

Art Glossary

Studio Art Course

Abstract: not realistic, though often based on an actual subject.

Accent: a distinctive feature, such as a color or shape, added to bring interest to a composition.

Advertisement: a public notice designed to attract attention to the qualities or advantages of a product or business to increase sales.

Aesthetics: the study of the beautiful in art; defined by the visual, moral, and social standards of the culture in which it was created; focuses on the nature of beauty, the nature and value of art, our responses to art, and how we define what is art.

Alternate: lines, colors or shapes that repeat every other time, such as red, blue, red, blue or square, circle, square, circle.

Anatomy: the study of the structure of the human body, especially the bones and muscles.

Angular Shapes: shapes made of straight lines with sharp corners and angles.

Appliqué: a decoration created by cutting pieces of one material and applying them to the surface of another material.

Art: the creative expression of people who want to share their ideas and feelings; the making or doing of things that have form and beauty; usually creative and unique. There are four arts: dance, drama, music, and visual.

Artist: a person who creates art; in ancient times the artist created works for the religious or political powers; in Medieval and Renaissance times, the artist created works for the church and wealthy patrons; in modern times, artists create for themselves, businesses, patrons or churches.

Assemble: to fit or join together various objects to create an artwork, such as a collage, mosaic or sculpture.

Asymmetrical: different on either side of a central axis (a line drawn down the middle).

Balance: if you draw an imaginary line down the middle of a composition, symmetrical balance is when the right side of the artwork is the same as the left side; in asymmetrical balance the sides are different.

Belief: *spiritual* or *religious* ideas people accept as true, such as: who created the world and why, there is a higher power, good conquers evil and there is life after death.

Caricature: character studies that usually exaggerate one or more features, often with humorous or satirical intent.

Carving: a subtractive method of sculpture; taking away wood or stone.

Collage: a grouping of different textures, objects and materials glued down.

Color Wheel: a chart that shows the relationship of the primary and secondary colors to each other; it can also show other mixtures, such as the tertiary colors.

Composition: the manner in which the artist presents the subject or subjects in a composition. This includes five elements: **focus** – how the person, place or thing is shown in the artwork such as pose and focus; **placement** – how are they arranged; background – what place is shown and how it is shown; **lighting** – soft, contrasting or dramatic; use of shapes – distorted or soft and rounded or sharp and angular.

Contour Line: a drawing of an object or person showing only the outline of the shape or the edges.

Cool Colors: colors that recede (appear to go away from us), such as blue, green and violet.

Creative: original, expressive or imaginative; the ability to put together lines, colors, forms and subjects in ways that are new and different.

Design: the organization of line, form, color, value, texture and space in an eye-pleasing arrangement; artists use repetition, emphasis, unity, proportion and/or contrast to organize their art works.

Diagonal Line: a line that goes in a slanted direction; within a square it could go from the upper left corner to the lower right corner.

Drawing: usually a work in pen, pencil or charcoal on paper.

Element: artistic design considerations such as color, line, texture, shape or form and space.

Emphasis: a design principle that gives dominance to a particular area through color, size or repetition.

Exaggerate: to enlarge something out of proportion with nearby objects or people.

Express: to communicate one's feelings, opinions or imagination, through words, gestures, symbols, or artistic activity.

Extension: a part added to a main object or structure that makes it larger.

Figure: the human or animal form used in creating art; i.e. figure-drawing.

Found Object: various objects or materials picked up by chance and added to a work of art or used to create the work of art.

Gesture Drawing: a drawing of the human figure, showing the position of hands, arms, legs and/or head to help express movement or feeling.

Graphics: simple line drawings or abstract shapes added to advertising designs and logos.

High Key: an artwork that uses primarily bright colors and tints.

Horizontal Line: a line that runs side to side.

Human Form: artworks that show the human face and/or figure; this includes portraits and narrative works that tell stories.

Improvisation: to make, invent, create or provide from available materials.

Landscape: a scenery painting; also includes the cityscape or seascape.

Linear Perspective: having lines converge to meet at a single point on the horizon to create a three-dimensional effect on a two-dimensional surface. There are two other kinds of perspective: 1) visual perspective – making distant objects smaller; 2) aerial or atmospheric – colors in the distance are hazier or bluer.

Logo: a unique design created to identify a company or organization the creatively uses typefaces and graphics to attract people's attention and communicate the image of the company or product.

Low Key: an artwork that uses primarily dark colors and shades.

Modeling: in sculpture building up clay or wax into a form; in painting varying the colors to suggest a three-dimensional quality.

Narrative Art: an artwork that tells a story.

Natural World: artworks that show plants, animals and landscapes.

Painting: the act, art or occupation of picturing scenes, objects, persons, etc. with paint.

Parallel Line: lines that are an equal distance apart at every point.

Pattern: an overall design that repeats the same lines or shapes to cover a surface.

Perpendicular Lines: a horizontal line that crosses a vertical line at a right angle (90 degrees).

Portrait: a painting, photograph or other likeness of a person, especially one showing a face.

Primary Colors: red, yellow and blue; may be mixed to make other colors but cannot themselves be mixed from other colors.

Print: a work of art, usually on paper, created from a “printing block” that has been transformed through a technique such as engraving, etching or woodcut and then inked and the image is transferred to paper multiple times.

Printing Block: a material, such as wood, metal, linoleum, etc. on which an artwork is created so that it can be printed.

Proportion: the pleasing relationship of all parts to each other and the whole of the design; also refers to the correct proportions in showing a human body, where each part (head, hand, etc.) is normal compared to the other parts.

Relief: in sculpture and architecture the projection of figures and forms from a flat surface so that they stand partly free.

Repetition: repeating an object, shape, or color in an artwork.

Rhythm: the regular repetition (pattern) of strong and weak elements, such as sound, lines, shapes or colors.

Rounded Shapes: shapes made with curved lines and rounded or no corners.

Secondary Colors: green, purple and orange; the colors obtained by mixing the primary colors.

Sculpture: the art of carving wood, chiseling stone, casting and welding metal, modeling clay or wax, or assembling these materials into three-dimensional representations, such as statues, figures, forms, etc.

Self-portrait: the artist creates a work that shows his/her own likeness, whether real or exaggerated.

Shade: any color mixed with black; it makes the color darker.

Shading: lines or other marks used to fill in the outlines of a sketch or painting to show shadows or changing tints or shades of color.

Sketch: a quick or undetailed drawing or painting made as a beginning study of a subject.

Spatial Relationship: the objects in an artwork or design are drawn or painted to show their shape and size as they appear in real life.

Spiritual World: artwork that shows spiritual images or is used in religious ceremonies.

Symbol: something that stands for or represents another thing; especially an object to represent something abstract, as a dove represents peace.

Symmetrical: the same on either side of a central axis (a line drawn down the middle).

Texture: the tactile (feeling through the skin) quality of a surface; smooth, rough, slick, sticky. Sculptures, architecture and three-dimensional artworks have **real texture** – you can feel the cold steel, rough rock, slick glass. Some painted and drawn artworks have **implied texture** – the paint or pencil is applied to look like curly hair, soft fur, silky clothes or rough wood.

Three-dimensional: having three dimension, height, width and depth, such as a sculpture, building or box; not flat.

Tint: any color mixed with white; it makes the color lighter.

Two-dimensional: having two dimensions, height and width; flat.

Typeface: the style or design of a letter; examples: Avant Garde, Brush Script, Courier, Impact, Lydian. Originally type meant a small block of metal or wood with a raised letter or character on the upper end that when inked and pressed upon paper, left a printed impression.

Unique: being the only one of its kind; being without an equal or equivalent.

Variety: the differences in scale, surface, line, value and shape that give interest to a composition.

Vertical Line: a line that goes from top to bottom.

Visual Arts: a broad category that includes the traditional fine arts such as drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture; communication and design arts such as film, television, graphics, and product design; architecture and environmental arts such as urban, building, interior and landscape design; folk arts; and other works of art such as ceramics, fibers, jewelry, works in wood, paper and other materials.

Warm Colors: colors that advance, such as red, red-orange, orange and yellow.