

Using Art and Artifacts as Provocations in the Classroom
Jewish Museum/Jewish Education Project Educator Workshop
September 24, 2019

Glossary of Art Terminology

A

Abstract: A term generally used to describe art that is not representational or based on external reality or nature.

Acrylic paint: a water-based paint with a polymer binder; dries to a permanent finish.

Aesthetics: the study or theory of the beautiful in art.

Analogous: colors that are next to each other on the color wheel and are related by a single hue; e.g., red, red-orange, orange, and red-violet.

Armature: basic structure on which to build a sculpture.

Assemblage: sculpture consisting of different objects and materials arranged in a unified 3-D composition.

Asymmetry: a way of organizing the parts of a design so that one side differs from the other without destroying the overall balance and harmony; also called informal balance.

B

Background: the part of the picture plane that seems to be the farthest from the viewer.

Balance: the principle of design that refers to the visual equalization of the elements in a work of art. The three major forms of balance are asymmetrical balance (where equilibrium is achieved by the balance differences in the art elements within a composition), symmetrical balance (where the art elements in a composition are balanced in a mirror-like fashion), and radial balance (a kind of balance where the elements branch or radiate out from a central point).



C

Canvas: linen or cotton cloth tightly stretched over and attached to wooden stretcher bars to create a taut surface for oil or acrylic painting.

Carving: shaping wood, stone, or marble by scraping, cutting, and chipping.

Ceramics: the process of creating functional and nonfunctional art forms out of clay.

Chiaroscuro: using the contrast and transitioning of light and dark areas to create the illusion of three-dimensional form on a two-dimensional surface.

Classicism: imitating, referencing, or having the general characteristics of the art and culture of ancient Rome or Greece. Classical characteristics include idealized beauty, restraint, harmony, and balance.

Collage: artwork made by attaching pieces of paper or other materials to a flat surface.

Color: the various visual phenomena that are the results of the reflection or absorption of light by a surface. Color has three properties: hue, value, and intensity.

Color harmonies: color groupings that have a pleasing visual effect (as opposed to colors that clash with one another).

Color theory: as used in the Kentucky Core Content, the study of pigmented color (subtractive color theory) as opposed to light (additive color theory).

Color wheel: In art and design, color theory is a set of principles used for working with colors that involves mixing colors, considering the visual effects of color, and creating pleasing color combinations.

Complementary colors: pairs of colors that are opposite one another on the color wheel. Red and green, blue and orange, and yellow and violet have the greatest degree of contrast.

Composition: the arrangement of the elements of art and the principles of design within a given work of art.

Computer design: any visual expression (original art, functional graphics, scientific illustrations) created with a computer.

Contour drawing: a continuous line drawing where the student draws the interior and

exterior contours of the subject. In the process, students keep their eyes on the contours of their subject more than they do on their drawing, and the results are drawings that are often randomly abstracted or distorted.

Contrast: design principle that emphasizes differences between the art elements. For example, a painting may have bright colors that contrast with dull colors or angular shapes that contrast with rounded shapes. Sharp contrast draws attention and can direct a viewer to a focal point within a work of art.

Cool colors: a color group associated with blue that includes blue-green, blue-violet, green, yellow-green, and violet. Cool colors appear to recede in space and have a general psychological association with coolness.

D

Depth: the actual dimension of depth within a work of art or the illusion of showing distance in a work of art.

Design: plan, organization, or arrangement of elements in a work of art.

Dimensional: measurement in one direction. A two-dimensional (2-D) work of art has the two dimensions of length and width; a three-dimensional (3-D) work of art has the three dimensions of length, width, and depth.

E

Elements of art: the basic components or tools of visual communication; include line, space, shape/form, value, color, and texture.

Embroidery: decorating fabric with stitches.

F

Fiber art: a type of art using fibers, yarn, and fabric as the medium to create tactile forms and images through surface design, weaving, and construction techniques.

Fine art: works made to be enjoyed, not functional, and judged by the theories of art.

Firing process: to apply intense heat to harden clay.

Focal point: the area within a composition at which the emphasis is greatest and where the eye of the viewer continually comes to rest (the center of interest).

Folk art: generally refers to artworks created by individuals who have little or no formal academic training in fine art.

Foreground: the part of a picture which appears closest to the viewer and often is at the bottom of the picture.

Form: element of art that refers to the three-dimensional quality/qualities of an artwork.

Found objects: common or unusual objects that may be used to create a work of art; specifically refers to scrap, discarded materials that have been "found" and used in artworks.

Functional art: functional objects such as dishes and clothes that are of a high artistic quality and/or craftsmanship; art with a utilitarian purpose.

G

Glaze: painting technique in which a transparent layer of color is placed over another layer of paint to create a slight change in color.

Gradation: principle of design that refers to the use of a series of gradual/transitional changes in the use of the elements of art with a given work of art; for example, a transition from lighter to darker colors or a gradation of large shapes to smaller ones.

Graphic design: visual communication intended to be used with commercial printing/reproductive processes in both two- and three-dimensional presentations.

Grid: pattern of intersecting vertical and horizontal lines.

Gouache: opaque water-based paint that dries to a dense matte finish; similar to the appearance and quality of poster paints.

H

Hue: property of color that refers to the intrinsic "color" of a color. Distinguishing between a color that is more red-orange than red-violet is referencing the property of hue.

I

Impressionistic: showing the effects of light and atmospheric conditions of an artist's work that spontaneously captures a moment in time.

Intensity: the property of color that refers to the brightness or dullness of a color; how pure the color is.

Interpret: to respond to art work by identifying the feelings, moods, and ideas communicated by the work of art. Interpretation also calls for the investigation of the influence of time and place upon the artist who created the work of art.

K

Kiln: a furnace in which clay is fired.

L

Landscape: the subject matter category in which the main theme of the work is natural scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers, and lakes. Traditionally, the space depicted in a landscape is divided into three parts. The foreground is the part closest to you, the viewer. Objects in the foreground are usually larger and more detailed than other objects; they overlap other objects. Objects in the middle ground appear to be behind objects in the foreground. The background is the part of the painting farthest from the viewer. Objects in the background are usually smaller and less distinct than other objects in the work.

Line: element of art which refers to the mark(s) made on a surface by a moving point. The element of line has a wide range of qualities and expressive possibilities: curved lines, diagonal lines, dotted lines, straight lines, etc.

M

Medium/Media: the material used by the artist to produce art (i.e., paint, clay, fibers).

Middle ground: area in a picture between the foreground and the background.

Mimetic: artwork whose purpose is to "mimic" or imitate nature; often refers to work that is highly realistic.

Mixed media: any art work that uses more than one medium.

Mobile: a hanging sculpture that has free-moving parts.

Monochromatic: a color scheme that uses one color and all of the tones, tints, and shades that can be derived from it.

Motif: a unit repeated to create visual rhythm.

Movement: the design principle that uses some of the elements of art to produce the look of action or to cause the viewer's eye to sweep over the art work in a certain manner.

Mural: surface treatment or decoration that is applied directly to a wall. A painted fresco is one form of a mural.

N

Narrative artwork: a work of art whose primary purpose is to tell a story.

Naturalistic: art work that looks like the subject it is trying to represent.

Negative space: the areas of space that are in and around the subject matter. The negative spaces define the subject matter.

Neoclassicism: "new" classicism movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Neoclassicism was inspired by the classical style of ancient Greece and Rome, and the classical ideals of harmony, idealized realism, clarity, and reason are all generally found in examples of neoclassical architecture, painting, and sculpture.

Neutral colors: Black, white, gray, and brown are considered to be “neutral” colors because they are (theoretically) neither warm nor cool colors. Some neutral colors may be achieved by mixing a complementary color pair—which “neutralizes” them.

Nonobjective / Nonrepresentational: artwork that contains no recognizable objects or forms.

O

Oil paint: a type of paint created by combining pigmentation with oils such as linseed and sunflower oils.

P

Papier-mâché: sculpture medium that uses paper or rags dipped in wheat paste (wallpaper paste) over an armature.

Oil pastels: media with similar color pigments as chalk pastels, but an oil-and-wax composition.

Pastels: pigments pressed into sticks and used as a dry medium on paper; sometimes referred to as hard or soft chalk pastels.

Pattern: repetition of an element of art (i.e., shapes, lines, or colors) to achieve decoration or ornamentation.

Perspective: system of representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface, giving the illusion of depth in space. Linear perspective deals with drawing, and atmospheric perspective attempts to use color and value changes to get the effect of distance.

Portrait: subject matter category in which the main purpose of the art work is to communicate a likeness of an individual or group of individuals.

Positive space: the primary subject matter in a work of art, as opposed to the background or unoccupied spaces.

Primary colors: hues that cannot be produced by a mixture of other hues: magenta red, yellow, and cyan (turquoise) blue.

Principles of design: concepts for combining the elements of art into successful art forms, including balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, repetition, rhythm, proportion, unity, and variety.

Printmaking: the process of reproducing images on a flat surface; three types are relief block (linoleum, wood), intaglio (etching, engraving), and stencil (silkscreen).

Processes: both art methods and the media used for visual communication in a variety of art forms.

Proportion: the relationship in size of one component of a work of art to another.

R

Random rhythm: visual rhythm in which a motif is repeated in no apparent order.

Realism: 19th-century art movement in which artists focused attention on ordinary people, such as peasants and laborers, who had not been pictured in art up to that time. Realists depicted real scenes from contemporary life, from city street scenes to country funerals. They tried to show the beauty in the commonplace, refusing to idealize or gloss over reality as Neoclassical and Romantic artists had.

realistic: art work that attempts a photographic likeness of the subject matter; sometimes refers to the choice of subject that is commonplace as opposed to courtly and idealized.

Regular rhythm: visual rhythm created through repeating the same motif with the same distance between placements.

Relief sculpture: three-dimensional forms attached to a background.

Renaissance: literally means "rebirth." The Renaissance period in Europe lasted from the 14th century through the 16th century and was distinguished by a renewed interest in classical art, architecture, literature, and philosophy. While the Renaissance began in Italy, over time its influence eventually spread to other areas of Europe, laying the intellectual and cultural groundwork for the modern world. The artists and scholars of the Italian Renaissance were primarily interested in the Roman classical period, as they identified with it as both their ancestral heritage and their intellectual guide. The Renaissance culture's embrace of classical learning and values came at a time when a significant growth in trade and commerce was replacing the feudal economy of serfs and lords. An unprecedented period of exploration occurred, with the discovery of unknown continents and new ways of

understanding the Earth's place in the universe. Parallel to the many technological and scientific discoveries of our own age, the development of paper and the printing press brought unprecedented social changes in literacy and the spread of information.

Repetition: a way of combining art elements so that the same elements are used over and over to achieve balance and harmony.

Representational art: artworks whose primary purpose is to depict the visual appearance of objects and things.

Rhythm: refers to a way of utilizing art elements to produce the look and feel of rhythmic movement with a visual tempo or beat.

Romanticism: late 18th- and early 19th-century movement that emphasized the values of passionate emotion and artistic freedom. Romanticism was a philosophical attitude that emphasized emotion, imagination, mystery, and the pursuit of one's unique destiny. The Romantics had a deep fascination with historical literature and artistic styles that stood in contrast to a world that was becoming increasingly industrialized and developed. The Romantics' artistic approach was, in part, a rejection of the classical artistic values of the Neoclassical movement. Rather than finding their artistic guidance in the classical principles of harmony, idealized realism, or clarity, the Romantics sought inspiration from intense personal experiences.

S

Secondary colors: violet, green, orange; hues that can be produced by mixing two of the primary hues. Magenta red and cyan (turquoise) blue make violet. Yellow and cyan blue make green. Magenta red and yellow make orange.

Shades: colors created when black is added to a hue to darken a color.

Shape: element of art that refers to an enclosed area of 2-D or 3-D space that is defined by its external edge. Almost everything you see has one main shape. A shape can be created within an artwork by enclosing an area with a line, or it can be achieved by making changes in value, colors, forms, or one of the other elements of art.

Space: element of art that refers to the perceived distance or area between, around, above, below, or within a given area. Artworks can deal with actual physical space or the illusion of space (depth), depending on the aims of the artist; major divisions within the composition of an artwork include areas of positive and negative space.

Still life: the subject matter category in which the main purpose of the art work is to show inanimate objects.

Style: a characteristic manner of presenting ideas and feeling in visual form; may also refer to an individual artist or a group of artists whose work has certain features in common.

Symbolic: works of art that have forms, images, or subjects representing meanings other than the ones with which they are usually associated.

Symmetry: a way of organizing the parts of a design so that one side duplicates or mirrors the other.

I

Tempera paint: water-based paint that traditionally had pigment mixed with an egg binder. Sometimes called poster paint, this opaque medium now has a chemical binder.

Textiles: art works that are created from natural or manmade fibers. Weaving, basketry, stitchery, and knitting are just a few of the processes involved in textile design.

Texture: element of art that refers to the perceived surface quality or “feel” of an object—its roughness, smoothness, softness, etc. Artworks can deal with the actual physical texture of a surface or the illusion of texture, depending on the aim of the artist.

Tints: colors obtained by adding white to the hue to lighten it.

Tones: colors obtained by adding gray to the hue of a color.

Transition: the principle of art that refers to a way of combining art elements by using a series of gradual changes in those elements (gradation).

U

Unity: refers to the visual quality of wholeness or oneness that is achieved through effective use of the elements of art and principles of design.

V

Value: element of art that refers to the degree and qualities of lightness or darkness. In color theory, value refers to the lightness (tint) or darkness (shade) of a color; i.e. pink is a tint of red.

Vanishing point: in perspective drawing, a point or points on the horizon where receding parallel lines seem to meet.

Variety: quality achieved when the art elements are combined in various combinations to increase visual interest. For instance, an assortment of shapes that are of a variety of sizes attracts more attention than an assortment of shapes all the same size.

W

Warm colors: a color group that is associated with red that includes red-orange, red-violet, orange, yellow-orange, and usually yellow. Warm colors appear to advance in space and have a general psychological association with warmth.

Watercolor: transparent water-based paint that uses gum arabic as a binder.

Weaving: fiber construction based on a right-angle relationship. In a weaving, the warp is a unit of strong taut cords running vertically on a loom, and the flexible weft fibers are "woven" in and out horizontally of the warp strings. When the weaving is completed, the warp strings are cut from the loom, and warp and weft fibers have created a solid piece of woven cloth.

