

# The Language of Art

**T**o learn how a watch works, you might take it apart and study the pieces. While the parts are spread out before you, however, the watch cannot run. Only when the parts are in place will the familiar ticking tell you that the watch is working.

Like watches, works of art are made up of parts. When an artist skillfully puts the pieces of an art work together, it succeeds as art. You can see how the parts work together to make a unified whole. In this chapter you will learn about these parts and how they can be organized, as in the painting at the left, to make a pleasing whole.

## OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define and recognize the elements of art.
- Make an abstract design, experimenting with the elements of art.
- Identify the principles of art.
- Use the elements of art and principles of art in a studio experience.

## WORDS YOU WILL LEARN

balance  
color  
emphasis  
form  
harmony  
line  
movement  
non-objective art  
proportion  
rhythm  
shape  
space  
texture  
unity  
variety



## PORTFOLIO IDEAS

Keep your art work in a portfolio. A **portfolio** is a carefully selected collection of art work kept by students and professional artists. Make sure each entry includes:

- Your name and the date you completed the art work.
- A summary or self-reflection of the assignment.
- Any additional information requested by your teacher.

Throughout the book, watch for other "Portfolio Ideas." Professional artists do similar types of exercises for their own portfolios.



# The Elements of Art

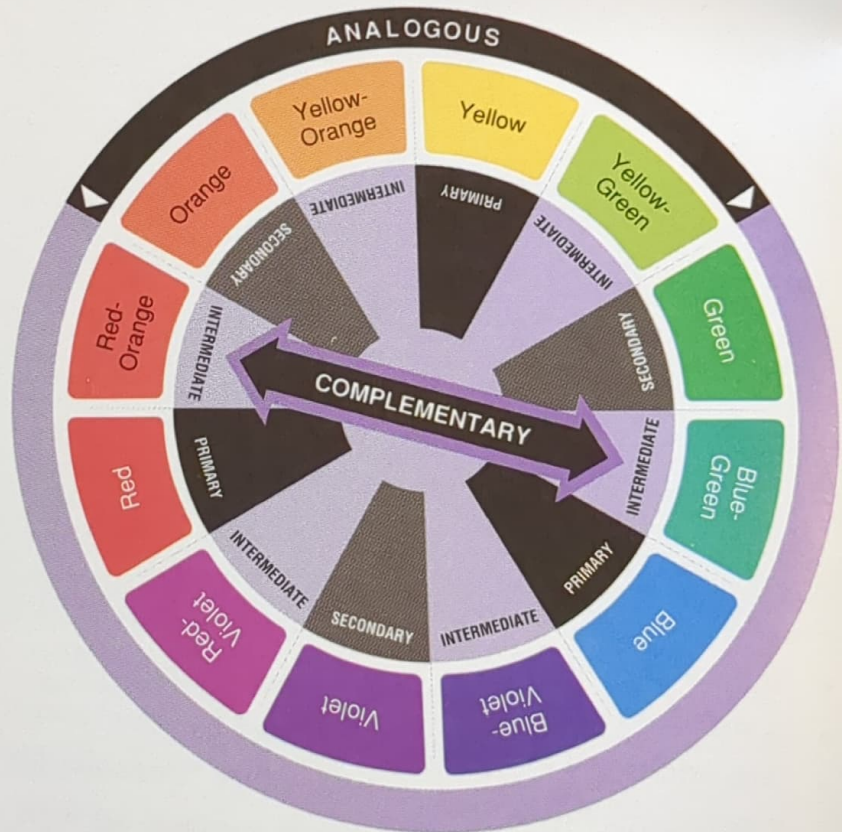
Art is a powerful language. Through it, artists communicate thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Like most languages, the language of art has its own special vocabulary. Unlike other vocabularies, however, the vocabulary of art is not made up of words. Rather, it is made up of visual elements. The visual elements include color, line, shape, form, space, and texture.

## COLOR

Have you ever noticed it is harder to see colors when the light is dim? Color relies on light. In fact, **color** is *what the eyes see when light is reflected off an object*.

Color has three properties, or traits. These are:

- **Hue.** Hue is the name of a color, such as red, blue, or yellow. Hues are arranged in a circular format on a color wheel. Red, yellow, and blue are the primary hues. They are equally spaced on the color wheel. (See Figure 1-1.) Look at the picture in Figure 1-2. How many different hues, or colors, can you find in this work? Which ones can you name?
- **Value.** Value is the lightness or darkness of a hue. The value of a hue can be changed by adding white or black. Can you point out different values of any one color in the picture in Figure 1-2?



► Figure 1-1 Color Wheel.



- **Intensity.** Intensity is the brightness or dullness of a hue. Pure hues are high-intensity colors. Dull hues are low-intensity colors. Which objects in Figure 1–2 would you describe as high in intensity? Which would you describe as low in intensity?

Colors can be combined to produce many interesting and striking results. Artists make use of different types of color schemes to create different effects. Following are some of the color schemes that trained artists use:

- **Monochromatic** (mahn-uh-kroh-mat-ik) **color scheme.** This scheme uses different values of a single hue. For example, dark

green, medium green, and light green make a monochromatic scheme.

- **Analogous** (uh-nal-uh-gus) **color scheme.** This scheme uses colors that are side by side on the color wheel and share a hue. Look at the color wheel in Figure 1–1. What colors share the hue red?
- **Warm or cool color scheme.** Warm color schemes — with red, yellow, and orange colors — remind us of the sun and warmth. Artists use blue, green, and violet — cool color schemes — to make us think of cool items such as ice or grass.



▲ **Figure 1–2** Can you point to places where the value changes are gradual? How do these gradual changes of value help to suggest round, three-dimensional form? Can you find places where the value changes are sudden?

William Michael Harnett. *Munich Still Life*. 1882. Oil on canvas. 62.5 x 76.8 cm (24½ x 30¼").  
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas.



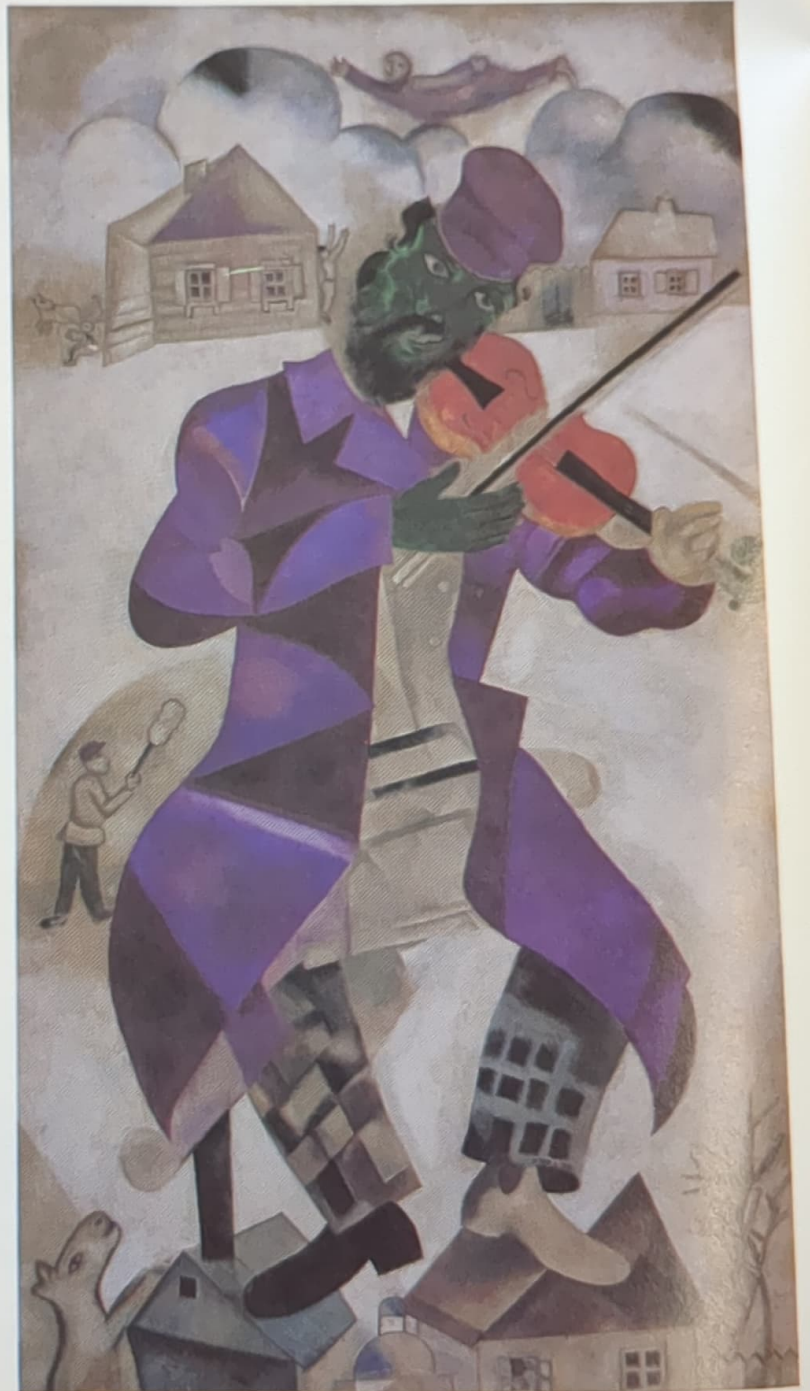
## LINE

An element of art that can be used to send different messages to viewers is a line. **Line** is defined as *the path of a moving point through space*. You can draw lines on paper or scratch a line in wet clay with a tool. Lines can be seen in your environment, such as the web of a spider or the railing on a stair.

There are five main kinds of lines:

- Horizontal lines, which run parallel to the ground, appear to be at rest.

- Vertical lines — lines that run up and down — seem to show dignity, formality, and strength.
- Diagonal, or slanting, lines signal action and excitement.
- Zigzag lines, which are made from combined diagonal lines, can create a feeling of confusion or suggest action.
- Curved lines express movement in a graceful, flowing way.



► **Figure 1-3** How is color used to help emphasize the figure in this painting? Do you think the artist's use of both large and small shapes makes this picture more pleasing to look at?

Marc Chagall. *Green Violinist*. 1923–1924. Oil on canvas. 198 x 108.6 cm (78 x 42¾"). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, New York. Gift of Solomon R. Guggenheim.

Look again at Figure 1–2 on page 3. How many different lines can you find? In what directions do these lines go?

In art, line quality and line variation influence the viewer's reaction to a work of art. Line quality is the unique character of the line. It can be affected by the tool or medium used to produce the mark or by the particular motion of the artist's hand. Line variation describes the thickness or thinness, lightness or darkness of a line.

## SHAPE AND FORM

Every object — a cloud, a house, a pebble — has a shape. **Shape** is an element of art that refers to an area clearly set off by one or more of the other elements of art. Shapes are limited to two dimensions — length and width.

All shapes belong to one of two classes:

- **Geometric** (jee-uh-meh-trik). Geometric shapes look as though they were made with a ruler or drawing tool. The square, the circle, the triangle, the rectangle, and the oval are the five basic geometric shapes. Look at the painting in Figure 1–3. Can you find any geometric shapes?
- **Organic**. Also called free-form, organic shapes are not regular or even. Their outlines may be curved or angular, or they may be a combination of both, to make free-form shapes. Organic shapes, such as clouds and pebbles, are usually found in nature. Can you find any organic shapes in Figure 1–3?

Like shapes, forms have length and width. Forms also have a third dimension, depth. **Form** is an element of art that refers to an object with three dimensions. With the forms found in works of art, such as sculpture and architecture, you can actually experience the three dimensions by walking around or into the works.

## SPACE

All objects take up space. **Space** is an element of art that refers to the distance between, around, above, below, and within things. Which objects in Figure 1–3 appear closest to you? Which seem to be farther back in space?

In both two- and three-dimensional works of art, the shapes or forms are called the positive area. The empty spaces between the shapes are called negative spaces. The relationship between the positive and negative space will affect how the art work is interpreted.

## TEXTURE

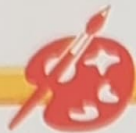
Run your fingers over the top of your desk or work table. You are feeling the surface's texture. **Texture** is an element of art that refers to the way things feel, or look as though they might feel, if touched.

Imagine you could touch the objects in the picture in Figure 1–2 on page 3. Which of them do you think would feel smooth? Do any look rough or uneven?

## ✓ CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What are the three properties of color?
2. What message do vertical lines send to a viewer? What message do diagonal lines send?
3. What is the difference between shape and form?
4. What is the difference between the positive area and the negative area in a work of art?
5. Define *texture*.





# Using the Elements of Art

Sometimes artists create **non-objective art**. These are *works in which no objects or subjects can be readily identified*. Figure 1–4 is such a work. This one is by Grace Hartigan. She has combined several elements of art in this work to create unusual effects.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

This is the first of many studio lessons. In these lessons you will use your creative skills and experiment with different media. You will create many works of art that may be displayed.

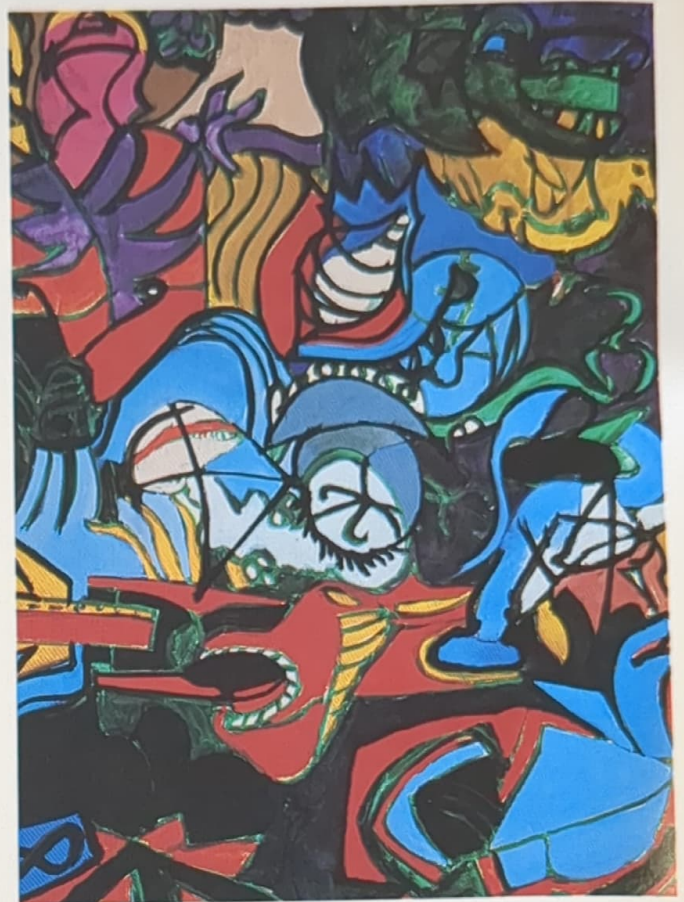
For this first studio experiment, you will create a non-objective design using all the elements of art. You will use pencil, felt-tip markers, colored pencils, and crayons. (See Figure 1–5.)

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Pencil and ruler
- Sheet of white drawing paper, 18 x 24 inches (46 x 61 cm)
- Colored markers, colored pencils, and crayons

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

1. Using one continuous pencil line, make a design that fills the sheet of drawing paper. Allow your pencil to drift off the edge of the paper and return. Try to create a design that has both large and small shapes.
2. Using the ruler, divide your paper into eight equal rectangles. Each should measure 6 x 9 inches (15 x 23 cm). Number the eight boxed areas lightly in pencil. You may order the numbers any way you like (Figure 1–6).
3. Using primary *hues* of crayons, color the shapes in Area 1. (See the color wheel on page 2.)
4. Using light and dark *values* of colored pencils, color in the shapes in Area 2. Using bright and dull *intensities* of colored pencils, color in the shapes in Area 3.
5. Using the pencil, go over the *lines* in Area 4. Make some of the lines straight and others curved. Try pressing down on the pencil for some of the lines. This will give a thicker, darker result.



▲ Figure 1–4 Hartigan has painted a non-objective work that shows several elements of art combined to make a pleasing whole. What elements can you identify in this painting?

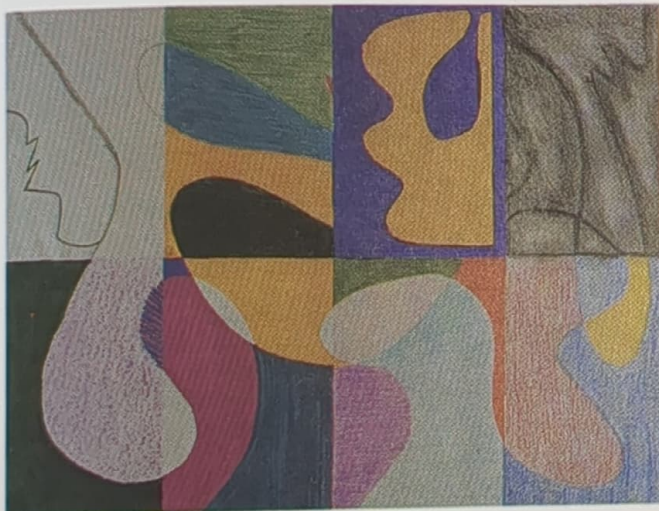
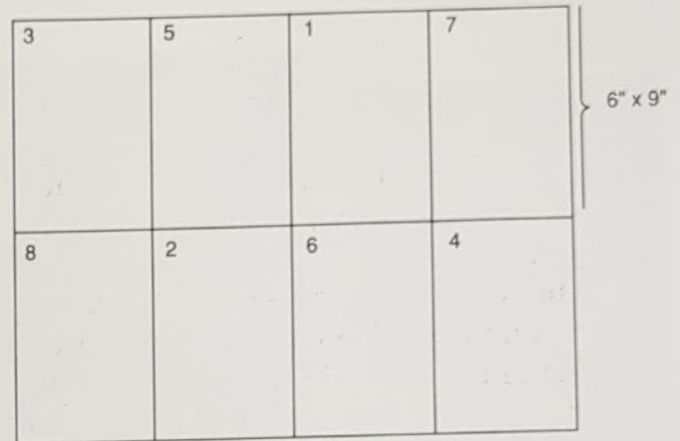
Grace Hartigan. *The Faraway Places*. 1974. Oil on canvas. 228.6 x 166.4 cm (90 x 65½"). McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas. Purchase made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts with matching funds, Marion Koogler.



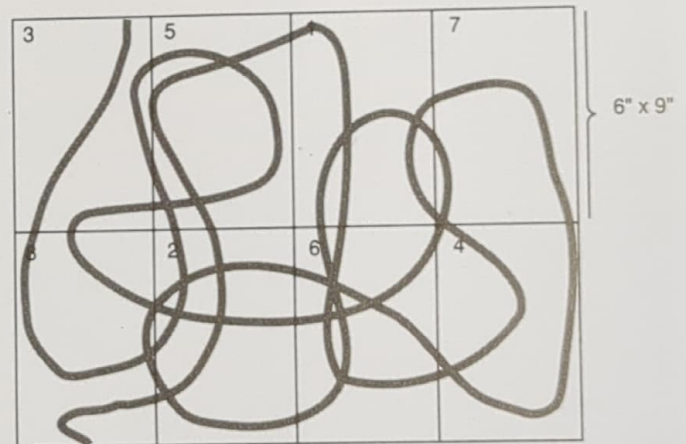
6. Using pencil, crayons, colored pencils, or markers, create three different *textures* in Area 5.
7. Using the markers, draw outlines around *shapes* in Area 6. Fill in some of the shapes with the markers. Leave the others white.
8. Use pencil to add a new shape that overlaps the existing shapes in Area 7 to show *space*. Add to this feeling of space by using colored pencil to color this shape in a bright hue. Color the other shapes in dull hues.
9. Using the pencil, shade the shapes in Area 8 little by little. Try to make these shapes look like rounded, three-dimensional *forms*. (For information on shading, see Technique Tip 6, *Handbook* page 278.)
10. Display your design. See if other members of your class can identify the different art elements found in each area.

## EXAMINING YOUR WORK

- **Describe** Tell which element each area of your design highlights. Identify the media you used to create the different areas.
- **Judge** State whether your design clearly highlights each element of art. Tell which section of your design you think is the most successful. Explain your answer.



▲ Figure 1-5 Student work. Non-objective design.



▲ Figure 1-6 Drawing the elements of art.

Try  
This!

## COMPUTER OPTION



■ Use a medium Brush tool. Draw a continuous line that drifts off the edges of the screen and fills the page. Draw an open box around your line design, 8 x 10 inches (20 x 25 cm). Use the Grids and Rulers option to guide you. Select the Straight Line tool and

hold down the Shift Key. Click and drag straight lines to divide the large box into eight small sections 2½ x 5 inches (6.4 x 12.7 cm). Follow directions in the Studio Lesson. Choose colors and Drawing tools on the computer to create texture and value.





# The Principles of Art

If you want to use a language, knowing the vocabulary is not enough. You must also know how the words go together. You must know the rules of grammar for that language.

The same is true of art. Instead of rules of grammar, the language of art has art princi-

ples. These principles, or guidelines, govern how artists organize the visual elements to create a work of art.

The principles of art include balance, variety, harmony, emphasis, proportion, movement, and rhythm.



► **Figure 1-7** This picture combines familiar images from our modern rock culture. Do you think the artist has succeeded in organizing the elements of art to create a visually pleasing whole?

Richard Lindner. *Rock-Rock*. 1966. Oil on canvas. 177.8 x 152.4 cm (70 x 60"). Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas. Gift of Mr. & Mrs. James H. Clark.



## BALANCE

If you have ever carried a stack of dishes or books, you know the importance of balance. In art, balance is also important. **Balance** is a principle of art concerned with arranging elements so no one part of a work overpowers, or seems heavier than, any other part. In art, balance is seen or felt by the viewer.

In works of art, three kinds of balance are possible. They are formal balance, informal balance, and radial balance. In works of art with formal, or symmetrical (suh-meh-trih-kuhl), balance the two halves are mirror im-

ages. In works with informal, or asymmetrical (ay-suh-meh-trih-kuhl), balance two unlike elements seem to carry equal weight. For example, a small shape painted bright red will balance several larger items painted in duller reds.

Radial balance occurs when elements or objects in an art work are positioned around a central point. Study the art works in Figures 1-7, 1-8, and 1-9. Which uses formal balance? Which uses informal balance? Which uses radial balance?



▲ Figure 1-8 Compare this painting with the one in Figure 1-7. How are they similar? Do the different elements in these paintings help suggest a certain kind of music? Would the mood of this painting change if the artist used the same colors as those in Figure 1-7?

Auguste Renoir. *Young Spanish Woman with a Guitar*. 1898. Canvas. 55.6 x 65.2 cm (21 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ "). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection.





▲ Figure 1-9 How many different art elements did Vincent van Gogh use in this painting? What has he done to create the illusion of movement? What images in this painting do not appear to move?

Vincent van Gogh. *The Starry Night*. 1889. Oil on canvas. 73.7 x 92.1 cm (29 x 36¼"). Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss bequest.

## VARIETY

The same routine day after day can become dull. The same color or shape repeated over and over in an art work can become equally dull. To avoid dullness, artists use the principle of variety in their works. **Variety** is a principle of art concerned with combining one or more elements to create interest by adding slight changes. By giving a work variety, the artist heightens the visual appeal of the work.

Look again at the picture in Figure 1-7. How does the artist's use of color add variety to the work? Which other elements are used to add variety?

## HARMONY

If too little variety can become boring, too much variety can create chaos. Artists avoid chaos in their works by using the principle of harmony. **Harmony** is a principle of art concerned with blending elements to create a more calm, restful appearance.

Of the two paintings in Figures 1-7 and 1-8, which has greater harmony? Which elements does the artist use to introduce harmony to the work?



## EMPHASIS

To attract a viewer's attention to important parts of a work, artists use the principle of emphasis. **Emphasis** is *making an element in a work stand out*. Emphasis can be created by contrast or by extreme changes in an element.

Look once more at Figure 1-8. What has been done to emphasize the face of the young woman?

## PROPORTION

Have you ever tasted a food that was so salty you couldn't eat it? The problem was one of proportion. **Proportion** is *the principle of art concerned with the relationship of one part to another and to the whole*.

The principle of proportion is not limited to size. Elements such as color can be used in differing proportions to create emphasis. It is used this way in Figure 1-7. Which color is used in greatest proportion?

## MOVEMENT

You may not have realized it, but when you look at a work of art your eye moves from part to part. Artists use the principle of movement to lead the viewer's eyes throughout the work. **Movement** is *the principle of art used to create the look and feeling of action and to guide a viewer's eye throughout the work of art*.

Study yet again the paintings in Figures 1-7, 1-8, and 1-9. How have the artists used line and shape to move your eyes throughout the works?

## RHYTHM

Often artists seek to make their works seem active. When they do, they call upon the principle of rhythm. **Rhythm** is *the principle of art concerned with repeating an element to make a work seem active or to suggest vibration*. Sometimes to create rhythm, an artist will repeat not just elements but also the same exact objects over and over. When this is done, a pattern is formed.

Compare the works in Figures 1-7, 1-8, and 1-9. Which uses the principle of rhythm? What element is repeated?

## UNITY IN ART

When you look at works of art, it may be difficult to determine where one part ends and the other begins. Instead, the piece of art works together as a whole. It has unity. **Unity** is *the arrangement of elements and principles with media to create a feeling of completeness or wholeness*. You will sense this unity as you look at works of art in which artists use the elements and principles with skill, imagination, and sensitivity.

## ✓ CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

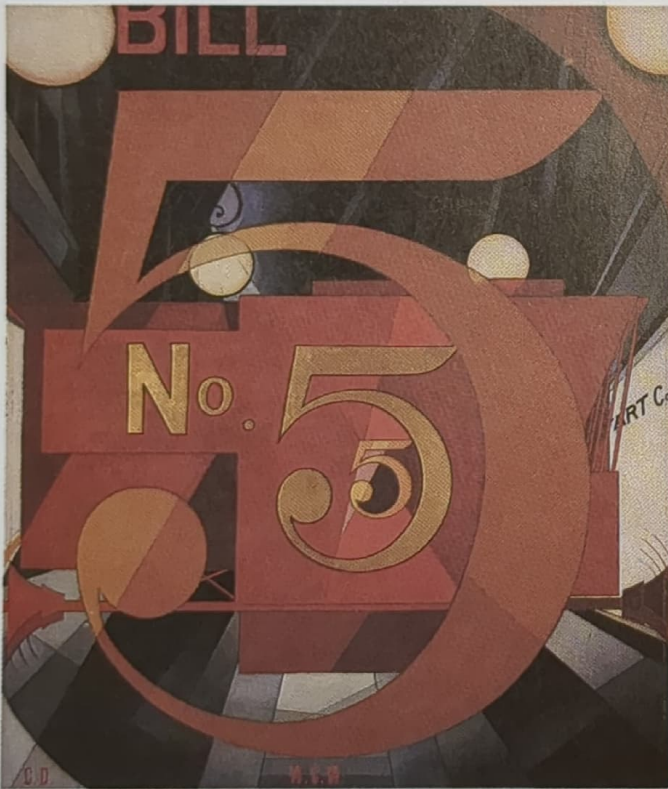
1. What are principles of art?
2. Name three kinds of balance. Describe each kind.
3. What principles do artists use to prevent works from being static?
4. How can emphasis be created in a work of art?
5. Define *movement*.



# Using the Principles of Art

Artists use the language of art in different and often highly imaginative ways. Figure 1–10 gives us painter Charles Demuth's (duh-mooth) view of a fire engine racing through a rain-swept city at night.

Notice that the artist has not attempted to create a true-to-life picture. There are no clear images of trucks, wet streets, or darkened buildings. Rather, Demuth has captured the *idea* of those images. Look closely and you can almost hear the screaming of Engine Company 5's siren. You can almost see the red truck's lights flashing.



▲ Figure 1–10 How is the principle of proportion demonstrated in this work? Explain how repetition is used to suggest movement and rhythm. Do you think this painting demonstrates unity?

Charles Henry Demuth. *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold*. 1928. Oil on composition board. 91.4 x 75.6 cm (36 x 29 3/4"). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. The Alfred Stieglitz Collection.

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

You will create the "idea of your name." You will do this through a design made up of the letters of your name or nickname. All the principles of art will be used in your design. You will use watercolor paint and tempera paint in your work. (See Figure 1–11.)

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Sheets of scrap paper
- Pencil, ruler, and eraser
- Sheet of white drawing paper, 18 x 24 inches (46 x 61 cm)
- Watercolor paint and several brushes
- Tempera paint and mixing tray

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

1. On scrap paper, practice making block letters of different sizes and shapes. Focus only on the letters in your name or nickname.
2. Working lightly in pencil, create a design with the letters on the sheet of drawing paper. Arrange for some of the letters to overlap and some to go off the page. Fill the entire sheet of paper.
3. Using the ruler, divide your paper into eight equal rectangles. Each should measure 6 x 9 inches (15 x 23 cm). Number the eight boxed areas lightly in pencil in any order you like.
4. Using the pencil and eraser, draw in or erase lines to rearrange the shapes in Area 1 so they have formal *balance*. Fill in some of the shapes with pencil.
5. Using a *variety* of hues of tempera, paint the shapes in Area 2.
6. Using no more than three hues, paint the shapes in Area 3. Repeat one of these colors over and over to add *harmony*.



## EXAMINING YOUR WORK

- **Describe** Tell where the different letters of your name or nickname are found in your design. Identify the art media you used to create the different areas.
- **Analyze** Name the principle of art highlighted in each area of your design.
- **Judge** Tell whether your design clearly highlights each principle of art. Tell which section of your design you think is the most successful. Explain your answer.

### SAFETY TIP

Remember to check paints for safety labels. The labels *AP* (for Approved Product) and *CP* (for Certified Product) mean the paint does not contain harmful amounts of poisonous substances. An *HL* label (for Health Label), on the other hand, warns that the paint contains poisonous ingredients and is dangerous to use.



▲ Figure 1-12 Student work. Design using the principles of art.

- Identify the most interesting shape in Area 4. Using the brightest hue, paint this area to give *emphasis* to this shape. Paint other shapes with dull hues.
- Using the pencil and eraser, rearrange the shapes in Area 5 to create *rhythm*. Use watercolors to paint the shapes.
- Using watercolors, paint the shapes in Area 6. Increase the *proportion* of one of the colors you use. Notice how doing this *emphasizes* that color.
- Using the pencil and eraser, rearrange the shapes in Area 7 to create a sense of *movement* in any direction. Use watercolors to paint the shapes. Pick colors that will add to the feeling of movement.
- Rearrange similar shapes in Area 8 to create a pattern. Pick one color of tempera to paint the shapes in Area 8. Paint the nearest shapes. Paint the other shapes, adding white to lighten the value of the hue. (For information on mixing paint to change value, see Technique Tip 12, *Handbook* page 280.) In this way the shapes will appear to create rhythm.
- Display your design and identify the different principles of art found in each area.

balance	variety	rhythm	proportion
emphasis	harmony	movement	unity

▲ Figure 1-11 Grid showing principles of art in Figure 1-12.

**Try This!**

### STUDIO OPTION

■ On a sheet of white paper, create a second design. This work should be based on your initials. Focus on the

part of your first design that you found most interesting. Complete your work using techniques from the Studio Lesson.





Giacomo Balla. *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*. 1912. Oil on canvas. 89.8 x 109.9 cm (35½ x 43¼"). Albright Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Bequest of A. Conger Goodyear and Gift of George F. Goodyear. 1964.

## How Does the Eye Perceive Movement?

Our eyes and brain work together to help us make sense of what we see. Human eyes provide an amazingly detailed, three-dimensional view of the world. How do the eyes accomplish this work?

Everything we see depends on rays of light. Light rays pass into the eye through the cornea. A thin layer of cells called the retina picks up these rays of light, detecting the image created by the light. Some of the light-sensitive cells of the retina detect shapes and shades of light but not color. Other cells are sensitive to details, colors, and movement.

The eye then sends a pattern of signals to the brain. The brain decodes the signals and makes sense of the shapes, colors, and movements transmitted through the rays of light. Thus it is the brain that really interprets colors, shape and form, and movement. Sometimes what we see can play tricks on the brain, as with Giacomo Balla's painting shown here. Balla tried to create the illusion of movement using brush strokes that imitate the process of animation. In this technique, a series of images is repeated quickly, one right after another. The eye and brain blend the images together to give the impression that the image is moving.

### MAKING THE CONNECTION

- ✓ In Giacomo Balla's *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*, what technique has the artist used to imitate actual movement?
- ✓ Find some examples of multiple-exposure photographs. How is Balla's painting similar to the photographs?
- ✓ Find other examples of art that simulate, or imitate, movement. Explain the technique the artist has used and why you think the technique was or was not successful.

### INTERNET ACTIVITY



Visit Glencoe's Fine Arts Web Site for students at:

<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/art/students>



# CHAPTER 1

# REVIEW

## BUILDING VOCABULARY

Number a sheet of paper from 1 to 15. After each number, write the term from the box that best matches each description below.

balance	proportion
color	rhythm
emphasis	shape
form	space
harmony	texture
line	unity
movement	variety
non-objective art	

1. What the eyes see when light is reflected off an object.
2. Path of a moving point through space.
3. The way things feel, or look as though they might feel, if touched.
4. An area clearly set off by one or more of the other elements of art.
5. An object with three dimensions.
6. Arranging elements so no one part of a work overpowers, or seems heavier than, any other part.
7. Combining one or more elements to create interest by adding slight changes.
8. Blending elements to create a more calm, restful appearance.
9. Making an element in a work stand out.
10. The repeating of an element to make a work seem active or to suggest vibration.
11. The relationship of one part to another and to the whole.
12. The arrangement of elements and principles with media to create a feeling of completeness or wholeness.

## MAKING ART CONNECTIONS

1. **Science.** Make a list of the elements of art. Choose an object from nature that shows examples of these elements. Beside each art element listed, write a one- or two-word description of the natural object you chose.

13. The principle of art used to create the look and feeling of action and to guide a viewer's eye throughout the work.
14. Art works in which no objects or subjects can be readily identified.
15. The distance between, around, above, below, and within things.

## REVIEWING ART FACTS

Number a sheet of paper from 16 to 20. Answer each question in a complete sentence.

16. What are the elements of art?
17. Which of the three properties of color refers to a color's name and place on a color wheel?
18. What are the two different kinds of shapes?
19. What is non-objective art?
20. What is symmetrical balance? What is asymmetrical balance?



## THINKING ABOUT ART

On a sheet of paper, answer each question in a sentence or two.

1. **Extend.** What kind of lines would you use in creating a picture of an action-packed horse race? What kind of lines would you use in creating a calm, peaceful picture of a lake and trees? Explain your answers.
2. **Compare and contrast.** What do the elements of shape and form have in common? In what ways are the two different?

2. **Language Arts.** Think about a career in art. Read a book with interviews of people working in the art field, *Careers for Artistic Types*, by Andrew Kaplan. Make a poster that shows some of the art careers you read about.