

# Elements Of Art



*Unlocking and Discovering the  
Key Building Blocks of Art*

- \*Line
- \*Value
- \*Shape
- \*Form
- \*Color
- \*Texture
- \*Space

Henri Matisse. *Interior with Egyptian Curtain* 1948. Oil Painting

# Line

When you, as a child, first picked up a crayon, a line might have been the first mark you made. You use lines to write numbers, symbols, and the letter of the alphabet. You use lines to draw pictures. Lines are everywhere. In drawing, **line** is an element of art that is the path of a moving point through space.



What type of lines do you see around you?



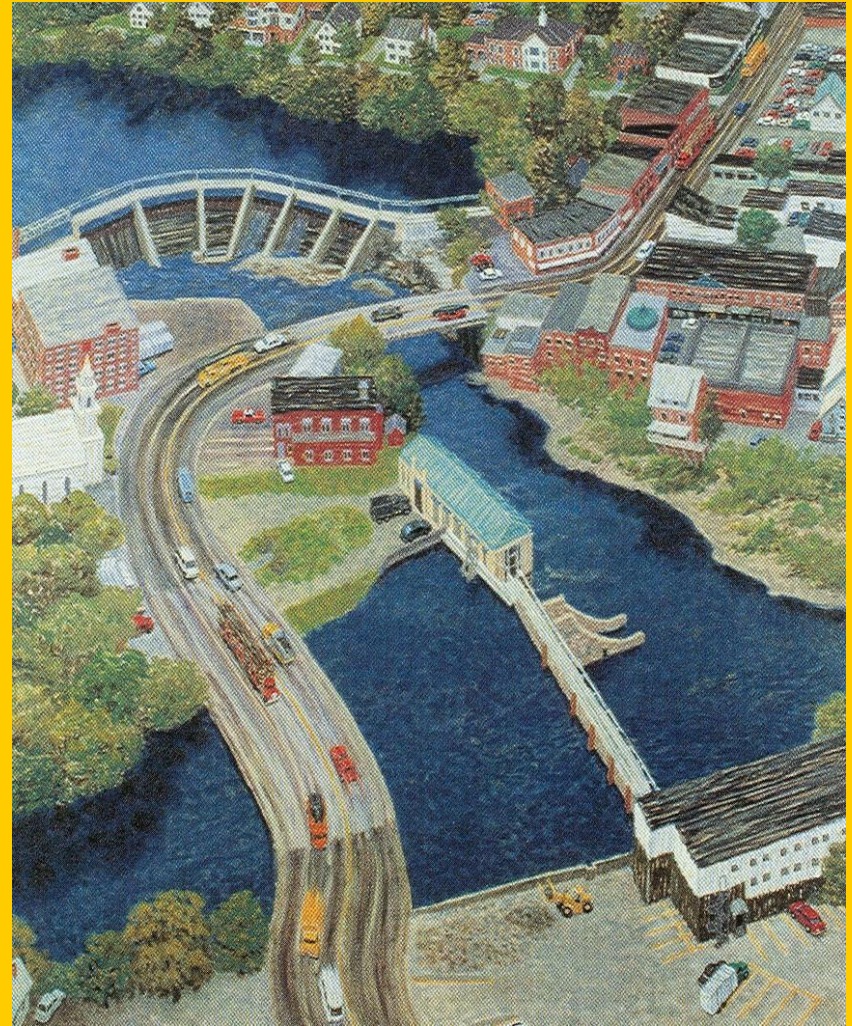


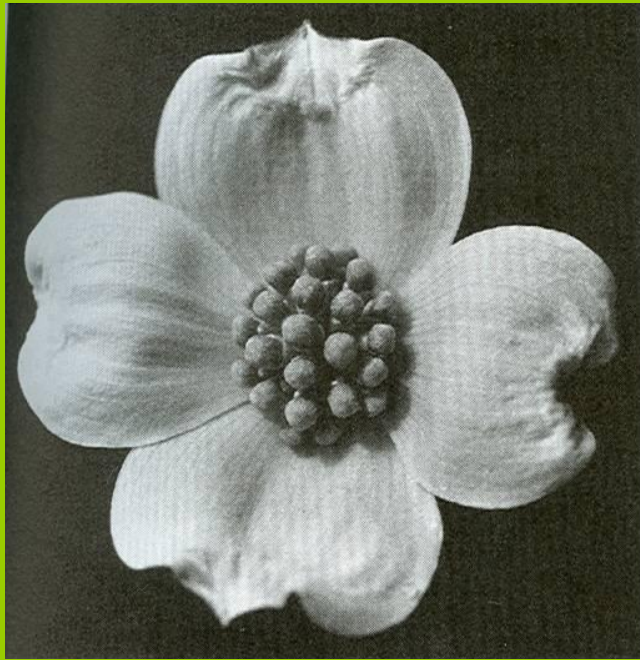
**Artists use line to lead your eyes around a work of art.** This is because the artist wants to lead you through their composition. Line creates movement, and leads your eye into, around, and out of visual images as in this painting by Yvonne Jacquette. Oil, 1988

Notice how the artist uses the line of the highway to pull your eyes into the artwork.

Line has width as well as length, but usually the width of the line is smaller than the length.

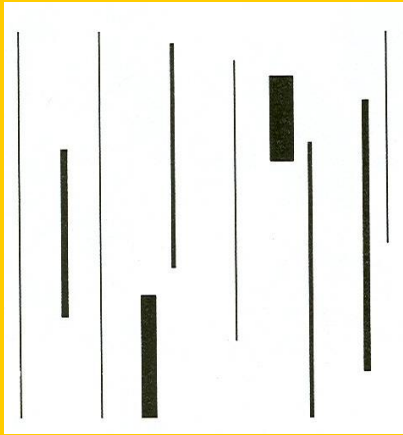
Artists create lines in many different ways. A line can be drawn on a paper with pencil or scratched in clay with a stick.





Some lines that we think we see in nature really do not exist. For instance, when you look at the edges of shapes, you think of lines. In the photo of the dogwood blossom, notice that there are no black lines around the flower, only black against white. However in a sketch of the same blossom, lines are used to define the shape of the flower.

# Kinds Of Line



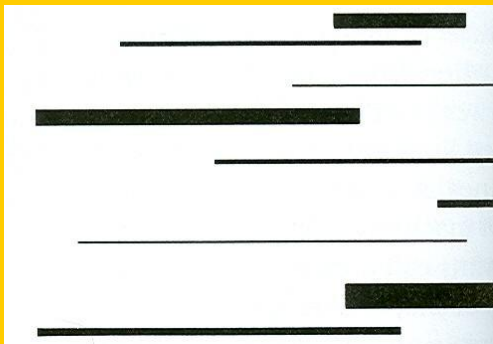
Vertical



Diagonal



Curved



Horizontal

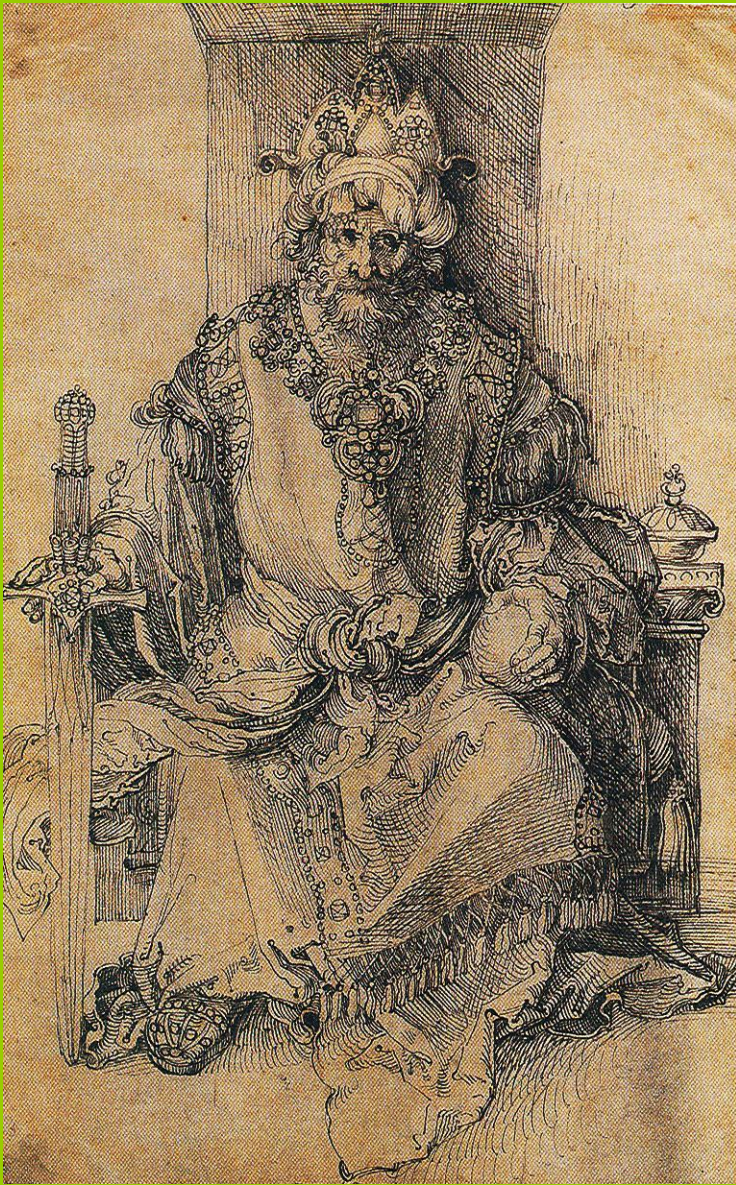


Zig Zag, or also known as geometric

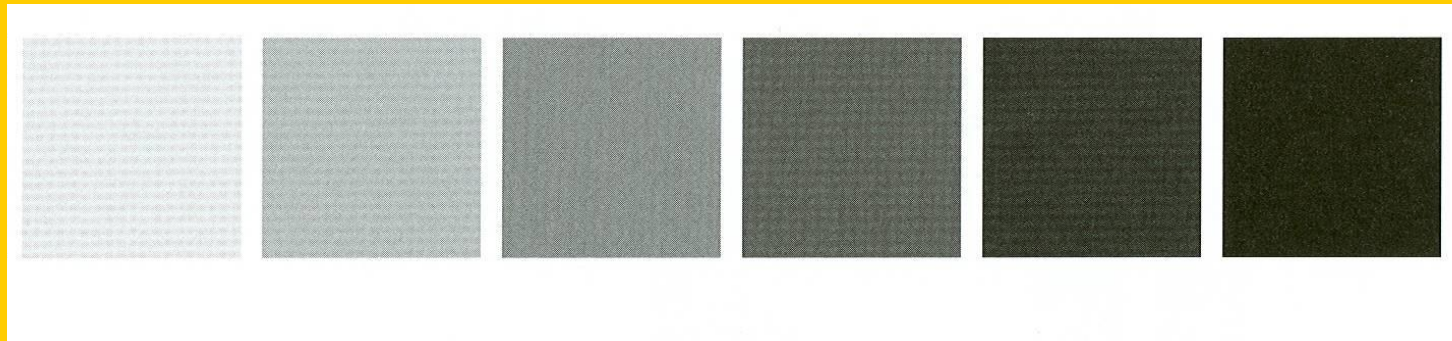


# Value

Value is the element of art that describes the darkness or lightness of an object. Value depends on how much light a surface reflects. A surface has a dark value if it reflects little light. It has a light value if it reflects a lot of light. Every time you make a mark with a pencil, you are creating a line with a certain value. The harder you press, the darker the value. A series of closely placed lines can create areas of dark value. (Also known as crosshatching)



Albrecht Durer. *An Original Ruler Seated On a Throne*. 1445. Pen and Ink



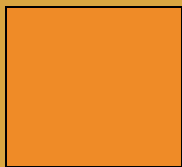
Value Bar. Various shades from white to black

# Shapes and Form

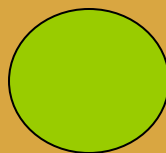
All objects are either shapes or forms, whether they are rocks, puddles, flowers, shirts, houses, whatever. The words shapes and forms are used interchangeably in everyday language, but in art, they mean very different things.

A shape is a two dimensional area that is defined in some way. In other words, it may have an outline or a boundary around it. If you draw the outline of a square on a sheet of paper, you have created a shape. All shapes can be classified as geometric or free form shapes.

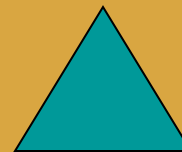
There are three basic geometric shapes that can be defined with precise mathematical formulas.



square



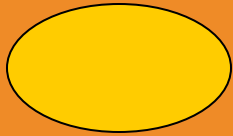
circle



triangle



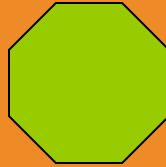
All other geometric shapes are variations or combinations of these basic shapes



oval



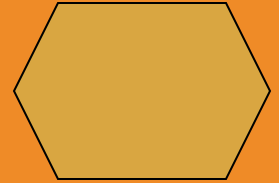
rectangle



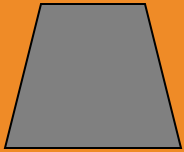
octagon



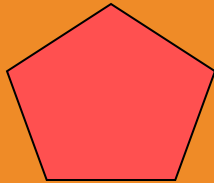
parallelogram



hexagon

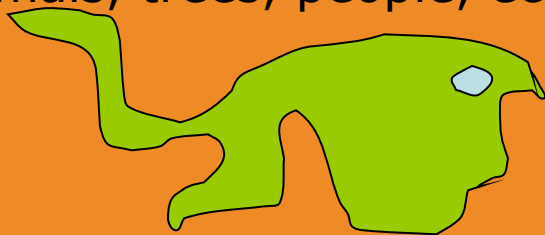
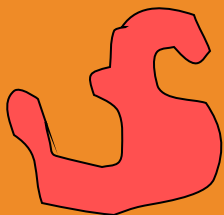


trapezoid



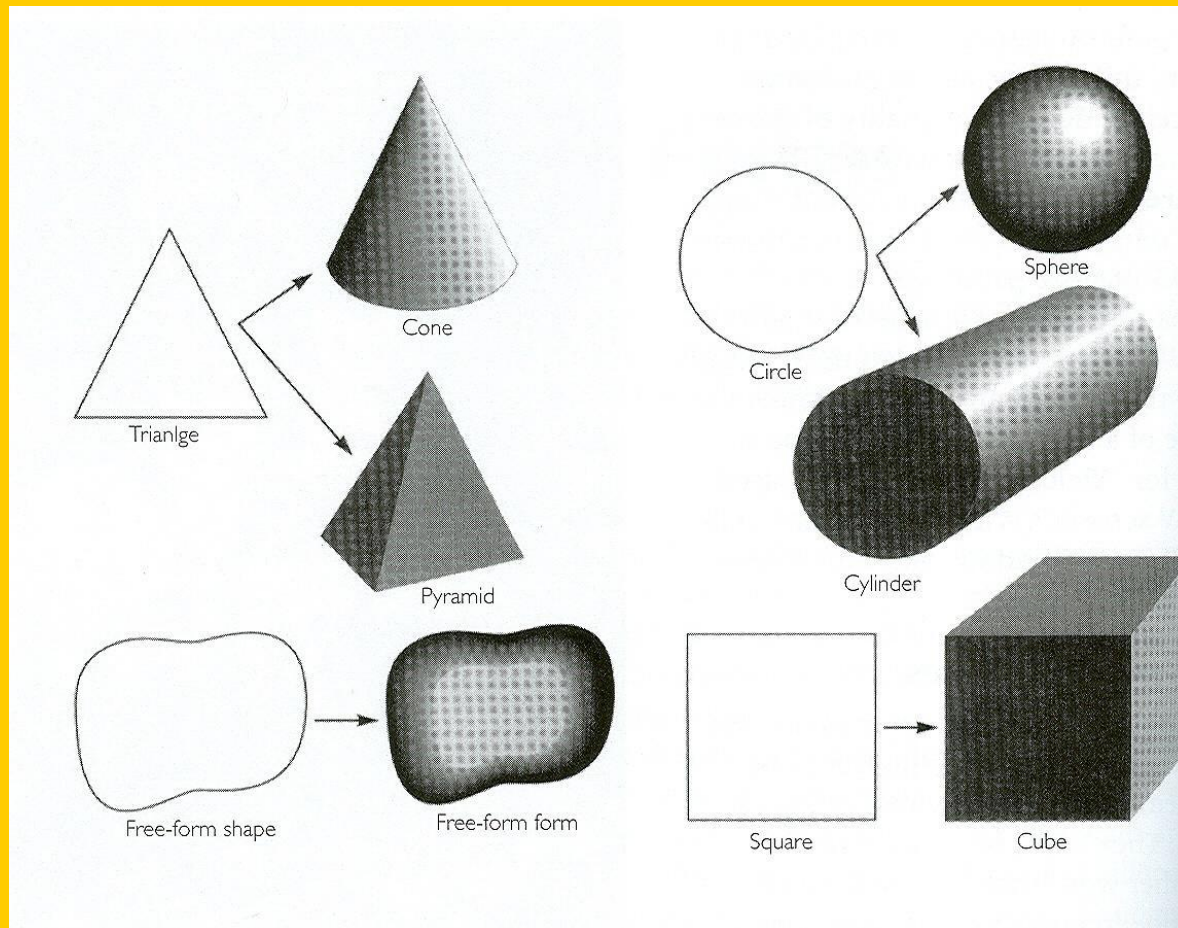
pentagon

Free-form shapes are irregular and uneven shapes. Their outlines may be curved, angular, or a combination of both. Another term that is often used by your instructor is organic. Organic is used when we talk about silhouettes of living things, such as animals, trees, people, ect.



# Forms

Forms are objects having three dimensions. Like shapes, they both have length and width, but forms also have depth. YOU are a three dimensional form, so is a tree or a table.







**COLOR**

Wassily Kandinsky *Tension in Red* 1926 oil

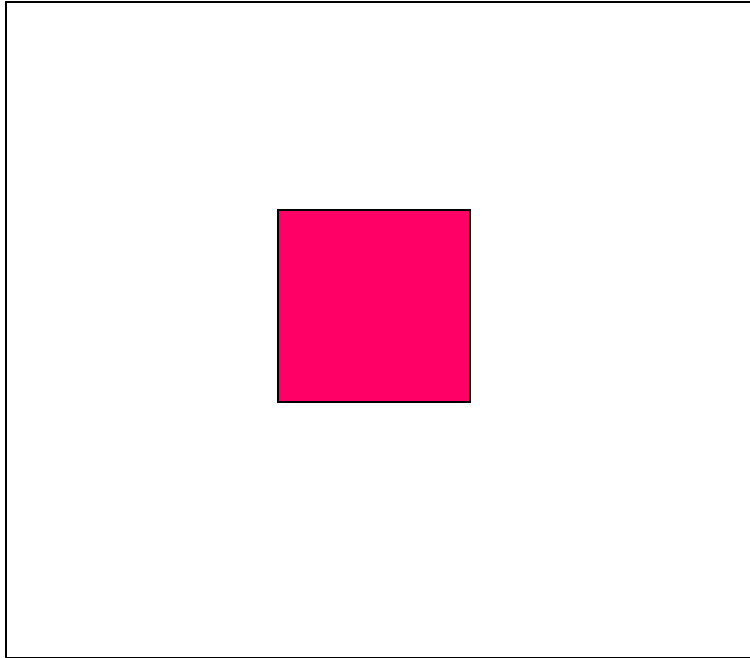
# Color

Color is the most expressive element of art. It shares a powerful connection with emotion. Color can be a strong clue to an artist's symbolism, or meaning behind an artwork. Color can represent many different feelings or ideas. Black can stand for mystery or evil, white can mean purity or innocence. Red stands for love, passion, hunger, or violence, green is meditative, calming, while blue is the symbol for power, or royalty.

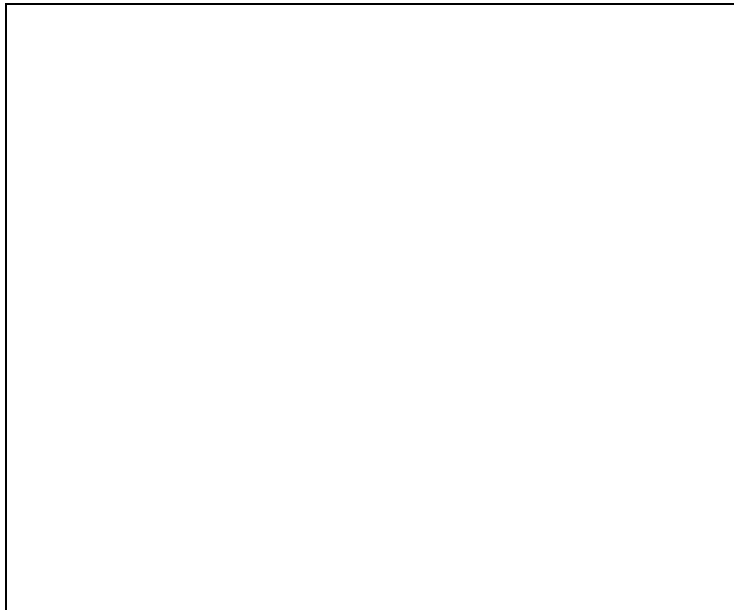
A prison system in North Carolina decided they would attempt to reduce violent behavior within the prison by painting the prison with the color pink. After consulting a color specialist, it was decided that since pink is a feminine color, and females have less incidents of violence, pink would be a good color for their facilities. After a few months the rate of violence steadily increased. Prison officials were left scratching their heads...what went wrong? Another color specialist was consulted, and it was quickly discovered that pink is a variation of red, which is the color of passion, and now the prison is a nice off white.

**Color** is the element of art that is derived from reflective light. You see color because light waves are reflected from objects to your eyes.





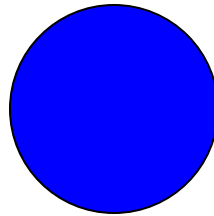
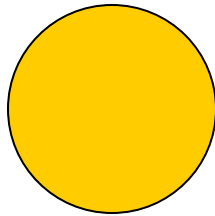
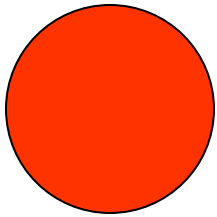
What color do you see when you stare at the red square, then shift your gaze from the red to the white area?



This is called an afterimage. It occurs because the receptors in your eye retain the visual stimulation even after it has ceased. Your brain creates the afterimage as a reaction to the color you stared at originally.

# Hue

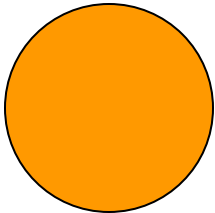
Hue is the name of a color in its true form. Red, blue, and yellow are called primary colors. You cannot make primary hues by mixing other hues together, however, by mixing black, white, or a combination of primary colors, you can make any other color in the spectrum.



**Primary colors**

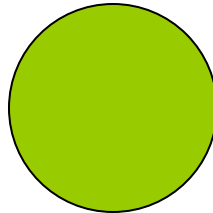
**Secondary colors** are made by mixing two primary colors.

orange



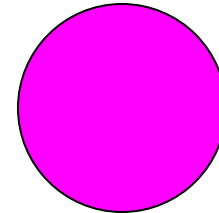
Red and yellow

Green



Yellow and Blue

Violet



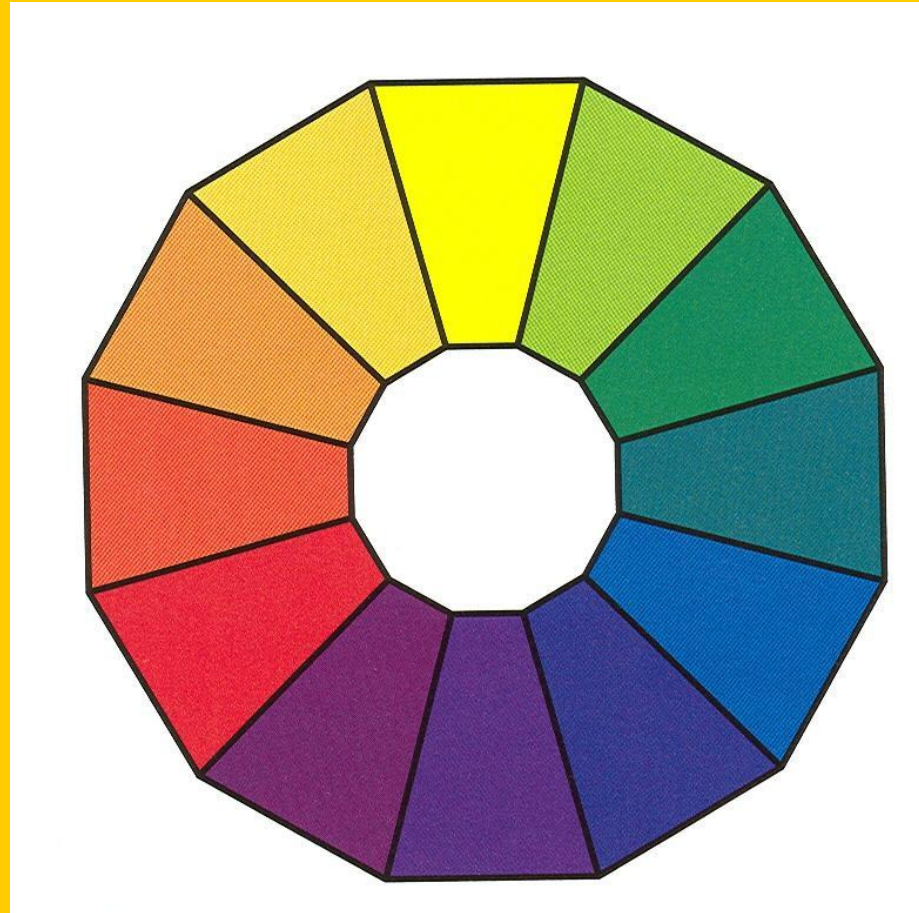
Red and blue



# Color Wheel

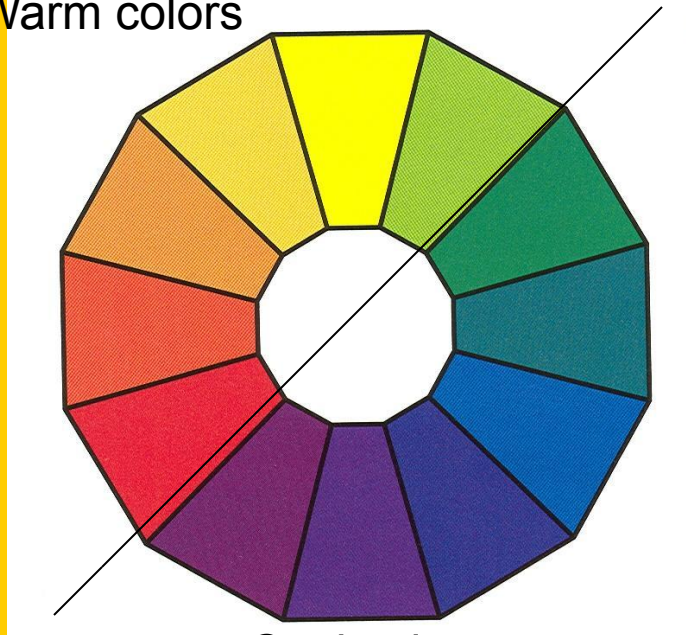
A color wheel is the spectrum bent into a circle. It is a useful tool for organizing colors.

There are yet another group of six colors called intermediate, or tertiary colors. These are made by mixing a primary color with a secondary colors



These colors include yellow green, yellow orange, red orange, blue green, blue violet, red violet. Always list the primary color first when referring to a tertiary color.

Warm colors



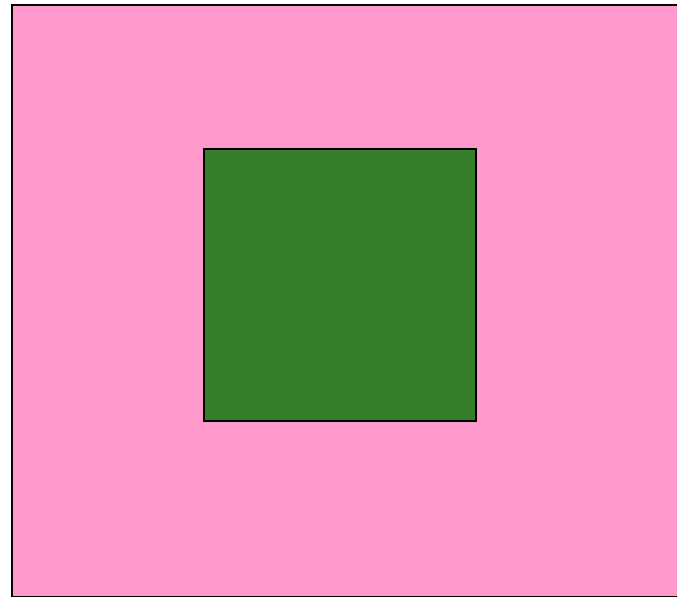
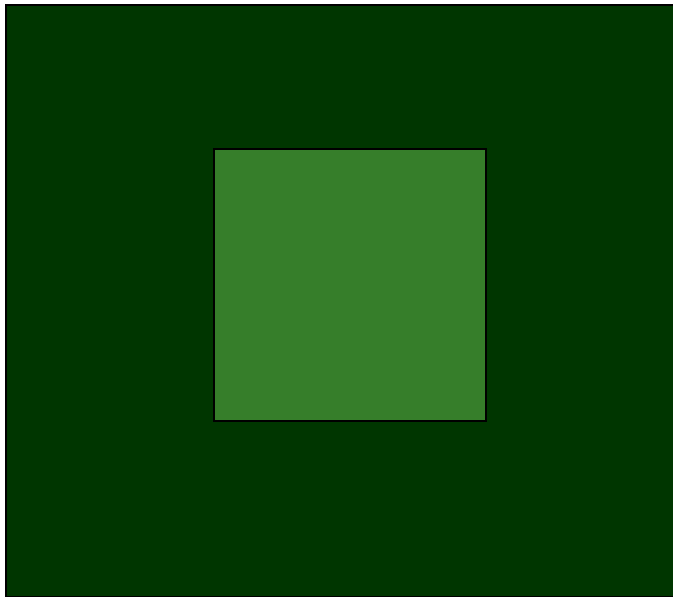
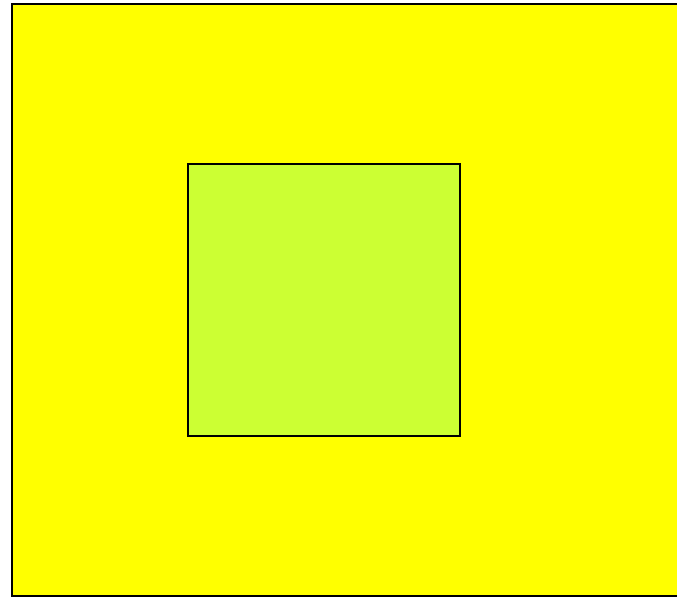
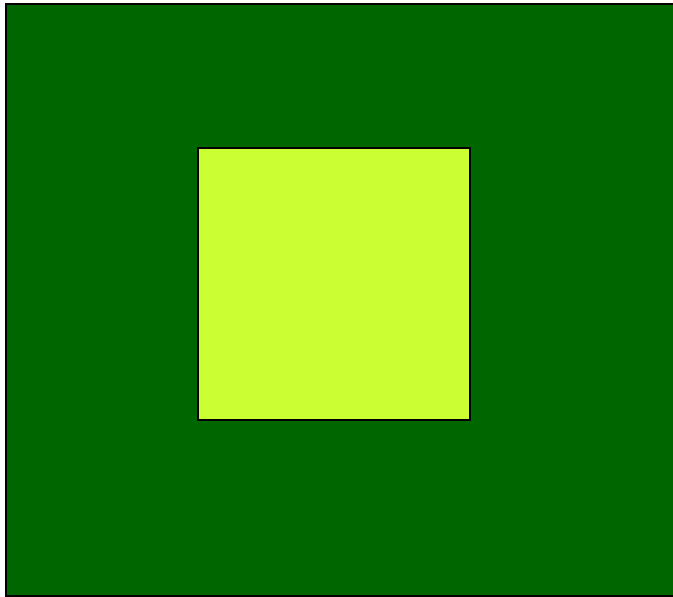
Cool colors

# Color Schemes

**Analogous Colors**...colors that are next to each other on the color wheel, such as green and yellow green.

**Complementary Colors**...colors that are directly across from each other such as yellow and violet.

**Monochromatic Colors**...a color scheme that uses only one hue and black and white mixed with that one color to make tints, or values of that color.



Your perception of color is influenced by the color that surrounds that color. Notice that all squares are actually equal in size.



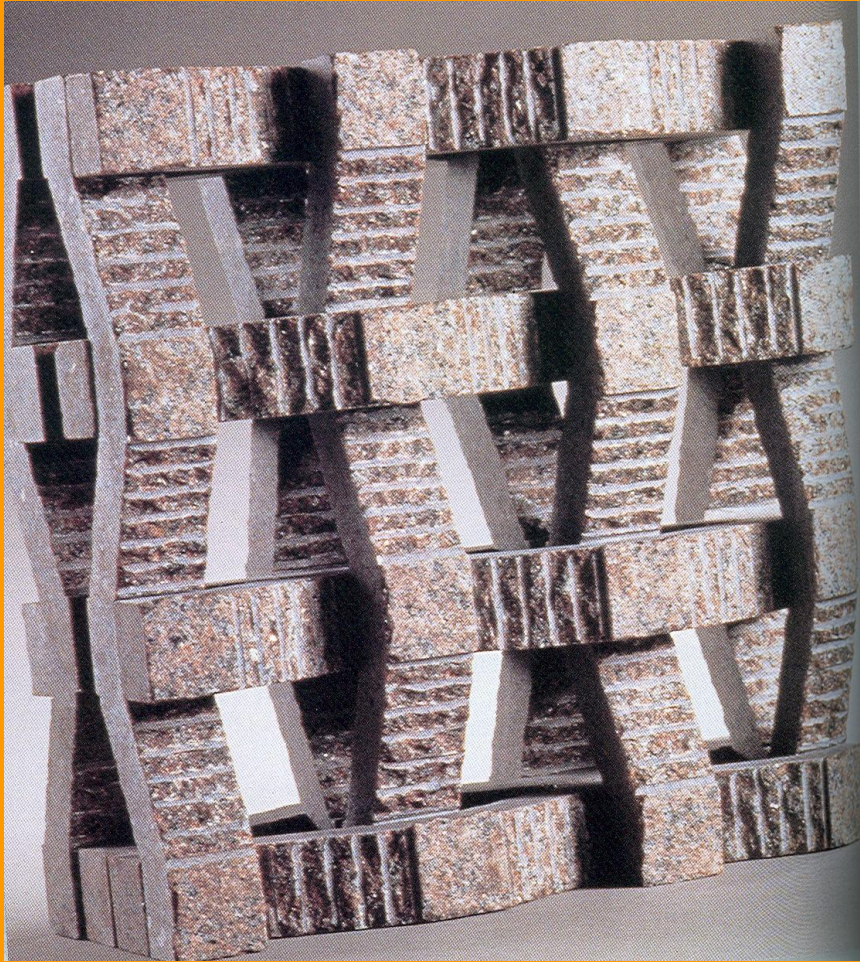


Franz Marc. *Yellow Cow*. 1911 oil.

**Arbitrary Color.** Artists sometimes use color to express emotions or feelings, ignoring the actual colors of objects. They choose colors arbitrarily to express meaning. Marc felt that yellow was a gentle, cheerful color which symbolized the female, while blue symbolized the intellectual, and spiritual male. Red symbolized the earth, with green being its compliment.



# Texture



Everything you touch has its own special feel, or texture. As an element of art, texture may be real, or implied or suggested, like in a photograph, or in a painting.

Texture is the element of art that refers to how things feel, or look as if they might feel, if touched. You perceive texture with two of your senses; touch and vision. Infants learn about their environment by touching objects and by putting them in their mouths. Toddlers are attracted to all objects that are within their reach. When you look at surfaces, you are able to guess their texture because you have learned how textures feel.





Janet Fish *Oranges* 1973 Pastel on Sandpaper

Janet Fish used pastels to create visual textures in this work. In some areas she has combined different kinds of visual textures, such as shiny-rough, and shiny smooth, and matte smooth.



# Space

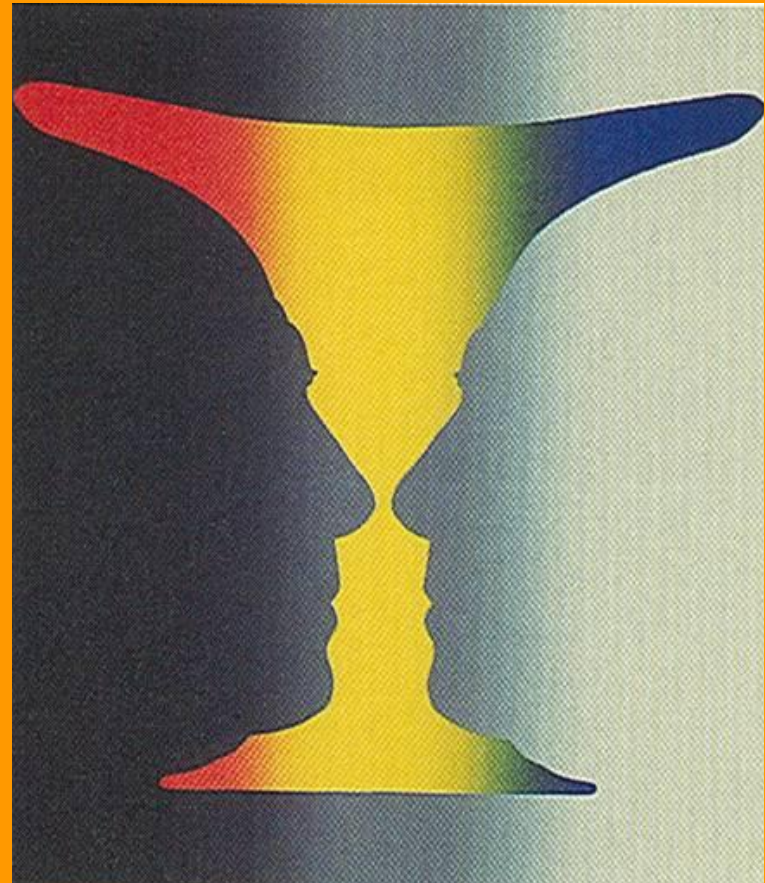
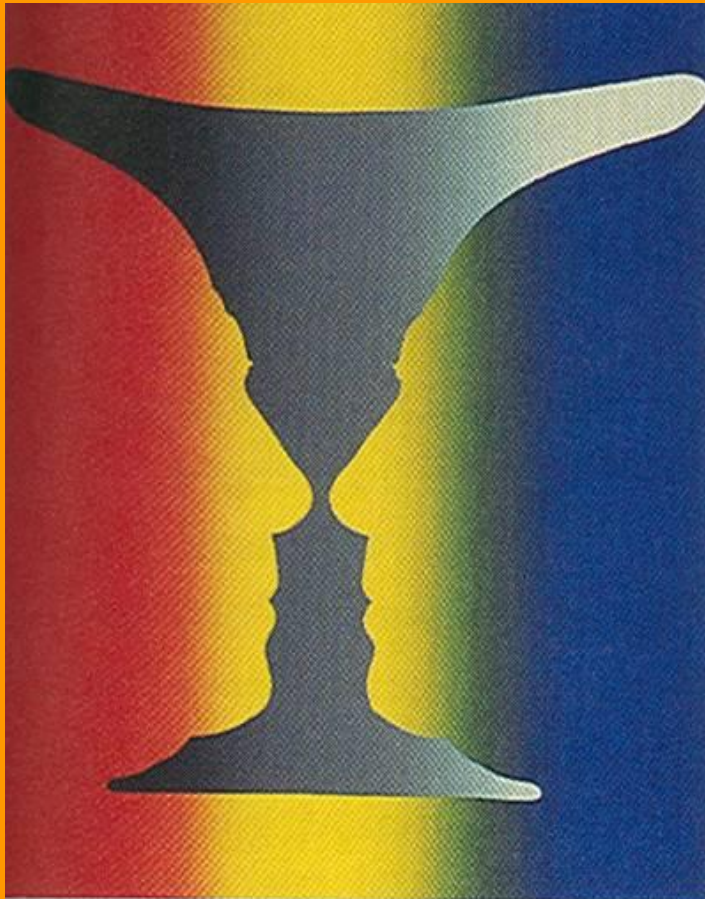
Space refers to both outer space and inner space. Rockets move through outer space to explore other planets. People move through the inner space of rooms and buildings. Space can be flat and two dimensional, such as the space of a window. Space can also be three dimensional, such as the space filled with water in a swimming pool.

Shapes and forms exist in space. Space is the element of art that refers to the emptiness or area between, around, above, below, or within objects. All objects take up space. You for example, are a living breathing form moving through space.

Shapes and forms are defined by the space around and within them. They depend on space for their existence. This is why it is important to understand the relationship of space to shapes and form.

# Positive and Negative Space

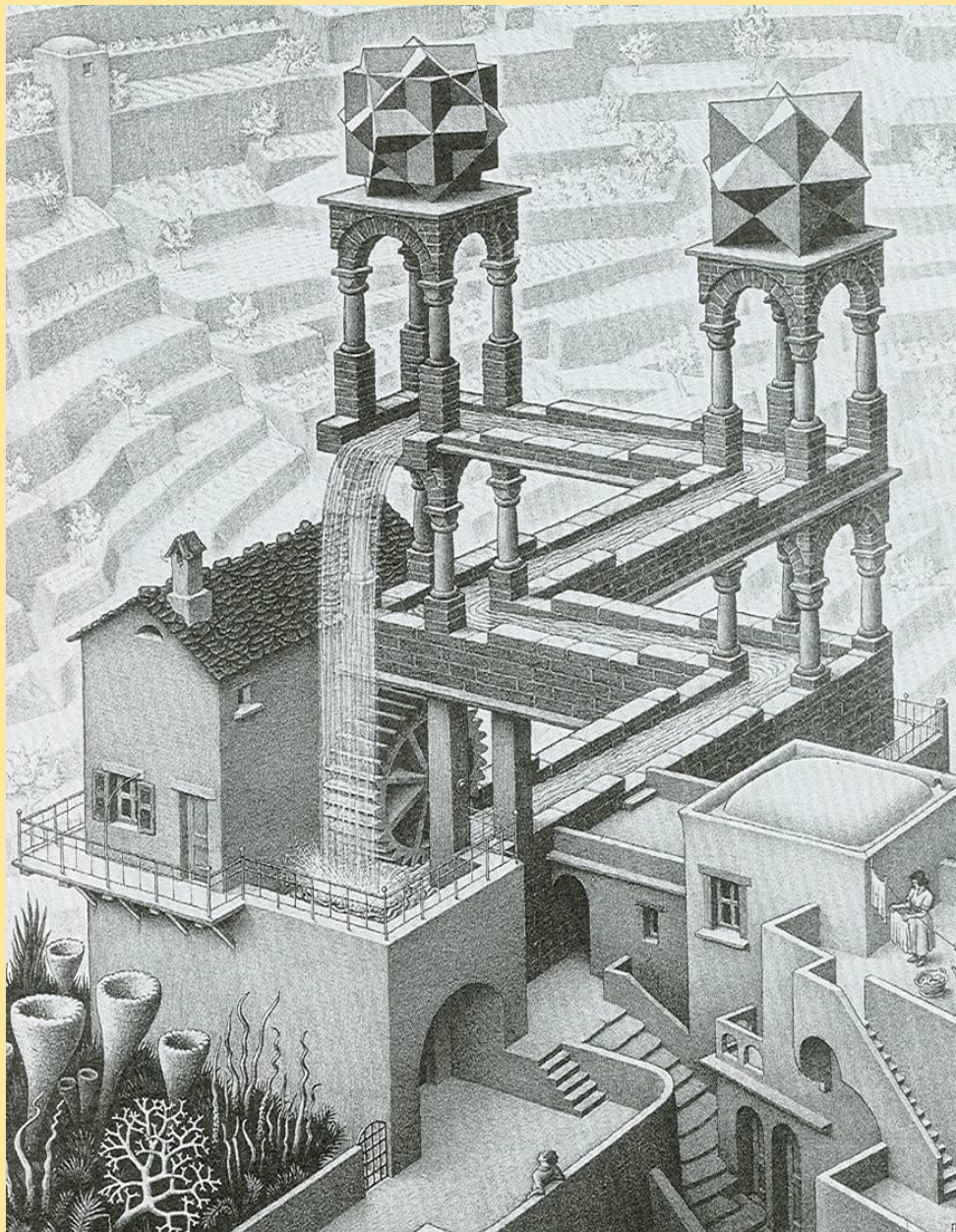
In both two and three dimensional art, the shapes or forms are called the positive space or the figure. The empty space between the forms are called negative space or ground. In the next slide, Jasper Johns uses a play on positive negative space. Are the faces or the vase the positive or negative?



Jasper Johns *Cups 4 Picasso* 1972 Lithograph.

Do you see a vase or do you see profiles of Pablo Picasso. Jasper Johns has deliberately organized this work as a visual puzzle to confuse the viewer. One minute the faces are very clear and seem to be the figure, while the space between the profiles is the ground. The next moment the vase becomes figure and the space around the vase becomes the ground.





## Experimenting with Space

At first this print looks normal. Water is falling to turn a water wheel. However, follow the water from the base of the fall. It runs uphill. Escher has crated a visual puzzle using the mathematics of perspective.

M.C. Escher *Waterfall* 1961 Lithograph