

Chapter 2

The Primary Elements

Instructor's Manual

Overview

In this chapter introduce the Primary Elements. Describe and define the visual elements of art. Use the terms the text lays out to describe art.

Sub Headers

- Space
- Line
- Shape
- The Spirit of Forms
- Light, Shadow, Value
- Texture
- Color
 - Describing color
 - Color wheel
 - The science of color
 - Naturalistic versus Arbitrary color
 - Emotional resonance

Terms:

two-dimensional space
three-dimensional space
contour lines
mass
volume
geometric shapes
organic shapes
abstract shapes
nonrepresentational shapes
chiaroscuro
hue
neutral colors
intensity
saturated
primary colors
secondary colors
color wheel

complementary colors
analogous colors
warm colors
cool colors
local colors
simultaneous contrast
arbitrary colors
naturalistic colors
design

Lecture #1

Discussion:

Explore the visual elements of space, line, shape, light, shadow, value and texture. Use real life objects during class discussion as examples.

Class Questions/Prompts:

1. **Lines of Emotion** Directional lines bring a psychological association or emotive response from the viewer. For example, horizontal lines can emit a sense of calmness, vertical lines a sense of strength, diagonal lines can portray action, and curves lines are expressive and playful. When these lines are combined, the responses become even more subjective. Lines can also be associated with certain sounds and music. Choose a few different images from the text to show. Discuss the major moods and sounds each work evokes.

2. **Shape Sort** According to the text, there are four basic types of shape: geometric, organic, abstract, and nonrepresentational. Geometric shapes are formed shapes that progress evenly, such as a circle, triangle, and square. Organic shapes are irregularly formed shapes consisting of amoeba like curves, and these shapes are also known as biomorphic or naturalistic shapes. Abstract shapes are simplified yet representational shapes. Nonrepresentational shapes are not representing anything in the natural world, and are also known as nonobjective. Look at four different images from the book, such as images in chapter 4 by Louise Bourgeois, Georges Seurat, Vasily Kandinsky, and Rembrandt van Rijn. Describe the shapes seen in the works by labeling them with one or more of those terms and explain your reasoning.

3. **Light and Value** James Turrell is an artist who uses light and value in his work to create ambiguous areas of space. Turrell's artworks, such as *Atlan* (figure 2-13), disorient viewers, leaving them to wonder if the space is flat or three-dimensional, real or non-existent. Explore other works by Turrell, such as *The Light Inside* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston or his work-in-progress *Roden Crater*. How can an artwork that uses light and not traditional materials be considered a work of art?

Exercise #1

1. Analysis

- a. Have students make observations on materials, methods, cultural and historical context.**

Figure 2-2 Vincent van Gogh, *Fishing Boats at Sea*, 1889

2. Compare and Contrast

Figure 2-10 Louise Bourgeois, *Blind Man's Bluff*, 1984

Figure 2-15 *Oath-Taking Figure*, Congo, 1880-1920

Lecture #2

Discussion:

Explore the visual elements of color. Examine the emotional resonance of color. Ask students their own feelings about colors. Discuss the color wheel

Class Questions/Prompts:

1. **Feeling of Color** Wassily Kandinsky was born in Russia in the middle of the 19th century. He formed the group Der Blaue Reiter with German artist Franz Marc in Munich in 1911, and joined the Bauhaus in 1922. Kandinsky is regarded as the father of non-representational art after freeing the subject matter from art to focus on the composition of the elements of art. In his book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, Kandinsky explores the idea of color and form, and how there are physical and physiological effects of color, such as how red is the color of flame, something that humans are drawn to. What does red signify? What items in the constructed

environment use red? What emotions are associated with red? Discuss the symbolic potential of various colors. Consult a resource on color symbolism.

Exercise #1

3. Analysis

- a. Have students make observations on materials, methods, cultural and historical context.**

Figure 2-26 Kees van Dongen, *Modjesko, Soprano Singer*, 1908

4. Compare and Contrast

Figure 2-23 Color diagram

Figure 2-24 Color diagram

Figure 2-25 Color diagram