



Lesson #19: The Basic Elements of Art

The Elements of Art are the key components of a work of art. It is the artist's decision in how they want to put them to use. Each element is very important to a piece of art, but some are stressed more than others. When looking at a work of art, which elements do you notice? What kind of mood does it create?



Supermarket, by Ben Shahn

Line: A very important Element of Art is "Line". Imagine a work of art with no use of lines. Whether it is a drawing, painting, or sculpture, lines are important. They help form shapes, and also can communicate an idea or feeling. Take a look at the drawing by Ben Shahn, titled The Supermarket. As you can see, line plays a very large role in his overall piece. The use of vertical, diagonal, and horizontal are all used to create the shopping carts.



The Peacock Skirt, by Aubrey Beardsley

Another great image displaying the use of line as a key element is in The Peacock Skirt, by Aubrey Beardsley. How are the lines different from that of the shopping carts? The mood is drastically changed by the soft, flowing lines in the clothing worn by the women.

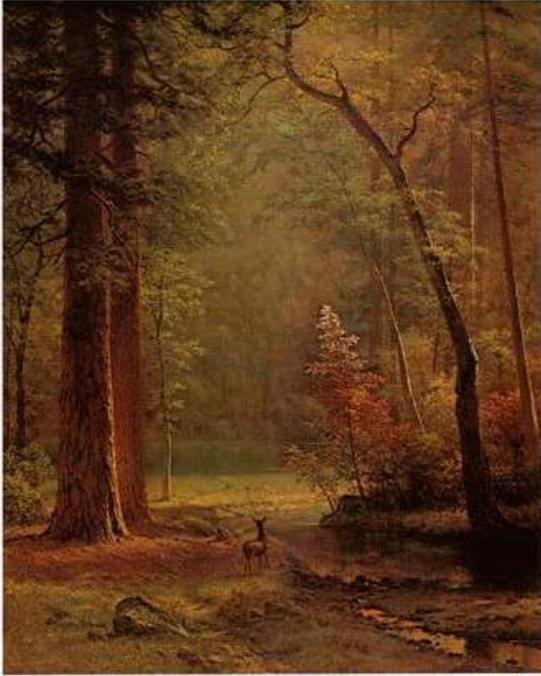


The Butterfly by Pablo Picasso



The Elements of Art -- Color

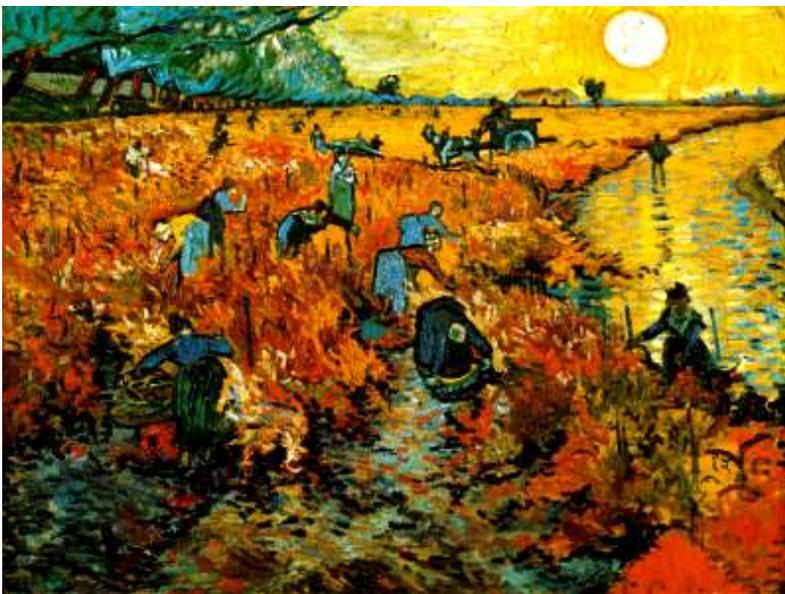
Color: Artists value "Color" as another important Element of Art. It is a wonderful tool to create mood in a piece of art. The effect of color can have a strong impact on your feelings. Do you remember the last rainy day, when it was dark and dreary outside? How did your mood change when sun came back out and lightened everything up? In art, dark, dreary colors often depict sadness, while cheerful yellows and orange are used for happiness.



Dogwood by Albert Bierstadt



Paris, a Rainy Day, 1877 by Gustave Caillebotte



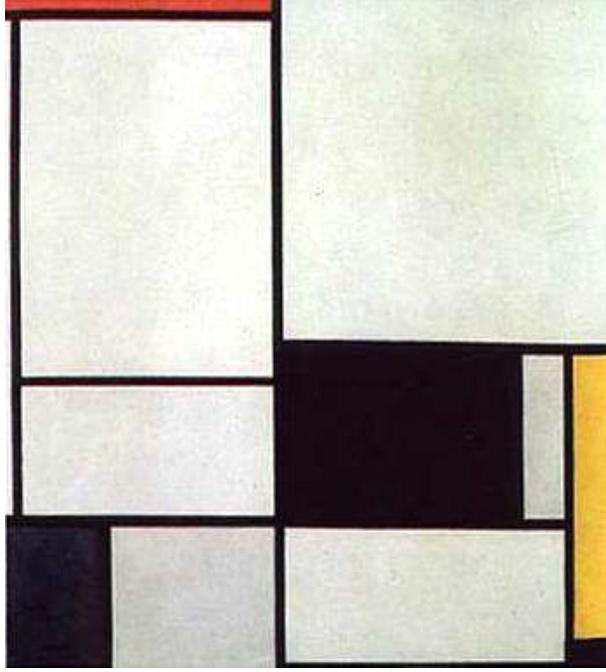
The Red Vineyard at Arles, c.1888
by Vincent Van Gogh



Sunflowers, c.1888
by Vincent Van Gogh



Shape: There are a number of different shapes an artist can use to create subject matter.



Piet Mondrian, Composition No. 2



Wassily Kandinsky, Merry Structure



Pablo Picasso, The Lesson

What shapes do you primarily see in the above paintings? Are they soft and round, or more angular and geometrical? What type of feeling does it create? Both Mondrian and Kandinsky were famous for their abstract paintings they created in the 20th century. Kandinsky's painting, Merry Structure, definitely lives up to its title. The playful shapes create a fun image, while Mondrian's painting is more serious, consisting of only squares and rectangles.

Picasso was another famous painter in the 20th century. Look at all the shapes in his painting, The Lesson. There are triangles, squares, circles, and many other shapes.



Texture: The last Element of Art is “Texture”, which refers to the way the paint feels on the surface of the canvas. Artists can create texture by using of a paint brush, palette knife, or any type of tool or medium they would like. Many of the other Elements of Art that we talked about can also be used. Take a look at these two examples:



Vincent Van Gogh, Starry Night



Paul Klee, Ad Parnassem

Both images are great examples of “Texture”. Van Gogh was known for his heavy impasto, created by applying lots of paint with a brush or even a palette knife. The texture in Starry Night makes the painting look like it has movement. French artist, Paul Klee, is famous for his abstract paintings. With color, simple shapes and textures, Klee is able to make his work interesting and enjoyable to look at. You can see the bumpy texture of the canvas show through the paint. The following picture is by Georges Seurat. In his painting called, Femmes au bord de l'eau he's used all dots and dabs of paint to look like women picnicking next to a lake.



The Elements of Art that we have discussed are all important in what makes a work of art interesting. Line, Color, Shape, and Texture can be used individually, or combined together to create more impact. It is the artist's decision in how they want to use them according to their style of art.



Activity #19: Texture Rubbing Activity



This is a fun and easy project to do at home or in school. You will need to get a piece of 12 x 18” white drawing paper and a box of crayons. Fold your paper to make 16 boxes.

Open up the paper and grab your crayons. You are now going to look around for objects and surfaces that have textures that you can feel with your fingertips. Select a dark crayon and place the paper on top of the texture. Use the **SIDE** of the crayon and make a rubbing of that texture. Press firmly and fill in the box. When you have finished, go and find another textured surface to rub. Complete a row of four rubbed textures. Underneath each of those four boxes you are going to try to recreate the texture rubbing using oil pastels. Artists have imitated textures for hundreds of years to give their works a sense of realism or an expressive element.

Once you have completed the second row, go outside and find four natural or environmental textures. Make a rubbing of each one that you find. Try to work neatly, though this can be difficult with very rough textures. Be careful you do not rip the paper. As before, in the next four boxes try to recreate those textures.

Words Describing Textures: Fill the space given below with words describing a texture. Come up with good, descriptive words that go beyond smooth, rough, bumpy, etc.





Lesson #19: Vocabulary

Impasto: Applying paint in a heavy manner.

Landscape: A picture representing natural scenery, such as trees, lakes, mountains, etc.

Element: A part of a whole or one of the parts into which a whole may be resolved.

Inspiration: to produce or stir up a feeling, thought, etc.; to inspire confidence in others.

Composition: Plan or placement of elements of art in an artwork.

Abstract: Of or pertaining to the formal aspect of art, emphasizing lines, colors, generalized or geometrical forms, etc., esp. with reference to their relationship to one another.

Expressive: Showing emotion, thought, or feeling.

Gallery: A building, an institution, or a room for the exhibition of artwork; a business that displays and sells works of art.

Subject Matter: The substance of a discussion, book, artwork, etc., as distinguished from its form or style.

Mood: A state or quality of feeling at a particular time.

Medium: Type of material used in an artwork, such as oil paint, acrylic, or pastels.

Vertical: A line, whether visual or imaginary, that moves up and down.

Diagonal: A line, whether visual or imaginary, that runs at angle from lower right to upper left, or upper right to lower left



Horizontal: A line, whether visual or imaginary, that runs from left to right or right to left.

Melancholy: Gloomy state of mind; depressed.

Sculpture: The art of carving, modeling, welding, or otherwise producing figurative or abstract works of art in three dimensions.



Western Painter ~ Thomas Moran

Thomas Moran became highly recognized for his Western landscapes during the 1800's. His paintings brought awareness to the natural beauty of the land, which many did not believe existed. In 1871, Moran partnered with photographer, William Henry Jackson, to study the land through the U.S. Geological Survey of the Territories. During their journey, Moran made sketches and notes of the land along the Yellowstone River, while Jackson photographed it. These became proof of what was really in the American wilderness.



Thomas Moran:
The Tower of Tower Falls



William Henry Jackson:
At Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone



Thomas Moran

Throughout northwestern Wyoming and southeastern Montana, Jackson and Moran discovered some of the most beautiful land in America. After their expedition, they brought their images to Washington, D.C. to show Congress. They were very impressed. Through Moran and Jackson's efforts, Yellowstone National Park was established on March 1, 1872.



Thomas Moran, *Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*



Thomas Moran, *The Yellowstone Range*



Thomas Moran: *Cliffdwellers*



Thomas Moran: *Hopi Village*



Thomas Moran



Grand Canyon of Arizona from Hermit Rim Road



Southwestern Painter ~ Georgia O'Keefe



Known for her beautiful interpretation of flowers and southwestern landscapes, Georgia O'Keefe definitely stands out as one of most influential artists of the 20th century. Born in 1887, in our neighboring city of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, O'Keefe longed to be an artist from an early age. In 1905 she attended the Art Institute of Chicago and a year later went to study at the Art Students League of New York. She worked briefly in Chicago before moving to Texas to teach.

During O'Keefe's stay in Texas, she made a handful of charcoal drawings for her friend, Anna Pollitzer in New York. Anna was very impressed with her work, so she showed them to [Alfred Stieglitz](#), a photographer and [gallery](#) owner. He was enthused with the vibrant energy of her drawings and asked to show them. So, without her knowledge, Georgia O'Keefe had her first [exhibition](#) in 1916 at Steiglitz's "291 Gallery." Within two years, Steiglitz had convinced O'Keefe to move to New York and devote all of her time to painting. He began exhibiting her work more frequently, which increased her popularity. Their close relationship led to marriage six years later.



No.13 Special, 1916



No. 5 Special, 1916



Abstraction, 1916



Living in New York City, O'Keeffe painted some of her most famous work. During the 1920s, her large, over-powering flowers filled the canvasses with dynamic energy, along with her dramatic cityscapes. In 1929 O'Keeffe took a vacation with her friend Beck Strand to Taos, New Mexico. The trip would forever change the course of her life. She fell in love with the open skies and colorful landscapes. She longed to escape the city life and continued her vacations there every summer. When Steiglitz died in 1946, O'Keeffe took up permanent residence in New Mexico. These early New Mexico landscapes and still-lifes demonstrate her incredible talent. The rich colors and organic shapes were similar to her powerful representations of flowers.



Oriental Poppy



White Flower, 1929



Jimson Weed, 1932



Black Hollyhock, Blue Larkspur



Throughout O'Keeffe's lifetime, she was presented with numerous art awards. In 1985, President Reagan granted her the National Medal of Arts. The following year, O'Keeffe passed away at St. Vincent's Hospital in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She was 98 years old. Georgia O'Keeffe's work remains an important part of art history and serves as an inspiration to many.



1944 - Black Hills I



1944 - Cottonwood III



1941 - Series near Abiquiu, New Mexico



Cliffs Beyond Abiquiu, Dry Waterfall



Ram's Head White Holly Hock Hills



Georgia O'Keefe Activity

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

Anticipated Time Period: Two- 45 minute class periods

Goal: Students will be knowledgeable of the style and composition in Georgia O'Keefe's Work.

Objectives:

1. Students will discuss the characteristics of Georgia O'Keefe's Work.
2. Students will observe a floral arrangement to plan a composition of a flower that extends all four sides of the page.
3. Students will use crayon to add color, shade and value to their flowers.

Vocabulary

Value: The lightness or darkness of a color.

Composition: The way shapes and forms are arranged on the picture plane.

Nature: The living things that we find outside in our environment. Things that are not manmade, such as the earth, sky, animals, and plants.

Organic shapes: Free-flowing shapes found in nature.

Abstract: Artwork that has been broken down so as not to be recognizable. Nonrepresentational art.

Materials:

1. Examples of Georgia O'Keefe's work
2. Teacher's personal artwork inspired by O'Keefe
3. 9x12" paper
4. Pencils
5. Crayons
6. Fresh flowers, one vase per table

Teacher Preparation:

Prepare room with floral arrangements and supplies on every table, examples displayed, and vocabulary written on board.

Motivation:

1. Show the class some artwork that Georgia she has done. Ask students where they think she got her inspiration. Explain that Georgia loved to paint things from nature. Show some of her paintings of the city. Explain that she used to live in the city, but did not like it. Explain that she was married to a famous photographer named Alfred Stieglitz. Show her painting of the desert. Explain how she moved west and loved to paint what she saw around her.
2. Show examples of O'Keefe's flowers. Describe how the petals are huge and that she "zoomed in" close up to show details.
3. Have students identify elements of art in O'Keefe's work using art vocabulary.

Process and Procedures:

1. Using art vocabulary, demonstrate how to draw a composition using flowers as subject matter.
2. Demonstrate how to zoom in using your hands to crop the view.
3. Students will be seated in groups of four and will "zoom in" find an interesting composition.
4. They will first draw their composition with pencil and then apply crayon when enough contour lines are done. They will use value to depict folds and depth.
5. Monitor students and hold up good examples. Encourage filling the composition and making sure to look and see what is in between the petals. "Can you see another flower or a stem?"



Clean Up:

Students will make sure their names are on their paper and one person will be called on to collect work. Other students will be chosen to help clean up materials.

Closure:

1. Students will review the vocabulary and techniques they have learned.
2. Students will tell what they know about Georgia O'Keefe's life and what inspired her.

Assessment:

Evaluate students based on objectives met.

Teacher Reflection:

Make sure to use sturdy containers as a vase for flowers.



Georgia O'Keefe: Two Calla Lilies on Pin



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Artist Matching Game

Draw a line from the picture to the correct artist. If you need help, look back in your reading.



**Georgia
O'Keefe**



**Aubrey
Beardsley**



**Vincent
VanGogh**



**Thomas
Moran**