

Elements of Art

AP 2-D Art and Design ■ Topic 1

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Elements of Art

What we will cover

- 1 Line
- 2 Shape & form
- 3 Value
- 4 Color
- 5 Texture
- 6 Space

1 Line



Elements of Art

Line

Line – a moving point the eye follows

The **elements of art** 艺术元素 are the visual building blocks. The first is **line** 线条.

- it has **length and direction**
- it has **quality**: thick/thin, smooth/rough, continuous/broken
- **contour** 轮廓 traces edges;
- **gesture** 动态速写 captures movement
- **implied lines** 隐含线 are suggested, not drawn



Expressive line quality carries feeling

Elements of Art

Line

Direction carries feeling



Artists use line to build shape, shade **value** (hatching), imply **texture**, and **lead the eye**.

2 Shape & form

Shape and form

A **shape** 形状 is a flat enclosed area; a **form** 形体 has the illusion of three dimensions.

Form is created on a flat surface with value, overlapping and perspective.

Learning to see the negative shape makes drawing far more accurate – draw the gap, not the thing.

Geometric 几何 – regular, mechanical
vs **organic** 有机 – free, natural

Positive shape 正形 is the object
negative shape 负形 is the space around it

3 Value

Value – the most powerful tool for form

Value 明度 is the lightness or darkness of a tone. A **value scale** 明度阶 runs from white through greys to black.

Strong value contrast creates drama and a focal point.



Chiaroscuro models form with light and dark

Light on a form – the five zones

highlight 高光

midtones 中间

core shadow 明暗交

reflected light 反光

cast shadow 投影

Chiaroscuro 明暗对照法 is the bold use of light and dark to model form. **Squinting** removes colour and helps you judge value.

4 Color

The colour wheel

Colour 色彩 is light reflected from a surface. Its three properties:

- **hue** 色相 – its name
- **value** 明度 – light or dark
- **saturation** 饱和度 – dull to vivid

Primary 三原色 (red, yellow, blue) mix to **secondary** 间色, then tertiary.

Colour schemes and temperature

Complementary 互补色
– opposite on the wheel;
they intensify each other

Analogous 邻近色 – neigh-
bouring; they harmonise

Warm 暖色 (red, or-
ange, yellow) *advance*
cool 冷色 (blue, green, violet) *recede*

A **tint** adds white;
a **shade** adds black



Warm colour choices set emotional temperature

5 Texture & space

Texture – how a surface feels, or seems to

Actual texture 实际肌理 can be
physically touched; **implied**
texture 视觉肌理 is an *illusion* of surface.
Techniques: stippling, hatching,
impasto 厚涂, dry-brush.

Contrasting *smooth* and *rough* areas
adds interest – and can *direct the*
eye.

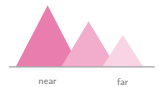


Fabric texture:
implied surface through marks and value

Space and the illusion of depth

Space 空间 is the area within, around and
between the parts of a work.

- depth from **overlapping** 重叠, size,
placement, detail
- **linear perspective** 线性透视: parallel
lines converge at a **vanishing**
point 灭点
- **atmospheric perspective** 空气透视:
distant things go *paler, bluer, less*
detailed



near is big & dark, far is small & pale The
format and *cropping* of the picture plane
shape how the space is read.

Worked example – writing about an element

**“Describe how *line* creates meaning in this
portrait.”**

A strong answer names the *element*, its *quality*,
and its *effect*: “The artist uses *thick, jagged di-
agonal lines* in the background, and their *restless,
active direction* makes the calm horizontal lines of
the sitter’s shoulders feel even more still.”

Naming the element *and*
linking it to a *feeling* is
what portfolio written
evidence and analysis
questions both reward.

6 Recap

Topic 1 – key takeaways

1 Line

quality and direction carry feeling:
calm, strong, active

2 Value

models form; five zones under one
light; squint to judge it

3 Colour

hue, value, saturation;
complementary vs analogous

4 Space

overlap, size, linear and
atmospheric perspective

Check yourself

- 1 What is the difference between shape and form?
- 2 Which colours sit opposite on the wheel and intensify each other?
- 3 Name two cues that make distant things read as far away.
- 4 Actual or implied texture: thick impasto paint?

Answers 1. shape is flat (2-D), form reads as solid (3-D) 2. complementary
3. paler/bluer, smaller, less detail, overlapped 4. actual