

The Basic Meaning of Art Explained

Lecture 2:

Art is form and content

"Art is form and content" means: All art consists of these two things.

Form means: (1) the elements of art, (2) the principles of design and (3) the actual, physical materials that the artist has used.

"Content" is idea-based and means (1) what the artist meant to portray, (2) what the artist actually did portray and (3) how we react, as individuals, to both the intended and actual messages.

Additionally, "content" includes ways in which a work was influenced - by religion, or politics, or society in general. All of these factors, together, make up the "content" side of art.

Elements of Art

The Elements of Art are the “tools” that artists use to make art. They are the basic “foundation” of a good composition. How would you describe your favorite work of art? You describe it by its color, shape, texture, mass, and patterns, There are seven elements of art that we use to precisely describe it. They are the parts of an artwork which an artist plans. Whenever you draw, paint, or sculpt, you are creating and designing an art project. In your art, you are working with elements that you may or may not be aware of. These elements have been broken down into 6 major categories and are called the elements of art. They are: 1) line, 2) value, 3) shape and form, 4) Space, 5) texture, and 6) color.

Line

A line is a path that a point takes through space. Lines are everywhere and you can make many different kinds of shapes by joining them together. They may be **obvious** (Straight, horizontal, Vertical, diagonal) or **implied** (Not really there but guide the eye or organize the image).

Lines are also used to create texture and to define objects. Line can suggest: emotions feelings ideas.

Shape

When lines meet, a shape is formed. Lines create or imply **shapes**. All shapes are flat, but some are geometric and others are irregular or freeform shapes. Shapes are **2 Dimensional** (2-D) which means there are 2 ways they can be measured. You can measure its **HEIGHT** and its **WIDTH**.

Geometric shapes are squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, and ovals.

Form

Forms are three-dimensional. A form has height, width, and thickness. Unlike shapes, forms are not flat, plus they take up space. Forms include cubes, spheres, cones, pyramids, and cylinders.

Space

Space is an empty surface or place in and around a work of art. This element can be two or three-dimensional and it can be a negative and/or positive space. The way an artist chooses to use space (or not use it) adds a lot to the artwork.

- Positive space is the space created by an image or a sculpture.
- Negative space is the space around and in between the parts of an image or sculpture. **Perspective** is also a way of showing space in a work of art. Perspective is when the artist uses a vanishing point on the horizon and then creates a sense of deep space by showing objects getting progressively smaller as they get closer to the vanishing point.

Texture

Texture is the way the surface of an object actually feels.

In the artistic world, we refer to two types of texture: tactile and implied.

Artists can create an illusion of texture in their artwork with brushstrokes, shading, and other techniques.

Color

Color is very important in our world. Colors allow us to know when to stop and when to go at a traffic light... Colors even influence our moods and emotions. Color is a very important element of art. Artists use color to show feelings, emotions, and moods in their artwork. The colors of the visible light spectrum are: • Red• Orange• Yellow• Green• Blue• Indigo• Violet. Gradations of color can produce the illusion of three-dimensional form.

-Primary colors:

The primary colors are red, blue and yellow. Primary colors cannot be made from other colors. Artists create secondary and intermediate colors by mixing primary pigments.

-Secondary colors:

The secondary colors are green, orange and violet (purple). A secondary color is made by mixing two primary colors. Each secondary color is made from the two primary colors on either side of it in the color wheel.

-Local color:

Local color means realistic color—color as it appears in nature (green grass, blue sky, brown horses, etc.)

- Cool colors:

Cool colors are made mostly of green, blue and violet (purple). This family of colors is called cool because they remind you of cool things like a cool forest or a cold lake. (There is a painting by Claude Monet uses cool colors to suggest a quiet pond.) Cool colors can even make you feel cooler because they can slightly decrease your circulation and body temperature.

- Warm colors:

Warm colors are made mostly of red, orange and yellow. This family of colors is called warm because they remind you of warm things like the sun or fire. Warm colors can even make you feel warmer because they can slightly increase your circulation and body temperature!

Artists use warm, cool and neutral colors to create moods, show contrast and create depth in artworks.

- Color wheel:

Color wheels show how visible colors are related. Primary, secondary, and intermediate colors are organized on a circular chart. Color wheels help artists remember how to mix and think about pigments.

-Complementary colors:

Complementary colors are located directly across from each other on the color wheel. Complementary pairs contrast because they share no common colors. For example, red and green are complements, because green is made of blue and yellow. Complementary colors can appear very exciting and seem to vibrate when placed side by side.

Value

Value in art refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. An artist can get different values of color by mixing its shades (Mixing with black) and tints (Mixing with white).

With the element of value an artist can make a two-dimensional piece of work look three dimensional. Have you ever looked at a painting and felt like an object in it was real? That is the value of the painting working to make you think the object is three-dimensional.

End of lecture 2