

# Pre-Tour Activities for Tour Groups



## Please Don't Touch!

Objective: Students will pass around a piece of paper and then examine the way oils and dirt in their hands can damage the paper, and therefore a painting.

Age Group: All Ages

Lesson Length: 10 minutes

Rationale: Many visitors wish to touch art, but unfortunately the oils, salt, and dirt from our hands can damage the art. Usually, visitors will not realize the serious damage that handling art can have. This activity will offer visual evidence of the consequences of touching art.

Materials:

- 2 white pieces of paper

Directions:

1. Introduce students to why they shouldn't touch art. Explain that our hands have oils, salt, and dirt that can be damaging to art over time.
2. Take one of the pieces of paper and pass it around, asking each student to rub the paper between their fingers for a minute before passing it along.
3. Compare the untouched white paper to the one that has been passed around, asking students to note the differences.
4. Discuss the importance not touching art so we can preserve it for future generations.
5. Also, please review all gallery rules. No touching the art. No running. No food in the galleries (including gum). Speak quietly. No pens in the gallery. Stay with your group. No backpacks in the gallery.

## How to Read a Painting

Objective: Students will use a sample image to understand the process art historians and critics use to evaluate a work of art.

Age Group: Elementary School (K-5), Middle School (6-8), High School (9-12)

Lesson Length: 20 minutes

Rationale: Many visitors to museums are often intimidated by art they do not understand. To encourage students to share their opinions and to learn to analyze a painting, students can practice the steps for understanding a work of art.

### Materials:

- 1 non-objective or abstract art example
- 1 traditional art example
- 2 copies of the attached worksheet per student

### Directions:

1. Provide students with the attached worksheet. Tell them to follow the steps in order, and to not skip ahead. Complete the worksheet for each of the examples.
2. For each step, ask students to share their opinions with the class, or with their group.

See included PowerPoint for the Mark Messersmith “Nightwatcher” example. Please also consider browsing the Gadsden Arts Center Permanent Collection at <http://gadsdenarts.org/collection.aspx> for additional images.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## How to Read a Painting

Follow along step by step, and don't skip ahead!

1. Give your **initial reaction** to the artwork. Write adjectives.
2. Describe the painting. **Identify** (list) what you see.
3. Now let's look at **the label**. What information do we get from the label?
4. Use questions to get **more information** from the painting. For example:
  - Why did the artist paint this?
  - What is the painting's purpose?
  - What is the feeling you have when you see it?
  - What do you think the artist meant to tell you with the artwork?
  - What does the artwork mean to you?
  - What of the artist's environment/background might have influenced the artwork?
  - Does the piece have strong craftsmanship?
  - Is it original?
5. Finally, **evaluate** the piece. Do you like it? Did your opinion change from your initial reaction?

## **KWL Chart (KNOW-WANT TO KNOW-LEARN)**

Objective: Students will prepare for their visit to the museum by filling in a KWL chart regarding their knowledge of art museums and art. What do they KNOW, WANT to know, and following the trip, what did they LEARN.

Age Group: Elementary School (K-5), Middle School (6-8), High School (9-12)

Lesson Length: 20-30 minutes

Rationale: To encourage students to think critically about museums, this activity will act as a guide for students' learning as they think about their tour before and after the visit.

### **Materials:**

- 1 worksheet per student
- pencils

### **Directions:**

1. Provide students with the attached worksheet (KWL Chart). Encourage them to think about what they already know about museums, art museums, galleries, and art. Then ask students to write this down in the "K" section.
2. Next, briefly tell students about the current exhibition that they will be seeing at the Gadsden Arts Center. Ask students to consider what they would like to learn, and to write questions on the "W" section of their KWL chart.
3. Have the students bring their KWL charts with them to the Gadsden Arts Center, and remind them to ask their questions if they are not answered during the tour.
4. Following the tour, in the classroom, ask students to fill in the "L" section of the chart, reflecting on what they've learned from their tour. Did they find answers to all of their questions? What was their favorite part? Encourage class discussion.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## KWL Chart

... what I Know, what I Want to know, and what I Learned ...

**K**

What do you already know about art museums and art?

**W**

What do you want to know about art museums and art?

**L**

What did you learn during your visit to the art museum?

## Learning the Language of Art

Objective: Students will learn art vocabulary that they can use to discuss and analyze art.

Age Group: Elementary School (K-5), Middle School (6-8), High School (9-12)

Lesson Length: 30-60 minutes

Rationale: Part of analyzing art is understanding what to look for, including the elements of art and the principles of design. Students will develop knowledge of art vocabulary to aid in discussing and critiquing art.

Materials:

- 1 copy of the attached worksheets for each student (The ABCs of Art, created by M.C. Gillis)

Directions:

1. Discuss the elements of art with the class using the worksheets, or using a work of art as an example.

- Line - the path of a point moving through space
- Shape & Form - shape implies spatial form and is usually perceived as two-dimensional; form has depth, length, and width and is usually perceived as three-dimensional
- Color - all color comes from three primaries (red, yellow, and blue) and black & white; usually described in terms such as warm colors, cool colors, or complementary colors, and hue, value, and intensity
- Texture - refers to the tactile qualities of a surface or the visual representation of such surface qualities
- Space - the area in which art is organized
- Value - refers to the lightness and darkness

2. Discuss the principles of design with the class using the worksheets, or using a work of art as an example.

- Balance - impression of equilibrium in a composition; often referred to as symmetrical, asymmetrical, or radial
- Emphasis - refers to the created center of interest, the place in an artwork where your eye first lands

### **Learning the Language of Art Cont.**

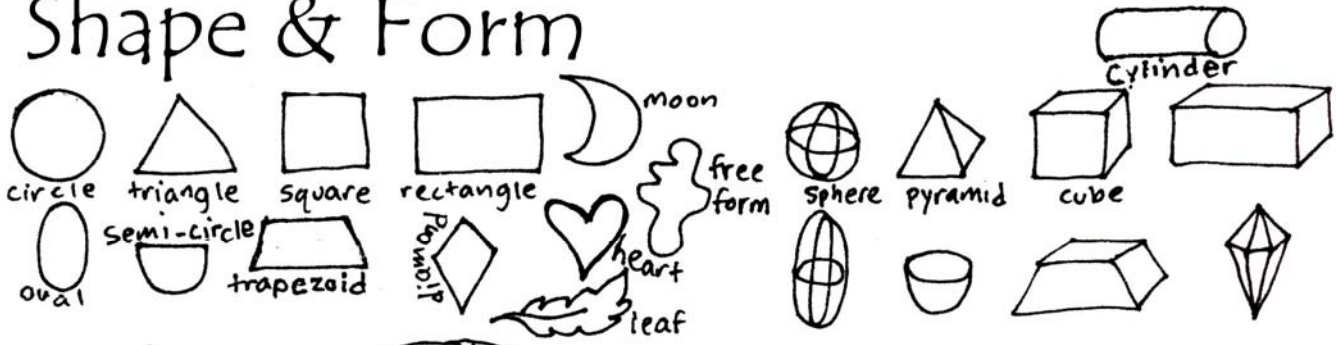
- Movement/Rhythm - refers to the suggestion of motion through the use of various elements
- Pattern - repetition of a design element, exact or varied, which establish a visual
- Unity - achieved when the components of a work of art are perceived as harmonious, giving the work a sense of completion
- Proportion/scale - proportion is the size relationship of parts to a whole and to one another; scale refers to relating size to a constant, such as a human body



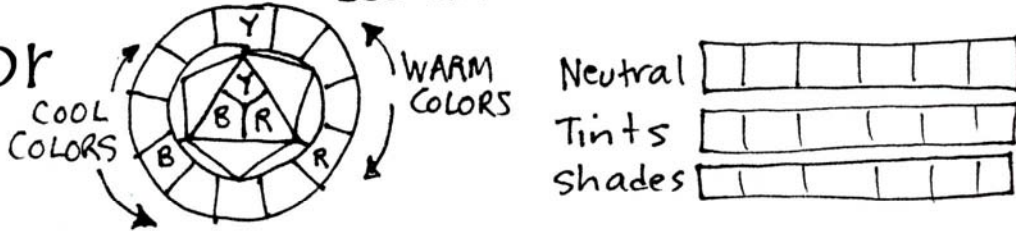
# Elements of Art



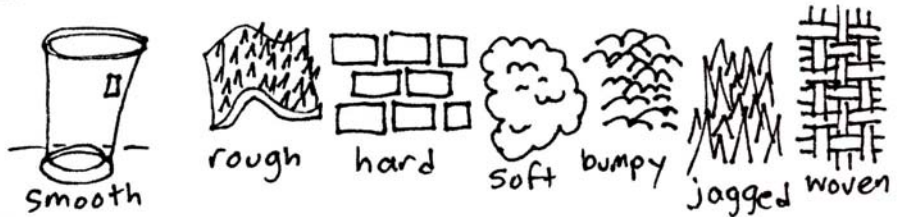
## Shape & Form



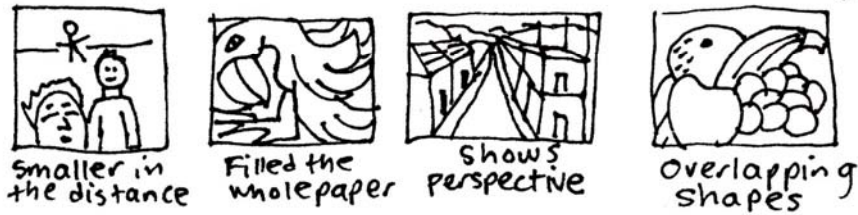
## Color



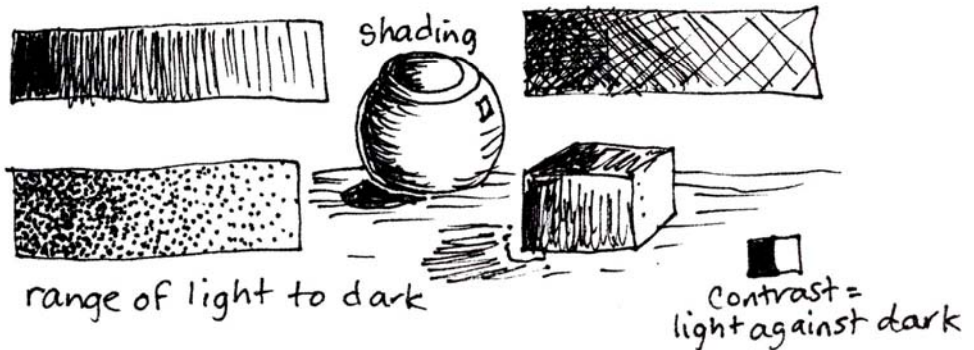
## Texture



## Space



## Value



The ABCs of Art: The Elements & Principles of Design - Compiled, organized, and added to by M.C.Gillis

Contact artist, [mo@expandingheart.com](mailto:mo@expandingheart.com), to give feedback.

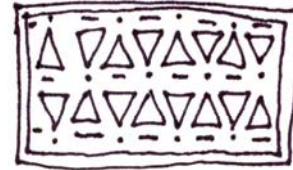
More downloads at [www.expandingheart.com](http://www.expandingheart.com) & [www.awesomeartists.com](http://www.awesomeartists.com).



# Principles of Art

## Pattern

Repetition of the elements of art



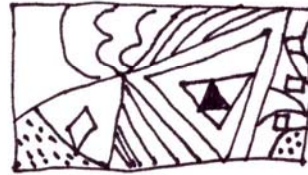
## Emphasis

Focus - Main idea  
What "grabs" your attention



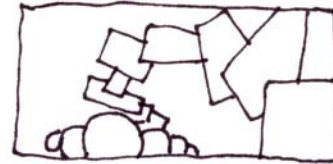
## Variety

An assortment of lines, shapes, colors and other elements of art in the art work



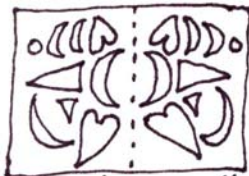
## Unity

How the elements work together, fit together, so the art work looks complete



## Balance

Symmetrical



same design on both sides of a midline.

Asymmetrical



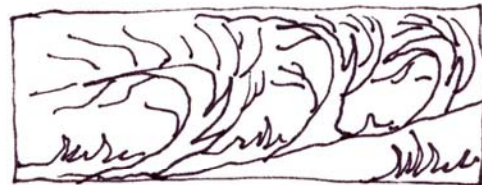
A balance that is not even

Radial



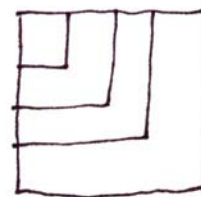
## Rhythm & Movement

A regular repetition of the elements of art to create a sense of rhythm and/or movement



## Proportion

How parts fit together to make a whole - Size relations  
(Includes scale, monumental, miniature, exaggeration...)



The ABCs of Art: The Elements & Principles of Design - Compiled, organized, and added to by ♥ M.C.Gillis

Contact artist, [mo@expandingheart.com](mailto:mo@expandingheart.com), to give feedback.

More downloads at [www.expandingheart.com](http://www.expandingheart.com) & [www.awesomeartists.com](http://www.awesomeartists.com).

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