



**INTRODUCTION TO
ART APPRECIATION**

Why Study the World of Art?

- ✧ Looking at, making, and writing about art develops critical thinking skills, or a “questioning frame of mind.”
- ✧ Our culture is increasingly dominated by images: learn to read and understand them fully.
- ✧ Art helps us understand more about the culture and values that produced it. Art contains information.
- ✧ Creativity is essential in any field of study.

The Elements of Art

FORM

The overall structure of the work. (A round, yellow-orange colored shape)

SUBJECT MATTER

What is literally depicted. (An orange: the fruit)

CONTENT

What it means.



The Elements of Art

REPRESENTATIONAL

Attempts to depict objects as they are in actual, visual reality. (realistic)

ABSTRACT

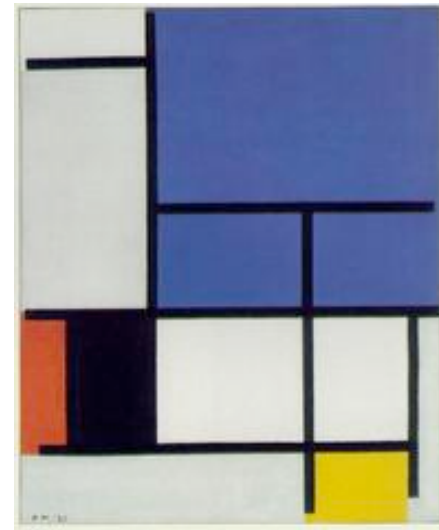
Reduces subject matter to its essential qualities. The more abstract a work is, the less it resembles real things in the real world.

NON-REPRESENTATIONAL

Subject matter is not recognizable, or not intended to represent a visual reality.



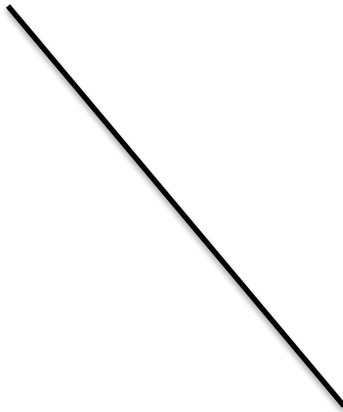
Photograph of the Eiffel tower (from Google images)



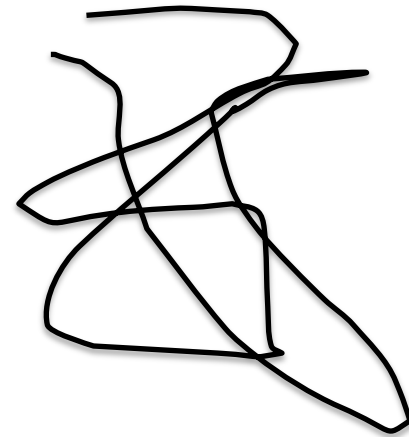
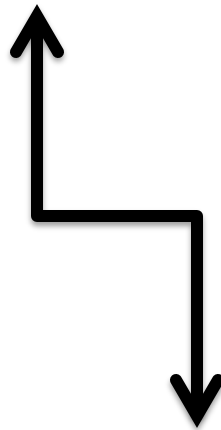
Formal Elements

LINE

the most fundamental formal element. A mark left by a moving point, actual or implied, and varying in direction, thickness, and density.



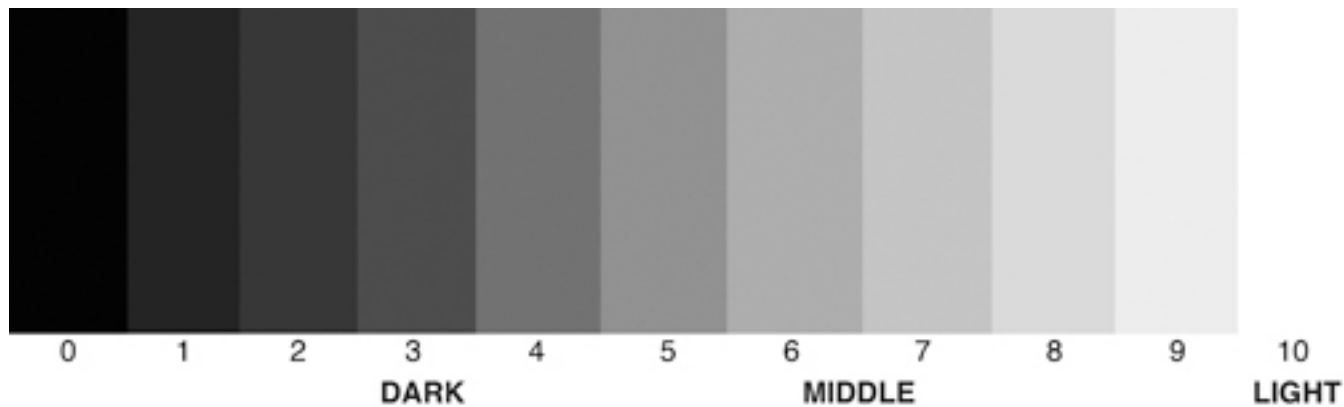
Precise, controlled



loose, gestural

Formal Elements

LIGHT/DARK: Value is the relative degree of lightness or darkness in the range from white to black.



Formal Elements

COLOR

HUE: is the color itself.

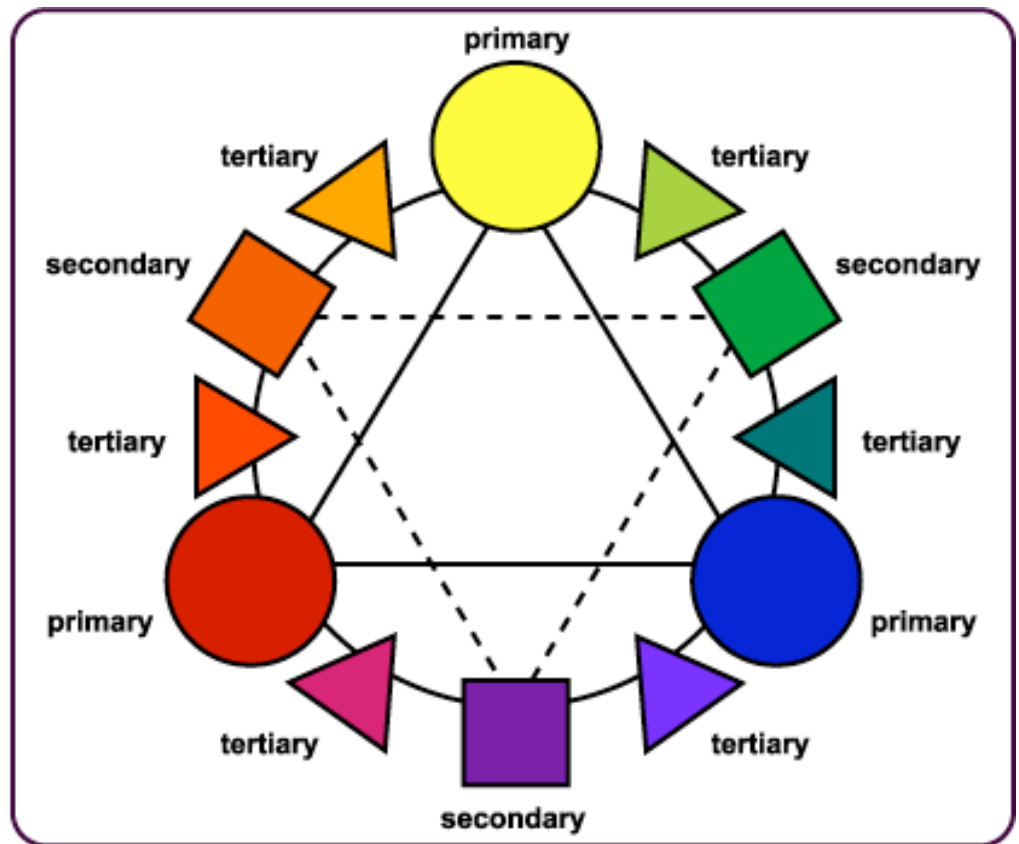
Warm & Cool hues

Color also has VALUE (by adding white or black)

PRIMARY Colors: Red, Yellow, Blue

SECONDARY Colors: Green, Orange, Purple

TERTIARY Colors: Red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, red-violet



Formal Elements

TEXTURE

The tactile quality of a surface.

Actual vs. illusion: A smooth piece of paper can *look* rough



7 Steps to Thinking Critically about Art

✧ Identify the artist's decisions and choices. *What choices do artists make? Medium, style, color,....what else?*

✧ Ask Questions. Be Curious. *What does the title tell me about the work? What do I know about the artist? Is the work informed by its location?...What other questions might you ask?*

✧ Describe the object.

✧ Question your assumptions. *Why do you like or dislike the work? What is the artist's point of view? Is it political, biased, or prejudiced?*

✧ Avoid an emotional response. *Try to understand any emotional response. What specific elements of the work make you feel that way?*

✧ Don't oversimplify or misrepresent the art object. *Recognize complexity.*

✧ Tolerate Uncertainty. *Ask good questions and uncover possibilities. There is often no "right" or "wrong" answer.*

- ✧ What are the formal elements?
- ✧ What is the subject matter?
- ✧ What is the content?
- ✧ Why do you think the artist made these choices?
- ✧ What questions do you still have about the work?



Jessica Stockholder (b. 1959), **#291**, 1997
Acrylic and oil paints, couch cushions, plastic container lid, shoe laces, hardware, chain, plastic scoop and toilet plunger
65 x 57 x 36 inches
Courtesy of Jennifer McSweeney

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Oliver Herring, **Gloria** (2004)
digital C-print photographs, museum board, foam core
and polystyrene, 72" x 40" x 40" with vitrine

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Ellen Gallagher, *DeLuxe*, 2005
 A portfolio of 60 etchings with photogravure, spit-bite, collage, cutting, scratching, silkscreen, offset lithography and hand-building