

Artistic Visual Terminology

Balance:the degree to which elements of a picture are in proportion. If the elements are balanced, it is ***symmetrical*** and there is *harmony*. If they are weighted to one side, it is ***asymmetrical*** and there is *tension*.

Colour:creates contrast and *emphasis* (i.e. a bright colour on a drab background), can have symbolic meaning (green = nature), and can suggest a mood (black = depressing, scary).

Composition: The placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients in a work of art, as distinct from the subject of a work. It can be also be thought of as the organization of the elements of art.

Contrast: The arrangement of opposite elements (dark vs. light colours, smooth vs. rough textures, large vs. small shapes, etc.)

Dominant Image: The component of the image that is most prominent/noticeable.

Focal Point: where the eye is drawn in a visual – contrast or an unusual image can create a focal point, as can the *rule of thirds*.

Frame: The presentation of visual elements, especially the subject of the image in relation to other objects. Framing enables the viewer to focus on the subject. Secondary objects surrounding the subject.

Juxtaposition: Placing two objects in close proximity whose connotations have contrasting effects

Lighting: Allows objects to fall under light, shade, or shadow, thereby drawing or detracting the viewer's attention

Line: lines frame pictures, draw the eye to the focal points and create contrasts. **Curved lines** suggests softness; **angular lines** suggest hardness; **jagged lines** suggest energy.

Perspective:from Latin *perspicere*, to see through) in the graphic arts, such as drawing, is an approximate representation, on a flat surface (such as paper), of an image as it is seen by the eye. Here, things are noted as in the **foreground** (appearing to the viewer as being closer) or **background** (appearing farther away).

Proportion: The relationship of sizes in elements of a work; how tall an object is as compared to how wide it is.

Scale: The size of an object compared to the size of another object within the same image.

Symbol:often symbols are used to convey complex ideas quickly. A skull may mean death, a beaver may stand for Canada, etc.

Words: should be analyzed for **font** (i.e. is it in a childish form of writing, or is it more sophisticated?) and also for **connotation** (extra meanings a word comes to have.)