**Visual Arts Vocabulary Glossary**

**Abstract:** Artwork in which the subject matter is stated in a brief, simplified manner; little or no attempt is made to represent images realistically.

**Acrylic paint:** Quick drying, plastic polymer pigment used with water.

**Analogous:** Closely related colors; a color scheme that combines several hues next to each other on the color wheel.

**Apprenticeship:** A person who works for a professional in order to learn the trade. Can be paid or unpaid.

**Art critique:** An organized system for looking at the visual arts in a critical, educated manner.

**Asymmetry:** A lack of equality between parts or aspects of something.

**Background:** The part of the picture plane that seems to be farthest from the viewer.

**Balance:** The way in which the elements in visual arts are arranged to create a feeling of equilibrium in an artwork. The three types are symmetry, asymmetry, and radial.

**Ceramics:** objects and works of art created with a clay material.

**Collage**: An artistic composition made of various materials (e.g., paper, cloth, or wood) glued on a surface.

**Color:** The visual sensation dependent on the reflection or absorption of light from a given surface. The three characteristics are hue, intensity, and value.

**Colored pencil:** an art medium constructed of a narrow, colored core encased in a wooden cylindrical case. The hardness of the core is harder and is not easy to erase or smudge

**Color relationships**: How colors relate to eachother on the color wheel. Basic color schemes include monochromatic, analogous, and complementary.

**Color wheel:** A circular diagram of the spectrum used to show the relationships between the colors

**Complementary colors**: Colors opposite one another on the color wheel. Red/green, blue/orange, yellow/violet are complementary colors.

**Composition:** The overall placement and organization of elements in a work of art.

**Content:** The representations, messages, ideas, and/or feelings expressed in a work of art.

**Contour line drawings:** Drawing that defines and object’s edge (“outline”)

**Contrast:** Differences between two or more elements (e.g., value, color, texture) in a composition. Also refers the degree of difference between the lightest and darkest areas of an image.

**Cool colors:** Colors suggesting coolness: blues, greens, violets and their variants.

**Craft:** The creation of art involving the skill of making things by hand. When someone has good craft, it means they have mastered the skill of what they have created.

**Creativity**: The choices an artist makes in his/her work to make it new or unique

**Critique:** To review or examine a piece of artwork critically by using prior knowledge and experience in visual arts.

**Cross-contour line**: Lines that travel across an object’s form

**Cross-hatching:** method of line drawing that describes value by creating variation of density of crossed lines.

**Cubism:** An art movement that was inspired by the fast paced era of the industrial revolution. “Broken” compositions included simplified, geometric shapes, flattened colors and multiple vantage points in a single image.

**Deconstruction:** In art, it means the work of art is created in a way that is not perfectly put together. Artwork shows how it was created and there are imperfections purposely left

**Depth:** The illusion of distance or three dimensions

**Design**: The plan or organization of a work of art; the arrangement of independent parts (the elements of art) to form a whole.

**Ebony pencil:** A drawing pencil that features a thick core of soft graphite that makes a very black and smooth/satin finish. Capable of a wide tonal range with rich darks.

**Elements of art:** Sensory components used to create and talk about works of art: see last page for list

**Embellishment**: in sewing, a decorative techniques and or embroidery, done either by machine or by hand to create detail to the work being

**Emphasis:** Special attention or embellishment on an element, characteristic or object in a work of art that makes it stand out from others.

**Fellowship:** A financed research post providing study facilities, privileges, etc. often in return for teaching services. Usually an endowment to support the postgraduate research of a student.

**Focal point**: The place in a work of art at which attention becomes focused because of an element emphasized in some way.

**Folk art:** Art, usually primitive-looking, created by artists or persons who are not classically trained or art that is made to look that way.

**Foreground**: Part of a two-dimensional artwork that appears to be nearer the viewer or in the “front” of the image.

**Foreshortening:** When surfaces appear flattened or squished as they recede

**Form:** (1) The particular characteristics of an artwork’s visual elements (as distinguished from its subject matter or content). (2) A three-dimensional volume or the illusion of three dimensions; related to shape (which is 2-D).

**Function**: Purpose and use of a work of art.

**Gesture drawing**: The drawing of lines quickly and loosely to show movement in a subject.

**Geometric shape**: Shapes with precise edges that have to be measured or traced

**Gradation:** a value gradually changes from dark to light (or light to dark); it is clear that the value is changing but not where it changes

**Graphite pencil:** an art medium specially designed for drawing. There are different levels of hardness of the lead that helps the artist create different values. The range goes from 9H (hard) to 9B (soft) with HB (your #2 pencils) being the middle of the range.

**Harmony:** The principle of design that creates unity within a work of art.

**Hatching**: is an artistic technique used to create tonal or shading effects by drawing (or painting or scribing) closely spaced parallel lines.

**Hue**: The gradation or attribute of a color that defines its general classification as a red, blue, yellow, green or intermediate color.

**Implied line**: A broken, sketchy line that suggests and edge

**Installation:** Larger than life sculpture created with various materials and designed for public to interact with the art.

**Intensity**: Refers to the brightness of a color (a color is full in intensity only when in its pure form and unmixed). Color intensity can be changed by adding black, white, gray or an opposite color on the color wheel.

**Internship:** temporary position with an emphasis on on-the-job training rather than merely employment, and it can be paid or unpaid.

**Intermediate colors:** Also known as tertiary, colors created when mixing a primary and secondary colors.

**Line:** An element of art defined by a point moving in space. Line may be two-or three-dimensional, descriptive, implied, or abstract.

**Line weight**: How thick/thin a line is (the eye goes to lines with more weight first)

**Local color**: the color of something before light/shadow hits it.

**Mass**: The outside size and bulk of an object, such as a building or a sculpture; the visual weight of an object.

**Media:** (1) Plural of medium referring to materials used to make works of art. (2) Classifications of artworks, such as painting, printmaking, sculpture, film, etc.).

**Middle ground:** Area of a two-dimensional work of art between the foreground and background.

**Mixed media:** An artwork in which more than one type of art material is used.

**Monochromatic:** Use of only one hue or color that can vary in value or intensity.

**Mood:** The state of mind or emotion communicated in a work of art through color, composition, media, scale, size, etc.

**Motif:** A repeated pattern, often creating a sense of rhythm.

**Movement:** The principle of design that deals with the creation of action.

**Negative space:** The space around or between objects.

**Neutral colors:** Black, white, gray, and variations of brown.

**Non-objective:** The subject has been abstracted, representing something non-tangible (a mood, emotion, idea etc.)

**Objective**: The subject has been abstracted, but is still recognizable as something tangible

**Oil paint:** Oil-based pigment used with paint thinner, turpentine, or other non-water-based suspension.

**Oil pastels:** a drawing medium that consists of pigment mixed with a non-drying oil and wax binder.

**One-point perspective:** A way to show 3-D objects on a 2-D surface, lines appear to go away from the viewer meet at a single point on the horizon known as the vanishing point.

**Organic shape:** Refers to shapes or forms not geometric, having irregular edges and surfaces or similar to natural forms.

**Overlap:** When one object sits in front of another object, blocking the visibility of part of the object that is behind it

**Pattern:** A repeated line or shape.

**Perceptual colors:** the color something looks (or is “perceived” after the light/shadow hits it.

**Perspective:** A system for representing three-dimensional objects viewed in spatial recession on a two-dimensional surface.

**Point of view:** The angle from which a viewer sees the objects or scene in an image.

**Portfolio:** A systematic, organized collection of artwork.

**Positive space:** Shapes or spaces in an image that represent solid objects or forms.

**Primary colors:** Red, yellow, and blue. From these all other colors are created.

**Principles of design:** A design concept describing the ways in which the elements of an image are arranged: see last page for list

**Printmaking:** The transference of an image from one surface (plate or block) to another (usually paper) using ink.

**Proportion:** The scale relationships of one part to the whole and of one part to another. In images of figures, the appropriate balance between the size of body and its limbs.

**Reflection:** Personal and thoughtful consideration of an artwork, an aesthetic experience, or the creative process.

**Rhythm:** Repetitive visual elements that achieve a specific effect.

**Rubric:** A guide for judgment or scoring, a description of expectations.

**Scale:** Relative size, proportion; the determination of measurements of dimensions within a design or artwork.

**Sculpture:** Three-dimensional artwork to be seen either in the round (from all sides) or as a bas relief (a low relief in which figures protrude only slightly from the background).

**Secondary colors:** Colors that are created by the mixture of two primary colors, i.e. red and yellow make orange, yellow and blue make green, blue and red make violet, etc.

**Shade:** A color produced by the addition of black.

**Shape:** A two-dimensional area or plane that is closed.

**Sharpie pen:** a permanent marker that is usually used as black but also comes in a variety of colors.

**Space:** The area between, around, above, below, or contained within objects. Spaces are areas defined by the shapes and forms around them and within them, just as shapes and forms are defined by the space around and within them.

**Still life:** A specific type of visual artwork representing one or more inanimate object.

**Stippling**: is the creation of a pattern simulating varying degrees of value by using small dots.

**Studies:** a drawing, sketch or painting done in preparation for a finished piece. Often used to understand the problems involved in drawing subjects and to plan the elements to be used in finished works such as light, color, form, perspective, and composition.

**Style:** A set of characteristics of the art of a culture, a period, or school of art; the characteristic expression of individual artists or groups.

**Subject matter:** The people, places and things in a work of art

**Symmetry**: A balance of parts on opposite sides of a perceived midline, giving the appearance of equal visual weight.

**Tempera paint**: permanent, fast-drying painting medium consisting of colored pigments mixed with a water-soluble binder. Compared to acrylic, this paint is thinner in application.

**Texture:** The surface quality of materials, either actual (touch) or implied (visual). It is one of the elements of art.

**Theme:** A subject or topic of discourse or of artistic representation.

**Three-dimensional:** Having height, width, and depth (3-D).

**Tint:** A slight or pale coloration; a variation of a color produced by adding white to it and characterized by a low saturation and high lightness.

**Tonality:** values change *gradually* from dark to light, or vice versa.

**Tone:** Color with gray added to it.

**Two-dimensional:** Having height and width but not depth (2-D).

**Two-point perspective:** A visual system of representation designed to show 3-D objects on a 2-D surface. This illusion of space and volume utilizes two vanishing points on the horizon line.

**Unity:** A principle of design that connects a variety of elements of art and principles of design into a work of art with harmony and balance.

**Value:** Lightness or darkness of a hue or neutral color.

**Value scale:** A value scale shows the range of values from black to white and light to dark.

**Vanishing point:** In perspective drawing, a point at which receding lines seem to converge.

**Variety:** A principle of art concerned with combining one or more elements of art in different ways to create interest.

**Volume:** Describes the space within a form, such as that of a container or building.

**Warm colors:** Colors suggesting warmth, such as reds, yellows, and oranges.

**Watercolor:** A transparent pigment used with water. Paintings done with this medium are known as watercolors

Principles of Design:

* Rhythm
* Balance
* Emphasis
* Harmony
* Variety
* Movement
* Contrast
* Unity

Elements of Art:

* Line
* Shape
* Form
* Value
* Space
* Color
* Texture