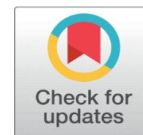


## FUNDAMENTALS OF ARTS

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### ABSTRACT

Art means creation. This ability of creation is the highest and invaluable gift given by God almighty to mankind. From the very beginning art has been the strongest medium of expressing emotions. World's great pieces of art have been created by the ability to express the basic emotions of human heart like joy, sorrow, faith, aesthetic sense etc. in various forms.

**Keywords:** Primitive Fertility, Animism, Stylized Form

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the period of time as human being developed so did art. In this journey of evolution some rules were laid down for systematic development. In the field of art these rules are called fundamental / basic elements of art. There are many types of art forms in the world but if we talk about drawing and painting specifically, we come across 9 popular basic elements as:

- Line
- Shape
- Form
- Value
- Space
- Texture
- Perspective
- Anatomy Gesture
- Composition

In order to learn art, one must have the knowledge of these fundamental elements. Of course, it is not impossible to create an artwork without having knowledge of these elements but having their knowledge certainly helps an artist to create a good work / attain excellence in the subject. Thus, knowledge of fundamental elements gives a touch of perfection to the work.

### 2. LINE

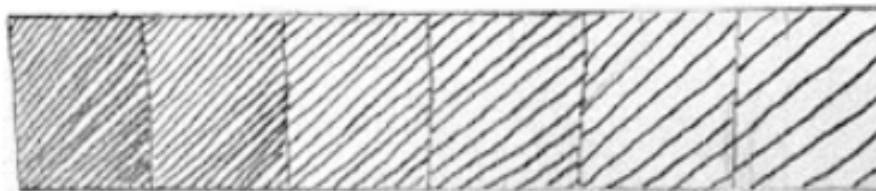
God created this universe but man is the creator of line – the first and the most important part of a drawing. Line is a one-dimensional figure. According to mathematics a line is the shortest distance between any two points whereas in Art a line is defined as a point moving in space or a series of points clubbed



together God created this universe, but man is the creator of line – the first and the most important part of a drawing. Line is a one-dimensional figure. According to mathematics a line is the shortest distance between any two points whereas in Art a line is defined as a point moving in space or a series of points clubbed together. A line can be smaller or bigger, thin or thick, moving or stationary. The most basic concept of lines defines two types of lines – straight line (horizontal, vertical, slant) and curved line and then there are spiral lines which is nothing but a chain of curved lines and then zigzag lines chain of straight lines.

A line is the most important part of the language of drawing and the biggest example of it are the cave paintings of prehistoric period where all the pictures are made up of lines only. Different lines show different emotions such as Horizontal lines gives the feel of rest, distance, width, calmness, stability, Vertical lines adds a sense of height, strength, Diagonal lines shows movement, curved lines give a feel of comfort, ease and sometimes sensuality and Zigzag lines shows action, excitement, restlessness, and anxiety. Emotions like sympathy, hatred, softness, hardness can be shown with the help of moving lines whereas stationary or non-moving lines does not give firmness and a certain shape to anything. Light lines show uncertainty, confusion, weakness and distance, Dark and clear lines show closeness, power, strength, and certainty.

With the help of lines one can create the effect of shading. There are few popular techniques of shading like parallel hatching and cross hatching [Figure 1](#), [Figure 2](#) where different tones are created with the help of small parallel or criss-cross lines. If small lines are made too close to each other they create an effect of darkness whereas if the lines are made keeping little distance between them, they create the light tonal effect.



**Figure 1** parallel hatching



**Figure 2** Cross Hatching

Lines are so powerful that even a small change in the direction or shape of a small line can change the whole emotion in a drawing. For example, we can see the simple line drawings given below [Figure 3](#)

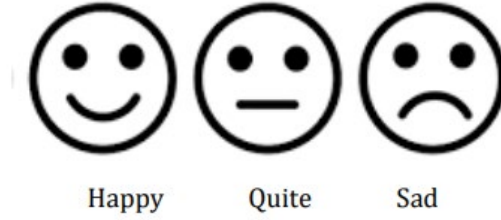


Figure 3 Happy, Quiet, Sad

The importance of knowledge of lines for an artist is described very well in a shloka of an old Hindu scripture **VISHNUDHAMOTTAR PURAN** as

सुप्तं च चेतनायुक्तं मृतं चैतन्यवर्जितम्।  
निम्नोन्नत विभागं च यः करोति स चित्रविता॥ 43॥29॥

The above shloka means a brilliant artist is the one who can draw the line work for a sleeping man and a dead man so differently that any viewer can easily distinguish between the two.

### 3. SHAPE

Shape is a two-dimensional figure which is formed by matching the ends of a continuous line. It is two dimensional means it has only width and length so we can also call it a flat figure. It can be described through colours or texture also and not necessarily with lines only. There are two types of shapes: [Boddy-Evans \(2020\)](#)

- Geometric Shapes
- Organic Shapes

Geometric Shapes are simple mathematical shapes like triangle, square, rectangle, circle, polygon etc. These shapes have perfect uniform measurements and are often man-made. They can easily be made with the help of simple mathematical tools like scale, protector, compass etc.

Organic Shapes are just opposite to geometric shapes as they have no defined shape i.e., they are asymmetric and irregular. These shapes are found everywhere in nature like leaves, flowers, animals, humans, clouds, plants, trees, hills etc. and there are no defined tools available to create these shapes as they don't have a defined shape. These shapes are an artist's delight.

If we go through the history of art and different important and popular movements of art, we find that in Cubism great artists like Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp played with both geometrical shapes as well as organic shapes together in their works brilliantly.

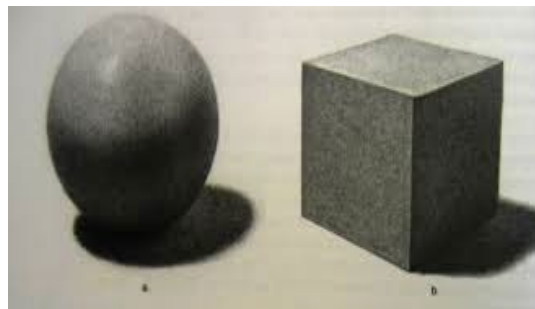
## 4. FORM

Form is an important element of art. In one word a form can, be described as three-dimensional shape. A shape has two dimensions length and width but in forms we have a third dimension of depth also and this third dimension of depth gives the artist an opportunity to create the illusion of a realistic object on a simple flat two-dimensional surface. When we add third dimension in a triangle it becomes a pyramid or cone, when the third dimension is added in a square it becomes a cube, rectangle becomes cuboid and a simple circle becomes a sphere.

As we know all the fundamental elements of art are closely related to each other and up to a certain extent depends on each other so to create the illusion effect of third dimension on a flat two-dimensional surface or in other words to convert a shape into form we need to add some volume in it i.e., the effect of light and shade. When an artist adds the effect of light and shade with the help of different tones a simple flat shape gets the depth and this depth makes the object look three dimensional. The viewer feels as if the object is raised from the flat surface. [Scribd \(2020\)](#)

To understand it in a better way we can take an example: suppose you want make drawing of a cube kept on a plain surface and you want to create an illusion so that the viewer will feel as if a real cube is kept on a surface. To achieve this target first you need to draw a simple square, turn it into a cube by adding a third dimension of height in a simple two-dimensional shape of a square and then you need to add some value in it or in other words you need to do shading to create the illusion of depth. Here to keep our work simple / easier we will be doing shading work using three basic tones of shading light, medium and dark. While adding volume firstly you need to see the direction of light and on which portion of the cube it's falling directly on. Now the portion on which the light is falling directly will get the lightest tone to get the bright look in comparison to the other portions of it. Then the portion which is neither directly exposed to the light source nor on the opposite side of it will actually have the medium light and so has to be made with the medium tone and finally the portion of the cube which is hardly getting any light will look darkest and so has to be made with the dark shade. In addition to all this near the base of the cube some dark shade has to be made on the surface in the opposite direction of the light source just to create the effect of shadow and once this is done the simple shape of a square will start looking like a realistic three-dimensional object little raised from the plain surface on which it is kept. Similarly, any flat shape can be turned into a form.

Given below the images of (a) a circle shape getting form of a sphere and (b) a square shape getting form of a cube. [Figure 4](#)



**Figure 4** (a) a circle shape getting form of a sphere and (b) a square shape getting form of a cube

Just like shapes forms are also of two types: Geometric and Organic. Geometric forms are well defined, symmetric and easily measurable mathematical objects like cube, pyramid, sphere etc. Whereas Organic forms are asymmetric, irregular natural objects like flowers, leaves, clouds, animals, humans' plants etc. Organic forms are not easily measurable or named.

## 5. VALUE

Value can be simply understood as an element that defines how light or dark a colour is. To create illusion of three dimensions on a two-dimensional surface value is incredibly important because it deals with the lightness / darkness of a colour which is the key responsible factor in creation of illusion effect. The most commonly used term for value is **Tone**. Tone / Value basically defines the level of light in a colour. Though a colour can have infinite values / tones but it being convenient, artists normally use 3-4 values only of a colour in their art works. Let's try to understand the concept of tones with the help of few examples given below. [Figure 5](#)

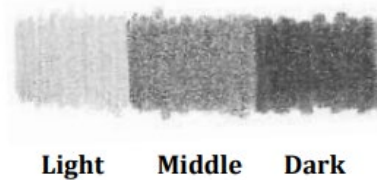


Figure 5 Colour Tone

In the above picture three different tones of black colour are shown. Here on the extreme left side the lightest tone is shown whereas on the extreme right hand side darkest tone is shown and in between both of these tones the one which is seen is called middle tone / medium tone. Likewise, we can create more tones of black. [Figure 6](#)

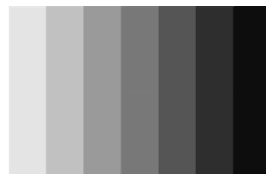


Figure 6 Middle Tone

This way the process of creation of tones / values of a colour can be taken to infinite. To create lighter tones of any colour we need to add white in it and to create darker tones black colour has to be added in it. Lighter tones of a colour show energy, happiness, enthusiasm whereas darker tones show mystery, depression and middle / medium tone depicts a mixed effect of both the tones.

Nowadays 3D paintings are extremely popular and Value / Tone is actually the key factor of a 3D painting. In other words, we can also say that value is the backbone

of a 3D painting. Without adding value in a painting, it's impossible to create the illusion of realism in any 3D painting because to make a work look realistic you need to add depth to it and the effect of depth can only be created with value. Here the middle tone plays an important role as after light tone, dark tone cannot come suddenly but there has to be a middle tone which helps light tone to get merged with dark tone smoothly and this smooth movement of tones from light to dark actually creates the required effect of third dimension to a painting by providing depth to it. Value creates contrast in a painting that helps an artist to create the effect of depth which makes the work looks more and more realistic.

## **6. SPACE**

The literal meaning of the word Space is a continuous area which is free, available or unoccupied / the physical universe beyond the earth's atmosphere / an interval of time / distance / the portion of a text or document available for writing whereas in art Space means the area around or between or within the constituent of any art work.

In drawing / painting / artwork space is nothing but how the area within the drawing / painting surface is used. The area occupied by the main object is termed as positive space whereas the area surrounding the main object is negative space. Appropriate use of positive and negative space has a big impact on the overall appearance of the painting / drawing / artwork. The space may be created with the use of shading techniques or use of colours in an appropriate manner or by adding texture or with the help of the combination of shading, colours and texture.

## **7. TEXTURE**

It is an important element of art. Texture is nothing but the feel that one gets either on looking at or touching the surface of any object. The surface can be natural or man-made. In other words, we can say Texture is nothing but the character of a surface which can be soft, smooth, silky, hard, rough, furry, wet etc. Every object has some or the other texture. In art texture plays an important role. Texture provides balance and effectiveness to a piece of art. Artists incorporate texture in their paintings / artworks to break the monotony, creating a focal point and sometimes just for adding contrast.

An artist works on two types of surfaces to create their artworks - natural or artificial. Natural surfaces are wood, stone etc. and artificial surfaces are handmade sheets, canvas, cloth, paper etc. Sometimes an artist creates an illusion of texture and makes the surface look like something it is not. The success of this type of illusion work solely depends upon the ability of an artist, how brilliantly he / she can play with colours. With simply the use of colours, brush, sponge, knife, cotton, nib, toothbrush, string, comb, sack and many more easily available things an artist can create the illusion of a desired texture. A brilliant artist always knows where and how a texture can be placed in a painting to make an ordinary work look good.

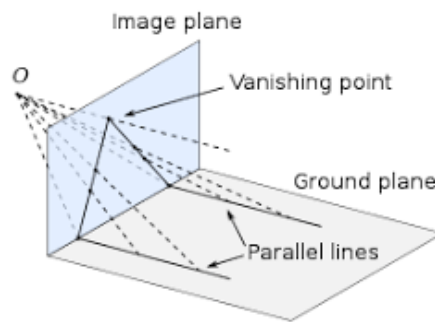
## **8. PERSPECTIVE**

Perspective is one of the key fundamentals of art. It is a technique of creating three dimensions on a two-dimensional surface and this third dimension of depth makes a drawing / painting look more interesting and realistic. We know a simple fact that when we look at objects from near, they appear to be bigger in size but

when we look at the same object from distance it looks comparatively smaller in size depends upon the amount of distance. In mathematical language we can say that the size of any object is inversely proportion to its distance from the viewer. There are different types of perspective but before we discuss types of perspective, we need to get a little bit of idea about two important terms related to perspective and they are [Kleiner \(2020\)](#)

- Vanishing Point
- Horizon line

**Vanishing point:** It is the point in perspective drawing where the parallel lines appear to converge. [Figure 7](#)



**Figure 7** Technique of Creating Three Dimensions on A Two-Dimensional Surface

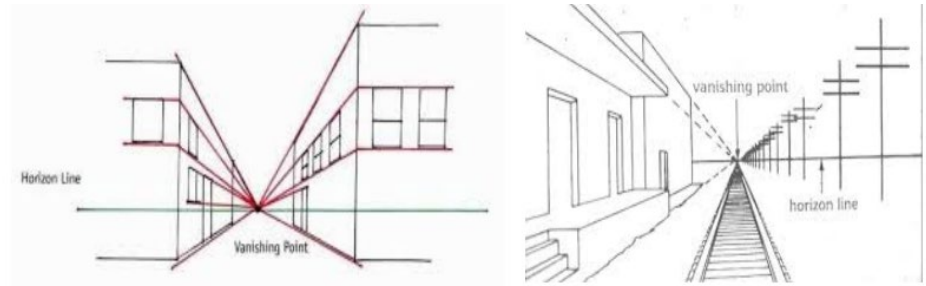
**Horizon line:** It is essential in an artwork. This line is important because it gives the viewer an idea of their relative position with the scene depicted in an art work as above, below or on the same level with the subject. This actually gives an exact idea about the correct proportion of subject which makes the artwork look realistic.

Now let us try to understand the types of perspective and there are 4 popular types of perspective which are as follows: [Line and Linear Perspective \(2020\)](#)

- Linear Perspective
- One-Point Perspective
- Two- Point Perspective
- Atmospheric Perspective

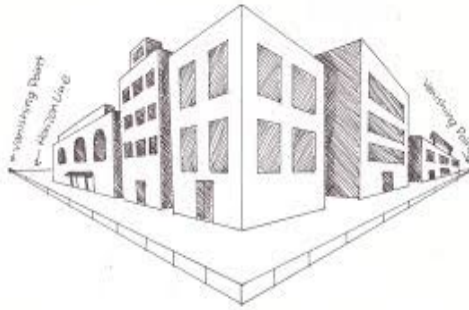
**Linear Perspective:** This can be understood as creation of depth with the help of positioning of objects and their relative size (variation in size in relation to distance). In simple language we can understand it as objects looks larger in size when they are placed near to the viewer whereas they look smaller when placed at distance from the viewer.

**One-Point Perspective:** This type of perspective has only one vanishing point along the horizon line and so it is called one-point perspective. The most common example of such perspective are drawing or painting showing railway lines and roads. [Figure 8](#)



**Figure 8** One-Point Perspective

**Two-Point Perspective:** As the name clarifies this kind of perspective has two vanishing points on a horizon line. This technique is usually shown when an artist creates a scene showing corner of a building on a street where both left and right sides of the building will have their own vanishing points on the horizon line. For example, [Figure 9](#)



**Figure 9** Two-Point Perspective

**Atmospheric Perspective:** This is a technique of creating third dimension of depth on a two-dimensional surface with the help of colours. When we talk about adding depth in a painting through colours, we know that colours get fade away with increasing distance. In other words when objects are near their colour / colours look bright and when they are at distance their colour / colours look faded or blurry. This simple concept is used in this technique.

## 9. ANATOMY GESTURE

The word anatomy gesture is made up of two words anatomy and gesture. Both these are related to each other as 'Anatomy' is the complete study of human body (bone structure, details of muscle structure, nervous system) whereas 'Gesture' means capturing the action of body for a particular pose or for different poses. The study of anatomy gesture is very important for an artist.

To draw a human figure firstly you should have the knowledge of human body structure so that when you start drawing a human body/figure every part of the body can be drawn in proper proportion on the contrary if you don't have the knowledge of the exact proportion you will end up with a completely disproportionate figure which will make your drawing look either artificial, funny



or ugly and this concept is true for the drawing of all the living beings whether it's human or animal or bird's body. In short if we are trying to make the drawing of any living being, knowledge of its anatomy is the essential requirement.

Gesture is also as important as the study of the structure and proportion of the body parts. Gesture gives life to the body. Drawing of any living being without gesture makes it look like lifeless and artificial only. Gesture can be shown with the help of either movement in body parts or through facial expressions. We can also understand the meaning of gesture as body language.

Anatomy and Gesture needs each other to complete themselves. They are so tightly bonded with each other that only one of them will not be able to lead you to make a proper figure full of life.

## 10. COMPOSITION

Composition is one of the fundamentals of art and it's a very important element. Composition is the arrangement of visual elements in an art work / painting. According to a great artist **HENRI MATISSE** "**Composition is the art of arranging in a decorative manner the diverse elements at the painter's command to express his feelings.**" [Boddy-Evans \(2020\)](#)

Every painting abstract or realistic or representational has a composition. A good composition is the one which when seen by a viewer allows his / her eyes to move all around the artwork or painting and finally brings back the attention to its focal point / main subject. While arranging the visual elements in an art work an artist must see whether in the arrangement between the element's proper unity, balance, movement, rhythm, focus, contrast, pattern and proportion is present or not because these are the important factors which makes a composition successful.

All the other elements of art like – line, shape, value, space, texture, perspective and anatomy gesture work well only if the composition i.e., the final arrangement of visual elements is good. So, we can say that composition is the final cherry on the cake.

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