

Elements of Art

The Elements of Art are the foundations of all artworks.

- Line
- Color
- Shape
- Form
- Texture
- Value
- Space



Chinese, *Pink and White Lotus* (detail), 14th century, hanging scroll; mineral pigments on silk. Kimbell Art Museum

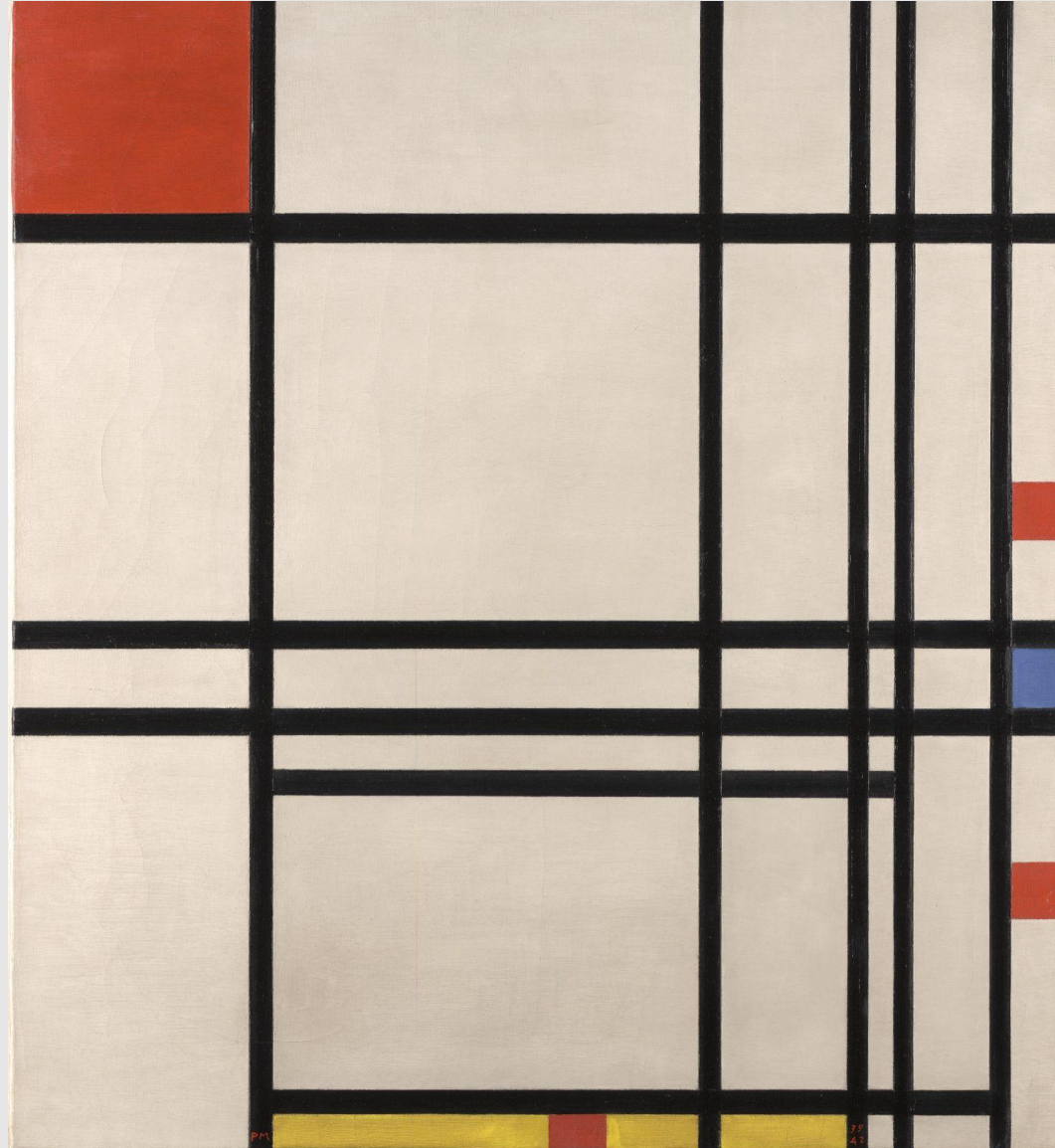
Line

A line connects two or more points and is used to define space, contours, and outlines.



Line

Lines can be straight. They can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.



Piet Mondrian, *Abstraction*, 1939–42, oil on canvas.
Kimbell Art Museum

Line

They can be squiggly, curved, dotted, or dashed.



Maya, *Conch Shell Trumpet*, c. 250–400 AD, shell with traces of cinnabar.
Kimbell Art Museum



Joan Miró, *Portrait of Heriberto Casany*, 1918, oil on canvas.
Kimbell Art Museum

Line

They can be thick or thin.

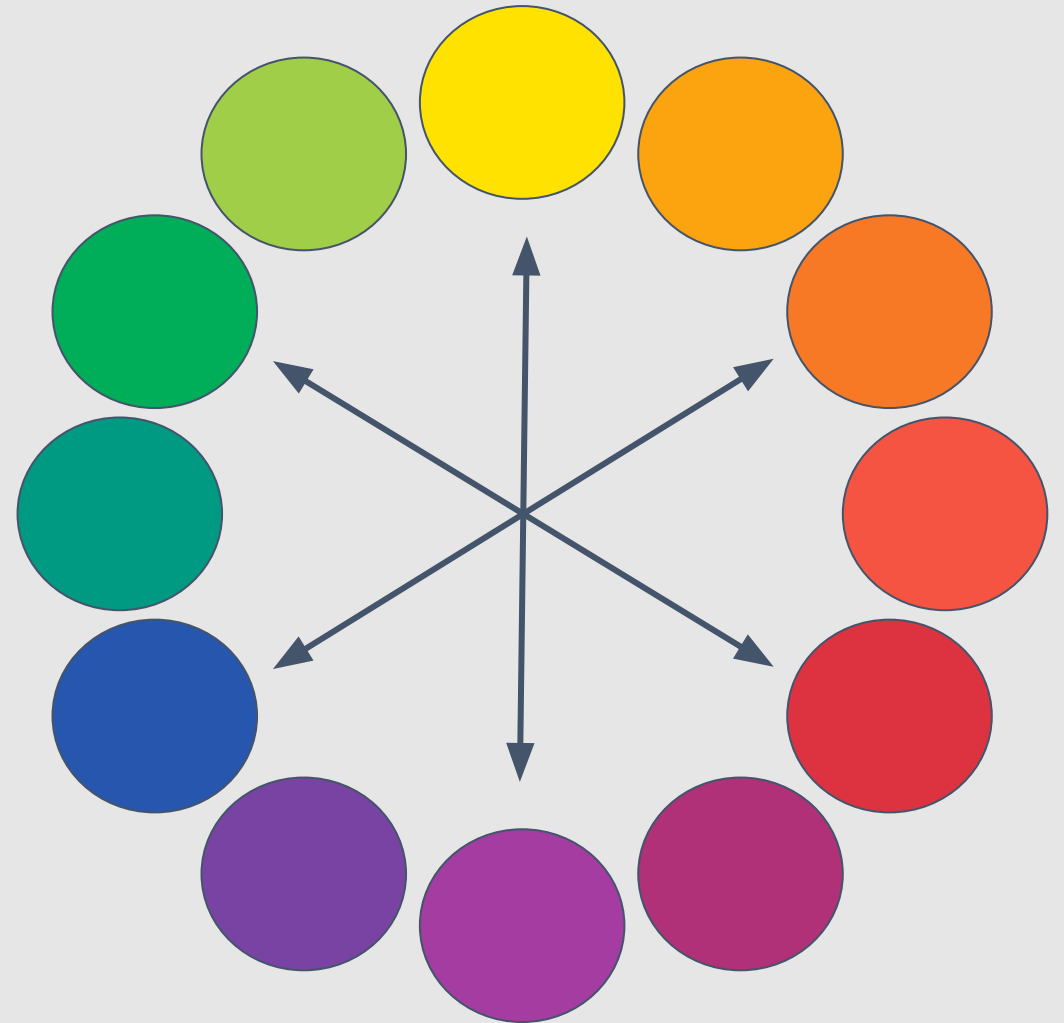


Louis Kahn, *Temple of Apollo, Corinth, at Midday*, 1951, pastel. Kimbell Art Museum

Color

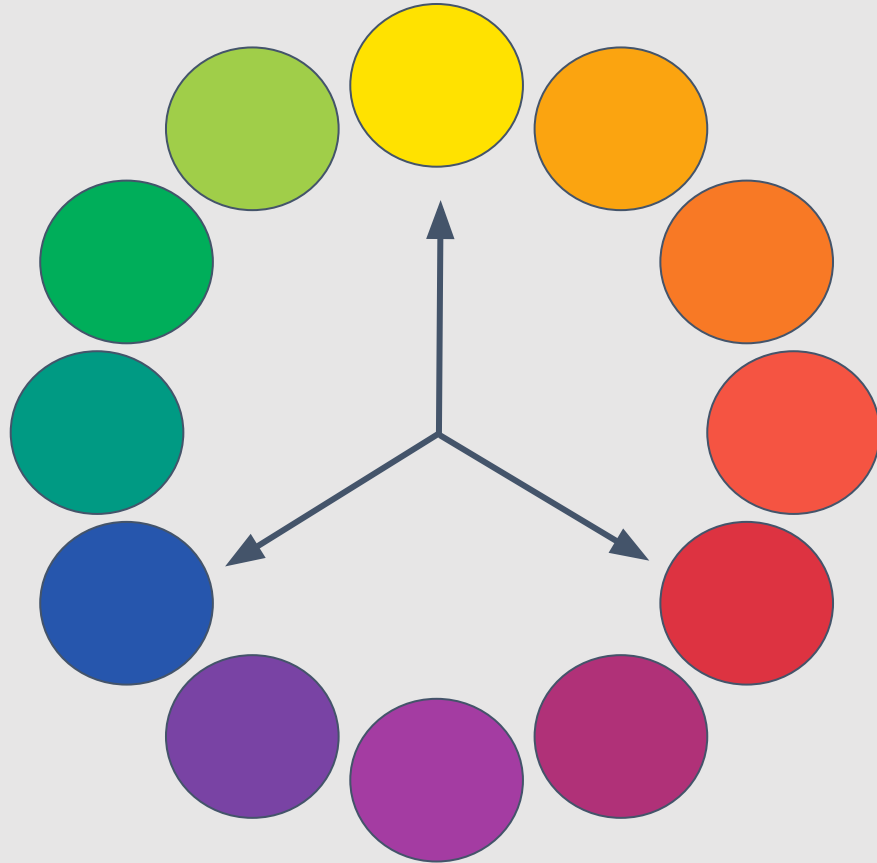
Color comes from reflected light.

Color wheels show how colors are related to one another.



Color

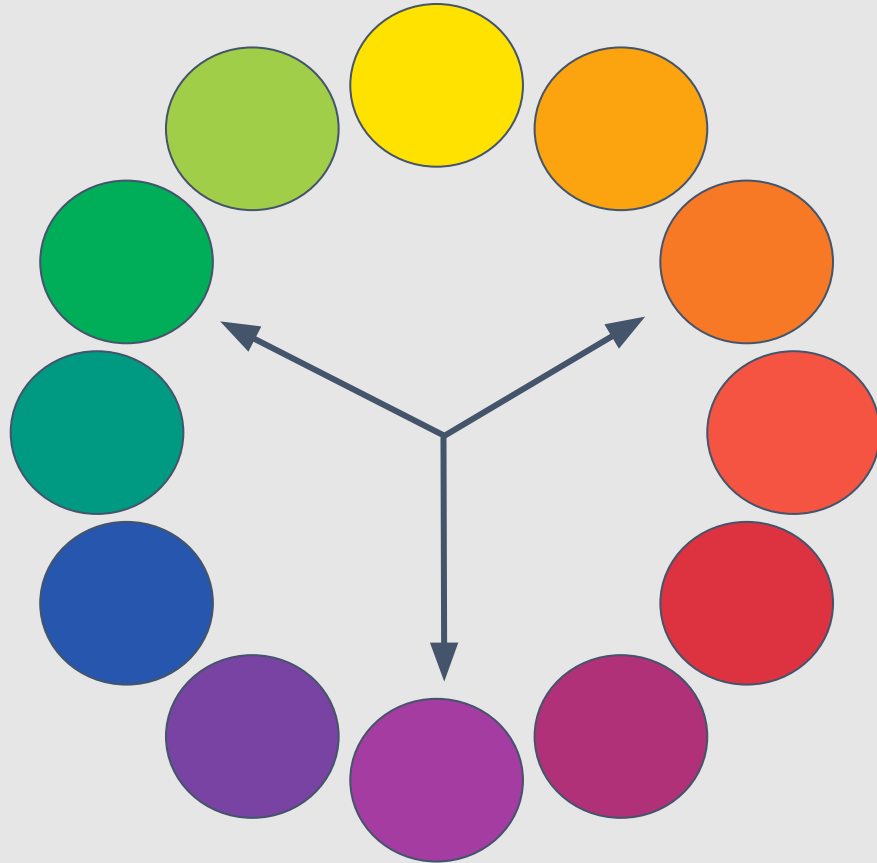
Primary colors are **red**, **yellow**, and **blue**.



Tibetan, *Four Mandalas of the Vajravali Series*, c. 1429–56, thangka, gouache on cotton. Kimbell Art Museum

Color

Secondary colors are **orange**, **green**, and **purple** and are made from mixing primary colors together.



Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, *Dog Guarding a Basket of Grapes*, 1836, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum

Color

Colors can be **warm** or **cool**.

The area farthest from the viewer, the **background**, shows **cool** tones.

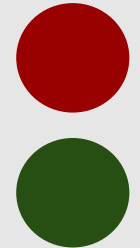


The area closest to the viewer, the **foreground**, shows **warm** tones.

Color



The oranges and the blue details on the vase are complementary.



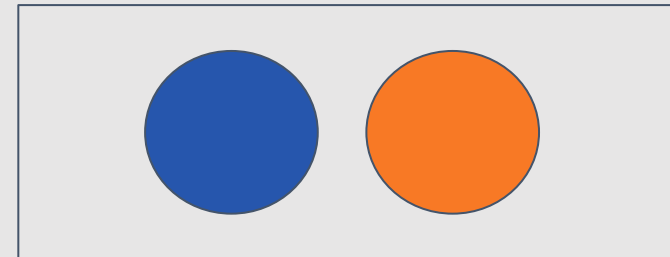
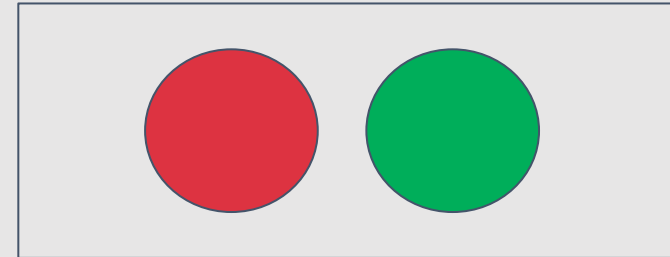
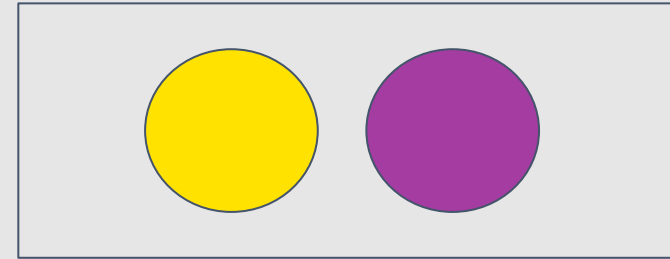
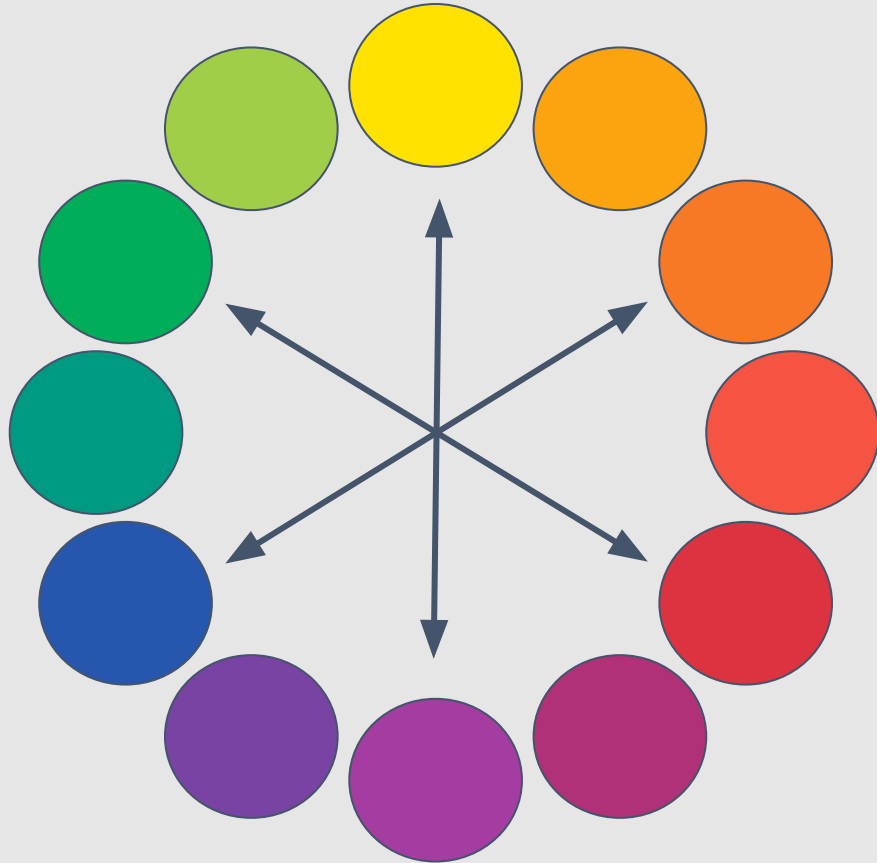
The red of the berries and the green of the leaves are complementary colors.

Left:
Luis Meléndez, *Still Life with Oranges, Jars, and Boxes of Sweets*, c. 1760–65, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum

Right:
Louise Moillon, *Still Life with a Bowl of Strawberries, Basket of Cherries, and Branch of Gooseberries*, 1631, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum

Color

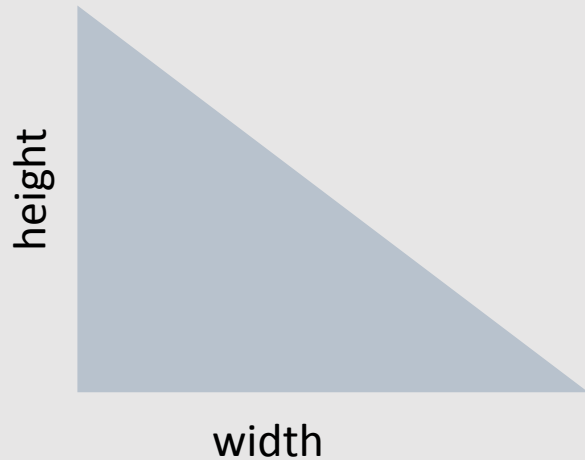
Colors opposite from each other on the color wheel are called **complementary**.



Shape

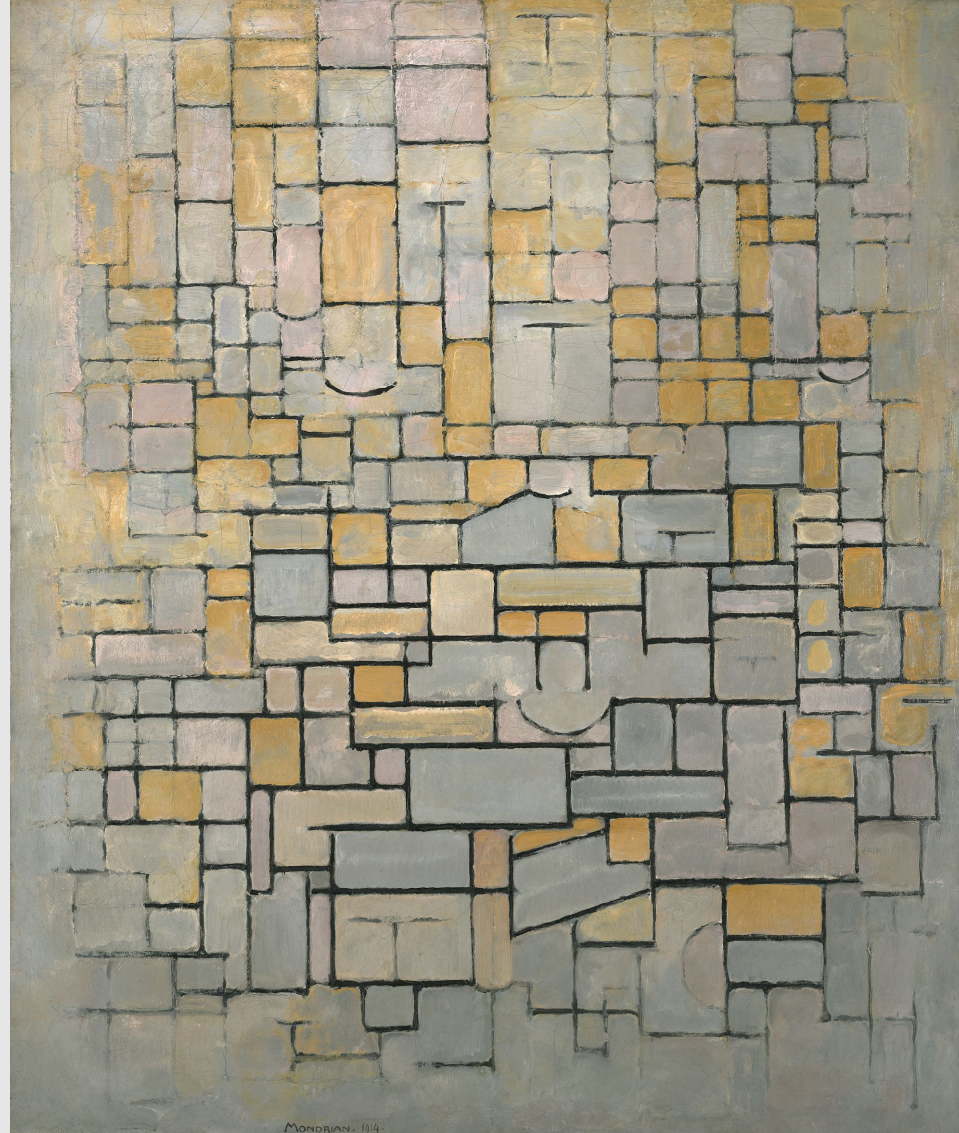
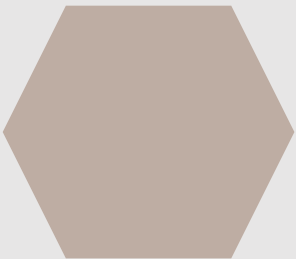
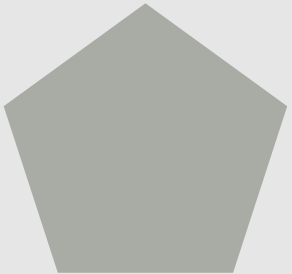
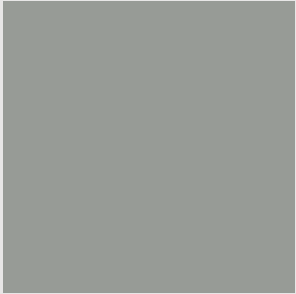
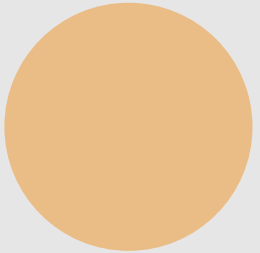
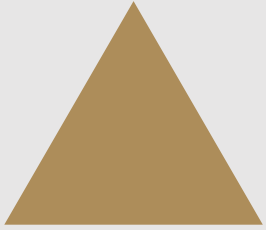
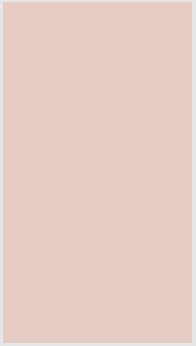
Shapes have **two dimensions**: height and width.

They can be either **geometric** or **organic**.



Gustave Caillebotte, *On the Pont de l'Europe*, 1876–77, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum

Shape



Geometric shapes typically have names:

- Rectangle
- Triangle
- Square
- Circle
- Pentagon

Shape



Organic shapes typically don't have names and can be blob-like.

Shape

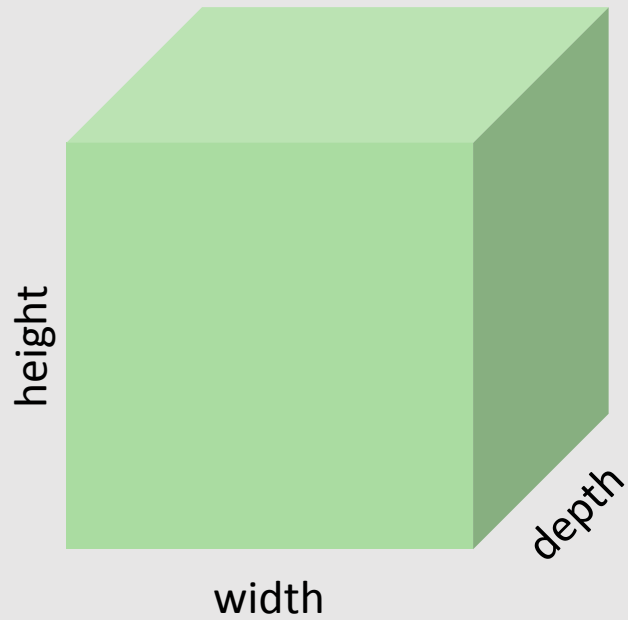


Often, artworks have **both** geometric and organic shapes.

In this sculpture, where do you see **geometric** shapes and where are there **organic** shapes?

Form

A form has **three dimensions**: height, width, and depth.



Fernand Léger, *Walking Flower* (*La fleur qui marche*), 1952, ceramic. Kimbell Art Museum

Form



Chinese, *Court Lady*, first half of the 8th century AD, gray earthenware with painted polychrome decoration.
Kimbell Art Museum

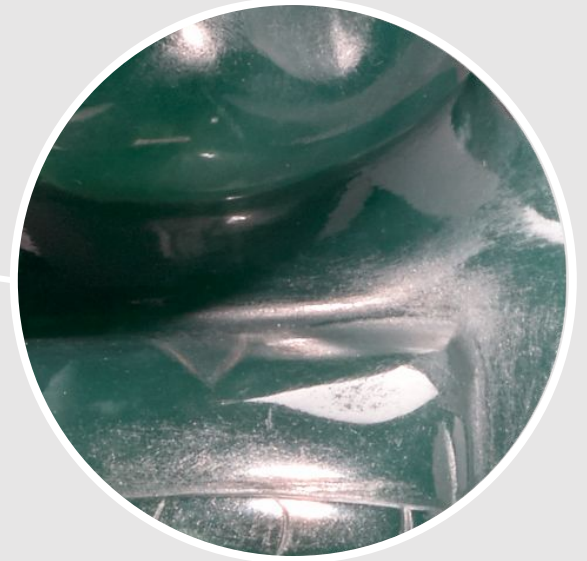
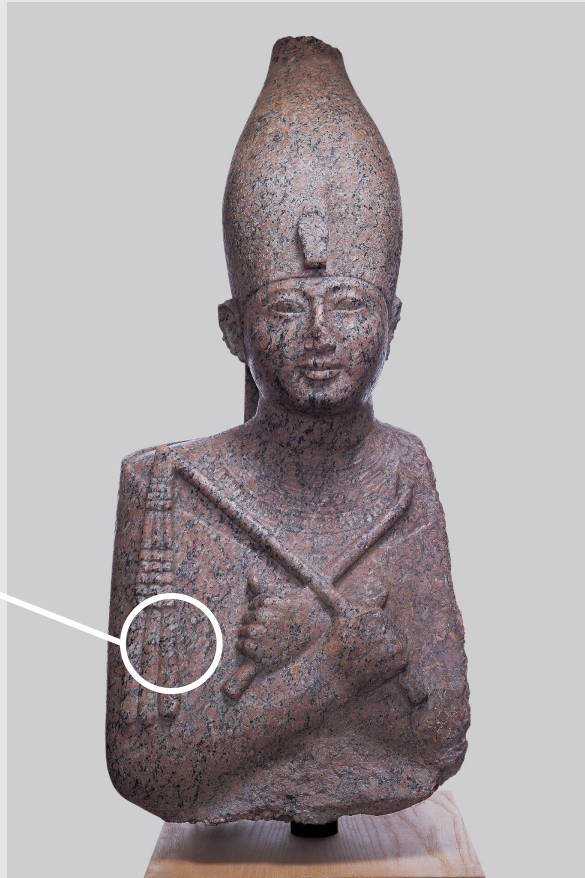
Texture

Texture describes how things feel (actual texture) or how they look like they might feel (implied texture).



Rough

Egyptian, *Portrait Statue of Pharaoh Amenhotep II*, c. 1400 BC, recarved for Ramesses II (the Great), c. 1250 BC, rose granite. Kimbell Art Museum

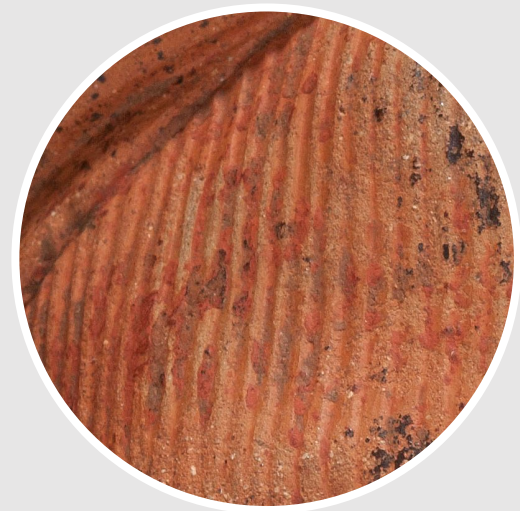


Smooth

Olmec, *Standing Figure Holding a Were-Jaguar Baby*, c. 900-300 BC, jade (jadeite). Kimbell Art Museum

Texture

Actual Texture



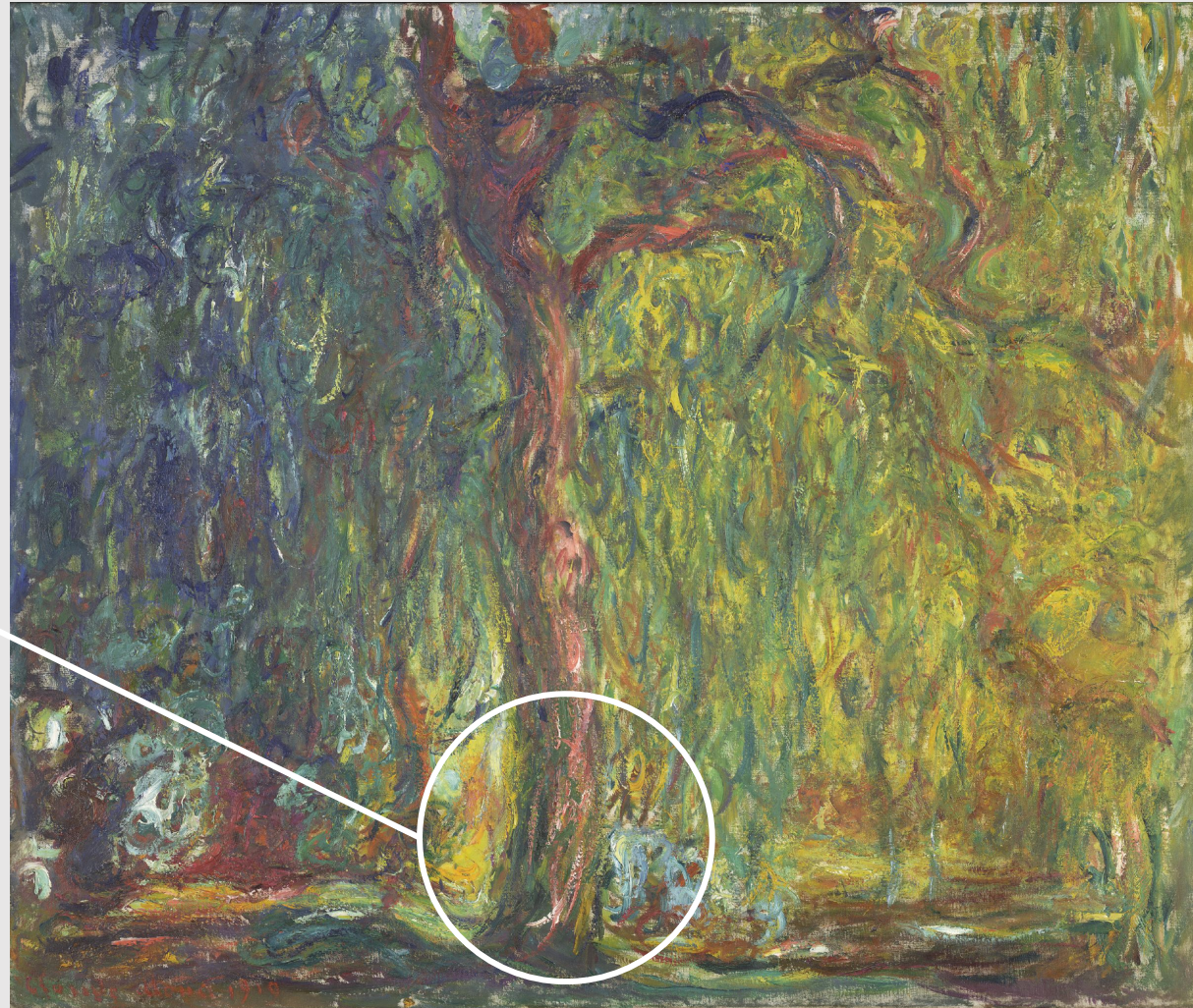
Ife culture, *Head, possibly a King*, 12th–14th century, terracotta with residue of red pigment and traces of mica. Kimbell Art Museum



Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, *Portrait of Charles Carpeaux, the Sculptor's Brother*, 1874, terracotta. Kimbell Art Museum

Texture

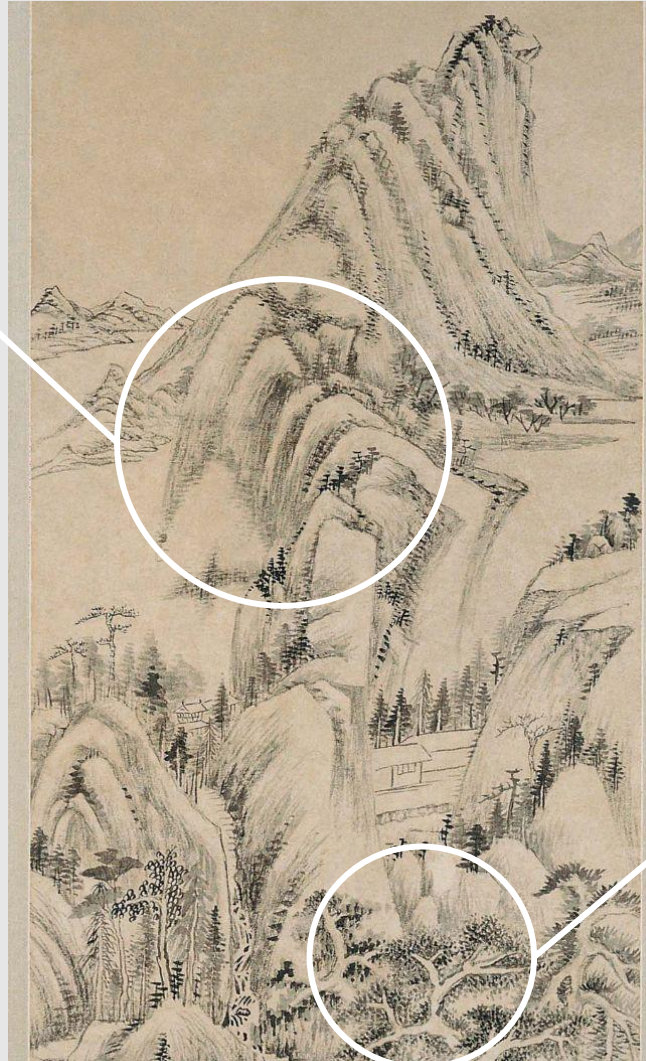
Actual Texture



Claude Monet, *Weeping Willow*, 1918–19, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum

Texture

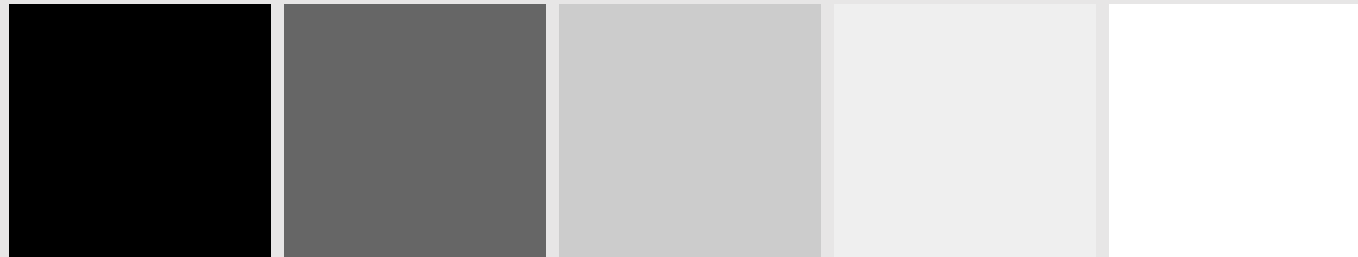
Implied Texture



Dong Qichang, *Steep Mountains and Silent Waters*, 1632, hanging scroll; ink on paper. Kimbell Art Museum

Value

Value refers to the lightness or darkness of colors.



Examples of
value scales

Edgar Degas, *Dancer Stretching*, c. 1882–85, pastel on pale blue gray paper. Kimbell Art Museum

Value

Values are important to help visually group parts of a composition.

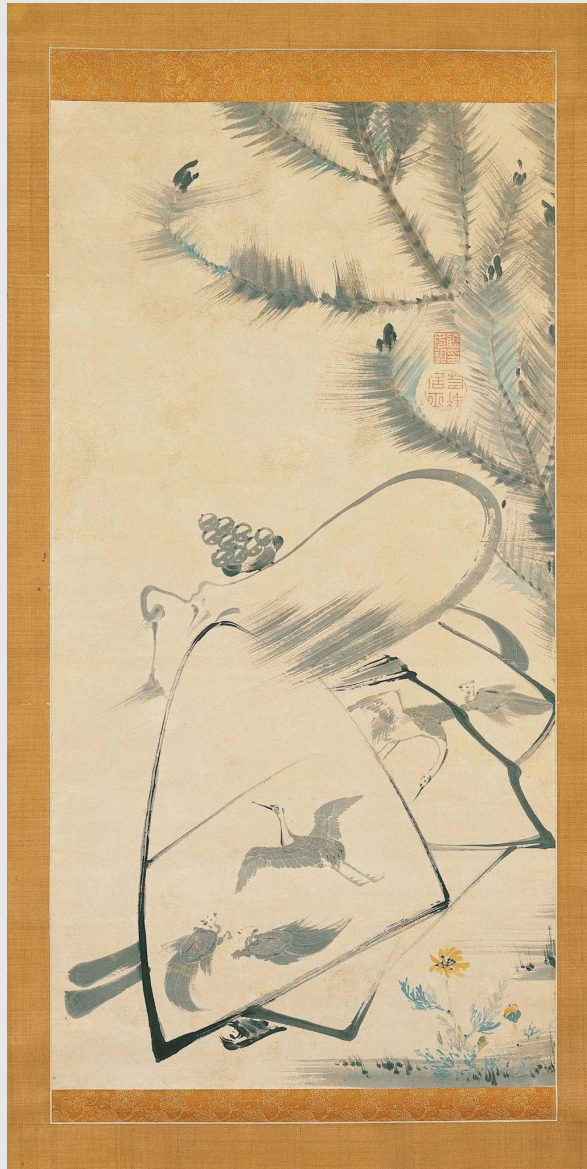


In *The Cardsharps*, Caravaggio created high contrast between the lights and the shadows to draw attention to the figures.

This use of high contrast between lights and darks is called *chiaroscuro*.

Value

An artwork can be either high key or low key.



High key = Overall **light** tones; typically **less** contrast

Ito Jakuchu, *Fukurojin, the God of Longevity and Wisdom*, c. 1790, hanging scroll; ink and light colors on paper.
Kimbell Art Museum

Value

An artwork can be either high key or low key.



Low key = Overall dark tones; typically **more contrast**

Jacob van Ruisdael, *Rough Sea at a Jetty*, 1650s, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum

Space

Space is the emptiness or area between, around, above, below, or within objects.



Canaletto, *The Molo, Venice*, c. 1735, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum

Space

Artworks contain both positive and negative space.



Positive space = the subject

Negative space = the empty areas around the subject

Barbara Hepworth, *Oval Form (Trezion)*, 1961–63, bronze. Kimbell Art Museum

Space

Negative Space

Positive Space



Japanese, *Genji in Exile at Suma*, late 16th century, six-fold screen; ink, gold, silver, and pigments on paper. Kimbell Art Museum

Space

Positive Space

Negative Space



Kaikei, *Standing Shaka Buddha*, c. 1210, gilt and lacquered wood. Kimbell Art Museum

Art in order of appearance:

Chinese, Detail from *Pink and White Lotus*, 14th century, hanging scroll; mineral pigments on silk. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1984.19

Piet Mondrian, *Abstraction*, 1939–42, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1994.05

Maya, *Conch Shell Trumpet*, c. 250–400 AD, shell with traces of cinnabar. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1984.11.

Joan Miró, *Portrait of Heriberto Casany*, 1918, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1984.09

Louis Kahn, *Temple of Apollo, Corinth, at Midday*, 1951, pastel. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 2021.02

Tibetan, *Four Mandalas of the Vajravali Series*, c. 1429–56, thangka, gouache on cotton.. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 2000.01

Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, *Dog Guarding a Basket of Grapes*, 1836, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 2022.01.

Hubert Robert, *The Fountain*, c. 1775–78, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1970.15

Luis Meléndez, *Still Life with Oranges, Jars, and Boxes of Sweets*, c. 1760–65, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1985.13

Louise Moillon, *Still Life with a Bowl of Strawberries, Basket of Cherries, and Branch of Gooseberries*, 1631, oil on canvas.

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 2022.04

Gustave Caillebotte, *On the Pont de l'Europe*, 1876–77, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1982.01

Piet Mondrian, *Composition*, 1914, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1983.03

Art in order of appearance:

Edvard Munch, *Girls on a Bridge*, c. 1904, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 1966.06

Wari culture, *Standing Dignitary*, c. AD 600–1000, wood with shell-and-stone inlay and silver. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 2002.04

Fernand Léger, *Walking Flower (La fleur qui marche)*, 1952, ceramic. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 2011.02

Chinese, *Court Lady*, first half of the 8th century AD, gray earthenware with painted polychrome decoration. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, AP 2001.01

Egyptian, *Portrait Statue of Pharaoh Amenhotep II*, c. 1400 BC, recarved for Ramesses II (the Great), c. 1250 BC, rose granite.
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Olmec, *Standing Figure Holding a Were-Jaguar Baby*, c. 900–300 BC, jade (jadeite). Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 2023.02

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Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, *Portrait of Charles Carpeaux, the Sculptor's Brother*, 1874, terracotta. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1984.21

Claude Monet, *Weeping Willow*, 1918–19, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1996.02

Dong Qichang, *Steep Mountains and Silent Waters*, 1632, hanging scroll; ink on paper. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1980.02

Edgar Degas, *Dancer Stretching*, c. 1882–85, pastel on pale blue gray paper. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1968.04

Caravaggio, *The Cardsharps*, c. 1596–97, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1987.06

Art in order of appearance:

Ito Jakuchu, *Fukurojin, the God of Longevity and Wisdom*, c. 1790, hanging scroll; ink and light colors on paper. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1986.02

Jacob van Ruisdael, *Rough Sea at a Jetty*, 1650s, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1989.01

Canaletto, *The Molo, Venice*, c. 1735, oil on canvas. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1969.22

Barbara Hepworth, *Oval Form (Trezion)*, 1961–63, bronze. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 2011.03

Japanese, *Genji in Exile at Suma*, late 16th century, six-fold screen; ink, gold, silver, and pigments on paper. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1971.11

Kaikei, *Standing Shaka Buddha*, c. 1210, gilt and lacquered wood. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth AP 1984.01 a,b,c