

Snippets of Art: A Closer Look

Adeena Khan¹, Anju Tulshyan²

¹Undergraduate Student, Department of Textile and Fashion Designing, Sir Vitthaldas Thackersey College of Home Science (Autonomous), SNTD Women's University, Juhu, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

²Associate Professor, Department of Textile and Fashion Designing, Sir Vitthaldas Thackersey College of Home Science (Autonomous), SNTD Women's University, Juhu, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

Abstract

Virtuosity or painting is a unique form of visual art, which is characterised by a rich and diverse range of colours, shapes and forms. It is influenced by the factors such as aesthetic value of art, the use of appropriate colour combinations, etc. achieved through the elements of art. This article is aimed at introducing the definitions of art according to different artists, the importance of the elements, and types. Furthermore, the application, uses and examples of elements will also be discussed while drawing attention towards the role of artists by the end. In the final analysis of the article the conclusion from the study of art elements and role of the artists will be considered.

Keywords: artists, artwork, building-blocks, elements.

Introduction

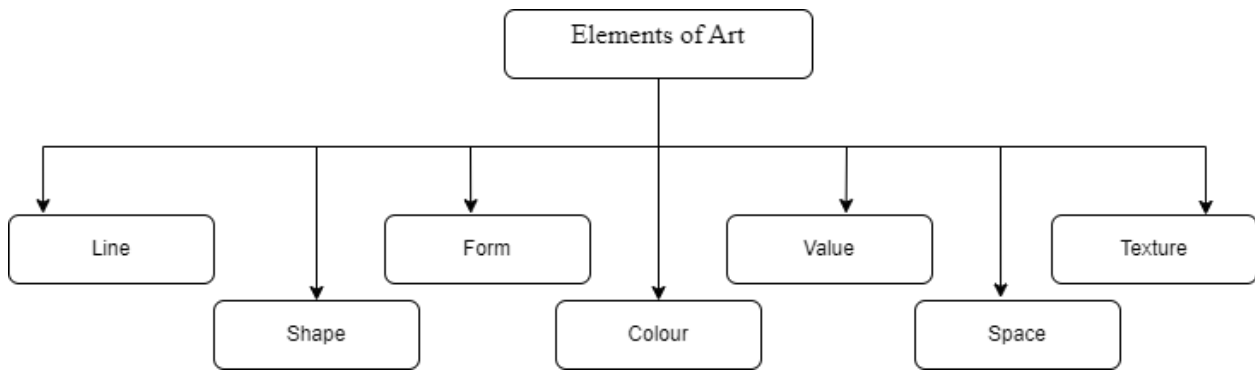
What is Art?

If such a question is asked, one may have multiple things on their mind. According to Oxford, the word 'art' is a noun which means - "the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power". Art is also considered as a verb - as in, it can do something, or change something. Art shifts perspectives, builds resistance movements, facilitates community development, and shifts cultural and political norms and expectations.

According to Aristotle - "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance." According to Plato, "Art is false knowledge of reality." Giorgio Vasari wrote 'painting is just the imitation of all the living things of nature with their colours and designs just as they are in nature'. Many Indian artists also have their unique thoughts on this topic. Rabindranath Tagore quoted that, "Art is the response of man's creative soul to the call of the real".

Whereas modern English states: -An art is the conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects.

Elements of Art (Table.01)



In order to explain in a simple core manner, elements are the formal art tools, or anything which is visible in art can be called as an *element*. They are the building blocks of any artwork. Elements in any art can be seen in combination with each other and are sometimes also combined with principles too. A work will not be considered as an art without the elements. They are also used in the process of teaching and analysis.

Types of Elements

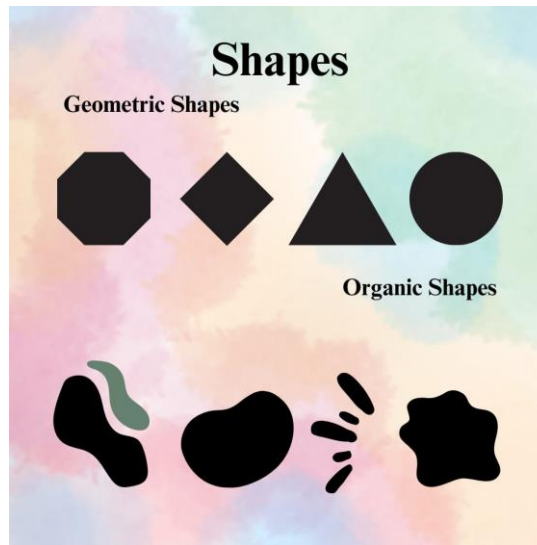
1. Line



(Figure.01)

Lines are the paths created in space. They are one - dimensional and consist of only a length. Lines are used to define a shape, direction, or outline of a specific figure. Lines are so useful that by using them artists can draw attention to the subject of the painting and can also create an illusion of depth and speed. They can exist in the form of outlines, contour lines, gesture lines, sketch lines, calligraphic lines and implied lines. Lines may be thick, thin, long, short, continuous, broken, horizontal, vertical, curved, pointy or zigzag, etc.

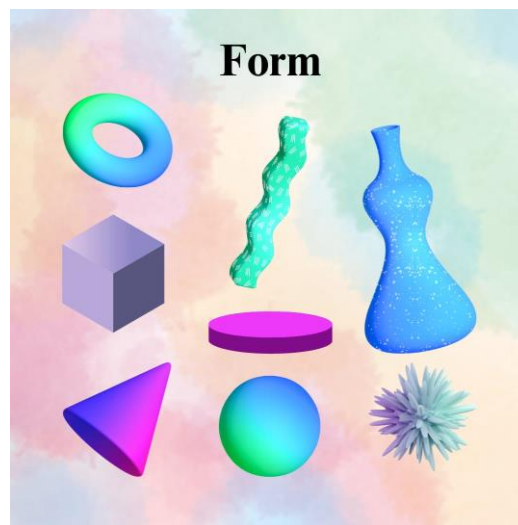
2. Shapes



(Figure.02)

Shapes are two- dimensional objects with length, and width added to it. A shape is formed by the enclosure, joining and intersection of a line. Lines and shapes are always used together. Shapes are always present in an art and are of various types such as Geometric, Organic, Positive and Negative. Geometric shapes consist of the already existing mathematical shapes and are well defined. These include common shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, hexagon, octagon and many more. Creating a shape depends on the number of lines used and its length, for example, three lines make a triangle, ^{[4] (Esaak)} four lines make a rectangle or a square, five lines connected together form a pentagon and so on. Organic shapes do not specifically exist but are created by the artists, for example, if you draw a random blob shape, people may consider it as a drawing of an amoeba. These shapes are just the opposite of what geometric shapes are. Positive and negative shapes consist of ‘space’ and are the opposite of each other. Positive space is the shape of any object, whereas negative space is the space around the drawn object or figure. Apart from this, the other two types of shape are Static shapes which are stable and resting and Dynamic shapes that appear to be moving and active^[3]

3. Form



(Figure.03)

Form is one of the elements of visual art which pertains to the way that a shape or physical configuration occupies space ^(Masterclass)[10]. A form consists of length, width and depth, being a three-dimensional structure of any shape. Basically, a shape with added depth can be called a form. It is possible to touch, hold and walk around or inside a form^[3]. Hence we can also assume that a form can also be a sculpture which describes the physical features of an art.^[5] ^(Marder) If a shape is shaded in a well-defined manner, an illusion can be created to make it look three dimensional.

There are 5 Basic Types of Form

1. Combined frontal and profile form: Combining frontal and profile views of the body is the simplest technique to depict the human figure in two dimensions. For instance, as shown in the images of the Book of the Dead for the Chantress of Nany, ancient Egyptian painters depicted the body frontally while painting the head, legs, and feet in profile.
2. Illusionistic form: During the Italian Renaissance, painters used vanishing points to indicate depth and a light source to cast shadows to create form. Space appears in these optical illusions as it would in reality. One prominent illustration is The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci, which creates the impression that three-dimensional shapes are filling deep space.
3. Abstract form: Artists can experiment with form by employing geometric shapes to mimic naturally occurring biomorphic ones. Demoiselles d'Avignon is an experiment by Cubist painter Pablo Picasso that highlights the characteristics of organic shapes by painting the typically curving, soft female form with angular geometric patterns.
4. Three-dimensional form: Michelangelo's massive David and Giambologna's dramatic sculpture of the Abduction of a Sabine Woman are two of the most well-known examples of three-dimensional sculpture from the Renaissance.
5. Relief form: The Gates of Paradise by Lorenzo Ghiberti, a bronze sculpture from the Italian Renaissance period that is inlaid on the door of the St. John Baptistery in Florence, Italy, is a well-known example of a relief sculpture. ^(MasterClass)[10]

4. Colour



(Figure.04)

Colours are just the work of reflection of light. Colours are the first element to catch the eye of the viewer. It is necessary to have a 'colour harmony' in the artwork in order to maintain the aesthetics of it. This includes the correct use of primary, secondary and tertiary colours. Colour schemes are the ways in which colours are put together in an intelligent way. ^{(Fussell)[6]} Colour schemes such as monochromatic, analogous, complementary colours, triad colours, split complementary, warm colours, cool colours etc. are used in every art, making it look attractive and unique.

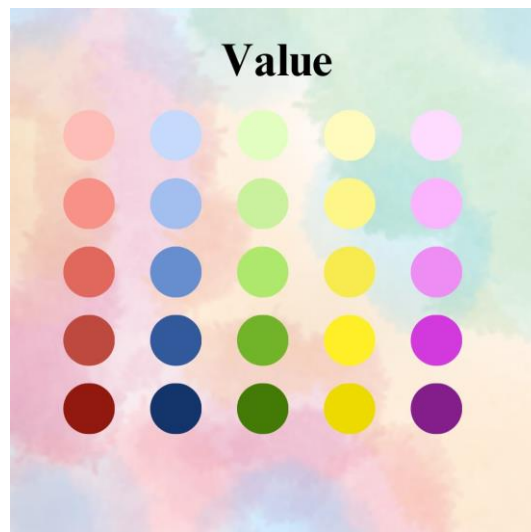
Colour Harmony

Colour Harmonies are certain colour combinations used in order to create an appealing look to the eyes. Proper colour combinations contribute greatly to the aesthetic value of the art. Colour combinations aren't randomly chosen but specifically selected by the artists depending on the theme, and the impression that is to be conveyed. The colour choice may vary depending on what is painted such as, a landscape of a jungle may contain lots of green, beach painting may include more of blue colour, etc.

- Complementary colours: Complementary colours exist completely opposite to each other in the colour wheel. They are the most appealing colour combinations. For example, red-green, yellow-purple, blue-orange. ^{(Wikipedia)[9]}
- Split-complementary colours: It is similar to complementary colours but the second colour splits into two nearby analogous colours making a 'Y' on the colour wheel.
- Double split- complementary: Just like split complementary, the colours split, but from both the sides. There are basically two pairs of complementary colours, consisting of where the 'X' shape lands on any four colours in the wheel.
- Analogous colours: It is a very simple colour scheme, with one chosen colour and other two on the both sides. ^{(Wikipedia)[9]} These colours are right next to each other on the colour wheel. For example, green, blue-green and blue. ^{(Cox)[3]}
- Triad colours: It comprises three colours present at equidistant from each other on the colour wheel in an equilateral triangle. The primary colours, red, blue and green are the simplest examples of triadic colour schemes. ^{(Wikipedia)[9]}

- Monochromatic colour scheme: The word ‘mono’ itself means one. In this scheme only one colour is used but, in different values and intensities. For example, light blue, blue and dark blue. (Cox)^[3]
- Warm colours: Warm colours involve one section of the colour wheel. These colours display the feeling of warmth such as yellow, orange and red as they define the colours of the warm fire.
- Cool colours: Cool colours involve the other half of the colour wheel, they define the feeling of coolness. Cool colours can be blue, violet and green as they define the colours of water and grass respectively.

5. Value



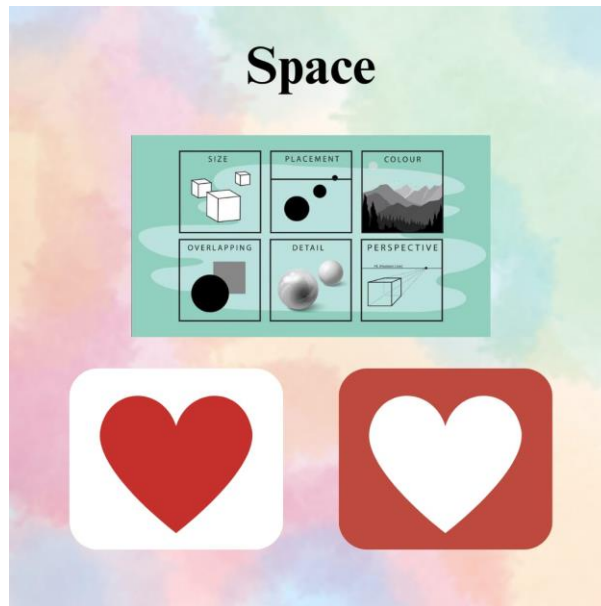
(Figure.05)

Value is directly related to contrast and tone. It refers to the range of lightness, darkness and highlights of shades. Value is created by a light source that shines on an object creating depth by highlights and shadows illuminating the local or actual colour of the subject. ^[3] (Cox) Value works with hues and defines the brightness of a colour. It also includes creating changes in the colours by mixing.

Categories of value

- Tint: Mixing white to a colour makes a ‘tint’. It includes light and pastel colours such as light blue, baby pink, lilac, etc.
- Shade: They consist of darker value shades by adding black to a colour such as, dark blue, and dark red.
- High-key: High-key includes light values.
- Low-key: This includes dark values.
- Value Contrast: It is light values placed next to dark values to create contrast or strong differences.
- Value Scale: It is a scale that shows the gradual change in value from its lightest value, (white) to its darkest value (black). (Cox)^[3]

6. Space



(Figure.06)

Space is the area provided for a particular purpose in an art. Sometimes the use of positive spaces and negative spaces defines an art in a certain way, letting the viewer understand the concept. In order to define the minute details of a work, space is created in two or three dimensions. It includes background, foreground and middle ground

Categories of Space

- Positive space – Similar to a positive shape, that is the shape of the object drawn.
- Negative space – Similar to a negative shape, it is the space around the drawn object.
- The drafting canvas or paper base's flat surface is referred to as the picture plane.
- A composition is the arrangement and alignment of all the components in a picture plane.
- A focal point of the piece of art is the subject or section that we want the spectator to centre their attention on immediately. ^{[3] (Cox)}

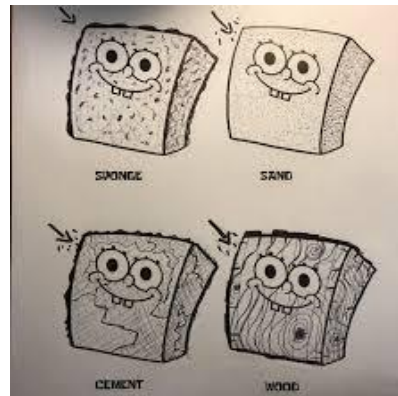
7. Texture



(Figure.07)

Texture is the quality of the surface of the object drawn. By using the technique of texture as an element, illusions of softness or hardness can be created. The magic is all in the hands of the artist, who can create textures flawlessly by using different methods of shading and colouring. From making a normal paper look like a surface of soft, fluffy cotton to making a smooth paper look like a rough, grainy texture of a rock, textures do play an important part in the elements of art. To give an example, a rectangular shape can only be considered as a block of mud or a sponge depending on the texture created.

Textures are of two types:



(Figure.08)

- Real Texture - Real texture is the actual texture of any object. Sculptures rely heavily on actual texture because they are three-dimensional forms. (“BMMS Visual Arts / Texture”)[7]
- Implied Texture - Implied textures can be two-dimensional textures created by the artist, giving the viewer the impression of a certain surface

<http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/LETS%20DRAW%20TEXTURE%20AFTERSCHOOL.pdf>

Role of Artists

Artists keep, make and transform meaning (Azzam)[8]. Artists play an important role in making an art as their responsibility is to convey the correct message to the viewers through their art without saying or writing anything. They have to make it possible for the viewers to understand the gist accurately hence, they have to create something which conveys the direct message to people. Different people have different interpretations about various things therefore it is necessary to ensure every person gets the same idea about it. In some cases, expressionists make it tricky for the people to comprehend the prime definition. The minds of the people can be greatly influenced through visual media, they only believe in what they see and interpret from the art. Artists have to make sure not to hurt the sentiments of the spectators by any misunderstandings created unintentionally by their project. The four roles of the artist include capturing in visual form the individuals, places, and occurrences of their era and location, assist the audience in discovering new and imaginative perspectives on the world, to embellish functional objects and structures with beauty and meaning, and to giving form to unimportant thoughts and feelings. First, by reproducing what they observe rather than inventing something new, the artist provides an artistic representation of the people, places, and events of their time frame. (Bartleby)[11].

Conclusion

In conclusion, the elements of art constitute separate and specified components or fragments of a piece of art. They are the components that constitute making a work of art. Individuals who comprehend and

evaluate the elements in the composition of a work of art will be able to more thoroughly understand an artist's decisions. They will be able to discuss whether or not a work of art is excellent and why. The arrangement of elements in an artwork is important. The artist determines the composition of all works of art. Composition establishes a hierarchy within the piece, thus informing the observer of the level of significance of the imagery and elements contained. Artists are the connectors, comforters, influencers, observers, mediators, interpreters and inspirations for the whole world. Artists have the unique ability to express themselves and communicate ideas in a way that resonates with people on a deep level. They can challenge the status quo, inspire change, and provide a new perspective on the world around us. Ultimately, artists help us to understand our humanity and bring us together as a society.

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