



Tyler Museum of Art's Elements and Principles of Design

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Elements of Design

Line

An element of design; line is created on a surface with a pointed moving tool. Lines can range in size, width, texture, and presentation. Common types of line are vertical, horizontal, diagonal, zig-zag, and curved.



Ancel E. Nunn, *Landscape with Victorian Cottage and Gazebo*, 1968, acrylic on panel, 21 inches X 31 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylERMuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/3A2ADBC5-3E42-4057-9052-429745422490>

In Ancel Nunn's painting, *Landscape with Victorian Cottage and Gazebo*, line is found in the following locations:

- The cottage is made with parallel horizontal lines to identify the wooden boards of the cottage.
- The blue-green windows are made from horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines that intersect at each corner.
- The thin columns of the cottage are made from vertical lines that help balance the horizontal lines of the cottage.
- The boards of the gazebo are horizontal lines, and the roof of the structure is held up by vertical lines.
- The tan grass that surrounds the cottage and gazebo are considered curved lines. Each blade of grass curves towards the right side of the composition.

Shape

An element of design; shape is a two-dimensional enclosed space that represents either an organic shape or a geometric shape. Geometric shapes include squares, circles, rectangles, triangles and other standard geometric shapes. Organic shapes include natural non-geometric shapes that are developed from curvilinear lines.



Rezalia Cleopatra Thrash, *Untitled (Still Life with Dogwood Branch)*, not dated, oil on canvas, 26 inches X 16.5 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/C982C08C-629E-43C0-888C-424099692500>

In Rezalia Cleopatra Thrash's painting, *Untitled (Still Life with Dogwood Branch)*, shape is found in the following locations:

- The petals of each white flower are organic shapes that resemble rounded squares.
- The leaves of the flowers are also organic, containing rounded sides that meet at a point.
- The vase can be considered an organic shape that exhibits an hourglass design.
- The two objects next to the vase are made from geometric shapes. They exhibit: a circle, a rounded square, and an oval that lays over the rounded square.
- The table and the tablecloth are both geometric rectangles.
- The curtain in the background is made from organic shapes, seen in each fold of the cloth.

Form

An element of design; form is a three-dimensional enclosed space that represents organic and geometric shapes in a third space. Geometric forms include cubes, spheres, triangular prisms, rectangular prisms, and cones. Organic shapes include three-dimensional forms observed in nature, such as trees, rivers, and rocks.



Phillip Wade, *Tarot Reading*, 1994, acrylic on canvas, 36.25 inches X 42.60, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylERMuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/8DA45E9B-A4F1-4C52-A469-474470745479>

In Philip Wade's painting, *Tarot Reading*, form is found in the following locations:

- The two boys, their clothing, candles, and tarot cards are modeled to appear three-dimensional.
 - o Wade accomplished this by setting the light source at the left side of the composition.
 - o This causes dark shadows to be placed on the right sides of the figures and objects.
 - o Additionally, he added small shadows to the clothing and background to emphasize the concept that two boys are sitting at a table and interacting with tarot cards.
- The viewer's eye perceives the composition as a representation of reality.

Space

An element of design; this term defines the surface area between, before, and behind an object in a composition.



Billy Hassell, *Roadrunners Near Marfa*, 2007, oil on canvas, 60 inches X 72 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/CDA833BD-769B-401F-9FD6-361458377998>

In Billy Hassell's painting, *Roadrunners Near Marfa*, space is found in the following locations:

- The roadrunner is in the foreground of the composition and directly interacting with the viewer's space.
- Beyond the bird, the composition appears to stretch back into the distance.
 - o The artist accomplished this by gradually painting the objects in the landscape in a smaller perspective.
 - o For example, the mountains in the background are smaller than the roadrunner.
 - o The visual shift in scale reveals that the mountains are in the distance and the roadrunner is in the foreground.

Color

An element of design; this term defines the pigments used in a painting. Color can be organized into categories, such as: hues, values, complements, and intensity.



David Bates, *Magnolia and Lemon*, 1999, woodcut on Japanese paper with over painting, 32.5 inches X 26.5 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/E7B19050-7F34-4540-9778-766992247040>

In David Bates' print, *Magnolia and Lemon*, color is found in the following locations:

- The artist uses the complementary colors of red and green pigments to create a bright color palette.
- Additionally, he balances the composition by having white and black pigments together.
- The colors are highly saturated, causing the flower and the lemon to appear brighter than the background of the canvas.
- The black outline that surrounds the objects in the painting helps the viewer's eye identify the color harmonies of red and green with white and black.

Value

Value is a spectrum applied to a hue. The color can have a dark value or a light hue. This process of changing the value is caused by adding white for light hues and black for dark hues.



Margie Crisp, *Pastoral*, 1997, charcoal on paper, 390 inches X 22.25 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/9AAD499A-BC71-411E-AACA-696083806740>

In Margie Crisp's charcoal drawing, *Pastoral*, value is found in the following locations:

- The entire composition exhibits a value shift from white to black.
- Due to the use of charcoal, the piece appears to be a night scene.
 - o The moon serves as the primary light source throughout the composition.
 - o The value shift is gradual and even, following the slopes of the landscape and the three-dimensionality of the visible objects.

Texture

An element of design; this term defines an artwork's surface. The artist's use of the chosen medium creates either implied or actual texture.



Mihailo Vukelic, *Interference*, 2001, cast bronze relief sculpture, 8 inches X 50 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/8033C912-42AD-48C3-BFCA-282133229888>

In Mihailo Vukelic's cast bronze relief, *Interference*, texture can be found in the following locations:

- Since the piece is cast in bronze, the artwork has visible and actual texture.
- In the image above, the light hitting the work reveals the raised surface of the bronze sculpture.
- The figures do not dramatically stand off of the bronze panel.
 - o Instead, the subtle raising of the figure's form helps the viewer identify the figures, objects, and implied landscapes.

Principles of Design

Balance

A principle of design; this term defines the arrangement of the presented imagery with the elements of design. It refers to either asymmetrical compositions or symmetrical compositions.



Donald S. Vogel, *Self Portrait*, 1989, oil on panel, 24 inches X 24 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/8A970141-9CE3-49C9-80C4-523624434943>

In Donald S. Vogel's painting, *Self Portrait*, balance can be seen in the following locations:

- The figure of the artist is placed at the left section of the composition.
 - o He inhabits most of the space in the painting.
 - o Directly above the artist, there is an empty space in the foreground.
- The artist's arms are extended towards a small plant, situated at the bottom right of the composition.
 - o Above the plant, in the foreground, is empty space.
 - o The artist contrasts the figure of the artist with the small figure of the plant to create balance in the foreground of the composition.

Unity

A principle of design; this term defines how the elements and principles of design are combined within a composition.



Jim Stoker, *East Texas Sumac*, 2005, oil on linen, 35.75 inches X 54 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/62CFD669-9A7D-49A6-BAC0-423345876300>

In Jim Stoker's painting, *East Texas Sumac*, unity is found the following locations:

- The entire composition is comprised of colorful ferns and abstract spots of energetic paint throughout the composition.
 - o The ferns and the spots of paint both use the following colors:
 - Red-orange
 - Yellow-green
 - Green
 - Blue-Green
 - And Red-Brown
- Using the same pigments for the ferns and the sports unifies the composition while allowing the elements to appear erratic.

Variety

A principle of design; this term defines the combination of imagery, objects, and ideas in an artwork.



Michael Kennaugh, *Twisting Skies*, 2006, acrylic, gesso, and graphite on paper, 30 inches X 22 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/37ADFD00-98C9-46AE-9EAA-128548195227>

In Michael Kennaugh's painting, *Twisting Skies*, variety is found in the following locations:

- The artist uses a mixture of shape, color, and line to evoke movement, balance, and emphasis.
 - o Movement is clearly seen in the rendering of the shapes and lines.
 - The eye follows each element, creating an idea of objects flowing around the painting.
 - o Balance is seen in the asymmetrical organization of shapes and lines.
 - Most of the shapes and lines are placed at the right of the composition and direct the eye towards the right side of the piece.
 - o The emphasis of the painting is found in the red organic shape.
 - Placed at the bottom of the composition, the eye is immediately drawn to the red hue.
 - Afterwards, the viewer's eye begins to circulate throughout the painting by following the movement of the formal elements.

Emphasis

A principle of design; this term defines the most prominent area in a composition. The viewer's eye is drawn to this point because the artist used a mixture of the elements and principles of design.



Dick Wray, *Untitled*, 1979, oil on canvas, 65 inches X 79.25 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/A66E59D3-6799-472E-8088-943672875489>

In Dick Wray's painting, *Untitled*, emphasis is identified in the following location:

- The emphasis of the piece is the composite rectangular shape that is visible in the bottom-left corner.
 - o The artist highlighted the form by surrounding the shape in lines that radiate outward to the edges of the painting.
 - o The bright green and red-orange hues emphasize the importance of the shape.

Movement

A principle of design; this term defines the visual movement observed in a painting. This can be identified as kinetic movement or implied movement. Additionally, movement can be defined as how the viewer's eye moves throughout the composition.



Liz Ward, *Ghost of the Old Mississippi: Baton Rouge to Donaldsonville*, 2014, watercolor, gouache, graphite, and collage, 72 inches X 32 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

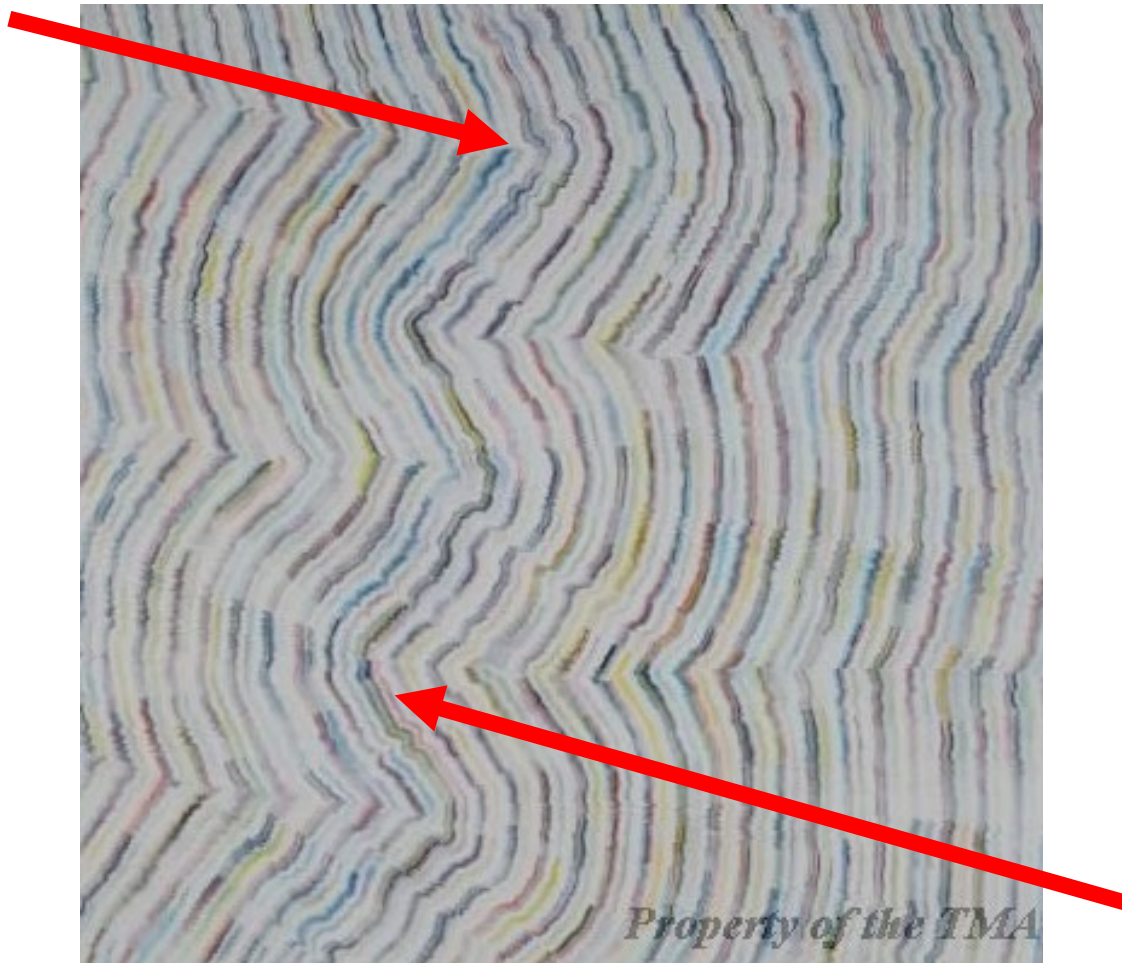
<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/2EC4AACF-08D6-43FB-86A8-383772393360>

In Liz Ward's painting, *Ghost of the Old Mississippi: Baton Rouge to Donaldsonville*, movement is primarily found in the following locations:

- The bold red, yellow, and blue lines that divide Ward's painting are curvy meandering lines.
 - o The viewer's eye follows each line down the center of the painting.
 - o As the lines intersect, the movement appears to quicken.
 - o Likewise, when the lines separate, the movement appears to slow down.

Pattern

A principle of design; this term defines the repetitive imagery and elements of design found in a composition.



Vincent Falsetta, *Untitled (CL 05-3)*, 2005, oil on canvas, 60 inches X 60 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

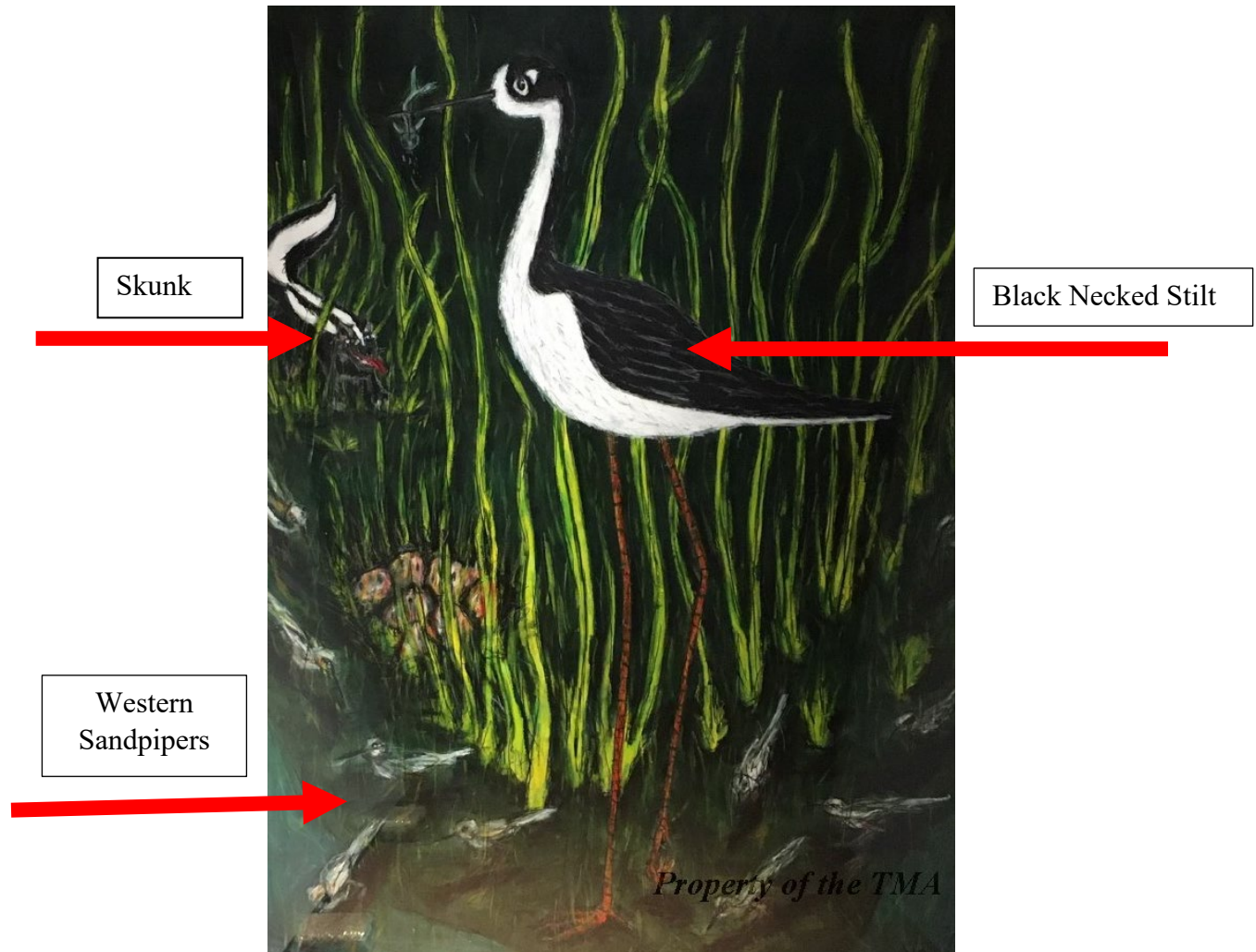
<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/A3EAD7CF-D7B8-43BE-A29D-812220105644>

In Vincent Falsetta's painting, *Untitled (CL 05-3)*, patterns can be found in the following locations:

- The pattern of the painting consists of multi-colored lines that bow out towards the right and left side of the composition.
- Examining the painting, it appears as though the original line that began the pattern is near the center of the painting.
 - o The line is highlighted by two red arrows and is more jagged than the remaining lines.

Proportion

A principle of design; this term defines the comparative size between objects in the composition. It can refer to the imagery within a painting or the size between a sculpture and a real object.



Frank Tolbert, *Black Necked Stilt*, 2015, oil-stick on paper, 60 inches X 44 inches, Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas.

<https://tylermuseum.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/9522E862-780A-47D4-B0B4-131796170610>

In Frank Tolbert's painting, *Black Necked Stilt*, proportion can be found in the following locations:

- The size of the black necked stilt, which is the largest animal in this composition, is compared to the small size of the western sandpipers and the skunk.