

## Drawing I Vocabulary List

### LINE

**Line:** The path of a moving point that is made by a tool, instrument, or material as it moves across an area. A line is usually made visible because it contrasts in value with its surroundings. Three-dimensional lines may be created by the use of materials like string, wire, rods, etc. A line immediately sets up a figure ground relationship; therefore it creates a sense of space.

**Point:** An element in space having a definite position and technically no dimension

**Dot:** The smallest two-dimensional element

**Stippling :** A method for producing areas of value by clustering small dots or points.

**Hatching :** Drawing several thin (usually parallel) lines close together to create an area of value.

**Cross-Hatching :** Superimposing hatched lines at right angles to the initial hatched lines, to build up value and to suggest form and volume.

**Contours :** The lines within an outline that give an object its volume, such as the hoops around a barrel. Sometimes used synonymously with **outline**.

**Cross-Contour:** A line that crosses and defines the surface undulations between, or up to, the outermost edges of shapes or objects.

**Outline :** A real or imaginary line that describes a shape and its edges or boundaries. A line that defines the outer most limits of an object, form or shape.

**Explicit Line:** A line or edge within which forms are clearly delineated: it may not always be a black line, but it has clear and distinct edges that stand out from the background.

**Gesture (As Line) :** A free line within and around a form showing the dynamics of a scene or pose, the action of drawing, and the movement of the eye rather than a tight arrangement of shapes.

**Implied Line :** An imaginary line created by arranging points or short lines in such a manner that our brains join them, for example, a dotted or dashed line. With lines that appear to stop, start, and disappear, the missing portions are implied to continue and are completed in the mind of the viewer.

**Weighted Line or Thick and Thin Line:** Thick and thin line is the use of varying widths and values of line by way of the pressure applied when creating a line with a drawing implement. A softer lead used with a drawing implement will yield a darker and wider line, while a harder lead will result in a narrower, lighter line. Hard lead pencils (H) give a crisp line, while soft lead pencil (B) produces a softer line.

**Lost and Found Edges:** Where edges are sometimes hard and sharp against a background, and sometimes are soft and blurred, receding into the background. Now you see them, now you don't.

**Line Quality:** A characteristic of line determined by its weight, direction, uniformity, or other features.

**Line Drawing:** A line drawing emphasizes only the linear aspects of drawing to accomplish numerous goals. A line drawing does not possess value or any type of shading technique. Through the use of thick and thin lines form is eluded to and space is achieved.

**Linear vs. Painterly:** In the established history of the Western Canon linear image making is the filling in of color or value within a shape that does not go beyond the contour of the shape or form. Linear images adhere toward the tradition of drawing. Painterly image making allows for the filling in of color or value to exceed the boundaries of the contour of the shape or form. Painterly images lend themselves to the creation of atmosphere and texture.

### SHAPE

**Shape:** An area that stands out from the space next to or around it because of a defined or implied boundary, or because of differences of value, color or texture.

**Form** : The apparent solidity or three-dimensionality of a drawn or painted object.  
The composition and structure of the work as a whole.

**Mass** : The apparent solidity of a form. The illusion of bulk and weight achieved by shading and lighting, or by overlapping and merging forms. In sculpture and architecture, it is the actual or apparent material substance and density of a form. It can be thought of as positive space, volume as negative space.

**Volume** : The illusion of enclosed space surrounded by or implied by a shape or form, and the space immediately adjacent to and around a painted form. In sculpture and architecture, the space occupied by the form and/or the immediate surrounding space. It can be thought of as positive space, volume as negative space.

**Plane**: A continuous surface limited by edges

**Figure** : The recognizable object we are depicting; a human figure, vase, or flower, for example. Traditionally, it is described as a positive shape, the ground as a negative shape.

**Silhouette**: The area bounded by the contours of an object or shape. Usually the shape is of a graphic or high contrasting value.

**Scale**: A ratio of the proportions or dimensions of a drawn object or scene to those of the original. When, for example, a drawing of a building is in the scale of one inch to ten feet, one inch in the drawing stands for ten feet of the actual size of the building. The relative size or extent of a visual image.

**Shifting Scale**: The act of making a shape, form, line, volume, etc. larger or smaller.

**Proportion**: Compares elements to one another in terms of size, quantity, or degree of emphasis. It may be expressed as a ratio, or may be a more generalized relativity.

**Distortion** : A departure from the accepted perception of a form or object, often manipulating conventional proportions.

**Implied Shape**: A shape created or suggested by the psychological connection of spaces or their edges, creating the visual appearance of a shape that does not physically exist.

## COMPOSITION

**Composition**: The term used for the format containing the formal elements and visual language of an image.

**Open Composition**: Placing elements in a composition so that they are cut off by the frame implying that the picture is a partial view of a larger scene.

**Closed Composition**: Composition in which the elements are contained by the edges of the canvas or the boundaries of the picture frame.

**Dominance**: The dominant structure or organization of a composition in which all the elements conform to. Major Force-The first movement you see in a composition.

**Subordinate**: The subdominant structures or organization of a composition that help to create subtlety and variety. Minor Forces-the movements you see in a composition after study, that support the dominant or subdominant structure

**Harmony**: State of order, visual unity, agreement or aesthetically pleasing relationships among the elements of the whole.

**Balance**: The equilibrium of opposing or interacting forces in a composition

**Imbalance**: Occurs when opposing or interacting forms are out of equilibrium in a composition

**Time/Motion**: A formal condition that implies a change in a visual environment, it implies a happening or event. A sequence of events that is interdependent of one another.

**Repetition**: The repeating of a form or motif within a composition to create harmony, connect differing visual languages and the establishment of a visual syntax.

**Symmetry:** The exact duplication of appearances in mirror-like repetition on either side of a composition, which is divided by the centerline of vision. Symmetry does not contain a center of interest. The viewer's attention remains locked in a static, grid that has been developed by the symmetry of the composition. Symmetry is usually something that is designed or constructed.

**Approximate Symmetry:** The use of similar imagery on either side of the centerline of vision. The visual material on one side resembles the visual material on the other, but is varied to prevent the formation of symmetry. In Approximate symmetry the composition will have competing centers of interest.

**Asymmetry:** Must be distinguished from chaos or absence of structure, implies an underlying symmetry. It is pictorial balance achieved with dissimilar objects that have equal visual weight or equal eye attraction without the use of an axis. Asymmetry will always have a focal point that is usually not in the center of the composition. The viewer's eye moves through composition via the use of directional movement.

**Picture Plane/Frame:** In perspective, the plane occupied by the surface of the picture. The actual edge of the surface on which a composition occurs.

**Edge and Framing:** Edge and framing refer to the interaction of the visual elements of the composition with the picture plane. The elements interact with the picture plane's edge by:

Touching the edge

Being cropped by the edge

Having a parallel position to the edge

The interaction of these elements with the picture plane determine whether a composition is open or closed.

**Focal Point/Center of Interest:** In a composition the point or area where the viewer's eye is drawn to first. The starting point which helps to move the viewer's eye through the composition by way of directional movement.

**Positive and Negative Space:** Positive space equals the objects within a composition, while negative space equals the space surrounding the objects. Measuring the positive and negative space allows for precise placement of objects while drawing from life or copying an image. When positive and negative space become equal in a composition, the image moves toward abstraction and the sense of space is diminished.

**Figure-Ground Relationship:** The relationship of an object to its surroundings in terms of perspective, form and atmosphere.

**Figure/Ground Reversal:** Even amounts of black to white (or color) where one pattern of shapes is not more or less dominant than the other. Usually ordered on a net structure such as a grid.

## PERSPECTIVE

**Space:** The three-dimensional void that elements occupy: the empty area between elements.

**Deep Space:** Majestic, awe-inspiring landscapes or distant mountains or rolling hills, also called infinite space.

**Shallow Space:** The illusion of limited depth: the imagery is only a slight distance back from the picture plane.

**Overlapping:** A depth cue, in which some shapes are in front of and partially hide or obscure others.

**Weaving Space:** A descriptive term describing the interlacing of line, shapes and forms through the use of overlapping to create a shallow, sometimes abstract, space.

**Perspective:** A system of representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface so that the effect is the same as if the actual scene were viewed from a given point, the objects appearing three-dimensional and receding in depth with the same space relationships. Perspective has three different viewpoints: one, two and three point perspective.

**One-Point Perspective:** A system of spatial illusion based on the convergence of parallel lines at a single vanishing point, usually on the horizon; only appropriate to interiors or vistas.

**Two-Point Perspective:** Linear perspective with two vanishing points, placed on the horizon at the left and right of the object, usually off the picture plane or canvas. Vertical lines remain parallel to the picture plane.

**Three-Point Perspective:** Linear perspective in which vertical lines converge toward a third vanishing point directly

above or below the object.

**Multiple Perspective:** Where paintings and drawings allowing us to see planes we couldn't possibly see in reality, unless we could get inside the picture and walk around.

**Aerial Perspective:** The illusion of deep space. Distant objects such as mountain ranges, seen through the haze of atmosphere, appear to have less detail and contrast than nearer objects, lighter values, and a shift in color toward the blue end of the spectrum- also called atmospheric perspective.

**Linear Perspective:** A formal method for drawing the way distant objects appear to be smaller than similar objects nearer to us by making parallel lines converge at a vanishing point or points on the horizon.

**Forced Perspective:** In a stage set, the illusion of distance created by using properties that are physically smaller than their real equivalents, so that they give the impression of being located some distance away.

**Vanishing Point:** In linear perspective, the point at which converging parallel lines appear to meet on the line of the horizon. There may be one or more vanishing points.

**Viewer's Location Point (station point):** In one-point perspective, a vertical axis through the vanishing point. One-point perspective assumes that the viewer is at a fixed point looking with one eye through the picture plane to the 3D world behind.

**Diminution:** The act or process of diminishing; a lessening or reduction

**Orthogonals:** Imaginary receding parallel lines at right angles to the field of vision which join horizontal lines of, say, a building, to the vanishing point; also called sight lines or guide lines.

**Repoussoir:** In aerial perspective, a prominent dark or contrasting form in the foreground, such as a tree or a lonely figure silhouetted against the landscape.

**Fractional Representation:** A device used by various cultures (notably the Egyptians) in which several spatial aspects of the same subject are combined in the same image, such as the front view of an eye on a side view of the head.

**Ground Plane:** The ground we stand on, rather than the (back)ground or canvas of the painting- or a more abstracted plane.

**Foreground, Mid-ground & Background:** The three zones of recession in a composition that has space or linear perspective.

**Bird's Eye View & Worm's Eye View:** Bird and worm's eye view are two viewpoints of perspective. Bird's eye view takes the position of looking at the subject matter from above, while worm's eye view assumes the position of looking from below. If bird or worm's eye view is being imposed as an aspect of perspective, the subject matter must be in three-point perspective.

**Center Line of Vision or Central Visual Ray:** The line of sight at the exact center of the cone of vision. It is that line which makes an angle of exactly 90 degrees with the picture plane.

**Cone of Vision:** The field of vision of the observer of a work of art. The cone of vision may be thought of as an infinite number of sight lines radiating for the eye.

**Foreshortening:** The diminishing of certain dimensions of an object or figure in order to depict it in a correct spatial relationship. In realistic depictions, foreshortening is necessary because although lines and planes that are perpendicular to the observer's line of vision, and the extremities of which are equidistant for the eye will be seen at the full size when they are revolved away from the observer they will seem increasingly shorter.

## VALUE

**Value:** The degree of lightness or darkness on a scale of grays running from dark gray to light gray. Value and its degrees of darkness and lightness are always relative to the environment in which it is viewed. Value has three aspects: shade, tint and tone.

**Shade:** the addition of black

**Tint:** the addition of white

**Tone:** the overall specific gray of a composition

**Value Emphasis:** Where a value contrast is used to create a focal point within a composition.

**Local Value:** Value of an object seen free from the effects of light and shadow.

**Value Pattern:** The shapes that an arrangement of various light and dark value areas in a composition make, independent of any colors used.

**Value Assimilation:** Two values which are close to one another, appear to look the same if they are separated by distance, or a contrasting value separates the two similar ones

**Optical Value:** Through Line, dot, or mark the illusion of value is achieved. The size, weight, and density of the mark are considered. The elements used are small, and close together so the eye cannot focus on mark separate from ground, but blurs them together.

**Value Contrast:** The value relationship between adjacent areas of light and dark.

**High Value Contrast:** The highest contrast of all in value is from black to white. This value contrast forms a hard edge that creates a linear quality.

**Minimum Value Contrast:** The least amount of difference between values (or any other element), the edge between them is a soft edge, or a vanishing boundary. This contrast of value can create a more expansive feel.

**Mid-Tones:** The tints at the center of a chromatic scale, midway between black and white.

**Low-Key Values:** A value that has a level of middle gray or darker, tints from middle gray to black.

**High-Key Values:** A value that has a level of middle gray or lighter, tints between the mid-tones and white.

**Gradation:** A series or progression of shades and tints of a value world or color world that move in a consistently seamless sequence from light to dark. The jumps from one value to the next in a gradation maybe large or small, but within one given gradation the transitions must consistently be the same. This consistency creates a seamless flow from one value to the next.

**Graduated Tint:** A continuous change in value with no observable banding.

**Shading:** The toning or filling in of areas of a picture (as by cross-hatching and by lightening or darkening a value) by means of which shadows, three-dimensional form and the absence of full illumination are depicted.

**Light Source:** The light source is the direction from which light is emanating in a composition. The light source defines how the subject matter is shaded when the use of value to create form is imposed. The light source does not need to be found within the borders of the picture plane.

**Highlight:** The part of an object that, from the viewer's position, receives the greatest amount of direct light. The highest value of a modeled form, or a bright distinct dot or area on the surface of a shiny form that accentuates its glossiness.

**Core Shadow:** The dark part of an object, away from and not directly illuminated by the light source. It is attached to the object, or encompasses a space.

**Cast Shadow:** The dark area projected from an illuminated form onto other objects or the background.

**Reflected Light:** The Portion of light that is deflected from a surface, as distinguished from transmitted or absorbed light.

**Chiaroscuro:** The distribution of light and dark in a picture. From the Italian 'chiaro' for clear or light and 'oscuro' for obscure or dark. In drawing, painting and the graphic arts, the rendering of forms through a balanced contrast between pronounced light and dark areas. The technique, which was introduced in the Renaissance, is effective in creating an illusion of depth and space around the principal figures in a composition. It has come to refer to the dramatic theatrical compositions of Caravaggio and Rembrandt.

#### **DRAWING AND VISUAL ART TERMINOLOGY:**

**Realism/Naturalistic:** Depicting real objects in a natural scene without distortion or stylization; representational or objective image making.

**Idealism (idealized)** : The world depicted as an artist thinks it should be, rather than as in naturalism, in which it is depicted as it is, warts and all. All flaws and deviations from the norm are corrected.

**Abstraction:** The depiction of real objects that exist in a space, but where the emphasis on realism has been subordinated or entirely discarded, and the aesthetic content is expressed in formal concerns of pattern, structure of shapes, line and/or color. Abstraction is the formal process of deconstructing the image within the picture plane, thereby emphasizing the picture plane as a flat surface and not a window.

**Nonobjective Images/ Non-Representational:** Entirely imaginary shapes with no reference to, or representation of, the natural world. Not representing an object, figure or element in nature in any direct way, thereby reinforcing the picture plane in the most extreme measures as an object or closed composition. The artwork is the reality.

**Objective** : Having real, tangible existence outside of the artist's mind, not influenced by personal feelings or opinions.

**Subjective:** Particular to a specific individual. Ideas that are modified or effect by an artist's personal views.

**Formalism:** In the arts, the observance of established rules, methods, and traditions. An established visual vocabulary that becomes the tools for depicting ideas, thoughts and emotions in an artistic medium. Formalism encompasses all the aspects of the visual image that are directly seen by the viewer.

**Conceptualism:** To conceive or form an idea. Why was the image created? Who is it for? What does it say to the viewer? Conceptualism encompasses all the aspects of the visual image that are indirectly perceived by the viewer

**Psychological Closure/Gestalt/Visual Unity:** These terms are examples of how our eye links up elements that are similar and sees the whole of an image before its parts. This can happen with shape, placement, value, and size. It is a way of unifying a composition through a visual pathway. Our eye links up what is similar, or close in proximity, or dominant or combinations of all three.

These visual similarities can create implied direction, implied line, implied force, implied shape or hierarchy of shape as well as rhythm, pattern, and movement.

**Studio Practice:** The process, tools, materials and methods used by an individual in the creation of something that is designed.

**Gesture (drawing)** : Gesture drawing explores the form and movement of an object in space, as your eye follows its shape. A gesture drawing is the initial stage of a drawing. It is the recorded information of the subject matter being depicted that captures the movement, speed and general position. A gesture is a non-committal stage of drawing. It can be drawn lightly, and can be reworked numerous times.

**Thumbnail Sketch:** A rough sketch of very small proportions used to map out a larger scale and more complex composition.

**Preliminary Sketch:** A drawing or other composition that is not intended as a finished work, but an exploration into formal and conceptual ideas for a finished, more advanced image.

**Blind Contour Drawing:** A drawing where the attention of the drawn line is on the outline of the model or object. The line is drawn in a steady, continuous motion without lifting the pencil or looking at the paper. A procedure of hand placement on the drawing by viewing the subject matter and then beginning the execution of the drawing without looking at the subject matter. This exercise aids in the concentrate of viewing aspects of line within subject matter and also develops formal elements of line speed, weight and control.