

## ART 110 - MID-TERM VOCABULARY

**absolute symmetry** Term used when each half of a composition is exactly the same. 134

**abstract** In art, the rendering of images and objects in a stylized or simplified way, so that though they remain recognizable, their formal or expressive aspects are emphasized. Compare both *representational* and *nonobjective art*. 33

**Abstract Expressionism** A painting style of the late 1940s and early 1950s, predominantly American, characterized by its rendering of expressive content by *abstract* or *nonobjective* means. 507

**acrylic** A plastic resin that, when mixed with water and pigment, forms an inorganic and quick-drying paint *medium*. 203

**additive process** 1 In color, the fact that when different *hues* of colored light are combined, the resulting mixture is higher in key than the original hues and brighter as well, and as more and more hues are added, the resulting mixture is closer and closer to white.

**aesthetic** Our sense of what is beautiful. 10

**afocal** Without any focal points. 141

**analogous colors** Pairs of colors, such as yellow and orange, that are adjacent to each other on the *color wheel*. 102

**arbitrary color** Color that has no *realistic* or natural relation to the object that is depicted, as in a blue horse or a purple cow, but that may have emotional or expressive significance. 112

**asymmetrical balance** Balance achieved in a composition when neither side reflects or mirrors the other. 136

**atmospheric perspective** A technique, often employed in landscape painting, designed to suggest three-dimensional space in the two-dimensional space of the picture plane, and in which forms and objects distant from the viewer become less distinct, often bluer or cooler in color, and contrast among the various distant elements is greatly reduced. 89

**balance** The even distribution of weight, either *actual weight* or *visual weight*, in a composition. 134

**bilateral symmetry** Term used when the overall effect of a composition is one of *absolute symmetry*, even though there are clear discrepancies side to side. 134

**binder** In a *medium*, the substance that holds *pigments* together. 165

**canon of proportion** The “rule” of perfect proportions for the human body as determined by the Greek sculptor Polyclitus in a now lost work, known as the *Canon*, and based on the idea that each part of the body should be a common fraction of the figure’s total height. 147

**cartoon** As distinct from common usage, where it refers to a drawing with humorous content, any full-size drawing, subsequently transferred to the working surface, from which a painting or *fresco* is made. 163

**cast shadow** In *chiaroscuro*, the shadow cast by a figure, darker than the shadowed surface itself. 94

**chiaroscuro** In drawing and painting, the use of light and dark to create the effect of three-dimensional, *modeled* surfaces. 93

**collage** A work made by pasting various scraps or pieces of material—cloth, paper, photographs—onto the surface of the *composition*. 205

**color wheel** A circular arrangement of *hues* based on one of a number of various color theories. 101

**combine-painting** Robert Rauschenberg’s name for his works of high-relief collage. 208

**complementary colors** Pairs of colors, such as red and green, that are directly opposite each other on the *color wheel*. 104

**composition** The organization of the formal elements in a work of art. 37

**conté crayon** A soft drawing tool made by adding clay to graphite. 169

**content** The meaning of an image, beyond its overt *subject matter*, as opposed to *form*. 30

**contour lines** The perceived lines that mark the border of an object in space. 49

**cross-hatching** Two or more sets of roughly parallel and overlapping lines, set at an angle to one another, in order to create a sense of three-dimensional, *modeled* space. See also *hatching*. 96

**Cubism** A style of art pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in the first decade of the twentieth century, noted for the geometry of its forms, its fragmentation of the object, and its increasing abstraction. 496

**diagonal recession** In perspective, when the lines recede to a *vanishing point* to the right or left of the *vantage point*. 75

**encaustic** A method of painting with molten beeswax fused to the support after application by means of heat. 184

**en plein air** also “*plein-air* painting” A French expression meaning “in the open air,” used specifically to refer to the act of painting outdoors. 197

**figure-ground relation** The relationship between a work of art the figure and the surface upon which the work is made the ground. 68

**focal point** In a work of art, the center of visual attention, often different from the physical center of the work. 140

**foreshortening** The modification of perspective to decrease distortion resulting from the apparent visual contraction of an object or figure as it extends backward from the picture plane at an angle approaching the perpendicular. 79

**form** 1 The literal *shape* and *mass* of an object or figure. 2 More generally, the materials used to make a work of art, the ways in which these materials are used in terms of the formal elements line, light, color, etc., and the *composition* that results. 37

**fresco** Painting on plaster, either dry *fresco secco* or wet *buon*, or true *fresco*. In the former, the paint is an independent layer, separate from the plaster proper; in the latter, the paint is chemically bound to the plaster, and is integral to the wall or support. 185

**Futurism** An early twentieth-century art movement, characterized by its desire to celebrate the movement and speed of modern industrial life. 70

**genres** In film, a style having a particular content, such as *Westerns*, *Romances*, and so on. 260

**gesso** A plaster mixture used as a *ground* for painting. 188

**gouache** A painting *medium* similar to *watercolor*, but opaque instead of transparent. 200

**grid** A pattern of horizontal and vertical lines that cross each other to make uniform squares or rectangles. 56

**hatching** An area of closely spaced parallel lines, employed in drawing and *engraving*, to create the effect of shading or *modeling*. See also *cross-hatching*. 96

**highlights** The spot or one of the spots of highest key or value in a picture. 94

**hue** A color, as found on a *color wheel*. 101

**iconography** The study or description of images and symbols. 39

**impasto** Paint applied very thickly to canvas or support. 53

**implied line** A line created by movement or direction, such as the line established by a pointing finger, the direction of a glance, or a body moving through space. 50

**Impressionists** The painters of the Impressionist movement in nineteenth-century France whose work is characterized by the use of discontinuous strokes of color meant to reproduce the effects of light. 488

**intensity** The relative purity of a color’s *hue*, and a function of its relative brightness or dullness; also known as *saturation*. 101

**intermediate colors** The range of colors on the *color wheel* between each *primary color* and its neighboring *secondary colors*; yellow– green, for example. 101

**kinetic art** Art that moves. 122

**line** A mark left by a moving point, actual or implied, and varying in direction, thickness, and density. 48

**linear perspective** See *one-point linear perspective* and *two-point linear perspective*. 75

**local color** As opposed to optical color and *perceptual color*, the actual *hue* of a thing, independent of the ways in which colors might be mixed or how different conditions of light and atmosphere might affect color. 111

**mass** Any solid that occupies a three-dimensional volume. 69

**medium** Plural form, *media* 1 Any material used to create a work of art. 2 In painting, a liquid added to paint that makes it easier to manipulate. 101

**memento mori** From the Latin “remember that you will die,” an image that invites viewers to contemplate their own mortality. 556

**metalpoint** A drawing technique, especially silverpoint, popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in which a stylus with a point of gold, silver, or some other metal was applied to a sheet of paper treated with a mixture of powdered bones or lead white and gumwater. 165

**Minimalism** A style of art, predominantly American, that dates from the mid-twentieth century, characterized by its rejection of expressive content and its use of “minimal” formal means. 509

**mixed media** The combination of two or more *media* in a single work. 204

**modernism** Generally speaking, the various strategies and directions employed in twentieth-century art—*Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism*, etc.—to explore the particular formal properties of any given *medium*. 506

**monochromatic** A color composition limited to a single *hue*. 110

**naturalism** A brand of representation in which the artist retains apparently realistic elements but presents the visual world from a distinctly personal or subjective point of view. 35

**negative shape or space** Empty space, surrounded and shaped so that it acquires a sense of form or volume. 68

**nonobjective art** Art that makes no reference to the natural world and that explores the inherent expressive or aesthetic potential of the formal elements—line, shape, color—and the formal *compositional* principles of a given *medium*. Also known as nonrepresentational art. 33

**oil paint** A medium using linseed oil as a binder that became particularly popular beginning in the fifteenth century. 193

**one-point linear perspective** A version of *linear perspective* in which there is only one *vanishing point* in the *composition*. 75

**Op Art** An art style particularly popular in the 1960s in which line and color are manipulated in ways that stimulate the eye into believing it perceives movement. 124

**outline** The edge of a shape or figure depicted by an actual line drawn or painted on the surface. 49

**palette** Literally, a thin board, with a thumb hole at one end, upon which the artist lays out and mixes colors, but, by extension, the range of colors used by the artist. In this last sense, a *closed* or *restricted palette* is one employing only a few colors and an *open palette* is one using the full range of *hues*. 102

**pastel** 1 A soft crayon made of chalk and pigment; also, any work done in this *medium*. 2 A pale, light color. 170

**pattern** A repetitive motif or design. 56

**pencil** A drawing tool made of graphite encased in a soft wood cylinder. 169

**perceptual color** Color as perceived by the eye. Compare *local color*. 111

**perspective** The way in which the picture plane—the flat surface of the canvas—functions as a window through which a specific scene is presented to the viewer. 66

**pigments** The coloring agents of a *medium*. 165

**pointillism** A style of painting, championed by Georges Seurat in particular, consisting of small points of pure colors, juxtaposed with one another, in the belief that they might mix together in the viewer’s eye—so that a dot of blue next to a dot of yellow might produce the effect of green. 107

**polychromatic** A color composition consisting of a variety of *hues*. 110

**Pop Art** A style arising in the early 1960s characterized by emphasis on the forms and imagery of mass culture. 508

**positive shapes** The figure in a *figure-ground relation*. 68

**Post-Impressionism** A name that describes the painting of a number of artists, working in widely different styles, in France during the last decades of the nineteenth century. 490

**postmodernism** A term used to describe the willfully plural and eclectic art forms of contemporary art. 154

**primary colors** The *hues* that in theory cannot be created from a mixture of other hues and from which all other hues are created—namely, in *pigment*, red, yellow, and blue, and in refracted light, red–orange, green, and blue–violet. 101

**proportion** In any composition, the relationship between the parts to each other and to the whole. 147

**radial balance** A circular composition in which the elements project outward from a central core at regular intervals, like the spokes of a wheel. 138

**realism** Generally, the tendency to render the facts of existence, but, specifically, in the nineteenth century, the desire to describe the world in a way unadulterated by the imaginative and idealist tendencies of the *Romantic* sensibility. 33

**Renaissance** The period in Europe from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, characterized by a revival of interest in the arts and sciences that had been lost since antiquity. 444

**representational art** Any work of art that seeks to resemble the world of natural appearance. 33

**restricted palette** A selection of colors limited in its range of *hues*. 110

**rhythm** An effect achieved when shapes, colors, or a regular *pattern* of any kind is repeated over and over again. 150

**saturation** See *intensity*. 101

**scale** The comparative size of an object in relation to other objects and settings. 144

**secondary colors** *Hues* created by combining two *primary colors*; in *pigment*, the secondary colors are traditionally considered to be orange, green, and violet; in refracted light, yellow, magenta, and cyan. 101

**shade** A color or *hue* modified by the addition of another color, resulting in a *hue* of a darker value, in the way, for instance, that the addition of black to red results in maroon. 93

**shadow** The unlighted surface of a form rendered by *modeling* or *chiaroscuro*. 94

**shape** A two-dimensional area, the boundaries of which are measured in terms of height and width. More broadly, the *form* of any object or figure. 66

**simultaneous contrast** A property of *complementary colors* when placed side by side, resulting in the fact that both appear brighter and more intense than when seen in isolation. 104

**solvent** A thinner that enables paint to flow more readily and that also cleans brushes; also called *vehicle*. 184

**spectrum** The colored bands of visible light created when sunlight passes through a prism. 100

**subject matter** The literal, visible image in a work of art, as distinguished from its *content*, which includes the *connotative*, symbolic, and suggestive aspects of the image. 30

**subtractive process** 1 In color, the fact that, when different *hues* of colored *pigment* are combined, the resulting mixture is lower in key than the original hues and duller as well, and as more and more hues are added, the resulting mixture is closer and closer to black. 101

**symbols** Images that represent something more than their literal meaning. 39

**symmetrical** When two halves of a *composition* correspond to one another in terms of size, shape, and placement of forms. 134

**tempera** A painting *medium* made by combining water, pigment, and, usually, egg yolk. 188

**temperature** The relative warmth or coolness of a given *hue*; hues in the yellow–orange–red range are considered to be warm, and hues in the green–blue–violet range are considered cool. 102

**tenebrism** From the Italian *tenebroso*, meaning murky, a heightened form of *chiaroscuro*. 94

**texture** The surface quality of a work. 116

**time and motion** The primary elements of temporal media, linear rather than spatial in character. 116

**tint** A color or *hue* modified by the addition of another color, resulting in a hue of a lighter value, in the way, for instance, that the addition of white to red results in pink. 93

**trompe l’oeil** A manner of two-dimensional representation in which the appearance of natural space and objects is recreated with the intention of fooling the eye of the viewer, who may be convinced that the subject actually exists in three-dimensional space. 7

**two-point linear perspective** A version of *linear perspective* in which there are two or more *vanishing points* in the *composition*. 77

**vanishing point** In *linear perspective*, the point on the horizon line where parallel lines appear to converge. 75

**vanitas** A tradition of still-life painting, especially popular in northern Europe in the seventeenth century, reminding the viewer of the frivolous quality, or vanity *vanitas* in Latin, of human existence. 57

**vantage point** In *linear perspective*, the point where the viewer is positioned. 75

**wash** Large flat areas of ink or *watercolor* diluted with water and applied by brush. 175

**watercolor** A painting *medium* consisting of *pigments* suspended in a solution of water and gum arabic. 198