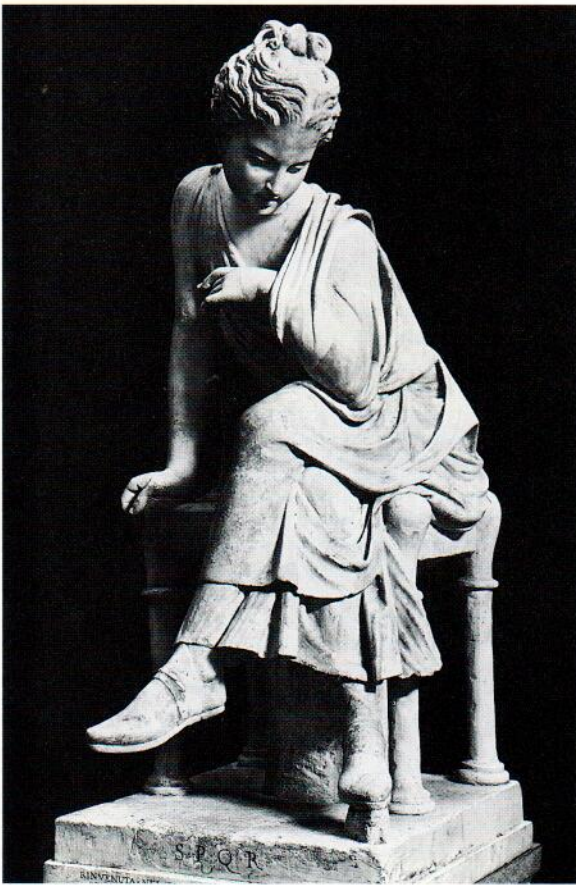


# Introduction

## What Is Design?

The design of a work of art is its plan. Design can refer either to the way a piece is organized or to the piece itself. We might talk about the design of a fine piece of sculpture, a startling painting or photograph, an unusual building, or an interesting layout for an advertisement. When someone says “That’s a great design!,” he or she is recognizing a sense of visual order—different parts brought together to make a whole.

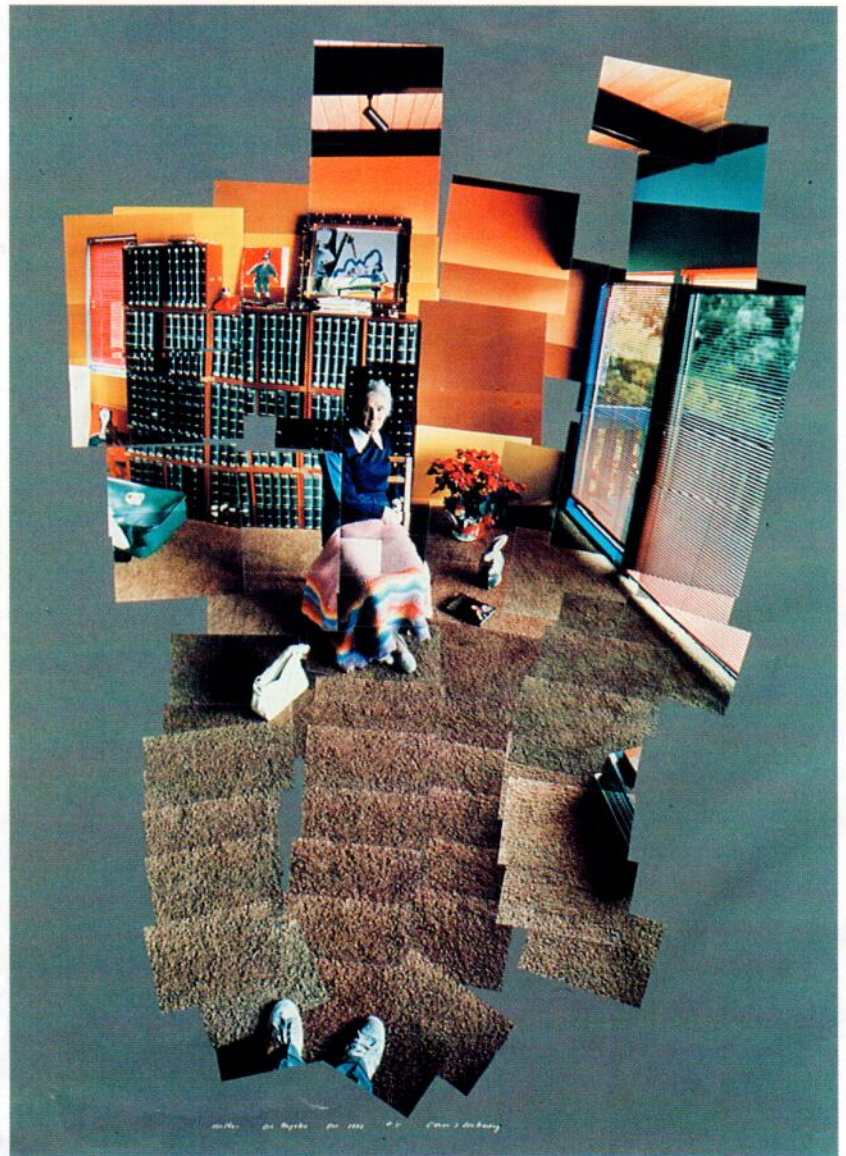


The human figure has been a favorite subject of artists since ancient times, providing an endless number of visual problems to solve. There are many challenges in designing a graceful and balanced figure such as this seated girl.

*Seated Girl.* Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome.  
Alinari/Art Resource, NY.

A work of art sometimes holds an element of surprise. This image represents the artist’s mother. It recalls a simple snapshot, but the artist has manipulated the design. The space within the image and its overall shape are unexpected, and therefore attract our attention.

David Hockney (b. 1937). *Mother, Los Angeles*, 1982. Photographs, 52 ½" x 38 ¾" (133.4 x 98 cm). Estate of Frederick R. Weisman.







The elements and principles of design may be used to communicate or emphasize a message or a concept. Using the title as a clue, what do you think is the idea behind this work?

James Doolin (b. 1932). *Last Painter on Earth*, 1983. Oil on canvas, 72" x 120" (182.5 x 304.5 cm). Courtesy of the Koplin Gallery, Los Angeles, California.

Design surrounds us—in nature or at home, in a flower or a dinner plate. Design affects the print displays in magazines, the furniture styles in department stores, and the shapes and colors of cars and bicycles. You probably use design without even knowing it. When you buy one piece of clothing rather than another, or decorate a wall with this poster instead of that one, you are reacting to issues of design.

To know when or why one design is better or more successful than another, ask what makes it work and how it is put together. Does the design hold your interest? Is its purpose meant to entertain? To convince? To frighten? Does it achieve that goal? Also consider how the piece makes you feel and why.





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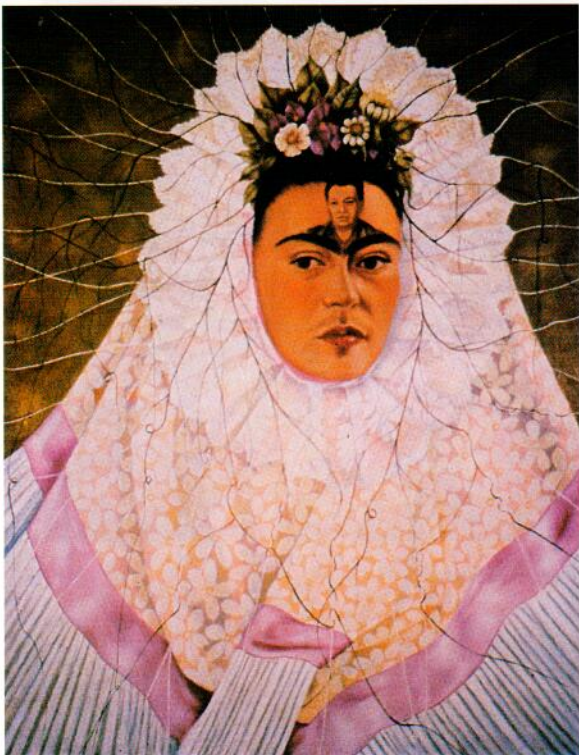


## Appreciating Design

Appreciating or creating a work of art takes time and effort. One way to improve your design sense and judgment is to stop and carefully look at some of the hundreds of objects that you encounter daily. Although there are no absolute rules in art, this book will help you know what to look for. It will help you understand and be able to discuss your personal reactions to design. And it should improve your ability to communicate feelings and ideas in your own creations.

With practice, we can learn to recognize elements of design in everyday objects. Consider the lines used in the design of this umbrella. There are the straight, rigid lines of the spokes and the broad, freer lines of the written characters.

*Umbrella.* Photo by A. W. Porter.



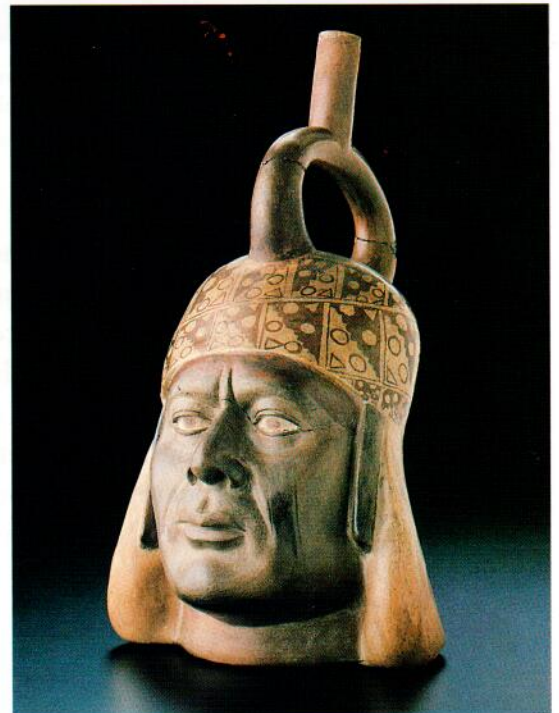
This painting is a self-portrait of the artist. Artworks can capture the very personal feelings of an artist.

Frida Kahlo (1910-53). *Autorretrato como tehuana (Diego en mi pensamiento)*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 30" x 24" (76 x 61 cm). Gelman Collection. Courtesy of the Centro Nacional de las Artes, Biblioteca de las Artes, Mexico. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura.



The same elements of design used by the creator of this masterpiece over 1,200 years ago are still used to create art today.

Portrait vessel of a ruler, Peruvian, Moche culture, 300/700. Earthenware with pigmented clay slip, 14" high (35.6 cm). Kate S. Buckingham Endowment, 1955.2338. Art Institute of Chicago.





## Elements and Principles of Design

This book contains two parts. The first part is devoted to the elements of design—the ingredients that artists use to create an artwork. The second part discusses the principles of design, the different ways in which artists combine the elements to achieve a desired effect or outcome. Although this book presents each element and principle separately, no one of them appears alone in a design: the elements and principles work together.

Throughout the twelve chapters are images of a variety of fine art, architecture, crafts, advertisements, and designs from nature. There are designs from different time periods and cultures. Each image is intended to help explain some idea in the text and to help you develop your looking skills. But remember: the elements and principles of design work together. Although each image is carefully placed to illustrate a particular principle or element, many of the images could illustrate a different concept in another chapter.



Some works of art, such as *Peasant Dance*, are quite complex in their design; others are rather simple. Each presents its own visual problems for the artist to solve.

Pieter Brueghel the Younger (1564/5–1637/8). *Peasant's Dance*, c. 1566–67. Panel, 44  $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 64  $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria. Photo Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.



## Observing Design

6 Although the hundreds of images may also offer guidance, inspiration, and solutions to problems in creating your own artwork, be aware that they are only photographic reproductions. An image may be quite different from the real thing, and it often does not or can not accurately reproduce a work's actual size or color. The best way to experience art is to study it in person—whether at museums and galleries, or in public parks and buildings.

Successful visual artists and designers are careful observers and collectors of ideas. Their designs reflect intimate knowledge of the world, as well as a desire to share their personal feelings and reactions with others. If you wish to achieve similar results, you must continue your exploration and study of design both in and outside the classroom.



The shapes and forms that create a building's design can vary from ordinary to spectacular. How might your house, school, or church be considered a designed space?

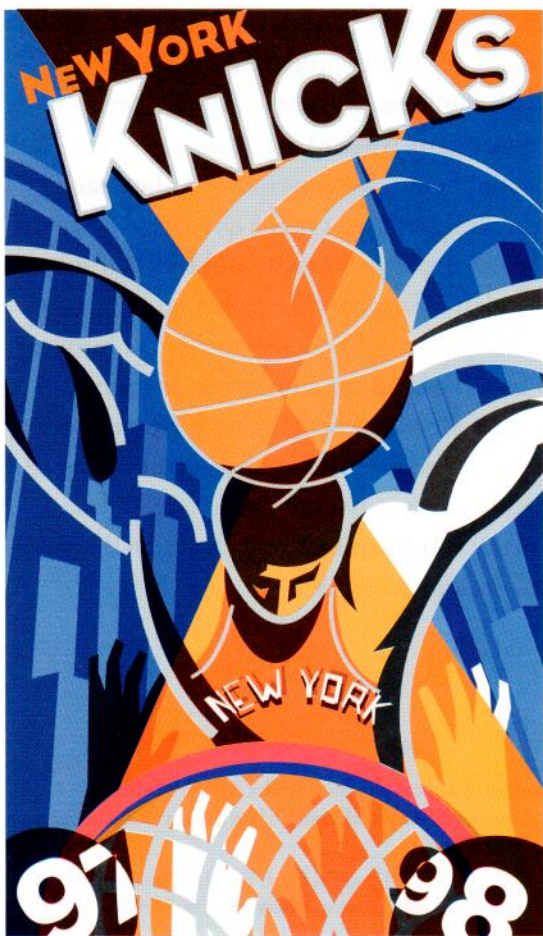
Le Corbusier, Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut, 1951–53, Ronchamp, France. View from southeast. © 1987 Oliver Radford.





A photographic reproduction of an artwork can be beautiful and inspirational, but it does not always give us an accurate view of the work. For example, note the measurements of *Howl from the Past*. In life, it is approximately five times larger than Kahlo's image shown on page 4.

Sylvia Glass (20th cent.)  
*Howl from the Past*, 1987.  
 Acrylic and pastel on cloth,  
 55" x 56 1/2" (140 x 144 cm).  
 Courtesy of the artist.



The designer of this graphic sought to convey an immediate message. Do you think the image is a successful communicator? Why or why not?  
 Graphic for New York Knicks 1997-98 season.  
 Courtesy of Mecca Studios, New York.



An understanding of the elements and principles of visual design will make you a more careful observer; as a result, you might more fully enjoy the pleasures of design in fine art, manufactured objects, and nature.  
 Philip Moulthrop (b. 1947). *White Pine Mosaic Bowl*, 1993.  
 White pine and resin; lathe-turned, 14 1/4" x 20 1/2" (36.2 x 52.1 cm). White House Collection of Contemporary Crafts.  
 Photo by John Bigelow Taylor, N.Y.C.



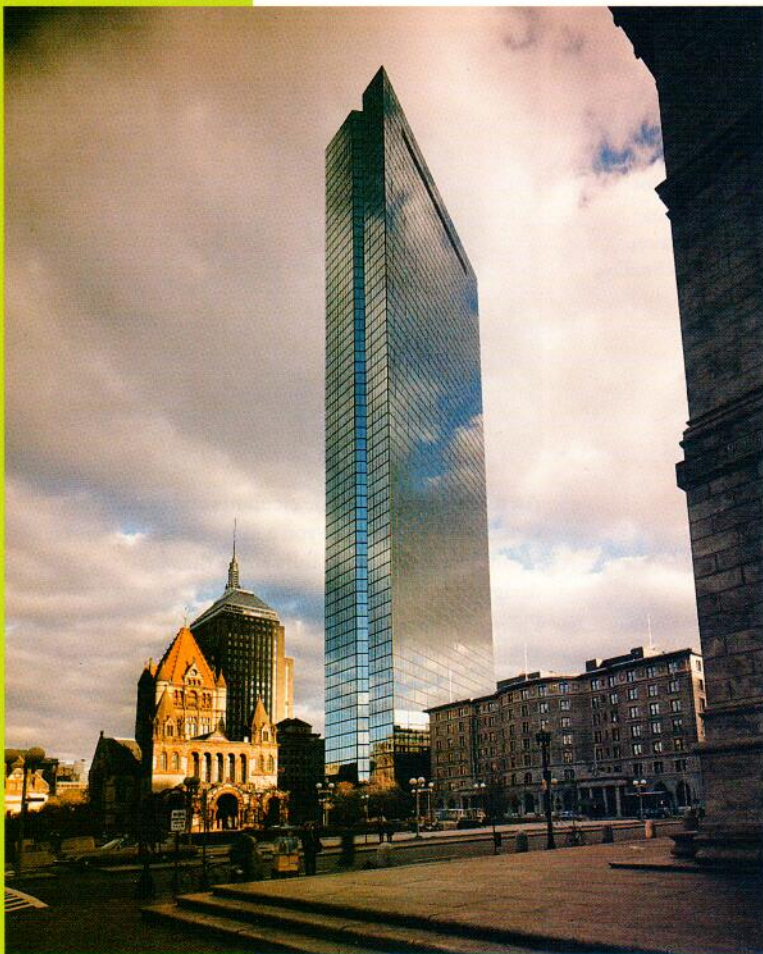
# Part One: The Elements of Design

Every creative process has its own tools and ingredients. Writers use paper and pen or computers to put together the ingredients of language, such as nouns and verbs. Chefs have ovens, pans, and spoons to create food by mixing assorted ingredients, such as flour, eggs, and fruit. Artists and designers might use brushes, paint, and canvas to combine the basic ingredients of art: the elements of design.

The elements of design include line, shape, form, value, color, space, and texture. You can see these elements all around you: nature offers an almost unlimited supply of them. The element of line, for example, can be seen in the thin stem of a flower, the curving ridge

of a sand dune, or the intricate markings of a tropical fish. The six chapters of Part One define and provide many examples of each element.

Although the elements of design are the basic parts of any work of art, there are many ways to use them. Like a writer or a chef, each artist and designer must make choices. An artist might choose to express ideas and feelings visually in pastel drawings, acrylic paintings, or sculpture. A designer might choose to express him- or herself in the design for a towering office building. In the following chapters, each element of design is isolated for study and discussion, but in both nature and art, they are rarely seen alone. Their many combinations provide a rich diversity of visual designs to explore.



Shape and form are emphasized in the design of this skyscraper. Another essential element of its design is the shiny, reflective glass.

Henry N. Cobb (1859–1931) of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners Architects LLP. John Hancock Tower, Boston, Massachusetts. ©1980 Steve Rosenthal.





The designed artifacts of ancient civilizations provide us with clues about their history and culture.

*Hieroglyphics*. Photo by A. W. Porter.



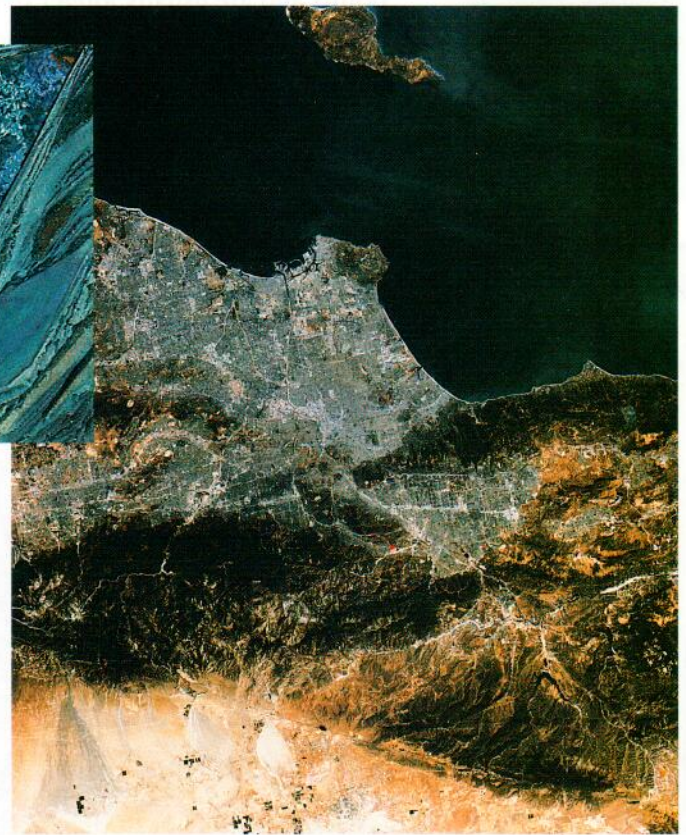
Some artworks are crisp and clear in their construction. Notice the sharp lines and simple shapes used by this artist.

Edward Ruscha (b. 1937). *Standard Station*, 1966. Silkscreen print, 25 3/4" x 40" (65.4 x 101.6 cm). Edition of 50. Courtesy of the artist.



Nature often inspires artists. Dill (inset) creates abstract pieces that appear like land masses seen from a great distance. He often draws inspiration from photos released by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Compare the photo with Dill's artwork. What similarities do you find?

Laddie John Dill (b. 1943). *Untitled*, 1989. Cement and glass, 24" x 48" (61 x 122 cm). Courtesy of the artist.

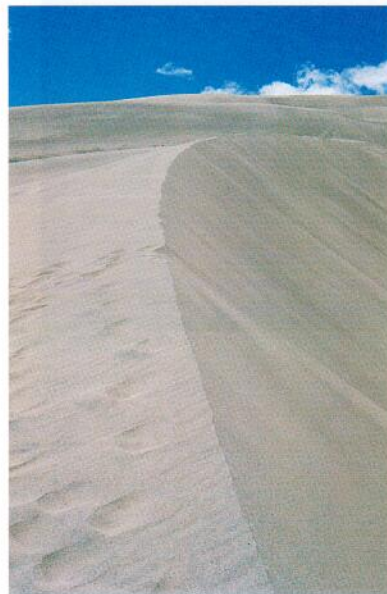


This satellite photo of the Los Angeles area was released by the Jet Propulsion Laboratories in California. It marked the beginning of a computer and animation project sponsored by NASA's Office of Space Science and Applications that would allow scientists to study the three-dimensional nature of global cloud cover.

LANDSAT satellite photo of Los Angeles area. Courtesy of the Public Information Office, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Pasadena, California.

The elements of design can be found in nature. Artists often use nature as a guide or inspiration when designing.

*Sand dunes*. Photo by H. Roman.





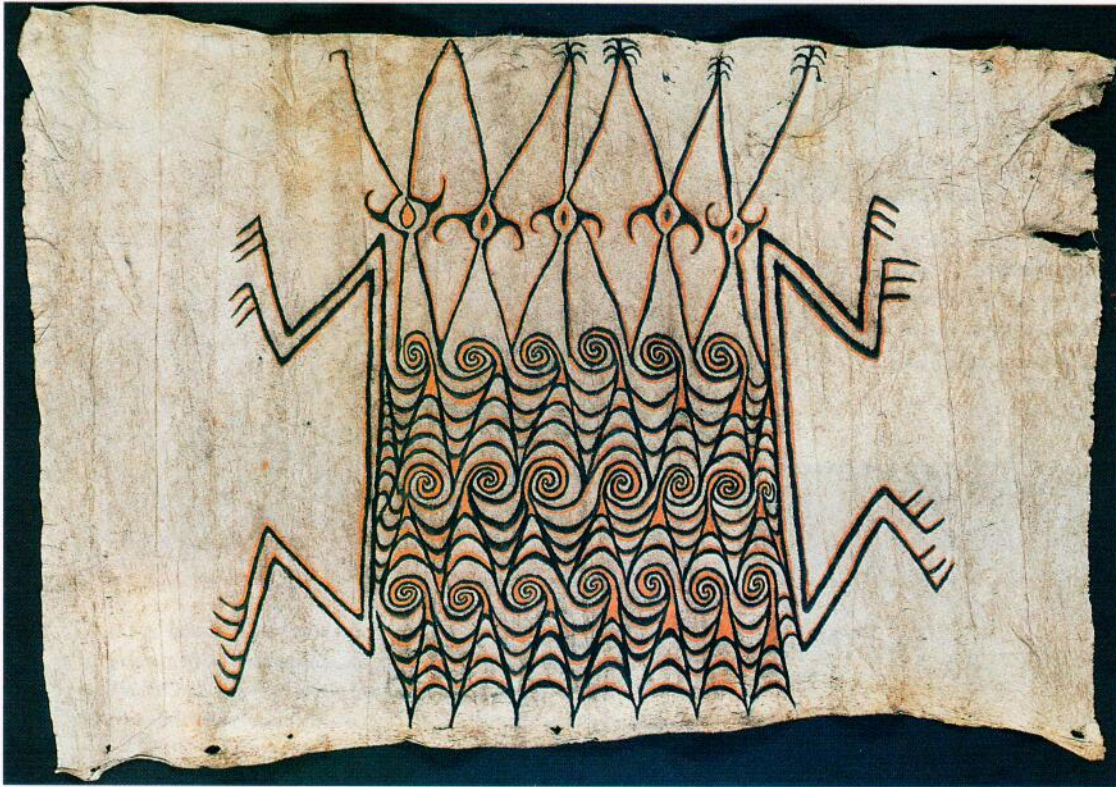
# 1 Line

## Key Vocabulary

structural lines  
outline  
contour lines  
gesture line  
sketch line  
calligraphy  
line personality  
implied line  
line of sight

**E**XAMPLES OF LINE ARE EVERYWHERE. In nature, you see them as the stem of a flower and the stripes on a zebra. In architecture, the edge of a skyscraper and a fence surrounding a house both form lines. In art, lines may be the path made by a pencil or the stroke of a paintbrush. They are created by the wires of a mobile or the carvings in a stone sculpture. Lines are also formed when two objects meet or overlap, such as the line made by your upper and lower lips when you smile.

Lines can be thin or thick, continuous or interrupted. In general, they connect two points and are usually longer than they are wide. Whether you draw on the wet sand of a beach or write your initials on a chalkboard, you are using one of the most basic elements of design—the line.



1-1 This work is from the island of New Guinea, near Australia. What words would you use to describe the creature or creatures depicted? How do the lines used by the artist help you describe the image?

New Guinea (Lake Senteni, Irian Jaya). *Barkcloth*, collected 1926. 68  $\frac{7}{8}$ " long (173 cm). Museum der Kulturen, Basel. Photo by Peter Horner.





1-2 Had you ever thought of this very famous structure simply in terms of line? Its sleek profile foreshadowed modern skyscraper construction.

Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923). *Eiffel Tower*, 1889. Paris.

1-3 The lines, or stripes, on a zebra serve as camouflage as it roams its natural habitat. In what type of environment might these natural lines best blend?

*Zebras, Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania, 1996.*  
Photo by David DeVore.





## Line Types

Many types of lines are used to create art. Six of the most common are described below.

### Structural Lines

**Structural lines** are the lines that hold a design together. Structural lines come in a variety of types with different characteristics and qualities. They can be delicate and thin like a spider's web, or thick and bold like a row of telephone poles.

### Outlines

An **outline** generally refers to the outer edge of a silhouette, or the line made by the edges of an object. An outline makes an object seem flat and is usually the same thickness throughout. Tracing around an object placed on a sheet of paper is one way to create an outline.



1–4 Note how these delicate lines of nature also communicate a sense of strength.

*Spider web, early morning, New Zealand.* Photo by John Scott. Courtesy of the artist.

### Try it



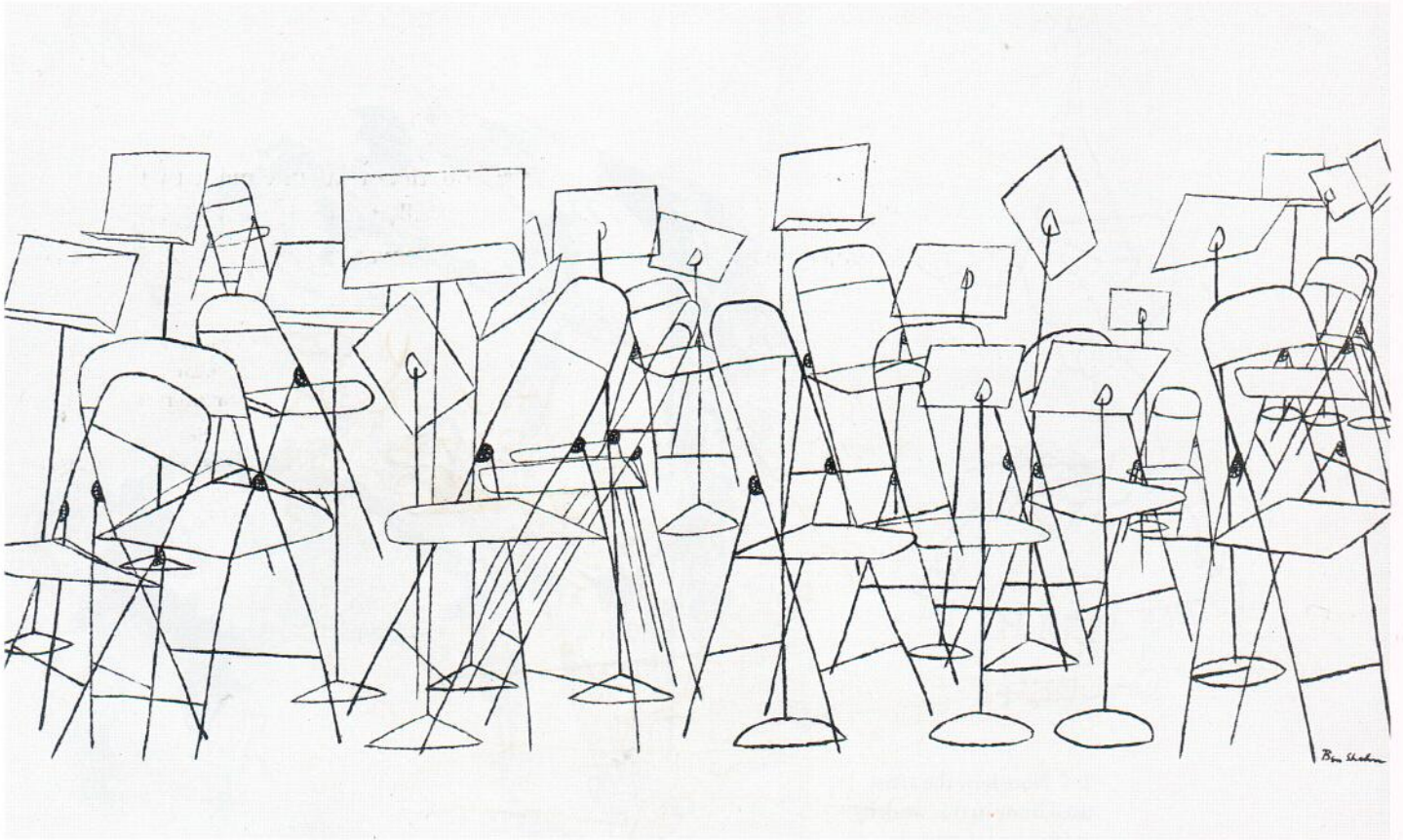
Choose a simple three-dimensional object, such as a chair or a shoe.

Create a contour line drawing of the object. As you draw, work slowly and try not to remove your drawing tool from the paper. Keep your eyes on the object, not your paper. This is called “blind contour drawing.” (It is acceptable to draw back over lines to get from one point to another.)



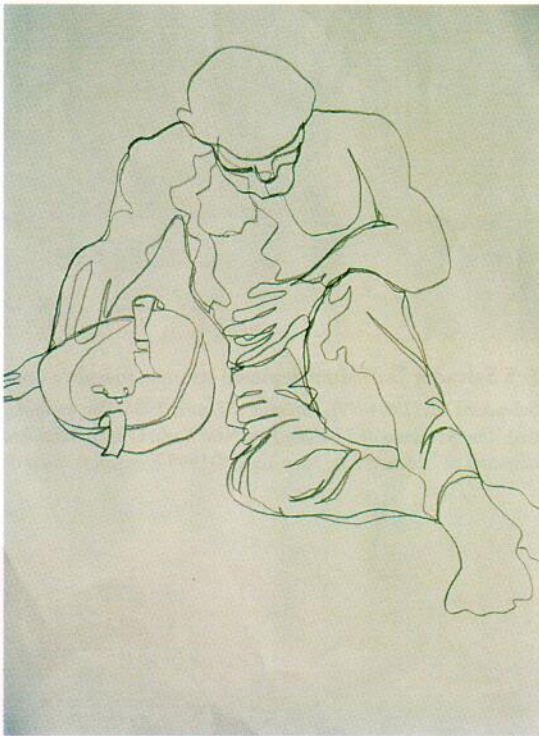
## Contour Lines

**Contour lines** describe the shape of an object, and include interior detail. For example, a contour drawing of a person's face would include a line defining the shape of the head and additional lines that describe the surfaces and planes of the facial features.



1-5 Why is an outlining technique particularly appropriate for conveying the physical characteristics of these objects?

Ben Shahn (1898-1969).  
*Empty Studio (Silent Music)*,  
1948. India ink on paper,  
26" x 40" (66 x 101.6 cm).  
The Museum of Modern  
Art, New York. The William  
S. Paley Collection. Photo  
©1998 The Museum of  
Modern Art, New York.



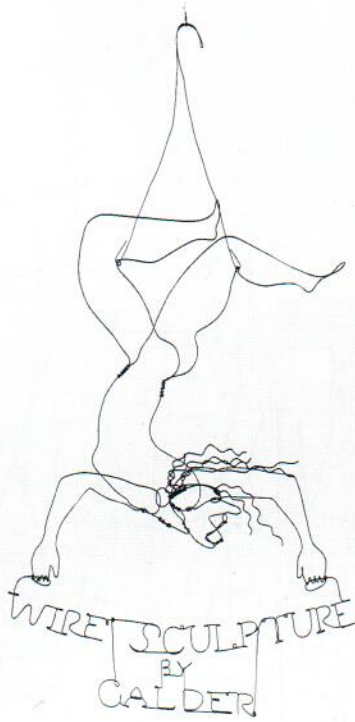
1-6 This contour drawing gives an indication of general physical features and folds in clothing.

Jeremy Mann (age 18).  
*Untitled Contour*, 1994.  
Pencil, 14" x 14" (35.6 x 35.6  
cm). Plano Senior High  
School, Plano, Texas.



## Gesture Lines

*Gesture lines*, sometimes called movement lines, emphasize direction and fluidity. Imagine a thin, continuous flow of line coming out of the drawing tool. By looping, twisting, and changing direction, gesture lines quickly describe a figure.



1-7 Note how the artist used irony in this work by writing out the words "wire sculpture" with the same wire he used to create the sculpture.

Alexander Calder (1898-1976). *Wire Sculpture by Calder, Variation: Acrobat Sign*, 1928. Wire, 48 1/4" x 25 7/8" x 4 7/8" (122.6 x 65.7 x 12.4 cm). Collection of Whitney Museum of American Art Purchase, with funds from Howard and Jean Lipman, 72.168. Photograph ©1998: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. ©1999 Estate of Alexander Calder/ARS, New York.



1-8 Salvador Dalí often depicted strange, macabre images.

Salvador Dalí (1904-89). *Cavalier of Death*, 1934. Pen and ink on paper, 38 3/4" x 28 3/8" (98.4 x 72 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Miss Ann C. Resor. Photo ©1998 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. ©1999 Fundacion Gala-Salvador Dalí/ARS, New York.

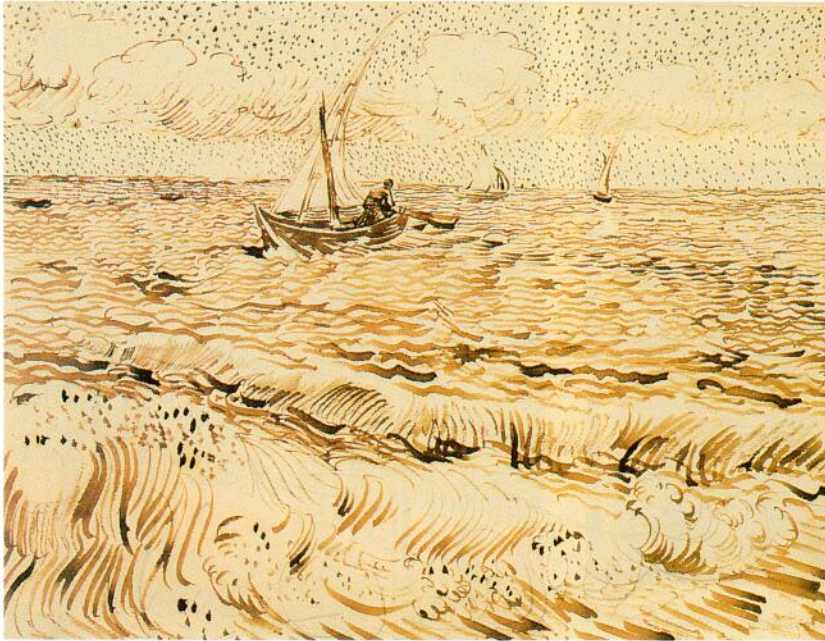


## Sketch Lines

*Sketch lines* provide more detail than outlines, contour lines, and gesture lines. They can be drawn very quickly, but they sometimes have a finished appearance. Sketch lines often give an object the appearance of depth, or three-dimensionality. Artists use sketches for information-gathering.

## Calligraphy

*Calligraphy*, from two Greek words meaning “beautiful writing,” is precise, elegant handwriting or lettering done by hand. The lines in calligraphy often vary between thick and thin, even within a single letter.



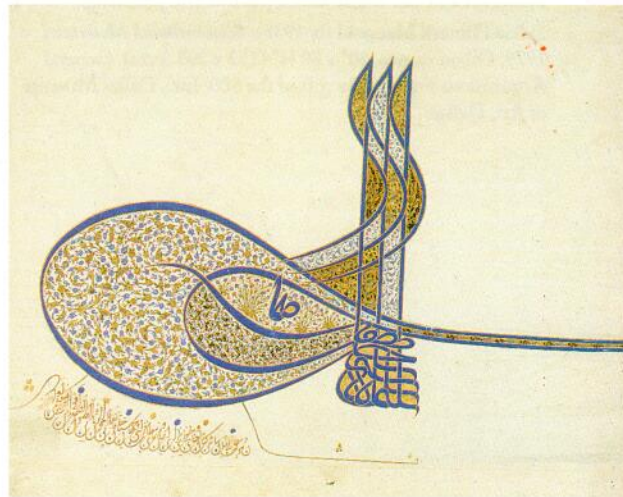
1–9 This drawing is not a nature study, but is a sketch based on one of van Gogh's own paintings. The artist was attempting to give a freer interpretation of the more precisely rendered painting.

Vincent van Gogh (1853–90). *Fishing Boats at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer*, 1888. Reed pen, brown ink, and graphite on wove paper, 9 ½" x 12 ½" (24.3 x 31.9 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. 137: 1984, The Saint Louis Art Museum (Prints, Drawings, and Photographs) (ISN 26606).

1–10 The fluid motion of the lines in this emblem had to be drawn without hesitation or mistake.

Turkey (Istanbul).

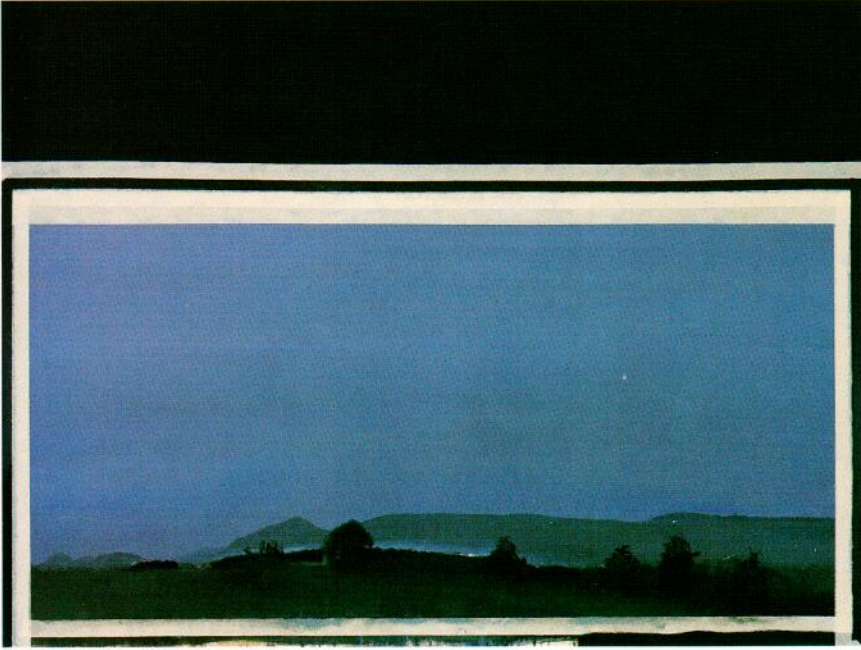
*Illuminated tughra of Sultan Suleyman*, c. 1555–60. Ink, paint, and gold on paper, removed from a firman and trimmed to 20 ½" x 25 ¾" (52.1 x 65.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1938. (38.149.1) Photograph ©1986 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.





## Line Personality

Artists often rely on *line personality*, or the general characteristics of a line, to convey a specific mood or feeling. You may have noticed that a thick line with sharp edges and sudden directional changes produces a feeling quite different from a thin, flowing one. The two basic characteristics of line are its direction or movement, and its quality or weight. The direction of a line may be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, or curved. You can use each of these directions to help give your artwork a different personality.



1–11 What aspects of a mountain landscape are emphasized through the use of line? Keep in mind that the black area at the top is also a part of the painting.

Sylvia Plimack Mangold (b. 1938). *Schunnemunk Mountain*, 1979. Oil on canvas, 60" x 80 1/8" (152 x 203.5 cm). General Acquisitions Fund, and a gift of the 500, Inc., Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas.



1–12 Korisheli often combines animal and plant forms in an effort to make the viewer aware of the relationships among all forms of nature. In this piece the heads and ears of canines are discernable near the tops of each section of the sculpture. How did the artist use vertical lines to convey the characteristics of a forest?

Margaret Korisheli (b. 1959). *The Forest*, 1996. Steel, 102" high (259 cm). Private collection. Courtesy of the Sherry Frumkin Gallery, Santa Monica, California.



## Vertical and Horizontal Lines

Vertical lines remind us of ourselves; they run straight up and down, as if they were standing. They might also bring to mind fences and forests, skyscrapers and soldiers. Artists use vertical lines to convey height, stability, and dignity.

Horizontal lines run from side to side. They call up images of the vast ocean, the horizon, or the body at rest. Artists use horizontal lines to suggest calmness, repose, and balance.



1-13 Frank Lloyd Wright was particularly interested in making his structures compatible with their environment. Note how he used construction materials that blend well with nature. How does he use line to bring together the building with its surroundings?

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959). *Falling Water (Kaufmann House)*, 1936. Bear Run, Pennsylvania.



1-14 Note how this student work has been tightly structured through the use of an informal grid made by horizontal and vertical lines.

Rebecca Moyer (age 15). *Rustic Wall*, 1998. Oil pastel, 18" x 24" (45.7 x 61 cm). Nashoba Regional High School, Bolton, Massachusetts.



## Diagonal Lines

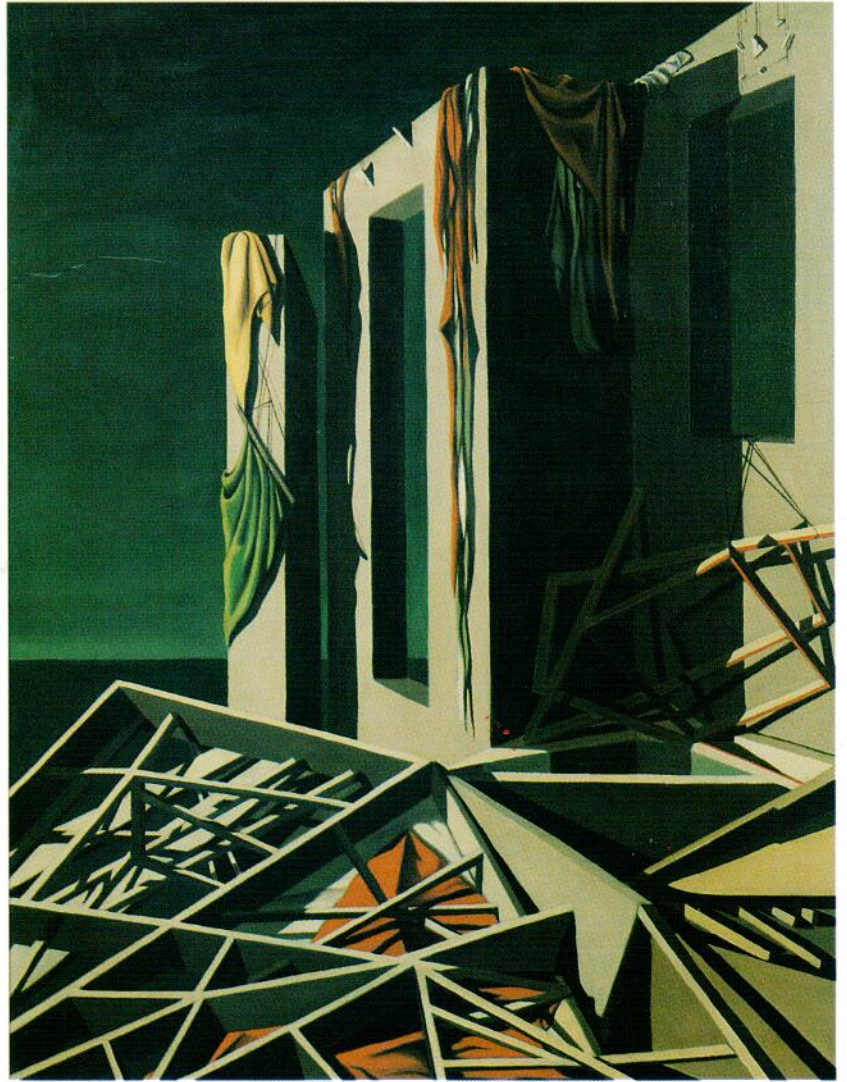
Diagonal lines run at an angle. They may describe a plane soaring across the sky, a tree falling down, or rays of sunlight. They can express action, movement, and tension. Diagonal lines often add a dramatic and dynamic aspect to a design.

Look at the black-and-white photograph of an agave plant (fig.1-17). The edges of the plant create sharp diagonal lines that shoot from the bottom of the image. Notice how the shadow continues the line of the plant into the upper left corner of the photograph. By using strong diagonal lines, the artist created a work of energy and action, even though her subject is a stationary plant.



1-15 The familiar sight of paintbrushes propped diagonally in a can are captured in glazed ceramic. If the ceramic brushes were made to lie on a table or hang from a wall, how might the visual impact differ?

David Furman (b. 1947). *Savarin Bouquet (for JJ)*, 1995. Ceramic and glaze, 13" x 14" x 12" (33 x 35.6 x 30.5 cm). Courtesy of the Sherry Frumkin Gallery, Santa Monica, California.



1-16 How are diagonal lines used in this composition?

Kay Sage (1898-1963). *All Soundings Are Referred to High Water*, 1947. Oil on canvas, 44" x 62" (112 x 158 cm). Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. Photo by R.H. Phil.



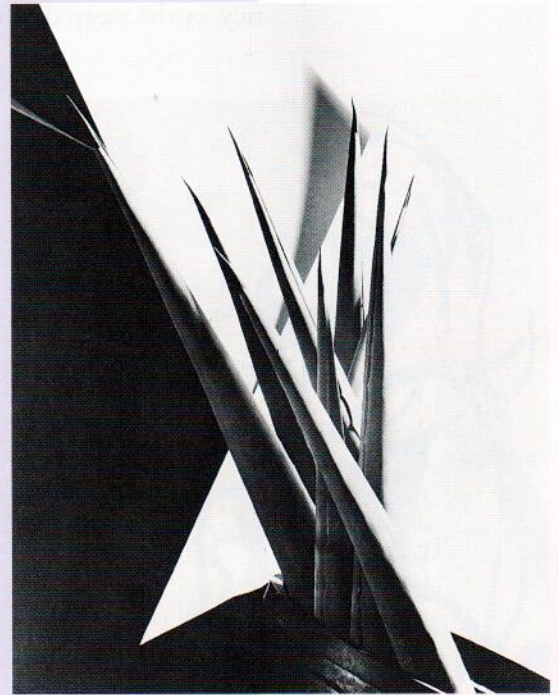
# Imogen Cunningham

Imogen Cunningham was born in Oregon in 1883, the same year that the National Federation of Women Photographers was formed. At that time, women had little opportunity to succeed as artists; however, they were encouraged to enter the field of photography, a relatively new medium invented in the mid-1800s.

The photography bug bit Cunningham when she was in her early twenties. She pursued her interest by studying photographic chemistry, art history, and life drawing in Dresden, Germany. In the 1920s Cunningham turned her attention to photographing nature. Today, she is best remembered for her close-up studies of flowers and plants.

1-17 Compare these diagonals, which provide a sense of openness and freedom in this work, with those in fig. 1-16.

Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976). *Agave Design I*, 1925. Gelatin silver print. San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco. Clinton Walker Fund Purchase. ©1978 The Imogen Cunningham Trust, Berkeley, California.



*Self-portrait with Korona View*, 1933. Photo by Imogen Cunningham. ©1978 The Imogen Cunningham Trust.

*Agave Design I* (fig. 1-17) is an example of the crisp, unadorned technique that led Cunningham to become a member of the famous Group f.64. This group of photographers believed that objects should be photographed in a sharp, detailed manner, without a dramatic setting, and without manipulation on the part of the photographer. *Agave Design I* clearly demonstrates this approach with its stark diagonal lines that create an image filled with strength and vitality.

Cunningham eventually shifted her attention from nature to portraiture. In the 1930s she worked for the magazine *Vanity Fair*. A popular figure in the world of twentieth-century photography, Cunningham was a special favorite among students until her death at the age of 93.



## Curved Lines

Like diagonal lines, curved lines also express a sense of movement. But the motion of curved lines is fluid, not tense. They may represent rolling, turning, curling, or bending. If you've ever drawn a cumulus cloud, the rings of a tree trunk, spiraling smoke from a chimney, or the steep dips of a roller coaster, you've used curved lines.



1-18 This figure is depicted at rest, yet the curved lines of which it is composed give it great liveliness and energy.

Aleksandra Otwinowska (age 16). *Untitled*, 1995. Mixed media, 18" x 12" (45.7 x 30.5 cm). Plano Senior High School, Plano, Texas.



1-19 Note how line so easily communicates a mood or emotion.

Niklaus Troxler (b. 1947).  
*Poster for South African Jazz Night*, 1990. Silkscreen, 35  $\frac{5}{8}$ " x 50  $\frac{3}{8}$ " (90.5 x 128 cm). Courtesy of the artist.  
©1999 ARS, New York/Pro Litteris, Zurich.



Look at the black-and-yellow poster (fig.1-19), an advertisement for a jazz concert. The curved lines provide a feeling of fun and festivity. The bold strokes capture a sense of motion in the figures. As a whole, the design conveys a sense of spontaneity and improvisation—important aspects of jazz music.



1-20 The artist created a swirling tornado of lines for this award-winning poster which he designed while still a student at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. What qualities of symphonic music does the poster evoke? Victor Hugo Zayas (b. 1961). *Poster for the National Symphony Orchestra*, from the *Movement Series*, 1985. Acrylic on board, 24" x 36" (61 x 91 cm). John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. ©National Symphony Orchestra and Victor Hugo Zayas. Photo courtesy of Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, California.

**Try it**



Select an interesting but common object with a curve, such as a protractor or a pair of scissors. Use thick and thin lines to draw and repeat the shape. Create a design by interweaving the images so that the curved lines and shapes break up and overlap. What kind of movement do the curved lines in your design create?

1-21 Nature contains a variety of lines. What are some other natural examples of curved line?

*Fiddleheads*. Photo by T. Fiorelli.





## Line Quality

Line quality adds to the personality of a line. Structural lines may be thin and delicate, or thick and bold. These changes in line quality can emphasize—or contradict—what is conveyed by a line's direction. An artist may use broken or jagged lines to convey fear or irritability. Nervous, quick strokes can heighten the sense of tension or drama. Fuzzy, blurred lines might suggest a dreamy or mysterious mood. Horizontal lines usually convey calmness or rest.



1–22 How would you describe the line quality used in this work?

Tyrus Wong (b. 1910).  
*Kicking Horse*, undated.  
Lithograph, 4" x 6" (10.2 x 15.2 cm). Collection of Shirl and Albert Porter.

1–23 Why do you think that the artist chose these types of lines to construct an entryway sculpture for this museum? What do the lines suggest about the museum?

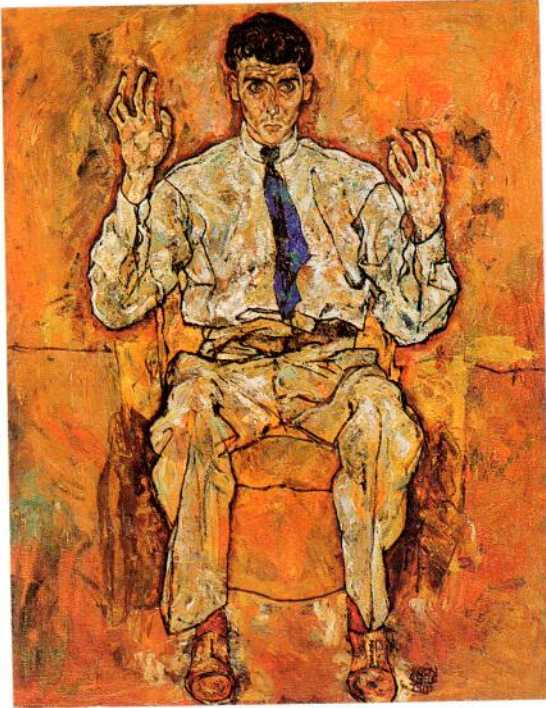
Stephen Antonakos (b. 1926).  
*Neon for the Columbus Museum of Art*, 1986. Neon, glass, and stainless steel, 336" x 294" (853 x 746 cm). Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio: Gift of Artglo Sign Company, Inc., and Museum Purchase, Howald Fund.





An artist's purpose or mood will determine the kind of line used. To represent an object as it actually appears, artists may choose simple, thin outlines and add many carefully drawn surface details. Cartoonists, on the other hand, may use thick outlines. They might exaggerate certain features and describe surface details with only a few well-placed lines. Other artists may use line to represent an object so that it isn't recognizable at all!

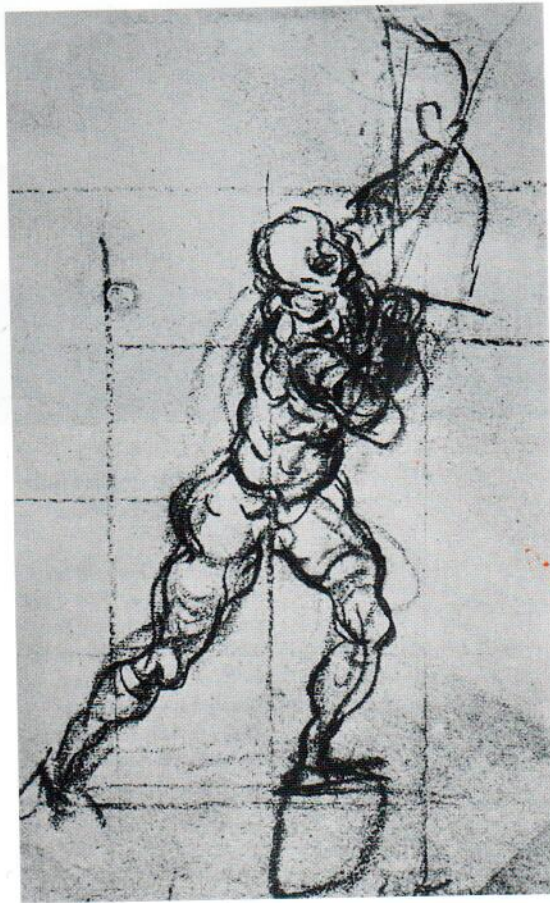
Remember: the personality of a line can suggest many different moods and feelings. This will help you view designs with more understanding. It will also help you convey meaning more effectively in your own creations.



1-24 Note that this is a portrait of a painter. How do the jagged lines of the clothing convey the creative energy of the sitter?  
Egon Schiele (1890-1918). *Portrait of Painter Paris von Gueterslob*, 1918. Oil on canvas, 55 1/8" x 43 3/4" (140 x 111 cm). ©Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis.

1-25 Tintoretto was known for the speed with which he created his sketches and paintings. His hasty style is evident in the short quick lines that bring this figure to life.

Tintoretto (1518-94). *Study for a Bowman in the Capture of Zara*, before 1585. Black chalk, 14 3/8" x 8 5/8" (36.5 x 22 cm). Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi, Florence.





## Implied Lines

*Implied lines* are suggested lines—lines that were not actually drawn or incorporated—in a work of art. Large objects or groups of objects may appear as lines when viewed from a distance: a winding road or river, a train speeding across the landscape, a row of tall trees. Your eyes fill in the spaces between a series of widely distanced marks or objects, thereby creating an implied line.

When objects or areas of color meet within a painting, collage, or sculpture, they also create an implied line. Where the shapes touch or overlap, they share an edge. On opposite sides of this edge may be two different textures, patterns, or colors. This shared edge may not be sharply drawn or defined, but it functions as a line within the overall design.

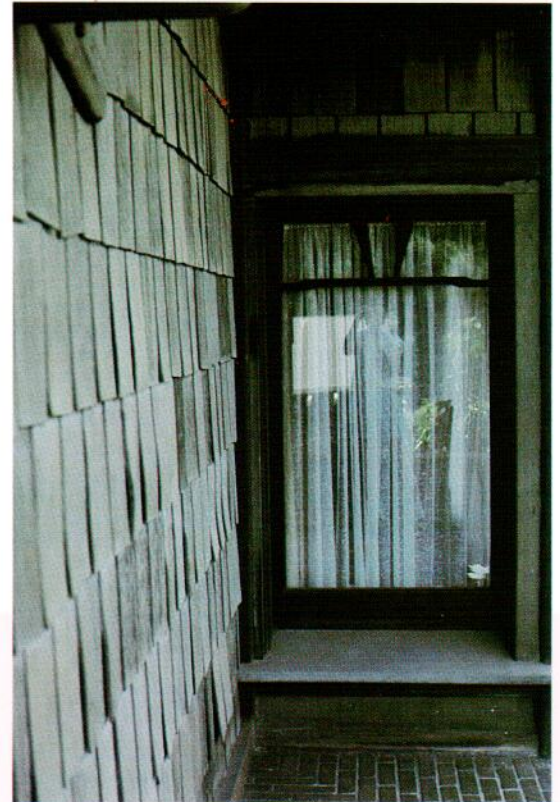


1–26 Implied lines are created in the space below the two arches of water.

*Fountain*, Century City, California. Photo by J. Selleck.

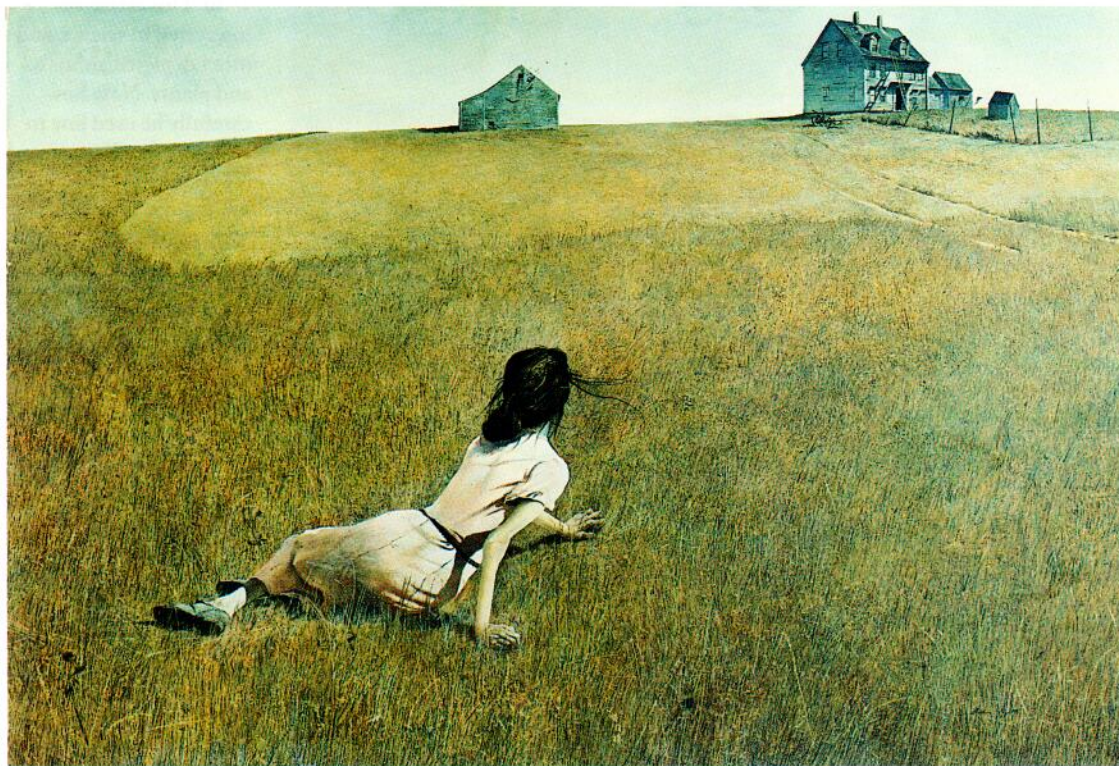
1–27 What implied lines can you find in this image?

Greene and Greene (Henry Mather Greene, 1870–1954; and Charles Sumner Greene, 1868–1957). *Gamble House*, 1908, detail of doorway. Located at 4 Westmore Place, Pasadena, California. Photo by H. Ronan.





Another type of implied line is a *line of sight*, an imaginary line from a figure's eyes to a viewed object. A line of sight can help direct your attention from one part of a design to another. Look at the painting *Christina's World* (fig.1-28). The woman gazes into the distance, and the line of sight is an implied diagonal line that runs from her head to the farmhouse on the hill. What do you think the artist tried to convey with this painting? How did a line of sight help him achieve his result?

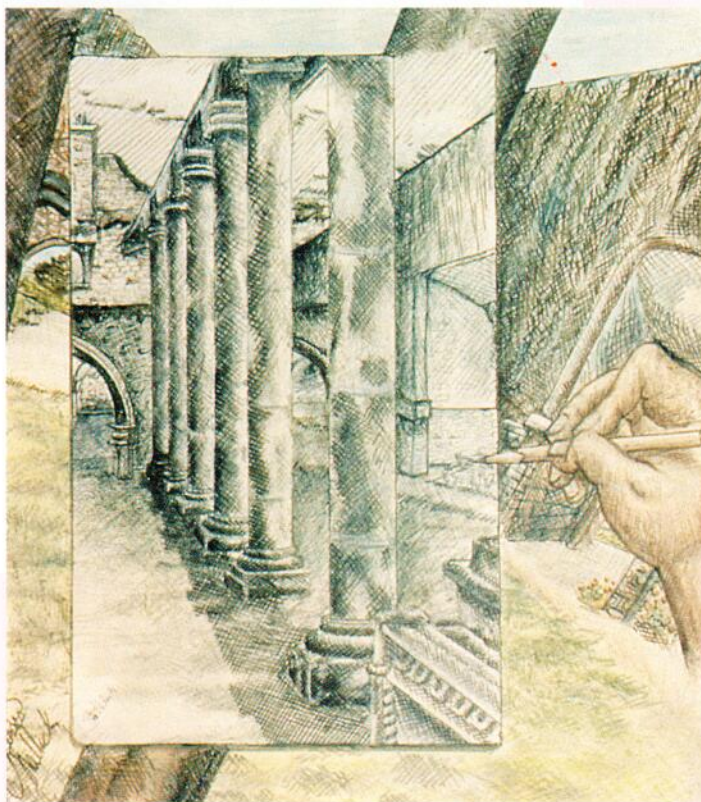


1-28 Christina Olsen, who was partially paralyzed and unable to walk, was Andrew Wyeth's neighbor when he summered in Maine near her farm. In this painting, the lines in her body and her line of sight indicate how she is straining to reach her house.

Andrew Wyeth (b. 1917). *Christina's World*, 1948. Tempera on gessoed panel, 32 1/4" x 47 3/4" (82 x 121 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photo ©1998 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1-29 How has this student juxtaposed shapes of different textures and patterns to create implied lines?

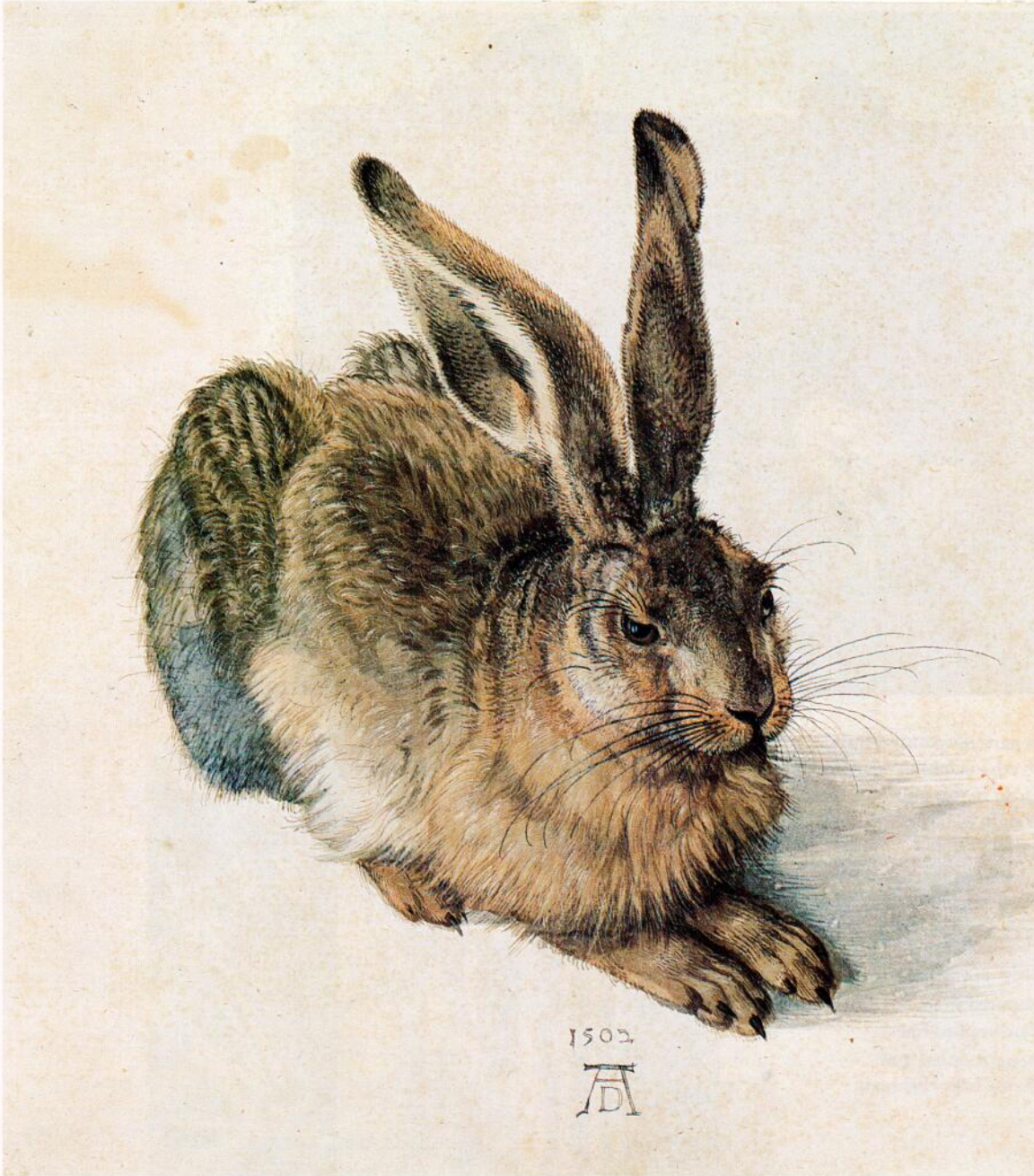
Ulises Kullick-Escobar (age 18). *Mexico Revisited*, 1996. Colored pencil, 14" x 17" (35.5 x 43 cm). Lake Highlands High School, Dallas, Texas.





## Line as Texture and Pattern

Texture is the surface quality of an object—for example, whether it is rough, smooth, or scarred. Pattern is the repetition of a surface element; examples are the stripes on a shirt and the polka dots on a dress. Although texture and pattern are further discussed in Chapters 6 and 11, here we look at their relationship to line.



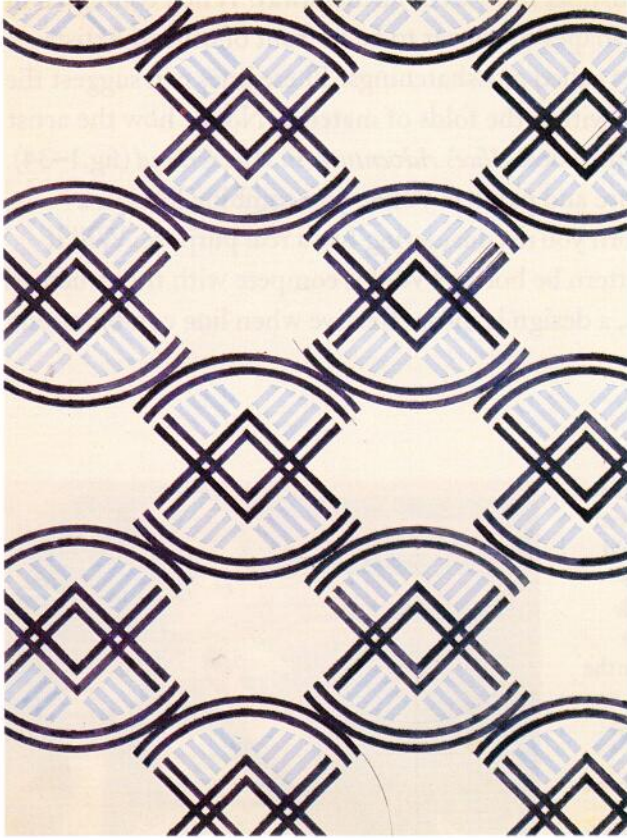
1–30 This artist was interested in science and often depicted animals and plants. Note how carefully he used line to show the familiar soft texture of a rabbit.

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528). *Young Hare*, 1502. Watercolor with opaque white, 9 7/8" x 9" (25 x 23 cm). Graphische Sammlung Albertina (Albertina Museum), Vienna.



Artists often use a series of lines to suggest texture or pattern in their designs. In the watercolor of a hare (fig.1-30), Dürer's finely drawn lines capture the texture of soft, fluffy fur and lengthy whiskers. In the textile design (fig.1-31), the artist's short, bold lines combine to create a repetitive geometric pattern.

Sometimes, an artist achieves texture or pattern through the lines that occur in materials. A sculpture may display the grain of wood. A collage may include a piece of plaid fabric. Texture and pattern can also be increased by marking, carving, or otherwise altering the surface quality. In the Maori sculptures (fig.1-32), both straight and spiraling lines are etched into painted wood to create an intricate surface pattern.

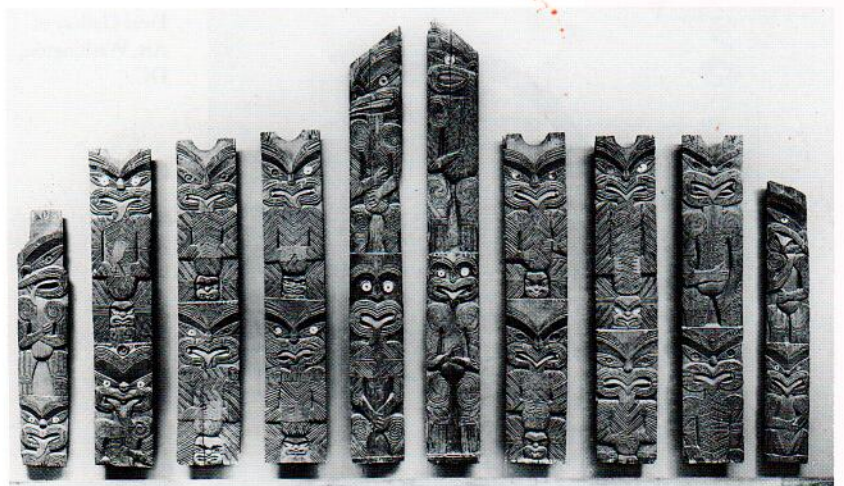


1-31 What two types of line did the artist use to create this pattern?

Varvara Stepanova (1894-1958). *Textile design*, 1924. Gouache on paper, 12 1/2" x 10 7/8" (31.8 x 27.7 cm). ©Rodchenko and Stepanova Archive, Moscow and Varvara Stepanova/ licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

1-32 The Maori of New Zealand have a tradition of carving wood panels to decorate the interior and exterior of some of their buildings. Careful examination of these carvings reveals a series of stylized human forms. These figures often represent ancestors.

New Zealand, Maori. *House front panels*, 19th cent. Painted wood and halictis shell inlay, 108-132" high (274.3-335.3 cm). The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. W. Howard Adams and Mr. and Mrs. Julius Carlebach.



### Try it

Experiment with different techniques to discover ways of using line to create texture and pattern. You might draw with twigs and ink, erase lines into a charcoal drawing, or carve lines of varying thicknesses into a plaster block. For ideas, look at natural objects in which texture and pattern are prominent: the bark of a tree, the stripes on an animal, the veins on a leaf, the walls of an eroded canyon.



## Line Combinations

A line combination is a mixture of different line types and personalities. In nature, many things appear to contain a variety of lines. Think of a tree. You might depict it using thick, rough-textured lines for the trunk, thinner lines for the branches, and short, soft-edged lines to represent leaves.

In a design, artists might use line combinations to create a sense of depth. Bold lines generally appear closer to the viewer. Indistinct lines seem farther away. When combined in a single design, the mixture causes some shapes to appear to be in front of others. Artists might also use short, criss-crossed strokes called crosshatchings. These lines can suggest the edges of a rounded object or the shadows within the folds of material. Notice how the artist used crosshatchings in his illustration for the book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (fig.1-34).

Line combinations can create texture and pattern. When you combine lines in a design, ask yourself if the texture or pattern you're considering has a real purpose. Will it add a needed visual interest? Will the pattern be boring? Will it compete with the structural lines or with crosshatchings? Sometimes, a design is most effective when line combinations are used sparingly.



1-33 The artist used the curved line of the bald head and the curving thick line below to tightly frame the portrait.

Ekaku Hakuin (1685-1768). *Portrait of Daruma*, undated. Ink on paper, 63" x 36 5/8" (160 x 93 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.



1-34 Illustrators are adept at using line to contribute to the illusion of space and rounded objects.

Sir John Tenniel (1820-1914). *Alice and the White Rabbit*, Illustration from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. ©1995 Macmillan Publishers Ltd. Reproduced by permission of Macmillan Children's Books, London.



## Flying Ant Dreaming

Did you know that the oldest continuous culture in the world is the Aboriginal people of Australia? The continent has been occupied by humans for at least 40,000 years. An integral part of this culture is the idea of dreaming. This concept is very difficult to define, but it refers to Dreamtime, or several states of time and place. It reaches back to the beginning of life in Australia.

Dreaming incorporates a time when the Aboriginals believe that ancestral figures traveled the unformed earth. These beings shaped the natural landscape and created

everything on the earth. Where they walked, valleys were formed and where they bled, lakes were created. The Aboriginals believe that they are descendants of these ancestral figures.

Aboriginals view Dreamtime as a state of being that encompasses both the past and the future. When they engage in certain rites, such as dancing, art making, and ceremonial walking, the Aboriginals believe that they share in Dreamtime and become one with the earth.

Dreaming forms the basis of much Aboriginal art. Dreaming designs first made their way to the modern medium of acrylic on canvas in the 1970s. Ancestral figures and natural landmarks are depicted in an abstract style. Sometimes called dot paintings, these

works are composed of a series of painted dots generally arranged in curving lines. Each dream painting relates to the personal and tribal Dreamtime of the artist. The works depict sacred beings and sites. Only the initiated members of the artist's tribe can fully understand the meaning and symbolism of a dream painting.



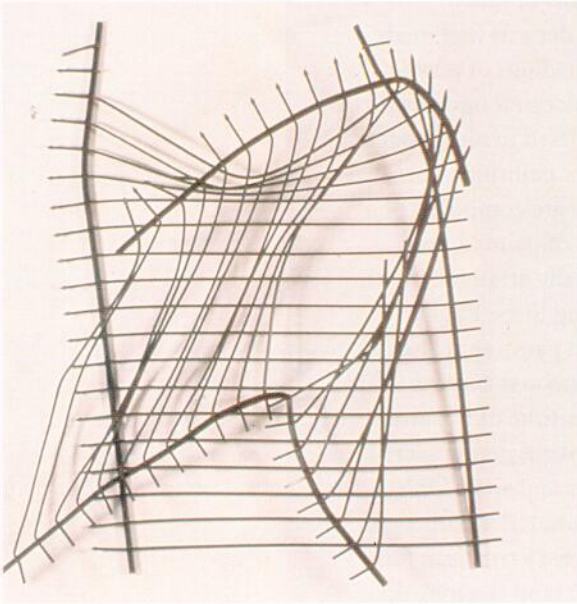
1-35 The artist used a series of evenly spaced individual dots of color to create the lines in this composition. Norman Kelly Tjampijinpa. *Flying Ant Dreaming*, 20th cent. Collection of Tom Raney, NY. Aboriginal Artists Agency, Sydney, Australia. Photo by Jennifer Steele/Art Resource, NY.



## Another Look at Line

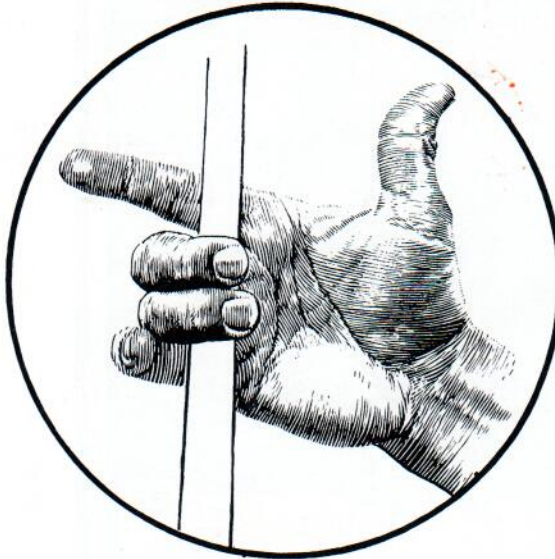
1-36 What sounds and images does this painting and its title bring to mind?

Pat Steir (b. 1938). *Painted Rain*, 1994–95. Oil on canvas, 108" x 108" (274.3 x 274.3 cm). Courtesy of the Robert Miller Gallery, New York.



1-37 Can you tell what contradictory sensations the artist created by use of a variety of lines?

Will Rollins (age 18). *Untitled*, c. 1989–90. Welded and galvanized steel, plaster, and acrylic traces, 9' x 8 1/2' (2.74 x 2.59 m). Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, Los Angeles, California.



1-38 The artist used line to emphasize the roundness of the hands. The crisp quality of the line also ensures the clarity of the image, an important aspect of instructional illustration.

Anthony Ravielli (1910–97). Illustrations for *The Modern Fundamentals of Golf*. Scratchboard, courtesy of the artist.



## Career Portfolio

# Interview with a Cartoonist

Cartooning is an art form with an emphasis on line. Bold outlines are the principal—often the only—element in a cartoon drawing.

**Gene Mater** is a free-lance artist, caricaturist, and graphic artist who has been active professionally since 1971. For seven years his cartoon strip *Gremlin Village* appeared in college newspapers, and his cartoon illustrations have appeared in numerous magazines, books, and other publications. He is best known for his good-natured cartoon portraits. Born in 1949 in San Bernardino, California, he currently lives and works in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

*What would you call your occupation?*

**Gene** Artist, cartoonist, or artist-entertainer, because I'm using the artwork to entertain people. I don't know anyone who does exactly what I do. There are a lot of people who call themselves caricaturists, but they're not artists who really talk to the people, and find out things about them that they include in the drawings to make them a one-of-a-kind statement. Also, the drawings that I do for people are generally more cartoon portraits than caricature. A caricature, where you're really using major distortion, is a harder thing to do well, and not everyone's face or

Gene Mater uses his sense of humor on the job—in this case, a cartoon portrait of himself.

temperament do I find suited to that. Mostly what I do is cartoon portraits of people; that is to say, they are recognizable drawings/renderings of people, done in a cartoon style.

*Tell us about some of your first paying jobs.*

**Gene** My first work was political cartoons, but they didn't pay very well, even though that's what I concentrated on right out of college. I was trying to build it up enough so that I'd have a following and get good enough to show it to the syndicates [who buy and market cartoon strips nationally]. But I was moving very slowly, and I was just not confident that I was good enough.

*A lot of kids know they like to draw, but don't know what to do with it.*

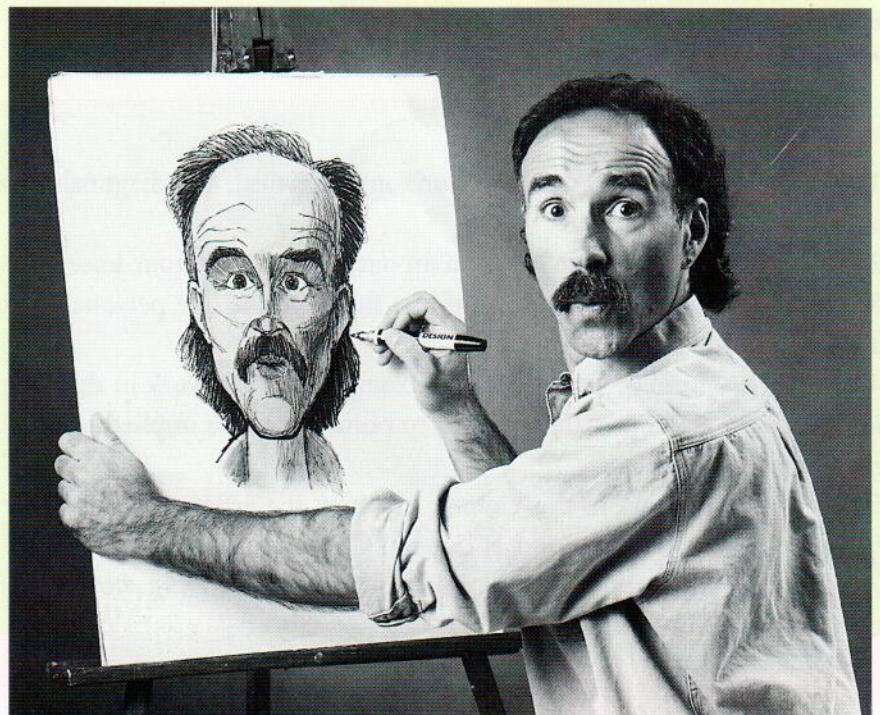
**Gene** Well, sure, because there is such a breadth and width of possibilities. You can do everything from cartooning to formal oil portrait painting and everything in between. You can do fine arts, or you can do commercial arts. You can just work on paper, or you can do mixed media. There are so many different things, and that's just for drawing. I think one of the best things a person can do is to play with as many options as possible.

*What would you tell teenagers about pursuing an art career?*

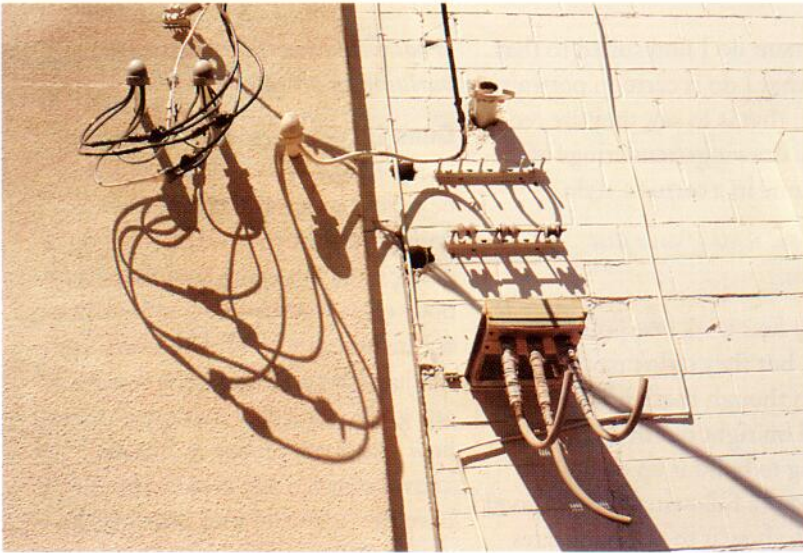
**Gene** If I could get any point across to a teenager who liked art, it would be to just accept the fact that you're going to doubt your work, that you're going to feel insecure, and that everybody else's work is going to look better, including a lot of your peers. It's not just how good an artist you are at any given point that matters. It's also how much you pursue it. I have known many, many artists who didn't have the drive and they didn't stick with it. You can always learn to be better. You can acquire skills like in any other line of pursuit.

*Talk about your future goals.*

**Gene** I would like to continue doing the kind of cartoon portrait entertainment I enjoy. Because I do enjoy people and I enjoy that instant gratification, both for them and for myself, of spending six minutes on a drawing and then having it done and having the person just sit there, look at it, and laugh. I really like it. That was one of the problems with the cartoon strips. I could never see anybody's reaction. So, sit somebody down in front of me, and let me draw him or her, and let me see those smiling faces when I'm done.

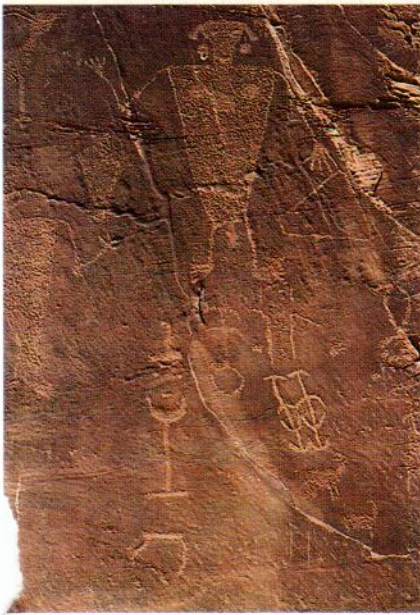






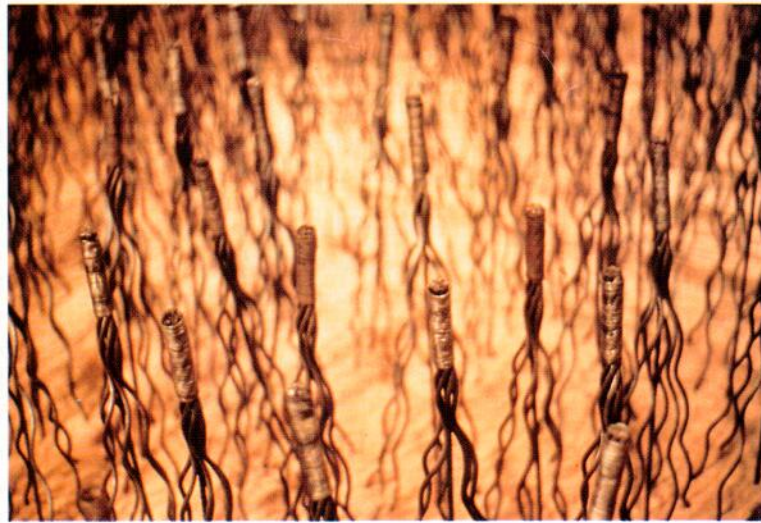
1–39 Common objects can form interesting linear compositions that we often overlook.

*Wires and shadows.* Photo by J. Selleck.



1–41 A petroglyph is a carving or inscription on a rock. How does the material affect the types of lines used?

*Petroglyphs, Utah.* Photo by H. Ronan.



1–40 Lines frequently convey a strong sense of energy. Find two other images in this chapter that are “energized” by line.

Maren Hassinger (b. 1947). *Walking*, 1978. Wire rope and wire, 148 units, 2' x 10' x 12' (60 x 308 x 370 cm); 1 unit: 24" x 8" x 8" (61 x 20.3 x 20.3 cm). Courtesy of the artist.

## Review Questions

1. What feelings and moods do horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines usually suggest?
2. What is the difference between an outline and a contour line?
3. What are two characteristics of line that give the line personality and help convey a specific mood or feeling?
4. What are implied lines? Give an example of an artwork in this chapter that illustrates implied lines. Be prepared to point out these implied lines to other members of your class.
5. Name an artwork in this chapter in which the artist used lines to create texture.
6. For what type of artworks is Imogen Cunningham best known?
7. Describe the lines in the piece of Aboriginal art, *Flying Ant Dreaming*. On what continent do Aboriginal people live?