THE ELEMENTS OF ART

The Elements of Art are the individual parts that make up a complete artwork, like words in a sentence.

LINE - a long mark whose length can extend infinitely in either direction. Often, a line connects two points. In art, lines can be straight or curved, thick or thin. On sculpture, lines can also be visible along the edges of shapes and forms.

SHAPE - a flat object with length and width. Shapes can be geometric, like circles or squares, or organic with irregular, free-form edges like what you might find in nature.

FORM - a three-dimensional object with length, width, and height. Forms might be actual objects that take up space as part of a sculpture, or an artist might use shade and shadow to give the appearance of form in a drawing or painting.

SPACE - the area between and around an object, also called “negative space.” Space can have its own shape or form. In a 2D artwork, an artist might create the appearance of space through the use of (or absence of) color, shade, and shadow.

COLOR - visible light reflected off an object. Humans see color based on three characteristics: hue (the color’s name like yellow, red, or blue), value (lightness or darkness), and intensity (brightness or dullness).

TEXTURE - the way the surface of an object looks or feels. Textures can be bumpy or smooth, soft or hard, and might not always feel the way they look. For example, in a 2D artwork, an artist might make an object look bumpy but the paper is actually smooth.