

## **VISUAL ANALYSIS**

**Visual analysis** is an important technique for describing a work of art from any period in history, whether a photograph, sculpture, painting or cultural artifact. The purpose is to understand the choices the artist made in creating it and how this conveys meaning.

### ***The Formal Elements:***

**Line** is the most basic building block of formal analysis. Line can be used to create more complex shapes or to lead your eye from one area in the composition to another.

**Value** is the degree of light and dark in a design. It is the contrast between black and white and all the tones in between. Value can be used with color as well as black and white. Contrast is the extreme changes between values.

**Shapes** are created when lines are combined to form a square, triangle, or circle. Shapes can be organic (irregular shapes found in nature) or geometric (shapes with strong lines and angles such as circles, triangles, and squares).

**Forms** are three-dimensional shapes with length, width, and depth. Balls, cylinders, boxes and pyramids are forms.

**Space** is the area between and around objects. Increasing or decreasing the amount of space around an object affects the way we view that object.

**Color** differentiates and defines lines, shapes, forms, and space. Even black and white images have a huge number of different shades of gray.

**Texture** is the surface quality that can be seen and felt. Textures can be rough or smooth, soft or hard. Textures are often implied. For instance, a drawing of a rock might appear to have a rough and hard surface, but in reality is as smooth as the paper on which it is drawn.

### ***The Principles***

**Balance** is created in a work of art when textures, colors, forms, or shapes are combined harmoniously.

**Contrast** is the use of several elements of design to hold the viewer's attention and to guide the viewer's eye through the artwork.

**Movement** is the way a viewer's eye is directed to move through a composition, often to areas of emphasis. Movement can be directed by lines, contrasting shapes, or colors within the artwork.

**Emphasis** is created in a work of art when the artist contrasts colors, textures, or shapes to direct your viewing towards a particular part of the image.

**Pattern** is the repetition of a shape, form, or texture across a work of art.

**Proportion** is created when the sizes of elements in a work of art are combined harmoniously

**Unity** is created when the principles of analysis are present in a composition and in harmony. Some images have a complete sense of unity, while some artists deliberately avoid formal unity to create feelings of tension and anxiety