

# Art Glossary

**2D OR TWO- DIMENSIONAL:** things that look flat. For example, a square is a 2-D shape.

**3D OR THREE- DIMENSIONAL:** things that look (or are) solid. For example, a cube is a 3-D shape.

**ABSTRACT:** art that does not attempt to represent the appearance of objects, real or imaginary. The artist takes an image or object and changes its appearance by leaving out details, simplifying or rearranging its parts to express his or her idea or feeling. Abstraction can occur in varying degrees, perhaps to the extent where you may not recognize the subject in the final product. Abstract work with no recognizable subject matter is called non-objective art.

**ACTION PAINTING:** a way of painting by splashing and dripping paint with energetic movements. It was made famous by Jackson Pollock.

**AESTHETIC:** the science of the beautiful in art; defined by visual, moral, social, and contemporary standards.

**ALLEGORY:** something which has a hidden symbolic meaning.

**ARCHITECTURE:** the art of making plans for buildings or a style of building

**ARTIFACT:** hand-made object that represents a particular culture or period.

**ASYMMETRICAL:** different on either side of a central axis

**BACKGROUND:** the part of a picture that appears to be farthest away from the viewer

**BALANCE:** equilibrium in a composition, either symmetrical or asymmetrical

**BLEEDING:** the tendency for some colours to show through a second layer of paint

**BLENDING:** the transition of colour from one tone to another; for example, in a sky

**CALLIGRAPHY:** fine handwriting in ink with a quill, reed pen, or brush; follows specific rules or designs

**CANVAS:** a strong cloth which, since the Renaissance, many artists have used as a surface for painting

**CARICATURE:** character studies that usually exaggerate one or more features

**CARTOON:** full-scale drawing for tapestry or wall painting; or a humorous satirical drawing

**CARVING:** a subtractive method of sculpture; taking away wood or stone

**CERAMIC:** any object made of clay and fired

**CLAY:** a moist earth of decomposed rock; used in products such as pottery, bricks, tiles, and sculpture

**COLLAGE:** a work of art created by arranging and gluing assorted materials onto a flat surface

**COLOUR WHEEL:** an arrangement of colours that shows how to mix the primary colours to create new colours

## COLOURS:

**Analogous**-colours closely related on a colour wheel. Example: red, red-orange, yellow

**Complementary** - colours which fall directly opposite each other on the colour wheel. Example: blue/orange

**Primary** - Blue, yellow, red. Colours from which all other colours are derived. Primary colours cannot be mixed from other colours

**Secondary** colours - colours made by mixing equal proportions of any two primary colours. Example: red + blue = violet

**Cool** -blues, greens

**Warm** - reds, yellows

**Monochromatic**-a colour scheme that involves different values of a single colour

**Harmonious**-colours, such as red and orange, that come next to each other on the colour wheel. Seen side by side, they seem to blend together

**Neutral**-complementary colours mixed to produce a dull, subdued colour (variations of grey); the non-colours of black and white

**Receding**-cool colours which we generally perceive to be moving away in a field of colour

**Advancing**-warm colours which we generally perceive to be coming forward in a field of colour

**COMPOSITION:** the placement of forms, shapes, colours, and light and dark areas in a work of art. Artists use composition to direct the viewer's eye to the most important elements of a work of art.

**CONTRAST:** to set in opposition for the purpose of comparison

**CROSSHATCH:** to create differences in value through a crossed series of parallel lines

**DEPTH:** the illusion of space in a picture plane.

**DESIGN:** the organization of line, form, colour, value, texture and space in an eye-pleasing arrangement

**DETAILS:** dealing with some item by showing all of the particulars

**DRAWING:** usually a work in pen, pencil, or charcoal on

**DRYBRUSH:** a technique used with wet media applied with an almost-empty brush

**EMBELLISH:** to add ornamental details to

**EMPHASIS:** a design principle that gives dominance to a particular area through colour, size, or repetition

**FOCAL POINT:** an area of an artwork that first attracts and usually sustains the viewer's attention

**FOREGROUND:** in a scene or artwork, the part that seems closest to the viewer

**FORM:** a three-dimensional shape, such as the human form or an abstract form

**GESTURE:** the implication of motion in a shape

**GLAZE:** a glass-like coating that makes ceramics waterproof

**GLUE:** a jelly-like protein substance used for sticking things together

**GUIDELINES:** lines an artist makes that help "guide" the drawing. Usually these are not seen in the final piece.

**HIGHLIGHT:** a light area that represents the reflection of light

**HORIZON LINE:** a level line where water or land seems to end and the sky begins. It is usually on the eye level of the observer. If the horizon cannot be seen, its placement may be imagined based on the placement of trees, grasses, mountains and the like.

**HORIZONTAL:** side to side and parallel to the horizon

**HUE:** refers to the common name of the colour such as red or green

**ILLUSTRATION:** work of art created to accompany a story or other literary work in print. Illustrations usually appear in reproduced form in books, magazines and newspapers

**INTENSITY:** colour used in its purest hue without mixing can be said to have its purest intensity

**LANDSCAPE:** the scenery of an inland area, a painting or drawing of the land or natural environment

**LAYER:** lying over or under another

**MEDIUM:** the material used to make a work of art. Examples include oil, watercolour, pencil, pen and ink, tempera, and pastel

**MIDDLEGROUND:** the part of the painting that lies between the background and the foreground

**MIXED MEDIA:** used to describe art made from more than one material or medium

**MOBILE/STABILE:** terms coined to describe work created by Alexander Calder: the *mobile* is a hanging, movable sculpture; the *stabile* rests on the ground but may also have moving parts.

**MODEL:** one who poses for an artist

**MOSAIC:** a design or picture created by imbedding stones or pieces of glass on a floor, vault or wall

**MURAL:** a large painting or artwork, generally designed for and created on the wall or ceiling of a public building

**OPAQUE:** ability of paint to cover over a surface. Not seen through

**OPTICAL ILLUSION:** image that appears different than it actually is

**PATTERN:** a design made by repeating a motif at regular intervals

**PERSPECTIVE:** a technique for creating the illusion of depth on a 2-D surface

**PORTRAIT:** a picture of a person or images that portray a person

**POSE:** to sit or stand still for an artist

**PROPORTION:** the relationship of one object to another in size, shape, number or degree.

**RADIAL DESIGN:** branching out from the middle.

**REFLECTION:** a repeating tessellated shape that mirrors itself

**REPETITION:** recurring again and again

**ROTATION:** a tessellated shape that repeats around a point

**RUBBINGS:** to use pressure and friction over a piece of paper to capture the texture

**SHADE:** any colour mixed with black

**SHAPE:** the outline of a figure or form. Shapes can be geometric (rectangles, triangles, and circles, etc.) or organic (irregular)

**SILHOUETTE:** portrait or picture cut from black paper or done in solid black upon a light background

**SKETCH:** a rough outline or drawing showing the main features of something

**SLIP:** clay diluted with water to the consistency of cream, this helps to glue clay sections together

**STAINED GLASS:** pieces of coloured glass put together to make a picture

**STENCILING:** applying paint to a wall or cloth surface through a hole cut in metal or oiled cardboard

**STILL LIFE:** an arrangement of fruit, flowers, food or assorted unmoving objects. The plural is "still lifes" (not "lives").

**STUDY:** a drawing that may be used to try out an idea or plan out another work

**TEXTURE:** the way something feels to the touch. Texture can be real, as in the smoothness of a bronze sculpture, or the bumpiness of thick oil paint on a canvas. Texture can also be implied or imagined, as in painted illusions of the softness of a kitten's fur, or the prickly quality of hay

**THEME:** the main idea underlying the subject in a work of art

**THUMBNAIL SKETCHES:** small sketches.

**TILE:** a repeating design that covers an entire surface

**TINT:** any colour mixed with white

**TOPE:** harmony in colours and values in an artwork

**TRANSLUCENT:** clear enough to allow light to pass through

**TRANSPARENT:** see through

**VANISHING POINT:** term used in perspective; all lines lead to this point which may be on or off the canvas

**VERTICAL:** up and down

**VISUAL TEXTURE:** texture that you can see or that an artist will decorate a surface with. You cannot feel visual texture

**WASH:** pigment diluted with water and applied to a painting surface to give a translucent effect

**WATERCOLOUR:** a type of paint made from a mixture of powdered pigments (colours) with a binder and water. Watercolour painting usually transparent, meaning that you can see through it to the surface beneath. Opaque paints (paints that you cannot see through) that are mixed with water are called gouache

**WATERCOLOUR WASH:** a thin or watery coating of paint