

The visual analysis of artistic form.

form

1. In art, an object's shape and structure, either in two dimensions (for example, a figure painted on a surface) or in three dimensions (such as statue).

medium (pl. media)

1. a liquid (e.g., oil or water) with which pigments are mixed to make paint.
2. the material or form used by an artist, composer, or writer : oil paint is the most popular medium for glazing.

LINE

- The path of a moving point made by a tool, instrument, or medium as it moves across an area.²

SHAPE

- An area that stands out from its surroundings because of a defined or implied boundary or because of differences of value, color, or texture.²

VALUE

- The relative degree of lightness or darkness. The characteristic of color determined by its lightness or darkness of the quality of light reflected by the color.²

COLOR

- The visual response to different wavelengths of sunlight identified as red, green, blue, and so on' having the physical properties of hue, intensity, and value.²
 - ✓ hue: chromatic distinctiveness of color
 - ✓ intensity: saturation or purity of color, pure color, or mixed with a neutral or other color
 - ✓ value: relative light or dark of color

TEXTURE

- The surface character of a material that can be experienced through touch or the illusion of touch.²

SPACE

- The interval, or measurable distance, between points or images; can be actual or illusionary.²

Other terms that can be useful when analyzing a work of art formally:

BALANCE

- The design or arrangement of parts in a whole grouping that creates a feeling of equilibrium or equality. ¹

EMPHASIS

- Dominance: A condition that occurs when one or more compositional elements within a visual field is emphasized and becomes more visually prominent than the others. ¹
- Focal Point: A compositional device emphasizing a certain area or object to draw attention to the piece and to encourage closer scrutiny of the work. ³

SCALE

- The association of size relative to a constant standard or specific unit of measure related to human dimensions. ²

Questions to consider asking when using formal analysis

- What is being emphasized? How is it being emphasized?
- What does the artist use to create emphasis? Line, shape, color?
- How does the artist use color?
- Is there a pattern or rhythm to the work of art?
- Is there an overall harmony or unity to the work? Do the elements seem connected or disconnected?
- Does the work evoke an emotion? How does the artist achieve this effect?
- What is the format of the work, vertical or horizontal? Is it a large- or small-scale work?
- What type of texture is seen in the work of art? Does the work seem rough or smooth?
- What indication of space is inherent in the work of art? Does the artist create an illusion of depth in the work? How is this achieved?

¹ *Basic Visual Concepts and Principles*, Allschlaeger and Busic-Snyder, 1st ed.

² *Art Fundamentals: Theory and Practice*, Ocvirk, et al. 11th ed.