

## Glossary of Art Terminology

**Abstract drawing:** a translation into drawing of a real life object or experience. Usually implies the isolation, emphasis, or exaggeration of some aspect of the real world.

**Acrylic:** Thicker and stronger than tempera or watercolor paint, Acrylic is a water-based "plastic" paint.

**Alla Prima:** A direct painting method, which means painted "At Once".

**Analogous colors** are groups of colors that are adjacent to each other on the color wheel, with one being the dominant color, which tends to be a primary or secondary color, and two on either side complimenting, which tend to be tertiary.

**Awareness:** consciousness; the act of "taking account" of an object, person or surroundings. Possible synonyms are "seeing" or cognition.

**Balance:** An art and design principle concerned with the arrangement of one or more elements in a work of art so that they appear symmetrical (even) or asymmetrical (uneven) in design and proportion.

**Basic Unit:** a starting shape or "starting unit" chosen from within a composition for the purpose of maintaining correct size relationships in a drawing. The basic unit is always termed "one" and becomes part of a ratio, as in "1:2"

**Brain Mode:** a mental strategic, implying emphasis on particular capabilities of the human brain, such as language processing or visual spatial processing.

**Brushes:** Brush styles are designated by a letter following a series number.

Some basic brushes to meet your needs:

F- Flats, square edge, long bristle

B- Brights, flat, square-edged, long sable

R - Rounds, pointed bristle

L- Longs, flat, square-edge, long sable

Filberts- Flat, oval edge, long fibre

**Canvas:** Fabrics, usually cotton or Linen or polyester, that are prepared for painting. Available in panels, stretched on frames, or obtained by the yard.

**Chroma:** This is the intensity, or strength, or purity of a color.

**Cognitive shift:** a transference of the predominance of one mental state to another, e.g. From verbal, verbal analytic mode to visual, spatial mode, or vice versa.

**Color:** When light is reflected off an object, color is what the eye sees. The primary colors are red, yellow and blue. The secondary colors are orange, purple and green.

**Cool/Warm Color:** Color theory has described perceptual and psychological effects to this contrast. Warm colors are said to advance or appear more active in a painting, while cool colors tend to recede; used in interior design or fashion, warm colors are said to arouse or stimulate the viewer, while cool colors calm and relax. Most of these effects, to the extent they are real, can be attributed to the higher saturation and lighter value of warm pigments in contrast to cool pigments.

**Complimentary Colors.** Colors directly opposite each other in the color spectrum, such as red and green or blue and orange, that when combined in the right proportions, produce white light. The effect is not the same when mixing paints

**Composition:** an ordered relationship among the parts or elements of an artwork. In drawing, the arrangement of forms and spaces within the format.

**Contour:** in drawing, A line that represents the shared edges of shapes and spaces.

**Charcoal and Conte Crayon:** In stick form, both give you a very strong, dark line. A disadvantage to these crayons is that they break easily and tend to smudge. Can be found in stick form as well.

**Contrast:** Contrast is created by using opposites near or beside one another, such as a light object next to a dark object or a rough texture next to a smooth texture.

**Core Shadow:** the *defining* edge between light and shade. The Core or Core Shadow is the darkest part of the object. Usually the vertical side away from light source.

**Crosshatching:** a series of intersecting sets of parallel lines used to indicate shadings or volume in a drawing, also called hatching.

**Dry Brushing:** Technique used in paintings using more pigment than water.

**Easel:** An easel is used to support your canvas while painting. Can be a collapsible tripod, studio types and as a combination sketch box unit. Some sketch boxes contain lids that serve as easels.

**Ebauche:** students of the French Academy were taught that the *ébauche*, or lay-in, was an essential, if not the most important step, in the development of a painted picture.

**Edge:** in drawing, a place where two things meet (for example, where the sky meets the ground); the line of separation (called a contour) between two shapes or a space and a shape.

**Elements of Art:** Elements of art are the basic visual symbols found in the work such as lines, shape, form, space, point, light, motion, direction, scale, dimension, texture and color.

**Encaustic:** This ancient art uses colored wax for painting. This technique involves painting images onto walls with pigments that are blended with wax. When used with heat, such as an iron, the permanent color is burned into the wall, for good.

**Eye level:** in portrait drawing, the horizontal proportional line that divides the head approximately in half; the eye level line is located at this halfway mark on the head. In landscape drawing or painting it is the viewpoint from which the scene is being observed, hence the "eye-level".

**Fat over lean:** refers to the principle, in oil painting, of applying paint with a higher oil to pigment ratio ('fat')

**Foreshortening:** a means of creating the illusion of projecting or receding forms on a flat surface.

**Format:** the particular shape of a drawing surface (rectangular, square, triangular, etc.); the proportional relationship of the length to the width of a rectangular surface.

**Gamut or Colour Gamut:** The range of colours that can be mixed by the paints on an Artists Palette. Also defined as the range or colours that can be displayed on a TV, Computer Monitor or a Printer. The Human eye is capable of seeing colors far beyond any of these limited Gamuts.

**Gesso:** A paste prepared by mixing plaster of paris or gypsum whiting with size or glue and spread upon a surface to fit it for painting or gilding

**Gesture:** is work of art defined by rapid execution. Typical situations involve an artist drawing a series of poses taken by a [model](#) in a short amount of time, often as little as 30 seconds, or as long as 2 minutes. Gesture drawing is often performed as a warm-up for a [life drawing](#) session. More generally, a gesture drawing may be any drawing which attempts to capture action or movement.

**Glaze:** Color that is thinned to a transparent state and applied over previously painted areas to modify the original color. (see also Underpainting)

**Gouache (Tempera):** Opaque watercolors and the technique of painting with such colors using white to make tints.

**Grisaille:** is a French word meaning grey.

**Highlight:** Small areas on a painting or drawing on which reflected light is the brightest.

**Hue:** In painting color theory, a **hue** refers to a *pure* color—one without tint or shade (added white or black pigment, respectively). A hue is an element of the color wheel.

**Image:** verb: To call up in the mind a mental copy of something not present to the senses; to see in the mind's eye. Noun: A retinal image picture received by a visual system and interpreted or reinterpreted by the brain.

**Imagination:** A recombination of mental images from past experiences into new patterns.

**Impasto:** A manner of painting where the paint is laid on thickly so texture stands out in relief.

**Impressionism:** Impressionism is referred to as the most important art movement of the 19th century. The term impressionism came from a painting by Claude Monet. His painting was titled Impression Sunrise. Impressionism is about capturing fast fleeting moments with color, light, and surface.

**Intensity:** This term is used to describe the brightness, or the dullness of a color.

**Intermediate colors:** Obtained by mixing adjoining Primary and Secondary colors.

**Intuition:** Direct and apparently unmediated knowledge; a judgment, meaning or idea that occurs to a person without any known process or reflective thinking; an idea that seems "to come from nowhere."

**Left-Handedness:** About ten percent of the population prefers using the left hand for motor activities such as writing or drawing. Location of brain functions are located in the left hemisphere.

**Left-Hemisphere.** The left half of the cerebrum. For most right-handed individuals, verbal functions are located in the left hemisphere.

**Light Logic.** In art, the effect caused by a light source. Light rays, falling in straight lines, can logically be expected to cause the following highlights, cast shadows, reflected lights, and crest shadows.

**Limited Palette:** is to purposefully limit the color choices in the composition of a painting, the example we used in class was known as the Zorn Limited Palette, based on the famous artist Anders Zorn. This practice instantly harmonizes the painting.

**L-mode:** A mental state of information processing characterized as linear, verbal, analytic, and logical.

**Line:** A line is an identifiable path of a point moving in space. It can vary in width, direction and length.

**Horizontal** lines run parallel such as ===

**Vertical** lines run up and down such as |||||

**Diagonal** lines are slanting lines such as \\\

**Angled** lines are a combination of diagonal lines such as /\

**Curved** lines are curly and express movement such as ~~~~~

**Linseed Oil:** Used as a medium. The traditional "binder" for oil colors.

**Medium:** The art material that is used in a work of art such as clay, paint or pencil. Describing more than one art medium is referred to as media. Any substance added to color to facilitate application or to achieve a desired effect.

**Monochromatic:** (Mono=One; Chromatic=Color) describes paintings, drawings, design, or photographs in one color or shades of one color.

**Negative spaces:** The areas around positive forms that, in drawing, share edges with the forms. Negative spaces are bounded by the outer edges of the format. "Interior" negative spaces can be parts of positive forms.

**Oil Paint:** A definition by Winsor & Newton states: "Oils are one of the great classic media, and have dominated painting for five hundred years. They remain popular for many reasons: their great versatility, offering the possibility of transparency and opacity in the same painting; the lack of color change when the painting dries; and ease of manipulation."

**Painting Knife:** Knives come in a variety of shapes and sizes. A trowel-type flexible knife.

**Pastel:** Colors go from soft to brilliant in a stick form. When the paper is covered completely, it is known as a pastel painting. When the paper is exposed through the pastel, it is known as a pastel sketch.

**Pencil grades:** The grade number stamped on drawing pencils indicates the hardness or softness of the graphite. "H" for Hard; "B" for soft or (black)

**Perspective:** Perspective creates the feeling of depth through the use of lines that make your image appear to be three-dimensional. The closer the image is, the more detailed it will appear, and the larger it will be.

**Pigment:** Pigment is the material used to create the effect of color on any surface.

**Picture plane:** An imaginary transparent plane, like a framed window, that always remains parallel to the vertical plane of the artist's face.

**Primary Colors.** Any of a group of colors from which all other colors can be obtained by mixing. (Red, Yellow, Blue)

**Proportion:** The average human body is 7 ½ heads tall, a heroic proportion may be as tall as 10 heads tall.

**Realistic drawing:** The objective depiction of objects, forms, and figures attentively perceived. Also called naturalism.

**Relationships:** In art, how the parts of an artwork are organized and connected. Also commonly known as perspective and proportion: the relationships of angles vertical to horizontal and the relationships of sizes or values to each other.

**Repetition:** Repetition is created when objects, shapes, space, light, direction, lines etc. are repeated in artwork.

**Rhythm:** When the regular repetition of particular forms or elements occurs in a work of art, that work is said to have rhythm. It suggests motion.

**Right Hemisphere:** The right half of the cerebrum. For most right handed individuals, visual, spatial, relational functions are located in the right hemisphere.

**R-mode:** A state of information processing characterized as simultaneous, global, spatial, and relational.

**Sauce:** was a term used throughout 19th century France to refer to a transparent, fluid mixture of red-brown paint, diluted with turpentine and a boiled drying oil like linseed oil.

**Secondary Color:** is a color made by mixing two primary colors in a given color space.

**Shade:** Using a mixture of black mixed with a color to make it darker. The opposite of shade is tint.

**Shape:** Shapes can be in the form of squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, and ovals.

**Sighting:** In drawing, measuring relative sizes by means of a constant measure (the pencil held at arms length is the most usual measuring device); determining the location of one part relative to another part. Also, determining angles relative to vertical and horizontal.

**Sight Sized Method:** is a method of drawing and painting an object exactly as it appears to the artist on a one to one scale.

**Symbol system:** In drawing, a set of symbols that are consistently used to form an image, for example, a face or figure. Much like the alphabet is a symbol for a sound.

**Symmetry:** Symmetry is when one side of something balances out the other side.

**Tertiary Color.** A tertiary color is a color made by mixing one primary color with one secondary color, in a given color space such as RGB or RYB.

**Tint:** A shade of a color, especially a pale or delicate variation. A gradation of a color made by adding white to it to lessen its saturation.

**Turpentine (or Grumtine):** Used for cleaning equipment and to thin mediums.

**Underpainting.** A layer of paint subsequently overlaid with another layer or with a finishing coat and that is intended to be seen through a subsequent paint layer.

**Unity:** A feeling of completeness is created by the use of elements in the artwork.

**Value:** In art, the darkness or lightness of tones or colors. White is the lightest or highest (in the Munsell system a value 9); black is the darkest or lowest (value 0).

**Verdaccio:** is an Italian name for the mixture of black, white, and yellow pigments resulting in a grayish or yellowish (depending on the proportion) soft greenish brown.

**Viewfinder:** A device used by artists to frame a view and provide bounding edges to a composition; similar to the device on a camera that lets the user see

**Watercolour:** A translucent, water-based paint that comes in cake or tube form.

<http://www.artincanada.com/arttalk/arttermsanddefinitions.html#s>