

The Language of Art

When you are writing about any work of art you should always refer to the visual elements. ie.

Line, Shape, Form, Tone, Colour, Pattern, Texture

Line

Line is the trace left by the movement of any mark making object
Line can be used to define shape and form, and represent pattern and even texture.

Wordbank

Thick, thin, straight, curved, short, long, wavy, angular, linear, continuous, broken, fuzzy, uneven, zig-zag, soft, hard, light, heavy, neat, messy, rough, smooth, jagged, ragged, scratchy, torn, squiggly, dribbly, splashy, faint, fine, bold, fluid, flowing, graceful, elegant, confident, hesitant, clear, distinct, definite, indefinite, stripe horizontal, vertical, diagonal, sloping, precise, sketchy, accurate, sensitive, mark.

Shape/Form

Shape defines an area in 2-dimensional work
Shape can be produced by applying line, tone, colour, pattern or texture.
Form is 3 dimensional shape

Wordbank

Solid, geometric, regular, irregular, negative, organic, natural, man-made, hard-edged, distinct, indistinct, rounded, circular, oval, triangular, spherical, square, angular, rectangular, oblong, oval, cubed, cylindrical, symmetrical, asymmetrical, flat, long, tall, deep, wide, narrow, pointed, bold, elegant, contour, silhouette, relief, profile, outline, figure, moulded, cast, deformed, carved, modelled, built, clearly-defined, distorted, sharp, concave, convex, hollow, bulbous, tubular, pointed, twisted, bent.

Tone

Tone is the variation of shade from light to dark
Tone can be used to define shape, form, pattern and texture and to create contrast.

Wordbank

light, dark, soft, subtle, strong, contrasting, gradual, graded, sombre, monotone, high-key, low-key, limited, subdued, separate, distinct, indistinct, clear, deep, muted, restrained, varied, dull, highlight, half-tone, mid-tone, shadow, range, even.

Colour

Colour is the visible range of the spectrum
Colour can express mood and consist of shades (adding black) hues (pure colour) and tints (adding white).

Wordbank

bright, dull, strong, bold, subtle, vivid vibrant, light, dark, drab, deep, contrasting, hue, tint, shade, spectrum, rainbow, palette, colour-scheme, complementary, warm, cool, rich, pale, soft, hard, intense, pigment, tinge, wash, glowing, rich, gaudy, garish, harsh, crude, lurid, loud, clash, clear, pastel, primary, secondary, tertiary, neutral, balanced, harmonious, opposite, related, clear, pure, muted, pastel, saturated, brilliant, symbolic, decorative, matching, sombre, subdued, restrained, limited, graded, faded, varied, monochrome.

Pattern

Pattern is the arrange of similar or repeated lines, shapes, forms tones or colours.
Pattern can be regular, rhythmic or random.
Pattern can be natural or man-made

Wordbank

Decorative, rhythmic, applied, repeating, random, varied, regular, simple, complicated, natural, man-made, positive, negative, ornate, bold, subtle, loose, tight, optical, kinetic, geometric, mechanical, organic, tartan, ornamental, floral, chequered, polka-dot, cross-hatching.

Repeated shapes: dots, dashes, lines, stripes, circles, squares, triangles, symbols, squiggles, splashes, dribbles, motifs.

Texture

Texture is the tactile quality of a surface – (what a surface feels like)
Texture can be represented in 3 dimensions ie. actual texture or in 2 dimensions to crate the effect of texture.

Wordbank

Surface, tactile, feel, touch, fine, smooth, rounded, rough, soft, hard, coarse, shiny, bumpy, rippled, wrinkly, crinkly, jagged, scaly silky, hairy, uneven, indented, scratched, scraped, ragged, grainy, ribbed, grooved, pitted, notched, woven, raised, dusty, gritty, crumbly, abrasive, cracked, velvety, spongy, waxy, greasy, spikey fleecy.
brushwork: gestural, rhythmic, free, controlled, directional, angular, careful, rapid, swirling, loose, tight, impasto.