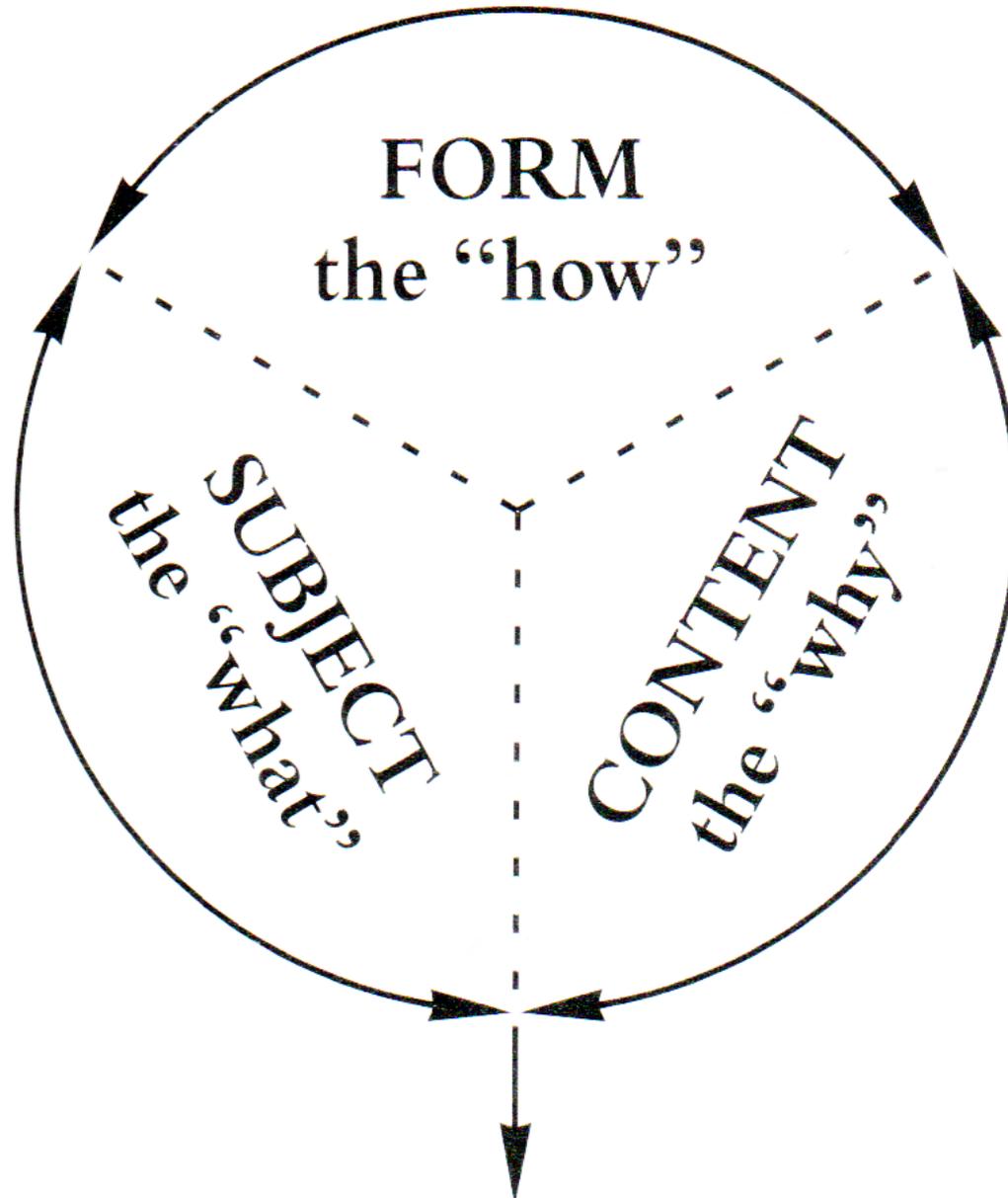


Elements of Art

Principles of Organization

Robert Spahr
Associate Professor
Department of Cinema & Photography
rspahr@siu.edu
<http://www.robertspahr.com>



combining to produce
ORGANIC UNITY



Pieter Claesz. (Dutch, about 1597–1660),
Still Life with Stoneware Jug, Wine Glass, Herring, and Bread, 1642



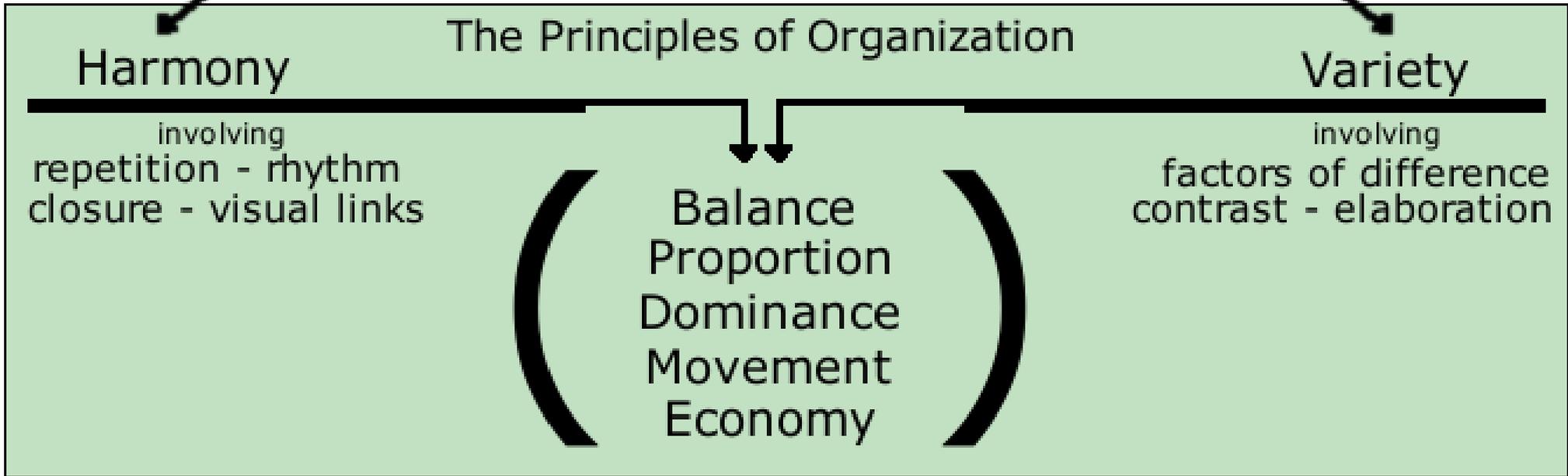
Paul Cezanne,
Still Life, Drapery, Pitcher, and Fruit Bowl 1893–1894

The Evolution of
Form

Art tools ↓ and media

The Elements of Art
(Line, Shape, Value, Texture, Color)

are employed according to



creating
Space
↓
to produce

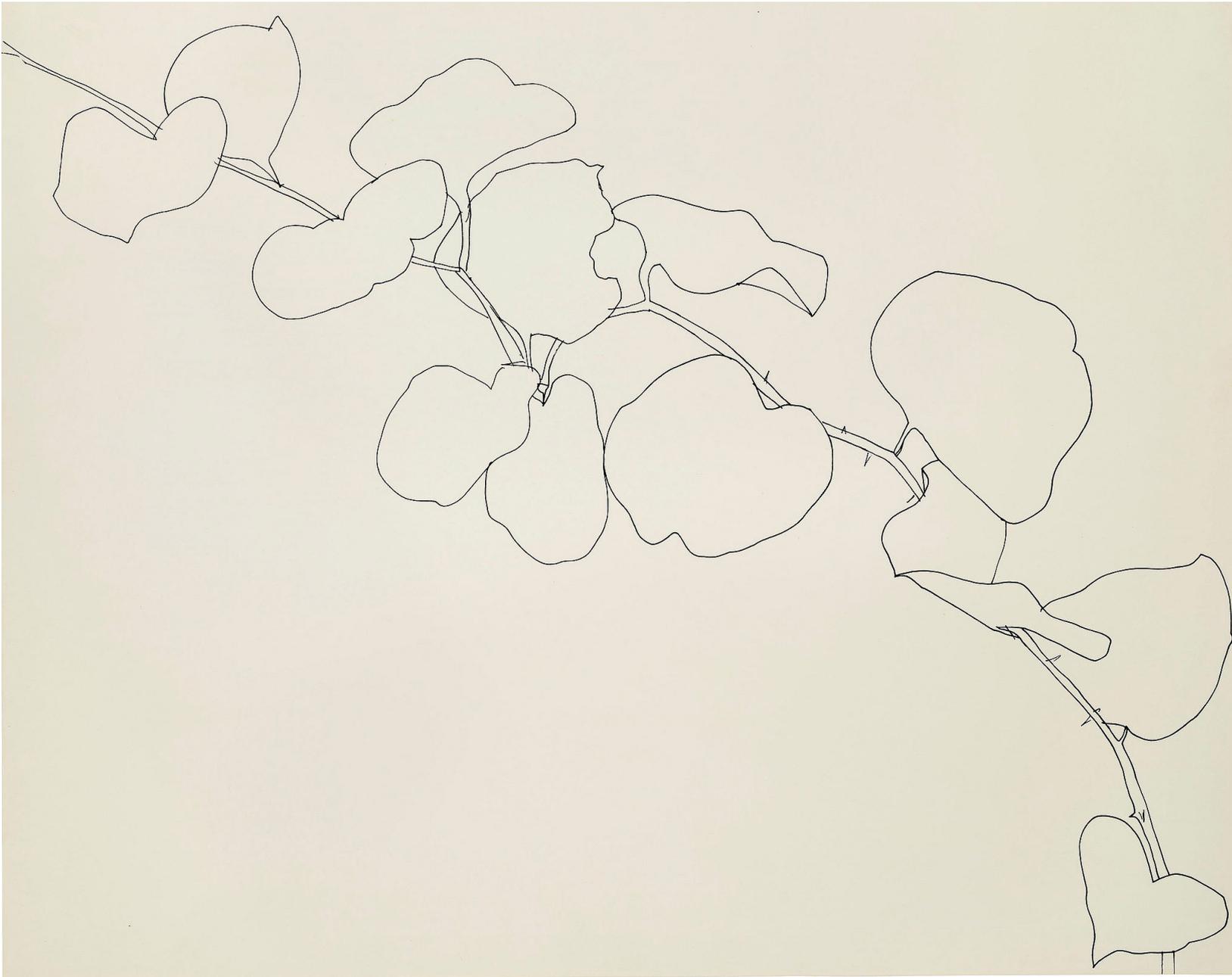
Unity

Elements of Art: LINE

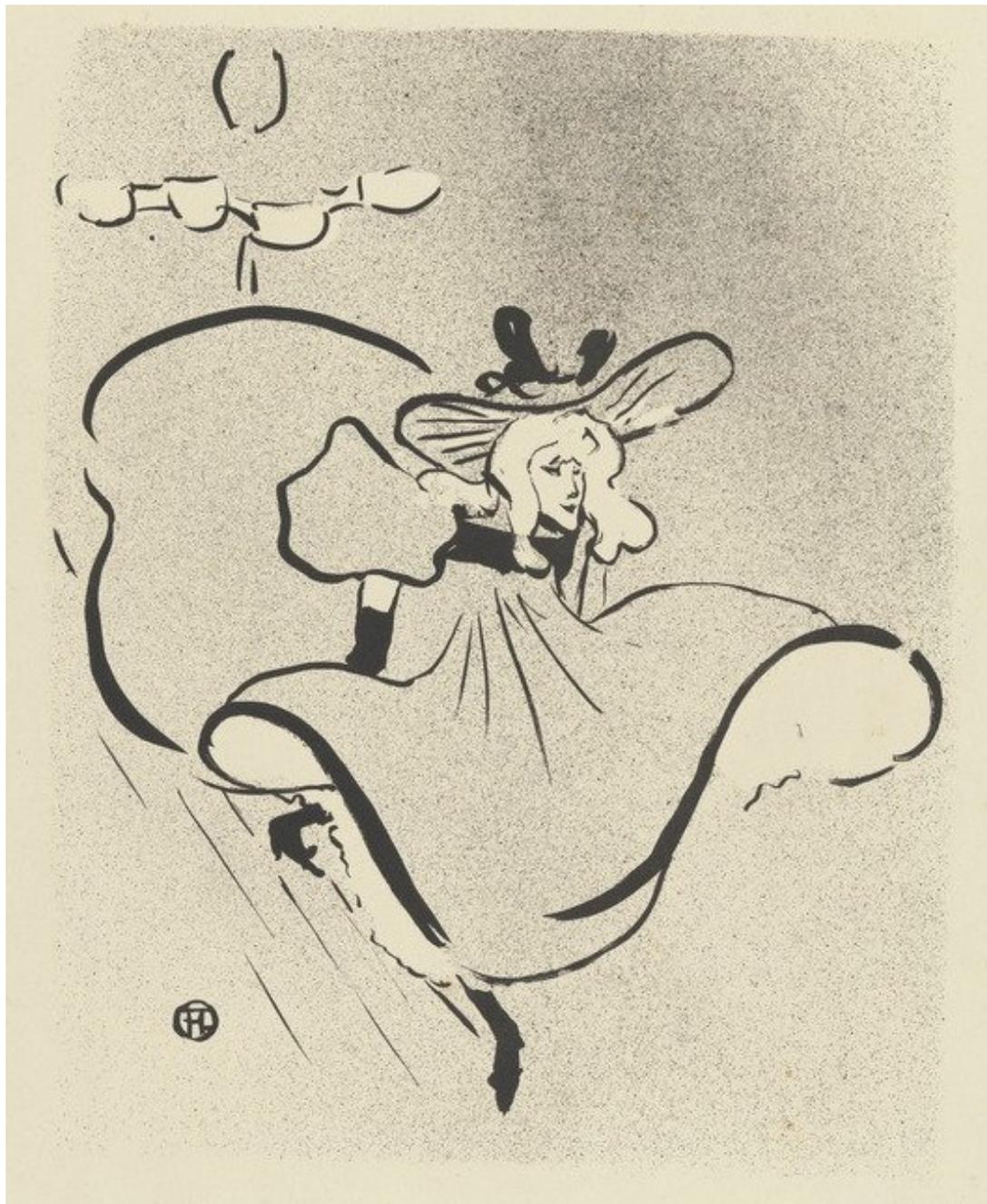
Lines and curves are marks that span a distance between two points (or the path of a moving point).

As an element of visual art, line is the use of various marks, outlines, and implied lines in artwork and design.

A line has a width, direction, and length. A line's width is sometimes called its "thickness".



Ellsworth Kelly,
Briar, 1961



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec,
Jane Avril, first plate from *Le Cafe Concert*, 1893

Elements of Art: SHAPE

Shape can be defined in art as a line enclosing an area.

Shapes could be geometric, such as squares, circles, triangles etc. or organic and curvaceous.

In everyday usage, the word 'shape' is also used to talk about three-dimensional *form*.



We have an instinctive need for order that enables our minds to fill in the parts that have been left out.

This principle was first put forward by the German Gestalt psychologists, during their exploration into human perception in the early part of the twentieth century.

Gestalt is the German word for “form.”

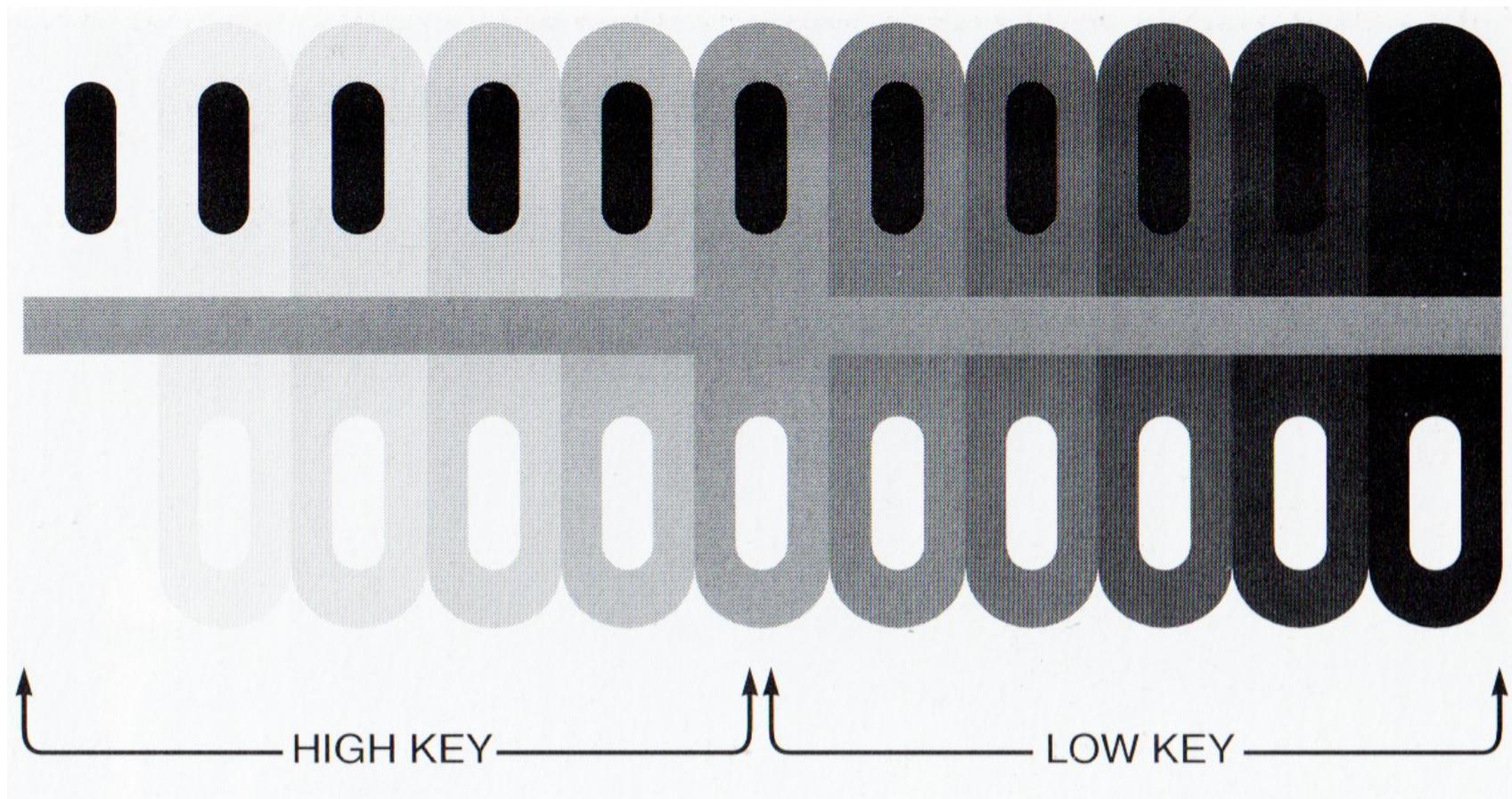


Joan Miro,
Painting, 1933

Elements of Art: VALUE

How light or dark an object or element is, independent of its color. Shading uses value to depict light and shadow and show volume/form.

Anyone who studies art must consider the relationship of value to the other elements of art form, all of which possess value.



This value scale shows a gradation from light to dark.

The value is also seen against middle gray and black and white. Regardless of the media, or technique used to create them, compositions that use values from white to middle gray are referred to as high key, while low-key images would include dark values – middle grays to black.

Small amounts of contrasting value are often necessary to make either low or high key exciting.



Giorgio Morandi
Large Still Life with Coffeepot, 1933

Elements of Art: TEXTURE

The tactile sensation or feel of a surface (rough, smooth, spiky, etc.) or how something appears to feel.



Pablo Picasso
Still Life with Chair Caning, 1912

Elements of Art: COLOR

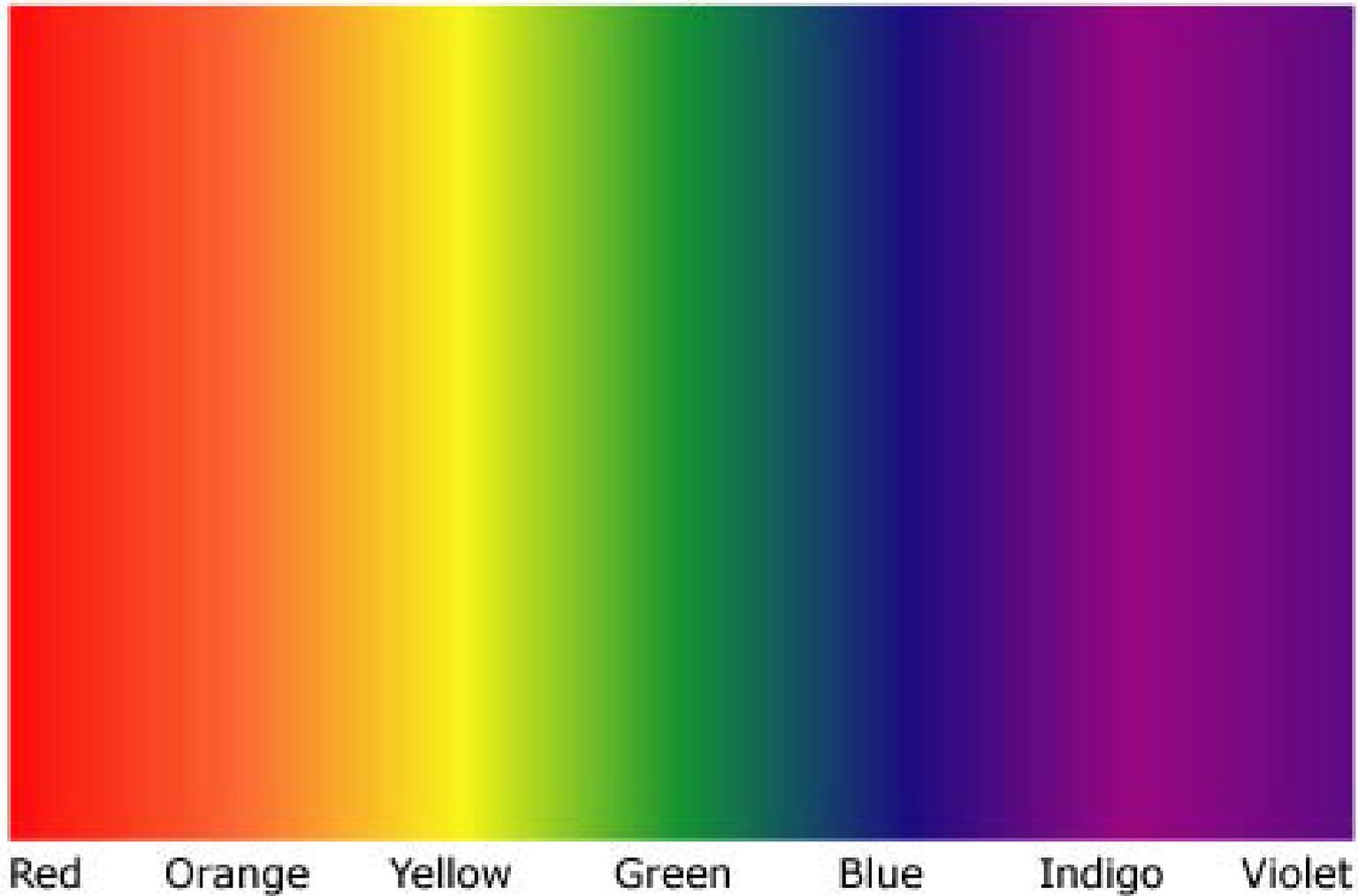
The visible spectrum of radiation reflected from an object.
Three properties of color are:

Hue – The name of the color (red, green, etc.)

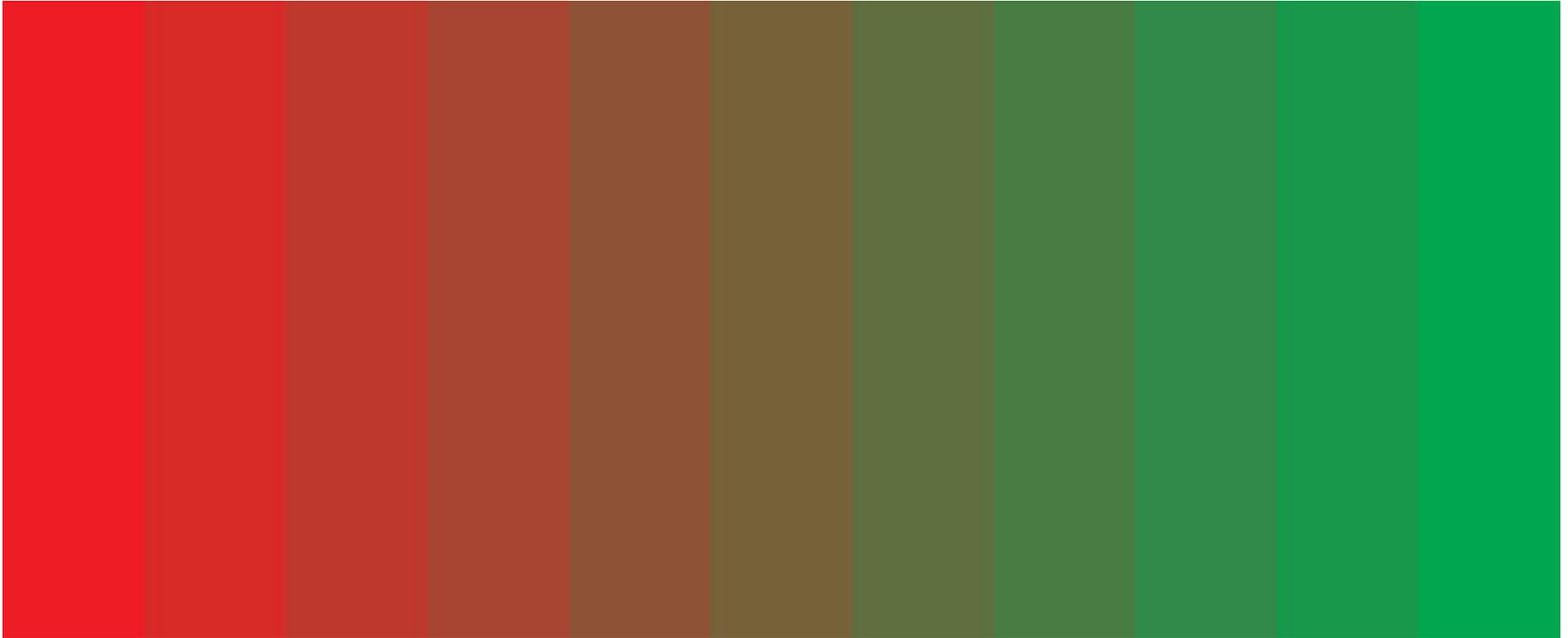
Intensity or Saturation – The purity (brightness or dullness) of the color. Pure red is bright; red mixed with a little green becomes less intense, more neutral.

Value or Brightness – The lightness or darkness of a color. How much white or black shows through or is mixed in. Can be used to depict light and shadow on a color and help show volume/form.

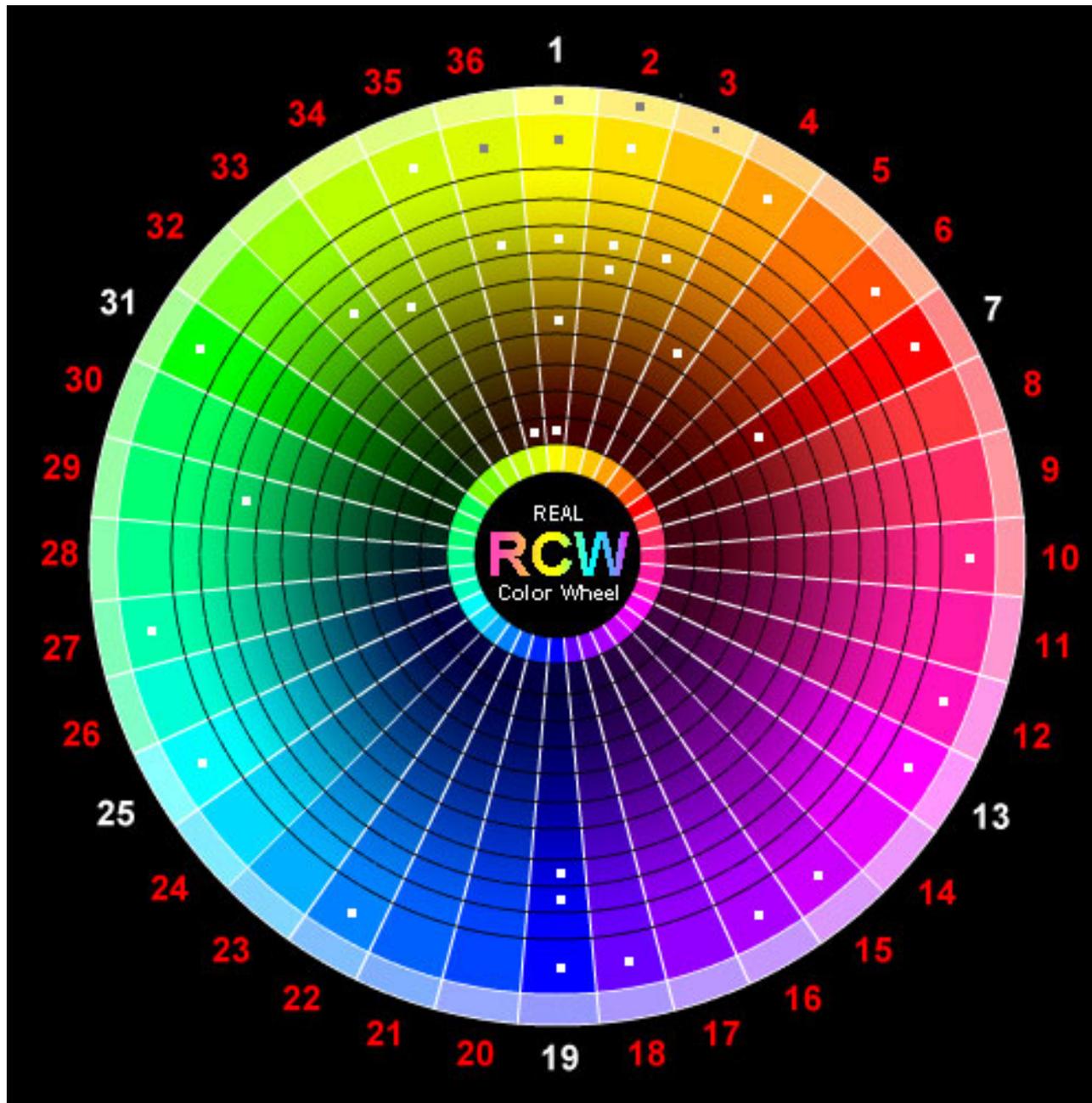
Visible Spectrum



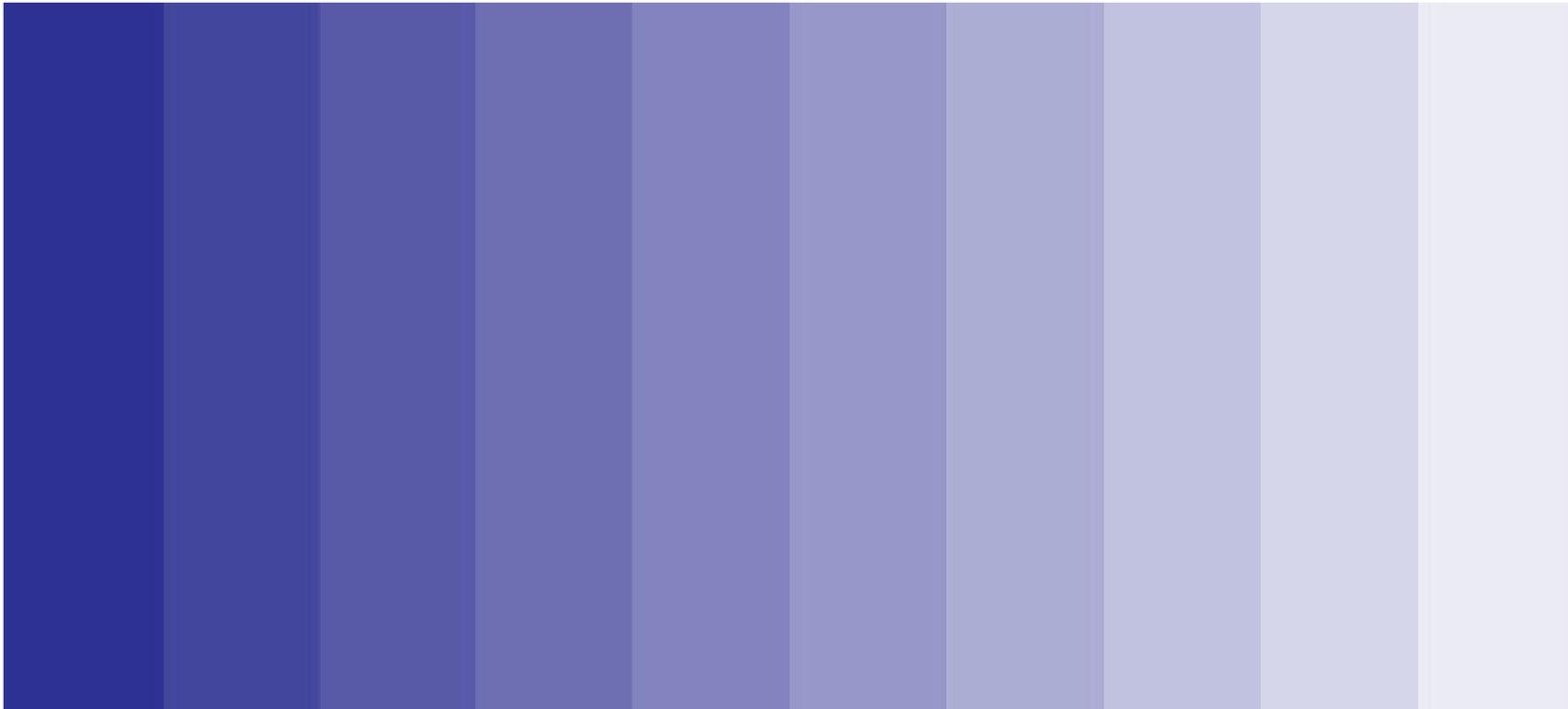
Hue – The name of the color (red, blue, green, etc.)



Intensity or Saturation – The purity (brightness or dullness) of the color. Pure red is bright; red mixed with a little green (its complement, opposite it on the color wheel) becomes less intense, more neutral.



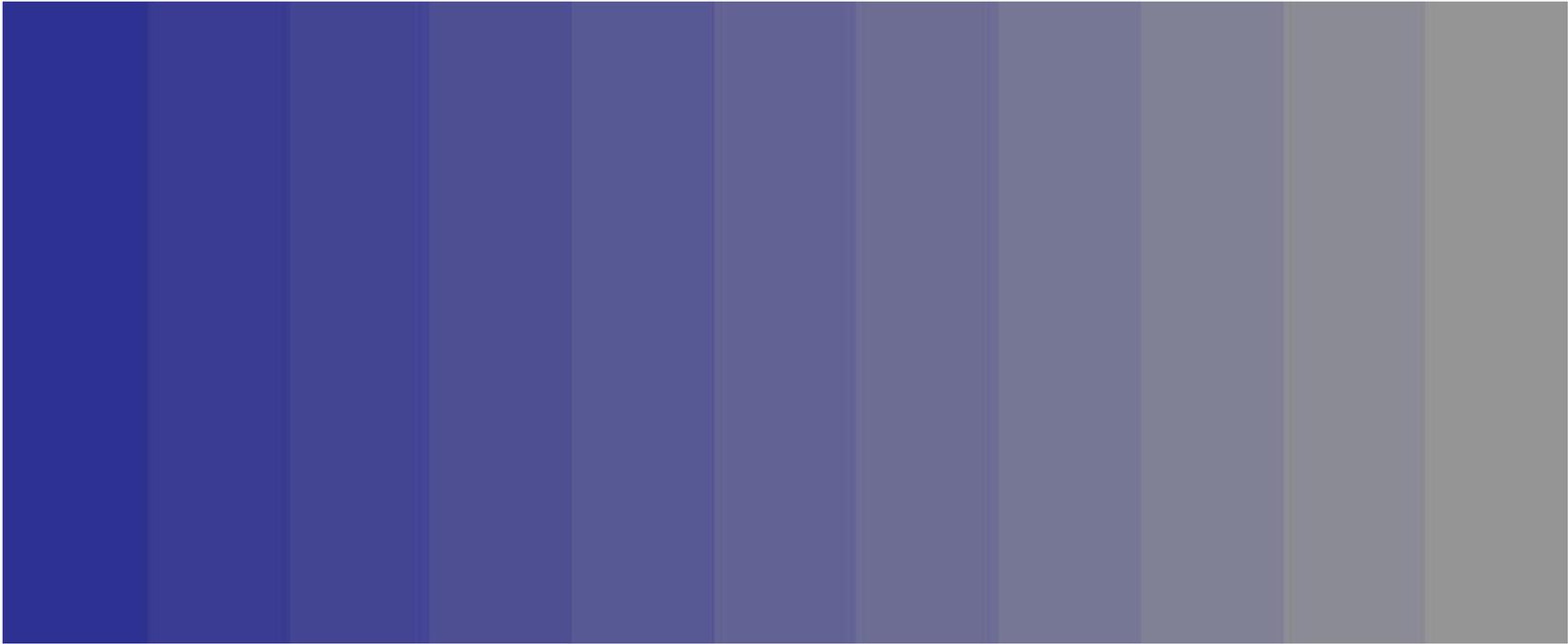
Value or Brightness – The lightness or darkness of a color. How much white or black shows through or is mixed in. Can be used to depict light and shadow on a color and help show volume/form.



Tint. A hue with white added to it, or applied thin enough so that a white background material (paper, canvas, etc.) shows through.



Shade. A hue with black added to it.



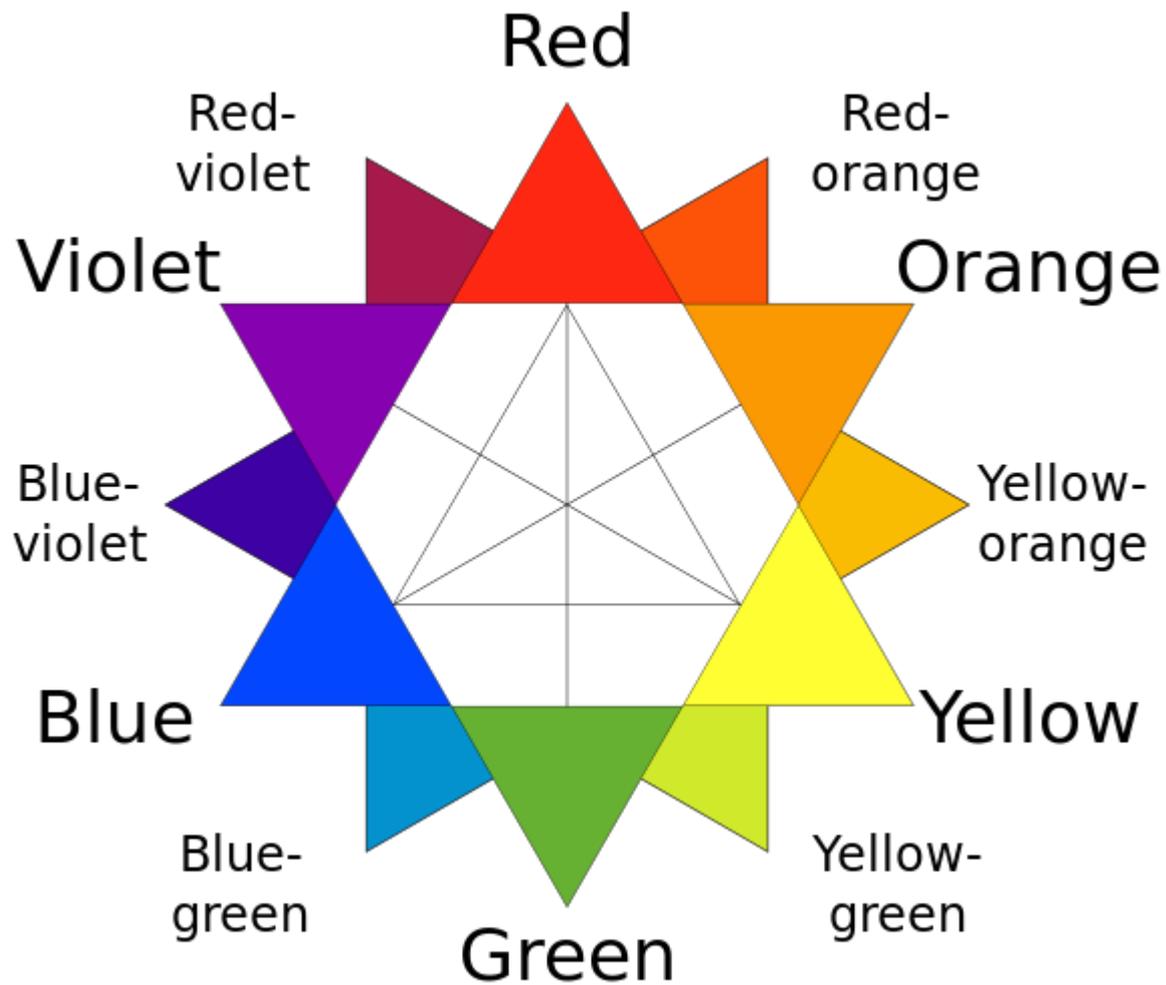
Tone. A hue with gray added to it.

Color Temperature

Warm colors. Reds, oranges and yellows are said to be warm colors because of their visual relationship to sources of heat and light. Objects or elements with these colors will tend to appear energetic and exciting, as well as more forward in space.

Cool colors. Blues, greens and violets are said to be cool colors. Objects or elements with these colors will tend to appear calming and soothing, as well as farther back in space.

Neutral colors. Blacks, grays, browns, tans, beiges, and whites. Browns, tans, and beiges are slightly warm; blacks, grays, and whites can be slightly cool or warm.



Monochrome – Using only one color.

Analogous – Using colors next to each other on the color wheel.

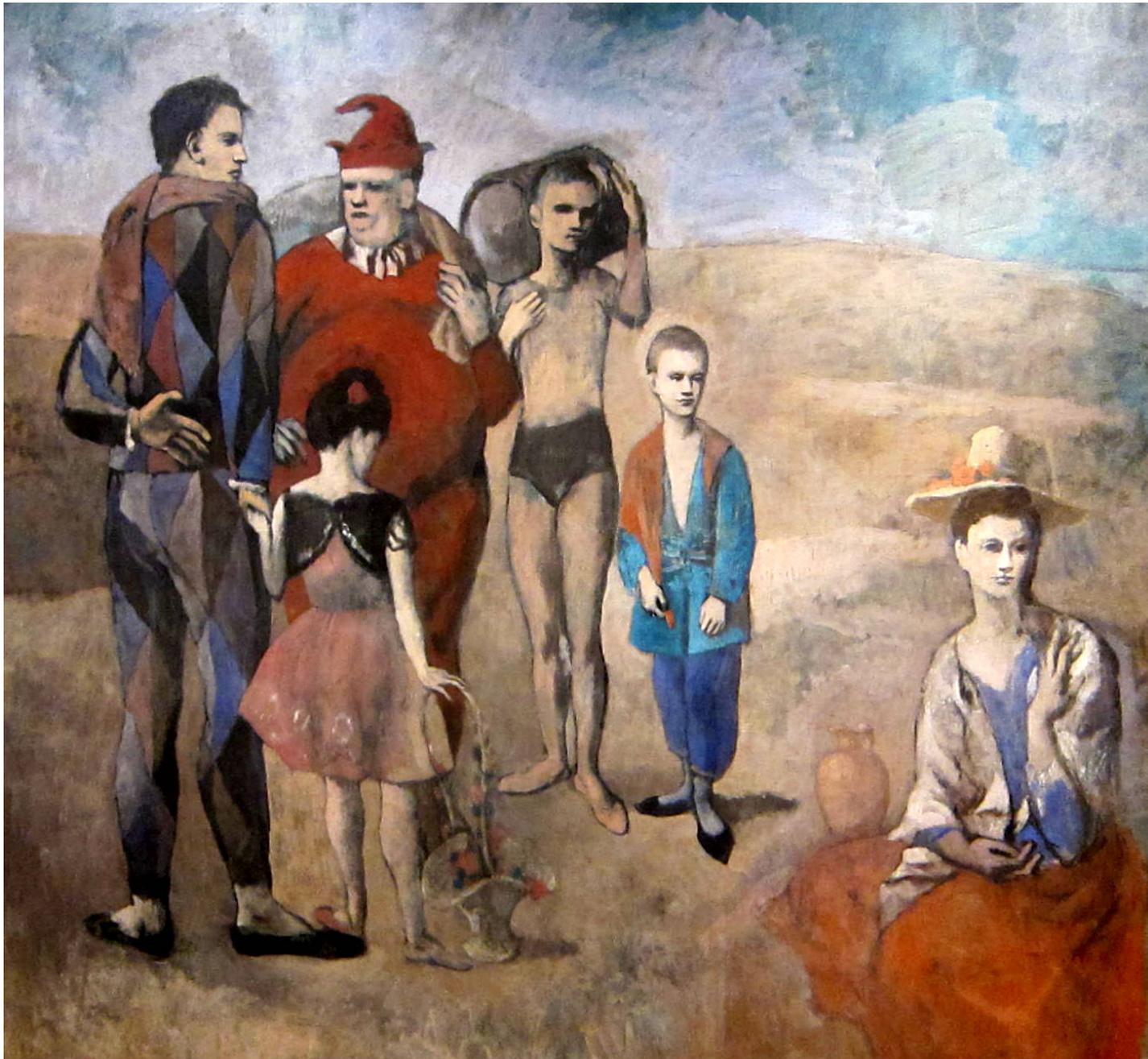
Complementary – Using colors opposite each other on the color wheel.

Principles of Organization: BALANCE

The distribution of interest or visual weight in a work. If all the visually interesting elements of a work are centered in one spot, the work is off-balance and the viewer's gaze will be stuck in one place, ignoring the rest of the piece.

Some types of balance are *symmetric*, *asymmetric*, and *radial*.

Gravity is a universally and intuitively felt experience. Walking, standing on one leg, or tipping back in a chair reveals our intuitive need for balance.



Pablo Picasso
Family of Saltimbanques, 1905

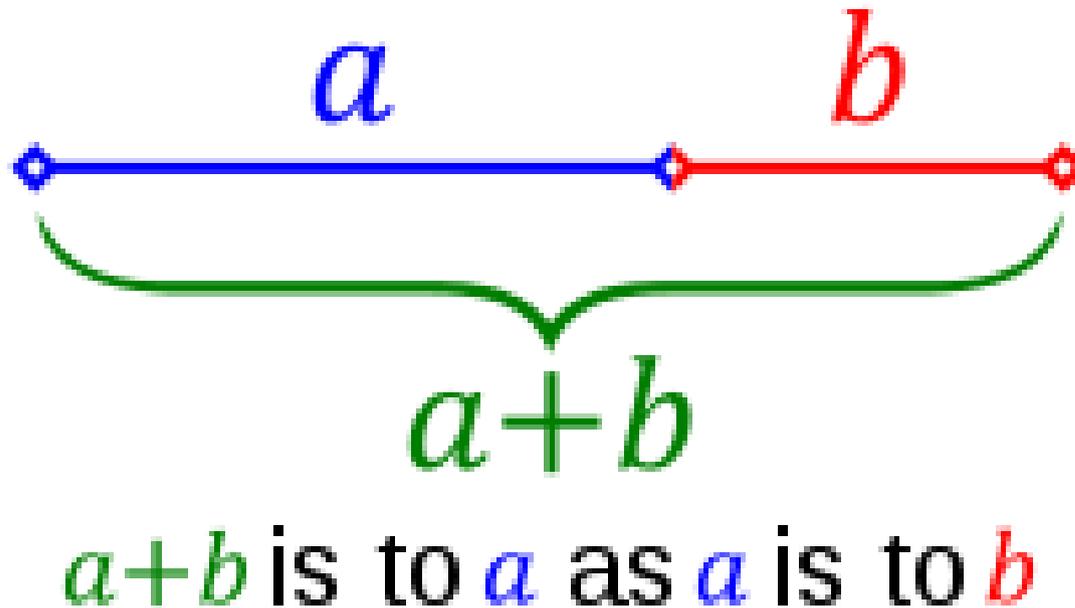
Principles of Organization: PROPORTION and SCALE

Proportion is the relationship of sizes between different parts of a work.

For example, how wide it is compared to how tall it is. Some proportions, such as the golden ratio and the rule of thirds, are thought to be more naturally pleasing.

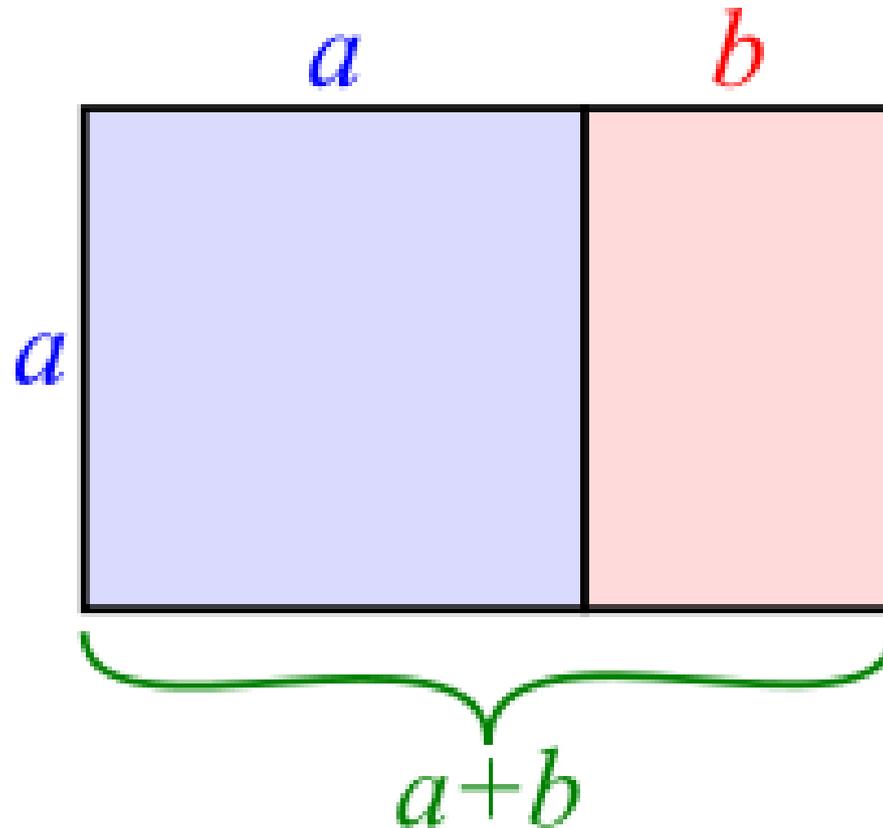
Scale is the size of something compared to the world in general.

The Golden Ratio, Section, Spiral



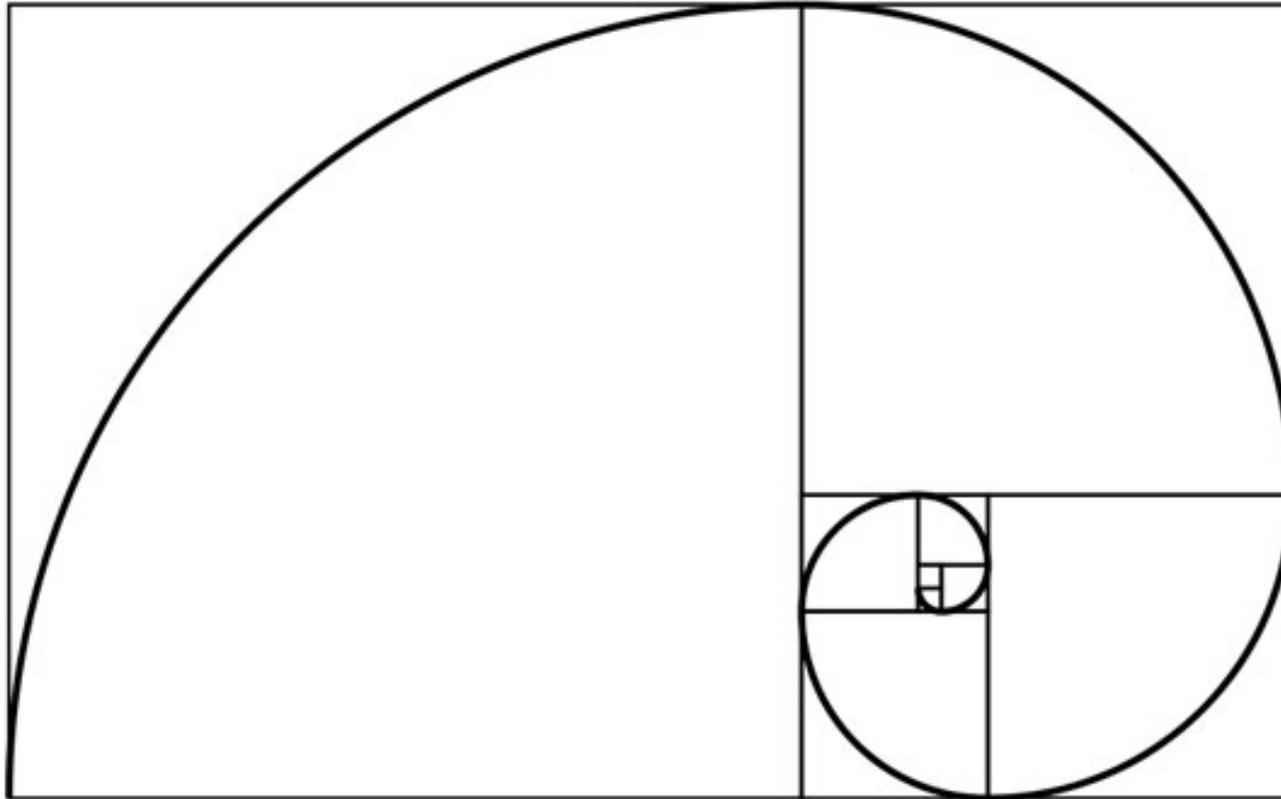
The golden ratio is a recurring relationship found in math, art and nature, and is thought by many to be inherently aesthetically pleasing.

The Golden Ratio, Section, Spiral



The golden ratio is a recurring relationship found in math, art and nature, and is thought by many to be inherently aesthetically pleasing.

The Golden Ratio, Section, Spiral



The golden ratio is a recurring relationship found in math, art and nature, and is thought by many to be inherently aesthetically pleasing.

Rule of Thirds



Rule of Thirds

The guideline proposes that an image should be imagined as divided into nine equal parts by two equally spaced horizontal lines and two equally spaced vertical lines, and that important compositional elements should be placed along these lines or their intersections.

Proponents of the technique claim that aligning a subject with these points creates more tension, energy and interest in the composition than simply centering the subject

Principles of Organization: DOMINANCE, EMPHASIS and FOCAL POINT

Emphasis is created by visually reinforcing something we want the viewer to pay attention to. Focal points are areas of interest the viewer's eyes skip to. The strongest focal point with the greatest visual weight is the dominant element of the work.

Dominance

Isolation - By separating the subject from other distracting elements and placing it against a plain background, the viewer is left with nothing else to focus on.

Leading Lines and Convergence - A line, arrow, or similar triangular or elongated element can indicate a direction and point towards something, leading the eye in that direction.

Contrast - The more strongly something contrasts with its surroundings, the easier it is to see and the more energy it will seem to have. Strong contrast in value, color, etc. can make elements "pop."

Anomaly - A single square in a repeating pattern of circles will stand out - it's not like everything else, it doesn't blend in, it breaks the pattern.

Principles of Organization: MOVEMENT

Using art elements to direct a viewer's eye along a path through the artwork, and/or to show movement, action and direction.

Also, giving some elements the ability to be moved or move on their own, via internal or external power.

Principles of Organization: ECONOMY

Very often, as a work develops, the artist will find that the solutions to various visual problems result in unnecessary complexity.

Economy has no rules but rather must be an outgrowth of the artist's instincts. If something works with respect to the whole, it is kept; if disruptive, it may be reworked or rejected.

Principles of Organization: HARMONY and UNITY

Harmonious elements have a logical relationship or progression - in some way they work together and complement each other.

When a jarring element is added - something that goes against the whole - it is said to be *dissonant*, just like an off-note in a musical performance.

Unity is created by using harmonious similarity and repetition, continuance, proximity and alignment, and closure of design elements in different parts of the work so that the parts **RELATE** to each other and create a unified whole.

Principles of Organization: REPETITION, RHYTHM and PATTERN

Repeating art elements in regular or cyclical fashion to create interest, movement, and/or harmony and unity.

Rhythms can be random, regular, alternating, flowing, and progressive.

Classes of pattern include mosaics, lattices, spirals, meanders, waves, symmetry and fractals, among others.

Principles of Organization: VARIETY and VARIATION

Using a range of different qualities or instances of an art element to create a desired visual effect - e.g., a variety of shapes, colors, etc.

Variety can add interest and break the monotony of simple repetitions.