

THE LANGUAGE OF ART:

A PRIMER

BY KAREN MAYER



**THE
LANGUAGE
OF ART:
A PRIMER**

FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ELEMENTS,
PRINCIPLES AND TYPES OF ART TO HELP YOU
FIND THE ART THAT MAKES YOUR SOUL SING

KAREN MAYER

Front Cover: Stone and Water. Cathy Groulx

Copyright @ 2020 Karen Mayer

Self-published in Canada by: Savvy Art Inc. www.savvyart.ca

Cover Design: Karen Mayer, Art Titled Stone and Water by Cathy Groulx

Interior Design: Canva Template: Karen Mayer and Jasmine Virginia

Interior Photos/Illustrations: Artists are credited. See back index.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic, or electronic process, or in the form of a phonographic recording; nor may it be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or otherwise be copied for public or private use -- other than for "fair use" as brief quotations embodied in articles and reviews -- without prior written permission of the publisher. Artists that are included in this book have permission to promote the book in their social media outlets by use of the cover page and the page in which their artwork appears.

The author of this book does not dispense art collecting advice, only offers information of a general nature to help you in your quest for art buying and collecting success. This book is not designed to be a definitive guide or to take the place of academic art materials or advice from a qualified professional, and there is no guarantee that the information in this book will be everything that an art buyer needs to successfully acquire artwork they desire at the best price or will prevent them from making mistakes in doing so. Thus, neither the publisher nor the author assume liability for any losses that may be sustained by the use of the information described in this book, and any such liability is hereby expressly disclaimed. In the event you use any of the information or images in this book for yourself, the author and the publisher assume no responsibility for your actions.

Currently in electronic form only.

Canada

For Haley and Sophie.

INSIDE | ART PRIMER

1 | Introduction

2 | Elements of Art and Design

Line

Shape and Form

Colour

○ Hue

○ Value

○ Intensity

Space and Perspective

Texture

Value

3 | Principles of Art

Pattern

Rhythm and Movement

Proportion and Scale

Balance

Unity and Harmony

Contrast

Emphasis and Focal Point

4 | Types of Art

Original Art

Limited Edition Prints

Fine Art Photography

Reproductions

Posters

Textile

Sculpture

5 | A Quick Word

Provenance

Appraisals

Insurance

Conclusion

About The Author

Artist Index



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Life is a succession of lessons, which must be lived to be understood." This quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson captures my hope for readers of this entry to the fundamentals of art.

By understanding the basics, you will have the information necessary to choose art that reflects your style and taste and that complements the space it will inhabit.

More than this, when you understand the elements, principles and types of art—in effect the language of art—you will be more deeply connected to the art you see, know its value and gain insight into how an artist has created a

Untitled. Beth ten Hove

given work and why it speaks to you..

My bigger goal is to encourage more people to explore art and experience the joy I have benefitted from my whole life both as an artist and art lover.

I was inspired to start Savvy Art after I learned about New York couple Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, who, over the course of 46 years, amassed an art collection of 3,900 pieces, worth hundreds of millions of dollars. The story was so special because Herbert and Dorothy were not wealthy. They simply loved art and supported young artists just getting started.

Herbert worked for the post office and never earned more than \$23,000 per year. Dorothy was a librarian.

Her salary was used to cover their living expenses while his salary went to purchasing art they loved. Eventually, they donated their entire collection to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., where others could enjoy it just as they had.

Through Savvy Art, I want to help people realize the many benefits of owning art that speaks to you and support Canadian artists in the process.



Jake's Lifter. Richard A. Jacobson



CHAPTER 2

ELEMENTS OF ART AND DESIGN

How do you begin to make a piece of art?

It starts with six key elements or building blocks that can be combined and manipulated to tell a visual story.

Knowing what these building blocks are will help you understand and describe what an artist has done.

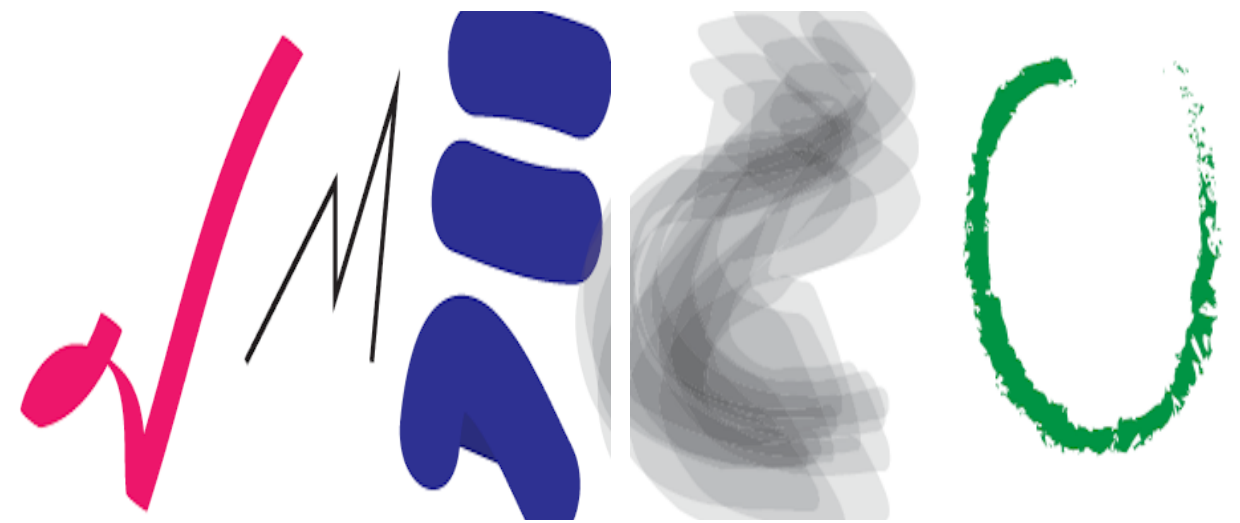
It will also help provide the context and confidence to choose the right pieces of art for your space.

Pin Feathers. Mari Adams

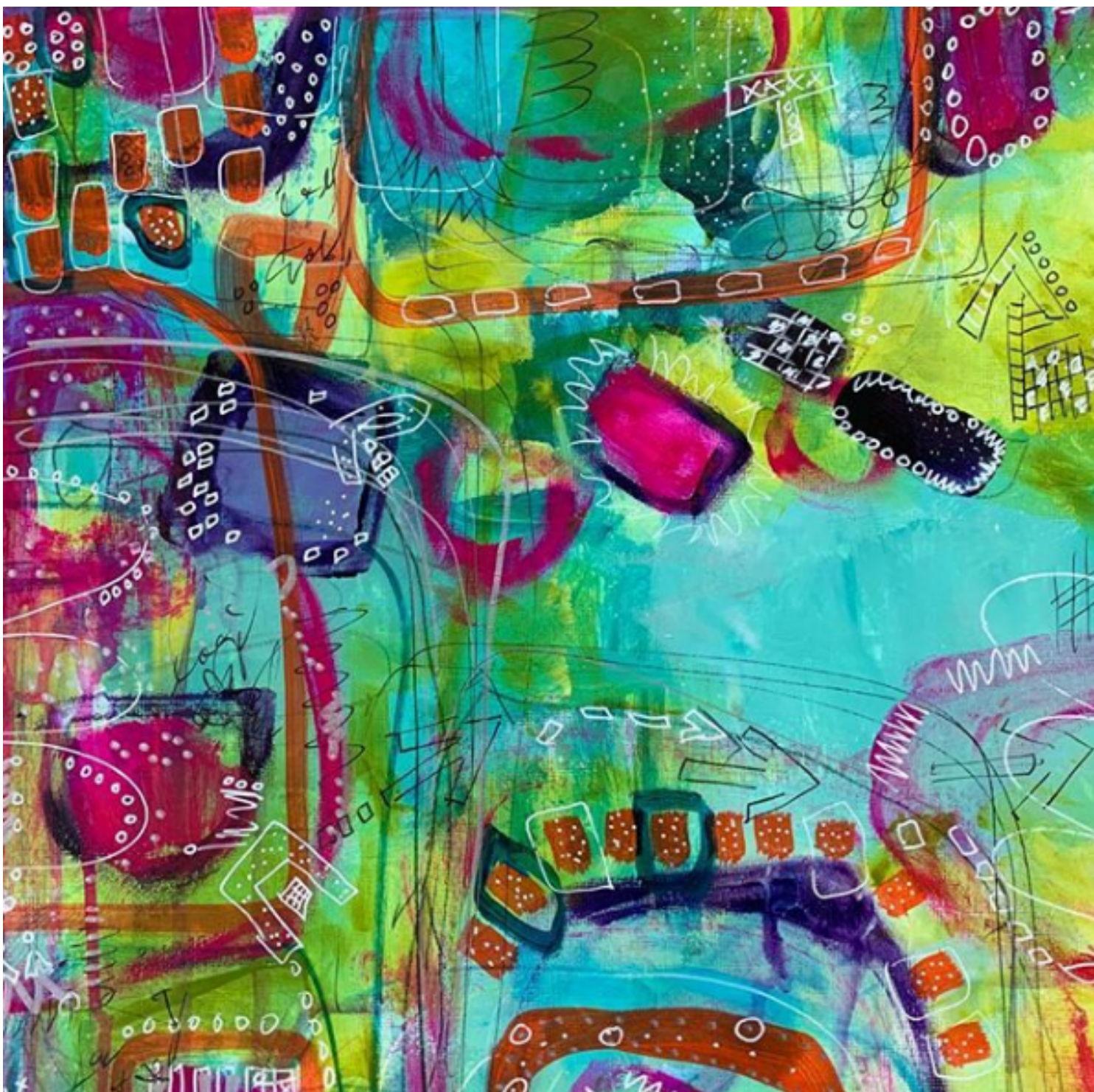
LINE

A line is a mark or point moving through space.

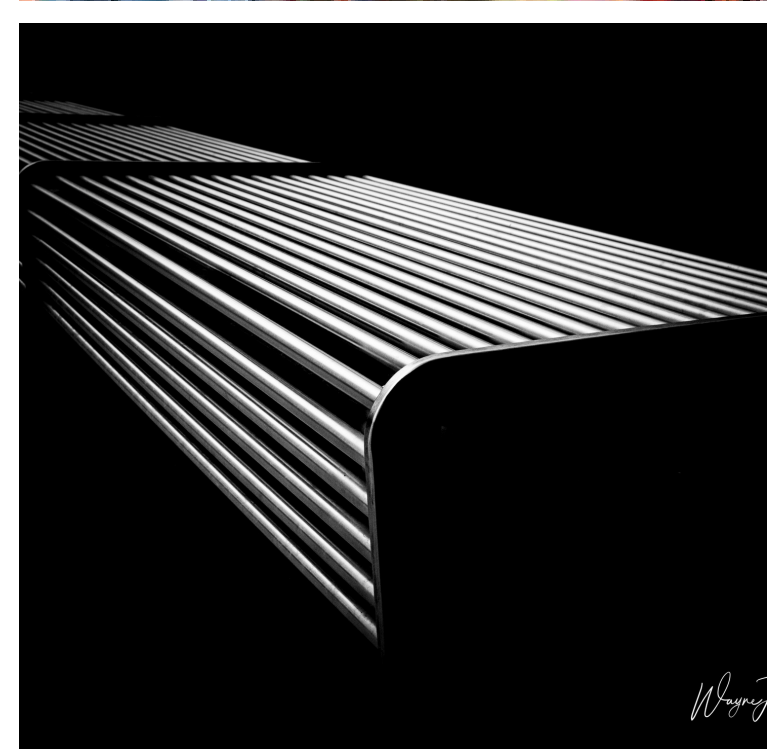
Think of it as a path. It can be thick or thin, long or short, sharp or smooth, straight or wavy, horizontal, vertical or diagonal, and more.



Top: Photo Credit. Courtney Nuss. Unsplash
Bottom: Illustrations: Karen Mayer



It's My Decision, Darlene Watson

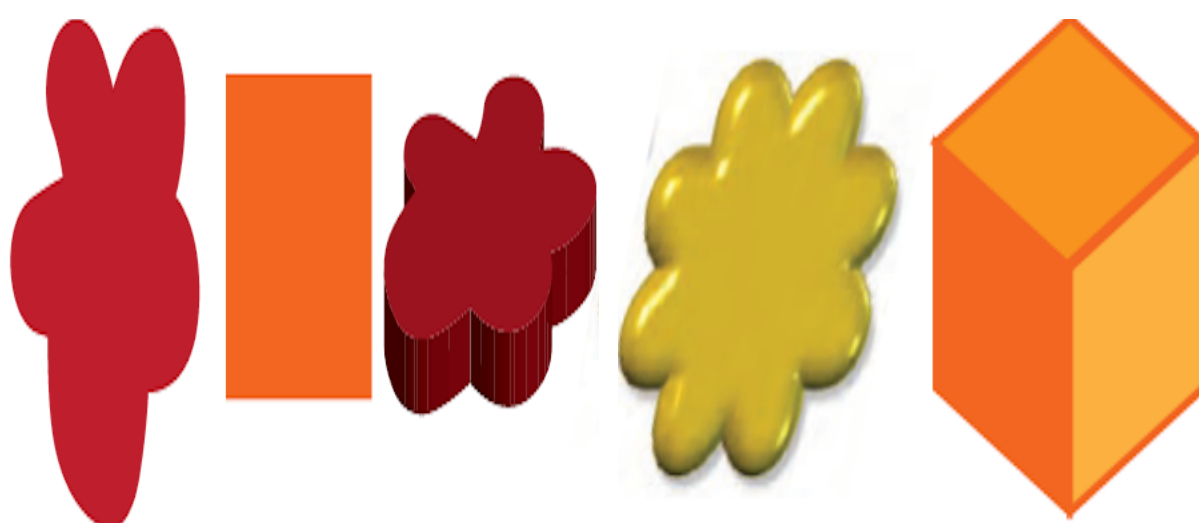


Top: Abstract. Kristyn Watterworth
Bottom: Pedal To The Metal, Wayne Fisher

SHAPE AND FORM

Shapes and forms are created when lines are enclosed.

While shapes are two-dimensional (height and width) and flat, form is three-dimensional with depth, length and width and can be viewed from different angles.



Top: Enrapture. Darlene Watson
Bottom: Illustration. Karen Mayer



Hold Tight. Meredith Bingham



Top: Ring Around The Rosie. Adriana Rinaldi

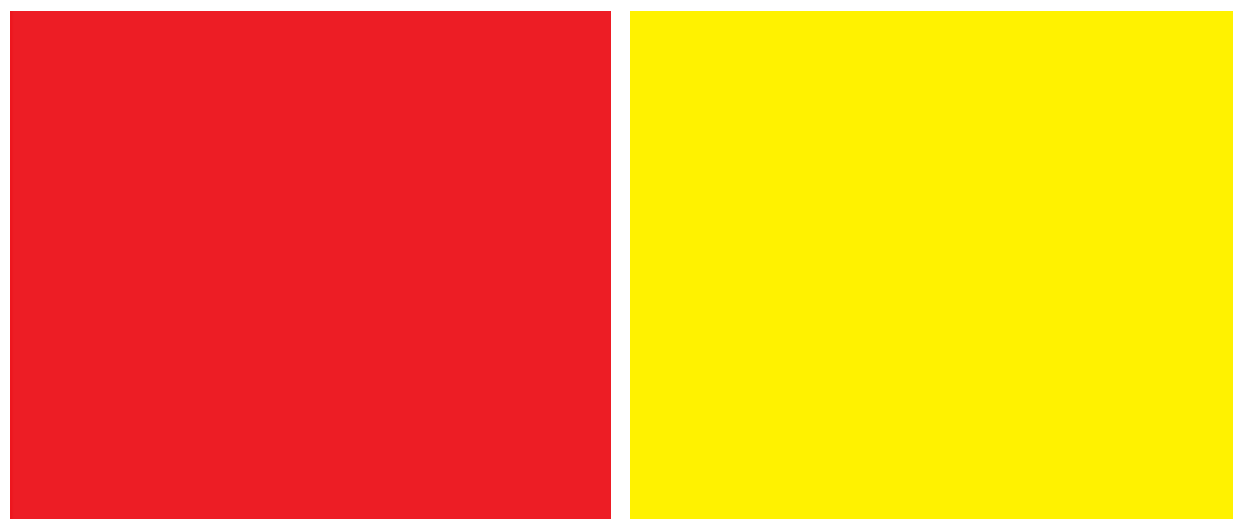


Bottom: No Sleep. Gloria Blatt

COLOUR

Colour is reflected light. All colours come from three primary colours: red, yellow and blue. When these three primary colours are mixed they create three secondary colours: orange, purple and green.

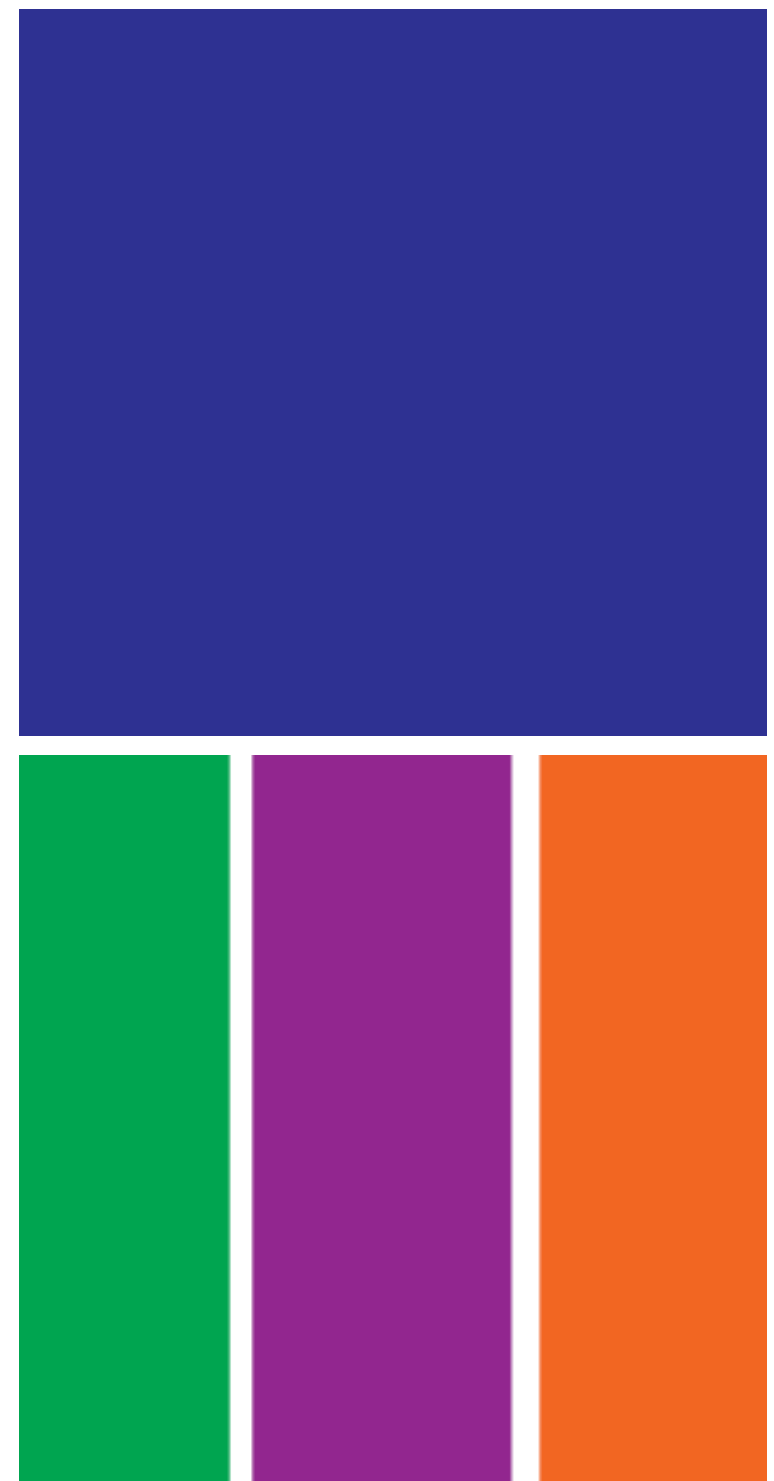
Colour has three main properties: **hue**, **value** and **intensity**.



Top: Interventions 21. Ivo Stoyanov
Bottom L & R: Illustrations. Karen Mayer



Windy Way. Joanne Coughlin



Top & Bottom: Illustrations.
Karen Mayer

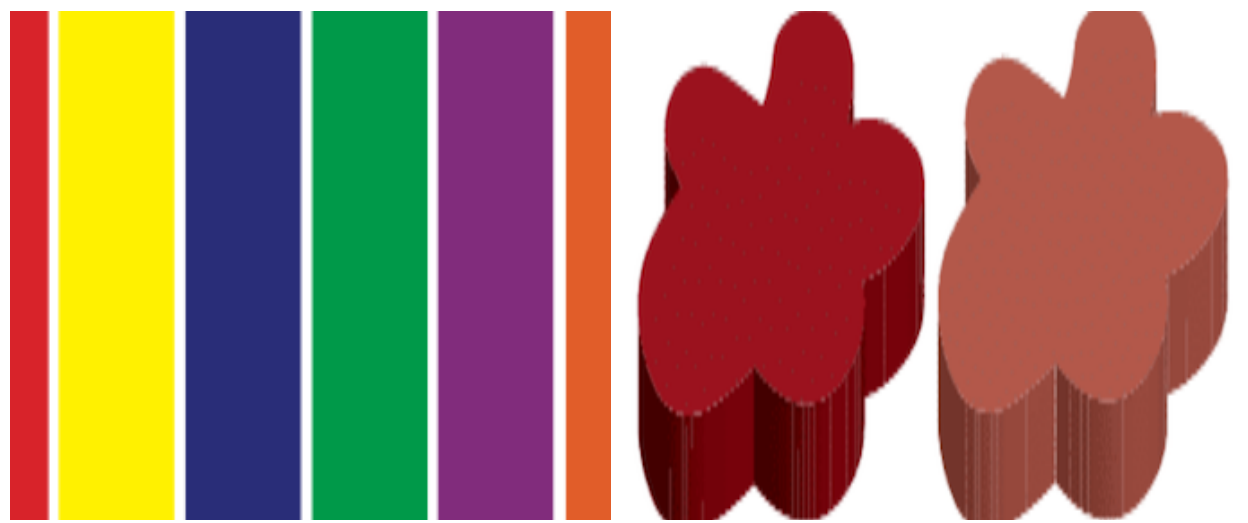
HUE

Hue refers to a true or pure colour, one without tint (white) or shade (black). These include red, orange, yellow, blue, green and violet.



INTENSITY

This characteristic of colour is also called chroma or saturation and refers to how bright or how dull a colour is. Intensity describes the strength of a colour.



Top: Violet Iris. Nell Lamarsh
Bottom L & R: Illustrations: Karen Mayer



Left: Morning Mist. Richard De Wolfe
Right: Illustrations. Karen Mayer

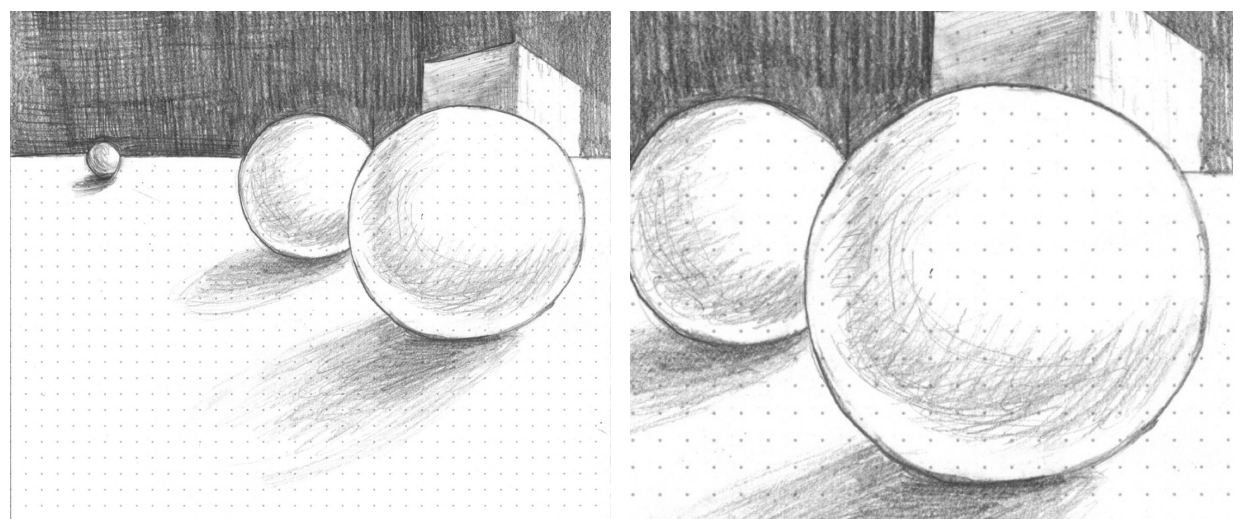
VALUE

Colour value refers to the lightness or darkness of a hue. Adding white produces a high-value colour, often called a tint. Adding black to a hue produces a low-value colour, often called a shade. Colour value can help create specific moods in a piece of visual art.

SPACE AND PERSPECTIVE

Space is the area in which art is organized.

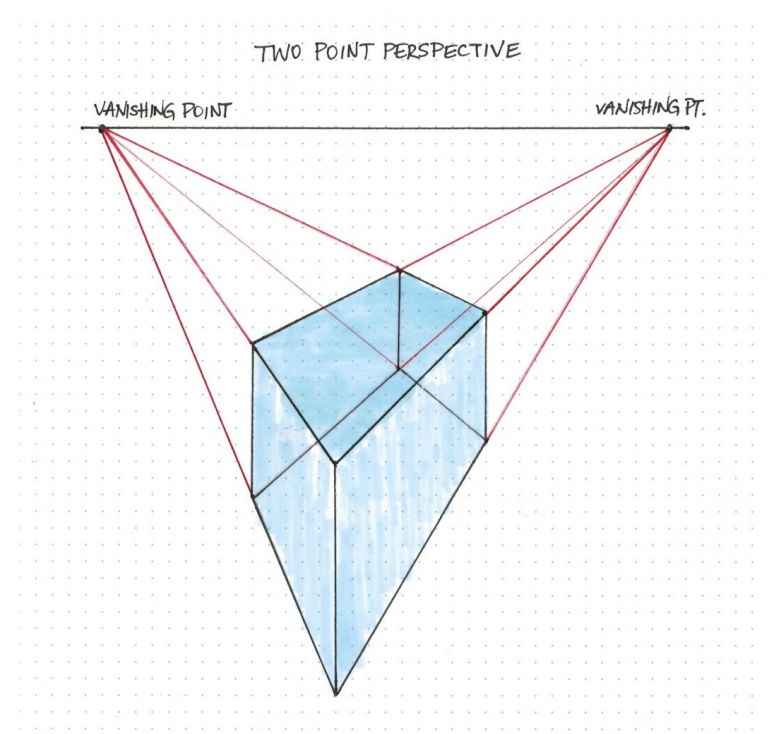
Perspective is a volume of space, such as a three-dimensional object on a flat surface.



Top: Vintage Reflections. Adriana Rinaldi
Bottom L & R: Illustrations: Karen Mayer



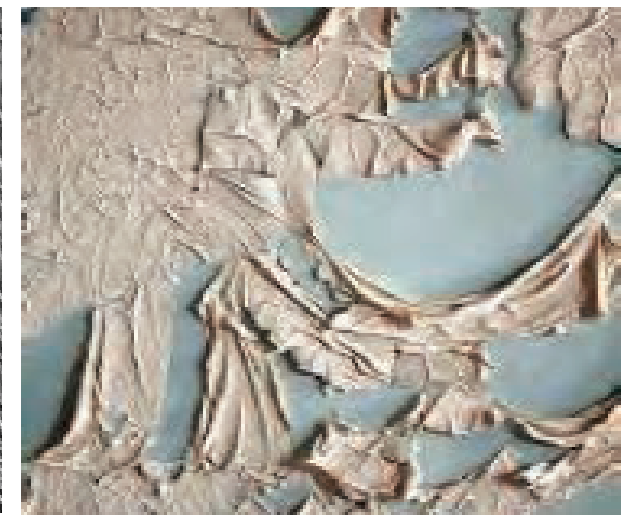
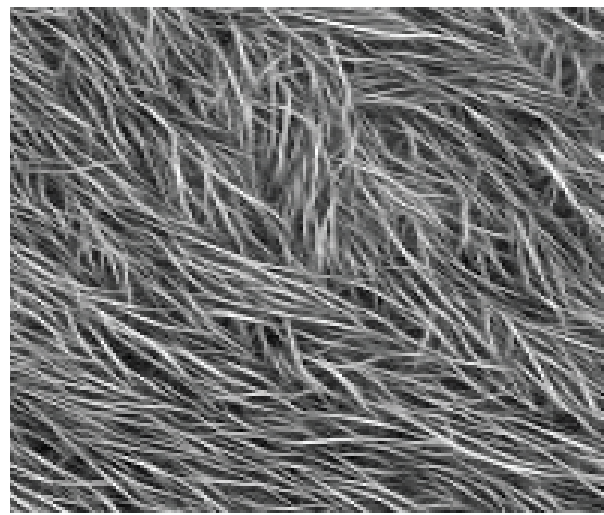
Morning Light. Jessica Masters



Top: Photo Credit: Haley Mayer
Illustrations: Karen Mayer

TEXTURE

This is what we can sense through touch. Texture can be physical or, in a two-dimensional visual artwork, this surface quality can be implied, so that you can sense what an object in the artwork would feel like. Thickly painted artworks are sometimes described as “heavily textured.”



Top: Nordic 1. Ann Shier
Bottom L & R: Public Domain



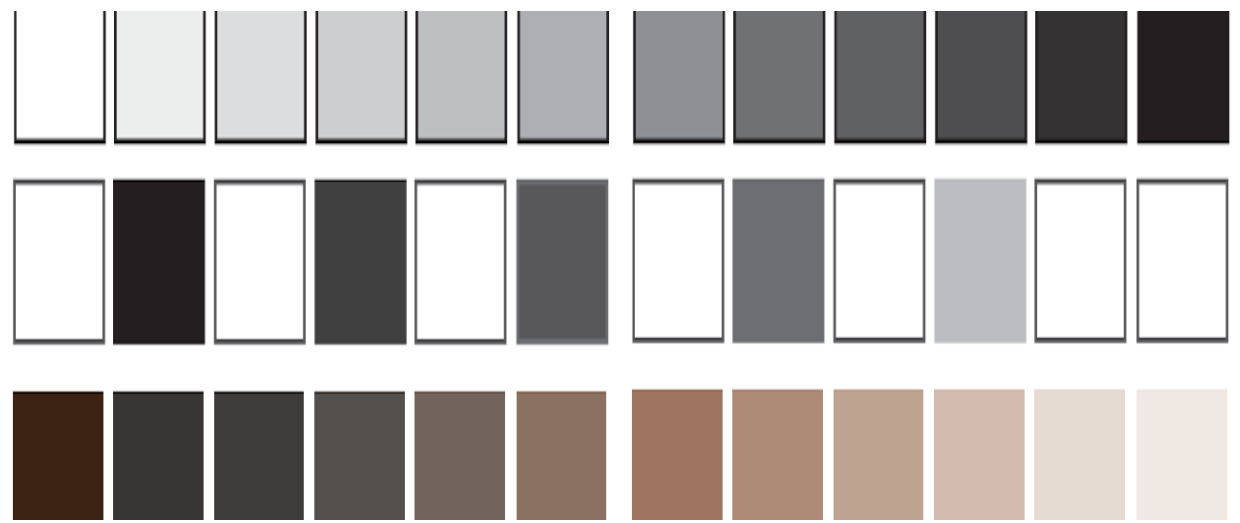
Midnight Flower. Jasmine Virginia



Top: Public Domain
Bottom: Black Icing. Briar Emond

VALUE

Value refers to relative lightness and darkness of a piece of visual art and is perceived in terms of varying levels of contrast. Terms such as light, soft, dreamy, dark, moody, bright, bold are often used to describe the technical value of an artwork.



Top: Rosseau. Karen Mayer
Bottom: Illustration. Karen Mayer



Cloud Catching. Darlene Winfield



Top: Sunshine. Doris Savard
Bottom: Hold Me. Wayne Fisher



CHAPTER 3

PRINCIPLES OF ART

If the Elements of Art are the tools (line, shape, form, colour, space, texture, value) an artist uses to create visual art, the Principles of Art represent how those tools or elements are used and combined to create the story the artist wants to tell.

These principles don't just apply to artists.

They also serve as a valuable guide to art buyers, helping ensure you choose artwork as well as furniture and other decor that will work in harmony with the rest of your space.

Flight II. Julia Hacker

PATTERN

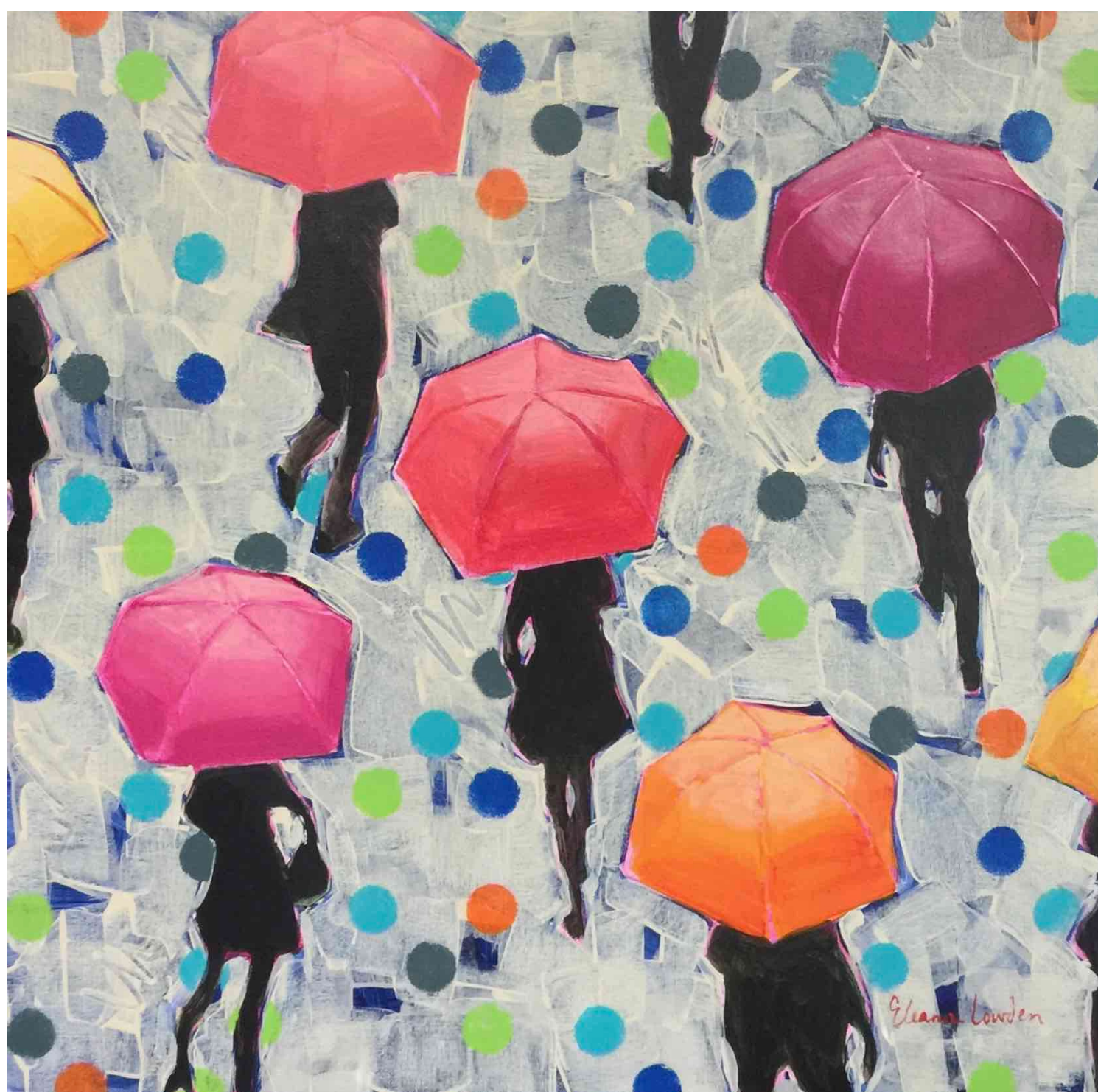
Pattern is the consistent repetition or reoccurrence of one or more design elements.

Just about anything can be turned into a pattern through repetition.

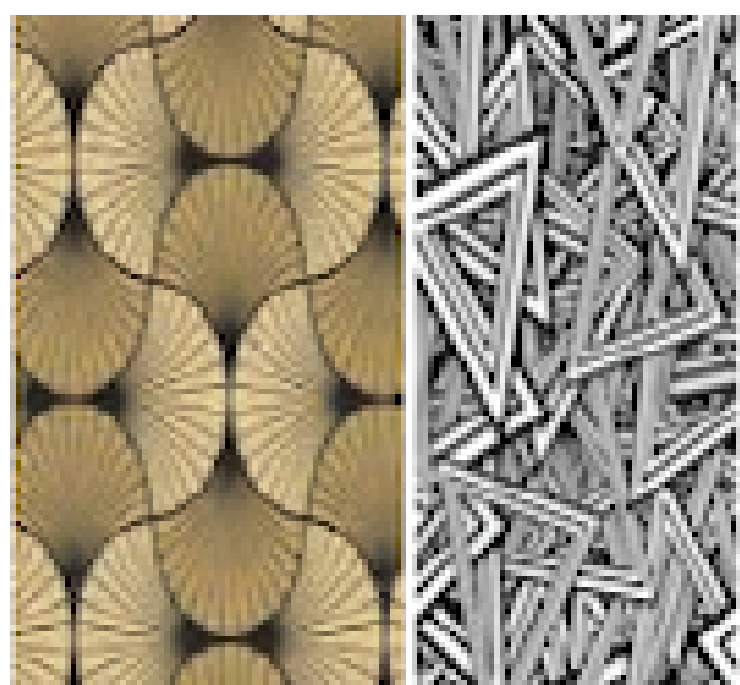
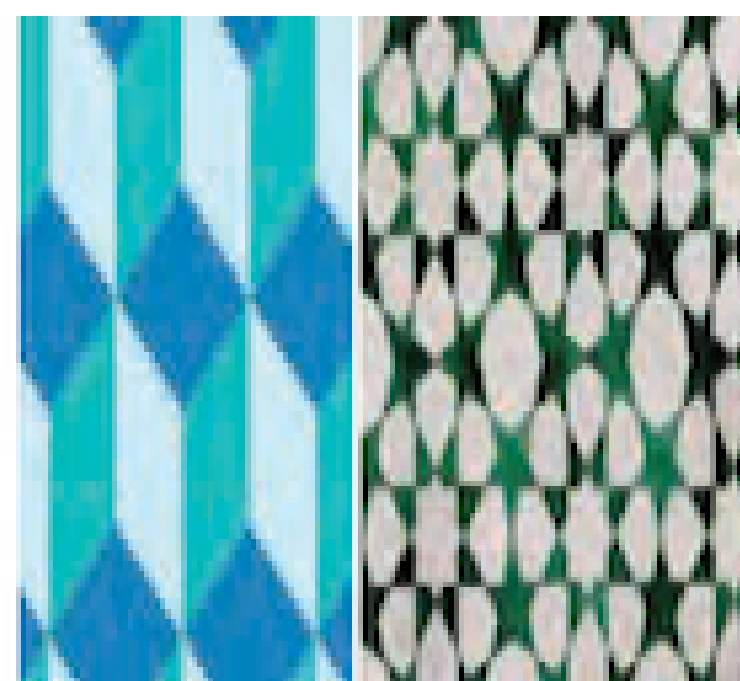
Artists use patterns to establish a visual beat.



Top: Colourful Horses. Michele Taras
Bottom: Illustration. Karen Mayer



I Love it When it Rains. Eleanor Lowden



Top & Bottom: Public Domain

RHYTHM AND MOVEMENT

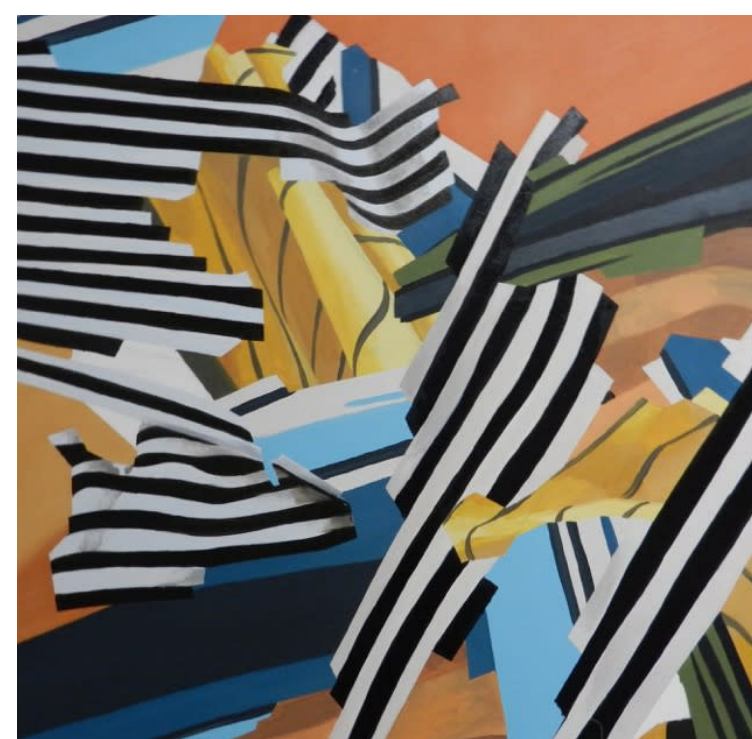
When your eye travels across an artwork, following the suggested motion of lines, shapes, patterns or any of the elements and principles the artist has employed, this is called rhythm and movement.



Sizzling Roller. Joe Sampson
Bottom L: Where Are You Going? Darlene Winfield.
Bottom R: Toronto Skyline. Kristyn Watterworth



Yellow Boat. Julia Veenstra



Top: Drown The Zebra. Kyle Griffiths
Bottom: Hurricane. Richard Rizzo

PROPORTION AND SCALE

Proportion and scale are all about size and are important to how we perceive a piece of art. While proportion refers to the size of parts of an object in relation to other parts of the same object, scale relates the size of one whole object to another whole object in a visual artwork.



Top: Crossing Wellington Quay. Sherry Czekus.
Bottom L: Illustration. Karen Mayer.
Bottom R: Photo credit. Dimitry Anikin. Unsplash



Memories Of A Birch Tree. Ixchel Suarez and Stella Jackson

The scale of an object as it compares to the size of the human body is important in how we experience a work of art. Not surprisingly, large paintings have more presence and impact than smaller paintings. That said, size alone does not dictate the overall effect a piece of art will have.

BALANCE

Balance is about the visual weight of a piece of art and how the elements relate to each other to create the impression of equilibrium in a composition.

A sense of balance can be achieved using symmetry, asymmetry or radial symmetry.

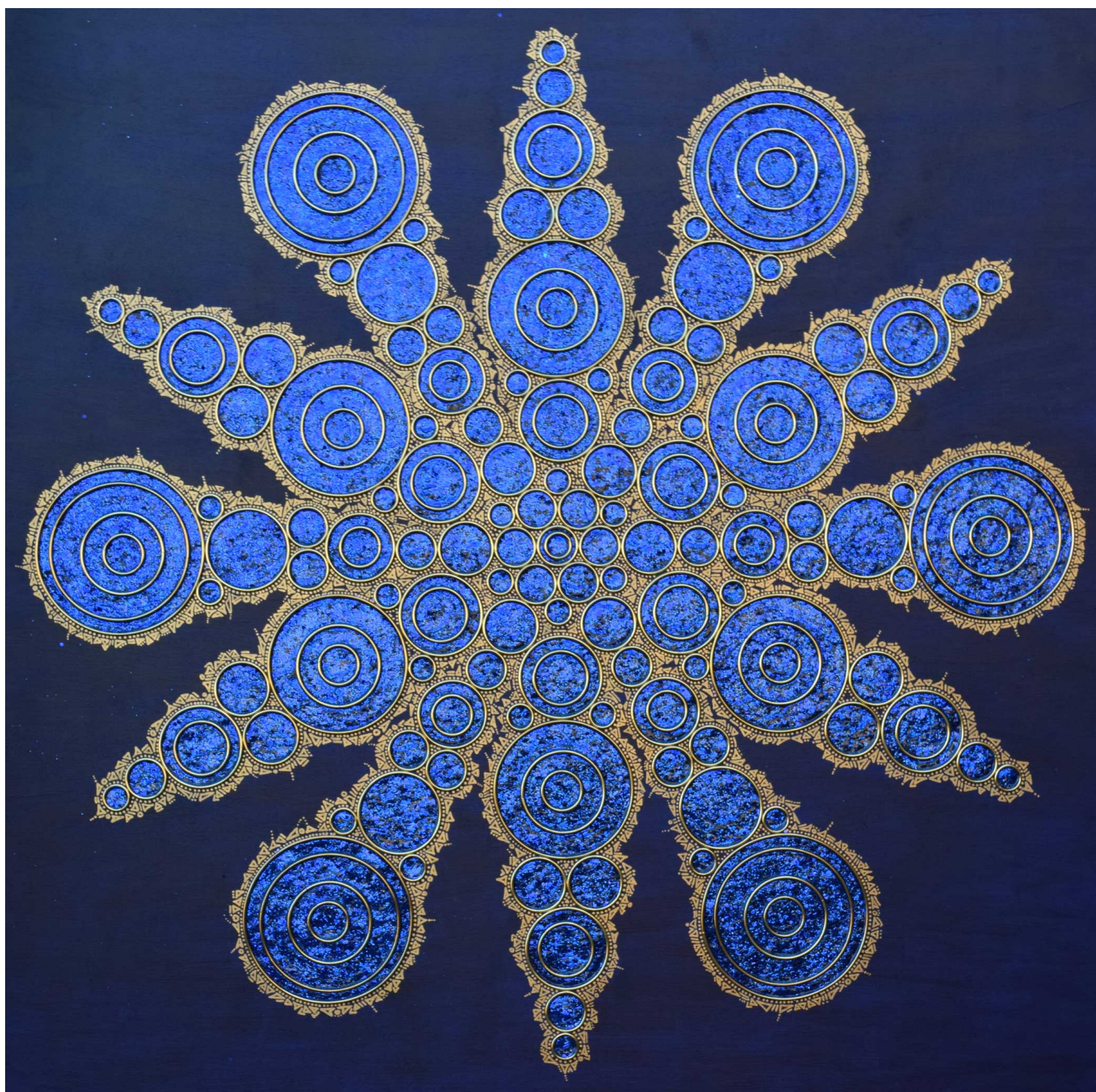


ASYMMETRICAL

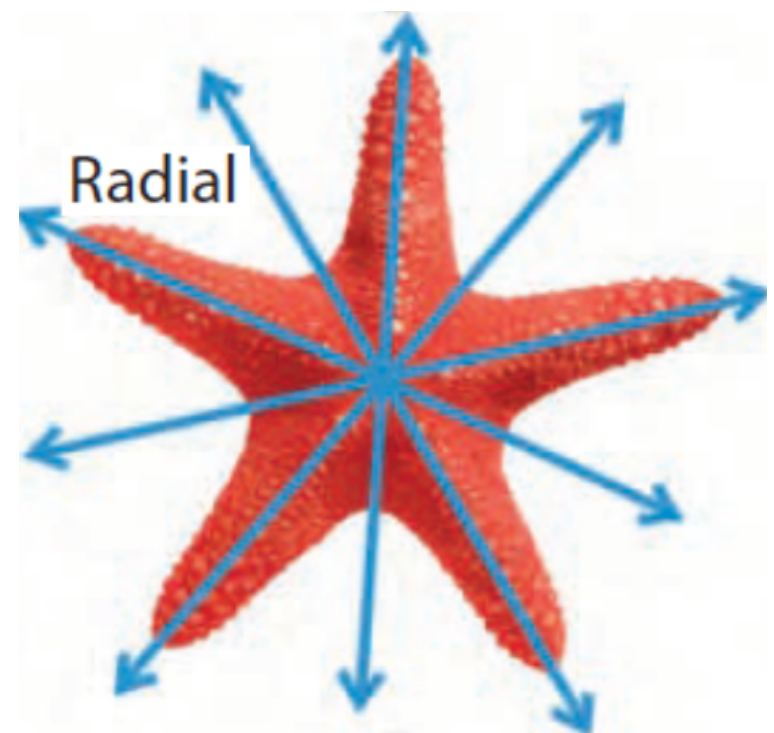
SYMMETRICAL



Top: Aura Lee Lake. Laura Culic
Bottom L & R: Photo Credit. Haley Mayer



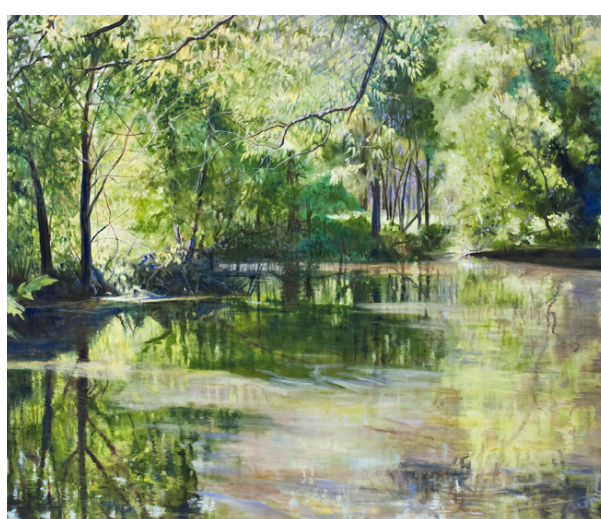
Forgotten Tongue. Jasmine Virginia



Top: Public Domain
Bottom: Mood Tide.
Richard Rizzo

UNITY AND HARMONY

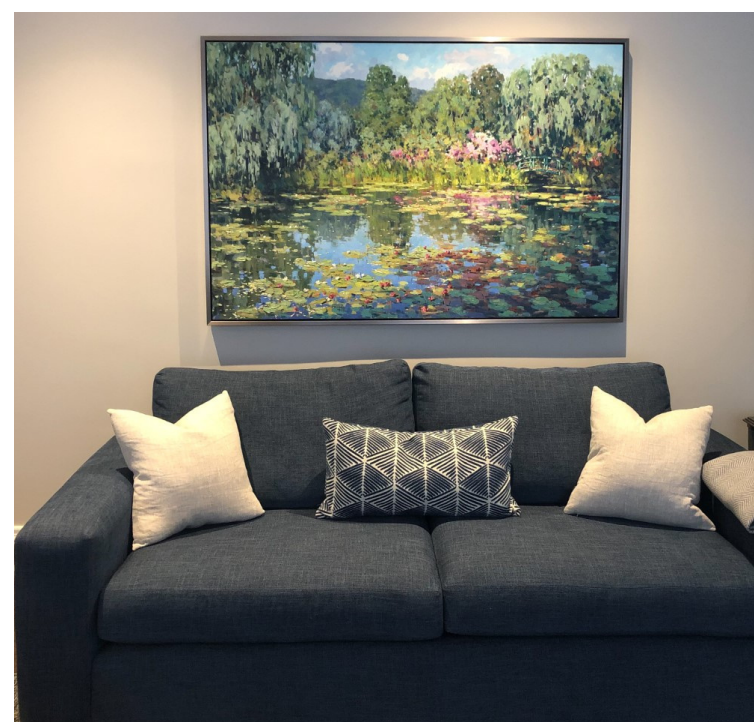
Unity is achieved when the elements of the art fit together and make the artwork look and feel complete; like everything belongs. Harmony is used to tie the composition together so it makes sense as a whole. These principles apply to the design of a room as well, and how artwork, furniture, carpets and accessories should work together.



Top: Lilies Bobcagen. Anthony Saldutto
 Bottom L: Serenity. Cathy Groulx
 Bottom R: Shield. Brigitte Nowak



Copper on Copper. Briar Emond

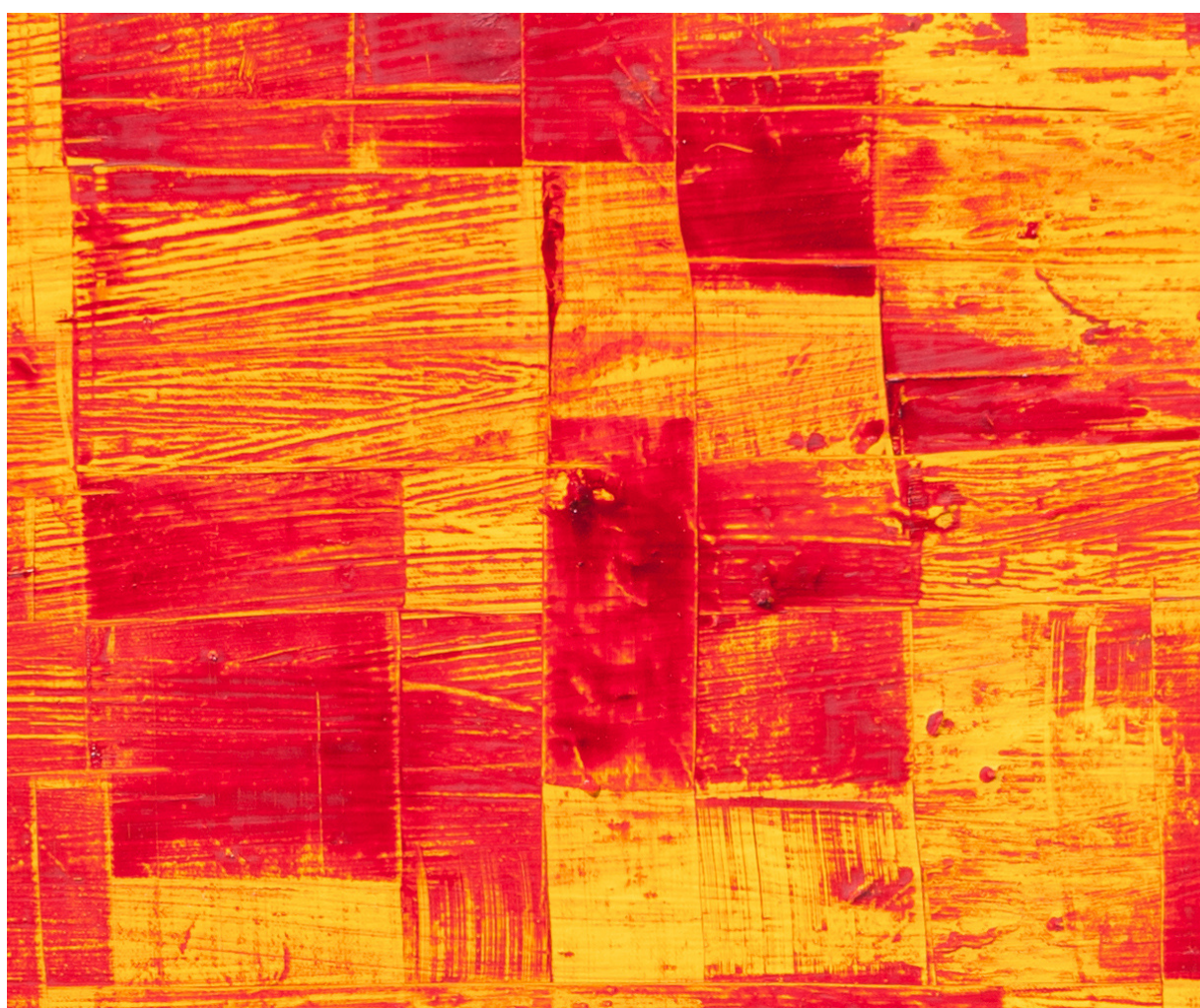


Top: Vowel. Kyle Griffiths
 Bottom: Monet's Garden. Vadim Dolgov

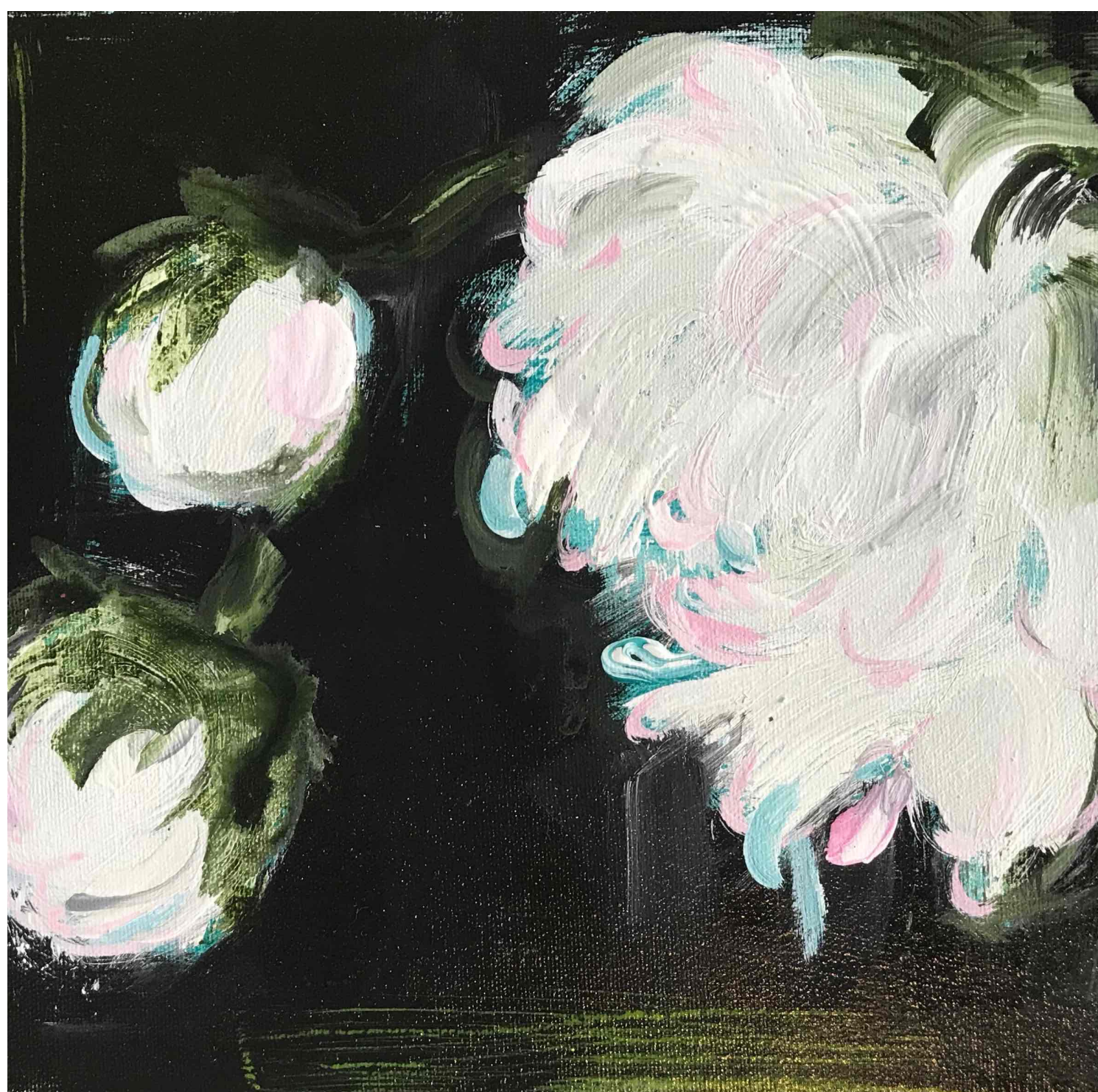
CONTRAST

Contrast is defined as the arrangement of opposite elements in an artwork to create visual interest, excitement and drama.

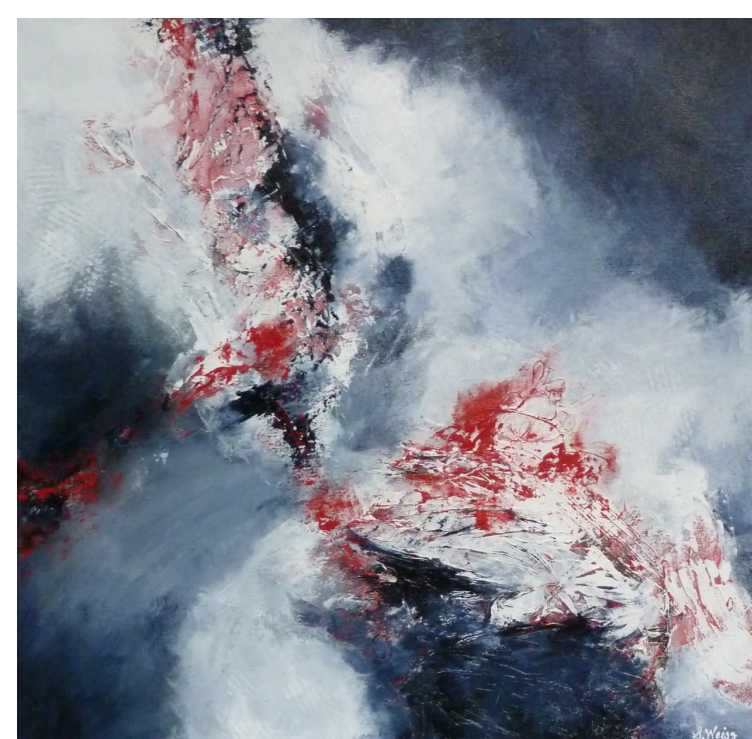
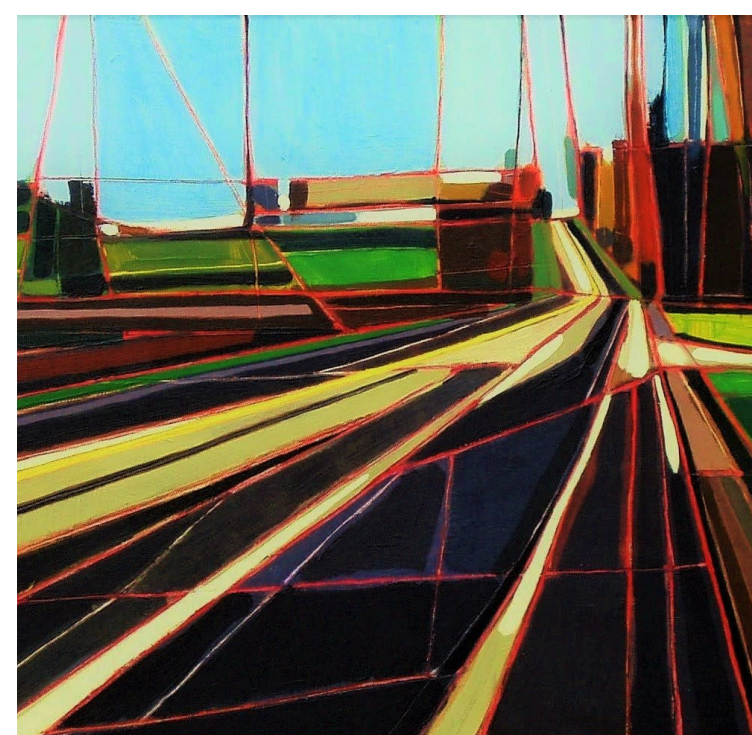
Examples include light versus dark colours, rough versus smooth textures, large versus small shapes, etc.



Top: Forest Fire. A.C. Pifaro
Bottom L & R: Illustration. Karen Mayer



Pieces of You. Rundi Phelan



Top: Yellow Line. Eric Ranveau
Bottom: Application #10.
Susan Weisz

EMPHASIS AND FOCAL POINT

This is the place in an artwork where your eye first lands. It can be achieved using colour, pattern, shape, perspective, etc.

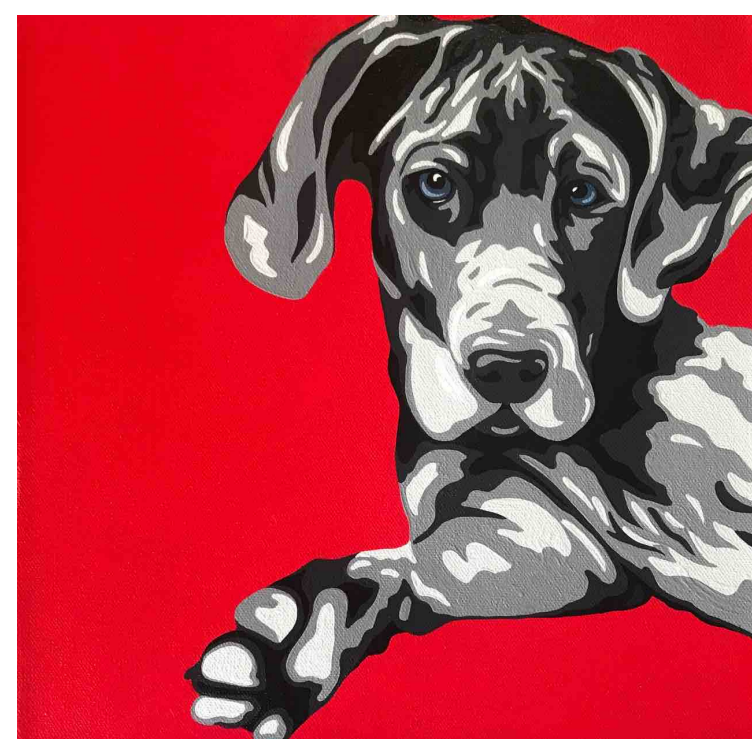
Together with rhythm and movement, emphasis and focal point take the viewer on a journey.



Top: On The Grid. Wayne Fisher
Bottom L & R: Public Domain



Adriana Rinaldi. Tutti Frutti



Top: Winston. Erika McDowall
Bottom: Red Canoe. Matt Jenkins



CHAPTER 4

TYPES OF ART

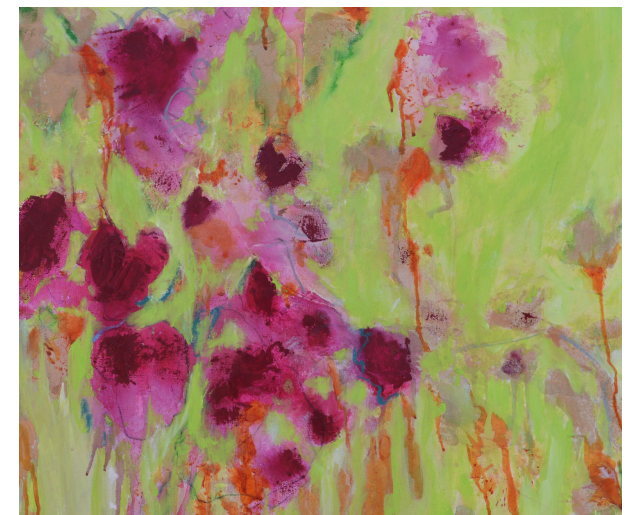
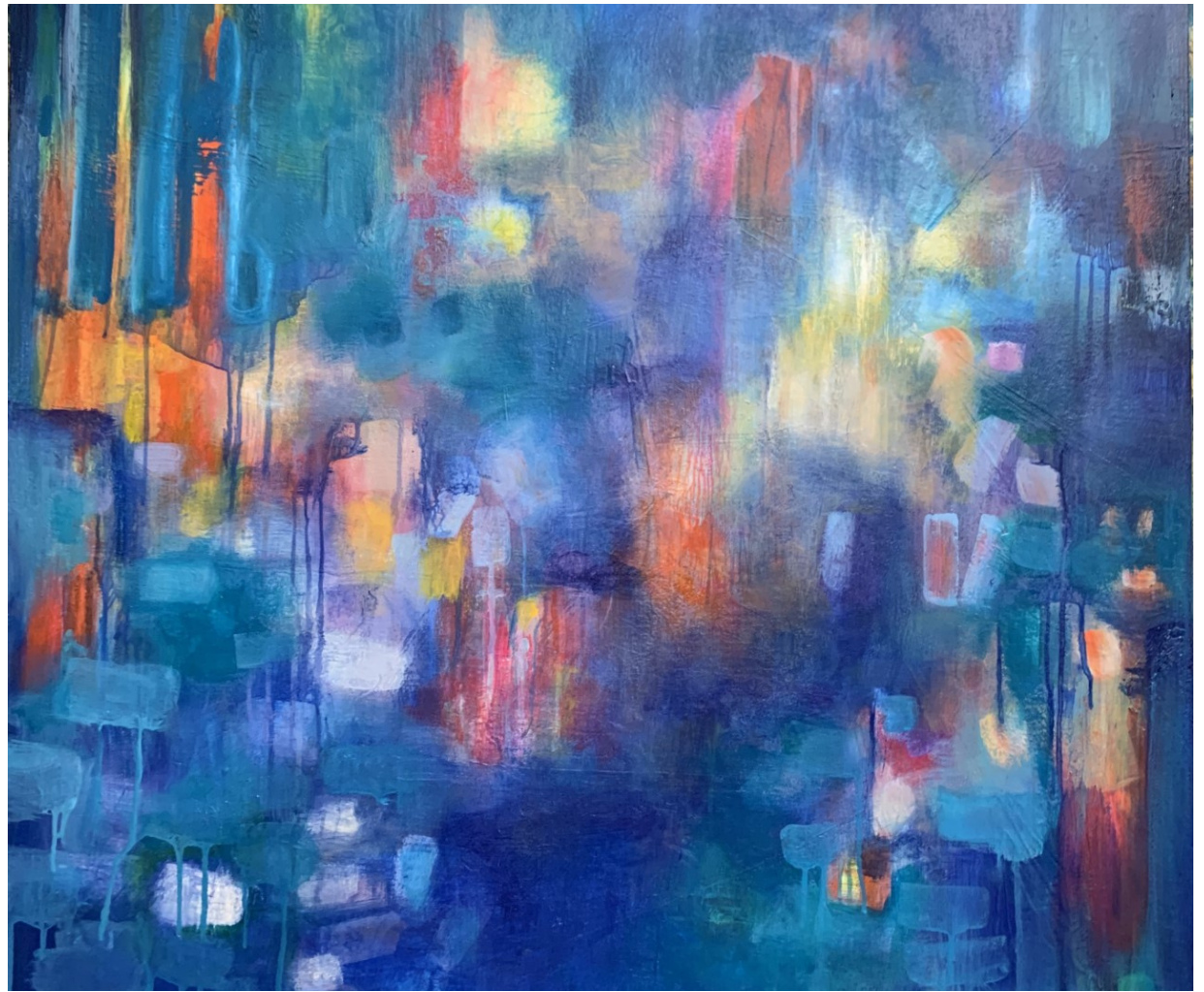
Here, we will explore the most common types of wall art you will encounter at physical galleries or online:

- original art,
- limited edition prints,
- fine art photography, reproductions and
- posters.

All That Remains. Jessica Ruth Freedman

ORIGINAL ART

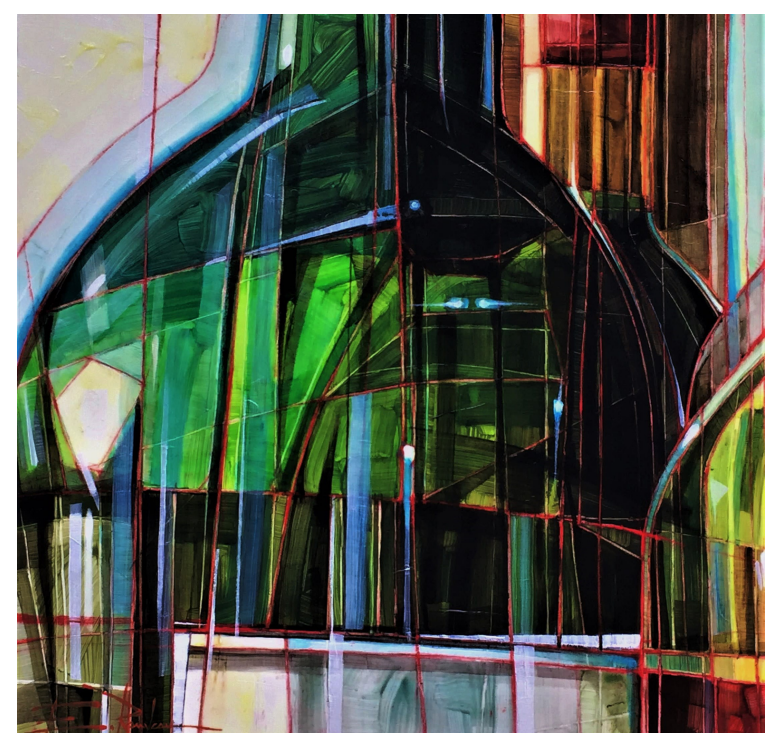
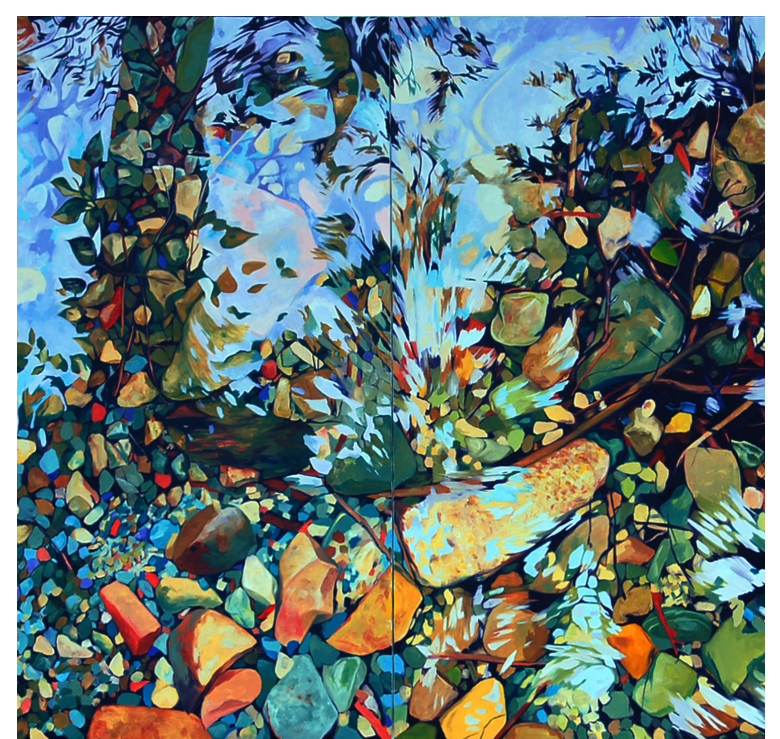
When an artist imagines and either creates or supervises the production of a unique work of art it is considered original art. Original works tend to be the highest valued type of art. Note: Printmaking can also be original art, but only if the artist makes the printing plate from which an edition is printed and it is not a copy of a work that was originally produced in some other medium.



Top: Composing Frigid and Fervid. Kristyn Watterworth
 Bottom L: Take the Plunge. Sharon Kirsh
 Bottom R: Pink Flowers. Geraldine Gillingham



Canadian Will. Darlene Winfield



Top: The Last Time I Saw Her Eyes. Rick Jacobson
 Bottom: 2 Labels. Eric Ranveau

LIMITED EDITION PRINTS

Simply put, a limited edition print means there will only ever be a certain number of prints produced from one print run or plate.

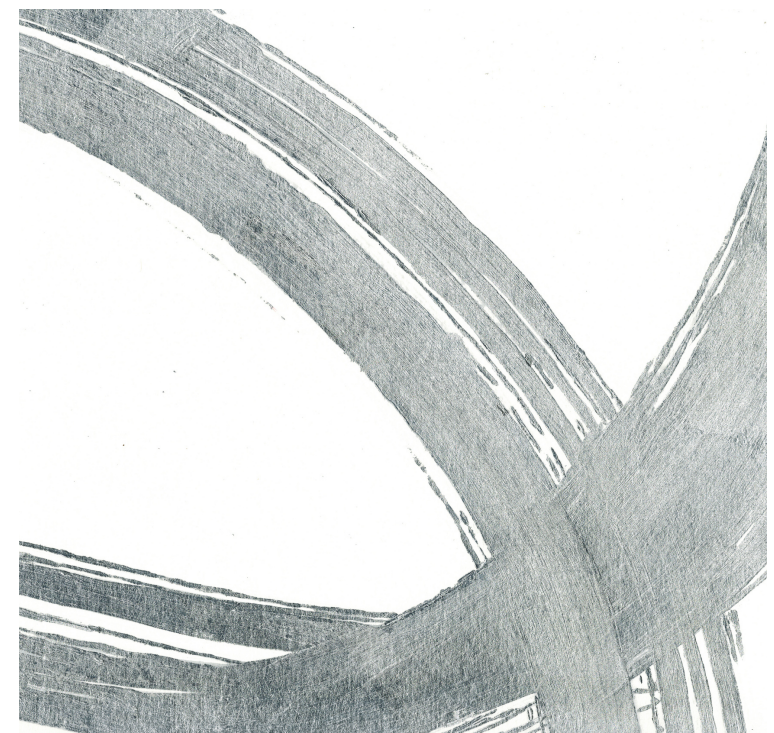
Once they are sold, there won't be any more available.



Top: Snowy Egret. Ernie Francis
Bottom L: Heritage Hens. Mari Adams
Bottom R: Geometry. Michael Toole



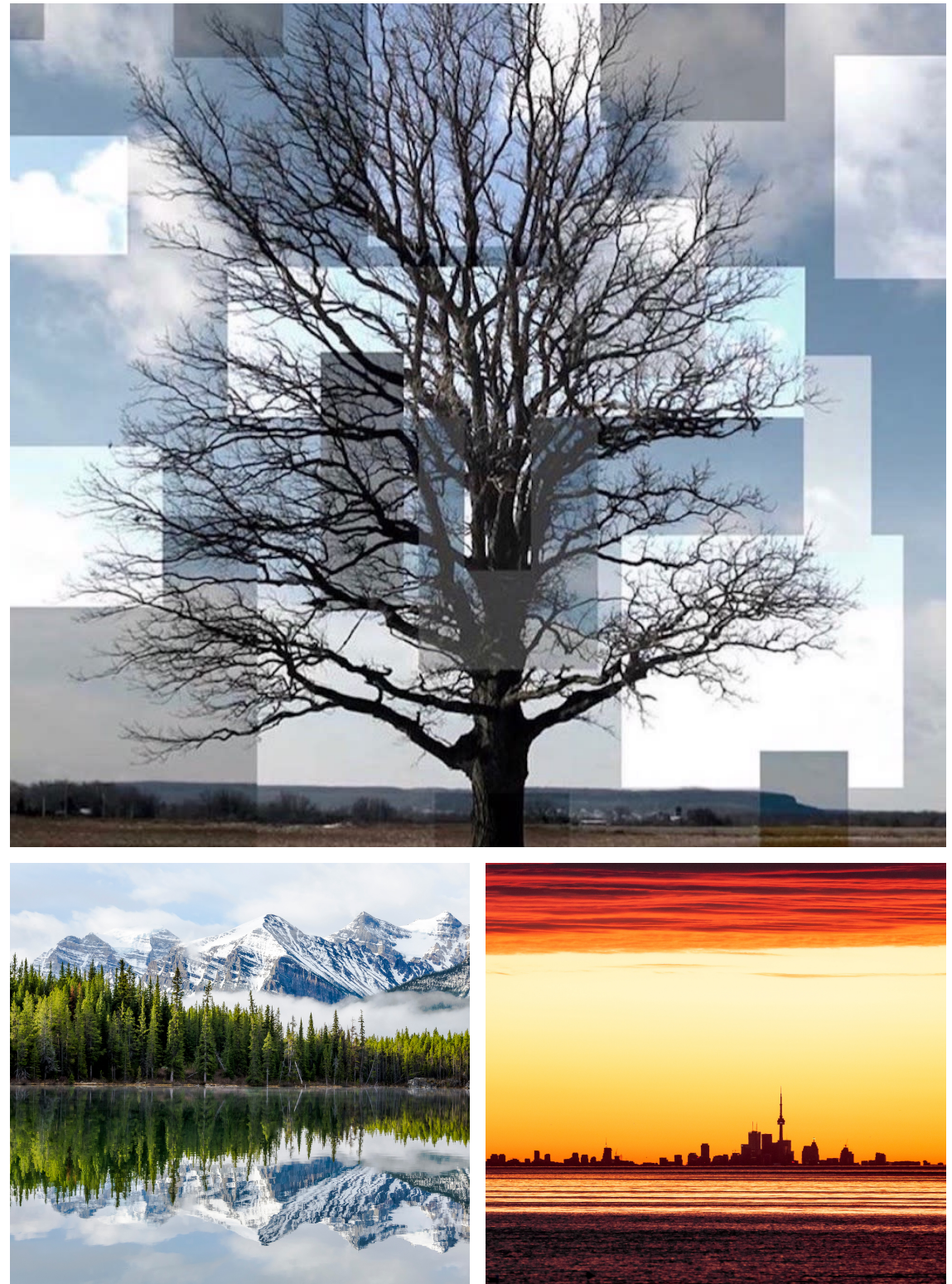
Spruce. Deborah Kanfer



Top: Silver Wave III. Karen Mayer
Bottom: Entry. Matt Jenkins

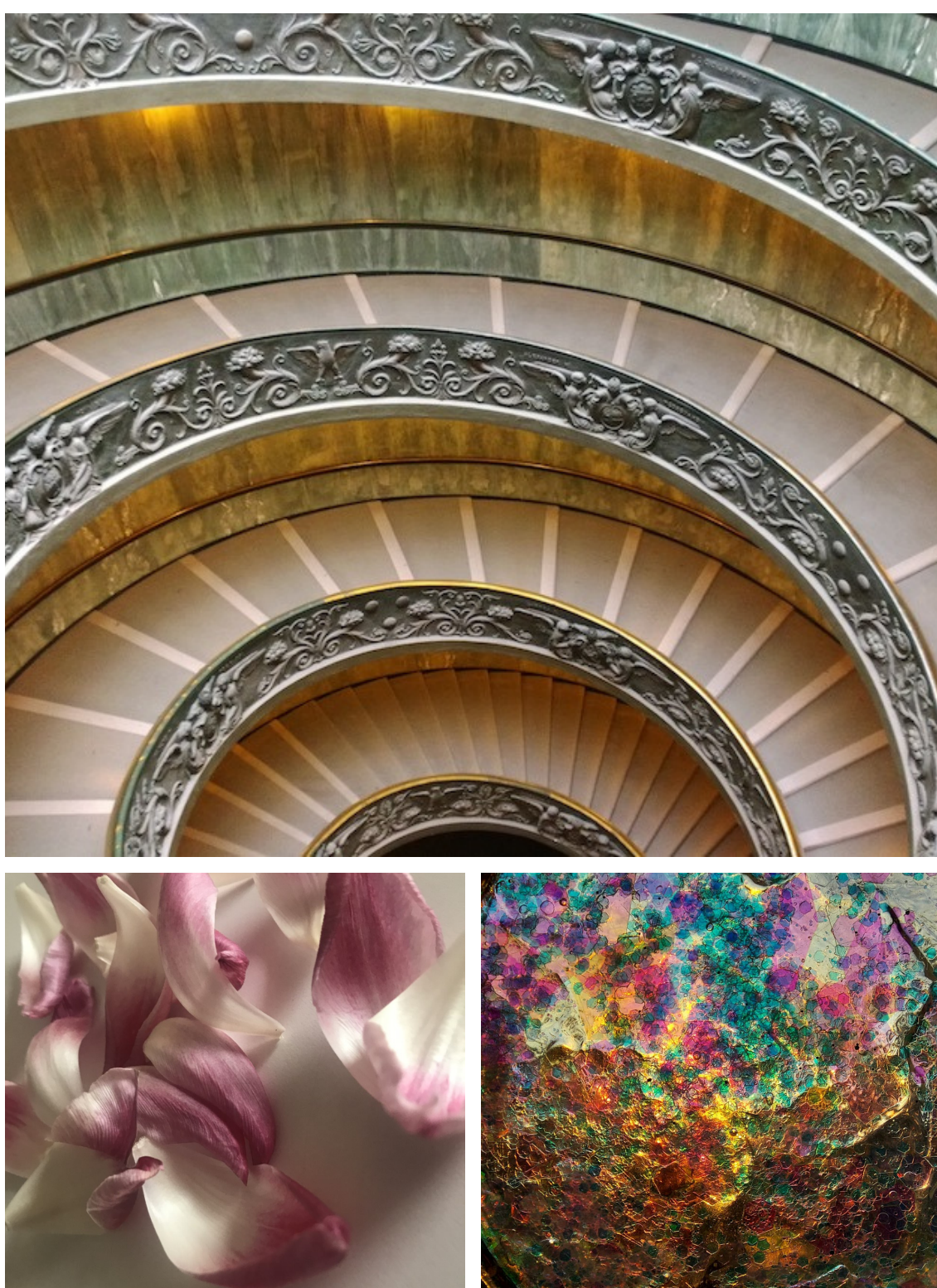
FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

There is no universally agreed upon definition of fine art photography other than it refers to photographs and images created in accordance with the creative vision and artistic intent of the photographer. Fine art photography includes the actual image taken on location as well as any photo editing the artist



Top: Oak Pieces. Michael Toole
Bottom L: Emerald Lake. Matt Jenkins
Bottom R: Toronto Skyline. Pierre Ribout

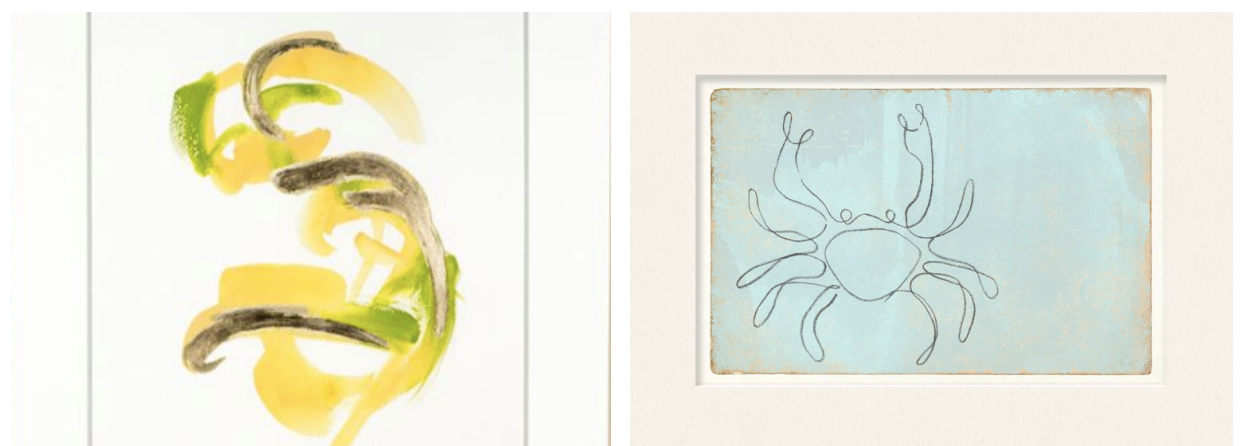
may do in post production using software such as Photoshop, Lightroom, Capture One, Serif Affinity, etc.



Top: Vatikan Museum. Laurent Matur
Bottom L: Petals. Karen Mayer. Bottom
R: Art Scape. Jasmine Virginia

REPRODUCTIONS

If an image an artist originally made in some other medium is replicated, even if the artist signs the print or makes some little extra adjustment (an additional paint stroke, added gel or colour, etc.), it is considered a reproduction. Giclée and C-Type prints are the highest print quality and use a wide variety of photographic

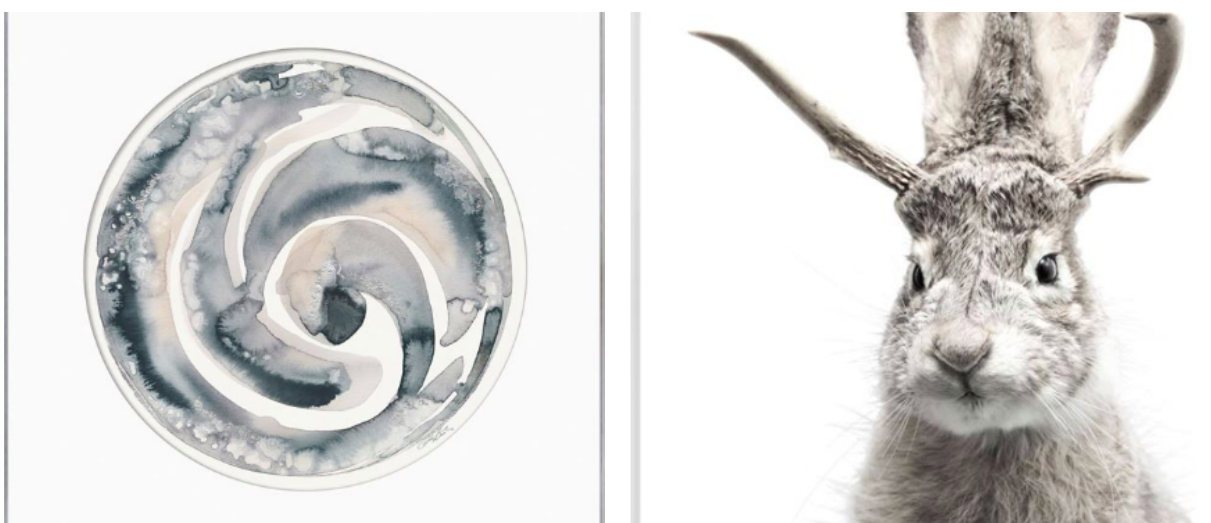


Courtesy of Celadon Art



and fine art papers.

Limited editions and fine art photography are special kinds of reproductions and are priced higher than a regular reproduction.

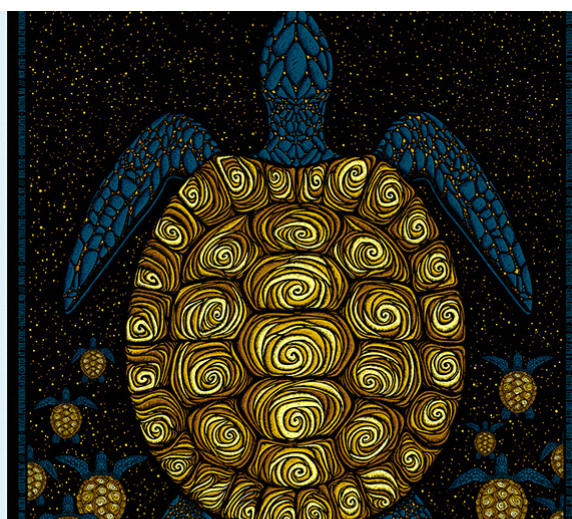


Courtesy of Celadon Art

POSTERS

These are mass-produced images printed on different kinds of paper stock used for wide distribution.

While there are an infinite number of images for posters, they typically fall into one of three broad categories: art posters, reproductions of famous paintings and political/commercial/promotional posters.



Polarity Trilateral Album Poster
 Bottom L: Todd Slater Tour Poster
 Bottom R: Eden Concert Poster



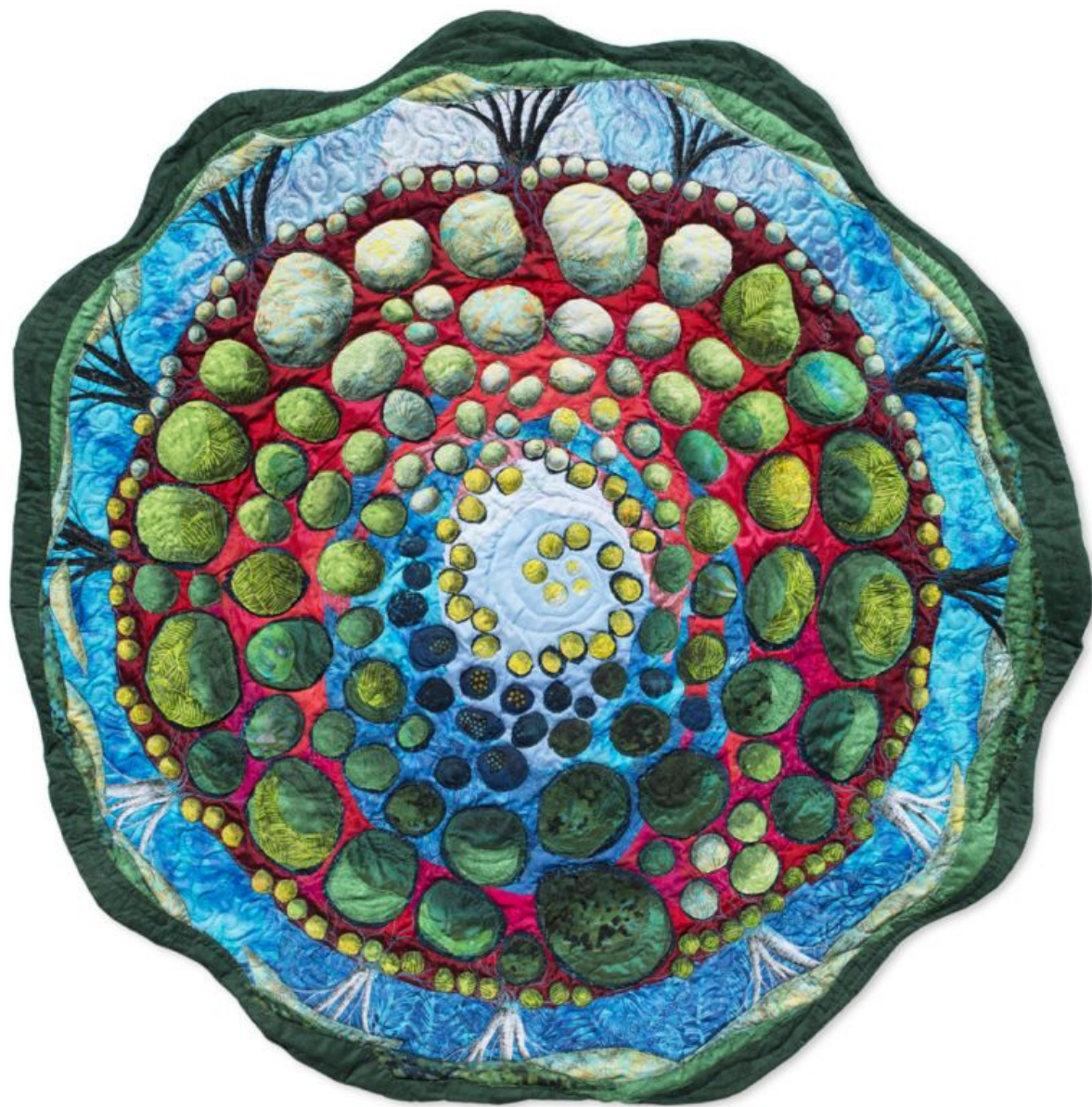
Forbidden Planet, Public



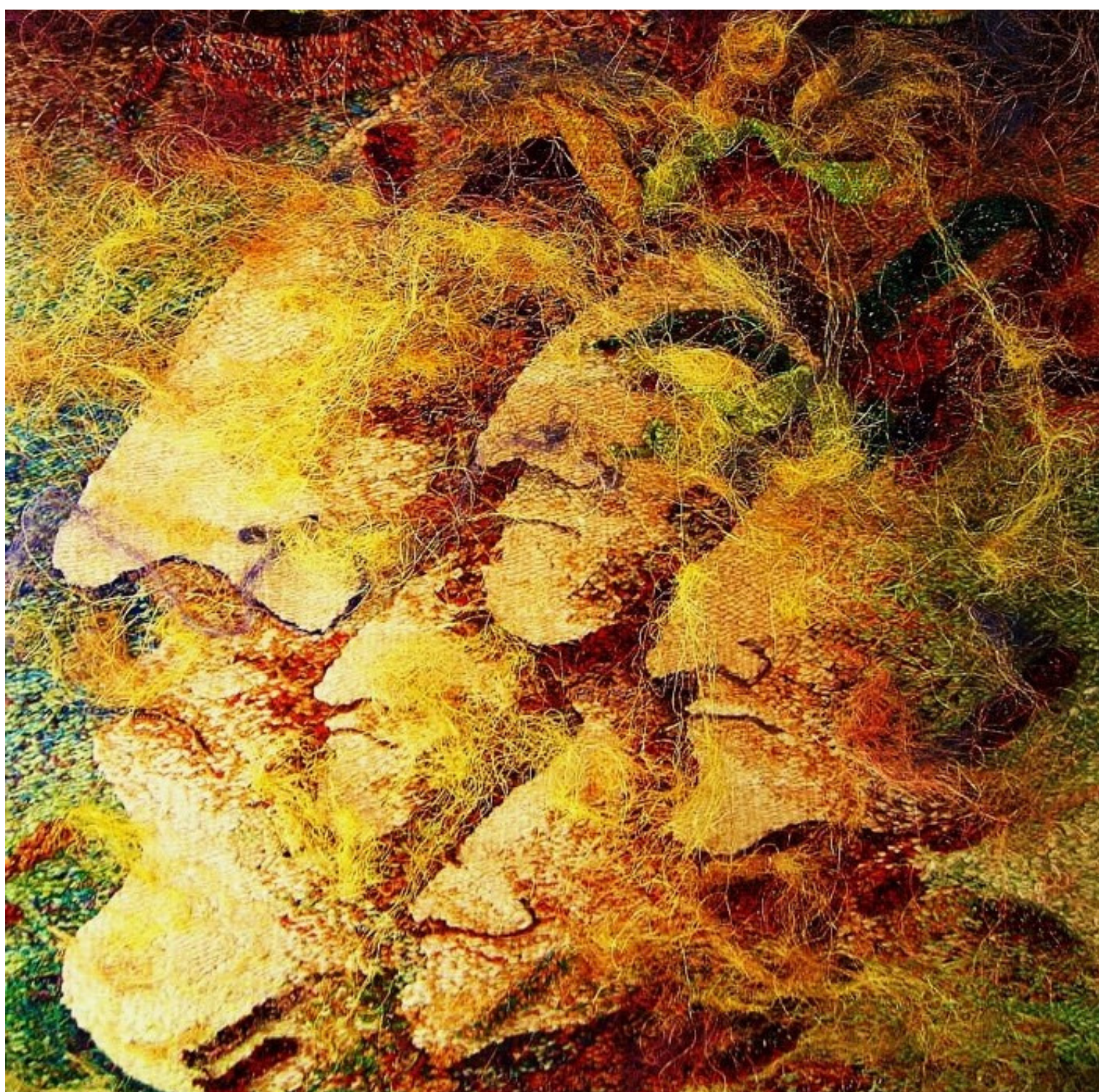
Top: We Can Do It. Public
 Bottom: Lion Poster. Guinness

TEXTILE

One of the oldest art forms on the planet, textile art is the result of creating a practical or decorative object using fibres from sources like plants, animals, insects (think silk) or synthetic materials. (Think jute, rope, silk, wool, synthetic yarns for example.) The materials, artist's manual labour and aesthetic value are prioritized when assessing the value of a textile artwork.



Top: Source. Lorainne Roy
 Bottom R: Spring Cherry. Lorainne Roy
 Bottom L: Public Domain Image



Faces. Ixchel Suarez

Top: Maple Bark. Ixchel Suarez
 Bottom: Fractal's From Nature. Ixchel Suarez

SCULPTURE

Sculpture, a three dimensional type of visual art, are free-standing objects on ground level or table tops, in relief on surfaces or in spaces that may even envelop the viewer.

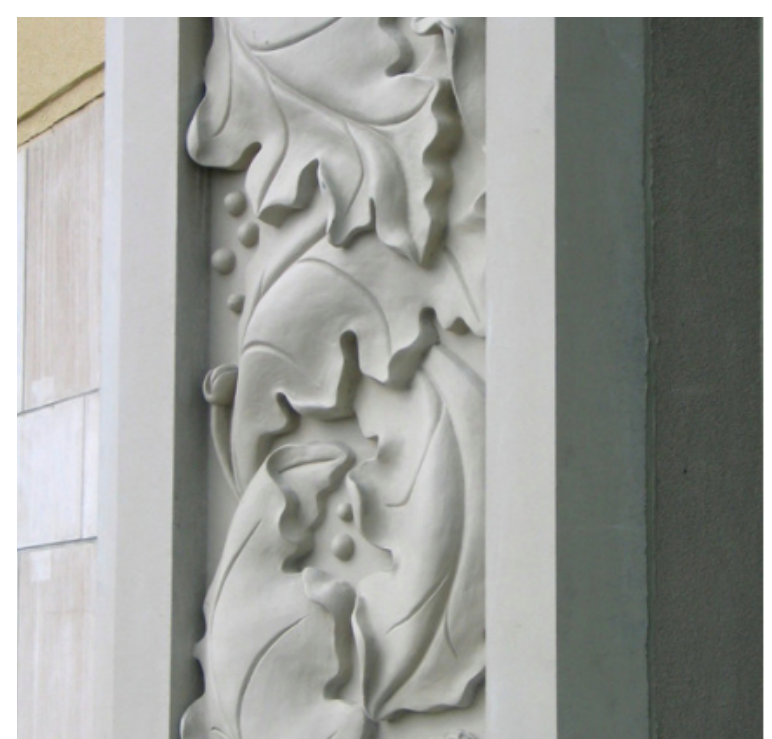
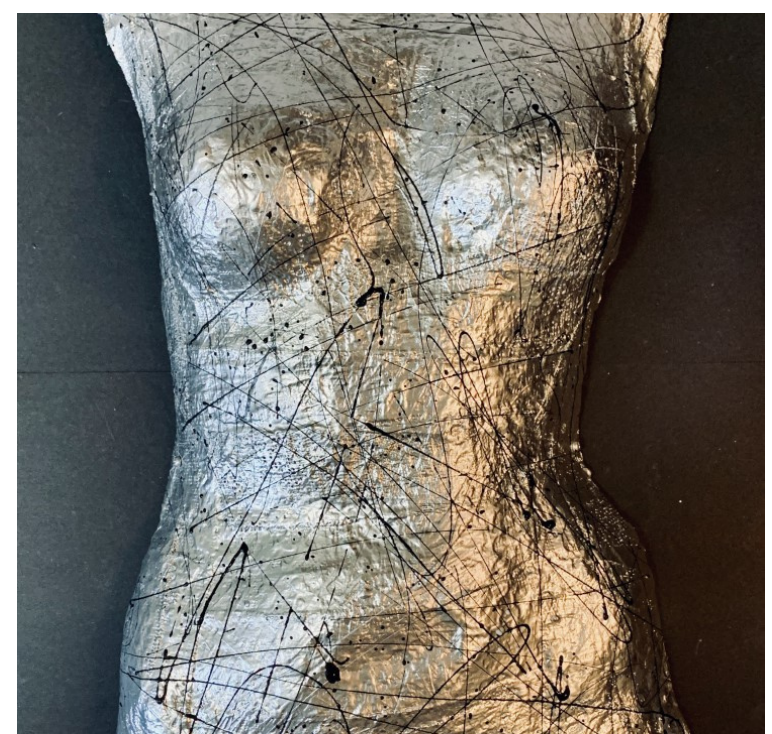
Creating sculptures involves carving, modeling, welding or building plastic, metal, stone, clay or wood materials into works of art.



Top: Trio. Ann Bartok
Bottom L: Piranha. Ralph Remo Russo
Bottom R: Two Wolves. Bert Jackson



Vertebrae. Ralph Remo Russo



Top: Torso. Suzanne Metz
Bottom: Concrete Relief.
Ann Bartok



CHAPTER 5

A QUICK WORD

- **PROVENANCE**
- **ART APPRAISALS**
- **INSURANCE**
- **CONCLUSION**
- **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**
- **ARTIST INDEX**

Three wise men. Cleo Lant

PROVENANCE

Provenance is the history of ownership of an artwork all the way back to the artist's studio. Verified provenance can prove the authenticity of an artwork and greatly increase its value.

Sometimes the story of an artwork's history is very short. For example, you personally bought it from the artist one year ago on a specific date. Sometimes that story can date back decades or even centuries. Keeping records for each artwork is important.

Make a folder to store all of the purchase receipts and certificates of authenticity, especially for originals and prime reproductions.

If you are interested in acquiring a piece of art from a source other than the artist, make sure to carefully review and document its provenance and ask for help from an expert if you are uncertain.

ART APPRAISALS

Art Appraisals are conducted by qualified professionals for the explicit purpose of determining the current value of an artwork. This service is usually required when insuring, bequeathing, donating and selling fine art or when making damage claims.

INSURANCE

It seems there are no two insurance companies that follow the same strategy for how to insure artwork and art collections. Some policies cover artworks up to a certain collection value, while others require an appraisal for every piece.

Check your insurance policy for details about fine art coverage and contact your agent directly if you need clarification on your coverage. There are insurance companies you can request details from that specialize in fine art policies.

CONCLUSION

I hope this introductory guide to the language of art is helpful as you begin and continue your journey into Canadian art. If you'd like more information or a deeper perspective into how to get started or enhance that journey, please feel free to contact me at Savvy Art.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Mayer started her first online gallery in response to a deep craving to get back into art and support Canadian artists.

It was through working closely with art buyers that she realized the extra support and information helped to make their experience with art so much more rewarding and fun.

She lives in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada with her family, and you can visit her online at savvyart.ca.



ARTIST INDEX

A.C Pifaro	www.crudeexperiments.com
Adriana Rinaldi	@adriana_rinaldi_1
Ann Bartok	ann.bartok@rogers.com
Ann Shier	@annshier
Anthony Saldutto	@anthonysaldutto
Briar Emond	briaremond@gmail.com
Bert Jackston	hwww.bertjackson.ca
Brigitte Nowak	www.brigittenowak.com
Cathy Groulx	cathygroulx@hotmail.com
Cleo Lant	cleolant@gmail.com
Darlene Watson	@darlenewatsonart
Darlene Winfield	www.darlenejwinfieldart.com
Deborah Kanfer	www.deborahkanfer.com
Doris Savard	www.dorissavard.com
Eleanor Lowden	@eleanorlowden
Eric Ranveau	www.ericranveau.com
Erica McDowall	@emcdowallart
Ernie Francis	facebook.com/ernie.francis
Geraldine Gillingham	@Geradline_gillinghamgalleries
Gloria Blattt	@gloriablatt
Ivar Mendez	@ivarcortesmendez
Ivo Stoyanov	@ivostoyanovstudio
Ixchel Suarez	@ixchelsuarez
Jasmine Virginia	www.jasminevirginia.ca
Jessica Masters	@jessicamastersart
Jessica Ruth Freedman	@jessica_ruth_freedman_art
Joanne Coughlin	@joanne.coughlin
Joe Sampson	www.josephsampson.com

ARTIST INDEX

Julia Hacker	www.artjuliahacker.com
Julia Veenstra	@juliaveenstra_
Karen Mayer	@savvyartinc
Kristyn Watterworth	www.kryart.com
Kyle Griffiths	www.kylegriffiths.ca
Laura Culic	@lauraculic
Laurent Matur	@Laurent2967
Lorraine Roy	www.lroyart.com
Mari Adams	FB @ mariadamsart1
Matt Jenkins	@mattjenkinsphoto
Meredith Bingham	@meredithbingham.artist
Michael Toole	@michaeltooleart
Michele Taras	www.micheletaras.com
Nell Lamarsh	nell.lamarsh@yahoo.com
Pierre Ribout	www.vividfineart.ca
Ralph Remo Russo	https://www.amoire.ca/
Richard DeWolfe	richarddewolfe.com
Richard Jacobson	@richardajacobson
Richard Rizzo	mrrichardrizzo@gmail.com
Rundi Phelan	@rundiphelan
Sharon Kirsh	@Sharonkirsh
Sherry Czekus	@sherryczekus
Susan Weisz	www.susanweisz.com
Wayne Fisher	@waynefisherphotography