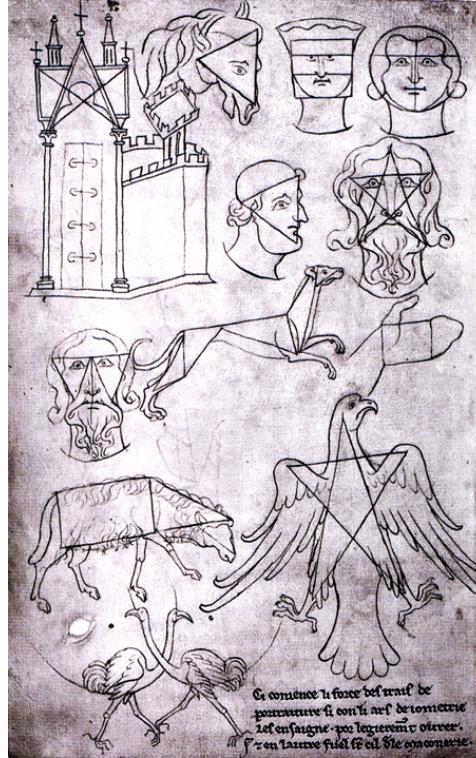


## **Illustrated Glossary**

### **Formal terms**

Formal terms are used to describe art visually.  
Using them to describe art is called “formalism” or “formal analysis.”



## Formal terms: real line, contour line, directional line, composition: Europe Middle Ages 13<sup>th</sup> century

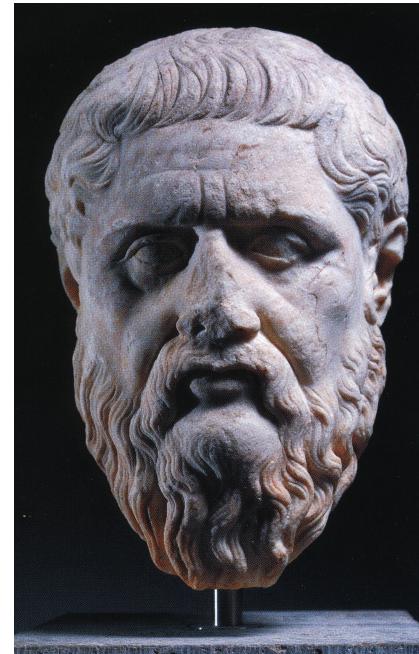
A line is a mark made by a moving point.

A real line is actually drawn. All the lines in these figures are real.

A contour line goes around something. All the lines here are contour lines

A directional line points to something for emphasis. In the bird, the sides of the star all point to different extremities of the bird: the head, the legs, the curves of the wings.

Composition is how large shapes organize a work. All the geometric shapes (triangles, rectangles, stars) inside the figures are compositional shapes.



### **Formal terms: volume, mass:**

Left: Horse from China, 9<sup>th</sup> century, Right: Head of Plato, Greece, 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE

Volume is a three-dimensional (3-D) form with mass or space inside.

Mass is a solid 3-D form.

The ceramic horse is hollow. It is a volume with space inside.

The carved stone head is solid. It is volume with mass inside or mass.



**Formal terms: implied line, shading, composition**  
Seated man by Seurat, France, 19<sup>th</sup> century

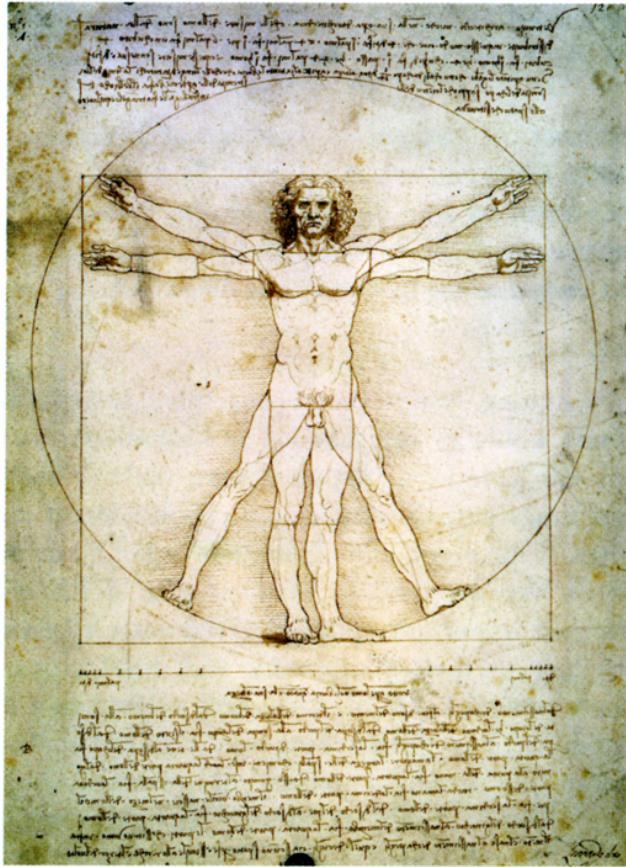
An implied line is not actually drawn. An example would be the edges of this figure.

Another example is the directional line of the lower leg that points to the head.

Shading is the gradation of lights and darks to show volume (3-D form), usually in a 2-D picture.

Here we see shading on the lower leg, back, arm and hat to imply volume.

Compositional shapes include the triangle of the bend leg, the semi-circle of the upper body and arm, the oval of the hat and face. Composition also includes the background shapes such as the large triangles in the upper right and left corners.



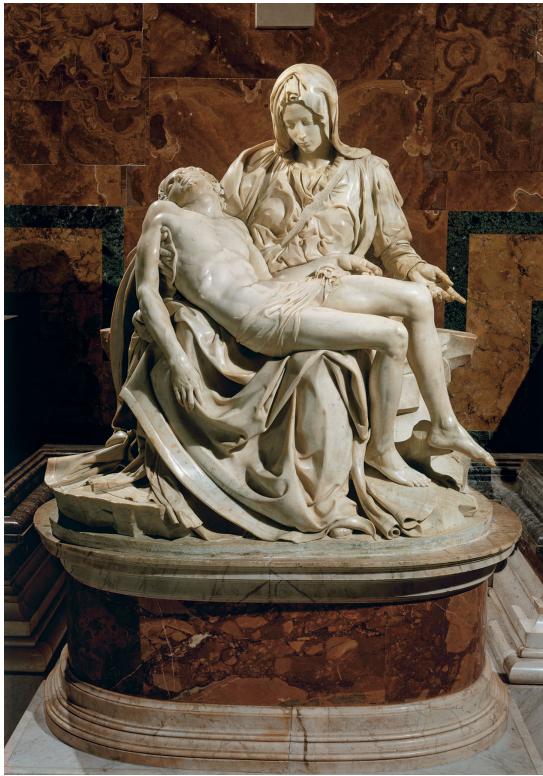
**Formal terms: organic and geometric shapes:** Man by Leonardo, Italy, late 15<sup>th</sup> century

Organic shapes are irregular bounded forms.

The human body with its curved volumes and surfaces is organic.

Geometric shapes are regular bounded forms.

The circle and the square containing the body are geometric shapes.



### **Formal terms: real texture, rhythm: Pieta by Michelangelo, late 15<sup>th</sup> century**

Texture is the physical feel of a surface. The exposed body of Jesus is very smooth in large areas with gentle curves. The fabric of Mary's garment is irregular and moves in and out dramatically.

Texture here is real because you could actually physically feel it with your hand.

Rhythm is how the eye moves around in work.

Here our eyes are directed to the upper part of the sculpture. The curve of Mary's upper body brings us to the body of Jesus. The curves of his arms and legs bring our eyes toward his upper body, especially his torso. Together their bodies form a kind of visual loop.

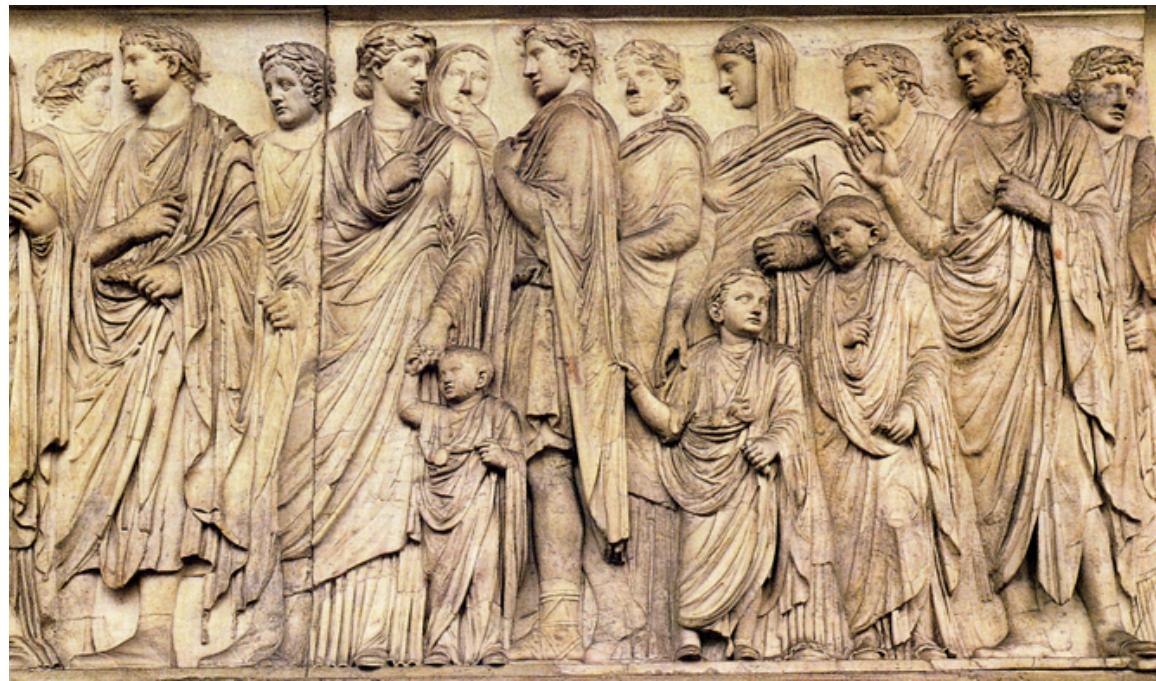


## **Formal terms: Implied texture: Self Portrait by Adelaide Labille-Guiard, France, 18<sup>th</sup> century**

Texture in a picture is often implied and not real.

Here the real surface of the painting is very smooth to make it look realistic. But there are many implied textures painted to look like a surface to give you the physical feel of what is depicted.

Note the skin, the different dresses, the feather, the veil, the cushion, the canvas, the wood frame, and the tiled floor.



### **Formal terms: pattern:** Side of an altarpiece, Rome, 1<sup>st</sup> century

Pattern is something repeated.

Here the bodies and heads form a regular pattern across the work which give it rhythm and movement. The tilt in the shoulders (foreshortening) and the direction of the heads form directional lines across the top of the relief sculpture pointing to the left. There is also a directional line through the heads of the children taking our eyes to the upper right.



**Formal terms: plane, linear perspective, foreshortening;**  
Annunciation by Fra Angelico, Italy, 15<sup>th</sup> century

A plane is a flat 2-D surface. Some large planes in this picture are the lawn/floor, the back wall, the front of the building/pillars, and a plane going back through the pillars on the left.

Linear perspective uses angles lines to show depth. The left side of the porch is the best example here. Foreshortening is when angles show a figure turning in space. Note the shoulders of each figure. They are shorter than if the figure faced the front and they show the angel and Mary at different angles going back into space because they face each other.



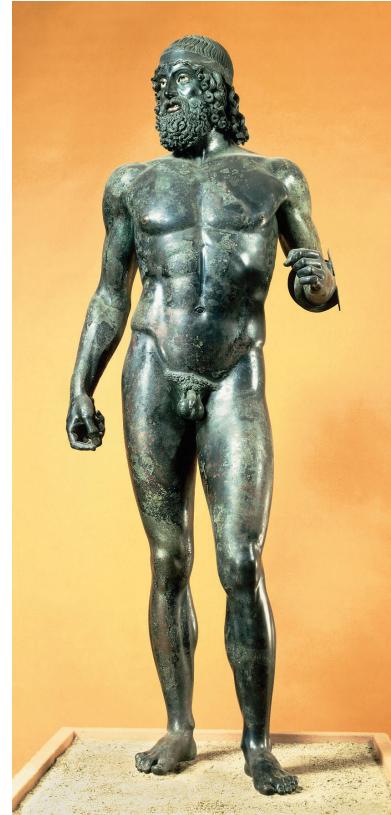
**Formal terms: atmospheric perspective, diminishing and realistic scale:**  
Hunters by Brueghel, Netherlands, 16<sup>th</sup> century, Renaissance

Atmospheric perspective uses fading in the background to show depth.

Note how things far away in the picture are less clear and softer looking.

Scale is how big something is. Diminishing scale is when things are smaller in the background to show distance. The people on the ice are much smaller on the skating ponds.

Realistic scale is when size is depicted as in real life. Considering the distances depicted here, all size relationships here look normal to what the eye would see.



### **Formal terms: hieratic proportion and scale, realistic proportion and scale**

Left: Seated King, Yoruba, Africa, early 20<sup>th</sup> century; Right: Warrior, Greece, 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE

Proportion is the size relationships of parts to the whole. Scale is the size of a whole.

Hieratic is when something large is important, small is not. Realistic is when size relationships are as in real life. The Greek statue is larger than life scale (about 7 feet) so it is hieratic scale. But the proportions of his body parts are realistic. The hieratic scale of the African king is smaller than his queen to show her importance in providing an heir to the throne. Their necks show hieratic proportion in their unrealistic length to emphasize the importance of the head. His legs are hieratically short to show that his power comes from being on the throne.



### **Formal terms: symmetry, asymmetry**

Left: Pot by Maria Martinez, Native American, 20<sup>th</sup> century

Right: Drawing by Luis Martinez-Pedro, Cuba, 20<sup>th</sup> century

Symmetry is when visual balance looks the same on each side. The pot is very symmetrical in shape. Asymmetry is when visual balance looks unequal on each side. The drawing has more visual weight on the right side because the man is larger scale than the bird and he is off-centered.