ART

ASSIGNMENT #4: SUPREMATISM

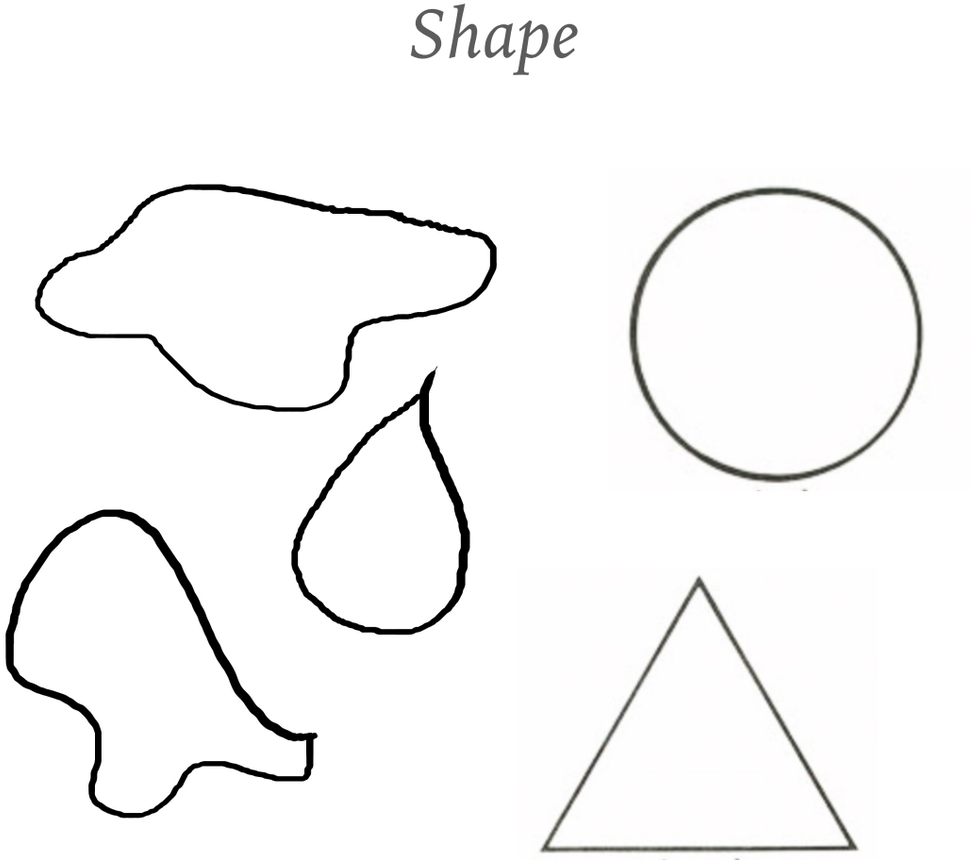
Elements & Principles of Art- Form, Space, Balance



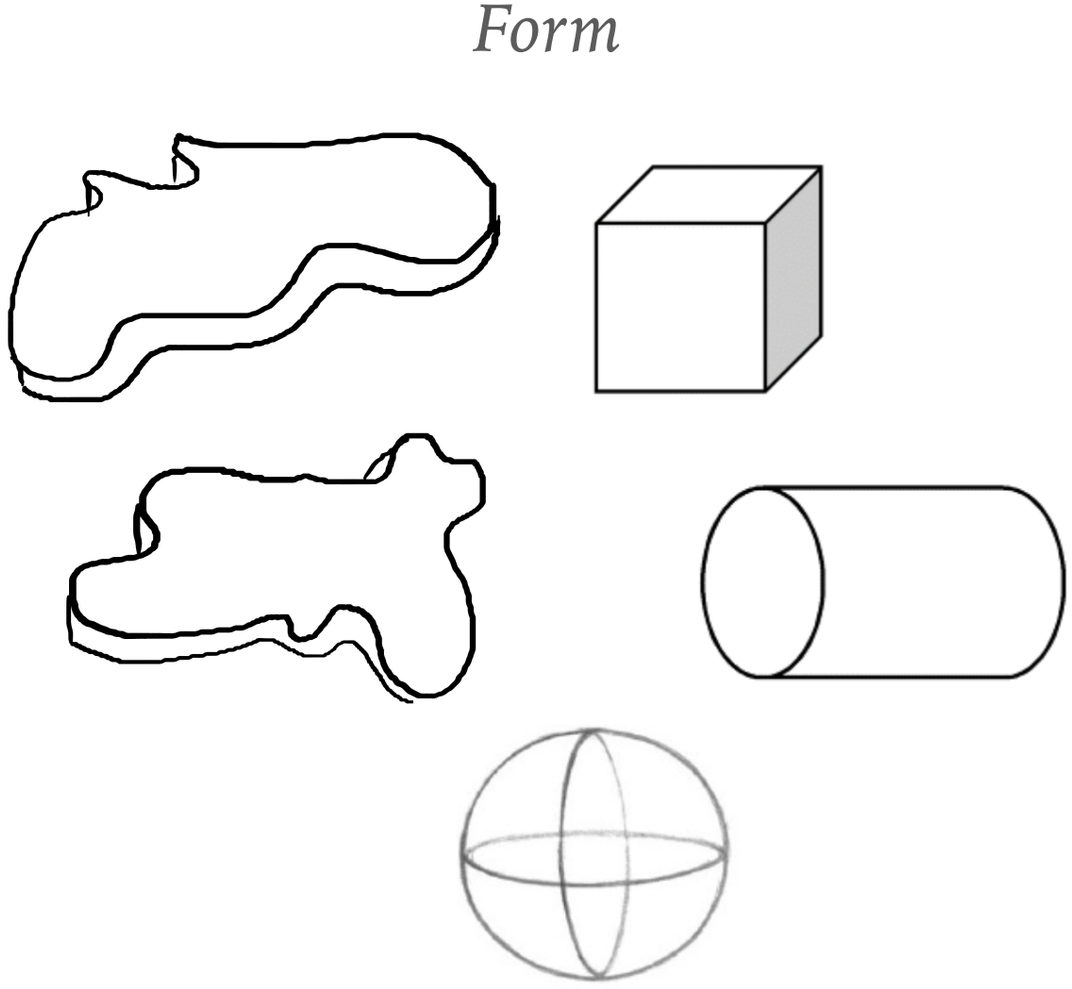
ELEMENTS OF ART: FORM

- **In art, *form* refers to objects that are three-dimensional or have volume. In other words, they have length, width, and height. Shapes, on the other hand, are flat.**

Shape



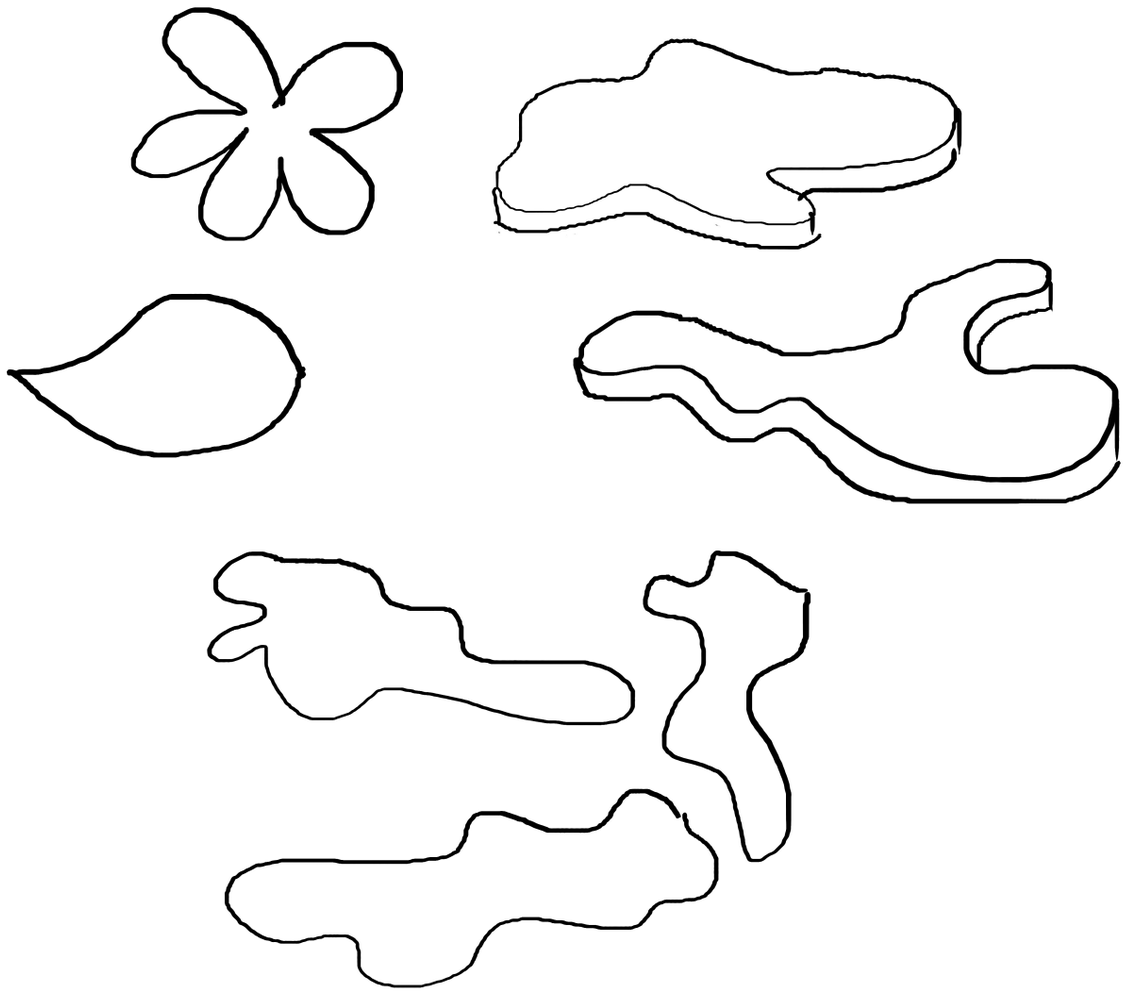
Form



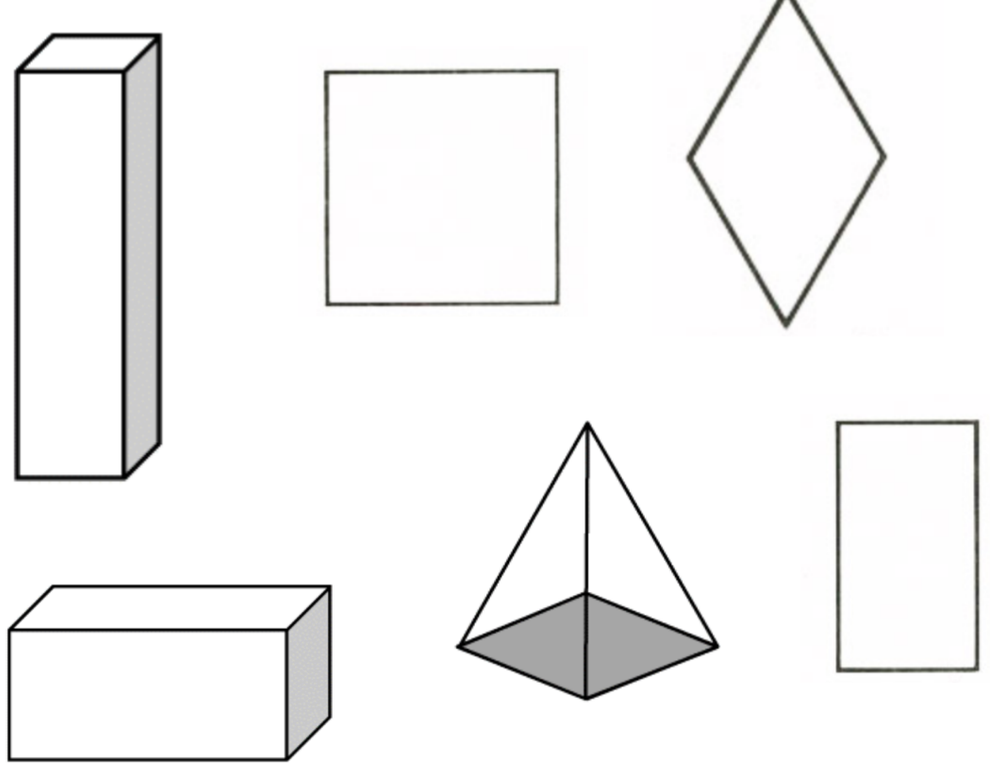
GEOMETRIC VS. ORGANIC SHAPES/FORMS

- **Shapes and forms are both divided into Geometric and Organic types.**

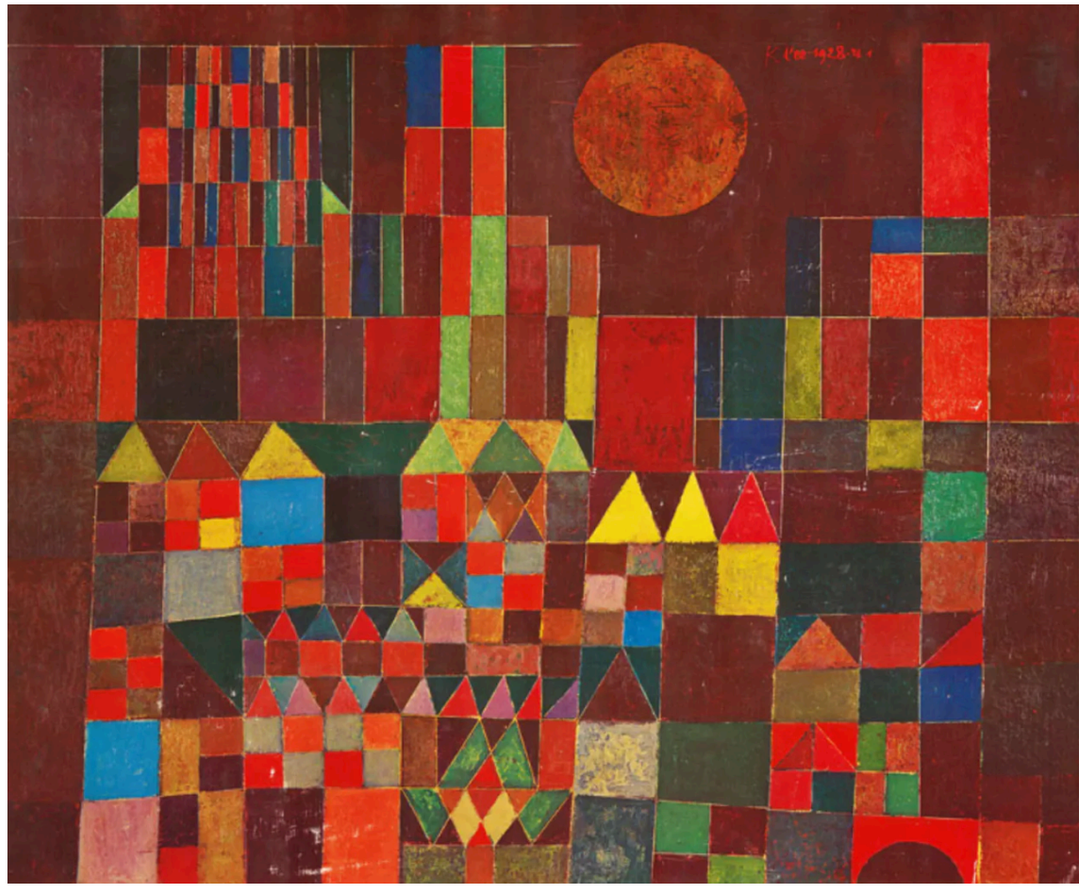
Organic



Geometric



EXAMPLES OF SHAPE VS. FORM IN ART



**Mostly Geometric shapes and a flatter look.*
Paul Klee, *Castle and Sun, 1928*

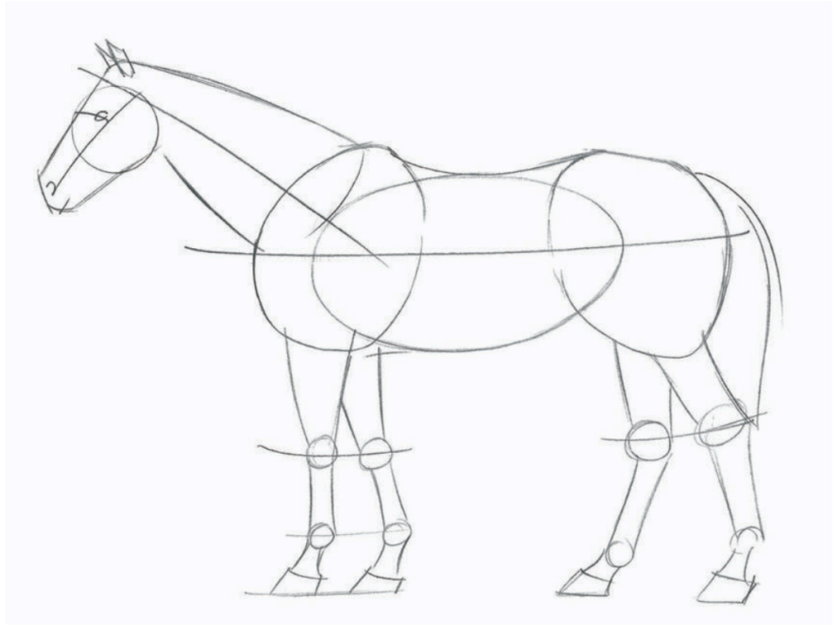


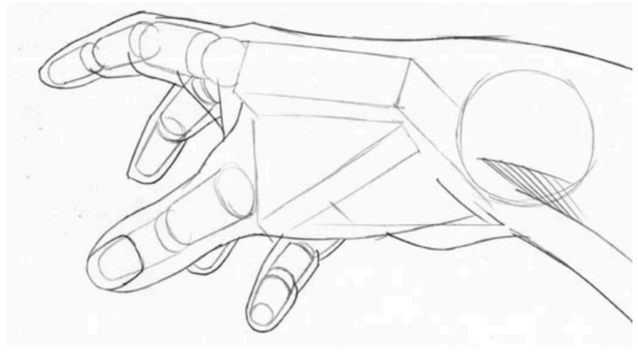
**Combo of Geometric and Organic shapes and a look that transmits volume.*
Pablo Picasso, *Girl with a Mandolin,* 1910.

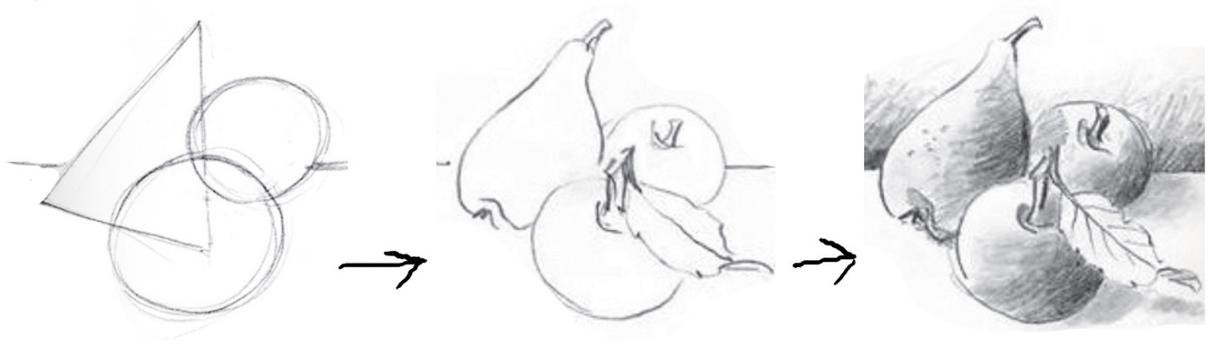
VISUALIZING OBJECTS & SUBJECTS AS COMBINATIONS OF SHAPES/FORMS

- **The world we live in made up almost entirely of forms.**
- **As artists, we must have a strong understanding of form and how to create the illusion of three-dimensionality in drawings and paintings.**
- **We need to be able to visualize everything we see, as combinations of simple forms sitting in space. This will allow us to create preliminary sketches that demonstrate effective form and perspective.**





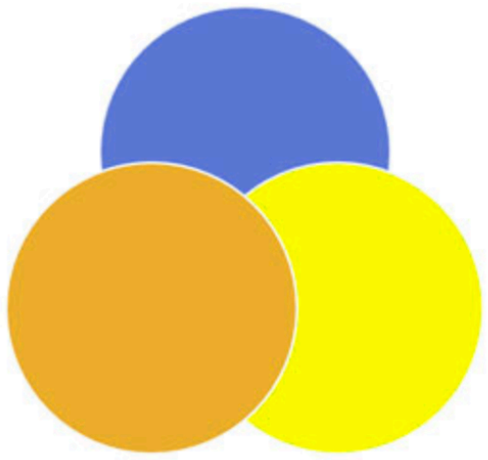




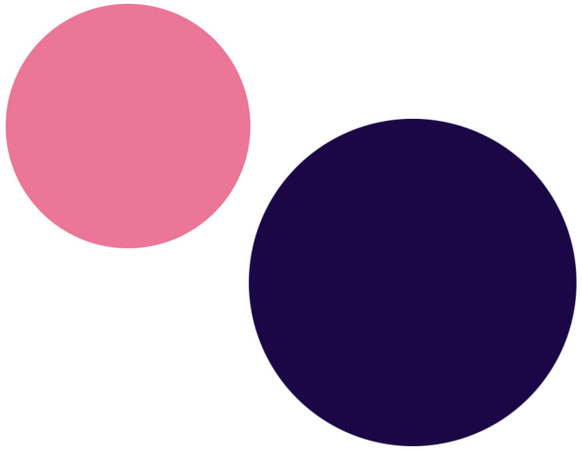
ELEMENTS OF ART: SPACE

- **In art, space refers to the area in which the artwork is organized. It's the area within, around, above or below the elements inside of the picture plane.**
- Three-dimensional, site-specific art (sculptures, etc.), are easiest to understand because they are created to be part of, and change the space/environment in itself.
- **In two-dimensional artwork, the space is encompassed within the limit of the paper or canvas it's created on. Artists who draw and paint create a sense of space by using techniques that create the illusion of perspective and depth on a two-dimensional surface (paper, canvas, etc.).**
- **These techniques are: overlapping, sizes, placement, detail, color/value, and linear perspective**

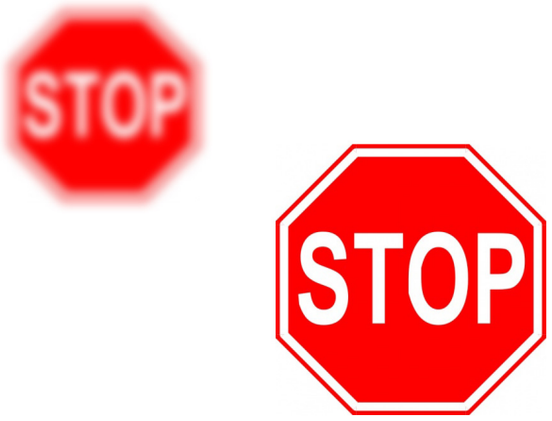
Overlapping



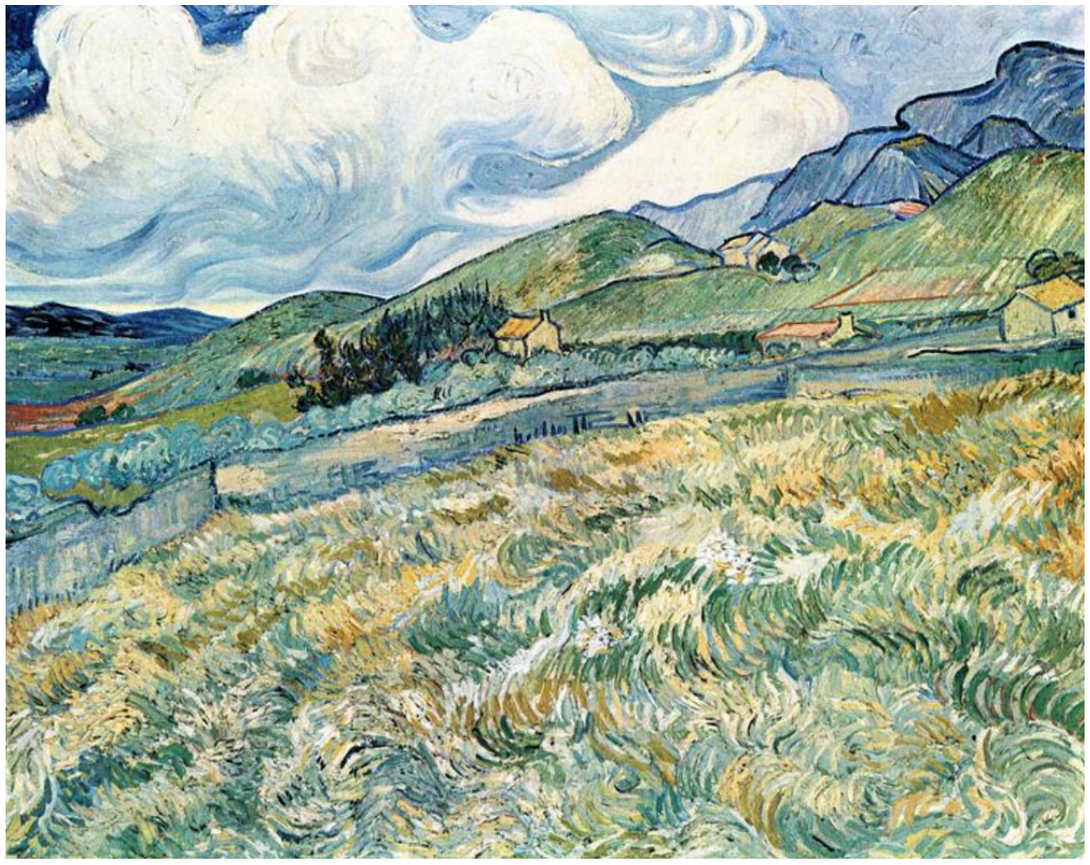
Size



Detail



EXAMPLES OF TECHNIQUES TO HELP CREATE DEPTH AND SPACE

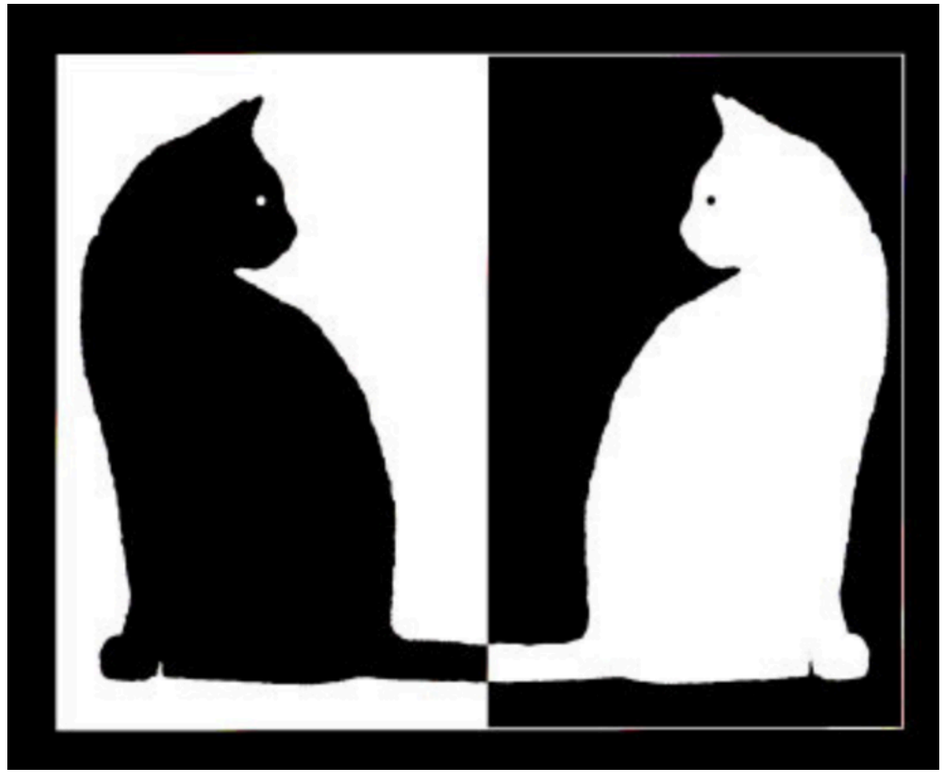


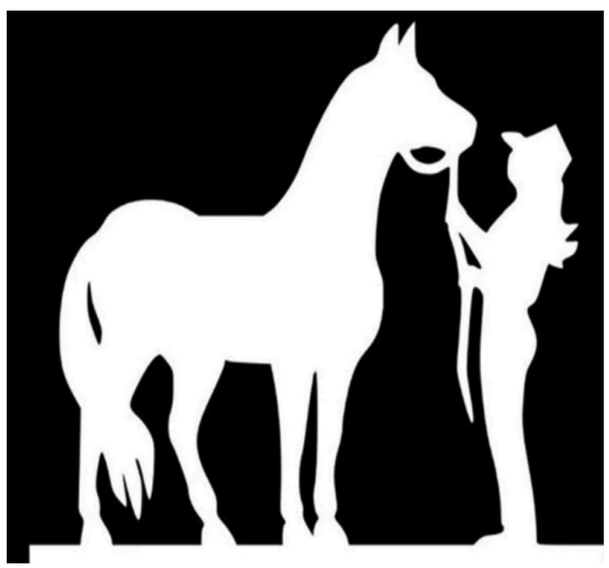
**Shows overlapping, difference in sizes, placement, detail, color and value*
Vincent Van Gogh, *Mountain Landscape Behind the St. Paul Hospital,1889*

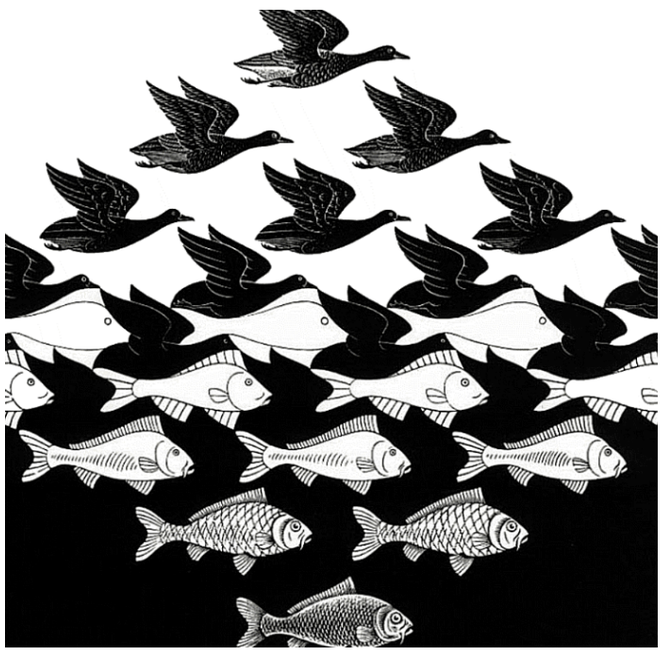


**Shows linear perspective (1-Point)*
Gustave Caillebotte, *The Pont de l'Europe,1876*

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPACE







- **The term *positive space* refers to the subject of the piece itself, or the shapes or forms of interest.**

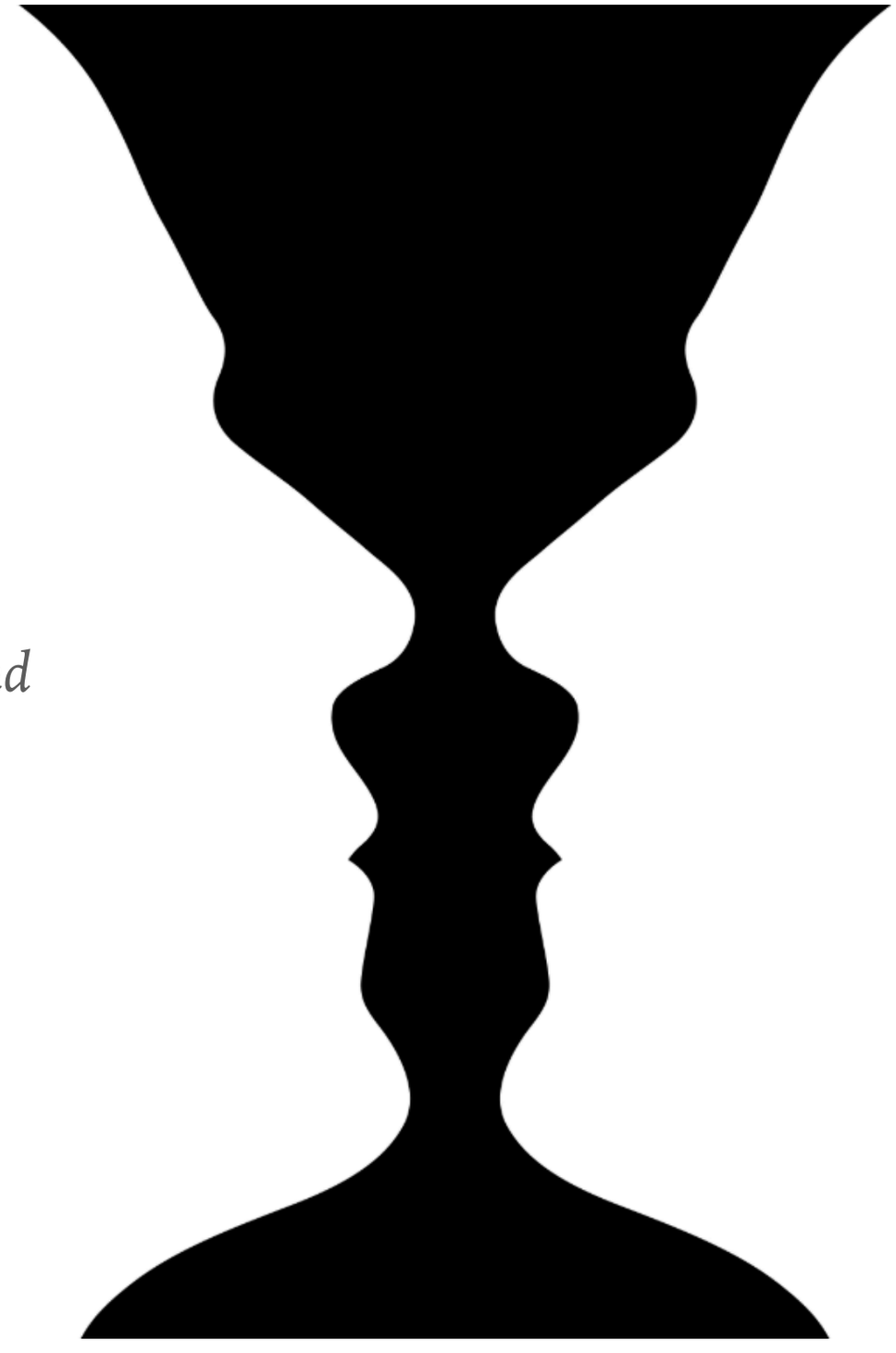
- ***Negative space* refers to the empty spaces the artist has created around, between, and at times, within the subjects.**

Ex: In a painting of a vase of flowers, the vase and the flowers are considered positive space, while everything else is negative space.

- **Positive and negative spaces work together when we are creating visual compositions. Always give thought to the ratio of your positive and negative spaces in your artworks in order to ensure well-balanced pieces that are interesting to look at.**

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPACE

What area(s) are positive and what area(s) are negative?



PRINCIPLE OF ART: BALANCE







- **Balance is a way of combining elements of art to create a feeling of stability in a work of art.**
- **Balance is an incredibly important Principle of Art, for it helps communicate the message behind an artwork and contributes to its overall effect, making it look dynamic/lively, or restful/calm.**
- A balanced composition feels stable and aesthetically pleasing. There is a specific focal point involved, but the viewers eyes are also called to less important areas throughout the piece that don't overpower the main areas.
- **Designing a balanced composition involves giving thought to positive and negative spaces and making sure everything works and fits together as a whole.**
- Unbalanced compositions lead to tension, which can be purposefully used to transmit this kind of message. Generally, however, we're looking to create balanced compositions.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF BALANCE

- **<u>Symmetrical balance:</u> Both sides of the piece are equal (identical or almost identical). It can be created by drawing an imaginary line through the center of a work either horizontally or vertically. This kind of balance creates a sense of order and stability. This said, it can also be a bit boring to look at.**

- **<u>Asymmetrical balance:</u> Two sides of the composition are not the same but appear to have an equal visual weight. Negative and positive shapes are unequal and unevenly distributed, leading the viewer's eye through the piece.**
- Asymmetrical balance is more difficult to achieve than symmetrical balance, because it challenges us to give thought to the weight of the different elements of art involved and how they compare to each other.
- Ex. Larger, non-texturized area counterbalances smaller highly-texturized area. Larger area with less-intense color counterbalances a smaller area of color that is highly saturated. Smaller, highly detailed area counterbalances larger area with little detail.

- **<u>Radial symmetry:</u> A variation of symmetrical balance in which elements are arranged equally around the central point, like a wheel. This one has a strong focal point because everything is organized around it.**

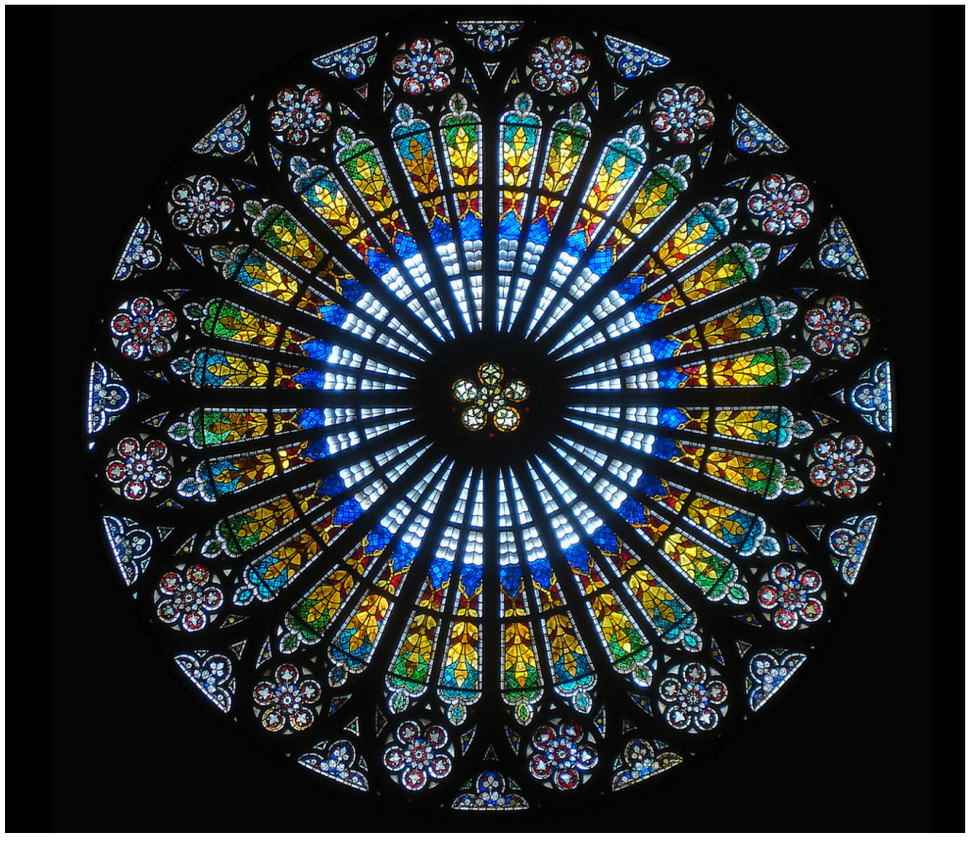


**Shows symmetrical balance*
Diego Rivera, *Flower Day,1925*

EXAMPLES OF ASYMMETRICAL AND RADIAL BALANCE IN ART

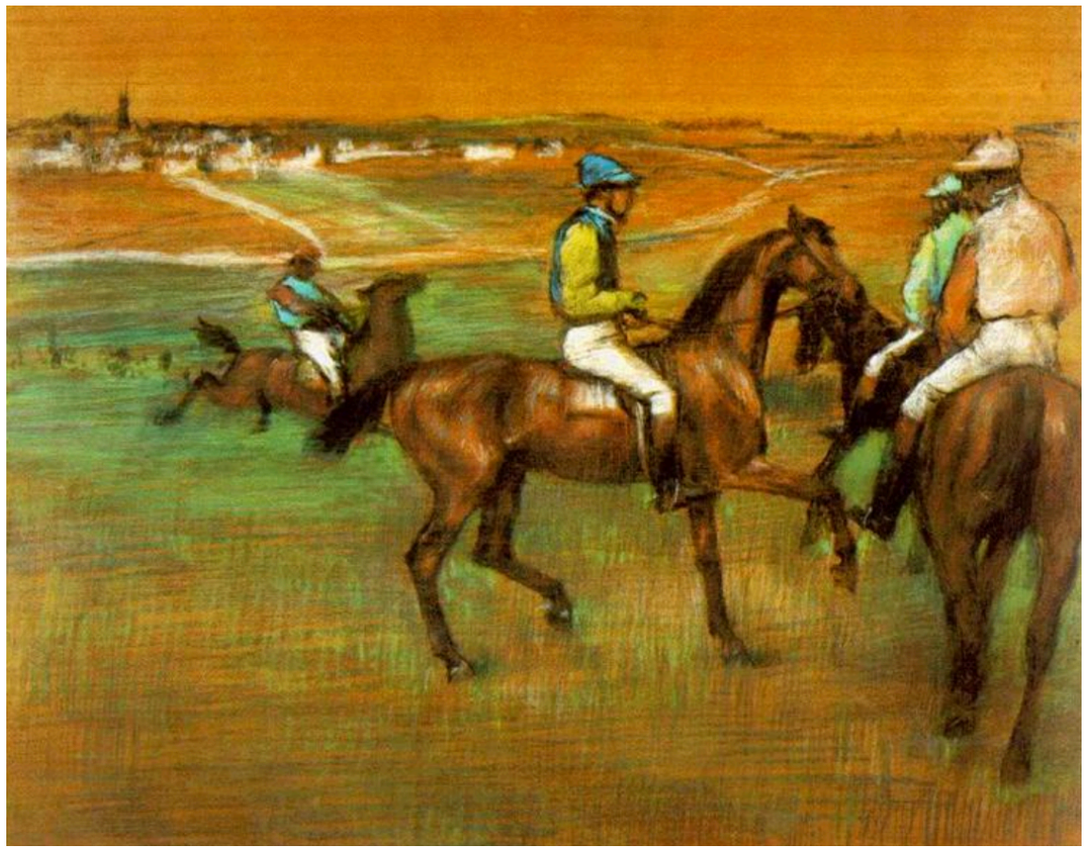


**Shows asymmetrical balance*
Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii, 1785*



**Shows radial balance*
Interior of the rose at Strasbourg Cathedral

EXAMPLES OF UNBALANCED ARTWORKS



**Shows more visual weight in the right half*
Edgar Degas, *Race Horses,1888*



**Shows more visual weight in the left half*
Paulus Potter, *The Bull,1647*

Why do you think the artists made the decision to design their compositions in this way?

HOW THE ELEMENTS OF ART INFLUENCE BALANCE

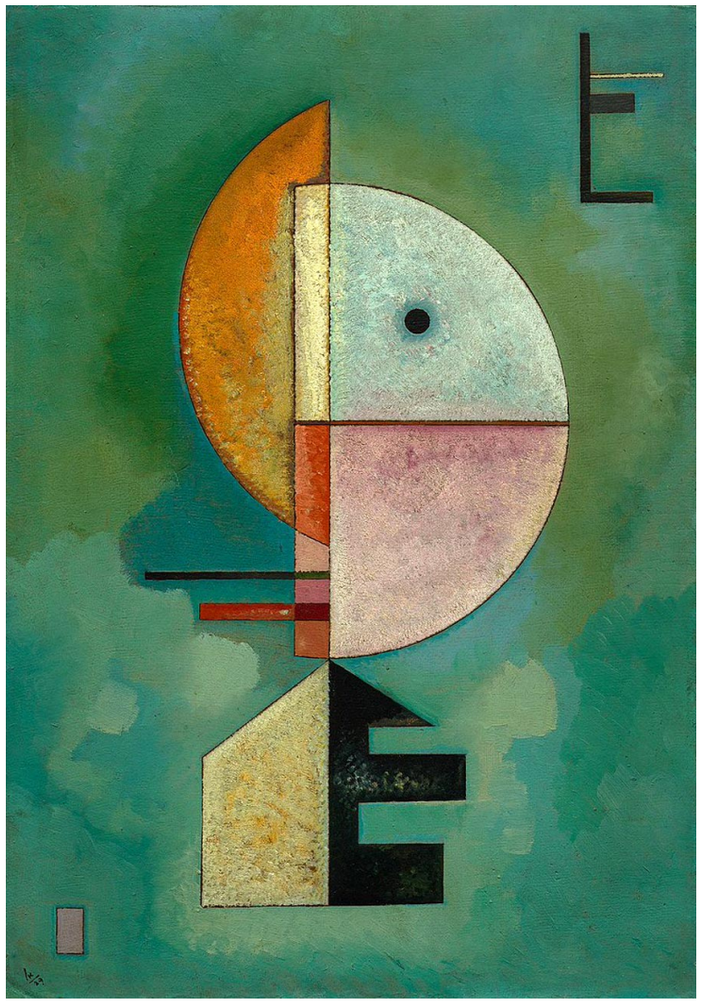
Certain elements and characteristics have greater *visual weight* than others. Each composition is different and the elements within a composition always behave in relation to the other elements, but here are a few key points to know.

Color: The visual weight of a color can change depending on its value, saturation, hue and transparency.

- **Value:** Darker colors seem visually heavier in weight than lighter colors.
- **Saturation**: More intense, saturated colors are visually heavier than neutral, duller colors.
- **Hue**: Warm colors weigh more than cool colors.
- **Transparency**: Opaque areas have more visual weight than transparent areas.

Shape: **Certain shapes have a greater visual weight than others.**

- Squares are heavier than circles.
- Complex shapes like trapezoids, and hexagons have more visual weight than simpler shapes like circles and squares.
- Size- Larger shapes are heavier than smaller shapes, but a group of small shapes can equal the weight of a large shape.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Upward,1929*

Line: Thick lines weigh more than thin lines.

Texture: A shape or form with texture has more weight than one that is not textured.

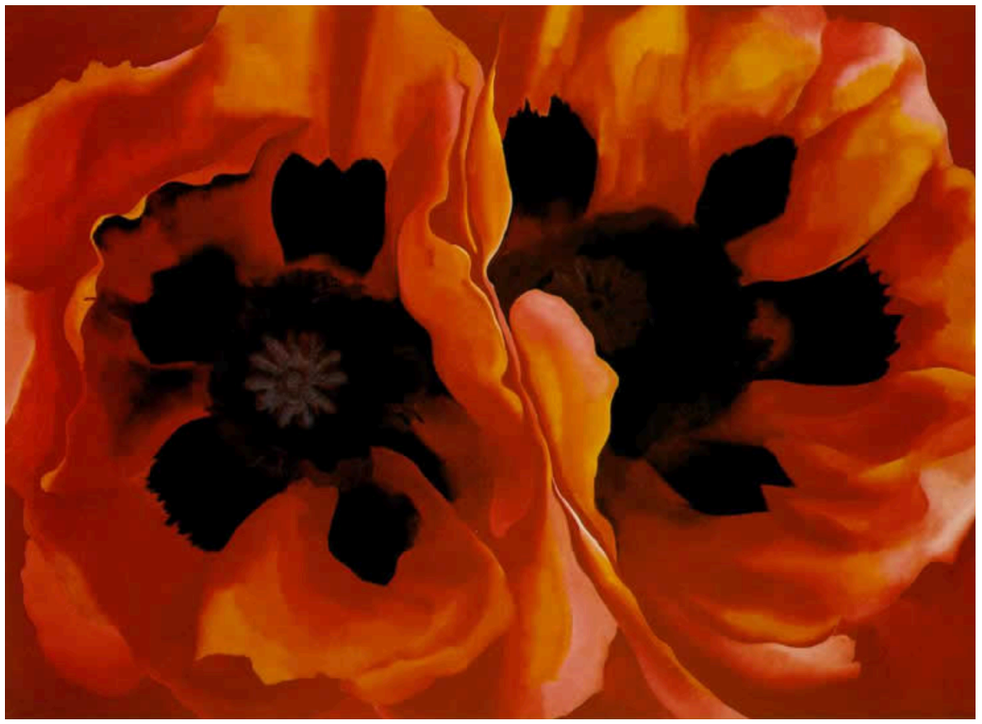
Placement: The location of the element within the space also affects its visual weight.

- Shapes or objects located toward the edge or corner of the composition have more visual weight.
- Items can also balance each other along a diagonal axis, not just vertical or horizontal.

Any type of *contrast* can be used when striving to create balance: still vs. moving, smooth vs. rough, wide vs. narrow, and so on.



Wassily Kandinsky, *Black and Violet, 1923*



Georgia O'Keeffe, *Oriental Poppies, 1928*

SUPREMATISM–HISTORY

- **During World War I, as Russia was experiencing huge changes in political, social and cultural life, artist Kazimir Malevich invented Suprematism (1915). It was one of the earliest and most radical developments in abstract art.**

- It was inspired by Cubism in many ways, but it was taken to the extreme. It was the first art movement that created total geometric abstraction. Paintings didn't rely on realism or narrative.

- **The artists involved in this movement were interested in pushing the boundaries of art. They explored the point to which a medium could go without ceasing to be art. This is why they used very simple elements, because they best articulated the shape and flat surface of the canvases, as opposed to creating a sense of realistic form.**

- Malevich believed his new art would be superior to the art of the past, purer, more truthful, and not distracted by reliance on realism. This is why he gave it this name.



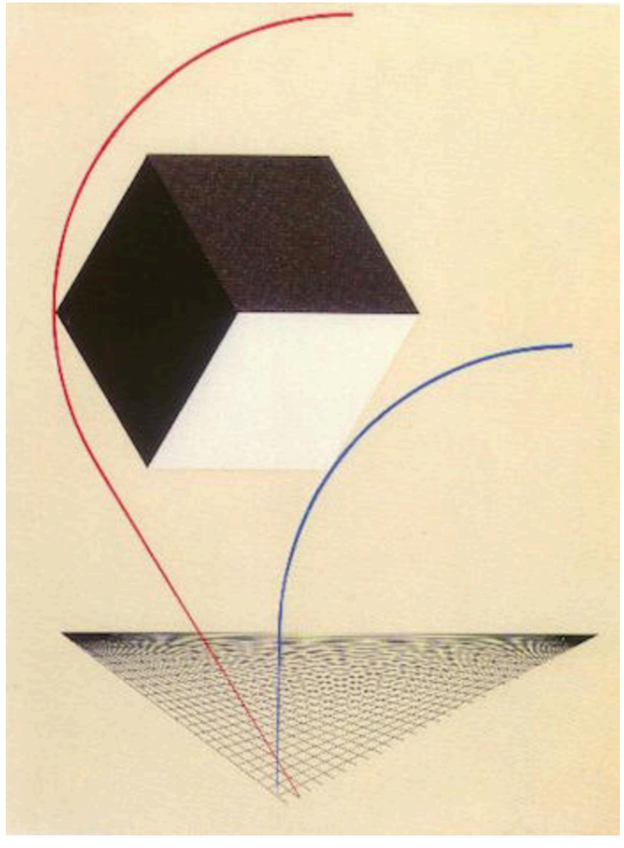
***Kazimir Malevich**, Suprematism, 1916*

SUPREMATISM–CHARACTERISTICS

- **Neutral backgrounds, many times white/off-white**
- **Limited color schemes, use of pure colors, many times highly contrasting colors were used (red, black, blue, white and green)**
- **Emphasis on use of basic geometric shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles and crosses, though sometimes a sense of form was brought in**
- **Sometimes shapes are accompanied by line**
- **Transmit a sensation of movement**
- **Focus on simplicity**



Lyubov Popova, *Painterly Architectonic, 1918*



El Lissitzky, *A Proun, 1925*

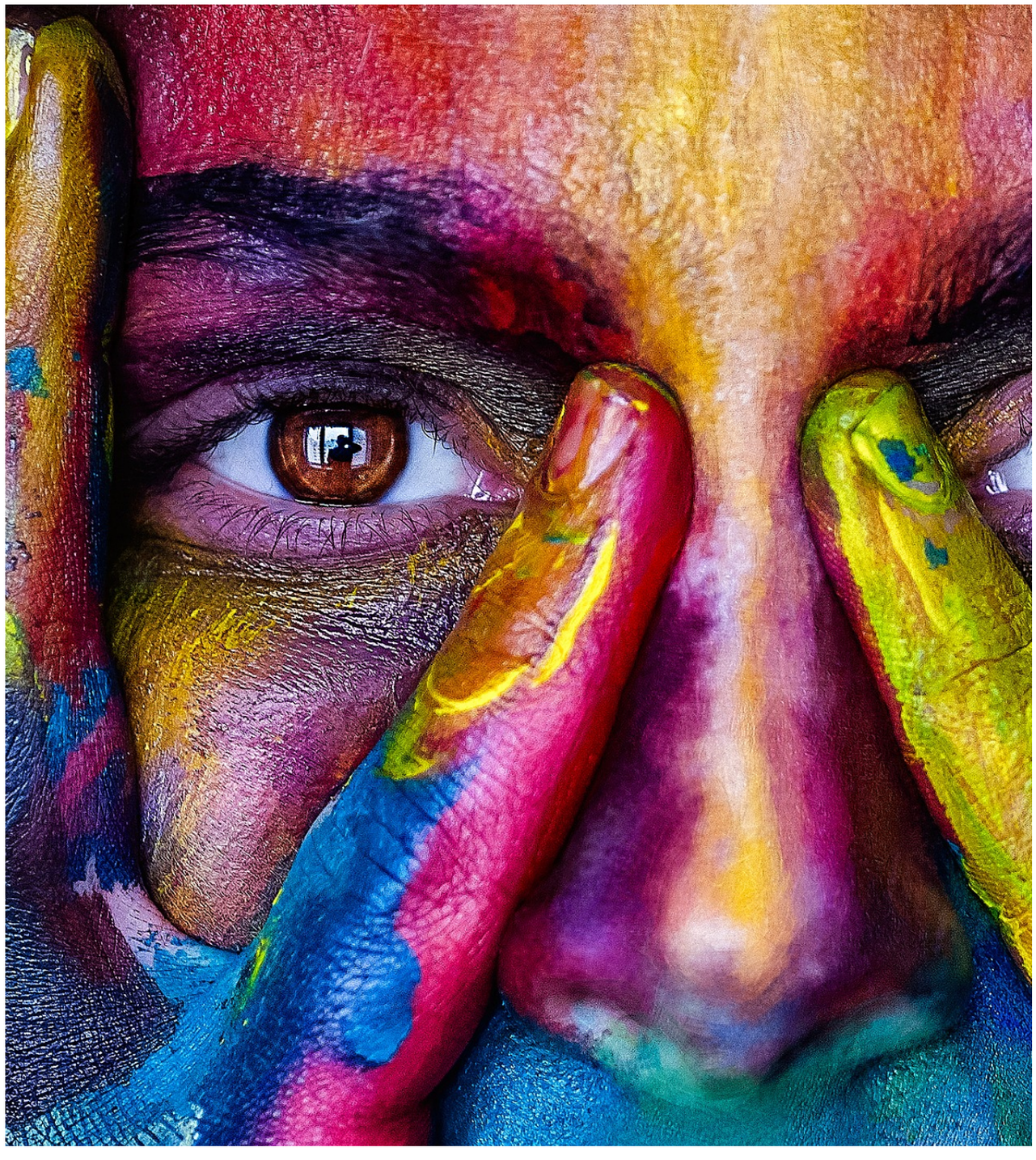


Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematism, 1915*

ART ASSIGNMENT #4:

- **Create a composition that demonstrates an interesting utilization of space. Sketch out thumbnails using your knowledge of Positive and Negative Shapes to design your composition.**
- **Select a specific kind of balance you want to use (symmetrical, asymmetrical or radial).**
- **Utilize your ability to draw both flat shapes and three-dimensional forms.**
- **Suggested art style to explore: Suprematism**
- **Have fun and be creative! :)**

ARTISTIC PROCESS *SUGGESTED* STAGES



1. Dream it

2. Plan + Prepare

3. Execution

4. End it (or repeat it)

5. Evaluate + Reflect

Staying mindful of these helps you keep moving forward!