



# VISUAL ARTS: Painting



**Exhibition of Paintings by Nancy Jay (see Bishop, Ch 1.)**

# VISUAL ARTS: Painting

1. Picture as Magic
2. Some Concepts
3. How to Talk in Pictures
4. World of Painting
5. Abstraction
6. Formal Elements, Composition
7. How to Look
8. Styles: Types and Traditions

# What is a **Picture**?

- An Image
- With two dimensions:
  - Height + width, but no (or little) depth
- An Icon\*
- It's about depiction and truth, as an artist or other people may see it.

\* **Icon**: Sacred picture; or a small image or symbol that represents something



**Byzantine  
Icon:**  
A Sacred Picture



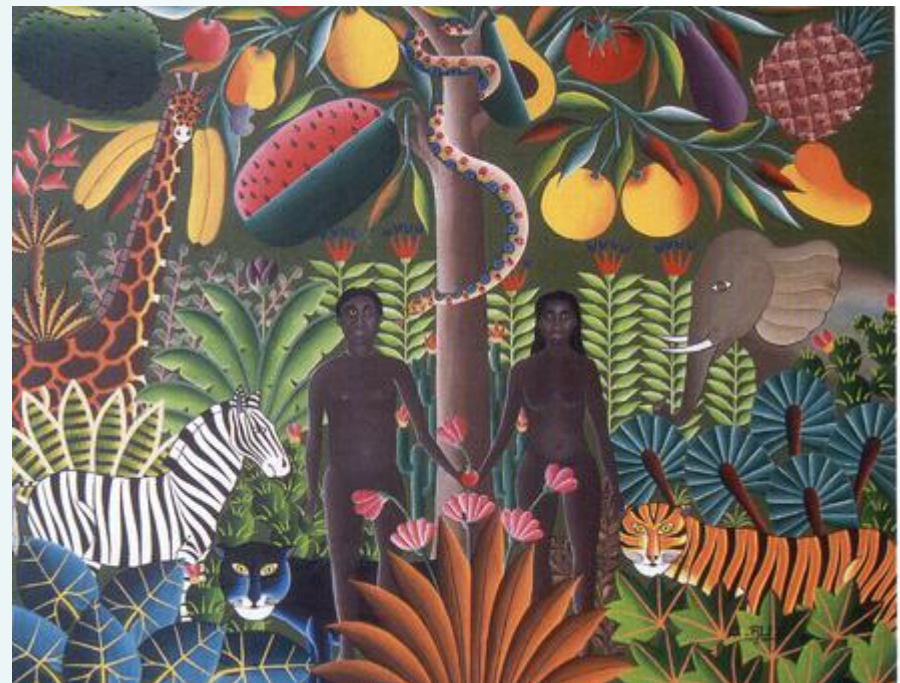
A modern icon

# SYMBOL Signs



What are

Signs point to things that  
but cannot be seen.



# What is a **Style**?

## Why do we have STYLES?

## Why do Styles Change?



stylus



# Some **CONTEXTUAL** factors

**STYLE:** distinctive artistic way a subject is handled:

- **Individual.** Like van Gogh, Monet, or Picasso (who was known for more styles than most well-known artists)
- **Group.** Impressionists, Romantics, Abstract Expressionists
- **Period of time:** Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Modern, Mogul Dynasty, New Kingdom (Egypt) . . .

**AUDIENCE** to whom the work is addressed, such as: nobility, middle class, cultural group, self-reflection, etc.

**PATRON (client)** who commissions (or just buys) art works:  
Religious, state, commercial institution . . . individual

**Artworks can function, or express responses to cultural values, beliefs, philosophies, or historical events.**

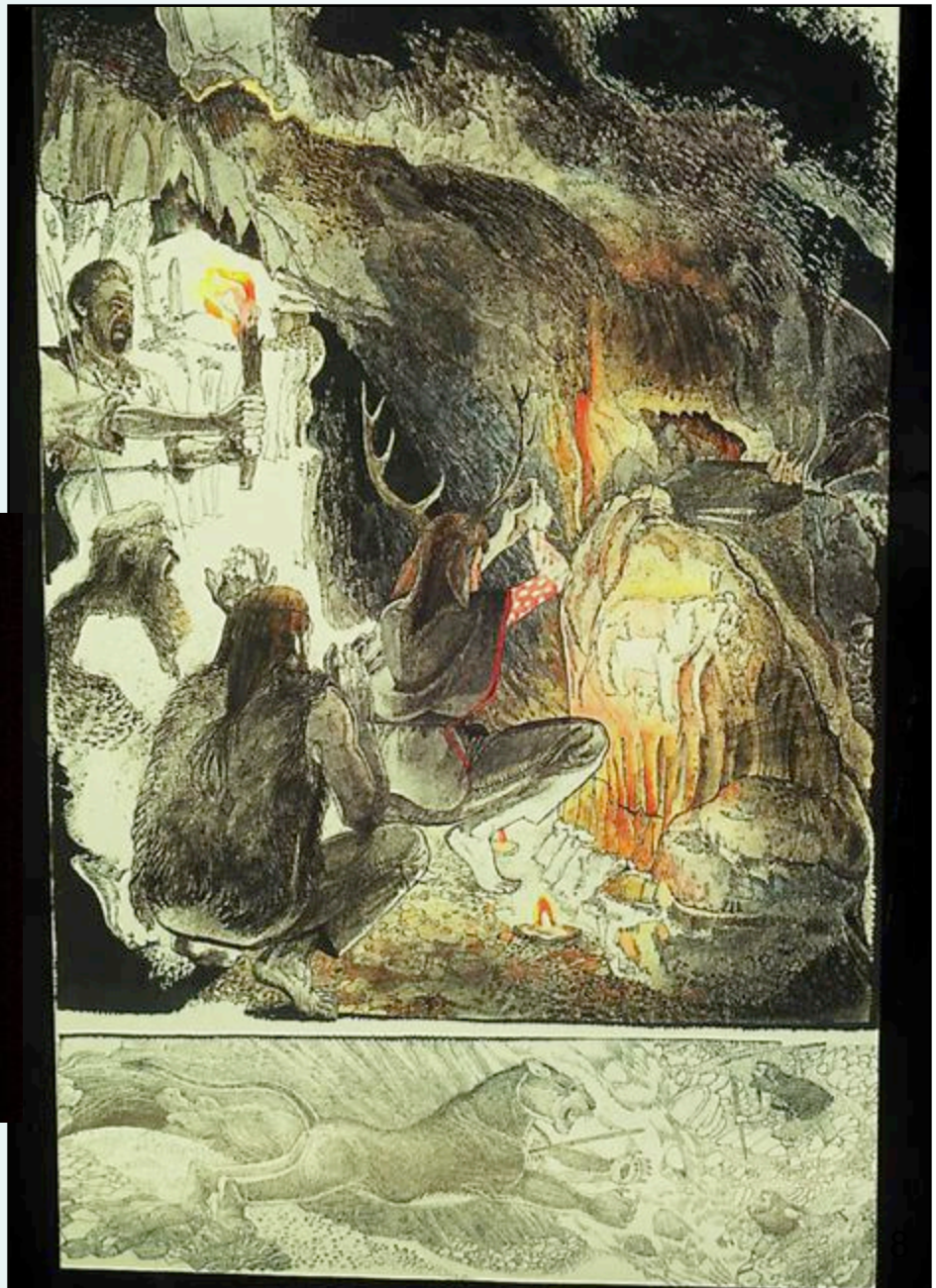
# Paintings

An alternate way  
of seeing . . .

Prehistoric Cave Paintings,



**Peche Merle, France**  
25,000 – 16,000 year old paintings.  
Visualization, invocation, expression.



# Painting:

## Media, Materials, and Techniques

**MEDIUM**: vehicle for

**Pigments** suspended in:

- Oil paint
- Acrylic
- Egg Tempera
- Watercolor
- Pastel
- Fresco
- Mixed media
  - ex.: **collage**

### **MATERIALS**

- Wall
- Scroll
- Canvas
- Panel
- Paper
- Mural

**Techniques**-how you handle media + materials.

\* **Pigment**: dry, ground up, insoluble substance when suspended in a liquid vehicle (medium) becomes paint.

**SURFACES:**  
cave walls:  
Lascaux Cave,  
France.  
15,000 BCE.  
pigments on stone



**Portrait  
Painting.  
Pablo Picasso.  
oil on canvas  
1901.**



**Scroll  
Painting.  
Pigments  
on paper.  
India**

# Fresco : a type of wall painting or “mural.” 2 kinds:

“**Dry**” fresco (Egypt) “**True**” fresco: pigments  
chemically bind with plaster



Pigments painted  
on dry plaster.  
Artist: anonymous  
(unknown)



Giotto, The Lamentation, e. 1300s, CE

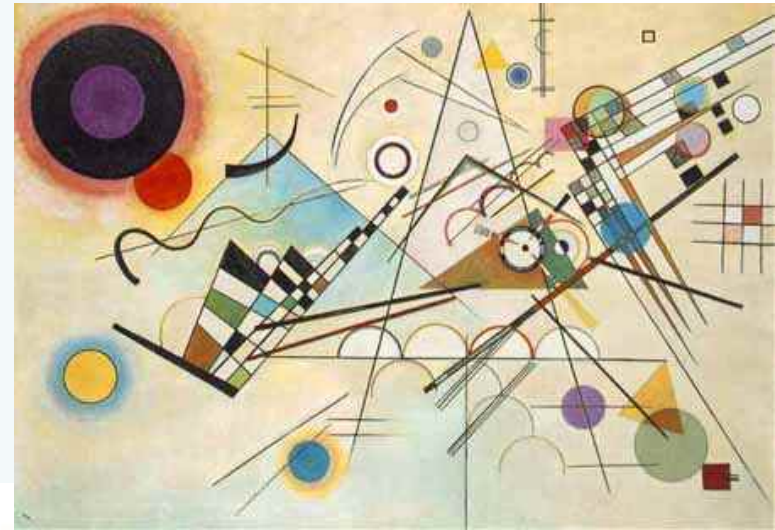
# Painting Tool Kit:

## Imagery

### 3 Types of Pictorial Imagery:

- Representational (also called Figurative)
- Abstract, Abstraction
- Non-Objective (also Non-Figurative)

- Representational
- Abstract
- Non-objective



# Why make pictures?

Popular answer: to depict the world. A picture mimics seeing. **Mimesis**, Aristotle called it.

*But there's more, such as to:*

Honor / Revere

Remember

Imagine

Control

Document

Alter / Express

Or, Just paint for itself: **Art for art's sake**

# Popular Types of **Subjects:**

- Portrait
- Genre (slice of everyday life)
- Narrative:
  - Religious/Mythic/
  - Literary/Historical
- Landscape
- Still Life
- Symbolic
- The Nude
- Fantasy
- Abstract
- Protest

# Portrait. Portraits **portray** an individual, not a type.



Leonardo  
da Vinci.  
*Mona Lisa*  
([Lisa Gherardini](#))  
1503-05.



(sfumato)

# Genre and Still Life

## In Holland, in the 1600s

Jan Vermeer-- *Interior*



Willem Kalf -- *Still Life*





**Protest Art.** Style of  
protest--Representational /  
Abstract--in tune with the times?

**Francisco Goya,**  
*Third of May, 1808, 1814*  
(oil on canvas, easel painting)



**Pablo  
Picasso,**  
*Guernica*  
1936.  
Mural  
painting

# Contemporary Protest: Outdoor wall MURAL-Judy Baca Los Angeles. 1983

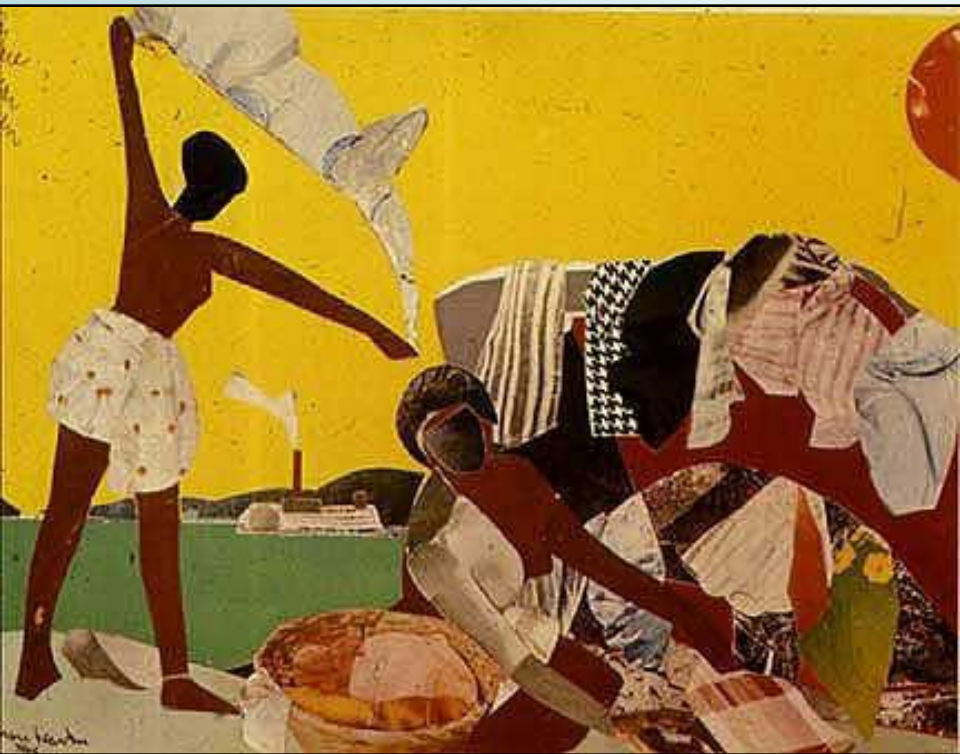


# Related Pictorial Arts

Artist: Romare Bearden.

Mississippi Monday

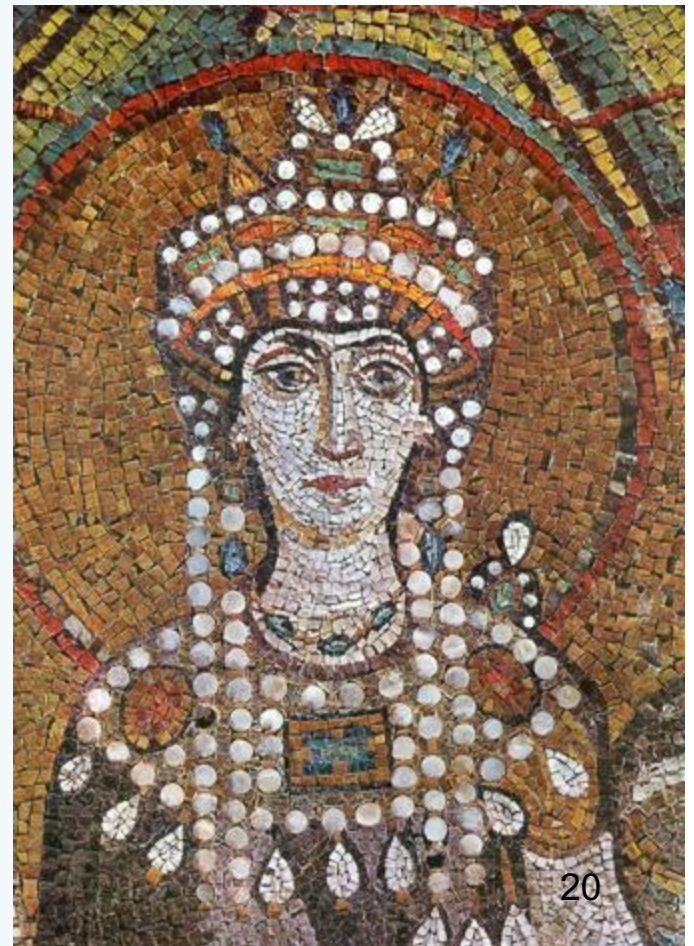
Medium: **Collage**



Anonymous Byzantine artisans

Queen Theodora (detail)

Medium: **Mosaic** (tiles or *tessera*)



# Painting: **Form** (visual elements)

Form's parts are called: **Formal or visual elements**

- Dot
- Line
- Shape
- Mass
- Chiaroscuro ->
  - (light-dark)
- Color
- Texture

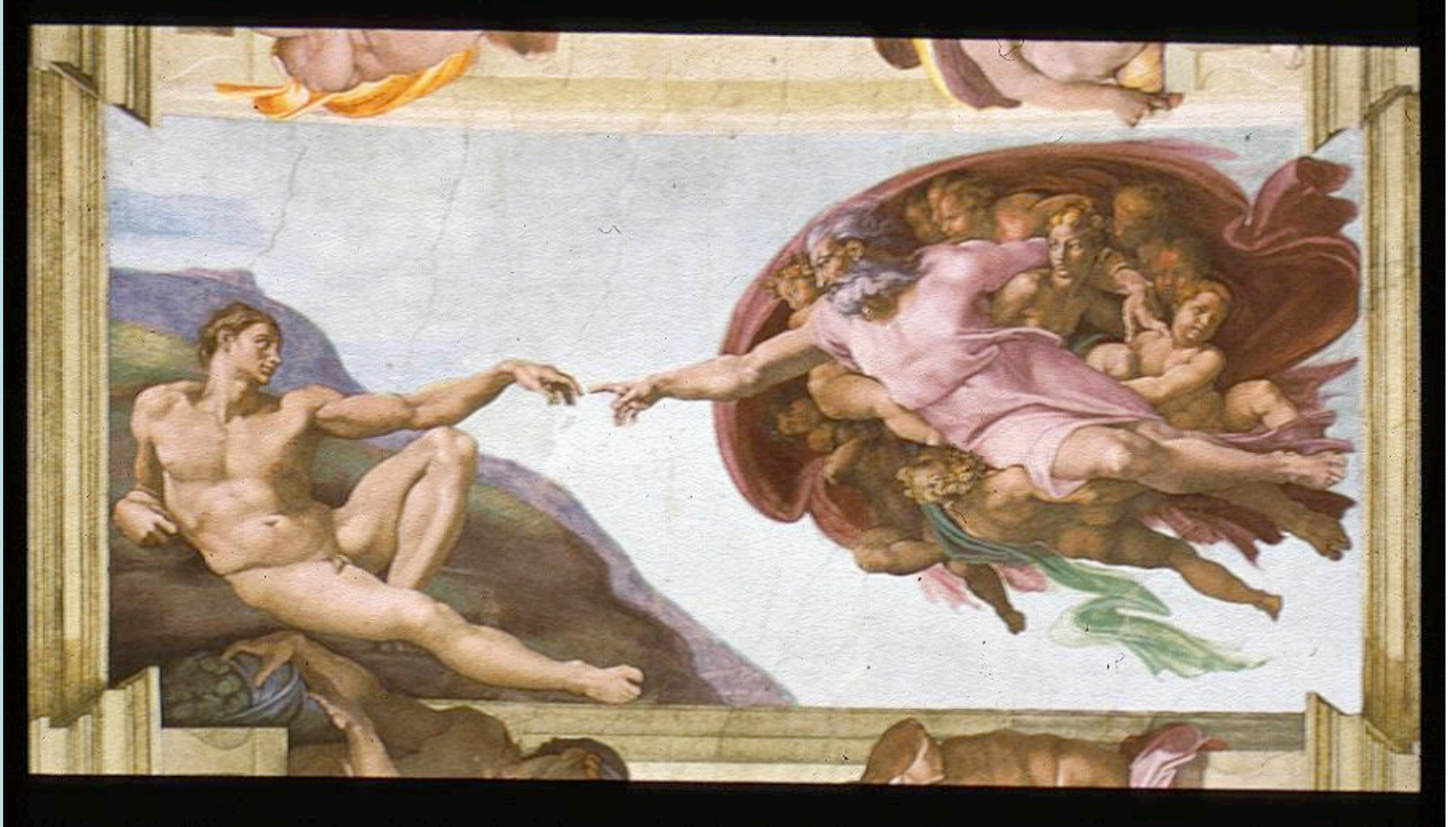


***Line*** can create  
chiaroscuro

**Peter Rubens.**  
Anatomical  
Study.  
1601-1605.

***“Hatching”  
technique***





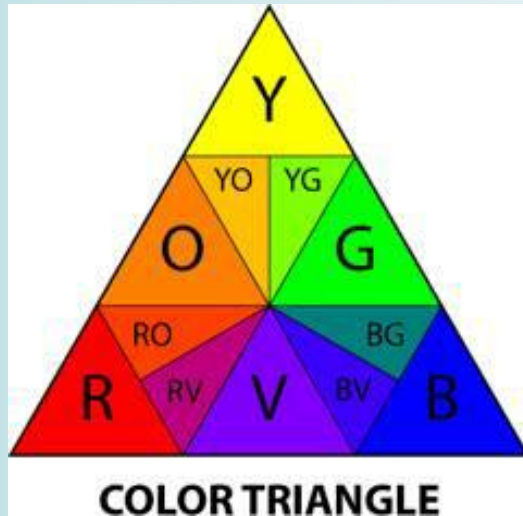
Michelangelo. *God & Adam*. Ceiling Fresco. Sistine Chapel, Rome.

Forms suggest Lines: **“Implied” Lines** & Shapes: **Silhouettes**.<sup>23</sup>

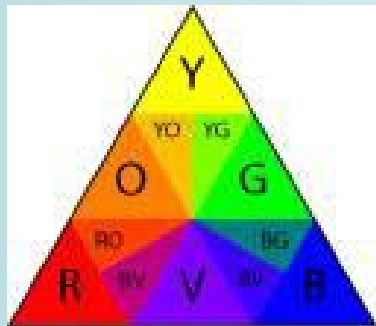
# Color and Light

- **Hue:** (color frequency)
- **Value** (tone, tint)
- **Intensity** (saturated)
- **Palette** (color range)
- **Light and Dark**
  - *chiaroscuro*

# Color ORGANIZATION



- Primary
- Complementary
- Analogous
- Chiaroscuro



**COLOR TRIANGLE**



**with TINTS**



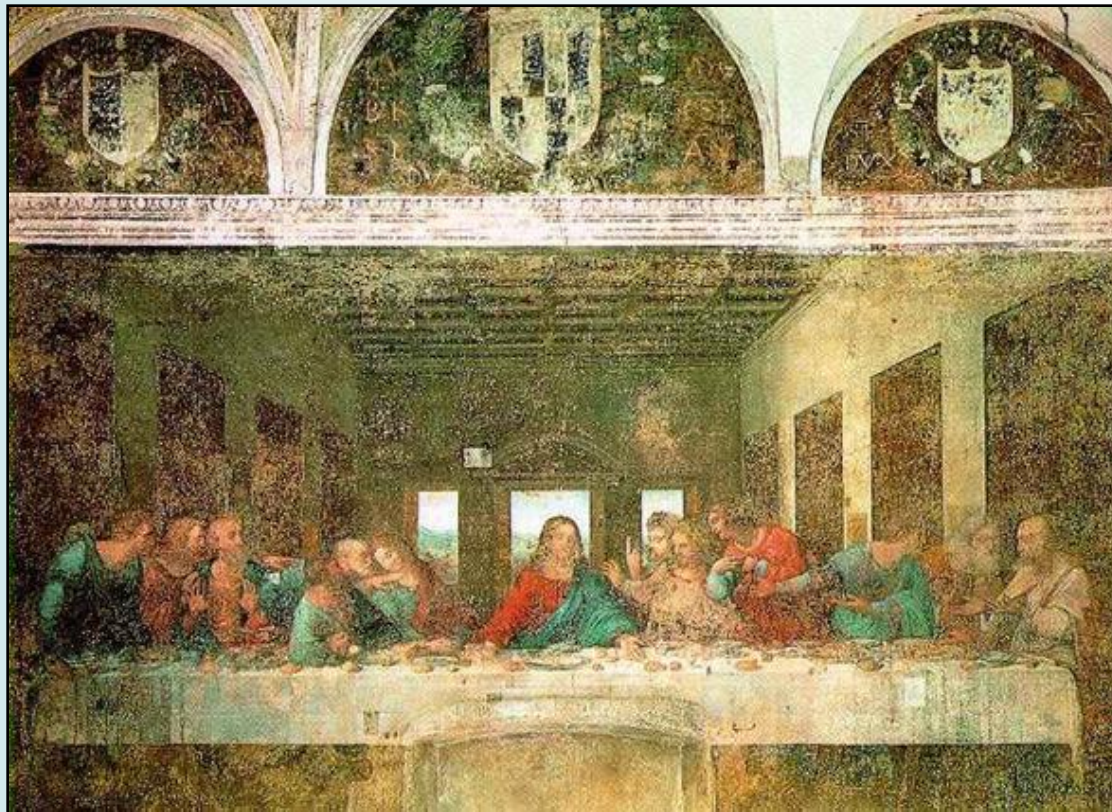
**with SHADES**



# COMPOSITION

**Arrangement / organization. Major approaches:**

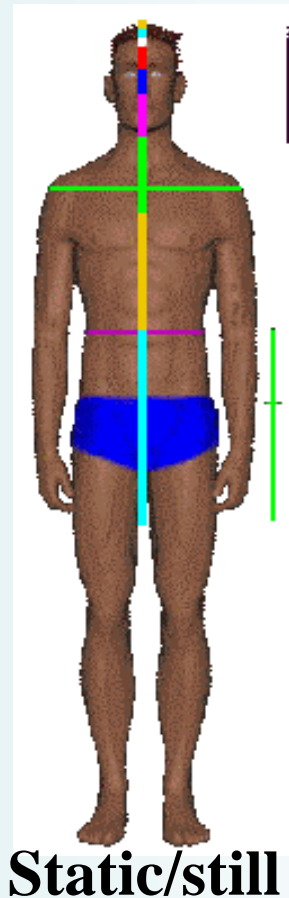
**Symmetry/asymmetry    Suggested Movement**  
**Fore-Middle-Background    Contrast & Focus**



# Composition: **Static Symmetry**, **Asymmetry** (=>dynamic), and **Movement**



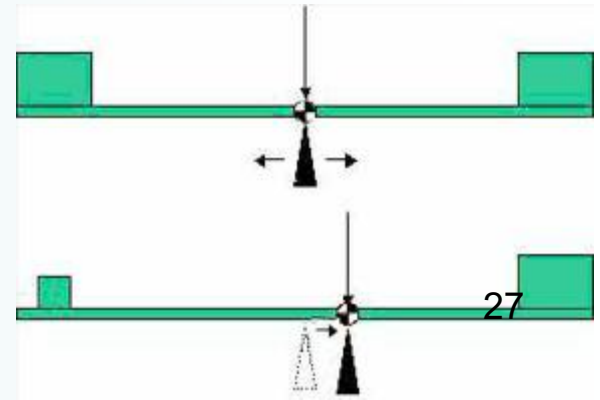
**Diagonals suggest:  
imbalance, Movement**



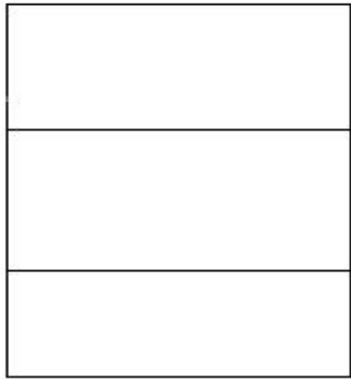
**Static/still**



**See-saw**



# Composition - **Spatial organization:** Foreground, Middle ground, Background

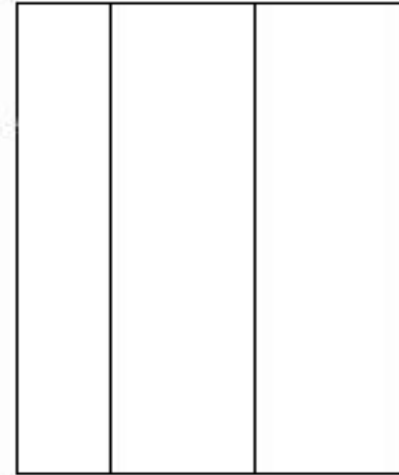


The Background goes to infinity.

The Middleground includes the horizon.

The Foreground is close at hand.

**In-Depth Picture Plane**



**Decorative Picture**

Andrew Wyeth, *Christina's World*



Modernist,  
**Paul Cezanne**,  
fooled around  
with picture  
planes in this  
still life.

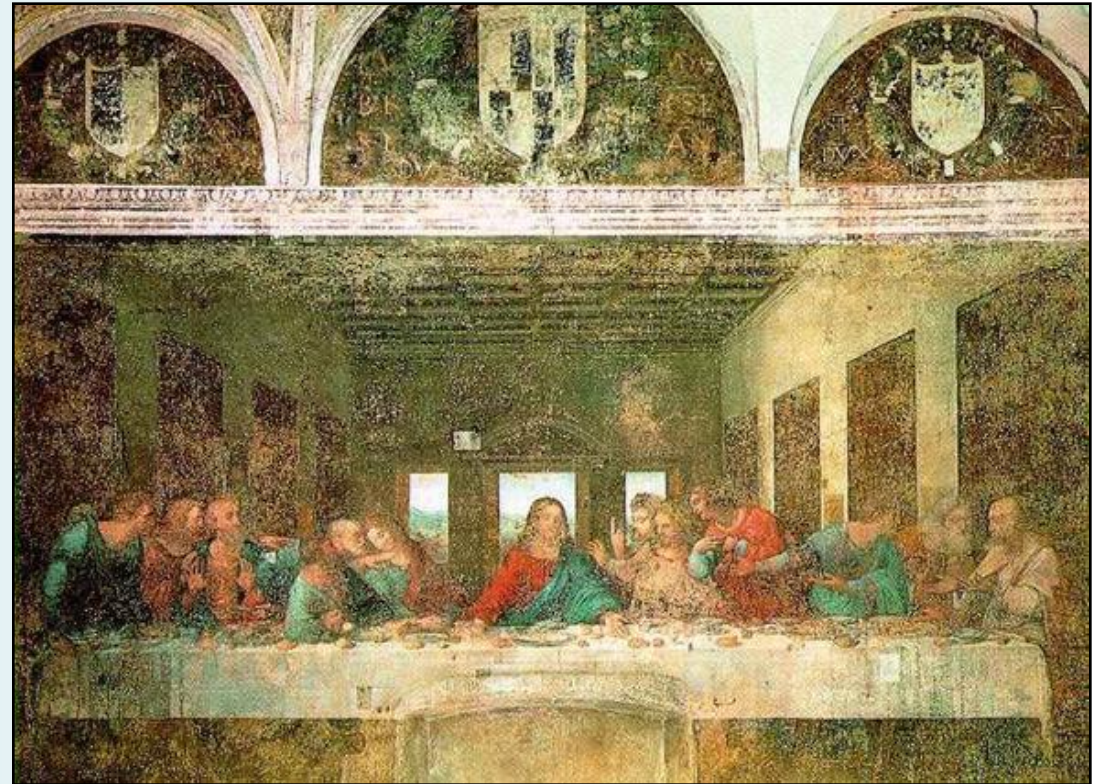


# COMPOSITION: **Perspective**

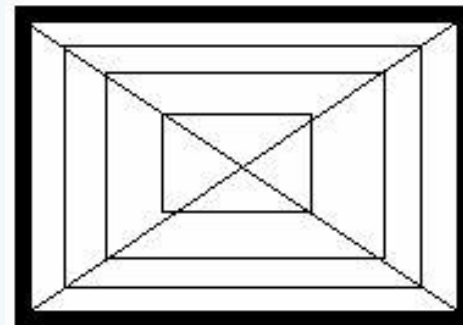
## Four kinds:

- **Linear** (geometric)
- **Atmospheric** (aerial)
- **Overlapping forms**
- **Multiple views**

Atmospheric  
Perspective ↓

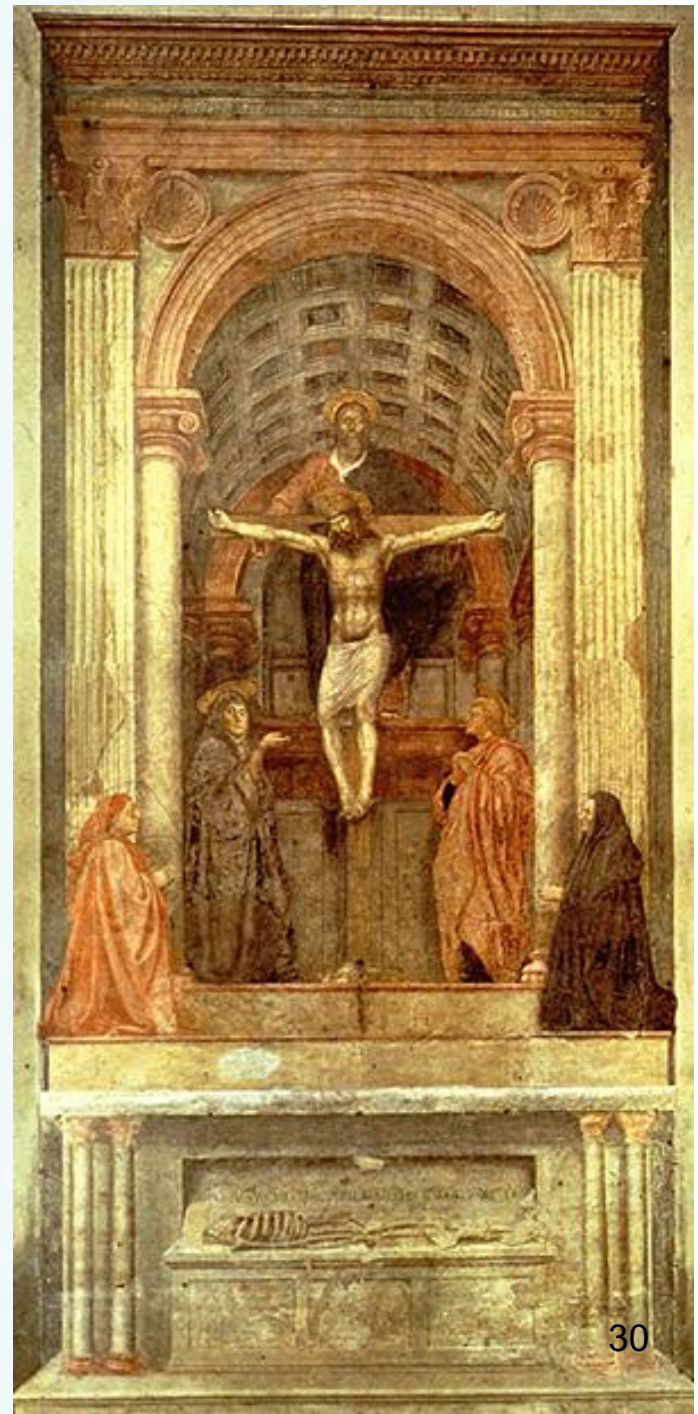
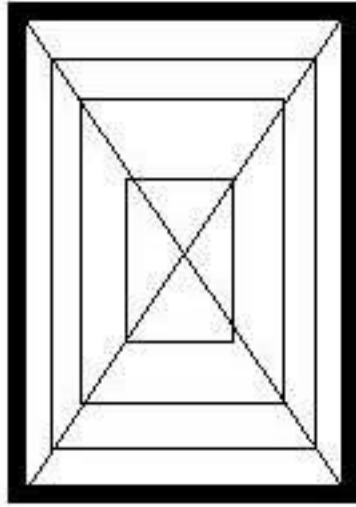


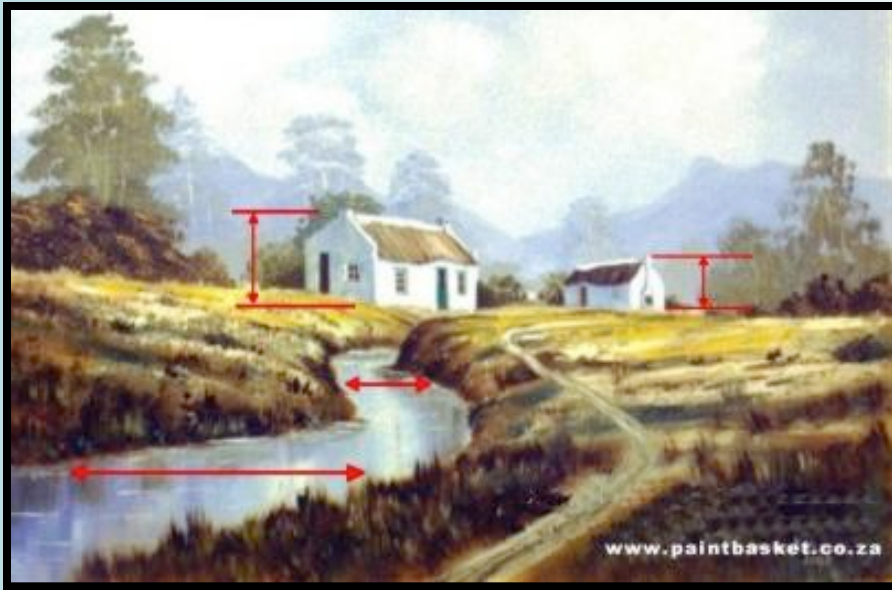
Linear ↑  
perspective



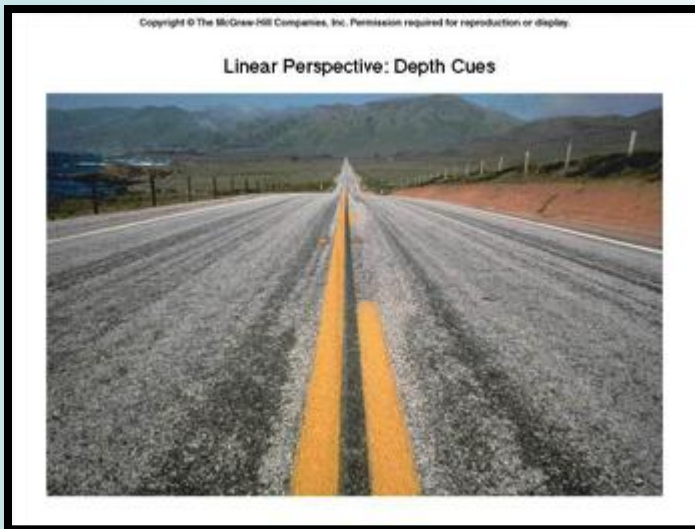
# THE RENAISSANCE

## *“Linear Perspective”*





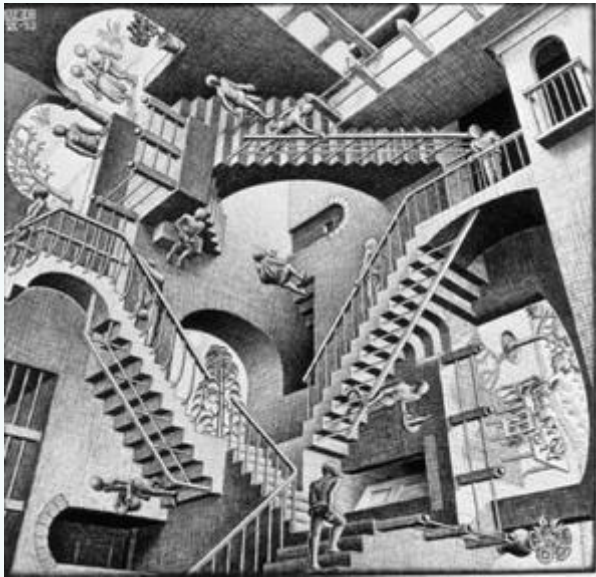
**Linear Perspective . . . .**  
 developed from visual depth cues.

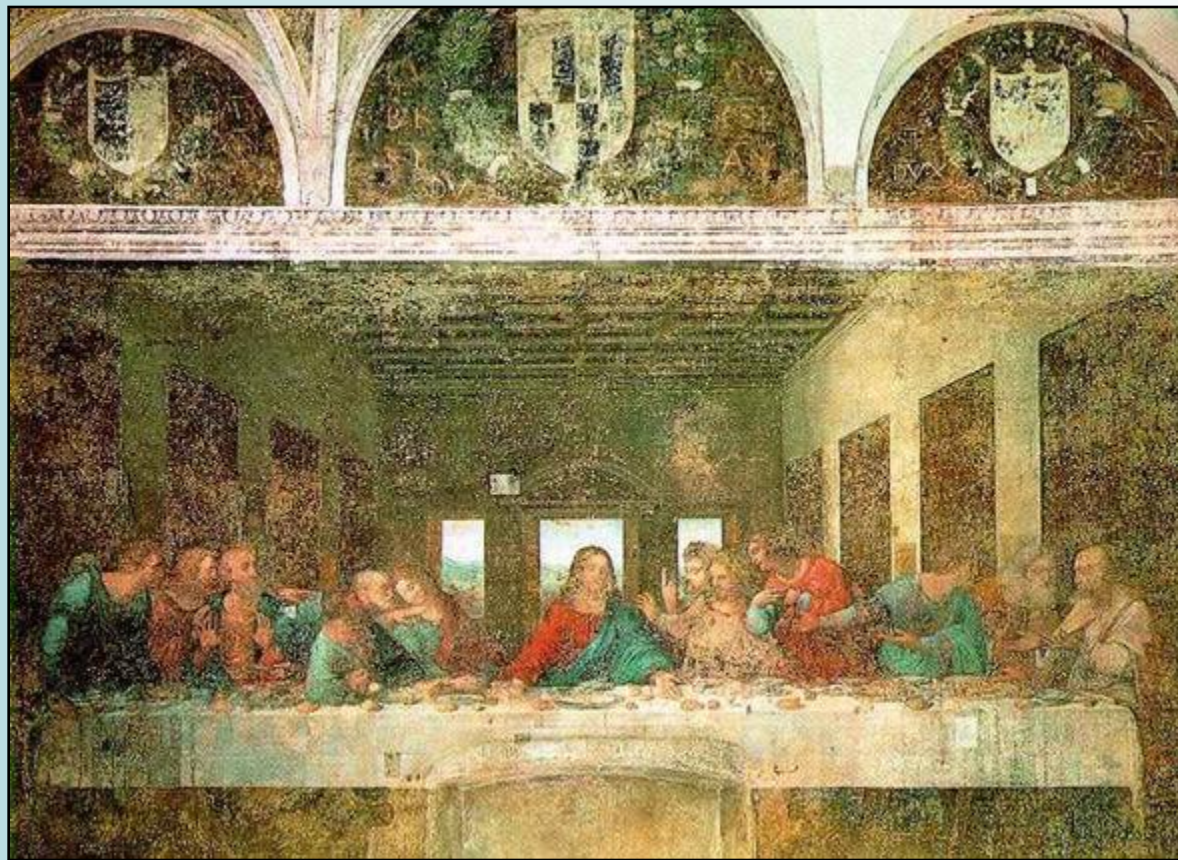


Appearance of things near and far.



Ancient Egyptians identified things.↑  
**Multiple Perspectives.**  
 M.C. Escher: confused reality. ↓





**Artist:**

**Leonardo da Vinci.**

**Title:** *The Last Supper.*

**Dates:** painted between  
1495-1498.

**Below: Figure Study.**

↓ **Medium:** pen + ink on  
paper.

**Composition:** *not really.*



↑ **ABOVE:** The final wall painting today.

**Subject:** **Biblical Narrative.**

**Medium:** wall mural with tempera +  
oil on plaster (Not in good shape).

**But the COMPOSITION, the  
organization of the final image, is  
beautifully worked out.**

# PATTERN

## Tibetan mandala

Ireland, 7-8th c.  
Manuscript  
illumination



Intricate patterns,  
Fantastic figures,  
Emphasis on idea,  
flat forms, frontalism,  
split representation  
Symbolic proportions . . .

# FIELD

Jackson Pollock,  
*Cathedral*, 1947



# C. Monet (1890s) + J. Pollock (1947)



Claude Monet (French)  
8 of 30 paintings of  
Rouen Cathedral, France.



Jackson Pollock (American)  
Rouen Cathedral, 1947

Details: Pollock + Monet

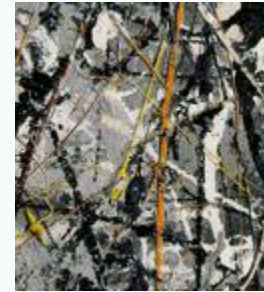


Photo of Rouen Cath. 34

**FIELD ABSTRACTION. ORGANIC version.**  
**Gestural rhythms instead of geometric patterns.**

**Jackson Pollock (American). *Autumn Rhythm*. ca. 1950**



*Story: When artist Hans Hofmann first visited Pollock's studio he was startled by the absence of any models or sketches. "Do you work from nature?" he asked. Pollock replied, "I **am** nature."*

detail ->

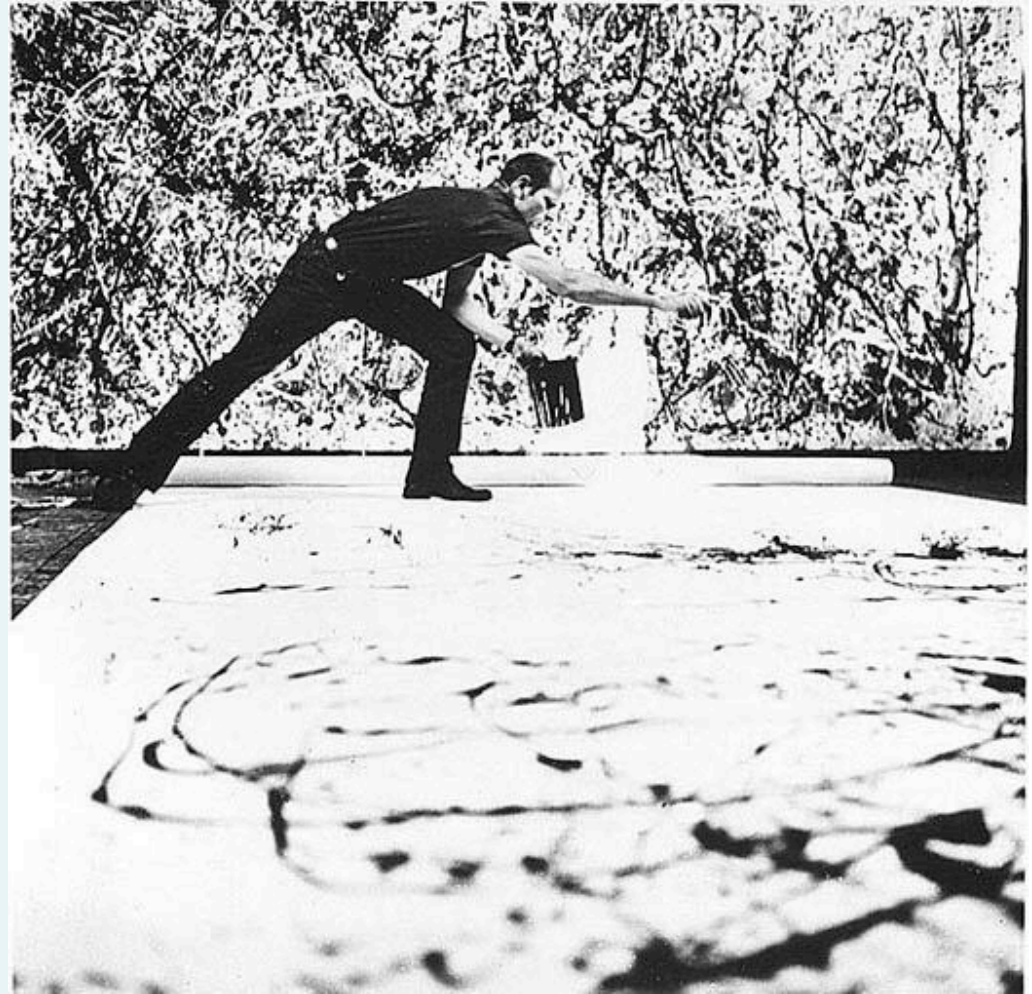


# Pollock at Work.

*Jackson Pollock* made a big impression with his large "drip" paintings, which he made by flinging, splashing, and dripping paint onto large canvases placed on the floor. "New needs demand new techniques," he said, explaining his disregard for the brush and easel.

He used to create his art by moving around the canvas in a sort of dance: thus came the term *Action Painting*: "What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event."

Jackson Pollock led an intensely fiery life, filled with bar-room brawls, and other violence. His life ended abruptly in a drunk driving crash at the age of 44.



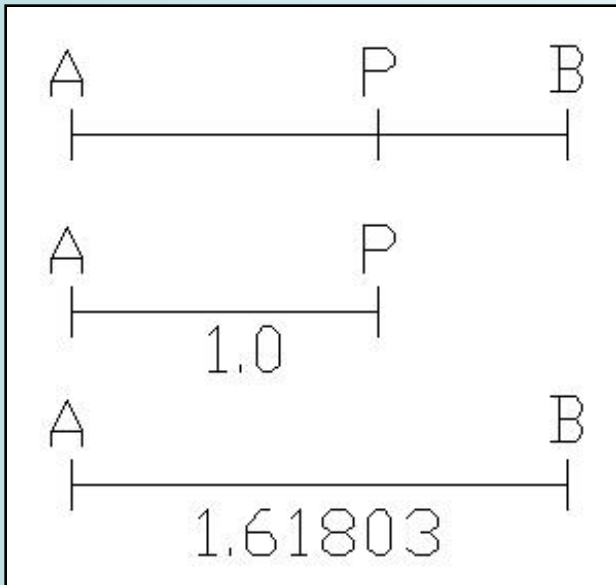
**The *process* of painting  
... Action painting. ...**

# COMPOSITION: PROPORTION.

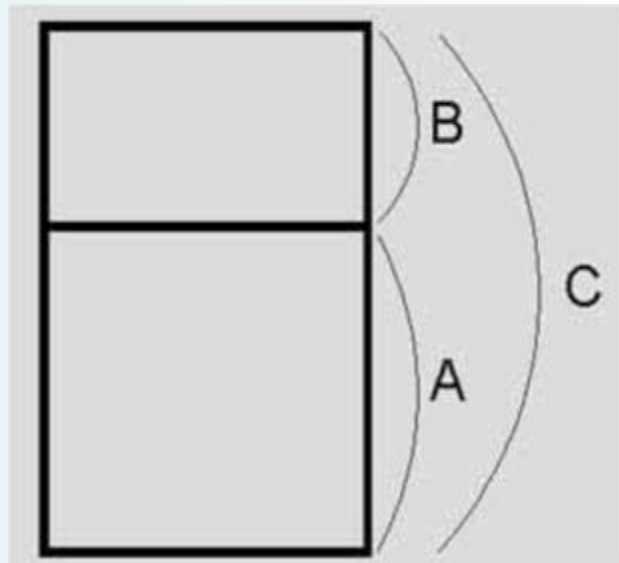
For example:

## “THE GOLDEN SECTION”

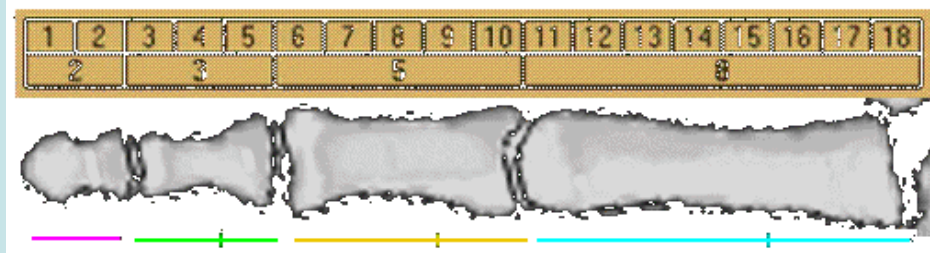
*A formula developed by the Greek philosopher and mathematician **Pythagoras**, to define the idea of **natural harmony**.*



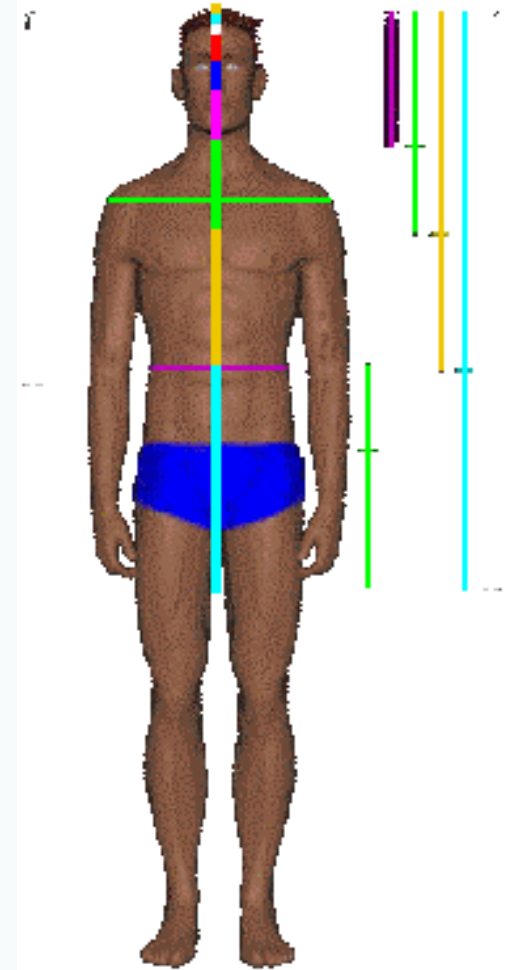
This ratio (relationship):  
“The small relates to the larger,  
as the larger relates to the whole,”  
is found in geometry  
and nature . . . . .



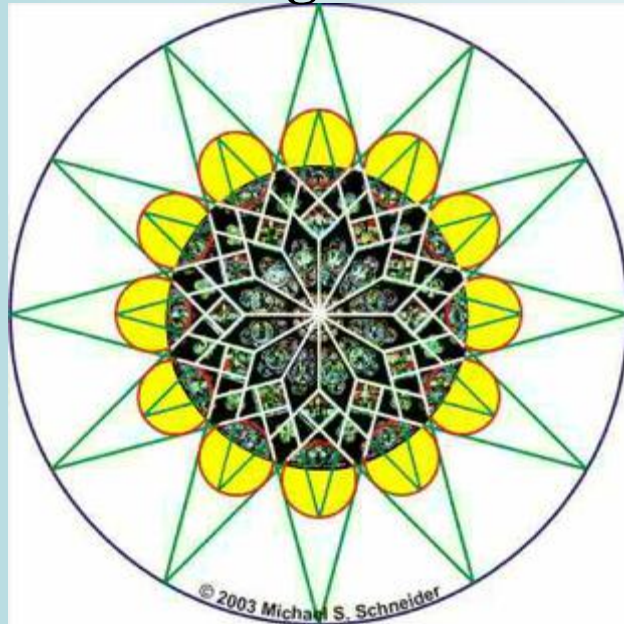
# Golden Section examples:



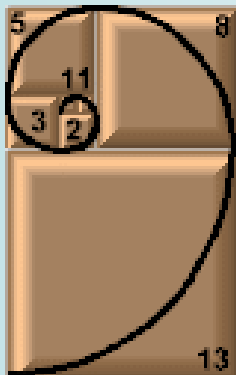
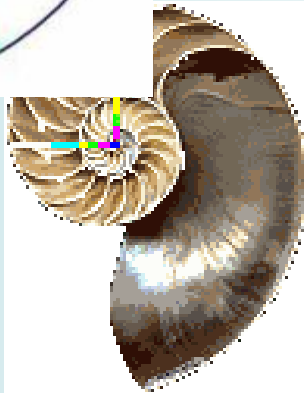
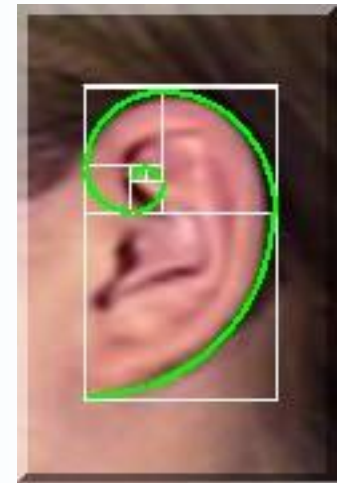
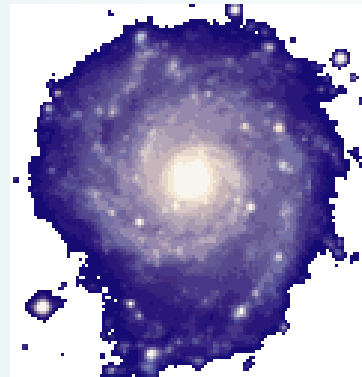
Paintings and Photographs often follow the **Rule of Thirds** which is a rough estimation of Golden Section



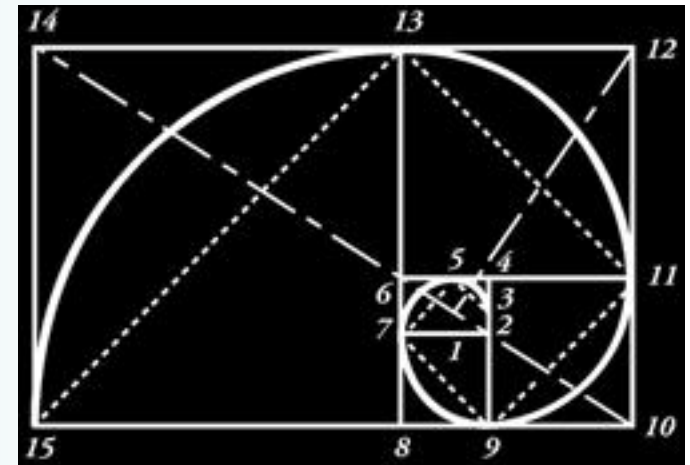
# Stained glass window design



More you can  
discover . . . starting with  
The Golden Section to . . .



. . . **Fibonacci spirals**  
In nature and art.



<http://www.constructingtheuniverse.com/Grace.html>

See also discussion of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

# ILLUSIONS and IDEAS

## Illusions in painting

*Suggest* ways we understand the physical world:

Space

Mass/solids

Textures

## Popular IDEAS about art:

- Realism, likeness: “*mimesis*” (Aristotle)
- Idealism: --> perfection (ex., beauty)
- Alteration: change from likeness
  - *Picture -- Expression -- Painting*
  - *Art for Art’s Sake*
- Issue: Uses of art. *Ex.* Icon -- Iconoclasm

Many people demand beauty. It's an **idea**.  
Not everyone agrees on what beautiful is, but  
*we can develop and enrich "the eye of the beholder"*  
What are those views of beauty?

Halle  
publicity photo.



Plato's "inspiration" was the divine muse.  
→ *What's the Inspiration for movie star beauty?*

More than one kind of Beauty can be appreciated  
in traditional Japan: Kitagawa Utamaro, *A Beauty*. 1753  
(Delicate lines, flat, details, accessories)



<- and also "Wabi Sabi"  
(Irregular, natural shapes, contrasts,  
interesting imperfections, character).

American artist **Mary Cassatt** found beauty in style elements of Japanese prints.

*The Bath, 1863 ->*

*Subject: Genre.*



Notice the  
Bold shapes,  
color contrasts,  
flattened space,  
high point of view.

Utamaro. Midnight: Mother w Sleepy Child  
(print. late 1700s)

*Unlike Utamaro: FOCUS / DOMINANCE,  
blurry and sharp areas.*



42

Next: *Visual Perceptions . . .*

# Perception.

*What do you see?*



***Old Woman...Or Young Girl?***  
***hint: The old woman's nose is the***  
***young girls***  
***chin.***



***Going West.*** Oil on canvas. Jackson Pollock  
Can you find hidden images? Mythical symbolism? 44

# STYLE: Western history of Types and Traditions

- Prehistoric
- Early Cultures/Civilizations
- Classical
- Medieval
- Illumination/
  - illustration
- Byzantine
- Renaissance
- Baroque
- Landscape
- Romanticism
- Realism
- Impressionism
- Modernism
- PostModern/  
Contemporary

# Modernist Movements

## 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

- Primitivism
- Photography as art
- Cubism
- Expressionism
- Futurism and Dada
- Surrealism
- American Scene
- Harlem Renaissance
- Abstract Expressionism
- Post-Modernism  
(our era)

# Post-Modernist Movements

- Pop Art
- Super Realism
- Environmental art
- Installation art
- Computer art



**Secular** icon: one of Andy Warhol's  
Pop portraits of Marilyn Monroe, 1960s

Chris Ofili,  
b. 1968 British.

**Post-Modern Style**

(playful, challenges  
authority, patchwork/  
eclectic)

**Medium + Materials:**

Mixed Media:

Acrylic, collage, glitter,  
resin, map pins, and  
elephant dung on  
canvas.

96 in. x 72 in.

Collection SFMOMA



**Princess of the Posse, 1999**

# How to Look at a Picture

- Get up close
- Take a step back
- Then think. Try another angle. Do this process for a while.

## Perception/Conception:

- Hemispheric Asymmetry, “gestalt”
- Imitate (mimesis) perceptual, psychological
- Idealize (perfect): conceptual, symbolic

- First, respond with your own observations, ideas, and feelings  
AND then, for a critical perspective, it helps to Learn about the Context (the bigger picture)
  - Read the label, to start expanding beyond your perceptions and conceptions, by discovering and using evidence and reason to come to your conclusions / evaluation of art works.
  - Do some research to help answer your questions, but mainly *use your own words* to observe, analyze, define, and comment on others'.<sup>49</sup>

# Getting to know Your Tendencies and Develop Your Own

## **“Aesthetic”**

This is Your philosophy of values  
in the arts,  
and in living --

Traditionally, involves such ideas as  
the good, the true, the beautiful, the  
just, and the sublime (experience  
beyond everyday emotions) . . .

*Art is what the artist does.*

*Robert Thiele*

*Do you think I know what art is? Do you think  
I'd think anybody knew, even if they said they did?  
Do you think I'd care what anybody thought? Now  
if you ask me what we're trying to do that's a different  
thing.*

*Georgia O'Keeffe*

*In art there can be no effect without twisting the truth.*

*Georges Braque*

*Learn by heart the forms that are to be found in nature.*

*Max Beckmann*

*Children are too early taught to embellish nature instead of  
rendering her scrupulously.*

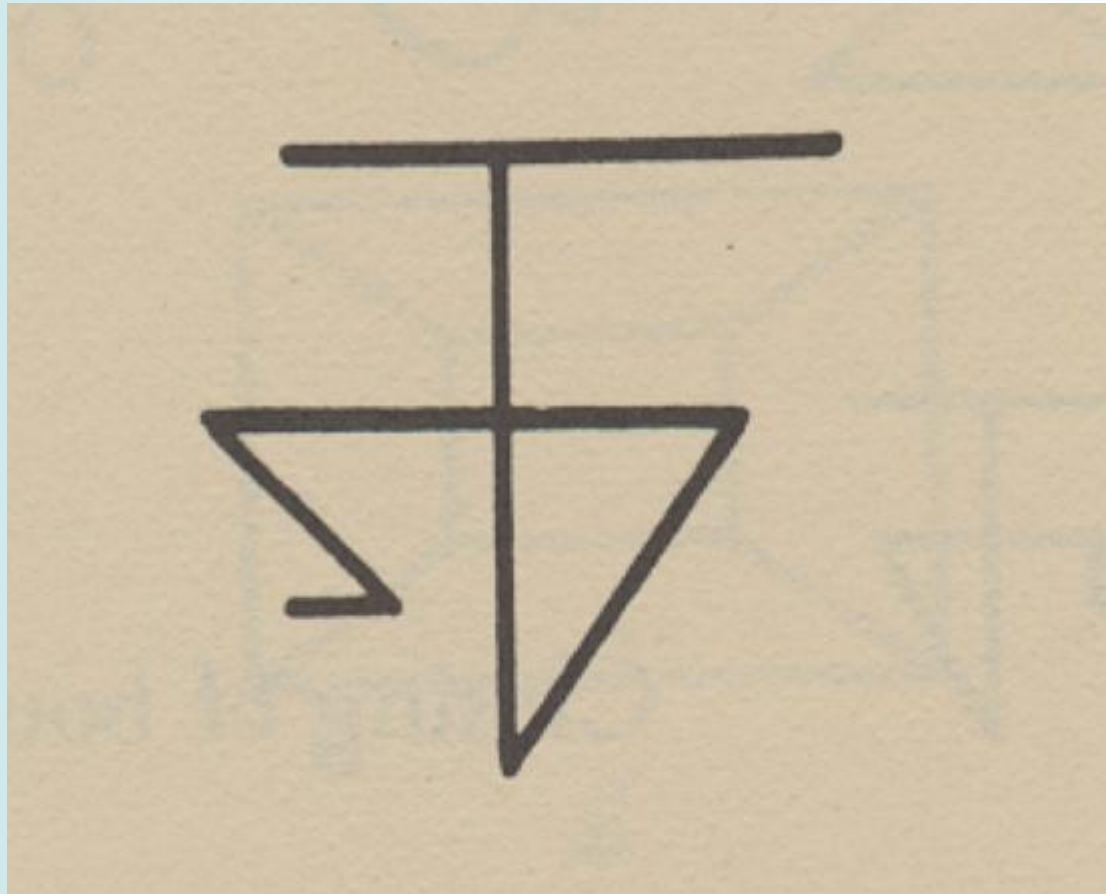
*Quentin de la Tour*

*Art is not truth; art is a lie that makes us realize truth . . .  
at least the truth that is given us to understand.*

*Pablo Picasso*

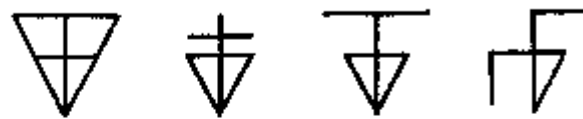
## **An Experiment.**

**Take a quick look  
at the next slide.**





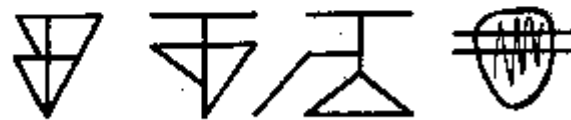
**Draw what you remember seeing. Don't go back to check.  
Hemispheric asymmetry. Gestalt.**



Symmetry enhanced



Nonfitting detail isolated



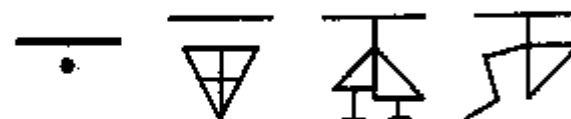
Over-all shape simplified



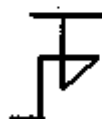
Closing of boundaries



Repetition of similar shape



Subdivision enhanced



Change from oblique to vertical

## M.C. Escher.

A painter's original function may have been to record reality faithfully.

## M.C. Escher.



# Value and Meaning: Cave paintings--Graffiti tags.

## Differences?





Now: **SUBWAY** drawings?

**Keith Haring**

**1958-1990**

***Art and Ideas:***

**SEMIOTICS:**  
**THEORY OF SIGNS**



# Organic Pigments



Iris



Amaryllis