

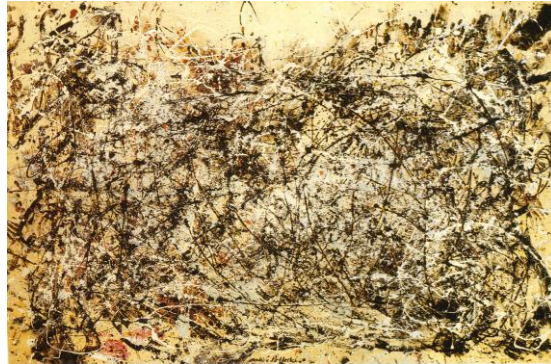
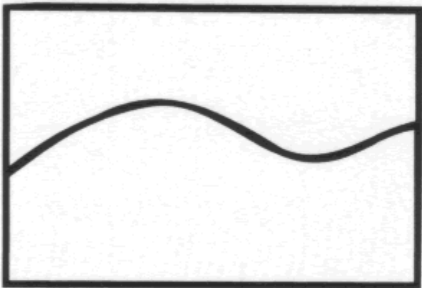
Visual Element - Line

I. Term: Line

II. Definition of the term: A path left by a moving point. (Examples include a mark left by some moving utensil or the path your eyes take as you look at an artwork.)

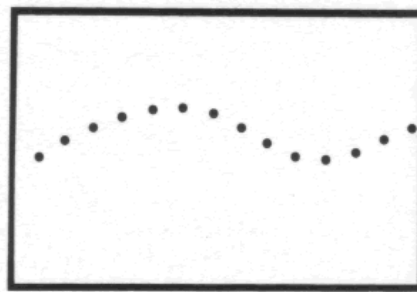
III. Examples of the term:

ACTUAL LINE: An actual line is a visible path created by the continuous extension of a point by a moving instrument.

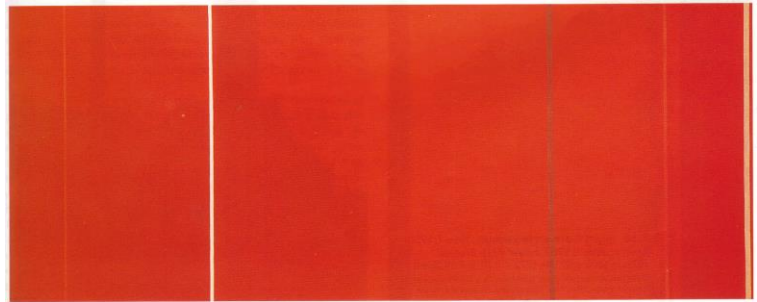
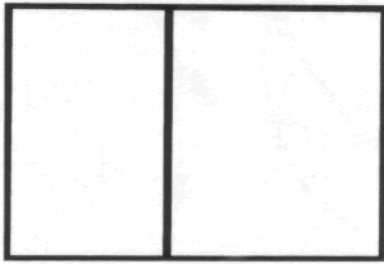


Jackson Pollock, *Number 1*, 1948

IMPLIED LINE: An implied line is an invisible line we create with our eyes as we look at an artwork and make visual connections. When we look at an artwork we follow a certain path as our eyes naturally “connect the dots” within the composition. An artist can guide our eyes by incorporating implied lines to create these natural paths for us to follow.

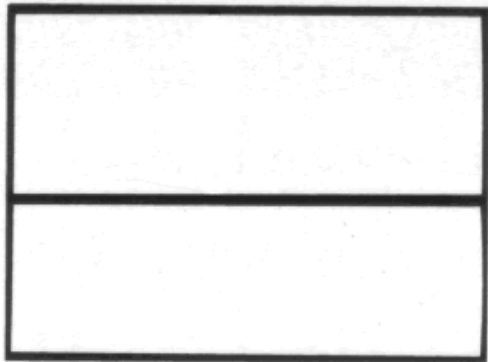


VERTICAL LINE: A vertical line is line that runs straight up and down. These type of lines are most often associated with strength and stability. We tend to trust these type of lines because they remind of us strong upright objects such as buildings or trees.



Barnett Newman, *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, 1950-51

HORIZONTAL LINE: A horizontal line is a line that parallels the horizon. These types of lines are also associated with strength in a more calming and restful way. Most people sleep in a horizontal position. We also tend to trust horizontal lines because, like vertical lines, we usually trust that they will remain unmoving. I can imagine that you are sitting on a horizontal seat, your computer is on a horizontal surface and you both depend on a horizontal floor to support you. Most people trust horizontal planes each day and rarely do they move or bend unexpectedly.

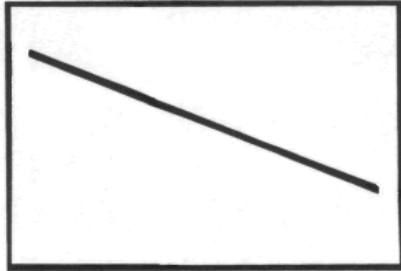


Thomas Eakins, *The Biglin Brothers Racing*, 1873-74

In this painting, horizontal lines include: the boat in which the brothers sit, the line of the boat appearing below them in the picture plane, the horizon line behind them, numerous lines within the architecture along the shore, and the line of the trees above and to the right of their heads. (Interestingly, the line of the trees on the left is a diagonal line which acts to guide your gaze down to them.)

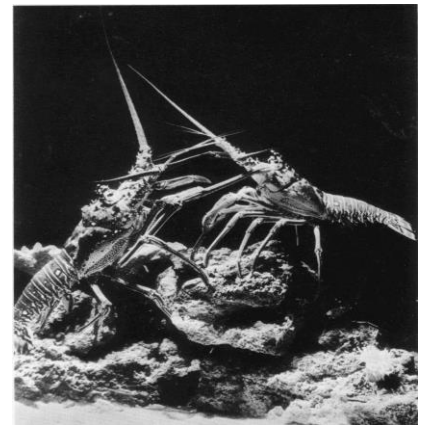
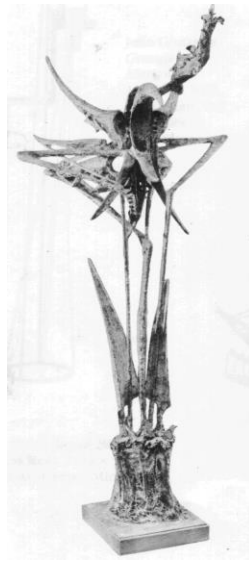
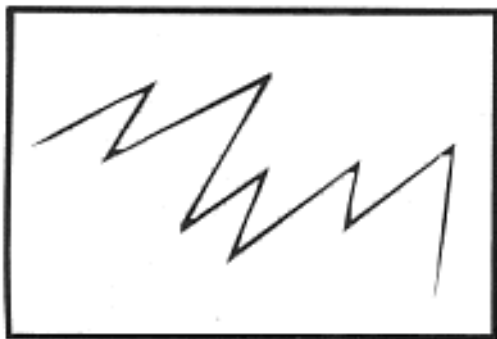
All of these horizontal lines contribute to the peaceful feeling of the painting. These men are, no doubt, working hard to win the competition. I do not get the feeling that they are in any danger and it seems like a beautiful day to engage in an enjoyable sporting event.

DIAGONAL LINE: A diagonal line is a line that is slanted at an angle. These types of lines are often used to imply movement or create a bit of uncertainty in the viewer. Few objects remain in a permanent diagonal position without some type of vertical support. We may feel tense or anxious when we are looking at a diagonal line because it appears unstable. It may be in the process of falling down to a horizontal resting point or being raised up to a vertical position. Gravity teaches us fairly early in life to be wary of these types of lines.



Lovis Corinth, *Death and the Artist*, 1921

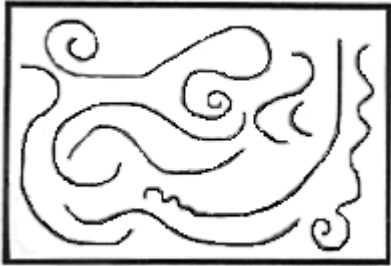
JAGGED LINE: A jagged line is made up of lines that come together from different directions. Jagged lines can be a little scary because they are often created by converging diagonal lines. The diagonal lines, alone, may cause us to feel uneasy. Jagged lines can seem even more threatening because sharp points are created when the lines meet. We may be reminded of our previous experiences with other sharp, jagged things such as knives, the teeth of vicious animals, or metal tools. Normally, people tend to use caution around objects with jagged edges.



Theodore Roszak, *Sea Sentinel*, 1956

- Although the subject of this sculpture (Roszak's *Sea Sentinel*) is not readily recognizable, we may associate the sharp, spiny lines with creatures such as these lobsters. None of these seems very cuddly!

CURVED LINE: A curved line is a rounded or bended line that deviates from straightness with smooth, continuous contour. Many people find curved lines soothing or comforting. We tend to associate these lines with soft objects such as pillows, puffy clouds and maternal body shapes. Baby toys tend to have more curved lines than jagged lines, for example.



Auguste Herbin, *Composition*, 1939

