

Art Elements! Tour

Grades: Pre-K–1

45 minutes

Procedures

As with all tours, timing is critical. **Therefore please refrain from discussing concepts that are not included in this tour packet.** If you are asked by the teacher or students to do so, invite them to return to the galleries after the tour or activity themselves. When the teachers sign up for this tour, they are informed that their students will not see the entire museum.

Although groups can begin at any of the tour stops listed below, all tours should start with a discussion of art elements. Props and one docent stool need to be placed at each stop prior to the beginning of the tour. Be sure to give yourself enough time (roughly ten minutes) to cover all four concepts. If needed, use other paintings in the immediate vicinity to further the discussion.

Tour Objectives*Students will...*

- Learn about and discuss four art elements: color, shape, line, and space.
- View four different paintings in the Morris Museum's permanent collection galleries.
- Analyze paintings to determine how artists used line, shape, color, or space in their compositions.

Vocabulary

Art elements	Implied line
Color	Zig-Zag line
Primary color	Curvy line
Secondary color	Straight line
Neutral color	Wavy line
Color wheel	Bent line
Shape	Space
Geometric shape	Depth
Freeform shape	Vertical location
Line	Relative size
Actual line	Overlapping

Props

Color wheel chart
Laminated shapes
Shape chart
Long wire
Pipe cleaners (one for each child)
Landscape chart

Tips for talking to young children:

- Ask children to sit on the floor if you plan on being in one area longer than 2-3 minutes. If possible, sit in a chair so you do not tower over the kids (it places you closer to their level).

- Ask them to repeat terms or concepts in unison.
- Ask questions—even if you don't think they will know the answers.
- Repeat new concepts 2–3 times.
- Don't require them to always raise their hand to talk. The museum is not school, and we want to avoid turning tours into classroom experiences.
- Use proximity—have them sit as close to you as possible.
- Speak up. Don't be afraid of the kids being too loud. Just relax!
- Let them know what they are going to talk about.
- Wait about 4–5 seconds for responses to questions. If you don't get any response after that time, use prompts to work answers out of them.
- If you are talking to an individual student, never directly tell them they are wrong. Instead say something like, “That is an interesting thought, but.....”
- Frequently praise participation.
- Keep it fun! Again, we are not a school. The kids, as well as their teachers, are at the museum to have a good time.
- If there is a child or group of children that is misbehaving, wait for a break in the conversation then ask the teacher to intervene. (Example: “Excuse me Ms. Smith, would you mind asking that student to pay attention/quiet down/not to touch?”) Another technique is to simply make eye contact with the teacher and point to the student who is causing a disturbance.
- Allow the teacher to add comments or information. Even outside of the classroom, teachers will still act like teachers. Many like to add to the conversation; after all, they are on the field trip too!
- Don't try to teach autobiographical information. Stick to concepts and techniques.

Sample script for talking about the color:

Now we are going to talk about colors. Let's sit in a semi-circle in front of this painting. Don't be afraid to sit close to your neighbor!

I am sure that all of you know your colors, right? Well many painters like to use color in their art. Some use a lot of colors, while others only use a few. This painting was made by Jonathan Green. How do you think he felt about color?

Let's name some of the colors you see. [The students shout out color names.] That's right, they used blue, red, violet—I also see some yellow and orange (etc.).

Sometimes when artists paint, they like to mix two or more colors together to make a new color. This is called *color mixing*. There is a tool called a *color wheel* that can help us to mix colors to make new colors. [Present the color wheel.] This is a color wheel. Together we are going to fill it up with colors.

Most colors can be made using three special colors called the *primary colors*. Repeat that with me—PRIMARY COLORS.

Name the colors when I hold them up. [Hold up the blue wedge, wait for them to respond.]

Right—blue. This is the first primary color. [Place it in the appropriate area on the color wheel. Repeat this step with red and yellow.] So blue, red, and yellow are the primary colors. These are the three colors that can be mixed together to make almost every other color. What are they called again?

Do you notice that we have left a space between each primary color? This is because we are going to fill the area with *secondary colors*. Repeat that with me—SECONDARY COLORS.

When you mix two primary colors that sit next to each other on the color wheel together, you get a secondary color. [Don't show them the colors yet.]

Let's start with blue and yellow. What color do I get if I mix blue and yellow together? [Wait for a response. If you do not get a correct answer, hold up the green wedge as a prompt.] That's right, green. When you mix blue and yellow together you get the color green. [Pick out a student who is sitting in front of you.] You come up here and put the green wedge where you think it belongs. [Prompt him/her if necessary.] That's right.

Now what color do I get when I mix yellow and red? [Repeat the steps above.]

So violet, orange, and green are the secondary colors. We get these by mixing together primary colors. If we mix blue and yellow what color do we get? What about yellow and red? Red and blue? What are these colors called again?

Great work. Now are there more colors than this? Of course there are! You can blend any of these colors together to make a countless number of others. But what do you think happens if you mix too many together? What color might you end up with? [Wait for a response. If you do not get a response, hold up the brown circle as a prompt.] That's right, you get brown or grey. How many of you have painted before? What happens when the water gets really dirty? What color does it turn into? That's right—it becomes a yucky brown color. Why is that?

So let's put the brown and gray circle in the middle of the color wheel. We call these *neutral colors*. Repeat that with me—NEUTRAL COLOR.

Let's study this painting by Jonathan Green and try to find primary, secondary, and neutral colors.

The script above is only a sample conversation you can have with young children during a tour. ***The key is preparation.*** Below I have listed the basic concepts that should be discussed at each stop. It is your job to decide how you would like to present the information. Keep the suggestions presented earlier in mind when developing your presentation.

Introduction

1. Introduce the term *art elements*. [Art elements are the basic components used by the artist when producing works of art. They include color, line, shape, form, texture, and space. **During this tour, you are only going to talk about color, line, shape, and space.**]
2. Discuss how artists use a combination of different art elements when creating a work of art.

Tour Stops

Jonathan Green

Daughters of the South

Concept:

Color

Props:

Color wheel chart

Procedure:

1. Identify the colors used in the painting.

2. Introduce the terms *primary color*, *secondary color*, and *neutral color* using the *color wheel* chart. [The primary colors are blue, red, and yellow. The secondary colors are made mixing the primary colors—red and blue make violet, yellow and red make orange, and blue and yellow make green. Mixing all three primaries or all three secondaries makes gray or brown, the neutral colors.]
3. Invite different students to place the color wedges in the appropriate area of the color wheel while identifying each color as a group. Be sure to define every concept as you are completing the chart.
4. Discuss how the artist used primary, secondary, and neutral colors in his painting *Daughters of the South*. If needed, use other paintings in the immediate vicinity to further the discussion.

Ida Kohlmeyer
Composition 95–22, 1995

Concept:

Shape

Props:

Laminated shapes

Shape chart

Procedure:

1. Review the terms *freeform shape* and *geometric shape*. [For the purposes of this tour, we are going to define geometric shapes as those based on math principles, while freeform shapes are based on natural forms.] Discuss the differences and similarities.
2. Using the pre-cut shapes and shape chart, have the students identify which are freeform and which are geometric. If geometric, name the shape as you go.
3. Locate some examples of the shapes you just presented in the Kohlmeyer painting.
4. Discuss how and why the artist used different shapes in the painting *Composition 95–92*. If needed, use other paintings in the immediate vicinity to further the discussion.

Nell Choate Jones
Georgia Red Clay, 1946

Concept:

Line

Props:

Long wire

Pipe cleaners (one for each child)

Procedure:

1. Review the term *line*. [There are two types of lines, *actual lines* and *implied lines*. Actual lines are marks that start at one point and end at another. Implied lines are invisible. They are created when the viewer's eye is directed from one point to another. When you point at something, it creates an implied line from the tip of your finger to the object.]

2. Demonstrate implied lines; have the students copy you.
3. Discuss different types of actual lines.
4. Pass out one pipe cleaner to each student. [Do not do this step until you are ready for them to begin manipulating them. You can ask them to place the pipe cleaner on the floor in front of them when they are not in use.]
5. Demonstrate them using the long wire, and have the students copy your examples with their own pipe cleaner. Include the following types of lines in your discussion (be sure to end on the straight line):
 - Zig-Zag line*
 - Curvy line*
 - Wavy line*
 - Bent Line*
 - Straight line*
6. Examine the work *Georgia Red Clay*. Identify the different types of lines included in the composition.
7. Discuss how artists use lines in their work. [Artists use lines to create borders, isolate shapes, and draw attention to particular areas. Lines can also be arbitrary or purely aesthetic.] Determine how Jones used lines in the painting. If needed, use other paintings in the immediate vicinity to further the discussion.

Gladys Nelson Smith

Afternoon at the Beach, Chesapeake Bay, 1930s

Concept:

Space

Props:

Landscape chart

Procedure:

1. Define how artists use *space* in their artwork. [For the purposes of this tour, space is the illusion of depth in an artwork.]
2. Explain that even though a painting such as *Afternoon at the Beach* is actually flat, the artist has used different techniques to give it the illusion of *depth*.
3. Discuss the different techniques artists use to create space, including *overlapping*, *vertical location*, *relative size*, color, and sharpness. [Closer objects are positioned on top of those that are further away. Closer objects are lower than those that are further away. Closer objects are larger than those that are further away. Closer objects have purer colors while objects that are further away appear bluish and have a more muted coloring. Closer objects have sharper focus while objects that are further away have less detail and blurred outlines.]
4. Explain each individual technique using the landscape chart. Reference the actual painting as necessary. Allow the students to take turns placing the objects in the correct position. Go in this order:
 - Color
 - Sharpness
 - Vertical location [For very young children, use the term *location*.]

Relative size

Overlapping

5. Examine *Afternoon at the Beach*. Identify other examples of how Smith used each technique in her painting. If needed, use other paintings in the immediate vicinity to further the discussion.