

keywords

Abstract
Aesthetics
Anthropomorphic
Anticipation

Balance
Beauty
Boundary

Center
Closure
Collaboration
Collage
Composition
Compression
Concrete
Confidence

Content
Context
Continuity
Contour
Control
Contrast
Craft
Critique

Decorative
Density
Design
Dialogue
Distance
Dominance
Dynamic

Eclectic
Economy
Edge
Elegance
Emphasis
Entropy
Ergonomics

Figure/Ground
Formal
Fragment
Function

Gestalt
Gesture
Grid
Grouping

Harmony
Hierarchy
Hue

Icon
Innovation
Intersection
Integration
Integrity
Interval
Intuition
Invention

Join

Line
Linear

Mass
Module
Monumentality
Motion

Negative/Positive

Order
Organic
Originality
Ornamental

Parameters
Pattern
Perspective
Plane
Positive/Negative
Progression
Proximity

Ratio
Resolution
Rhythm

Scale
Sensuous/Sensual
Sentiment
Shape
Size
Space
Structure
Stylization
Surreal
Symbol
Symmetry
Synesthesia

Template
Tension
Texture
Time
Transformation
Transition

Unity

Value
Volume

Weight

Edge

edge (ej)

- 1 The usually thin, sharpened side of a blade, weapon, or tool
- 2 Keenness, as of desire or enjoyment; zest
- 3 A rim, brink or crest
- 4 A dividing line or point of transition; a margin, a border

egge (Middle English) = edge, point, or sword. There might be connections with ancient words for ax, tool, spike, and tart, as in a sharp taste

Edges are usually active places. In a crowd, though the focus might be on what's happening at the center, it is at the edge that there is movement and the possibility for freedom. People in the center of a throng have little choice except to be carried along, but those at the edge can wander off.

Center equates with stability, edges with instability. In the center of a room, we are surrounded by equal spaces. We have room to shift without losing our bearings. A mark in the center of a page is not at risk of being overlooked. It is at risk, however, of being boring. The center is comfortable, the edge is threatening or exhilarating, depending on your personality.

In a two-dimensional composition, marks at the center are locked into relationships with the other marks on the page. Marks near the edge split their allegiance between other marks and the edge itself; they know where the paper ends.

An edge is to a line as a scent is to a flower.

Edges are given their power by their relative proximity. A curb is less threatening than the molding that surrounds the edge of a roof, though both might be of the same width. The difference is in the distance between this edge and the next-closest surface. A rim on a bowl is different in the same way from the rim of a plate. In three-dimensional form, edges are given their power not only by their direction and shape, but by their relationship to the next-closest form.

Edge is a word most commonly seen in the singular. Of course objects have many edges, but there is more drama in the edge of a knife than in the edges of a saw.

People who live dangerously are said to live "on the edge." They are in a position of almost falling off, of crossing over, of shifting allegiance. A fearful person is described as "edgy."

"Design can be on turbid days what sonar is to bats at night. It is a way to transmit signs, to ricochet symbols outside ourselves, and by that to locate the edges of things."

— Roy Behrens

SEE:

Center	Intersection
Composition	Interval
Contrast	Join
Contrast	Scale
Economy	Tension
Figure/Ground	Equation
gestalt	

Line

Line (lyn)

- 1 The locus of a point having one degree of freedom
- 2 A thin, continuous mark, as that made by a pen, pencil or brush applied to a surface
- 3 An indentation or crease in the skin; a wrinkle

linum (Latin) = thread, derived from the word for flax

SEE:

Abstract	Gesture
Beauty	Grid
Boundary	Intersection
Center	Linear
Centrality	Organic
Context	Plane
Decorative	Weight

Lines are a human invention; they are intellectual constructs to impose order such as in a line of thought, or a line of flight. In the visual world, lines are generally a shorthand for edges. We perceive objects because of the dozens of ways they differ from their surroundings. We abbreviate these differences by drawing a contour line.

Famous Lines: the Equator, the horizon, the line of sight, the Mason-Dixon Line, the shortest line (which is often the most direct), the lines in the sidewalk, the police lineup, the out of bounds line, the finish line, the scrimmage line, the line you get out of when you are out of line, and the line you get onto when you are on-line.

"Shaded" lines go from thick to thin and create a subtle illusion of space. Thin areas recede while thicker sections advance.

Types of Lines

-----	Long / Short
-----	Thin / Thick
-----	Solid / Broken
-----	Straight / Curved
-----	Uniform / Irregular
-----	Neat / Sloppy
-----	Planned / Random
-----	Vertical / Horizontal

"No one looks at the thing itself anymore. We look at what the thing does, at the traces it leaves behind."

— Niki Smiter

Scale

Scale (skayl)

- 1 A system of ordered marks at fixed intervals used as a reference
- 2 An instrument or device used in such measurement
- 3 A calibrated line, as on a map or architectural drawing
- 4 A progressive classification of size, amount, importance, or rank
- 5 Relative proportion, degree

scalae (Latin) = stairs

"The artist recognizes existing relationships and arrests them."

- Louise Nevelson

We automatically make comparisons every time we receive sensory information. Objects are "too hot" or "safe to touch" because they are instantly compared to previous experience. This allows us to say "That's a big car" at a glance and be understood by people with a common experience.

In art, where the usual comparisons are less helpful, the artist or designer can provide a comparison and thereby create scale. We have a tendency to make size comparisons based on relationship to human scale. Return as an adult to a place known as a child and it seems so much smaller.

Scale can be used to direct a viewer through a site or image.

A "proper" sense of scale contributes to stability and comfort, while an "incorrect" scale makes us feel cramped or exposed.

SEE:

Contrast
Density
Gestalt
Monumentality
Ratio
Transition