

# SCULPTURE VOCABULARY

## & LIBRARY RESOURCES

Viewers may observe sculptures and other art forms that broaden, reinforce, refine, and extend currently held values or concepts. Familiarity with a vocabulary of art terms empowers verbal and visual forces to work side by side.

Area public educators instill in their students a sequential program of three dimensional art understanding. Part of that learning involves the introduction and reinforcement of new art terms from kindergarten through high school. Art teachers at all levels of public and private schools incorporate some degree of three dimensional art projects into their curriculum.

Our two local libraries have a sizeable collection of available sculpture books on their shelves. The L. E. Phillips Memorial Public Library [[www.ecpubliclibrary.com](http://www.ecpubliclibrary.com)] 400 Eau Claire Street; **715.839.1648**, has over one hundred books, a fifth of which are in the junior section. The Library of Congress headings are in the 730-740 area. The UWEC McIntyre Library houses books in the NB-NK range. The UWEC McIntyre Library website is [<http://www.uwec.edu/library>] The reference phone is **715.836.3858**.

The Eau Claire Public School art program has three sculpture curriculum areas. They are: Elementary, Middle School and High School. From the earliest grades, three-dimensional terms are incorporated into the curriculum. The terms are reinforced in each subsequent year. Here is the current elementary sequence, by grades:

### FIRST GRADE

- **Ceramics:** A craft process involving the conversion of moist clay to decorative and useful products by firing and glazing in a kiln.
- **Ceramic Moist Clay:** Actual clay, suitable for kiln firing, which has been packaged in 25 pound allotments. Must be stored moist.
- **Contemporary Art:** New art forms produced at the present time.

- **Line:** One of the basic elements of art. Line appears tangibles an independent entity or as an edge of a shape, and intangible as in the way of suggested directions that the eye may follow.
- **Non Objectivity:** In art forms, the lack of any subject matter or reference to the objective, visible world; sometimes referred to as “pure art”.
- **Pattern:** In decorative design, well articulated repetitive shapes appearing on a much larger scale than ordinary textural gradations
- **Shape:** One of the basic elements of art; an area enclosed by an area that emerges between other areas; for example, the hole in a doughnut.
- **Space:** The area in which visual expression and organization occurs.
- **Sculpture:** One of the most basic art techniques involving the production of three-dimensional art work made from one of three approaches:
  - (1) subtractive, in which the material is removed from a prescribed block, such as stone;
  - (2) additive, in which the form is developed by being built up with a plastic substance such as wax or clay; or
  - (3) constructive, in which separate segments of metal or other material are joined together. Some work combines these approaches.

Sculptures may also exist as flattened, partial figures (relief) or as full three-dimensional figures said to be freestanding or sculpture in the round.
- **Sculptor:** An artist who creates a sculpture.
- **Style:** The characteristics of an art movement or, more specifically, of the mode of expression attributed to an artist during a certain phase of his development.
- **Subject Matter:** The topic of intended expression by visual means.
- **Texture:** One of the basic elements of art; the tactile qualities of a surface, which, when touched, range from slick to coarse. Small patterns may connote texture.

## SECOND GRADE

- **Form:** In art, the ultimate structure which fulfills and embodies, by means of appropriate materials, the expression of an artist. Often form is used interchangeably (perhaps incorrectly) with shape to signify an element of art used interchangeably (perhaps incorrectly) with shape to signify an element of art.
- **Medium:** The material the artist uses as a vehicle for expression; also, the fluid in which pigments are suspended.
- **Sculpture in the Round:** Works showing height, depth and width.
- **Tools:** What the artist selects to develop the work.
- **Visual Meaning:** An expression which is embodied effectively in a visual rather than a verbal statement.

## THIRD GRADE

- **Composition:** Combining and organizing the elements of a work of art to effect a satisfactory whole.
- **Distortion:** The intentional and unintentional departure from the norms of reality in an effort to instill the necessary visual and expressive qualities in a work of art.
- **Balance:** One of the principles of visual order; a means of reconciling tensions in an artistic composition. The attainment of equilibrium among diverse elements of art.
- **Asymmetry:** Combining and organizing the elements of a work of art to effect a satisfactory whole.
- **Symmetry:** Evenly balanced on both sides of a composition.
- **Negative Space:** The space that appears between the positively defined shapes (which are usually first perceived). For example, the sky appears as a negative space between the positive shapes denoted by the branches of a tree.
- **Positive Shapes:** Often confused with background. Areas that are superimposed on a surface or first perceived in a view, such as words on a page, tree against sky, or objects in a painting.

- **Materials:** Tangible form, liquid or solid, from which the artist creates a work of art.
- **Techniques:** The systematic, complex procedure by which an artistic task is completed.
- **Contrast:** A means of opposing dissimilar visual elements in order to intensify a composition.
- **Value:** In color, the degree of lightness or darkness.
- **Unity:** A completeness achieved when all visible elements in a work of art are in harmony with the interacting principles of visual organization.
- **Variety:** One of the principles of visual order; the use of diversity as a means of attaining visual interest.

#### FOURTH GRADE

- **Clay Slab**  
**Techniques:** Ceramic moist clay is rolled flat, then cut and formed into a vessel; variation includes forming clay in a sling, then allowing air to interact with the clay, forming leather-hard, bone dry and fired ceramic vessels.
- **Proportion:** A principle of visual organization describing the relationships of elements to one another and to the whole composition (for example, a space of red as related to a space of gray; often used in reference to size relationships as they exist in nature and human anatomy).
- **Rhythm:** One of the principles of visual order; repetition of one or more of the visual elements in a composition, for example the repetition of similar colors or lines.

## FIFTH GRADE

- **Realism:** An approach in painting which is devoted to interpretations, not imitative renderings, of the significant aspects of the world in further considerations of the medium and of visual organization.
- **Subtractive Sculpture/Carved Sculpture:** Carving selected parts away from a block of material chosen to best express the sculptor's idea.
- **Cast Sculpture:** Often liquid plaster is used to pour into a moist clay or hardened plaster mold to form the final work.
- **Symbol:** In art, a construction standing for something, material or immaterial, apart from itself.
- **Taste:** One's sense of what is personally gratifying; often confused with art judgment.

## OTHER - RELATED TERMS

- **Abstract:** The reduction of a thing to its essential features or characteristics.
- **Content:** An artist's way of expressing the subject matter; also, the ideological and emotional significance of any work of art whether or not it has subject matter.
- **Design:** The organizational properties of a work of art; also, a preliminary plan for objects of intended utility; to make such a plan.
- **Dimension:** Measures. Two dimensions are the height and width of a plane; the third dimension is the depth or thickness of an area.
- **Dominance:** One of the principles of visual organization whereby certain elements are combined in such a way as to acquire more importance than any of the others in the same composition.
- **Format:** The physical area occupied by a work of art. In painting, the two-dimensional boundaries are precisely defined; in sculpture, the air around and within the object serves as a less-precise area in which to organize.
- **Mass:** The main or larger part: bulky lump or shape.
- **Tessera (Tile):** Separate pieces of glazed tile formed together to create a pattern, design or image.

- **Transition:** One of the principles of visual order, used by artists to avert chaos or unintended abruptness. A gradual change of visual phenomena as exemplified by the diminishing size relationships in a tree (ranging from the thick trunk to thin branches to thinner twigs); by gradual color variation as observed in a spectrum, or by textural gradation from coarse to fine.
- **Volume:** A three dimensional substance or mass that occupies space.