



## Unit 2

### Fundamentals: The Language of Art

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*Introduced by Elisabeth Condon, Associate Professor, School of Art and Art History*

Welcome to this unit. Fundamentals: the language of art. I'm Elisabeth Condon. Associate Professor of Painting and Drawing at the University of South Florida.

Fundamentals the language of art really makes explicit that art is a visual language. It is analogist to learning a new language like French or learning how to play a new game like tennis; where there are a whole new set of rules and there's a whole new arena of concerns to know. And that's what's so important about this unit. That you start to learn the vocabulary in order to put together a working knowledge of how to look at a painting or how to look at art.

There are two different modes of perception. The first is pure perception where you would look at a yellow oblong with black squares and marvel at the shapes and proportion in relationship to each other. Then there's the level of perception that's recognition. Where you would identify the same yellow oblong with black squares as a bus. And recognition serves to help us so when we are staring at the yellow oblong with black windows, we are not in the way of the bus. Recognition helps us to get out of the way, but perception helps us see it abstractly. And that's a component of the fundamental language of art.

So in my own work I'd like to talk about the painting "Leap." Which is sixty-five inches high by fifty-four inches wide. I begin my paintings with pours of paint so that I'm not really sure when I start the painting how its going to end up, and in this way I relate the process of painting to travel.



Where you might think you have tickets to Hawaii but if there's a cancelled flight or a weather condition you are not really sure how you are going to get there or how it's going to end up. And that's the way it feels to pour out paint at the beginning and then to be able to build the painting from the pour. So again in the painting "Leap" you can see the pour that sets out a whole shape and then I start moving into the pour with the opaque rocks and transparent trees.

Another compositional principal that goes into visual art is unity and variety. So with the repetition of shapes for example the linear trees with the little rounded leaves and then the opaque rocks once again you get a sense of both different forms but then the repetition of those forms enough where the eye starts to establish a pattern but the pattern doesn't get too boring. In the upper part of the painting things are more hand-drawn.

One of the elements of visual art is line. So the line in the trees that are drawn is very light and automated almost as if it's projected. Well, it is projected. And this gives you the feeling of a mechanized line. When you learn these words and you see the painting, and you see how the words apply to the painting; you start to develop a language in order to spend time before a painting and to start to identify it. It's a language that's ingested with individual consciousness and it's applied through the activity of painting and the way that the language is used by you, who are learning it, is that its your chance to spend time and start to use it n order to correspond with the painting and to connect to it and that will take you deeper into the world of painting and into the world of art in all dimensions.