

# CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY: FOUR KINDS OF LINES

## CONCEPTS: 4 Kinds of Lines

- Drawing is a practice that artists will never complete because their drawing style will change with them, always evolving. Drawing is much more than describing objects in the world.
- Drawing is an abstraction that stands between the objective appearance of the world and what the artist feels or intuitively. A drawing expresses what artists experience outside of themselves and what is felt or experienced within themselves.
- There is a fundamental difference between drawing an object positioned in three-dimensional space, in perspective, and drawing a vignette of an object where the space around the object is neutral, not included in the composition.
- When an artist composes a still life, even the parts of the composition that are blank are part of the work. The blank spaces are called negative space. The objects represent positive space.
- Every artist develops his own style of drawing, but most artists use four kinds of lines.
- Contour and cross-contour lines describe the nature of an object's surface.
- Construction lines measure the proportions of the different parts of an object.
- Gesture lines can express the attitude and action of an object, or express emotion.
- Artists draw for different reasons. The function of a drawing can be a study that is preliminary to a later work, or it can be an illustration or diagram of an abstract idea. But every artist will always have a way of drawing that is unique to that person.

## VOCABULARY

**View-finder:** two pieces of L-shaped card used to create a lens through which a student can isolate the objects he sees.

**Negative/positive shapes:** an object occupies a positive space, the space behind and around it is the negative space.

**Vignette:** a small illustration or portrait which has no definite border (is not situated within a larger three-dimensional space).

**Composition:** An arrangement of elements that integrate into a whole.

Like a musical composition, all parts of a visual composition must play a necessary role. In a composition, with no random parts.

**Contour lines:** lines defining the outside boundary of an object.

**Cross-contour lines:** lines defining the shape of a surface.

**Construction lines:** Lines measuring out the proportions between the different parts of an object.

**Gesture lines:** lines giving the impression of an object's movement and attitude.

**Modeling: shading,** making shapes of dark and light that represent the appearance of an object in light.