


Glossary of Art Vocabulary Supporting Progression Map

Term	Definition (Tate Gallery)	Example
Abstract	Abstract art is art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead use shapes, colours, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect	Wassily Kandinsky <i>Cossacks</i>
Carve	To cut a hard material in order to produce an object, design or inscription.	
Charcoal	Charcoal is a black crumbly drawing material made of carbon and often used for sketching and under-drawing for paintings, although can also be used to create more finished drawings	Leon Kossoff <i>Self-Portrait. Verso: Untitled (Two Figures)</i>
Coil	A length of something wound in a joined sequence of concentric rings.	
Colour wheel	A circle with different coloured sectors used to show the relationship between colours.	
Collage	Collage describes both the technique and the resulting work of art in which pieces of paper, photographs, fabric and other ephemera are arranged and stuck down onto a supporting surface	
Complimentary colour	Complementary colours are pairs of colours that contrast with each other more than any other colour, and when placed side-by-side make each other look brighter	James Dixon Innes <i>Arenig, North Wales</i>
Composition	Composition is the arrangement of elements within a work of art	Frank Stella <i>Hyena Stomp</i>
Cross hatching	An area in a drawing which has been shaded with intersecting sets of parallel lines.	
Cubism	Cubism was a revolutionary new approach to representing reality invented in around 1907-08 by artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. They brought different views of subjects (usually objects or figures) together in the same picture, resulting in paintings that appear fragmented and abstracted	Pablo Picasso <i>Bowl of Fruit, Violin and Bottle</i>
Diorama	A model representing a scene with three-dimensional figures, either in miniature or as a large-scale museum exhibit.	
Engrave	Engraving is a printmaking technique that involves making incisions into a metal plate which retain the ink and form the printed image	William Hogarth <i>The Enraged Musician</i>
En Plein Air	The French term 'plein air' means out of doors and refers to the practice of painting entire finished pictures out of doors	John Constable <i>Stoke-by-Nayland</i>
Genre	Genres are types of painting. These were codified in the seventeenth century as (in descending order of importance) history, portrait, genre (scenes of everyday life), landscape and still life	
Gloss	Shine or lustre on a smooth surface	
Hatching	Shading with closely drawn parallel lines.	
HB, H & B graphite	Pencils are graded in 9 number and 3 letters. The range goes from 9H (hardest) , 8H 7H, 6H, 5H, 4H, 3H, 2H, H, F, HB, B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B, 7B, 8B and 9B (softest).	
Illustration	A picture depicting something in a book, newspaper etc.	
Impasto	Impasto refers to an area of thick paint or texture, in a painting	Frank Auerbach <i>Head of E.O.W.</i>
Impressionism	Impressionism developed in France in the nineteenth century and is based on the practice of painting out of doors and spontaneously 'on the spot' rather than in a studio from sketches. Main impressionist subjects were landscapes and scenes of everyday life	Edouard Manet <i>Woman with a Cat</i>
Landscape	Landscape depicts the outside world; it is one of the principal types or genres of subject in Western art	Claude Monet <i>Impression, Sunrise</i>
Matt	(of a colour, paint or surface) dull or flat, without a shine.	
Medium	Medium can refer to both to the type of art (e.g. painting, sculpture, printmaking), as well as the materials an artwork is made from	
Mould	A form or shape; a frame or a template for producing mouldings; a hollow container used to give shape to a liquid material;	
Mosaic	A mosaic is a picture made up of small parts which are traditionally tiny tiles made out of terracotta, pieces of glass, ceramics or marble and usually inlaid into floors and walls	Boris Anrep <i>Mosaic Pavement in Gallery II</i>
Oil Paint	Oil paint is form of a slow-drying paint that consists of particles of pigment suspended in a drying oil that forms a tough, coloured film on exposure to air	David Hockney <i>My Parents</i>
Opaque	Not able to be seen through; not transparent	
Palette	A palette is a smooth, flat surface on which artists set out and mix their colours before painting, often designed to be held in the hand. The term also refers to the range of colours habitually used by and characteristic of an artist.	
Pastel	Pastel is a coloured drawing medium made from pure coloured pigment mixed with a binder to form a stick	Edgar Degas <i>Ballerina</i>
Perspective	The term perspective refers to the representation of objects in three-dimensional space (i.e. for representing the visible world) on the two-dimensional surface of a picture	Henry Moore <i>Tube Shelter Perspective</i>
Pointillism	A painting technique using tiny dots of various colours which are blended in the viewer's eye	Georges Seurat

Portrait	A portrait is a representation of a particular person. A self-portrait is a portrait of the artist by the artist	Unknown Artist <i>The Cholmondeley Ladies</i>
Post-Impressionism	Post-impressionism is a term which describes the changes in impressionism from about 1886, the date of last Impressionist group show in Paris	Paul Cezanne <i>Still Life with a Water Jug</i>
Primary Colours	In painting red, blue and yellow; cannot be mixed by combining other colours.	
Print	A print is an impression made by any method involving transfer from one surface to another	Georges Baselitz <i>Eagle</i>
Proportion	Proportion is the relationship of one part of a whole to other parts	
Realism	In its specific sense realism refers to a mid-nineteenth century artistic movement characterised by subjects painted from everyday life in a naturalistic manner; however the term is also generally used to describe artworks painted in a realistic almost photographic way	Alphonse Legros <i>Le Repas des Pauvres</i>
Scale	A ratio of size in a map, model, drawing or plan.	
Sculpture	Three-dimensional art made by one of four basic processes: carving, modelling, casting, constructing	Sir Jacob Epstein <i>Jacob and the Angel</i>
Secondary Colours	A colour resulting from mixing two primary colours: Purple (red/blue), Orange (red/yellow) Green (blue/yellow)	
Shade	A shade is a mixture with black, which increases darkness.	
Sketch	A rough or unfinished drawing or painting.	
Slip (clay)	A mixture of clay and water used as a glue to connect two pieces of clay together.	
Sponge	Using a sponge to apply paint in a soft dappled effect (diluted paint).	
Still Life	One of the principal genres (subject types) of Western art - essentially, the subject matter of a still life painting or sculpture is anything that does not move or is dead	Vincent van Gogh <i>Sunflowers</i>
Stipple	In drawing, painting and engraving, marking the surface with numerous small dots or specks.	
Subject matter	The topic of the work of art.	
Symbolism	Late nineteenth-century movement that advocated the expression of an idea over the realistic description of the natural world	Dante Gabriel Rossetti <i>Beata Beatrix</i>
Tertiary colours	A tertiary colour is made by mixing equal amounts of a primary colour and a secondary colour together. There are six tertiary colours. On the colour wheel, they sit between the primary and secondary colour they are mixed from	
Texture	The feel, appearance or consistency of a surface or substance.	
Tint	A tint is a mixture of a colour with white, which increases lightness.	
Tone	A tone is produced either by mixing a colour with grey, or by both tinting and shading.	James Whistler <i>Harmony in Grey and Green</i>
Translucent	Semi-see through.	
Vanishing Point	The point at which receding parallel lines viewed in perspective appear to converge	J.M. Turner <i>Tracing of a Perspective Construction of a House</i>
Warp	Strands of yarn or thread arranged lengthwise onto (a loom) in preparation for weaving.	
Wash	A technique in which a paint brush that is very wet with solvent and holds a small load of paint or ink is applied to a wet or dry support such as paper or primed or raw canvas. ... A wash is accomplished by using a large amount of solvent with little paint.	
Watercolour	Refers both to the medium and works of art made using the medium of watercolour - a water soluble paint with transparent properties	
Weave	A method of textile production in which two distinct sets of yarns or threads are interlaced at right angles to form a fabric or cloth.	
Weft	Crosswise threads on a loom that are passed under and over the warp threads to make cloth	