

Movement > Issaquah Schools Foundation



In art, movement can mean anything from literal movement, found in some sculpture or mobiles, to implied movement or how an artist makes our eye move around the work.

The illusion of stability or movement in a work of art is created to a great extent by the main “lines” in the work. Horizontal and vertical lines create stability and stillness. Horizontal lines tend to hold the eye stable and static in the center of the picture creating calmness and continuity. Vertical lines are also stable, but tend to pull the eye upward. Often they are used to suggest looking upward and can convey divinity or royalty. Diagonal lines evoke movement. The eye follows the lines throughout the composition and even out of it. Circular lines take the eye around the composition and either hold it in or guide it out.

Teaching Notes: On a large piece of paper or on the chalkboard, draw a horizontal line. Ask students what kind of line it is what it reminds them of (a horizon or something lying down for example.). Draw a vertical line and ask the same thing (a tall building, etc.). Draw a diagonal line. Point out how it looks like it is falling or going upward, etc. Draw a circle and show how the eye moves around the circle. Show the images below and on the first few pairs, point out the main vertical lines and diagonal lines in the works of art. Then see if they can see them and see the difference it makes in feeling of movement in the paintings. The last few are not pairs of contrasting slides. Ask more detailed questions as to why the artist chose what he or she did in terms of conveying movement (or the lack of it) in the paintings.

Sample Projects:

- [Geometric Mobile](#) (3rd Grade Art Lesson).
- [Life-Size Keith Haring Drawings](#) (3rd Grade Art Lesson).
- [Raised Relief Printing](#) (3rd Grade Art Lesson).
- Gesture drawings: With charcoal and newsprint draw quick figures which just try to get the movement of a figure. Demonstrate how to draw quickly using a stick figure. Have the children draw you in different fast poses (30 seconds or even less).

- Draw several circles. Draw the “hair” on the head show movement such as blowing in the wind, swimming, standing still riding a bike, hanging upside down. For a simpler version, just blow paint around and see what it inspires. (Warn the kids – they do tend to get hyper-ventilated on this one.)
- Paint a picture of a landscape in a rainstorm. Remind the children about diagonal lines showing movement.
- With colored pencil, draw a picture of a bald person (self portrait?) pointing a blow dryer at their head. Drip watercolor at the top of the head and blow it with a straw in the direction the dryer is pointing.
- Do a “Starry Night” imitation with pastels on black paper. Concentrate on the movement of the lines.

Examples of Movement in Art:

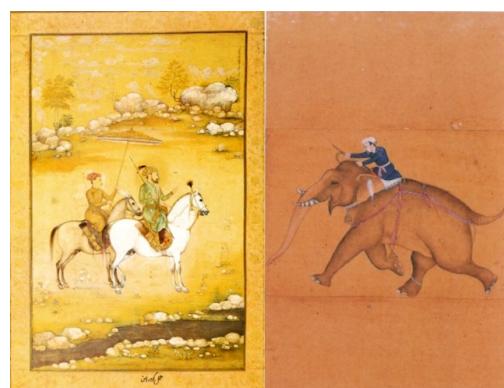
Napoleon, David (French), 1800 (left).
 Napoleon, Ingres (French), 1806 (right).



Kobo Dashi 14th C.(Chinese) (left)
 Calmady Children, Lawrence (English), 1823 (right).

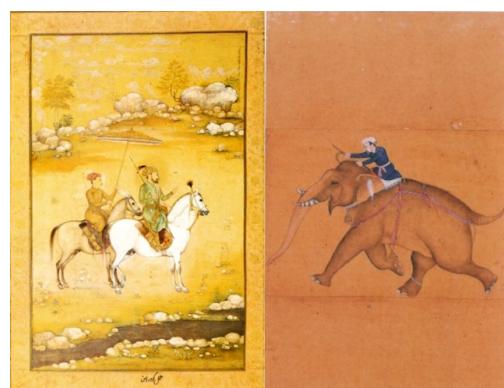


Dara Govardhan (Indian), 1657 (top).
 San Vitale, Theodora 570 (Italy) (bottom).



Utagawato Yohiro (Japanese), 1804 (left).
 Young Woman in Summer Shower (Japan) (right).

Egyptian Servant (left).
 David, Bernini, 1610 (right).



Chartes Cathedral, Corot, (French), 1830 (left).
Starry Night, Van Gogh (Dutch), 1889 (right).

