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WEEK 10: Module 2: Design>Line

Line is a fundamental element of art. Explicit or implied, lines lead the viewer's eye and in so doing, evoke both mental and emotional responses in the brain.

Explicit and implied lines

An **explicit line** is deliberately created by the author. Examples include:

- the line around the piece or the lines around the shapes making up the piece. These lines are called contours or outlines,
- lines embedded in cane patterns: these lines can be sharp or fuzzy as in the cell contours in Ford/Forlano's earrings (see Showcase),
- lines can be drawn. Annie Pennington uses coloured pencils to draw directly on her *Pod Brooch* (see Showcase), but other methods such as silk-screening or image transfers create lines with their associated complexion,
- textured lines can be achieved using instruments such as stamps, moulds and carving instruments.

Implied lines do not physically exist but are formed by the brain as it groups similar elements, fills in the gaps and completes the picture. For example:

- in Ford/Forlano's *Rocks 13 Brooch*, the eye fills the gaps between the six components to perceive the piece as an elongated circle,
- in Celine Charuau's *Slightly Paunchy Flower Necklace*, the eye completes the picture by adding a fifth bead to close the loop. If there were actually a fifth bead, the composition would have been predictable and much too heavy,
- in Celine's *Plume Necklace*, the lines fanning out seem to extend beyond the strict physical boundary of the piece, making it more than the sum of its parts.

Mental and Emotional Responses to Lines

Whether explicit or implied, lines have an **orientation** which evokes different mental and emotional responses in the viewer:

- compositions in which **horizontal lines** dominate tend to be perceived as restful and quiet. See Satomi Kawai's necklace;
- **vertical lines** communicate a feeling of power and loftiness. In Deb Karash's brooch, the elongated shape is further amplified by the direction of the thin silver arrow and the striations texturing the bezel. Vertical and horizontal lines combine to create a sense of stability as in Connie's *City Sunrise Bangle*;
- compositions with **diagonal lines** give the impression of being in motion or dynamic. See Tory Hughes' *Luminaria Brooch*;
- **smooth open curves** evoke sensuality and restfulness as in Claire Maunsell's *Snakeskin Tube Necklace*. Tight repeating curves can suggest the organic world – see Kelly Munro's *Yellow Offset Ring Pin* – turbulence and even frenzy,
- **repeated lines** create rhythm or movement as shown in Conny's and Claire's pieces.

The eye loves a pattern and will work very hard to find one. Often a piece fails to engage because of a lack of cohesion in its line treatment. A good understanding of how lines are perceived by the brain through the eye can help you create more powerful work.

Assignment

How Artists Speak Through Line

Surf the internet and collect images of works where lines combine effectively to create a strong emotional or mental response. Analyse your collection and document your research.

Go to the Forums and share your progress or ask for help. Use the following link to do this:
<http://voila.eu.com/forums/Forum/week-10-lines>