# Elements of Art

The elements of art are the building blocks used by artists to create a work of art.

**LINE** is a mark with greater length than width. Lines can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal; straight or curved; thick or thin.

**SHAPE** is a closed line. Shapes can be geometric, like squares and circles; or organic, like free-form or natural shapes. Shapes are flat and can express length and width.

**FORMS** are three-dimensional shapes expressing length, width, and depth. Balls, cylinders, boxes, and pyramids are forms.

**SPACE** is the area between and around objects. The space around objects is often called negative space; negative space has shape. Space can also refer to the feeling of depth. Real space is three-dimensional; in visual art, when we create the feeling or illusion of depth, we call it space.

**TEXTURE** is the surface quality that can be seen and felt. Textures can be rough or smooth, soft or hard. Textures do not always feel the way they look; for example, a drawing of a porcupine may look prickly, but if you touch the drawing, the paper is still smooth.

**COLOR** is light reflected off of objects. Color has three main characteristics: *hue* (the name of the color such as red, green, blue, etc.), *value* (how light or dark it is), and *intensity* (how bright or dull it is).

- White is pure light; black is the absence of light.
- Primary colors are the only true colors (red, yellow, and blue). All other colors are mixes of primary colors.
- Secondary colors are two primary colors mixed together (green, orange, violet).
- Tertiary colors are made by mixing a primary and a secondary color together. Some examples of tertiary colors are yellow green, blue green, and red violet.
- Complimentary colors are located directly across from each other on the *color wheel.* Complimentary pairs contrast because they share no common colors. For example, red and green are complimentary because green is made of yellow and blue. When complimentary colors are mixed together, they neutralize each other to make brown.