

Turnbull Art Tips #5

When artists use the 5 Design elements (Line, Shape, Form, Texture and Color) the element of line is often the one that's not fully explored. Many artists tend to use the line more as an "outline," with no subtle changes or gradations in it.

They treat line in much the same way a novice public speaker treats the tone of his or her voice. There is no modulation, no rising and falling of the voice, no slowing down or speeding up for emphasis in certain parts of the speech....the result: a boring monotone. The words, no matter how carefully crafted, lose their power as the speaker muffles their meaning with a deadening delivery.

So it is with the artist who uses line as some sort of monotonous outer edge of a shape. When drawing, the line should be used to its full potential. Vary its weight and its width. Soften it or sharpen it. From time to time, let it literally disappear, allowing the viewer's eye to make the implied visual connection. Then line will have the same dramatic effect as the deepening of a tone of voice, or a subtle pause has in a speech. It will grab and hold our attention...and it will never, never be boring !

Keep each of these tips in mind on your creative journey and your travels will be more productive and exciting!