

First Principles - LINE

Since this is pre-eminently an art using line, we must look at line and the ways in which it can express or convey meaning

1. a line drawn is as purely a cultural creation as a musical note.

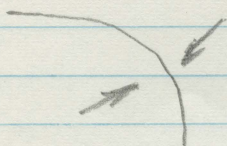
2. line can express meaning in 3 ways:

a) by outlining images. Combining, usually with closure, to form an image. This is the iconographic function. The lines form edges of silhouette, outlining shapes copied from the world, or otherwise agreed upon

- iconographic	icon
- pictographic	sign
- symbolic ♀ Fish	symbol

b) by expressing an action, motion, movement as a stroke of the brush in Chinese calligraphy, or a line in one of Leonardo's sketches, expresses the quality of an action. In this sense a line is an action, since it is the direct and visible path of the artist's act; he was conscious of it as behavior and as act.

c) by expressing the boundaries of fields of force, as a line on the ocean represents the intersections of lines of swells. As mediating boundary. The path of the line responds to the contending forces on either side. See Donkum on parabola. An expression of relationships between



Levels of Meaning in Haida Art

Holm departed as an iconographical style. If focus was

1. The Sample chosen (AEE) to exemplify the style
Edenshaw in brief.

Raven
Chests
Box

2. Search for Meaning. 1. Icon and Symbol. (object)

What does it represent? and
What does that mean in the culture?

a) Boas phase

b) Collectors: Newcombe, Emmons, Swanton

3. Search for Meaning 2. Description of Form

a) Holm's book - vocabulary
- formal features - elements
- distortion etc. - composition

"symbolic" = iconography
'decorative'
'abstract'
fill filling

4. Search for Meaning 3. Search for Individual Styles
clearer definition of problems

a) Arts of Raven Show - intuitive choice of raven, styles

b) Duff: Innovations several artists
: Edenshaw. - chests
- red on black

5. Search for Meaning 4. Intuition

a) Reid on Haida Art
b) Holm
c) Hanna, Susan Reid.

Statement: bankruptcy of iconography and ascendance of 'style'
over the link into abstraction.

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Out of the Impasse

6. Breakthrough: the concept of "structural symbolism"
Concepts: meanings implicit in the style are more important than
explicit in the iconography

: gropings: art as a "cultural cognitive map" (Fischer)

art as a structured system (Levi-Strauss)
(Burnham)

discourse - presentational (Langer)
nature - culture (Burnham, 65)

7. First Principles: the ^{visual} qualities of line
The tools of meaning in art: the visual qualities of form } Anheim

8a The descriptive level: de Halm, add: ovoid, color rules, other corrections and additions

8 The Expressive Level of Haida Art

a) Discursive aspect: lines move, lines interact

b) Presentational aspect: new forms emerge, which

- express forces
- are cultural rather than natural
- can take on cultural "meanings" which are non-explicit, generalized.

1. parts (emergent forms)
2. whole (force of force)

9. Relations between the Iconographic Level and Expressive Level.

a) "Abstract" trend is the ^{subjugation} breaking down of iconography into

a discursive aspect

- iconic mode static and expressionless, doing nothing
- disproportionate parts emphasize parts rather than whole
- decay of silhouette: configurative, expansive, distributive
- reduction of elements → ambiguity
- double meaning (punning)

b) Building up of Expressive aspect

- ^{subdued} lazy iconography, diligent expression

10. Iconic meanings (?)

a) The way things should behave

isomorphisms between the behavior of elements and social behavior

- all behavior precise, controlled, mediating
- behavior of an element itself
- relations with fellow elements
 - discursive
 - proximate

b) The way things should be shaped
isomorphisms between shapes in the design
and the proper (assigned?) shapes of things

i) fixity of form (ovoid, etc) argues for fixity
of meaning - and we can only guess what
the meanings are.

ii) split - U = slave?
ovoid = world? bilateral symmetry = complete
salmon = nephew?

iii) overall design:
isomorphism between expression & iconography?
total field = total universe?
cosmic design: chest front.

11. Cosmic meanings - expressions of Haida ethos

a) Man controls

- all time, all space (by controlling all behavior
man controls the shape of the world)

- Expression dominates iconography
Culture " Nature

b) Man mediates contending forces

- line
- ovoid
- salmon
- designs (no 2 alike)
- even levels of meaning

12. Analysis of paintings

- Raven, whale, whales
- Chest
- The Box (again) what does it mean now (the test)

Roman Hubel

contending tensions.

Harda line obeys all those imperfections, and conveys all those kinds of meaning.

No matter for which reason a line was created, the eye will search in it for at least the first two kinds of meaning.

Iconography - At the first level of awareness the eye searches for images. In nature there are things, images, which are the relevant things to see. Sight has evolved to seek out the things and their expressions (see Aronheim)

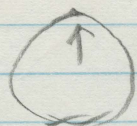
Expression - when focused on the line per se, the eye will read it as expressive action. Lines "move". Curves "move" (see Aronheim). The movements have generalized meanings: "rising" etc which the eye perceives.

These meanings are present, and read, whether put there purposely or not. Harda art uses them.

Shaped by Forces - There is a beautiful reciprocal arrangement between these lines and the forces that create them.

Eg. split-U, ovoid

They are caused by these forces, and they give the forces their expression.



When viewed as line, it is yielding to force

When viewed as shape, it shows the force.

The shape of the line shows the force, but the thickness of the form shows the counterforce nec. to contain it.