



Objective: To teach the children to see the lines all around us and understand how artists use lines in their artwork to draw objects and convey action.

## A) Introduction:

Today we are going to talk about lines and how artists use them. Lines are everywhere if we just look for them. Look around this room for minute. Where can you see lines? Artists look very carefully at the world around them for line, and they use lines in their artwork to control a viewer's eye. A line can illustrate an edges, it can outline a form, express feeling and show movement.

## B) Vocabulary/Script:

Lines are everywhere if we just look for them. When you walk home from school, there are lines on the sidewalk and lines in the sky. (Telephone wires, airplane trails, etc.) When we look at a spider's web we see lines.

Artists look very carefully at the world around them to see as many lines as they can, and they use many kinds of lines in their pictures to help them say what they want. Here are some different kinds of lines:

*(Refer to visuals provided when discussing the following):*

1. **Vertical lines:** Does anyone know what these kinds of lines are called? These are called vertical lines.
2. **Horizontal lines:** What about these lines? What are they called? These lines are called horizontal lines. They remind us of the horizon, where the land meets the sky. In art, vertical and horizontal lines are "lazy" lines. You often see them when nothing is moving.
3. **Diagonal lines:** Here are some more lines. These lines are called diagonal lines. How do you feel when you look at these lines? These lines give a feeling of movement and excitement.
4. Some lines express what we feel inside. Which one of these lines would you call a happy line? A tired line? A crazy line? Notice that a line doesn't have to be straight.
5. **Outline:** An outline is a line around the edge of a shape. When you draw a circle like this you are drawing an outline.

So, you see that lines can be lazy, or show movement, or express our feelings or be outlines. Now, let's look for lines in some artwork.



## C) Artwork

**Title: One of a Pair of Screens of Southern Barbarians (namban-byobu), 1568-1603**

**Details: Painting on Screen**

- The first artwork we'll look at today is a picture of a Japanese folding screen.
- The painting on the screen is of the earliest European visitors to Japan about 400 years ago. These visitors were called "barbarians" because they looked, dressed and acted very different from the Japanese.
- At that time the arrival of a ship was a special event and people would wait for the ship to arrive.
- What lines do you see in this painting? Vertical? Horizontal? Where?
- What other lines do you see? Lines of motion? Lines of feeling? An Outline? Where?

**Title: Cosmic Eye, Carlos Merida, 1980**

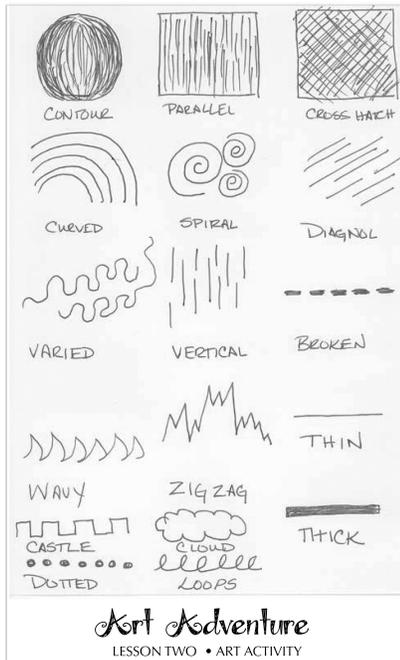
- Our second artwork is called Cosmic Eye. The artist is Carlos Merida. This painting has all kinds of lines.
- Can anyone show me some horizontal lines? Can anyone show me some vertical lines? Where do you see diagonal lines? Are the black lines the only lines in the picture? (No, the edges of the geometric shapes in the background are lines). Where do you see an outline?
- Do you feel any movement in this picture? (Yes) This picture has a lot of active lines, doesn't it?
- Does this picture look like something you could see in real life? (No) Why do you think it is called Cosmic Eye? (Because of the eye-like shape in the upper corner)

## Reinforcement Activity



Materials provided:  
8.5 x 5.5 Black Scratch Art Paper  
Wooden Scratch Sticks  
8.5 x 5.5 Line Example Sheets

Each student should be supplied a sheet of Scratch Art Paper, Wooded Scratch Stick and a Line Example Sheet. Review the examples of each of the lines on the example sheet. Ask the students to practice drawing lines, any type of line they can dream up. The example sheet is there to provide ideas, but the students can explore and draw any and all linear designs.





## **Additional Background Material:**

*This material is provided to give you, the discussion leader, additional information about the artists and paintings that may help you answer questions or generate additional discussion with the children if time permits. You are not expected or required to cover this information in the classroom.*

### **One of a Pair of Screens of Southern Barbarians (namban-byobu), Japan, 1568-1603**

Among the most unusual products of the Momoyama period (1568-1603) in Japan were the so called namban-byobu or “Southern Barbarian” screens. These large, folding screen-paintings depicted the earliest Europeans (the “barbarians” so called due to their different eating, dressing and bathing customs) to come to Japan – the Catholic missionaries and merchants of Portugal and Spain. The screen documents the curiosity of the previously isolated islanders about the foreigners from Europe. Screens are very important in traditional Japanese architecture. They functioned to section off interiors and to establish atmosphere within that space. They were not necessarily works of fine art as defined in the West, but with the somewhat bare interiors of traditional Japanese residences, screens created a controlled decorative focus.

### **Carlos Merida, Cosmic Eye, 1980**

Carlos Merida, a Guatemalan-born Latin American artist, developed a distinctive style that blended elements of ancient Mayan art and modern European abstraction, such as Cubism. Merida’s work was not representational, for he believed that a work of art should be valued for its aesthetic qualities alone without being a picture of something else. Sometimes a title suggests itself after the work has been completed when one part or, perhaps, the total effect happens to resemble an object or a feeling. Such was the case with the eye-shape in Cosmic Eye. Merida exhibited a great command of geometric, non-representational composition in this picture. A powerful structure of mostly straight lines of unvarying thickness overlies a background of geometric shapes in tones blue and orange. The shapes echo the lines but are not bounded by them. The horizontals run parallel to the base of the print, but the verticals are really subtle diagonals, keeping the composition from mechanical rigidity.