Looking for Contours
When we view a work of art, we not only sharpen our perceptual skills but also deepen our connections with the artwork, gaining an appreciation for the creative process and enriching our understanding and conversations about art.
As we engage with works of art, through careful and thoughtful looking, we are introduced to the ABCs of visual art. The following words are part of the language of art. They are some of the building blocks used when creating a work of art.

- **line**: A continuous mark from one point to another.
- **shape**: A line which returns and touches itself enclosing space.
- **texture**: The surface quality of an object (actual or implied).
- **contour line**: A line that defines the outer edges of an object.
Can you locate the line, shape, texture, and contour line?

This artwork is called *Rainbow Serpent*, and it’s the artist Romuald Hazoumè’s interpretation of the ancient Egyptian ouroboros, a serpent or dragon eating its own tail.
let's get started

First, cover your workspace

Then, gather your materials

- 4 x 7 inch lightweight cardboard
- Ruler
- 8 x 11 inch white board or heavy drawing paper
- Watercolor or acrylic paint
- 8 x 11 inch white board or heavy drawing paper
- Scissors
- Container for water
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Scrap paper
- Brushes (fine point, flat, and round)
Instructions

**STEP 1**

1. Fold the 4 x 7 inch lightweight cardboard in half lengthwise.
2. Place it in a vertical position. Measure 1 inch from the top and cut into the fold 1/4 inch; measure down 3/4 inch from the cut and make a second 1/4 inch cut into the fold.
3. With your pencil, draw a vertical line to join the edges of both cuts. Cut along the line. Remove the loose piece.
4. Open the folded cardboard to reveal a rectangular opening in the center.

Set your viewfinder aside to use later.
**STEP 2**
Visit the museum’s website at africa.si.edu, click on Browse the Collection under Collections. Use the object number to select one of the following objects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object name</th>
<th>Object number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tetela helmet mask</td>
<td>84-6-6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamum male figure</td>
<td>85-8-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fisherman and the River Goddess</td>
<td>97-6-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle of Adwa</td>
<td>2003-19-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nuna butterfly mask</td>
<td>2005-6-47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edo Benin female figure</td>
<td>2005-6-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Serpent</td>
<td>2013-1-1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**STEP 3**
Hone in on a section of your object that you find interesting. Use your viewfinder to help you focus by looking through the opening while moving the viewfinder over the object.

**STEP 4**
Follow the selected section’s contour lines, observing the shapes and textures.
**STEP 5**
Draw what you are observing through your viewfinder onto your 8 x 11 inch paper or cardboard.

**STEP 6**
Look at your drawing. Do you want to use colors from the original artwork or create a totally different color scheme?

**STEP 7**
Using watercolor or acrylic paint, color your drawing.
the selected portion of your object has been broken down into very simple lines, shapes, textures, and forms that tend to be quite abstract in nature.

Line and shape are two primary elements or building blocks in creating art.

You were able to replicate what you saw.

Your drawing can stand on its own as a composition when you turn it in any direction.
Share your creations!

Send your creations to NMAFA-Workshops@si.edu to post on the museum’s website

NOTE: We will make every effort, but cannot guarantee, to include your artwork.
Thank you!

Bamum artist
Fumban, Grassfields region, Cameroon
Male figure
Late 19th century
Wood, brass, cloth, glass beads, cowrie shells
Gift of Evelyn A. J. Hall and John A. Friede, 85-8-1

Twins Seven-Seven
1944–2011, Nigeria
The Fisherman and the River Goddess
with His Multicolored Fishes and the River Night Guard
C. 1960
Oil, pastel, and ink on wood
Gift of Merton Simpson, 97-6-1

Solomon Belachew
1919-2002, b. Gojam area, Amhara Region, Ethiopia
Worked in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Battle of Adwa
1970
Oil on canvas
Gift of Miriam and Michael Dow, 2003-19-1

Tetela or Songye artist
Kasongo, Maniema Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Helmet mask
Early 20th century
Wood, kaolin, pigment, raffia
Acquisition grant from the James Smithson Society, 84-6-6.1

Nuna artist
Boucle du Mahoun Region, Burkina Faso
Face mask
Mid-20th century
Wood, pigment, metal
Gift of Walt Disney World Co., a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company, 2005-6-47

Edo artist
Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria
Female figure
Early 19th century
Ivory
Gift of Walt Disney World Co., a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company, 2005-6-3

Romuald Hazoumè
b. 1962, Porto-Novo, Benin
Works in Porto-Novo
Rainbow Serpent (Dan-Ayido-Houedo)
2007
Mixed media and found objects
Museum purchase, 2013-1-1

Visit africa.si.edu/education/at-home/ for more workshops