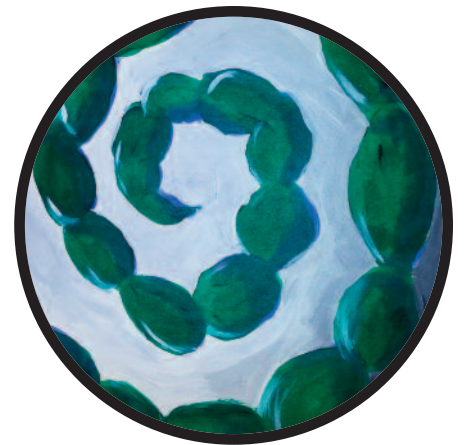


AFRICAN ART  
WORKSHOP  
WEDNESDAYS

[ o n l i n e ]

# Looking for Contours



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of African Art*

# INTRODUCTION

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.





# VOCABULARY

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.

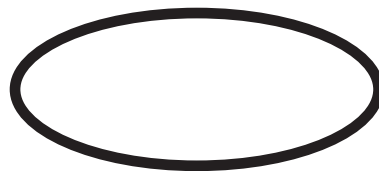
*line*

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



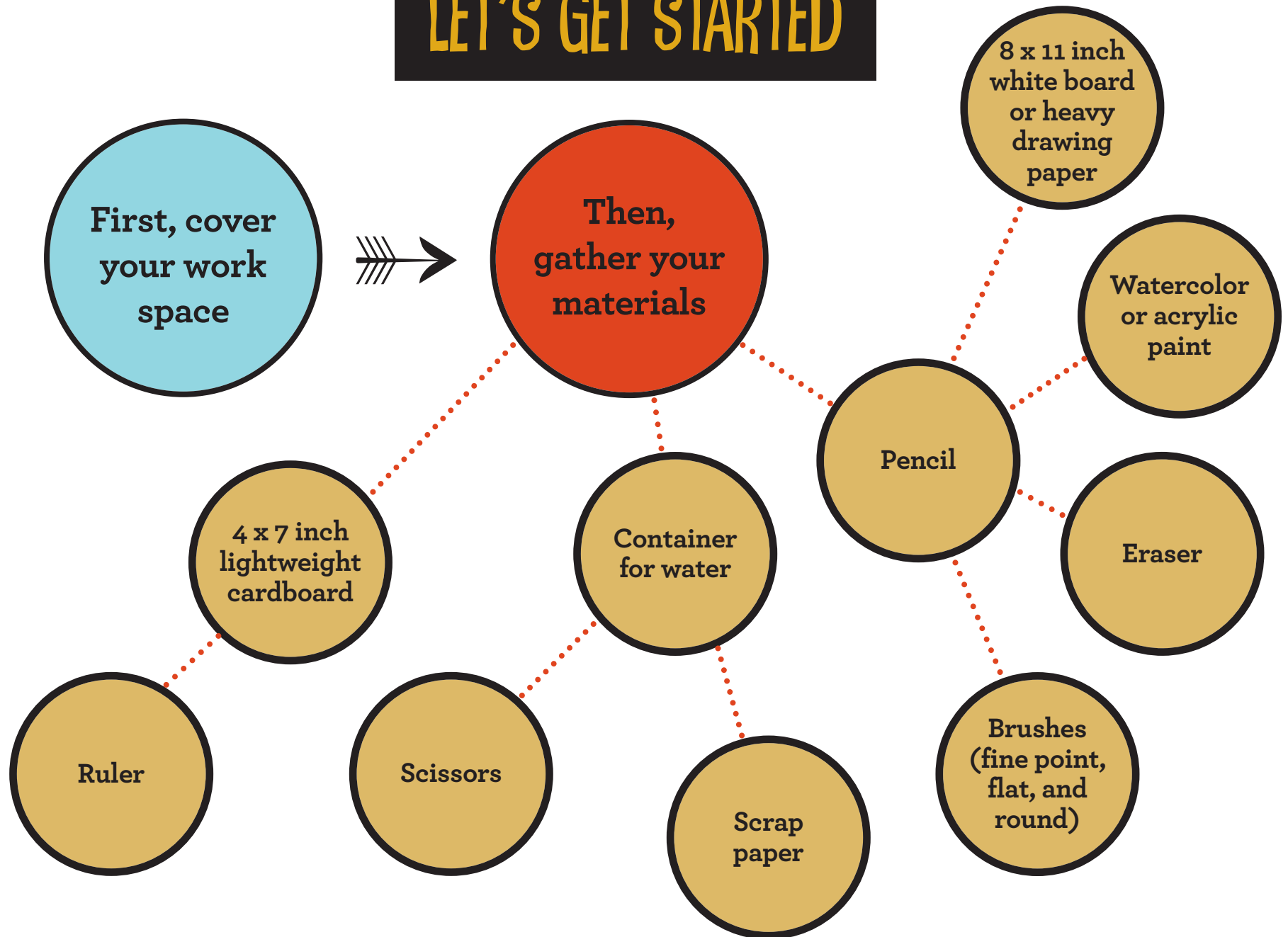
# LOOK AT THE SCULPTURE

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



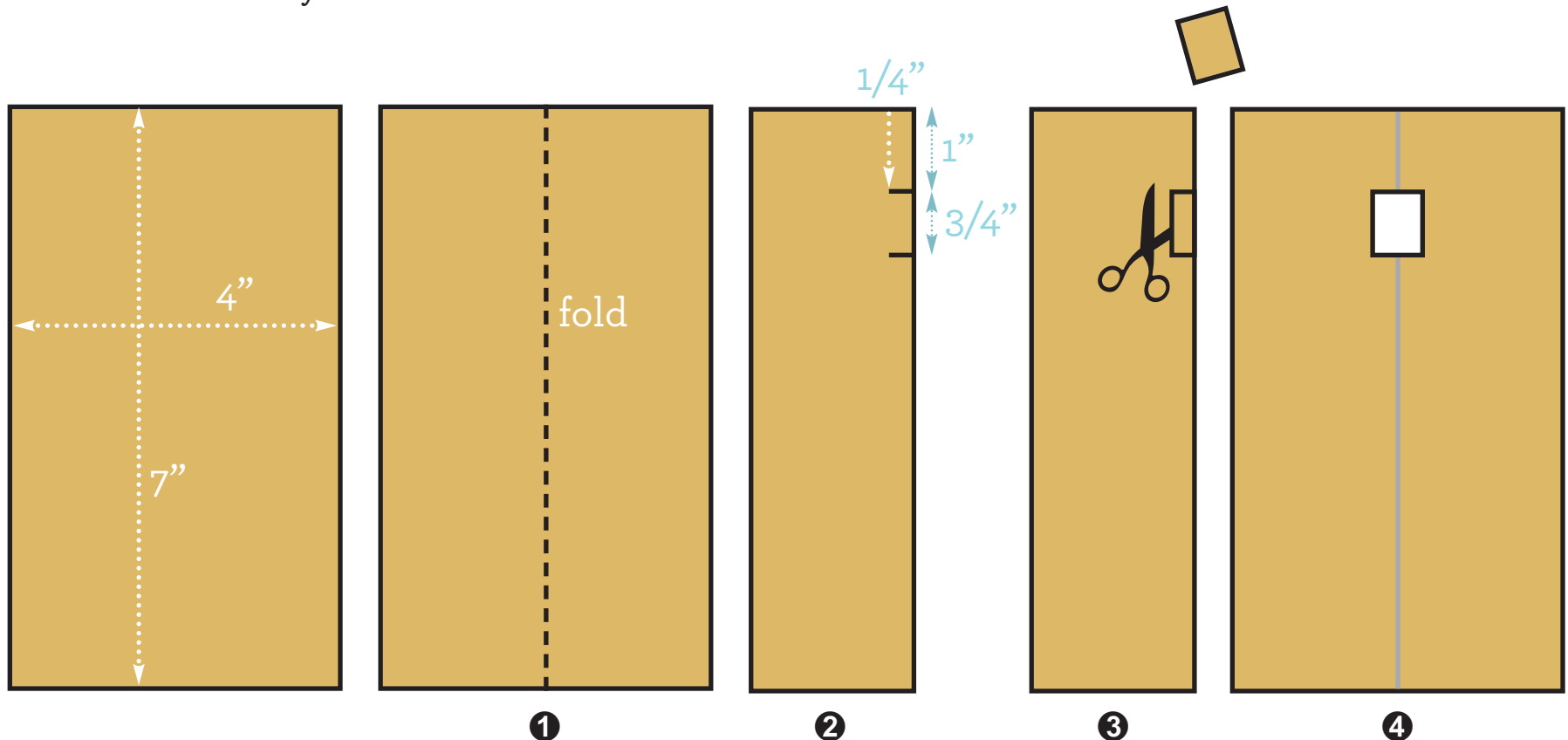
## Instructions

### STEP 1

Make your viewfinder.

- 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  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch; measure down  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from the cut and make a second  $\frac{1}{4}$  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](http://africa.si.edu), click on Browse the Collection under Collections.

Use the object number to select one of the following objects

**Object name:** **object number**

*Tetela helmet mask:* **84-6-6.1**

*Bamum male figure:* **85-8-1**

*The Fisherman and the River Goddess:* **97-6-1**

*Battle of Adwa:* **2003-19-1**

*Nuna butterfly mask:* **2005-6-47**

*Edo Benin female figure:* **2005-6-3**

*Rainbow Serpent:* **2013-1-1**

Click here  
to browse the  
collection

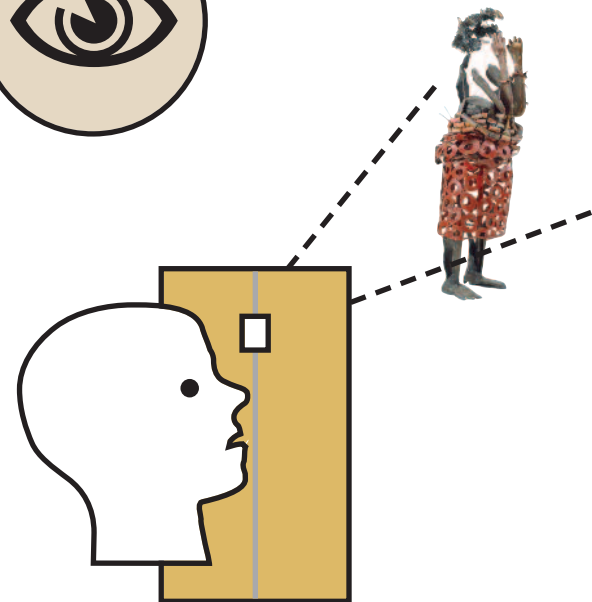
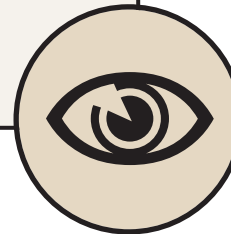


## STEP 3

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

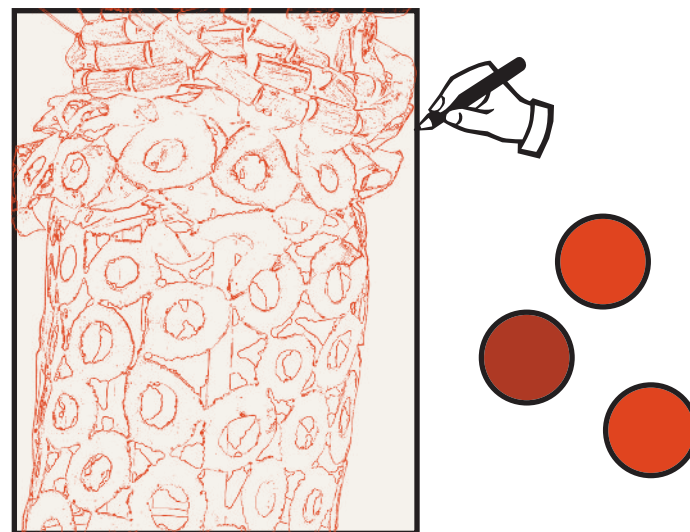
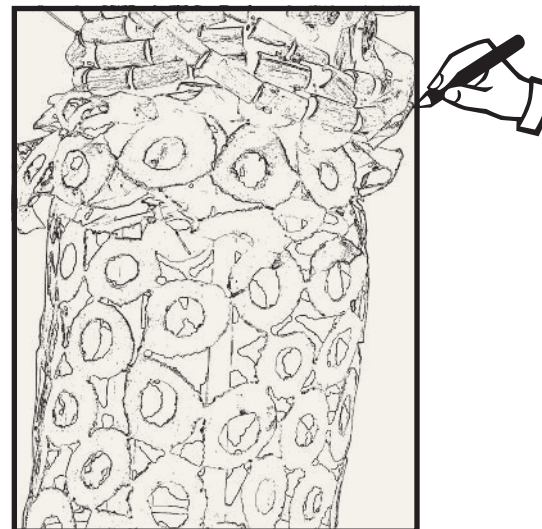
Draw what you are observing through your viewfinder onto your 8 x 11 inch paper or cardboard.

## 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.





# WITH CAREFUL OBSERVATION YOU HAVE DISCOVERED...

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

you were able  
to replicate what  
you saw

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

your drawing can  
stand on its own as  
a composition when  
you turn it in any  
direction

# OUR WORKSHOP

**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!*



*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*



*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. Gojjam 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*



*Nuna artist  
Boucle du Muhoun 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*

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Visit [africa.si.edu/education/at-home/](http://africa.si.edu/education/at-home/) for more workshops