Simplicity to Complexity in terms of line...
The Obvious

STRAIGHT

HORIZONTAL

VERTICAL

DIAGONAL
Barnett Newman, *Yellow Painting*, 1949
Barnett Newman, *Untitled (The Cry)*, 36x24in., ink on paper
Giotto, *Pieta* (Lamentation) fresco

Late Gothic/Early Renaissance from 1305
Caravaggio
The Calling of St. Matthew, 1599-1600
Gentileschi, Judith Slaying Holofernes, 1620
Lines can be implied . . .
IMPLIED LINES

Not really there but guide the eye or organize the image

Note lines implied by directional gazes.
Pierre-Auguste Renoir
*Le déjeuner des canotiers*, 1880–1881
Oil on canvas, 129.5 × 172.7 cm
Morandi, Giorgio
Still Life
(The Blue Vase)
1920
Oil on canvas

The blue lines point out . . .

IMPLIRED LINES
Morandi, Giorgio
Still Life
(The Blue Vase)
1920
Oil on canvas

implied
Schiele, Egon
*Seated Girl*
1911
Watercolor and pencil
48 x 31.5 cm
Caravaggio, *Supper at Emmaus*, c.1601
Kenneth Noland, *Thrust*, 1963
45 x 45 in.
A VENETIAN WOMAN
John Singer Sargent (American, b.1856, d.1925)
1882
oil on canvas
93 3/4 x 52 1/2 in. (238.1 x 133.4 cm)
Lines used to create emphasis

A VENETIAN WOMAN
John Singer Sargent (American, b.1856, d.1925)
1882
oil on canvas
93 3/4 x 52 1/2 in. (238.1 x 133.4 cm)
Lines can curve ...
Hokusai, Katsushika
The Great Wave Off Kanagawa
From "Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji"
1823-29
Color woodcut
10 x 15 in.
Jean Honore Fragonard, *The Bathers*, 1761
Cy Twombly, *Untitled*, 1970
This “artless” scribble

- Defines an area
- Creates an illusion of depth (volume)
Look again ...
Brice Marden
American, born Bronxville, New York, 1938

*Cold Mountain 2*, 1989-1991
Oil on linen, 108 1/8 x 144 1/4 in.
What lines
lurk in
this texture?
Jackson Pollock, *Lavendar Mist No. 1*, 1950
Consider the expressive quality of the jagged lines in this work . . .
Georgia O’Keeffe, *Red, White and Blue*, 1931
The Obvious Again

STRAIGHT

CURVED – SMOOTH, JAGGED
Johann Koerbecke
German, c. 1420 - 1491

*The Ascension*, 1456/1457
tempera on panel, 92.7 x 64.8 cm (36 1/2 x 25 1/2 in.)
Clyfford Still
American, 1904 - 1980

1948-C, (1948)
Oil on canvas
80 7/8 x 68 3/4 in.

complex contour lines formed by these complex shapes
Lines create or imply shapes

Shapes can be open or closed

Lines around a shape are CONTOUR lines
SHAPE

open/closed

geometric/

biomorphic or organic
an *open* shape, a *biomorphic* form

Picasso, *Femme*
Frank Stella,  
_Wolfeboro II_, 1966  

closed, geometric
THE UPSTAIRS
Charles Sheeler (American, b.1883, d.1965)
1938
oil on canvas
19 1/2 x 12 3/4 in. (49.5 x 32.4 cm)

Lines create planes; planes suggest volume
Implied in painting; actual in sculpture
Kenneth Snelson
*Rador*, 1975
brass & stainless steel
21 x 17 x 6 inches
Kenneth Snelson
American, born Pendleton, Oregon, 1927

*Needle Tower*, 1968
Aluminum and stainless steel
720 x 243-1/2 x 213-3/8 in.
Rodin

Balzac
Frank Lloyd Wright, *Fallingwater*, 1936-7
Volumes

CREATE LINES

C A N

CREATE

LINES
Frank Lloyd Wright,
*Fallingwater, 1936-37*
Frank Gehry, *Disney Concert Hall*
Frank Gehry, *Disney Concert Hall*
Frank Gehry, *Disney Concert Hall*
Giusti Garden, Verona, Italy
Henry Moore

Knife Edge Mirror Two Piece

1976-1978, bronze

534.5 x 721.1 x 363.1 cm (210 1/2 x 284 x 143 in.)
Bird in Space, 1923
Constantin Brancusi
(French, born Romania, 1876–1957)
Marble; (with base) H. 56-3/4, Diam. 6-1/2 in.
Brancusi
*Adam and Eve*
1921
The concept of line plays a role in compositions of music and art, ranging from the simple to the complex.
What is a line in Art?

Line – a series of points; an area whose length is considerably greater than its width; an indication of direction, an apparent movement. A line is a point moved or moving through space. This applies to drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, clay/pottery, and architecture.

Characteristics of lines: lines can be actual or implied; a line which denotes or describes an outside edge of an object is a contour line. A contour line divides the plane or delineates an edge of a volume.

A directional line points or moves the eye in a particular direction. Horizontal – often read as across, quiet, stable. Vertical: reaching up, spiritual, uplifting, rising. Diagonal: dynamic, moving.

Lines can be interpreted as having expressive qualities; particular qualities – thick or thin, weighty or straight, hard-edged or soft – can indicate moods or feelings.