



## RHYTHM AND CHARACTER OF LINES IN CREATING VISUAL NARRATIVES CASE STUDY: STUDENT'S LINO ART

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role of rhythm and line character in creating storytelling visuals, with a case study on the Lino Art work by student Maulana Rizqi Fadilah, which depicts a scene from the local Indonesian folktale titled \*Asal Usul Selat Bali\* ("The Legend of Naga Besukih"). Rhythm and line character are understood as essential elements that influence the dynamics and emotions in a visual artwork. Through a qualitative approach, this research analyzes how the student utilizes rhythm and lines to convey narrative in their Lino Art piece. The findings indicate that variations in rhythm and the use of different line characters can create dynamic, moving impressions, as well as evoke strong emotions. The conclusion of this study affirms that a deep understanding of rhythm and line character can enhance students' ability to create communicative and narrative-driven visual works. The implications of these findings can be applied in art education to develop students' skills in expressing themselves through visual mediums.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The line is one of the fundamental elements in visual art that plays a crucial role in creating composition and conveying visual expression (Liang, 2024). In the context of lino art, which is the art of creating visual works using the relief printing technique with linoleum as the printing medium, the line becomes the most recognizable element through the principle of solid positive-diapositive coloring that defines the character of the artwork. This research focuses on the visual analysis of lines in student lino art works, particularly how lines are used to express movement (Felipov, 2024). The study is based on the theory of formalism in art, which emphasizes the analysis of visual elements such as lines, shapes, and composition.

Lino art is a type of relief printing technique that utilizes linoleum as the recording or printing medium. Lines in lino art are created through the process of carving the linoleum printing plate, where the uncarved areas absorb ink and produce images through ink transfer onto the printing medium. This technique allows artists to explore line variations with high precision, creating complex visual effects (Harutyunyan, 2023). The lino art works in this study are the creations of students from the Visual Communication Design program at Universitas Komputer Indonesia, who participated in the Applied Printmaking Techniques course. The work analyzed in this research is a linoart piece by student Maulana Rizqi Fadilah with student ID number 51923068, which depicts a scene from the local Indonesian folktale titled \*Asal Usul Selat Bali\* ("The Legend of Naga Besukih"). As seen in **Figure 1**, this lino art work depicts a visualization of a mythological creature incarnate as a dragon believed by the Balinese people, named Naga Besukih. In the illustration, the Naga Besukih creature is seen facing a powerful human figure who can summon the Dragon, namely Sidi Mantra. The fairy tale of this creature is associated with the origin of the creation of the Bali Strait. He is said to have great power, is noble and very powerful. His scales can turn into gold and diamonds.



**Figure 1.** Student`s Lino art, the representation of a particular scene in a story tale named Asal Usul Selat Bali “Legenda Naga Besukih.”

Visual narratives or storytelling visuals refer to the use of visual elements to convey stories or messages not only effectively but also attractively, ensuring that a frame containing visual artwork has rich narrative content and stimulates the audience's imagination, even within the constraints of a limited frame size. This theory focuses on how images, composition, color, lines, and other visual elements can work together to create coherent and meaningful narratives. Visual narratives are often used in various fields, such as art, design, film, and digital media, to communicate ideas, emotions, or stories without relying entirely on text (Abdullah *et al.*, 2022).

Several research in the Journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, "Visual narratives rely on the sequential arrangement of images to convey meaning, much like how words are arranged in sentences to form a story." This indicates that visual narratives depend on the sequence and relationship between images to create a storyline, similar to how words are structured in written language (Cohn, 2013).

In the context of art, visual narratives also involve the use of elements such as rhythm, composition, and line character to create dynamics and emotion. In the journal *Visual Communication*, "the rhythm and flow of visual elements guide the viewer's eye and evoke emotional responses, enhancing the storytelling experience." This demonstrates that visual

elements do not merely serve as decoration but also as tools to direct attention and create a profound narrative experience.

This research aims to identify effective line characteristics in creating visual narratives. The results are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the role of lines in conveying stories or visual messages, as well as contribute theoretically and practically to students and practitioners of visual art and communication design in exploring the use of lines in artistic works.

A formal analysis of line character and line rhythm in lino art illustrations from the perspective of art and visual communication design involves understanding how these visual elements function to create meaning, emotion, and structure within a work. In this study, specific attention will be given to expressive lines from the standpoint of formality or basic elements (Korobko & Penkova, 2010).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To position this research within the broader academic context, the literature review will examine several previous studies related to the analysis of lines as expressive elements in illustrative artworks. This review includes studies from both national and international journals to provide relevant theoretical context and foundation for the focus of this research, which is the analysis of the movement effect created by line elements in student lino artworks.

- (i) Line as an Expressive Element in Visual Art. In his book *Point and Line to Plane* states that the line is a visual element with significant expressive power. Lines not only function as boundaries of shapes but can also express emotions, movement, and energy. Diagonal lines tend to create a dynamic impression, while horizontal and vertical lines convey stability and stillness. This theory provides an essential foundation for understanding how lines can be used to express movement in artworks (Cohn, 2013).
- (ii) Lines in the Context of Illustrative Art. In the *International Journal of Art and Design* examines the role of lines in illustrative art. The research finds that illustrators often use variations in lines (thick, thin, straight, curved) to create visual rhythm and dynamics. Wavy and intersecting lines tend to create a sense of movement, while smooth and flowing lines evoke calmness. These findings are relevant to this study, as lino art also utilizes lines to create similar visual effects (Felipov, 2021).
- (iii) Line Analysis in Relief Printing Techniques. In his book *The Art of Linocut* explores the use of lines in relief printing techniques, particularly lino art. Brown states that the carving technique on linoleum allows artists to create lines with high precision, which can be used to express texture, movement, and emotion. This study provides insights into how line characteristics in lino art can be leveraged to create complex visual effects, including movement (Felipov, 2021).
- (iv) Lines and the Perception of Movement in Gestalt Theory. In the *Journal of Visual Arts Research* investigates the relationship between line characteristics and the perception of movement based on Gestalt theory. Johnson finds that intersecting or wavy lines tend to create a sense of fast and energetic movement, while straight and parallel lines convey stability and stillness. These findings support this research, which focuses on analyzing the movement effect of line elements in lino artworks (Korobko & Penkova, 2010).
- (v) Case Study of Lines in Student Artworks. In the *Journal of Fine Arts and Design* examines the use of lines in student artworks in Indonesia. The study finds that students often use

lines to express emotions and movement, albeit with varying degrees of success. This research provides a relevant local context for the current study, which also focuses on student works (Guay *et al.*, 2013).

- (vi) Lines as an Expressive Tool in Contemporary Art. A study by in the Contemporary Art Review explores the use of lines in contemporary art. Lee finds that lines are frequently used as an expressive tool to create visual dynamics and rhythm. The study also highlights the importance of experimenting with line variations to create innovative visual effects. These findings are relevant to this research, which focuses on exploring movement effects in lino art works (Guay *et al.*, 2013).
- (vii) Positioning This Research in the Context of Previous Studies. This research positions itself as a continuation of previous studies, with a specific focus on analyzing the movement effect of line elements in student lino art works. Unlike previous studies that broadly discuss lines in illustrative art or printing techniques, this research delves deeper into how line characteristics (thick, thin, straight, curved) are used to express movement in the context of lino art. By combining visual theory, case studies, and formal analysis, this research is expected to contribute new insights into understanding the role of lines as expressive elements in visual art.

### 3. METHODS

This research aims to analyze the role of line composition in creating movement or dynamic effects, thereby building attractive and dramatic visual narratives in student lino art works that depict a scene from the folktale “Asal Usul Selat Bali”. The research methodology is designed to identify and interpret how line elements in illustrations are used to convey visual impressions. A qualitative approach is employed, utilizing formal visual analysis methods, which are grounded in art theory and supported by citations from relevant international journals.

#### (i) Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach with a focus on formal visual analysis. This approach is chosen to deeply examine visual elements such as lines, shapes, and composition, as well as their relationship with visual narratives. The formal visual analysis method is based on art theory proposed in the book “Art as Image and Idea”, which emphasizes the analysis of visual elements and design principles (Kimball, 2013).

#### (ii) Research Object

The research object is student lino art works that explore visual narrative themes from the folktale. The works are selected based on the following criteria:

- (a) Use of lines as a dominant element.
- (b) Clear conveyance of a story or visual message.
- (c) Variation in line characteristics (thick, thin, straight, curved).

#### (iii) Data Collection Techniques

- (a) Direct Observation: Observing student lino artworks to identify line characteristics and their relationship with visual narratives. Thirty students have completed lino art projects. During the data collection phase, two lino art works from two students were selected based on a rubric for assessing student works to determine which pieces are suitable for formal analysis of line expression in lino art. The assessment criteria include:
  - Relevance to the research theme, specifically visualizations that prominently feature lines as movement effects.
  - Originality and innovation, ensuring the works are authentic representations of student ideas.

- Visual and aesthetic quality.
  - Clarity of concept and design narrative, focusing on traditional folktales from Indonesia and around the world.
- (b) Visual Documentation: Taking photographs or images of the lino artworks for further analysis.
- (c) Interviews: Conducting interviews with the student creators to understand their intentions and objectives in using lines in their works.
- (iv) Data Analysis Techniques
- Data analysis is conducted using formal visual analysis methods, which include the following steps:
- (a) Description : Identifying and describing line elements in the lino artworks, including line types (straight, curved, diagonal), thickness, and direction.
- (b) Formal Analysis : Analyzing the relationship between line characteristics and design principles such as rhythm, balance, and contrast. This analysis is based on Gestalt theory, which posits that human visual perception tends to interpret visual elements as meaningful wholes (Rank, 2008).
- (c) Interpretation : Interpreting how line characteristics are used to create visual narratives. This step involves symbolic and contextual analysis to understand the messages or stories conveyed through lines.

With this methodology, the research is expected to provide new insights into the role of line characteristics in creating visual narratives, particularly in the context of student lino artworks.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Lines in artistic drawing serve as expressive tools, where their attributes—such as thickness, direction, and fluidity—can evoke specific emotional responses, from aggression to calmness. Formal analysis of line character and line rhythm in illustrative drawings from the perspective of visual communication art and design involves an understanding of how these visual elements function to create meaning, emotion, and structure in a work. The following is an in-depth analysis of these two aspects (Felipov, 2021).

##### (i) Line Characteristics

Line characteristics refer to the physical properties of lines used in illustrations, such as thickness, length, direction, texture, and shape. These characteristics can influence the visual message and emotions conveyed.

##### (a) Line Thickness.

- Thick lines are evident in the depiction of the dragon's body, forming large, curved lines. These thick lines, representing the dragon's body, occupy significant space, creating a sense of fullness. This fullness conveys dynamism and strength, surpassing other line elements. The thick lines also give the dragon a strong, bold, and dominant character. Additionally, they create a visual focus, positioning the dragon as the center of interest. The large, thick curved lines further enhance the dragon's powerful presence within the frame.
- Thin Lines. Thin lines appear in the depiction of the dragon's body as additional details, representing the scales typically found on snakes or dragons. These lines are shown as thin, repetitive curves that follow the rhythm of the thicker lines above. The repetitive thin curves serve as secondary elements, reinforcing the character's role and adding

strength through their repetitive variation. These thin lines also convey a sense of dynamism, suggesting that the dragon is in motion (See **Figure 2**).



**Figure 2.** The elements that show variative curve and thick lines, and its direction in dragon's element.

(b) Line Direction

- Vertical Lines. Although the artwork primarily uses curved lines for its manual illustration technique, there are curves that suggest a vertical impression. These implied vertical lines, forming the dragon's body and head, evoke a sense of stability and superiority. The implied vertical lines within the curves also create a formal or monumental impression, symbolizing reverence for a majestic figure (as defined in the KBBI, the Indonesian dictionary). In mythology, the dragon represents a figure from Nusantara folklore. Straight lines are also visible in the depiction of a seated human figure, where vertical lines convey precision, though they appear in the minority.
- Horizontal Lines: Horizontal lines evoke a sense of calm, peace, and expansiveness. They are often used to create a stable atmosphere or emphasize gentle, sloping elements (See **Figure 3**).



**Figure 3.** The elements that show vertical lines.

- Diagonal Lines: Diagonal lines create dynamism, movement, and tension. In illustrations, diagonal lines can be used to depict action or drama.

(c) Line Shape

- Straight Lines: Straight lines appear in the depiction of shadowed landforms, such as irregular rocks. The angles depicted suggest uneven terrain, like rocks or small hills. Straight lines are in the minority.
- Curved Lines: Curved lines dominate the visualization, technically enhancing the natural or handcrafted feel, which is difficult to replicate. Visually, they create a varied and dynamic impression. These curved lines depict soft, flowing elements and are primarily used as decorative ornaments. The curved lines representing the dragon's body also appear wavy and intersecting, creating a sense of flowing movement. Emphasizes that

curved lines in paintings dynamically translate the artist's emotions into visible motion, creating a sense of organic rhythm that resonates with viewers (Liang, 2024).

(d) Line Texture

- Rough Textured Lines: These lines are a result of the technical process of lino art printing, which produces a specific grain. Emotionally, they convey a strong sense of intensity.

(ii) Line Rhythm

Line rhythm refers to the repetition, variation, and patterns of lines that create a sense of movement or flow in an illustration. Line rhythm influences how the viewer's eye moves

- (a) Line Repetition. There is a repetition of thick and thin lines. Thin lines are visible in the ornamental details of the dragon's head decorations and the depiction of clouds. Thick lines are evident in the dragon's body. The variation in line thickness, achieved through positive and diapositive coloring, creates a dynamic and engaging rhythm.
- (b) Line Variation. Variations in line thickness, length, or direction within the illustration create contrast and attractiveness. The thick lines of the dragon's body are composed alongside thin lines depicting ornamental decorations on the dragon's head, creating a visual focus on the head and the dragon's expression. Analysis shows that the student used line variations to express movement. Diagonal and curved lines dominate, creating dynamism, while implied vertical lines in the human figure and horizontal lines representing the terrain are used to balance the composition.
- (c) Line Patterns. There are irregular or organic line patterns, creating a spontaneous and natural impression. These patterns are often used in expressive or artistic illustrations, which is related to the technical process of creating lino art.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of rhythm and character of lines in students' lino art reveals that curved lines dominate the compositions, primarily serving as a stylistic choice for decorative ornamentation. The undulating lines create a dynamic impression, evoking a sense of fluid movement that guides the viewer's eye through the artwork. The repetitive patterns accompanying these curved lines optically direct attention to specific areas, particularly the head adorned with decorative elements, emphasizing the character's elevated and powerful status. This strategic use of lines not only enhances the visual appeal but also reinforces the narrative by highlighting the significance of the depicted figure. Furthermore, the variation in line thickness, achieved through positive and diapositive coloring techniques, contributes to a dynamic and engaging rhythm within the artwork. The interplay of thick and thin lines adds depth and texture, creating a visually stimulating experience. This study underscores the importance of line character and rhythm in lino art, demonstrating how these elements can effectively convey visual narratives and evoke emotional responses. The findings highlight the potential of lines as a powerful tool for storytelling and aesthetic expression in printmaking, offering valuable insights for both students and practitioners in the field of visual arts.

## 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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