Lecture – 25

Line is a visual element that is mainly used to delineate shape in any kind of visual expression. But, line also has its own entity and identity and line can also be free from a shape, because when see line in like all over us, they come as certain identity. So, there is nothing called a contour line that is found in nature, there are lines in nature that are actually not lying, but just has a linear feel to it.

Like for example, we have shapes like twigs, ropes and we may say that it has a linear feeling. But, line is something that is like a helping tool for us; that gives us a building structure and whenever we try to express our ideas on paper or on any other surface; we take help of this line. So, line is basically man made, and we will see what are the different ways that we can make the best use of line and how we interpret line, how we make use of line in a visual expression.

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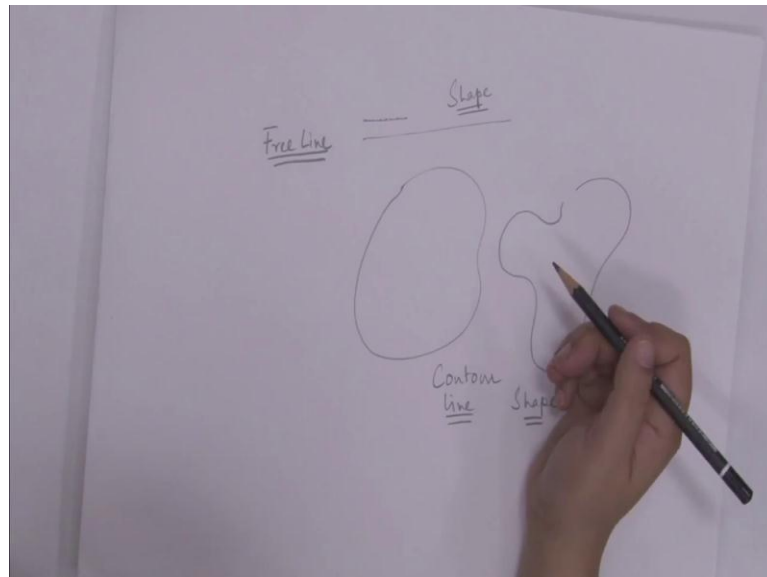
So, line is an integration of many points. So, we have many points that we keep on joining and that gives us a sense of a line, it can also happen that in art, we consider it as a moving dot. So, we start from a point, it is a dot and then we keep on travelling. So, it

is a combination of many dots that are placed side by side. So, that is how we look at line, it also happens that, when we talk about a shape, we use line in a particular order; that we start from a point. We travel and we make sure that we come back to the same point and that produces a shape.

We either come back to the point or we decide to come close to the point in whatever way. So, we come closer to the point and we join the gap mentally. So, these are the two ways, where we start from a point and we come back to the point. And then the line gets the identity of a contour line or a border to delineate a shape; that is one identity that the line has, but line is free from that. So, we can also free the line, a free line may not produce a shape unnecessarily. So, a free line has a different character, let us see how it works.

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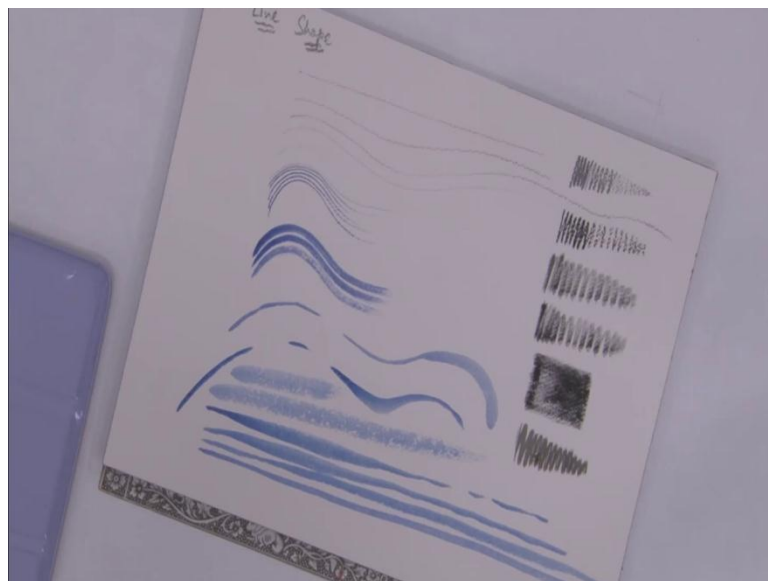
So, a free line is a line that does not start from a point or even if it starts from a point, it does not necessarily come back to the same point. So, it may go in this order, it may also go in this order. So, it is a combination of many points that has it is own way of movement, it is an identity that is free from the identity of a shape. So, line can be line or the line can be a shape, let us talk about the different nature of line.

So, when we produce line with the use of a pencil, we can also make gradients in the line. When, we press it too hard, we get a lighter line and then it can also produce a line, which is much lighter, it can be darker, it totally depends on how much pressure, we are

adding to it. Similarly, when we pick up another material, may be a pencil that is made out of charcoal, we get a line, which is different from this, that is a character of a charcoal.

We may also produce line with brush, a dry brush, a thinner line; it is not possible to get a smooth line anywhere here, because the surface is not smooth. So, every time, we are touching our brush or pencil on the surface we end up getting multiple points, because of the rough surface. So, it totally depends on the quality of the surface and quality of the material, how the quality of line will be operated.

So, if we have a diluted brush line with more water, we can ignore the surface texture; that will absorb more water. We may use thinner brush to get thin lines, which are very thin and fine. So, all the lines produced by a particular brush tip will generate a similar thickness in the line and then we can change the brush and see, how it results. We can change the brush that has a different characteristic and the brush line will change in it is nature.

We may also choose to use a very fat brush and use it to get different gradients in line. So, we start with it is tip which is thin, we can also leave a gap by lifting it at certain point, continue press it, it becomes thicker another line in the same way. So, a thicker brush has some advantage that we can start from a very thin point, make it thick, lift it, make it very thin. So, these are the possibilities of creating line and there are off course many more.
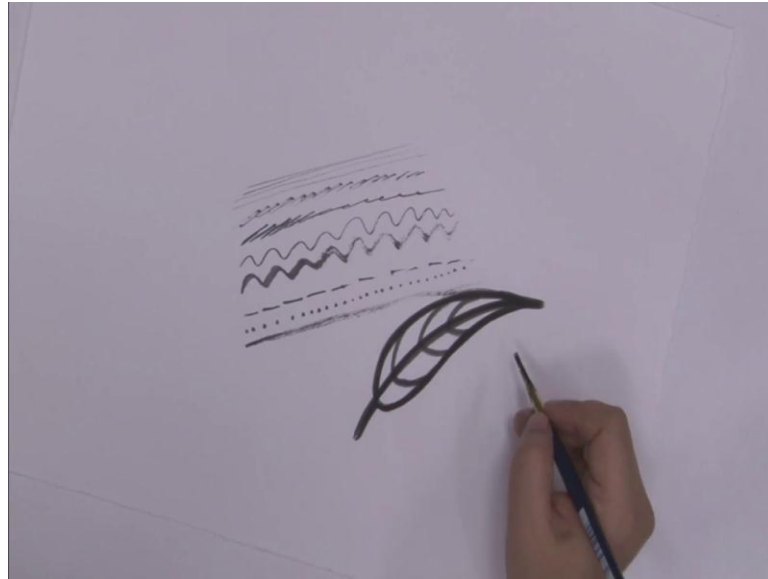
So, when line appears just as a line and not as a shape, it also expresses different emotion or mental state through it. So, if the line is like this or if it is purposely like this or it is just a curvature it is thick, dry, it can also be broken, can be dotted. So, if we want to show nothing but a simple shape, we can straight away go like that. So, this is a simple thick line with no much expression into it, there is no variation as such and the only function of this line would be to talk about a shape.

So, we will see the shape and we will identify it as a leaf and we will not ask any other questions regarding how much light is falling on this leaf or what other things happening with then leaf. So, as line appears as only line and not as a shape, it has its own identity, it has its own free quality into it. We do not read it with in association with any other form; that is known to us.

But, there can be other options also that we create a shape through a line and the line itself without any texture or any anything on the surface. It can also tell us, whether it is a two dimensional form or like it also has a volume, it has some three dimensionalities to it. It totally depends on the quality of the line drawing that we are producing that it can be very, very communicative and that is one reason; that sometimes we say that line drawings are complete.

So, if you are producing a line drawing, you may not need any other thing, you may not need a surface texture, you may not even need to color it. Because, if we see things in

terms of the value, the properties of the visual elements, then line itself can complete a visual representation. So, line is capable of producing emotion as we have seen in the earlier drawings that when you are going very steady with your line, it shows a steady and mental state.

When you have emphasis on some lines, which have broken, it may also show some of the hesitation of your mind. So, it also happens that, when you want to go in a flow, we hold our breath and then go very steady. So, it totally depends what how you express yourself through the line that you are producing; it is an identity of the artist, who is applying the line on the given surface. So, line is very important and we will see, how line works and what are the different kinds of lines that we can produce, how we can create more variation into line.

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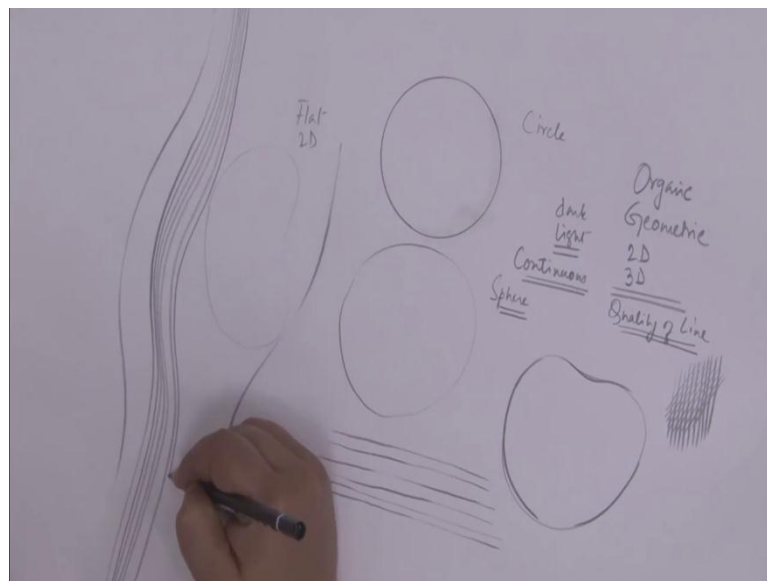
So, let us see how line works as a shape, if we put an even pressure with the pencil and create a shape like this, it will look rather flat or two dimensional. To get a three dimensional quality in a similar line, we need to have more variation. So, when we say that, we want a circle to be converted into a sphere, we take some other measures. So, we see a line, which is having less variation.

So, we call it a circle, but then if we have a line, which is not as flat as this, it is rather having a volume in the line, we increase the pressure, we decrease it, increase the pressure once again, this circular form will look more voluminous. So, it will be

something, which is close to a sphere. So, that way by changing the pressure in the line by making it dark and light in a continuous order, we can create a great sense of volume in a shape.

So, a shape that is something which can be either organic or geometric, it can be two dimensional or three dimensional, it totally gets operated with the operational factor that we can apply in our quality of line. So, if we make a shape like this, which is more like a pebble, very organic, it will by the use of this line with slight variation. We can give it a sense of volume; we can also increase the volume by overlapping the darkness. But, if we can do it in a single go like this, this will be more preferable.

So, let us try and see, how we can make a good rendering in a single line. This way we can keep practicing and improve our control over the line that we are producing. So, you start from a high pressure, lower your pressure to absolutely lift it, you start with a low pressure, you go deeper, you go light and dark. In fact, while we apply stroke on a paper, we need to have a proper control over that, we should also be able to make line that does not start and end. So, this is a line in continuity, another line in continuity, liner with changing proximity.

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So, let us draw a contour line again for a shape and then go for a cross contour line to define a shape; that is when we start like this, then go on and on and on or. So, with the use of some horizontal line or line in a horizontal formation, we can get a sense of a

shape with the kind of depression, the concave convex formation, the shape can have. So, let us also have a variation with the same cross contour formation in a vertical order, vertical cross contours. So, we are absolutely use lines, which are either contour or cross contour to delineate a shape.

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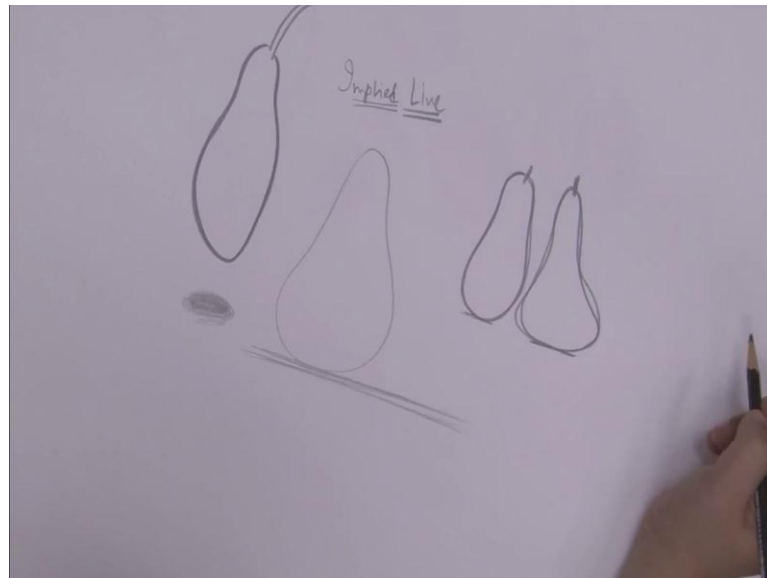
So, line can also be implied, where we have a shape and the base is not very well defined. So, we main make a guess that it has a base, where the line is not very prominent. If we have more than two objects in the same formation, so here we have two lines, but it gives us a sense of a line; that is the base, which is not showing. We can also have objects that are hanging with no sense of base and that makes us imagine, that there can be a shadow formation somewhere here. So, that will give us a sense of a line; that is the form of the implied line, where it is implicit.
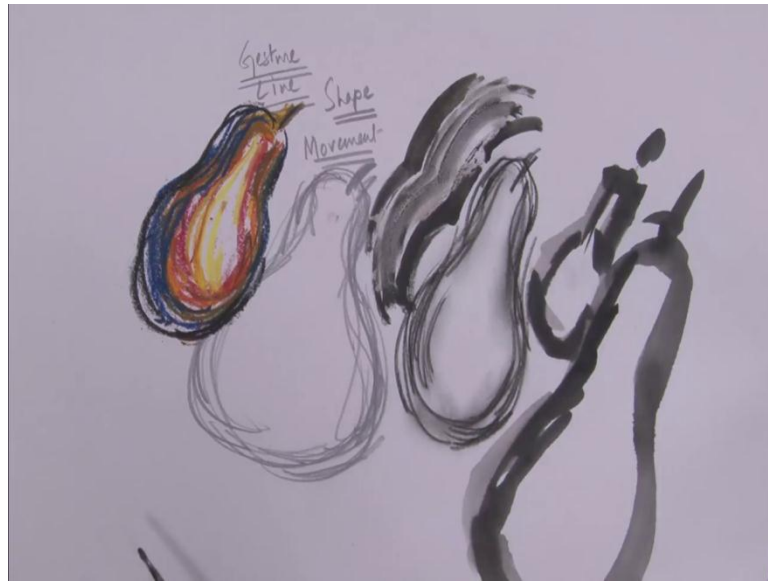
A shape can also be a little less defined and we can you a gesture line to show that like this, where it does not have a definite contour. So, we give ourselves a practice before we actually make our hand move, because gesture line is not actually about the shape, but rather than shape, we emphasized on movement. So, what we do we make our hand move and finally, we come up with lines with no definite contour and this is perhaps, the right example for a gesture drawing.

So, these are the type of line; that is known as gesture line, we use that in different medium in different way. So, this is done with a pencil and create some gesture line with the use of a charcoal pencil with a smudge effect. The things are not that well defined, one example of gesture line, we can create gesture line with brushening. So, the shape is not very well defined, they are just there, we can use colors to draw gesture lines, multiple colors to give it a volume.

So, it is a bunch of line that is present there and we do not know definitely, which one is the right contour. Every time, we make a control line, it gives us a sense of a shape and we spoil that possibility by making more lines. So, gesture line gives us a sense of a movement and we use gesture line in different contexts as per it is need. We can also use some very indefinite line by changing the quality of the surface.

So, we make the quality of the surface a little oily, then we try to apply some line on the oily surface and we get some texture here, because of the oil water ratio that does not

work too well. So, we get some line with a different surface quality that is also implied at some part the more watery it is, the more invisible it becomes, because of the component of oil. We are also familiar with the formation of the mental lines, where the line is not present there actually, but through the proximity, we try to give it some kind of a shape.

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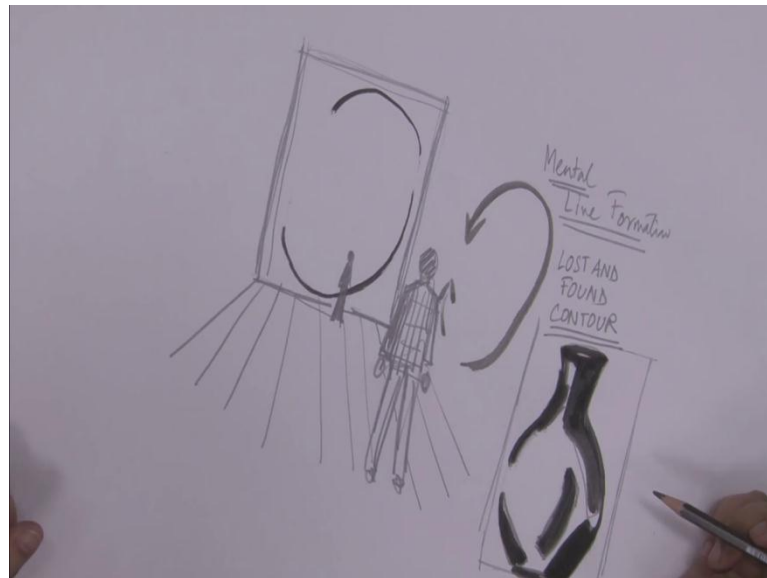
So, if it starts from here and does not actually come back here or it is not totally continuous, we still call it or read it as a shape, but there should be proximity maintain there. So, if the lines are as close as this, we fill up this gap mentally and it gives us a feel that the line was continuous here. Even, if the proximity is this big, we mentally connect them, because these two ends are going in a certain direction.

So, through the direction we mentally connect them, it is more obvious, when we make a line, which has an arrow like formation. So, you have an indicative arrow coming in one direction and we mentally connect them, it may also block the form. But, what if we see it from a very close proximity, if the shape is enlarged, it is very big and if we take reference to a human form that is this big.

So, this particular form is drawn on a very large place and the viewer is as tall as this, then because of the viewing distance, we may not connect the forms effectively. So, it totally depends on the visual distance, if we have certain gaps from a far away distance, if we are standing somewhere here as a viewer the gap will be made up, because of the

holistic approach that we take here as a viewer. But, as we go close to the form, we will see it in part.

So, unless we have a holistic vision, we may not make use of the psychic formation of line, what is known as the mental line or the psychic line. They may not be as effective as when you take a far away view, you see it from a real view and you get the form. So, while using the mental line formation, we will have to be extra careful, regarding the viewers distance from the object.

If we keep the other aspects in mind, then we can get very interesting and effective result out of this psychic line formation. We can also create a lost and found contour through the use of psychic formation as we know I will write it down, lost and found contour. So, you create a shape, you can also take some general association of lighten shade; that is that can be referred from the nature that you make a shape of a maybe a vase. You start, you make it very deep, you leave it as some point, make it continuous, make it dark, make it very dark, very dark, leave it here.

So, what we find in this whole shape are lines, which are very thick, a very thick line here round a very thick patch; that is part of the contour line. Another line here which are almost like shapes, some lines are totally disconnected, some are connected, but through this lost and found contour line, where it is lost here, again you find it here. It gives us a sense of continuity and it also gives us a sense of a shape, where we have some cross contours to show the surface. There are multiple lines to render the form into it is lighten dark rendering.

So, through the variation through some missing parts, we get a sense of a volume, which can be very, very effective. So, we tried out different kind of line, some are the gesture lines, some are the actual line, which is coming as a contour, it can be a cross contour, they can be implied explicit, it can also be totally missing and psychic. But, we need to know in our mind that line is nothing that is basically found in nature, but we are the creators of lines.

At the same time, we have objects with linear feels and we need to be observant and we need to continuously watch the functioning of line, how line is also talking the lighten shade by the variation of different pressure that we create with our hand with rather with our mind and how line changes in it is character. So, in our next lecture, we are going to

see how the characteristic of line gives a new shape, it gives birth to new forms and also it tries and successfully creates association of nature in it is delineation.