

## Expressive Line #2



**Activity page for:**

Image 5: George Grosz, *Franz Jung gewidmet/Dedicated to Franz Jung*, 1917

Image 24: Otto Herbig, *Das Bad/The Bath*, 1921

Image 27: Max Beckmann, *Selbstbildnis/Self-Portrait*, 1922



### ***Try this:***

#### **Option A (for everyone)**

Use the list on the next page of line qualities and their associations to attempt to “read” each one of the pieces mentioned above.

#### **Option B (for the more artistically inclined)**

Let George Grosz and Otto Herbig inspire you as you create a witty and original line composition of your own. Challenge your technical control by drawing the finished version with a nib pen and liquid ink.



## The Expressive Qualities of Line

### VERTICAL

Vertical lines are static, inactive, and appear to be “at rest”. They express stability. They are used to show dignity, poise, stiffness, and formality.

e.g. Think of a row of soldiers standing at attention...

### HORIZONTAL

Horizontal lines are also static. They express feelings of peace, rest, quiet, stability. They create feelings of permanence or solidarity. They make use feel relaxed and calm.

e.g. Think of the ocean when it is calm, the earth that we stand on (a horizontal surface)...

### CURVED

Curved lines change direction, and therefore they express activity. How much activity depends on the type and the direction of the curve: A more gradual curve is calmer, while a tight spiral is hypnotic...

e.g. Think of the gentle curve of a grassy slope vs. a snake’s hypnotically spiraling eyes in a Disney cartoon...

### DIAGONAL

Diagonal lines express instability, tension, activity, excitement. They can appear to be either rising or falling, and this uncertainty make use feel uncomfortable. Diagonal lines can be used to add tension.

However, think of the roof of a house. Here, two diagonal lines meet and “support” each other. In this case, diagonal lines are more stable.

### ZIGZAG

Zigzag lines are extremely active. They can create confusion, and may evoke feelings of excitement and nervousness. However, the degree of intensity is indicated by the direction of the zigzag (think of a picket fence vs. a lightning bolt).