TEXTURE in ART

Docent Training

Juried Fine Arts Exhibition 2017, and FRESH AIR

In the visual arts, texture is the perceived surface quality of a work of art. It may be perceived physically, through the sense of touch, or visually, or both. Our experience of texture in visual art relies on our experience with the physical world. Use of texture, along with other elements of design, can help to tell stories and evoke emotions.

- Physical Texture
- Implied Texture
- Pattern

Physical/Actual/Tactile Texture

- Physical textures (also known as *actual texture* or *tactile texture*) are the patterns of dimensional variations in a physical surface. Physical texture can be felt by touching the surface of the object or material.

- Physical texture may also be perceived visually without physical contact.

- Light and shadow are important factors in the visual experience of physical texture. The physical profile of the texture casts shadows that help us perceive texture.

- The visual experience of physical texture is also informed by previous experience with the physical world.

Visual/Implied Texture

- *Visual texture* is the illusion/representation of physical texture. It is created by the manipulation of light and shadow to mimic the visual experience of physical texture.

Since this is a slide show, all of the images are IMPLIED TEXTURE!

This is a close-up photo of a Van Gogh painting. The light and shadow in the photograph represent the tactile dimensions of his impasto technique. Artists can manipulate paint and other media to create physical/tactile texture in their work. However, for the most part, we experience this physical texture visually. We are not usually invited to touch the art.

This is another example of visual texture. We have a physical experience of it because we know what fur feels like. We transfer our previous physical experience to the image to imagine what it feels like to handle this object.

The texture, combined with the forms, are unsettling. We don't want as much as an eyelash in our tea, let alone a small rabbit pelt. The texture evokes an emotional response.

Meret Oppenheim, 1936

Our experience of visual texture relies on our previous experience of physical texture.

We know what this jello feels like. We know that it is chilled. We might even be able to imagine what it taste like.
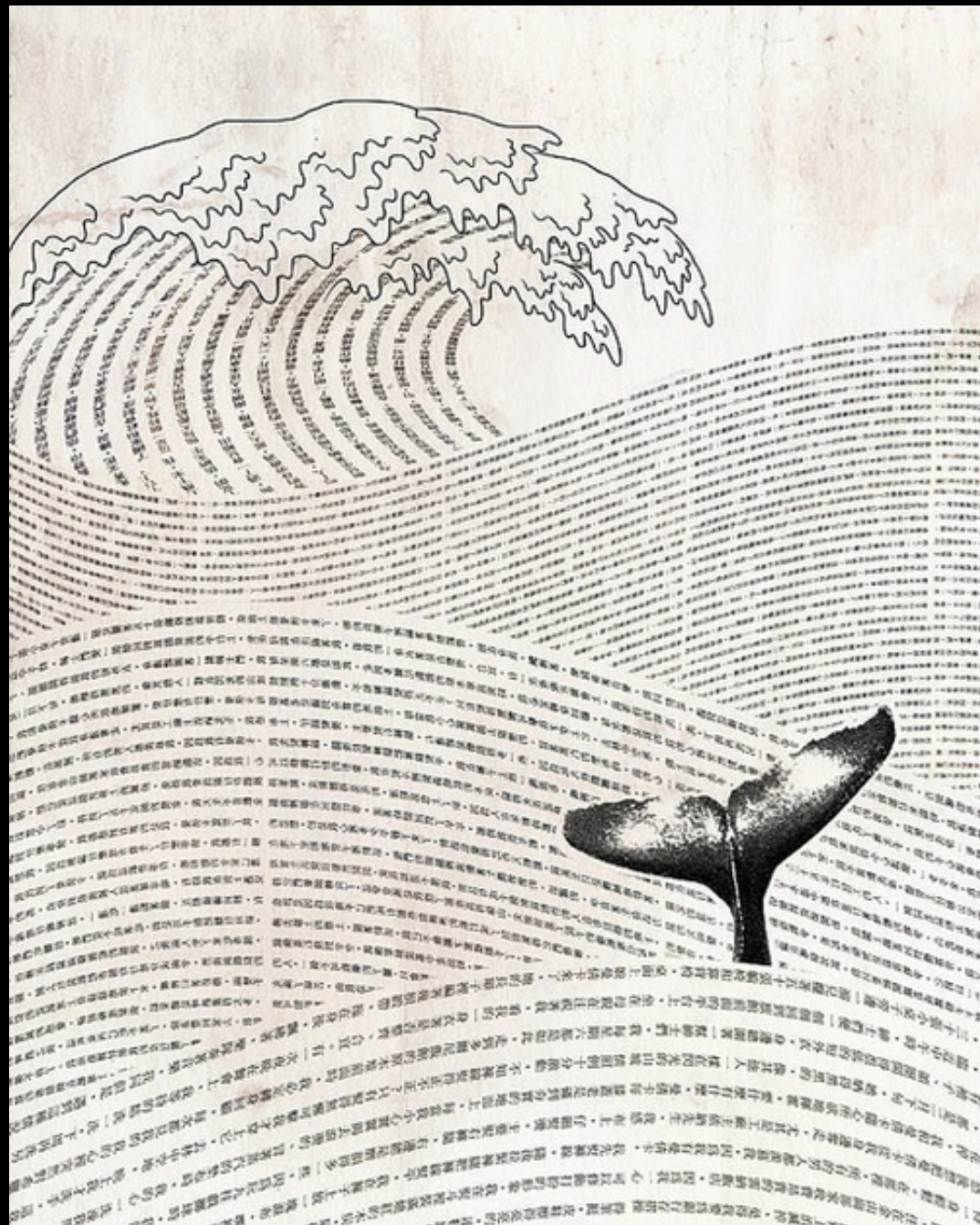
We have many words to describe texture.
The words alone, without any image or object, can evoke our experience of texture through our imagination and memories.

Abrasive,
Acute,
Angular,
Arid,
Ballooned,
Bendable,
Biting,
Blemished,
Blistered,
Boiling,
Bouncy,
Bristly,
Broad,
Bubbly,
Bulging,
Bumpy,
Burning,
Burnished,
Bushy,
Caked,
Caressing,
Carved,

Chafing,
Channeled,
Chapped,
Cheap,
Cheerful,
Chunky,
Clammy,
Clean,
Clear,
Coagulated,
Coarse,
Coating,
Cold,
Concentrated,
Confused,
Cool,
Copious,
Corduroy,
Corrugated,
Cottony,
Covering,
Cratered,
Crawly,

Creamy,
Creepy,
Crocheted,
Crude,
Crumbly,
Curdled,
Cushioned,
Cut,
Cutting,
Damaged,
Damp,
Dank,
Decorated,
Deep,
Defective,
Definite,
Dehydrated,
Dense,
Dented,
Difficult,
Dirty,
Discoloration

Disfigured,
Distended,
Downy,
Dreary,
Drenched,
Dripping,
Dry,
Ductile,
Dull,
Durable,
Dusty,
Effective,
Elastic,
Emblazoned,
Embossed,
Enameled,
Encrusted,
Engraved,
Enlarged,
Etched,
Even,
Expanded,
Feathery,

Fiery,
Filmy,
Filthy,
Fine,
Firm,
Flattened,
Flawless,
Fleecy,
Fluted,
Foamy,
Freezing,
Fresh,
Frigid,
Frothy,
Furry,
Fuzzy,
Glassy,
Glazed,
Glossy,
Glutinous,
Gooey,
Grainy,

Granular,
Grating,
Gravelly,
Greasy ,
Grimy,
Grinding,
Gripped,
Gritty,
Grooved,
Grubby,
Grungy,
Hairy,
Hard,
Hard ,
Harsh,
Hatched,
Hazy,
Heated,
Hoarse,
Honeyed,
Hot,
Humid,

Hygienic,
Icy,
Immaculate,
Impenetrable,
Imprinted,
Incised,
Incisive,
Indented,
Inflated,
Inflexible,
Inlaid,
Inscribed,
Inviting,
Ironed,
Irregular,
Itching,
Ivory,
Jagged,
Jarring,
Jumbled,

ECT......

Words, type, or letterforms, divorced from their phonetics and definitions, can also be arranged to create textures that evoke tactile experiences.

Van Gogh represented a great variety of textures through the simple use of line. Notice the repetition of lines that mimics the patterns of actual textures in the landscape. You can see here that there is a relationship between pattern and texture. If you filter out the physical evocation of implied texture, you are left with pattern
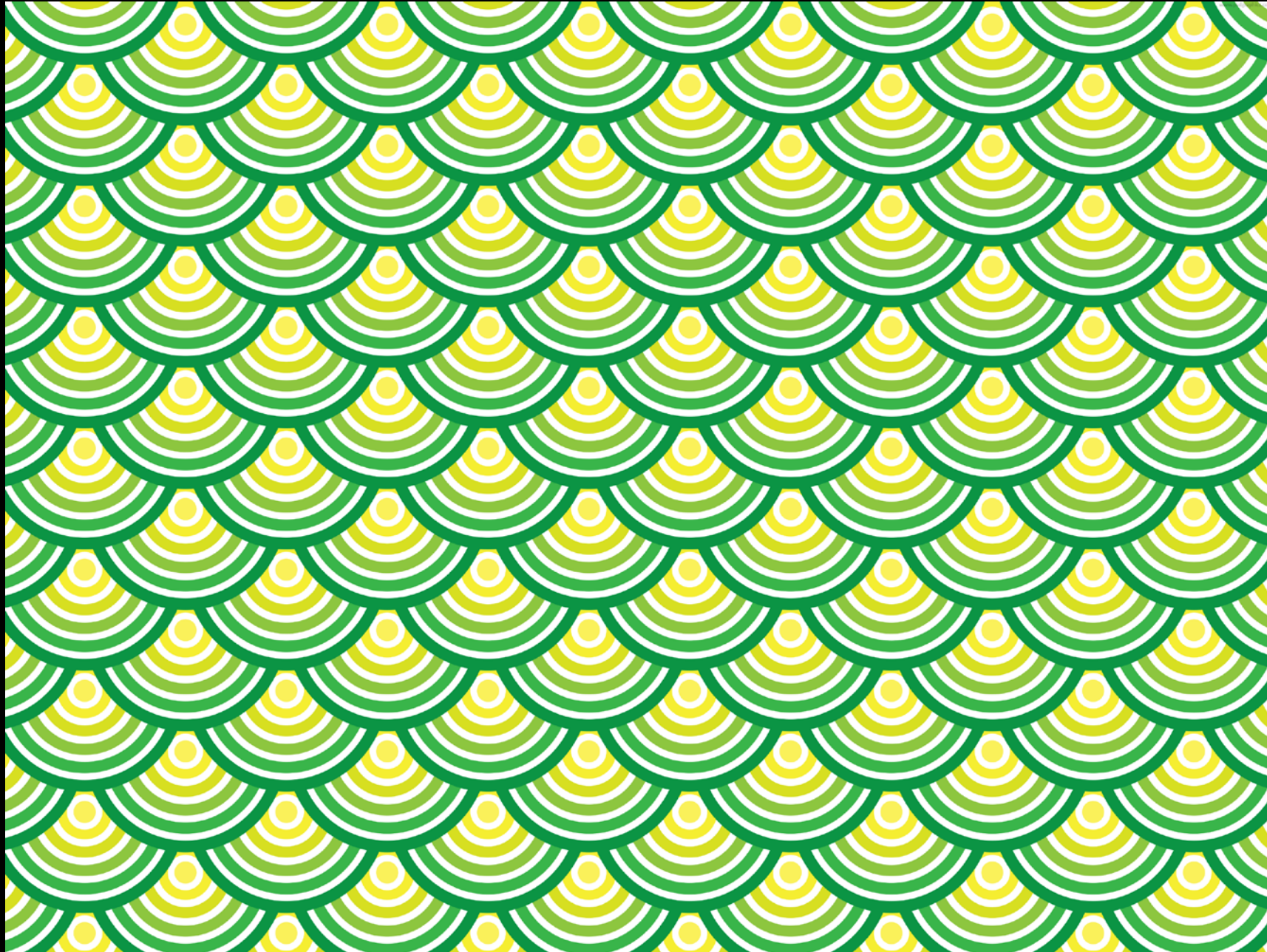
Pattern

- Visual texture may be abstracted or stylized into pattern.

A close-up photograph of fish and fish scales. Notice the role of light and shadow in rendering of the texture. Photography is very good at representing light, shadow, and texture.

This is an example of a drawing of fish scales that evokes a tactile dimension through the use of line weight, density and shading.

This is an example of a fish scale pattern. It is abstracted from the pattern of physical texture. It may remotely evoke an imagination of tactile experience, however, it functions more as pattern than implied texture.
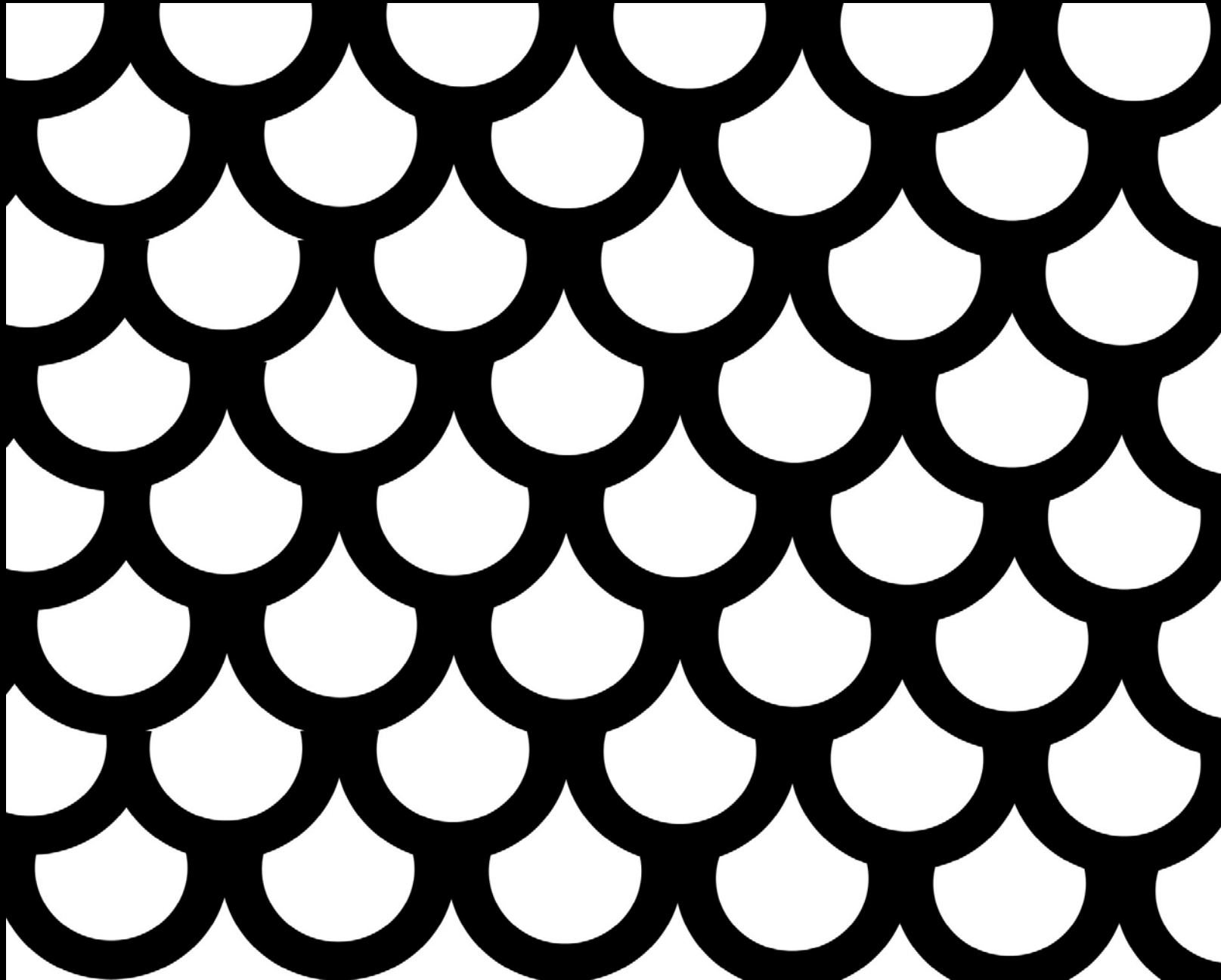
This fish scale pattern is further distilled into simple black and white, moving further from the experience of texture into the realm of pattern.

Tour the exhibitions

- Look for physical/actual texture. What do you imagine that the textures feel like? How do you know?

- What is the role of texture in the work?

- How was the texture created? How were materials manipulated to create the physical/actual texture?

- Look for visual/implied textures in the exhibitions. What textures to they represent? What physical responses do they evoke? How do they feel (virtually).

- What media and techniques were used to create the visual/implied textures?

- What is the role of texture in the work?
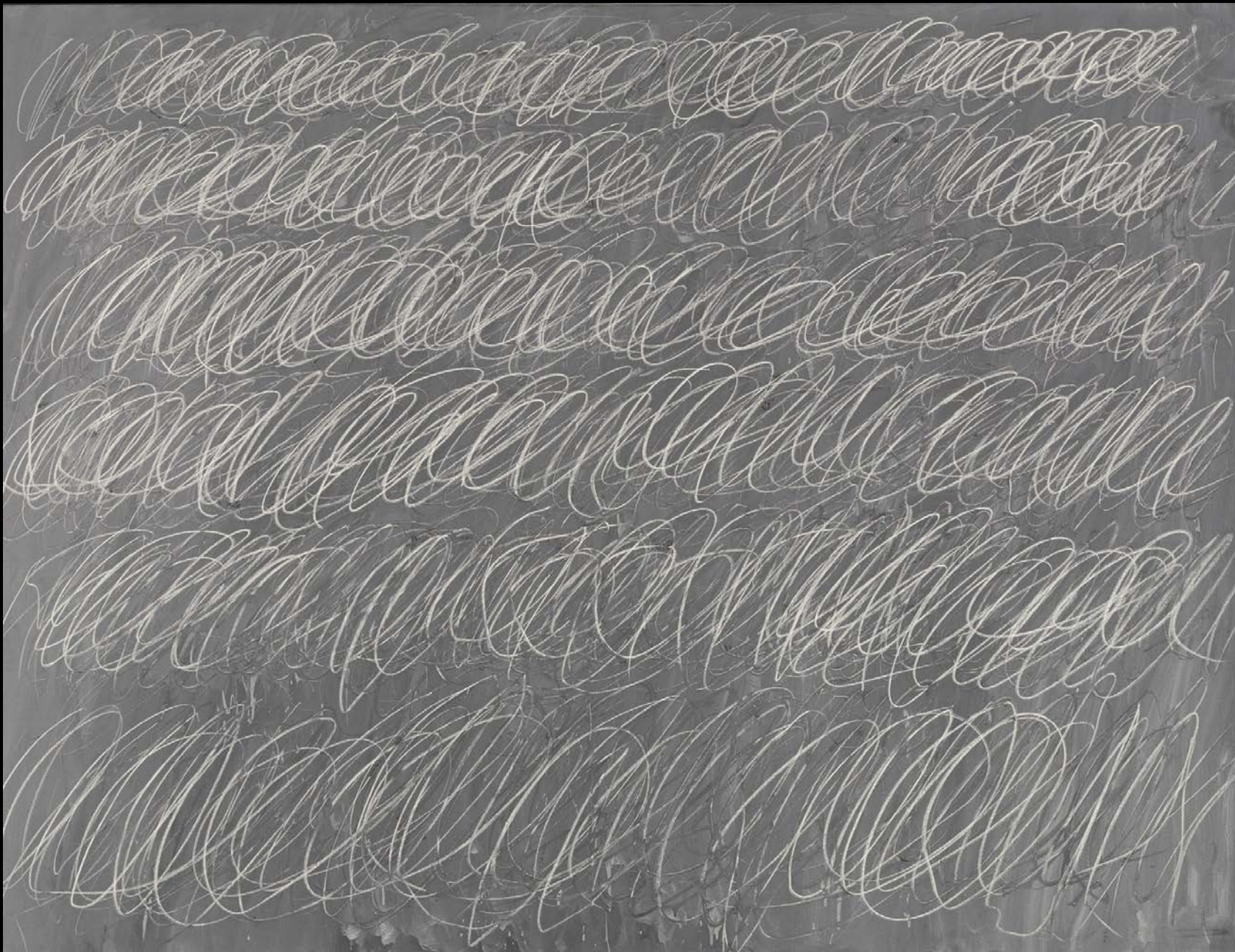
Abstract and non-objective art may also have visual texture when it engages our tactile imagination

Cy Twombly

- Look for patterns in the exhibitions. Were they abstracted from physical textures?

- How were the patterns created? What media an techniques were used?

- How are the elements repeated and how is the pattern organized?

- What is the role of pattern in the work?