

ELEMENTS OF ART and PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

COMPOSITION

An orderly arrangement of elements using the principles of design

The principles of design help you to carefully plan and organize the elements of art so that you will hold interest and command attention. This is sometimes referred to as visual impact. In any work of art there is a thought process for the arrangement and use of the elements of design. The artist who works with the principles of good composition will create a more interesting piece of art it will be arranged to show a pleasing rhythm and movement. The center of interest will be strong and the viewers will not look away, instead, they will be drawn into the work. A good knowledge of composition is essential in producing good artwork. Some artists today like to bend or ignore these rules and therefore are experimenting with different forms of expression. We think that composition is very important. The following will assist you in understanding the basics of a good composition.

ELEMENTS OF ART

The Elements of Art are the building blocks of an artistic creation, a "visual language" or "visual alphabet" used by the artist. These are the primary aspects of visual perception. Every art work can be described by reference to these elements. For example, an art work will have strong line work or an absence of lines. An art work may have heavy use of tone or a complete lack of tone.

LINE , COLOR, TEXTURE, SHAPE, FORM, VALUE, SIZE

COLOR	TONE	TEXTURE	LINE	SHAPE/FORM
The visual sensation dependent on the reflection or absorption of light.	Means variation in the lightness or darkness of color used.	The surface quality of materials either actual (tactile) or implied (visual).	Our eyes see boundaries of objects in terms of lines. Line delineates shape and form.	Shape is the two dimensional space created by line or a boundary of color, tone or texture. form is the shape of a 3 dimensional object.
DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS
vivid subtle/brilliant primary colors secondary tertiary complementary analogous warm cool color contrasting monochrome color scheme	subtle muted flat tone light/dark chiaroscuro absence of tone tonal changes depth contrast shadow reflection	rough/coarse smooth fine prickly embossed slippery crinkly fluffy silky woolly tactile spiky	fine/thick curving/straight vertical/horizontal jagged/zigzag directional meandering broken dotted spiral wavy contour parallel	geometric shapes square triangular circular organic/biomorphic curvaceous/curvy angular round/full figurative abstract form semi abstract cubist forms

palette muddy gloomy pigment hue value spectrum earthy mood tone shade tint neutralize blending graduated		hard shiny soft silky rusty flaky lumpy touch surface hairy scaly grained dull sandy	outline wiggly diagonal perpendicular horizontal flowing vertical edge hatched crosshatched blind contour stroke	primitive forms muscular forms elongated cylinder cone cone cube 3D 2D irregular
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PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

The Principles of Design are a way of describing how an artist has combined the elements of Art within an art work. These elements are used to create the Principles of Design. Principles are the results of using the Elements. When you are working in a particular format (size and shape of the work surface) the principles are used to create interest, harmony and unity to the elements that you are using. You can use the Principles of design to check your composition to see if it has good structure. The principles of design are the recipe for a good work of art. The principles combine the elements to create an aesthetic placement of things that will produce a good design.

SCALE, SPACE, UNITY, EMPHASIS, BALANCE, HARMONY, CONTRAST, MOVEMENT(RHYTHM)

SCALE	SPACE	PROPORTION	BALANCE	EMPHASIS
The overall size of the work, relative to other artworks of a similar type.	In a 3D work this is the area occupied by the work, height width and depth. In a 2D work we refer to the illusion of space or depth.	The relation between the scale of the shapes and forms within an art work.	Is there a feeling of evenness in the distribution of color , texture, shape and form etc?	What catches the viewer's eye most in the art work.

DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS
large small intimate miniature monumental massive life size	positive space (solid mass) negative space (holes/cavities) linear perspective aerial perspective figure/ground foreground/background	out of proportion realistic proportion exaggerated distorted elongated surrealist strange unnatural	top heavy even unbalanced symmetry asymmetrical radial balance balanced equal	focal point dominant feature subordinate zooming in leading lines eye catching visually stimulating even distribution uneven distribution
CONTRAST	RHYTHM	MOVEMENT	UNITY	
Achieved when different aspects of one element used side by side to create interesting and variation.	Use of repeated element, eg line to create pattern or area of visual interest. Repetition of subject matter eg heads in a row.	Use of repetition of shapes/forms or colors or use of line to lead the viewer's eye in a particular way. To create rhythm or visual movement.	Does the work feel like it is complete? Is it cohesive or is there something missing?	
DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	DESCRIPTIVE WORDS	
strong contrast minimal contrast tonal contrast textural contrast dramatic contrast color contrast	continuous sporadic monotonous even repetition patten motif symbol	directional lines flowing lines whirlpool of color, optical illusion rippling effect stillness rhythm	finished unfinished whole not working cohesively harmonious flow harmony bring together	