

Elements of Design

1. Line: a continuous mark with length and direction that describes a shape or outline
 - a. need not be the shortest distance between two points; includes curves, zigzags, etc.
 - b. lines can be explicit, or be implied by the edge of a shape or form
 - c. lines divide the space and volume they inhabit

2. Color: visible spectrum of radiation reflected from an object
 - a. Color Properties
 - i. chroma: hue or color temperature (measured in Kelvin)
 - ii. intensity/saturation: purity (brightness or dullness) of a color
 - iii. value/brightness : lightness or darkness of a color; determined by how much white or black shows through or is mixed in
 - b. white balance (measured in Kelvin)
 - i. warm: veers towards yellow and away from blue (e.g. tungsten lamp: 3000K)
 - ii. cool: veers towards blue and away from yellow (e.g. blue sky: 10,000K)
 - iii. neutral
 - c. using black and white
 - i. white can be added to create tints
 - ii. black can be used to create shades
 - iii. gray's introduction can help create *tones* (for contrast, illusion of form, depth, etc.)

3. Value: lightness or darkness of an element (amount of white or black mixed in), independent of its color
 - a. Range
 - i. a full range of values provides more visual interest and complexity
 - ii. a limited range of values can establish a particular mood
 - iii. an art piece using primarily extremes—very bright and very dark values (w/ few grays or middle tones)—creates high contrast, resulting in a bold or stylized feel
 - b. Key
 - i. Low key: the art contains minimally lit subjects, and a dark background
 - ii. High key: art contains brightly lit subjects and washed-out or white backgrounds

4. Shape: enclosed space defined by artistic elements
 - a. bounded space implied by lines or contrast w/ surroundings
 - b. 2-dimensional objects
 - c. shapes can be *geometric* (created using ruler or compass) or *organic* (created using freehand)

5. Form: a defined volume of space
 - a. 3-dimensional object; has depth, length, & width
 - b. on a 2-dimensional surface, 3 dimension are created by manipulating lighting, shading, & value
 - c. defined, in part, by the presence of shadows on surfaces, by the interplay of light and dark

6. Space: distance or area between, around, above, below or within things
 - a. types of space
 - i. Positive space: space filled w/ something
 - ii. Negative space: space empty of discrete artifacts
 - b. an *illusion* of depth/space can be created through use of perspective, overlapping elements, size, level of detail, color, and value
 - c. planes within framed space
 - i. Foreground
 - ii. Middle ground
 - iii. Background

7. Texture: surface quality, either tactile or visual—textures may be actual or implied

Principles of Design

1. Unity/Harmony: created by combining similar, related elements
 - a. no part stands out from the whole; for instance, if a composition employs curvy lines and organic shapes, harmony would be disrupted by adding a single geometric shape
 - b. the counter-balance of unity & variety is engaging, neither too static or too chaotic
2. Balance: the impression of equilibrium, of equalized tension
 - a. symmetrical balance: the two sides/halves of a work mirror one another
 - b. asymmetrical balance: the two halves differ significantly, yet create dynamic balance
 - c. radial balance: a central element provides a focal point from which other elements appear to radiate
3. Proportion & Scale
 - a. proportion: relationship among parts and the whole with regards to size, quantity, & degree
 - b. scale: size relative to a constant (e.g. a human body); contrasts in scale can create drama/tension
4. Emphasis & Hierarchy
 - a. emphasis: the focal point—the area to which the eye is immediately drawn
 - b. hierarchy: elements lead the viewer from point to point in order of diminishing significance
5. Contrast: a juxtaposition of opposing elements
 - a. a change of value often results in visual tension and interest
 - b. too much contrast creates confusion
 - c. the major contrast in a work should be located near the center of interest
 - d. examples
 - i. Contrasts created by differing shapes
 - ii. Contrast created to bring objects out from a background
 - iii. Contrast creates area of emphasis
6. Gradation: gradual change in color or tone
 - a. gradation of color from warm to cool, or tone from dark to light, produces aerial perspective
 - b. gradation from dark to light will cause the eye to move along a shape

Others

7. directional movement: visual flow that moves the eye from point to point
8. rhythm: elements recur regularly, often creating sense of movement
9. pattern: the repetition of a design element which establishes a visual beat