

THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

Throughout history, artists have used the Line, Shape, Space, Texture, Form, Color and Value to create countless works of art. The way artists use the Elements of Art is called composition. Artists and people who study art created a system for creating compositions that capture your attention and excite your eyes. They are called the *Principles of Design*. By applying these concepts to the design of your artwork, you can create much more interesting visual compositions.



The Principles of Art are:

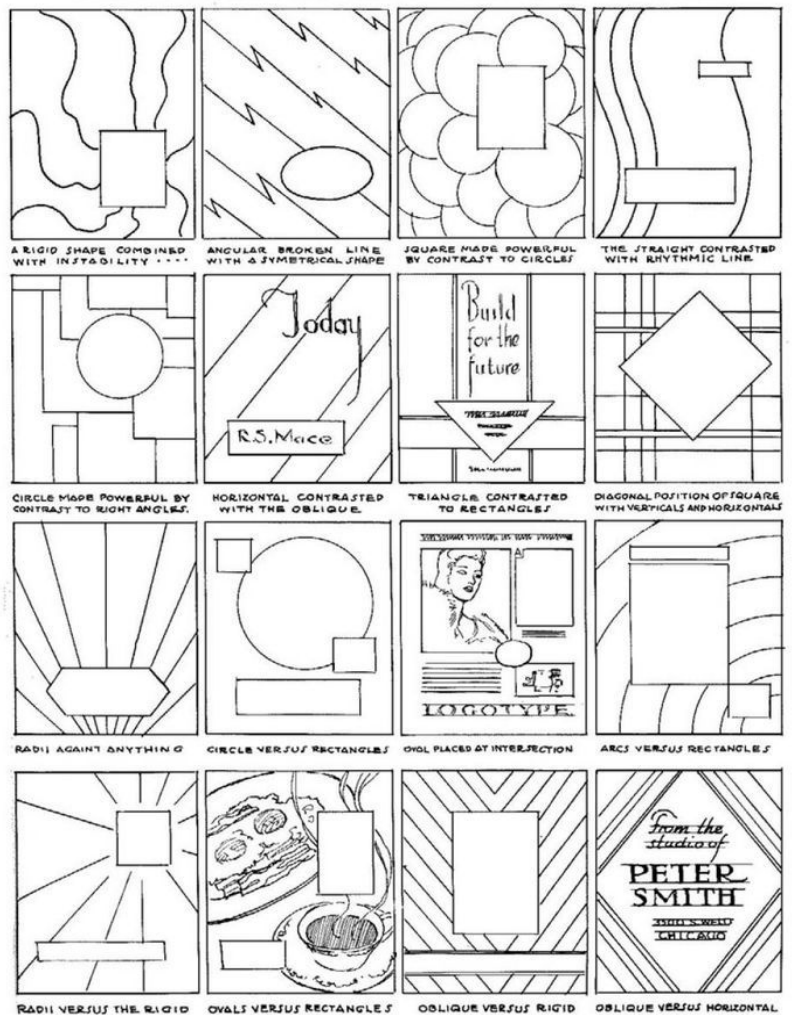
- **Pattern**
- **Movement/Rhythm**
- **Proportion/Scale**
- **Balance**
- **Unity**
- **Emphasis**

Composition

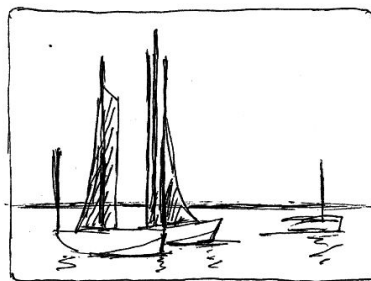
The term composition means 'putting together,' and can apply to any work of art, from music to writing to photography. In art, **composition** refers to the way the artist arranges (or puts together) the visual elements within a painting or sculpture. In the visual arts, composition is often used interchangeably with the word "design."

Composition is used to arrange or organize the components in a way that is pleasing to the artist and, hopefully, the viewer. It encourages the viewer to look at the entire work of art, taking in all of the visual information and ultimately coming back to rest on the focal point.

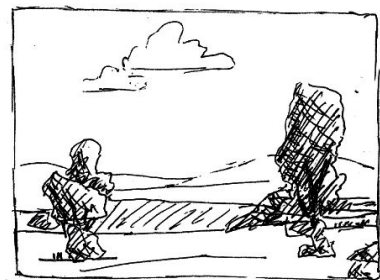
The **focal point** is the part of the artwork that stands out the most - it is the part of the artwork that the artist has tried to make more important than the rest of the subject matter in the painting or sculpture.



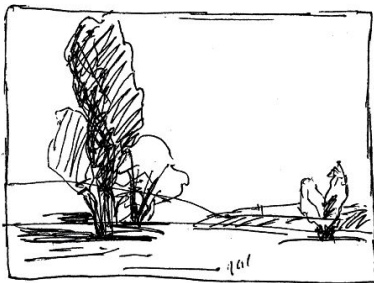
"S" or Compound Curve.



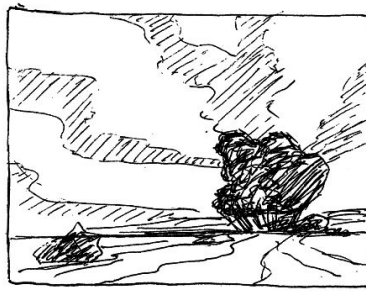
Cross.



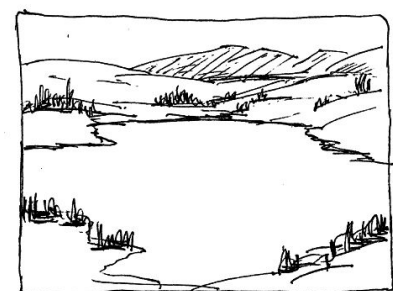
Triangle.



Steelyard



Radiating Lines.



"O" or Circular

PATTERN

Pattern is one of the principles of art. Artists create pattern by repeating a line, shape or color over and over again.



From top to bottom:
Lizard, by M.C. Escher

Ciphers and Constellations, by Joan Miro

The Ceiling of the Blue Mosque,
Istanbul Turkey



MOVEMENT/RHYTHM

Movement is the path the viewer's eye takes through the work of art, often to focal areas. Such movement can be directed along lines, edges, shape, and color within the work of art.

Rhythm is when the artist uses a repetition of shapes, colors, patterns or textures to create the illusion of movement throughout a work of art. Just like a musical rhythm carries you through the beat of a song, visual rhythm carries your eye through the work of art, leading your eye around the composition.



Hokusai's world-famous print *The Great Wave* is perhaps one of the most iconic images from Japan. The print features a wave that dominates the frame as it crashes onto people struggling to stay on their boat. Hokusai used visual rhythm to move the viewer's eye up and down through the picture as if we, too, are riding the waves!

BALANCE

Balance is one of the principles of art which describes how artists to create visual “weight”. By arranging different elements within a composition, the artist can “weigh down” an area so that the viewer’s eye remains in one part of the image, or they can balance it so that the viewer’s eye moves easily around the subject matter.

Artists think about how to make their works balanced by using elements such as line, shape, or color.

The oil painting on the right, entitled, “Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue” was painted in 1931 by Georgia O'Keeffe.

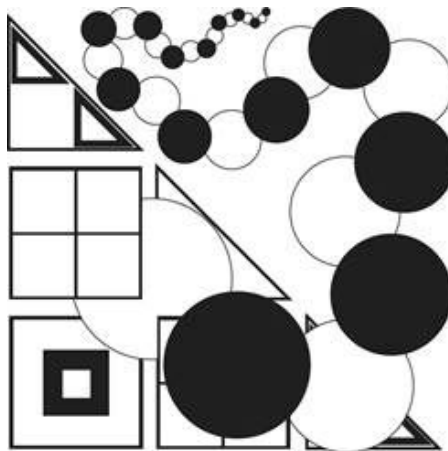


There are several ways to balance an artwork:

1. Symmetrical Balance means both sides of an imaginary line are the same. We say that the artwork has “symmetry.”

2. Asymmetrical Balance means each side of an imaginary line is different yet equal. We say that the artwork has “asymmetry.”

3. Radial Balance means that the lines or shapes grow from a center point and radiate out in a circular pattern.



PROPORTION/SCALE

Proportion is the feeling that is created when all parts of a work of art (sizes, amounts, or number) relate well with each other – when all of the parts of a picture are the proper size, or **Scale**, then the image just seems to “fit” correctly.

For example, when drawing the human figure proportion can refer to the size of the head compared to the rest of the body.

Purposely changing the size (or scale) of part of a picture can drastically change the mood of the picture!

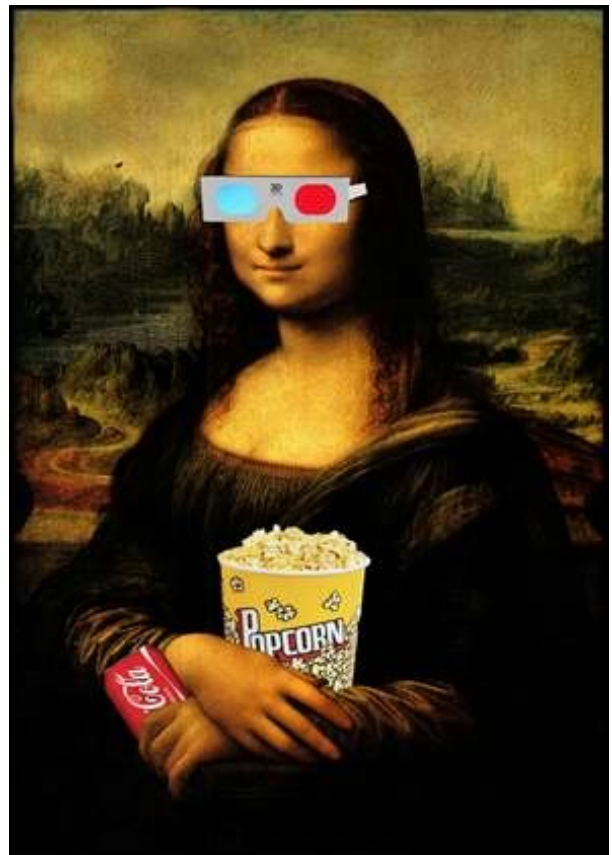


UNITY

Unity is the feeling that everything in the work of art works together and looks like it fits.



This work is has unity.



This work is not unified.

Creating unity in your artwork is important, because it makes the image not only pleasing to look at, but it also makes the image believable – unity makes all the pieces of the artwork feel like they belong there.

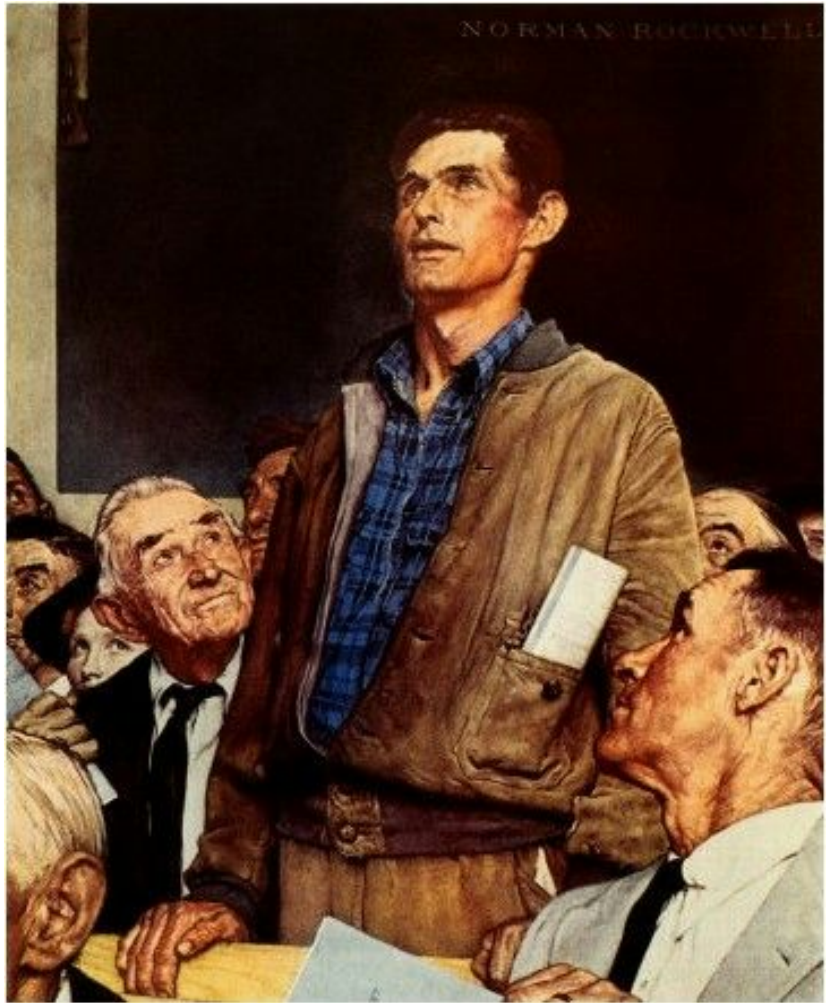


EMPHASIS

Emphasis is another principle of art. Artists use emphasis to make certain parts of their artwork stand out and grab your attention. The center of interest or *focal point* is the place the artist draws your eye to first.

In this painting by Norman Rockwell, the viewer's eye is drawn to the face of the man standing up in the crowd of people. The dark wall behind the man helps to emphasize this as the focal point.

What other elements in the image help the viewer see the standing man's face as the focal point?

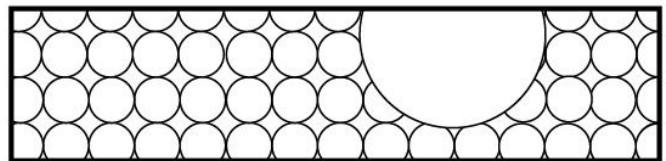


Ways to create areas of emphasis in your artwork:

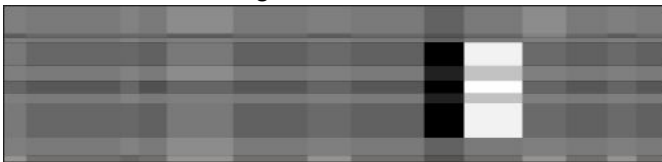
1. Use shape to create emphasis.



2. Change the scale (or size) of an object



3. Use a darker or lighter value



4. Focus attention with converging lines



5. Call attention to the object using space



6. Increase an object's intensity of color

