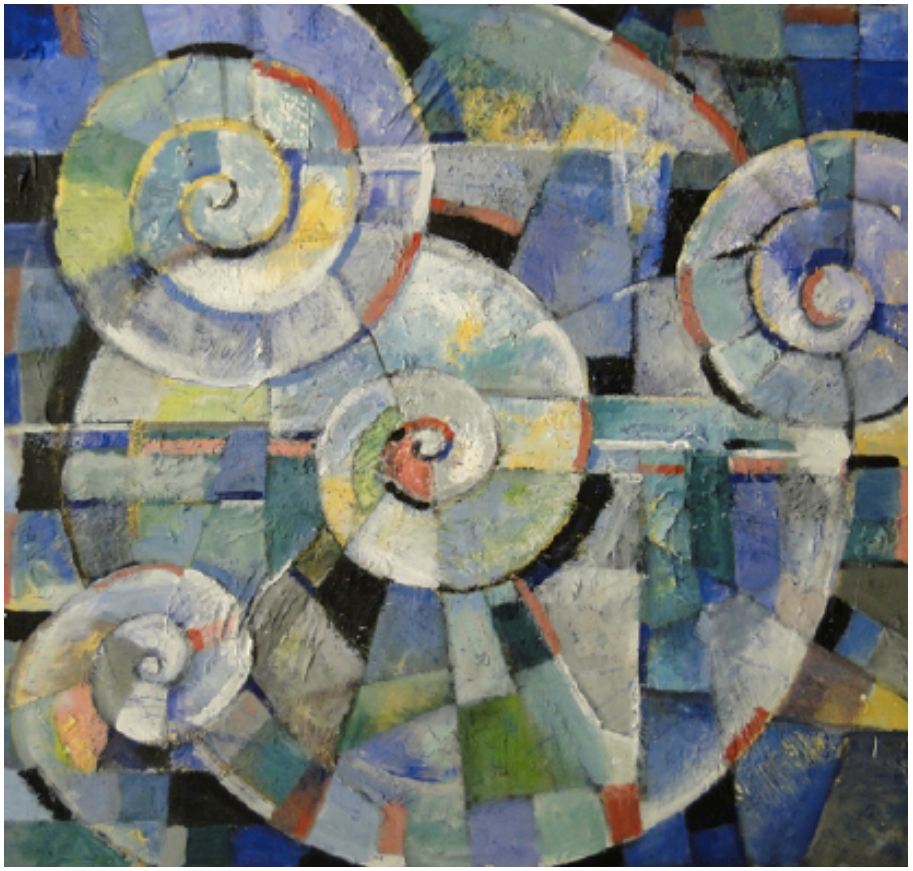
Week 3 – Principles of Design

ARTS 1301 Art Appreciation



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Unity
Emphasis
Contrast
Harmony
Weight
Balance
Variety
Proportion & Scale
Pattern
Direction
Movement
Rhythm
Elegance

Balance

Balance is one of the most important design principles. Every proper composition must have its elements in one of the types of balance. Balance in art refers to the sense of distribution of perceived visual weights that offset one another. We feel more comfortable--and therefore find it more pleasing--when the parts of an artwork seem to balance each other.

Balance, in art, has to do with *how big*, *how many*, and *where* the objects are in a *composition*. In art, balance has nothing to do with physical weight, but rather is about ***visual weight***. If an artwork has *more* objects or *larger* objects on one side (or top or bottom) of the composition, the visual weight is "heavier" on that side of the piece.

If the visual weight appears heavier on one side or the other, or on the top or bottom, the artwork is usually considered "*unbalanced*". The visual interest of the artist's use of the Elements (if the artist uses an eye-catching texture or a bright color, for example) will also make the visual weight appear heavier, as well.

Symmetrical Balance: A composition that has the same Elements or imagery on both sides has *symmetrical balance*. If an object or artwork has symmetry, it can be divided down the center with a *line of symmetry*. On both sides of the line of symmetry, the images are the *same, but opposite*. A good way to "test" for symmetry is to fold the image (or at least imagine you are folding it!) on the line of symmetry. If the Elements or images "match up" when the composition is folded, it's symmetrical

Symmetrical Balance,,

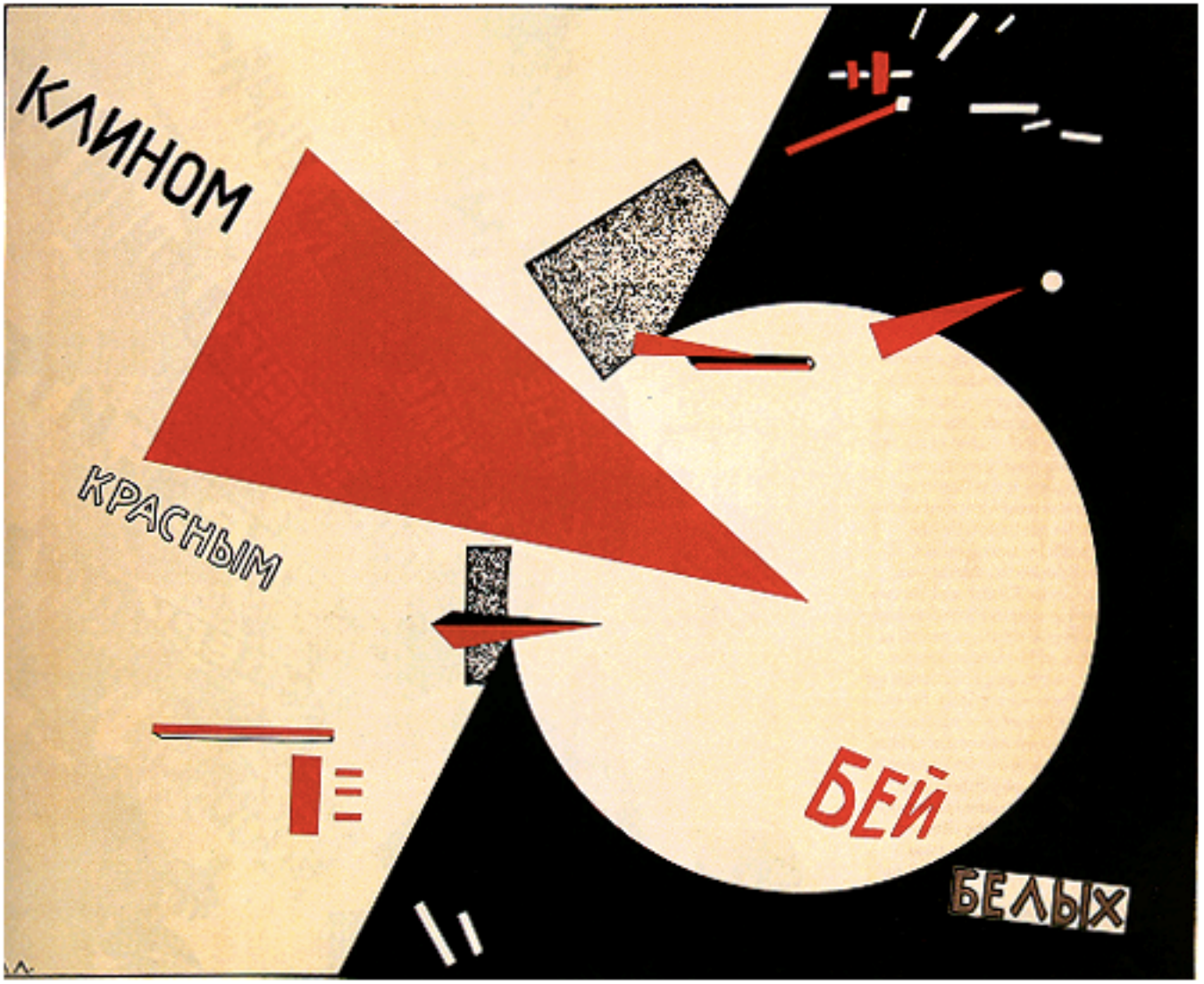
Symmetrical “Formal” Balance

Symmetrical “Formal” Balance

Remember that images on both side of the symmetry line don’t have to be exactly the same things — but the visual weight must be nearly the same.

Asymmetrical Balance: "Asymmetrical" simply means "not symmetrical." If a design or composition is *asymmetrically balanced*, it has *more* or *larger* or *more interesting* Elements or imagery on *one side* more than the *other side*, or more on the *top* than the *bottom*,. This informal balance is more intuitive. In the majority of applications, it is considered the most sophisticated and desirable.

Asymmetrical “Informal” Balance

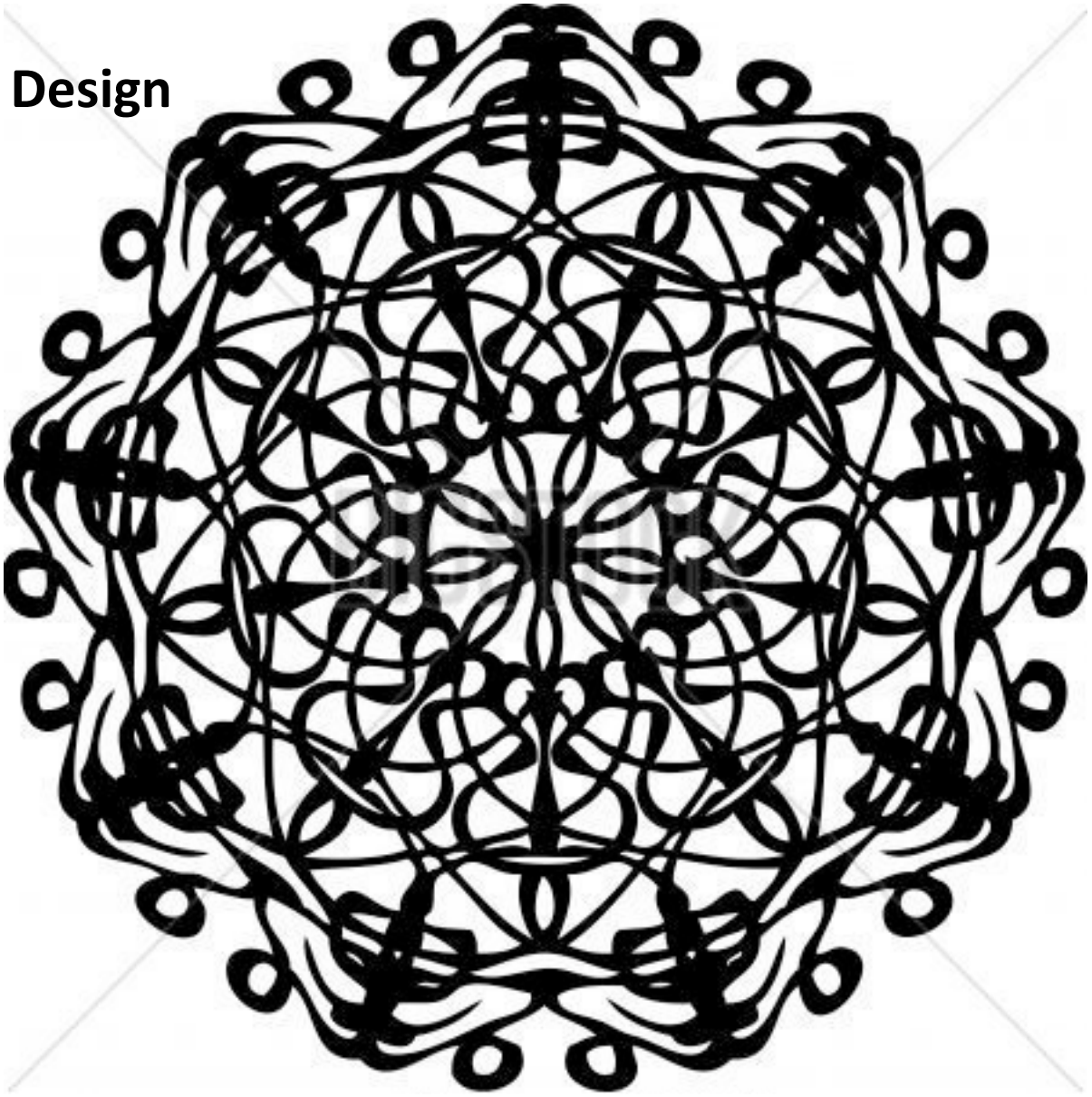


Asymmetrical “Informal” Balance

Radial Balance: Radially-balanced designs "radiate from" or "revolve around" a central focal point in the composition. A radially-balanced artwork is usually very dynamic

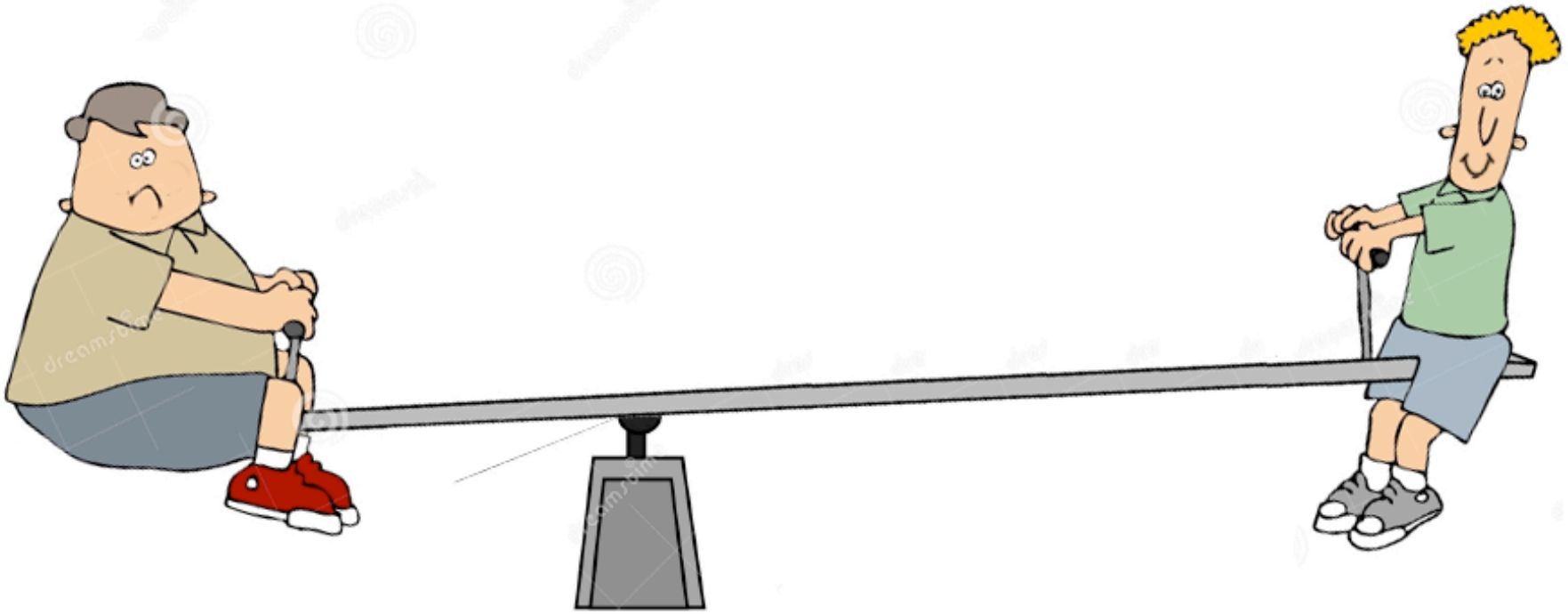
Radial Design

Radial Design

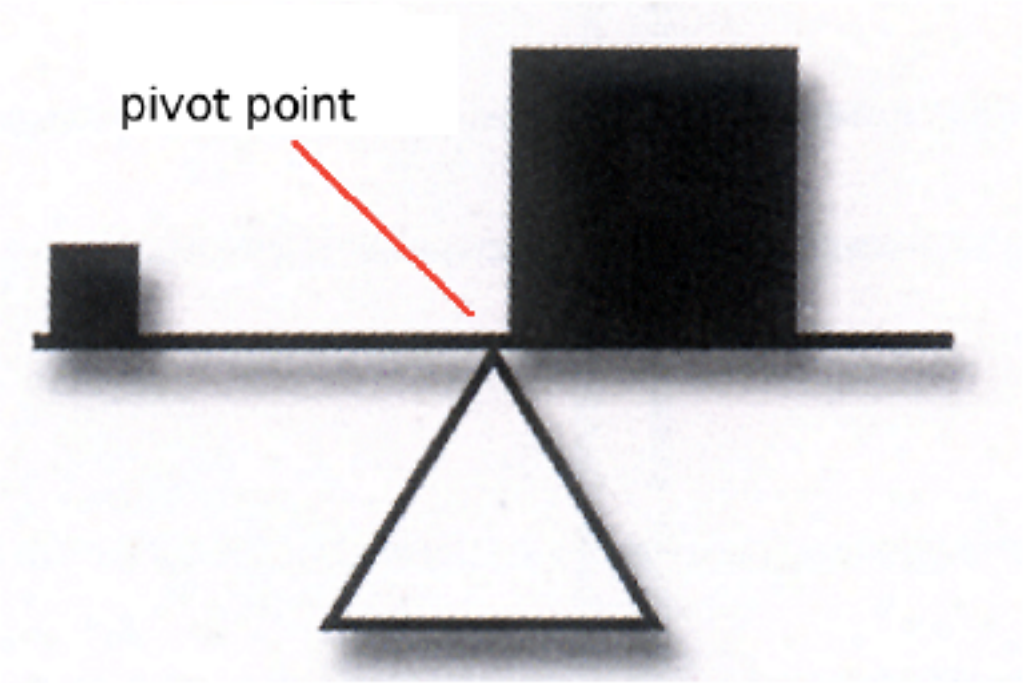


Our designs need to be in **balace.**
We can compare visual balance to the teeter totter that uses a fulcrum lever and a pivot hinge.

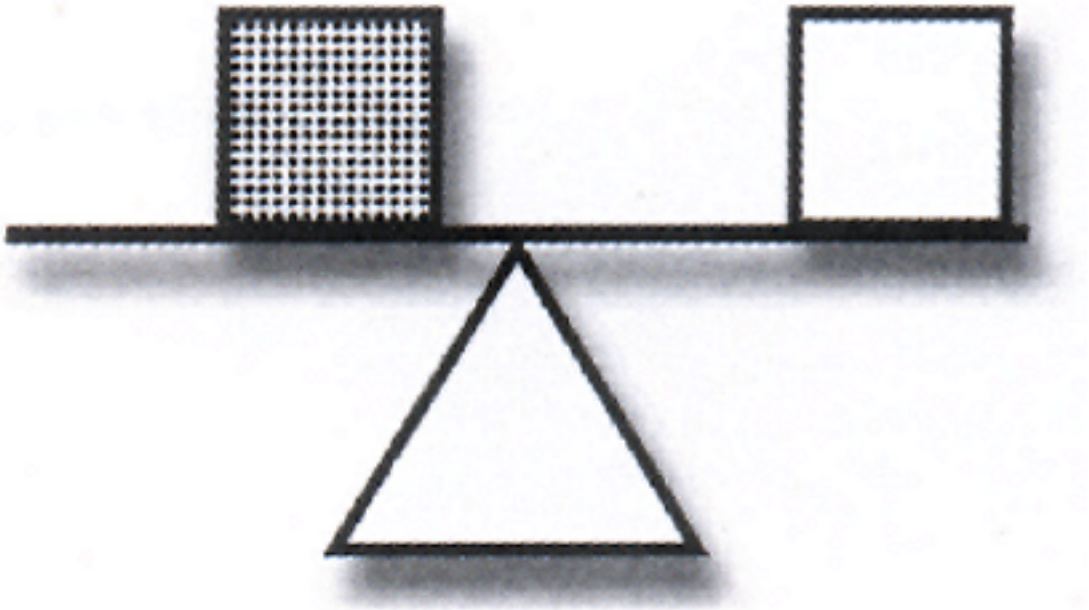
But if we extend the lever and slide our lighter weight boy out to the end, **Leverage** will lift up the heavier boy, giving us **balance**.



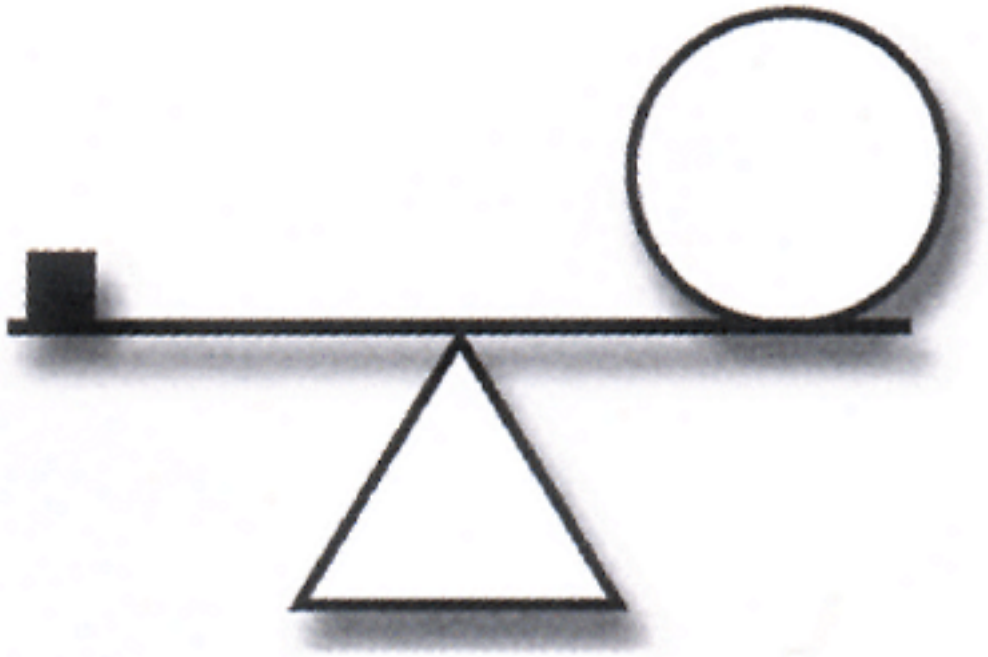
When we learn visual balance it is helpful to compare elements on a scales or teeter-totter.



Large elements can be balanced when small elements are farther away from the fulcrum.

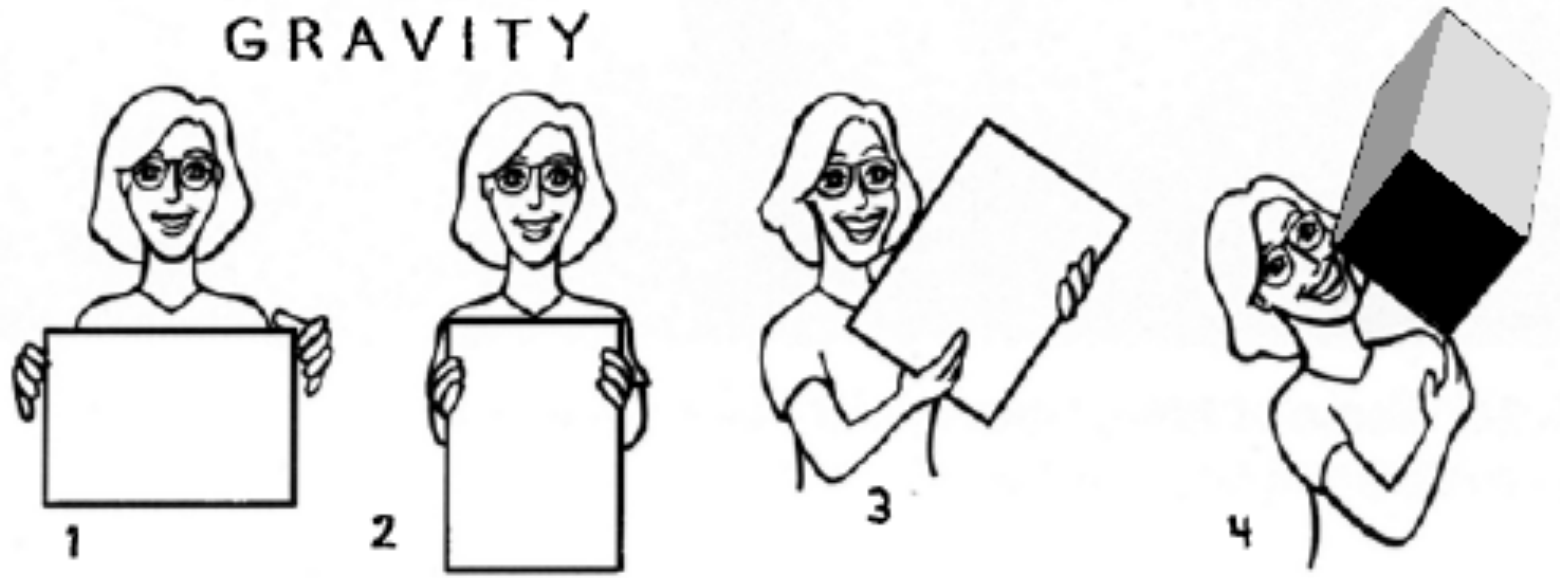


Or both elements are the same shape and size, but one is darker and seems heavier.



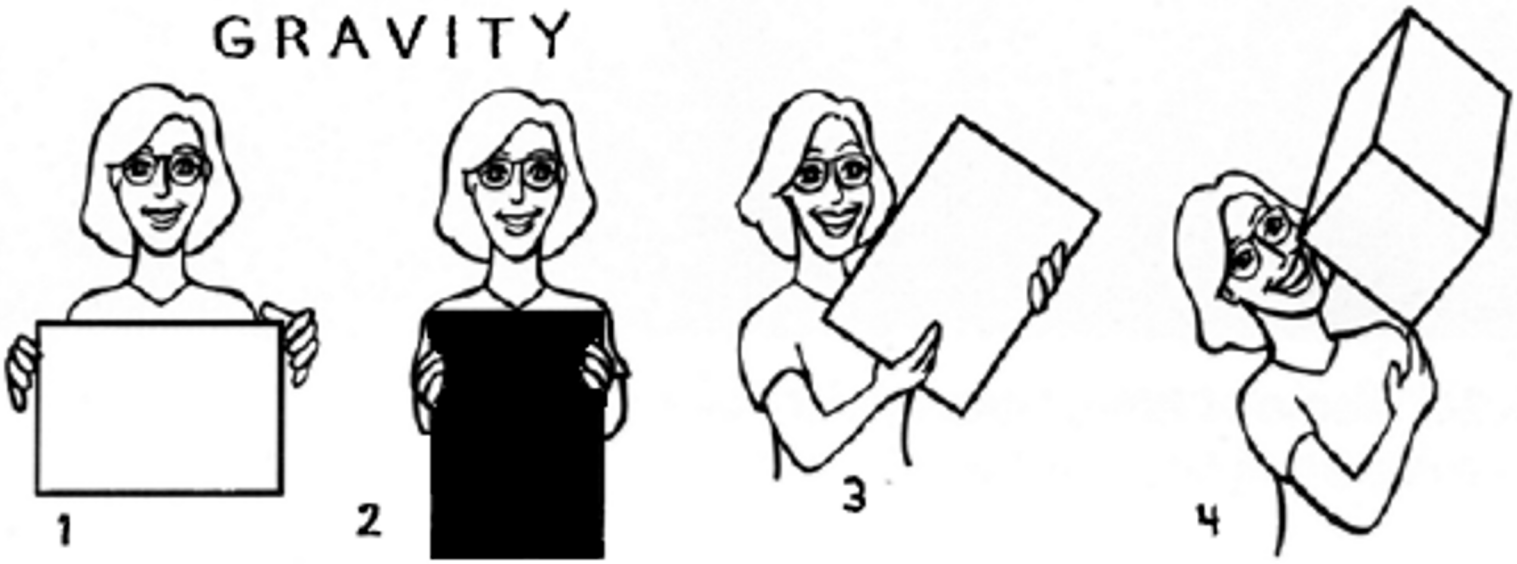
In this case, the large element seems lighter because it is circular and filled with white a bubble.

Which box is static or dynamic?



Dynamic

Which box is static or dynamic?

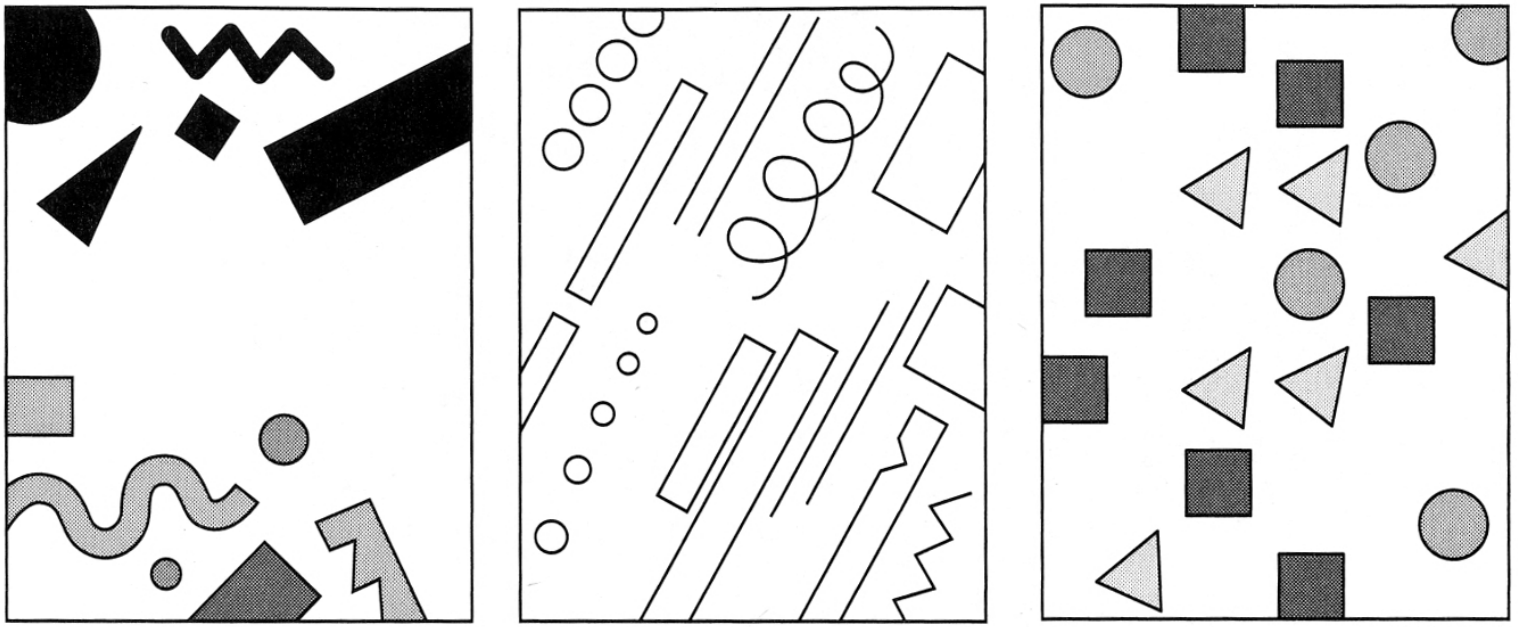


Static

Unity

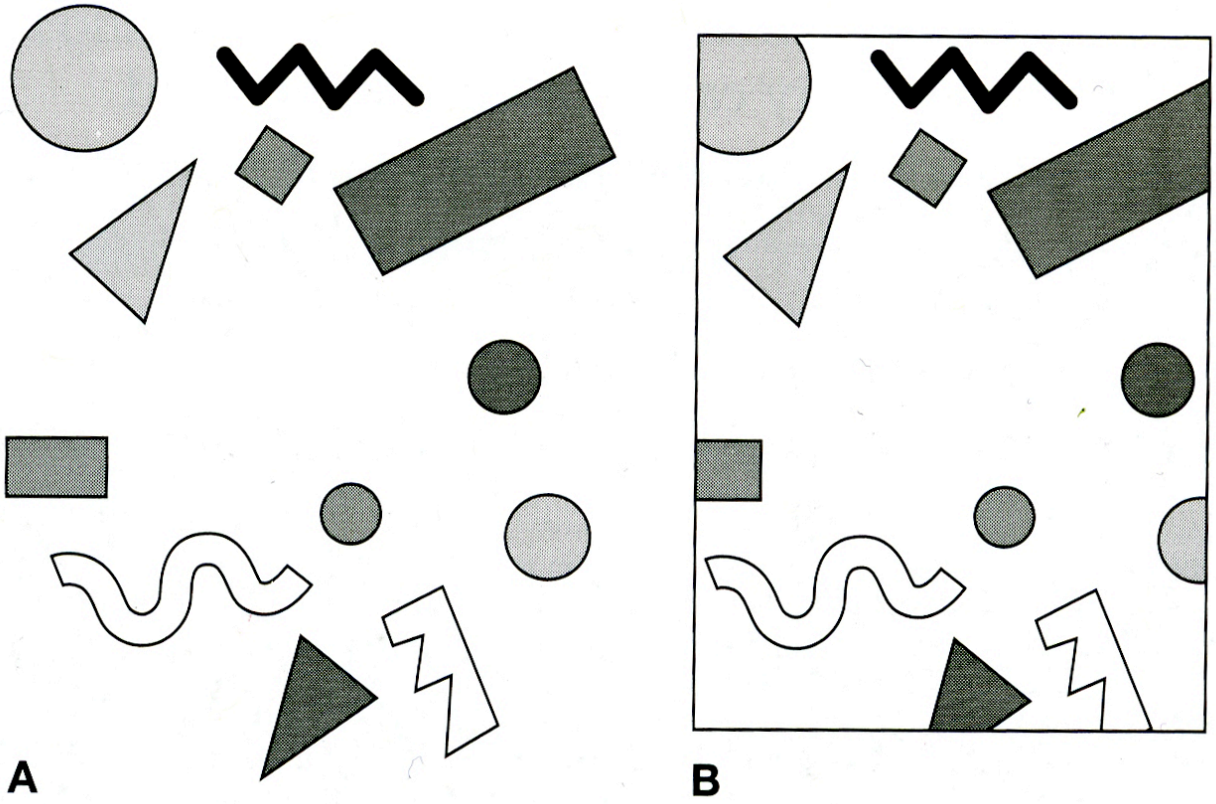
Unity brings everything together. Unity is the relationship among the elements of a visual that helps all the elements function together. Without unity the other principles fall apart. Variety runs amok. Things that are supposed to balance are lost to sight. Without unity, we lose interest and concentration. The plan is fragmented and unintelligible.

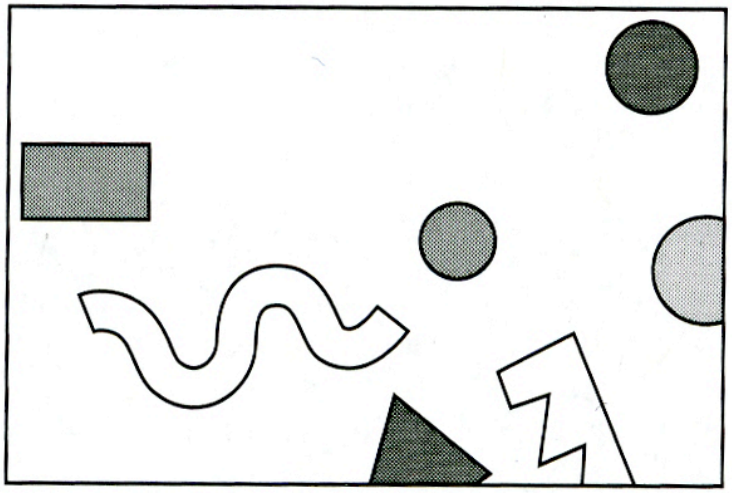
A very important principle of art, unity occurs when all of the elements of a piece combine to make a balanced, harmonious, complete whole. Unity is another of those hard-to-describe art terms but, when it's present, your eye and brain are pleased to see it. Unity is intuitive. Yet there as several way to achieve Unity…



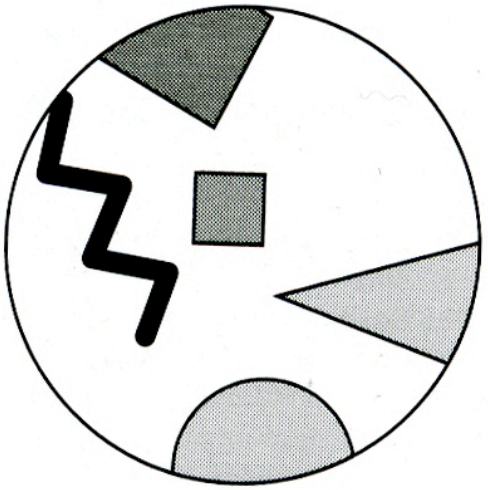
A **B** **C**

Examples of grouping by location, orientation, and shape.


A
B



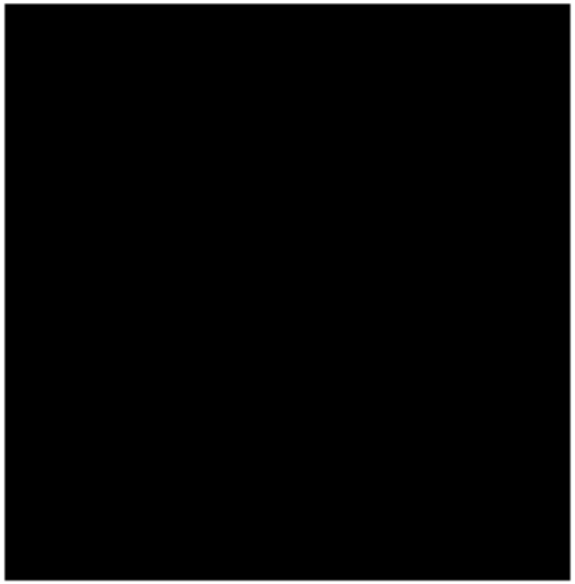
C

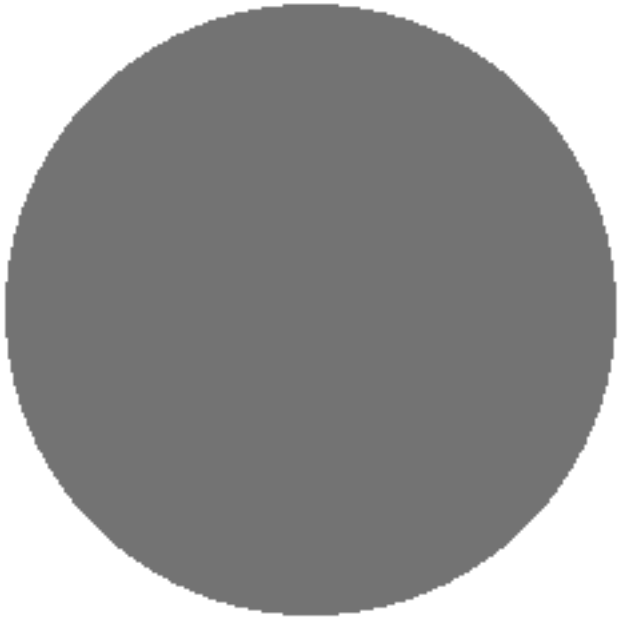


D

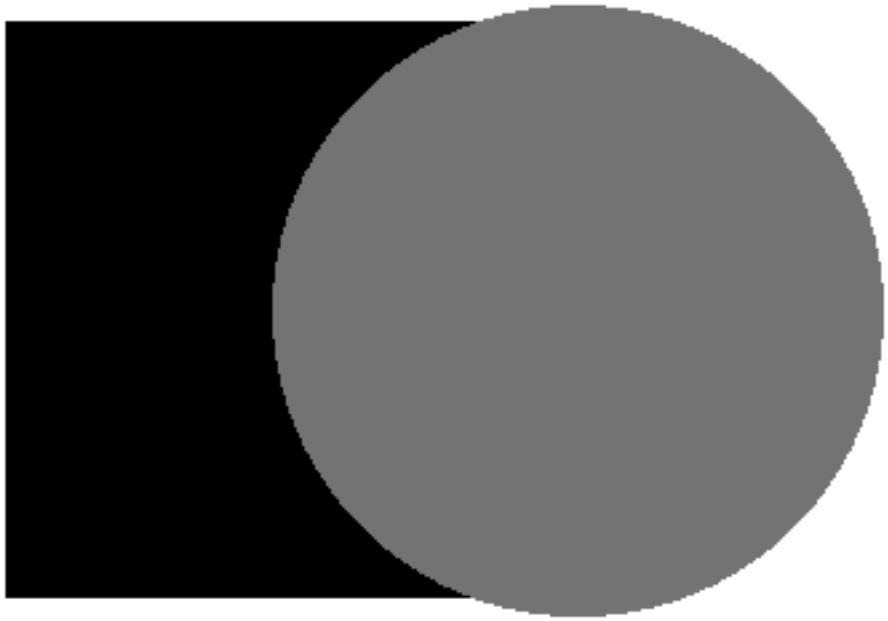
Unified Composition by overlapping and direction of lines and implied movement

UNITY THROUGH PROXIMITY
(closeness and overlapping)

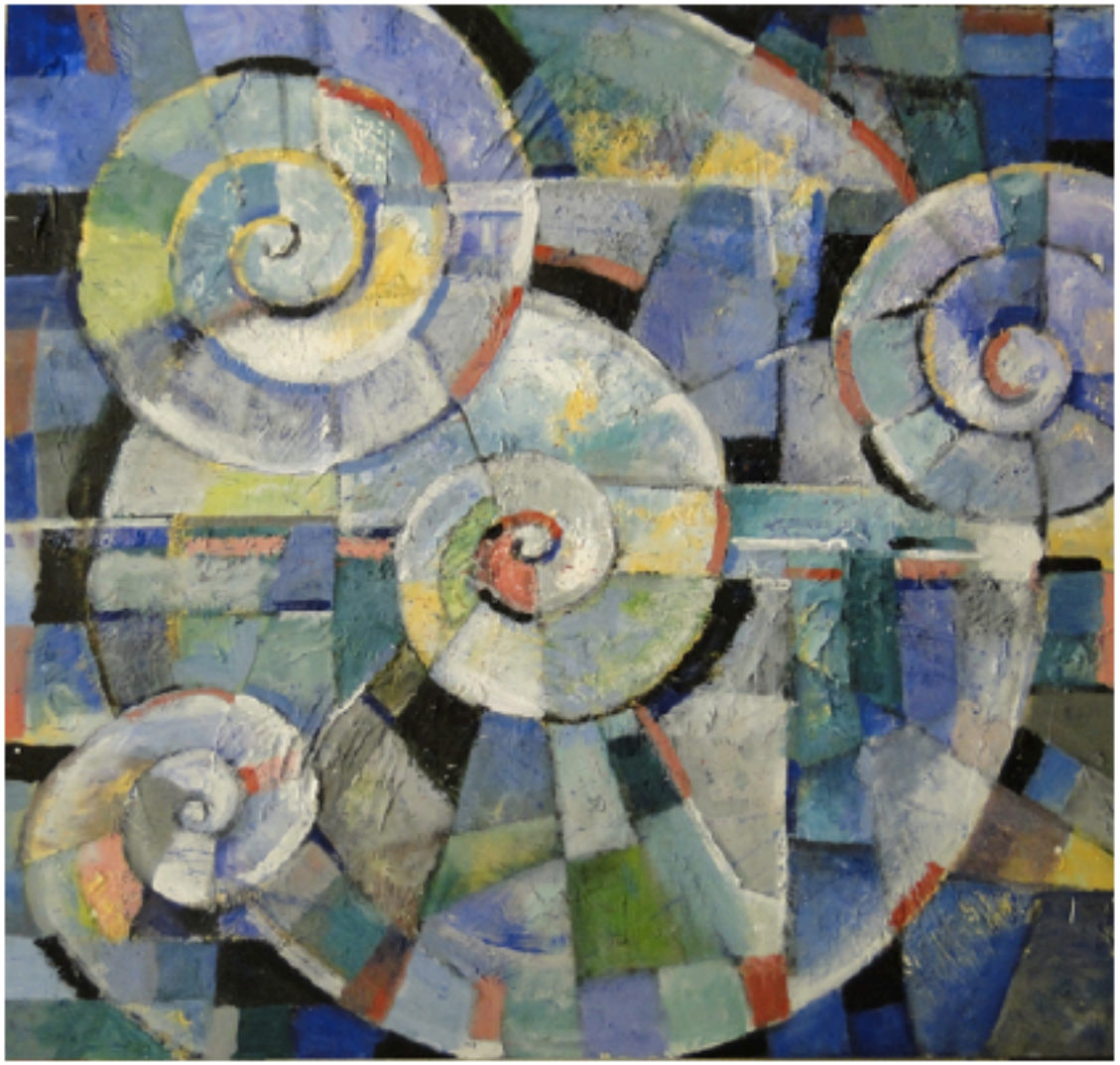




UNITY THROUGH PROXIMITY
(closeness and overlapping)



Unity through similar and overlapping shapes



Emphasis

Emphasis

Emphasis is contrast. It is the principle that allows an image to stand out from the rest, usually through contrast. The higher the contrast, such as black and white, the more the viewer's eye will go to that area. Size can also create enough contrast to emphasize something. Often the larger the better. However a small item can be emphasized if the color or value contrast is great enough. Color, such as a singular red item, a yellow sun against a dark sky, or the use of complementary colors in contrast with each other.

Emphasis is Dominance

What is Dominance?

Emphasis is dominance. When you create emphasis in your work you are creating dominant elements that command attention and prevail over other elements.

Every design should have a primary area of interest or focal point that serves as a way into the design. From the primary dominant element, design flow can be achieved by creating elements with secondary and tertiary dominance. Dominance relies on contrast, since without contrast everything would be the same.

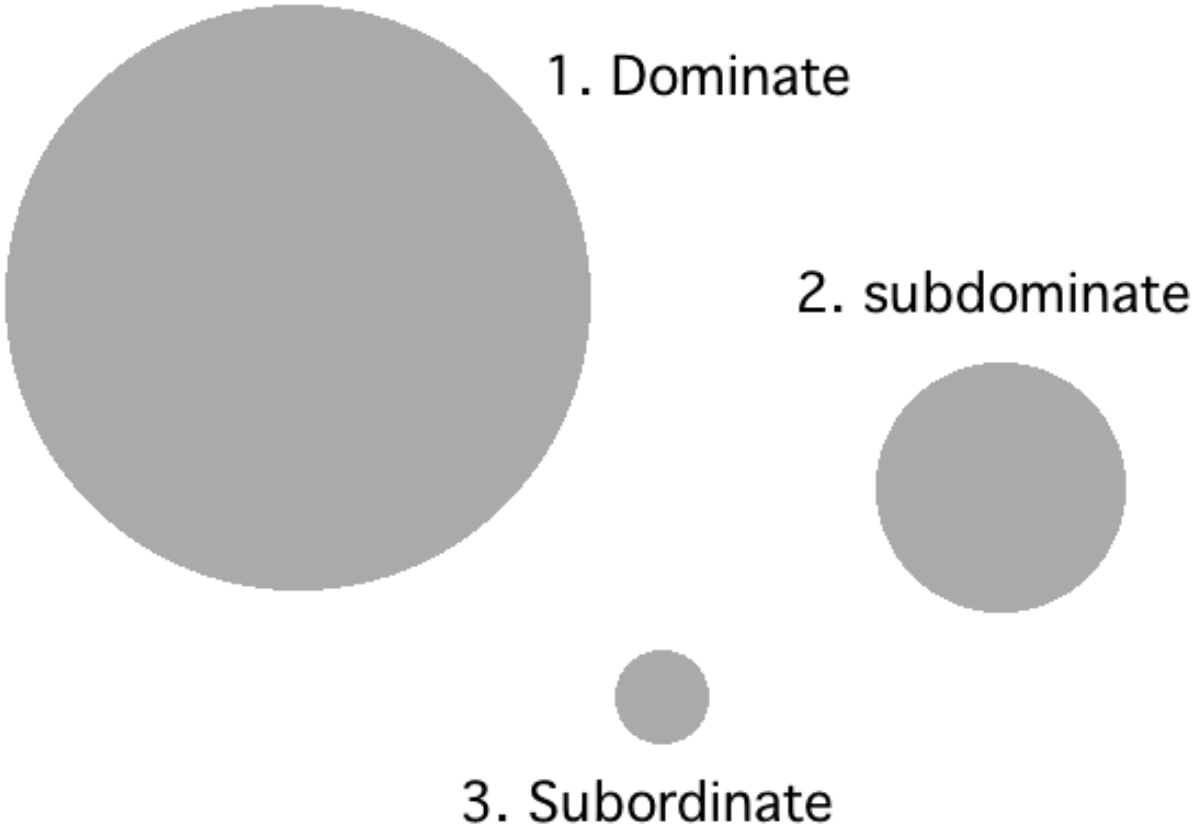
Dominance is the varying degree of emphasis in your design elements. You can create 3 levels of dominance in your work.

1. Dominant: The element given the most visual weight, the element of primary emphasis. The dominant element will advance into the foreground in your composition.

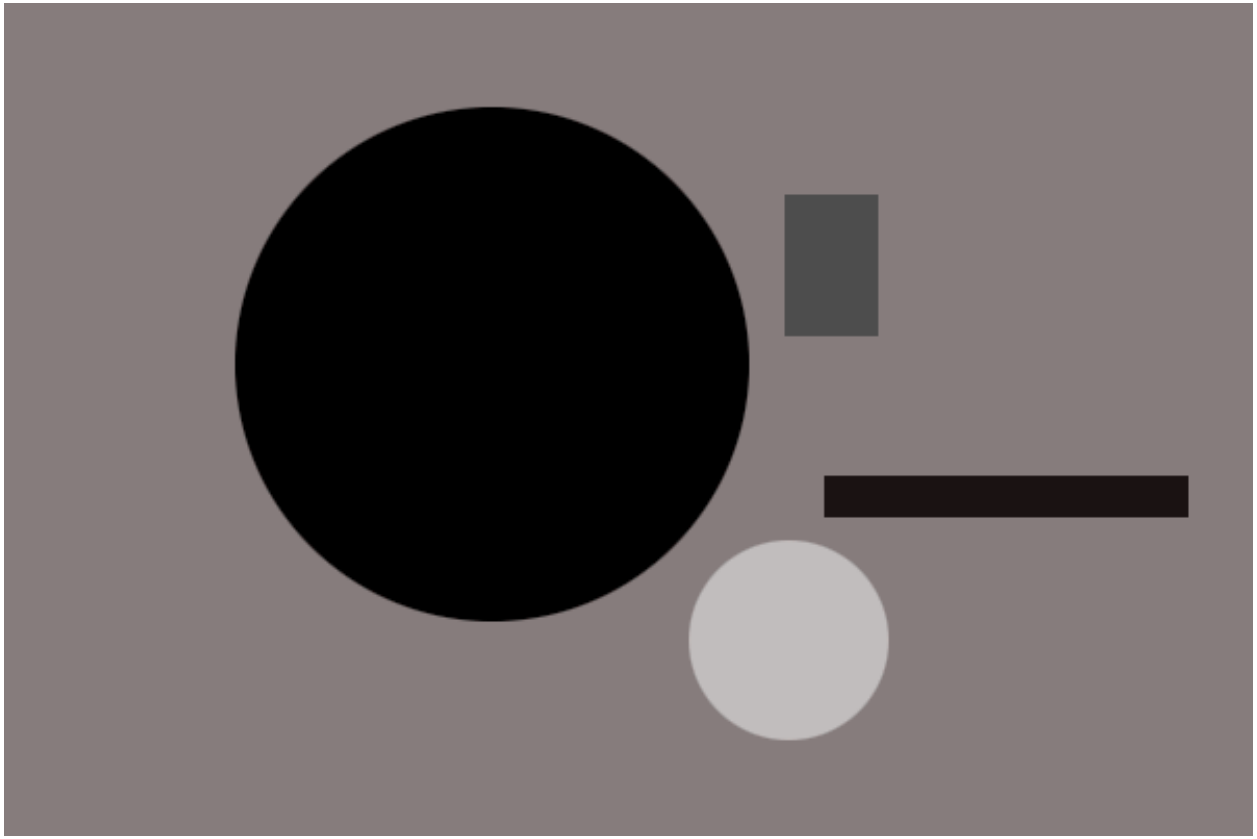
2. Sub-Dominant: The element(s) of secondary emphasis that will become the middle ground in your composition.

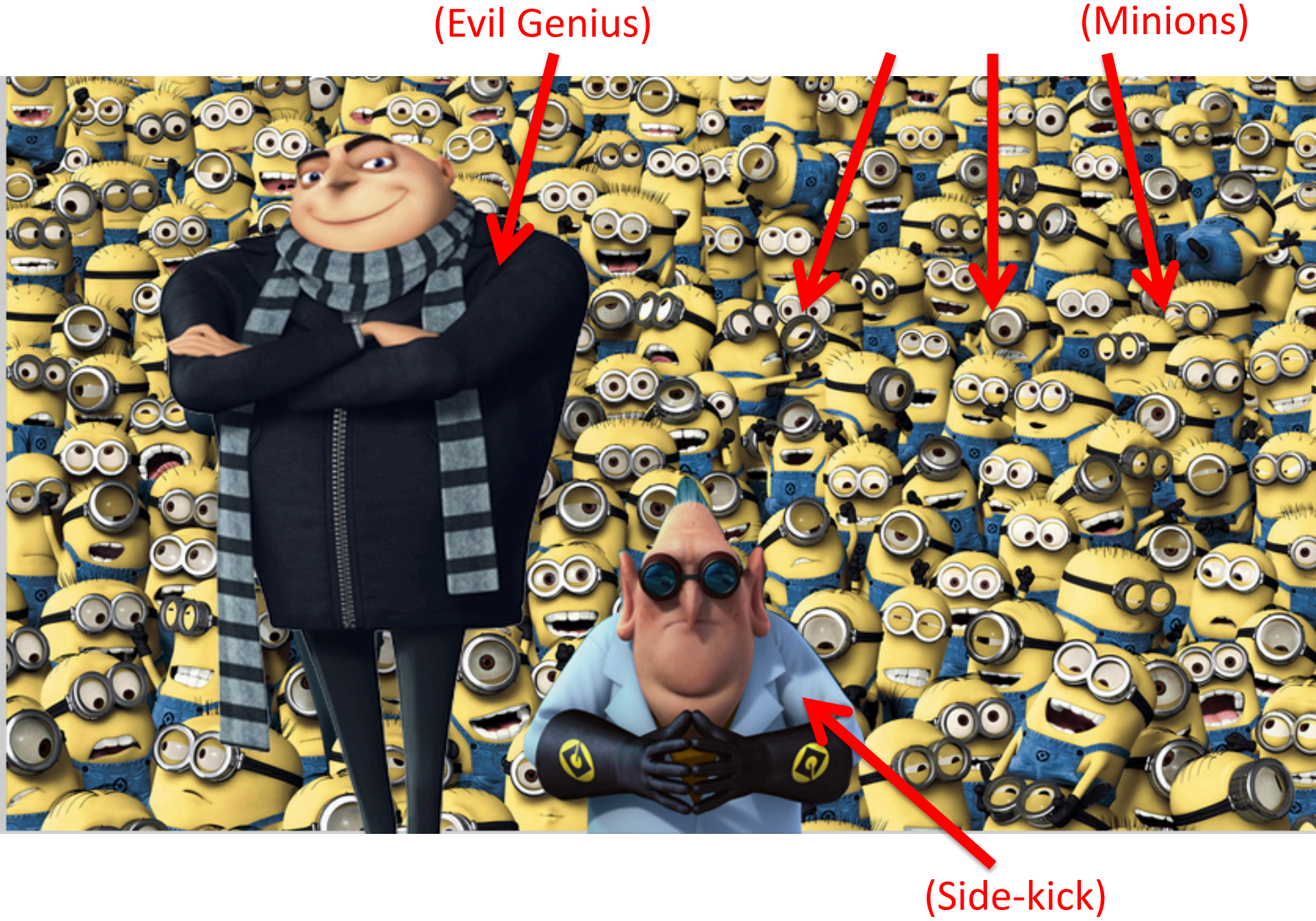
3. Subordinate: The elements with tertiary emphasis, given the least visual weight. Subordinate elements will recede into the background of your composition.

Size adds emphasis. Balance with a dominate, subdominate and subordinate items spread around the composition.



Size matters, and the larger black circle dominates and is emphasized




(Evil Genius)
(Minions)
(Side-kick)

It becomes difficult to create a 4th level of dominance. As human beings we can easily distinguish most and least, but things in between quickly move into a gray area where they are seen as equal in dominance.

Remember that dominance helps create an area of interest, a focal point. The dominant element on your page should be the element you want people to see first. By creating a dominant element in your work you reveal what's most important in your design and show people were to look first. From there you can create a subdominant element to guide your viewer where to look next.

2. subdominate

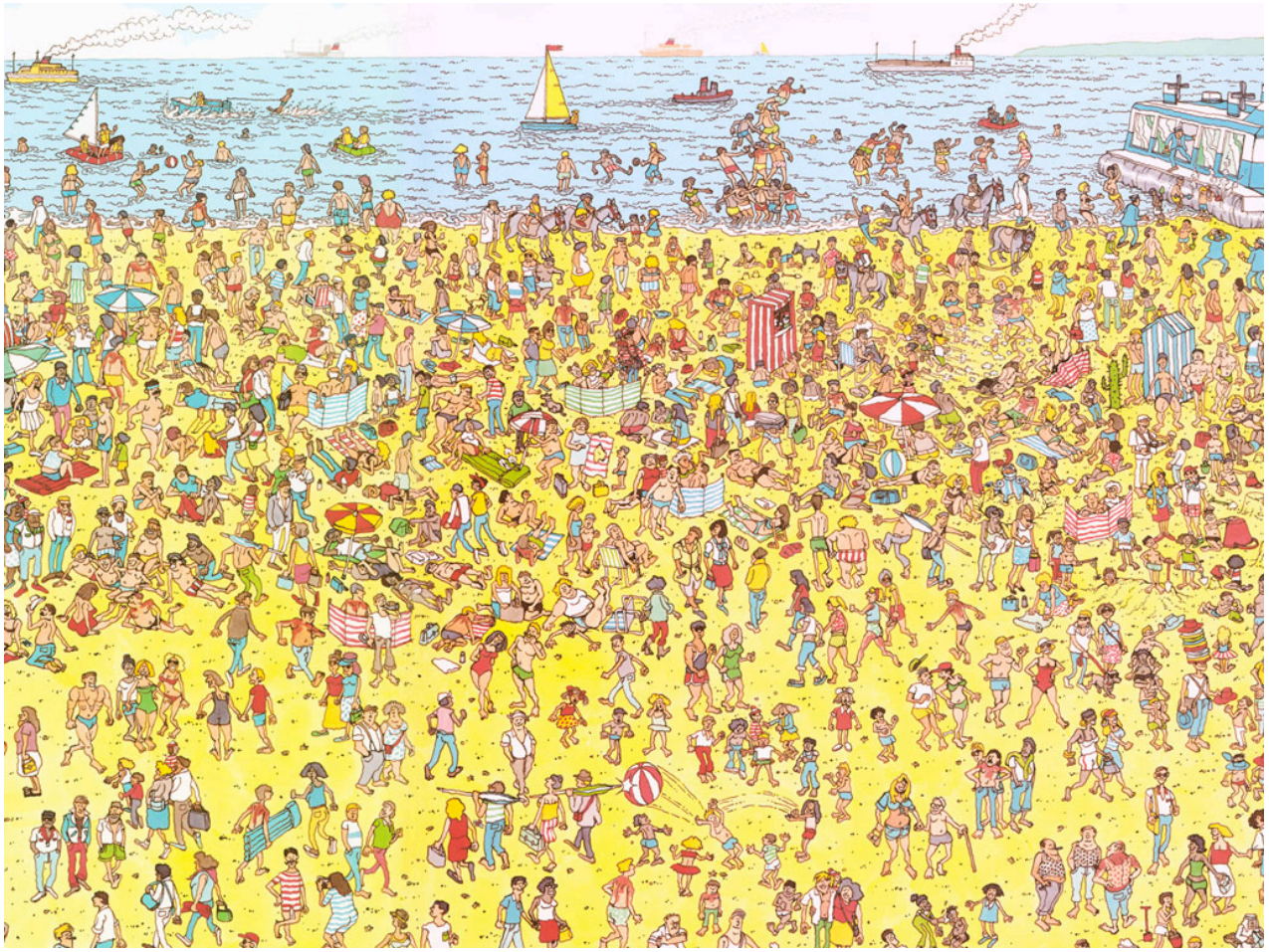
3. Subordinate

1. Dominate

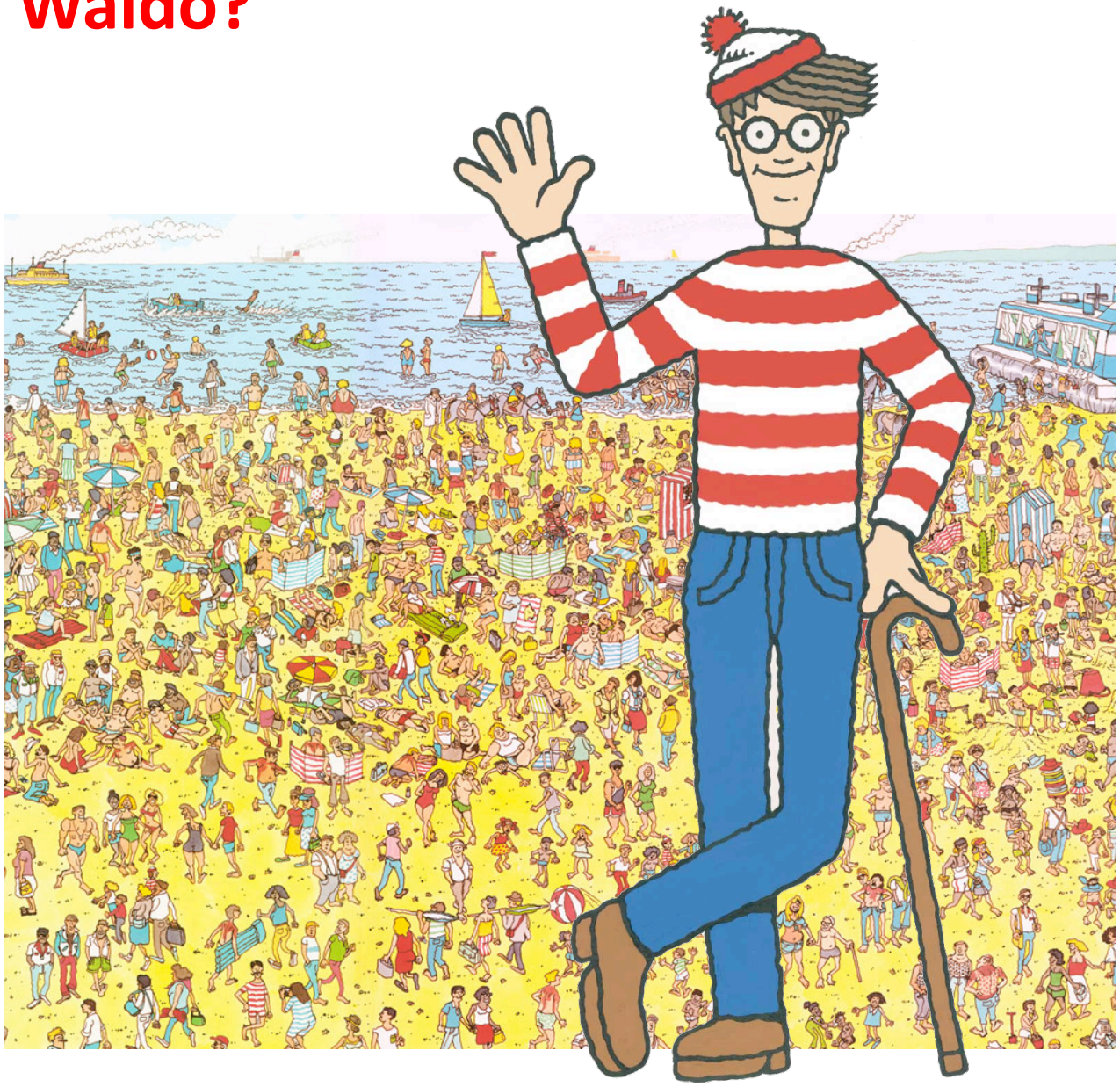
Keep in mind that visual weight is a combination of all of the above. Your biggest element on the page may also have the lightest color and value and still recede into the background.

Be careful with overdoing dominance. While you want to create an element that dominates your design to serve as the focal point you still want the rest of your design to be seen. Be careful not to make an element so dominant that everything else in the design gets lost. You want your design to be balanced overall.

Where's Waldo?

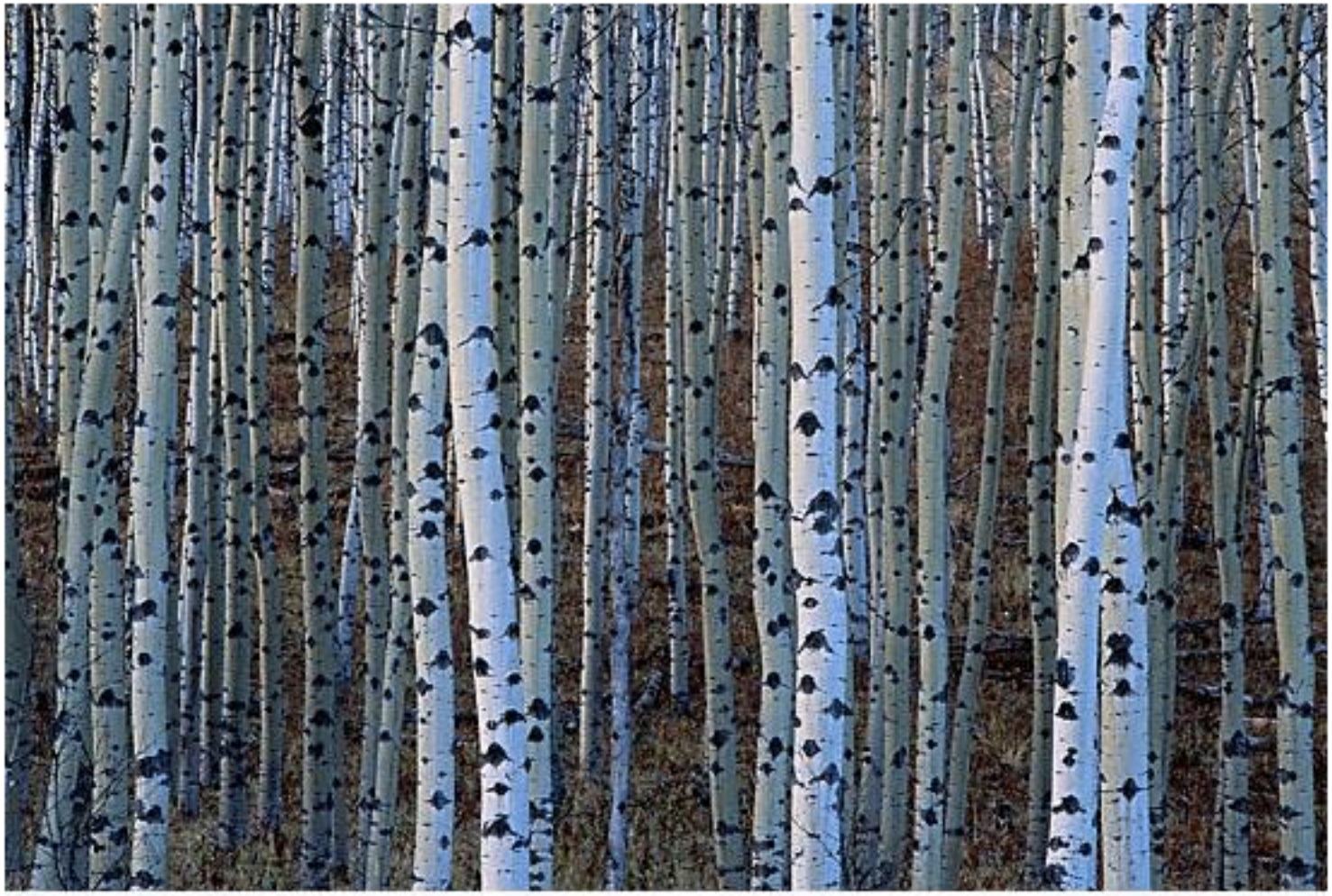


Here's Waldo?



Repetition, Rhythm and Pattern

Repetition in nature is a common sight, from schools of fish to forests of trees.



Repeating shapes and forms without variation can be taken in with one glance. The brain comprehends one and immediately knows the rest are identical..

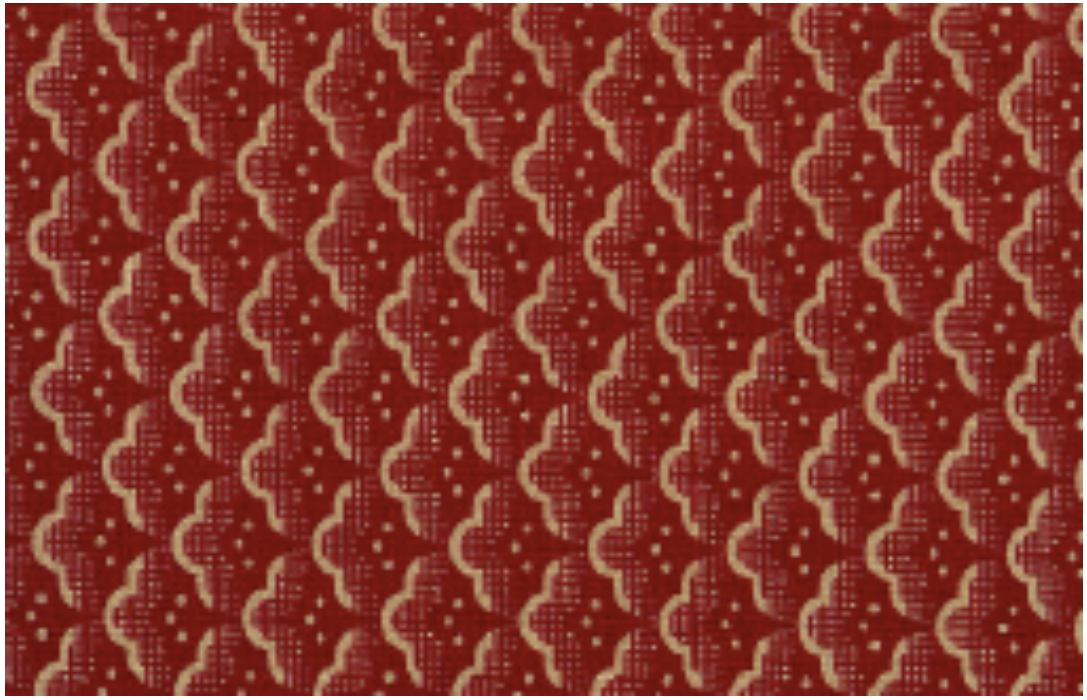
Due to constant exposure, our hard-wired response is to always expect **Repetition** to be accompanied by variation. The important thing to notice with natural repetition is the presence of variation which makes repetition more rhythmical and interesting.

When variation is introduced, subconscience mental activity is required to absord the repeating elements. This relieves monotony and adds interest, even when the variation is subtle.

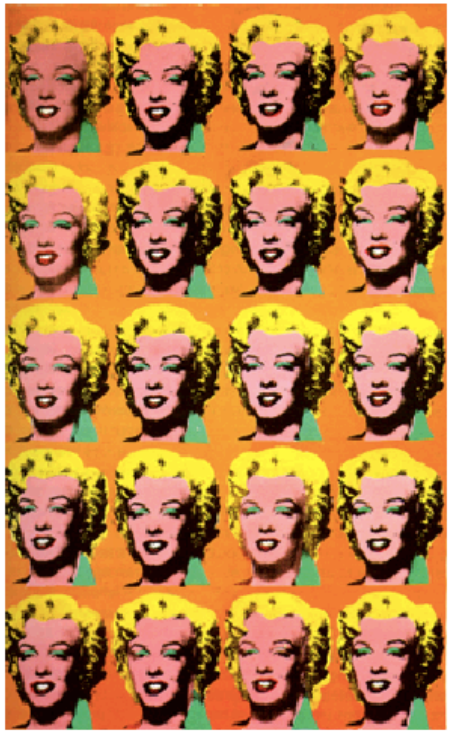
Due to constant exposure, our hard-wired response is to always expect repetition to be accompanied by variation.

The important thing to notice with any repetition is the presence of variation which makes repetition more rhythmical and interesting.

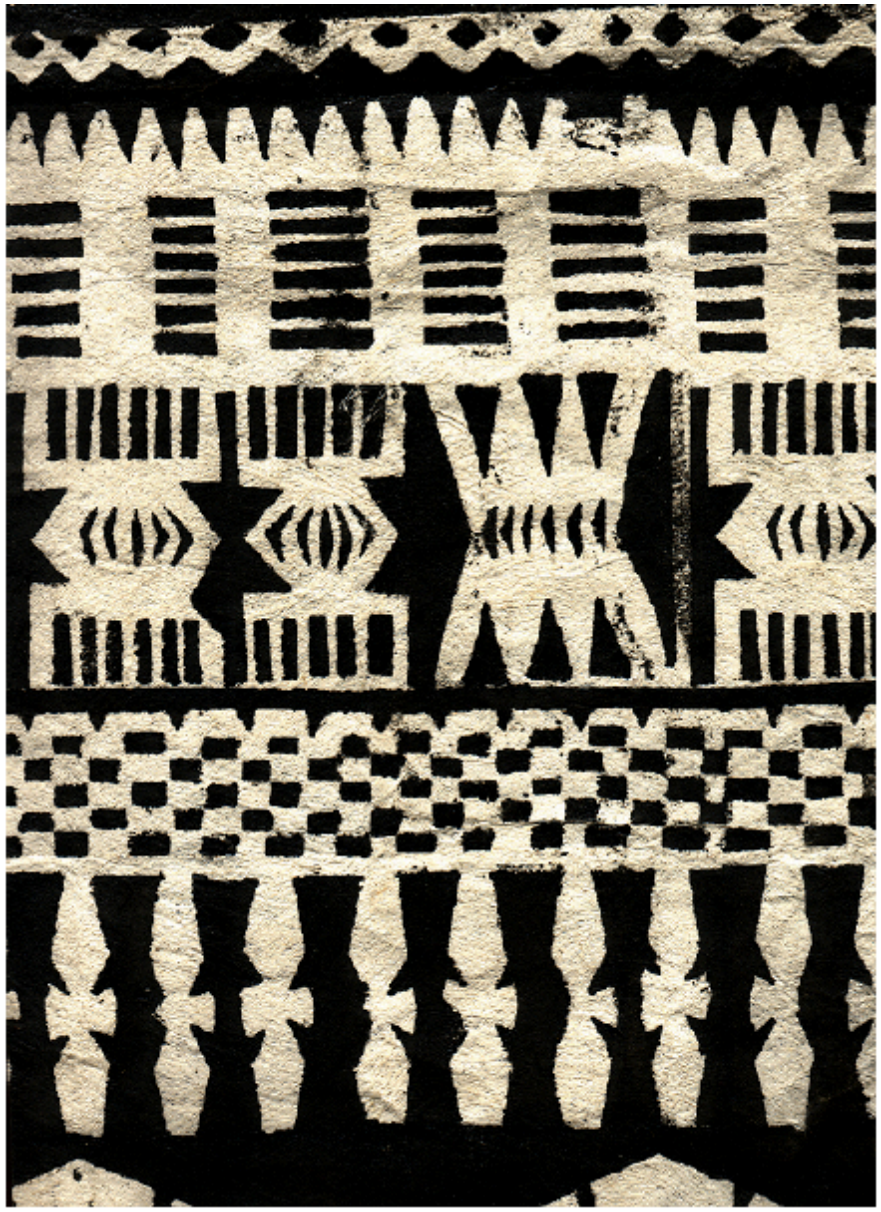
Repetition without variation becomes **Pattern** and moves more into the realm of what was considered decorative art.



However many of the pop artists incorporated pattern into fine art, a trend that has continued into the contemporary art practice of today.



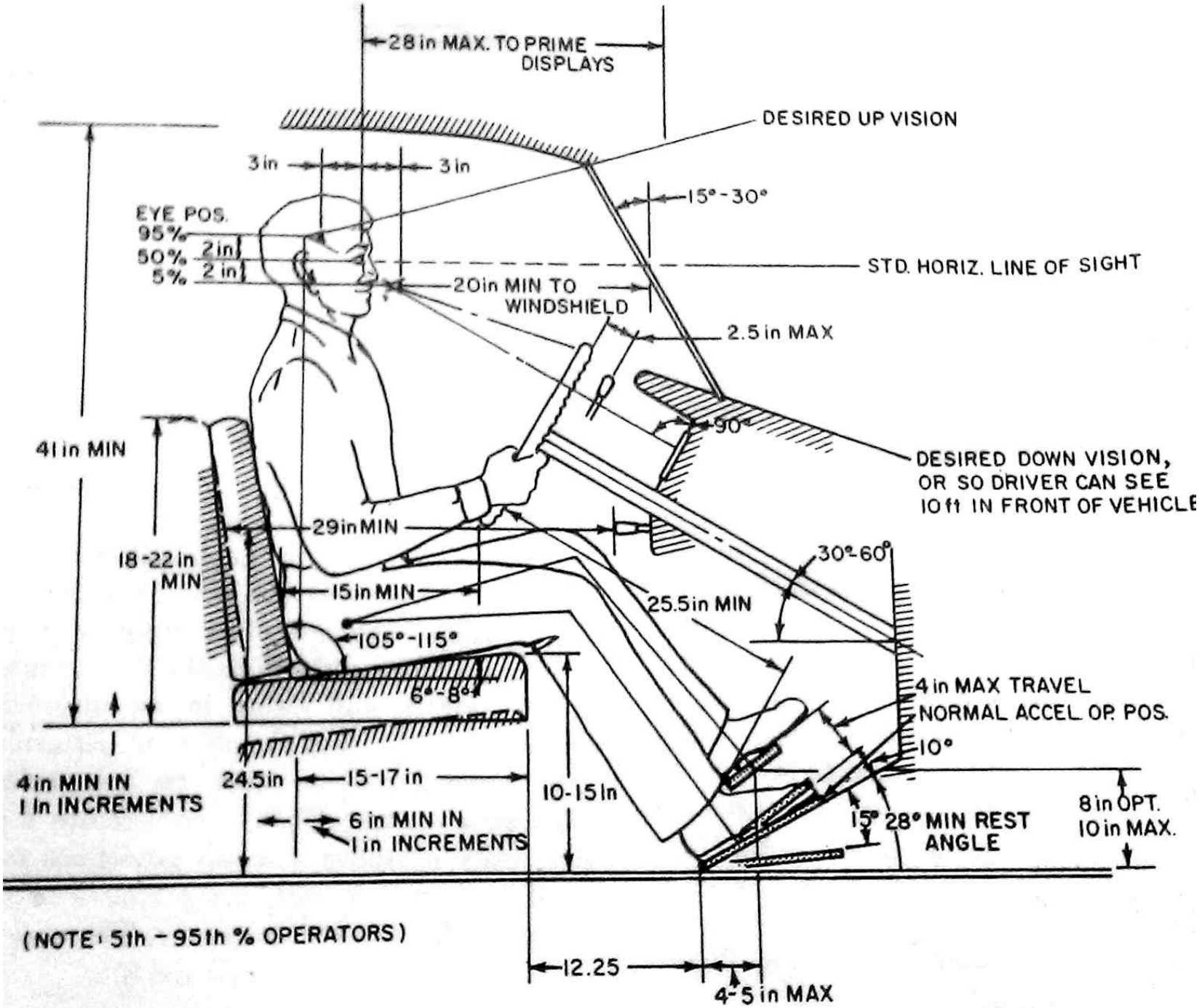
Rhythm relieves monotony of mere repetition. Like with music sequences of shapes and forms are repeated with sophistication.

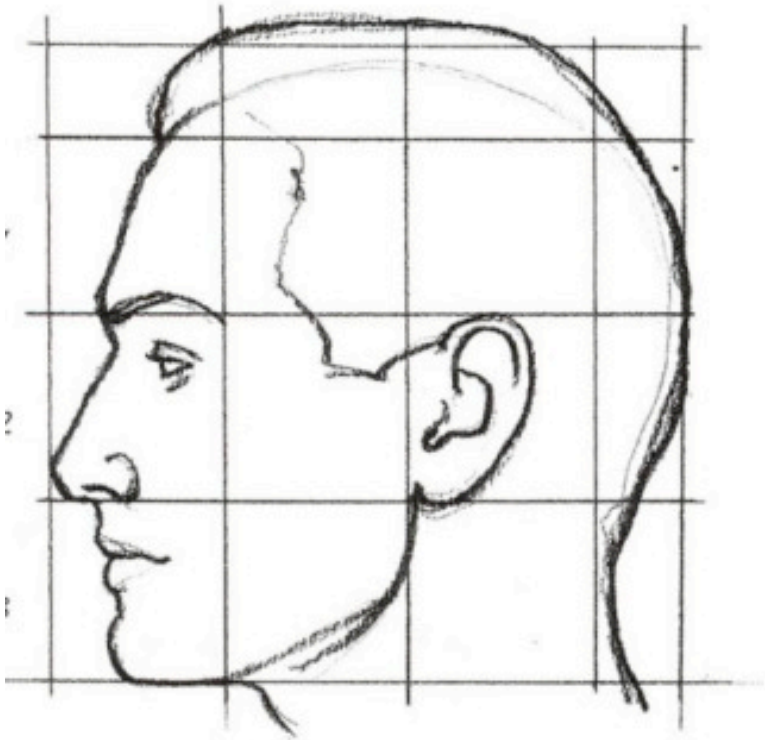


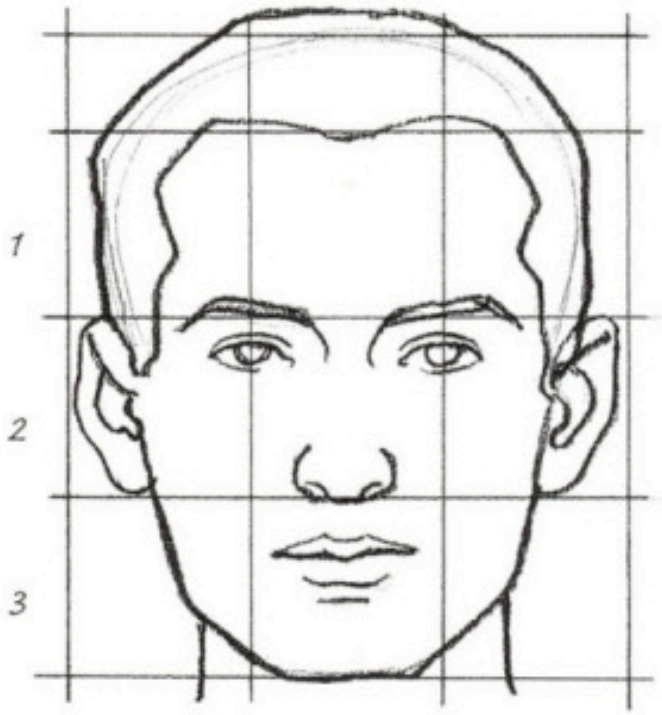
Proportion & Scale

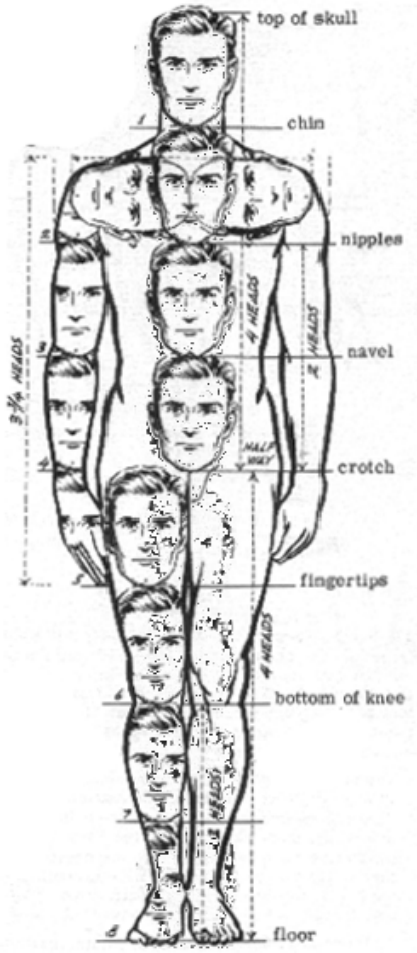
Proportion is the comparison of one thing to another, specifically the size of one thing compared to another. Parts of the body are in proportion to each other. The hand is about the size of the face. If a nose is very large and out of proportion it is very noticable.

Scale is the comparison of a thing to the siae of a human being. It may also be compared to things that are a standard size to a human. The size of a chair must be in scale to the human who will sit in it.

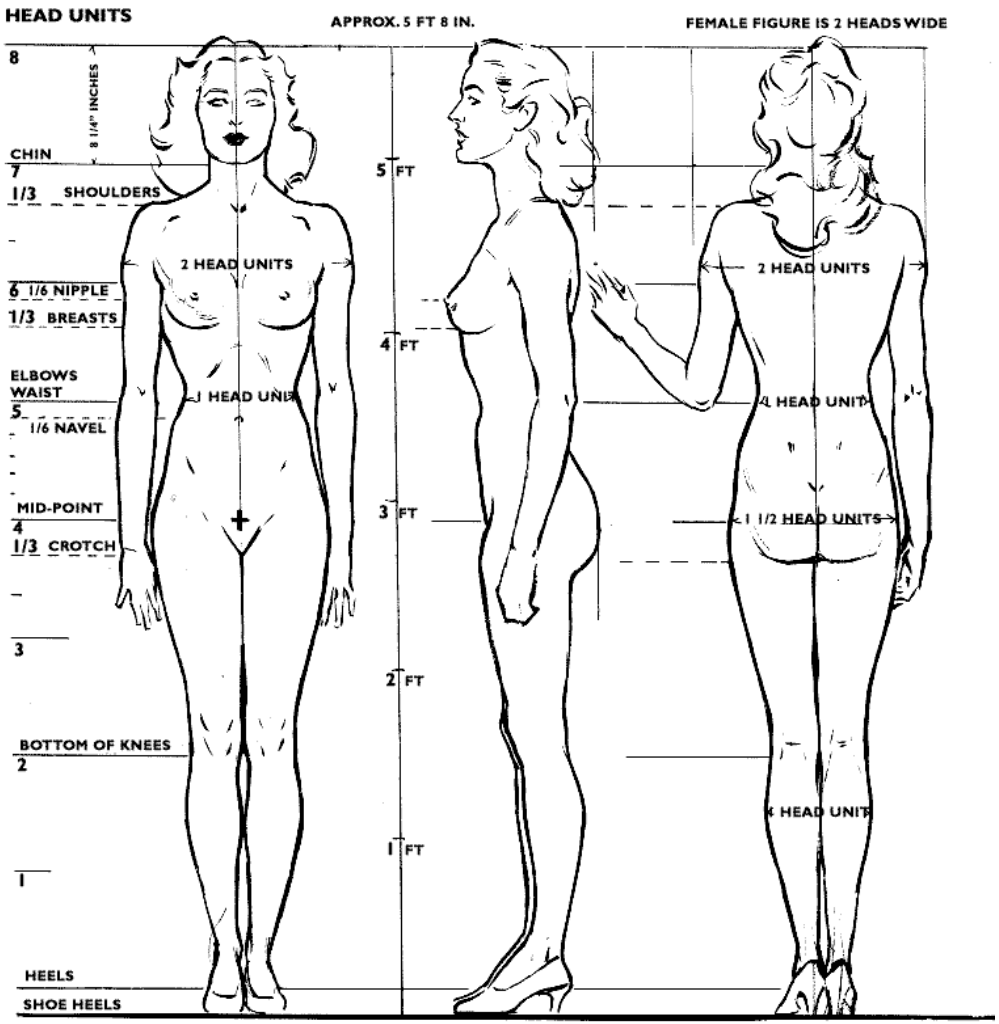

28 in MAX. TO PRIME DISPLAYS
DESIRED UP VISION
3 in
3 in
15°-30°
EYE POS.
95%
50%
5%
2 in
2 in
STD. HORIZ. LINE OF SIGHT
20 in MIN TO WINDSHIELD
2.5 in MAX
90°
41 in MIN
DESIRED DOWN VISION, OR SO DRIVER CAN SEE 10 ft IN FRONT OF VEHICLE
29 in MIN
18-22 in MIN
30°-60°
15 in MIN
25.5 in MIN
105°-115°
6°-8°
4 in MAX TRAVEL NORMAL ACCEL OP. POS.
10°
4 in MIN IN 1 in INCREMENTS
24.5 in
15-17 in
10-15 in
6 in MIN IN 1 in INCREMENTS
15° 28° MIN REST ANGLE
8 in OPT. 10 in MAX.
(NOTE: 5th - 95th % OPERATORS)
12.25
4-5 in MAX

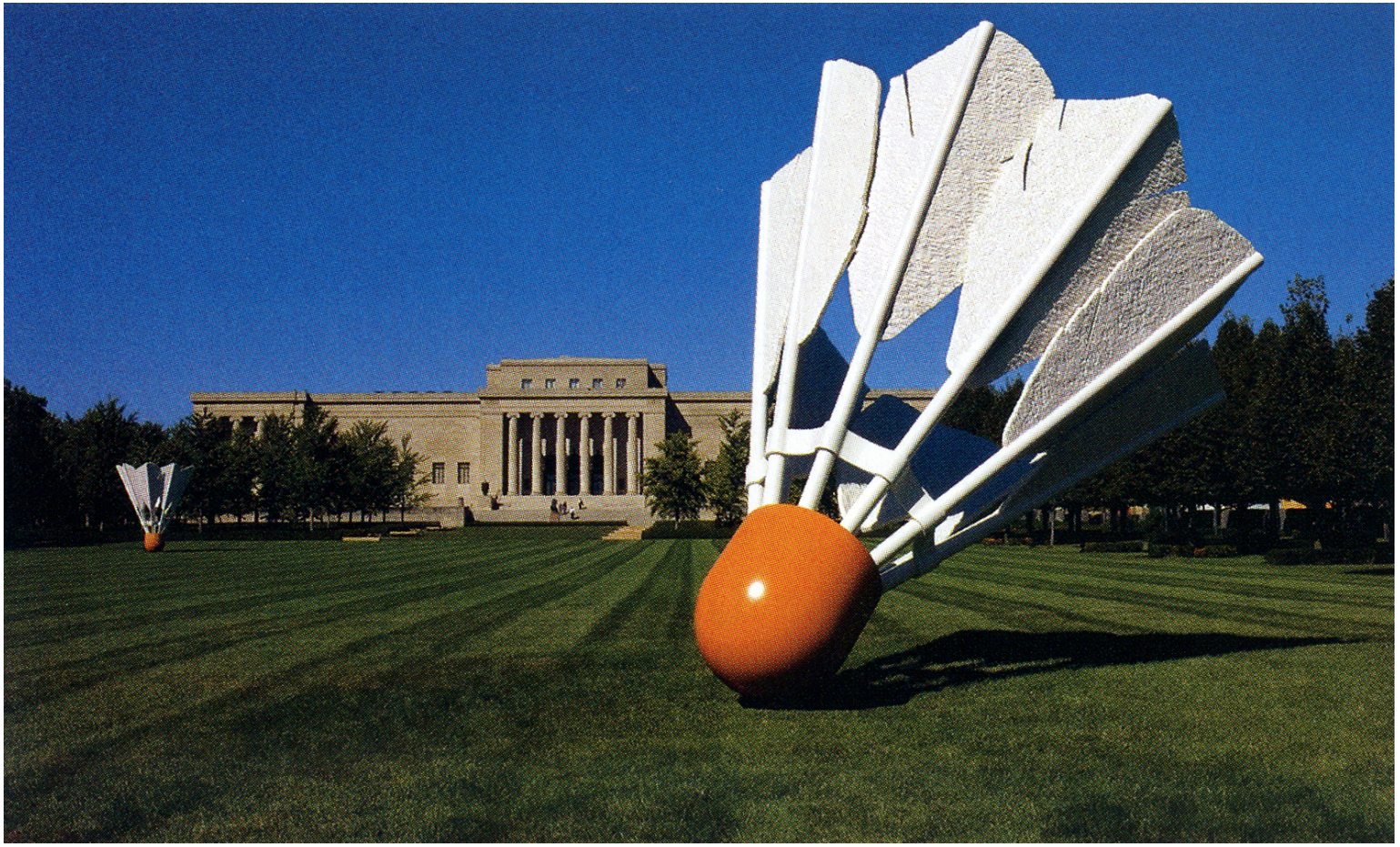



1
2
3

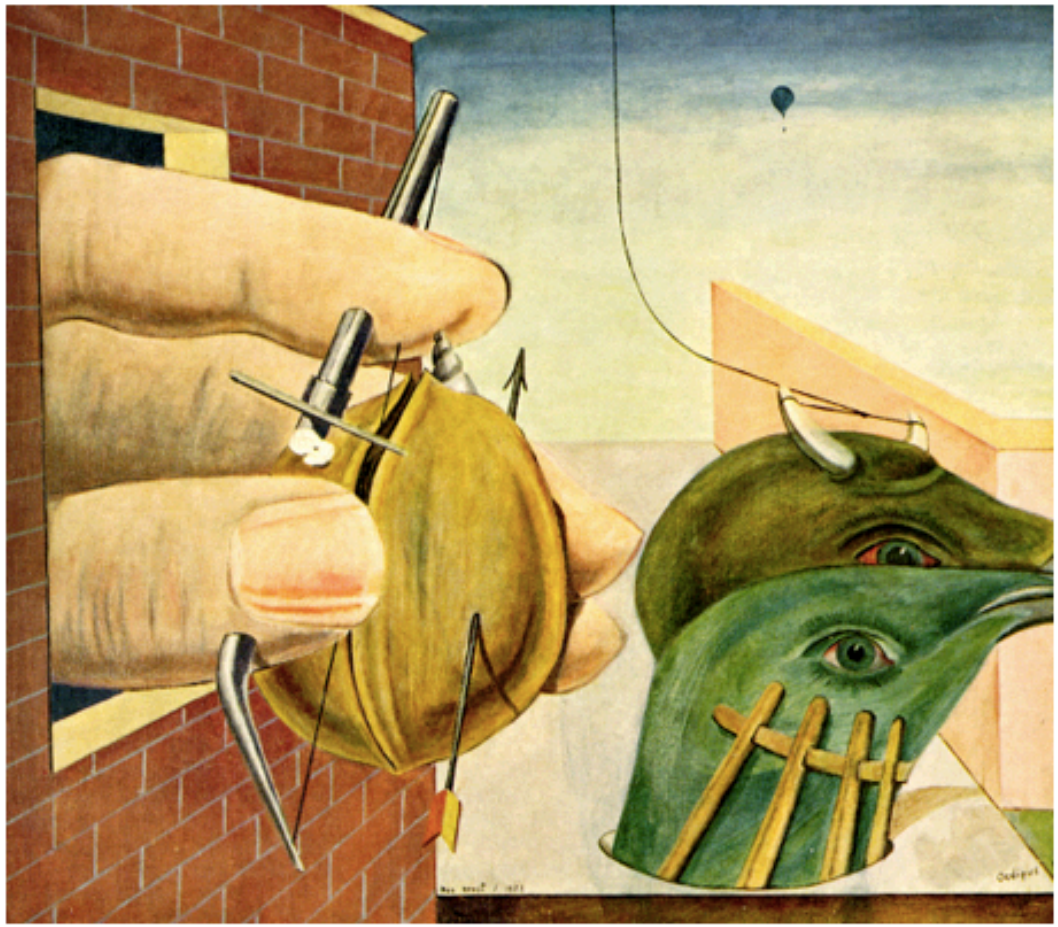

top of skull
chin
nipples
navel
crotch
fingertips
bottom of knee
floor
3½ HEADS
4 HEADS
4 HEADS
4 HEADS
HALF WAY

IDEAL PROPORTION - FEMALE

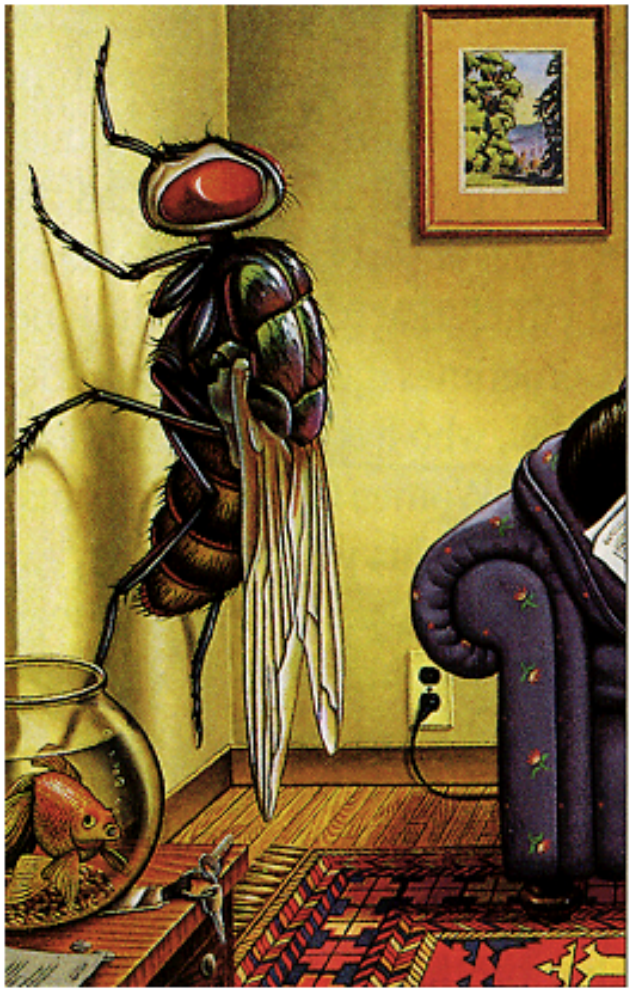




Exaggerated scale lends its mystery to surrealistic art.



Exaggerated scale lends its mystery to surrealistic art.

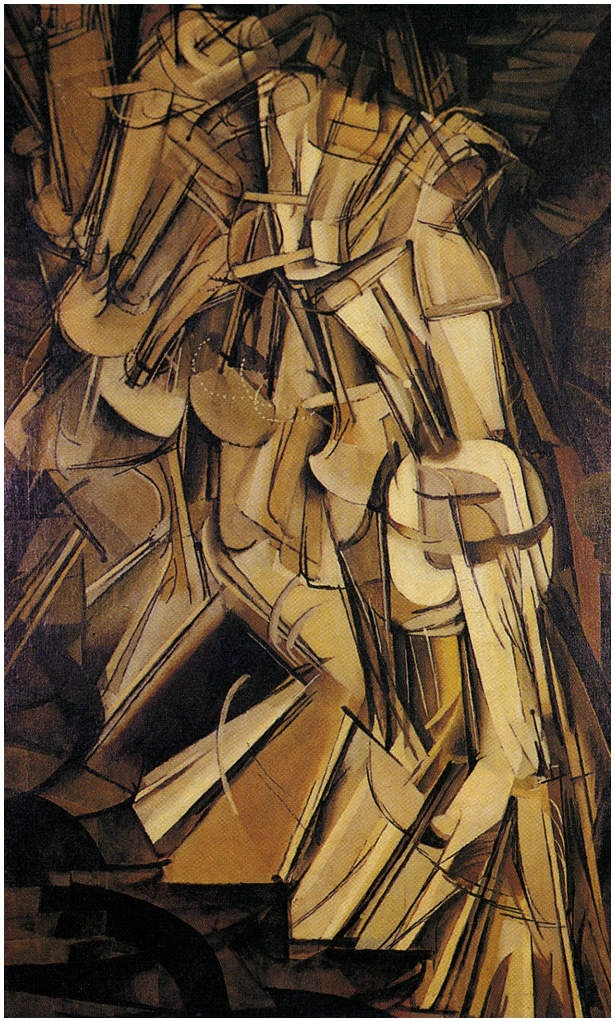


Exaggerated scale lends its mystery to surrealistic art.

Movement & Direction

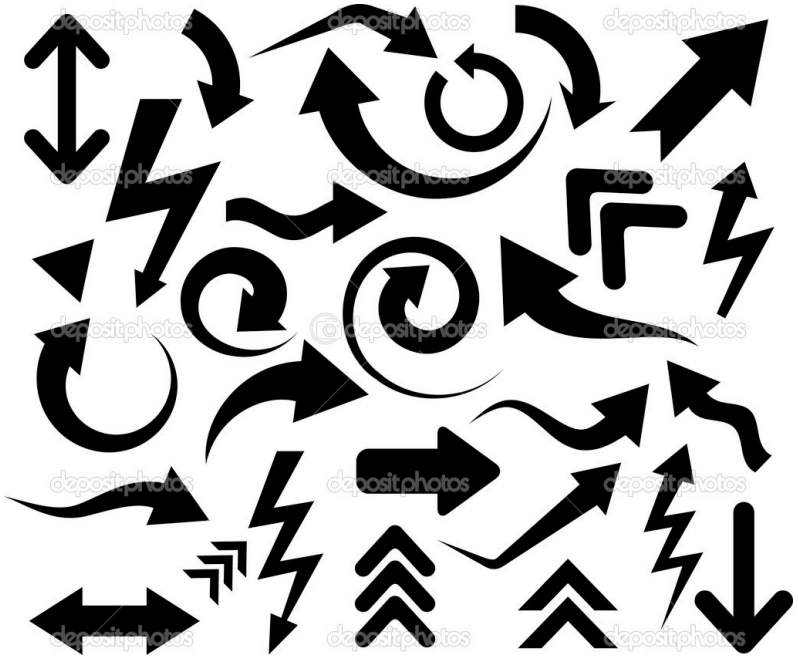
Direction is dependent on the elements and other principles of design, especially contrast and emphasis.

Westerners tend to read left to right and top to bottom, so this will greatly influence where they feel the most comfortable starting (upper left) and ending up (lower right) in the design.

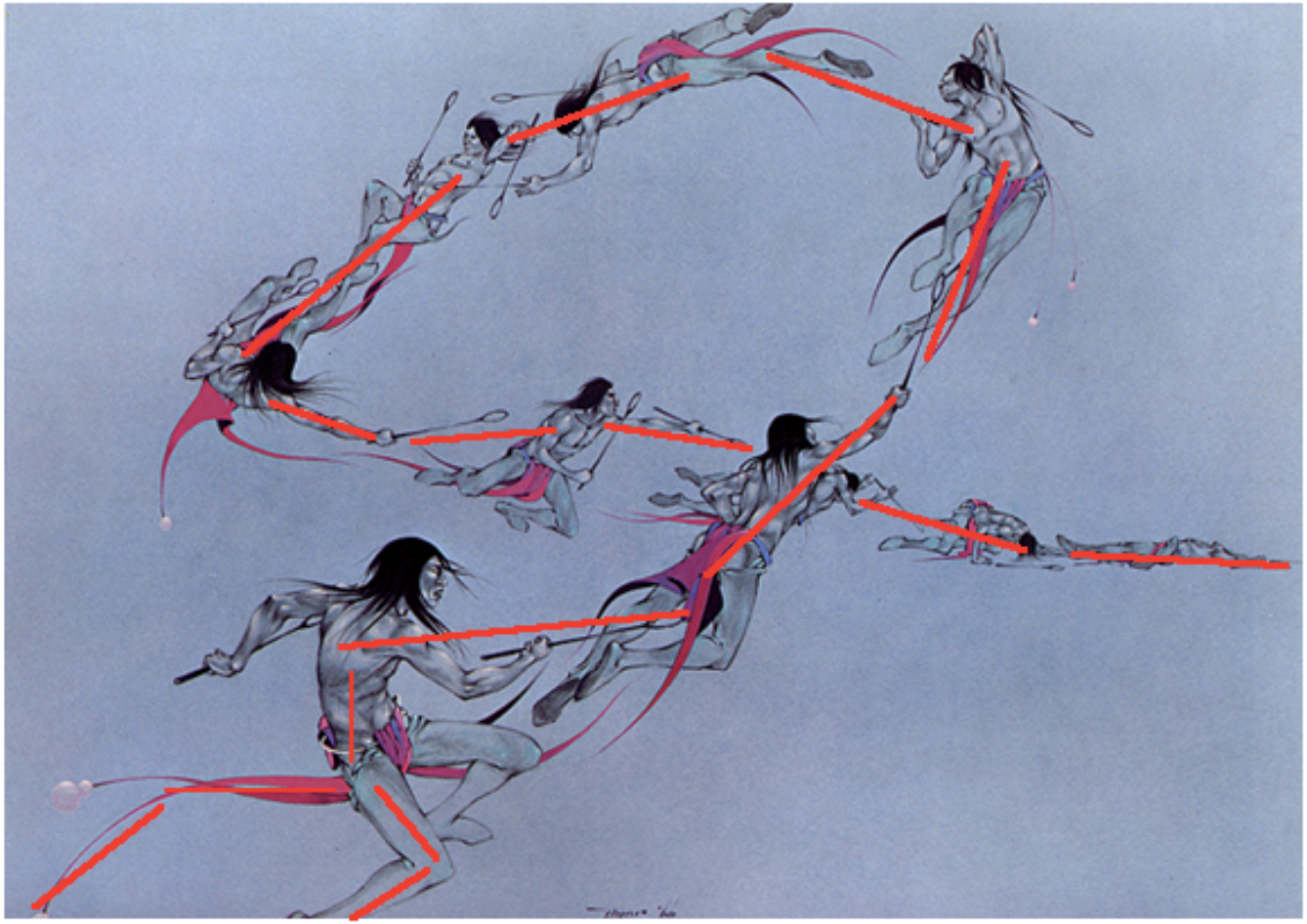


If visual weight is about attracting the eye to a particular location, then visual direction is about leading the eye to the next location. Visual direction is the perceived direction of visual forces. Think of it as the direction you would expect an element to move if it were in motion.

Line is probably the easiest way to guide the viewer through a design. Arrows (vectors) are commonly used to point to important information or to the next area. Be careful, though, because using line conspicuously like this can be unsophisticated and maybe even condescending..



Linear direction



Implying **Motion** in a static image is similar to freezing the action. Motion will also have a direction into which to move.

Frozen motion

Motion effects

Harmony

Harmony is the pleasing relationship between elements such as color, value, and shape. Harmony in art and design is the visually satisfying effect of combining similar, related elements. For instance, adjacent colors on the color wheel, similar shapes etc. In color there are color schemes, such as analogous, complementary, and monochromatic color schemes, that assure color harmony.

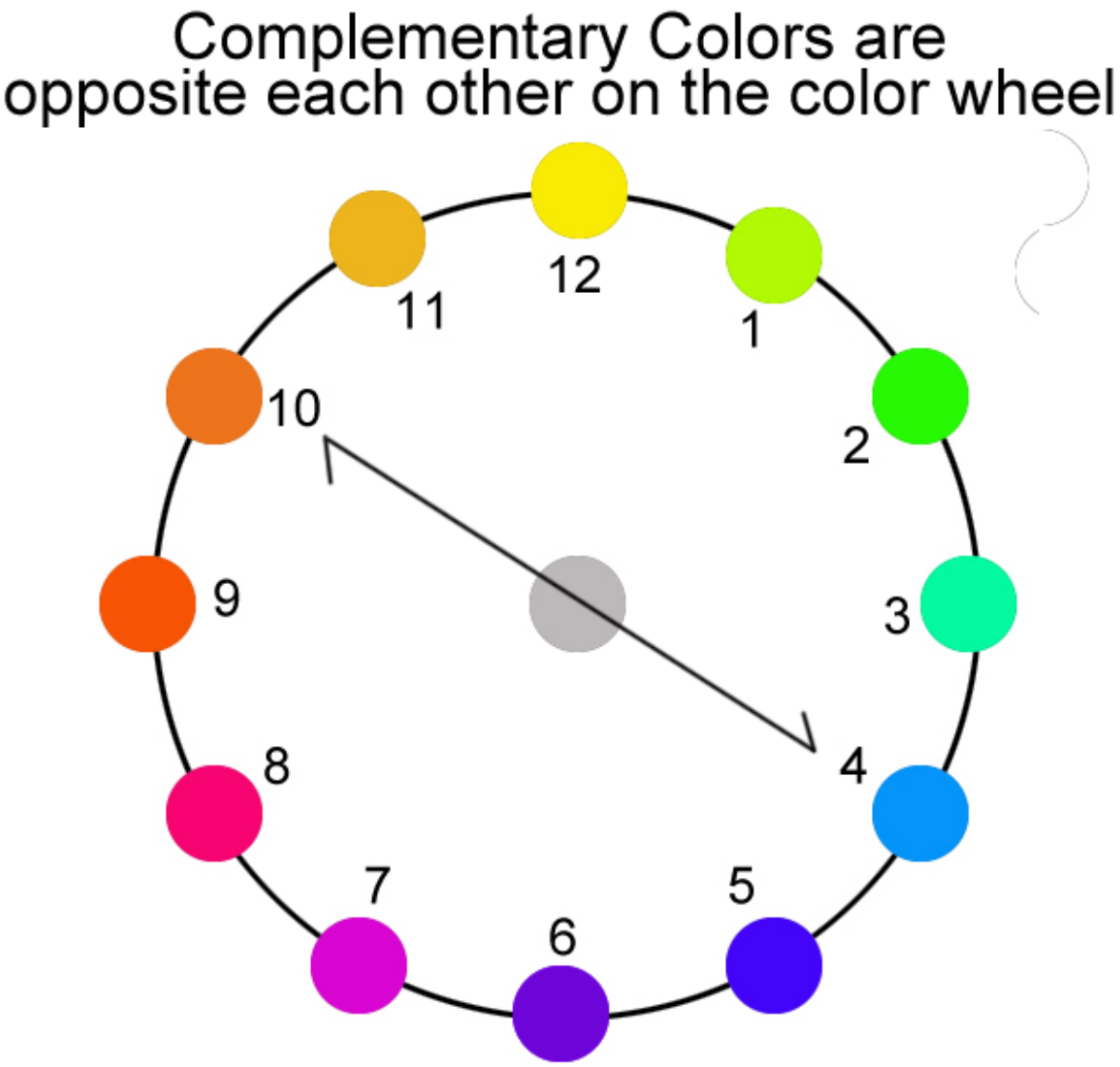
Harmony is the visually satisfying effect of combining similar or related elements.

Harmony using cool analogous colors and similar organic shapes — like a pleasing harmonic musical chord.

Type and image Harmony

Better choice

Color Harmony



Color Harmony

Complementary Color Semi-Neutrals

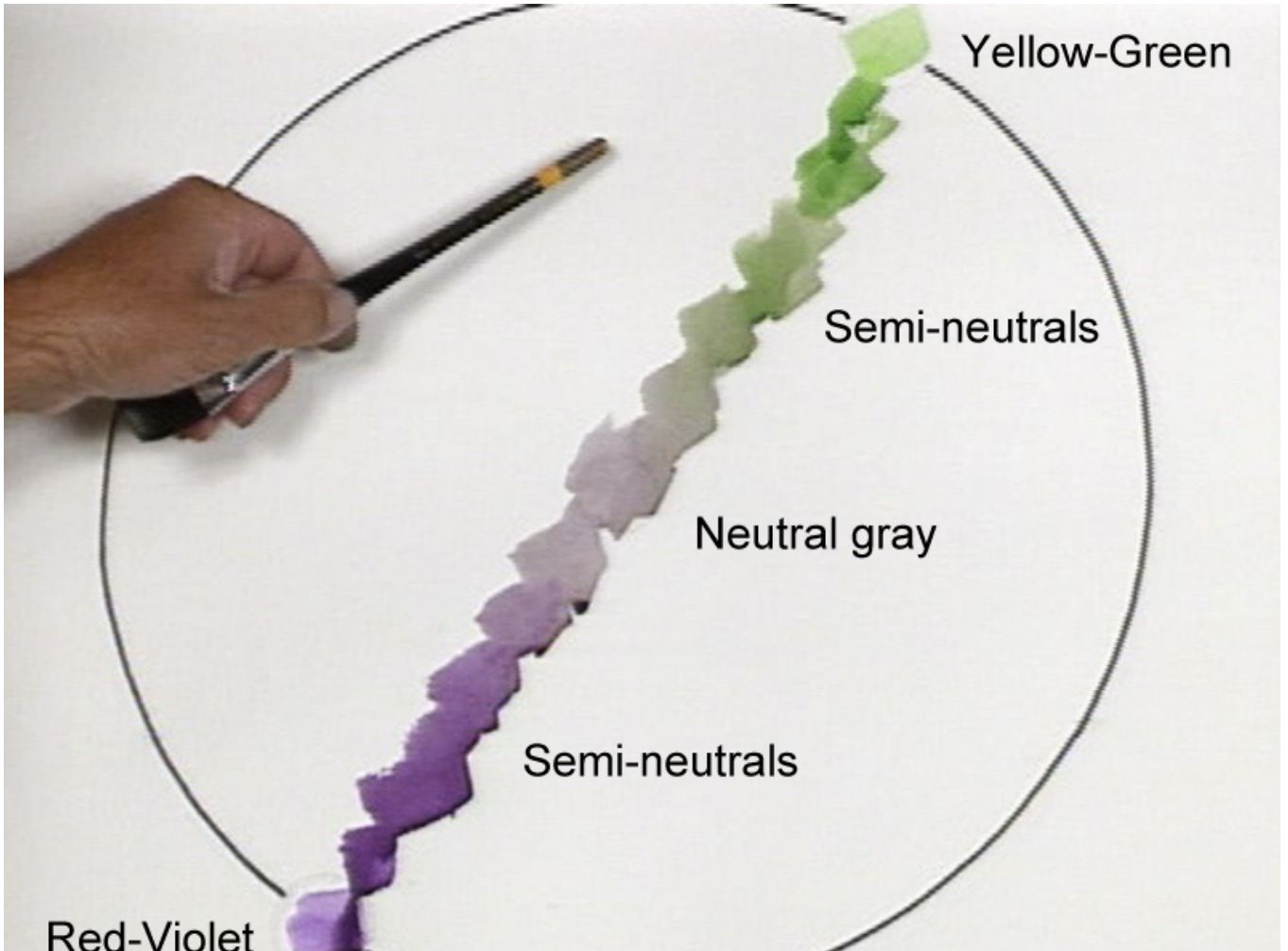
Red-Orange

Making neutral lifeless gray and semi-neutrals with complementary colors

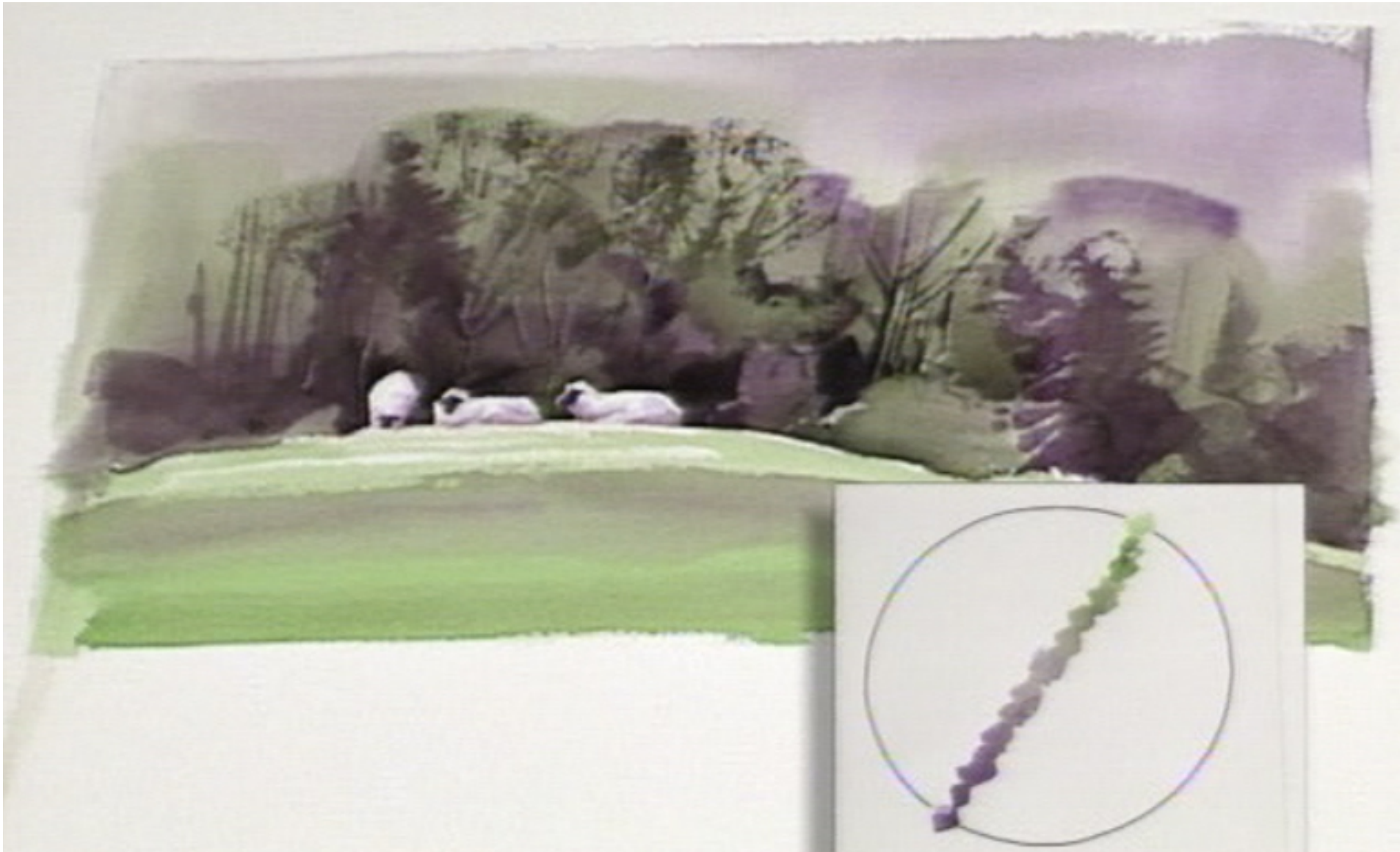
Blue-Green

Complementary Color

Semi-Neutrals

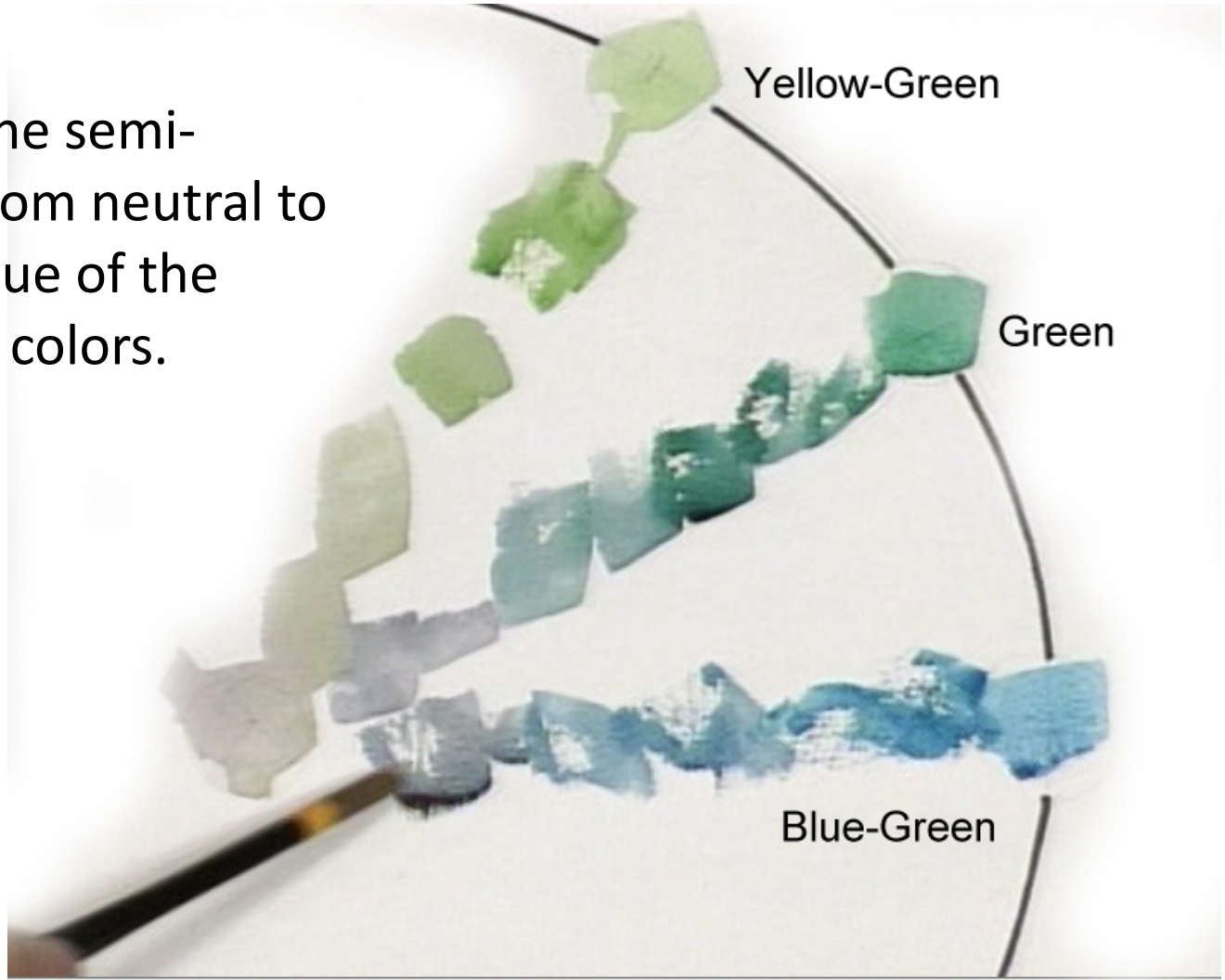


Complementary Color



Color Harmony
Analgous Colors

Mix only the semi-neutrals from neutral to the pure hue of the analogous colors.

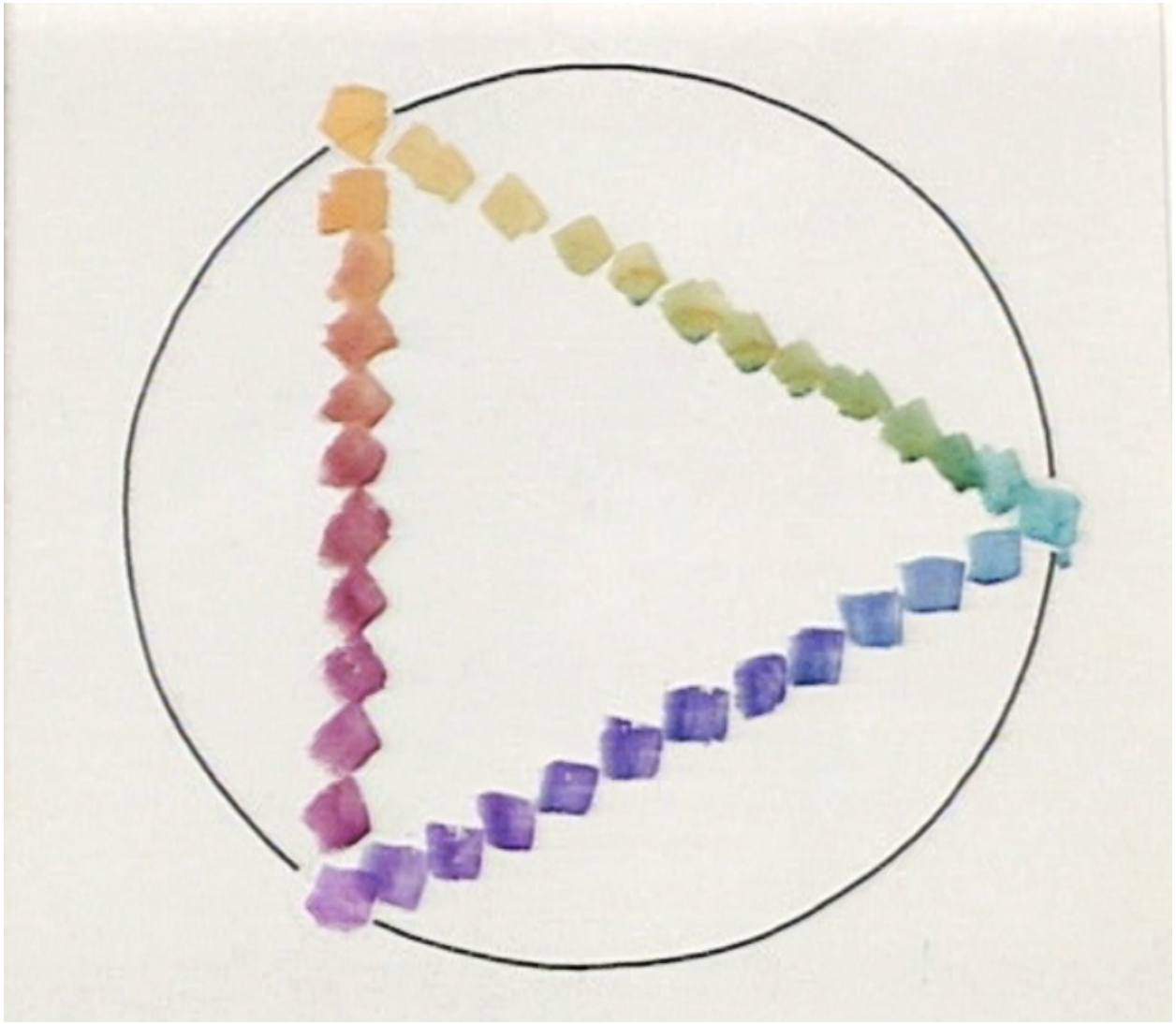


Color Harmony

Analgous Colors

Color Harmony

Triadic Colors



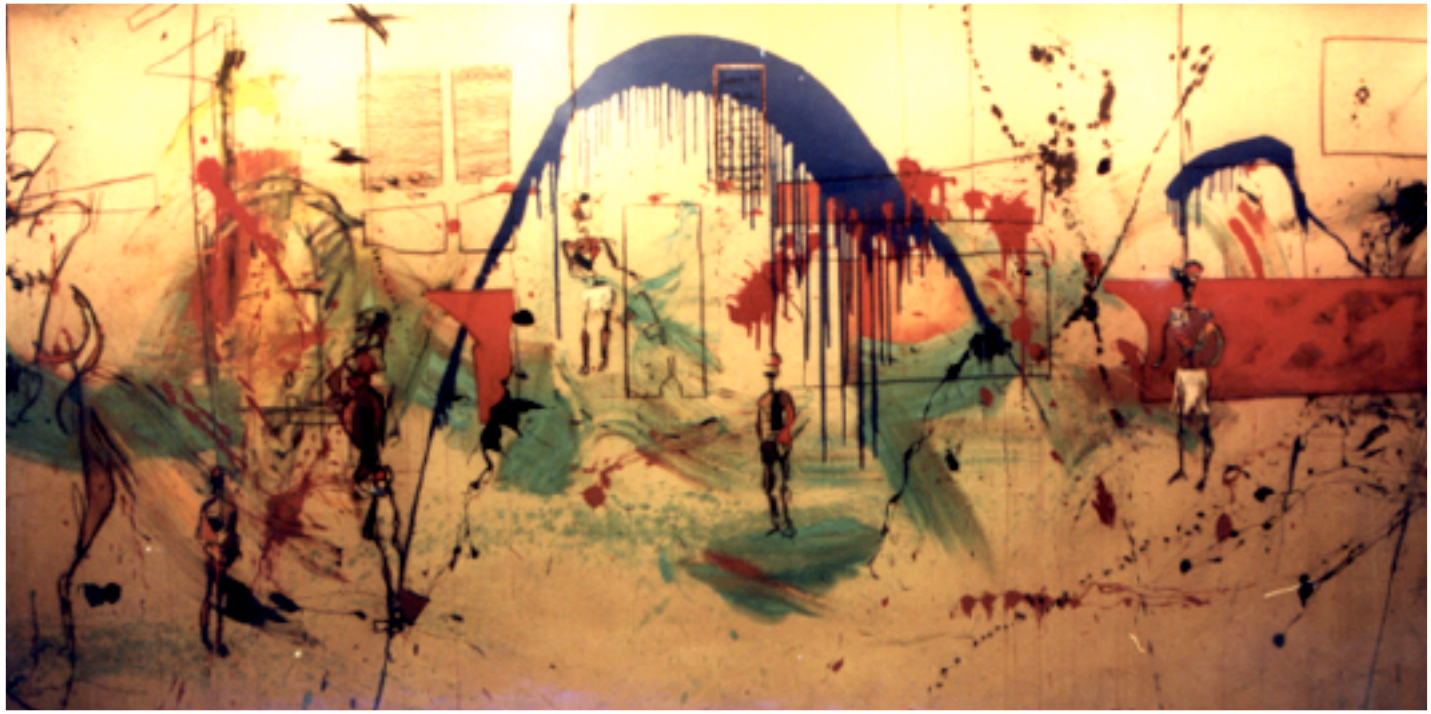
Color Harmony

Triadic Colors

Variety

Variety is the al-you-can-eat buffet, that provides many choices. Try them all of have more of one. Variety is “the spice of life” they say, and life would be bland and boring without variety. Variety in design includes the elements such as a variety of lines, shapes, and colors. It also includes the principles using emphasis, balance, and movement. Its challenging using variety and keeping **unity**.

Variety of values, textures, shapes, colors, lines and direction and movement — all together heighten our interest.



Overlapping elements can unify compositions with a great variety of unrelated images.