Elements of Design

The Language of Design
Primary Principles

- Affect the design as a whole
  - Unity
  - Variety
  - Hierarchy
  - Proportion
  - Dominance/Emphasis
  - Balance
Unity

- An overriding principle that is served by all other principles
  - A primary objective of a design is to create a sense of unity through organization of compositional parts
- Controls variety
Unity is created when objects seem to belong to each other so that each contributes something to the whole composition.

Nothing can be left out without changing the composition.

The feeling of wholeness or the parts belonging together.
What do you think Cezanne used to keep this painting, *Mt. Victoria*, unified or working together?
Cezanne used blues, yellows and greens. By using related colors (remember blue and yellow make green), the piece appears to work as a whole.
Variety

- Creates visual interest
- Balance of visual contrasts
- Combination of elements
Variety

When elements are changed in scale, color, or form.
Variety
The use of different lines, shapes, and colors in a piece of work.
Let’s look at Wassily Kandinsky’s, *Composition VII*. How is the artist showing variety in this work?
Kandinsky used a variety of lines, shapes and colors to give this painting interest. He also overlapped some of those elements.
Hierarchy

- An arranged order

- Principle functions of hierarchy
  - Dominance
    - Influence of one element over another
  - Emphasis
    - Stressing one element over another
Dominance/Emphasis
Emphasis

- Emphasis is used by artists to create dominance and focus in their work.

- Artists can emphasize color, value, shapes, or other art elements to achieve dominance.

- Various kinds of contrast can be used to emphasize a center of interest.

- The principle of design that is concerned with dominance;
  - the development of a main idea or center of interest (also called focal point)
Where is the focal point in Wassily Kandinsky’s, *Composition VII*?
Kandinsky emphasized the large black circle in the upper left corner of his work. The object is different from everything else in the painting and therefore it "stands out".
Emphasis

When one area in a work of art stands out more than another. The part that catches your attention first.

using proximity, color, and throwing something random in a pattern adds Emphasis
Emphasis

- Emphasis is the use of a focal point to stress certain elements or to give special attention to an element.
Emphasis & Focal Point

Barbara Kruger

Rene Magritte
EMPHASIS CAN BE CREATED BY CONTRAST

A large difference between two things, such as light and shadow, color and black/white

Andy Warhol
Proportion

- Size relationship or ratio
- Outer dimensions have a relationship to internal divisions and alignments
Proportion
How is this artist, John Zacchea, showing correct proportion in *Wine Bottle and Cheese*?

When comparing the size of the objects in the composition, you see that the objects are not too large or too small for each other. They are of a realistic size.
Sometimes artists chose to distort or exaggerate the proportions of the subjects involved.

In this case the artist chose to use these "puffed up forms" to exaggerate the size of the people. By showing the figures larger than life size, he is attempting to celebrate the life within, and perhaps to mock their role in the world.

Fernando Botero, *A Family*
Balance

- Visual distribution of elements
  - Symmetrical
  - Asymmetrical
  - Physical balance
  - Radial symmetry
The three major forms of balance:

- **Asymmetrical balance:** where equilibrium is achieved by the balance differences in the art elements within a composition.

- **Symmetrical balance:** where the art elements in a composition are balanced in a mirror-like fashion (it does not have to be exact but close).

- **Radial balance:** a kind of balance where the elements branch or radiate out from a central point.
Symmetric Balance

- Elements are arranged the same or very similarly on either side of a central axis
What kind of balance is illustrated in this painting "Oriental Poppies," by Georgia O’Keefe?
If you said **symmetrical balance**, you are correct!

If you could visually divide the paper in half. There would be a poppy on both sides. No one side dominates the pictures. Neither poppy appears to be more important than the other.
Asymmetric Balance

- Sometimes referred to as dynamic symmetry
- Using uneven numbers, sizes
What type of balance is shown in this painting, *Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Painter's Mother* (commonly known as Whistler’s Mother), by James Whistler?
If you said, asymmetrical balance, you were right! The large form of the woman is offset yet "visually equal" to the black curtain and white painting on the wall. This makes the painting appear balanced and off balance.
Symmetrical arrangement of constituents, especially of radiating parts, about a central point
What type of balance is shown here?

The monkey and the cat balance each other out on either side of the woman.

Freda Khalo, *Autorretarto con Collare de Espina y Colibri,*
Primary Elements

- Unity
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Supporting Principles

- Affect the interaction among elements
  - Scale (related to proportion)
  - Rhythm/Repetition/Pattern
  - Proximity
  - Movement
Scale

- Size comparison of internal parts
- Comparison based on a known constant such as human scale
- Helps establish hierarchy
Proportion refers to the size relationships of the design elements in a composition as an aspect of the space they occupy in a design composition as a whole.

Scale refers to size comparisons of the internal parts of a composition, or a size relationship in the comparison of one design element to another.
"The Fisherman," Saul Steinberg, from *The Labyrinth*
Rhythm

- Alternating occurrence of form and space
- Creates eye movement
Here is an example of a cut paper tessellation design. What is used to create the appearance of rhythm in this work?
Possible answers could be:
The fish design is repeated over and over. The colors white and orange appear as a pattern. The lines that form the scales of the fish. The black triangles that decorate the backbone of the fish.
Pattern

- Repetition of an element of art (i.e., shapes, lines, or colors) to achieve decoration or ornamentation.
How has the artists use of pattern enhanced this piece?

Would this piece be as interesting if the artist had used a solid background rather than this patterned one?

Riffs by Florene
Repetition

- The principle of repetition simply means the reusing of the same or similar elements throughout a design.

- Repetition of certain design elements in a slide or among a deck of slides will bring a clear sense of unity, consistency, and cohesiveness.

- Regular pattern of elements

- Principle function of repetition
  - Pattern
    - Configuration of distributed elements
This beautiful *Scorpion Mola*, by an unknown artist, from the Panama Canal Kuna Indians shows repetition of what elements of art?
Shapes, colors, lines, and forms are repeated.
Proximity

- Relative position of elements
- Creates visual tension
How close together or far apart elements are placed suggests a relationship (or lack of) between otherwise disparate parts.

Unity is also achieved by using a third element to connect distant parts.
Movement

Movement adds excitement to your work by showing action and directing the viewers eye throughout the picture plane.

Edward Munch, the Scream
In *Starry Night*, famed artist Vincent Van Gogh creates movement in his sky. How does he show us this?
The swirling motion of the colors in the sky showing the artist's interpretation of wind.

The repetition of the brushstrokes and paint dabs.

The stars are all yellow and round, vary in size and placement, and have "halos" of light encircling them.

Look at the painting and concentrate on how your eyes bounce from one star to another. This is an example of how an artist can create movement in a work of art.
Motion or movement in a visual image occurs when objects seem to be moving in a visual image.

- Movement in a visual image comes from the kinds of shapes, forms, lines, and curves that are used.

- Diagonal lines tend to create the illusion of movement or motion.
Supporting Principles

- Scale
- Rhythm/Pattern/Repetition
- Proximity
- Movement
Primary Principles

- Affect the design as a whole
  - Unity
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  - Proportion
  - Dominance/Emphasis
  - Balance
Components of Design & Visual Cues

- Shape
- Space
- Line
- Size
- Color
- Texture
Shapes are generally considered positive figures that displace space
Shape & Form

Shape is an enclosed space defined by other elements of art. **Shape** is 2-Dimensional while **form** is 3-dimensional

Shape can be

Geometric  or  Organic

Fernana Leger, The City

Matisse, from the series “Jazz”
Are these shapes Geometric or Organic?

Edward Steichen, Le Tournesol (Sunflower) 1920
Combination of dots and lines into patterns

Figures that sit on the plane of the visual field without depth and define the outside edges of objects

- 3 basic geometric shapes
  - Parallelograms
  - Circles
  - Triangles
Parallelograms

- 4 sided figure with opposite sides that are parallel and equal in length
  - Squares and Rectangles
  - **Square**– Unsophisticated Balanced Sturdy Straight-forward
  - **Rectangle** – opposites of above

- Squares and rectangles are the most common shapes in man-made objects.

- Because so much of the man-made world is composed of these shapes, squares and rectangles are familiar, safe, and comfortable, but their uniformity can also create a conservative or rigid effect.

- They can be used to suggest stability and truth. Squares are considered to be one of the most honest shapes, even more than other types of rectangles, because of their mathematical and visual simplicity.
Circles

- Always associated with endless rhythmic patterns or time
  - *Eternity*
  - *Clear beginnings or endings*
- The viewer’s eye will immediately be drawn to this shape
- Circles suggest infinity, completion, softness, and security.
- Many ancient cultures considered the circle to be a perfect and even a sacred form.
- *Circles are useful for focusing attention because of the closure of the shape, and because they are less common in man-made objects than shapes with straight lines. Ellipses share the psychology of circles, but to a lesser extent depending on the how close they are to a true circle.*
The most dynamic and active

- Equilateral & Isosceles

- Equilateral – serene mood symmetrical balance

- Isosceles draws power from its point and not its base – thus the eye will be drawn to its point

Triangles suggest action because of movement from the corners “pointing” in a direction.

Equilateral triangles are the most stable of the triangle shapes because all sides and angles are the same. Triangles can suggest growth or “reaching the top.”
Shapes – Form – Depth

- There are 5 forms related to volume which exhibit the illusion of weight and mass termed **volumetric forms**
  - Cube
  - Cylinder
  - Sphere
  - Pyramid
  - Cone
Volumetric Forms

- Cube – composed of six squares
Volumetric Forms

- Cylinder – Rectangle with two circular shapes on each end
Volumetric Forms

- Sphere – 2 circles cut in half and joined at the middle
Volumetric Forms

- Pyramid – 4 triangles
Volumetric Forms

- Cone – a circular shape and a triangle combined
Area activated by visual elements

Shape/space relationships
  ◦ figure/ground
  ◦ form/counterform
  ◦ positive/negative
- **Space** is the distance or area between shapes.

- **Shapes** can be arranged in space in many ways – rows, overlapping, by size to show distance ... can you think of other ways?

- **Positive Space** is created by objects that are seen as a main element appearing to be in front of the background.

- **Negative Space** is the area that surrounds the shapes.
cognitive ability to separate elements based upon contrast, that is, dark and light, black and white.

subject/background

positive/negative space.
Space

Positive/Negative Space

MC Escher
Dots

- A line is a dot out for a walk.  
  —Paul Klee

- A line connects two points. It’s also the path made by a moving point.
Pointillism: Seurat's Bathers at Asnières
**Line**

- A line is defined as a mark with length and direction, created by a point that moves across a surface. A line can vary in length, width, direction, curvature, and color.
Line

- Moving path of a point
  - Line as type
  - Line as edge
  - Line implied
Horizontal lines are parallel to the horizon (hence the name).
They look like they’re lying down, at rest, asleep.
They suggest calm and quiet, a relaxed comfort.
Horizontal lines can’t fall over.
They accentuate width.
They’re stable and secure.
They convey an absence of conflict, a restful peace.
Horizontal lines by their connection to the horizon are associated with earth bound things and idea.
**Lines & Implications**

- **Vertical lines** are perpendicular to the horizon.
- They are filled with potential energy that could be released if they were to fall over.
- **Vertical lines** are strong and rigid.
- They can suggest stability, especially when thicker.
- **Vertical lines** accentuate height and convey a lack of movement.
- They stretch from the earth to the heavens and are often connected with religious feelings.
- Their tallness and formality may give the impression of dignity.
Curved lines are softer than straight lines.
They sweep and turn gracefully between end points.
They are less definite and predictable than straight lines.
They bend, they change direction.
Curved lines express fluid movement.
They can be calm or dynamic depending on how much they curve.
The less active the curve the calmer the feeling.
Lines & Implications

- Diagonal lines are **unbalanced**.
- They are filled with restless and uncontrolled energy.
- They can appear to be either rising or falling and convey action and motion.
- Their kinetic energy and apparent movement create tension and excitement.
- Diagonal lines are more dramatic than either horizontal or vertical lines.

  - Any diagonal line – moves the eye in the line’s direction
  - Several diagonal lines – create nervous dynamic energy
MONDRIAN: THEOSOPHICALLY PAINTING
Roy Lichtenstein, Brushstroke, 1965
Color

- Is an element of design with three properties

1) Hue, the name of the color, e.g. red, yellow, etc.
2) Saturation/Intensity (chroma) or the purity and strength of the color
3) Value, or the lightness or darkness of the color

Jasper Johns, Target (primary colors)

Delauney
Color

- Hues found in light and pigment
  - Convey mood
  - Enhance pictorial space
  - Heighten emotion
  - Transmit cultural meaning
Every color composed of 3 primary colors –

- Red, green, and blue – not red, yellow and blue

- Equal amounts of red, green and blue light will produce white light
Primary Colors - Red, Blue, and Yellow
Used for mixing paint or printing
Secondary Colors - Orange, Green, and Violet
Used for mixing paint or printing
Primary – Secondary – Tertiary

- Red (Primary)
- Red-orange (Tertiary)
- Orange (Secondary)
- Yellow-orange (Tertiary)
- Yellow (Primary)
- Yellow-Green (Tertiary)
- Violet (Secondary)
- Blue-violet (Tertiary)
- Blue (Primary)
- Blue-green (Tertiary)
- Green (Secondary)
Complementary colors are opposite on the color wheel. Red and green, yellow and violet, blue and orange, are the three simple pairs of complementary colors.

These colors always go well with each other, hence the term complimentary.
The “Temperature” of Color

Half of the color wheel--from red to yellow-green--is considered WARM.

*These colors appear as if they are advancing toward you, appearing nearer. They can help create a warm, cozy atmosphere.*
The “Temperature” of Color

From green to red-violet—is considered Cool. These colors appear to recede, as though the space is expanding.

Green and violet may appear to advance or recede, depending on the colors used with them. So some interior designers consider them neutrals that can complement any color scheme.
Triad Colors

A combination of three colors that are equally spaced on the color wheel is known as a TRIAD. These combinations can create a bold, yet balanced decorating palette.
- **Hue** is described with the words we normally think of as describing color: red, purple, blue, etc.

- **Value (lightness)** describes overall intensity to how light or dark a color is. It is the only dimension of color that may exist by itself.

- **Chroma (Saturation)** may be defined as the strength or dominance of the hue. On the outer edge of the hue wheel are the intensely saturated hues.
  - Towards the center of the color wheel, no hue dominates and they becomes less and less saturated.
In order to establish an immediate message, color combinations should contain visual color cues that trigger specific responses — those that best express the intention and/or purpose of the product or service.

As a general rule of thumb, there should be a rank order of dominant color, subordinate color, and color accents.
Red is the color of fire and blood,
- so it is associated with energy, war, danger, strength, power, determination as well as passion, desire, and love.

Red is a very emotionally intense color. It enhances human metabolism, increases respiration rate, and raises blood pressure.

It has very high visibility, which is why stop signs, stoplights, and fire equipment are usually painted red.
- In heraldry, red is used to indicate courage. It is a color found in many national flags.
In North American and European cultures, red conveys passion, love, danger and power. It is the color of stop signs in the United States and is even thought to stimulate the appetite.

In the East, red is a celebrated color, often representing joy or happiness. Chinese brides wear red for luck; and it represents purity in India.

In Latin America, red is also a color that strongly connects to passion and fire.

In the Middle East, red is the color of caution. Some also see the hue as a sign of evil.
A chemical message is sent to your adrenal medulla and releases the hormone epinephrine. This alters your body chemistry, causing you to breathe more rapidly, increases your blood pressure, pulse rate, heartbeat, your flow of adrenaline, GSR — Galvanic Skin Response (a fancy term for perspiration and the basis of lie detector tests).

These reactions are physiological, and we have no control over the effect.

As a result, red is indelibly imprinted on the human mind to connect with excitement and high energy.

Warm tones are known as high-arousal colors and red, in particular, creates the highest arousal threshold in humans.

So from negligees to sports cars to food, red stimulates all kinds of appetites – it is true that red literally can turn you on. In print or at point of purchase, red is virtually un-ignoreable. It has an aggressive nature, commanding attention and demanding action.

The consumer responds to wine tones as rich, refined, expensive; they see the shade as more authoritative, mature, lush, opulent, and elegant than vivid red.
YELLOW

- Yellow is the color of sunshine. It's associated with joy, happiness, intellect, and energy.
- Yellow produces a warming effect, arouses cheerfulness, stimulates mental activity, and generates muscle energy. Yellow is often associated with food.
- Bright, pure yellow is an attention getter, which is the reason taxicabs are painted this color.
- When overused, yellow may have a disturbing effect; it is known that babies cry more in yellow rooms.
- Yellow is seen before other colors when placed against black; this combination is often used to issue a warning.
  - In heraldry, yellow indicates honor and loyalty. Later the meaning of yellow was connected with cowardice.
While generally a happy color in Western cultures it can also be a sign of caution. School buses and street signs are yellow in the United States, for example.

In Germany, yellow is the color of envy and if often avoided in advertising materials.

In the East, yellow is a color associated with royalty. It is also connected to courage and items of a sacred nature.

In some Middle Eastern countries, people connect yellow to mourning and loss. Other Middle Eastern associations though include happiness and prosperity, much like the color meanings in the west.
Orange combines the energy of red and the happiness of yellow. It is associated with joy, sunshine, and the tropics.

Orange represents enthusiasm, fascination, happiness, creativity, determination, attraction, success, encouragement, and stimulation.

To the human eye, orange is a very hot color, so it gives the sensation of heat.

Nevertheless, orange is not as aggressive as red.

Orange increases oxygen supply to the brain, produces an invigorating effect, and stimulates mental activity.

It is highly accepted among young people.

As a citrus color, orange is associated with healthy food and stimulates appetite. Orange is the color of fall and harvest.

- In heraldry, orange is symbolic of strength and endurance.
The associations are rather loose in Western cultures. Orange is the color of fall and of harvests because of the changing of the color of leaves on plants.

Similarly it is associated with the fall holiday, Halloween. But at the same time, brighter oranges can be sunnier and more upbeat colors.

The hue is associated with the sunny state of Florida and its world-known orange crops.

It can be a color of balance as well.

Orange in Japan is the color of courage and love.

Orange and reddish-orange tones are popular in Latin American cultures.

The hues are earthy and are associated closely with the color of the land in much of South America.

In the Middle East, orange is often associated with loss.
Green is the color of nature. It symbolizes growth, harmony, freshness, and fertility.

Green has strong emotional correspondence with safety.

Dark green is also commonly associated with money.

Green has great healing power. It is the most restful color for the human eye; it can improve vision.

Green suggests stability and endurance. Sometimes green denotes lack of experience; for example, a 'greenhorn' is a novice.

Green, as opposed to red, means safety; it is the color of free passage in road traffic.

- In heraldry, green indicates growth and hope.
Much of the western world associates green with envy or jealousy.

Conversely it also represents luck and is commonly used with red for Christmas holiday applications.

Green is a trendy color and phrase when it comes to environmental causes or concerns and it can also be associated with forward-thinking.

In Asian cultures, green represents life and nature as well. But the meaning extends to encompass youth and fertility. Be especially wary of negative associations – infidelity, for example. To wear a green hat in China, means to have cheated on a spouse.

Green is the national color of Mexico and is a source of pride in that nation.

The hue is also strongly associated with Islam and feelings of strength and wealth.
Blue is the color of the sky and sea. It is often associated with depth and stability. It symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and heaven.

Blue is considered beneficial to the mind and body. It slows human metabolism and produces a calming effect. Blue is strongly associated with tranquility and calmness.

Blue is a masculine color; according to studies, it is highly accepted among males.

Dark blue is associated with depth, expertise, and stability; it is a preferred color for corporate America.

Avoid using blue when promoting food and cooking, because blue suppresses appetite.

When used together with warm colors like yellow or red, blue can create high-impact, vibrant designs; for example, blue-yellow-red is a perfect color scheme for a superhero.

- In heraldry, blue is used to symbolize piety and sincerity.
In North America and Europe, blue is the color of trust and authority, making it the top color used by banks, financial institutions and insurance companies.

The color is considered strong and masculine.

In the East, blue is associated with everlasting life, strength and immortality.

Contrary to the masculine association of blue in the U.S., in Chinese cultures blue is a color of femininity.

In Middle Eastern countries, blue is connected closely to religion and is often linked to heaven or the soul.
Purple combines the stability of blue and the energy of red.

Purple is associated with royalty. It symbolizes power, nobility, luxury, and ambition. It conveys wealth and extravagance.

Purple is associated with wisdom, dignity, independence, creativity, mystery, and magic.

According to surveys, almost 75 percent of pre-adolescent children prefer purple to all other colors.

Purple is a very rare color in nature; some people consider it to be artificial.

Light purple is a good choice for a feminine design. You can use bright purple when promoting children's products.
On an almost worldwide scale, the color is connected to wealth.

The color is connected to wealth and regality in the West. In the United States, purple — especially when mixed with white for more pale tones — is commonly associated feminine attributes.
White is associated with light, goodness, innocence, purity, and virginity.

It is considered to be the color of perfection.

White means safety, purity, and cleanliness.

As opposed to black, white usually has a positive connotation.

White can represent a successful beginning. In heraldry, white depicts faith and purity.
Indelibly imprinted in the human mind, black is most closely associated with...

- the magical mysteries of night. That impenetrable, after dark, powerful essence of black is seen in every product category as the most sophisticated and highly stylized shade.

  - The consumer sees black as the most powerful, dramatic, elegant, and expensive presence. This extends into food packaging, where the consumer will pay more for this “gourmet image.”

Black gives the feeling of perspective and depth, but a black background diminishes readability.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Color</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>CHINA</th>
<th>INDIA</th>
<th>EGYPT</th>
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<td>luck, fury, masculine</td>
<td>death</td>
<td>aristocracy</td>
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<td>fortune, luck, joy</td>
<td>mourning, disgust, chilling</td>
<td>virtue</td>
<td>freedom</td>
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Personal Branding – What Color is Your Brand

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDohoPavchc
Texture

Actual and Implied

Albrecht Dürer
Rhinocerus

Golsdworthy
Texture

- Quality and characteristic of surface
  - Tactile texture
  - Visual texture


Visual Texture

- *Visual texture* is the illusion of having physical texture
Visual Texture

- The ripple effect seen in a still pond and the ridges from wind against a sand dune
  - Ridges appear closer together as the viewer moves away

As these textural elements get farther from us, they appear smaller and closer together. That provides us with a clue to their relative distance.