

The Elements of Design



- Line:** Straight, diagonal, curved or scribbled, lines can be drawn, created by text or patterns, or be implied by shapes or images.
- Shape:** Organic or geometric, shapes occur when a line closes on itself, creating an interior. Text characters are shapes too!
When shaded with value, shape can give the illusion of Form.
- Color:** Every color in the rainbow, and so much more.
Color is the most emotionally powerful element in design, consisting of three parts: Hue, Saturation and Value.
- Value:** From light to dark, value pertains to the visual perception of light in everything from color and lines to the value created by text.
- Texture:** What does the surface of the image feel like?
Texture relates to the illusion of how a surface may feel; bumpy, hairy, spiky, smooth, etc. Use line, color and/or application (and many other ways) to imply texture.
- Space:** Relates to the illusion of three dimensions (height, width and depth) on a two dimensional surface. Overlapping, scale, color changes (atmospheric perspective) or lines (linear perspective) all relate to space.

The Principles of Design



- Unity:** Also known as Harmony, means all the parts within an image look like they belong together. An important aspect to visual unity is that the whole must dominate over the parts.
- Balance:** Pertains to the distribution of visual weight within a design. Symmetry, asymmetry and radial are techniques used to create balance. A design without proper balance will move the viewers eye off the page, and lose their interest.
- Emphasis:** Or Focal Point, is the emphasized area of a design to get the viewers attention. Create emphasis through isolation, contrast or placement.
- Rhythm:** Involves a clear repetition of elements that are the same or slightly modified. The repeating pattern creates movement throughout the work, moving the viewers eye around the piece and evoking an emotional response. Rhythm can also create patterns.
- Proportion:** Scale and proportion are related terms meaning the relative size of things. Refers not only to the relative size of elements within the composition, but also to the size of the picture plane.