

# COMPOSITION & DESIGN

## THE PRINCIPLES & ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

The principles and elements of design unify a work of art as a whole; making it pleasing to the eye, so that it captures and holds the viewer's attention, both visually and emotionally. C F Jernigan

### Principles of Design

The principles of design are the rules of design.

**Balance** - Visual stability within the composition due to the relationship between opposing elements in size and scale.

**Gradation** - A gradual transition between elements as in the transition between a light and dark value, or between a warm and cool color, or the transition between the sizes and shapes of objects.

**Variety/Movement** - The use of more than one element and the direction in which the elements in the composition can deliberately lead and hold the viewer's attention.

**Rhythm/Repetition** - The sequence of spacing between shapes and colors which determine the pace of movement. Is the repeating of an element (pattern) within a composition.

**Emphasis** - The focal point.

**Contrast** - A noticeable difference between elements as in light versus dark value, or smooth versus rough texture.

**Unity** - The relationship of the individual elements are brought together as complete and whole.

# Elements of Design

## Seven Things Involved In Creating A Design

**Value** - The relationship between light (tint) and dark (tone). Value creates depth and perception.

**Color** - Colors are either warm or cool. They are determined by how the light reflects off the surface; projecting back primary, secondary, and tertiary colors that have a relationship. Colors can be used to attract and stir the viewer's emotions.

**Shape** - An area that stands out from its surrounding boundaries by defined edges created by value, color, and texture.

**Line** - The continuous movement of a point along a given surface. It can be straight or curved, and any length or thickness. The line controls the movement.

**Movement** - Controls flow and direction of the viewer's eye throughout the composition.

**Space** - An area of two or three dimension consisting of negative and positive space for that of the background, middle ground, and foreground. It should allow the eye to rest without the composition being so busy as to lose the viewer's attention or interest.

**Texture & Pattern** - Texture is the physical roughness or smoothness of a surface, as well as the visually implied roughness and smoothness of a surface. Pattern is the repetition of elements in a sequence.

## Other Important Areas to Consider In a Composition

- ❖ Use proper and consistent direction of light and shadow throughout the entire composition.
- ❖ Flow and movement is deliberate and directs the viewer throughout the composition.
- ❖ Positive and negative space is used to create depth, movement, and contrast.
- ❖ The center of interest has a relationship with other parts in the composition including the background.
- ❖ The rule of thirds is applied (photography and painting).
- ❖ Perspective and space.
- ❖ Original and creative.
- ❖ Quality of work and materials (craftsmanship).