

## Chapter 4 Scale/Proportion

### Visual Problems in Scale/Proportion

#### Introduction:

"Scale' and 'proportion' are related terms in that both basically refer to size. **Scale** is essentially another word for size. 'Large scale' is a way of saying big, and 'small scale' means small. Big and small, however, are relative. What is big? Big is meaningless unless we have some standard of reference. A big dog means nothing if we do not know the size of an average dog. This is what distinguishes the two terms. **Proportion** refers to the relative size—size measured against other elements or against some mental norm or standard."

—Design Basics, Chapter 4

#### Sketchbook Assignment Homework:

The following exercises and project are designed to give the student both short-term and long-term experiences in utilizing the principles of **scale** and **proportion**. Four individual exercises require students to explore **emphasis**, **human scale**, **context**, **location**, **internal proportions**, **contrast**, the **Golden Rectangle**, and **root rectangle**.

#### Traditional Media

**Choose 3 uncomplicated objects from around your household to complete these exercises.**

1. Draw your 3 objects either much larger in scale than is expected and much smaller in size than is considered "normal". (Review section in the text titled, "Human Scale Reference".) There must be a good reason for the unusual scale rendering for it to be successful. Regular drawing pencils can be applied to sketching paper to complete this rendering.
2. Use scale of an object in a composition to place emphasis on the area that should be seen first (the focal point). Usually this means that an object larger than other objects or shapes in the composition would attract immediate attention. But, in reality, an object made unusually smaller than surrounding shapes or objects could also "stand out" the most.
3. Draw a rectangle based on the Golden Mean (refer to pages 76-79 of the text). Using it either vertically or horizontally, create a design with horizontal rectangles inside the vertical format or vertical rectangles inside the horizontal format. Create a crystallographic balance to provide unity in the design.

#### Project:

Goal: To create a composition that expresses the visual qualities of Surrealism or fantasy by emphasizing the principles of relative size and proportion. Arrange your three objects into a simple "still-life" composition. Change the scale of the objects to create a sense of Surrealism and/or fantasy.

#### Materials:

Bristol board approximately 11"x14".

Three objects to draw for your composition.

Optional media: black, white, and grey acrylic paint (including mediums, palettes, and brushes), charcoal, or black and grey markers.

Tracing paper with which to draw down imagery onto the rendering surface.

Black mounting/Black core matting board

#### Guidelines:

Choose three objects, both large and small, and change their relative sizes and proportions to express a Surreal or fantasy space.

The sizes and proportions of the objects included should create unusual juxtaposition of objects and space. The principle of contrast and emphasis must be used to attract the eye and guide it around the composition in a triangular fashion.

Objects chosen for the composition should be ordinary, everyday images which are easy to recognize and when distorted in size and proportion for spatial effect of fantasy.

Finished size for the composition is 11"x14" and it should be mounted onto a black core mounting board with 2" mounting board area around the top and sides of the composition and 3" along the bottom.