

The Principles of Design



Balance

Symmetrical, Asymmetrical, and Radial

Emphasis and Focal Point

Scale and Proportion

Repetition and Rhythm

Variety and Unity

Unity:

The sense of oneness, of things belonging together and making up a coherent whole.

Great Job!

What and why?

The principles are rules for combining design elements. To design something involves *organizing the formal elements*- line, space, light and color, texture, time and motion- into a unified whole.

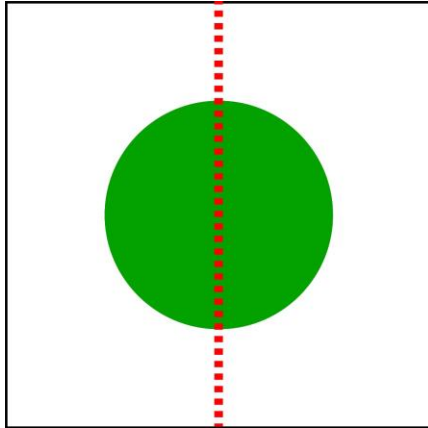
These help designers (and artists) create good work.

If something looks unusual, identify which principles it follows and which it does not.

Balance

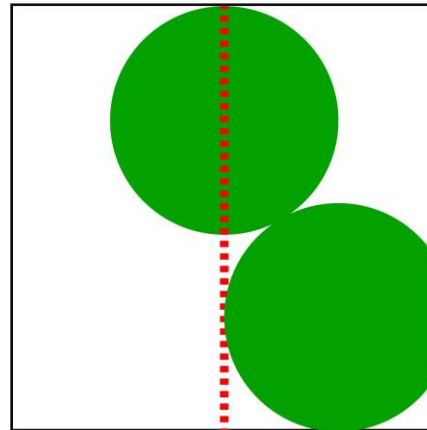
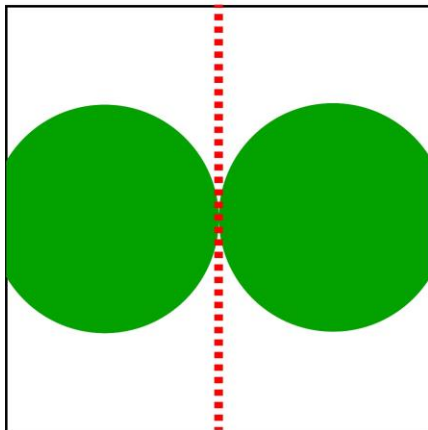
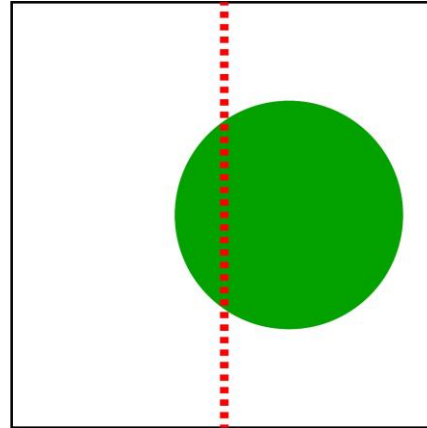
Symmetrical

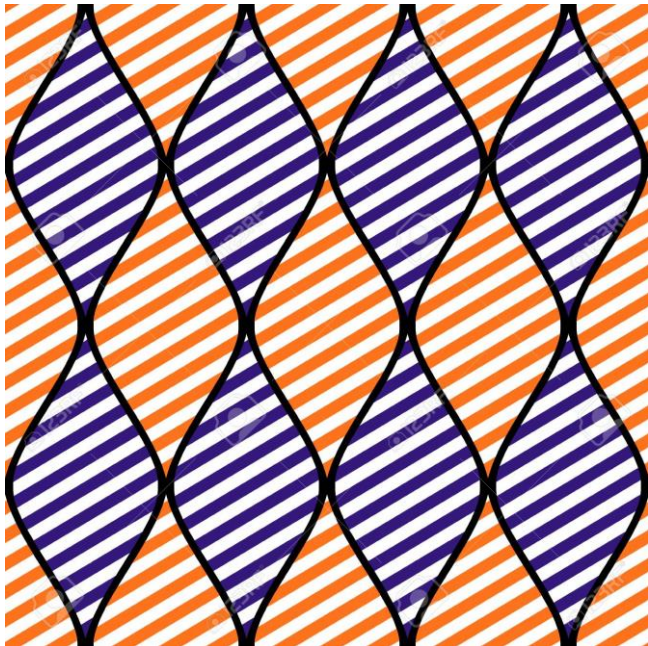
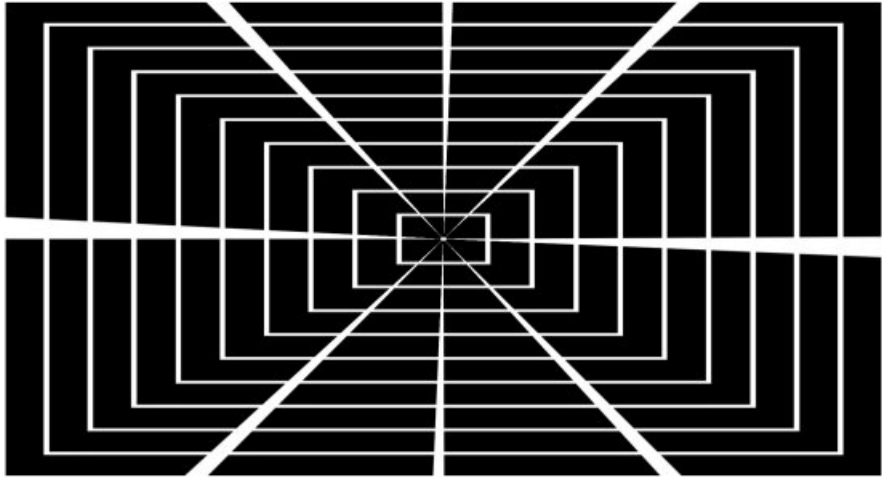
- Even along an axis.
- Stable and static.



Asymmetrical

- Uneven along an axis.
- Unstable and dynamic.







Sarah Welch, *"Holdouts"*, 2017. This two page spread from a longer comic book has visual balance on each page. The left page is balance with multiple squares to make up one larger square. The right page has balance between the small inner panel square and text bubble on the upper left and right, and the larger square.



Radial Balance



With radial balance, everything radiates out from a central point. Radial balance is very familiar in nature.

(right) Tibetan Sand Mandala, in the process of creation by Buddhist monks. The image radiates out from a central representation of a deity and is intended to bring about enlightenment through meditation.



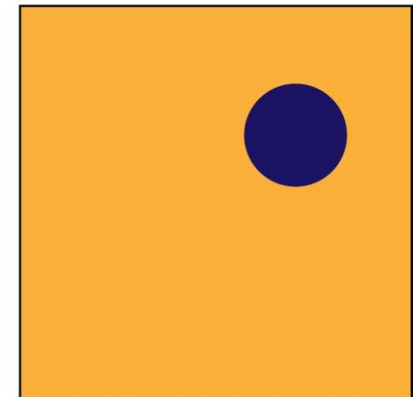
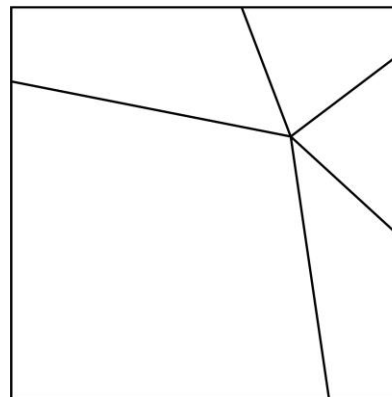
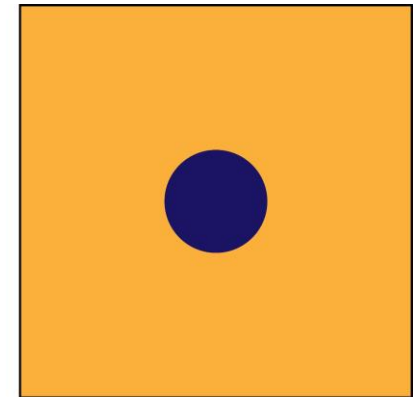
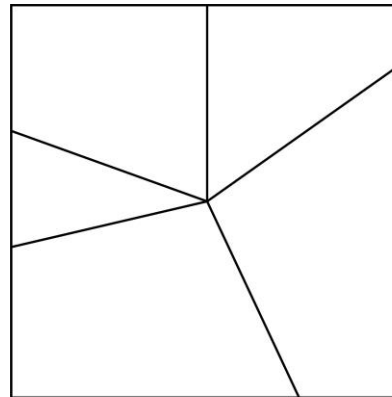
Focal Point/Emphasis

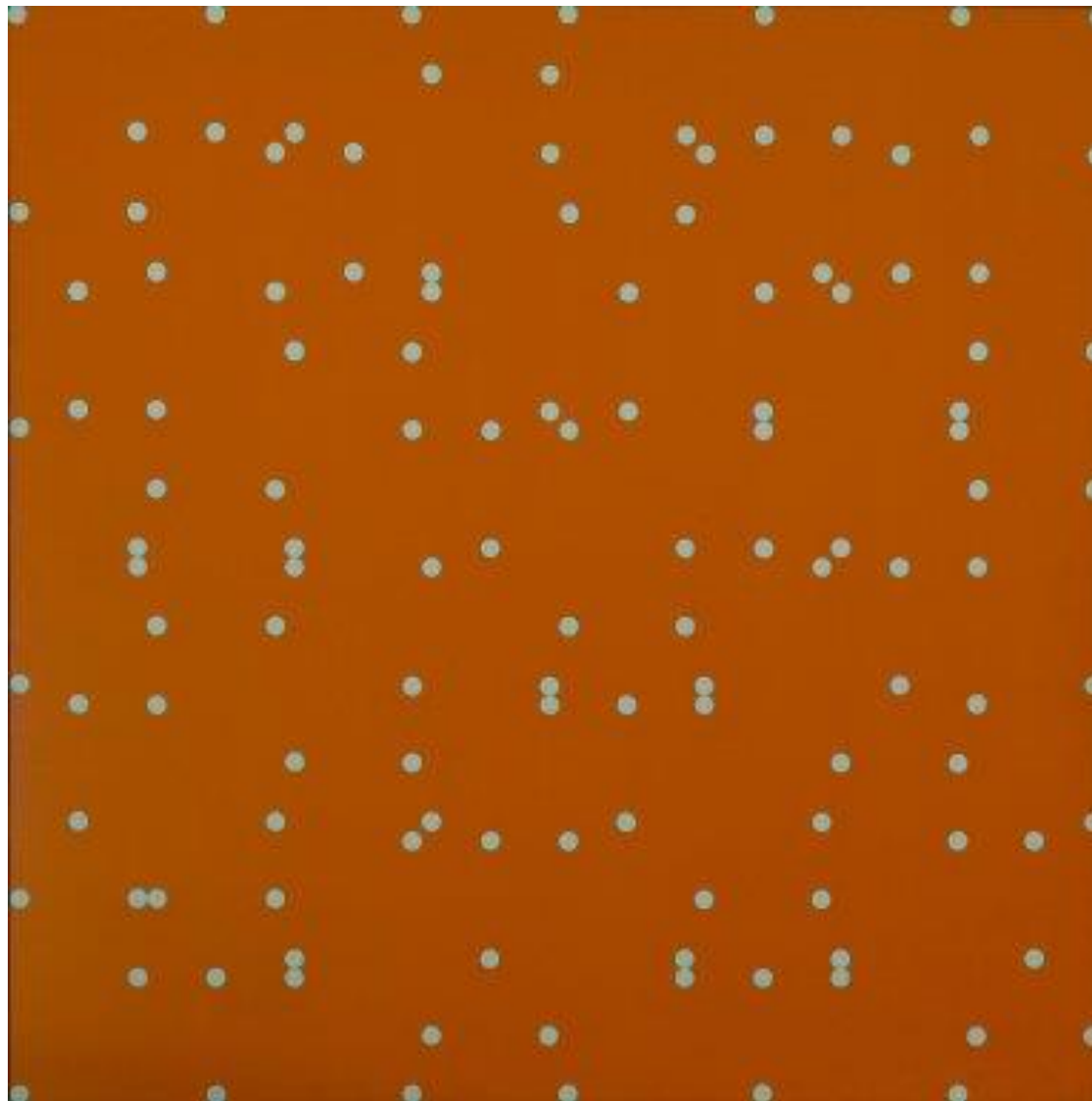
Using line, contrast, or any other technique to direct the viewer's eye to a focal point(s).

Emphasis is used by artists to draw the viewer's attention to one area of the work.

This area is the focal point of the composition. It is easy to find the focal point of a radially balanced composition; it is always the center.

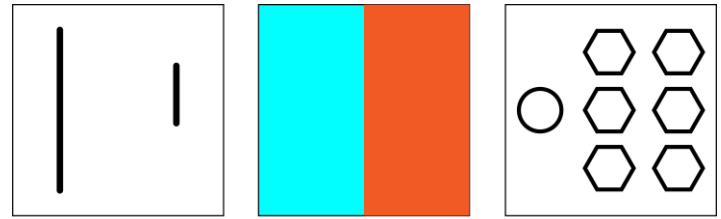
Emphasis can also be established by creating strong contrasts of light and color, or by the organized implied lines of linear perspective.





Larry Poons, *Orange Crush*, 1963. This work is afocal – there is no one point where your eye wanders comfortably to rest. It bounces around the composition, always in motion.

Scale/Proportion



- Scale is the word used to describe the dimensions of an art object in relation to the original object that it depicts or in relation to the objects around it.
- Proportion refers to the relationship between the parts of an object and the whole, or the relationship between an object and its surroundings.

The Great Wave off Kanagawa, from the series Thirty Six Views of Mount Fuji

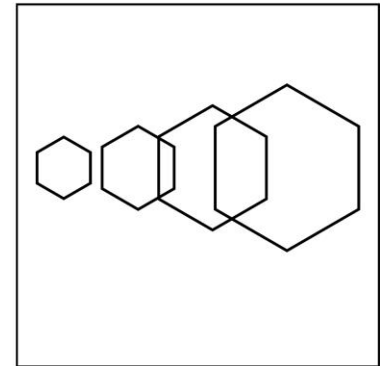
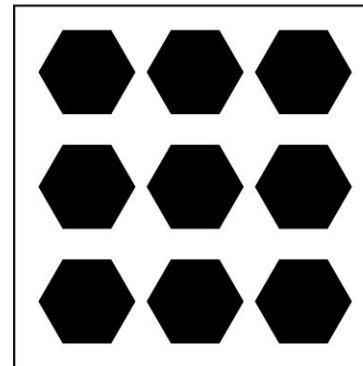
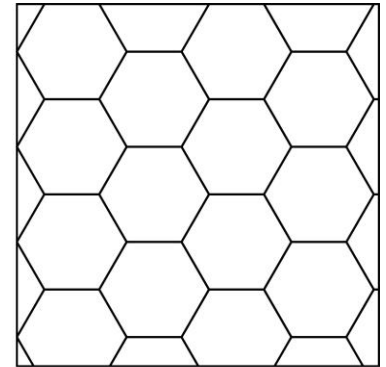
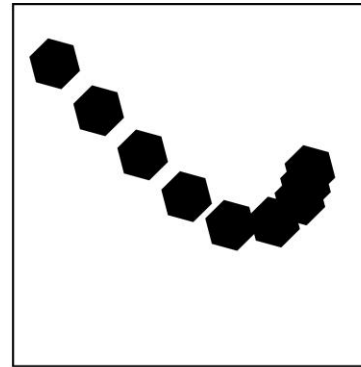
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Note the relationship between the scale of the mountain, which is known to be large, and the scale of the wave. This plays with our expected sense of proportions



Rhythm/Repetition

Repeating the same or similar elements, sometimes to lead the eye in a direction or all-over as a repeated pattern.



Kente prestige cloth (detail), Ghana; Ewe peoples, 19th century.

Patterned textiles are closely associated with social prestige and wealth among the Ewe and Asante societies of Ghana.

Unity

Unity brings it all together using one or more principles to create harmony.

When all visual elements are in agreement, the artwork has *unity*. No individual part is valued more than another.

Variety shows us different aspects to the composition and breaks the potential for visual monotony within unity.

