

Module 9

Lecture-1

Attributes of the visual elements for an understanding of the visual principles of composition balance, rhythm, contrast, harmony, order and chaos.

Some basic design elements are outlined below to understand the visual principles.

Balance:

Balance implies that the visual elements within the frame have a sense of weight. Large objects generally weigh more than small objects and dark objects weigh more than light coloured objects. The position of the visual elements is also critical. We unconsciously assume the center of a picture corresponds to a fulcrum. A heavy weight on one side can be balanced by a lighter weight on the other side if the lighter weight is located at a greater distance from the fulcrum.

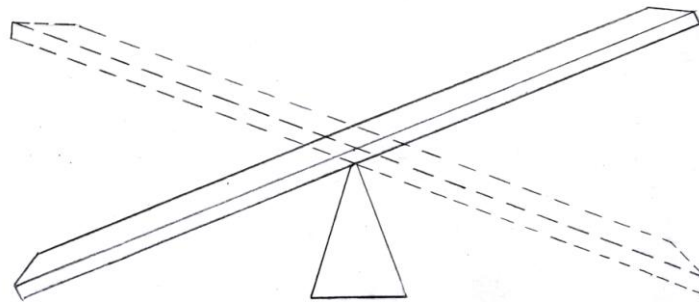


Fig. 124. Balance of visual elements.

Visual interest is what we balance in design. Different colours, shapes sizes, etc. create different degrees of interest. It is the distribution of this interest that you need to control. Subject matter changes the situation because different objects can call more (or less) attention to themselves because of their content and relationships to other objects in the image.

Balance can also be described as achieving equilibrium. But artist generally refuse to accept this term in their world. It usually means that no part of the composition calls too much attention to itself at the expense of the rest of the image. This increases unity, but decreases variety, and hence interest.

Symmetrical balance:

A vertical axis is required to achieve a balance with symmetry. Part of the reason is that we have struggled throughout our lives to perfect our balance in order to stand, walk, ride a bike, etc. To do this, we must have exactly the same weight on both sides of our bodies. Our axis of symmetry is vertical and this makes a good model for symmetry in visual information.

Symmetrical balance is also called formal balance because we use a mirror image formula. A mirror image formula is a reflection of an image on its vertical axis. The results of this look formal, organized and orderly. See fig.119

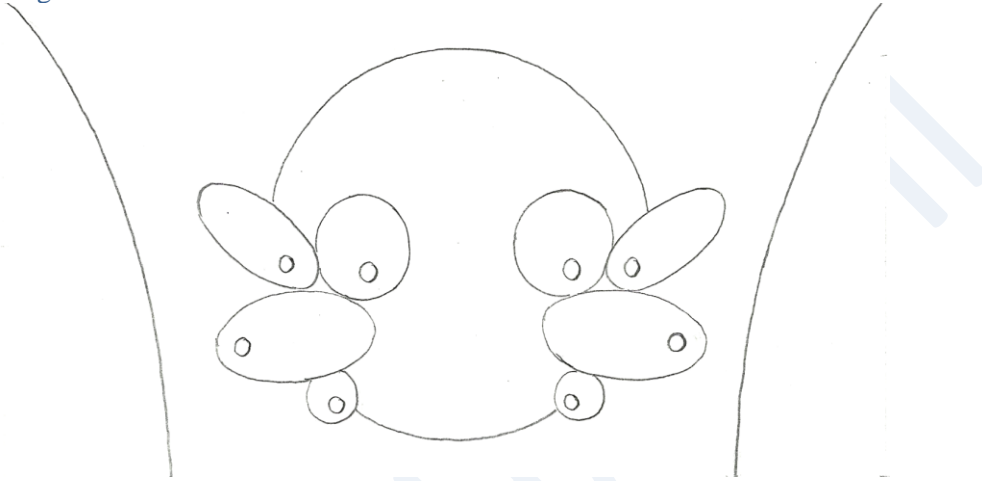


Figure 125. Balance with symmetry and equality.

There is a strong emphasis on the central axis in symmetry since all of the information is reflected from there. This should be taken into consideration when designing with symmetry.

Symmetrical balance guarantees left to right balance, which is the most important aspect of balance. But there is more to balance than that. Balance from top to bottom is also important. Most images seem to be more stable if the bottom seems slightly heavier. If the top seems too heavy the composition can look unstable.

Balance between the center and the outsides of the image must also be considered. Fortunately our own sense of balance is usually good enough to feel when the balance in a composition is wrong. Pay attention to your own sense of balance and you will do well. Your sense of balance, like anything else, can be improved with practice and experience.



Fig.126: Balance with non-symmetry and elements of inequality.

Lecture-2

Rhythm:

Rhythm refers to the regular repeating occurrence of elements in the scene just as in music it refers to the regular occurrence of certain musical notes over time. In photography, the repetition of similar shapes sets up a rhythm that makes seeing easier and more enjoyable. Rhythm is soothing and our eyes usually search to follow rhythmic patterns. To be effective, rhythm also requires some variability - rhythm that is too similar or perfect may be boring. Therefore, when composing our images look for repetition with variation. For instance ,if we are visualising a fence - one that is perfect will not hold a viewers interest for long, but one in which some of the posts are bent, broken, larger or smaller will generate more interest to the viewers.

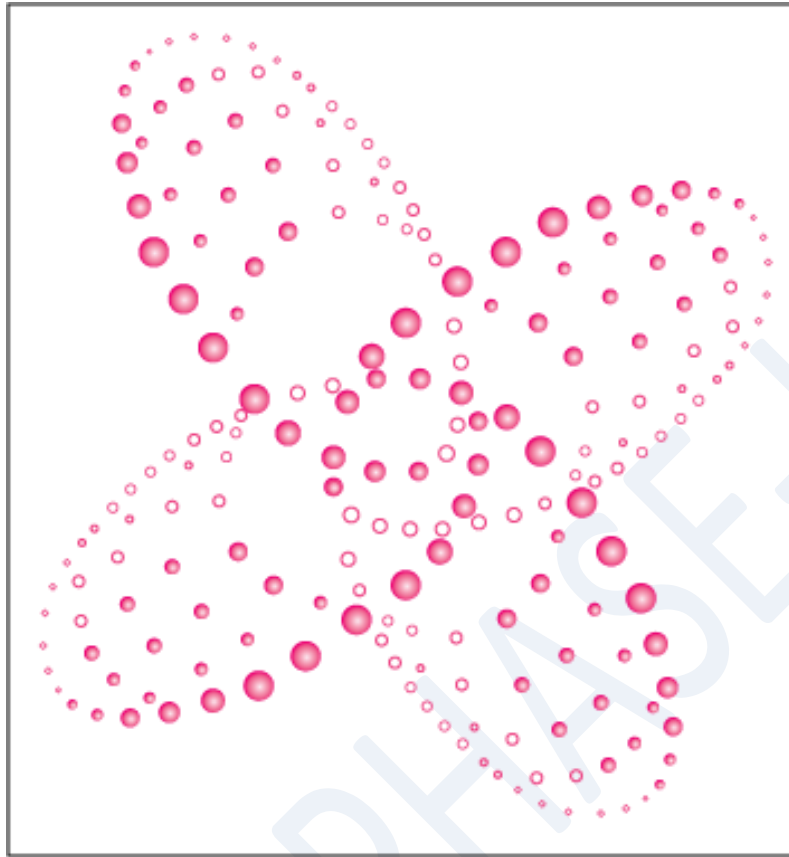


Fig.127: Rhythm among the elements of an environment.

Contrast:

The objective of contrast is to produce maximum visibility. An item is more noticeable with more contrast.

Colour/Value:

One of the greatest possible contrasts in visual design or art is the difference between black and white (value contrast). Colour contrasts can be strong but usually not as strong as value contrasts. Bright colours attract more attention than dull colours.

Size:

When it comes to being noticed bigger is always better. There is a place for all different sizes in the scheme of layouts. Size plays an important role for concentrating other elements for a comparing reference to portray increased attention.

Shape:

An unusual shape can call attention to itself but it is not as strong a contrast as size or value/colour.



Fig. 128: Value contrast among elements and space.

Lecture-3

Order:

It is a state where every element in the composition refers to an alignment or layout which is clearly visible just by looking at the composition. Such a layout generally does not exhibit any deep hidden message the designer wants to portray, and hence, leaves the viewer with more calmness and concentration where the viewer can concentrate on individual elements for a longer period. Here the ability of the viewer to handle complex elements is not questioned as much as in chaos. In such kind of an image, layout or composition the viewer need not put up much effort to view, explore or appreciate the image/layout/design.

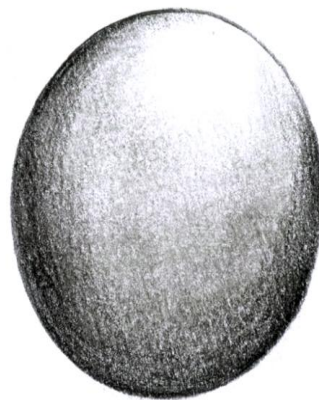


Fig. 129: Order of elements in a visual composition.

Chaos:

Chaos is a disordered state of elements and it is frequently found in nature. The goal of many designers is to portray a picture that exhibits some underlying organization so the viewer sees what the artists intends for them to see, but leaves enough chaos within the frame of the image so the viewer has to put forth some effort to explore and fully appreciate the image. After a certain level, however an image that is too simple fails to hold ones attention (e.g. single leaf above has interesting elements but after a few moments we find little to hold my attention). We compare this to an image for example of the rainforest , and we find the rainforest image has so many textures and patterns that we can look at and explore the image for longer periods of time and still continue to discover things we have not seen before. The ability to introduce and handle complex elements within the frame of an image and still produce an effective composition requires a maturation of seeing that takes time to develop. A composition which depicts an underlying meaning but it is upto the viewer's discretion and may not be found easily just by looking at the composition can be termed as chaos.



Fig. 130: Disorder of elements in a visual composition causing chaos.

Question & Answer

Module 9

- 1) What are the visual principle of art and design?
 - See lecture 1 and 2.
- 2) What is order and chaos? Visually how we represent them for a particular context
 - See lecture3, and see the illustration given bellow

