THE FORMAL ELEMENTS OF DESIGN:

* POINT
* LINE
* SHAPE
  Plane
* SPACE
* PATTERN
  Texture
* VALUE
  Form/ Mass
* COLOR

THE FORMAL PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN:

* HARMONY
  Unity & Variety

* BALANCE
  Symmetry / Asymmetry
  (Formal) (Informal)

* PROPORTION (Governs the Whole)
  Part to Whole – Scale or Size
  Dominance & Subordination
  Gradation

* REPETITION

* RHYTHM / MOVEMENT

* EMPHASIS / FOCAL POINT

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THE FORMAL ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF ART

The ELEMENTS and PRINCIPLES of art are used in the formal analysis of both two and three-dimensional works. These following definitions are geared toward the understanding of two-dimensional works of art and are part of the discussion of COMPOSITION in relationship to a PICTURE PLANE. In their visual form they are the parts of any work of art or design.

**THE ELEMENTS** - the irreducible component parts necessary to create any work of art or object.

**POINT:**
- The simplest of elements. Point is the most brief visual statement that can be made.
- It is static (except when used in sequence).
- Point attracts the eye.
- It can be a pause, or moment of silence.

**LINE:**
- A thin threadlike mark indicating the path of a point moving in space.
- It has a beginning and a point of termination.
- It has length and can vary in width, but its length far exceeds its width proportionally.
- Line has position (location), direction (it often points) and many times has movement.
- It can be: straight, convoluted
  - bent, even in width
  - curved, thick and thin
  - zig-zagged, dark and light
- Lines define the boundaries of shape.
- Lines can be used for: construction
  - contour or cross contour
gesture
- Line can express emotion
- Lines do not exist in nature - we invent them to understand, clarify and define edges and to initiate "linear-like" things such as grasses and twigs from a distance.

**SHAPE / PLANE:**
- Two-dimensional quality of form.
- They have height and width but not depth.
- Is the two-dimensional interpretation of form or mass
- Planes are flat and level and act to define three dimensional space.
- Have position in space
- Sometimes created by a configuration (see GESTALT)
SPACE:
- Expanse within which all things are contained.
- The distance, interval or area between elements in the picture plane.
- It can be POSITIVE or NEGATIVE space.
- The illusion of actual three-dimensional space.

PATTERN / TEXTURE:
- TEXTURE: The representation of or the actual quality of surface, i.e. rough, smooth, hard, soft, etc., resulting from minute variations in surface
- PATTERN: Can be the graphic representational illusion of actual textures created by shapes & values etc.
- Sequencing / Interval
- A repeated motif or motifs
- More abstractly: the colors, values, lines, texture - regular or irregular - that form a configuration in a composition.

VALUE / FORM / MASS:
- VALUE: The ACHROMATIC scale (without color) from white thru gray to black in 9 - 12 steps.
  - In color value is translated to the concept of TONE which is created with CHROMATIC grays created by the combination of complementary colors, or achromatic grays added to any HUE.
  - Describes form through transitions of a variety of grays created by a light source focused on an object (CHIAROSCURO)
  - Helps create the illusion of depth within the PICTURE PLANE - ATMOSPHERIC PERSPECTIVE.
  - Helps describe MASS (VISUAL WEIGHT) and FORM (the three-dimensional aspect of shape in space).
- FORM: The three-dimensional interpretation of shape.
- MASS: The illusion of solid substance or bulk - saturated visual weight.

COLOR:
- The properties of white light (sunlight) that artists portray with pigments.
- A term for the combined qualities of HUE, VALUE and INTENSITY.
- HUE - the specific designated position of a section of the spectrum. The first property of color, it simply refers to the name of one of the twelve (12) specific color groups on the conceptual color wheel (i.e. red, red-orange, orange, yellow-orange etc.) to which the color belongs. The pure state of the color, unmixed and unmodified. It has an exact measurable position in the electro-magnetic spectrum.
- See hand-out on COLOR for more definitions pertaining to color.
THE PRINCIPLES - organize the elements and through them structure the composition

HARMONY: A combination of parts into a proportionate or orderly whole; congruity, agreement. It is an explanation of how the physical properties (elements & principles) of a work of art create visual harmony and then support what might be content harmony
  - Unity with variety, variety with unity
  - Balance

BALANCE:
  - In a composition, a visually favorable distribution of ELEMENTS on either side of a central axis (or FULCRUM) gives the impression of visual equilibrium within the PICTURE PLANE indirect relation to gravity and physical mass, The FORMAL ELEMENTS as well as associative and psychological factors play a role in this visual balance.
  - There are two different types of balance, SYMMETRY and ASYMMETRY.

SYMMETRY: Formal in balance, with elements of equal or near-equal weight on either side of a real or implied central fulcrum.

ASYMMETRY: Informal in balance. Elements not the same on either side of the central axis, but not necessarily out of balance. The visual point of gravitational balance may not be located on the imaginary central axis of the PICTURE PLANE.

REPETITION:
  - Repetition is multiple occurrence. It acts as a fundamental unifying factor in works of art. Any of the FORMAL ELEMENTS may be repeated in a work of art (see GESTALT). Repetition may be obvious, with clearly discernible patterns and rhythm or may be employed by subtle means as well, in some cases remaining static. Repetition is not always pattern.

RHYTHM / MOVEMENT:
  - Rhythm is regular repetition. In visual art, rhythm results from the perception of intervals between repeated elements, Images, motifs or gestures.
  - Rhythm may be described as:
    - regular
    - alternating
    - flowing
    - syncopated (shifted accents)
    - progressive
    - any combination of these

Both REPETITION and RHYTHM create a form of movement in the PICTURE PLANE.  

EMPHASIS / FOCAL POINT:
  - The perceived focus of interest (CENTER OF INTEREST); the visual center of the Image. It may be a specific ELEMENT or a central figure / IMAGE, or it may be in a general area.
  - The principle of emphasis has to do with the quality of subordinating certain elements to others. This creates centers of interest in the composition where certain forms, shapes, lines, textures, etc, lead us
toward those which become the main features of the composition. By emphasis the artist makes certain elements dominate over others, creating a sense of order rather than chaos, a sense of variety rather than monotony. Emphasis can be achieved by making certain elements important due to their placement in the composition; or by contrasting elements through texture, color, size and shape relationships.

PROPORTION:

• The comparative relation between parts in respect to one another in size, amount, similarity, difference (etc.) and to the whole; ratio. Having to do with the harmonious relationship between the parts as they make up the whole or totality of a work of art. Proportion refers not to absolute size or amount, but to the comparison of dimensions.

• The principle of proportion has to do with size relationships. Elements of all the same size create a sense of monotony. Elements of different sizes, though some are repeated to retain a sense of continuity, create a sense of variety of interest.

• Proportion not only aids logic but also interest in a work of art.

• PROPORTION is the size relationship of the parts to the whole or part to part.

SCALE is the size relation of something to its surrounding or environment.

SIZE: comparison to an absolute measurement

• Proportional gradations of:
  - shape
  - size
  - direction
  - orientation (spatial illusion)
  - value

• Dominance and subordination

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