
THE POWER OF COLOR COMPOSITION OUTLINE

CONTENT

- WHAT IS COMPOSITION
- ELEMENTS OF ART
- PRINCIPLES OF ART
- PRINCIPLES AND COLOR

COMPOSITION

- Composition is the way in which different elements of an artwork are combined. (Pipes)
- How the artist uses the elements and principles of art and how they work together to create meaning

Elements

- Line
- Texture
- Shape
- Form
- Color
- Value
- Space

Line

- The most fundamental element
- A mark created by connecting one point to another
- There are many types of line.

Texture

- Texture refers to the tactile qualities of a surface
- The way objects actually feel or the way they look like they would feel.

Shape

- A shape is an enclosed area of space created through lines
- Shapes can be geometric or free-form.

Form

- Closely related to shape, but form is always three-dimensional, and encloses volume.
- Can be implied forms where the artist creates the illusion of the form.

Color

- Color is produced by the way an object reflects or emits light.

Space

- Space is how an artwork uses or depicts depth or distance.
- Artists can make a two-dimensional surface appear three-dimensional.

• PRINCIPLES OF ART

Principles

- How the building blocks (elements) are arranged
 - Contrast
 - Emphasis
 - Movement
 - Rhythm
 - Balance
 - Unity
 - Variety
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Why color is so powerful

- Subjective interpretation of our brain to what our photo receptors “see”
- The human eye is capable of seeing millions of colors
- Color = one of the most diverse and powerful elements
- Can be a language more potent than words
- Color can evoke a mood in a composition
- Strong effect on our emotions

Contrast

1. Contrast refers to the arrangement of opposite elements and effects.
2. Light and dark colors, smooth and rough textures, large and small shapes.

Contrast and color

1. Use complementary colors
2. Warm and cool colors
3. Dark and light values
4. Saturated and muted colors

Emphasis

1. Emphasis refers to the area of an artwork that dominates attention or draws interest.
2. It is often the place a viewer looks first.

Emphasis and Color

1. Light or dark area
2. Color accent / Proportion of use of color
3. Color saturation
4. Color temperature

Movement

Movement can be thought of in two ways:

1. How an artist depicts movement using the elements and principles of art.
2. Visual flow of an artwork, indicated by the path a viewer’s eyes take as they look at the artwork.

Movement and Color

1. Repeating color provides a path for the viewer’s eye to follow
2. Visual flow by locating colors
3. We can create rhythm in a composition.

Balance

1. Refers to the distribution of weight in a composition.
2. The visual heaviness of shapes and forms in an artwork.

Balance and color

- The darker a shape, the heavier it will look
- How colors are located - balance all over the work

Unity (Harmony)

1. Unity, also known as harmony, refers to the cohesiveness of an artwork.
2. Unity is the pleasing combination of elements to create a harmonious composition (Pipes)

Unity and Color

1. Use analogous colors (same components)
2. Monochromatic color scheme
3. Same value / same saturation
4. Repeat colors

Variety

1. Variety refers to the elements of a composition that differ from one another. (Pipes)

Variety and Color

Use a variety of hues - value - saturation

Elements and principles

- They are all closely related
- Many of them overlap
- When combined, they produce a complete artistic vision.
- We can use many elements and principles in one piece.
- Can be overwhelming
- We need to befriend elements & principles in order to start thinking and using them.
- Start small= One element + one principle
- With practice you can start adding more elements and principles
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FINAL THOUGHTS

- Color is the most powerful element in art.
- It is good to know how to use color to create a successful composition
- We can use color to create:
 - Contrast
 - Emphasis
 - Movement / Rhythm
 - Balance
 - Unity
 - Variety
- It is important to consider that color depends on perception, culture and personal experience.
- Pipes, Alan (2008). *Foundations of Art + Design*. Laurence King.