



Saint Benedict  
Catholic Voluntary Academy

2026

**BE  
PREPARED**

**Art and  
Textiles**



St Ralph  
Sherwin  
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

# **A LEVEL ART, CRAFT & DESIGN**

SAINT BENEDICT A VOLUNTARY CATHOLIC ACADEMY

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# COURSE OVERVIEW

# COURSE STRUCTURE

## **AQA ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN**

A broad-based course exploring practical and critical/contextual work through a range of 2D and/or 3D processes and media associated with two or more of the titles below.

### **Component 1: Personal investigation**

No time limit

96 marks

60% of A-level

Non-exam assessment (NEA) set and marked by the centre and moderated by AQA during a visit to the centre. Visits will normally take place in June.

### **Component 2: Externally set assignment**

Preparatory period + 15 hours supervised time

96 marks

40% of A-level

Non-exam assessment (NEA) set by AQA, marked by the centre and moderated by AQA during a visit to the centre. Visits will normally take place in June.



# COURSE OVERVIEW

# COMPONENT 1

## COMPONENT 1: PERSONAL INVESTIGATION

This is a practical investigation supported by written material.

Students are required to conduct a practical investigation, into an idea, issue, concept or theme, supported by written material. The focus of the investigation must be identified independently by the student and must lead to a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes.

The investigation should be a coherent, in-depth study that demonstrates the student's ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning from an initial starting point to a final realisation.

The investigation must show clear development from initial intentions to the final outcome or outcomes. It must include evidence of the student's ability to research and develop ideas and relate their work in meaningful ways to relevant critical/contextual materials.

The investigation must be informed by an aspect of contemporary or past practice of artists, photographers, designers or craftspeople.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

# COMPONENT 1

## COMPONENT 1: PERSONAL INVESTIGATION

The written material must confirm understanding of creative decisions, providing evidence of all four assessment objectives by:

Clarifying the focus of the investigation demonstrating critical understanding of contextual and other sources

substantiating decisions leading to the development and refinement of ideas

recording ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions by reflecting critically on practical work making meaningful connections between, visual, written and other elements.

The written material must:

Be a coherent and logically structured extended response of between 1000 and 3000 words of continuous prose.

include specialist vocabulary appropriate to the subject matter include a bibliography that, identifies contextual references from sources such as: books, journals, websites, through studies of others' work made during a residency, or on a site, museum or gallery visit be legible with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar so that meaning is clear.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

## COMPONENT 2

### COMPONENT 2: EXTERNALLY SET ASSIGNMENT

Separate question papers will be provided by the exam board. Each question paper will consist of a choice of eight questions to be used as starting points. Students are required to select one. Students will be provided with exam papers on 1 February, or as soon as possible after that date.

Preparatory period – from 1 February

Following receipt of the paper students should consider the starting points and select one. Preparatory work should be presented in any suitable format, such as mounted sheets, design sheets, sketchbooks, workbooks, journals, models and maquettes.

Supervised time – 15 hours

Following the preparatory period, students must complete 15 hours of unaided, supervised time.

In the 15 hours students must produce a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes, informed by their preparatory work.

Students must stop work on their preparatory work as soon as the first period of supervised time starts. Students may refer to their preparatory work in the supervised time, but it must not be added to or amended.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

## ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

### OVERARCHING KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS

Students are introduced to a variety of experiences that employ a range of traditional and new media, processes and techniques appropriate to the chosen areas of study. Knowledge of art, craft and design is developed through research, the development of ideas and making, working from first-hand experience and, where appropriate, secondary source materials.

Students are required to participate actively in their course of study, recognising and developing their own strengths in the subject and identifying and sustaining their own lines of enquiry.

Students will develop practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of:

- relevant materials, processes, technologies and resources
- how ideas, feelings and meanings can be conveyed and interpreted in images and artefacts
- how images and artefacts relate to the time and place in which they were made and to their social and cultural contexts
- continuity and change in different genres, styles and traditions
- a working vocabulary and specialist terminology.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

## ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

### OVERARCHING KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS

Students are required to develop the skills to:

- record experiences and observations, in a variety of ways using drawing or other appropriate visual forms; undertake research; and gather, select and organise visual and other appropriate information
- explore relevant resources; analyse, discuss and evaluate images, objects and artefacts; and make and record independent judgements
- use knowledge and understanding of the work of others to develop and extend thinking and inform own work
- generate and explore potential lines of enquiry using appropriate media and techniques
- apply knowledge and understanding in making images and artefacts; review and modify work; and plan and develop ideas in the light of their own and others' evaluations
- organise, select and communicate ideas, solutions and responses, and present them in a range of visual, tactile and/or sensory forms.
- Students can work entirely in digital media or entirely in non-digital media, or in a mixture of both, provided the aims and assessment objectives are met.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

## ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

Students will be introduced to a variety of experiences that explore a range of two-dimensional and/or three-dimensional media, processes and techniques. They will be made aware of both traditional and new media.

Students will explore the use of drawing for different purposes, using a variety of methods and media on a variety of scales. Students may use sketchbooks/workbooks/journals to underpin their work where appropriate.

Students will explore relevant images, artefacts and resources relating to a range of art, craft and design, from the past and from recent times, including European and non-European examples. This will be integral to the investigating and making processes. Students' responses to these examples must be shown through practical and critical activities that demonstrate their understanding of different styles, genres and traditions.

Students will be aware of the four assessment objectives to be demonstrated in the context of the content and skills presented. They will be aware of the importance of process as well as product.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

## ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

### AREAS OF STUDY

Within each component, students must demonstrate evidence that they have explored critical and contextual work through a range of two-dimensional and/or three-dimensional processes and media.

**Component 1:** must show evidence of working in areas of study drawn **from two or more** of the endorsed titles listed on the following page.

**Component 2:** must show evidence of areas of study drawn from **one or more** of the endorsed titles listed on the following page.

The area(s) of study selected for Component 1 can be the same as, or different to, those selected for Component 2.

### Skills and techniques

Students will be expected to demonstrate skills, as defined in Overarching knowledge, understanding and skills, in the context of their chosen areas of study.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

## ART, CRAFT AND DESIGN

**Fine art:** for example, drawing, painting, mixed-media, sculpture, ceramics, installation, printmaking, moving image (video, film, animation) and photography.

**Graphic communication:** for example, interactive media (including web, app and game design), advertising, packaging design, design for print, illustration, communication graphics, branding, multimedia, motion graphics, design for film and television.

**Textile design:** for example, fashion design, fashion textiles, costume design, digital textiles, printed and/or dyed fabrics and materials, domestic textiles, wallpaper, interior design, constructed textiles, art textiles and installed textiles.

**Three-dimensional design:** for example, ceramics, sculpture, exhibition design, design for theatre, television and film, interior design, product design, environmental design, architectural design, jewellery/body ornament and 3D digital design.

**Photography:** for example, portraiture, landscape photography, still life photography, documentary photography, photojournalism, fashion photography, experimental imagery, multimedia, photographic installation and moving image (video, film, animation).



# ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all A-level Art and Design specifications and all exam boards.

The assessments will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives:

**AO1:** Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

**AO2:** Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.

**AO3:** Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

**AO4:** Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

# ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

### Weighting of assessment objectives for A-level Art and Design

The assessment objectives are equally weighted within each component. The table shows the approximate weighting of each of the assessment objectives across all components.

| Assessment objectives (AOs)     | Component 1 weighting (approx. %) | Component 2 weighting (approx. %) | Overall weighting of AOs (approx. %) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| AO1                             | 15                                | 10                                | 25                                   |
| AO2                             | 15                                | 10                                | 25                                   |
| AO3                             | 15                                | 10                                | 25                                   |
| AO4                             | 15                                | 10                                | 25                                   |
| Overall weighting of components | 60                                | 40                                | 100                                  |

### Quality of making

The ability to handle materials, techniques and processes effectively, skilfully and safely underpins all the assessment objectives. It is important in enabling students to develop a personal language, to express ideas and to link their intentions to outcomes in a confident and assured manner.

### Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria is applied to the assessment of students' work for all components. The assessment objectives are equally weighted in each of the components. The Assessment criteria grid indicates the levels of response which would be expected for the award of marks in the ranges shown.

# ASSESSMENT A01

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 1

Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

| Marks |              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 24    | Convincingly | An exceptional ability to develop ideas through sustained investigations informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates exceptional analytical and critical understanding. Demonstrates fluent use of appropriate specialist vocabulary.                                        |
| 23    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 22    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 21    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 20    | Convincingly | A confident and highly developed ability to develop ideas through sustained investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates confident and highly developed analytical and critical understanding. Demonstrates assured use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. |
| 19    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 18    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 17    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 16    | Convincingly | A consistent ability to develop ideas through sustained investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates consistent analytical and critical understanding. Demonstrates consistent use of appropriate specialist vocabulary.                                      |
| 15    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 14    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 13    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 12    | Convincingly | A reasonably consistent ability to develop ideas through sustained investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates reasonably consistent analytical and critical understanding. Demonstrates reasonably consistent use of appropriate specialist vocabulary.     |
| 11    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 9     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 8     | Convincingly | Some ability to develop ideas and sustain investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates some analytical and critical understanding. Demonstrates limited use of appropriate specialist vocabulary.                                                             |
| 7     | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 6     | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 5     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 4     | Convincingly | Minimal ability to develop ideas and sustain investigations, informed by contextual and other sources. Demonstrates minimal analytical and critical understanding. Demonstrates little or no use of appropriate specialist vocabulary.                                                  |
| 3     | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2     | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 0     | No work      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

# ASSESSMENT A02

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 2

Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.

| Marks |              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 24    | Convincingly | An exceptional ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, material, techniques and processes. Reviews and refines ideas in a confident and purposeful manner as work develops.     |
| 23    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 22    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 21    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 20    | Convincingly | A confident and highly developed ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes. Reviews and refines ideas in a confident manner as work develops. |
| 19    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 18    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 17    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 16    | Convincingly | A consistent ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes. Reviews and refines ideas with increasing confidence as work develops.                |
| 15    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 14    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 13    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 12    | Convincingly | A reasonably consistent ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and process. Reviews and refines ideas with a degree of success as work develops.         |
| 11    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 10    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 9     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 8     | Convincingly | Some ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and process. Reviews and refines ideas with limited success as work develops.                                |
| 7     | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 6     | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 5     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 4     | Convincingly | Minimal ability to explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and process. Minimal evidence of reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.                           |
| 3     | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2     | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 0     | No work      |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

# ASSESSMENT A03

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 3

Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

| Marks |              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 24    | Convincingly | An exceptional ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions.<br>Demonstrates an exceptional ability to reflect critically on work and progress.                                     |
| 23    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 22    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 21    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 20    | Convincingly | A confident and highly developed ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions.<br>Demonstrates a confident and highly developed ability to reflect critically on work and progress. |
| 19    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 18    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 17    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 16    | Convincingly | A consistent ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions.<br>Demonstrates a consistent ability to reflect critically on work and progress.                                         |
| 15    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 14    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 13    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 12    | Convincingly | A reasonably consistent ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions.<br>Demonstrates a reasonably consistent ability to reflect critically on work and progress.                   |
| 11    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 10    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 9     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 8     | Convincingly | Some ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions.<br>Demonstrates some ability to reflect critically on work and progress.                                                         |
| 7     | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 6     | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 4     | Convincingly | Minimal ability to record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions.<br>Demonstrates minimal ability to reflect critically on work and progress.                                                   |
| 3     | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2     | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 0     | No work      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

# ASSESSMENT A04

## ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 4

Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

|  | Marks |              | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--|-------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | 24    | Convincingly | An exceptional ability to present a personal and meaningful response.<br>Demonstrates an exceptional ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual, written and other elements.<br>Exceptionally clear, coherent and accurate use of language.                |
|  | 23    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 22    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 21    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 20    | Convincingly | A confident and highly developed ability to present a personal and meaningful response.<br>Demonstrates a highly developed ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual, written and other elements.<br>Clear, coherent and accurate use of language.        |
|  | 19    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 18    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 17    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 16    | Convincingly | A consistent ability to present a personal and meaningful response.<br>Demonstrates a consistent ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual, written and other elements.<br>Generally clear, coherent and accurate use of language                         |
|  | 15    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 14    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 13    | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 12    | Convincingly | A reasonably consistent ability to present a personal and meaningful response.<br>Demonstrates a reasonably consistent ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual, written and other elements.<br>Basic clarity, coherence and accuracy in using language. |
|  | 11    | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 10    | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 9     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 8     | Convincingly | Some ability to present a personal and meaningful response which is uneven.<br>Demonstrates some ability to successfully realise intentions and, where appropriate, makes connection between visual, written and other elements.<br>Limited clarity, coherence and accuracy in using language.                      |
|  | 7     | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 6     | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 5     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 4     | Convincingly | Minimal ability to present a personal and meaningful response, limited by a lack of skill and understanding.<br>Demonstrates minimal ability to realise intentions and, where appropriate, make connections between visual, written and other elements.<br>Unclear and often inaccurate language is used.           |
|  | 3     | Clearly      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 2     | Adequately   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 1     | Just         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|  | 0     | No work      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

# RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is the artist's name?

Where/when were they born? (this is important to put the work in context)

What do you know about the artist's background? (Life events / education / career)

When was the work created?

What is their style of work?

What does the artwork show?

Is the artwork part of a series?

Is there a theme? What is the theme about? (this could be researched or your own opinion)

## EXAMPLE

Dutch Impressionist painter, Vincent Van Gogh was born on March 30th, 1853, in Zundert, a predominantly Catholic province of North Brabant in the Netherlands. Van Gogh created about 2,100 artworks, most of which date from the last two years of his life. They include landscapes, still-lives, portraits and self-portraits, and are characterised by bold colours and dramatic, impulsive and expressive brushwork that contributed to the foundations of modern art. He was not commercially successful, and his suicide at 37 came after years of mental illness, depression and poverty.

The painting 'Starry Night' is one of the most recognized pieces of art in the world. Vincent van Gogh painted Starry Night in 1889 during his stay at the asylum of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole near Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. When in a state of depression Van Gogh incorporated darker colours and Starry Night is a wonderful example of this. Blue dominates the painting, blending hills into the sky. The small village lays at the base in the painting in browns, greys, and blues. Even though each building is clearly outlined in black, the yellow and white of the stars and the moon stand out against the sky, drawing the eyes to the sky.

# RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

## ANALYSIS

What is the main focus/where is your eye drawn to?

What formal elements have they used and how?

How would you describe the composition?

If they have used people in their artwork, can you read any body or facial language?

How has the artist achieved the meaning, concept or message?

What techniques has the artist used to create the meaning/concept or message?

What are your opinions of the work and why?

How does the piece of work make you feel?

## EXAMPLE

The stars in the sky are the big attention grabber of the painting; the brightness of them, the swirling brushstrokes and the contrast between them and the blue-sky help make them stand out. It could be that Van Gogh simply wanted to breathe in the higher power into his art, as he grew up in a religious household, they could also represent hope. The village is painted with dark colours, but the brightly lit windows create a sense of comfort. The village is peaceful in comparison to the dramatic night sky and the silence of the night can almost be felt in *Starry Night*. Vince Van Gogh's unique, thick brush strokes are very much obvious and it's possible that his severe attacks further dramatized his brush work, this technique that adds even more depth as well as a rich texture to this work of art. The steeple dominates the village and symbolizes unity in the town. In terms of composition, the church steeple gives an impression of size and isolation. You cannot ignore the huge, curvy Cyprus tree positioned to the left in the foreground of the painting, Cyprus trees are typically associated with mourning. Personally, I believe that Van Gogh was showing that even with a dark night such as this it is still possible to see light in the windows of the houses. Furthermore, with shining stars filling the sky, there is always light to guide you. This is one of my favourite paintings by Van Gogh, I find the blues calming and the sky transfixes me.



# RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

## DEEPER ANALYSIS

What viewpoint has the artist used?

Are there any back stories as to how the work was made?

Does the artwork have depth or is it shallow?

What materials do you think they have used?

Can you think of any other materials they could have used?

What skills will you develop looking at this artist?

Could you approach the work using different techniques?

How could you experiment with the artists ideas further?

How will you be influenced by this artists work when planning your own artwork?

## EXAMPLE

Van Gogh painted The Starry Night during his stay at the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole asylum near Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in France, several months after suffering a breakdown. This painting is based on the view from his window, it appears that his room could have been high up or that the asylum was on a hill. Van Gogh was not allowed to paint in his room, so he created sketches of the view and used these alongside his memory. There is a great deal of depth to this painting, Van Gogh has achieved this by including the foreground, middle ground and the background. There is also depth and texture within the paint that Van Gogh has used, to achieve this he loaded his brush with oil paints to build up a thick, impasto texture. This impasto texture is a key feature in many of van Gogh's works. By creating work in response to Van Gogh I will develop my understanding of mark making, and colour, I will also develop my painting and drawing skills, and I think it will also provide me with the opportunity to be more expressive within my work. When planning my own work, I will consider exaggerating certain elements like colour and perspective, if I paint light within my work I could use a strong colour contrast, like yellow and orange against blue. I could also use directional brushwork to create a sense of movement and turbulence in my painting and finally, I will consider repeating similar techniques and processes within my work, so that I can achieve a strong style.

# RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

## SENTENCE STARTERS

These sentence starters can be used to help you form your artist research and analysis. You might not always be able to find the answer to all of the questions through research, some of the question require your thoughts and opinions. Always write in full sentences, check spelling and punctuation, use specialist vocabulary and keywords, and evidence your thoughts and opinions.

The artist... was born in...

Their parents were...

They studied at...

Events that may have influenced...

They are/were influenced by...

The painting is called...

It was completed in the year...

The work portrays...

This style of... is called...

Looking at this piece of work...

This painting is/isn't part of a series called...

When first looking at the painting I thought...

In the painting I can see...

The subject of the painting is...

To me the artwork looks like...

My eye is initially drawn to..... Because...

In the piece the artist has created a... texture... by...

The colours used can be described as...

I can see the following shapes and forms...

There is limited use of... this suggests...

The artist uses space to create a feeling of...

# RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

## SENTENCE STARTERS

The composition of the image suggests...

The composition style conveys...

The objects/people/scene looks... because the artist has...

The artist's use of... suggests...

I think he/she has done this to convey...

In my opinion...

It is in my view that...

This piece of artwork makes me feel...

I think the artist worked from... because...

The artist prepared for this work by...

I think the artist is trying to communicate...

There are/aren't any clear messages...

The reason I think this is because...

They have used...

It appears that...

They may have also used...

If they had used... It might have...

I could potentially use...

By looking at... I will develop my skills in...

It could also influence...

When creating my own work, I will...

This piece of art will influence how I...

Moving forward I think I will...

As a result of studying... I will...

This piece of art has made me consider...

# SPECIALIST VOCABULARY

## WORDS TO DESCRIBE ART

Realistic  
Abstract  
Abstraction  
Expressive  
Impressionistic  
Surreal  
Still life  
Portraiture  
Figurative  
Non-Western  
Sculpture  
Textile  
Batik  
Appliqué  
Glass  
Painting  
Mixed media  
Ceramics

Unrealistic  
Colourful  
Linear  
Rounded  
Motion  
Messy  
Organised  
Geometric  
Structured  
Fluid  
Neat  
Loud  
Accurate  
Disorganised  
Graphic  
Traditional  
Modern  
Contemporary  
Primitive

## COMPOSITION

Balanced  
Unbalanced  
Skewed  
Distorted  
Perspective  
Plane  
Proportion  
Symmetry  
Space  
Scale

Depth  
Distance  
Foreground  
Middle ground  
Background  
Decorative  
Eye-line  
Focus  
Blurred  
Form  
Birds eye view

# SPECIALIST VOCABULARY

## DRAWING

Sketch

Line

Tone

Shading

Contour

Two-Dimensional

Three-Dimensional

Observational

Composition

Proportion

Perspective

Scale

Accuracy

Realistic

Outline

Mark-making

Sketch

Composition

Tracing

Impression

Continuous

## PAINTING

Wash

Watercolour

Acrylic

Oil Paint

Gouache

Brush strokes

Impasto

Drybrush

Underpainting

## PRINTING

Monoprint

Etching

Intaglio

Lithograph

Collagraph

Woodcut

Block Printing

Lino Print

Linocut

Relief Print

Ink

Brayer

Blind emboss

## LIGHT

Natural

Artificial

Dark

Bright

Shadow

Low light

Dim

Radiant

Luminous

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

To see colour, you need light. When light shines on an object some colours bounce off the object and others are absorbed by it. Our eyes only see the colours that are bounced off or reflected.

### Primary Colours



All colours can be obtained by mixing primary colours together. Primary colours cannot be created by mixing other colours.

### Secondary Colours



A colour mixed from two primary colours

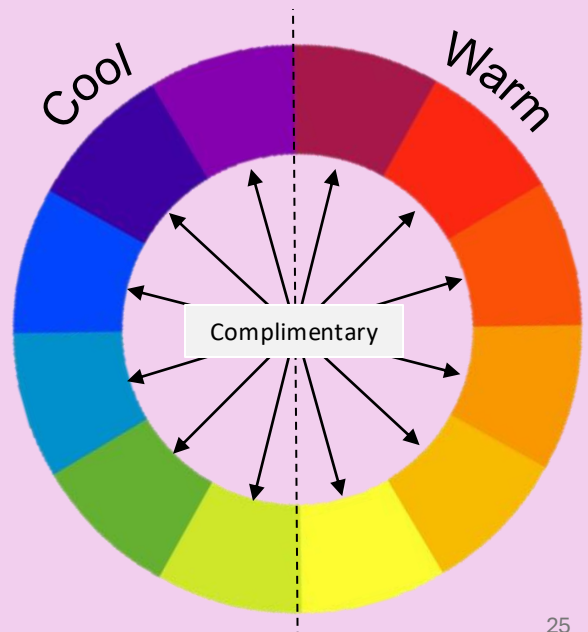
### Tertiary Colours



A colour mixed from a primary colour and a secondary colour

**Harmonious Colours** are 3 colours next to each other on the colour wheel. These colours work well together and create an image which is pleasing to the eye.

**Complimentary Colours** are colours opposite each other on the colour wheel. These are often referred to as opposite colours and even contrasting colours.



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

The colour wheel can be split up into **warm** and **cool** colours, and each individual colour has its own warm and cool variant.

### Tint

A tint is where an artist adds a colour to white to create a lighter version of the colour. An example of a tint is pink. Pink is a tint created by adding white to red.

### Shade

A shade is where an artist adds black to a colour to darken it down.

### Tone

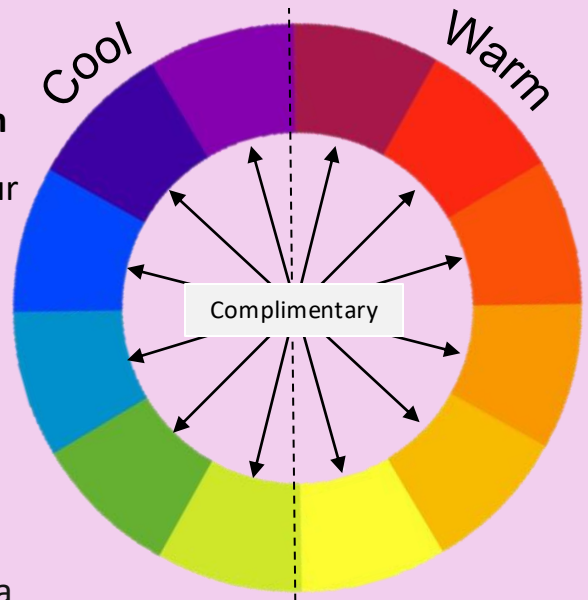
A tone is where an artist adds grey to a colour.

### Monochromatic

An artist may decide to create a piece of artwork which is monochromatic. This means that the artist uses tints, shades and tones of a single colour.

### Emotion, mood and atmosphere

Often when an artist uses colour in a painting, they are trying to communicate an emotion, mood or atmosphere. They could either be trying to make a viewer feel a certain way or they are trying to communicate their own feelings.



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

A single colour can have a number of meanings, but it is up to you to form an opinion on why a piece of artwork includes certain colours.

| Blue                                                 | Purple                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sadness, loneliness, cold, calm, serenity, freshness | Royal (purple was a colour used by royalty), expensive, wealth, power, luxury, nobility |

Some further examples of the links and associations with other colours are as follows:

| Green                                                      | Yellow                                            | Orange                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Nature, cool, money, freshness, growth, sickness, jealousy | Happiness, warmth, cheery, laughter, lighthearted | Happiness, enthusiasm, energy, warmth |

Although not colours, white and black also have a lot of associations.

| White                                                                             | Black                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Purity, innocence, cleanliness, space, neutrality, goodness, coolness, high tech, | Evil, darkness, fear, death, intelligence, strength, elegance, mystery |

There are many different associations attached to colours. Most colours can have positive as well as negative feelings attached. Some colours share the same ones too. Many colour associations can be personal so you may agree with some of the ones above but disagree with others.

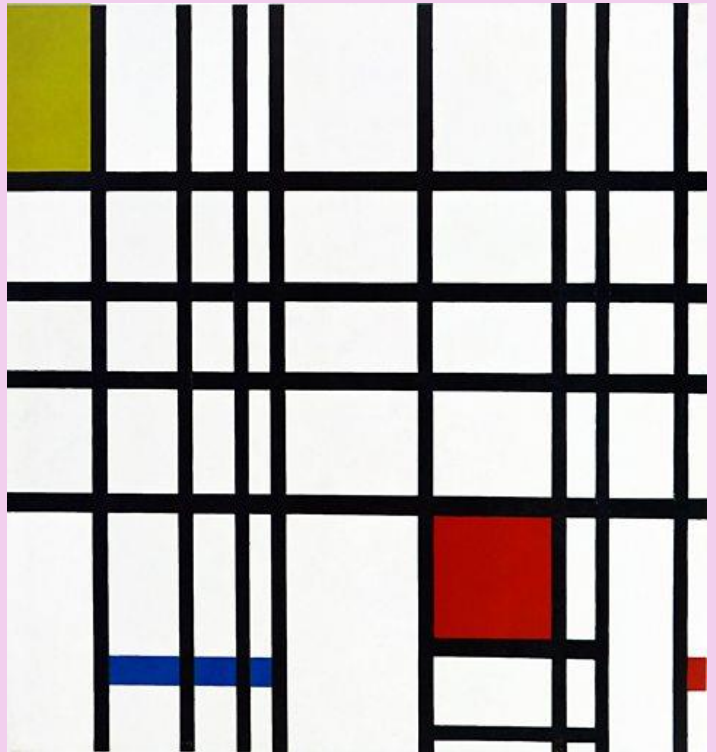


# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

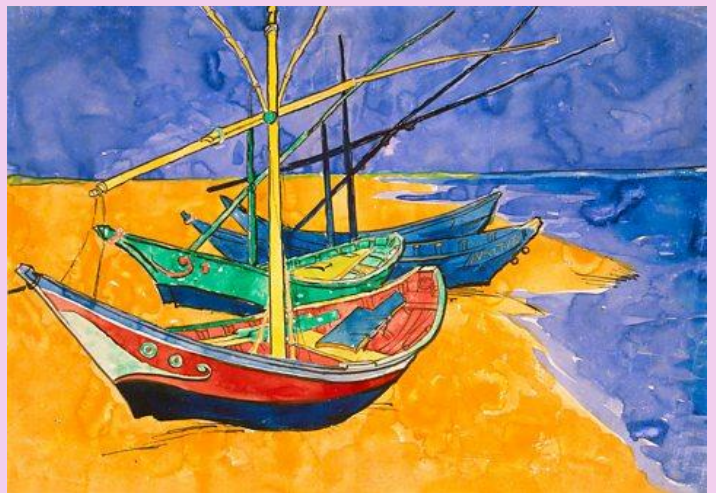
### PRIMARY

Piet Mondrian often used primary colours in his works. In *Composition with Yellow, Blue and Red* (1937-42) the solid blocks of colour are relatively small. But because they are bright, pure primary colours, they stand out boldly against the white background and black grid lines.



*Composition with Yellow, Blue and Red*, Piet Mondrian, 1937-42, oil on canvas

Van Gogh used primary colour to great effect in this version of his 1888 work *Fishing Boats on the Beach at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer*. The fact that the main colours in the painting are red, blue and yellow makes a striking image that stands out to the viewer. The bright colours of paint used by Mondrian and Van Gogh were not yet available for earlier painters.



*Fishing Boats on the Beach at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer*, Vincent van Gogh, 1888, pen and ink with watercolour

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

### SECONDARY

Franz Marc uses primary and secondary colours in *The Tiger*.

The tiger is made from bold yellow and black shapes. They stand out against the blue leaf shapes in the bottom left of frame and the purple areas to the top right.

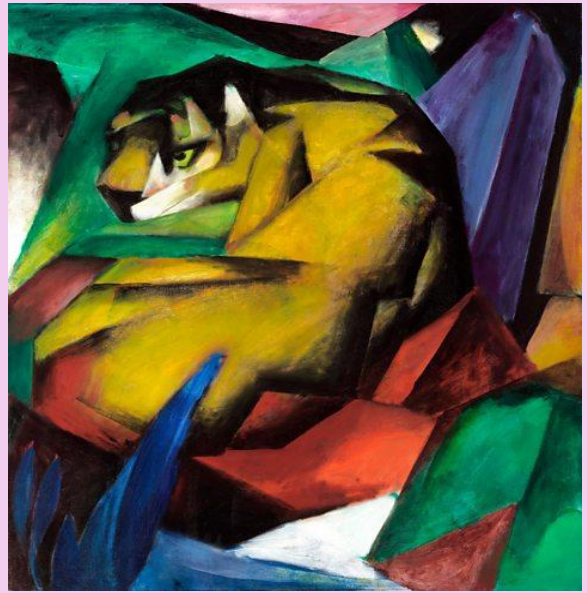
There is a closer harmony with the green and orange – both secondary colours that contain yellow. These colour relationships and the similar shapes used suggest the tiger is at home in its surroundings.

### TERTIARY

In *Woman with Parasol* (1893), Paul Signac creates a vibrant image based on tertiary colours.

Instead of mixing different colours of paint Signac applied small dabs of red-orange, blue-green, red-purple (and yellow) to his canvas. From a distance our eyes mix these to see different

hues, tints and tones.



The Tiger, Franz Marc, 1912, oil on canvas, painting



Woman with a Parasol, Paul Signac, 1893, oil on canvas



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

### WARM COLOURS

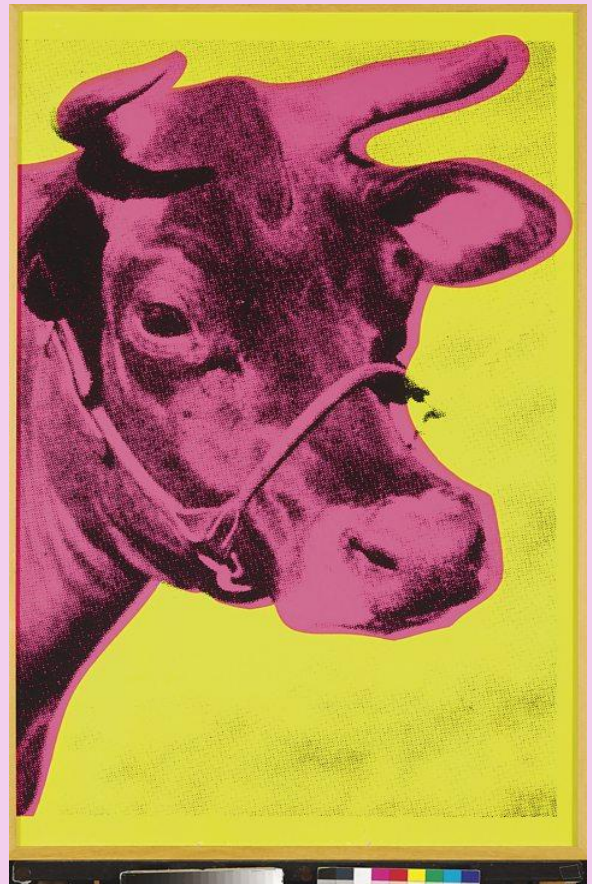
Warm colours are said to advance towards you as if they are jumping out of the painting. These colours can be exciting and energetic and will catch the viewer's attention by drawing their eye towards them. Castle and Sun (Paul Klee, 1928) features a number of different colours but is dominated by the reddish brown of the background and the bright yellow sun. These and the many red, yellow and orange shapes that make up the buildings create a warm image that suggests hot sunlight shining down on the scene.

Andy Warhol's Cow (1966) was one of a series of brightly coloured prints used as a wallpaper design.

Warhol deliberately used bright and unnatural warm colours. These strong colours advance and stand out so that they catch the viewer's eye when hung on a wall.



Castle and Sun, 1928 (no 201), Paul Klee, 1928, oil on canvas



Andy Warhol, Cow (F. & S. II.11), 1966, Screenprint, Christie's Images

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

### COOL COLOURS

Cool colours are said to recede into the background, meaning that they move away from the viewer. Cool colours can be calming and relaxing but can also be used to signify sadness.

The Old Guitarist was painted by Picasso between 1903 and 1904, during his Blue Period.

It features cool colours including dark blues, light blues, some turquoises and greens. The mood seems sad or even bleak. The only warmth comes from the brown of the guitar. This suggests a single source of comfort and warmth in the man's life.



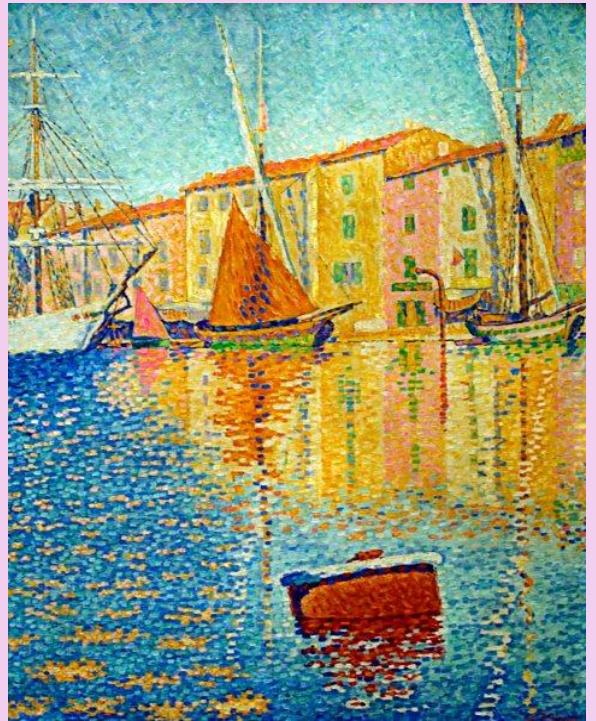
The Old Guitarist, Pablo Picasso, 1903-04, oil on canvas

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

### COMBINING WARM AND COOL

Warm and cool colours can be used together to create a sense of drama, to add interest and contrast, or to balance the temperature of a composition. Paul Signac painted *The Red Buoy* using different temperatures of colour. The colours used make this a very bright and vibrant painting. The painting of a harbour in the South of France uses warm colours such as reds, yellows and oranges to communicate a feeling about sunshine and heat. These are balanced by the cool blue of the water and the green shutters. This balance makes the scene look pleasantly warm rather than just hot. Signac's choice of colour means that the viewer gets a feeling of a warm summer's night as the sun sets on the village. Monet's painting *Houses of Parliament* (1903) shows a dramatic scene suggesting a sunrise or sunset on a cold winter's day.



*The Red Buoy*, Paul Signac, 1895, oil on canvas



*Houses of Parliament*, Claude Monet, 1903, oil on canvas

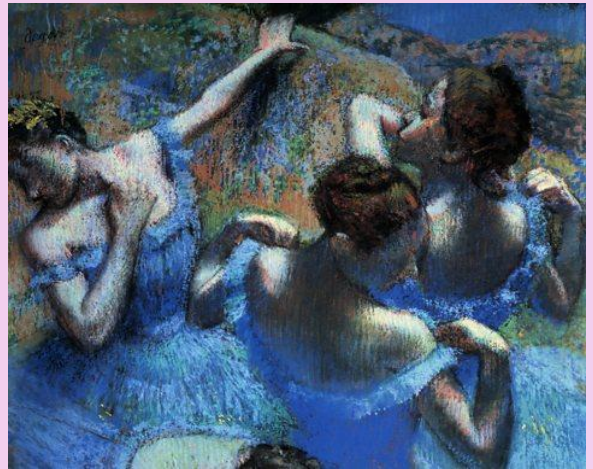


# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

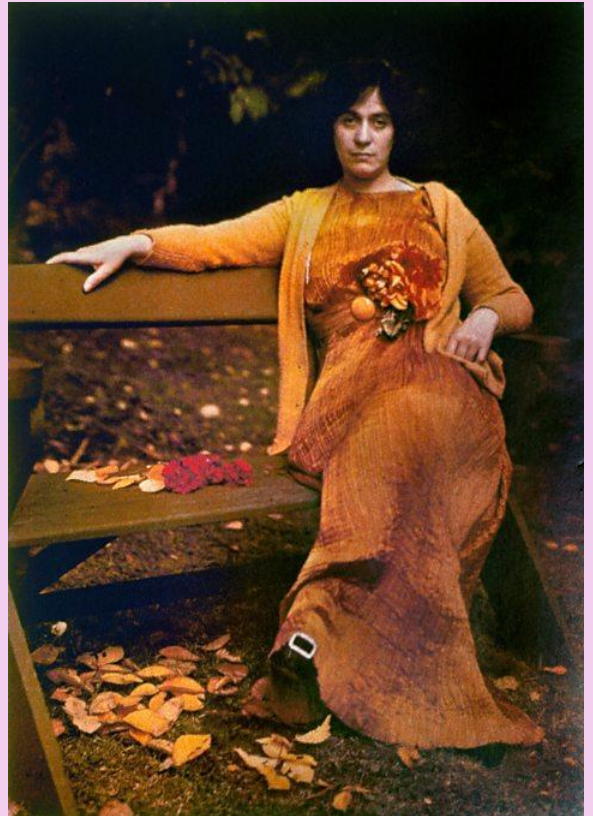
### HARMONIUS COLOURS

In *Blue Dancers* (1899) Edgar Degas uses harmonious blue and green pastels that create a calm atmosphere. Blue, blue-purple and blue-green tints in the dresses are repeated in the background, linking it and the subjects. These cool colours contrast with warm red, pink and yellow-brown in the dancers' skin and the space around them.



*Blue Dancers*, Edgar Degas, c.1899, pastel on paper

In this photograph of Mrs Selma Schubart (Arthur Stieglitz, 1907) the orange tone of the dress harmonises with the lighter tint of the cardigan and with the fallen leaves and red petals on the bench. The use of similar colours creates a sense of harmony between the dress and the natural autumn surroundings. The result is a warm and relaxed composition.



Mrs. Selma Schubart, Alfred Stieglitz, 1907, autochrome photograph

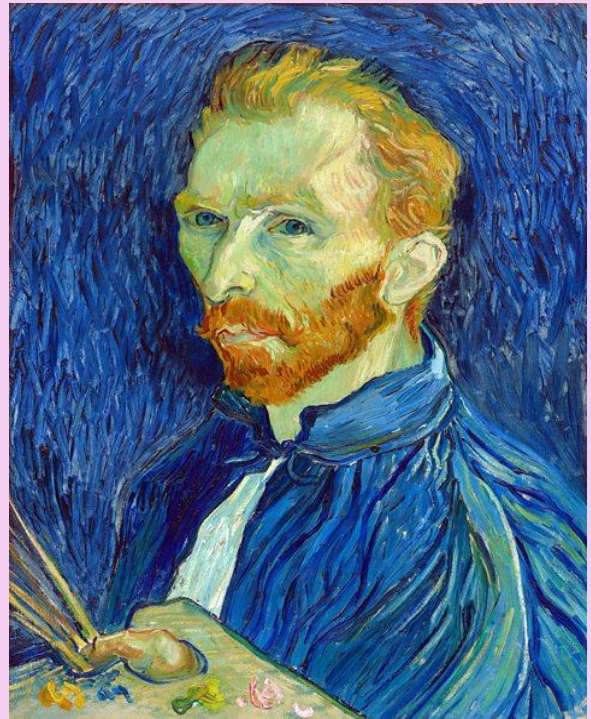
# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

### COMPLIMENTARY COLOURS

When complementary colours are placed next to each other, a very strong contrast is created. The colours appear more vivid and brighter. Some people say these colours clash when used next to each other and create very visually stimulating artwork. The complementary colours are:

- Green and red
- Orange and blue
- Yellow and purple
- Yellow-green and red-purple
- Yellow-orange and blue-purple
- Red-orange and blue-green



Self-portrait, Vincent van Gogh,  
1889, oil on canvas

In Van Gogh's Self-portrait (1889), the blue of his shirt matches the background colour. The blue complements the bright orange of the beard and hair and the greenish colour of Van Gogh's face. The painting palette and brushes are similar colours to the artist's skin. There are patches of orange, green and pink paint on the palette. These make a visual link between the artist and his work that stands out against his surroundings.

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

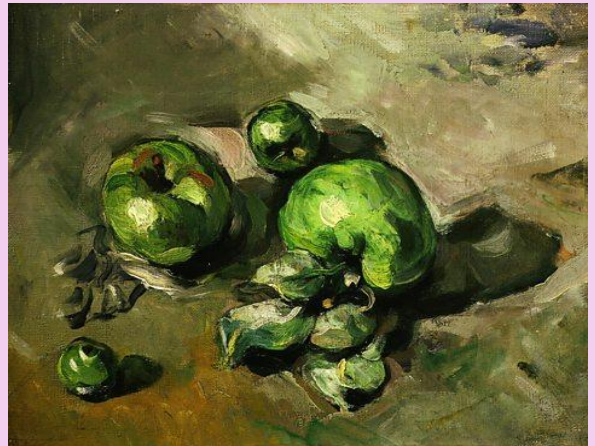
## COLOUR

### MONOCHROMATIC

An artist may decide to create a piece of artwork which is monochromatic. This means that the artist uses tints, shades and tones of a single colour. Still Life with Green Apples (Paul Cezanne, 1873) is almost completely monochromatic. The apples are painted using greens that range from very pale near white tints to nearly black shades. The background is made up of green-browns.

The three strokes of red on the apple on the left create contrasts and adds interest. A small amount of yellow is used to add more variety of colour to the bottom left corner and to the apples and their leaves.

Habitat 67 (Moshe Safdie, 1967) in Montreal is a model housing development based on stacked forms. The irregular arrangement of these forms could seem chaotic, but the fact that they all share the same grey-brown colour unites them as a composition.



Green Apples, Paul Cezanne, c.1872-73, oil on canvas



Habitat 67 on St. Helene Island, Montreal, Quebec, Canada



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## COLOUR

### EMOTION, MOOD AND ATMOSPHERE

Often when an artist uses colour in a painting, they are trying to communicate an emotion, mood or atmosphere. They could either be trying to make a viewer feel a certain way or they are trying to communicate their own feelings.

One way to do this is through wider social and cultural ideas we associate with certain colours. Let's take the colour red as an example.

The use of light and dark colours also often represents positive and negative emotions, or the good and the bad. White or lightness symbolises hope, purity, innocence, goodness, openness, angelic and heaven. Black or darkness symbolizes despair, pessimism, hidden, death, shadows or general negativity. Pink or pinkish shades are often used to portray sensitivity, compassion, youth, feminine, naivety, emotion and nurture.

Red is often used to show anger, aggression and danger, red is used in art in many forms. In stories, red is often used to represent evil characters, due to red's obvious associations with blood.

Blue is often used by artists to suggest trust, honesty and tranquillity, dark blue suggests authority, tradition and seriousness.

Green symbolizes balance, growth, healing and has obvious connections to nature.

Purple often represents creativity in some form in paintings, and it can also be used to project depressive feelings.

Brown is often used in art to represent traits such as being dependable and reliable. Brown can also be used to portray low energy, negative emotions and depression.

Yellow often symbolizes the sun and is often used to invoke feelings of warmth. Yellow also represents positive uplifting emotions.

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

In art and design, tone refers to how light or dark something is. Tones could refer to black, white and the grey tones in between. It could refer to how light or dark a colour appears.

In real life tone is created by the way light falls on an object. The parts of the object on which the light is strongest are called highlights and the darker areas are called shadows.

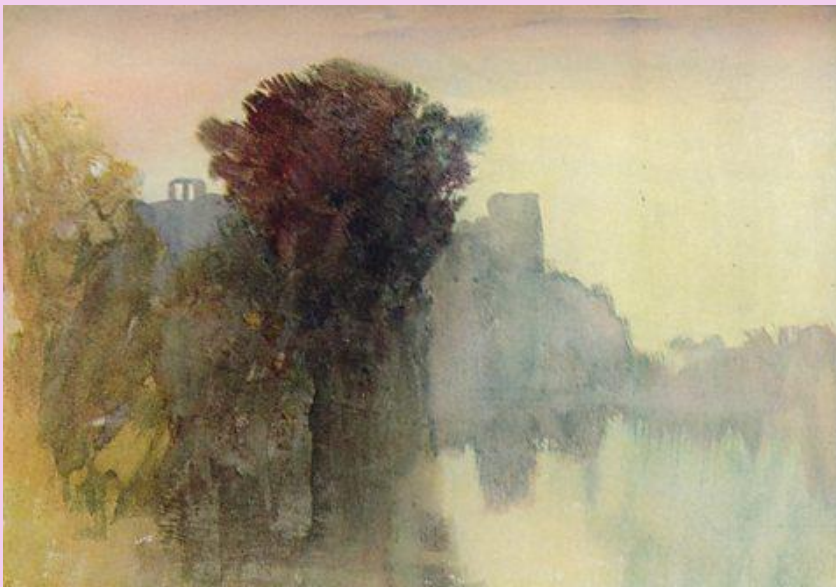
Tone can be used for a range of effects:

to create the **illusion of form**

to create **a particular atmosphere**

to create **contrast and focus attention**

to suggest **depth and distance**



In this painting Barnard Castle, by JMW Turner, the artist has used tone to create the illusion of form, to create an atmosphere, to create contrast, and to create depth and distance.

Barnard Castle, 1909, JMW Turner

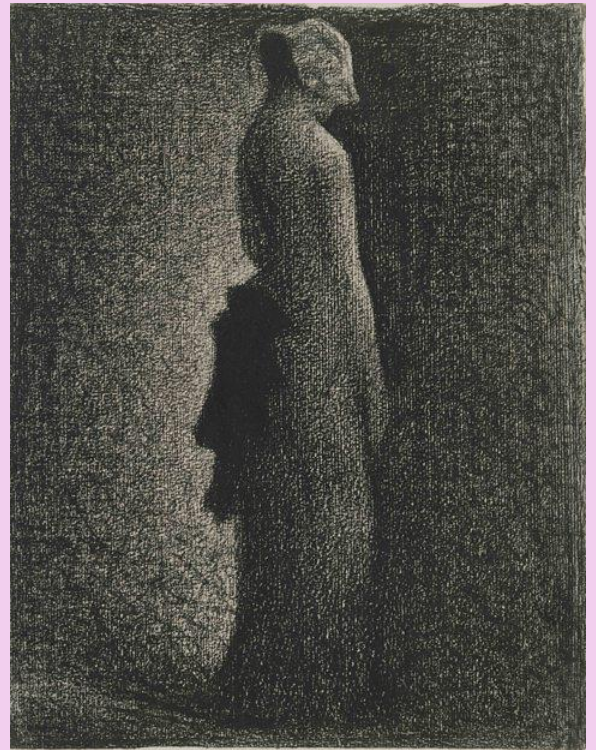
# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

### THE ILLUSION OF FORM

Tone can create the illusion of form by using different tones that suggest different amounts of light hitting the subjects shown. This can fool the eye into seeing a three-dimensional object.

The figure in *The Black Bow* (George Seurat, c.1882) appears three dimensional. The lightest tones suggest highlights on the woman's shoulder and arm and at the front of her hat. The tones gradually get darker further round the figure. The darkest tones are at the back. These suggest shadows at the base of her dress, in the small of her back and under the brim of her hat. These changing tones create the illusion of light hitting a real form.



### Mixing tones

In paintings or pastel work, different tones can be created by mixing different colours together. Black, white and grey can be mixed to make varied tones in a monotone piece. They can be added to a colour to create tints, shades and tones.

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## -tone

### Mixing tones

In *Watercolour of a Young Hare*, (1502), Albrecht Durer mixes black, white and brown to show different colours of fur and to suggest patches highlights on the hare's eye, cheek and side of the nose. Single strokes of white suggest light hitting individual hairs on the animal's back. Black is used for shadows, for example under the mouth and between the front legs.

In watercolour paintings, adding different amounts of water can create paler, lighter tints.



### Shading

Shading is used to create different tones in a drawing. A range of different techniques can be used to build up tones.

### Hatching

Hatching involves building tone using lines. The thickness and number of lines and the distance between them creates the illusion of form. There are different types of hatching:

1. Hatching uses parallel lines.
2. Crosshatching uses lines that cross at different angles to each other.



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

### Hatching

3. Contour hatching uses curved lines that follow the form of a subject.

Head of Leda (Leonardo da Vinci, 1506) shows all three techniques. Hatching is used to shade the background, the side of the nose and eyelids. Crosshatching creates darker tones in the hair decoration at the side of the woman's head. Contour hatching suggests the curve of her forehead and throat.



Head of Leda, 1506, Leonardo da Vinci.

### Stippling

Dots can be used instead of lines to build up tone. This is called stippling. The size, number and distance between the dots will change the tones created.

In A Thunderstorm over Mount Fuji in Japan, (Katsushika Hokusai, early 19th century) dark brown dots build up as you move down the side of the mountain. The stippling increases and develops into a solid dark tone. Lines of lighter red-brown with less stippling stretch down towards the base. This suggests ridges catching the light.



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

### CREATING ATMOSPHERE

Tone can be used to create atmosphere in art and design work. Different atmospheres will be created depending on the value and contrast of the tones used.

#### Value

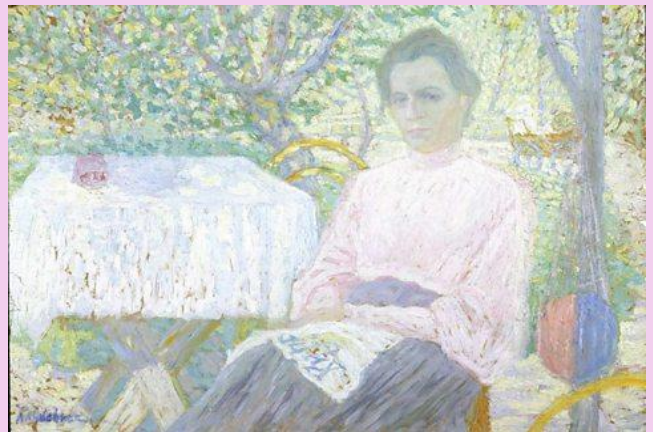
Value refers to how light or dark a tone is. Dark tones are said to have low value.

*Westminster, Evening* (Joseph Pennell, 1909) is dominated by use of low value tones that create the appearance of a dark night. The viewer has to work to make out the shapes of buildings and clouds. Small spots of much brighter tones effectively suggest lights and their reflections in the water.



*Westminster, Evening*, 1909, Joseph Pennell

Light tones are said to have high value. In *Woman reading newspaper* (c.1905-1906), Kazimir Malevich uses high value tones to suggest bright sunlight. These light tones are used throughout the composition, creating a calm, tranquil atmosphere.



*Woman Reading Newspaper*, c.1905-1906, Kazimir Malevich

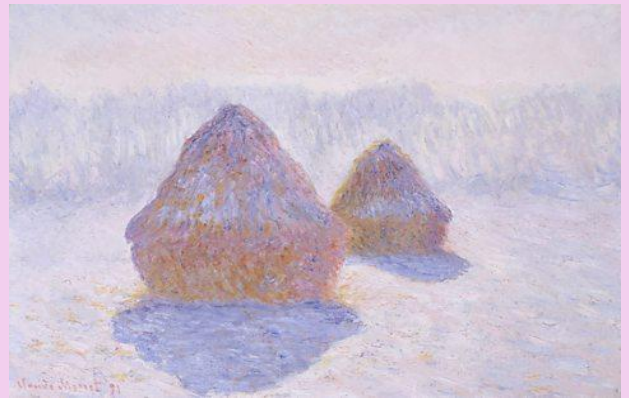
# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

### Contrast

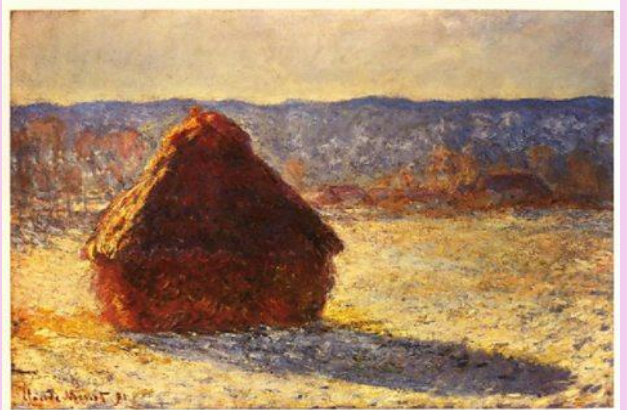
Contrast refers to the difference between tones. A small amount of contrast, or low contrast, between the lightest and darkest tones will tend to result in a more subtle or calm image. The greater, or higher, the contrast of tones, the more dramatic the atmosphere.

In *Haystacks (Effect of Snow and Sun)* (1891), Claude Monet uses a limited colour palette with high and mid-value tones. These suggest gentle winter light on a hazy, misty day.



*Haystacks (Effect of Snow and Sun)*, 1891,  
Claude Monet

The greater, or higher, the contrast of tones, the more dramatic the atmosphere. *Haystack, Morning Snow Effect* (Claude Monet, 1891) has a much wider range of tones. High values suggest bright, direct light hitting the snowy field and the left side of the haystack. Contrast is created by much lower value tones that show deep shadow.



*Haystack (Morning Snow Effect)*, 1891,  
Claude Monet



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

### Chiaroscuro

The term chiaroscuro is used to describe images with very high contrast.

Chiaroscuro comes from two Italian words – 'chiaro' meaning light and 'scuro' meaning dark.

Narcissus (c.1597-99) is typical of Michelangelo Caravaggio's use of chiaroscuro. A black background and very dark shadows in the water and the folds of the figure's clothes make his white sleeves and the pale skin of his face, arms and knee stand out dramatically.



Narcissus, c.1597-1599, Michelangelo Caravaggio

The Girl with the Pearl Earring (c.1665) depicts a young woman, standing before a dark background, as she gazes out at the viewer, her eyes luminous and her lips open as if she is just about to speak or has paused in mid-speech. Dressed in fine fabric, her dress soft with contrasting shadows and highlights of colour, she wears an exotic blue turban while a large pearl, dangling from her ear, catches the light.



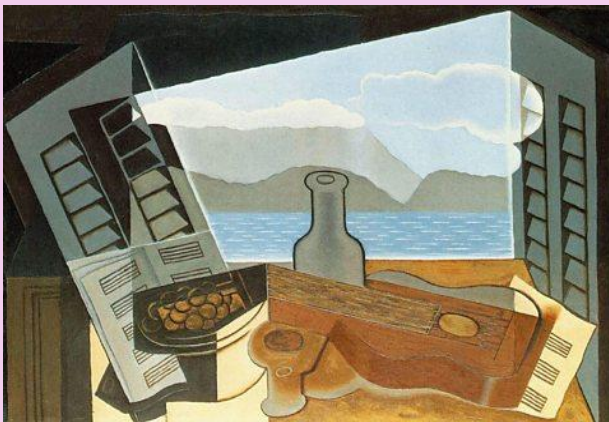
The Girl with the Pearl Earring, C.1665, Johannes Vermeer

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

### CREATING DEPTH AND DISTANCE

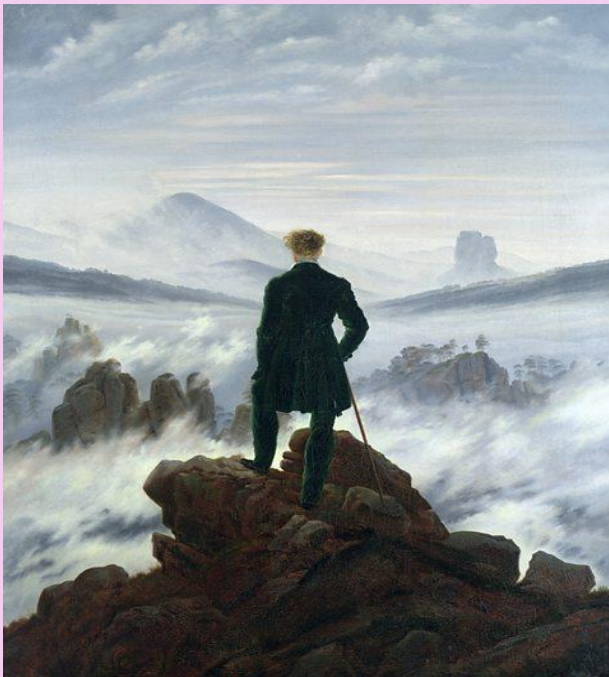
Changing tone can be used to suggest distance and depth in an artwork. Progressive tone can be used to gradually change from a light tone in the foreground to a dark tone in the background, or a dark tone in the foreground to a light tone in the background. This suggests a change in the amount of light hitting objects that is related to how far they are from the viewer.



The Open Window, 1921, Juan Gris

In *The Open Window* (1921), Juan Gris uses black and dark colours to show parts of the room that are in shade. Light tones are used in the foreground to suggest sunlight hitting the table and a sheet of paper.

Through the window, a line of dark hills appears closer than lighter mountains behind. The pale tones of the sky and white clouds suggest they are the elements furthest from the viewer.



The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog, 1818, Caspar David Friedrich

Caspar David Friedrich uses his darkest tones in the foreground of *The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818).

The central figure and the rock he stands appear almost as silhouettes. The highest values show swirling white fog beneath the man.

Progressive tones show the hills and rocks, the fog and the sky getting brighter and lighter in the distance.

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

### CREATING CONTRAST AND FOCUS

By changing tones, artists and designers can create focal points in their work. Our eyes are often drawn to the lightest object, so making a key part of a composition lighter than its surrounding can help bring it to a viewer's attention.



Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1 / Portrait of the Artist's Mother, James Whistler, 1871, oil on canvas

Dark and mid-tones are used most in Portrait of the Artist's Mother. The black dress, dark curtain, grey wall and brown floor occupy the largest areas of the composition.

The woman's head, cap and hands and the picture on the wall are shown with white and bright tints. The viewer's eye is drawn to these small patches of light tone. There is little contrast in Whistler's colour palette, so it is contrast of tones alone that creates these focal points.



Self-portrait with Black Dog, early 1840s, Gustave Courbet

In a similar way, a dark element can be made to stand out if it is in contrast with much lighter surroundings. The background of Self-portrait with Black Dog is painted with the brightest tones and largely in the most detail. The artist and dog are mostly shown using darker shades.

The combination of subject matter, central positioning and contrast with the background draws the viewer's eye to these figures



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## -tone

### MONOTONE AND DUOTONE

Tone does not have to be used realistically. In graphic communication and design, images can be created by limiting the number of tones or colours used.

#### Monotone

Monotone means using only one colour. This is particularly used to mean black and white. Many photographers choose to work with black and white images. Removing colour means that the images



A Dust Storm Hits a Southwestern Town, 1937

rely fully on tone to describe light, shape and form. Monotone images can be very eye-catching because of the natural high contrast between black and white. However, the range of tones used will change how bold or subtle the final piece is.

#### Duotone

A duotone is like monotone but is made up of two colours rather than black and white. The choice of colours lets an artist or designer make an image seem warm or cool, bold or subtle. Andy Warhol based Atomic Bomb: Red Explosion (1965) on a newspaper image of a mushroom cloud from a nuclear explosion.



Atomic Bomb: Red Explosion, Andy Warhol, 1965, silkscreen

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## tone

### DUOTONE

The original image would have been printed in monotone but Warhol changes this for black and red duotone. This still suggests an image printed repeatedly in newspapers but one that has become unnaturally stylised or even sinister.

#### Why use monotone or duotone?

Using monotone and duotone can be aesthetic choices that create a particular mood. They can also be chosen for practical reasons:

- It can be simpler to make an image from a limited number of colours.
- Printing with limited colours can be cheaper.
- Very different images can be unified when printed in monotone or the same duotone colours.
- Duotone images can be linked to a particular brand if printed in the brand colours.

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

A line is a mark made on a surface that joins different points. Lines can vary in length, width, direction and shape. Artists and designers can use lines for many different reasons.

Lines can show the subject's physical appearance, or they can suggest something more than just what can be seen, such as movement.

### CONTOUR LINES

Lines that are used to define the shape or form of an object or to show key details are called outlines or contour lines.

Image caption,

In this lithograph portrait of Berthe Morisot (1872-74) Edouard Manet has used thick black lines to create an outline of his model. Manet varies the thicknesses of lines to communicate about different elements. The thick single outline of the clothing brings the subject together. Finer lines show the shape of her hair suggesting fine individual strands and a soft texture. More thick dark lines draw attention to the subject's eyes. Thinner, lighter lines describe her nose and mouth - making them look softer and finer.



Berthe Morisot, Edouard Manet, 1872-74, lithograph



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

Aubrey Beardsley's use of line allowed for complicated, organic shapes to be represented simply.

Some contour lines used in *The Peacock Skirt* (1893) are realistic – such as the simple outlines of hands and arms.

Other lines are more expressive - such as the flowing curves showing the outline of clothing. These contour lines create a sensual atmosphere rather than representing reality.



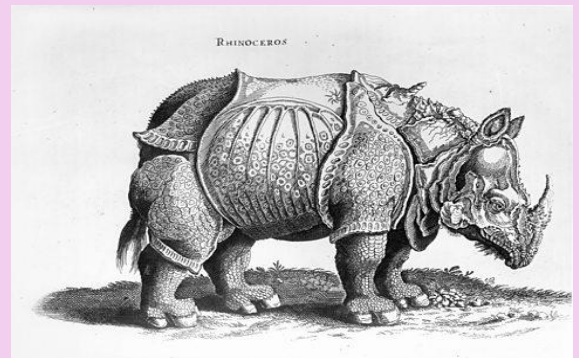
*The Peacock Skirt*, illustration for 'Salome' by Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, 1893, ink and graphite on paper

## DESCRIPTIVE LINES

Descriptive lines tell us more about a subject. They help make a shape look more like a three-dimensional object by showing light, shade and texture.

In *The Rhinoceros* (c.1515), Albrecht Durer

uses lines to describe how he imagines the animal would look and feel. Thin contour lines show the overall form and the outline of sections of armoured shell. More detailed lines that are close together, combine to show hard ridges, spikey hair and areas of smooth and rough texture.



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

This pen and ink drawing, Portrait of Jeanne Duval (Charles Pierre Baudelaire, mid 19th century) uses thick black contour lines to show the shape of the woman and her clothes.

Light and shade is described using hatched and cross-hatched lines. Thin lines are used to create the detail of the woman's features. Her face appears delicate in contrast to the bold lines around it.

In Head of a Satyr (c.1500 - 1505), Michelangelo shows form with areas of light and shade and lines that suggest facial features, the curves round the neck, and curling hair.

Hatching and cross-hatching is used descriptively. The lines are drawn very close together on the face. This makes it look hard and solid.

In contrast the lighter areas and small number of lines suggest the softer texture of the satyr's hair.



Portrait of Jeanne Duval, Charles Baudelaire, mid 19th century, pen and ink



Head of a Satyr, Michelangelo Buonarroti, c.1500-05, pen and ink on paper

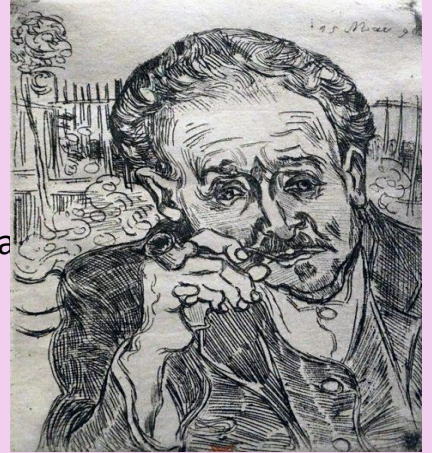


# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

### EXPRESSIVE LINES

Lines can be added to an artwork using a range of different media such as pencil, charcoal, oil paint and watercolour. These different media will give the lines a different quality, they may be thicker or thinner, bold or smudged. The way lines are created can be used to express emotions and to create mood.



Man with a Pipe (Portrait of Dr Gachet),  
Vincent van Gogh, 1890, etching

In the *etching Man with a Pipe (Portrait of Dr Gachet)* (1890) Van Gogh has used a range of bolder, thicker lines to define the outline of the subject. Short, dark, straight lines at different angles show the jacket and waistcoat and shorter, wispier lines show the texture of hair. Heavy, wavy lines around the forehead and eyes make the subject look thoughtful or troubled. These are matched by the contour lines that show his hands and clothing. In *Head of a Young Woman with Tousled Hair* (c.1508) Leonardo Da Vinci uses expressive lines to give the impression that the young woman in his



Head of a Young Woman with Tousled Hair,  
Leonardo Da Vinci, c.1508, gouache on wood

painting has long, flowing hair. This has been achieved by using only a few, expressive lines rather than realistically showing the appearance of her hair. Compare that to the intricate tone and shading in the face of the young woman to see how effective even only a few lines can be.

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

### ORIENTATION

Orientation refers to the direction of lines. They could be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. Lines can be used in art and design to help guide your eye around a painting, or to create a sense of balance and structure. Deliberate use of horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines can help to create a focal point. They can also help to suggest depth and a sense of perspective.

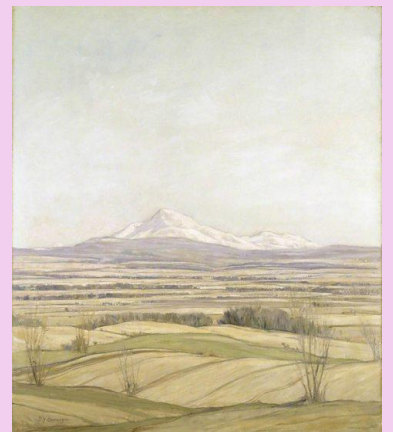
Shower on the Bank of the Sumida River at Ommaya Embankment in Edo (Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1834) has vertical lines that direct the viewer's eye down to the people walking by the river. The horizontal lines of the bank itself also adds to the sense of movement, leading our eyes back and forward between the people rushing along under umbrellas.



*Shower on the Banks of the Sumida River at Ommaya*

*Embankment in Edo, Utagawa Kuniyoshi, c.1834, woodblock print*

The horizontal lines in Ben Ledi, Early Spring (Sir David Young Cameron, 1914) create a sense of rest and space. They suggest a flat landscape stretching out beyond the frame. These calm lines help emphasise the mountain that rises behind them in the distance.



*Ben Ledi, Early Spring* Sir David Young Cameron, 1914, oil on canvas

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

### ACTUAL AND IMPLIED LINES

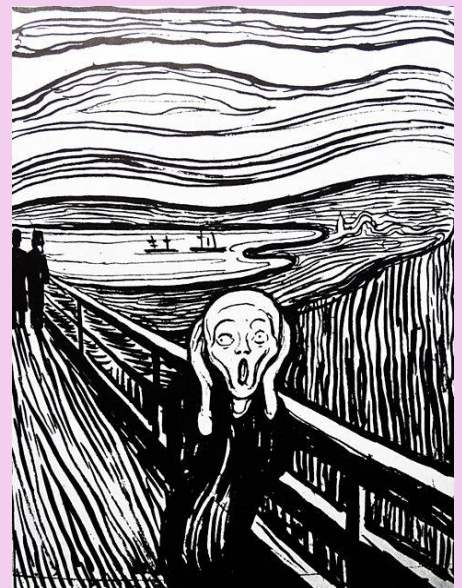
Actual lines are real marks made in a composition. Implied lines are lines that are suggested by changes in colour, tone and texture or by the edges of shapes.

This lithograph print of *The Scream* (Edvard Munch, 1895) is entirely made using actual lines. Contour lines show the figure and its expression as well as outlining the bridge, the land, water and sky.

There is no tone or shading so actual lines are also used to show the texture of the wooden bridge and to suggest clouds, hills and waves.

*Sand Dune by Plains Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, South Africa* shows strong implied lines created by the horizon and the diagonal slope of the sand dune.

The combination of lines leads your eye from one edge of the photograph to the other and back again. It is a very simple composition, but the bold changes in colour and texture in each section of the photograph help to create a sense of the scale of this desert landscape.



*The Scream*, Edvard Munch, 1895, lithograph



*Sand Dune by Plains*, Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, South Africa, Unknown artist, 2009



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

### LEADING LINES

Lines that our eyes follow round a composition are called leading lines. They are a useful tool to create a visual flow or to emphasise focal points.

The Polar Sea by Caspar David Friedrich shows how diagonal lines can lead a viewer into an image. The shallow diagonal along the light brown sheets of ice at the bottom leads the viewer from left to right. Here the large yellow triangle of ice leads the eye towards the main pyramid shape in the middle of the composition.



The Polar Sea, Caspar David Friedrich, 1824, oil on canvas

This is a great example of how the placement of lines can help lead the viewer through the composition.

In Leda by Juan Gris, curving lines lead our eyes in both directions along the path.



Leda, Juan Gris, date unknown, gouache, pen and ink

They take us from the bottom right of frame and converge in the top left, creating a sense of depth. The path and the curve of the pond lead us to the bottom of the woman's dress. Here the lines of her skirt draw our eyes up the outline of her figure to her face. The vertical lines of the trees around her also help lead our eyes up to the top of the frame.



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

### GEOMETRIC AND ORGANIC LINES

#### Geometric lines

Geometric lines are ones that relate to perfect mathematical shapes and man-made objects. They are straight, regular and uniform. They often follow a specific pattern and can be symmetrical or repeat in a specific way.

The Empire State Building in New York is a piece of Art Deco architecture made up entirely of straight lines.

The windows run up the length of the entire building in long, straight, vertical lines. These emphasise the height of the building.

The overall effect of the geometric lines suggest that the building is strong and stable.

Painting No.II / Composition No.XV /

Composition 4 by Piet Mondrian is

entirely made of geometric lines and

blocks of colour. These are arranged in a

seemingly random way and painted over

so that they appear faded around the edges of the frame. This makes the

composition feel less rigid and perfect than you might expect from a group of purely geometric lines.



Empire State Building, New York, USA



Painting No.II / Composition No.XV /  
Composition 4, Piet Mondrian, 1913, oil on  
canvas

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## LINE

### GEOMETRIC AND ORGANIC LINES

#### Organic lines

Lines that appear natural and imperfect rather than man-made or mathematical are called organic lines. They tend to have less structure, they can change quickly and often don't follow a particular path or route. Organic lines are curved and irregular.

Reverie (1897) is an Art Nouveau poster by Alphonse Mucha. Mucha used organic lines in a realistic way to suggest the delicate forms of hair and the flowing fabric of the woman's dress.

Swirling patterns and flower forms create a flowing organic background. The image is given structure by a contrasting geometric line – the white outline of a circle in the background.

Organic lines dominate this poster advertising salad dressing, Delftsche Slaolie (Jan Toorop, 1895). They are used expressively and the lines of hair and clothing flow together and swirl round filling the frame. Even the shape of the lettering at the top of the poster is curved and flowing. The result feels very sensual and natural.



Rêverie, Alphonse Mucha, 1897, colour litho



Delft Salad Oil poster, Jan Toorop, 1894, lithograph

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## SHAPE

A shape is a two-dimensional area. Shapes have height and width but not depth.

A shape might be defined by an outline or through contrast with its surroundings, such as through colour or tone. There are two types of shape:

- **Organic** - Organic shapes are ones that can be found in nature. For example fruit, vegetables, flowers and shells all have organic shapes.
- **Geometric** - Geometric shapes are mathematical shapes, such as squares and circles. They are perfect and regular.

### ORGANIC SHAPES

Organic shapes are irregular and imperfect. Naturally these shapes will all be slightly different from one another. They are often curved and flowing and can seem unpredictable. Using organic shapes can make a piece of art or design seem more natural and real. Still life, portrait and landscape are all genres of art that often feature organic shapes.

In this still life, Samuel John Peploe has painted the apples and flowers as irregular, organic shapes. Just as in real life, these are imperfect objects. Each is unique and there are subtle differences in their natural shapes and sizes. The curve and decoration of the vase add more organic shapes to the painting.

The straight edges of the table and the pattern of the cloth behind are geometric shapes that add contrast to the composition.



Still Life, Samuel John Peploe, date unknown, oil on canvas



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## SHAPE

The Pre-Raphaelite group of artists looked to nature for inspiration and attempted to show their subjects with maximum realism.

Melody (Musica) (Kate Elizabeth Bunce, c 1895-97) is in the Pre-Raphaelite style and realistically captures the natural shape of a young woman, her clothes and surroundings.

Additional organic shapes are introduced through the flowers behind her and the floral pattern of her dress.

Paisley pattern is built up of repeating organic shapes. While the pattern repeats in regular blocks, it is made up of irregular twisted teardrop shapes that suggest seeds or other parts of a plant.

The May Queen designed by Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh is a good example of how organic shapes were used in Art Nouveau works.

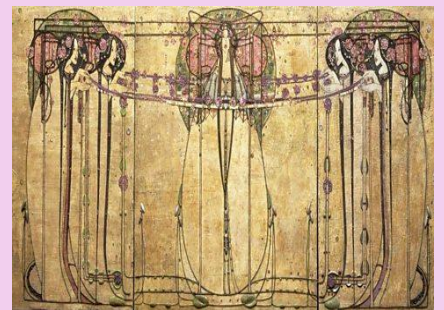
Here human figures, flowers and plant shapes all seem to merge together. Curving lines and shapes are used throughout and create a flowing, unified, organic composition.



Melody (Musica), Kate Elizabeth Bunce, c.1895-97, oil on canvas



Paisley Pattern



The May Queen, Margaret MacDonald Mackintosh, 1900, oil painted gesso on hessian and scrim

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## SHAPE

### GEOMETRIC SHAPES

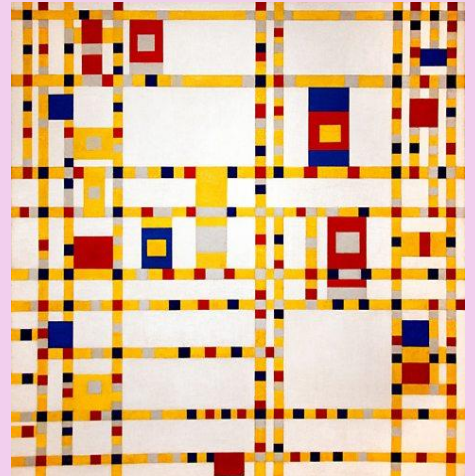
Geometric shapes are mathematical shapes. They have straight lines, angles and points and curves. Geometric shapes include circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, parallelograms, hexagons etc. Artists will sometimes use geometric shapes in their artwork to suggest balance and order or to highlight that something is man-made or artificial.

Piet Mondrian's painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942-43), uses the geometric shapes of squares and rectangles to represent the busy grid of streets in Manhattan, New York.

The simple shapes have been laid out in a way that makes them look like a birds-eye view of roads, traffic and buildings. There are no organic, natural shapes. This completely geometric image suggests a modern, man-made city.

In *Woman in Hat and Fur Collar*, Pablo Picasso has deliberately added angles and points to the organic shapes that would normally be found in the human face.

Simplifying natural shapes and representing them in a geometric way such as this was common with the Cubist movement of the early 20th Century.



*Broadway Boogie Woogie*, Piet Mondrian, 1942-43, oil on canvas



*Woman in Hat and Fur Collar*, Pablo Picasso, 1937, oil on canvas



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## SHAPE

### POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SHAPES

All shapes can be described as either positive or negative:

Positive shapes are the shapes of actual objects.

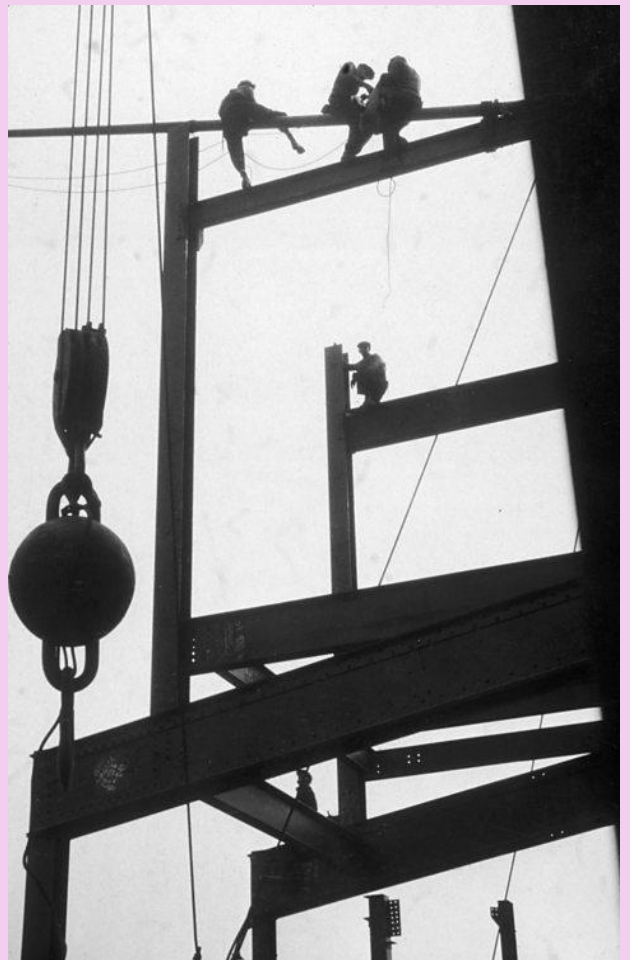
Negative shapes are the areas between these objects.

The way positive and negative shapes act together creates the atmosphere of a composition. Artist will sometimes use the outline of a shape, filled in with flat colour to represent that object as a whole. This is known as a silhouette.

This Dwight Franklin photograph shows the Empire State Building under construction.

The steel frame, the workers and the crane act as positive shapes. They are almost in silhouette, and this unites them through colour.

There is stark contrast with the white negative shapes created around the building's frame. These negative shapes take up the majority of the composition. This highlights how thin the structure is and makes the small human figures seem exposed and precariously positioned.



Empire State Building, Dwight Franklin, 1930, photograph

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

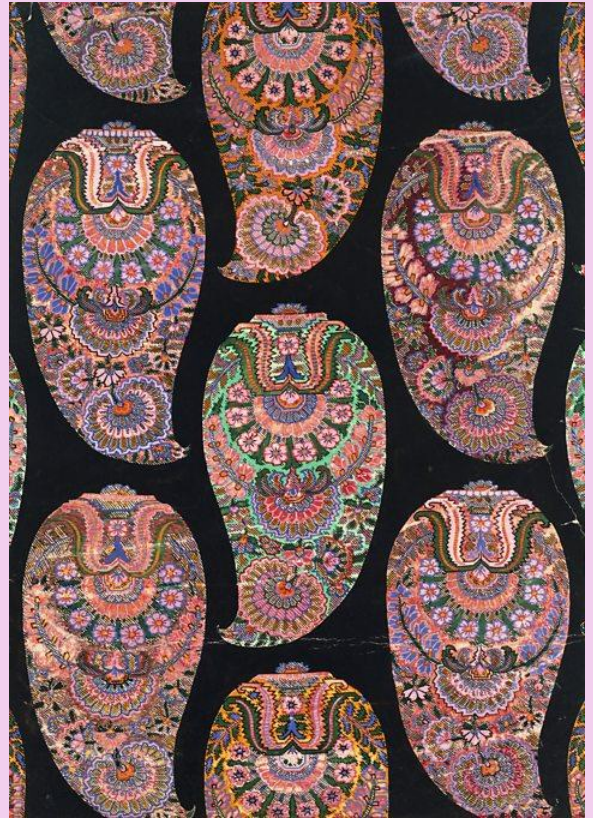
Patterns are all around us, in nature as well as in art and design.

We see patterns where shapes, lines or colours are repeated. How complicated a pattern is depends on what is repeated and the way in which it is repeated.

## MOTIFS

The starting point of any pattern is the single element that will be repeated. This is called a motif. A motif can be repeated and arranged in many different ways in order to create different types of pattern.

This textile design by George Haité (c 1850) is based on a twisted teardrop shape motif typical of a Paisley pattern. This shape, called a buta, dates back to ancient Persia but became popular in the west in the 18th and 19th centuries. Here the motif is mirrored - sometimes it twists to the left, sometimes to the right. The colours change creating different versions of the buta, but it is always recognisable as the same motif.



Shawl fabric design, George Charles Haite, 19th century, watercolour

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

The drawing room of Hill House (Charles Rennie MacKintosh, 1902-04) features a rose motif that has been repeated to create a border round the room.

A very similar rose motif has been used in the wall light to link these two features into one interior design.



Wall Light in The Hill House, Charles Rennie MacKintosh, 1902-04



The Master Bedroom in the Hill House, Charles Rennie MacKintosh, 1902-1904

A series of motifs within the bedroom of Hill House (Charles Rennie MacKintosh, 1902-04) are used to a similar effect.

Again, a rose motif and a repeat of simple squares are used to unite different elements of the room, and to link this room to the design of other rooms in the house.



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

### REGULAR PATTERNS

Patterns can be regular or irregular.

In regular patterns the motif (or motifs) is repeated in a way that is predictable.

It could be exactly the same each time, or it could change in a way that is regularly repeated.

There are many ways to arrange motifs to create a regular pattern.

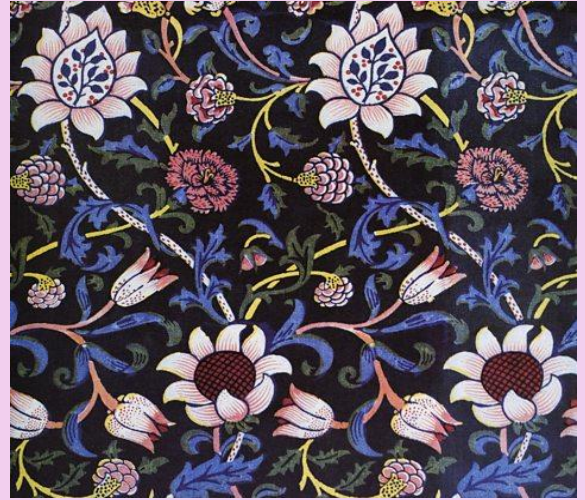
### BLOCK REPEAT

The most basic way of creating pattern is to block repeat.

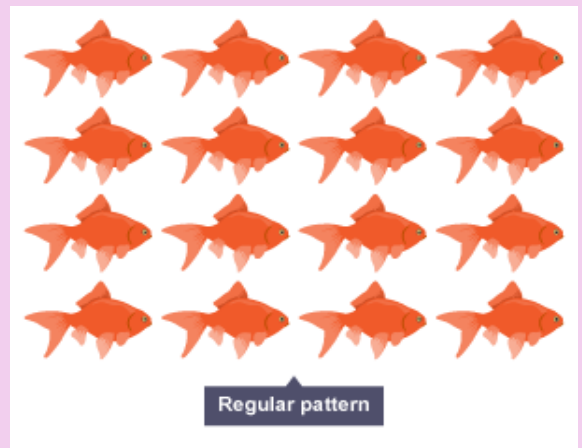
This is where the motif is repeated in exactly the same way in horizontal and vertical lines.

Each of these tiles from the Rustempaşa Mosque in Istanbul can be seen as a motif of a central rosette with mirrored tulip shapes around it.

The tiles are arranged in a block repeat creating a regular pattern.



Evenlode, William Morris, 1883, textile print



Izlnik tile in Rustempaşa Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

### ROTATIONAL

A rotational pattern is where the motif has been rotated on its axis.

The motif may be rotated and repeated at any angle, but most designers will rotate at 90 or 180 degrees to make more uniform patterns.

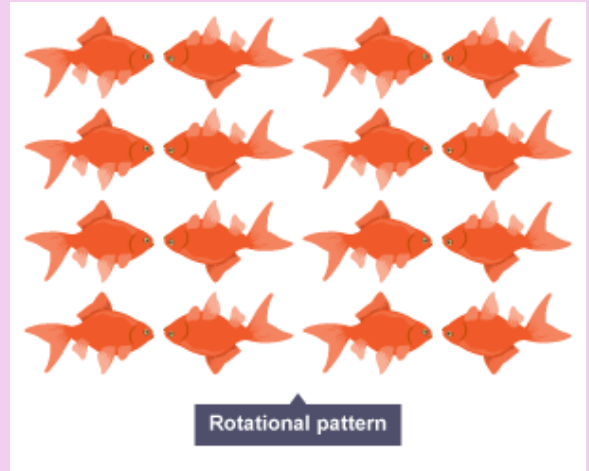
These Cornflowers tiles (William De Morgan, 1898) have been designed to create a rotational pattern.

When rotated through 180 degrees, the leaves and stems create a seamless line across the join between the tiles.

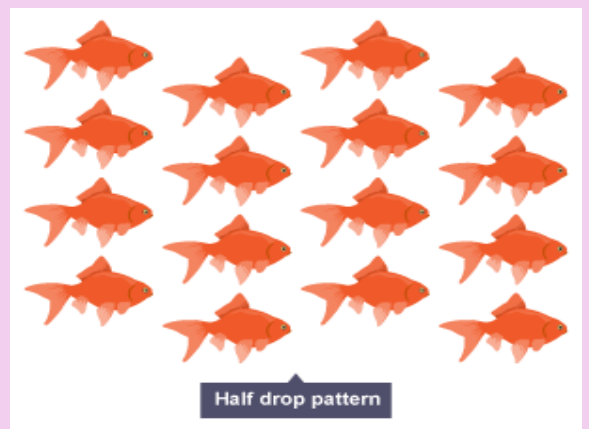
A line of tiles would read as a continuous design but the rotational pattern adds variety and creates a more organic feel than a block repeat.

### HALF-DROP

Half-drop patterns are made by dropping every second line of motifs down a half-length height of the motif.



Cornflowers tiles, William De Morgan, 1898





# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

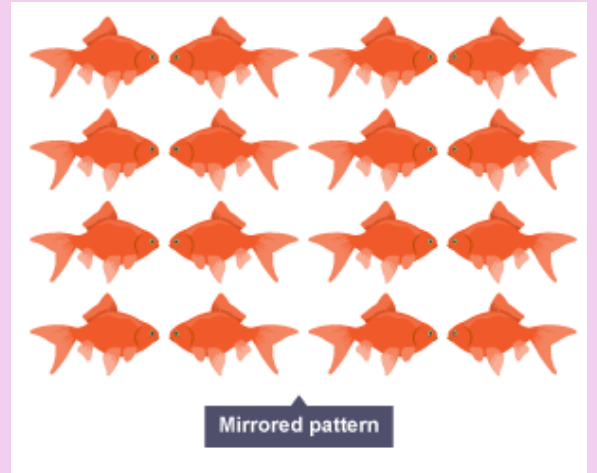
These tiles from the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul are arranged in a half-drop repeat. The leaf-shaped motif is arranged so that alternate columns are staggered vertically by half the height of the motif. The pattern is regular but feels more varied than a block repeat.



Decorative tile, Topkapi Palace museum, Istanbul, Turkey

## MIRRORED

Another way of creating patterns is to mirror the motif. Motifs can be mirrored horizontally or vertically.



Swan, Rush and Iris (Walter Crane, 1875) is a wallpaper pattern that uses a mirrored motif.

The swans and the leaf pattern behind are arranged around a vertical line of symmetry creating a well-balanced image.



Evenlode, William Morris, 1883, textile print

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

### IRREGULAR PATTERN

An irregular pattern is one in which the motif changes or the way it is repeated is unpredictable.

Antoni Gaudi created benches in Parc Guell in Barcelona using broken tiles that were arranged to form an irregular pattern. There is no set pattern, but we can see elements of motifs that are spread out to give the impression they are repeating.

In *Echelonement* (1934), Sophie Taeuber-Arp has taken a simple white shape as her motif and repeated it against a blue background. The pattern is irregular because the height of the shape changes each time it is repeated.



Bench in Park Guell, Barcelona, Antoni Gaudi, c.1900-14, Yury Zap



Échelonement, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, 1934

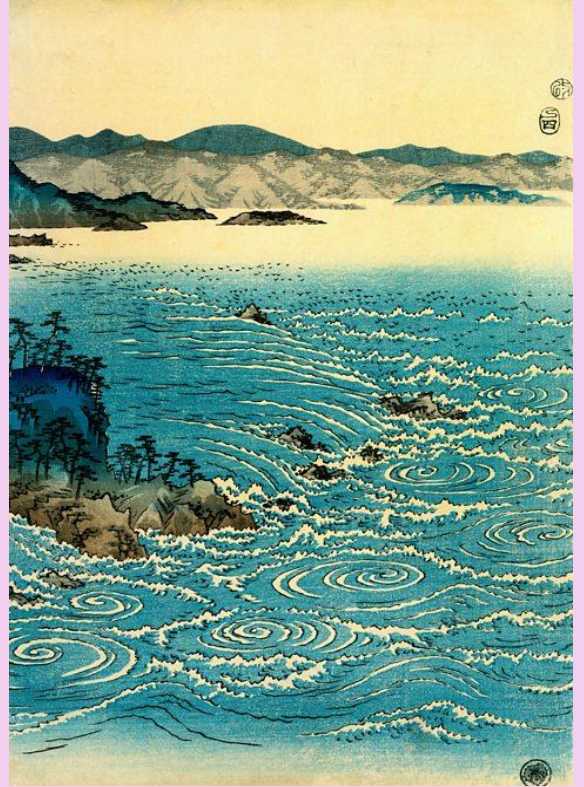
# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

### IRREGULAR PATTERN

View of the Whirlpools at Awa (Utagawa Hiroshige, 1857) features a spiral motif. This is repeated in an irregular arrangement and the size and number of turns in the spiral changes each time.

The Gray Tree (Piet Mondrian, 1912) is composed from an irregular pattern of curving brush strokes. These lines act as a motif that is repeated in different sizes and at different angles to suggest the random arrangement of branches in a tree.



View of the Whirlpools at Awa, from an untitled set of three triptychs, Utagawa Hiroshige, 1857, woodblock print



The Gray Tree, Piet Mondrian, 1912, oil on canvas



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

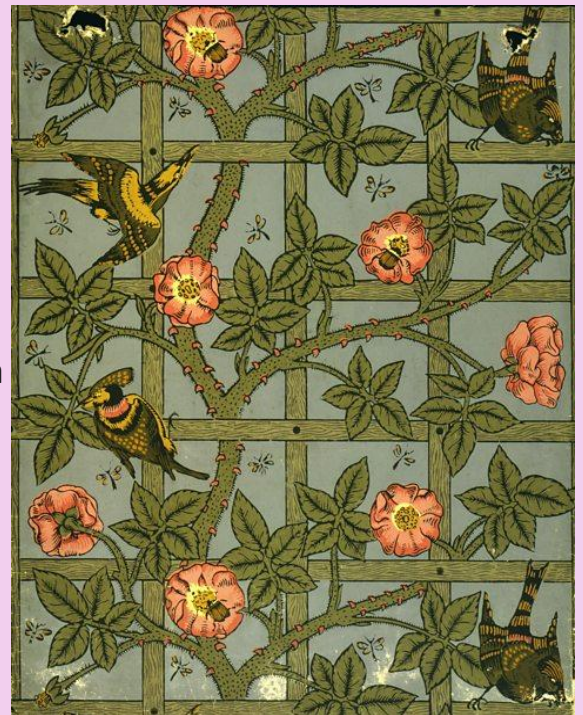
### COMPLEX PATTERNS

How complicated a pattern is depends on the designer. It may contain more than one motif and may use a combination of pattern types to create quite complicated designs. It can often be difficult to identify the type of pattern used in a piece because so many different types have been combined together. This beaded collar (Egypt, 1550 – 1070 BC) is made from a simple series of patterned bands, each of which regularly repeats a simple motif. Combining different motifs like this is a simple way to create a more complex and varied pattern.



Beaded Egyptian collar, 1550-1070 BC

Trellis (William Morris, 1864) is a wallpaper design that mixes regular and irregular patterns. The grid of the trellis is a regular pattern – the wooden frame creates a series of squares that repeat identically in a block repeat. The plant that grows through the trellis makes an irregular pattern. The branches, flowers and leaves all repeat at different intervals. This makes the pattern seem organic and natural.



Trellis, William Morris, 1864, wallpaper design <sup>68</sup>

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

### RADIATING PATTERN

A pattern that is arranged around a central point is called a radiating pattern. It seems to radiate out in all directions. Radiating patterns result in designs that feel balanced. They can be an effective way to create a focal point at the centre of the pattern.

This Welsh patchwork quilt has a radiating pattern that is arranged around the centre in a series of squares. At the centre is a pinwheel design made from contrasting blue-green and pale brown triangles. Similarly-coloured triangles spread out in a series of bands that alternate with dark brown and patterned strips of fabric. Triangles at the corners act as arrows that lead our eyes out to the edges of the design.



Welsh pin wheel frame quilt, 1880-89, wool and cotton



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

### RADIATING PATTERN

Mosaic of Dionysos from the floor of a Roman villa (c.2nd Century BC) has a radiating pattern. Small squares of tiles form coloured triangles. These triangles create petal shapes. The sides of the triangles also make circles that spread out from the centre. These help emphasise the portrait of the god Dionysus in the middle of the pattern.



Mosaic of Dionysos, from the tessellated floor of a Roman villa, 2nd century BC



Islamic tiling detail inside Jameh Mosque

Islamic art is often based on geometric shapes and patterns that suggest flowers and plants. This tile pattern from inside the Jāmeḥ Mosque of Yazd, Iran (12th – 14th Century) has star or petal shapes that spread out from a central circle.

These radiate out to an arabesque design of twisting and overlapping lines that create a complicated pattern of leaf and flower shapes.



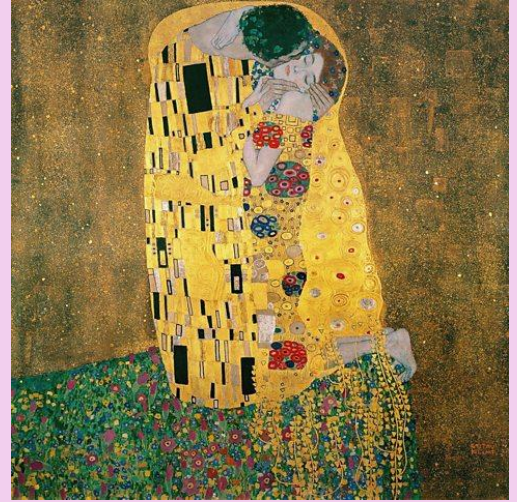
Islamic tiling, Morocco

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

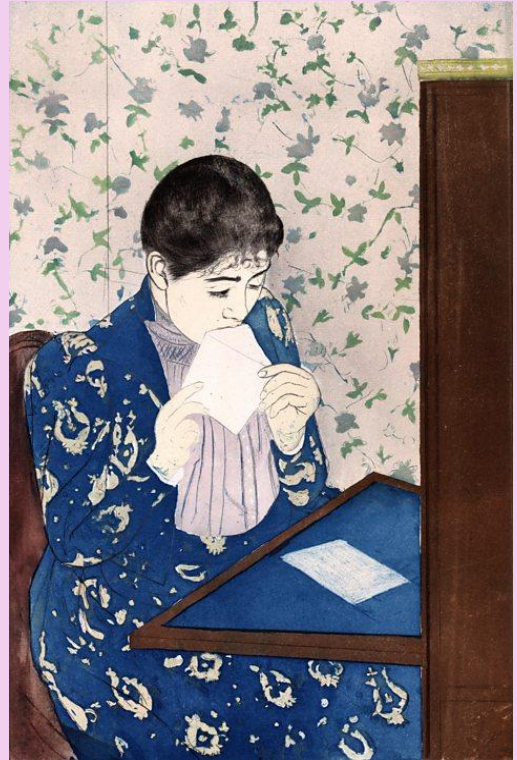
## PATTERN

### PATTERN IN EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Pattern is a key part of organising and decorating design. In expressive art, pattern can be used to add variety to a composition, to reflect patterns used in the real world, or to help create a sense of rhythm, movement or unity. Gustav Klimt often used patterns in his paintings and murals. The Kiss (1907-8) is composed of flat areas of irregular patterns. A repeating rectangle motif is used for the man's body, while circles are used for the woman and flower and leaf shapes are used to create a field they are kneeling on. The patterns are all irregular but they are tied together by shared colours and details that flow into each other. In The Letter (1890-91) Mary Cassatt fills most of the frame with large patches of detailed pattern. These reflect the style of women's clothing and interiors from that time. The clashing patterns dominate the print but they also contrast with the plain areas, drawing attention to the woman's features, the envelope and the letter on the desk.



The Kiss, Gustav Klimt, 1907-08, oil on canvas



The Letter, Mary Cassatt, 1890-1891, drypoint and etching



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

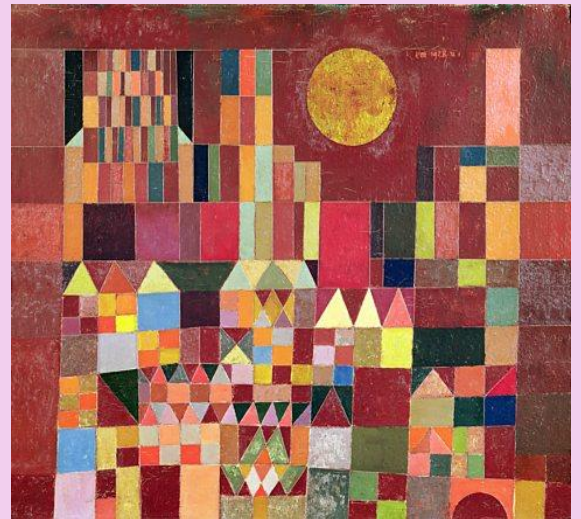
### PATTERN IN EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Van Gogh's *Starry Night* uses thick textured paint and brushstrokes applied in a way that creates patterns. The flowing patterns in the sky and around the stars create movement and energy, allowing the viewer to almost see the twinkling of the stars.



The *Starry Night*, Vincent Van Gogh, 1889, oil on canvas

The use of pattern in a painting can be very simple. *Castle and Sun* (Paul Klee, 1928) uses repeated squares, rectangles and triangles that add together to create an impression of architecture. The motifs create different patches of regular pattern but the overall composition is irregular.



*Castle and Sun*, 1928 (no 201), Paul Klee, 1928, oil on canvas

## GRADATION

Patterns do not always remain the same. Sometimes a motif is put through a number of small gradual changes so that its shape, colour or size becomes increasingly different. This is called gradation.

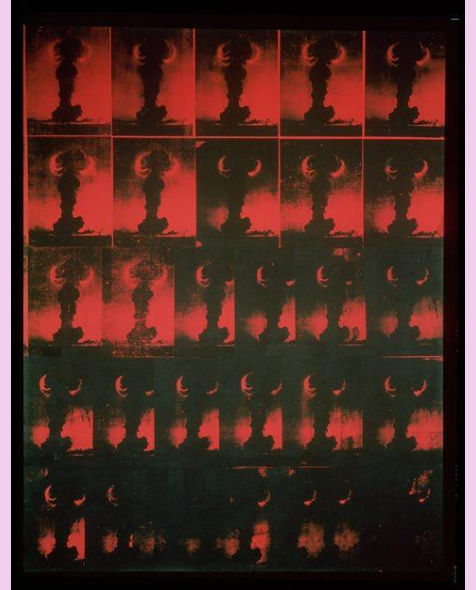
# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## PATTERN

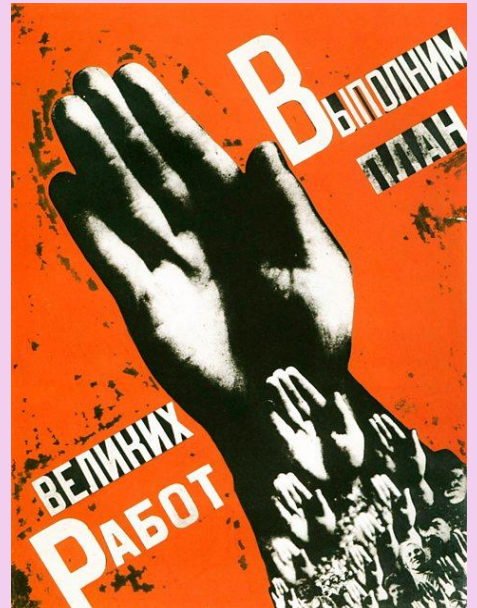
### GRADATION

Atomic Bomb: Red Explosion (Andy Warhol, 1965) features a repeating motif of the mushroom cloud from a nuclear explosion. The regular repetition shows a large number of identical bombs all exploding together. Although the shape and size of the motif remains the same, Warhol uses gradation of colour to change the pattern. Red dominates at the top of the print but the images become increasingly black towards the bottom. Eventually there is very little detail left to see. The whole image suggests Warhol is commenting on the mass destruction of nuclear war which will leave nothing behind.

Let Us Fulfill the Plan of the Great Projects (Gustav Klutsis, 1930) is a Russian poster design based on a motif of a raised hand. This is a gradating pattern because the motif grows from small hands in the bottom right corner to one hand that dominates the poster. Repeating the motif and making it become larger suggests how the power of individuals all voting together can combine and grow into united strength.



Atomic Bomb: Red Explosion, Andy Warhol, 1965, silkscreen



Let Us Fulfill the Plan of the Great Projects, Gustav Klutsis, 1930, print

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## TEXTURE

In all art and design, the appearance of texture is an important visual element. In design, texture can also play a part in a product's function.

### FUNCTIONAL TEXTURE

The textiles used in this Coco Chanel cape have been chosen because of their texture. The body of the cape is made from chiffon. This is a light fabric with a smooth, almost slippery texture that allows it to slide and move freely without catching on other materials. In contrast, the collar is made from feathers. Their softness looks and feels luxurious and comforting.

### ACTUAL TEXTURE

Actual texture, or physical texture, means the ~~it describes the tactile feeling an artwork gives~~ ~~to describe the tactile feeling an artwork gives~~ texture you would get if you were able to run your hand over an artwork. This feeling can vary depending on the materials the artist used to create the piece of work. It could be smooth, bumpy, coarse, rough or many other textures. Actual texture is the result of the materials used and the artist or designer's technique.



Black chiffon cape, Coco Chanel, c.1920s



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## TEXTURE

### ACTUAL TEXTURE

The roof terrace of Casa Milà (Antonio Gaudi 1906-12) feature sculptural chimneys in a variety of textures. Organic forms made of limestone create smooth, flowing shapes. In contrast, broken glass, tiles and marble are used to create a rough texture. These create the appearance of armoured helmets. The figure of Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen (Edgar Degas, 1880 – 1881) was originally cast with coloured beeswax but has been reproduced here in bronze. The face is smooth, suggesting the young dancer's skin. Rougher texture on the legs could suggest wrinkles in the fabric of tights. The dancer's clothing is made from real textiles. Silk ribbon, a cotton and silk tutu and a cotton bodice are all actual textures that add to the realism of the sculpture.



Casa Milà ('La Pedrera') rooftop, Antoni Gaudí, 1906-1912



Little Dancer Aged Fourteen, Edgar Degas, 1879-81 (cast 1921), bronze, gauze and satin ribbon

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## TEXTURE

### TEXTURE AND TECHNIQUE

Rather than accurately copying the appearance of their subject, many artists use texture to show their technique and to express emotion.

Vincent Van Gogh created many heavily textured artworks. In *Noon (The Siesta, After Millet)* (1890) he used thick application of oil paint in an expressive manner. This creates an artwork that has a rough texture as well as a raised surface. Applying thick areas of paint on a canvas like this is known as *impasto*. This layered, thick paint creates a visual effect that allows you to see the individual brushstrokes the artist has used. The thick brushstrokes follow the shapes and forms of the objects and people - creating a sense of movement in the painting. Van Gogh also used the *impasto* style to reflect feeling and emotion, especially within his self-portraits. Claude Monet used the *impasto* technique to describe the texture and light of his subjects. In his series of paintings of Rouen Cathedral he changed his technique to show different light conditions. In the painting on the left (1893) paint is applied in expressive but light brushstrokes suggesting hazy shapes in the dim light of early morning or evening. In the painting on the right (1892) thick dabs of paint build up more definite texture. This gives a more detailed idea of the forms of the building as seen in full daylight.



*Noon, or The Siesta, After Millet*, Vincent Van Gogh, 1890, oil on canvas

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## TEXTURE

### ACTUAL TEXTURE

The roof terrace of Casa Milà (Antonio Gaudi 1906-12) feature sculptural chimneys in a variety of textures. Organic forms made of limestone create smooth, flowing shapes. In contrast, broken glass, tiles and marble are used to create a rough texture. These create the appearance of armoured helmets. The figure of Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen (Edgar Degas, 1880 – 1881) was originally cast with coloured beeswax but has been reproduced here in bronze. The face is smooth, suggesting the young dancer's skin. Rougher texture on the legs could suggest wrinkles in the fabric of tights. The dancer's clothing is made from real textiles. Silk ribbon, a cotton and silk tutu and a cotton bodice are all actual textures that add to the realism of the sculpture.



Casa Milà ('La Pedrera') rooftop, Antoni Gaudí, 1906-1912



Little Dancer Aged Fourteen, Edgar Degas, 1879-81 (cast 1921), bronze, gauze and satin ribbon

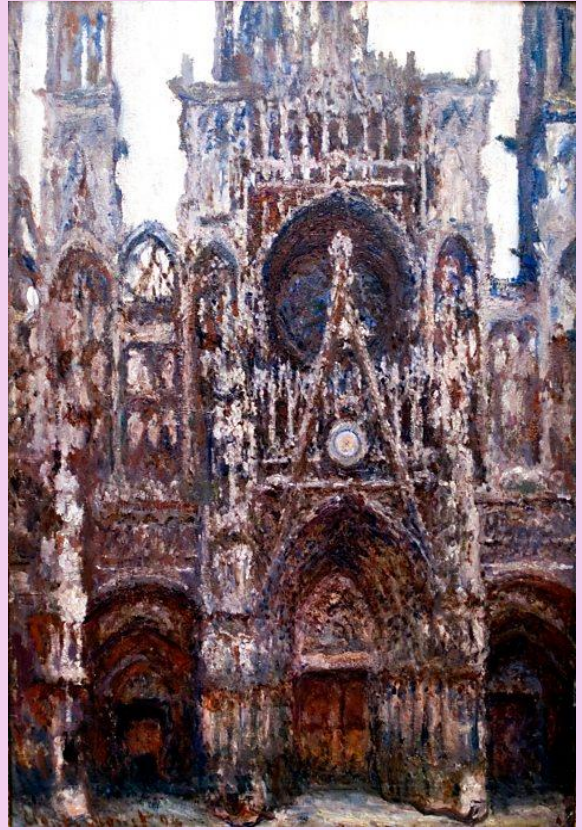


# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## TEXTURE



Rouen Cathedral, Claude Monet, 1893, oil on canvas



Rouen Cathedral, Claude Monet, 1892, oil on canvas

## VISUAL TEXTURE

Visual texture refers to the artist using their skill to create the illusion of an object's texture. A still life may have a bottle, an orange and a flower. An artist will use their materials and media in a way which will try and make the bottle look smooth, the orange look bumpy and the flower soft, thin and delicate.

The Old Violin (William Michael Harnett, 1886) is a trompe l'oeil. Visual texture has been used to recreate the texture and form of the subject as realistically as possible.



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## TEXTURE

### VISUAL TEXTURE

The smooth shine of the violin, the way the sheet music hangs forward, the chipped and worn paint, rough rusty metal and the creased envelope are all painted in great detail and with great accuracy. The image looks as if it would feel just like the real objects and surfaces it shows.

Another area where realistic visual texture is often used is portrait painting. An artist may try to recreate the smooth skin of a younger model or the lines and wrinkles of an older subject.

In Rembrandt's Portrait of a Sitting Man (1631), you can clearly see the realistic detail not only in the lines and wrinkles around the eyes but in the texture of the hair. There is even a highlight added to the eye to communicate its shiny, wet texture. The style Rembrandt has adopted shows that he is trying to recreate realistic skin, hair and even clothing textures.



The Old Violin, William Michael Hamett, 1886, oil on canvas



Portrait of a Sitting Man, Rembrandt, 1631, oil on panel

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## FORM

Form refers to three-dimensional objects. While shapes have two dimensions (height and width), forms have three dimensions (height, width and depth)

Forms that are three-dimensional, such as sculptures or buildings are called real forms.

Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen (Edgar Degas, 1880 – 1881) is a real form. The sculpture takes up space and has height, width and depth.

Two-dimensional work can suggest three dimensional objects by including **implied forms**.

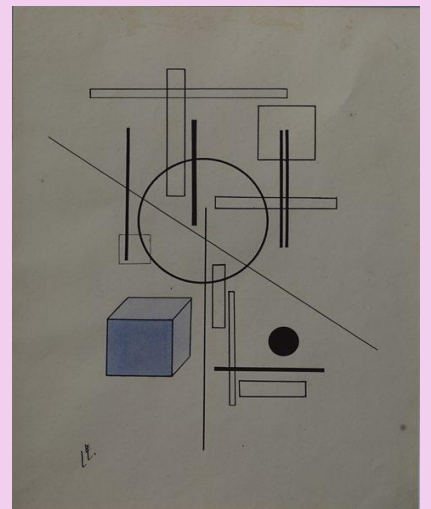
This means that lines or shapes are shown in a way that suggests they have depth. This can be done using perspective, or through tone or colour effects.

The blue cube in *Composition* (El Lissitzky, 1920) is an implied form. It appears to have a front (with width and height) and sides (adding depth).

The two different blues used suggest light hitting the cube in different ways on different sides. This adds to the 3D effect.



Little Dancer, Edgar Degas, 1879-81 (cast 1921), bronze, gauze and satin ribbon



Composition, El Lissitzky, 1920

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## FORM

### GEOMETRIC FORMS

Whether they are real or implied, all forms are either geometric or organic.

Geometric forms are pure, mathematical objects including cubes, pyramids and spheres.

Forms appear man made and can suggest something solid, balanced and permanent. The Temple of Kukulcan in Chechen Itza, Mexico (constructed 9th – 12th Century) is an example of a real geometric form. It is a pyramid that has been constructed by people. It is not a natural form.

This *Constructivist* teapot (Kasimir Malevich, 1923) is a real geometric form. The main body is made from an interlocked cylinder and cuboid with a spout

created from a sphere, cuboid and triangular prism. All these are mathematical rather than natural forms.

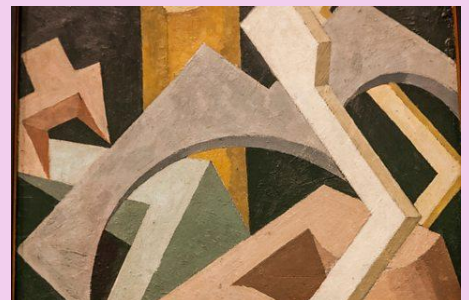
*Abstract Composition* (Jessica Dismorr, c.1915) shows a number of objects that could be parts of buildings or other structures. These are geometric forms. Although they are irregular, they are made up of straight faces, sharp angles and perfect curves. This is a two-dimensional work so these are implied forms rather than real forms.



Temple of Kukulcan, El Castillo,  
Chichen Itza



Constructivist teapot, Kazimir  
Malevich, 1923



Abstract Composition, Jessica  
Dismorr, c.1915, oil on wood <sup>81</sup>

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## FORM

### ORGANIC FORMS

Organic forms look natural. The most obvious example of organic forms are realistic representations of the natural world or living things.

Lemon and Pepper on a White Tablecloth (Odilon Redon, 1901) shows implied forms realistically. Both objects have been painted realistically and shape, texture, tone and colour are all used to show them as imperfect organic forms.

Although The Kelpies (Andy Scott, 2008-13) are massive in scale and made from steel, they appear like real horses.

The real forms created are flowing, irregular and organic. Forms don't have to be realistic to be organic. In Mother and Child (1934), Barbara Hepworth has sculpted two smooth and rounded figures. The mother form wraps round the smaller child. The two flowing organic forms are similar and complement each other.

Although made of stone, these real forms appear soft and the composition seems natural and relaxed.



Lemon and Pepper on a White Tablecloth, Odilon Redon, 1901, oil on canvas



The Kelpies, Andy Scott, 2008-13, stainless steel



Mother and Child, Barbara Hepworth, 1934, alabaster



# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## FORM

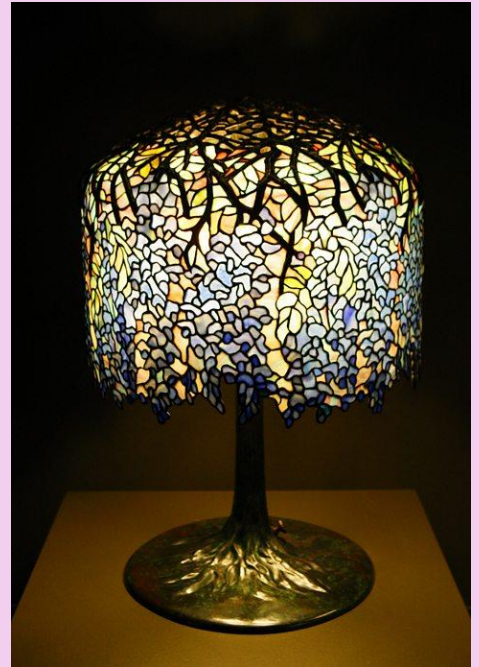
### COMBINING GEOMETRIC AND ORGANIC FORMS

Some designs may mix elements of organic and geometric forms.

The Wisteria Table Lamp (Clara Driscoll - Tiffany Studios, c.1905) has a cylindrical shade topped by a dome, so it is a geometric form. But the bottom of the shade has an irregular edge representing the leaves and flowers of a wisteria plant.

The stem of the lamp has been made to resemble a tree trunk. Rather than a regular cylinder, it widens into a series of roots that spread across the base. The basic forms are geometric but enough irregularity has been introduced to make the overall effect seem more organic.

The Chrysler Building (William Van Alen, 1930) in New York is an Art Deco skyscraper. The corners of the 61st floor feature eagle 'gargoyles' made from chrome-nickel. Rather than realistic birds, the eagle forms have been stylised to match the aesthetic of the rest of the building. Although the forms are rounded, they are not completely organic. The forms have definite tops, bottoms and sides, making them appear more geometric. The fact that they are made from sheets of metal gives them a man-made, industrial aesthetic that fits with the building's machine-age look.



Wisteria table lamp, Clara Driscoll - Tiffany & Co., c.1905



Art Deco eagle sculpture, Chrysler Building, Manhattan, New York, USA

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## FORM

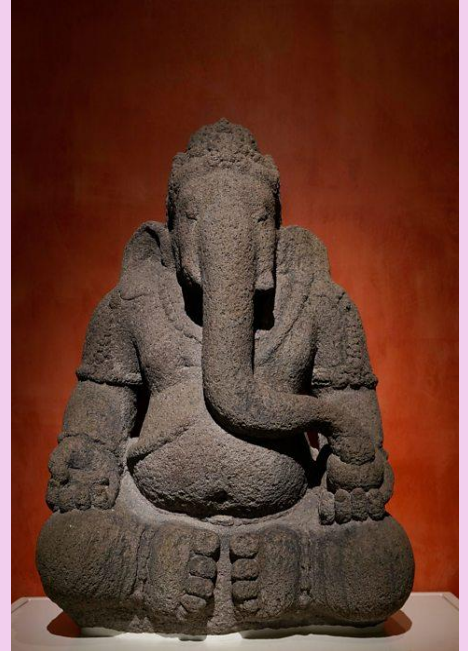
### PERCEIVED MASS

Forms have mass. The mass of a form is a result of its size and the material it is made from. The greater the mass the heavier a form is.

The appearance of an object can change how heavy it looks – its perceived mass. For example darker and more intense colours, or more detailed textures tend to appear heavier.

This statue of Ganesh, Remover of Obstacles (9th or 10th Century) appears to be heavy

because of its form and the material it is made from. The statue has a rough dome shape, widening out from the head to solid arms and a rounded belly and ending with legs which form a broad and thick horizontal band. There is no negative space and the figure appears as one heavy, closed mass. The fact that it is made from dark, rough andesite stone increases the idea that this carries great Mass. In The Flower Carrier (Diego Rivera, 1935) the title character is shown struggling under the weight of an enormous basket of flowers. This implied form appears heavy as a result of Rivera's technique. The size of the basket makes it dominate the picture. It has a more detailed and heavier texture than the rest of the painting.



God Ganesha, Remover of Obstacles, unknown artist, 9th - 10th century, andesite



The Flower Carrier, Diego Rivera, 1935, oil on canvas

# FORMAL ELEMENTS

## FORM

### PERCEIVED MASS

The shape of the basket and flowers bulge at the sides and bottom. The sling that ties the basket to the man's back appears stretched tight as if struggling to hold the basket. The man's posture and the spread of his hands suggest his struggle to hold the load.



The Flower Carrier, Diego Rivera, 1935, oil on canvas

Tall Tree and the Eye (Anish Kapoor, 2009) is a 13 metre tall sculpture made from 73 reflective spheres. Anish Kapoor's sculpture is made of geometric forms but these are arranged in what seems a random and organic arrangement. Despite its size, the sculpture appears very light because the spheres are arranged in a way that makes them appear to hang in space. If the spheres were heavy we would expect the sculpture to collapse. The perceived mass and volume of the forms is also decreased by their reflective surfaces. These appear to break up the solid forms.



Tall Tree and the Eye, Anish Kapoor, 2009, stainless steel

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## UNITY

Unity is created when there is a relationship between the different elements in a design or artwork. Unity adds order to a composition and helps us see it as one thing instead of a number of separate parts.

There are a number of techniques that can be used to create unity:

- **Simplicity**
- **Proximity**
- **Repetition**
- **Continuation**

Although most artists and designers try to create a sense of unity in their work, it is important that compositions are not so unified and similar that they seem boring. There should be some variety within a piece of work.

## SIMPLICITY

Limiting the range of colours, materials, textures, lines or other elements in a piece will make a composition look more unified. It will appear simpler and easier to read as one work.

This Coco Chanel cape from the 1920s is made of *chiffon* and is trimmed with feathers. The two materials have contrasting textures but are united because they are both black. The result is a simple and elegant design.



Black chiffon cape, Coco Chanel, c.1920s



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## UNITY

### SIMPLICITY

This group, called Three Figures, is from a larger group called The Family of Man by Barbara Hepworth (1970). Although the three forms are separate from each other Hepworth has created unity between them through simplicity. Each figure:

- is made from bronze
- has the same colour and texture
- is made from four forms stacked on top of each other
- is a similar height to the other figures
- shows a similar language of forms featuring holes and rounded edges and corners

This fashion photograph for Paco Rabane, (Richard Loftus, 1968) has a sense of unity due to the use of circles within the dress, glasses and the watches.



Three Figures from The Family of Man, Snape Maltings, Suffolk, Barbara Hepworth, c.1970, bronze, The Fitzwilliam Museum



Young and English, Richard Loftus, 1968, Paco Rabanne bolero, and Loftus watches and glasses

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## UNITY

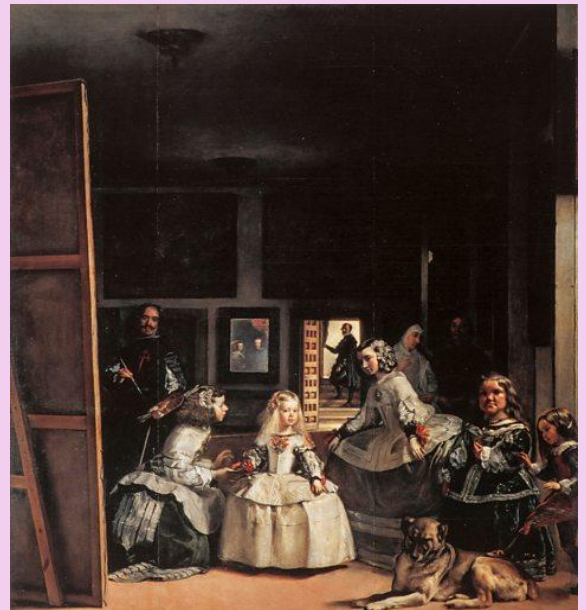
### PROXIMITY

Proximity means how near things are to each other. Unity can be created through proximity when parts of a composition are close together. The closer together they are, the more we tend to see them as a group.

Vanita Still Life by Pieter Claes (1625) features a number of objects that are different in their size, colour, shape and texture. But there is unity in the composition because the objects are in close proximity to each other. Their closeness links them together. They are also united because they symbolise themes of life, death and passing time.



Vanita Still Life, Pieter Claesz, 1625, oil on canvas



Las Meninas or The Family of Philip IV, Diego Velázquez, c.1656, oil on canvas

Las Meninas (Diego Velazquez, c.1656) creates unity through the proximity of figures in this group portrait. Most of figures shown are in the same room. But the figure on the stairs in the background, and the image of the king and queen reflected in the mirror read as part of the same unified composition because they are positioned in amongst the main group.

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## UNITY

### REPETITION

Repeating similar elements brings unity to a composition. Repetition is most clearly seen through the creation of patterns. In design, repetition is a key part of branding.

Andy Warhol often created prints made from multiple images repeated in a regular grid. Soup Cans (1962) recreates the effect of mass-produced commodities stacked together as if on a supermarket shelf. Repetition creates unity and also reflects ideas about modern society.

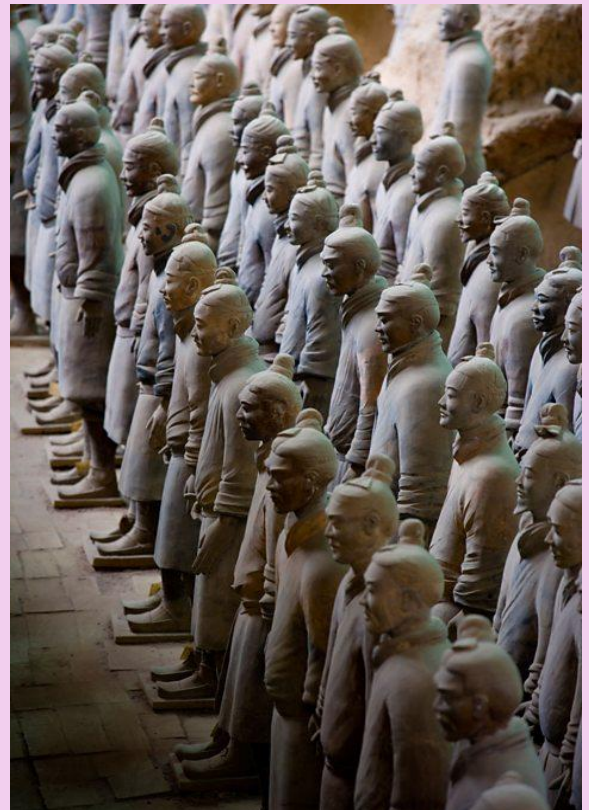
The lined-up terracotta warriors (246-210 BC) of Emperor Qin create a similar regular and orderly effect.

Here repetition of similarly sized and

dressed figures all facing the same direction creates a united army. The result is a clear display of prestige and power.



Soup Cans, Andy Warhol, 1962, Synthetic polymer paint on thirty-two canvases



Terracotta Army, China, 246-210 BC, clay



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## UNITY

### REPETITION

Repetition is a key part of creating a sense of unity between different products that form a particular range. The Latona Red Roses tea set designed by Clarice Cliff (c.1930) is united through repetition of a floral pattern and the angular handles and spout. For the Team GB kit for the 2012 Olympics, Stella McCartney needed to design clothing that would function effectively for individual performers in a variety of sports. But the range of outfits had to clearly show everyone was part of the same team. The outfits are united through repetition of colours (dominated by blues, with some white and red) and repeated use of a pattern based on the Union Flag. Company at the Table (Katherina Fritsch, 1988) has great unity within the artwork due to the repeated human forms all wearing the same clothing. The pattern repeating as it stretches down the length of the table also creates a sense of unity.



Latona Red Roses, Clarice Cliff, c.1930, ceramic



Team GB, Stella McCartney, Adidas



Company at the Table (Tischgesellschaft), Katherina Fritsch, 1988, polyester, wood, cotton and paint



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## UNITY

### CONTINUATION

Unity can be achieved by using continuing lines, edges and shapes to link together different areas and elements in a composition.

In this Arts and Crafts vase designed by Archibald Knox around 1902, continuation unites different parts of the vase.

The body of the vase widens out from the opening on top and this line is continued through the curving form of the supporting legs.

Continuity unites different parts of Hôtel National des Invalides in Paris (1671-76). Columns form vertical lines that lead up from the ground to pillars around the base of the dome. These are continued as gold lines in the decoration of the dome that then lead up to the thin columns, spire and cross at the top of the building.



Pewter vase, Liberty & Co. Arts and Crafts, Archibald Knox, c.1902



Hôtel National des Invalides, Paris, c.1671-76

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

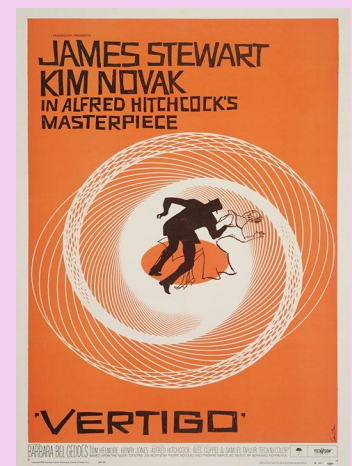
## VARIETY

Variety refers to how artists and designers add complexity and visual interest to their work. All artists and designers need to consider how they balance unity and variety in their work. Unity is needed so that a composition will appear as one unified work rather than just separate elements. Variety is needed to create interest and to prevent a work from being dull or monotonous. These three methods all add variety to a composition:

- **Contrast** – using shapes, forms, colour, texture or other elements that are very different from each other can create dynamic and eye-catching works.
- **Difference and change** – repeating similar elements but varying one aspect, such as size, colour or position, can create a unified composition but keep it interesting.
- **Elaboration** – adding detail and complexity can add interest and give the viewer more to look at and think about.

## CONTRAST

This film poster by Saul Bass has used contrast to create visual impact. There is high contrast between the red-orange background colour, the white of the spiral shape and the black of the figure falling through space. The large, black lettering of the *Vertigo* title contrasts with the much smaller, white, simple typeface used for the rest of the film credits. Both the black and white lettering stand out from the bold, eye-catching red background.



Vertigo film poster,  
Saul Bass

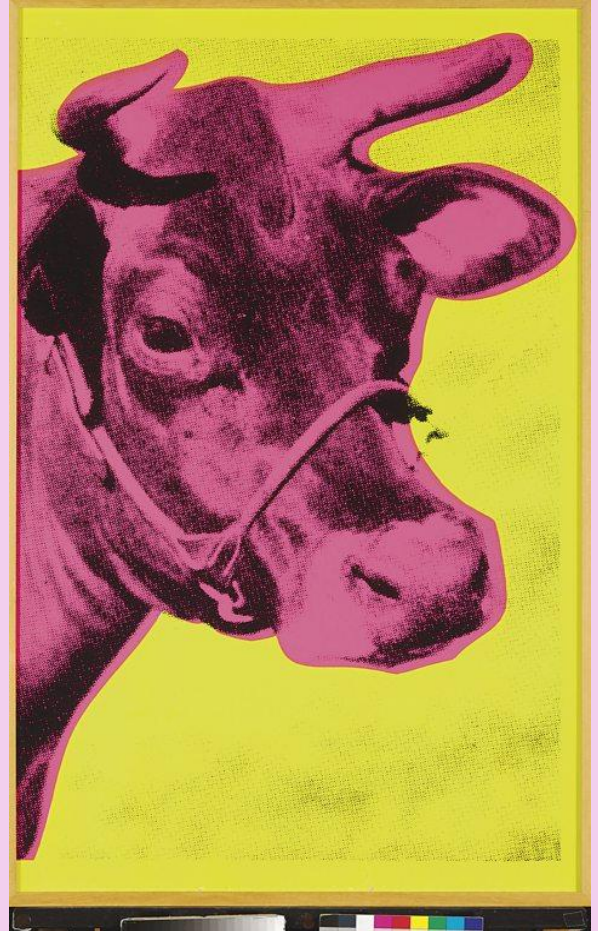
# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## VARIETY

### CONTRAST

Andy Warhol's Cow (F. & S. II.11) (1966) is a composition that is unified as it only has one subject – the cow. It shows variety in the high contrast between the pink and yellow colours used, and in the contrast between the realistic photograph of the cow and the unnaturally bright colours.

Andy Goldsworthy's Midsummer Snowballs (2000) was a group of thirteen snowballs created in Scotland and placed in public places in London. There is variety in the contrast of the snow they are made from and other materials that are revealed as the snow melts. In this picture the white snow contrasts with black feathers through colour, texture and form.



Andy Warhol, Cow (F. & S. II.11), 1966, screenprint



Crow feathers. Midsummer snowballs, June 2000, Andy Goldsworthy



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## VARIETY

### DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE

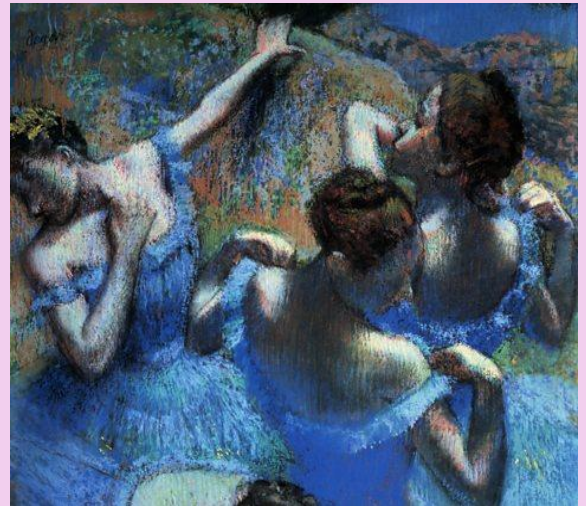
Although *Sketch for Several Circles* (Wassily Kandinsky, 1926) is entirely based on circles, variety is introduced through changes in the size, colour and placement of the different circles.

There is no obvious order or pattern in the colours that Kandinsky used or how these colours have been positioned on the canvas. The circles are different sizes and are placed randomly on the canvas, with many of them overlapping or touching one another.

*Blue Dancers* (Edgar Degas, 1899) shows three ballet dancers who are united by their identical costumes and hairstyles. The composition is varied because each figure's posture and position is different from the others.



*Sketch for Several Circles*, Wassily Kandinsky, 1939



*Blue Dancers*, Edgar Degas, c1899, pastel on paper



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## VARIETY

### ELABORATION

The Book of Kells (c.800AD) contains the four gospels from the New Testament of the Bible. On many of the pages letters and words are presented in intricate patterns rather than as plain text. This page from the Gospel of St Matthew contains the text XPI autem generatio. The first three letters have been elaborately decorated with swirling shapes, spirals, organic forms, animals and even a human head. The book was created as a treasure to be admired as well as read. The elaborate detail shows the time and skill that went into creating the book. Variety through elaboration adds interest so that the image holds the viewer's



Christi Auteum Generatio from The Book of Kells, c.6-8th century



The Secession Building, Vienna, Austria, Joseph Olbrich, 1897

attention. The Secession Building, (Joseph Olbrich, 1897) in Vienna is made up of a series of white, cubic forms. The stone has a smooth finish and the structure could easily have seemed uniform and uninteresting. Variety is created through contrast between the pure white building and the gold decoration. Variety through elaboration is added by the hollow dome of golden leaves. This adds rich texture and draws the eye.

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## BALANCE

Balance in art refers to how different elements are arranged in a composition. Every element has a visual weight. How 'heavy' it looks depends on the following:

- **Position** – the further from the centre of a composition the heavier
- **Shape** – complex shapes feel heavier than simple shapes
- **Colour** – bright, intense colours feel heavier than pale, muted colours
- **Size** – larger elements feel heavier than small elements
- **Quantity** – increasing the number of elements gives a greater combined visual weight
- **Texture** – complex, detailed textures tend to be heavier.

We tend to find balanced compositions more visually pleasing and comforting. Unbalanced compositions can make us feel uneasy. Artists and designers often consider the placement of elements within a design or artwork to ensure it is well-balanced and aesthetically pleasing. One of the simplest ways to do this is by using symmetry.

## SYMMETRY

Bilateral symmetry is where an image, object or design is mirrored equally through a vertical line. Ancient buildings such as the Parthenon in Athens are early examples of the use of bilateral symmetry.



Parthenon in the Acropolis, Athens, Greece, 447-438 BC

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## BALANCE

### SYMMETRY

The visual weight is perfectly balanced. The actual weight of the structure is also balanced and the building is physically very stable. Buildings with bilateral symmetry can seem very solid and permanent. They can also appear grand and formal.

The Capitol Building in Washington was designed using elements of classical architecture such as columns and a dome.

Its perfect symmetry gives it a sense of grandness and formality. This creates a strong signal about the power and status of government.

The downside to symmetry is that it can be seen to lack variety. It can seem boring unless the design is made to be more visually interesting. This can be achieved by the inclusion of more complicated features and details. The examples above do this through the use of windows, columns and different patterns.



Parthenon in the Acropolis, Athens, Greece, 447-438 BC



Capitol Building, Washington DC, USA

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## BALANCE

### SYMMETRY

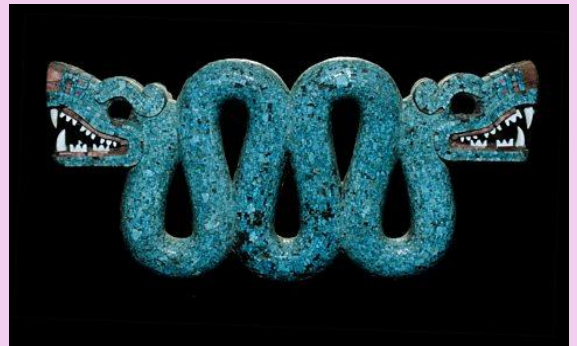
Symmetry is often used in wallpaper and fabric patterns where it can help create a regular repeating pattern.

Swan, Rush and Iris (Walter Crane, 1875) is a wallpaper design in which the image of the two swans and the plants behind them has been vertically mirrored. This creates perfect balance.



Swan, Rush and Iris, 1875, Walter Crane

The level of detail contained within the design keeps the viewer's interest. This Aztec percoral ornament (c.1400 – 1521) would have been worn during ceremonies or important occasions. The double-headed snake is perfectly symmetrical. This fits well with the central position it would have hung in on the wearer's chest. Variety is added through the textured mosaic used to represent the snake's scaly body.



Pectoral ornament in the form of a double-headed serpent, unknown artist



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## BALANCE

### SYMMETRY

This piano is based on a Charles Rennie Mackintosh design for his House for an Art Lover (1901). The design is perfectly symmetrical and helps create a line of symmetry around its central position at one end of a music room. Visual interest is added through the detail of the curving, floral shapes that stretch up above the piano keyboard itself.

Horizontal symmetry can also create a sense of visual balance. In this photograph, the composition of mountains and trees is perfectly reflected in the surface of the lake. The horizontal mirroring creates a strong sense of balance, calm and tranquillity.



Piano room, House for an Art Lover, Charles Rennie MacKintosh, design 1901, built 1989-96



Pyramid Island in the Pyramid Lake, Jasper National Park, Alberta, Canada

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## BALANCE

### ASYMMETRY

Compositions do not need to be completely symmetrical to appear balanced. Asymmetrical balance can be created through careful arrangement of visual weight within a work of art or design. Asymmetry gives the artist or designer a greater range of freedom and can be used to create more interesting and varied work. While the body of this vase (Deruta, Italy, 1935)

is symmetrical, the different positions of the handles makes the design asymmetrical. The handle on the left is higher up and further from the centre of the vase. This gives it more visual weight than the handle on the right.

This is balanced by the red forms that sit just to the left of the centre line. The final composition is more interesting than a symmetrical arrangement of these elements, but the vase still appears stable. Asymmetrical balance has been used in this woodcut, The Sea at Satta in Suruga Province. Visual weight on the left of frame comes from the cliff, the detailed texture of the branches and leaves and from the larger but simpler shape of Mount Fuji in the distance. This is balanced by the breaking wave and rocks on the right. The use of similar shapes, sizes and levels of detail keeps the visual weights balanced.



Deruta vase with asymmetric handles, 1935, Italy, 20th century



The Sea at Satta in Suruga Province, from Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, Utagawa Hiroshige, 1858, woodblock print

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## BALANCE

### ASSYMMETRY

Avenue of Schloss Kammer Park (Gustav Klimt, 1912) shows asymmetry in the placement of the building at the end of the avenue of trees. The large area of highly detailed and textured dark greens and blues of the trees is balanced by the smaller, less detailed but brighter yellow front of the building. The angled avenue of trees draws our eye, providing the viewer with a more engaging and visually dynamic route towards the focal point in the distance.



Avenue in Schloss Kammer Park, Gustav Klimt, 1912, oil on canvas



Guernica, Pablo Picasso, 1937, oil on canvas

Guernica (Pablo Picasso, 1937) shows a

Basque town being bombed during the Spanish Civil War. At first the composition appears disordered and chaotic but Picasso's painting is carefully balanced: the central mass of figures is organised into a symmetrical triangle, the dark background behind the horse is balanced by the light background created by the open door, the woman and bull to the left of frame are balanced by the woman with raised arms on the right, and the arm in the bottom left corner is balanced by the leg in the bottom right.



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## BALANCE

### RADIAL SYMMETRY

Not all symmetry in art and design is based on balancing the left and right of a composition. Radial balance relates to elements that spread out from a central point. When the visual weight of these elements is evenly spread, the result is radial symmetry.

This mosaic from the Jameh Mosque of Isfahān in Iran is arranged around a central point. Star and flower shapes radiate out



Islamic tiling detail inside Jameh Mosque



The Sun, Edvard Munch, 1911-16, oil on canvas

from here. The design is very symmetrical but the level of detail and sense of shapes flowing into each other keeps the composition interesting.

*The Sun* (Edvard Munch, 1911-16) features asymmetrical balance in the shapes used to show the rocks and shoreline. But the painting is dominated by radial symmetry created by the lines of sunlight that spread out from the bright centre and fill the entire frame.

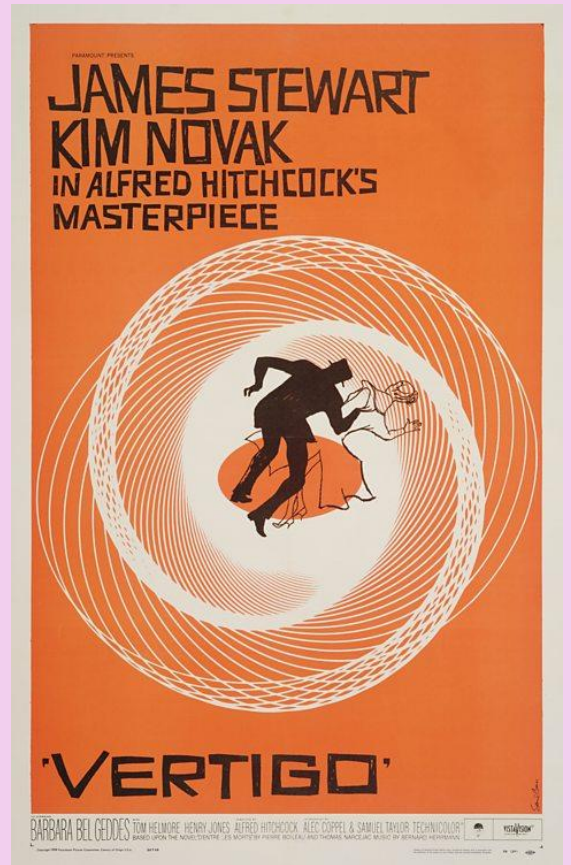


# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## BALANCE

### IMBALANCE

Sometimes artists and designers will deliberately create a sense of imbalance in their work. This can be used to create a sense of unease or even danger. Saul Bass's poster for the 1958 film *Vertigo* mixes balance and imbalance. The overall composition is **asymmetrical**. The main spiral shape is centrally positioned, and its visual weight is evenly spread. The two figures are offset to the right of centre but they are balanced by the text on the left of frame. **Radial** balance is created by the



*Vertigo* film poster, Saul Bass

central spiral. It radiates from the centre of the composition and its visual weight is evenly spread. **Imbalance** is created by the position and pose of the figures. The eye is drawn upwards from the centre of the spiral along the male figure's legs, up and to the right by the angle of his torso and then further to the right along the female figure to her head and hand. The shape of the spiral behind them also draws the eye in this direction. This central, imbalanced image creates a sense of tension and unease that reflects the mood and themes of the film.

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## EMPHASIS

Emphasis is how an artist or designer creates a focal point in their work. This can be done by allowing one element to stand out from the others, or by toning down surrounding elements in order to draw attention to one particular point.

There are five main methods of creating emphasis:

- **Contrast** - part of a composition that stands out from its surroundings will draw our attention
- **Placement** - the closer an element is to the centre of a composition, the more our eyes are led to it
- **Isolation** - something that sits separately from a group of other elements will stand out
- **Convergence** - lines or other elements can draw closer together to create a focal point
- **The unusual** - something that seems unusual or strange will grab our attention

## CONTRAST

Emphasis through contrast is when artist and designers draw attention to part of a composition by making it different from its surroundings. One way to do this is by using a colour placed against a complementary background colour:

- Warm colours jump out against cooler colours
- Intense colours stand out against muted or more neutral tints, shades and tones

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## EMPHASIS

### CONTRAST

Girl with a Balloon by Banksy (2002) shows how colour can create emphasis. The focal point is the red balloon because it is a warm, intense colour. It stands out against the plain, grey background. The girl is the only figure in the painting and as such our attention should be on her. However, she is painted with black paint that ties in with the grey background. She becomes a secondary focus to the bright red balloon.

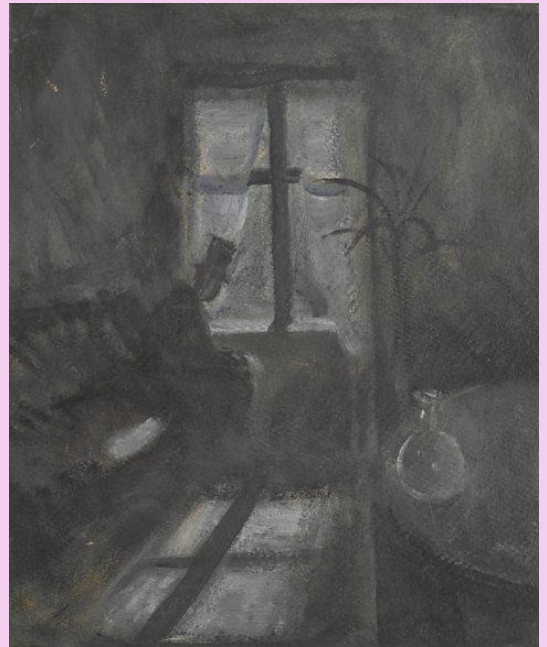
Contrasting tones of light and dark can also create emphasis.

Moonlight (Night in Saint-Cloud) by Edvard Munch (1892) uses light and dark to create emphasis. The contrast between the shadows and highlights are extreme,

creating silhouettes. The eye is drawn to the window and the light it casts on the floor. The emphasis is on the figure at the window, whose silhouette interrupts the highlighted area in one of the windowpanes. This technique creates intrigue and interest in a sketch with few other discernible details.



Girl with a Balloon, Banksy, London, 2008, Pest Control Office



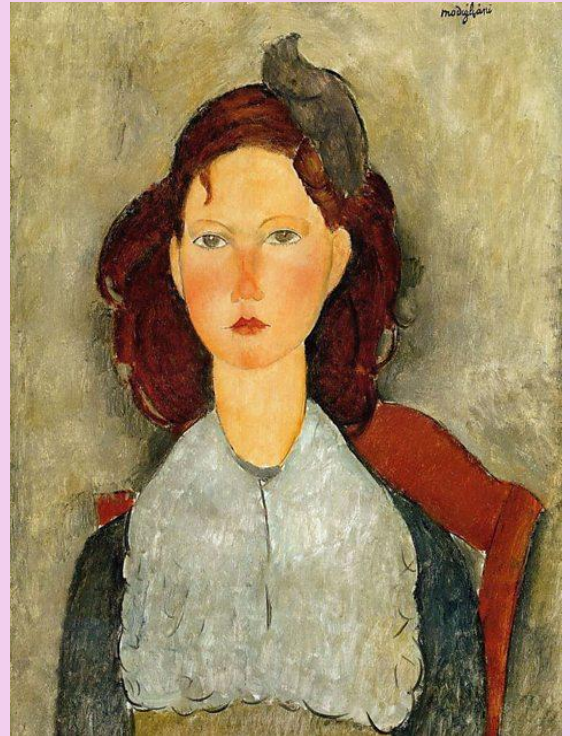
Night in Saint-Cloud, Edvard Munch, 1892

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## EMPHASIS

### PLACEMENT

Placing something in a central position will help emphasise it because our eyes tend to be drawn to the middle of a composition. Seated Girl (Amadeo Modigliani, 1918) is a very simple example showing how placement can help draw our attention to a subject. The girl is centrally positioned in the frame. The fact that there is very little other detail in the painting helps ensure she stands out against her plain surroundings.



Seated Girl, Amadeo Modigliani, 1918, oil on canvas

Emphasis can play an important functional role in architectural design. In Peter Behren's Haus Cuno (1907-10) the central position of the main entrance draws our attention to it and makes it easy to find. The strong vertical lines of the curving window frames above also help lead our eyes down to the doorway.



Cuno House, Peter Behren, 1907-11



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

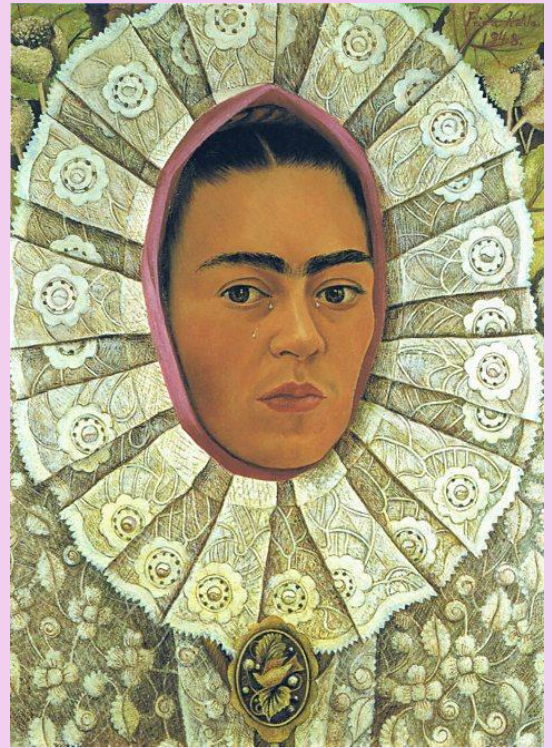
## EMPHASIS

### CONVERGENCE

When lines or other elements draw closer together, they can be used to lead our eyes to a focal point.

Frida Kahlo's Self-Portrait with Medallion (1948) shows the artist wearing a traditional Mexican Tehuana headdress. The collar flattens the space so that the artist seems to emerge through the frame. Emphasis is created by the folds in the material. These form a circle of converging lines that lead our eyes to Kahlo's features. There are no physical lines that converge in The Adoration of the Shepherds (Guido Reni, 1640) but the direction in which the figures are looking suggests converging eye-lines that lead to the baby in the

manger. Contrasting tone adds more emphasis. The baby is brightly lit while the surrounding figures grow darker as they move away from this highlighted point. The background is very dark and fades away as a result.



Self-portrait in Medallion, Frida Kahlo, 1948, oil on masonite



The Adoration of the Shepherds, Guido Reni, 1640, oil on canvas

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## EMPHASIS

### ISOLATION

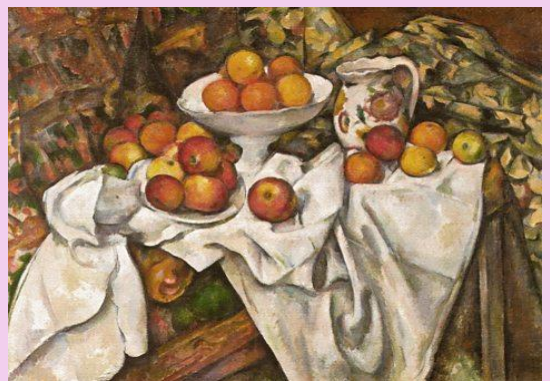
While elements that are grouped together may carry more visual weight, isolating or separating a key object or shape from the rest of a composition will make it stand out.



At the Moulin Rouge, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, 1892-95, oil on canvas

In *At the Moulin Rouge* (1892-95), Henri De Toulouse-Lautrec uses isolation to guide our attention. The group of people at the table are placed near the centre of the painting but our eyes are drawn to the woman who sits alone at the right edge of the frame. The way she stares directly out of the painting as if looking at the viewer increases the emphasis on her. More emphasis is created by the unusual green and blue tones of her skin.

When we look at *Apples and Oranges* (Paul Cezanne, 1895–1900) the placement of the apple in the centre of the painting draws our eyes to it. While the other fruit is all arranged in groups, this single apple is isolated from its surroundings by the white of the tablecloth.



Apples and Oranges, Paul Cezanne, 1895-1900, oil on canvas

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## EMPHASIS

### THE UNUSUAL

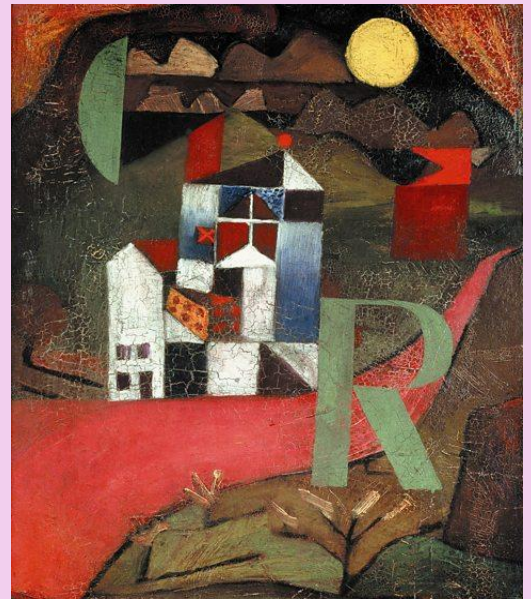
When an element is unusual, unlike the other elements used or doesn't seem to 'fit' with its surroundings, we tend to look at it for longer as we try and work out why it is there.

At first *The Ambassadors* (Hans Holbein the Younger, 1533) looks like a conventional double portrait with a number of objects arranged between the figures.

At the bottom of the painting is an anamorphically stretched image of a skull. The unusual technique used to show the skull and the way it seems unconnected to the scene around it emphasises the importance of this image of death and mortality.



*The Ambassadors*, Hans Holbein the Younger, 1533, oil on panel



*Villa R*, Paul Klee, 1919, oil on panel

In Paul Klee's *Villa R*, our eye is drawn to the familiar shape of the capital letter R.

It stands out as an unusual feature against the mix of geometric and organic shapes used to portray the house and surrounding landscape.



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## RHYTHM

Rhythm in art and design refers to a relationship between elements that creates a sense of harmony. Rhythm can be seen in patterns, in relationships between colours and shapes, and in repetitions of lines and forms. Rhythms help to guide the viewer's eye around a piece rather than allowing the eye to settle on a particular focal point. There are three main types of rhythm:

- **Regular rhythm** – elements are repeated exactly in an evenly spaced arrangement
- **Flowing rhythm** – movement is suggested through repeating organic shapes or through irregular repetition of repeating elements
- **Progressive rhythm** – a sequence is created in which the elements are changed slightly every time they are repeated

### REGULAR RHYTHM

The most obvious regular rhythm is one in which elements are repeated exactly over and over again.

The structure of the *Mezquita* in Córdoba, Spain is a series of striped arches supported by columns. The spacing between columns and their size, shape, colour and pattern are always exactly the same. The resulting regular rhythm suggests a space that could stretch on infinitely.



Inside the Mezquita in Córdoba, Spain, built and extended 8th–10th century



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## RHYTHM

### REGULAR RHYTHM

Regular rhythm can involve changing elements when the change is the same each time.

Three Flags (Jasper Johns, 1958) is an example of a regular rhythm. Johns reproduced the American flag three times. The flags are identical except their size changes each time. The relationship between the colours and shapes of each of the flags is easy to see. The viewer's eye moves smoothly from the larger flag at the back into the smaller one in the centre and back out again. It is pleasing to the eye and does not force the viewer into focussing on one particular point in the painting.



Three Flags, Jasper Johns, 1958,  
encaustic on canvas

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## RHYTHM

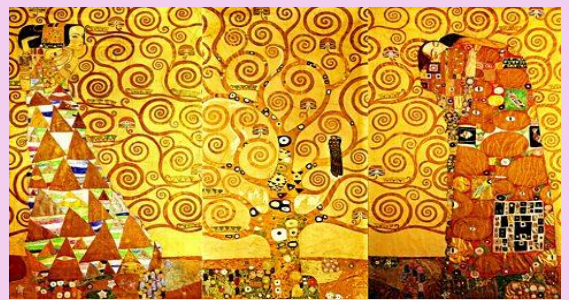
### FLOWING RHYTHM

Flowing rhythms are created when organic shapes and forms are repeated, or where repetition is irregular. This results in a sense of movement or flow.

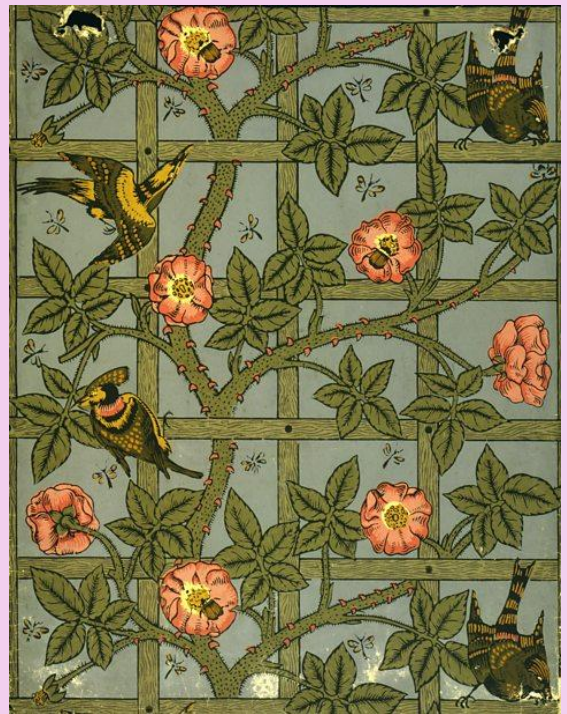
The Tree of Life (Gustav Klimt, 1905-09) is an example of a flowing rhythm using line and shape. Klimt repeated a spiralling line to create the flowing shape of the tree. It leads the viewer's eye from the middle of the painting out to the sides of the artwork, where we see human figures. The spirals themselves are flowing organic shapes. They vary in size and orientation, and they are arranged in an irregular flowing rhythm that seems natural and suggests movement.

William Morris' *Trellis* wallpaper design (1864) shows a regular rhythm in the grid of squares created by the trellis. There is also flowing rhythm in the natural, curving

shapes of the stem and branches of the climbing plant. These lead the eye around the irregular repetition of bird, flower and leaf shapes.



The Stoclet Frieze, The Tree of Life, Gustav Klimt, 1905-09, tempera on cardboard



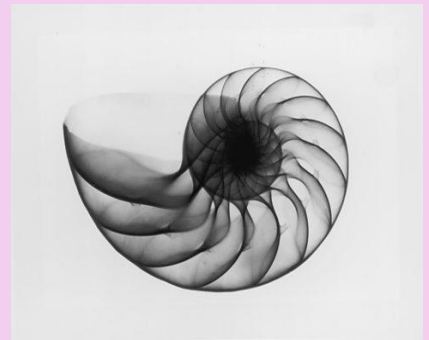
# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## RHYTHM

### Progressive rhythm

Progressive rhythm features elements that are changed every time they repeat

*X-ray of Nautilus Shell* (Edward Charles Le Grice, c.1910) shows how progressive rhythm can be found in nature. The shell is made up of a series of identically-shaped sections that grow larger as they spiral out from the centre. The regular way these shapes change creates a progressive rhythm.



*X-ray of Nautilus Shell*, Edward Charles Le Grice, c.1910

*Nude Descending a Staircase* (Marcel Duchamp, 1912) features progressive rhythm created through repeated but changing shapes and lines. By trying to capture the figure moving down the stairs, Duchamp avoids creating one specific focal point. Instead, the viewer's eye follows the movement of the figure from the top left of the canvas to the bottom right. Although the shapes are abstract, they suggest the changing posture of a walking figure. The consistent use of a limited



colour palette of yellow and brown ties the shapes together. They read as one developing, moving arrangement with a progressive rhythm.



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PROPORTION

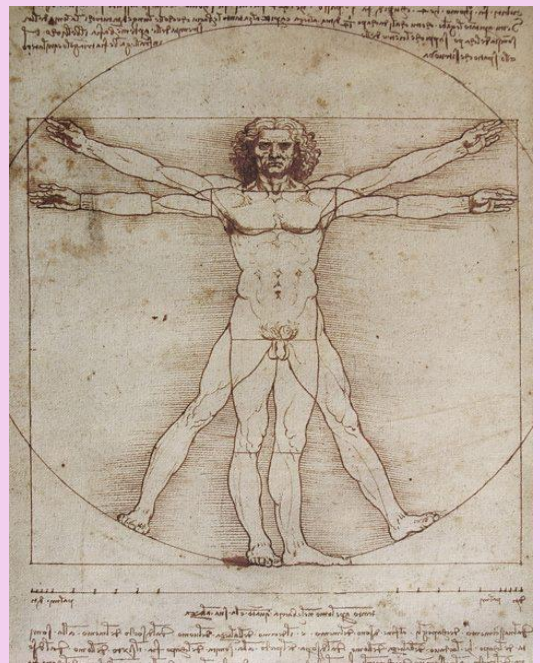
### PROPORTION, BALANCE AND COMPOSITION

Proportion refers to the dimensions of a composition and relationships between height, width and depth. How proportion is used will affect how realistic or stylised something seems. Proportion also describes how the sizes of different parts of a piece of art or design relate to each other. The proportions of a composition will affect how pleasing it looks and can be used to draw our attention to particular areas. The use of proportion is essential for creating accurate images. Understanding and using correct proportion in life drawing and portraits allows an artist to create well-balanced, realistic representations of the human form.

Leonardo da Vinci's Proportions of the Human Figure (After Vitruvius) (c.1492) was his attempt at depicting the proportions of the human body. The text around the image describes the scale and proportion of each part of the body.

*"The length of the  
outspread arms is equal to  
the height of a man."*

— Leonardo da Vinci



The Proportions of the Human Figure (After Vitruvius), Leonardo Da Vinci, c.1492, pen and ink



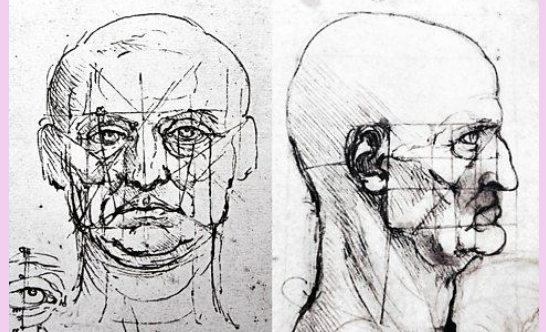
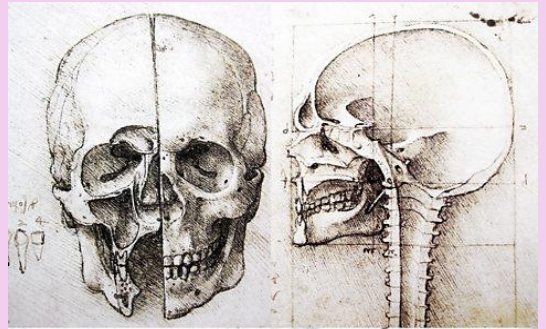
# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PROPORTION

### PROPORTION, BALANCE AND COMPOSITION

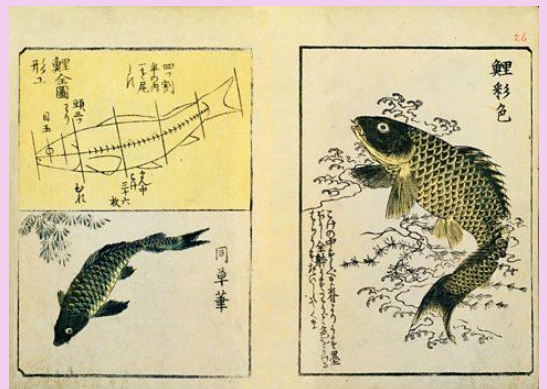
In this set of sketches Da Vinci looked in more detail at the human head. He worked out realistic proportions to use as general rules for the positions and size of different features:

- Eyes positioned halfway down the head
- Top of the ears are in line with the eyebrows
- Bottom of the ears in line with the bottom of the nose
- Pupils in line with the ends of the mouth



Sketches of the Human Head, Leonardo da Vinci, c.1489-90, pen and ink

It isn't just the human form that can be divided into specific proportions. Swimming Carp (Utagawa Hiroshige, 19th Century) shows how the body of a fish has been divided into five equal lengths – one for the head, three for the main body and one for the tail. These proportions are then used in the detailed images.



Swimming Carp, from A Picture Book Miscellany, Utagawa Hiroshige, 1849, woodblock print

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PROPORTION

### ALTERING PROPORTIONS

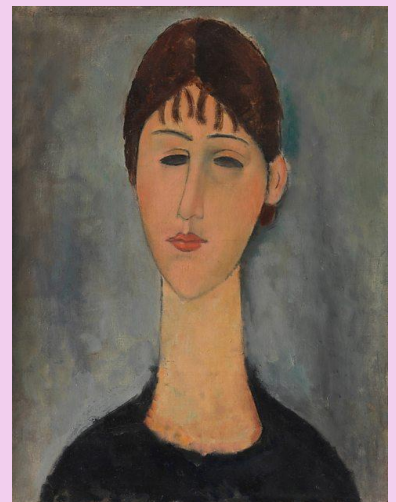
Not all compositions are based on realistic proportions. Some artists and designers experiment with altering proportions to create distinctive works.

Alberto Giacometti's statues use stretched proportions to show tall thin figures, like in *Walking Man I* (1960). Giacometti stripped away as much clay as possible from his models to try and gain a better understanding of real human forms. The slender proportions of his sculptures draw attention to the space around them and create a sense of separation and distance between the viewer and the isolated figures portrayed.

Amadeo Modigliani's portraits often show elongated proportions. Here the sitter's face has been stretched to a long oval and the neck appears like a long slim column. Stretching the woman's head makes it similar in shape to her eyes. The high arch of the top of her head is matched by the curve of her shoulders. The overall effect of these repeated elongated curves is to make the woman seem elegant and graceful.



*Walking Man I*, Alberto Giacometti, 1960, bronze



*Young Woman*, Amadeo Modigliani, 1918, oil on canvas

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

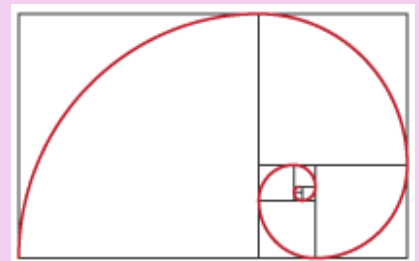
## PROPORTION

### GOLDEN RATIO

Proportion can be used for aesthetic effect as well as for realism. The Golden Ratio is a proportion that occurs in nature. It reflects the rate and pattern in which many things grow – shells, ferns, even galaxies. We are used to seeing the Golden Ratio in the world around us, so using it to compose art and design can make a work look natural, calming and ‘right’. The Golden Ratio can be written mathematically as 1:1.62. Objects are related by the Golden Ratio when one is 1.62 times the length of the other.

The composition of *The Annunciation* (Leonardo Da Vinci, 1472) uses the Golden Ratio as a relationship between many measurements:

- The position of the stonework at the corner of the building in relation to the edges of the frame
- The line of the top of the wall in relation to the top and bottom of the frame
- The position of the ornament in relation to the edges of the tabletop
- The spacing between groups of trees
- The height taken up by the yellow sash, red bodice and blue skirt of the Virgin Mary’s clothing



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PROPORTION

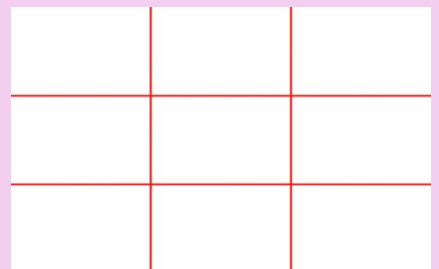
### THE RULE OF THIRDS

The Rule of Thirds is another way of arranging a composition. The Rule of Thirds splits an image into thirds vertically and horizontally, as shown in this grid. Artists will often separate the foreground and background content by using the horizontal lines. The overlapping areas indicated by the red circles are known as the focal points. These can be used to draw the viewer's attention to particular elements of a composition. When applying the Rule of Thirds, it is generally better not to fill all four of the focal points. It is usually better to emphasise only some of them. Samuel Peploe has composed *Still Life With Coffee Pot* (c.

1905) using the principles of the Rule of Thirds:

- the horizontal line of the table edge runs along the bottom third of the painting
- the reflected light down the centre of the teapot is on a vertical line two thirds of the way across the frame
- the bright orange and lemon to the left of frame sit at one of the focal points

As with the Golden Ratio, the Rule of Thirds is a compositional tool that can help to create an aesthetically balanced piece.



*Still Life with Coffee Pot*, Samuel John Peploe, c.1905, oil on canvas



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PROPORTION

### SCALE

Scale refers to the overall physical size of an artwork or objects in the artwork.

An artist may decide to use a scale which is different from life-sized, and this will have an impact on how the artwork feels.

#### Large scale

An artist may create an artwork that is much larger than it would be in real life in order to create a visual impact. There are many artists who create artworks that use scaled-up objects.

Katharina Fritsch's *Rat King* (1993) has scaled up a group of rats in order to increase the impact of her sculpture. The rats are twice the height of a person. Their size makes them seem monstrous and combines with their posture to make them feel threatening to the viewer. Artists can use the land and environment around them to create pieces of work on a monumental scale.



Rat King (Rattenkönig), Katharina Fritsch, 1993, polyester resin

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PROPORTION

### SCALE

One of the earliest examples of land art is seen with the Nazca Lines in Peru (between 500BC and 500AD). These ancient artworks were made by digging troughs into the ground to expose lighter stones and pebbles below. This stylised



Nazca Lines showing markings in the ground that make a hummingbird, Nazca Desert, Peru

drawing of a hummingbird has a relatively simple design but, at over 90 metres long, it has a dramatic impact because of its scale. The reason this image was created is unknown, but its scale suggests its importance, as a significant amount of effort and skill was needed to create it. This is made all the more impressive when you consider that there was no way for the creators to see the finished artwork which can only be seen from the air.

### Small scale

When artists create work on a miniature scale, impact is often created through the level of detail and skill involved. This prayer nut was created by Adam Theodrici between 1500 – 1525. It measures less than 5cm across and would have



Prayer Nut with Case, Adam Theodrici, c.1500-25, boxwood

been hung from a chain of rosary beads. This work would have been time expensive. This object would have clearly signalled the wealth of its owner.

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PROPORTION

### CONTRASTING SCALES

Scale also relates to the size of one part of an artwork in relation to another. Artists can choose to compose an image with contrasting scales to create tension or drama.



Under the Wave off Kanagawa, aka The Great Wave, Katsushika Hokusai, 1830-32, woodblock print

In Under the Wave off Kanagawa by Katsushika Hokusai (1830-32), scale has been used to demonstrate the awesome power of nature. The giant wave fills the height of the frame. It towers over the image of Mount Fuji, which appears in a much smaller scale due to perspective. The power of nature is emphasised by the small human figures in the boats that the wave is about to crash down on. The artist's use of scale within this image emphasises the lack of control the powerless boatmen have over nature.

A similar contrast of scale between nature and the man-made is shown in this photograph of a dust storm approaching a town. There are no specific human figures, but the scale of the houses, street and tree create an effective contrast with the giant wall created by the dust cloud.



A Dust Storm Hits a Southwestern Town, 1937