

Principles of Design

The principles of design describe the ways that artists use the elements of art in a work of art.



Balance is the distribution of the visual weight of objects, colors, texture, and space. If the design was a scale, these elements should be balanced to make a design feel stable. In symmetrical balance, the elements used on one side of the design are similar to those on the other side; in asymmetrical balance, the sides are different but still look balanced. In radial balance, the elements are arranged around a central point and may be similar.



Emphasis is the part of the design that catches the viewer's attention. Usually the artist will make one area stand out by contrasting it with other areas. The area could be different in size, color, texture, shape, etc.



Movement is the path the viewer's eye takes through the work of art, often to focal areas. Such movement can be directed along lines, edges, shape, and color within the work of art.



Pattern is the repeating of an object or symbol all over the work of art.



Repetition works with pattern to make the work of art seem active. The repetition of elements of design creates unity within the work of art.



Proportion is the feeling of unity created when all parts (sizes, amounts, or number) relate well with each other. When drawing the human figure, proportion can refer to the size of the head compared to the rest of the body.



Rhythm is created when one or more elements of design are used repeatedly to create a feeling of organized movement. Rhythm creates a mood like music or dancing. To keep rhythm exciting and active, variety is essential.



Variety is the use of several elements of design to hold the viewer's attention and to guide the viewer's eye through and around the work of art.



Unity is the feeling of harmony between all parts of the work of art, which creates a sense of completeness.

Alexander Keighley's (1930s) 7 points by which the judging of pictorial work should be based.

These are principles not rules.

1. The work should be good technically good technique does not its self make a good picture but indefatigably bad techniques makes invariably bad picture
2. The work should comply with the fundamental principles which underlie all art expression principles which have evolved from the experiences of many generations of artists and are founded on the Constitution of the human eye and the mind
3. The picture should convey a message or idea which should be worthwhile it may be simple but not trivial
4. The idea should be complete as a whole that is it should show unity there should be nothing redundant and nothing wanting.
5. The subject should be presented in a pleasing manner, satisfactory in composition, design and pattern
6. The tone ~~allergy~~ ^{Tone Quality} should be appropriate and well considered
7. The rendering should not be opposed to the truth of nature