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Fundamentals of Art (Dual Credit-Art 122) Principles

The following is a basic list of the definitions, explanations, descriptions and expectations and assignments concerning the principles of art.

The following are the principles of art: balance, movement, rhythm, contrast, emphasis, pattern, and unity. These principles along with the elements (line, shape, form color, value, texture and space) help to unify and give visual order to a work of art. The elements and principles are always used in combination and therefore work together to create a composition with a good design. As you admire the way the artist painted such a realistic scene, you should not limit your attention to the subject matter alone. *The elements become the "tools" of an artwork while the principles become the "rules" of an artwork.*

The following is a list of definitions of the principles of art:

- **Balance** refers to the visual distribution of weight in a work of art. In a painting is the visual "equilibrium" of the elements that causes the total image to appear balanced. Balance can be either **symmetrical** or **asymmetrical** in a work of art. Asymmetrical artwork is when the elements on both sides of a central vertical line appear to be about equal in shape, weight, value and color. **Symmetrical balance** is also referred to as either classical balance or formal balance. Asymmetrical balance is when two sides of an artwork are different and yet appear to be in balance. For example when a larger group of people are sitting quietly a smaller shape of active birds in flight, they are in ***asymmetrical balance***. Another term for asymmetrical balance is informal balance. **Value balance** is present when a small light value shape and a larger medium shape is on a medium value background. **Color balance** is present when a smaller intense and a larger neutral color are on a neutral background. **Shape balance** occurs when a smaller irregular shape is placed with a larger geometric shape such as a circle, square, rectangular or even a simple shape. This happens even if all the shapes are the same color, texture or value. The smaller shape is more interesting; therefore it has more visual weight. **Radial balance** occurs when all the elements radiate out from a central point.

If the focus is at the center, it is also in **symmetrical balance**. An orange and a bicycle wheel are both examples of radial balance.

- **Movement** a principle of art, directs the viewer of the artwork, often to a focal area. This eye movement can be directed along lines, edges, shapes, and colors within the artwork, but moves the eye more easily on paths of equal value. An artist may move our eyes through a painting by providing **visual passage** or **linkage** on dark or light values. **Visual movement** usually leads to a **focal area**. Our eyes move into the painting if it contains **one-point perspective**. Our eyes are drawn from the foreground into the background. Such visual movement can be very strong. We are drawn into the background from the **foreground**. Such **visual movement** can be very strong. **Elongated shapes** cause our eyes to move along them. If there is a strong center of interest, our eyes will be drawn to it like a magnet. **Linear movement** can be both direct (**straight**) and irregular (**curvilinear**). Our eyes follow lines and edges in sculpture, architecture, and paintings, as well as in nature. As lines and shapes move our eyes across a surface, interruptions may occur. Our eyes skip across these interruptions in a process called **closure**.
- **Rhythm** a principle of art, is the repetition of visual movement of the elements...colors, shapes, lines, values, forms, spaces and textures. Variety is essential to keep rhythms exciting and active and to avoid **monotony**. **Movement** and **rhythm** work together to create the visual equivalent of a musical beat. **Regular rhythm** is the repetition of elements that are the same or nearly the same in **regular sequences**. In nature, a row of evenly spaced trees or **rock strata** creates regular rhythm. Plants spaced unevenly create **irregular rhythms**. Irregular rhythms might repeat throughout a painting without any exact duplication. **Staccato rhythms** are repetitions that are abrupt and that change frequently. They often seem to be short bursts of energy in a painting. **Progressive rhythms** are those in which the elements change sizes as they progress or move across space. This is seen in looking at buildings or a fence in **perspective**. The windows and architectural elements are the same size but diminish as they progress into space. In architecture, rhythmic sequences of windows, columns, and other architectural details are used to unify large surfaces.
- **Contrast** a principle of art, refers to differences in colors, shapes, lines, values, forms, spaces and textures. Contrasts create visual excitement and add interest to the work. If all the art elements...value for example...are the same, the result is monotonous and unexciting. **Value contrast** is most evident when black is next to white, and when light values from one end of the **gray scale** are next to dark values from the other end. A black and white photograph is readable because of

gray value contrasts. **Simultaneous contrast** occurs when two pure complementary colors are placed side by side. Each will appear brighter than when placed next to any other hues. **Visual vibration** might occur. **Contrast in color intensity** occurs when a pure, fully intense color is next to a muted or gray color mixture. The pure color's strength and intensity seem, to cause it to glow. **Shape contrasts** occur when organic shapes are placed in a geometric environment. Or in an opposite way, a building in a landscape will produce shape contrast, as will a person in a city street. **Temperature contrast** refers to the contrast of warm and cool colors. If small warm areas are placed in a dominantly cool painting, temperature contrast is evident. **Textural contrast** is easily noted when artist use heavy textures to const with smoother areas in painting, sculpture, photography, architecture or any of the crafts. Textural contrasts are found abundantly in nature.

- **Emphasis**, a principle of art, is used by artists to create **dominance** and **focus** in their work. Artists can emphasize color, value, shapes, or other art elements to achieve dominance. Various kinds of contrast can be used to emphasize a center of interest. An artist often uses **focal areas** (centers of interest) to place emphasis on the most important aspect of a work. **The best placement for a focal area is a location off center about one-third from either side of the piece of paper and one-third from the top or bottom.** Color dominance is a way of emphasizing a color or color family in a painting. **Visual emphasis** on a local area can be achieved by having the strongest light and dark value contrasts in the painting located in a desirable place. **Visual emphasis** in a painting is enhanced when **value passages** (light or dark movements) lead to a **focal area**. Such **visual movement** places **emphasis** on the **focal area** in a work. In nature, **emphasis** might be felt when elements are isolated, such as a tree or an animal. **Emphasis** is usually on the *element that is different*. A person in a landscape becomes the focus or visual emphasis of a photograph. **Visual emphasis** at the center of interest can be developed by using **shape contrast**. A building in the natural environment will become a focus and therefore receives **emphasis**.
- **Pattern**, a principle of art, uses the art elements in planned or random repetitions to enhance surfaces of painting or sculptures. Patterns often occur in nature and artists use similar repeated motifs to create **pattern** in their work. **Pattern** increases visual excitement by enriching surface interest. Fabrics often have regular or planned patterns, because certain elements are repeated with accuracy (lines, shapes, swirls, or other design elements). **Planned patterns** are used by architects to create **surface interest** on buildings. Repeated shapes

for windows, doors, ledges, and architectural details are used to develop patterns. **Repeated Patterns** in nature surround us constantly: repeated leaves, flowers, grass, shells, and many others. The **radial pattern** in many fruits and vegetables can be noticed by cutting them in half. Some painters use pattern to organize surface elements. For example, a regular pattern of spares is made more interesting with an irregular pattern of another shape within them. **Patterns** made of repeated lines, shapes, colors, or designers of such things as jewelry, ceramics, weavings, wall coverings, fabrics, carpets, and flooring use textures.

- **Unity** is one of the most important aspects of well-designed art and is planned by the artist. **Unity** provides the cohesive quality that makes an artwork feel complete and finished. When all the **elements** in a work look as though they belong together, the artist has achieved unity. **Variety** is essential to keep art from being **monotonous**. Horizontal layers of paint or collage create unity, but a different element, colors, shapes, lines, values, forms, spaces and textures., could provide variety. Visual unity in a painting can be developed by clustering elements.

Demonstrations of the Art Principles

All projects should always be neatly demonstrated and identified through labeling. (Example: Line, Project One, "Line Tools", Date, Name)

Balance

Due Date _____

1. Create a composition demonstrating value balance. On a medium background, a small light value shape seems to balance a large middle value shape.
2. Create a composition demonstrating color balance. On a medium background, a small bright (pure intense color) shape seems to balance a large middle value shape.

Due Date _____

3. Radial balance...creates a composition using paint, coffee, tar, etc. (whatever works) to create an artwork that depicts radial balance. Use your creativity!!!!
4. Demonstrate shape balance in a composition.

Movement

Due Date _____

1. Cut out six elongated triangular shapes of different colors from construction paper. Arrange them on a piece of paper, three

on each side. Place a different shape such as a circle of a different color just off center (the focal point). Glue down the pieces. You can see the movement to the focal point in your collage.

2. From magazines, cut pictures of architecture that reflects movement, such as churches with their upward lines to the steeple or bell tower and office buildings with their continuous rows of windows. Find other examples.
3. Select pictures from a magazine that show one-point perspective. Mount the picture on a piece of construction paper, and then draw lines with a ruler from the foreground to the focal point to illustrate visual movement.

Rhythm

Due Date _____

1. Cut out strips of colored paper approximately one inch by six inches. Then, cut out figure shapes about the same size but in a different color. Arrange them in a row, one strip, one figure, one strip etc. evenly spaced. This illustrates regular rhythm.
2. Take the same shapes and arrange them with unequal spaces between them. This illustrates irregular rhythm with often is more interesting and exciting than regular rhythm.
3. Using tempera paint, paint regular rhythmic linear marks on a sheet of paper. Then, develop another chart of irregular rhythmic linear marks by painting them on another piece of paper.
4. Take pictures of architectural features around the school or building near by that illustrate the architect's use of rhythm in the structures.

Contrast

Due Date _____

1. Make a chart with two columns and using tempera paint, show side-by-side intense color and neutralized color; dark and light value; soft edges and hard edges; plain square of paint and patterned square; plain square and square textured with rag or sponge dipped in paint; geometric shape and organic shape; and a large shape and small, confetti-like shapes. This chart illustrates all the kinds of contrast we see in works of art, architecture, and nature. Please label neatly.
2. Cut out pictures from magazines to illustrate the kinds of contrast in the first activity and glue them down to make another chart of examples. Label neatly.

3. Take a photo that illustrates spatial contrast, such as a person alone standing against a blank wall, or a single tree against a backdrop of a canyon. Label neatly.
4. Take photos of contrasts in texture (example: textured fabric use with smooth metal, decorated part of sculpture contrasting with smooth part. Label neatly.

Emphasis

Due Date _____

1. On a 8 ½ x 11 inch piece of paper placed horizontally in front of you, draw vertical lines 1/3 of the way into the paper and another 2/3 into the paper. Then draw horizontal lines 1/3 of the way down the paper and 2/3 down the paper. Where the lines intersect is a good place for a focal point or center of interest. Label the focal points.
2. Make a nonobjective painting with light or dark value passages leading to a focal area.
3. Cut different geometric shapes of different sizes of colored paper. Cut one organic shapes from a different color paper. Arrange them on a large piece of paper to illustrate how emphasis develops when the organic shape is the focal point.
4. Gather scraps of different textured fabrics and cut or tear them into different shapes. Arrange them on a neutral background to resemble a bird, flower animal and glue them down. In this collage, the textures are emphasized. (See example of the portrait of the little girl with a toy)

Pattern

Due Date _____

1. Print with a sponge, rubber stamp, or eraser dipped in tempera paint random markings on a piece of colored paper to demonstrate an irregular pattern.
2. On another piece of colored paper, draw rows of squares the same size all over the paper. Then use the sponge rubber stamp or eraser dipped in one color tempera paint to print in each space illustrating regular pattern both in color and space.
3. Create a composition by repeating different textures in squares that are two by two inches. (diagonal lines, dots, circles, solid color, wavy lines, hatching, letters, checkers, stars, hearts, symbols). Fill a paper that is a least 8 ½ x 11.

Unity

Due Date _____