

Principles of Design in Photography

The “*Principles of Design*” take the *Elements of Art* and organize them in a single piece of art/ composition. The principles of design are **Balance, Harmony, Pattern/Rhythm, Unity, Contrast, Proportion, Variety, and Movement.**

Balance:

Balance is arranging the elements in a piece so that there is an equality from one side to the other. A symmetrical image has perfect balance. Balance can also be achieved by asymmetry or radial arrangement. Below are an example of both poor and good balance.



Harmony:

The dictionary definition of harmony is “a consistent, orderly, or pleasing arrangement of parts; congruity”. This happens in art by using similar elements throughout a piece that bring it together in a “pleasing” way. Harmony can be considered simplicity.



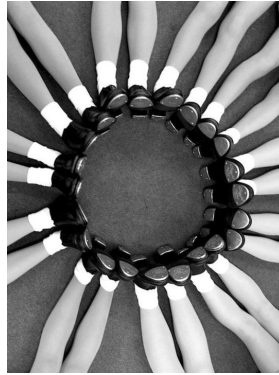
Pattern/ Rhythm:

Pattern or rhythm is simply repeating an element in such a manner. This will cause the viewer’s eye to move around to each element.



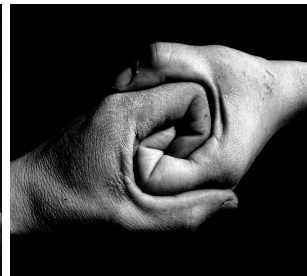
Unity:

Unity is taking the parts of a piece of art and unifying them in to something better as a whole. Composition is a great way to do this. This image could be separated in to each part as its own piece, but together they become a unified composition.



Contrast:

Contrast is easy. It is similar to adding contrast to an image overall, but this is done by using the elements. You can create contrast in an image by using complementary colors or differences in light and dark.



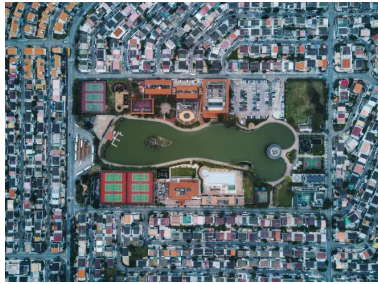
Proportion:

Proportion is using the size of an object to give it more or less importance. Finding an image that uses this purposefully was difficult. In this image, the size of the sky was dramatically greater than the ground, giving it importance.



Variety:

Variety is exactly what it sounds like, having variety in your elements! The image on the left has variety by combining a sunset sky, the bridge, and the middle ground of the trees. The image on the right has variety in each of the shells. By differing the kinds of shells, I've created variety that still maintains unity in that they are all shells.



Movement:

Movement is one of the simpler principles to learn; I actually used it a lot when discussing the Elements of Art. The goal of creating movement is to lead the viewer's eye all around the photo and land on the focal point. The image below does a great job of that using line and tone.

