

## 2-D Design Definitions

The basic elements of two-dimensional visual perception are: dot, line, plane, texture and color. When these elements are combined in a composition using the principles of organization, (balance, harmony, variety, emphasis, proportion, etc) we have the basic structure for a two dimensional work of art. However, this list is not every word ever spoken on the subject. So leave room at the bottom to add more as we find them.

### **Amorphous**

Without clarity or definition; formless; indistinct and of uncertain dimensions.

### **Balance**

A sense of stability or equilibrium of opposing forces, an equal distribution of visual weight.

### **Symmetrical Balance**

The balance achieved by the use of identical compositional units on either side of a vertical axis.

### **Approximate Symmetry**

A form of balance achieved by the use of units of similar shape and size, but not identical on either side of the vertical axis.

### **Asymmetrical Balance**

An equal distribution of visual weight in which the items balanced is not identical on both sides of the center line.

### **Biomorphic Shapes**

Irregular shapes that resemble the freely developed curves found in live organisms.

### **Composition**

The arrangement of the visual elements into a unified work of art.

### **Contour**

A line, which creates a boundary separating an area of space, forms its surrounding background.

### **Contrast**

The combination of opposing elements or to create interest and variation to the complete surface area.

### **Curvilinear**

Stressing the use of curved lines as opposed to rectilinear, which stresses straight lines.

### **Discord**

Elements, which are so sharply contrasted that, they deny harmony.

### **Dominance**

A principle of visual design suggesting that certain elements are more important than others within the same composition.

### **Emphasis**

Dominant factor within a composition defining the focal point or subject of the work.

### **Equilibrium**

Disposition of the compositional elements providing a balance of different types: Symmetry, Asymmetry, etc.

### **Geometric Shape**

Mechanical shapes of precision such as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, hexagons, etc.

**Harmony**

The unity of all visual elements of a composition achieved by repetition, rhythm, similarity and gradation.

**Line**

The path of moving points made visible by a mark, which contrasts, with its ground.

**Mass**

The bulk that occupies any three dimensional space.

**Negative Space**

The unoccupied area around and through a shape created by an artist. Because the negative space also has boundaries, it forms its own shapes.

**Organic Shapes**

A non-mechanical shape. A life like shape.

**Positive Space**

An enclosed area on a field or ground suggesting a shape or figure in space.

**Proportion**

The relative size of a shape to its ground or neighboring shape.

**Repetition**

A factor of similarity used in the development of rhythm.

**Rhythm**

A dynamic continuity with certain repetitive intervals.

**Sequences**

A relationship of a series of visual factors. This may be a transition of an other type of series. Sequences function to a certain extent in the development toward focal points.

**Simplicity**

An economic statement, which allows for immediate perception.

**Shape**

The area that stands out from the space around it because of the defined boundaries and the differences attributed to dot, line, plane, color and texture.

**Tension**

The degree of tautness in the equilibrium of the composition.

**Texture**

The surface feel of an object or its represented surface character.

**Transition**

Used to bridge extremes by stages to create a unity between them.

**Unity**

The harmonious combination of elements to create a sense of oneness. The point at which every element and principle within a composition is necessary for that sense of oneness.

**Variation**

Used to relieve monotony by creating subtle movements within the composition.

**Visual Weight**

The weight of a shape suggested by its size, value, placement or direction. Usually a dark shape is visually heavier than a white shape.