










## THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN *FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS*

The **principles of design** describe the ways that artists use the elements of art in a work of art. (the elements are, just to review what you know from gr 9/10 art: line, shape, space, colour, texture, value & form) They are *tools* needed to create effective compositions.

In order to use the principles of design effectively, a good photographer must think about what they are seeing and then decide how they want their viewer to see it. This allows the photographer to interpret what they are looking at in a conscious and deliberate way. Regardless of the purpose of their image, this skill is relevant.

Pattern		A regular arrangement of alternated or repeated elements (shapes, lines, colours) or motifs.
Contrast		The juxtaposition of different elements of design (for example: rough and smooth textures, dark and light values) in order to highlight their differences and/or create visual interest, or a focal point.
Emphasis		Special attention/importance given to one part of a work of art (for example, a dark shape in a light composition). Emphasis can be achieved through placement, contrast, colour, size, repetition... Relates to focal point.
Balance		A feeling of balance results when the elements of design are arranged symmetrically or asymmetrically to create the impression of equality in weight or importance.
Scale		The relationship between objects with respect to size, number, and so on, including the relation between parts of a whole.
Harmony		The arrangement of elements to give the viewer the feeling that all the parts of the piece form a coherent whole.
Rhythm/ Movement		The use of recurring elements to direct the eye through the image; the way the elements are organized to lead the eye to the focal area. The eye can be directed, for example, along edges and by means of shape and colour.
Unity		All parts of an image work together to be seen as a whole.
Variety		Using different elements in an image to create visual interest.

**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.

**How this photograph demonstrates balance:**

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**Contrast** is the juxtaposition of different elements of design (for example rough & smooth textures, dark and light values) in order to highlight their differences and/or create visual interest, or a focal point. In addition, contrast can create discourse, tension or conflict in an image.

**How this photograph shows contrast:**

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**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.

**How this photograph uses emphasis:**

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**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.

**How this photograph captures movement:**

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**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.

**How this photograph shows pattern:**

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**Scale or 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.

**How this photograph uses proportion or scale:**

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**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. It can also be seen as a repeated element in an image that guides the viewer's eye through a composition. In this way it can be understood as a combination of pattern with movement.

**How this photograph demonstrates rhythm:**

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**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.

**How this photograph shows variety:**

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**Unity** is the feeling of “oneness” between all parts of the work of art, which creates a sense of completeness.

**How this photograph demonstrates unity:**

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**Harmony** is the appearance that all of the elements of art are working together to create a cohesive whole. No one component of the work overpowers or conflicts visually with any other part of the work. A harmonious art piece lacks discourse and the elements of design used in the work evoke feelings of calm, balance or organization.

**How this photograph captures harmony:**

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