

## Project # 2: Concepts of Balance & Relationships of Space

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How do you interpret compositional space? Define composition.

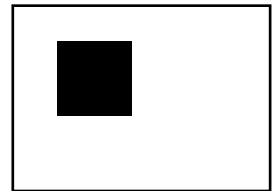
It is the total organization of any design, the sum of its parts. The participating forms and parts of forms in a composition have shape, size and a position within the totality. Concepts/ideas are established through the relationships of these forms and their unique character of organization.

Figure/ground or Positive/negative.

Whenever we look at a mark on a page we see it as an object distinct from its background. The thing (figure or positive shape) is only visible to the extent that it is seen as separate from the background (negative) space.

### ORGANIZATION OF FIGURE/GROUND: 3 sub-categories

a. *Stable*—each two-dimensional mark or shape is perceived in an unchanging relationship of object against background. For example, the small area of black inside a larger white shape is likely to be viewed as figure or positive.



b. *Reversible*—both the figure and ground can be focused on equally. There is often a flip-flop occurring on the page.

c. *Ambiguous*—as in a picture puzzle, one figure may turn out to be made up of another or of several pictures.



### BALANCE:

Do you have a sense of balance? It should allow you to walk upright or ride a bicycle. Our eye is pleased with a sense of balance while the lack of balance may be irritating. When the dynamic tension between elements is balanced, most likely our intended message will be communicated. Like the concept of positive/negatives, there are sub-categories to better understand the various forms of balance.

- Symmetrical*—balance proceeds from a central point and is based on the principles of scales or the seesaw. Work on a vertical, horizontal or diagonal axis. Emphasis of weight is repeated equally and appears fixed or static to the eye. Has a quiet sense of order, useful for stability and tradition. Can be Bilateral: identical pattern repeated on either side of a median line, such as a butterfly.
- Radial*—repetition of any number of parts radiating from a fixed center, such as a snow flake.
- Asymmetrical*—balance not always logical or easy to perceive. Perception based on feeling rather than reason, no mathematical formula. Dynamic, free, based on movement and continuous shifting of weights or accents. Can be achieved through value and color, shape and texture, position and eye direction.
- Crystallographic*—all over pattern. Actually a rather special refinement of symmetrical balance, the constant repetition of the same quality/aspect/element.

CLASS EXERCISE Work in class Monday/Tuesday 10-21/22.

Read over the following terms. What do they mean to you? Can you visualize each of them?

order, congested, tension, playful, and bold

Select one of the three basic shapes: the square, the triangle or the circle for each of these exercises.

Combine four of your chosen shapes in such a fashion that you successfully represent each of these terms. Do one composition for each. Work with pencil or pen for this exercise. You will have only 35 minutes to do

the total of seven (7) ideas, basically five minutes for each one. Work quickly, do not try to make your shapes perfect, try to get your idea across. How well do you think you did? Are your compositions balanced? Did it just happen or did you intend for such balance? Do you know which type of balance is each? Wish you had more time to think? to work?

#### STEPS IN DESIGN PROCESS:

Lets begin by actually defining the job or role of the Graphic Designer. At the beginning of the semester each of you brought to class a variety of items that you though were “created” by a graphic designer. Many of these items included such things as business cards, food packaging, music and movie containers (cd,dvd, videos, video games, etc), magazines and brochures. Mostly complicated combinations of text and images - all to convey or communicate a message. This communication of a message with text and/or image is the key role of a designer: combining visuals together to get the desired message of the client across to the intended audience. Hopefully this is done through the creation of compelling and/or pleasing design. This is also the same process for more simple forms of design, such as the creation of a logo, trademark or symbol. For our next project you will be creating a symbol for yourself. This self identification symbol will be the result of stepping through the design process as both the designer and the client.

#### STEPS IN DESIGN PROCESS:

1. State the actual job (problem) in your own words.
2. Research, Research, Research
3. Sketch, Sketch, Sketch! - often referred to as thumbnails
4. Choose your best 2-3 thumbnails and develop them more - turn them into “roughs”
5. Take your best “rough” and continue to develop it - it will become your “comp”
6. When the “comp” is approved, make it into the real thing

After you know who your are - yes that is your research. Take the information you worked with for the bed project in Foundations and develop it further. What were the terms you used?

Do not use the same characteristics as you did for the bed project. For your ID symbol you may include both personality and physical characteristics. After you have created your list of person characteristics (list #1) create a second and a third list. List #2 - take each term you have for yourself and look it up in a dictionary or thesaurus listing all the related terms. List #3 is developed from the terms on list #2, repeating finding additionally related terms. In addition to researching who you are and terms that help focus on you, look over a variety of symbols. Use the texts in the school library or see what you can find on the internet. How many different uses can you find for each of the three basic shapes that you will be allowed to work with: square, circle & triangle. Bring examples to class on Wednesday/Thursday 10-23/24. Can be sketches in your sketchbook with text information.

Your actual visual vocabulary for this project are squares, circles and triangles. Combine four elements (squares, circles &/or triangles) in such a fashion that they visually represents a SIMPLE PERSONAL CONCEPT. Select from your personal descriptions, combining no more than two different ideas together. You might consider first working to visually depict single concepts before you try to work with combinations. Work with *thumbnails* to help you focus on which terms and which shapes work best for

you. Your sketch book and a pencil are great for this level. Begin by sketching 6-8 or more ideas for at least 6 of your terms (a total of 36-48 thumbnails). Once you have a variety of visual ideas for six or more of your terms, begin combining two together. This should result in another 12-18 thumbnails. We will begin in class-10/23-24, Due for grade: 10/28-29.

In class on 10-28/29 you will be selecting from your thumbnails and developing your "roughs." A minimum of 8 different combinations should be worked on at this point. You are still working with pencil. Some ideas may be better mixed and matched. Homework will be developing comps.

Select 4-6 of the best *roughs* to develop into more refined drawings, begin using pen or marker. These are your *comps*. At this stage you should really try to get a clear idea of what these solutions would look like. If they begin to get muddy, re-do them. Re-do is not a bad thing - it is a way to make your thinking and your work much clearer. Make these comps actual size. As with any design project, you need to know the whole project before you really jump in to begin deciding upon solutions. It is the intended outcome that usually houses the size, shape and material restrictions. For this project, actual size is a 4" square. You will need a final total of 4 comps to turn in for a grade at this point. These will be due at the end of class on Wednesday/Thursday 10-30/31. Presentation is up to you, you must have your name on all parts and a grade sheet. Cover with TP if appropriate.

Having only 3 different shapes to work with may seem like a limited vocabulary to some. This limitation can be expanded by taking into consideration the endless variety of possible presentation of the same idea. First you may work with forms ranging from solid to thin line, with every possible variation in between. Your line studies should come in very helpful for ideas on this. In addition, the following list of six principles of placement are given for you to work with as needed. Not all principles should be seen in one solution. Consider working with them one on one. We will discuss them in class. They include:

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Frame of Reference | Touching               |
| Over-lapping       | Cropping of form       |
| Contrast in size   | Direction of movement. |

As you develop your ideas work to achieve an equal distribution of positive and negative space in your solutions. As you have three different forms to work with, you also need to incorporate four forms in each composition. Eventually you may need to add or remove a form or two, but begin working with four in each composition.

Your self-id symbol must consist of at least two different terms from your lists. A third terms may also be included, but no more. Too many different ideas will make this "simple" symbol too complex or trying to too many different things and not being successful at any one. Your solutions should not be simply centered on the page, nor housed in a comfortable corner. Utilize the entire space. Try to achieve a Reversible Figure/Ground for at least one of each of your final solutions.

Upon approval of your comps, you may need to make some revisions/alterations before proceeding on to the final step. Presentation of the final self-identity symbol must include one each of the following:

1. A 4" presentation
2. An 8" presentation
3. A stamp of the symbol, no smaller than 1" and no larger than 2". May be in a square or rectangle.

Final due: Wed/Thurs 1-6/7. Use your Speedball stamp carving block, 3" x 4" to carve for your stamp. It is large enough for you to cut into several blocks for practice before cutting the final. You will also need to purchase an ink pad - color is your choice.