

Art Elements & Principles of Design

Elements of Art:

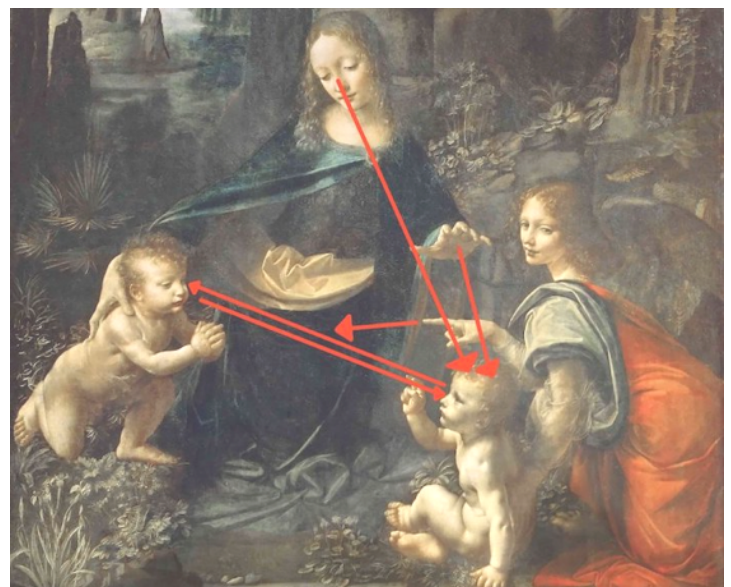
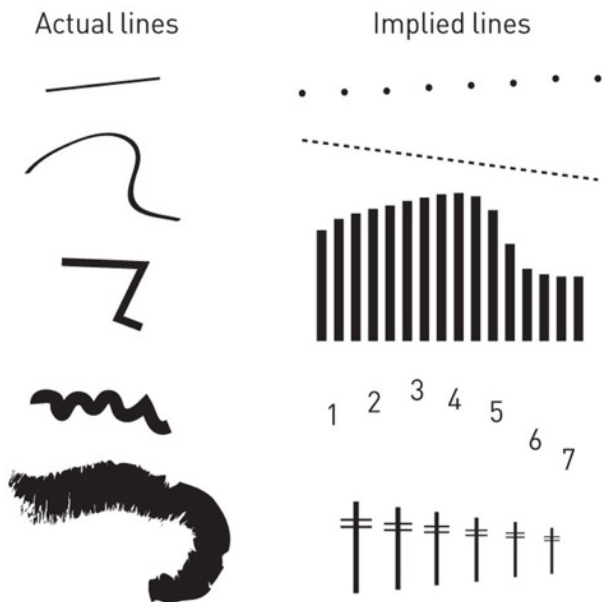
- Line
- Shape & Form
- Mass & Volume
- Light
- Value
- Color
- Texture
- Space
- Time & Motion

Line







Artists use line in many ways. Line can be varied (thick, thin, long, short, wavy, straight, curvy, implied, angular, choppy, directional, etc.).

Contour line or outline: An actual line that defines the outermost edges of an object or shape.

Implied lines suggest a conceptual connection – an invisible linear path between or among elements or characters in a composition. Implied line gives us the impression we are seeing a line where there is no continuous mark. Lines can be suggested by the arrangement of forms (our eyes follow the movement). One example would be the direction the figures are looking directs your eye through the composition. This is called line of sight.



Directional lines direct a viewer's attention to a particular part of a work

Vertical lines communicate strength, stability, and authority	Horizontal lines communicate calm, peace, and passiveness	Diagonal lines communicate movement, action, and drama
		
		

Value: gradations of grays from white to black; light to dark

To create value using line, artists can use:

- Crosshatching – crisscrossed lines
- Hatching – closely spaced parallel lines
- Stippling – dense pattern of dots

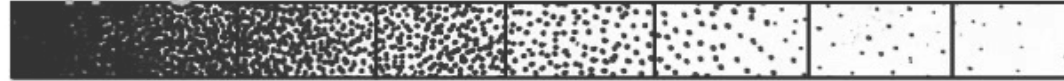
hatching



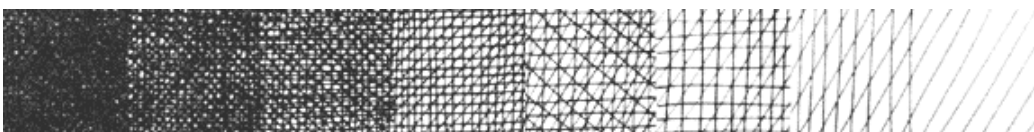
cross hatching



stippling



scribbling



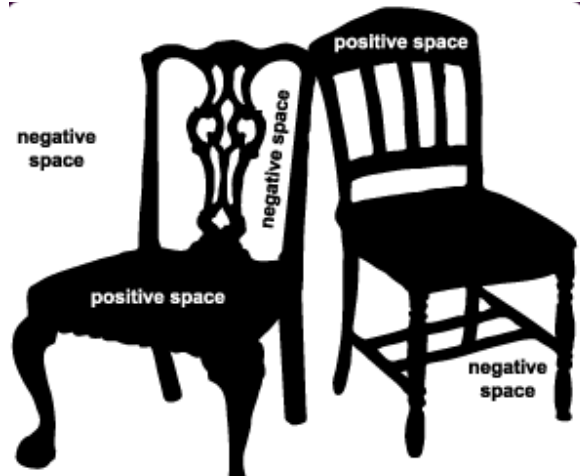
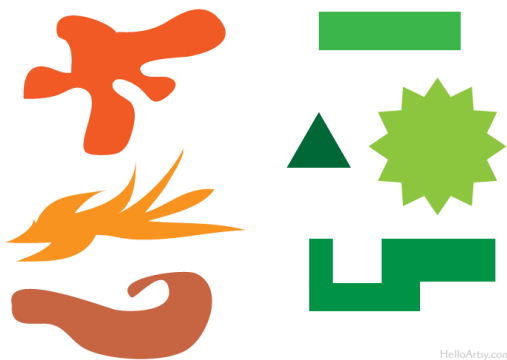
Shape: A flat, enclosed area (circle, square, triangle, etc.)

Types of Shape:

- Rectilinear – straight edges and angular corners vs. Curvilinear – curving edges
- Geometric - mathematically regular and precise
- Organic - made up of unpredictable, irregular lines that suggest the natural world; has curvilinear properties that imply growth
- Abstract shapes: simplifications, exaggerations, or transmutations of reality... sometimes bear little resemblance to the original shape. Unlike nonobjective shapes, abstract shapes are connected to the world of visible reality. Think Picasso.
- Nonobjective shapes: shapes not derived from or making any reference to visible reality
- Positive shape: shape of objects in the artwork
- Negative shape: shape of empty spaces surrounding positive shapes, the background

Types of Shapes

Organic Shapes vs. Geometric Shapes



Form: three-dimensional shapes (sphere, cube, etc.)

Forms (3-D shapes) have two fundamental attributes: volume and mass

Volume: the amount of space a form occupies

Mass: the expression of solidity (how solid/heavy something seems). Sculptures have actual mass, whereas in painting, the artist creates the illusion of a solid 3-D form on the canvas by implying mass

Value

- Value refers to the degree of lightness or darkness of a surface or color. This is determined by the amount of light reflected by the surface
- shades of light and dark (from white to black, and all the gray in-between)
- Chiaroscuro or modeling (as seen in many Renaissance paintings) is a technique for creating value.

Value Scale



Low-key value: dark grays; values toward black
High-key value: light grays; values toward white

High Key Range

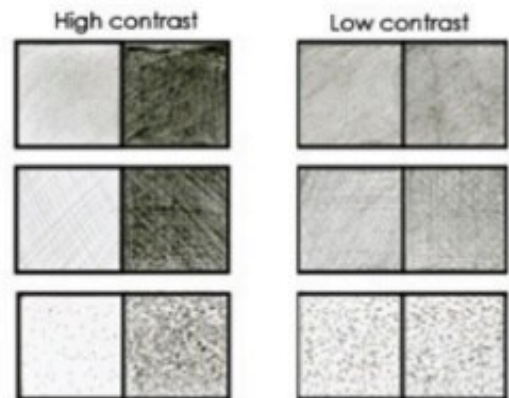


Low Key Range



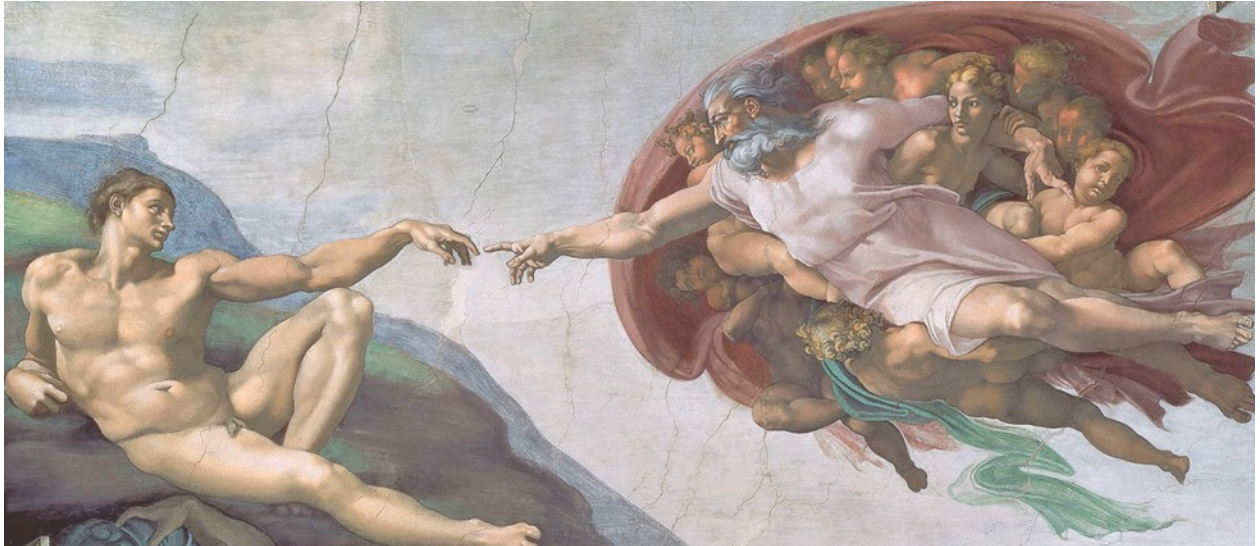
Contrast:

- High contrast: light and dark values are next to each other
- Low contrast: values that are close to each other on the value scale



Chiaroscuro – gradual progression from light to dark across a curved surface. This technique can be seen in paintings and drawings. It is the soft modeling or blending of values to create a sense of space and light.

Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* from the Sistine Chapel shows chiaroscuro. Notice the soft modeling of light and shadow on Adam's body. His sense of light and shadow makes the body look three-dimensional.



Tenebrism – Tenebrism is an exaggerated chiaroscuro. There is often soft modeling of chiaroscuro in some areas, but mainly there are intense highlights right beside dark shadows. This dramatic illumination gives a spot-light effect. This technique was often seen in paintings of the Baroque era in artists such as Caravaggio.

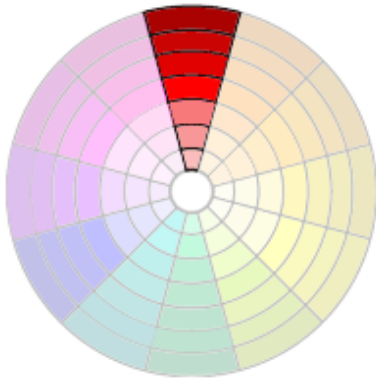


Color

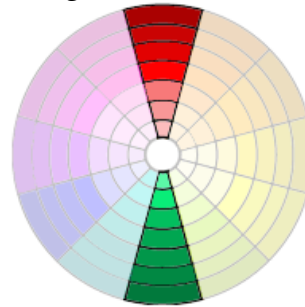
- Primary colors: red, blue, & yellow (the colors from which all other colors are derived)
- Secondary color – colors made by mixing two primary colors (red + yellow = orange; blue + yellow = green, red + blue = violet)
- Tertiary color – colors created by mixing a primary and secondary color (yellow-orange, orange-red, red-violet, blue-violet, blue-green, yellow-green)
- Colors have 3 properties: hue, value, and intensity
 - Hue - name of the pure color (red, blue...)
 - Value - relative lightness or darkness of a hue (pink → red → maroon)
 - Tint – color lighter than the hue’s normal value; white is added
 - Shade – color darker than the hue’s normal value; black is added
 - Tone – created by mixing gray with a color/hue
 - Intensity/Saturation- relative purity of a color, brightness/dullness of a color
 - Pure colors have a high intensity; duller colors have lower intensity.
- Warm colors: on the red-orange side of the color wheel; associated with sunlight & fire
Warm colors tend to give a happy feeling and come toward the viewer
- Cool colors: on the blue-green side of the color wheel; associated with sky, water, & shade
Cool colors tend to give a sad feeling and tend to recede in space



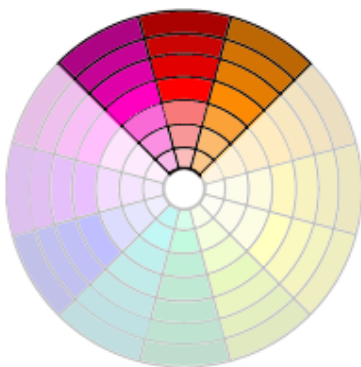
Monochromatic: only one hue is used with different tints & shades or intensities



Complimentary: colors opposite each other on the color wheel; complimentary colors react with each other making the other hue appear more intense. (red & green, violet & yellow, blue & orange)



Analogous: color schemes that combine colors adjacent to one another on the color wheel. (blue & violet, red & orange)



- Local Color – The natural color of things
grass = green, banana = yellow, sky = blue
It is known and seen rather than in the mind of an individual
- Optical Color – Depiction of color as it is perceived under different lighting conditions. Color changes depending on the lighting and surroundings. Claude Monet painted using optical color to show how he perceived things depending on the lighting, weather, etc. rather than what color he “knew” them to be, seen in his haystack paintings



- Arbitrary Color – Subjective color. Use of color that is not normally associated with the object being depicted. Color in this case is typically used for a more emotional or expressive effect



Texture: surface quality

- Actual texture: the actual, tactile texture of something that can be experienced through touch. This is something you would refer to more with sculptures.
- Visual or implied texture: the suggestion or illusion of texture (as seen in a painting)

This painting is a great example of implied texture. The artist tried to create the illusion of fur through the painting technique.



Impasto: a painting technique where the paint is thick and built up on the canvas; it is an actual texture on the canvas. Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh painted with the impasto technique. You can see it in this close up of a van Gogh painting.



Space

Actual Space – the dimensions in which we live and move

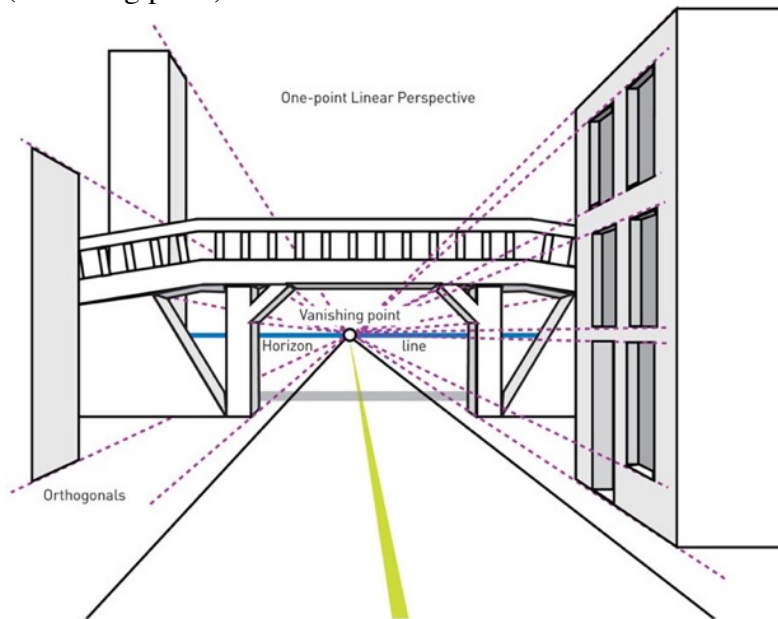
Sculptures are in real/actual space

Two-dimensional works represent the illusion of space. This can be called implied space or pictorial space. Artists often try to create the illusion of three-dimensional space in their drawings or paintings.

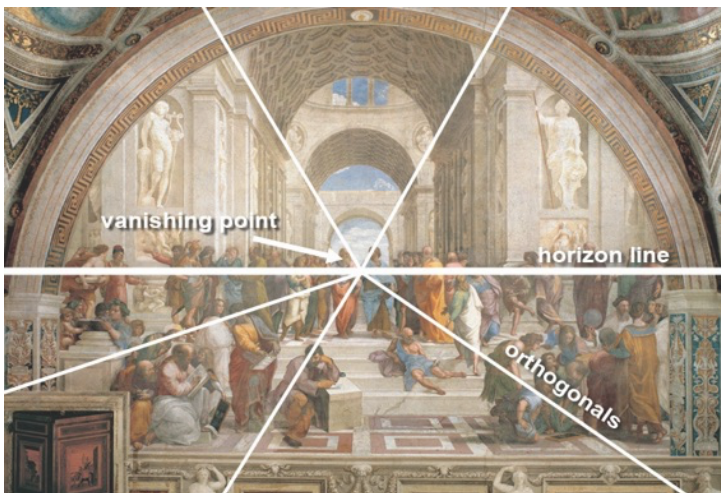
- The strategies whereby an artist creates a sense of depth and the illusion of space include:
 - Relative Size
 - Overlapping
 - Vertical positioning
 - a method of creating the illusion of space by placing objects designated as being farther from the viewer toward the upper edge of the composition. Things farther away are placed at the top of the composition and objects closer to the viewer are placed at the bottom of the composition
 - Alternating value and texture
 - Changing brightness and color
 - Atmospheric perspective
 - An optical effect caused by the particles of moisture and dust suspended in the atmosphere that scatter light. When looking into the mountains, the closest ones are clear, but each succeeding range appears paler, bluer, and less distinct.
 - As distance increases, definition (clarity of focus & detail, value contrasts, textural differences) decreases.
 - Objects up close are perceived as having more detail or texture. They are also brighter and their colors are more pure. As objects are farther away from us, they appear to have less texture and detail, and their color saturation and brightness also decreases



- Linear perspective: a mathematical system that uses lines to create the illusion of depth in a two-dimensional artwork. Parallel lines appear to converge to a point (vanishing point)



Raphael, *School of Athens*, 1509-11



Linear perspective was invented during the Renaissance. It added a realistic sense of space to the paintings and drawings. Before linear perspective, artists used intuitive perspective to create a sense of depth. Without linear perspective things seem off. There is no vanishing point and it doesn't seem as though the objects are receding in space. Some things seem to be floating or falling toward us. Instead of a floor going back in space away from us, it feels as though it is going uphill.



Foreshortening is another way to show depth and the illusion of space. It is the visual effect that causes an object or distance to appear shorter than it actually is because it is angled toward the viewer.



Time & Motion

Art can have implied motion – the suggestion of movement, or implied time – the suggestion of the passage of time.

The principles of design are how artists organize the elements into works of art.

We call the organization of the visual elements in a work of art the **composition**.

Principles of Design

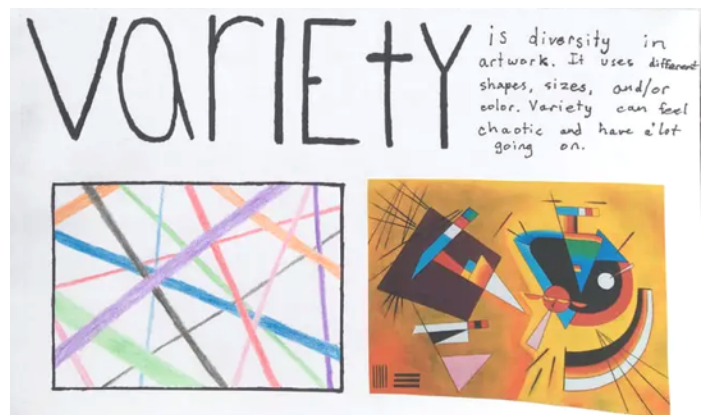
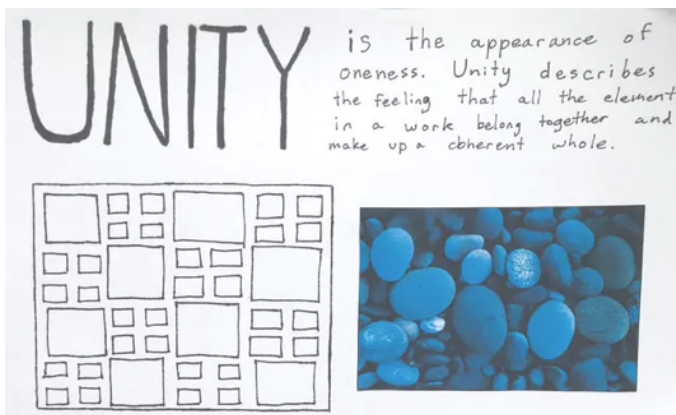
- Unity
- Variety
- Balance
- Emphasis & Focal point
- Rhythm
- Scale
- Proportion
- Pattern

Unity

- An overall sense of oneness or **unity** can be created by maintaining a constant element throughout a work
- Provides an artwork with its cohesiveness: all parts seem necessary, belong together to make a coherent whole

Variety

- Artists can incorporate the principle of variety in their work by having various colors, shapes, textures, etc.
- Variety adds visual interest

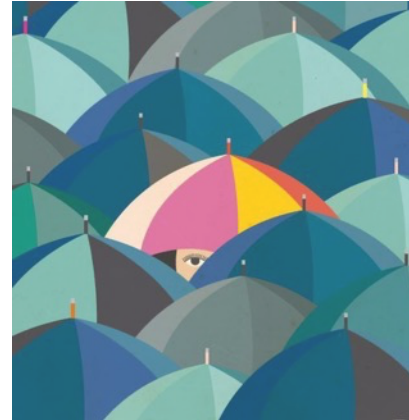


Emphasis/Focal Point

- Having emphasis or a focal point brings the viewer's attention in to a particular part of the composition.
- Focal Point – the main point of interest in a work of art. This area of the composition holds the viewer's attention
- A focal point can be achieved by accentuating certain shapes/forms, intensifying value or color, strategically placing objects/isolating objects, etc.
- Afocal- the absence of a focal point; the viewer finds no place to rest their eyes



Andrew Wyeth, *Christina's World*
Do you see the implied line and focal point?



Pink umbrella is the focal point

Balance

- Balance refers to the distribution of elements within a work. It is the visual weight of the composition
- Sculptures have actual balance, paintings have a visual balance
- Visual balance can be symmetrical or asymmetrical

Symmetrical Balance

- Is created through approximate symmetry - the whole work has a symmetrical feeling, but there are slight variations that give variety/visual interest (more so than a mirror image would). The arrangement of forms on either side of a dividing line are similar.



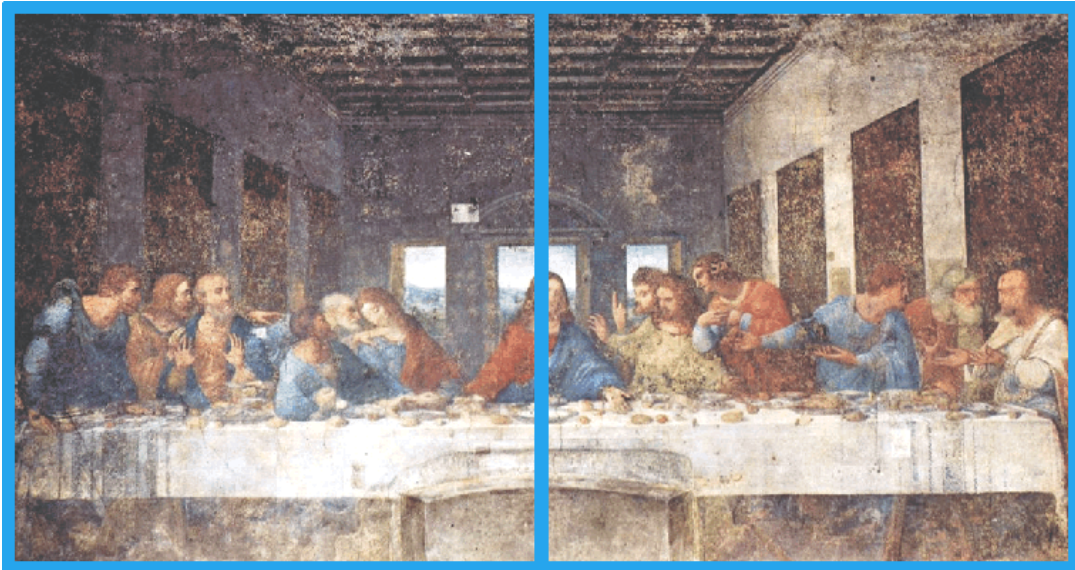
Symmetrical balance

vs.



Asymmetrical balance

Here, Jesus is in the center of da Vinci's painting. On each side of him is an equal number of figures, creating a sense of symmetrical balance. The use of linear perspective with the vanishing point in the center also creates symmetry.



Asymmetrical balance

- When one side of the composition has more visual weight than the other by having larger objects or more objects one on side. Generally, with asymmetrical balance, your eye is drawn more to one side of the composition. Here, our eye is drawn to the right side of the painting rather than to the center.



Rhythm

Rhythm in art is based on repetition or orderly progressions. Repeating an element (such as color or texture) can create a sense of visual rhythm, just as repeating a beat or note in music creates rhythm



Repetition

The use of repetition in a work of art usually results in pattern or rhythm. Artists often create unity in works of art by repeatedly using a similar shape, value, or color, etc.



Scale

Scale means size in relation to a standard or “normal size,” the size we expect something to be. Artists can make objects have a normal scale, or exaggerated scale to emphasize things.



Hierarchical Scaling

- The use of relative size/scale to indicate the relative importance of the forms being depicted.
- The most important figure (a king or god) will be portrayed as much larger than other figures. (larger = more important)



Here, Mary is depicted much larger than the other figures

Proportion

- The comparative relationship or ratio of one thing to another
- Size relationships between parts of a whole, or between two or more items perceived as a unit
- Proportion is often been used in art to represent beauty or an ideal, or emphasize something

This statue of Marcus Aurelius, a Roman emperor is a great example of a play with proportions. The size of the emperor is out of proportion compared to the horse. He is shown much too large to emphasize his power and control.

