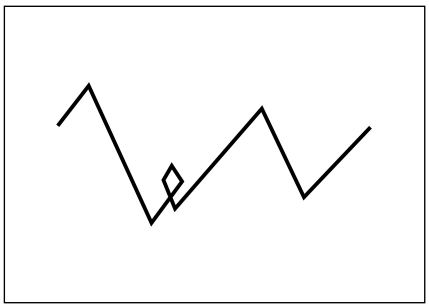
DEFINING LINE

A line is a stroke or mark that has length and width. Lines are so simple, yet they can communicate personality, movement, structure, meaning and emotion.

TYPES OF LINE

Actual Line

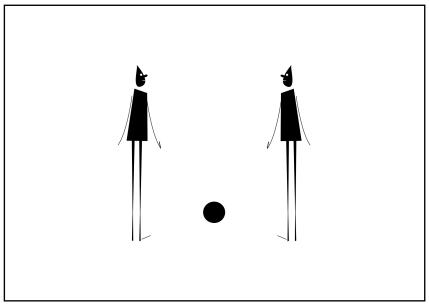
A mark that has length and width is called an actual line.



What does it communicate?

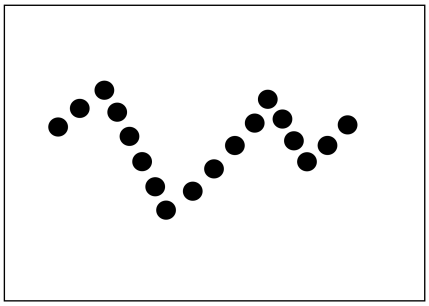
Psychic Line

When one object looks or points in the direction of another, and we make a linear connection between them, we are forming a psychic line in our mind.



What does it communicate?

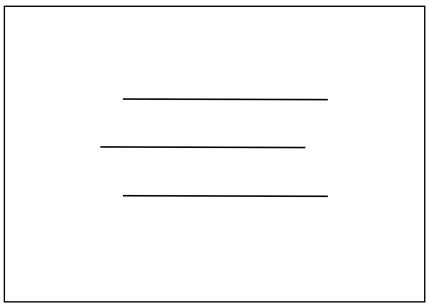
Implied Line
When we see a series of points or objects that are displayed in a way that we connect them together in our mind, we are forming an implied line.



What does it communicate?

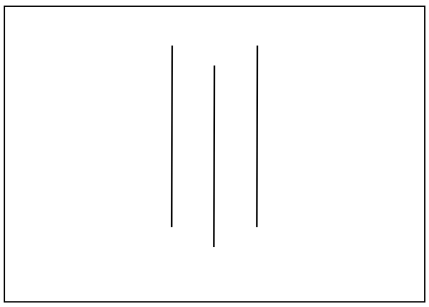
LINE DIRECTION

Horizontal Line
Horizontal lines are parallel to the horizon line, moving left to right.



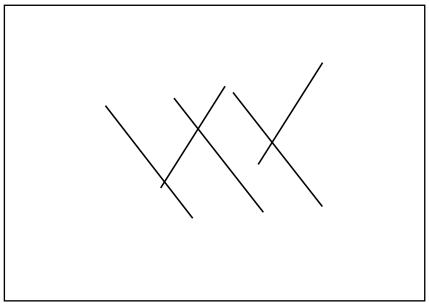
What does it communicate?

Vertical Line
Vertical lines are upright, moving up and down at right angles to a horizontal line.



What does it communicate?

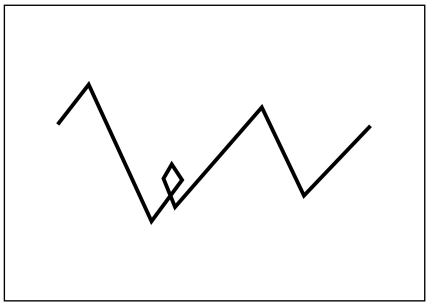
Diagonal Line
Diagonal lines move up and down, and left to right at varied angles.



What does it communicate?

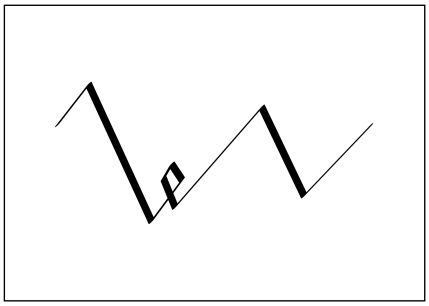
LINE CLASSIFICATION

Even Weight Line
An even weight line has the same width and value over its entire length.



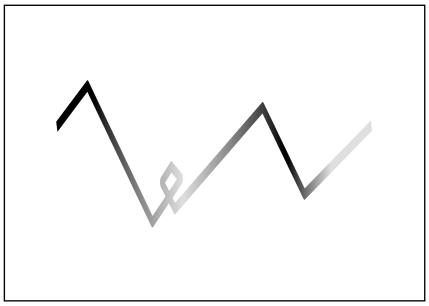
What does it communicate?

Thick-to-Thin Line
A thick-to-thin line varies in its width, while its value remains constant.



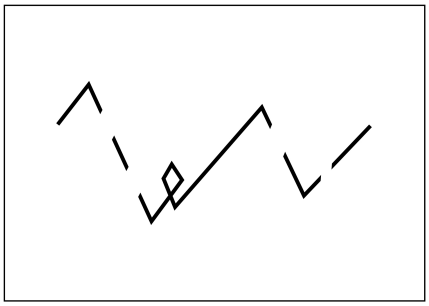
What does it communicate?

Light-to-Dark Line
A light-to-dark line varies in its value, while its width remains constant.



What does it communicate?

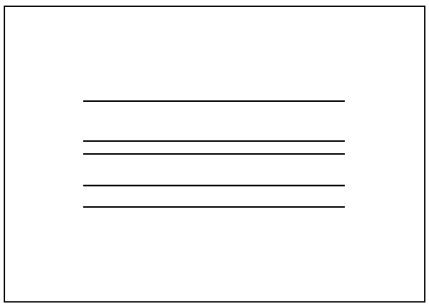
Broken Line
A broken line fades in-and-out or is interrupted, yet is completed in our mind.



What does it communicate?

LINE RELATIONSHIP

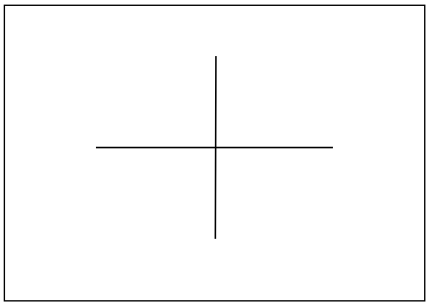
Parallel Line
Parallel lines are lines that move in the same direction.



What does it communicate?

Opposing Lines

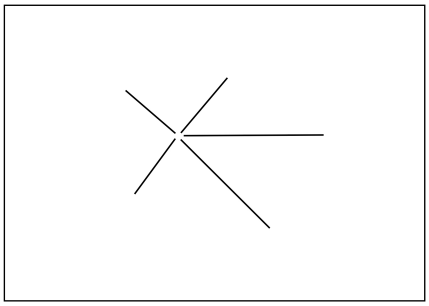
Opposing lines move in opposite directions or at right angles to one another, creating an opposing line relationship.



What does it communicate?

Radiating Lines

Radiating lines start at a central point and move or fan outward.



What does it communicate?

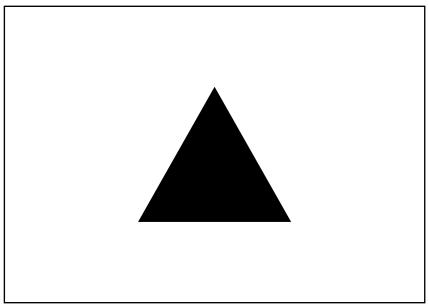
DEFINING SHAPE

A shape is a distinct area defined by an actual or implied outline. Shapes can feel cold and intimidating as well as warm and inviting.

TYPES OF SHAPE

Simple Shape

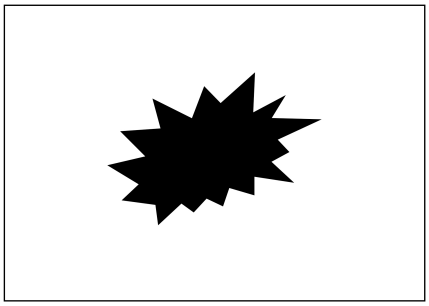
Simple shapes have a structure that is easily remembered. Certainly, we could glance at the image below and recall the shape quite easily.



What does it communicate?

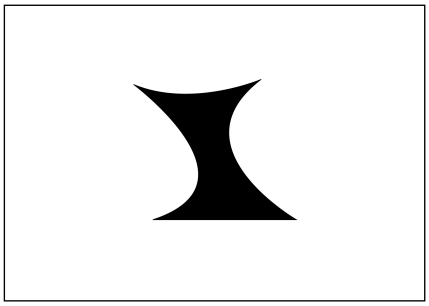
Complex Shape

Complex shapes have structures that are not easily remembered. It is doubtful we could recall the shape of the image below from just a glance.



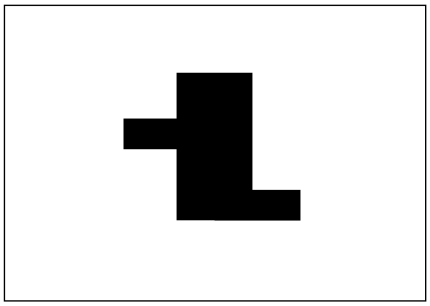
What does it communicate?

Curvilinear Shape
Curvilinear shapes have boundaries that consist of curving lines.



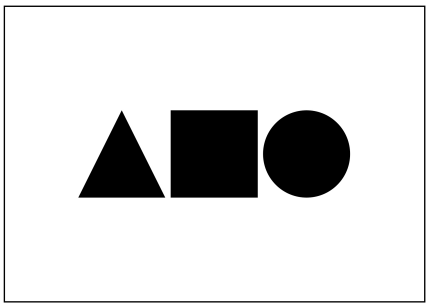
What does it communicate?

Rectilinear Shape
Rectilinear shapes have boundaries that consist of straight lines and angular corners.



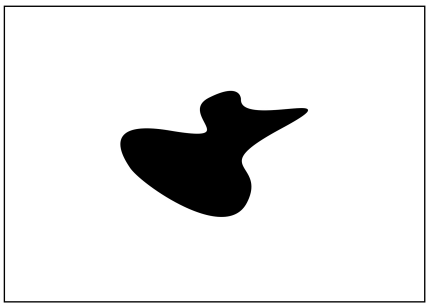
What does it communicate?

Geometric Shape
Geometric shapes are basic shapes such as a circle, triangle, rectangle, hexagon, etc. that are made of precise edges, geometric angles and curves.



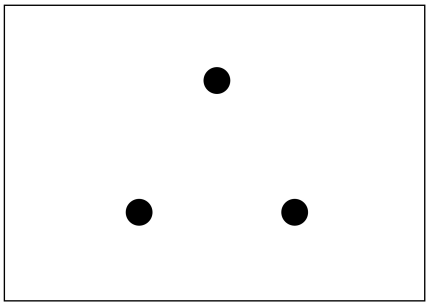
What does it communicate?

Organic Shape
Organic shapes are most often fluid and curvilinear, but can also be somewhat geometric and rectilinear. Regardless, they do not consist of perfectly straight edges or geometric curves. Shapes that look as if they are actually living are called biomorphic shapes.



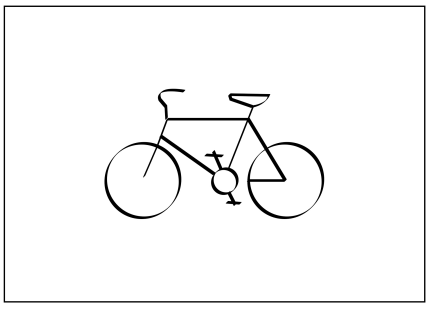
What does it communicate?

Implied Shape
An implied shape is created with an implied boundary. Our mind fills in the gaps and pieces together separate objects to see an additional, familiar shape.



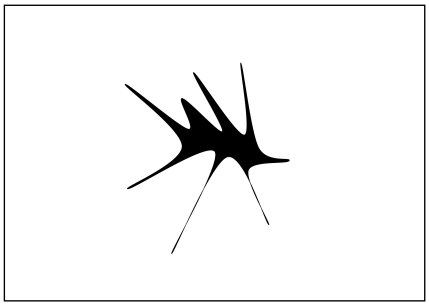
What does it communicate?

Abstract Shape
Abstract shapes are familiar objects that have been simplified, distorted or changed in some way, yet the object is still recognizable.



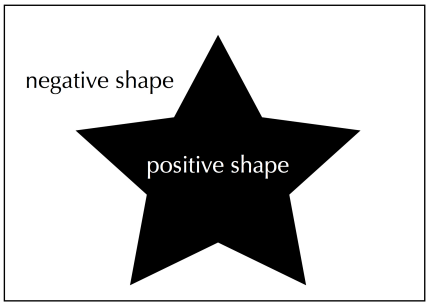
What does it communicate?

Non-Objective Shape
Non-objective shapes do not resemble or represent objects.



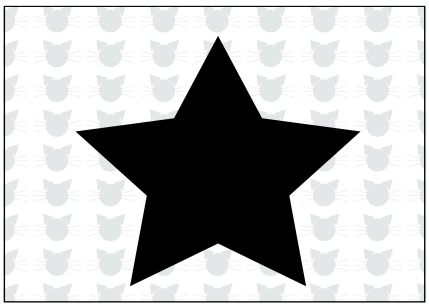
What does it communicate?

POSITIVE/NEGATIVE SHAPE
A positive shape is the object(s) of a design, while negative shape is the area surrounding it. Positive shape and negative shape are also referred to as positive space and negative space; and figure and ground, respectively.



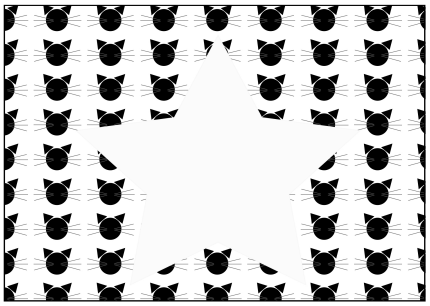
What does it communicate?

Positive Dominant
In a positive dominant design, we are most aware of the positive shapes, and drawn less to the negative shape.



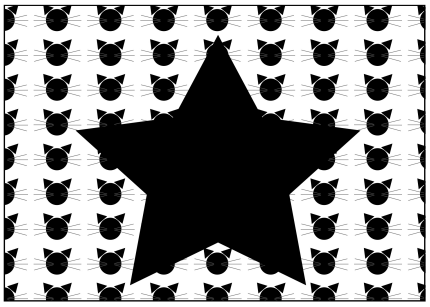
What does it communicate?

Negative Dominant
In a negative dominant design, we are most aware of the negative shape, and drawn less to the positive shapes.



What does it communicate?

Equal Dominance
An equally dominant design will draw our attention to both the positive and negative shapes equally.



What does it communicate?

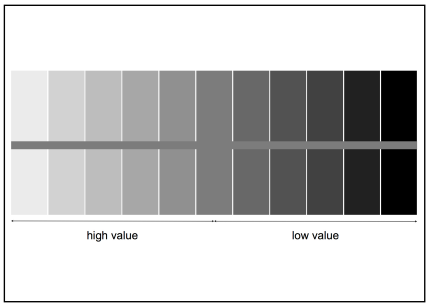
DEFINING VALUE

Value is the relative degree of lightness or darkness in a given context. We make judgments as to whether an object is light or dark by comparing it to its surroundings. A medium value looks darker when placed next to a light area, and looks lighter placed next to a dark area.

VALUE AND CONTRAST

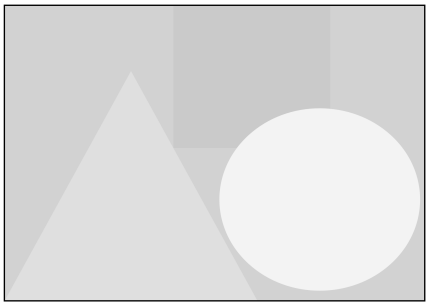
Value Scale

A value scale shows the gradation from light to dark in even-step intervals.



High-Key

A composition with a range of high to middle values is referred to as high-key.



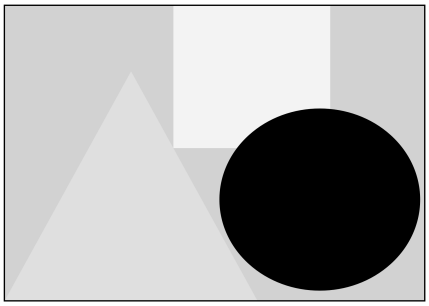
What does it communicate?

Low-Key

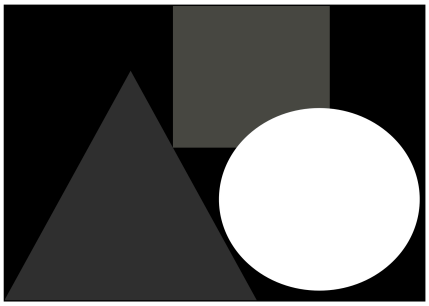
A composition with a range of middle to low values is referred to as low-key.

What does it communicate?

High Contrast
A high contrast design employs values that are far apart from each other on the value scale.

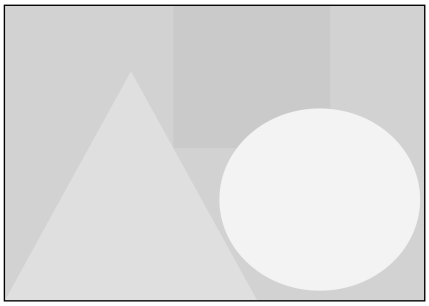


What does it communicate?



What does it communicate?

Low Contrast
A low contrast design employs values that are close together on the value scale.

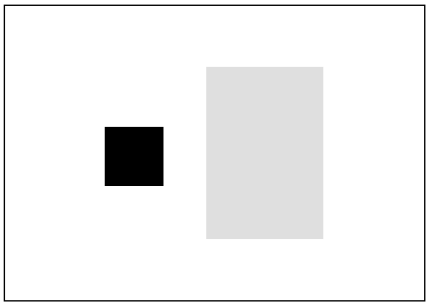


What does it communicate?

What does it communicate?

VALUE AS VISUAL WEIGHT

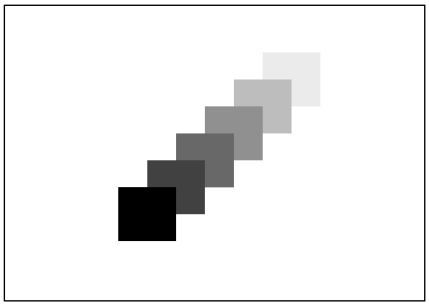
Lower values carry more visual weight than higher values; they tend to feel heavy and tightly packed. The black square is smaller, yet feels just as heavy as the larger lighter value rectangle.



What does it communicate?

VALUE AND THE ILLUSION OF SPACE

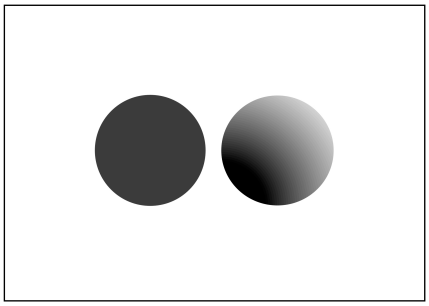
A gradual change in value creates visual steps that move our eye back into the picture plane, creating the illusion of space.



What does it communicate?

VALUE AND THE ILLUSION OF FORM

The use of high and low values to create light and shadow gives the illusion of form (3-dimension) on a 2-dimensional surface. Notice the first shape appears flat, while the second shape has the illusion of form.



What does it communicate?

DEFINING TEXTURE

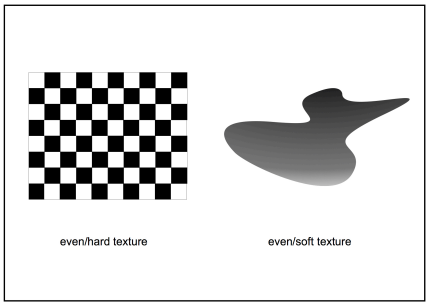
Texture is the surface variation we experience through sight or touch. We refer to texture experienced through sight as visual texture, and texture experienced through touch as tactile texture. Texture can be experienced as soft and delicate, rough and hard, and everything in between.

EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF TEXTURE

We often have an emotional response to texture...

Even/Hard and Even/Soft

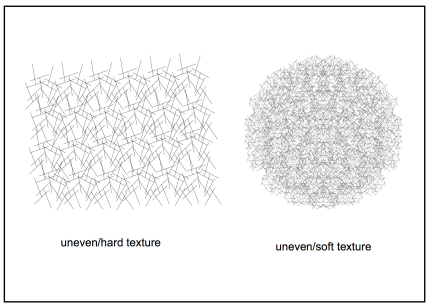
Even/hard textures can feel cold and sterile, whereas an even/soft textures can feel smooth and fluid.



What does it communicate?

Uneven/Hard and Uneven/Soft

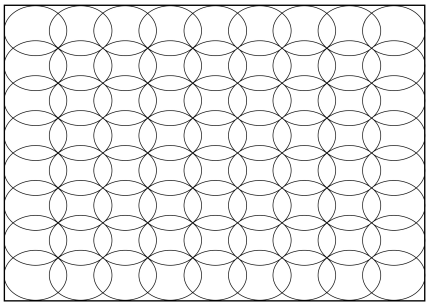
Uneven/hard textures can feel rough, abrasive and threatening, whereas uneven/soft textures can feel warm and welcoming.



What does it communicate?

TEXTURE AND PATTERN

Repeating an image or motif in a regular sequence creates a pattern. A pattern can be quiet and subtle to loud and busy. The more regular the repetition, the stronger the pattern.



What does it communicate?

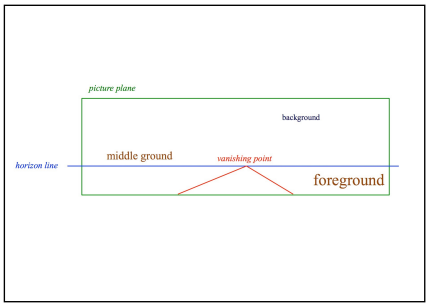
It is difficult to draw a clear distinction between pattern and texture. Pattern involves *regularity*… and texture can involve both *regularity and irregularity*. The concepts of pattern and texture overlap, for example, the grain of wood; wood grain has both pattern *and* texture.

There can be texture and no pattern. All patterns have visual texture, but not all textures have pattern.

DEFINING THE ILLUSION OF SPACE

The illusion of space is the representation of depth on a 2-dimensional surface. Though we mostly think of space as the distance between objects that are far apart from one another, the illusion of space can also feel very shallow.

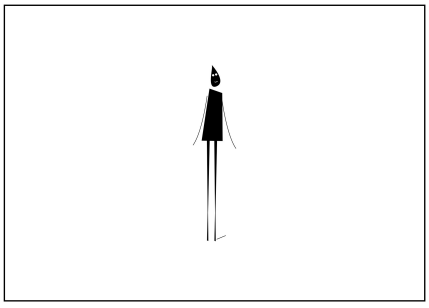
We use the terms picture plane, horizon line, vanishing point, foreground, middle ground and background when referring to space.



VIEWPOINTS

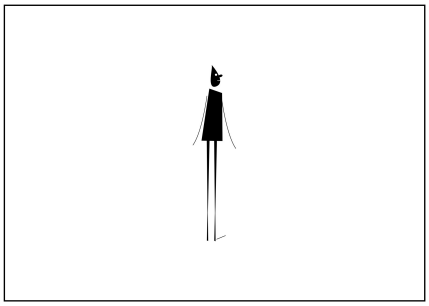
Internal View

An internal point of view makes us feel included, that we are somehow involved in composition.



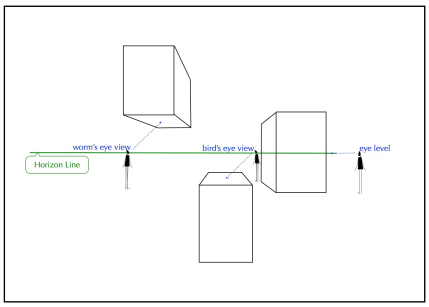
What does it communicate?

External View
An external point of view makes us feel excluded, that we are simply looking at the composition.

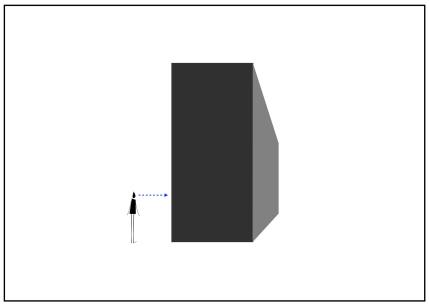


What does it communicate?

The placement of an object in relation to the horizon line establishes our point of view.

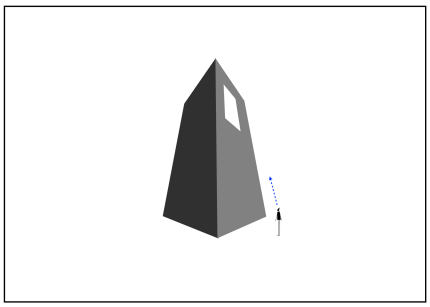


Eye-Level View
An eye-level view occurs when we are looking straight on at an object. In an eye-level view, our eyes are level with the horizon line.



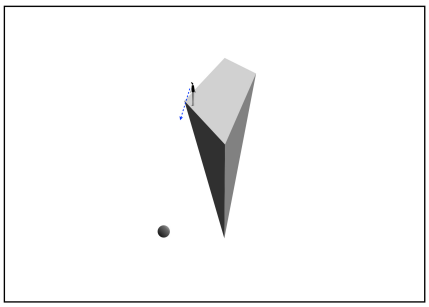
What does it communicate?

Worm's Eye View
A worm's eye point of view occurs when we are looking up at an object.



What does it communicate?

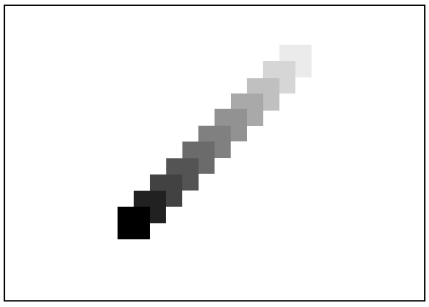
Bird's Eye View
A bird's eye point of view occurs when we are looking down at an object.



What does it communicate?

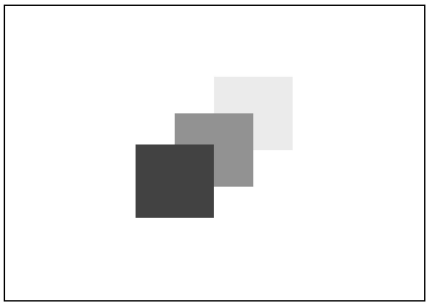
CREATING THE ILLUSION OF SPACE

Deep Space
The illusion of deep space is created when the distance between foreground and background appear to be far apart from one another.



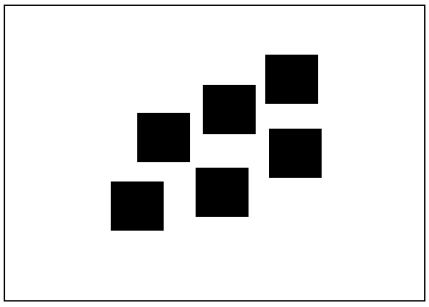
What does it communicate?

Shallow Space
The illusion of shallow space is created when the distance between foreground and background appear to be closer together.



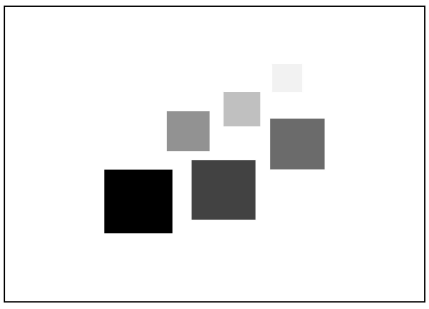
What does it communicate?

Vertical Location
Creating the illusion of space by vertical location is achieved by placing the objects in the background higher up than those in the foreground. We perceive the black square highest in the image to be farthest back.



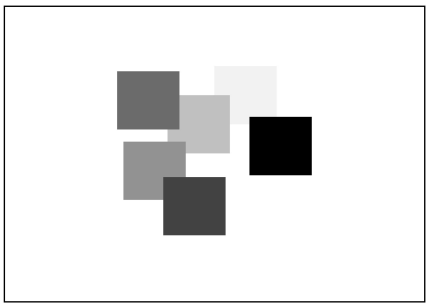
What does it communicate?

Gradients
Creating the illusion of space by gradients is achieved by the gradual change in value and gradual decreasing size of the objects. We perceive the squares that are smaller and higher in value to be farther back.



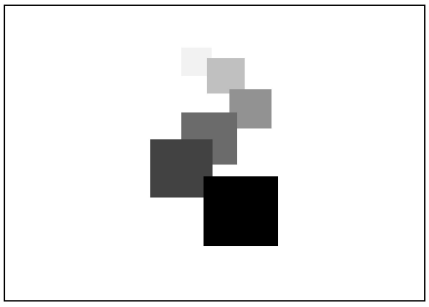
What does it communicate?

Overlapping
Creating the illusion of space by overlapping is achieved by representing objects in the foreground as overlapping the objects in the background.



What does it communicate?

Combining Vertical Location, Gradients and Overlapping
Combining vertical location, gradients and overlapping creates a natural progression from foreground to background. The greater the number of steps in value, the deeper the space.

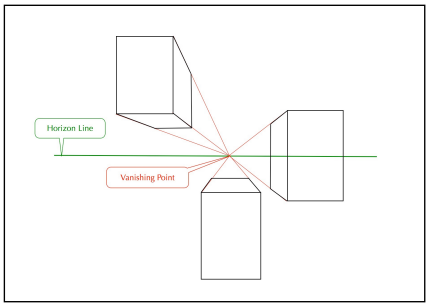


What does it communicate?

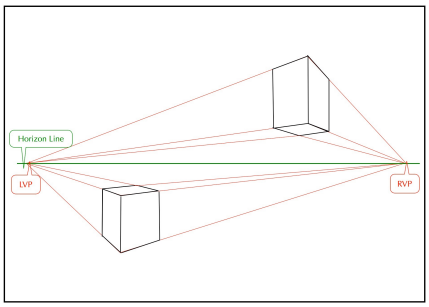
LINEAR PERSPECTIVE

A linear perspective is a method for creating the illusion of space on a 2-dimensional surface by showing parallel lines as converging on a vanishing point on the horizon line.
One-Point Perspective

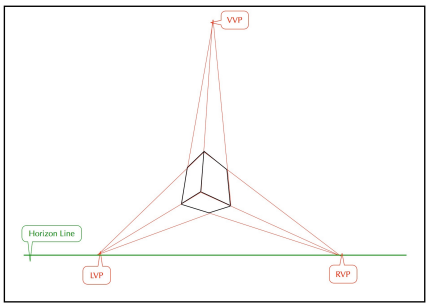
One-Point Perspective
A one-point perspective is a method for creating the illusion of space on a 2-dimensional surface by showing parallel lines as converging on one vanishing point on the horizon line, while the objects are parallel to the picture plane.



Two-Point Perspective
A two-point perspective is a method for creating the illusion of space on a 2-dimensional surface by showing parallel lines as converging on two vanishing points on the horizon line, while the objects are seen at an angle to the picture plane.



Three-Point Perspective
A three-point perspective is a method for creating the illusion of space on a 2-dimensional surface by showing parallel lines as converging on two vanishing points on the horizon line, plus a third vanishing point placed above or below the eye level.



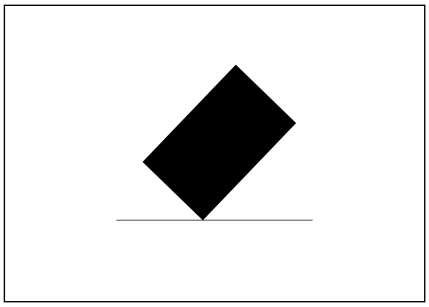
DEFINING THE ILLUSION OF MOTION

The illusion of motion is the representation of an action, or the process of moving. The illusion of motion can be experienced as quite slow, to incredibly fast.

CREATING THE ILLUSION OF MOTION

Kinesthetic Empathy

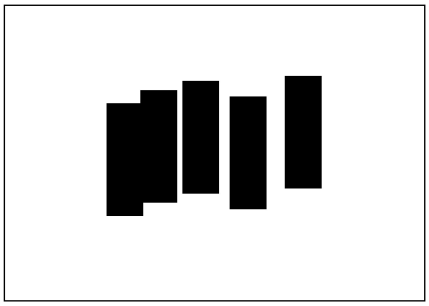
Kinesthetic empathy is an unconscious reaction we feel in our body; we *feel* as well as *see* the action.



What does it communicate?

Multiple Image

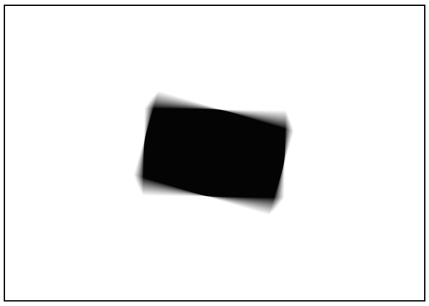
As an object moves, it occupies various positions in space. The same object positioned in a slightly different location (called multiple image) is interpreted as an object in motion.



What does it communicate?

Blurred Outline

When an object moves quickly through space, our eye does not capture the object's actual outline, but a blurred outline. Because of this, we interpret an object with blurred outlines as an object in motion.



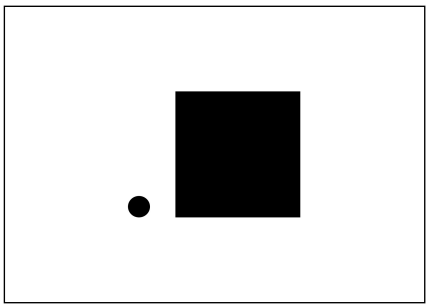
What does it communicate?

DEFINING SCALE

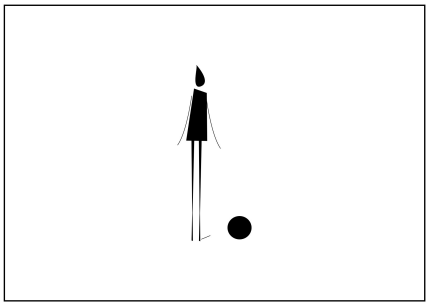
Scale is the relative size of an object. We tend to determine whether an object is small or large by comparing it to ourselves, the human figure.

HUMAN SCALE

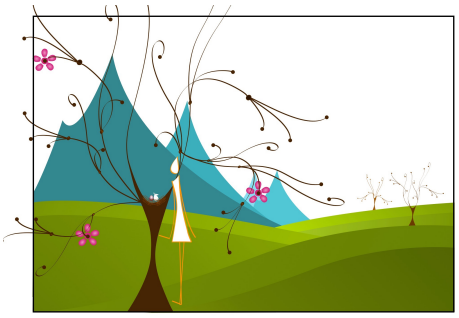
Human scale is the size of an object relative to the size of our body. Without a human figure present, we are uncertain to the size of objects.



The presence of the human figure allows us to quickly determine scale.

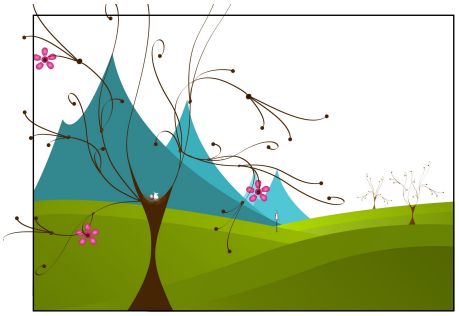


Human Scale | Small Scale
Now, by comparing the chick to the human figure, we can see that the chick is actually quite small. Given his small scale size, he feels delicate and fragile.



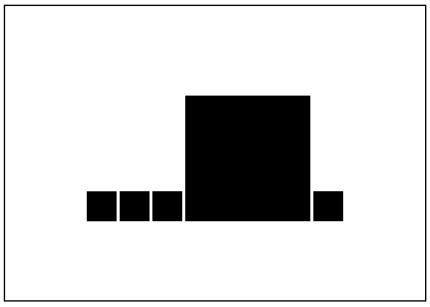
What does it communicate?

Human Scale | Large Scale
The mountains look enormous and feel powerful and majestic. It is not until we compare them to the human figure that we get a sense of their large scale nature.



What does it communicate?

HIERARCHICAL SCALING
Size can be used to indicate the importance of an object or person being represented; this is referred to as hierarchal scaling.



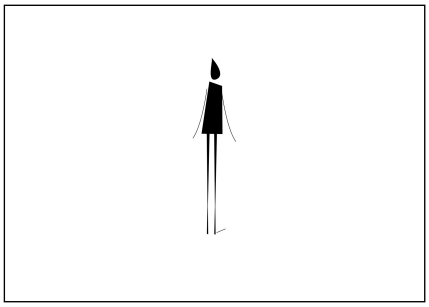
What does it communicate?

DEFINING PROPORTION

Proportion is the size relationship of different part(s) to the whole.

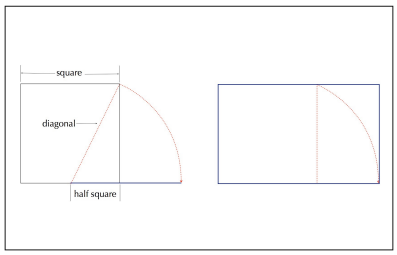
NOTIONS OF THE IDEAL

We judge what a "correct" size is based on our own personal perception or what we identify as a standard.

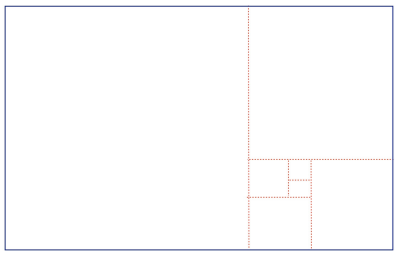


THE GOLDEN RECTANGLE

Is there such a thing as an "ideal proportion"? Perhaps. The Greeks believed the ideal proportion of art and architecture is employed in the golden rectangle. The golden rectangle is created by a mathematical ratio called the golden ratio – rotating the diagonal of the half square, which can continually be constructed.



What does it communicate?



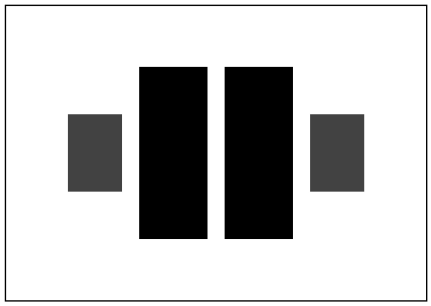
DEFINING BALANCE

Balance refers to an even distribution of visual weight. Symmetrical balance can feel strong and stable, while asymmetrical balance can feel quite spontaneous.

TYPES OF BALANCE

Symmetrical Balance

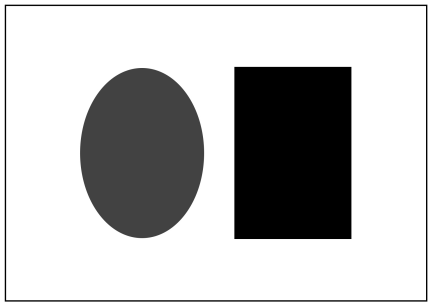
Symmetrical balance (formal balance) is created when the left side and right side of the vertical axis are identical in visual weight – line, shape, value, texture and color are a perfect mirror image.



What does it communicate?

Approximate Symmetrical Balance

Approximate symmetrical balance is created when the left side and right side of the vertical axis are similar in visual weight – line, shape, value, texture and color are an almost perfect mirror image.

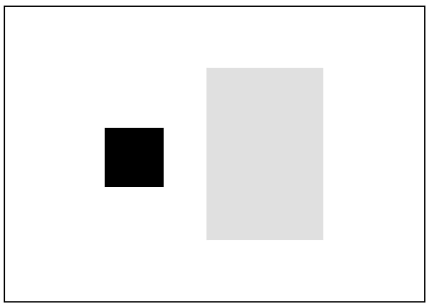


What does it communicate?

Asymmetrical Balance

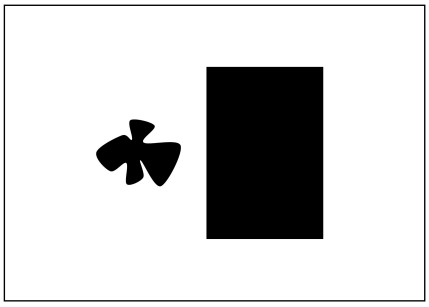
An asymmetrically balanced (informal balance) composition displays an uneven distribution of visual weights while visually balanced. Asymmetrical balance tends to feel natural, casual and spontaneous.

Asymmetrical Balance by Value
One way to achieve asymmetrical balance is by value. Lower values carry more visual weight than higher values. The black square is smaller, yet feels equally balanced with the larger higher value square.



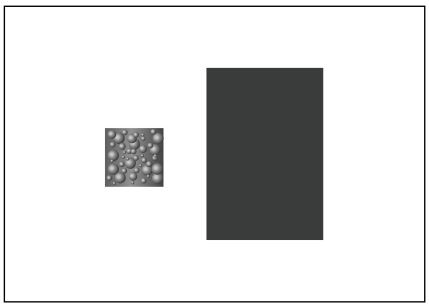
What does it communicate?

Asymmetrical Balance by Shape
Another way to achieve asymmetrical balance is by shape. Complex shapes carry more visual weight than simple shapes.



What does it communicate?

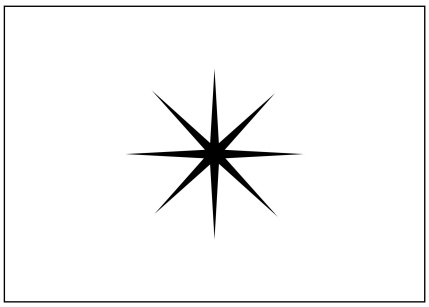
Asymmetrical Balance by Texture
Complex textures carry more visual weight than smooth textures creating asymmetrical balance by texture.



What does it communicate?

Radial Balance

Radial balance is created when the visual weights – line, shape, value, texture and color – are mirrored both vertically and horizontally around a central point. Like symmetrical balance, radial balance can also exhibit approximate radial balance.



What does it communicate?

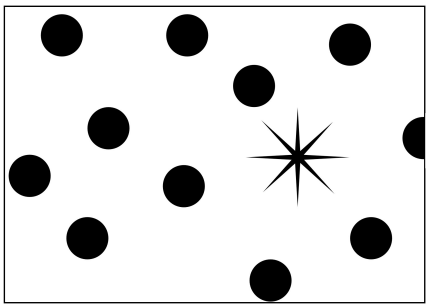
DEFINING FOCAL POINT

A focal point is the center of interest; it is what catches our eye and holds our attention.

CREATING A FOCAL POINT

Focal Point by Contrast

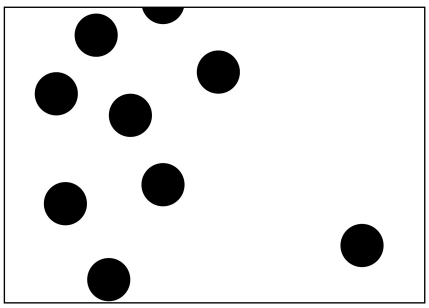
When one object or area differs from the rest, a focal point by contrast is created.



What does it communicate?

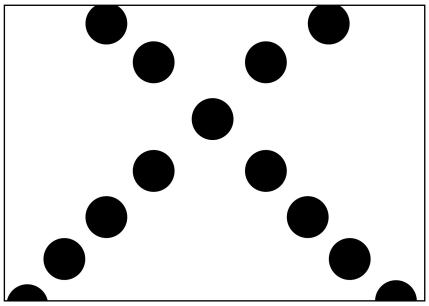
Focal Point by Isolation

When one object or area is isolated from the rest, a focal point by isolation is created.



What does it communicate?

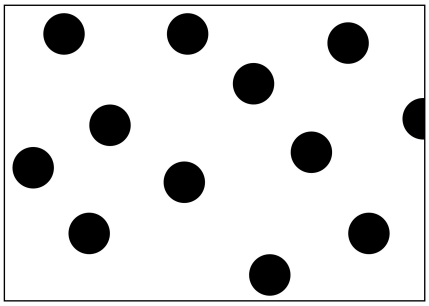
Focal Point by Placement
When the placement of objects leads our eye to one object or area, a focal point by placement is created.



What does it communicate?

ABSENCE OF FOCAL POINT

When all subjects or areas are emphasized, we experience an absence of focal point.



What does it communicate?

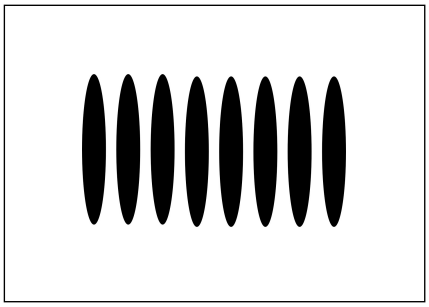
DEFINING RHYTHM

Rhythm refers to a clear repetition of elements. A strong rhythm produces the look and feel of movement, allowing our eye to jump or travel easily from one object to the next.

TYPES OF RHYTHM

Regular Repetition

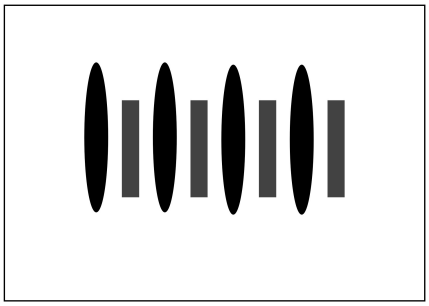
When similar elements are repeated in a clear and regular manner, a rhythm of regular repetition is established.



What does it communicate?

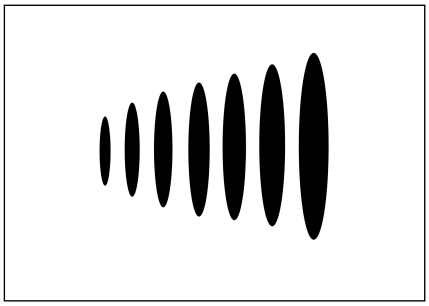
Alternating Repetition

When similar elements are repeated in a clear alternating manner, a rhythm of alternating repetition occurs.



What does it communicate?

Progressive Rhythm
When similar elements are repeated in a clear, gradually changing manner, a progressive rhythm is created.



What does it communicate?

DEFINING UNITY

Unity is the aesthetic arrangement of elements; the elements look as if they belong together. An important aspect of visual unity is that you see the design as a whole before you notice the individual elements.

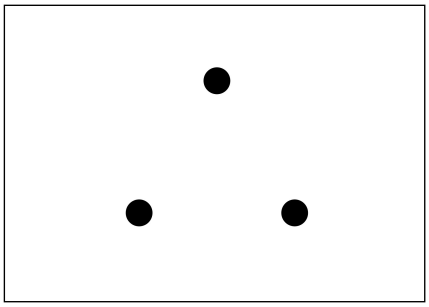
A unified design can have a pleasing interaction and therefore be considered harmonious, or an unpleasing interaction creating dissonance

THE GESTALT THEORY

The Gestalt Theory states that objects are first perceived as a unified whole before they are perceived as individual units. The aspects of the Gestalt Theory are: closure, continuation, repetition and proximity.Closure

Closure

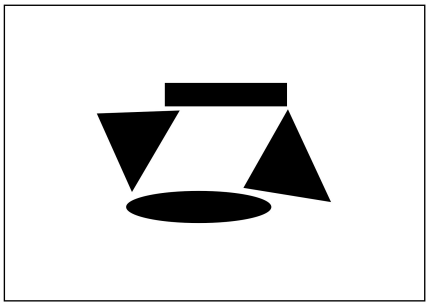
Closure is an aspect of the Gestalt Theory that occurs when separate objects are placed in a way that additional shapes are formed. What shape do you see here?



What does it communicate?

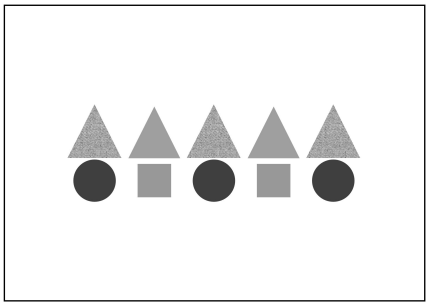
Continuation

Continuation is an aspect of the Gestalt Theory that occurs when something continues—usually a line, an edge, or direction—from one object to another.



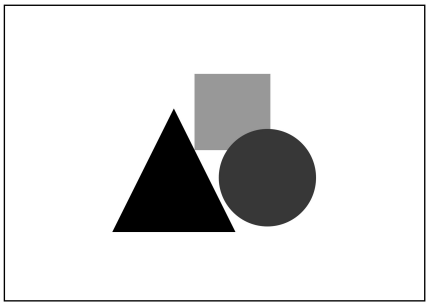
What does it communicate?

Repetition
Repetition is an aspect of the Gestalt Theory that occurs when objects that are similar in one or more aspects—line, shape, value, texture and color—are repeated and appear related.



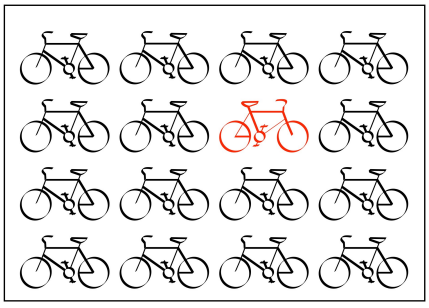
What does it communicate?

Proximity
Proximity is an aspect of the Gestalt Theory that occurs when separate objects look as if they belong together based on their proximity to one another.



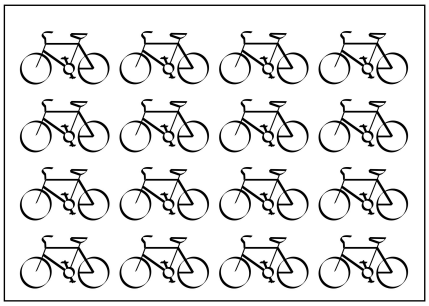
What does it communicate?

UNITY WITH VARIETY
Variety adds interest to a design by the use of diversifying elements.



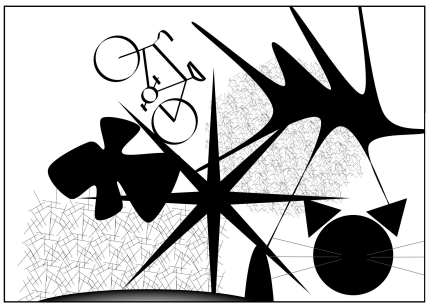
What does it communicate?

Excessive Unity
Too little variety tends to create a monotonous, static and uninteresting design.



What does it communicate?

Excessive Variety
Too much variety tends to create chaos and dissonance.



What does it communicate?