

CONNECTING TO DESIGN

Form and Content Analysis

The exercise of an analysis is to develop a clear understanding of form and content—what the elements and principles of design communicate.

step ONE – form and content

determine FORM and CONTENT

The first step is to address each specific element or principle. In analyzing your work...ask yourself these three questions: "What?" "Where?" "What?"

determining FORM

(the visual aspects of the composition – be specific and descriptive!)

- **WHAT** is the specific element or principle?
- **WHERE** is the specific element or principle located within the composition?

determining CONTENT

(the story, emotion or message that is being communicated – be specific and descriptive!)

- **WHAT** is the specific element or principle communicating?

Analysis FORMAT

Refer to *Connecting to Design* for full example.

(Example) ELEMENT: SHAPE: SIMPLE SHAPE

FORM: What are the visual and descriptive aspects?

Diamond shapes appear horizontally left, right and center of the composition, bird-type shapes are positioned on each side, above, and below the center diamond, raindrop shapes are positioned left and right of the bird-type shapes, and four circles surrounding center. These are simple shapes because they are easily grasped and remembered.

CONTENT: What is being communicated?

As these simple shapes are easily grasped and remembered, they give the piece a sense of comfort and familiarity.

step TWO – interpretation

After you have determined form and content, discuss the interpretation of your composition. How does the piece make you feel and why? This is a summary of your FORM and CONTENT. Refer to *Connecting to Design* for full example.

(Example) Summary of Form and Content

At first glance, the loose, twisting, and turning forms (complex, curvilinear, and organic) create a sense of playfulness, energy, and lighthearted movement. Yet, as the viewer lingers, the shapes begin to come alive and grow more defined: swirling lines suggest waves and ripples, sea creatures lap gently in the water, and birds seem to soar above. A sense of life and motion emerges, evoking childhood memories of summertime at the coast. The piece feels playful and comforting, and unexpectedly alive.