



ASSIGNMENTS TO ACCOMPANY:

Foundations of Art & Design 2e by Alan Pipes

ASSIGNMENT 1: VISUAL TRANSLATIONS

Elements: line, shape, value

Rules: contrast and emphasis

Objective:

- To gain practical understanding of the use of line, shape and value in composition.
- To develop skills in various methods of visual translation.

Process:

For this assignment, you will work closely with a small object (easy to carry around) of your choice. You will explore various ways of visually representing this object using the following visual translations:

1. A linear representation of the object:

By manipulating lines, create a composition defining your object through its main edges only. Start by hand drawing the object from different angles. Consider combining varied line treatments (thick, thin, dashed, delicate, subtle, etc.) as a way to assign visual emphasis.

2. A shape representation of the object:

All outlines should be eliminated and the object broken down into positive and negative shapes. The positive shapes should all be 100% black. This is not merely a silhouette drawing but an analytical composition made of the harmonic combination of simplified but recognizable shapes. Both positive and negative shapes need to work together in implying mass and volume.

3. A tonal representation:

Here the object should be defined by its value patterns rather than its edges. All outlines must be omitted and the object's volumes and masses should be depicted through the contrasts of tonal value, either through line pattern (line as value) or various tints of black. Representation of the object's actual texture is not important here. Focus instead on the quality of its planes and surfaces.

Technical considerations:

- Each representation should fit within A4 paper.
- This assignment can be executed either with felt-tip markers or through a vector-drawing computer program. In both cases, the initial composition studies and sketches should be drawn by hand, preferably using tracing paper to allow for quick multiple redrawing and refining.

ASSIGNMENT 2: WORD AND IMAGE

Elements: shape, space, texture

Rules: visual unity, balance, contrast and emphasis

Objective:

- To gain practical understanding of various methods for achieving visual emphasis.
- To develop a practical understanding of strategies of composition and layout.
- To visually coordinate disparate elements to achieve visual unity.

Process:

Select a cutout image from a magazine, or from your own photo library, which you find particularly interesting. Photocopy it and put that aside as your original. Repeat this process with a found word and a texture (if you prefer, you can create your own texture by rubbing on interesting surfaces). Next, make other copies in varied sizes of these three elements and with them create four compositions which explore visual emphasis in the following different ways:

1. Through contrast of scale:

Investigate how scale and proportion can be used to draw the eye to specific areas of the composition. Extreme variations in size next to each other can be used to achieve dramatic effects. You may crop portions of the elements off the edge of the picture frame to further dramatize scale.

2. Through placement:

Experiment with positioning the most important elements on privileged areas of the picture plane. You may also use overlapping, interpenetration and/or use size cues as a way to build spatial depth.

3. Through isolation:

Explore this special case of placement contrast in a composition which visually singles out the most important element from the others. Consider using directional cues and the effective use of negative space to guide the viewer's eye through the page.

4. Through absence of focal point:

This time you will eliminate the relative importance of any single element by either treating the whole composition as one main focal point or by establishing various focal points that balance each other out. Repeat patterns and random scattering of elements are valid strategies here.

You can repeat, resize, crop, and layer word, image, and texture as much as you see it necessary. Remember you can pull the letters apart, subtract portions and rearrange them spatially. The same applies to image and texture, which can also be fragmented and reassembled. Each composition should look visually balanced and visually integrated. Experiment with both symmetric and asymmetric compositions.

Technical considerations:

- Each composition should occupy a 21 x 30 cm (8 1/4 x 11 1/4 in) rectangular area, circumscribed with ruler and thin black marker, within a 25.5 x 35.5 cm (10 x 14 in) Bristol board.
- As an alternative, this assignment can be executed on the computer using scanned images in a page layout program.
- In either case, the basic components (image, word and texture) must remain the same through all compositions, while variations in their dimensions and cropping should be explored.

ASSIGNMENT 3: VISUAL NARRATIVES

Elements: time and motion, space

Rules: rhythm, scale and proportion

Objective:

- To introduce principles of modular and spatial relationships, use of grids, and visual continuity in sequential arrangements.
- To gain practical understanding of visual approaches for representation of narratives.

Process:

You are going to design an accordion book. This book must contain the sensory record of a trip of your choice. In it you will describe through images and words the many sensory encounters that are part of your trip. Think of the multiple events that can occur even during the most ordinary trip. For example, when you leave your house to come to college, what are the things you usually come across? What are the sights, smells, tastes, sounds? Traffic, music on the radio, street noises, speed, etc. Although you might perceive these things one at a time, they often take place simultaneously. How would you visually describe these overlapping sensations and the passing of time within a spatial framework?

In order to define your imagery, think of symbolic representations: metaphors (a thing regarded as symbolic of something else), metonymies (word or expression used as a substitute for something with which it is closely associated), onomatopoeias (formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named), etc. Both words and images can be used. Search for your own original format and avoid defaulting to a comic strip design. Consider the use of repeated figures, multiple images, or

motion blur as possible ways to convey a temporal dimension to your work.

Think of the page as a structural space: consider contrast relationships, scale, value, texture and patterns as the vocabulary from which you will articulate your ideas. As a way to organize this space, explore the use of grids and shallow/deep spaces. Keep in mind that a book, despite being kinetic, is also a single piece. As such, it is important to balance rhythmic flow with visual unity. The pages must be recognizable as parts of the same whole without becoming monotonous or predictable.

Technical considerations:

- The format of each page should be 13 x 18 cm (5 x 7 in) tall, five pages long. Use stiff card or heavy paper for the final book. This means you will need a sheet that is at least 63.5 (25 in) wide so it can be folded into the five panels.
- Alternatively, you can piece two strips together: one measuring 38 cm (15 in) and the other 25.5 cm (10 in), allowing an extra 0.6 cm (¼ in) for a flap that will be used to glue the two pieces on their reverse side.
- You can use any combination of techniques for graphic treatment: collage, acrylic or gouache, coloured pencil, markers, India ink, etc.
- Start by storyboarding different ideas as thumbnails before you work at the actual size. This will allow you to jot down ideas more quickly and encourage creative thinking.

ASSIGNMENT 4: COLOUR MAPPING AND APPLICATION

Elements: colour, value, texture

Rules: unity and harmony, balance

Objective:

- To be able to understand and apply colour schemes.
- To develop skills in colour mixing.
- To explore the expressive potential of colour.

Process:

Part 1

Select a reproduction of a painting characteristic of any period or style. Determine which are its dominant, supporting and accent colours. By mixing paints, try to obtain samples close to the colours in the original painting. Cut out various squares of the following dimensions: 10 cm (4 in), 5 cm (2 in) and 2.5 cm (1 in). Now, as you attempt to recreate the basic colour scheme you see in your artwork, paint the squares in the following manner:

- 10 cm (4 in) for dominant colours
- 5 cm (2 in) for supporting colours
- 2.5 cm (1 in) for accents

Paste the squares together to create a colour scheme based on the colours of your painting. Try to determine the placement of each colour in your scheme according to their three defining attributes: hue, saturation and brightness.

Part 2

Now, referring to your perceived colour scheme, design a poster advertising an exhibition of artwork of your chosen period or style. You may not use any examples of actual paintings. You will have to represent that period or style in an abstract manner, through colour, texture, pattern, shapes and lines. Consider how colour interactions, such as visual mixings and simultaneous contrasts, can alter your perception of the original colours and thus be used to intensify or tone down a chromatic arrangement. As you define the space in your poster, look for ways of using colour to build emphasis, balance, or spatial depth. The poster headline should be the name of the historical period or style plus a second word denoting an emotion or mood associated with it.

Technical considerations:

- In Part 1, use Bristol board and acrylic paints for the colour samples. Lay the squares out next to each other on a 30 x 35.5 cm (11 x 14 in) Bristol board.
- In Part 2, use Illustration board for the poster. The dimensions of the poster should be 30 x 43 cm (11 x 17 in). You can use both collage colour samples on the board or paint directly over it.
- Alternatively, this assignment can be executed on the computer using a paint program.

ASSIGNMENT 5: VISUAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Elements: colour

Rules: rhythm, thematic and visual unity

Objective:

- To understand and apply various colour strategies in a coordinated manner.
- To develop skills in thematic visual thinking.
- To learn how to balance visual repetition and variety.

Process:

You will create a series of four interrelated images, with one image per panel. Each image should describe one of the four phases of a transformation in time or one of four sequential spatial locations.

Choose one transformation or location from the list below or come up with your own:

Temporal transformations:

- the change of seasons
- the four moon phases
- the life cycle: birth, growth, decay and rebirth
- the water cycle: evaporation, condensation, saturation and rainfall

Spatial locations:

- through the cardinal points: north, south, east and west
- through habitats: wilderness, farm, village and city
- through a house: living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom
- through the earth's main layers: atmosphere, crust, mantle and core
- through an ecological hierarchy: individual, population, community and ecosystem

The four panels should be clearly different but should also be cohesive. In other words, each panel should have its own unique visual composition, but there should also be an underlying motif, theme or structure which will bring them together as part of the same whole. Remember, the subject matter is just a departure point for the search for visual expression. Ultimately, your design must be original, based on your research and personal interpretation of the chosen topic, not a literal description of it. Consider symbols, metaphors, rhythms and free associations, in order to convey your specific message. Your approach can range from figurative to non-representational.

The overall colour scheme should include all of the following:

1. An analogous colour study based on colours extracted from a natural object.
2. A complementary colour study based on colours extracted from a natural object.
3. A transparency colour study.
4. A monochromatic study.

These can be distributed throughout the panels at your own discretion. Some panels might have more than one colour study, while others might have only one study or none at all.

Technical considerations:

- Cut four panels, each measuring 13 x 13 cm (5 x 5 in) out of Illustration board.
- You can use any combination of techniques for graphic treatment: collage, acrylic or gouache, coloured pencil, markers, India ink, etc. Alternatively, this assignment can be executed with a computer paint program.
- Start by sketching out some ideas on a smaller format, so you can let your ideas flow quickly before committing to the execution of the best idea. As you think of possible solutions, consider how each idea would develop along all four panels.

ASSIGNMENT 6: TIME AND MOTION

1 A gesture strip: Draw the boxes for a comic strip comprising three frames. Get a friend to pose for you, preferably standing (don't worry if he or she cannot stand still). Try to express in a gesture drawing the space your friend is occupying. Then ask him or her to change the pose and do another drawing in the second frame. Change the pose again for frame three. Try to incorporate as many cartoon devices as you can to show movement.

ASSIGNMENT 7: COLOUR

1 Found-object colour wheel: Draw or copy an Itten colour wheel (fig. 7.10, page 150) and search the rubbish (in your junk drawers at home, in the park or in the recycling bin) for small, brightly coloured found objects – mainly plastic – which correspond to the colours of the wheel. Make another wheel using just the found objects, ordered by their position on the colour wheel.

2 Brightness scale: Draw twelve equal squares in a line, abutting each other. Using two complementary colours, such as red and green, blue and orange, or yellow and purple, paint a square of pure colour at each end of your scale. For the middle colour, add equal amounts of the two pure colours to create a neutral. To each pure colour add small amounts of its complement so that you have five steps on either side of the middle colour.

ASSIGNMENT 8: BALANCE

1 Make an asymmetrical collage: Using cut-out coloured geometrical shapes – circles, triangles and rectangles – make a collage. Start with large shapes that break up the background and then add smaller shapes, keeping the overall image balanced and interesting. Avoid putting anything in the centre or in the corners. Do not line up two or more objects on their centre axes. Test the balance by looking at the collage from different directions and through a mirror. A well balanced composition will be slightly bottom heavy. Do not glue down until you are satisfied with the composition.

ASSIGNMENT 9: SCALE AND PROPORTION

1 Visual analysis of design: Find some pictures of classic product designs, photographed side on – for example a chair by Charles Eames or a VW Beetle. Photocopy them or use tracing paper to see how many features of the design can be represented by circles, squares, Golden Sections and Golden Ellipses (an ellipse that will fit comfortably into a Golden Rectangle).

ASSIGNMENT 10: CONTRAST AND EMPHASIS

1 Value pattern: Starting with a Renaissance painting such as fig. 11.17, page 237, use tracing paper to simplify the main shapes until you are left with just two or three biomorphic shapes. Fill these in black, against a white ground. Make another version, white on black.

ASSIGNMENT 11: RHYTHM

1 Make a psychedelic poster of your dream gig: Draw out the names of your favourite bands in bubble writing along curvy flowing lines, then expand each letter to fill any remaining white space around it. Colour the letter shapes in bright colours with the ground in a complementary colour.

2 Making melodies: Using elements such as straight vertical lines or semi-circular arcs, design some simple motifs. Combine these motifs, repeating, inverting and reversing them, to form a linear 'melody'. Trace this four times freehand, end to end, on to a long strip of paper. Prepare three more identical strips to complete the four 'voices' of your canon. Place the second strip above or below the first, displaced to the right, and the third strip the same interval along again. Try to develop linear continuances from the lines of one voice to the next to create new unexpected shapes. When you find a pleasing combination, trace a section containing all four voices on to a new sheet of paper.