Senior Art 4M

Showalter

**Composing a Work of ART**

 *The elements of design are the building blocks that artists use to create a work of art. While the principles of design is how an artist puts together the elements. Compositional techniques further edit and tighten the artistic vision of a work of art.*

*Elements of Design*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LINE/DIRECTION** | * linear marks made with a medium
* the edge created when two shapes meet
* all lines have direction - Horizontal, Vertical or Oblique.
* horizontal suggests calmness, stability and tranquillity.
* vertical gives a feeling of balance, formality and alertness.
* oblique suggests movement and action
 |
| **SHAPE/FORM** | * is a self contained defined area of geometric or organic form
* positive shape in an art work automatically creates a negative shape.
* shape is 2D, Form is 3D
 |
| **SPACE** | * positive – negative space in a composition
* illusion of perspective (placement, overlap/layer, scale)
 |
| **TEXTURE** | * is the surface quality of a shape - rough, smooth, soft hard glossy...
* can be real or implied
 |
| **COLOUR** | * colours are called hues
* addition of white creates tints/addition of black creates shades
* specific colour schemes will create different visual affects
 |
| **VALUE** | * is the darkness of a colour
* also called tone
 |

*Principles of Design*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **BALANCE** | * is similar to the balance in physics
* symmetry (equal), asymmetry (unbalanced)
* real or implied
 |
| **GRADATION** | * of size and direction may produce linear perspective
* from warm to cool and dark to light will produce aerial perspective
* adds movement and interest
 |
| **REPETITION** | * creation of some sort of order (grid, linear, off-set, etc)
* creation of a pattern
 |
| **VARIEITY** | * altering, adjusting or changing a component of a composition to create visual interest
* breaks up potential monotony
 |
| **CONTRAST** | * juxtaposition of opposing elements to create emphasis and interest
* too much contrast will result in chaos
 |
| **HARMONY** | * combining similar and/or related elements will result in a work having a satisfying effect
* making sure that the repetition of the above throughout a composition will result in all parts of the art working together
 |
| **DOMINANCE** | * gives a work interest and a place in the work for the eye to focus on
* applied to one or two elements will create emphasis and a focal point
 |
| **UNITY** | * reinforcing the concept of the work through main elements and principles
* visual linking of various components and is visually more comfortable for the viewer

revision of John Lovett, 1999 |

*Compositional Techniques*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RULE OF THIRDS** | * visually divide the work into thirds horizontally and vertically. Where the lines intersect are the most interesting and dynamic places in the image – focal point
* subject matter placed in the centre of the image is static and visually boring (Japanese Flag Sydrome)
 |
| **GOLDEN RULE/****GOLDEN RATIO** | * mathematical formulae for finding the most interesting place on the picture plane – historical significance based upon nature
 |
| **FRAMING** | * use of items in the art work can frame a focal point
* zooming in on a specific component
* reframing of the subject matter
 |
| **POSITION** | * artist finding the most appropriate pose, direction, view to convey a well considered work with the greatest visual impact
 |
| **VIEW POINT** | * think in terms of a camera
* zoom in or out, lower and look up or above and look down
 |
| **LIGHTING** | * effect of outside natural light and its variations
* effect of single light source and location verses multiple sources of light
* reflection of light from shining surfaces verses surfaces that absorb light
 |
| **SHADOWS** | * will create dynamic shapes dependent upon lighting
* can create extremely dramatic or soft moods
* consider silhouettes
 |
| **CROP** | * get rid of any visual clutter that doesn’t contribute to the overall image
* images are much more interesting when part of the subject matter is cut off or touches the edges
 |

*Collage Techniques*

1. Cut exactly around the part of the image that you want to preserve. No Halos!
2. Overlap and create groupings. Don’t spread your images out!
3. Negative space/white space should not be in the centre of your composition. No Japanese Flag Syndrome, please!
4. Experiment with placement. Don’t settle with the first arrangement!
5. You will need more source material than you think.