

CHAPTER TWO

The language of Basic Design

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Introduction

The word "design" refers to a deliberate plan to imagine, create, or form ideas, to bring them to actual reality. "basic design" on the other hand entails the fundamentals or insights into design areas, starting from scratch, with special focus on the application of the basic elements of design in terms of line, colour, shape, space, and form. Literally, they are the fundamental languages of design.

As a subject, Basic Design focuses on leading the students into a candid understanding of the formal elements, guiding principles, and their application to two-dimensional designs, as well as to three-dimensional design. Therefore, basic design is an all-encompassing subject which covers visual communication design, textiles, painting, drawing, and other aspects of three-dimensional art, including installation and assemblage techniques.

To design is to "contrive" to "formulate", it is an intentional action to create on purpose. Hornby (2010) explains design as the general arrangement of the different parts of something that are made, such as a building, book, machine, etc. Design is the art or process of deciding how work would seem, by drawing plans, making models, etc. It is also a drawing of a plan from which

finished work may be made. The purpose may be functional, it may be decorative, educative, informative, and it may be for entertainment, therapeutic, or economic purpose. Though, the outcome of the design must be pleasing and attractive to the eyes.

Basic design is a careful arrangement of elements with or without forms which develops into a careful compositional arrangement of all the elements of design.

Elements of Design

The element of Basic Design is the same as the elements of Art. In Visual Art, those elements are the basic ingredients the artist applies to produce imagery. elements of Art are those materials or tools that the artist used in deriving his/her artistic objectives. Applying these elements of art results in the utilization of the visual language of art. They are those qualities of a design that can be seen and worked with independently of its figurative content. Elements of Art are the alphabets of the visual language. The statements and expressions of the artist come into being with the aid of an organized and careful use of the elements. These elements of art are as follows; line, shape texture, value, space, form and colour.

Line

This is any mark made on any surface by a moving point or dot (.). It is an expression of an artist through which communicates emotion as well as direction and movement. Line is a force derived from the artist who drew it. It is a long narrow mark, which is made on a

surface; it varies from one another, in thickness, and length. It is made by the man who drew it. The physical characteristics of line are many; line may be straight, either vertical or horizontal, may be curved, direct, meandering, short, long; thin or thick, zig-zag line, or serpentine line. Lines can be grouped into curved (Rhythmic line) and straight lines (structural line). In art, line is also used as a symbol that artists use in making statements or expressing ideas. These characteristics of line have built-in associations that the artist or designer or user can command. A line may be of any length and breadth. An infinite number of combinations of a long and short, thick and thin line can be according to their uses, divided, balanced or unbalanced, a pictorial area or a designing surface.

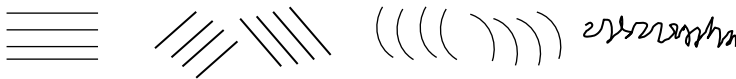


Fig 1: various types of lines. Emodi, 2021

Shape

Shape is a line enclosing an area. Shape can be defined as any visually perceived area of value, texture, colour or line or combination of these elements. Shape is two-dimensional while form is three-dimensional. Shape is the outer edge of an object. When a line covers a space, we have a shape. In pictorial design, shapes are flat or two-dimensional in the three-dimensional forms of art,

shapes are more often solid masses. There are absolute shapes which are geometrical; they can be described with rulers and squares. The relative shape is organic mostly from nature.

Texture

Texture is the surface appearance of any object or composition, that is to say, the surface character of a material that can be experienced through touch or the illusion of touch. It shows the amount of roughness or smoothness of a body, material, or object.



Fig 1: Visual texture suggesting movement. Source: <https://254-online.com/texture-as-a-visual-element-in-graphic-design/>

Texture can be tactile, which possesses real physical touch value, as in the feel of sand, paper, glass, or wool. These have a sense of touch. Texture can also be stimulated or visual, i.e. it cannot be felt. It is made to look

so to the eyes, whether it is decorative effects of colour, pattern, tone, or line.

Value

Value, also sometimes referred to as tone, is the relative lightness and darkness of an object (Farley, 2009). It is a relative degree of light or dark. Value can be referred to as the degree of darkness or lightness of a picture, or an object when placed with others.



Fig 1: Silhouette of dogs showing various levels of shades. Source: <https://www.sitepoint.com/principles-of-design-value/>

Value is very important in any design or work of Art. It enables the artist to create contrast which aids one to distinguish one form from the other. Value can also suggest the lightening of an object by a variation in the thickness of a line but, its main concern is with what might be called the objective reality of a solid thing. Value can also be referred to as Tone.

Space

It is an interval or measurable distance between points or images. It is the area where artwork or a design

is created. Space can be described as the distance between and around forms.

Form

Form is that which is used in defining the shape of anything with volume or mass. In art, form has three dimensions, length, breadth, and depth. Form is used to describe the inner structure of a particular object. Form can be seen as the organization and arrangement of visual elements that develop unity in designs or artwork. It is the total appearance or organization of a design or an artwork.

Colour

Colour is an integral part of a design. It is the visual response to different electromagnetic wavelengths of the sunlight, identified as red, green, blue, cyan, magenta and yellow. They have the physical properties of hue, intensity, and value. These wavelengths can be in form of light or pigments. Pigments are the actual colours we see and mix to realize other colours. Colours are arranged in order. The first order is known as the primary colours (Red, yellow, and blue). The second order of colours is otherwise known as secondary colours, while the last but not least is the third order of colours. This is also known as the tertiary colours.

The Principles of Design

Principles of design are the basic rules or guides of art. Egonwa (2012) sees principles of art as the basic aesthetic considerations that guide the organization of a

work of art. Principles of design are the same as principles of art. Ndubisi (2010) opines principles of art as principles of design which guides and helps the artist or the designer to make good use of his tools which are the elements of art/design effectively, to achieve some order, unity, and produce pleasing work of Art. These principles of design are Balance, Variety, Rhythm or Continuity, Dominance or Emphasis, Repetition, and Proportion.

Balance

This can be achieved between line and space or between form and value. Balance is the arranging of elements so that no one part of a work overpowers or seems heavier than any other part, Ngumah, Ayoola, Dalhatu, and Samkay (2013). There are two types of balance, Asymmetrical and Symmetrical balance.

Asymmetrical Balance is otherwise known as informal balance, and it occurs when elements are visually imbalanced. Ndubisi (2010) defines it as dynamic balance.

Symmetrical Balance can be seen when the balance is formal and equal on both sides. Symmetrical balance is attained when a design is split by a line of symmetry; appears to be the same on both sides. The human body is an example of symmetrical balance. Symmetrical is a good technique for good balance, but not necessarily the best for all types of designs.

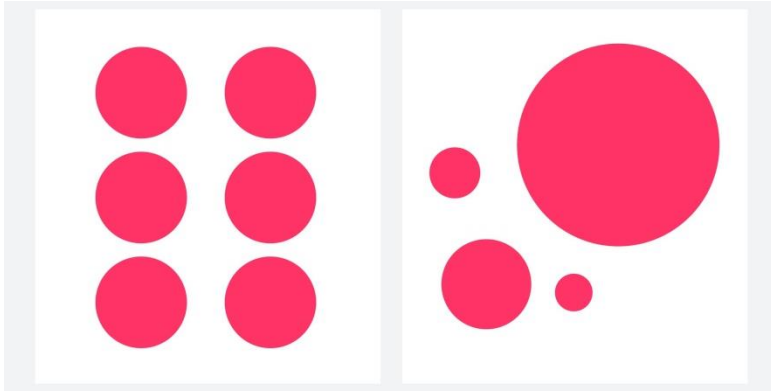


Fig 2: Illustration shows symmetrical and asymmetrical balance in design. Source; [https://www.invisionapp.com/ defined/principles-of-design](https://www.invisionapp.com/defined/principles-of-design)

Variety is the use of different sizes or shapes or colours to create interesting visual differences in a work of art. It could be seen as showing differences between different sections of a design. Contrast, highlight, and emphasis are usually employed to show this.

Rhythm means the arrangement of art elements in a repeated manner to achieve harmony. It is also known as continuity. Rhythm is an organized movement of elements, which are characterized by a proper relationship and inter-dependence of parts of one another and the whole. It is the flowing of designs into one another. It is the movement featured by repetition of different conditions, Ndubisi (2010). Rhythm is the movement or variation characterized by repetition or alternation of different qualities, quantities, or conditions.



Fig: Repetition creates rhythm in design. Source: <https://www.selfmadedesigner.com/graphic-design-principles/>

The more elements are repeated, the stronger we associate them with a certain idea or effect. Also, the more we repeat an element, the more rhythm a composition has (Ramirez, 2022). It is like routine work resulting in a pattern and shows that the design of such artwork has a 'beat' or 'flow' going with it. This means keeping your design in a certain format. It is the suggestion or illusion of motion in a design.

Dominance principle, otherwise known as emphasis, is when extra attention is given to an area within the design. This can be because that area is more important or has peculiarities worth emphasizing, that is a "focal point". Dominance is extra attention given to an area within an artwork due to the vital contributions of such an area. Dominance is also similar to emphasis. This is achieved when a certain part of a design is highlighted or

emphasized to get attention as a focus centre with a variety of shapes, colours and lines.

Repetition is sometimes related to rhythm and continuity. It is achieved when a unit of design is repeated severally to create what is seen as a visual flow in a design composition. Repetition occurs when elements that have something in common are repeated regularly or irregularly.

Proportion is a measurement of the size and quantity of elements within a composition. It is the relationship of one part with the other parts in a given artwork or any design. Proportion is a comparative relationship between elements in a design. It is the placing of designed elements in relative proportion to a space. Proportion is to be considered in terms of a given space or surface within an art working space to fit the size and quantity of elements within a composition. It is the relationship of one part with the other parts in given artwork.

Harmony in design is when an artwork achieves a sort of unified form, a comfortable feeling of completeness. This makes the design seem to be unified, with no friction or conflicting parts. Some forms of pattern repetition and wholesomeness are usually used to show harmony.

Question

1. Define the concept of design
2. Explain in detail the term "basic design"
3. State the elements of basic design
4. Carefully explain the principles of design.

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