

# Principles of Organization

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# Structure of Art

- **Components of Art - Analyzed by the Degrees of Representation**
  - Subject Matter
  - Content
  - Context
  - Form
    - Elements of Design
      - Line
      - **Shape & Space**
      - Value
      - Texture
      - Color
      - (Type)
    - Principles of Organization
      - **Balance**
      - Emphasis & Focal Point
      - **Rhythm**
      - **Scale & Proportion**
      - Unity

Rule of Thirds  
Visual Flow

# Composition

- **Composition** in Design is the overall arrangement and organization of formal elements on the two-dimensional surface.
- Line, shape, space, value, texture, color and type are the elements of design that make up a two-dimensional composition.
- A good composition utilizes these elements of design and follow the principles of organization to create a visually interesting and unified whole.

## Why?

- Communication
- Create Order out of Chaos
- Foundation

# Principles of Organization

- **UNITY**
- **EMPHASIS & FOCAL POINT**
- **SCALE & PROPORTION**
- **BALANCE**
- **RHYTHM**



# Principles of Organization

# Unity

# Principles of Organization

**Unity** creates an integrated image in which all the elements are working together to support the design as a whole.

A **unified design** is greater than the sum of its parts; the design is seen as a whole first, before the individual elements are noticed.

**Unity** can be compared to harmony, integrity or wholeness.

# Unity



Wayne Thiebaud, *Paint Cans*, 1990, Lithograph

- Unity means there is an agreement among all the elements in a design.
- All elements of the image belong together.
- All elements work together to create a harmonious image.
- If an image is not harmonious, elements appear separate or unrelated.
- The image to the left uses line, shape, and color, as well as an organized direction of these elements to create a harmonious & unified composition.



- The overall composition should be dominant over its individual parts.
- Unlike in a scrapbook, this collage utilizes images to create a unified composition rather than placing emphasis on each individual item.
- The content (idea) or subject matter of each individual image does not create **visual** unity. It is the visual elements and tools utilized that have the capability of creating a unified image.



What elements of design in this composition help unify the composition?



Robert Rauschenberg, *Charlene*, 1954



In this painting, visual unity is created with repeated shapes (rectangles), texture, and color.



Robert Rauschenberg, *Charlene*, 1954

This can be done in both representational and non-representational compositions.

# Unity

## CRAP

- Contrast
- Repetition
- Alignment
- Proximity

## CRAP in Unity

- Continuation
- Repetition
- Alignment
- Proximity





Helmut Newton

**Contrast** Helmut Newton uses light x dark to unify his compositions and create focal point.



## Continuation



Edward Hopper,  
*Hotel By a Railroad*,  
1952

Edward Hopper finds lines that seem to connect naturally. Look at the man's left arm and how it almost seamlessly connects to the dresser and the woman's knees.



## Repetition

Shifra Levyathan,  
*Colorful Neglect*, 70x50cm

- Repetition means to repeat something.
- Repetition can be used with any element of design: line, shape, space, value, texture, color and type; and their characteristics, such as direction, character, etc.
- Repetition should not be used to create a predictable composition, but rather create a harmonious image.
- Create interesting variations when using repetition.



## Alignment - The Grid



John Hilliard, *The Most Plausible Theory*, 1977

## Proximity



Caravaggio,  
*The Calling of St. Matthew*, 1604

To unify the figures sitting at the table, Caravaggio places them in **proximity** to each other. The small shapes of light against the black background belong to a group of objects. To place an emphasis on Jesus, he is set aside from the figures at the table.

# Unity & Gestalt - Visual Perception



A **gestalt** is created because the mind simplifies and organizes information. It does this by grouping elements together to create new wholes.

Understanding how the mind groups elements helps us understand how **unity** can be achieved.

# Gestalt Laws

## Closure

Visual Grouping explains why incomplete figures are perceived as complete or whole.

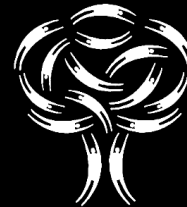


## Pragnanz

We organize our perceptions into the simplest possible experience. The Law of Simplicity.

## Common Fate

Describes how objects moving together are perceived as belonging together.



## Proximity

Objects near one another in space or time are perceived as belonging together.

## Continuity

Objects aligned along a line or curve are perceived as belonging together, and we will perceive the simplest, smooth path, rather than a complex path.

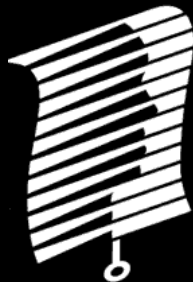


## Similarity

Objects with similar characteristics, such as form, color, size, and brightness, are perceived as belonging together.

## Figure/Ground

Refers to the relationship between positive elements and negative space. The eye separates whole figures from their background in order to understand what's being seen.



## Symmetry

Explains our tendency to perceive symmetric objects as figures on a background.

# Overview: Unity

- Harmony
- Visual Unity
- “CRAP-U”
- Contrast - Continuation
- Repetition
- Alignment
- Proximity
- Gestalt

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Rule of Thirds  
Visual Flow



Principles of Organization

**Emphasis & Focal Point**

# Emphasis & Focal Point

A **Focal Point** is the location in a composition that attracts the viewer's attention and may repeatedly draw attention back to itself.

A **Focal Point** is where the artist has **deliberately** placed **emphasis** within their composition.



Edouard Manet, *Oysters*, 1862

# Creating a Point of Emphasis/Focal Point

- Contrast
- Convergence
- Isolation
- Placement
- The Unusual



## Contrast

Use of contrast.

It refers to difference.

Any specific type of difference in the composition can result in that element becoming a focal point.

Difference or contrast can be achieved by changing the characteristics of the Elements of Design: **line**, **shape**, **value** **texture**, **color** and Principles of Organization such as movement, direction, etc...



## Convergence

Use implied lines to direct a viewer's eye to an object or element.

This technique is known as "convergence".



## Isolation

Isolate an element from others.

Whenever one shape or element is separated from a group or area, it becomes isolated and in turn, becomes a focal point.



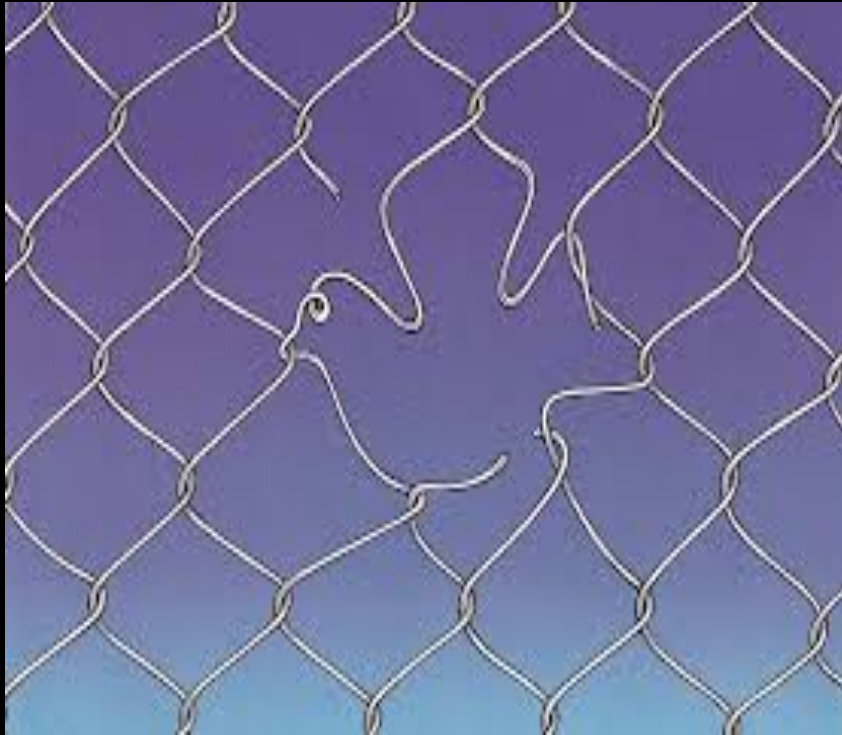
## Placement

Objects that are placed in the center of the picture plane or near center, will become a focal point.

Most of the time, a non-centered focal point is preferred.

By placing an object or element just off center, you can make a focal point through placement without affecting the aesthetics of the artwork.

See **Rule of Thirds!**



## The Unusual

Introduce an object or element that is unusual to the composition.

This element stands out and gets the viewer's attention.



Rule of Thirds

## Rule of Thirds

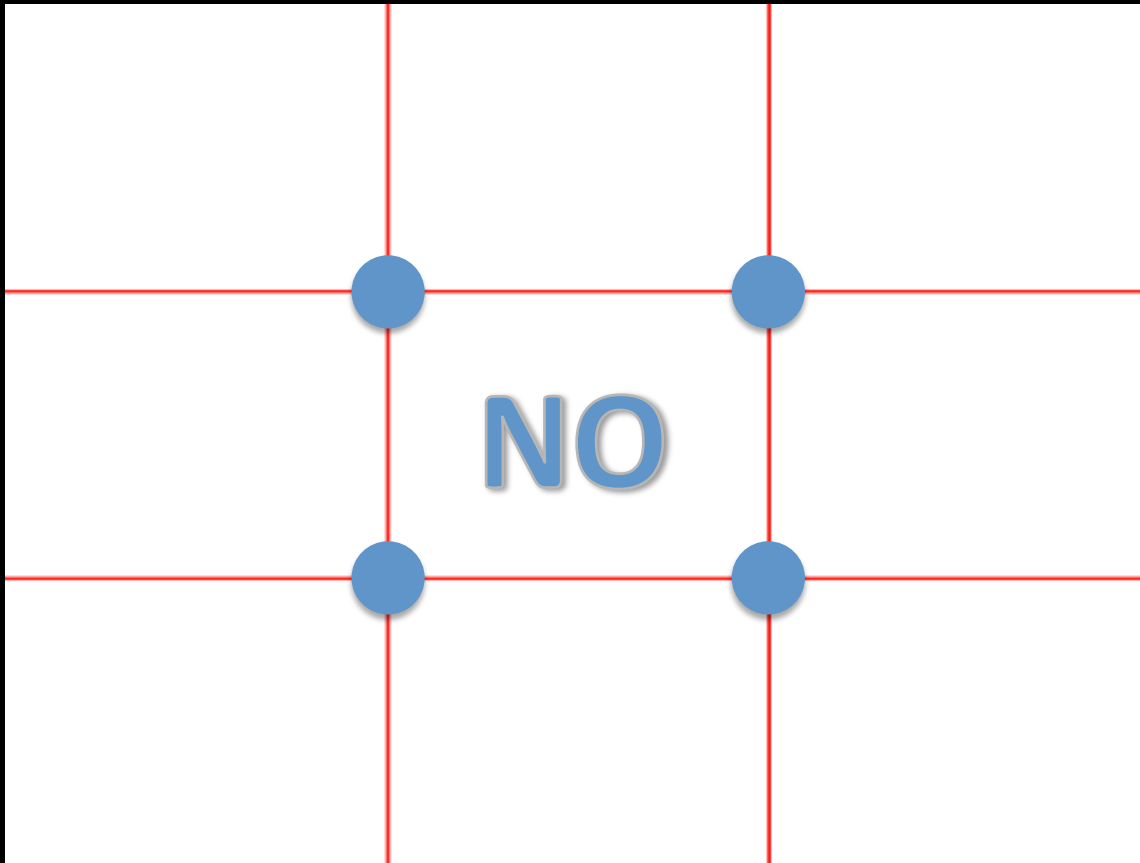


<https://creativemarket.com/blog/2014/08/04/photography-15-great-examples-of-the-rule-of-thirds-in-action>

When the picture plane is divided into thirds both vertically and horizontally as a tool to arrange and organize elements of a composition.

Important compositional elements should be placed along those lines or at their intersections.

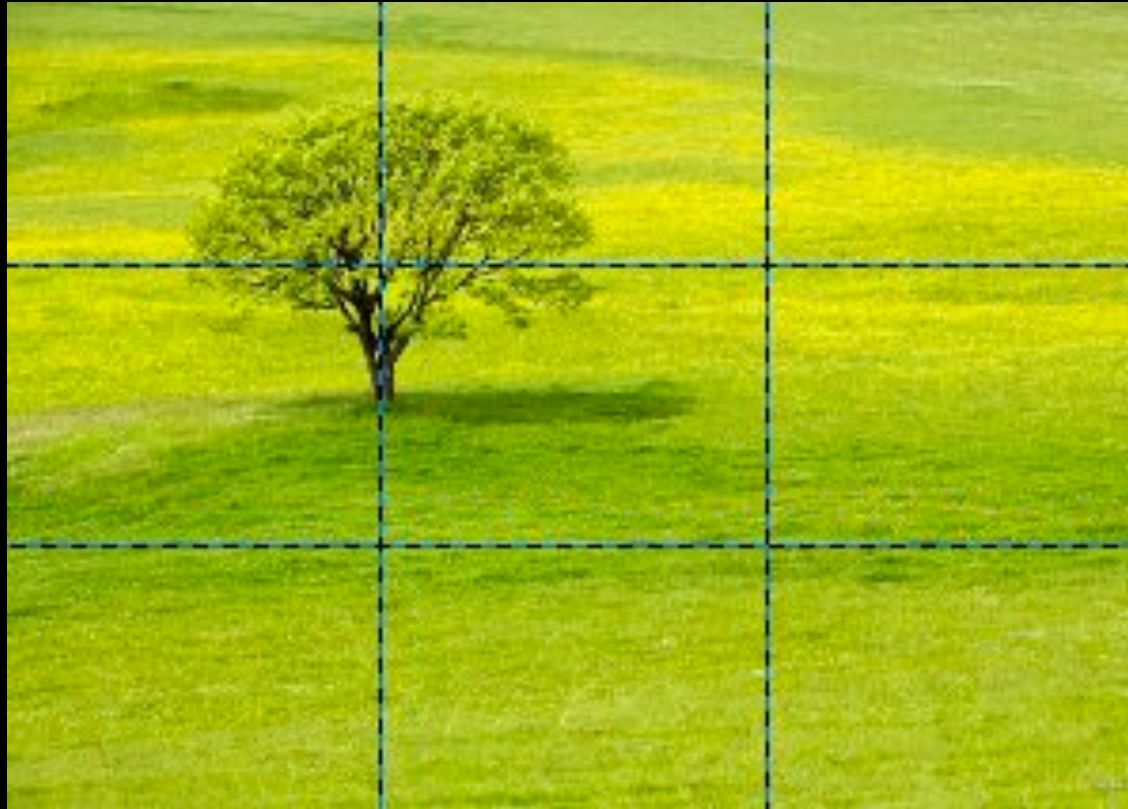
## Rule of Thirds



**Power Points:** best placement for **Focal Point**

**NO**

Avoid placing any strong elements in the center, this creates a static image and works against establishing a visual flow



## Rule of Thirds

Place key elements of  
your composition at  
**Power Points**

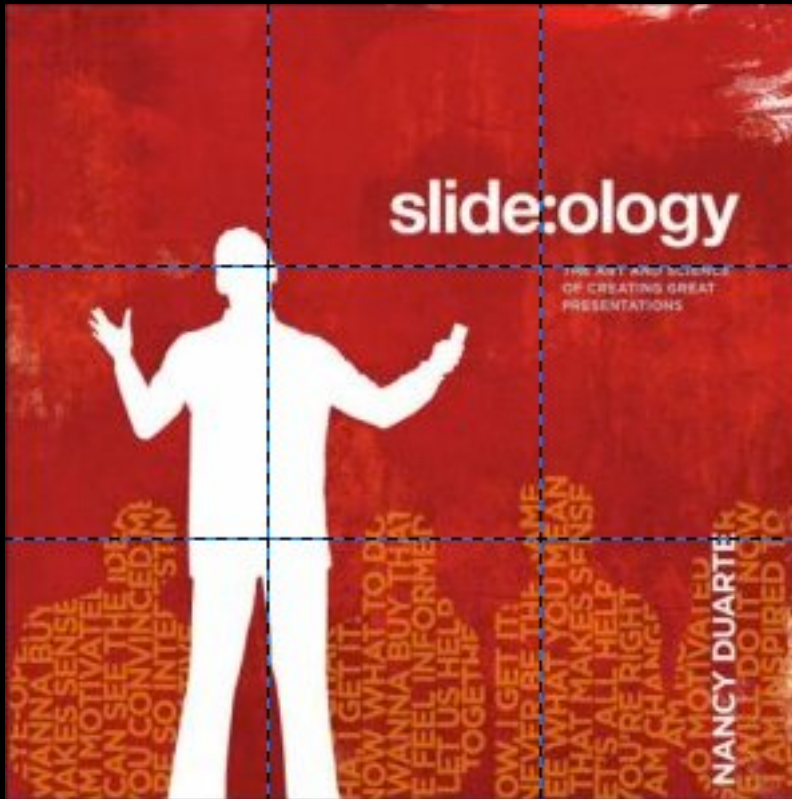
<http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/rule-of-thirds-powerpoint/>



## Rule of Thirds

Place key elements of your composition at along **horizontal lines**

<http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/rule-of-thirds-powerpoint/>



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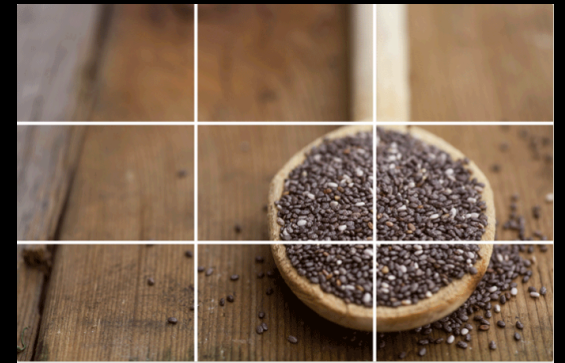
## Rule of Thirds

Place key elements of your composition at along **vertical** lines





## Rule of Thirds

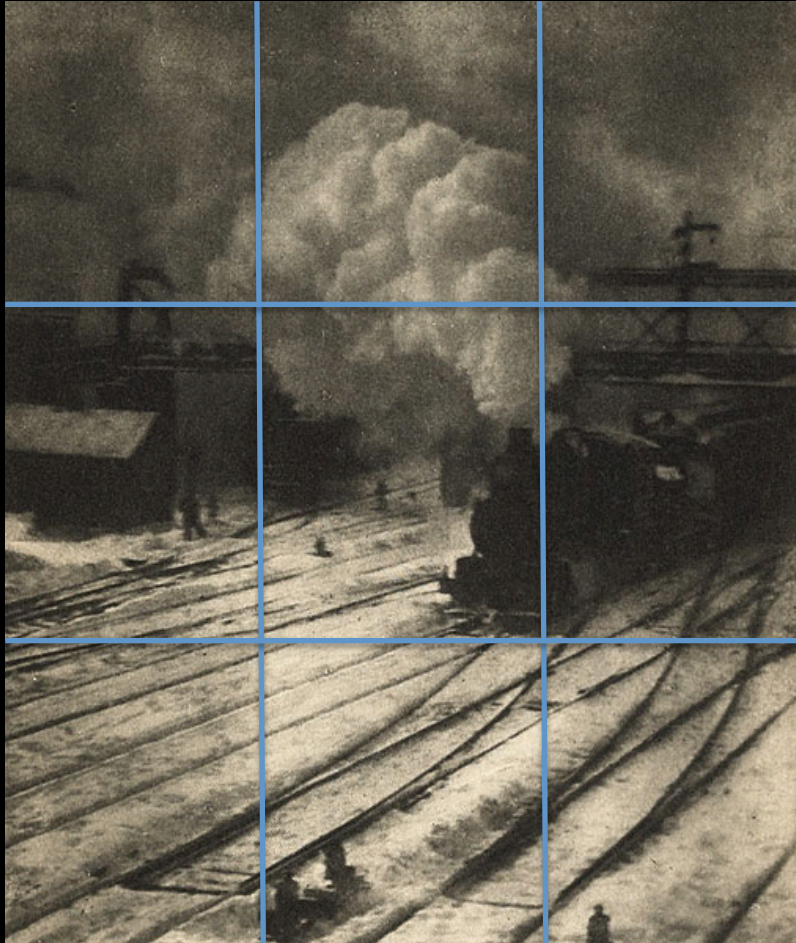


Place key elements of your composition at along **Power Points** and **simultaneously** on **dividing** (vertical and/or horizontal) **lines**.

Visual Flow



# Visual Flow



*New York Central Yard*  
STIEGLITZ, ALFRED, b.1864-1946  
The Artistic Side of Photography, 1910  
9.7 x 12 cm, Photogravure

A good composition is designed to lead the viewer's eye around the picture plane.

Visual Flow creates movement and avoids stagnant areas.

Visual Flow can be created using **Unity** and **Emphasis & Focal Point**:

1. Proximity
2. Repetition
3. Continuation
4. Directional Line
5. Converging Lines
6. Value & Color

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## Visual Flow



Albert Oehlen, *Descending Hot Rays*, 2003

Converging Lines & Directional Force



## Visual Flow



Toby Ziegler, *Designated For Leisure*, 2004

Proximity, Repetition, Continuation, Directional Lines, Light Among Dark,  
Color among Black and White, Large Among Small

## Visual Flow



Jin Myerson, *Steeplechase*, 2004

Repetition, Continuation, Texture Contrast, Large Among Small, Recognition Interest

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