Photography Composition using the Elements and Principles of Art

Elements
The basic building blocks

- Line
- Shape/
- Form
- Space
- Value
- Texture
- Color

Lines

- A mark made by a moving point.
- Has greater length than width.
- Directs the eye – horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curvy, zig-zag, etc.
- Can be actual obvious lines or the borders or edges of shapes.

Lines

Shape/Form

- A contained area.
- Can be GEOMETRIC (man-made) ex. Square, triangle, circle, etc.
- Can be ORGANIC (natural) ex. Leaves, humans, puddles, etc.
- Shapes are 2-Dimensional and flat. (circle)
- Forms are 3-Dimensional with height, width and depth. (sphere)
- Used to create a sense of space and substance.

Shape/Form

Space

- The area used or unused in a composition.
- Positive space – the area the objects/subject takes up.
- Negative space – the area around, under, through and between.
- Gives the photo a 3-dimensional feeling. (Depth)
- Foreground (closest), Middle ground, and Background (farthest).
- Can be open, crowded, near, far, etc.

Space

Value

- Black and White and all the Grays in between

- Dark to Light

- Can add drama and impact to composition.

- Can give a sense of timelessness

- Train your eye to read color as Black and White!

Value

Texture

- The surface quality.
- How an object feels, or how it looks like it feels.
- Rough, smooth, bumpy, gooey, sharp, etc.
- Adds interest! Sense of sight and sense of touch involved.

Texture

Color

- Artistic term is HUE
- Need light to see color.
- Primary, Secondary, Intermediates.
- Use color schemes to enhance appeal or make impact.

Color

Principles

- The different arrangements – or *compositions* - of the ELEMENTS of design to create artistic, interesting, more visually powerful photographs

C.R.A.P.-E. Principles of Design

- Contrast
- Repetition
- Alignment
- Proximity
- Emphasis

Contrast

Contrast helps us to differentiate items on a page. There is a variety of ways to provide contrast…

Monday Night Concert Series
Bill Zehfuss, trombone & Kathy Palmer, piano
Feb. 27 at 8 p.m.
Recital Hall, Simons Center for the Arts, 54 St. Philip Street
$5 at the door
(843)953.5927

Robert Ivey Ballet
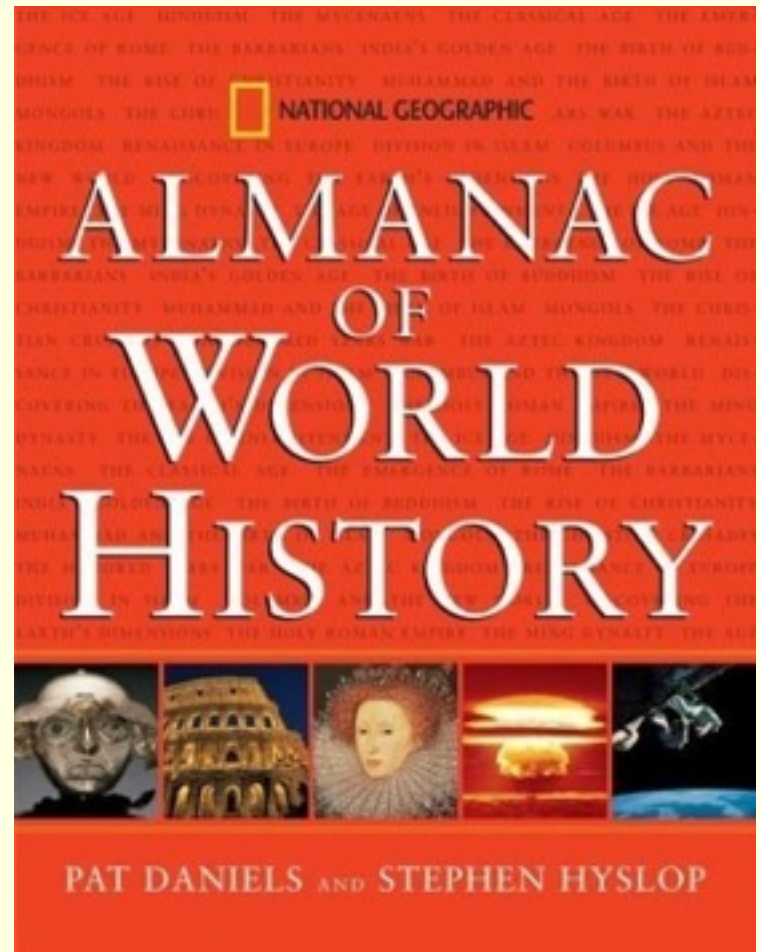**The Velveteen Rabbit**
March 2 – 4 at 9 a.m.
Sottle Theatre, 44 George Street
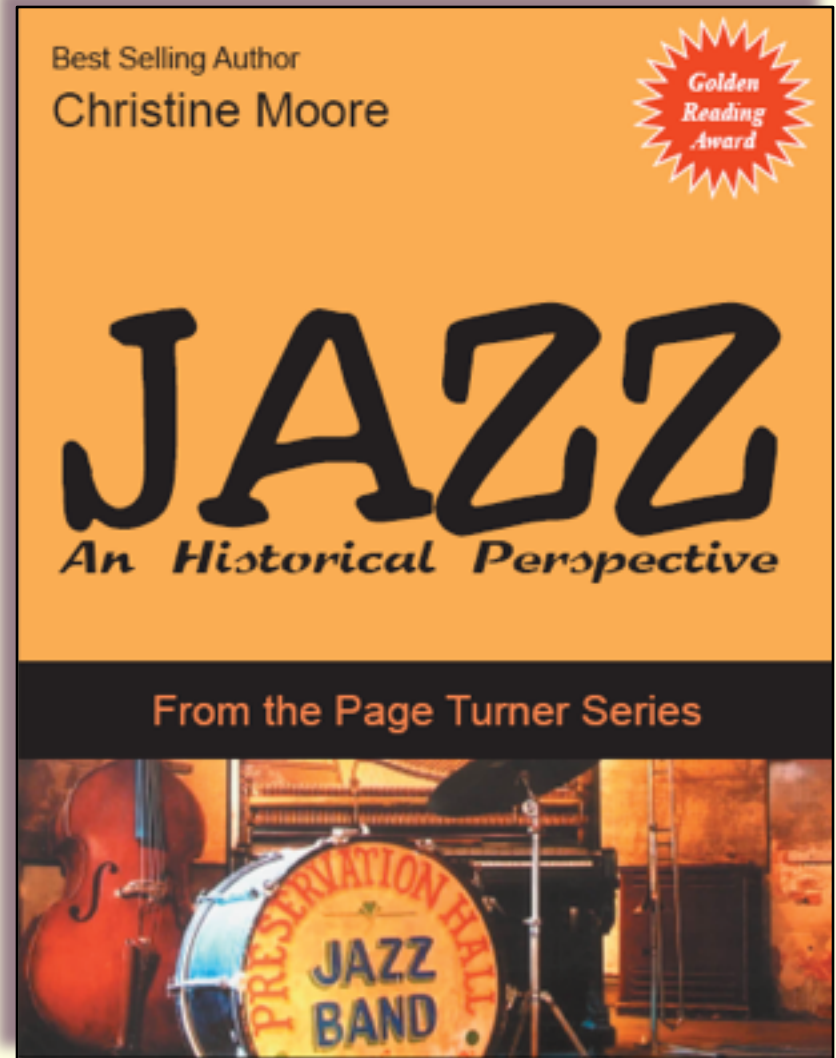$8 Reservations
(843) 556.1343

More Contrast

Notice how the contrast in font sizing bring attention to the main words.

More Contrast

An example of contrast, using various typefaces and colors.

The idea behind contrast is to avoid elements on the page that are merely *similar*. If the elements [...] are not the *same*, then make them **very different**.
(from Robin Williams, Non-designers Handbook)

Best Selling Author
Christine Moore

Golden Reading Award

JAZZ
An Historical Perspective

From the Page Turner Series

JAZZ BAND

More Contrast

Contrast is the most popular design principle. Here are two more examples, using various aspects of fonts.

Johnathan**Messerman**

Gibbes **MUSEUM OF** Art

Alignment

Alignment is where you place things on the page in relation to other things. Basically, everything should strategically-placed on the page. Nothing should be placed arbitrary on a page.

More Alignment

A full page flyer demonstrating two basic alignments…

1. What other principles do you see demonstrated? How?

2. How would you improve it?

(Note: This is a design that I found in a textbook.)

October 8-10
Moss Point
Harbor
Park

Moore Annual

Folk
Arts
Festival

Quilting
Weaving & Spinning
Boatbuilding
Shaker Furniture
Musical Instruments
Morris Dancing
Stoy Telling
Live Music
Clambakes

10 am - 7 pm Daily
FREE

Repetition

Repeating visual elements of the design throughout the piece helps develop its organization and strengthens its unity.

For example, a footer with repeated elements on each page helps to create a sense of unity.

Chapter 1

4 *Accessibility Manual*

More Repetition

More Examples:

…Repeating the same type of graphic.

… Also, the graphics are on a consistently white background.

Basic Elements *of*
Custom Wood Furniture

By Christine Moore

Proximity

Placing related close together. Grouping items together help them to be seen as one visual unit, which improves the availability of information.

More Proximity

Proximity between headers and content …

Introduction

The new computer system consists of 92 Pentium 4's, each running at 1 GHz, except for the file server, which is a Pentium computer, running at 800 MHz. All of the end-user machines have a 1.44-Mb 3½ floppy disk, a DVD, and a 40 GB hard disk. The file server is equipped with a 200 GB hard disk and a tape-drive backup system.

Connected to the file server are three Hewlett-Packard Laser printers and a Hewlett-Packard ScanJet flatbed OCR scanner.

Description of the Software

The operating system for our computers is Windows 2000. The network operating system uses Novell Netware.

The file server hard disk is installed with Corel WordPerfect, Lotus 1−2−3, and Paradox, which are accessible to all computers on the network, and installed with other specialty software used by individual lawyers, clerks, and secretaries.

All C.R.A.P.

Can you identify each
principle in this flyer?

- Contrast
- Repetition
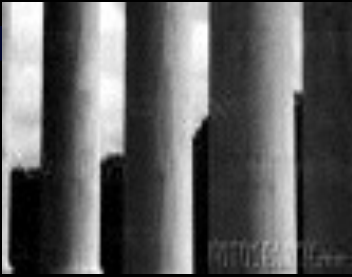- Alignment
- Proximity

Unity or Chaos?

What are the Principles of Art?

- Contrast
- Repetition
- Alignment
- Proximity
- Emphasis
- CRAP-E are the Design Principles

Repetition

- An element that occurs over and over again in a composition.

- Can repeat the element in a consistent pattern.

- Can repeat the element in a variation of the pattern.

Repetition Examples

EMPHASIS or Focal Point

Emphasis in a composition refers to developing points of interest to pull the viewer's eye to important parts of the body of the work.

EMPHASIS EXAMPLES

CONTRAST

Contrast refers to the opposites and differences in the work. You can achieve variety by using different shapes, textures, colors and values in your work.

CONTRAST Examples

Elements and Principles in Photographic Composition

- The Elements and Principles are used in *making* photographs – not just taking photographs.
- You have to know and understand the elements and principles of art to *see* them all around you and capture them in your photos.
- Good luck!