

# 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

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- Contrast
- Repetition
- Alignment
- Proximity
- Emphasis



# Contrast

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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.**

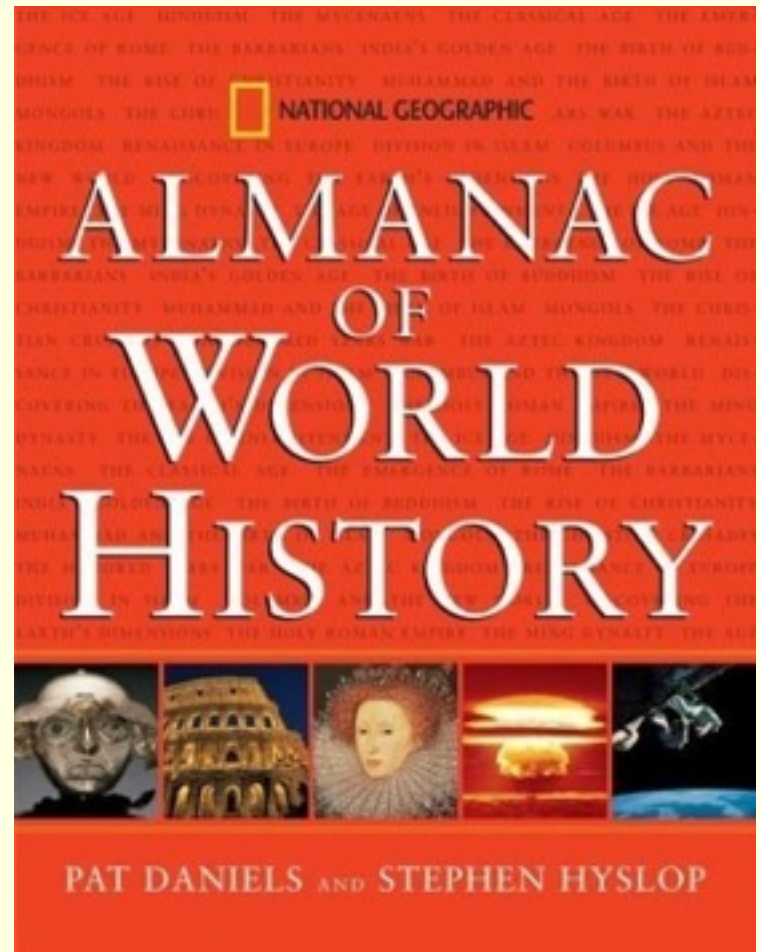
Sottile Theatre, 44 George Street

\$8 Reservations

(843) 556.1343

# More Contrast

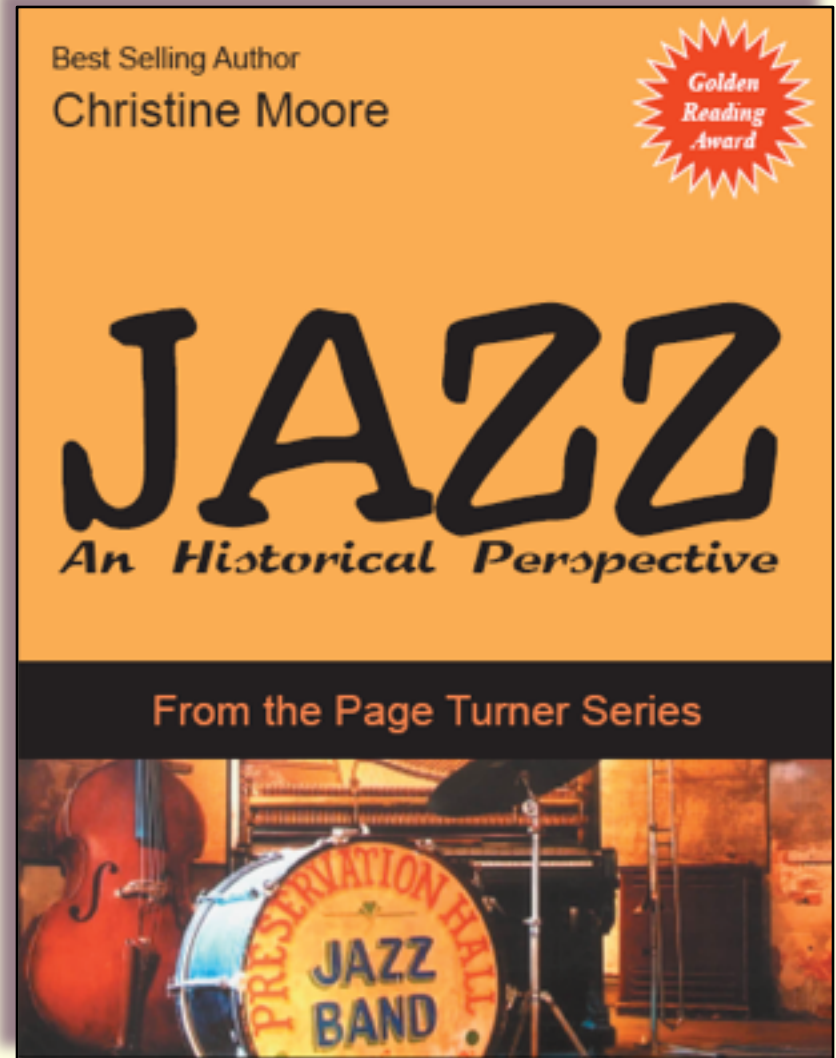
Notice how the contrast in font sizing bring attention to the main words.



# 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*)



# More Contrast

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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 be strategically-placed on the page. Nothing should be placed arbitrary on a page.



# More Alignment

A full page flyer demonstrating two basic alignments...



**October 8-10**  
**Moss Point**  
**Harbor**  
**Park**

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

**Moore Annual**  
**Folk**  
**Arts**  
**Festival**

*10 am - 7 pm Daily*  
**FREE**

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.)

# Repetition

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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.*

# More Repetition

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## 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

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



The image shows a business card for Moore & Moore Computing. The card is white with a black border. At the top left is a red diamond-shaped logo composed of horizontal lines. To the right of the logo, the text "Moore & Moore" is written in a blue, serif font, with a red horizontal line underneath it. Below this, the word "Computing" is written in a blue, sans-serif font. Underneath "Computing" is the tagline "Expect More." in a black, italicized serif font. At the bottom of the card, the website "www.mooremoore.com" is centered. In the bottom left corner, the name "Christine Moore" and phone number "(843) 572-3252" are listed. In the bottom right corner, the address "8562 S. Waccamaw Ct. N. Charleston, SC 29406" is listed.

**Moore & Moore**  
**Computing**  
*Expect More.*

[www.mooremoore.com](http://www.mooremoore.com)

**Christine Moore**  
(843) 572-3252

8562 S. Waccamaw Ct.  
N. Charleston, SC 29406

# More Proximity

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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

**One House  
Pride**

College and Community  
**Blitz Build**  
February 2-16  
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Build a house  
in two weeks!

**Donate now!**  
CHEC Community Service Center  
chec@cofc.edu • 953.5838  
www.cofc.edu/blitzbuild

COLLEGE of  
CHARLESTON

Charleston  
**Habitat**  
for Humanity

# Unity or Chaos?



# Rock <sup>The</sup> Block

FIFTH ANNUAL ROCK THE BLOCK

# SATURDAY

# SEPTEMBER 22, 2007

9:00 pm - 1:00 am • George Street • Between St. Philip and Coming Streets

Live music with Papa Robbie

Come join us! All four local schools are participating in this year's Rock the Block!

There will be live music, food, climbing wall, electric bull, face painting, a henna tattoo artist and more!

The best part is that it is all FREE!

**FREE!**

College of  
**Charleston**

CHARLESTON  
SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY

THE  
CITADEL  
COLLEGE

TRIDENT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

ARAMARK

Coca-Cola

College  
Community  
Coalition

CAB

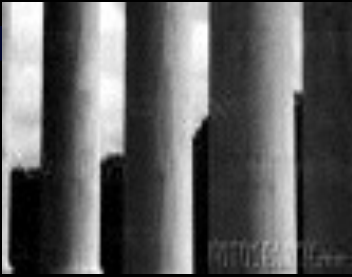
# *What are the Principles of Art?*

- 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*



Photography | [www.123rf.com](http://www.123rf.com) | Photography



# 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!