

Design Principles - Unity and Variety

Introduction to Principles of Design Units: We have learned about the Elements of Art. The visual elements are the basic building blocks used to create art.

Now we will learn how they can be used together, organized and arranged following the guidelines of the Principles of Design. Understanding design principles can aid visual communication between the artist and the viewer.

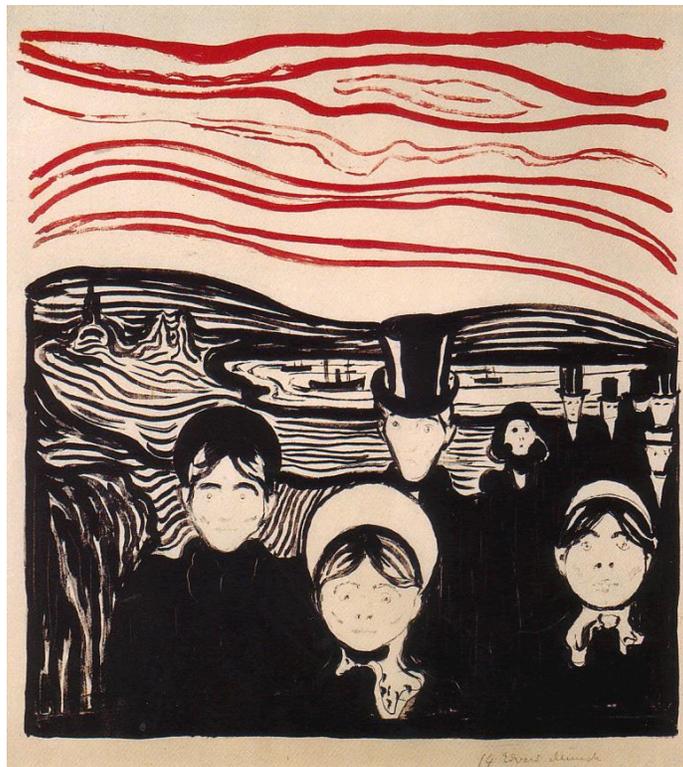
I. Terms: Unity and Variety

II. Definition of the terms: Unity and Variety are complimentary concepts.

- *Unity* is the sense of oneness achieved when all of the parts look like they belong together and contribute to the harmonious whole.
- *Variety* creates interest by providing diversity.

III. Examples of the terms: The Elements of Art are used to create Unity and Variety. Too much *unity* can be boring and too much *variety* can seem chaotic.

UNITY - LINE



(Edvard Munch *Anxiety* 1896)

- The Element of Art that unites this work is LINE. Munch has used lines of different lengths, thicknesses, and directions of lines to create *variety*.
- COLOR also adds to the *variety* in this composition. The piece is much more interesting as a result of the red lines.

UNITY – SHAPE/ COLOR



(Matisse *Ivy in Flower* 1953)

- *Unity* and *variety* are achieved through the use of COLOR, LINE, and SHAPE. The COLOR orange *unites* the background. Both warm and cool COLORS have been used to add *variety*.
- Implied LINES impose a grid that provides a *unifying* structure.
- Notice the *variety* of SHAPES. Most of the shapes are organic, but the squares in the grid are geometric. The work is held together by the consistent handling of these different elements.

UNITY – COLOR/ SPACE



(Tony Cragg *Green Leaf* 1983)

- Tony Cragg integrates variation within a theme. A *variety* of green, plastic pieces collectively form the SHAPE of a leaf.
- Although each fragment is unique, shared SPACE and COLOR provide cohesiveness.

UNITY – TEXTURE



(Ana Mendieta *Serie arbol de la vida (Tree of Life Series)*1977)

- Ana Mendieta's goal in this series was to establish “a dialog between the landscape and the female body.”¹ Mendieta covered her body with mud and plants. She blends with her surroundings and creates visual *unity* by mimicking the TEXTURES of the environment.

UNITY – LIGHT/ SHAPE/ LINE/ COLOR/ PATTERN



(Fernand Leger *Three Women*1921)

- Leger *unifies* this composition by repeating SHAPES in the round circles of the heads, table, and vessel. Vertical and horizontal LINES are used throughout the piece. COLOR also unifies the work, especially the repeated use of red and yellow in the upper three quarters of the composition.
- The three women demonstrate *variety* in their poses, hairstyles and skin colors. The objects are *united* by a similar treatment of LIGHT. The women's bodies along with the saucer, the vessel, and other shapes in the background show smooth transitions from light to dark.

¹Fineberg, Johnathan. *Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being*. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 373.