

Homework 5

Space and Composition

Space in a work of art refers to **a feeling of depth or three dimensions**. It can also refer to the artist's use of the area within the picture plane. The area around the objects in a work of art is known as negative space, while the space occupied by the primary objects is known as positive space.

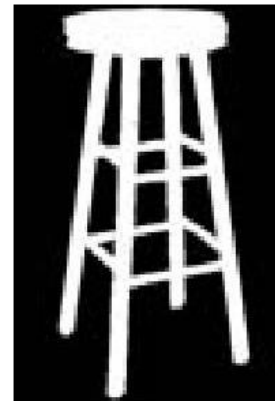
Positive and Negative Space



A Stool



The POSITIVE space
Is black



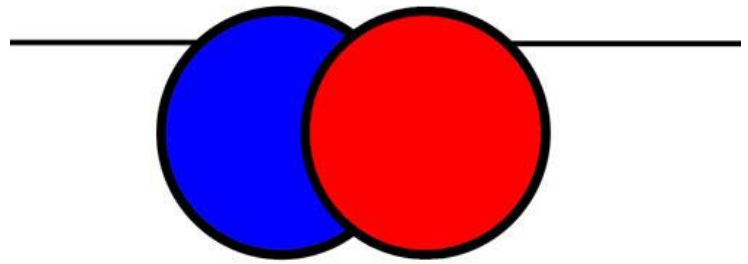
The NEGATIVE space
Is black

In terms of art, space is the area around, above, and within an object. With consideration to drawings and paintings, our goal is to create the illusion of space.

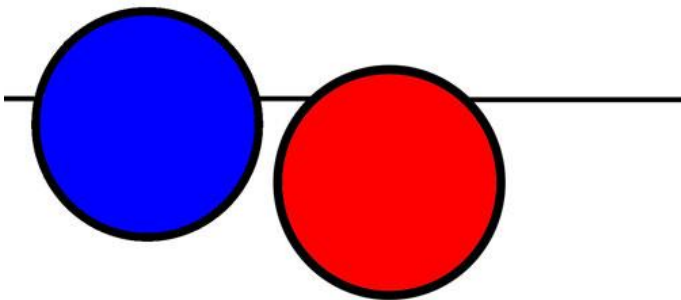
The Uses of Space

Many new artists overlook the importance of creating space in a drawing or painting. The result usually looks flat or objects can appear to be floating. There are six ways an artist can create the illusion of space on a 2-Dimensional surface.

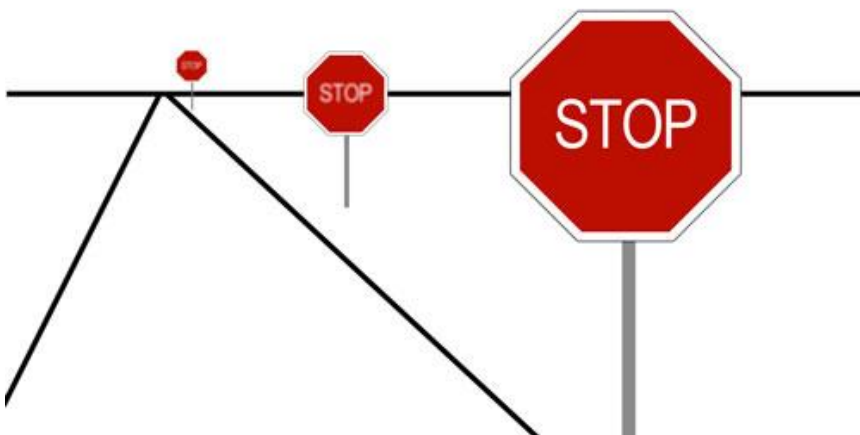
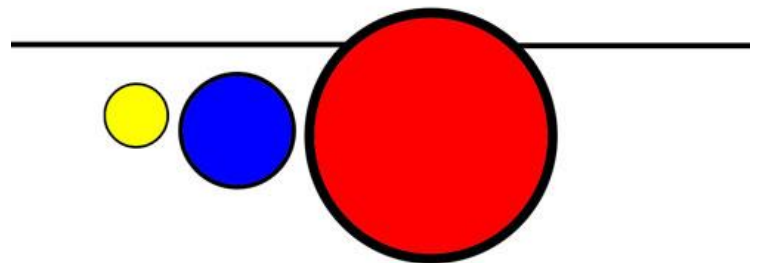
Overlapping - occurs when objects that are closer to the viewer prevent the view of objects that are behind them.



Placement on the paper - Objects placed higher within the picture plane will appear further away.



Size - Objects that are smaller will appear further away from the viewer.



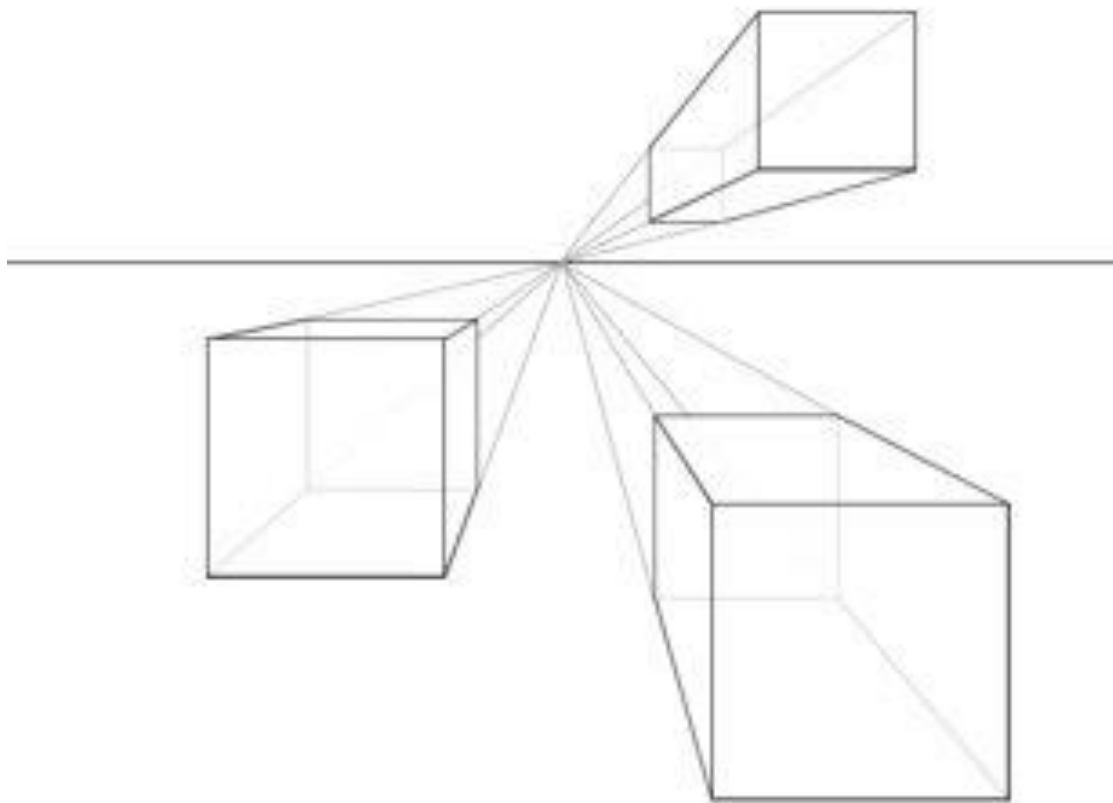
Detail - Objects that are further away should have less detail than objects that are closer to the viewer.

Colour and Value - Objects that are further away are cooler in colour temperature, while objects that are closer are warmer. Objects that are further away are lighter in value, while objects that are closer are typically darker in value.



Perspective - Linear perspective is a drawing method that uses lines to create the illusion of space on a flat surface. There are three types of linear perspective.

This is an example of One point perspective. One point perspective uses one vanishing point to accomplish this illusion of depth and distance.



Composition

Composition refers to the arrangement of the drawing on the page.

The term composition means 'putting together,' and can apply to any work of art, from music to writing to photography, that is arranged or put together using conscious thought. In a 2D piece of Art, it is where you choose to put things on your page, the layout.

The aim is to get the viewer pulled into the painting, their eye drawn across the whole composition, enjoying the scenery, before returning to the focal point. A successful composition does this subtly, without us being aware of it.

The Elements of Composition are, in Western art, **generally considered to be: Balance, Contrast, Focus, Motion, Pattern, Proportion, Rhythm and Unity.**

Balance: Is there a symmetrical or asymmetrical arrangement? Symmetry can add a sense of calm, orderliness, whereas asymmetry can lend a sense of unease, imbalance.

Contrast: Are the dramatic differences in tones, strong darks and intense lights, or is it minimal?

Focus or Emphasis: Is there a focal point, somewhere that the "most important bit" where the viewer's eye will ultimately pause and rest, rather than wandering around and around.

Motion or Movement: Is the composition static or is there a sense of movement? This can be done in many different ways, including through suggested movement with soft edges.

Pattern: If you look at the lines and shapes, is there an underlying structure that is pleasing or intriguing, or is it chaotic?

Proportion: Do the things in the painting relate to one another, do they fit together? If it's realism, does it follow the rules of perspective, are nearby things bigger than things further away for instance.

Rhythm: Find the beat, as you would in a piece of music. Its job is to lead and pace the eye across the composition. Look at the fundamental shapes as well as colour, repetitions and echoes.

Unity: Is there anything in the painting that feels it doesn't belong, something sitting awkwardly, out of place?

It can feel like a lot to consider in each and every painting; through practice it becomes more intuitive. Checking each is a part of self-critiquing. If you find it hard remember the Elements of Composition, here's a mnemonic:

Before Considering Final Mark, Ponder Painting Rightside Up.

Balance, Contrast, Focus, Motion, Pattern, Proportion, Rhythm and Unity.

or perhaps

Before Considering Final Mark, Ponder Painting wRongside Up.

Balance, Contrast, Focus, Motion, Pattern, Proportion, Rhythm and Unity.

The Rule of Thirds

The Rule of Thirds is used to avoid a central focal point but still give overall unity to the composition. This makes the artwork more visually appealing for the viewer.

How to Apply the Rule of Thirds. Start by dividing your canvas with two equally spaced vertical and horizontal lines to give you a nine-part grid. Place your focal point subject matter at one of the intersections of these nine segments. This creates a carefully planned "design imbalance" that, while off-center, still looks impactful.



See how the rule of thirds has been applied to this image to make it a more interesting composition.

