

Lesson One

Objectives

1. Students analyze how elements are organized to create balance within artworks.
2. Students identify focal points within artworks.

Arizona Visual Arts Standards

RELATE: Artworld: PO 102, 202 & 302: Discuss how artworks are used to communicate stories, ideas and emotions.

EVALUATE: Art Issues & Values: PO 202 & 302: Debate whether art is different from visual culture in general.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 101: Identify an element or principle in an artwork that supports its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 201: Describe an artist's use of elements and principles in an artwork to support its meaning and/or purpose.

EVALUATE: Elements & Principles: PO 301: Using established criteria, judge the effectiveness of an artist's use of elements and principles in an artwork to support its meaning and/or purpose.

Preparation

Preview the [What Do I Choose? PowerPoint](#). (If you teach younger students or beginners, preview the [What Shall I Choose? Beginner's Version PowerPoint](#) to see whether it is more appropriate for your students.) Assemble several print designs that you believe your students might see as being "cool," such as DVD covers, magazine ads, brochures or campaign buttons.

Resources

[What Shall I Choose? PowerPoint](#)

OPTIONAL: [What Shall I Choose? Beginner's Version PowerPoint](#)

OPTIONAL: Sample "cool" ads

Activities

Unit Preview: Introduce the theme in life, "Life is full of choices," by discussing how every day we make choices such as what to do, where to go, what to buy, who to vote for, what to eat, who to help, what to believe and much more.

Introduce the theme in art, "designers create designs to influence us to choose (or prefer) one thing rather than another," by showing examples of graphic design such as DVD covers, magazine ads, brochures or campaign buttons. Ask students which examples they are drawn to and why. For example, was something designed to say, "Buy this," "Go to this show," "Vote for this person" or "Give money to this cause?" Explain further that designers use elements and principles of design to make what they are presenting look "cool."

Explain that "cool" is a word people have used since at least the 1950s to declare that something is excellent, fine or great. Other words with similar meanings come and go through time, like the words: swell,

hip, nifty, rad, bad, awesome and sweet. Discuss what “cool” means to different groups such as high school students, children or adults. Break down these groups into sub-groups. For example, young children might call toys, games and/or cartoons “cool.” High school students might more likely refer to athletes, cars and/or sunglasses as “cool.”

Introduce the two key questions students will be working with in the unit:

1. How do designers and artists balance elements to draw (grab) viewers’ attention?
2. What makes one thing look “cool” (excellent) and not another?

Definition and Examples: If you selected the “What Shall I Choose PowerPoint” use it to:

- Introduce design in general and more specifically graphic design.
- Define and analyze four types of balance (Formal balance: bilateral, quadrilateral and radial symmetry and asymmetrical balance).
- Show examples of all four types of balance.
- Explain how balance affects focal points.
- Introduce the Cars and Guitars exhibition.

Definition and Examples: If you selected the “What Shall I Choose? Beginner’s Version Power Point,” use it to:

- Introduce design in general and more specifically graphic design.
- Define and analyze four types of balance (Formal balance: bilateral, quadrilateral and radial symmetry and asymmetrical balance).
- Show examples of all four types of balance.
- Check students’ understanding of all four types of balance.
- Introduce the Cars and Guitars exhibition.

Transfer to TCA: Explain that at the *Cars and Guitars* exhibition students will have an opportunity to see samples of a very successful product (Fender guitars) and see how they have been advertised through the years.

High School Extension Idea

Ask students to make a list of products/ideas/events/celebrities they believe are “cool.” Do Google image searches for advertisements promoting these items. For example, type “Fender Guitar Ads” in the search box on Google. Discuss what the guitar (product) is and whether or not that is what is being promoted in the ad. Is the ad selling the product by appealing to the consumer’s desire for something else? Often this “something else” is the elusive quality of being “cool.” Analyze how the designer of the ad used balance and focus (focal point) in an attempt to influence viewers’ choices. You may want to collect student selections during one class period and bring search results for the class the next day, after editing out any not-school-appropriate selections.

Vocabulary

DESIGN: to plan or arrange elements to create an interesting and compelling image or object. A good design is more than the sum of the elements from which it is formed. (Gestalt) *Synonym:* Composition – the arrangement of the image.

FOCAL POINT: the most important part of the picture or object. This is the place the viewer’s attention is most attracted. An artist/designer can create a focal point in many ways. One way is by the type of balance the designer uses when creating the image/object.

BALANCE: an arrangement of the elements in a design or composition that results in a feeling of stability or pleasing proportion.

SYMMETRICAL or FORMAL BALANCE: Symmetrical designs can be divided by lines of symmetry into many numbers of identical or nearly identical parts. Picture a balancing scale, like the one held by lady justice to weigh guilt or innocence. Symmetry can be thought of as putting the same number of identical objects in the opposing pan of a balance/scale. The combined weight of the objects is equal and the objects themselves are equivalent. There are three main types of symmetry.

Bilateral symmetry: One line of symmetry divides the image or object into two identical or nearly identical parts.

Quadrilateral symmetry: Two lines of symmetry that cross at right angles divide the image or object into four identical or nearly identical parts.

Radial symmetry: Multiple lines of symmetry divide the image or object into many identical or nearly identical parts. Radial designs can be thought of as similar to dividing a pie into many equal pieces.

ASSYMETRICAL or INFORMAL BALANCE: Asymmetrical designs are created when one side of the design is not a reflection of the other side. Asymmetrical designs still feel balanced but they are balanced by the visual weight of contrasting elements such as, size, color, value, shape and texture. Picture a balancing scale, like the one held by lady justice to weigh guilt or innocence. Asymmetry can be thought of as putting different numbers and sized objects in the opposing pans of a balance/scale. The combined weight of the objects is equal even though the objects themselves are not equivalent.

Assessment Checklist

- _____ Students analyze how elements are organized to create balance within artworks.
(Student responses to questions posed in What Shall I Choose? PowerPoint)

- _____ Students identify focal points within artworks.
(Student responses to questions posed in What Shall I Choose? PowerPoint)