

ART 115: 2D Design

Instructor: Mandy Keathley

Project 1: Oscillation of Positive / Negative Space: Figure/Foreground Reversal

OBJECTIVE:

Use black and white paper to make a composition focusing on negative space. Create an image where oscillation occurs between positive (figure) and negative (ground) space. Consider the concept of CLOSURE as a key element in your design. You can choose between geometric and organic form, or a combination. This design must be abstract, not representational.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Make several drawings in your sketchbook to plan your composition. Research some inspiration for your design (other artists, designs, patterns, conceptual ideas, etc.)
3. Make 2 test designs in your sketchbook before beginning your final. Begin with a 4x4" square, rectangle, or alternative geometric shape of black paper. Use a pencil to lightly sketch out your final design on black paper. You must use all of the black paper! Use scissors or x-acto knife to cut precise edges. Erase any pencil lines and adhere your shapes to a white piece of paper.
4. Increase the size of your final composition to fit onto an 11x14 paper. Play around with dimensions for your black paper, but this will be approximately 7x7 inches.

ARTISTS:

- Escher
- Carmen Herrera
- Kara Walker

DESIGN TERMINOLOGY:

- OSCILLATION: Movement back and forth, alternating
- FIGURE: Also called POSITIVE SPACE; outline or contour of an object, shape, form, image, and so on
- GROUND: Also called NEGATIVE SPACE; that which is behind a figure, without dominant form; the space surrounding a figure
- FIGURE/GROUND REVERSAL; a figure with more than one dominant shape sharing the same contour, which causes the viewer to visually switch back and forth from one shape to another
- NONOBJECTIVE: Circles, squares, and rectangles, for example; shapes created without reference to realistic subject matter
- SYMMETRY: Axial balance; a composition in which every element on one side of the centerline is replicated on the other side; can be bilateral (reflection) or radial (rotation); static, passive, congruent, stable

- **ASYMMETRY:** A counterpoise of weights across the picture plane achieved through variation in elements and placement that results in a feeling of balance; considered the richer and more complex type of balance; dynamic, active, diverse
- **GEOMETRIC:** Mathematical forms like squares, circles, triangles; distinguished by the crisp, precise edges and mathematically consistent shapes
- **ORGANIC:** More commonly found in nature; amorphous, inconsistent, unpredictable
- **LAW OF CLOSURE:** The perceptual tendency to complete a form or figure from which some visual information has been deleted; the remaining visual elements are sufficient for the viewer to perceive the form as a whole

GRADING RUBRIC:

Project worth 50 points, divided into 5 categories:

- **PROMPT:** Engagement with the prompt and design problems posed by the assignment
- **COMPOSITION:** Interesting use of design elements and principles, thoughtful composition
- **INNOVATION:** experimentation, risk-taking, and problem-solving
- **AMBITION:** Intricacy, Difficulty of project
- **CRAFTSMANSHIP:** Quality, attention to detail, and professional presentation