

DESN 110 GRAPHIC DESIGN I

Balance

Balance is the equal distribution of visual weight. It is the universal aim of composition. When there is a lack of balance it disturbs us, much as a crooked picture on the wall or a tilting ladder.

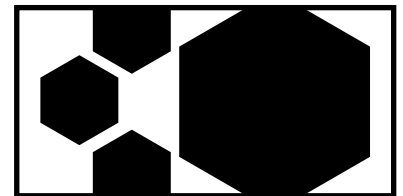
When looking at a design, we always assume a center, vertical axis with the visual weight evenly distributed on either side. This axis serves as a fulcrum, on which both sides should achieve an equilibrium. This axis can also be horizontal. Sometimes an artist can use a visual imbalance to express an uneasy or disquieting feelings if the design requires it.

There are four types of visual balance:

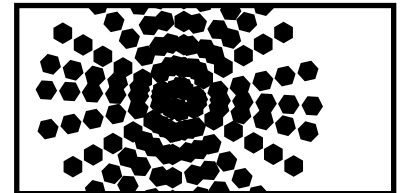
Symmetrical – like shapes are repeated in the same positions on either side of an axis. Also called formal, it can be quiet, static and dull. The design must be made more interesting through contrast of value, texture, and shape.



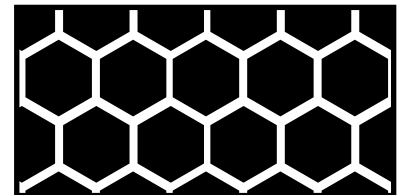
Asymmetrical – also known as informal, is balance achieved with dissimilar objects that have equal visual weight. More casual than symmetrical, asymmetrical looks less planned and obvious making it more visually interesting; movement and change.



Radial – where objects radiate or circle out from a central point. Radial balance can also be symmetrical or asymmetrical depending on where the central point lies. Usually this balance appears contrived and unnatural to used in most designs



Overall – an equal distribution of visual weight all over the design.



Asymmetrical Balance is achieved through **CONTRAST** utilizing 2 considerations: weight & direction. Weight is the dominance of the object. Direction is the way the eye is drawn between elements.

Weight and direction are influenced by these forces.

Location – A smaller object placed out toward the edge of a design can balance a larger shape placed closer to the center of the design.

Spatial Depth – Objects that lead the eye into the design will have greater weight. Also, a smaller object can be balanced by having larger shapes lead your eye toward the small object.

Size – The larger the object, the more visual weight it will have.

Texture – A smaller, roughly textured area can balance a larger, smoother textured area.

Isolation – A small object that is isolated will have more weight than one surrounded by other objects.

Subject Matter – A more interesting subject will draw the viewer's attention, increasing its weight.

Value – A small area of strong value contrast can balance a large area with little contrast.

Shape – A smaller, more complicated shape can balance a larger, simple shape.

Color – A small area of bright color can balance a large area of a more neutral color.

Most of the time a design will incorporate several of these techniques at the same time to create a more effective and natural looking design. Only for the sake of clarity are these principles listed separately.