



# Elements & Principles of Photography

A Brief Introduction

# The Difference between Elements and Principles

Often times, these two are usually mistaken for each other. Quite simply, **Elements are the visible components of any art or design. They are: Line, Shape & Form, Value, Space, and Texture.**

Principles on the other are the unseen components of any design or artwork. In other words, it is basically how the **Elements are used. They are as follows: Balance, Emphasis, Movement, Pattern, Repetition, Proportion, Rhythm, Variety and Unity.**



# The Difference between Elements and Principles



+



=

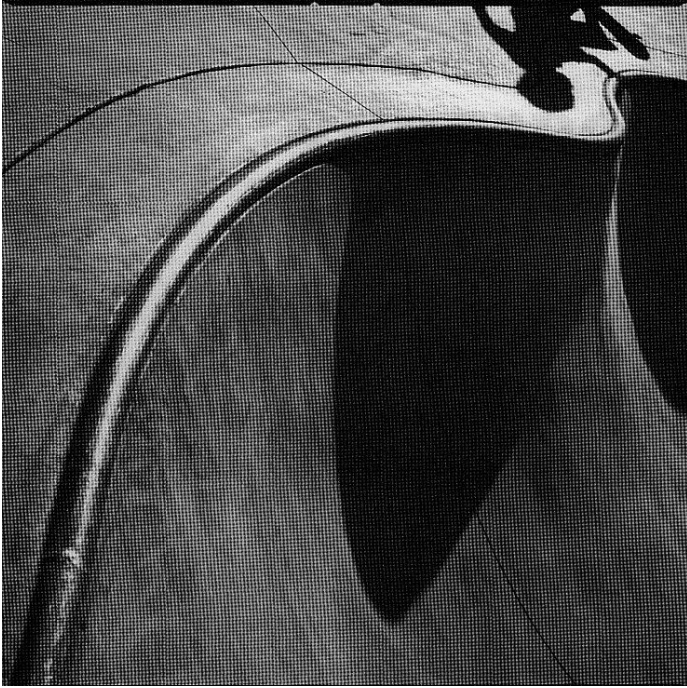


elements

principles



# Elements vs Principles



Elements are the real and tangible parts of an artwork. Principles are the intangible plans and blueprints for creating and arranging the elements.



# Photography as Art



Photographers learn how to create visual art with cameras, similar to the way musicians learn to create music with instruments. But even though photographers need cameras and other technology to make art, the same visual art elements and principles that apply to painting and sculpture apply to the art of photography.



# What is Composition?

Photographers learn how to create visual art with cameras, similar to the way musicians learn to create music with instruments. But even though photographers need cameras and other technology to make art, the same visual art elements and principles that apply to painting and sculpture apply to the art of photography.



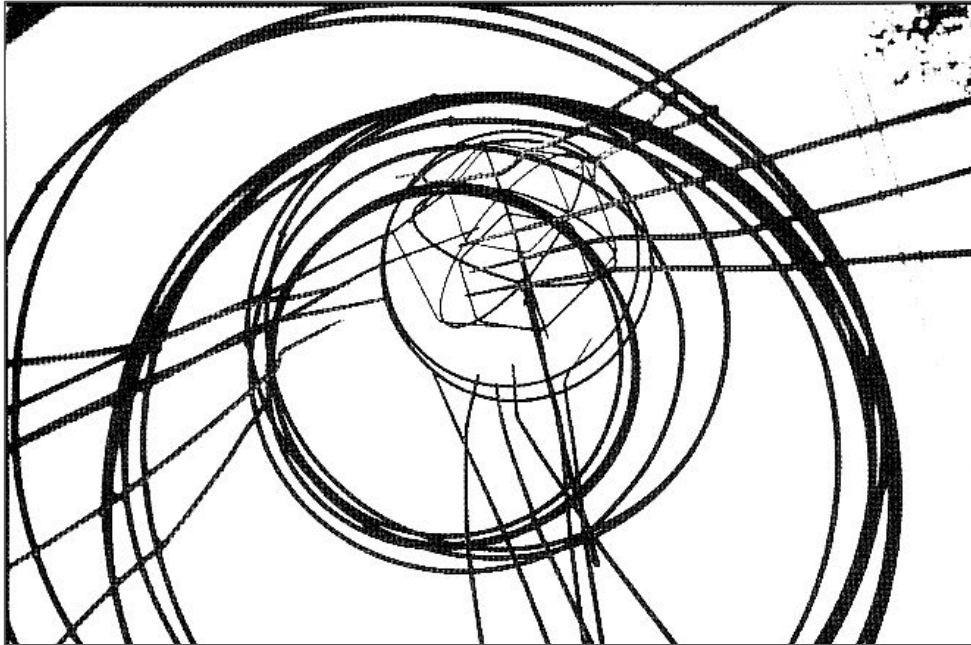
# Photography as Art

In visual art terms, composition is divided into two areas, the elements of art, which are the composition's individual visual parts, and the principles of design, which are the composition's organizing ideas.



# Element: Line

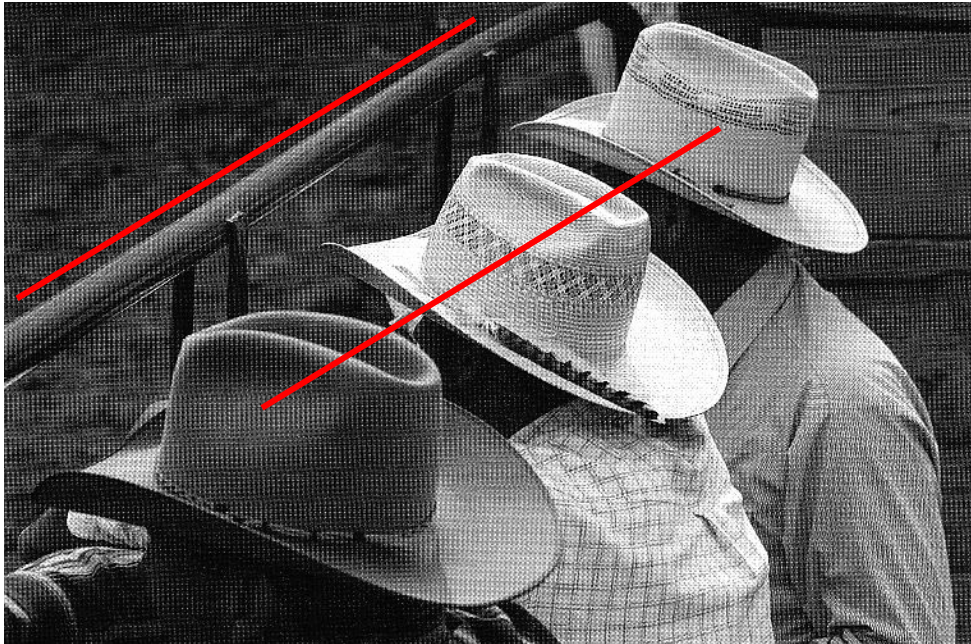
In photography, a line is one of the most fundamental art elements. In basic terms, a line is a point moving in space. The line starts in one place and ends somewhere else.





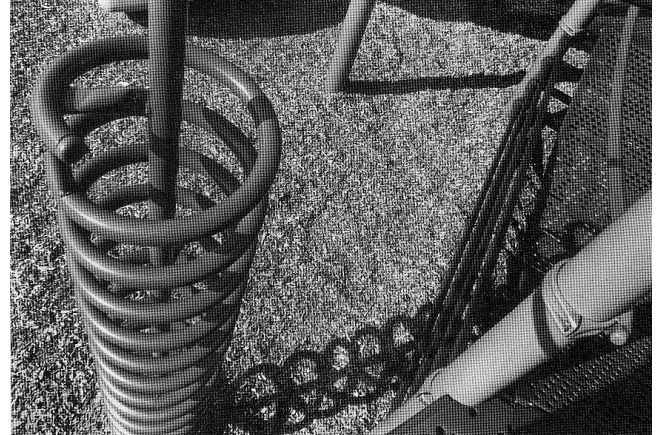
# Element: Line

Lines can serve as pathways through your pictures or as dividers and boundaries within your composition to separate different areas of your photographs.



# Shape & Form

A shape is created when a line meets itself. A shape can be either geometric or organic. Circles, ovals, triangles, rectangles, and squares are examples of geometric shapes.



# Value

Value refers to the quality of light and dark, both in terms of color and shades of gray, in a composition. This is an especially important part of photography because photography is the medium of light. When you capture an image, you are recording the light and dark tones in a scene. You are photographing how much light is reflected back at the camera and how much light is absorbed by the subject or scene.



# Value

Light and dark values give you visual clues about the shapes and forms of objects. They tell how near and how far objects in the image are from each other and from the viewer. The values in a scene carry emotional content as well.



# Space

Looking through your camera's viewfinder, you see a specific area contained within a frame. In art, that area is called your picture's space. Space is the two-dimensional arrangement of objects in a photograph. Space also refers to the three-dimensional illusion of depth in the image. This is the near/far relationship of objects in the photograph.



# Space

The relative size of different objects in the picture, the result of a shallow or deep depth of field, and the effects of perspective combine to create this sense of physical space and dimension.



# Texture



Texture appeals to the sense of touch. More than a visual element, it is a physical sensation and memory. In a photograph, a sense of texture makes our eyes believe that a rusted metal surface feels rough to the touch, or that a polished steel surface is indeed smooth and glasslike.



# Principles of Photography

A hand-drawn sketch of a large, multi-story building with a gabled roof and several windows, rendered in a dark, textured style. The drawing uses fine lines and cross-hatching to create depth and shadow. The building has a prominent gable on the right side and a series of windows along the ground floor. The overall style is reminiscent of a charcoal or pencil sketch.



# Balance

Balance is the distribution of the visual weight of objects, colours, texture, and space. If the design was a scale, these elements should be balanced to make a design feel stable. In symmetrical balance, the elements used on one side of the design are similar to those on the other side; in asymmetrical balance, the sides are different but still look balanced. In radial balance, the elements are arranged around a central point and may be similar.



# Emphasis



Emphasis is the part of the design that catches the viewer's attention. Usually the artist will make one area stand out by contrasting it with other areas. The area could be different in size, colour, texture, shape, etc.



# Movement

Movement is the path the viewer's eye takes through the work of art, often to focal areas. Such movement can be directed along lines, edges, shape, and colour within the work of art.



# Pattern

Pattern is the repeating of an object or symbol all over the work of art.



# Repetition

Repetition works with pattern to make the work of art seem active. The repetition of elements of design creates unity within the work of art.



# Proportion



Proportion is the feeling of unity created when all parts (sizes, amounts, or number) relate well with each other. When drawing the human figure, proportion can refer to the size of the head compared to the rest of the body.



# Rhythm



Rhythm is created when one or more elements of design are used repeatedly to create a feeling of organized movement. Rhythm creates a mood like music or dancing. To keep rhythm exciting and active, variety is essential.



# Variety

Variety is the use of several elements of design to hold the viewer's attention and to guide the viewer's eye through and around the work of art.





# Unity

Unity is the feeling of harmony between all parts of the work of art, which creates a sense of completeness.

