The Principles of C.R.A.P.

Basic principles to improve your designs

The Principles of C.R.A.P.

• Contrast

Avoiding elements that are merely similar. If elements are not the same, make them very different.

• Repetition

Repeating visual design elements throughout the piece. This helps strengthen organization and unity.

Alignment

Nothing should be placed arbitrarily. Every element should have a visual connection with another element on the page.

Proximity

Items relating to one another should be grouped together. When elements are grouped together they develop a synergy and form a single group. Again this helps create visual organization.

- Contrast can aid in creating an organizational hierarchy among different elements.
- Contrast is the designer's most powerful communication tool.
- Rule to remember: Contrast will only be effective if it is strong. If two items are not exactly the same then make them different – really different.
- Contrast can occur in several forms

Contrast of Scale

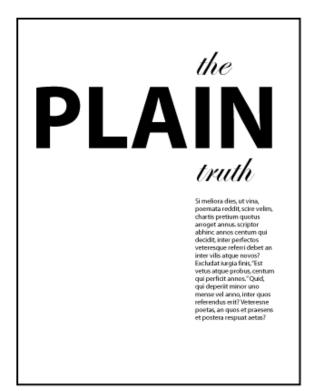
• Contrasts large with small, tall with short, broad with narrow etc.





Contrast of Form

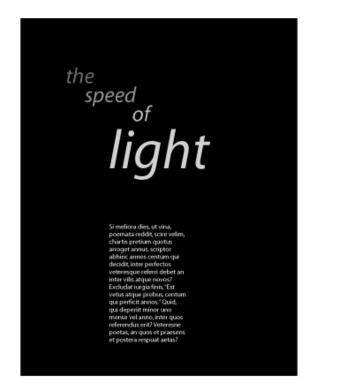
• Contrasts CAPSs vs lowercase, roman vs italic, square/round, elaborate or simple, etc.

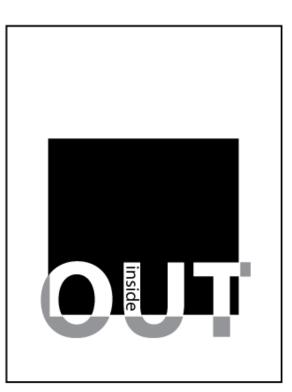




Contrast of Value

• Contrasts light with dark, negative/positive, solid with color, etc.





Contrast of Weight

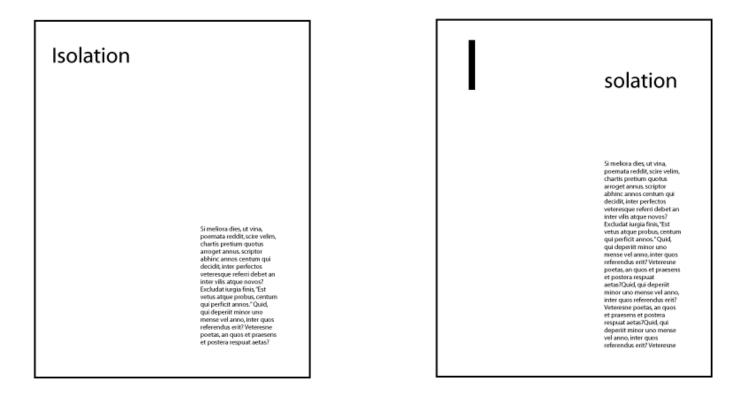
• Contrasts bold with light, mass with line, thick with thin, etc.





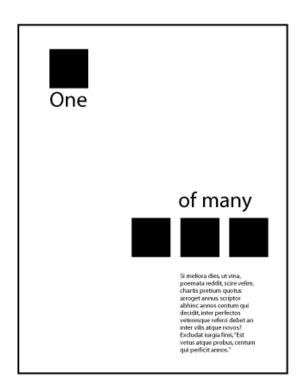
Contrast of Placement

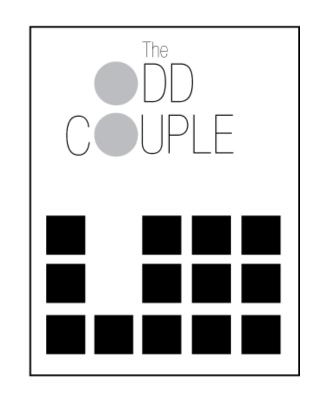
• Contrasts high with low, left with right, together or apart, etc.



Contrast of Quantity

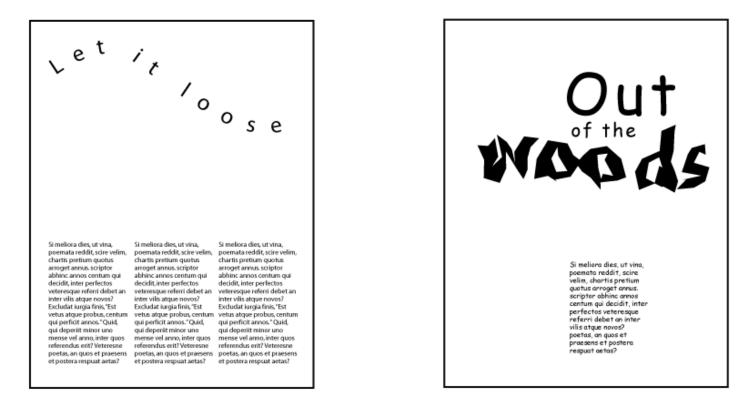
• Contrasts many with few, single elements with groupings, etc.





Contrast of Texture

• Contrasts tight with loose, airy with dense, smooth with rough, etc.



- The basic purpose of contrast is two-fold, and both purposes are inextricable from each other.
 - to create an interest on the page
 - to aid in the organization of the information
- If a page is more interesting, it is more likely to be read.
- If a reader can understand the organization of page easily, it is more likely to be read.
- The proper use of contrast will always add visual interest to a design.
- The important thing is to be strong.

• How do you improve this ad?



- Remove conflicting elements, borders and stars are not focal points
- Decide on a focus and make the focus big and bold.
- Set Upper and lowercase, not all CAPS.
- Decide on the groupings of information and arrange items together (proximity) leaving space between the items to indicate relationships.
- Arrange all elements along a strong alignment.
- Give it some breathing room allow for the use of space.



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250 356-6789

Builders Exchange Member

- This design lacks contrast.
- There isn't much to draw a potential reader's eye to it.

NEWSLETTER

Volume 6708 Day, Month and Year

Exciting headline

Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit, scire velim, chartis pretium quotus arroget annus. scriptor abhine annos centum qui decidit, inter perfectos veteresque referri debet an inter vilis atque novos? Excludat iurgia finis, "Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos." Quid, qui deperiit minor uno mense vel anno, inter quos referendus erit? Veteresne poetas, an quos et praesens et postera respuat aetas?

Thrilling Subhead

"Iste quidem veteres inter ponetur honeste, qui vel mense brevi vel toto est iunior anno." Utor permisso, caudaeque pilos ut equinae paulatim vello unum, demo etiam unum, dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi, qui redit in fastos et virtutem aestimat annis miraturque nihil nisi quod Libitina sacravit. Ennius et sapines et fortis et alter Homerus, ut critici dicunt, leviter curare videtur, quo promissa cadant et somnia Pythagorea.

Another Exciting Headline

Naevius in manibus non est et mentibus haeret paene recens? Adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema. ambigitur quotiens, uter utro sit prior, aufert Pacuvius docti famam senis Accius alti, dicitur Afrani toga convenisse Menandro, Plautus ad exemplar Siculi properare Epicharmi, vincere Caecilius gravitate, Terentius arte. Hos ediscit et hos arto stipata theatro spectat Roma potens; habet hos numeratque poetas ad nostrum tempus Livi scriptoris ab aevo.

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Boring Subhead

"Iste quidem veteres inter ponetur honeste qui vel mense brevi vel toto est iunior anno." Utor permisso, caudacque pillo ut equina, paulatim vello unum, demo etiam unum, dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi, qui redit in fastos et virturem aestinate annis miraturque nihil nisi quod Libitina sacravit. Ennius et sapines et fortis et alter Homerus, ut critici dicunt, leviter curare videtur, quo promissa cadant et somnia Pythagorea.

- This design is still quite mundane.
- However, the addition of some contrast certainly improves its drawing power.

NEWSLETTER

Volume 6708

Day, Month and Year

Exciting headline

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Another Exciting Headline

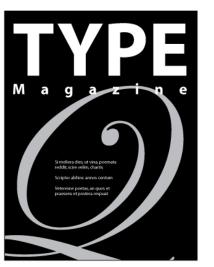
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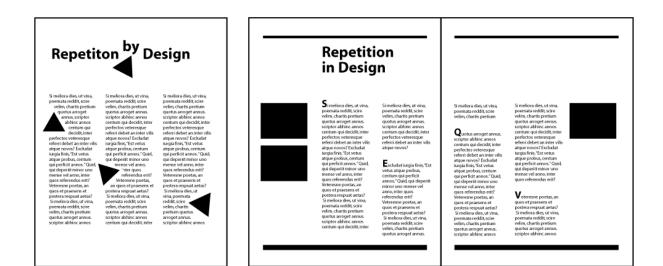
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- Repetition occurs when some element or aspect of the design
- is repeated throughout the piece. This can occur within a single page,
- over multiple pages or over multiple issues.
- Repetition is a conscious effort to unify the design.
- Repetition brings consistency to the design.
- It can be anything the reader will visually recognize.







- Repetitive elements may be the use of a bold font, a thick rule, a certain bullet or a particular format.
- Here, the repetitive use of a bold face is all that is needed to quickly convey the important info on the business card.



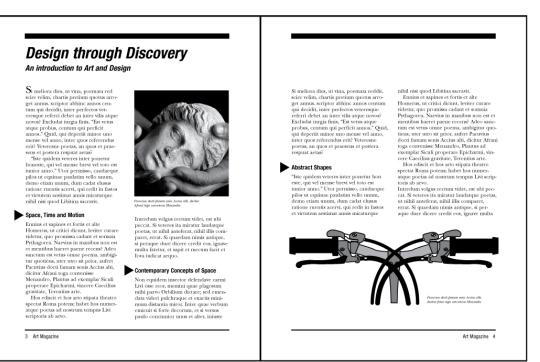
Repetitive elements like the use of rules, consistent hanglines for text, subhead styles, weights and sizes and consistent placement of page numbers all help unify any design.



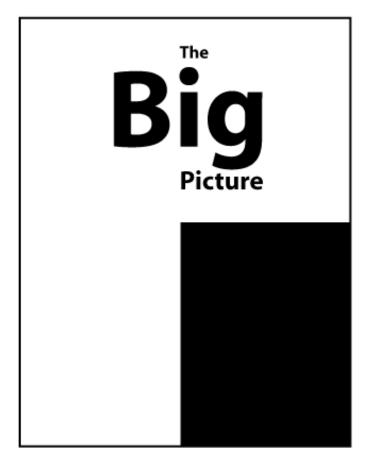
3 ArtMagazine

ArtMagazine 4

- Repetitive elements like the use of bullets also help unify a design.
- The purpose of repetition is to unify and add visual interest. If a piece looks visually interesting it is more likely to be read.
- Avoid repeating elements so much that they become an annoyance and overwhelming.

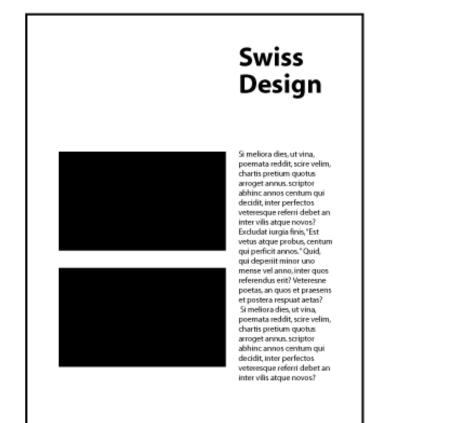


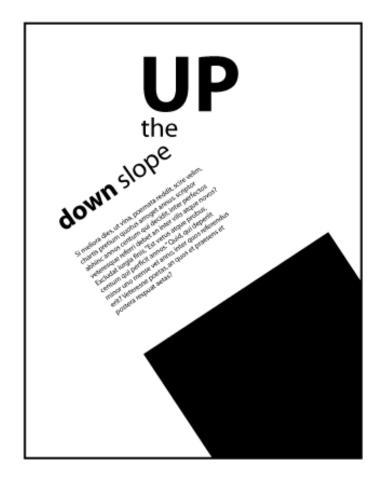
- When items are aligned on a page, it creates a stronger cohesive unit. It unifies the page.
- Rule to remember: Nothing should be placed on the page arbitrarily.
- Every item should have a visual relationship or connection with something else on the page.



To catch a falling star

Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit, scire velim, chartis pretium quotus arroget annus, scriptor abhinc annos centum qui decidit, inter perfectos weteresque referi debet an inter vilis atque novos? Excludat iurgia finis, "Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos." Quid, qui deperit minor uno mense vel anno, inter quos referendus erit? Veteresne poetas, an quos et praesens et postera respuat





- This page has no alignment.
- Setting some elements on a page in a centered format and other in a flush left or right arrangement will rarely work.

Design through Discovery

An introduction to Art and Design

Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit, scire velim, chartis pretium quotes arroget annus. scriptor abhinc annos centum qui decidit, inter perfectos veteresque referri debet an inter vilis atque novos? Excludat iurgia finis, "Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos." Quid, qui deperiit minor uno mense vel anno, inter quos referendus erit? Veteresne poetas, an quos et praesens et postera respuat aetas?

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Space, time and motion

Ennius et sapines et fortis et alter Homerus, ut critici dicunt, leviter curare videtur, quo promissa cadant et somnia Pythagorea. Naevius in manibus non est et mentibus haeret paene recens? Adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema. ambigitur quotiens, uter utro sit prior, aufert Pacuvius docti famam senis Accius alti, dicitur Afrani toga convenisse Menandro, Plautus ad exemplar Siculi properare Epicharmi, vincere Caecilius gravitate,

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Contemporary Concepts of Space

Non equidem insector delendave carmina Livi esse reor, memini quae plagosum mihi parvo Orbilium dictare; sed emendata videri pulchraque et exactis minimum distantia miror. Inter quae verbum emicuit si forte decorum, et si versus paulo concinnior unus et alter, iniuste totum ducit venditque poema.



- This page has a strong flush left alignment.
- Paragraph indents have been reduced and all text has been aligned to the left.
- The appearance here is more formal or scholarly.
- This page looks much more inviting to read than the previous one.

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- A slightly different flush left alignment.
- Paragraph indents have been reduced and all text has been aligned to the left.
- The heading has been set across two columns rather than stacked in one column as in the previous example.
- Still a very formal looking page that appears quite easy to read.

Design through Discovery

An introduction to Art and Design

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- Centered alignments are always safe. However, symmetrical balance is very static.
- Centered arrangements work well for discontinuous blocks of text, like invitations or book jackets.

The Haida





Photographs by David DiFrancesco

- By rearranging and prioritizing the text, this jacket has a much different look to it.
- More contrast has been added by playing up key words. The arrangement here is predominantly aligned to the left.





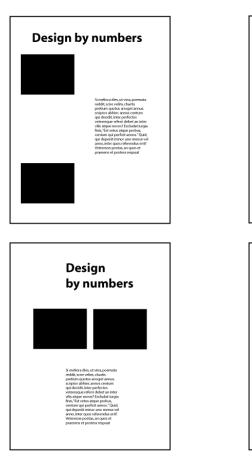
by Bill Read Photographs by David DiFrancesco

- This elements of the top business card, though carefully placed, have no connection with any of the other elements on the card.
- The middle card has the text items grouped into logical proximity. It does however, look like a million other cards with the centered arrangement.
- By rearranging text into related groupings and applying some right alignment This business card directs the reader's eye through the information. Note the use of contrast for emphasis.



251 Cedar Lane Terrace, BC (250) 321-4567

- The purpose of alignment is to unify and organize the page. Be conscious of where elements are placed. Try to find some other element to align to, even if they are far apart in space.
- Avoid using more than one text alignment on the page.
 Don't center some text and right or left align other text.
- Break away from centered alignments unless you are consciously trying to create a more formal, sedate, and often dull presentation. Choose a centered alignment consciously, not by default.







- Proximity groups related items together so that they are seen as a cohesive group rather than a bunch of unrelated bits.
- Items or groups of information that are not related to each other should not be in close proximity to other elements.

Moon over

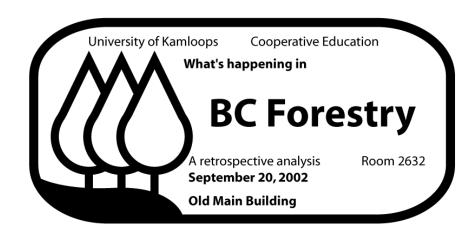
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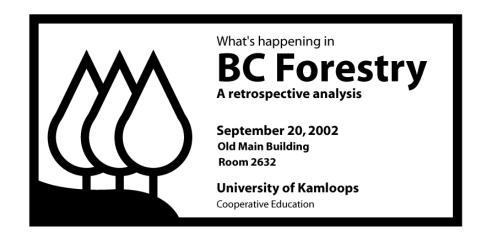
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Proximity by Design

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- Analyze which items should be grouped together.
- The first example shows very little consideration of the grouping of the text items.
- The second example is much cleaner and stronger in terms of how it organizes the information by proximity. It's a much quicker read than the above example.





 Trapping equal or almost equal parts of white space like this sample shows tends to push elements apart.

Discovery through design

Interacting Patterns

Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit, scire velim, chartis pretium quotus arroget annus. scriptor abhinc annos centum qui decidit, inter perfectos veteresque referri debet an inter vilis atque novos? Excludat iurgia finis, "Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos." Quid, qui deperiit minor uno mense vel anno, inter quos referendus erit? Veteresne poetas, an quos et praesens et postera respuat aetas?



Pattern as Surface Design

"Iste quidem veteres inter ponetur honeste, qui vel mense brevi vel toto est iunior anno." Utor permisso, caudaeque pilos ut equinae paulatim vello unum, demo etiam unum, dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi, qui redit in fastos et virtutem aestimat annis miraturque nihil nisi quod Libitina sacravit

Texture and Pattern.

Ennius et sapines et fortis et alter Homerus, ut critici dicunt, leviter curare videtur, quo promissa cadant et somnia Pythagorea. Naevius in manibus non est et mentibus haeret paene recens? Adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema. ambigitur quotiens, uter utro sit prior, aufert Pacuvius docti famam senis Accius alti, dicitur.



Afrani toga convenisse Menandro, Plautus ad exemplar Siculi properare Epicharmi, vincere Caecilius gravitate, Terentius arte. Hos ediscit et hos arto stipata theatro spectat Roma potens; habet hos numeratque poetas ad nostrum tempus Livi scriptoris ab aevo.

Pattern in Nature

Interdum volgus rectum videt, est ubi peccat. Si veteres ita miratur laudatque poetas, ut nihil anteferat, nihil illis comparet, errat. Si quaedam nimis antique, si peraque dure dicere credit eos, ignave multa fatetur, et sapit et mecum facit et lova iudicat aequo.





 By re-arranging the same elements and moving the heading closer to the related text, this page is much clearer. White space is no longer divisive. It helps to define the groupings.

Discovery through design

Interacting Patterns

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Pattern as Repitition

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 This example ignores proximity in the body text. The bullets are too large and distracting. There needs to be some visual relief between bulleted points. The tabs are set in too far.

Listing items in point form

Using bullets

• Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit, scire velim, chartis pretium quotus arroget annus. scriptor abhinc annos centum qui decidit, linter perfectos veteresque referri debet

novos? Excludat iurgia finis, "Est vetus atque probus, centum qui

• perficit annos." Quid, qui deperiit minor uno mense vel anno,

inter quos referendus erit? Veteresne poetas, an quos et praesens et

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Deading in design

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• paulatim vello unum, demo etiam unum, dum cadat elusus

ratione ruentis acervi, qui redit in fastos et virtutem aestimat annis

miraturque nihil nisi quod Libitina sacravit

Hanging punctuation

• Ennius et sapines et fortis et alter Homerus, ut critici dicunt, leviter curare videtur, quo promissa cadant et somnia Pythagorea.

 Naevius in manibus non est et mentibus haeret paene recens?
Adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema. ambigitur quotiens, uter utro sit prior, aufert Pacuvius docti famam senis Accius alti, dicitur.

Word and letter spacing

Afrani toga convenisse Menandro, Plautus ad exemplar Siculi
properare Epicharmi, vincere Caecilius gravitate, Terentius arte.
Hos ediscit et hos arto stipata theatro spectat Roma potens; habet

• hos numeratque poetas ad nostrum tempus Livi scriptoris ab aevo.

Tracking and kerning

 Interdum volgus rectum videt, est ubi peccat. Si veteres ita miratur laudatque poetas, ut nihil anteferat, nihil illis comparet,

- This example attempts to create proximity in the body text. The bullets are smaller and less overpowering. They now hang in the margin.
- Leading (an additional 3 pts) has been added before each new point while remaining the same for additional lines within a single point. The tabs spaces have been reduced.

Listing items in point form

Using bullets

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