

# **TWO DIMENSIONAL DESIGN**

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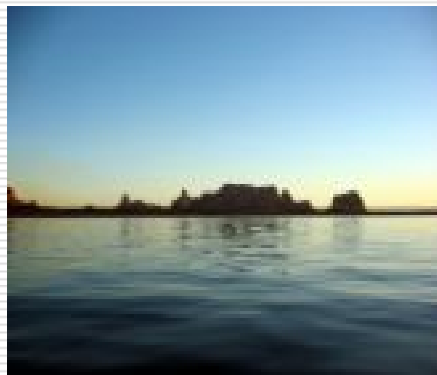
## **CHAPTER 9: CONTRAST**

**Dr. Hatem Galal A Ibrahim**

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## SAMPLES OF CONTRAST

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## Definition

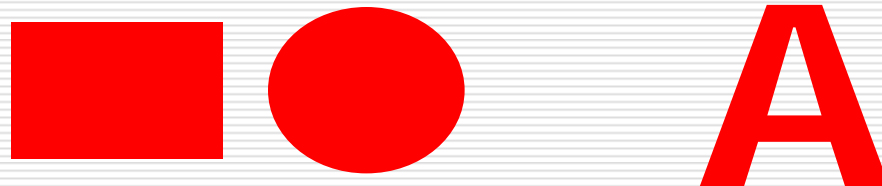
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- ☐ Contrast happens all the time, although its presence may be overlooked.
  - ☐ There is contrast when a form is surrounded by blank space.
  - ☐ There is contrast when a straight line meets a curve.
  - ☐ There is contrast when one form is much bigger than another.
  - ☐ There is contrast when vertical and horizontal directions coexist.
  - ☐ We experience all sorts of contrasts in our daily life. The day is in contrast with the night; a flying bird is in contrast with the sky; an old chair is in contrast with a modern sofa.
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## Definition

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- It is quite flexible: it may be mild or severe, vague or obvious, simple or complex.
- Form A may appear contrasting to form B, but when form C is brought in, forms A and B may appear similar rather than contrasting to one another, and both of them can be contrasting to form C in varying degrees.



- Contrast is just a kind of comparison whereby differences are made clear.
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## Contrast, Regularity, and Anomaly

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□ Anomaly exists in regularity as irregular elements. There is contrast between anomaly and regularity because regularity is the observation of, whereas anomaly is the departure from, a certain kind of discipline. However, contrast exists also within regularity itself.

□ Regularity does not necessarily make a good design, although it may guarantee a certain degree of harmony. The same group of unit forms used in a repetition structure can be a dull design in the hands of one designer, but an exciting design in the hands of another. Proper use of contrast in the relational elements can make the difference.

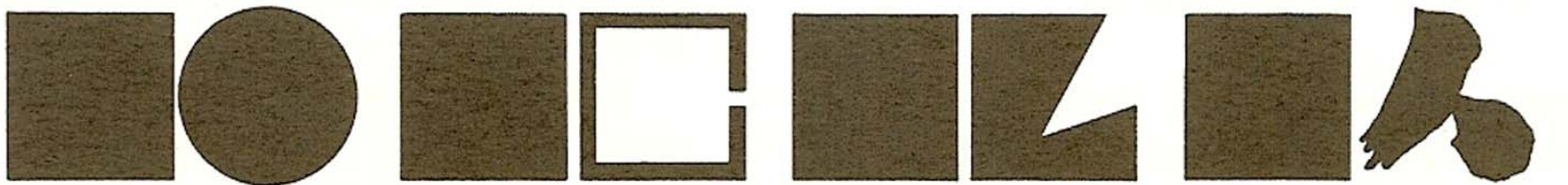
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# Contrast of Visual and Relational Elements

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## a. Contrast of shape

- ❑ It is quite complicated because a shape can be described in a multiplicity of ways.
- ❑ There is contrast between a geometric shape and an organic one, but two geometric shapes can be in contrast if one is angular but the other non-angular.
- ❑ Other common cases of contrast of shape are: curvilinear/rectilinear, planar/linear, beautiful/ugly, simple/complex, abstract/representational, undistorted/distorted, etc.



## Contrast of Visual and Relational Elements

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### b. Contrast of size

It is straightforward. Big/small contrast is seen among planar forms, whereas long/short contrast is seen among linear forms.

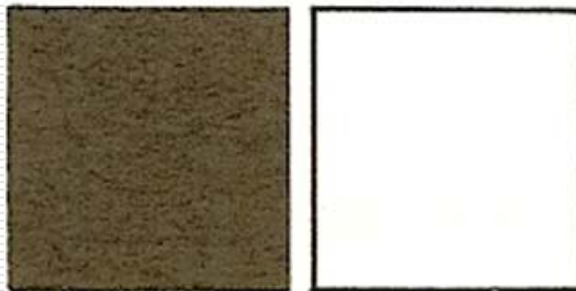


## Contrast of Visual and Relational Elements

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### c. Contrast of color

Detailed discussions of color contrasts are beyond the scope of the present book, but Some common cases can be mentioned here: light/dark, brilliant/dull, warm/ cool, etc.



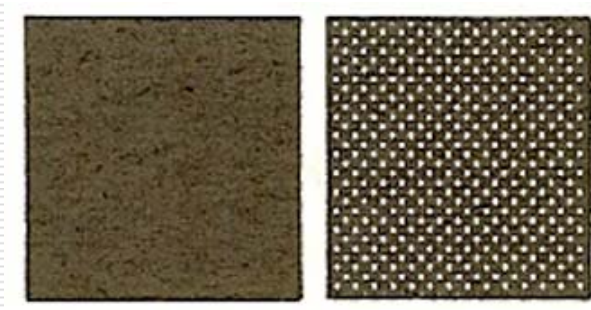


## Contrast of Visual and Relational Elements

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### d. Contrast of texture

Texture will form the subject of a later chapter. However, some typical cases of textural contrasts are: smooth/rough, fine/coarse, even/uneven, matt/glossy, etc.

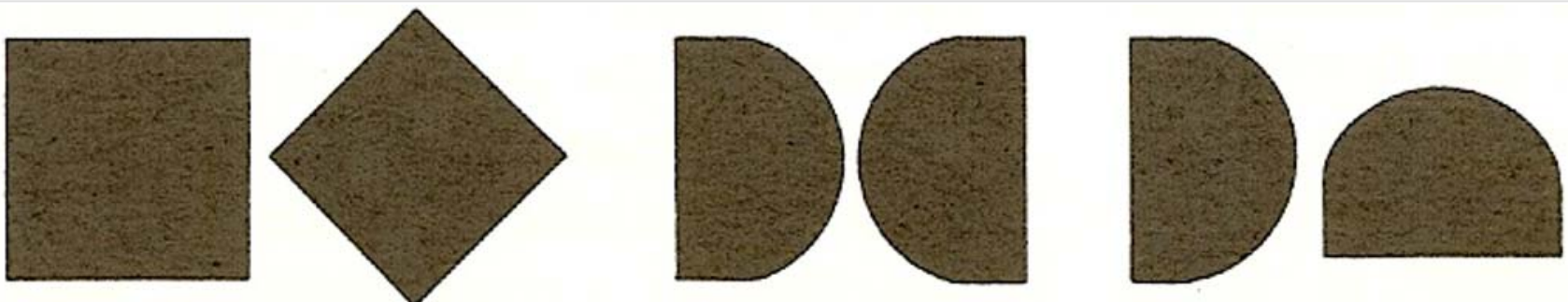


## Contrast of Visual and Relational Elements

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### e. Contrast of direction

Any two directions meeting each other at an angle of 90 degrees are in maximum contrast. Two forms directly facing each other create a directional contrast of quite a different nature, because they are not unparallel, although one of them has been rotated a full 180 degrees.

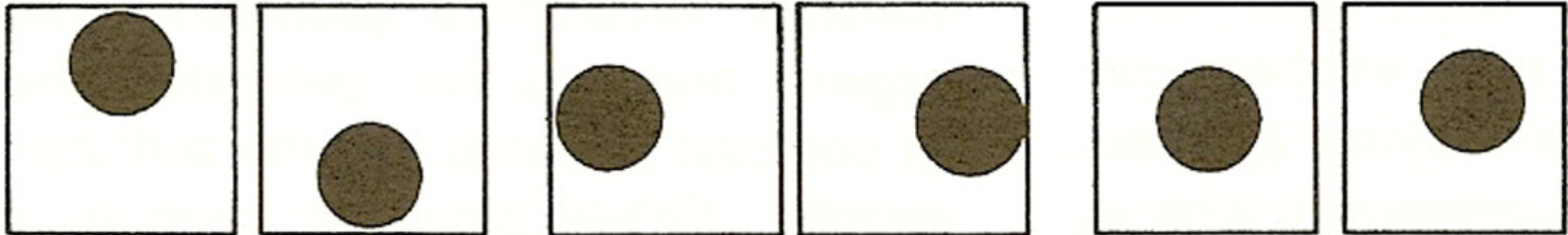


## Contrast of Visual and Relational Elements

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### f. Contrast of position

The position of a form is recognized as related to the frame reference, the center, the structural subdivision that contains it, the structural lines nearby, or another form. The common positional contrasts are: top/bottom, high/low, left/right, central/off-center.

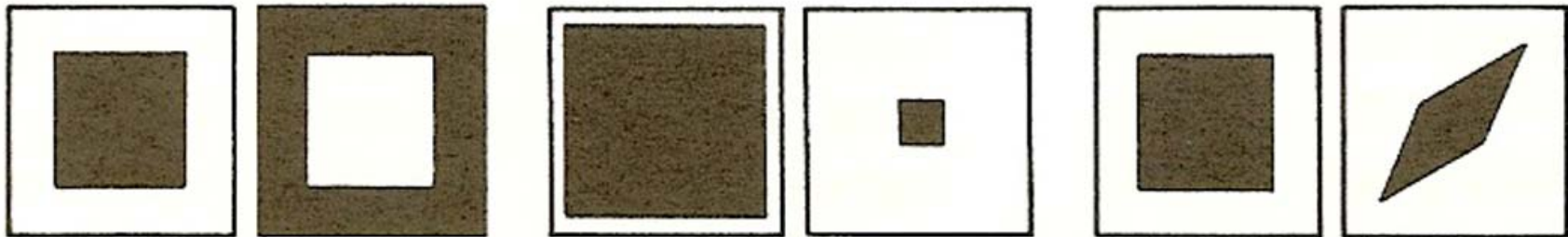


## Contrast of Visual and Relational Elements

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### g. Contrast of space

When space is considered as a flat plane, contrasts are perceived as occupied/unoccupied or positive/negative. Blank space can be seen as congested or expansive, and can have contrasts of shape and size if it is read as a negative form. When space is considered as illusory, forms may appear to advance or recede, to be near or far, flat or three-dimensional, parallel or unparallel to the picture plane, etc., in spatial contrast with one another.

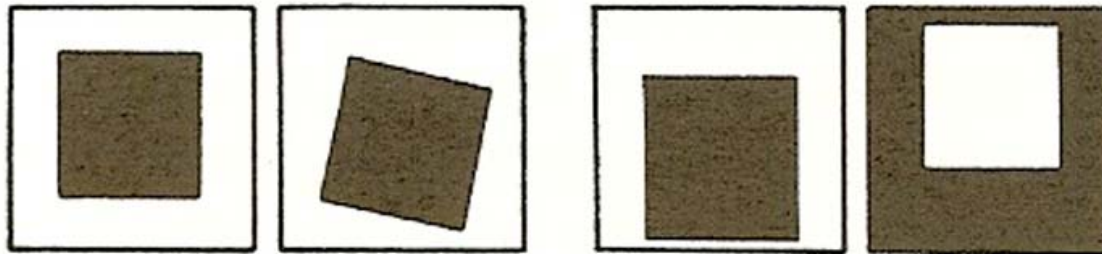


## Contrast of Visual and Relational Elements

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### h. Contrast of gravity

There are two types of gravitational contrasts: stable/unstable and light/heavy. Stability or instability may be due to the shape itself, or due to conformity to or deviation from either verticality or horizontality. A stable form is static, whereas an unstable form suggests movement. Lightness or heaviness of a form may be due to the use of color, but is also affected by shape and size.



## Contrasts within a Form

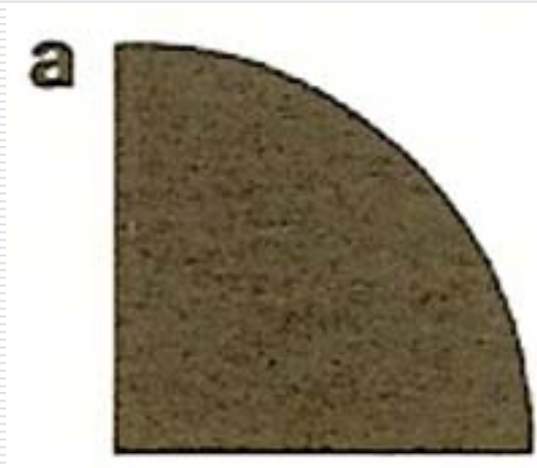
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- ☐ It is common for individual forms or unit forms to contain contrasting elements which may help to make them look more interesting.
- ☐ Sometimes contrast exists without being noticed, but a designer should be sensitive of its presence.
- ☐ Effective use of contrast is of paramount importance in designing.

## Contrasts within a Form

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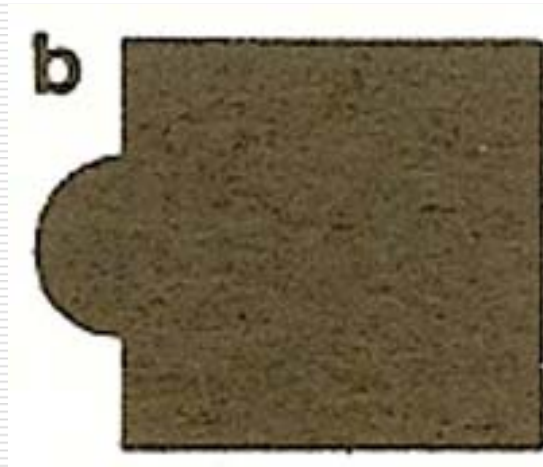
Figure 60a is composed of three edge lines, two straight lines of the same length being part of a square, and a curved line being part of a circle. There is a contrast of shape (angular/ non-angular).



## Contrasts within a Form

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**Figure 60b is composed of a square and a circle. The circle is obviously much smaller than the square. So there is not just a contrast of shape (angular/non-angular). but also a contrast of size (big/small).**

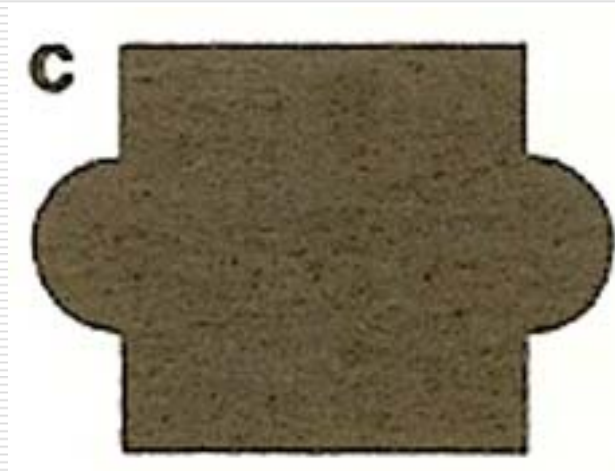




## Contrasts within a Form

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Figure 60c is composed of one square and two circles. The circles are small in size, as in figure 60b. So there is a contrast of shape as well as a contrast of size, and then there is also a contrast of position (left/right) between the two small circles.



## Contrasts within a Form

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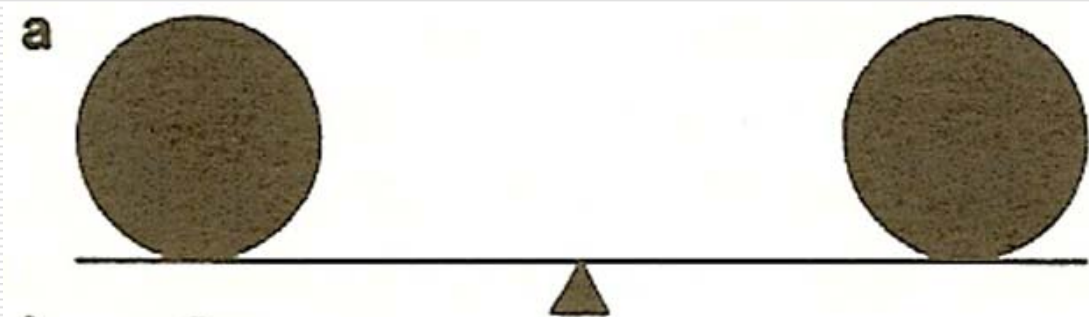
Like figure 60c, figure 60d is composed of one square and two circles, but in a different way. There is a contrast of shape as well as a contrast of size and a contrast of position. Furthermore, there is a contrast of space (positive/negative). because one circle is united to the square, but the other circle is subtracted from it.



## The Contrast Structure

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A formal structure (repetition, gradation, or radiation) consists of regularly constructed structural lines or subdivisions which guide the organization of unit forms into a definite order. An informal structure has no structural lines, and unit forms are positioned freely. Balance is to be maintained in both cases, but the kind of balance in each case is different. To illustrate this, balance in a formal structure is like distributing two equal weights equidistantly from the fulcrum.



## The Contrast Structure

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The balance in an informal structure is like distributing two unequal weights at unequal distances from the fulcrum, with the lighter weight farther away, the heavier weight nearer by, with careful adjustments.



## The Contrast Structure

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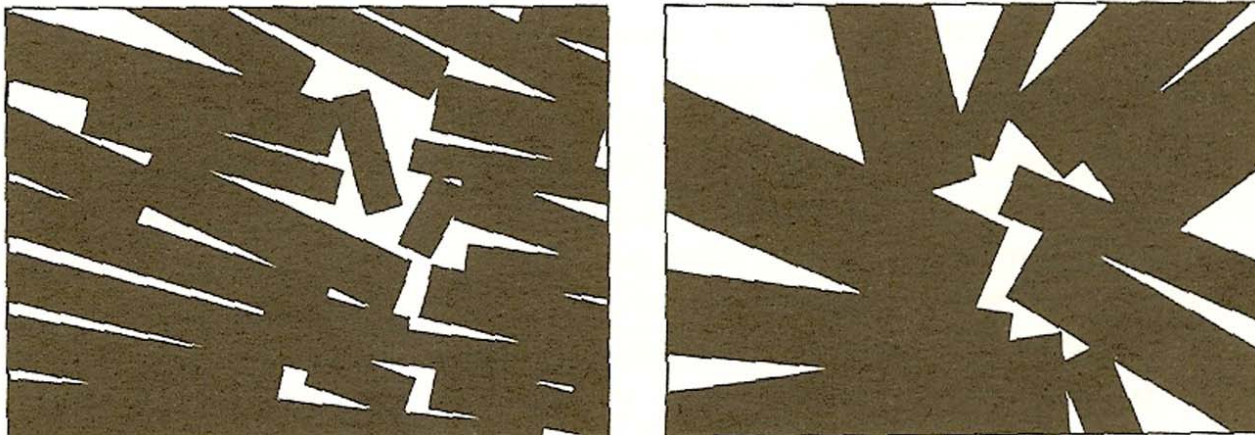
- ❑ In a contrast structure, unit forms are seldom repetitive in both shape and size but are in a loose relationship of similarity. They may have more than just one kind, but usually there is one kind that dominates. Among the two or more kinds of unit forms, contrasts of shape, size, and/or color may exist.
  - ❑ No definite rules can be established in the organization of a contrast structure. Shapes and sizes of unit forms are adjusted as felt necessary.
  - ❑ Similarity is sought, not just among each of the visual elements, but among the relational elements as well in order to maintain a sense of unity, with occasional contrasts to produce tension and visual excitement.
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## The Contrast Structure

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### a. Direction

Most of the unit forms may have similar directions. Contrasting directions are used to provoke agitation. We can also arrange the unit forms in all sorts of directions, creating varying degrees of contrast among them.

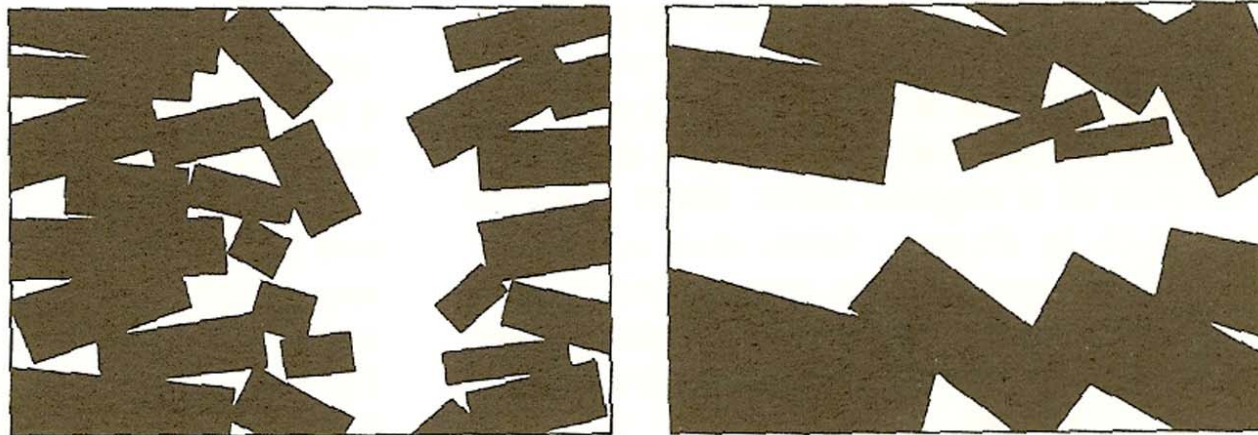


## The Contrast Structure

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### b. Position

Unit forms can be positioned towards opposite borders of the frame reference, creating tension in between.



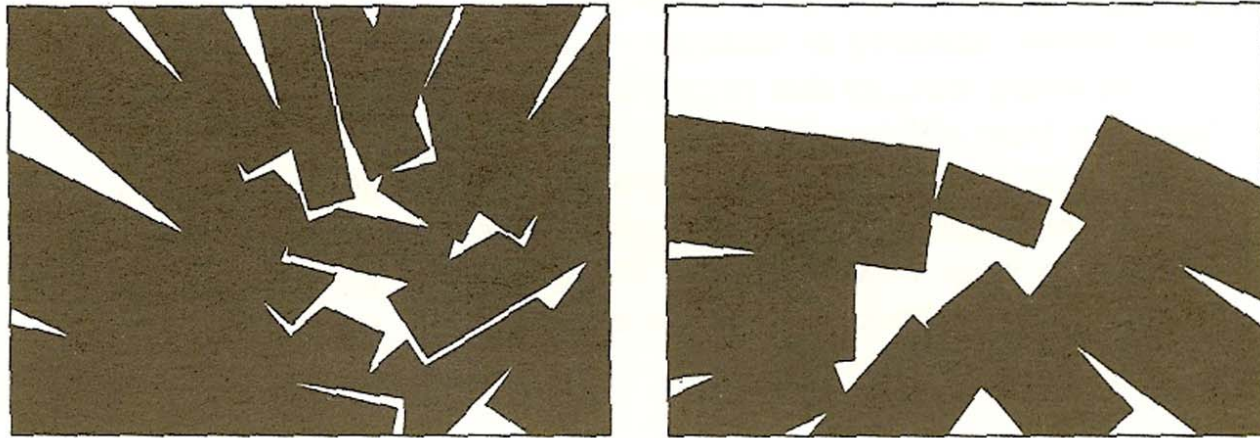


## The Contrast Structure

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### c. Space

The encounter of positive and negative unit forms (resulting in subtraction) is a way of producing spatial contrast. Space can be pushed and squeezed by unit forms which are thrust against each other. It can also be left void, in contrast with congested areas.



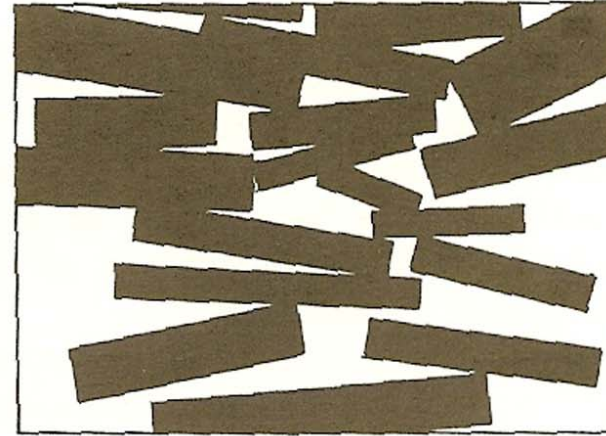
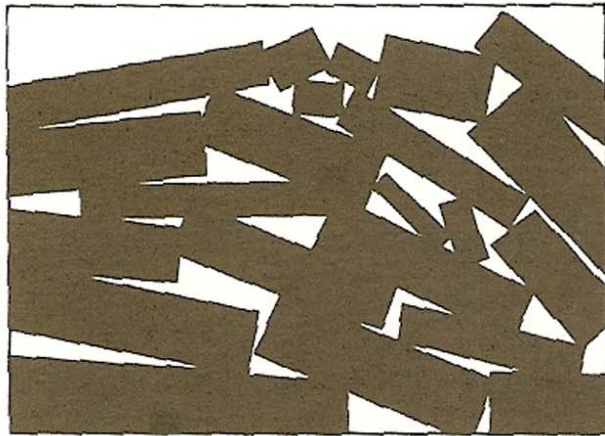


## The Contrast Structure

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### d. Gravity

Unit forms dropping from high to low positions, or stacking from low to high positions, can suggest a gravitational pull. Stable and unstable unit forms, static and moving unit forms, or heavy and light unit forms can be put together in effective contrast of gravity.



# Dominance and Emphasis

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## Dominance of majority

- Dominance is gained by one kind of unit form which occupies more space in a design than other kinds.
  - These unit forms, as distinguished from all others by shape, size, color, texture, direction, position, space, and/or gravity, are in a majority because they are spread over a wider area.
  - Dominance of majority helps to pull the design together into an integrated whole.
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## Dominance and Emphasis

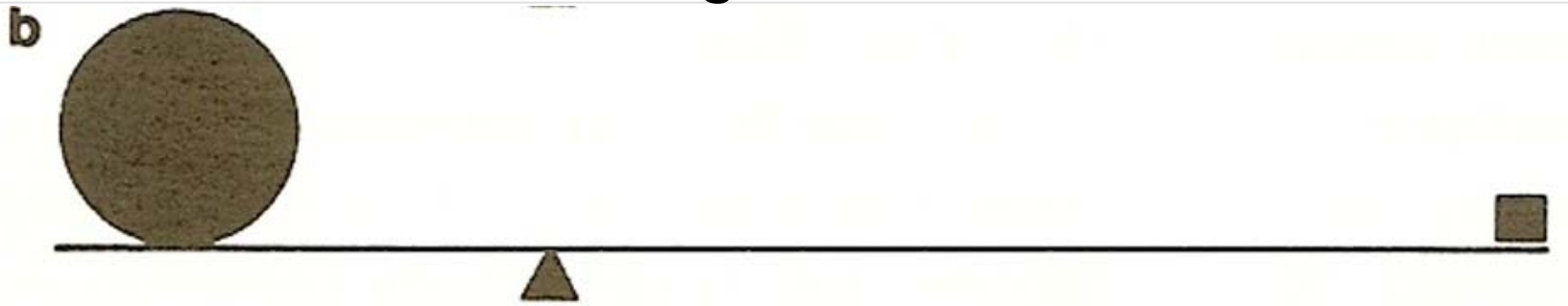
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### Emphasis of minority

- Dominance of majority does not necessarily put the minority into oblivion. On the contrary, the minority often gets emphasized and demands greater attention.
- It is like an anomaly, which is more readily seen.

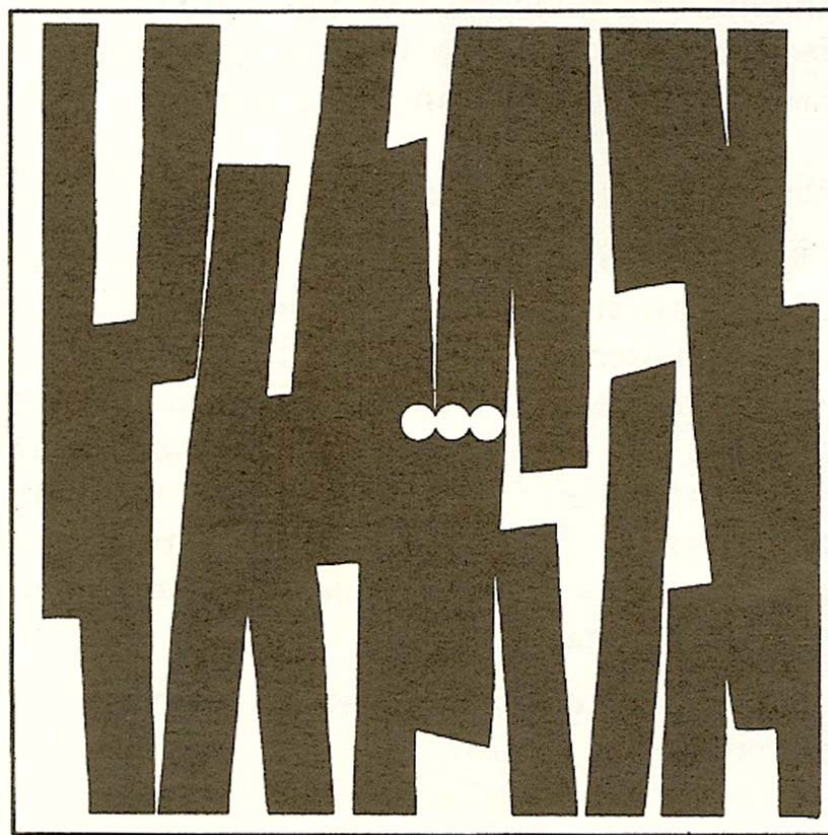
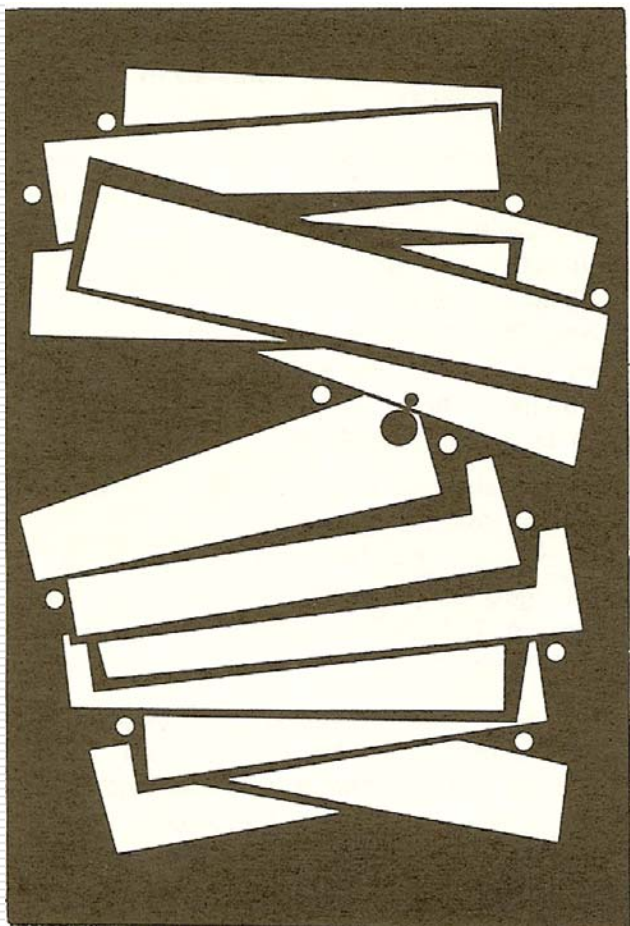
## Dominance and Emphasis

- Dominance of majority and emphasis of minority normally work together in a contrast structure.
- Even if there is only one kind of unit form in the design, various relational elements can be manipulated to create dominance and emphasis.
- Dominance of majority is like the heavier weight, closer to the fulcrum, and emphasis of minority like the lighter weight, farther away from the fulcrum, establishing a balance as illustrated in figure 61b.



## Exercises

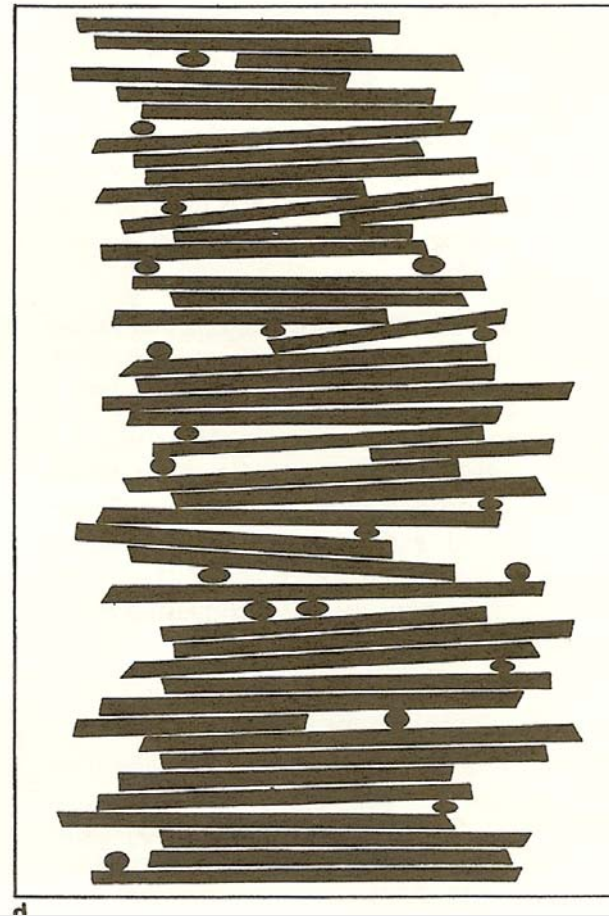
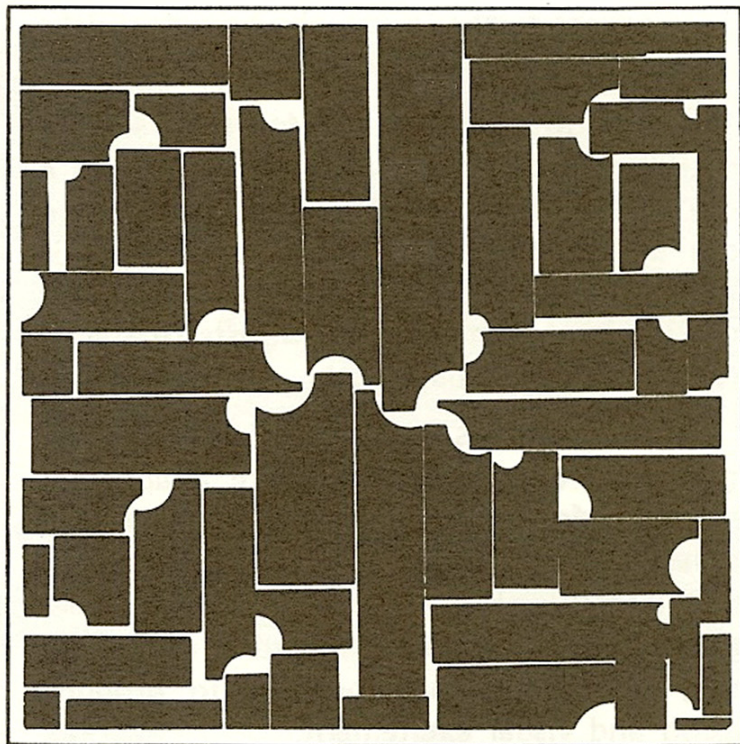
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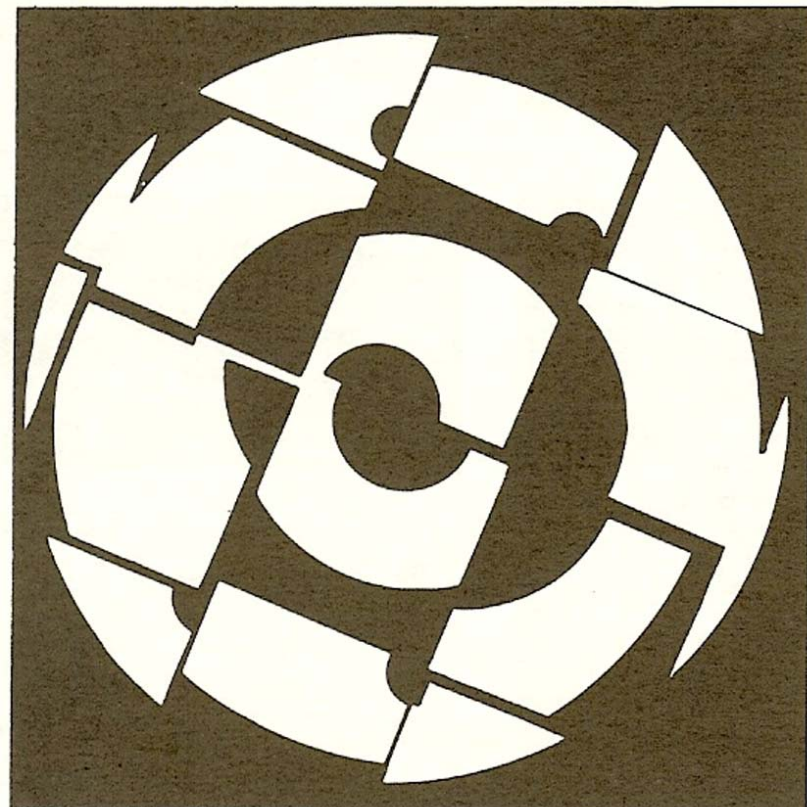
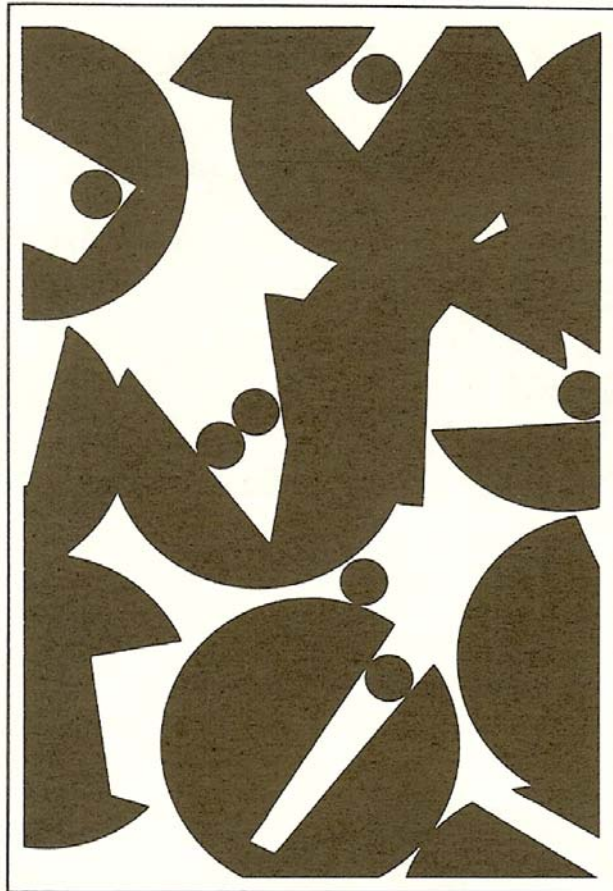
## Exercises

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## Exercises

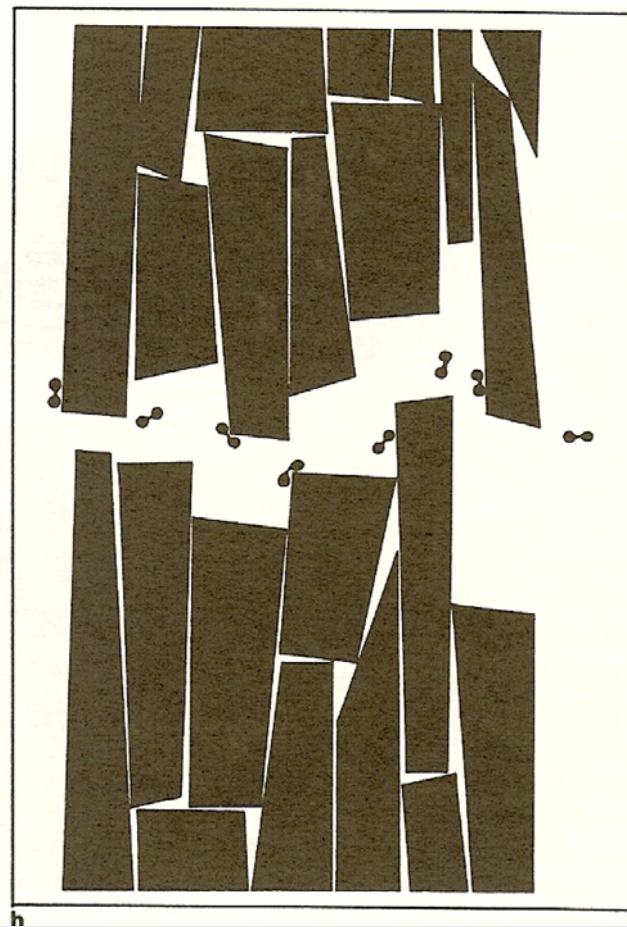
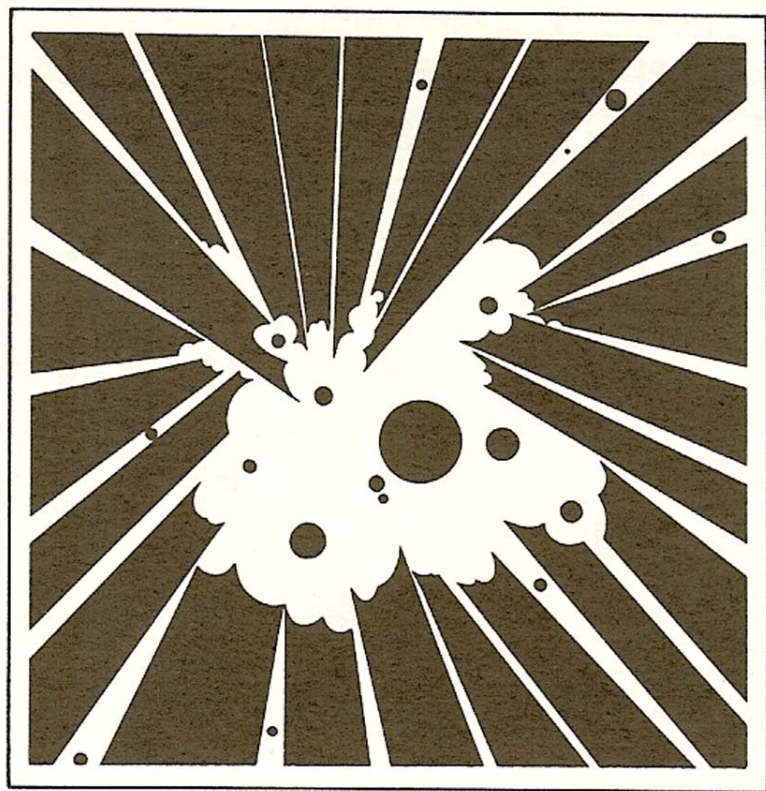
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## Exercises

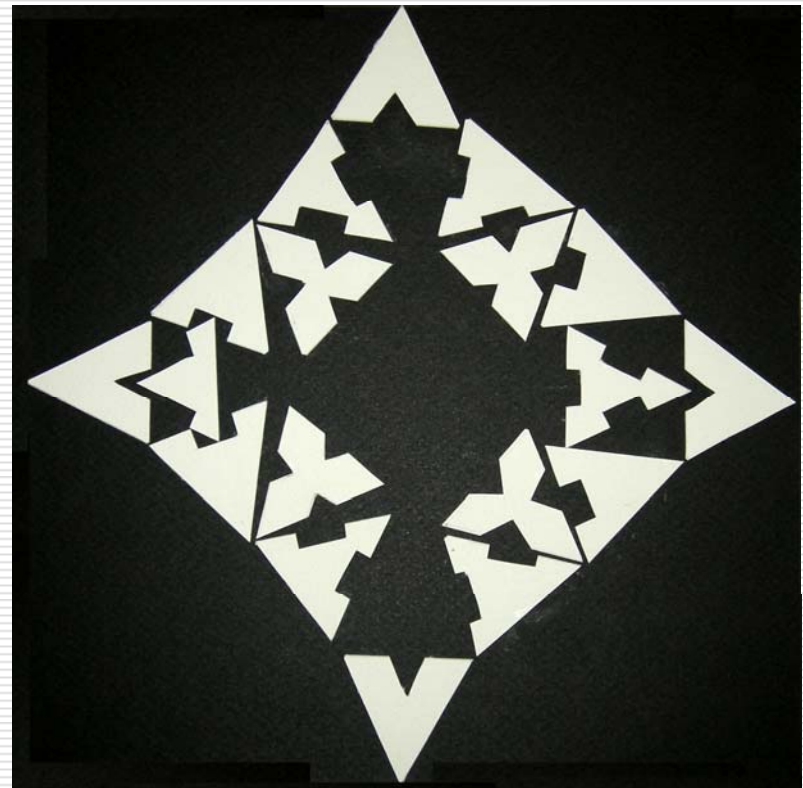
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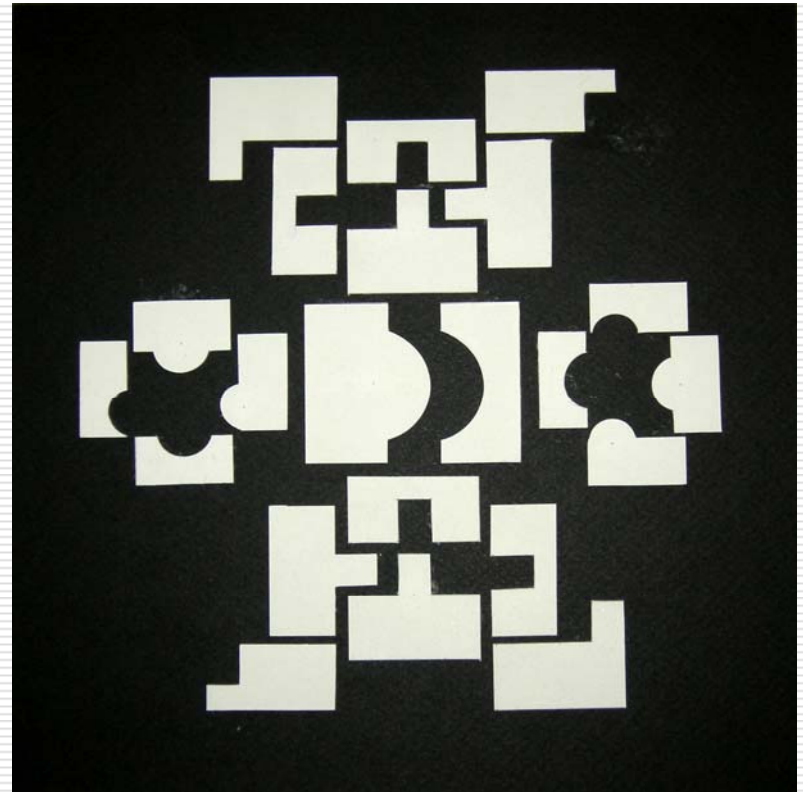
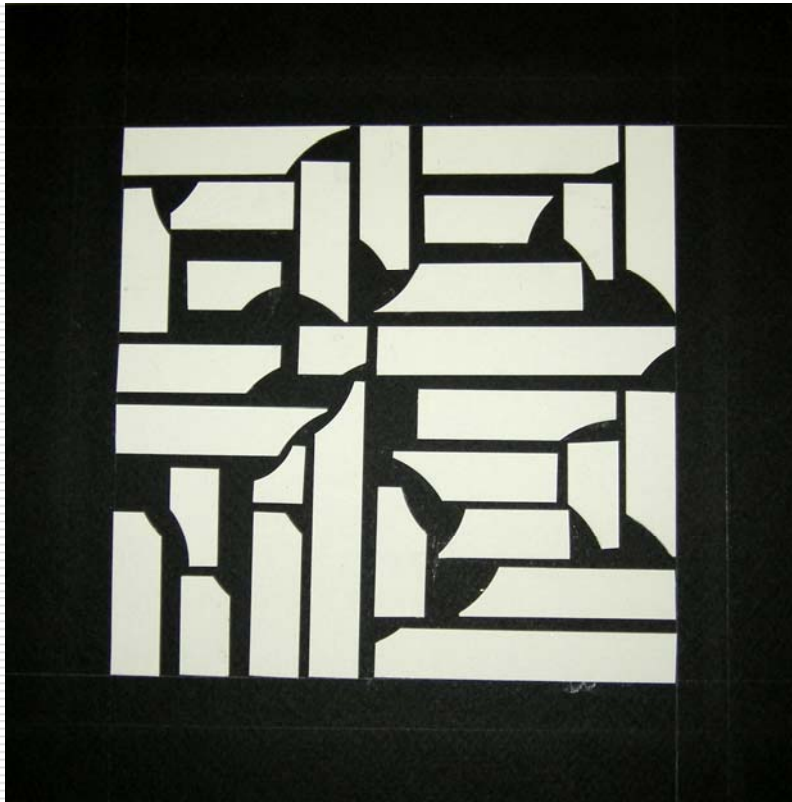
## Examples

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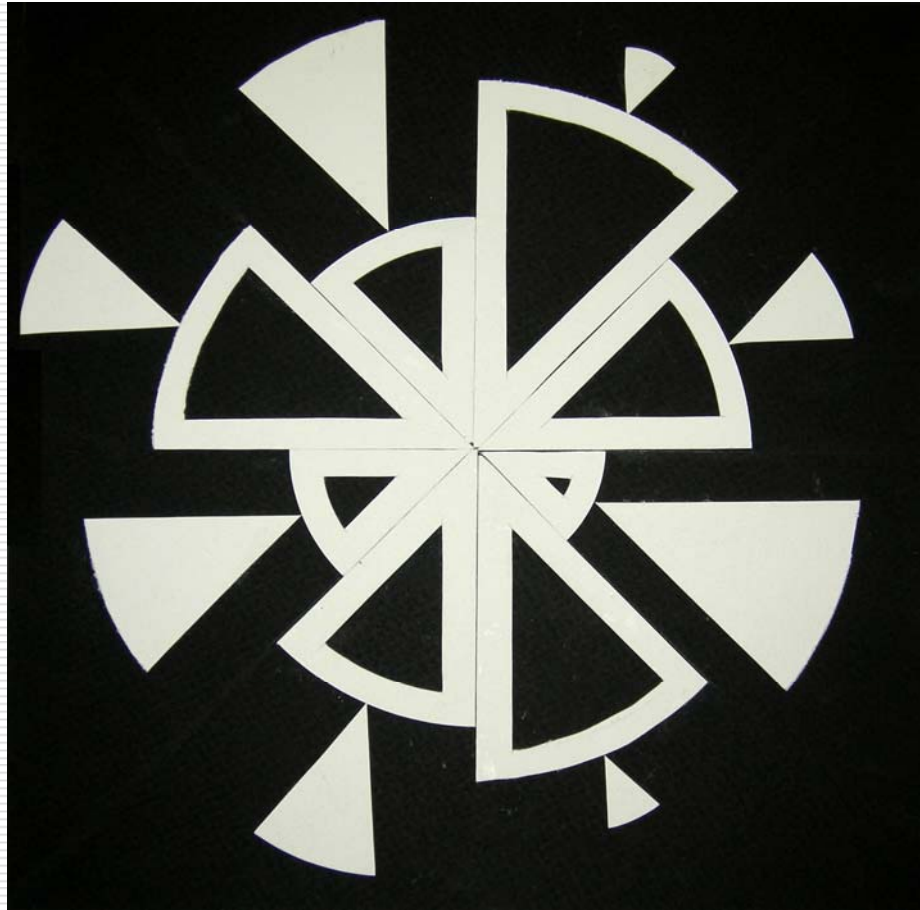
## Examples

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## Examples

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