I have spent a lot of time on this blog talking about art, and the various “rule” of design. To be clear, the purpose of such rules are not to impose so rigid rubric by which you measure artwork, the purpose is to guide a new or unsure artists in developing a dialogue with the viewer. This is an important element of the artistic endeavour. Art is nothing without being viewed, even if you are the only person that will ever see the piece of art in question, you should aspire to even surprise yourself with the interesting forms you develope.

When I talk about developing Interest in a two dimensional piece it is not some attempt to make all art the same, but simple advice to help you engage your audience. The average person in a gallery or on the internet will decide if they like a piece in under five seconds. That’s it, that’s all the time you have to grab someone and encourage them to further explore your piece. The best arts of art can be viewed hundreds of times for hours over the lifetime of the piece and never lose interest.

There are many ways to evoke interest in a work of art, but there are two main schools of thought. The first and some would say higher form is the use of content. A painting of a horrific moment of violence is certainly eye grabbing and would make a peice more memorable in anyones mind. The second school of thought and the one I have spent the most time elaborating on is developing interest through form. The reason this is, in my opinion a more important ability to discuss, is that even a piece of artwork that is emotionally evocative, using visual images to grab the viewers attention, can being visually interesting. The artist has the prerogative to place the forms in such a manner as would develop the most interest. Developing visual interest is a skill, and can be practiced and honed even if you do not have anything specific to say. These guidelines and rules and be followed no matter the subject matter, whether its an wedding photo, landscape painting, figure drawing, or abstract sculpture. All of visual art exist as a visual composition and can therefore be considered in a visual fashion.

The only visual medium that is really exempt for this is scientific diagrams, whose primary function is not entertainment but communicating scientific fact. But even in this realm there is a place for composition, balance and visual interest. To say that a piece does not require visual balance because it is driven by content is to promote an attitude of laziness, and more often than not leads to artwork that may have message worth spreading but that has no interest and therefore legs *to* spread with. So no matter the message behind a work of art, some consideration must be paid to the visual composition of a piece. Even if it is only to make the the piece intentionally unsettling or grotesque. Again my intention is not to encourage everyone to make their art idyllic and pretty. Just to say that form is of equal importance when creating art.

**And that’s my take on form versus content.**