# Rules for Rebuilding the World

Christopher Alexander's **Element of Style** 

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### Levels of Scale

A balanced range of sizes is pleasing and beautiful.



Scale and proportion in art are both concerned with size. Scale refers to the size of an object (a whole) in relationship to another object (another whole). In art the size relationship between an object and the human body is significant.



# Strong Centers

Good design offers areas of focus or weight.



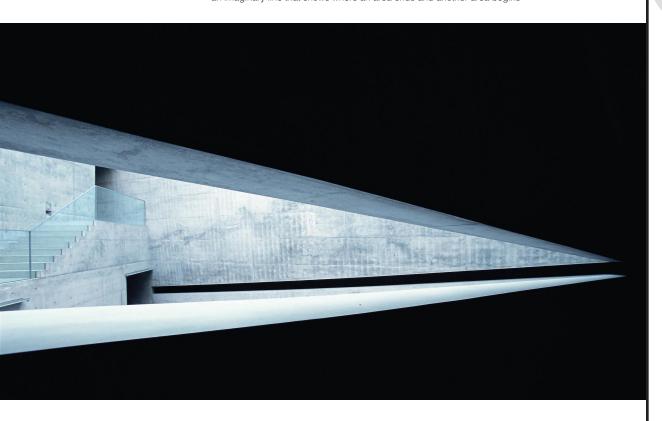
The word "centre" often means places or buildings where an activity takes place. Moving these two elements out of center to make them look like they're visually centered would balance the composition a little better.



### Boundaries

Outlines focus attention on the center.

Boundary is something that indicates or fixes a limit or extent. Such as a river, a fence, or an imaginary line that shows where an area ends and another area begins





### Alternating Repetition

Repeating various elements creates a sense of order and harmony.





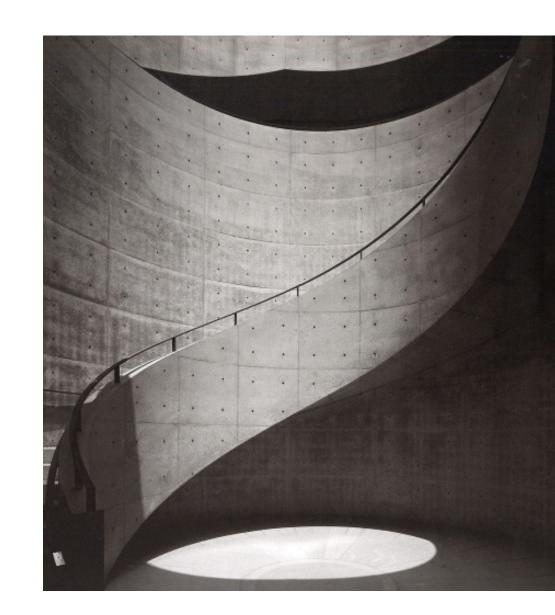
Repetition refers to one object or shape repeated; pattern is a combination of elements or shapes repeated in a recurring and regular arrangement; rhythm is a combination of elements repeated, but with variations.

### Positive Space

The background should reinforce rather than detract from the center.



Positive space is the area or part of a painting's composition that the subject occupies. For instance, the positive space could be a vase of flowers in a still life painting, a person's face in a portrait, the trees and hills of a landscape painting. The area around the positive space is called the negative space.







Simple forms create an intense, powerful center.

The enclosed lines are then transformed into another element of art called shape. Shapes are areas of enclosed space that are two-dimensional. Shapes are flat, and can only have height and width. The two different categories of shapes are geometric and organic.



### Local Symmetries

Organic, small-scale symmetry works better than precise, overall symmetry.

Asymmetrical balance is achieved when elements on either side of a composition do not reflect one another, whereas symmetrical balance can be thought of as a mirror image, a composition in which objects on either side match one another.

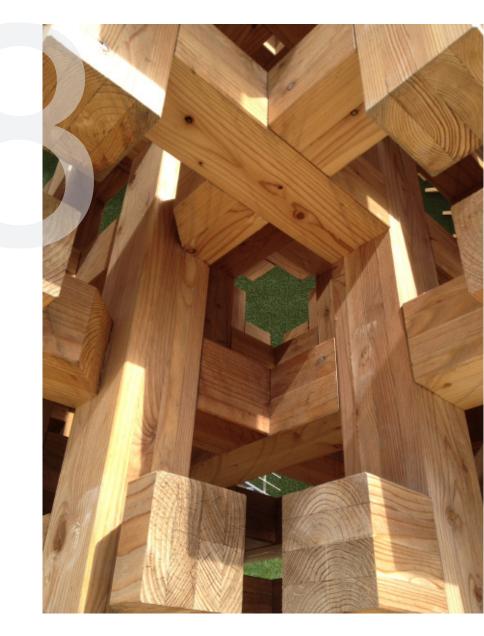


### Looping, connected elements promote unity and grace.



## Deep Interlock & Ambiguity

Interlock functions to fit together like pieces in jigsaw puzzle. Ambiguity is a type of uncertainty of meaning in which several interpretations are plausible.



### Contrast

Unity is achieved with visible opposites.



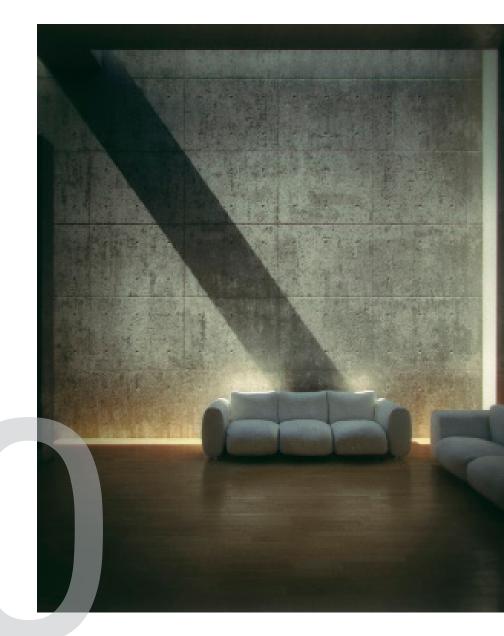


Contrast is a principle of art. When defining it, art experts refer to the arrangement of opposite elements (light vs. dark colors, rough vs. smooth textures, large vs. small shapes, etc.) in a piece so as to create visual interest, excitement and drama.

Gradient The proportional use of space and pattern creates harmony.



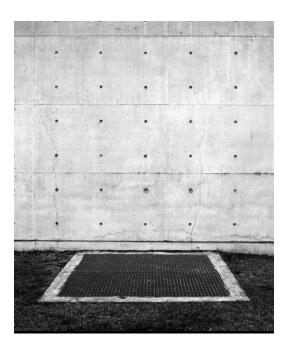
Gradation in art is a visual technique of gradually transitioning from one colour hue to another, or from one shade to another, or one texture to another. Space, distance, atmosphere, volume, and curved or rounded forms are some of the visual effects created with gradation.



## Roughness

### Texture and imperfections convey uniqueness and life.

Texture is the surface quality of an artwork - the roughness or smoothness of the material from which it is made.





# Echoes

Similarities should repeat throughout a design.





Similarity and proximity are two of the four grouping concepts in classic gestalt theory (the other two are closure and simplicity). Similarity refers to what items look like and how that effects grouping. Proximity refers to where items are and how that effects grouping.

### The Void

The use of negative space is a key element of artistic composition. The Japanese word "ma" is sometimes used for this concept, for example in garden design.

**Empty spaces offer calm and contrast.** 

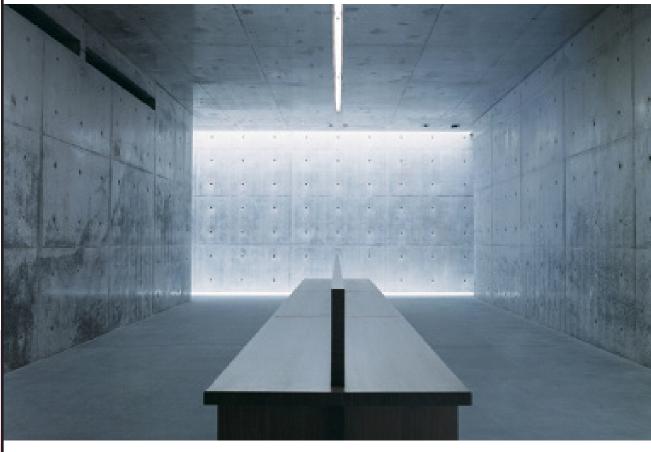




Use only essentials; avoid extraneous elements.

## Simplicity & Inner Calm





Simplicity is the state or quality of being simple. Something which is easy to understand or explain seems simple, in contrast to something complicated.

### Not-Seperateness



Designs should be connected and complementary, not egocentric and isolated.

Design should keep its integrity, which means the state of being whole and undivided

