

Visual Thinking ~ by Trudy Thomson

This presentation is based on the psychology of visual thinking -- how we respond to visual messages and assign meaning

Everything around us -- our visual world of advertising, graphic design, as well as arts and craft in most any medium -- can be placed on a continuum

This continuum moves from Realism (could be photographic, illustrative or painterly and is very detailed > Representational Imagery (refers to specific objects as more suggestive line, form, and shape > Impressionistic or Expressionistic Renderings > Abstract (without reference to pictorial content)

Compositional Elements provide a sense of stability or excitement

When compositions are symmetrical -- have strong vertical and horizontal lines -- we feel safe and secure; this is referred to as "leveling"

When compositions are asymmetrical but balanced -- we are more likely to explore the "territory" of the composition

When compositions are diagonal or elements are positioned off the expected axis, our interest is peaked; this is referred to as "sharpening"

Circular movements carry our eyes around a composition and can give us a sense of completion

Visual Styles can soothe or stimulate. Examples include:

Simplicity vs Complexity

Regularity vs Irregularity

Continuity and Repetition

Organic and Spontaneous

Sequential and Episodic

Motion & Movement

Controlled Spontaneity

Random & Sporadic

To summarize, three overriding principles associated with Visual Thinking are:

Symmetrical compositions impart stability vs asymmetrical composition "sharpen" and stimulates interest

There is a continuum of styles from realistic through representational to abstract

There is a wide range of visual techniques that can be used to either soothe or stimulate attention

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