**Elements of Design & Principles of Composition Handout**

**Elements of Design**

**Line:** a mark that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The characteristics of a line are determined by

* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**:the length and width of a line
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**:the line’s shape, value (how light/dark it is), and its contrast with surrounding objects. Ex-lines can be straight, curvilinear, angled, jagged, serpentine, or any combination of these characteristics
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**:the lines’ emotionally evocative characteristics (ex- long lines more noticeable than short, lines that contrast strongly with surroundings/backgrounds draw more attention than those that don’t, etc…)

**Shape:** Any line that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* In set design, shapes create walls, platforms & defines outlines of windows, doors, furniture, etc…

**Mass:** the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_manifestation of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Creates an awareness of depth and spatial arrangements

**Position:** the relative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of adjacent shapes or masses. (both the distance between objects and their placement to other forms around them).

**Texture:** the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_surface characteristics or appearance of an object (ex-rough, soft, fuzzy, slick/metallic). Provides clues to the play’s psychological environment (ex-smooth surfaces could suggest a finished, orderly type of environment vs. rough textures which could suggest a less polished, harsher atmosphere)

**Principles of Composition**

**Unity:** creating a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_that all elements fit into. (Ex-Production concept) Each part of the design fits/connects with the production concept.

**Harmony**: the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_that happens when all elements of a design fit together. The combination of design elements seem to naturally blend or flow together, avoids discordant/incompatible contrasts.

**Contrast:** the juxtaposition of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Effective contrast works in opposition to the major or dominant visual theme in a composition, it is balanced. Too much contrast can destroy a visual theme, but too little contrast (to much harmony) will be monotonous.

**Variation:** Variation of monotonous elements can create \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (ex-using a simple repeated floor pattern can be boring, but varying the shape of every second or third object can create visual interest that highlights the whole design. Line, shape, texture can all be varied.

**Balance:** achieved by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to give a sense of restfulness or equilibrium to the design. The two types of balance are

* **Symmetrical Balance**: if the design were folded in half both sides would

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ each other perfectly

* **Asymmetrical Balance:** balance created through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by juxtaposition of dissimilar design elements (line, form, mass, value, color)

**Emphasis**: directing the audience’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to a specific \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (ex-in scenic design the focal points would be areas of the stage which specific scenes or moments are played in). Can be created in different ways (ex-converging lines or changing textures can direct audience’s attention to specific locations in a set)