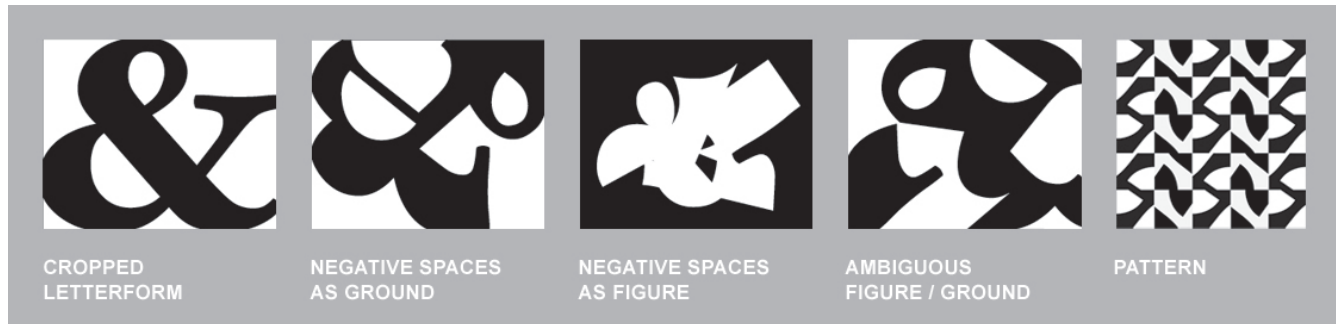


HIERARCHIES & PATTERN

Project Definition:

In a series of five consecutive tactile and digital experiments, students will explore hierarchical and non-hierarchical imagery in the FIGURE/GROUND relationships of abstracted letterforms, through the use of cropping, arrangement, juxtaposition, FIGURE/GROUND interchange and pattern formation.



Overall Objectives:

- To explore how hierarchies are created, leveled & inverted through the manipulation of FIGURE/GROUND
- To manipulate FIGURE/GROUND relationships and understand their significance in design.
- To explore FIGURE/GROUND interchange and balance through the use of inversion, repetition and pattern.
- Adobe Illustrator - To understand the use of the type tool, pen tool, pathfinder, stroke, masking, convert to outlines tool, layers, document setup, copying, pasting, and printing.
- Adobe Photoshop - To understand how to manipulate imagery by learning how to scan, adjust image size, brightness/contrast, levels, crop, rotate, format files and printing.

Materials & Software Needed:

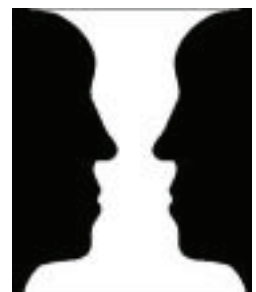
- Adobe Illustrator & Photoshop
- Bright White Cardstock (Large Quantity & Cheap at Staples)
- Black Illustration Board
- Matt Cutting Board
- Rubber Cement Eraser
- Digital Storage Device
- Black & White Laser Prints
- Black Graphite Transferring Paper
- Exacto Knife, Ruler
- Envelopes
- Spray mount, Rubber Cement

Phase 1: Cropped Letterform

FIGURE / GROUND Lesson:

SHAPE is an area that is separate from other areas and/or its background. GEOMETRIC SHAPES are those made with straight lines and circles– manmade shapes that can be drawn with a ruler or compass. ORGANIC SHAPES are those found in nature that have a more spontaneous hand-drawn feel to them.

FIGURE or “positive shape” is the part of a composition that we focus on. The FIGURE is easy to identify when it is a recognizable object “subject matter”. When shapes are more



abstract, we determine what the FIGURE is based on its relationship to other visual elements. GROUND or “negative shape” is everything that is not the FIGURE.

The FIGURE/GROUND RELATIONSHIP refers to humans’ ability to separate elements based upon contrast. The FIGURE always defines the GROUND and the GROUND defines the FIGURE. They are inseparable -- you cannot have one without the other. If you draw the FIGURE in a composition, you are drawing the GROUND at the same time. The edges of one are the edges of the other.

BALANCE. Our tendency to perceive FIGURE/GROUND relationships is exploited in this vase / two faces example where the negative and positive space is balanced. One can view the image as either a central white vase or two profiles facing each other. When we focus on the vase, as FIGURE the black becomes the GROUND and vice versa. To see both of these perceptions, it requires switching the FIGURE / GROUND back and forth. Animation Ex: <http://www.scottkim.com/inversions/gallery/figure.html>

Illustrator Tutorial / Printing & Mounting Demonstration:

- Setting up Illustrator document, type tool, rectangle tool, scale, rotate, pathfinder, create outlines.
- Printing document as black and white laser print. Mounting onto illustration board. Trimming.

Objective: To design an obvious FIGURE GROUND relationship using a letterform as the FIGURE and the negative space surrounding it as GROUND.

Methodology:

- In Adobe Illustrator, set up an 11” X 17” document.
- With the type tool and rectangle tool, design a black letterform that fits in a white rectangular format so that it touches all four sides. The letter must be easily recognized and occupy 50% of the space in the format. Any style of upper or lower case letter may be used. Keep in mind that you will use the negative shapes from this assignment in the next one so design the letter with the negative shapes in mind. Try to find a good balance of FIGURE/GROUND. There must be at least five negative shapes in your composition. The rectangle surrounding your letterform must fit within the 11” X 17” page but should be no smaller than 7” X 7”. Both rectangular and square formats are acceptable.
- Slight adjustments can be made to the letterform to help it fit the format you have chosen as long as it remains recognizable. (i.e., enhancing the stroke, rotating, cropping, scaling etc.) However, DO NOT DISTORT OR STRETCH THE LETTERFORM.
- When completed, print a black and white laser print.
- Mount your cropped letterform to black illustration board. Save digital file as “initials_Hierarchies.ai”.

Phase 2: Negative Spaces as GROUND

Objective: Your objective with this assignment is to control the GROUND of your composition. Using the white negative shapes from your original composition, you will rearrange them so that they are still seen as GROUND in a new composition. This new composition will create a new black FIGURE that is different from the one you started with.



Methodology:

- Trim your black illustration board to be the exact dimensions as your Cropped Letterform Final.
- With black transfer paper, trace the negative shapes of your extra Cropped Letterform laser print, onto the bright white cardstock. Very carefully, cut out each of the shapes with your exacto knife. With your rubber cement eraser, erase any lines created from the transfer paper.
- Repeat this process three times to create three separate sets of the same negative shapes. Keep the sets separate in small envelopes carefully labeled “set 01, set02, set03” including your full name.
- Using the first set, begin to arrange the white negative shapes on your trimmed black illustration board to create a new composition (that differs drastically from your original) in which the white shapes remain the GROUND. The “negative shapes” should all touch the outside edge of the composition or nestle into shapes that do. Avoid making shapes that float or extend out into the center of the composition.
- Look at the black FIGURE that is forming as a result of your new arrangement of negative shapes. Once you have designed a new composition that you are happy with that follows the above guidelines, carefully rubber cement the negative shapes into place on the illustration board. For this assignment, there should be no overlapping of shapes and no shapes hanging off the outer edges of the board.
- Informal class critique. Revise or re-do compositions based on class discussion.

Phase 3: Negative Spaces as FIGURE

Objective:

Your objective with this assignment is to control the FIGURE. Using the white negative shapes from your original composition, you will re-arrange them as the FIGURE on a new composition. This is the opposite as the previous assignment. By using the white negative shapes as FIGURE, the black becomes the GROUND.



Methodology:

- Trim your black illustration board to be the exact dimensions as your original Cropped Letterform Final.
- Using the second set of shapes that you cut last week, begin to arrange the white negative shapes on your trimmed black illustration board to create a new composition (that differs drastically from your first two) in which the white shapes become the FIGURE.
- Look at the black GROUND that is forming as a result of your new arrangement. Does the GROUND function as a significant part of the image? Once you have designed a new composition that you are happy with that follows the above guidelines, carefully spray mount the negative shapes into place on the illustration board. For this assignment, there may be some overlapping of shapes but no shapes should be hanging off the outer edges of the board.
- Informal class critique. Revise or re-do compositions based on class discussion.

Phase 4: Ambiguous FIGURE/GROUND

Objective:

Now that you have some experience making the same shapes into either FIGURE OR GROUND, in this assignment you will make them into both FIGURE AND GROUND, in the same composition.



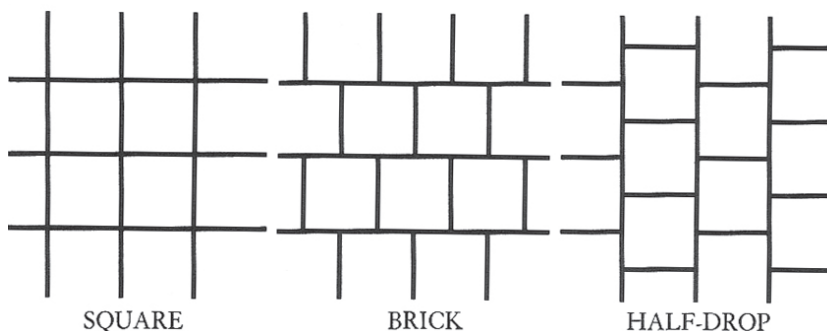
Methodology:

- Trim your black illustration board to be the exact dimensions as your original Cropped Letterform Final.
- Using the second set of shapes that you cut last week, begin to arrange the white negative shapes on your trimmed black illustration board to create a new composition (that differs drastically from your first three) in which all shapes are BOTH FIGURE AND GROUND.
- Arrange the “negative shapes” so that all are touching (not overlapping) so that they form new shapes out of the background. Try to make as many of these new shapes as possible. Pay attention to the edges of the shapes created by the positive and negative shapes. Notice that the edges of the GROUND are the edges of the FIGURE and vice-versa. Let the edges of the shapes flow across the composition in a compelling and rhythmic way.
- When you are finished ask two people what color (black or white) is figure. They should say both colors are figure and both are ground. Experiment with alternate configurations until you have an interesting composition where the FIGURE/GROUND relationship is ambiguous. Once you have designed a new composition that you are happy with, that follows the above guidelines, carefully spray mount the shapes into place on the illustration board. For this assignment, there should be no overlapping of shapes but shapes can be hang slightly off the outer edges of the board and trimmed afterwards.
- Informal class critique. Revise or re-do compositions based on class discussion.

Phase 5: Pattern

Objective:

Through the use of FIGURE/GROUND interchange, repetition, rotation, and reflection students will explore pattern design within the following networks- square, brick and half-drop.



Illustrator Tutorial:

- Setting up grids, drawing with pen tool, Bezier curves, pathfinder tool, inverting, copying, pasting, rotating, aligning, moving, preview mode, printing with cropmarks

Methodology:

- Read the pdf handout by Richard M Proctor introducing the Principles of Pattern Design.
- In Illustrator, create a 9" X 9" document and name it "INITIALS_PatternSquare" and use the Preferences to set your grid to be every 1" with 8 subdivisions.
- Using the pen or shape tool, create a black and white 1" square graphic unit to use for your first pattern within a square network. The lines can be geometric or organic.
- Repeating the unit in a 9 X 9 grid, create a pattern design by experimenting with interchange, repetition, rotation, and reflection.
- Create 2 new units to use for creating patterns in both the brick and half-drop network.
- For the final mount and trim your three 9" X 9" laser prints on black illustration board for final critique in our next class.