



Balance

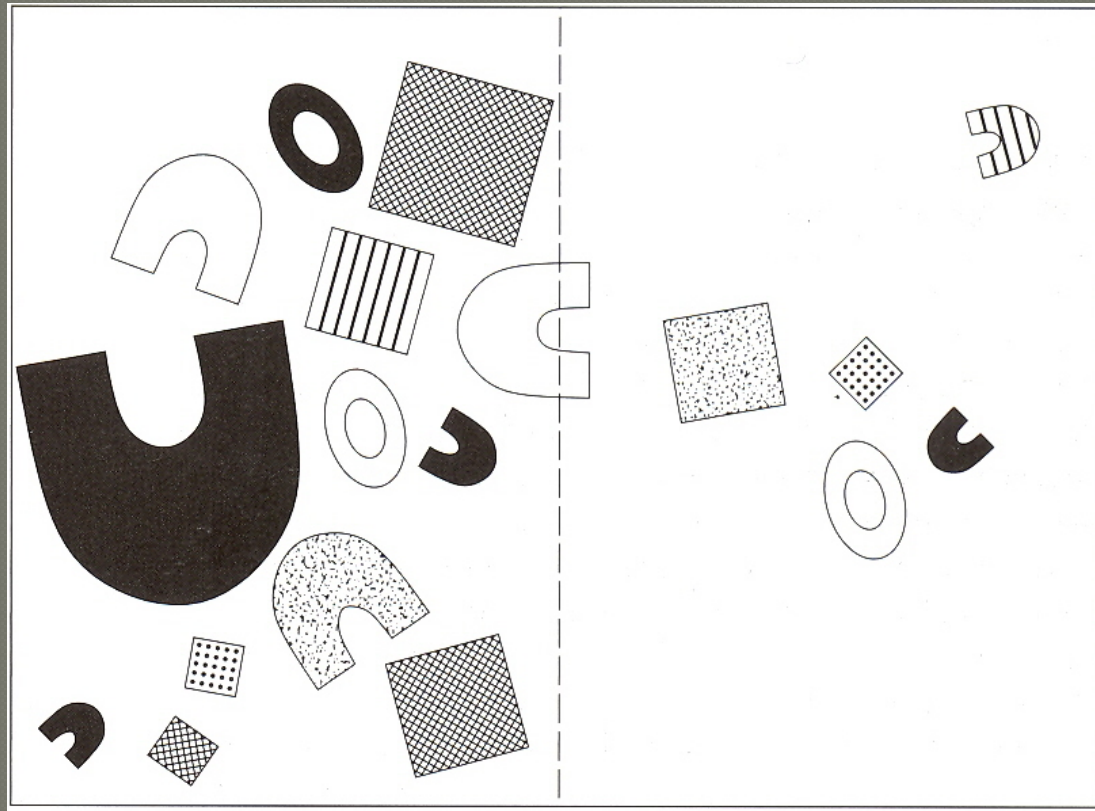


-
- Balance - An arrangement of parts achieving a state of equilibrium between opposing forces or influences.
 - We inherently understand the concept of balance because there are physical and psychological consequences when we are off balance.
 - Use horizontal and vertical axis to measure balance

Why is this image balanced?

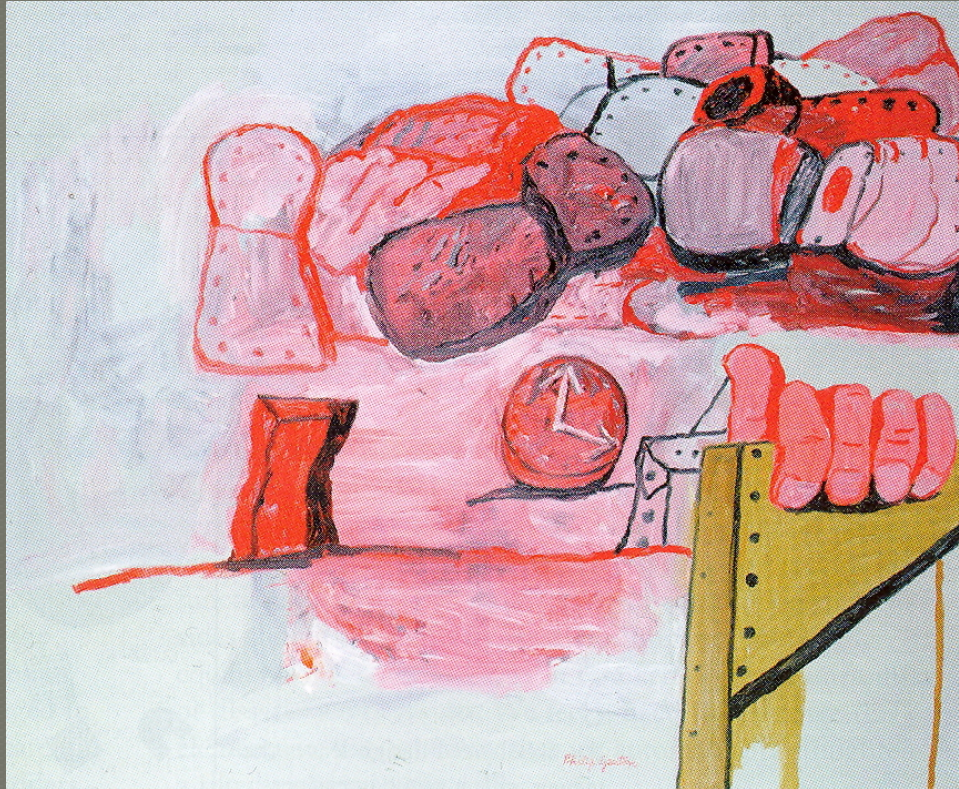


Imbalance can be disconcerting



But sometimes imbalance is

○ useful

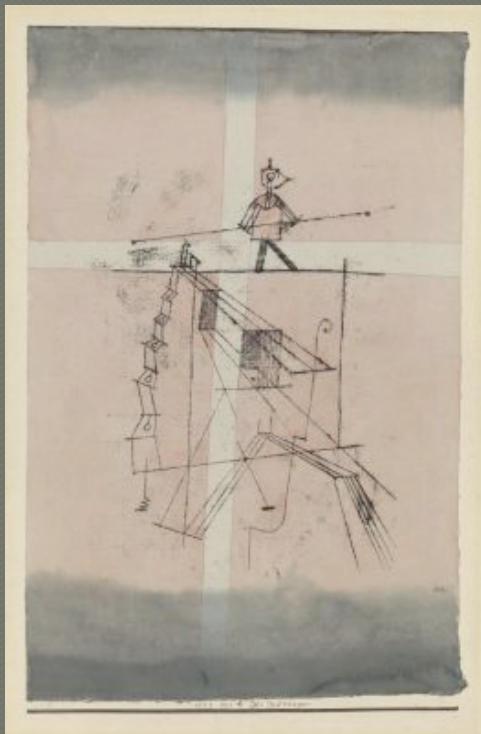


Phillip Guston, *Transistion*, 1975, oil on canvas



Katsushika Hokusai
Boy and Mt. Fuji
Japan, Edo Period c. 1839
Scroll: Ink and color on silk 36.2 x 51.0
Freer Gallery of Art/ Smithsonian Institution

○ Vertical balance | horizontal axis



Paul Klee
Tightrope Walker
1923
color lithograph 17 x 10"
The Museum of Modern Art
New York

When we think of balance, we often think of horizontal balance

Vertical balance is another consideration

We tend to want to weight compositions toward the bottom because of gravity.

As we move the main distribution of weight upward, we can create a more dynamic composition, but too far up, and we feel like we're going to tip over.

Symmetrical Balance | Bilateral symmetry

- The simplest type of balance

- Like shapes are duplicated on either side of the vertical axis
- Mirror image
- Static
- Formal

Used in architecture- often desired

feels stable

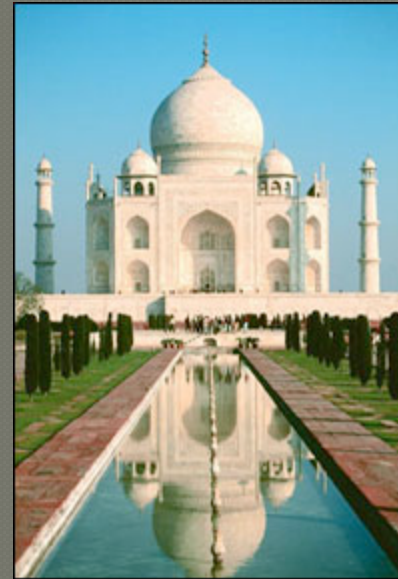
permanent

imparts strength

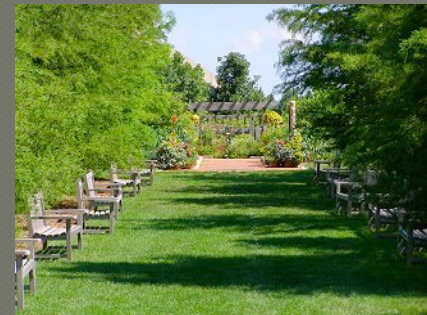
sedate

dignified

Also regularly used in landscape design



Taj Mahal



The formality of symmetry



Man's shirt, Chilkat
Tlingit, Alaska, 1890

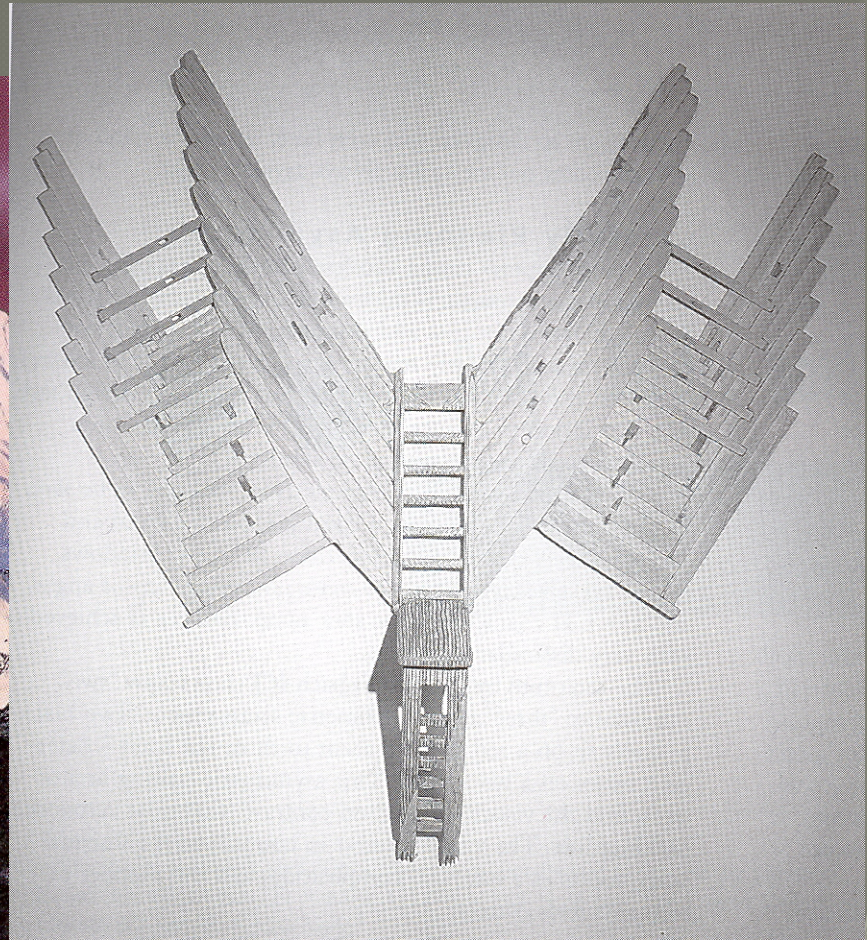


New York State Capitol Building, Albany, NY

Symmetry in art



Ed Rucha, *Step On No Pets*, 2002



Margaret Wharton, *Mockingbird*, 1981



Asymmetrical Balance

- Based on equal eye attraction a little more exciting and unpredictable
- Several ways to balance without symmetry
- Balance is achieved with dissimilar objects that have equal visual weight or eye attraction.



Nan Goldin. Siobhan
with a cigarette, Berlin.
1994. Photograph



Haim Steinbach. Supremely Black.
1989. Sonnabend Gallery, New York

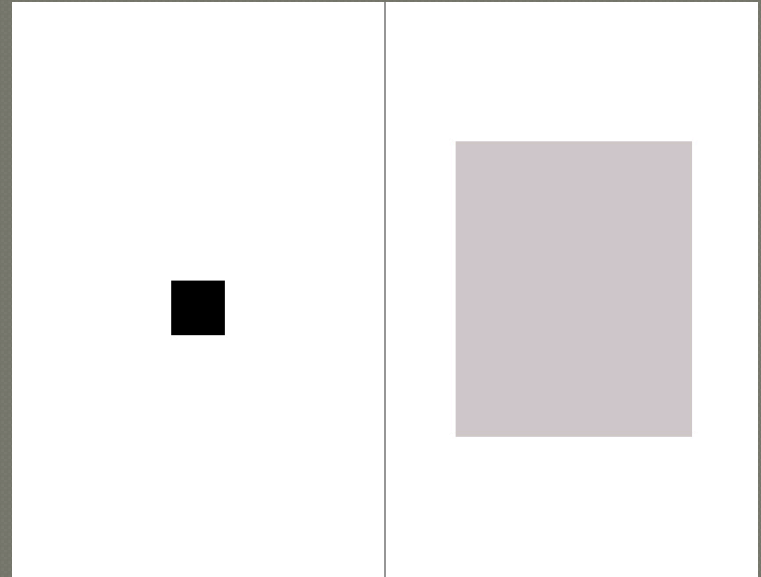


El Alamillo Bridge, Santiago Calatrava, 1992

Asymmetrical balance | value

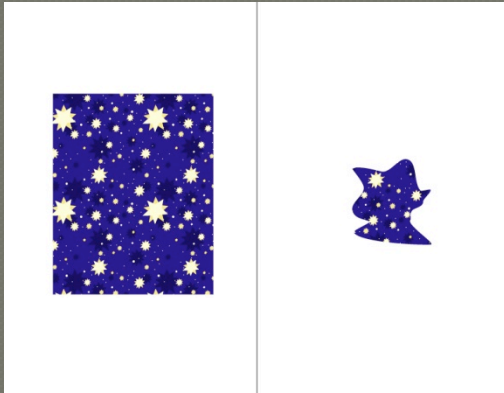


A darker, smaller element is visually equal to a lighter, larger one.

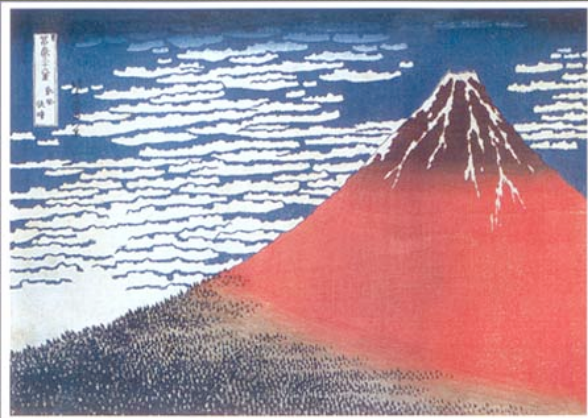


Frederic H. Evans. *New York Minster, Into the South Transept*. C. 1900
Platinum print. Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York Alfred Stieglitz Collection

Asymmetrical Balance | Shape and Texture

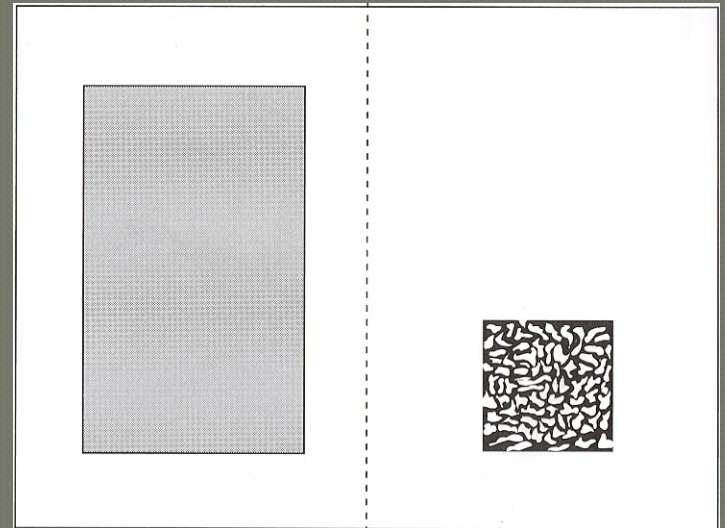


The two shapes at the left have the same texture and value- the only difference is their shape.



Katsushika Hokusai
Fuji Clear Weather 1820-1830. Color woodcut, 10 x 15" Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

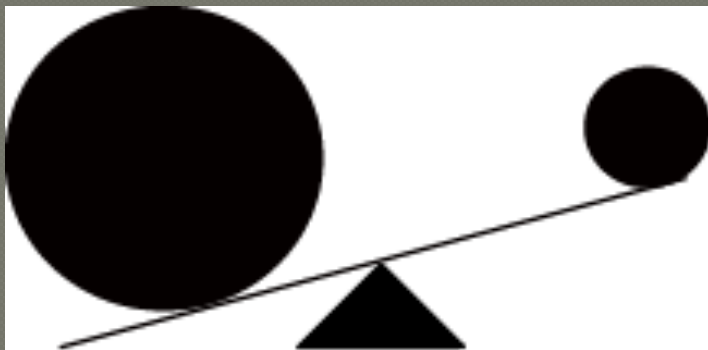
Large, simple form, balanced by intricate pattern or texture



A small textured shape can balance a larger untextured one

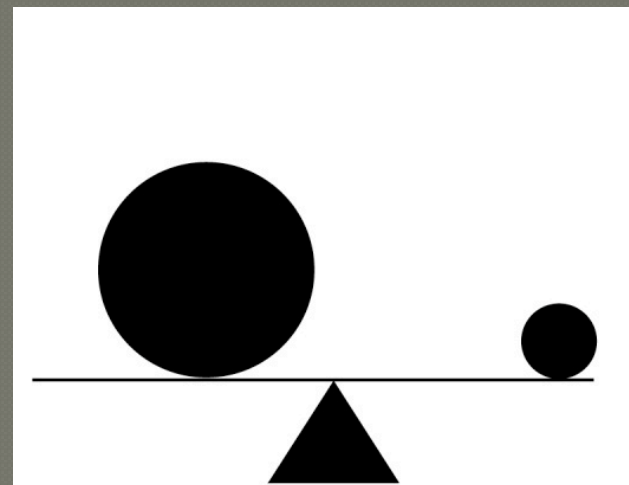
Asymmetrical Balance | position

- Unequal weight can be brought to equilibrium by moving the heavier object toward the center.
- In design, this means put the larger item toward the center of the composition and the smaller item toward the edge.



Not balanced

Balanced by position



Asymmetrical Balance | eye direction



Notice how Degas directs your eye toward the empty area in the composition.

Edgar Degas
Dancers at the Barre
Oil on canvas c. 1900

The Phillips Collection Washington D.C.

What type of balance is illustrated by this sculpture?
Why is it working?



Martin Puryear, Lever No. 3 1989
Wood, carved and painted 7.5' x 13.8' x 13'
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

Shape, value, position, and eye direction are all being used here to balance this asymmetrical woodcut.



Suzuki Harunobu
Girl with Lantern on Balcony at Night
1768, Color Woodcut
Metropolitan Museum of Art

Radial Balance

- All elements radiate from a common central point

Can be symmetrical or asymmetrical

- Depends upon whether common point (focus) is in center or not.
- Radial Balance is common in non-western cultures
- Navajo sand paintings
- Tibetan
- Mesoamerican
- Celtic

Tibetan Monks

Mesoamerican calendar



Hindu



Celtic



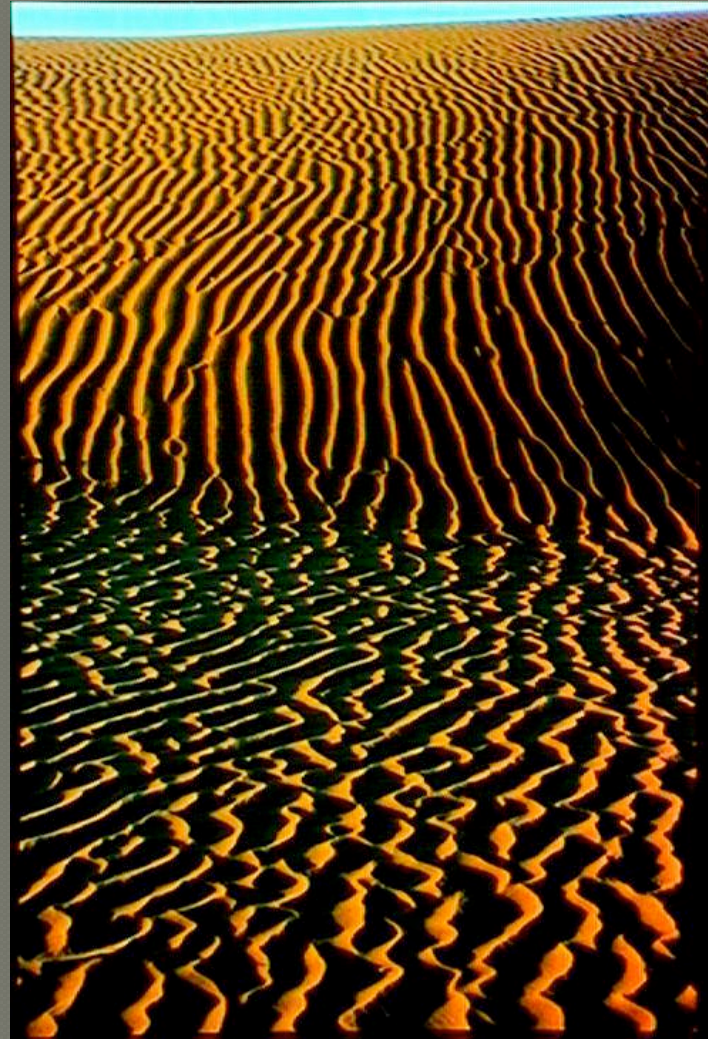
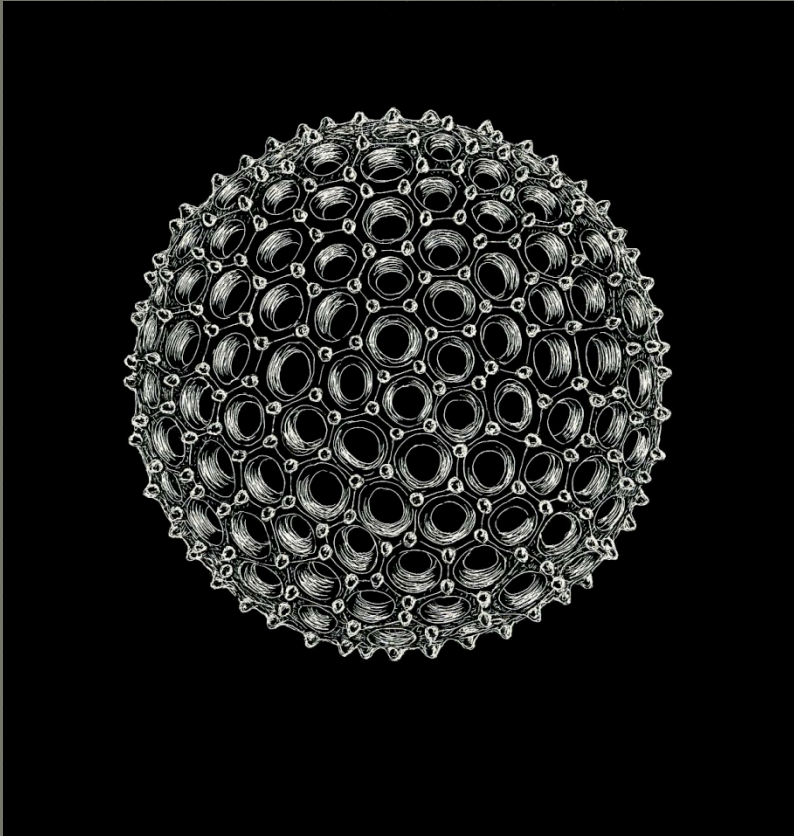
Navajo sand painting



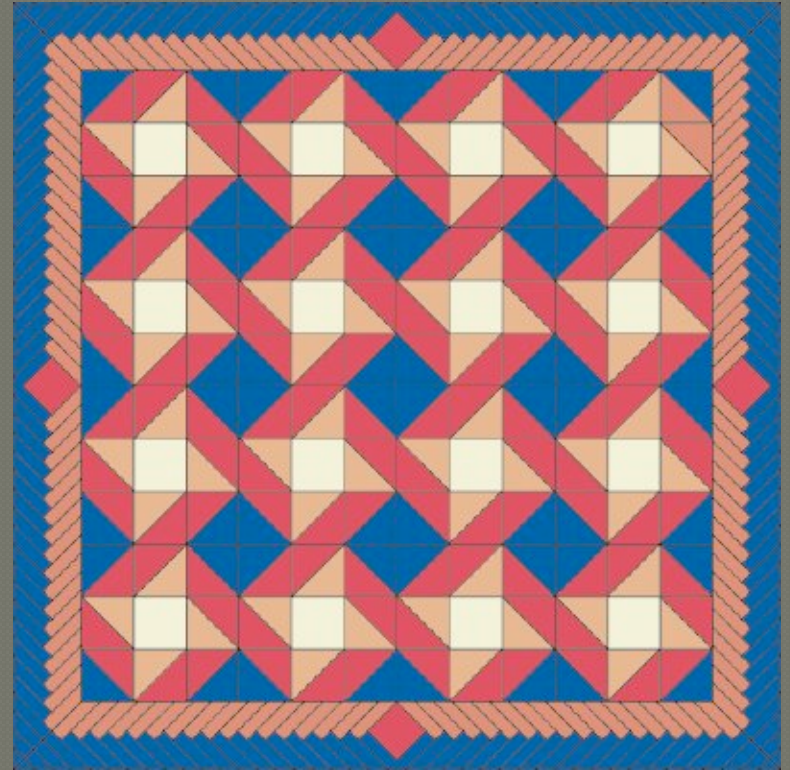
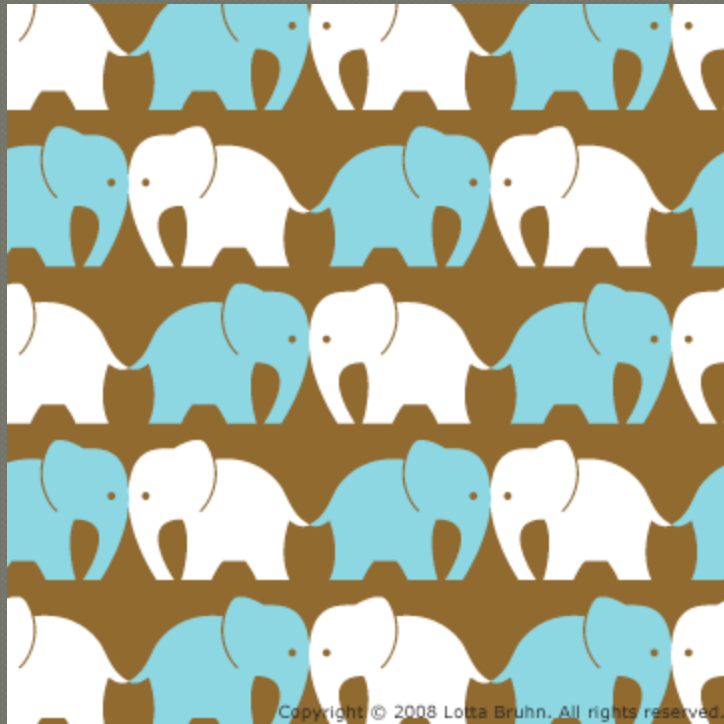
Crystallographic Balance

- ◉ Also known as Allover pattern
 - Refinement of symmetrical balance
 - Constant repetition of the same quality everywhere on the surface.

In nature



As design



Balance review

- ◉ Relative contrast creates a “heavier” visual weight.
- ◉ When balancing an image, think of the appropriate visual counterweight.
- ◉ Does the counterweight need to be larger? More textured? A more intricate shape?
- ◉ Do you need to use eye direction to help balance the image?

Project 2: Balance

- **Project 2: Balance**
- **Info:** As previously discussed, there are four types of balance: symmetrical, asymmetrical, radial and crystallographic. For this assignment you will be asked to create 2 compositions.
- **SYMMETRICAL COMPOSITION**
Make a symmetrically balanced composition using only geometric shapes; circles, triangles and/or rectangles. The shapes can overlap to make new shapes and up to four colors may be used. The composition must have a vertical or horizontal axis of symmetry.
- **ASYMMETRICAL COMPOSITION**
Use the same format, shapes and colors, make a new composition that reflects asymmetrical balance. In this composition you may use geometric and organic shapes. The composition should be well balanced and displayed as a set with the symmetry project.
- **Instructions:** This is a collage. You may cut shapes out of magazines or use colored paper. Using a template will help keep your shapes consistent. Do not use recognizable images from magazines within your shapes; use solid colors or textures only and *no reference to subject matter*.
- **Dimension:** Each composition should be a minimum of 8 x 10".
- **Presentation:** All work must be mounted and presented on black foam core. Remember to give a 2 inch border around each piece. Craft is an integral part of the grade. Be neat and Use Rubber Cement, apply to both surfaces, let dry, then use an eraser to get rid of excess glue along the edges. On the back of the work please include:
 - **Your name, project 1 balance, and date it.**
 - **Deadline:** This project is due at the beginning of class February 7