



WAYS OF THINKING, WAYS OF SEEING

Guiding questions to help students think about core design issues.

To help you better understand important formal design relationships that affect our visual perceptions, and to find a some guidance on how to start imbuing meaning into abstract compositions, ask yourself some questions.

Scale-related questions:

1. At what point does a "point" become a plane?
2. At what point does the thickness of a line's stroke make it perceivable as a plane?
3. How do overlapping shapes contribute to a sense of depth?
4. How does scaling an object change our engagement with the image as a whole?
5. What happens to our perception of the image when an object's increased scale moves part of it outside the picture plane/frame?



Spread from book, *Your Are Beautiful*, produced by Firebelly Design.



Poster concert design by Joshua Davis. This work is code-generated based on audio (music) input.

6. Explore different ways to adjust scale, proximity, and overlapping shapes to create a sense of tactile texture.

Movement related questions:

7. What happens to a picture plane when some objects are partially outside the edge of the picture plane/frame?
8. Arrange objects in a way that you think it implies movement. Next, verbalize and articulate all the reasons why you feel a sense of movement.
9. What are some ways to arrange objects to give a sense of direction?
10. What are some ways to arrange the interval of objects so that they convey each of the following concepts?
 - time passage
 - stillness
 - persistence
 - urgency
11. How does changing axis affect our perception of action / stillness? Explore horizontal line, vertical line, diagonal line, organic line.
12. How can you manipulate balance in a composition to keep a viewer's eyes moving and engaged?

System-related questions:

13. At what proximity do points need to be placed to be perceived as a line?



Nesta campaign by Pentagram.
Lead designer: Paula Scher.

14. At what proximity do objects need to be to be perceived as a single unit? ... and at what viewing distance?
15. What happens to your perception of a system when alignment is off?
16. How can you manipulate alignment of objects to imply discreet groupings within the composition?
17. How can you employ white space to effectively group elements? Think in reverse. Instead of considering the manipulation of the objects (figure), consider that you are instead manipulating the white space (ground). Figure-ground is also referred to as positive-negative space.
18. How can you adjust the figure and ground proportions so that it is ambiguous which is which? How does this affect visual tension?
19. How does "line" relate to alignment?

Planar issues:



Saks Fifth Avenue gift card
redesign after rebranding.

20. How can 2D points and lines create planes?
21. How can 2D planes be organized to give sense of 3D volume?
22. How can point, line, and plane be used to illustrate perspective?