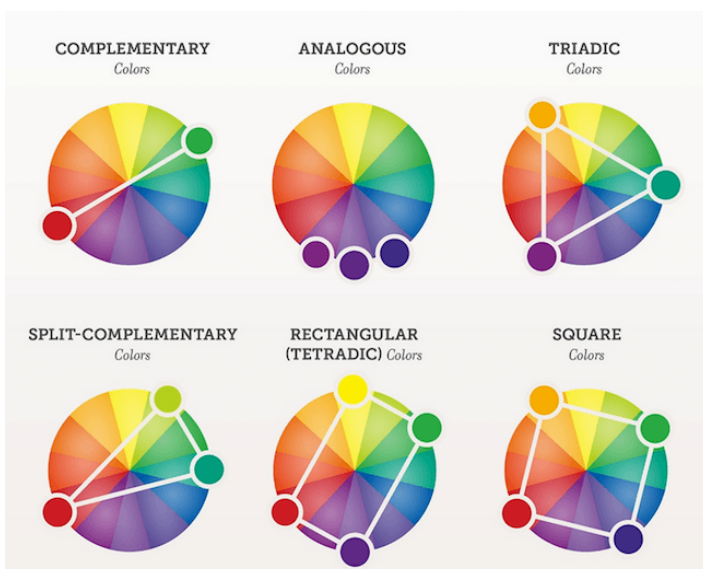
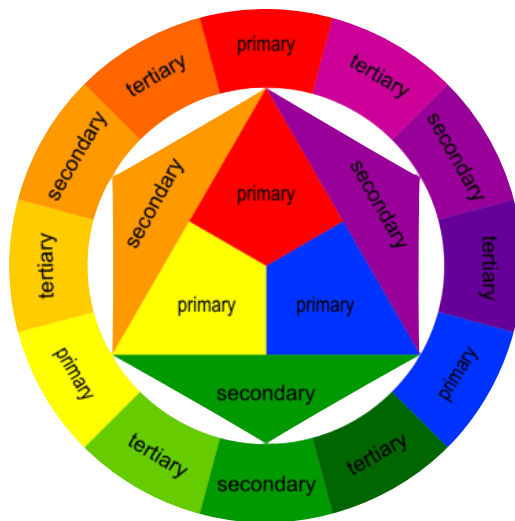


Basic Designs of Abstract Compositions

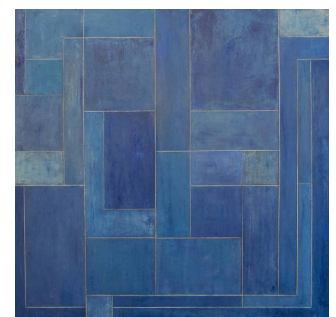
Composition refers to how you organise and arrange elements in your artwork. There are some popular composition designs that many artists use. Before beginning a work of art, it is helpful to choose your colours beforehand. Colour schemes can unite and make your work appear more attractive.

Look at the colour wheel below. The three **primary** colours cannot be made. If you mix 2 primary colours equally together, you make a **secondary** colour. If you mix a secondary with a primary, you make a **tertiary** colour. If I mix 25% primary red with 75% primary blue, I will also get the **tertiary** colour. All colours can also be mixed with varying degrees of white and black to create different **tints and shades**.



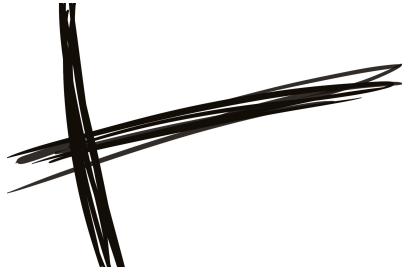
Colour schemes should be considered before creating your work. When selecting one from the left, you are able to use other colours as well, but your main colours will follow the scheme. Of course, you can also use different **shades** and **tints** of the colours too.

A **Monochromatic** scheme could also be used. This is where you focus on just using 1 colour with different shades and tints.



"so blue so happy so cool squared" *stephen cimini*

1. Cruciform or "L" Shape



Basically, a "cross" form is used.



Franz Kline "Fig.2" 1959-60
Elements used: colour, **line**, shape, size, **space**, texture and value



Timothy O'Sullivan "Crux of the Matter"
Elements used: **colour**, **line**, shape, size, space, **texture** and value

2. Horizontal



Everything is happening horizontally. It suggests peace and calmness.



Mark Rothko "No.5/No.22" 1950
Elements used: **colour**, line, **shape**, size, **space**, texture and **value**



Paul Klee "In The Current Six" 1929
Elements used: **colour**, **line**, **shape**, **size**, space, texture and value

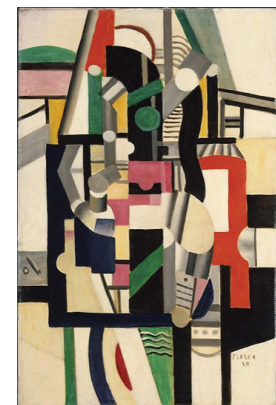
3. Vertical



Everything is happening vertically. It suggests stability and strength.



Robert Motherwell "Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 110" 1971
Elements used: colour, **line**, **shape**, size, **space**, **texture** and value

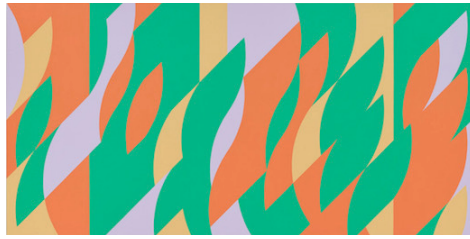


Fernand Leger "Mechanical Elements" 1920
Elements used: **colour**, **line**, **shape**, size, space, texture and value

4. Diagonal



Everything is happening diagonally. This is also used to suggest movement, action or agitation.



Bridget Riley "Painting with Verticals 2" 2006
Elements used: **colour, line, shape**, size, space, texture and value



Kazimir Malevich "Supremus No. 55" 1916
Elements used: colour, line, **shape, size**, space, texture and value

5. Symmetrical



This balance tactic divides the frame equally on both sides.



Sonia Delaunay "Rythme" 1938
Elements used: **colour, line, shape**, size, **space**, texture and value



Jack Youngerman "At Pace"
Elements used: **colour**, line, **shape, size, space**, texture and value

6. Asymmetrical



This balance tactic creates something big on one side, and something small on the other.



Robert Delaunay "Rhythm, Joie De Vivre" 1930
Elements used: **colour, line, shape, size, space**, texture and value



Sarah Morris "Creative Artist Agency" 2005
Elements used: **colour, line, shape, size, space**, texture and value

7. Radiating / Radial



This balance tactic utilising elements coming out from a centre point, as in the rays of the sun.



Robert Delaunay "Rythme, no.1" 1938
Elements used: **colour, line, shape**, size, **space**, texture and value



Jack Youngerman, "Serratus" 2008
Elements used: **colour, line, shape**, size, **space**, texture and value

8. Circular/Curves



Everything is based on curves. It is very organic and can suggest motion.



Deanna Sirlin "Hourly" 2004
Elements used: **colour, line, shape**, size, space, texture and value

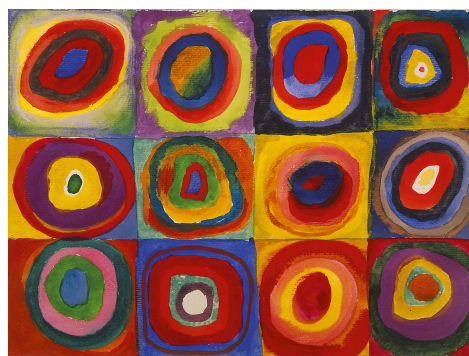


Charles Burwell "Red Bio" 2007
Elements used: **colour, line, shape**, size, **space**, texture and value

9. Grid



A grid is used to arrange elements into rows and columns. This can create stability in the work.



Wassily Kandinsky "Color Study. Squares with Concentric Circles" 1913
Elements used: **colour, line, shape**, size, space, texture and value



Odili Donald Odita "Displacement" 2018
Elements used: **colour, line, shape**, size, space, texture and value

10. Overlapping Frames



Think of this as overlapping boxes. It possesses a strong sense of structure.



Hans Hofmann "Veluti in Speculum" 1962
Elements used: **colour**, line, **shape**, **size**, space, **texture** and value

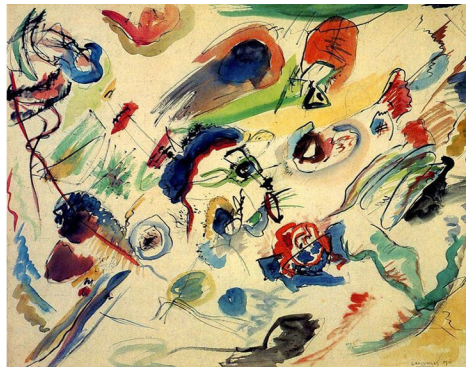


Piet Mondrian "Tableau No. 2/Composition No. VII" 1913
Elements used: **colour**, **line**, shape, size, space, **texture** and value

11. Constellation



Rhythm is used with a slight pattern; connections are being made between the parts.

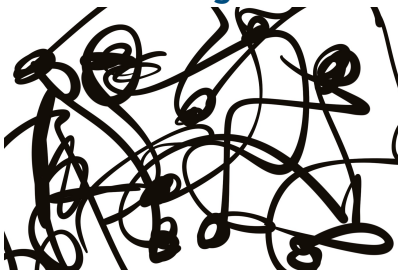


Wassily Kandinsky "Untitled (First Abstract Watercolor)" 1910
Elements used: **colour**, **line**, **shape**, size, **space**, texture and value



Willem de Kooning "Excavation" 1950
Elements used: **colour**, **line**, shape, size, **space**, texture and value

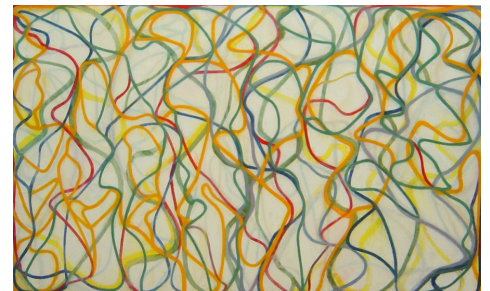
12. Meandering



This design is all over the plane (frame) with no real focus, however control is important so as not to make it confusing.

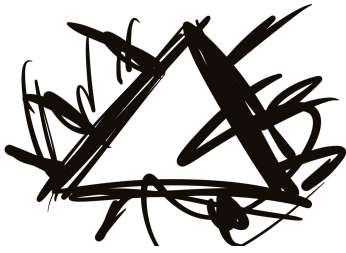


Jackson Pollock "Free Form" 1946
Elements used: **colour**, **line**, shape, size, **space**, **texture** and value

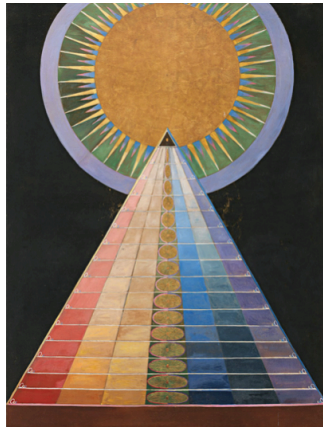


Brice Marden "The Muses" 1993
Elements used: **colour**, **line**, shape, size, **space**, texture and value

13. Spirituality



Mandalas and triangular formations are popular with this design as the works may have religious inspirations or connections.



Hilma af Klint "Group X, No. 1, Altarpiece" 1915
Elements used: **colour, line, shape, size, space,**
texture and **value**



Painted 19th century Tibetan mandala of the Naropa tradition, Vajrayogini stands in the center of two crossed red triangles. Rubin Museum of Art

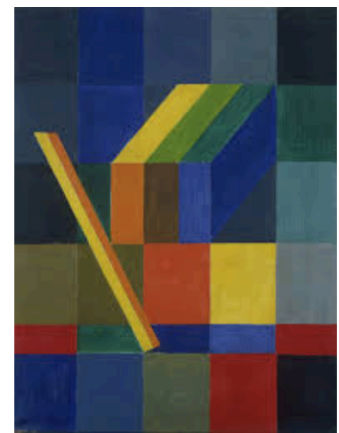
14. Tension/Uneasiness (off balance)



This composition may make you feel uncomfortable or uneasy.

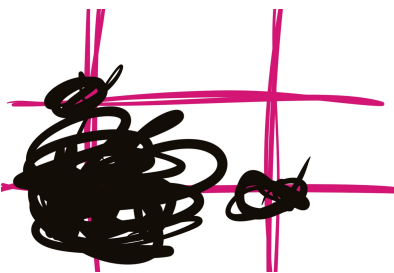


Theo van Doesburg "Counter-Composition V" 1924
Elements used: **colour, line, shape, size, space,**
texture and **value**



Johannes Itten "Space Composition 1" 1944
Elements used: **colour, line, shape, size, space,**
texture and **value**

15. Golden Section / Rule of Thirds



The golden section refers to perfect balance. It has been summarised into the **rule of thirds**. Emphasis is placed on the intersecting points.

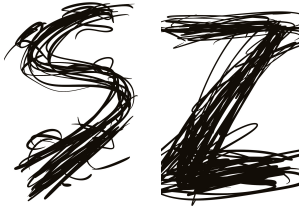


Johannes Itten "Space Composition, II" 1944
Elements used: **colour, line, shape, size, space,**
texture and value



Mark Rothko "No. 8" 1949
Elements used: **colour, line, shape, size, space,**
texture and value

16. "S" or "Z" curve

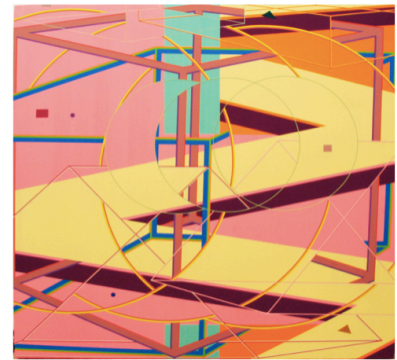


You will often find this in landscape work that features a river or road. It helps lead the eye.



This photographic explanation helps illustrate the concept.

[Image source here](#)




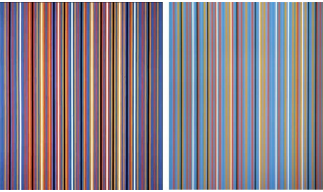
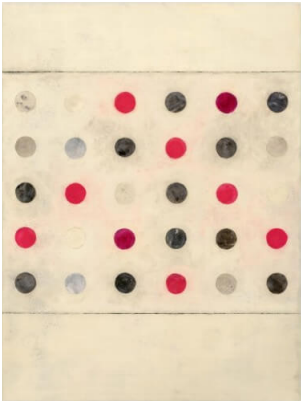


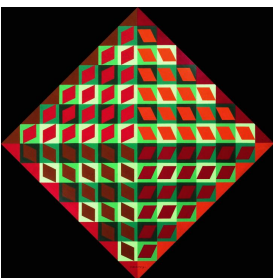

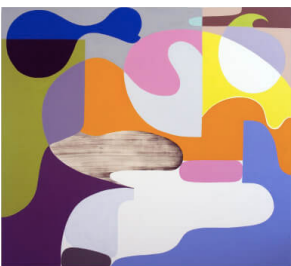
Al Head "C.P.I." 1978

Elements used: **colour, line, shape, size, space,** texture and value

QUICK RECAP: These compositions can help arrange the elements of art used.

<p>1. Cruciform or "L" Shape</p>	<p>2. Horizontal</p>	<p>3. Vertical</p>	<p>4. Diagonal</p>
<p>5. Symmetrical</p>	<p>6. Asymmetrical</p>	<p>7. Radiating / Radial</p>	<p>8. Circular/Curves</p>
<p>9. Grid</p>	<p>10. Overlapping Frames</p>	<p>11. Constellation</p>	<p>12. Meandering</p>
<p>13. Spirituality</p>	<p>14. Tension/Uneasiness</p>	<p>15. Rule of Thirds</p>	<p>16. "S" or "Z" curve</p>

Remember, you can also use an element or principle of art/design to add to your composition.

Movement:	Repetition:	Pattern:	Rhythm:
 <p>Dana Gordon "Night" 2012</p>	 <p>Bridget Riley "ra-two" 1981</p>	 <p>Tracey Adams "In (R)evolution 20"</p>	 <p>Robert Delaunay "Endless Rhythm" 1934</p>
 <p>Wassily Kandinsky "Cossacks" 1910-1911</p>	 <p>Victor Vasarely "Banya" 1964</p>	 <p>Beatriz Milhazes "Figo" 2006</p>	 <p>Jessica Snow "A Reflection of Morning" 2011</p>



Steps to creating better abstract art:

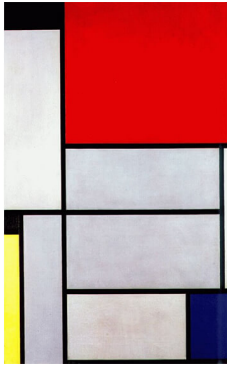
1. Choose a colour scheme
2. Choose a composition design
3. Reflect what elements to use
4. Decide on your painting approach (see below)



**How do you want to execute your painting? This is called an "approach."
 Would you like to have visible brushmarks? go smooth or flat? go hard-edge? have
 colourfields? Note the different textures visible in the examples below.**

HARD EDGE

characterised by areas of flat colour with sharp, clear (or 'hard') edges
 if interested in this, you can also investigate **geometric abstraction



Piet Mondrian "Tableau I" 1921

COLOURFIELD

characterised by large areas of color, typically without strong tonal contrasts or a defined point of focus.



Helen Frankenthaler "The Bay" 1963

ACTION PAINTING

characterised by spontaneous dribbles, splashes or smears onto the canvas, rather than being carefully applied.



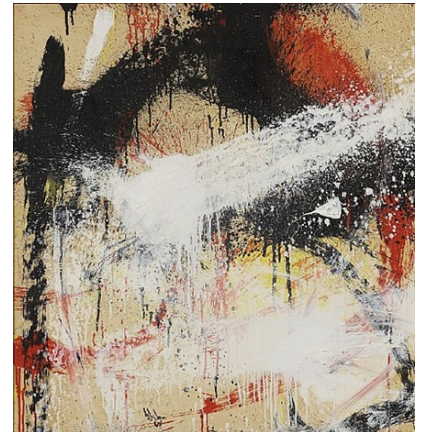
Franz Kline "Chief" 1950



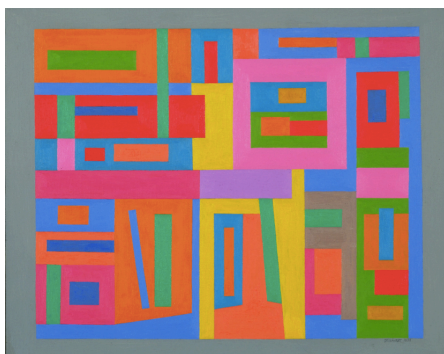
Kenneth Noland "Bridge" 1964



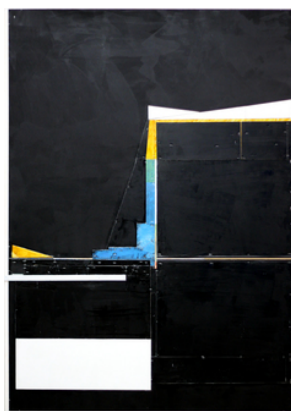
Clyfford Still "1948-C" 1948



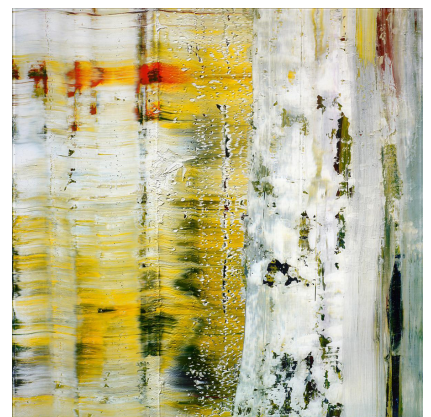
Norman Bluhm "untitled" 1960



Ad Reinhardt "Untitled" 1938



Florian Schmidt "Untitled(hold)23" 2013



Gerhard Richter "Cage II" 2015