tian**jiang**

PORTFOLIO

Introduction

Hi, my name is Tian Jiang. I'm from China. I love photography and recording all kinds of interesting stuff I've seen. I do web, graphic and, now, document design. Also, I am pursuing some improvement of UI/UX design.

This portfolio book is a gathering of exercises for the course Document Design. These exercises show how we apply some interesting and important design principles into design practice.

This portfolio book itself is also a design product which I hope can be a professional and logical presentation of my understanding and application of design principles.

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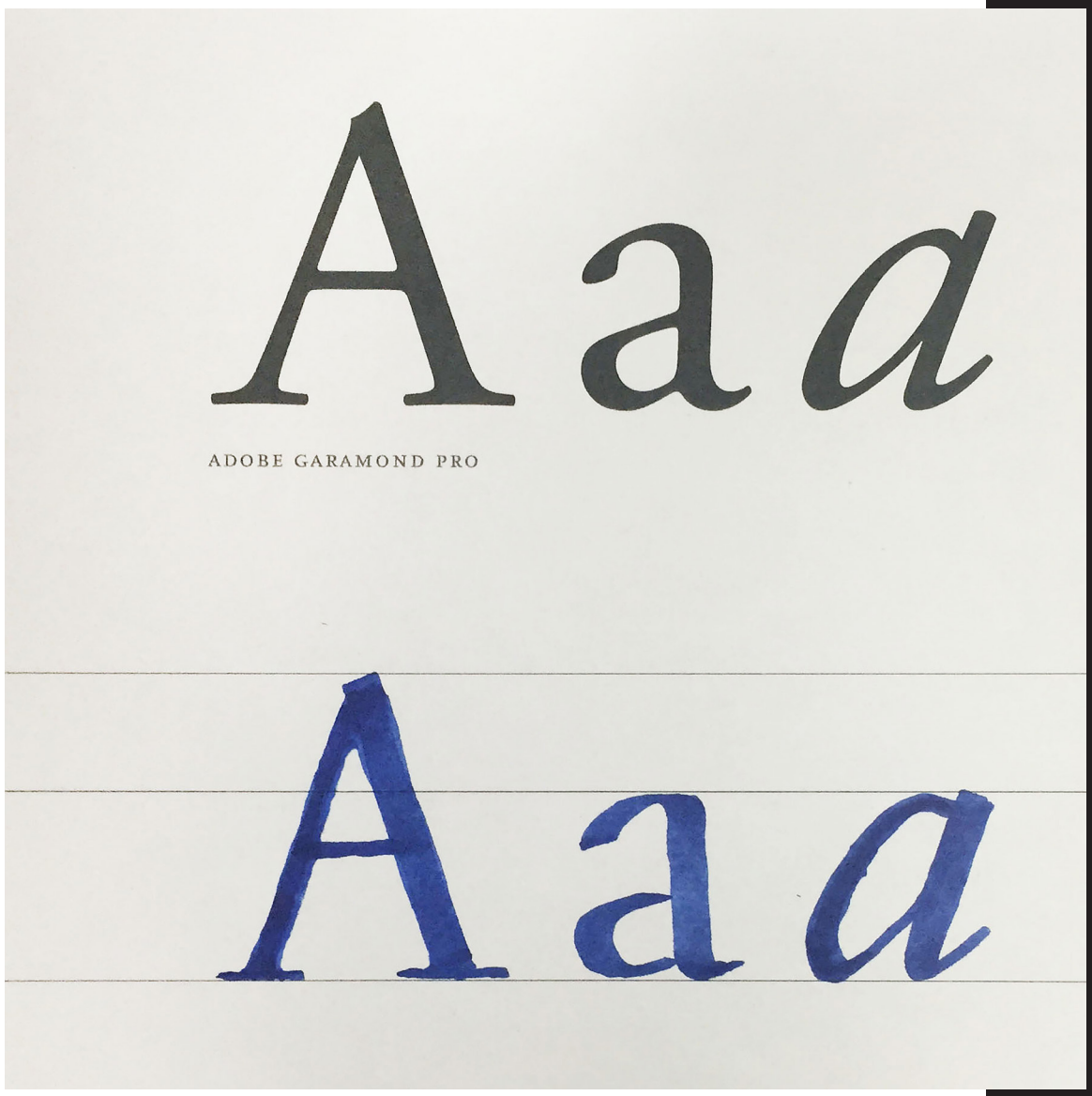
Design Principle Exercises

The exercises evolve step by step, from basic element like letterforms, to application of rules and randomness.

Draw these letterforms



This exercise requires to draw letterforms. It is harder than it looks.

Word

This exercise requires rethink and rearrangement of words to express their meanings.

For 'expansion', the word has a very clear meaning of being enlarged and more extensive. I simply apply larger font size to letters at middle and smaller font size to letters at the edges. But this looks crowded and uncomfortable. To solve the problem, I added space between letters. Then there is clearly a sense of space.

Word

For 'transition', I notice it is not an outcome nor a status, hence I use the change of font size as well as transparency to imply the process of transition.

Because only one kind of change can mislead to the change itself, but with more changes, people tend to figure out the logic trend here.

Text

Print situates words in space more relentlessly than writing ever did.

Writing moves words from the sound world to a world of visual space, but print locks words into position in this space.

Control of position is everything in print. Printed texts look machine-made, as they are. In handwriting, control of space tends to be ornamental, ornate, as in calligraphy. Typographic control typically impresses most by its tidiness and invisibility: the lines perfectly regular, all justified on the right side, everything coming out even visually, and without the aid of guidelines or ruled borders that often occur in manuscripts.

This is
an insistent world of cold, non-human, facts.

Compose the text to express its meaning.

First I singled out sentences that I found representative, like the second one and the last one. The second sentence shows the meanings of writing and print, also the difference between them. The second sentence is inserted in the two columns where it should have been. The work flow also follows the reading order as I enlarge the line space between the first sentence and the third one.

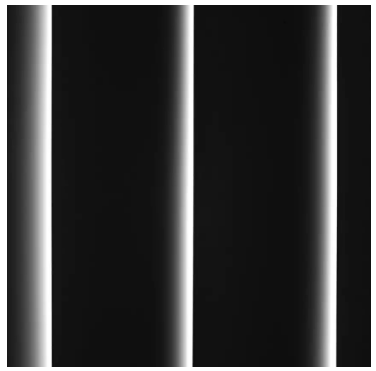
Last I put the last sentence centered at the bottom as one single line breaking the columns. The reading order is realized. Finally, with some alignment, the paragraph now looks more like a face with one eyebrow raised which I figured out half way of the exercise.

Point, Line, Plane

Explore your environment with a camera, looking for surprising and intriguing visual examples of the design principles: point, line, and plane.

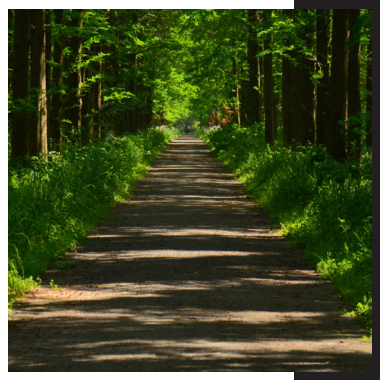
Point

The **point** is a bulb in an old IKEA lamp.



Line

The **line** is light through louver dampers.



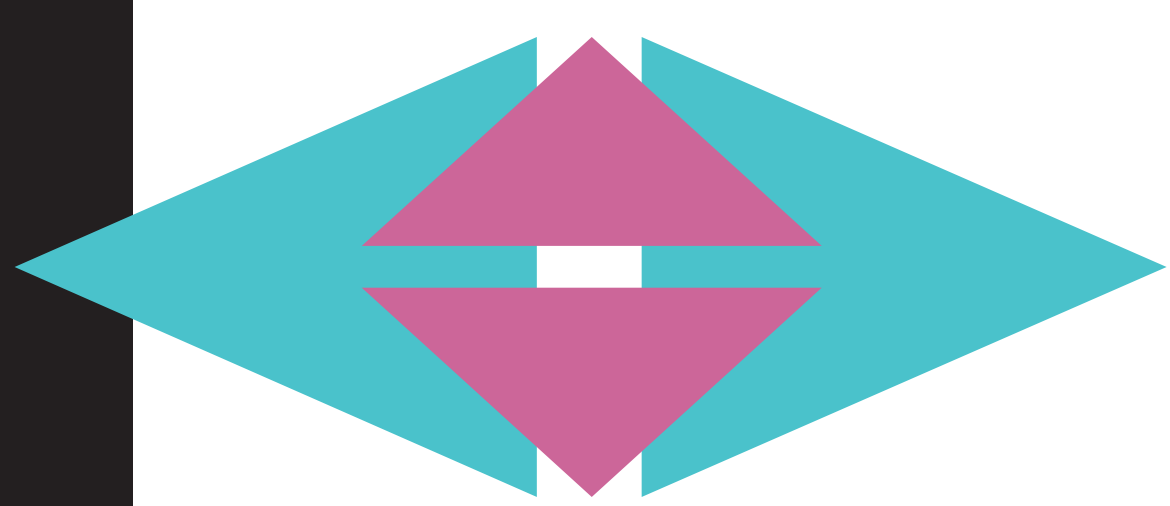
Plane

The **plane** is a shadowed path in a park.

Symmetry and Asymmetry

Symmetry

Create symmetrical designs with elements of different size. Experiment with scale and cropping.

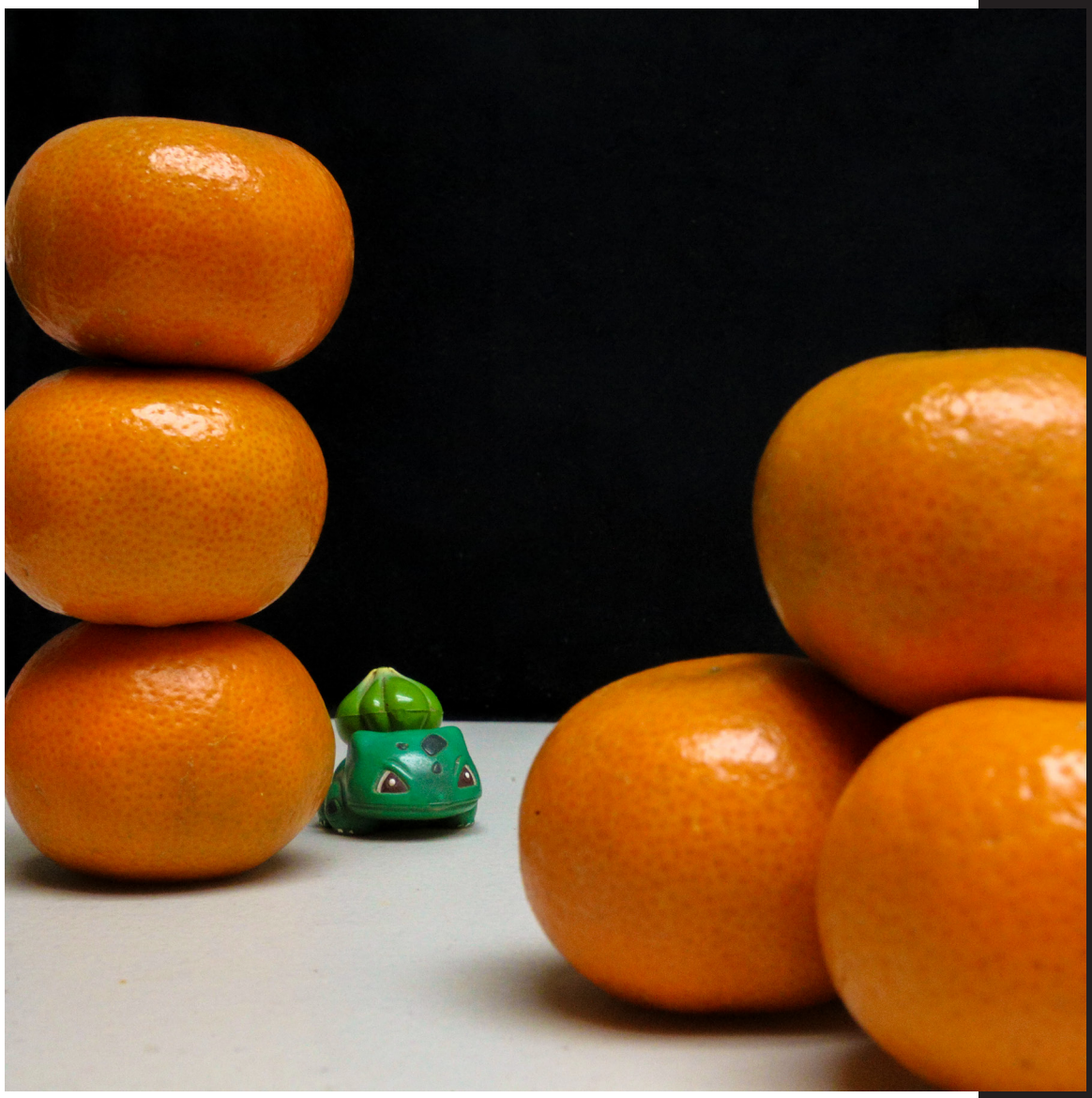


Symmetry and Asymmetry

Asymmetry

Create asymmetrical designs using forms of different sizes. Experiment until you find visual balance in each composition.

Scale



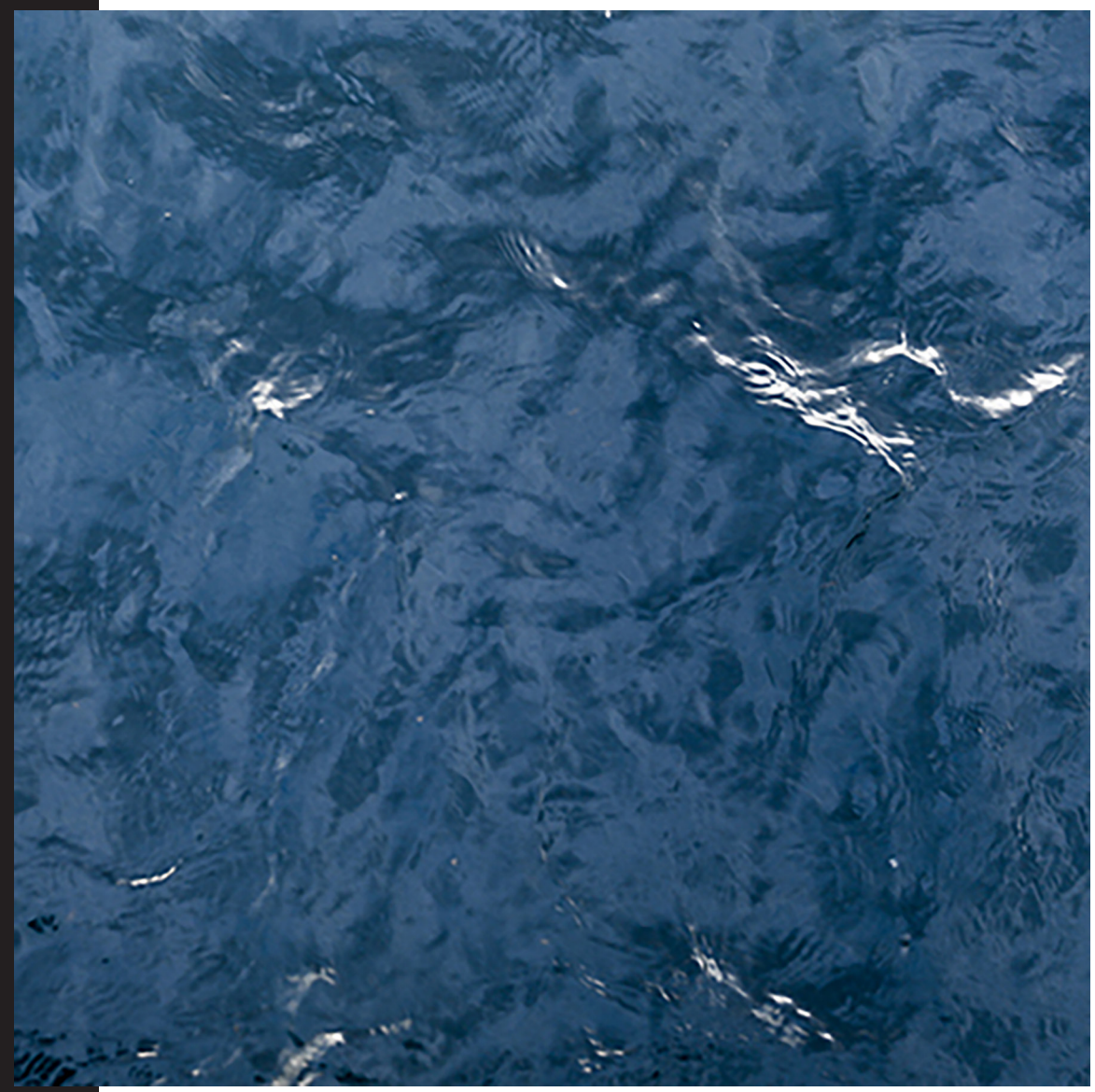
Photograph the objects in a way that changes the viewer's sense of their scale.

Texture

Use a digital camera to capture compelling textures from the environment.

This is a pile of wood. Most are in round shape, and some are irregular. However, it's enough to be repetitive. The surface is dark shadow in the background, the yellow looks not too bright.

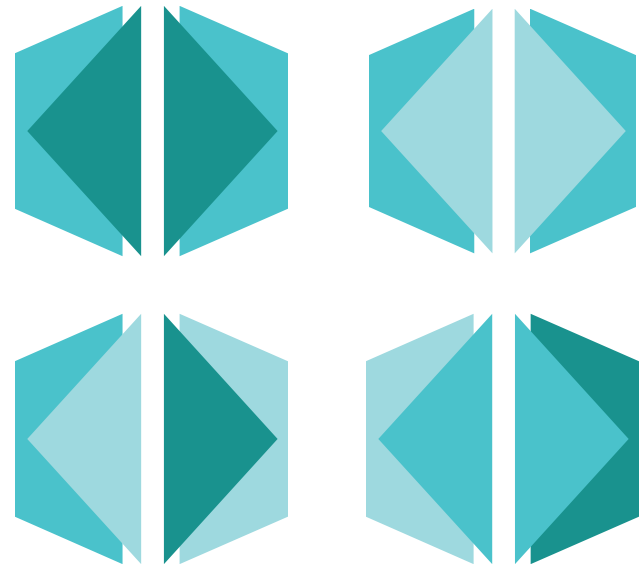
Texture



This is Lake Michigan. The late is not at peace as usual. Ripples and wrinkles are everywhere. Even though it is liquid, with adequate refection, it feels like plastic and even mental to some extent. The water is in a dark color, but the reflection adds many layers which looks much brighter.

Color

Try adjusting the color scheme to produce a different visual impression from the design.



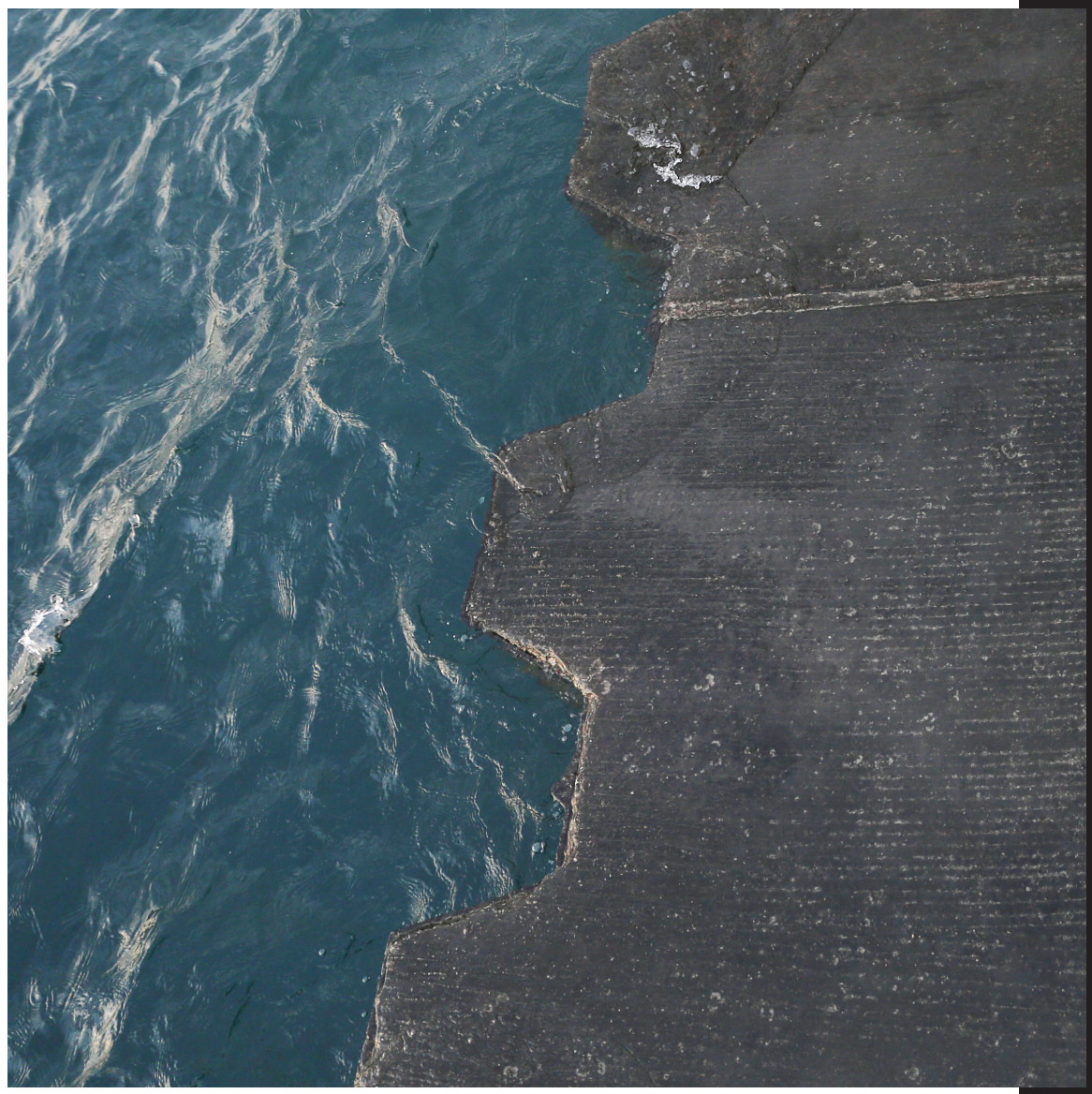
Figure/Ground Relationship

Stable

A stable relationship exits when a form or figure stands clearly apart from its background.

Most photography functions according to this principle, where someone or something is featured within a setting.

Figure/Ground Relationship



Reversible

Reversible occurs when positive and negative elements attract our attention equally and alternately, coming forward, then receding, as our eye perceives one first as dominant and next as subordinate. Reversible figure ground motifs can be seen in the ceramics, weaving, and crafts of cultures around the globe.

Figure/Ground Relationship

Ambiguous

Images and compositions featuring ambiguous figure/ground challenge the viewer to find a focal point.
Figure is enmeshed with ground, carrying the viewer's eye in and around the surface with no discernible assignment of dominance.

Hierarchy

This exercise is about two virations that use fifferent systems of hierarchy. Compare this one with the Introduction page.

After reading the article about how Monet never used black, I decide to take a shot about this. I used a dark yellow, very similar to black, for the color of headline. It does build a hierarchy. I also have a drop cap to eliminate the contrast caused by the massive different of the font size. Last, I change the font into a sans-serif futura.

In the second variation, I tried to break the boundary and avoid leaving too much white space. So I turned the height of the portrait image same with page. Round still, but only half is in bleed. The half shape works as an arrow directing to main texts. Then I added a black background to the texts, also as high as page to take most of the white space.

Introduction

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Layers

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Manipulate the content of the Table of Contents to re-imagine the layout design to present the content in a more (or different) visually interesting way.

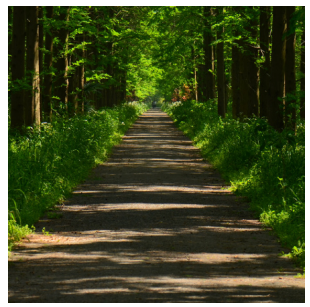
Modular Grid

Point, Line, Plane

A simple layout and a complex layout of this page is built with the constraints of grid systems.

Point

Line



Plane

The point is a bulb in an old IKEA lamp.

The line is light through louver dampers.

The plane is a shadowed path in a park.

Explore your environment with a camera, looking for surprising and intriguing visual examples of the design principles: point, line, and plane

Simple

I kind of set a trap for myself before in the 'point, line, plane' exercise. I already build a 3x3 grid in the square and arranged three photos diagonally. At that time, it looks just fine. But put that in to another grid is challenging. I have to create the new grid fitting the old one. In both two versions, I tried to balance the photos with other elements.

Modular Grid

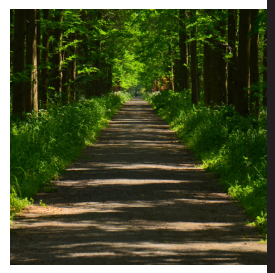
Complex

But there're not many elements to use, hence, in the simple version, it looks still a little imbalanced. I believe the color and size of the photos cause this. So, in the complex version, I repeat the pattern with description texts and add a black background to the other side. My strategy is also to keep it simple, mostly because I am not able to handle a complex layout. And that's why grid is a helpful tool in such situation to figure out the balance point.

Point, Line, Plane

Point

Line



Plane

Explore your environment with a camera, looking for surprising and intriguing visual examples of the design principles: point, line, and plane.

The **point** is a bulb in an old IKEA lamp.

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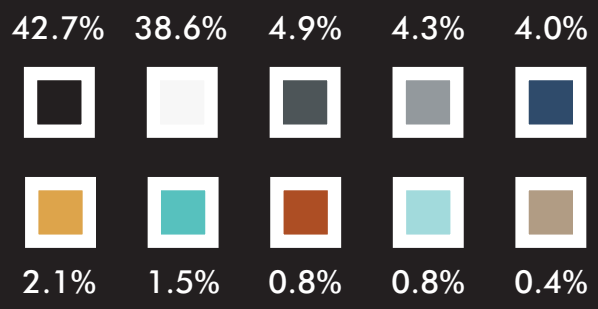
Diagram



Color Summarizer

Analyzed by ***TinEye Lads***, including 10 main colors and proportion of colors.

This exercise adds up all the exercises to a diagram from data derived from them.

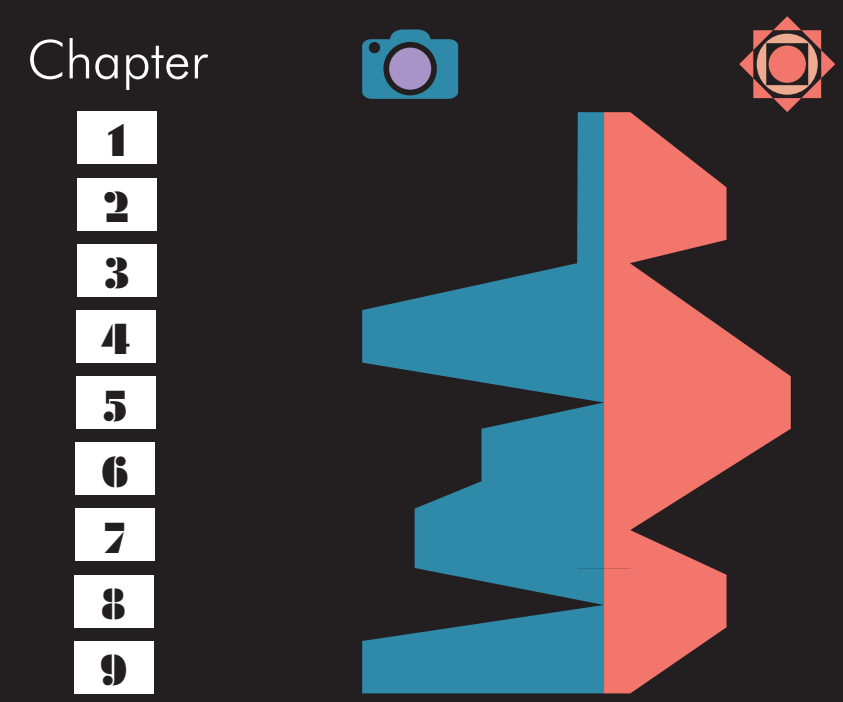
The usage of colors, how different softwares serve and the preference between photography and graphic design are shown in a visual way.

Softwares

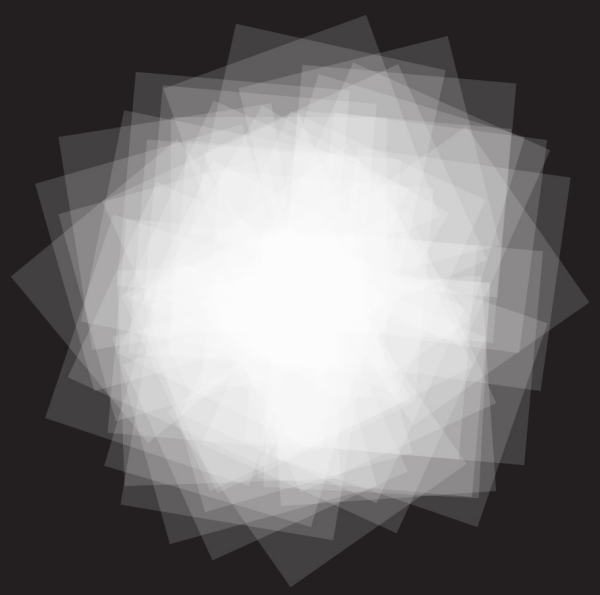
How each software serves in different chapters (from 1 to 9).

Photos VS Graphic

The preference between photography and graphic design.



Rules & Randomness



This is the last chapter of the portfolio book. In this chapter, not only rules and randomness will be discussed, but also it's about a conclusion and inspiration.

The most obvious pattern in this book is the contrast between large areas of white and black. This doesn't come from nowhere. One main base is the grid system I built. As most of the exercises are in a dimension of 6"x6", they take most space of pages. I want all elements in pages connecting with each other. So a heavier dark background is set for description texts and a lighter whiter background is set to exercises with a title breaking the boundary and intermingling the blacks and whites.

All these and hierarchy such as headings, content descriptions exercise examples and page numbers keep the consistency of page layout.

During the work flow of this portfolio, my most interesting finding is that even with no idea in mind, starting designs with setting basic rules can lead to inspirations. Fireworks always begin with a tiny spark.