

A desert landscape with ancient stone ruins. In the foreground, two people wearing blue and green robes are walking away from the viewer. The background features large, weathered stone structures with arches and a small doorway. The sky is a hazy, warm orange color.

8

GUARANTEED
TIPS TO TRANSFORM
YOUR
PORTFOLIO

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studio

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HELLO!

Thank you for downloading your FREE copy of Pic1 Studio's 8 Monster Tips to Transform your Portfolio!

With so much online content available at our fingertips on how to put together a great portfolio, we've done the research for you by putting together this extensive ebook. To start off we'd also like to recommend this free PDF, by Imagine FX magazine and Artstation, which covers some great general advice for portfolio building.



DOWNLOAD
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<https://magazine.artstation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ArtStationImagineFX.pdf>

ADDING TO THE GENERAL TIPS

In this ebook we want to take a deeper dive past the general tips and provide insight into what recruiters and companies look for in determining your skills.

Although different companies have different standards, styles and needs, the information within this ebook is the kind of information that high level artists and designers should be aware of.

Also keep in mind that the information presented here is a guide as there are no definitive answers in art. There are no rules, only tools!

We hope this ebook will help you on your creative journey!

*Best regards,
Pic1 Studio*

TODAY, WITH ACCESS TO TOOLS WE'VE NEVER HAD BEFORE, IT IS THE BEST TIME TO BE CREATIVE.

In any job, having a solid workflow is important for overall efficiency, and the entertainment industry is no different.

There is no doubt that modern tools ranging from Adobe Photoshop, various 3D modelling programs, to Apps on our smart devices have helped us in many ways to streamline our processes.

Universities and TAFES are often great places to explore these various tools, however, the true value and quality of concept work is still determined based on our understanding of **FUNDAMENTALS** and the **SCIENCE OF HOW WE SEE**, which is often missed in our art and design education.

In this ebook, we will focus on some key fundamentals, and the science behind visual illusions that are commonly used in concept artwork and design. Adding to this we will also provide information on education and the importance of communicating ideas clearly.

WHAT WE WILL COVER:

1. CLARITY
2. THE LAW OF CONTINUITY
3. THE LAW OF CLOSURE
4. SIMPLE VS COMPLEX
5. TONAL VALUE IN CONTEXT
6. COLOUR INTERACTION
7. DESIGN
8. MINDSET

HIGHER EDUCATION

DO DEGREES MATTER?

We'd like to begin with a controversial topic surrounding art and design education and degrees.

In the education system, our abilities are evaluated based on our grades and degrees (diagram 1). But in reality, our society evaluates simply based on whether you are competent or not, or whether you can solve problems or not (diagram 2). A degree alone is a certificate, and your competency is a separate thing.

It is natural to carry over our personal experiences into our education throughout our career, and in many cases it can serve us well.

In the case of getting a job overseas, a working visa is required. And the easiest way to get a working visa is to have a related degree (not necessarily high grades), or years of relevant professional experience.

So please keep in mind that all opportunities in the creative industry begin with a good portfolio, not a degree.

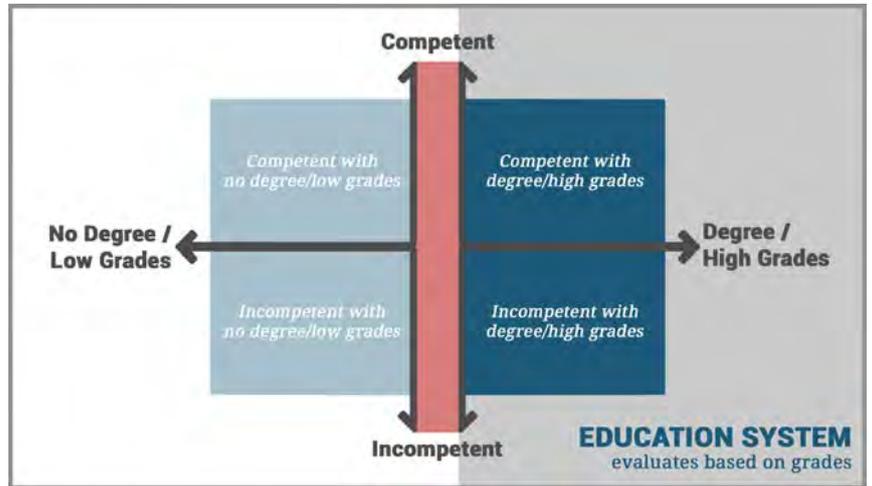


Diagram 1

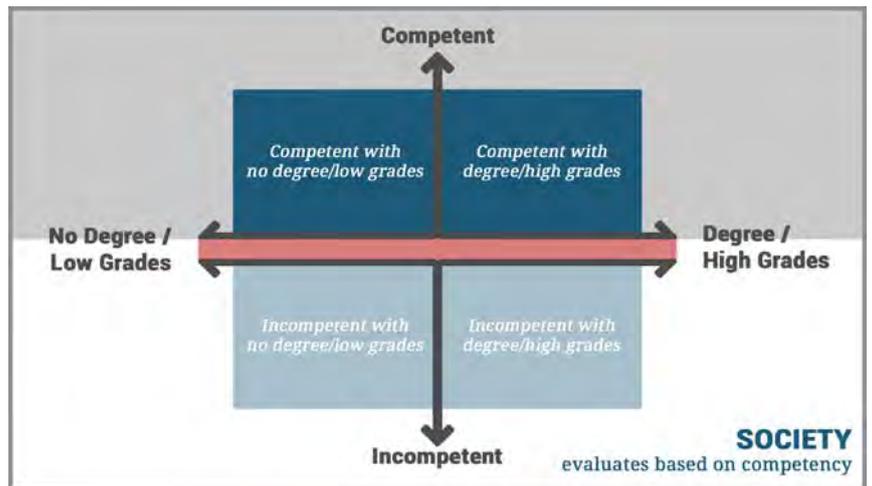


Diagram 2

IDEAS DO NOT MAKE ARTISTS, EXECUTION DOES.



Image based on The Pensive Pilcrow article.

In everyday life, we use verbal and body language to communicate our thoughts, messages and feelings. In art and design we use **VISUAL LANGUAGE**, and how we communicate is dictated by how we think and see.

No matter how good an idea is, it doesn't actually exist until it is properly communicated.

Through the 8 tips presented in this ebook, we want to bring awareness to some techniques and illusions that are used in the entertainment industry, and are often used in evaluations.

We hope to encourage you to use them as a checklist to refine your portfolio and to help you visually communicate your ideas.

1

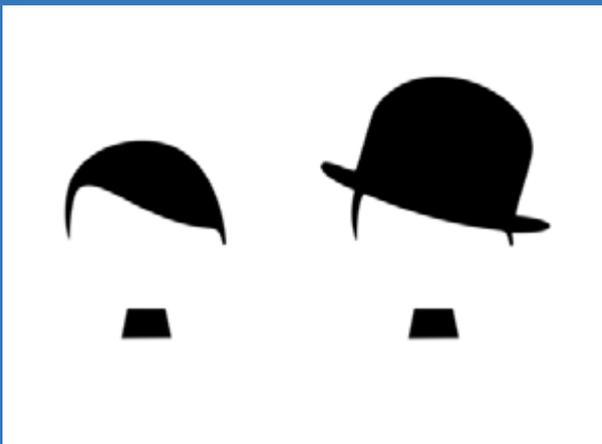
CLARITY

Clarity is essential in our lives, whether it's for our art & design work, communication or setting personal goals.

One of the biggest giveaways in determining whether an artist actually understands a particular subject (such as story, anatomy, value or design) is their ability to prevent distinct ideas from bleeding into each other.

Always ask yourself, "What is that one most important message you want to deliver?" Everything else wraps around that main message. Your composition, values, shapes etc should be used to support that message.

"A SIMPLISTIC APPROACH ISN'T SUBTRACTING FOR THE SAKE OF SUBTRACTION. IT IS SUBTRACTING FOR THE SAKE OF CLARITY."



BEHIND THE THEORY:

Clarity Creates Focus
Image by Serviceplan

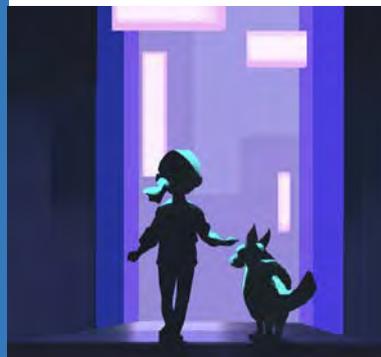
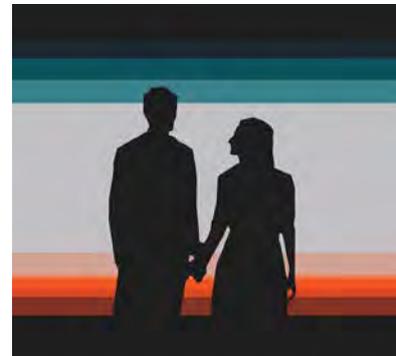
"OUR BRAIN CRAVES MEANING BEFORE DETAILS."

- CARMINE GALLO

We are all driven by emotions.

Story is what touches and moves our emotions. After that, we use logic, facts and content to back it up.

Having a clear idea with a clear story is the key in creating compelling art and design work.



Although these four images are quite simple, can you see how they each evoke different feelings?

WHAT IS THAT ONE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE YOU WANT TO DELIVER?

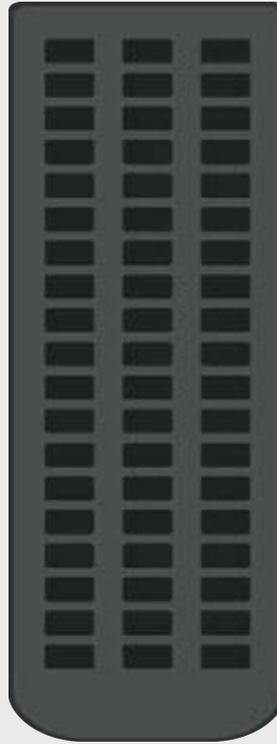
VISUAL ORGANISATION READABILITY

Set priorities and take advantage of basic design principles to visually organise design elements for instant readability.

Whether it's a textured painting or graphical image, one of the most common struggles is how the design elements are organised. This is a crucial step to master, and it will reveal one's ability to make bold decisions and to set priorities.

Stay focused on the clarity of a story, and compose everything around it.

We are all hardwired to look for information that is easy to read and understand.



In this example, the above remote control would be difficult to use, as there is no priority in the organisation of its buttons.



This remote control would be much easier to use as the buttons have been organised and designed strategically to aid the user experience.



In this example, the artist's intention was to place focus on the character's scar. The image on the right is much clearer than the left image as the elements of the image (values, shape, anatomy form etc) have been organised with more fundamental control.

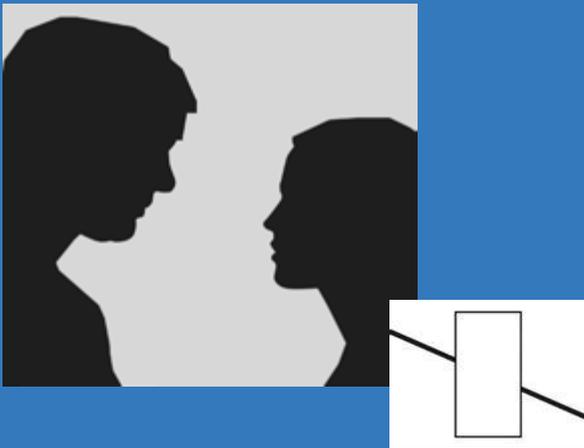
2

THE LAW OF CONTINUITY

We have an ability to connect the dots and perceive blank spaces as objects even when they are not actually there.

In art, we are aware of this ability and use **IMPLIED LINE** to help design a road-map for how the viewer's eyes will move around your image.

A good example in film is a gaze between two people. We imagine a line (implied line) that goes from one person's eyes to the other.



“THE EYE IS COMPELLED TO MOVE THROUGH ONE OBJECT AND CONTINUE TO ANOTHER OBJECT.”

Instead of using ‘Actual Lines’, use implied line(s) to subtly direct the viewer to the main focal point(s) in your painting.

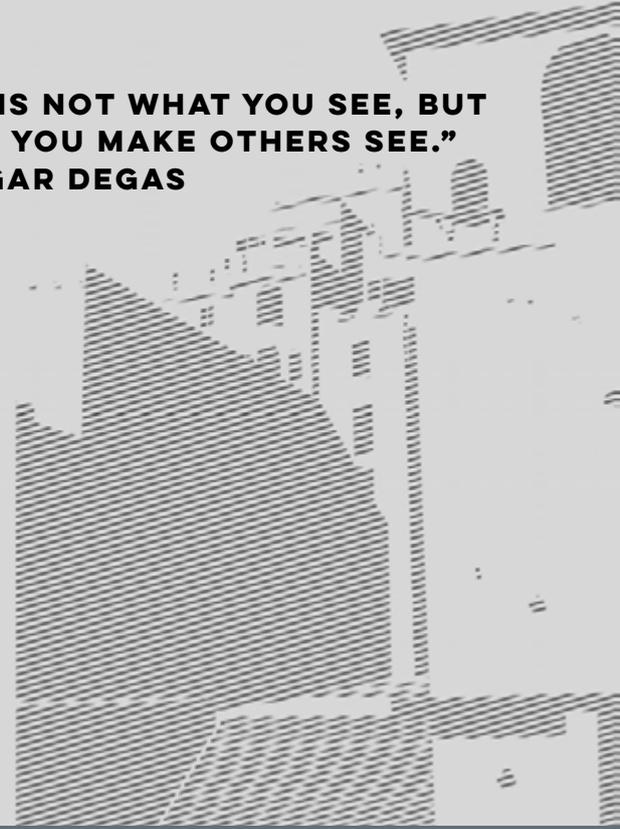
Implied line is an effective compositional element, and although it can be used in various ways, it is most notably used to create direction.

BEHIND THE THEORY:

The Poggendorf Illusion
By Johann Poggendorff

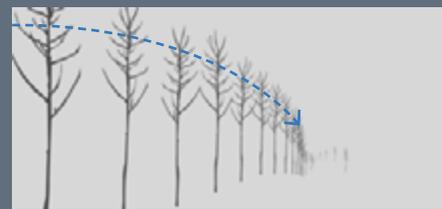
“ART IS NOT WHAT YOU SEE, BUT WHAT YOU MAKE OTHERS SEE.”

- EDGAR DEGAS



IMPLIED LINES TO CREATE DIRECTION

To create a dynamic image, use diagonals to promote a feeling of movement.



Be aware of arranging objects vertically or horizontally, as it conveys a static mood, and unless this is your intention, stay explorative.

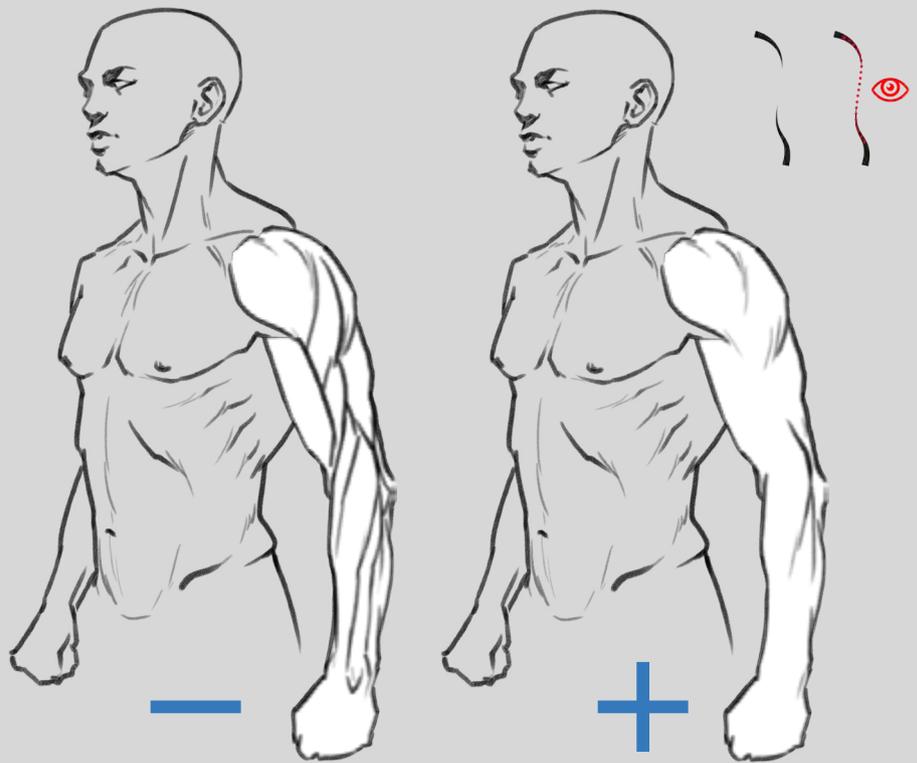
Diagonal lines are strong, dynamic and uplifting in composition.

LOOSE VS MESSY

There is a difference between a “Loose Drawing” and a “Messy Drawing”. We want to avoid a messy drawing by controlling the empty space.

When we learn anatomy or other technical topics, it is tempting to want to overstate everything in our illustrations. Unfortunately, unless it is a technical drawing, it can over-complicate your image and lead to a cluttered image.

Alternatively, you would want to use **DISCONTINUOUS LINES** that together creates a flow. Be strategic and these implied features will be enough to create a stronger image.



OVERLAPPING EFFECTS

There are many approaches to communicate the same story. Our focus is to explore interesting ways to make the best out of our subjects.

OVERLAPPING is one of the most effective ways to create a sense of depth. When mixed with discontinuous lines and objects, it allows for a more interesting scene.

None of the images to the right are wrong, but you want to be able to push beyond the “obvious” and create more interest.



MORE OBVIOUS



MORE INTERESTING



**ARE YOU
CREATING
ENOUGH
INTEREST?**

3

THE LAW OF CLOSURE

In a fraction of a second we are able to comprehend what we see and we do this by recognising familiar basic shapes despite the absence of one or more parts.

Just like in our everyday conversation, we enjoy filling in the gaps.

Here's an example in text:

It deosn't mtttaer wehn the ltteers of a wrod are jublmed. The olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. Tihis is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

This experience also occurs in visual communication, where the artist shows their thinking process while making the final image feel effortless and easy to read.

“IN PERCEPTION WE HAVE THE TENDENCY TO COMPLETE UNFINISHED OR PARTIALLY OBSCURED OBJECTS.”

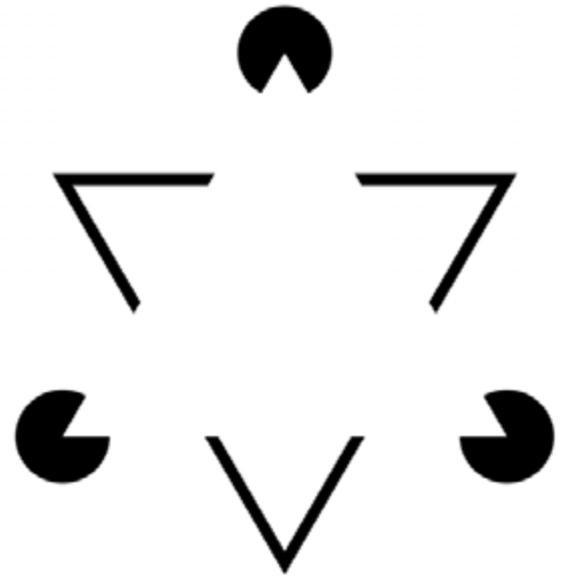
As an artist, you want to embrace our ability to close an incomplete object and utilise it as a strong design feature in the composition.

We want to avoid over-flooded details, so part of the challenge is to determine how many visual cues are enough to tell your story, without compromising your image.

BEHIND THE THEORY:

Kanizsa's Triangle Illusion

By Gaetano Kanizsa



TONAL VALUE GROUPING

With The Law of Closure in mind, it is important to establish a composition that is quick and easy to read.

In order to do this, define the underlying value structure of an image by abstracting in the
2-3 VALUE SYSTEM.



DO NOT SKIP THIS IMPORTANT STEP!

Even though the above image only uses 3 values, we can still determine the main story the artist is trying to convey - a humanoid subject and the journey that they are about to commence.



DETAILS COME AFTER

Creating an easy to read value structure is one of the most important elements in creating an image and can either make or break a piece, regardless of how intriguing the details are.

Treat the detailing phase as icing on the cake, and use it only to complement the story of the scene.

**“SIMPLICITY IS ABOUT
 SUBTRACTING THE
 OBVIOUS AND ADDING
 THE MEANINGFUL.” -
 JOHN MAEDA**

4 SIMPLE VS COMPLEX

A compelling artwork is not simply about reproducing what you see, it's about representing your subject with visual hints and clues that suggest at the larger scene.

Accuracy isn't necessarily what appeals to the viewer, it is the overall feeling, style and story.

The key is to achieve a balance between simplicity & complexity. However, simplifying is not an easy process, as it is about prioritising and making bold decisions.

SIMPLE \neq EASY

You might be surprised at how little you need to show in order to create a compelling image.

You will want to provide an abbreviated version of a scene that can accentuate a particular subject matter by balancing the contrast between the simple and complex areas.

“THE ROLE OF GENIUS IS NOT TO COMPLICATE THE SIMPLE, BUT TO SIMPLIFY THE COMPLICATED.”

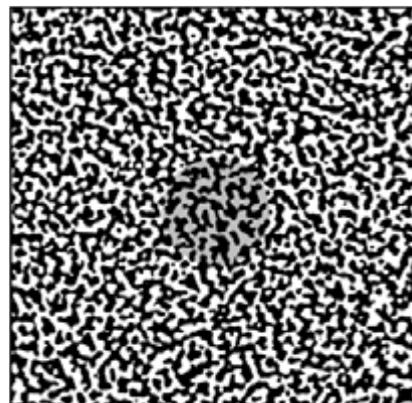
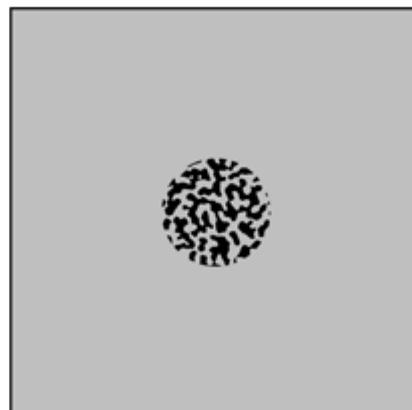
- CRISS JAMI

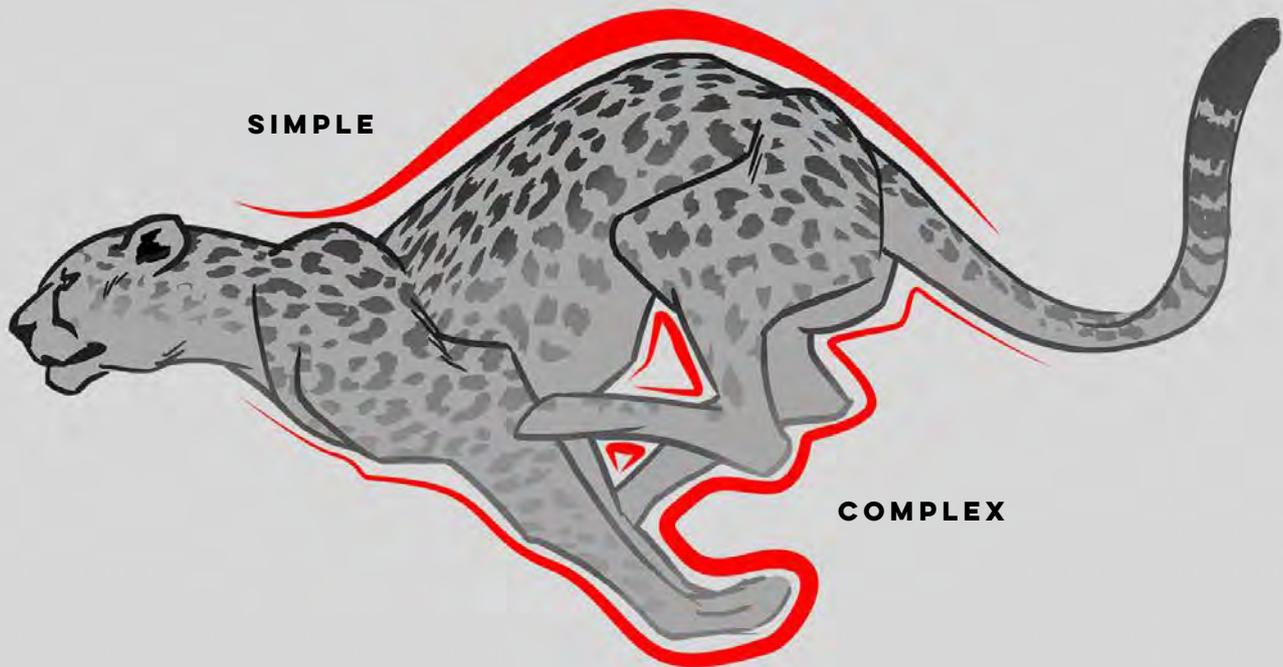
BEHIND THE THEORY:

Chubb Illusion
By Charles Chubb



When a textured object is placed on a plain grey background, it seems to have more contrast than when the same object is placed on a high-contrast, textured background.





BALANCING ACT
SIMPLE | COMPLEX

The relationship between simple and complex lines and shapes is an effective tool to strengthen a story, emotion, movement, weight etc.

Don't be afraid to reduce possible distractions to highlight what actually matters in your image.



COMPLEX ONLY

Complexity is laziness. Providing every detail might be an accurate representation of a subject, but it fails to engage with the viewers.



NO FOCAL POINT



EMPHASIZING SIMPLE

Opening up a space in a busy environment creates breathing space, trapping the viewer's focus.



SMALL FOCAL POINT



EMPHASIZING COMPLEX

By minimising excess details, what was simple now becomes the complex, creating more space and expanding the focal point, allowing your eyes to move around the image.



EXPANDED FOCAL POINT

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO EMPHASIZE?

5

TONAL VALUE IN CONTEXT

Among all of the visual elements, shape and tonal value are the most significant in a painting. The two together are responsible for up to 90% of the final outcome.

In order to design a clear value structure in your painting, you will need to consider one or an integration of the following:

1. LOCAL VALUE

2. LIGHTING

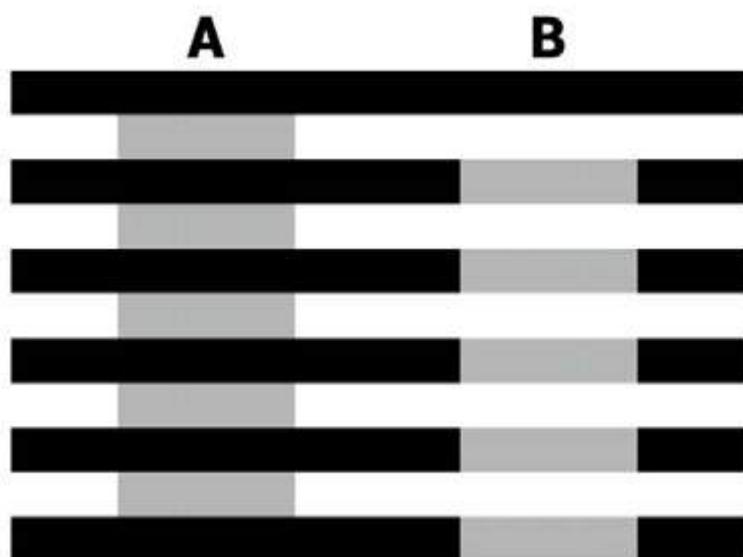
“THE SAME TARGET LUMINANCE CAN ELICIT DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF BRIGHTNESS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS.”
-WHITE’S ILLUSION

We have an automated process of discerning colour and value under varying lighting conditions.

Taking a look at the image on the right, the middle building is not actually white, especially in the shadow areas, but we automatically disregard the lighting information and accept it as a white building. >

BEHIND THE THEORY:

White’s Illusion
By Michael White



As illustrated by White's Illusion, the grey values under 'A' and 'B' are the same value, but they appear different due to the different contexts.



VALUE PERCEPTION COLOUR CONSTANCY

Almost all objects have their own local colour (their natural colour unaffected by lighting conditions). Colour constancy is the colour of an object being perceived as the same colour under different lighting conditions.

It is tempting to push the lightness of a white object but unless it is glowing, it rarely is white.

We automatically perceive colour and value in context, so always evaluate your colours and values in relation to the environment and lighting conditions.



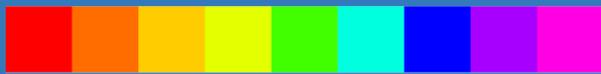
In this example, although the building is white in theory, given the lighting direction, conditions and colour information, its value is much darker than white.

6

COLOUR INTER-ACTION

In our real physical space, colour does not exist without light. Here are the three aspects of colour:

1. HUE



2. SATURATION



2. VALUE



Colour is one of the most subjective topics when considering colour intentions for a piece. However, one thing is true, colour never works in isolation and always exists in relation to its surrounding colours and lighting.

“IN DEALING WITH COLOUR RELATIVITY, IT IS PRACTICAL TO DISTINGUISH ‘FACTUAL’ FACTS FROM ‘ACTUAL’ FACTS.”

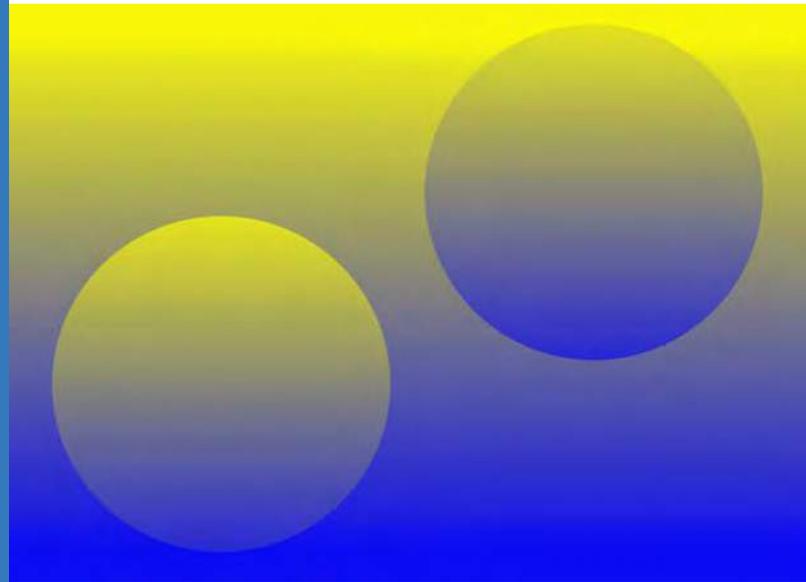
- JOSEF ALBERS

The scientific approach to colour (wavelengths) are the ‘factual facts’. How we actually perceive colour are the ‘actual facts’.

So when painting a scene with lighting, our colour choices should be made with consideration to how we perceive colour, along with the way they interact and relate as a whole.

BEHIND THE THEORY:

Interaction of Color
By Josef Albers



“WE SEE TWO DIFFERENT COLOURED CIRCLES BUT THE TWO ARE ACTUALLY THE SAME IN COLOUR.”

Above image based on the Interaction of Color by Josef Albers



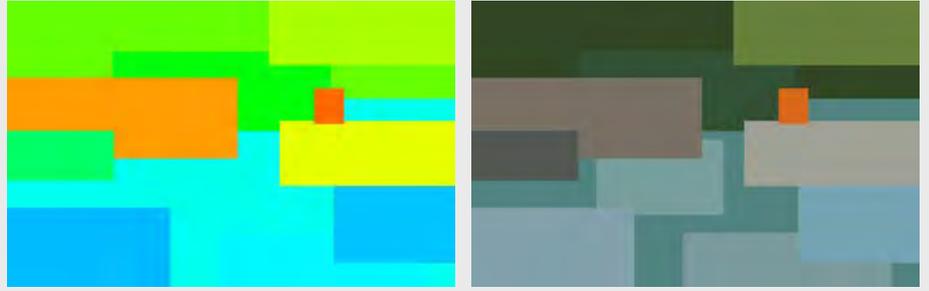
Blue hues are not actually used in the above painting, but you can still convey the cool and warm areas.



COLOUR PROPERTIES

VALUE & SATURATION

Value and saturation are often overlooked, but are the major elements in balancing colour. Hue is usually the least of the issue.



The hues are exactly the same in both images. The only difference between the two are the Tonal Value and Saturation.

NOTE: Hue alone is useful in creating loud attention seeking images and are crucial in logos and advertisements, however, this is not how we approach colour when depicting physical space.

COLOUR TEMPERATURE

In order to convey naturalistic light and colour in your work, it is important to state a layer of colour temperature.

WARM OR COOL

Determine if the light source is warm or cool, then the shadow is influenced by a complementary cool or warm.

Warm lighting = Cool shadows

Cool lighting = Warm shadows

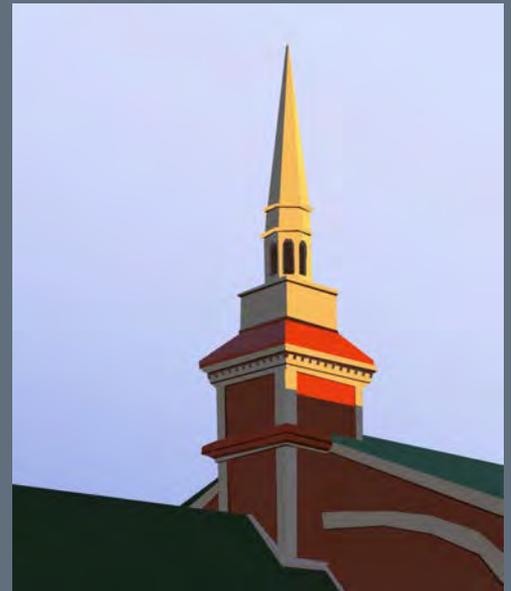


OR



WARM(SUNSET)

COOL (BLUE SKY)

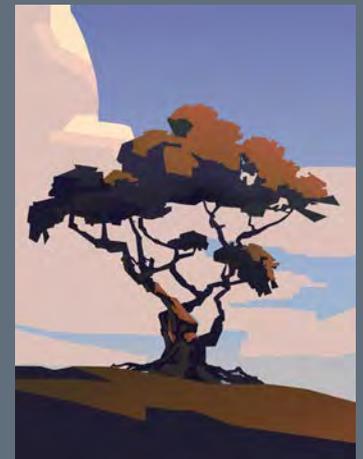
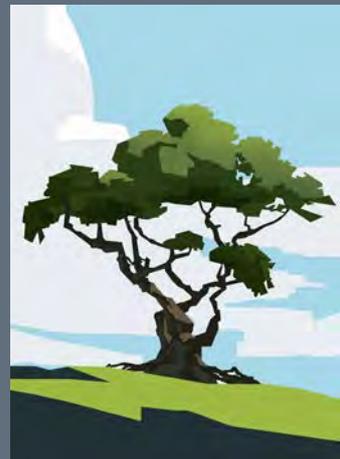


COLOUR RELATIVITY

Colour has the ability to drive the viewer's emotions and is often the most memorable part of art.

However, light is what reveals colour, so your colours depend on the type of lighting conditions.

Make sure your lighting and all aspects of colour are related and controlled throughout the whole image with intention to convey a mood and feeling.



The same scene under different lighting conditions will affect the overall colours.

7

DESIGN

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

The process of design is to solve problems using our creativity and experience, while addressing constraints such as function, story, style, technology, and even budget.

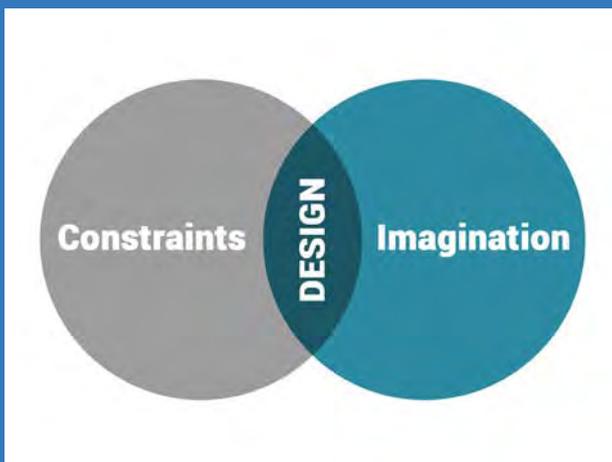
Design is not just about how it looks, but most importantly about how it works and interacts with its user audience.

To design is to serve a purpose and objective.

Designing for higher purpose lies in how well a designer extracts information from various sources and integrates them to create an innovative or interesting outcome.

“DESIGN IS A PLAN FOR ARRANGING ELEMENTS TO ACCOMPLISH A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.”

- CHARLES EAMES (1907–1978 ARCHITECT)



BEHIND THE THEORY:

Charles and Ray Eames

HERE IS A CASE STUDY:

The origin of a new type of knife, a snap-off utility knife (i.e. Stanley knife) was a result of mixing 2 key ingredients: a sharp cutting edge of a broken glass and a chocolate bar that was broken in segments.

The final design is an integration of disparate ideas to serve a new purpose in office workplaces.



DESIGN PURPOSE FORM LANGUAGE

Design is more closely linked to strategy than aesthetics.

A definitive purpose creates constraints, which in turn helps to narrow the scope of design thinking.

Sometimes a design can be ugly or beautiful all depending on its purpose in the narrative.

To communicate a purpose in a story, portraying personality in design is critical, and can mean the difference between good design and great design.

So understanding form language is a must in the entertainment industry. From characters to props, it is the key to evoking emotional responses.



COMMON
(GENERAL PURPOSE)



UNCOMMON
(PERSONAL PURPOSE)

DESIGN FUNCTION SILHOUETTES

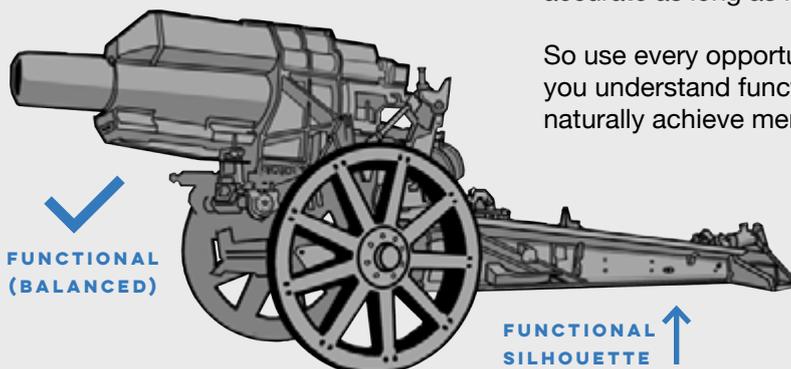
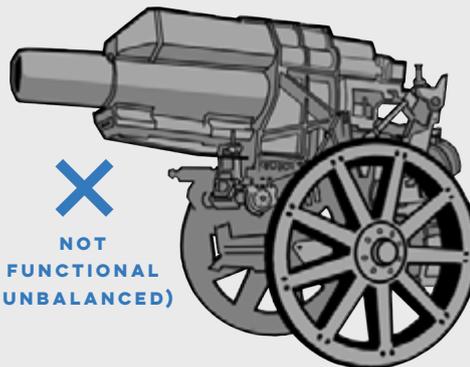
“Beauty in design results from purity of function.”

The silhouette of a design makes a strong impact on its viewers.

The more iconic the shape is, the easier it is to recognise within a scene.

There are various approaches, but shapes are often fueled by its purpose and function.

So in order to shape your idea in a context, research on functional constraints such as engineering, location, era etc that can provide clues to accentuate your ideas.



HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF A FUNCTIONAL DEFINED SILHOUETTE FOR A CONVENTIONAL ARTILLERY:

For artilleries, recoil is an important occurrence that needs to be addressed.

There are a few solutions that we can consider, but in conventional designs they are equipped with spades or trails on the back to combat recoil.

In the early days, ropes were often used, and today, we have hydraulics.

Function doesn't need to be completely accurate as long as it appears believable.

So use every opportunity to show that you understand function and you will naturally achieve memorable silhouettes.

FUNCTIONAL SILHOUETTE ↑

8

MINDSET

FOCUS | STRATEGY

We want to take this opportunity to illustrate some useful approaches to effectively learn and face challenges along your creative journey.

Not all information is created equal.

Attaining accurate information is a difficult, yet vital task, especially when trying something new. Whether you are learning how to draw, design, market, job hunt or even make decisions, information plays a huge role in unlocking new ideas and possibilities. However it can be a double edged sword, as it could potentially misguide you depending on its source and relevancy. One red flag is learning from people who cannot demonstrate what they preach.

With the abundance of information available to us, it can often leave us feeling confused and paralysed. So, in order to reduce the risk of following information that is not a good fit for you, a trusted method is to start testing out the different options you have. Start with the options that resonate with you - Just **pick one** and see if it works! If it doesn't, try another option. You may find that a few different options will work! This way, you will have multiple experiences to analyse, learn and draw from, preparing you for when it really matters. You may even come to your own unique realisations.

A big suggestion is to not expect a perfect outcome from one big action, the first time round. This could lead you to disappointment if it doesn't go to plan.

“Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently.” – Henry Ford

So be flexible with the information around you, but remember that in the end, your decisions are best made by you.

“YOUR MIND IS LIKE A PARACHUTE, IT ONLY WORKS WHEN IT IS OPEN.”

- FRANK ZAPPA

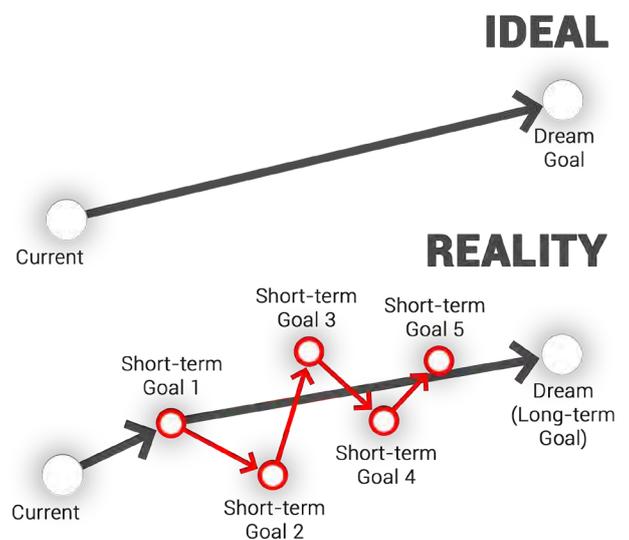
SETTING GOALS

SHORT TERM & LONG TERM

Wanting to be successful or rich is not a goal, it is a wish. But wanting to earn \$100k a year as character designer is a clearly defined short-term goal.

Having precise short-term goals are crucial, as they are measurable and can be reverse engineered.

For example, “let’s learn everything about anatomy for characters” is a vague and often intimidating task. Instead, a clear approachable goal like “learn 54 major muscles” is measurable and approachable. Half of them may already be familiar to you.



CROSS POLLINATION VARIETY

Learn from variety to create new variety.

There was a story about a landscape painter who was struggling to push personality in his shapes. So he took his concern to his mentor, and the mentor replied “Stop with landscape, and study gesture drawing!”. So he did. After some time, he went back to landscape painting and to his surprise, trees began dancing across his canvas.

SPIDER TECHNIQUE

'On average a typical spider has 20-25% chance of catching its prey before it escapes. Every time an escape is made, it fixes its web and crawls back to its base center.'

This presents an idea of spreading your sources of information, experience and income to different areas of potential return.

As in reality, there isn't one perfect source of creativity and ideas.

When you determine your circle of expertise, use it as anchor point and attract various sources from outside of your circle to your base, instead of constantly relocating your base.



“THE DAY YOU PLANT THE SEED IS NOT THE DAY YOU EAT THE FRUIT.”

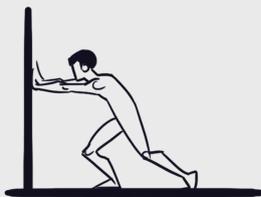
“CREATIVITY IS INTELLIGENCE HAVING FUN.”
- ALBERT EINSTEIN

EXPAND YOURSELF!

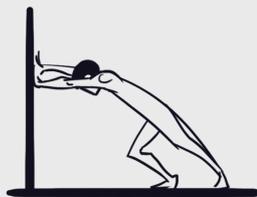
You don't have to figure out everything at once.

In your journey, it is important to spend a little time to explore beyond your circle or personal interests without any expectations, as new ideas usually come from outside of the circle. Feel free to explore anything that interests you, especially if it doesn't seem related to your specific field.

The combination of your interests is uniquely yours!



PUSH



STRONG PUSH



There is certain knowledge that you can only attain from experimenting outside of your circle, but it is up to you on how to connect and utilise your experiences.

Much like in design, your approach can spring from diverse knowledge. There is no rule to this, just fun, so strive to entertain your viewers and employers with your portfolio. After all, we are in this to entertain!

USEFUL RESOURCES

STUDIO SEARCH

VFX studios:

<http://vfxworldmap.com/>

Game Developers & Publishers:

<https://www.gamedevmap.com/index.php>

DRAWING PLUGINS

Alchemy (Free):

<http://al.chemy.org/>

Lazy Nezumi Pro (Trial):

<https://lazynezumi.com/>

COLOUR EVALUATION

KGamut3b:

<http://www.kauei.com/kgamut/kgamut3b.zip>

and Instructions here:

<https://cr10blog.blogspot.com/2013/02/kgamut.html>

Colour Constructor:

<https://gumroad.com/l/ColorConstructor/>

Instructions here:

<http://www.colourconstructor.com/about>

COLOUR WHEEL PLUGINS

Coolorus:

<https://coolorus.com/>

MagicPicker:

<https://anastasiy.com/colorwheel>

REFERENCES

Visual Reference:

<https://characterdesignreferences.com/visual-library/>

Textures and Photos:

<https://www.textures.com/>

3D Scans of animal skulls:

<http://phenome10k.org/library/>

IMAGE ORGANISER

PureRef:

<https://www.pureref.com/>

FREE 3D SCULPTING

SculptGL:

<https://stephaneinier.com/sculptgl/>

Sculptris:

<http://pixologic.com/sculptris/>

FREE 3D SOFTWARE

Blender:

<https://www.blender.org/>

SketchUp:

<https://www.sketchup.com/>



Pic 1 Studio is a collective of design creatives who provide conceptual art services and education catered towards the entertainment design industry, covering film, games, advertising and industrial design.

We started out studying art and design at university and went through the challenges that design students commonly experience in Australia. After working in a variety of different design studios, we each decided to expand our knowledge and skillset. And so we set out across the world, including Europe and LA, attending a variety of workshops and art schools, whilst also advancing our work experience into the film and game industries, technology start ups, advertising and freelancing. From our collective experiences, we were able to gain the essential foundational knowledge that we discovered was missing from our early education, as well as expand our life experiences of working in the creative field.

After teaching at several universities and colleges, we decided to launch Pic1 Studio with a mission to provide the most up to date information and tools from global industry professionals to those who are genuinely interested in art and design at any level. We aim to provide clarity, build community and create more opportunities for creatives from all walks of life.

**WE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE FOUND THIS EBOOK HELPFUL IN YOUR CREATIVE JOURNEY.
FROM ALL OF US HERE AT PIC1 STUDIO,
THANK YOU!**

VISIT

**WWW.PIC1STUDIO.COM
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HELPFUL RESOURCES.**





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