

The 7 Principles of Design

The principles of design are the rules a designer must follow to create an effective and attractive composition.

The fundamental principles of design are:

- 1. Emphasis,
- 2. Balance and Alignment,
- 3. Contrast,
- 4. Repetition,
- 5. Proportion,
- 6. Movement and
- 7. White Space.

Design differs from art in that it has to have a purpose. Visually, this functionality is interpreted by making sure an image has a center of attention, a point of focus.

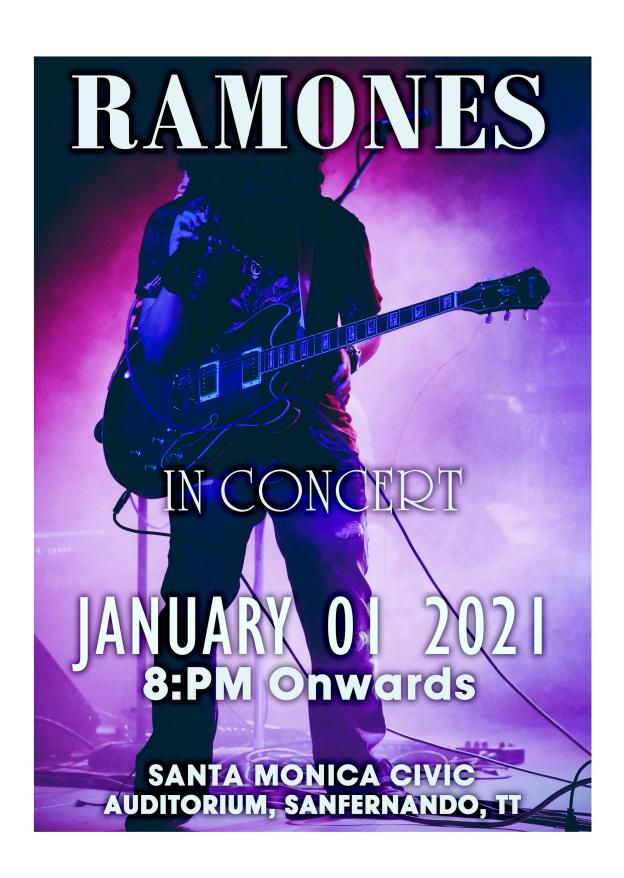
Graphic design, like any discipline, adheres to strict rules that work under the surface to make the work stable and balanced. If the work is missing that balance, it will be weak and ineffective.

This will take you through 7 basic principles of design that will make your project stand out.

1.Emphasis

If you're creating a poster for a concert. You should ask yourself: what is the first piece of information my audience needs to know? Is it the band? or the concert venue? What about the day and the cost of attending?

Make a mental outline. Let your brain organize the information and then layout your design in a way that communicates that order. If the band's name is the most essential information, place it in the centre or make it the biggest element on the poster. Or you could put it in the strongest, boldest type. Learn about color theory and use strong color combinations to make the band name.



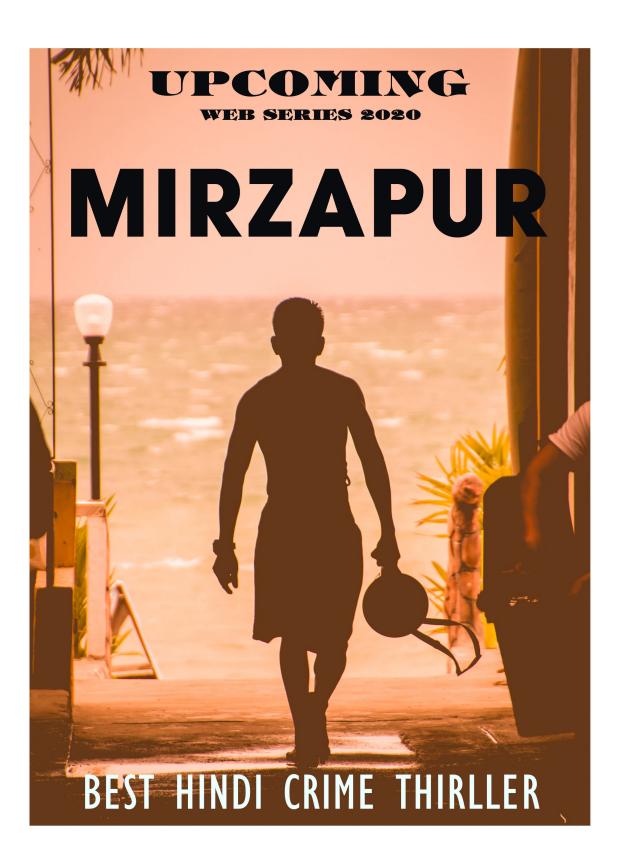
2.Balance and Aignment

Never forget that every element you place on a page has a weight. The weight can come from color, size, or texture. Without balance, your audience will feel as if their eye is sliding off the page.

Symmetrical design creates balance through equally weighted elements aligned on either side of a center line.

On the other hand, asymmetrical design uses opposite weights (like contrasting one large element with several smaller elements) to create a composition that is not even, but still has equilibrium.

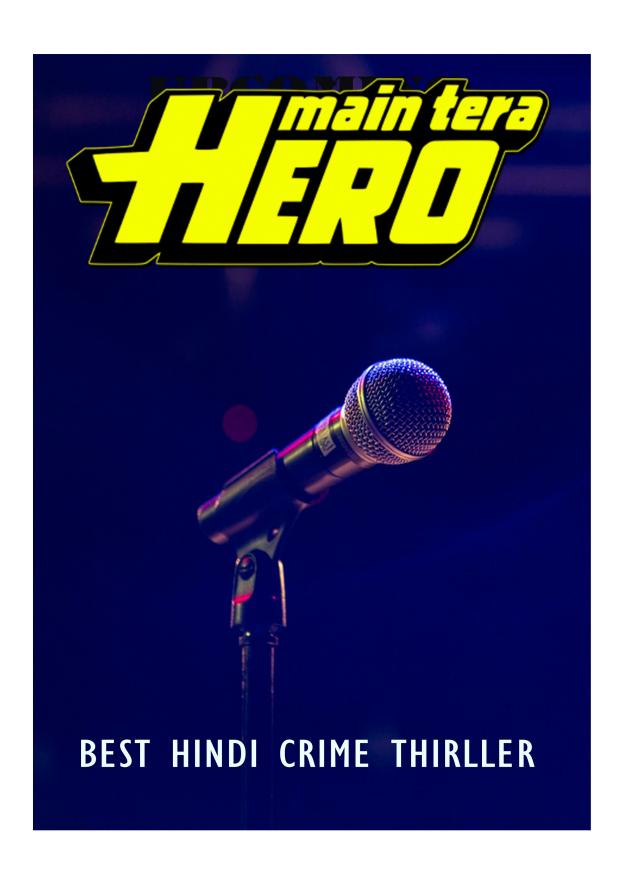
Symmetrical designs are always pleasing, if not occasionally boring. Asymmetrical designs are bolder and can bring real visual interest and movement to your composition.



3.Contrast

Contrast is what people mean when they say a design "pops." It comes away from the page and sticks in your memory. Contrast creates space and difference between elements in your design. Your background needs to be significantly different from the color of your elements so they work harmoniously together and are readable.

If you plan to work with type, understanding contrast is incredibly essential because it means the weight and size of your type are balanced. How will your audience know what is most important if everything is in bold?



4. Repetition

If you limit yourself to two strong typefaces or three strong colors, you'll soon find you'll have to repeat some things. It's often said that repetition combines and strengthens a design.

Repetition can be important beyond one printed product. Current packaging design is heavily embracing beautiful illustrated patterns. Anyone thinking about a start up knows one of the first things you need is a strong logo to feature on your website, business cards, social media and more. Brand identity is Another term for repetition.



5. Proportion

Proportion is the visual size and weight of elements in a composition and how they relate to each other. It often helps to approach your design in sections, instead of as a whole.

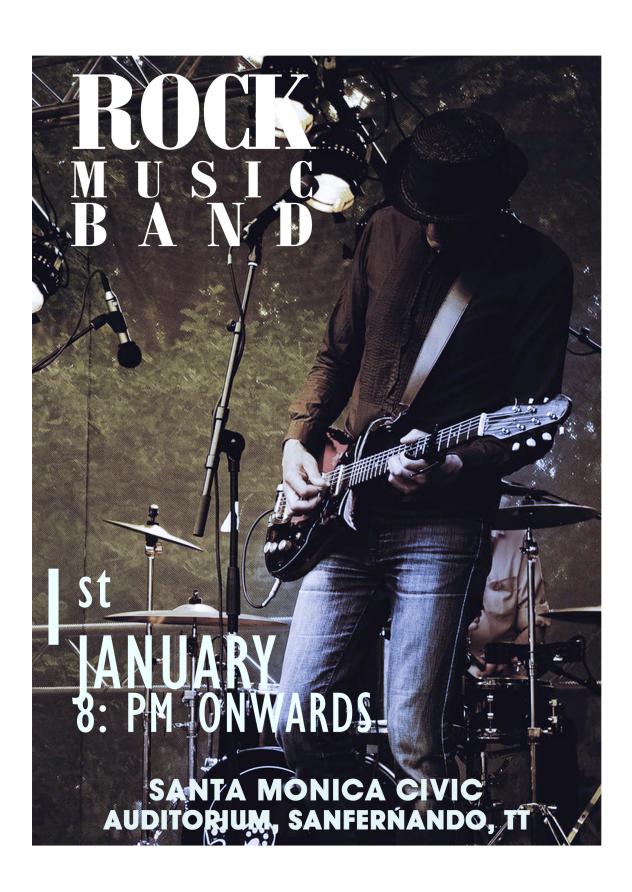
Grouping related items can give them importance at a smaller size think of a box at the bottom of your poster for ticket information or a sidebar on a website for a search bar. Proportion can be achieved only if all elements of your design are well-sized and thoughtfully placed. Once you master alignment, balance, and contrast, proportion should emerge organically.



6. Movement

Going back to our concert poster. If you decided the band was the most important piece of information on the page and the venue was the second, how would you communicate that with your audience?

Movement is controlling the elements in a composition so that the eye is led to move from one to the next and the information is properly communicated to your audience.



7. White Space

White space is the only one that specifically deals with what you don't add. White space is exactly that the empty page around the elements in your composition.

White space isn't sitting there doing nothing it's creating hierarchy and organization. Our brains naturally associate ample white space around an element with importance and luxury. It's telling our eyes that objects in one region are grouped separately from objects elsewhere.

Even more exciting, it can communicate an entirely different image or idea from your main design that will reward your audience for engaging with it.



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