

picture-plane are brought to life. This two-fold characteristic can be still further increased by the addition of color, texture and other spatial qualities and by the illusory indication of form or action. II8

Directions of the visual flow on the surface can also be indicated in more subtle ways. A kind of psychological filling-in of the optical intervals will supply latent lines capable of performing the same role of organization as actual lines for shapes which have in their own right no common lines whatsoever. According to the law of closure, intervals of colors and values can emerge into forms, intervals of lines into shapes, intervals of points into lines, generating new figures with new kinetic outlines.

The study of certain optical situations where the attention fluctuates between figure and background, and where each in turn emerges as the figure or the background, makes it evident that there is no fundamental difference, in an optical sense, between the figure and the background, between the positive and negative space. Linear movement is based not only upon the activity of existing lines or outlines of figures, but also upon the latent outlines of the intervals between these figures.

The kinetic outlines of the figures generated by the optical intervals constitute an integral part of the plastic organization. They live, act, and move with the same kinetic power as the lines and shapes intentionally created.

Plastic movement can be repeated in various visual qualities such as color, tone value, texture, shape, form, and so on. The eye passing from one sensory stimulation to another receives an accumulated impetus which leads it to embrace newer relationships on the picture surface.

Music suggests an excellent analogy: A musical unit played by an instrument is repeated contrapuntally on other instruments, on the strings, on the brasses, on the woodwinds, even on percussion instruments. Each plastic unit with its specific sensory quality echoes the previous one; light, dark, color, shapes, forms, all mutually help one another, one taking over the movement where another stopped, leading toward complete unity.

"The groups of tones in a melody which are harmonically connected are like the links of a chain; they give the melody color and sheen. They are the real body of the melody, strange as it may seem to speak of body in connection with a linear phenomenon like a melody. It must not be forgotten that a melody is only primarily linear, and that the comparison with a curved line applies only to the most obvious, external aspect of a chain of tones. The melodic thread has an ever-changing but ever-present volume or thickness."²

II. Study

Figure studies (in pencil or pen and ink) in massing and movement. To start drawing lines or volumes or both first to establish dynamic continuity, unity and massing and then proceed to evolve them into human figures.

III. Assignment:

- a. Three original figure-ground studies in black ink on white paper.
- b. Find a reproduction of an old master painting and analyze the massing and relationships in light and shade or dynamic equilibrium and continuity in terms of lines or tones.

You can do your study by tracing over it or simply by looking at it and drawing or painting your particular angle of analysis.

²Hindemith, Craft of Musical Composition