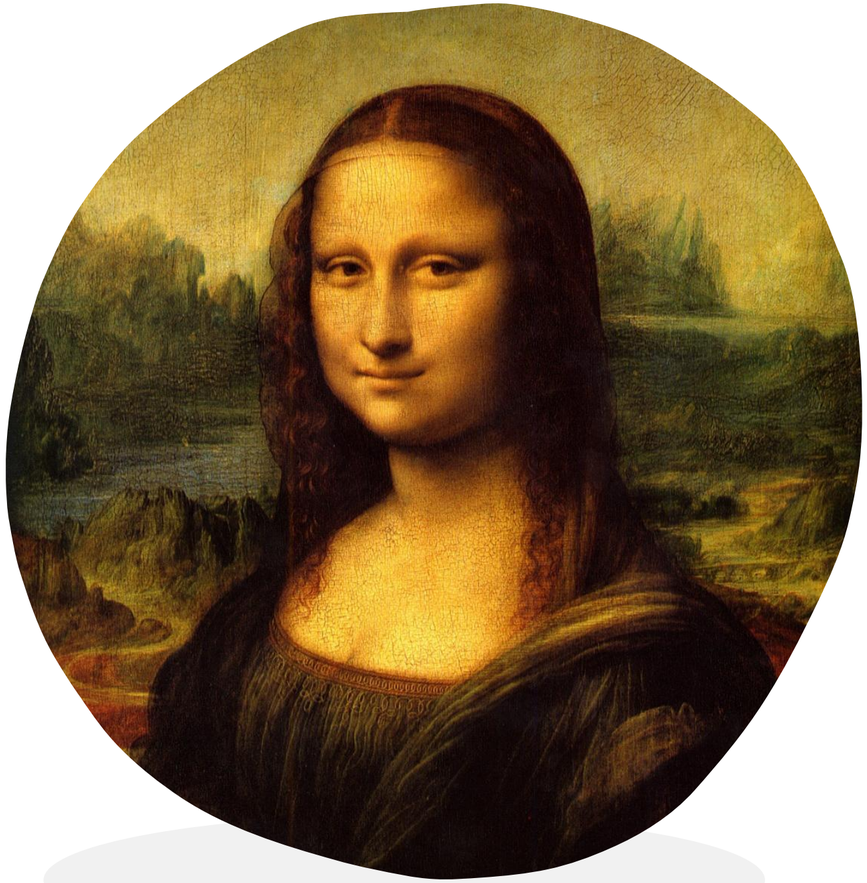
Composition in Art

Welcome to My Presentation Party!

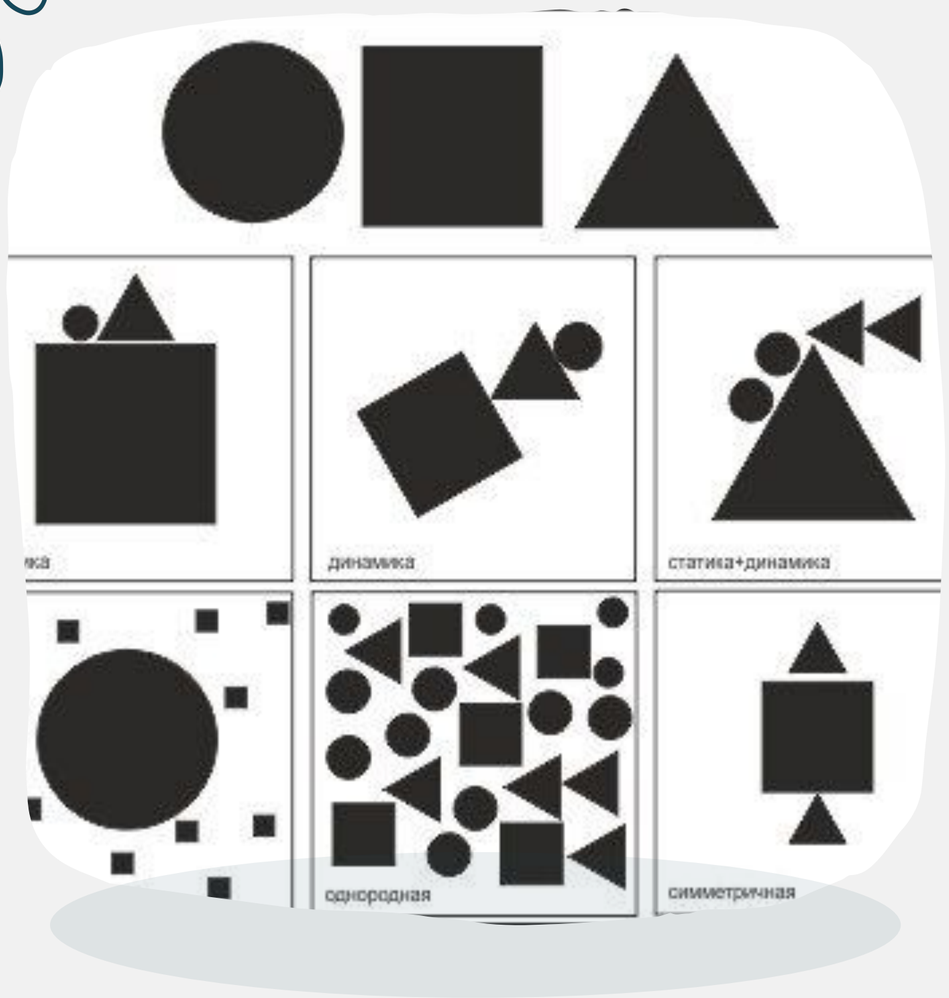
We’ll be talking about the elements of composition in art!

Composition is the term used to describe the arrangement of the visual elements in a painting or other artwork.



Every painting, whether abstract or representational, regardless of subject matter, has a composition.

Composition is how the elements of art and design—line, shape, colour, value, texture, form, and space—are organized or composed according to the principles of art and design—balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, rhythm, unity/variety.



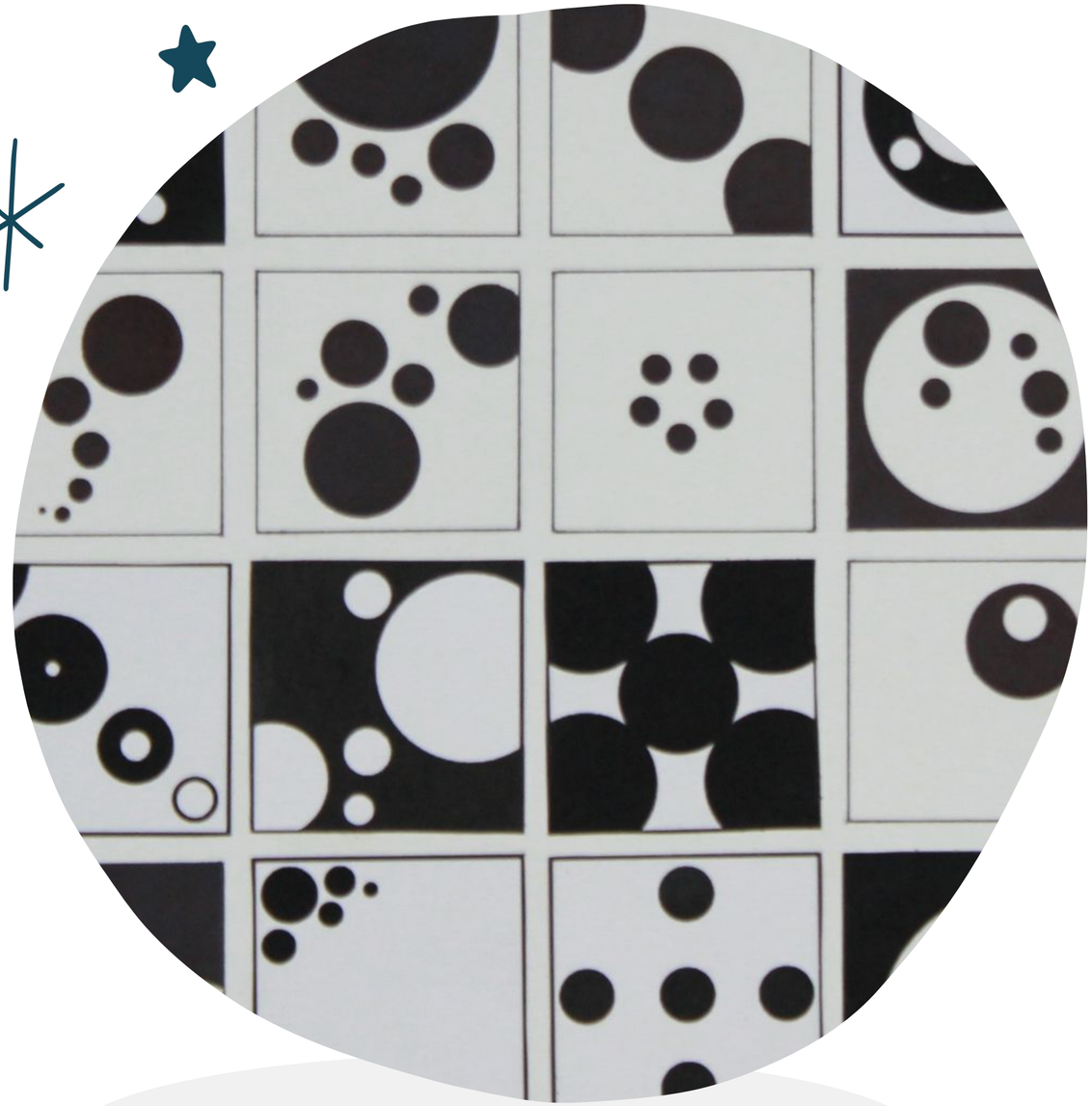
The elements of composition in art

- are used to arrange or organize the visual components in a way that is pleasing to the artist and, one hopes, the viewer.
- help give structure to the layout of the painting and the way the subject is presented.
- can also encourage or lead the viewer's eye to wander around the whole painting, taking in everything and ultimately coming back to rest on the focal point.

The elements of composition are generally considered to be:

Unity

Do all the parts of the composition feel as if they belong together, or does something feel stuck on, awkwardly out of place?



Balance

Balance is the sense that the painting "feels right" and not heavier on one side. Having a symmetrical arrangement adds a sense of calm, whereas an asymmetrical arrangement creates a more dynamic feeling. A painting that is not balanced creates a sense of uneasiness.

Movement

There are many ways to give a sense of movement in a painting, such as

- the arrangement of objects,
- the position of figures,
- the flow of a river.
- You can use leading lines to direct the viewer's eye into and around the painting.

Leading lines can be actual lines, such as the lines of a fence or railroad, or they can be implied lines, such as a row of trees or curve of stones or circles.

Rhythm

Rhythm is a principle of design that suggests movement or action. Rhythm is usually achieved through repetition of lines, shapes, colors, and more. It creates a visual tempo in artworks and provides a path for the viewer’s eye to follow.

Focus

The viewer's eye ultimately wants to rest on the "most important" thing or focal point in the painting, otherwise the eye feels lost, wandering around in space.

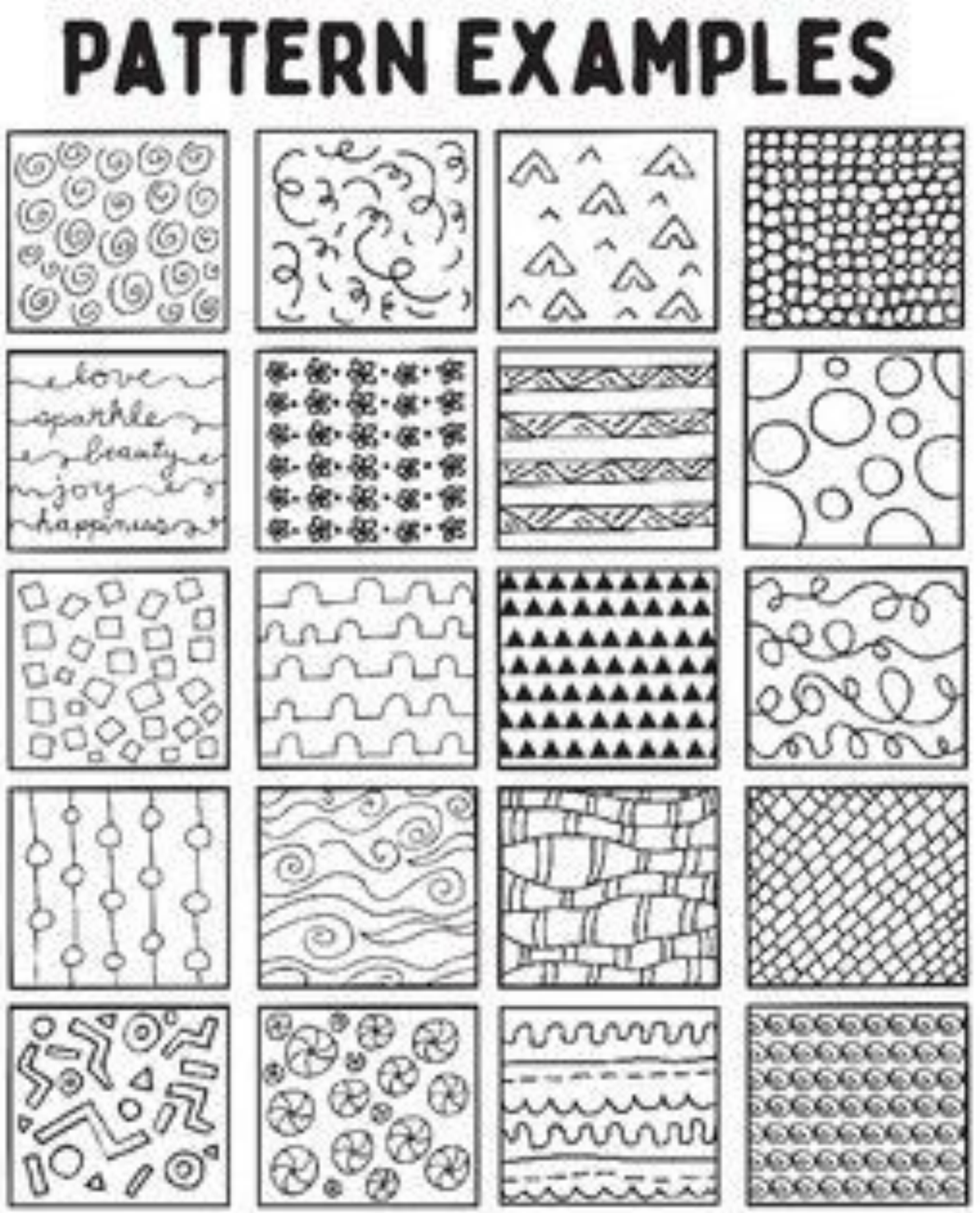
Contrast

Paintings with high contrast — strong differences between light and dark, for example — have a different feel than paintings with minimal contrast in light and dark, such as in **Whistler Nocturne** series.

In addition to light and dark, contrast can be differences in shape, color, size, texture, type of line, etc.

Pattern

A regular repetition of lines, shapes, colors, or values in a composition.



Proportion

How things fit together and relate to each other in terms of size and scale; whether big or small, nearby or distant.

Good composition is essential to the success of a painting. If done successfully, good composition draws the viewer in and then moves the viewer's eye across the whole painting so that everything is taken in, finally settling on the main subject of the painting.

Good luck!