

Emphasis

The Control of Attention

Hierarchy

- Dominance - also known as a focal point
- Subordination - things/elements in a lower ranking

1₂

Emphasis

- Contrast - to achieve maximum visibility
- Placement - the importance of the 'weighted' zones of the picture plane
- Isolation - an element stands out from its surroundings

Emphasis by Contrast

HORSE

Which letter is noticed first? Why? This is emphasis by contrast where **VALUE** causes the contrast.

Contrast of *value* is usually seen before contrast of *color*, *size*, or *texture*.



Emphasis by Placement



a_r t



a_{rt} s

Placement influenced by proximity

Emphasis by Placement

When elements are placed that are similar in color, or texture, the emphasis is linked from the strongest *placed* element to those of similar color next.



When the similarly colored elements are placed and also use *continuanace*, the emphasis is strengthened.



Emphasis by Isolation

This type of arrangement is related to placement, but the element stands a distance away from its surroundings.

I *solation*

How would you hide an element in a Composition?

1

Proportion

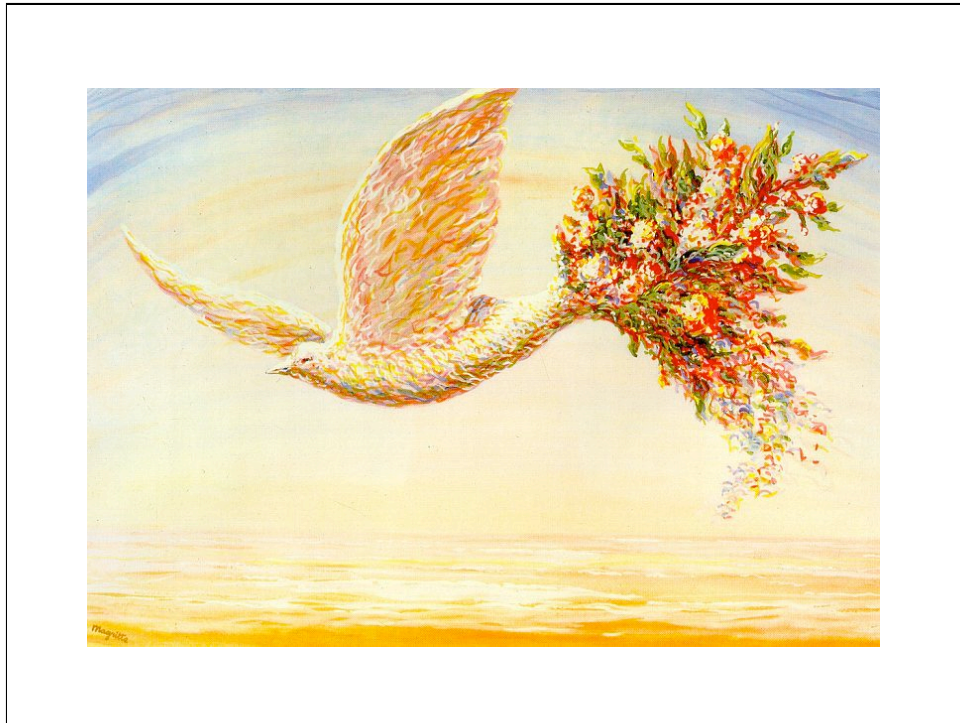
Size - how large an element actually is

Scale- how large or small an element seems to be

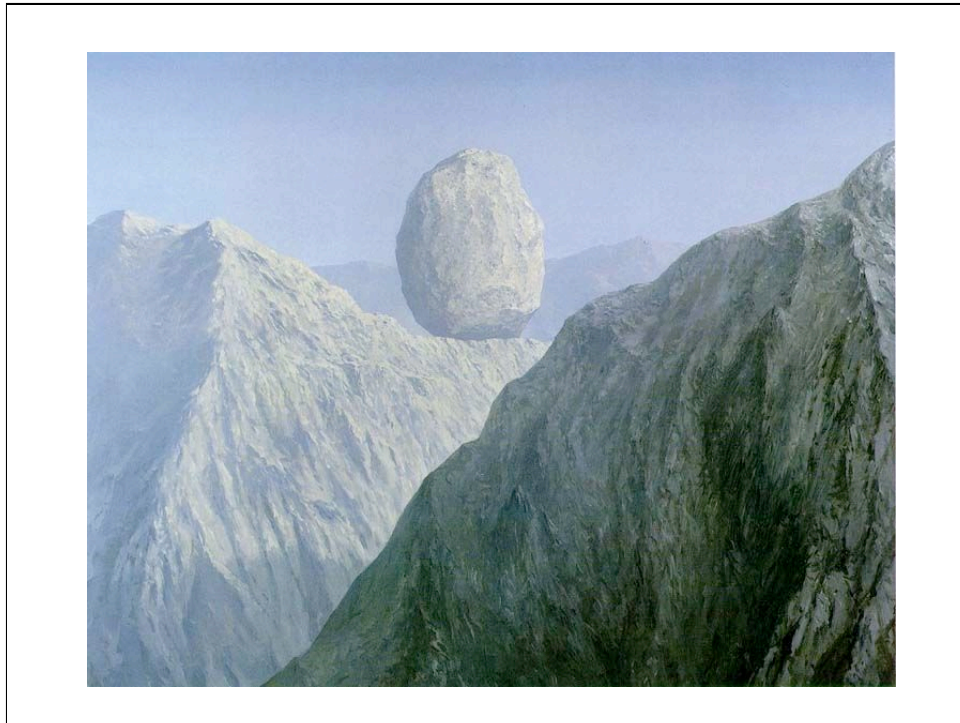
Magritte



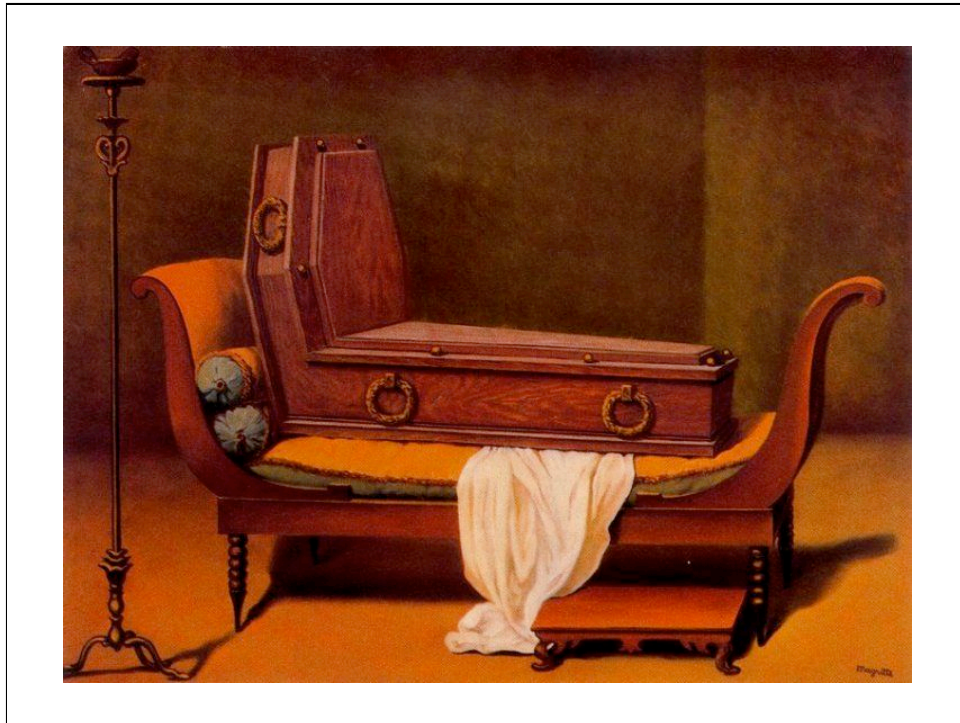
What do you see first? ... the grouped elements that make a face? Is this emphasis using closure? ...and placement?



Titled “The Good Omens” by Magritte, the artist has “replaced” the bird’s tail with a bouquet of flowers, using emphasis by contrast and the gestalt “continuance.” The contrast is rather subtle here, since the flowers are comprised of similar color as the bird. Instead of a shocking pair of images, the flowers seem to belong to the bird as it’s tail would belong. What does this combination of images suggest to you?



Again, Magritte is using images that at first glance seem to belong in terms of color, value, atmosphere, texture. Does this painting evoke a stranger landscape than the bird with the flower tail? What other principle of design is the artist employing with emphasis? Is the “boulder” not strangely out of scale? If he had placed an apple where the boulder is, would the scale change have been too obvious? Using this “middle” distance in the landscape to place an object that by all accounts is large, but maybe not THAT large, is a way to make us question our sense of what constitutes spatial illusion in the first place.



Magritte has placed a coffin in the traditional posture of the genre of “odalisque” painting. Many artists have painted women reclining on just such a piece of furniture. It is very much an unexpected image, but its color and texture make it seem to belong to the painting. What sort of query might the artist be asking us to make? This painting was based on Jacques Louis David’s well known portrait of Madame Recamier. He replaced the attractive sitter with the coffin. Only her gown is left for us to see.



“Personal Values” by Magritte using what type of emphasis to direct our attention to the out of scale objects contained within this sky painted bedroom? Where do you look first in this painting? How does the artists make the objects feel like they belong in this scene?



“La Durée poignardée” or “Time Transfixed” is the title of this painting by Magritte. It is the odd juxtaposition of the out of scale, but common image of a locomotive, with the equally ordinary living room, that the artist evokes mystery and possibly magic. In allowing the train’s smoke to climb up the fireplace, and cast its shadow, the artist has linked the two images. This is very selective use of emphasis by “placement.”



Magritte uses emphasis by placement and the gestalt continuance to keep the viewer's eye moving from figure to figure. The shadow shapes move the eye toward the large figures and the enclosing placement of the small figures allows their notice. How do the sky and ground planes support this composition?