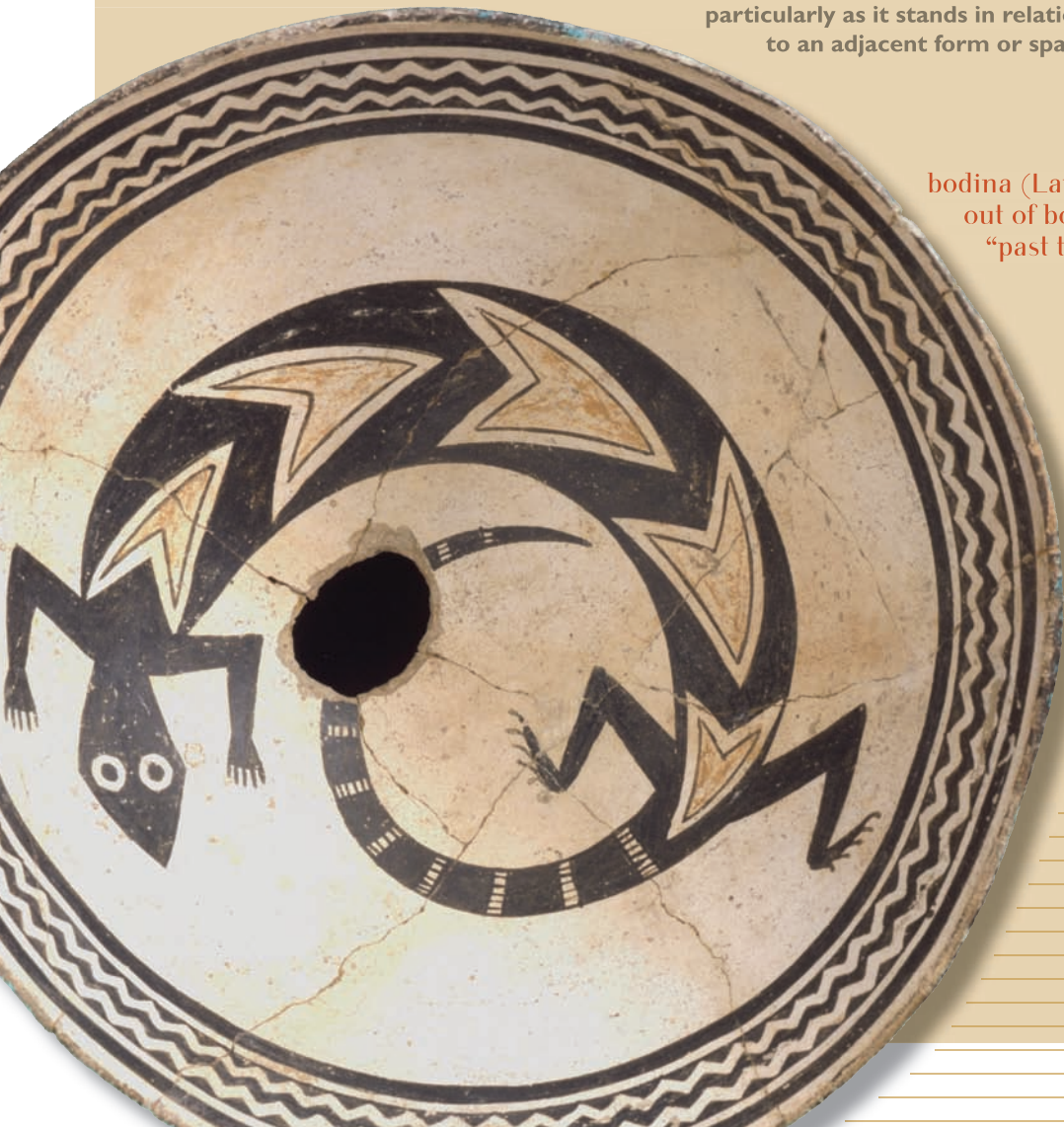


# Boundary

The outer limit, the edge of a shape, particularly as it stands in relation to an adjacent form or space

bodina (Latin) = limits; out of bounds means "past the limits"

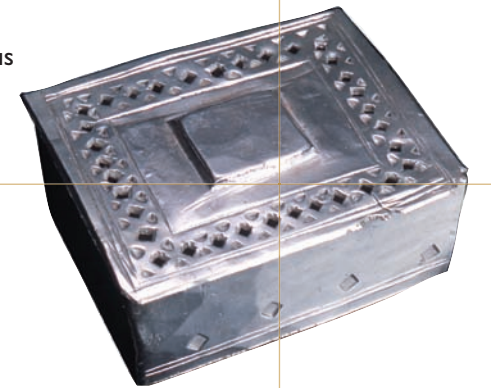


Boundaries separate a "this" from a "that," and a "here" from a "there." A frame around a picture separates the image from the space around it. The frame is a boundary.

The visual strength of a boundary depends on its contrast to adjacent elements. A gray frame on a gray wall will not separate a print from its environment as much as a gold frame, for instance.

The boundaries of a two-dimensional composition are established by the edges of the paper, page or canvas. Rather than specific boundaries like these, three-dimensional work activates a volume of space in its immediate vicinity. This intuitively provides a frame of reference. In order to be called a boundary, the space must be relevant to an observer.

We set boundaries in our personal lives to help us control our relationships, jobs, fears, and hopes. These boundaries are usually changeable, like sticks we poke in the ground to mark out a playing field.



*To avoid criticism, do  
nothing, say nothing,  
be nothing.*

Elbert Hubbard

# Contrast

- 1 To set in opposition in order to show or emphasize differences
- 2 A striking dissimilarity between things being compared
- 3 The use of opposing elements such as colors, forms, or lines in proximity to produce an intensified effect



(Latin)  
contra (against) +  
stare (to stand) =  
to strive against

Contrast clarifies and heightens an effect. To make a white paper brighter, place a black mark upon it. Punctuate the silence with a scream, the night with a candle, and muted tones with a spot of intense color. Contrast is used to draw attention to an area, to provide stability or clarity in a composition, and to affect the figure/ground relationship, either by clarifying or confusing it.

Contrast can exist in many realms at once. A thick, jagged, curved black line contrasts with a thin, smooth, straight red line. We can simultaneously experience contrast of scale, value, shape, direction, and surface.

We locate and define ourselves through contrast. Our first lessons as newborns is to distinguish this from that, here from there, and me from not-me. We would be lost without contrasts, snow-blind in a universe barren of distinctions.

Visual, aural, and olfactory contrasts are instinctive. You don't need to be taught what is a good smell or a bad smell. Other contrasts are learned because of cultural norms or associations.



*Do what you can,  
with what you have,  
where you are.*

Theodore Roosevelt

# Unity

- 1 The state of being one; singleness
- 2 The state, quality or condition of accord or agreement; concord
- 3 The combination or arrangement of parts into a whole
- 4 The ability of a composition to coordinate its various parts into a stable whole

*unus (Latin) = one*  
Unity is the effect of the whole exerting

*The task of artists is to organize elements into a comprehensible whole by simplifying, organizing and unifying.*

— Kenneth Bates

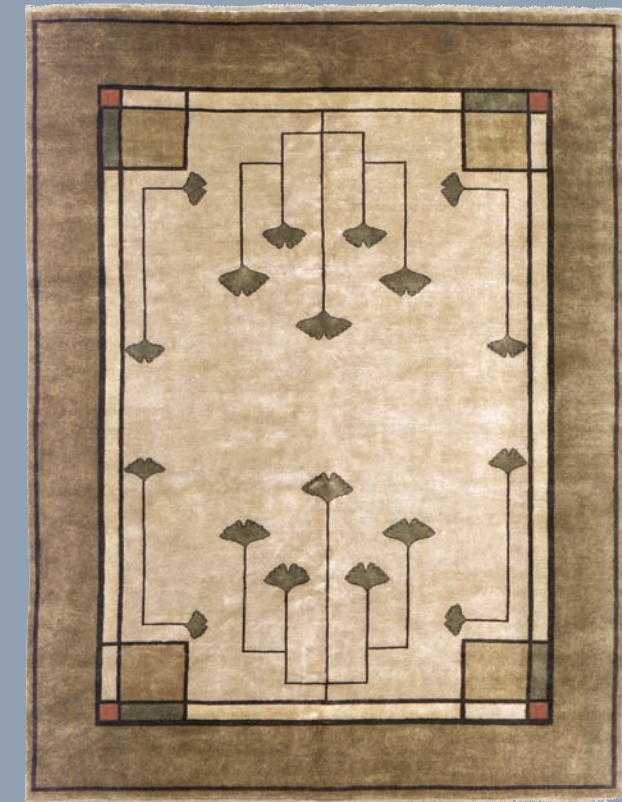


Unity is the effect of the whole exerting a greater force than would be expected from a simple collection of the parts. When you taste the ingredients in food, that's analysis. When you sit back and savor, that's unity.

Unity defies formulation but will often include careful attention to hierarchy, rhythm, and balance. Unity is the positive effect of establishing a sympathetic relationship between parts. The more diverse the parts, the greater the challenge—and the reward. We deal with issues of unity when we select the clothes we wear or when we decorate our homes.

Connect the dots—repeat every mark, pattern or color—the effect will be consistent but this is not unity, any more than playing the same note over and over could be called a melody.

Thin strands can become a strong rope because of the way they are assembled. Diverse parts can create a powerful composition when organized to create unity. Note that even a disjointed composition can achieve unity, as we see, for example, in a Pollock painting or a crowded street. The lack of order provides a pattern of its own, which unifies the scene.





# Grid

- 1 A framework of parallel or crisscrossed bars; gridiron
- 2 A pattern of horizontal and vertical lines forming squares of uniform size on a map, chart, or aerial photograph, used as a reference for locating points

Short for gridiron, the flat framework of parallel metal bars used for broiling meat or fish, from gredil (Middle English) = griddle



A series of alignments and intersections, grids can be used to assemble, organize, or separate elements. They can be seen or inferred.

In mathematics, cartography, and bingo a grid is a locating device.

Cities are sometimes designed on a grid because the logical system can be translated from large to small scale without loss of information. Whether you are going to the next block or across town, the grid will allow the language of directions to be consistent. If you can find your way around the block, you can find your way across town.

Because of its mathematical origin, a grid is “transparent,” meaning it can be understood without language. In a city laid out on a grid, a couple of fingers and a little pointing can direct a stranger to a destination.

Grids are used to reduce or enlarge an image. They simplify a mathematical relationship. Digitization, which has revolutionized our media, uses a grid.

*It is respectable to have no illusions, and safe,  
and profitable and dull.*

– Joseph Conrad