

Eliminate the Grid

form and counter-form

Materials

Part A

Tracing paper
Sketch book
Pencil
Black sharpie

Parts B

Xacto knife
scrapbooking tape
or doublesided tape
Metal ruler
White paper
Black paper
Grey matte board

Project Overview

When we look at the world our eyes are bombarded with enormous amounts of visual data. Somehow, our mind separates the various forms and colors into distinguishable groups or figures. Without this spatial sense we could not navigate in the world or read the letters on this page. At the most basic level, we can think of the separation between visual bodies with the dichotomy of figure and ground. The figure can be thought of as the identifiable form which distinguishes itself from the background.

Expanding on the idea, we can explore two dimensional space by up-setting the mind's ability to distinguish between figure and ground. In this assignment we will design a space that creates a figure and ground ambiguity. Through careful cropping and balance of tone one can undo the mind's ability to distinguish figure from ground. Once figure and ground are destroyed we must speak of form and counter-form because a figure no longer exists in relation to ground.

In order to master our own visual language each of us must come to an understanding of the most basic visual elements. This begins with an exploration of form, counter-form, figure and ground.

For this assignment you will eliminate the grid using one of the following nine letter words or phrases or one of your own choosing:

abstracts
fragments
structure
transform,
peace & war
love & hate
look again
eliminate
eye tricks
uta design

New Key Terms:

Form / Counter-form

Positive/ Negative Space relationship

Line

Contrast

Gestalt

Crop

Grid



Eliminate the Grid *form and counter-form*

Final Product

7.5 x 7.5 inch square grid made of nine 2.5 inch squares mounted on 12 x 15 inch Grey mounting board.



To begin

You must photocopy or print several enlarged variations of the letters found in your term (letters provided). You will need several sizes to successfully complete the assignment. Photocopy at %200 of original size, then %250, etc until you are satisfied with the scales for your crops. Aim for a variety of scale to work with.

Part A

- Draw a nine square grid (7.5 in X 7.5 in) in your sketch book or on tracing paper. Each square in the grid should be exactly 2.5 x 2.5 inches.

- Arrange the word from left to right and top to bottom so we may read it more easily. Trace the cropped letter-forms into the squares. Do not trace the entire letter into each square. Crop the letters.

- **You MUST retain the identifiable features of the letter-forms so that they retain a certain level of legibility. Find the balance between cropping away information (abstraction and ambiguity) but also leaving enough behind (clarity).**

- **Place letters in the correct order from top left to lower right...just like we read. Do not mix up the order of the letters.**

- Sketch the letters until they flow into one another. The grid will become invisible when the letters flow. **Reverse the tone of the figure and ground so that some time the ground is black and sometime it is white.** In other words, some letters will be black and others will be white. A minimum of 10 full size sketches are due.

- You may use a very small amount of black sharpie or white ink to help smooth the connections of your letter-forms and create super smooth transitions from one letter/box to another across the grid - MINOR edits to the letters, do not destroy the integrity of the letter forms.

-One letter per box of the grid. Once the form of the letter reaches the boundaries of its box all shape from that specific letter must stop. In other words the letters can NOT exceed the invisible grid. See examples.

Part B

Use the most successful sketch from part A to guide you. Using black paper cut out all black forms and re-align on a sheet of white paper. Use an X-acto knife to do all cutting. The total composition will be 7.5 x 7.5 inches and mounted on a 12 inch wide x 15 inch tall grey board, visually centered (about an inch north of dead center).

Figure and ground should become ambiguous and fluid. The grid should be destroyed. 1 composition is due. Use Photocopy machine to get a CLEAN rendering of your final 9 square grid. Use sharpie markers to fill in tiny, very tiny, odd gaps and create super smooth transitions from shape to shape. Then photocopy entire composition again to get 1 single smooth sheet of paper. High Quality Photocopying will eliminate seams between 2.5 inch squares and odd blotches from Sharpie Marker to give a very clean, sharp White and sharp Black composition to be mounted.

The use of a computer to compose or sketch is NOT allowed! You may print out different scale letters from the computer however if a Photocopier is not available.

a b c

d e f

g h i

j k l

m n o

p q r

s t u

v w x

y z &