

4-H Visual Arts/Home Improvement Design Elements and Art Principles

Most Visual Arts and Home Improvement classes at the county fair and at the state fair ask you to talk about the design elements and art principles that are relevant to your exhibit. You don't have to refer to each of these, just the ones that pertain to your exhibit, the ones that are dominant.

When completing your write-up of exhibit information, simply identify the design elements or art principles that are dominant in your exhibit, give the definition of those selected design elements or art principles, and provide one or two sentences of how each of those selected design elements or art principles apply to your exhibit. (For more information, refer to the visual arts project materials.)

Design Elements:

- **Line** can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, or curved. Lines can vary in thickness or help create a mood.
- **Shapes** are made from connected lines. How they are arranged determines the design.
- **Values/color**--light, intermediate, and dark values define parts of objects and set off one area of a design from another. Has a color scheme been followed?
- **Texture** is a surface characteristic that can be touched or seen. Contrasting textures add interest.
- **Space** is divided into negative and positive areas. One area should be dominant.

Art Principles

- **Rhythm** is organized movement. Repeating lines, shapes, or colors will produce rhythm.
- **Proportion** compares the amount, size, or number. Unequal proportions in which one element dominates is desirable.
- **Emphasis** captures your attention by unusual use of line, shape, texture, space, or value.
- **Balance** gives a design stability.
 - ◇ Radial Balance--same around a center point
 - ◇ Asymmetrical Balance--dissimilar
 - ◇ Bysymmetrical Balance--same on both sides
- **Unity** is the union of the elements in a design. Repetition produces unity.

Please take time to include these important pieces of information in your exhibit. Leaving them out may reduce your ribbon placing. Please include three to four of them, if possible.

EXAMPLE of how to apply to your exhibit write-up: reupholstered chair

Design Element: Texture

Texture is a surface characteristic that can be touched or seen. Contrasting textures add interest. In my exhibit, the chair has two textures. The upholstery is a rougher, rigid texture. The legs of the chair are smooth and follow a curve. The oversized upholstery tacks also add smooth texture.

