



**DUE DATE FOR PAINTINGS:  
MARCH 28, 2024**

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The focus of this critique on April 8, 2024 will be unity and balance.

- Please review the below and then create your painting with these ideas in mind.
- Submit 1 or 2 images for consideration to: **AZR@nwws.org**
- File size for submission .5 to 1MB
- You may work from your own photos or the images from my photo library attached. Keep in mind that you might want to consider “changing” the image to conform to the design ideas expressed here.

## **Unity / Balance**

**Unity**, relationships of the parts to the whole. Does it hold together as a complete unit? I have also felt that the word linkage might be another way of saying unity. Using paint, the artist is weaving a tapestry using the tools of line, shapes, colors, textures, values, textures, etc. Use these tools to make your painting balanced and unified.

When I review the paintings presented to me for critique, I would like to see the principals of unity and balance brought forth in your work.

Art is deliberately designed. Throughout the painting process, from inception to completion, unity is possible only through the observance of the principals that create it. Because knowledge must precede execution, planning is essential.

Because I struggled for a long time to understand the difference between elements of design and the principals of design, I thought I would try to clarify these artistic essentials.

They create your visual language. The eight principals of design are the verbs that activate your design. The seven elements are the nouns or tools you can use to effectively design a piece of fine art.

#### PRINCIPALS OF DESIGN

contrast  
dominance  
unity  
variation  
alternation  
harmony  
gradation  
balance

#### ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

shape  
size  
line  
direction  
texture  
value  
color

My desire is to provide you with guidelines that will help you focus on designs that will build a strong framework as a foundation for your subjects.

When you are planning a painting, choose a subject that interests you, may have meaning, or strikes an emotional chord.

I work from my own photos and do careful compositions at the time the shutter clicks. I also edit carefully on my computer to give me the best chance of having a successful resource from which to paint.

In addition, I sometimes will look at the image in a pencil sketch or create a black and white image or value study. You can also use an app on your mobile phone called a “notan” to quickly see the major shapes and their relationships before you even leave the scene or subject you are photographing. When I finish reviewing the subject, I then must analyze the major issues with design. Nature doesn’t always supply us with the ideal in a composition and we need to move things around. Artists can move mountains! Sometimes that is exactly what needs to happen! You can also be an arborist and chop down a few trees! Need another flower, add one. Please don’t forget you should use all of these principals when creating abstract work or paintings on location, from your memories or imagination! Photos are helpful springboards, but not essential for a painting.

**Balance** is one of the key principals that help to create a solid pictorial plan. You need a road map to find your way. The primary center of interest needs subordinates that support the main character. The main character in a stage play needs the supporting actors to help tell the story. A painter needs to balance the center of interest with appropriate elements of design to unify the painting. The artist is the director of the “actors” on the stage. In music, the chorus provides important background for the lead singer.

## **OPTIONAL REFERENCE IMAGES**



