



▲ **FIGURE 11.1** Notice how the variety of colors and patterns in this painting create a harmonious whole. Observe how the artist emphasizes the baby's head by surrounding it with white and placing it at the top of the canvas.

Gustav Klimt. *Baby (Cradle)*. 1917. Oil on canvas. 111 × 110 cm (43<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 43<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>”). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Gift of Otto and Franziska Kallir with the help of the Carol and Edwin Gaines Fullinwider Fund.

# Variety, Emphasis, Harmony, and Unity

Art principles such as balance, rhythm, and proportion do not operate in isolation. They work as a team. In the pages ahead, you will learn about three additional principles: *variety*, *emphasis*, and *harmony*. You will also learn about *unity*, or “oneness.” Unity is achieved when the elements and principles are used together to create a sense of wholeness.

## In this chapter, you will:

- Describe variety, emphasis, harmony, and unity in your environment and in art.
- Compare and contrast the use of the art principles emphasis and unity in artworks.
- Explain how artists create unity through effective use of the elements and principles of art.
- Use variety, emphasis, and harmony to create unified artworks.

### Focus on Art History

Austrian painter Gustav Klimt (1862–1918) was a

leader of the Art Nouveau school. Art Nouveau was a highly ornate, or decorative, art style. It found expression in both the fine arts and crafts such as glassmaking. Klimt’s earliest works, theatrical murals, received little critical attention. He is best known for his portraits. Like his other mature works, these reflect an emphasis on rich patterns of curving lines. Notice the abundance of curved patterns in **Figure 11.1**.

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**Interpret.** Notice that Figure 11.1 has two titles. Why do you think the artist gave the work a second title? Which title do you think best captures the main focus of the work?



# Variety, Emphasis, and Harmony

## Vocabulary

variety  
emphasis  
focal point  
harmony

**V**ariety is a principle of art that adds interest to an artwork. Emphasis is a principle of art that enhances variety because it creates areas that draw your attention. The eye-catching, or dominant, area is usually a focal point that first attracts the attention of the viewer. The viewer then looks at the less dominant, or subordinate, areas. Harmony makes variety and emphasis work together in a piece of art. Variety and harmony complement one another in the same way that positive and negative spaces complement each other. Variety adds interest to an artwork while harmony prevents variety from causing chaos.

## Variety

People need variety in all areas of their lives. Imagine how boring it would be if daily routines were exactly the same every day of the week for a whole year. Imagine how visually boring the world would be if everything in it—everything—were the same color.

People put a great deal of time and effort into creating variety in their environment. They may buy new furniture or paint the walls, not because the furniture is old or the paint is peeling, but simply because they need a change. They add variety to other aspects of their lives as well. New clothes, new foods, new friends—people make endless changes to relieve the sameness or add interest to life.

Just as people must add variety to their lives to keep it interesting, so must artists add variety to their works. **Variety** is the principle of art concerned with difference or contrast.

◀ **FIGURE 11.2** The artist has used only one shape (an isosceles triangle) and two colors to create this print. How has he used variety to change these two elements of art into an interesting design that has the illusion of three dimensions?

Miroslav Sutej. *Ultra AB*. 1966. Color silkscreen. 49.2 × 45 cm (19<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> × 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>""). Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Pennell Fund, 1970.



A work that is too much the same can become dull and monotonous. For example, a work composed of just one shape may be unified, but it will not hold your attention. Variety, or contrast, is achieved by adding something different to a design to provide a break in the repetition (**Figure 11.2**). When different art elements are placed next to each other in a work of art, they are in contrast (**Figure 11.3**). This type of contrast, or variety, adds interest to the work of art and gives it a lively quality.

Almost every artist uses contrasting elements to balance unifying elements. Wide, bold lines complement thin, delicate lines. Straight lines contrast with curves. Free-form shapes differ from geometric shapes. Rough textures add interest to a smooth surface. Colors can contrast in limitless ways. The degree of contrast may range from bold to subtle. The amount of difference between the elements depends on the artist's purpose.

## Activity

### Variety and Contrast

**Applying Your Skills.** Look through *ArtTalk* and find works of art that show bold contrast of line, shape, color, value, and texture. List one work for each kind of contrast. Explain how the contrast was created.

**Computer Option.** Make a simple design using five or six shapes. Overlap some shapes. Choose the Selection tool and Copy and Paste commands to make five copies of the design on the same page. Leave the original design unchanged but alter the rest to show a type of variety. Change color schemes, contrasts, and value as well as line thickness and textures. Use the Bucket fill or Selection tool to make changes quickly.



▲ **FIGURE 11.3** Which elements of art has Pereira used to create variety in this painting? Which element of art do you think shows the strongest contrast?

Irene Rice Pereira. *Pillar of Fire*. 1955. Oil on canvas. 145.7 × 94.9 cm (57<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 37<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"), San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, Texas. Purchased with funds provided by Charles M. Knipe by exchange; 95.3.

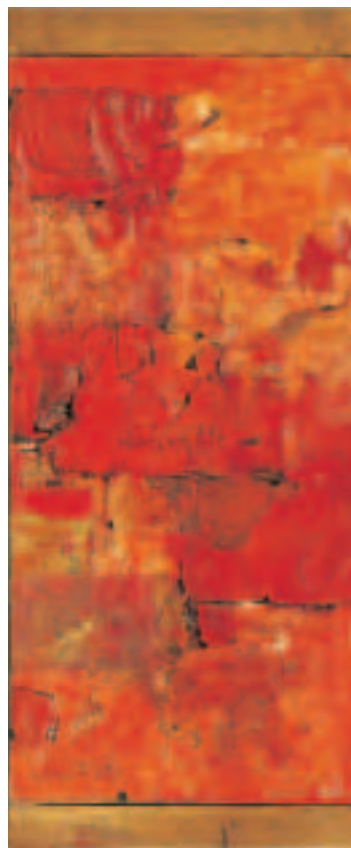
## Emphasis

Have you ever underlined an important word or phrase several times in a letter? Have you ever raised the volume of your voice to make sure the person you were talking to understood a key point? These are just two ways that people use emphasis to focus attention on the main points in a message.



► **FIGURE 11.4** Many different values of red are present in this work. In this way, the artist has created variety and added interest to a painting that might otherwise be boring. Locate areas of the painting that use different values of red.

Robert Rauschenberg. *Red Painting*. 1953. Oil, cloth, and newsprint on canvas with wood. 200.6 × 84.1 cm (79 × 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" ). The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, New York. Gift, Walter K. Gutman, 1963. © Robert Rauschenberg/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



▲ **FIGURE 11.5** This artist has used value contrast to create a strong focal point. Compare and contrast the use of emphasis in this work to Rembrandt's painting, Figure 5.36 on page 124.

Cecilia Beaux. *Ethel Page (Mrs. James Large)*. 1884. Oil on canvas. 76.2 × 63.8 cm (30 × 25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" ). National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.

In advertisements, music, news stories, your lessons at school, and your day-to-day communications, you see and hear certain ideas and feelings being emphasized over others.

**Emphasis** is the principle of art that makes one part of a work dominant over the other parts. Artists use emphasis to unify a work of art. Emphasis controls the sequence in which the parts are noticed. It also controls the amount of attention a viewer gives to each part.

There are two major types of visual emphasis. In one type, an *element of art* dominates the entire work. In the other type of emphasis, an *area* of the work is dominant over all the other areas.

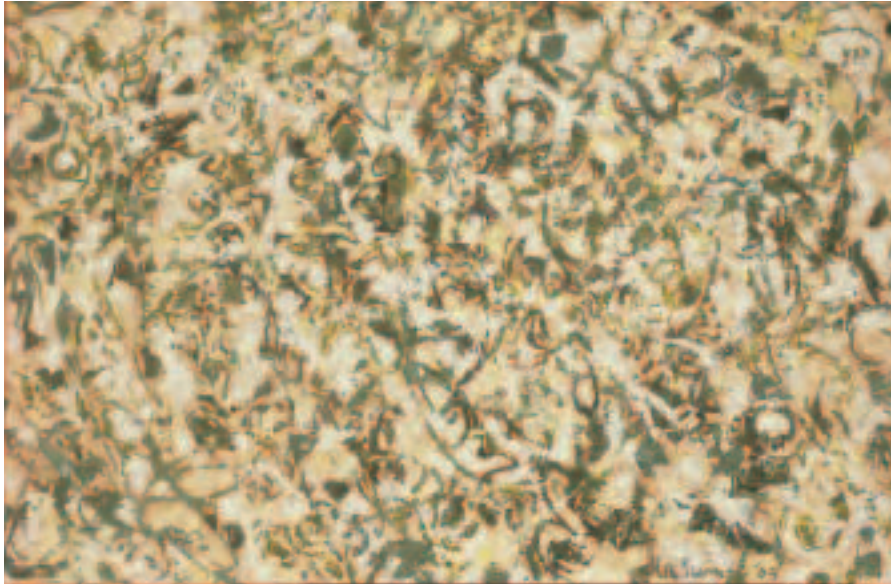
### Emphasizing an Element

If the artist chooses to emphasize one element, all the other elements of the work are made *subordinate*, or less important. The *dominant*, or most important, element affects the viewer's perception of the total work. This element also affects the way in which all the separate items and elements in the work are perceived.

Sometimes the dominant element is so strong that the whole work seems to be drenched in that element. Rauschenberg's *Red Painting* (**Figure 11.4**) is saturated with the color red. Even though he has used a variety of textures to create different areas, the redness takes on a meaning all its own. It affects the viewer's perception of the painting as a whole. It also affects the viewer's perception of the separate parts of the work.

### Emphasizing an Area

Sometimes a specific area in a work of art is emphasized. This area, called the **focal point**, is the first part of a work to attract the attention of the viewer. The other areas are subordinate to the focal point. Beaux used value like a spotlight to emphasize one important area—a focal point—in her painting *Ethel Page* (**Figure 11.5**).



◀ **FIGURE 11.6** In this painting the artist used three different greens, three values of brown, and white to make a net of colors. She used thick and thin brushstrokes as well as curves, lines, and dots squeezed straight from the tube. No one color or line advances toward the viewer. All are equal in importance.

Lee Krasner. *The Springs*. 1964. Oil on canvas. 109.2 × 167.6 cm (43 × 66"). National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay. © 2003 Pollock-Krasner Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

It is possible for a work of art to have more than one focal point. Artists must be careful about this, however. Too many focal points cause the eye to jump around and will confuse the viewer. Artists must also determine the degree of emphasis needed to create a focal point. This usually depends on the purpose of the work.

Of course, a focal point is not necessary. Many artists don't create a focal point in their works (**Figure 11.6**). When artists do create focal points, they are usually careful not to over-emphasize it. They make certain that the focal point is unified with the rest of the design.

Artists use several techniques to create a focal point in a work of art. Following are some examples of these techniques.

**Contrast.** One way to create a focal point is to place an element that contrasts with the rest of the work in that area. One large shape, for example, will stand out among small ones. One angular, geometric shape will be noticed first among rounded, free-form shapes. A bright color will dominate low-intensity colors, while a light area will dominate a dark design (**Figure 11.7**). An object with a smooth texture becomes a focal point in a design filled with rough textures.



◀ **FIGURE 11.7** Rubens has created contrast between the light, smooth skin of Daniel against the dark rocks and the rough fur of the lions. Daniel sits in a closed position while the lions growl and stretch in active poses.

Peter Paul Rubens. *Daniel in the Lions' Den*. c. 1615. Oil on linen. 224.3 × 330.4 cm (88 1/4 × 130 1/8"). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. © 1998 Board of Trustees. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund.



► **FIGURE 11.8** This was painted after the artist's father died. Wyeth said that the hill represents the father and the boy represents himself. The arm floating aimlessly in the air was his free soul trying to find something to hold on to. Wyeth eliminated all details so that the viewer sees the jagged shape of the boy against the smooth, lonely background.

Andrew Wyeth. *Winter 1946*. 1946. Tempera on composition board. 79.7 × 121.9 cm (31<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 48"). North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, North Carolina.



**Isolation.** Artists sometimes use isolation to create a focal point and thereby emphasize one part of their work. They do this by putting one object alone, apart from all the other objects (**Figure 11.8**). This draws the viewer's eye to the isolated object.

**Location.** Location is another method used to create a focal point for emphasis. A viewer's eye is normally drawn toward the center of a visual area. Thus, something near this center will probably be noticed first. Because the exact center is a predictable location, most artists place the objects they wish to emphasize a bit off center. They select a location a little to the left or right of center and a little above center (**Figure 11.9**).



◄ **FIGURE 11.9** The 12-year-old subject looks as if she were standing in the center of the painting. If you measure, you will find that the artist, Anguissola, has placed most of the face and body left of the center of the work.

Sofonisba Anguissola. *Portrait of the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia*. c. 1578. Oil on canvas. 115.9 × 101.9 cm (45<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 40<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"). Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain.

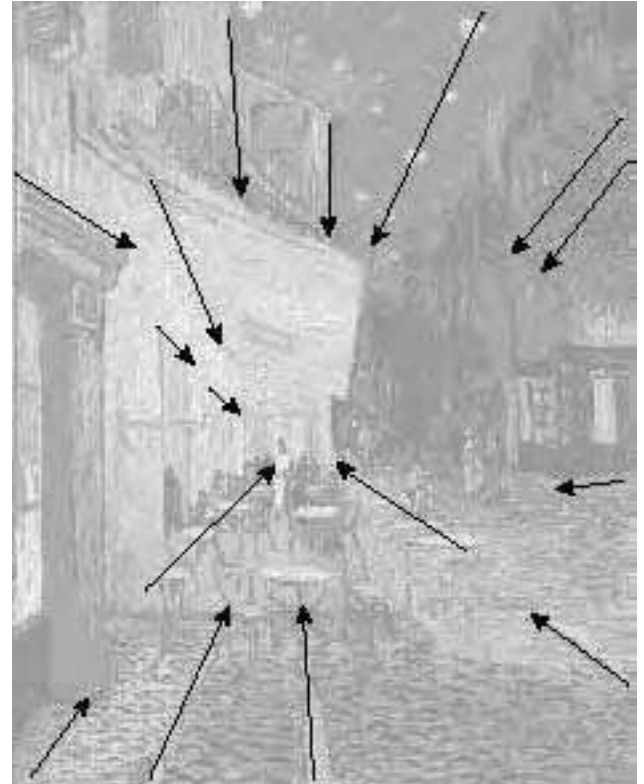
**Convergence.** When many elements in a work seem to point to one item, that item becomes the focal point. This technique, called convergence, can be

created with a very obvious radial arrangement of lines. It can also be achieved through a more subtle arrangement of elements (**Figure 11.10**).

**LOOKING CLOSELY**

## Creating a Focal Point

Many lines lead your eyes toward the brightly lit, yellow area of the café. Notice the ruts in the cobblestones, the edge of the awning, and the top of the blue door frame all point to the yellow area. How many more objects can you find that point to that area?



◀ **FIGURE 11.10**

Vincent van Gogh. *Café Terrace at Night*. 1888. Oil on canvas. 81 × 65.5 cm (31<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 25<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>”). Rijksmuseum Kroller-Muller, Otterlo, the Netherlands.





▲ **FIGURE 11.11** At first glance, you might think you are looking at an ordinary painting of a Mexican figure. The clothes are depicted with realistic pleats and folds. The smooth skin of the hands and woven texture of the sombrero are also painted realistically. However, when you look at the face, it seems to be wearing a wooden Olmec mask. The mask is the unusual focal point of this work.

David Alfaro Siqueiros. *Ethnography*. 1939. Enamel on composition board, 122.2 × 82.5 cm (48<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>”). Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York. © Estate of David Alfaro Siqueiros/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY/SOMAAP, Mexico City.

**The Unusual.** In a work of art, an object that is out of the ordinary can become the focal point (**Figure 11.11**). In a row of soldiers standing at attention, the one standing on his head will be noticed first. The unexpected will always draw the viewer's attention.

## Harmony

**Harmony** is the principle of art that creates unity by stressing the similarities of separate but related parts. In musical harmony, related tones are combined into blended sounds. Harmony is pleasing because the tones complement each other. In visual harmony, related art elements are combined. The result looks pleasing because the elements complement each other.

Used in certain ways, color can produce harmony in a work of art. Repetition of shapes that are related, such as rectangles with different proportions, produces harmony (**Figure 11.12**). A design that uses only geometric shapes appears more harmonious than a design using both geometric and free-form shapes. Even space used in a certain way can produce harmony. If all the parts in a work of art are different sizes, shapes, colors, and textures, the space between the parts can be made uniform to give the work a sense of order.



### Check Your Understanding

1. Describe the principle of variety.
2. What is a focal point?
3. Name the five ways emphasis can be created.
4. What is harmony?
5. Compare and contrast the use of emphasis for the central figure in Figure 11.7 on page 291 and Figure 11.8 on page 292.



▲ **FIGURE 11.12** Scully has used related shapes and colors to create harmony in this work. What has he done to introduce variety?

Sean Scully. *White Robe*. 1990. Oil on linen. 243.8 × 304.8 cm (96 × 120"). High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia. Purchase in honor of Richard A. Denny, Jr., President of the Board of Directors, 1991–94, with funds from Alfred Austell Thornton Sr. in memory of Leila Austell Thornton and Albert Edward Thornton Sr. and Sarah Miller Venable and William Hoyt Venable, 1992.5 a-b.

### Activity

### Using Emphasis

#### Creating Visual Solutions Using Imagination.

Draw from your imagination to make a series of small designs with strong focal points. Use each of the following: contrast of shape, contrast of color, contrast of value, contrast of texture, isolation, location, convergence, and the unusual.

**Computer Option.** Use the drawing tools of your choice to create a series of small designs with strong focal points, using each of the following: contrast of shape, contrast of color, contrast of value, contrast of texture, isolation, location, convergence, and the unusual.

You will be able to transform some designs to others by using the Fill Bucket tool. Others can be changed by using the Selection tool and rearranging the shapes. See if you can create all seven designs by starting with only three designs and making alterations to them. Save your work.



## Vocabulary

unity

# Unity

**U**nity is oneness. It brings order to the world. Without it, the world would be chaotic.

Countries made up of smaller parts are political unities: the United States is such a country. Its 50 states are joined by a single federal government. As a unit, the United States is a world power far stronger than the combined power of the separate states (**Figure 11.13**).

A tree is an example of unity in nature. It is composed of roots, trunk, bark, branches, twigs, and leaves. Each part has a purpose that contributes to the living, growing tree. An electric lamp is a manufactured unit composed of a base, electric wire, sockets, bulbs, shades, and so on. The parts of the lamp work together as a unified whole to provide light. If any part does not work, the unity of the lamp is impaired.

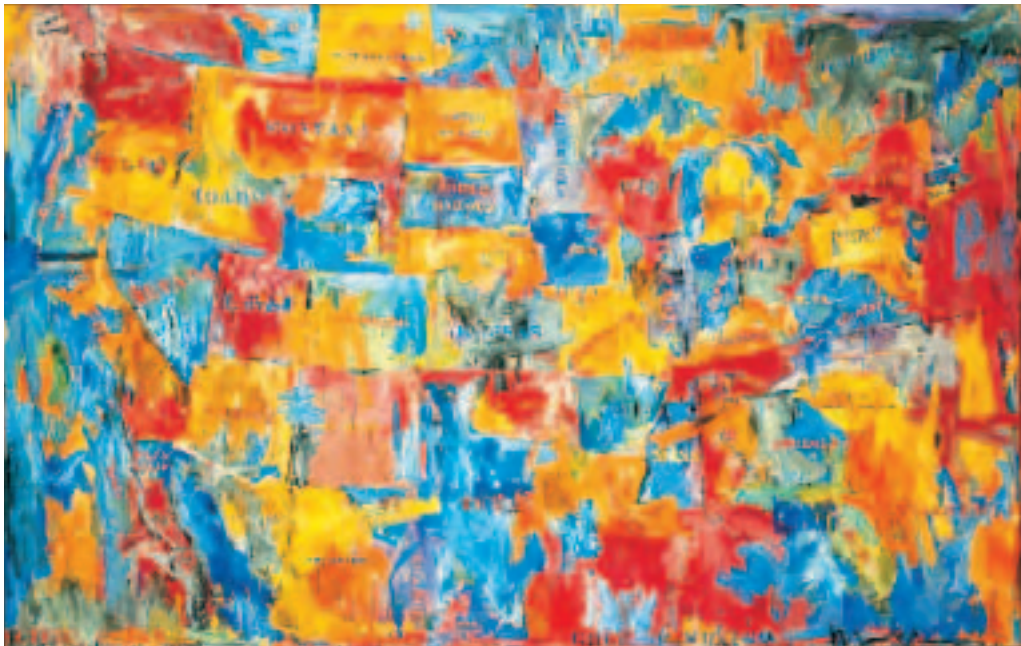
## Creating Visual Unity

In art, **unity** is *the quality of wholeness or oneness that is achieved through the effective use of the elements and principles of art*. Unity is like an invisible glue. It joins all the separate parts so that they look as if they belong together.

Unity is difficult to understand at first because it is not easily defined. It is a quality that you feel as you view a work of art (**Figure 11.14**). As you study an artwork, you may think that you would not change one element or object. You are receiving an impression that the work is a unified whole.

► **FIGURE 11.13** Johns combines the loose brushwork of Abstract Expressionism with the commonplace objects of American Realism. His map of the United States could be pulled apart by the wild action painting, but it is unified by the harmonious, limited color scheme of a primary triad.

Jasper Johns. *Map*. 1961. Oil on canvas. 198.2 × 312.7 cm (78 × 123 $\frac{1}{2}$ "'). Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Scull. © Jasper Johns/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.





◀ **FIGURE 11.14** The title of this work does not tell the viewer that the three children and two adults are related, but the artist reveals this in his use of line, form, color, and unity. The clothing and skin of all five figures are divided into similar, unusual free-form shapes. The children's bodies fit within the outlines of the adults. The woman's large, clapping hands are the focal point of the work. How do her hands add to the sense of unity?

Robert Gwathmey. *Children Dancing*. c. 1948. Oil on canvas. 81.2 × 101.6 cm (32 × 40"). The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio. © Estate of Robert Gwathmey/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

Unity helps you concentrate on a visual image. You cannot realize how important this is until you study a work that lacks unity. Looking at a work that lacks unity is like trying to carry on a serious discussion while your little sister is practicing the violin, your brother is listening to the stereo, and your mother is running the vacuum cleaner. It would be difficult to concentrate on your conversation with all these distractions. It is the same with a work of art that lacks unity. You can't concentrate on the work as a whole, because all the parts demand separate attention.

To create unity, an artist adjusts the parts of a work so they relate to each other and to the whole work. A potter plans decorations for ceramic ware to complement the shape, size, and purpose of the work. Notice the birdlike decoration in the center of the vase in **Figure 11.15**. This creature, the phoenix, was often used to symbolize rebirth in Buddhism. It is assumed that the vase was one of a set of altar vases in a Buddhist temple. Clothing designers



▲ **FIGURE 11.15** The designs for this vase were first outlined with a trail of raised slip, filled in with glaze, and then fired. Overglaze enamels were added, and a second, lower temperature firing was done. What art elements did the artist use to create unity?

China, Shanxi or Henan Province. *Jar*. Late fifteenth century, Ming Period. Stoneware with trailed slip under glaze and overglaze enamels. Height 35.2 cm (13<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" ), diameter 30.2 cm (11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" ). Asia Society, New York: Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection.



► **FIGURE 11.16** The Kuba men cut thin strips from raffia palm leaves and wove the basic cloth. Women embroidered the black plush designs onto the cloth. The finished cloth is as flexible and soft as silk. Sometimes, two or more finished cloths are sewn together to make a ceremonial skirt.

Kuba Group, Western Kasai Province, Congo. *Ceremonial Robe*. 1950–75. Cut pile and linear embroidery on plain-weave raffia palm. 58.4 × 64.8 cm (23 × 25½"). Museum of International Folk Art, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



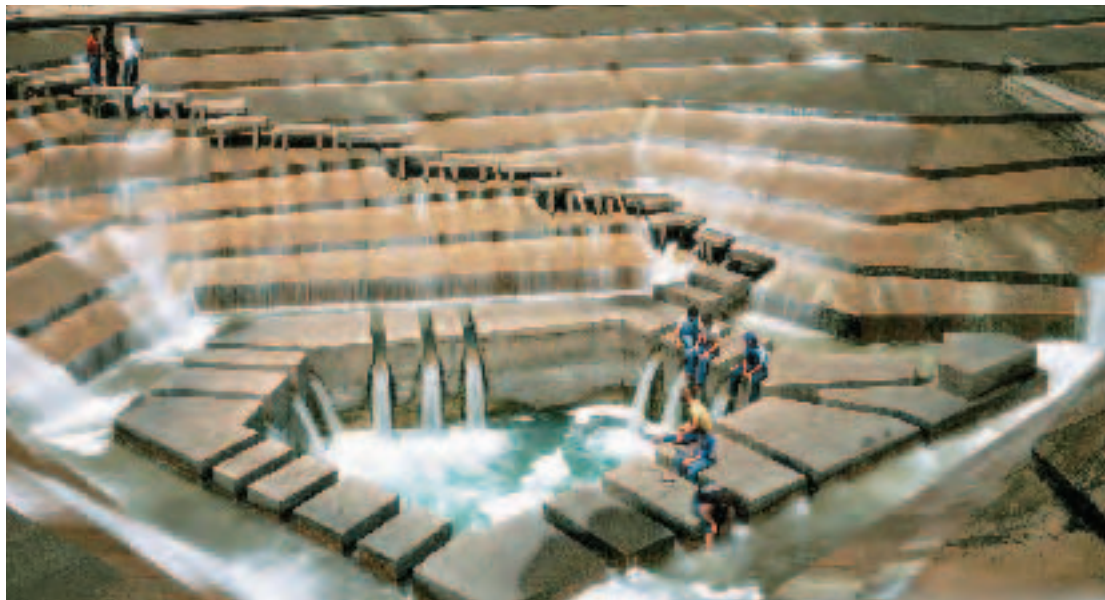
choose fabrics that complement the design and purpose of each outfit. Artists adjust the elements in a work to each other. A “busy” work with a variety of shapes and textures can be unified with a limited color scheme, for example (**Figure 11.16**).

### Simplicity

Another way to create unity is through *simplicity*. Simplicity is not easy

to achieve. An artist must plan carefully to create a good, simple design. This is done by limiting the number of variations of an element. The fewer variations the artist uses, the more unified the design will seem (**Figure 11.17**).

A painting in which the entire surface is covered with a single, even layer of one hue will appear strongly unified. A sculpture of a single unit expresses a simple unity (**Figure 11.18**).



▲ **FIGURE 11.17** Johnson used simplification by limiting the materials for his *Water Garden* to concrete and water. He also limited the forms of the structure to geometric forms.

Philip Johnson. *Water Garden*. 1976. 17,000 cubic yards of concrete, 19,000 gallons of water. Fort Worth, Texas (downtown).

## MEET THE ARTIST

### ALLAN HOUSER



*Native American,*  
1914–1994

Allan Houser created contemporary Apache sculpture. As a child, he listened to his father's stories about the adventures of Chief Geronimo. This gave him a deep attachment to his ancestral background, an attachment that is shown in his artwork. Houser studied at the Indian School in Sante Fe, New Mexico, and then remained in Sante Fe, where he worked as a freelance artist. During World War II, he traveled to California, where he became interested in the media of sculpture. He created works in a variety of styles and mastered bronze, metal, and stone sculpture. Houser's designs are modern, yet firmly rooted in the special tradition of his Native American forefathers. He drew inspiration from both past and present, but like all successful artists, his sculpture transcends race and language. The sculpture *Reverie* (**Figure 11.18**) shows a distinct Native American influence, but it can be appreciated by anyone, regardless of his or her background.

► **FIGURE 11.18** Notice how the artist has used simple lines and few details to create this artwork. The simplicity serves to emphasize the faces of the mother and child, which become focal points. The unity of the design shows the connection between mother and child. What feeling does this piece evoke?

Allan Houser. *Reverie*. 1981. Bronze, edition of 10. 63.5 × 58.4 × 33 cm (25 × 23 × 13"). Collection of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford. The Glen Green Galleries, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Copyright Allan Houser Inc.





## Repetition

The repetition of objects and elements can be an effective way to unify a work of art. Louise Nevelson's assemblages are good examples. She collects objects that are not alike. This presents a problem of unity, which she solves in one or more ways. Often, she places the objects

in a series of boxlike containers (**Figure 11.19**). The boxes help to unify the work. She sometimes paints the entire structure the same color. Sometimes she repeats both container shape and color to unify her assemblages.

Most architects are concerned with unity. Their goal is to design structures



▲ **FIGURE 11.19** The artist has collected different found objects and assembled them together. What has the artist done to unify this work and make the objects look like they belong together? Can you identify any of the found objects?

Louise Nevelson. *Dawn*. 1962. Wood painted gold. 323 × 240 × 19 cm (127 × 94½ × 7½"). The Pace Gallery, New York, New York. © 2003 Estate of Louise Nevelson/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

that blend with the surroundings (**Figure 11.20**). They may use materials that repeat the colors and textures found in the structure's environment. They may also use materials that reflect the surroundings. For instance, mirrored outside walls have been used on skyscrapers. The mirrors reflect the shapes and colors of the clouds and sky, and the buildings seem to blend with their surroundings and the atmosphere.

## Proximity

Proximity, or closeness, is another way of unifying very different shapes in a work (**Figure 11.21**). This is achieved by limiting the negative space between the shapes. Clustering the shapes in this way suggests unity and coherence. The sense of unity can be made even stronger if the cluster of unlike items is surrounded by an area of negative space.



▲ **FIGURE 11.20** Wright was a genius who dared to be different. In 1936 he was asked to design a house close to this waterfall. Instead, he placed the house right over the falls. Concrete terraces hang suspended over the running water. The stones that make up the walls come from the building site, which ties the house more closely to its surroundings.

Frank Lloyd Wright. *Fallingwater House*. Bear Run, Pennsylvania. 1936. Photography by Sandak, Inc., Stamford, Connecticut. © 2003 Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



◀ **FIGURE 11.21** The artist has used proximity by grouping the children close together. What do the children appear to be doing? What kind of meeting are they having?

Marie Bashkirtseff. *A Meeting*. 1884. Oil on canvas. 190.5 × 172.2 cm (75 × 67<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>”). Musée d’Orsay, Paris, France. Art Resource, New York, New York.



**Demonstrating Effective Use of Art Media in Design.** Suppose you have been hired to create a window display for a gift shop that sells many unrelated objects. From magazines, cut out photographs of 15 unrelated objects that represent the merchandise to be displayed. Use as many unifying techniques as you can to create the display. Using pencil and then darkening with a black, felt-tip marker, draw the window and the design for the display. Glue the cutouts where the objects would be placed in the design.

**Computer Option.** Arrange three or four different objects close together on a table. Use the Pencil or small Brush tool to draw the outline of all the objects using a continuous line. Another option is to draw the objects as individual shapes but extend the lines into the background. Select, copy, and repeat a few of the shapes but vary their sizes. Arrange the shapes to emphasize a focal point. Add a simple background. Now, choose and apply a limited color scheme with no more than four or five colors. Title, save, and print your work.

## How Artists Use Variety, Emphasis, and Harmony to Enhance Unity

As you know, artists use variety, emphasis, and harmony to make their works more interesting and appealing. If carried to extremes, however, these principles can destroy the unity of a visual work. This means that artists must be careful to balance contrasting qualities of

variety and emphasis with harmonizing and unifying techniques to create a unified work.

Jane Wilson has successfully balanced the harmonizing and varying devices in *Tempest* (**Figure 11.22**). The entire work is composed of waves of color. Although a contrasting color scheme of cool and warm colors is used, the work is unified by simple wavelike forms. The bright yellow streaks of sunlight are the focal point.

► **FIGURE 11.22** Wilson has created a unified composition, using several techniques. What has she simplified, and what has she repeated?

Jane Wilson. *Tempest*. 1993. Oil on linen. 177.8 × 177.8 cm (70 × 70"). Courtesy DC Moore Gallery, New York.





▲ **FIGURE 11.23** Why do you think Chryssa used the letter A as a form to contain all her active lines, shapes, and forms?

Chryssa. *The Gates to Times Square*. 1966. Welded stainless steel, neon, and Plexiglas. 3.04 × 3.04 × 3.04 m (10 × 10 × 10'). Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albert List, 1972.

Look closely at the work in **Figure 11.23**. The artist, Chryssa, left her home in Greece when she was 20 to study art. She arrived in New York City in the 1950s and was inspired by the materials of modern technology—especially the flashing neon signs in Times Square.

Within the letter A form in Figure 11.23, Chryssa has placed different kinds of shapes transformed from letters of the alphabet. Some are neon outlines. Others are flat metal. Everything is colored with blue light except the two Plexiglas rectangular forms near the top. They contain wiggly curved forms that are a very pale, low-intensity orange.

What do you think the different parts represent? Which art principles has she balanced to give this work unity?



### Check Your Understanding

1. Define *unity*.
2. What is simplicity?
3. How is proximity used to create unity?
4. Compare and contrast the use of unity in Figure 11.14 on page 297 and Figure 11.19 on page 300. What art elements were used to create unity?



# Decorated Found Object



▲ FIGURE 11.24

Julia Russell. *Jaguar Chair*. 2002. Back 106.7 cm (42") tall, seat 48.3 × 48.3 × 43.2 cm (19 × 19 × 17"). Gessoed linen, acrylic paint, polymer glaze. Private Collection.

## SUPPLIES

- Any ordinary, old, or worn object with a paintable surface
- Sketchbook and pencils
- Sandpaper, medium and fine
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Acrylic paints and a variety of paintbrushes
- Kraft paper
- Chalk
- Spray acrylic (gloss or matte) finish (optional)

## Historical and Cultural Context

All art is meant to appeal to the eye, to delight. Some art goes beyond that requirement, serving a practical function as well. An example is the object in **Figure 11.24**. Its practical function is to provide a place to sit. The artist, Julia Russell, transformed an ordinary chair into a one-of-a-kind art object by giving it a new “skin.” Notice the variety of lively colors and shapes. The artist has depicted tropical foliage, a jaguar, a butterfly, and a monkey—images common to Central American cultures. Do you find your eye moving over and around the chair covering? Observe that no matter where your eye begins its journey, it always ends with the soft-eyed monkey grasping a flower. What feelings does this painting-within-a-chair evoke?

## What You Will Learn

You will create a design for a practical application. You will revive an old, worn, functional object by painting it with a variety of images and designs typical of a particular culture, past or present. Research your chosen culture and study its distinctively unique designs in art books, your school’s media center, and the Internet. Make both visual and verbal notes in your sketchbook of the images, designs, and colors that are distinctive of that culture.

## Creating

Sketch your object from different points of view. In a small group, brainstorm cultures that you have learned about in art or other classes. Select a culture that might be appropriate for this project. Your object itself may suggest a culture. Do outside research, as needed, finding pictures and descriptions of typical designs, images, and colors.

**Step 1** Begin, if necessary, by sanding the surface of your object to remove any finish and to make it smooth.

**Step 2** Incorporate images or individual art elements—such as lines, forms, and shapes—into the sketchbook drawings of your object. Vary the placement of objects by size or shape to add visual interest and variety.

**Step 3** Choose a color scheme typical of your culture. Using colored pencils or crayons, add color to your final sketchbook designs.

**Step 4** On large pieces of kraft paper, practice painting your designs and patterns with acrylic paint. Experiment with different brushes. Decide on a base (background) color. Choose a color that will unify the images or designs to be painted over it. Using a broad brush, apply the base color to all visible surface areas. Allow the paint to dry.

**Step 5** Using soft pencil or chalk, draw the contours (outlines) of the images from your sketch on the dried base coat. Working with one color at a time, paint your images and designs.

**Step 6** When your object is completely dry, apply a protective spray acrylic finish if your teacher provides it. This will protect the new “skin” you have added to your found object. *Safety Note:* Spray outside or in a well-ventilated area.

## Evaluating Your Work

- ▶ **DESCRIBE** What found object did you use for your project? What is its primary function? What cultural style did you select for your design? Describe the different images you used in your overall design.
- ▶ **ANALYZE** Compare and contrast the use of line, form, and color in your art object. Were your colors consistent with those of the culture you had selected? Did you use variety to make your work interesting? Explain.
- ▶ **INTERPRET** Describe the theme of your project. Does your design complement the object, or is it a surprising design that one wouldn't expect to see on the object? Give your work a title that sums up its meaning.
- ▶ **JUDGE** Did your painted design transform or enhance the expressive quality of the original object? Justify your artistic decisions. If you were starting over, what would you do differently?



▲ FIGURE 11.24A

Student work.



# Multimedia High-Relief Collage



▲ **FIGURE 11.25**

Missionary Mary L. Proctor. *Like a Butterfly*. 1999. Acrylic, leather, hot glue, painted on wood. 22.9 × 30.5 cm (9 × 12"). Collection of Ted and Ann Oliver.

## SUPPLIES

- Sketchbook and pencil
- Unusual found objects: beads; old and/or broken jewelry; holiday decorations; buttons; fibers; ribbons; fabrics; screws; washers; computer parts; mosaiclike pieces of broken china, glass, or pottery
- Mat board, canvas panels, or a scrap of plywood
- Acrylic or house paint
- Scissors
- Glue
- Permanent markers or paint pens

## Historical and Cultural Context

An old riddle asks “When is a door not a door?” For contemporary artist Mary Proctor, the riddle might be rephrased “When is a door *more* than a door?” To her, a door is a symbol. It represents a passage from one moment of life to the next and to the opportunities and challenges that may lie on the other side. Her obsession with painting doors began when her grandmother, who raised her, died in a fire, trapped by a door that would not open.

The work in **Figure 11.25** is a mixed-media collage by Mary Proctor. Like the many doors she has painted, this collage carries a message of hope. What do you think lies beyond the “door” in this work of art?

## What You Will Learn

You will design and create a *high-relief* collage—one that stands out vividly in three-dimensional space. Your collage will express your visual interpretation of an inspirational line from a favorite poem, song, or saying. As in Figure 11.25, the words must be incorporated into the design. You will unify the different materials and letters, using the principles of variety, emphasis, and harmony.

## Creating

In small groups, brainstorm ideas from poetry you have studied, lines from songs you like, and famous sayings. Choose one line or phrase that is most meaningful to you. Write it in your sketchbook. Make rough sketches of images that you feel illustrate these words. In each sketch, work at incorporating the words themselves into the design. Select your best idea.

**Step 1** Collect unusual materials that you think you can use in your collage. A piece of mat board, canvas panel, or a scrap of plywood is to serve as the base.

**Step 2** Using acrylic or house paint, add a layer of background color to your base. Allow the paint to dry before continuing.

**Step 3** Switching to pencil, transfer the large shapes from your sketches to your backdrop in their relative positions. Plan to use found objects to fill each shape. Think about variety, emphasis, and harmony as you select colors and textures. Think also about what sense the materials themselves convey. What feelings do you associate, for example, with discarded jewelry? With holiday decorations such as tinsel? With broken glass or ceramic?

**Step 4** Fill in the collage shapes by gluing in your found materials. Once the glue is dry, print your inspirational line of text.

## Evaluating Your Work

- ▶ **DESCRIBE** What line of text served as the inspiration for your collage? What objects did you choose? Why did you choose these? How was the use of words incorporated into the overall design?
- ▶ **ANALYZE** Compare and contrast your selection of colors and textures to create variety and emphasis in your work. Is your design harmonious? If so, how? Do the found objects in your collage stand out in high relief?
- ▶ **INTERPRET** Does your collage reflect the meaning of the words you have chosen? Give your work a short title, other than the words included within the image, that expresses your feelings about the work.
- ▶ **JUDGE** Were you successful in unifying the words and objects in your image? Which aesthetic theory would be best to judge your work?



▲ **FIGURE 11.25A**

Student work.



# Animation Movie Poster



▲ FIGURE 11.26

David Feiss. *Thrown for a Curve*. 1998. Cartoon Network.

## SUPPLIES

- Sketchbook and pencil
- Fine-tip black marker
- Computer
- Scanner
- Any computer paint program
- Color printer
- Mat board

## Historical and Cultural Context

David Feiss (b. 1959) is an award-winning American animator. He started his professional career as an animator with Hanna-Barbera Studios in 1978. Since then, he has worked with various studios as an animator, storyboard artist, director, and producer on television series, feature films, and commercials.

Look closely at **Figure 11.26**, titled *Thrown for a Curve*. This is a cel, a single sheet of celluloid that is drawn on and colored to make animated cartoons. The repetition of curves dominates the composition and creates harmony, which unifies the layout of the cel. Notice the repetition of curves that radiate from the pitcher's knee: the edges of the stadium, the signs atop the stadium, the swirl above the pitcher's head, and the curve of the batter's body and bat. The clouds and the placement of each ballplayer also mirror the curved path of the ball as it moves toward the catcher's glove.

## What You Will Learn

Using a computer paint program (Digital Media Handbook, page 449), you will create a poster for an animation movie. Create visual unity in your poster by arranging and drawing the movie's characters, using any or all of the unifying devices of harmony, simplicity, repetition, or proximity.

## Creating

Plan and write the outline for the movie. In your outline, introduce, name, and describe each character. Describe the main conflict, the climax, and the resolution of your story. This outline will help you plan your movie poster.

**Step 1** Using your sketchbook and a pencil, draw rough sketches of the characters, including their names and notes describing their characteristics.

**Step 2** Create rough sketches of different layouts for your poster, using as many of the unifying devices (harmony, simplicity, repetition, and proximity) as possible.

**Step 3** Select your best layout drawing. Ink the lines in this drawing. Then scan the inked drawing into a computer.

**Step 4** Open your scanned image in a paint program. Insert the scanned image into your working file, but save the original in a different file so that you can go back to it later, if necessary.

**Step 5** Add a layer to your file. Use a line tool to trace the original drawing onto this new layer. Make sure all areas to be painted are enclosed by solid lines.

**Step 6** Using various paint tools—such as paintbrush, paint bucket, or airbrush—you can begin coloring your poster. Make sure that the color stays within the lines of character. Most paint programs have a gradient option for coloring. By applying gradient values to your colors, your characters will look more three-dimensional in form.

**Step 7** Add the movie's title to your poster. When finished, save, print, and mat your poster for display.

## Evaluating Your Work

- ▶ **DESCRIBE** Explain the concept or story of your movie. Describe the characters in your layout. What type of paint program and which tools did you use?
- ▶ **ANALYZE** How many unifying devices (harmony, simplicity, repetition, and proximity) did you use in your poster? Compare and contrast how you used the various elements of your poster to create a sense of visual unity.
- ▶ **INTERPRET** Does your poster express the mood of the movie? Does it tell what type of movie it is? Do the images and title express the same message about the characters and story?
- ▶ **JUDGE** Were you successful in creating a sense of visual unity? Does your poster represent the concept or story of the movie? Which of the three aesthetic theories would you use to judge this work?



▶ **FIGURE 11.26A**  
Student work.



# Variety, Emphasis, Harmony, and Unity

Variety is not only the spice of life but of art. Along with emphasis, harmony, and unity, this principle gives works visual interest. As you examine the student artworks on these pages:

- Analyze them to form precise conclusions about their use of variety, emphasis, and unity.
- Compare and contrast them in terms of their use of color, form, or line to achieve unity.



### Activity 11.27 Variety.

Analyze this item of found-object jewelry in terms of variety. Describe which art elements the student artist has varied to add visual interest.

#### ▲ FIGURE 11.27

Student work. *Untitled*. Copper and brass coiled wire on paint can opener with aluminum can ring snap and other components. 12.1 × 8.9 cm (4¾ × 3½").

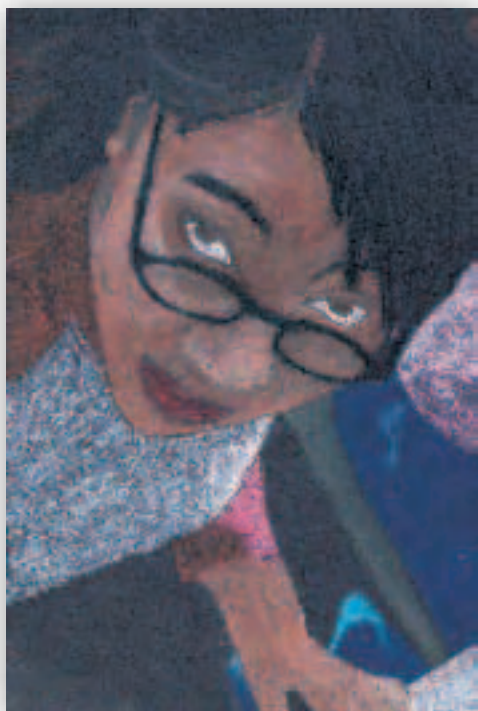
### Activity 11.28 Harmony and unity.

Compare the use of art elements. Which element contributes to a sense of harmony and unity? Analyze the details in this peer artwork to form a conclusion about its historical or cultural context.



#### ► FIGURE 11.28

Student work. *Even the Kitchen Sink*. Oil pastel and graphite. 30.5 × 45.7 cm (12 × 18").



### Activity 11.29 Emphasis.

Analyze this student artwork, to form a conclusion about how the artist has used the formal qualities to emphasize the subject. What art elements contribute to the emphasis on the subject?

#### ◀ FIGURE 11.29

Student work. *Leah*. Oil pastel. 30.5 × 45.7 cm (12 × 18”).

### Activity 11.30 Harmony and variety.

Compare the way harmony and variety have been used to balance each other in this student artwork.

#### ▶ FIGURE 11.30

Student work. *Untitled*. Watercolor, pen and ink. 25.4 × 35.6 cm (10 × 14”).



To view more student artworks, visit the Glencoe Student Art Gallery at [art.glencoe.com](http://art.glencoe.com).



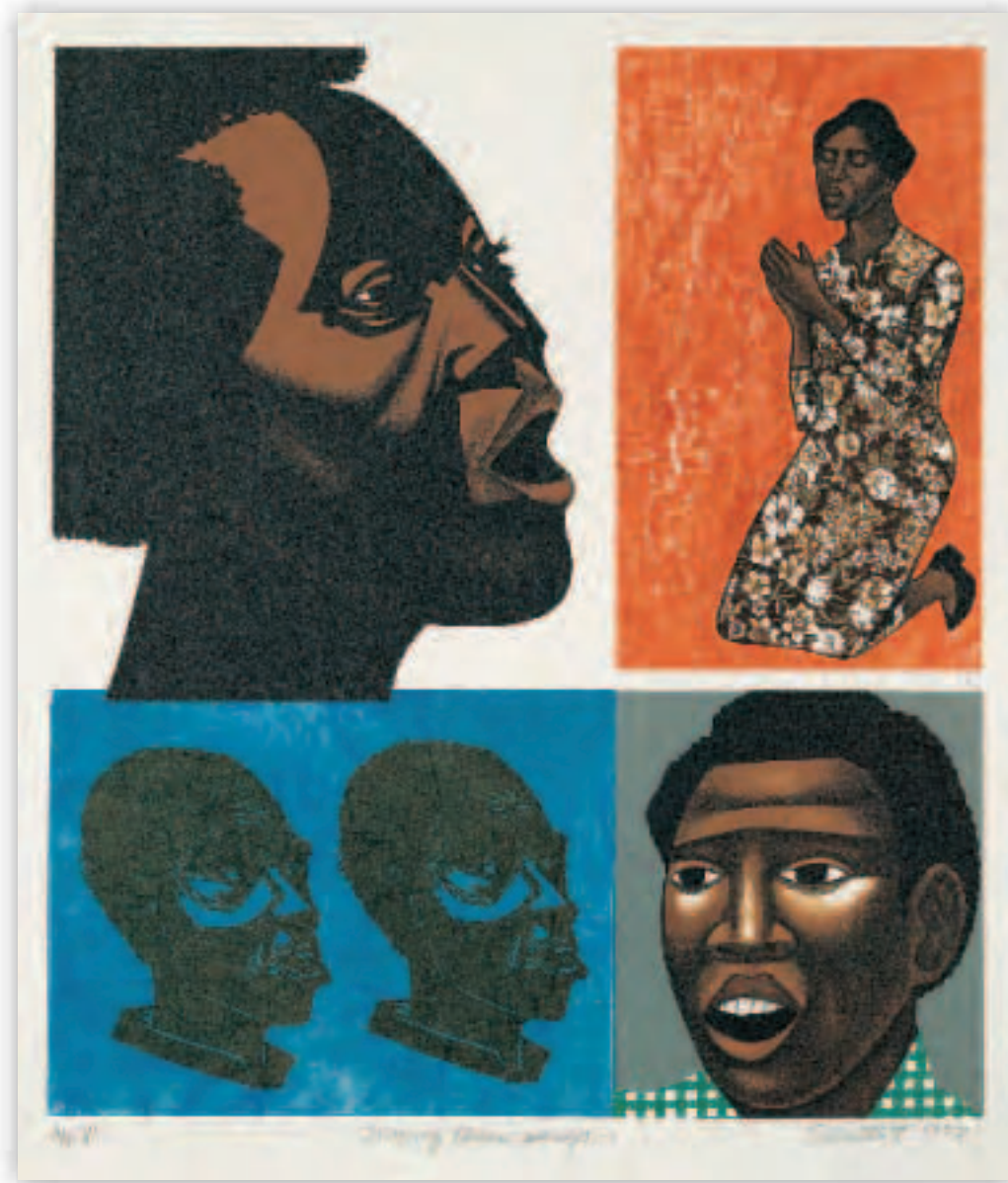
Sketch or photograph two different rooms in your home or school. Number the sketches or photos 1 and 2. Next, divide a page of your art journal into three columns. Label one column *Variety*, one *Emphasis*, and one *Harmony*. Write an analysis of each picture in terms of the three art principles. Note which art elements contribute in each case.

## For Your Portfolio

**Evaluate Personal Artworks.** The principles you have studied in this chapter can be found in any successful artwork. Review artworks that you have added to your portfolio previously in terms of these principles. Evaluate the artistic decisions you made to achieve unity. Unity is the goal of most artists. Be sure that your notes are attached to the works.



# Art Criticism *in Action*



▲ **FIGURE 11.31**

Elizabeth Catlett. *Singing Their Songs*, from *For My People*. 1992. Color lithograph on paper. 40 × 35 cm (15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>”). National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. © Elizabeth Catlett/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.

# Critiquing the Artwork

▶ **1 DESCRIBE** *What do you see?*

**This is a clue collecting step. If you are not sure of something, do not guess.**

- Describe what you see in this fine art print.

▶ **2 ANALYZE** *How is this work organized?*

**This step deals with the formal qualities. You will gather information about how the principles of art are used to organize the elements of art.**

- How has the artist used variety in organizing this print?
- Is one part of the work emphasized over the others?
- What has the artist done to harmonize the separate but related parts?
- What unifies this work?

▶ **3 INTERPRET** *What message does this artwork communicate to you?*

**Combine the clues you have collected to form a creative interpretation of the work.**

- What kind of sound do you think you would hear from each person? Explain your reaction.
- What emotion is expressed on each face?
- Write a sentence or two that you think each person is expressing.

▶ **4 JUDGE** *What do you think of the work?*

**Now, you are ready to make an aesthetic judgment of the work.**

- Do you think the artist has organized the elements and principles of art to achieve a unified composition? Explain.
- Is this a successful work of art? Why or why not? Use one or more of the aesthetic theories to defend your decision.

Meet the **ARTIST**

**Elizabeth Catlett**  
*b. 1915*



Elizabeth Catlett was born in Washington, D.C. She studied painting and design at Howard University. She became the first person to receive an MFA degree from the University of Iowa in 1940. Grant Wood was her painting teacher. Wood encouraged his students to focus on subjects they knew best and to experiment with different media. Catlett spent the rest of her career following his advice. Her subjects have been almost exclusively African American women. She has made lithograph and linoleum prints as well as sculptures from wood, stone, clay, and bronze. She won a grant to study printmaking in Mexico in 1946. Since then, she has divided her time between her studios in New York City and Cuernavaca, Mexico.



### ARTISTIC ROOTS

**A Southwestern artist celebrates his heritage.**

**L**uis Jimenez is a Texas-born sculptor and artist whose colorful work in a variety of media celebrates Chicano life and history. Raised in El Paso, Jimenez worked in his father’s sign shop. It was there that he first came in contact with fiberglass—a lightweight material that Jimenez later used for some of his large-scale figurative sculptures.

As a young boy, Jimenez read art books and visited art museums. He also traveled to Mexico, where he was inspired by the Mexican people and the huge murals about Mexican history.

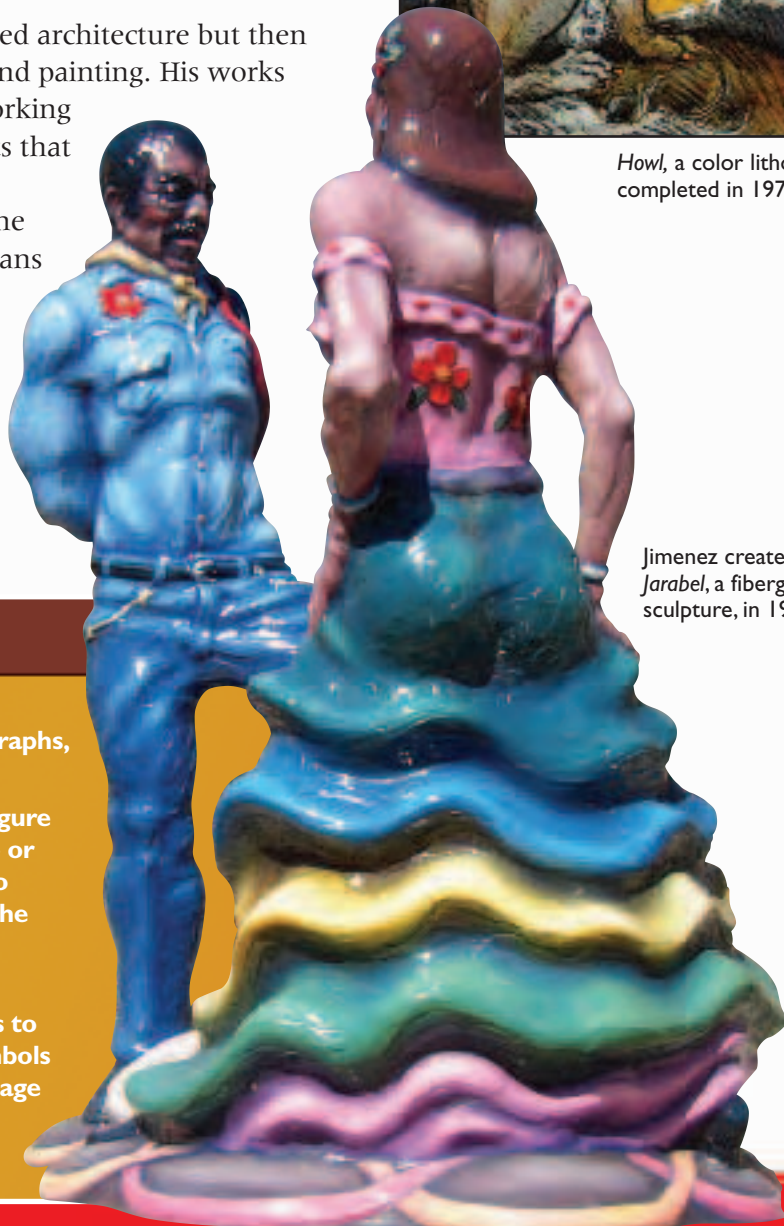
As an adult, Jimenez first studied architecture but then switched to sculpture, drawing, and painting. His works emphasize the Southwest and working class Mexican-Americans, subjects that are close to his geographic and cultural roots. His art celebrates the contributions of Mexican-Americans to American history. Mexican cowboys, Native Americans, farmers, and even rodeo queens are some of his favorite subjects.

Jimenez continues to live in the Southwest, where the region and its people inspire him.



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*Howl*, a color lithograph completed in 1977.



Jimenez created *Fiesta Jarabe*, a fiberglass sculpture, in 1986.

TERRY GUGLIOTTA

### TIME to Connect

How have famous Americans been depicted in painting, sculpture, photographs, and other media?

- Choose and research an important figure from American history. What was he or she famous for? What contribution to United States history or society did the person make?
- What symbols would you include to emphasize the person’s contributions to history? Why did you choose the symbols you did? Incorporate them into a collage to create a unified design.
- Share your work with the class.



### Building Vocabulary

On a separate sheet of paper, write the term that best matches each definition given below.

1. The principle of art concerned with difference or contrast.
2. The principle of art that makes one part of a work dominant over the other parts.
3. The first part of a work to attract the attention of the viewer.
4. The principle of art that creates unity by stressing the similarities of separate but related parts.
5. The quality of wholeness or oneness that is achieved through the effective use of the elements and principles of art.

### Reviewing Art Facts

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

6. Why do artists use variety in artworks?
7. Name the two major types of visual emphasis.
8. What is the most important part of an artwork called?
9. Name and describe the five ways in which artists create a focal point.
10. Name and describe three techniques that artists use to create unity in a work of art.
11. What can happen if variety, emphasis, or harmony is carried to an extreme in an artwork?

### Thinking Critically About Art

12. **Compare and contrast.** Notice the variety used in Figure 11.2, page 288. Compare this with the variety used in Figure 11.3, page 289. Explain how each artist used variety and point out the similarities and differences between the two works.
13. **Analyze.** Look through the other chapters of this book to find three examples of works in which the artist has emphasized one element, making all the others subordinate to it. List the works and explain which element has been emphasized.
14. **Historical/Cultural Heritage.** Read the Meet the Artist feature on Allan Houser on page 299. Analyze Houser's sculpture in Figure 11.18 to identify the general theme. Then compare and contrast Figure 11.18 with another contemporary artwork in Figure 4.20 on page 81. Do they share a similar theme? Explain.



Now that you have mastered the principles of variety, emphasis, harmony, and unity,

challenge yourself with an interactive composition game. Simply follow the **Web Museum Tour** link at [art.glencoe.com](http://art.glencoe.com) to visit the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in Canada.

### Linking to the Performing Arts

Read how the “Vocalworks Radio Hour” presents variety and harmony in the re-creation

of a live radio broadcast from the 1930s era. Showcasing swing music, comedy, and drama programs, Vocalworks swings us back to the past in the Performing Arts Handbook on page 423.

