

Describing Visual Phenomena

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Composition can be:

linear	painterly
closed	open
multiplistic (multiple unity)	unified (unified unity)
planimetric (close to picture plane)	recessional (distant)
clear	unclear*
symmetrical	asymmetrical
centrally	focused off-center
organized	chaotic
static	kinetic or dynamic
balanced	askew
restful	agitated
flowing	choppy
simple	complex
minimal	detailed
shallow	deep or receding

Structure/Form can be:

weighty	light
heavy or bulky	slight or delicate
solid	ethereal
massive	modest or slender
volumetric	wispy
mechanical or geometric	organic
energetic	passive
reachable	remote
angular	curvilinear
spacially extended	self-contained or compact
open	closed
rigid	plastic or pliable
brittle	elastic or supple
rounded or bulbous	flat or angular

Surface/Texture can be:

smooth	rough
soft	hard or brittle
tactile	repulsive
sharp or crisp	hazy or subdued
linear	painterly
uniform or consistent	undulating or inconsistent
repetitive	varied
sensuous	harsh
flowing	faceted or broken

Color/Value can be:

bright or vibrant
warm
harmonious
strong or bold
light
harsh
natural
blended

subdued or diffused
cool
dissonant or contrasting
subtle or pale
dark
diffused
unnatural
isolated or compartmentalized

Space/ Architecture can be:

symmetrical
light
uplifting
vertical
contained or compact
harmonized with surroundings
externally oriented
axially aligned
airy

asymmetrical
dense
earthbound
horizontal
expansive or sprawling
placed in contrast
internally oriented
clustered or non-directional
suffocating or oppressive

Examples:

"...The (flowing/choppy) character of the composition is quite (symmetrical/asymmetrical), enhanced by the (orderly/chaotic) placement of the individual elements."

"The elements overlap tumultuously in a fury of shape and texture."

"The crisp edges sharply distinguish one shape from another in an orderly fashion."