

Understanding what you see

Visual Literacy





**“A picture is worth a
thousand words”**

The average person **spends 17
seconds** looking at a work of art

Steps for understanding an image

Look

Observe

See

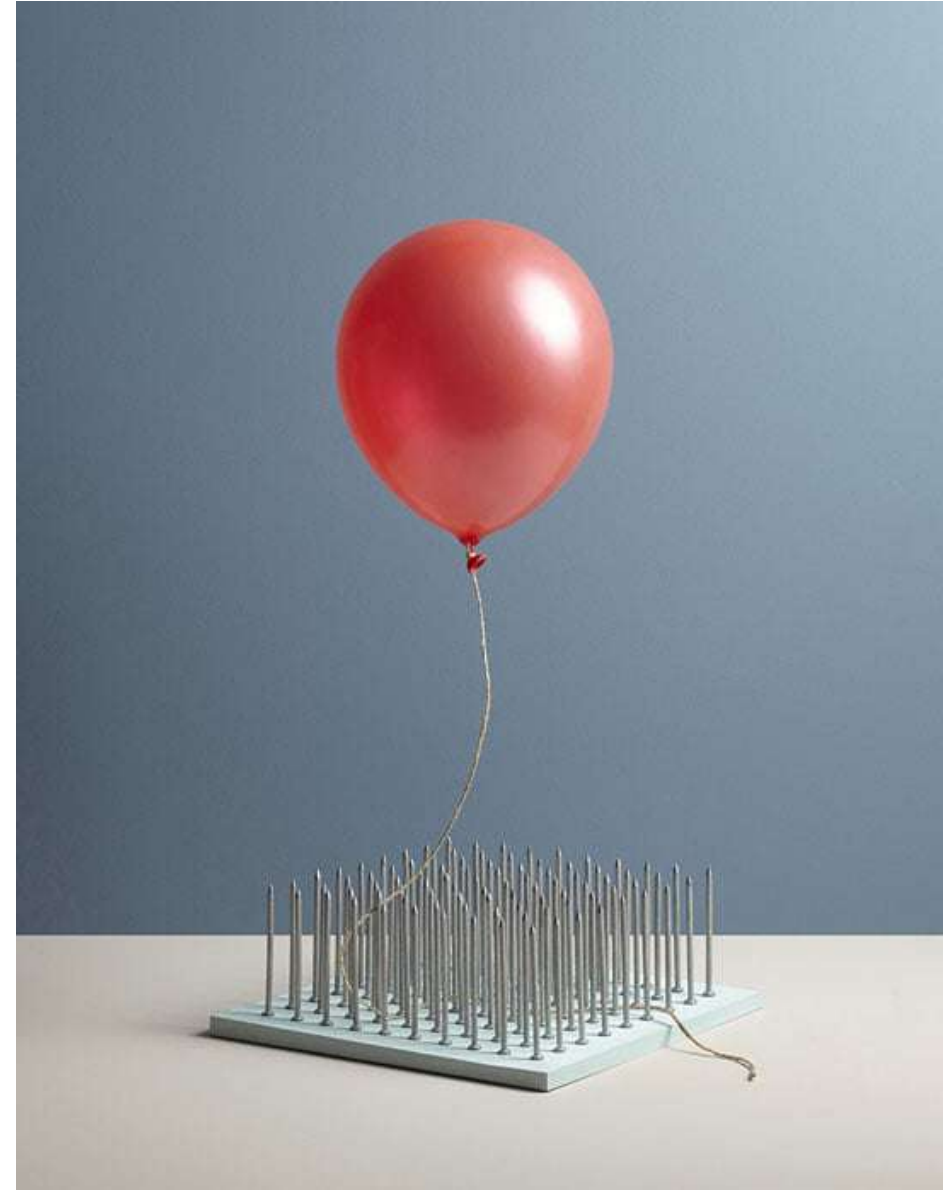
Describe

Analyze

Interpret

1. Look

Take the time to just
LOOK at the image.



2.Observe

Closer inspection of an image's visual elements

Think about: colors, lines, shadows/values, textures, etc.

Composition



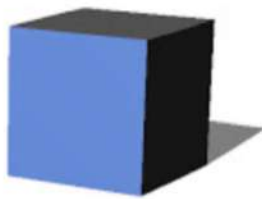
Line



Shape



Form



Texture



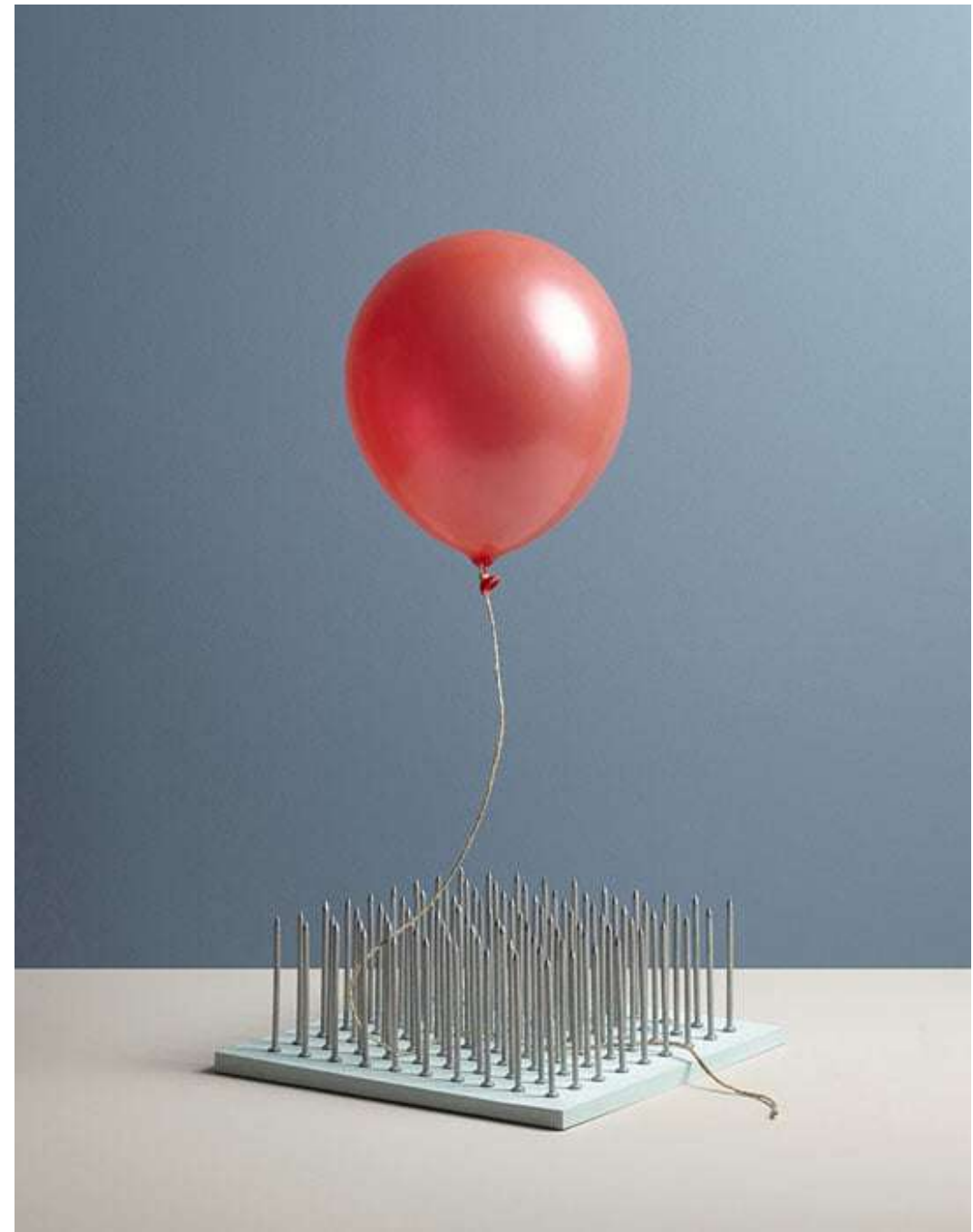
Color



Value



Space

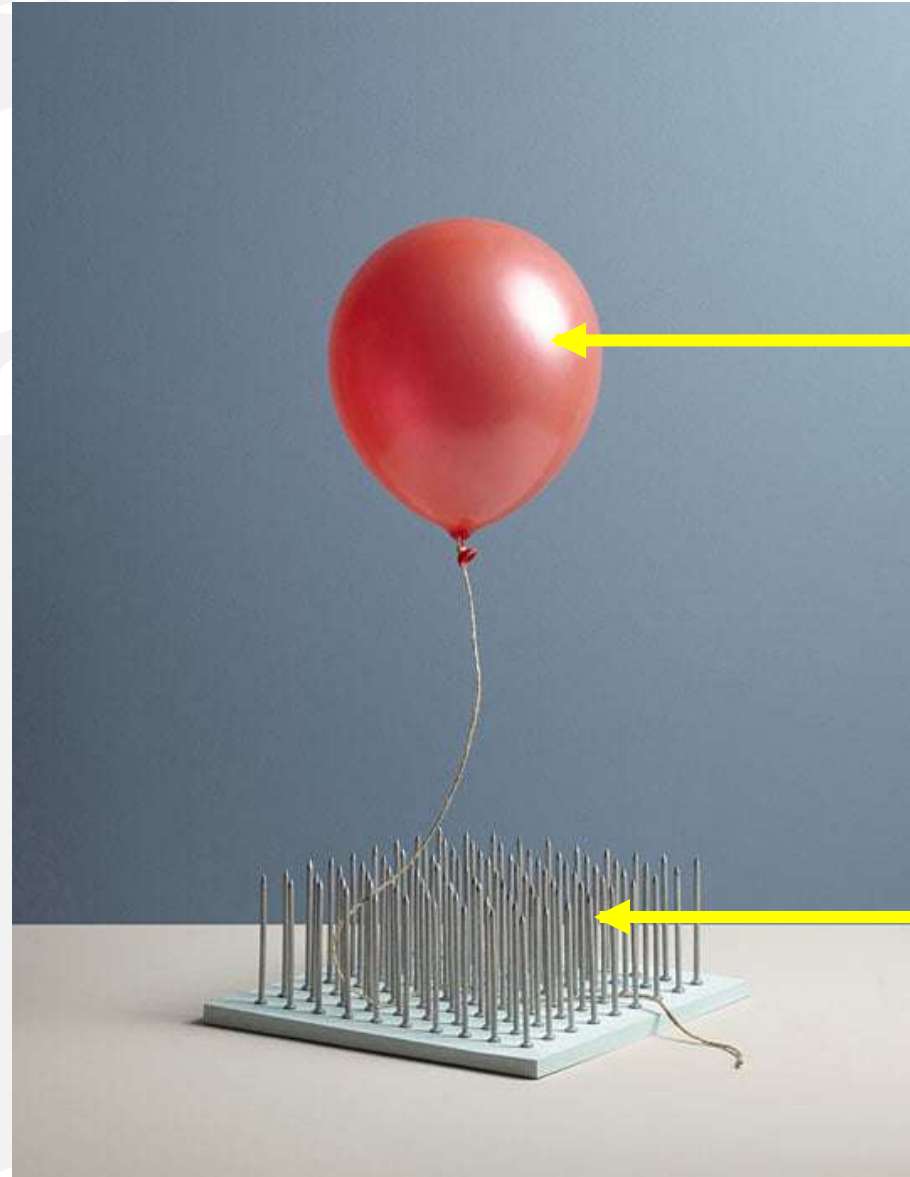


3. See

Recognize or connect the information in the image with your own knowledge and experiences to create meaning.

This requires time and attention.

**Don't over think it!
Just recognize the obvious.**



- What are balloons for?
- Why is the balloon on a string?
- What do you think of when you see red?
- Where is the balloon located?

- What do we use nails for?
- What direction are the nails facing?
- What happens if a nail meets a balloon?
- Why are there so many nails?

4. Describe

Time to organize your thoughts about what you are seeing!

You can begin the process by identifying and describing the Elements of Art within a composition.



COLOR



LINE



SHAPE



SPACE



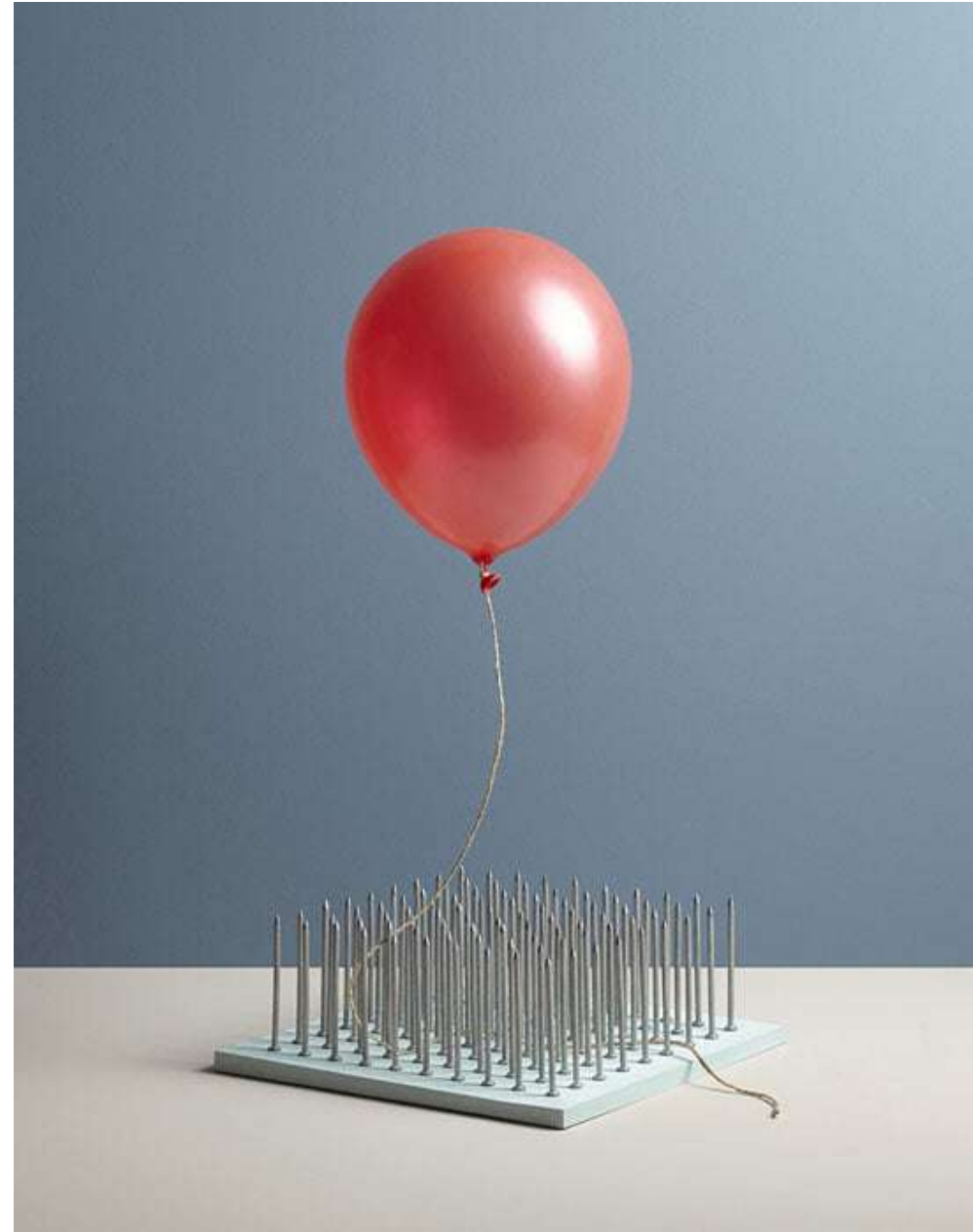
TEXTURE



FORM



VALUE



Principles of Design



BALANCE



EMPHASIS



HARMONY



MOVEMENT



PROPORTION



RHYTHM



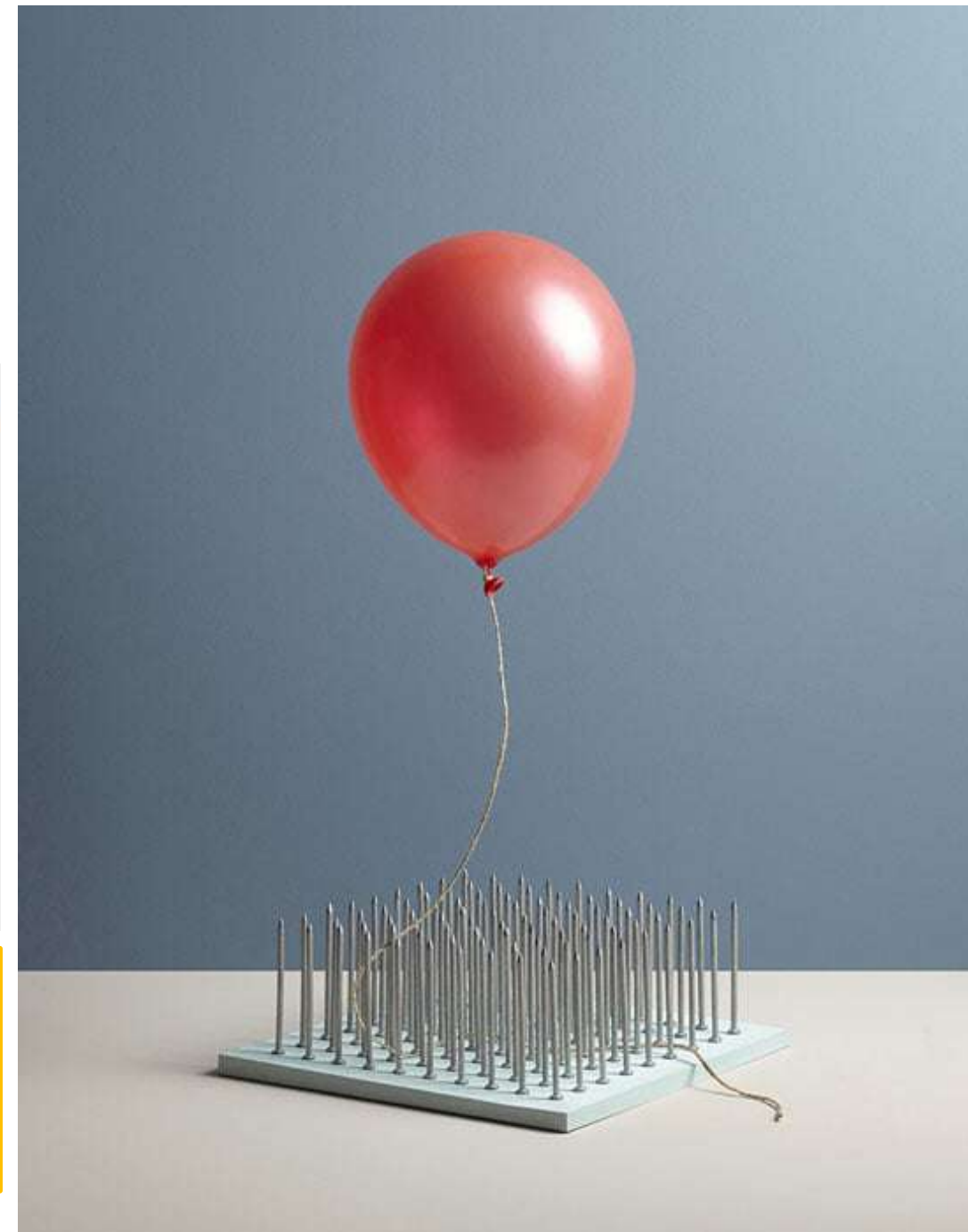
UNITY



VARIETY

Emphasis: where are your eyes drawn? How did the image get your eyes to look at that spot?

Balance: Do the visual elements create equal or unequal balance? Symmetrical or Asymmetrical?



5. Analyze

Consider how the figures, objects and settings fit together to tell a story.

What is the story?

What do YOU think the artist meant by using certain colors?

WHY do you think the artist made the choices they made?

What did the artist do to tell you this story?

The **WHAT's**, **WHY's**, and **HOW's**



FORM



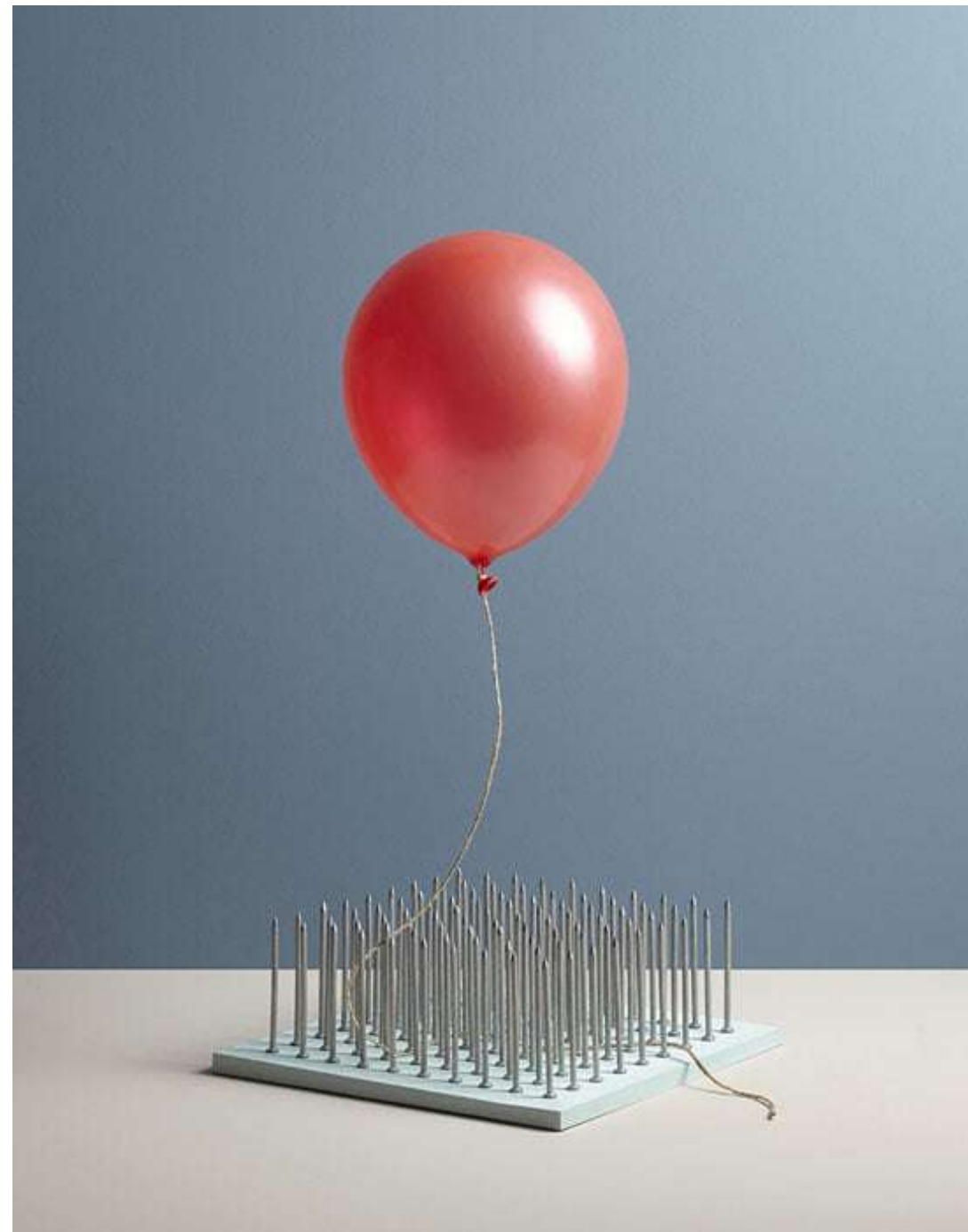
SYMBOLS



IDEAS



MEANING



6. Interpret

The final part!

Interpret the art to draw conclusions about the image.

- Explain *YOUR* personal interpretation of what *YOU* think the image is about.
- Explain *how* you came to that conclusion.
- Explain *how the image personally made you feel*.

There are NO WRONG ANSWERS.

This is YOUR personal interpretation on how the image made YOU feel.

