

# The Gestalt Principles

ELEMENTS OF VISUAL DESIGN

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***Gestalt*** is a psychology term which means "**unified whole**".

It refers to theories of **visual perception** developed by German psychologists in the 1920s.

These theories attempt to describe how people tend to organize visual elements into **groups** or *unified wholes* when certain principles are applied.

These principles are:

# Similarity

*Similarity* occurs when **objects look similar** to one another. People often perceive them as a group or pattern.

The example (containing 10 distinct objects) appears as as **single unit** because all of the shapes have **similarity**.

Unity occurs because the triangular shapes at the bottom of the eagle symbol **look similar** to the shapes that form the sunburst.



When similarity occurs, an object can be emphasised if it is *dissimilar* to the others. This is called **anomaly**.

The figure on the far right becomes a focal point because it is **dissimilar** to the other shapes.



# Continuation



Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to **move through** one object and **continue** to another object.

Continuation occurs in the example above, because the viewer's eye will naturally follow a line or curve. The smooth flowing crossbar of the "H" leads the eye directly to the maple leaf.

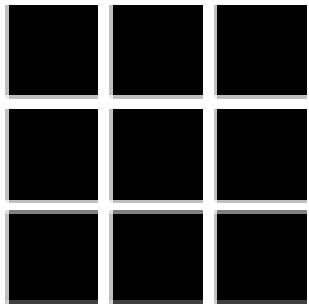
# Closure



*Closure* occurs when an object is *incomplete* or a space is not *completely enclosed*. If enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information.

Although the panda is not complete, enough is present for the eye to complete the shape. When the *viewer's perception completes a shape*, **closure** occurs.

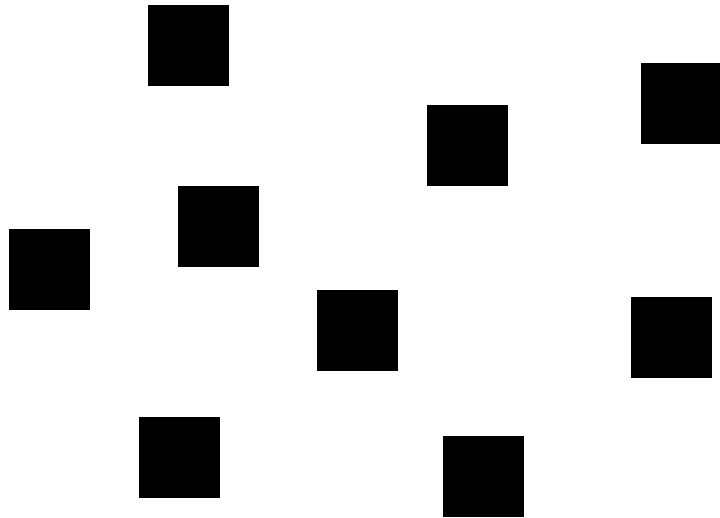
# Proximity



*Proximity* occurs when elements are placed close together. They tend to be perceived as a group.

When the squares are given close proximity, unity occurs. They are now perceived as **one group**.

## Not in Proximity



The nine squares are placed without proximity. They are perceived as **separate shapes**.

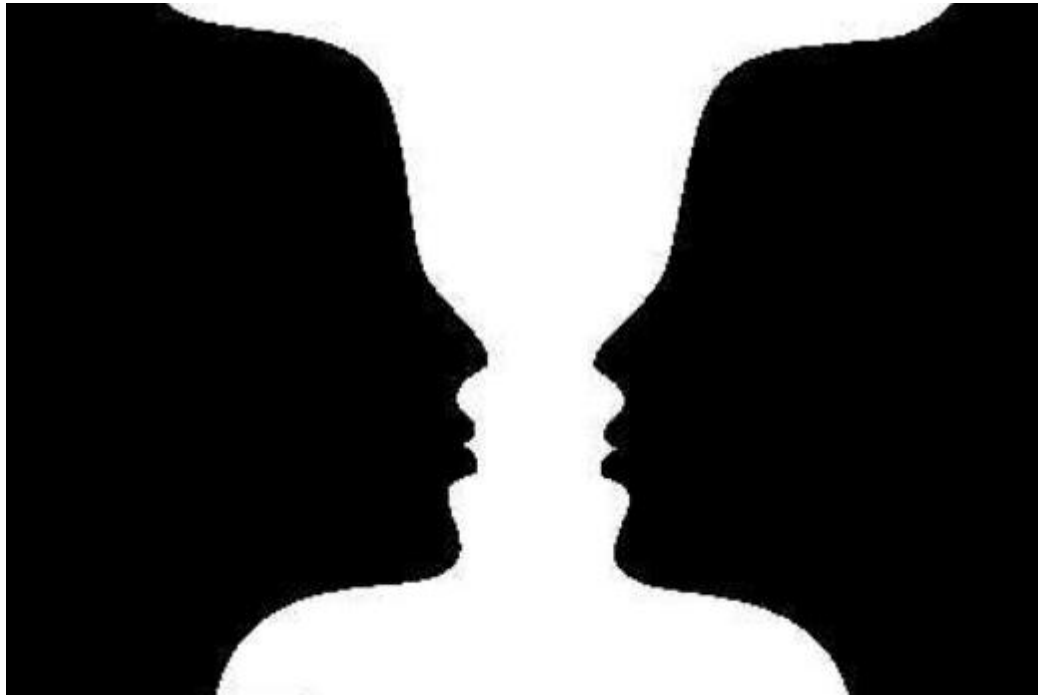


# Proximity

The fifteen figures form a *unified whole* (the shape of a tree) because of their **proximity**.

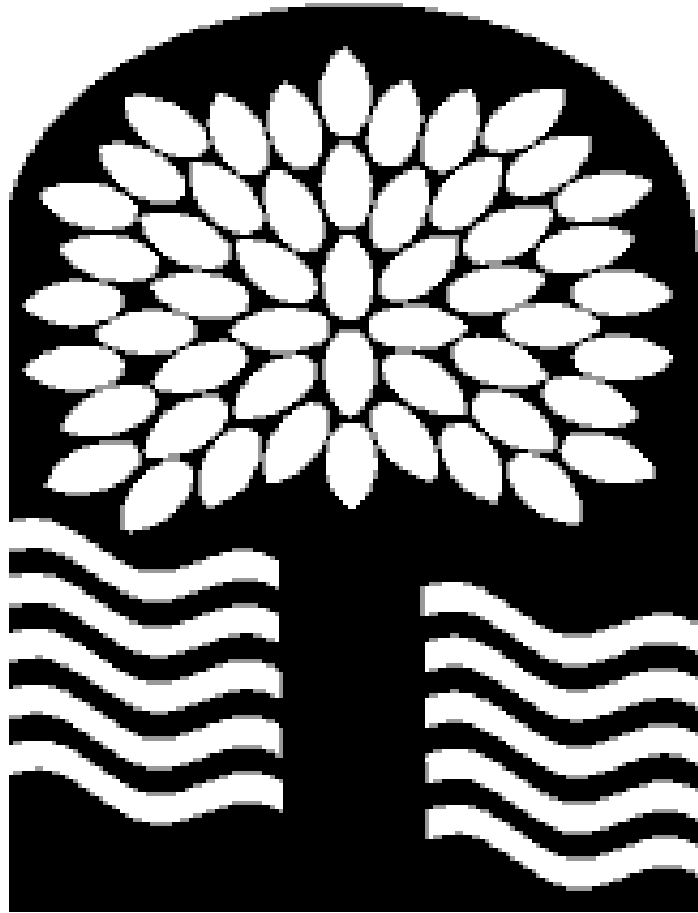


# Figure and Ground



The word above is **clearly perceived** as figure with the surrounding white space ground.

In this image, the figure and ground relationships **change** as the eye perceives the form of a chalice/vase or the silhouette of a face.



The design uses complex figure/ground relationships which change upon perceiving leaves, water and tree trunk.

Guess the laws applied?

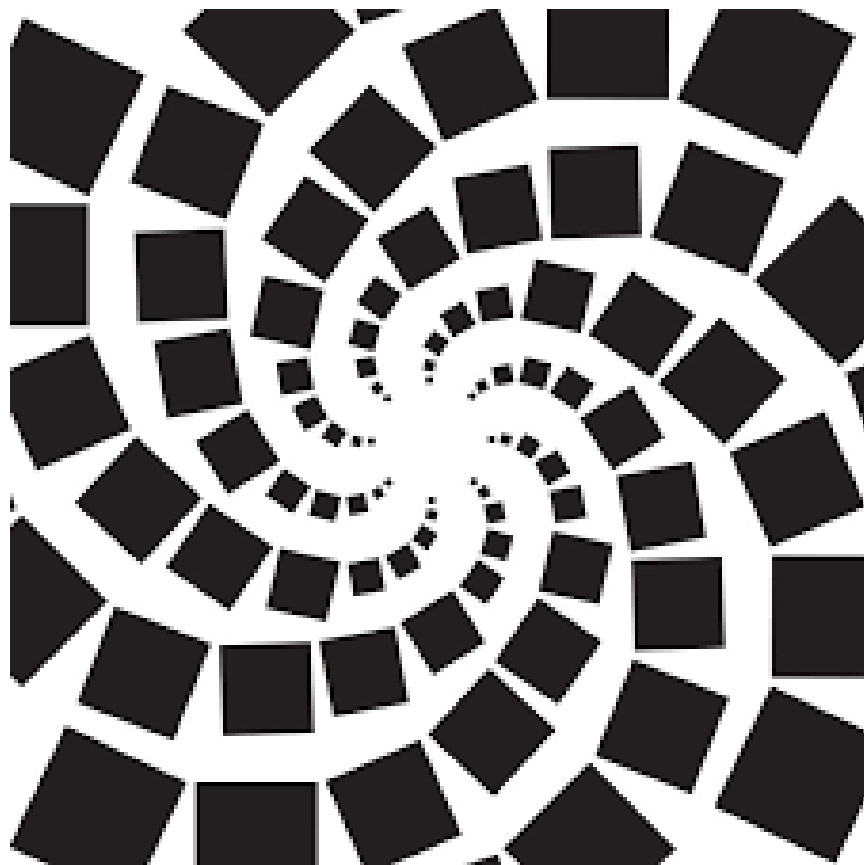
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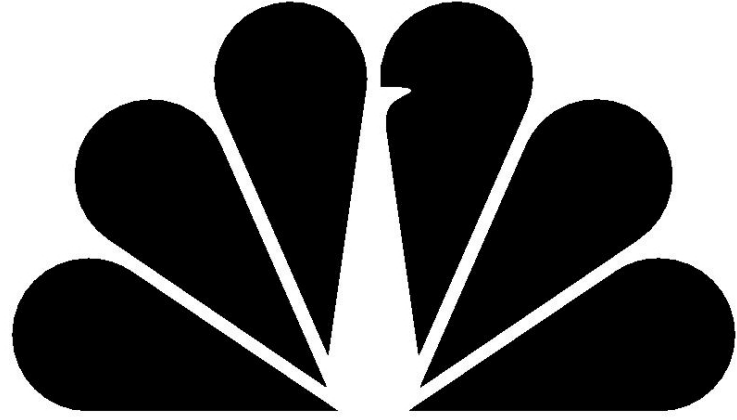








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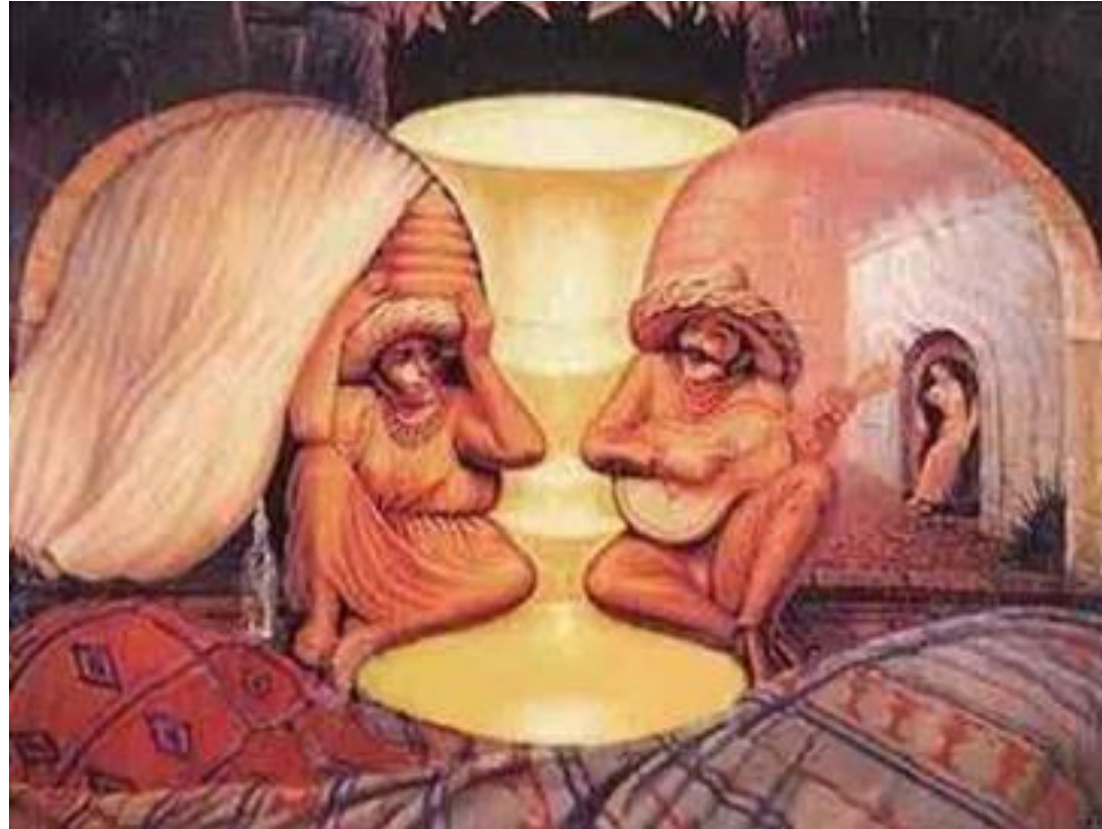
G O L F C L U B





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Thank you