

Project 1

lost & found

Graphic Design Principles 1

Spring 2019 | COMD1100 - D100 | Room N1122

Professor: María **Paula** Rennis

Problem: Create black & white figure-ground (obvious and ambiguous) compositions based on the simplified forms created from photographs of discarded objects found on an urban sidewalk.

Limits: Simple, flat, black shapes, no lines or text.

Materials: Sketchbook, camera/phone, pencils, inking pens, Bristol Boards for ink 9x12in, ruler/ t-square, tracing paper, eraser, scissors, removable or masking tape.

Concepts: Shape (Organic, Geometric), Frame, Figure-Ground (Obvious, Ambiguous), Unity, Economy, Simplicity

Technical Skills: Thumbnail sketching, digital imaging, drafting with ruler/t-square, inking pens.

Design Process:

1. Step 1: Discover
2. Step 2: Define
3. Step 3: Develop
4. Step 4: Deliver

Step 1: Discover

- Take a walk.
- Along the way you will be looking for small objects — left over items, objects or fragments of objects that have been discarded, lost, deteriorated or destroyed.
- **Take 6 photographs:**

- **3 Photographs should demonstrate an obvious figure/ground relationship**

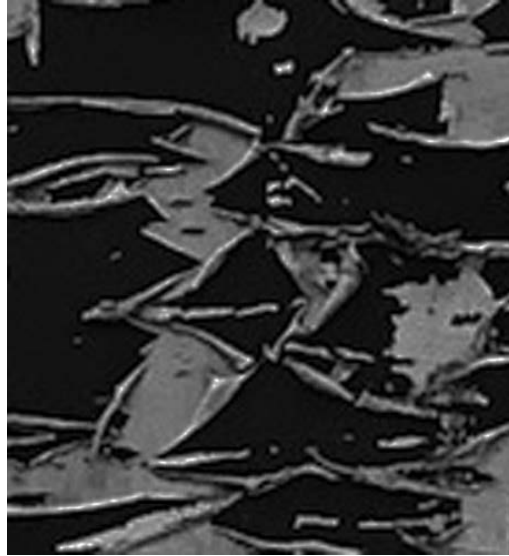


Obvious figure/ground example

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- **3 Photographs** should demonstrate an ambiguous figure/ground relationship



Ambiguous figure/ground example

Writing

- Look at the images of the objects you discovered on your walk.
- Think about the history of each object; the shape, the texture, how it ended up where it did.
- In your sketchbook write the heading: “Project 1 - Lost & Found” and compose a minimum of 1 paragraph description of the images. Describe the shapes. Are they geometric or organic? Note the figure/ground relationships. Which are obvious or ambiguous and why? Create a 1-2 paragraph story about these artifacts, imagining how they happened to turn up in the location that you found them.

Post to the Class Blog:

- Under Categories (on right hand side), choose “**Project 1- Lost & Found**” “**Step 1: Discover**”. Post your images.
- Upload the six images of the objects you discovered on your walk. Name them accordingly, “obvious or ambiguous”.
- Refine your writing. Don't forget to spell-check and grammar-check.
- Comment on at least 1 other student's post.

Step 2: Define (Class 3)

Goal: Develop an understanding of the two types of figure-ground relationships, obvious and ambiguous. Through experimentation and repetition create six compositions using pencil and paper, based on your original photographic compositions of urban objects.

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Review Principles:

- **Composition:** The formal organization of elements in a composition arranged according to principles that will support the communication of the concept.
- **Organic shape:** Is one that resembles the flowing contours of an organism.
- **Geometric shape:** such as circles, triangles or squares often have precise, uniform measurements.
- **Figure (positive space):** The shape of a form that serves as a subject in a composition.
- **Ground (negative space):** The space surrounding a positive shape or form; sometimes referred to as ground, empty space, field, or void.
- **Figure/Ground:** The relationship between positive and negative space.
 - **OBVIOUS:** An obvious figure-ground will generally have an imbalance of figure and ground (70/30), wherein the ground "supports" or surrounds the figure.
 - **AMBIGUOUS:** An ambiguous figure-ground will generally have a closer balance of figure and ground (50/50), wherein the differentiation between figure and ground become blurred. Often the figure will intersect the boundaries of the frame.

STUDENT EXAMPLES: Can you determine which image demonstrates Obvious and Ambiguous Figure/Ground? And why? Are they all successful or could some be improved? How?

Example 1 | Example 2

Iterate - Thumbnail Sketches

Thumbnail sketches or roughs are used to explore layout options. These are quick drawings allow the designer to try out a range of ideas and find the best compositions before beginning a project.

Working from your photographs, you will **complete a total of 6-12 thumbnail sketches: a minimum of**

- **3 Obvious figure-ground compositions**
- **3 Ambiguous figure-ground compositions**

- Choose one object from each set of obvious figure-ground and ambiguous figure-ground photographs.
- Consider the relationship between these two objects. Find some commonality (ie: stains on the ground, objects from the built environment, objects from nature, etc) or meaning (feeling, atmosphere, mood, etc.)
- Take a moment to think about the meaning that the two objects convey together and separately.
- Using an hb-2b pencil, draw out 6 boxes on a page in your sketchbook.
- For each thumbnail drawing create new compositions based on your urban objects.
- Adjust the placement until the arrangements feel unified. In some instances, you may need to simplify, removing some elements in order to create a more unified composition.
- Observe the objects (figure) and the background layer (ground). Are the figure and ground present in equal proportions or unequal? How do they relate? Does the ground *support* the figure or fight for dominance?

Refine - Final Sketches

- Choose your two best obvious and two best ambiguous figure-ground sketches and **refine**.
- Use a full page in your sketchbook (9x12") to redraw and refine each of your compositions.
NOTE: Adjust the orientation of the page (portrait or landscape), as needed, but consider choosing the same orientation for both compositions.
- **There should be a clear transition from the photographs > to the thumbnails sketches > to the refined final sketches.**
- When you are finished, take a photograph of your thumbnails and each refined sketch.

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Documentation and Feedback

- Under Categories (on right hand side), choose “**Project 1- Lost & Found**” “**Step 2: Define**”. Post your images.
- Post the photographs of your thumbnails and refined sketches.
- Don't forget to comment on at least 1 other student's posts. (This is important! If something is not working in a fellow student's work, they need to know before they continue with the rest of the project)

Step 3: Develop (Class 4)

Inked Compositions

Goal: Finalize the compositions you refined to create **2 culminating compositions in ink on Bristol board:**
1 Obvious figure / ground relationship and **1 ambiguous figure/ground** relationship.
Using an economy of organic and/or geometric shapes, the final compositions should feel **unified**.

Activity:

- These 2 compositions should be a culmination of the creative process so far. They should represent your most successful attempts at this design problem.
- Based on the critique of your compositions, either rework or begin to transfer your refined (Step 2) obvious and refined ambiguous figure-ground compositions to 9×12” Bristol Board using very light pencil. Redraw your compositions or use the light table to trace.
- Determine if you need to alter the compositions to fit the page by extending to the edge or creating a border. If you plan to use a border, create a rectangle with your ruler and t-square Do this very lightly using a hard pencil. The lines should be barely visible.
- Compare with your refined sketches. Do the compositions still feel unified? Do they still communicate the same concept, mood or feeling?
- Use a fine inking pen (.03 or .05) to outline all the elements and then use the brush pen to fill in the black areas.
- Erase all extraneous pencil lines and measurements.
- The final work should be neat, clean and well-presented.
- Package and protect your work using tracing paper - see class demo.

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Step 4: Deliver (Class 5)

Critique

- Bring all parts of this project to class.
- Be prepared to present, discuss and analyze your finished work in terms of concept, craft, what you learned, and the design process.
- State the following: your name, what you are presenting (title and design problem), which parts are successful and why, which parts are unsuccessful and why.
- Your peers and the professor will provide feedback. You will have an opportunity to revise your work based on the feedback and improve your grade.

Documentation and Feedback

- Under Categories (on right hand side), choose “**Project 1- Lost & Found**” “**Step 4: Deliver**”. Post your images.
- In the post, document your thoughts about this project. Think about what you learned, what you could have done better (planning, material use, craft), and how you will apply what you learned to your next project.
- Consider and respond to the comments made in class during the critique or online.

NOTE: Posting, writing and commenting are part of the full grade of the project.