

Design Essentials

Artist David Milton's painting, *Blue Swallow Motel* (pictured below), encompasses several principles of design. Using the word **curveball** as a memory device, you can learn and apply good design in your artmaking, too.

▷ **C Contrast**

Areas of high contrast draw our attention to a visual artwork. The motel sign's large, white letters stand out against the dark blue background, a perfect example of contrast.

▷ **U Unity**

The limited color palette – blue, white, and gray – helps pull the scene together, making all areas of the image feel like they belong, creating unity in the artwork.

▷ **R Repetition**

The artist repeats horizontal lines throughout the composition. The repetition of horizontal lines – the motel sign, roofline, top of the car, and road – functions like a staircase, encouraging our eyes to step down and across the picture plane.

▷ **V Variety**

The use of text, from the neon sign to numbers on the license plate, adds graphic interest and variety to the composition.

▷ **E Emphasis**

The placement of the vintage car emphasizes it in the composition. The surrounding features, like the lobby entrance and column supporting the motel sign, serve as a framing device around the car, isolating the subject and drawing the viewer's focus to it.

▷ **B Balance**

The positive space (the building, sign, and car) and negative space (the open sky) create a well-balanced composition.

▷ **A All**

Incorporating *all* of these principles into one artwork can be a real challenge; doing so leads to creative and impressive results.



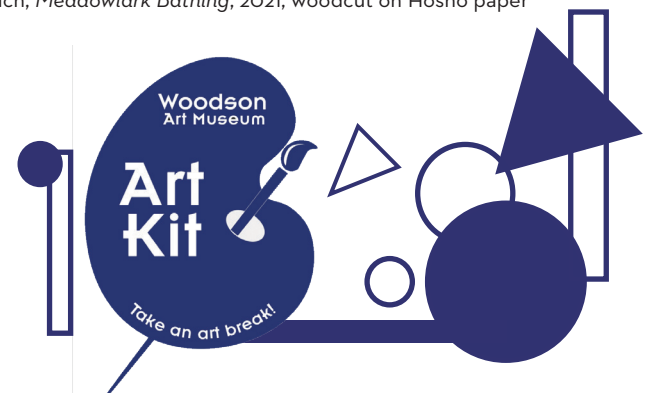
David Milton, *Blue Swallow Motel*, 2021, watercolor and pastel on Arches paper

Your Turn!

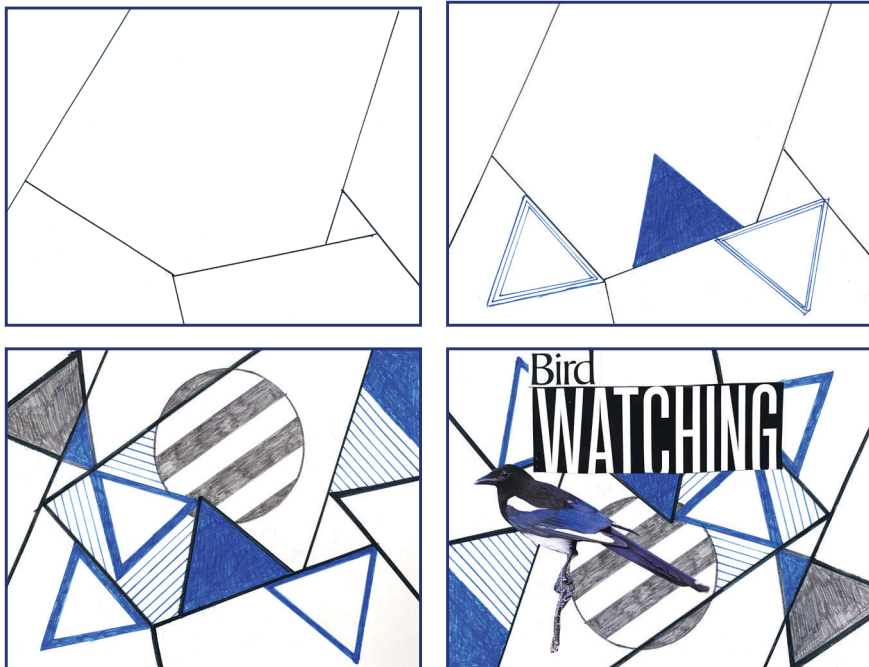
Identify design principles in the image below using the **curveball** strategy.



Andrea Rich, *Meadowlark Bathing*, 2021, woodcut on Hoshio paper

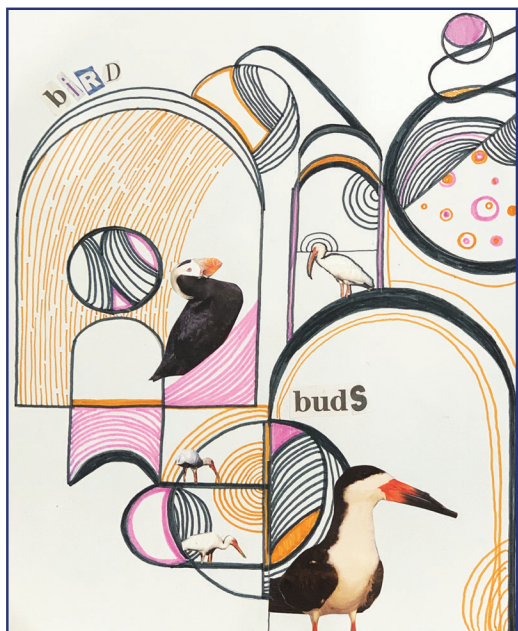


Throw Yourself a Creative Curveball



Claire Duncan, *Unexpected Landing*, 2022, acrylic on board

- First, use the provided protractor and markers to divide your paper with directional lines and shapes.
- Enhance your composition with pattern, varying line weights, and by filling in areas with color.
- Finish your design by selecting bird images and text to collage on top of your background.



Harro Maass, *Treasure Hunters*, 2022, acrylic on linen

Hint:

Try tracing lids, cups, bowls, or other household items to create geometric forms. Cut apart cereal boxes, newspapers, or magazines and use your own found images and words.

Leigh Yawkey
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Birds_{in}**Art**
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