

GESTALT

Principles

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MAT 103

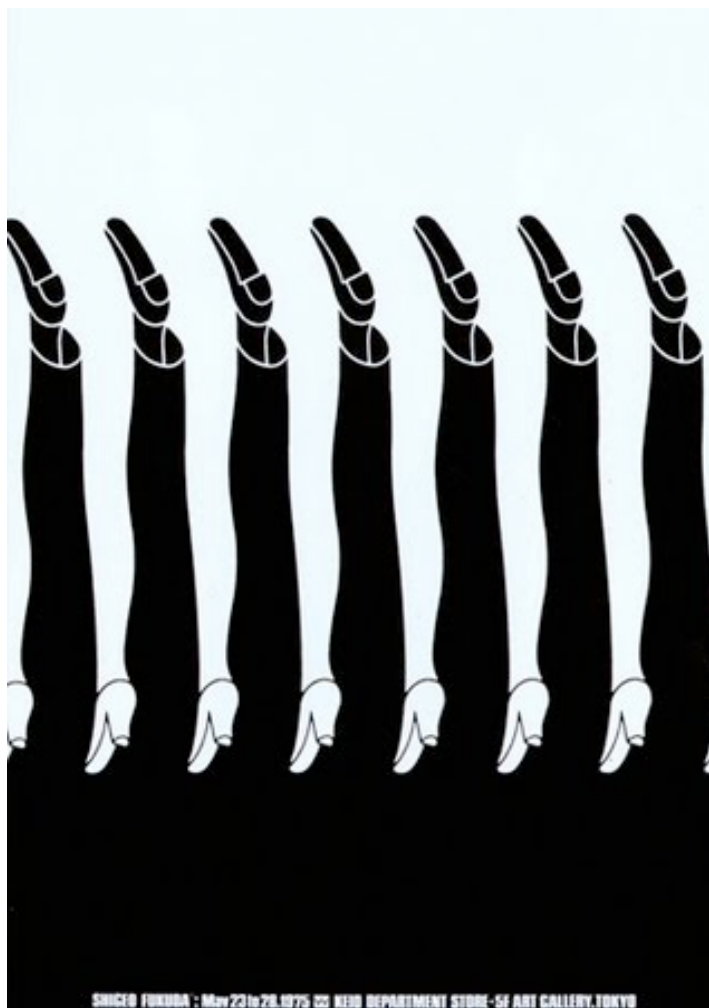


Figure and Background 1



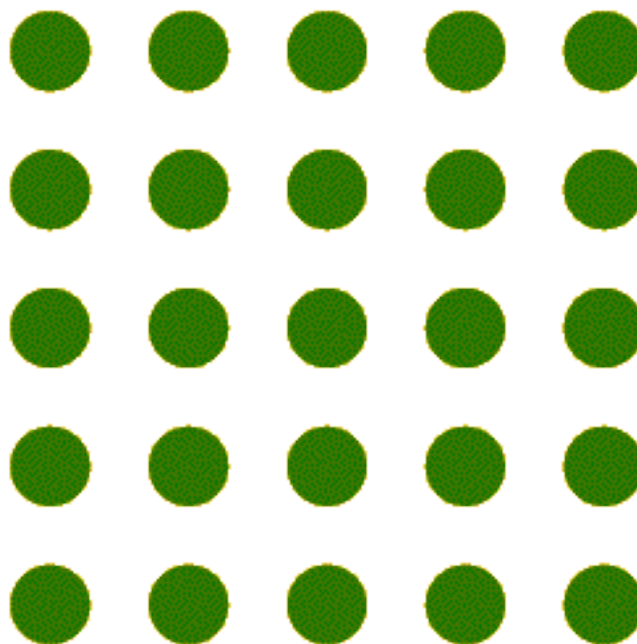
Figure and ground is the Gestalt principle which refers to how we perceive the “main” subject of an image versus the background or negative space. The creator of this image is playing with this concept, creating an illusion where we our eye switches back and forth, not being able to decipher which is the figure and which is the background. At first, we may see the saxophone player and a bird, with the white space being the negative space. Next our eye may switch to see the image of a woman.

Figure and Background 2



The picture above is another example of figure and ground, and another example of visual ambiguity. A definite example of figure may be a picture of a grizzly bear in the foreground, with mountain and trees in the back acting as the background (which would be an easier image to view). This example creates difficulty in deciphering whether the black legs are the subject or the white legs. Our eyes have trouble seeing them both at the same time, thus the tendency to visually group such into one subject (or figure) and a corresponding background, making the image easier to perceive.

Grouping 1



Grouping is the Gestalt principle that explains our tendency to organize small items into a more comprehensive and organized “whole.” In this case, we tend to read these small circles as one large square. In this manner, we subconsciously scan, organize, and recognize this image in a way that is easiest and fastest.

Grouping 2



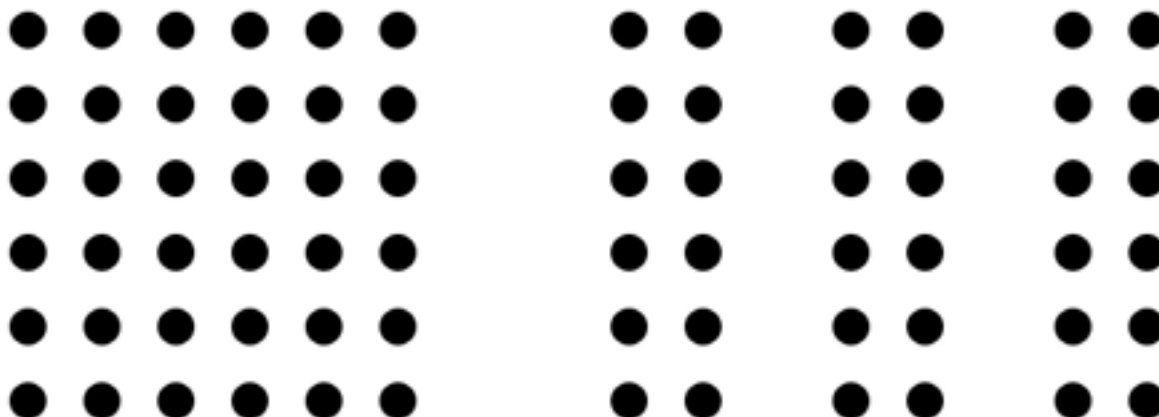
Again in this picture, the grouping plays a major role in how we interpret and recognize. In reality, we are staring at a row of lines that vary in thickness as well as length. No individual line is very important, but as a whole, we group them together in order to understand that the image is of an arrow.

Proximity 1



The main idea about proximity is that we tend to perceive and organize items which are closest to each other. In this image, we immediately see three columns of circles. We could see the the difference in colors (the red vs the black), or the 6 columns of circles, but no, our mind can most quickly and efficiently recognize the images as three “blocks” due solely to the relative proximity of the columns of dual circles.

Proximity 2



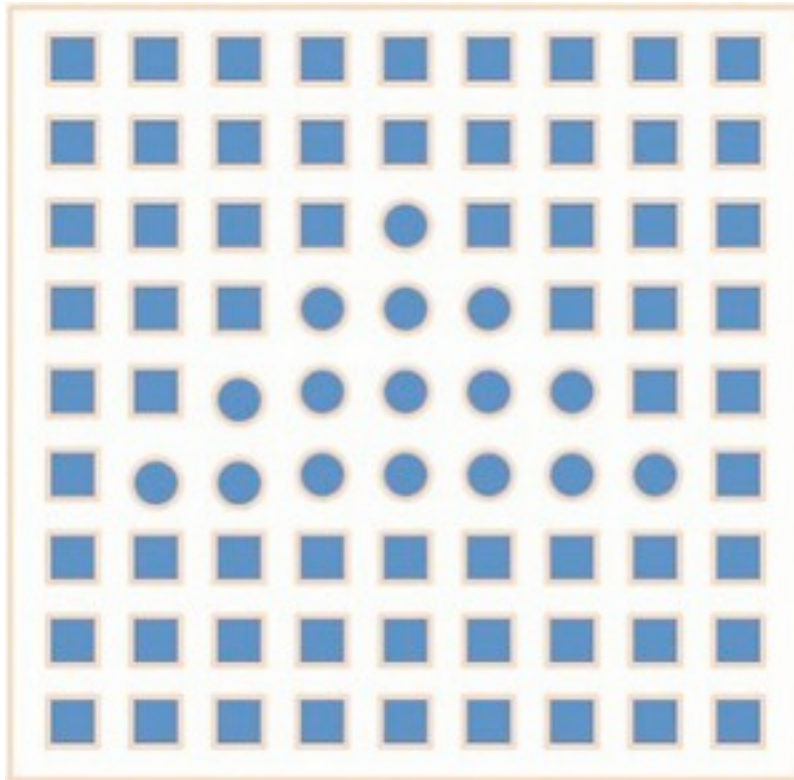
What do you see in the image above? Do you see the 72 tiny circles? Or the 12 columns or 6 rows which make up the image? No, what you will most likely see at first glance is a square on the left hand side, and three distinct “blocks” to the right. Again, due to the Gestalt principle of proximity we perceive the picture by how close the relative shapes are to each other, and by the size of the spaces in between.

Similarity 1



Similarity is, among other things, the ability to “read” a picture of similar but not identical items and see them as associated and part of a bigger whole. In this picture however, the orange is dissimilar enough to use the “similarity” principle to allow it to pop, or stand out amongst the others. This effect is used in advertising and websites in order to draw the viewer or consumers attention immediately to the desired subject.

Similarity 2



This is a great example that I found of similarity. While there are clearly circles mixed in with the squares in the middle of this image, we see it as similar enough to be associated and create a 'whole'. While the circles and squares are not similar in structure and shape, they share the same color and spacing which allows them to be similar enough to be seen as "together".

Continuity 1



We would much rather see smooth, continuous shapes and designs, as opposed to a small series of shapes. The above picture is a great example of continuity because we visually follow the lines rather than take the time to inspect each circular shape. Again, this principle of Gestalt allows the reader to quickly ascertain what he or she is looking at, and be able to make sense of it easily.

Continuity 2



This is not a picture of a circle and a rectangle, yet we *perceive* it to be. Really, this is an image of randomly placed lines of varying lengths and location. However, due to continuity (and also closure) we are able to easily fill in the gaps and mentally create the two obvious shapes.

Closure 1



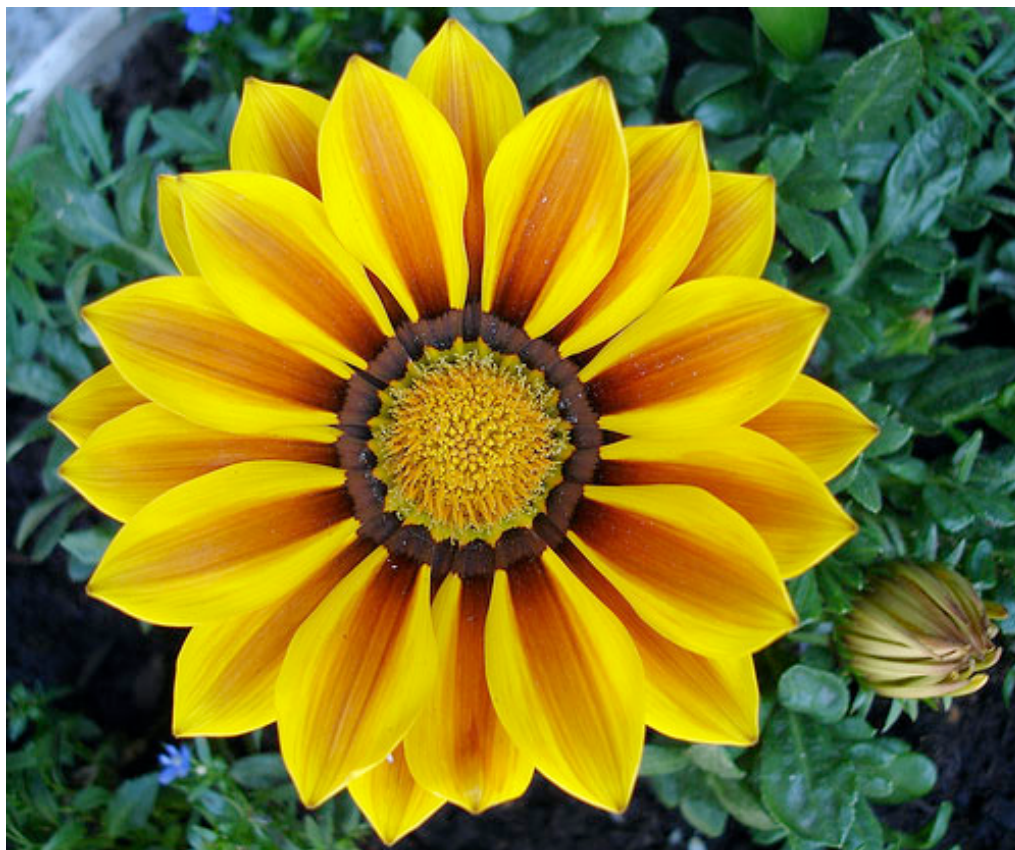
We favor closed objects and pictures as opposed to open ones, hence, the principle of closure comes into play. We see the above image and mentally “close it off” in order to make sense of the image. By doing this, we actually create the “S” from the negative background and put it in the foreground along with the U and the A.

Closure 2



Another example of closure (also grouping), as we see several dots and spots on the page, however for ease of recognition we mentally create a closed off image of a dalmatian. This effect works great for grabbing and keeping someones attention and is often used in logos (like the first example) and advertisements because it involves the viewers mental process and attention whether they know it or not. Now thats some good marketing!

Level and Sharpening 1



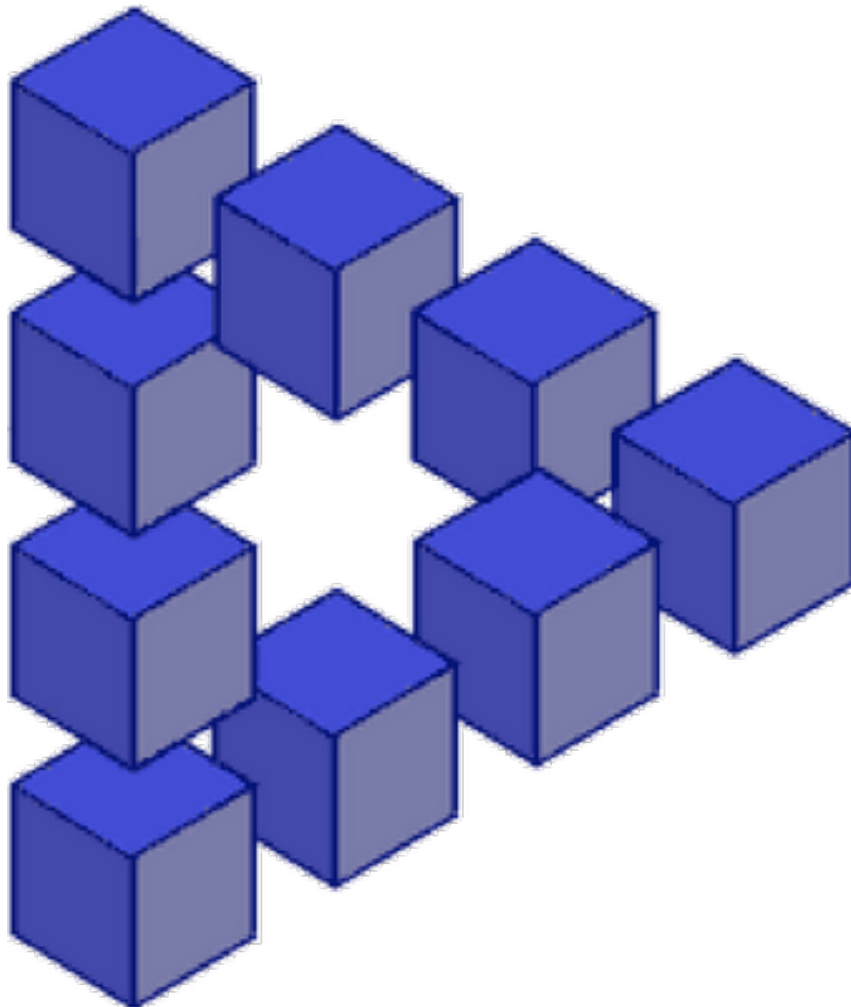
Leveling and sharpening are all about how we perceive, and then store images in our memory with regard to their position on the page. Whether something is symmetrical or centered (or nearly so), or asymmetrical plays an important role in the way we recall the pictures later on. If something is almost centered, we will remember it as centered because it is much easier to remember. This sunflower is almost centered, and very symmetrical, so we will “level” it off and perceive it as centered.

Level and Sharpening 2



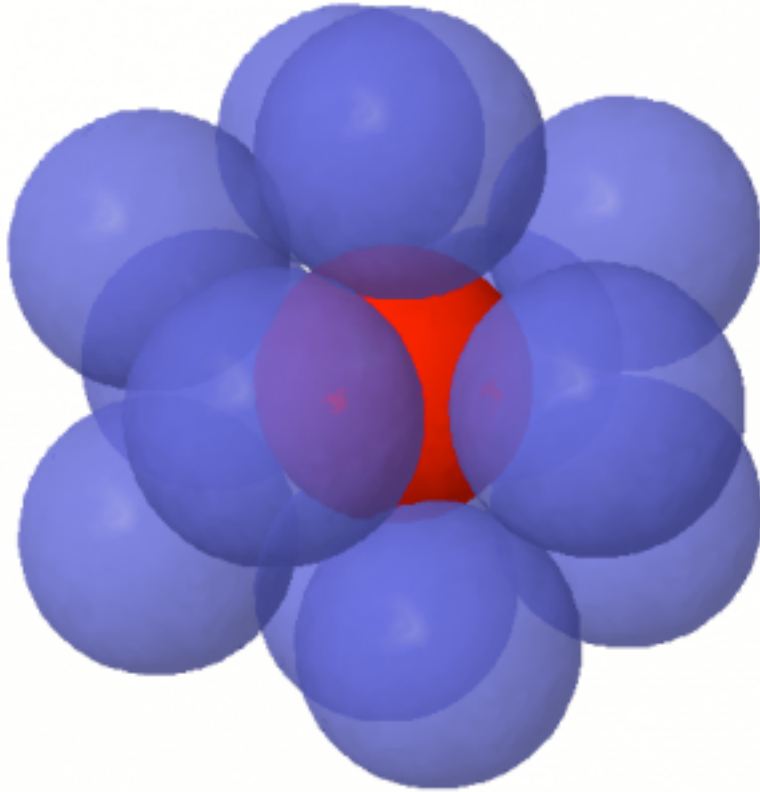
Another example of leveling, this target is central and symmetrical which will make it very easy to recognize and recall later on. Juxtaposed to this, if the image was asymmetrical we would have the tendency to recall it as being of a much broader and larger scope in order to make sense of the image.

Third Dimension 1



The third dimension is a Gestalt principle in which we perceive a two dimensional image as a three dimensional image due to optical illusion and the overlapping of shapes and lines. Above is an illusion, and an impossible object. This shape could only exist on paper, not in reality. It looks like it is possible when looking at one or two corners at a time, however when the perceived as a whole, we realize that this three dimensional image is merely an illusion.

Third Dimension 2



Another example of the use of the third dimension, these spheres give off the illusion of depth, in addition to width and height. This illusion is conducted through the principle of overlapping the purple spheres over the red sphere, while using a certain opacity for the purple spheres which make the red circle appear in the center while all the others circle around it.

Surrounding 1



The surroundings of an object can often affect the way we perceive the figure, in addition to the background. In this logo for Formula 1, we see the black “F” and red lines to the right. These encompass the negative space, creating a subject (or the ‘1’) seemingly out of nowhere.

Surrounding 2



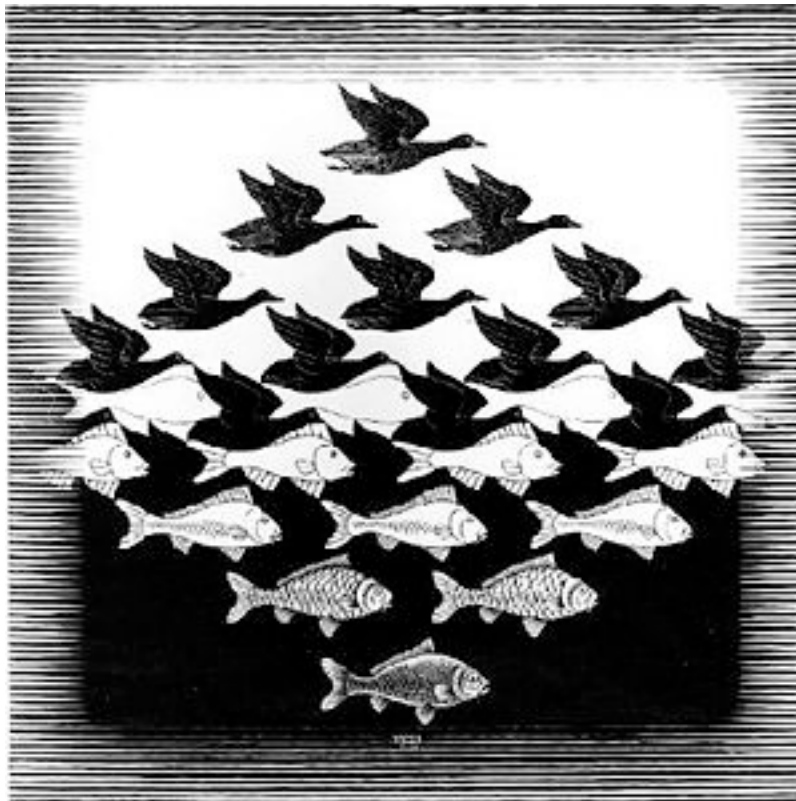
Another great example of how the principle of surrounding can impact our perception of a subject. The black shapes outline the portion of a girl which we perceive to be the subject of the image. The surroundings in an image play an integral role in our the presentation of the subject of an image as well our our perception of it, as opposed to the background.

Great Impact 1



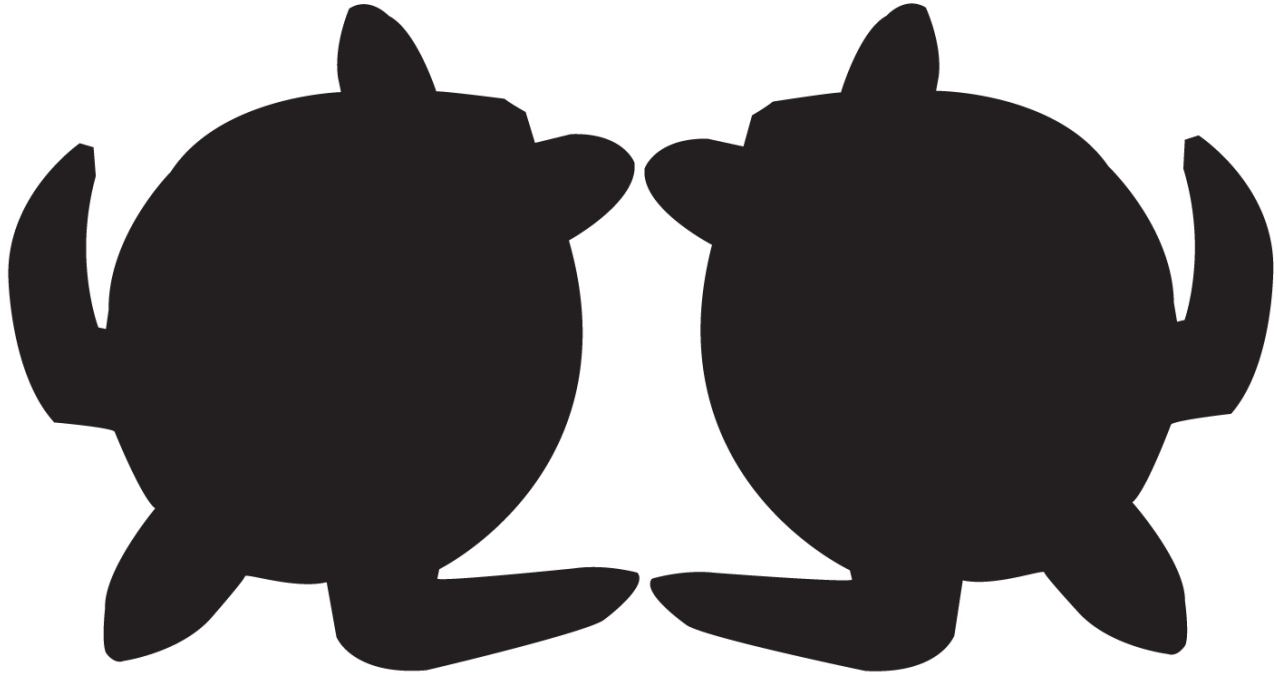
The image of this panda bear displays several Gestalt principles which allow it to be such a captivating image. First of all, the concept of closure is used as the bear is not complete, yet our eye automatically completes the bear to make sense of it, otherwise we would just see several shapes and blobs of black. Continuity is another aspect of this picture, as it is more pleasing to see smooth, circular lines as opposed to rigged, singular lines. And lastly, we can perceive this as a bear due to the principle of grouping. We tend to associate proximal figures and to see the greater image. If the shapes were farther apart and separated for instance, we may perceive a different image than the one we see above.

Great Impact 2



This famous Gestalt image is one that is a play on the principle of similarity. Visually, we tend to see similar looking images as associated, even if minute changes are apparent. In this image, we see birds and fish and everything in between, but because of similar sizes and shapes, we associate them as the more or less the same. Another interesting principle shown here is that of grouping. At first glance we see a diamond, as opposed to tens of individual animals. The grouping effect is due to our scanning of the page and looking for patterns which we use to quickly interpret information. Figure and ground is also an aspect here as the background changes from white to black, while the figures changed in the opposite fashion, which allows the images to really draw attention.

Great Impact 3



This is an excellent example of figure and ground as we can interpret both the bell in the middle as the main subject, or the turtles as the main subject. Most likely we will switch back and forth as there is no definite answer, just our interpretation and perception. Also, due to leveling, we are more apt to remember the turtles because symmetrical images reduce tension on the page, making the information easily viewed and processed. Finally, the principle of surrounding is applied by the black images in order for us to perceive the bell from seemingly nothing. This is used as a tactic in many marketing campaigns and logos in order to draw immediate attention to the desired subject of the image.