Gestalt Hunt

Gestalt is a term describing the wholeness of a design/object. The visual unity of a design/object is more than the sum of its individual parts. The Gestalts are a group of seven devices the brain uses to perceive and organize visual information (DiRisio, 2020). These are: *Figure Ground, Continuation, Closure, Similarity, Proximity, Equilibrium, and Isomorphic Correspondence*.

The following game can be done face-to-face or virtually.

DO

Students will be given a Gestalt principle along with its definition (see attached cards). Then students will have a set amount of time to find a Gestalt example in their environment. That could be either in the classroom or at home. Students should find 2 to 5 different examples of the Gestalt principles according to the age of the student. For example, younger students, K - 2nd grades, may only need to find two Gestalts while older students 3rd - 5th grades and will need to find four. Students in 6th - 8th grade will need to find five or more examples.

Younger students will prepare for a Gestalt discussion. Older students, 9th - 12th grade, should create a PowerPoint presentation based on what they have found. The purpose is to get students thinking and talking about Gestalt in everyday life and situations starting with items they find around the classroom or home.

1. Divide the students into groups of 3-4.
2. Distribute the Gestalt cards amongst the groups.
3. Set a timer for at least 5-10 minutes for students to find examples of Gestalt principles in their environment.
4. When the time is up, have the students gather into their groups. They should discuss what they found and how it fits into the assigned Gestalt principles.

LEARN

The instructor can point out how common the Gestalt principles are in everyday things we see. The students will learn how to differentiate one Gestalt principle to the next and how to apply them.

TAKE AWAY

Students will be able to apply the Gestalt principles to their artistic endeavors.
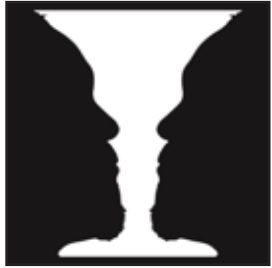
Gestalt Principles defined:
Figure Ground
The fundamental law of perception that makes it possible to discern objects. The eye and mind separate and object (figure) from its surrounds (ground)

Continuation
Continuation occurs when the eye is carried smoothly into the line or curve of an adjoining object. Continuation can also be achieved through implied directional lines.

Closure
Familiar shapes are more readily seen as complete than incomplete. The eye completes a line or curve in order to form a familiar shape.

Similarity
Things that are similar are naturally grouped together. Similarity can occur through the use of shape, size, color, angle or value.

Proximity
The grouping of items or elements (angles, colors) due to spatial location or nearness.

Equilibrium
The tendency towards order. The balance of a layout or the concept of gravity in a design.

Isomorphic Correspondence
Deals with the relationship between structural characteristics of visual form and similar characteristics of human behavior. (memory triggers)

DiRisio, K., (2020). *Gestalt principles.* [PowerPoint slides; Pdf]. College of Art and Design, Rochester Institute of Technology.

Figure Ground

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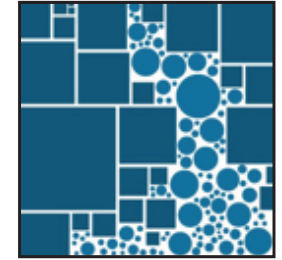
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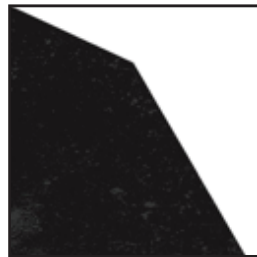
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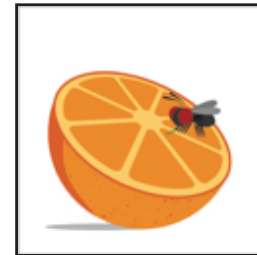
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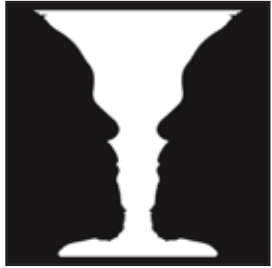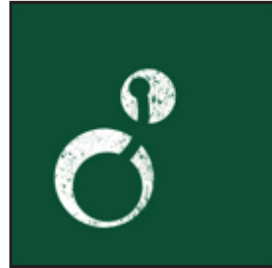
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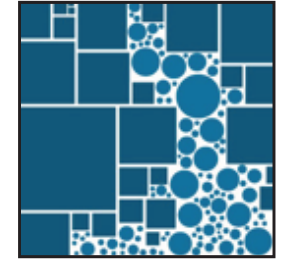
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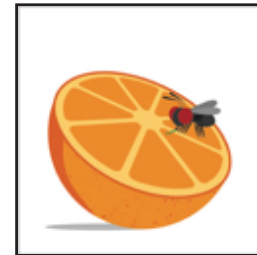
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