Visual Design

Basic Visual Components:	Design principles:
1. Space	1. Unity
2. Line and Shape	2. Balance
3. Value	3. Emphasis & Focal Point
4. Color	4. Depth and Perspective
5. Movement	5. Scale and Proportion
6. Pattern & texture	6. Rhythm and repetition
7. Contrast	

Basic Visual Components

1. **Space:** Must be evaluated both in terms of 3D and 2D. Three kinds of Space: physical space in front of the camera, space as it appears on the screen, spatial size of the screen itself.
2. **Line and shape:** Line is generally only in our heads – it is the result of visual components juxtaposed. Shapes appear to be constructed from lines. Lines define shape, direct the viewer's eye, and create pattern, texture, and rhythm.
3. **Value:** Refers to the brightness of objects in relation to the gray scale. It is important in creating contrast, defining form, and establishing the mood.
4. **Color:** One of the most powerful of visual elements. Color attracts the eye, creates contrast, generates feelings of warmth or cold, and establishes mood and emotion.
5. **Movement:** The first visual element to attract the eye. There are different elements that can move: objects, the camera, the viewer's eyes as they watch the screen.
6. **Pattern and texture:** Can create visual richness and the illusion of motion.
7. **Contrast:** When one element differs from another e.g. by color, tone, size, pattern, etc.

Design Principles

1. **Unity:** Line, color, shape, size, position, etc should all relate to one another in some way. All the elements should look as if they belong in the same image.
2. **Balance:** An image can be symmetrical (bi-laterally, radially, etc) or asymmetrical (out of balance). Balance can encompass texture, color, pattern, line , etc. The choice of which to use should be deliberate and relate to the desired message of the image.
3. **Emphasis & Focal Point:** Where the eye naturally looks – the place of visual intensity, e.g. some feature that dominates the center of interest. Most images have a primary focal point. The focal point is the starting point for the viewer and should lead the eye to further exploration. Movement, scale & proportion, contrast (color and value), lines, can all attract and direct the eye.

4. **Depth and Perspective:** Even though the image is two dimensional, it can give the illusion of depth. Lines (e.g. vanishing points) create the sense of a third dimension as do gradual changes in color, tone, focus, and line strength.

5. **Scale and Proportion:** Scale refers to size and Proportion refers to relative size. Unusual size or proportion can attract a viewer's attention

6. **Rhythm and repetition**: Repetition can occur with shape, position, density, color or texture. Rhythm is not just about sound. Rhythm occurs when similar elements are repeated at regular and recognizable intervals in alternating of sequential patterns. Rhythm can occur in stationary objects, but can also be created through movement of objects.

A Few Terms

- **The Screen:** The 2D screen where we view the picture or movie. This could be any number of things including the computer screen, movie screen in a theater, or a screen on a smart phone.
- **Real World:** The 3D environment where we live.
- **Picture Frame:** The rectangular frame (defined by 4 lines) which separates the part of the world the viewer or camera can see from what can't be seen.
- **Foreground (FG), Midground (MG) , Background (BG):** Objects reside at different depths. What is the desired focus? FG (close to the viewer or camera), BG (furthest away), and MG (between the FG and BG).
- **4D World:** 3D space together with the dimension of time.

Key to Visual Structure

Visual Structure is based on an understanding of the *Principle of Contrast and Affinity*:

Contrast (difference) = Greater Visual Intensity

Affinity (similarity) = Less Visual Intensity

References

Design Basics, 8th Edition, by Lauer & Pentak.
The Visual Story, 2nd Edition, by Bruce Block