

Design and display

info

Scout
Information
Centre

0845 300 1818

When planning a display we have the same problem as the artist painting a picture. The arrangement must be planned to give balance and colour harmony.

The underlying principles of design are 'order' and 'unity'. These are the arrangement of the subject and sections of the display into some sort of plan that the eye can easily follow. Order and unity are gained by arrangement and set around one or more of the following techniques.

Formal balance is where the area is measured into equal areas from the centre, a central item is established and allied subjects are fitted into the quarter divisions and eight divisions in the form of pairs, for example:

0
21012
0

Free balance is the complete opposite of the above. Unequal subjects are measured to balance with one another at unequal distances from the centre.

12
X
X
OX
OX
XO

This method is most effective when used diagonally, giving the eye a line on which to draw the attention to the subject.

Repetition involves the repeating of a subject to form a pattern. As an example, small pictures of Cub Scouts and Scouts may be placed so as to form the shape of a Fleur-de-lys badge. This technique is often used in shop window displays.

Alternation is another form of repetition, where two or more subjects are included in the pattern. They vary in size, shape, and colour, suiting often a general widespread theme rather than a set subject.

Progression is the technique of changing the design subject gradually over an area. The changes are usually very subtle, and go from small to large, light to dark, bright to dull, or vice versa.

This is a very good way of focusing on one particular point.

Radiation takes the eye in the opposite direction, by using lines away from the centre. Very good method of showing a number of sections allied to one subject, e.g. Beaver Scout, Cub Scout, Scout and Venture Scout Sections allied to the Scout Badge.

Variety is the opposite of monotony. The general rule is to have the subject of a composition enough *alike* to be compared and enough *unlike* to make their difference interesting.

The correct mixing of colours is also important. Whilst remembering that black and white gives the best contrast of media, there are four combinations of colour tone which are more effective:

black on yellow
purple on white
blue on white
white on blue

It is helpful to remember these not only in display work, but when choosing the colour of print for invitations etc.

Also bear in mind that some combinations are hard to read, namely:

red on green
yellow on white
blue on black

When selecting a colour combination it is well to remember that light colours make an object appear larger, and dark colours give a heavy appearance.

In all these considerations, one fact above all must be borne in mind. The display itself is required to fulfill a certain purpose. Be sure, therefore, that the background colours do not overshadow the general theme, but merely draw attention to it.

In stopping the passer-by and engaging attention, the background in design and colour planning must inevitably focus attention on the display theme, and secure the necessary action if the presentation is to be a complete success.