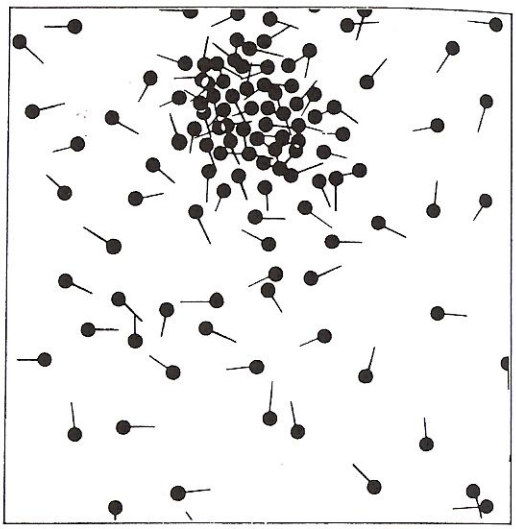
Points of Concentration

A point in a composition can mark the densest concentration of unit forms. Density could gradually give way to the sparse placement of elements; loose elements could activate otherwise blank space (figs. 385, 386).

When there is more than one point of concentration, densities at the different points should vary, allowing one point to emerge as the center of interest. In dense areas, voids become prominent; a void is often the center of interest in a composition with tightly packed elements (fig. 387).



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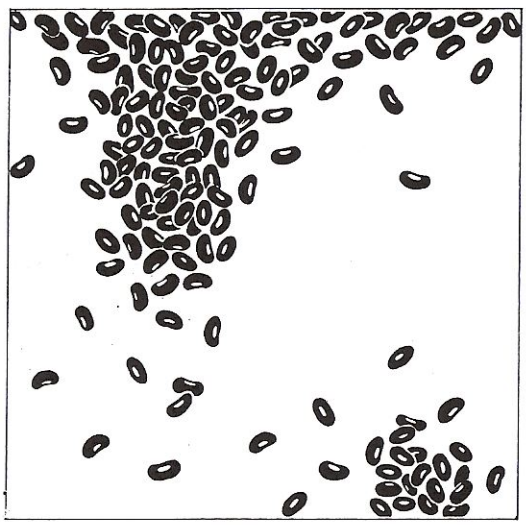

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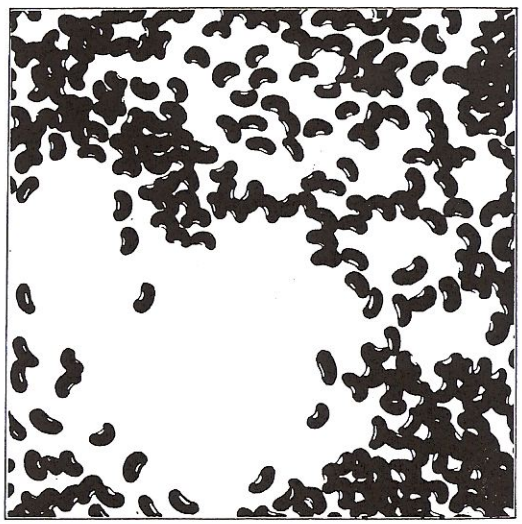
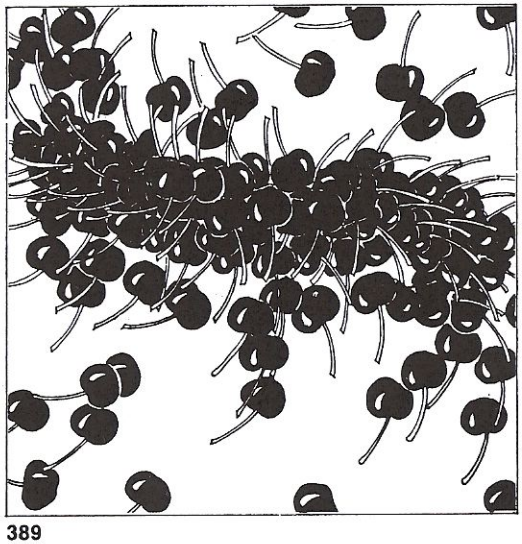


387

Linear Concentration

A concentrated area in a design can be linear, forming a band, with or without loose elements nearby (figs. 388–90).

Unit forms within the band could vary in density (fig. 391). A composition could contain more than one band (fig. 392).



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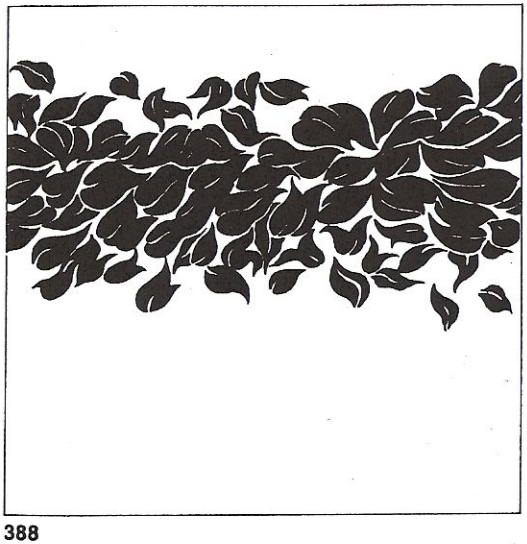

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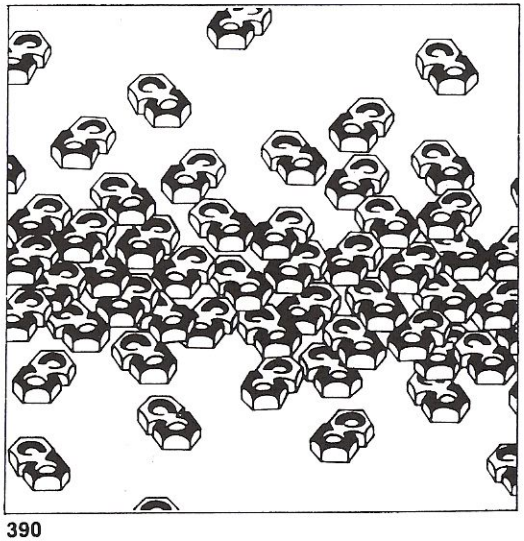


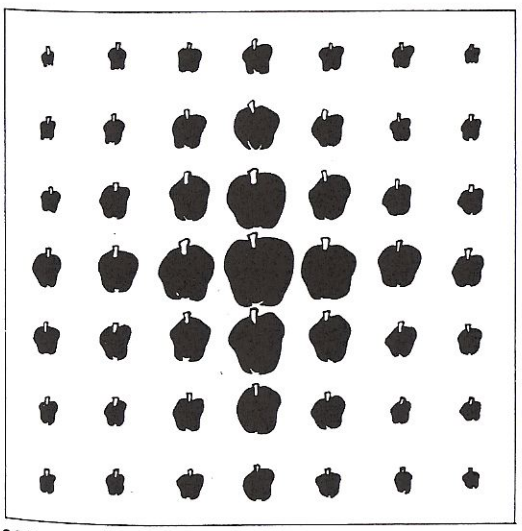
390

Gradation of Size

Size can be altered by enlarging or reducing forms arranged in sequence (usually in repetition). The transition could move from light to heavy rhythms, from heavy to light, or in an alternating fashion (fig. 364).

Gradation of Position

This is possible in a repetition structure with active structural lines that intercept and partially crop forms. The height of forms decreases as they are gradually moved down along the structural line (fig. 365).



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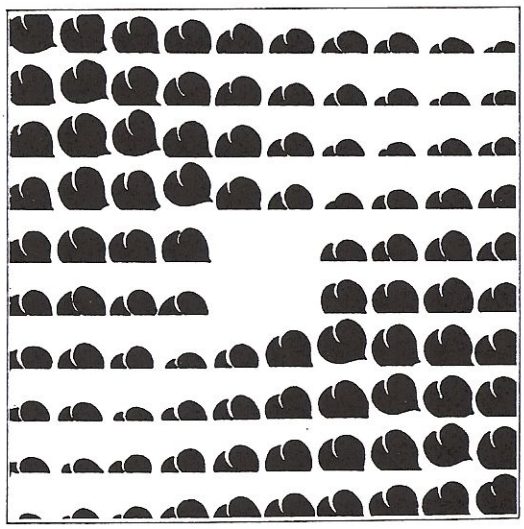
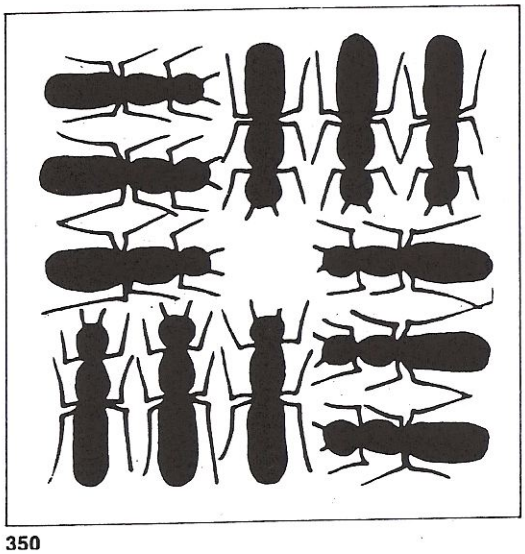


365

Rotation and Translation

A superunit form composed of translated unit forms can be rotated to achieve radiation (fig. 350).

Rotated unit forms displaying radiation can be used as a superunit form for translation in a repetition structure (figs. 351, 352).



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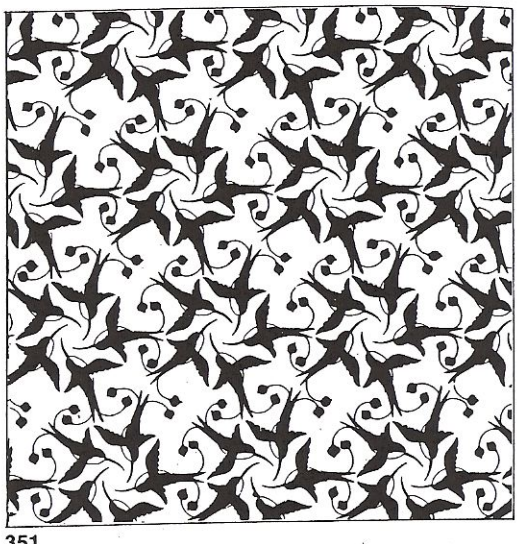

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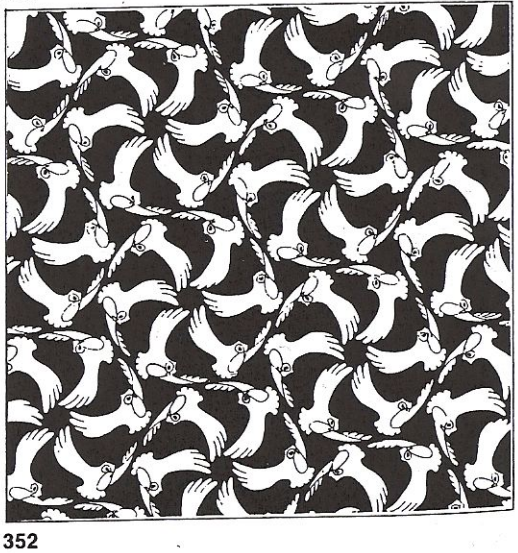


352

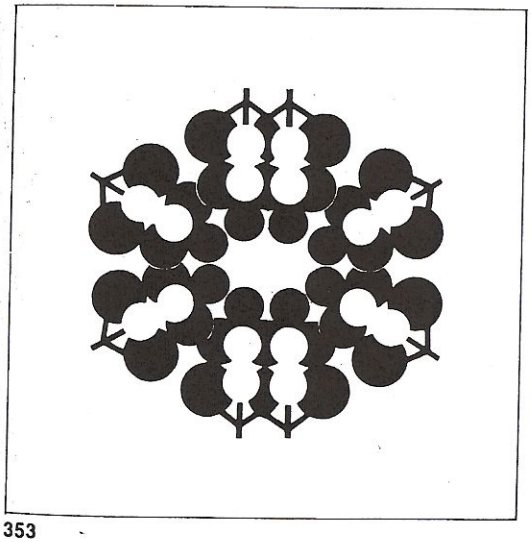
Rotation and Reflection

A full radiation might be cropped and joined to its mirror image on the other side of the cropped edge, which functions as an axis for reflection (fig. 353).

Rotation and Dilation

Dilated forms can be used instead of forms of uniform size. Slight variations of shape can be introduced during dilation if desired. These forms can be rotated to achieve a segmentary radiation, and then reflected or rotated again to achieve full radiation (figs. 354, 355).

Dilated forms in rotation can result in a spiral arrangement, a kind of radiation (fig. 356).



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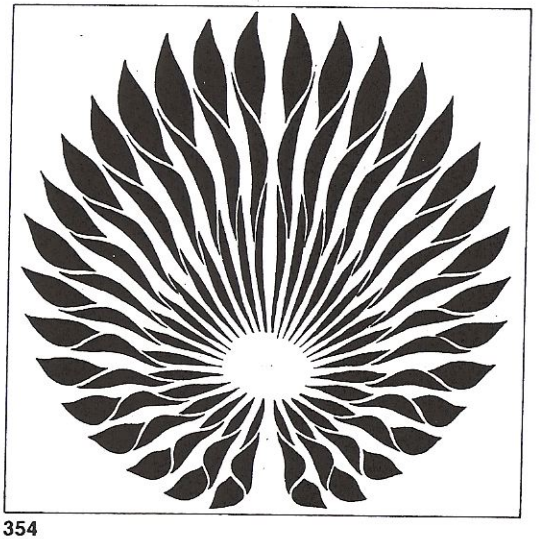

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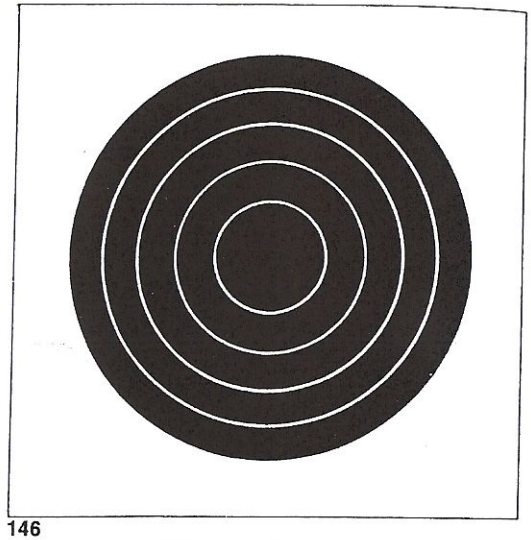
DILATION

Varying the Size of Planes

A plane can be enlarged gradually, or dilated. Smaller planes can then be placed within larger planes concentrically, or with slight variations in the direction or position of elements (figs. 145, 146). Alternate positive and negative shapes might be overlapped (fig. 147).



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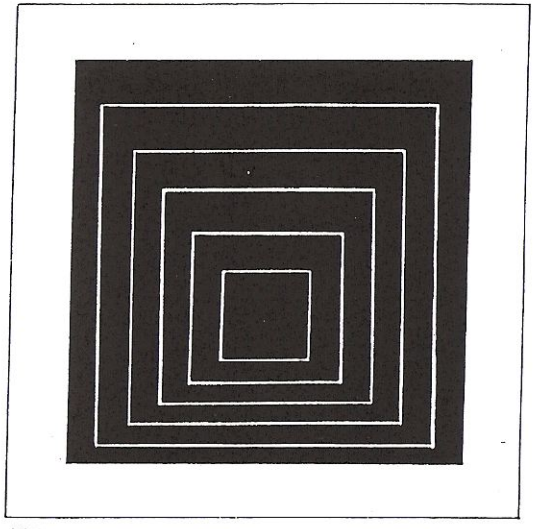

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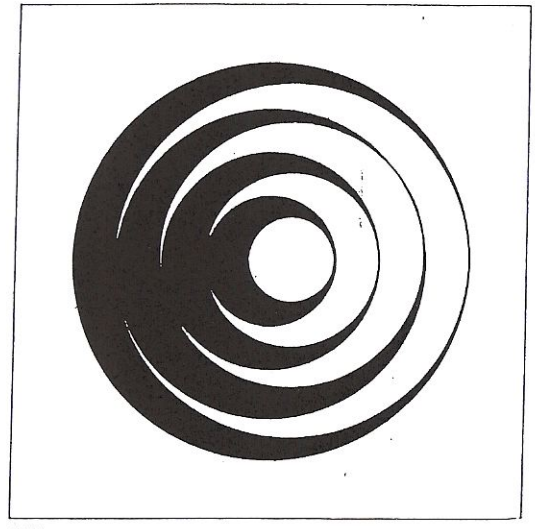
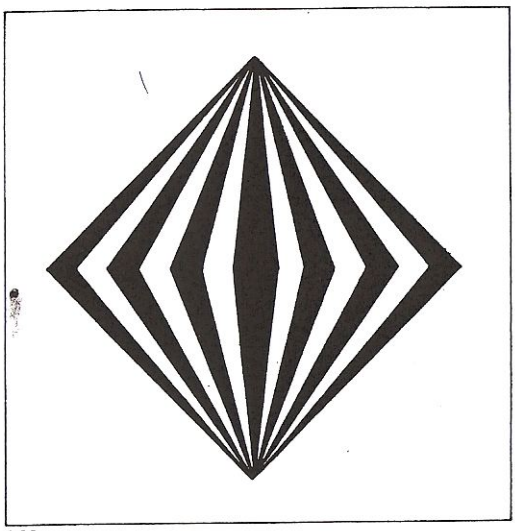


147

The Transformation of Planes

Planar shapes (or flat forms) can be rotated gradually to achieve transformation. The transformed shapes can then be superimposed (fig. 148). In addition, the size of shapes can be altered to suggest receding and advancing elements in space (fig. 149).

As with size variations, alternate positive and negative shapes might be overlapped (fig. 150).



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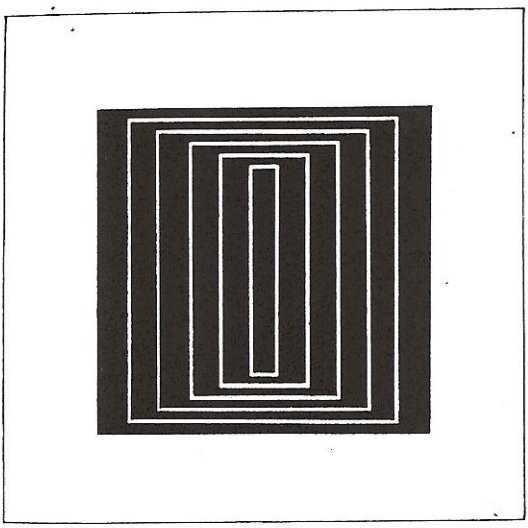

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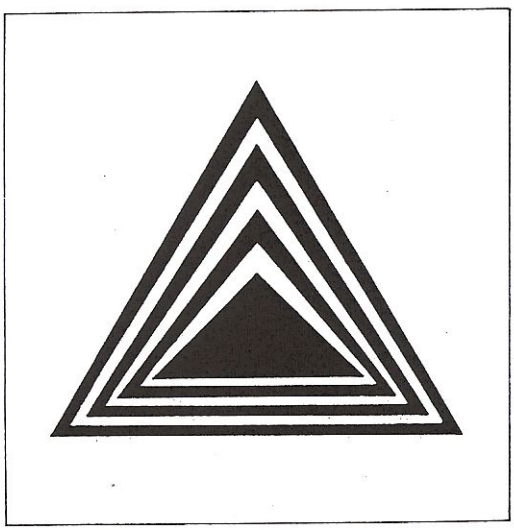

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CHAPTER 8: ANOMALY

Anomaly is the presence of irregularity in a design in which regularity still prevails. It marks a certain degree of departure from the general conformity, resulting in slight or considerable interruption of the overall discipline. Sometimes anomaly is just a singular element among uniform organization.

Examples of anomaly around us are common: flowers among foliage, the moon in a starry night, cracks on a plain wall, an old church among modern skyscrapers.

In design, the use of anomaly has to be of genuine necessity. It must have a definite purpose, which may be one of the following:

(a) **To attract attention** — When anomaly is used sparingly, it tends to stand out and attract immediate attention. Center of interest can be created if anomaly happens only within a restricted area of the design.

(b) **To relieve monotony** — Plain regularity can be monotonous. Anomaly is able to generate movement and vibration. Anomalous areas in this case should be scattered either casually or systematically all over the design.

(c) **To transform regularity** — One kind of regularity can be transformed into another. Here anomaly is just a change of discipline.

(d) **To break down regularity** — Regularity can be completely broken down into disorder in one or more areas. Anomaly seems to be more violent in this case, but the unity of the design should be maintained.

These purposes will be discussed further when anomaly among unit forms and anomaly within structures are dealt with separately.

Anomaly among Unit Forms

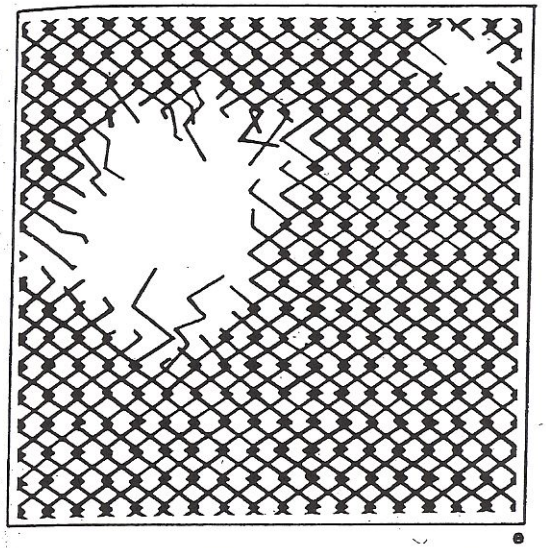
Regularity exists among unit forms when they are related to each other under a certain kind of discipline, which may be repetition, similarity, or gradation. However, if we consider all the visual and relational elements, the relationship of various unit forms can be rather complex. Unit forms may be repetitive in all aspects, but they may also be repetitive only in certain elements and gradational in the remaining elements.

When anomaly is introduced among unit forms, any regularity that may exist within each of the visual and relational elements should be carefully examined. An anomalous unit form does not have to be different in every way from the general regularity. It can deviate in just one or two elements and conform to the general regularity in all other elements.

Anomaly is comparative. One anomalous unit can be more anomalous than another. Anomaly can be so subtle that it is barely noticeable, or it can be extremely prominent. Anomalous unit forms can maintain a certain kind of regularity among themselves, or they can be quite different among themselves.

Anomalous unit forms can attract attention in one or more of the following ways: (a) the anomaly is prominent; (b) all anomalous unit forms appear within a restricted area; (c) there are only a few of these anomalous unit forms (or there is only one). Concentrated anomaly normally becomes the center of interest in a design. (Fig. 56a)

Anomaly relieves monotony when the anomalous unit forms appear quite frequently, scattering over a wide area. They can be fairly indistinct, occurring as minor distortions or transfigurations of the regular unit forms. Their placement in the design can be orderly or casual, generating movements



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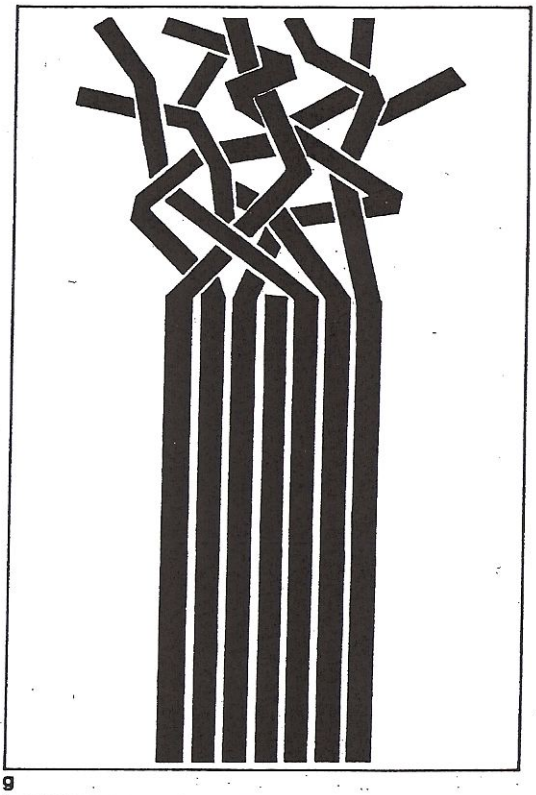

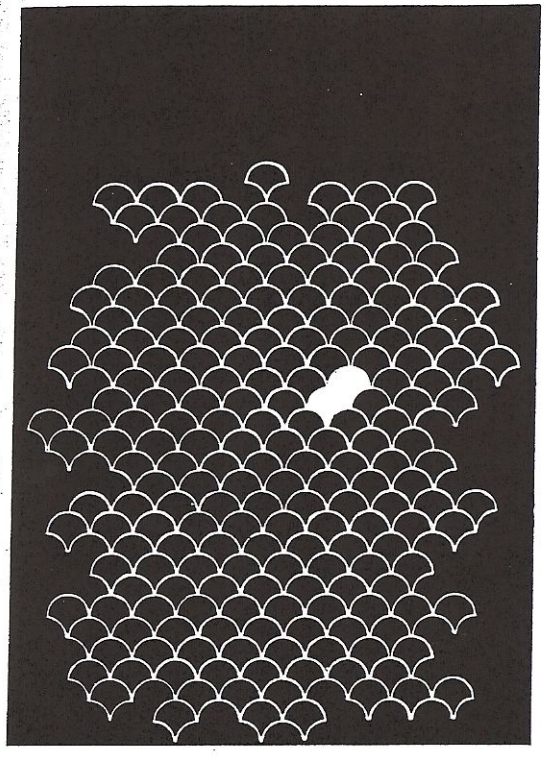

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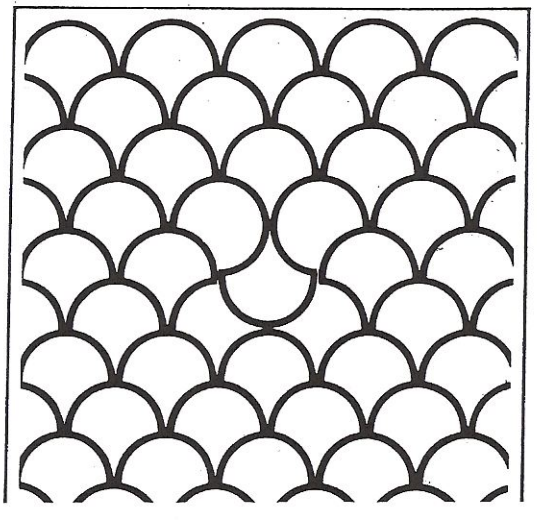

unit form in a design, concentration of one kind and dispersion of another (or others) can produce effects of dominance and emphasis.

In concentration, each visual or relational element can be considered separately. For instance, in a repetition structure the unit forms can be repetitive in all elements except color, which may be distributed concentratively.

The Concentration Structure

When a formal structure is not used, unit forms can be freely organized to achieve the effect of concentration. This produces a concentration structure which is entirely informal. Sometimes a formal structure may be used just to provide some guidelines for the distribution of unit forms. Concentration structures of this kind can be said to be semi-formal.

The kinds of concentration structures are suggested as follows:

(a) **Concentration towards a point** — This means that the unit forms crowd around a pre-established conceptual point in a design. The density reaches the maximum where the point lies and gradually thins down in surrounding areas. The effect is a sort of informal radiation, and more so if the directions of the unit forms are arranged radiatively. The number of pre-established points can range from one to many which may be guided by a formal structure. The degree of concentration towards each point can be uniformly similar, alternatively similar, vaguely gradational, or all different. (Fig. 65a)

(b) **Concentration away from a point** — This is the reverse of (a), with blankness or extreme scantiness in the immediate areas surrounding the conceptual point. (Fig. 65b)

(c) **Concentration towards a line** — This means that the unit forms crowd around a pre-Maximum density occurs along the line. The line can be straight or of any simple shape. When more than one pre-established line is used, they may be structural lines of a formal structure. Concentration towards a line approaches the effect of gradation. (Fig. 65c)

(d) **Concentration away from a line** — This is the reverse of (c), with blankness or extreme scantiness in the immediate area of the line. (Fig. 65d)

(e) **Free concentration** — This means that the unit forms are grouped freely with varying density and scantiness in the design. Organization is completely informal here, very much as in a contrast structure. Contrast of less and more prevails, but it should be carefully handled to create visual subtlety and/or drama. (Fig. 65e)

(f) **Over-concentration** — This means that the unit forms are grouped densely over the entire design, or over a rather wide area of the design, with or without gradual transition at the edges. If the unit forms are of similar size and grouped quite evenly, the result of over-concentration can become a similarity structure wherein each unit form occupies a similar amount of space. (Fig. 65f)

(g) **Deconcentration** — This is the reverse of (f). Here the unit forms never get concentrated in any place, but are thinly scattered over the entire design, or over a rather wide area. The scattering can be even, uneven, subtly rhythmical, or vaguely gradational. A similar structure can result if the unit forms, of similar size, are scattered quite evenly. (Fig. 65g)

Unit Forms in Concentration Structures

The effect of concentration is better achieved if all the unit forms are of relatively small size so that a large quantity of them

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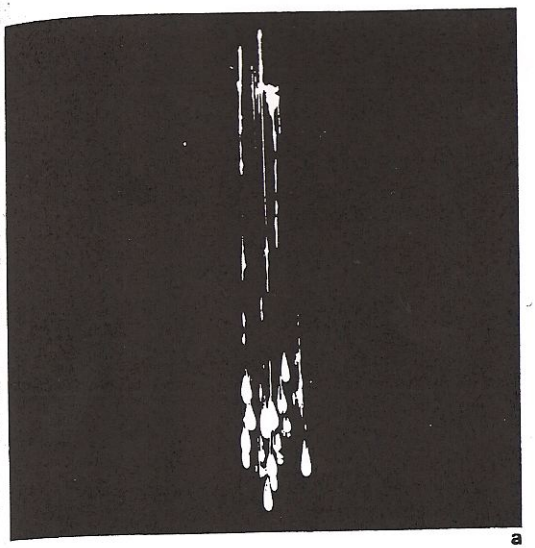

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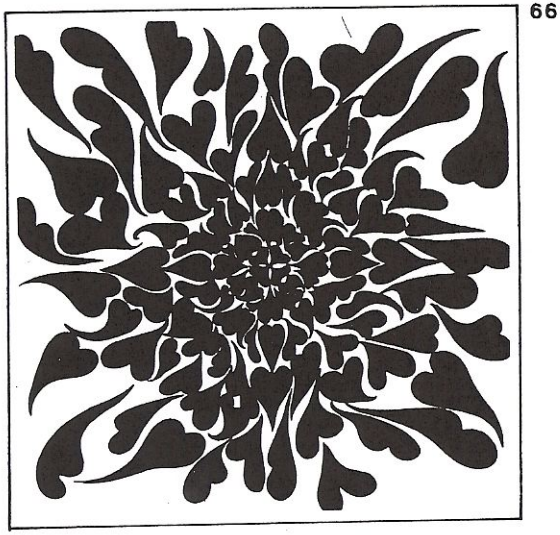

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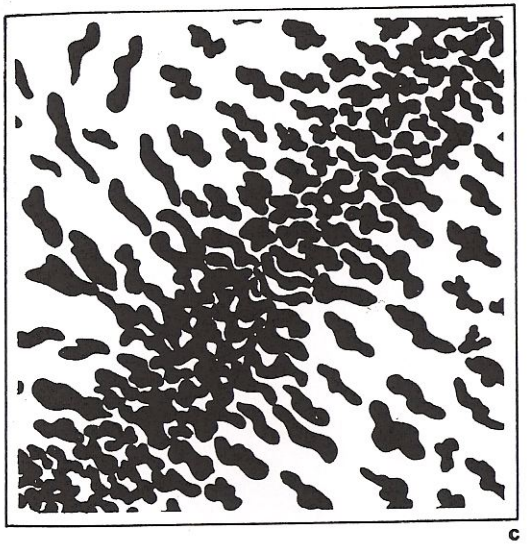

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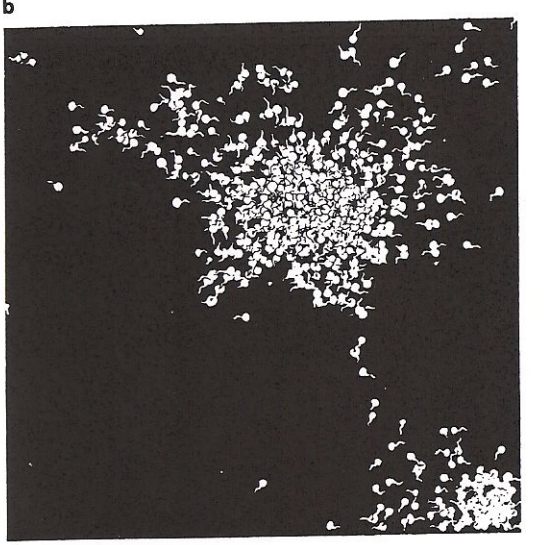

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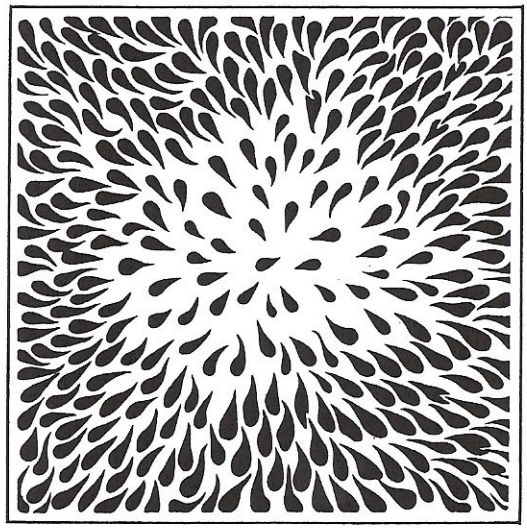

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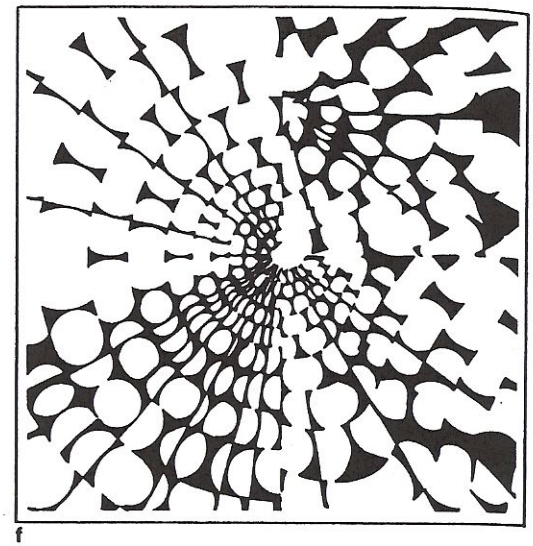

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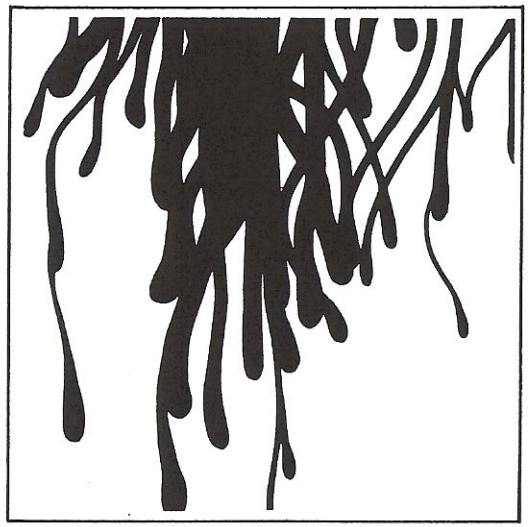

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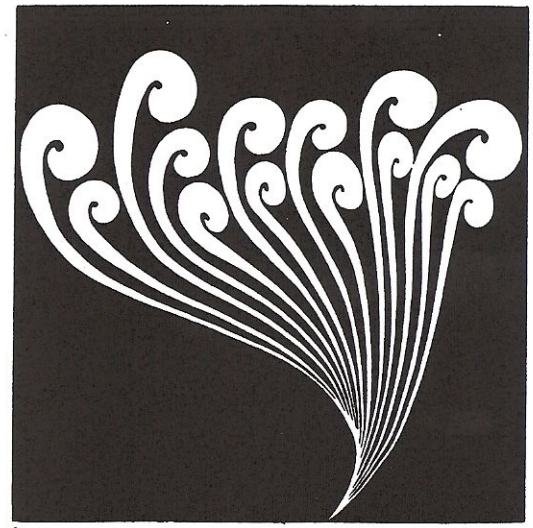

h

at suitable places. Size thus becomes the first element to be considered and shape only secondary. If the size of unit forms is generally large and its variation covers a wide range, the result may be a contrast structure rather than a concentration structure.

The shapes of the unit forms do not have to be all of one kind. Two or more kinds can be used, and the unit forms of each kind, among themselves, may be used in repetition or in similarity. If the shapes show a sense of direction, they can be arranged so that their directions may be repetitive, gradational, radiative, or just random.

Notes on the Exercises

Figures 66a, b, c, d, e, f, g, and h all exemplify the use of concentration structure. The unit forms are mostly organic, with variations in shape and size within a moderate range of similarity. It should not be difficult for us to recognize which kind of concentration structure is used in each exercise.