

B B C BITESIZE

Unity in art and design brings the elements within a piece together. But too much can get dull, which is why we need variety.

By using varied lines, colours, texture, shapes and space, artists and designers can create interest between elements.

This painting of shipbuilders at work uses harmonious colours to create unity. The artist, Stanley Spencer, introduced variety through his use of contrast.

The bright yellow-orange heat of the furnace, which acts as the focal point, contrasts with the gloom of the factory. The rectangular furnace contrasts with the organic shapes depicting the men.

At first glance the shipbuilders merge together but with a closer look we see their postures and positions are all varied. They are unified in their work but they are all individuals. The contrasts are balanced and the overall sense is unity.

Elaboration creates variety by adding detail. It can mean adding contrasting or opposing elements as this ring designed by Peter Chang shows.

Initially we see a black and red organic form. And then elaboration takes over. The decorative geometric shapes are in opposition to the organic form.

The analogous colours - red, orange and gold - harmonise but contrast with the black body and silver highlights. Elaboration introduces variety, whilst maintaining an overall unity and creates a bold, futuristic and unique piece of jewellery.

With this magazine layout, graphic designer, David Carson appears to break all the rules. By using letters of different sizes and colours and overlapping the text, he created a sense of variety and energy to match a surfing theme. The reader's eyes are forced to dart about the page to unravel what the article is about.

But there's unity too through similar fonts and balancing shapes. It defies what we think graphic design should be. It's cheeky and fun and challenges the reader.

An artist or designer like David Carson might intend to create a sense of confusion and disorder but variety within unity stops the design from becoming chaotic.

Elaboration is about adding contrasting detail and opposing elements within the overall piece. It's this balance that helps bring complexity and interest to pieces of art and design.