

The principles of composition

ORGANISING THE ELEMENTS

Composition

- ▶ Composition is the combination of the art elements to form a pleasing whole.
- ▶ Composition is very important in the creation of artworks and can often make or break the success of an artwork
- ▶ The arrangements of colours, form, etc. must form a visually pleasing result
- ▶ The artist is the one who puts these things together, which is called composing.
- ▶ The final result of composing a drawing, sculpture or a painting is called a composition.

Examples –

Raphael, The engagement of the virgin, 1504. Oil and tempera on panel.

– We can admire His use of forms, shapes, colour and space.

It is the way he organised them that makes the artwork pleasing as a whole

Composition is generally divided into 3 planes

Foreground, middle ground, and background



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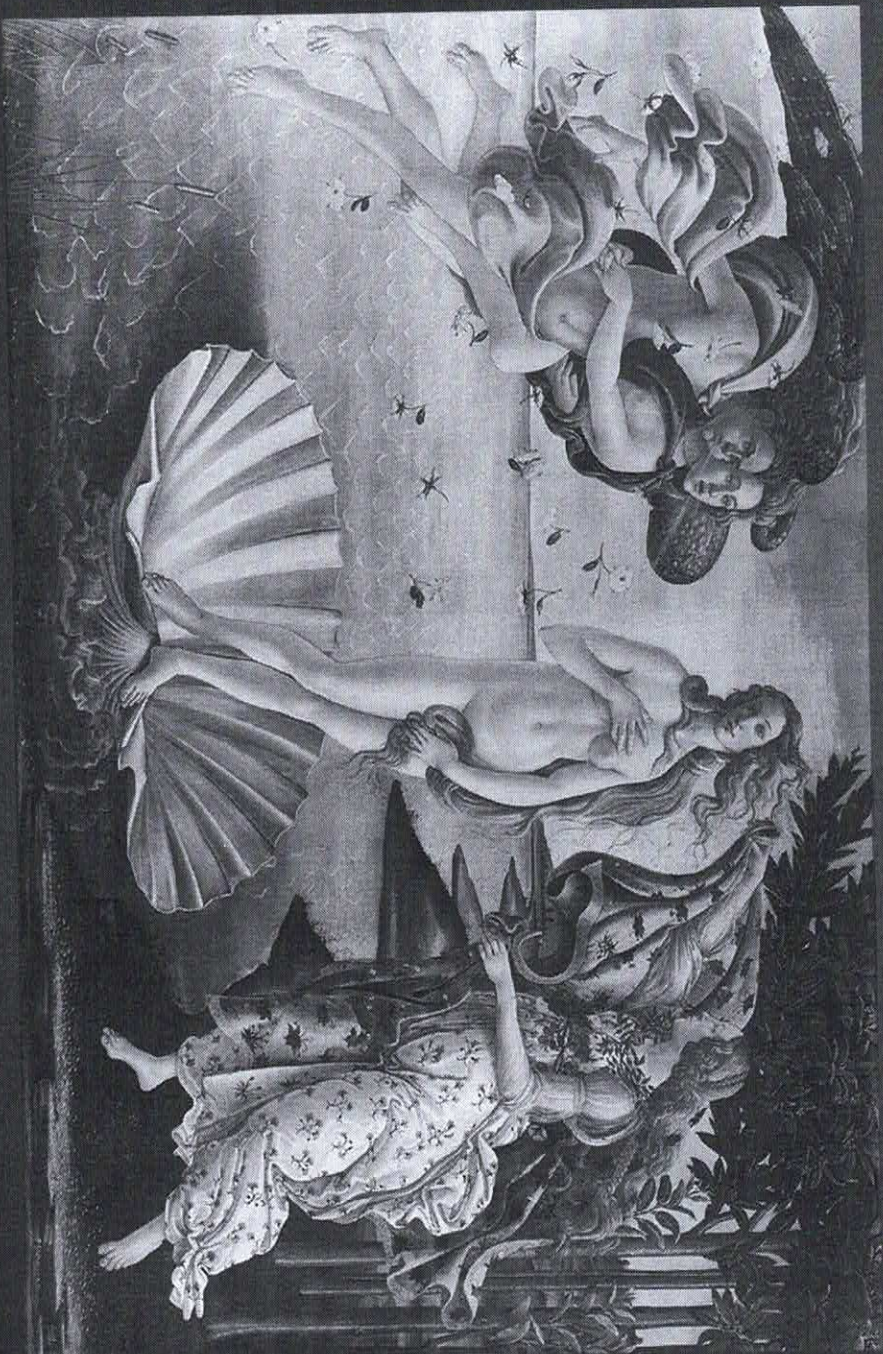
▶ **BALANCE**

- ▶ Balance refers to the arrangements of elements to create stability in an artwork.
- ▶ Symmetrical- balance is created when both sides are similar in visual weight and almost mirrored
- ▶ Asymmetrical – balance is created when both sides are similar in visual weight but not mirrored.
- ▶ Radial – balance is not very common in artists compositions but it is like a daisy or a flower with everything around a centre. Rose windows of cathedrals use this design.

Describe the
balance of
the two
works above

L'Absinthe is a painting by Edgar
Degas, painted 1876.





Botticelli, The Birth of Venus, The Birth of Venus , 1485, Tempera on canvas

Principles of composition continued...

- ▶ **Rhythm/movement** – it refers to the ways of combining art elements to produce the sense of flow or movement in an art work.
- ▶ **Emphasis**- refers to developing points of interest to pull the viewers eye to important parts of in the work (colour, tone, etc)
- ▶ **Unity and harmony** – these refer to the wholeness which results from the successful combination of elements in an artwork.
- ▶ **Contrast** – refers to the visual differences in an artwork

Proportion

Proportion- is the size relationship of parts to a whole and to one another, sometimes proportions are ignored enlarged or changed to create a certain effect, such as emotional impact.

