Creative Illustration

by ANDREW LOOMIS

CREATIVE ILLUSTRATION

Andrew Loomis

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To the furtherance

of our craft of illustrating

as a profession for young Americans,

this volume

is respectfully dedicated

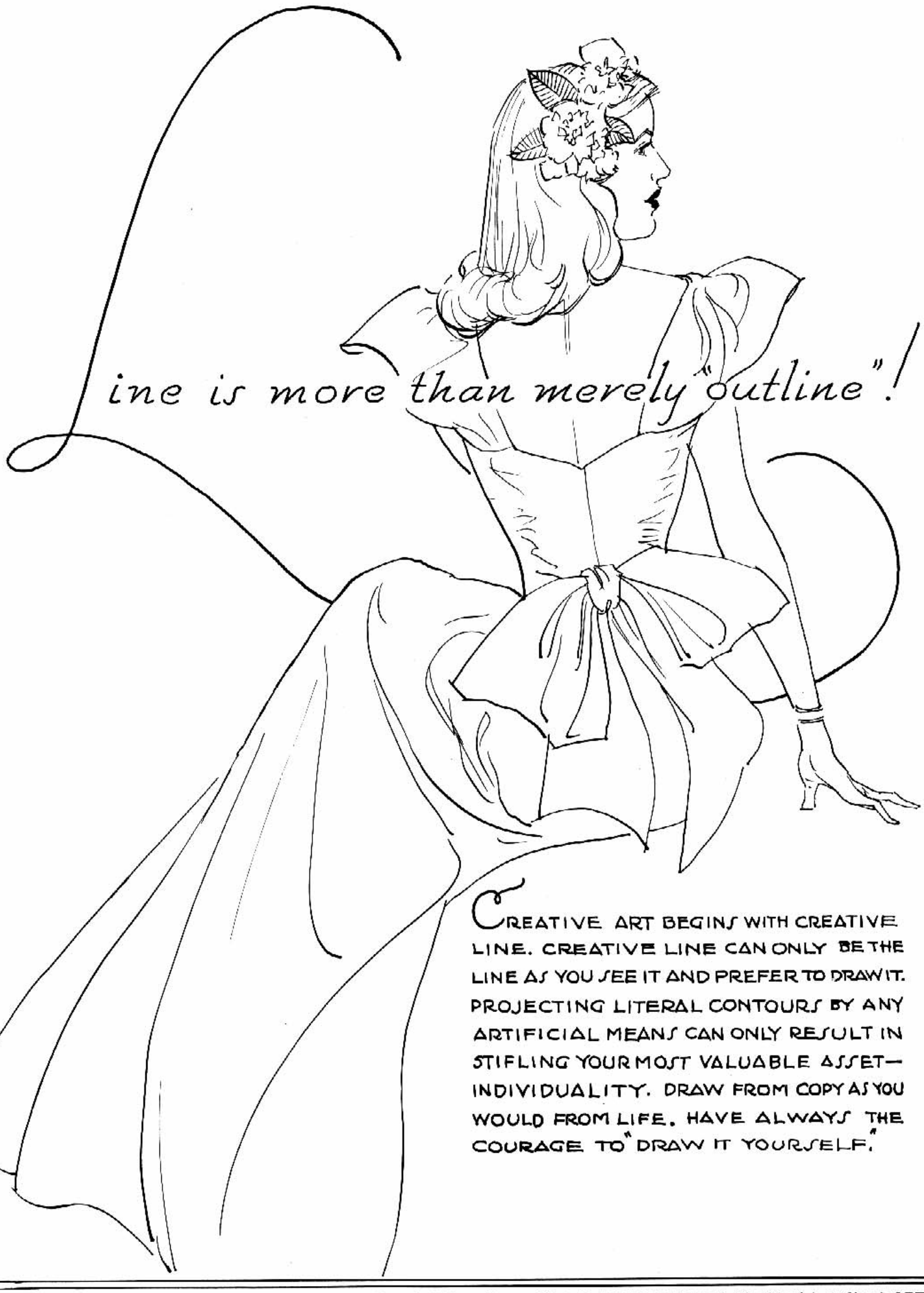
Line

THERE ARE SEVEN PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF LINE

1. To convey its own intrinsic beauty.
2. To divide or limit an area or space.
3. To delineate a thought or symbol.
4. To define form by edge or contour.
5. To catch and direct the eye over a given course.
6. To produce a grey or tonal gradation.
7. To create design or arrangement.

EVEN if it may seem a bit obvious, let us start the book with the very beginning of artistic expression, that of line. There is truly much more to line in the mind of the artist than in that of the layman. To the latter, line is but a mark of a pencil or a mere scratch of a pen. To the true artist, line can reach great heights, require exhaustive skill, and convey unlimited beauty. Line in its various functions has contributed as much to human progress as fire or steam. All line should have function and purpose. I want you to think of it in that light. Everything from this day forward that you do artistically will bear a relationship to line, either good or bad. You can either make line an asset to your work, or you can let its importance slide by you. But if you choose to ignore the functions of line, your work will make a bad statement of your ability. Line is bound to enter your work for better or worse. You cannot escape it.

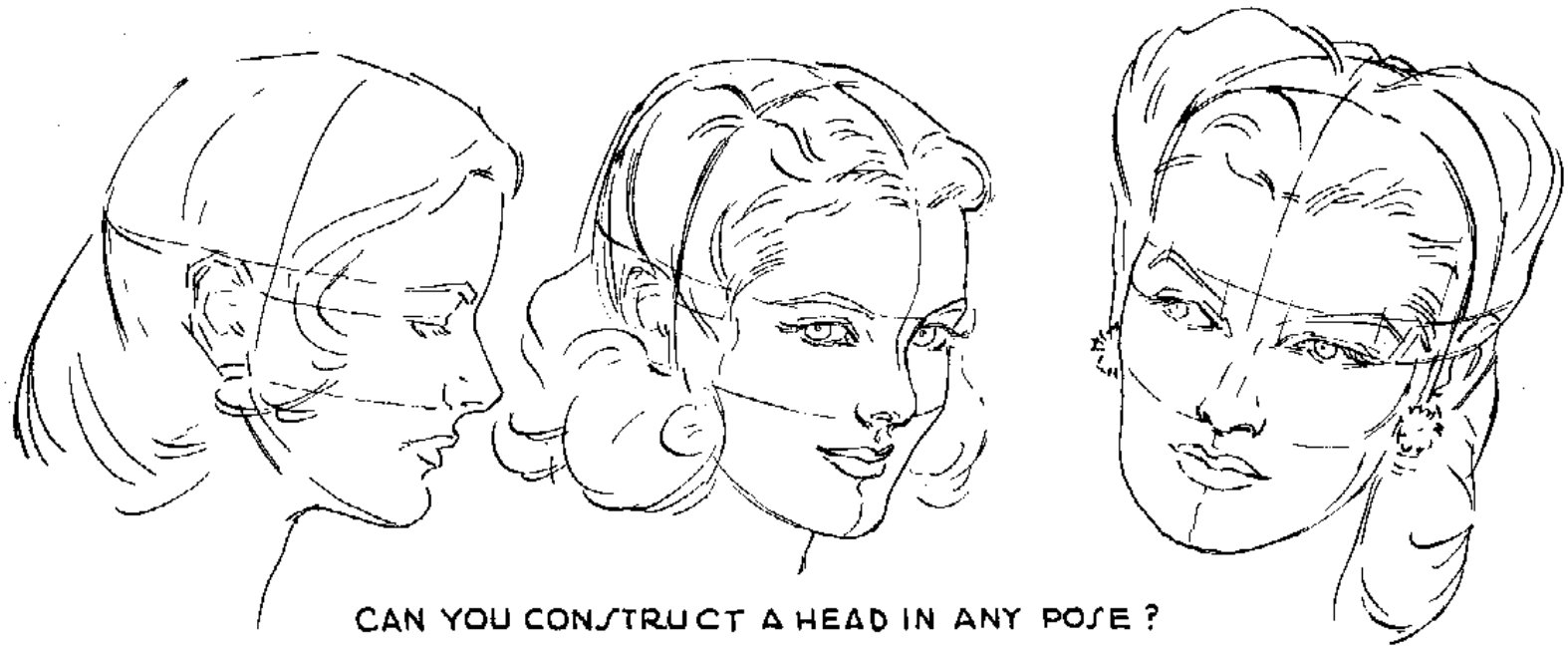
Let us see what can be done about it.



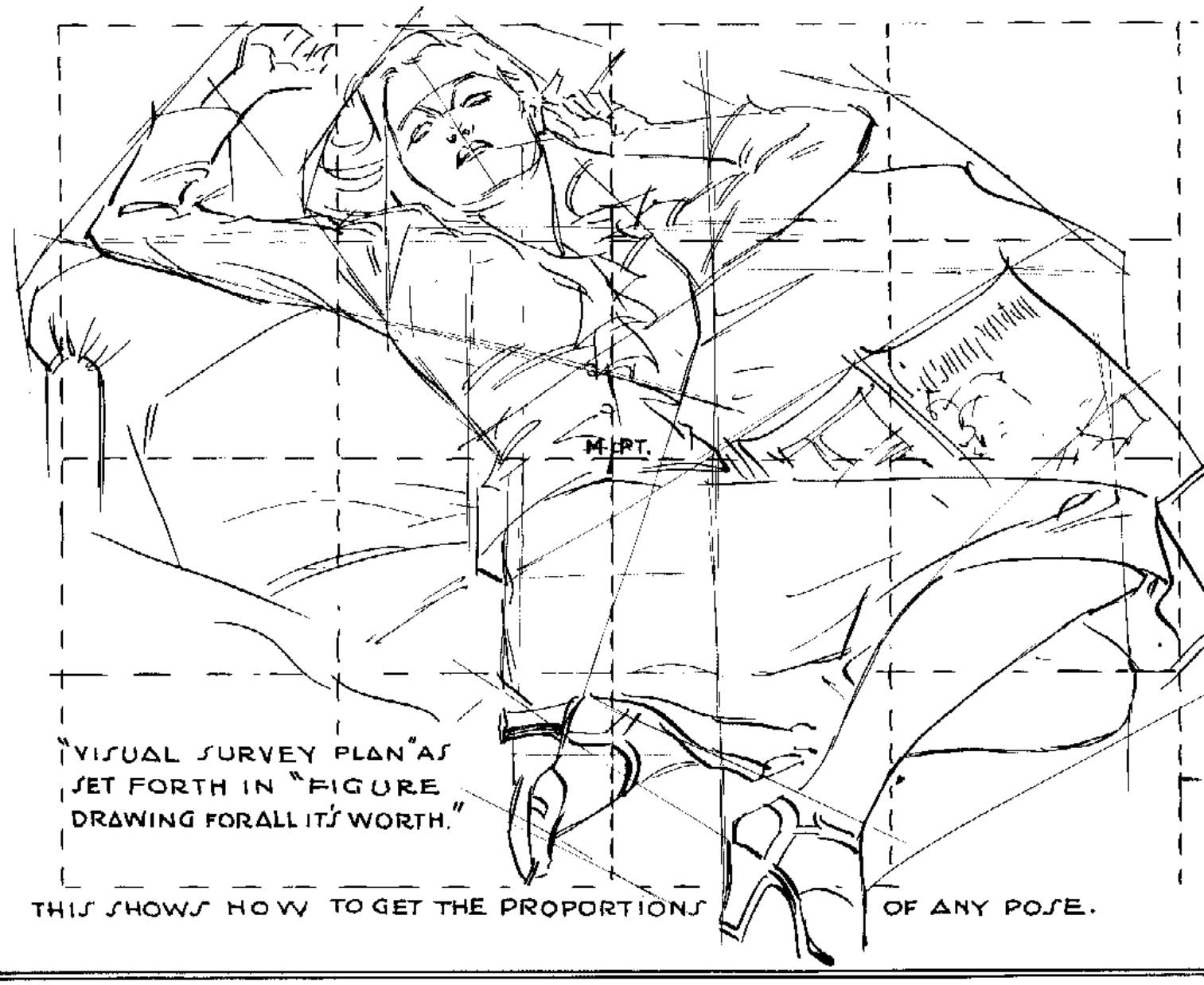
CREATIVE ART BEGINS WITH CREATIVE LINE. CREATIVE LINE CAN ONLY BE THE LINE AS YOU SEE IT AND PREFER TO DRAW IT. PROJECTING LITERAL CONTOURS BY ANY ARTIFICIAL MEANS CAN ONLY RESULT IN STIFLING YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET— INDIVIDUALITY. DRAW FROM COPY AS YOU WOULD FROM LIFE. HAVE ALWAYS THE COURAGE TO "DRAW IT YOURSELF."

THIS BOOK HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO CARRY FORWARD THE FUNDAMENTALS SET FORTH IN "FIGURE DRAWING FOR ALL IT'S WORTH." IT MUST BE ASSUMED YOU HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING

LINE IS PROPORTION WITH IMAGINATION



CAN YOU CONSTRUCT A HEAD IN ANY POSE ?
A PLAN OF HEAD CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN
SET FORTH IN "FUN WITH A PENCIL."

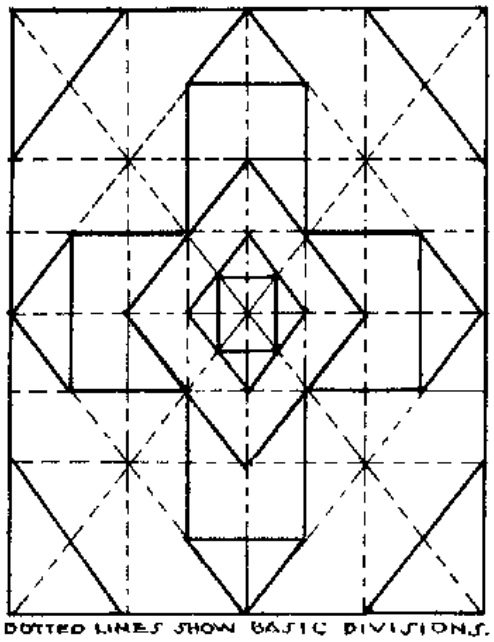


"VISUAL SURVEY PLAN" AS
SET FORTH IN "FIGURE
DRAWING FORALL IT'S WORTH."

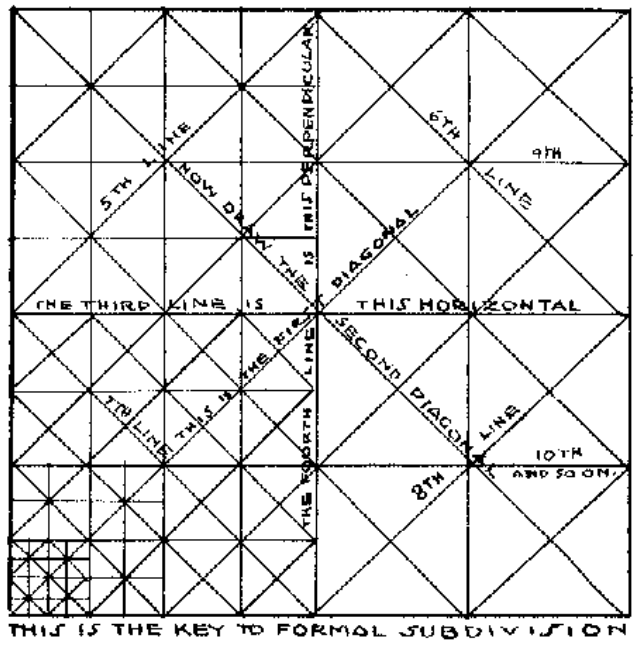
THIS SHOWS HOW TO GET THE PROPORTIONS OF ANY POSE.

OF THE PROPORTION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE HUMAN FIGURE. IT IS MY PURPOSE NOW TO HELP YOU DEVELOP THE FIGURE PICTORIALLY TO PRACTICAL GOALS AND TO A LIVELIHOOD. WORK!

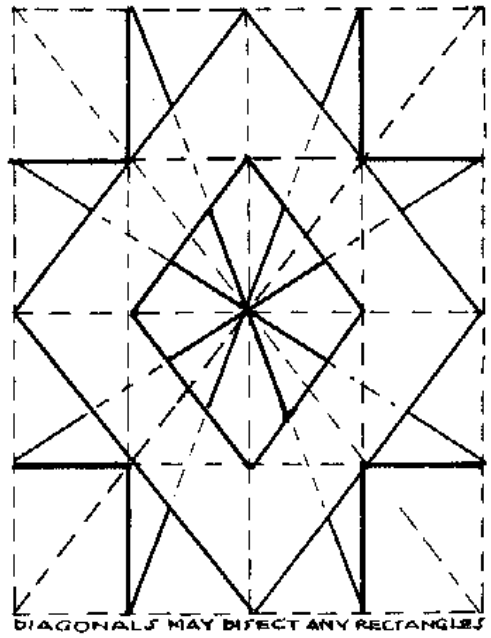
LINE PRODUCES FORMAL DESIGN



DOTTED LINES SHOW BASIC DIVISIONS.

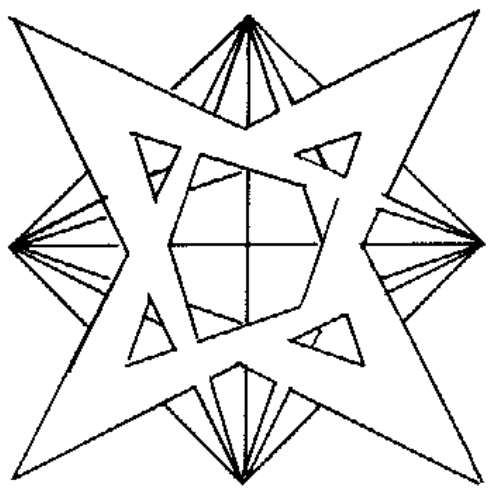


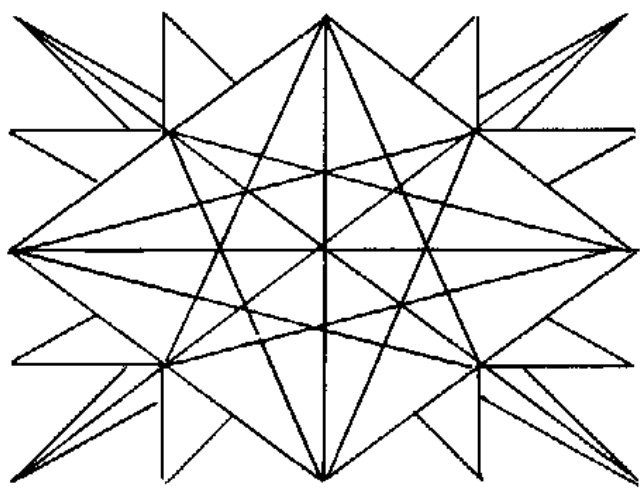
THIS IS THE KEY TO FORMAL SUBDIVISION

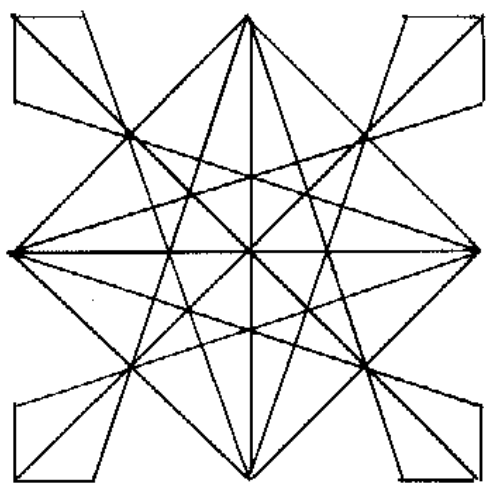


DIAGONALS MAY BISECT ANY RECTANGLES

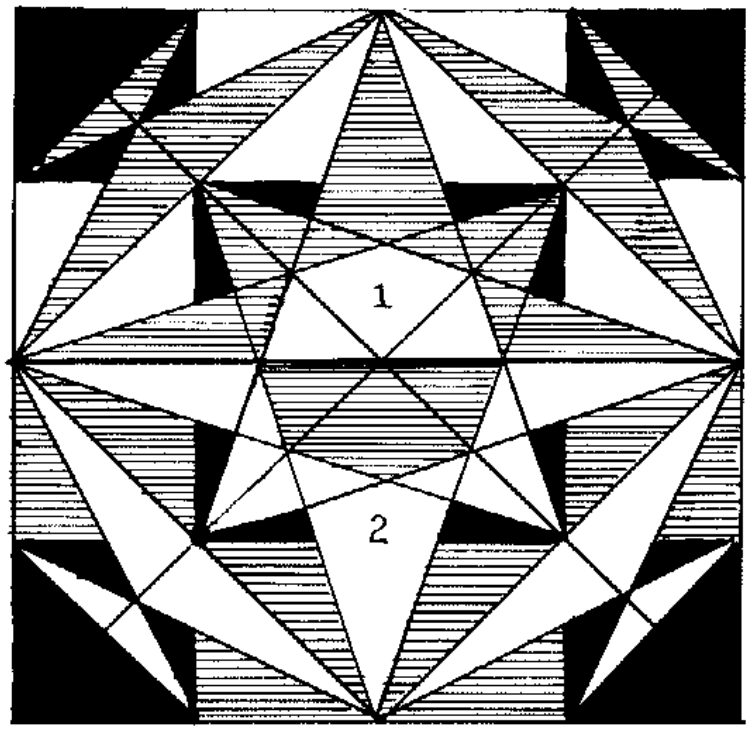
SUBDIVISION BY DIAGONALS, VERTICALS AND HORIZONTALS PRODUCES UNLIMITED DESIGN. TRY IT.



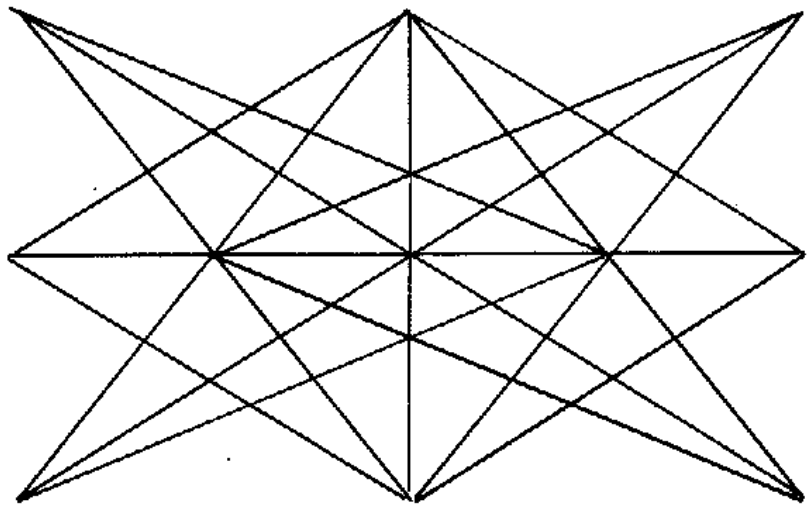




CHOOSE ANY POINTS, BEING CAREFUL TO REPEAT THE DIAGONAL BETWEEN ALL SIMILAR POINTS.

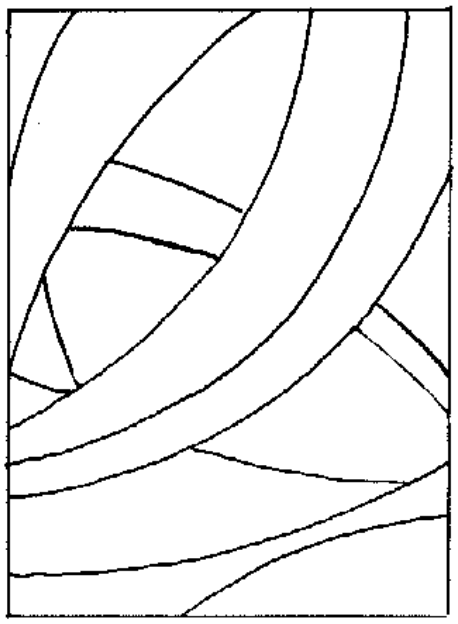


IF A DRAWING IS BASED UPON UNDERLYING LINEAR DESIGN, IT WILL PARTAKE OF ITS UNITY

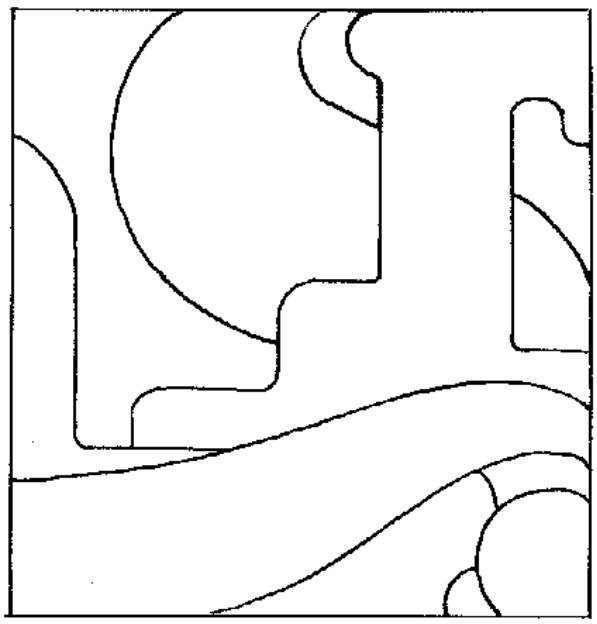


THIS PAGE IS TO IMPRESS UPON YOU THE BASIC RELATIONSHIP OF LINE TO DESIGN. DIVIDING SPACE EQUALLY PRODUCES "FORMAL" DESIGN. THEREFORE "INFORMAL" DESIGN IS BY UNEQUAL DIVISION. COMPOSITION IS ONE OR THE OTHER.

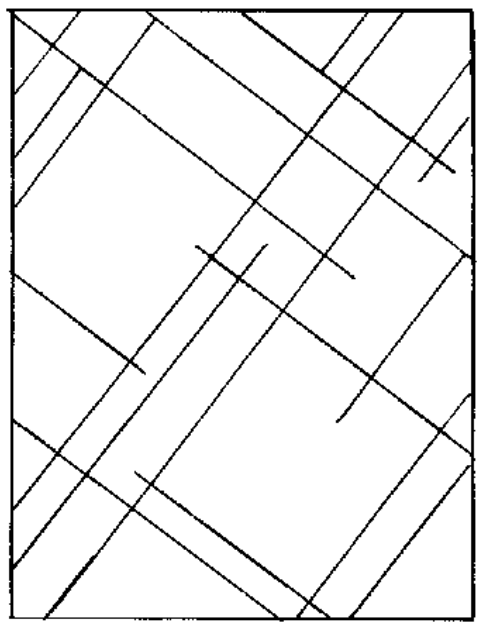
LINE PRODUCES INFORMAL DESIGN



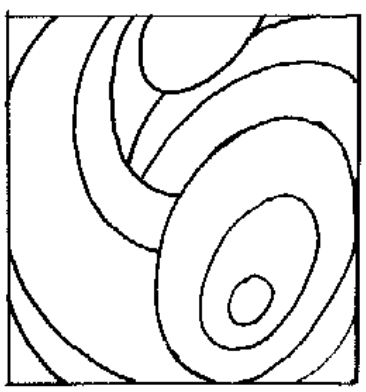
ARCS INTERLACED



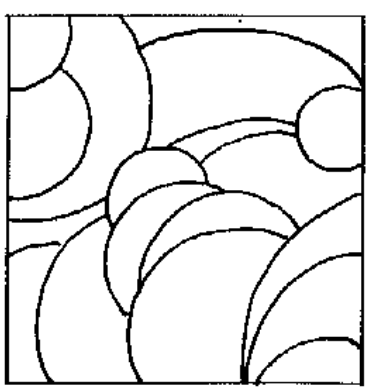
COMBINING HORIZONTALS AND PERPENDICULARS WITH CURVES.



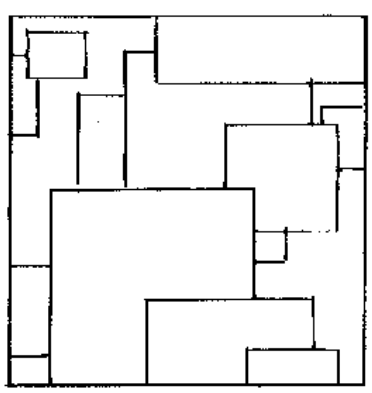
OBLIQUE LINES INTERLACED.



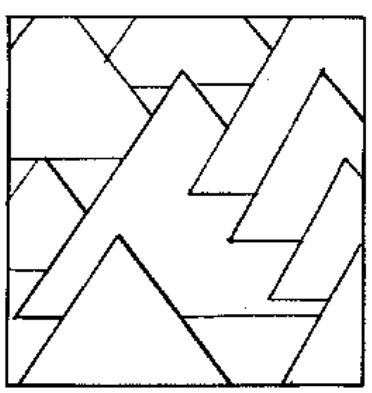
OVERLAPPING OVALS



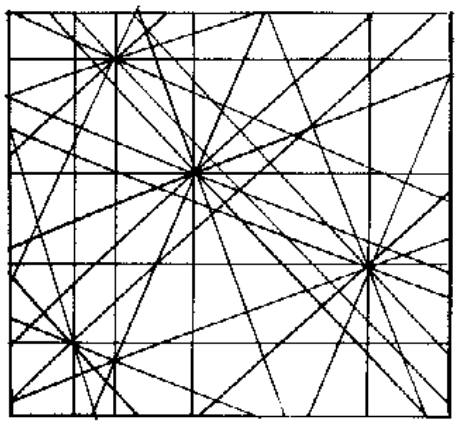
OVERLAPPING CIRCLES



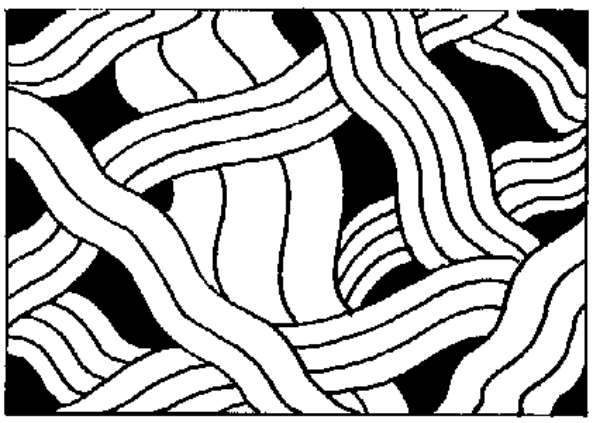
OVERLAPPING SQUARES



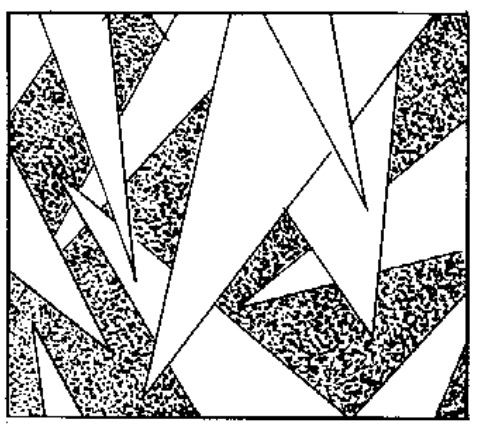
OVERLAPPING TRIANGLES



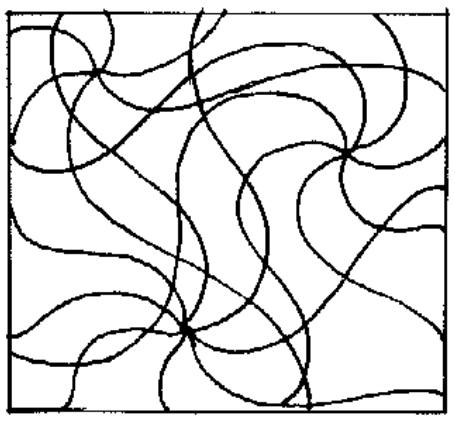
OVERLAPPING RADII



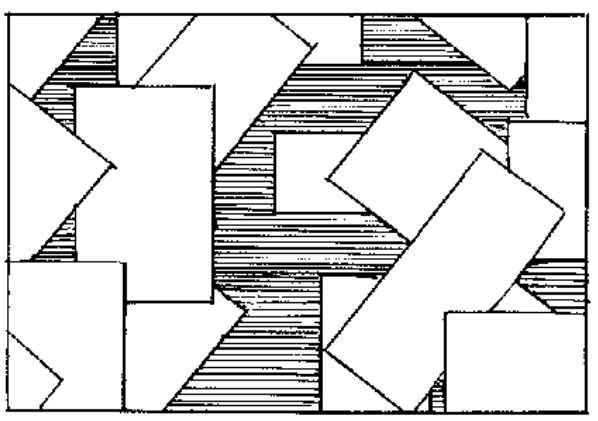
OVERLAPPING WAVY PARALLELS



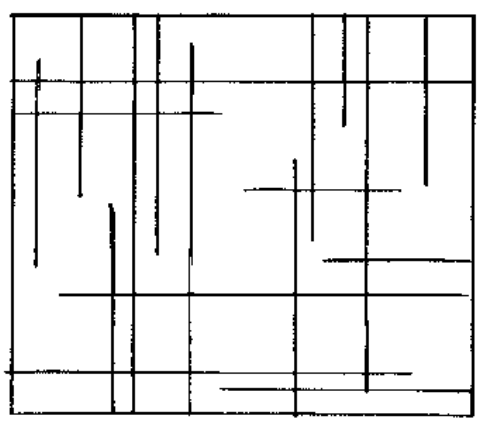
OVERLAPPING ANGLES



OVERLAPPING SPIRALS

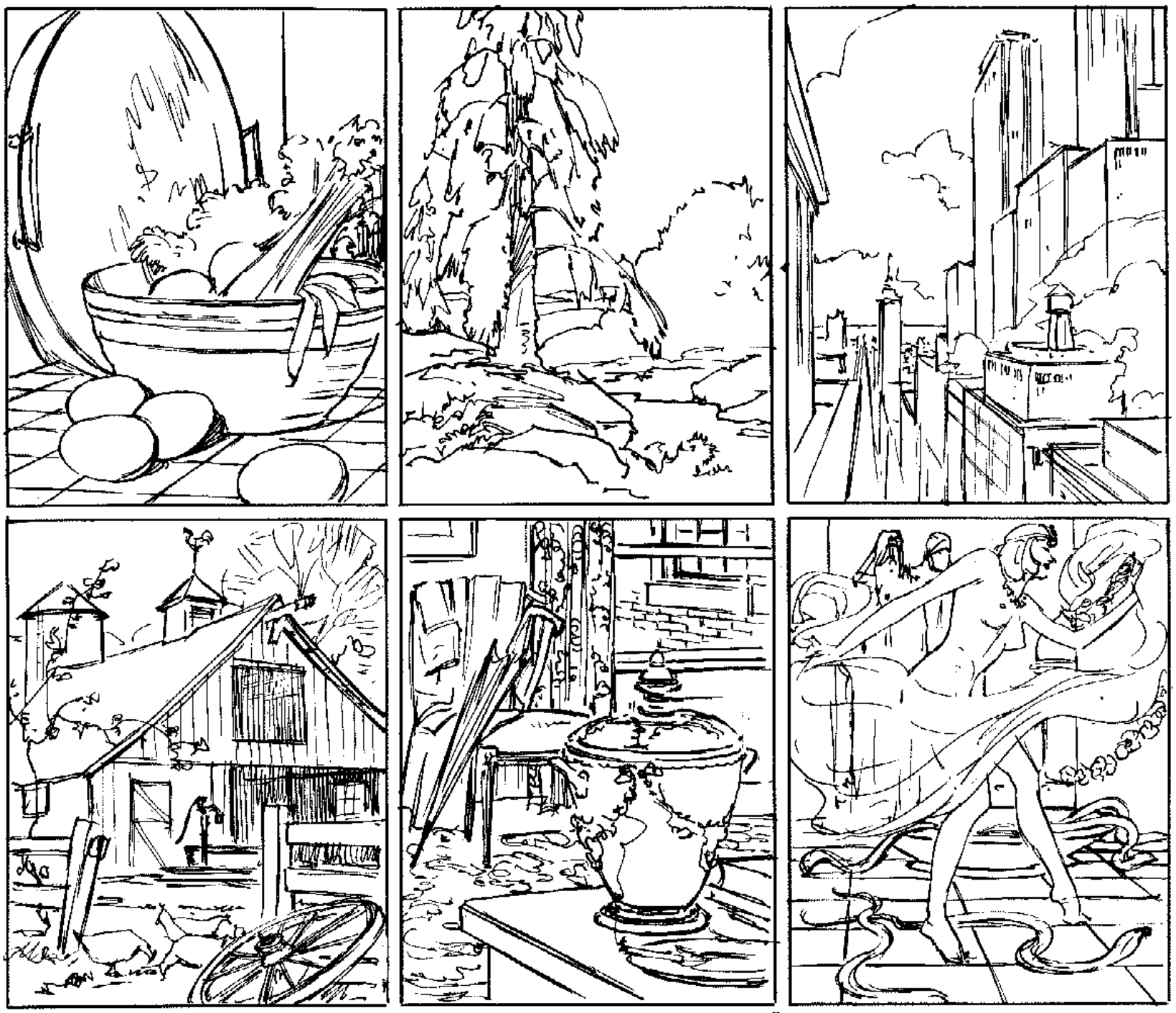


OVERLAPPING RECTANGLES



HORIZONTALS AND PERPENDICULARS

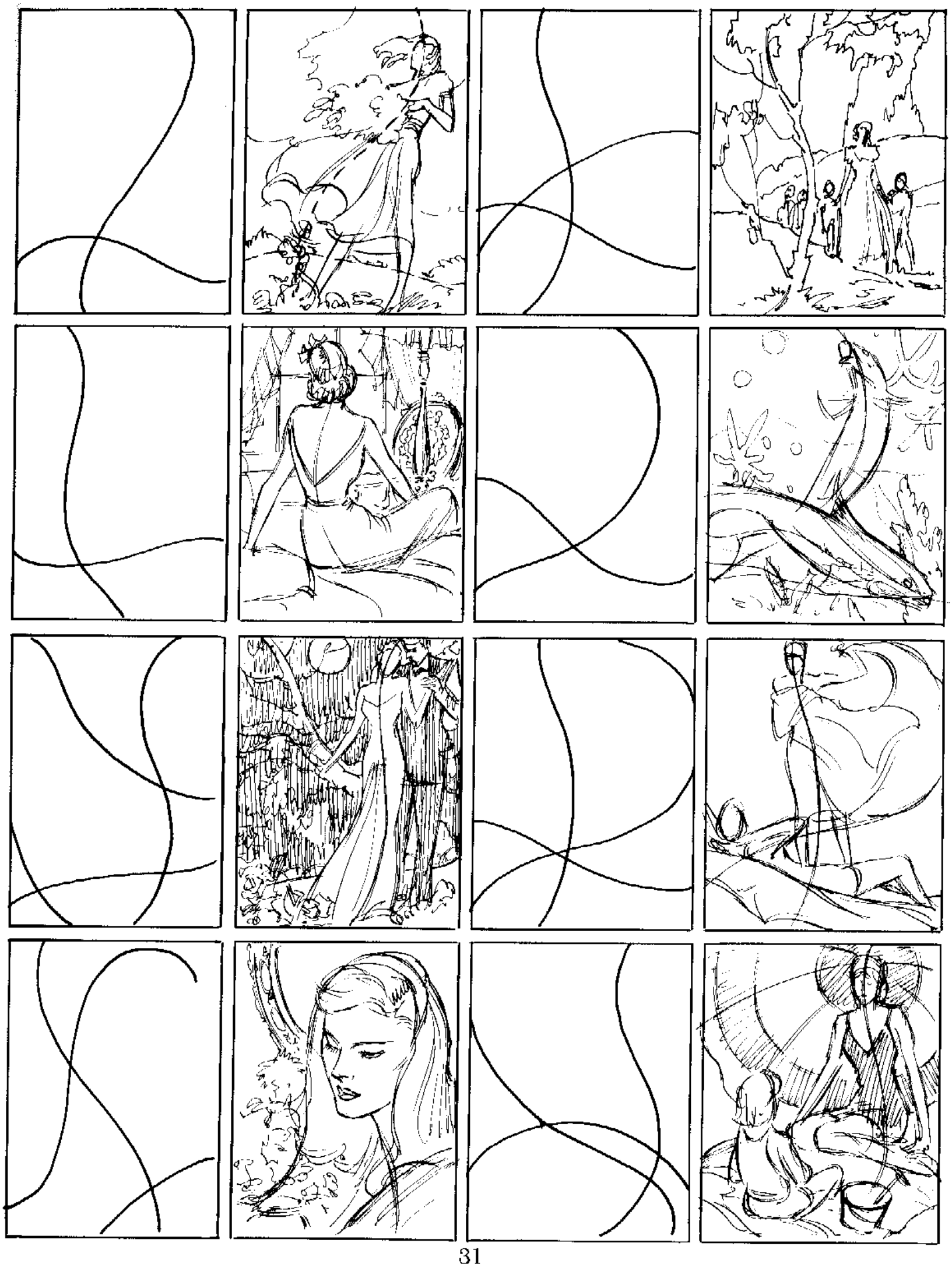
OVERLAPPING LINE AND AREAS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF COMPOSITION



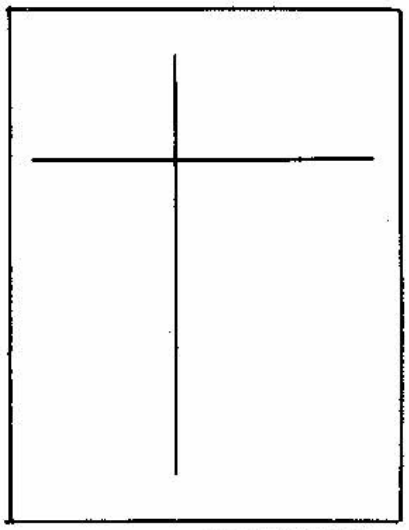
THE PRINCIPLE OF "OVERLAPPING AREAS, FORMS, AND CONTOURS" IS THE BASIS OF ALL PICTORIAL CREATION. SINCE LINE IS OUR FIRST MEANS OF DEFINING THESE, THEN LINEAR ARRANGEMENT BECOMES OUR FIRST CONSIDERATION. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GO ABOUT IT. SO LET US START.

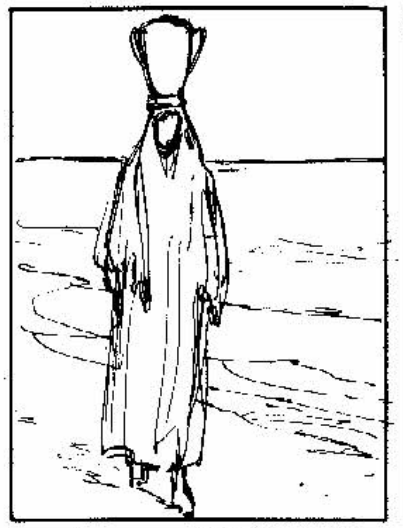
Nature is one vast panorama of contours and spaces. Everything is form, set into space. If we were to cut a rectangular opening in a piece of cardboard and look through it, nature would present us with a picture. Within the four limits of the opening, the space would become divided by spaces and contours. To that spacing and arrangement of contours we will give everlasting attention, for it is the basis of all pictorial approach. The novice snaps his camera carelessly at nature. The artist seeks to arrange it. From the artist's approach, almost anything is picture material, *since it is design and arrangement that makes pictures, regardless of subject.* Cut a cardboard so as to make a "picture finder." An opening of three by four inches is large enough. Look through it. Jot down, in miniature compositions, the linear arrangements you find. Your sense of arrangement is the first real indication of your creativeness. Walk about the house or grounds with a small sketch pad. Don't go any farther until you have done a dozen or two small roughs.

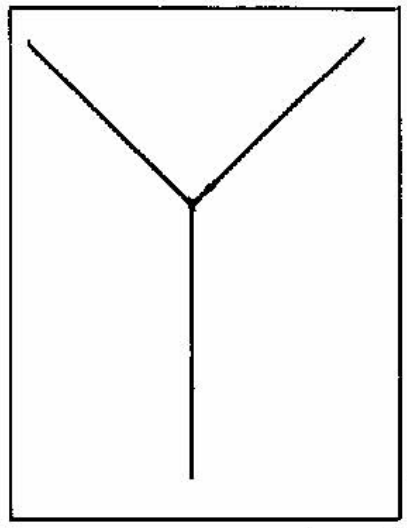
USING THE FIRST FUNCTION OF "LINE FOR ITSELF" FOR COMPOSITION

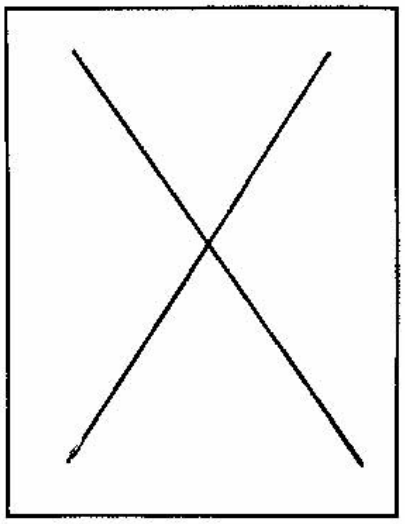


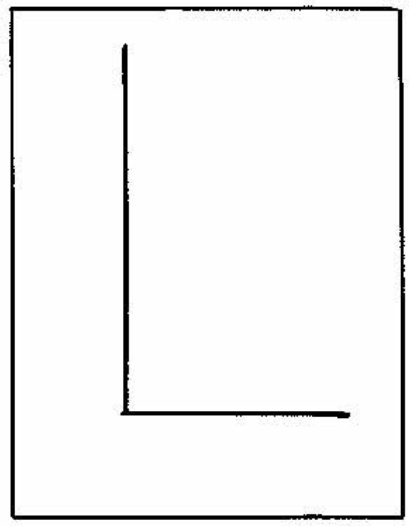
COMPOSITION MAY BE BASED ON LETTERS AND SYMBOLS

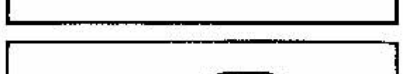


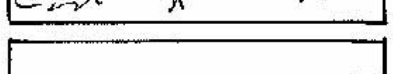


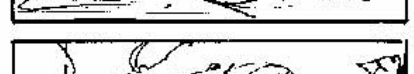


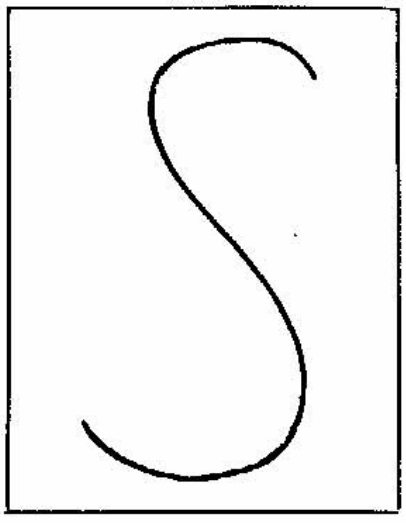


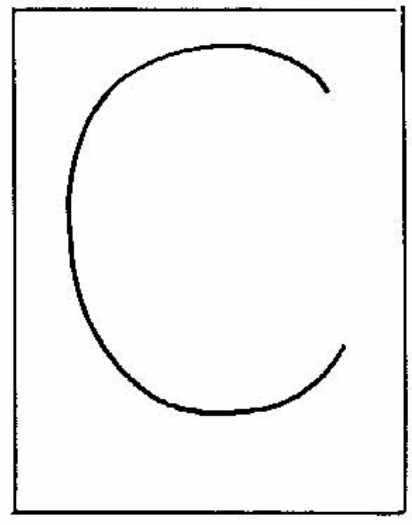


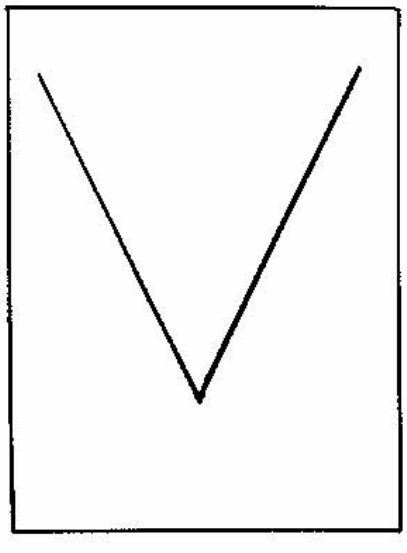


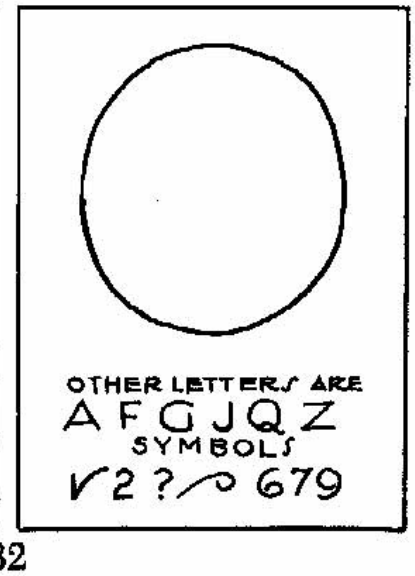




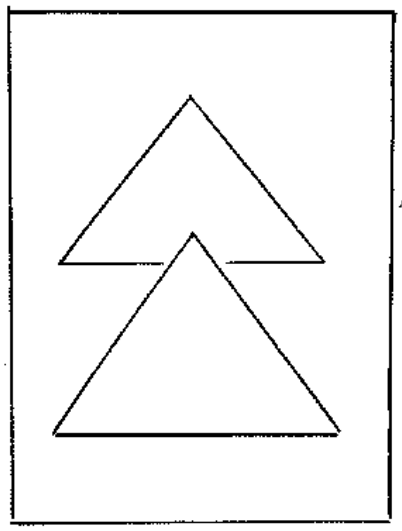


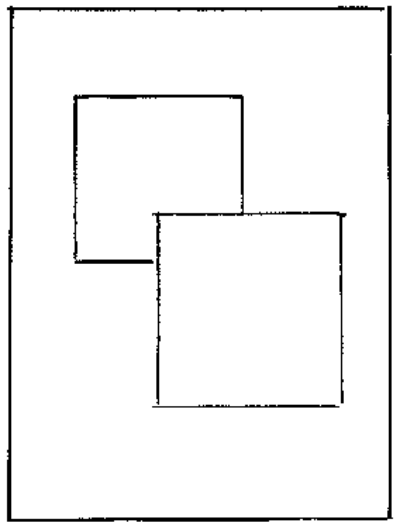


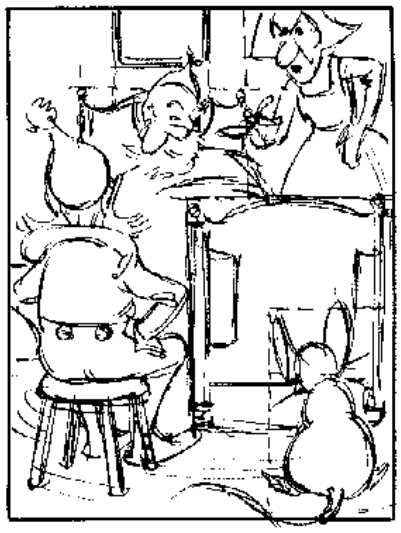


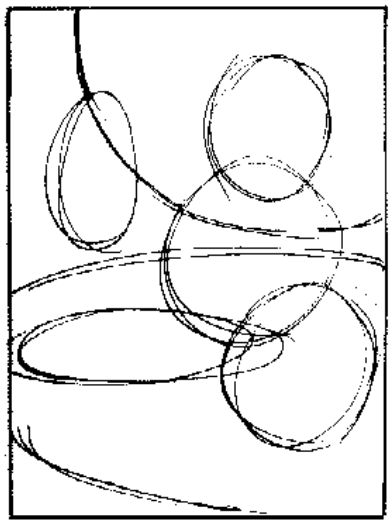


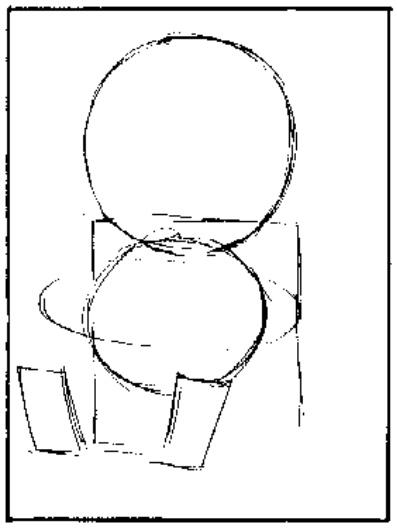
COMPOSITION MAY BE BASED ON GEOMETRIC FORMS

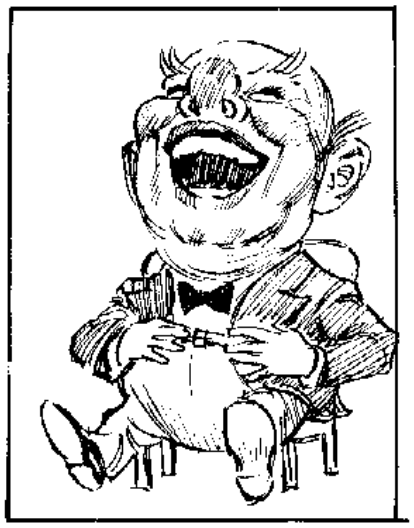


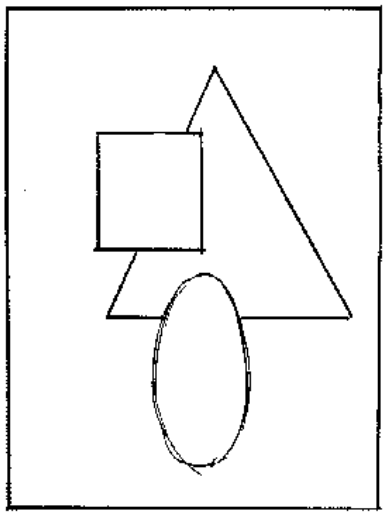


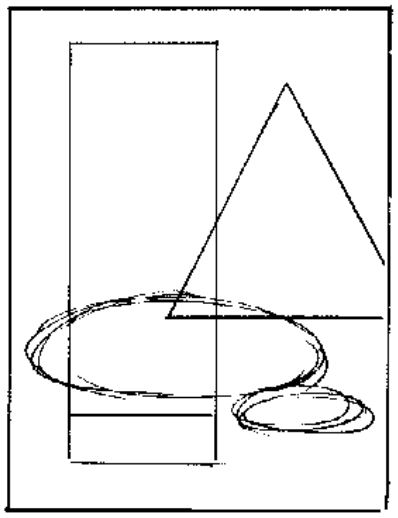


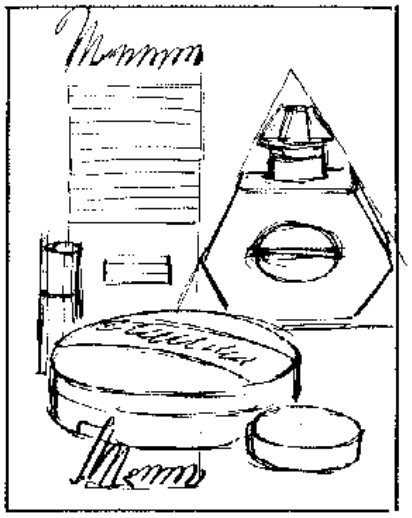


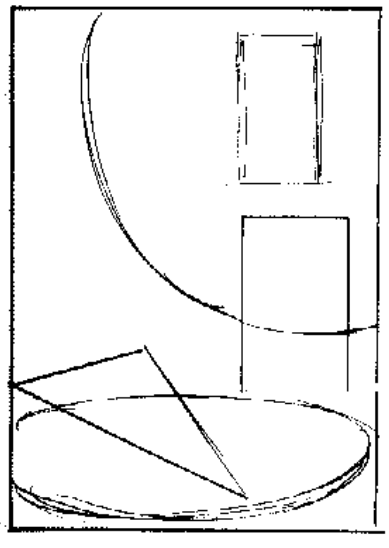


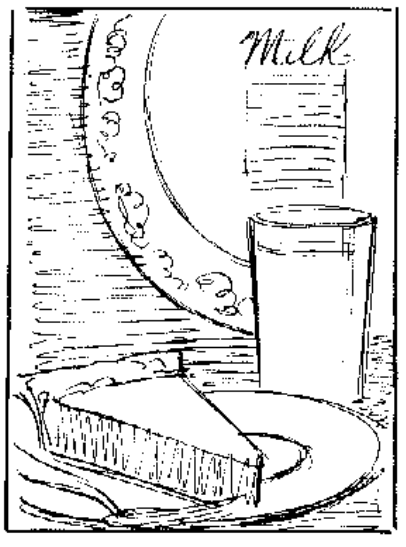


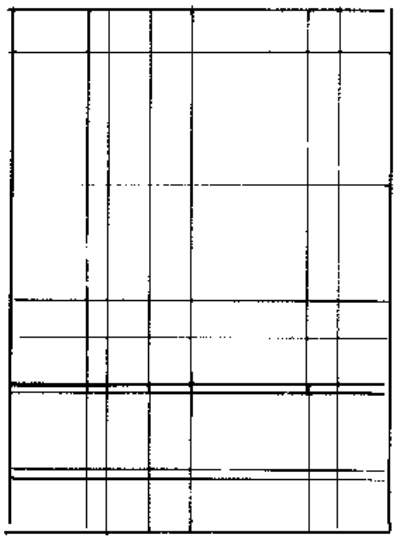


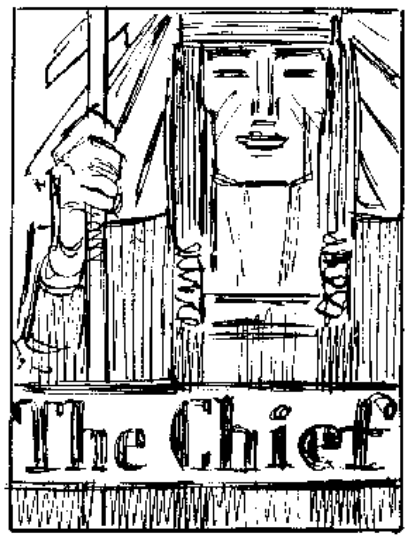




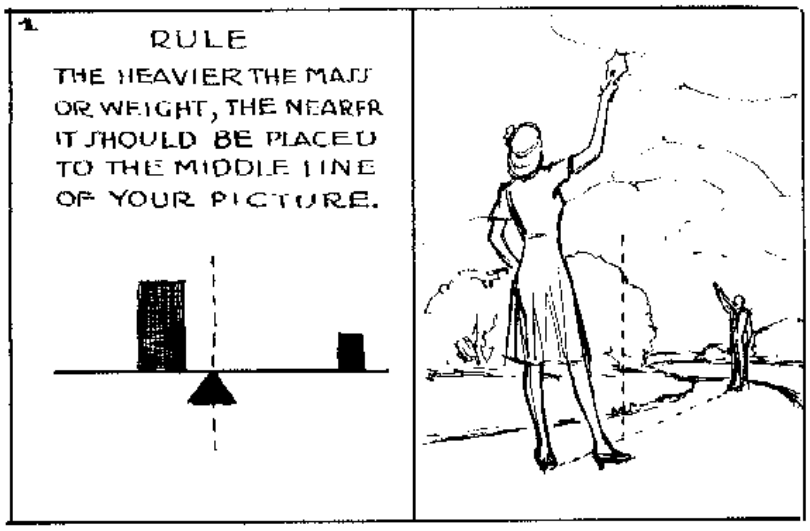






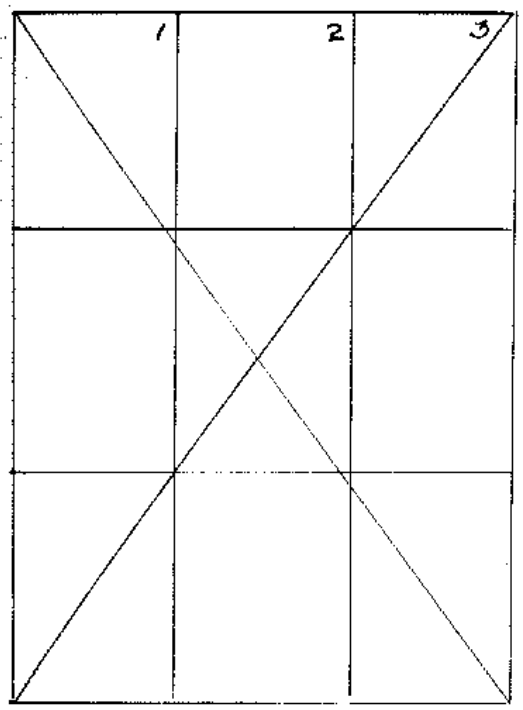


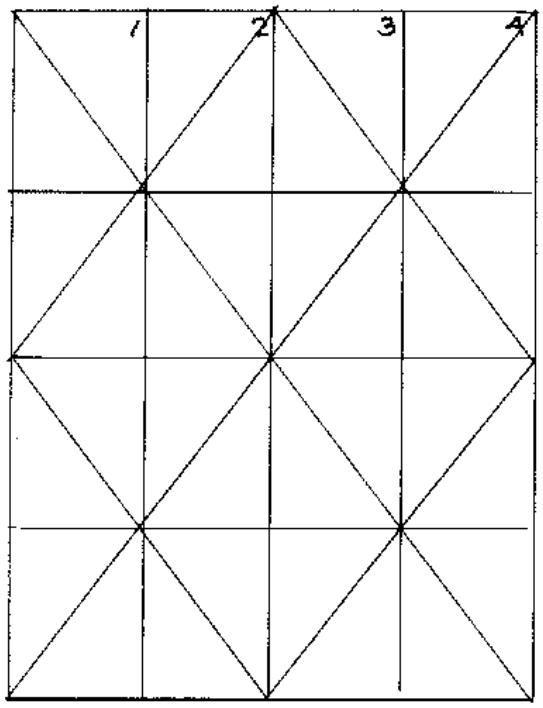
THE "FULCRUM-LEVER" PRINCIPLE APPLIED TO COMPOSITION

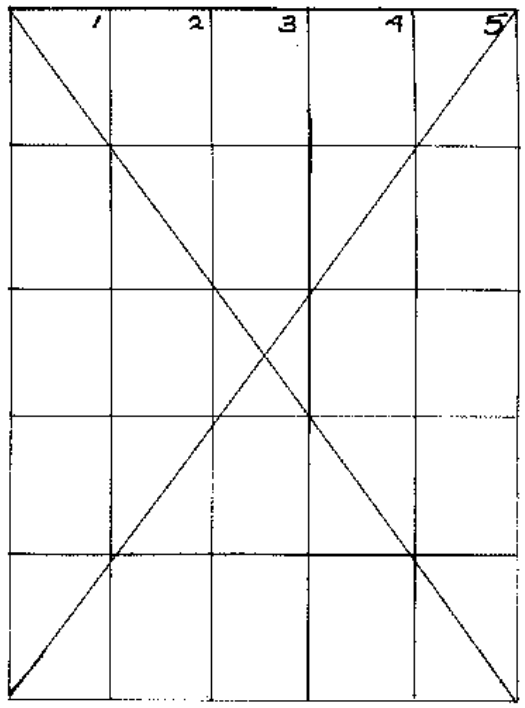


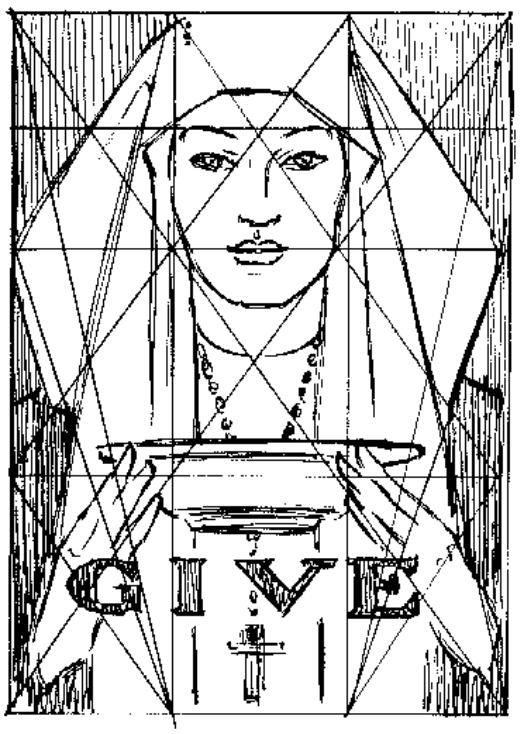
To be pleasing, the material within a picture needs balance, or should seem to be pleasantly reposing within the picture limits. Balance is obviously "off" when we feel that the limits would seem better if moved over, or more space added or cut away. This is the best guide we have, for there are no infallible rules of composition. About the only rule is that we give the greatest variety of spaces possible, no two duplicating one another in size or shape (except in strictly formal arrangements, where all things are balanced equally on each side). If two forms are equal, let one overlap the other so as to change the contour. Variety is the spice of composition. We make a small weight balance a heavier one by placing it farther away from the middle of the subject, or the fulcrum, which is the middle point of balance. Balance in composition is a sense of equilibrium between the masses of light and dark, or of the area and bulk of one thing balancing another. The heavier the mass, the nearer the middle—the smaller the mass, the nearer the edge—is a good axiom.

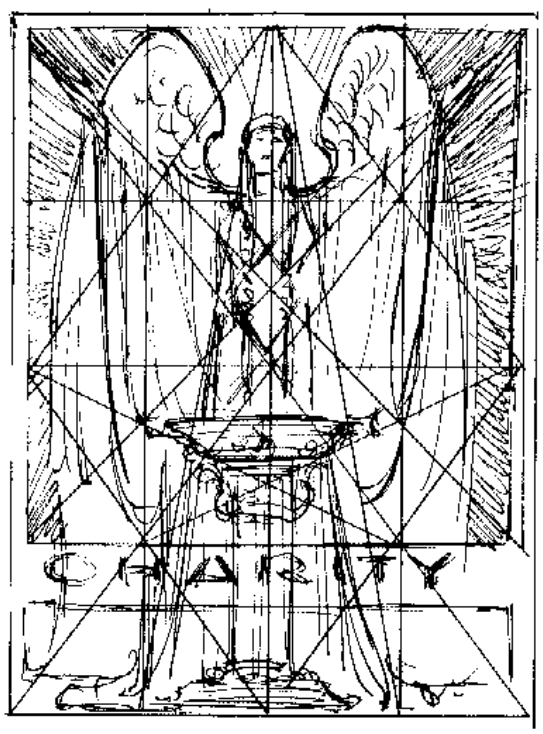
USE FORMAL SUBDIVISION FOR SYMMETRICAL COMPOSITION

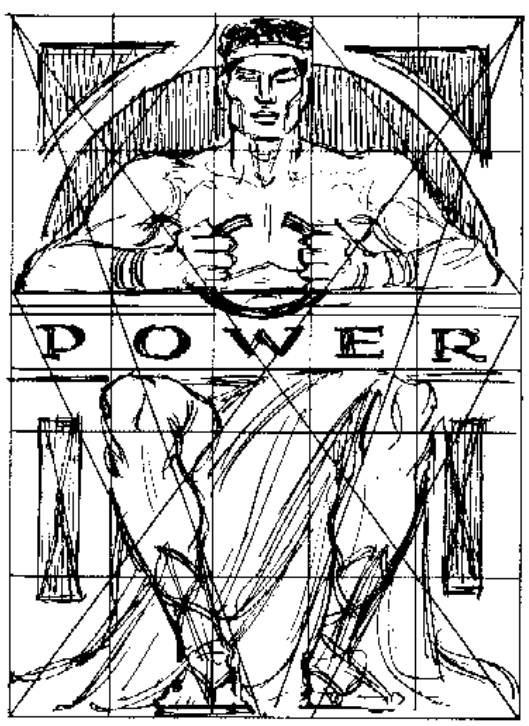










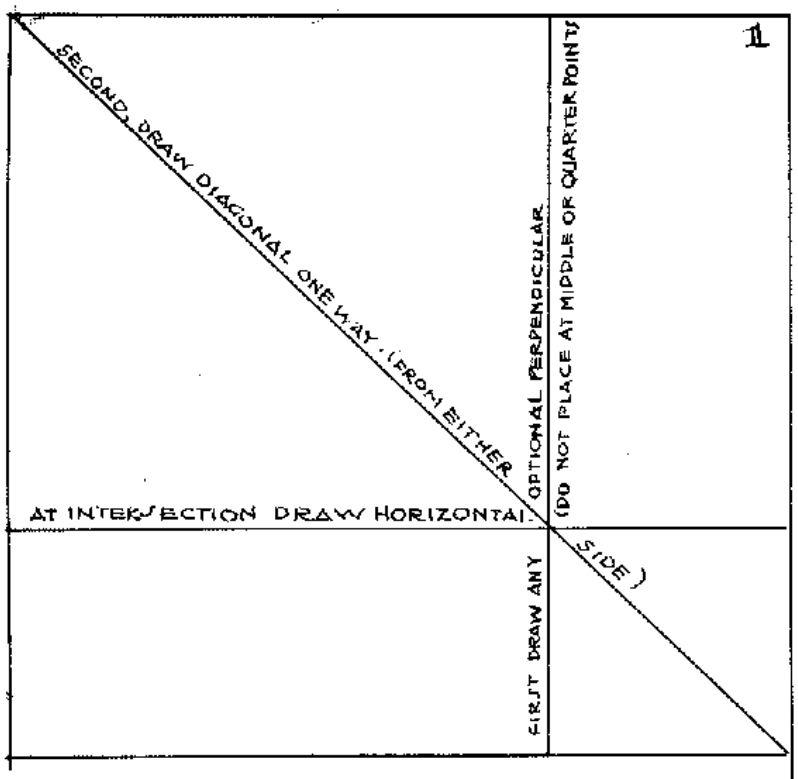


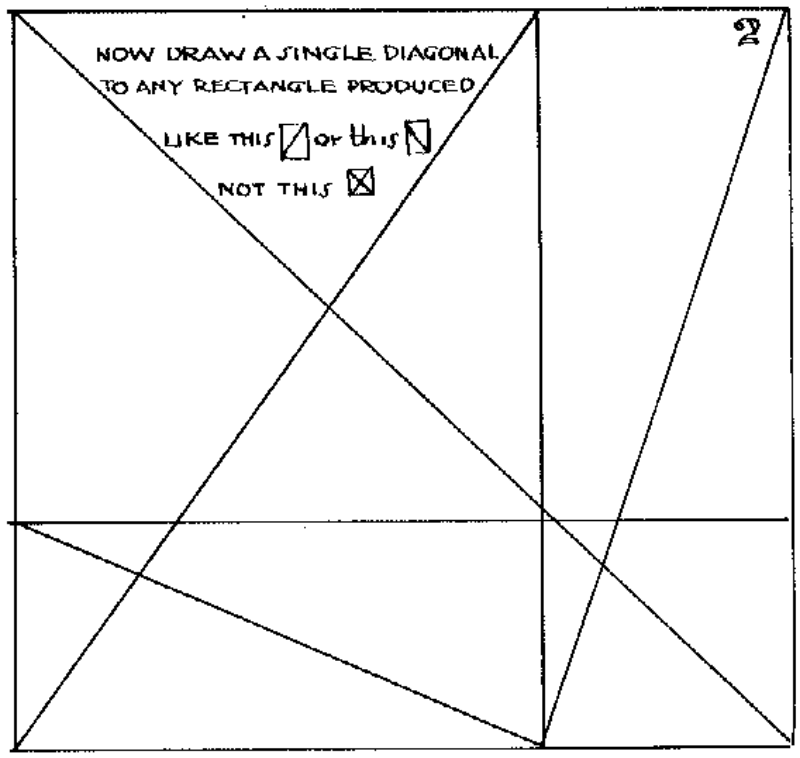
FORMAL DIVISION APPLIES BEST TO SUBJECTS OF A DIGNIFIED OR RELIGIOUS NATURE

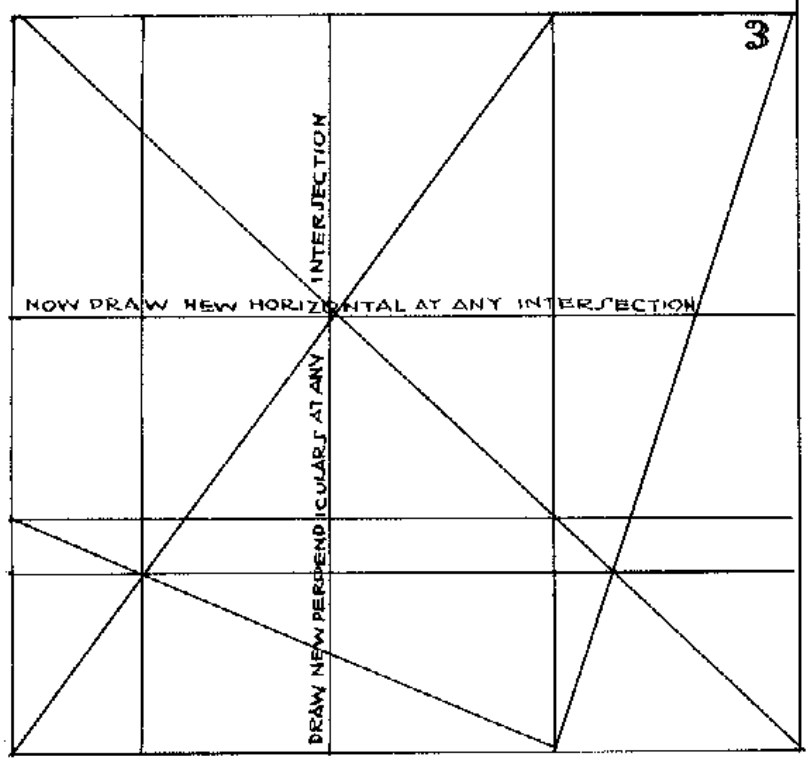
There are times when we wish to achieve great dignity of arrangement. Since the Creator's basic design for animate form is the duplication of one side by the other, such as the two sides of the human body, arrangement based on the same plan takes on the same sort of dignity. It does not mean that each side must duplicate exactly, but there should be a feeling of complete equalization of the units or masses, the line and spaces, of one side with the other. Church murals invariably follow this plan. It may be used to great advantage in symbolical subjects, appeals for charity, heroic subjects, or to suggest peace and serenity. Formal balance was almost the only approach in earlier times, and great compositions have been built with it. It is largely the formality of design which lends such magnificence to the work of Michelangelo, Rubens, and Raphael.

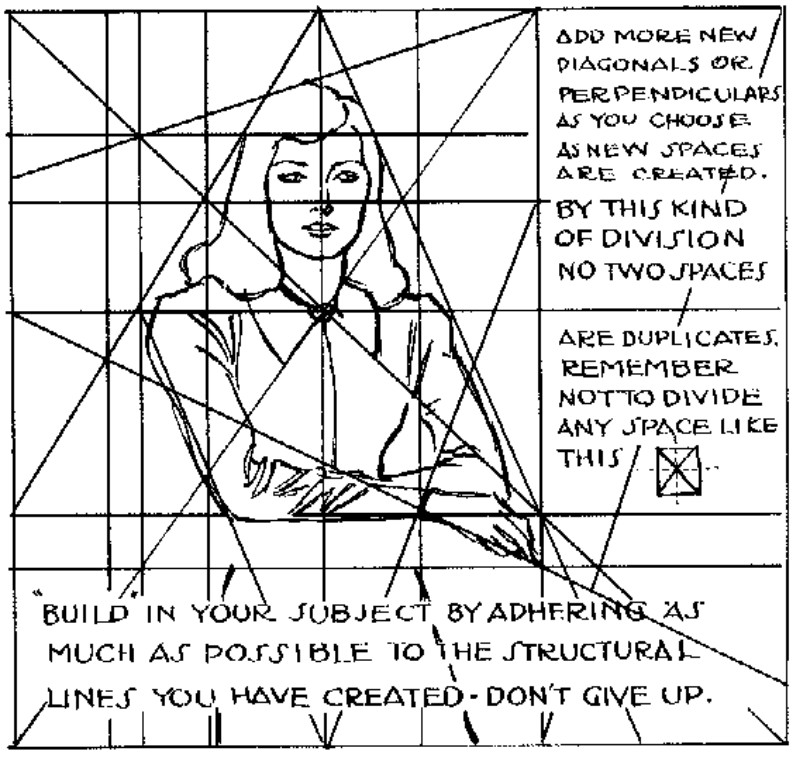
Formal subdivision may also be used informally if one is adept enough. I have introduced on the next page another method, quite apart from either formal division of space or dynamic symmetry. I have never found either as satisfactory as this new approach, and I hope it will prove of great benefit to others.

INTRODUCING INFORMAL SUBDIVISION





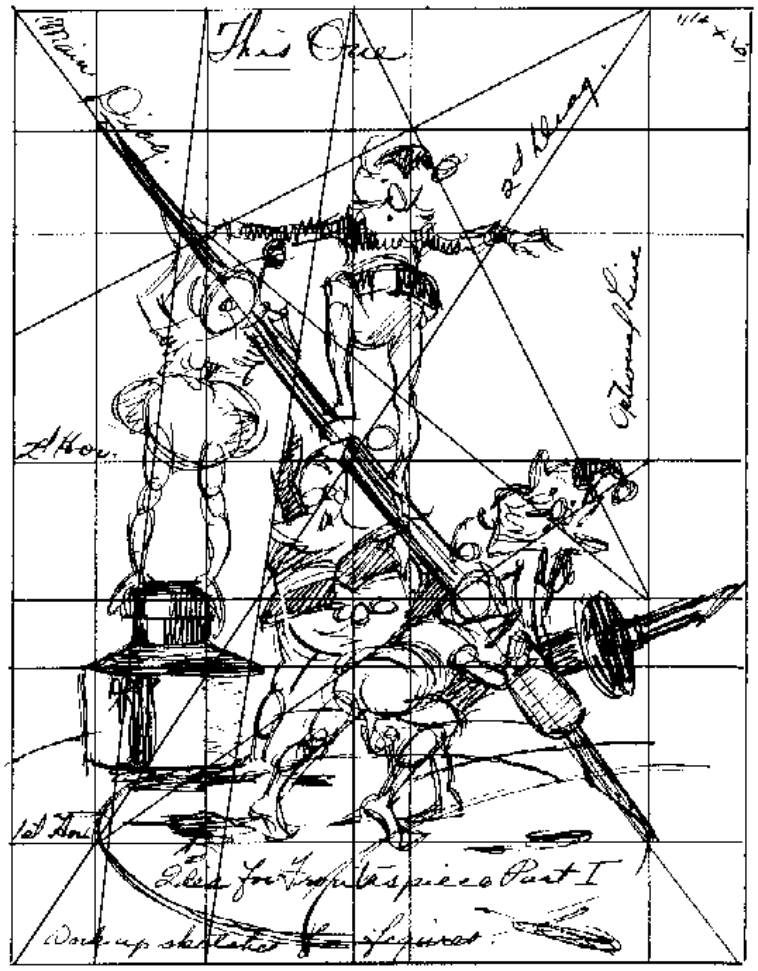




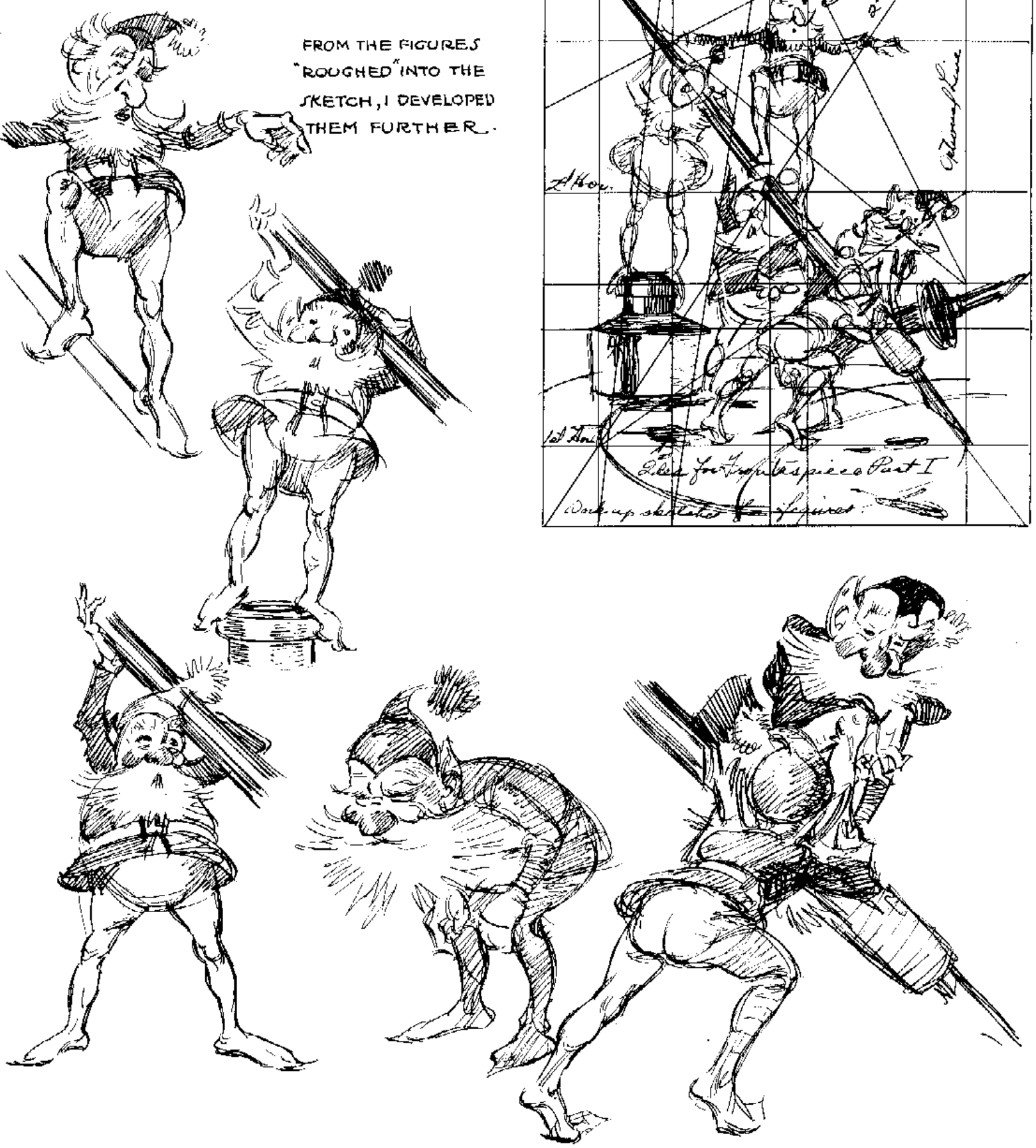
This is a plan of subdivision of my own. It offers greater freedom to the artist. Study it. It will help you to divide space unequally and interestingly. Start by dividing the whole space unequally with a single (optional) line. It is best to avoid placing the line at a point which would be one-half, one-third, or one-fourth of the whole space. Then draw one diagonal of the *whole* space from diagonally opposite corners. At the intersection of the diagonal and your first line, draw a horizontal line across the space. Now draw diagonals in any of the resulting rectangles, but only one to a space. Two diagonals crossing like an X would divide the rectangle equally, which we do not want. Now you may draw horizontals or perpendiculars at any intersection, thus making more rectangles to divide by diagonals again. In this manner you will never break up the same shape twice in the same way. It offers a great deal of suggestion for the placement of figures, spacing, and contours, with no two spaces being exactly equal or duplicated, except the two halves on each side of the single diagonal. If you have a subject in mind you will begin to see it develop.

A DEMONSTRATION OF INFORMAL SUBDIVISION

I HAD ONLY AN IDEA IN MIND OF SHOWING A LOT OF LITTLE GNOMES PLAYING WITH A PEN. SO FAR I HAD NO IDEA OF HOW I WOULD ARRANGE THEM. I DIVIDED MY SPACE AS SHOWN. THE ABSTRACT SHAPES THUS SUGGESTED THE COMPOSITION.

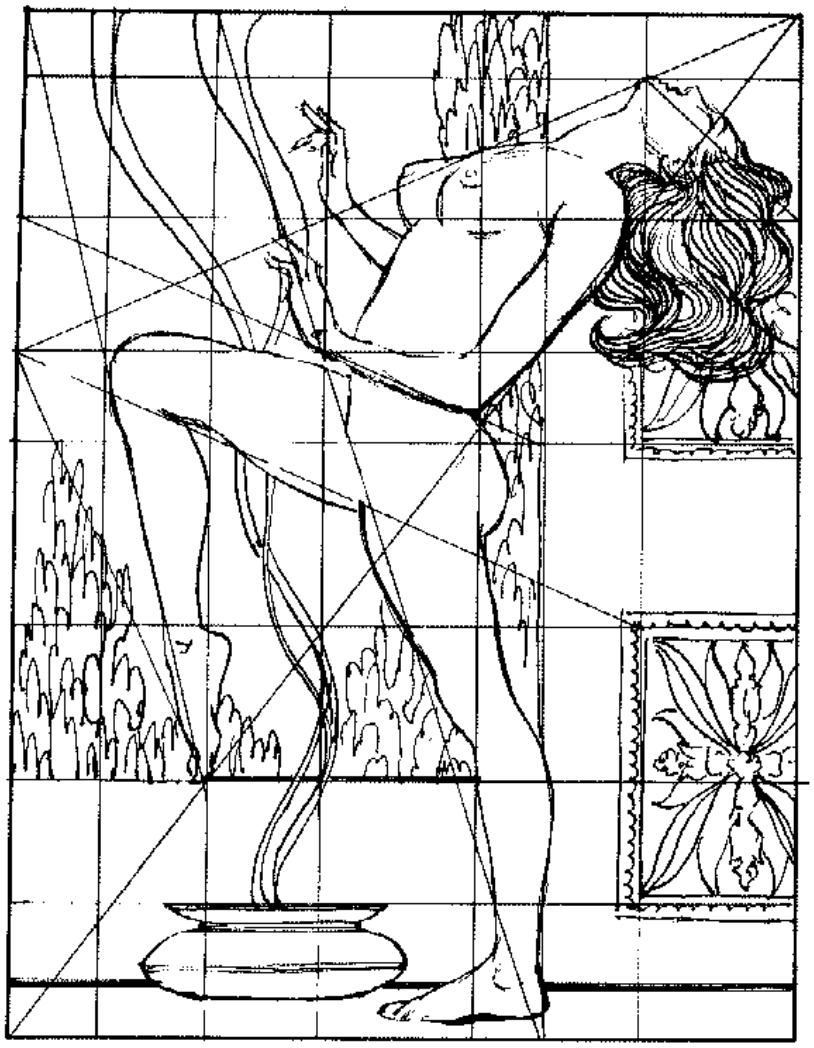


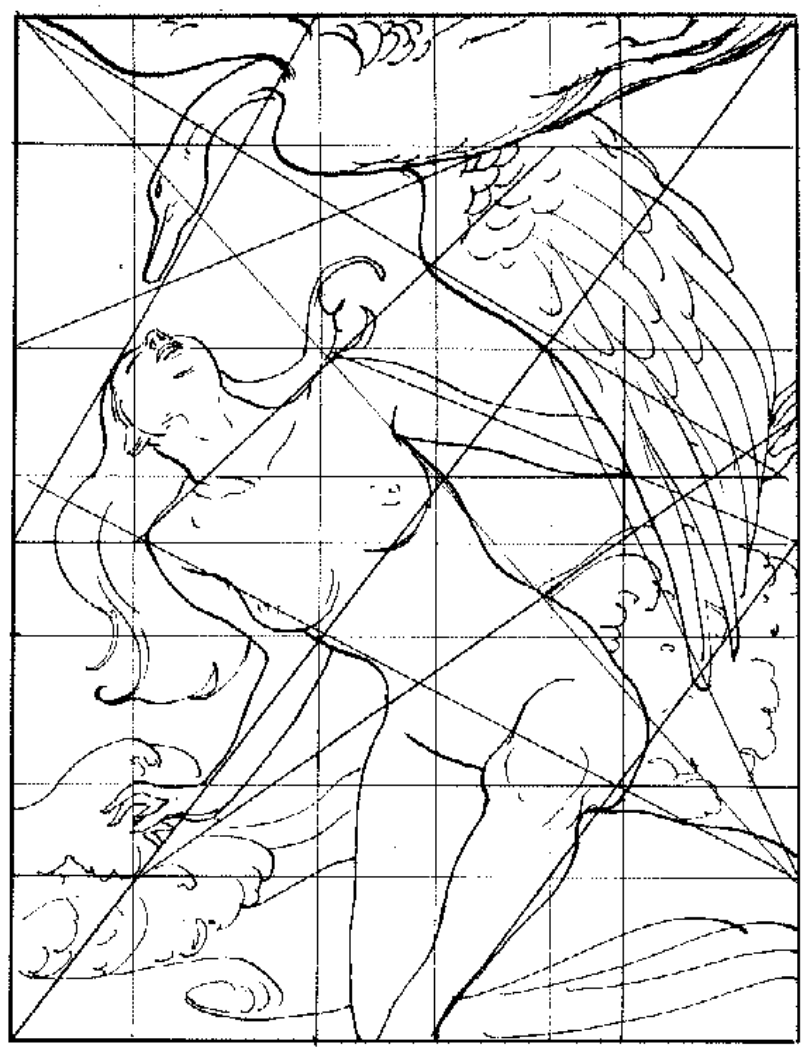
FROM THE FIGURES "ROUGHED" INTO THE SKETCH, I DEVELOPED THEM FURTHER.

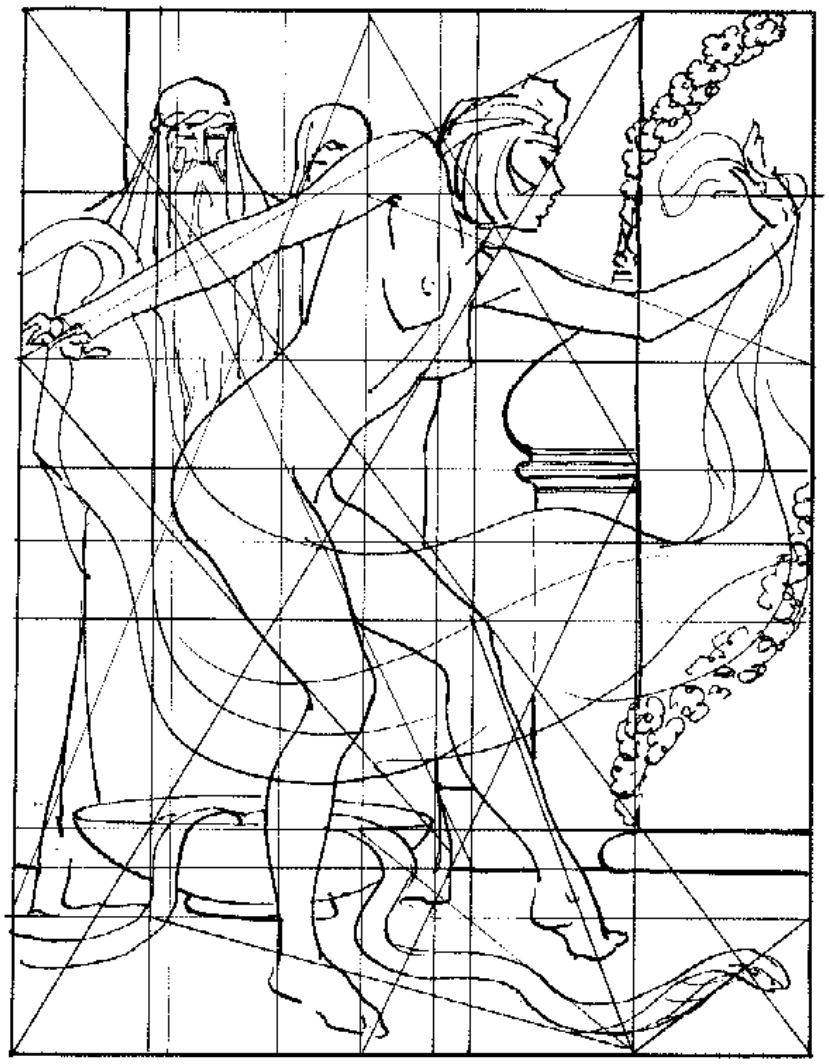


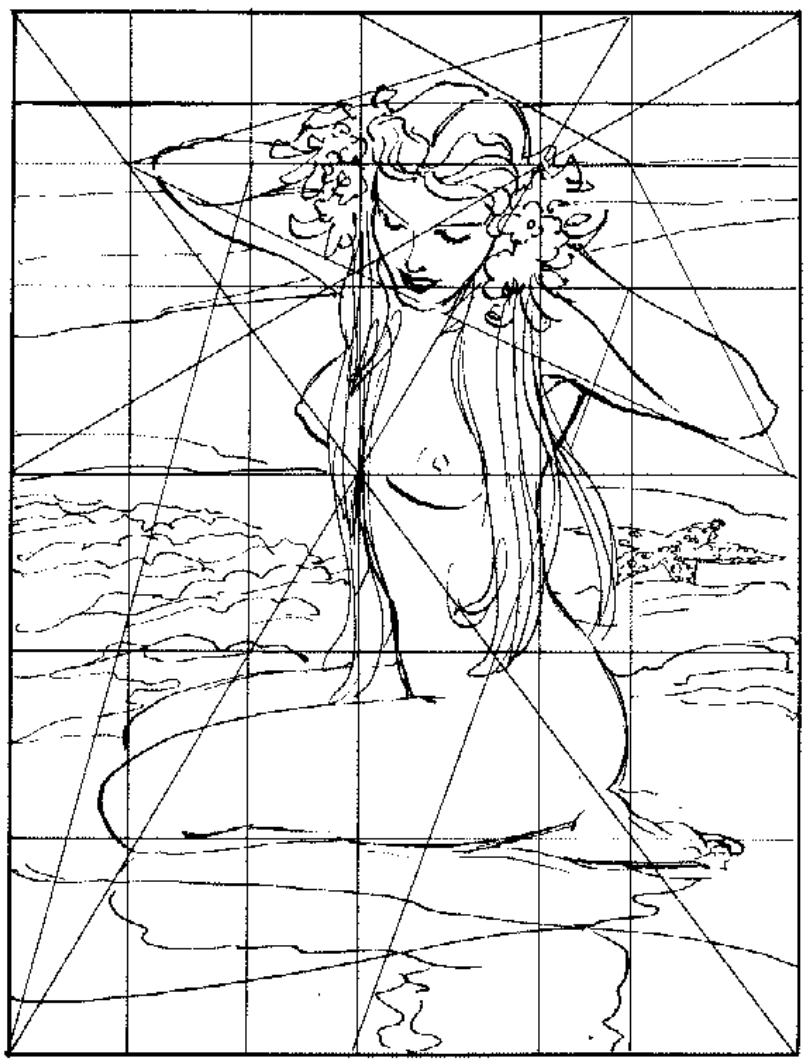
FROM THIS PRELIMINARY WORK, THE FINISHED FRONTISPIECE TO PART ONE WAS CREATED.

FIGURE COMPOSITIONS BASED ON INFORMAL SUBDIVISION

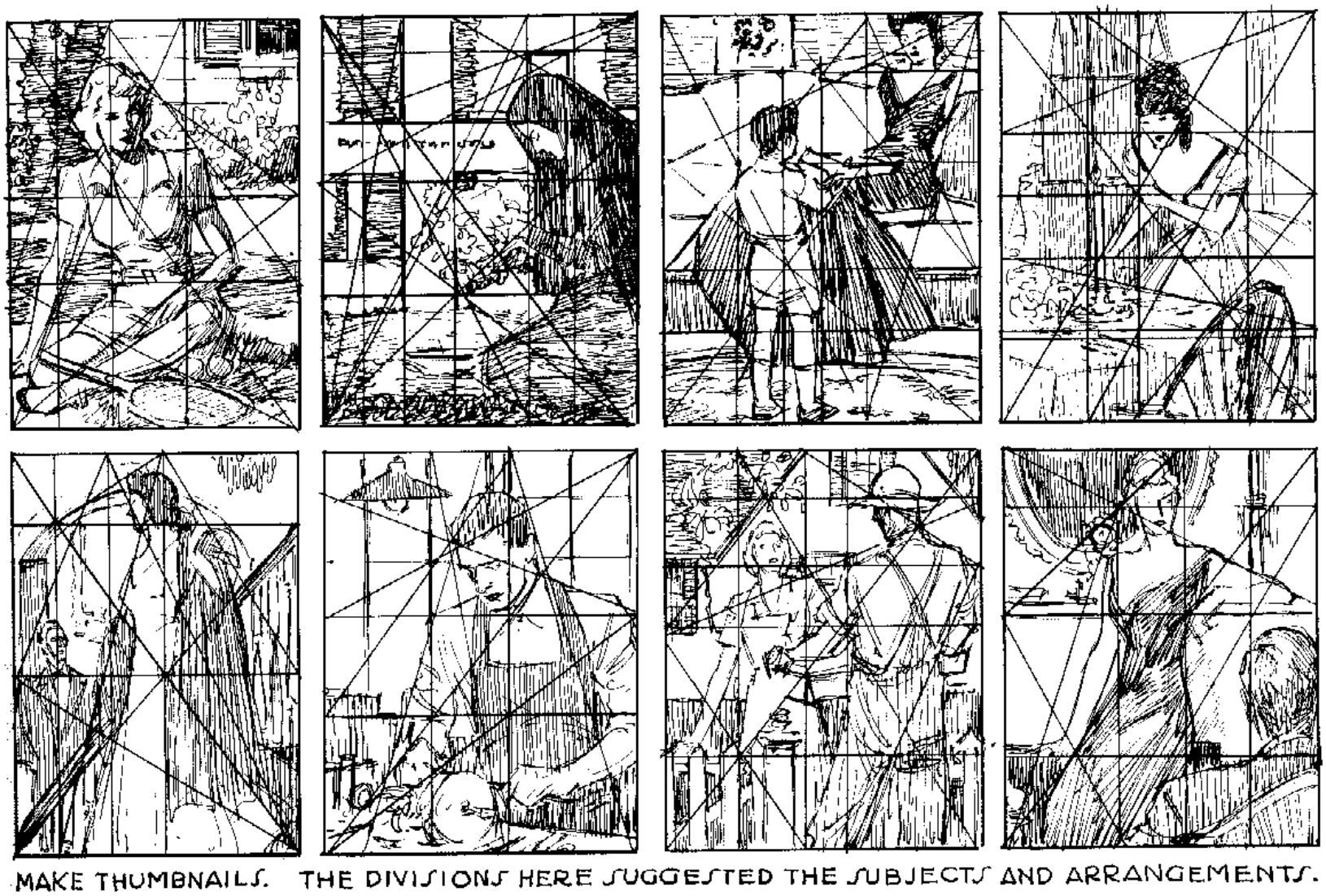








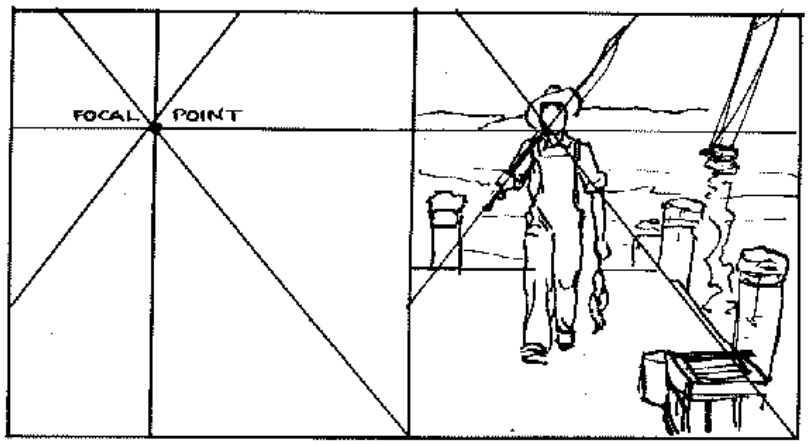
INFORMAL SUBDIVISION IS PURELY CREATIVE, NOT MECHANICAL



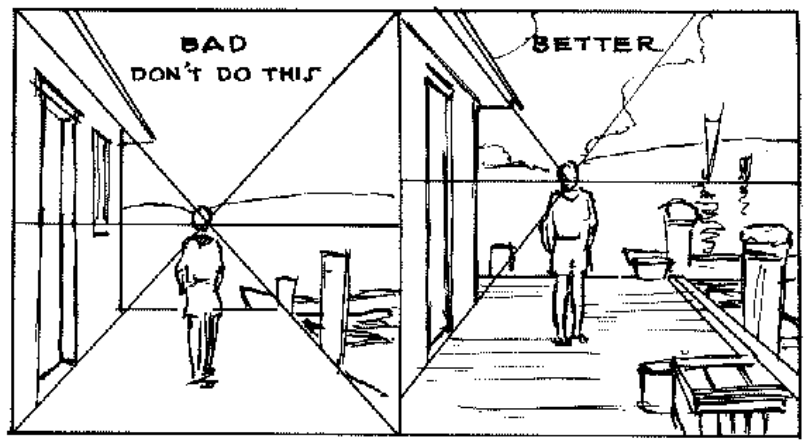
MAKE THUMBNAILS. THE DIVISIONS HERE SUGGESTED THE SUBJECTS AND ARRANGEMENTS.

Since, when a space is divided in the manner shown in these pages, selection plays a great part, and invention the rest, it cannot avoid being creative. That is its strongest recommendation, in comparison with forms of subdivision that start you out with a "set" or formal arrangement to begin with. You start inventing with your first line when you use informal subdivision. It helps to get you over the emptiness of blank paper before you, without an idea in your head. That, I assure you, is the feeling most of us experience, and you probably already know what I mean. If you have a subject in mind, it will develop with one or two tries. If you have no subject in mind, pretty soon the lines will start suggesting something, as these did in the little drawings above. In starting out I had no intimation of what the subjects would be. This method is invaluable in working up ideas, layouts, small compositions. As the ideas develop they can be carried out with models, clippings, and so forth. When the original subdividing lines are erased, it is amazing how well the composition balances or "hangs together." I urge you not to pass this up without a tryout. It has often saved the day for me, and I admit that even in my own work I am often so "stymied" for a good arrangement that I turn to it in great relief. While all of the compositions of the book are not so based, many of them are, and in my estimation the better ones. Any one of the arrangements on this or the preceding pages would be intriguing to do as a painting, and I only wish I had the space. Most artists develop an eye for composition eventually, but this device will get you well on the way. Draw the dividing lines lightly so they can be easily erased.

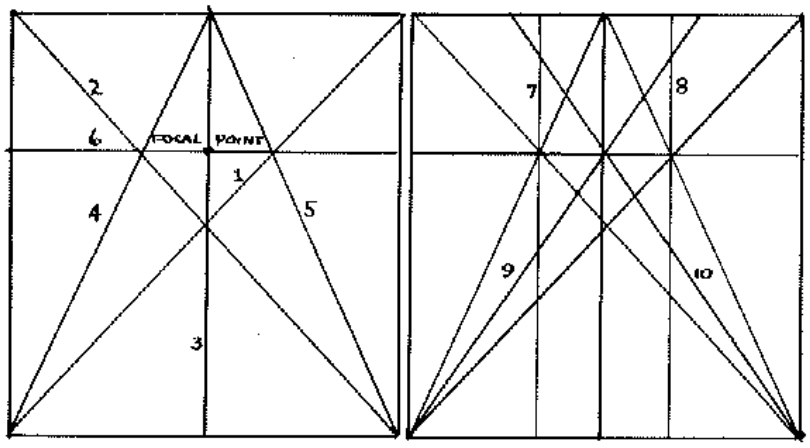
USING LINE TO PRODUCE A FOCAL POINT IN SUBJECT



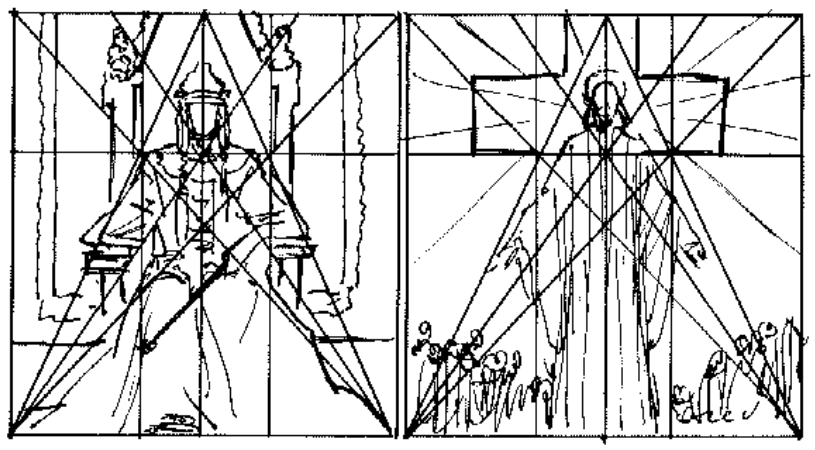
ANY COMMON JUNCTION OF LINES PRODUCES A FOCAL POINT. ANY LINES POINTING TO A VANISHING POINT OR JUNCTION MAKE A FOCAL POINT. A HEAD MAY WELL BE PLACED AT SUCH A POINT.



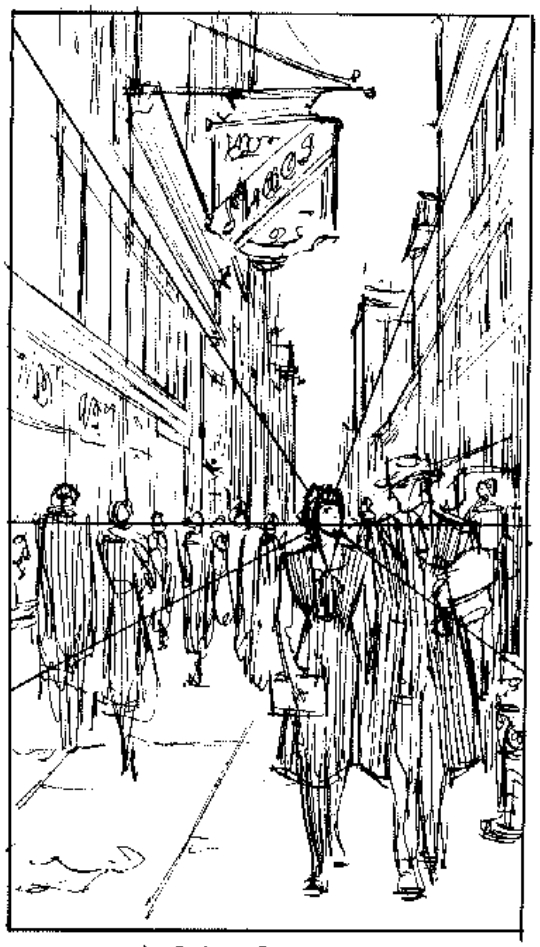
BUT NEVER PLACE A FOCAL POINT EXACTLY IN THE CENTER OF YOUR PICTURE AREA. IT IS ALSO WELL TO AVOID USING DIAGONALS THAT BISECT THE CORNERS AS MAIN LINES.



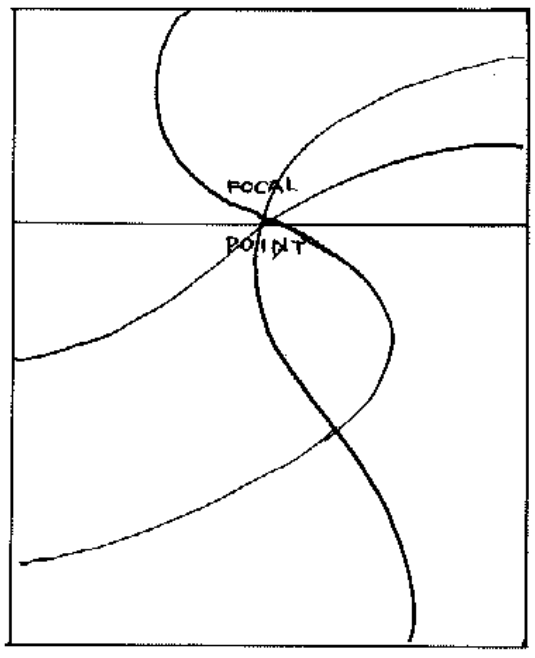
IN FORMAL DESIGN PLACE THE FOCAL POINT ABOVE OR BELOW THE MIDDLE. HERE IS A GOOD LAYOUT.



THIS BASIC ARRANGEMENT CAN BE USED FOR MANY DESIGNS. BUILD YOUR SUBJECT AS YOU WISH.



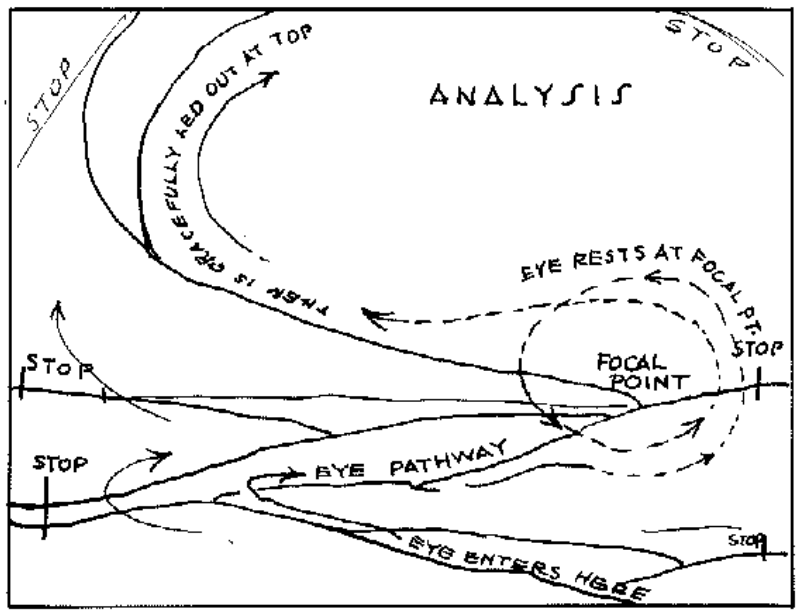
THE VANISHING POINT IS THE "POSITION OF HONOR", PICTORIALLY. IT SHOULD GO TO MAIN CHARACTER.



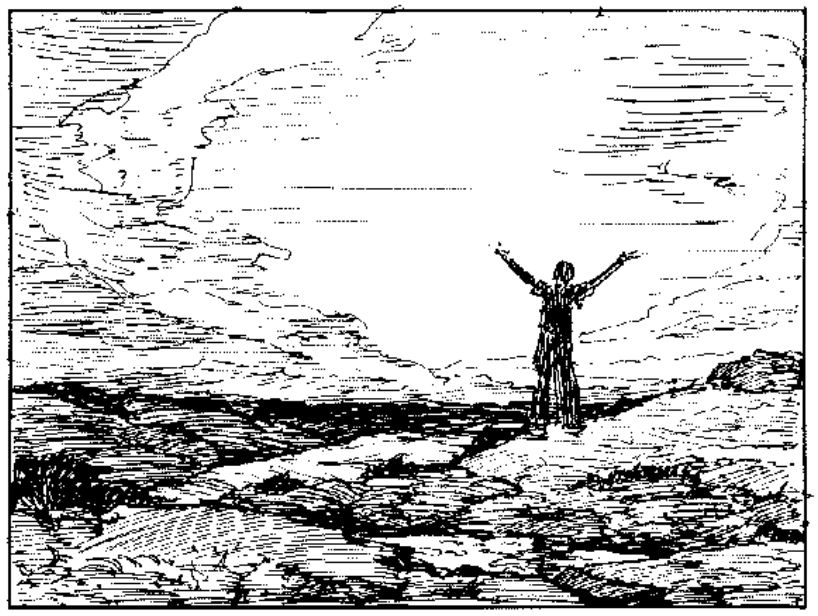
SPIRALS MAY ALSO BE USED TO FOCUS ATTENTION. TAKE IT AS A RULE THAT LINES SHOULD LEAD TO AND CROSS AT THE MAIN POINT OF INTEREST.

YOU WILL OFTEN WONDER HOW TO FOCUS ATTENTION AND INTEREST UPON A CERTAIN HEAD, FIGURE OR SPOT. STUDY THIS PAGE CAREFULLY. EVERY GOOD PICTURE SHOULD HAVE A MAIN FOCAL POINT AND ALL LINES SHOULD DRAW THE EYE TOWARD THAT SPOT. THE OLD SAYING "ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME" IS FUNDAMENTAL IN GOOD COMPOSITION. YOUR "ROADS" ARE LINES.

PROVIDING AN "EYE PATHWAY" IN COMPOSITION

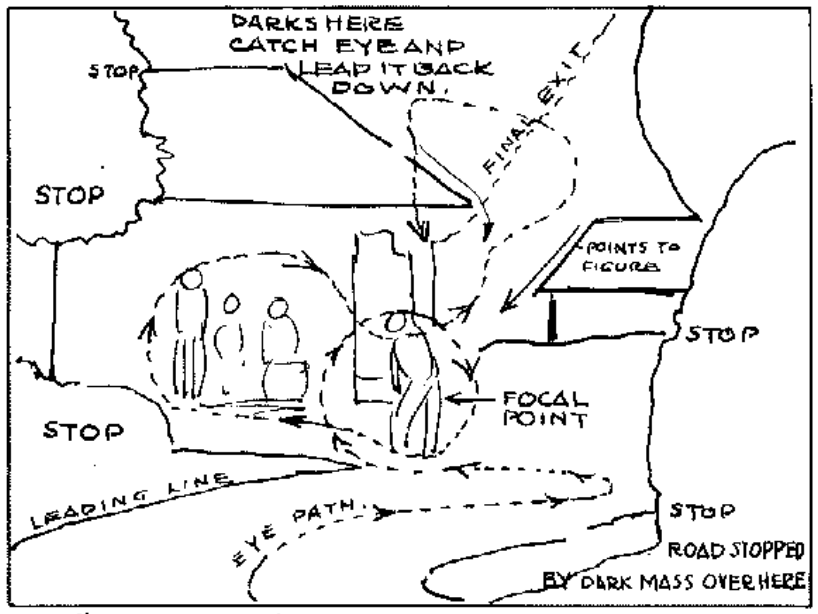


THERE SHOULD BE A PLANNED EASY AND NATURAL PATH FOR THE EYE TO TRAVEL IN EVERY GOOD PICTURE

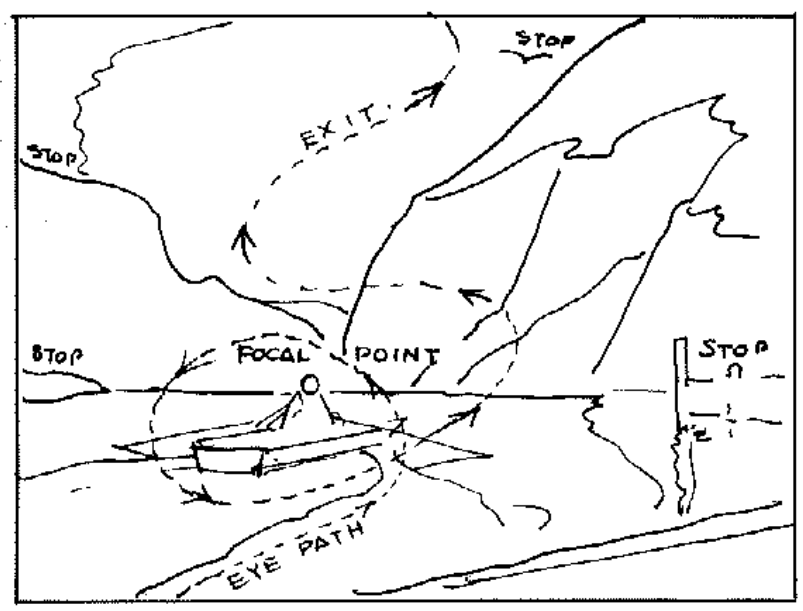


LINES LEADING OUT OF THE SUBJECT SHOULD BE STOPPED BY SOME DEVICE OR ANOTHER LINE LEADING THE EYE BACK

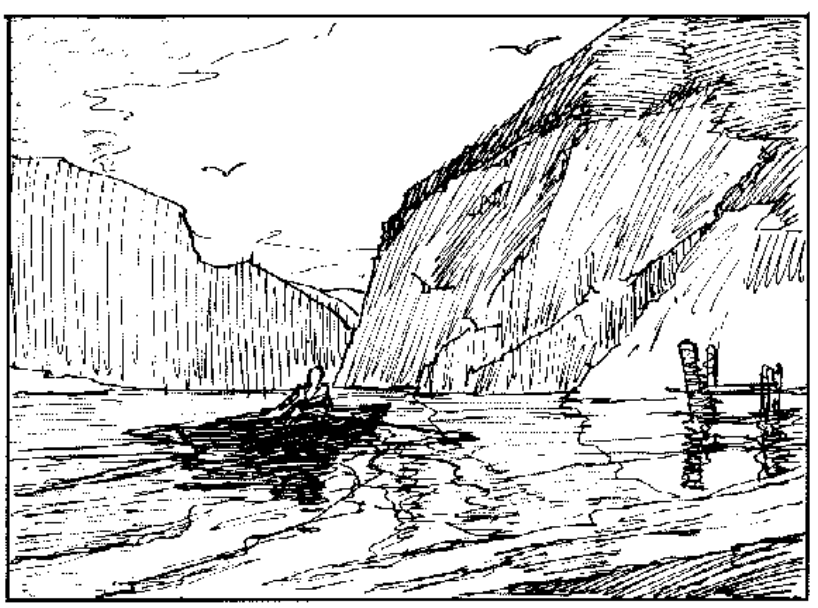
THE EYE SHOULD ENTER AT THE BOTTOM AND EMERGE AT THE TOP—NEVER AT THE SIDES. SINCE CORNERS



ARE "EYE TRAPS" BECAUSE OF THEIR JUNCTIONS, TRY TO LEAD THE EYE AWAY FROM OR AROUND THEM.



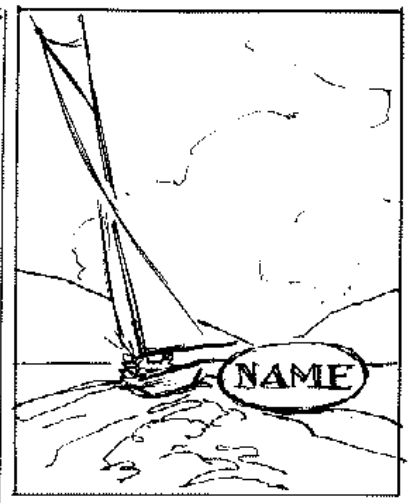
YOU CAN MAKE THE EYE FOLLOW A GIVEN COURSE ALMOST AS YOU WISH BY SKILLFUL USE OF LINE • LEAD THE EYE IN, ENTERTAIN



IT WITH A SPOT OF INTEREST AND THEN ALLOW IT TO PASS OUT. IT SHOULD BE A PLEASING PATH AND NOT OBSTRUCTED OR GIVEN TWO WAYS TO GO.

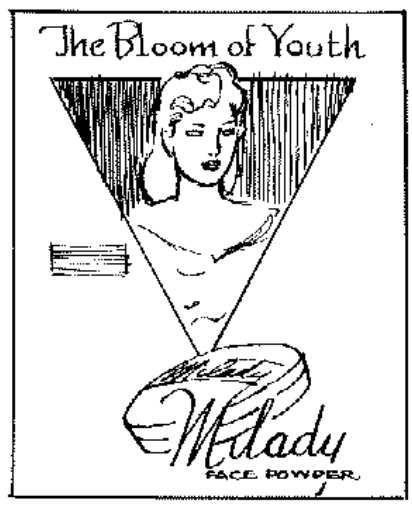
ATTENTION DEVICES

ANY KINDS OF CONFLICT



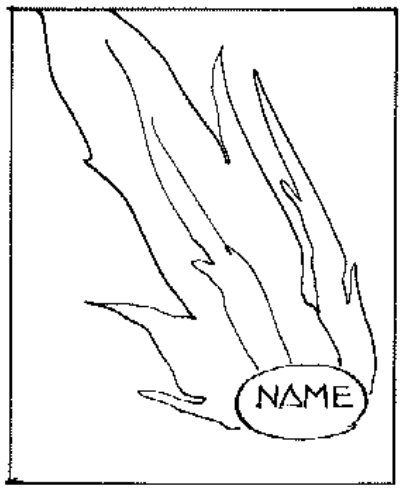
RADIATING CURVES TO FOCAL POINT

SPOT SEQUENCE TO FOCAL POINT

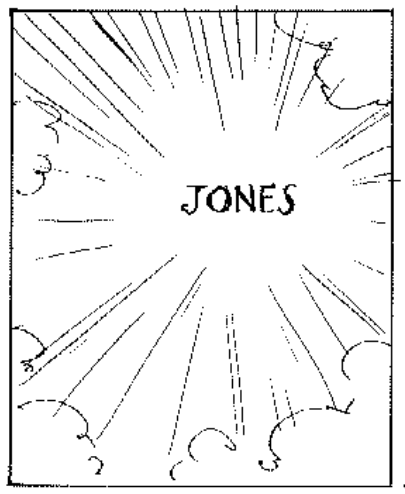


ANYTHING THAT WILL POINT

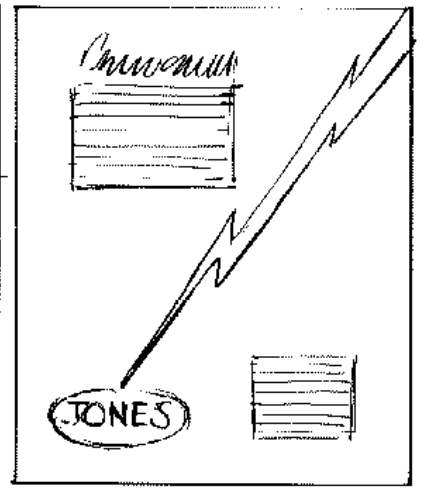
ANYTHING SHOWING SPEED



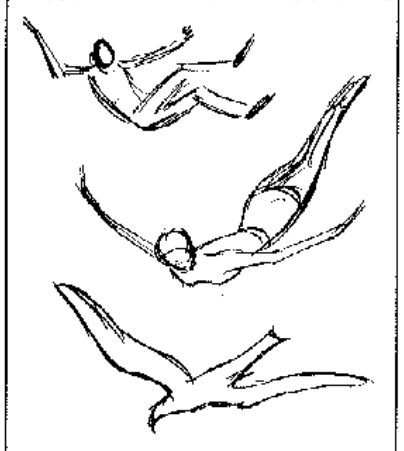
FLAME OR FIRE MOTIF



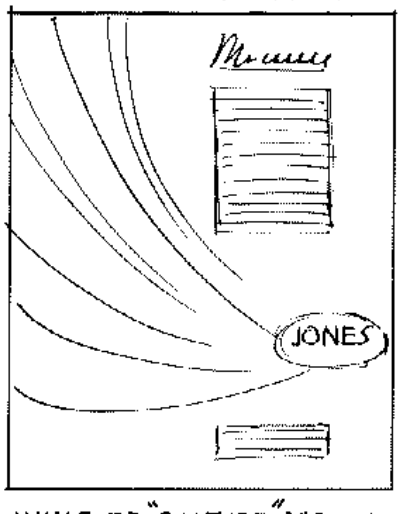
ANY SORT OF EXPLOSION



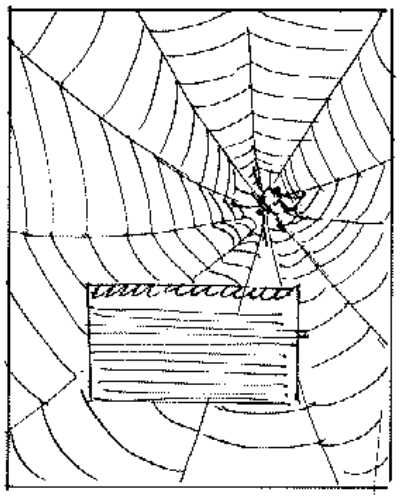
POINTER



FALLING, DIVING OR FLIGHT

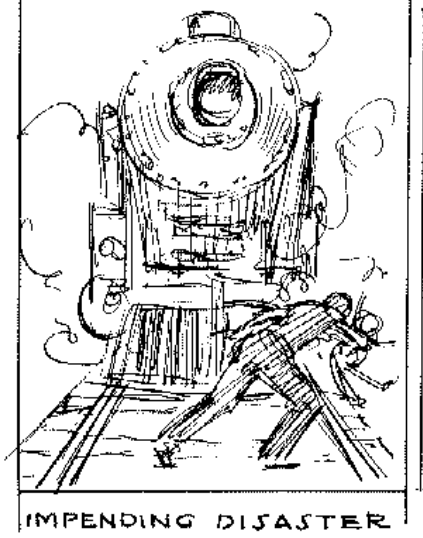


WING OR "SWEEP" MOTIF

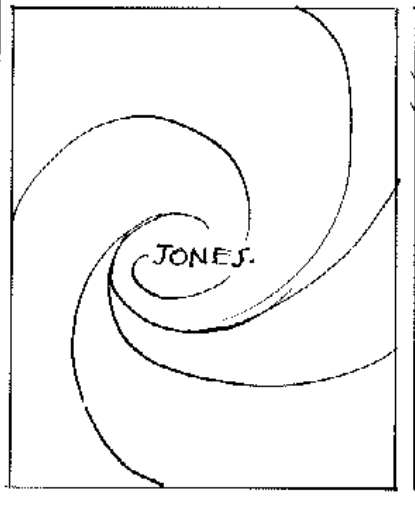


SPIDER WEB MOTIF

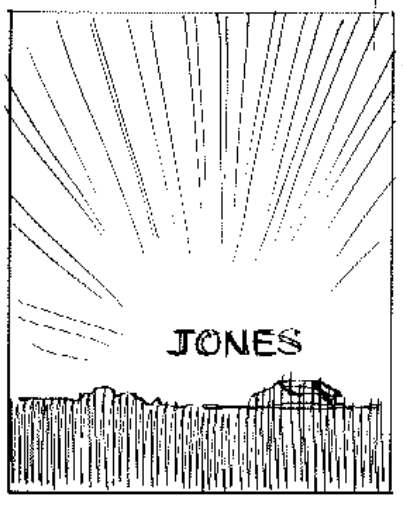
POINTER



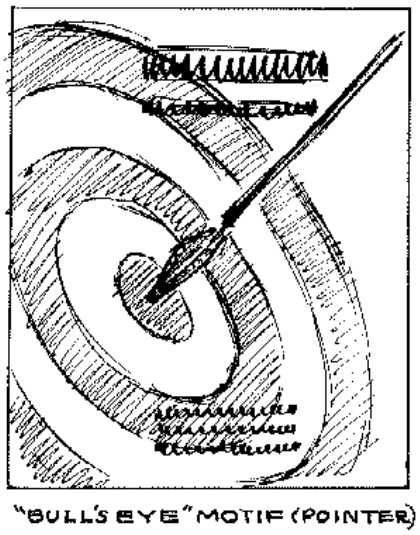
IMPENDING DISASTER



ANY SPIRAL MOTIF

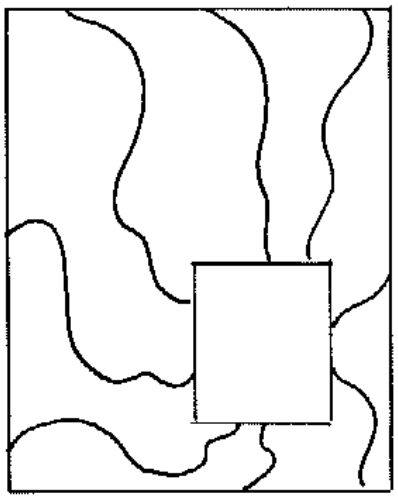


RADIATION OR LIGHT MOTIF

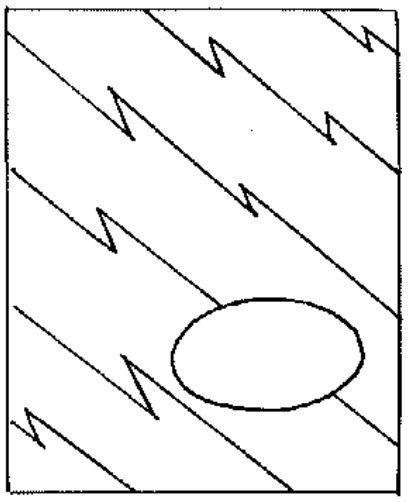


"BULL'S EYE" MOTIF (POINTER)

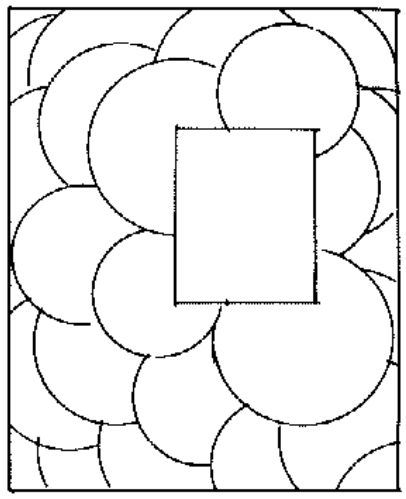
GET ATTENTION BY BUILDING CONTRAST OF LINE OR SHAPE



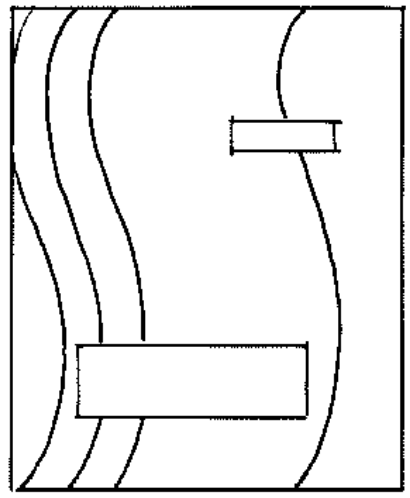
A RIGID SHAPE COMBINED WITH INSTABILITY . . . .



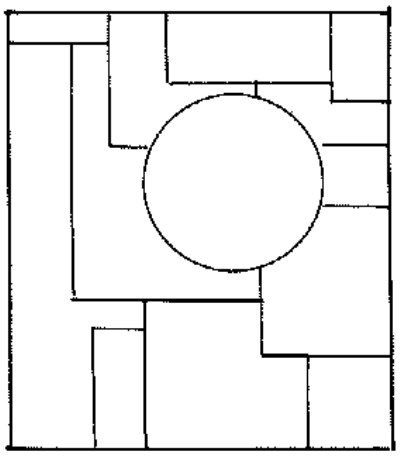
ANGULAR BROKEN LINE WITH A SYMETRICAL SHAPE



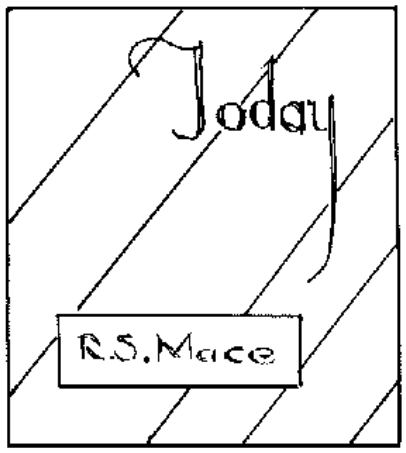
SQUARE MADE POWERFUL BY CONTRAST TO CIRCLES



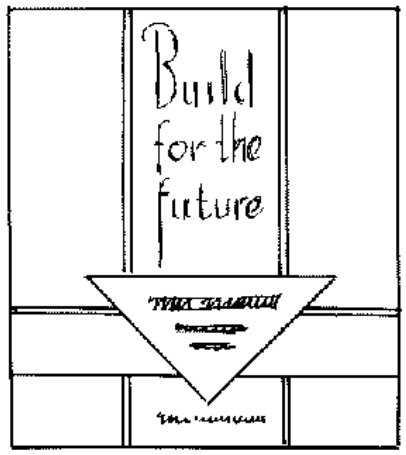
THE STRAIGHT CONTRASTED WITH RHYTHMIC LINE



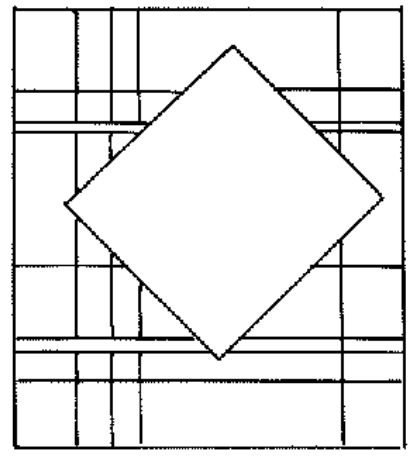
CIRCLE MADE POWERFUL BY CONTRAST TO RIGHT ANGLES.



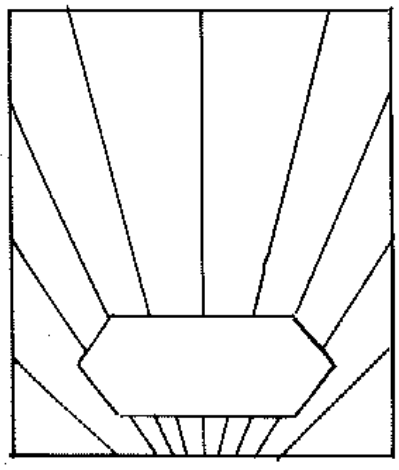
HORIZONTAL CONTRASTED WITH THE OBLIQUE



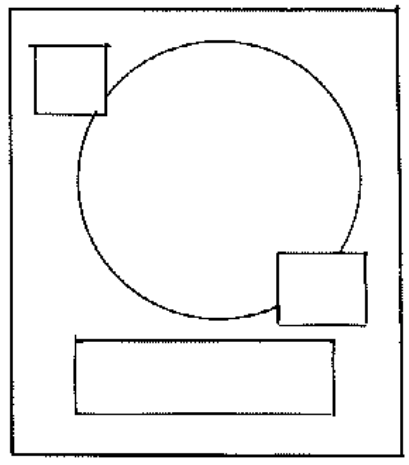
TRIANGLE CONTRASTED TO RECTANGLES



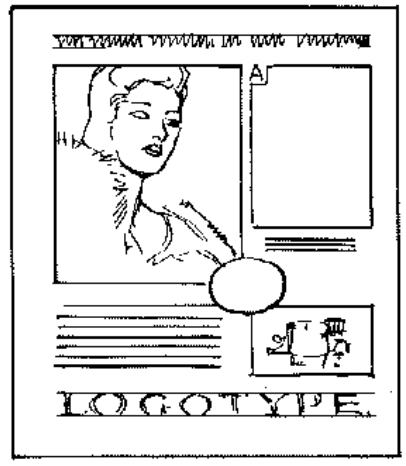
DIAGONAL POSITION OF SQUARE WITH VERTICALS AND HORIZONTALS



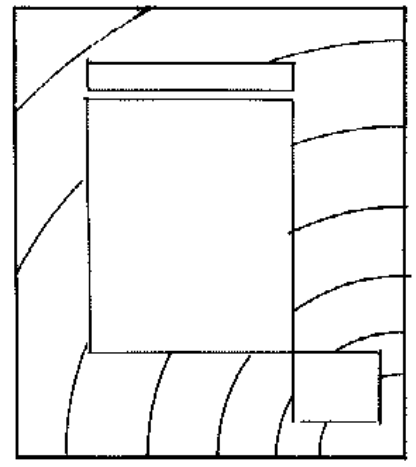
RADII AGAINT ANYTHING



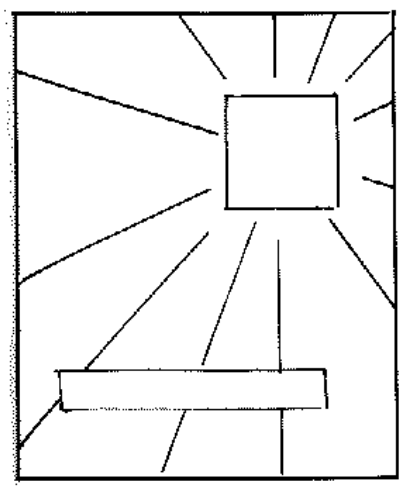
CIRCLE VERSUS RECTANGLES



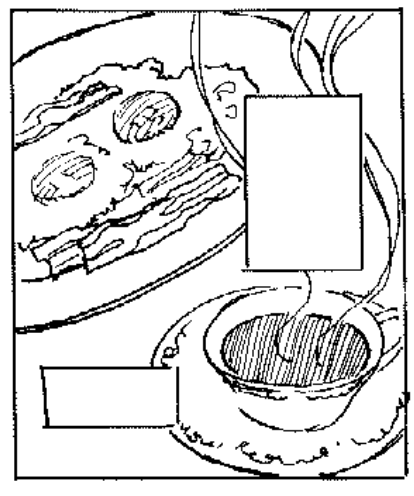
OVAL PLACED AT INTERSECTION



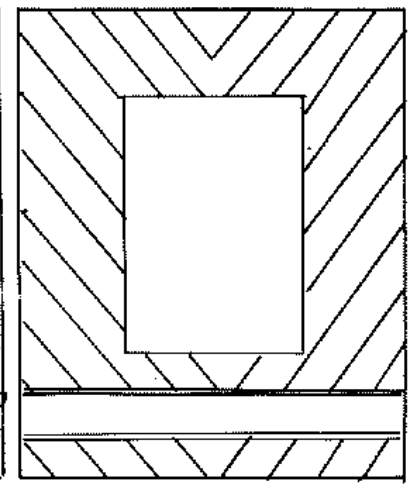
ARCS VERSUS RECTANGLES



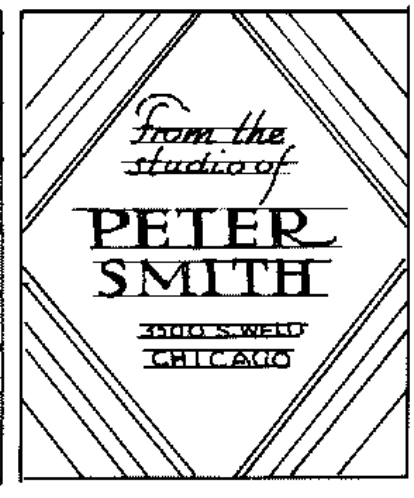
RADII VERSUS THE RIGID



OVALS VERSUS RECTANGLES

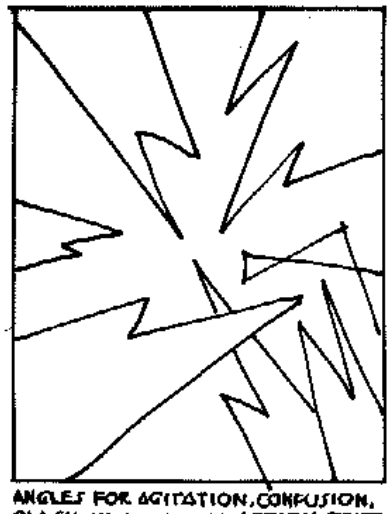


OBLIQUE VERSUS RIGID

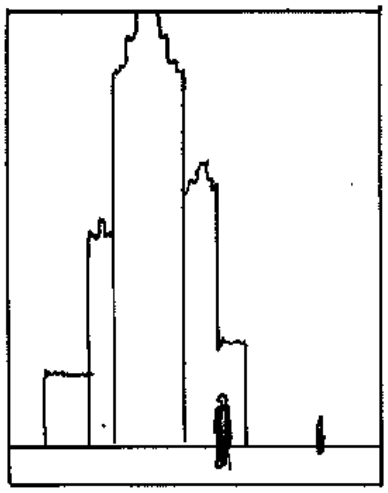


OBLIQUE VERSUS HORIZONTAL

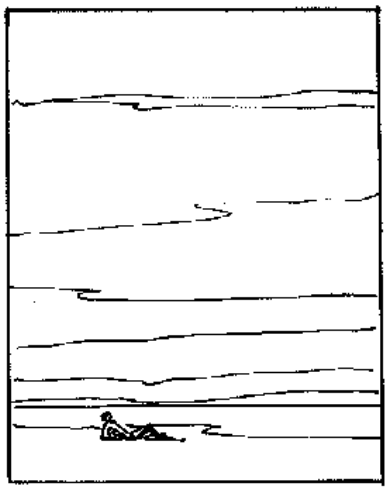
THE RELATIONSHIP OF LINE TO EMOTIONAL RESPONSE



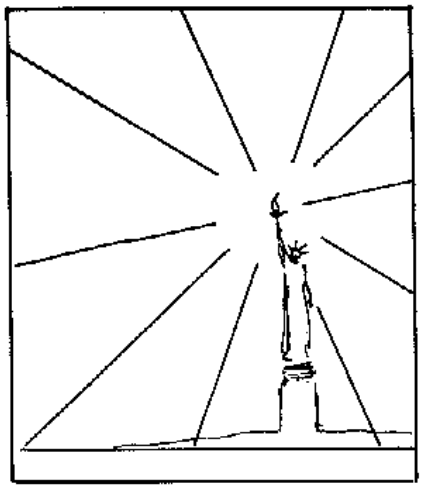
ANGLES FOR AGITATION, CONFUSION, CLASH, INSECURITY, ACTION, STRIFE



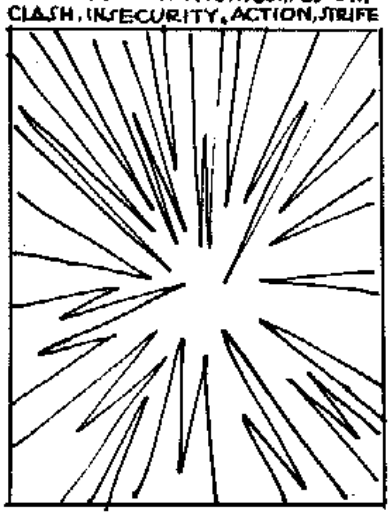
VERTICALS FOR DIGNITY, STRENGTH, PERMANENCE, STABILITY, AWE.



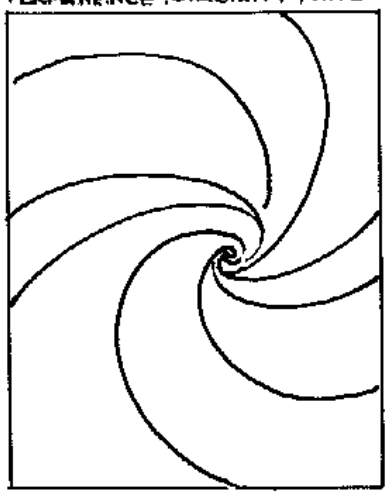
HORIZONTALS FOR REPOSE, CALM, QUIETUDE, PEACE, TRANQUILITY.



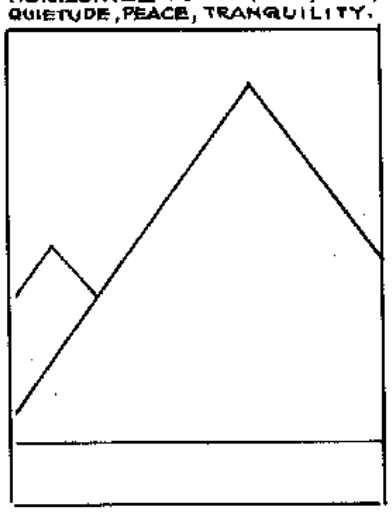
RADII FOR GLORY, DEVOTION, DUTY, PATRIOTISM, UNITY, AMBITION, FREEDOM



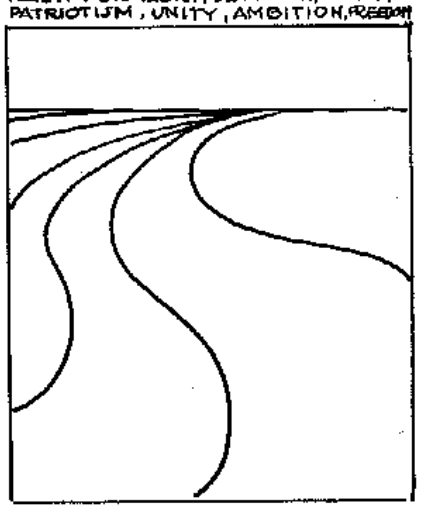
RADIATION FOR SHOCK, ATTENTION



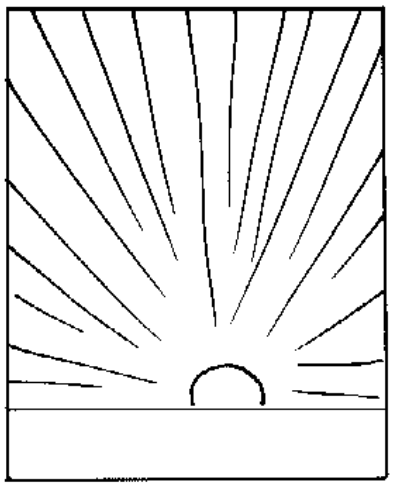
SPIRALS FOR MOTION, POWER, EXCITEMENT



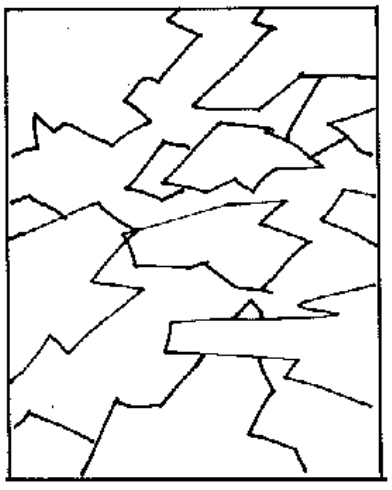
TRIANGLES FOR PERMANENCE, SECURITY



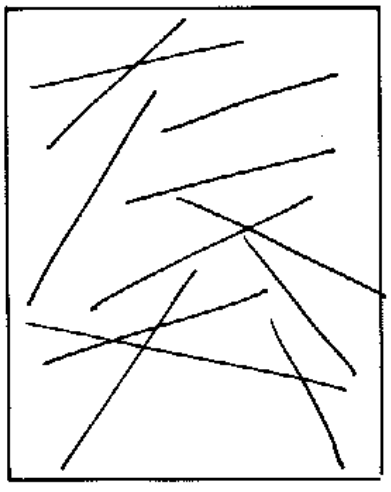
RHYTHM FOR GRACE, CHARM, MOVEMENT.



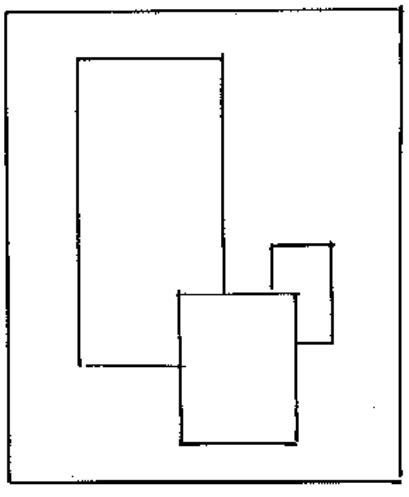
LIGHT FOR HOPE, LOVE, AMBITION.



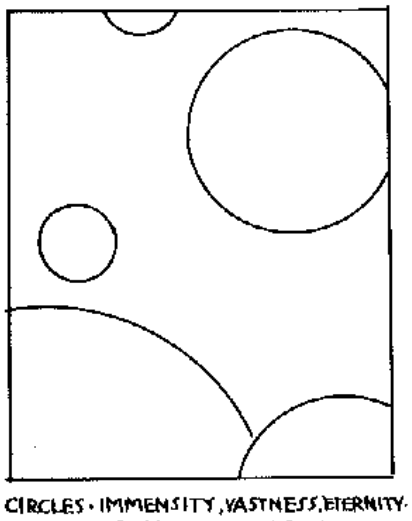
BROKEN SHAPES - INSTABILITY - UNCERTAINTY



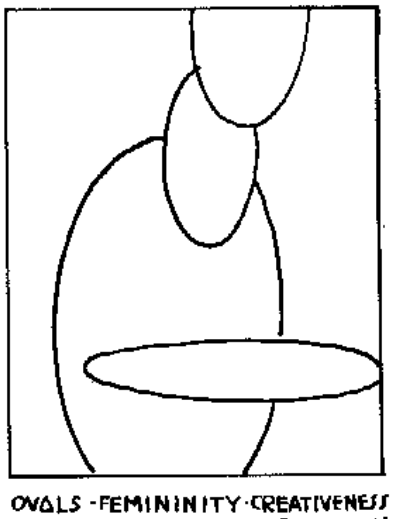
OBLIQUES - COMBAT - CONFUSION - CLASH



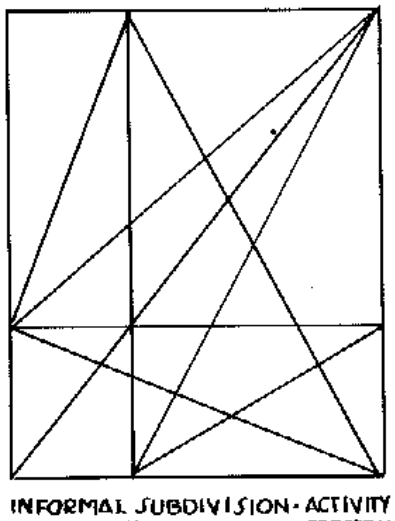
RECTANGLES - STABILITY - STRENGTH - UNITY



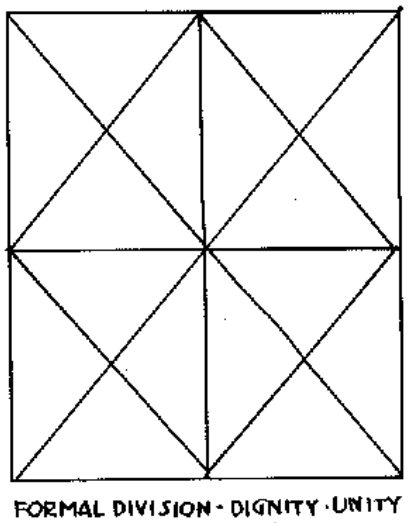
CIRCLES - IMMENSITY, VASTNESS, ETERNITY - MOTION - EQUALITY - DELIVERANCE.



OVALS - FEMININITY - CREATIVENESS SENSUOSITY - GRACE - PERPETUATION

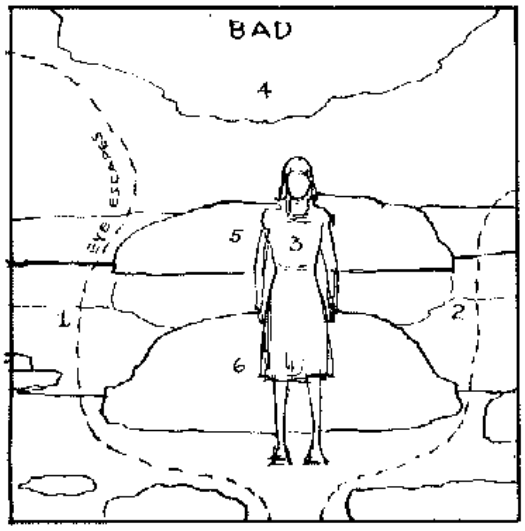


INFORMAL SUBDIVISION - ACTIVITY EXCITEMENT - ELASTICITY - PROGRESS

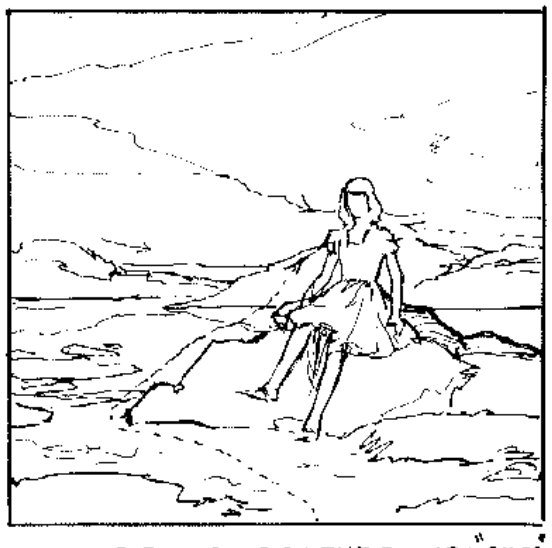


FORMAL DIVISION - DIGNITY - UNITY BALANCE - FORMALITY - STRENGTH.

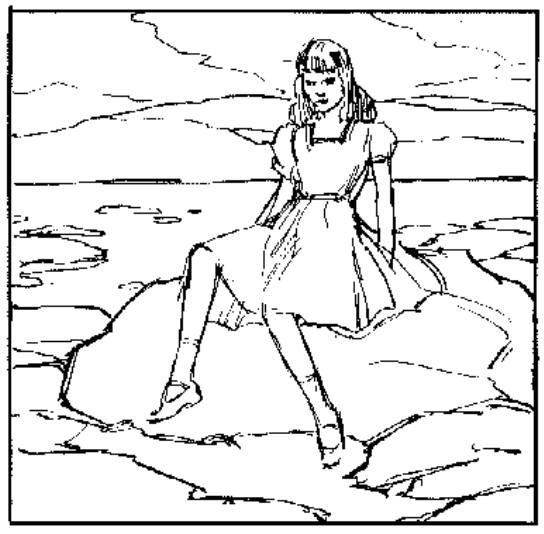
BAD COMPOSITION BRINGS NEGATIVE RESPONSE



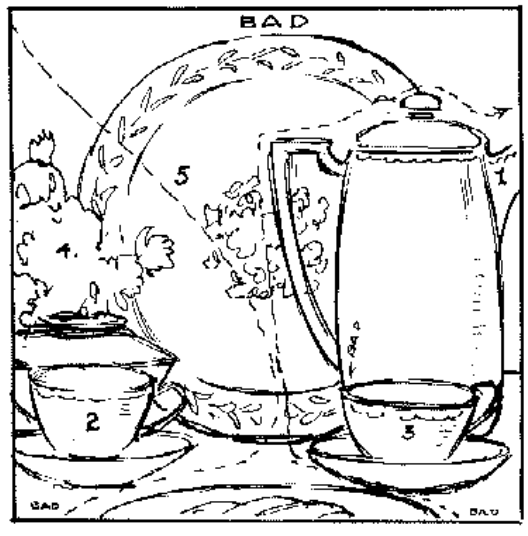
1·2· DON'T GIVE THE EYE TWO PATHWAYS. 3·4·5·6 ·TOO CENTERED· STRAIGHT FRONT POSE· BAD. 5·6· TOO ALIKE AND EQUAL.



NOW THE EYE IS LED TO THE FIGURE "STOPS" PUT IN ON LINES WHICH WOULD CARRY EYE OUT. POSE MORE IN KEEPING WITH SUBJECT.

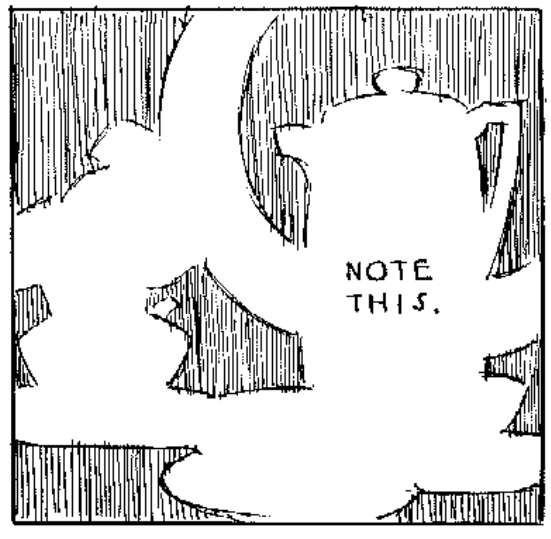


WE MAY HAVE A BETTER COMPOSITION BY HAVING THE LITTLE GIRL CLOSER TO DOMINATE THE LANDSCAPE.

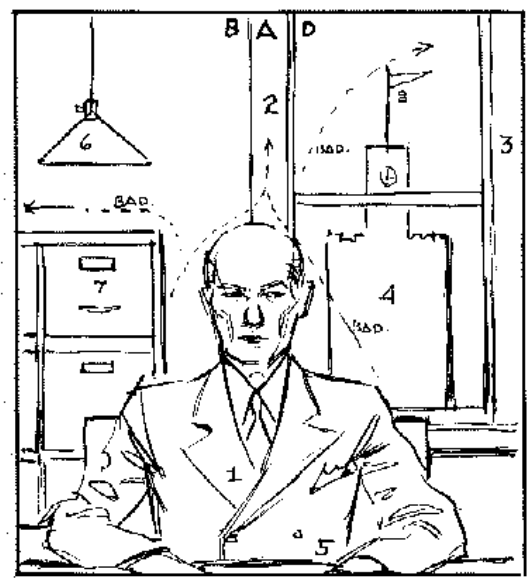


1. DON'T POINT THINGS OUT OF PICTURE. 2·3· TOO EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE. 4. FLOWERS POINTING WRONG WAY. 5· TWO EYEPATHS.

1. ONE EYEPATH NOW. 2 POINTING INWARD 3. CUPS GROUPED 4. FLOWERS CORRECTED 5· YOU NOW KNOW THEY ARE COOKIES. BETTER?

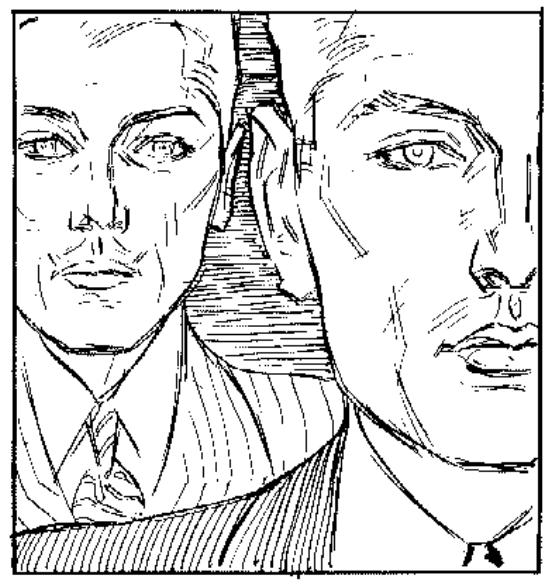


YOU CAN TEST ANY COMPOSITION BY, TRACING THE "SPACES BETWEEN THINGS" AND "FILLIN". SEE IF THEY MAKE A GOOD DESIGN.



1. FIGURE TOO LOW AND TOO CENTERED. 2. NEVER SPLIT A HEAD WITH ANY LINE. COMING INTO IT. 3. DONT USE THE EDGE OF THE PICTURE TO COINCIDE WITH A LINE IN THE PICTURE. (WINDOW FRAME) 4·6·7·8. TOO CENTERED. FLAG BAD. 5 HANDS CUT OFF. DESK LINE TOO LOW AND TOO NEAR BOTTOM EDGE. MAN'S GAZE BAD.

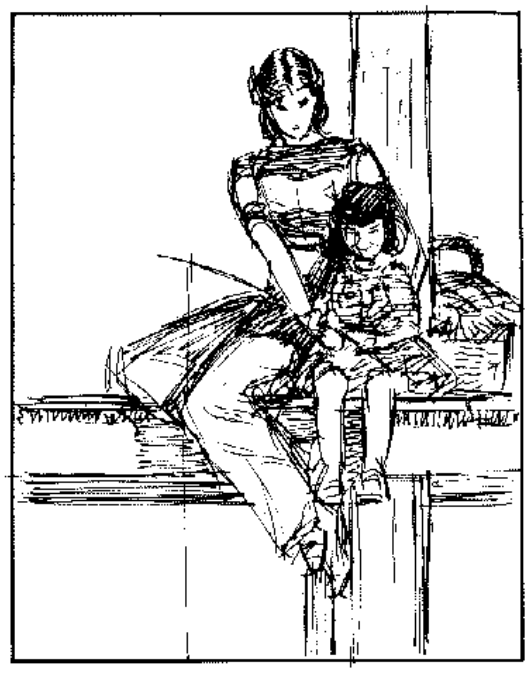
HERE WE HAVE MUCH THAT IS MISSING IN THE OTHER PICTURE. NOTHING COMPETES WITH HEAD. NOTHING IS CENTERED. THE BALANCE OF THE SUBJECT IS PLEASING, ACCESSORIES HAVE MORE CHARM. "BALDY" COULD JUST AS WELL HAVE BEEN PLACED AGAINST A MORE PLEASING BACKGROUND. TRY TO PLAN EVERYTHING YOU DO.



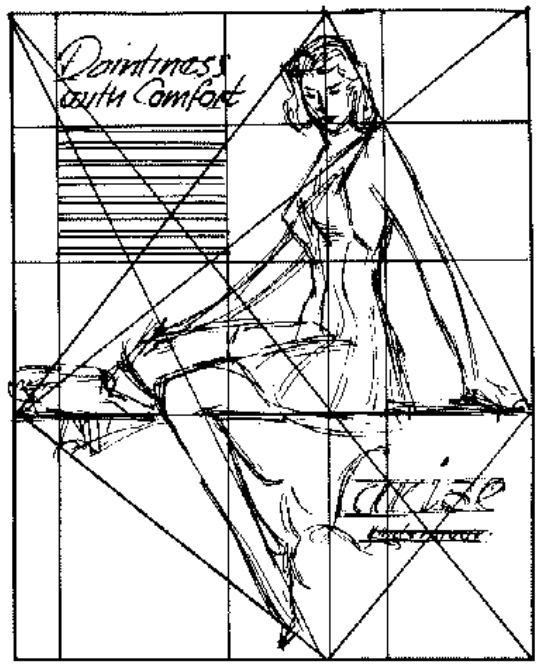
SOMETIMES A DESIGN MAY BE BUILT OF HEADS ALONE AND WITHOUT HAVING THE HEADS COMPLETE. THE PICTURE MAY BE MUCH MORE ARRESTING THAN IF TWO ENTIRE HEADS WERE SHOWN, ESPECIALLY IF THE TWO HEADS WERE ABOUT EQUAL IN SIZE OR AREA AND EVENLY SPACED.

VARIOUS TYPES OF VIGNETTES

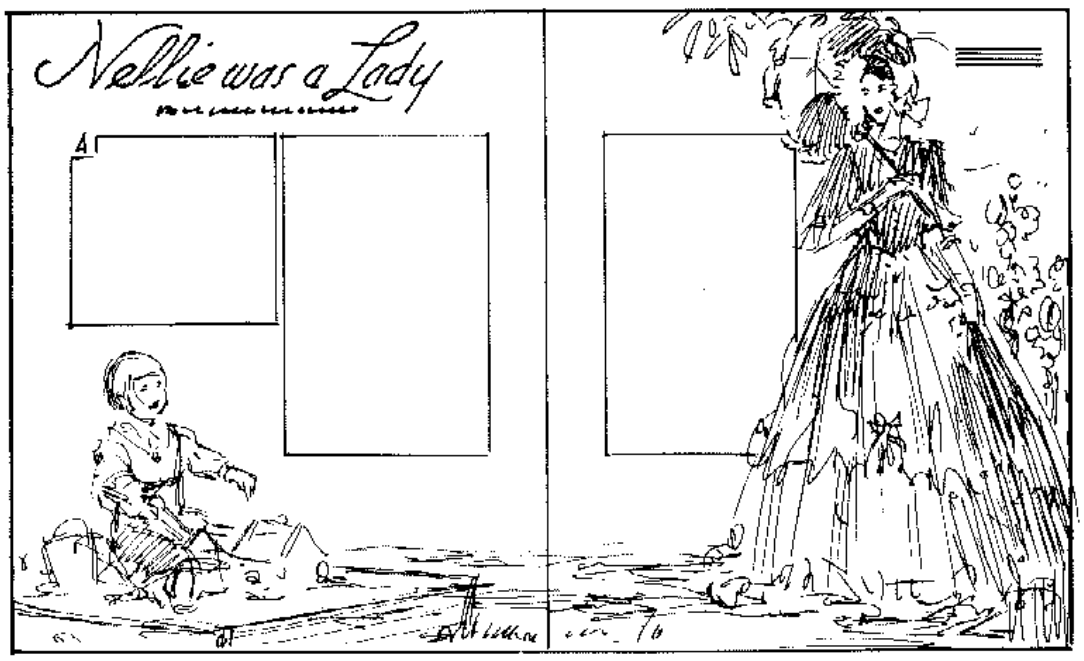
"FLOATING" OR FREE OF THE SPACE LIMITS.



TIED TO TWO OR MORE SIDES.

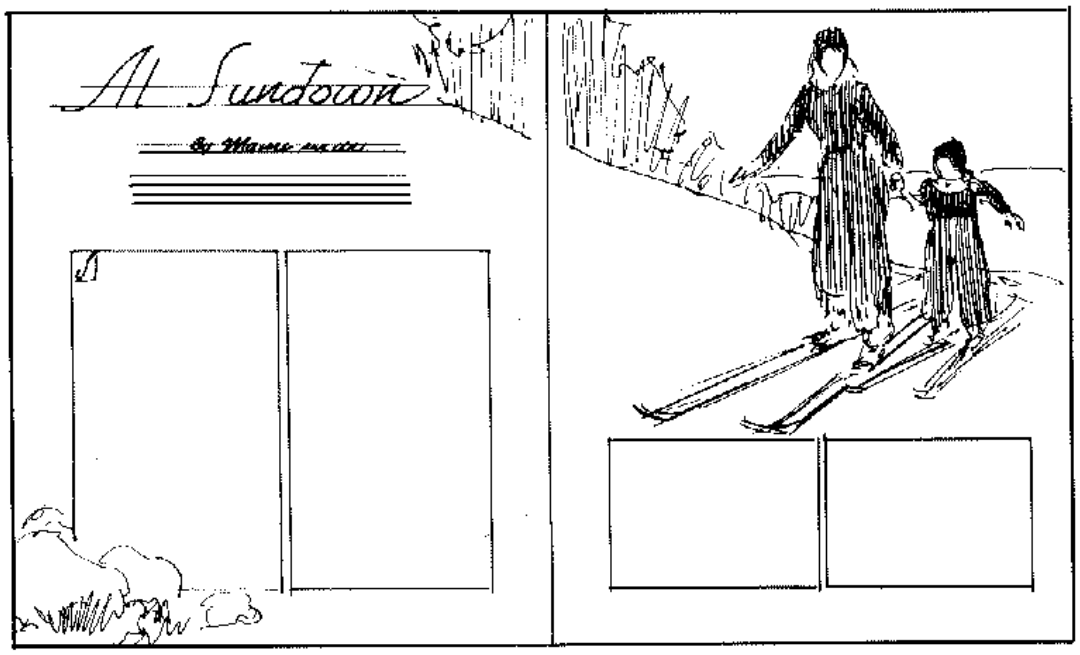


YOU CAN USE INFORMAL SUBDIVISION.



OPEN SPACE TIED TOGETHER BY CONNECTED VIGNETTE.

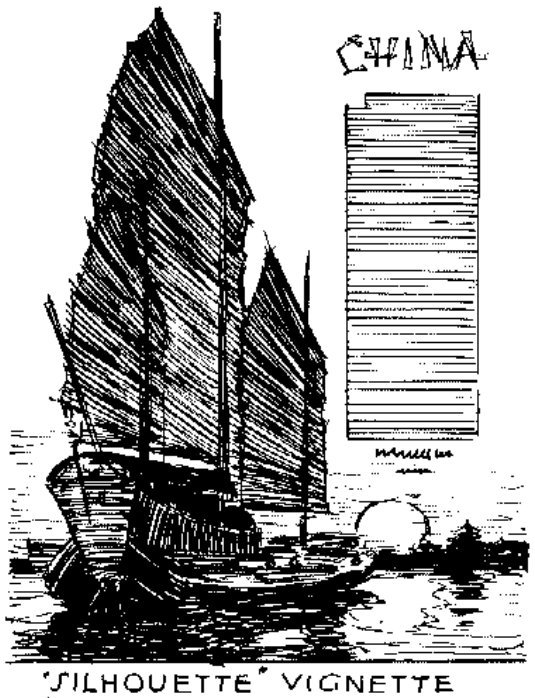
"SPOTS" TIED TO MAIN VIGNETTE



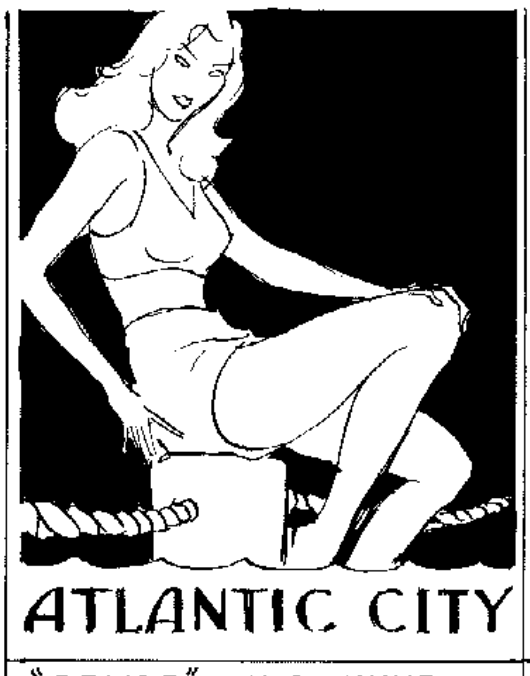
MAKING THE WHITE SPACE PART OF THE PICTURE.VERY USEFUL.

"BORDER" VIGNETTE.

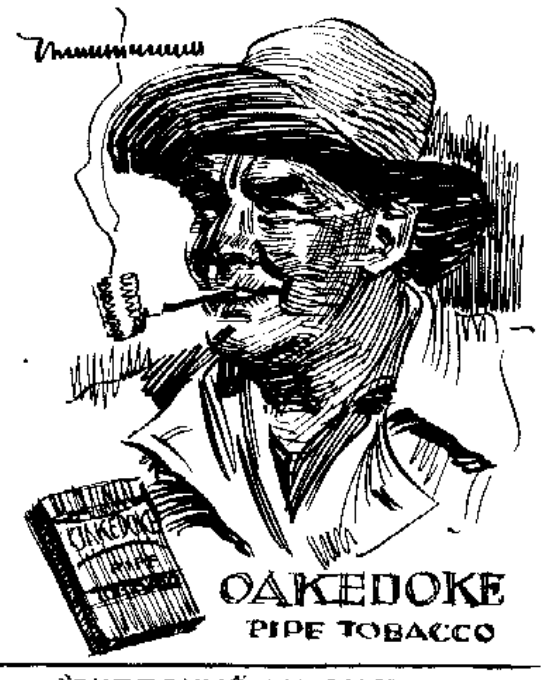
A VIGNETTE IS A DESIGN PURE AND SIMPLE



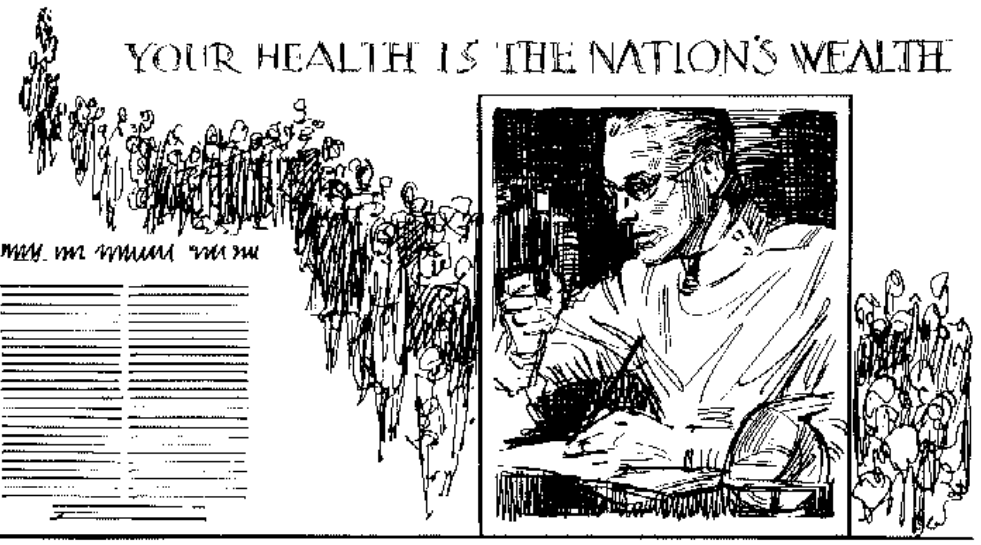
"SILHOUETTE" VIGNETTE
(DARK MASS AGAINST LIGHT)



"RELIEF" VIGNETTE
(LIGHT MASS AGAINST DARK)

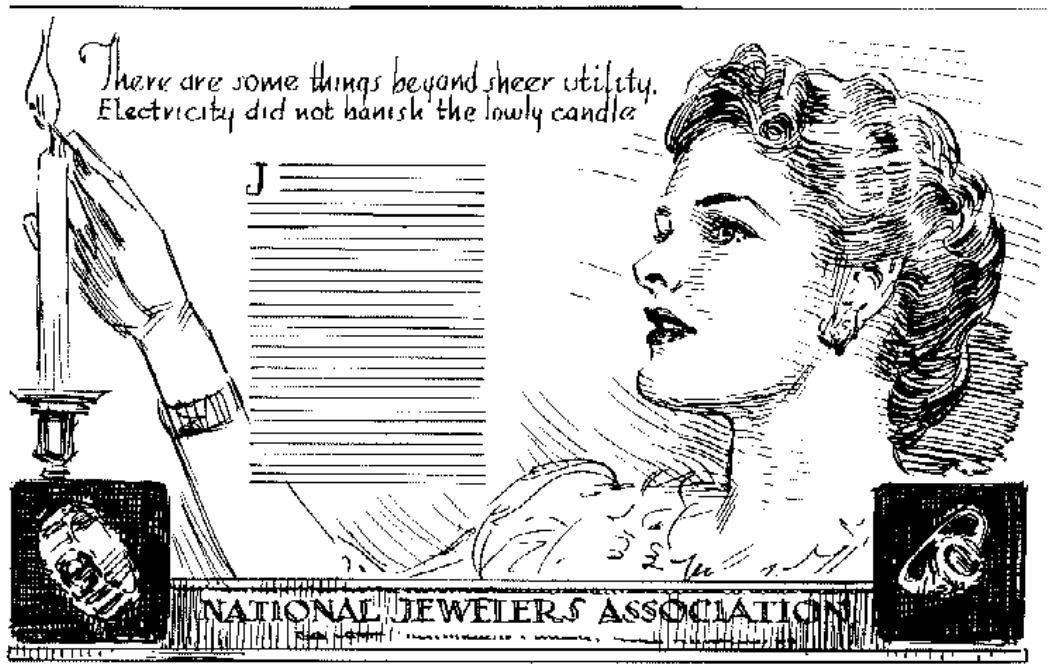


"SKETCHY" VIGNETTE
ANY SIMPLE MASSES VS. EACH OTHER

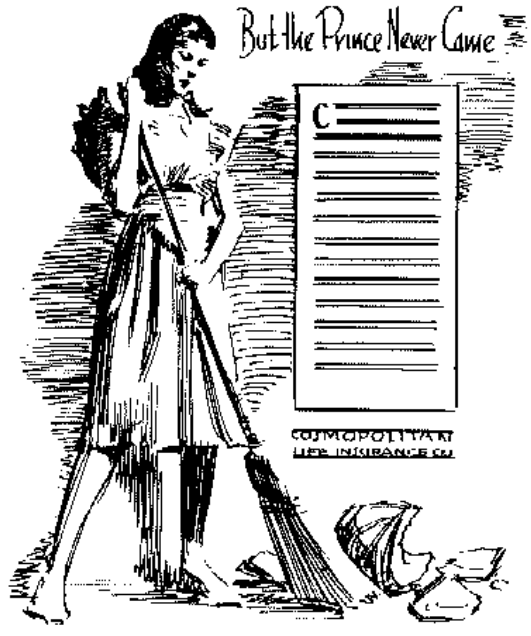


COMBINATION VIGNETTE WITH A SOLID PICTURE AS DOMINANT.

VIGNETTE TIED TO PRODUCT.



COMBINATION VIGNETTE DOMINATING OVER SQUARE UNITS.



VIGNETTE TIED TO COPY SPACE