

# COMPOSITION

IN ART AND DESIGN

A Comprehensive  
and Enlightening  
Presentation

# VISUAL WEIGHT

SIMPLY DETERMINES WHERE YOUR  
ATTENTION TENDS TO GO TO FIRST.

# VISUAL WEIGHT

IS SOOOO IMPORTANT IN COMPOSITION  
AND IS DETERMINED BY EXAMINING  
**THE ELEMENTS OF DESIGN**

# SIZE

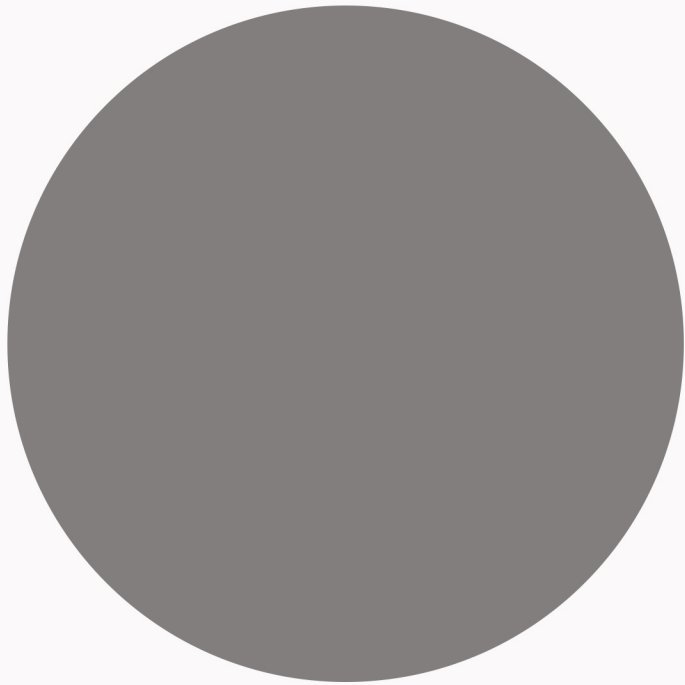
Visually Heavier





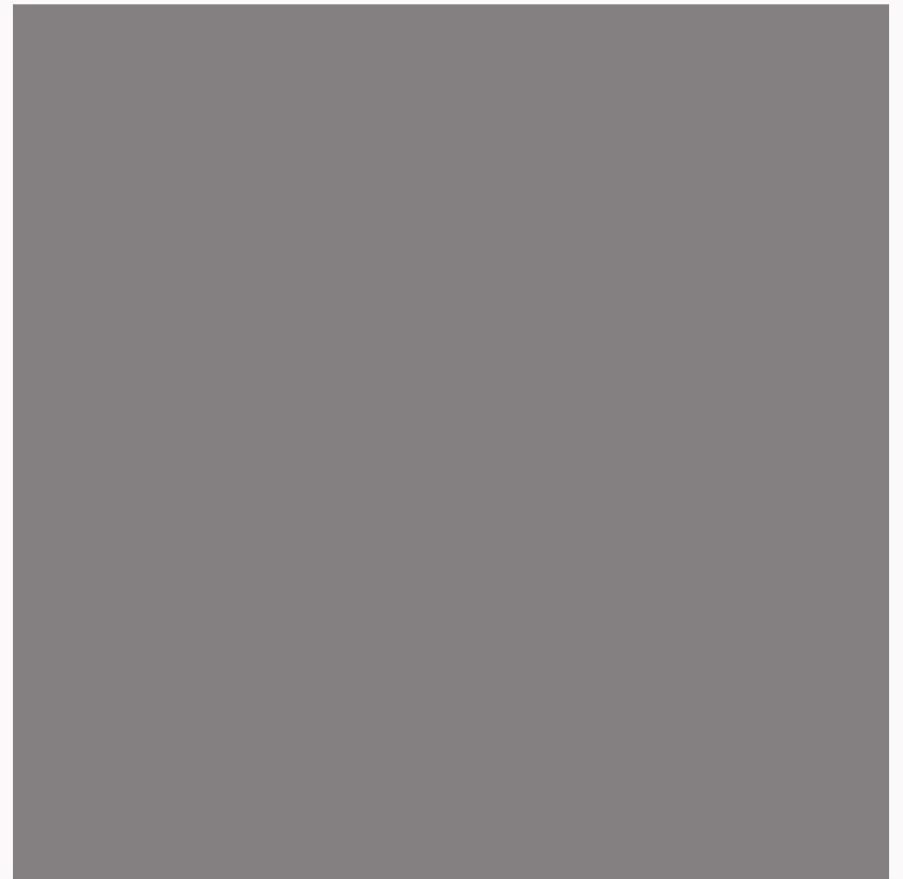
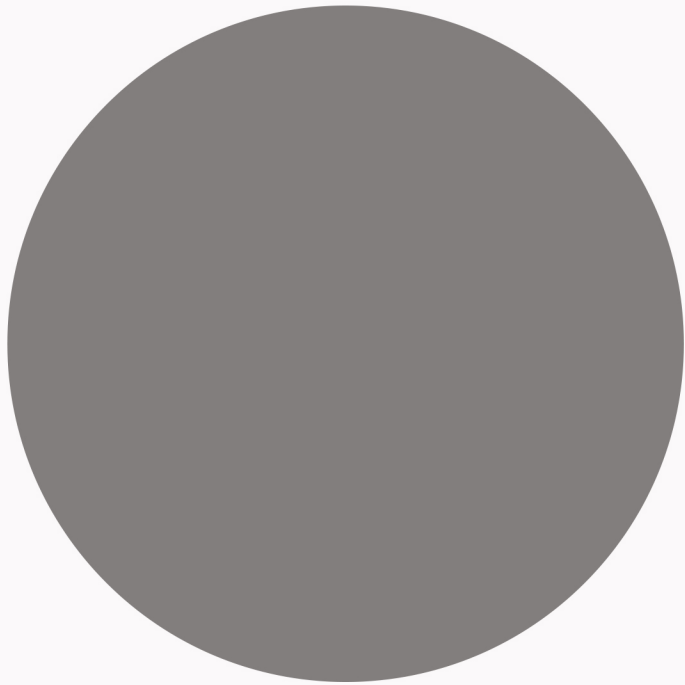
# SHAPE

Circles are heavier than squares  
(our eyes focus on them like targets)



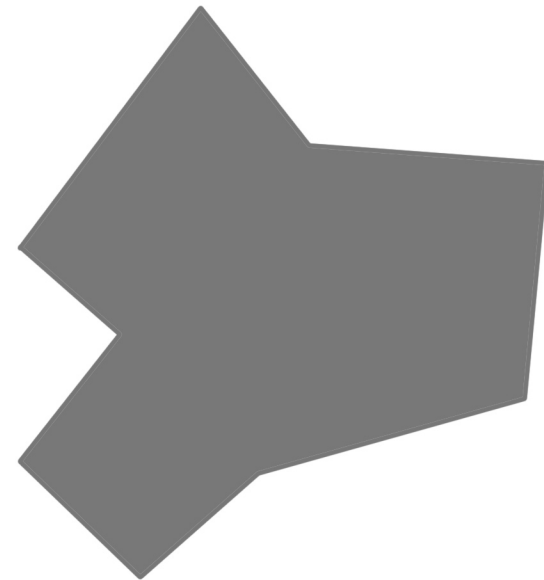
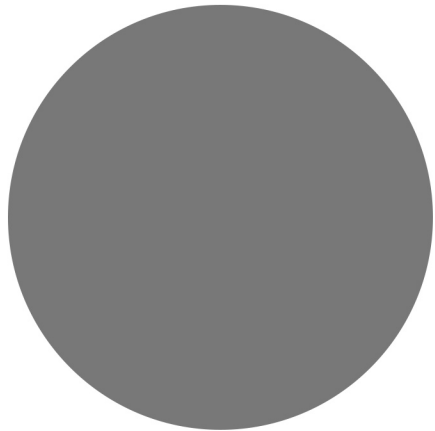
# SHAPE

But you can balance the visual weight by making the "lighter" shape larger



# SHAPE

Complex or irregular shapes tend to attract attention and therefore are visually heavy.



This shape less recognized, takes longer to understand, demands more attention and is therefore a more powerful visual element

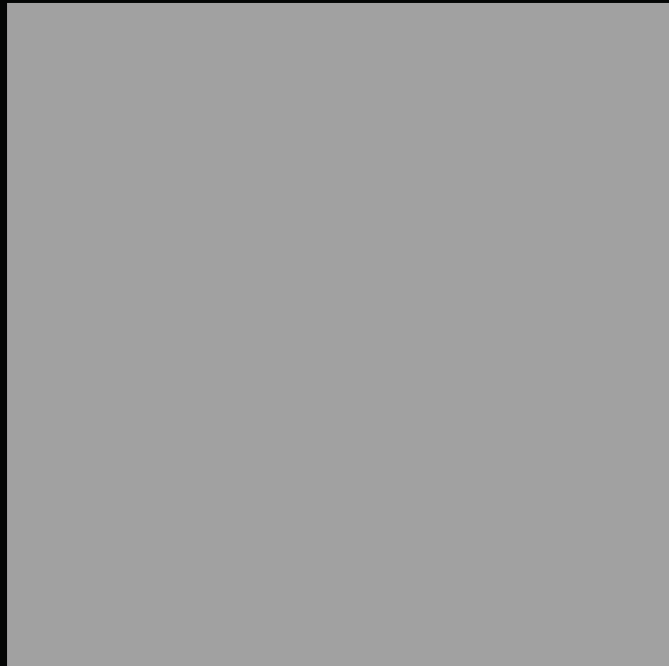
# VALUE

In this example the darker value is the "heavier" element



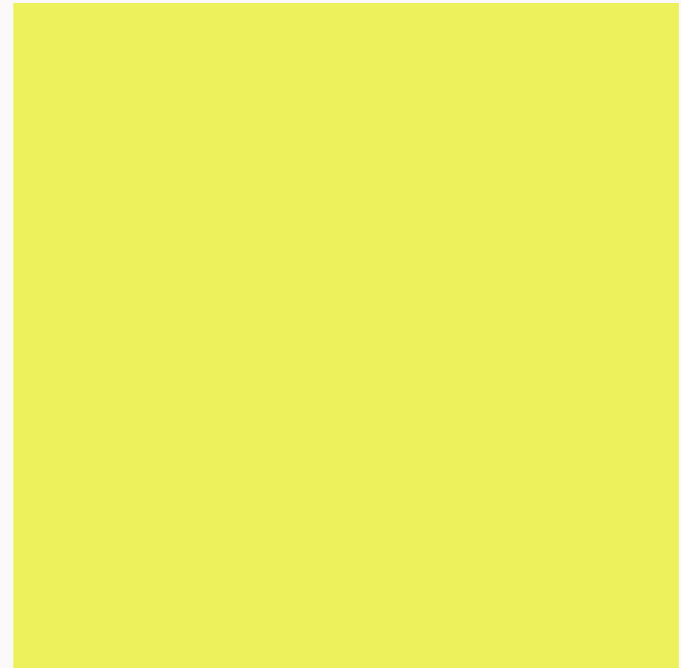
# VALUE

But in this example the lighter value is "heavier"  
this is because the weight of value depends on **CONTRAST**



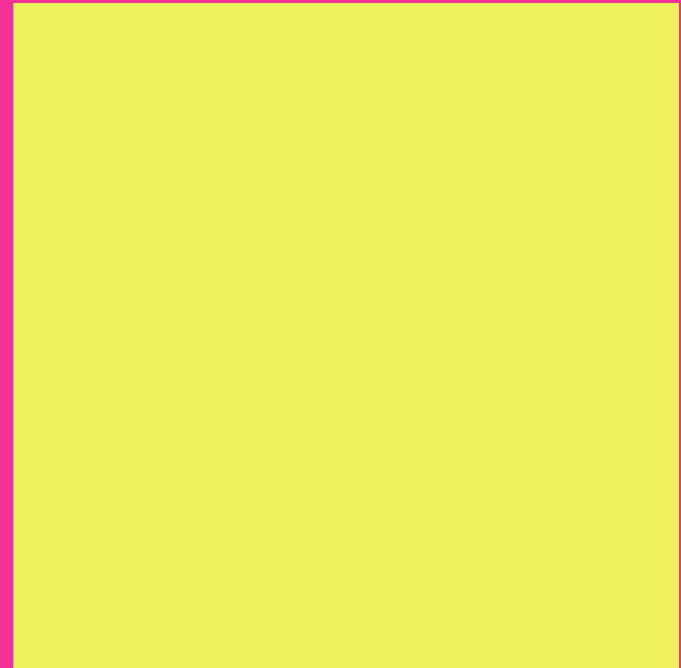
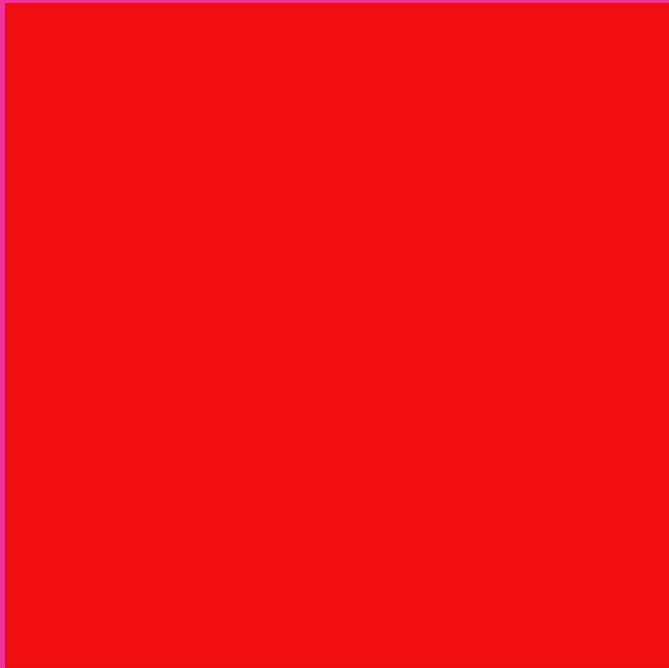
# COLOUR

In this example the red is the stronger or "heavier" visual element



# COLOUR

But now the yellow is heavier (because of CONTRAST!)



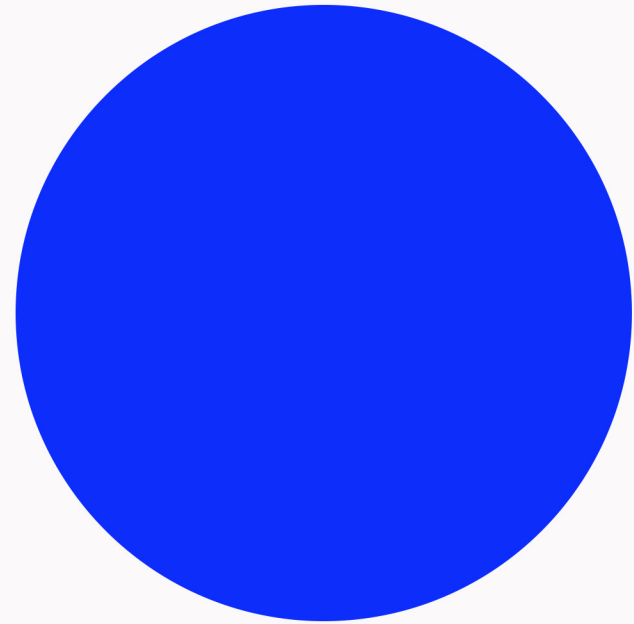
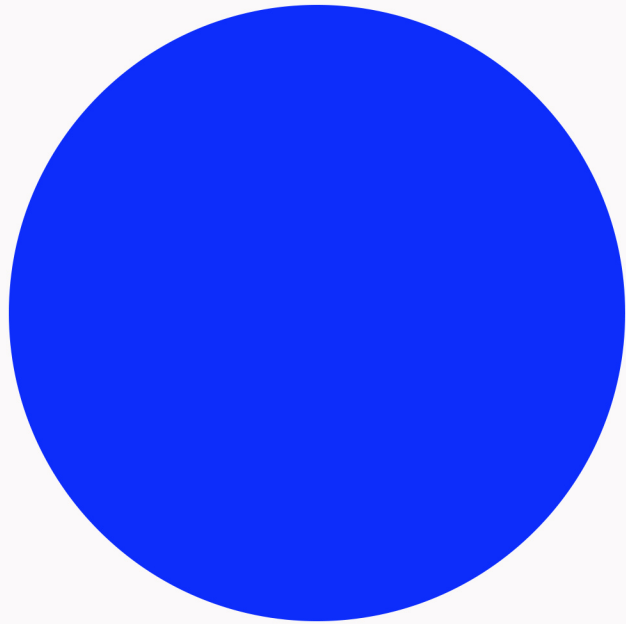
By manipulating these factors  
we are trying to achieve

**BALANCE**



# BALANCE

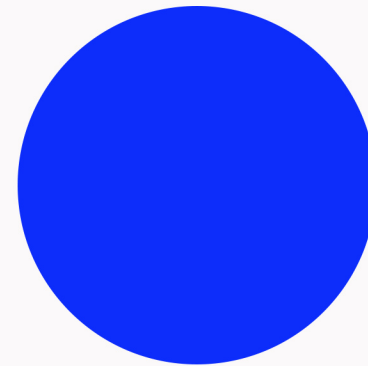
Can be achieved through SYMMETRY



meaning that two sides of your composition are mirror images of one another

# BALANCE

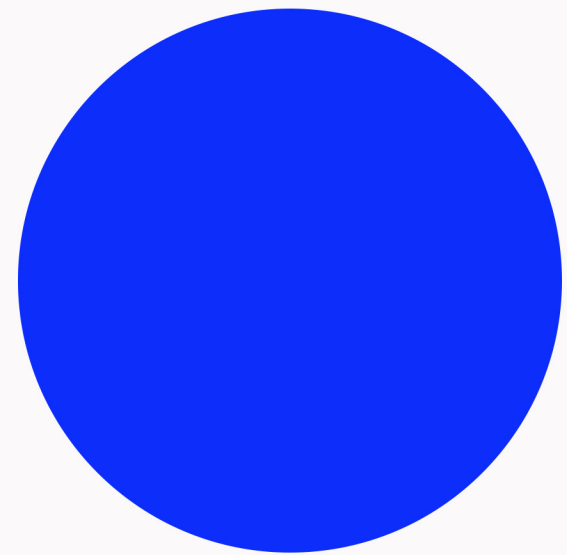
But it can also be achieved through **ASYMMETRY**



Remember that a circle is heavier visually than a square **BUT** by making it smaller (and thus lighten it) we can **BALANCE** the Composition

# BALANCE

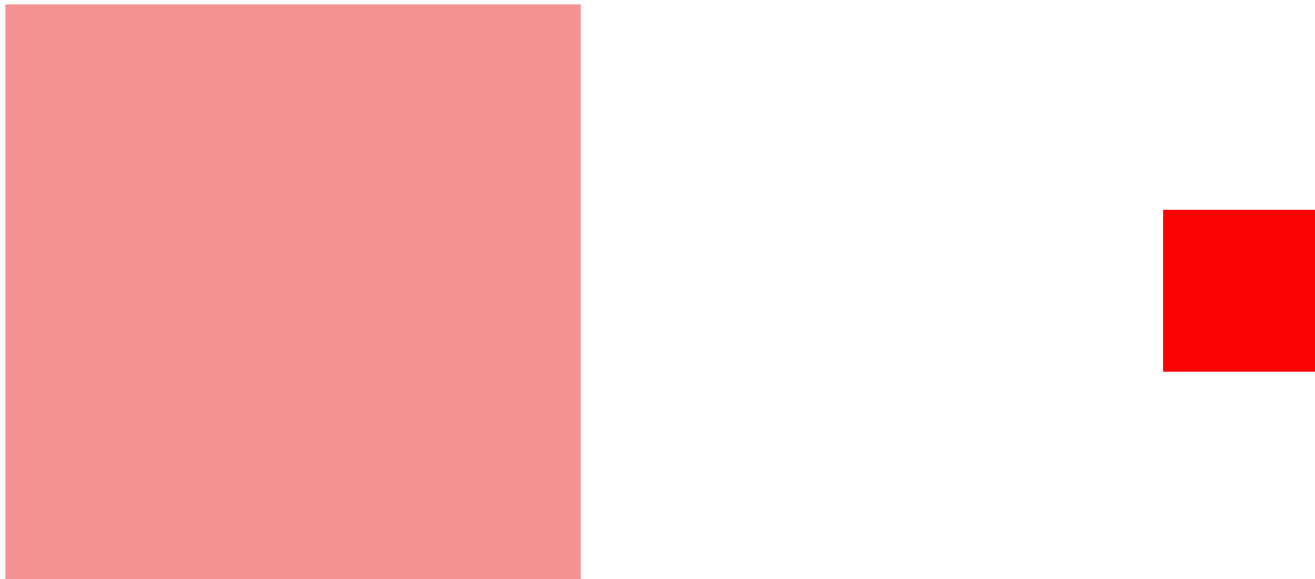
This is called **ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE**



We can also balance it by making the less “visually dominant” shape a MORE dominant colour.

# BALANCE

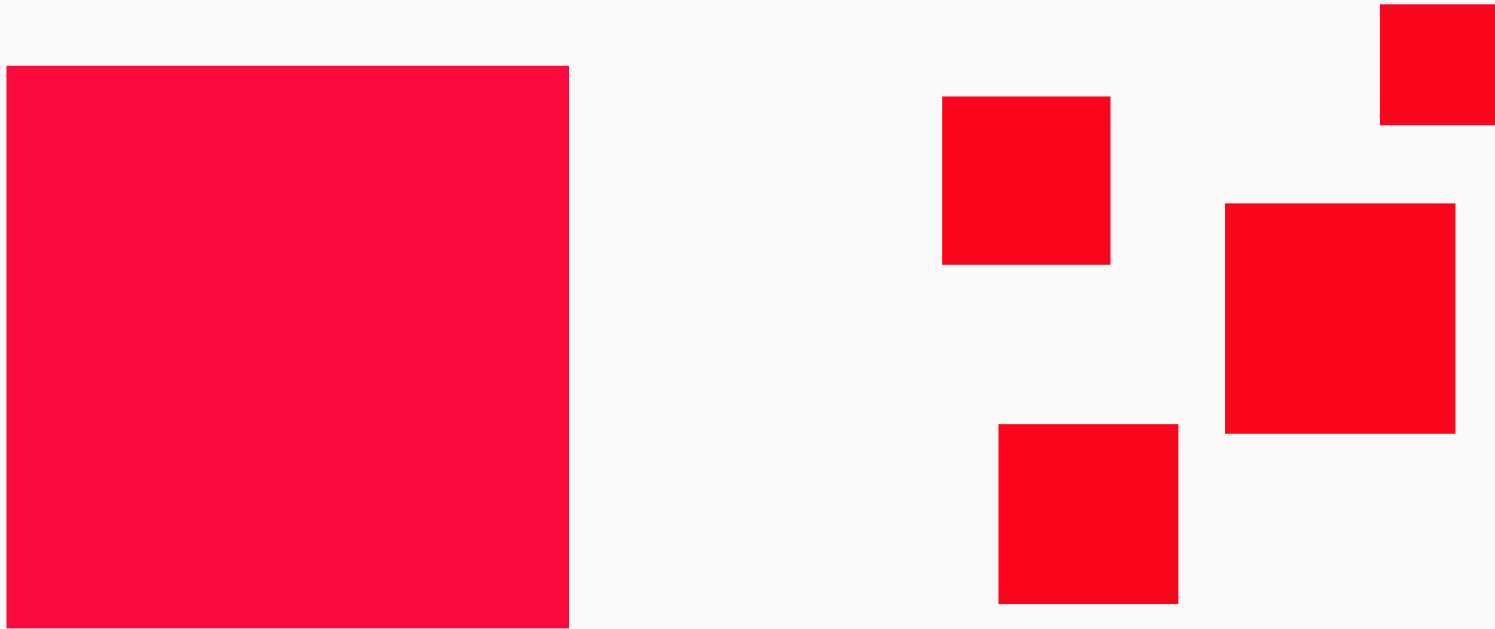
## ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE



Maybe we can achieve balance by making the smaller element a darker value and therefore have more contrast...

# BALANCE

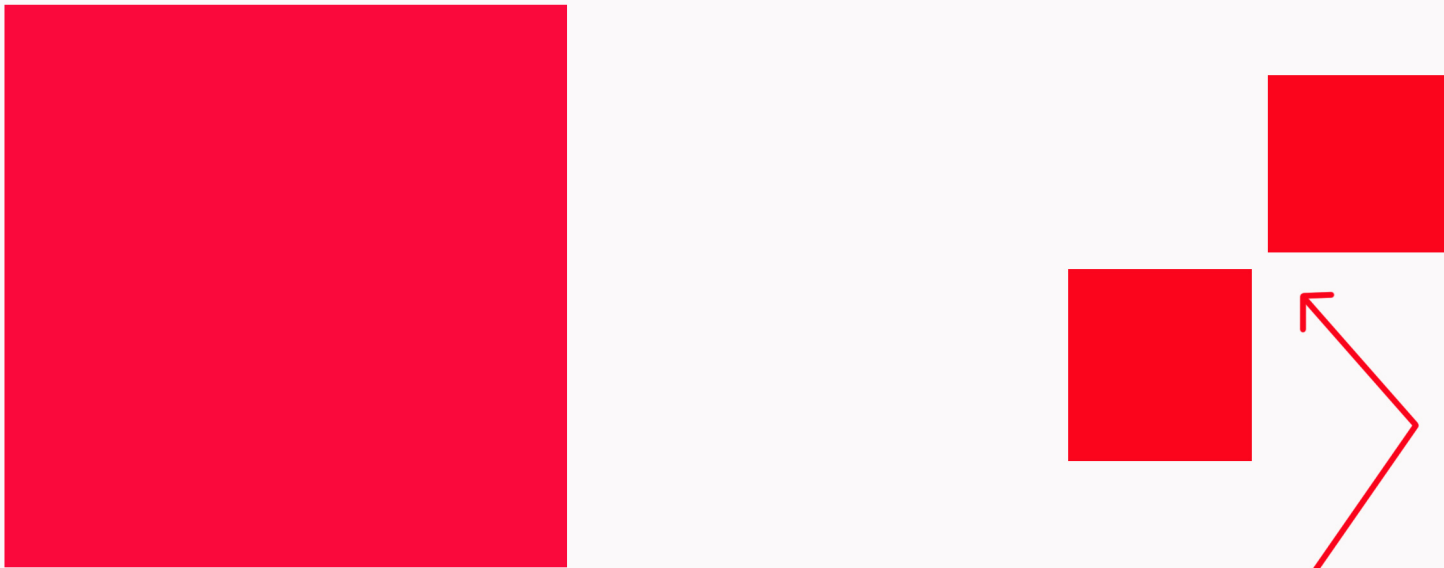
## ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE



A number of smaller objects can balance out one larger object

# BALANCE

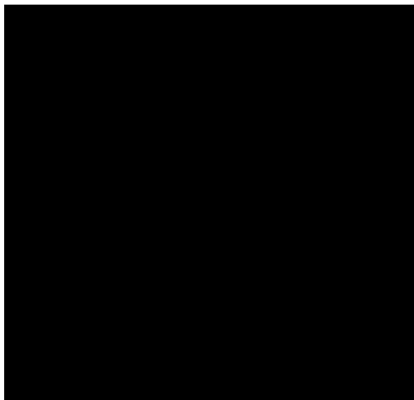
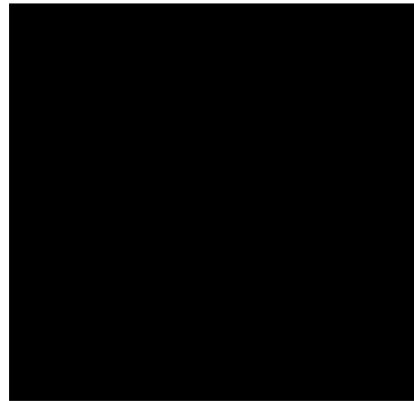
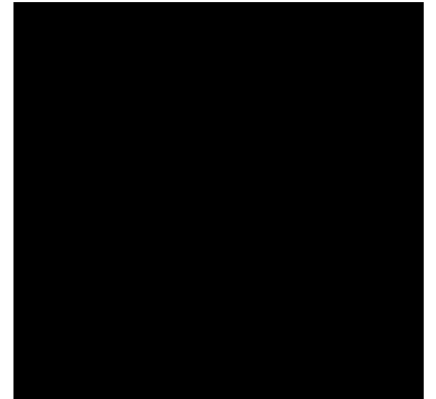
## ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE



Or creating an area of compositional **TENSION**  
can create an area of visual weight to achieve balance

# COMPOSITION

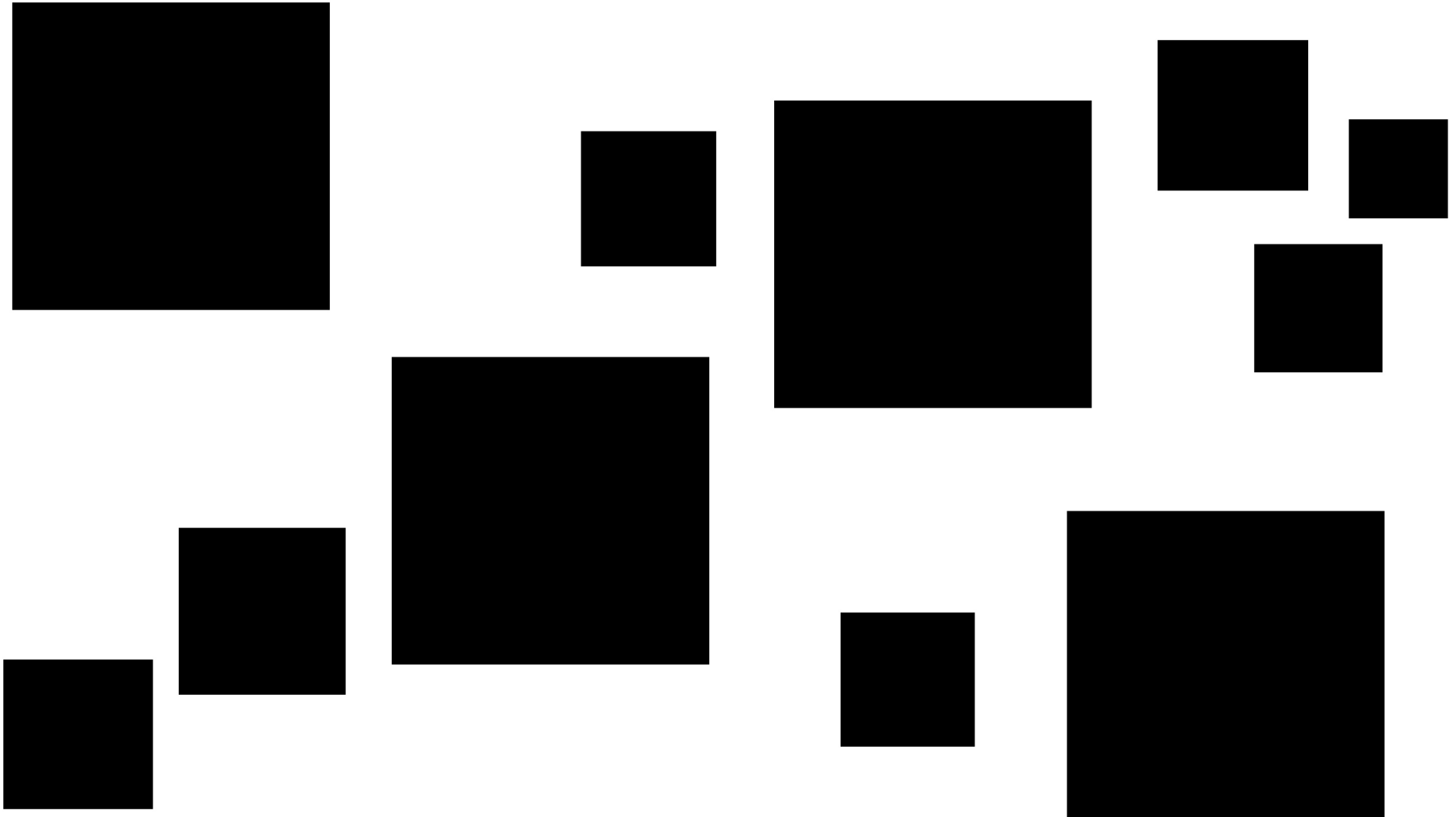
Lets put some of these ideas together:



A selection of relatively balanced black squares

# COMPOSITION

VISUAL INTEREST (don't you want to make your compositions interesting?)

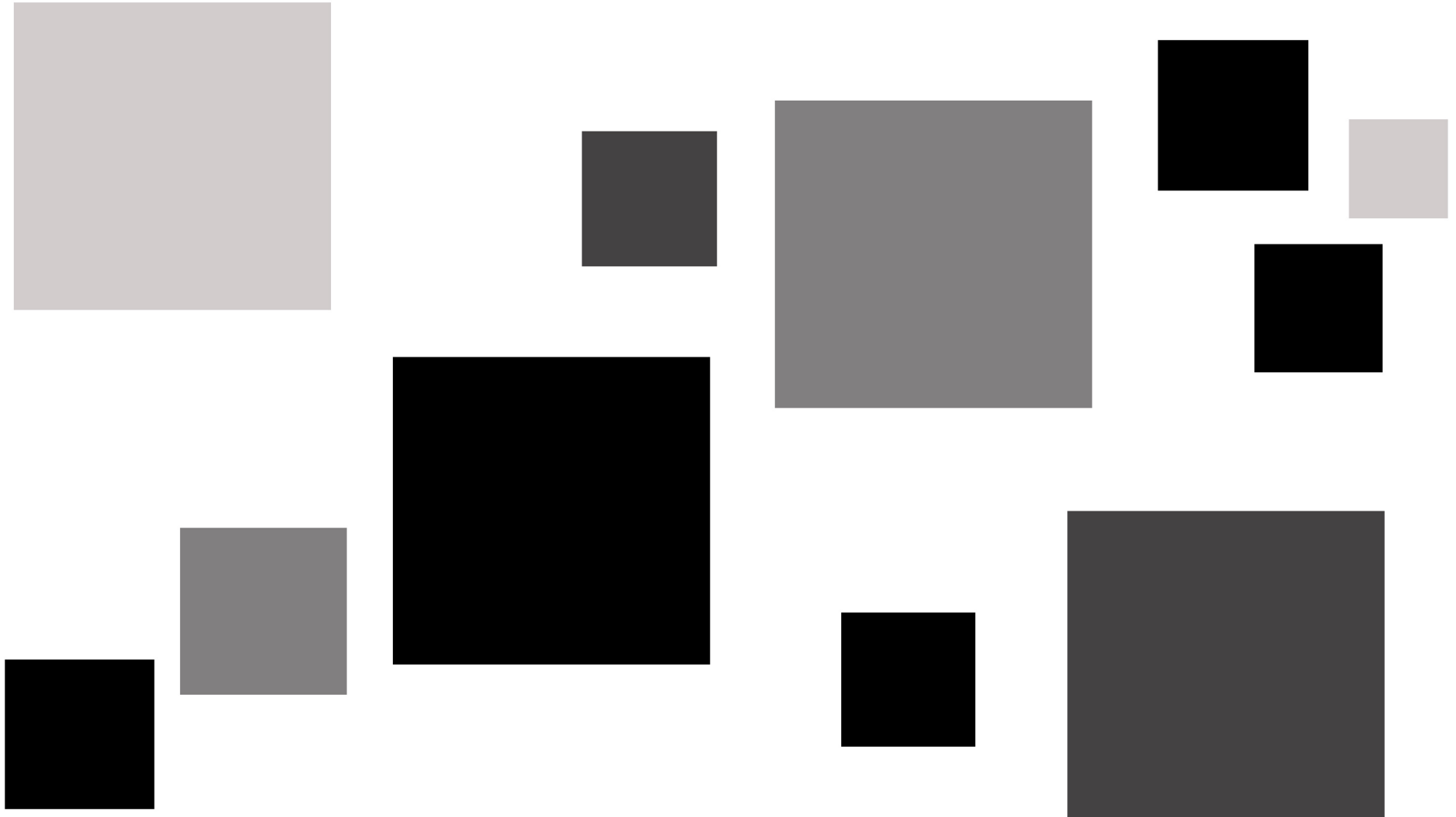


Providing variety of sizes increases **visual interest**



# COMPOSITION

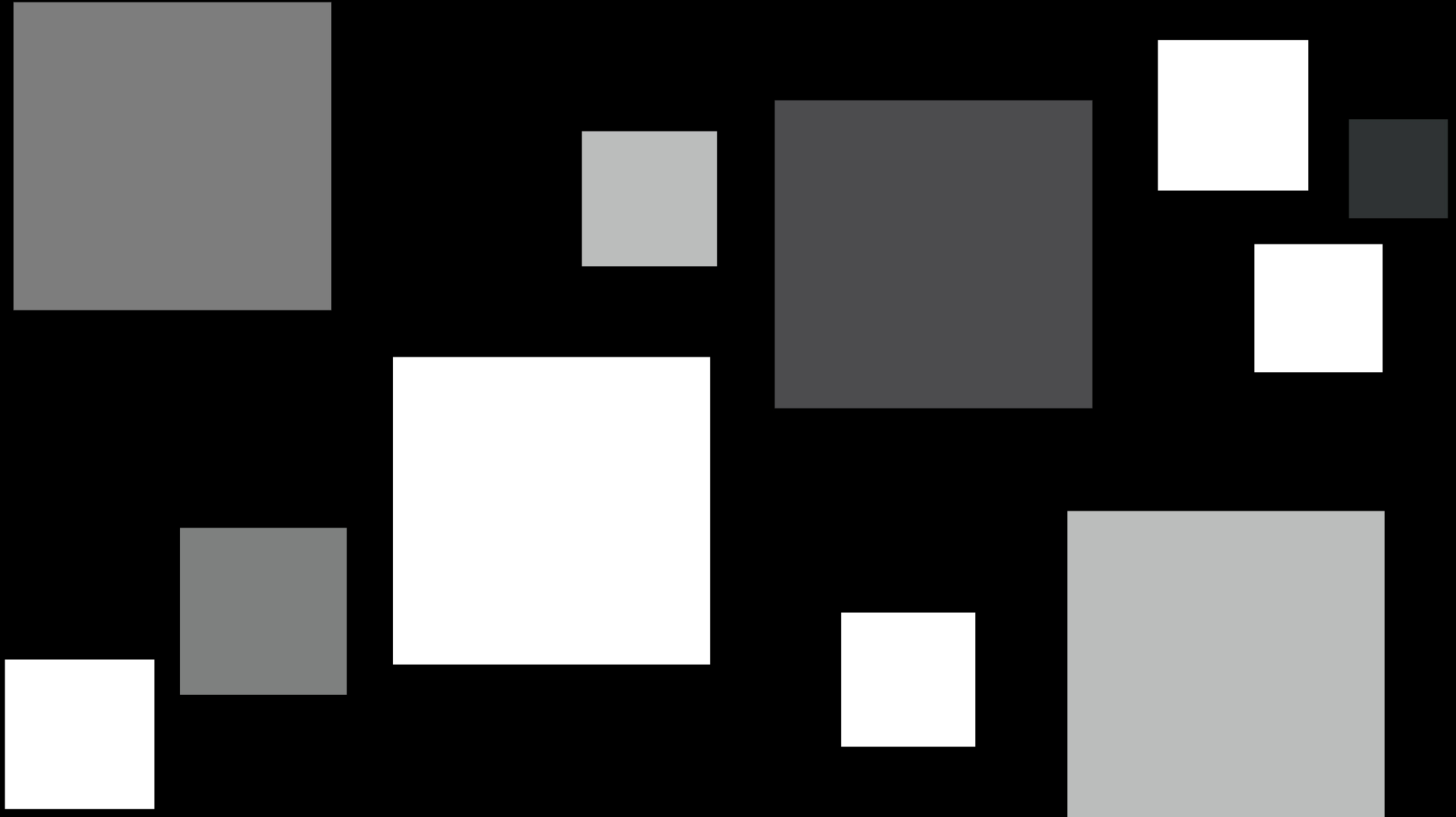
VISUAL INTEREST (don't you want to make your compositions interesting?)



Providing a variety of different values further increases visual interest. Notice that the composition is still relatively balanced.

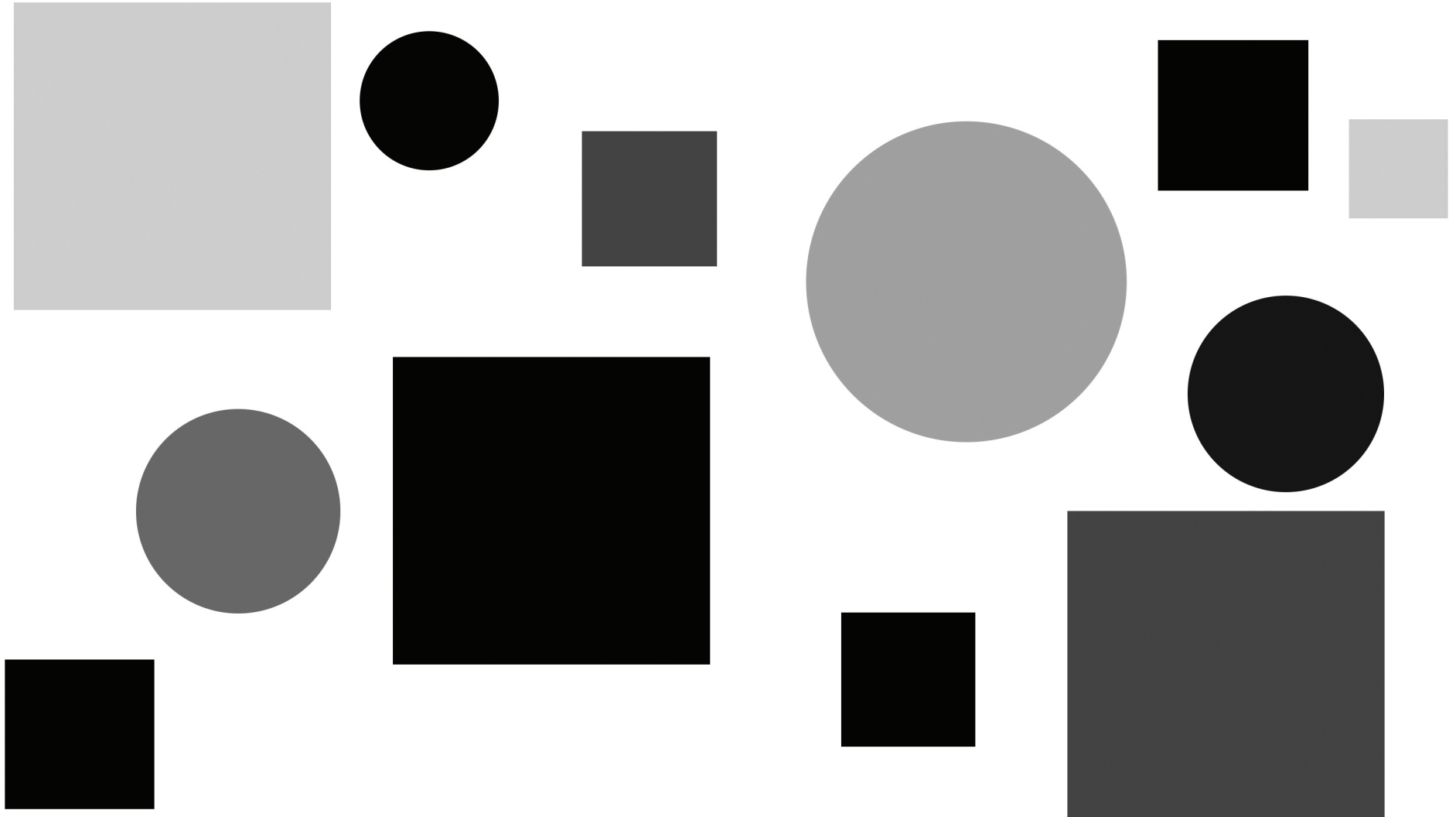
# COMPOSITION

NOTICE THAT THE INVERTED COMPOSITION REMAINS BALANCED (Contrast people!)



# REPETITION

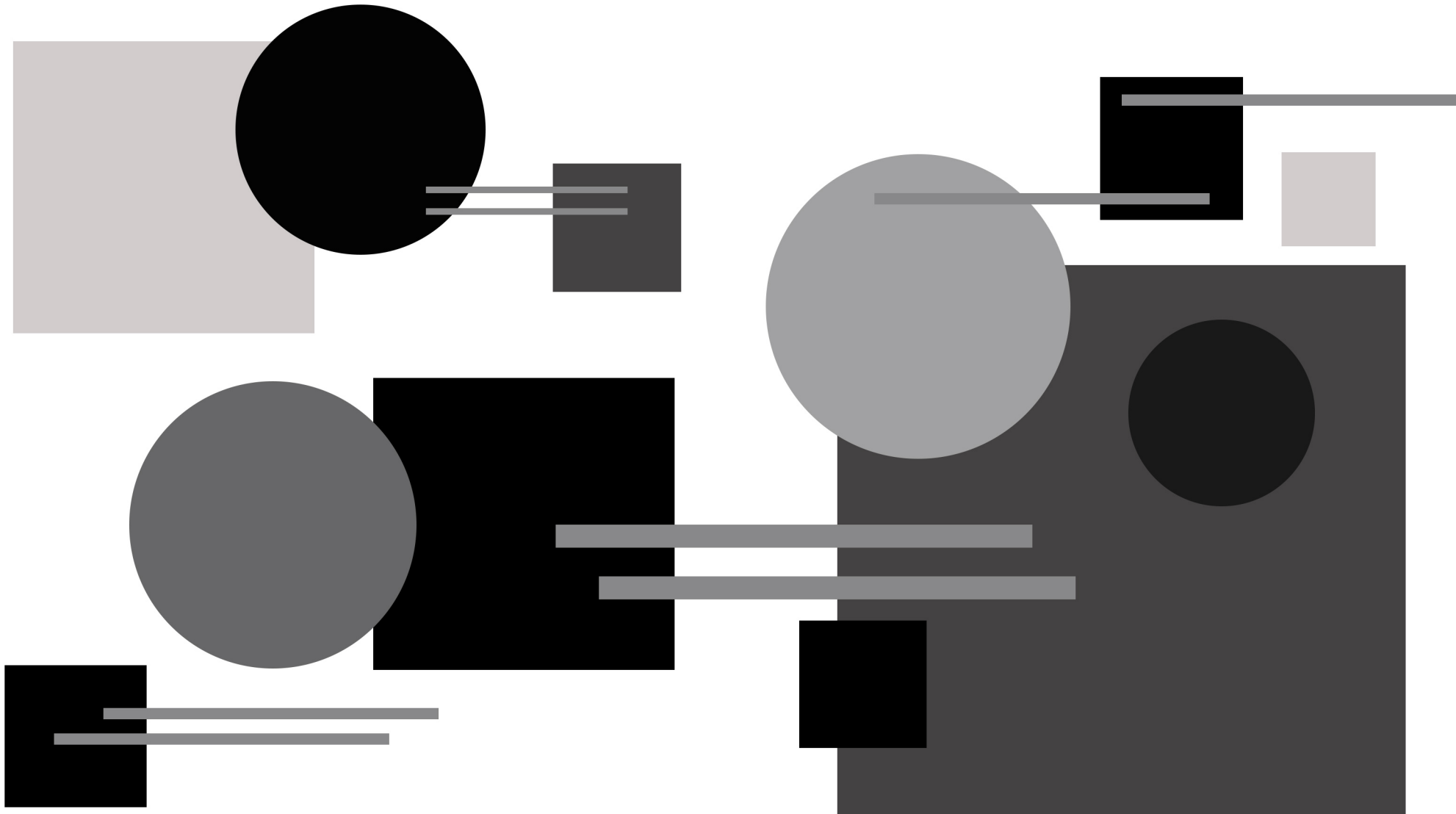
REPEATED SHAPES (OR OTHER ELEMENTS) LEAD OUR ATTENTION THROUGH THE IMAGE



Notice how the inclusion of the circles increases visual interest by increasing variety

# UNITY

NOW WHAT HAPPENS IF WE START EXAGGERATING THE SIZE DIFFERENCES AND START OVERLAPPING



NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE. THE OVERLAPPING SHAPES ARE CREATING CONNECTIONS THAT ALLOW OUR EYE TO FLOW THROUGH THE PICTURE INCREASING THE **UNITY** WITHIN THE IMAGE..