FERRANDI 3 D Design Vocabulary (borrowed and excerpted from Stephen Robison)

Abstract: Referring to art that simplifies, emphasizes, or distorts qualities of a real life image, often in order to present the essence of that image.

Activated Space: The space controlled or energized by a 3-D piece.

Additive Sculpture: Sculpture made by putting pieces together.

Allegorical: Using figure or emblem to stand for theme or idea.

Alignment: Arrangement along an axis.

Amorphous: Without definite form; lacking in structure.

Anthropomorphism: Giving human- or animal-like qualities to inanimate objects.

Appropriation: the use of existing imagery not created by the artist in order to communicate a new idea.

Armature: A simple wood or wire inner skeleton providing support for modeling in a plastic material such as clay or wax.

Articulate: To connect or juxtapose shapes or forms logically.

Assemblage: A 3-D artwork made from found objects.

Asymmetrical Balance: Balance achieved by different visual elements which command similar visual emphasis.

Axis: A conceptual straight line indicated by the dominant linear concentration of shapes or forms in a group, or by implied direction of movement.

Balance: Quality of stability and equilibrium controlled by location and emphasis of major parts of a design.

Biomorphic: Shapes and forms associated with those found in nature, non-linear. See organic.

Buoyancy: Impression of physical lightness or upward movement in a work.

Cantilever: An object which projects horizontally into space, supported at only one end.

Closed Form: A relatively solid form with little negative space.

Composition: The arrangement or structuring of various elements.

Confined Space: A spatial field with clearly defined enclosing boundaries.

Content: The subject matter of a work, plus its intellectual, symbolic, spiritual, and/or narrative implications, as opposed to physical form.

Contour: The outline of an object.

Contrast: The interaction of areas dissimilar in color, value, shape, texture, size, etc.

Curvilinear: Stressing use of curved lines, as opposed to rectilinear which stresses straight lines.

Deconstruction; Deconstructionism: The practice of interpreting meaning in a art by intellectually and philosophically dismantling image and meaning into component parts, systematically revealing hidden message or meaning.

Decorative: Art characterized primarily by pleasing appearance rather than strength of narrative; visual treatment that embellishes a surface.

Delineated Space: In 3-D works, negative space or unfilled areas described or delineated by positive shapes or filled areas.

Direction: The line (actual or implied) along which an object or element seems to be pointing or moving.

Directional Line or Shape: Line or shape with a clearly perceived sense of direction, guiding the viewer’s eye along a visual path.

Documentation: In contemporary art, the surviving documented record of a remote, inaccessible, or transitory art installation or a performance art event.

Dynamic Form: Form that conveys a sense of movement or change.  
Economy: Deletion of nonessential details to reveal the essence of a form.

Emphasis: Use of design elements to concentrate visual attention on particular areas or elements.

Ergonomics: The study of how people relate physically to their living environment; the study of how to make manufactured products physically user-friendly.

Fabrication: Assembling and attaching of rigid materials in creation of sculptural form.

Figurative: Art that is representational rather than abstract; art representing human or animal forms.

Figure/Ground: Terms generally used in 2-D art, parallel to positive/negative space, referring to the relationship between foreground object(s) or element(s) as figure, and the background field or surrounding space or ground.

Focal Point: The primary area or point in a work to which the eye is drawn.

Form: The volume and shape of a three-dimensional object, or the illusion of volume in a two-dimensional work; the overall physical aspects of a work, as opposed to its content.

Formal: Having to do with the design structure of a work without consideration of the content or recognizable subject matter.

Formalism: Theory or art that deals only with formal elements.

Found Objects: Objects or materials not created as art materials but used in a work of art.

Frontal: 3-D works which invite observation and appreciation primarily from one vantage point, as compared to half-round or full-round.

Full-Round - 3-D works which invite observation and appreciation from all directions.

Gestalt: The sum total effect of a work of art, combining the visual appearance, physical presence, objective narrative, and subjective psychological and emotional impact.

Gesture: Arrangements of design elements creating expressive or evocative association with movements and poses of the human figure.

Ground: Background or surface upon which marks or shapes are created.

Grouping: In perception, the tendency to search for connections and similarities between objects in proximity. In design, the attempt to establish those connections and similarities which add to a coherent whole.

Half-Round: 3-D works which invite observation and attention within a 180-degree field of view.

Hard-Edge: Art characterized by clearly-defined sharp-edged lines and shapes.

High Relief: 3-D form rising considerably off a flat background.

Highlight: A point or area characterized by brightness of color, value, or direct reflected light.

Icon: Greek for "image." In historic art, sacred paintings of the Greek Orthodox Church. In contemporary terms, any art image or object expressing basic values of the culture; any art image or object that creates the impression of being expressive of basic values of a non-specific culture.

Iconic: Art having the quality of an icon.

Idealized: In art, attempting some imagined rather than actual level of perfection.

Illusion: Appearance that is contrary to fact.

Implied Line, Plane, Shape, or Form: Suggested to the eye but not actually present.

Intent: The central idea or problem that an artist or designer is trying to deal with.

Interior Form: The internal shape described by a hollow work of art.

Juxtaposition: Adjacent placement of visual elements.

Kinetic Art: Two and three-dimensional artworks incorporating virtual or real movement. Pol Bury, Jean Tinguely, Alexander Calder, Yaacov Agam, George Rickey.

Line: That element of form that is primarily understood in terms of length and direction.

Linear: Consisting of or based upon lines or line-like divisions in space.  
Local Color: The natural color of an object or material.

Low Art: Traditionally refers to common arts, popular arts, applied arts, folk art.

Low Relief: 3-D form that is only slightly raised from a flat background.

Luminosity: the actual or illusory effect of giving off light.

Machine Art: Aesthetic based on machine forms and imagery.

Maquette: A small-scale model of a large sculptural work.

Mass: Perceived weight or density of an object or area.

Mixed Media: Combining several different media in one work.

Mobile: A word originally referring to the early work of Alexander Calder, now refers to any suspended kinetic artwork whose movement is powered by a natural force, usually wind.

Modeling: Shaping work from a pliable material such as clay.

Modifier: Something that changes the perceptual effect of form in space.

Modulation: Smooth transition or change.

Monochromatic: Color scheme developed from tints and shades of a single hue; any color scheme emphasizing a very few closely related colors.

Monolithic: Characterized by a primary connected volume.

Motif: An element, frequently the theme of a work, which may be repeated or elaborated on.

Movement, Actual: real physical movement.

Movement, Implied: Abstraction of static realism to create the visual effect of movement in progress, as in Giacomo Balla's study of a walking dog, or Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase."

Movement, Optical: Effect of movement created in 2-D work by the graphic juxtaposition of abstract patterns of contrasting color or value. See Op Art, moire effect.

Movement, Pictorial: Movement depicted realistically in a completely static way - movement frozen in time, as in Degas' horse racing scenes or Gericault's paintings of mounted horsemen.

Movement, Virtual: Effect of movement created by three-dimensional raised layers of patterns or shapes which seem to move as the viewer moves by the work.

Multi-Media: Combination of visual art with popular arts media, such as television or recorded sound.

Multiculturalism: In art, the purposeful incorporation of influences or imagery from multiple cultures.

Negative Space: Open space penetrating openings and surrounding the outer contour of a shape or form; the ground in a figure-ground relationship. That space which is controlled or affected by a shape or form.

Nonlinear: Art that emphasizes organic and/or painterly form and surface, minimizing hard-edged rectilinear form. .

Nonobjective Art: Having no readily identifiable resemblance to recognizable forms or objects.

Nonrepresentational: Art that features no overall recognizable object or scene.

Neutral: Color of very low saturation, approaching gray.

Objective: Referring to objects as they actually are.

Opaque: Having the property of blocking all light.

Organic: Having a shape or form referential to biological structures; form emphasizing curved shapes and volumes with minimal angularity.

Patina: Surface finish composed of a thin transparent film, usually conveys a sense of age or use.

Pattern: A regularly repeating decorative design.

Planar: Characterized by juxtaposition of planes.

Plane: That element of form that can be described in two dimensions, predominantly characterized by surface.

Plastic: Any material that may be molded or shaped without adding or subtracting mass.

Pluralism: Art that combines different styles and/or movements.

Point: A real or conceptual mark indicating location but no specific direction or dimension.

Point of View: The distance or angle from which something is seen.

Positive Space, Area or Form: The parts of a design that are perceived as being shape or object; the figure in a figure-ground relationship. In 3-D work, that which occupies actual physical space.

Postmodernism: Direction in modern art beginning in the late 1960s involving a shift away from the formalism, optimism, and idealism of Modernism. Modernism specifically sought styles distant from traditional art, also often distant from the imagery and realities of everyday life. Postmodernism reinterprets the past in contemporary terms, reconnecting art and everyday reality, dissolving traditional categorical distinctions such as popular arts, low art, high art, naive art, and folk art.

Potential Energy: The stored energy implied by mass elevated into space, often involving the impression of impending falling or other movement.

Primary Axis: The major axis of a form or object, such as the spine in a human skeleton.

Primary Contour: the shape of the outermost extremity of a form.

Principles of Design: The unifying principles governing composition - variety, contrast, rhythm, repetition, balance, emphasis, economy, and proportion.

Proportion: Comparative relationship of parts in terms of size, value, color, etc., independent of any specific measurement.

Proximity: Relative nearness of shapes and forms to each other.

Public Art: Art produced for and owned by the community. Often site-specific installation. Alice Aycock, Mary

Radial Balance: Balance in all directions around a central point.

Radiation: The quality of form which visually activates an area of space around it.

Realism: Visually accurate representation in art of known objects.

Rectilinear: Composed of straight lines, as opposed to curvilinear.

Referential: Having the property of resemblance to an identifiable object, idea, or emotion.

Relief: 3-D form rising from a 2-D surface.

Relief Sculpture: A sculptural work where the image is carved inward or built outward from a two-dimensional surface.

Repetition: Occurrence more than once. One of the basic unifying principles in design - can be repetition of shape, color, position, direction, etc.

Representational: Art that objectively represents things.

Rhythm: An arrangement of visual features in a measured sequence.

Scale: Size of an object or the elements that compose it, in relation to the surroundings or the external world.

Secondary Contours: Forms developed within the outer boundaries of a work.

Simulation, Simulationism, Simulacrum: Beginning in 1980s, art which emphasizes appropriation of multiple objects or images form contemporary culture as a comment on the whole notion of originality. Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine, Allan McCollum.

Simultaneous Contrast: Exaggerated visual contrast resulting when two highly-contrasting colors are juxtaposed. See optical color mixing and color vibration.

Site-specific: referring to works designed for and installed in a specific location.

Space: Total area of design consideration; total area affected by a design.

Spatial Orientation: The physical relationship of an object to its surroundings.

Spatial Presence: Total field of space defined by a work, including activated space.

Static Form: Without movement, implied or actual.

Subjectivity: Concern with the ideas, thoughts, or feelings of the artist rather than the external verifiable qualities of objectivity.

Subtractive Sculpture: Creation of a sculpture by carving away from a large piece of material.

Surface: The planar areas of an objects which are exposed to the viewer.

Symbol: A figure or character signifying some concept, idea, or emotion beyond its visual appearance. See semiotics.

Symmetrical Balance: 2-D or 3-D form that is a mirror image on either side of a central axis.

Symmetry: Degree to which form and/or elements are arranged in mirror image on either side of a central axis. See symmetrical balance and asymmetrically balance.

Superrealism: Extremely accurate representation of actual 3-D objects.

Tactile: Appealing to the sense of touch, either actually or visually.

Temporal: Relating to change occurring over time.

Textural Field: A broad area with a unified texture.

Texture: The tactile aspect of surface, actual or implied.

Totem; Totemic: form composed of stacked parts that show visual or narrative distinction between the parts.

Topographic: Area of surface referencing a rise or fall in elevation. Relating to cartography. Representation of the surface features of a place or region on a map, indicating their relative positions and elevations. Can be used especially in relief work but also to study in the round objects and the figure.

Trompe L’Oeil: Literally, "fool the eye" in French - optical illusion which convinces us we are seeing actual form or space when it does not exist. Or in 3-d work the work is so real that it visually becomes the object it is intending to represent.

Transition: Area featuring contrast or change from one quality or appearance to another.

Unifier: A formal or narrative element which allows a viewer to visually or conceptually connect or group various components of an image or object.

Unity: Organization of parts, visual and conceptual, so that all contribute to a coherent whole.

Utilitarianist: An artist who creates objects that encompass conceptual concerns but who’s primary focus is on objects that also have a function related to a specific use.

Vertical Balance: Distribution of visual emphasis determining impression of lightness or heaviness in a work.

Visual Density: Concentration of visual elements activating a localized area.

Visual Texture: The illusion of texture on a 2-D or 3-D form.

Void: see negative space.

Volume: A containment of space enclosed or implied by points, lines, or planes.

Zeitgeist: In German, "spirit of the time" or "what’s in the air." In art, the essential character, atmosphere, and expression of a particular situation or period. Also can be thought about as the bandwagon or what is in style.