

Sigils:
The Art of Magick

What are sigils?

- “a sign or image considered magical; a seal or signet”
- Visual focus for ritual, or meditation; magickal identifier
- A way to bypass the conscious mind, as all the thinking is done during its construction, not its use

Why apply artistic principles to sigils and other magickal objects?

- Sigils are visual focii; as such, they make use of the eyes and the brain to make their impact.
- Sigils are a door to the unconscious; most reactions to artistic principles happen on a subconscious level.

Using perceptual and aesthetic principles will enhance sigils' visual impact, and thus their power to affect your magickal work.

“But I’m not an artist.”
Am I screwed?

“But I’m not an artist.”
Am I screwed?

No.

Sigil Design Methods

- ❑ **Pictographic:** remove duplicate letters, arrange remaining ones into glyph
- ❑ **Symbolic:** merge existing symbols
- ❑ **Magic Squares:** transform words to numbers, and map them on a numeric grid
- ❑ **Rose Cross:** transliterate into Hebrew and map letters on the Golden Dawn Rosy Cross
- ❑ **Others:** find letters in a fingerprint or starmap; pick them out of a book; map them on a keyboard.....
- ❑ **Intuitive:** meditate on your subject, then just start drawing

Let's walk through the design process

- ❑ Pick a subject, goal, name, or concept
- ❑ Write a 'Will Statement', or pick a set of relevant words or symbols
- ❑ Decide on a design method
- ❑ Transliterate, transform, add and reduce as needed
- ❑ Merge letters and symbols, or plot letters/numbers onto map
- ❑ Evaluate design

Questions thus far?

Good!
Now design your sigil!

Shapes and Colors

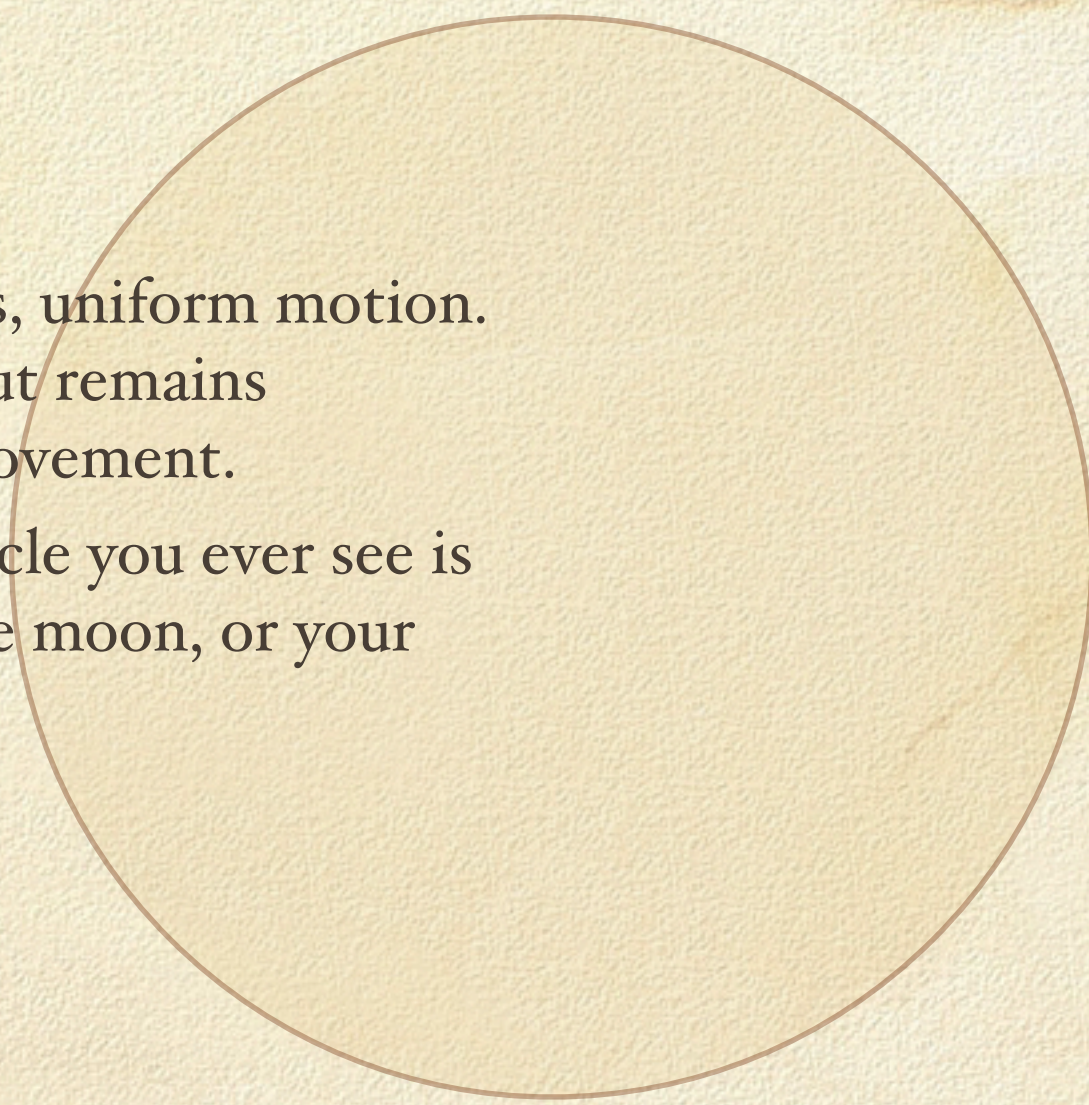
- ❑ The human eye has evolved to see three-dimensionally; it can often be fooled into seeing a third dimension when there is none.
- ❑ The human brain has instinctual psychological reactions to color and shape
- ❑ Magickal correspondences are linked closely to these phenomena

Shapes!

- The shape of the finished object
The shapes that make up the glyph
The overall shape of the glyph
- The eye follows any line as if it were a roller coaster.
- The brain interprets a shape as an object, and expects it to behave as the object would.

Shapes!

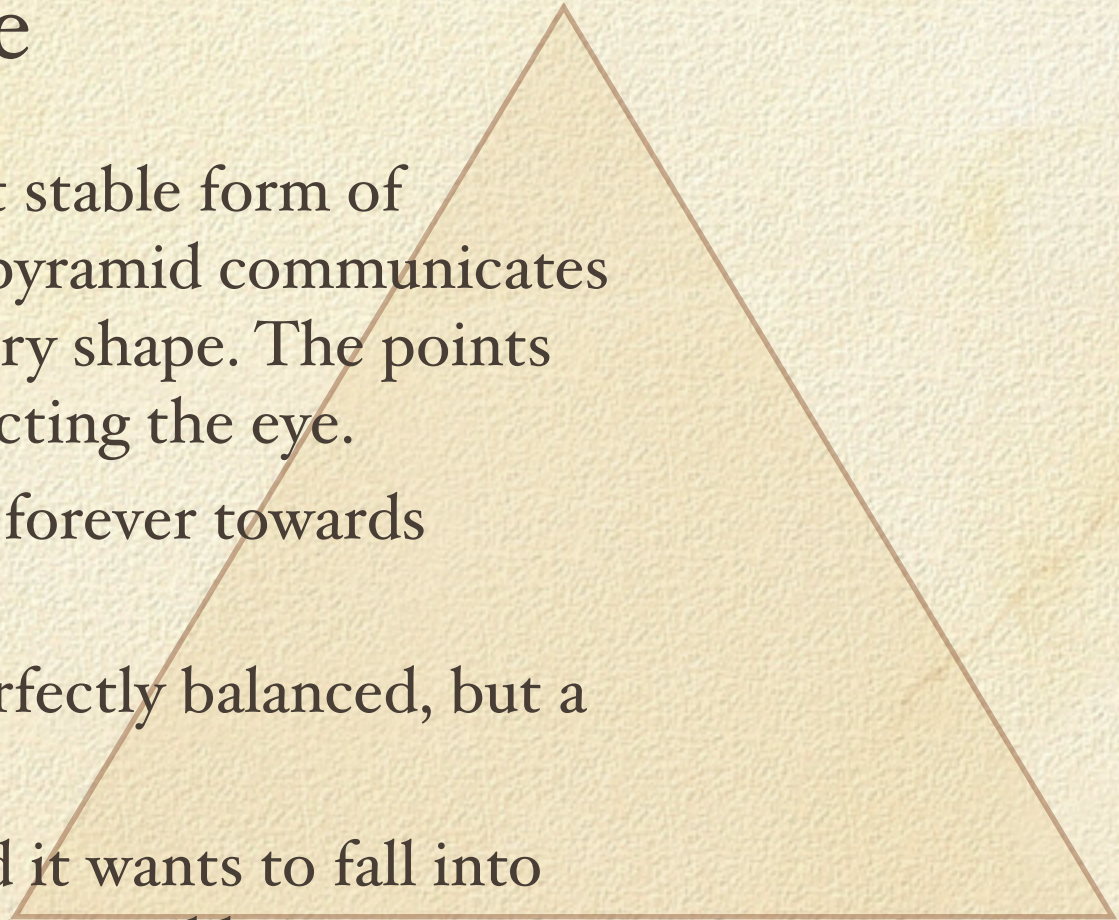
The Circle

- Smooth, continuous, uniform motion. It rolls like a ball, but remains unchanged by its movement.
 - The first perfect circle you ever see is likely the sun, or the moon, or your mother's eye.
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Shapes!

The Triangle

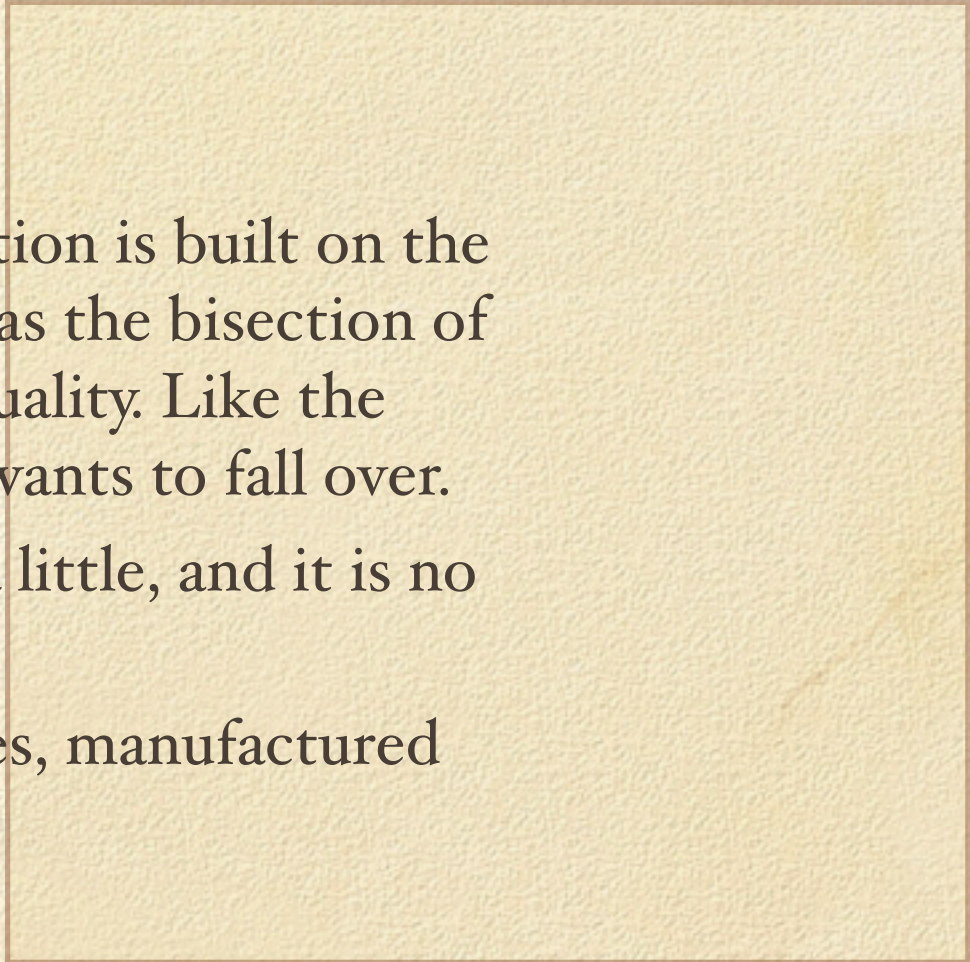
- A tripod is the most stable form of support there is. A pyramid communicates its stability by its very shape. The points are like arrows, directing the eye.
- Point up, it reaches forever towards heaven.
- Point down, it is perfectly balanced, but a breath could tip it.
- Point off center, and it wants to fall into the pyramid, to attain equilibrium.



Shapes!

The Square

- Most of modern civilization is built on the square. The right angle, as the bisection of a straight line, implies duality. Like the triangle, a tilted square wants to fall over.
- Change the shape only a little, and it is no longer a square.
- Squares are houses, boxes, manufactured things.



Shapes!

The Line

- A smooth, curved line leads the eye without stops or breaks
- A line with sharp angles is more segmented, rougher.
- A rock with a sharp angle is likely to be sharp, useful for cutting, but you run the risk of hurting yourself; one with a smooth profile is likely to be smooth to the touch as well.

Principles of Shape

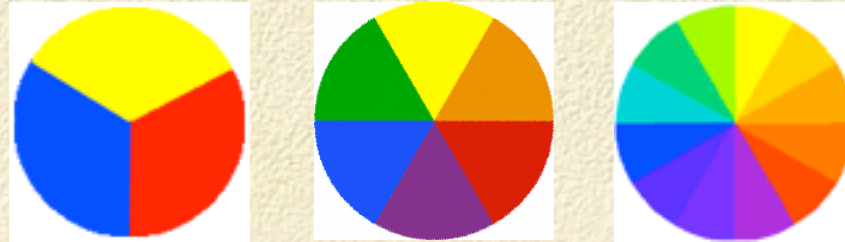
- Tension: how much the shape wants to 'fall over' into another position
- Symmetry: is it a mirror image of itself, and along how many lines
- Movement: how and where the line directs your eye

Shape Theory: Application

- ❑ What is the overall shape of your glyph?
- ❑ What kind of shapes make up its parts?
- ❑ Are there any commonalities between the feel of the shapes and the intent of your sigil?
- ❑ Can you tweak the glyph to make the shapes better reflect its intent?
- ❑ What shape do you want to use for the background?

Colors!

Artists use this color system:



- ❑ The primary colors (the ones out of which all others are made) are red, blue and yellow.
- ❑ The secondaries are made by mixing primaries: green, orange, and purple.
- ❑ The tertiaries are made by mixing a primary with a secondary (or two parts one primary, one part another): cyan, olive, citrine, russet, magenta, indigo

Colors!

- ❑ ‘Complementary’ colors: ones that are across from each other on the wheel. Red and green, blue and orange, yellow and purple.
- ❑ ‘Flashing’ colors: any pair of primaries on the pigment wheel: red and blue, blue and yellow, red and yellow.
- ❑ ‘Clashing’ colors: any pair of colors at odd angles to each other on the wheel.

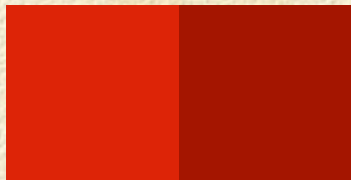
Components of Color

- Hue: the pure color (red, blue, citrine, etc.)
- Value: how light or dark the color is (as if it were converted to black-and-white)
- Saturation: the degree of purity of a color (pink is low-saturation red, and higher value than pure red)
- Temperature: Colors with red in them are 'warm', those with blue are 'cool'.

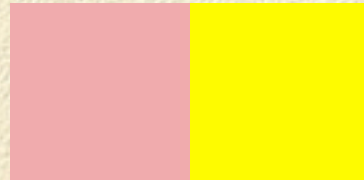
So both pink and burgundy are low-saturation reds; but pink has a higher value than pure red or burgundy. And all of them are 'warm'.

Contrast

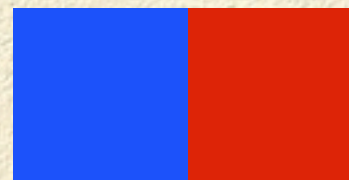
- Contrast is what makes text legible and an image interesting.
- The greater the difference in two colors' value and/or hue, and the higher their saturation, the higher the contrast.



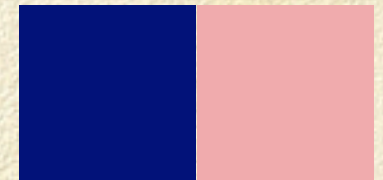
Similar hue
Similar value
Lowest contrast



Different hue
Similar value
Low saturation
Low contrast



Different hue
Similar value
High saturation
High contrast



Different hue
Different value
Highest contrast

Colors in Context

- The same color can look different depending on what colors are near it:



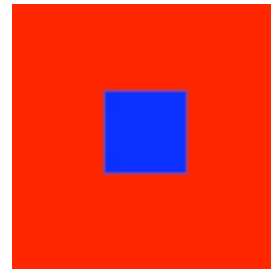
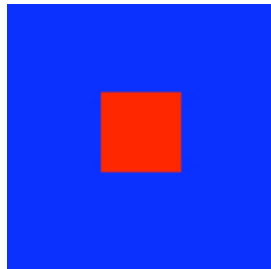
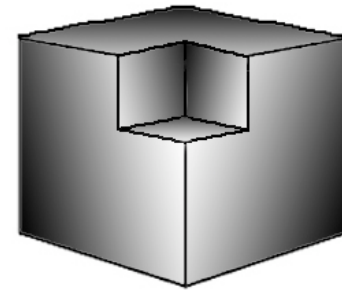
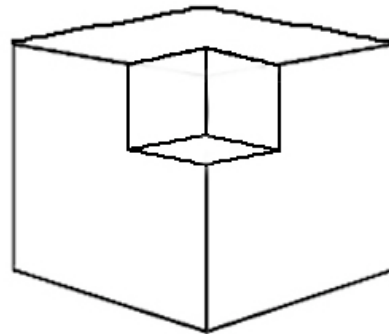
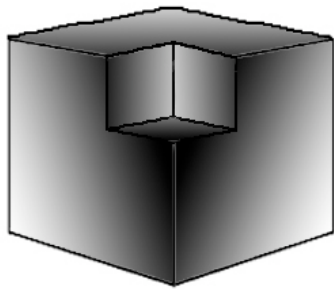
Choosing a Color Scheme

- ❑ The glyph and the background should be high contrast
- ❑ The background may be multiple colors, but they should be analogous (close on the color wheel).
- ❑ Clashing or just plain ugly colors may be appropriate, depending on the sigil's intent



The Third Dimension

- Warm colors advance, cool colors recede
- Light colors advance, dark colors recede

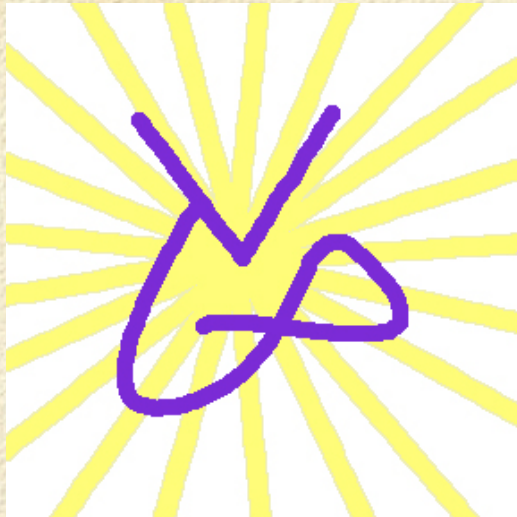


Color Theory: Application

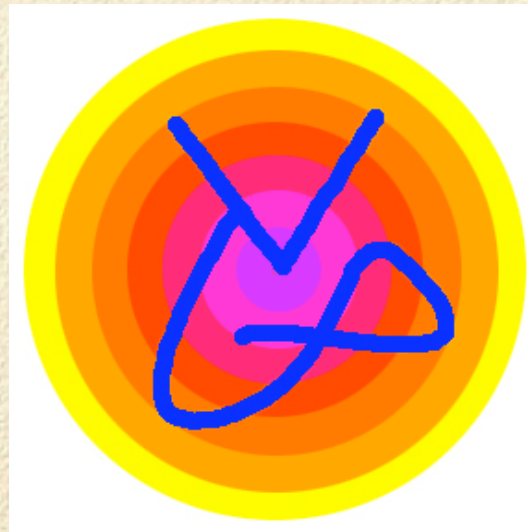
- ❑ What color(s) fit the intent of your sigil?
- ❑ Should the color scheme be harmonious?
Chaotic? Intense? Subdued?
- ❑ Do you want the glyph to seem like it is floating, falling, or vibrating?

Optical illusions!

Forced perspective:



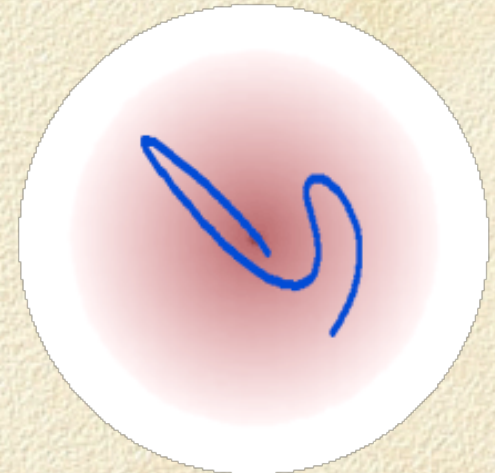
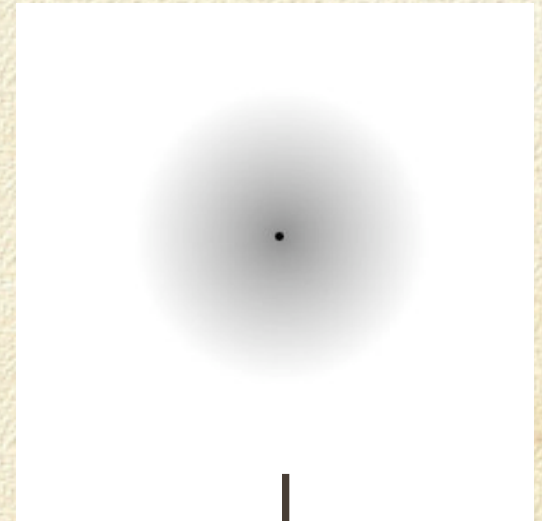
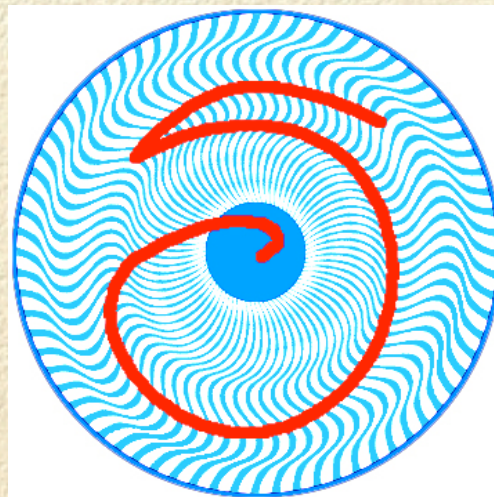
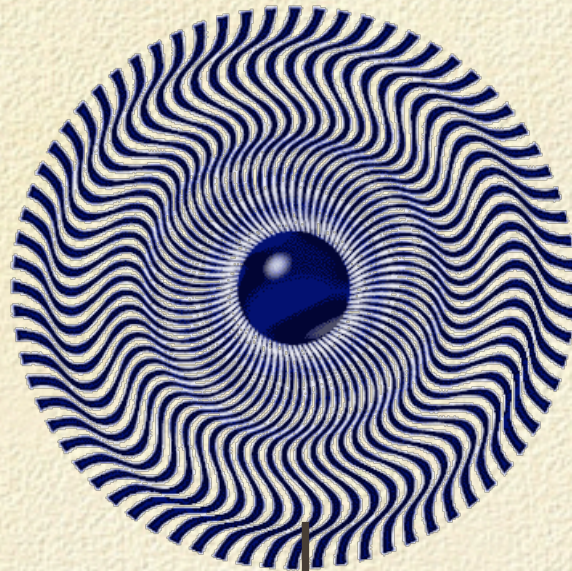
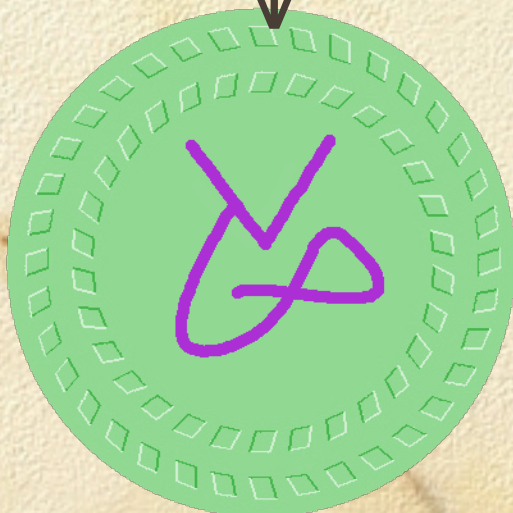
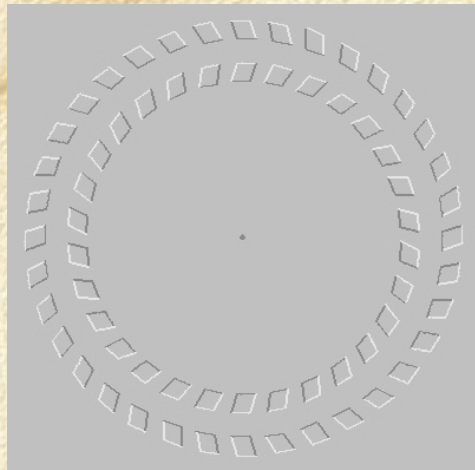
Concentric circles:



Drop shadow:



Optical illusions!



Optical Illusions: Application

- ❑ Will an additional sense of depth or movement enhance your sigil?
- ❑ Do you want the background to be part of the sigil's design?
- ❑ Are you willing to put in the extra work it takes to get a strong illusion?

Practical Technique

- ❑ Do lots and lots of rough drafts!
- ❑ Tools are your friends: rulers, compasses, shape templates
- ❑ Draw lightly!
- ❑ Don't expect it to look the way it does in your head!

Conquering Perfectionism

- ❑ Try to stay detached - evaluate each stage of the image without expectations.
- ❑ Creating any image is a dialogue between you and the materials. Don't order them around and expect them to behave!
- ❑ When all else fails, put it away. Try something else, or come back to it later.

Questions?