

Clothing and TEXTILES

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAMMING

Elements of Design



LINE



SPACE



TEXTURE



SHAPE or
FORM



COLOR

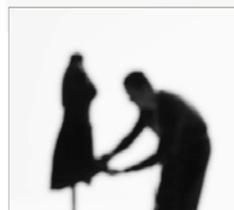
Introduction

The elements of design serve as a foundation for the development and creation of all textiles and clothing products, including fabrics for interior spaces. Throughout history artisans and designers have utilized the elements of design in a variety of ways to create a certain aesthetic. Across the disciplines, the elements of design: *line, space, shape, form, texture, and color* are used by every designer. The following discussion presents each element of design and examples of how it is used in clothing, textiles and/or interiors. Mass, light, and pattern are referred to in some interior design references, but for the purposes of clothing and textiles they will not be presented in detail in this overview of the elements of design.

Line

Line is defined by Wolfe (2011) as a distinct, elongated mark as if drawn by a pencil or pen (p. 451). There are three different types of line: 1) Straight, 2) Curved, and 3) Jagged. When used in clothing, line can suggest movement or rhythm while directing the eye from one part of the body to another. Further, line can draw attention to a specific part of the body or emphasize a specific detail in a garment. For example, a topstitch used on a pair of designer blue jeans draws attention to the seams throughout the garment focusing attention to the length of the leg and/or the pockets of the jeans.

The direction of lines used in clothing or textiles can be 1) Vertical, 2) Horizontal, or 3) Diagonal. Depending on direction of line used, various illusions can be created using clothing. For example, when an individual wears vertical lines there is an illusion of added height and slimness (Wolfe, 2011). If an individual is trying to communicate dignity, strength, poise or sophistication,



vertical lines are recommended (Wolfe, 2011). Inversely, horizontal lines can suggest someone is shorter or wider than what he/she actually is. Wolfe (2011) concluded that horizontal lines present a calm and relaxed look while suggesting rest and gentleness (p. 195). Applying the above information about vertical and horizontal lines, diagonal lines that are vertical lead to a slender visual, and horizontal diagonal lines create greater width to an individual's body. Diagonal lines suggest action and strength while coming across dramatic and eccentric (Wolfe, 2011, p. 195).

Line is applied to clothing design in two ways: 1) Structurally, and 2) Decoratively. Examples of how line is used in the structural design of a garment are seams, darts, pleats, tucks, and edges. Each of these design features are used in the construction of the garment decided upon by the designer. Decorative lines are showcased by the use of surface details on a garment. Examples of decorative lines are ruffles, braid, fringe, appliques, buttons, or accessories worn by the individual (Wolfe, 2011, p. 196).

Space

Space is often used when designing the interior space of a home or building. According to Nielson and Taylor (2011), space is defined as "an element of design consisting of a continuous expanse of distance without forms, which is divided with walls, partitions, and furnishings. Filled space, and empty space is called negative space" (p. 486). In clothing design, designers use the negative and positive space associated with shapes to create a surface design or pattern. The other elements of design can be used to define the contrast between the negative and positive space found on fabrics in clothing or used in interior spaces.

Shape or Form

Shape is defined as the silhouette, or overall outline of a garment or other item (Wolfe, 2011, p. 458). When a designer is creating a garment, how it is cut out and the construction techniques used impact the shape or form of the final product. When an individual is walking down the street, the image seen from a distance is considered his/her shape, form, or silhouette. The shape or form of a garment can be used by the wearer to draw attention to or away from various parts of the body. The larger the shape of a garment the larger the silhouette of an individual will be seen and vice versa.

Throughout history, three silhouettes have been used: 1) Tubular, 2) Bell, 3) Back Fullness (Wolfe, 2011, p. 192). The tubular silhouette was used in the 1820s and 1920s presenting the woman's body as slim by using vertical lines in structure and decoration. A bell silhouette was commonly found in the 1740s and 1850s showcasing a fitted waist and full skirt on women (Wolfe, 2011). The last silhouette, the back fullness, was primarily seen in the 1780s and 1880s. This application of shape or form incorporated a full skirt that puffed out in the back but not the front (Wolfe, 2011, p. 30).



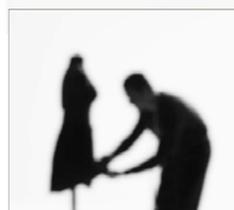
MODERN DAY TUBULAR



MODERN DAY BELL



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Texture

The texture of a clothing item is determined by the fiber content, yarns, and method of construction used. Texture is defined as the surface quality of a garment (Wolfe, 2010, p. 199). Finishes can be applied to clothing during the manufacturing process that also change the overall texture or feel of a clothing item. To describe the texture of a specific garment, the following words can be used: rough, smooth, dull, shiny, firm, crisp, fuzzy, bulky, nubby, soft, shaggy, flat, harsh, sheer, loopy, furry, scratchy, delicate, sparkling, and fine (Wolfe, 2010, p. 200). There are two different types of texture, *structural texture* and *added visual texture*. Structural texture is used to describe the weight or visual size of a garment. For example, when a wool sweater is manufactured, the final product that is created is visually bulky and heavy creating the illusion of an increased body size. Added visual texture occurs when a surface design is integrated into the garment. Specifically, logos, patterned prints of different sizes, and pictures can be used to change the overall motif of a garment. Considering the texture of a garment when purchasing new clothing is important for comfort, appearance, and can be used to create interest in an ensemble.

Color

Color provides individuals the opportunity to express feelings, create illusions in appearance, and can bring overall excitement to a personal wardrobe. Researchers have found that different colors can symbolize different moods, feelings, cultural practices, or as a communication tool (Hemphill, 1996; Lang, 1993; Mahnke, 1996). For example, blue is often seen as a calming color associated with comfort and security, red communicates excitement, passion, or anger, yellow is cheerful, representing prosperity and a bright or sunny disposition, and purple can be used to showcase loyalty, power, or even mysteriousness (Ballast, 2002; Wexner, 1982). The colors an individual chooses to wear can influence how others respond to them. Specifically, when participating in a job interview, it is important to communicate characteristics such as sophistication, seriousness, wisdom, and dignity to potential employers. By wearing a neutral such as black, these characteristics can be presented to a hiring committee before the candidate even speaks a word. This strategy could communicate to the potential employer that the job interview is being taken seriously.

There are three characteristics of color that are described using the following terms: hue, value, and intensity. *Hue* separates one color from another and is the name given to each color on the color wheel. *Value* is seen as the lightness or darkness of a color. White and black are added to change the overall value (lightness or darkness) of each color. When black is added, a shade is created; whereas, the result of adding white to a color is a tint. *Intensity* describes the brightness or dullness of a color. With color, the possibilities are endless. Consumers can choose from a variety of color palettes and schemes to create a specific look or illusion with their dress.

Conclusion

The elements of design can be used by the individual to communicate personal style, taste, occupation, and even mood. How the elements are applied are determined by the individual. Various clothing items can be used to create illusions and draw the eye to or from the body of the wearer. It is up to the individual to decide how they are going to apply the elements of design to achieve their desired look for a specific task associated with personal and professional life experiences.

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