

# DESIGN ELEMENTS

## ELEMENTS

The design elements are the building blocks or starting points in the creation of a design. In *Product Design & Technology* the design elements include:

SHAPE      SILHOUETTE      FORM      TEXTURE  
LINE      COLOUR      TRANSLUCENCY      TRANSPARENCY      OPACITY

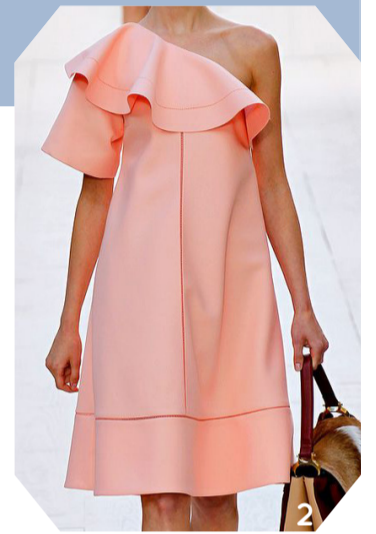
## SHAPE

**Shape is the area defined by the outside edges of an object, the boundaries of a colour, or a line.** A shape can be geometric or organic.

**Geometric shapes** include squares, rectangles, triangles and circles. **Organic shapes** are irregular and are often based on curves.

In fashion design **SHAPE** can refer to a few things...

- > The overall shape of the garment which is called the *silhouette*.
- > The shapes that are used as parts of a garment eg. sleeves or collars etc
- > Shapes created by a printed design or shapes created by seams, trims etc



## SILHOUETTE

**Silhouette is the outline or outside shape of the garment.** The silhouette shapes of fashion are very specific to descriptions of clothing, they include:

**Tube** - long, cylindrical, and narrow with minimal shaping.

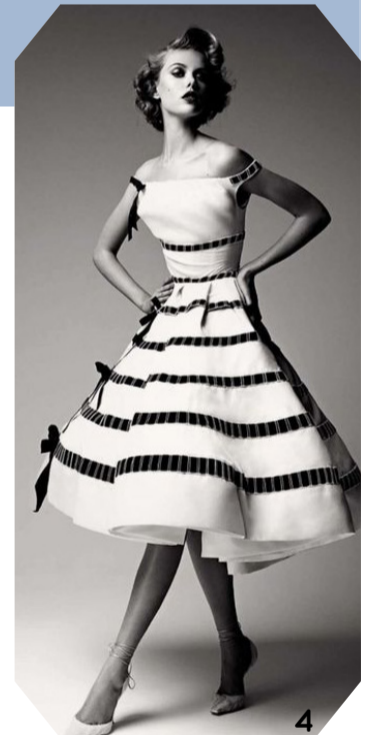
**Trapeze** - a triangle with a wide base, and pointed or narrow at the top.

**Bell** - narrow and tube like in the top section, suddenly rounding out to a flat base.

**Hourglass** - wide at the top and bottom, and narrow in the centre.

**Wedge** - an inverted triangle, wide at the top, narrowing to a point at the bottom.

“We often think of fashions of a particular era as using a specific silhouette shape - e.g. The tube like flapper dress of the 1920's, the full skirted, bell shaped gowns of the 1950's and the wedge created by the padded shoulders of 1980's power dressing.” - *PD&T textbook (p90)*



## FORM

**The overall three dimensional shape and structure of a product.**

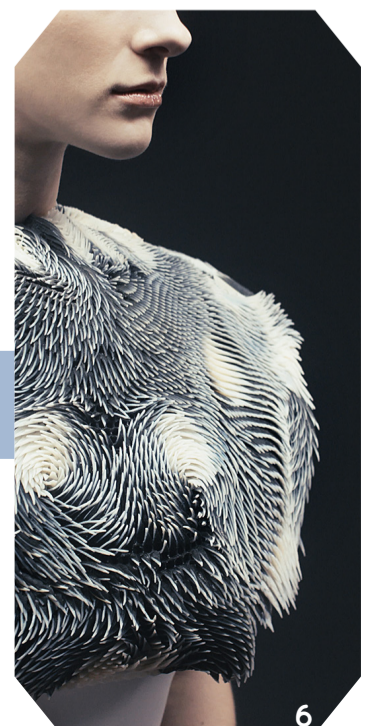
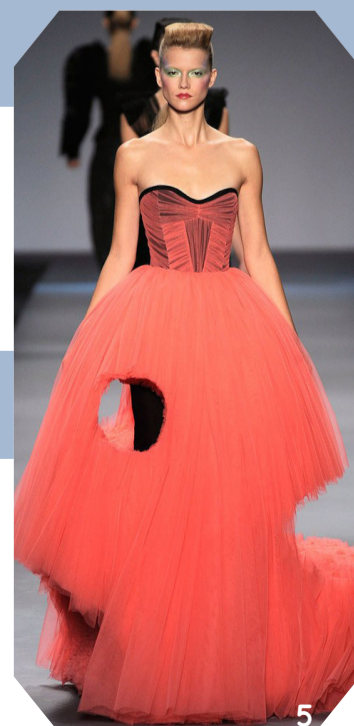
Form can be created through the use of shape or line. While shape is only two-dimensional, form is three-dimensional. You can hold a form, walk around a form and sometimes be inside a form.

## TEXTURE

**Texture is the surface quality of an item.**

It is how something feels when it is touched or looks like it would feel if touched. In fashion this is the **surface** of the fabrics and trimmings.

The texture of a fabric is created by the way the fabric is constructed and the fibre it is constructed from.



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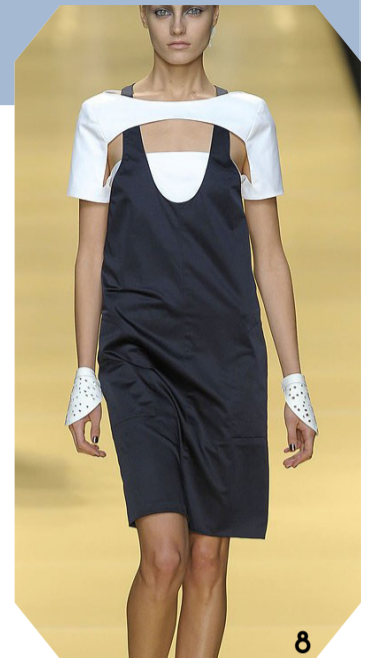
## LINE

**Line is the most basic of the design elements.**

Lines have length, thickness and direction and they can be straight, curved, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, zigzag, wavy, parallel, continuous, or interrupted, such as dashed or dotted lines.

**Line can be created by** the overall shape or silhouette, surface details such as stitching, printed pattern, or construction. In a fashion garment they can be part of the fabric (stripes, plaid or woven texture) or part of the design (seams, pleats, pin tucks, drape, decorative trim).

**Line can** show direction, draw attention to a part of the body by directing the gaze of the viewer, outline or divide a space, create psychological aspects in the design or generate optical illusion.



## COLOUR

**Colour can be referred to as:**

Primary, Secondary or Tertiary colour

Cool or warm

Harmonious or Complimentary

**Hue** refers to the name of the colour (eg. red, blue).

**Value or tone** is how light or dark the colour is (eg. light blue, navy blue).

**Intensity** is how bright or dull it is.

Colour can define parts of a design. It can be used to create shape, to draw the attention to a particular part of the body or may act as a contrast between one part of the design and another. Colour can be **dramatic or subtle**. It can be **used symbolically or can create mood** and emotion in design. Colour can define trends for a particular season or define brands or products.



## TRANSLUCENCY

**Allows some light through but detail cannot be seen clearly.**

In other words... things that are translucent **allow light through but with significant diffusion or distortion**. Most clothes would therefore better be described as translucent.

Materials which can be made translucent include silk, rayon or nylon.



## TRANSPARENCY

**Allows light through and can be seen through.**

Some sheer fabrics can be semi-transparent, these include fabrics with a low thread count such as Chiffon, Georgette or fine nylon (such as found in stockings).



## OPACITY

**Does not allow light through and cannot be seen through.**

Designs can be opaque but give the illusion of varying opacity levels.

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PRINCIPLES

The design principles are created through the way in which the various elements of the design are applied or combined. Together elements & principles form the building blocks of design and affect the expressive content, or message, mood or aesthetic form of the work.

In *Product Design & Technology* the design principles include:

PROPORTION

BALANCE

SYMMETRY / ASYMMETRY

RHYTHM

PATTERN

REPETITION

MOVEMENT

SPACE

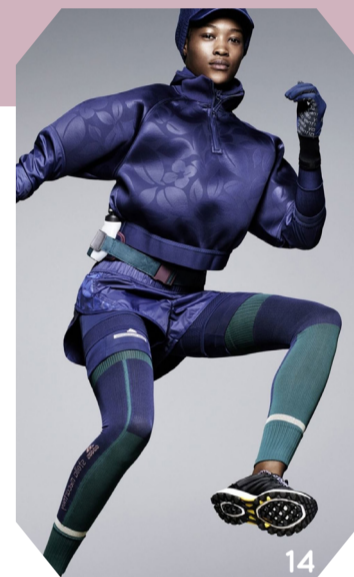
CONTRAST

## PROPORTION

**Proportion is how all aspects of the design relate to the design as a whole:** the pleasing interrelationship of the sizes of all parts of the garments.

The size and length of design features like pockets, trimmings, surface ornamentation or **parts of garment and their relationship to the silhouette** of the garment contribute to the sense of proportion.

“Many modern designers exaggerate some of the proportions of their designs for the effect that this produces....this creates a sense of tension and instability or may focus on a particular feature. It also gives the sense of breaking away from expected or conventional forms.” - PD&T textbook (p81)



## BALANCE

**Balance refers to visual weight in design.**

A garment must be balanced to be visually pleasing. Balance is also the concept of visual equilibrium, and relates to our physical sense of balance. Balance can be achieved **symmetrically OR asymmetrically**.

## SYMMETRY / ASYMMETRY

**When an object is symmetrical, one side is a mirror image of the other.**

A symmetrical object or garment can be described as having equal “weight” on both sides of a centrally placed line. It is also known as ‘formal balance’.

**Asymmetry means an object or garment has no lines of symmetry.**

Asymmetry can create an exciting dramatic effect. Asymmetrical garments can still be visually balanced through the use of similar shapes or volumes.



## RHYTHM

**Rhythm is the arrangement of features in a design so the eye moves easily over the garment.**

It leads the eye from one part of a design to another, creating movement through repetition of pattern, shapes, lines or colour. Rhythm has a fluid, visual beat that can range from slow and gradual to fast paced.



# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PATTERN

Patterns are created from the repeated use of lines, shapes and colours.

Patterns can be formed by:

- > The construction of the fabric through the interplay of threads that are woven or knitted
- > Through printed or embroidered designs on the surface of the fabric.

Patterns that are woven into fabric with different colours often have specific names, e.g. plaids, herringbones and hounds tooth. Twills and jacquards are fabrics with a pattern formed through the weaving process.

Printed patterns can use a variety of shapes, lines and colours. They can be abstract, or naturalistic/ figurative (based on real things such as flowers).

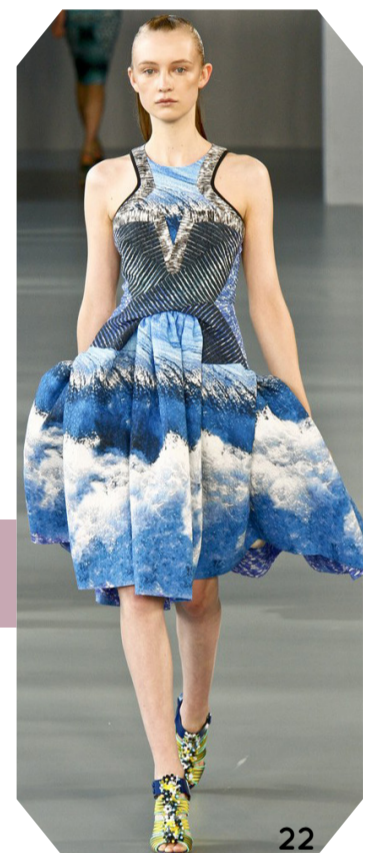


## REPETITION

Repetition occurs when an element such as line, shape, space, value, colour or texture is used more than once.

Repetition creates pattern. Repeated patterns or elements create a sense of rhythm like the rhythm or beat of a piece of music.

On fabric a 'repeat' is: The distance between the starting point of the pattern and where that pattern point restarts.



## MOVEMENT

When discussing clothing, movement refers to how the fabric flows and drapes.

When looking at other objects, such as furniture, movement refers to how the eye is drawn across the object by its visual features.

## SPACE

Gives the eye freedom to move through a design and to discover the elements it's looking for.

Positive space is the space an object or design takes up.

Negative space is the space between the positive space or between parts of the object. Negative space can be an important and integral part of any design and often helps lead the eye to a focal point.

## CONTRAST

Contrast is created through the use of elements such as colour, tone, shape and line. It can add interest and drama to a design, highlight specific points in the body or draw attention to a focal point in the design.



### Image details:

1) Fabio Bartelt, 2013

5) Viktor & Rolf, 2010

9) Gucci, 2016

13) Vivienne Westwood, 2014

17) James Long, 2014

21) Thakoon, 2015

2) Chloe, 2013

6) Irish Van Herpen

10) Zimmerman, 2015

14) Stella McCartney, 2014

18) Erdem, 2015

22) Peter Pilotto, 2012

3) Pierre Cardin

7) Sass & Bide

11) Irish Van Herpen, 2012

15) Valentino, 2016

19) Burberry, 2015

23) Jean Paul Gaultier, 2008

4) Christian Dior, 1950's

8) Chanel, 2009

12) YSL, 1960's

16) Erdem, 2015

20) Versace, 2017

24) Dereck Lam