



# Elements of Design

## Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- ✓ Analyse the elements of fashion design
- ✓ Explain how to apply The Elements of Design in order achieve a well designed garment
- ✓ Explore different types of designs
- ✓ Describe the importance of colour in a design scheme.

# Elements of Design

## Introduction to Design

Three main aspect-structures, functions and decorations must be considered when designing garments. The design must be appropriate for the buyer's needs and structurally effective as per the fashion of the day.

The garment should allow the person to perform activities while wearing it. It should be appropriately decorative and most importantly, be functional. Buyers gravitate towards clothing items that are functional as well as have an appealing appearance, structure and decoration. When the principles of design are met with these three aspects above, the result is usually success. These are the three elements of visual design and are the basics from which visual designs are made. Designers must be aware of the potential and the limitation of each element. The elements share individual and fundamental elements to a garment but they are not always mutually exclusive. Shape cannot exist without lines and space, as an example. An important part of designing is understanding how and why people respond to various principles and elements of design and also knowing how manipulate and use them effectively to create a good design.

## Elements of Design

The Art Element is one of the components that interacts when creating a design. Elements and principles of design are adaptable and must be interpreted in the current fashion setting. Designs can be described as line, shape, colour and texture arrangements which then create a visual image. The principles of design are the degrees that govern how elements are effectively combined.

The Elements of Design are:

- Line
- Form
- Shape
- Texture and
- Colour

The above elements are referred to as 'Plastics' in art language. This is because they can be adapted and arranged by designers to create the desired illusions.

## Line

The Line refers to the outline or edges of an item of clothing and the style lines that allocate the space within that piece. It is a very versatile and useful tool which functions both visually and verbally. It is the Line that will lead the eye in the direction the garment line is moving and divides the areas through which it moves. In this way it provides a breaking point in space. Line defines the silhouette of a garment and is used to convey the mood or character. The Line can create illusions such as width and height and make figures look thinner or thicker depending on what look they're going for at the time.

Line has nine characteristics, these being: path, thickness, evenness, continuity, edge sharpness, contour of edge, consistency, direction and length. All these give Line a very important role in dress design. Line is a space manipulator, it divides it, organises it, pushes or pulls it, encloses it, separates and contours space.

**Definition:** *Line is an elongated mark, the connection between two points, or the effect made by the edge of an object where there is no actual line on the object itself.*

Lines can be placed into three categories with regards to garments. These are:

1. By type
2. By direction
3. By application

Every garment will include a combination of lines from each of the three categories.

### Line types

Lines can be of three types: straight, curved, and jagged. See Figure 2.1

**Straight line:** Every garment will have some straight lines which emphasise the body angles and offset the body roundness. In garments, straight lines are created by seams, hems or garment edges, trims, pleats, darts, tucks, braids or panels, and they intend to create a sense of boldness or power. However, if more straight lines than necessary are used on an item it can make the piece look stiff.

**Curved lines:** Curved lines can be circular or rounded and referred to as full curve or restrained curve which is more flattened out. Curved lines are considered less conservative, formal and more powerful than straight lines. Curves and circles create the illusion of spaces being larger than they are and also enlarge the shape and size of a figure. On addition, they bring a certain interest and smoothness along with a gentle, soft and a youthful, flowing feeling. Using too many curved lines on a garment will produce a confusing look.

**Full curve:** A full curve will accentuate body curves and counteract a look of thinness or angularity. It will bring about a feminine, youthful, and vibrant character. Full curves are introduced through the seams and edges of a garment including scalloped edges.

**Restrained curve:** Restrained curves lightly accentuate the body curves of the wearer. They provide soft, shallow curves which imply comfort, relaxation, safety and familiarity. These elements are created by dress seams, edges, princess lines, trims and draping, or gathering fabric patterns.

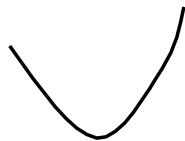
**Jagged line:** Jagged lines contain sharp points like a zigzag pattern and may change direction suddenly due to their points. These lines create a busy, excited and sometimes jerky effect and highlight angularity. A feeling of confusion will be created in a dress when these lines are used more than necessary. It is important to be careful with jagged lines due to their very noticeable effects. Using fabric pattern and trim like rickrack will create this effect.

Figure 2.1

a. Straight line



b. Full curve



c. Restrained curve



d. Jagged line



### Line Direction:

According to their direction, lines may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

a) **Vertical Line**

In Fig 2.1 vertical lines create the illusion of added height to the garment. These lines will make a shorter person look thinner and taller.



Vertical design lines pull the eye up and down and make a person look taller and slimmer. Here they are provided by the seam types, flaps, contrast bands or trim, pleats, and buttons.

Fig 2.1

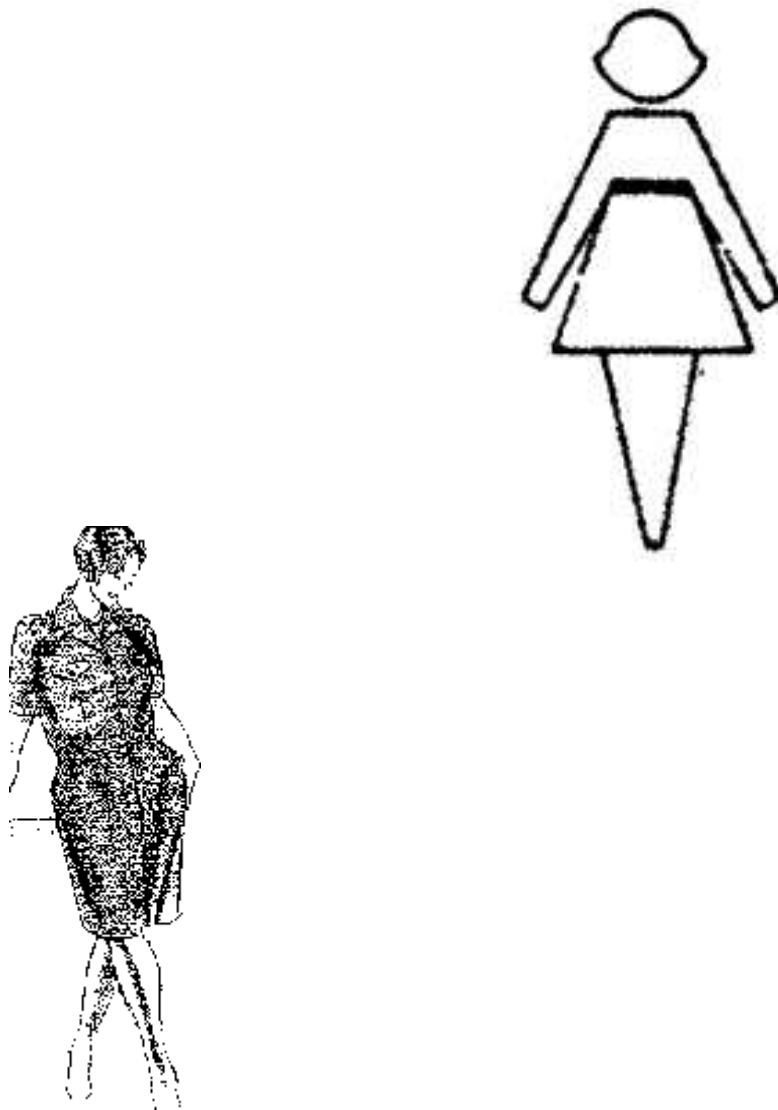
The power of Lines is in their ability to create moods and feelings. Vertical lines, for example, bring to mind upright, majestic figures and suggest stability.

#### **b) Horizontal Lines**

*Lines at rest* is the impression horizontal lines give. They suggest calmness, quiet and repose. These types of lines make the eye pause so wherever you want emphasis, this is where they should be placed – anywhere you want emphasis to balance out another feature or draw attention to one.

These lines (Fig 2.2 below) add width to the garment and decrease the apparent height, hence, they make a tall person look smaller and broader.

Fig. 1.2



Pockets, flaps and epaulettes are all horizontal details which can be used to your advantage.

### c) Diagonal Lines

Diagonal lines are used to add or decrease the height of the wearer depending on their slope. Long, uninterrupted diagonals which tilt almost vertically, are used to create the most lengthening style and most dramatic of all lines.

Fig 1.3



Dynamic, slenderising, and attractive are words that describe diagonal lines. It is easy to see from the above picture that the diagonal hem, neckline, and drape create a great evening look.

It is best if diagonal lines are combined with vertical or horizontal lines. When diagonals alone are used for the whole dress the effect will most likely be disturbing.

## Application of Line in Garments

Lines can be integrated into pieces in two main ways: structurally and decoratively.

### a. Structural Lines

When the garment fabric is plain then the structural lines will be more noticeable. These structural lines may be introduced through seams, darts, fitting tucks or shirring. Structural lines are also presented by either real or perceived edges of the garment's parts, things like the outer edge of collars, hems sleeves, pockets, belts, etc. Pleats and gathers, for example, will create folds and creases which will give a garment a structural line effect.

### b. Decorative Lines

Decorative lines will be formed when adding details to the surface of a piece of clothing. These lines are purely there to decorate a garment and make it more interesting including by giving it style and personality. Decorative lines can be created in so many ways including, but not limited

to, the additions of rows of buttons, braids, topstitching piping, bias binding lace edging, ruffles, faggoting and fringes. Another way to add lines decoratively is with fabric pattern lines like stripes, plaids, herringbones and checks.

## **Optical Illusions**

The trick of the optical illusion is that lines are used to fool the eye. These lines can make things seem different to what they really are. They can create illusions like more slimness, an advantage when designing larger sized garments, as the eye is led down the line and able to draw attention to more flattering areas and away from those that are less so. Clothing can definitely change the appearance of a person, offsetting any disagreements between the average body and the actual fashion ideal, the current ideal being slim and youthful. The most effective and successful garments use optical illusions to make the one wearing them seem more slender and taller than they really are. Specific design elements must be interpreted for each type of figure.

When adding height the design should incorporate long, unbroken lines, the stronger and longer they are the more effective the illusion will be. A good example of this would be a centre front closing running down from the neckline all the way to the hemline.

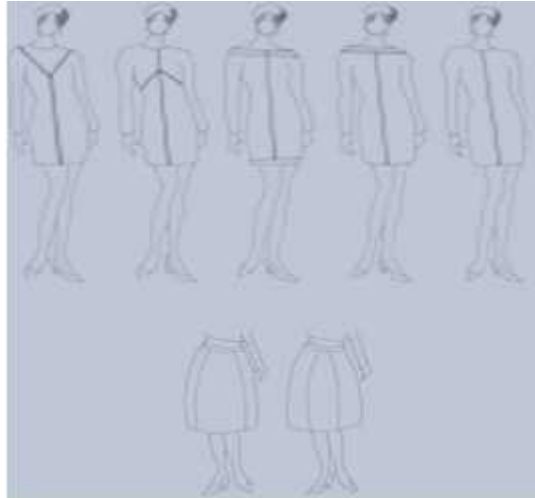
Vertical lines can be strengthened even more. This can be done by highlighting them with distinct or contrasting buttons or trimmings. This explains the long popularity enjoyed by the shirtwaist dress in women's half sizes. The most slimming vertical lines would be the princess seams as they create a vertical panel down the front of a dress. The area between the lines is emphasised whereas the side panels seem to recede. The human eye will judge any measurement of width or length in relation to other measurements in the same structure. A good example is the longer skirt whose length is greater than its width therefore making the wearer seem taller and slimmer. Horizontal lines will do the opposite, widening the figure and at times creating two chunky sections instead of a long, thin one. One way to partially avoid this problem is by using a self-belt.

The use of optical illusions is important in men's wear as well. As a general rule, men want to look taller and stronger. The production of men's wear has almost always focussed on increasing a man's stature with vertical line used in trousers or jacket closing and with built-up shoulders.

Attention is drawn to an area when lines cross each other. The use of tactful lines on any garment will give the illusions of height or width, thick or thin. As mentioned, it assists in concealing any irregularities in people's figures and comes closer to fashion form.

## OPTICAL ILLUSION THROUGH LINES

Fig. 1.4



## Shapes

The shape is what defines the outer dimensions or contour of an object. Shapes are also used to enclose spaces and impart a particular character to the object that is being viewed. The shape of a body can be revealed in a natural way through clothing design, however, it can sometimes be distorted. A garment's shape can usually communicate messages about the wearer.

A good silhouette is made up of elements that in themselves have interesting shapes including round, square, rectangular, oval and triangular, just to mention a few. When a waistline is placed on an item of women's clothing it is divided into two shapes, a bodice and a skirt. The sleeve will become another shape and all these parts then form new spaces where smaller details can be added including pockets and collars. Fabric patterns can make other little shapes.

In each fashion period, shapes may appear slowly or develop suddenly. No matter what the actual shape is it can be edited and restyled in different designs whilst not changing the basic garment shape. It may be tight or flowing, straight or circular, a raglan or a line. When a garment has an easy fitting shape to it, the time period of its popularity will be generally longer and it will be more accepted and varied. On the other hand, a garment that is tight usually has a much shorter cycle. This is because these types of designs are usually only suitable for one particular type of figure. So, if a designer wants his/her designs to last longer and be accepted by a larger portion of the population, the idea is to use an easy silhouette.

### Basic Shapes

There are seven basic shapes in dress designing. Every season's adaptations are of one or more of these. They are:



Fig 1.1



Fig 1.2



Fig 1.3



Fig 1.4



Fig 1.5



Fig 1.6



Fig 1.7

Figure 2.1 shows an example of a garment which is long, straight, and hanging in loose, graceful folds, such as in Greek and Roman styles. It will have straight line sheaths and could be for tailored suits. This type of style with these particular lines is slenderising and suitable for women who are either well-proportioned or heavier women.

### Triangle

Figure 1.2 shows an example of a Spanish style which includes a fitted bodice and a bell shaped, gently widening skirt.

### **Inverted Triangle (Fig 1.3)**

Figure 1.3 has wide shoulders and a narrow skirt with dolman or raglan sleeves. This is a particularly good design for women with a large bust.

### **Oval (Fig 1.4)**

The oval shape is draped over a figure and softly shaped. It is a very feminine and decorative form. It is suitable for women who are well-proportioned and have the 'ideal' figure. This style is suitable for afternoon and evening wear in particular.

### **Square (Fig 1.5)**

The square design has straight or boat shaped necklines, or boxy jackets, or capes. This style is good for women with very thin figures and can camouflage certain figure irregularities when the proportions are well planned and have a good design.

### **Round (Fig 1.6)**

Round shaped designs include wide skirts, petal shapes and puffy sleeves. This style is suitable for formal wear or afternoon frocks. This particular *fashion design* best suits the very young and/or the very thin figured.

### **Hourglass (Fig 1.7)**

The hourglass style includes wide shoulders and either a natural or 'wasp' waist which comes in. It fits smoothly over the hips and usually has a full skirt. This is a good design for the tall, thin figure.

### **Combinations**

A combination includes using the outline of any of the current fashion silhouettes which can be modified and combined with another. It can also be adapted for any specific figure type. In this way any irregularities (or lack of ideal figure proportions) can be lessened while still keeping the general effect of the current fashion design style.

## **Space**

When discussing space in designing, it is generally referring to the area seen between the shapes. A busy space in garments will be distractive and tiring to the eye.

The lines on a piece of clothing provide a path of vision along which the eye will travel. Usually, curving lines relate more naturally to human bodies and vertical lines tend to make a body look more slender. Horizontal lines, on the other hand, suggest width. If a designer wants to create emphasis he/she will use repetition and extreme contrast of a line, shape, space or form.

## Colour and Texture

When discussing principles of designing or when starting off with a specific design theme, the first thing that needs to be decided is the fabric colour and texture. In each season, or every now and then, a colour will appear in the fashion scene that has been decided by the leading manufacturers, exporters and textile experts of the fashion world.

When choosing a colour it is of utmost importance to be very careful because the colour will be the first impression people will get and therefore will either elevate the appearance of a person or destroy it. Colour is so important to a garment that the colour scheme can even enhance a very simple silhouette. Another visual effect on the wearer will be created by the texture or feel of the fabric, how it drapes on a body, and how stiff or soft it is. If given even a small swatch of fabric, a good designer is able to visualise the texture and how the fabric will fall on a figure. This will help him/her design further.

## Types of Design

Designs can be categorised in two ways:

1. Structural design
2. Decorative design

### 1. Structural Design

A structural design is created when an object structure is a vital part of the design. In dresses, structural design examples would be things like sleeves, pockets, collars, seam line positions and yokes.

Good Structural Design requires that:

- It be well matched to the purpose
- It is be simple
- It is well-proportioned
- It suits the material with which it is made.

Structural design is extremely important, more so than decorative design because it is necessary to all objects or garments. Decorative design has more to do with the luxury of design.

Structural design depends on the form and fabric. It is also created by the construction details as a design. Any detail that is an integral part of the garment is a structural design i.e., seams, collars, or pockets.

Good structural designs have certain requirements, these being that:

- The silhouette is agreeably related to the body structure and that it is expressive of that

particular time.

- Designs are appropriate to their use and to the needs of the wearer.
- Well-proportioned individual parts suggest variation combined with unity.
- Character and individuality in line, form or texture are used.

## 2. Decorative Design

Decorative design is the surface enhancement of structural design, or any line, colour or material that has been used on structural design in order to add a richer quality. Decorative designs are simply a luxury and include things like appliqués, embroidery, painting or any trimmings.

Good decorative design should:

- be used in moderation
- be placed at structural points and ought to strengthen the shape
- have a decorative design that is suitable for the material and for the type of service it provides
- have enough background space to give an effect of simplicity and dignity to the design
- have a surface pattern that covers the outside of the garment quietly.

### Types of Decorative Designs:

The 5 types of decorative designs are:

- a) Naturalistic
  - b) Conventional
  - c) Abstract
  - d) Historic
  - e) Geometric
- a) **Naturalistic Design** is when objects are chosen from nature and reproduced exactly using photographic correction. Objects from nature would include things like flowers and/or leaves (the most popular), animals and landscapes.
  - b) **Conventional Design** is choosing something from nature and adopting it to suit the purpose of the object. Then it becomes decorative and the motif is no longer naturalistic.
  - c) **Abstract Designs** will have motifs which do not use nature as the source but instead use a combination of lines producing irregular forms, this meaning they are not easily recognised. Modern art is a good example of abstract design.
  - d) **Historic Designs** will use famous monuments or buildings of historical importance. These would include things like temples, the Eiffel Tower etc.

- e) **Geometric Designs** are not taken from nature but rather are derived from shapes, i.e., circles, rectangles, triangles, parallel lines, and so on.

There are certain basic requirements for creating a good decorative design.

- The decorative designs are very attractive when created in sizes and structures which match or suit the textiles of the garments.

Suitable combinations of textures would be:

- Sequence for shiny fine material
- Fine embroidery for fine fabric
- Ricrac for medium weight cotton

## Colour

One can base an entire group or line or designs on a particular colour or colours. People will respond to colour first. Colour is related to personality and consumers will either choose or avoid a garment because of the colour. This is what is termed *colour appeal*. Designers then always consider their clientele or customers when choosing colours and ensure that they are flattering and attractive. Colour appeal will be different for those who have been raised and live in more westernised cities and different for those who live in more agricultural places and who have deeply rooted folk traditions. Holidays and seasons are also connected with specific colours in people's minds. The Christmas period, for example, uses many reds, greens and whites. Autumn is associated with very earthy shades of red and brown and more pastel colours in the spring and refreshing whites and blues for summer months. Every manufacturer will use or include some of these colours in the lines they make.

### Colour Dimensions

There are three different colour dimensions, these being: hue, value, and intensity.

#### a. Hue

The colour hues or shades help us tell one colour from another, such as yellow from green or blue.

#### b. Value

Value denotes the use of lights and darks. Put another way, it is the variation of strength in colours. The scale of colour value moves from white to black, white being pure light and black being the absence of it. It is obvious that white will lighten colours and black will darken them when it is added. Lighter values are called tints and darker values are referred to as shades.

Garments always have value contrasts, whether they be the colours created by the designer or those made by normal gathers and folds. One of the strongest value contrasts, and one that is a good example, is black against white. For a more conservative contrast or refined impression that is usually something easier for the average person to accept, the use of close value contrasts is the way to go.

### c. Intensity

Intensity refers to the brightness or strength of a colour or the weakness (paleness) of a colour. High-intensity colours would be the bright ones and low-intensity colours would be the paler ones. When water is added to paint in order to make it paler, its intensity is lessened. Within a green hue, for example, a dark, rich green is high-intensity whereas a soft pastel green is low-intensity. Balance is usually achieved when colours of the same intensity are used together, but a balance can also be reached by using a touch of bright colour in stitching or other embroidery when there are large amounts of dark colours around them.

### Warm Colours

Colours that are considered warm would be reds, yellows and oranges. They are associated with fire, the sun etc. Stimulating, lively and even aggressive is the way these colours can be described. *Reds*, for example, are used a lot in valentines, romance and love and are considered exciting and fiery, almost dangerous. One of the few colours used for every season, reds are high-intensity and used frequently in sporting clothes and evening wear. *Yellows* represent cheerfulness, brightness, sunniness and friendly feelings. It is important to be careful with yellows as they disagree with many skin tones and therefore are difficult colours to wear for many. *Orange* hues merge the warmth of red and the sunniness of yellow but can also be difficult to wear. Many times oranges will be toned down to soft peach or apricot shade as intense orange can be overpowering and therefore irritating to the eye. It is, however, also a good colour for active wear.

### Cool Colours

Cool colours include blues, greens and purples and evoke images of the sea and sky. They are refreshing in comparison to the warm colours mentioned above.

### Blue

Blue can be calming and restful but also reserved (especially darker blue). It is often found in very low (navy blue) values in garments or very high (pale blue) values, navy blue being one of the most popular colours in general. Because of its high popularity many manufacturers will include it in their spring and summer lines, at least.

## **Green**

Green brings a sense of peace, rest, calm and quiet. It is considered the most refreshing colour and is very popular for interior design. Its popularity does not extend to dresses, however, green being the least popular colour for them. It is used mainly in dark values in autumn sportswear collections or used with neutrals to produce earthy olives or a loden green colour.

## **Purple**

As purple has traditionally been associated with royalty, it is seen to represent dignity and wealth and sometimes drama. Purple is usually used as in a paler violet because when it is dark it can be too intense and perhaps even have a feel of melancholy about it.

## **Neutrals**

Neutrals include colours such as tan, brown, beige, grey, white, and black and these are very popular colours more than the colours above. These colours create a pleasing background for a wearer without vying for attention. White, for example, is linked to purity and cleanliness and it reflects light in the summer when it's hot. Every fashion season will contain some neutrals and they will be used to either make a strong fashion statement or to supplement a colour story.

## **Colour Naming**

Something that can promote a fashion look is an exciting colour. Sometimes, fashion colours re-emerge with new names as this can often make them seem fresh. For example, a colour may be referred to as 'plum' in one season or year and 'aubergine' in another. Colour name ideas can be retrieved from flower names, trees, fruit and vegetables, wines, oil paint colour lists and even animals. Often, fashion journalists and colourists will set the mood for a particular line with certain names such as *China blue*. This will appeal to more people and add interest in the colour.

## **Colour Selection**

In every fashion line, every group is usually organised around colour plans which may comprise only two colours or many colours, but each line must involve a range of colours that appeal to a variety of customers and echo the season, climate and the type of garment. Take sportswear for example; active and spectator sportswear will use different colours, active being more vivid and bold.

Research done by trade associations, fibre companies and design report predictors should be taken into account when deciding on a line's colour story. Designers can be guaranteed that if they base their colour stories on these predictions the group will be in the mainstream of fashion. At times, designers may choose only one or maybe two colours based on the predictions and then use their own colour choices to balance them on the clothing lines. The garment groups are then finished off with staple colours like blacks, whites or neutrals. Whatever the designer chooses to do, the colours must mean

something to each other and to the line; they cannot be groups of unrelated colours just thrown together.

### **Colour Relationships within a Garment**

Guiding the selection of colour combinations can be done using several systems, all using measured scales. Primary colours and secondary ones differ from one system to another. If one looks at a rainbow it will show the basic order of the colours' relationships to one another. The three **primary colours** from which all other colours originate, are red, yellow and blue. Mixing red and yellow colours will result in oranges. Mixing reds and blues will create purples and blues and yellows create green shades, these three being the **secondary colours**. In order to create all the other colours in between, mixtures of both primary and secondary colours are used. Often, this whole concept is arranged in a colour wheel which clearly shows the entire spectrum in an easy to understand manner. However, the fashion industry bases colour selections more on intuitive feelings and well researched colour forecasts.

There are no strict rules about using colours on a garment or which ones to use together. Generally, however, it is wise to choose two colours which work harmoniously together, meaning that one is used to enhance the beauty of the other. The use of certain colours for certain occasions does not necessarily glue today. An example would be evening wear. Colours that were only thought appropriate for evening occasions are now also used for sportswear. Ethnic influences on fashion have also changed people's views of colour combinations making them more open to new ideas. Colours also have fashion cycles just the same as styles do.

## **Texture**

It is through the element of texture that the surface appearance and feel of a fabric is described. Texture is perceived in a sensory manner both by sight and also by touch. To the touch and to the eye it can be smooth or rough, glossy or dull, soft or crisp. These are some words that can describe texture but there are others as well such as fuzzy or bulky, lightweight, medium weight or heavy weight.

Two types of textures exist. These are:

1. Structural textures – created when garments or fabrics are manufactured.
2. Added visual textures – emerge when a design is printed onto the surface of a fabric.

Then there are other components that will determine a texture such as yarns, fibres, other fabrics and finishes.

### **a) Determinants of Texture**

**Fibres:** These are hairline strands that are made into yarns. Linen textures will create crisp textures whereas wool fibres create soft textures. Because of the fuzz and the short fibres, cotton will create a dullish appearance. On the opposite end, long filaments from silk and synthetic

fibres will create smooth and shiny fabrics which are cool to the touch. So it can easily be seen that texture is a very sensory aspect.

**Yarn:** When fibres are twisted together they will produce yarn. In a low twist they will create a more shiny texture because the natural lustre of fibre is still preserved in the twist. A highly twisted yarn, on the other hand, will create a rougher texture. This is due to the lustre becoming lost in the twist. Stretch fabrics are created by yarn that is coiled or looped during manufacture. These types of yarns are a novelty and produce appealing surface contours also.

**Fabric:** Fabric is made by knitting, weaving, bonding felting, crocheting or braiding methods. It is usually the fabric construction that will decide the texture. Knits, for example, have a more dull texture and absorb light, whereas satin weaves of loosely twisted yarns will create shiny textures. **Finish:** A fabric is treated with a finish after it is constructed. A finish can impart and modify a texture. Certain finishes create stiffness (sizing) and some such as moireing (a finish that creates a watered or waved effect) will produce shine and watermarked designs on a fabric. Another way of producing shine on fabrics is calendaring (a finish used to coat, smooth or thin fabrics). Singeing creates a smooth surface and napping (the nap is woven into a cloth) produces a fizzy fabric type.

#### **b) Effect of Texture on Colour**

When on a shiny surface, colours will usually seem lighter. Colours on 'textured' or wrinkled fabrics will seem darker. This is because more shadows are created and colours on fuzzy surfaces mingle with fibre highlights and shadows making them dull a little. On smooth, firm surfaces colours will appear flat.

#### **c) Effect of Texture on Physical Proportion**

A texture has the physical properties of size, bulk, weight, shape, light absorption and reflection. Illusions can be created by texture which can make apparent body size look very different, making a person look thinner or heavier.

- 1.** Smooth, flat textures will make people look smaller and can be used for almost all figures and physiques. Because they can hold their own shape it is possible for them to hide some figure irregularities.
- 2.** Rough textures are more likely to subdue the colours of fabrics. Sheer fabrics also do this but the wearer's skin is seen through them.
- 3.** Soft and clingy fabrics are easily drapable and cling to the body. They will show every contour and reveal any body irregularities. Their use should be limited only to people who want to reveal their bodies. When a lining is added to a garment the fabric clinginess can be changed, see Fig: 5.

4. Stiff fabrics and bulky fabrics: Stiff textures stand away from the body and can hide body irregularities. Entirely stiff fabrics seem to add weight to the body. These fabrics benefit those who are average to tall in height and have either average or thin body types. Those who should avoid these fabrics are people with smaller physiques as they will tend to look dwarfed in them. For overweight people they will look heavier because these fabrics stand away from the body and create the illusion of additional thickness, see Fig: 6. Using moderate amounts of stiffness is better for overweight people because it will not cling or reveal exact contours.
5. Shiny textures—dull textures: Shiny textures make people who wear them seem larger because they reflect the light. Dull textures do not make a body seem enlarged as they absorb light. These textures are appropriate and suitable for every body type as long as they don't have qualities such as softness, bulk or crispness. These would create undesirable features. Using textures that are not extreme are better for those who do not want to call attention to any of their body irregularities. These people should not choose either very thin or thick, very soft or thick or stiff or shiny textures. Because these textures are not really structurally interesting, other elements such as colour and line are used to add interest to any clothes designed of these fabrics.



EFFECT OF SMOOTH & FLAT AND  
SOFT & CLINGY FABRICSON THIN



EFFECT OF STIFF & BULKY  
FABRICS ON THIN & BULKIER PEOPLE

## Proportion of Textures in Dress

When selecting the scale of textures to be used on garments it is important to take into account the size of the person who will wear them. A person with a smaller frame would seem to get lost wearing large scale textures. This is because of the extreme contrast between figure dimensions and fabric surface. On the other hand, a smaller frame will be emphasised by larger scale textures. Heavier people who wear large scale textures, however, will look heavier because of the repetition of size.

Any added visual texture affects the apparent size of the person the same as structural texture does. In the case where the print designs are bold and large, the structural designs become secondary to the actual print. Patterns that are big and bold will highlight the areas they are used on and make the apparent size of the wearer seem larger.

It is advisable that good structural design be well planned and organised in ways that are interesting. Textures should be used for their advantages of creating the desired effects for a pleasing personality.

## Pattern Scale in Relation to the Whole Garment

The scale of a pattern should complement the design and not overpower or underplay it. For example, a rather large print would overshadow the actual design. In order to display a larger print to its best advantage, it should be the most important element of a garment and not be broken up with details or seams. The structure should remain simple. When a design begins to form with dominating lines or details, it is best to keep the fabric plain and of secondary importance.

The pattern may be an important part of how a design looks. It is important for the scale of the pattern to match the person's scale.



This coat has a windowpane check that is too large for average to thicker figures.



The same coat is in perfect scale for an average to plus sized figures.

### Further Reading:

- ✓ *Fashion Design Course: Principles, practice and Techniques (By Caroline Tatham, Julian Seaman, Thames and Hudson)*
- ✓ *Fashion: A Very Short Introduction ( By Rebecca Arnold)*