



**TEACHING
GOOD
DESIGN**

EXTENSION DIVISION
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
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Let's Teach Good Design

The 4 walls of our houses are not enough to keep the modern family contented. We live in an age which is very conscious of color, line, and design. The application of art principles, together with an awareness and appreciation of good design, are phases of family living which must not be neglected.

Every day one makes thousands of design decisions. Your design judgment and your taste show every time you dress, set the table, arrange the furniture, or purchase a kitchen utensil.

Before we start helping families to recognize, appreciate, and use good design, we should arrive at a definition that will apply to the design of furnishings already in use, as well as furnishings that will be purchased in the future. A few aims and principles are basic in good interior design. These aims and principles open many paths to individual results. To be specific, a good design has 5 building blocks. It must:

BE IN SCALE

A good design looks as if it is neither too large nor too small, too light nor too heavy in relation to its surroundings.

BE USABLE

A well designed object is easily used for its intended purposes.

BE STRAIGHTFORWARD

A well designed article must look as if its achievement required little effort.

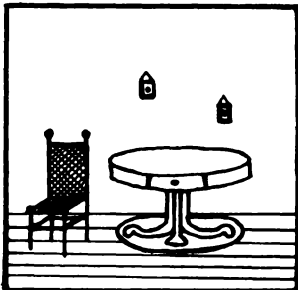
BE WELL INTEGRATED

A good design does not look complete if a part of it is removed. A good design loses some of its beauty if other parts are added.

CREATE A DEFINITE MOOD

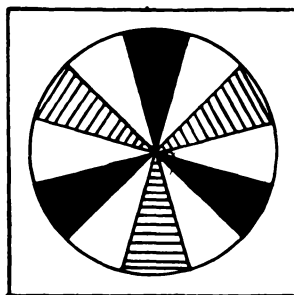
A good design must create some feeling such as calm, joy, happiness, gaiety, or boredom.

What Are The Components of Good Design?

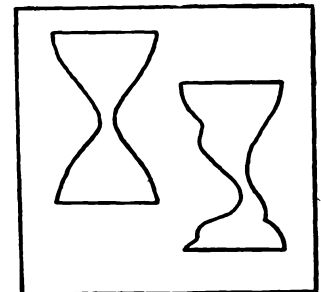


SCALE has to do with the size of pieces of furniture in relation to each other, and to the room

Design Elements



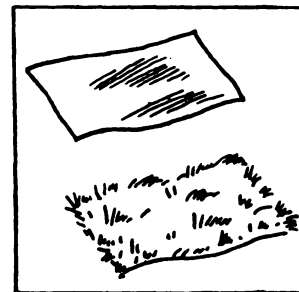
COLOR is dynamic. It affects human emotions



SILHOUETTE is the outline of the shape, an outstanding feature of this vase

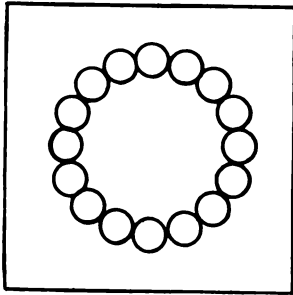


LINE symbolizes motion: rhythmic, sharp, rigid, smooth, severe, or flowing

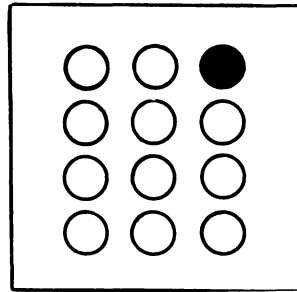


TEXTURE is either a part of the structure or applied as surface interest

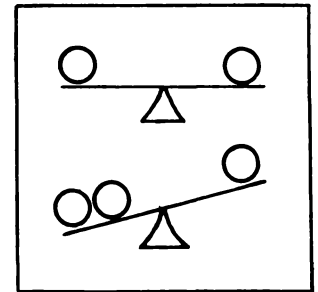
Design Principles



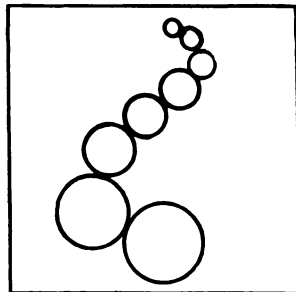
HARMONY conveys unity throughout a design



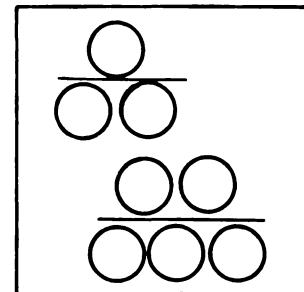
EMPHASIS requires a center of interest



BALANCE produces a feeling of rest



RHYTHM suggests motion relationship



PROPORTION gives pleasing space division

Actual experience in designing develops among participants:

An alertness to good design when purchasing furnishings of their own.

An awareness of design possibilities and how to discover design.

An ability to arrange artistically a room, a group of accessories, flowers, etc.

Suggested Methods to Use in Teaching Design

Extension philosophy holds that actual experience is the best teacher. Methods used in teaching design are:

Demonstrations
Discussion

Special interest groups to provide actual experience with designing
Evaluation

Demonstrations

Good design is taught as something that has a reason for being. It is integrated into the subject matter of demonstrations. Among examples of this are:

In designing a room, the hostess reports on number in the family, use of the room, furnishings to be used by individual members of the family, and new purchases of furniture, if any. Women then arrange groups of furniture and accessories according to the needs of the family and to good design, considering line, mass, texture, balance, harmony, and color.

In choosing textiles for draperies or for a chair cover, consideration is given to scale, pattern, line, fitness to purpose, straightforwardness, kind of mood, durability, ease of care, and how it harmonizes with other furnishings of the room.

In planning window design the homemaker is encouraged to consider what she wants the window to do for her—whether she wants more light, less glare, or a higher or broader window, etc.

The teaching of good design in our demonstrations is related to some specific aspects of home furnishings, such as choosing fabrics, wallpaper, and paint. Actual articles, pictures, and slides illustrating good and poor design are used. The construction of articles is highlighted and their use illustrated. What the family chooses depends on its inherent and acquired understanding of what is good, its financial circumstances, its physical and psychological needs.

Discussions

Discussion is one of the best ways to get ideas from the homemakers. When using this method, begin by having three women leave the group and return one at a time; ask each prepared questions as she returns to the room. For example, what she likes, what she has in her living room, how she uses what she has, and what she wants. This is an excellent way of beginning a discussion. Flannelgraphs have proved useful in focusing attention on principles of good design. Blackboards are used for recording ideas. Slides are helpful to illustrate discussions on design, especially where the groups are large. Illustrated charts can be used in small groups.

Evaluation

By evaluating design, you develop a high degree of awareness. Several methods can be used to give homemakers conscious experience in evaluating design, such as: judging, tests for taste, and comparative choices. The 5 building blocks of good design can be used as a score.

1. Judging continues all through the learning process of design. It is an excellent summary of important points taught.
2. Test for taste can serve as an introduction to a study of design or as an evaluation of lessons taught. The same test can be given at the beginning and end of the discussion. Some tests may be:
 - a. Photographs of good and bad design.
 - b. Magazine illustrations.
3. Pictures of and information about furniture from mail order houses and newspapers may be used as a teaching tool.

Comparative choice is a good method in studying the design of furniture, lamps, fabrics, accessories, wallpaper, linens, and other articles used in everyday living. An exhibit of articles of good and poor design can be set up for discussion and comparison.



Evaluating an Appreciation of Good Design

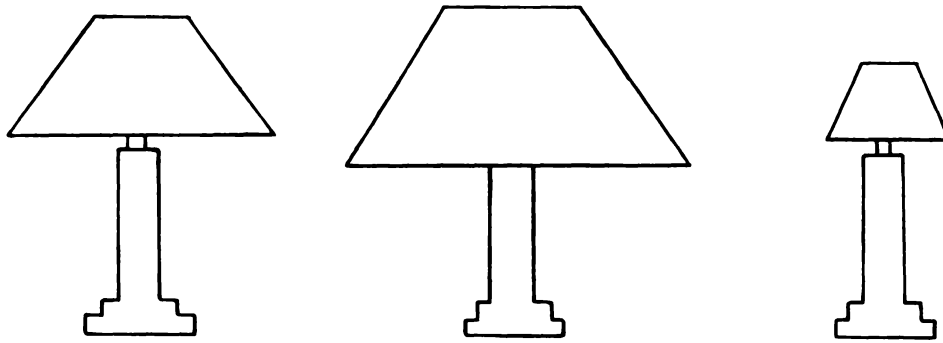
Scale

A good design looks as if it is neither too large nor too small, too light nor too heavy in relation to its surroundings.



Which would you choose?

A woman's handkerchief (the designs in relation to each other)

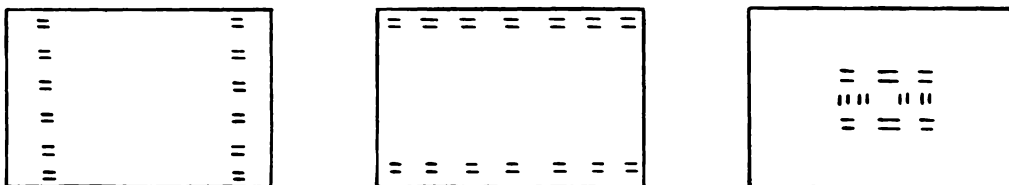


Which would you choose?

A lamp (the shade and lamp in relation to each other)

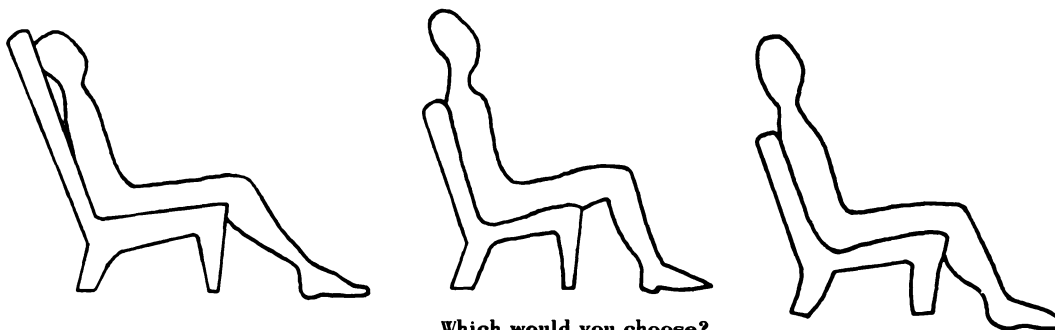
Usable

A well designed object is easily used for its intended purposes.



Which would you choose?

A place mat (a design to be seen when the place mat is used)

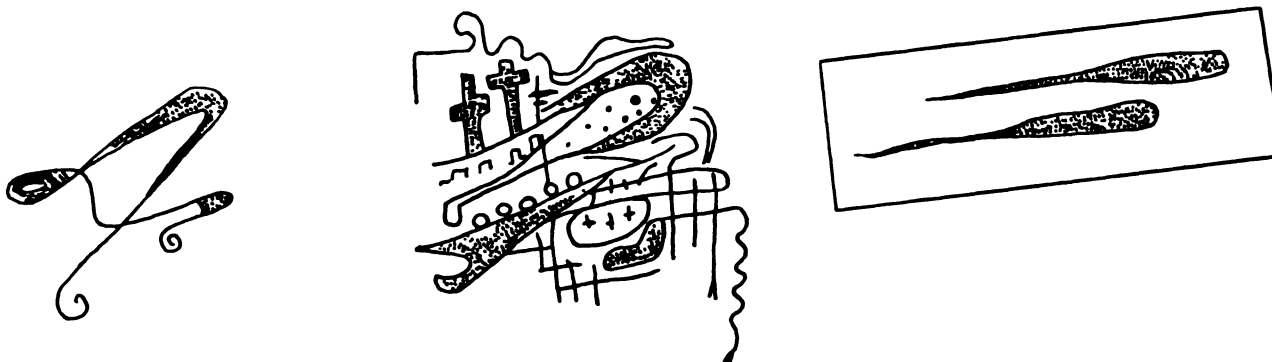


Which would you choose?

An easy chair (for comfort, the person in relation to the chair)

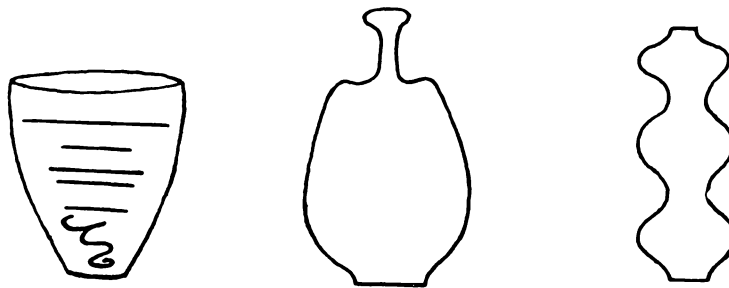
STRAIGHTFORWARD

A good design looks as if its achievement required little effort.



Which would you choose?

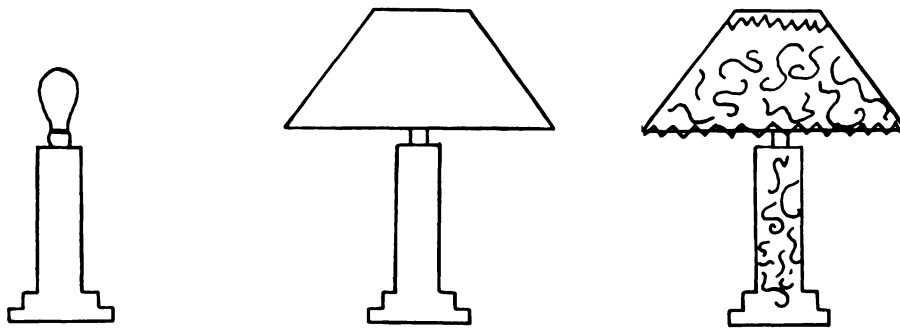
(is its message direct)



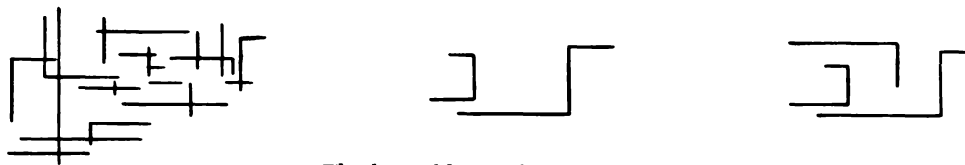
Which would you choose?
 A pottery vase (for the effect of effortless beauty)

Well Integrated

A good design does not look complete if a part of it is removed and loses some of its beauty if other parts are added.



Which would you choose?
 A lamp (to be used as a lamp)



Which would you choose?
 (the most pleasing to look at)

Create a Definite Mood

A good design must create some feeling such as calm, joy, happiness, ease, boredom.



Which is the gayest?

Summary

The Building Blocks of Design,

The Design Elements, and

Design Principles considered together help us achieve beauty and, since they are guides rather than rules, offer opportunities to express individuality and meet family needs.

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- | | |
|--|---|
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