



CREATE THE LOOK YOU LIKE-WITH TEXTURE

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CREATE THE LOOK YOU LIKE-WITH TEXTURE

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We believe what we see. And what we see is affected by the design elements of color, line and texture. These elements can be used to create illusions of size and shape, to express personality or mood and to hide or emphasize a feature.

The effects of the design elements are related. For example, texture affects the way color is seen. A color may look deeper in a rough textured fabric than in a smooth one. Texture is also modified by both color and line. In order to discuss the uses and effects of texture, discussions of color and line have been omitted from this publication.

Texture may be defined as surface interest. Straw, metal, satin, jersey and leather all have texture, as do all the materials used for clothing and accessories. Some fibers, especially the natural fibers, have distinctive textures that are evident in any fabric made from them. Texture may be seen, felt and even heard at times. For example, a taffeta dress looks crisp, feels stiff and makes a rustling sound when moved. Textures have weight, size, bulk and light absorbing or reflecting properties.

Visually, textures and surface designs such as prints, checks and floral patterns may affect appearance in the same way. Because textures and surface designs have many characteristics, they can enhance or detract from garment designs, affect the illusions of size and shape and add interest to a person's total appearance.

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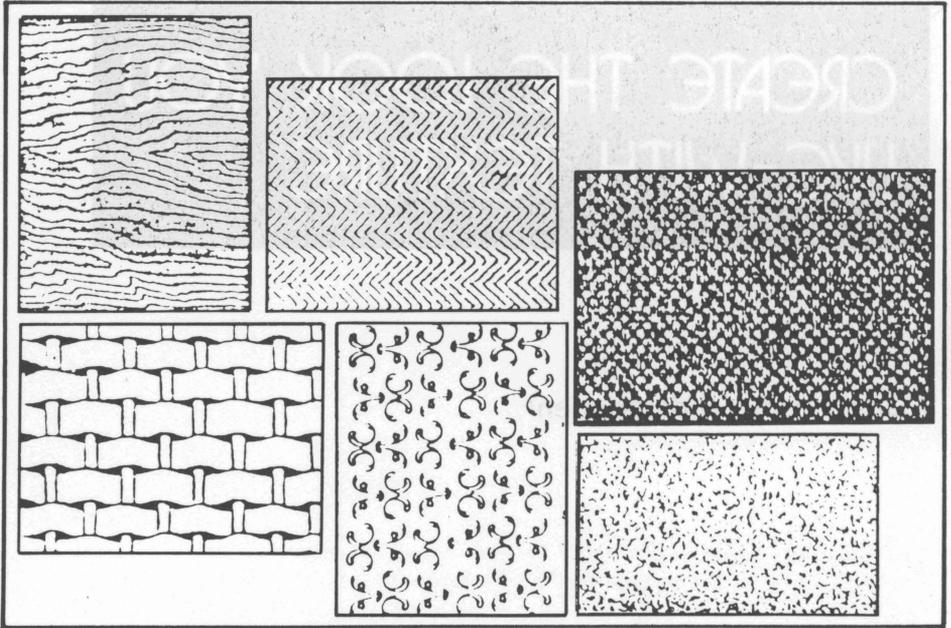


Fig. 1. Textures are often illustrated by dots, lines and circles that result in the same visual effect as the textures they represent.

TEXTURE AND SURFACE DESIGN

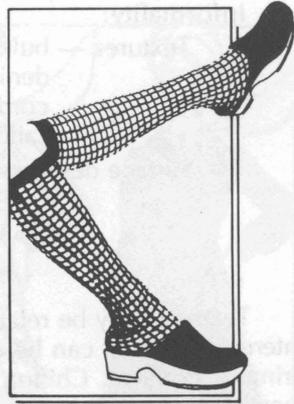
Textures and surface designs can be grouped by common characteristics. Because there are many variations within each group, it is easiest to think of textures as having a range within a group, such as from soft to stiff or from dull to shiny. Other groups are rough-smooth, coarse-fine, opaque-sheer, bulky-thin, crisp-limp, warm-cool and heavy-light. Remember that each texture has a combination of characteristics and often can be placed in more than one group.

Most popular apparel fabrics are near the middle range in each group. Fabrics such as denim, poplin, broadcloth, flannel and most double knits can be described as medium in weight, softness, light reflection, etc. Middle-range fabrics such as these are easy to style and look attractive on most people. Also, people don't tire of them as quickly as they do extremes.

Patterned fabrics may be grouped into the broad categories of stripes and stripe-effect designs, plaids and geometrics, and floral and dot designs. Within each of these groups there is much variation in the size of the pattern and the distinctness of pattern outlines. Prints that are similar to middle-range textures are also more popular than extremely large or small designs.

Textures and surface designs also express mood or feeling. Some fabrics such as satin and lace indicate festivity, while others like tweed or burlap create a casual mood. Certain textures tend to be used seasonally because they give an impression of warmth or coolness.

Fig. 2. Although both pairs of stockings are heavily textured, the distinct lines in the stocking on the right enlarge the legs more than the indistinct effect of those on the left.



Personality can even be expressed through textures and surface designs. Past experiences affect how we feel about certain designs and textures, but many are interpreted similarly by the majority of people. A few examples include:

Boldness and self-confidence:

Textures — homespun
leather
heavy lace
fleece

Surface designs — wide stripes

plastics
heavy tweed
metallics

large geometric prints

Femininity and softness:

Textures — velvet
organdy
angora
chiffon

Surface designs — small dots
small floral prints

tulle
voile
fine lace

checked gingham

Ruggedness:

Textures — burlap
sailcloth
wide wale corduroy
tweed

Surface designs — blanket plaids

leather
denim
monk's cloth

tartan

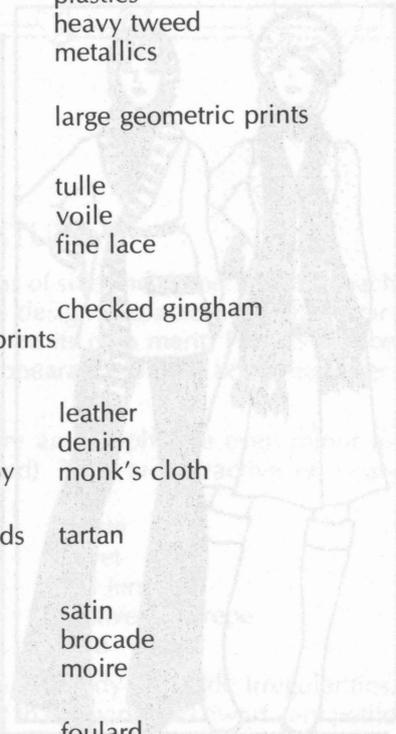
Luxury and wealth:

Textures — fur
taffeta
velvet
heavy silk

Surface designs — tapestry

satin
brocade
moire

foulard



Informality:

Textures — bulky knits
denim
corduroy
sailcloth

Surface designs — novelty prints
bandana print

pigskin
chambray
seersucker
terry cloth
animal prints
madras

Textures may be related or may contrast with each other. Contrast for interest or accent can be useful and appealing. Too much contrast can be tiring or comical. Chiffon and terry cloth, for example, are seldom worn together because the contrast in weight, scale, bulk and mood are extreme. When opposite extremes are used together the effect is more pleasing if one texture provides a focal point or accents the total appearance. Using a shiny, hard metallic necklace on a soft, fuzzy angora dress is an example of creating a focal point by the use of opposite extremes.

Medium textures combine well with each other and with most extreme textures because they are more closely related in appearance and mood.

Fabrics with extreme characteristics that have similar feeling or mood often combine well, too. Examples of this are blanket plaid with fleece and cowhide, all heavy, warm and casual, and tulle with satin and sequins, all dressy and festive in mood.



Fig. 3. Bulky fabrics look warmer than sheer ones and lend themselves well to the winter season.

Fig. 4. Smooth fabrics that absorb light make the figure appear smaller than bulky or fuzzy fabrics.



USING TEXTURE

In clothing, textures affect the illusions of size and shape. Because each fabric has a combination of textural and design characteristics, each garment or piece of fabric must be selected on its own merit. Fabrics can be grouped by characteristics and general appearance on the body, however. Some of these are listed below.

Soft or clingy. These reveal the figure and emphasize even minor irregularities when used alone (unlined). They are attractive on near-perfect figures.

chiffon

thin silk or rayon

satin (except slipper satin)

most tricot knits

single knits

batiste

velvet

thin jersey

lightweight crepe

lawn

Stiff or crisp. These stand away from the body and hide irregularities. Very stiff fabrics appear to add weight to the body and dwarf very petite figures. Moderately stiff fabrics are becoming to almost all people.

Very stiff

brocade
tapestry
organdy
leather-like fabrics
taffeta
tulle
plastics

Moderately stiff

linen
twill
durable press fabrics
medium-wale corduroy
most double knits
gabardine
denim

Bulky or fuzzy. These add volume to the figure. Extremely thin or very petite figures may be overpowered by the weight of these textures, but they are pleasing on tall, slender figures and when used to balance an irregular figure.

bulky knits
wide-wale corduroy
boucle
tapestry
felt
blanket-like woolens

terry cloth
quilted fabrics
angora
mohair
fake fur



Fig. 5. Figure irregularities can be balanced by the use of textural variety as in this bulky, fur-like vest worn with smooth sweater and pant fabrics.

Dull or matte finish. These absorb light and generally make the figure look smaller. They are suitable for every figure.

wool crepe
gingham
percale
raw silk
wool flannel
cotton suiting
denim

linen
wool jersey
pique
challis
sailcloth
broadcloth
chambray

Shiny. Shiny fabrics make a figure appear larger and reveal figure irregularities at the same time. They also emphasize both curves and angles. Shiny fabrics are worn best by those with average to slim figures of regular proportions.

plastic
velvet
cire
patent leather

satin
sateen
polished cotton
sequins

Coarse or rough. These are good choices for average to slim figures. They make heavy figures seem larger and very small figures look lost in contrast to the fabric.

monk's cloth
hopsacking
wide-wale corduroy
heavy tweeds

bulky knits
fleece
mohair
woolen coating

Smooth (but not shiny). These fabrics hide figure irregularities and are becoming to most people. They do not add weight unless the fabric is thick.

serge
gabardine
wool jersey
flannel
broadcloth
gingham
percale
double knits

velveteen
crepe
linen
shantung
chambray
seersucker
lightweight tweed
wool challis

Patterned fabrics. The effect of patterned fabrics depends on the size, distinctness and type of pattern. In general, four guidelines may be given for the effects created by patterned fabrics.

Indistinct outlines in small to medium patterns decrease the apparent size of the figure.

Large, prominent designs such as distinct florals or large plaids make the figure appear larger, especially if the design is scattered or "spotty."

Prints with an appearance of roundness or with a swirling effect often make the figure look rounder or curvier, increasing the apparent size.

Angular geometrics with distinct outlines such as squares, triangles or plaids may cause a stiff or angular look that is becoming to only the tall,

slender figure, since the effect is bold and dramatic. This is particularly true if the design is large.



Fig. 6. The swirly pattern and crisp texture of this fabric enlarge the apparent size of the model.

HAIR, SKIN AND ACCESSORIES

Consider hair and skin textures when selecting garment fabrics for use near the face. Coarse or rough textures make the skin look smoother while shiny textures cause the skin to appear rougher by contrast. Shiny textures may also reflect a harsh light on the skin, making any blemishes show up more readily. Velvet and other napped fabrics are usually becoming to all skins.

In the same way, shiny hats and shiny jewelry near the hair will emphasize the coarseness of hair. Medium or coarse textured hats and dull or brushed finish jewelry make hair look finer. Dull fabrics such as felt and jersey usually are becoming against all textures of hair.

Exceptions to this general rule are shiny accessories and accents used on a small scale. For example, contrasting textures provided by accessories add interest to most ensembles. An accessory may also provide a focal point

or center of interest. Because of this, the most pleasing effects are obtained by using one outstanding texture in an accessory along with several less noticeable textures. A soft, shiny scarf with a bright pin will attract the eye, for example. If shoes and bag are also very shiny or bright, the eye may move quickly to these, resulting in an unsettled look. The center of interest may be the feet if one's shoes provide the most textural interest. This can be an advantage for someone with attractive legs and feet.

Many people prefer to focus attention on or near the face. This can be easily accomplished by using jewelry, scarves or other accessories with dominant textures near the neck or shoulders and on the head.



Fig. 7. The busy, all-over design of this fabric provides much visual interest, drawing attention away from the figure and to the fabric.

USING THE DESIGN ELEMENTS

By selecting textures and combinations of textures or patterned fabrics that give the desired appearance, the average figure can be enhanced and irregular figures can be balanced.

The specific effects of texture that relate to mood, apparent size and shape have been explained independently of color and line, two other design elements.

In reality these three elements are closely related and modify or enhance each other. By combining these elements and using them with skill, you can create the look you like.

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