

FASHION DESIGN PROBLEM SOLVING

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What does the word "design" mean?

The word "design" has generally been used to express the visual aesthetics of things, although its meaning has nowadays expanded to strategic services and systems (Wagner).

Josef Alberts describes the design process:

To design is to plan and to organize,
to order and relate and to control.

In short it embraces all means opposing disorder and accident.

Therefore it signifies a human need
and qualifies man's thinking and doing (p.12, Lauer).

Design Problem Solving

The word "design" is used in various fields of design. One of them, of course, is fashion design and others are interior design, graphic design, industrial design, architectural design, package design, furniture design, lighting design and many more. All artists engaging in these areas are called designers who always seek something innovative and creative. Design doesn't occur incidentally, but it is planned by the artist. The art always relates to solving problems. Each designer in every field always searches creative solutions.

The word "creative" reflects a solution which is new, unique, imaginative, fantastic or innovative. The creative aspect of art may imply freedom from every rule, but in fact guidelines exist. There are two aspects of art, content and shape. Content infers a story that is what artists wish to tell and shape is a very visual aspect. The manipulation of the numerous factors is a principle of design, that is how they express it. Problems in art can concern one or both aspects and good ideas create successful design solutions.

"How can I get creative ideas" Designers often suffer from this kind of dilemma. They must have been studied hard on the "creative process" through a lot of valuable books and articles. In the creative process *Thinking, Looking, and Doing* are very important for

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innovative works though you may think these activities are too simple. These all stages, however, can stimulate the artistic problem-solving process.

Thinking,

Designers have certainly to think up answers to design problems. *Thinking* is an important phase of this solution. It is involved in every stage of the creative procedure. Each step in originating a design involves selections, and the choices are decided by *thinking*. *Thinking* can be particularly essential in design which has a special theme or message. A first phase is to think logically of which images could express this objective matter and to list them, sketch them quickly, since what you are finding is a visual solution. Professional designers often are helped by market researches which show the ideas of a lot of people. Draw your ideas to look immediately at the visual possibilities, and you can narrow a broad list of ideas to a few developed and worthy ones.

Looking

Looking is very likely the essential discipline of every artist. The artist may take their inspiration from natures and be effected by works of other designers. It is now a big advantage for us to easily get plenty of visual information through newspapers, books, magazines, website and so on. The more you observe and develop your study, the better you will learn in future problem solving. *Looking* has the more useful aspect of visual research in books or magazines which will not only be helpful but necessary.

Doing

What *doing* means here is to begin experimenting visually. If you have some serious problems relating to concepts, then you should start experimenting immediately. And doing something will be able to stimulate your thinking aspect. *Doing* experiments, indeed, can give you a great hint about other potentialities. Actually this series of spontaneous, quick "doing" can be really helpful for you to determine your direction to pursue. In this process of creation of a design, experiment a lot of possibilities and variations, your determination is now based on a selection from plenty of potentialities, not just a few.

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Once you have chosen a basic idea, or direction, the *doing* is the primary consideration (Lauer) .

Design Problem Solving in Fashion

Fashion designers also often struggle to find fresh ideas. How do you get ideas of new mode as a designer? It won't happen to you easily, will you? You must think of what is occurring in the world and how it influences fashion. Careful researches and unique interpretations of those effects will bring you the fresh innovative ideas that you want.

There are some idea sources that fashion designers often use; take ideas from historic, racial or ethnic clothes, costumes of museum collections etc. And then they modify the ideas to the dresses with trendy taste.

As other important design sources there are arts and images such as movie, video, TV, website, photograph, architecture, music, drama and so on. Fashion designers are often affected by works of other artists. They also use other art works to stimulate their creativity.

Awareness is the key to develop a new design. As a fashion designer you always must keep your eyes open, and have to learn how to gain a fresh idea from visual objects and to translate them into clothes. A lot of practice and careful observation make you more aware, sensitive, and confident (Frings) .

Fashion Design Problem Solving

There is an excellent training for students to develop their creativity of fashion design that is called "Fashion Design Problem Solving". In European countries, the US and some other countries, this kind of discipline is popular to develop aesthetic sense and stimulate creativity. The following example is a course "Fashion Design Problem Solving" in Philadelphia University, the US.

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A course “Fashion Design Problem Solving”

in Philadelphia University

This course aims at stimulate creativity and will give students with a unique occasion to develop their skills in problem solving.

PURPOSE

“Fashion Design Problem Solving” is a study to develop potential originality on fashion design and aims at stimulating creativity to make fresh, original, unique, innovative ideas of fashion design.

After researching objects and developing new designs, students are required to create 3 dimensional body coverings manipulating unexpected materials in an unusual manner. In this study students are asked creativity to the basic design problem of covering the body, but not asked ordinal clothing construction technology.

This is an occasion for creative thinking rather than conventional. The primal objective

is to explore, investigate and experiment ideas into making 3 dimensional solutions. The concept of this study is to stimulate innovative thought and ideas.

OBJECIVE

1. Develop new approaches to problem solving.
2. Inquire fine arts as well as finding objects for design inspiration.
3. Investigate lots of materials that you have never used before for a body covering and manipulate them well in an unusual way.
4. Use all skills you learned in every prior study.
5. Develop documentation skills using digital tools.

PROBLEMS

During a semester students will be assigned five projects and one portfolio, and before starting project students are asked field trips to visit various places for investigation and inspiration.

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1. Animal coatings: visit the zoo or the aquarium and select an animal, fish, or species of animal to observe its appearance. Research the design elements that nature originated.
2. White angles: right angle at which the two lines cross each other. A body covering must be designed by using only 90 degree.
3. Penn Pad: create an innovative experimental body covering using shoulder pads combined with other materials.
4. Transformation: transform an imaginative thought into a completely different one.
5. Edges: the line where something begins or ends. Create an edge on basic material and torture the edge; burn, cut, fringe etc. Use 5-10 different cloths, all solids or all prints.

PROCESURE

1. Draw at least 10 sketches.
2. Choose one of them and illustrate in working drawing.
3 views (front, back, side)
3. Develop design into 3-D form.
4. Present your 3-D construction on a live model.
5. Think shape, size, color, mobility when thinking whole body.

Materials:

Students are able to use any materials, but they must be in harmony with design image. Trims must work with its materials. It is recommended to use inexpensive but imaginative materials, for example, aluminum foil, polyester wrap, plastic bags, paper, newsprint, felt, small fabrics after cutting pattern-pieces, net, etc.

As trims, ribbon, string, cord, wire, cork, feather, chain, band, line, rope, shells etc.

- Keep your eyes open and think widely.
- Always think of the whole body, front, side, back, top to bottom.
- Consider mobility, and openings and closings in your body covering.
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- All shapes should be in harmony(Prezio-Henry) .

How to develop an idea

1. Research on themes in books, magazines, CDs, TV, internet, or visiting the library, museum, aquarium, zoo etc.
2. Choose one among your investigation as a theme.

Let's think of some examples!

If you choose a crane as your theme,

- Go to the zoo and observe its appearance, and how it flies, walks and act.
- Watch carefully at a crane's face, red crown, long bill with combined color, feather with black and white, and feel each texture. .



- Look at the manner of the mother and child relaxing in the grass.



- Study how two cranes act. They cry with their wings extended.



- Observe well its beautiful appearance of the crane, form and color, in the blue sky.



If your object is an onion,

- Look at a young white onion that break its root through dried soil. It has many green lines gathering together which make fresh green leaves.



- Observe two onions with a lot of white roots like men's beard. The onions start changing their color to light brown. You can see several colors on them, white, very light brown, light brown and dark brown of dried dirt.



Watch old brown onions, Its long beards have disappeared and only the mark is left.

- At the top of another onion there are no leaves anymore
- In the one cut in half vertically, You can see many lines of arcs on the beautiful white surface.
- Then try to cut it horizontally. What can you look at its surface?



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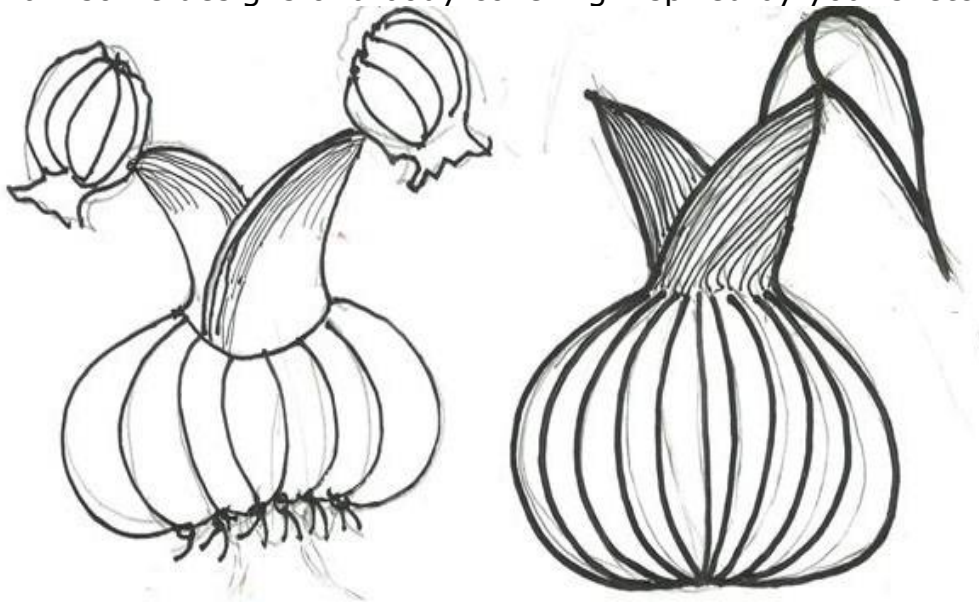
3. Make a few sketches of them in 2D and 3D to create your design.



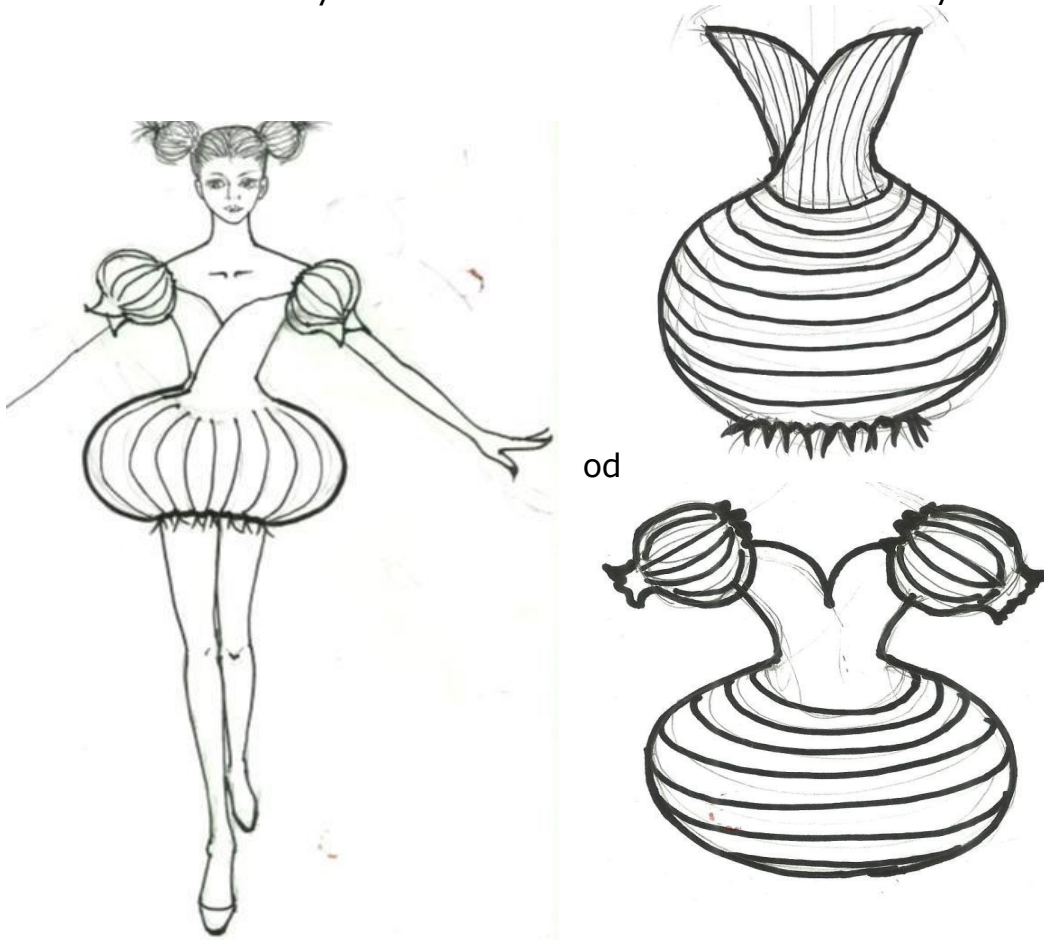
- See every elements and details carefully.
- Be imaginative and innovative.

(Don't throw out all drawings and photos to make your portfolio.)

4. Draw some designs of a body covering inspired by your sketches.

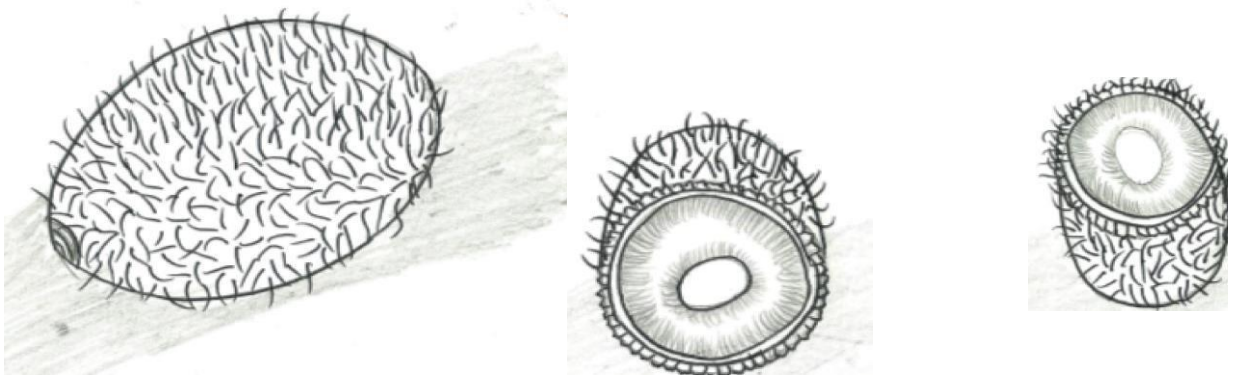


5. Select one from your sketches to make a woman's body covering.



Let's look at another example, **Rambutan**

- She sketched a whole rambutan and a half of one cut horizontally.
- She didn't cut it both vertically and diagonally, did she?



- She designed three inspired by her sketches.
- This is her final design from a rambutan.

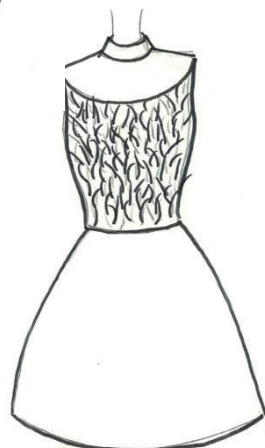


(Meri Andani)



- Decide materials to make your body covering express best, and manipulate them in an unusual manner. Think about all elements, texture and colors in harmony. Then your work may be a fresh, original, unique body covering.

(form Portfolio of Meri Andani)



Finally put your all works together and make a beautiful portfolio in which you express the concept or the world of your costume.

Notice: You can use any things you like and your garments must be wearable and be made firmly. That means your work won't be accepted if it tears while being worn.

Thinking, Looking and Doing are really crucial to solve design problems for designers in any kind of field. And you may now understand that this sort of course, "Fashion Design Problem Solving, is very important to study for students majoring in Fashion .

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