



Colour blocking

Proportion concerns the balance of shape, volume, colour, fabric, texture, and scale. These elements can be combined in different ways and the resulting designs can vary a lot.

Scale is the relationship between a garment and its details: all the elements need to harmonise within the total design and not be out of scale, for example too large or too bright.

Balance can be of two types: symmetrical balance is achieved by an equal distribution of elements and equal volume, whereas asymmetrical balance is obtained by unequal volume and impact. If the design contains many elements, it is more difficult to achieve a pleasing, balanced result.

The sense of proportion can be subjective but there are also theories providing formulas for pleasing harmonies.

Garment needs balance in its volume, style lines, and details included in the design. This sense of proportion needs to be correct, but it is difficult to achieve the exact lines for seams, size of collar or position of pockets.

Balance often depends on a complex range of comparisons and also contemporary views and ideal body shape.

Different techniques can be used to analyse and view the garment balance.

Colour blocking, for example, consists of filling large areas of the drawings with contrasting shades. Garment silhouettes can look dramatically different with proportionate colour effects.

Colour blocking a garment demonstrates a few of the many combinations and their varying effects. Using positive and negative effects in colour blocking is a good exercise where dramatic differences in balance and proportion can be achieved.

Positive and negative images create maximum visual impact and can be used not only for colour contrast, but also for hard and soft, pattern and plain, coarse and smooth and so on. It helps to draw attention on elements or features of the design.

(Adapted from *Fashion Design*)



ACTIVITIES

1 Decide if the following sentences are true or false, then correct the false ones.

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|--|---|
| 1 Proportion and scale are the same thing. (T) (F) | 5 Colour blocking is an example of how to study balance. (T) (F) |
| 2 A garment is out of scale if it is too bright or too large. (T) (F) | 6 This technique involves using black and white to show contrast. (T) (F) |
| 3 Designs with a lot of details are more difficult to balance. (T) (F) | 7 They can be used only for colour contrast. (T) (F) |
| 4 Proportion depends on objective criteria. (T) (F) | 8 It helps to highlight some specific elements of design. (T) (F) |

2 Summarise the characteristics of this technique in a few words.

3 Do you know any other techniques like colour blocking? How can you analyse balance, proportion and so on?

4 Draw some pictures of garments and try to use this technique on them. Analyse the results.