Style, Composition, and Design

Color!

ROP Stagehand Technician

2/11/10
Lesson Objective

- To learn the “visual language” of the designer, i.e. how to create the necessary sketches, patterns, and other visualizations of the design concept(s)
- To learn the 7 elements of design: line, shape, mass, measure, position, color, and texture
- To understand how to put those elements together to create a picture or design
Style and Stylization in Theatrical Design

- Style refers to the compositional characteristics that distinguish the appearance of one type of thing from another.

- Style is a “reflection of the social and political history of the times,…that…are eventually reflected in the patterns and shifting artistic trends of the period.

- In theatrical Design: A recognizable pattern of compositional elements that provides a distinctive reflection of the social and political history of the time.
Production Style

- A manner of producing a play in which all production elements (costumes, scenery, lights, acting, direction) adhere to a common set of artistic/philosophical characteristics (e.g. expressionism)

- The identification of a particular production style is the single most important step in the development of a play’s production concept.
Design Styles and Design Periods

- Design style, e.g. romanticism or naturalism
- Design periods, e.g. Elizabethan or Late Nineteenth Century
- They actually run into each other and overlap a little bit until one style is dominant
Design Styles and Design Periods

- Stylization: The use of specific compositional elements characteristic of a particular style or period that create the essence of that style or period (not exactly replicating elements of a historical style or period)

- Literary Style and Theatrical Design
  - Verse- noble, flowy, romantic
  - Prose- short, choppy, realistic
7 Elements of Design

- Line
- Shape
- Mass
- Measure
- Position
- Color
- Texture

WRITE THESE DOWN!
Elements of Design

- **Line**
  - A mark that connects two points
    - Dimension - the length and width
    - Quality - shape (curved/straight/jagged), value (lightness/darkness), contrast with surrounding objects
    - Character - emotionally evocative characteristics, what makes you notice one line more than another
Uniform vertical b&w lines at even intervals: static, orderly, conservative

Uniform horiz black lines of widely, but evenly spaced: static, stable, orderly

Uneven spacing of otherwise uniform lines creates feeling of movement: dynamic, orderly progression

Progression moves in from either side, gives impression of roundness: dynamic, orderly progression, dimension

Varying line widths and distances create random pattern: dynamic, chaotic, disorderly

Make lines into curves for controlled movement: dynamic, orderly flow
Elements of Design, continued

Shape
- Any line that encloses a space
- The quality of line enclosing a shape determines the quality of the shape
Elements of Design, continued

- Mass
  - The 3-dimensional form of a shape
  - Depth and spatial arrangements relative to other design elements
3-Dimensional Illusion
Elements of Design, continued

- Measure
  - Ability to judge the size of objects and relative distance between them without measuring devices
Elements of Design, continued

- **Position**
  - Relative location of adjacent shapes or masses = the distance between objects AND their placement relative to forms around them
Elements of Design, continued

- Color
  - The most dominant and complex element of design
    - Generates complex responses in viewer based on psychological and cultural reactions
    - (More on this later...)
Elements of Design, continued

Texture

- Visual or tactile (touch) surface or appearance
  - Fabric
    - Hard-surface - reflects light
      - Satins, taffeta, metals
    - Soft-surface - absorbs light
      - Wool, flannel, velour
  - Lighting
    - gobos (patterns) are used to create visual texture
Texture
7 Principles of Composition

- Unity
- Harmony
- Contrast
- Variation
- Balance
- Proportion
- Emphasis

WRITE THESE DOWN!
Principles of Composition

- **Unity** - the creation of a stylistic plan to which all parts of the design subscribe
- **Harmony** - a sense of blending and unity that is achieved when the various parts of a design fit together to create an orderly, congruous whole
  - Design elements seem to naturally blend or flow without discordant or incompatible contrasts
• Jagged roof is evocative of emotional stress of main character, also represents the ends of clapboards on the outside of the house
• Sweeping line of silhouette (outline of a form, aka profile) reinforces the romantic, nostalgic nature of the play (*The Member of the Wedding*)
Harmony, continued

- Too much harmony can be monotonous such as if a certain motif is repeated too often or too many closely related colors are repeated.
- Too little could be deliberate to represent chaos.
- The degree of harmony to pursue in the design is up to the designer’s interpretation of the design concept.
Contrast- the juxtaposition of dissimilar elements
- Contrast must work in opposition to the major, or dominant, visual theme
- Mirrors psychological stress level of the play
  - Tragedy= more contrast; comedy= less contrast

Variation- varying any of the design elements in a repetitive pattern
Principles of Composition, continued

- Balance - the arrangement of parts of a composition to create a sense of restfulness, stability, or equilibrium to the design
  - Symmetrical: correspondence in size, form, and relative position of parts on either side of a center dividing line; mirror-image balance
  - Asymmetrical: a sense of equilibrium achieved through dynamic tension created by the juxtaposition of dissimilar design elements
Asymmetrical balance, continued

- The white circle is dynamically balanced by the larger expanse of dark space to its right.
Principles of Composition, continued

- **Proportion** - the harmonious relationship of the parts of an object to each other or the whole

- **Emphasis** - directing the audience’s attention to a specific place
  - Scenic/Lighting: acting areas
  - Costume: actor’s face and torso
  - Color accents, converging lines, change of texture
Analyze This

- Line
- Shape
- Mass
- Measure
- Position
- Color
- Texture
- Unity
- Harmony
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Analyze This

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Analyze That
Analyze That
Analyze That
Color!

Pigment (i.e. paint)

- 1 Primary colors
- 2 Secondary colors
- 3 Tertiary colors

Light

- Red
- Blue
- Green
- Magenta
- Cyan
- White
- Yellow
Color Terminology

- Hue
- Saturation
- Value
- Tint
- Shade
- Tone
Color Terminology

- **Hue**: the quality that differentiates one color from another, such as blue from green
- **Saturation (aka chroma)**: the amount, or percentage, of a particular hue in a color mixture
Color Terminology

- **Value**: the relative lightness or darkness of a color
- **Tint**: a color with a high value, usually achieved by mixing a hue with white pigment/light
- **Shade**: a color with a low value, usually achieved by a mixture of one or more hues and black
Color Terminology

- Tone: a color of middle value, achieved by mixing a hue with black AND white; the addition of a complementary hue tones a color
  - Complementary: color opposite each other on the color wheel; 2 hues that, when combined, yield white in light or black in pigment
Tone, continued
Color Meaning - RED

- Red is the color of fire and blood, so it is associated with energy, war, danger, strength, power, determination as well as passion, desire, and love.
- Red is a very emotionally intense color. It enhances human metabolism, increases respiration rate, and raises blood pressure. It has very high visibility, which is why stop signs, stoplights, and fire equipment are usually painted red. In heraldry, red is used to indicate courage. It is a color found in many national flags.
- Red brings text and images to the foreground. Use it as an accent color to stimulate people to make quick decisions; it is a perfect color for 'Buy Now' or 'Click Here' buttons on Internet banners and websites. In advertising, red is often used to evoke erotic feelings (red lips, red nails, red-light districts, 'Lady in Red', etc). Red is widely used to indicate danger (high voltage signs, traffic lights). This color is also commonly associated with energy, so you can use it when promoting energy drinks, games, cars, items related to sports and high physical activity.
- Light red represents joy, sexuality, passion, sensitivity, and love. Pink signifies romance, love, and friendship. It denotes feminine qualities and passiveness.
- Dark red is associated with vigor, willpower, rage, anger, leadership, courage, longing, malice, and wrath.
- Brown suggests stability and denotes masculine qualities.
- Reddish-brown is associated with harvest and fall.
Color Meaning- ORANGE

- Orange combines the energy of red and the happiness of yellow. It is associated with joy, sunshine, and the tropics. Orange represents enthusiasm, fascination, happiness, creativity, determination, attraction, success, encouragement, and stimulation.

- To the human eye, orange is a very hot color, so it gives the sensation of heat. Nevertheless, orange is not as aggressive as red. Orange increases oxygen supply to the brain, produces an invigorating effect, and stimulates mental activity. It is highly accepted among young people. As a citrus color, orange is associated with healthy food and stimulates appetite. Orange is the color of fall and harvest. In heraldry, orange is symbolic of strength and endurance.

- Orange has very high visibility, so you can use it to catch attention and highlight the most important elements of your design. Orange is very effective for promoting food products and toys.

- **Dark orange** can mean deceit and distrust. **Red-orange** corresponds to desire, sexual passion, pleasure, domination, aggression, and thirst for action. **Gold** evokes the feeling of prestige. The meaning of gold is illumination, wisdom, and wealth. Gold often symbolizes high quality.
Color Meaning- YELLOW

- Yellow is the color of sunshine. It's associated with joy, happiness, intellect, and energy.
- Yellow produces a warming effect, arouses cheerfulness, stimulates mental activity, and generates muscle energy. Yellow is often associated with food. Bright, pure yellow is an attention getter, which is the reason taxicabs are painted this color. When overused, yellow may have a disturbing effect; it is known that babies cry more in yellow rooms. Yellow is seen before other colors when placed against black; this combination is often used to issue a warning. In heraldry, yellow indicates honor and loyalty. Later the meaning of yellow was connected with cowardice.
- Use yellow to evoke pleasant, cheerful feelings. You can choose yellow to promote children's products and items related to leisure. Yellow is very effective for attracting attention, so use it to highlight the most important elements of your design. Men usually perceive yellow as a very lighthearted, 'childish' color, so it is not recommended to use yellow when selling prestigious, expensive products to men – nobody will buy a yellow business suit or a yellow Mercedes. Yellow is an unstable and spontaneous color, so avoid using yellow if you want to suggest stability and safety. Light yellow tends to disappear into white, so it usually needs a dark color to highlight it. Shades of yellow are visually unappealing because they lose cheerfulness and become dingy.
- Dull (dingy) yellow represents caution, decay, sickness, and jealousy. Light yellow is associated with intellect, freshness, and joy.
Color Meaning- GREEN

- Green is the color of nature. It symbolizes growth, harmony, freshness, and fertility. Green has strong emotional correspondence with safety. Dark green is also commonly associated with money.

- Green has great healing power. It is the most restful color for the human eye; it can improve vision. Green suggests stability and endurance. Sometimes green denotes lack of experience; for example, a 'greenhorn' is a novice. In heraldry, green indicates growth and hope. Green, as opposed to red, means safety; it is the color of free passage in road traffic.

- Use green to indicate safety when advertising drugs and medical products. Green is directly related to nature, so you can use it to promote 'green' products. Dull, darker green is commonly associated with money, the financial world, banking, and Wall Street.

- Dark green is associated with ambition, greed, and jealousy. Yellow-green can indicate sickness, cowardice, discord, and jealousy. Aqua is associated with emotional healing and protection. Olive green is the traditional color of peace.
Color Meaning- BLUE

- Blue is the color of the sky and sea. It is often associated with depth and stability. It symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and heaven.
- Blue is considered beneficial to the mind and body. It slows human metabolism and produces a calming effect. Blue is strongly associated with tranquility and calmness. In heraldry, blue is used to symbolize piety and sincerity.
- You can use blue to promote products and services related to cleanliness (water purification filters, cleaning liquids, vodka), air and sky (airlines, airports, air conditioners), water and sea (sea voyages, mineral water). As opposed to emotionally warm colors like red, orange, and yellow; blue is linked to consciousness and intellect. Use blue to suggest precision when promoting high-tech products.
- Blue is a masculine color; according to studies, it is highly accepted among males. Dark blue is associated with depth, expertise, and stability; it is a preferred color for corporate America.
- Avoid using blue when promoting food and cooking, because blue suppresses appetite. When used together with warm colors like yellow or red, blue can create high-impact, vibrant designs; for example, blue-yellow-red is a perfect color scheme for a superhero.
- **Light blue** is associated with health, healing, tranquility, understanding, and softness.
- **Dark blue** represents knowledge, power, integrity, and seriousness.
Color Meaning- PURPLE

- Purple combines the stability of blue and the energy of red. Purple is associated with royalty. It symbolizes power, nobility, luxury, and ambition. It conveys wealth and extravagance. Purple is associated with wisdom, dignity, independence, creativity, mystery, and magic.

- According to surveys, almost 75 percent of pre-adolescent children prefer purple to all other colors. Purple is a very rare color in nature; some people consider it to be artificial.

- Light purple is a good choice for a feminine design. You can use bright purple when promoting children's products.

- **Light purple** evokes romantic and nostalgic feelings. **Dark purple** evokes gloom and sad feelings. It can cause frustration.
Color Meaning- WHITE

- White is associated with light, goodness, innocence, purity, and virginity. It is considered to be the color of perfection.
- White means safety, purity, and cleanliness. As opposed to black, white usually has a positive connotation. White can represent a successful beginning. In heraldry, white depicts faith and purity.
- In advertising, white is associated with coolness and cleanliness because it's the color of snow. You can use white to suggest simplicity in high-tech products. White is an appropriate color for charitable organizations; angels are usually imagined wearing white clothes. White is associated with hospitals, doctors, and sterility, so you can use white to suggest safety when promoting medical products. White is often associated with low weight, low-fat food, and dairy products.
Color Meaning- BLACK

- Black is associated with power, elegance, formality, death, evil, and mystery.
- Black is a mysterious color associated with fear and the unknown (black holes). It usually has a negative connotation (blacklist, black humor, 'black death'). Black denotes strength and authority; it is considered to be a very formal, elegant, and prestigious color (black tie, black Mercedes). In heraldry, black is the symbol of grief.
- Black gives the feeling of perspective and depth, but a black background diminishes readability. A black suit or dress can make you look thinner. When designing for a gallery of art or photography, you can use a black or gray background to make the other colors stand out. Black contrasts well with bright colors. Combined with red or orange – other very powerful colors – black gives a very aggressive color scheme.