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EC58-414 Line and Design in Dress

Helen Rocke

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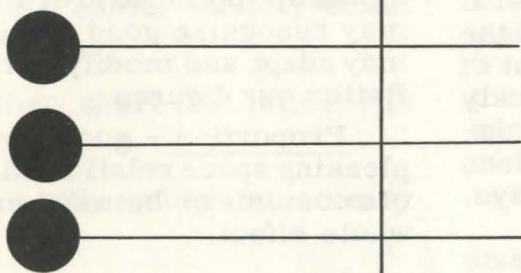
E.C. 58-414

LINE and

by HELEN ROCKE, Clothing Specialist

design

in
Dress



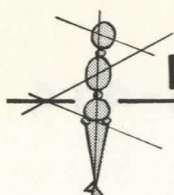
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line and design in dress

Good line is one of the design essentials for a costume. The basic principles of line in design remain constant even though fashion continues to change.

In selecting a design or pattern for a garment it is necessary to think of the outside or silhouette lines and the lines within the silhouette. Lines are made by seams, by jacket and sleeve length, by hem, and by collars, cuffs, pockets, belts, yokes and buttonholes. They are made by decorative features such as tucks, pleats, cording, special stitching, by the use of two or more colors, and by fabrics of different textures. Lines are found in fabric, too; in plaids, stripes and prints.

Effect and Kinds of Line

Each of the lines creates some effect in the garment or on the figure. Lines can produce pleasant or unpleasant impressions. Good silhouette lines are related to body structure and emphasize good points and hide imperfections. Good arrangement and spacing of lines within the silhouette results in good design and adds beauty.

Silhouette lines conform to the general fashion tendencies. If a style distorts the figure or makes one part appear out of proportion, it goes out of fashion quickly and looks absurd in a short time, but designs that bring out the good proportions of the figure will be pleasing always.

Lines used by fashion experts to create their designs may be straight or curved. The straight lines, vertical, horizontal and diagonal, suggest strength and dignity. Curved lines are graceful and have a softening effect. Illusions which will seem to alter proportions can be created by the use of line.

Some of the effects of line are shown in Figure 1.

Horizontal or the side-to-side lines tend to create width and decrease height.

Vertical lines give height and make spaces appear longer and narrower.

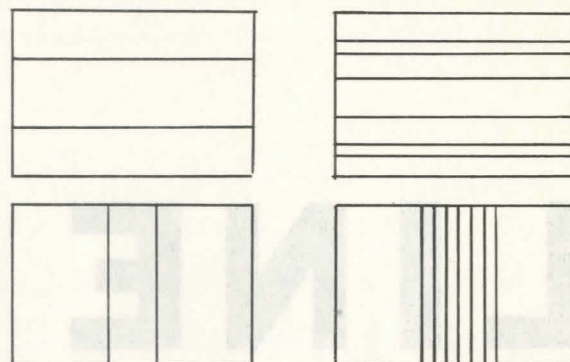


FIG. 1

Broken lines appear shorter.

Converging lines make an object appear longer.

Diverging lines make an object appear shorter.

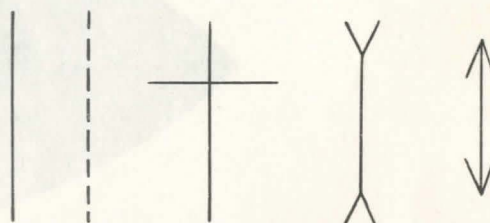


FIG. 1

These same effects are created by the lines in costume and can be used to flatter the figure or to produce the opposite effect.

Here again we need to review art principles as applied to dress in order that we may recognize good designs, and that we may adapt and modify current fashions to flatter our figures.

Proportion - good proportion is the pleasing space relationship between parts of a costume or between each part and the whole effect.

Harmony - is an agreement between the various parts of a design making everything seem to belong together.

Balance - is the restful effect obtained by grouping lines and shapes around a center in such a way that there will be equal attraction on both sides.

Rhythm - is related movement. It is gained through repetition of shapes, lines, color, which form and easy connected path along which the eye may travel.

Emphasis - is the art principle by which the eye is carried first to the most important thing in any arrangement, and from that point to every other detail in the order of its importance.

Analyzing Figure Types

In order to apply principles in the use of line to clothing and pattern selection you need to study your own figure to determine your figure type. This can be done by standing in front of a full length mirror and studying what you see. The tape measure and scales are other tools that can be used in a self-analysis study.

There are many types of figures. Few can be called one type exclusively. Figure irregularities are common. Some are listed on the check sheet attached for use in analyzing your figure.

Classifications of figures as to height are:

- Average - Between 5'3" and 5'7"
- Short - 5'3" or less
- Tall - Over 5'7"

Another classification giving general characteristics is:

Average - the figure, with height and weight well balanced.

Petite - always short, usually small boned.

Stocky - rather short (but taller than petite), always stout.

Statuesque - tall, muscular, heavy boned.

Willowy - always tall and slender, frequently somewhat angular with prominent shoulder blades, long neck, thin arms and legs.

The average figure is considered a fine example of good proportion. (Fig. 2). If it is divided into eight equal parts, three will be above the waistline and five parts below. As you stand before a long mirror and put your hands on your natural waistline notice how your height is divided. Is approximately $\frac{3}{5}$ of your height below your

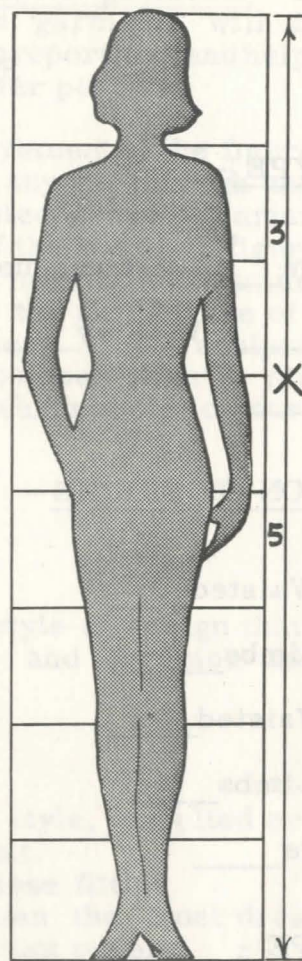


FIG.2

waistline? Most designers agree that the Greek rule of proportion, two to three, three to five or other unequal divisions of space are the most pleasing and desirable divisions.

The ratio of your width to your height is also a proportion to be considered in analyzing the figure.

Measurements used by pattern companies are based on long study of the American woman's figure, and reflect proportions of the modern figure. It may be helpful to compare the difference between your bust and hip measurement with the difference between those measurements given on a pattern chart. It is the relationship of the size of any one part of the body in relation to other parts, and to the whole effect, that is important.

FIGURE CHECK SHEET

FIGURE TYPE -

Average _____ Statuesque _____

Petite _____ Willowy _____

Stocky _____

PROPORTION OF FIGURE -

Short Waisted _____

Long Limbs _____

Long Waisted _____

Short Limbs _____

Average _____

FACE SHAPE -

Oval _____ Square _____

Long _____ Triangular _____

Narrow _____ Round _____

SHOULDERS -

Narrow _____ Broad _____

Rounded _____ Square _____

Sloping _____

NECK -

Short _____ Long _____

Average _____ Thick _____

Thin _____

BUST -

Large _____ Small _____

Average _____ High _____

Low _____

ABDOMEN -

Flat _____ Prominent _____

HIPS -

Average _____ Small _____

Large _____

WAIST -

Average _____ Small _____

Large _____

POSTURE -

Erect _____ Stooped _____

Sway-backed _____

What Line Can Do For You

Along with a study of the use of line to improve the appearance of the figure, some thought should be given to other factors that contribute to a good figure. These are:

Diet and exercise - Some figure proportions and unshapely muscular development may be the result of faulty diet and lack of exercise.

Posture - The most perfect figure proportions will be ineffective without fine posture.

Foundation garments - Rightly fitted foundation garments will improve any woman's proportions and help her to maintain a better posture.

Improvement of the figure may be attained by anyone through the use of the means listed above. Variations in proportion of the body and figure irregularities will need to be minimized or concealed by the skillful use of line and design in dress. After analyzing your own figure, you may wish to study the suggestions which apply to your figure type.

The Average Figure

Line

Has a choice of lines. Choose those to emphasize best features.

Style

Most any style or design that is suited to the fabric and occasion may be used.

The Short Figure

Wear lines that carry the eye up and down giving a longer, overall effect -- Unbroken vertical lines or upward slanting diagonals.

Princess style, unbelted or with a very narrow belt.

Sleeves close fitting.

Button down the front dresses -- contrasting front panels.

If stocky, soft lines rather than tailored -- easy fit, V-neck lines help to slenderize. Smooth not bulky fabrics. Small designs or plain fabrics.

Short boleros, high cut waistlines.

Pockets placed high.

If petite, plain, uncluttered lines that follow body contour. Small details, small patterned fabrics.

Collars narrow and relatively flat.

The Tall Figure

Wear lines that carry the eye in a horizontal movement -- diagonal and broken lines.

Wide belts, large collars, double breasted effects.

Long waisted or low belted effects. Overblouses, peplums, tunics, capes.

If tall and slender, rough textures, bulky fabrics, bold prints and designs.

Wide, full sleeves.

If statuesque, light weight, smooth, pliable fabrics. Dull surface, indistinct designs.

Two piece dresses with soft look. Straight coat, either three quarter or full length, fitted sleeves.

COMMON FIGURE PROBLEMS

Large Hips	Draw attention to the top of the figure, width of shoulders. Use interesting collars, yokes, shoulder details, longer bodice or bolero. Use trimming in center or near center of figure. Use slightly flared skirt. Use panels or unpressed pleats in center of figure.
Prominent abdomen	Direct attention either above or below abdomen by using darts, pleats, dark center panels, long straight jackets, easy fitting blouses with interesting necklines. Skirts with front fullness or drapery.
Sway back and prominent posterior	Conceal by dipping waist seam in the back, filling in the hollow above with a blouse effect. Use fullness in back of skirt, peplums, bustle effects, long jackets.
Shoulders	
Square	Use raglan type sleeves.
Sloping	Always use shoulder pads. Fullness in top of sleeve or high wide lapel.
Rounded	Soft rolling collar tends to straighten upper curve of shoulder. Bolero, cape or short jacket may be used.
Narrow	Extended shoulder line, crosswise tucks, wide lapels, shoulder fullness in tucks, darts, gathers.
Flat Chest	Use easy fitting blouses - vestees, frilly ruffles, jackets, double breasted effects, wide revers.
Large Bust	Surplice styles, V shaped vestees with ease in bodice and at waistline. Straight boxy jackets.
Low Bust	Draw attention toward neckline by interesting collar, necklace, pockets.
Long Waist	Point attention to shoulder or bustline. Wide belts, broad collars. Use low waist seam unbelted, as in long torso design, princess lines, horizontal trimming.
Short Waist	Use surplice closing, narrow belts, or unbelted, long collars, tucks running up and down. One piece dresses.

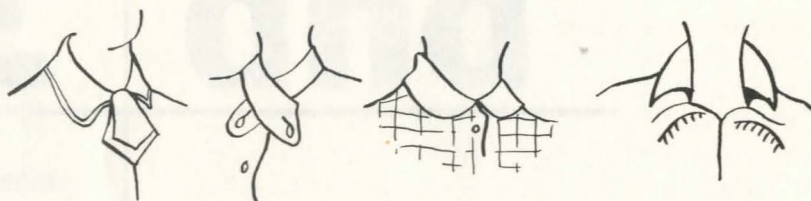
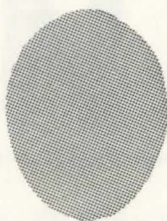
The type of neckline to be selected depends upon the shape of the face, features, and length of neck. The average length of neck is one third that of the head length. The oval is considered an ideal face shape.

Variations in face shapes and suggestions for becoming necklines for each type are shown in Fig. 3.

FIG. 3

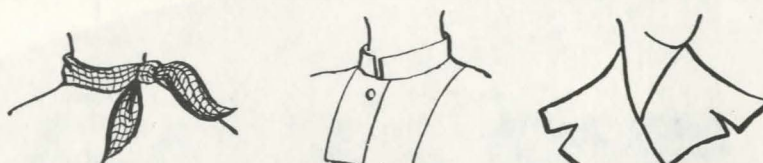
OVAL

ideal shape



Many lines are becoming

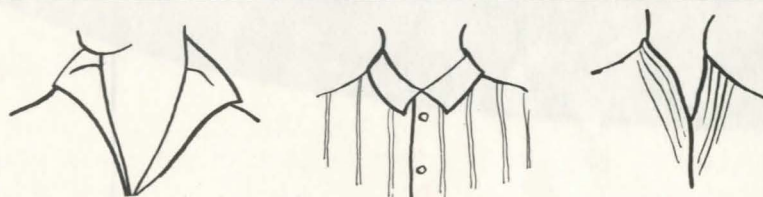
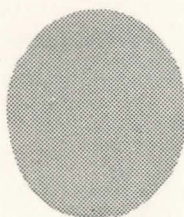
LONG and NARROW



These necklines seem to shorten the face and add fullness. Use high necklines, wide lapels, scarves, bows or chokers worn high

ROUND

full cheeks,
round chin



Lower the neckline for apparent length with narrow lapel, small pointed collars.

SQUARE

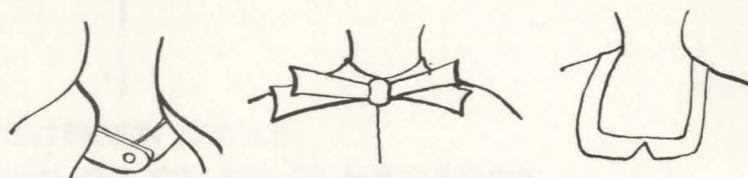
forehead
and chin
broad



Lower neckline to add length. Use V line to slenderize, give soft effects.

INVERTED TRIANGULAR

wide forehead,
pointed chin



Use width at neckline. A short oval or short U is becoming.

