

Gallery and Classroom Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan – Principles of Design, Balance and Emphasis

Abstract: This lesson uses images of Lauren Bacall and items from her wardrobe to teach students about elements and principles of design. Students will visit a museum exhibition, think critically about the objects they see, and, to apply what they have learned, design a garment for Lauren Bacall inspired by the garments in the exhibition.

Grade/Level: High school seniors or college freshmen

Subject: Visual Arts, Fashion Design

Time Required: 30 minute tour, additional 20 minutes for students to sketch and explore the exhibition following the tour.

Materials Required: In the gallery: notebook and pencil. In the classroom: Sketchpad, drawing medium (e.g. pencil, ink, marker, watercolor)

Educational Standards: New York State Educational Guideline for Lessons in the Visual Arts, Grade 12

- Standard 3.4.2. Students explain their reflections about the meanings, purposes, and sources of works of art; describe their responses to the works and the reasons for those responses.
- Standard 1.4.3. Students understand and use the elements and principles of art (line, color, texture, shape) in order to communicate their ideas.

Lesson Overview: In 2004, Lauren Bacall told *Harper's Bazaar*, "Put a ruffle on me, and I'm finished...I love understatement." In spite of her love for understated fashion, Bacall's wardrobe was never boring. She favored designers who used innovative fabrics and creative embellishments to create clothing that was both dramatic and refined. This lesson will explore the strategies used by these designers to achieve those results.

Lesson Objectives:

- Analyze and interpret principles of emphasis/focal points and ways in which balance is achieved in fashion design.
- Practice taking inspiration from influential fashion figures (designers and others)
- Learn to think critically about fashion.

Discussion Steps:

- At the entrance of the gallery, introduce the exhibition. Inform the students that they will see the entire exhibition, but will focus on two ensembles for this lesson.
- In the gallery (*Harper's Bazaar*, July 1957, p. 80-81), ask the students to describe Bacall's style.

- How would you describe Bacall's style?
- What aspects of her clothing are the most eye-catching?
- What are the design elements or construction details that make these garments more than a "little black dress" or a "little white dress"?
- In the main gallery, look at the Dior dress (Christian Dior evening dress and belt), ask the students where they first focus when looking at the dress.
 - What is the primary focal point of this dress?
 - Now take a minute to look at the dress. Consider the fabric, construction, and details.
 - What are the secondary focal points that attracted your eye?
 - How do you think the dress would be different if it didn't have ostrich feathers on the cuffs or the gold belt?
 - What if the dress was made of a different fabric, more structured and with more seams? How would that be different?
 - *Here make the point of achieving equilibrium, how designer Marc Bohan achieved harmony and balance, without over or under-embellishing the garment.*
- Next, point to the pink Cardin dress (Pierre Cardin dress); ask the students what they think of the ensemble.
 - Where does your eye go first when you look at this dress?
 - How would you describe this dress?
 - What are the obvious differences between this dress and the Dior dress? *(It's short, it is more structured, it has more seams...)*
 - How did Cardin achieve balance/harmony in this design? (Similar to the Dior dress).
- Explain the in-classroom assignment to students, before allowing them time to explore the rest of the gallery.
- Give the students 20 minutes to examine the remaining garments in the gallery. Have the students consider the ways in which the ensembles are unique. How does each designer apply the elements of line, color, shape, and texture to create emphasis and achieve balance?

Activities/Projects: In the classroom, ask the students to design a single garment (dress, jacket, top, skirt, etc.) that they imagine Lauren Bacall would have worn. In creating their design, students should consider the design elements and principles applied by the five designers featured in the exhibition to achieve emphasis and balance.

Assessment:

- Students will present and discuss their design in class.
- In presenting their designs, each student should discuss:
 - How the design is inspired by Lauren Bacall's personal style, and why the student thinks she would have worn the garment.
 - Explain the focal point of the garment and how balance was achieved when applying design elements.

LAUREN BACALL : THE LOOK

Elements & Principles of Design

A fashion designer's goal is to create a visually harmonious garment. Design elements are tools used by artists and designers to enhance the appearance of the completed product. Design Principles are guidelines for how the designer uses these tools.

Design Elements:

The basic tools for creating visual art.

- Color
- Line
- Shape
- Texture

Design Principles:

Guidelines for combining design elements.

- Proportion
- Balance
- Repetition
- Emphasis

Harmony:

A successful design is achieved when all the elements and principles of design work together harmoniously.



Norman Norell
Coat
1964
USA
Wool, rhinestones
Gift of Lauren Bacall

Color: Color is the first element to which viewers respond. Color adds excitement, mood and emotion to a design.

Color has three dimensions:

- Hue is the name of the color: for example, this coat is pink.
- Value is how light or dark the color is
- Intensity is how bright or dull the color is

Line: In fashion, line refers to the direction of visual interest in a garment created by construction details such as seams, openings, pleats, gathers, tucks, topstitching, and trims. Straight lines suggest crispness, such as that of tailored garments; curved lines imply fluidity.



Norman Norell
Dress
1966
USA
Wool jersey
Gift of Lauren Bacall



Pierre Cardin
Dress
1968
France
Dyrel (Cardine)
Gift of Lauren Bacall

Shape: Shape or Silhouette, is used to describe the outline of the whole garment. Silhouette is viewed from a distance and is therefore responsible for one of the first impressions of a garment. A silhouette should be related to the body structure, but some variation is needed to add interest.

Texture: Texture refers to the surface interest of a fabric, created by the weave and by light reflection. Texture appeals to the sense of touch-- how something feels, or looks like it would feel, when touched.



Traina-Norell
Dress and coat ensemble
c.1956
USA
Camel cashmere, silk jersey, sequins
Gift of Lauren Bacall

LAUREN BACALL : THE LOOK



Christian Dior
Evening dress and belt
1968
France
Silk jersey, ostrich feathers, metal,
silk organza, sequins, beads
Gift of Lauren Bacall

Balance: Balance is the visual weight in design. Based on a central dividing line, Balance makes the right and left side of a garment appear to be equal. A garment must be balanced to be visually pleasing.

- **Symmetrical Balance:** Symmetrical or Formal Balance uses two identical objects on either side of the design, such as patch pockets of equal size.
- **Asymmetrical Balance:** In Asymmetrical or Informal Balance composition is different from one side of the garment to the other. Balance is achieved through visual impact.

Proportion: Proportion is the pleasing interrelationship between parts of a design. The various elements in the design should be scaled in size to fit its overall proportion.



Emanuel Ungaro
Pantsuit
1973
France
Silk damask
Gift of Lauren Bacall



Norman Norell
Pantsuit ensemble
c.1968
USA
Silk satin
Gift of Lauren Bacall

Emphasis: Emphasis creates a center of interest in a garment. All other elements support it by echoing its design message. A focal point can emphasize the theme of the design. Creation of a focal point can be achieved by color accents, significant shapes or details, lines coming together, groups of details, or contrast.

Rhythm: Rhythm leads the eye from one part of a design to another part, creating movement through repetition of pattern or color.



Yves Saint Laurent
Tunic and shorts ensemble
1969
France
Silk organza, sequins, beads
Gift of Lauren Bacall