1921

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Recommended Citation
Prang, Anne (1921) "The Well Dressed Woman Considers Art Principles," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 1 : No. 11 , Article 3.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol1/iss11/3

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The Well Dressed Woman Considers Art Principles

By ANNE PRANG

In this Group the First Figure Illustrates Formal Balance While the Second Shows Informal

THE well dressed woman knows WHAT TO PUT ON, HOW TO PUT IT ON, AND WHEN TO WEAR IT.

She has studied her own features and figure, as well as her personality, and knows exactly what lines, materials and colors, will help to bring out her best. She keeps clean and well groomed; she dresses with modesty and sincerity; she does not buy clothes beyond her means at the expense of other necessities of life, nor does she stoop to imitations. She does not seek to outshine other women; rather she prefers to be distinctly herself. Whether her costume is of costly fabric or of calico, she presents a unified picture of beauty, the central interest of which is her personality. The consciousness of being well dressed frees her mind from all anxiety and self-consciousness on that score, which leaves her free to enjoy herself and to devote her undivided attention to other matters.

A beautiful costume is judged by the same laws of art as a beautiful painting or a splendid structure in architecture. Each is a design. In each are considered the relationships of areas, lines, and colors, and their conformity to certain laws. It is from the big-out-of-doors, from nature itself, that the human race has learned to appreciate true beauty. The proportions and arrangement of masses, the ever-changing color harmonies that nature holds before us have such a strong human appeal that no one has ever tired of them. When these same truths are applied to the things that man makes, they too have the same human appeal—they are truly beautiful.

A brief outline of the most important principles upon which costume design is based, is herewith given; together with examples, to show the practical applicability to the costume.

UNITY—A unit in design has been defined as "that to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken, without interfering, materially, with the beauty and the meaning of the whole." Every costume expresses an idea—when it has said enough then it is time to stop. Often a dress is spoiled by introducing too many ideas—it is overloaded with trimming, jewelry, drapery, contrasting materials and colors, so that the whole effect is confusing.

To secure unity in a design one seeks, first to lead the eye through all the details of the design. This is done by means of rhythm which is manifested in the simplest way through the regular repetition of certain shape or line or color. This type of rhythm is often spoken of as the "principle of repetition." By repeating similar spots of interest in costume by means of line, color or value contrast, the eye of the observer may be caused to move consecutively from one thing to another, leading to the face, hands, feet, general coloring, or to any part whose emphasis is desired.

A peculiar characteristic of a line is that the eye, once having rested upon it, tends to follow the direction of the line; this is why the most skillfully designed curves seem to go on and on. Such lines are said to have rhythm, like a flowing melody in a song. Curved lines should seem to flow into one another or grow out of one another; they should not come to abrupt stops but go on invisibly in the imagination.

The second means for securing unity is to impart to the design a sense of balance and repose. The repose or rest that results from equal attraction on each side of an axis is called formal balance. Example: If a dress is exactly the same on one side as it is on the other, then it is said to be symmetrical. This type of balance, especially if carried out in straight lines, suggests dignity, strength and positiveness.

INFORMAL BALANCE is a balance of feeling resulting from spacing and importance of large and small elements. By a well balanced dress is meant one in which the weight or mass on one side balances that on the other. The two sides of this dress are not the same, still there is a feeling of balance. The "surplus" line of the waist at the left, together with the decorative material set in the skirt, is balanced at the right by a repetition of the same material in the lower part of the skirt.

BALANCE UP AND DOWN. A design which is lighter at the top and darker and heavier toward the base is restful and well balanced. This order of arrangement in nature is illustrated by the light sky, the darker trees and mountains and finally the still darker color of the ground. For this reason white shoes with a dark skirt or dress are not good.

As a third means of securing unity, one should give to the various parts of a costume some common factor. Two or more things are said to be in harmony with each other when they have sufficient likeness to seem to belong to each other and if at the same time there is enough difference to give interest. Example: The skirt of a dress might be trimmed with five rows of braid, the sleeve with one row and the neck with three rows. Since the braid is all of the same kind, there is enough likeness, and the fact that a little different arrangement is used in each place gives interest. Colors are harmonized in the same way.

To produce an arrangement of lines, masses or colors so that one dominates, so that there is a leading thought or dominant mass—this is a fourth device for securing unity. It is called subordination. All lines, colors and contrasts in costume should be kept subordinate to the wearer, so that she will be the most interesting part of the whole.

To produce a pleasing relation of the parts of an object to each other and to the object as a whole, is proportion.

Here the First Figure Pictures Poor Spacing and Proportion While the Second Depicts Good Proportion
Tell Me a Story Mother
By MILDRED ELDERS

"COME tell us a story!" It is the familiar plea of childhood. Unhappy, she who has not been assailed with it again and again. Thrice miserable, she who is confronted with the scathing criticism, "she doesn't know any stories." And thrice blessed is she who is recognized as a person sure to be full to the brim of them. She is the Person with a Story.

If you would be the Person with a Story, you must not only have one to tell, but also be willing to learn the art of story telling. The story teller, unlike the poet is made as well as born, but she is not made of all stuffs nor in the twinkling of an eye. If you would tell your children stories, make a definite study of the task.

Well chosen stories can be made of definite educative value in the nursery. They give the child a love of reading, develop in him a taste for good literature, and teach him the art of speech. A well told story is an object lesson in English.

Stories are the child's first introduction into the world of ideal and character. Thru them he understands his own life and sees his possibilities and personalities reflected in them as in a mirror.

Opinions differ regarding the value of fairy stories, but the consensus is that the same spiritual truth underlies the old fairy-tale, there is little educative value in them, since the most of them are merely a jumble of incidents, often impossible and are frequently varnished with romanticism, which is well to remember.

Directness in telling is a long step towards holding attention. Relate the incidents in logical order, with the explanation, "child, this is how it was and why." Nothing more quickly destroys interest than the "cart-before-the-horse" method.

The dramatic quality of story telling depends chiefly upon the clearness and power with which the events and characters are visualized. Hold the image before the mind's eye, and make the child see what you say. Get in the mood of the story and tell it simply, vividly and joyously, weaving in bits of your own personality.

The art of story telling is no longer a pastime, it is a means of molding character, of introducing children to things over the rough spots for children.

I know a story which a mother tells to her little girl when she combs her tangles for she is apt to wiggle and squirm. She starts by saying, "I know a story about Tiny Tangles." Then, "they are little folk with long, thin legs and long, thin arms and they live in little girl's hair. They like to be close right over the ears or in that little place in the neck, for there they can hold on the tightest. I tell you, they are clinging things, but when a mother comes along with the comb they run and hide. When Mister Comb says, 'Go,' they know they have to go and so they do" when the child's attention is attracted to the story her fussing promptly stops.

In the same way a younger child loves to hear and mimic animal sounds. A crying spell may often be turned into a jolly laugh by imitating some familiar animal. Little stories giving these sounds can be invented. Stories accompanied by action in "Pete-a-cake" or "ride a Cock Horse." are always a diversion to tired little children.

Little children, old enough to understand anything, like stories with a strong sense of appeal, in which rhymes and phrases are repeated such as the "trip-trap, trip-trap" of the goats walking over a bridge, in the Billy Goat's Gruff, the colorable stories of ethereal lands or those full of touch sensations or of good things to eat. As they grow older they like fairy tales, fables, myths, legends, and parables. These stories picture for them characters that take on a real meaning and appeal to their quick developing minds. In these legends, heroes and valiant deeds take the place of fairies and animals.

A mother of several children has said, "Stories give both pleasure and information. They are better for wounds than kisses and they are a never failing lure for the restless child who might otherwise forget how happy a home he has. Stories strengthen the love, between parent and child. They clear up misunderstandings and enable the two to travel together frequently into that best place for comradeship, fabricated. They help the child over hard places and reward faithful tasks and make up for many childish disappointments."

HEALTH BOOKLETS FOR CHILDREN

Did you know that some very interesting booklets on health, just for children, are published by different health associations and concerns which are interested in public health? Some of them are free and the rest are priced very reasonably. Many of them make delightful reading matter for children and at the same time teach good health and health habits.

The following is a list of book sets and publishers:

Child Health Organization, Penn. Terminal Bldg., New York City:

Cho-Cho and the Health Fairy, 15c.
Child Health Alphabet cards, 15c.
Rosy Cheeks and Strong Heart (Third Reader) 30c.
Happy's Calendar School year 1921-1922, 25c.
Cho-Cho's Health Game (Something Like Author's ABC) 25c.

Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., New York City:

Child Health Alphabet, free.
Metropolitan Mother Goose, free.
Magic Health Book, free.

Iowa Tuberculosis Association, Des Moines, Iowa:

Story Telling for Health, 8c.
Health First Reader, 7c.
Silent Reading, 7c.

—By Eleanor Murray.