

BASICS; - DESIGN FOR JEWELLERY

WHAT IS DESIGN?

To put it simply - design is the series of questions and answers - decisions

- made in the process of creating an object - whether that is designing a vacuum cleaner, or a piece of fine art.

Design can incorporate a multitude of aspects - but primarily it is the overall plan or scheme of how an item, product, building, piece of jewellery or art will come together, how it will be made, how it will look and function.

Design is also a way of resolving a problem or question, whether that is how a ring band will look and fit, how a gemstone setting might sit on a ring, or something more in depth such as creating a collection or piece of jewellery around a theme or brief, to creating a piece of art jewellery as a way of processing an idea or event, telling a story, or to encourage a viewer or wearer to question.

"Creativity is Intelligence Having Fun!"

Albert Einstein

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

There are certain key elements we all use when designing a piece of

jewellery (or anything else; - 3D or 2D) - the building blocks we use to create...

- Line - the path of a dot through space - it can connect, contain or define
- Shape - a flat plane enclosed or defined by lines as edges
- Form - a 3D shape
- Colour - single colours, tones or shades, individually or in combination
- Pattern - how elements are organised or repeated
- Textures - visual or tactile surface of a form
- Position - how elements are placed in relation to each other
- Materials - choice of materials can affect the colour and texture

"In design, it all comes down to making decisions. Design is a process of expansion and contraction; opening up to a wide expanse of possibilities and narrowing down to the most promising."

Michael David Sturlin

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

These are the underlying concepts to consider that can help bring a design together - the ideas to think about or experiment with to refine and adapt designs.

- Unity - how do the different elements or parts of your design work together
- Movement - both movement of the elements, but also how the eye is drawn along or around the piece
- Balance - is the piece as a whole visually balanced, symmetrical or asymmetrical
- Contrast - are colours, shapes or other elements contrasting, or working harmoniously
- Variety - bringing similar or varying elements together to create different energies
- Rhythm - how repetition or variety work together
- Emphasis - which area/S are holding the attention
- Proportion - the scale of parts in relation to each other and the piece as a whole
- Scale - the scale of the piece overall in relation to the wearer

"Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Design is knowing which ones to keep."

Scott Adams

"The advice I like to give young artists, or really anybody who'll listen to me, is not to wait around for inspiration. Inspiration is for amateurs; the rest of us just show up and get to work. If you wait around for the clouds to part and a bolt of lightning to strike you in the brain, you are not going to make an awful lot of work. All the best ideas come out of the process; they come out of the work itself.

If you're sitting around trying to dream up a great art idea, you can sit there a long time before anything happens, but if you just get to work, something will occur to you and something else will occur to you and something else that you reject will push you in another direction. Inspiration is absolutely unnecessary and somehow deceptive.

You feel like you need this great idea before you can get down to work, and I find that's almost never the case."

Chuck Close

WHY SPEND TIME ON DESIGN

When we are learning our making skills - in any discipline - it is normal to use standard designs or those created or suggested by others in order to learn the processes and required techniques.

At some point however, we have built enough skills to be able to create and adapt our own designs and this is where it becomes useful to consider the design in more detail - to enable us to make the best, most exciting jewellery and most unique jewellery we can.

Thinking about and taking time to refine your designs, helps to create your own unique style and to create your own design identity, which will help hugely if you decide to work in the jewellery industry and/or sell your jewellery.

"Styles come and go. Good design is a language, not a style."

Massimo Vignelli

FUNCTIONALITY

Jewellery is worn, elements have to connect, pieces have to hang or attach in different ways and this is an additional consideration.

Is the look of the piece the

priority, or its functionality / wearability the priority to you? Using different findings or attachments will change how a piece hangs or is worn, as well as how it looks.

"Design is a plan for arranging elements in such a way as best to accomplish a particular purpose."

Charles Eames, Designer

Common jewellery designs have become traditional and popular in part due to fitting a particular bill, for example, wedding rings tend to be relatively plain and made from high end fine metals such as gold or platinum as they are worn every day and need to be practical. Different stones are suited to different styles of setting, due to the properties of the stone - including it's strength and durability - a stone setting as well as holding the stone and being visually decorative, is also there to protect the stone, and show it off to its best effect.

It is important to remember how a piece will be worn, when, where, and who by, and to decide as part of your design process how important each different consideration is for you in the context of this design and its purpose.

"Design adds value faster than it adds costs."

Joel Spolsky, Designer