

Sew You Want to Be a Designer

Well, Maybe You Already ARE!

If you are a home sew-er, wouldn't you like to feel the satisfaction of being own your own designer? If you answer YES, you might be in for a pleasant surprise. As a matter of fact, all talented individuals who choose fabrics to cut and sew for garments are fashion artists belonging to a subgroup of **Recreational Fashion Designers™**, or shall we call them **RecFasDes™** - are **YOU?**

In very general terms, fashion designers are apparel artists who combine specific **elements of fashion** following universal **principles of design** to create their own personal interpretations of fashion. This means that the designer is the one who chooses each of the elements needed to create a particular garment or outfit and combines them effectively following the principles of design.

Elements of design are **things** that you can see and/or feel and are quite **specific** to a particular field of the arts. For example:

- Elements of *landscaping* design (e.g. trees and grass, etc.) are very different from
- Elements of *fashion* design (e.g. skirts and blouses, etc.) and
- Elements of *interior* design (e.g. carpets and wood, etc.)

Principles of design on the other hand are **universal**. They are the unwritten "rules" for **combining the elements** to achieve a pleasing **result**. The result may be that it is balanced and stable or might just be whimsical and scattered.

Think of the principles of design as the glue that holds the elements together in the right places and for the desired effects.

If you are a recreational home sew-er, then you are no doubt a recreational fashion designer. Most people who buy patterns styled by other people willingly give the design credit to these others, quite appropriately - *to an extent*; however, there is more to fashion design than styling the patterns and drawing the finished garments.

Many fashion designers have their own patternmakers and sketch artists to enable them to focus on things such as *elements* to use and *principles* to follow for their creations and the settings in which to photograph them. As a **RecFasDes**, you might consider that you are collaborating with the original designer.

Every **RecFasDes** chooses and uses her or his own priorities. When cutting and sewing a garment, you are making design decisions repeatedly. These decisions include but are not limited to:

- Fabric
 - Colour – suitable for you and a specific function or location
 - Texture - appropriate for both you and the style of the pattern
 - Drape - positioning the grain line for maximum control – straight or bias

- Pattern
 - Will you use a waistband or an elastic casing?
 - Should the sleeve have a hem or a cuff?
 - Will the dress be better in full length or should it end at mid-calf?
- Style
 - Elegant and sophisticated
 - Fun and easy
 - Formal and proper

Choosing a designer pattern is primarily about choosing the cut of the garment. Cut is related to the amount of ease and relative proportions included in the shape. Let's say that you choose a designer pattern from a classic Chanel collection from the 1950`s. The amount of ease and the proportions will be as consistent as the relatively simple lines and minimal detail – *maybe* some braided trim along edges with the simple accessory of a long string of synthetic pearls.

You still make designer decisions by choosing fabric **colors** and **textures**, garment **lines** and **suitability** for purpose (fashion fits function) and more. You will feel your creative satisfaction **soar** when you **consciously** make your own designer decisions - *on purpose* as *the* **DESIGNER** of **everything** that you cut and sew!