

Advanced Higher Graphic Communication

Class 5: Texture

Lesson 1 - Paper Textures & Finishes

Paper is often something we take for granted. It's just 'there.' Sometimes we have no choice about the type of paper on which our designs are printed. Normally we can't dictate the paper used for ads in newspapers or magazines. Even when we do have a choice, we're limited by budget, printing requirements, or other factors. However, paper can be an important textural element in our desktop published documents.

Some papers just 'feel' better than others. Grab up some paper from around you. Get a newspaper, a magazine, some paper from your printer, and a few different samples from your Class Samples. Close your eyes and touch the different surfaces. Can you identify the general type of paper (newsprint, etc.) simply by touch? Probably so. But also consider how they feel to your touch — smooth, rough, slightly patterned, fuzzy, bumpy, slick, shiny, dull, warm or cold.

Familiarize yourself with some of the various surfaces and finishes used in paper. Some may be familiar to you already. Others will be new.

- **Antique Finish**
- **Cast-Coated Paper**
- **Cockle Finish**
- **Dull Finish**
- **Eggshell Finish**
- **English Finish**
- **Felt Finish**
- **Glazed Finish**
- **Granite Finish**
- **Laid Finish**
- **Linen Finish**
- **Machine Finish**
- **Machine Glazed**
- **Matte Finish**
- **Mottled Finish**
- **Natural Finish**
- **Onionskin Paper**
- **Parchment Paper**
- **Supercalendered Paper**
- **Vellum Finish**
- **Wove Finish**

Design Concept & Texture

Varying paper surfaces can dramatically or subtly alter the mood you want your designs to convey. An exercise from *Using Design Basics To Get Creative Results* by Bryan L. Peterson uses the example of a piece of jewelry placed against two totally different surfaces — a shiny tile of black Formica vs. a piece of cement.

Translate this same concept to paper and imagine a photograph of a well-preserved vintage automobile printed on extremely smooth, glossy paper or printed on a rough, peppy surface. Neither one is necessarily better or worse. It depends on the mood

you want to convey. Increased contrast between the image (and its visual texture) and the actual surface of the paper can create interest in your design.

When selecting paper, choose a texture that is related to the concept of your design and doesn't overwhelm or get in the way of the message. While you can make a bold statement with texture, sometimes a subtle texture that stays 'in the background' is most appropriate. Make sure that your texture works with your choice of type and images so that text does not become unreadable or images unrecognizable. It may be necessary to use a bolder typeface if your paper is rough or strongly patterned.

Here is an example of paper texture from an assignment turned in for Class 1:

Unexpected contrast: In a brochure promoting a computer-related service: "The gray color also evokes a high-tech, sterile mood, although I might expect a glossier surface to go along with that, rather than the sensual feel of the textured stock." — Student ID S011203

My comments: "...the softer texture may indeed have been meant to soften and humanize the high-tech image."

Go through your Class Samples with an eye on paper textures.

Exercise

Go through your class samples and find five paper samples that range from the very smooth to the very rough. For each sample, look at the purpose and focus of the piece and decide if, in your opinion, the paper texture

- 1) is insignificant/incidental to the piece;
- 2) is appropriate for the mood and purpose of the piece; or,
- 3) is inappropriate for the mood and purpose of the piece.

If possible, find a paper store or warehouse near you. Stroll the aisles and discover the variety of papers there, especially with an eye on textures and finishes. Don't just look at the paper. Pick it up, touch it. Some paper stores will provide you with paper sample books — ask for them. These sample books are provided by various paper manufacturers to showcase the variety of papers they carry. Some sample books are beautifully designed as well and would make good samples for your Class Samples collection.

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Lesson 2 - Visual Textures

Everything around us has a texture. Sometimes we can simulate those textures with paper, but more often the textures we create in our designs are visual rather than tactile. However, those visual textures can be just as provocative or full of meaning as actual textures we can touch.

It's extremely easy to find or create visual textures for your designs. There are four basic ways to incorporate visual texture.

1. Objects within a photograph



Textures: fairly smooth surface of the chalk; rough surface of the cement



Textures: smooth glass bottles; fabric of the potholders



Textures: worn wooden mallet; grass

2. Images created with photo-editing software

these textures may mimic actual textures or be imagined textures



Texture: mimics drapes or folds in a satiny fabric

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Texture: simulates a rough, rocky surface



Texture: random soft circles create an imaginary texture

3. Digitized images of actual textures
(from scans, digital photos)



Texture: a straw mat



Texture: piece of door mat made from old tires

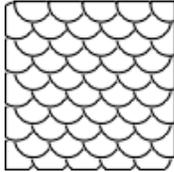


Texture: tree bark

4. Symbolic textures created with lines or shapes
these patterns suggest various textures and are similar to the use of symbols or icons to represent ideas or objects



Texture: wavy lines could symbolize water, waves, rolling terrain



Texture: overlapping circles give the look of fish scales



Texture: a grid of lines could simulate plaid or linen fabrics, wire mesh, or other textures

You can enhance or alter the appearance of visual textures depending on the actual texture of the paper used. Keep this interaction in mind when using texture. While you can easily simulate a rough texture on smooth paper, using a 'slick' visual texture on some rough papers changes the visual appearance.

As with paper textures, choose textures that relate to the concept of the piece and are appropriate to the design. Just as some paper textures can interfere with the readability of text, so can visual textures used as backgrounds. Use caution when placing text over heavy or busy visual textures.

Go through your Class Samples with an eye on visual texture.

Exercise

Go through your class samples and find three examples of visual texture as follows:

- Objects in photographs that create interesting textures, especially textures that relate to the purpose and concept of the whole piece
- Backgrounds or filled objects that appear to use simulated textures or scans of actual textures
- Symbolic textures and patterns created with lines or shapes

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Graded Assignment

1. The following image is an example of which type of texture:
a. Blind Embossing **b.** Scan of Object **c.** Paper **d.** Symbolic Texture



2. Which is the smoother paper?
a. Cockle Finish **b.** Onionskin **c.** Supercalendered **d.** Embossed Finish
3. In 2-3 sentences describe the differences between *engraving* and *thermography*.
4. (In regards to paper) Satin Finish is another name for:
a. Matte Finish **b.** English Finish **c.** Antique Finish **d.** Felt Finish
5. This question has three steps:
 1. Get a spoon, a rock (any kind), and a piece of fabric (any kind).
 2. Describe in 1-2 words (*words, not sentences*) the texture of each item in Step 1.
 3. Describe one way (a different method for each) that you might incorporate the texture of that object into a printed design.