

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Texture, Repeat Pattern System as Formal Elements of Design**

Mary Emodi-Nnoruka, Chika Chudi-Duru, &  
Vivian Okpalauba

#### **Introduction**

**T**exture and patterns are parts of the vocabulary of art and design. Texture is a formal element of design, and pattern is a form of repetition. Texture is the surface quality of an item. It is how something feels when touched, or looks like it would feel if touched. A drawing of a tree stump could show rough outer bark and a smooth inner surface. Texture adds variety and interest (Stout, 2000). Pattern in design is a repetition of certain elements in an orderly manner to form a design layout.

#### **Motif**

A motif is a unit of design. A motif can be described as what constitutes a major theme in pattern-making or pattern arrangement. Motifs in pattern making are to be repeated at regular intervals, several times. It could also be said that the decorative design is composed of a basic unit often referred to as a motif, an isolated shape or figure that is repeated all along the length and width of the cloth by weaving or printing.



Fig. 1: A motif. Source: Emodi, 2021

## **Classification of Textile Motifs**

According to Naik & Wilson (2009), they are broadly classified and grouped as naturalistic, ethnic, geometric, stylized and abstract.

### **Naturalistic motifs**

This could also be referred to as realistic motifs naturally depicting real objects. It could be flora-fauna, utility articles, sculptures, architectural objects, animal skins, human figures and any other derivative of nature.

### **Ethnic motifs**

They are inspired by traditional design works from different native cultures, for instance, African, Indian, North American, European, South American, Greek, Roman, Japanese, Persian, Byzantine, Gothic and many others. They are occasionally considered tribal motifs.

Some designers are greatly influenced by ethnic motifs and ethnic textiles.

### **Geometric motifs**

This comprises entirely geometric shapes and forms or a design may be constructed on a geometric foundation. The design or pattern which is repeated or multiplied indefinitely by either weaving or printing must show an exact repeat no matter how elaborate it is.

### **Stylized motifs**

These motif designs distort the real objects. The source of inspiration for a stylized design is generally recognizable, the object is either abridged or exaggerated in such a way as to give it an unnatural form.

### **Abstract motifs**

Here, the form of the real object is used as motif designs in such an unrealistic shape and irregularities that probably no one would possibly recognize or identify it.

### **Uses of Motifs**

1. Motif is used to serve as a major theme in pattern making.
2. Motifs can be used to create texture in designing some surfaces.
3. It is used to enhance the surface of the design.
4. Motif is used to create a rhythmic flow in pattern making.

## **Repeat Pattern System**

This is a way of arranging motifs creatively in a repeated way to achieve rhythm and balance. There are different methods which can be used to repeat motifs in pattern making.

In basic design, a repeat pattern system is the art of organizing and arranging various elements of art or elements of design in a meaningful and orderly manner. The arrangement of these elements should be done according to certain principles of art which are the guiding rules.

Pattern is an arrangement of repeated motifs to create rhythm, in lines, shapes, colours and textures. Pattern is a decorative design that appears mostly on clothes, walls, paper, carpets etc. There are several types of pattern arrangements, Ndubisi (2010). However, there are some basic repeat patterns, networks or design layouts that are very necessary to the textile artist/ designer. They are briefly discussed below.

## **Simple Repeat Pattern**

This is a repeat method where motifs are arranged beside each other on each row, both vertically and horizontally. An example is placed below:

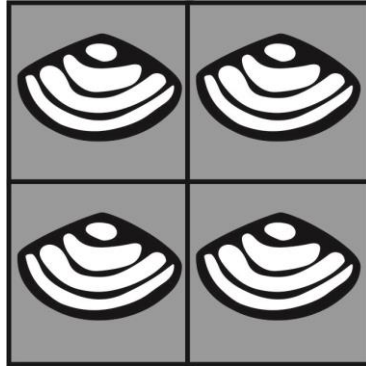


Fig. 1: Simple Repeat Pattern. Source: Emodi, 2021

**Mirror Repeat Pattern:** Mirror repeat pattern is a method whereby the motifs are arranged to reflect one another in design. An example can be seen below:

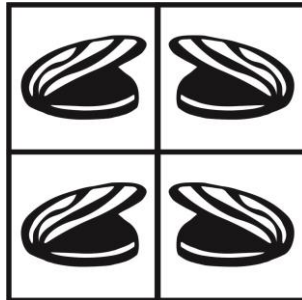


Fig. 2: Mirror Repeat Pattern, Emodi, 2021

**Brick Repeat Pattern:** A brick repeat pattern is a repeat method where motifs are arranged in a brick-laying pattern. An example is placed below:

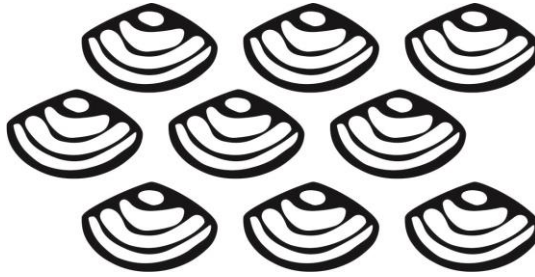


Fig. 3: Brick Repeat Pattern, Emodi, 2021

### **Half Drop Repeat Pattern**

Half drop repeat pattern is a repeat method that has the motifs arranged in a half-drop way/style in a design. Below is an example:

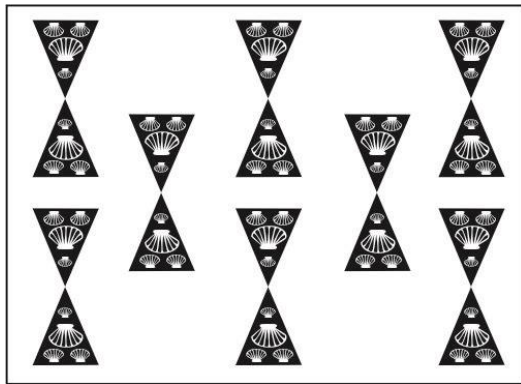


Fig 5: Half drop Repeat Pattern, Emodi, 2021

## **Diamond Repeat Pattern**

Diamond repeat pattern is a repeat method that takes after a diamond effect. In a diamond repeat pattern, the motifs are arranged in angles that are not right angles. An example is seen below:



Fig.6a: diamond pattern layout. Source:  
<https://www.pinterest.com/guygecko/cool-pattern-designs/>

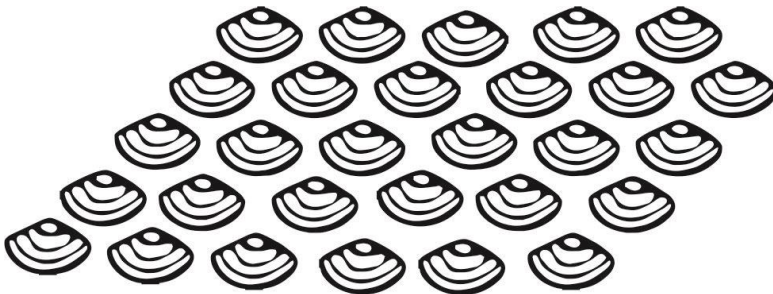


Fig 6b: Diamond Repeat Pattern. Emodi, 2021

## **Counter change Repeat pattern**

This refers to patterns in which the motif and the background reverse in colour- two-colour symmetrical patterns.

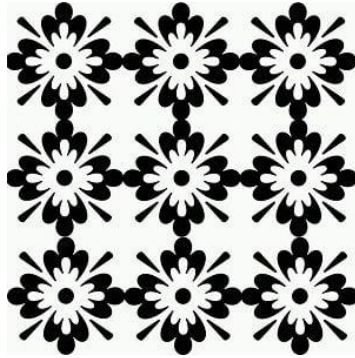


Fig.7: counter change repeat pattern. Source:  
<https://sewguide.com/fabric-design-pattern-repeat/>

### **Ogee Repeat pattern**

The repeated ogee pattern is an S-like curved shape with two arches that come to a point and intersect to create an interesting graphic.



Fig.8: ogee repeat pattern. Source:  
<https://www.printmag.com/design-education/fabric-patterns-deconstructed/>



## **Scattered pattern**

In this layout the motifs are scattered randomly; there is no symmetry or any formal arrangement to the motifs; the motifs are placed in a repeating fashion but without a specific plan or calculation. This repeat utilizes a random arrangement of various motifs to create a very organic, non-linear design. It is very popular for floral patterns and more. Elements of the design are “tossed” onto the fabric,

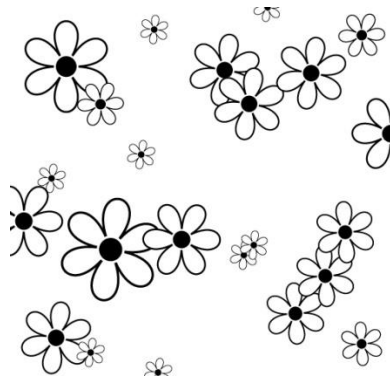


Fig. 9: scattered pattern arrangement. Source: <https://www.printmag.com/design-education/fabric-patterns-deconstructed/>

## **Border design pattern**

This is designed so that the motifs are placed on the edge of the fabric. Some of them are found to be placed as border designs on laces, fabrics for furnishing, tablecloths, sarees and some other fabrics.



Fig.10: border designs. Source:  
<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/354025220691847133/>

### **Some other repeat patterns**

There are probably an infinite number of repeat types. One could argue that there are triangle repeats and hexagon repeats (like diamond/ogee repeats) and many others. Essentially, however, all repeats are iterations of the brick, block or drop repeats.

### **Texture**

Texture denotes the quality of surfaces and the characteristic physical structure of objects. People feel their surroundings by looking at and touching surfaces. The materials around can be distinguished by feeling diverse textures, which helps to recognize familiar substances when seen or touched to identify unusual or unfamiliar textures (Preble et al., 2002; Gatto et al., 2000). Textures may be rough or smooth, coarse or fine, crisp or clingy, soft or stiff, thin or bulky, opaque or sheer, shiny or dull, heavy or light, or any combination of these characteristics. In essence, there is a visual texture and a tactile one. When an artist attempts to represent texture in

two-dimensional work such as drawing, it is visual texture, but for three-dimensional objects, it is tactile or actual texture with a physical feel. Such effect can be manipulated with tools, for example, metal sculpture, and woodwork. Some call the tactile texture 'simulated'. Ideelart (2017) - an internet blog, has observed that texture in art can be perceived in at least two ways: through touch (physical texture) and sight (visual texture). Physical texture gives an artwork a sense of object-ness. It associates it with the concrete physical world. . It further mentions that it can affect mood, evoke psychological associations, bring attention to a medium, or divert the focus towards materials used in a work.

Texture is one of the elements that can be manipulated to make art and design more innovative and interesting and “heighten an emotional impact” on the observers (Preble et al., 2002). It is an important element of art and design. It is associated with a sense of feel, which draws all the viewers' physical and mental attention to the artwork. Some examples of textures applied to art and design works are explained therefrom.

One of the earliest ways abstract painters experimented with texture is through a process called *impasto*. A painting in *impasto* means that the painter has applied the paint to the surface in thick layers. An *impasto* work is considered painterly since it gives prominence to the physical marks made by the painter. Post-Impressionist painters like Van Gogh used *impasto* to create drama and to affect the way light interacted with the

surface of their images since *impasto* layers create shadows and highlights. *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh (1889). Van Gogh's famous Post-Impressionist painting of a village in the silhouette of a starry sky is an example of three-dimensional texture. The scene is rendered in *impasto* painting technique, with thick, visible brushstrokes standing out from the surface of the canvas (Master class staff, 2022).



Plate 1: *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh (1889) The Museum of Modern Art. 73.7 cm × 92.1 cm (29.01 in × 36.26 in), Oil on canvas, Source: [google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=vincent+van+gohs+starry+night+painting](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=vincent+van+gohs+starry+night+painting).



Plate 2: Texture is applied to the ceramic owl using materials such as gauze. Source: [teacheroz.com/apah-elements.pdf](http://teacheroz.com/apah-elements.pdf)

**In sculpture, David by Michelangelo (1501–1504):** Sculpted during the Italian Renaissance. According to the Master class staff (2022), Michelangelo's masterful sculpture of the Biblical king David was chiselled entirely out of marble. In sculpting it, Michelangelo's use of texture yielded a shiny, smooth surface that emphasizes the subject's physique (Master class staff, 2022).



Plate 3: *David* by Michelangelo (1501–1504): Marble Sculpture, 517 cm × 199 cm (17 ft × 6.5 ft), Galleria de'll Accademia, Florence, Italy, retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_\(Michelangelo\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_(Michelangelo)).

***Le Chat* by Alberto Giacometti (1955):** Modern sculptor Alberto Giacometti is most famous for his sculptures of long, skinny figures constructed with roughly-applied passages of bronze. In *Le Chat*, he turned to a cat as his subject matter, which is also constructed with a hard, bumpy texture in opposition to the typical soft fur of a cat (Master class staff, 2022).



Plate 4: *Le Chat* by Alberto Giacometti (1955). Bronze with brown patina. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Dimension: 11 in. × 31 1/2 in. × 5 1/4 in. (27.9 × 80 × 13.3 cm). Source: [metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/489980](https://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/489980)

Lujan (2013) reveals that in textile and fashion designs, texture describes the body and surface of the fabric. Textures may be rough or smooth, coarse or fine, crisp or clingy, soft or stiff, thin or bulky, opaque or sheer, shiny or dull, heavy or light, or any combination of these characteristics. She further mentions that because textures have many characteristics, they can enhance or detract from a garment's design. They also affect the illusions of scale and shape of the figure. During weaving, in textile designs, texture is created through the construction of threads and fabrics. Varying types of fabric, like silk, cotton or wool, all have different qualities. Texture can also be created with added elements, like embroidery, crochet lace or embellishments. Some textile designs decorated with visual textures are placed below:



Plate 5: Chudi-Duru (2017). Akwete traditional hand-woven fabric. Textures in textile design (weaving). Source: Dimension two and a quarter yardage. Medium: synthetic yarns.



Plate 6: Chudi-Duru (2017). Printed fabric Textures in textile design on cotton fabric inspired by Akwete hand-woven fabrics. Source: Dimension three yards. Medium: fabric ink and acrylic.

When used in graphic design, texture refers more to the sense of feeling. Texture is a characteristic component of graphic design that uplifts the presence of other visual elements like patterns, colours, illustrations, content, and more. Graphic design is customized to deliver a message to grab the viewer's interest (white 2018).



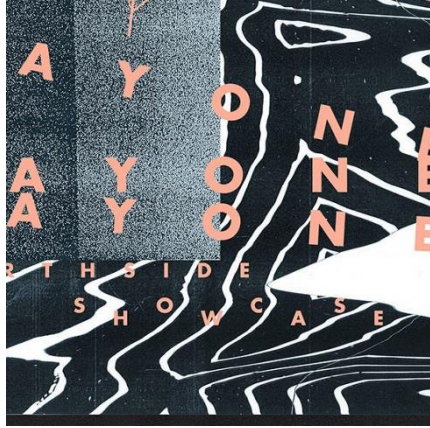


Plate 7: Texture in graphic design. Source:  
[google.com/search?q=textures+in+graphic+design&client=firefox-b-](https://www.google.com/search?q=textures+in+graphic+design&client=firefox-b-)

## Questions

1. Define repeat pattern system
2. What is a motif?
3. Design a unit of motif
4. With the aid of a designed motif, arrange a pattern on a surface.
5. Explain the importance of texture in art and design.

## References

Chudi-Duru, C.C. (2017).Exploration of Akwete Weaves Motifs for Adaptation on Printed Textiles for Apparel Production. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the Department of Industrial Design, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

- Gatto, J., Porter, A., & Selleck, J. (2000). Exploring visual design: the elements and principles (3rd Ed.). Worcester: Davis Publications
- Lujan, N. (2013). Fashion Feasibility. Retrieved from [https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/\\_c/C312/welcome.html](https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_c/C312/welcome.html) on 10-04 -22
- Master Class Staff (2022). How to Use Texture in Art: 4 Examples of Texture in Art. Retrieved from <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/texture-in-art-explained#what-is-texture-in-art> on 11-04-22.
- Naik, D.S & Wilson, J.A (2009). Surface designing of textile fabrics. New age international (P) Ltd., Publishers. Delhi India.
- Ndubisi Ogomma A. (2010) A Hand Book on Textile, Emyn Nigeria, Hugetez Publisher.
- Preble, D., Preble, S., & Frank, P. (2002). Art forms: an introduction to the visual arts (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.
- Stout, J. (2000). Design: Exploring the Elements and the Principles. Lecture Note: Iowa State University. <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4hfiles/statefair/EEHHandbook/EEHJPDesign4H634.pdf>. Assessed 12/4/2021
- White, E. (2018). 7 Tips On How To Use Textures In Graphic Design. Retrieved from <https://elearningindustry.com/textures-in-graphic-design-7-tips-use> on 14-04-22