



Geometry of Design: Studies in Proportion and Composition

Kimberly Elam

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At last, a mathematical explanation of how art works presented in a manner we can all understand. Kimberly Elam takes the reader on a geometrical journey, lending insight and coherence to the design process by exploring the visual relationships that have foundations in mathematics as well as the essential qualities of life. Geometry of Design—the first book in our new Design Briefs Series—takes a close look at a broad range of twentieth-century examples of design, architecture, and illustration (from the Barcelona chair to the Musica Viva poster, from the Braun handblender to the Conico kettle), revealing underlying geometric structures in their compositions. Explanations and techniques of visual analysis make the inherent mathematical relationships evident and a must-have for anyone involved in graphic arts. The book focuses not only on the classic systems of proportioning, such as the golden section and root rectangles, but also on less well known proportioning systems such as the Fibonacci Series. Through detailed diagrams these geometric systems are brought to life giving an effective insight into the design process.

Geometry of Design: Studies in Proportion and Composition Details

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Author : Kimberly Elam

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From Reader Review Geometry of Design: Studies in Proportion and Composition for online ebook

Pj says

I'm not a person that is trained in design, but I love the correlation between nature and geometry. The book started out with those comparisons, but went into geometry and key posters of the past as well as furniture....Mies van der Rohe, Jules Cheret, A. M. Cassandre. I enjoyed learning about Root Rectangles and Golden Section rectangles and triangles, but that was only the first 42 pages of the book. I'm guessing this book might be a short study for a graphic designer.

Meagan says

Really sweet illustrations of the Fibonacci sequence and the golden ratio.

Jessie Moberg says

If you like math and design, pick this book up.

It's nerd-tastic.

(The lovely images and diagrams are just an added bonus)

Rebecca says

I'm obviously guessing at the date I finished this book. I remember taking it out of the library at University and hanging it on to it until they wouldn't let me renew anymore.

I loved the velum paper overlays of the geometry of well know pieces of art and design. I always love to know that what I'm doing, where I'm putting something in a composition is for a damn good reason, like a law of mathematics! It's obviously not always the case that I do everything to strict geometric rules, but it's a good basis and now a subconcious thing I do when designing, and I think that seeing in black and white in the book helped cement that.

I've recently asked for this book for a Christmas pressie- fingers crossed for Santa so I'll always have it to refer to.

Erik says

Yet another essential volume for a graphic designer's library. It's small, it's quick, it's priceless.

I generally dislike graphic design books. They tend to be written by knowledgeable folks who love reading their own incoherent words (coughRANDcough). Kimberly Elan's books--Grid Systems being another--are worth every penny you pay for them as far as I'm concerned.

Erika Mulvenna says

A great little book about geometry and design with a focus on the golden ratio and root rectangles. I really liked the use of overlays to show clear geometry of easy to identify designs. Would recommend to anyone interested in the golden ratio in art and design.

Libby says

fun and quick. great illustrations.

Bjm Index says

9

Jessica says

The golden ratio in design - it does a great job of highlighting the use of the golden ratio as it has vellum pages illustrating the design proportions overlaying a photograph of the actual object.

Mariana García says

It is a brilliant collection of design examples and how they follow proportion and composition rules. It covers pieces from classic paintings to architecture starting with a digestible theoretical ground that holds the hand of the reader through the vast amount of examples. The displayed pieces are analysed through several glasses and the use of semi transparent paper on top to overlay the relationship between elements. Well achieved and a great reference book, I recommend this one to everyone that wants to open their perception on how some beautiful proportions work.

Lorenzo Diaz campos says

No existen manuales para medir la estética y belleza en las creaciones de diseño, eso es cierto. Aun así este interesante tomo explica con sencillez y con una vasta cantidad de ilustraciones los elementos de proporción y composición que contribuyen indudablemente a crear objetos y construcciones notables. La autora revisa conceptos matemáticos y geométricos ancestrales que explican el talento humano para entender la naturaleza

misma de la belleza.

Con delicadas inserciones en papel velum, elaborados dibujos y detalladas razones matemáticas uno a uno se revelan los secretos de la proporción aurea, la secuencia Fibonacci y otras maravillas de la naturaleza que han inspirado y guiado a los grandes del diseño y la arquitectura en sus creaciones maestras.

Este volumen trata el tema con un acercamiento sencillo y claro por lo que, además de ser una indispensable referencia para los profesionales del ramo, puede ayudar a los amateurs en el entendimiento de los maravillosos secretos de las proporciones y geometrías de la belleza.

Don says

This is a short book on design and composition that focuses on a handful of popular ratios and geometrical constructions and then overlays those constructions on professional design work and architecture to reveal the geometric framework underpinning the works of art. The initial geometric portion of the book focuses on the golden rectangle and root rectangles, showing how they are constructed and subdivided. After this initial material, the book launches into a series of examples involving art ranging across the 20th century. The book has two weaknesses. First, the examples are heavily slanted towards graphic design work of the early 20th century. A more even spread of examples would have been helpful. Second, the analysis of examples often requires the introduction of many geometric concepts that were not covered in the introductory sections. Perhaps the book should have been longer and covered more material. These complaints aside, it's a very useful work on geometric composition.

See-ming Lee says

Fairly elementary but I like the translucent overlays. That's pretty cool.

Jack Keely says

Designers and artists will be intrigued by Kimberly Elam's visually rich investigation of proportion, form, and composition. I tend to draw intuitively, placing elements in a picture where they seem to "fit". My ability to illustrate was definitely sharpened by my years in design school working with grid systems and analyzing the composition of posters and page layouts. Kimberly Elam's book echoes that experience by closely examining everything from a Mies van der Rohe Barcelona Chair to a Toulouse-Lautrec poster. She relates the forms in design, architecture, and art to naturally occurring forms such as a Nautilus shell or a pine cone. The author's ability to explain complex concepts in an understandable way makes this book approachable, useful, and fun. I am fascinated by Ms. Elam's use of transparent overlays that allow the reader to see the structure of the work under examination. Judging by the fact that the book has been published in nine languages, apparently other readers are fascinated as well.

L says

Bought this after taking it out of the library. Worth having as a reference, but honestly, this whole Golden

Section debate is absurd. She justifies its use when the overlays don't even line up the way she describes. But a good exercise.
