Illusions of Lines in Design

One of the fun things about putting together outfits is using design lines to create optical illusions. Those illusions can make you look taller, shorter, wider, narrower, and accentuate your face or other characteristics.

Line is the most basic element of design. Line can divide areas into shapes and spaces. Line can give direction or a feeling of movement to a design. As a basic tool, line can be used to create optical illusions in clothing.

Line direction may be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, or curved. Vertical lines lead the eye upward creating the illusion of height to visually slenderize the figure. Horizontal lines usually carry the eye across. Diagonal lines slant, and because of the slant are incredibly slimming and like vertical lines, no matter where you place them on your body will slim that area. Curved lines are graceful. They may be soft when slightly curved or bold when tightly curved.

Outfits of one color and those with center front interest can add height. Use of the "Y" line such as a "V" neckline increases the illusion of height. When two or more vertical or horizontal lines are used, the spacing between the lines will affect the illusion created.

Generally, vertical lines that carry the eye up the figure without interruption will give a taller, more slender illusion. Lines that stop the eye from traveling upward by moving the eye from side to side or back down will create a shorter and heavier illusion.

1. Study each photo to analyze how the use of line effects each figure.

2. Horizontal lines carry the eye across. Vertical lines moves the eye upward.

3. The longer your eye can travel upward without being interrupted by a horizontal line, the taller the figure will appear.

4. A vertical illusion becomes a horizontal illusion when a vertical line is topped with a horizontal line, causing the eye to move from side to side. The sooner the eye encounters a horizontal line, the shorter the figure will appear.

5. The magic "Y" creates a feeling of height as the eye is guided upward, with nothing to impede its vertical motion.

6. Two vertical lines spaced far apart form three wide panels that move the eye across the figure.

7. Slanted diagonal lines are slimming no matter where they are placed, they will slim that area.