

## ART 3784 Project 1: Organizing Surface on Form

Surface on form is usually effective when the artist

- makes decisions about content or tone of the work and develops complement or contrast in form and surface message
- works with the “geography” of the form when developing surface so form and surface relate to each other
- organizes the surface and form to direct the viewer’s eye. This creates emphasis and priorities that help move the eye around the work to see the form and surface information in specific ways. One form may be seen in many different ways through use of different surfaces.

Graphic designer Robin Williams, author of *The Non-Designer’s Design Book* refers to the principles of:

**C**ontrast

**R**epetition

**A**lignment

**P**roximity

She uses these principles to organize 2-D space. Similar organization issues are in play on 3-D form, but there is the added complication of moving around a volume. Below is a diagram done by anthropologists of how Mimbres potters divided space on the bowls they made. The Mimbres people lived in the Southwest U.S. in the 6-12<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are known for the bowls they buried over the faces of their dead. These thin, coil-built bowls have masterful use of design, particularly positive-negative space.

**Goals:**

- learn to mix plaster and make simple hump molds
- develop handbuilding pottery skills with hump molds
- practice composing surface on form for effective organization of visual space movement as well as working with the form as a carrier of personal content

**Please read:**

Plaster **handout** online: <http://lindaarbuckle.com/handouts/plaster.pdf>

**Article** via e-mail: *Why Decorate Pots* by Alan Caiger-Smith

See the brushwork **demo** by **Caiger-Smith on YouTube:**

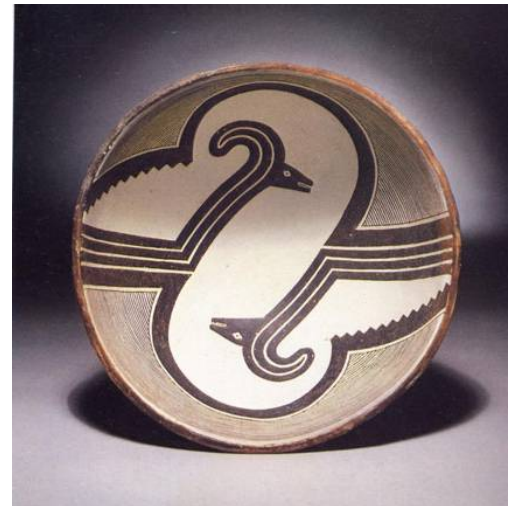
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWkRJ-u9YEc> – sound quality is poor. See parts 1 and 2.

**Suggested reading**

*Ceramics*, by Philip Rawson. On reserve in the AFA Library . Color pp. 127 – 150, discusses significance of color use.

**To do:**

- **Choose a found object from which to make a hump mold.** Something a minimum of 8” in the longest dimension would be a good size. **Choose an object that has non-radial axis** – e.g. long and short dimensions (ovals, rectangles), or you may use something square. Avoid round forms – with radial symmetry, all points on the form are the same distance from the center, and this limits compositional choices. A Demo in class will show you how to mix plaster and make a mold. Make at least 2 molds of your form. Dry your molds in the dry box (do not heat over 150 deg F).



Mimbres bowl w/antelope



**Figure 1 Arbuckle.** Majolica dish made from an oval hump mold. Extruded foot and rim additions. Added handles.

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- **Make 2 sets of 6 similar forms.** It is easier to see the effects of your surface decisions when comparing similar forms. You may do all 12 forms the same, or develop 2 different forms and do 6 each. Consider adding walls, rims, feet, handles, and/or lugs to the basic hump form for added interest and dimension.
- **decide on what surface methods you'll use.** You may use terra sigillata, slips, transparent or colored glazes, or in-glaze (majolica or other painting on glaze) decoration. Your chosen method has to be able to be applied to bisqued clay so that you may make the forms, bisque, and then complete the surfaces.
- **Sketch your forms and potential ways to organize surface.** See the Mimbres diagrams and the other sample diagrams. Look at the geography of your form. How do you want people to read the form? What do you want to emphasize? How will you move someone's eye around your form? Draw diagrams to experiment with options. Look at the options you're drawn and choose the solutions you think work best. **Interpret each solution you choose in at least 2 variations – you will have a maximum of 6 solutions for your 12 pieces,** but you may choose to interpret a solution in more than one way. The 2 variations should be on similar forms.
- **plan color and value.** You may use colored slips and transparent glazes, colored glazes, or opaque glaze with color painted on top (e.g. majolica glaze methods). How will your use of color collaborate with your surface organization on your forms? It may be helpful to use torn color from magazines to experiment with color possibilities.
- **Depending on your material choices, use surface on your forms at the appropriate time.**



**Left:** Diagram of a way to emphasize the vertical shape of the form, while calling attention to the connection between the spout and the body. Middle: Motifs that would follow the diagram.

**Right:** Diagrams of ways to organize space on an oval baker featuring central motifs: **top** shows upright movement of central motif and radiation out to emphasize the the ends, **center** shows central motif w/downward motion, other motifs making diagonals rising toward the ends, and motifs capping the ends, **bottom** has central motif containing both up and down motion, and secondary motifs moving in and down from the sides to focus on the central motif.

**Resources for design:** most basic design books will provide a refresher on the use of design principles to create meaning.




Title	Author/s	AFA call number
<i>Design Basics</i>	David Lauer and Stephen Pentak	NK1510 .L38 2000
<i>Principles of form and design</i> <i>Principles of two-dimensional design.</i>	Wucius Wong	TA345 .W66 1993 NK1510 .W6 1972 – multiple copies
<i>The Non-Designer's Design Book</i>	Robin Williams	Z246 .W64x 1994

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Mimbres Pottery: Ancient Art of the American Southwest. J.J. Bro  
 Hudson Hills Press, NY 1983 ISBN 0-933920-47-4

	<p>1. Four equal wedge-shaped segments, each with the same pattern</p>		<p>9. Division into three segments along a vertical axis, the center usually dominant</p>
	<p>2. Four equal wedge-shaped segments, with a different pattern in each pair of opposed wedges</p>		<p>10. Division along the horizontal plane, wall pattern dominates, center reserved</p>
	<p>3. The bisecting lines are offset, wedges rotate, wedges filled as in 1 or 2</p>		<p>11. Central picture space dominates, top-bottom orientation with side-wall painting as a frame</p>
	<p>4. Wedges rotate about a reserved design area in the center</p>		<p>12. As in 11 but with the figure in the central picture space curved to avoid top-bottom orientation</p>
	<p>5. The related parts of an image are in a quartered pattern, the bisecting lines are implied</p>		<p>13. Figure in central space integrated with frame, orientation is top-bottom</p>
	<p>6. An overall "wallpaper" pattern which can be extended indefinitely</p>		<p>14. Pair of opposed but non-interacting figures within framed space, the picture space is implicitly divided into two separate units</p>
	<p>7. Same as 1 through 5 but division is into three segments</p>		<p>15. Two or more figures integrated with the frame, central space blank</p>
	<p>8. Same as 1 through 5 but division is into five or more segments</p>		<p>16. Group of interacting figures within framed picture space: each is on axis oriented to an invisible vanishing point near the bowl center</p>

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	<p>The spouted, handled earthenware cups left are made by Minoan potters around 1200-1400 B.C.E. All are a similar form, but the decorator chose to relate to the form in different ways.</p> <p>The top form has decoration that begins small where the cup is small, and expands as the cup swells, emphasizing the vertical quality of the cup and moving the eye from bottom to top, similar to the way plants grow.</p>
	<p>The middle cup has a fluid, watery movement to the line quality, and like water, the lines move in a horizontal direction. The botanical motif is on the fullest part of the cup, and the light-valued ground color helps make the full part of the cup look expanded, while moving your eye around horizontally.</p>
	<p>The bottom cup has lines that hang down from the rim into the full part of the cup. The movement is downward into the full part of the cup.</p> <p>In all versions, the decorator responded to the shape, but with different directional and line strategies.</p>

**Evaluation:** Final presentation of: **12 forms** that are similar, surfaced as two sets of 6 similar forms each; minimum of **8 development sketches of forms, 4 sketches that develop the form** you choose from the 8 sketches. **Sketches of the directional ideas for your 6 surface options.** Please turn in photocopies of your sketches. My grading is at times delayed, and you will want your sketches for reference.

### Works will be graded on

- Clear statement of mood/content goals and investigation through sketch research
- Forming, surfacing, and finishing skills and craftsmanship (even walls, consideration of feet, bottoms, glazing application, etc.)
- Effectiveness in organizing the surface to relate to the form and direct the viewer's reading of the piece in relation to your diagram plan.

<b>Research -10%</b>
Sketches: 8 for form, 4 that develop your form. 6 directional surface options for your form
<b>Technical Skill – 45%</b>
Forming craftsmanship
Finishing/surface craftsmanship
<b>Aesthetic skills- 45% Set A, Set B</b>
Design decisions support stated content/attitude
<b>Set A, Set B</b>
Effectiveness in organizing the surface to relate to the form and direct the viewer's reading of the piece as discussed on project sheet
<b>Set A, Set B</b>
Progress between sets