

Diosmary Artiles  
Visual Merchandising  
Met Museum Project

The Metropolitan Museum holds very beautiful and historical pieces of art varying from paintings, sculptures and antique furniture and silverware from different time period. As I was walking around the museum the particular painting of Thomas de Keyser stood out to me. Thomas de Keyser's *A Musician and His Daughter*, is a small darker painting compared to the ones surrounding it. While all the other paintings had bronze or gold frames, this one in particular had a very intense, luscious, black framing. The figures are wearing black attire with high value of white on the detailing around the neck and wrists. Keyser painting this work with oil painting on a wooden canvas and so he uses the oil to create different shades and cast shadows in the back of the room as well as the figures and the objects on the floor. He also uses tints to create a highlighting effect on the figures faces and on the objects in which direct light is hitting it. The front part of the floor is lighter than the back which shows dimension and how the artist used tints and shades to create this effect.

The use of lines on the garment shows texture in the ruffles. The father is wearing some sort of knee pad and it looks like leather from the way the light hits it and it gives this sort of sheen, the same kind of sheen seen on his shoes which I believe are also leather. The way the knee pad sits on his knee and not conform with the bending of the knee also gives a clue that it is a more rough and harder material compared to his coat which dangles over his shoulders. The daughter is wearing a long elegant dress that has a floral pattern on it that looks like a velvet material from the different value of black on her dress. This painting was created in the early 1600's and so velvet is a very luxurious material which can be true that she is wearing it because she comes from a very high class family (Thomas de Keyser). The gold detailing around her arms and peeking through the slit of her dress in the front as well as the gold belt around her

waist and pendent on her dress is highlighted on her very dark dress. The ruffles on her neck and wrists looks very soft and angelic especially with the intensity of the white on it. The juxtaposition of the father holding the theorbo musical instrument feels bizarre as the instrument is the only object in the entire painting that is not black or in the same hue as the rest of the painting. The instrument in this very bright chestnut shade and with a smooth texture and is highlighted on the side of it as if to bring the viewer's attention more towards the elephant in the room compared to everything else.

Looking at the picture I assumed that the father is standing and is giving a very dramatic pose which is often seen in paintings around this time period which was the rise of the Baroque period in art where darker colors are used and paintings are more dramtacized. However the diagonal lines in the way that his arm and legs are position shows movement. The father is about to sit down. The daughter is standing very poised and vertically making her look much older Than the child that she is. There is an informal balance in the way that the father and the chair that he is about to sit on is larger than the daughter standing next to him. The proportions on this painting is off and it gives an unnatural feeling as to how large the father and the chair is to the daughter and how he is positioned to sit down. Because he is sso large, he dominates the painting which fits the idea because he is the father, the dominating figure in the family. The repetition of dark colors and contrasts throughout the painting creates a rhythm of the eyes going back and forth from the large man, the small child and the bright instrument.

The painting shows a father and daughter bonding time with a darker, more mysterious tone that one is not used to seeing when speaking about this family bonding time. Art is being reflected in this painting with the dramatic pose and instruments which shows how art influences

our lives without us realizing however, life influences the painting in which it shows a bonding time in a wealthy family as some sort of lifestyle thing to do. The wealthy have leisure time to learn these art practices which makes the viewer looking at the painting want to join in as well.

As I was walking down 5th ave from the museum I stopped by a display at the Saks 5th Ave store. In the visual display, there are two mannequins in a very dramatic scene. The display has a very dark red background and carpet flooring with nothing but accent lighting to give it a dark and dramatic look. The lighting gives an illusion of shading around the display as well as on the clothing being worn by the mannequins. The shadows makes the value of the clothing appear darker than it would in natural light. The light hitting the wall and the mannequins creates a high value of red which draws our attention to the center of the room. The lighter tints on the clothing such as the gold detailing on the coats or the plaid detailing on the collar pops out on the darker clothing.

The mannequin on the left is wearing a wool coat which can be seen by the stitching on the coat and the buttons on it. Also the way the collar is popped up and out shows that it is a heavier material. She is wearing a knit sweater with a ruffle detailing at the front which can be seen with the vertical stitching on the ruffles. She is wearing a two tones, boyfriend fit, frayed and asymmetrical hem jeans. The texture of the pants looks rough which can be determined that she is wearing jeans. The sheen on her shoes looks like they are leather heels or patent leather. The mannequin on the right is wearing a plaid long wool coat. From the lighting one cannot see that it is entirely plaid unless you look very closely. There is fur trimming around the wrists which gives us the idea that this a more winter look. She has chunky heels which are in a fabric material and not leather because it is matte compared to the shiny heels the other mannequin is

wearing. The juxtaposition of the mannequin holding a green bag brings attention to her even though she is more in the background compared to the other mannequin. The green against the red background shows how the complementary colors can bring this mannequin forward even though she is wearing a lot of dark colors.

The mannequin on the left is standing vertically and very strong and forward. She is demanding attention as she dominates the display with the spotlight on her and the contrasting color of red surrounding her. The mannequin on the right is looking to the side in contrapposto. Contrapposto is an Italian term for contrapose. A term used in ancient art period to describe a natural stance of how people stand with their weight on one leg and the other leg is relaxed (Dan in Art Business Advice ). The stance that the mannequin on the right is using gives her a more natural appearance, as if she is not stiff but gives a movement that the viewer can relate to a picture themselves in her position with the same outfit. There is informal balance in the display from the way that the mannequin on the right is farther away than the one in the front which gives an illusion of unequal height. The repetition of dark tones gives the display a dramatic and mysterious tone and the rhythm goes back and forth from the two mannequins and up and down from their head to their toes.

Art is influencing this display which is trying to display a lifestyle. From the stances of both of the mannequins and the dramatic lighting, the display is trying to show that this is more than just a winter look of jeans and a wool coat but how it can set a different mood. The use of color especially in the background gives a warm feeling which is the opposite of what winter is. The red color and the wool coats gives a message of the customer can be warm and stylish at the

same time. The art of making the display look very theatrical and dramatic draws the viewer in to not just look at the clothes but at a piece of artwork.

The painting and the visual display are very similar in the way that they both use shades more than tints to create a darker tone. Both shows two figures, one standing vertical and the other showing movement and the rhythm goes back and forth towards the two figures being shown. The painting shows a dark colors, mostly black with a bright colored instrument while the display shows dark clothing and a brighter colored background. The figure on the left are dominating in both the painting and the visual display. The leather, wool and darker colors shows that both of the painting and display is showing that they're in a winter season. The tones are dramatic and mysterious yet the highlight draws the viewer in to see what is in the dark display or painting.

The Elements of Design are helpful tools that can be used to create a selling display. These elements are color, texture, proportion, direction, line, shape, size, sequence and tension. Color is various qualities of light that individuals can perceive with their eyes and describe in terms of lightness, brightness, darkness, richness, purity and so on (Bell, 2011). An example to this is the rich chestnut colored instrument being held by the father in the painting *A Musician and His Daughter* by Thomas de Keyser's. The color is very vibrant compared to the rest of the painting. In the display, the red background is rich in color but darker than your average red.

Texture is how a surface actually feels to the touch or how it appears that it might feel if touched (Bell, 2011). An example of this is the roughness or smoothness of an object. In the painting, there is a sheen appearance to the father's shows which may indicate that they are

leather. In the display, the mannequins are wearing wool coats and this can be determined by how rough the coat looks and how thick the stitching is around the coat and collar.

Proportion is the relationship between the apparent size, mass, scale, or optical weight of two or more objects (Bell, 2011). The proportion of the father and daughter in the painting is accurate in the fact that the father is taller than the daughter, however it is off in the way that the chair and father are a lot more larger than the daughter than how they're supposed to be.

Whereas in the display, the mannequins are the same height but positioning one behind the other gives an illusion of disproportion.

Direction is the tools that leads the shopper's eye from one place to another. A line guides the eye to a feature or is a linear element that sets a mood (Bell, 2011). The direction of the painting goes from the father, the daughter and the instrument and continues this motion. The line is where the instrument and the slit on the daughter's dress is placed which focuses on these features and sets an elegant mood. The display's direction goes back and forth with the mannequins and up and down their outfits. The lines in the back of the wall sets a mood of being inside a room or hallway.

Shape is a standard or universally recognized spatial form like a circle or a triangle that helps the viewer identify various objects (Bell, 2011). The shapes in the painting shows a lot of rectangles on the flooring and circular shape on the instrument and the shape of the dress of the daughter. Also there is a circular shape on the hat of the father as well as a triangular and rectangular shape on the doorway. In the display there are rectangular shapes on the walls, the plaid on the coat and the panels on the jeans.

A sequence is the particular order in which items are presented for viewing (Bell, 2011). In the case of the painting, The sequence is the instrument, the father and then the daughter. This can be interpreted in many ways whether it is by age or by what is respected. In the display the sequence goes from short coat and long pants to long coat and short skirt. The sequence in my opinion is by length.

Size is all about proportion, ratio, mass or scale (Bell, 2011). The sizes of the mannequins are the same they are just larger than the average women. In the painting the father is much larger than the daughter and she appears to be smaller than the normal size objects in the room.

Tension is an arrangement of elements that causes the viewer to wonder if opposing forces will disturb balance or equilibrium in a display (Bell, 2011). The mannequin leaning to the side gives tension and makes the viewer wonder if she is stable because she might fall. In the painting, the lid of the case for the instrument is left open and so it gives tension to wonder if the lid will close by itself by gravity.

The assignment helped with the understanding of color and texture by comparing something tangible like a visual display and with something intangible like what is inside of a painting. In pieces of art there is always a deeper hidden meanings within them. However, I never thought to use this same point of view with a visual display. If one pays attention closely, there is a deeper meaning behind it. It is the visuals' own work of art for the company. I've learned that visual displays and are very similar to works of art in the Metropolitan Museum. I thought that visiting the museum and picking out a display that is similar to the paintings in the museum was going to be a difficult task however it was easier than I thought. The works of art inspires the companies in which we shop in all the time and sometimes we do not see the



resemblance until we visit the museum. Walking down 5th ave was like experiencing deja vu from what I had seen from the museum. It just shows how visual merchandisers are like modern day artists and the window displays are their galleries to present their work.

## References

Bell, J. (2011). *Silent Selling*. Fairchild Books & Visuals.

Dan in Art Business Advice. What is “Contrapposto” in Art? Here’s an Explanation of Classical Contrapposto. Retrieved October 29, 2017.

<http://emptyeasel.com/2007/12/18/what-is-contrapposto-in-art-heres-an-explanation-of-classical-contrapposto/>

Saks 5th Ave window display ( Figure 2)

Thomas de Keyser | A Musician and His Daughter | The Met. Retrieved October 29, 2017.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436818>