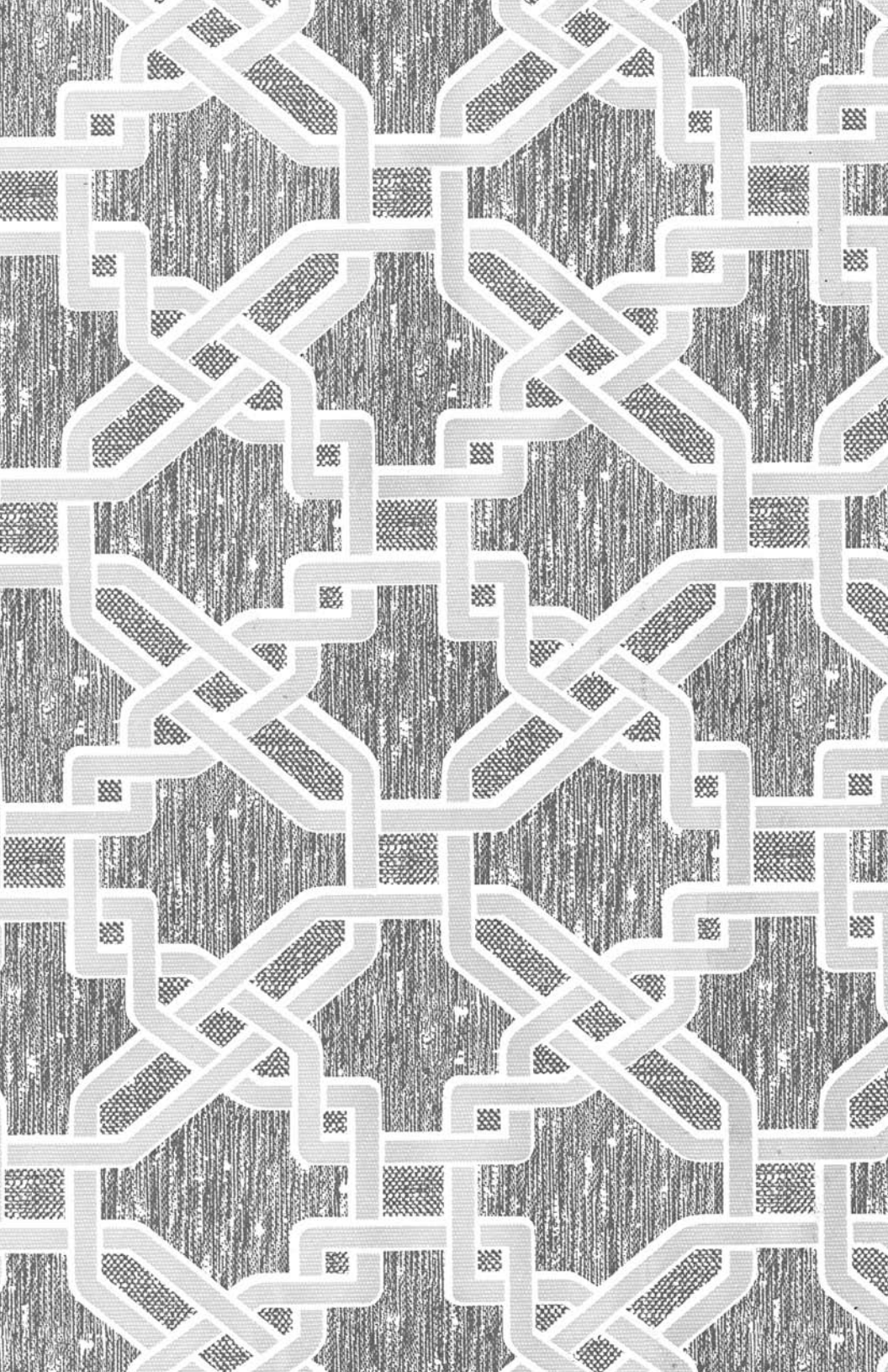




**NO TASTE,
NO FLAVOR**



NO TASTE, NO FLAVOR

*towards an understanding of taste
as design, history, and philosophy*

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graphic design · masters of fine art

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baltimore · maryland
2009

XXX / 500

Instructions for a Modular Manifesto of Taste

This document is open for discussion and closed to conclusion.

Nailing numerical grievances to the House of High Design's door is anti-productive and final; it prevents participation. The modules of this manifesto are marked with an "X" to indicate points of entrance. One can add or delete, move up and down, and expand or condense any part of this list. Numbering points excludes ideas.

X. TASTE IS IMPORTANT.
Preferences guide every action.

X. EVERYONE HAS TASTE.
Our tastes surface on our every decision, from what color socks to put on in the morning to what style to build our houses.

X. TASTE HAPPENS IN CONTEXT.
Our decisions are made in environments which constantly affect our choices.

X. TASTE IS PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE.
Think about shopping for goods as opposed to admiring artifacts.

X. THERE IS NO HIERARCHY OF STYLE.
All styles are created equally.

X. WE ADD OUR OWN FLAVOR.
If we do not see what we like then we make it. We constantly create flavors to add to the pot.

X. TASTE IS SOCIAL.
In the past, taste was thought to reside in an individual. However, we now know taste forms socially within subcultures.

X. TASTE ENHANCES EXPERIENCE.
The enjoyment of typography, hand towels, or architecture increases when it appeals to the audience's taste.

X. EMBRACE BANALITY.
Banality is the celebration of the ordinary.

X. REJECT LUXURY.
Luxury is the false idol of taste. Artifacts of luxury clutter museums and become obsolete to society.

X. DEATH TO BEAUTY.
Beauty will die because of its concern with vanity and its lack of concern with ideas.

X. MONEY \neq TASTE.
Money will not buy taste, look at Paris Hilton.

X. POWER \neq TASTE.
Power will not create taste, look at Kim Jong-Il.

Postulates of Taste

1. All artifacts have AUTHENTICITY.

The true intention of an artifact's existence can not be hidden from the audience.

2. An artifact's SALIENCE creates its existence.

Exceptional artifacts stand out from their surroundings and become available to audiences.

3. An artifact's IDENTITY is malleable.

An artifact's identity possesses many meanings to many people, morphing an objects relevance with audiences.

4. An artifact's RELEVANCE is inherent to situations, not things.

Inventing relevance of an artifact invites unnecessary waste.

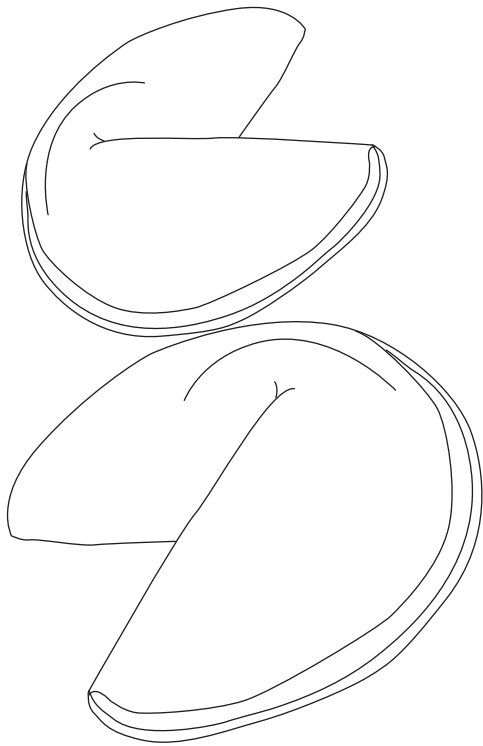
5. An artifact's QUALITY is its most undeniable trait.

Good quality will enhance both the artifacts form and function.

6. A DESIRE for an artifact and the PLEASURE received from the artifact are a dichotomy.

Desire can't exist with out pleasure and vice versa.





LEARNING MORE ABOUT...

AUTHENTICITY

**an objects is true to its intention
and the opposite of fake**

When the check arrives, the waitress from the Chinatown Cafe places the bill and 2 fortune cookies on the Chinese zodiac calender in front of Ryan: one for him and one for Betsy. While unwrapping the cookie, Betsy notices her Chinese fortune cookie came from California. Disappointed with her discovery, she finds comfort in knowing her lucky numbers are 3, 7, 17, 18, 22, 29.

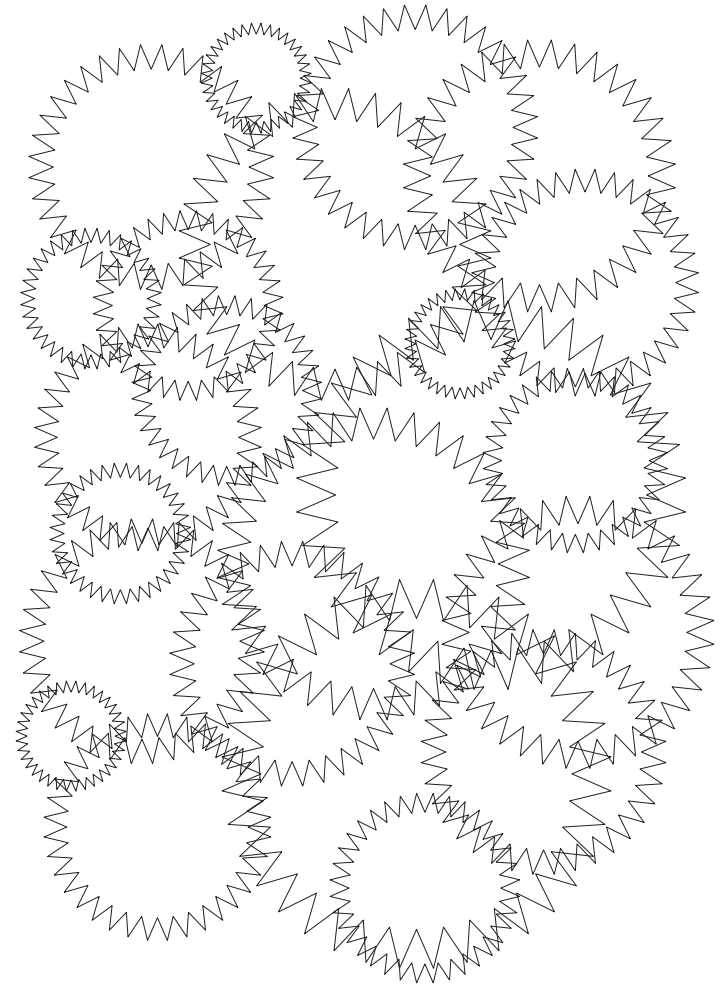
What would the fortune of a genuine cookie say?

LEARNING MORE ABOUT ...

SALIENCE

**when something is most noticeable
or important to a person**

Danielle buys jeans from the never ending outlet mall. She assesses the racks upon racks of dungarees at the retailer, waiting for one to catch her eye. She notes a lengthy pair of blue selvage dark denim that will go great with her well worn hoodie. The perfect pair of Levi's always leaps out from the rest.



Which starburst catches your eye?

LEARNING MORE ABOUT...

IDENTITY

a person's perceived traits and characteristics, totaling the uniqueness of one's self

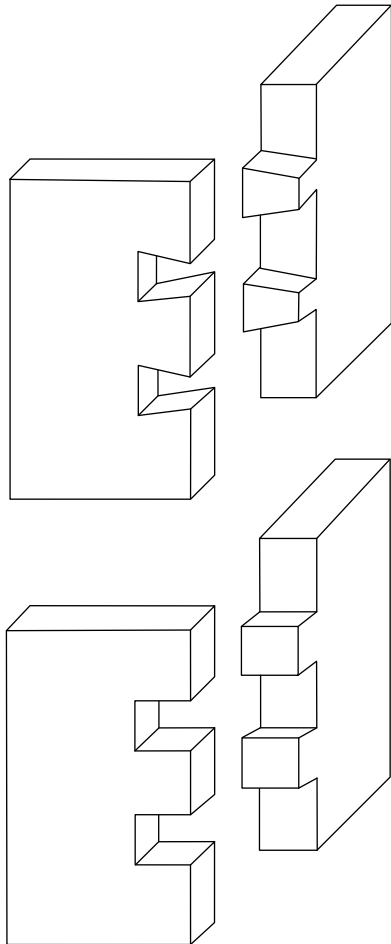
Joe usually shows up covered in printing ink. Coming straight from Globe Poster, he spends 6–8 hours a day sifting, piling and organizing a massive array of ephemera from 80 years of business. Although the work is painstakingly monotonous, he relates to the business's accumulation of artwork, plates, and proofs with his own pack rat lifestyle.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT...

RELEVANCE

describes how applicable an object is to a situation

Kristian constantly uses butter, from slathering crusty baguettes to dropping dollops onto gorgeous green asparagus. While browsing Williams-Sonoma, he discovers the butter bell. "I totally need a butter bell to keep the butter soft, fresh and un-oxidized. We won't waste any by owning this awesome culinary crock." said Kristian. "This is so sustainable!"



LEARNING MORE ABOUT...

QUALITY

**an artifact's perceived degree of excellence
or lack thereof**

After hours and hours of shopping at the Towson Mall, wandering in and out of every electronic outlet, Joo concludes the MacBook Pro stands above the rest. Designed for durability and sturdiness, crafted from semi-precious metal and glass, this laptop will outlast all other portable computers in the same category.

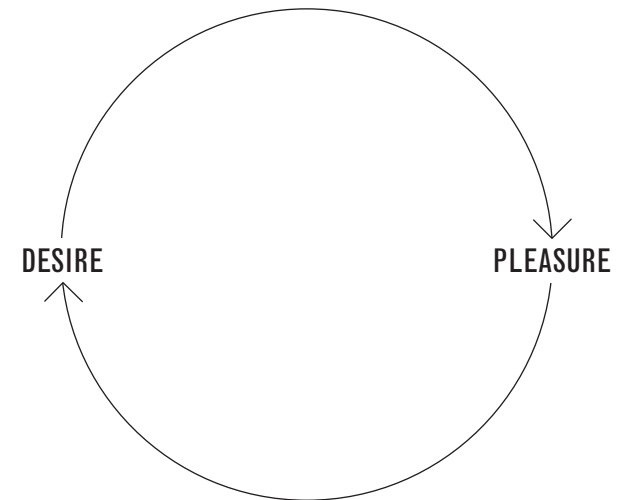
Which joint technique creates higher quality?

LEARNING MORE ABOUT...

DESIRE

to want something so much a person takes action to acquire it

Lindsey loses sleep because she dreams about owning a Kate Spade Terrytown Logan handbag. Quickly she leaps from her bed, shuffles to the laptop and moves the purse from her Amazon wish list to the shopping basket. She clicks checkout and proceeds... The next week a cardboard box arrives at her apartment. Peeling back the packing tape, she reveals the handbag recently ordered. Excitement over comes her. She is pleased with the purchase.



Pleasure creates desire which, in turn, seeks pleasure.

THE OLD ORDER OF BROW

Thee High Brow

(high culture)

The Middle Brow

(everything in between)

Da Low Brow

(pawpula' kulcha')



THE NEW ORDER OF BROW

THE UNI BROW

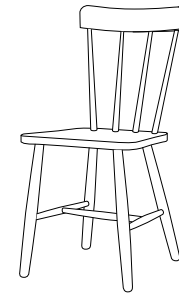
(making high brow universal)

THE MONO BROW

(high, middle, and low brow have no distinction)

THE NO BROW

(creating high brow with low brow and vice-versa)



IMMANUEL KANT



ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS ON TASTE

Taste *is* Yours

Society doesn't determine taste,
the individual does.

DAVID HUME

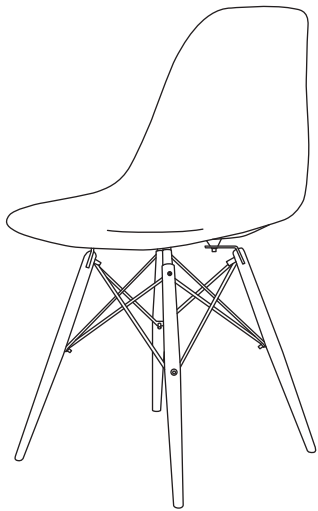


ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS ON TASTE

Tastes *will* **Vary**

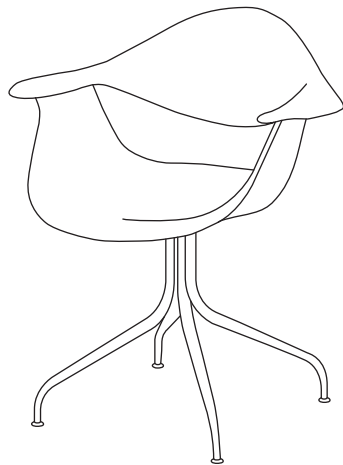
Genuine taste allows for variations in customs and manners; as a critic, one must forget one's own "peculiar circumstances."

**HOW TO DESIGN
A NO BROW CHAIR**



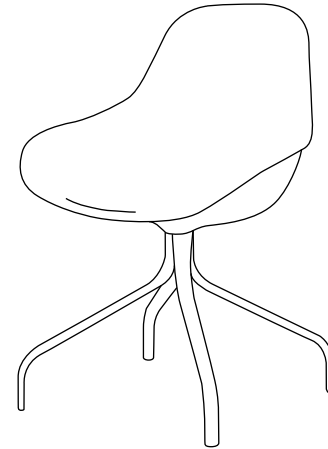
EAMES

+



NELSON

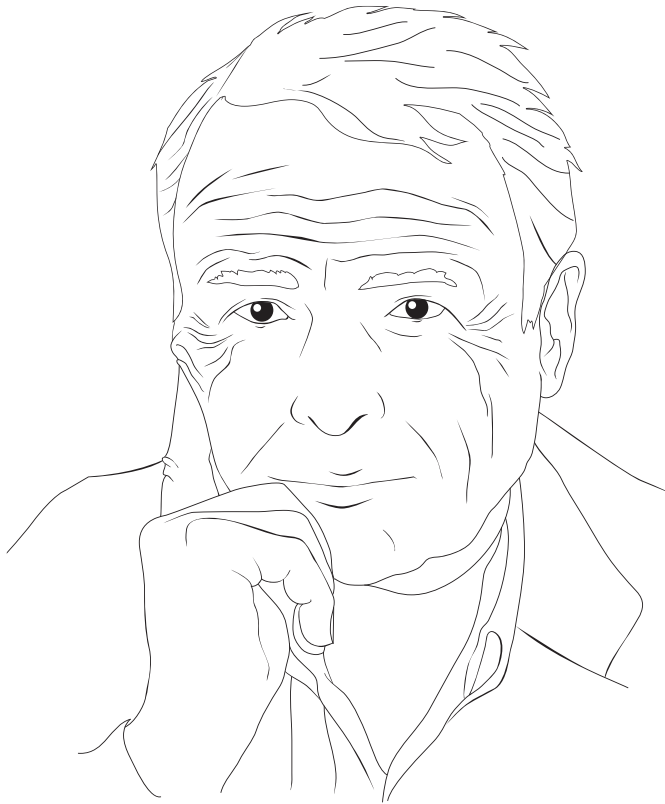
≠



IKEA

VOILA!

PIERRE BOURDIEU



MODERNIST IDEAS ON TASTE

**Social
Status**
is stronger than
**Economic
Status**

Social status, more than economic status, motivates aesthetic choices. Regardless of economic upward mobility, consumption patterns tend to remain the same.

CLEMENT GREENBERG



MODERNIST IDEAS ON TASTE

Avante- Garde *to the* Rescue

The avant-garde and modernist art is a means
to resist the 'dumbing down' of culture caused
by consumerism.

ARTHUR DANTO



POST-MODERNIST IDEAS ON TASTE

Beauty *is* Dead

Post-modern art finds new ways to delight
the senses other than attempting to find truth
in beauty.

DAVE HICKEY



POST-MODERNIST IDEAS ON TASTE

Las Vegas *is for* **Lovers**

"One either prefers the honest fakery of the neon or the fake honesty of the sunset..."

Dave Hickey

"Rhinestone as Big as the Ritz," *Air Guitar*

JOHN WATERS



PURVEYOR OF TASTE

His Majesty
**The Queen
of Camp**

Shocking audiences with unapologetically plump transsexuals, multiple murdering mothers, and over-endowed crinkle perm strippers, John Waters tells tales in blue collar Baltimore.

JEFF KOONS



PURVEYOR OF TASTE

The
Saccharin
Saviour

Jeff Koons 1989 exhibition *Banality* used a variety of appropriated imagery such as pop music culture icons, fuzzy stuffed children's toys, and kitschy statuary of topless women.

HOW TO CREATE LUXURY

Only exhibit the best artifacts.

**Create stories involving craftsmanship,
tradition, and premium components.**

Refer to European heritage.

**Draw parallels between the artifact
and the high arts.**

**Use classically attractive, uncontroversial,
and slightly dull models.**

**Use monograms, calligraphy,
and black & white imagery.**

**Claim short-runs and
limited editions of artifacts.**

Adapted from "Luxury Brands: branding it like everyone else" by Simon Case

AN EXERCISE IN LUXURY

A label of luxury deems an artifact unnecessary.
Many purveyors of luxury take pride in the quality,
authenticity, and pedigree of their artifacts.

Can you spot the luxury brand Louis Vuitton's real label?



LOUIS VUITTON

A



LOUIS VUITTON

B



LOUIS VUITTON

C



LOUIS VUITTON

D

Answer: A

A EXERCISE IN ORIGINALITY

Still held up by many as the highest form of modernism, the typeface Helvetica has been updated, copied, and reinterpreted for over 50 years.

Can you spot the original Helvetica?

- A originality**
- B originality**
- C originality**
- D originality**
- E originality**
- F originality**

A. Helvetica, B. Pragmatica, C. Triumvirate, D. Swiss 721, E. Univers, F. Arial

AXIOMS OF AUTHENTICITY

**If you are authentic,
then you don't say you're authentic.**

**If you say you're authentic,
then you'd better be authentic.**

**It's easier to be authentic,
if you don't say you're authentic.**

From *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* by James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II

VOCABULARY

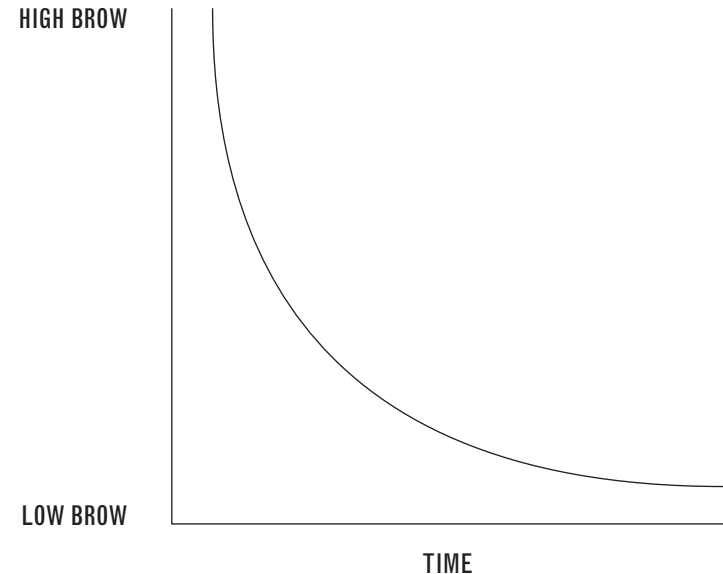
BANALITY: a lack of originality, freshness, or novelty

Giselle turns in the manuscript set in Times New Roman at 12 points, with 14.4 points of leading. Finding the text uninspiring and mundane, she uses a default typographic style from InDesign to emphasize boredom in her layouts.

BEAUTY: something with balance and harmony which draws desire to create pleasure

CAMP: something of value because of its ironic value or status as bad taste

Marianne strolls through Hampden searching for Chris's perfect present. Stopping into a knickknack shop to dig, shuffle, and peek in every pile, she discovers a peculiar purchase for her boyfriend. At Juntique she uncovers a fuzzy, flocked animal coin bank molded out of burnt umber tone plastic. Smirking at the crude construction she pays the cashier and strolls on her way. Chris displays the fake monkey as a conversation piece and brags about the primates' ugliness.



Banality

VOCABULARY

KITSCH: artifacts which convey sentimentality

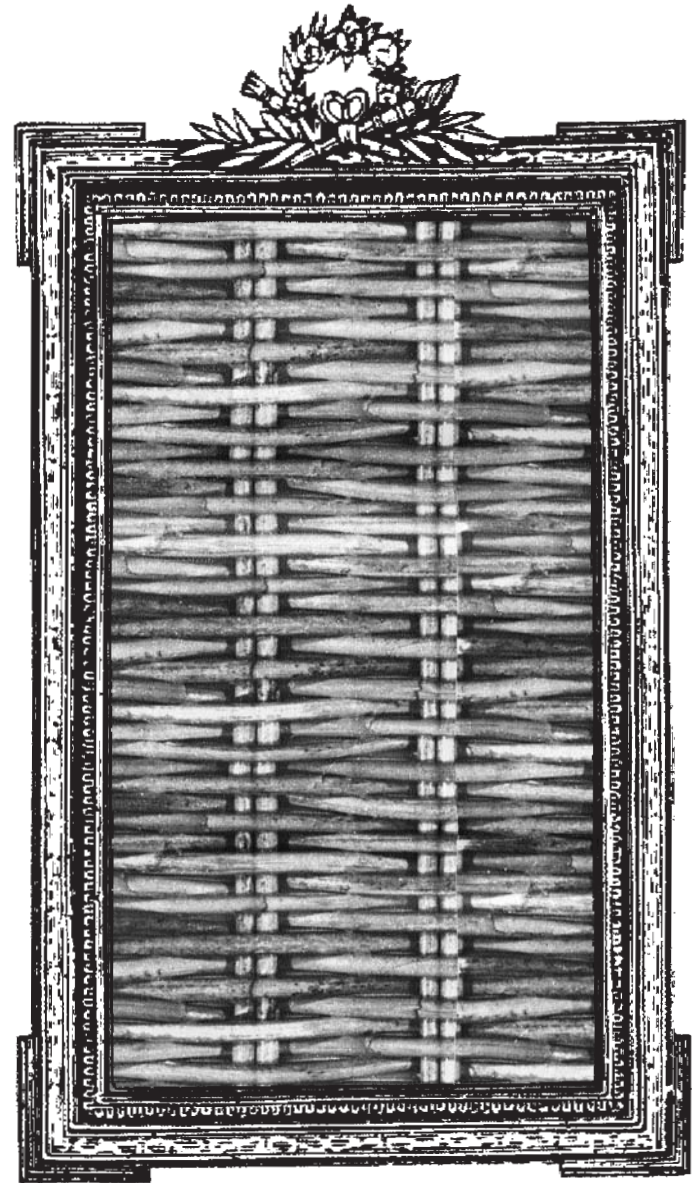
While on vacation in Las Vegas, Seth and Sue stroll down the strip, wandering in and out of casinos along the way. Enjoying themselves immensely, they walk into a gift shop at the Luxor. Marveling at the architecture and captured in the moment, Seth buys Sue a miniature pyramid, the same shape as the hotel. He hopes it will remind her of the trip. When she presses the top, an LED lights up, filling her face with artificial light. The pyramid now sits on a shelf; when visitors notice the paper weight and press the top, she smiles.

SENTIMENTALITY: an overly dramatized emotional response to an artifact

SIMULACRA: to replicate in order to simulate something from reality

To create the perfect texture, Helen scans faux woven wicker shelf paper to use for backgrounds on invitations to her party. The graphic texture recalls the wicker chairs on her porch. She hopes her guests will remember chatting away the evening, sitting in those chairs during a breezy summer eve.

STATUS SYMBOL: artifacts obtained to signify social status, power, or income



Simulacra: Reality » Photo » Graphic » Scan » Reprint » Reality

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