Charlotte Hodes

THE GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT

New Papercuts and Ceramics
This project has been informed by the influential book *The Grammar of Ornament* by the architect and designer, Owen Jones, originally published in 1856 and republished as *Decorative Ornament* by Black Dog and Leventhal in 2006.

These papercuts correspond to, and are numbered according to each of the original thirty-seven propositions which form the ‘general principles in the arrangement of form and colour in architecture and the decorative arts’. Each proposition provided a starting point, in some cases the entire proposition was taken on while in others, a single phrase, or merely a word triggered visual associations. In the papercuts the female figure appears as a protagonist serving to undermine and disrupt the rigidity of the hierarchical system as presented by Jones.

The series of dishes draw upon the imagery developed in the papercuts providing a step further away from the rules of the propositions. The form of a dish situates the imagery firmly within the domestic domain rather than the lofty iconography of architecture and grand design.

*Charlotte Hodes*
Charlotte Hodes

THE GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT: NEW PAPER CUTS AND CERAMICS

DR. JANET MCKENZIE

In The Grammar of Ornament: New Papercuts and Ceramics, the artist Charlotte Hodes takes as her cue the seminal 19th-century publication The Grammar of Ornament (1856) by the architect and designer Owen Jones to investigate the relationship between the female form in painting and the decorative arts. Acting as a platform from which to interrogate both 21st-century design and feminism, Hodes dismantles idea and form by using collage and papercut techniques to disrupt images, thus creating new ornament and of female independence in the art world,

Dr. Jane T. Mc Kenzie

assertion of the important yet threatened English tradition of decorated classical urns, and her current position as professor of residency at the Wallace Collection (2005-7) inspired sumptuously intermittently in the Spode factory in Stoke from 1996 to 2004; a Hodes' first dialogue with text, The Grammar of Ornament provides time-consuming techniques employed by the artist herself. as languid and idle, an ironic aside to the painstaking and papercut techniques to disrupt images, thus creating feminism, Hodes dismantles idea and form by using collage and platform from which to interrogate both 21st-century design and arts laden with religious and social connotations, Jones became a key element for Jones was colour, and a number of the Jones’s proposition with: “are you sure?” The female form here which images of tiles and patterns are lavishly reproduced side by side: Hodes uses another Hayes’ swatch, as well as fragments of the floral pattern from her Proposition 7 Architecture. She then cuts into the sheets of patterns to disrupt the sameness of digital-print surface, building up cut and pasted layers, and applying paint to enhance the surface quality. The zigzags in the Hayes design are echoed by the use of a zigzag cutting method and around an edge, creating the effect of dressmaker’s pinking shears, a reference to a traditional female activity. Cutting paper also produces mirror images, ready to place within the composition – in this case, the figure to the left of the tower, who has been flipped and repeated – and dashed lines are then also repeated by the cutting-out process.

A key source of inspiration for Jones’s book was Islamic ornament, and the flatness of the designs lent themselves to reproduction using the new technological advances. In “Proposition 4,” Jones stated “true beauty results from that repose which the mind feels when the eye, the intellect and the affections are satisfied from the absence of any want” Abstract pattern was “seen to lead the eye to move, while giving a satisfying structure and therefore being restful to the mind”.

A key element for Jones was colour, and a number of the principles referred to its application “Proposition 3” expressed

1856, where his paint scheme, which was limited to the primary colours, blue, red and yellow, generated much criticism and debate. Through his close association with Henry Cole, Jones played a pivotal role in the formation of the Victoria and Albert Museum. His audacious new principles became the teaching framework for the Government School of Design. The design propositions also formed the basis for The Grammar of Ornament, a compendium of 19 styles of historic and world ornament, which concludes with a chapter on nature. This lavish publication, which broke new ground with its use of the expensive and intricate process of chromolithography, contains 100 subjects, highly detailed colour plates of ornaments drawn from architecture, including textiles, tiles and stained glass. Rejecting the 19th-century predilection for historic revival and decorative arts laden with religious and social connotations, Jones became a progenitor of modernism.

He sought to identify the common principles inherent in historic ornament, and to formulate a design language that was appropriate to the modern world. “The Grammar of Ornament is prefaced by 37 general principles of design pertaining to the arrangement of form and colour in architecture and the decorative arts, the first of which asserts: “The decorative arts arise from, and should properly be attendant upon, architecture.” Ornament, he maintained, should never compete with architecture. He urged artists and designers to embrace technology to develop a new, modern style, not by reviving old styles or techniques, or by copying designs found in other cultures, but by analysing the styles in order to grasp their underlying design grammar. Charlotte’s response to “Proposition 1” uses as its background a digitally manipulated scan of a fabric swatch from Hayes Textile Ltd Collection, from the archive of the London College of Fashion. The whole is printed on a large-format printer and the lines from an architectural horizon line are then imposed using a scalpel. The cut lines also resemble the screen of an electrocardiogram, implying human life in the balance. The figure absorbs and contains ornamental forms; she is the artist’s protagonist and in this image, Proposition 1 Architecture, she walks away, perhaps querying the authority of Jones’s proposition with “Are you sure?” The female form here asserts her refusal to be simply a decorative presence; in the process, she escapes the rigid rules of traditional roles and disrupts the visual order.

For Jones, geometry was fundamental to good ornamental design. In “Proposition 8,” he asserted “All ornament should be based upon a geometrical construction.” Proposition 8: Geometry is...
his theory of the harmonious use of primary colours. To using the primary colours on moulded surfaces, we should place blue, which retreats, on the concave surfaces; yellow, which advances, on the convex, and red, the intermediate colour, on the underside, separating the colours by white on the vertical planes.

For the 21st-century reader, perhaps the most extraordinary characteristic of Jones’s great work is the fact that half the chapters were devoted to ornament that originated outside Western Europe. Since its publication, The Grammar of Ornament has been a key work for artists and designers, including Christopher Dresser and William Morris, and, later, for architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier. A design bible for students and practitioners alike, it comes as no surprise that Hodes has embraced its marvellous potential, since her work has long occupied and addressed the interface between painting and design. She recalls that, while at the Slade School of Art in the 1970s, she experienced a strong sense of not being able to coexist with elements that have over [centuries] been represented and re-represented in the fine and decorative arts: drapery, cloth, ornament and pattern. They acknowledge their origins, but not the present as past incarnations. They are a celebration of the art histories from which they have come, whilst existing in a painterly space with my rules. By contrast to Grayson Perry, who constructs his own large ceramics, Hodes commissions dishes to be made according to her design, then works on the pots as a painter: the vessel becomes her painted surface. In 1996, she was invited to work at the Spode factory in Stoke and there absorbed many of the skills working with copper-engraavings and transfers. Her Wallace Collection residency inspired her to use sumptuously decorated formal urns. However, air of ironic anarchy can be identified in Hodes’s females who stroll languidly across them evading a world-wary idleness; her flabby nudes certainly do not derive from Jean-Antoine Watteau’s fête galante painting in the Wallace Collection, as they stroll off stage, as if on strike. The idile figure on the pots and dishes (she has made a number of dinner services) can be read as players disengaged from traditional female responsibilities – a case of not doing the dishes, perhaps?

In Proposition 14: The Colour Blue, Hodes’s female is militant and further removed from the 17th-century sensibilities to be found in the courtship ritual captured in Watteau’s painting. Indeed, manners are cast to the wind, so to speak, as she commits the unspeakable: flatulence – perhaps even excrement – explodes from her bottom as if she is being jet-propelled. In Proposition 25: Lethargy, the female form has been foppd off on to a vase created from an upside-down skirt. The silhouette is presented in her historic “decorative” capacity, to simulate a lace frill. In Proposition 25: Lethargy, the female form has been appropriated from a dressmaker’s paper pattern from the archive at the London College of Fashion. Feet beneath the skirt suggest movement and the reading of an image from left to right. The conceptual play of word and image is grounded by Hodes’ meticulous practice, using paper cutting, collage and drawing from life.

For Hodes, papercuts are drawings created using a scalpel in the place of a conventional drawing tool. Her work, using tiny fragments of paper and decorative motifs, explores the diverse manner in which the women have been presented in art history; the decorative links to the domestic and, in which so much female activity goes unnoticed. Hodes explains her process: “Drawing is the way in which I begin. I make pencil drawings and take photos from observation, which enable me to construct images in my mind. I do not invent. The drawing becomes modulated and changed through subsequent drawings, tracings, digital manipulation or as hand-cut paper stencils, according to how I intend to use them.”

In challenging Jones’s design principles, Hodes also embraces his pleasure of patternning, as fundamental to human civilisations around the world, and expands its meaning in the light of drawing research and, indeed, conceptual art of the past 40 years. The images from the 37 new works indicate the confident manner in which Hodes is now working, an inspiring dialogue with fine and decorative arts and technology.

As a painter, Hodes found the study of printmaking at the Slade liberating, working with lithography, which she describes as “the most painterly of the print processes”, under the master lithographer Stanley Jones of Curwen Press. At each stage proof, the pots and dishes (she has made a number of dinner services) can be read as players disengaged from traditional female responsibilities – a case of not doing the dishes, perhaps?

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In the arrangement of form and colour, in architecture and the decorative arts, which are advocated throughout this work.

OWEN JONES

PROPOSITION 1
The Decorative Arts arise from, and should properly be attendant upon, Architecture.

PROPOSITION 2
Architecture is the material expression of the wants, the faculties, and the sentiments, of the age in which it is created.
Style in Architecture is the peculiar form that expression takes under the influence of climate and materials at command.

PROPOSITION 3
As Architecture, so all works of the Decorative Arts, should possess fitness, proportion, harmony, the result of all which is repose.

PROPOSITION 4
True beauty results from that repose which the mind feels when the eye, the intellect, and the affections, are satisfied from the absence of any want.

PROPOSITION 5
Construction should be decorated. Decoration should never be purposely constructed.
That which is beautiful is true; that which is true must be beautiful.

PROPOSITION 6
Beauty of form is produced by lines growing out one from the other in gradual undulations; there are no excrescences; nothing could be removed and leave the design equally good or better.

PROPOSITION 7
The general forms being first cared for, these should be subdivided and ornamented by general lines; the interstices may then be filled in with ornament, which may again be subdivided and enriched for closer inspection.

PROPOSITION 8
All ornament should be based upon a geometrical construction.

PROPOSITION 9
As in every perfect work of Architecture a true proportion will be found to reign between all the members which compose it, so throughout the Decorative Arts every assemblage of forms should be arranged on certain definite proportions; the whole and each particular member should be a multiple of some simple unit.
Those proportions will be the most beautiful which it will be most difficult for the eye to detect.
Thus the proportion of a double square, or 4 to 8, will be less beautiful than the more subtle ratio of 5 to 8, 3 to 6, than 3 to 7, 3 to 9, than 3 to 8, 3 to 4, than 3 to 5.

PROPOSITION 10
Harmony of form consists in the proper balancing, and contrast of, the straight, the inclined, and the curved.

PROPOSITION 11
In surface decoration all lines should flow out of a parent system.
Every ornament, however distant, should be traced to its branch and root. Oriental practice.
PROPOSITION 12
All junctions of curved lines with curved or of curved lines with straight should be tangential to each other. Natural law: Oriental practice in accordance with it.

PROPOSITION 13
Flowers or other natural objects should not be used as ornaments, but conventional representations founded upon them sufficiently suggestive to convey the intended image to the mind, without destroying the unity of the object they are employed to decorate. Universally obeyed in the best periods of Art, equally violated when Art declines.

PROPOSITION 14
Colour is used to assist in the development of form, and to distinguish objects or parts of objects one from another.

PROPOSITION 15
Colour is used to assist light and shade, helping the undulations of form by the proper distribution of the several colours.

PROPOSITION 16
These objects are best attained by the use of primary colours on small surfaces and in small quantities, balanced and supported by the secondary and tertiary colours on the larger masses.

PROPOSITION 17
The primary colours should be used on the upper portions of objects, the secondary and tertiary on the lower.

PROPOSITION 18
(Finish Chromatic equivalents.)
The primaries of equal intensities will harmonise or neutralise each other, in the proportions of 3 yellow, 5 red, and 8 blue, —integrally as 16.

Each secondary being a compound of two primaries is neutralised by the remaining primary in the same proportions, thus, 8 of orange by 8 of blue, 11 of green by five of red, 13 of purple by 3 of yellow.

Each tertiary being a binary compound of two secondaries, is neutralised by the remaining secondary, as, 24 of olive by 8 of orange, 21 of russet by 11 of green, 19 of citrine by 13 of purple.

PROPOSITION 19
The above supposes the colours to be used in their prismatic intensities, but each colour has a variety of tones when mixed with white, or of shades when mixed with grey or black.

When a full colour is contrasted with another of a lower tone, the volume of the latter must be proportionally increased, —i.e. we should take the yellow out of them; so if the much yellow, we should make the red more crimson and the blue more purple, —i.e. we should take the yellow out of them; so if the much yellow, we should make the red more crimson and the blue more purple, —i.e. we should take the yellow out of them; so if the much yellow, we should make the red more crimson and the blue more purple.

PROPOSITION 20
If using the primary colours on moulded surfaces, we should place blue, which retires, on the concave surfaces; yellow, which stands out, on the convex; and red, the intermediate colour, on the underrises, separating the colours by white on the vertical planes.

When the proportions required by Proposition 18 cannot be obtained, we may procure the balance by a change in the colours themselves; thus, if the surfaces to be coloured should give too much blue, we should make the red more crimson and the blue more purple; —i.e. we should take the yellow out of them; so the surfaces should give too much blue, we should make the yellow more orange and the red more scarlet.

PROPOSITION 21
When ornaments in a colour are on a ground of a contrasting colour, the ornament should be separated from the ground by an edging of lighter colour; as a red flower on a green ground should have an edging of lighter red.

PROPOSITION 22
The various colours should be so blended that the objects coloured, when viewed at a distance, should present a neutralised bloom.

PROPOSITION 23
No composition can ever be perfect in which any one of the three primary colours is wanting, either in its natural state or in combination.

PROPOSITION 24
When two tones of the same colour are juxtaposed, the light colour will appear lighter, and the dark colour darker.

PROPOSITION 25
When two different colours are juxtaposed, they receive a double modification; first, as to their tone (the light colour appearing lighter, and the dark colour appearing darker), secondly, as to their hue, each will become tinged with the complimentary colour of the other.

PROPOSITION 26
Colours on white grounds appear darker, on black grounds lighter.

PROPOSITION 27
Black grounds suffer when opposed to colours which give a luminous complementary.

PROPOSITION 28
Colours should never be allowed to impinge on each other.

PROPOSITION 29
When ornaments in a colour are on a ground of a contrasting colour, the ornament should be separated from the ground by an edging of lighter colour; as a red flower on a green ground should have an edging of lighter red.

PROPOSITION 30
When ornaments in a colour are on a gold ground, the ornaments should be separated from the ground by an edging of a darker colour.

PROPOSITION 31
Gold ornaments on any coloured ground should be outlined with black.

PROPOSITION 32
Ornaments of any colour may be separated from grounds of any other colour by edgings of white, gold, or black.

PROPOSITION 33
Ornaments in any colour, or in gold, may be used on white or black grounds, without outline or edging.

PROPOSITION 34
In “self-tints,” tones, or shades of the same colour, a light tint on a dark ground may be used without outline, but a dark ornament on a light ground requires to be outlined with a still darker tint.

PROPOSITION 35
Imitations, such as the graining of woods, and of the various coloured marbles, allowable only, when the employment of the thing imitated would not have been inconsistent.

PROPOSITION 36
The principles discoverable in the works of the past belong to us; not so the results. It is taking the ends for the means.

PROPOSITION 37
No improvement can take place in the art of the present generation until all classes, Artists, Manufacturers, and the public, are better educated in Art, and the existence of general principles is more fully recognised.
The Grammar of Ornament

Papercuts

Drawing, printed and painted papers, 2013-2014

Image sizes (cm): height x width (maximums)
Proposition 05  Fine Balance
101 x 59

Proposition 06  Linear Perfection
65 x 88
Proposition 07 Interstices
56 x 89

Six details
Proposition 08: Geometry
63.5 x 86

Proposition 09: Assemblage of Two Forms
51.6 x 75
Proposition 14  The Colour Blue
56 x 83

Proposition 15  Light and Shade, Red
33 x 75
Proposition 16 Spring
61 x 86.4
Proposition 17: Order of Things
66 x 103.5

Proposition 18: Field of Squares I
53 x 74.5
Proposition 19: Field of Squares II
57 x 72.5

Proposition 20:
Scarlet – Red, Crimson-Red
80.3 x 55
Proposition 25 Lethargy
75.4 x 54.6

Proposition 26 Journey
63.8 x 93
Proposition 28: Slumber
56 x 93.5

Proposition 29: Red Flower on Green
61.5 x 94.5
Opposite
Proposition 32 Flower skirt
39.3 x 70

Above
Proposition 32 Flower skirt
Six details
The Grammar of Ornament

Ceramics

Proposition 37
Apathy
78.4 x 62.5

Each dish enamel transfer on china,
diameter: 30 cms. Edition 100
2014
Proposition 06  Linear Perfection
Proposition 07  Interstices
Proposition 08  Geometry
Proposition 09  Assemblage of Two Forms
Proposition 10  Harmony
Proposition 11  Flow
Proposition 12  Patterns from Curved Lines
Proposition 13  Flower
Proposition 14: The Colour Blue

Proposition 15: Light and Shade

Proposition 16: Spring

Proposition 17: Order of Things

Proposition 18: Field of Squares

Proposition 19: Network
Proposition 28 Slumber

Proposition 29 Filigree Line

Proposition 30 Bouquet

Proposition 31 Light Breeze

Proposition 32 Flower Skirt
Proposition 33  Thinker

Proposition 34  Camouflage

Proposition 35  Dress

Proposition 36  Pillar

Proposition 37  Apathy
Charlotte Hodes studied at Brighton College of Art, 1977-78, and at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London where she completed her undergraduate and postgraduate studies in painting in 1984. She was Associate Artist at the Wallace Collection, London from 2005-2007 and winner of the Jerwood Drawing Prize, 2006. She is Professor in Fine Art at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London.

**Selected Exhibitions**

2013
- Glasstress: White Light / White Heat
- 55th Venice Biennale, Berengo Centre for Contemporary Art and Glass, Murano 
- The Wallace Collection, London
- Re-found: Jagged Art, London (3-person)
- Contemporary Show: Harris Lindsay, London
- Ruth Bernard Self Portrait Exhibition: Kings Place Gallery, London

2012
- Ceramics and Papercuts: Clara Scremmini Gallery, Paris (solo)

2011
- Block Party: Exploring Contemporary Pattern Cutting
- Crafts Council Touring
- Glasstress Stockholm: Millesgården Stockholm, Sweden

2010
- Art Fair: 21st Century Art: Cologne, Germany
- Closely Held Secrets: Bunnington Gallery, Nottingham Trent University

2009-10
- Silhouettes and Filigree: Marlborough Fine Art, London (solo)

2009
- Glasstress: Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti 53rd International Venice Biennale

2008
- Drawing Skirts: Baring Wing, University of Northumbria, Newcastle
- Committed to Print: Centre for Fine Print Research, UWE, London
- Summer Show: Marlborough Fine Art

2007
- Fragmented Images: New Artworks: The Wallace Collection, London, supported by the AHRC and Arts Council, England
- ACE (solo)
- Works on Paper: Marlborough Fine Art

2006
- New Ceramic Works and Collages: Flow Gallery, London (solo)

2005
- 40 Artists: 40 Drawings: The Drawing Gallery, Shropshire, UK
- Works on Paper: Marlborough Fine Art

2004

2003
- Waste to Taste: Sotheby’s curated by Janice Blackburn

2002
- Digital Responses: caxophony, a cabinet of voices: V&A, London (2-person)

2001
- Fragmented Histories: Quay Art, Yorkshire Arts, Hull (solo)
- Paintings, Prints, Ceramics: Berwin Leighton Paisner, Hayward Gallery Development (solo)

2000
- Hibrida II Print Exhibition: Cartwright Hall, Bradford

1999
- Mostyn 10: Open Exhibition: Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno
- The Open Drawing Show: Cheltenham & touring

1998
- Surfing History: Eagle Gallery, London (2-person)

1999
- Mostyn 10: Open Exhibition: Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno
- The Open Drawing Show: Cheltenham & touring

1999
- Surfing History: Eagle Gallery, London (solo)
- Computers and Printmaking: Birmingham City Museums & Art Gallery

BIOGRAPHY

Charlotte Hodes studied at Brighton College of Art, 1977-78, and at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London where she completed her undergraduate and postgraduate studies in painting in 1984. She was Associate Artist at the Wallace Collection, London from 2005-2007 and winner of the Jerwood Drawing Prize, 2006. She is Professor in Fine Art at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London.
C O M M I S S I O N S & R E S I D E N C I E S

1997
Pattern in Painting City Museum & Art Gallery, Staffordshire (solo)
International Print Exhibition (invited artist) Portland Art Museum U.S.A.
20th Century Art from the Collection Worcester City Museum & Art Gallery
The Open Drawing Show Cheltenham & touring Small is Beautiful AY Flowers East, London

1996

1995
Print to Paint 4 Artists Eagle Gallery, London
New Views on Collections City Museum & Art Gallery, Worcester
ShelfLife Eagle Gallery, London

1993
Figurines Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, Worcester (solo)
Contemporary Printmaking in London Clifford Chance, London

1992
Recent Paintings Eagle Gallery, London (solo)

1991
Open Exhibition South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell

1990
Riverside Open Riverside Studios, London

W O R K I N C O L L E C T I O N S

2007
29th Arts and Business Awards commission supported by Berengo Glass Studio, Venice

2004
Clifford Chance Commission proposal

2000
British Petroleum Amoco

1998 - 2003
Artist Placements: Spode, Staffordshire (supported 2000-2001 by Year of the Artist West Midlands Arts, Spode with Pottery Museum, Staffordshire)

Arthur Andersen
Berengo Glass Museum
Birmingham City Art Gallery
Brighton City Museum & Art Gallery
British Council
Clifford Chance
Deutsche Bank
Leicestershire Education Authority
Pottery Museum & Art Gallery Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
Ruth Bernhard Collection
St. Thomas' Hospital
Southampton General Hospital
Spode Museum
University College London Art Museum
Victoria & Albert Museum
Wellcome Foundation
Women's Art Collection, New Hall Cambridge
Worcester City Museum & Art Gallery

WEBSITE
www.charlottuhodes.com
www.arts.ac.uk/fashion/research/
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by **Charlotte Hodes**

at

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and

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Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DF

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