

The Elements & Principles of Design

The ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’

Elements

Point
Shape
Line
Colour
Texture
Transparency
Translucency
Opacity

Principles

Proportion
Balance
Symmetry & Asymmetry
Pattern
Repetition
Movement
Rhythm
Positive & Negative Space

Why do we need this vocabulary?

Can you spend 2 minutes thinking about **why designers might need to use particular types of words to describe the designs they see and create?**

Share your thoughts with the
person next to you!

Just like any other language...



It's a designer's way of communicating exactly what they see!

Ok...so let's discuss the elements and principles of design for this product.



Bit tricky?

Wouldn't it be easier to discuss the product if we knew a bit more information about it?

For example, what it's made of? Or even, why it's been made?

Nicole Monks - Cross discipline Designer

Context



Sydney-based Indigenous designer Nicole Monks has released her latest furniture collection, Marlu, which means 'kangaroo' in her native language.

The collection has been developed as part of the 2016 Arts NSW Indigenous Design Mentorship program under guidance by **Top3 by Design** founder Terri Winter. Marlu is an expression of Monks' mixed English, Dutch and Aboriginal heritage.

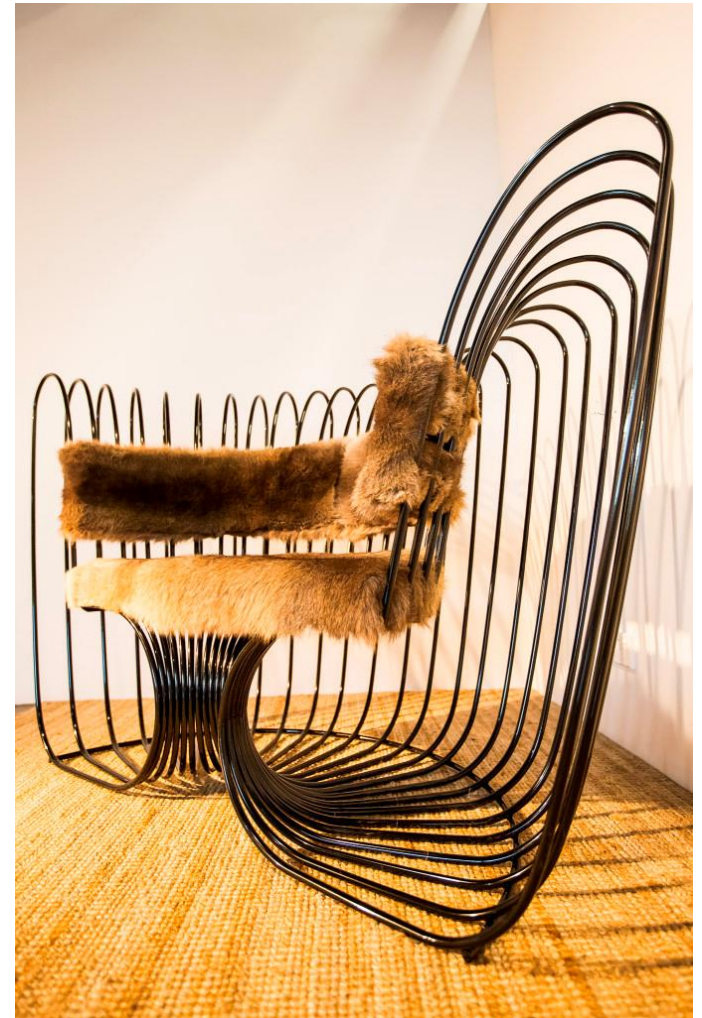
Working across design and art, Monks was inspired by her Wajarri Yamatji heritage after taking a trip back to visit her 93-year-old 'auntie', where she learnt about her family history and great-grandmother's renowned kangaroo tail stew.

Each of the pieces in the new collection draws on this Indigenous heritage, telling the story of lived experiences through the design - 'wabarn-wabarn' (bounce), 'walarnu' (boomerang) and 'nyinajimanha' (sitting together).

Expressing the significance of knowledge transfer and the role of memory transfer, which is so inherent within indigenous culture, this process has given Monks the opportunity to share her personal experience through design.z

<https://www.australiandesignreview.com/objects/kangaroo-furniture-nicole-monks/>

“The aesthetic is characterised by seamless joins, clean and simplified lines and timbers. All of the pieces are made to order and individually customised, an additional reflection of the designer’s desire to promote sustainable design practices.”



Walarnu (Boomerang) Chair designed by Nicole Monks for bseated. Image: bseated

Medium steel, kangaroo skin, wood (under kangaroo skin)

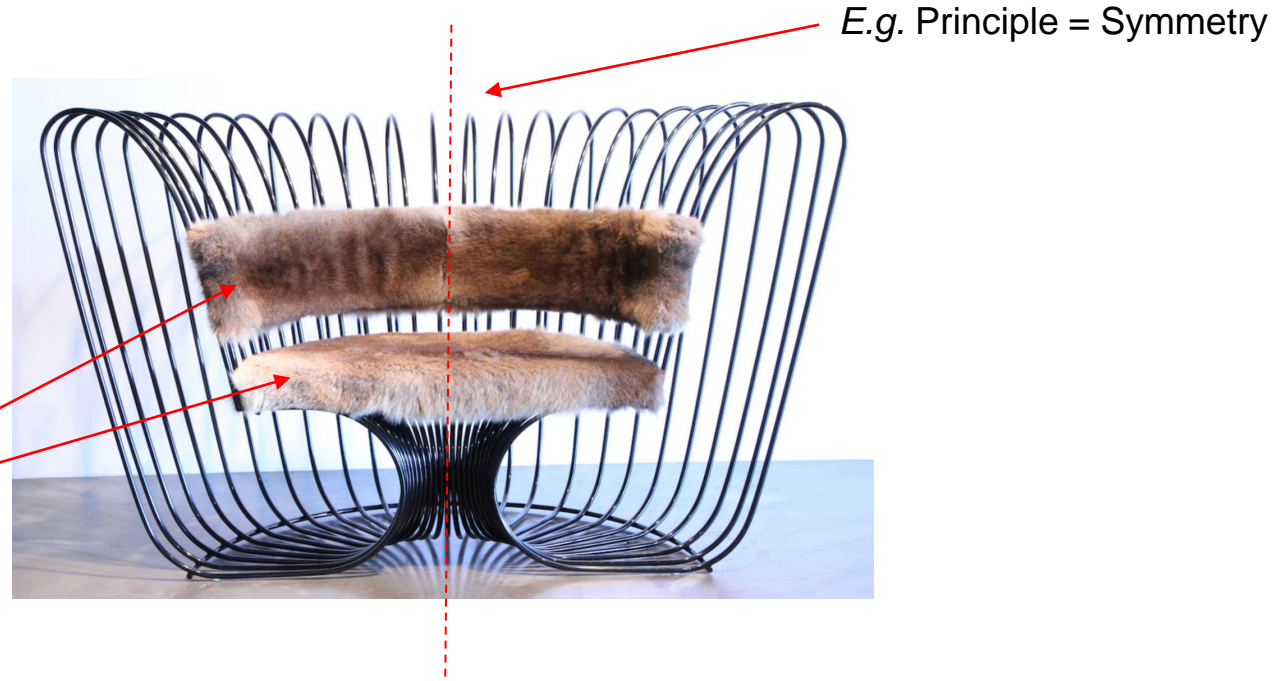
Measurements 94.5 × 157.0 × 82.0 cm (variable)

Now that we know a little more...

*Recognise and name and/or select an event, feature, ingredient, element, speaker and/or part from a list or extended narrative or argument, or within a diagram, structure, artwork or experiment.

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/GlossaryofCommandTerms.aspx>

First step: **IDENTIFY*** and *label* all the elements & principles you can see.



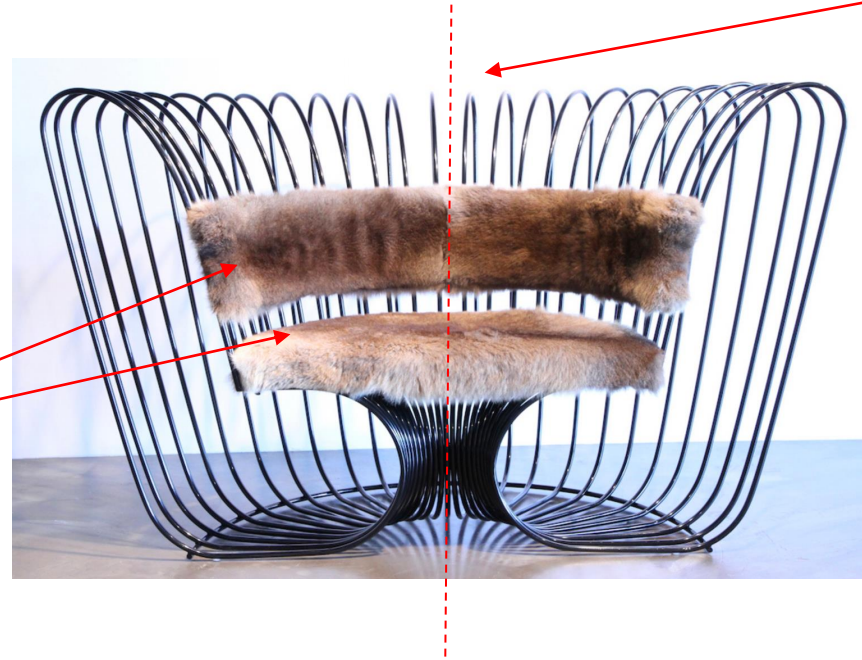
E.g. Element = texture

E.g. Principle = Symmetry

*Provide characteristics, features and qualities of a given concept, opinion, situation, event, process, effect, argument, narrative, text, experiment, artwork, performance piece or other artefact in an accurate way.

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/GlossaryofCommandTerms.aspx>

Second step: **DESCRIBE*** the elements & principles you've labelled.



E.g. Element = texture
The back and seat of the Walarnu Chair is made with Kangaroo skin/fur, making the texture of the chair soft.

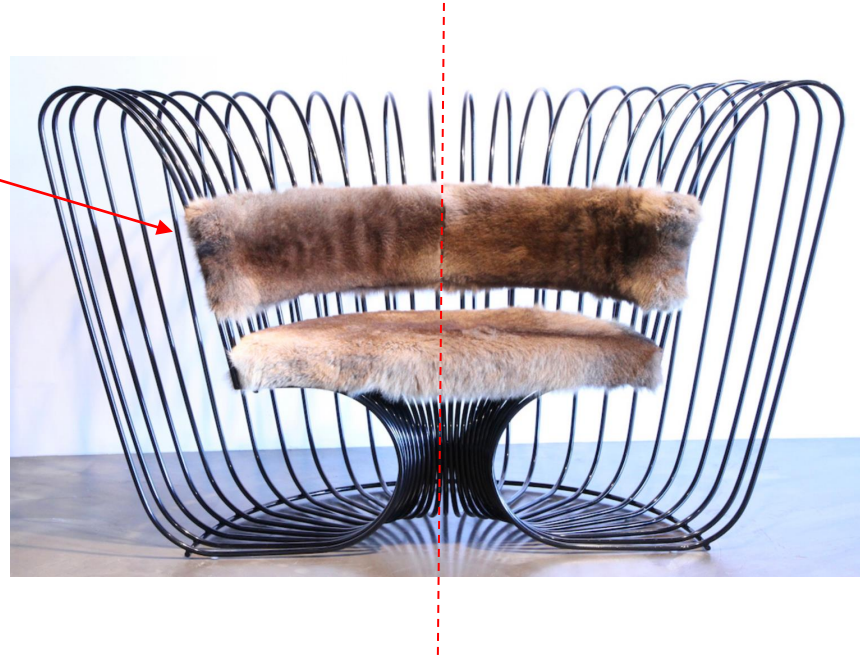
E.g. Principle = Symmetry
If the chair was to be cut straight down the centre, both sides would be exactly the same, making the design symmetrical.

*Give a detailed account of why and/or how with reference to causes, effects, continuity, change, reasons or mechanisms; make the relationships between things evident.

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/GlossaryofCommandTerms.aspx>

Third step: **EXPLAIN*** WHY that particular element/principle has been used and how they are connected (we usually use elements to discuss principles in design.)

E.g. The Walarnu chair is perfectly balanced to the eye as it is completely symmetrical down the vertical centre. The seat and seat back, also completely symmetrical, uses kangaroo skin as a covering material to give a soft, furry texture, which makes the seat comfortable to sit in.



Follow the 3 steps!

1. Identify

First step: **IDENTIFY*** and *label* all the elements & principles you can see.

2. Describe

Second step: **DESCRIBE*** the elements & principles you've labelled.

3. Explain

Third step: **EXPLAIN*** WHY that particular element/principle has been used and how they are connected (we usually use elements to discuss principles in design.)