

HOW THE BAUHAUS INSPIRED MY PLAYING CARD DESIGNS



Form and color study, Joost Schmidt, ca. 1929-1930

1



The painting above by Joost Schmidt, master at the Bauhaus was the primary inspiration for the design of my joker. I really liked the abstraction of the various sized circles accompanied by longer and sharper looking shapes. I responded to these by creating a composition that resembled the circles and sharp forms. Jokers in a deck are often used as a wild card, which during a game can either be beneficial or not. Because of this, I wanted to make the joker stand out in the deck. My joker design draws a distinction between the rest of my cards through a contrasting colour palette, where I used darker colours such as greens and purples. This contradicted from the blue and red theme of my suites and face cards.

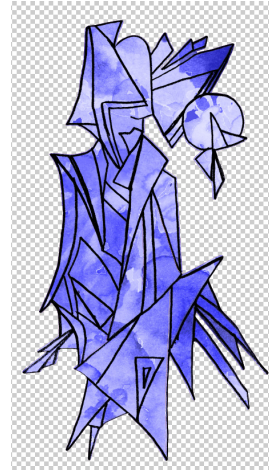
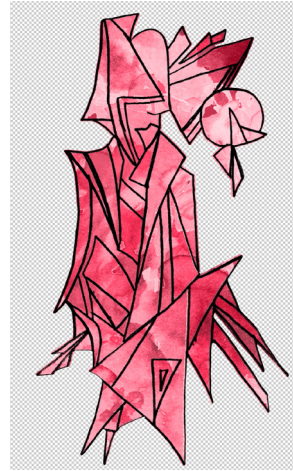


Der Bachsänger (Helge Lindberg) 1916, Johannes Itten



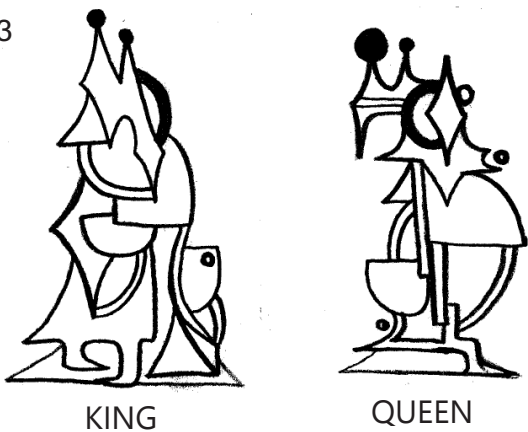
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My initial design inspired by the artwork of teacher at the Bauhaus, Johannes Itten, was originally going to be my joker. I then decided to turn it into my jacks as I felt it was better suited. I manipulated my designs in photoshop by adding some of my watercolour paintings underneath. To ensure they matched the rest of my face cards and suites, I added a red and blue colour on top.



The Red Tower, 1917-1918, Johannes Itten

3



KING

QUEEN

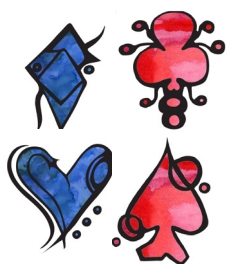
These two designs were hand-drawn in response to Johannes Itten's painting, 'The Red Tower.' I enjoyed the combination of angular shapes and rounded lines in his artwork, so I tried to replicate this in my own work. I also added crown-like figures on top of my King and Queen and attempted to keep them abstract like the rest of my design.

Figures 6 and 7 are watercolour pieces that I composed from artworks by Bauhaus artist, Josef Albers.

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I then developed the colours of my four suites using these watercolour works. (Diamonds and Hearts = Blue, Spades and Clubs = Red)

4

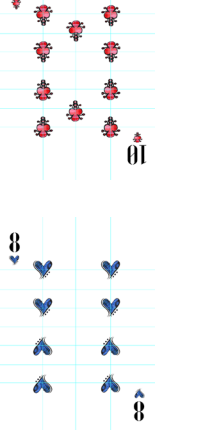


5



Figures 4 and 5 were inspired by the designs of Gunta Stölzl. I enjoyed the various sections of contrasting colours in her work and attempted to replicate that in my own designs. I manipulated my finished paintings to create the front, back, and sides of my playing card box.

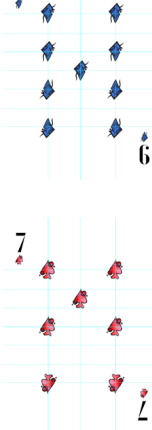
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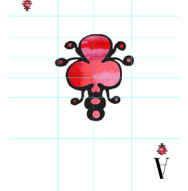
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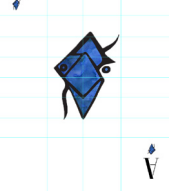
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A



V

A



V



For the backs of my cards, I took my watercolour design (figure 8) and copied it several times, rotating each copy at the same degree. This resulted in a spiral looking design which I wanted for the backs of my cards. I added a plain blue colour in the background which is shown in the middle of my final design.

The overall design process that went towards my cards begun by collecting various images of others. I decided what I liked and disliked about number and suite placements on the cards as well as the backs and boxes. For my suites I experimented with drawing manipulated versions of the classic shapes - hearts, diamonds, spades, and clubs. My decision towards my final four suites came down to personal preference and which ones complemented each other well. For my Kings, Queens, and Jacks I looked at the works of numerous Bauhaus artists and designed my own face cards drawing inspiration from them. I feel that the success of all my designs derived from the material I used in each piece, which was watercolour. This created a theme within my playing cards and I thoroughly enjoy the aesthetic of this. A lot of my designs on the surface don't look Bauhaus inspired, but when looking at the process, it's clear that techniques from Bauhaus artists were used and taken into consideration.

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