Visual Textures

Everything around us has a texture. Sometimes we can simulate those textures with paper, but more often the textures we create in our designs are visual rather than tactile. However, those visual textures can be just as provocative or full of meaning as actual textures we can touch.

It's extremely easy to find or create visual textures for your designs. There are four basic ways to incorporate visual texture.

1. **Objects within a photograph**

   - Textures: fairly smooth surface of the chalk; rough surface of the cement
   - Textures: smooth glass bottles; fabric of the potholders
   - Textures: worn wooden mallet; grass

2. **Images created with photo-editing software, these textures may mimic actual textures or be imagined textures**

   - Texture: mimics drapes or folds in a satiny fabric
   - Texture: simulates a rough, rocky surface
   - Texture: random soft circles create an imaginary texture
3. Digitized images of actual textures (from scans, digital photos)

- Texture: a straw mat
- Texture: piece of door mat made from old tires
- Texture: tree bark

4. Symbolic textures created with lines or shapes; these patterns suggest various textures and are similar to the use of symbols or icons to represent ideas or objects

- Texture: wavy lines could symbolize water, waves, rolling terrain
- Texture: overlapping circles give the look of fish scales
- Texture: a grid of lines could simulate plaid or linen fabrics, wire mesh, or other textures

You can enhance or alter the appearance of visual textures depending on the actual texture of the paper used. Keep this interaction in mind when using texture. While you can easily simulate a rough texture on smooth paper, using a 'slick' visual texture on some rough papers changes the visual appearance.

As with paper textures, choose textures that relate to the concept of the piece and are appropriate to the design. Just as some paper textures can interfere with the readability of text, so can visual textures used as backgrounds. Use caution when placing text over heavy or busy visual textures.