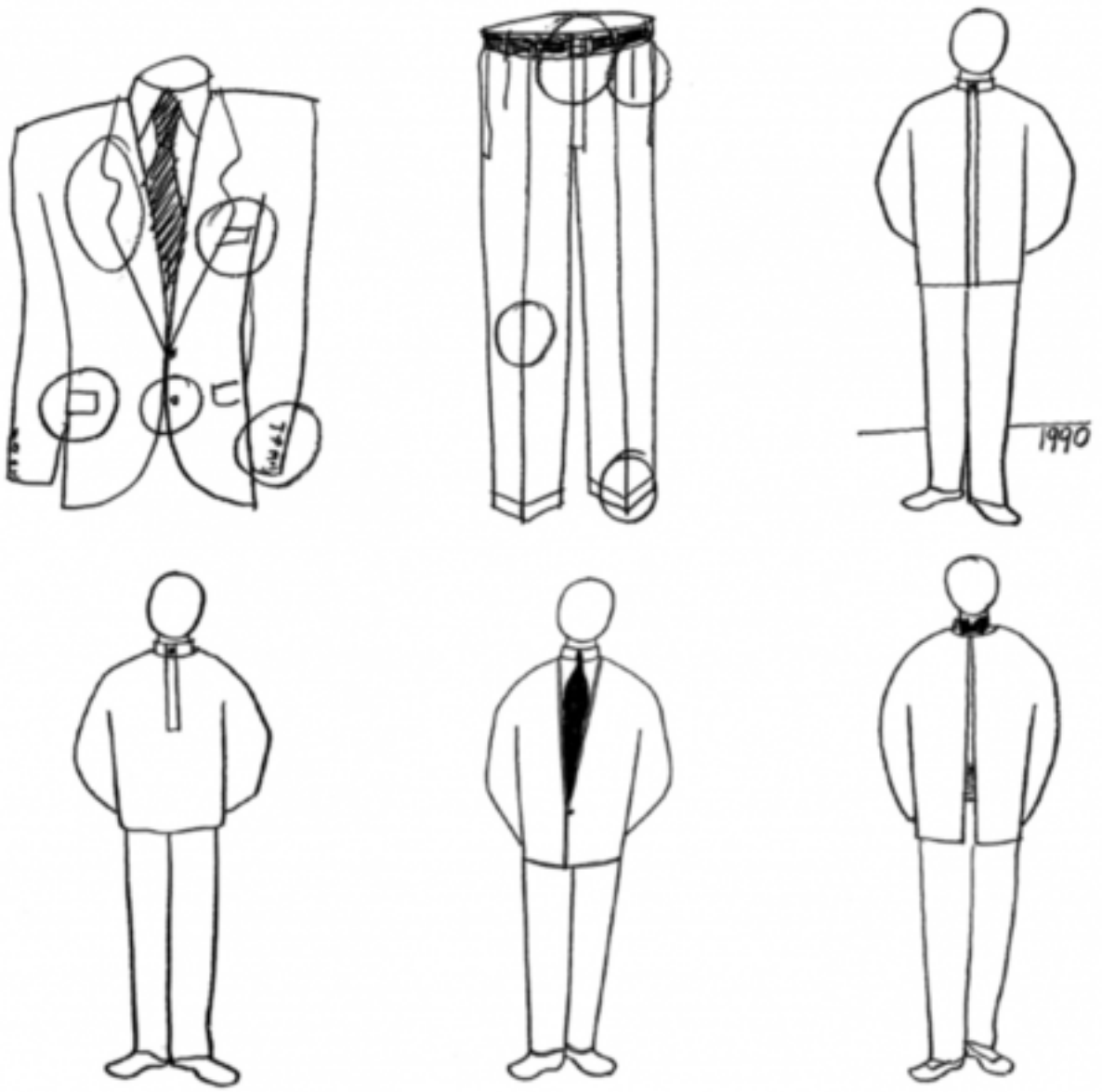
If you Cannot Find it, Design It

Massimo Vignelli (May 19, 2016)



Given all the objects designed by Massimo Vignelli that are located in New York and its museums, we decided to publish a not-so-well-known drawing he made in the early 1990s, when he decided to stop “being a fashion victim” and create his own clothing line. The drawing and accompanying text are taken from Designed by Lella, an electronic book he assembled a few months before dying to

celebrate his lifelong partnership with his beloved wife. He made the book available in pdf format free of charge.

Tired of being a fashion victim penalized by having lapels, shoulders, and waist continuously changing in their proportions and lengths I began to look for alternatives but I could not find anything in the marketplace.

Therefore, according to our motto “If you Cannot Find it, Design It”.

I started to design a line of clothing that would follow the body rather than focusing on fashion trends. A normal men’s jacket is full of details that make no sense at all. The lapel’s original function has been erased; pockets have a little roof (to prevent water from raining in?) The breast pocket has no real function either, and buttons on the sleeves have outlived their original purpose.

Shoulders expand or contract according to the whims of fashion designers. Pants have pleats, which are difficult to iron, a crease in the in the center, continuously pushed out by the knee; and often a cuff at the bottom as a perfect receptacle for dust and other trash. They have a front fly and therefore require a belt to adjust sizes.

I eliminated all this nonsense by taking center,a more rational approach,reducing the construction of the jacket from 54 pieces to 10. Placing the pockets on front and back seams, eliminating lapels and all visible buttons, eliminating the fly and the crease in the pants and replacing a belt with an elastic waist;
this clothing responds to body needs rather then constricting them.

I designed a sweater, made with same fabric of the suit rather than knitted wool so that when worn with the pants it becomes an informal suit. Varying the jacket provided alternatives for different functions from business attire to formal attire.

The black tie version is in black velvet with a cummerbund and a regular black tie. Lella’s role at first was in the selection of fabrics and in design criticism.

Electronic book 'Designed by Lella' >>> [2]

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