

Geometry lessons

Remember the subject that you hated most at school? Well, those blotchy parallelograms and obtuse angles have come back to bite you. Has anyone else noticed that it's the decade of the geometric shape? Yes, polygonal shapes are everywhere.

By [Terry Levin](#) 1 Jun 2010



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Besides the obvious fact that, in just under two weeks' time, the whole world will be watching a icosahedron, made up of 20 hexagons and 12 pentagons in exquisite formation, being kicked around in pursuit of national glory. (Actually, this is poetic licence; since Germany 2006, the 32-panel ball has been replaced by the official FIFA World Cup 14-panel design by Adidas + Teamgeist. Prior to the 1960s, balls were usually stitched from 18 oblong panels, similar to the design of the modern volleyballs.)

Belonging to the hexagon

Anyway, just as the 1950s will always be remembered as the decade of atomic-inspired motifs, so may the early decades of the 21st century be remembered, by those of pop cultural bent, as belonging to the hexagon.

Previously the domain of biologists, pharmaceuticals, securities and [good ol' Black&Decker](#), this year sees the hexagon crank up its cred, with culture creationistas from Moët&Chandon and Mini to Virgin and Vodaphone displaying the new crystalline looks.

Architecture is currently displaying hugely hexagonal tendencies, a notable example being the multi-faceted Melbourne Recital Centre which opened last year. Not to be outdone by its Sydney cousins in the archi department, Melbourne architects [Ashton Raggatt McDougal \(ARM\)](#) has created the exuberantly contemporary structure.

So de rigueur is the geometric look now that even the lawns of the origami-inspired [Vodafone HQ in Portugal](#) is divided into shapes.

The Queen of Architecture, Zaha Hadid, uses [quartz-shaped planters](#) in colours even named after crystals - azurite, citrine, topaz and amethyst - to adorn her latest beach house designs.

Also popping up all over

Half football-shaped domes or Buckminster Fullerenes, so named after their inventor [Richard Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller](#), are also popping up all over.

In Belgrade, Serbia, a geodesic dome has been used to renovate a disused 1970s-built area into a spacey gym and spa complex - The Wellness Sky. The "Bucky" look can also be seen in the Barcelona-based [bDeardesign's concept store](#) for

30-year old Spanish fashion brand [Lurdes Bergada](#).

Interestingly, the humble carbon molecules - of which, in case you haven't heard, we have a few too many - are known by scientists as Fullerenes, for their resemblance to Buckminster Fuller's geodesic spheres.

Brands are also seen to be adopting the angular look, in the crowd-sourced designs for Vitamin Water, around jazzily wrapped Minis and blasting across an array of apparel, sports- and eyewear.

But the significance of the trend goes deeper than just decoration - the geodesic dome tent perhaps pointing to the impermanence of our existence, the fact that every type of company now needs to have a sub-division entitled "lab", the deepening understanding of our own cellular makeup as the building blocks of creation itself - these are all factors that are bringing the underlying structures of the universe to the surface by designers.

Inspired by the base

Of course, the British ad awards icon, [D&AD](#) has long foretold the trend, its hexagonal logo simply inspired by the base of the coveted graphite pencil trophies.

Lastly, credit for the geometric trend must surely go to the honeybee and the lessons we can learn from its elegant social and collaborative networks to produce the goodies. The hex hasn't yet appeared in any thought clouds, but it may still. In the meantime, kick it!

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