

Proposed Heading for Independent Inquiry: How are Surface Patterns Tailored to their Product?

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To begin my dissertation proposal, I will be researching three key words which represent what I believe are important within my study of practice. The three main words which have come to my attention are, *Context*, *Weave* and *Artistry*. Throughout this essay I will discuss processes that go into surface pattern art and how design collaborates to create seamless imagery. This essay is intended to broaden what makes a design through my key words, discussing ideologies, alongside some visual imagery and thoughts of what makes a design.

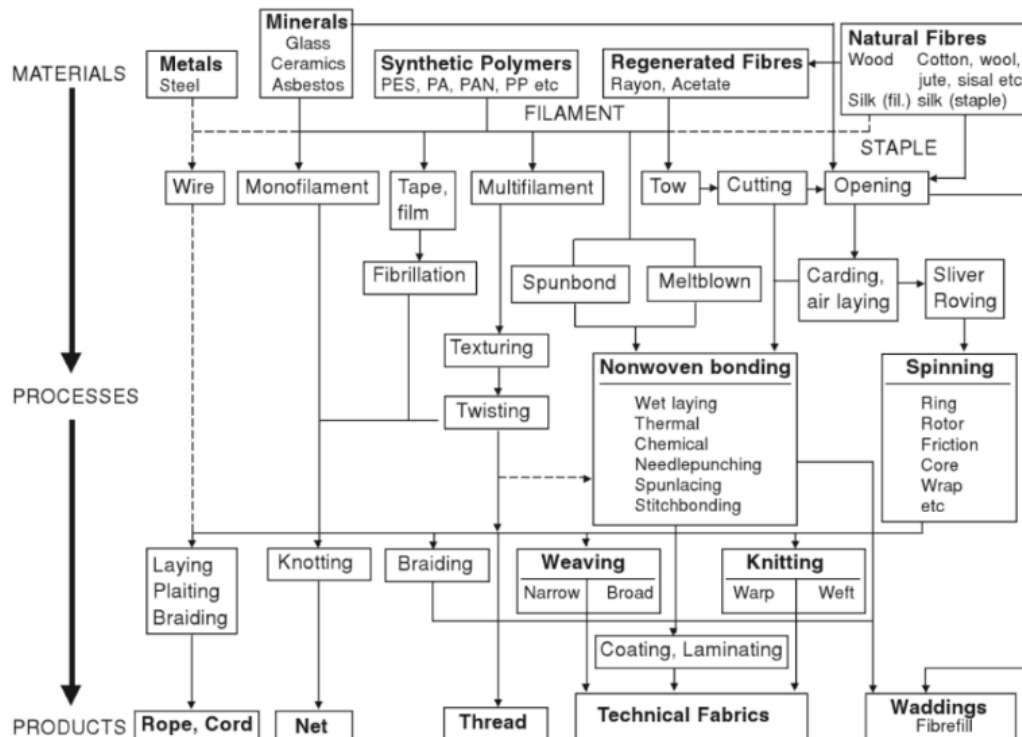
To every design there is a meaning, a purpose behind the art. *Context*, brings a subject to the design of a pattern, it tells us a story, about the artwork, the artist and the scenery around the art tells us why it has been placed. Surface design resembles repeated artwork, embedded onto an area of a section of fabrics, walls, ceramics, glass, and wood even. The area of surface design has a well diverse market in an ever-changing world, creating new ideas, new designs and out the box thinking progressing the surface design industry which has developed through centuries. Within the 21st century “new developments are taking place all the time and we are currently moving in a world where there is an explosion of interest in ‘the new’ and what is currently perceived as contemporary” (A Briggs-Goode, 2011). Due to the expanse of technology surface design has been more accessible than ever before. Having created designs, creators can process their work through digital technology which can be printed off onto sheets of fabric, laser cut on harder materials such as wood, card, plastics, and glass. Being able to access this technology is a huge bonus for students, companies and even growing businesses. As surface design is a large competitive design field, there are opportunities to present yourself for business through surface design shows. London holds shows such as New Designers where graduates from their studied courses can

exhibit their work and even seek out potential future work. Companies attend these shows look for the new and potential future trends. It is important to keep up to date with trends as they are forever changing, especially within fashion and interior décor. Although, opportunities can be found through case shows where designers can display their work, everything has been moved towards a social platform via the internet. "It is now much easier for a designer or an ambitious person to set up a business because of new production methods such as computer production and the new levels of what is acceptable in design" (A Briggs-Goode, 2011). Graduates, students or even an ambitious person can create a website, it is easily creatable through platforms such as Wix, Squarespace and WordPress giving an infinite platform to display your work, accessible to anyone with access to the internet.

Within different areas of surface design there are certain elements which bring out the up most style, whether it being interiors, fashion, objects or stationery, the design resembles that subject. Surface design creates atmospheres through the drawn element, which is the sole focus of attention, the designer needs to think about what looks good and what does not, for example certain colours may not be harmonious or complementary. Creating designs such as women's cloth wear, you need to "experiment with drawing, use types of media and be expressive with line, colour and texture. Think also about silhouettes and blocks of colour or tone within your design" (Udale, 2008). Looking towards trends designers become influenced by what is in the new, being inspired by new designs, creators develop their work around these new trends. Companies which have risen such as Patternbank, Spoonflower, will investigate these new trends and set themes and mood boards selling the latest trends as well. Entrepreneurs, companies, students look at trends and think about what direction to take forward with their designs. "Starting from a given point (often the design of existing or competing products, brands or organisations), designers can

think in specific 'directions' in order to generate new ideas from existing designs" (Gavin Ambrose, 2010). Thinking out of the box, a surface designer would think about what could be done differently or added onto a specific trend and then apply their style to that specified trend. This could be done through methods of screen printing, applying the design through dyes and colour transfers onto different fabrics. Some designs can be such as dying fabric different colours, creating a nice touch to a dress, which adds that texture defining the dress. Adding that specific "colour of a fabric can inspire, motivate and attract a designer or consumer to a particular article of clothing. There are also other aspects that can enhance a garment, such as a particular novelty dyeing effect or specialty coating that creates a look or feel that is unique and desirable" (Udale, 2008). As much as adding that desire, it is important to think about contrasts between fabrics and how a specific dye would interact to natural plant-based fibres and man-made fibres, leading onto my next topic of 'weave'.

'Weaving' is the interconnected fibres which interlock and are woven into creating clothing, carpets, rugs, and furniture's. There is a lot of technicality into weaving, such as using different threads, the placement of colours, bringing together a design and what type of materials to use, whether it being plant-based silicone type fibres, to manmade polyester type of fibres. There are a lot of different types of textiles, from cotton, to silk, satin, denim, leather and more like lace. Each textile texture plays a purpose into its design and is used specifically to its potential, such as nylon which makes the umbrella deflect the rain, sheltering whoever uses it. From different materials we get different outcomes, for example this diagram shows the material, processed and then finally the outcomes of rope, netting, threads and technical fibres we make use of.



(A R Horrocks, 2000)

It is important that the manufacturing of our textiles is well made, durable for any outcome and are fashioned for different weather forecasts. Cloth wear for example has different purposes from rain wear, summer wear and occasional wear. We wear clothes to cloth our bodies and to also bring out our sense of fashion. We design clothes to be worn with function and for work. However, we also wear clothes for style and resemble our own personalities around what we wear. Surface design in the style of fashion, brings out that flare, the designs which the artists create, to the designs embellished onto the clothing, to the people who buy the clothing. In eastern countries such as China and Japan, a women's kimono, is amongst the prettiest designs of patterns in todays and past textile fashion. Japan, being a very cultural country and people, they have fashioned the kimono to represent long life and good fortune, and is only worn today for special occasions, weddings, funerals,

graduations, and festivals. The Japanese people are also “noted for their spiritual and symbolic aspects. Each pattern, which has been passed down over many years, is deeply meaningful” (Nitanai, 2017). The symbolic symbols from each kimono can translate as a family symbol or perhaps a season typically of when the kimono should be worn or when it was made. Just like how the patterns from the kimono represent culture, heritage, and seasonal wear. We can see this amongst our own clothing, although they may not be cultural or have been passed down through heritage, we embellish our designs, the patterns to our clothing. We see these patterns on our tops, jackets, dresses, skirts, shirts, footwear, swimwear and, the patterns which embody our clothing bring and come through in a seasonal fashion. Bringing back towards the kimono, we see different images amongst the different seasons. For example, during the spring season, you could typically see birds either as a single or as a flock, aligned with spring flowers. The designs of spring birds you will see are “a bewildering variety of birds, large and small, congregating in flocks or singled out as a lone motif” (Nitanai, 2017) and “Spring is the season for small birds” (Nitanai, 2017). The symbol of small birds represents the beginning of something new and the start of growth. Bringing florals with birds into pattern design has been adapted from the small birds on a kimono, to a more “western-style flowers and exchanging native birds for parrots, canaries” (Nitanai, 2017). Looking into womenswear and dresses, you can see the designs of florals and birds coming out from their textiles. We often see these patterns in spring and summer time when the weather is warmer and there is less rain. Within the designs which are woven into our clothing we design to create atmospheres, to bring across emotions and what we think, such as, ‘I like the way this looks’. “To sense a mood is to be sensitive to a subtle atmospheric shift that touches persons across air space. In this way, motion creates emotion and, reciprocally, emotion contains a movement that becomes communicated”(Bruno, 2014). Seasonally we design and add our

imagery onto clothing to what fits the weather and the functions of said dress or outfit. We put our place, our own emotions “within the fabric of what we touch and from that which touches us: we “handle” them, even when we cannot handle them” (Bruno, 2014). As an artist placing our emotions and feelings onto our work conveys our thoughts and what we want to represent through each design. A lot of hard work goes into designing, from what texture of cloth works best with different disperse dyes, to what colours work best and, additional work such as lace or bringing a collection of patterns with similar styles. This leads on to design and the ‘*Artistry*’ behind the work.



(Nitanai, 2017)

We see a lot of art fashioned into our day to day lives, but what we do not see is the work, the time creating the designs. ‘*Artistry*’, is the ability to create, design, bring attention to detail and

produce exceptional designs. As mentioned within the topic of *'weave'*, the creator designs the pattern, however, create the imagery to what looks good and are happy with the design. It is important that the design of materials within clothing are put together strongly and fashioned through textiles suitable for their purposes. When thinking about cloth the designer must also think about the placement of their design amongst the texture, "mental images are fashioned as cloth is, haptically, out of the texture of our world: they are pictured with the material, stretch, malleable, creative quality of its fabric" (Bruno, 2014). Creating designs and being able to create is a part of who we are, when you look around, you will see that "anything that isn't a simple, untouched piece of nature has been designed by someone" (Cross, 2011). Design thinking has always been there, we all are designers and through centuries have fathomed our ideas and have created designs which suit purpose. When designing a surface design there are stages to create a nice seamless design. Thinking about designs, interpreting each individual stage, such as the line work, placing your design onto a screen, choosing the right fabric, immersing your design onto the fabric, and then visualising your work through software's adobe photoshop or adobe illustrator. "The process of making something does not normally start before the process of designing it is complete" (Cross, 2011). Designing something comes from having an original idea, a subject to look at, researching and then creating mood boards of possible outcomes and where you would like to take your designs. Creating mood boards really does help guide a designer, telling them what style of art they will produce, the different colour tones to give the designs and the area to which the designs will be placed. Photoshop is a great digital tool to visualize your designs, whether it being for fashion, interior design, stationary or object. You can see how they will look by placing the dress or room as a Jpeg and overlay your image with your pattern design. Many designers today use adobe photoshop for editing and lots of creative workplaces use and promote photoshop as the best platform for designers to work on, edit on. Creating surface design pattern work within photoshop contains lots of imagery and each image piece represents a layer. Combining layers in different ways helps a designer think about how they want their pattern to be seen and where their patterns placement could potentially go. "When we create a montage in

Photoshop, we're not just laying the bare facts before our viewers – we're telling a story. And we have to do all we can to make that story entertaining, informative and compelling" (Caplin, 2008). Through surface design our work resembles a subject, that subject could be botanical, animals, food, sports, antiques, art deco, bold colours, or aquatic. There are lots of potential subject area a surface artist can take and draw, but it is how the drawings are created, and used which is the focal point to every design. Having the right atmosphere and composition for pattern work ensures the best outcome of a surface designers work. It all comes down to how the design works and what the final product of their design perceives as. Reading more about design thinking, "designers – especially skilled, successful designers – talk spontaneously about what they do, they talk almost exclusively about the outcomes, not the activities. They talk about the products of their designing, rather than the process" (Cross, 2011). After completion of a design, the outcome is the most looked forward to part, from having done the processes, to being able to see your design in its end outcome is what is most exciting.

After researching the three key words '*context*', '*weave*', '*artistry*' and what they mean/represent through the practice of surface design. I have concluded as to what question I will be taking forward. The question which relatively came to me after due consideration is 'How are Surface Patterns Tailored to their Product?'. From my research I have developed further inquisitiveness into what goes into the design thinking, the structure of materials and best outcomes. I am also interested in what makes a good pattern, whether it is complex or simple, yet intriguingly efficient. Progressing on from my question I will investigate more illustrative patterns, how to encompass them into design and their product designs. To add, how the patterns are perceived on their relative products.

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