

Student Name: Nikita Wild

Student Number: 2003582

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Question 2: Define skill in the context of your own practice and the work of two artists/makers/designers from the lecture series.

This essay will discuss the skills required to be a Surface Pattern Designer (SPD). Programmes of study in SPD at universities will be looked at for the modules and skills that they deliver as well as current employment opportunities in the industry to gain an understanding of the skills needed for the workplace. In addition to this, William Morris and Tricia Guild who are 2 designers will be discussed in more detail, looking at their work and the skills applied to create their designs. Finally, the essay will conclude with

A surface pattern designer needs to have a diverse set of skills as there are a variety of employment opportunities available in the industry. After graduating a surface pattern designer will be qualified to work in these areas, textiles interiors such as wallpaper and fabric furnishing, as well as automotive industry, fashion, and surface design for lifestyle products, architectural spaces, and blogs writing for magazines. Also, surface pattern designer may want to work in the retail industry as a buyer for a store, display merchandising and possibly a career in teaching. (Wolverhampton, 2021).

The surface pattern design BA course at The University of Wales Trinity Saint David equips the student with the necessary skills for the workplace. For example, over the three-year period students will be experts in the following, researching; creating and presenting ideas on a mood board; developing ideas through different drawing skills and medias; sketch book development; the use of materials and their suitability for the projects. Also, different types of printing methods are delivered, to include screen printing, mono printing, transfer printing, batik, devore “some traditional techniques such as block, potato and lino, which are in danger of being lost” (Wells, 2000, p.6). Further to this, digital printing skills are taught as they are quicker to produce and less waste helping the environment, in comparison to a traditionally printed fabric with multi colours that would take much longer to create. For example, from the start of the process a small design on a t-shirt would take about 6 hours (anon, 2021), a 5 meters length of fabric would take much longer. R A

Smart quotes that “10 digital machines” has a “Capacity of Digital Printing over 1 million meters of fabric each year” (smart, 2021). Digital printing is known to be better for the environment,

There is less use of chemicals and water than traditional methods. Use of water is unavoidable however, we have reduced our water consumption to the minimum required to achieve production. The disposal of wastewater is treated through approved channels as effluent friendly. (smart, 2021).

Looking at a live job advert with a leading interior fabric and wallpaper company, Romo group, for a “Colour Retoucher and Support Artworker” (Romo, n/a), the desirable criterion for the job is to have skills in colour matching and the materials needed to correct designs digitally. A current job advertisement for a designer/stylist, the role requires digital and traditional skills for designing wallpapers. This is a dream job as it also involves “traveling to our manufacturing partners, both in the UK and throughout Europe, for product proofing and sign off”. (Holden, 2021). The skills needed to be a surface pattern designer for the employment areas listed above are research skills, digital skills, and an element of traditional skills.

A designer that continues to be recognised is the late William Morris, renowned for his decorative textiles created with traditional methods, also another designer that is current is Tricia Guild OBE, she is a well-known figure in the interior design world. The works of both will be discussed analysing the methods applied to create their own unique designs.

“William Morris was a man on many talents, whose life and life’s work made a huge impact on the worlds of literature, design and politics.” (Zaczek, 1999).

Morris was originally trained as a an architect, then later developed his skills in textiles such as tapestries and embroidery, wallpaper, furniture design and stained glass, (Zaczek, 1999), however Parry(2013) adds that his skills also developed in carpets and woven textiles (Parry, 2013). Pattern making became second nature to him when his aspirations of an architect and a painter failed. His first interest into textiles was just for aesthetic, developing his love for pattern and texture. Using his knowledge on textiles, Morris tried and tested traditional patterns and techniques of his own,

allowing him to become one of the most knowledgeable textile historians of his generation. "He experimented with new techniques but also revived long-forgotten methods of dyeing, printing and weaving in order to get the best of his designs in terms of colour, composition and texture" (Parry, 2013, p. 10).

A lot of Morris' designs were inspired by the natural forms of the outdoors, through the gardens and all the plants which were surrounding him. Taking inspiration from plants, he never replicated them exactly as he believed that it was not possible to imitate nature. "It is impossible to imitate nature literally; the utmost realism of the most realistic painter falls a long way short of it." (William Morris 'Some Hints on Pattern Designing' lecture, 1881) (Barber, n.d.).

Throughout his life he had a few companies which he had developed. The company which is still going to this day is Morris and Co, which was formed in 1875, the designers at the company were Burne-Jones, Philip Webb, and William Morris. Morris created and designed a multitude of wallpaper and textile designs. Rich colour tones were something which William Morris wanted to create, and with help he was able to do this using pre-industrial herbal techniques. Machine and hand weaving techniques were techniques that Morris enjoyed experimenting with. "The firm complemented their 24 machine-made carpets with a range of hand-woven tapestries worked on a jacquard loom, operated by a silk-weaver from Lyons and an assistant from Spitalfields" (I, 1999, p. 11). This links back to the old skill set that a surface pattern designer would have needed, as they didn't have the resources, like surface pattern designer do now, to create different tones of colour, there would have been a lot more of a creative and a lot more thought would have gone into a colour palette.



Figure 1 - *Sunflower wallpaper, 1877-78*

In Figure 1, the design is called Sunflower, this is one of William Morris's original designs, the pattern includes sunflowers and grape vines with fruit. The materials used to create the motif was pen and watercolour, the wallpaper design is symmetrical, the repeat pattern is a mirror image repeat, created using block print, however during this time Morris became "interested in the weaving process, and some of the stylistic traits commonly associated with craft were carried into his wallpaper design" (Zaczek, 1999, p. 197).



Figure 2- *Fruit wallpaper, 1866*

The name figure 2 above is fruit, however the design of this wallpaper is also known as 'Pomegranate'. The motif of the pattern is branches of fruit leaves, including lemons, oranges, and pomegranates, the design of the fruits is lifelike. "There is light stripping on their surfaces, and the burst of skins and exposed seeds of the over-ripe pomegranates lend an extra hint of realism" (Zaczek, 1999, p. 195). The technique used is block print in a repeated pattern, using the pales branches in the background to mask the repeat.



Figure 3- *Acanthus Hanging*, 1880

Figure 3 above is a wall hanging, designed by William Morris, and worked on by May Morris. The woollen felt cloth, edged with silk cord worked in darning stitch, includes coloured silk thread, satin, stem, and buttonhole stitching, couching and laid work (V&A, 2004), during the time of Morris designing this piece, was when Morris was teaching himself how to weave. The design involves the acanthus leaves, as Morris was fascinated with pattern making them throughout his career, often in his design the acanthus leaf is curled up and dense and in this design the acanthus leaf is “flattened out and used as a linking device, binding together the bright array of tiny blooms in the central panel and borders” (Zaczek, 1999, p. 245). The design on this wall hanging was mainly created with

embroidery. This is a traditional skill, that continues to be used to create texture and depth to any piece.

Tricia Guild OBE is a British designer, she is the founder and creative director of Designer Guild. “She has sat at the Craft Council and is an honorary fellow of The Royal College of Art” (Guild, 1994). It was in 2008 she was awarded an OBE for her services to interior design from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (Guild, 2020).

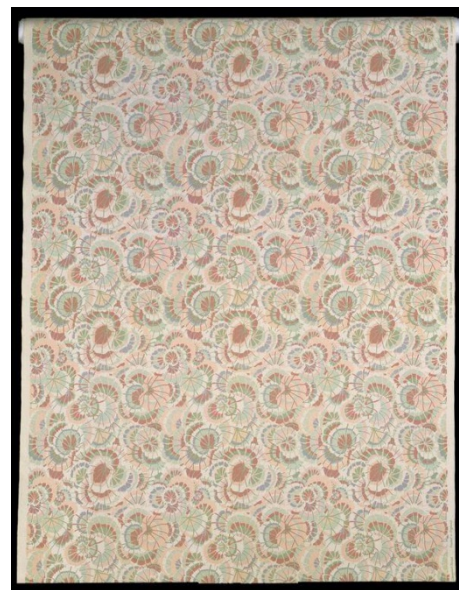
During an interview with Home and Garden Magazines Guilds states that “I find that inspiration for my work can strike at almost any time – nature and the landscape are of course constant sources of joy” (Guild, 2021). Indian prints had also inspired her, from when David Bishops, who had his own decorating company, brought back block prints from a trip to India, the design of the block prints were hand printed on to raw cotton, small scale designs, and the colours were earthy tones, from this Guilds fascination with textiles, wallpapers and pattern design. (Guild, 2020). “Derived from such diverse sources as Eastern decorative art, Italian architecture, flowers and nature to classical documents” (Guild, 2021).

The company Designers Guild was established in 1970 by brother and sister Robin and Tricia Guild and now has offices and showrooms worldwide in London, New York, Munich, Stockholm, and Paris. As a company, Designers Guild produce fabrics for interiors, wallpaper, upholstery, and bed and bath collections, currently having a range of 9,000 fabrics and 2,000 wallpapers. For their fabrics, “The highest qualities of cloth are sourced: from combed Egyptian cottons and Scottish linen unions to Swiss woven damasks” (Guild, 2021). With each collection Designers Guild create, it all starts with ideas or inspiration starting with a sketch with a pencil or artist’s brush. This follows with experimenting and trialling the design, from the beginning of the idea to the finished product at the

end. It can take up to 2 years for the whole creative process. The development team in the company consists of weavers, printers and manufactures. The company uses a range of techniques, which are part of the skillset of a surface pattern designer. At the start, the company used the traditional method of screen printing, and Rotary Galvano printing, this then followed to more state-of-the-art digital printing (Guild, 2021).



Figure 4 – *Geranium*, 1977



Geranium

Figure 4, the image on the left is a drawing, drawn by the designer Kaffe Fassett for the company Designers Guild, the materials which Fassett used were, watercolour, body colour, another term for gouache and pencil (V&A, 2009). Hand drawings are often of used by a surface pattern designer, its usually the first step to create initial drawing using the natural resources as inspiration as it is quick and easy to sketch something down on paper, come back to later. Image to the right is the furnishing fabric, screen printed in 1976 onto cream cotton. There would have been 6 screens needed for the 6 colours used in the print, these were pale green, mid- green, pale pink, mid pink, mid-blue and peach (V&A, 2009). It's interesting to see how one drawing, can be created into a repeated pattern. The type of pattern that looks to have been used is a continuous repeat, this is a common skill used

by a Surface pattern designer. it is probably one of the most difficult techniques however, it looks good with any motif.



Figure 5- *Caprioglio collection 2015*



Caprioglio

Figure 5 on the left, is a panel of the wallpaper that is part of the Caprioglio collection, designed by Tricia Guild in 2015. The bright pink and vibrant yellow florals are set against a dramatic blue sky. The design of the florals was hand painted, as can be seen the detail of the brushwork and marks and then it has been developed into digital prints, allowing the design to be printed on deluxe fabrics. This application is contemporary skill set of a surface pattern designer. The figure on the right you can see the wallpaper on display and is styled, its easier to see here that the pattern has been created as a block repeat.



Figure 6- *Peonia Grande Zinc*



Veronese Fabrics collection

In figure 6 seen on the left, is a floral design created by Tricia Guild called *Peonia Grande Zinc*. The design is of photorealistic peonies that were hand painted, allowing details of the brush strokes to be seen, and then digitally printed on to the luxury fabrics, like the design seen above in Figure 5. The colours used are quite translucent, neutral tones and with the layering. This allows the design to mix perfectly between classicism and contemporary. Whereas Morris' work leans more towards a traditional arts and crafts style, with a heavier colour palette.

Both artists have drawn inspiration from the natural forms and produced similar interior products using different methods to produce the work. Morris originally not trained in the area of surface pattern design however, Guild was. Despite their different background Morris' legacy continues and no doubt Guilds work will be discussed for many years to come.

In conclusion, from the information sourced to write this assignment to looking at job opportunities, training as a student and the practices of 2 practitioners in the field of surface pattern design, I have gained a broader understanding of the diverse skills needed to become a successful surface pattern designer. From looking at the work of the 2 practitioners discussed, they have been very

inspirational and will inform my future practice. Also, looking at the job advert for the wallpaper designer, this too has inspired me to maintain focus on my studies in an area that I am passionate about.

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