

The Beginning Design Student: Pedagogy and Pattern

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With a broad spectrum of cultural and artistic periods, designers and works worthy of discussion, one challenge for the beginning design student is developing an understanding of the history of the field and the value of historic analysis and research in building design skills. Rather than offering an encyclopedic collection of works in a design history course, it can be advantageous to consider particular works/buildings/objects as a methodological opportunity to build the student's analytical and research skills. With this practice in mind, I have been investigating the utility of object based research as a pedagogical tool. This paper will focus on one assignment, "The Pattern Project," for beginning interior design students as a means of developing research and analytical skills.

The focus of the "Pattern Project" for the beginning design student is to use textiles as a point of departure to explore the intersection of narrative, technology and materiality. In choosing a historical pattern for research and evaluation, students begin exploring the pattern formally, thereby honing their observation skills. They examine the pattern in relation to six areas of inquiry: materiality, design, color, culture and history, craft, and use. This exploration leads to questions about how patterns communicate and transmit meaning, and further, how textile research can be utilized to provoke an understanding of the cultural, political and economic circumstances of a particular time and place. Such an investigation naturally poses questions about production and consumption that underscore shifting economic, political, regional and global relationships.

The assignment culminates with an oral presentation of their findings and an 18" x 24" presentation board in landscape orientation that communicates their research and design analyses. This exercise allows beginning design students to further develop their graphic and oral communication skills, considering the relationship between object and text in a meaningful way. Students consider legibility and self-editing as significant elements in sharing ideas. A key part of this process is developing students' understanding of relevant sources, citing when appropriate both text and images.

As previously stated, the challenge for a history survey course in any discipline is the growing array of coverage that is an impossible feat for any instructor. As scholars have been debating the value of the introductory history course's "coverage model" since the 1960s (Sipress and Voelker 2011), new approaches suggest aligning the objectives of assignments with the overarching goals of the course. In the case of the "Pattern Project," the goals are twofold: 1. to develop a methodology for the evaluation of an object or space and 2. to gain a greater appreciation for the complexity of objects that often serve as surface decoration. Although the focus of the project is to use textile patterns as a point of departure to explore the intersection of narrative, technology and materiality, a broader goal is to instill a culture of curiosity in the classroom and to embolden students in their critical thinking. There have been numerous studies especially geared to K-12 education that explore this phenomenon. One educator has written, 'For students to be curious, they must feel worthy of seeking. They must feel entitled to ask questions and encouraged to stray, to explore, to seek' (Shonstrom 2014). Many design

students may feel comfortable taking risks in their creative pursuits, but typically they are more insecure in their writing and research skills. This project is intended to provide students with tools to strengthen their written and oral communication skills while also making research less daunting and to see it as a vital part of the design process.

After the first iteration of this project, I adjusted the project to reflect these goals of fostering deeper understanding and curiosity for my students. In order for my students to develop lasting connections on their own, I needed a better understanding of their design curriculum and how history and theory fits within their educational trajectory. According to numerous education experts, considering the entire life cycle of an object increases the learning effect (Johnson 2011). Therefore, partnering with studio faculty allows students to explore the project from multiple perspectives. My colleague, Emily Smith, who shares an interest in pattern and materials research, and I conceived of the project from the vantage point of both my course (History and Theory of Interior Environments) and her Fundamentals of Design class, both for first year interior design students.

In addition, I developed a modeling exercise to underscore the multifaceted nature of object based research and introduce the project. I begin with a brief workshop on toile, as a form of modeling how a single object can spark a flow of interrogation. Specifically, I use a textile sample called 'American Independence Toile' or 'The Apotheosis of Franklin,' 1780-1790 (Figure 1). According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, the generic definition of toile is any of many plain or simple twill weave fabrics, especially linen. And, more specifically it often refers to a cotton or linen fabric characterized by monochromatic prints on a light background. Toile also commonly implies, 'Toile de Jouy,' or fabric from Jouy-en-Josas, a French town that was home to the most famous producer of these textiles, the Oberkampf manufactory. These intricate images included pastoral scenes and landscapes, but depictions of political and military subjects, such as this one (Figure 1), were also common. (Riffel and Rouart 2003).



Figure 1: 'The Apotheosis of Franklin' 1780-1890, England, plate printed linen and cotton. Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Toile may be something that students either know nothing about or they may have associations of 'old, traditional, found in Grandma's house or a second-hand store.' Yet, through formal and contextual analysis, a global story emerges that spans from India, western Europe to the American colonies, a story about shifting technologies and geopolitics, and even identity politics. According to textile scholar, Whitney A. J. Robertson, 'Every inch of the pattern repeat [of the American Independence Toile] is both visually appealing and loaded with meaning, creating a design that almost begs the viewer to play 'I Spy.' Perhaps this is why the 'Apotheosis' became so well-known in its own time and so highly collected afterwards' (Robertson, 2012, 6). By delving into the history of toile and more specifically this pattern, students explore how observation can lead to questions and thereby begin the research process. In essence, they follow this practice: Observation of Material/Object; Establish Research Questions; Investigation; Analysis, Reflection; More questions; Repeat.

To begin the exercise, students are placed in groups of five or six around a sample of the toile and they are asked to look at it formally, thereby honing their observation skills. They begin evaluating the textile based on the project's six areas of inquiry: materiality, design, color, culture and history, craft and use. Through this process, they establish what they are able to glean from observation and what types of questions lead to further investigation. For instance, in looking at the design of the sample, they ask questions such as, who are the figures represented? What is happening in this narrative? Does this sample include the entire repeat and how large is that repeat? What does the scale suggest about its use and where it would be in an interior environment? In terms of materiality and color, they ask about what it is made of and whether it is woven or printed, and further, why there are only two colors. This analysis naturally provokes questions about the context in which the textile was made, distributed and used.

Once students are made aware of the complexity of images in this single design, it opens up inquiry into why it was made, for whom, how it was made and how the dissemination of iconography manifested during this period. For instance, the sample utilizes images taken from other sources, but it takes the subject further; rather than commemorating a specific historical event, the toile's designer combined images of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin with a wealth of well-known symbols of liberty and the American nation to create an allegorical piece that celebrated both the creation of America and its greatest heroes. (Robertson, 2012). The figure of George Washington, first President of the United States of America, is taken from a painting by the American artist John Trumbull (1756-1843) that had been engraved by Valentine Green in 1781. One scene shows Washington driving a chariot with an allegorical figure of America holding a plaque inscribed 'American Independence 1776'. The other main scene shows the goddess Athene with the statesman Benjamin Franklin and a figure of Liberty bearing a scroll inscribed 'where liberty dwells there is my country' (V&A Museum, n.d.).

These symbols were important testaments to the foundation of the new American nation and would have been readily recognized by a literate class of Americans. For instance, the design is known to have been used in the house of the President of Congress, Richard Henry Lee, in New York in 1785, described by a guest: 'My chamber is ... prettily furnished. Which way soever I turn my eyes I find a

triumphal Car, a liberty Cap, a Temple of Fame or the Hero of Heroes [Washington], all these and many more objects of a piece with them, being finely represented on the hangings.' (V&A Museum, n.d.)

Often students immediately note that the label on the original source provides information that it was made in England from 1780-1790. An understanding of broader historical context opens up questions about how and why an American story with American heroes, made shortly after the Revolutionary War, was made in England. The story of printed textiles begins much earlier with the European taste for Indian calicos in the eighteenth century, eventually leading to European manufacturers establishing competitive domestic markets for cotton printed fabrics and ultimately an understanding of colonial taxes. The American colonies were not allowed to manufacture their own printed cottons, having to send their raw materials back to England and the importing the finished product.

Comparative analysis of the Apotheosis toile with other printed textiles of the period highlights the value of new manufacturing technologies this product. The introduction of copper-plate printing in the 1750s presented new possibilities in the development of printed textile design, allowing a fineness of detail and delicacy of drawing which had not been achieved in earlier wood-block printed textiles. It also allowed much larger pattern repeats, which made it particularly suitable for bed hangings. This line of inquiry opens up an excellent opportunity to discuss the valuable resources from museums such as the Metropolitan, Winterthur Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum that showcase decorative arts and period rooms that amplify the story of how this textile may have been originally used. And of course, it elicits a conversation about how unusual it would be to have a sofa or bed covered in twenty-first century political figures.

The value of developing contextual understanding is crucial to a full appreciation of this particular narrative pattern. Considering how this textile has shifted in meaning over time, we also discuss a few examples of contemporary toiles, including "Harlem Toile" by Sheila Bridges from 2006. Sheila Bridges created her own toile based on her neighborhood in Harlem, infusing this traditional scenic fabric with images of African American everyday life. Often traditional toiles included prominent classical monuments referencing the European Grand Tour as a sign of education and refinement in the late eighteenth century. Here she places African Americans within these scenes—adding them to a story from which they were often excluded (Cooper Hewitt Museum, n.d.)

As students develop questions for further research, they are also given support from our Arts Librarian who helps them to understand how to identify relevant sources and review when and how to cite both text and images. Carla Mae also created a library webpage dedicated to our project, with advice about books, articles, and databases that may be helpful for research. Although my students are incredibly reliant on digital research, they quickly learn the value of individuals like our arts librarian, Carla-Mae Crookendale, in helping to expand their research abilities.

The story of toile offers an opportunity to expound upon the value of object centered investigation. Beginning with something seemingly ordinary and showing its extraordinary capacity to tell us a larger story about a particular time and place, the exercise sets the students on their own path to discover the intersection of narrative, technology and materiality investigating their pattern.

The assignment culminates with an oral presentation of their findings and an 18" x 24" presentation board that communicates their research and design analyses. This exercise allows students to further

develop their graphic and oral communication skills, considering the relationship between object and text in a meaningful way. Students consider legibility and self-editing as significant elements in sharing ideas. Students take a graphics course concurrently where they are introduced to the basics of InDesign. In the future, the project could be further enhanced by becoming an integral element of the Graphics course. In the remaining portion of the paper, I would like to share examples of student work to highlight the variety and complexity of their research and presentations.

In this first example (Figure 2), student Abby Knuff chose the Greek key pattern, which she had noticed kept reappearing since antiquity and one that we had first encountered in an amphora at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. She looked at a textile made by a contemporary manufacturer, Schumacher. Her poster includes a textual evaluation of the major themes: materiality, design, color, culture and history, craft and use, as well as sketches that show her investigation into the origins of the pattern, including one in which she explores the idea of infinity as expressed through the Meander River in Asia Minor, said to have been the source of inspiration for the motif. In the other sketch, she evaluated the concept of stability as expressed in interlocking elements in the second sketch.

Culture, History, and Use

The Greek key, or Greek fret, pattern has existed since antiquity. It came out of Ancient Greece, with many examples coming out of the Geometric Period, between 900 B.C.E. and 700 B.C.E. However, variations of this pattern have been found that date back to 22,000 B.C.E. (Bird, 2003.) Because of this, the origin of this pattern is not associated with a specific date or designer. The original use of this pattern was typically for Greek ceramics and architecture. In ceramics, the pattern typically appeared as a single band around the top or bottom of an amphora or Greek vase. In architecture, the pattern appeared across the frieze of buildings. (Bird, 2003.) The purpose of this pattern was mainly decorative and was heavily associated with symbolism.

Greek key is the modern name for this pattern, but the original name was meander, or "meandros" in Greek. (Wikipedia, 2017.) This name came from the Meander river in Asia Minor, or modern-day Turkey. This river was referenced in Homer's Iliad and is known for its convoluted, twisting path. For this reason, the twisting, continuous pattern of the Greek key is meant to symbolize infinity and an eternal flow. (CultureFaste, 2016.) The Greek key was one of the most important motifs in ancient Greece, creating a national identity. The continuity of the meander pattern is also associated with the natural pattern of growth. (Bird, 2003.) The interlocking symbol of the Greek key is connected with unity, eternal bond, and friendship, and was often given as a marriage gift. (CultureFaste, 2016.)

Greek Key was an important motif during its time, and has been just as prominent throughout history, existing in several forms across cultures. It appeared during the Roman Empire where the motif was found on mosaic roads as well as buildings and ceramics. (Wikipedia, 2017.) Throughout history, the motif has been found across Europe, and eventually America, in styles that referenced classical ideals, such as the Renaissance and Neo-Palladian periods. The Greek Key pattern was especially popular in 18th and 19th century European designs. (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2017.) In the 20th century, the motif was common in Art Deco rugs, wallpapers, and furniture, as well as those of the Mid-Century Modern era. Today, many variations of the motif are found in digitally printed fabrics and wallpapers.

Materiality and Craft- Continued

Ceramics were made of clay gathered from the earth and then fired. The designs were painted onto them with either a red figure or a black figure technique. In the black figure technique, all the figures, shapes, and motifs were painted with a black glaze, and the background was left as the natural color of the red clay. In the red figure technique, the black glaze was applied everywhere on the vase except for the figures and motifs, so the background would appear black and the designs would appear as the natural red color of the earthenware. The black glaze was a type of watered-down clay, or slip, that turned black when fired a second time. (Department of Greek and Roman Art, 2002.)

Diagram Key

1- Diagram representing differing levels of contrast among colorways

A. Greek Key: Asia, cotton and linen blend, Schumacher

B. Greek Key: Ruby, cotton and linen blend, Schumacher

C. Greek Key: Sand, cotton and linen blend, Schumacher

2- Diagram illustrating the Greek key pattern's relationship to nature and the Meander River as well as its symbolism of continuity, infinity, and complexity

3- Diagram representing the Greek key's symbolism of bond and unity and the pattern's overall rectilinear, interlocking design

4- Geometric Amphora, 700-720 B.C.E., terracotta, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

5- Mould, 1790-1810, carved strips of boxwood, set in a beech block, Victoria and Albert Museum

Materiality and Craft

The contemporary version of the Greek key pattern was designed and produced by Schumacher. It comes in the form of a woven textile with the colored pattern digitally printed onto its surface. The fabric is a linen-cotton blend and is woven into a plain, extensible weave. The size of the warp and weft of the weave allow for a sturdy and durable textile. Historically, the Greek key pattern was found in architectural friezes and pottery. In architecture, craftspeople would use chisel and hand drills to carve the pattern into the quartet-mantle frieze of a temple or building. (Curtwright, 2013.) Craftspeople during this period learned their trade by apprenticing other craftspeople and were very refined and highly skilled. (Phillips, 1999.)

Design



The Greek key is a simple pattern made up entirely of straight lines and right angles. The pattern consists of key motifs, which look like simple, angular spirals. The rectilinear form of this pattern responds to the visual language of the classical Greek architecture of this period. These motifs interlock with each other to create the Greek key pattern. The positive spaces create a negative space that is the same as the positive space. If the colors were inverted, the same pattern would appear.


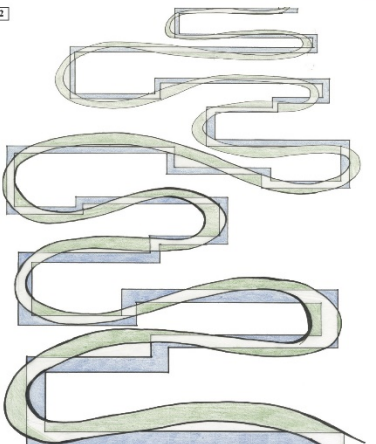
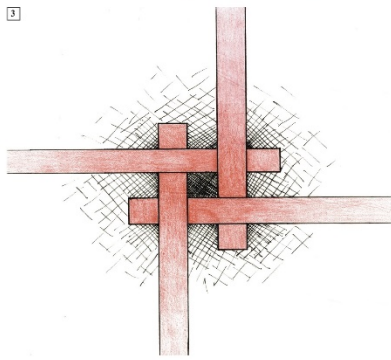
Historically, the motifs formed a single, continuous band that encircled buildings and vases. Contemporary versions, such as Schumacher's Greek key, extend the motif in all four directions, creating a more grid-like structure. The Schumacher pattern has both a horizontal and vertical repeat of 9 inches. (Schumacher, 2015.) Although the pattern is inherently simple, the motifs can be interlocked in a way that makes the pattern appear complex and convoluted. Because of this, the Greek key is often associated with labyrinthine, which can be created through the repeated use of the Greek key motif. (CultureFaste, 2016.)

Color

The original Greek key pattern as a curved motif in architecture was often polychromed, or painted, onto the surface of a building, typically in gold. (Bird, 2003.) These ancient Greek amphoras, or vases, were typically made of earthenware with designs painted or glazed onto them. Because red-figure black-figure glazing and firing techniques were used, the only colors in the final product were the inherent black and red colors of the clay. Sometimes, the amphoras would also be highlighted with additional paint colors, but this was typically only done on the figures and not on the geometric patterns such as a band of Greek key. (Department of Greek and Roman Art, 2002.)

The contemporary version by Schumacher comes in three colorways: Ruby, Java, and Sand. (Schumacher, 2015.) Each one of these is a single color digitally printed onto an off-white, woven textile. Ruby is a red-orange, Java is a dark brown, and Sand is a yellow beige. These different colors create different levels of contrast against the cream-white background. Java has the highest contrast, while Sand has the lowest.

Pattern Research Project-
An Investigation of the Greek Key Motif
Abby Knuff | December 2017

Figure 2: Abby Knuff, "Pattern Project Research: An Investigation of the Greek Key Motif" Fall 2017. Poster 18" x 24". (Image courtesy of Abby Knuff).

The sample that Mathew Toscano chose to evaluate, called 'Chevron Black,' 2011, came from Spoonflower, a low cost, digitally printed fabric (Figure 3). Spoonflower is an on demand digital printing service since 2008 out of North Carolina, and is currently the largest collection of independent fabric designers in the world. In choosing this pattern, Mathew was inspired by popular culture, specifically his favorite show, 'Twin Peaks,' to begin thinking about how pattern can amplify larger themes within the structure of a story. For instance, he noted that the repetition of the motif in the television series may represent the persistent dichotomy between good and evil as portrayed in the series. Mathew also included a timeline that examined how the simple zigzag pattern has been used since antiquity and by various cultures in diverse media, often taking on very different meanings and sometimes leading to questions of cultural appropriation.

CULTURE + HISTORY + USE



PREHISTORIC FOSSIL
The recent archaeological discovery of a prehistoric fossil displays a zigzag etching. While not an intentional pattern, the carving highlights the simple nature of the design and the ease with which it can be created (Leshover, 2014).

GEOMETRIC KRATER
Art of the Geometric Era of ancient Greece is characterized by simple geometric abstractions. In the krater at the left, people are represented by triangles and other basic shapes, the Greek key motif is employed around the rim, and zigzag features heavily, especially as a means of distinguishing segments.

NAVAJO TEXTILE
Navajo blankets feature many patterns, including zigzag. Weaving on a traditional loom with a vertical and horizontal warp and weft is conducive to the creation of geometric designs. Stripes or yarns are dyed before weaving and then woven to create a pattern. (Wahnes, 1990).

ART DECO ILLUSTRATION
This fashion illustration by the French artist Sonia Delaunay shows Art Deco's appreciation for the zigzag. The movement was partly inspired by the geometric art of ancient Egypt (Ellson, 2008).

ZIGZAG CHAIR
This famous zigzag chair by the Dutch designer Gerrit Rietveld shows the rudimentary functionality of the zigzag form.

FASHION
Marc Jacobs, for his 2011 Spring Summer collection, included bold zigzag patterns on the runway. The look book references a past appreciation in fashion of geometric design while stressing its continued relevance (Phelps, 2010).

MY PATTERN



Pattern name: Zigzag
Title: "Chevron Black"
Creator: Tina Raparanta
Place of origin: Ontario, CA
Date of origin: 2011 (Raparanta, 2011)

CRAFT & MATERIALITY

My sample of "Chevron Black" is printed on cotton and is one of the many items manufactured and continually produced by textiles of the custom digital printing company Spoonflower. The cloth itself is simple, tightly woven and slightly rough to the touch. Like all eco-friendly, 100% biodegradable and non-toxic, contributing to a sustainable and attractive business model (Spoonflower, n.d.).

The diagram at the right illustrates the concept of applied color.



COLOR

This high-contrast, black and white pattern boldly plays with positive and negative space. Spoonflower creates all textiles through digital printing. Color is applied to a variety of available fabrics such as cotton, silk, and satin. Typically, other zigzag patterns, such as in Figure 2 and 6, contain other high contrast colors such as red and white (Spoonflower, n.d.).



INSPIRATION

Red and white zigzag features heavily in the hit, cult TV show *Twin Peaks*. When the pattern symbolism is not directly addressed in the series, however, Jane Speedster's floor coat (illustrate the dichotomy of good and evil) (*Twin Peaks Explained*, n.d.).



DESIGN

A simple geometric design, "Chevron Black" contains three distinct repeats. The horizontal and vertical repeats take place on a 2 inch grid while the diagonal repeat is on a 1.45 inch grid at a 45° angle. All three scales are small as the pattern is meant to repeat many times when printed on a textile. Although there are no sub-patterns, the pattern could be considered as containing a series of repeated, conjoined chevrons.

The diagram at the right illustrates the three repeats.



IMAGES


- Figure 1: "Zigzag on ancient shell" (2014)
- Figure 2: "Decorated Stone Jar" (Springer, Museum of Art, n.d.)
- Figure 3: Navajo Blanket (National Navaho Culture, n.d.)
- Figure 4: Sonia Delaunay Fashion Illustration (PT Library Department of Special Collections, 2009)
- Figure 5: Zigzag Chair (KunsthausGraz, 2016)
- Figure 6: 2011 Spring Summer Fashion Illustration (Phelps, 2010)
- Figure 7: Chevron by Black (Raparanta, 2011)
- Figure 8: Twin Peaks Floor Coat (Chevron, n.d.)
- Figure 9: Materiality & Craft (Toscano, 2017)
- Figure 10: Twin Peaks Season 2 Floor Coat (2017)
- Figure 11: Scale (Toscano, 2017)

Figure 3: Matthew Toscano, 'ZIGZAG: An Investigation' Fall 2017, poster 18" x 24" (Image courtesy of Matthew Toscano).

Two students looked at popular herringbone patterns, one inspired by a scarf that she owned and the other by walking paths around campus. Both students wanted to explore how herringbone patterns vary depending on materiality. In particular, each examined the use of the pattern in masonry as well as in textiles for both fashion and interiors. Seylar Pring discussed how this pattern was used in antiquity as a method for shock absorption in streets and structures (Figure 4). And then she further explored how this structural system transferred to wool offering flexibility and movement. Jada Hitt's sample herringbone was her silk scarf, and she focused on this pattern's dynamic qualities, creating a sense of

movement when interacting with light (Figure 5). Her sketches reflect how alternating colors moving directionally add to this dynamic quality.

Herringbone



"Tile of Louisa County in Canada." (1877) by Ansonia Inc. U.S.

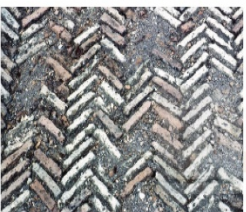


Image of Herringbone by S. Vermeir. (1778) by J. Mechanical Company.

Culture & History

The herringbone pattern dates back to Roman times, when this pattern was found to be used in roadways and laid down in such a pattern called "opus spicatum," which is referred to as the herringbone design found in modern marbles, sidewalks, and other interiors. Laying stones in the herringbone pattern allowed for shock absorption where people would walk along the ground.¹

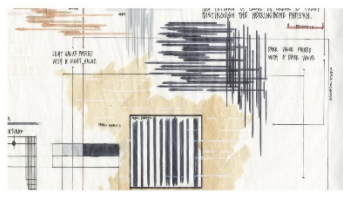
L.014046.2015

Color & Design

The colors within the pattern and its design since the design is a simple arrangement of the same shape. Using contrast between a light and dark color distinguishes the pattern completely, where a monochromatic pattern tends to create a look that's more subtle up-close and more difficult to find the pattern when viewed from afar. The formation of the pattern within textiles is through a warp twill, where it's sometimes woven in pairs, thus creating the herringbone pattern.²

The bulk of the pattern consists of rectangular shapes interlocking within each other, creating this look of a broken chevron since the original way this pattern was created was laying brick-like/cast stone pieces.


1. Bark, N., & Philadelphia Museum of Art. (1925)



Craft & Use

The original way that this pattern was made was the use of masonry techniques, which involves creating structures (or in this case, a pattern) using smaller parts (brick-like/cast stone or cut stone) into a bigger, main piece. In this case, this bigger main piece would be the end result of the herringbone pattern after the brick-like/cast stone pieces were all laid together.

Its original usage was within road pavement systems dating back to the Roman empire. This pattern also has history found in textiles, most notably coats and outerwear, where the use of the actual thick wool fabric worked well in applying this pattern to these clothing items.



"Skeleton of Herring fish." (1904) by J. S. Sear.

Its name actually derives from a herring fish due to the fact that there's a strong resemblance between the pattern itself and the spine of the fish.³

3. Owen, Scott, 1941, 2010.

Materiality

Although the original material of this pattern wasn't textile based, rather it was made from rectangular pieces of brick/cast stone, this pattern has found its way within the fashion world.

Most commonly woven as a broad fabric, usually using wool, its popular among suits and outerwear. It's also found within scarves and even woven using other fabrics such as linen, cotton, and polyester.




Photo by Lauren Lewis. Herringbone fabric. (2012)

Figure 4: Seylar Pring, 'Herringbone' Fall 2017, Poster 18" x 24" (Image Courtesy of Seylar Pring).

Craft

The Dudley herringbone print is a very versatile print. The pattern is applied as a textile that is made 100% from cotton. The cotton is manufactured and then spun into long lint fibers that is used in thread or yarns and then dyed as prussian blue, white or grey.

The herringbone pattern is a weft twill which the weft threads pass under one and over two or more threads.¹

The main use for this pattern by Shumacher is to be produced onto furnishing textiles such as couches, pillows, blankets and etc. Since the repeat is so small it is the perfect mate to make into large-scale patterns.

1. A Brief History of Textile, Herringbone & Plaid. (2015, December 26). Retrieved December 01, 2017, from <http://coloratombot.com/blog/2015/10/a-brief-history-of-herringbone-plaid/>


Culture & History

The Herringbone pattern dates back to the Roman Empire. They would place stones in a v-shaped zig-zag pattern for their road systems. This interlocking paving system was built on top of a base of crushed stone, which cleverly absorbed the compression of traffic and footfall, making it extremely stable and durable.²

We can see in diagram one what it would look like if you took the tiles apart and it shows how they would fall back together.

1. The History of Herringbone. (2017, February 11). Retrieved December 03, 2017, from <https://imgandcolor.com/a-brief-history-of-herringbone/>

Use



Dating back to the Roman Empire this pattern was used as a paving system. In present day the herringbone pattern can be used in different techniques. Such as:

- Tile back-splash
- Wooden flooring
- Sidewalks
- Fireplaces

Shumacher uses this pattern mainly for the use of textiles.

2. Backley, Matt. (2016). "The mini-check pattern works very well with certain tones of embroidery."

3. McManis, S. (2007, October). Post Query. For Design & Women 83. Fashion/Street Fashion, 2173, 41-46.

Design

As we begin to really strip down and look at this pattern we can see that this pattern has some type of movement to it. You could imagine tiny arrows all pointing in the same direction but on the next repeat the patterns are going the opposite way. It shows us that resemblance of continuation.

The horizontal repeat is 13 1/2" (34cm)
The vertical repeat is 4 1/2" (11cm)³

1. McManis, S. (2007, October). Post Query. For Design & Women 83. Fashion/Street Fashion, 2173, 41-46. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/openview/5e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e0e/114441530?fulltextPDF&2844242&2&1&10792?fromopenview=114441530>


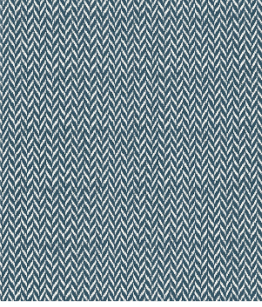
Materiality

The Dudley Herringbone pattern is made from one material: Cotton. Cotton is a white fibrous material that is attached to a tropical plant and is used as a textile fiber and thread for sewing.

A few qualities when using cotton is, it holds up longer than synthetic fibers, it has good color retention, and absorbs moisture well.

Color

The fabric comes with two color options, prussian blue and grey but both colors are intertwined with a white/cream color. It is a synthetic dye that is then placed upon a natural material.

1. B.D.J. Retrieved December 04, 2017, from <https://www.shumacher.com/#/047242>

2. Monville, K. (n.d.). Cotton Herringbone Market (New). Retrieved December 04, 2017, from <https://www.fashionista.com/article/1498005/1099-cotton-herringbone-market-easy>

Figure 5: Jada Hitt, 'Pattern Research Project: The Herringbone Pattern,' Fall 2017, Poster 18" x 24" (Image courtesy of Jada Hitt)

Emilie Kryse first noticed her pattern on sidelights of prominent early twentieth century Georgian homes around the VCU campus. As she began looking for similar examples in textiles, she discovered the 'Shippo Tsunagi' pattern, also found on Spoonflower (Figure 6). Emilie immediately noticed that although her pattern was digitally printed, it resembled embroidery. Her research uncovered that the Japanese embroidery style of a running stitch called (sashiko) was commonly used to create this pattern on Japanese kimonos. The name itself derives from both cloisonné techniques of enameling metal work and also referred to Buddhist symbolism. Because of its spiritual associations, her poster highlights the ways in which her pattern can be found in other media.

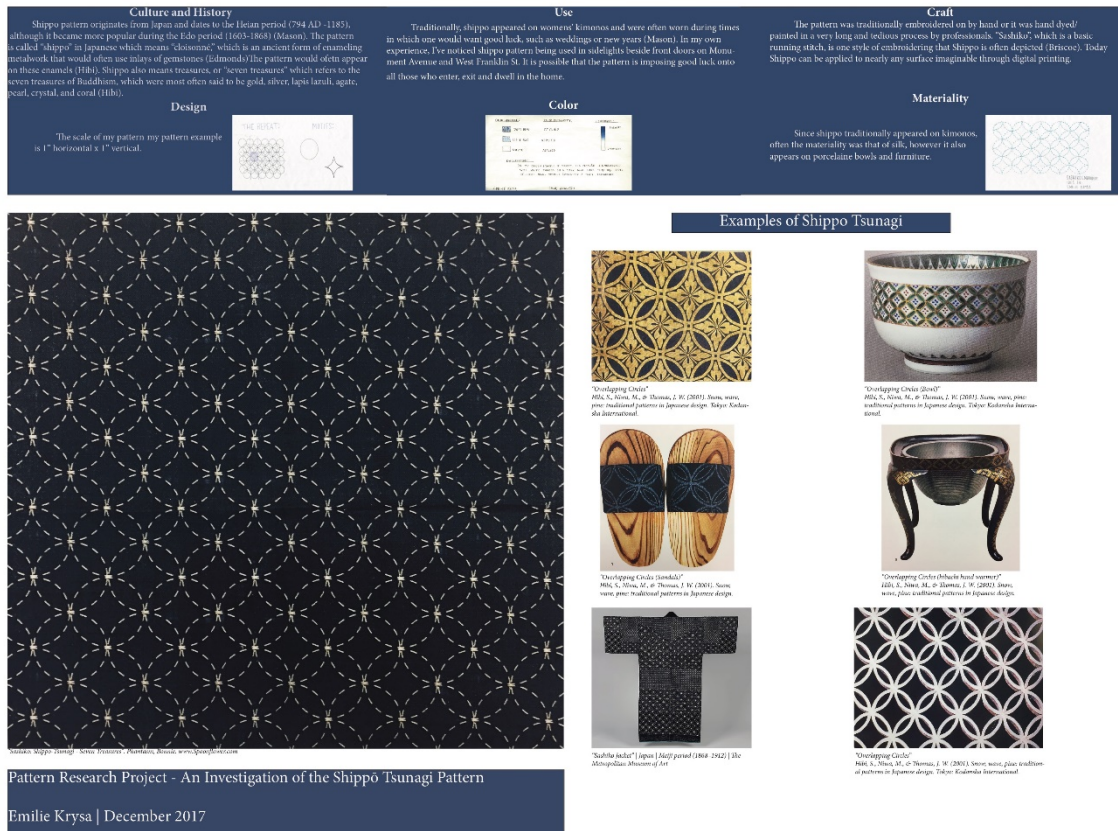


Figure 6: Emilie Krysa, 'Pattern Research Project: An Investigation of the Shippo Tsunagi Pattern' Fall 2017, Poster 18" x 24" (Image courtesy of Emilie Krysa).

Although each student explored craft, materiality, color, culture and history, and use, the way that they chose to focus their research and communicate that graphically was all their own, showcasing the multifaceted nature of historical analysis and the value of storytelling in exploring one's own investigation. In terms of further developing this project, we concluded that an initial pinup halfway through the semester would encourage further exploration and research, while also providing feedback and discussion of the poster design.

During the final presentations, my collaborator Emily Smith and I asked each student what questions they had for further research or how they would want to take this project further. This was a valuable way to conclude their presentations because rather than seeing them as 'complete' or 'comprehensive'—we want them to view this practice similarly to their design process, as a first iteration.

In conclusion, this project provides an opportunity for students to develop their research, observation, and communication skills. Offering a workshop in which I model evaluation and analysis helps to demystify the research process. And further, partnering with other faculty and library staff creates more meaningful and lasting connections for students. To further this initial investigation from their sophomore year, students will create their own patterns in the Materials Studio during their junior year.

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