

Paisley Impressions

April Elisha Stanley, Iowa State University, USA

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Measurements: 21 ½" bust, 21 ½" waist, 30" hips, 16 3/8" kilt length.

Contextual Review and Concept. Market research revealed that paisley design for children is relegated to nursery design (Three Wishes Bedding Co., 2016) and textiles such as car seat covers (Sew Cute in AZ, 2016), not children's garments, and usually made of pastel colors. Other paisley designs include beaded appliqués (Bead to Live By, 2015), a Kashmir paisley patterned pillow constructed of 100% linen (Spark Modern (2016), and a pattern for a crocheted paisley motif (ATERG Crochet, 2016). This childrenswear ensemble addresses a gap in the children's market in design, colorways, and methods employed. The purpose of this project was to explore digital printing, surface design, and needlework by creating a childrenswear ensemble inspired by the designer's Scottish heritage. The designer also wanted to include both visual and physical textures within the design to produce a unique childrenswear garment representative of Scotland.

Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact. Scottish elements researched and incorporated into this outfit were the national emblem, the Scottish thistle (Barnes, 2011), the paisley motif (Reilly, 1989; Stewart, 2015), and the colors of the Scottish flag (Barnes, 2011). Additional inspirations are weaving (Reilly, 1989), embroidery (e.g., Future Museum, 2016; Marsh, 2008; Vintage French Linens, 2016), and the use of cotton and linen textiles (e.g. Reilly, 1989; Thistle & Broom, n.d.). This childrenswear ensemble implemented all of these components to create a unique children's design.

Process, Technique, and Execution. 134 samples were created to test digital printing outcomes, dye baths, surface design methods, and needlework techniques. The fabrics utilized for dye baths and most of the surface design methods were a mediumweight linen, a lightweight linen, mediumweight cotton, silk noil, and hemp summercloth from Dharma Trading Co. These fabrics were used to construct the cape design. The cape consists of 99 2-inch squares, eight 6-inch squares, bordering strips of silk noil, and a full lining of silk noil. All of the squares were dyed in dye baths using Procion MX fiber reactive dyes. Four of the 6-inch squares were stamped with white textile color using a handcarved, raised stamp in an original paisley Scottish thistle design. French knots were embroidered with white DMC Cotton Perle size 5 embroidery thread to simulate the thistle top. The other four 6-inch squares were machine appliquéd with raw-edged paisley motifs cut from original digitally printed fabric designs. Then French knots were embroidered with navy and teal DMC Cotton Perle size 5 embroidery threads around each of the paisley appliqués. A pole-wrapped shibori method and dye immersion in a Procion MX fiber reactive dye bath was used for the lining. The shoulders of the cape were attached with a zigzag stitch. The edges of the cape were finished with a topstitch. The cape took 32 hours to complete.

Because the designer has years of experience crocheting afghans but not garments, a children's machine knitted sweater was purchased in a 4T for the purpose of discerning appropriate measurements. The original sweater design for this ensemble was crocheted with 100% cotton navy yarn using the measurements obtained from the purchased children's sweater. A post weave basket stitch was adapted to create the sweater design (e.g., Davis, 2009). The sweater was crocheted in separate pieces and then attached, i.e. sleeves, bodice front panels, and back bodice. The center front panel of the sweater was created by crocheting a foundation and then weaving ribbons and yarns through the base. This crocheted/weaving combination was a creative experiment to combine the two methods to generate visual interest and texture. The shoulders of the sweater were left disconnected to allow for ribbons to be woven through. This type of laced closure allows for loosening to accommodate the donning and doffing of the garment. The sweater took 50 hours to complete.

The kilt skirt was constructed of digitally printed Belgium linen. This printed textile design was created by scanning the crocheted/woven center front panel of the sweater. The scan was then saved as a jpg file. A new file was created in Adobe Photoshop CS4 for the digital textile design. The crocheted/woven scan was repeated within the Photoshop file to produce a visual texture of the design. The purpose in creating this visual texture was to coordinate with the sweater color scheme but contrast with the sweater's physical texture. The kilt skirt overlaps in the front and has a pleated detail. The skirt was patterned so that the front waistband is flat and the back waistband is gathered with elastic inserted to accommodate ease of dressing. The kilt skirt took 7 hours to complete.

Cohesion. This childrenswear ensemble cohesively incorporated elements from Scotland. Digital textile printing technologies, surface design, and needlework were successfully combined to create a unique childrenswear garment.

Design Contribution and Innovation. This childrenswear outfit contributes a unique design for niche consumers in the children's market. The ensemble demonstrates original methods and designs for childrenswear through the utilization of digital printing, surface design, and needlework as well as the combination of a variety of fabrics and textures. Paisley Impressions is an innovative example of Scottish-inspired childrenswear and has successfully implemented Scottish emblems into the design while addressing the gap in the children's market. This ensemble was completed in May 2016 in a childrenswear size 4T.

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Full Front



Full Back



Detail 1



Detail 2

