



Ondine

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**Contextual Review and Concept.** The movie, *Ondine*, prompted research into the myth of the selkie, which is prevalent in both Irish and Scottish cultures. A review of the market demonstrated that garments inspired by the selkie are limited to womenswear, costume, and T-shirts (e.g., DandilionGirlDesigns, 2013; Selkie Swim Co., 2016; TwinRoseDesigns, 2016; Unabashed Apparel, 2016). This ensemble was also inspired by the color schemes of the land and seascapes of Ireland and Scotland. Due to this outfit being inspired mainly by Ireland, the color green has a vital role. However, green is used less frequently in childrenswear garments according to MacCabe (2012). This childrenswear outfit, consisting of a dress and shrug, fills a gap in the market and also contributes to the knowledge in the field through the patterning development, exploration of digital prints, and heirloom construction methods implemented together in the garments. The purpose of this childrenswear ensemble was:

- (a) to explore experimental patternmaking methods by Sanah Sharma (n.d.),
- (b) produce a “self-help” outfit, which permits a child to don and doff a garment without adult assistance (Banerjee, 1964),
- (c) create an outfit that embodied the Celtic myth of the selkie, a mythological, shapeshifting seal that can evolve into a human and then back into an animal form (Celtic Rings, 2016), and
- (d) combine watercolor and needlework with digital textile printing for visual texturization.

**Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact.** This ensemble integrated semiotics prevalent in Ireland: shamrocks (Davies 2011), tartan (Barnes, 2011), crochet (Barker, 2014), and linen fabric. Digital textile printing was explored to generate Celtic-inspired fabrics from watercolor and needlework. Crocheted cables were implemented in one of the textile prints to create visual texture. The intrigue of the selkie myth influenced the shape of the garment patterns. As selkies are typically depicted as being brown in color (e.g., Celtic Rings, 2016), it was desired that a more playful color palette be implemented for the designs. The main color palette was green and white. However, for the tartan print, a chocolate brown was incorporated to represent the traditional color of the selkie, a blue to signify the Scottish flag, and a gray to indicate the fog endemic in Scotland.

**Process, Technique, and Execution.** Both hands-on and digital methods were used to create the digitally-printed Belgium linen used in the dress and shrug ensemble. Two of the textile motifs were crafted by scanning hand-painted watercolor designs into the computer. These two motifs included one tartan design and a shamrock design meant to emulate a relief print. The third textile motif was generated by scanning a crocheted sample square. Repeating digital prints of the textile motifs were created in Adobe Photoshop CS6.

The dress was patterned as an adaption of Sharma’s Mobius-strip-inspired “Within the Circle” (n.d., p. 7) creative patternmaking technique. Due to the twisting occurring during the construction process, it was necessary to incorporate seamlines into Sharma’s methods to prevent the wrong side of the digitally printed fabric from showing once the dress was sewn together. A center front opening was added to the dress for the purpose of creating a “self-help” garment, which according to Banerjee (1964) would permit a child to don and doff the dress without adult assistance. The hemline of the dress front and back was shaped to integrate the selkie form into the garment. The dress was constructed utilizing heirloom sewing techniques to increase the quality and durability of the dress. These methods included French seams, roll hem serged edging, slip stitching, and tacking for reinforcement (e.g., Country Bumpkin, 2015). The dress was fully lined. The lining allows for a child to easily don and doff the garment, eliminating confusions of the layers formed in the twisting of the dress.

The *shrug* was also patterned using Sharma's "Within the Circle" concept (n.d., p. 7). However, alterations had to be made since the garment could not accommodate the twisting process as it would wrap around a child's neck and also expose the wrong side of the fabric. Therefore, the bodices were aligned so that the shoulder/neck seams met at the same guideline to create the pattern, eliminating the conventional spacing and the need for twisting in the construction process. The pattern space connecting the underarms (front to back) was converted into partial side seams, creating a draped appearance on each side of the shrug. The shrug was also lined for reversibility, which allowed the garment to be made of two different fabrics, creating multiple looks.

**Cohesion.** This ensemble cohesively integrated the selkie myth through utilization of experimental patternmaking methods, Irish- and Scottish-inspired design elements, and heirloom construction methods. These components were successfully combined with digital textile printing technology to produce original textile designs from watercolor art and a crochet sample. The final outcome was a unique childrenswear outfit representative of the selkie legend and Celtic culture.

**Design Contribution and Innovation.** This ensemble contributes to childrenswear design through the uniqueness of the experimental patterning process, the production of a "self-help" outfit, the incorporation of the selkie myth, and the combination of watercolor and crochet digital textile designs. The use of heirloom sewing techniques also demonstrates the success of these methods in conjunction with experimental patternmaking methods. This selkie outfit is an innovative example of childrenswear and successfully implemented the semiotics of Celtic culture while addressing the gaps concerning design inspiration and color scheme within the childrenswear market. This ensemble was completed in October 2016 in a childrenswear 5X.

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