

Digital West-African-Inspired Batik Meets Traditional European Crochet

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The *concept* was to combine diverse cultural approaches to design, using traditional and digital textile technology to create a cohesive lounging ensemble. The crochet elements draw from the recent resurgence of domesticity as it works to empower third-wave feminists (Chansky, 2010; Groeneveld, 2010). The “digital batik” textile references West African wax prints which incorporate a tradition of bringing semiology to clothing (Spencer, 2001; Sylvanus, 2007). By combining the two traditions, this design demonstrates an innovative approach to the capacity of textiles to inspire us and change through time.

Inspiration comes from the designer Stella Jean and her collaboration with the Ethical Fashion Initiative. Stella Jean is known for combining elements of African textile culture with European fashion. This design is different from those of Stella Jean in that it combines West-African-inspired textiles with European crochet.



The *design process* interpreted the classic wax “crackle” pattern of traditional batik into a digital design using Lectra software. The crochet textile used filet crochet technique, which creates patterns using a system of open and closed double crochet stitches (Stoller, 2006). The crochet pattern was designed to replicate the primary motif in the “digital batik” textile to create a *cohesive appearance*. Coordinating crocheted garments were created using the same replication of motifs from the “digital batik” to the crochet design.

This design contributes to the field by initiating discussion of globalism through clothing. It demonstrates how varying cultural traditions can be brought together in potentially positive ways. The work is *innovative* in its combination of tradition and digital technology to create a cohesive look within one design.

This design was completed in September 2014, and conforms to an industry size 8.

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Stoller, D. (2006). *Stitch ‘n bitch crochet: The happy hooker*. New York, NY: Workman Publishing.

Sylvanus, N. (2007). The fabric of Africanity Tracing the global threads of authenticity. *Anthropological Theory*, 7(2), 201-216.