

Perennial

Katie Grimsley, North Carolina State University Raleigh, NC

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By definition, “perennial” is a plant variety that persists for multiple growing seasons. Unlike annuals, which flourish only for a short time, perennial plants come back year after year. *Perennial* was inspired by this type of resilient beauty; the concept for this piece stemmed from the desire to create a home furnishing that could not only last for multiple years, but could truly become an art piece in a home. Research of traditional floral damask patterns in the Middle Ages led the designer to modernize formerly coveted patterns seen throughout history in the



home textile industry. Old-fashioned damask motifs were transformed into a brightly colored, bold design that fits the design aesthetic of the 21st century. *Perennial* came to life through a combination of digital printing, embroidery, and upholstery.

The designer began generating the engineered textile design for the back of the chair by drawing outlines for the desired motifs on paper. The motifs were then scanned into Adobe Illustrator and turned into vector images, which were saved and stored in Lectra Kaledo Print. Composition of the motifs were manipulated to create the final design and then merged together to make one continuous pattern. In addition to the engineered back of the chair, the repeat pattern for the seat of the chair (a straight repeat) and the reverse side of the back (a half

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drop repeat) were both also created in Lectra Kaledo Print.

In traditional damask weaving, color options were limited, but modern technology and digital design provides an abundance of color choices. To choose the palette for *Perennial*, the designer researched color trends from the 2014-2015 Home Furnishing Trend Forecasting Book (distributed by Showtime), and explored the shades of perennial plants in nature. Vibrant hues of pink, yellow, and teal were chosen for the final piece in hope that the chair would be statement piece in a home. After the finalization of colors and pattern layout, the CAD files were ink-jet printed on one hundred percent cotton sateen fabric in the RGB color mode with Nano-pigment inks.



To give dimension and texture to the piece, the designer explored and sampled surface design techniques such as embellishment, appliqué and embroidery; embroidery provided the desired dimensionality and texture. The back of the chair was hand embroidered with a mixture of split stitches, running stitches, stem stitches, chain stitches and French knots. To

create a more complex color composition, slightly more saturated hues of one hundred percent cotton thread were chosen for the embroidery – as opposed to the Nano-pigmented colors on the ink-jet printed design of the fabric.

The last step in the design process was to refinish an old chair and reupholster it. All previous fabric was removed; the frame of the chair was sanded and painted in off-white chalk paint by Annie Sloan. The designed fabric was then applied, and piping in a coordinating color was sewn and trimmed the edge of the back and the seat. The overall chair sits about 4 feet high and approximately 2 ¾ feet wide.