

Irish Roots

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Keywords: new technologies, textile innovation, and couture techniques.

Measurements: 21" bust, 27" waist, 38" hips, 26" full length.

Contextual Review and Concept. Market research revealed that Irish childrenswear is limited to classic designs in a range of pastels, neutral colors, and some primary colors and does not have Irish symbols on the garments (e.g., Bumps 'N' Babies Maternity & Childrenswear, 2016; Cherish Me ® Luxury Mother & Child, 2016; Cilento, 2016). According to MacCabe (2012), Deirdre Coyne set up a website to sell more colorful children's clothing. Some of the colors stated to be rare in childrenswear include green, red, and purple (MacCabe, 2012). This childrenswear jacket, Irish Roots, fills a gap in the market as it was created in whimsical colors and emblems not commonly found in the Irish children's market. The purpose of this project was to explore digital printing technologies by creating an engineered childrenswear jacket inspired by the designer's Irish heritage. The goal was also to combine both visual and physical textures within the design and produce a colorful children's garment.

Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact. This design incorporated elements endemic of Ireland: shamrocks (Davies 2011), the Cliffs of Moher, Aran knitting (Bliss, 1991), Celtic crosses (e.g., Barnes, 2011), and famine walls (MacAonghusa, 2013). This garment was also inspired by Irish double chain quilting (Breneman, n.d.). The quilting design for this jacket utilized two colors of the Irish flag, green and orange (Barnes, 2011), as well as including Ireland's national color blue for this pattern (Reilly, 2013). Additional inspirations include the national symbol of Ireland, a harp (Davies 2011), and the claddagh (Sullivan, 2013).

Process, Technique, and Execution. A combination of hands-on and digital techniques were utilized to create textile designs. The jacket was digitally printed and constructed of cotton sateen jacquard with a Belgium linen panel. Ninety-five percent of the textile designs were created by hand and colored with Prismacolor markers. The other five percent were photographs of Aran knitting and Irish crochet motifs. All textile designs were scanned and manipulated in Adobe Photoshop CS4 for digital printing. Traditional Irish needlework techniques, Mountmellick embroidery and Irish crochet, were incorporated into this garment for embellishment (e.g., d'Arcy, 2003; Trott, 2012). For this design, the Irish crocheted roses were created in the traditional color, white (e.g., d'Arcy, 2003). However, the Mountmellick embroidery deviated from its' conventional form of whitework for this design (e.g., Trott, 2012). Bright colors were utilized to stand out against the digital prints and reinforce an ideal of fun and excitement in childrenswear design.

The collar was constructed of cotton sateen and adorned with hand crocheted Irish roses using size 40 Cébélia DMC cotton thread and size 0 steel crochet hook. Each rose took six hours to crochet. The jacket is constructed as a paneled garment. The Aran knitting/Cliffs of Moher panel was embellished with colorful Mountmellick embroidery motifs of both Cotton Perle size 5 and traditional sized embroidery floss. Each motif was embroidered in 2 – 3 hours with the exception of the Celtic harp, which took a total of six hours to complete. The Celtic crosses panel was machine quilted outlining the details to create a stained glass impression reminiscent of church windows in Ireland. The quilting was completed in 22 hours. The hem border panel was constructed of digitally-printed Belgium linen, which employed fabric manipulation to produce a rocky replica of the famine walls in Ireland. The fabric manipulation method was adapted from a combination of the "stuffed quilting" and "biscuits" techniques as described by Wolff (e.g., 1996, pp. 230 – 235, 258 - 261). The fabric was not stuffed with batting

neither were uniform squares pieced together to create this panel (e.g., Wolff, 1996). This famine wall panel was formed by creating a digitally printed linen twice the width and length of its base panel. Then the linen was box pleated by hand around the edges to fit the base panel and stay stitched into place. The remainder of linen was randomly tacked into place using the rocks on the fabric as a guide to create the famine wall appearance. This manipulation method took 12 hours to complete. The jacket was lined with an Irish green polyester to reiterate the color of the Emerald Isle (Davies, 2011). Varying degrees of shrinkage occurred with the printed fabrics and had to be combated with sewing techniques to regain sizing. The sewing solutions included changing the amounts of seam allowances to be sewn and patterning and cutting the lining and collar after the jacket was digitally printed. Connemara marble buttons crafted in Ireland were chosen to complete this jacket and incorporate a true piece of Ireland into the garment.

Cohesion. This jacket cohesively incorporated components from Ireland and successfully combined these elements with digital textile printing technologies, needlework, and fabric manipulation to create an original, colorful childrenswear garment.

Design Contribution and Innovation. This jacket contributes to childrenswear design through the designer's use of traditional methods explored and adapted in unconventional colors as well as the use of these techniques combined with digitally printed fabrics. This childrenswear garment also contributes to design through the creation of original textile designs for digital textile printing technology. The jacket is also an innovative example of Irish-inspired childrenswear, which has successfully incorporated Irish symbolism into the design and addresses the gap discovered in the Irish children's market. This jacket was completed in December 2015 in a childrenswear 4T.

References

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Full Front



Full Back



Detail 1



Detail 2

