



**Digital Creativity: The Impact of Digital Imaging Technology on the Creative Practice of Printed Textile and Surface Pattern Design**

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ABSTRACT

*The development of digital imaging technology for printed textile and surface pattern design has been driven by its use as a production tool rather than as a design medium. It has been successfully deployed by industry for the reduction of cycle times in product development, prototyping and communication but its full potential in the creative domain has yet to be realized. This paper contends that it is possible to unlock the potential for innovation when digital imaging technology is embraced as meta-media containing a wealth of embedded knowledge and skills in virtual space.*

*The initial phase of phenomenological research into the creative use of digital imaging by surface pattern and textile practitioners being undertaken at University of Wales Institute Cardiff has revealed that creative expression is being enhanced through an evolving visual language, development of new craft techniques and the possibilities that it provides for collaboration and communication. On going empirical research described in the paper illustrates how creative practice can be explored through a sharing of imagination in virtual space and the resulting material artifact is a phenomena of both individual and shared expressive responses.*

*Keywords: Digital imaging, design medium, virtual space*

**Introduction**

The development of digital imaging technology for the design of surface pattern and textiles has been largely driven by production concerns rather than a desire to exploit the creative potential of the medium (Leak, 1998). Much of the on-going research in the domain reflects this emphasis on technology. This paper seeks to address issues that surround its creative use in concept generation and the propagation of imagery in the design of printed textiles. It draws upon the findings of the first phase of the phenomenological research being undertaken at Cardiff School of Art and

A Design, UWIC and a current ongoing empirical investigation into creative practice using digital imaging technology that forms the second phase of the project.

M The initial findings of the research indicate that digital imaging technology impacts not only on working processes but also on the phenomenon of the created artifact. Those practitioners who have been interviewed for the study have recognized the use of a developing visual language comprising complex layered and photographic imagery, with an extended color and tonal gamut. Digitally printed fabric output is challenging conventions of traditional pattern making and providing greater freedom in creative