Case study number: 02/2013

Project Title: *An Educational Case Study:* B Des-Textile Design: Shima Folder

Researcher: AUT Lecturer Rachelle Moore and 2nd Year AUT Textile Design students

Project Period: March – June 2013

Project Description:

AUT University Bachelor of Design offers students an opportunity to major in Textile Design. As part of the degree program there are learning options for developing familiarity and expertise knitting with Shima Seiki electronic flatbed machines.

The 2nd year Textile students utilised the Shima Seiki knitting technology by preparing their own folder of swatches to use for reference when planning future products. This project, led by Textiles Lecturer Rachelle Moore, encouraged the students to develop their knowledge of weft knitted constructions and extend their creativity by using a variety of visual and technical features. The key objective of the project was to develop the students' ability to recognise, analyse and successfully reproduce the visual and physical properties into a fabric.

An innovative new learning resource created by Rachelle was successfully incorporated into the project. She created a series of online screencast notations to enable students to learn basic technical knitting skills in their free time, which was complemented with support from TDL Senior Technician, Gordon Fraser. This online learning initiative allowed Rachelle to focus her class time on teaching design.

The students referred to '*Swatch Example*' folders to gain familiarity with the basic principles and techniques. They then developed an extensive range of their own sample swatches, which they compiled along with their individual comments and evaluation, noting adjustments made to settings, errors, and changes for future reference. This development of rigorous record keeping whilst creating sample swatches was an important aspect of the methodology. The detailed annotations and information on process aided in developing critical analysis.

The design brief had an emphasis on technical learning, with students developing the knitted sample swatches in order to demonstrate correct handle and stitch structures. The students also experimented with the techniques learnt to develop their own textures in response to research of an individual design theme and inspiration.

The experimentation with yarns, texture and techniques allowed the students to go on to develop more complex textiles, with investigation into colour-ways and shape. A diverse range of design inspirations resulted in highly original final presentations, with students displaying mood-boards, sketches, swatches, samples and experiments. Design inspiration for the knitted samples came from both expected sources such as trade and fashion magazines, and unexpected creative inspirations such as children's cartoon shows, geometry and nature. The degree of extension of design research resulted in innovative colour palettes, knit structures and designs. In particular, some outstanding examples of jacquard and intarsia knitted textile designs were displayed in the students' studio.

Evident in the students' work was the confidence to trial new design ideas that developed after familiarity with the technical capabilities of the Shima Seiki knitting machines was gained. Working with the TDL enabled the students to gain an understanding of the electronic knitting process, and from that develop and experiment through the design and research process. Feedback from Rachelle's students on the online learning initiative was also extremely positive, and the increased class time on teaching design that the online resource facilitated was apparent in the creativity of the end results.

Interesting and Relevant links:

To find out more about the Bachelor of Design - Textiles for Fashion major:

http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/art-and-design-at-aut-university,-auckland/study/certificate-undergraduate/bachelor-of-design-textiles-for-fashion

Contact:

For further information about the programme please contact the Programme Administrator, Johanna Bowden: jbowden@aut.ac.nz

Images:

The following photos are of final presentations by students Bethany Pearce, Amelia Teumisinale and Caroline Stephen.