

**TRANSFORMING CLASSICAL AFRICAN TEXTILE PRINT DESIGNS TO
MEET CONTEMPORARY TRENDS**

BY

ISAAC ABRAHAM

BA. ART (ART)

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ABSTRACT

RESEARCHER: ISAAC ABRAHAM

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Wax prints and the non-wax prints were the earliest textile prints exported to Ghana by the Europeans. These prints, which are commonly referred to as classical prints were largely used by Ghanaians during the 19th and the 20th century. As time went on, design preference changed and textile producers adapted more creative ways in designing that satisfied the taste and demands of textile consumers. This in turn gave rise to contemporary designs that were quickly embraced by the public especially the youth. The purpose of the study was to widen the scope of African print designs by creating new designs that incorporate classical and contemporary design concepts. Samples of African prints were observed and interviews conducted to determine the reason why people preferred either classical or contemporary prints. The findings led to the development of new designs named “classicon”. The “classicon” prints combine the elements, principles and philosophy of both the classical and the contemporary designs. The study recommends that textile designers should consider the integration of symbolism and aesthetics in textile designing.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Man, after satisfying the basic needs to keep himself alive, has always tried to give expression to his artistic instinct. The history of decorating the different fabrics worn by man follows very closely the history of man from the time he first took shelter in caves. African textile Print is based on the Javanese batik print that was introduced to West Africa during the second half of the 19th Century (Steiner, 1960). African print is a general term employed by the European textile firms in Africa to identify fabrics which are machine-printed using wax resins and dyes in order to achieve batik effect on both sides of the cloth, and a term for those imitating or achieving a resemblance of the wax type effects (Akinwumi, 2008). According to Akinwumi (2008), African soldiers, returning home after serving commissions in Indonesia, took these brightly coloured cloths with them and soon started a fashion in their own countries. Small local production started but demand exceeded supply because the traditional production process was slow and laborious. Several European manufacturers began experimenting to speed up the process in order to produce this cloth at more affordable prices (Akinwumi, 2008).

The Gold Coast, present-day Ghana, appeared as the first market for the wax-print at the end of the 19th century (Lindholm, 1979). European traders, missionaries, and, in particular, the evangelical mission of Basel, contributed significantly to the popularization of these newly adapted fabrics. They were, in fact, distributed through the mission's trade company, the *Basler Handelsgesellschaft*, which was charged to meet the

needs of its expatriates and to provide the local population with ‘civilized’ commodities (Lindholm, 1979b). It is in this context that missionaries ordered wax-prints in specific colours and patterns according to the area in question and the targeted ‘ethnic group’.

Wax print is the most worn and the most valued fabric in West Africa, but it is also the most imitated. Its principal characteristic is the unique combination of pattern and colour. The introduction of wax-print in West African culture consists of the ascription to the fabric, series of local names, permitting its integration into various local strategies of consumption. Indeed, once the cloth leaves the warehouse and arrives on the market, a name is allotted to it to increase its market potential. These names operate as facilitators to penetrate people’s life-spaces and local structures of identification. The naming process transcends the fabric’s status as a simple object of consumption within a commercial framework. These names reflect or translate a reinterpretation of the European design patterns (Steiner, 1960). Some fabrics carry complete sentences as names, which can be used as a specialized language. In the context of polygamous relations, these idioms may be used among women of the same age group, who are competing for potential husbands, or among competing co-wives, who live in the same household. The wax prints called ‘The eye of my rival’ and ‘When my rival sees it she will throw herself into the river’ illustrate this practice (sagepub.com, 14th August 2011). While these fabrics can be used in the context of amorous competition, they are also deployed as fashionable expressions that attest to a woman’s financial capacity to participate in changing sartorial styles. African prints become special commodities in their capacity to ‘clothe’ a person with a specific social identity.

African textile prints are mostly sewn into dresses. Traditionally, many African textiles were not cut or tailored. Instead, they were draped and tied to suit various occasions. But with the current trend in fashion designing, textile prints fabrics are cut and fashioned into contemporary clothing for various occasions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The 21st century has seen a new trend in Ghanaian print designs, as the contemporary designs which are mostly fancy prints are gaining prominence. Some of these designs are a total deviation of the wax and java print designs with no proverbial concepts attached to them. While a section of the population usually the elderly still patronize the classical designs, the youth who form the majority of Ghana's population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012) prefer the contemporary designs, which has little or no proverbial motifs.

As trends keep on changing and consumers quest for new design concepts increase, Ghanaian fashion designers are also faced with a greater challenge as to the use of either classical or contemporary textile print designs to meet the diverse need of their target group. The design range of African prints is narrow in concept to meet these diverse needs. There is therefore the need to have a third concept that will merge the two concepts which will in effect broaden the scope of African print designs. This will be to the advantage of both manufacturers and consumers because manufacturers on one hand will have a wide range of designs to produce from, and consumers on the other hand, will have a wide range of designs to choose from.

It is against this background that the researcher did a comparative study of both classical and contemporary designs which resulted in new designs that incorporated the two concepts.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To determine ways by which textile prints designs have changed over time.
2. To analyse consumer's preference for African textile prints.
3. To create new designs that incorporate both the classical and the contemporary print designs.

1.4 Research questions

1. In what ways have the African prints designs changed over the years?
2. Which African prints are mostly patronized by consumers?
3. How can the classical print designs merge with the contemporary designs to create a common design?

1.5 Importance of the Study

1. Classical African textile prints that have been ignored or given little attention can be redeveloped in order to make them adaptable to contemporary fashion.
2. Students and textile designers will learn new approaches of creating contemporary textile designs.
3. Consumers on the other hand will have a wider range of African prints to choose from.

1.6 Limitation

The researcher did not get access to the design archive in the textile industries to compare and study the trend of textile designs in Ghana. This made it difficult to determine the years in which each of the classical prints were produced.

1.7 Delimitation

Due to limited companies producing real African prints in Ghana, the study was limited to Akosombo Textile Limited (ATL) and Ghana Textile Printing Company (GTP).

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Texture: Texture is the nature of the surface and construction of materials as perceived by touch, kinesthetic and sight.

African prints: African print is a general term employed by the European textile firms in Africa to identify fabrics which are machine-printed using wax resins and dyes in order to achieve batik effect on both sides of the cloth, and a term for those imitating or achieving a resemblance of the wax type effects.

Wax print: A wax prints consists of a printed cotton fabric of plain weave structure in which the designs are applied with hot wax or resin on both sides of the cloth.

Fancy print: This is a non-wax printed fabric, in which the designs are printed on one side of the fabric in a continuous process by engraved metal rollers or rotary screen.

Classical prints: Classical prints are mostly wax and fancy prints that are produced by the roller printing machine and were introduced into the country in the 19th century.

Classicon prints: These are newer prints designs that combine classical and contemporary prints designs.

Contemporary prints: Contemporary prints are mostly fancy prints with brightly coloured and intricate motifs and textures that became popular in the 21st century and are produced by the rotary screen printing machines.

Nustyle: This is a type of wax prints produced by the Ghana Textile Printing Company, where additional designs are introduced with the rotary screen instead of the block printing technique.

Da viva: This is a fancy prints produced by the Akosombo Textile Limited using the rotary screen printing machine.

Fashion: Fashion is the style of clothing that is accepted as popular at a particular time

1.9 Abbreviations

GTP: Ghana Textile Printing Company

ATL: Akosombo Textile Limited

1.10 Organization of the study

The thesis is made up of five chapters. Chapter one deals with the introductory part of the study. Chapter Two reviews related literature on textile designing, introduction of African prints to Africa, characteristics of African prints and classical and contemporary fashion. Chapter Three deals with the research methodology, this includes

the research design, the study population, the sampling procedures, sources of data, field work, data collection techniques and data processing and analysis. The Fourth Chapter deals with the discussion of result from the fieldwork. The Fifth chapter discusses the summary, conclusion and the recommendations made.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

Issues discussed under literature review include: textile design, introduction of African prints in Africa, the characteristics of African prints, creativity and classical versus contemporary fashion.

2.2 Textile Design

Over ten thousand years ago, early men and women found ways to collect natural fibres, align and twist them into yarns, and interlace them into fabrics, which found uses as clothing, shelter and an increasing range of other purposes (Hearle, 2003). According to Celanese (2001) textiles which originally referred to a woven fabric; now applied generally to any one of the following:

- a) Staple fibres and filaments suitable for conversion to or use as yarns, or for the preparation of woven, knit, or nonwoven fabrics.
- b) Yarns made from natural or manufactured fibres.
- c) Fabrics and other manufactured products made from fibres as defined above and from yarns.
- d) Garments and other articles fabricated from fibres, yarns, or fabrics when the products retain the characteristic flexibility and drape of the original fabrics.

Design could be viewed as an activity that translates an idea into a blueprint for something useful, whether it's a car, building, a graphic or a textile print. The important

part is the translation of the idea to serve its purpose. Textile design is an ancient art. It refers to the various processes by which fabrics are printed in coloured design. ([decoration.html](#), 12th August 2011). According to Digolo and Mazrui (2006), textile designing is the patterning of an essentially plain fabric to render it more appealing or to serve a particular purpose.

Every design is created keeping in mind certain basic elements and principles of design. A design may not have a function but may simply appeal to the senses (Lalwani, 2010a). Even for such purposes, it is essential to use the various principles of design. For instance, textile art or textile design is sometimes incomprehensible, yet it follows the principles of design so that what you would perceive as a 'meaningless splatter of colours and shapes' is still visually appealing (Lalwani, 2010b).

2.3 Introduction of African prints in Ghana

African print is a general term employed by the European textile firms in Africa to identify fabrics which are machine-printed using wax resins and dyes in order to achieve batik effect on both sides of the cloth, and a term for those imitating or achieving a resemblance of the wax type effects (Akinwumi, 2008a).

African print was developed from batik, the latter being of Indian origin. Batik diffused from India to Indonesian islands and Japan while its subsequent perfection was made possible by the Javanese before the thirteen century (Akinwumi, 2008b). Because batik was of Hindu origin, its sacred importance was associated with women's birth,

initiation and death (Lindholm, 1979). It was particularly a medium for depicting symbols of Javanese women's fertility, such as the feature of crowned snakes; whereas among the Sawu in Sunda island of Indonesia, the cloth was used as a means of clan identification (Newman, 1977). The Javanese developed a high level of batik artistry before they were colonized. They produced many symbolic and non-symbolic patterns (Akinwumi, 2008b).

By the seventeenth century, Java came under the political control of the Dutch as Javanese batik was introduced to Holland and thereafter to other parts of Europe (Akinwumi, 2008c). Yet, it was not readily accepted in Europe because of its 'exotic' design content (Nielsen, 1980). However, the Dutch led interested European firms in developing overseas market for the machine-made batik which became known as wax print, and thus during the Dutch trade expansion, factories were established in overseas ports or possessions, including India, Java, Sumatra, Ceylon and the Moluccas (Robinson, 1969). By the nineteenth century, styles derived from European peasant ornamentation and preserved in the oldest cloths served as inspirational sources for designing wax print (Muller, 1992). Design motifs universal to all cultures, such as nature-based forms: plants and animals were drawn and styled in the European format and in the manner of other foreign cultures (Akinwumi, 2008d). Some of these nature-based motifs are reminiscent of the seventeenth century western embroidery and silk styles (Irwin and Brett, 1970). All these added to the repertoire of design content of the print, and despite the non-relationship of the design motifs to African traditions, the cloth bearing the motifs were introduced to African communities.

During the late nineteenth century, the Dutch directed their textile mills in Haalem, Leyden and those in overseas to produce wax prints for the West African markets (Akinwumi, 2008e). Before then, little quantity of wax print were introduced to West Africa by the Europeans, first through Christian missionaries who needed the prints for converts; second, through the European producers who made wax prints for the African market; third, through West African soldiers who brought back Javanese batiks to their wives after serving between 1810 and 1862 in Indonesia (Nielsen, 1980b). Thus, by the early decades of the twentieth century, there was a rapid increase in the export of the cloth to Africa, and later in the twentieth century, additional bales of African prints were supplied from Japan and local factories to West Africa (Akinwumi, 2008f).

According to Steiner (2002) Printed textiles exported to Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries have been of two main types: wax prints (wax batiks) and non-wax prints (fancy or roller prints). In her typography of imported textiles in Africa, Nielson (1980c) proposes types of inspirational sources used in designing both wax and non-wax prints for the African: (1) Indian cottons; (2) Javanese batiks; (3) European prints; (4) African indigenous cloth; (5) Traditional African objects and symbols; (6) Historical events, current events, political figures and ideas; (7) Natural forms; and (8) Geometrical designs. European producers were more concerned with fabric colour preferences of various African countries. According to Nielsen (1980d), the early years of the twentieth century witnessed the export of predominantly blue prints for Nigeria while orange and black went to Gold Coast (now Ghana). Later, the eastern part of Nigeria favoured deep

red and yellow while Ivory Coast cherished brown, yellow, red, dark red, yellows and greens. Zaire went for brown cream, pink, purple and light green (Nielsen, 1980e).

Marketing of the cloth at the retail level was greatly enhanced by indigenous names in the form of proverbs, catch phrases, catch words, slogans, maxims and puns given to the designs by African traders, although the names had no connection with the designs (Domowitz, 1992). Yet, the practice then became established as one of the strategies for marketing African prints at various local markets.

2.4 Characteristics of African prints

In much of the literature in art history, textile history, sociology, and anthropology, cloth has been termed the fabric of life and the fabric of culture (Steiner, 2002b). It has been said that you are what you wear, the clothes make the man (or woman), and that you wear your cultural values. Adornment has been characterized as an aesthetic experience; a definition of social role; a statement of social worth; an indication of magico-religious condition; a facility in social rituals; a reinforcement of belief, custom and values; a form of recreation; and a sexual symbol (Cordwell and Schwarz, 1979). In short, cloth and clothing constitute a microcosm where one finds mirrored the aesthetic, moral and nationalistic ideas of those who wear it (Steiner, 2002c).

Common to most African print fabric is its characteristic design having irregular composition style. The style of African prints has an orderly repetition of motifs which are interrupted by a shift in texture, direction or scale (Adams, 1991a). Motifs are

required for designing any art, whether it is jewelry, ceramics, fashion, furniture or textiles. According to Saw (2002) a motif is any recurring thematic element or repeated figure in design. It could be an object, shape, color, direction, etc. Motif is a unit of design; a particular motif is used in every design that is selected by a designer, so a good designer should always be well informed about art, and current events. It is the designers' responsibility to translate the stylist concept, with the help of reference material.

Motifs have played an important role in the designing of fabrics. Natural motifs are widely used in the entire world. An expertly crafted piece of fabric can capture forever the life-like qualities of an animal on the run, a bird in flight, blooming flowers, butterflies, insects or fish. Such fabric remains a perennial favourite, never seeming to go out of style.

Texture is one of the more subtle design elements that make a textile print richer and more interesting. According to Dennis (1962) texture is the nature of the surface and construction of materials as perceived by touch, kinesthetics, and sight; these senses are used alone or together in the perception of texture." Faulkner (1957a) referred to texture as visual and tactile; he stated that, "Texture refers to the surface quality of materials, how they reflect the light that hits them." He also stated that texture means quality of surface: hard, soft, rough, smooth, coarse or fine. It is the tactile quality of surface, which can be felt by touch. Texture is the roughness or smoothness of fabric and is perceived as much by sight as by feel (Morton, 1964), while Webster (1958) defined texture as the character of a woven fabric resulting from the arrangement, size, quality, etc. of the

fabric's threads. Definitions found in the art and design referred, directly or indirectly, to the use of one or more of the senses in determining the texture of material.

Most textures have a naturalistic quality; they repeat a motif in a random way. With a texture you may be aware of the repeating motif but you are more aware of the surface (Saw, 2002). Faulkner (1957b) emphasized the practical importance of texture in everyday life. He said that texture affects our sense of touch and influences reactions to materials and fabrics we wear. Texture affects light reflection and therefore the fabric appearance.

The symbolism of colour runs deep in African print designs. Every colour and combination of colours has their own particular meaning. Every colour from blues to deep reds, to bright yellows represents meaningful statements and presents messages to others.

According to Pemberton-sikes (2001a) it doesn't matter how old the garment is or how many times you wear it, you feel good in it because it always gets you noticed because of the colour. Colour brings confidence and happiness to people. Certain colours also interact with your skin tone to make you appear vibrant and healthy (Pemberton-Sikes, 2001b).

According to Pemberton-sikes (2000c), Human beings can likewise be classified as having either "warm" or "cool" undertones depending on their unique combination of

melanin, carotene, and hemoglobin. The undertone you're born with never changes; it simply deepens with a tan and fades with age.

Textile designers have long recognised the importance of colour to the design process. Not only does it qualitatively alter all other elements, but may in fact serve as its own subject, i.e. exert influence through its innate qualities (Vodvarka, 2000c). Colour affects the way we perceive the world, evoking certain emotions and feelings. They can alter our moods and sense of well-being (Frouman, 1996). Either consciously or subconsciously our minds understand that all colours have deep-seated meanings and natural associations. Sometimes we understand the message we are sending with certain colours, and other times, we choose colours because they feels right and express what we would like to share.

Colour is a language. Colour is one of the most fulfilling elements in our lives. Colour of a fabric can attract one's attention or change your mood. It speaks to who you are, how you feel and where you're going.

According to Adam (1991b), design elements in the African prints are made of irregularities and regularities and these provide a source of vitality for the people to behold. The asymmetry (i.e. the irregularity) style also activates a sense of movement for its beholder unlike the symmetrical design characteristics of European and other traditions (Adams, 1991c). This characteristic style has more advantages. The style

enables the beholding of varying design component shifts of same theme on the cloth surface without being bored.

2.5 Creativity

Creativity involves inventing new things or ideas; improving upon new things or ideas; rearranging old things or ideas in new forms (Amenuke et. al., 1991). Gardner (1982) defines creativity as the “Articulation of inner experiences in response to outer stimuli”. In that sense, gathered knowledge (data) and imaginative thinking of a person must be in perfect balance and unity for production. Creativity is usually understood as a person’s ability to produce something new and unexpected. According to De Bono (1993), “Creativity is a messy and confusing subject, at the simplest level, creativity means bringing into being something that was not there before, but the new thing must have a value”. Creativity is the purposeful production of creative ideas, followed by deliberate effort to implement those ideas. Erdurak (2002) opines that, creativity connotes originality, imagination, and expressiveness. While it is often associated with the fine arts and literature, it is often relevant to aspects of science, engineering, and other fields where design, research, and innovation are required. Creativity requires flexibility and divergence in thinking i.e. new ways of thinking or expressing oneself; pursuing questions for which there is no single, correct answer. It implies a stretching and expansion of one’s thoughts and ideas and the development of original insights. For these reasons, it often requires overcoming fear and encouraging self-confidence. Much insight into the nature of creativity has come from the study of personality and factors that influence it. For example, Brodin as stated in Erdurak (2002) attributes the following

characteristics to the creative person: strong motivation, endurance, intellectual curiosity, deep commitment, independence in thought and action, strong desire for self-realization, strong self-confidence, openness to impressions from within and without, attracted to complexity and obscurity.

Also creativity involves both the process and product of unprecedented or novel perception, thoughts, or actions (Erlbaum, 1992). Intelligence, training and experience are some of the necessary conditions for creative process. Problem solving is the common aspect in creative process and also it is the very basics of design. In psycho-physiological terms, creative process can be understood as production of something new from existing knowledge, experience, memory, observation, everything that the brain stored up to that moment (Erlbaum, 1992). According Erdurak (2002), Creative process contains certain phases. The first phase can be described as data gathering. In any kind of creative activity, the person who deals with a problem must collect information and facts about the current problem. This is also known as preparation. The second phase is called subconscious organization. This phase is active in every person, but most people are not aware of it. It is not an active phase in other words one must not strive for it to happen. It happens while the person is not concentrating on the problem, but while doing other things. For example while watching television or sleeping. The third phase is called illumination; it can be described as the sudden appearance of the solution, or recognition of the solution. The fourth and the last phase is verification, it is detailing the solution by comparison and seeing if it carries all the requirements of the problem. Within all these phases a strong internal motivation is needed in order to start and perform this process.

There must be degree of satisfaction derived from this performance and from the final product or result.

2.6 Classical and contemporary fashion

Contemporary fashion can be referred to as a style or group of styles in dress or personal decoration belonging to or occurring in the present. Kawamura (2005) refers to fashion as prevailing customs or styles considered as an abstract force whose integral components are novelty and change.

Elizabeth Yawson as quoted in Wilson (1985) argues that what one wears is always a statement about oneself, as no clothes exist outside of the fashion system. Dress fulfils a number of social aesthetic and psychological functions, which is true of both modern and ancient dress (Wilson, 1985). Fashion could be viewed as fabric in which the key feature is rapid and continual changing of styles.

Simmel (Frisby and Featherstone) notes that fashion's preoccupation with change and 'new-ness' sets in place an eternal dialectic interplay in which 'fashion as the continuous announcement of newness always disturbs and destroys that which is already in existence'. This continual unfolding of contemporary fashion paradoxically begins with the demise of the present trend. Thus fashion represents the unfolding adoption of the new in modern societies.

The paradox of contemporary fashion entails a pursuit of the new and the creation of a new standard of beauty and fashion style (Wilson, 1985). This constant adherence to changes in sartorial wear is a frequent criticism of fashion adversaries to demonstrate the superfluous and contradictory nature of fashion, adding to its image as frivolous and trivial (Tay, 2006). However, the denunciation of fashion can only be countered by a thorough study of the uses of fashion, its conventions and consumptions (Wilson, 1985).

Walter Benjamin as quoted in Frisby (1986) states that fashion is the ‘tireless help-maidens of contemporary lifestyle. Similarly, philosopher Mark C. Taylor as quoted in Tay, (2006) underlines this connection by pointing out that the advent of fashion is intrinsic to the process of modernity.

Featherstone (1991) observes an increasing aesthetics of contemporary life as an intense saturation of images in the postmodern environment, wherein aesthetics could be taken to mean images which saturate the fabric of everyday life in contemporary society. He argues that this has come about due to an increase in consumer culture and the various technological mediations that have come to dominate and infuse everyday life. Featherstone (1991b) notes that with the rise of modernity and the age of industrialization, arts impetus and power of illusion was transferred from painting into advertising, architecture into technical engineering, textiles and sculpture into industrial art. Simmel likewise notes that this aesthetics is in the public body through fashion and adornment, with the acceleration of city life enforcing its seasonal change and further conformity to fashions (1986).

Textile designers in the 21st century function in an environment that is characterized by increased competition, enhanced consumer awareness, and rapidly-developing technology. In order to adapt to and thrive in this changing environment, textile designers ought to be extremely innovative.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter deals with the research design, the population under study, and the sampling procedure used in the study. The research instrument, data processing and analysis are also discussed.

3.2 Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed comparative and descriptive research methods. In comparative research, the researcher is interested in identifying similarities and/or differences between units at all levels (Sproull, 1988). The study therefore looked at the similarities and differences between the classical and contemporary prints designs in order to come out with a print that can satisfy consumers of both classical and contemporary African prints designs.

According to McNiff (1992), the aim of descriptive research is to describe social systems, relations or social events providing background information about the issue in question as well as stimulating explanations. The researcher therefore employed the descriptive research approach to discuss the characteristics of African prints and the procedure used to incorporate both the classical and the contemporary designs into common print designs.

3.3 Population of the Study

According to Best (1981), population is any group that has one or more characteristics in general that is of interest to a researcher. Mugo (n.d.) also reiterates that population is a group of persons, objects, or items from which samples are taken for measurement. The study population covered producers of African prints, wholesalers of African prints, retailers of African prints and consumers of African prints.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Webster, 1985). The sampling techniques used for the study include: accidental sampling and purposive sampling. According to Sarantakos (1997b), accidental sampling is employed in qualitative research and in other studies where representativeness is not an issue. It is also known as convenient sampling; chunk sampling; grab sampling and haphazard sampling. When this sampling technique is employed, all units for study that the researcher accidentally comes in contact with during a certain period of time are considered (Sarantakos, 1997c). It is upon these bases that the researcher issued 300 questionnaires to retailers and consumers who come to buy African prints at specific shops in Kumasi.

In purposive sampling technique (also known as judgmental sampling) the researchers purposely choose subjects who in their opinion, are thought to be relevant to the research topic (Sarantakos, (1997c). The process of sampling involves identifying the

informants and arranging time for meeting them. The researcher therefore used purposive sampling to interview 2 (two) marketing managers and 4 (four) sales representative at the GTP and ATL distribution outlets in Kumasi.

3.5 Data collection techniques

The secondary data came from journals, published and unpublished records. The three main methods of research tools used are:

- a) Observation
- b) Prepared questionnaires and
- c) Interviews

3.5.1 Observation

Observation means a method of data collection that employs vision as its main means of data collection (Bailey, 1982). To determine the characteristics of classical and contemporary prints designs, observation was carried out on samples of fabrics at the GTP and ATL distribution outlet in Kumasi. The sample cloths observed include: real wax prints, fancy prints (woodin and Da diva prints) and Nustyle prints. Observation was also carried out at the retail shops.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a method of data collection in which information is gathered through written questioning. The main characteristic of this method is that data are offered by the respondents, with limited interference on the part of research personnel.

Prepared questionnaire as indicated in appendix I, was issued to wholesalers, retailers and buyers of African prints to solicit information on consumer preference for either classical or contemporary prints. The sample size was 300. Three research assistants were employed to help administer the questionnaire.

3.5.3 Interview

Interview is a form of questioning characterized by the fact that it employs verbal questioning as its principal technique of data collection. Together with questionnaires, interviews make up the survey method, which is one of the most popular techniques of research. Interview guide as indicated in appendix II was prepared and given to 2 (two) marketing managers and 4 (four) sales representatives at the GTP and ATL distribution outlet in Kumasi. Issues based on the naming of classical and contemporary prints designs, patronage of classical prints compared with contemporary prints and factors influencing the production of classical and contemporary prints by the textile companies were solicited from them. Interview guide as shown in appendix III was given to fashion designers, retailers and consumers of African prints to solicit information on the level of acceptance of the new designs generated.

3.6 Data analysis

The data from the fieldwork was analysed using cross tabulation and frequency tables and bar charts to determine the reason why people prefer either the classical prints or the contemporary prints. The percentage of people who prefer either the classical prints or the contemporary prints were also determined.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter deals specifically with the findings from the research. Issues discussed include the characteristics of classical and contemporary prints, patronage of classical prints compared with contemporary prints and factors influencing the production of classical and contemporary prints by the Ghana Textile Printing Company (GTP) and Akosombo Textiles Limited (ATL).

4.1 The characteristics of classical and contemporary prints

European manufacturers have continued to export textiles to West Africa up to the present. In the 1960s, however, there was an important shift from production in Europe to local African manufacturers such as those in Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal (Nielsen 1980). Early African prints produced in Ghana were wax prints and non wax print (fancy prints or roller prints). The early wax prints had unique characteristic features that appealed to consumers. However, as a result of technology and innovation, newer textile print designs emerged.

The African prints produced were given proverbial names, catch phrases and slogans to promote sales. Such prints are referred to as classical prints because of their proverbial concept and also, they were the first print fabrics to be produced in Ghana. Names of such fabrics include: “Kun pa”, “Owu atwedee baako mforo”, “Akyekyedee akyi”, “Kodu sa”, “Su bura”, “Dua kor gye mframa abu”, “Efie bosea”, “Eniwa”,

“Awhene pa nkasa”, “Awhere po”, “Ludu aba”, “Odo chain”, “Akofona”, “Sika wo ntaban”, “Afame wa” and “Asobayere”.

Samples of classical prints observed revealed that they have bigger motifs, overlapping colours, wax print effect, accidental crackles and regular textures distributed around the motifs. The element and principle of design used in the classical prints are quite different from contemporary prints produced in the 1990's and the 21st century. The contemporary prints do not have the original wax print features, instead the rotary screens are used to imitate the wax effect; more colours are used as compared to the classical prints; most of the contemporary prints have analogous colours; the motifs used are often smaller in size; textures are displayed at specific points rather than being displayed all over the fabric. In some instances, textures are used without motifs. The contemporary prints do not carry proverbial names and catch phrases. Notable classical prints are discussed below.

“Kodu sa”

“Kodu sa” (Plate 1 and 2), which literally means a bunch of banana is a classical print made up of individual banana aligned to each other. The “kodu sa” fabric signifies unity. The motif in the “kodu sa” cloth shown in plate1 is made up of abstract banana arranged in a semi circular formation. The motifs on the cloth are big and they follow the full drop arrangement pattern. The background of the cloth has regular textures displayed around the motifs. The texture is made up of lines crossing each other at 90° angle and small dots introduced at the intersection. The fabric has accidental crackles running

through it. These crackles are as a result of the printing rollers crashing the wax during printing. The fabric in plate 1 was dyed with only one colour after waxing without the introduction of block prints.

The “kodu sa” shown in plate 2 has varying colours, introduced by the block printing method. The colours used are raw and they are overlapping.



Plate 1: “Kodu sa” 1



Plate 2: “Kodu sa” 2

“Akyekyedee akyi”

“Akyekyedee akyi” (Plate 3 and 4), which literally means bark of a tortoise, is a classical print mainly composed of textures. The “Akyekyedee akyi” was developed from the structure of a tortoise. The outline of the design is represented with curved lines. Whiles the inside is decorated with textures composed of dots. Textures in the form of question marks are displayed around the motifs. The “Akyekyedee akyi” shown in plate 3 is dyed with just one colour without a block print. The “Akyekyedee akyi” in plate 4 was

printed in the 1980's. It has additional colours introduced by the block printing process. The textures are made up of dots and accidental crackle effect. The accidental crackle is as a result of machines introduced to break portions of the wax to create additional design effect.



Plate 3: “Akyekyedee akyi” 1



Plate 4: “Akyekyedee akyi” 2

“Afe bi ye asiane”

“Afe bi ye asiane” (Plate 5) is yet another classical print. The motifs in the cloth are made up of thick winding lines. Very small lines that look like thorns are represented at the ends of the motifs. Inside the thick lines are small round spot that runs through the entire motifs. There are also crackle effects running through the fabric.



Plate 5: Afe bi ye asiane

“Ahwere po”

Another interesting classical print is “ahwere po” (Plate 6) which literally means the knot of sugarcane. The motif in the fabric was therefore developed from sugarcane. The motifs are arranged in a circular form as compared to the “ahwere po” produced in the 1990s where the motifs are arranged in either the vertical or in the horizontal direction. This fabric has crackle effect and wavy textures on the background.



Plate 6: “Ahwere po”

“Sedeε”

“Sedeε” (Plate 7), which is an Akan name for cowry shell is another classical print produced in the 1970s. The motifs are bigger in size, and they are separated from one another. They are made up of varying dots and a half crescent moon shapes with invented lines. The cloth was dyed with just one colour.



Plate 7: “Sedeε”

“Akomfem”

“Akomfem” (Plate 8) is the Akan name for guinea fowl. The overlapping effect in classical prints is clearly seen in this design. An interesting feature of this design is that the overlapping effects represent the shadows of the guinea fowl. The guinea fowls are moving towards one direction in a full drop arrangement.



Plate 8: “Akomfem”

Fancy/roller prints

Fancy prints which are sometimes referred to as java prints were also printed alongside the classical prints. These prints do not have the qualities of wax prints because the application of colour was done by rollers instead of dyeing and subsequently stamping with blocks. However, this process enabled brighter colours to be produced. The fancy prints were cheaper than the wax print. The technique also allows images of people to be printed on the fabric. An example is shown in plate 9. This print is known as “eni bera enso gya”, which literally means, the eye does not spark fire if it is furious. The

designs are made up of floral patterns arranged in a haphazard manner. These floral patterns are contained in rectangular shape, while a solid colour is introduced around the triangles.



Plate 9: Fancy

4.2 Contemporary prints

Production of contemporary prints started in the 1990's when the textile companies started printing with the rotary screens. Fabrics such as woodin, "sika" prints and "nkanea" prints were produced by the textile companies in Ghana. Because of low patronage, the companies stopped producing the "sika" prints and the "nkanea" prints. However, the production of woodin fabrics has continued to the present, because the demand is still high.

The woodin fabrics have unique characteristic features that appeal to consumers especially the youth. The fabric in plate 10 has smaller motifs lined up in unison. The

wooden fabric in plate 11 also has smaller motifs joined together and arranged in a meandering order. The woodin in plates 12 and 13 have the same design but different colour ways. These two motifs have been reduced to smaller sizes to form textures. The woodin fabrics shown in the plates have similar characteristics that include: smaller designs, regular arrangement, analogous and brighter colours. One design could also be treated in different colour ways to appeal to wider consumers. These characteristics are typical of contemporary prints designs.



Plate 10: Woodin 1



Plate 11: Woodin 2



Plate 12: Woodin 3

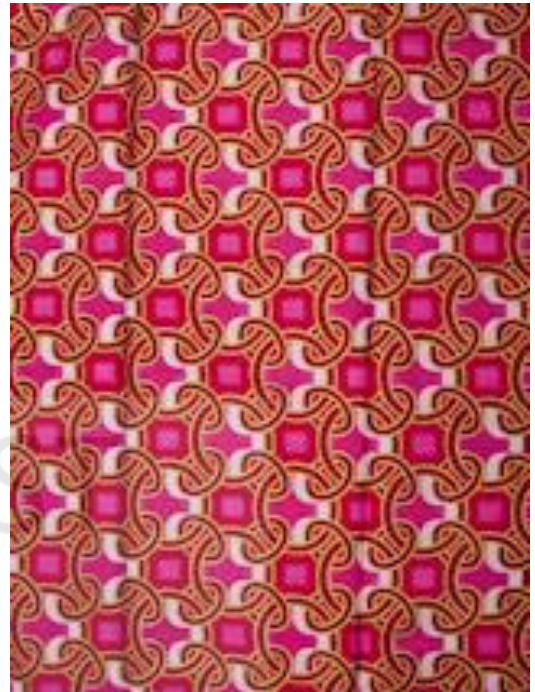


Plate 13: Woodin 4

The 21st century has seen the production of new contemporary prints such as Da viva produced by the ATL and Nustyle produced by the GTP. The Da viva fabric which is a fancy print is printed with the rotary screen. The Nustyle fabric is a wax print fabric, but the rotary screen is used in introducing the additional colours that is done by the block printing process. The Da viva fabrics have characteristic features similar to the woodin fabrics. The Da viva shown in plate 14 and 15 are made up of textures combined to form motifs.



Plate 14: Da viva 1



Plate 15: Da viva 2

According to the respondents at GTP, the Nustyle fabrics were introduced to reduce the cost of wax prints. The classical print fabrics, which are mostly made up of real wax prints, is done by first applying the wax after that, the fabric is dyed before dewaxing. After dewaxing, either one or two colours are introduced on the fabric using

the block printing technique before the fabric is given the final finishing treatment. This process is rather cumbersome and expensive. With the Nustyle prints, instead of using the blocks to introduce the additional colours and designs, the rotary screens are used to print the dewaxed fabrics in multiple colours. According to the respondents at GTP, the cost of producing the Nustyle fabrics is cheaper and more colours can be printed as compared to the blocks that are used for producing the classical prints. Even though some of the classical prints are printed in the nustyle, the concept of the design still remains the same. The Nustyle prints shown in plate 16 and 17 have more colours and designs as compared to the classical print which have limited colours. The Nustyle in plate 17 has arrangement similar to the woodin and the Da viva, but the motifs are bigger in size.



Plate 16: Nustyle 1



Plate 17: Nustyle 2

4.3 Patronage of classical prints compared with contemporary prints

Majority of Ghanaians still patronize the African prints, but unlike the 19th and the 20th century that the classical prints were very much in vogue, the trend has changed giving way to new African prints designs that are commonly referred to as contemporary prints. Questionnaire as shown in appendix I was given to 300 retailers and buyers of African prints to solicit information on the patronage of classical and contemporary prints. According to the findings as shown in table 4.3.1, majority of Ghanaians especially the elderly still patronize the classical prints. Consumers who buy the contemporary prints are mostly the youth. 39% of respondents who are within the ages of 20 and 39 preferred classical prints while 61% within the same age preferred contemporary prints. 72% of respondents between the ages of 40 and 65 preferred classical prints while 28% of respondents within the same age preferred contemporary prints. A total of 165 respondents representing 55% preferred classical prints, while 135 respondents representing 45% preferred contemporary prints.

Table 4.3.1 Cross-tabulation of patronage of classical and contemporary prints by age

			African prints		Total
			Classical prints	Contemporary prints	
Age of respondents	20 - 39	Count	60	94	154
		% total	39.0%	61.0%	100.0%
	40 - 65	Count	105	41	146
		% total	72.0%	28.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	165	135	300
		% total	55%	45%	100.0%

4.3.1 Reasons why people prefer classical prints

Respondents gave different reasons why they prefer a particular type of print. For classical prints 70.3% said they patronize it because of the name of the fabric, 14.5% attributed it to their age, 11% buy the fabric because of its aesthetic qualities and 4.2% buy it because of the cost. This analysis is shown in table 4.3.2.

Table 4.3.2 Reasons why people prefer classical prints

Variable	Frequency (N=165)	Percentage
Name of fabric	116	70.3%
Age	24	14.5%
Aesthetic qualities	18	11.0%
Price	7	4.2%
Total	165	100.0%

Majority of the respondents who patronize the classical prints do so because of the names given to the prints designs. They were of the view that buying a fabric with proverbial names can easily communicate their motive to the public. According to the respondents, naming of fabrics started when wax print fabrics were introduced into the country, and therefore that culture has to be preserved. Majority of people who supported this idea were between the ages of 40 and 65. Respondents in the classical prints category who considered age as the main reason for patronizing the fabrics were mostly wholesalers of African prints. They said they are elderly people and would always want to be identified with the authentic African print designs to promote their sales. 11% of the

respondents, who buy the fabric based on aesthetic qualities, were of the view that the classical prints have intricate patterns, make one look African, and is suitable for all occasions. 4.2% of the respondents in the classical prints category who buy the fabric because of the cost said they do so because the fabrics are more expensive than the contemporary prints and therefore they are of good quality.

4.3.2 Reasons why people prefer contemporary prints

For contemporary prints, 4% patronize it because of the name of the fabric, 14% buy it because of their age, 54% prefer it because of its aesthetic qualities and 28% buy it because the price is cheaper than the classical print. This analysis is shown in table 4.3.3.

Table 4.3.3 Reasons why people prefer contemporary prints

Variable	Frequency (N=135)	Percentage
Name of fabric	5	4.0%
Age	19	14.0%
Aesthetic qualities	73	54.0%
Price	38	28.0%
Total	135	100.0%

Majority of the respondents in the contemporary prints category buy the fabric because of its aesthetic qualities. They were of the view that the contemporary prints designs and the colour schemes are gorgeous and attractive, and there is variation in the sizes and the arrangement of designs. They also said that because the designs are smaller, it can easily be sewn into any style. The respondents in this category referred to the

contemporary prints as modern and more fashionable than the classical prints. 28% of the respondents, who buy the contemporary prints, do so because the cost of the fabric is less expensive as compared to the classical prints. 14% of respondents who considered their age as the reason said; the contemporary prints fabrics were purposely designed for the youth and therefore would not go for something that is meant for the elderly. 4% consider the name of the fabric which has no proverbial meaning. Such names (Woodin, Nustyle, Da diva and Treasure) are given by the textile companies.

4.4 Factors Influencing the Production of Classical and Contemporary Prints.

According to the marketing managers at the GTP and ATL distribution outlets in Kumasi (interview guide, appendix II), the textile factories are still producing the real wax prints which are classical prints because the elderly people still patronize the fabrics and such people cannot be persuaded to purchase the contemporary prints. According to the respondents the classical prints are still being produced because they are traditional fabrics that are used for special occasions such as marriage and outdoor ceremonies. The textile industries also produce the classical prints because of the proverbial meaning attached to them. These names are fascinating and people wear them to send various messages to the public.

According to the respondents, the young people prefer changing styles and designs and they become fed up with the same old designs that they come across. This therefore motivated the companies to come out with new and innovative designs that will attract the youth. They added that the contemporary prints are produced because the cost

of producing the classical prints is far more expensive than the contemporary prints. According to the respondents at GTP, the “Nustyle” fabrics were introduced to reduce the cost of wax prints and to attract the youth. The respondents also reiterated that the contemporary prints are highly patronized by organized groups.

4.5 New African prints that incorporate classical and contemporary style (classicon).

According to Amenuke et. al. (1991), creativity involves inventing new things or ideas; improving upon new things or ideas; rearranging old things or ideas in new forms. Based on the research findings, the researcher came up with new African prints named “classicon”. The name “classicon” was derived from classical and contemporary because the motifs were developed from classical prints while the application of colour, size and arrangement of motifs and distribution of textures were inspired by the contemporary style. Thus the “classicon” prints combines the classical prints designs that are proverbial and the contemporary style. The following “classicon” prints which were designed with the Adobe Photoshop have unique characteristic features that could broaden the patronage of African prints in Ghana. The stages of developing the motifs have also been discussed.

4.5.1 Classicon prints 1

The “classicon” prints 1 motif was developed from the original “kodu sa” motif as shown in plate 18. “Kodu sa” means bunch of banana and its represent unity. The processes of developing the final motif are as follows.

Stage 1

In stage 1, the textures of the original “kodu sa” were removed as shown in plate 19.

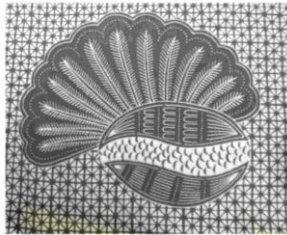


Plate 18: Original “kodu sa”

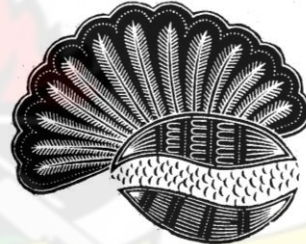


Plate 19: Idea development

Stage 2

In stage 2, copies of the motifs were made and one turned in the 90% clockwise direction and the other was turned in an anticlockwise direction as shown in plate 20.

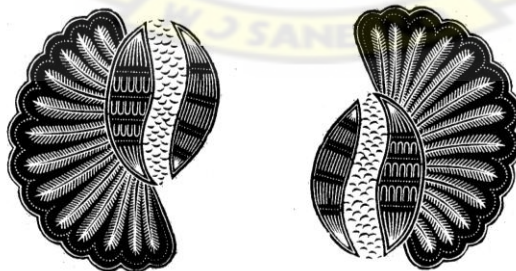


Plate 20: Idea development

In stage 3, the motifs in plate 20 were joined together to form the final motif as shown in plate 21.



Plate 21: Final motif

Copies of the final motif were made and arranged in a meandering order for the “classicon” prints. Plate 22, 23, and 24 shows the “classicon” prints put in three different colour ways and textures.

“Classicon” prints 1a

In “classicon” 1a as shown in plate 22, the original “kodu sa” textures are displayed in between the meandering motifs. The textures are made of lines crossing each other at an angle. Portions of the textures were selected and filled with colour to add beauty to the work. The motifs in the work have also been reduced in size to conform to the current trend. The meandering arrangement of the motifs is also creating some sought of movement in the work. The design has different shades of green which is creating harmony in the work.



Plate 22: "Classicon" print 1a

“Classicon” print 1b

In “classicon” 1b (plate 23), wax crackles are displayed in between the meandering motifs, making the work look like a real wax print. Different shades of violet were used to create harmony in the work.



Plate 23: “Classicon” print 1b

“Classicon” print 1c

Textures in the form of dots are displayed in between the meandering motifs in plate 24. There is also a contrast between the tiny textures and the motifs. The yellow background is also creating a contrast with the brown coloured motif.



Plate 24: “Classicon” print 1c

4.5.2 “Classicon” prints 2

The “classicon” prints 2 motif was developed from the “akyekyedee akyi” design as shown in plate 25. “Akyekyedee akyi” literally means “the back of a tortoise” and it signifies independence and self sufficiency. The final motif was developed as follows:

Stage 1

In the first stage, the textures around the original motif were removed as shown in plate 26.

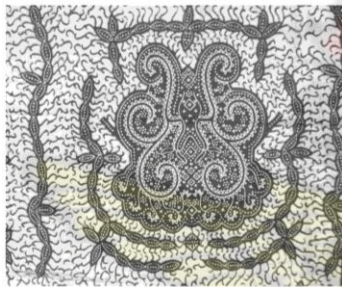


Plate 25: Original “akyekyedee akyi”

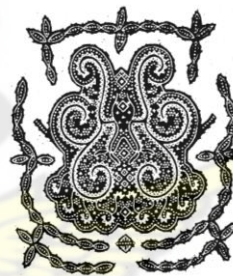


Plate 26: Idea development

Stage 2

Two copies of the motif in plate 26 were made and joined together as shown in plate 27.

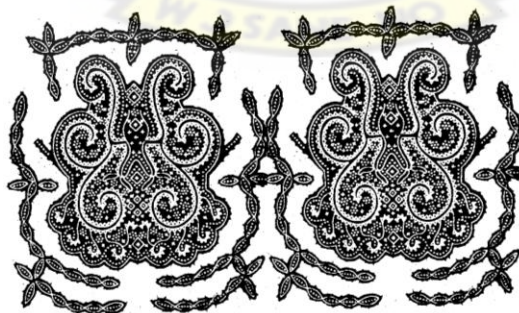


Plate 27: Idea development

Stage 2

Two copies of the motif in plate 27 were made and one was turned upward and the other was turned downwards as shown in plate 28. These two were joined together to form the final motif as shown in plate 29. Plates 30, 31 and 32 shows the “classicon” 2 design in different colour ways and textures.

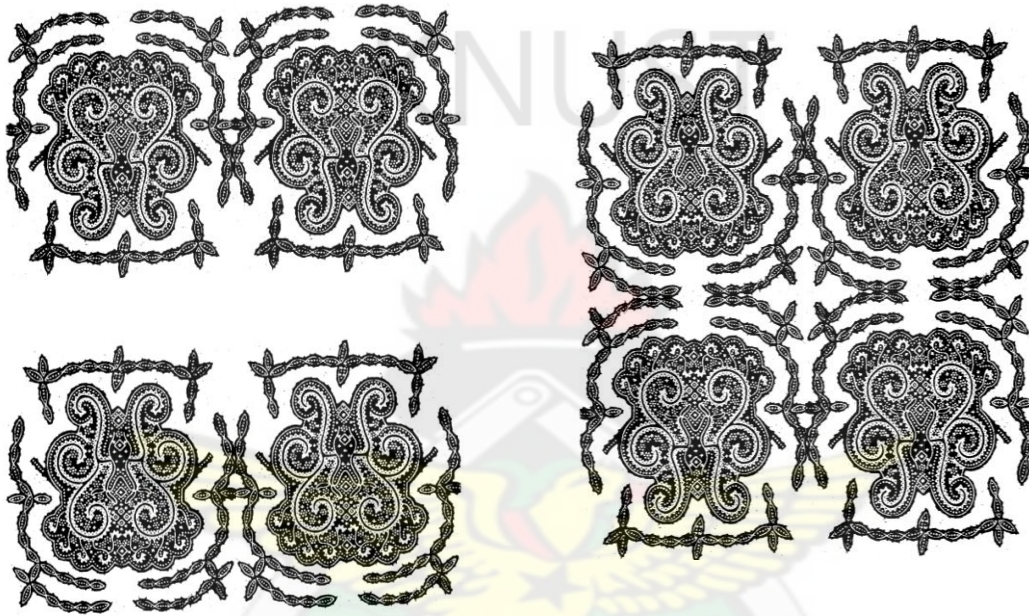


Plate 28: Idea development

Plate 29: Final motif

“Classicon” 2a

In classicon 2a (plate 30), the designer joined the motifs to create additional design in between the motifs. The motifs were printed in deep blue colour against a lighter blue background. The motifs have white outlines to make them more visible. These outlines resulted in textures that were accidentally created.

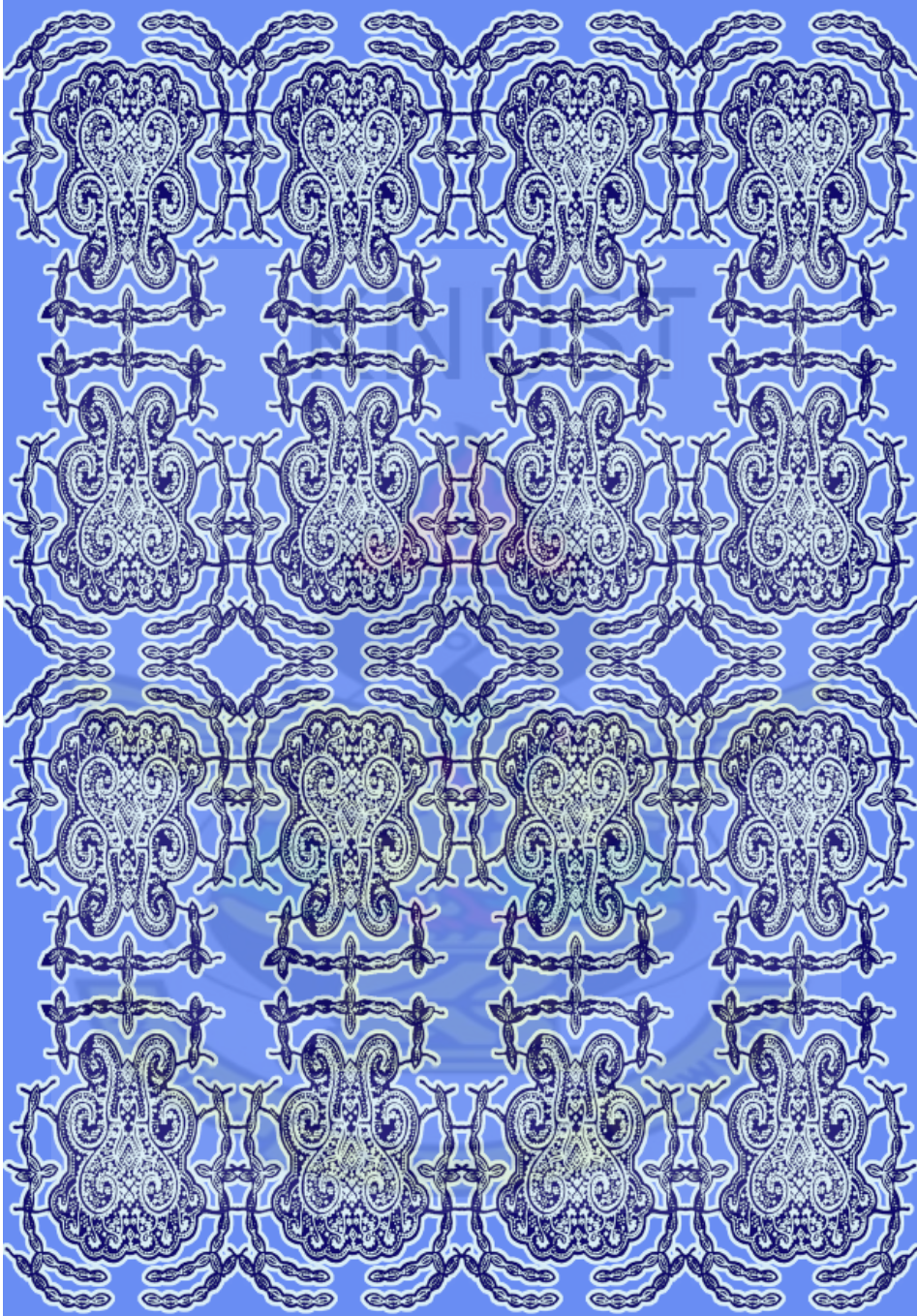


Plate 30: "Classicon" print 2a

“Classicon” prints 2b

In “classicon” 2b (plate 31), the designer distributed textures in the form of a tree bark in between the motifs to enhance the design. The inverse of the textures which takes the background colour is creating additional textures. There is also a contrast between the colour of the motif and the background.

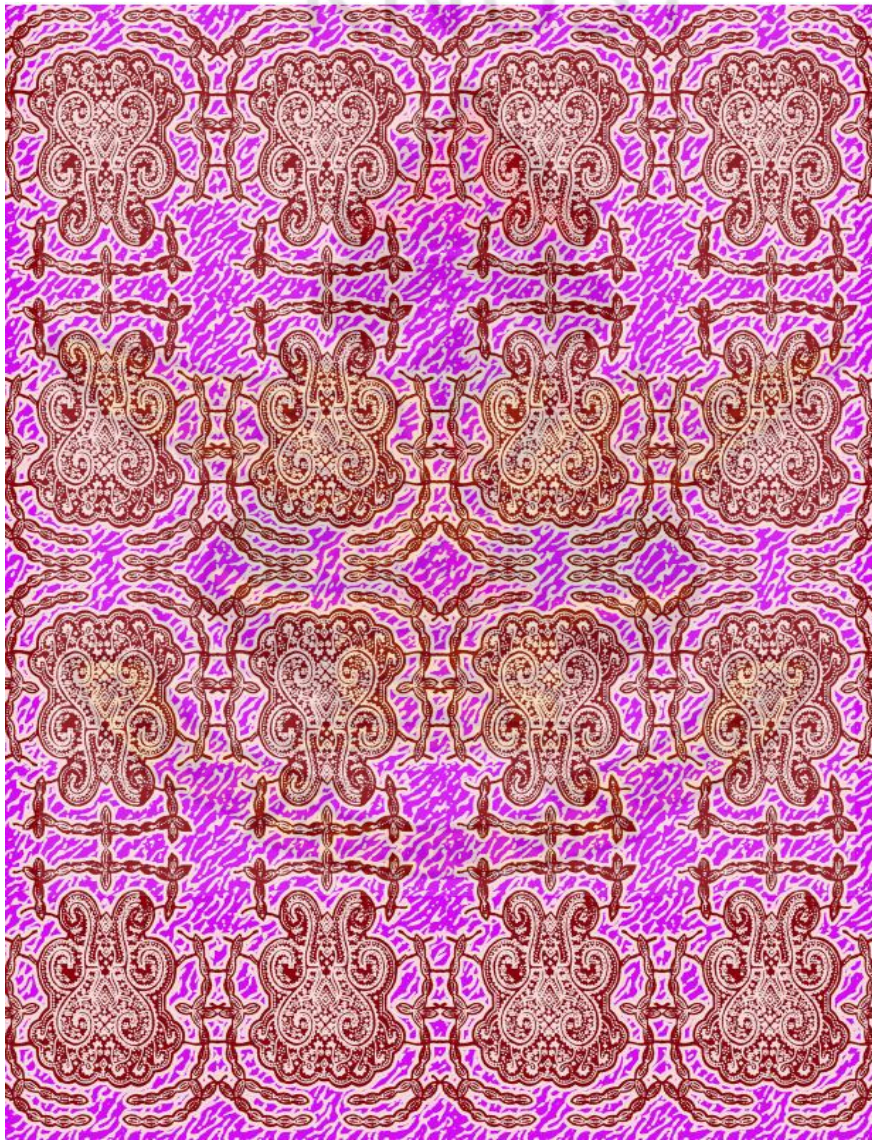


Plate 31: “Classicon” print 2b

“Classicon” print 2c

The “classicon” print 2c (plate 32) has multiple colours making the print more attractive. The textures in between the motifs were also intentionally created to make the motifs stand out clearly. The style and the colour of the textures accidentally resemble the skin of a tiger which is further enhancing the design.



Plate 32: “Classicon” print 2c

4.5.3 “Classicon” prints 3

The “classicon” prints 3 motif was developed from “afe bi ye asiane” design which is shown in plate 33. “Afe bi ye asiane” literally means some years are evil. The designs were put in two different colour ways and joined to each other in a continuous manner to create an irregular arrangement. The stages of development are as follows:

Stage 1

The line textures around the motifs were removed and part of the design isolated as shown in plate 35.



Plate 34: “Afe bi ye asiane”



Plate 35: Idea development

Stage 1

Copies of the design were made and turned in different angles as shown in plate 36. The designs were then joined together to form a whole as shown in plate 36.



Plate 36: Idea development

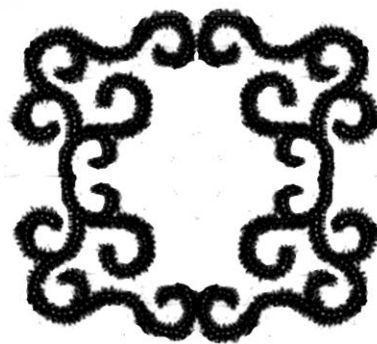


Plate 37: Idea development

Stage 3

A copy of the design in plate 37 was made and placed in the middle of the design in plate 38 to form the final motif as shown in plate 39. The motifs were arranged in a successive order both in the horizontal and in the vertical direction and put in two different colour ways and textures as shown in plates 40 and 41.

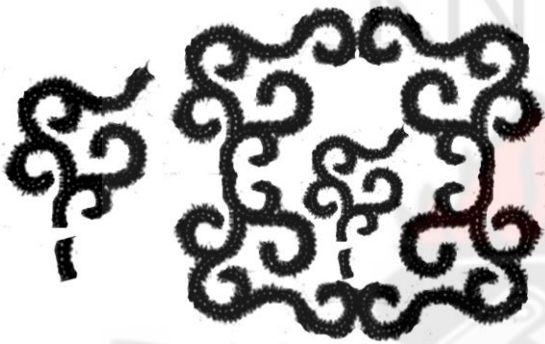


Plate 38: Idea development

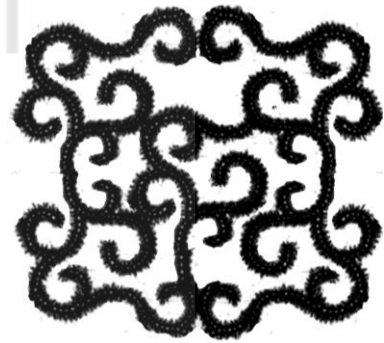


Plate 39: Final motif

“Classicon” prints 3a

In “classicon” 3a (plate 40), portions of the design in between the motifs are solely filled with colour, while the remaining portions are filled with textures, thus creating variety in the work. The dots within the lines of the motifs are also creating additional textures. The winding lines are creating movement that never seems to end. The combination of textures, motifs and colours in the work shows contrast, harmony, variety and movement.

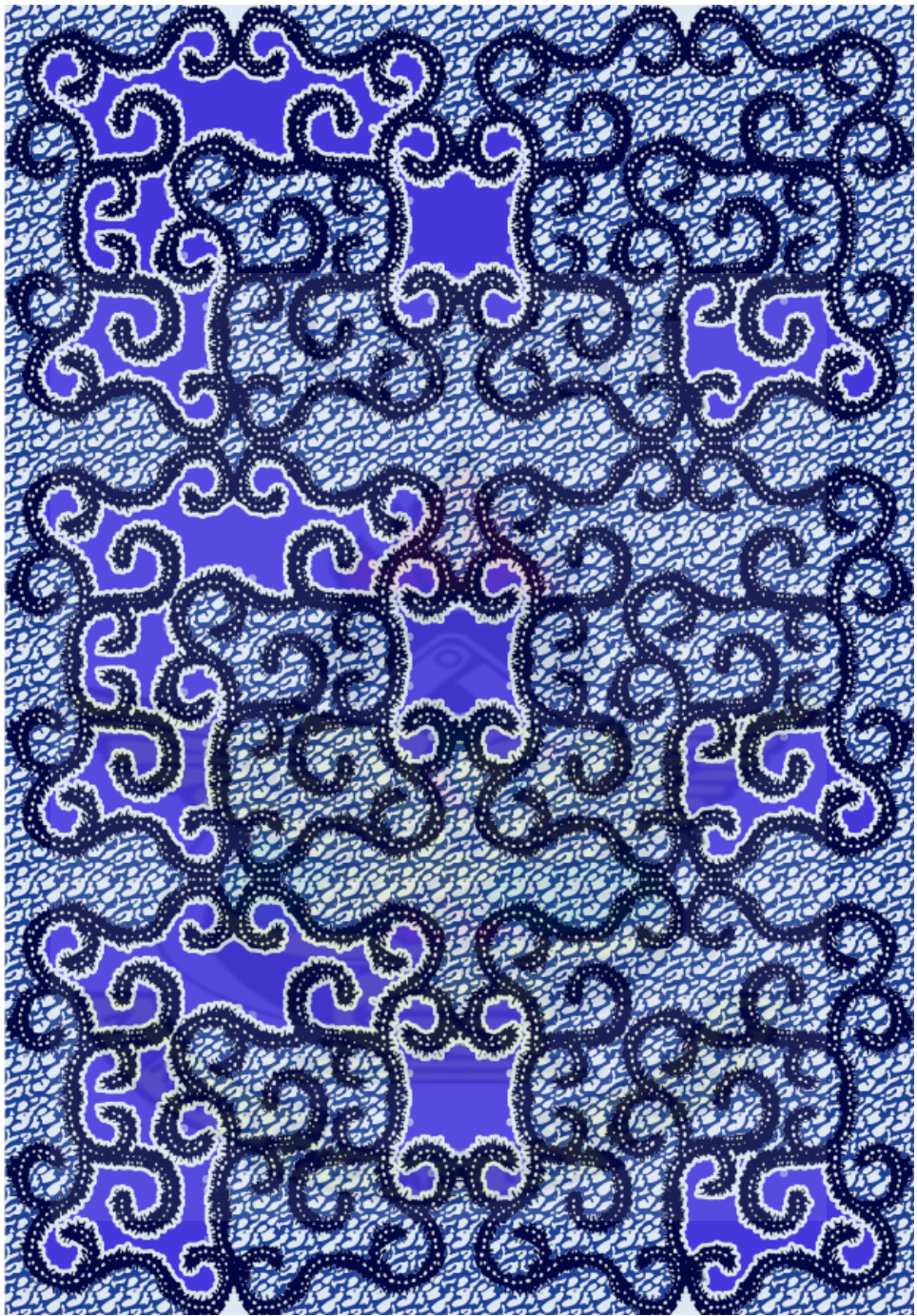


Plate 40: "Classicon" print 3a

4.5.4 “Classicon” print 3b

In “classicon” 3b (plate 41), the background is filled with wax crackles. Portions of the textures are filled with lemon green colour, while the remaining portions are filled with sea blue colour. This distribution of colour is creating variety and contrast in the work.

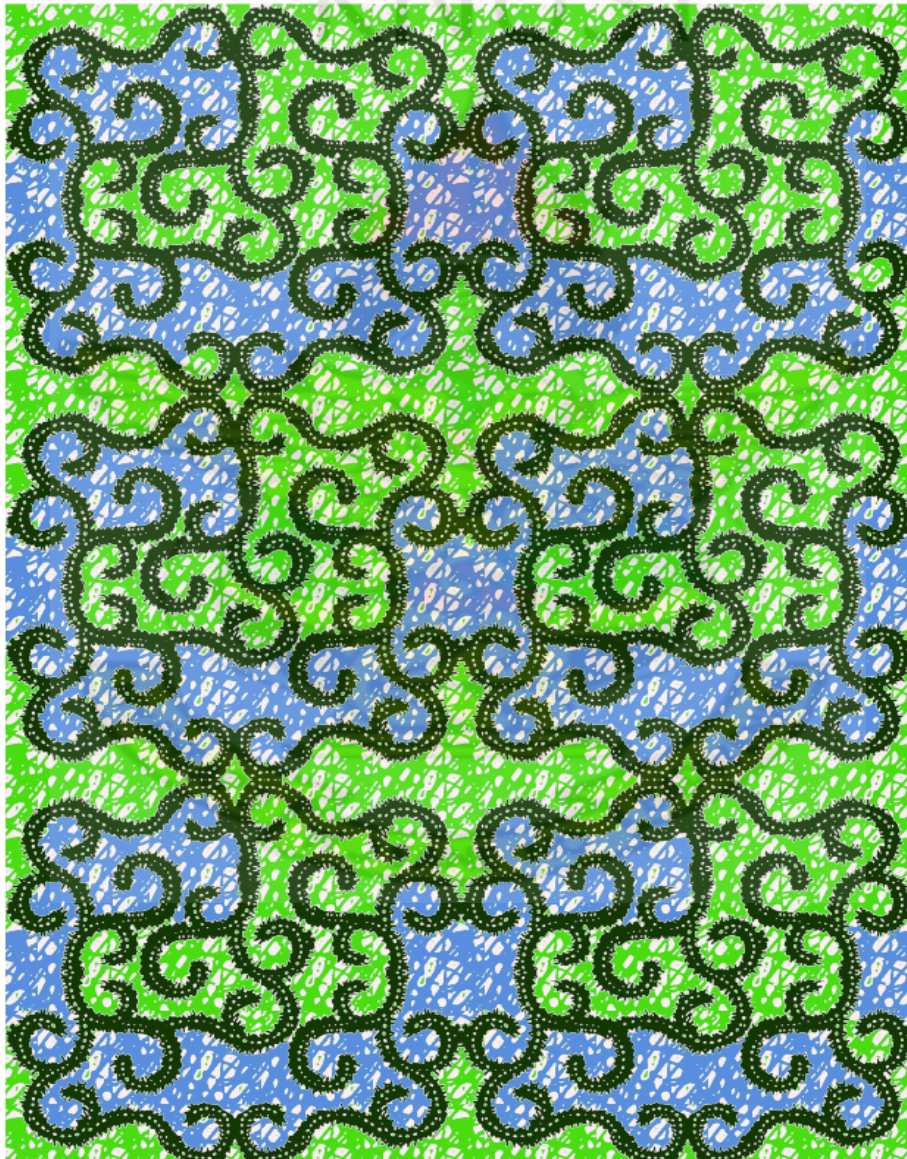


Plate 41: “Classicon” print 3b

“Classicon” prints 4

The “classicon” prints 4 design was developed from the classical print, “εfie abosea” (plate 42), which literally means ‘gravels of a house’. This indicates that your closest friend can be your enemy. The stages of developing the motifs are as follows:

Stage 1

The background of the design was removed to make the blocks stand out as shown in plate 43.

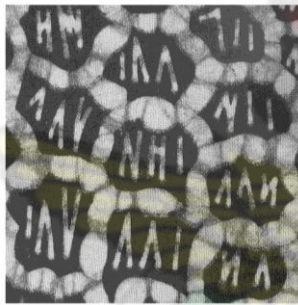


Plate 42: Original “εfie abosea”



Plate 43: Idea development

Stage 2

The designs were given outlines and then inversed as shown in plates 44 and 45 respectively. The motifs were put in 3 different colour ways as shown in plates 46, 47 and 48.



Plate 44: Idea development



Plate 45: Idea development

“Classicon” print 4a

The designs (plate 46) which are in the form of blocks were given outlines to make them stand out clearly. In between the blocks are varied contour lines representing textures. The design has a green and coffee coloured blocks against a cream coloured background. The outlines are in a brown colour. The varied sizes of the blocks are also creating variety in the work.



Plate 46: “Classicon” print 4a

“Classicon” print 4b

The “classicon” 4b (plate 47) has spot textures distributed in between the blocks. The design has a cream background, wine textures and coffee coloured blocks, thus creating harmony in the work.



Plate 47: "Classicon" print 4b

“Classicon” print 4c

In classicon 4c (plate 48), the blocks were inversed resulting in complete outlines. These outlines are making the blocks which are in lighter blue colour stand out clearly. The background colour is also harmonizing with the outlines and the block colours.

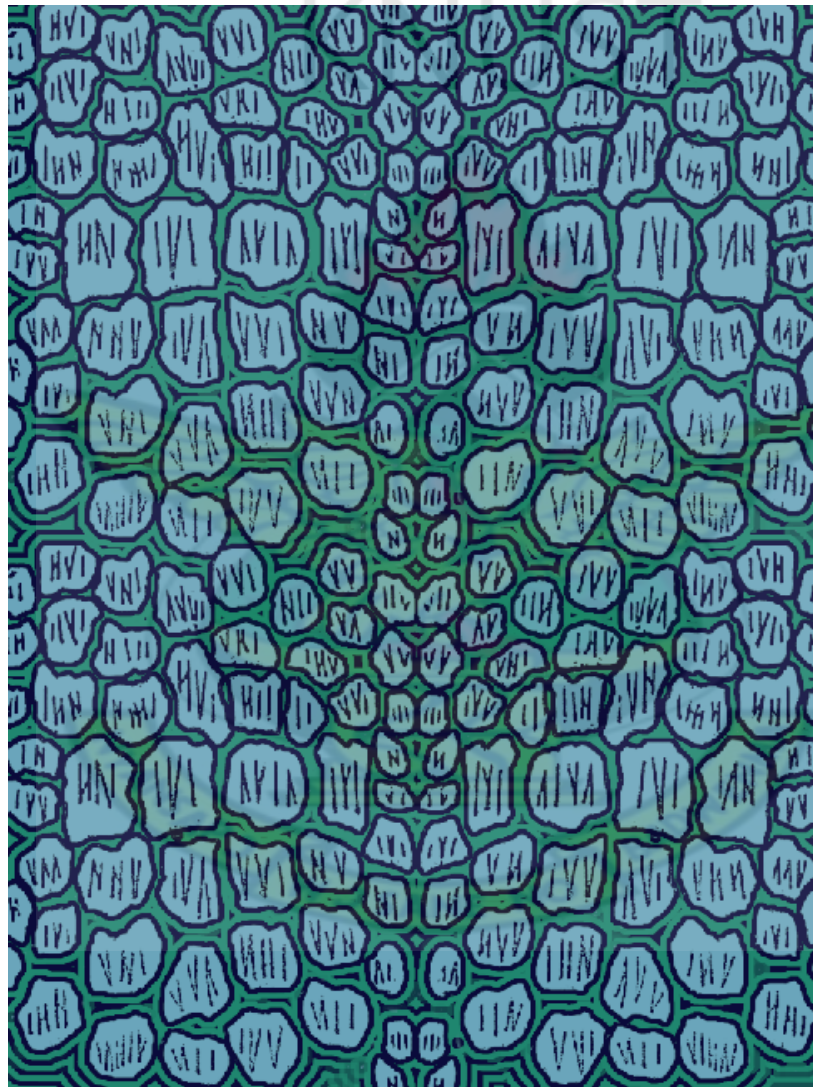


Plate 48: “Classicon” print 4c

4.5.5 “Classicon” prints 5

The “classicon” 5 design was developed from the “awhere po motif” (plate 49), which means the knots of sugarcane. The “awhere po” motifs were reduced in size to conform to the current trend in textile design. In developing the motif, the background of the design was removed to make the motif stand out clearly. The motif was then turned in the horizontal direction as shown in plate 50 and 51. The final motif was arranged in 3 different colour ways as shown in plates 52, 53 and 54.

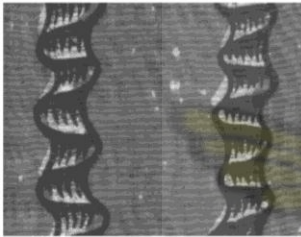


Plate 49: Original “awhere po”



Plate 50: Idea development



Plate 51: Final motif

“Classicon” prints 5a

In “classicon” 5a (plate 52), the motifs have been arranged in a meandering order. They have also been aligned to each other in the horizontal direction. Spot textures have been distributed in between the motifs and the colours have been interchangeably arranged to create harmonious and contrasting effect. The arrangement of the entire motif is creating a continuous movement in the work.

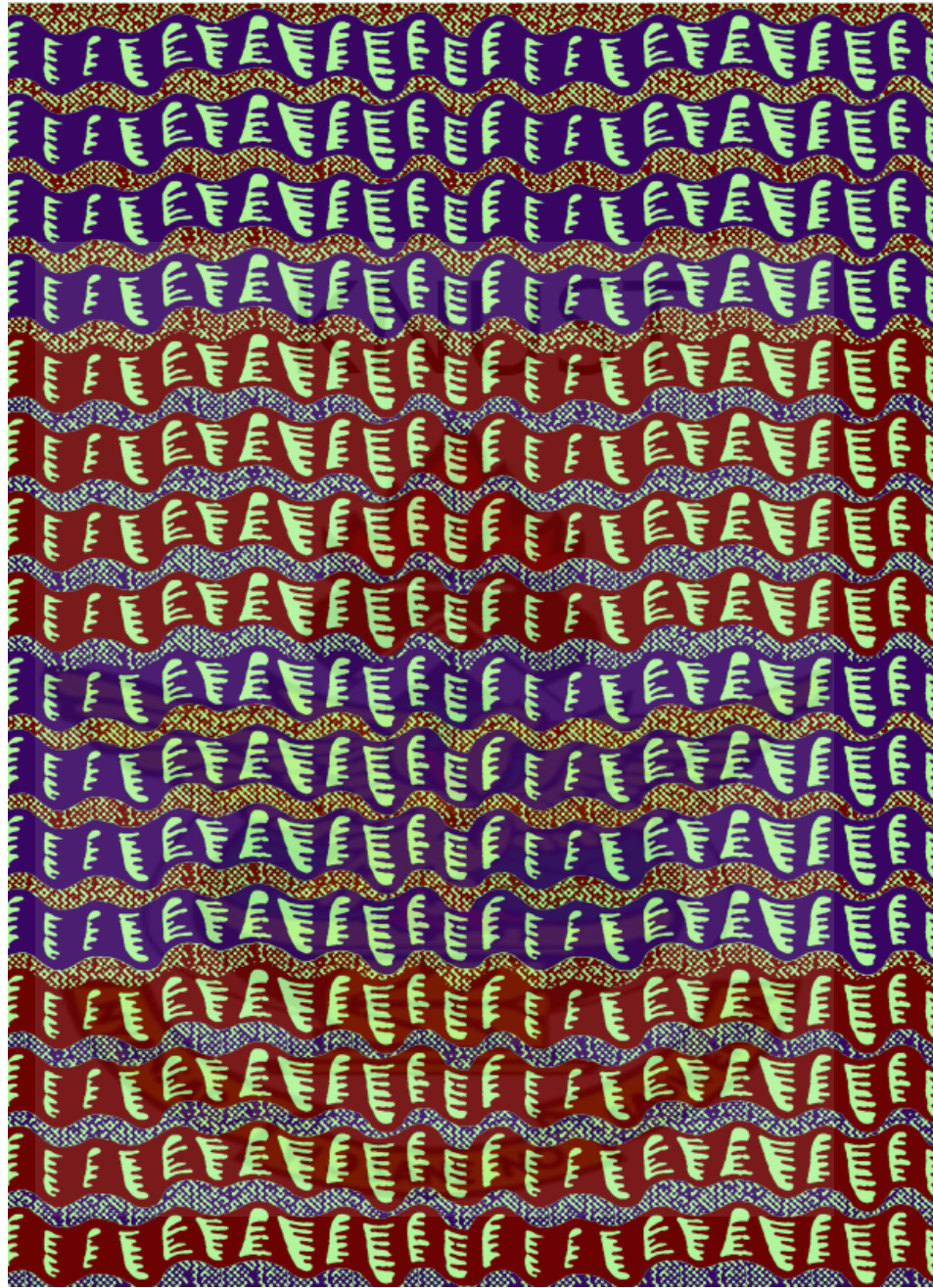


Plate 52: "Classicon" print 5a

“Classicon” prints 5b

The “classicon” 5b as shown in plate 53 has a pink and a blue coloured motifs and textures which have been interchangeably arranged. This arrangement is creating a contrasting effect with the yellow background.

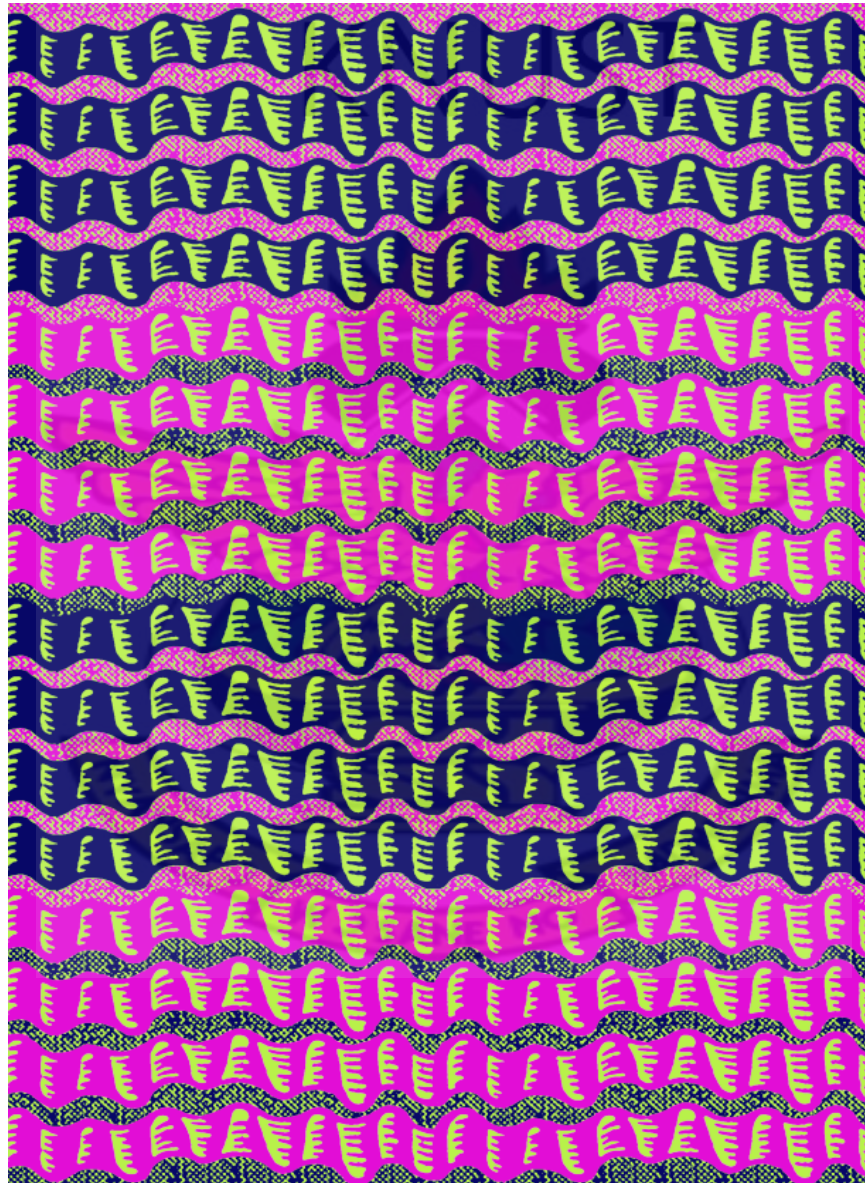


Plate 53: “Classicon” print 5b

“Classicon” print 5c

The “classicon” 5c motifs (plate 54) have been inversed, making the background colour more pronounce. These black coloured shapes which are in the form of a comb are creating contrast in the work. The lighter colour is also harmonizing with the green colour.

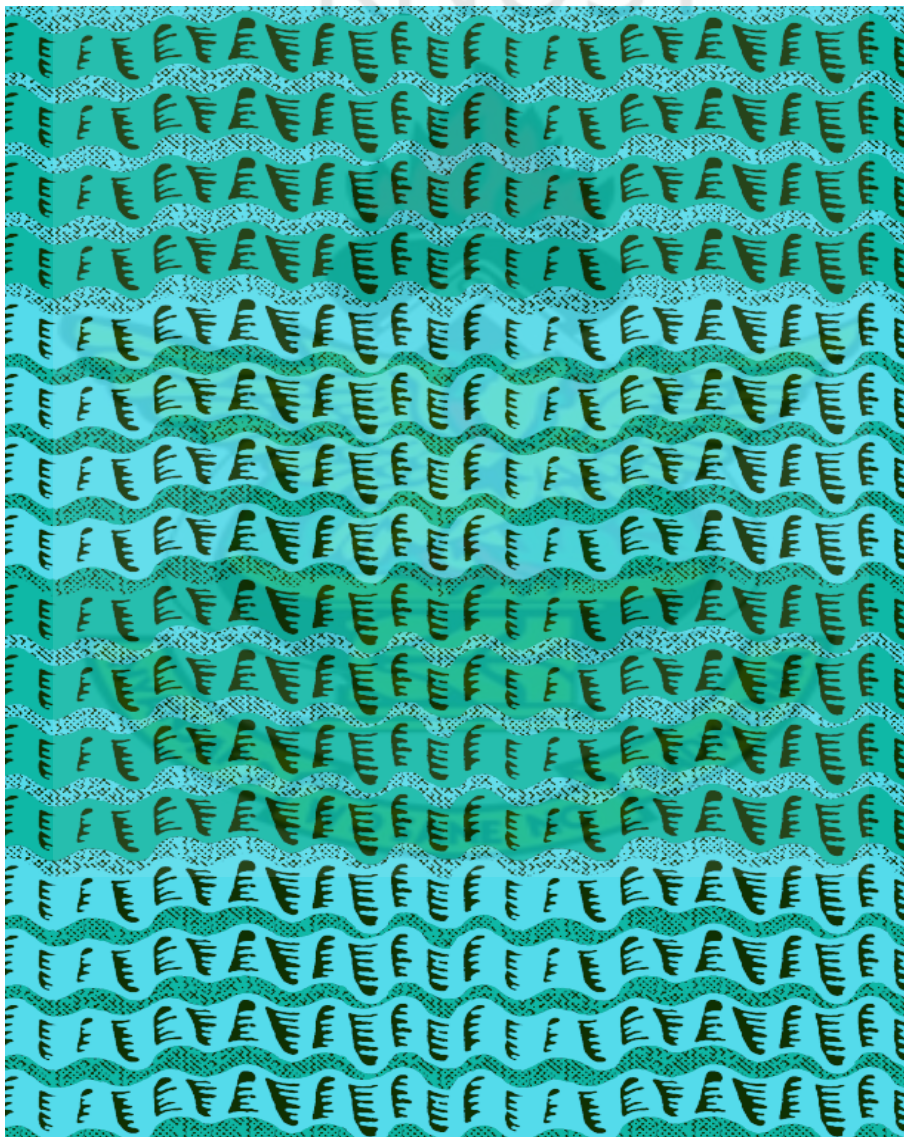


Plate 54: “Classicon” print 5c

4.5.6 “Classicon” prints 6

The “classicon” prints 6 motif was developed from “sedee”, which means cowry shells as shown in plate 55. The motifs were reduced in size, joined together and arranged in a meandering order in a horizontal direction. The stages of development are as follows:

Stage 1

The plane background of the design was removed to make the motif stand out as shown in plate 56.

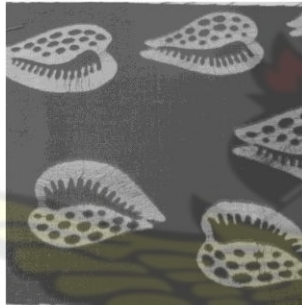


Plate 55: Original sedee



Plate 56: Idea development

Stage 2

The motif was then inversed as shown in plate 57.



Plate 57: Idea development

Stage 3

Two copies of the inversed motif were made and one was turned in the opposite direction. The two were joined together to form the final motif as shown in plate 58 and 59.



Plate 58: Idea development



Plate 59: Final motif

“Classicon” prints 6a

In classicon 6a (plate 60), the motifs were arranged in a meandering order. Textures were distributed in between the motifs to unite with the dots in the motifs. This design has analogous colours.

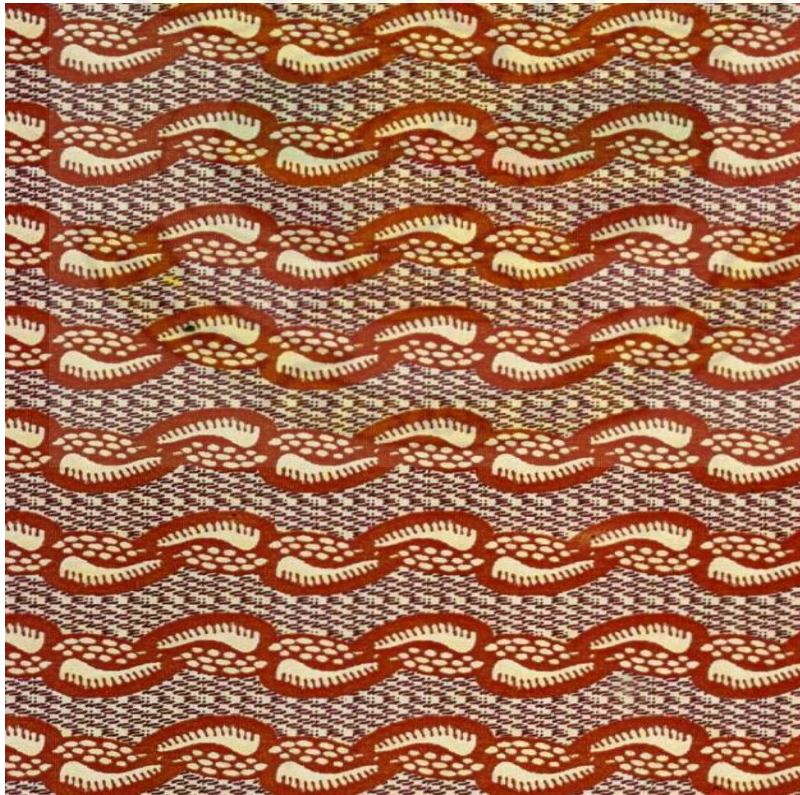


Plate 60: “Classicon” print 6a

“Classicon” print 6b

The “classicon” 6b (plate 61) has three colours which have been interchangeably arranged to create harmony. The design also has contrasting colours.



Plate 61: “Classicon” print 6b

4.5.7 “Classicon” prints 7

The “classicon” print 7 design was developed from the classical print, “aso bayere” as shown in plate 62. The processes of developing the motifs are as follows:

Stage 1

The background of the design was removed as shown in plate 63.



Plate 62: Original “aso bayere”



Plate 63: Idea development

Stage 2

The design was disintegrated into two parts and the rejoined as shown in plate 64 and 65.



Plate 64: Idea development



Plate 65: Idea development

Stage 3

4 copies of plate 65 were made and turned in different angles as shown in plate 66. These were joined together to form the final motif as shown in plate 67.

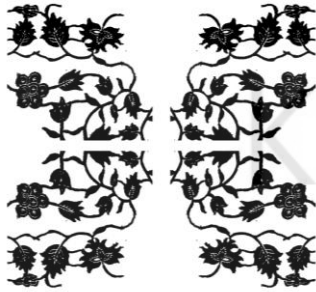


Plate 66: Idea development

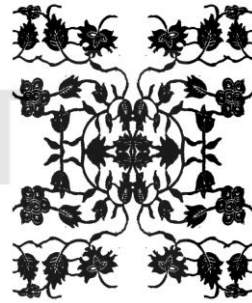


Plate 67: Final motif

“Classicon” prints 7a

“Classicon” 7a as shown in plate 68 is made up of motifs and outlines with tiny textures distributed at specific portions in between the motifs. The outlines have also resulted in irregular designs which are formed in between the motifs. The background colour is also harmonizing with the colour of the motifs, while the outline which is making the motifs stand out is creating a contrasting effect.

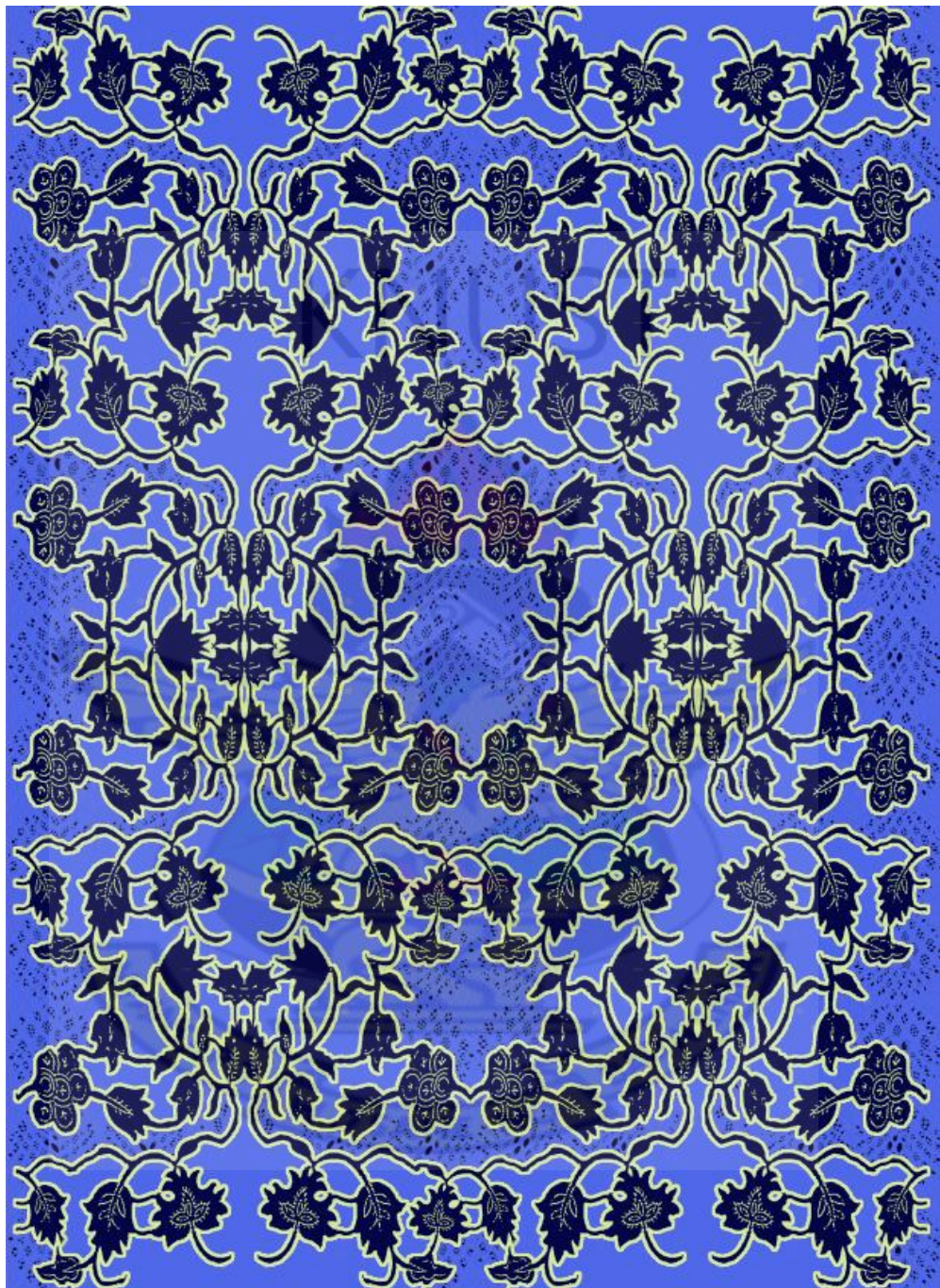


Plate 68: "Classicon" print 7a

“Classicon” print 7b

“Classicon” 7b (plate 69) has horizontal stripes shown in two different colour ways. These stripes have been interchangeably arranged to create contrast and variety in the work. Textures in the form of irregular broken lines are also displayed on the background to enhance the work.



Plate 69: “Classicon” print 7b

4.5.8 “Classicon” prints 8

The “classicon” prints 8 motif was developed from the classical print “akomfem” as shown in plate 70. “Akomfem” means guinea fowl. The motifs have been reduced in size to reflect the current trend. The stages of development are as follows:

Stage 1

The background of the “akomfem” design was removed to make the motif stand out clearly as shown in plate 71.

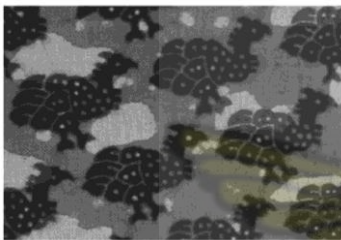


Plate 70: Original “akomfem”



Plate 71: Final motif 1

Stage 2

The solid colour of the motif was transformed into an outline as shown in plate 72. These two motifs were put in three different colour ways and textures as shown in plates 73, 74 and 75. The arrangements were also done in half drop.



Plate 72: Final motif 2

“Classicon” plate 8a

The “Classicon” print 8a as shown in plate 72 has textures in the form of tree barks distributed in between the motifs. The textures have two different colours which is creating variety and harmony in the work. The dots in the animals are also creating additional textures. The colours used in the design are analogous.

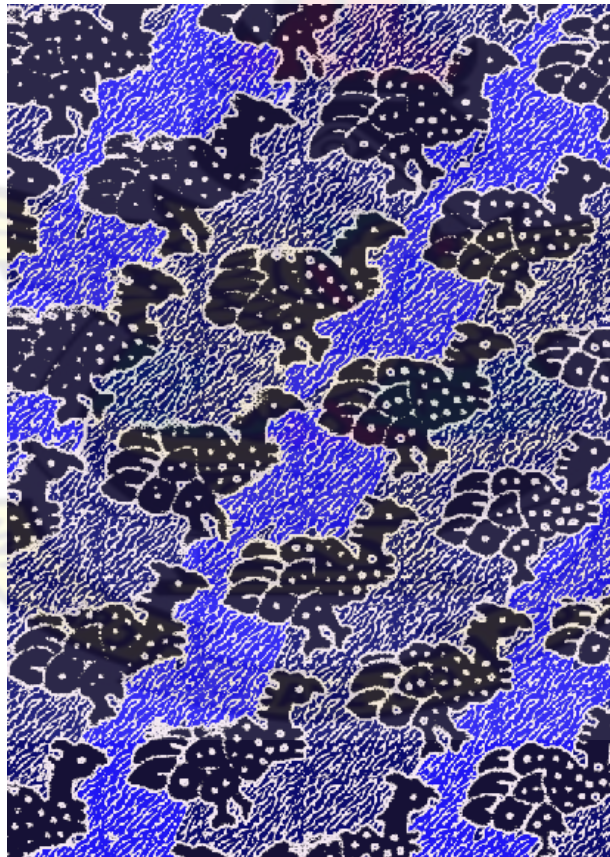


Plate 72: “Classicon” print 8a

“Classicon” plate 8b

The textures in “classicon” 8b (plate 73), are in the form of contour lines which are displayed in between the motifs. This design has analogous colours, but the motifs are standing out clearly as compared to plate 72.



Plate 73: “Classicon” print 8b

“Classicon” print 8c

In “classicon” print 8c as shown in plate 74, the motifs have been outlined instead of the entire motifs being filled with colour. This design also has analogous colours.

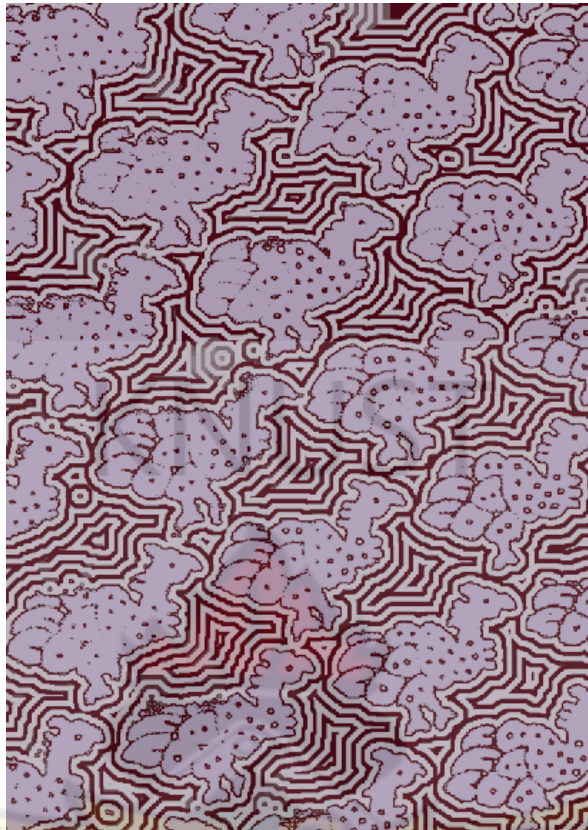


Plate 74: “Classicon” print 8c

4.5.9 “Classicon” prints 9

The “classicon” 9 print design was developed from the “owu atwede baako mforo” design as shown in plate 75. This literally means “the ladder of death is not climbed by one person”. This indicates that everybody will die someday irrespective of one’s position in society. “Owu atwede” used to be a funeral cloth, but today it is used for all social functions. The stages of development are as follows:

Stage 1

In the first stage, parts of the design were removed as shown in plate 76.



Plate 75: Original “owu atwedee baako mforo”



Plate 76: Idea development

Stage 2

Copies of the motif were made and rejoined to form the final motif as shown in plate 77 and 78 respectively. The motifs were joined in unison and put in 2 different colour ways as shown in plate 79 and 80.



Plate 77: Idea development

Plate 78: Final motif

“Classicon” prints 9a

In “classicon” prints 9a as shown in plate 79, the designer applied wax crackle effect on the motifs to reflect the original design. This design has harmonious and contrasting colours. There is also movement and variety in terms of the elements used.



Plate 79: “Classicon” print 9a

“Classicon” prints 9b

The “classicon” 9b as shown in plate 80 has a green and a blue colour motif against a yellow background, thus creating contrast in the work. An interesting feature of this design is that textures are embedded in the motifs.

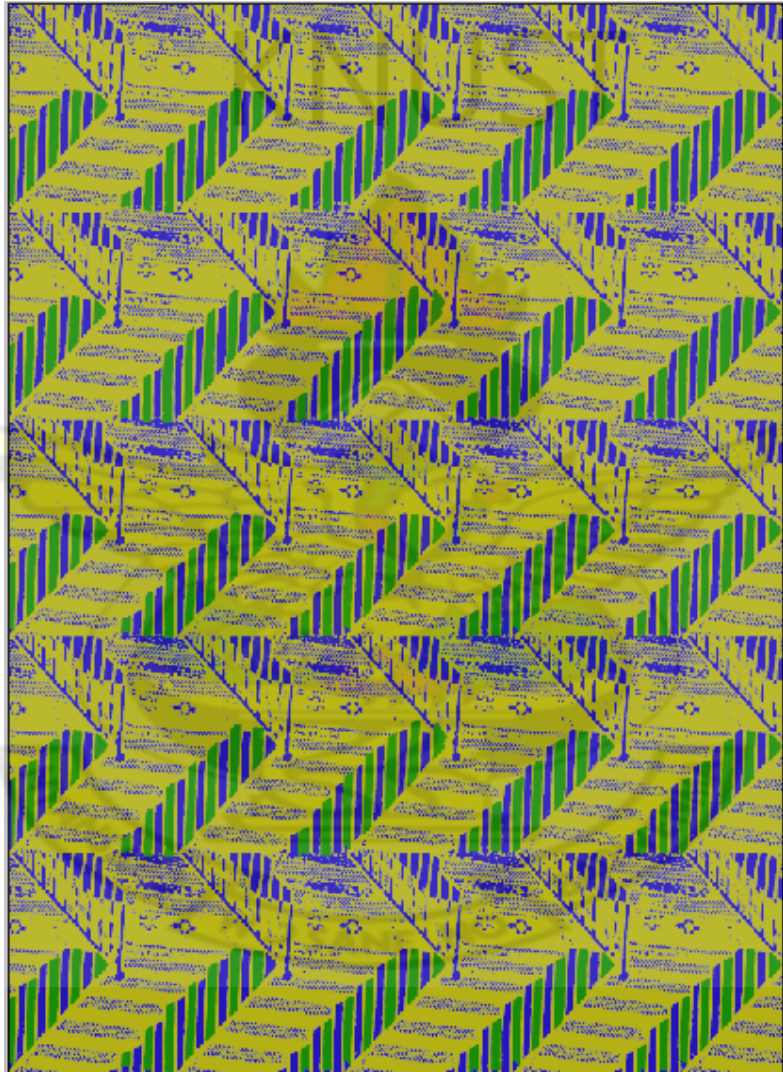


Plate 80: “Classicon” print 9b

4.5.10 “Classicon” prints 10

The “classicon” prints 10 motif was developed from “Ahoonee pa nkasa” as shown in plate 81. This literally means precious beads make no noise. That is, empty barrels make the most noise or a good person needs not blow his own horns. It is an advice to people to eschew arrogance. The stages of development are as follows:

Stage 1

The background and part of the design were removed to get a single motif as shown in plate 82.



Plate 81: Original “Ahoonee pa nkasa”



Plate 82: Idea development

Stage 2

The motif was then turned in an anticlockwise direction as shown in plate 83.



Plate 83: Idea development

Stage 3

Two copies of plate 83 were made and one was turned in the opposite direction. The two were then joined together to form the final motif as shown in plate 84.



Plate 84: Final motif

The “classicon” 10 (plate 85) motifs have been outlined to make them stand out clearly. The background has some parts uniformly filled with purple colour and the remaining part filled with textures. The part filled with purple is accidentally creating additional textures. This form of arrangement is creating variety in the work.

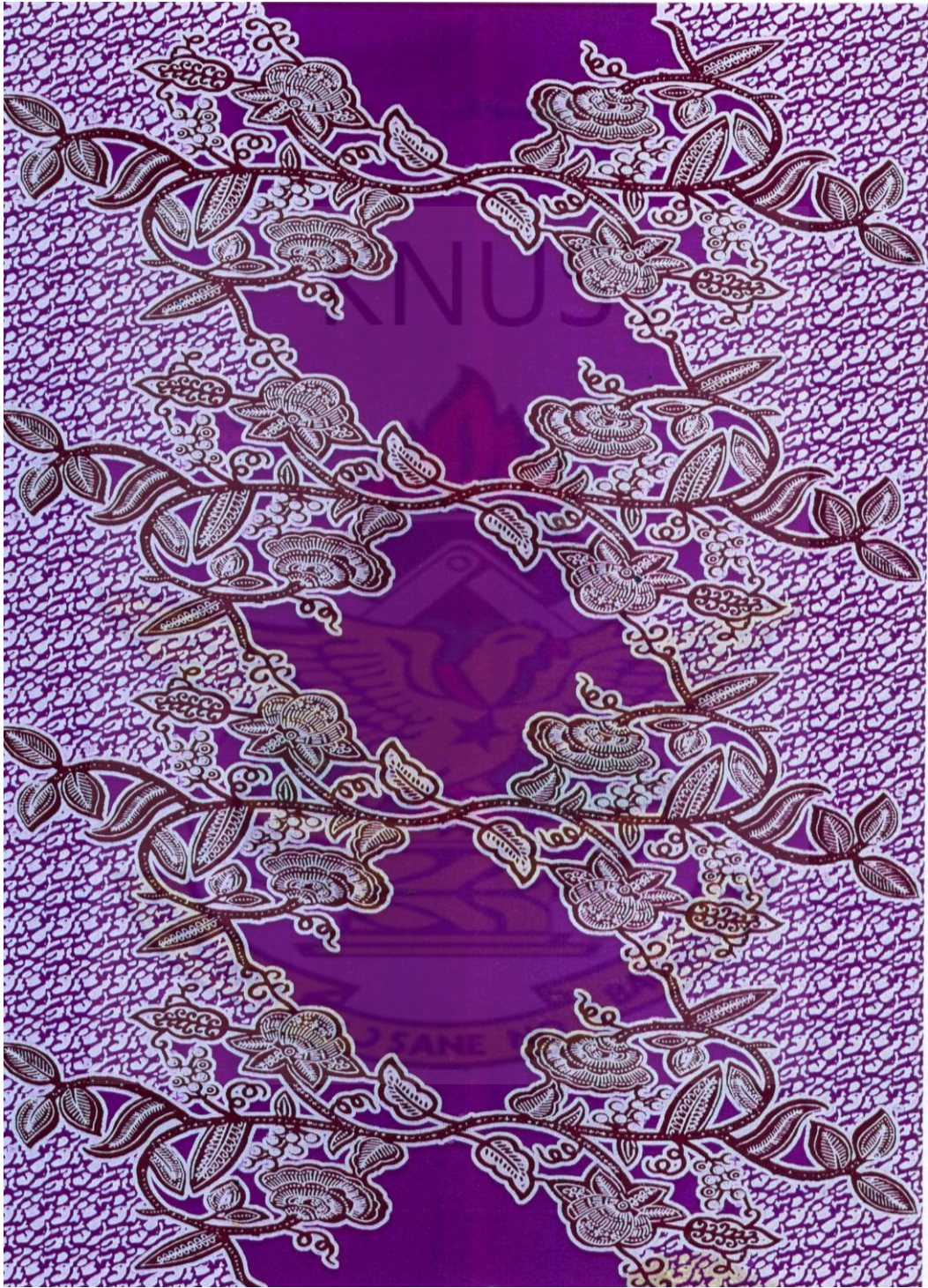


Plate 84: "Classicon" print 10

4.5.11 “Classicon” prints 11

The “classicon” prints 11 motif was developed from su bura as shown in plate 85. “Su bura” means well water. The motifs are in the form of circles with textures arranged in spiral form. The stages of development are as follow:

Stage 1

The background textures were removed to make the motif stand out as shown in plate 86.

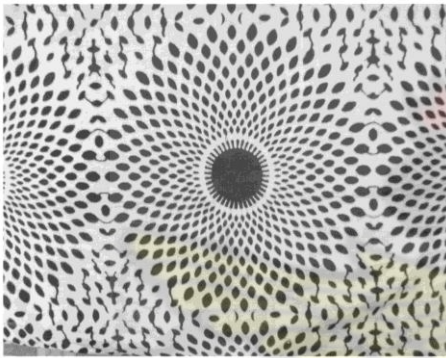


Plate 85: Original “su bura”



Plate 86: Idea development

Stage 2

The motif in plate 86 was inversed to form another motif as shown in plate 87.



Plate 87: Idea development

“Classicon” 11a

The “classicon” print 11a (plate 88) motifs are in the form of circles with textures arranged in spiral form. The design has multiple colours which is enhancing the beauty of the design. In between the motifs are rectangular shapes which have been intentionally created to add beauty to the design. The yellow rectangular shapes are also creating contrast in the work.

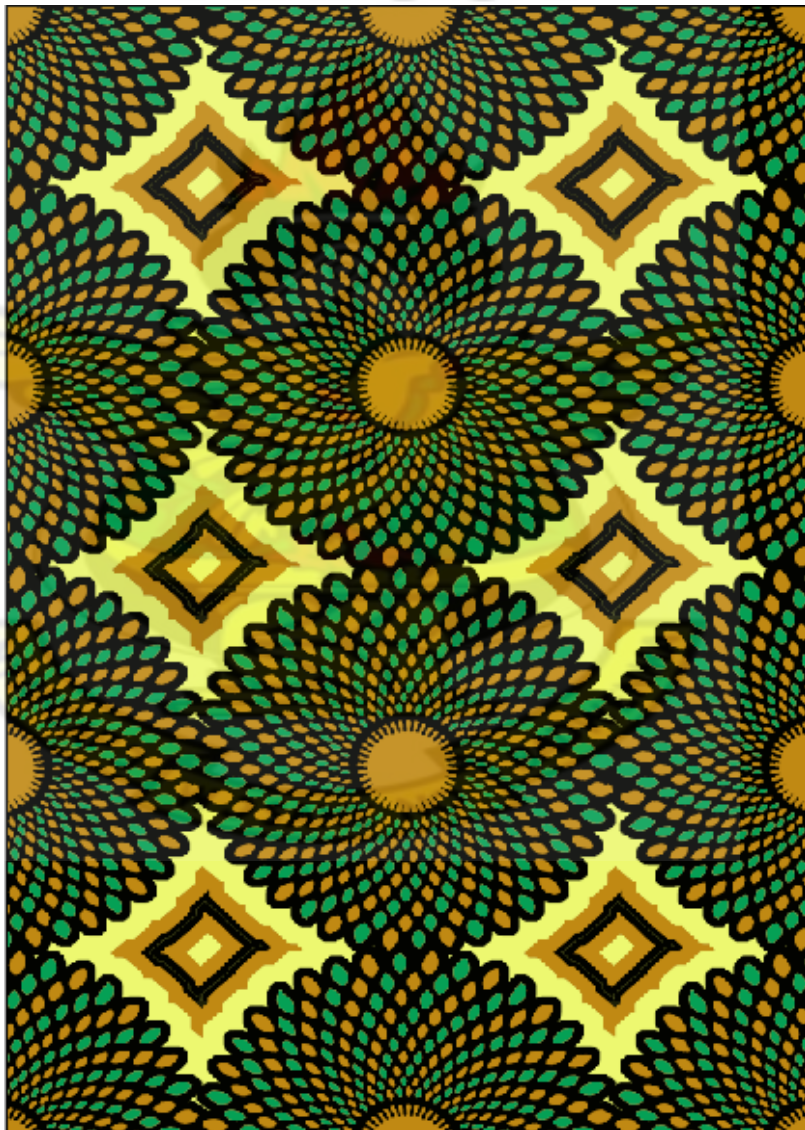


Plate 88: “Classicon” print 11a

“Classicon” plate 11b

The “classicon” print 11b as shown in plate 89, has textures displayed in between the motifs. The background colour is harmonizing with the motif colour, while the combination of textures in the motif is creating contrast and balance in the work.

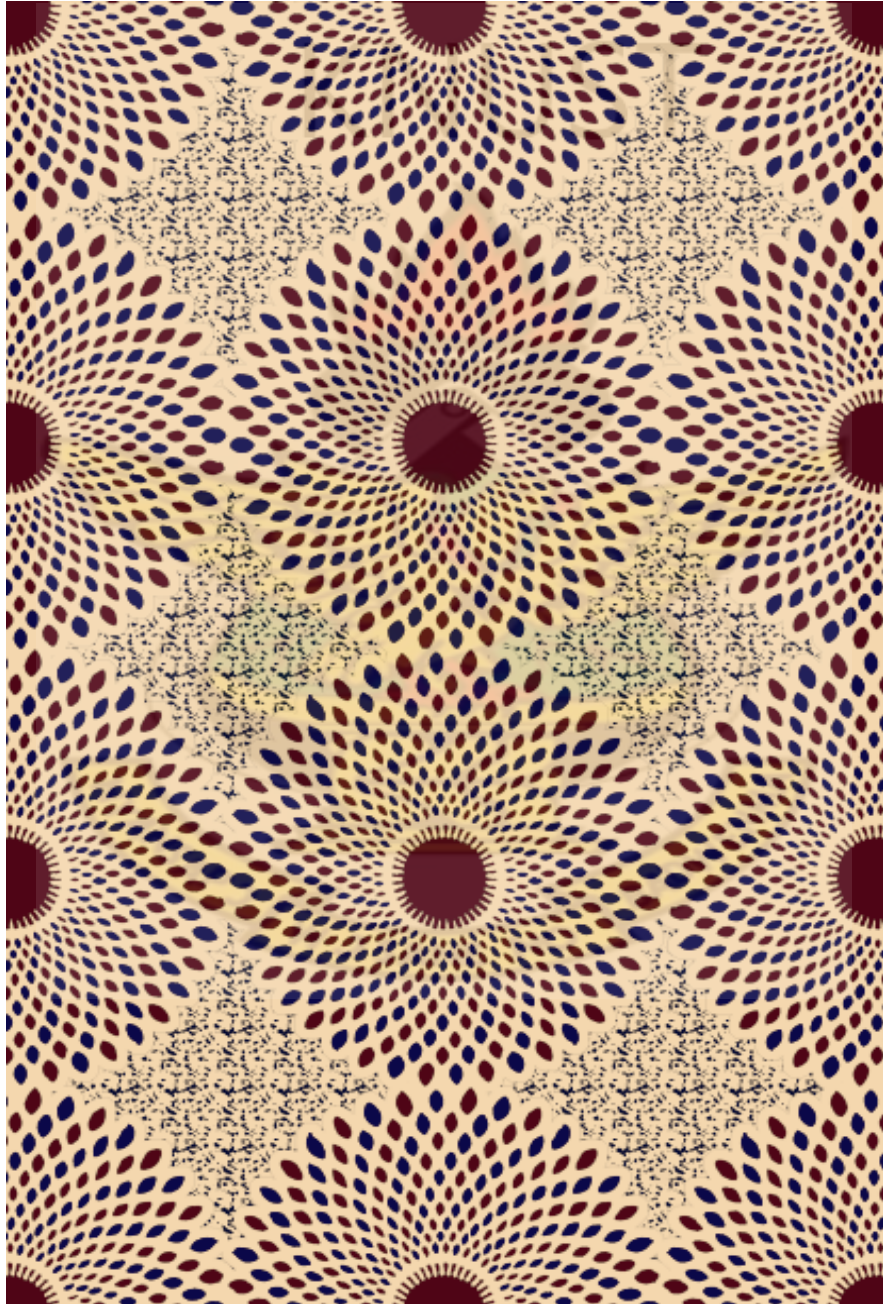


Plate 89: “Classicon” print 11b

4.6 Level of Acceptance of “Classicon” Prints

To determine whether the “classicon” prints would receive patronage from consumers, the researcher carried out further studies by issuing questionnaire to fashion designers, retailers and consumers of African prints as indicated in appendix III. On the adaptation of classical motifs, respondents were marveled as to how old designs could be redesigned and still maintain its features. Some were of the view that even though the designs have been altered they could still see the proverbial concept in the new designs. Respondents rated the “classicon” designs as shown in table 4.5.4.

Table 4.5.4 The level of Acceptance of “Classicon” Prints

		Frequency (N=50)	Percentage
Valid	Excellent	5	10.0%
	Very Good	36	72.0%
	Good	9	18.0%
	Poor	0	0.0%
	Total	50	100.0%

Out 50 respondents, 5 representing 10% rated the “classicon” designs excellent, 36 representing 72% rated the designs very good, and 9 representing 18% rated the designs good. None of the respondents said the designs were poor. These ratings suggest that the “classicon” prints would be highly patronized by consumers.

The respondents said the new designs would benefits those who did not like the classical designs because of the bigger sizes of motifs. They were of the view that the

new designs will receive a high patronage from the youth because the arrangement of the entire design reflect modern trend. Some retailers said because the proverbial concept is still there it will receive a high patronage. Fashion designers interviewed were happy about the small sizes of motifs because they could easily cut through them. They also thought the new designs could be put to other use like bags and hats because of the nature of designs. Respondent also appreciated the distribution of textures and the varied colour ways.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

African prints were imported by the European merchant and subsequently manufactured by the local textile companies'. These prints have strong cultural, social and economic importance. African prints of various kinds are admired by all in Ghana. Most women desire to possess the greatest amount of African prints especially wax fabrics not only to demonstrate their good taste, but also to identify the person socially. The early African prints were sewn into “kaba” and “slit” for the women and the men worn them as cloth. As a result of fashion, modernity and innovation, these prints are made into different dresses by tailors, dress makers and fashion designers to satisfy consumers.

Classical prints represent the early African prints designs produced in Ghana. They carry slogans, catch phrases and proverbs that help to market the products. An example is “Ahonnee pa nkasa” which literally means precious beads make no noise. That is, empty barrels make the most noise or a good person needs not blow his own horns. People bought these fabrics without considering its aesthetic appeal, but rather the message they carry. These classical prints continued to dominate the textile trade in Ghana until 1990 when newer prints fabrics called contemporary prints emerged. According to the findings of the research, 55% of people still patronize the classical prints.

Production of contemporary prints started when rotary screen printing machines were introduced into the country. Contemporary print fabrics such as woodin and Nustyle are

produced by Ghana Textile Printing Company, and Da diva and Treasure produced by Akosombo Textile Limited. These contemporary prints quickly caught up with consumers especially the youth who developed special interest in them. 45% of respondents patronize the contemporary prints.

In order to broaden the patronage of African prints, the researcher developed the “classicon” prints. The prints combine some characteristic features of classical prints which are highly patronized because of its proverbial and catch phrases and the gorgeous and aesthetic nature of contemporary prints which are highly patronized by the youth and organized groups.

5.2 Conclusion

African prints have seen significant changes since it was introduced into the country by the Europeans. Whiles the contemporary designs which are mostly fancy prints are gaining prominence, the classical prints which carry proverbial names are still patronized by consumers especially the elderly. To determine changes that have occurred over the years in African print designs, observation was carried out on samples of both classical and contemporary prints. Consumer preference for African prints was also analysed. These observation and analysis led to the development of the “Classicon” Prints.

The researcher converted 11 classical prints into new prints. A total number of 26 designs were generated as a result of different colour ways, varied motif arrangement and

distribution of textures. To determine whether the new prints would be patronized by consumers, the researcher conducted further studies by interviewing retailers, fashion designers and consumers of African prints. 10% of respondent rated the new designs excellent, 72% rated the designs very good, 18% rated the designs good and none of the respondents rated the designs poor. These ratings suggest that the new prints named “classicon” prints would be highly patronized by consumers.

6.3 Recommendations

In order to broaden the patronage of textiles in Ghana, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The textile industries should continue to produce the classical prints in order to satisfy consumers who strictly patronize the classical prints.
2. There should be a category of design where these classical prints could be transformed into newer prints to meet the current trend in textile design. The introduction of “classicon” prints will therefore form the basis for this transformation.
3. Textile designers should consider reducing the size of motifs, as it is difficult to cut through bigger motifs in certain dresses when sewing, and this poses a big challenge to fashion designers.
4. There should be collaboration between textile designers and fashion designers to come out with designs that will suit the current trend in fashion. This will in turn boost consumer confidence in textile producers and fashion designers.
5. Designers should consider the integration of symbolism and aesthetics in textile designing since majority of consumers who patronize the classical prints

considered the symbolic meaning and those who patronize the contemporary prints considered the aesthetic qualities as compared to the other reasons given for patronizing African prints.

6. Finally, further research on consumer preference for textile prints in order to increase the patronage of African prints in Ghana.

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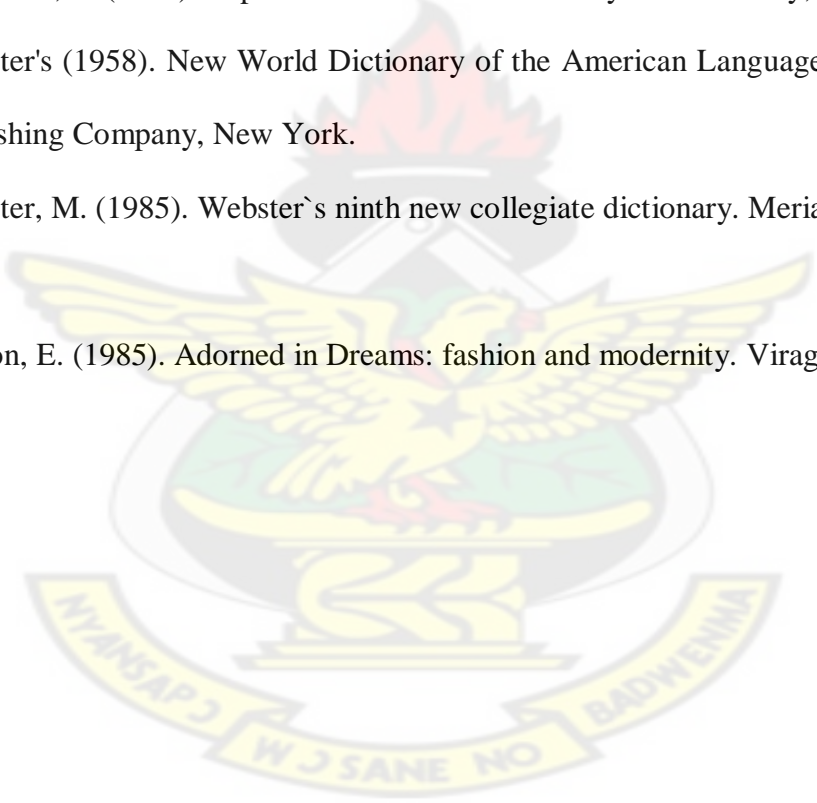
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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out consumer preference for either classical or contemporary textile prints. It is also to find out the reasons why consumers patronize either classical or contemporary prints in order to come out with improved and innovative designs that will satisfy wider consumers.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONSUMERS OF TEXTILE PRINT DESIGNS

1. Age group

- I. 15 – 29 II. 30 – 39 III. 40 – 49 IV. 50 and above

2. Gender

- I. Male II. Female

3. Educational level

- II. Basic II. Secondary III. HND
IV. Degree and above V. Non

4. Occupation/profession

.....

5. Which type of fabric do you prefer most?

- I. Classical print designs (old designs)
II. Contemporary print designs (new designs)

6a Why do you prefer either classical or contemporary prints?

III. Because of the name of the fabric

IV. Because of the cost of the fabric

V. Because of my age

VI. Because of the aesthetic qualities of the fabric

6b. Give reasons for your answer in 6a.

.....

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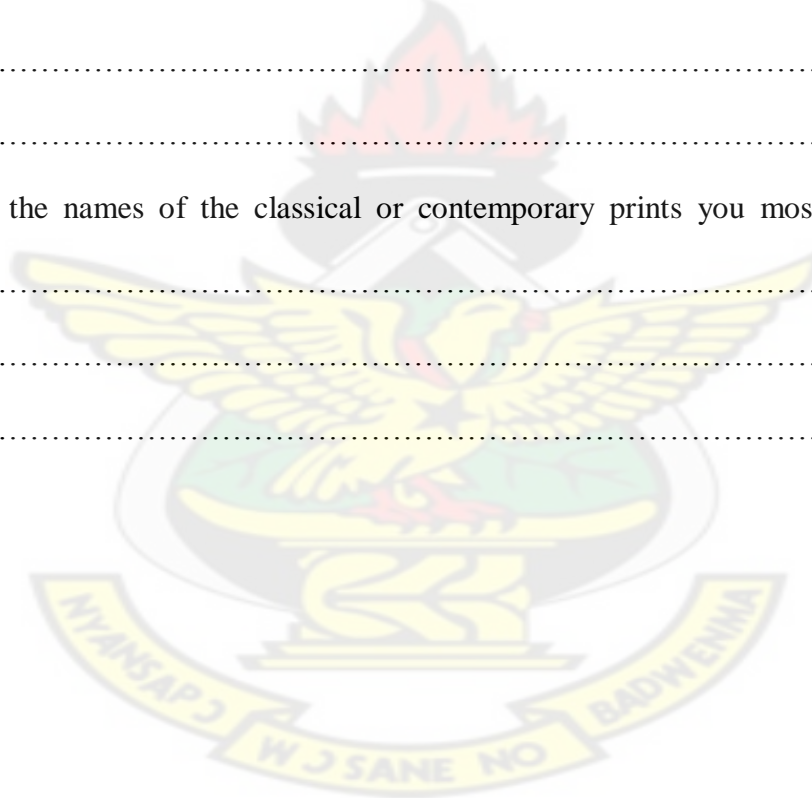
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6. Give the names of the classical or contemporary prints you mostly patronize.

.....

.....

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APPENDIX II

Interview guide for managers of sales and distribution outlets of African prints

1. Occupation/profession
2. How long have worked in this business?
3. Which African prints were the first to be printed by your company?
4. What were the local names given to the first printed fabrics?
5. Which years were the fabrics mentioned above printed?
6. Name some of the contemporary prints fabrics that your company has produced.
7. What motivated the production of the contemporary prints fabrics?
8. Which year did you start producing the contemporary prints?
9. How would you rate the patronage of the classical prints?
 - a. I. High II. Average IV. Low
10. Give reasons for your answer.
11. How would you rate the patronage of the contemporary prints?
 - a. I. High II. Average IV. Low
12. Give reasons for your answer.
13. How would you assess the trend of textile print designs?

APPENDIX III

Level of Acceptance of “Classicon” Prints

1. Do you like the motifs in the prints?

Yes

No

If yes give reasons.

2. Do you like the colour ways?

Yes

No

If yes give reasons.

3. Do you like the distribution of textures?

Yes

No

If yes give reasons.

4. Do you think consumers will accept the new designs?

Yes

No

If yes give reasons.

5. Give your impression about the design

6. How would you rate the new designs

a) Excellent

b) Very good

c) Good

d) poor