

A FUSION OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN AND CHINESE  
CRAFT DESIGN METHODS AND TECHNIQUES TO  
INFORM A RANGE OF INTERIOR CHILDREN'S  
PRODUCTS

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A fusion of traditional African and Chinese craft and design methods and techniques to inform a range of interior children's products

by

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**at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology**

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## DECLARATION

I, Yanfei Li, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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**Signed**

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**Date**

## **ABSTRACT**

In today's world of mass production, many traditional craft expressions are being forgotten and techniques are getting lost. Thereby, this research proposes to deal with selected traditional African textile design and Chinese folk (fabric) craftwork technique, in order to create unique children's products. As a designer of Chinese origin studying in South Africa, I have been drawn to Africa's traditional material culture. I have designed some interior products for children, which combined two different traditional cultures; African and Chinese. My research focuses on the importance of cultural specificity amidst globalisation trends that affect design, and how the development of a range of design products based on the fusion of the two different traditional craft techniques can effectively be marketed locally and in China. The research methodology is exploratory; field work was conducted in China and South Africa and the theoretical component dovetails with the practicum to inform an iterative process of design, development, and prototype production.

### **Keywords:**

Adinkra symbols; African and Chinese traditional textile designs; auspicious Chinese patterns; children's products; craft expression; craftwork; cultural fusion; globalisation; South Africa.

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## DEDICATION

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## GLOSSARY

<b>Terms/Acronyms/Abbreviations</b>	<b>Definition/Explanation</b>
ACTAG	The Arts and Culture Task Group
CA&CA	China Arts and Crafts Association
CASE	The Culture and Sport Evidence Programme
CCDI	Cape Craft and Design Institute
CSP	Comprehensive Strategy Partnership
DCMS	Department for Culture Media & Sport's Culture and Sport Evidence (UK)
DRAW	Design Research Activities Workgroup
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECCC	The Editorial Committee of Chinese Civilization
GCIS	Government Communications
GIA	Global Industry Analysts, Inc
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education
RMB	Renminbi (Chinese currency)
TARA	Trust for African Rock Art ·

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Declaration</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Dedication</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>vi</b>

### CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Defining arts, crafts and creativity</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>New creation of traditional culture</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Role of the researcher</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Rationale of study</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Aim of the study</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.6</b>	<b>Objectives of study</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.6.1</b>	<b>Delineation of the study</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.7</b>	<b>Piaget's theory of cognitive development</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.8</b>	<b>Research problem statement</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.9</b>	<b>Research questions</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.10</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.11</b>	<b>Thesis Outline</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.12</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>13</b>

### CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Chinese and African social literature</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.1.1</b>	<b>Chinese social literature</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.1.2</b>	<b>African social literature</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Cultural Dimensions</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.2.1</b>	<b>Defining culture and tradition</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.2.2</b>	<b>The use of cultural dimensions</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.2.3</b>	<b>Hofstede's cultural dimensions</b>	<b>22</b>



2.3	The conjuncture of Chinese traditional craft skills	25
2.4	Theoretical underpinning	27
2.4.1	Mark K. Smith & Michele Erina Doyle and globalisation	27
2.4.2	Anthony Giddens and globalisation	28
2.4.3	Ezio Manzini and globalisation	29
2.4.4	Bill Moggridge on how globalisation has affected design	30
2.4.5	Craft as cultural repository	31
2.4.6	Contemporary craft	32
2.4.7	Craft and the economy	34
2.4.8	Craft and cultural specificity in product design	36
2.4.9	Craft education and its potential impact on children's development	38
2.4.10	Craft and children's products	39
2.5	Inspiration drawn from expert practitioners	42
2.6	Summary	44

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction	45
3.1	Research design	45
3.1.1	Semiotics and symbolism in craft design	46
3.2	Qualitative approach	49
3.2.1	Practice – led research	50
3.2.2	Exploratory research	54
3.2.3	Ethnography	54
3.2.4	Duration of the research project	56
3.3	Data gathering techniques	56
3.3.1	Flexible research instruments	56
3.3.1.1	Market research surveys	57
3.3.1.2	Observation	57
3.3.1.3	Interviews	58
3.3.1.4	A reflexive approach in research: journaling	59
3.3.2	Fixed research designs	61
3.3.2.1	Document Analysis 1	61
3.3.2.2	Document Analysis 2	62
3.4	Data analysis	62
3.5	Timing of interviews	63

<b>3.6</b>	<b>Ethical considerations</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>3.7</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>63</b>

## **CHAPTER FOUR: COLOURS, MOTIFS AND TECHNIQUES USED IN SELECTED AFRICAN AND CHINESE EXAMPLES**

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Experimentation: an exchange of knowledge and creative ideas</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Rationale for the utilisation of motifs and techniques</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>4.2.1</b>	<b>African Adinkra motifs and pattern design</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>4.2.2</b>	<b>Chinese folk fabric art</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>4.2.2.1</b>	<b>Traditional Chinese fabric pattern</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>4.2.2.2</b>	<b>Folk hand stitching and patterns</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>4.2.2.3</b>	<b>Traditional Chinese embroidery technique</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>4.2.2.4</b>	<b>Chinese folk cloth-pasted technique</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Utilisation of colour and materials</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>86</b>

## **CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

<b>5.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Documenting the traditional African textile design and Chinese folk fabric art</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Observations of workshops and design focus group</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>5.2.1</b>	<b>Chinese Su Embroidery workshop: H Z</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>5.2.2</b>	<b>Chinese Lu Embroidery practitioner: R Y</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>5.2.3</b>	<b>African “Adinkra” textile designer: R D D</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>5.2.4</b>	<b>African fashion designer: N M</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>5.2.5</b>	<b>Fine art printmaker: A I V</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>5.2.6</b>	<b>CCDI design focus group</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Establishing the marketability of the children’s products</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>5.3.1</b>	<b>The analysis of survey questionnaires</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>131</b>

## **CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS A REFLECTED IN THE PRODUCT RANGE**

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Children’s cloth-pasted book</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>6.1.1</b>	<b>Background of book story</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>6.1.2</b>	<b>Design of children’s book</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Interior products</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>6.2.1</b>	<b>Children’s duvet set</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>6.2.2</b>	<b>Children’s curtain</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>6.2.3</b>	<b>Folk-patterned cushions</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>6.2.4</b>	<b>Children’s height gauge</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>6.2.5</b>	<b>Children’s wall decoration</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>6.2.6</b>	<b>Children’s kitbag</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>6.2.7</b>	<b>Products’ packaging bags</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Website design</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>187</b>

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION**

<b>7.0</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>193</b>

<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>209</b>

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>Figure 1.1: Fabric craftwork of Shaanxi Province: tiger-head shoes</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Figure 1.2: Su embroidery of Jiangsu Province</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Figure 1.3: Xiang embroidery of Hunan Province</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Figure 1.4: Yue embroidery of Guangdong Province</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Figure 1.5: Shu embroidery of Sichuan Province</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Figure 2.1: The pronunciation is that of Mandarin and of Old Chinese</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Figure 2.2: Chinese ancient poem: Chun Wang</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Figure 2.3: The conjuncture of Chinese traditional craft skills</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Figure 2.4: Yao Fuying and his embroidered gown work</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Figure 2.5: Charles and Ray Eames</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Figure 2.6: Crafts value chain</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Figure 2.7: 2009 Wafrika fashion design by Serge Mouangue</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Figure 2.8: Pink Warthog by Susie Jardine</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Figure 2.9: Dragon Teng Cloth-pasted Picture</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Figure 3.1: The logic of the research process</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Figure 3.2: The structure of semiotics</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Figure 3.3: Overview of the research design</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Figure 3.4: Practical and theoretical iterations</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Figure 3.5: A model of creative arts and research processes: the iterative cyclic web of practice-led research and research-led practice</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Figure 3.6: Four paradigms for the analysis of social theory</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Figure 4.1: Adinkra Stamping</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Figure 4.2: Adinkra motif: “Bese Saka”</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Figure 4.3: Adinkra motif: “Pempamsie”</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Figure 4.4: Adinkra motif: “Adinkrahene”</b>	<b>68</b>

Figure 4.5: Large red and black Adinkra cloth	69
Figure 4.6: An auspicious Chinese pattern: <i>Longevity above Five Fu</i>	72
Figure 4.7: Chinese geometric patterns	73
Figure 4.8: Chinese plum blossom pattern	74
Figure 4.9: Chinese hand stitching design	75
Figure 4.10: The back surface of the hand-stitched design	75
Figure 4.11: Huaxi hand stitching	76
Figure 4.12: Ancient women's red dresses	77
Figure 4.13: Work of <i>Qizhen</i> Stitch	78
Figure 4.14: Lu embroidered shoes	78
Figure 4.15: Lu embroidery woman	79
Figure 4.16: A pair of shoes of Manchues' appliqué	80
Figure 4.17: Crane	80
Figure 4.18: The Temple of Heaven	82
Figure 4.19: The Gold Crown of Ming dynasty emperor	83
Figure 4.20: Egyptian cave painting	84
Figure 4.21: Skirt and shawl braided raffia	85
Figure 4.22: Cache-sexe cotton, glass beads and cowrie shells	86
Figure 5.1: Yoruba people, Stencil & starch resist - dyed agbada, Nigeria cotton	89
Figure 5.2: The CCTV's <i>Su Embroidery</i> Program	90
Figure 5.3: The subtle embroidery: <i>God of Longevity</i>	92
Figure 5.4: <i>Pingtao</i> stitch work	93
Figure 5.5: <i>Panjin</i> stitch work	94
Figure 5.6: <i>Dazi</i> stitch work	94
Figure 5.7: <i>Wangxiu</i> stitch work	95
Figure 5.8: <i>Bingwen</i> stitch work	95
Figure 5.9: <i>Najin</i> stitch work	96
Figure 5.10: <i>Kelin</i> embroidery work – fish scales	96
Figure 5.11: Lu Embroidered coaster	99
Figure 5.12: DRAW symbol	102
Figure 5.13: Adinkra symbols	104
Figure 5.14: Adinkra symbol: “Eniwa” (eyes) calabash stamp	105
Figure 5.15: Adinkra symbol: “Papa” (fan) calabash stamp	105
Figure 5.16: Adinkra symbol: “Kenten” (basket) calabash stamp	106
Figure 5.17: Adinkra symbol: “Nsuo ne Anwa” (oil and water) calabash stamp	107
Figure 5.18: The process of Adinkra design printing	107
Figure 5.19: The result of Adinkra designs	107

Figure 5.20: The design combination of Chinese auspicious patterns and Adinkra symbols	108
Figure 5.21: The product examples of Chinese auspicious pattern and Adinkra symbol design combinations	109
Figure 5.22: Kidz Korner fashion designs	113
Figure 5.23: A I V's embroidery designs	115
Figure 5.24: A I V's embroidery design stitch	117
Figure 5.25: V P's work: Rounded pot	121
Figure 5.26: A D's work: Once off piece	122
Figure 5.27: Mielie bag design	124
Figure 5.28: The "Bokkie" textile design	125
Figure 5.29: The "Positive Power" cushion design	125
Figure 5.30: The Magpie Collective's hand-decorated light design	126
Figure 5.31: Father and mother participants pie chart	128
Figure 5.32: The age range of the participants' children graph	128
Figure 5.33: The attractive aspects of traditional culture and art chart	129
Figure 5.34: The range of purchasing children's products pie chart	130
Figure 5.35: The factors influencing the purchase of products graph	131
Figure 6.1: The twelve Chinese zodiac animals	133
Figure 6.2: Character of Long Long	134
Figure 6.3: Twelve zodiac animal characters	135
Figure 6.4: Big Five of Africa	136
Figure 6.5: "Big Five" characters' sketch	137
Figure 6.6: Chinese embroidery pattern design	138
Figure 6.7: The font style of the book	139
Figure 6.8: Graphic design in the book	139
Figure 6.9: UV-coated technique of book	142
Figure 6.10: Details of butterfly binding technique	142
Figure 6.11: The printed fabric book cover	144
Figure 6.12: Long Long on the book cover	144
Figure 6.13: Embroidered details of the book cover	145
Figure 6.14: The making process of the Long Long cartoon	145
Figure 6.15: The book mark	146
Figure 6.16: The satin and blanket stitches	147
Figure 6.17: The digital printing process	149
Figure 6.18: The children's duvet set design	150
Figure 6.19: The digitally-printed details of the children's duvet set	152
Figure 6.20: The Lu embroidered characters of the duvet cover	153

<b>Figure 6.21: The duvet cover zipper</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Figure 6.22: The sewing stitches details of the children’s duvet set</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Figure 6.23: The children’s curtain design</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Figure 6.24: The digitally-printed details of the children’s curtain</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Figure 6.25: The Lu embroidery of the Hello, South Africa!</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Figure 6.26: The Lu embroidering process</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Figure 6.27: The sewing process of the circular cotton-belts</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Figure 6.28: The square folk-patterned cushion cover design</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Figure 6.29: The digitally-printed patterns of the square cushion cover</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Figure 6.30: The cloth-pasted patterns of the square cushion cover</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Figure 6.31: The sewing process of the square cushion cover</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Figure 6.32: The Adinkra symbol: “Osram ne Nsoromma”</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Figure 6.33: The red folk-patterned cushion cover design</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Figure 6.34: The digitally-printed patterns of the red cushion cover</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Figure 6.35: The zipper of the red folk-patterned cushion cover</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Figure 6.36: The folk-embroidered cushion cover design</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Figure 6.37: The central Tuan Hua Wen pattern: lotus flower</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Figure 6.38: The full-blown lotus flower</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Figure 6.39: The digitally-printed patterns of the embroidered cushion cover</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Figure 6.40: The Su embroidery process of the cushion cover</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Figure 6.41: The Su embroidered details of the cushion cover</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Figure 6.42: The making process of the internal cushion</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Figure 6.43: The folk-patterned cushions</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Figure 6.44: The design of the children’s height gauge</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Figure 6.45: The children’s height gauge</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Figure 6.46: The technique details of the children’s height gauge</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Figure 6.47: The making process of the Long Long cartoon head-toy</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Figure 6.48: The Long Long cartoon head-mark</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Figure 6.49: The double-threaded blanket stitches</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Figure 6.50: The embroidered stitches of Long Long cartoon head-mark</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Figure 6.51: The embroidered ribbon of the children’s height gauge</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Figure 6.52: The design of the children’s wall decoration</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Figure 6.53: The background pattern of the traditional African symbols</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Figure 6.54: The African Adinkra symbol: “Mmusuyidee”</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Figure 6.55: The digitally-printed colour of the wall decoration</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Figure 6.56: The different stitches of the wall decoration</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Figure 6.57: The buttonhole stitch wheel stitches</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Figure 6.58: The basic backstitches</b>	<b>178</b>

<b>Figure 6.59: The single-threaded and double-threaded backstitches</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Figure 6.60: The cloth-pasted and embroidery details</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Figure 6.61: The design sketch of the children’s kitbag</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Figure 6.62: The Chinese auspicious patterns of the kitbag’s fabric design</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Figure 6.63: The making process of the children’s kitbag</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>Figure 6.64: The children’s kitbag</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Figure 6.65: The design of the packaging bag</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Figure 6.66: The different types of the packaging bags</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Figure 6.67: The embroidered brand tag</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Figure 6.68: The images of the website design</b>	<b>185</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES**

<b>Table 1.1: Connections of planning goals to arts, culture, and creativity</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Table 1.2: Piaget’s theory of cognitive development</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Table 2.1: Comparison of Hofstede’s cultural framework with other models</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Table 4.1: The Ashanti symbols and meanings</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Table 5.1: The DRAW Adinkra-inspired symbols and meanings</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Table 6.1: Main African and Chinese pattern designs</b>	<b>138</b>



# CHAPTER ONE

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.0 Introduction

African textile arts count as one of Africa's most significant craft forms (LaGamma & Giuntini, 2008:2). People all over the world wear fabrics influenced by woven and printed African textiles. It is not difficult to find their colours and intricate patterns incorporated not only in clothing and home decor, but also in product packaging. Africa's distinct patterns depend on the type of textile techniques that are used; they may be woven, printed, dyed or drawn onto the fabric (Timmel & Leo, 2008:8). In contemporary Africa, some traditional designs and weaving methods still fulfil a practical function as they form an important part of African lifestyle (Dale, 1980:5). What I set out to achieve with the research is to acknowledge these practices and to extend them in a novel manner through practical experimentation, in conjunction with traditional Chinese textile crafts, into contemporary children's products. This "merging" of African and Eastern material cultures to inform a range of products, provides fertile ground for practical experimentation and theoretical analysis.

Folk arts vary little from the established patterns and codes set by the communities in and for which the art is made. Usually the guiding principles that maintain the conformities of folk arts are laid down by the actual social networks that are served by them. This means that mere imitation by an artist cannot count as much as it is not rooted in these networks. It is far more important that a craftsman is schooled through the rigorous and time-honoured methods of the master mentor who can impart an understanding of all the aspects necessary to ensure the integrity of the piece as a metaphor for the belief-systems and identity of a particular community (MacDowell, 1999:120).



Folk craftwork in China, particularly fabric art is mainly prevalent in the northern regions of China including Shandong, Henan, Shanxi and Shaanxi Province (CA&CA, 2014). Traditional folk fabric art products in China are of diversified types, ranging from costumes, shoes, caps, bedding curtains, satchels, backpacks and pillows to toys, handkerchiefs and other small-sized ornaments (Sumberg, 2010:58). For example, my father's hometown is Shaanxi (a province in the central part of Mainland China), and an area where one of the important varieties of folk fabric art includes "infant fineries". These fineries are characterised by diversified shapes and various colour matches, typically with tiger-head shoes and tiger-head (lion-head) caps as the symbolic product. Figure 1.1 is an example of tiger-head shoes. The reason why the lion and tiger are used is because they are regarded commonly by most Chinese people as deity beasts which can bless them with good luck. Extensive application of these two animals in infant fineries also reflects the important role of the lion and the tiger in the culture of Chinese folk custom (Sun, 1992:48-51).



**Figure 1.1**

**Fabric craftwork of Shaanxi Province: tiger-head shoes**

**(CA&CA, 2014)**

Embroidery is another renowned traditional Chinese craft. It consists of pulling coloured threads through a background material with embroidery needles to stitch coloured patterns that have been previously designed on the cloth ground (Xiang, 2003:270). Chinese embroidery had already reached a high level early in the Qin and

Han dynasties (221BC-AD220), when silk and embroidery were the main products transported along the ancient Chinese Silk Road. The immense sophistication and eminence in the art of Chinese embroidery eventually led to the formation of distinctive schools of style, each of which developed its own individual needling methods and techniques. The four famous Chinese embroidery styles are the Su Embroidery of Jiangsu Province (Figure 1.2), the Xiang Embroidery of Hunan Province (Figure 1.3), the Yue Embroidery of Guangdong Province (Figure 1.4) and the Shu Embroidery of Sichuan Province (Figure 1.5) (Chinaculture, 2005).



**Figure 1.2**

**Su embroidery of Jiangsu Province**

**(Shen & Zhang, 2010:126)**



**Figure 1.3**

**Xiang embroidery of Hunan Province**

**(Shen & Zhang, 2010:135)**



**Figure 1.4**

**Yue embroidery of Guangdong Province**

**(Liang, 2012)**



**Figure 1.5**

**Shu embroidery of Sichuan Province**

**(Shen & Zhang, 2010:141)**

### **1.1 Defining arts, crafts and creativity**

“Craft refers to the creation and production of a broad range of utilitarian and decorative items produced on a small scale with hand processes being a significant part of the value-added content. The production of goods uses a range of natural and synthetic materials” (The ACTAG report, 1994). This definition has been adopted by the Department of Trade and Industry as the official definition.

The domain of arts and culture embodies the visual, performing and fine arts as well as applied arts, which encompass architecture and crafts, graphic design, digital media and video, movies, literature, folk life, humanities and historic preservation and other creative activities. The arts alone can be sorted in thirteen different categories: announcing, acting, directing, writing, architecture, fine art, design, photography, music and singing, dancing and choreography, animation, entertainment, performance and production (Gaquin, 2008:12). The arts and a community's intangible shared beliefs, values and practices (Houston, 2007:3), can be classified as culture. The common elements of arts and culture sometimes are used to describe 'creativity', which also encompasses other fields (Gaquin, 2008:15). On the whole, the aspects of daily human activities are naturally manifested in various forms of arts and culture (Robinson, 2007:11).

People use different avenues to pursue artistic and creative expressions. Not only do they involve formal expressions such as theatre and drama, painting, sculpture and architecture, but also less formal arts such as music, food festivals and celebrations, informal crafts teams and cultural gatherings. A community's cultural property consists of these artistic and cultural activities whether they are formal, visible and professional or informal, invisible, and amateurish. There are a variety of positions, spaces, degrees of participation and professionalism, consumers, creators, critics, products and events in the activities and they are very crucial to the community's welfare, sense of identity, economic and cultural vitality and heritage (NACCCE, 1999:243-245).

The sector of arts and culture is constantly changing and developing. Moreover, the approaches in which the activities of arts and culture are defined and manifested are valued reasonably differently from one locality and community to another. Since the sector of arts and culture is interlaced with all forms of daily human activities, different players and constituents are active in a discriminating understanding of the roles (Gaquin, 2008:13-15). Table 1.1 offers examples for understanding where and how

the arts, culture, and creativity can be integrated in the planning of activities and processes.

**Table 1.1: Connections of planning goals to arts, culture, and creativity**

Category	Planning Goals	Sample Activities	Actors
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preserve the historic and cultural heritage of a place</li> <li>● Provide a better understanding and an appreciation for a community's cultural diversity</li> <li>● Facilitate connections among or reduce barriers between diverse groups (e.g., age cohorts, ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage community residents in a PhotoVoice or storytelling exercise to identify shared needs and values</li> <li>● Create and unveil a community mural or other form of public artwork to validate or celebrate the past</li> <li>● Organise a community festival to celebrate local cultural diversity</li> <li>● Provide arts and cultural education programmes, such as workshops, interactive classes, and performances, to encourage an understanding and awareness of a community's historical and cultural context</li> <li>● Use cultural and noncultural venues to facilitate participation from different parts of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planners</li> <li>● Nonprofit organisations</li> <li>● Neighbourhood Groups</li> <li>● Artists</li> <li>● Individuals</li> <li>● Funders</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop and expand upon local economic opportunities for members of the community</li> <li>● Ensure quality affordable housing for all members of the community</li> <li>● Attract businesses, new residents, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create and provide maps, signs, and other products to educate consumers about locally owned and operated community businesses</li> <li>● Use public art within streetscape improvements to increase traffic to underutilised corridors</li> <li>● Provide cultural assets in new affordable-housing developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planners</li> <li>● Economic developers</li> <li>● Engineers</li> <li>● Business investment districts</li> <li>● Nonprofit organisations</li> <li>● Artists</li> <li>● Financial institutions</li> </ul>

Category	Planning Goals	Sample Activities	Actors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visitors</li> <li>● Provide or facilitate public transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage use of public transit, including ensuring safety</li> <li>● Create live/work spaces</li> <li>● Create incubator spaces for individual entrepreneurs, including artists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Policy makers</li> <li>● Residents</li> <li>● Visitors and tourists</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preserve and enhance a place's local identity and character</li> <li>● Preserve and protect the community's parks and open space</li> <li>● Restore, protect, and preserve the community's waterways</li> <li>● Implement sustainable practices</li> <li>● Encourage healthy practices, including bike/ped-friendly travel, outdoor activities, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Integrate public art in transportation, parks and open space, water, and sewer infrastructure</li> <li>● Engage the community in a multidisciplinary exploration of environmental degradation and preservation through community performances and festivals</li> <li>● Inventory, assess, and map a community's artistic and cultural characteristics</li> <li>● Encourage zero-waste practices at festivals, public venues, restaurants, hotels, and such like.</li> <li>● Locate or develop performance spaces and public gathering places on public transportation routes</li> <li>● Include sustainable practices incentives in site-review regulations</li> <li>● Creatively reuse and preserve historic structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planners</li> <li>● Nonprofit organisations</li> <li>● Design professionals</li> <li>● Artists</li> <li>● Environmental planners</li> <li>● Developers and builders</li> <li>● Policy makers</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage the public in transparent planning processes to assess the current and future needs of the community</li> <li>● Promote community pride and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use interactive, online community forums</li> <li>● Empower and engage racially and ethnically diverse groups of youths and adults to participate in planning decisions through innovative tools such as drawing, sculpting,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planners</li> <li>● Nonprofit organisations</li> <li>● Local businesses</li> <li>● Neighborhood groups</li> <li>● Artists</li> <li>● Individuals</li> </ul>

Category	Planning Goals	Sample Activities	Actors
	stewardship of place	modeling, and painting ● Engage artists to provide or help develop a vision	

(Houston, 2007:15)

## 1.2 New creation of traditional culture

At present the world tendency is toward a global culture. It is a concept used in describing the characteristics of any given product which integrates the diverse spaces of human interaction, and as Ono Maristela notes “the adoption of global design demands the creation of products with a universal language capable of penetrating all the social, cultural and economic barriers of different markets irrespective of local particularities” (Maristela, 1999:45). This global tendency tends to homogenise most products with the objective of their introduction into a global marketplace. On the whole, each industrial sector seeks to design an absolute product capable of satisfying the needs of a single universal user (Maristela, 1999:45). However, according to Ricard:

*“It is impossible to reduce human diversity to an absolute uniformity. This so called ‘universal human being’ becomes, unfortunately, the model imitated by people of different ethnicities who support the invasion of their cultural territory by merchandise which is foreign to them and suffer the consequent loss of their genuine idiosyncrasies. The universal homogenisation of things leads to cultural impoverishment” (Ricard, 2000:113).*

Consequently, it is impossible to define humankind as a homogenous entity, because exactly on creating such generalisations the human dimension is lost: the equipment of material must be made of the precise measure of any given human group whose cultural, anthropometrics, and affective characteristics are connected and who share common climatological, geographic, economic and political circumstances. This builds authentic development (Ricard, 2000:114).



Therefore I consider it necessary to contribute to the material craft culture. Craft culture may then evolve into a new design order to allow it to find its place in the contemporary human market and environment without losing its richness and cultural significance.

### **1.3 Role of the researcher**

When I was nineteen years old, I decided to come to South Africa to study, because I wanted to experience the culture and knowledge of Africa, particularly South Africa, with a view to enriching my design practice. I found both similarities and differences between African and Chinese traditional craft design methods and techniques. I experienced South Africa as a country rich in culture. Its people have been referred to as the “rainbow nation” (Archbishop Desmond Tutu called the South African people in 1993: “The Rainbow people of God”), a term which illuminates the country’s cultural diversity (Nevitt, 2013). The population of South Africa is one of the most complex and diverse in the world (Davenport, 1987:32), and a similar demographic situation occurs in China with many ethnic groups and languages making up a complex society. South African traditional culture attracts me deeply, but with excessive availability of mass produced goods, fewer people use traditional design processes and techniques to make products, consequently many traditional crafts are disappearing (Hudson, 2010). The same situation is evident in China. In order for a culture to endure, it is necessary to adapt to changing times. This situation informed my research intention of designing unique interior products for children, which draw on the traditional cultures of South Africa and China with respect to design and craft techniques and heritage.

### **1.4 Rationale of study**

In today’s world, the development of mass media and the achievements in science and technology have doubtlessly resulted in a rapidly progressing society, but many traditional craft expressions are being forgotten and their techniques lost. This research attempts to deal with the dearth of traditional African textile motifs and

pattern design and Chinese folk fabric craftwork and embroidery techniques, in order to create marketable children's products with a difference.

### **1.5 Aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to connect traditional African textile motifs and pattern designs and processes with Chinese folk-fabric craftwork and embroidery techniques to create stimulating interior products for children, thus tying my Chinese roots with newly-grown African ones.

### **1.6 Objectives of study**

This study focuses on two objectives. Firstly, I am providing an understanding of the textile motifs and folk-fabric craftwork, to cultivate an interest in these traditional cultures in order to prevent the further loss of traditional crafts (albeit to a limited degree). Secondly I am pursuing a commercial objective. I aim to establish my own brand – “Long Long” - that will cater for a particular children's market segment in the two to seven-year-old category.

#### **1.6.1 Delineation of the study**

The research project consists of a 50% practicum component coupled with a thesis. Culturally specific design is investigated namely the cloth-pasted works of Teng Teng and the specific Chinese embroidery techniques of Wuxi and Xi'an Cities, Ghanaian Adinkra motifs and their symbolic meanings as well as selected craft designers and the CCDI craft designers are investigated to establish the current position in that field in Western Cape. An investigation of the relevant literature is carried out to ascertain the causes contributing to the demise of certain traditional types of craft expressions.

### **1.7 Piaget's theory of cognitive development**

Jean Piaget is perhaps one of the most well-known and influential child development specialists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Huitt & Hummel, 2003:3). His view of how children's minds work and develop has been enormously influential, particularly in educational

theory (Huitt & Hummel, 2003:4). Piaget's theory of cognitive development posits that two to seven-year-old children enter the preoperational stage (as shown in Table 1.2), where they will learn how to think abstractly, understand symbolic concepts, and use language in more sophisticated ways (Piaget, 1976:12). During this stage, children become insatiably curious and begin to ask questions about everything they see. They imagine people or objects and enjoy making up their own games, imaginative activities not commonly found in younger or much older children (Atherton, 2011). My target market will consist of a segment of this two to seven-year-old children; they are curious and creative, and their imagination and intuition are well developed and they are able to start thinking symbolically.

**Table 1.2: Piaget's theory of cognitive development**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Sensorimotor</b>	0-2 years	Coordination of senses with motor response, sensory curiosity about the world. Language used for demands and cataloguing. Object permanence developed
<b>Preoperational</b>	2-7 years	Symbolic thinking, use of proper syntax and grammar to express full concepts. Imagination and intuition are strong, but complex abstract thought still difficult. Concentration develops.
<b>Concrete Operational</b>	7-11 years	Concepts attached to concrete situations. Time, space, and quantity are understood and can be applied, but not as independent concepts.
<b>Formal Operations</b>	11+	Theoretical, hypothetical, and counterfactual thinking. Abstract logic and reasoning. Strategy and planning become possible. Concepts learned in one context can be applied to another.

**(Piaget, 1976:11-23)**

## **1.8 Research problem statement**

Traditional craft design is diminishing in the contemporary world with globalisation as one of the contributing factors. This has led to the loss of culturally specific craft design expressions with reference to South Africa and China.

## **1.9 Research questions:**

- 1.9.1 How has the phenomenon of globalisation impacted upon craft design products in South Africa and China, specifically in Cape Town in the Western Cape and Xi'an in Shaanxi province?
- 1.9.2 What is being produced for children with respect to traditional crafts in South Africa and China?
- 1.9.3 How can I as a designer of Chinese origin, living and studying in South Africa, produce marketable products for children that fuse traditional crafts of the said two countries and through niche marketing / internet marketing cater for the above mentioned markets?

## **1.10 Assumptions**

With the development of globalisation, many opportunities have been provided by sharing of goods, services, knowledge and cultures between people and countries. However, there is little focus on traditional design, and many traditional crafts have also been neglected. I fear that the traditional designs and techniques will become redundant. I believe that traditional craft techniques have the potential to become "re-invented" as a new "design/art/craft" form. This re-invented craft form can be used to help children between the ages of 2-7 years form a basic understanding of traditional crafts, and also cultivate an interest in traditional culture. This will be made possible by combining traditional African textile motifs, pattern designs and processes with Chinese folk-fabric art and embroidery techniques. However, the assumption is made that there is a market demand for such craft-design products.

### **1.11 Thesis Outline**

The outline for the rest of the study begins with Chapter Two, which discusses literature regarding African and Chinese societies, cultural dimensions, theoretical underpinnings and expert practitioners. Chapter Three focuses on research methodology and data collection. The colours, motifs and techniques used in the development of the children's product range are discussed in Chapter Four. Chapter Five represents research findings that were obtained from the semi-structured individual and focus group interviews as well as questionnaires. Chapter Six introduces my children's product range. Chapter Seven concludes what I have accomplished through this research, with an evaluation of the outcome.

### **1.12 Summary**

Traditional culture plays a significant role in the societies of Africa and China. However, many traditional African and Chinese crafts are being forgotten, and techniques lost, due to the rapidly changing profile of economic interchange between nations and the impact of globalisation. Therefore, this research aims to prevent the further loss of traditional crafts in today's world of mass production, and encourage a return to the use of traditional design processes and techniques to make children's products in the future.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction

*Globalisation is the greater movement of people, goods, capital and ideas due to increased economic integration, which in turn is propelled by increased trade and investment (James et al., 2010:13). This phenomenon has impacted upon design and design activities.*

The aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework based on globalisation theory, with reference to Mark K. Smith and Michele Erina Doyle, Anthony Giddens as well as Ezio Manzini as expert academics. Bill Moggridge's theory of 'Designing Interactions' will also inform this enquiry. I also discuss six aspects of craft designs and products, which include craft as cultural repository, contemporary craft, craft and the economy, craft and cultural specificity in product design, craft education and its potential impact on children's development as well as craft and children's products.

### 2.1 Chinese and African social literature

#### 2.1.1 Chinese social literature

China is in the possession of the world's major social and literary traditions. These traditions span over 3,000 years. A deep respect for its history has kept China acutely aware of the need to protect and conserve its ancient traditions. Despite this respect for social literature, its government has not been instrumental in actively promoting and supporting the various crafts and artisanal production methods which are at risk of being lost (Wagner, 2009). The invention of woodblock printing in the 9th century and later, movable type printing, may have been motivated by the determination to perpetuate and protect their canons of written language (Wagner, 2009). Most importantly, China can boast of an unbroken cultural tradition based on the Chinese script (see Figure 2.1) as a language that is used as a written medium, and it is independent of spoken dialectic difference. With the fading out of literary language from the spoken language, the literary language seems to be far less important, which has experienced a transition from nature to imitation. In fact the literature, originating



from the time of Confucius, has a long history. Many models of literature have been derived along the historical development. A typical example is social literature. It is becoming more and more excellent due to its character of popularity and familiarity, which was also implied by Dr. Marsha Wagner in 2009 (Wagner, 2009).

	oracle bone <i>jiaquwen</i>	greater seal <i>dazhuan</i>	lesser seal <i>xiaozhuan</i>	clerkly script <i>lishu</i>	standard script <i>kaishu</i>	running script <i>xingshu</i>	cursive script <i>caoshu</i>	modern simplified <i>jiantizi</i>
<i>rén</i> (*nín) human	𠄎	𠄎	𠄎	人	人	人	人	人
<i>nǚ</i> (*nra?) woman	𡗗	𡗗	𡗗	女	女	女	女	女
<i>ěr</i> (*nə?) ear	𦊔	𦊔	𦊔	耳	耳	耳	耳	耳
<i>mǎ</i> (*mrā?) horse	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	馬	馬	馬	馬	马
<i>yú</i> (*ŋa) fish	𩺰	𩺰	𩺰	魚	魚	魚	魚	鱼
<i>shān</i> (*srān) mountain	𠂔	𠂔	𠂔	山	山	山	山	山
<i>rì</i> (*nit) sun	𠄎	𠄎	𠄎	日	日	日	日	日
<i>yuè</i> (*ŋwat) moon	𠄎	𠄎	𠄎	月	月	月	月	月
<i>yǔ</i> (*wa?) rain	𠄎	𠄎	𠄎	雨	雨	雨	雨	雨
<i>yún</i> (*wan) cloud	𠄎	𠄎	𠄎	雲	雲	雲	雲	云

Figure 2.1

The pronunciation is that of Mandarin and of Old Chinese (1000-700 BCE)

(Chen, 2011:127)

Poetry is the principal genre of Chinese literature. This *shi*<sup>3</sup> (*shi* means poetry in Chinese) form was established from early folk songs, and it crystallised during the Han dynasty (206BC-AD220) and dominated for the next 1,200 years. However, this form of literature became increasingly complicated or regulated. Structures included rhymed couplets of folk songs that were always used to express simple longings and complaints. Several years were needed by the poet to grasp the formal rules of composition (Wells, 2005:46).

<sup>3</sup> Chinese Pinyin

Figure 2.2 is an example of a Chinese ancient poem by the greatest poet - Du Fu. Like many poets of his time, Du Fu was a government official during the Tang dynasty (618-907). The Tang Dynasty, the second greatest dynasty in the Chinese history, completed a unification of vast territories and made a magnificent contribution in the cultural communication with the surrounding countries and peoples by way of absorbing and spreading their cultures (The ECCC, 2007:61). However, the An Lu Shan Rebellion was the beginning of the end for China's glorious Tang dynasty, which provided the turning point of China from an outward-looking nation to an inward-looking xenophobic society. It was the rebellion which Du Fu lived through. In a traditional sense, this poem features an “anti-war” theme, but it also reflects basic humanity and described Du Fu’s sorrowful emotion on account of separation. This poem presents the beauty of the traditional Chinese poetry. Herein we can see true Chinese language, especially the classical Chinese, which is very compact even if it is ambiguous (The ECCC, 2007:74-75).

春 望									
Chun wang									
Spring view									
國	破	山	河	在	烽	火	連	三	月
gwo	po	shan	he	dzai	fung	hwo	lian	san	yue
country	shattered	mountain	river	in/at/on	beacon	fire	unite	three	month
成	春	草	木	深	家	書	抵	萬	金
cheng	chun	tsao	mu	shen	jia	shu	di	wan	jin
city	spring	grass	tree	deep/thick	family	document	against	ten thousand	gold
感	時	花	濺	淚	白	頭	搔	更	短
gan	shr	hwa	jian	lay	bai	tou	sao	geng	dawn
feelings	time	flower	splash/spill	tears	white	head	scratch	more	short
恨	別	鳥	驚	心	渾	欲	不	勝	簪
hun	bie	niao	jing	syin	hwun	yu	bu	sheng	dzen
hate	separation	bird	startle	heart	entire	desire	not	adequate	hair/hatpin
					杜 甫				
					Du Fu (c. 712-770)				

Figure 2.2

Chinese ancient poem: Chun Wang

(Du Fu cited in the ECCC, 2007:65)



The Tang Dynasty also saw the early development of the short story. At first it was used as a vehicle for relating informal events or even the supernatural, something which could not be done in any formal historical writing (Wells, 2005:135). The notion of fiction as related to history persisted, yet more rationally inexplicable and imaginative, culminating in China's greatest novel, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* or *The Story of the Stone*, which was written by the famous fictionist of the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) Cao Xueqin. It is at once realistic and autobiographical, as well as mystical and imaginative (Cao, 2012:6).

The development of theatre began with the activities of popular entertainment, and this genre developed well in China. During the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), the medium of theatre provided a perfect opportunity for the intelligentsia to pursue the dramatic and literary arts while at the same time using them as a vehicle to deride the ruling elite of Mongol usurpers who had conquered them. In the following centuries, theatres inclined to become longer, but the opera was limited. But it was the opera that eventually came to the fore and took precedence. Until the 20th century, spoken theatre became less conspicuous (Milagros, 2000:7).

By the dawn of the 20th century, the powerful influence of West made itself felt in Chinese literature. There was a desire to modernise and restructure traditional artistic formats. The formal classical language of written texts was slowly taken over by the vernacular spoken language as a medium for the literary arts. Western influence was seen in free verse and sonnet forms, interior monologues and short autobiographical stories, spoken theatre and radio, as well as film scripts rather than the classical Chinese tradition (Mayfair, 1994:15-24). During the 20th century, nevertheless, the plight of China played a significant role in the literature. The pendulum frequently swayed to and fro between Chinese foundation and conservative techniques versus western culture and a modernised style in the past 60 years. However, Chinese traditional literature has been appreciated for its consideration of craft and erudition.

After 1919, the essence of Chinese literature can be evaluated mostly with regard to its social and political relevancy (Mayfair, 1994:31).

### **2.1.2 African social literature**

Africa is an enormous continent, and the ways of life, the challenges and responses, and the institutions that have been shaped often vary greatly from one region to another, often from one tribe and to a neighbouring tribe. There are many cultural developments and concepts that over centuries and millennia have permeated most of the continent (Harold, 1996:2).

In Africa, there are about 2,000 spoken languages. Language is always classified by the racial-cultural group. Each distinct ethnic group with different racial beliefs have their own native language (Murdock, 1959:63). Identifying, classifying, and describing African languages can be difficult. It is also hard to have knowledge of phonetics for most European speakers. Sometimes the identical language seems to have several diverse names. This has resulted from the many different ways in which the Europeans have engaged with the language. One group's language or ethnic names are supplied from a particular neighbourhood. However, it can happen that a name used by a certain neighbourhood has become modified over time to assume a completely different, even pejorative, meaning. When such an aberration enters the linguistic literature or ethnography, it is hard to correct it. To compound these inherent difficulties, there are theoretical differences among scholars of African linguistics (Greenberg, 1963:11).

African culture is innovative, creative and frequently unique (Harold, 1996:6). Along with the literature, African art and music are perceived as exotic (ibid:6). Unlike the dominant expressions of fine arts in the West, most African design can be seen to be more integrated into the rituals and routines of daily life and social interaction. Thus it has been said that traditional African designs and expressions are mostly represented in the form of daily appliance such as masks or religious carvings and other related

artefacts. Perhaps this is not completely the case, but exact analysis of African art or not, this concept should not in any way diminish its grandeur or in any way reduce its role as a dynamic manifestation of vibrant ideas and aesthetics (Brain, 1980:285).

Scholarly research in modern Africa poetry began in the 1960s, aimed at making African literature a formal discipline. The most famous and important events being Makerere, Dakar and Freetown conferences that were held during 1962 and 1963. Moore (1965) edited the conferences' proceedings, which are combined together with *African Literature and the Universities*. These pivotal efforts laid the foundations for the recognition of the identities of traditional African literature as well as the various dynamics in which they could be framed. These practices are relevant to the task of elucidating the identification of Africa literature, including the crisis of what is relevant to the medium of African writing; the dilemma of inventing an idiom of criticism; as well as the deceptively simple question which can reveal the African literary tradition (Moore, 1965:18-22). To sum up with a famous saying of Dubem Okafor, "African literature is not only a contested terrain, but the medium of its production and of its discussion is, to say the least, cacophonous" (Okafor, 2001:1). In fact, all other problems that have ever emerged in African critical literature are generated by their primary underscores in assessing modern African poetic traditions (Finnegan, 1982:57).

During the uprisings of the 1970s, Nadine Gordimer predicted pessimistically and drearily on the white and black conflict in South Africa in *July's People*. This prophecy, suggesting the toppling of all racial segregation, remains a challenge to the social and racial roles currently existing in South African society. Amid the chaos, traditional roles would be overturned and new ones established. To obtain absolute understanding of racial and sexual roles present in southern African countries, one must carefully review both *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* and *July's People* for an old social structure that is disguised as the identity of the developments of a new nation (Egudu, 1975:421-447).

## **2.2 Cultural dimensions**

Human culture is the result of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution. During most of this time, culture constituted the broadest influence on many dimensions of human behaviour (Greet, 2001:76). There are almost 200 countries in the world at the present time and although they are recognised as sovereign states, many of them contain within their borders a large variety of separate groups and populations. Some nations are culturally more heterogeneous than others; and especially large nations like China, India and Brazil comprise culturally different regions. Also, culturally similar areas may belong politically to different nations: this is the case particularly in Africa. In spite of different constraints and limitations, comparing national cultures is still a meaningful and revealing venture, helping to ascertain how people make meaning of their world and share that meaning with others (Greet, 2001:81-87).

### **2.2.1 Defining culture and tradition**

Taylor provides one of the earliest definitions of culture: “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society” (Taylor, 1871, in McCort & Malhotra, 1993:97). Succeeding contributions share the entire nature of culture as influencing aspects of human social life. However, it is difficult to distinguish strictly some macro-level influences on cultural factors, which make the definition of culture even more complicated. Culture differs intrinsically from other macro-environmental factors: “Culturally patterned behaviors are thus distinct from the economic, political, legal, religious, linguistic, educational, technological and industrial environment in which people find them” (Sekaran, 1983:68). Considering there are no clear boundaries between these interrelated influences, it might not be so easy and practical to absolutely distinguish macro-environmental influences and pure culture. “Culturally normed behavior and patterns of socialisation could often stem from a mix of religious beliefs, economic and political exigencies and so on. Sorting these out in a clear-cut fashion would be extremely difficult, if not totally impossible” (Sekaran, 1983:68).

In the description of tradition from Kagan and Graburm, Kagan argued that “traditions are practices and beliefs that are passed down between generations of a certain family, culture, or other group” (Kagan, 2010; Graburm cited in Nelson, 2001:6). As Graburm suggested, the use of tradition to name the cultural features is to keep the cultures, which are expected to be handed on generation by generation (Graburm cited in Nelson, 2001:6). He states, “Tradition is a reservoir to draw upon, a source of historically defined identity, and a source of a sense of safety, specialness, or difference” (Graburm cited in Nelson, 2001:9).

### **2.2.2 The use of cultural dimensions**

Van de Vijver and Leung pointed out that “Culture is too global a concept to be meaningful as an explanatory variable” (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997:3). Herein, it is essential to clarify the cultural differences from the application of the concept of culture, in which the components of the culture can be directly understood once unpacked. The origin comparing the cultures in anthropology is the application of dimensions with a limited number. As early as in 1951, Parson and Shills proposed the pattern of culture. Many classifications of culture based on this variable have been derived as follows: Typically there are emotions and emotional neutrality; self-orientation and collectivity orientation; universalism and particularism; specificity and diffuseness as well as ascription and achievement. The definition of cultural patterns has greatly affected the research of modal personality, the core of which is the embodiment of character. In 1969, Inkeles and Levinson put forward the definitions of social character, national character, and also the basic personality structure:

*“The concept of national character is an important but problematic one in the social sciences. It has been strongly rejected in the hereditarian or racist forms in which it was couched by earlier writers. Seen in more modern perspective, however, it poses fundamental problems for social-scientific theory and research: To what extent do the patterned conditions of life in a particular society give rise to certain distinctive patterns in the personalities of its members? To what extent, that is, does the socio-cultural system produce its distinctive forms of ‘social character,’ ‘basic personality structure,’ or ‘modal personality’? Further, what are*

*the consequences, if any, of this patterning in personality for stability or change in the societal order?" (Inkeles & Levinson, 1969:118).*

Furthermore, distinguishing dependable dimensions to synthesise major discriminating aspects of culture could become a main contribution to cross-cultural research. In cross-cultural research, culture is viewed as a comprehensive structure with multi-dimensions rather than a simple variable. However, using dimensions to acquire the culture construct of multidimensionality has not been without criticism (Briley et al., 2000:159). Usually, the identification of dependable dimensions of cultural diversification should be helpful in creating a nomological framework, which not only can integrate various phenomena with different attitudes and behaviours, but also is a base for generating hypotheses (Smith et al., 1996:232). Meantime, while keeping the unique character for a specific kind of culture, the additional emic dimension cannot be ignored. Nonetheless, for the purpose of parsimony, it is important for the researcher to establish that an ostensibly emic cultural diversification cannot be described adequately as a point in the universal dimension (Schwartz, 1994:88).

### **2.2.3 Hofstede's cultural dimensions**

During 1978 to 1983, the Dutch cultural anthropologist Geert Hofstede interviewed hundreds of IBM employees from 53 countries, acquiring a vast amount of data. In this research, the similarities and differences of patterns were determined by analyzing these data sets using the statistical method. A systematic theory, which described the world culture variation along with dimensions, was also set up by statistical analysis. Because the research of Hofstede only focused on world-wide employees from the same company, the differences mentioned in his theory, embodying one company's culture, were only explained as the effects of national cultures on their own company (Hofstede, 1991:113).

In the 1990s, Hofstede wrote another paper about his research published in *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (Hofstede, 1991:113). In prior studies, culture was defined as the refinement of the mind including "highly civilised" attitudes and behavior. However, in this new research, the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting were indicated as key points, which have been well established in later childhood. These differences of culture reflect themselves in choosing culture's symbols, heroes, values, and rituals (Hofstede, 1991:115). Five dimensions were identified in this research, on each of which indices from 53 countries were rated and normalised to values of 0 to 100.

His five dimensions of culture are the following:

- Power-distance
- Collectivism versus individualism
- Femininity versus masculinity
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Long versus short-term orientation

Hofstede's framework is the most widely used national cultural framework in psychology, sociology, marketing, or management studies (Sondergaard, 1994:56). Table 2.1 compares Hofstede's dimensions to other approaches for unpacking the concept of culture. It manifests a high level of convergence through methods, supports the theoretical framework of Hofstede, and verifies further use of his dimensions (Steenkamp, 2001:30-44).

**Table 2.1: Comparison of Hofstede's cultural framework with other models**

	Masculinity /Femininity	Individualism /collectivism	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Long-term orientation	Other
Hofstede (1984)						
Hofstede (1991, 2001)						

	Masculinity /Feminity	Individualism /collectivism	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Long-term orientation	Other
Inkeles and Levinson (1969)	Conceptions of self		Relation to authority	Primary dilemmas or conflicts		
Triandis (1995)						
Chinese culture connection (1987)	Human heartedness	Integration			Confucian work dynamism	Moral discipline
Clark (1990)	Relation to self		Relation to authority	Relation to risk		
Trompenaars (1997)	Neutral/emotional	Universalism / particularism Individualism / communitarianism			Attitudes to time	Specific/diffuse Achievement /ascription Attitudes to the environment
Dorfman and Howell (1988)						Paternalism
Schwartz (1994)	Mastery/harmony	Autonomy/ conservatism	Hierarchy/ egalitarianism			
Smith et al. (1996)		Loyal involvement/ utilitarian involvement	Conservatism/ egalitarianism			Discussion of a third dimension 3 deferred
Keillor and Hult (1999)						National heritage/culture homogeneity / belief system/ consumer ethnocentrism



	Masculinity /Feminity	Individualism /collectivism	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Long-term orientation	Other
Steenkamp (2001)		Autonomy/ collectivism	Egalitarianism/ hierarch	Uncertainty avoidance	Mastery/nu rturance	

(Steenkamp, 2001:30-44)

### 2.3 The conjuncture of Chinese traditional craft skills

According to the 2009 China Arts and Crafts Association's report, 1865 recognized varieties of handicrafts are diminishing, of which 28% are facing difficulties, 13% are in a danger of extinction, and 6% have virtually disappeared (seen in Figure 2.3). Today traditional arts masters are "genuine invaluable treasures" in China, and unfortunately their rare skills are tardily being restricted to history because of a lack of interest, resources and government protection (Zhang, 2010:1).

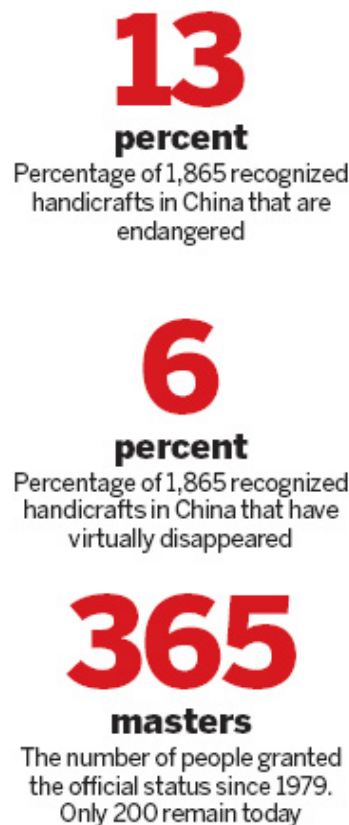


Figure 2.3

The conjuncture of Chinese traditional craft skills

(Zhang, 2010:2)

Yao Fuying (67 years old) is a master of traditional Chinese embroidery, under whom as many as 10 apprentices were taken. Each of them learned a specific craft differing to that of others, which can date back centuries. Today, he has none. Not even his son has continued to learn the art (Zhang, 2010:1). He said, "A student can only learn 80 percent of my master's skill before I die. That means 20 percent is lost every generation. I am afraid there will be nothing left for future generations." Figure 2.4 shows a fine gown, which is embroidered with nine dragons, and they are the symbol of emperor. Yao spent two years making it.



**Figure 2.4**

**Yao Fuying and his embroidered gown work**

**(Photograph, China Daily, 2010)**

"As more crafts are 'fossilised' and only exhibited in museums, to better solve this issue we need to close the gap between masters and consumers," said Tang Shukun, who is an expert in traditional handicrafts and executive director of the college of humanities and social sciences at the University of Science and Technology of China in Hefei, Anhui province. "It should be the strategy to not only protect culture but also promote it well in product design. We have to create a new way to attract people to pay more attention to these traditional skills. The more craftworks are bought, the faster the skills progress. Otherwise a skill just gradually dies out" (Zhang, 2010:1). Nowadays, the whole world is faced with a severe shortage of resources. This situation is putting enormous pressure on these practitioners who are working with traditional handcraft skills all the time, and consequently these unique and valuable master-crafts will not survive in the immediate future unless committed interventions

are found or new solutions developed to keep them alive. So I try to use the dearth of traditional African and Chinese textile design techniques and processes in creating marketable children's products, to protect the traditional cultures in a fresh practical design method.

## **2.4 Theoretical underpinning**

This thesis discusses globalisation from economic, political, as well as cultural and social dimensions, which focused on regularity of literature in the following five themes: the de-localization and super-territoriality; the speed and power of technological innovation, as well as the risk brought by the associated growth; the rising of multinational corporations; the achievement that the creation of (global) free markets can get to in the leading of instability and division (Smith & Doyle, 2002).

### **2.4.1 Mark K. Smith & Michele Erina Doyle and globalisation**

Mark K. Smith and Michele Erina Doyle recognise that the term "globalisation" has been used to describe the ever expanding developments in communications and technology across the world which has nurtured the growth of economic interchange between nations, widening the horizons of production lines and, inevitably, intertwining the activities of trade with the threads of cultural practice (Smith & Doyle, 2002). Globalisation is also viewed as the efforts of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other organisations for the creation of a global and free market. However, the reality is not quite so positive for the poorer nations that often find themselves overwhelmed and taken advantage of by the richer ones (Smith & Doyle, 2002). Globalisation, in the sense of connectivity in economic and cultural life across the world, has been growing for centuries. However, it is believed that the order of the current situation is essentially different from those experienced before. Under pressure from the speed of communication and exchange, complicated networks, as well as the sheer volume of trade, interaction and risk, globalisation is now a powerful reality (Smith & Doyle, 2002).

Along with the deep-rooted changes of politics brought by an increased economic interconnection, conditional activities in the “central” economies have become more and more important in the poorer and “peripheral” countries. For instance, USA is the country where technical expertise and capital tend to be located. There has also been a transformation in power from the nation state towards multinational corporations (Smith & Doyle, 2002). The rise and globalization of the “brand” has also been witnessed by us. It is the operation of large companies across geographies. Meanwhile, many salable and marketable products have been developed by these corporations in Beijing and Washington. Many famous brands like Coca Cola, Nike, Sony and a lot of others have become part of immense numbers in the framework of people’s lives (Smith & Doyle, 2002).

#### **2.4.2 Anthony Giddens and globalisation**

Globalisation is something more than universalisation and internationalisation; it involves the dispersion of ideas, practices and technologies. Globalisation is not merely westernization, modernization and the liberalization of markets (Roland, 1992:49). As described by Anthony Giddens, “globalisation, the intensification of worldwide social relations, is a linkage between distant regions and local environments. So we see that local happenings are engendered from events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 1990:64). Generally speaking, globalisation can be described as a shorthand method in which the diffusion and connectivity of worldwide production, technologies and communication take place. This diffusion has included the exchange of cultural activity and economic intersection (Roland, 1992:61).

The emphases of Smith and Doyle’s theory are on globalisation, technological innovation and risk. As I have already noted, a particular feature of globalisation is the momentum and power of the change involved. In *Living with Global Capitalism* (2001), Hutton and Giddens said, “it is the interaction of extraordinary technological innovation combined with world-wide reach that gives today's change its particular

complexion” (Hutton & Giddens, 2001:7). Accordingly the developments of life science, digital technology and others have opened up colossal and fresh probabilities for production and communication. Innovations like the Internet have built new access for sharing the information and resources in the whole world, while it has coordinated activities in real time (Smith & Doyle, 2002).

### **2.4.3 Ezio Manzini and globalisation**

Ezio Manzini is an Italian engineer and architect. His works focus on innovative production and consumption systems and, in particular, on the relationship between product strategies and environmental policies in relation to sustainable development. He argues, “The process of globalisation provides the capability of choosing where to locate different activities worldwide. However, choices will need to be made by considering the ‘intensity of renewable resources and regenerated materials’ and the ‘intensity of transport’ required for each unit of service wherever it is produced. And increasing the former and decreasing the latter will be a new fundamental criterion for the localisation of production activities. This means that within the scenario of sustainability it is possible to imagine the development of new businesses that are simultaneously both global and local: businesses that globalise the flow of information by localising the flow of material with lower eco-impact. Combining the global dimension of the production and distribution of certain semi-finished products or components with the local, ‘service’ dimension related to the management of regionalized production activities and centres of production” (Manzini, 1998:55). By this token, globalisation represents a potentially significant contribution to the flexibility and sustainability of production.

My research discusses how the phenomenon of globalisation impacted upon craft design products in South Africa and China, specifically in Cape Town in the Western Cape and Xi’an in Shaanxi province. It also endeavours to explore how I, as a designer of Chinese origin, living and studying in South Africa, can produce products

for children that fuse traditional crafts of two countries and through niche marketing / Internet marketing to cater for a section of the above mentioned markets.

#### **2.4.4 Bill Moggridge on how globalisation has affected design**

Bill Moggridge was a British industrial and interaction designer, and also the former director of Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in New York (Moggridge, 2007:1). He has written *Designing Interactions* (2007), and he speaks on how globalization has affected design.

*“Globalisation allows you to think of which aspect of something you are doing you would like to have in which kind of resource, doesn't it? So, the main manufacturing, it's very obvious, that manufacturing has already moved away from this country, just in recent times, just as it moved away from the UK in the '60s and the '70s. So, what do the people who are there focus on? Globalisation becomes that they need to focus more on creativity because that's the part that's unique to where they are. And the development of a lot of design elements will probably follow the manufacturing so that the more detailed elements of implementation of design, whether engineering or industrial design, are probably going to be more obviously better done close to the manufacturing. So, the thing that really is going to matter more and more is the deciding what to do and doing it in a creative way, or any of the arts, where you're just hoping to achieve a result which is about you and your community and where you are” (Moggridge, 2007:13).*

From Bill Moggridge's concept, I ask myself, can designers make a difference? And I consider the answer to be yes. There are both positive and negative aspects to the phenomenon of globalisation but, I believe that as a designer, if I understand the role of design, then design can play a significant role. There are some thoughts on how I might make a difference. One is to change my frame of reference. I looked at Christopher Liechty's theory about globalization and design, and he writes:

*“Let's think in terms of globalism rather than globalisation. The word 'globalisation' carries too much a feeling of steam rolling across the world with a profit-at-any-cost attitude. Globalism, on the other hand, has been defined by some like Robert Peters in *Icograda* as being about equality among cultures and respect for people everywhere. Let's take the best from every culture. Developed*

*countries do not have everything right and we have a lot to learn from indigenous peoples” (Liechty, 2009).*

#### **2.4.5 Craft as cultural repository**

Craft is not just an essential resource of living; it is usually linked to the sociology of cultural traditions, and ultimately to the conservation of cultural diversity and peculiarity. Donkin (2001) describes this relationship between craft and the social fabric, in *Crafts And Conservation*, “Crafts are not simply a particular way of making objects, but are inextricably bound up with the structures, values, history and identity of the communities in which they are practiced”. There are multiple meanings and functions in craft. It ritualizes the personal consumption with religious importance or economic activity, which has generated commercial effect. Herein, it is a significant part in defining ethnic, regional or national identity and culture (Donkin, 2001).

In the scriptures and mythological texts of India, the word *silpa* is referred to in the *Samhitas*<sup>4</sup> and the *Brahmanas*. Beneath *silpa* a wide diversity of accomplishment and occupations find signification with other than the conventional handicraft. In *Brahmanas* it refers to “Works of Art”. In some references, *silpa* has been defined as “karu” that represents the “maker” in the context of Vedic (Chattopadhyay, 1980:126). It has an extensive connotation listing performers, artisans, singers, poets, and so on. This consideration of all creative presentations as the incorporated power, growing out of *Viswakarma*, which is a single source and means the maker of the universe (Chattopadhyay, 1980:126). Thus the “creation of things” became a noble act, the object a manifestation of *Viswakarma*. The whole process of creation expressed the fusion with the divine. Accordingly craftsmen were regarded as being in touch with nature and the divine.

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<sup>4</sup> A *Samhita* is a collection of the mantras in Vedas, and are at times referred to as *Mantras*. *Mantras* or hymns are concerned with nature and deities.

Nature is a perfect and complex sculpture, from which the artisan extracted inspiration. They believed in the rituals, and put much effort into ornamentation and improving the product creations aesthetically, built on the foundation of culture. Like an ancestral heritage, the skills of making products were handed down the generations, and the people who were accomplished in them were considered judiciously and spiritually active and closer to the omnipotent. These products involve semantics, which are rooted in the ritualistic or traditional contexts, and is a way of life. In the lack of such semantics, it loses the original context and an entire collection of unexpressed history, ritual, religion, tradition, culture and thought are lost. As a part of rituals and culture, traditional practices kept the connection between the artisans and the crafts they are versed in (Chattopadhyay, 1980:128-130).

Nelson (2001:7-9) has claimed that no craft can be evaluated by any criteria outside of the cultural environment in which it is born. In fact, it is entirely possible in some cases that an artifact, to be highly regarded, needs only to efficiently fulfill its function in the social practice for which it has been made. Characteristics of colour, design and pattern therefore take a secondary role and may not count as “art” or “beauty” when seen through the eyes of a different culture or even from a universal perspective.

#### **2.4.6 Contemporary craft**

Rosy Greenlees is the executive director of the Crafts Council that is the national development agency for contemporary craft in London. As she noticed, “Contemporary craft is about making things. It is an intellectual and physical activity where the maker explores the infinite possibilities of materials and processes to produce unique objects. To see craft is to enter a world of wonderful things which can be challenging, beautiful, sometimes useful, tactile, and extraordinary; and to understand and enjoy the energy and care which has gone into their making” (Greenlees, 2012).



The new trend in conceiving and manufacturing products is called “The New Craft Design”. This new trend has been developed in several European countries, the United States and Japan. This new trend has allowed the process of creation and production to evolve and the artisan to adapt to new contemporary situations and survive (Gil et al., 2004:2).

Recently in the United States this new approach to craft design has been tried in a series of small companies located in New York, Florida and California. They are small industrial estates made up of craftsmen workshops where craftsmen produce, customise and number products in limited amounts. These craftsmen create interior furnishings that utilise, illumine and complement different materials, such as clay, glass, metal, wood and other conventional craft materials (Gil et al., 2004:3).

Charles and Ray Eames are outstanding examples. They were some of the first American architects and designers of the 20th century who looked at crafts as an important source of ideas. Their work is distinguished because they were successfully taking advantage of the modern technologies, while simultaneously using the aesthetic inspirations and techniques of the craftsmanship process from the past (Eames & Eames, 2014).



**Figure 2.5**

**Charles and Ray Eames**

**(Eames & Eames, 2014)**

#### **2.4.7 Craft and the economy**

There is no doubt that the craft industry not only makes a vital contribution to the micro and macro economies of nations, but also ensures that culturally representative artifacts have developed, over time, an identity which can be recognised as the very incarnation of a particular community or cultural constellation (Schwarz & Yair, 2010:5). For instance, the turquoise and silver jewelry represents the Southwest of America, the Amish quilt denotes Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the Tartan plaid says Scotland, and the wooden Dala horse can immediately remind you of Sweden. The signification and function of a craft piece's exterior instead of the makers and their immediate communities, attract visitors to come to the place of origin; they provide the value of unique and handmade products and are purchased for travel souvenirs, as personal adornment or home decorations, as presents for friends, and for a variety of other functions and reasons (Schwarz & Yair, 2010:6).

According to DAC Creative SA (Cultural Strategy Group, 1998), there has been a notable expansion in the commercialisation of craft industries throughout the world - around \$35 billion. The global market is divided broadly into local markets for locally-produced craft- and export markets whereby products are exported for sale in exterior markets (Temple, 1998: 311).

In terms of global markets, the craft industry has escalated in the European Union (EU), the United States of America (USA), Canada and Australasia. The EU has expanded its demand for sophisticated items for the discerning market while the USA, as the largest economy in the world, is a significant global market for all consumer products, including craft. There has also been significant growth in Canada, Japan and the Far East. In addition, there is a growing trend of demand for craft in the newer, fast expanding economic players like China and India (DTI, 2005:66).

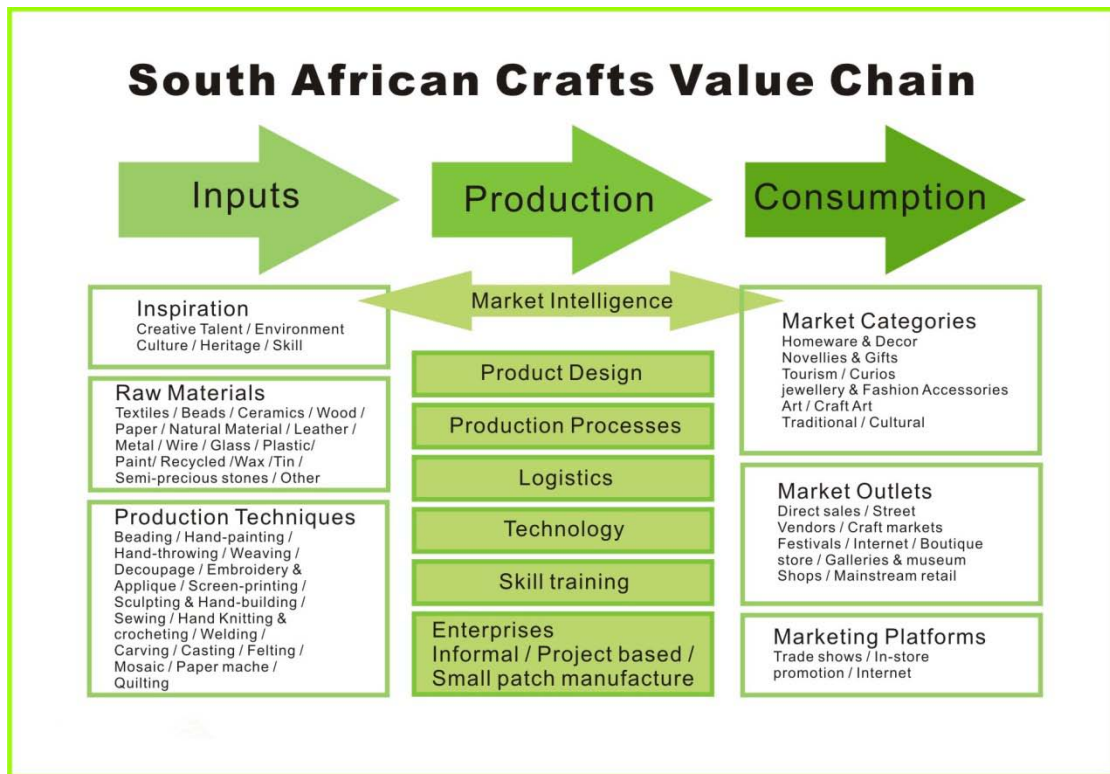
### *South African and Chinese crafts' value*

According to the Department of Trade and Industry, the South African craft sector contributed approximately R3.3 billion to gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010. It also provided employment and income to more than 273,000 people through the economic activity operating across the value chain (GCIS, 2013:28). The South African craft sector is rapidly developing and clearly defining its orientation as a significant second economy, and its growth areas largely create opportunities and jobs for unemployed people in South Africa.

The Chinese art and craft industries contribute RMB829.5 billion (approximately \$133 billion) to the total light industry (4.1%) in 2013 and it increased by 28.52% compare to 2012. It provides a total profit of approximately RMB43 billion (approximately \$7 billion). The value of craft exports is \$52.5 billion and also increased by 17.93% in 2013 (CA&CA, 2014). China specialises in mass production which is oriented towards copying and manufacturing under license. However, minimal handmade cultural craft is currently exported from China. There is, therefore, a huge potential craft market in the future (CA&CA, 2014).

Today's market for children's products such as clothing, toys and accessories is growing fast in the US and Europe. Consequently children are increasingly the target of craft products because of the increasing growth of parents' purchasing power. This child-targeted marketing concentrates on books, toys, stationary, garments and interior products (Sharon, 1998).

The crafts value chain includes provision of inputs (inspiration, raw materials, and production techniques), production (product design, production processes, logistics, technology, skill training, and enterprises), services and distribution, linking production with consumption, and finally consumption (market categories, market outlets, marketing platforms) as depicted in the Figure 2.6.



**Figure 2.6**

**Crafts value chain**

(DTI Expo presentation, 2007)

#### **2.4.8 Craft and cultural specificity in product design**

Despite the fact that craft has always been a ritualistic and cultural activity, the products which were made were often practicable enough for production and sales. Many competing products that are designed to perform the same function, contain similar technologies, are priced similarly and perform equally well. Combining craft with cultural style becomes an increasingly important and powerful tool to be utilised by designers in order to allow them to compete on aesthetic and emotional grounds, not necessarily those of function and price. However, national style has been applied as a marketing strategy to advance the sales volume of products for enterprises or companies for many decades in both domestic and overseas markets (Angus, 2003:8).

In the process of creation of craft and culture, design intervention has an important role in every step. This could involve designing new products; redesigning existing products, with changes in shape, size, colour, surface manipulation, function and utility; exploring new markets and reviving lapsed markets; applying traditional skills to meet new opportunities and challenges; and the introduction of new materials, new processes, new tools and technologies. Design interventions may be thought of as a connection between tradition and contemporaneity, that ties craft production to the demands of modern living (Angus, 2003:9).

For example, Japan is known for its beautiful kimonos, and Serge Mouangue, a Cameroonian, is interested in celebrating the similarities between Japan and Africa through this traditional outfit, as shown in Figure 2.7 (Wafrika, 2012). The kimonos are designed with African fabric but still maintain the integrity of a traditional kimono (Wafrika, 2012). This creative fashion designer is making a difference in our concept of what a Kimono is, which represent a fresh aesthetic via the transition of timeless visual symbols, responding to the argument that globalisation may despoil us of our cultural characteristic, a dialogue between two archaic, sophisticated and powerful identities: Japan and African (Wafrika, 2012).



**Figure 2.7**

**2009 Wafrika fashion design by Serge Mouangue**

**(Wafrika, 2012)**

Many designers have shown that they can make a difference by getting involved in charities. The World Studio Foundation is one example of designers using design combined with other disciplines to advocate for a social cause (Liechty, 2009). Another one we can take is to get out there and travel, make friends and learn as much as we can about the world. That is the reason why I chose South Africa to study, I believe when we see the world through the eyes of others, things change.

#### **2.4.9 Craft education and its potential impact on children's development**

In *Understanding Young Children's Three Dimensional Creative Potential in Art Making*, Pavlou offers that children typically engage in drawing or painting – rather than making – activities, simply because these are the most practical methods for the classroom. As a result, studies of artistic development tend to focus on two dimensional mark making and image making, to the exclusion of three dimensional making and the development of skills in creating form and structure (Pavlou, 2009:139). Therefore, he advocates that more needs to be done to give children the opportunities to transact in the three-dimensional sphere so that this can be measured in terms of how cognitive development occurs.

These sentiments are echoed by Jarvis who believes it is vital to provide children with as many opportunities as possible to experiment with a variety of tools and materials to extend their visual vocabulary (Jarvis, 2011:307). This is important not only because it extends children's capacity to engage with and comment on the world, but also because it helps them to discover their own strengths and preferences in terms of ways of thinking and working. It is possible that one child might find an aptitude for designing in a three-dimensional domain while another might be more comfortable in a two-dimensional pattern-making activity. Jarvis bases these recommendations on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences which recommend that a broad exposure to different types of activities can encourage growth in the tactile and spatial awareness of growing children (Gardner, 2011:79).

Looking beyond the craft literature, South Africa's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published significant new evidence of the value of arts and creative knowledge in the cognitive development of learners, during the review period. The DCMS's Culture and Sport Evidence Programme (CASE)'s July 2010 report quotes a group of 24 'high quality' studies which sought to establish how engaging regularly in the arts and sports curricula affected learners' ability to progress in other aspects of their general education (The CASE, 2010:11).

The reported data indicates that children and youth aged 2 – 16 from Europe, Asia and the United States show notable improvements in the following areas after exposure to planned arts practice:

- Secondary school students' academic attainment, by an estimated 1% - 2%.
- Young people's cognitive abilities (based on various measures of intelligence), by an estimated 16% - 19%.
- Young people's transferable skills, by an estimated 10% - 17%.

The study, which compared children who were exposed to arts activities in the daily course of their educational curriculum with those children who were not exposed, showed considerably improved cognitive ability in the former.

#### **2.4.10 Craft and children's products**

Simply brilliant new designs are usually built into contemporary children's products (Klein, 1997:53). These designs follow the logical systems of functionality and meet the stringent safety standards, most of which not only look fine but can also be used for touching, stroking, sitting, rolling and using. Because the development of these designs has raced ahead only in the last decade, they herald a new century's approach to childrearing (Phyllis, 2008:6).

These children's products have been made by experienced and qualified designers at the forefront of innovation since the last century (Phyllis, 2008:6). For instance, Gerrit Rietveld designed a series of products in the 1920s for his children, in which the

“beach buggy”, made of wood with coloured squares in iconic patterning was the most famous. However, the movement nowadays is of a greater importance than these separate design achievements, involving a spectrum of designers from large manufacturers to individuals based in their own workshops (Phyllis, 2008:6-7).

As far as market research is concerned, parent designers have ideal resources playing at their feet, even if those same resources make it difficult to have lengthy periods of creative productivity. In other cases, goods are produced by established manufacturers, who are striving for products featuring better design, and have achieved a higher reputation in the global market. Furthermore, other designs are produced from collaborative workshops and come from far-reaching research of children’s development and learning. Phyllis is a parent designer who stated, “No one is saying that children should be raised to worship high design, but if the act of caring for them can be raised up so that the fine feelings are given expression in fine fabric or a well-turned handle, and we might make ourselves happier parents being able to hold or turn it, then design has fulfilled functions beyond expectations” (Phyllis, 2008:7).

Craft products provide valuable educational and entertainment ideas and can offer interesting clothing items and accessories for children. Crafts and craft activities can help children improve not only their dexterity and ability to concentrate, but also cultivate an interest in different cultures. Ultimately it is hoped that this engagement of parents and children with my range of craft design products will contribute somewhat to an understanding of the value of craft as a cultural expression and in this way contribute to the preservation of craft techniques and methods.

Two of the strategies marketers employ to target children are discussed next. Because I aim to establish my own brand – “Long Long” - that will cater to a particular children’s market segment in the two to seven-year-old category, I need to investigate marketing strategies that have proven to be successful that I can employ to promote



and market “Long Long”, such as niche marketing, building brand name loyalty and Internet marketing to cater to a global audience.

### *Building brand name loyalty*

Branded features are usually used in the successful marketing campaigns. The media is used as a conduit to mount extensive advertising campaigns costing millions of dollars - all for the purpose of building and promoting a particular brand. This is an intelligent way to attract children and the youth. Naomi Klein is a Canadian author, and she traced the origin of “brand” marketing in her 2000 book, *No Logo*. Klein discussed that in the middle of 1980s, a new sort of corporation was generated, such as Calvin Klein, Nike and Tommy Hilfiger, to name a few. These brands altered their principal corporate focus from production to originating an image for their brand name. They moved the manufacturing operations to areas with cheap labour, in order to free up capital for effective marketing messages. It has been an enormously profitable recipe, and has built the foundation of several of the richest and most influential multinational corporations the world has seen (Klein, 2000:57).

Entrepreneurs cultivate the seeds of brand recognition in children, and hope that they will grow into relationships that will last their lifetime. The advertising industry knows very well that constant exposure instils awareness of brands and logos. Even two-year-olds have already internalised a vast amount of such logos.

### *The Internet*

Nowadays young people are growing up in an environment with Internet over present, and it has become a routine part of their daily life. Therefore, it plays an important role in youth culture. Consequently, the Internet is an exceedingly eligible medium for entrepreneurs intending to capture a particular children’s market (Calvert, 2008:206-207). Children are usually online by themselves, without parental supervision. Parents in general do not understand the extent of product appeal to their children online. Sophisticated technologies are used to gather information from young

people who are used in marketing research. The latter is aimed at individual children with individualised advertising. One of the psychological tools used to attract children are cleverly constructed interactive web pages which can ensure conscious and sub-conscious compliance and loyalty to a particular product (Klein, 2000:74).

### **2.5 Inspiration drawn from expert practitioners**

A South African craft design practitioner that I find inspiring and whose work is related to my design intention is Susie Jardine. She is the creator of a variety of quirky African animal characters that are available as plush cushion-toys, children's bags and smaller toys. Some of the plush toy characters have a rhyming story that promotes a positive attitude or identity in a light- hearted way. For example, Yonwaba is the giraffe's name, and means "happy" in Xhosa. Those animal designs feature the matching of varied textured and coloured fabrics which contribute in the end to unique products (Jardine, 2011). Figure 2.8 is an example of her work. In my design work, I aim to use African and Chinese textiles in this way, allowing the material to represent my own story and life illustrated in the range of products.



**Figure 2.8**

**Pink Warthog by Susie Jardine**

**(Jardine, 2011)**

“Teng Cloth-pasted Picture” is a contemporary picture, which was invented by the well-known folk artist Teng Teng of Fengning in Chengde City. The work of a cloth pasted dragon is the masterpiece of Teng Teng (*China Cloth Pasted Pictures*, 2012). A total of 1997 Chinese dragons with different shapes and colours are pasted up on the wall, which is so fine that it seems like embroidery. Figure 2.9 shows this great craftwork. The main material used in the Teng Cloth-pasted Picture is fabric. However, superfine silk becomes important in order to make the colour in these works brighter and more vivid. The cloth pasting skill not only refers to decorative pictures, but also includes stereo Buddha statues and porcelains (*China Cloth Pasted Pictures*, 2012).



**Figure 2.9**

**Dragon Teng Cloth-pasted Picture**

**(Teng, in *China Cloth Pasted Pictures*, 2012)**

Teng Teng is over 80 years old, and he explained that the cloth pasted picture technique stems from the applique skill of Manchu. This is different from southern China where silk is used for embroidery, northern China does not have silk, so the northerners make use of cloth. Cloth is stuffed with cotton and fur, and then sewn the cloth onto the background fabrics. All of Mr Teng's works have been donated to the government and are exhibited for free in an art gallery of Long Teng cloth pasted pictures in Fengning City in north China's Heibei Province (*China Cloth Pasted Pictures*, 2012).

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter has focused on the literature review of this study, placing it in an international as well as local context. It was divided into five sections. The first section reviewed African and Chinese social literature, while the second section gave an overview of the literature on cultural dimensions. The third section also focused on the conjuncture of Chinese traditional craft skills. The fourth section built on a theoretical underpinning for globalisation, craft designs and products, as well as the children's educational craft and products market. It determined that globalisation involves the diffusion of ideas, practices and technologies. This phenomenon had an impact on design and craft design products. The fifth section introduced two expert practitioners: African children product designer Susie Jardine and Chinese folk artist Teng Teng. Chapter Three focuses on research methodology.

# CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a description of how the research was conducted.

### 3.1 Research Design

Research design is defined as a strategy to be applied to find out something that addresses the planning of scientific inquiry (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:72). It has two major aspects; firstly, researchers must specify as clearly as possible what they want to find out. Secondly, they must decide the best way to do it. Consequently the research design enables the researchers to anticipate what appropriate methods should be used for the purpose of increasing furthest the validity of the ultimate results (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:72-73). The logic and flow of the research design is shown in Figure 3.1.

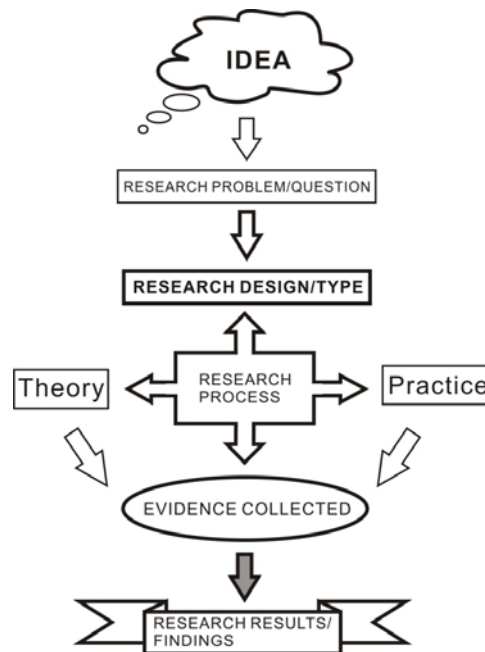


Figure 3.1

The logic of the research process

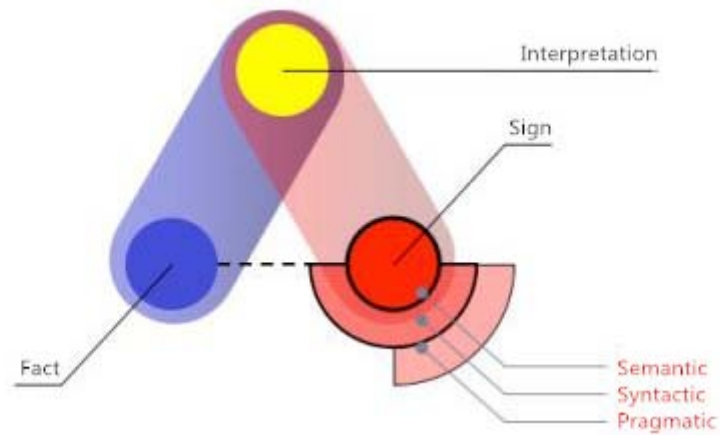
(Li, adapted from Babbie & Mouton, 2001:72)

A research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer a question validly, objectively, accurately and economically. "A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure" (Claire, 1962:50).

A research design is a blueprint of how the researchers plan to conduct the research, and there are three facets in research design that are different from research methodology. The first facet is focused on the end-product, which means what kind of study is being planned and what kind of results are aimed at. The second facet is point of departure, and it equals to defining the research problem or question. The last facet is focused on the logic of research: what kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately? (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:74-75).

### **3.1.1 Semiotics and symbolism in craft design**

Semiotics refers to the science of signs. Semiotic research emphasises philosophy and linguistics (Hardt, 2005:14). Semiotics is generally subdivided in three aspects that involve: syntactics (the sign in relation to what it means), semantics (the sign in relation to how it stands in context with other signs) and pragmatics (the sign in relation to its origin, the effect it has on the viewer, the use one makes of it), as illustrated in Figure 3.2 (Pierce, 1931:228). Leibniz (1646-1716) was an important representative of semiotics history, and he said "A sign is a perception that permits the conclusion of the existence of a non-perception. A sign can stand for a thing or an idea (concept, idea, cogitation)." Leibniz also defined as signs such as typefaces, graphical symbols and Chinese and Egyptian signs (Hardt, 2005:15). These symbols and signs represent ideas or qualities through extending them symbolic meanings that differ from their literal sense, and they can be defined as symbolism, which is frequently used in arts, designs and cultural literatures.



**Figure 3.2**

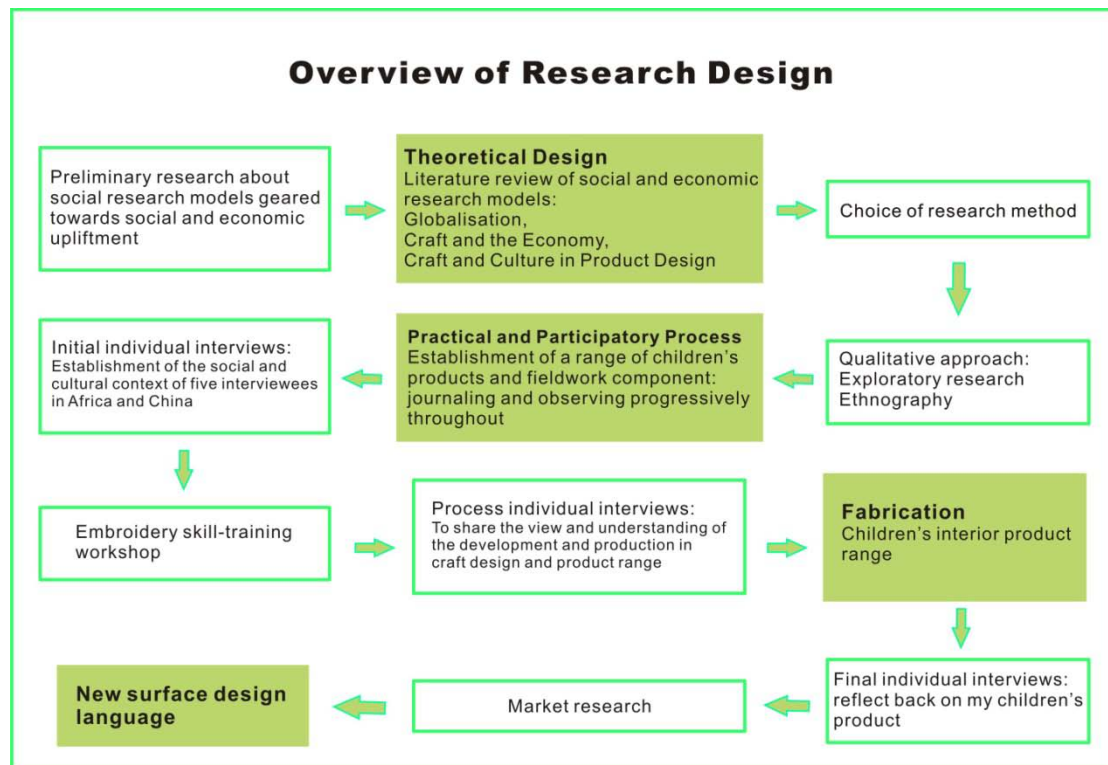
**The structure of semiotics**

**(Pierce, 1931:228)**

The human mind is a symbol-seeking mechanism. For example, in ancient times, the stars were constellations, and most of them were embodied with mythic significance. Therefore, people thought the star could be regarded as a symbol and the whole sky can be apprehended as a pattern. Then they used their hands to draw the star on a surface, to form clay into the shape of the star or to record a star shape by scratching its image onto a rock surface. This is a kind of mimesis and symbol creation as well as a re-presentation of an image (Li quoted in Hawkes, 1977:31). It gradually brought into being the craft design. The conceptual framework for this study was also built on the semiotics and symbolism that are used in the craft design.

This conceptual framework must be appropriate to answer the research questions, while the empirical approaches that are used must also be eligible to answer the research questions. The findings and analysis are grounded in the data, which, when synthesised produce conclusions that culminate in recommendations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:73-74).

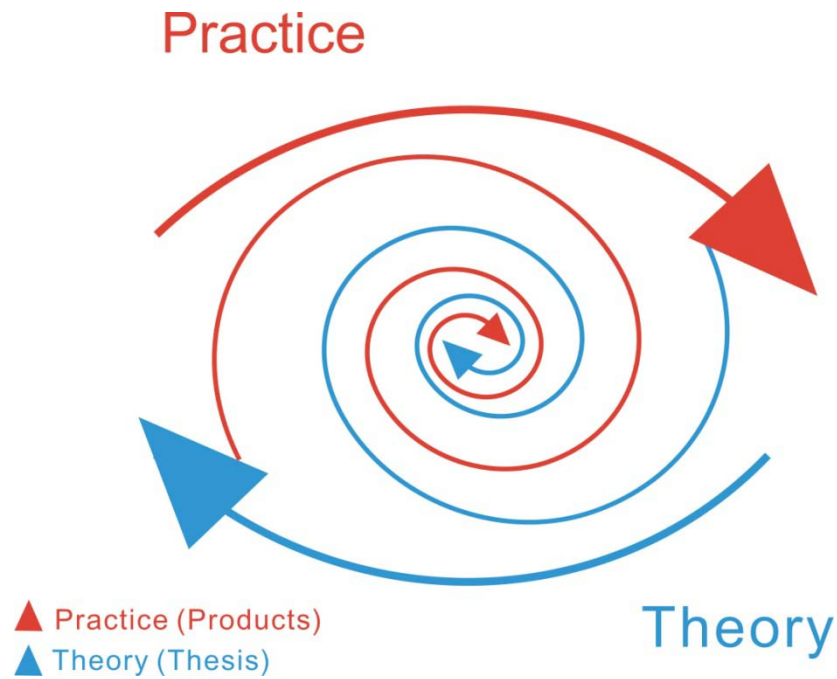
The research design for the study was conceptualised in three phases. Firstly the literature review, secondly the practical process and participatory component, and thirdly the product range. Figure 3.3 shows the overview of research design in this study.



**Figure 3.3**  
**Overview of the research design**  
**(Li, 2014)**

The research project consists of a 50% practicum component coupled with a thesis. The practice leading to an iterative process of theory and vice versa is followed, shown in Figure 3.4. Data collection is qualitative and the research is conducted in the following manner:





**Figure 3.4**  
**Practical and theoretical iterations**  
(Li, 2013)

### 3.2 Qualitative approach

Qualitative research is really a type of framework for data rather than a particular design or set of techniques, or as Van Maanen asserts (1979:520) “it is an ‘umbrella’ phrase covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally accruing phenomena in the social world. Therefore, the qualitative approach is fundamentally a descriptive form of research”.

This research focuses on a fusion of traditional African textile motifs and pattern design and Chinese folk fabric craftwork and embroidery techniques to inform a range of interior children’s products. Qualitative research was ideal for my purposes because it allowed me to record the experiences of my subjects and to engage with their views of the world as well as their own personal relationship with it. “Qualitative research has been assigned many different labels, such as field research, an anti-positivist approach, an alternative approach, and constructivism. However, they

all share a common focus: to interpret and construct qualitative aspects of experience” (Du Plooy, 2002:29).

### **3.2.1 Practice – led research**

The research approach is practice – led or practice – based. Practice - based research derives its meaning from its affiliation with that which people do as they go about their professional businesses. Its principal purpose is to seek to understand the complexities of practice in order that improvement can take place (Sullivan, 2010:42).

Figure 3.5 illustrates Smith and Dean’s model of creative and research processes, which accommodates practice-led research and research-led practice as well as creative work and basic research. The structure of this model integrates a cycle and several sub-cycles (illuminated by the smaller ovoids and larger circle) with a web (the crisscross, branching lines across the circle) built from many points of entry and transition within the cycle. The importance of the model is the concept of iteration that is fundamental to both creative practice and research processes. In a practice phase its choice can be technical or aesthetic; in a research phase it is regarded as a selection created by a theoretical fit or empirical data (Smith & Dean, 2009:19). With reference to Smith and Dean’s model, it helped me to manifestly understand the process of practice-led research. A creative researcher or practitioner can start at the process with a concept or even play with materials to generate ideas. This is followed by the selection of possibilities that could be ideas that are pursued by research or investigation (Smith & Dean, 2009:21). These recommendations will form part of my chosen methodology for this research.

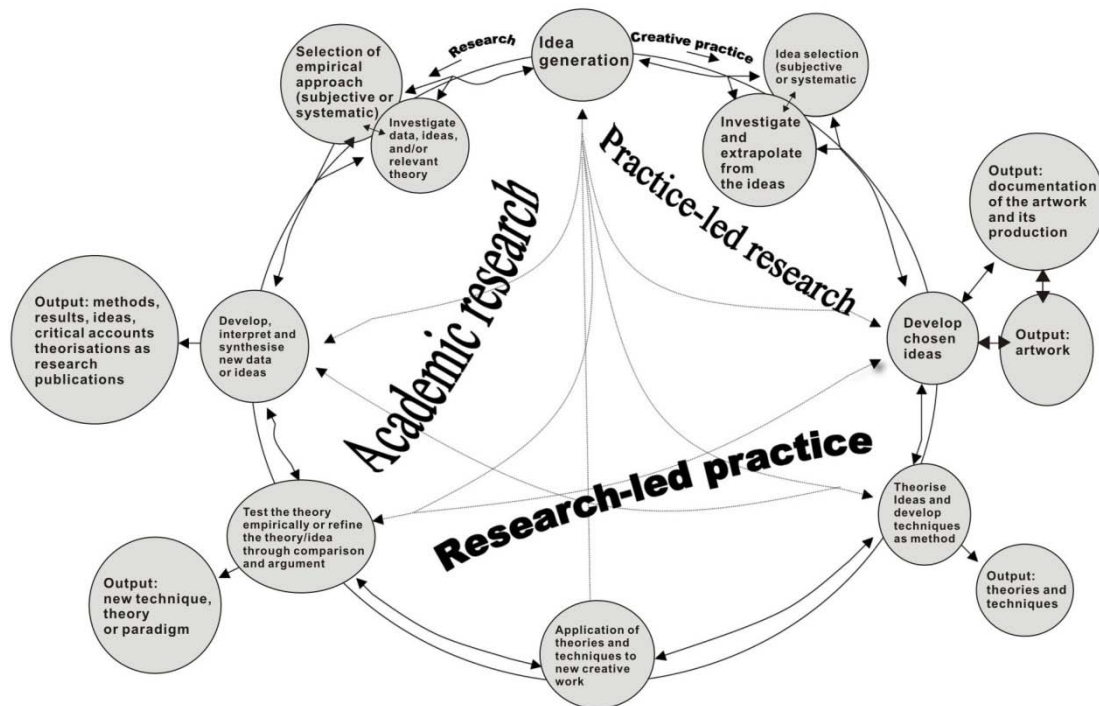


Figure 3.5

**A model of creative arts and research processes: the iterative cyclic web of practice-led research and research-led practice**

(Smith & Dean, 2009:20)

Thurber suggests that “qualitative research methods address questions directed towards a deep-seated comprehension of social phenomena, thereby providing abundant, detailed descriptions of settings and participants in a specific context” (Thurber, 2004:489). With this in mind, I needed to gain insight into the participants’ worldviews, background and creative practice, as well as their motivation behind continuing with traditional design or techniques. Therefore qualitative methods were selected to collect data for this research study. I also needed to examine the marketing opinions of 60 parent participants (30 in South Africa and 30 in China) with children in the 2-7 year-old age range. This data enabled me to broaden the scope of the research and to add to the body of knowledge. The findings of the in-depth interviews conducted with traditional African textile designers and Chinese folk artists revealed details of each particular cultural background, as reported in Chapter Five.

From the findings concerning cultural background that emerged, a broader understanding of traditional design and technique seen against this background led to the identification of two further aspects of qualitative research: exploratory research and ethnography. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995:19), qualitative interviews can differ in the degree of emphasis on culture. In qualitative interviews, culture could be regarded as a way of making meaning of the world by developing shared understandings. Also, participants and interviewees have the opportunity to learn jointly and to find common ground. They would be able to negotiate around issues of how phenomena should be represented and would find agreement in terms of the interpretation of behaviours in particular situations. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:42) describes exploratory studies as a tool to investigate a given set of circumstances or an event, a society or an individual.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) analysed social science by referencing the ontological and epistemological tool-kit of the philosopher and developed four paradigms of understanding organisations from a social perspective (see Figure 3.6). These social paradigms produced are radical humanist (change-subjective), radical structuralist (change-objective), interpretive (regulation-subjective) and functionalist (regulation-objective), which define various fundamental perspectives for analysing social phenomena (Burrell & Morgan, 1979:23). In this study, methods are philosophically related with the radical humanist and interpretivist paradigms. For instance, the ethnography being produced from a data-base of semi-structured conversational materials collected during participant observation and ethnographic interviews, and the research described not only the formal processes of presentation but also the personal experiences of participants.

SOCIOLOGY OF RADICAL CHANGE			
SUBJECTIVE	Radical humanist	Radical structuralist	OBJECTIVE
	Interpreivist	Funtionalist / Constructivist	
SOCIOLOGY OF REGULATION			

**Figure 3.6**

**Four paradigms for the analysis of social theory**

**(Burrell and Morgan, 1979:22)**

In the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), the mechanism of individual development incorporated the biological (internal) and the social (external) in the process of development. To understand this, Vygotsky suggested *the zone of proximal development* (ZPD), which is defined as “the distance between the actual level of development as determined through solving a problem independently and the potential developmental level as determined by problem solving under the guidance of adult or with more capable peers collaboration” (Vygotsky, 1978:86). This method is regarded as a more accurate relative indicator of cognitive development than simply measuring what children are able to accomplish alone. For example - imagine that a child is having difficulty with reading a book, but with the help of the parent, who reads the book with interest and teaches the child unstudied words, this same child is able to make progress.

Vygotsky also emphasised the importance of cultural tools in the development of socio-cultural awareness. Mechanisms for creating cultural consciousness include accessibility to traditional activities, books, and computers that teach children about the group’s expectations. Through using the social tools and participating in the cultural events, the children learn the importance of preserving and respecting their culture (Vygotsky, 1978:137). It confirms and supports the objective of my study which is to provide a basic understanding of African textile motifs and Chinese folk

fabric craftwork for children, to cultivate their interest in these traditional cultures and to prevent the further loss of irreplaceable skills that have been handed down through generations.

### **3.2.2 Exploratory research**

Exploratory research might involve any number of methods such as conducting focus group interviews. The exploration of new phenomena in this way may help the researcher's need for better understanding, may test the feasibility of a more extensive study, or determine the best methods to be used in a subsequent study. The objective of exploratory research is to identify key issues and key variables. For these reasons, exploratory research is broad in focus and rarely provides definite answers to specific research issues (Monroe College, 2012:28-29). The exploratory approach will lead amongst other things, to an iterative process of product development that will manifest during the term of the study. No definite answers to specific research issues are sought with this research project, rather an "emergent research paradigm" approach is used (Breen, 2005:162-176) to allow scope for creative and theoretical development.

My exploratory research focuses on Chinese and South African culture and heritage protection. Extensive use is made of the strategic plan of the Department of Arts and Culture (2007-2010), which is presented in Appendix C.

### **3.2.3 Ethnography**

Ethnography is defined as a type of qualitative inquiry in which "the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting during a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational data" (Creswell, 1994:11). It is one of the chief research methods in sociology, anthropology and other cognate disciplines in the social sciences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:735). Ethnography involves the study of people in their natural environment. It includes careful observation, usually for extended periods of time. It can also be called "field research" because the researcher

must spend considerable effort recording much of the daily life and practices which constitute the culture and traditional mores of those under study (Leedy, 1997:159).

Ethnography employs a unique set of data collection strategies: participant observation, ethnographic interviews with informants who are purposefully selected, and artifact collection (Mile & Huberman, 1994:102).

Participant observation is typically conceived of as existing along a continuum with the role of “complete observer” on one end and the role of “complete participant” on the other. Depending on the researcher’s purpose and skill, different levels of participant observation are more or less appropriate (Leedy, 1997:159).

My starting point was in Wuxi City to investigate embroidery practitioners. From there other related site visits have been done, while I immersed myself in the field work. During the observations and interviews, I not only had to communicate with the embroidery practitioners and observe the different colour and patterns of their embroidery works, but also tried to learn the history of ancient Chinese motifs and the traditional embroidery process. This approach can be seen to fit in with what researchers have stated about ethnographic interviews.

Ethnographic semi-structured interviews are “open-response questions to obtain data of participant meanings - how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or ‘make sense’ of the important events in their lives” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:423). Unlike quantitative sampling methods, interviewees are usually selected “purposefully” – that is, to obtain important insights or information that is not readily available to the ethnographer (Leedy, 1997:159).

### **3.2.4 Duration of the research project**

Due to the complex nature of the research design and the fact that many components were conducted both concurrently and separately, a period of over two years was needed to conclude the study, which included:

- Practical and theoretical components
- Digital printing workshop attendance by the researcher in Shanghai (from November to December 2013)
- Onsite training embroidery workshop in China (Wuxi: 8<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September 2013)
- Development and fabrication of components for the interior items range in Cape Town and Xi'an
- Manufacture of the books in Shanghai
- Market research completed of product range in Shanghai and Cape Town
- Interviews with South African designers and the CCDI in Cape Town
- Writing up of the entire research project

### **3.3 Data gathering techniques**

This section will describe the various methods of collecting the data for this research. The data were obtained only by means of appropriate qualitative research methods. These included flexible as well as fixed research designs.

#### **3.3.1 Flexible research instruments**

Flexible research instruments evolve during data collection and are associated with a qualitative method. The primary methods employed, among others are market research surveys, observations, interviews and journaling (Robson, 2002:83).

##### *Primary research:*

Evaluating a social programme, finding out firsthand the attitudes of a community towards health services, ascertaining the health needs of a community, determining the job satisfaction of the employees of an organisation, and ascertaining the quality of services provided by a worker are examples of information collected from primary sources (Kumar, 2005:118). In summary, primary research provides firsthand



information, observation and investigation: analysing a workplace, conducting a survey or an interview (Walliman, 2001:128).

### **3.3.1.1 Market research surveys**

Questionnaires were administered to 60 parent participants (30 in South Africa and 30 in China) with children in the 2-7 year-old age range. The questionnaires consisted of twelve graded, open-ended and closed-ended questions (Appendix D), and the individuals had approximately five to ten minutes to complete the questionnaire. The parent participants were selected on the grounds of their willingness to participate and their interest and inclination to purchase original, hand-crafted, high quality products for their children.

South African market research was conducted with the survey questionnaires at the 2014 Constantia Waldorf Fair in Cape Town. The theme of the Constantia Waldorf Fair for this year was “Fair of Heart”. An opportunity was created for me to interview parents who came to relax in the atmosphere of the Constantia Valley. Art, good food and entertainment were on offer, with an emphasis on mindfulness of the environment with children included. The Chinese market research was finished during the research investigation (September-December 2013) in China. Seventeen Chinese parents completed the questionnaires by email. An explanatory statement and consent form were presented to the interviewee as part of the ethical requirements of the university.

### **3.3.1.2 Observation**

Observation is a way of gathering data by watching behaviour, events, or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting. The observational process allows the researcher to register subtle attitudinal and behavioural actions of focus groups under investigation (Lindolf, 1995:134; Gray, 2004:238). Observations were conducted at both sites (Wuxi and Cape Town) continually from September 2013 to July 2014, throughout the development and production of the children’s products range, as well as during the embroidery skills training workshop. Journaling and photography were

utilised to record the observation, as well as to track changes in these participants' behaviour, feelings and well-being.

### **3.3.1.3 Interviews**

Interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data. The different qualitative interviewing strategies in common use emerged from diverse disciplinary perspectives resulting in a wide variation among interviewing approaches (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:314).

#### *Semi-structured individual interviews*

Semi-structured interviews are usually scheduled in advance at a designated time and location outside of everyday events. They are generally organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:315). Using semi-structured interviews as a data collection method was specifically chosen to ensure that broader, more in-depth data and responses from the interviewees own word would be elicited, since interviewing lends itself to the collection of rich and valid data obtained in a cultural and social context (Chisin, 2003:68; Miller & Brewer, 2003:166 and Gray, 2004:213). Having a relaxed and informal interview also allows the interviewee to talk about sensitive issues (if the need arises), in addition to their own thoughts, values, attitudes and preferences, and to do so with greater spontaneity (Lindolf, 1995:163; Miller & Brewer, 2003:167). This did in fact occur with selected interviewees who were experts in South Africa and China; including designers, craft producers and retail experts in the area of children's products.

Five individual semi-structured interviews were administered at various times during the product development process, which was from September 2013 to June 2014. The interviewees included H Z, when I visited her workshop in Wuxi. She is a Su embroidery stylist and practitioner. I used the journaling and photographic method to record some ancient Chinese embroidery pieces that she had collected from different

places and to learn the histories of each piece. R Y is a traditional embroidery producer and retail expert that I interviewed. I interviewed him and he completed a questionnaire (see Appendix E) through email. I had to translate the English interview into the participants' first language, Chinese. This established trust and familiarity between the researcher and interviewee, since the latter was made to feel comfortable and negative reactions were therefore avoided (Miller & Brewer, 2003:166). I interviewed R D D, N M and A I V in Cape Town. R D D is an "Adinkra" textile designer, and N M is a fashion designer of children's clothing and owner of accessories brand "Kidz Korner". These last two interviews were recorded in my journal and they took approximately thirty minutes to one hour in the initial interview. A I V is a fine art printmaker, and she also excels at interesting embroidered craft design pieces apart from being an artist. I visited her painting studio to record photographically her embroidered designs. Later she had finished my interview questions by email.

#### *Focus group interview*

Focus group interviews may generate new ideas and provide valuable, rich and insightful data that would have been overlooked if participants were interviewed separately (Neuman, 1997:53). A semi-structured product design focus group interview was conducted during September 2014, with the CCDI director E E and selected craft producers operational in the field of traditional craft design or techniques who work with the CCDI. This interview confirmed our shared view and understanding of the development and production of the craft product range with traditional culture background. The product design focus group session was photographically recorded and lasted for approximately three hours.

#### **3.3.1.4 A reflexive approach in research: journaling**

A reflexive approach to the research process is now widely accepted in much qualitative research. Researchers are urged to talk about themselves, "their presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research process"

(Mruck & Breuer, 2003:3). Reflective practice such as this aims to make visible to the reader the constructed nature of research outcomes, a construction that “originates in the various choices and decisions researchers undertake during the process of researching” (Mruck & Breuer, 2003:3). The journaling method helped to develop and explore critical thinking in this study process.

In an effort to map the research progress and to advance the research work, a daily journal was kept and served as a notebook as well as time-line. It became an essential device to reference the inspirations that I had experienced, and recorded the types of problems that had occurred during the research process and helped me to identify issues that needed to be prioritized. The journal was also used as a tool for “supplementing field notes” (Welman et al., 2005:198). In the journal I made mention of all conceptual ideas and product development. It helped to reflect on two year’s work. According to Welman et al. (2005:199), field notes can be described as detailed notes and observations that are made by the researcher and refer to the records kept during the observational exercises. After all the visits to different workshops and design studios, and informal meeting with involved parties and interviewing, I took notes condensing the information. These notes included all observations during the research process, the names of the designers and practitioners, the names of related organisations that I had met during the occasion, as well as obstacles encountered during setting up interviews and sourcing the data on traditional craft and design. Keeping a journal was a helpful way for me to record data that I could revisit at a later stage to gain perspective on it or, to “gain practical knowledge of and insight into this research area” (De Vos et al., 2005:298). The following components formed part of the journaling record: the photographic documentation and sketches of data collection.

#### *Photographic documentation*

Part of the journal comprised photographs taken by myself. Taking photographs provided a visual record of the different traditional textile design and embroidery

techniques in Africa and China. From these photographs, I was able to compare the different traditional African textile designs at Iziko Museum of South Africa in Cape Town with the traditional Chinese embroidery techniques seen in the photographs that were taken during visits to China. The photographs also helped in recognising the difference between Su, Xiang, Yue and Shu embroidery. Taking photographs of the various samples was vitally important as none of the institutions in China and South Africa were in possession of a visual catalogue of their work.

### *Sketches*

There are advantages in using sketches to supplement accurate data gathering. The sketches were useful when I conceptualised new ideas for the product designs in the practical component (see Appendix F). This was also crucial in recording some inspirations from those mature designers who are currently using traditional elements in their works and to use the records as reference.

### **3.3.2 Fixed research designs**

Fixed designs call for a tight pre-specification at the outset, and are equated with the qualitative method and employ secondary research methods (Robson, 2002:90).

#### *Secondary research:*

Secondary analysis of qualitative data is the approach of existing data to explore answers to research questions that is different from the questions asked in the original research (Hinds et al., 1997:408). Examples of secondary sources involve the use of an organisation's records to ascertain its activities and the collection of data from sources such as articles, documents, journals, magazines, books and periodicals to obtain historical and other types of information (Kumar, 2005:118).

#### **3.3.2.1 Document Analysis 1**

The relevant texts regarding globalisation were interrogated. The craft specific document (includes globalisation analysis) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is the Customised Sector Programme (CSP). This strategic document was

completed in 2005 and gives a would-be entrepreneur an important summary of world markets with regard to a spectrum of design industries and especially the craft segment thereof (Appendix G).

### **3.3.2.2 Document Analysis 2**

The relevant texts regarding traditional African textile design, and Chinese folk fabric art discussed from both a local and global context in order to provide an understanding of contextual constraints and limitations

The documents of traditional African textile design are from the handbook of West African Textiles Exhibition, which was edited by José Blanco and Jennifer Regan with assistance from Dr. Patricia Hunt-Hurst, Raúl Vázquez-López and his students at Barrow Hall Gallery in 2007 (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:1). It introduced a variety of textile designs and techniques which are from different terrains in Africa, such as Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Mali amongst others.

The Chinese folk art document is from China Arts and Crafts Association (CA&CA), which was established in 1988, and was officially registered as a national association by the China Ministry of Civil Affairs. It is a service oriented non-profit organisation, and works as a bridge between the government and craft industry as well as artisan community (CA&CA, 2014).

### **3.4 Data analysis**

In this study I made use of inductive data analysis techniques. The findings were reduced to categories in which the words share the same meaning or connotation (Weber, 1990:9). The aims were to categorise and code the findings obtained from observations, interviews, focus group interviews and market surveys in the research. The technique mentioned, is referred to as data reduction and assists in standardising the analytical process (Patton, 2002:489). Through the use of graphic methods, such as charts and tables, trends were identified and conclusions were drawn from the

emergent patterns and themes of the findings of the entire process in order to clarify the meaning of the data (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006:251). Vague statements and poetic intuition about society should be avoided at all times by rather following the process of description, definition and specification of the relationships between all data gathered (Chisin, 2003:74-75).

### **3.5 Timing of the interviews**

Timing was planned for the four semi-structured interviews. The observational and journaling findings were obtained through participants' studio interviews, the embroidery workshop interviews and the CCDI product design focus group session. The interviewing system used for the four semi-structured interviews, the embroidery workshop and CCDI product design focus group session incorporated display, coding and analysis as well.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

I have followed the Cape Peninsula University of Technology Research Ethics Review Checklist (Appendix J) and all other ethics procedures as required by the university, including consent forms (A sample is shown in Appendix E) and explanatory statement.

### **3.7 Summary**

The research methodology consisted of four phases in this chapter. The first phase discussed the overview of the research design and the semiotics and symbolism in craft design. The second phase was divided into two sections: section 1 conceptualised the qualitative approach and practice – led research; section 2 introduced two methods of qualitative research: exploratory research and ethnography that helped me to collect and analyse data, and the results of which were used to answer my research questions. The third phase focused on the data gathering techniques employed. These included the use of market research surveys, observation, semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, journaling and

document analysis. Data analysis was the fourth phase. The following chapter will introduce the colours, motifs and techniques that were used in the development of the children's product range.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **COLOURS, MOTIFS AND TECHNIQUES USED IN SELECTED AFRICAN AND CHINESE EXAMPLES**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Experimentation with different Chinese folk fabric art techniques and African motifs were undertaken in order to establish which pattern design and craft techniques were suitable for the development of the children's product range. The different styles of interesting children's products including a book and interior items, as well as the design trends for children were also researched so as to ensure that the development of my range of interior items would be creative and playful. They had to be contemporary in design to optimise marketability, but also conceptualised, developed and sourced with sustainable principles underpinning the entire process.

#### **4.1 Experimentation: an exchange of knowledge and creative ideas**

All products combined traditional African textile pattern design with Chinese folk fabric art and embroidery techniques to create a new surface design language. I created inspiration boards (Appendix A) with overarching elements for the practical research component. The overarching elements related well with the traditional culture from Africa and China. Consequently, many different ideas and variations for the product range emerged from these elements.

The elements allowed for a variety of African and Chinese pattern design to be used in conjunction with one another, as well as employing different craft techniques in one product. This resulted in fresh and innovative products, aspects which the current stylish children's product market requires. I designed the product range and was responsible for its development, including which colours, motifs and techniques should be used. The making up of the product components, however, was the task of



practitioners who are professional in traditional craft techniques, while the final assembling of all products was my responsibility.

## **4.2 Rationale for the utilisation of motifs and techniques**

Techniques used in making the products include: African Adinkra motifs and pattern design, Chinese cloth-pasted technique, embroidery, needlework and digital printing. The rationale for the use of motifs and techniques is further supported by the fact that this research project sought to determine which craft techniques are under threat. In addition if possible to merge African and Chinese traditional craft design and techniques to create a fresh, unusual surface design expression. Therefore, the research project was aimed at reviving disused and possibly forgotten craft skills and knowledge, as well as simultaneously preserving the wisdom inherent in many forms of cultural heritage expressions.

The list of mentioned techniques is as follows:

- African Adinkra motifs and pattern design
- Chinese cloth-pasted technique
- Embroidery
- Needlework
- Digital printing

### **4.2.1 African Adinkra motifs and pattern design**

The Adinkra cloth, which originated from Ghana in the Asante region, is fabric printed by hand. It is made of interesting traditional Asante symbols which are mostly proverbial. The prints are made using a black or brown dye called “Adinkra Aduru” which is extracted from the bark of trees by boiling it for several hours until a thick printable paste is obtained (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:12). The artists first demarcate sections on the cloth with the dye they have made. Then, using calabash gourds which they have cleverly carved into shapes and symbols, they ink the shapes and press them deeply into the fabric to create a printed pattern (see Figure 4.1). The “Adinkra” fabrics were predominantly worn by royals at festive occasions, funerals,

naming ceremonies and other special religious or traditional ceremonies. Through the years, people have also decorated the cloths to tell a story or to express their thoughts or feelings (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:12).

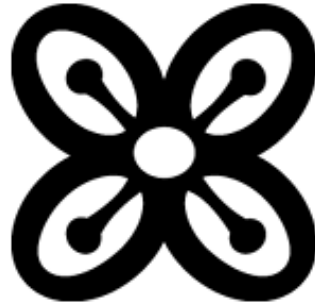


**Figure 4.1**

**Adinkra Stamping**

**(Photograph, Sabur, 2011)**

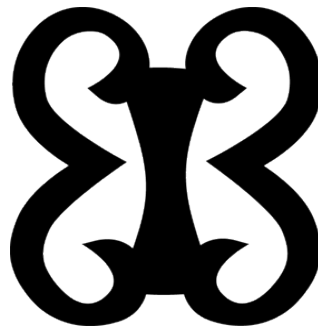
There are different types of Adinkra symbols used for different occasions. This varies from abstract forms to semi-realistic forms. Each symbol carries its own significant meaning derived from the daily life activities of the people of Ghana, particularly the Asantes (Willis, 1998:87). Figure 4.2 shows “Bese Saka” (“sack of cola nuts”) which is the symbol of affluence, power, abundance, plenty, togetherness and unity. The cola nut was once used as a means of exchange in Ghana. It was also a widely used cash crop and therefore was closely associated with affluence and abundance. This symbol also represents the role of agriculture and trade in bringing peoples together. Figure 4.3 is “Pempamsie” (“sew in readiness”), and it symbolises readiness, steadfastness and hardiness. “Adinkrahene” (“chief of the Adinkra symbols”) is the symbol of greatness, charisma and leadership, shown in Figure 4.4. It is believed that this symbol played a pioneering role in the designing of other symbols. It signifies the importance of playing a leadership role (Willis, 1998:99-105). I mainly used these Adinkra motifs in adapted form in combination with the traditional Chinese patterns and created the new unique pattern designs for the fabric.



**Figure 4.2**

**Adinkra motif: "Bese Saka"**

**(Adinkra, 2007)**



**Figure 4.3**

**Adinkra motif: "Pempamsie"**

**(Adinkra, 2007)**



**Figure 4.4**

**Adinkra motif: "Adinkrahene"**

**(Adinkra, 2007)**

Figure 4.5 is the large red cloth with black print seen in this design features some traditional Ashanti symbols, and I also used some Ashanti symbols in the products' fabric design. "Osrane Ne Nsoroma", which is translated as the "moon and stars", is a powerful emblem of loyalty and kindness. It can also represent the female persona as well as fellowship and trust between human beings. "Dwennimmen", which is translated as the "ram's horn", is another sign of positive energy, suggesting admirable qualities of character such as modesty, power and erudition. "Gye nyame", meaning "only god", symbolises the greatness and power of God. "Ese ne tekrema", meaning "the teeth and the tongue", shows the need for friendliness, interdependence, and the complementary nature of humanity (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:12).




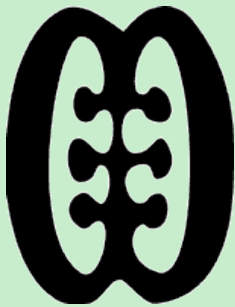
**Figure 4.5**

**Large red and black Adinkra cloth**

**(Ashanti people in Ghana, Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:11)**

**Table 4.1: The Ashanti symbols and meanings**

Adinkra symbol	Meaning	Interpretation	Reflection
	<b>Osrane Ne Nsoroma</b> "moon and stars"	symbol of love, faithfulness, harmony	This symbol reflects the harmony that exists in the bonding between a man and a woman.

Adinkra symbol	Meaning	Interpretation	Reflection
	<b>Dwennimmen</b> “ram’s horn”	symbol of humility together with strength	The ram will fight fiercely against an adversary, but it also submits humbly to slaughter, emphasizing that even the strong need to be humble.
	<b>Gye nyame</b> “only god”	symbol of the supremacy of God	This unique and beautiful symbol is ubiquitous in Ghana. It is by far the most popular for use in decoration, a reflection on the deeply religious character of the Ghanaian people.
	<b>Ese ne tekrema</b> “the teeth and the tongue”	symbol of friendship and interdependence	The teeth and the tongue play interdependent roles in the mouth. They may come into conflict, but they need to work together.

(Adinkra, 2007)

#### 4.2.2 Chinese folk fabric art

The fabric art of China refers to fabric handcrafts made by Chinese people using traditional fabric and threads as raw materials (Wu, 1999:31). These are tailored and sewn onto the different fabrics to adorn them. Fabric handcrafts come in such forms as embroidery, Gesi tapestry, hand stitching, embroidery paste, barbola, brocade and batik (Jin, 2011:26).

Chinese fabric art found great popularity with the tribal groups and families for thousands of years and retains the most primitive art form of ancient China. It also reflects ancient Chinese worship and beliefs. Fabric art includes garments, toys and perennial articles of everyday use. Fabric art reminds the people of their history and customs through symbols and designs and thus reinforces their notions of identity while helping to relieve the boredom of everyday life by making everyday items more colourful and engaging (Geng, 2008:3-4).

#### **4.2.2.1 Traditional Chinese fabric pattern**

In early times in China the standard of living was primitive and the most important things were survival and procreation. Nature changed so quickly and mysteriously that the people imagined that there was a supernatural force that existed behind the changes. This lent support to their imagination that “each figure or pattern had a meaning and the meaning must be auspicious”. Gradually the people created drawings of their ancestors, lucky animals, flowers, plants, geometric lines and other patterns to bring good luck and avoid evil (Shu, 2012:4).

On festive and happy occasions, Chinese people like to decorate their clothing and living items with auspicious Chinese patterns, which originated in the Western Zhou Dynasty (1100 BC-771 BC), and which reached the height of their popularity during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties. Figure 4.6 shows *Longevity above Five Fu* that is an example of auspicious Chinese patterns. These symbols have played an important role in the Chinese people’s lives for centuries (Gu, 2006:52).



**Figure 4.6**

**An auspicious Chinese pattern: *Longevity above Five Fu***

**(Chen, 2011)**

### *Geometric Patterns*

Two common Chinese geometric patterns are the “key pattern” and the “meander pattern”. Figure 4.7 shows the Chinese geometric symbols of longevity. The top geometric pattern is Chinese character “*Shou*<sup>5</sup>”, which means long life and good health. This Chinese traditional pattern is usually used in the celebration of birthdays. The concept and linguistic expression of the word ‘longevity’ has evolved over the centuries and has been symbolised in the culture of Chinese characters, which is viewed as an important part of psychiatry in people’s eyes (Shu, 2012:37). Bottom geometric patterns, the workable elements of borders and bands, are always present as an additional decoration of garments. *Shou* is one of the oldest meander geometric pattern types, which has become a lucky symbol of Buddhist belief since AD 200 in China. People often refer to *Shou* as the number of ten thousand (Shu, 2012:38). These patterns are put into the background of the fabric design for my children’s interior products, and they are used in African colours to represent the fusion of African and Chinese cultures.

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<sup>5</sup>Chinese character: 寿





**Figure 4.7**

**Chinese geometric patterns**

**(Shu, 2012:37-38)**

*Flower pattern - plum blossom*

Undaunted by the frost and snow in winter, plum blossoms and its buds will appear even on the withered branches. Therefore, the plum has been seen as a symbol of noble character since ancient times (Shu, 2012:111). I chose the plum blossom as the main flower in the pattern design, because it stands for renewal and is emblematic of perseverance and purity (Gu, 2006:53). The “eyebrow” (*Mei*<sup>6</sup>) and the “plum” are a pair of homophones in the Chinese language (Gu, 2006:53), and the five petals of plum blossom are one of most popular and auspicious symbols since the number five is sacred, and stands for happiness, prosperity, longevity, bliss and wealth (Shu, 2012:112) (shown in Figure 4.8).

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<sup>6</sup> Chinese Pinyin



**Figure 4.8**

**Chinese plum blossom pattern**

**(Shu, 2012:170)**

#### **4.2.2.2 Folk hand stitching and patterns**

Hand stitching, which is also known as “Shelf Flower” or “Cross Flower”, is a traditional style of embroidery stitching which was one of the earliest methods of stitching commonly used. This method of hand stitching features strong regionalism with regard to content and it is most popular in the areas of Hunan, Hubei, Guizhou, south Sichuan, Yunan, northwest Guangxi and Hainan (Geng, 2008:94). The decorative patterns used are also the most primitive and they feature a neat style, symmetrical design and are distinctly pointed (Geng, 2008:95).

Hand stitching uses a flat cloth and strictly follows the veins of the cloth. It takes the “cross” or “x” shape as the basic stitch, embroidering cross patterns with equal distance and length and arranging them into various designs (Dong, 2012:19). Figure 4.9 is a highly intricate and skilful hand stitched design, executed with great finesse by my friend Zhao. She took six months to finish it. She first drew the outline with thread and stitch according to the design at intervals of one yarn or several yarns, which must be in a strict order. Mostly it takes up the thread from the back surface (Figure 4.10).



**Figure 4.9**

**Chinese hand stitching design**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**



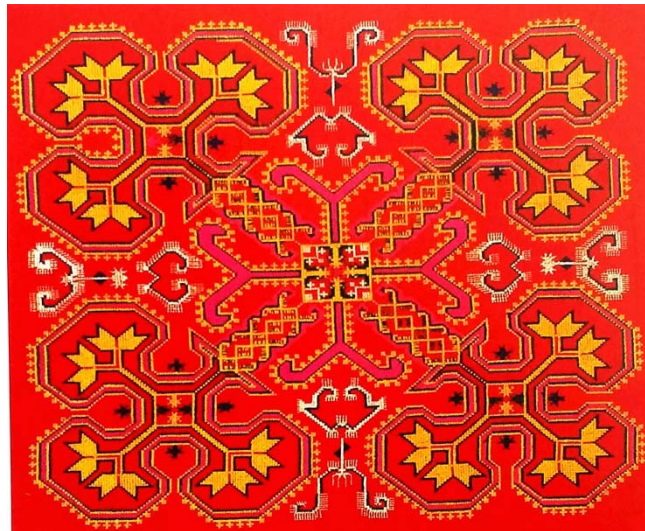
**Figure 4.10**

**The back surface of the hand-stitched design**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**

The patterns of hand stitching are usually geometrical figures or groups of flowers which are the combination of several bouquets of flowers formed by many basic designs (Geng, 2008:95). Figure 4.11 is a pattern combination of a butterfly, flower and a maple tree. The maple tree is one of the totems worshipped by the people of the Miao, a Chinese minority ethnic group, that mainly live in the southwest of China

(Geng, 2008:98). Using the Miao as inspiration, I also made some hand stitched pattern designs for the pages of the children's book. All the designs are basic symmetrical designs with fairly complicated elements and colours.



**Figure 4.11**

**Huaxi hand stitching**

**(Geng, 2008:98)**

#### **4.2.2.3 Traditional Chinese embroidery technique**

China is a splendid country famous for its clothing while embroidery is the traditional Chinese craftsmanship of designing patterns on different fabric by threading the needle as well as using a variety of stitches and embroidery methods (Bertin-Guest, 2003:4). Embroidery, which originated as silk embroidery, is done mostly by women. As the art was passed down historically between mother and daughter, or between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, it became known as the “mother’s art” (Shu, 2008:3).

The patterns of the embroidery works are highly decorative and colourful with a unique artistic style and delicate features. The embroidery art and vivid patterns throughout the ages are treasures and important parts of ancient Chinese culture and arts (Dong, 2012:2). Figure 4.12 illustrates some embroidery designs of the late Qing Dynasty of women’s red dresses (I took the photographs when I trained in H Z’s

embroidery workshop in Wuxi). As handcrafts have a wide geographical spread, the formation and development of embroidery have been greatly influenced by the geographical environment (Bertin-Guest, 2003:4).



**Figure 4.12**

**Ancient women's red dresses**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

Wuxi is one of the important sites from which Su embroidery flourished. The exquisite masterpieces of Wuxi embroidery features small scroll, exquisite patterns, skillful and neat lines and excellent craftsmanship (Dong, 2012:65).

H Z is a Su embroidery stylist and practitioner that I interviewed, and she is also a professional collector of ancient Chinese embroidery pieces. H Z taught me some different stitches of embroidery including satin stitch in her work studio. For example, *Qizhen*<sup>7</sup> stitch (Figure 4.13), one of the basic embroidery stitches. The lines are evenly and uniformly arranged and the surface is neat. It can be done in three ways according to the arrangement of the threads, *Zhichan* (direct), *Hengchan* (horizontal) and *Xiechan* (slanting) respectively (Dong, 2012:38). This embroidery stitch is used in the Children's interior items that I produced.

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<sup>7</sup> Chinese Pinyin



**Figure 4.13**

**Work of *Qizhen* Stitch**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

Other embroidery techniques that are used in the making of the interior products are from Shanxi province, called Lu embroidery. The Lu folk embroidery has not only a long history but also the unique artistic style of its own, reflecting the local conditions, customs and characteristics. Their works have simple patterns, flamboyant colours, concise composition, exaggerated shapes, multiple stitches and fine craftsmanship (Sun, 1992:97). Lu embroidered shoes in Figure 4.14 are generally made from cloth and satin with pattern embroidered on the uppers. They are unique Chinese handicrafts because they integrate embroidery art into shoe culture uniquely known as “Chinese shoes” (Dong, 2012:98).



**Figure 4.14**

**Lu embroidered shoes**

**(Dong, 2012:98)**

Some Lu embroidery works that forms part of the design for the interior items of my range is finished by the women from Shanxi province. These women start learning embroidery from a very young age. As they grow older, embroidery has naturally become an important artistic activity in their lives. They accumulate experience and develop skills through practice. Thus they can create new designs independently while they can only imitate existing ones in the beginning. In this way, they have created countless embroidery products which are rich both in decorative taste and in local flavour, and formed the unique folk embroidery style (Shu, 2008:5). Figure 4.15 shows a woman who is absorbed in her embroidery work.



**Figure 4.15**

**Lu embroidery woman**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

#### **4.2.2.4 Chinese folk cloth-pasted technique**

Cloth pasting is a kind of Chinese traditional folk craftsmanship, which integrates embroidery, paper-cut and Manchues' appliqué (Figure 4.16 is a pair of shoes of Manchues' appliqué). It is still quite popular in Shaanxi province. Here people use high-temperature dyed cotton as the background material, and then they meticulously cut, patch, pile up, stitch and appliqué to make the raised cloth pasted picture works. Human figures, landscapes, flowers, birds, fish and insects form the subject matter for cloth pasted pictures, and every picture is vivid, striking and detailed (Chinaculture, 2009). Figure 4.17 is an example of the traditional Chinese cloth-pasted picture. The cloth pasting technique was used on the children's book cover and cushion in my range, because it is suitable for children to feel and touch different textures of

materials, and it also makes the motifs and patterns more lifelike and interesting for the young child to interact with.



**Figure 4.16**

**A pair of shoes of Manchues' appliqué  
(*China Cloth Pasted Pictures*, 2012)**



**Figure 4.17**

**Crane**

**(*China Cloth Pasted Pictures*, 2012)**

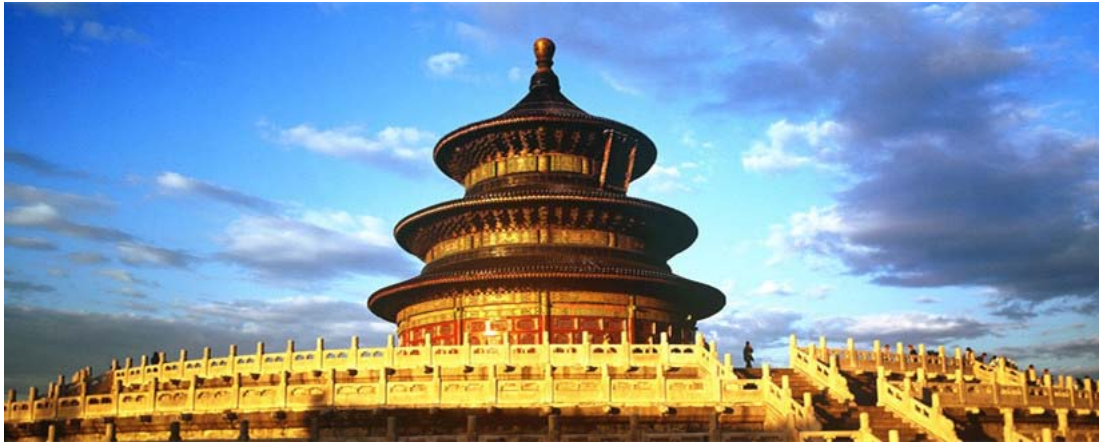


### **4.3 Utilisation of colour and materials**

#### *Chinese colour*

As a component of the traditional Chinese culture, traditional Chinese colours mirror the politics, economy, social life and folk customs, as well as the ideological values and aesthetical tastes of a particular era (Huang, 2011:9). The Chinese were the first people who knew how to use colour on a scientific basis. They established their colour structure by associating five basic colours (yellow, blue, red, black and white), respectively with the five fundamental elements of the universe (Which are earth, wood, fire, water and metal). By incorporating their ideas of the nature, ethics and philosophy in colours, the Chinese formulated a unique culture of colours (Zhao, 2012:3-6). The profound Chinese culture has nurtured a distinct value system of two colours in my mind: passion for red and worship for yellow. These two colours are the dominant ones in my product's designs.

Red can be said to describe the Chinese nation, and it is the symbol of passion, auspiciousness, happiness, majesty, dignity, courage, and justice (Huang, 2011:21). Since ancient times, the Chinese preferred something red on all festive occasions, because red was considered the most auspicious colour. For example, at Chinese weddings red absolutely dominates: the bride's red dress, shoes and veil; the groom's red gown, flower and band; red candles, quilt and sheet in the bridal chamber. All red elements bring the couple to the starting point of a married life. This practice is believed to ensure that their family's offspring will survive for many generations (Huang, 2011:26-27). Red is also the colour of upper class status and the aristocracy and is used in imperial buildings, such as the Temple of Heaven (Figure 4.18). The red walls and yellow-glazed tile roofs could create a strong visual impact, interpreting the imperial power into a great boldness of vision (Zhao, 2012:37). I also wanted to bring a strong contrast vision on colour and to provide an obvious style of traditional culture.



**Figure 4.18**

**The Temple of Heaven**

**(Zhao, 2012:37)**

The Chinese love for the colour yellow has gone to the extent of reverence. Their respect and worship of the colour yellow is closely related to the tradition of the farming based civilisation (Huang, 2011:43). It originated in the Yellow River basin, where ancient Chinese turned the yellow earth into arable lands. They sowed yellow seeds in the lands and irrigated the lands with water from the Yellow River. Their hard work brought them good harvests of yellow grain. In addition to the close association with nature, yellow is also the symbol of power, wealth, brightness and wisdom. It was once used exclusively by the royal family and bears a strong religious connotation (Zhao, 2012:23-25). Figure 4.19 shows the Gold Crown unearthed from the underground Mausoleum of emperor Wanli at the Ming tombs in Beijing, and it illustrates yellow as the emperor's colour in ancient China (Zhao, 2012:41). There is a wide range of application of the yellow colour in Buddhist architectures, monks' clothes, as well as decoration in the monasteries (Huang, 2011:44). As a Buddhist, yellow represents my religion and personality, so it actually is 'my colour'. I brought my own origin and roots through using yellow into the design.



**Figure 4.19**

**The Gold Crown of Ming dynasty emperor**

**(Zhao, 2012:41)**

#### *African colour*

Colours are frequently symbolic of important messages in African art. Colour stimulates eyes and enhances emotions that are activated by human voices and dynamic bodies. The characteristics of African cultures are illustrated in their unique perception and visual expression of colour. Therefore, colour has become the most powerful approach of visual non-verbal communication in African civilization (African Art, 2014). Since 17000 years ago, African people simply painted animals and human figures using natural colours on rock, such as cave paintings which are typically naturalistic in style (see Figure 4.20). The primitive artists tried to naturalistically depict their experience and life in these visual representations. Symbolism is introduced in cave art through simplicity of form and shape (TARA, 2014). By this token, the colours of nature strongly represent Africa. I typically chose three natural colours: orange, brown and green, which are used to represent African colours for the design of the products in my range.



**Figure 4.20**  
**Egyptian cave painting**  
**(TARA, 2014)**

Orange is present in nature, in the setting sun, falling leaves, fruit, and flowers. It creates a sense of warmth, fruitfulness, brightness and cheerfulness. Brown equals earth and symbolises comfort and security (Feisner, 2000:119). They are largely used in African ceramics, jewelry and textile designs, as well as architecture. For example, orange and brown in the fabrics of African people are invested with important meaning. Orange is defined and linked to temperate and fine weather, while brown represents the richness and fertility of the soil. These colours are closely associated with people's observations about the temperature and weather of the day, and the environment of nature (Dereje et al., 2011:230). There is an exquisite example of tie-died skirts and raffia shawls that are from the Ivory Coast, as shown in Figure 4.21. The extremely fine tube-shaped braiding of multiple fibres is a real tour de force. The woman maker hooked a slubbing of fine strands to her big toe and interlaced them with the strands of another slubbing. This procedure is used for various items of clothing worn by both women and men (Bouttiaux et al., 2008:114-115). The colours of orange and yellowish brown strongly stand out from the black background and make for a deep, rich, warm and folksy scene.



**Figure 4.21**

**Skirt and shawl braided raffia**

**(Bouttiaux et al., 2008: 110-112)**

Green is the largest colour family discernible to the human eye, which is why our feeling toward green can be so varied. Green is seen in the environment, growth and renewal in spring, fertility, freshness, nature, youth, health, peace and calm, things that are cool and refreshing, and wealth (Feisner, 2000:120). In African culture, green signifies the renewal and growth seen in plants and represents the cycle of birth and death. Figure 4.22 embodies an infinite variety of colour combinations, including red, orange, yellow, green, white and black. In this case a perfect balance is achieved between warm and cool colours, and the detail is especially well-crafted, showing off the technical skill needed in creating openwork<sup>6</sup>. This colour design inspired me to combine red, orange, yellow and brown with green to create a harmonious, rich, and cultural colour combination for my unique product designs.

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<sup>6</sup> Ornamental work in cloth, metal, leather or other material with regular patterns of openings and holes.



**Figure 4.22**  
**Cache-sexe cotton, glass beads and cowrie shells**  
**(Bouttiaux et al., 2008:115-116)**

#### **4.4 Summary**

The colours, motifs and techniques used in the development of the children's product range were discussed in this chapter. I introduced in detail traditional African textile design Adinkra motifs, Chinese auspicious patterns, embroidery and folk cloth pasting techniques. The chapter also explained how to represent African and Chinese cultures in the colours chosen for the products. The research findings are discussed thoroughly in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

The research findings presented in this chapter have been obtained from five rounds of individual semi-structured interviews and one focus group interview. These data gathered were obtained at various times during the fieldwork research. For instance, by means of attending a Chinese Su embroidery workshop of H Z, Lu embroidery practitioner R Y, African “Adinkra” textile designer R D D, fashion designer N M and fine art printmaker A I V. In addition, data was gathered during an interview and visit to the CCDI, and also during the development and fabrication of the children’s products, and by means of market research questionnaires. Firstly, the findings of the initial introductory interviews are reported. Secondly, observational and journaling findings (obtained through the embroidery workshop training, visits to practitioners’ studios and CCDI design focus group) are presented. Thirdly, the data obtained from the midway interviews are presented and lastly, findings obtained through the market research questionnaires are presented.

#### **5.1 Documenting the traditional African textile design and Chinese folk fabric art**

African textile design and arts go back thousands of years when several ethnic groups started weaving their own cotton and making clothes for utilisation. Their arts and design expressions were known for geometric patterns graced with vibrant colour choices which were principally bright in that sense (Picton, 1999:28). According to Blanco and Regan (2011), “the substance of all textile art in Africa is shaped by its powerful link to the dominant symbolic traditions in a given social structure. Designs were born from symbols connected to religious rituals, languages, or even ceremonial rites associated with the king and nobility. In the same way, other ethnic groups also used the objects of nature, the surrounding landscapes and animals as inspiration for



their innovative works in their prototype symbols which have accumulated from various social environments and groups, to be used as embellishing materials for different purposes. Slowly through time, these representations evolved into symbols which could be imprinted on fabrics” (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:2).

Fundamentally, the textiles design of Africa derived from the backgrounds of 55 African countries’ culture and more than 800 linguistic groups (Picton, 1999: 28). The African continent has various natural environments ranging from cordillera to harsh deserts, the Great Rift Valley and rainforests. These overall natural environments determined what African people created and wore in addition to, the missionaries’ or explorers’ influences. These environmental and cultural differences contributed to laying a foundation of unique styles, marvellous fine arts, attractive cultural dressing and traditional crafts of contemporary African textiles (Dereje, et al., 2011:229).

Blanco and Regan held an exhibition of West African Textiles at Barrow Hall Gallery in 2007. In this epitome of showcasing African arts, cultures and society, exquisite wearable design and crafts were shown. These textiles and accessories excelled with their beautiful colour collections, structure, composition and visible characteristic elements. Each element of the specific African patterns has particular meaning and symbolically represents several African social values. Those values are revealed through a diverse form of lines, curves and complete symbols to convey hope, spiritual messages and other invisible concepts (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:3).

Figure 5.1 is a typical example of a traditional African textile on display in the exhibition. This textile was made in the adire eleko technique. “Adire” means to resist dye in Yoruba, using indigo and “eleko” indicates the usage of a resist paste that is painted or die-stamped on the fabric (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:11). This technique is used for one side of the cloth applying a starch paste, which is then pressed into a stencil of zinc using a spatula of metal. The cloth is then dyed with indigo many times. The paste is rubbed out of the cloth before it is hung to dry. The starch plays a role in



resisting the dye substance when it is removed. On the fabric, the dark colour is shown because of void starch and the light blue colour is shown because starch was applied (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:11). There are many featured elements in this textile design, and they inspired me to explore traditional motifs and symbols that can be used in my pattern designs. For instance, the middle pattern is the traditional motif “tree of life”, as well as the delineation of utensils, which probably related to the significance of owning these daily necessities which also represent a given level of prestige (Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:11).



**Figure 5.1**

**Yoruba people, stencil & starch resist - dyed agbada, Nigeria cotton**

**(Collected by Dr. Akinloye, Barrow Hall Gallery, 2011:11)**

Over the past thousands of years, the industrious and wise Chinese craftsmen have created various folk fabric handicrafts of great originality and artistry. As an important part of the Chinese arts, folk handicraft not only embodies the general feature of arts and crafts but also suggest the distinctive characteristic of the Chinese culture, fully exhibiting the excellent creativity and life interest of the Chinese (Wen & Lyu, 2012:1).

Embroidery is the most-represented Chinese folk fabric art that involves the use of needles and thread. It is essentially done for the purpose of decorations by sewing different types of materials into a cloth layer to make patterns and designs that are normally a beautiful natural expression. According to the documents of China Arts and Crafts Association (CA&CA), “embroidery, a folk fabric art with a long tradition,

occupies a meaningful position in Chinese art and craft history. This has been inseparable from silkworm-raising, silk-reeling and weaving in its long development. Today, silk embroidery becomes a unique symbol of China” (CA&CA, 2014).

China Central Television (CCTV) was associated with CA&CA making a special TV programme, which introduced the most famous Chinese embroidery, Su embroidery. Su embroidery has a bold folk flavour and its weaving techniques are featured in the thin needle-sewing, the dense needle-lines, the flat product surface, the neat rim, the bright and harmonious colour and the even picture. The products of Su embroidery are segmented into three major categories: costumes, crafts for daily use and decorations for halls that incorporate decorative and practical concepts (*Su Embroidery*, 2014). Figure 5.2 shows a picture of this programme. In an interview with Qiwei Zhang, the director of Jiao Gu Su Embroidery Arts & Crafts Company, and he said, “*As a status of national intangible cultural heritage of China, Su Embroidery needs to be protected by us, so we try to combine it with contemporary fashion style and add the fresh blood and feature to develop Su Embroidery faster in the future.*” (CA&CA, 2014).



**Figure 5.2**

**The CCTV's *Su Embroidery* Program**

**(CA&CA, 2014)**

I also did a related interview with the Chinese Su embroidery practitioner H Z while taking part in a short-term embroidery skills training at her workshop in Wuxi. Accordingly, I got a deeper understanding of Su embroidery technique and the

method of its stitches was blended in the development of my products.

## 5.2 Observations of workshops and design focus group

Observations and journaling were accomplished progressively throughout the fieldwork component in order to record, explore and determine whether any changes had occurred amongst the five individual semi-structured interviews and one focus group interview. The embroidery skills training workshop, the CCDI design focus group's observations and journaling findings are presented in this section, whilst the findings will be analysed in the next chapter.

### 5.2.1 Chinese Su Embroidery workshop: H Z

Interviewee	Occupation	Initial Interview	Midway Interview	Concluding Interview
H Z	Su embroidery stylist and practitioner	Visit, 8 Sep 2013	Training, 10-13 Sep 2013	Journaling, 15 Sep 2013

*“Su embroidery is well known for its fine close stitches, elegantly light colour, and exquisite products, featuring smoothness, brightness, orderliness, evenness, fineness and thickness (H Z, 2013).”*

I visited H Z's workshop in Wuxi and she allowed me to join in the training of Su embroidery for four days. During this time, I realised several traditional patterns that are frequently used in Su embroidery design, namely *Pingtao, Panjin, Dazi, Wangxiu, Bingwen, Najin and Kelin*. This allowed me to learn the *Qizhen* stitch of Su embroidery that is used in my product development.

#### Initial Interview

Keywords: Su embroidery, history background, double-sided embroidery.

When I interviewed H Z at the first time in Wuxi, she introduced the history of Su embroidery, “Su embroidery boasts of a history of more than 2600 years and had developed to a considerable scale even as early as the Song Dynasty (AD960-AD1297), when major production workshops had already emerged, such as embroidery garments workshops, embroidery lanes, *Gunxiu*<sup>7</sup> workshops and embroidery threads workshops (H Z, 2013). It is well known for its fine close stitches, elegantly light colour, and exquisite products, featuring smoothness, brightness, orderliness, evenness, fineness and thickness.”

Furthermore, I visited H Z’s embroidery studio. I found that she is especially good at doing the subtle embroidery interestingly; her subtle embroidery work was even offered as a precious gift to a foreign leader from the government of China. Figure 5.3 shows her exquisite and extremely detailed stitching in a piece called *God of Longevity*. She said, “During the Qing Dynasty, the subtle embroidery arts of boudoir embroidery, *Duishabang*<sup>8</sup> embroidery, *Luanzhen* embroidery were initiated in Wuxi. In the 1980s, the heirs to subtle embroidery developed and invented ‘double-side subtle embroidery’ on the basis of traditional art, which was acknowledged as a superexcellent art throughout the country” (H Z, 2013).



**Figure 5.3**

**The subtle embroidery: *God of Longevity***

**(Photograph, H Z, 2013)**

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<sup>7</sup> Chinese Pinyin

<sup>8</sup> Chinese Pinyin

H Z explained the features of her subtle embroidery work to me, “*Compared with the normal double-sided embroidery, the double-sided subtle embroidery is more particular about the selection of needle, thread, material, as well as colour, and also demands more sophisticated skills and techniques. Sometimes, a strand of thread has to be divided into seventy or eighty pieces. Images by subtle embroidery art are tiny and as thin as legs of a fly, but lines are smooth and precise, vividly depicting the form and spirit of the patterns.*”

### Midway Interview

Keywords: Su embroidery training, embroidery skills, stitches' examples.

I wanted to have some experiences of Su embroidery after the introductory interview, and I requested a short-term training in her work studio. During the training, H Z showed me the processes of some different stitches of Su embroidery and also taught me some basic stitches. The major stitches of Su embroidery that I had realised from H Z were photographically recorded in the journal. They are as follows:

1. *Pingtao*<sup>9</sup> stitch (Figure 5.4) - using threads of equal length to connect layers. One stitch is chained to the other, where the colours match well and the surface is in neat and flat.



**Figure 5.4**

***Pingtao* stitch work**

**(Photograph, H Z, 2013)**

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<sup>9</sup> Chinese Pinyin

2. *Panjin*<sup>10</sup> embroidery (Figure 5.5) – It is done by putting a golden thread on the embroidered pattern for decoration, again, it helps beautify and coordinate colours.

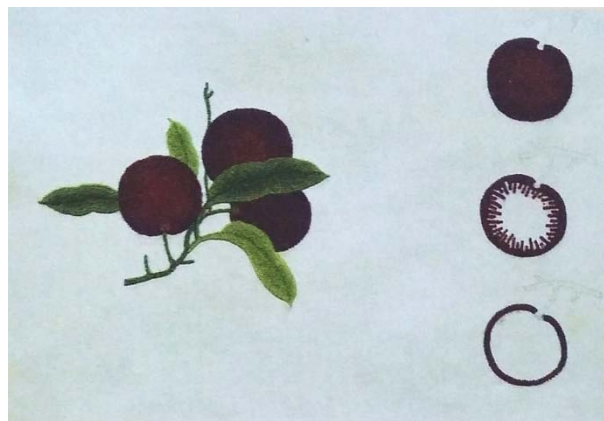


**Figure 5.5**

***Panjin* stitch work**

**(Photograph, H Z, 2013)**

3. *Dazi*<sup>11</sup> stitch (Figure 5.6) – winding the threads for embroidering. It is so named because it looks like the silkworm. The surface is flat with no luster, with solid and durable embroidery.



**Figure 5.6**

***Dazi* stitch work**

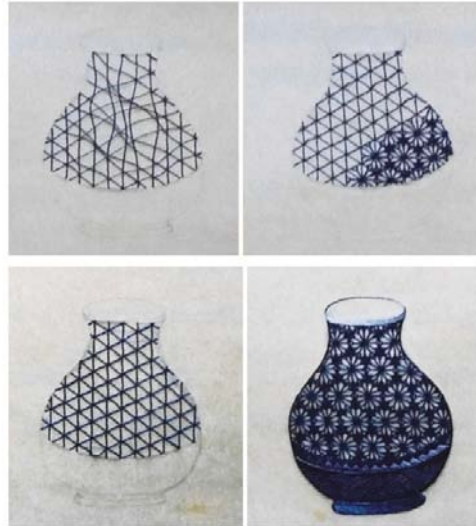
**(Photograph, H Z, 2013)**

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<sup>10</sup> Chinese Pinyin

<sup>11</sup> Chinese Pinyin

4. *Wangxiu*<sup>12</sup> embroidery (Figure 5.7) – forming small consecutive units of geometric patterns with horizontal, straight and slanting lines in different directions. This embroidery is made up of beautiful patterns within each unit which are clear with multiple changes. Dozens of kinds of patterns can be embroidered in this way.



**Figure 5.7**

***Wangxiu* stitch work**

**(Photograph, H Z, 2013)**

5. *Bingwen*<sup>13</sup> stitch (Figure 5.8) – using strips of different angles to embroider patterns looking like cracked ice.



**Figure 5.8**

***Bingwen* stitch work**

**(Photograph, H Z, 2013)**

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<sup>12</sup> Chinese Pinyin

<sup>13</sup> Chinese Pinyin

6. *Najin*<sup>14</sup> (Figure 5.9) - embroidering geometric patterns, small inside big ones, all over the gauze ground, and the patterns are changeable and decorative.

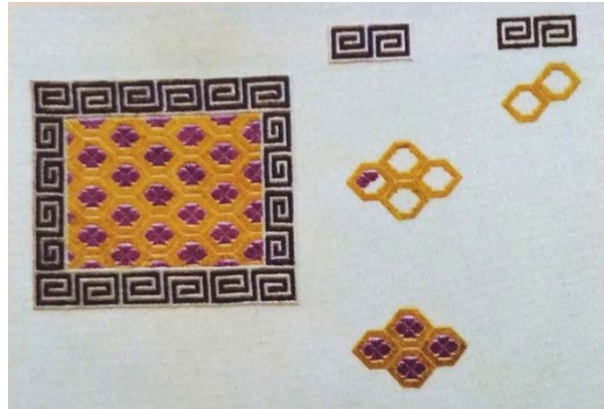


Figure 5.9

*Najin* stitch work

(Photograph, H Z, 2013)

7. *Kelin*<sup>15</sup> (scale-engraving) stitch (Figure 5.10) – in the shape of scales, it should be used with supplementary stitches. On the ground of the embroidery, using short stitches and short *Zhazhen*<sup>16</sup> stitch to make patterns shaped like scales or feathers. The *Kelin* stitch can be divided into fish scales and feathered scales by different arrangement of stitches.



Figure 5.10

*Kelin* embroidery work – fish scales

(Photograph, H Z, 2013)

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<sup>14</sup> Chinese Pinyin

<sup>15</sup> Chinese Pinyin

<sup>16</sup> Chinese Pinyin



### Concluding Interview

Finally, H Z taught me to embroider the Su embroidery stitch, but she also helped me to embroider the satin stitch on the design of a folk- patterned cushion, as shown in Chapter Six.

### 5.2.2 Chinese Lu Embroidery practitioner: R Y

Interviewee	Occupation	Initial Email Communication	Concluding Email Communication
R Y	Lu embroidery producer and retail expert	Email, 13 Dec 2013	Questionnaire, 16 Dec 2013

*“No one wants to learn old skills like embroidery. Lack of interest and resources are putting Chinese traditional skills on the verge of extinction. As a result of the lack of government protection, embroidery industries have now become a ‘sunset industry’ (R Y, 2013).”*

R Y’s family are specialists in Lu embroidery for the past 20 years in the Shanxi province, but recently, R Y opened his own online shop of Lu embroidery handicrafts in Xi’an. I could not interview him, but I sent him the questionnaires which he gladly accepted to complete by email (see Appendix E).

### Initial Email Communication

Keywords: loss of traditional cultures, Lu embroidery characteristics and skills.

R Y completed my questionnaire during the middle of December in 2013. I translated his Chinese interview questionnaire into English. It is as follows:

1. What do you think about today’s Chinese folk art and traditional culture?

*In general, as a Lu embroidery practitioner (a position which carries a highly respected status as a master of our cultural heritage), I think the situation is gloomy. The demand for mass product development is increasing rapidly due to the on-going*

*expansion of science and technology in the modern world. No one wants to learn old skills like embroidery. Lack of interest and resources are putting the Chinese traditional skills on the verge of extinction. As a result of the lack of government protection, embroidery industries have become a 'sunset industry' now.*

2. Why are you interested in the traditional Lu embroidery?

*Lu embroidery art had been in my family for 20 years, so I think I should pass it on.*

3. Could you introduce the characteristics of your Lu embroidery handicrafts?

*Lu embroidery stems from Shanxi province and has a long history. Our Lu embroidery handicrafts can be roughly divided into three types: clothing, household articles and sacrificial items. For instance, the dresses, skirts, shawls, hats, shoes, as well as quilt covers, pillows, table covers, chair cushions and altar curtains in the mourning hall or temples are all embroidered with different patterns. The patterns mostly take popular themes among the folk people, for example, the peacock flaunting its tail, phoenix and peonies, and two dragons playing with a pearl. Moreover, patterns such as fruits and vegetables, birds and animals, landscapes and pavilions are even more common themes of our embroidery. It is different from other embroideries. We use the double-twisted colour silk threads as the embroidery threads through various stitch techniques such as Chanxiu<sup>17</sup> stitch, Dazi stitch, Gunzhen stitch, Souhe stitch, Zhenxiu embroider and Connecting stitch to embroider these patterns.*

4. Could you explain the process and time spent in making the traditional Lu embroideries?

*Formally, we have six steps to make a Lu embroidery product, and they are:*

- a) Doing the sketches: It is finished by our professional embroidery pattern designers.*
- b) Choosing the materials: We use a lot of various materials for different craft products.*

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<sup>17</sup> Chinese Pinyin

- c) *Stabbing the patterns: Our embroiderers used the technical tools to stab these patterns on the plastic paper.*
- d) *Brushing: It is similar to the painting, which means that the patterns are drawn on fabrics.*
- e) *Embroidering: The embroiderers make the embroideries that followed the painted patterns on fabrics.*
- f) *Post processing: It includes washing, ironing, packing, and finally the embroidered products are finished.*

5. How do you price each embroidered product?

*Pricing is according to the amount of threads used. For example, a set of table covers usually use 3000 threads and each thread costs R1 (includes profit), so its price will be R3000 ( $1 \times 3000 = 3000$ ).*

6. Could you show an example of your embroidered product?

*Figure 5.11 is the best-selling embroidered product: Embroidered coaster.*



**Figure 5.11**

**Lu Embroidered coaster**

**(Photograph, R Y, 2013)**

7. If the traditional embroidery techniques can be combined with several contemporary designs, how do you suggest that this can be achieved?

*I believe that the Lu embroidery techniques can be used in some contemporary industries in China such as presents from the Gift Industry or Chinese tea products.*

8. What do you think if these combinations are use of for children’s products?

*In my opinion, Lu embroidery can be used in the children’s products. It enjoyably decorates the products in order to attract more children and their parents’ eyes.*

*However, I do not think it is really useful for children.*

### Concluding - Email Communication

After I finished the printing process of the children’s product fabrics, I emailed R Y and then asked him to do some Lu embroideries for my products. I sent the printed fabrics to him, and his embroiderer did Lu embroideries in the printed patterns. *“It is a fresh and interesting idea to inspire my eyes and mind.”* R Y said, *“I totally changed my mind, and it can be useful for children to feel and touch this traditional embroidery skill in order to get the basic understanding of it. It will inspire them to cultivate their interests of traditional skills, like embroidery.”* The products of Lu embroidery will be analysed in Chapter Six.

### 5.2.3 African “Adinkra” textile designer: R D D

Interviewee	Occupation	Initial Interview	Midway Email Communication	Concluding Email Communication
R D D	Adinkra textile designer	Visit, 24 Apr 2014	Email, 15 May 2014	Email, 29 May 2014

*“The Adinkra symbols are usually proverbial symbols, which represent ideas and wisdom that are transferred from generation to generation and also promote good moral values embedded in the Akan tradition (R D D, 2014).”*

R D D comes from Ghana in West Africa. She studied design and is a practicing designer. R D D started to do an interesting African “Adinkra” textile design project in 2012 and she explained it to me, “this project was to explore alternative ways by which the Adinkra symbols could be used, it was also to promote the use of Adinkra in other cultures for other purposes.”

### Initial Interview

Keywords: Ghanaian social literature and tradition, Adinkra symbols.

Our initial introductory interview was on 24 April (2014), and she described the brief history of Adinkra in Ghana, she indicated that Adinkra symbols are indigenous of Ghanaian origin and very peculiar to the people of Akan origin or the Asantes of Ghana. These symbols are usually stamped onto fabrics, which are either hand woven or factory made. Therefore the Adinkra cloth can simply be described as a piece of material which has the Adinkra symbols stamped unto it. The Adinkra symbols are usually proverbial symbols, which represents ideas and wisdom that is transferred from one generation to the other and also promotes good moral values embedded in the Akan tradition. These symbols have a lot of coded information which historically was also used to send information from one person to the other. The word Adinkra also means saying good-bye and it is believed that it was also used as a means of communication from the living to the ancestors. Adinkra is used in many other fabrics within the Ghanaian culture. However the most prominent one is the Kente fabric which is hand woven. The historical origin of Adinkra symbols is dictated by R D D in resonance with Adinkra printers in the Ntonso Village of Ghana (2014):

*“This information is based on the oral accounts obtained from the people of the present popular Adinkra village in Ghana-Ntonso as I interacted with them from time to time.”*

According to them, the Akan people of Ghana are mainly associated with the Adinkra symbols. They have developed their skills for Adinkra prints more than anyone else within the Ghanaian community. Adinkra, simply means “goodbye”. Adinkra is said to have been named after King Adinkra Panin who was once the King of the people of the Gyaman in the Ashanti Kingdom which was quite prominent in the 1700’s. The fabric is said to be used by prominent people in society such as the King and other Royals in the palace. It is worn on special occasions such as funerals, initiation rites and other ceremonial practices (Soyinka, 1976:89).

Today, Adinkra is not only used for special occasions, but also for everyday activities. It can be found on architectural buildings, metal works, and many more. It is also being used as a source of inspiration and ideas by popular stars both in Ghana and abroad. Sometimes Adinkra is even tattooed on their bodies. It is also very popular among the African Americans in the Diaspora. Additionally, it has been adopted in its original state by some prominent organisations in some parts of the world as logos for their companies. For instance, at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa, there is a research group known as Design Research Activities Workgroup (DRAW) which has developed its corporate symbol by combining four Adinkra symbols. This goes to show how significant these symbols are for different cultures across the world (see Figure 5.12). The inclusive philosophy of the DRAW is illustrated by the combination of four Adinkra symbols listed in Table 5.1.

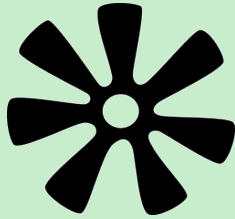

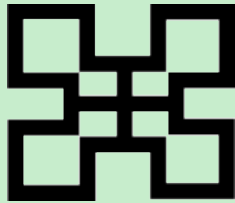
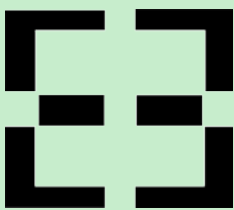


**Figure 5.12**

**DRAW symbol**

**(M’Rithaa, 2012)**

**Table 5.1: The DRAW Adinkra-inspired symbols and meanings**

Symbol	Meaning	Interpretation	Reflection
	<b>ANANSE</b> <b>NTONTAN</b> "spider's web"	symbol of wisdom, creativity and the complexities of life	Ananse, the spider, is a well-known character in African folktales.
Symbol	Meaning	Interpretation	Reflection
	<b>DENKYEM</b> "crocodile"	symbol of adaptability	The crocodile lives in the water, yet breathes the air, demonstrating an ability to adapt to circumstances.
	<b>NSAA</b> a type of hand-woven fabric	symbol of excellence, genuineness, authenticity	According to "The Adinkra Dictionary" by Willis (2007), the nsaa symbols reflect a saying: " <i>nea onnim nsaa to n'ago</i> ", which he translates as "He who does not know authentic Nsaa will buy the fakes."  The quality of Nsaa has come to represent quality of workmanship in general.
	<b>WOFORO DUA</b> <b>PA A</b> "when you climb a good tree"	symbol of support, cooperation and encouragement	From the expression "Woforo dua pa a, na yɛpia wo" meaning "When you climb a good tree, you are given a push". More metaphorically, it means that when you work for a good cause,

you will get support.

(Adinkra, 2007)

While R D D was talking, she showed me some examples of Adinkra symbols (Figure 5.13). I then asked her what her opinion of today's Adinkra design was. She replied, *"Today, the Adinkra cloth is easier to procure and has been adapted for overseas markets and faster production. However, the original mode of making it can still be seen in Ghana today. The ink is rendered by stripping the Badie tree of its bark and subjecting it to very high temperatures in water mixed with iron filings or slag which deepen the colour of the dye. The result is an ink (adinkra aduru) which can be used with a particular kind of stamping device – bearing one or more Adinkra symbols - to embellish and 'print' designs on the Adinkra cloth which is then used for special ceremonies and other social events such as funerals. The material thus patterned cannot be subjected to normal washing because the ink does not have any fixative qualities when made by traditional methods."*



Figure 5.13

Adinkra symbols

(Agbo's collection–indigenous symbol, R D D, 2014)

#### Midway Email Communication

Keywords: Examples and meaning of Adinkra symbol, "Adinkra" project process.

The midway interview was by way of email, and R D D explained the meaning of some Adinkra symbols as follows:



*“Eniwa”* – eyes (Figure 5.14). This symbol represents the idea of being focused. The proverb says that “one cannot look into a bottle with both eyes” the idea is for people to remain focused on everything they do. And if there are challenges they can always turn to the supremacy of known as God “Nyame”.



**Figure 5.14**

**Adinkra symbol: “Eniwa” (eyes) calabash stamp**

**(Photograph, R D D, 2014)**

*“Papa”* – fan (Figure 5.15). The symbol represents purity or pure air. “The environment needs to be kept clean, pure and fresh air needed at all times.” For instance, it can be used to speak to the challenges we have today with the environment and the need for us to be mindful about our environments to avoid air pollution.



**Figure 5.15**

**Adinkra symbol: “Papa” (fan) calabash stamp**

**(Photograph, R D D, 2014)**

*“Kenten”* – basket “doing the right thing” (Figure 5.16). It symbolises the act of doing the right thing. The connected proverb speaks to the idea that people ought to do the right thing all the time – “If you use a basket to fetch water, you will go home without anything”. Therefore the need to do the right thing at all times. It is also a symbol of harvest.



**Figure 5.16**

**Adinkra symbol: “Kenten” (basket) calabash stamp**

**(Photograph, R D D, 2014)**

R D D illuminated the process of her "Adinkra" project. There are six steps involved in it. Firstly, the symbols were developed based on emerging issues relating to climate and the environment. Then secondly the best one was selected. Thirdly, a stencil was made out of the symbol to try and print out if it will work. Fourthly, the design was then transferred unto a stamp created out of a calabash as shown in Figure 5.17. Furthermore, interesting repeated patterns of the symbols were created using the computer after which screens were made out of it for printing. Figure 5.18 showed the process of design printing. Finally, the designs (Figure 5.19) were then transferred unto suitable surfaces which could be used for several purposes such as, wall hangings, prints in shirts, table cloths, and everyday fabrics.



**Figure 5.17**

**Adinkra symbol: “Nsuo ne Anwa” (oil and water) calabash stamp**

**(Photograph, R D D, 2014)**



**Figure 5.18**

**The process of Adinkra design printing**

**(Photograph, R D D, 2014)**



**Figure 5.19**

**The result of Adinkra designs**

**(Photograph, R D D, 2014)**

## Concluding - Email Communication

Keywords: Africa meet Asia, Adinkra symbols, Chinese auspicious patterns, Design.

I asked R D D what she thinks about the traditional African cultural influence in today's designs through doing this "Adinkra" project. She answered, *"From my perspective, I believe the African traditional culture has very rich sources of design and very unique ways of developing ideas. By observing the trends in design today one could trace some influence of the African traditions in emerging design forms."* I asked, "Do you think the product designs that used the traditional designs or techniques are marketable?" Her response: *"Yes it will be marketable. People will want to see new things everyday therefore trying to do something different from the usual will always attract people."*

Eventually, R D D asked me to add several Chinese auspicious patterns for her "Adinkra" designs. Therefore, we did three pattern designs that combined my Chinese motifs with R D D's Adinkra designs as shown in Figure 5.20. Starting a new idea was very absorbing and we decided to do some more pattern presentations to develop our design thinking more deeply.

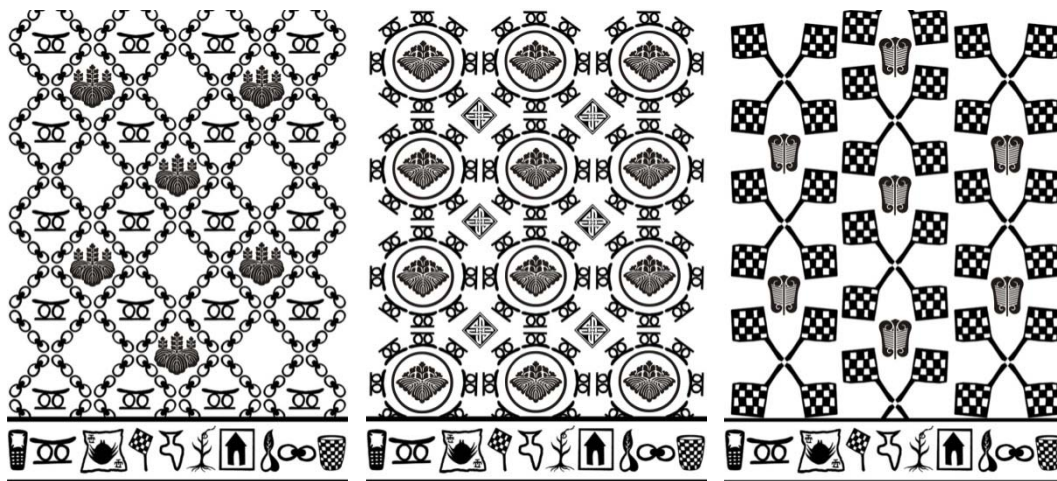


Figure 5.20

The design combination of Chinese auspicious patterns and Adinkra symbols

(Photograph, Li, 2014)

These designs explored the possibilities of merging Ghanaian Adinkra symbols and Chinese auspicious patterns as a unit of design which can be used in a wide range of contemporary products, such as cloths, bags and soft furnishings. And here are interesting, new design expressions that I created as shown in Figure 5.21.



(Women's vest and men's T-shirt)



(Model example)

**Figure 5.21**

**The product examples of Chinese auspicious pattern and Adinkra symbol design combinations**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

#### 5.2.4 African fashion designer: N M

Interviewee	Occupation	Initial Interview	Midway Interview	Concluding Email Communication
N M	Children's fashion designer	Visit, 2 Mar 2014	Visit and questionnaire, 17 May 2014	Email, 10 Jun 2014

*"Today, I am designing African-inspired children's clothes, Kidz Korner, which is inspired not only by my love for kids, but by wanting to express that love through understanding their tastes and preferences in fashion, as trends evolve (N M, 2014)."*

N M built Kidz Korner, which specialises in making African-inspired children's clothing and accessories, born out of a love for children and fashion. She uses wax fabrics derived from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mali, Ghana, Zambia and South Africa, each item is fun-stylish and unique, just like every child. Her ultimate object is for people in Africa and around the world to acknowledge and understand where the patterns and designs are from, as opposed to merely referring to them as "African" (N M, 2014).

#### Initial Interview

Keywords: African inspiration, children's fashion design.

I met N M in the Design Indaba Expo 2014 where she was exhibiting her amazing children's fashion designs. She introduced herself to me and we had a brief chat. Her roots stem from KwaZulu Natal, Durban. She had always dreamed of being a dancer or an attorney when she was young. She said, "I realised the latter dream of being a lawyer but deep down I always loved the fashion world and silently complimented strangers with a unique sense of style as they walked by. I paid particular attention to the manner in which parents dressed their children, probably because from age seven, I could not wait to be a grown up so I would have the

freedom of wearing what I like to express myself and my mood of the day. Today, I am designing African-inspired children's clothes, Kidz Korner, which is inspired not only from my love for kids, but for wanting to express that love through understanding their tastes and preferences in fashion, as trends evolve." I was attracted profoundly by her designs and asked her whether she would agree to do an in-depth interview. She gladly accepted.

### Midway Interview

Keywords: African pattern and textile designs, traditional cultures and techniques, true nature of childhood.

I made an interview checklist questionnaire to do the midway interview with N M when I visited her studio. The questions and responses are as follows:

1. What is the background of Kidz Korner's designs?

*The background to the designs is distinguishable through African patterns and fabrics, fusing them with Western and European shapes that are either classic or part of the current fashion trend. The fabrics emanate from the entire African continent, ranging from Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa.*

2. What is the rationale of your children's product design? Why did you choose to do children's fashion design specifically?

*My inspiration for designing the clothes that I design is also inspired by travelling and seeing the type of children's clothes that are available in the Western markets as well as South African ones. The quality and designs are exceptional, without a doubt, but I noticed that something is missing. That was the beautiful textures, designs and patterns found in African fabrics. I wanted to see it incorporated in the everyday outfits of children. Not just at African functions such as traditional weddings or celebrations. There is so much that can be explored and done with the beautiful fabrics, which all have a special meaning or story to tell. What particularly bothered me was the fact that when the African arises in the fashion world, the first thing that often comes to*

peoples mind is Tiger design or animal prints. That, to me, is not the only way in which Africa's uniqueness can be known or understood to be.

3. What is the process of your fashion design?

*The process of my design basically starts from me getting inspiration to do certain cuts and play with different bold colours that children will feel good in. After choosing the fabrics, I blend them with various textiles from linen to cotton to wool.*

4. What do you think about the traditional African culture influence design now?

*I think that it is still a concept the world is beginning to understand and see more and more often especially from big brands that design couture. Yet, there remains a lack of information as to what the meanings of the prints are. Fabrics and prints from different African countries tell unique stories, although sometimes similar. I would like to continue making functional, fun and fashionable clothes that will tell a story about Africa other than the animal prints that the world has become accustomed to.*

5. If product designers use the traditional designs or techniques, like you used the African traditional textiles in fashion design, do you think it is marketable? Why?

*Yes it is marketable especially, for kids, it is comfortable and mixed with material such as denim, stretch material such as leggings or cool items such as hoodies which children around the world can relate to and enjoy wearing.*

6. What is the most important element for the children's product market?

*The most important is to allow kids to be kids. Their garments must express individuality yet at the same time express the true nature of childhood.*

7. What is the plan of your fashion design in the future? Will you extend the range of your products?

*Yes. I will expand my products to accommodate trends and styles currently worn by kids all over the world. That is why I am attending Playtime New York Kids Tradeshow*



*in August so I can show those in the children's clothing industry from Europe and USA how modern clothes can be blended with a touch of African fabrics.*

### Concluding - Email Communication

N M emailed me pictures of her fashion design examples (seen in Figure 5.22) that she just finished during June (2014) and exhibited in the 2014 Playtime New York Kids Tradeshow in August.



**Figure 5.22**

**Kidz Korner fashion designs**

**(Photograph, N M, 2014)**

### 5.2.5 Fine art printmaker: A I V

Interviewee	Occupation	Initial Interview	Concluding Email Communication
A I V	Fine artist	Visit, 21 Jun 2014	Email, 12 Jul 2014

*"I just embroidered because I loved creating with thread and needle" (A I V, 2014).*

She graduated with distinction from the University of Cape Town with a Master of Fine Art degree. Since then and still presently ongoing, she has been practicing as a fine art printmaker, running a private printmaking studio that includes tuition and edition,

and lectures part time at Michaelis at the University of Cape Town.

A I V has had interesting experiences in embroidering. She was taught about four embroidery stitches at primary school and she has always used these four stitches and combinations of them, for all of her life. She said, "I started embroidering on my clothes to make them more interesting and loved working with the silky colours so much that I made lots of densely embroidered cushions for my house. I just embroidered because I loved creating with thread and needle. My friends and family kept saying that I should not hide them in my house but should try to sell them. Through the years I have regularly had exhibitions at galleries and at one such an event I decided to produce and include a small series of framed embroidery works with prints and other mixed media works."

### Initial Interview

I came to A I V's printmaking studio and took the photographic record of her embroidered designs that are shown in Figure 5.23. "What is your rationale for doing embroidery designs?" I asked. Her reply was *"Four reasons: At first, as a fine artist, it is very hard to make a living just by producing work for galleries. Most of us do many other jobs to pay the bills and to be able to financially afford and support our love in making art. So often we also try to create products that are easier to make, faster to produce, will have a demand and will ultimately show financial profit. Then I quickly realised that the amount of time I spent on each embroidery was way too long to be able to produce many. Making embroidered cushion covers for a more commercial market would not be financially viable. Finally, presenting the embroideries as unique works of fine art in a gallery space seemed the best option. I found the idea very exciting because up till that stage I just embroidered very freely: either making it up as I went along (one area growing from another) or a light pencil drawing which I interpreted very loosely. I found it very inspiring and expansive to interpret first my themes and subject matter into miniature colour sketches and collages and then to consider ways to express, include or combine embroidery in these images."* During the interview, I also explained the objective of my research and showed her my

designs. She agreed to teach me how to embroider with some of her stitches in my own work. Then A I V gave me several copies of teaching embroidery stitches, and I started to embroider the design with different new stitches.



Figure 5.23

A I V's embroidery designs

(Photograph, Li, 2014)

### Concluding - Email Communication

Keywords: embroidered designs and processes, recreation.

In the concluding interview, A I V answered my interview questions and emailed me.

The interview questions and answers are as follows:

1. What is your process of making embroidery designs?

*I did a lot of sourcing of particular threads and colours. Looked at a lot of examples of embroideries, from what grannies do right through to large gallery works. I experimented with embroidering through a high quality colour photocopy on thick cartridge paper. You have to sew very carefully as the needle breaks and tear the paper but the effect, if carefully controlled, can turn out well. I eventually chose to*

*work on seed cloth (a pure, bleached or unbleached, strong, fairly thin cotton) I found the weave of the cloth fine enough to draw on with a pencil or fine liner. It also showed up photocopied fine detail clearly. Once the images were transferred onto the cloth, I chose to selectively embroider some areas. Although there was an image to guide me, I still embroidered very freely, inventing as I went along. I work in a similar way in my other fine art works: One step leads to the next; one shape or form informs the next. The resultant embroideries developed very organically. I worked on more than one embroidery at a time so the development of around 15 works took place more or less at the same time.”*

2. What kind of materials and embroidery skills did you use in the designs?

*I preferred working in this bright, satin like thread which is commercially available. I also discovered a supplier of subtly shaded, hand dyed thread that allowed for unplanned, spontaneous, colour bursts and combination. Unfortunately, they stopped making the thread. I preferred working without an embroidery hoop. Though the cloth did tend to pull the more embroidery stitches it carries, I found if I was very careful with the tension of stitches, the slight distortion didn't matter. Because of the small sizes (no larger than A3) distortion was also minor. As I mentioned, I only ever used 4 stitches, such as satin stitch, blanket stitch, chain stitch and the one where you twirl the thread around the needle a number of times before sewing (this stitch is showed in Figure 5.24). How I achieved the appearance of so many different stitches is by varying the thickness of the thread I used: I used only 2 strands, everything in between, right up to as thick as the thread naturally is. Varying stitch lengths and the density (how closely I sew them together) further allowed for different effects and textures. Choosing where and how much to fill with thread and how much to let the underlying drawing show through adds potential for accentuating colour areas or stitch textures.*



**Figure 5.24**

**A I V's embroidery design stitch**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

3. If the product designers use the traditional embroidery designs or techniques, like your creative embroidery designs, do you think it is marketable? Why?

*Using these traditional hand techniques is very slow and in these social times that is financially not good; unless what you can charge for an individual piece merits the time and attention spent making it. At the exhibition, I had a lot of verbal admiration, a few sales but mostly I perceived a reluctance to buy the embroideries - the feeling; too small and too expensive. I priced them at the same level I normally priced a work of that size in other media. My interest is not in the mass market but in the once off, unique work of art. Therefore scanning and computerising embroidery for speed and volume is not an option for me. I like the imperfections of hand sewing. I am still hugely enthusiastic to carry on doing the embroideries, just need the right formula or plan.*

### 5.2.6 CCDI design focus group

Interviewee	Mission	Initial Interview	Concluding Interview and Email Communication
CCDI	A craft and design sector development agency	Visit, 14 Aug 2014	Visit and email, 20 Sep 2014

*“It is about people. We work with craft producers, designers and a wide range of other creative entrepreneurs. Whether you need a short course on how to cost your product or service, time in our Product Support space developing your latest idea, or support to access markets, we have a range of services to help you grow”*  
(CCDI, 2014).

The CCDI was established in Western Cape in 2001. It takes vision and passion to build an organisation within the arts, crafts, design and culture sector. As a not-for-profit company, the CCDI is a joint initiative of the Western Cape Government and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Its aim is to support and develop capable artists and designers as well as to build reliable creative businesses within local and international markets (CCDI, 2014).

#### Interview with CCDI Executive Director: E E

Keywords: traditional culture and context, craft design, markets work.

After 10 years as CCDI executive director, E E was convinced the CCDI was not about craft and design or selling and markets, but, about people. E E explained their support services to me. “We work with craft producers, designers and a wide range of other creative entrepreneurs. Whether you need a short course on how to cost your product or service, time in our Product Support space developing your latest idea, or support to access markets, we have a range of services to help you grow.”

“How is traditional culture incorporated in today's craft design? If it is, does it work well?” I asked E E. *“Before answering this question, I want to tell you some context of Western Cape. According to Mel Hagen’s essay Intersection: design and craft (2011:118-120), the Western Cape is characterised by an extraordinary diversity of cultures, races, and religions. The earliest indigenous inhabitants of the region were the San stone-tool-using hunter-gatherers, inheritors of the legacy of those who occupied Blombos Cave over 75,000 years ago.”*

*“The second group of indigenous inhabitant was the Khoikhoi pastoralists, who were well established in the Western part of the country by the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD and moved throughout the region in response to seasonal variations in grazing and water resources. Following years of competition over resources with the European settlers, Khoikhoi resistance was decisively crushed in 1739, their independence was destroyed and they were absorbed into the Trekboer economy. Evidence of Khoikhoi culture, like that of the San hunter-gatherers, vanished into museum storerooms. European settlers arrived in the Western Cape from 1652 onwards, principally Dutch, German and French.”*

*“In the period through to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, slaves were brought in from sources as diverse as Madagascar, East India, Ceylon and many of the outer islands of Batavia. The Islamic community arose in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the banishment to the Cape of key religious figures of resistance to the Dutch presence in Batavia. Through miscegenation, a further category of people of mixed descent was added to this mix.”*

*“Labour migration of Xhosa-speaking black people to Cape Town started in the mid-19 century and continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, accelerating after the abolition of the pass laws in 1986. Between 1992 and 2001, an average influx of 50,000 people a year was experienced, including migrants from Zimbabwe, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other African countries. The population mix was further*

*enriched from 1886 through to the 1930 by a wave of Jewish immigrants, fleeing Russian pogroms in Lithuania and persecution in Germany, and later, by a sizeable Indian community. The particular demographic mix with its preponderance of people of mixed descent creates particular conditions for craft development that are unique in South Africa. ” Then she said: “One important division can be identified in the craft sector is that of indigenous, traditional craft using techniques passed down through generations to make objects for daily or ceremonial use. Now let us answer your question. When the CCDI was established it recognized that without a strong, indigenous craft tradition, craft in the province would necessarily need to rely on design principles to differentiate it from work produced elsewhere. In concentrating on developing market access, craft producers needed to have a clear understanding of the markets they were serving, and to be able to infuse their products with contemporary idioms, while still reflecting the work’s origins in a craft tradition. For instance, the development of designed products, using traditional craft technique, that is then handmade by craft producers as employees of the enterprise, such as Streetwires, Mielie, Heath Nash, Kunye and Monkeybiz.”*

*“This approach allows for a strong injection of the vernacular, similar to that adopted by the Campana brothers (Hagen, 2011: 120). Today the development of design in South Africa is beginning to mirror development in the Western world. However, in contrast to Western societies where craft has become an individual activity embedded in humanist values, in African societies craft is still largely a repository of indigenous cultural knowledge. Craft and design can engage in a dialogue where craft revitalisation, through indigenous cultural knowledge, can have an impact on design and industrialisation.”*

In the CCDI's 10 years, its stand at the Design Indaba Expo in Cape Town depicting the region's craft offering as the product of a rich cultural and natural laboratory. Craft products under the CCDI handmade banner were set among spiky leaves, sprouting bulbs, horns bones, and fur as if sprung from a hothouse of ideas (CCDI, 2011:88).



### Interview with CCDI's designers

Keywords: CCDI, personal culture background, traditions, recreations.

Potina Ceramics: V P

“To work with our hands is part of our culture,” said V P, a Franschhoek-based ceramicist had his roots traced from the rural Eastern Cape, where he was raised in Elliotdale near Mthatha. His works represent traditional African pottery shapes and techniques which are usually reinterpreted for a local and international clientele. “To me, the CCDI is like a university and they do a lot for you and also expect you to do a lot for yourself. It is on top.” He said, “When you make something with your hands, you add your identity to it.” V P’s generously curved piece, “Rounded pot” melds traditional African shape and proportion with modern influence, as shown in Figure 5.25.



**Figure 5.25**

**V P’s work: Rounded pot**

**(Photograph, CCDI, 2011)**

Imiso Ceramics: A D and Z P

A D, the founder of Imiso Ceramics. His initial inspirations were from the forms of wooden milk pails, meat platters, grass mats and baskets, where he also explores the colours of the sea, mountains and flowers. “I realised I could express myself in any way,” he said. “I could take a shapeless lump of clay and create something that people

loved. It was a gift.” Then A D started to incorporate modern styles and fresh interpretation of historical Xhosa references such as body scarification, reflected in the way he incised clay and made use of red, the colour of the animal blood spilled during traditional ceremonies (Figure 5.26). “While you can be driven, you also needed someone to give you hope. It is like you are climbing up a steep valley and you can see a tree with one root sticking out. Even if you do not need to grasp it, knowing there is something there makes you feel that you can climb. That is how I see the CCDI,” said A D.



**Figure 5.26**

**A D’s work: Once off piece**

**(Photograph, Imiso Ceramics, 2014)**

Z P is the other artist who worked in Imiso Ceramics. Her work is inspired by her background in textile design. “I have always enjoyed making things with my own hands. I specifically chose to use the hand pinching technique to give my work that elegant and organic feel. I love colour, flowers and creating patterns, hence my love for fashion. This is very evident in my work.” “What kind of traditional cultural material or techniques do you use in your designs?” I asked her. *“I use clay which is one of the world’s oldest raw materials found in abundance everywhere in the African continent and was also used for pottery many years ago.”*

*"I use the traditional method of hand building and also found objects to decorate my work. The application of colour is done by hand too."* Then I continued to ask, "Do you think there is a market for traditional methods and techniques combined with fine design to innovate new products? Why?" *"Yes. This is a demand for these kinds of products. There are a lot of modern designers who draw inspiration from their culture by combining traditional aesthetics with modern designs. In my case the technique of hand making pottery is traditional; I then use modern glazes and application techniques to achieve a contemporary look. Like my colleague A D, who also draws inspiration from traditional Xhosa culture products like meat platters, a milk pail, and vessels for traditional beer. Some of his work even has surface treatment inspired by tribal body scarification. Both of us have our work in high demand locally and especially overseas. Because the preservation of our culture for many generations to come and educating other countries about our culture is the most important aspect that inspires us to work with traditional methods"* replied she.

#### Mielie Designs: A S

The founder of Mielie's popular handbags and home ware measures A S's success as a designer by the number of people whose lives she can change for the better. "I saw the traditional African hooked rug technique – pulling strips of bright T-shirting through a loose-weave hessian base – and was smitten. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen." A S said, "So we tried to produce our first range of brightly coloured handbags, made of cotton fabric strips hand-knotted onto recycled mielie bags, was soon a fashion must-have (see Figure 5.27). Inspiration for these funky designs comes from nature, local culture and popular household brands such as tinned fish and safety matches, often given a humorous, modern-day twist."

"Everything is about people and personality. I have 40 Mielie craft producers travelling through once a week to drop off completed products, check the quality and receive new orders. I love the way each product has the weaving fingerprint of each craft producer so that one can immediately recognise a bag by the colours and how closely

or loosely it has been woven.” She also gets inspiration from working with her craft producers in other fields such as knitting and embroidery and said: “I never want to stop learning new things. When I spot something new I want to know how it is made, as I could teach someone to do it to create another job.”



**Figure 5.27**

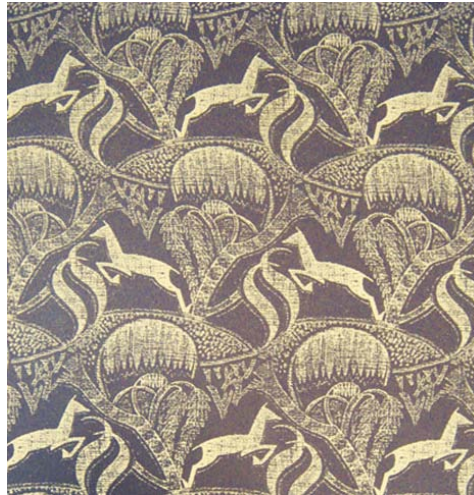
**Mielie bag design**

**(Photograph, CCDI, 2011)**

Fabrication: J S

J S is the owner of the Fabrication, a new design house which was started in Cape Town in 2007. Producing fresh, diverse textile and wallpaper collections based on an African textile tradition, yet rendered in a modern urban context, J S has taken part in monthly craft sector meetings and has facilitated numerous of such in the CCDI inspirational workshops. These have ranged from a workshop inspired by the “Picasso and Africa” exhibition to an Art Deco workshop she participated in which then resulted in her Bokkie design, which is a reinterpretation of the springbok (Figure 5.28), inspired by Art Deco and South African Railways (CCDI, 2011:40). “I am constantly looking. I have got my eyes wide open to what might inspire me” said J S. Her other design “Positive Power” (Figure 5.29) is a floral pattern inspired by the “folk/hippie” textiles of the late 1960s and early 1970s, but its flowers have been created by mutating and collaging elements from medical diagrams of the HIV virus. J

S explained, “Social and political issues are a key driver in the creation of beautiful textiles carrying a message of hope and inspiration.”



**Figure 5.28**

**The “Bokkie” textile design**

**(Photograph, Fabricnation, 2014)**



**Figure 5.29**

**The “Positive Power” cushion design**

**(Photograph, Fabricnation, 2014)**

Magpie Collective

The Magpie Collective is committed to making a difference in the community and using traditional craft methods to weave magic with cast-off materials (CCDI, 2011:112). “If you make something with your hands, you will always have a market,” said artist S D, a member of the Magpie Collective that operates from a colourful,

flamboyantly lit outlet in the Klein Karoo town of Barrydale. The collective combines the complementary skill of social entrepreneur S P, clothing designer S H, artist S D and administrator R P. They produce a variety of products from recycled – or as they prefer to say, “Second generation” – materials. These could include a hand-decorated light-bulb cover, a delicate fragment of jewellery, or a model of a magpie bird, incorporating materials such as pieces of glass, twigs, yoghurt containers, dog-food cans and gingerbread. “We like to use the simple materials and techniques to produce work that surprises people. Our inspirations come from what is around us.” Figure 5.30 shows a Magpie Collective’s hand-decorated chandelier that is made of plastic bottles.



**Figure 5.30**

**The Magpie Collective’s hand-decorated light design**

**(Photograph, Magpie Collective, 2014)**

### **5.3 Establishing the marketability of the children’s products**

Preliminary market research was conducted at Sheraton’s Textile Company in 2011 when I was an intern. During this experiential training with Sheraton Textiles, I had come to understand the textile manufacturing industry in South Africa, from the

conceptualising stage through to the end product supplied to retailers, especially in children's textile items. At Sheraton, I gained very valuable experience which gave me many useful insights into how I should develop my own design products. I also realised there are two essential points for a textile designer. Firstly, a good designer does not only have a good design, but also a good costing point, because, a business must survive in the competitive market and costing influences this factor directly. Low costing can add more benefit to how the business operates. As a result, I have to understand the effect and importance of costing. Secondly, culture is also a very important influence for marketing (Angus, 2003:8). There are always different colours and symbols that people of different countries prefer. Therefore, getting to know the local culture and what the consumer prefers is another very important aspect of any successful designer.

Market research was also conducted through survey questionnaires, which were administered to 60 parent participants with children in the 2-7 year old age range (Appendix D). This was to ascertain the marketability of the range and price of children's products. The 60 parent participants included 30 South African participants and 30 Chinese participants. The South African parent participants completed the survey questionnaires at the 2014 Constantia Waldorf Fair in Cape Town and the Chinese parent participants were found during the product development (September-December 2013) in Shanghai, Wuxi, Xi'an and Guangzhou.

### **5.3.1 The analysis of survey questionnaires**

Through the 60 market research survey questionnaires it was established that the product range appealed to both fathers and mothers. It was determined that the product range appealed more to mothers (80%) than fathers (20%), as illustrated in Figure 5.31. The questionnaires also established that the majority of the parent participants' children aged 3 (21.7%) and 6 (23.3%), while 15% of the participants' children were aged 4, and 16.7% of the participants' children were aged 5. The remaining 10% and 13.3%, the participants' children separately were aged 2 and 7, as

illustrated in Figure 5.32. Therefore, the main spending on children's items occurred in the 3 year and 6 year categories, and thereafter from the 4 to 5 year category and least spending occurred in the 2 year and 7 year categories.

### Father and mother participants

Fathers:12 people Mothers:48 people

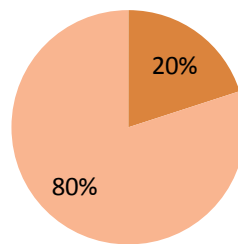


Figure 5.31

Father and mother participants pie chart

(Li, 2014)

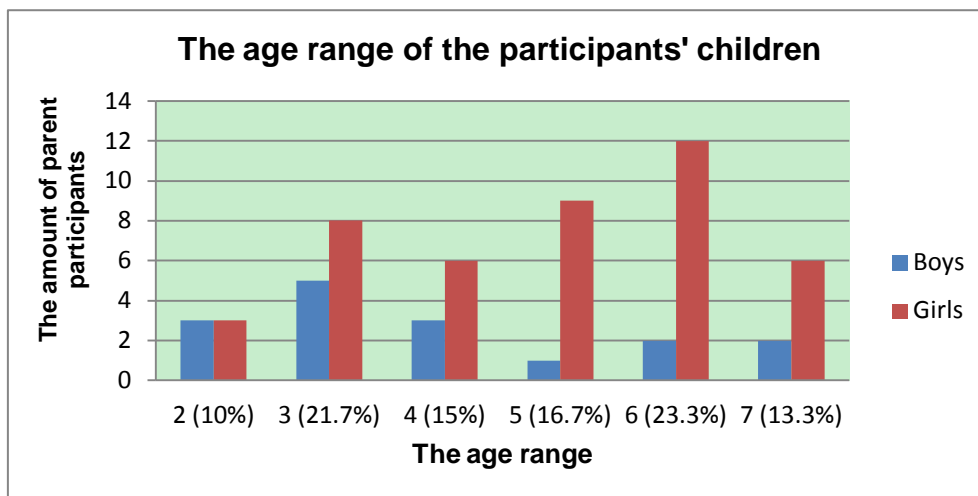


Figure 5.32

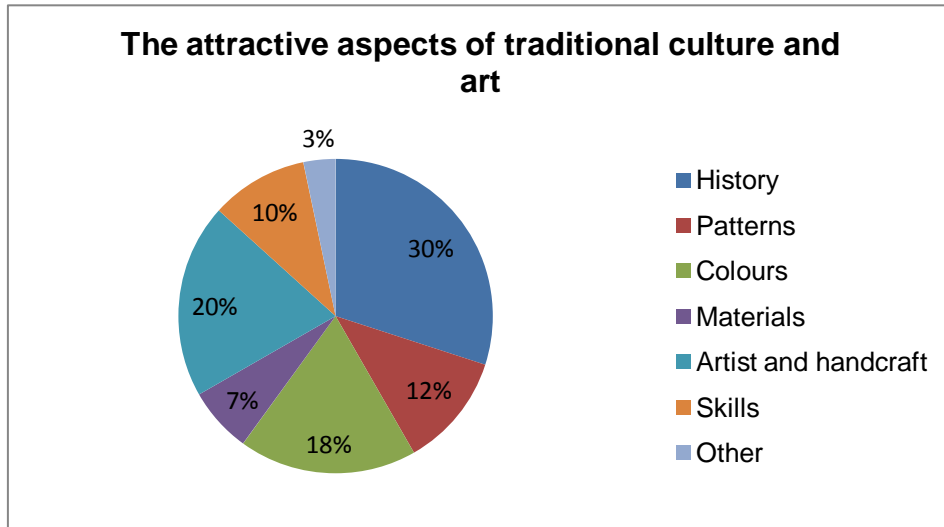
The age range of the participants' children graph

(Li, 2014)

The survey questionnaires furthermore revealed that 75% of the participants' children liked the traditional culture and art, but only 26.7% of the participants' children knew about their country's traditional culture and art. There were various aspects that



attracted the participants' children to want to know more about the traditional culture and art, as illustrated in Figure 5.33.



**Figure 5.33**

**The attractive aspects of traditional culture and art chart**

**(Li, 2014)**

According to the survey questionnaires, 50% of the parent participants bought children's products between two to four times monthly, while 30% of the parent participants bought children's products less than two times monthly, and the remaining 20% of the parent participants bought children's products more than four times monthly. In these parent participants, the majority of the monthly overheads of children's products was between R200 to R500 (45%), and less than R200 (25%), between R500 to R800 (20%) and more than R800 (10%). The range of children's products the parent participants usually spent on involved toys (33%), stationery (12%), clothes (36%), interior items (15%) and others (4%), as illustrated in Figure 5.34.

### The range of purchasing children's products

■ Toys ■ Stationery ■ Clothes ■ Interior items ■ Other

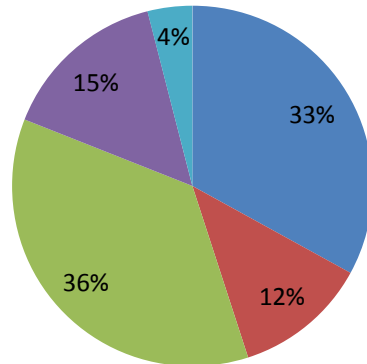


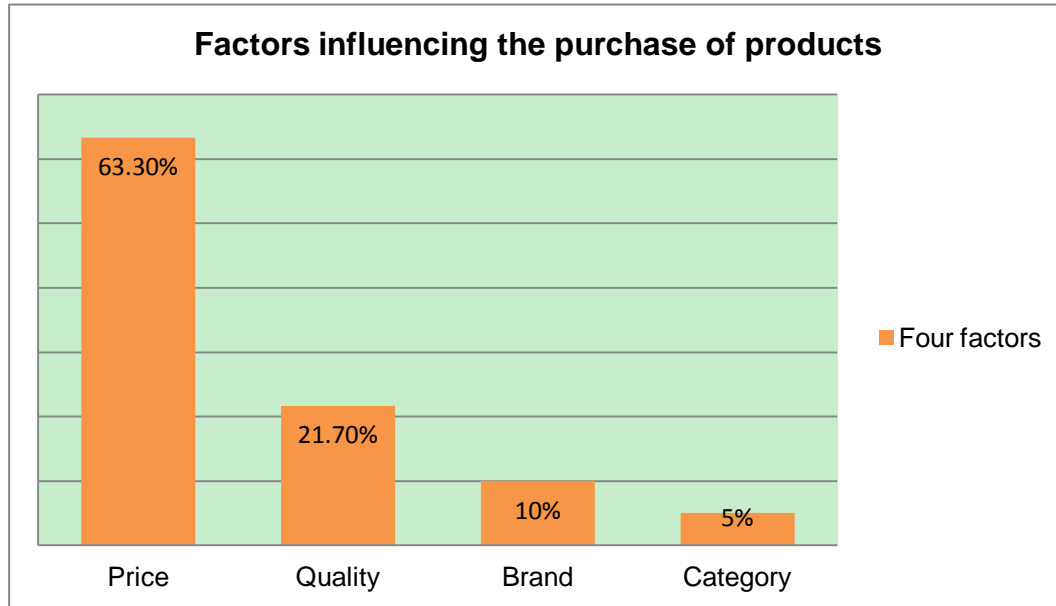
Figure 5.34

The range of purchasing children's products pie chart

(Li, 2014)

Comparing the Chinese parent participants with the South African parent participants, the survey questionnaires represented that the Chinese parent participants generally choose to buy the educational products for their children, such as books and stationery. Chinese attach much importance on the elementary education, especially on the infant education (3-6 year old age range). Therefore, they can accept the major price range of a children's book, between R50 to R500, which is higher than the South African. On the contrary, the South African parent participants commonly are focused on buying living goods for their children, such as clothes or interior items, and the major price range of a children's interior product is from R100 to R600 that they can accept. The Chinese parent participants can accept the major price range of a children's interior product is only between R50 to R400. In these 60 parent participants (30 Chinese parent participants and 30 South African parent participants), 38 parent participants (63.3%) are focused on the price when they choose children's products, while 13 parent participants (21.7%) are focused on the quality and 6 parent participants (10%) are focused on the product's brand. The remaining 3 parent participants (5%) are focused on the product's category, as illustrated in Figure 5.35.

Consequently, price is the most important factor of marketing the products successfully.



**Figure 5.35**

**The factors influencing the purchase of products graph**

**(Li, 2014)**

#### **5.4 Summary**

This chapter mainly focused on five semi-structured individual interviews with Chinese Su embroidery stylist H Z, Lu embroidery practitioner R Y, African “Adinkra” textile designer R D D, Children’s fashion designer N M and fine art printmaker A I V to describe some of their innovative and exciting design and artworks alongside their meanings. They also shared their views on their perception of traditional art and culture. I conducted one focus group interview with CCDI to explore the context of the Western Cape with regard to the traditional craft designs and techniques prevalent in the Western Cape. Otherwise, the research findings obtained in this chapter analysed 60 parent participants’ questionnaires to establish the product range. The next chapter describes the development and fabrication of the range of children’s product in detail.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS A REFLECTED IN THE PRODUCT RANGE

#### 6.0 Introduction

The findings of the development of the children's book and interior products are presented in this chapter, as follows:

Children's cloth-pasted book

Children's duvet set (included the pillowcase, single duvet cover and bedding flat-sheet)

Children's curtain

Folk-patterned cushions

Children's height gauge

Children's wall decoration

Children's kitbag

Products' packaging bags

#### 6.1 Children's cloth-pasted book

I used life-writing to produce a children's story based on my experiences when I arrived in a foreign land (South Africa) with the aim of making people aware of cultural similarities and differences between Africa and China. The story is suitable for toddlers: at age 2 – 7 the child's mind is extremely impressionable and quickly records new experiences and ideas. This was the best time to teach language with the mind at its most absorbent (Daddyread, 2012). The book used two main languages: English and Chinese (Mandarin). These languages are internationally dominant and my objective was to cater for a global market, i.e. the Chinese and South African. The size of book is 30 x 45 cm, designed to stimulate the imagination of the child and encourage him or her to read.



### 6.1.1 Background of book story

#### *Chinese animal zodiac*

The twelve Chinese zodiac animal signs (Figure 6.1) were inspired from common or legendary animals closely related to people's daily life. Rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig are eleven terrestrial animals that together with dragon, a traditional mascot, represent a dating method which represent a cyclical concept of time, rather than the Western linear concept of time (Xu, 2012:15).



**Figure 6.1**

**The twelve Chinese zodiac animals**

**(Photograph, Baidu, 2014)**

The selection of twelve Chinese zodiac signs can be categorised into three types. The first type covers six domestic animals, which include ox, horse, sheep, rooster, dog and pig. The second type is wild animals that people know well and are close to people's daily life and social activities, and they are rat, tiger, rabbit, snake and monkey. The third type is a traditional mascot in the Chinese culture, the dragon (Xu, 2012:16-17).

When I decided to design the children's cloth- pasted book, I felt that animals make suitable characters in children's stories, because they are easy to identify with, especially as caricatures. I also wanted to introduce my Chinese culture and origin, so I considered the twelve Chinese zodiac signs to be the great and interesting culture background for the book story. I drew many cartoons of the twelve zodiac animals in my journal, and then I decided to choose one little dragon as a main protagonist in the story. Dragon serves as the symbol of the Chinese people. This was created with many features of other animals. As a spirit animal only existing in people's imagination, the dragon represents wealth and good fortune. It is a purely symbolic mascot and is therefore of unique and significant importance among the twelve Chinese zodiac sign (Xu, 2012:17-18). The reason why I chose the dragon was not only because it represents my zodiac animal in traditional Chinese culture, but I started to do this design project in 2012 which was also the year of dragon. Finally, I originated Long Long ("*Long*" means dragon in Chinese), the name of the dragon, seen in Figure 6.2. More so, I designed other eleven Chinese zodiac animal cartoons that are Long Long's brothers and sisters, seen in Figure 6.3.



**Figure 6.2**

**Character of Long Long**

**(Li, 2012:44)**



**Figure 6.3**

**Twelve zodiac animal characters**

**(Li, 2012:45)**

*“Big Five”*

The “Big Five”- leopard, buffalo, elephant, lion and rhino are Africa’s flagship species (shown in Figure 6.4). They capture the spirit of the African bush incarnating the legends of those early explorers and hunters who raised the status of these creatures above all others. The “Big Five” are the dominant animals of the grassland plains and deciduous woodlands that stretch across much of the subcontinent, wherever they occur as masters of their domain (Gerald, 2008:11).



**Figure 6.4**

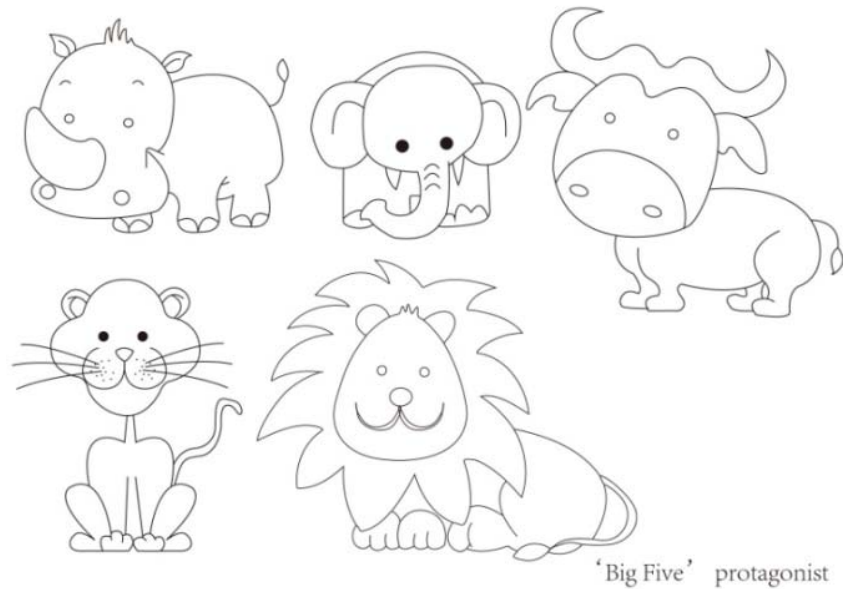
**Big Five of Africa**

**(Photograph, Gerald, 2008)**

The term “Big Five” is probably rooted in the early 1800s as a result of the increasing popularity of sport hunting. These were considered to be the most dangerous animals to deal with when confronted on foot. They are the ones most capable of killing a human, so it was natural that would become highly desirable prizes for sport hunters venturing into the largely unknown Africa (Gerald, 2008:12).

Nowadays, the “Big Five” have become synonymous to Africa. The “hunters” with their cameras, enjoy the photographic safari which has become a significant attraction for many foreign tourists to visit African nations. Again this also explains the reason why I chose the “Big Five” as the African characters and created wildlife designs in my children’s story book. I designed the “Big Five” as a cartoon lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino, seen in Figure 6.5 and these appealing characters are playful and lovely, making them attractive to parents as well as children.





**Figure 6.5**

**“Big Five” characters’ sketch**

**(Li, 2012:48)**

### **6.1.2 Design of children’s book**

#### *Graphic design*

The starting point for the graphic design of the book came from my life experiences in South Africa that I wanted to express visually. During the process, I recorded every exciting and stimulating personal thought and design idea in the journal, and it led me to explore contemporary design trends, historical periods and different traditional cultures from Africa and China. It also allowed my ideas and concepts to develop fully. I found the graphic inspiration in these various craft techniques and traditional colours. Further to that, I asked myself how I could express the traditional craft techniques through surface design. I then tried to use different methods to work on and wanted the designs to become a very sophisticated mix of graphic imagery, drawing, photography, pattern, texture and motif. Figure 6.6 is an example of Chinese embroidery pattern design I made. It recreates the feel of an embroidery texture by means of graphic design. The book also incorporated many traditional African and Chinese patterns and motifs to decorate the background of each page (seen in Table 6.1). Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator offered a perfect platform for me to work with

these designs. Photoshop is programmed in such a way that an image is made up of a mosaic of individual coloured pixels; it gives me the freedom to edit and manipulate drawings and photographs. Illustrator creates a graphic image from a series of points, lines, curves and shapes. High-quality artwork and graphics can be created with the wide range of drawing tools on offer (Melanie & Ceri, 2009:40). The fonts were worked with Illustrator, and the final outcome is very pleasing and appealing to children as the representations of the characters and text have stamped the storybook with a delightfully quirky and enchanting style. The English font design has also been embellished with geometric patterns and motifs as a reminder of the themes of traditional culture, shown in Figure 6.7.



**Figure 6.6**  
**Chinese embroidery pattern design**  
 (Li, 2013)

**Table 6.1: Main African and Chinese pattern designs**

Main African and Chinese Pattern Designs		
	Motifs and Symbols	Flower and Plant Patterns
African Pattern Designs		
Chinese Pattern Designs		

(Li, 2013)

Hello!  
你好!

Figure 6.7

The font style of the book

(Li, 2012:48)

*The story*

Long Long and “Big Five” are friends, and his eleven brothers and sisters came from China to South Africa to meet “Big Five” on a safari. Long Long introduces his twinborn brother Snake to Rhino, “Nice to meet you, let’s play together!” said Rhino amusedly. Rat introduces his brother Ox to Buffalo, and he said, “Look, their heads all have two horns!” Rabbit is playing with Tiger and Leopard. She said with a smile, “Look, they look alike!” Elephant let Horse and Sheep sit on his back, as he shows the beautiful view to them. Dog and Pig make friends with Lion. They become the best of friends. Figure 6.8 illustrates the story.



(Page 1-2)



(Page 3-4)



(Page 5-6)



(Page 7-8)



(Page 9-10)



(Page 11-12)

**Figure 6.8**

**Graphic design in the book**

**(Li, 2013)**

The pages were printed using a digital printing technique and finished in Shanghai. Digital printing produced the book graphics in vivid colours with strong sense of hierarchy. This also reduced the chromatic variation. The material of the book page is white polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a sustainable material; currently being used in contemporary production processes (Rob, 2013:174). UV-coated technique was used on the surface of pages, which it did not only provide a gorgeous graphic vision for

children, but being waterproof also gave the book a perfect protection (shown in Figure 6.9) (Vezzoli, 2007:136). The book was bound using the “butterfly-mounted” technique. Figure 6.10 shows the details of it. This binding technique hid the spine crack and leveled off both sides of the book neatly.



**Figure 6.9**

**UV-coated technique of book**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**



**Figure 6.10**

**Details of butterfly binding technique**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**

### *Textile design*

The book's cover is made from my own fabric design, using the digital textile printing approach. The digital printing of textiles grew out of reprographic technologies originally developed for signage and paper printing, and today it provides the same advantages to the textile manufacturing that digital production offers the printing

business of paper and streamer (Melanie & Ceri, 2012:12). Initially, I used hand screen printing technique to print some African Adinkra patterns on the product felts. The silk screen of this technique is made by stretching a fine, porous mesh over a frame. The design on the screen is then delineated by masking out areas of the design that will not be printed, leaving areas open for each colour, through which the ink is pushed using a rubber squeegee. The design that has been transferred onto the screen is laid out as a repeat pattern (Melanie & Ceri, 2012:169).

During the design process, traditional African and Chinese motifs and symbols inspired me to create my own patterns. I wanted to print these patterns in different colours on the fabric of products. However, screen printing requires that a separate template for each colour be made, and for the design to then be built up in stages as each colour must be laid down separately. The number of colours is limited by the practical considerations; hence I considered the technique of digital printing is the best way to print my design pattern. There is actually no limit to the kinds of designs that can be exactly reproduced using inkjet technology. The inkjet technology ensures continuous flow and drop on demand (DOD) two categories. In turn, DOD technology also has two subcategories: thermal and piezoelectric (Melanie & Ceri, 2012:172). Piezoelectric DOD inkjet technology is accurately the basic approach for the digital printing of textile and is also used in my fabric production. The printed fabric book cover is shown as in Figure 6.11.



**Figure 6.11**

**The printed fabric book cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

On this book cover, I used the traditional Chinese cloth-pasted and hand-embroidered stitching techniques to make Long Long cartoon stand out of the fabric, seen in Figure 6.12. The tiny dropped patterns and four little blocks were embroidered which flattened made the hem of fabric, shown in Figure 6.13.



**Figure 6.12**

**Long Long on the book cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



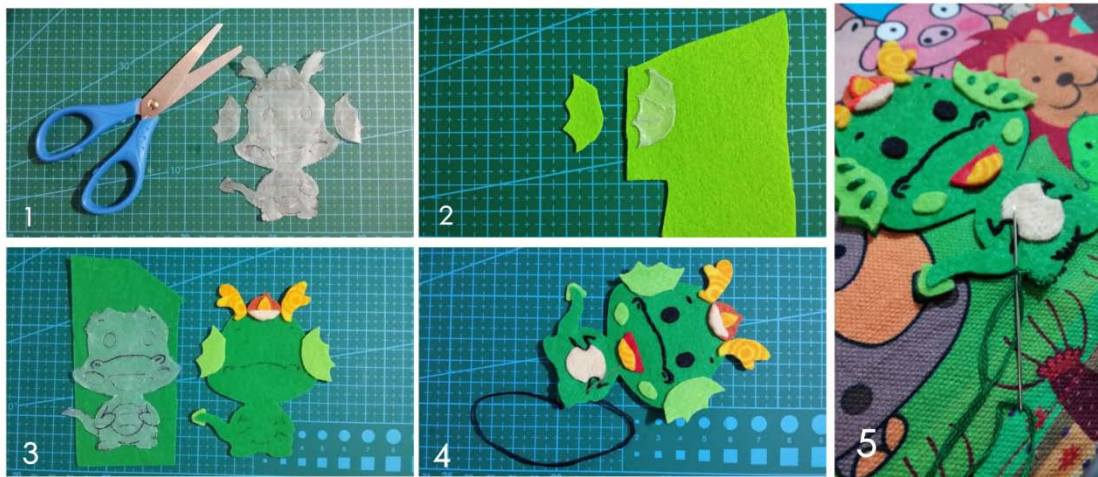


**Figure 6.13**

**Embroidered details of the book cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

The making process of the Long Long cartoon involves five steps, as seen in Figure 6.14. They are the following: 1. Draw the shape of the Long Long cartoon on the plastic paper and cut off, and then cut the horns, cap, eyes, beards, cheeks, mouth and tail separately. 2. Paste these parts on the different coloured felts and cut them out. 3. Cut the shape of Long Long cartoon with felt and paste other colourful felted parts overlapped on it. 4. Embroider the eyebrows, nose and hands. 5. Stitch this cartoon on the fabric book cover.



**Figure 6.14**

**The making process of the Long Long cartoon**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

The book mark (Figure 6.15) also used Chinese cloth-pasted and embroidered stitching techniques. It was made from the embroidered ribbon and the felted head of Long Long cartoon. The chosen felt type is included in the needle felting, which is done with special needles that have barbed ends (Teller-Loumagne, 2008:27). The felt is used widely in children's products because its texture is soft, cosy and inviting. It is also environmentally friendly. The embroidered ribbon used the satin stitches while the cartoon's head used the blanket stitches; these embroidered stitches are shown in Figure 6.16.



**Figure 6.15**

**The book mark**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.16**

**The satin and blanket stitches**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

## **6.2 Interior products**

The interior products of my range included the children's duvet set (the pillowcase, single duvet cover and bedding flat-sheet), the children's curtain, the folk-patterned cushions, the children's height gauge, the children's wall decoration, the children's kitbag and the products' packaging bags. Digital printing, Lu and Su embroideries, hand and machine stitching as well as cloth pasted techniques were used in the process of making of my range.

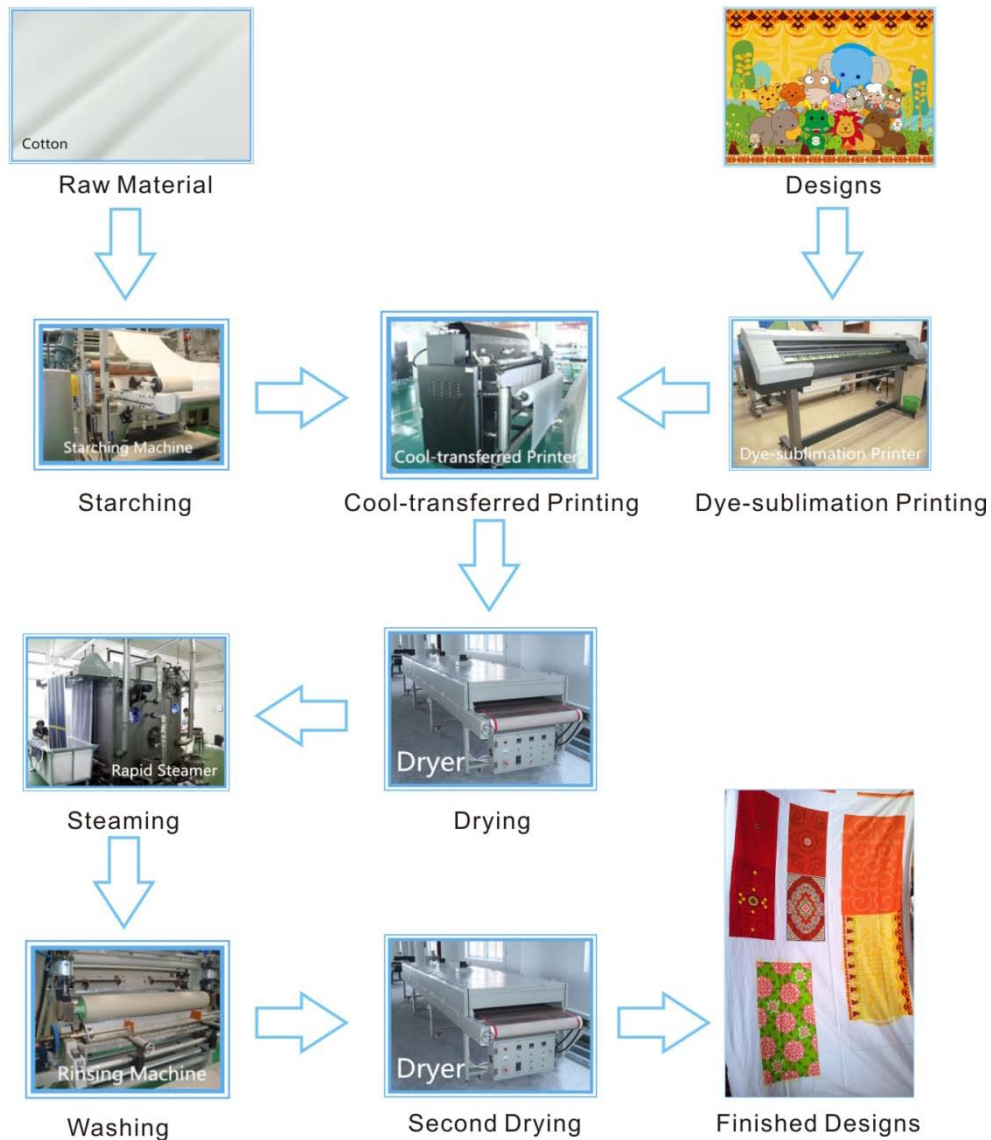
### *Raw material*

The interior products are made from 100% cotton. Cotton is a widely-obtainable fibre that is familiar to most people and is a popular and affordable choice as a fabric for printing. There are two fabric types of cotton: calico and canvas that are used as the raw material of these interior products. Because they are lightweight, opaque, soft, and fluid, these fabrics are easily adapted for use in home furnishings as well as being

suitable for children. Cotton can also be grown organically and is seeing good success in products marketed by major brands as environmentally friendly. It is easier to care for, better-wearing and more comfortable than other fibre such as polyester (Briggs-Goode, 2013: 124). For the requirements of my range, these cotton fabrics were printed through the digital inkjet process for my pattern designs requiring full coverage and saturated colours.

### *Digital printing*

Digital printing is the term often used to describe printing directly onto fabric through an inkjet printing process, whereby images that have been created by digital means or digitised from manual methods are transferred onto fabric (Briggs-Goode, 2013: 98). I had developed my designs in Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, after which I did the colour calibration before the digital printing process. This is because the colours chosen on the screen will not be reproduced exactly the same in print unless colour management software is used. Shanghai Haoshi Textile Printing Company helped me to do the digital printing on the fabric. Their process of the fabric digital printing can be divided into five steps. Firstly, the fabrics need to be starched by the machine, because secondly the design images use the dye- sublimation printer to be printed on the paper. Thirdly, they use the cool-transferred printer to transfer the designs from the paper onto the starched fabrics. Fourth, the printed fabrics are dried after printing, and then they are put through the steaming process to fasten the printed colours. Fifth, these fabrics are washed by the rinsing machine and dried again. Finally, the digital design images are printed on the fabrics. This process is shown in Figure 6.17.



**Figure 6.17**

**The digital printing process**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013-2014)**

### 6.2.1 Children’s duvet set

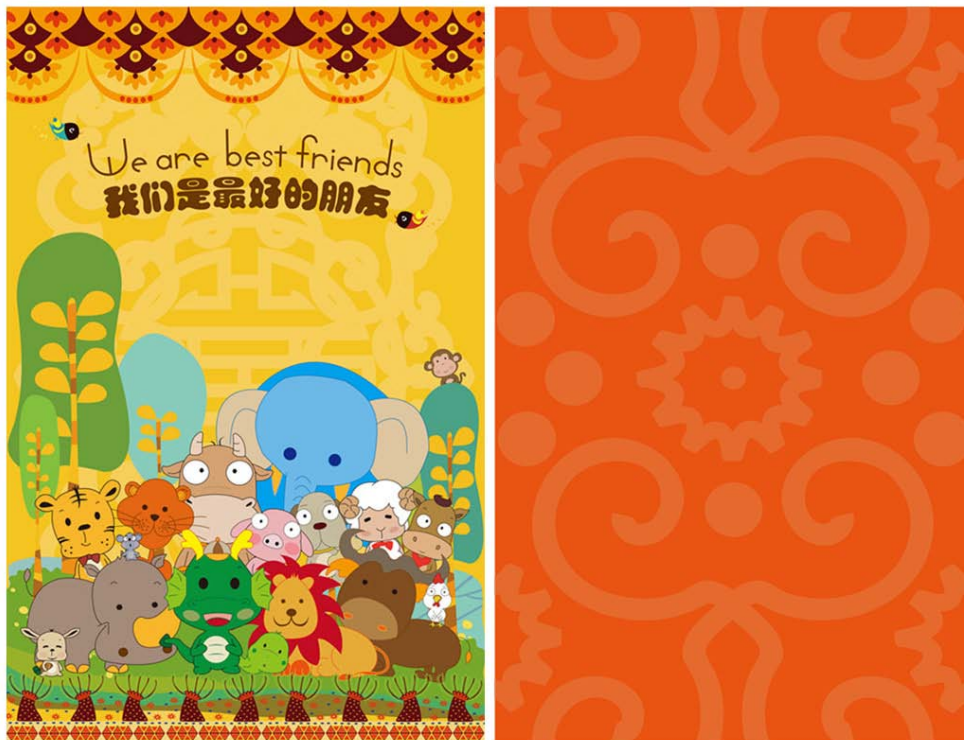
#### *Graphic design*

The design concept of the children’s duvet set revolves around the book story, which talks about Long Long with his eleven brothers and sisters making friends with the “Big Five” in South Africa. The recurring motifs incorporating the fusion of various traditional African and Chinese themes were used to decorate the pillowcase, single duvet cover and bedding flat-sheet. These designs were composed in Adobe

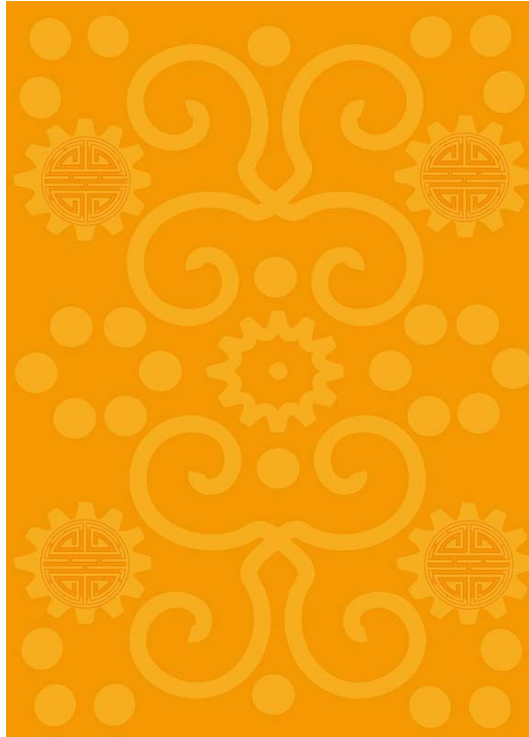
Illustrator and Photoshop as shown in Figure 6.18. The size of the pillowcase, single duvet cover and bedding flat-sheet (separately) are 42 x 68 cm, 123 x190 cm and 155 x 220 cm, respectively.



(Pillowcase: front and reverse)



(Single duvet cover: front and reverse)



(Bedding flat-sheet)

**Figure 6.18**

**The children's duvet set design**

**(Li, 2013)**

### *Textile design*

The children's duvet set consisted of cotton fabrics printed with my own design. The fabrics are lightweight, comfortable and high-quality. Accordingly, the digital-printed colours of these fabrics are bright and rich and the details are showed in Figure 6.19. The characters of the duvet cover displayed in Figure 6.20, were rendered using the traditional Lu embroidery technique using satin stitch to make them stand out. There is a zipper snugly inserted at the bottom of the cover (Figure 6.21). The pillowcase, single duvet cover and the bedding flat-sheet were made by sewing machine in Shanghai and some sewing stitches details are shown in Figure 6.22.



(The pillowcase: front)



(The detail of the single duvet cover)



(The detail of the bedding flat-sheet)

**Figure 6.19**

**The digitally-printed details of the children's duvet set**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**





**Figure 6.20**

**The Lu embroidered characters of the duvet cover**

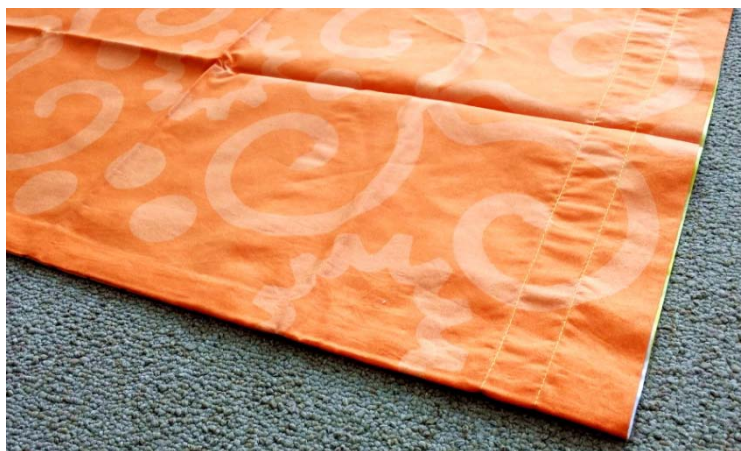
**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.21**

**The duvet cover zipper**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**(The sewing stitches detail of the pillowcase)**



(The sewing stitches detail of the bedding flat-sheet)

**Figure 6.22**

**The sewing stitches details of the children's duvet set**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

### **6.2.2 Children's curtain**

#### *Graphic design*

The story concept of the children's curtain is Hello! South Africa; it describes when Long Long came to Cape Town by train and viewed the beautiful landscape of Table Mountain (Figure 6.23). This design was accomplished using the bright and significant colours of Africa such as the light and dark orange, yellow, brown as well as green to represent the unique African natural scenery. The elements of the patterns echo the traditional African motifs that are to be found in the children's cloth pasted book. There are eight circular belts used to hang up the curtain on the top. The size of the children's curtain is 140 x 123 cm.



**Figure 6.23**

**The children's curtain design**

**(Li, 2013)**

### *Textile design*

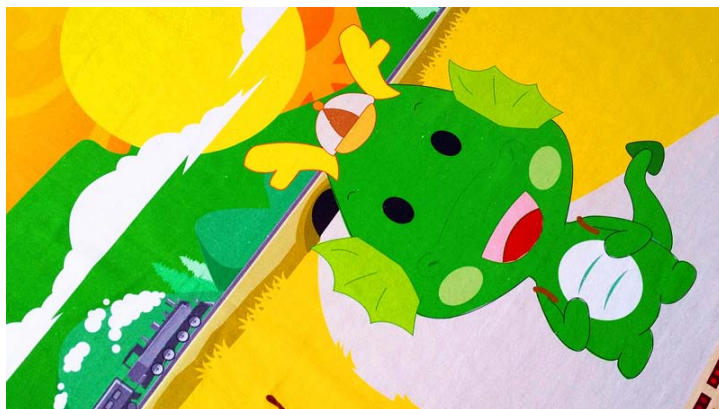
The children's curtain was also made from the digitally-printed canvas fabric, which is 100% cotton. The characteristics of this fabric are functional and woven. This fabric is highly practical in interior design because of its toughness and durability. It is also easy to maintain so it can be compatibly used as the material of soft furnishings. The details of the curtain are showed in Figure 6.24. The Hello! South Africa characters are embroidered by the traditional Lu embroiderer in Shanxi province (Figure 6.25). Figure 6.26 displayed the process of this embroidery technique. The size of each circular cotton-belt is 4 x 7 cm, and its sewing process is shown in Figure 6.27. I decided to use the eight circular belts to hang up the curtain, because I considered it is the easiest and safest approach for parents to change the curtains.



(The top African motifs of the curtain)



(The train and the Table Mountain view of the curtain)



(The Long Long cartoon of the curtain)



(The bottom African patterns of the curtain)

**Figure 6.24**

**The digitally-printed details of the children's curtain**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



(The embroidered Hello, South Africa! characters: front and reverse)

**Figure 6.25**

**The Lu embroidery of the Hello, South Africa!**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.26**

**The Lu embroidering process**

**(Photograph, R Y, 2013)**



**Figure 6.27**

**The sewing process of the circular cotton-belts**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**

### **6.2.3 Folk-patterned cushions**

#### *Square folk-patterned cushion cover*

This cushion cover design uses the Chinese auspicious patterns that I recreated. The patterns consist of pistils, stamens, petals and leaves that come from different parts of a flower and are repeated (Figure 6.28). I designed them to form like round patterns or

rosettes. Chinese people commonly define a round pattern as *Tuan Hua Wen*<sup>18</sup> pattern, on which there are not necessarily only images of flowers, but also images of animals, persons, and characters. It is widely used on bronze wares, gold and silver wares, jade wares, porcelains, embroideries, clothes, beddings, wooden furniture and carvings (Shu, 2012:82). These patterns symbolise conjugal bliss, happiness and auspiciousness. There is also a strong colour contrast used in this design; the red expresses the petal blossom, the light creamy white represents the pistils and stamens, as well as the light and dark green not only are the colour of the leaves, and it also symbolises the freshness and makes the red flowers stand out.



**Figure 6.28**

**The square folk-patterned cushion cover design**

**(Li, 2013)**

The cushion cover used digital printing, laser cutting, Chinese folk cloth-pasted techniques and machine sewing to make. The material is 100% calico cotton, and the colours are vividly digital-printed on the fabric, as shown in Figure 6.29. Laser cutting is a technique to cut precise patterns practically in almost all materials that people work with, such as wood, metal and plastic. It works through a gaseous medium, generally carbon dioxide, which can amplify light reflected backwards and forwards multiple times within the laser chamber. The light is focused by a lens onto a given

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<sup>18</sup> Chinese Pinyin

point, and it emerges from an aperture. The conventional machining tools can use laser cutting to work with a level of accuracy and complexity at present (Lefteri, 2002:57). Consequently, I used the laser cutting technique to create two round patterns that are made with velvet cloth and applied adhesive to the back of them. Then I ironed these patterns onto the digital-printed cotton. Finally, they three-dimensionally stood out from the cover's background (Figure 6.30). This process is defined as the cloth pasted technique. The sewing process includes washing, overlocking and machine sewing that are showed in Figure 6.31. The cushion cover's size on completion was 33 x 32 cm with the addition of a zip opening as a finishing.



**Figure 6.29**

**The digitally-printed patterns of the square cushion cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.30**

**The cloth-pasted patterns of the square cushion cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**





**Figure 6.31**

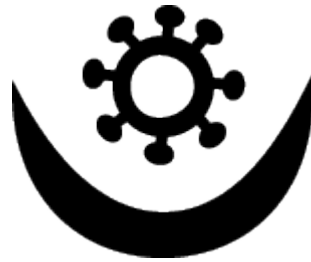
**The sewing process of the square cushion cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**

*Red folk-patterned cushion cover*

The design of this cushion cover is a combination of traditional African symbols and Chinese auspicious patterns. The main Chinese auspicious pattern is the plum blossom, which represents noble, persistent and chaste characters. The traditional African elements came from Adinkra symbol “Osram ne Nsoromma” (it means “the moon and the star” and was mentioned in Table 4.1) that I transformed and recreated, and it symbolises love, harmony and faithfulness (Figure 6.32). In the front design of the cushion cover, the traditional African symbols are used in the background to accentuate these Chinese auspicious patterns, which are composed of the central and four-cornered plum blossom patterns and the wave-like patterns that are around the central plum blossom. On the reverse side, the traditional African symbols stand out in the background design of the cushion cover, while there is only a little plum blossom pattern situated in the centre (Figure 6.33). The background colours are

inversely used in the front and back cover designs, and the pattern colours of the front design feature the rich visual and strong traditional sense; however, on the reverse side, the colours are more subtly differentiated to suggest a simple and harmonious feeling. Accordingly, this cushion cover design embodies a balanced combination of a variety of both African and Chinese cultural and traditional representations.



**Figure 6.32**

**The Adinkra symbol: “Osram ne Nsoromma”**

**(Adinkra, 2007)**



(Front and back)

**Figure 6.33**

**The red folk-patterned cushion cover design**

**(Li, 2013)**

This cover design is digitally printed onto the calico so that the printed colours maintain the vividness of the original design (Figure 6.34). It was made by sewing machine and the opened zipper is hidden in the bottom fold of the cushion (Figure 6.35). The cushion cover size is 42 x 24 cm.



**Figure 6.34**

**The digitally-printed patterns of the red cushion cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.35**

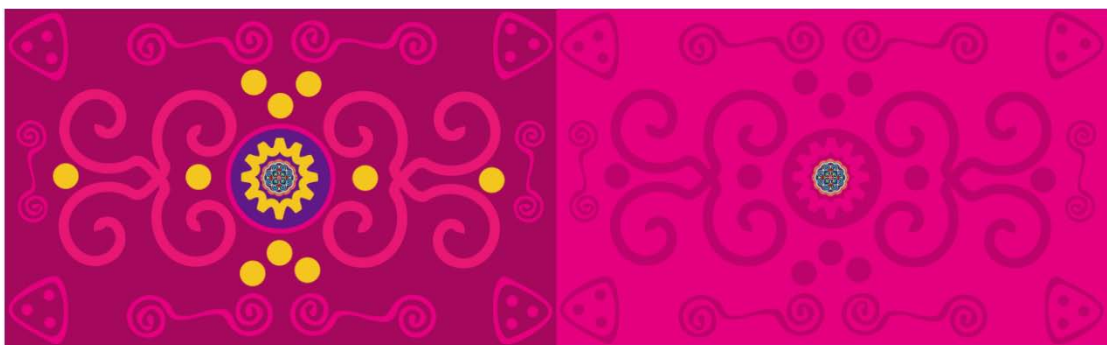
**The zipper of the red folk-patterned cushion cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

*Folk-embroidered cushion cover*

This cushion cover design also combines traditional African symbols with Chinese auspicious patterns, as shown in Figure 6.36. The central design pattern (Figure 6.37) is an expression of the mentioned Chinese *Tuan Hua Wen* pattern, and it delineates a full-blown lotus flower. The lotus flower (includes the lotus seed pod and lotus seed) is a significant auspicious pattern in the traditional Chinese culture, because it symbolises continuation and has the meaning of stretching long and unbroken (Geng, 2008:67). It closely relates to the Chinese Buddhism, for example, the *Guanyin* Bodhisatta is commonly portrayed as sitting atop the lotus flower. The lotus emerges from mud unsullied; therefore, it depurates and etherealises itself from earthliness. This is seamlessly in accord with the deep spirit of the Buddhism (Zhou & Zhou,

2009:45-51). As a Buddhist, it is also a symbol of me. The concept of the Adinkra symbols is used in representing the traditional African culture for this cushion design. "Pempamsie" (it means "sew in readiness" and was shown in Figure 4.3) comes from the Adinkra design, and it is a symbol of steadiness and readiness. According to *the Adinkra Dictionary*, this symbol looks like the links of a chain, which implies power by unity as well as the importance of being prepared (Adinkra, 2007). I redesigned this symbol to be fit for children with more smooth lines. There are some small genomic patterns used in the design as well. The design colour has contrast but balance.



(Front and back)

**Figure 6.36**

**The folk-embroidered cushion cover design**

(Li, 2013)



**Figure 6.37**

**The central *Tuan Hua Wen* pattern: lotus flower**

(Li, 2013)



**Figure 6.38**

**The full-blown lotus flower**

**(Photograph, Baidu, 2014)**

The composition of this cover design involved the combined techniques of digital printing, Su embroidery and machine sewing. Figure 6.39 illustrates the digitally-printed pattern details of the cushion. The Su embroidery is finished by H Z who is a professional embroiderer and stylist in Wuxi. She used the *Qizhen* stitch to embroider the recreated “Pempamsie” symbols in front design of the cushion (Figure 6.40). Su embroidery differs from other embroideries. It is wrought with thinner threads than Lu embroidery and therefore needs more time to work on, but it results in an extremely fine and exquisite finish. The Su embroidered details of the cushion cover are shown in Figure 6.41. The size of the cover is 39 x 24 cm.



**Figure 6.39**

**The digital-printed patterns of the embroidered cushion cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.40**

**The Su embroidery process of the cushion cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**



**(The front embroidered detail)**



**(The back embroidery)**

**Figure 6.41**

**The Su embroidered details of the cushion cover**

**(Photograph, Li, 2013)**

### *The interior cushions*

Three cushions are made from polyester and filled in cotton wadding. The making process is shown in Figure 6.42 and the steps of the process are as follows: 1 sewing, 2 filling, 3 overlocking and 4 finishing. The sizes of these scatter cushions are 32.5 x 31.5 cm, 41.5 x 23.5 cm and 38.5 x 23.5 cm respectively, which are suitable for each cushion cover. The completed cushions possess the softness and flexibility, as shown in Figure 6.43.



**Figure 6.42**

**The making process of the internal cushion**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.43**

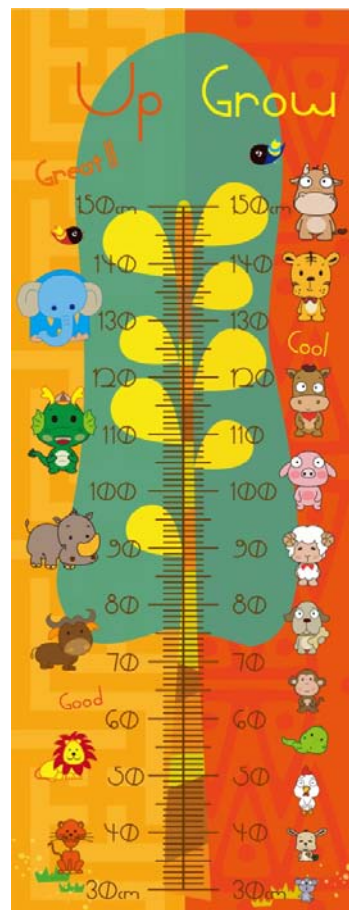
**The folk-patterned cushions**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

## 6.2.4 Children's height gauge

### *Graphic design*

The design elements of the children's height gauge include the twelve Chinese zodiac animal and African "Big Five" characters that I designed, as well as a big tree which is designed as a gauge. The middle line of the tree gauge averagely separates into two sides that all can be used to measure children's heights. The colour of one side is orange-yellow and incorporates Long Long and the "Big Five" characters in the traditional Chinese pattern background; the other side is red-orange colour and it combines the twelve zodiac animal characters with the African symbol background. These characters are arranged from small to large size, as it conceptualises the growing process of children. The design was finished by Illustrator as shown in details in Figure 6.44. Each side of the height gauge is 30 x 145 cm.



**Figure 6.44**

**The design of the children's height gauge**

**(Li, 2013)**



### *Textile design*

The children's height gauge consists of three parts: the gauge piece, the big Long Long cartoon head-toy and the small Long Long cartoon head-mark (Figure 6.45). They were made of various materials that include canvas cotton, plush and felt. The gauge piece was achieved using the digital printing technique and Lu embroidery that made the gauge and the numbers stand out. I stitched velcro onto the fabric piece and wanted to use them to stick to the head-mark as well as the head-toy. These details are shown in Figure 6.46. The Long Long cartoon head-toy serves two purposes - it is not only a decoration that can be stuck on the children's height gauge, but it can also be used as a separate toy to amuse children when playing with their friends.

Figure 6.47 shows the making process of this head-toy as follows: Prepare different colours of the plush materials and cut the materials into each part that makes up the shape of Long Long's head. Then use the sewing machine to stitch these parts and put the filling into the stitched head. Finally, do the needlework to sew other parts onto the filled head and also draw the squama pattern onto Long Long's head. The Long Long cartoon head-mark (Figure 6.48) can serve as a mark of measurement for parents wanting to keep a record of their children's increasing growth in height. It was accomplished using the Chinese cloth pasted technique and embroidered stitching. The embroidered stitching includes satin stitches, blanket stitches and double-threaded blanket stitches (Figure 6.49); these embroidered stitches are shown in Figure 6.50. Delicately embroidered ribbon, intricately finished with satin stitches, is used for hanging the gauge (see Figure 6.51).



**Figure 6.45**

**The children's height gauge**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**(The digital printing details)**



**(The details of Lu embroidery and the velcro)**

**Figure 6.46**

**The technique details of the children's height gauge**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



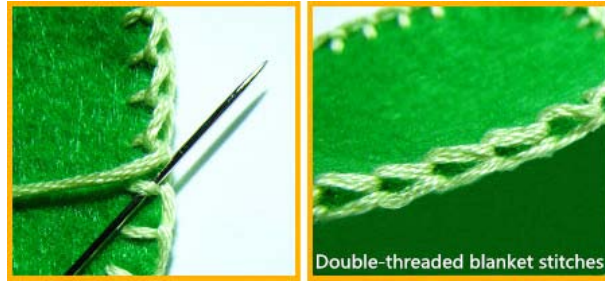
**Figure 6.47**

**The making process of the Long Long cartoon head-toy  
(Photograph, Li, 2013)**



**Figure 6.48**

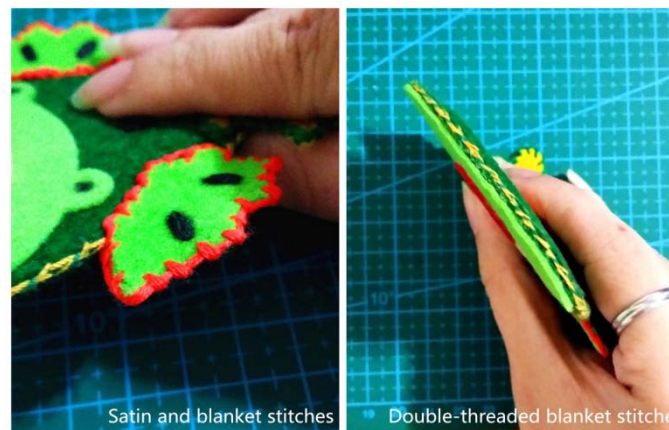
**The Long Long cartoon head-mark  
(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.49**

**The double-threaded blanket stitches**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.50**

**The embroidered stitches of Long Long cartoon head-mark**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.51**

**The embroidered ribbon of the children's height gauge**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

## 6.2.5 Children's wall decoration

### *Graphic design*

The design of the wall decoration (Figure 6.52) is a combination of the traditional African symbols and the Chinese full-blown lotus flower patterns which have already been discussed and which are merged into the pattern's background and foreground respectively (see Figure 6.53). The major African symbol is transformed from the Adinkra "Mmusuyidee" (Figure 6.54), which means "removal of bad luck". It symbolises good fortune and sanctity, which is also recreated to be used in the background. The design colour is vivid and luxuriant, reflecting the brilliance of the China red and yellow, the African orange and brown, the luminous green as well as the purpled-blue. The size of this design is 63 x 64 cm.



**Figure 6.52**

**The design of the children's wall decoration**

**(Li, 2013)**



**Figure 6.53**

**The background pattern of the traditional African symbols**

**(Li, 2013)**



**Figure 6.54**

**The African Adinkra symbol: “Mmusuyidee”**

**(Adinkra, 2007)**

### *Textile design*

The making process of the wall decoration can be divided into five phases. At first, the digital printing technique was used to print the patterns onto the cotton for the design of the wall decoration. I then sewed the design border by the sewing machine. The digital printing of the design has resulted in glorious colours - very intense and beautiful as shown in Figure 6.55. Thirdly, I embroidered 5 different stitches on the design, and Figure 6.56 illustrates these stitches that include satin stitches, basic buttonhole stitches, basic backstitches, single-threaded backstitches and

double-threaded backstitches. The basic buttonhole stitch is worked like the blanket stitch, except that the stitches are placed very close together to form a firm edge. This tight little band of stitches is used extensively in cutwork embroidery. A buttonhole stitch wheel is a popular method for doing flowered motifs, so I embroidered it to symbolise the central lotus seed pattern. It is worked in a circle with the needle entering the same hole each time (see Figure 6.57). The basic backstitch is most often used as a straight outline stitch. Its simple line effect is often seen in blackwork embroidery. This stitch also forms the base line for other decorative stitches. Figure 6.58 shows how to embroider this stitch on fabric. The single-threaded or double-threaded backstitches add another dimension to the basic stitch (Figure 6.59).

Worked in contrasting yarns, each new row can alter the overall effect. Lay down basic backstitch first. To work single-threaded line, use a blunt needle to lace the yarn under each stitch; do not catch fabric below. To work double-threaded line, lace second yarn in opposite direction, keeping loops even on both sides of backstitch line; do not catch or split yarns already laid. Fourth, I combined the cloth pasted technique with the hand embroidery to make the lotus petal patterns stand out from the background in order to give the design a more layered sense (Figure 6.60). Lastly, the Art and Frame Factory helped me to frame the design piece with the triple colourful mount approach, which enriches the design with a more three dimensional feeling.



**Figure 6.55**

**The digitally-printed colour of the wall decoration**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

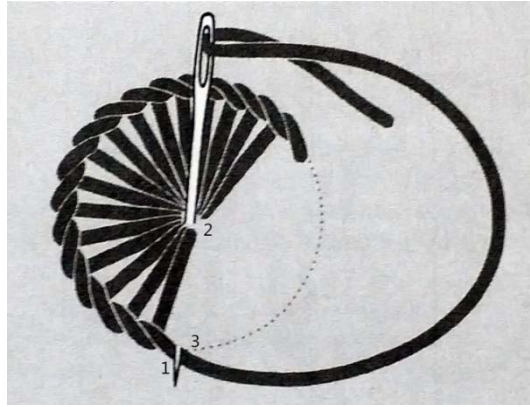




**Figure 6.56**

**The different stitches of the wall decoration**

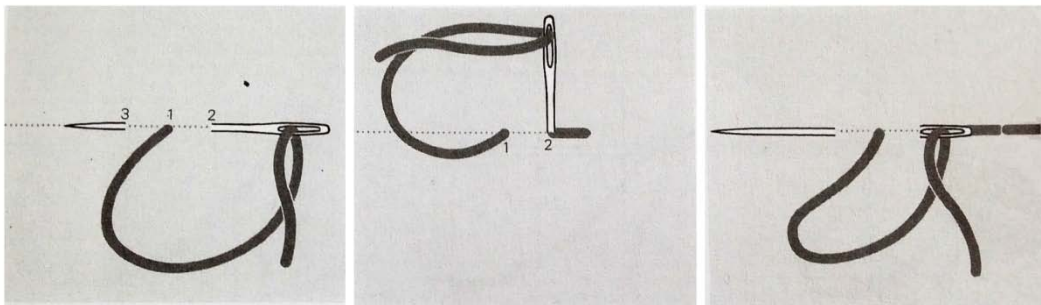
**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.57**

**The buttonhole stitch wheel stitches**

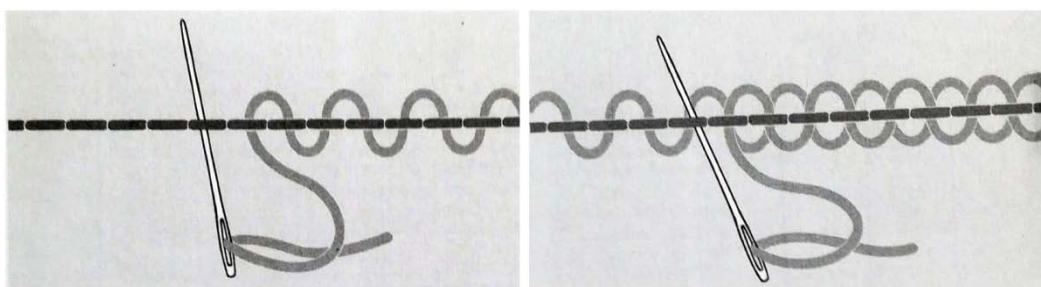
**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.58**

**The basic backstitches**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.59**

**The single-threaded and double-threaded backstitches**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.60**

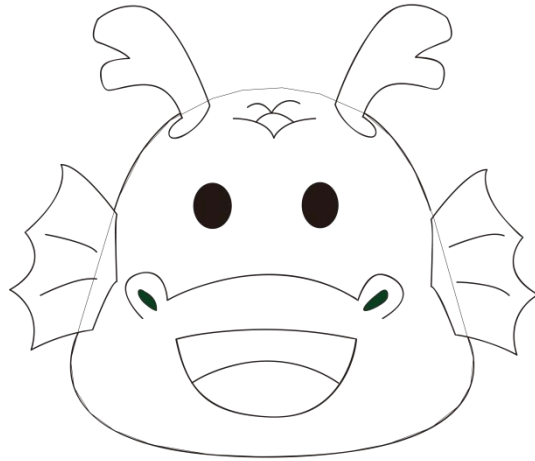
**The cloth-pasted and embroidery details**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

### **6.2.6 Children's kitbag**

#### *Graphic design*

The children's kitbag is designed as the Long Long cartoon's head, and Figure 6.61 shows the design sketch that I drew in my journal. The design elements of this kitbag incorporate the traditional African symbols and the Chinese auspicious patterns that I created and used in the other interior products as well. For example, the kitbag's inside fabric is the same as the wall decoration design, which is shown in Figure 6.52. The fabric design of Long Long's horns matches the reverse pattern of the red folk-patterned cushion cover but in different colours. Thereby, all these interior products are linked by the same recurring themes and motifs to create a sense of harmony, integration and balance. The Chinese plum blossom pattern and longevity symbol (mentioned in Chapter Four) are combined with the African motif backgrounds and also used in the fabric designs as shown in Figure 6.62. The design colours are still focused on the rich traditional red, orange, yellow, green and blue.



**Figure 6.61**

**The design sketch of the children's kitbag**

**(Li, 2013)**



**(The plum blossom pattern)**



**(The longevity symbols)**

**Figure 6.62**

**The Chinese auspicious patterns of the kitbag's fabric design**

**(Li, 2013)**

### *Textile design*

The children's kitbag was manufactured by means of the sewing machine as well as hand needlework; the materials came from the traditional African textile design and digitally-printed cottons. The process (Figure 6.63) includes: 1. Cut the fabrics in the different parts of the cartoon head and fill the horns and beards of Long Long with cotton wadding. Add one more layer of sponge on the back in order to make these fabrics flexible and strong. 2. Stitch a little fronted pocket that can be described as the cartoon mouth with a zipper and embroidered the head pattern and eyes by hand. 3. Stitch these part pieces together and sew the belts of the kitbag by machine. 4. Sew the inside fabric at last. Figure 6.64 shows the finishing of the children's kitbag and its size is 28 x 27 x 7 cm.



**Figure 6.63**

**The making process of the children's kitbag**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**



**Figure 6.64**

**The children's kitbag**

**(Photograph, Li, 2014)**

### **6.2.7 Products' packaging bags**

#### *Graphic design*

The package bag's design elements echo those of the children's book and interior products, which I developed into a refreshing surface design. It conceptualises all the traditional African symbols and Chinese auspicious patterns that I used before.



**Figure 6.65**

**The design of the packaging bag**

**(Li, 2013)**

### *Textile design*

According to the various types of these children's products, the products' packaging bags have three shape styles such as rectangle, square and cylinder with different sizes, illustrated in Figure 6.66. Their sizes are 47 x 35 cm, 29 x 28 cm and 35 x 26 x 45 cm respectively. Each package bag possesses one brand tag, which displays the details of the brand, the name of the designer as well as cleaning instructions – all done by means of embroidery (Figure 6.67). The material of these package bags is the digitally-printed canvas and the making process was finished by the sewing machine.



(The rectangular bag)



(The square bags)



(The cylindrical bag)

**Figure 6.66**

**The different types of the packaging bags**

**(Li, 2013)**



**Figure 6.67**

**The embroidered brand tag**

**(Li, 2013)**

### **6.3 Website design**

The Internet will be the main approach to sell my children's products because of its global reach and accessibility. Consequently, the website design will be a significant element influencing marketing and sales. The enter page of my website incorporates the music with the animated film of the children's book story; it tries to provide a



carefree atmosphere for the customers. The website pages keep the same format and style with the products which will include the home page, design, collection, media and contact page. The home page will follow up the news of the products; the design page will introduce the designer's profile, the background of the inspiration and the process of the production. The details of all products are introduced and shown at the collection page. Customers will be able to choose these products based on the information and images. The media page will promote the products' brand by means of public communications such as magazines. The customers will be able to consult the Contact page to see details of the delivery and payment method or any other requirements. Figure 6.68 shows the image samples of the website design.



(The enter page)



(The design and collection pages)

Figure 6.68

The images of the website design

(Li, 2014)

#### **6.4 Summary**

I have demonstrated how the theory threads into the practical component for each product in this chapter. With the development of globalisation, many opportunities have been provided by a sharing of goods, services, knowledge and cultures between people and countries. However, there is little focus on traditional design and many traditional crafts have been neglected. I fear that the traditional designs and techniques will become redundant, more so I believe that my products could become a new form to attract people, by combining traditional African textile designs with Chinese folk fabric art and embroidery techniques. I have defined and discussed my reasons for fabric choice, colour, shape, methods, components and layout. All products combine traditional African textile pattern design with Chinese folk fabric art and embroidery techniques creating a new fused technique to encourage children's interests in different traditional cultures and also different craft techniques. Traditional techniques used in making the products included: African Adinkra symbols and pattern design, plus Chinese cloth-pasted technique, embroidery and needlework that I worked and the digital printing that was done for me. The material of all the products in the range included: 100% cotton that I digitally-printed my own pattern designs onto as well as traditional African fabric and felts.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

#### 7.0 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to connect traditional African textile motifs and pattern designs and processes with Chinese folk-fabric craftwork and embroidery techniques to create stimulating interior products for children, thus tying my Chinese roots with my newly-grown African ones. The study focused on two objectives. Firstly, I am provided an understanding of the textile motifs and folk-fabric craftwork, to cultivate an interest in these traditional cultures in order to prevent the further loss of traditional crafts (albeit to a limited degree). Secondly, I am pursuing a commercial objective which aimed at establishing my own brand – “Long Long” - that will cater for a particular children’s market segment in the two to seven-year-old category.

The deductive analysis of the literature revealed important aspects of both Chinese and African social literature. China is in the possession of world's major social and literary traditions, whilst African cultures also possess much that is innovative, creative and frequently unique. Chinese and African cultures are the result of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution. During most of this time, their cultures constituted the broadest influence on many dimensions of human behaviour that can be defined as the cultural dimensions. However, today traditional arts masters are "genuine invaluable treasures" in China, and unfortunately their rare skills are gradually being restricted to history because of a lack of interest, resources and government protection. The same situation is evident in Africa. Fewer people use traditional design processes and techniques to make products, therefore, many traditional crafts are disappearing. The problem statement of this research was born out of concern about these situations.



The theoretical underpinning was focused on globalisation, craft designs and products, as well as the children's craft education and products market. Globalisation is the greater movement of people, goods, capital and ideas due to increased economic integration, which in turn is propelled by increased trade and investment. This phenomenon has impacted upon design and design activities. Craft is not just an essential resource of living; it is usually linked to the sociology of cultural traditions, and ultimately to the conservation of cultural diversity and peculiarity. Combining craft with cultural style becomes an increasingly important and powerful tool to be utilised by designers in order to allow them to compete on aesthetic and emotional grounds, not necessarily those of function and price.

Crafts and craft activities can help children improve not only their dexterity and ability to concentrate, but also cultivate an interest in different cultures (Phyllis, 2008:7).

Ultimately, it is hoped that this engagement of parents and children with my range of craft design products will contribute somewhat to an understanding of the value of craft as a cultural expression and in this way contribute to the preservation of craft techniques and methods.

The research project consisted of a 50% practicum component coupled with a thesis. Data collection was acquired predominately by means of a qualitative approach. From the cultural background that emerged, a broader understanding of traditional design and technique seen against this background led to the identification of two further methods of qualitative research: exploratory research and ethnography. Throughout the investigation, the establishment of the data gathering, as well as through critical analysis and reflection of the research findings, it emerged how traditional culture background is incorporated in some of today's product design, and what kind of cultural material, techniques or methods are skillfully being employed by the African and Chinese designers and crafters that were interviewed during my research.

The development and fabrication of the children's product range was experimented with using different Chinese folk fabric art techniques and African traditional textile symbols to revive the disused and possibly forgotten craft skills and knowledge, as well as simultaneously preserving the wisdom inherent in many forms of cultural heritage expressions. Techniques used in making the products include African Adinkra symbol designs, Chinese cloth-pasted technique, embroidery, needlework and digital printing. Traditional African and Chinese colours served as the symbols of important messages in this product development.

The research findings had been obtained from five rounds of individual semi-structured interviews and one focus group discussion. The data gathered were obtained at various times during the fieldwork research; for instance, by means of attending a Chinese Su embroidery workshop of H Z, Lu embroidery practitioner R Y, African "Adinkra" textile designer R D D, fashion designer N M and fine art printmaker A I V. In addition, data was gathered during an interview and visit to the CCDI, which helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the context of the Western Cape and communicate with some craft designers and producers to explore the diverse cultures of South Africa. The response to the market research survey questionnaires determined that the children's products' range is marketable in South Africa and China, since the interchangeable products, as well as the craft techniques and materials used in the development of the product range were unique, original and appealed very much to the target market for children and their parents, whilst still being able to maintain a competitive edge in the handcraft industry sector.

The findings of the development of the children's book and interior products range are the children's cloth-pasted book, the children's duvet set (included the pillowcase, single duvet cover and bedding flat-sheet), the children's curtain, the folk-patterned cushions, the children's height gauge, the children's wall decoration, the children's kitbag and the products' packaging bags. All products combined traditional African textile pattern design with Chinese folk fabric art and embroidery techniques to create

a new surface design language.

### **7.1 Recommendations**

The African Adinkra symbols and Chinese embroidery and cloth-pasted technique reflect the two territories' rich histories and cultural diversities. With globalisation, many opportunities arose by a sharing of goods, services, knowledge and cultures between people and countries. However, there is little focus on traditional designs and skills, where many traditional crafts have been neglected. Fewer people are doing traditional crafts specialty goods because of the changes of the global market. I fear that the traditional designs and techniques will become slowly more redundant. One way to slow this process down is to try to convince the consumer to believe in hand crafted commodities once again and more importantly, to "buy in" to the philosophy that underpins such commodities. I propose it is possible to use traditional craft processes and techniques as a method to develop innovative design products to become a new attraction to the discerning customer. Therefore, my research focused strongly on the loss of culturally specific craft design expressions with reference to South Africa and China and my suggestions as to how this problem can be solved.

The integration of support and alignment of objectives is crucial to the conjunctures of African and Chinese traditional craft designs and techniques in today's world. The support should be in terms of a fresh design approach which connects traditional African textile motifs and pattern designs and processes with Chinese folk fabric craftwork and embroidery techniques to create stimulating interior products for children. My goal was to find a way to combine two completely different cultural identities by means of designing children's products which reflect the traditional symbols of both. I would want to market this range across the world, especially in countries where a demand for high-end quality craft items is prevalent.

As a whole, the analysis of this study indicated the social and economic problems of loss of traditional crafts from a creative perspective, and how, through a practical intervention, these problems can be addressed. Through inductive analysis of the fieldwork data findings, a framework and a set of guidelines were consequently established to address how I worked with the two traditional cultures' design and craft techniques and heritage, to be reintegrated into some form of social participation and economic activity. The resultant product range of children's products was tested in the market and represents a business opportunity that I will pursue in future.

Key considerations must be taken into account, so as to protect the traditional cultures and heritages. Firstly, governments should encourage and support the development of the traditional craft designs from social, cultural and economic aspects, so that it can easily arouse people's attention to learn and work on them.

Artists, craftsmen and women, as well as designers should think about how to use the elements of traditional craft converted to modern product design. We have the responsibility to educate our next generation about traditional knowledge, cultures and histories, so we should seek ways to develop them in different areas, such as languages, cultural etiquettes or art and craft skills.

Despite the reduced demand for traditional handcrafts and techniques in today's society, because of mass production, a concerted effort ought to be made to retain traditional artisanal heritage. We ought to protect these disappearing craft processes and techniques that are not only of cultural significance but also useful historical examples to help us create renewed interest in and more adequate, sustainable processes and techniques to contribute to a quality life at present.

Traditional culture is a symbol to tell us who we are and where we came from. It is in our blood; therefore we cannot allow it to be lost. I hope one day my children can still see and learn about something that comes from thousands of years ago and then tell



me its history.

## **7.2 Summary**

The essence of my study was based on self-reflection and discovery. At the age of nineteen, I came to South Africa to study where I wanted to experience a particular culture and knowledge from Africa in order to enrich my design life. During this time, I pursued my fascination for both African and Chinese traditional craftworks. Slowly, the concept of designing a range of modern products for children took shape and I explored the idea of synchronizing the elements of both cultures. Although this process was very difficult, I discovered my potential and creativity. This journey can be seen as my starting point and has shaped me into a stronger designer with a more focused career direction.

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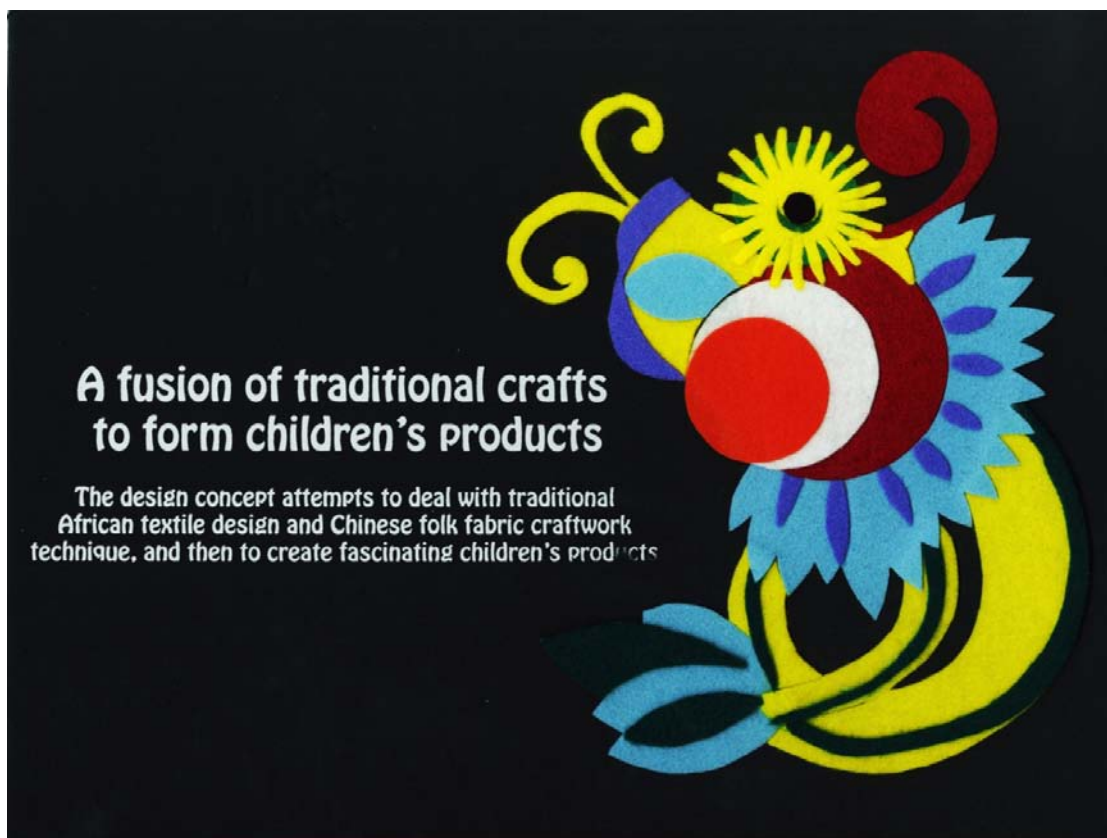


## **APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix A: Inspiration Boards</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>Appendix B: Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture Index Table</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Appendix C: The DAC Strategic Plan Report (2007-2010)</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Appendix D: Questionnaire Sample</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Appendix E: Consent Letter and Interview with R Y (Chinese traditional embroidery producer and retail expert)</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Appendix F: Journaling Sketches</b>	<b>227</b>
<b>Appendix G: The DTI Craft Sector Development Strategy</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Appendix H: Marketing Plan</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>Appendix I: Photographic Documentations</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Appendix J: Research Ethics Review Checklist</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>Appendix K: Design and Layout of Thesis and Practicum</b>	<b>242</b>

Appendix A:

Inspiration Boards





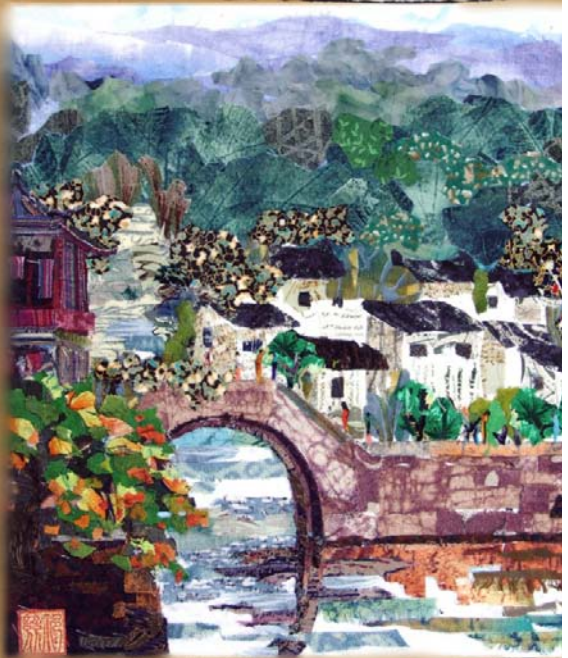
### Traditional African Textile

Africa's fine art and craft traditions are known throughout the world. The textile arts are among one of Africa's most significant craft forms. African cloths have distinct patterns. Depending on the type of textile the patterns are woven, printed, dyed, or drawn onto the fabric. There are many types of African textiles but three of the best known are kente, adire, and adinkro.



### Chinese Folk Fabric Art The Cloth Pasted Picture

The cloth pasted picture is a kind of Chinese traditional craftsmanship, which integrated embroidery, paper-cut and Manchues' applique. Human figures, landscapes, flowers, birds, fish and insects can be put into cloth pasted pictures, and every picture is vivid and stereo.



Inspiration Boards: Mind Map



(Yanfei, 2012)

**Appendix B:**

**Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture Index Table**

**PDI** Power distance Index

**UDV** Individualism Index

**MAS** Masculinity Index

**UAI** Uncertainty Avoidance Index

**LTO** Long-Term Orientation Index

	PDI		IDV		MAS		UAI		LTO	
	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score	rank	score
Arab Countries	7	80	26/27	38	23	53	27	68		
Argentina	35/36	49	22/23	46	20/21	56	10/15	86		
Australia	41	36	2	90	16	61	37	51	15	31
Austria	53	11	18	55	2	79	24/25	70		
Bangladesh									11	40
Belgium	20	65	8	75	22	54	5/6	94		
Brazil	14	69	26/27	38	27	49	21/22	76	6	65
Canada	39	39	4/5	80	24	52	41/42	48	20	23
Chile	24/25	63	38	23	46	28	10/15	86		
China									1	118
Columbia	17	67	49	13	11/12	64	20	80		
Costa Rica	42/44	35	46	15	48/49	21	10/15	86		
Denmark	51	18	9	74	50	16	51	23		
East Africa	21/23	64	33/35	27	39	41	36	52		
Ecuador	8/9	78	52	8	13/14	63	28	67		
Finland	46	33	17	63	47	26	31/32	59		
France	15/16	68	10/11	71	35/36	43	10/15	86		
Germany FR	42/44	35	15	67	9/10	66	29	65	14	31
Great Britain	42/44	35	3	89	9/10	66	47/48	35	18	25
Greece	27/28	60	30	35	18/19	57	1	112		
Guatemala	2/3	95	53	6	43	37	3	101		
Hong Kong	15/16	68	37	25	18/19	57	49/50	29	2	96
India	10/11	77	21	48	20/21	56	45	40	7	61
Indonesia	8/9	78	47/48	14	30/31	46	41/42	48		
Iran	29/30	58	24	41	35/36	43	31/32	59		
Ireland (Republic of)	49	28	12	70	7/8	68	47/48	35		
Israel	52	13	19	54	29	47	19	81		
Italy	34	50	7	76	4/5	70	23	75		

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## **Appendix C:**

### **The DAC Strategic Plan Report (2007-2010)**

The South African culture and heritage protection document to be considered is that of the 2007-2010 strategic plan report of the Department of Art and Culture.

A gap analysis was done indicating the following:

#### Vision

The vision of the Department of Arts and Culture is to develop and preserve South African culture to ensure social cohesion and nation building.

#### Mission

The mission of the DAC is to:

- Develop and promote arts and culture in South Africa and mainstream its role in social development.
- Develop and promote the official languages of South Africa and enhance the linguistic diversity of the country.
- Improve economic and other development opportunities for South African arts and culture nationally and globally through mutually beneficial partnerships, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the sector.
- Develop and monitor the implementation of policy, legislation and strategic direction for the identification, conservation and promotion of cultural heritage.
- Guide, sustain and develop the archival, heraldic and information resources of the nation to empower citizens through full and open access to these resources.

The Department's activities are divided into six programmes and their respective descriptions and measurable objective are the following:

#### Programme 1: Administration

Conduct the overall management of the department and provide centralised support services.

#### Programme 2: Arts and Culture in Society

Increase and facilitate access to and broader participation in arts and culture through policy formulation, legislation and equitable funding.

#### Programme 3: National Language Service

Develop, promote and protect the 11 official languages through policy formulation, legislation and the implementation of the language policy in order to allow South Africans to realise their language rights.

Programme 4: Cultural Development and International Co-operation

Increase the access and participation of grassroots arts practitioners in cultural industries economic activities through training, legislation and international opportunities.

Programme 5: Heritage Promotion

Ensure the transformation of the heritage landscape as a vehicle for nation-building and social cohesion, through the implementation of heritage policies and legislation.

Programme 6: National Archives, Records, Meta-Information and Heraldic Services

Enable transparency and evidenced-based good governance of archives, records, published information, and the heraldic and symbolic inheritance of the nation through institutional management, regulation and development.

Expenditure over the last 4 years is reflected in the table below:

PROGRAMME	2003/2004 Audited R'000	2004/2005 Audited R'000	2005/2006 Audited R'000	2006/2007 (preliminary outcome) R'000	
1. Administration	65,932	81,685	71,548	65,932 7.6%	7.6%
2. Arts and Culture in Society	192,011	232,802	194,716	65,932	17.7%
3. National Language Service	43,919	69,239	58,849	65,932	5.6%
4. Cultural Development and International Cooperation	121,672	140,047	159,763	65,932	14.7%
5. Heritage Promotion	440,222	532,286	536,893	65,932	48.5%
6. National Archives, Records, Meta-Information and Heraldic Services	60,301	75,180	75,180	65,932	5.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>924,057</b>	<b>1,1096,949</b>	<b>1,096,949</b>	<b>1,330,139</b>	

ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATION	2003/2004 Audited R'000	2004/2005 Audited R'000	2005/2006 Audited R'000	2006/2007 (preliminary outcome) R'000	
<b>Current</b>	<b>162,404</b>	<b>199,433</b>	<b>179,169</b>	<b>258,762</b>	<b>19.45%</b>
Compensation of Employees	56,872	71,952	86,831	96,581	7.26%
Goods and Services	105,532	127,481	92,338	162,181	12.19%
<b>Transfers and subsidies</b>	<b>752,713</b>	<b>908,489</b>	<b>908,367</b>	<b>1,066,581</b>	<b>80.19%</b>
Provinces and municipalities	158	230	263	82	0.01%
Departmental agencies and accounts	628,719	729,032	735,714	885,688	66.59%
Other transfers to households	123,836	179,227	172,390	180,811	13.59%
<b>Capital Assets</b>	<b>8,940</b>	<b>5,829</b>	<b>9,413</b>	<b>4,796</b>	<b>0.36%</b>
Machinery and Equipment	8,940	5,829	9,413	4,796	0.36%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>924,057</b>	<b>1,113,751</b>	<b>1,096,949</b>	<b>1,330,139</b>	

(DAC, 2010)

The Department of Arts and Culture will pursue the achievement of the following key objectives:

**Programme 5: Heritage Promotion: R630 050 000 (39.18%)**

Key Departmental Objective	Outputs	Service Delivery Indicator	Service Delivery Target or Milestone	Estimated Costs
<b>Heritage Promotion</b>				
<b>Growing the economy</b>	A Conservation Management Plan.	A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the graveside site approved.	CMP developed with SAHRA, Kouga Municipality and DAC.	50,656
	Indigenous Knowledge Projects that contribute to social development.	Support national projects/programmes that utilise indigenous knowledge to address poverty alleviation, community development, and crime.	Community development through projects that contribute to job creation and tourism.	
	An audit of current and planned capital works related to heritage institutions, sites as well as legacy projects. On the basis of this audit develop a strategic framework that will feed into government's expanded public works programme, 2010 opportunities and other government imperatives.	An integrated approach that will take into account linkages with communities, other institutions, sites, tourism, and local economic development imperatives.  A systematic formalized public works project management relationship with DPW.		
	Promote objectives of Social Cohesion.	Statue of O R Tambo and exhibition on O R Tambo to be placed at Khaya.	Statue developed with DUT and exhibition developed with NAHECS.	
	Lock Street concept document.	Acquisition of the Lock Street Property and the development of a concept document for Women's Museum.	Lock Street property acquired and concept document approved by Ministry.	



<b>Organisational Capabilities</b>	Rehabilitation of Fort Hare Buildings.	MOU between DAC and UFH.	Signed and approved MOU.
		Improved safety and security of Heritage	Appoint a service provider to investigate the safety and security in our institutions.
<b>Improve Institutional Performance Management</b>	A coherent, integrated and coordinated heritage product delivery system for DAC through its heritage institutions that would strategically position these institutions as vehicles for shifting the heritage sector to a qualitatively higher level of delivery in the next three to five years.	Executive management and newly appointed councils work-shopped on: their duties, roles, responsibilities during their three year term in terms of the relevant enabling legislation; methods of work in terms of internal functioning, engagement with stakeholders and funding; elements of the transformation and development of the heritage sector and the role of institutions in this process; the alignment of government imperatives such as job creation, poverty alleviation rural development, urban renewal and African recovery with institutional.	Four to eight workshops in first quarter of 2007.  Shared vision and KPI's incorporated in strategic plans by March 2007. Meetings with Councils and Executive Management to refine strategic plans by March 2007.  Monitoring, evaluation and corrective adjustments through analysing quarterly and annual reports and evaluating performance against shared objectives twice a year until end of council's term in 2009 coupled with visits to institutions twice a year to give support.
	Improved skills in institutions and heritage sector.	Skills audit and skills development strategy adopted.	Improved skills through the SAMA Transformation Training Programme.

	Improved marketing, branding and communication of work of DAC and its heritage institutions.	All Heritage Institutional Development activities, reports, publications etc to be posted on the website and DAC website to institutions website. A material distribution strategy is developed.	Improved visibility of DAC and heritage institution's work.
	Audit of state owned heritage resources and development of the South African Resources Information System. To include South African missions abroad in the audit. Production Treaties with.	A report on the heritage resources to help with implementation of efficient systems to fight theft of heritage objects. Broad public awareness of significance of our heritage objects.	Short-term: Audit of cultural property: 2008.  Medium-term: Development of a database: 2009.
	Heritage Month Celebrations.	Identification of Heritage Month theme and financial support for the implementation of the approved theme.	Identification of Heritage Month theme and financial support for the implementation of the approved theme.
	Living Human Treasures Project.	Recognition and capacitation of knowledge holders and the transfer of their knowledge and skills for community development, inputs in S.A tourism and moral regeneration.	Identification of experts/ practitioners of various forms of intangible cultural heritage.
<b>World Heritage Convention</b>	Improved management of South African World Heritage sites.	Joint facilitation of the South African World Heritage Convention Committee meetings.	Review of the tentative list twice a year which will be in February and in October preparation of the new sites and their nomination dossiers.
<b>African World Heritage Fund</b>	A fully functional the African World Heritage Fund to contribute to the Nepad agenda.	Leverage economic benefits of the continent's heritage for its development through amongst other things decolonising African Heritage	Operationalise the Fund by appointing the Staff personnel and communicate with all the potential

		integration and cohesion.  Transfer of the World Heritage Convention Act to DAC.	funders to encourage them to contribute towards the Fund.  Report on the state of conservation of South African World Heritage Sites to the World Heritage Committee annually.  Prepare projects which the Fund has identified.
	National heritage development strategy.	Develop strategy to position cultural heritage to contribute to GDP and 2010.	Comprehensive strategy with targets and timeframes on how to develop SA heritage tourism.
<b>National policy on intangible cultural heritage.</b>	A policy on intangible heritage is developed.	Adoption of policy by stakeholders.	Comprehensive and clear policy that promotes and preserves intangible heritage developed.
<b>Promote heritage policy and legislation awareness</b>	Increased awareness of heritage policy and legislation.	Create broad public awareness on the significance of (amended) heritage legislation and policies.	Consistent implementation and awareness of amended legislation and policies promoted.
<b>Ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage; Convention on Stolen or Illegally</b>	The country adopts a policy on intangible heritage.	Observance of UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.	Consultative workshop to develop national position and a cabinet memorandum for ratification of convention submitted.

<b>Exported Cultural</b>				
<b>Object and Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict</b>				
<b>Review and amendment of Heritage, Archives and Libraries legislation</b>	Amended legislation.	Recommendations made at the end of the review process.	Draft amendment bills developed and memorandum for amendment of legislation submitted to Cabinet.	
<b>Development of a National Policy on Museums and Human Remains</b>	Policies developed.	Policies on Human Remains and National museums developed.		
	Establishment of PGNCs.	Establishment and capacity building for provincial geographical names committees.	Research report on comprehensive and clear policy guidelines for (management of) museums and human remains conducted.	
<b>South African Geographical Names Council</b>	Study on Social and Economic benefits of standardizing geographical names.	Study on Social and Economic benefits of standardizing geographical names is conducted.	Establishment of Provincial Geographical Names Committees in all provinces. Statistics on the impact of the standardisation on the economy.	1,272
<b>Capital Works</b>	Capital grants to associated and other institutions for maintenance and other capital projects.	Number of institutions covered by infrastructure plan by March 2010.	Number of institutions covered by infrastructure plan by March 2010.	236,459

(DAC, 2010)

Appendix D:

# 问卷调查

## Questionnaire

针对二到七周岁的儿童家长关于儿童产品的市场问卷调查 (请标识在 ，一些问题可多选)。

Children's products' marketing questionnaire administered to the parents with children in the 2-7 year-old age range (Please mark in , some questions can be multiple).

家长姓名 Parent's full name:

家长职业 Parent's job:

Questions:

Q1. 你是 (Are you)?

父亲 Father

母亲 Mother

Q2. 你的小孩几岁了 (How old is your child)?

2

3

4

5

6

7

Q3. 他/她是男孩，还是女孩 (Is he/she a boy or a girl)?

男孩 Boy

女孩 Girl

Q4. 您的小孩喜欢传统文化和艺术吗 (Is your child interested in the traditional culture and art)?

喜欢 Yes, he/she is.

不喜欢 No, he/she isn't.

我不清楚 Sorry, I don't know.

Q5. 您的小孩了解传统文化和艺术吗 (Does your child know about their country's traditional culture and art)?

了解 Yes, he/she does.

不了解 No, he/she doesn't.

我不清楚 Sorry, I don't know.

Q6. 如果您的小孩想了解传统文化和艺术, 哪一方面将会吸引他/她的注意力 (If your child wants to know their country's traditional culture and art, which aspect will attract his/her attention)?

- 历史故事 History                       图案 Pattern                       颜色 Colour
- 材料 Material               艺术家和手艺人 Artist and handcraft               技术 Skill
- 其它 Others

Q7. 每月您购买儿童产品的次数是多少 (How often do you go shopping for your child monthly)?

- 少于两次 Less than two                       两次到四次 Two to four
- 多于四次 More than four

Q8. 您会经常挑选什么样的儿童产品 (Which kind of children's products do you normally buy)?

- 玩具 Toys                       文具 Stationary                       衣服 Clothes
- 生活用品 Interior items                       其它 Others

Q9. 您每月儿童产品的开销是多少 (How much do you spend on children's products per month)?

- 少于两百 Less than 200                       200 ~ 500                       500 ~ 800
- 多余八百 More than 800

Q10. 您能接受一本儿童书的价格幅度是 (With which price range would you spend on a children's book)?

例如 For example: 0~50 or 50~100

Q11. 您能接受一件儿童生活用品的价格幅度是 (With which price range would you spend on a children's interior item)?

例如 For example: 0~50 or 50~100

Q12. 请您根据平时影响您购买儿童产品时的条件进行排序 (Please order the following factors that influence you when buying children's products).

品牌 Brand

种类 Category

价格 Price

质量 Quality

(例如 For example: 质量 Quality › 价格 Price › 种类 Category › 品牌 Brand)

感谢您的参与 Thank you!

Appendix E:

# 同意书

## Consent Letter

敬启者:

To whom it may concern;

于润铭 (姓名), 是一个 刺绣工厂厂长 (职业)。

I, Runming Yu (Name), am a embroidery factory owner (Job).

我同意并接受李彦霏的硕士研究课题的采访, 其研究课题是关于非洲传统手工艺的图案设计与中国传统手工艺技术相结合, 继而设计并制造相关的儿童产品。如有任何疑问, 请与以下联系方式, 联系我。

I give my consent to be interviewed with Yanfei Li about her master project: A fusion of traditional African and Chinese craft design methods and techniques to inform a range of interior children's products. Any questions regarding this consent can be directed to me using the following contact information:

名字 Name: 于润铭

电话 Phone:

手机 Mobile: 13054581917

地址 Address: 陕西省西安市鲁峰街 60-1 号

电子邮件 Email: yurunming@hotmail.com

敬上,

Sincerely,

签名



Signature



采访人物 Interviewee: 于润铭 Runming Yu

采访者 Interviewer: 李彦霏 Yanfei Li

采访时间 Interview date: 2013.12.16

采访问题 Questions of Interview:

Q1. 您的职业是(如绣工或民间艺术家)

鲁绣从业者

Q2. 您从事这项职业有多久

20年

Q3. 您对传统文化及民间艺术有怎样的见解

作为一个非物质文化遗产鲁绣的从业者看来，由于时代的发展和人们生活水平的提高，总的来说比较的悲观。对于老祖宗留下来的手工技艺越来越不重视，使得这些极具历史价值的工艺、技巧面临很危险的，失传的地步。而由于现今政府的无视，得不到政府有效扶持的绣花产业可以说是名副其实的夕阳产业。

Q4. 您为什么会民间布艺特别是传统鲁绣感兴趣，源于哪里？

家族企业，父亲，母亲从业，自己理所应当的传承下去。

Q5. 能否介绍一下传统鲁绣是一种怎样的刺绣工艺，有什么特点？

鲁绣，山东生产的刺绣品，山东地区的代表性刺绣，山东简称为“鲁”，故名。是历史文献中记载最早的一个绣种，属“八大名绣”之一。它所用的绣线大多是较粗的加捻双股丝线，俗称“衣线”，故又称“衣线绣”。其绣品不仅有服饰用品，也有观赏性的书画艺术品。鲁绣风格较他绣不同，多以暗花织物作底衬，以彩色强捻双股衣线为绣线，采用齐针、缠针、打籽、滚针、擞和针、镇绣、接针等针法，选取民间喜闻乐见的花鸟，风景、鸳鸯、蝴蝶等内容。

Q6. 能否简单说明一下传统鲁绣有哪些步骤及制作时间

一般我们工厂制作主要是分为以下几个步骤：

1.定稿：专门的设计师设计图案

2.选料：决定产品的用料

3.刺样：用专门的工具在塑料纸上刺出图案

4.刷版：类似于印刷术

5.制作：绣工根据印刷在布上面的图案走向绣制

6.后处理：绣好的产品经过下水，熨烫，包装，出厂。

Q7. 鲁绣作品的价格的主要依据是什么（请举例说明）？

线的使用:一套台布需要用到 3000 根线，那么每根线 x 元，这个台布需要付给绣工的金  
额就是 3000x。

Q8. 您最喜欢或满意的自己的鲁绣作品是什么，为什么？

代号 6001：曾经卖的最好产品代号。



Q9. 如果将这些传统刺绣工艺与现代设计相结合，您有怎样建议和想法

刺绣工艺主要面向比较有层次的少数人群，可以和礼品行业、汽车改装行业、茶品行业  
等展开合作。

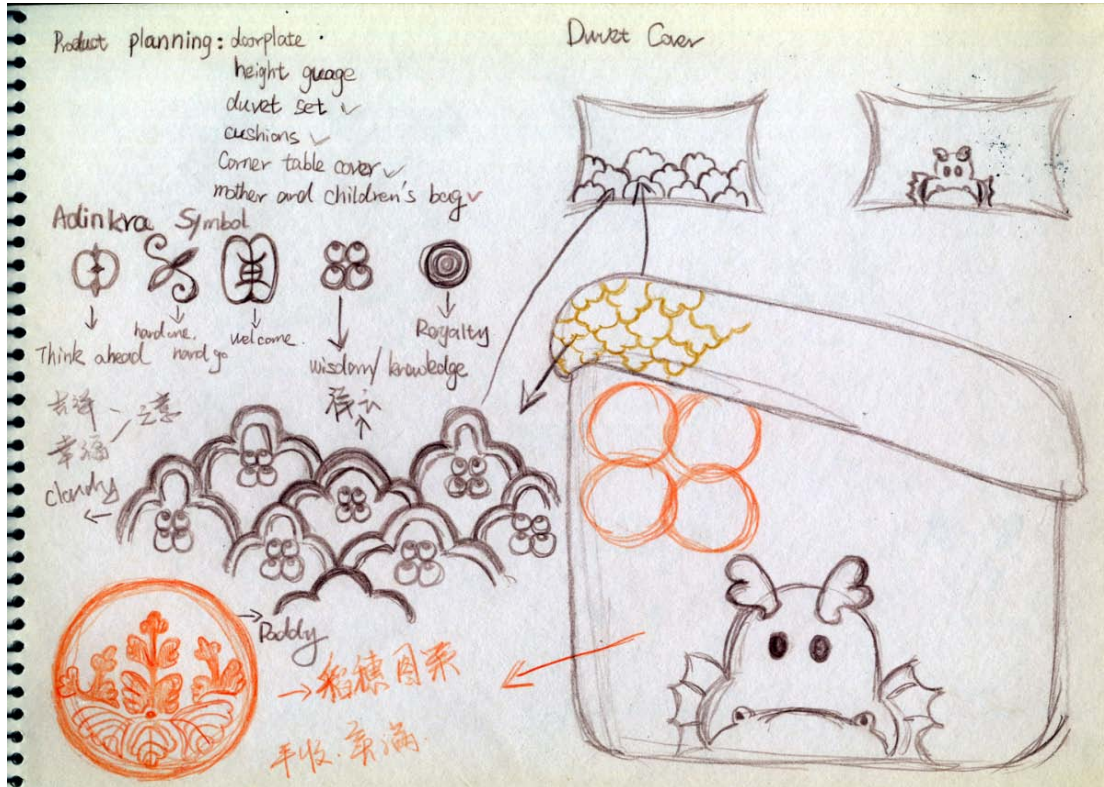
Q10. 如果这些结合运用到儿童产品设计，您有怎样建议和想法

个人认为鲁绣与其运用在儿童产品身上，不如说是更能吸引那些购买儿童产品的父母。  
主要起到一些装饰的作用。对儿童产品本身的意义个人认为非常有限。

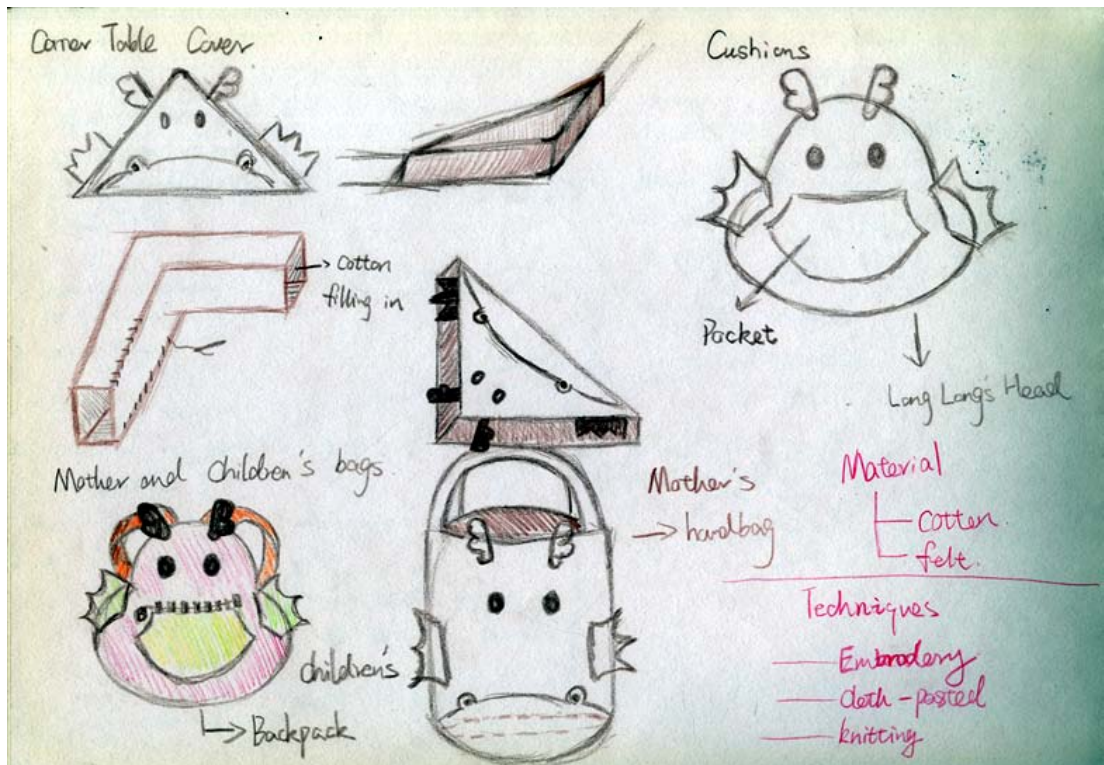
Appendix F:

## Journaling Sketches

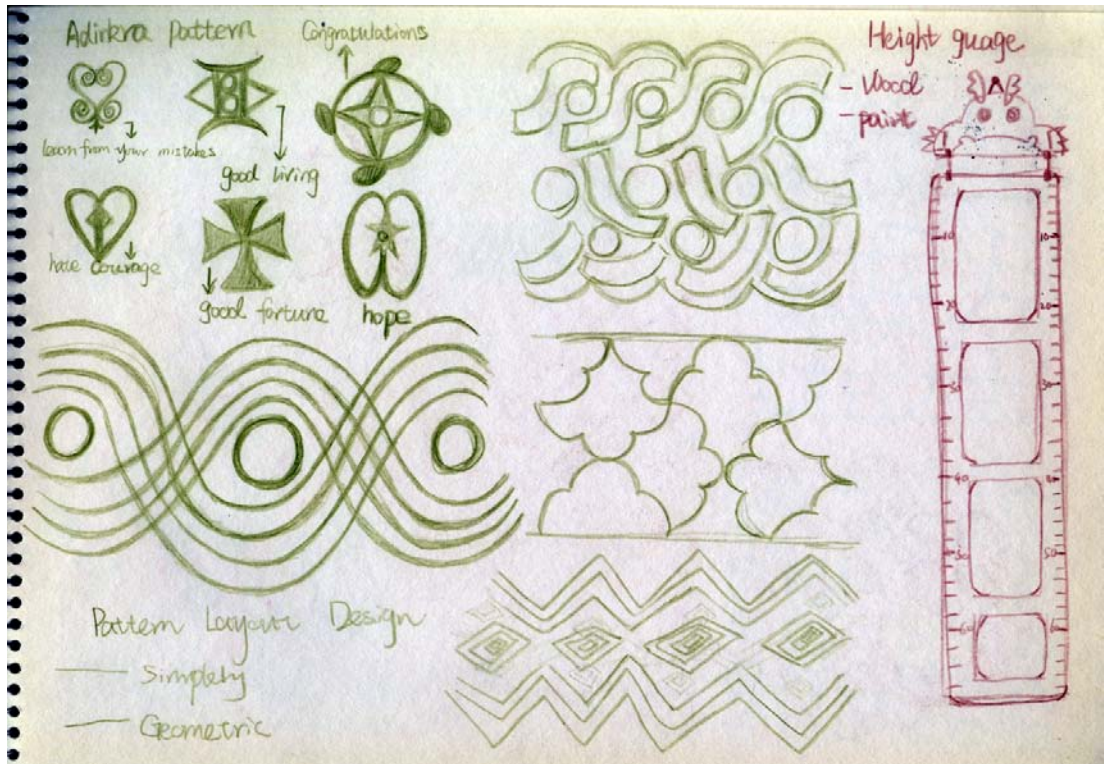
The sketches of the traditional Adinkra symbols and children's duvet set



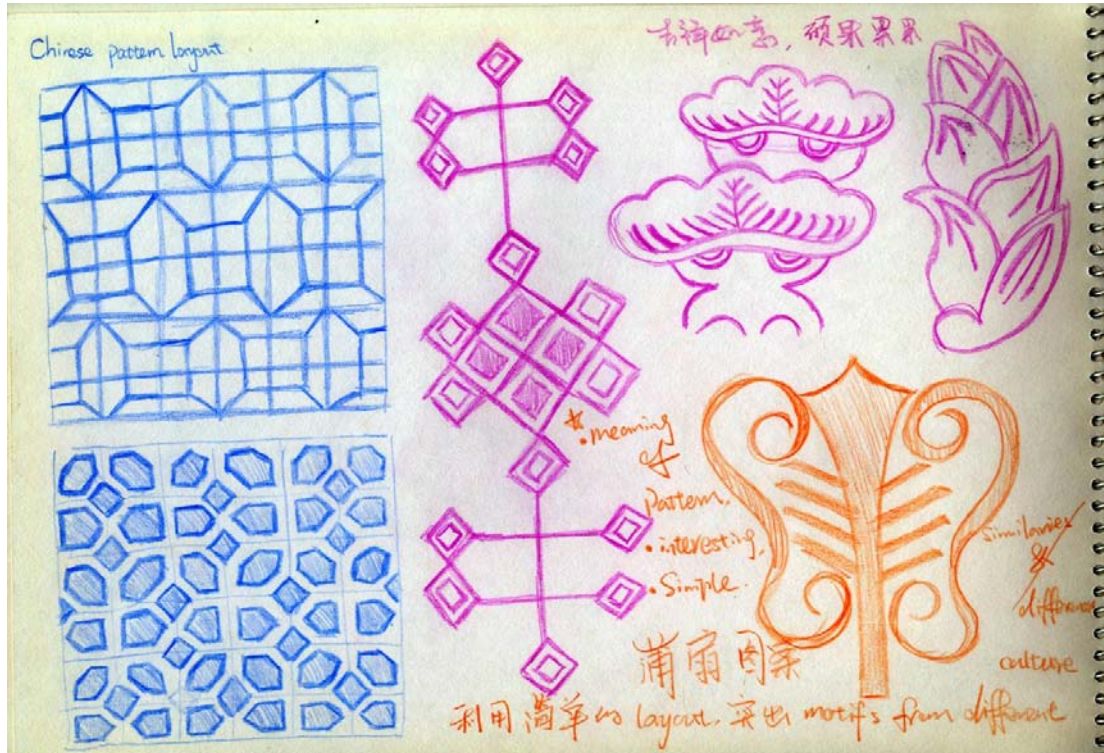
The sketches of the children's bags



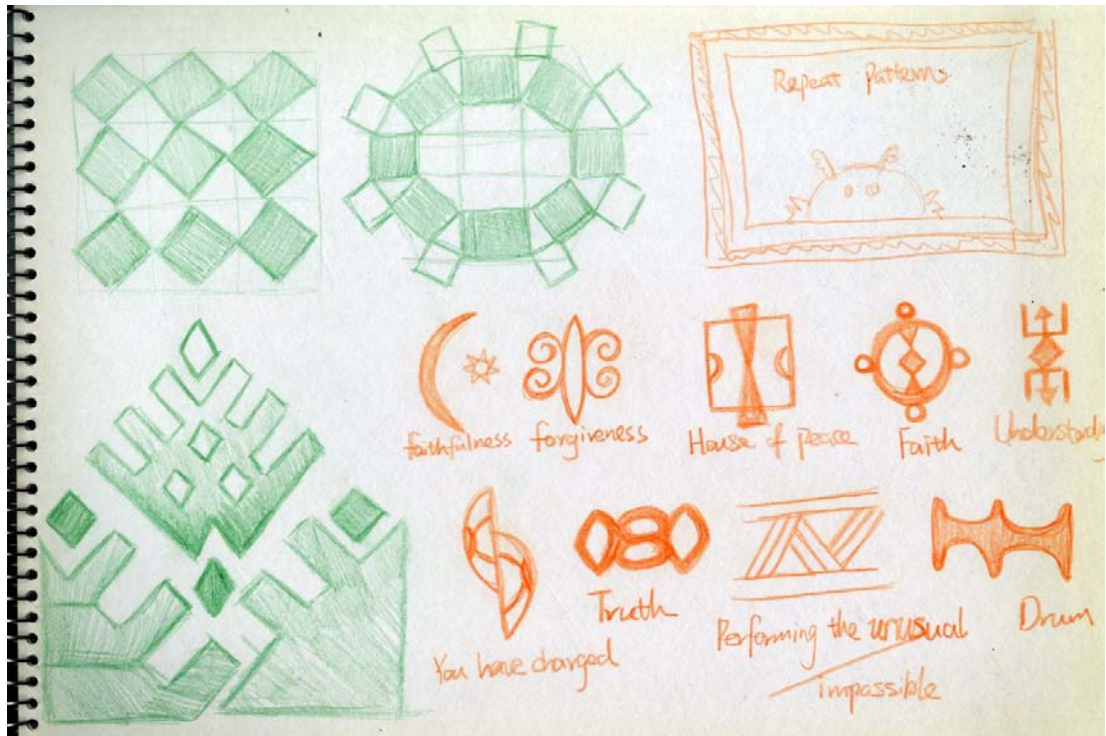
The sketches of the traditional Adinkra symbols and children's height guage



The sketches of traditional Chinese auspicious patterns



The sketches of the traditional Adinkra symbols



## Appendix G:

# The DTI Craft Sector Development Strategy

### Global trends in the creative industries

There is no doubt that there is huge growth in the trade in cultural goods and services around the world. UNESCO's Study on International Flows of Cultural Goods: 1980-1998, showed that annual world trade in literature, visual arts, cinema, photography, music, radio, television and electronic games grew from \$95 billion to more than \$387 billion. Figures from a variety of sources indicate annual growth of at least 3 times average economic growth in a range of creative industry sub-sectors<sup>1</sup>.

Unsurprisingly the largest share of the global market is held by developed countries and by 1998; the five largest exporters of cultural goods and services were Japan, USA, Germany, United Kingdom and China, accounting for 53% of cultural exports and 57% of cultural imports<sup>2</sup>.

Clearly, the creative industries have become increasingly important in national economies and in global trade, and are now the primary export-earners for some of the leading developed economies. However, there is a major disparity between developed economies on the one hand and developing economies on the other. "The world map of cultural industries reveals a yawning gap between North and South. This can only be counteracted by strengthening local capacities and facilitating access to global markets at national level by way of new partnerships, know-how, control of piracy and increased international solidarity of every kind".<sup>3</sup> There is a huge need – and huge potential - for the developing world to generate

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<sup>1</sup> The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) which monitors sales on an annual basis in seventy countries reported that in 1998, global sales of recorded music stood at \$38 671 billion as against \$27 billion in 1990 (Study on International Flows of Cultural Goods: 1980-1998, published by UNESCO in 2000). A report by the International Intellectual Property Alliance six years ago indicated that creative industries in the USA grew three times faster than the annual growth rate of the economy between 1977 and 1996. In 1996, exports in cultural products (films, music, television programmes, computer software, books, etc) earned more than \$60 billion, surpassing traditional industries that generated foreign income for the USA like motor vehicles, agriculture, aerospace and defence. By 2001, foreign sales and exports by the copyright industries in the USA were estimated at nearly \$90 billion, again surpassing all other major industry sectors (News report posted on [www.backstage.com](http://www.backstage.com) on 17 March 2003). In the United Kingdom, the creative industries grew by an average of 9% per annum between 1997 and 2001. Creative industry exports accounted for 4,2% of all exported goods and services, the equivalent of 11,4 billion sterling in 2001. By June 2002, 122 000 companies had registered in Creative Industry sectors of the Inter-Departmental Business Register in the United Kingdom, and this sector had a total of 1,9 million jobs. Between 1997 and 2001, employment in the creative industries grew by 3% compared with 1% in the whole economy, an achievement similar to that of the cultural industries sector in the USA (Study on International Flows of Cultural Goods: 1980-1998, published by UNESCO in 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Culture, Trade and Globalisation: Some Questions and Answers by Guiomar Alonso, published on UNESCO's website.

<sup>3</sup> From Cultural Industries: A focal point for culture in the future on UNESCO's website

creative industries that will produce products to compete on the global market.

The unique nature of the creative industries is that they have both an economic and a cultural dimension. Given the cultural dimension, creative products carry with them the values, worldviews, ideas and interests of the country of origin. The dominance of the USA in creative industry world markets has generated huge concerns about the impact of American cultural products on the identity and cultures of societies across the globe. These concerns have become even more profound with the increasing liberalisation of national markets, the removal of tariffs and other barriers to trade as demanded by the World Trade Organisation. However, the growing global cultural diversity movement offers an opportunity for creative products from the developing world to find greater markets internationally.

### **Market opportunities in the creative industries**

The major domestic sector markets for creative industry products and services are the tourism, services and retail sectors – all of which are showing significant growth in South Africa, in most cases above average national growth. Research shows that most products and services emanating from the creative industries are consumed at a local and provincial level with a small percentage accessing national and export markets<sup>4</sup>. This reflects both the untapped market potential for local products and the absence of skills and resources in marketing and distributing products nationally and internationally.

Primary international exports currently are to the South African Development Community (35%), USA (28%) and the European Union (21%).

### **Creative industry indicators**

In 1998 annual world trade in literature, visual arts, cinema, photography, music, radio, television and electronic games was more than \$387 billion<sup>33</sup>. Japan, the USA, Germany, UK and China together have a 55% share of this market<sup>5</sup>. And South Africa has 4.4% of this market.

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<http://portal.unesco.org/culture>.

<sup>4</sup> 68% service local markets; 21% distributed their products and services nationally; and only 11% made it to international markets, CreateSA's National Skills and Resources Audit, Nov 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Source...

## Appendix H:

### Marketing Plan

The brand name is Long Long that is a little dragon as the main protagonist in my products. Long Long is a specialty children's product brand produced in Cape Town, and all products through internet marketing cater to a global market. I am dealing with traditional African textile motifs and pattern designs and processes with Chinese folk fabric craftwork and embroidery techniques, in order to create fascinating children's products. My products are made into a series of children's cloth- pasted books and interior items. The books used two main languages: English and Chinese, due to its global dominance. Long Long is aimed at the target market for 2-7 years old children. The marketing mission is to provide customers with unique, high-quality children's products at affordable prices.

The four marketing instruments (product, price place and promotion) were made use of and developed into a marketing plan, it is as follows:

#### Products

Long Long's products are made into a series of children's books and interior items. The interior items include duvet sets, curtain, cushions, height gauges and children's bags. All products combined traditional African textile motifs and pattern designs with Chinese folk fabric and embroidery techniques creating a new technique to encourage children's interests in traditional culture and also different craft techniques. Techniques used in making the products included African Adinkra motifs and pattern design, plus Chinese cloth pasting, embroidery, needlework and digital printing. Each product can also be custom-made if desired; however since every product fabric is designed by me, no two products will ever be identical. All cotton, felt, non-woven fabric and other materials that are utilized in the construction of the products are of highest quality. All products are available for sale on the Long Long website page and it will provide delivery service in the future.

#### Price:

Totally invest R6400 in this business to produce prototypes of children's cloth- pasted books and interior items.

List of price of products' prototypes:

The children's cloth- pasted books (including the price of digital printing on short runs): R899

The children's duvet set (including a pillowcase, single duvet cover and flat sheet): R629

The children's curtain: R499

The children's cushions: R389 – R529 (each)

The children's wall decoration: R2249

The children's height gauge: R429

The children's bags: R179 – R529 (each)



Place:

The Long Long website page is building up and will be published later. It also will cooperate with some local craft and design stores at Long Street.

Promotion

Long Long provides the business card, brochures, promotional postcards and leaflet to publish. It can be interviewed by the cultural and design magazines or television programmes. Customer can visit the Long Long website page to follow the products' news in the future.

A SWOT analysis was conducted to ascertain the Long Long's product strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The results are displayed below.

**Table 1: SWOT analysis**

SWOT	Impact on Long Long
<b>Strengths:</b>	
● Low interest rates	● Cost of financing low
● Local business	● Higher purchase rates
● Unique products	● Unique design and hand making
● Reputable local and international supplier	● Steady and fast supplying
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	
● Limited production capacity	● Hand making
● Limited product's range	● Loss certain range of customers
● New business with weak consumer confidence first	● Decreased sales
<b>Opportunities:</b>	
● Growth of children's global market	● Increased sales
● Urban sales	● Increased sales and high margins
● Increasing consumption capacity	● Increased sales
<b>Threats</b>	
● Low price competition	● Decreased sales
● No employees	● Slowly manufacture
● High cost of delivery	● Decreased sales

(Yanfei, 2014)

There is the analysis of risk management (seen in Table 2).

**Table 2: Risk Management**

Impact	Risk	Solution
Significant	International fabrics' suppliers therefore risk of production problem. Idea copy.	Continually seek new reliable local manufacturers and cheaper delivery company.  Long Long children's products registration
	Slowly manufacturing therefore lack the stock.	Store extra products in case of short, need to train someone to help.
Minor	Limited range of children's products.	Children's product category Exploration.

**Table 3: Cost of Product Samples Manufactured**

Cost of Samples Production		6357.40
Raw Materials		1737.20
● calico cotton	980.78	
● canvas cotton	274.12	
● velvet	80.80	
● traditional Africa fabric	28.00	
● felt	30.50	
● non-woven fabric	54.10	
● embroidered silk threads	158.20	
● accessories	130.70	
Techniques		3418.70
● fabric digital printing	1014.60	
● book printing	400.50	
● laser cut	71.20	
● handing embroidery	712.00	
● machine embroidery	320.40	
● Framing	900.00	
Labor		1201.50

(Yanfei, 2014)

Appendix I:

Photographic Documentations

Documentation 1

Title: The traditional Chinese embroidery techniques photographs

Place: The studio of Hongyu Zhao in Wuxi, China

Time: September 2013

The traditional Chinese embroidered cushion covers



The traditional Chinese embroidered accessory bags



## The traditional Chinese embroidered women skirts



## Documentation 2

**Title:** The traditional African Textile photographs

**Place:** Iziko Museum and Art Galleries in Cape Town, South Africa

**Time:** March 2014

## Kampala fabric from Nigeria



Mudcloth from Mali



Ankara piece from Ipele



Kente Strips from Ghana



Discharge dyed fabric



Printed factory cloths from Ghana



Stripweave from Burkina Faso



Damask caps from Nigeria



Ashetu (Prestige Hats) from Cameroon



**Appendix J:**

Faculty of Informatics and Design

**Research Ethics Review Checklist**

All post-graduate students and researchers are required to complete this form before commencing with research. Post-graduate students are requested to please submit this form together with HDC 1.2 (proposal submission) to the Faculty Research Committee (FRC).

*(Where applicable mark relevant boxes with an X)*

Project Title: A fusion of traditional craft and design methods and techniques to inform a range of children's product
---

<b>Applicant / Researcher:</b>	Title, name & surname: Ms, Yanfei Li	Under-graduate	Post-graduate	x	Staff
	Office Telephone:	Cell: 0799 787378	eMail: xiule8877@hotmail.com		

<b>Supervisor (if)</b>	Title, name & surname: Dr Alettia Chisin				
	Office Telephone: 021- 469 1036	Cell: 0735092033	eMail: chisina@cput.ac.za		

**Research Checklist:**

		Yes	No
1:	Does the study involve participants who are unable to give informed consent? Examples include children, people with learning disabilities, or your own students.		x
2:	Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for access to the research participants. Examples include students at school, members of self-help groups, residents of nursing homes — anyone who is under the legal care of another.		x
3:	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? — e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places?		x
4:	Will the study with the research subject involve discussion of sensitive topics? Examples would include questions on sexual activity or drug use.		x
5:	Will the study involve invasive, intrusive, or potentially harmful procedures of any kind (e.g. drugs, placebos or other substances to be administered to		x

	the study participants)?		
6:	Will the study involve testing on sentient subjects?		x
7:	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		x
8:	Will your research involve materials or processes that could damage the environment?		x

If you have answered '**No**' to all questions, submit the completed and signed form to the FRC together with the research proposal.

*If you have answered 'Yes'...*

If you have answered '**Yes**' to one or more questions, kindly attach a report describing how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your research. This does not mean that you cannot do the research, only that your proposal will need to be approved by the Research Ethics Committee. You will need to submit your plans for addressing the ethical issues raised by your proposal to the FID Research Ethics Committee.


**Declaration**


As Researcher / Applicant I acknowledge that:

- It is my responsibility to follow the CPUT Code of Practice on Ethical Standards (which is currently being drafted) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of my study; and
- that this includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.
- Furthermore that in the event that there are any significant changes in the design, or conduct over the course of the research, that I will notify my supervisor (where relevant) and inform the FID Research Ethics Committee if new ethics approval is needed.

By my signature below I declare that I am not aware of any potential conflicts of interest, other than those declared on THIS form, which may influence the ethical conduct of this study.

Signatures:

Researcher: 
Date: 3/10/2013

Supervisor: 
Date: 3/10/2013



FID Research Ethics Committee comments:

Approved	Referred back	Chair: Ethics Committee	Date:

**Appendix K:**

## **Design and Layout of Thesis and Practicum**

**The elements, motifs, patterns, designs, colours, font styling and texts of the practical works and thesis are all created by Yanfei Li.**