

Textile Design at Thomas Jefferson University

Thomas Jefferson University has been a textile leader since 1884, when it was founded as the Philadelphia Textile School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—the first textile school in the United States. The university has grown and evolved into an institution known for preeminence in transdisciplinary, experiential, professional education, research and discovery. Jefferson delivers exceptional value for 21st century students with excellence in textiles, design, architecture, business, engineering, fashion, health, science, and social science infused with liberal arts.

The Textile Design programs—Textile Design BS, Textile Design MS and the newly launched Global Textile Design MS/MSc—as part of Jefferson's Fashion & Textiles Futures Center, create connections that form the collaborative future of the industry, establishing a process of innovation and advancing textiles across platforms. This is realised through the intersection of wildly creative, conceptual, aesthetics embedded with strong technical knowledge in the development of next-generation textiles, textile products, and textile processes.

Global Textile Design MS/MSc is a world-leading joint degree program in partnership with Heriot-Watt University in Galashiels, Scotland UK. In the textile, fashion, interiors and related fields, there is established interest and importance placed on design sustainability, artisanal heritage and entrepreneurship. The think global/live local movement emphasises a return to artisanal roots through ethical sourcing and reconnecting with handwork interfaced with technology. Maker spaces proliferate where artisanal skills are celebrated, and resources are shared. This program provides context for designing in a global market where people want to understand the heritage of their products and purchases. Through this innovative program, with semesters at Jefferson and Heriot-Watt, students will be immersed in the global textile design market,

enabling them to develop both their technical and artisanal skills for foremost industry or entrepreneurial ventures. Students will have unprecedented access to extend and expand their professional networks through involvement with global trade fairs, access to famed archives and placement into premiere textile design industry internships. The first cohort for Global Textile Design MS/MSc will be welcomed in Fall 2024. This and all Textile Design programs at Jefferson are STEM eligible.

In our programs, students have access to extensive facilities incorporating a full range of analog and digital textile equipment. Our dedicated maker spaces include knit studios and fabric production labs from hand flats to whole garment technology. The Center for Excellence in Surface Imaging anchors our print facilities, incorporating the latest software, expansive digital technologies, darkroom, screen printing and colour kitchen. In the handweaving studios and the John L. Steen Power Weaving Center, students access floor looms, dobbie looms and state of the art industrial jacquard equipment. Textile testing and fitness for use are investigated in the Jeff Bruner Materials Characterisation Laboratory, with over 50 pieces of industry leading equipment. At Jefferson, we truly have the best textile "toys", establishing a wide range of opportunities for exploration.





Throughout our courses, students are immersed in their future by participating in industry-sponsored projects, interactive field trips to top firms and global trade fairs, internship opportunities and important design competitions. Our Textile Design students routinely test their skills and take top honors in national and international design challenges. One such competition is the International Textile Alliance Virginia Jackson Design Competition, where our students have consistently been awarded top prizes year after year. The competition, named in honour of the late trend forecaster Virginia Jackson, was established in 1995 to “recognise the most talented students in the field of textile design and create a vehicle to bring new talent into the industry”. Jackson stated that her goal was that of “an educator and creative force in colour and design direction... to nurture talents to the American home fashions scene”.

Students create designs for residential upholstery in dobby woven, jacquard woven and print design categories. In Jefferson’s Textile Design programs, students learn foundational and advanced techniques in all of these areas, selecting one or more of these textile platforms for experimental, future-facing design and innovative problem solving. For the Virginia Jackson Design Competition students submit original dobby and jacquard woven samples, with

an illustrated end use and conceptual statement. Entries are created without information as to university affiliation, so that jurors may evaluate the submissions on a neutral basis. Industry jurors analyse the projects based on creativity of concept, furniture application, colour usage and design innovation.

In 2023, Jefferson Textile Design undergraduate and graduate students were awarded 8 of the 9 total prizes, including all 6 of the top awards (1st and 2nd place in each of the three categories). These students were honored to have their winning designs displayed at Interwoven, the premier home furnishings textile trade show located in High Point, North Carolina, the heart of the furniture industry in the United States.

Some of the winning students have shared insights on their interest in textile design, why they selected Jefferson as a university, their conceptual focus, their design process and their career aspirations. Please see the responses below from this next generation of industry professionals, as well as selected images of winning entries.

What led you to choose Textile Design as a major/career?

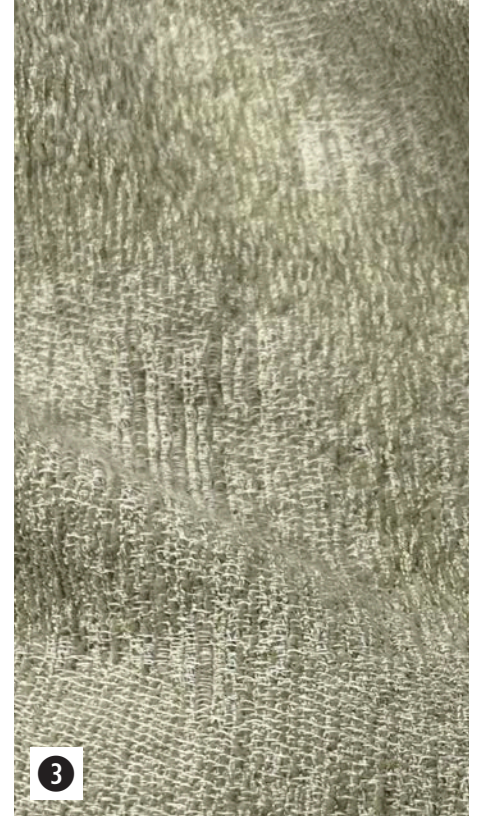
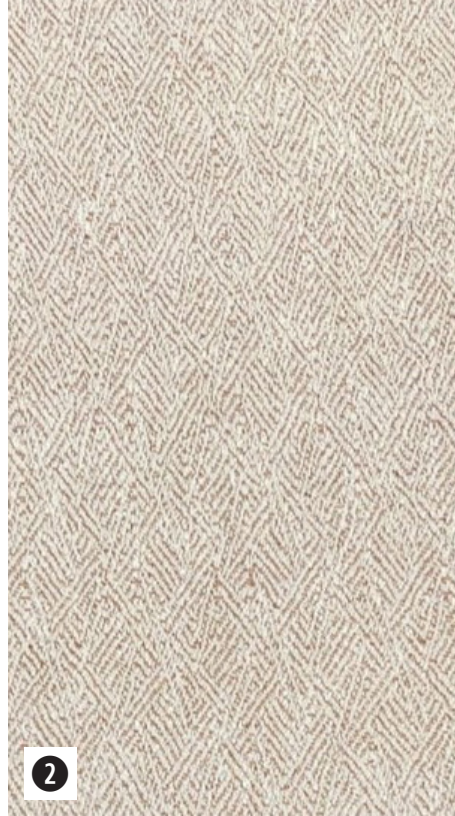
I have always had an interest in design and tradition which was probably inspired by my

Indian upbringing. I have travelled throughout India exploring its rich textiles and grown up around the unique culture. I developed a passion for creativity and admiration for the incredible artisans that I have seen creating beautiful wovens which has led me to dive deeper in understanding how to communicate creatively through visual components and stay close to tactility in art. *Sanika Borkar (MS Textile Design '24)*

I decided to be a Textile Designer and pursue a career because I love working with my hands. The physical aspect of what I do brings me joy. The tactile experience is wonderful. *Skylar Strauss (BS Textile Design '24)*

I have been interested in fibre arts since I was young. I majored in Fashion Design in undergrad, but my roommates were both in Textile Design. I loved what they were doing and knew that was where I should be. That convinced me to pursue a Masters in Textile Design. *Kelly Padulese-Czyzewski (MS Textile Design '23)*

My journey into Textile Design was a combination of my passion and a series of influential experiences. Ever since I was young, I’ve always had a fascination with colours, patterns, and fabrics. I find joy in creating something beautiful from scratch, and textiles offer an incredible canvas for artistic expression. As I continued my education and explored different fields, I found that Textile Design resonated



with me the most. It's a blend of creativity and functionality, allowing me to combine my love for art with practical applications. Moreover, I've had the chance to work on various projects and internships that confirmed my passion for this field. *Fatima Saifuddin [MS Textile Design '24]*

Why Textile Design at Jefferson? What makes this program/ university special?

It really is the most reputed within the textile community and was the only school I applied to. It also has an outstanding curriculum that gives great freedom creatively along with a solid technically structured versatile MS program while also having an incredibly supportive faculty that constantly pushes us to work beyond our comfort zones. The extensive facilities available, for knit, print and weave, to explore and experiment create excellent opportunities to learn and advance our knowledge. *Sanika*

I attend Jefferson not only for the extensive knowledge in the industry you can obtain as an undergraduate student but also because of the studio environment. I feel my professors and peers make this program unique. *Skylar*

I chose Jefferson because of the beautiful campus, welcoming atmosphere, and networking opportunities. The program is special because the staff in the Textile Design department are phenomenal. The caliber of talent the other students possess drives everyone to higher

achievements. *Kelly*

Jefferson University has a rich history and a strong reputation in the field of design and textiles. The program has a legacy of producing successful graduates who have made significant contributions to the industry. This legacy is backed by experienced faculty members who are not only experts in their fields but also deeply passionate about nurturing students' creativity and talents. *Fatima*

Please share the inspiration for your award-winning work in this competition.

This abstract jacquard is inspired by the awe of traveling and the sights one sees. This conveys the romantic nostalgia of far-off places. The painterly textures and movement of sunsets mixing with the sky, convey a sense of comfort. *Sanika*

My inspiration for my work in this competition, Trapped-A-Zoid, was the flow of colour within the brush marks in juxtaposition to the geometric nature of the trapezoids that aim to freeze the beautiful movement of flowing water. I've found a love for printmaking and painting that I did not possess before entering this program. *Skylar*

My entry focused on creating an environment that is practical and relaxing for working from home but also luxurious for hosting others. By mixing a soft boucle yarn with a smooth reflective yarn both sides are represented. *Kelly*

Print: The genesis of the print design is rooted

in my recent visit to the safari at Disneyworld. The motifs, which were drawn from life, are the result of a thorough process of hand-painting using watercolours.

Dobby: I have produced a woven sample that draws inspiration from maps. To depict the crisscrossing lines prevalent in bus, train, subway and road maps, I opted for yarn with finer plies wrapped around it and multiple hues. My idea of incorporating crossing lines into the design stemmed from examining samples in the NUNO: Visionary Japanese Textiles Book. *Fatima*

Please tell us about your design process. How did you create the designs/textiles for this competition?

I started by creating hand drawn motifs with different mediums like watercolour, coloured pencils, and gesso on paper along with making abstract textures in my sketchbook. The motifs were then scanned and were made into a repeating print design digitally. I experimented with several yarns and the design was further developed using jacquard software. It was then finally woven into a textile. *Sanika*

My design process always starts with ideation and research. After I had decided to do a geometric shape, I wanted to challenge what one typically sees within geometric patterns. The movement in the trapezoids counters the overall shape. *Skylar*



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My design process began with researching trends. I looked at colours, ways of life, and current events. I developed a story to represent my fabric and then chose yarns that fit into the story. I created yarn wrappings to understand how the two yarns would look together on the loom. I developed the weave structure in a digital weaving program to check float length and patterning. Then I created several samples to see which one best represented my idea. *Kelly*

Print: I created motifs in watercolour inspired by the Safari at Disneyworld and used those to create a 2x2 repeat.

Dobby: The choice of yarn depended on colouration. The yarn represents the crisscrossing depiction of similar patterns on a map. The longer floats are intentional and play the role of train floats crossing one another. *Fatima*

What are your career aspirations?

My career aspirations are centered around constant growth and skill enhancement. I also wish to preserve traditional artisanship that isn't machine made or mass produced. *Sanika*

As of right now my career aspirations are leaning heavily into the interiors industry. Upholstery or carpet are interesting to me since I love to weave and have started to develop successful prints. *Skylar*

My career goals include teaching and writing about my weaving adventures. *Kelly*



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My career aspiration as a textile designer is to create innovative, sustainable designs that inspire. I aim to collaborate across industries, share knowledge, and potentially start my own studio. My goal is to leave a positive, lasting mark on the industry and promote sustainable practices. *Fatima*



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These students, Textile Designers at Jefferson, represent the future of our industry, with interests in sustainability, materiality and the intersection of artisanal practices with technology. For more information on any of these programs, please follow us on Instagram @textiledesignatjefferson and visit our website at Jefferson.edu/FuturesCenter.



4. Sanika Borkar, MS Textile Design '24, Honorable Mention Jacquard
5. Fatima Saifuddin, MS Textile Design '24, 1st Place Print
6. Skylar Strouss, BS Textile Design '24, 2nd Place Print

The John.L Steen Power Weaving Centre