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CAPTURING THE LANDSCAPE: TEXTILES FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FASHION INDUSTRY

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This paper evolved from research undertaken in 2008 when I was invited by Bonnie English (QCA) and Liliana Pomazin (RMIT) to write a chapter in their book *Australian Fashion Unstitched : the last 60 years*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2010. *Australian Fashion Unstitched* surveyed the industry from the various perspectives: the fabulous fifties, Australian Haute Couture designer Beryl Jents, (40's to 50's) photography, museum collections, the swim suit , navigating the world's fashion capitals etc. The chapter on textiles titled *Interlaced : Textiles and Fashion* included the development of the wool industry (and mentioned only as background in this paper) and traced the role of designing and making textiles for the fashion industry.

Textiles are intricately interlaced with fashion, giving texture, drape, feel, detail and colour to garments. In Australia, tracing the place of textiles in the fashion industry presents a complex story of materials, individual designers, studio practices, commercial production, textiles, art, craft and design. Overwhelmingly, makers of textiles for fashion have shown a desire to represent Australia, its character and spirit in cloth.

This paper documents designers from two periods. Firstly, the pioneers of modernist textile designs - the period from 1940 to 1960 when several studios were established by Australians returning from studying overseas with specialist knowledge and skills or by highly skilled immigrants for them Australia presented opportunities and a new horizon after World War II. The second period is the boom times for hand painted and printed clothes in the 1970s through to the early 1990's. This period saw many designers become involved with indigenous groups, the emergence of designer makers and establishment of a number of Aboriginal artists design studios. Designers in this period created bold and expressive designs for the industry.

All designers are were telling a story with designs that they believed captured the essence of this country, defining its character through design, colour, pattern, line, texture, image and shape. These designers have introduced new design practices, embraced Asian influences and developed innovative approaches - all explore the relationship between practice, design, location and the environment to create designs that capture the essence of Australia.

Australia's history is interlaced with textiles. The search for raw materials for the textile industry (flax) was one reason for the search for the great south land, From the arrival of sheep with the First Fleet in 1788 to celebrating 200 years of wool trading in 2007, the export of fine Merino wool has been central to Australia's wealth and prosperity. Some industry was established but basically wool was exported and Australia was a market for British goods. Exploring this is beyond the scope of this paper, but the fact that relatively little industry existed and what did exist was linked to English or European parent companies, so little original design work was undertaken in Australia. The influx of migrants following World War II, brought textile design and manufacturing expertise, along side a different approach to food, culture and the multicultural Australia we have today began to take shape.

Pioneers of Modernist Textile Designs

In the story of textiles in Australian fashion, several studio-based practices and design projects from the early 1940s left a legacy of originality, using colour, texture, pattern and design to represent a vision of Australia. Various craft studios and workrooms were established by Australians returning from study overseas, by recent immigrants or by textile artists attempting to visualize their heritage. Arguably, while

most endeavored to developed unique national designs for the Australian market, all in their own way were important in defining an Australian character in fashion through textile design. Edith (Mollie) Grove and Catherine Hardress established *eclarté*,[1] in 1939 'to make, for Australians, in Australia, fabrics of equal beauty and quality to those which, up to date, we have enjoyed only when expensively imported from abroad' (Ashton 2000: 16). Eclarte became a highly successful weaving studio. Having studied and worked in weaving and theatre in London, the pair travelled in Europe, researching fashion and textile trends. Studio production began on specially designed looms, with Hardress designing and Grove weaving tweeds for clothing. Designs were directed by an aesthetic concerned with 'texture and colour blending, and considering climate conditions in relation to weight and weaves and durability' (Ashton 2000: 19).

The business was launched at an exhibition opened by Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies in 1940, with over 300 yards in their range of 'tweeds in checks, stripes and plain colours, dress fabrics for the beach, gossamer laces in wool for evening wear and furnishing materials including floor rugs, cushions and accessories' (Ashton 2000: 19). Invited by the Australian Wool Bureau to demonstrate at the Melbourne Royal Agricultural Society Show, *eclarté* won great acclaim with the public and their fabrics found their way into top Australian stores, with regular displays in Myer in Melbourne (Ashton 2000: 19). During the war years, when mills were producing heavier fabrics for military needs, *eclarté* was restricted by the government to producing tweeds only in commercial lengths at prices dictated by the Prices Commission. After the war, *eclarté* began to develop furnishing fabrics, and enjoyed a postwar boom in housing development, working with architects and individual clients on commercial and domestic interiors.

With the move to Dandenong, just outside Melbourne, Victoria in 1951, the Australian Wool Bureau continued its support as *eclarté's* hand-woven wool products were outstanding, both aesthetically and in terms of quality. *eclarté* was renowned for its extensive range of subtly coloured yarns, all chemically dyed but reflecting Grove's experimentation with shades and colours influenced by the landscape surrounding their studio. Not surprisingly, a suit woven by *eclarté* and designed by Australian fashion designer Hal Ludlow in 1960 won the gold medal in the Couture Section of the Australian Wool Bureau Fashion Awards (Ashton 2000: 21), and a special award was given for the fabrics (Cochrane 1992: 179). *eclarté* collapsed in the early 1960s when the studio found it impossible to compete with mechanized factories in an increasingly industrialized environment; its designs were copied and complications arose regarding commission. Grove and Hardress proclaimed that they were 'artists, not traders' (Bogle 2002: 115).

Alcorso printed textile designs were considered the most innovative products that reflected a truly Australian character. The company Silk and Textile Printers was established in Sydney in 1939 to produce screen-printed dress fabrics using new Italian techniques that Claudio and Orlando Alcorso had brought to Australia. At the end of World War II, Claudio Alcorso actively sought out Australian artists to realize his vision that Australia could produce its own textiles of quality and beauty by commissioning leading artists to design fabrics that reflected an Australian character for a market largely dominated by imports (Menz 1987: 72). The first range of fabrics, exhibited in Melbourne in 1946, presented Australian motifs printed on wool and silk dress fabrics, with the printed wool designs attracting international orders, acclaimed by critics and manufacturers and worn by hundreds of Australian women on the streets of Sydney and Melbourne. The following year, the company moved to Hobart in Tasmania, and the Modernage Fabrics range was printed using forty-six designs from thirty-three Australian artists, including Margaret Preston, Russell Drysdale, James Gleeson, William Dobell and Hal Missingham – leading artists of the time.

While many artists had never produced designs for textiles before, the designs reflected Alcorso's vision for Australian textiles with original motifs, landscapes, cityscapes, flora and fauna. The catalogue entry

for *Tree Forms* by Russell Drysdale notes ‘this design was made from drawings taken from a sketch and arranged informally to complete a full screen’ (Alcorso 1947: 9). It shows Drysdale’s interest in the landscape of inland Australia with small groups of Aborigines wandering through a threatening, drought-stricken landscape (Menz 1987: 74).

William Dobell’s *Burlesque* design 37 was ‘inspired by a festive woman during peace celebrations at Kings Cross, Sydney’ and has two variations: one for ‘hangings in heavy fabrics’, the other with an ‘all over pattern is intended for dress materials in fine fabrics’ (Alcorso 1947: 28). The range extended beyond the original forty-six designs as they were offered in various colourways and on different fabrics. Designs were printed on wool, silk and other fabrics, as either furnishing fabrics or for fashion.

Modernage Fabrics were hailed as ‘one of the boldest attempts to establish a range of exclusively Australian designs’ (Bogle 2002: 212), and a review of the time commented that ‘a few years ago it would have been considered impossible to produce locally a wide range of attractive textile designs by Australian artists. This exhibition is an important pointer to the future trend of industrial development.’ (*South Australian Homes and Gardens*, 1 December 1947)

Sydney Ure Smith, president of the Society of Artists, commented in his catalogue essay ‘Vision and Confidence in Art for Textille’ that there was great potential in these fabrics as, in the past, ‘our manufacturers had been content to copy designs from overseas, not daring to venture into new fields’ (Alcorso 1947: 8). The venture generated limited commercial success as the Australian public preferred imported fabrics, but was remarkable in involving high-profile artists and a visionary process to produce unique designs, now held in museum collections.

During the 1950s, several companies provided print designs to the fashion industry. In Melbourne, Prestige Limited, a manufacturer of hosiery from 1922 to 1979, established one of the first industrial design studios in Australia with European trained textile designer Gerard Herbst as art director from 1946 to 1956. German trained industrial designer, Herbst introduced printed fashion fabrics to the Prestige range, with the studio inventing several new printing techniques, including the transfer of gold leaf to fabric and a photographic screen-printing process called ‘phototex’. The company’s printed fabrics were showcased internationally in 1951 at the International Textile Exhibition in Lille, France.

Designs were based on natural forms of the Australian environment, featuring images of driftwood, lizard skin, seashells, rocks and leaves. The studio implemented a Bauhaus-inspired program of experimental textile design creating artists’ designed fashion fabrics that competed with imported fabrics. The studio aimed to introduce a European-inspired design aesthetic to the Australian industry. Whilst searching for a sense of identity, Herbst ‘was keen to distance himself from the gumnut and koala style’ and instead ‘favoured more subtle designs based on moss, eucalypt, bark, leaves, logs and geological formations’. He wanted his designs ‘to do justice to the Australian environment and its unique characteristics without resorting to pirating aboriginal motifs’ (Maynard 2001: 168). Prestige’s main Australian competitor was Silk and Textile Printers.

During this period, several designers and companies successfully produced and marketed their own design ranges. One of the most successful was Frances Burke in Melbourne. Burke had studied art at various institutions in Melbourne in the early 1930s, and exhibited at the Melbourne Contemporary Artists Exhibition from 1936 to 1938. In 1937, Burke and Morris Holloway established Burway Prints, Australia’s first registered screen-printery, becoming Frances Burke Fabrics in 1942. Burke’s strongly patterned, modern fabric designs, which had a distinctly Australian spirit, often featured Australian flora, fauna and Aboriginal motifs. Burke promoted the use of innovative designs and vivid, daring colours, educating her clientele in the use of appropriate fabrics to create an ambience for the new wave of

architecture. Her shop, New Design, presented a range of her popular prints, printed in repeat in fifty-two colours plus plain dyed cotton fabrics for clothing (Cyberfibres 2009a).

In Sydney, Annan Fabrics was established as a wartime enterprises in 1941 by Alexandra (Nan) Mackenzie and Anne Outlaw, and became a pioneer in screen-printing design in Australia. Having studied design, drawing and painting at the National Art School in Sydney, Mackenzie's design philosophy was based on appropriate and full knowledge of all the processes involved in making the finished article (Sumner 1987: 84). Inspired by Australian flora and fauna and Aboriginal symbols, she produced large-scale designs with vibrant colours primarily suited to interior furnishing fabrics but used also for beachwear, evening wear, day dresses and sarongs. Her designs *Strelizia, Banana, Ginger Plant* and *Bush Bunch* captured the lushness of each plant, highlighting Mackenzie's skill and expertise. After the war, inexpensive imported fabrics flooded the market and impacted on the company's viability. Relying on commissions, Annan Fabrics continued to produce hand screen-printed textiles until the mid-1950s.

1970 to 1990's

Sydney-based designer Mary Shackman's designs showed great versatility, ranging from the large-scale patterns and brightly coloured prints of the 1960s to the hand painted free-form clothing of the 1970s. They were sought after by leading Australian fashion designers. Her designs reflected the mood of the time and are said to have 'raised a few eyebrows … offering everything from punk, African warrior, Japanese samurai, Australian native or 50s colour or just a mass of abstract colours' (Mackay 1984: 179).

Shackman began screen-printing fabrics in 1965 after attending the National Art School when she co-founded a design studio called Printed Materials, Mary and Vicki. The studio hand painted and printed yardage for clothing and furnishings, which sold to department stores, designers and boutiques, including Georges, Farmers, Finlandia, Carla Zampatti, John J Hilton, Simona, Merivale and Gasworks. Her design practice illustrates the shift occurring at this time towards a focus on Australian fashion designers and manufacturers using local artists and designers, rather than outsourcing from overseas or larger factories.

In 1972 Shackman began a wholesale business with her husband George Theodore, hand painting and printing for Australian fashion labels Jenny Kee, Linda Jackson and Mark & Geoffrey. Later she established Mary Shackman Pty Ltd, creating her own resort wear ranges of t-shirts, sarongs and accessories, which sold through Sportsgirl, Country Road, David Jones, Cherry Lane and Robert Burton. In the 1980s, she concentrated on painting, exhibiting at various galleries while continuing to work with fashion designers, creating hand painted textiles for Nicola Finetta. In 1998, she began collaborating with Anthony Kendal, painting fabric designs for his Thys Collective collections in 2000, 2001 and 2002.

Australian designers began to receive international recognition in the European market. The use of 'primitive' Australian designs, including Aboriginal motifs on women's dress and leisure wear, intensified in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1980s, major Australian fashion designers put Indigenous textiles on the map, and at the same time Indigenous labels including Designer Aboriginals, Tiwi Designs, Desert Designs and Balarinji captured the brilliance of Aboriginal stories in their design. This coincided with the Australian government's policy of developing a national identity through artistic expression.

When Jenny Kee returned to Australia in 1972 after a number of years selling vintage clothes in swinging London, she saw Australia with a fresh vision. Her bold graphics style is based on the colours and forms of Australian native plants and animals, the landscape, brilliant opals and the art of Aboriginal people. In 1973 she opened her shop Flamingo Park in Sydney to sell her flamboyant knits. Jenny Kee and Linda

Jackson collaborated for 10 years at Flamingo Park, creating their own designs based on the landscape, its rocks, plants and animals. As Jane de Telga writes in Australian fashion: the contemporary Art 'they not only helped retrieve our native imagery from the limbo of kitsch tourist souvenirs, but also revitalized Australian Textile design'. They searched for a unique aesthetic that lead to the exploration of Australian themes.

For example, Jenny Kee believed that, by going back into history, a new contemporary fashion could be created, and that the epitome of this in Australia was the tribal art of the Aboriginal people. Her *Kee Corroboree* range, designed in 1977 with David McDiarmid, illustrated this approach.

Much of the work produced in Linda Jackson's design studio Bush Couture was inspired by outback trips to central Australia in the early 1980s. Her collections were diverse, including printed, plant-dyed, knitted and woven garments with inspiration derived from time spent with Indigenous communities learning about their myths, history and art. The women of Utopia supplied her with their batik silk, incorporating many traditional motifs. One range was based on a design achieved by placing gum leaves on fabric and rolling over dyes, the leaf forming a resist and creating a pattern via the relief of the leaf (Mackay 1984: 110).

Deborah Leser intensely patterned fabrics are a result of her training in graphics design and years spend researching traditional textiles. Working in the studios of Indonesian and Japanese textile dyers and traveling in India encouraged Deborah to transcend her Western views about the use of colour and explore freely its possibilities. Deborah worked with Linda Jackson interpreting the flashing colours of the indigenous opal gemstones and producing brilliant translations of the hues of the Australian landscape using sophisticated colouring techniques.

At the same time as designers were using Australian motifs, native flora and fauna to capture an Australian aesthetic, several Aboriginal labels were established, successfully marketing their designs internationally. In the previous decades, the Australian government and other agencies had to encourage Indigenous cultural production in communities, promoting self-sufficiency and employment.

In the late 1960s, Ernabella artists were introduced to the wax-resist technique of batik. This proved popular, quick to produce, easily transportable and appropriate for translating traditional body painting designs. In the hot conditions of the desert, batik proved an ideal process to capture stories, and from 1971 became a signature art form for Ernabella. Batik spread to other communities, with the Utopia women being introduced in late 1977. Their earliest creations were translated on to t-shirts and wrap-around skirts. Both groups visited the Batik Research Institute in Jogjakarta, Indonesia. Emily Kngwarreye, a ceremonial elder, worked with fabric before turning to painting on canvas in 1989. As a ceremonial elder, Kngwarreye was among the Utopia women who took on leadership of the batik project. They preferred brushes to *tjanting* (the traditional tool used to apply wax) so their batiks took on a painterly quality, a style far removed from the traditional Indonesian craft. Techniques were adapted to local conditions, with the artists folding the fabric loosely in their laps to apply the wax or anchoring the corners on a flat surface with sand-filled tins: 'The result, unlike the rhythmically formal Indonesian style, is free-flowing, asymmetrical and abstract.' (Cosic 2009) Each Utopia artist developed her designs from traditional ceremonial ground and body paintings and personal totems.

The Tiwi Design Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1969 on Bathurst Island, near Darwin, to 'preserve, promote and enrich Tiwi culture' (Parkes 2006: 250). The Tiwi Design group currently represents about 100 artists working in traditional and contemporary media. Their textiles include hand screen-printed textiles for fashions, with many of the original 1970s designs still being produced, demonstrating an 'enduring quality' and a timelessness of Indigenous designs.

In the mid 80's Bina Wear was a thriving, independently operated clothing and fabric design workshop run by a group of indigenous women on Bathurst Island in the Torres Strait, just north of Darwin. The venture grew out of a skills workshop, established by the nuns at the island mission in 1969 to create local employment - a screen printing workshop. Their screen printed designs reflect both the Aboriginal heritage and European influences.

Bronwyn Bancroft ran Designer Aboriginals in Rozelle, Sydney from 1985 to 1990, one of the first retail outlets for quality, one-off, hand-printed and painted clothing and jewelry designed by Aboriginal artists. In 1987, Bancroft and four other Koori designers were invited to present their hand painted and printed clothing at the prestigious department store Au Printemps in Paris. In 1996, Bancroft expressed concern that clothing was no longer a suitable medium for Aboriginal artists, as it received little recognition. Aboriginal designers, she felt, needed to make art.

Desert Designs originated in Western Australia in the 1980s using designs created by Jimmy Pike, with a goal of marketing products into the commercial world of contemporary fashion while maintaining the essence of Pike's creativity as well as Aboriginal cultural integrity. Desert Designs opened several stores in Australia, with all fabric designs having an Indigenous name, information on the artist and the design, as well as its symbolic meaning, attached to all products. In 1986, Desert Designs established licensing agreements with accessory and textile manufacturers Oroton and Sheridan, giving access to national and international markets with ranges of both children's clothing and women's fashion. At the same time, the *Jimmy Pike: Desert Designs* exhibition travelled to Japan and, after a second tour in 1989, the designs were licensed for ranges of skiwear and beachwear.

The 1990s saw several innovative studio based practices established, including those of Glenda Morgan and Rebecca Paterson. Glenda Morgan set up Reptilia Studio in Sydney in 1983, specializing in hand-printed and painted furnishing and fashion textiles, characterized by random repeat patterns. Her designs possessed a uniquely Australian quality inspired by the landscape and a 'painterly style' where 'the paint is usually layered in a thick, rich impasto that speaks for a variety of brush techniques' (Singleton 1988: 68). Reptilia fabrics were widely exhibited throughout Australia, and are represented in numerous collections.

Rebecca Paterson is a Perth-based textile designer, clothing designer and manufacturer. With a background in the visual arts, she 'views clothing, textiles and the body from a different perspective, outside the trend driven mainstream fashion industry'. The loose flowing outfit, *'Before'*, from 1986 aims to tell stories of the nature and history of Australian women. The tunic's delicate screen printed patterns intermingles early white images of the new land (maps of terra australis) with Aboriginal graphics. Edged with aboriginal netting / looping, the outfit is rust dyed and screen printed silk. Her label, SpppsssP, was launched in 1996 in Western Australia with Megan Salmon. Both trained as painters and met in 1990 while working at Desert Designs. Paterson worked for a time with leading Japanese textile innovator Junichi Arai, and their Summer 1998 Collection included pieces patterned with *shibori*, the Japanese resist dye technique. SpppsssP has been described as 'Australian culture slamming into Japanese textile processes' (Boland 1998).

Paterson launched Breathless in 2000, with 'dramatic textiles and bold forms continuing her focus on process, concept and the designing and making of clothes that blur the boundaries between art and fashion' (http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/hsc/paperbark/influence.htm). With concepts derived from politics, feminism and spirituality, her passion for experimenting with new technologies drives her work. Deconstructionists and Japanese designers – particularly Rei Kawakubo of Commes des Garcons –

are the major inspiration for the label: ‘We do anything with our fabrics. Let’s see what happens when we put the fabric on the floor and have a party.’ (Anderson 1997)

Over recent years, various Asian countries have played a key role in the design, making and production of textiles for the individualized design of Australia’s contemporary fashion designers. Many Australian designers are expressing their individual aesthetic through the use of original and handcrafted textiles. Leading designers are sourcing fabrics from Asian countries, and are collaborating with their traditional artisans to create unique one-off textiles.

Easton Pearson’s inspiration for garments comes directly from the textile. Fabrics sourced and commissioned are hand-embroidered, crocheted, knitted, woven, beaded and embellished from artisans and craftspeople in India and Vietnam (Parkes 2006: 112). Lydia Pearson and Pamela Easton make frequent trips to these countries with a passion and respect for their cultures and the welfare of their people. Collaboration with an Indian women’s cooperative has enabled embroidery and traditional techniques to be incorporated into their garments: ‘It’s so much more exciting to work with fabric you have designed, I guess there is some sort of spirituality about the process. It has a bit more heart. We will often include a little story about where the fabric comes from. It makes the garment more special.’ (Coffey 1998: 137) The majority of the embroidery is from Mumbai in India, with the garments being constructed mainly in Brisbane. The paper patterns are sent to the embroidery workshops with the fabric and, once completed by the artisans, the garments are cut and assembled in Australia. A small percentage of production occurs in Hong Kong, which is justified by the fact that the skill base is still lacking in Australia. The label now sells in Europe, Japan, Russia, the United States, Asia and the Middle East.

Caravana was launched in 2004 by Cathy Braid and Kirsten Ainsworth at Sydney’s Fashion Week, and quickly became known as ‘a label with a conscience’ (Cochrane 2007: 122). Caravana designs are produced by Pakistani artisans using their traditional embroidery skills. Braid and Ainsworth lived in the Chitral Valley, Northwest Pakistan in 2003 to train the women and establish work centres in which they would work. Designs take inspiration from the local environment and, through each woman’s individual interpretation, each garment is made with a personal imprint of both designer and maker.

Akira Isogawa, one of Australia’s most original designers, grew up in Kyoto, Japan, a city founded on the ancient silk trade. It is apt that a designer who is passionate about textiles comes from a city that exists essentially because of fabric. His work fuses Japanese traditions with Western influences. In 2001–02, his solo exhibition at Object Gallery, Sydney demonstrated his commitment to textiles and emphasized his belief in the process of collaboration. Within the industry, he has searched for skilled artisans, craftspeople, specialists in embroidery and print, and textile producers in places such as Bali, Hong Kong, India and Vietnam, with the aim of developing ‘experimental textiles’ (Parkes 2006: 156):

To make his *Embroidered Silk Organza Wedding Bird Layered Dress*, Isogawa worked with Chinese embroiderers to dramatically loosen and scale up their work in order to create an exaggerated laced effect. He has also collaborated with Signature Prints, drawing inspiration from the archive of Florence Broadhurst. Akira’s designs are driven by the texture of fabrics and the endless possibilities of cloth, as he works by physically draping the cloth over the figure to create his garments. Every collection is conceptually driven; however, Isogawa has stated that: ‘If you cannot wear it then I’m defeating the purpose – and that is a mistake. This is the trick – to find the balance between what is wearable and what is art.’ (http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/akira/resources/rb_akira.pdf) In his 1998 Spring/Summer collection entitled *Botanica*, he bravely used calico, it being the only fabric available to him during a trip to Indonesia scouting for embroidery. He ‘adopted it as an ironic foil for his most lavish workmanship’ (Coffey 1998: 38). Clearly, in his inimitable humble way, Isogawa was challenging existing practice and, through paradox, posing alternatives to contemporary methodologies.

Georgia Chapman and her co-founder Meredith Rowe launched Vixen in 1993. Vixen produces beautifully feminine handcrafted textiles 'driven by the surface decoration rather than the product'. They began designing scarves and sarongs because they were uninterrupted lengths of fabric which required little in the way of manufacturing (Parkes 2006: 262). Chapman's textile designs are a collaboration of specialists' and designers' work, with the textile and the garment being created in tandem, each evolving in tandem as ideas and processes influence the other. Her eclectically mixed patterns and colours have become her signature. For over a decade, Chapman has been devoted to labour-intensive techniques, done by hand: 'Everybody loves decoration. I think that's why people react so strongly to what we are doing. It's almost a backlash against all the plain clothes that around.' (Coffey 1998: 168) Vixen began showcasing its textile designs by supplying high-end fashion labels, such as Scanlan and Theodore, Colette Dinnigan and Country Road.

In the postwar period, the place of textile design within the Australian fashion industry has continually evolved, with fashion designers, textile designers and manufacturers presenting designs that reflected the colour, character and nature of the land, its people and location – in a unique land close to the cultures of Asia. Above all, textile and fashion designers have interlaced ideas of the Australian spirit and Australia's place in the world into each inspiring design range. Textile designers during these periods gave sections of the Australian fashion industry, very individual designs that captured and reflecting a landscape – full of bold colour, intricate patterns and textures.

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