Repeated Stories
- exploring storytelling for children in surface pattern design

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1.2 abstract

Repeated Stories is an exploratory project in textile design where the aim is to explore the design of storytelling patterns addressed to children. More precisely, the work examines how patterns can be designed as a tool to encourage curiosity and creativity among children. The work is practice-based, building on concrete experiments with a workshop character, where combinations of textile material, colour, printing techniques and scale are explored. The primary motive for this work is to take advantage of textile design expertise in a social context, to find new areas for competence in making repeats and patterns, and how a social value can be added to patterns. The result is an installation of three hanging textiles, meant for a public space, such as waiting room in a hospital. The work proposes an alternative approach to surface patterns by adding storytelling and give the patterns both a communicative and decorative function.

keywords:
Storytelling pattern, surface pattern, digital print, repeat
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2.1 Introduction

**Storytelling patterns**
Patterns, handy craft and textiles have in one sense always been a kind of storytelling, it tells a story about the environment and the era in which it has been created. Through history people have always had a need of telling stories, made up or true ones. In art, books and through mouth to mouth. In pattern design, this phenomenon can be seen in the so called conversational or picturing patterns, designs that encourage the idea that patterns can start a conversation, owing to its actual interest (Edwards, 2009). For instance, conversational patterns refers historically to the Toiles; scenic, single coloured designs, popular in the 18th and 19th century. With a mix of landscape and figurative scenes, representing contemporary life, politics and country living, the patterns are in one sense narrative (ibid). Another example of conversational textiles is the *Bayeux tapestry*, a nearly 70 meter long embroidered textile from the 11th century. The Tapestry portrays continuously 72 historical scenes from the life of William the Conqueror (Nationalencyklopedin).

The textile artist Miwa Akabane (2012) claims “*Storytelling patterns is an endless chain of imagination*”. She argues further that storytelling in textile pattern includes the surrounding of the pattern, the receiver, the space, the given shape and the passed time.
Designing for health environment and public space
Waiting rooms in hospitals and medical centres are areas in which every human during their life have to spend more or less time. For a child this can be a very non-secure experience, since the reason for the stay most likely is some kind of illness. You wish for something to distract your eyes and your mind. Waiting rooms may appear differently, however, a lack of strong features and characteristics could be experienced (Teimouri, 2013). According to Richard Sangwill, manager at the art department Västra Götalandsregionen, the function of art in care environments is highly important. A waiting area represents soft and human values, in contrast to the rational and high technologic environment in a hospital. Sangwill claims that art pieces may contribute to a safe and dignified background that cares for the whole human, and intrigue our curiosity, which hopefully help us to feel better (Sangwill, 2013).

The philosopher Lena Halldenius (2008) talks about waiting as both an active and a passive action. The main function of a waiting room is to serve us with a place to let time pass. Only hospitals and waiting rooms for children are arranged for something else than being prepared, because small children do not wait as grown ups do. (Halldenius, 2008).

How we experience an interior or an environment is very personal. Therefore environments should provide stimuli for new experiences. A designer has the possibility to offer a visual escape by creating interesting interior landscapes (Edwards, 2011).

Annika Nilsson is a Swedish designer who works with design and textiles from a child’s perspective. Her work Sagans skog (The story forrest) consists of a textile wall that creates a room in a bigger space, intended for a library. Annika Nilsson aims to encourage the child’s imagination and build her textile world around a story. She wants to create a calm and playful space for children in a public space (Nilsson, 2012).
2.2 motive & idea

It is interesting to think of a pattern as a story, a picture without no clear end. The Swedish illustrator Gunna Grähs claims that the communicative function of the image and its ability to tell stories tends to be forgotten, considered as a “filler” or “decoration” (Grähs, 2013, p.121). Can an image or a pattern be more than decoration, and have a more communicative function?

The designer Kristi Kuusk (2014) provides in her work *Bedtime stories* one way of storytelling, combining jacquard woven textiles, pattern and technology. It consists of a set of bed sheets for children that have woven images into the fabric. The images are recognizable through a custom made software, which creates interaction and give the child an opportunity to experience the fairy tale in a more physical way. Customized experiences gives the storyteller a chance to create his/her own story (Kuusk, Tomico, Wensveen, 2014). But is the technology necessary to intrigue the child’s imagination, and create interaction between child and pattern? How important is the choice of material and the character of the textile?

To add a social value to patterns, except the value of decoration, is a field in which it lays a great potential of development, looking at for example the textile designer Sara Gullmans work with adding social issues in patterns and how one can tell a story without words (Kaleido 2012). These ideas can be applied on design for children and space. While looking at small children, one can tell that they already build and imagine rooms and houses, draws huts and castles, and search for spatial units both inside and outside (Lundahl, 1995). But what kind of rooms do we give them to reside in?

Compared to art pieces, a pattern has several properties, including the repeat. To employ these perspectives within pattern design could lead to new expressions and a questioning of the concept of pattern in relation to storytelling. The projects mentioned above present certain approaches to storytelling pattern design, all relevant to the degree project presented here. They do not, however, consider the role of the storytelling pattern in a specific context or in relation to the viewer’s experience. There is yet no clear picture of how storytelling patterns can be designed as a tool to create imaginary intriguing spaces for children, which is the reason this project positions itself in the gap between Kristi Kuusk and Annika Nilssons work.
2.3 aim

The aim with this project is to explore the design of storytelling patterns addressed to children, and to examine how patterns can be designed as a tool to encourage curiosity and creativity among children from a textile design perspective.
3.1 method

According to Jones (1992), the best way of looking at a design strategy is simply as a list of the methods one intends to use. The strategy includes actions taken by a designer in order to transform a brief into a final design. The actions can be of different nature, some will consist of traditional actions like sketching or trying out scale, in combination with for example methods invented by the designer themselves. The chosen actions in a design strategy can be changed according to the previous actions, claims Jones. A point of view to apply to the method for this project, consider the importance of letting the process be open until a certain point. (Jones, 1992).

The method in this project can be separated in several sections, or as Jones mentions, actions. The first section is a research part, which will both include research on the area, and collection of inspiration material for the patterns. The research part will also include an analysis of the result of an earlier project made in storytelling patterns, where an exploration in how a story could be told without words, with images and patterns as a tool was made. The intention was to lift the value of the pattern, the image and the repeat. The second section will include sketching and developing patterns. This section will be divided in smaller workshops, followed by analysis, evaluation, development and selections. The third section includes those actions that, according to Jones, can be seen as more traditional, such as work in scale 1:1, colours scheme, experiments and development of materials (ibid.). The fourth section consists of production of final pieces and organisation of hanging the pieces. It will also include showing and getting response from a reference group of children. Clemens Thornqvist refer in his book Artistic Development in [Fashion] Design (Thornqvist, 2010) to this method as a basic design method or re-imagine, a method built on developing different parts of a collection, in this case patterns, by sketching, trying out different ideas, as well as an overall arrangement.

Limitations
This project will not focus on function of the textiles in a technical way, i.e. security requirements from a public area perspective, such as for example fire resistance. The project will not be a comment to the on-going gender debate. Considering the design it will neither focus on the children as boys or girls, but as individuals, with different needs, tastes and interests.
3.1 development

Research and background
To get a clear picture of what the field of designing for children, and specific the health care sector looks like today, interviews with people working with children in different ways were made. This included both textile designers and professionals within the health care sector. A study visit at the child section at SÄS (Södra Älvsborgs Sjukhus), the hospital in Borås, took place, to get an idea of what hospital areas for children look like today. The section includes children from 0-18 years old, both for longer stays and shorter visits. An absence of textile was observed (see figure 1-4), and the visit encouraged the continuation of the project. The study visit also gave ideas on what could be suitable design wise.

Experiments made in an earlier project within the field of storytelling patterns showed that a clear story as a starting point is not essential for development of this kind of patterns. A clear wish was to include children in the process. A workshop with a group of eight six-year olds was held, as a way of getting an idea of their way of thinking and imagining. With 4-6 pictures of significant objects from classical stories as a tool. The children were asked to create a story around the pictures. The pictures were shown one by one, so that at new figure or environment was constantly added to the story. All of the stories circled around some kind of adventure, including children and animals. Their stories were developed and complemented with several pictures to create a story-board (figure 5). This would be the base for the patterns, combined with the idea of how old classical stories are built up, working for example with the good and the evil.

Figure 1-4. Pictures from study visit at SÄS, Borås.
A meeting with the designer Annika Nilsson (earlier mentioned in the background) took place as a second part of the research. Early sketches and the concept, as well as important things to consider when designing for children, were discussed. According to Annika, the most important aspects was to look at things from the child’s perspective, since they most certainly have different angles to look at things. Working with children is also about letting the child be the expert, and for a designer to step into their world and be imaginative.

**Sketches and pattern development**
A sketch-phase started off with the intention to have a free mind and get several fast ideas on paper (figure 6). An exploration in sketching techniques and materials was taking place. By matching sketching techniques in pairs through a random system, the combination of materials where tried out in a fast way, with no specific motif in mind. The sketches contained very different expressions, and an intuitive decision to go for a combination of a different sketching techniques (as can be seen in figure 7-13) was made. The combination of techniques could create depth and layers within the patterns.

Different sketching-workshops continued the process. The main focus was to find the characters and motifs for the story. Some sketches in full scale were also made, to get an idea of how the patterns where intended to look in the end result (fig 13).

During the first seminar comments came up claiming that the fast sketches included a nice feeling with a good flow and the intention of leading the viewer into the patterns, a feeling that would be suitable for the end result. A combination of very finished parts and more sketchy sections within the same pattern could work as a way of letting the viewer tell their own story. An important input considered in the continued design development.
Figure 7-13. Samples from sketch-workshops.
Colour scheme
Considering the colours, a present idea was the one questioning the common view of bright and strong colours in design for children. Does it have to be that way? Was it possible to use a wider spread of colours even for children? A first sketch on a colour scheme where a mix of bright colours, darker tones and pastels were made, with the director Wes Anderson and his way of working with colours, as a great inspiration (see fig. 14).

Plan on how the textiles would be placed
Since the aim with the project was to use pattern as a tool to create a visual experience, an important aspect was the amount of pattern the end result would include and type of placement. Small idea-sketches on solutions were made, and a version where three patterns hang together in layers was picked out to work against when developing the patterns (fig. 15). The amount of three patterns was good to create a unit and to show several examples of storytelling in patterns. The idea of hanging the fabrics in layers with a distance provided the possibility to physically be able to “step into” and between the patterns to explore them. The three patterns should be able to stand for themselves, and tell their own story, but also work as a unit. Since there was yet no specific room to take in consideration, this way of hanging the textiles was also the one exposing the pattern best (fig. 16).
Making pattern sketches in black and white

The decision to develop three patterns got to lead the process further. An evaluation from the previous workshops of sketching was taking place, and 1-2 sketches for each pattern was chosen. Fast sketches in black and white on some first ideas on the patterns were made. Previous sketches on characters were developed and used as a complement. It was at this point, hard to get perspective on the work and to get a clear picture on which parameters that would be taken in consideration. The project needed a more structured frame. Looking back at both the reflections from the earlier project with storytelling patterns and the input from the first seminar, a frame for parameters to relate to was set up (see figure 17). What kind of sketching technique, materials and printing techniques to use, as well as the mood of each pattern, was taken in consideration. Further in the text the patterns will be mentioned as pattern 1, 2, and 3.

At this state the final decision to use digital printing as the main technique for the patterns was made. This was a result of choosing the most suitable technique in relation to the chosen sketch-methods, which expressions were hard to reach with for example screen printing. The decision was also a conscious choice of a more environmental friendly method.

With the frames settled, fast sketches on all three patterns were taking shape. A first tryout in the digital printer was made to see how the sketches would appear on fabric.

The printed samples were tried out in combination with other techniques, to see what one could gain considering depth and tactility. Flock, burnout and space dye were some of the techniques (figure 18-20). Evaluating the experiments, the samples with burn out had development potential. The technique enhanced the work with layers, and the sense of looking into something by mixing transparent and dense areas as a way of creating depth.

**Strategy for pattern development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern 1</th>
<th>Pattern 2</th>
<th>Pattern 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling:</td>
<td>Feeling:</td>
<td>Feeling:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>Inviting</td>
<td>Open End</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching</td>
<td>Dreamy</td>
<td>Mystery</td>
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<tr>
<td>What to try:</td>
<td>What to try:</td>
<td>What to try:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flock</td>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>Collage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play with scale</td>
<td>Watercolour</td>
<td>Pencil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coloured background</td>
<td>Space dye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle scale</td>
<td>Velvet</td>
<td>Watercolour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repeat</td>
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<td>Repeated</td>
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**Figure 17. Strategy for development of patterns.**

**Figure 18-20.**
Pattern 1, Development
For pattern 1, two very scenic sketches with black ink was picked out (see figure 21-22). They contained a lot of depth and a sketchy and soft feeling that was desirable. The sketches were developed and composed by hand into a black and white pattern (fig. 23). The repeat was adjusted in the computer and painted with watercolour and ink with the colour-scheme in consideration (fig. 24-26). Several variations of colour-ranges were tried out in the computer. It was something about the harmony in the coloured pattern that was not as balanced as in the black and white one. It was also harder to detect all the figures at once, without adding colours, which was an interesting aspect according to the storytelling. This issue raised the question if the pattern should remain black and white. A try out with painting on top of the black and white sketch with a transparent brush-tool in Photoshop was made, a modern way of hand colouring photos (fig. 27). The expression was in the right direction, but not close enough. Other samples with a dyed background, single coloured, only parts of the pattern coloured, was also tried to see how it influenced the expression and the storytelling (fig. 28). After an evaluation of all the samples made it clear that the water-coloured variant was the most suitable after all. The colour-setting responded to the wish of not using only bright colours, and with some adjustments in the contrast, the pattern became well balanced.

The pattern where printed on a range of materials. The choice fell on a silk quality for a start, because of its nice drape, and a more yellow tone. After a second evaluation the material was changed to a cotton quality. The light quality corresponded better to the other two patterns and the over all composition (see fig 29).
Figure 23. Pattern in black and white.

Figure 24-26. Colouring pattern with watercolour and ink.
Pattern number 2- Development
The first sketches for pattern 2 were developed with thin pen lines on paper, in combination with watercolour, and the printing technique burnout as an after treatment (fig 30-32). The goal was to create a more airy and light feeling in relation to pattern number 1. The purpose was that this pattern should have the feeling of a shrubbery, something to look into and explore both figures, and the other two patterns. Due to the burnout, the fabrics used were two variations of mixed fibres, one cotton/polyester and one viscose/polyester. Further digital printed samples could tell that some of the lines were way too small to catch the desired expression, and the feeling of the pen was lost in the printing (fig 33). A decision was made to develop the pattern further, still keeping some of the pen parts, but combine it with other techniques. One should consider the fact that the material printing on contained polyester and the digital printer uses reactive dyes. This can affect the print since the reactive dyes do not attach to the polyester fibre, and give the pattern a blurry effect. New sketches were developed. Since it was about creating depth and make the patterns interesting enough to search for stories, the first sketches appeared in that sense, too flat. A mix of materials was tried out (see figure 34-36). The expression where watercolour was added harmonized more with pattern 1 and a repeat was developed (fig 37).
Pattern 3- Development
The inspiration sketch for the third pattern was a bit darker than the first two (see figure 38). The idea was to let the last textile work as an “open end”, and the choice of a placed print was a result of this idea. A play with shadows and silhouettes might contribute to a tension, where the figures were not obvious from the beginning, but there to detect. The material-choice for the third fabric was a velvet quality, because of its tactility and shimmer and as a contrast to the two other materials in pattern 1 and 2. Some smaller pieces of fabric where dyed with a space dye technique, samples to be used as backgrounds in the sketch, for a deeper and more intense expression than was reachable with any other sketch technique (see figure 39-42). Paper cutting and collage in combination with blue and red ink were used as sketching methods (fig 43-45). The sketches were combined with the dyed fabrics to a composition in the computer (see figure 46).

Figure 38. Chosen sketch for pattern 3.
Figure 39-42. Dyed samples for backgrounds.
Figure 43.

Figure 44.

Figure 45.

Figure 46. Composition of patterns in computer.
Composition and Scale
It was of high value for the project how the patterns harmonized together. This was both a matter of scale, colours and material-combination. The first sketches of the textiles were combined in different ways in photo-montages in the computer (fig 47-49). Since pattern 3 was placed over a full wide fabric, that one settled the scale. Pattern 1 had a big repeat (140*70 cm) and included a lot of variation in scale within the repeat. A quite big scale was therefore needed. While combined the three patterns, number 2 was an issue. It harmonized neither in scale, nor in expression. The main idea was that pattern 2 should hang in the front of the other two, (as in figure 48) to show the potential of the burnout. The way the pattern looked liked at this stage made the overall expression to messy. It was a question about redoing the pattern or changing the arrangement.
Meeting children for feedback
To include children as a reference group for feedback on the designs was discussed several times with both the internal and the external supervisor. The final decision was to meet the same group as in the first inspiration workshop. The children's response was important for the value and the relevance of the project. It was also decided to meet a group of 7-years old to get a wider spread of ages and additional response. According to Annika Nilsson it is important to have a clear picture of what the project will gain from the children, and how their response will be considered further in the project. Would the designs be changed if the children were critical?

A clear plan for the workshop was set up. Their response would be taken in consideration as reflections of the process and project, but since the action was made at a late stage, the designs would not be changed in its all over look. The children where shown projected pictures of the patterns. The workshop was not a question about material, but about the visual expression. It should also be mentioned that this was just a small group of children, and to make more exact conclusions a more comprehensive analysis would be needed. They were shown the pattern one by one, and from the beginning only one open question was asked: “What do you see?”

The response from the children had a great variety. They saw different things in the same figures, and they had an ability to imagine and make up stories. The work got comments as “It feels like an adventure”, and the children's eyes gave a new perspective on the patterns. What appeared obvious during the process, did not seem as obvious to them. It was easier to catch the 7 year olds, which might have been a result of their more advanced capacity to put words on their stories. They were also able to talk about what colours they liked and how easy/difficult it was to see the figures in the patterns.

In summary pattern number one and three were the most catching patterns. These patterns were the most finished and the most colourful. Some of the children claimed that pattern 2 included a “bit boring colours”, and that the figures were hard to see since there was so much white in combination with the pencil drawing. This strengthened the idea that it needed to be rearranged, which was something that was considered already before the meeting. Another important aspect was the recognition of the repeat among the children, an effect not desired. The repeat for pattern number one was remade. An incertitude about the colour-setting for pattern 1 was clarified since the response was very positive.

Development and production
After remaking the repeat of pattern 1, the fabric was produced in the printing lab at the school, on the chosen cotton quality (figure 50). Since the digital printer at the school only can print with reactive dyes and have difficulties printing bigger areas covered with dark colours, pattern 3 was printed at Tobex, a digital printing company in Borås, which have the possibilities to print with dispersive dyes. The material choice fell on a velvet-like polyester, similar to materials used for try outs in the workshops. The great issues with pattern 2 were solved when further samples were made, where the whole pattern was made with burnout in a combination with foil print (fig 51-52). This technique made the light and airy expression reachable. With the previous pattern as a starting point, a simplified version in black and white, suited for screen printing was developed (fig. 53).
The decision to dye the fabric was a result of the composition. To keep it only in white made it look a bit unfinished, and the contrast between pattern 3 and 2 was too big to create a good unit. After making colour-samples the fabric was dyed in a light blue-green colour with reactive dyes, a hue that relates to pattern 1 (fig 54). The pattern was screen printed with burnout, where the background was burned away. A frame was prepared, and the repeat was tried out both with talk and pigment dye to try the repeat. (fig. 55-56).
4.1 result

The result of this project suggest an alternative way of working with surface pattern design addressed for children, where storytelling is added to the patterns. The physical result represented here consist of three hanging textiles, including different materials and techniques, all representing different ways of using storytelling in surface patterns.
DESCRIPTION

Digital printed with reactive dyes
Materials:
100% cotton

Repeat: half drop, mirrored
Size of repeat: 140 x 70 cm
PATTERN 1

Scale and close-up.
PATTERN 2
Description:
Dyed with reactive dye
Screen printed with burnout
Materials:
50% viscose, 50% polyester
Repeat: half drop
Size of repeat: 49 x 80 cm
PATTERN 2

Scale and close-up.
PATTERN 3

Description:
Transfer printed with dispercive dye

Materials:
100 % polyester

Repeat: placed
Size of repeat: 135 x 250 cm
Scale and close-up.
4.2 presentation

The collection presented here are three examples on how one can work with storytelling for children in surface pattern design. The examples are developed parallel with the main idea to hang together and create a unit or an installation for a public space.

The three samples are individually developed with different sketching techniques, materials and after treatments, to show different solutions of the aim. As mentioned, the samples are designed and composed as a unit, but the idea is that each piece should be strong enough to stand for themselves and clearly communicate the overall concept: surface patterns that can encourage curiosity and creativity through storytelling.

The key concept of this work can be communicated differently depending on the context. To communicate the potential of the concept in for example an exhibition, a text, a short movie and sketches from the process could be a good complement.

When it comes to the communication of the storytelling concept in its intended space, the waiting room, it’s about the arrangement of the textiles and the viewer’s experience. Therefore no complementing text or oral explanations are needed. If the receiver does not automatically find stories in the work, the textiles can serve as a decoration in the specific space.
4.3 Conclusion & Discussion

The work presented here provides three examples of how one can work with storytelling in pattern surface design addressed for children. The intention is that the patterns should encourage creativity and curiosity. The combination of material and technique lifts the patterns, just as the way of hanging and placement. To work with different techniques, repeating methods, colour-settings, the amount of details, abstract/figurative, scale and materials do affect the appearance of the textile and the way the stories are told.

Pattern number 1 is very scenic and traditional in its figurative expression, and the story can be seen as more obvious, compared to pattern number 2. The singed coloured burn-out fabric challenges the eye with a more abstract expression in comparison to the other two. That might encourage to an exploration, with its depth and combination of dense and transparency. The third pattern suggests in its placed print yet another way of storytelling. When not repeated, in a few colours, it represents an “open end”, where the viewer has to figure out the next step in the story.

It is clear that art, decoration and colour do affect the human, even if it is in a positive or negative way. Just as Miwa Akabane (2012) claims, one as a designer can not decide what the viewer should experience. Storytelling in textile pattern includes the surrounding of the pattern, the receiver, the space, the given shape and the passed time (ibid.). One can only give a suggestion and try to create something that is interesting enough to lean your eyes on and encourage imagination. This perspective was confirmed during the two workshops with children. They had a great imagination, but it was clear that they saw different things in the patterns from what expected. With this in mind, a development for the project could be an even deeper investigation regarding children and their imagination. When reflecting up on the process it could advantageously have included the children and their opinions further and earlier in the process. One idea would have been to let them draw their own stories and implement this to the design process, but this would of course have lead the process in another direction and give a different expression to the end result.

This project aimed to position itself between the work of Kristi Kuusk and Annika Nilsson. Kristi Kuusk claims in her work that it is the technology that creates the interaction between the viewer and the textile (Kuusk, Tomico, Wensveen, 2014). It is the software that let the child create its own stories. To combine textiles and technology is of course highly interesting, but isn’t it important to lift the value of pattern and textile as such? This project claims that patterns, materials and tactility can communicate its own clear visual language. When patterns, materials and tactility are combined, one can create a whole experience without technology, and encourage the child to be imaginary and creative with out a screen. The profits of Annika Nilssons work Sagans Skog (the story forest) (Nilsson, 2012), is the spatiality, and how the textiles creates a room within a room, creating the feeling of a hut. This is an idea in which lays a great potential, and this project aims towards spatial issues. On the other hand, the closed space in Nilssons work does decrease the availability. The placement of this work, might suggest a more available solution, which can be both positive and negative. The hanging, and how the patterns are combined are important for the communication
of the concept. Depending on the order of the patterns and the distance between the fabrics, they can tell different things, a whole story, or several. This is a part of the project that most certainly can be explored and developed further. A different hanging might create a more spatial feeling, and in that sense invite a wider audience to an exploration of the patterns. According to Lundahl (1995), children at play imagine rooms and search for spatial units all the time. One can question what kind of rooms we give them to reside in, specially those rooms which they do not choose on their own, as the waiting room. The result of this project does not create a room in a physical sense, but the possibility to offer an imaginary room provided by storytelling. The textile are at this stage presented in a squared format. It is defended due to the fact that this kind of format exposes the pattern best, when there is yet no specific space to relate to. In a development of the project, it can be of great value to explore different formats, to see how that would affect the experience and the expression of the patterns. The textiles could for example be placed on three-dimensional shapes. Textile accessories, as pillows or a carpet could have been added to the unit, to create a more spacial feeling and let the patterns “step out” in the room.

It lays a great potential within the idea of designing storytelling patterns for children. To work towards a public space, and specifically the health care sector, gives the pattern other values than in a home environment, and they aims to affect people and the environment in which they are placed. Even if this was not the intention in this project, storytelling opens up for a possibility to leave a message, or communicate a specific story within patterns, as for example the Bayeux tapestry (Nationalencyklopedin), mentioned in the introduction does. Storytelling provides the possibility to let textiles serve both as messengers and decoration.

The choice of digital printing as the main technique increases the possibilities of using more complicated and bigger repeats, compared with the screen printing. The amount of colours, shades and translation of sketching technique are also provided in the digital printing. The technique can be considered as a more environmental friendly method, with less wastage of dye, water and electricity than conventional printing methods (Bowles & Isaac, 2009). According to the conscious choice of digital printing, one can of course questioning the choice of burnout as a second technique. With more time and further investigations a more environmental friendly method for creating transparency could have been found. A suggestion could be screen-printing with pigment-dye on a thin material, or lacer-cutting. Lacer-cutting would have required a rearrangement of the pattern, since it now does consist of a lot of free objects, which is not possible due to the laser-cutting technique.

One of the biggest challenges have been to work in an experimental and investigative way, but at the same time focusing on the end result. When reflecting upon the process, one can tell that a great focus on creating a full scale end-result might have affected the exploration and investigation of the aim. This, in combination with the choice of a quite slow method including a lot of hand-drawing, contributed to some fast decisions, to be able to finish on time. If even more time would have been spend on the experimental-phase, the result of the project could have been pushed even further. Since the intention was to create a good unit and whole, it was important that the patterns spoke to each other. If they had been developed as single pieces or parts of a bigger collection, one might have reached another expression, and some of the sketches that were deselected might have had qualities to be developed as single pieces. On the other hand, if they would not have been developed
as a unit, the idea with transparency, which creates both depth and tension, might not have appeared.

Even if the main idea for these textiles is to be placed within the healthcare sector, the work can easily be adapted to other public spaces, such as a library or a school. Depending on the kind of space, the textiles can serve in different ways. It can be a meeting point, a decoration, or an imaginative storytelling space. To implement this project to a public environment one has to consider the limitation of not working with the material choice in a technical way in this project, i.e. security requirements from a public area perspective. In a realization of the concept this need to be adapted to the material-choice.

To develop the idea with this project, further investigations on how the patterns are experienced would be necessary. It’s a matter of time limitation, but it would have been interesting to make more try outs with the patterns in a real environment. A development of the patterns could then have been based on spontaneous reactions and experiences from the viewers. The workshops with the children gave an indication of how the patterns were experienced, but to make a confident conclusion on this, the investigation should have been made for a longer period of time, without instructions or questions for the children, to get a more spontaneous reaction. According to the material choices within the project, they are at this stage mainly based on its drape, transparency and shimmer. Only the visual expression of the patterns were considered during the workshops with children, but when developing the concept, a material-based investigation could have great relevance. How the hand-feel and the tactility of the material do affect the experience and the interaction with the viewer might be just as important as the pattern and the visual language.

All the patterns developed in this project are more or less figurative. This, mostly due to the author’s own aesthetics and interest. Pattern number two is the one approaching a more abstract expression. Some people might claim that a more abstract aesthetic would encourage the imagination more than something figurative. This is an interesting point of view, and something to bring in to further experiments within the concept. One the other hand, the workshop with the children showed that the quite figurative patterns lead their thoughts to totally different things than what were expected.

One can discuss if the result of this project do affect people in a positive way and encourage to creativity and curiosity among children, as the project aims to examine. This is hard to answer before it has reached its final receiver. Do they actually find their own stories in the textiles? Every child is different, and attracted to different aesthetic, some might be encouraged, some might not. According to the quite limited time period, no final answer to the question about how patterns can be designed as a tool to encourage creativity and curiosity, have been reached. And how important is that? If the receiver does not automatically start making up stories and imagine when looking at the patterns, the textile can just as well serve as a decoration in that specific space. As important as anything else.
5. references

Literature:


Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Helsinki, Finland.


Websites:


Images:
All images are taken by the author.