W13 – Career Kit: Trade Associations and Publications

<u>**Career:**</u>

Surface Pattern Designer

This is a specialized niche career focused on creating designs or patterns and repeats for the use on mass produced or manufactured items. While not entirely specialized to fabrics and textiles, it is not uncommon for them to specialize within the design niche to fashion fabrics, sportswear, home décor, and other textiles.

There are several different routes for this career and many designers use a combination of them. These include different positions include

- Becoming an in-house designer for a company

- Doing freelance design work

- Selling and licensing designs to other companies

- Becoming a studio designer for a company

- Becoming an artist for stock imagery companies

- Designing for print-on-demand sales.

For many surface pattern designers, they have used one path to boost their portfolio and increase industry visibility to obtain other positions.

<u>**Trade Organization:**</u>

There are a variety of associations and organizations for surface pattern designers, but not all of them are directly aligned with fashion or career tasks. You must get creative and focus down on the skills and niche you are choosing to specialize in. Unfortunately, many of these organizations

have very high-priced memberships making it unrealistic for students to join but would serve

beneficial to established fashion industry specialists.

Surface Design Association

https://surfacedesign.org

The Surface Design Association has multiple membership tiers, so it is easy to find one that is fit

for a variety of member types. The base level, digital only tier is $60 per year for students and

$75 for other members. This includes free digital access to the Surface Design Journal, their own

quarterly trade publication, both current and past editions. Included in the membership is also

discount savings and early tradeshow registration as well as membership listing with up to 3

images and a direct link to your website. There are a variety of other benefits included. The main

purpose of the Surface Design Association is to bring together "artists, designers, educators,

curators, gallery owners, students and writers through a shared passion for fiber art." The

mission is to not only promote but to raise awareness of and appreciation for textile arts.

Graphic Artists Guild

https://graphicartistsguild.org

Due to the graphic design background of this career, much emphasis is put on improving and

utilizing the latest is graphic design skills and technology. As such, membership in the Graphic

Artist Guild is a reasonable fit. They also have a tiered membership platform to accommodate a

variety of different member types. The cost for full-time students (12 credit hours or more) is

$75 per year. For other starting members, membership is $17.50 per month. Unfortunately, there

is also a $30 processing and renewal fee that is attached to each new membership or membership

renewal, but it is still quite affordable for students. Members receive the current edition of the

Guild's pricing and ethics handbook in addition to free access to a variety of webinars and a

variety of discounts. The main purpose of the Graphic Artists Guild is to help guild members

keep their competitive edge in a rapidly changing industry. The mission is to "promote and

protect the social, economic and professional interests of its members."

Trade Publication:

Finding trade publications specific to the Surface Pattern Design career was a challenge because

it is very specific. Unfortunately, due to the continued growth of digital media, a lot of printed

publications have fallen off.

With the impacts with the COVID pandemic, even digital publications have closed their doors

forever. This is a shame because we have lost some smaller publications such as MOYO

Magazine (https://issuu.com/search?q=moyo%20) from Make It in Design that focused

specifically on establishing and advancing a Surface Pattern Design career. Their website is still

useful and there is digital access to old publications, but their focus has shifted to classes on the

topic. This service may prove helpful for graduating students or individuals looking to change

careers.

Surface Design Journal

https://www.surfacedesign.org/journal/digital-journal-new/

The Surface Design Journal is a quarterly publication specific to surface design. It is not specific

to surface pattern design, but it is great resource for following the trends of "contemporary fiber

arts." The journal has an international reach and covers a variety of techniques, styles, processes,

and materials. The cost is included with the Surface Design Association membership, but old

print copies can be purchased directly from the association's website for $15-20 each.

Fibre2Fashion

https://www.fibre2fashion.com/business-solutions/magazine/

This is a magazine out of India that is focused on the entire "value chain" of the textile industry.

The cost for a 1-year digital subscription is $150, but you can access the latest digital edition

online for zero cost.

Trade Show:

Surtex

https://surtex.com/

This is an annual trade show held in New York City and is specific to the Surface Design

industry. The show brings together a variety of industry related individuals including creators,

designers, owners, buyers, etc. It is the sourcing event of the industry and the go to place for

companies "seeking unique art, designs, patterns and prints for commercial use on home textiles,

paper products, bed & bath, lifestyle giftware, décor, apparel, beauty, juvenile, trend services and

more." It is a great place to network with other designers and companies looking to purchase or

license designs. The show even has a section for first time exhibiting designers.