

Not only computing — also art

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One of the exciting things that's happening in art and design at the moment is the growing number of student designers who are looking at ways of exploiting computing in their work.

Until comparatively recently this was a difficult task and, even today, it's not particularly easy. But — mainly with the introduction of reasonably inexpensive painting and drawing systems — it is becoming possible for art and design students to use computing without the need for extensive periods of training in programming. At Middlesex Polytechnic, where I now work, many students are beginning to use computing to assist them in developing their ideas and I have shown some of their Macintosh-based graphic design work in the old series.

A fashion design student, Laurence Treweek, is using both our Macintosh

and Spaceward SuperNova systems to present his concepts. The images from the SuperNova paint system are a mixture of frame-grabbed images with painted additions. These are created to

give a photorealistic picture of the garments — matching the sort of sophistication of imagery expected in the fashion magazines. The Macintosh images are of a more technical nature and give pattern cutters and production staff a clearer idea of the designs. These are prepared using the Superpaint program which is a clever amalgamation of a paint system, to encourage freehand sketching, and a drafting package for technical drawing. Such drawings indicate the position of seams, pockets and other items which are not so easily represented in a detailed manner on a conventional fashion illustration. I like the way Laurence has exploited the design potential of this non-specialist software. It shows what can be done with imagination and talent.

Der Golem

Staying with the Centre for Advanced Studies in Computer Aided Art and



Fig. 2

Fig. 1

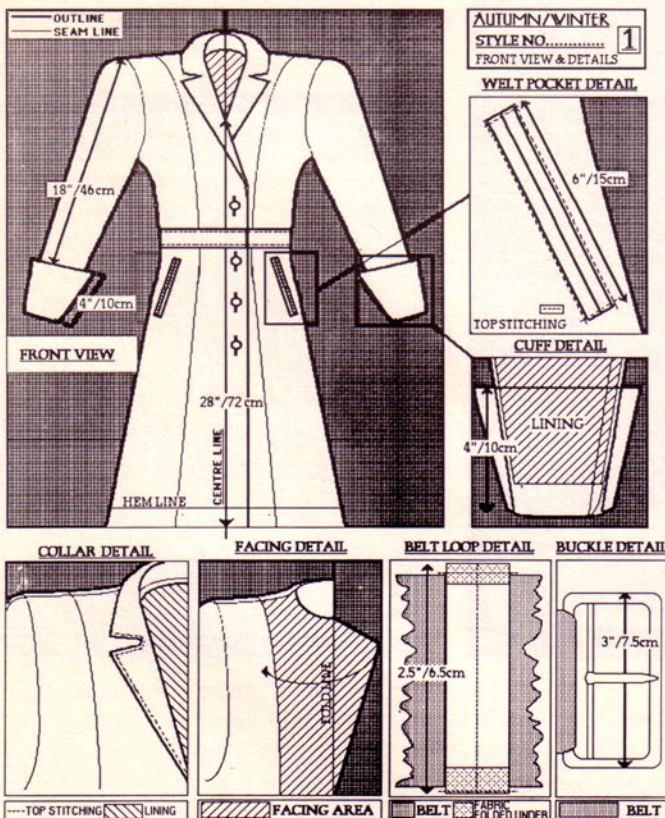
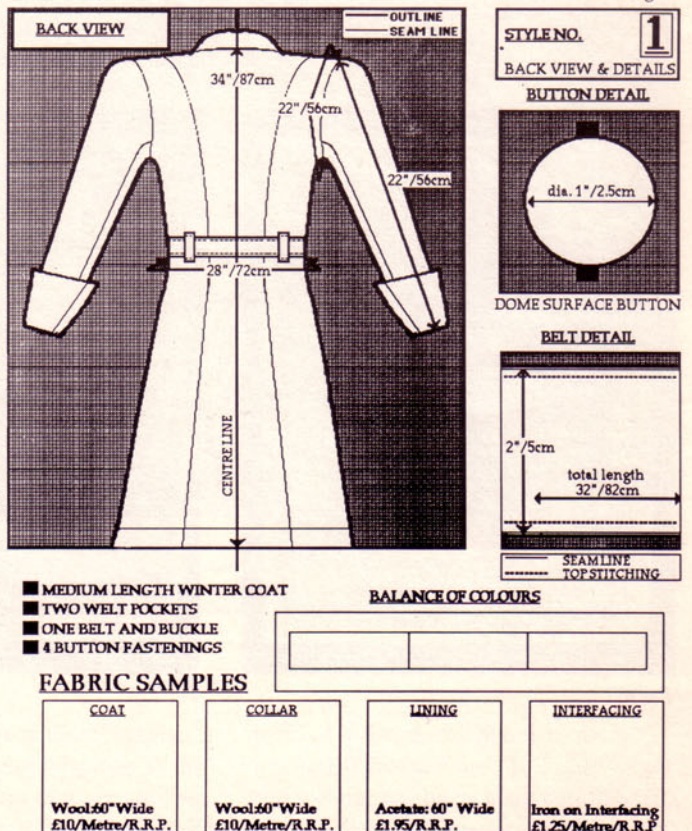


Fig. 3.



SERENDIPITY

Design at Middlesex Polytechnic, my other images in this issue are from a series of pictures created by Simon Biggs, our artist-in-residence. I have argued before (all too often, some might say) for the value of having artists-in-residence in computer organisations and I am glad to report that I have inherited one in my new post — although, as this position is in the Faculty of Art and Design, almost everyone there is either an artist or a designer or both. This does not, however, invalidate my point: to employ artists *as artists* in any organisation is always a stimulating and rewarding experience.

Simon is an Australian artist who specializes in the *installation*: that new form which is the major contribution of the second part of the 20th century to art. An installation is a mixed media show which relies on new technology such as video, tape-recording, kinetic sculpture or computing for its presentation. Sometimes installations require active audience participation and, almost always, are set in special sites of their own rather than in a gallery surrounded by other artworks.

The pictures which are illustrated here are from an installation devoted to an exploration of the Jewish folklore story of



Fig 4.

the Golem or Golum, a sort of human image which is brought to life. When they form part of an installation they are meant to be seen on multiple television screens which show the pictures in serial fashion accompanied by the text of the stories. (Because the images are in portrait format and normal TV screens are of landscape format, the monitors are turned on their sides to accommodate the pictures. Figure 4 shows a version — which was set up in Osnabruck, West Germany — with two monitors side by side at an angle to make them seem like an open book. The full story is told in still pictures around the walls).

Figure 5 called 'knowledge' is, as it were, a pictorial index to the story. The central figure is the Golem and, in the frieze around him, are small versions of the other pictures, two of which are shown, as Figs 6 and 7. A typical text image appears as Fig 8 and is meant to be read with Fig 7. These images were also prepared on one of our SuperNova machines and, as you can see, are designed to look like those from an illuminated manuscript. The work has already been shown in Germany and Holland as well as parts of the UK. Look out for it.



Fig 5.



Fig 6.



Fig 7.



Fig 8.