

Industry Terms

Allover print: Often screen printed, an allover print is composed of a design that is repeated across the entire surface of a garment.

Artwork: When designers talk about 'artwork', they usually mean an embellishment or design detail such as a screen print, embroidery, beading, eyelet applique or other decorative elements.

CAD: Computer Aided Design refers to flats that have been drawn using Adobe Illustrator or similar software. Most designers initially sketches onto the computer to apply various fills and colors. Using CAD allows designers to quickly experiment with different colors and shapes resulting in fewer adjustments to samples. CADs are often used in place of actual samples to present the collection to the buyers.

Collection: A fashion collection is group of styles that designers put together each season to showcase new trends. A season is usually defined as either autumn/ winter or spring/ summer. This will often include a percentage of classic styles that evolves slightly each year together with shorter term trendy products.

Color cards: Groups of color used to communicate the theme or mood of a collection. Color standards are usually arranged in a row using Pantone chips, fabric swatches, paint, or anything else that relates just the right shade. Usually each tone has a name or reference code written next to it so it can be identified. Color cards can also be sent by a factory for easy reference.

Color ways: An array of colors that contrast and complement one another is chosen for apparel designs. These are prepared for the stripes, prints, and solids.

Croquis: Figure templates used by fashion designers to ensure their garments come out proportional on the first try. Designers often trace croquis with tracing paper, or use them as a guide under their sketch paper.

Fits: During a fit session, a technical design team often consisting of a head designer, pattern maker and technical designer measures a sample garment on a fit model. The garment is scrutinized to ensure that it lays properly and all the finishing details such as print placement, artwork placement, topstitching and trim are finalized. Often, a junior assistant will take notes on the fit session to follow-up with the production team.

Flats: Flat sketches are the blueprints that specify how a garment is to be constructed. These are drawn by hand or using a computer (see CAD) as if the garment was laid flat, to display all the design details, including darts, hardware, print placement ,artwork and topstitching. An essential component of the design package, flats serve as the main method of the communication between designer, patternmaker, factory and buyer.

Garment dyeing: A popular dyeing technique in which a whole, finished garment is dipped in a dye bath and processed. This can be done at the last minute, ensuring the color is relevant to the up-to-the minute trends. Garment dyeing also preshrinks the garment, which will help minimize customer returns.

Grades: Once the fit of a sample approved, that garment will be graded up and down, meaning that a chart will be graded up and down, meaning that a chart will be put together with the measurement adjustments necessary to process the style in a range of sizes.

Hand: Also called hand feel, the term hand refers to the quality and characteristics of fabrics that are perceived only by touching them. For example, firmness, softness, silkiness, drape, and stretch are ways to describe the hand feel of a garment.

Haute couture: French for “high sewing” or “high dress-making” haute couture refers to custom, made to measure pieces that cost tens of thousands of dollars. In order to use the term, designers must have a Paris showroom; e.g., Christian Dior, Jean Paul Gaultier, Chanel, Givenchy.

Illustrations: Fashion illustrations are stylized drawings used to communicate the mood and spirit of a garment. An important tool for demonstrating a designers’ flair and creativity, as well as sketching skills, these are nevertheless not often used in the industry due to time constraints.

Lab dips: Small swatches of fabric dyed by a factory to match a color standard requested by the designer or coloring team. Lab dips are essential in determining how a fabric will respond to a certain shade, through the color can still vary when dyed in bulk quantities.

Line sheets: Used by sales people or designers to present a collection to buyers. The line sheet features a flat sketch or CAD of each style for a season, along with a style number, season, pricing information, color and fabric details and delivery date. Sometimes they also contain actual fabric swatches.

Mood board: Collages of items such as photographs, sketches, magazine clippings, fabric swatches, trim samples and color samples all strategically arranged on a board to communicate the spirit and theme of a collection.

Over dyed: When piece-dyed garments or yarn-dyed fabrics are put through an additional dye color in a process that creates unique shades.

Piece dye: Fabric that dyed after it is woven or knitted. In piece dyeing which is mainly used for fabrics that are to be a solid color, a continuous length of dry cloth is passed through a trough of hot dye solution.

Placement print: Also called “engineered print” when the print layout is strategically planned to fall in a specific place on the garment. For example, border prints are often located at the hem or the cuff. This technique is expensive as it results in fabric waste.

Prêt a porter: Also called “ready to wear” or “designer” prêt a porter refers to high-end lines that are machine made and sized with superior fit and finish. Price point is generally less than \$1000 e.g., Thakoon, Peter Som, Missoni, Prada, Versace, St. Jhon, Gucci, Chloe, Donna Karan, Marc Jacobs.

Specs: Often shown alongside flat sketches, specs are the measurements and construction details of a garment that are incorporated into design packages. Specs are essential for sample development as they contain the basic dimensions and instructions for fabrication.

Strike-off: A small patch of fabric printed by the factory to demonstrate and confirm color and pattern quality before proceeding to produce bulk quantities.

Tear Sheets: Pages ripped out of magazines that provide inspiration to designers

Tech pack: Sent to factories to make first samples for approval, tech packs contain detailed flats and specs, artwork layouts and fabrication instructions. Also called design packages.

Yarn dye: Fabric that is woven or knitted from yarn that was dyed prior to the fabrication of the cloth (e.g. plaid). These are considered to be high quality because yarn-dyes make the fabric resist fading. Often used to describe stripe or jacquard fabrics.

Textile Glossary

Appliqué: The art of cutting pieces of one material and applying them to the surface of another in order to embellish a garment.

Bamboo: An eco-friendly fiber often used for jersey products such as T-shirts and socks.

Corduroy: Medium to heavyweight cotton pile fabric. From the French corde du roi meaning “cord of the king” the tough, resilient fabric was first used the court of French kings.

Crepe: Used to describe fabrics that have a crinkly, rippled or grained surface. From the French creper which means to crimp. Can be made of various fibers, including wool, cotton, silk, rayon, synthetics and blends.

Crepe De Chine: A delicate, lightweight crepe often made of silk.

Denim: A cotton textile dyed using indigo; mostly known for its use in blue jeans. Denim is sturdy twill weave with diagonal ribbing. Originally used for workmen’s clothes, it has long since earned its place in the world of high fashion.

Dobby: Woven textile with simple geometric motifs that are created on the fabric during the weaving process.

Eyelet: A series of small and clean finished holes or perforations that are integrated into the pattern of a fabric at regular intervals. These add an airy and beautiful quality.

Facing: A portion of fabric sewn or ironed onto the inside of a pattern piece to add structure and support.

Flannel: Derived from the welsh word gwlanen, which means wool, flannel is made in tightly woven twill or plain weave. It is soft and warm to the touch and is commonly used to make pajamas and bed sheets.

Georgette: A textile traditionally manufactured from silk, through sometimes made of synthetic fabric, georgette is durable, highly absorbent and can be dyed or printed.

Habotai: A plain weave, lightweight, silk fabric with soft sheen. Since silk habotai breathes, it is commonly used for linings. Also, its silky texture allows for graceful removing of a garment.

Jacquard: Named for Joseph Marie Jacquard who enabled the loom to create complex patterns in the weave or knit of a textile. Several Jacquard patterns have specific names; e.g. brocade, damask, tapestry.

Jersey: A broad term for a plain knit fabric without a distinct rib. Features small, closely knit stitches. Initially made of wool but now usually made from cotton or a cotton and synthetic blend, jersey fabric was first manufactured on the island of Jersey, near Normandy, France. The fabric is flexible, soft and insulating making it a popular choice for the layer worn next to the body. Common uses for jersey fabric include T-shirts and bedding.

Linen: Fibers of the flax plant woven into a fabric that is breezy, resilient and absorbent. Linen is expensive to manufacture. It can help to whisk perspiration away from the skin, making it popular in hot climates although it creases easily.

Lyocell: A natural fabric made from vegetable matter or wood pulp. Known for its durability and strength in addition to its eco-friendly manufacturing techniques, Lyocell has a soft hand –feel and a no- crease finish.

Mercerized cotton: Named for John Mercer, this cotton has been immersed in sodium hydroxide to bring out its strength and shine and to increase the dye absorbance. Because the cotton is preshrunk, mercerized cotton also tends not to shrink as much as regular cotton, leading to greater customer satisfaction.

Modal: A processed textile made from the beech tree, which may be used in a blend with cotton, spandex or other textiles. Modal behaves similarly to cotton but has greater ability to retain shape when wet, as well as higher breaking strength. It is very soft and popular for both clothing and household textiles.

Rayon: A manmade fiber derived from processed cellulose, rayon was developed in the 1880s as a cheap substitute for silk. While it drapes well and is easy to dye, rayon tends to deteriorate with age,

