



# Introduction to the Application of Hand Crochet in Tweed Clothing—An Example of the Design of the 'White Velvet Shiyun Shang'

Enfeng Ji

Daiyin Group, Tai'an, Shandong, China

**Abstract:** *As more and more crochet designers around the world apply this traditional craft to a wider range of design fields, crochet has been transformed from a mere product of leisure activities to a commodity with fashion value. In this paper, we firstly analyse the design characteristics of handmade crochet in depth in order to interpret its technical connotation; Then, it explores the diversity of hand crochet stitches and their application in practice, and elaborates on the functionality of the technique; Subsequently, the paper analyses the expression of handmade crochet and its application in clothing design; Finally, taking the design of the 'White Velvet Shiyun Shang' series of tweed products as an example, the paper explains the design concept, design process, production process and display effect in detail, aiming to show the respect and inheritance of traditional Chinese culture. The paper is expected to inspire creators to use handmade crochet skills to outline and open up the infinite possibilities of life, and to arouse the public's deep affection and admiration for Chinese culture.*

**Keywords:** Crochet; Tweed; Design; White Velvet Shiyun Shang; Application.

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## 1. Introduction

Hand crochet is a way for people to create clothing and decorative items using simple tools and techniques, combining it with tweed as part of a traditional craft. It is like a bright jewel that radiates a unique and fascinating light, and is seen in designs both at home and abroad.

The craft of hand crochet originated in Europe and the first crochet book was published in England in 1840. In the Middle Ages, crochet lace production was mainly concentrated in monasteries, and after the Renaissance the lace production industry began to develop in Europe. At first, crochet lace was mainly used for the decoration of clothing and household items. At the end of the 19th century, European crochet skills were introduced to China's coastal areas by missionaries, nuns and merchants, from the early 20th century hand-knitted jumpers, tablecloths, lace and other fashionable knitting prototypes to the mid-20th century to the end of the 20th world of braid stitches, jujube stitches, radish silk stitches and other innovative stitches and patterns with Chinese characteristics. The range of its applications is constantly expanding. More and more crochet designers are applying crochet, a traditional craft, in more design fields, making crochet no longer a leisure time knitting but a product with fashion value. As crochet is a less efficient craft, complex, time-consuming and laborious, crochet products are too costly and unable to reflect the innovation, the commercial value of crochet will be reduced, and the traditional crochet is out of touch with the trend of fashion, and fails to get the favour of consumers.

Therefore, crochet product design needs to focus on highlighting the sense of handmade knitting, strengthen the advantages of the product's crochet technology, knitting techniques to choose a variety of techniques to reflect the sense of handmade knitting. Such as Hong Kong's famous brand apparel Huamu Ma is very good at using local handmade crochet to design clothing, often in the clothing collar, cuffs, hems and other parts of the decorative openwork knitting flowers, in order to show the femininity of women. And crochet design should also give full consideration to contemporary trends, innovative patterns and colour combinations, incorporating modern aesthetics, strengthening the characteristics of the times, so that the original traditional and old-fashioned crochet handicrafts to form a modern favorite style.

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## 2. Design Features of Hand Crochet

Hand crochet is a technique that uses a crochet hook to repeatedly crochet yarn in a spiral form to create fabrics with originality, excellent handfeel and remarkable visual effects [1]. The technique is popular for its unique artistic appeal and decorative visual effects.

During the process of hand crochet, designers create shapes with specific styles by applying different design principles and matching rules, and combining the diversity of basic patterns, stitches and colours. The differentiation of these shapes not only highlights the artistic charm, but also enhances the visual effect of the decoration. In addition, handmade crochet can echo with the overall style of the garment in terms of dress decoration, and achieve rich three-dimensional modelling through handmade techniques, such as constructing floral patterns through the sparseness and convexity texture of different yarns. At the same time, through the generalization and refinement of typical patterns, and with the corresponding stitches and colours, handmade crochet can give the fabric rich texture effect and good taking performance, and at the same time meet the creative expression and emotional needs.

Crochet is a unique method of knitting floss, the organisational structure of which is highly malleable, capable of achieving diversified designs and customised specifications, and whose artistic style is characterised by 'dewy, elastic, dense, softness and liveliness '[2].

'Dewy' refers to the transparent artistic effect of the organisational structure, which enables the crocheted products to be perfectly integrated with human body clothing and decorations, forming an aesthetic effect that complements each other.

'Elastic' is another distinctive feature of crocheted products, which can be given a special elasticity through the use of different crochet stitches. This elasticity not only reveals the aesthetics of the human body, but also provides a comfortable wearing experience.

'Dense' characteristic is reflected in the organisational structure of the crochet products, through specific crochet techniques, the products can achieve a tight style, and in the same product to show the visual effect of sparse and dense.

'Softness' characteristic refers to the flexibility of crocheted products, which is particularly prominent in all flexible fibre materials.

'Living' characteristic describes the variability of the organisation of the crochet product. With a simple crochet hook and dexterous hand skills, unlimited decorative possibilities can be created to fulfil various design intentions.

## 3. Types and Applications of Hand Crochet Stitches

Stitch design plays a crucial role in handmade crochet, through which people can express specific knitting emotions, and different stitch choices can give the work a unique style.

In the field of handmade crochet, there are many kinds of stitches, the basic stitches include the braid stitch (also known as the lock stitch), the short stitch, the medium-length stitch, the long stitch, etc. The locking stitch is the first basic stitch in crochet and is represented by an oval symbol, with multiple locking stitches grouped together like a chain, interlocking, and is generally used for flat surface crochet, such as coasters, earphone covers, and other decorative items. Short stitches are two loops in one stitch that are passed through together. There are regular short stitches, encrypted short stitches and cross short stitches, which are often used for the main part of a crocheted item. Medium and long stitches are three loops in one stitch, passed together, and are used for crocheting the edges or details of an item. Long stitches are three loops in one stitch, passed through twice, and are often used to crochet patterns or motifs in an item. Crocheted fabrics are combined with each other through different stitches and are known for their clear patterns, strong three-dimensionality and special texture effects, and their shape occupies an irreplaceable position in the fabric as a whole, and their appearance is not only colourful, but also highly decorative adding a unique character to the knitted work[3].

Based on these basic stitches, there are many variations, such as the date stitch, the conical stitch and the cross crochet. Through the use of a single stitch or a combination of different stitches, handmade crochet reveals its unique knitting style and creates a simple and diverse texture. Designers can choose, combine and innovate according to the effect created by the stitches. The advantages of crochet as a purely manual craft are the ease of introduction and the rapidity of the process, but the disadvantages are the time-consuming and long forming cycles, which result in high labour costs. Nevertheless, due to the freedom and flexibility of crochet stitches and the enormous room for creativity, the work can be presented in both flat and three-dimensional forms, and the texture can be simple and repetitive or varied, which attracts many crochet enthusiasts as well as some consumers.

#### 4. The Expression and Use in Clothing of Hand Crochet

Crochet, as a traditional craft, has a long history of application in the field of clothing, apparel and home textiles, with a variety of forms of expression, which can be broadly categorised into Afghan knitting, Irish knitting and Vayu knitting.

Afghan crochet is characterised by flat and dense fabrics, the woven garments have a thick hand, the woven pieces will be larger, and the woven patterns are somewhat like regular machine knitting<sup>4</sup> (Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Afghan Crochet (Image from the web)

Irish crochet technique is the earliest production of lace, the pattern is mostly plant motifs, crocheted with openwork stitches and then spliced together (Figure 2), in the later development of the crochet gradually enriched the crochet stitches, to crochet three-dimensional plant and flower-based. In order to enhance the sense of relief of the texture of the fabric surface, the fabric is made with a thread as the core, which is crocheted around the core, and the thickness of the core varies according to the degree of the relief effect. In order to enhance the three-dimensionality of the fabric, the petal and leaf forms are crocheted in layers. In the original traditional hand-crocheted works, the creation of motifs and patterns in the crocheting process depended entirely on the artisan. The artisan can adjust the stitches and the number of stitches at any time according to the shape of the work, and there are no drawings to follow, so there is always a unique personal touch that cannot be replaced by machine production.



**Figure 2:** Irish Crochet (Image from the web)

South American Wayuu crochet gets its name from the region where this form of knitting was created. The traditional Susu bag is decorated with bold, contrasting patterns and combinations of motifs derived from the colourful flora and fauna of the natural world, the sun, moon and stars, mountains and rivers. The bag is usually made in a round or square shape, with multiple strands of colourful thread starting at the same time, changing colours during the weaving process, and weaving outwards and upwards in the direction of the weave, finishing with colourful rope and tassels (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** South American Wayuu Crochet (Image from the web)

On this basis, crochet knitting has also been inherited and innovated in modern clothing design, with richer colour combinations than before, and designers incorporating personal colour creativity, colour blocking and other designs to suit more young consumers. In terms of fabric matching, designers combine fabric organisation with crochet to form a texture contrast between fabrics. And with the combination of new materials, modelling, knitting method innovation, with deconstruction and restructuring of the form of crochet clothing for innovative interpretation, giving full play to the characteristics of crochet free and casual. Especially in the application of tweed clothing from the initial simple decoration in the collar, cuffs, hem and other edge parts to the crochet decoration in the front lapel, back and other parts of the tweed jacket to weave a larger pattern or pattern, the decorative effect is more obvious. At the same time, the combination of crochet and tweed fabrics is also more diversified, in addition to direct sewing on the garment, but also appeared with tweed splicing and other ways. With the development of the times and the continuous improvement of technology, the concept of combining crochet with modern fashion elements is constantly innovating, paying more attention to personalisation and fashion sense, such as the use of bold, contrasting colour combinations, jumping out of the traditional floral, geometric pattern design and the combination of new materials such as metal wires, ribbons, beads and wool, which adds more texture and layering to the decoration of the tweed clothing.

## **5. The Application of Handmade Crochet in Tweed Garments - Taking the Design of 'White Velvet Shiyun Shang' as an Example**

### **5.1 Design Concept of 'White Velvet Shiyun Shang'**

#### **5.1.1 Sources of Inspiration and Theme Elaboration**

The design of this series is inspired by the poem 'qingping tune - one of the poems' by the Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai: 'Clouds think of clothes and flowers think of faces, spring breeze brushes the threshold and dew is thick. If I didn't see them at the top of the jade mountain, I would meet them under the moon on the Yao Tai platform.' The beauty of the clothes depicted in the poem is as light and airy as clouds, which coincides with the elegance, purity and flawlessness as well as the graceful and airy style pursued by this series. The collection is made of light and airy tweed fabric (semi-worsted, 36 count double stranded sand, grammage 350/m, 50% wool, 30% viscose, 20% Tencel), which is combined with exquisite hand crocheting techniques to create a lace-like openwork effect and thick, three-dimensional textures through a combination of diverse stitches. Combined with traditional Chinese tailoring techniques, this design gives the garment a fresh and elegant visual effect, while highlighting the delicacy and subtlety of the Chinese elements, showcasing its high-class texture and conveying an atmosphere of luxury

and sophistication.

### 5.1.2 Product orientation

This research series is intended for a group of female consumers, aged between 25 and 45, who are looking for high quality, unique design and fashion sense. They are highly attentive to the quality and details of their garments and are willing to pay a premium for unique design concepts. Tweed and handmade crocheted garments combine personalisation, new Chinese style and fashionable casual elements to create highly personalised clothing designs for customers.

Firstly, this study takes into account the customer's body shape, personal preference and wearing occasion through one-to-one customisation. The pursuit of the ultimate quality in the flowing texture of tweed and the fine craftsmanship of handmade crochet, every stitch and every line demonstrates exquisite handcraftsmanship.

Secondly, this study draws on the style characteristics of traditional ethnic clothing and adopts crochet patterns with ethnic characteristics to produce new Chinese clothing on tweed fabric. Through the traditional patterns of crochet, combined with the sewing and inlay techniques, the study creates clothing with a strong ethnic flavour. In addition, handmade crochet techniques are also used to create vintage-style lace necklines and cuffs to satisfy consumers' preference for vintage styles.

Thirdly, tweed and crochet will be combined with seasonal styles and patterns to ensure that the garments remain stylish and comfortable at the same time. Tweed fabrics are chosen for their flow and softness, while the hand-crocheted portion avoids discomfort for the wearer and ensures that the products are suitable for everyday casual occasions, such as crocheted tweed-blend scarves paired with casual tweed suits.

## 5.2 The design process of the 'White Velvet Shiyun Shang'

The design concept of this research collection is to take traditional Chinese elements as its core, integrate modern pattern making and cutting techniques, and present modern aesthetics through clean lines and silhouettes, highlighting the uniqueness of each piece. In terms of size and shape design, the collection is predominantly A and H shaped, aiming to achieve a moderately loose fit, while maintaining the clarity of the silhouette to ensure comfort and a sense of style. In terms of neckline and collar design, this series mainly adopts traditional Chinese stand-up collar with rounded curved neckline to fit the neckline and show elegance and generosity. The stand-up collar is complemented by a crochet false collar design, which not only highlights the characteristics of Chinese aesthetics, but also serves both practical and decorative functions, demonstrating the solemnity of Chinese style and avoiding excessive constraints. In terms of sleeve design, the sleeves of Chinese tweed jackets are dominated by flared and straight sleeves, ranging from one-piece sleeves to plunge sleeves, which not only pursues the aesthetics of appearance but also focuses on the comfort of wearing and ensures the free movement of the arms. Through hand-stitching and sewing techniques, needle-knitted butterflies, flowers, branches and other patterns are incorporated into the design (Figure 4), showing the diverse styles and elegance of Chinese element tweed suits. In terms of colour selection, this series is dominated by pure white, which itself conveys an image of purity and elegance. The unified white tone makes the overall collocation look simple and atmospheric, creating a serene and fresh atmosphere. In the choice of material, the tweed's stiff texture contrasts with the soft three-dimensional hollow shape of the knit, which is both rigid and soft, enhancing the overall sense of hierarchy and richness of the collocation. In addition, the pairing of a white Chinese tweed jacket with a tie-dye scarf maintains rigour without losing the casual mix-and-match style. The design of this collection combines the traditional elements of Chinese tweed, unique tailoring and modern sense of crochet, which inherits the essence of Chinese aesthetics, but also demonstrates the innovative nature of fashion.



**Figure 4:** Crochet Pattern

### **5.3 The Process of Making the 'White Velvet Shiyun Shang'**

#### **5.3.1 Hand-weaving Design and Production**

Firstly, diversified hand-knitting patterns are designed according to the clothing styles and design themes. The lace pattern adopts traditional patterns with moderate innovation and distortion to better suit modern fashion aesthetics. The flower and leaf patterns draw on real forms in nature, and through simplification and abstraction, different stitches and knitting techniques are used to show the layers of flowers and the texture of leaves. Detailed drawings of the patterns are made, with the stitches, colours and sizes of each part marked to ensure precision during the knitting process.

Secondly, before formally knitting the garment, make a knitting sample. Using the same materials and tools as those used in the actual application, knit according to the design drawings and check whether the knitting effect meets the expectation. Make necessary adjustments and improvements to the samples to ensure the aesthetics of the knitting pattern, the stability of the stitch pattern and the accuracy of the size.

Third, according to the design drawings and knitting samples, carry out the hand-knitting production of clothing. The colours and lengths of wool and silk yarn were prepared according to the requirements. Then, knit according to different parts and patterns. During the knitting process, pay attention to the uniformity and tightness of the stitches to ensure the quality and appearance of the knitted parts. Lace, flowers, leaves and other decorative parts should be knitted separately and then sewn to the corresponding parts of the garment. After the hand-knitted part is completed, it is finished and ironed to improve its smoothness and appearance. At the same time, the fit of the knitted part to the tweed fabric is checked and, if necessary, adjusted and fixed appropriately.

#### **5.3.2 Clothing Production and Integration**

White tweed fabrics are cut accurately according to the design and size parameters. During the cutting process, special attention is paid to the smoothness of the lines and the accuracy of the dimensions to ensure the fit of the garment. Subsequently, professional sewing equipment and tools are used to sew the cut tweed fabric. During the sewing process, attention should be paid to the uniformity and firmness of the stitching, as well as the flatness of the splicing of various parts. For the neckline, cuffs, skirt and other parts that require special treatment, specific sewing techniques and technology should be used to ensure the quality and appearance of the garment.

Then, the hand-knitted lace, flowers, leaves and other decorative elements are integrated with the tweed garments. In the process of integration, the position and placement of the decorative elements are determined according to the design drawings and the actual effect. Hand-stitching technology is used to closely combine the decorative elements with the tweed fabric, while paying attention to the firmness and aesthetics of the stitching.

Subsequently, the garment is fully detailed and perfected. Check all parts of the garment, including the neatness of the stitching, the firmness of the buttons, and the flatness of the decorative parts. Any problems found should be repaired and adjusted in time. Inside the garment, carry out appropriate lining treatment to enhance wearing comfort and the overall texture of the garment. The lining material can be soft silk or cotton fabrics to ensure the comfort when in contact with the skin.

Finally, professional models or target consumer groups are invited to try on the garments, and corresponding adjustments are made according to the feedback from the fitting to ensure that the performance indicators of the garments meet the design requirements and the needs of the wearers until the garments achieve the best effect and comfort.

### **5.4 Ready-to-wear presentation of 'White Velvet Shiyun Garments'**



**Figure 5:** 'White Velvet Shiyun Shang' ready-to-wear garments

As shown in Figure 5, 11 pieces of the 'White Velvet Shiyun Clothing' series were produced.

## 6. Conclusion

Traditional craftsmanship not only demonstrates human creativity, but also conveys a deep sense of beauty. The design of the 'White Velvet Poetry Dress' series in this study aims to explore the dynamic inheritance of the delicate conception of handmade crocheting skills by integrating them into modern clothing through fingertip art. Through this design practice, we deeply understand that the application of handmade crochet technique in tweed fabrics needs to comprehensively consider multiple dimensions such as colour, fabric characteristics, style design and stitching. Through the organic combination with fabric characteristics, the design aesthetics of tweed clothing can be effectively enhanced and its diversity can be enriched. This research will continue to devote itself to the use of hand crochet techniques, and explore in depth the integration of traditional hand techniques with modern clothing and apparel. We firmly believe that traditional skills will continue to show their unique charm and vitality in the intersection of handmade crochet skills and more clothing and apparel products.

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