

Question 1: Where am I going as a designer?

Contextual practice: Research in context

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List of illustrations

Figure 1: Design & Paper (2024) *Danish paper flowers* Available at:[Marianne Eriksen Scott-Hansen's Marvellous Paper Flower Installations - Design & Paper.](#) (Accessed :28th November 2024).

Figure 2: Burke, I. (2024) *Domestic life*. Available at:
<https://www.stephaniechefas.com/artists> (Accessed :27th November 2024).

Figure 3: Author, G. (2024) *Marcel Duchamp's Fountain and Why It Matters*. Available at:<https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/marcel-duchamps-fountain-and-why-it-matters/> (Accessed :24^h November 2024).

My personal manifesto

- 1) I want to improve my writing
- 2) To be able to discuss my work knowledgeably and confidently
- 3) To further research key designers and historically significant persons
- 4) To understand who I am as a designer
- 5) Enlarge the list of designers I admire – contemporary designers
- 6) Explore some of my philosophies in being a designer and enjoying art?
- 7) Understand which designers do I enjoy? Why?
- 8) To discuss the future of AI regarding surface pattern and textiles

What do you want to be when you grow up? A question we are presented with very early in life in an attempt for adults to learn more about us and our futures. When presented with this question, many children respond with fire fighter, ballerina, actor, or to be famous etc. However, some come up with unattainable career paths, such as a vegetable or a leaf collector. Although these are not actual jobs they are actions that young people enjoy. I feel they respond this way due to the anxiety of not knowing what the future holds. Although they can guess, they will not know until they live, experience, and learn more about themselves.

I have always struggled with this question. As a young person that has dyslexia and anxiety, I worried about getting it wrong and being stuck in a career I would feel unfulfilled or unconfident in, I always questioned whether I would ever get a “real job”.

From a young age I explored a variety of different creative outlets in hopes that I would find my “place” where I fit in. Crochet, sewing, acting, writing, modelling, fashion, embroidery, textiles, photography, YouTuber, influencer, singer, ballet dancing, pop dancing, karate, rugby and football. I felt comfort in little bits of all my adventures; however, I never fully felt comfortable enough to stick to it. This made me wonder, how many other people experience this conundrum? And where are they now?



Fig.2: *Danish paper flowers*

Throughout my research, I was inspired by the journey of Marianne Eriksen Scott-Hansen, a popular paper artist and designer who after years of working in the fashion industry, found a love in the Danish paper-cutting tradition. She creates physical 3D flowers crafted with tissue paper using completely self-taught Danish paper cutting techniques. Her vibrant, oversized, and unconventional floral installations are a testament to her creative journey from the fashion industry. She found it difficult to find a creative outlet with the fashion industries mass production, synthetic fabrics and feeling limited with how she could work. “I wanted to experiment and find my true source of creativity, my purest form of creative joy,” (Design & Paper ,2024).

Her complete shift in careers is inspirational and proves that someone who struggles to find joy in their working life can change their careers for the better. This shows how someone can get it wrong and still thrive in their creative paths.

This inspires me as a designer to not worry about where my career will go, as there are infinite career paths to choose from. Instead, I will focus on finding the techniques that I most enjoy and building skills that are useful for a working environment.

Laura Burk is another artist that showcases unconventional creative thinking when it comes to design. Her work is mainly canvas based, finding items that interest her and bringing them all together on a page. Although they should not go well together, they do. Her process is very unique and inspires me to think about my process and what inspires me to create?



Fig.2: *Domestic life*

This piece named 'Domestic life' has a mixture of surrealist and realist traits such as a photo realistic hand, apples and knife. This paired with the dancing flowers with arms and legs; the vase turning into a room with a window, half shrouded in a white cloth; and there being a tree indoors, creates a world where reality is distorted. All while disguising our mundane lives as portrayed by the used teabag and the dying flowers.

This alternate reality which she has created feels oddly comforting and brings beauty and life to the mundane. This reminds me of the stop-motion movie *Coraline* made in 2009 and directed by Henry Selick about a little girl named Coraline moving into a new house with her parents. At the beginning of the movie, it shows Coraline's everyday life with dull and bland colours symbolising her boredom and loneliness as her parents are overworked and stressed out and this makes Coraline feel neglected and ignored. In contrast, this world created by the villain to lure Coraline into staying, is bursting with vibrancy and life, suggesting an exciting and lively household. At the end of the movie Coraline returns to her world with her family and learns that although her life isn't perfect, she can appreciate it.

We often find ourselves wanting to escape our everyday lives, chasing a world which we are currently living in. By connecting Laura Burke's mundane quirks and my admiration for *Coraline*, I have discovered a drive to inspire others to implement a mindset which appreciates 'the little things in life'. I want to do this by curating a colour palette that feel inviting, into my designs. (admin (2021)).

Moving onto my next person of interest, William Morris.

"Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful." (AZ Quotes 2025).

William Morris (1834-1896) is a famous surface pattern and textiles designer advocating for the British arts and crafts movement. His work is full of movement, geometric shapes, French styles, patterns and colours. I take inspiration from his use of decorative damasks from the Victorian era. His use of dynamic patterns build an environment bustling with energy, liveliness and botanical beauty. His work really highlights the beauty of the hand-made element in design and how important it is to take pride in showcasing your designs uniqueness. (Victoria and Albert Museum (2025)).

Function follows form:

When it comes to creating, people are innately better at uncovering the potential benefits of a given form than creating a new form to satisfy a given need. This

discovery spurred a new thinking approach called Function Follows Form that encourages us to first create a Virtual Situation (form), and then to explore its potential benefits (function) (SIT, 2025).

Form follows function:

“It suggests that the shape or appearance of a building, product or object should be primarily based on its intended function or purpose. This concept prioritises usability and practicality over aesthetic considerations, ensuring that design decisions align with functional needs.” (Marraum Architects, 2025)

As a designer I believe that it is important to learn about how to better utilise the space in a design as well as in our houses to better our designing skills. And one of the philosophies that helps me with this is form follows function and function follows form.

Additionally, I also took an interest in Andy Warhol. He is an artist, filmmaker, and impresario, born in America.

“a commercial artist throughout his career, in the early 60s Warhol transitioned into the fine art world, gaining notoriety in the nascent Pop Art movement.” (The Andy Warhol Museum (2010).

He created a series of 32 paintings made between 1961 and 1962 inspired by the Pop Art movement and the Fountain by Marcel Duchamp in 1917. This was a Porcelain urinal signed R.Mutt, a controversial piece of art many found offensive to real artists and real art, asking questions such as;

Could this urinal, a commercial product designed for a purely functional purpose, even be called art? And could the person who submitted it, having not played any part in its design or manufacture, be called an artist? Eventually, the Society board decided no on both fronts. Unable to reject it outright, they hid it off in an obscure corner of the gallery behind a partition. (Author, G. 2024)



Fig.3: *Marcel Duchamp's Fountain and Why It Matters.*

This raises a very important question however, what is art? The dictionary defines an artist as “a person who creates works of art, especially paintings or drawings”. (Oxford learner's dictionaries (2025)).

The dictionary also defines an artisan as “a person who does work that needs a special skill, making things with their hands”. (Oxford learner's dictionaries (2025))

Both definitions state that to be an artist you must possess a ‘special skill’, ‘make things with your hands’, and or ‘create the object’ with whatever medium they use. Through this we can determine that he is not an artist for bringing this urinal to the exhibit as he neither created nor painted or drew this urinal. He simply signed it and brought it to this exhibition.

An editorial named “the blind man” made a case as to why it was indeed art, arguing that whether or not he made the urinal himself, he gave the viewer of this urinal “[a] new title and point of view,” and therefore “created a new thought for that object”. This would mean that an artist is someone who brings to light a topic or issue through an object, therefore giving that object a new meaning or purpose. This makes it ‘art’. I'm not certain I agree that this urinal is art and that he is an artist, however there is one thing that is certain, it questions art as a whole, questioning the substance of art and the artist.

The dictionary defines a designer as “a person whose job is to decide how things such as clothes, furniture, tools, etc. will look or work by making drawings, plans or patterns” reference (Oxford learner's dictionaries (2025))

I believe that to be an artist or a designer, they need to work on their skills to develop a talent in their chosen practice. Through learning and making mistakes is how we grow as people and designers. I am an artist as I use my hands, skills and mistakes to create art for designs. I am a designer as I constantly look to improve and develop my art for a final product.

This made me think, who else made me question what a designer is? Leading me to my favourite designer, Alexander McQueen. When I first saw his work, I was astonished by the bold and unconventional shapes he makes with his designs; the magnificent story he tells with every piece and the world he creates through them. This inspired me to design outside of our generic fashion for wearing. In his designing he struggled to connect the “romantic past with the postmodern present” as “The postmodern present did not recognize beauty or craftsmanship as relevant to art and culture.”

disproportionate silhouettes he makes and the political statements

Big detailed wild bold unconventional, design with ideology- rather than just for design's sake- what can I bring to light? Sadly, do need armor (Gerakiti, E (2019)

Another artist that captured my attention was the work of Laura Ashley. Laura Ashley was born in 1925, in her early life she developed a passion for textiles through her grandmother. When soft launching her textiles business, as a mother of two she understood the limitations set for her at the time. This gave her the idea to give jobs to stay at home mothers. Gifting them sewing machines in order for them to make clothes and tea towels for her business in return. This is a very inspiring message to anyone that your only limitations are the ones set by ourselves. I admire her perseverance and humble beginnings along with her various colour palettes and movement through her patterns. She has built a brand that is famous for the world's luxury, romantic and bespoke. Her brand appreciates and puts quality over quantity. I was very fortunate to have been in the Laura Ashley archive in London. Looking at scrap pieces of paper with drawings on them, drawings and re-drawings with annotations on how to improve the work inspired me to keep testing and re-designing my work. (New Designers (2024).

Laura Ashley showcases the current and the past of surface pattern and design. However, what does the future look like?

AI stands for Artificial intelligence, arguably this will be a major part of all design thinking and therefore must be considered by every designer currently. AI is all around us in our hands and in our houses. Artificial intelligence is only getting smarter, constantly learning and improving itself. I would like to talk about AI generating images and discuss its positive as well as its negative impacts. Many refer to AI generating

images as AI Art however, it is not involved in the physical making of the images or the thought behind the final image. It works by taking the information like a sentence or 'prompt' and uses it to combine 2 or multiple images from the web together to create the final image that is given back to the creator of the prompt. Many argue that this tool is the only way they are able to create art due to disability or simple lack of talent. Due to my previous research into what makes an artist and what makes art, I believe that we have already established that the AI nor the person inputting the data are artist, as they have no part in the making of the images nor do they generate a meaning behind them like artists and designers do.

"AI-Generated Imagery Replacing Human Artists - Programs that create generative images to create art will replace humans.

The Risk of Intellectual Property Theft - Artists work is being gathered by AI and will be used to create similar style designs" surface pattern (Elisabeth Silver (2024).

I would also like to conclude my essay with a quote from Bob Ross, a famous artist who would post tutorials on how to create simple but beautiful landscapes.

"Talent is a pursued interest. Anything that you're willing to practice, you can do -Bob Ross." (David, P. (2025).

I've learnt a lot about myself throughout this essay, and I will continue to experience, practice and develop my thinking and my designs. Whatever the future holds for me I know I will be able to adapt and I look forward to seeing how I progress.

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