



CREATIVE VENTURE

Evaluative Report

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Executive Summary

This report is an insight into the journey taken during the MDes year presenting reflection and self-analysis of practice and how these have informed future trajectories. It sets out the aims for the Creative Venture and demonstrates the actions put in place to achieve these goals. This will lead to a discussion of whether the aim was accomplished.

The review of research methods clarifies the importance of methods chosen, analysing what worked well and how there could have been improvements through material exploration and documentation. The report discusses the importance of how research has influenced the narrative and meaning behind my work. The core concepts of travel, movement and depicting a journey have driven the creative venture and led me to explore materials and digital media to express this.

The review of the creative enterprise strategy will discuss techniques that were learnt in response to reflections made during the creative enterprise module. This will determine whether the action plan outlined in the reflective report was achieved and whether it was successful in creating a strong and effective promotional presence.

The critical appraisal of the final proposition is key to this report as it will summarise the outcomes and will allow thorough self-analysis of what has worked effectively. It will highlight areas of importance and will inform my future actions discussed in the following section.

Finally, the reflections and discoveries made both practically and personally will solidify future decisions. The future trajectories will determine a plan for both short term as well as long term and will be a valuable structure to work towards.

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Review of research methodology and methods

Research

Research is the starting point for any project. Preparation for the creative process begins with exploring ideas and understanding the themes at the heart of the project. Reviewing the work of others is important for inspiration, to identify what already exists and to be confident that the work produced is not a replication of others.

Artists employ different methods of research according to their style of practice. Runway analysis and trend forecasting are both key elements to design in the fashion industry. Each collection is studied considering which print styles and colours are most prominent throughout; some seasons have been heavily striped/floral/checked for example. During work at H&M in Stockholm my research abilities were developed using the Worth Global Style Network (WGSN) and Pinterest to fuel the start of a collection.

For this project, the research has been auto-ethnographical; it draws from the experience of my own travels. Carolyn Ellis suggests that auto-ethnography is a way to describe and '*analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience*' (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).

Whilst traveling throughout Thailand recordings were made through photography and sketching as an attempt to capture the scene and the emotional impact each location had on me. I wanted to absorb the overall atmosphere of a place or situation in order to demonstrate this through my choices of colour, scale, texture, imagery and material. The aim being to provide the viewer with a similar reaction. As a method therefore, *'autoethnography is both process and product'* (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) .

This project has also expressed phenomenological engagement; the idea that these journeys collect not only research but also experiences that in turn add growth as a person and a designer. This relates to Merleau Ponty's idea of phenomenology as a sense of being in the world; he suggests that *'there is no 'inner' self-unrelated to a world; man is inescapably in the world. Phenomenology therefore is the attempt to articulate...bringing 'truth into being'*" (Merleau-Ponty and Baldwin, 2004, p. 63) This truth however is subjective; the imagery created depicts an individual perspective of my journey and interpretation of the experiences gained through travel. Husserl also suggests that all of his knowledge is only gained through his own viewpoint and experiences of the world, and without these, *'symbols of science would be meaningless'* (Merleau-Ponty and Baldwin, 2004, p. 65) This has emphasised the power that simply 'being in the world' has on the creative process which is also supported by Kolb's theory of learning where *"Knowledge is continuously derived from and tested out in the experiences of the learner."* (Kolb, 1984, p. 27) As a result, my designs are unique as they are representative of an experience exclusive to me.

Stefen Sagmeister applied these models as he noticed his works started to appear repetitive; he closed his studio to travel for a year and find new inspiration. (Sagmeister, 2009) The process was so valuable that Sagmeister repeats this every seven years. I feel this model of research is appropriate for my learning and creative style and is something I wish to continue engaging in throughout my career.

'Psychogeography is about the emotional place a location can take us; the feeling it can offer, the thoughts it can uncover, the ideas it can bring' (Williams, 2016) Alain de Botton suggests that a map is not simply enough to demonstrate a climate and that we need to start seeing the world *'not in a geographical sense but in a psychological way'* (Williams, 2016) This idea resonates with me; curiosity and the excitement of discovery aids my development as a designer and motivates my creativity. In his book *The Art of Travel*, Alain de Botton argues that *'the reality of travel is not what we anticipate'*, therefore pessimists may argue that *'the reality must always be disappointing'*. Alain De Botton encourages us to accept that the reality will be different from the perception to avoid disappointment. (De Botton, 2003, p. 42) My experiences demonstrated this; despite my love of travel and seeing new things the process of getting from A to B and the uncertainty of where you will end up can be stressful, unpredictable and challenging. Despite this the amazing highs felt discovering such beauty and wonder overpowered any negative feelings and became part of the growing experience. Learning to not control expectations allows a far more relaxed

judgement on arrival because there is no preconception for comparison. It is this relaxed judgement that gives patience to the experimental phase of developing a project. The journey is as important as the destination; an experiment may not result in the final outcome but is valuable to creative learning.

Drawing



Figure 1. Line drawn plant



Figure 2. Water colour foliage

Drawing in itself is a form of research; as the object is studied an understanding is gained of its make-up, colour, texture and fluidity. Whether it is pen, pencil or paint, observational drawing is crucial to my practice; drawing allows the creativity to begin. First drawing out the object with my eyes, fine liner is then used to generate detailed illustrations; different thicknesses of nib form built up areas of shade and depth to create light and darkness emphasising the objects

natural movement. Paint allows for colour to explode onto the page with each brushstroke building up layers of tone.

Materials

In contrast to the interiors pathway taken at degree level, the switch to textiles for fashion at Masters level has required a more considered approach to choice of materials with this having as much impact on the overall garment as the choice of colour and design.

Leather



Figure 3. Screened Puff binder and leather embellishment onto denim

Leather was used to construct areas of built up embellishment for example leather foliage motifs sewn into screen printed jeans. I found that the laser

engraver did not give me the finish required therefore it was necessary to learn how to use the plotter cutting machine to achieve a clean cut and avoid burning. An introduction was set up with the plotter technician and weekly tutorials were attended to enhance leather manipulation skills.

Denim



Figure 4. Screen printed puff Binder and laser engraved denim

I progressed my limited experience with using denim by experimenting with many different techniques such as engraving and screen printing. Exploration with opaque binders such as puff and metallic texture options, added areas of interest and layers of depth.

Traditional textiles



Figure 5. Clear and reactive devoré resist and reactive paste onto Stretch net, paper and denim.



Figure 6. Screen printed Puff, Pearl and reactive paste onto Stretch net, paper and denim.

Screen printing techniques such as devoré along with other surface treatments, such as puff, metallic, pearl, flock and foil, were explored heavily during the design experiment. Screen-printing textiles is very different to working with paper and provided a wealth of learning. In contrast to designing for paper, textiles require many more decisions to be made about the selection of print paste. Consideration needs to be made about movement, absorption and surface treatment. This has expanded my skillset and will better my chances of getting a studio job upon graduation.

Market research



Figure 7& 8. Embroidery onto denim(Topshop)
(Boohoo.com)

Figure 9. Flock onto net

To re-inforce my designing I explored high-street retail to make comparisons on techniques used. Where I found a process I was not familiar with I endeavored to learn it, for example different methods of embroidery as well as flock onto netted material.

Review of creative enterprise strategy

Look Book

For the Creative Enterprise module, an interactive look book was created for fashion. This was an opportunity to experiment with playful ways to visually communicate my work as well as myself as a designer. The purpose of this was to focus on the construction of the book itself rather than the designs it showcased. This is a move away from my previous methodology because it is about practical application rather than expression of meaning. The book encompassed lavish unravelling concertina pages along with small half pages and doors revealing secret patterns within. An A5 version was created to be economically viable for mass production and distribution. This illustrates my key skills of drawing, painting and pattern design as well as visually communicating my individual style and understanding of my place in the market. In addition, an A3 deluxe version was made to be presented face to face for example at interviews with special potential employers.

Overall these books were successful at communicating my work, however, after completion it became apparent that there was room for improvement particularly in the execution of constructing the book. An action plan was generated for the rest of the academic year to perfect any future books made. (see appendix 1) Initially contacting the printers to discuss paper qualities and construction was essential along with how to include interactive elements; in addition to this setting up tutorials on how to make a more pristine cover would

allow for a hand rendered feel. The action plan also consisted of points to develop in order to produce a better quality book, for example learning InDesign to speed up the layout process; After Effects to create a short animation and producing an online look book.

InDesign

Extra tuition in InDesign was sought to gain skills to speed up the process of designing a look book of this complexity. Layout templates were constructed to drop images in with ease to compose numerous books. The first look book identified areas for improvement in the overall finish and appearance of the book. The folds cracked the ink and the construction (made by myself) meant that the pages did not line up perfectly and were visible beyond the cover. I liaised with a printing company to compile the book professionally and discussed the inclusion of the interactive elements. A screen-printed cover was made to give a hand rendered feel and to add personality; in line with my methodology it is important to present something individual and 'of me'.

After Effects

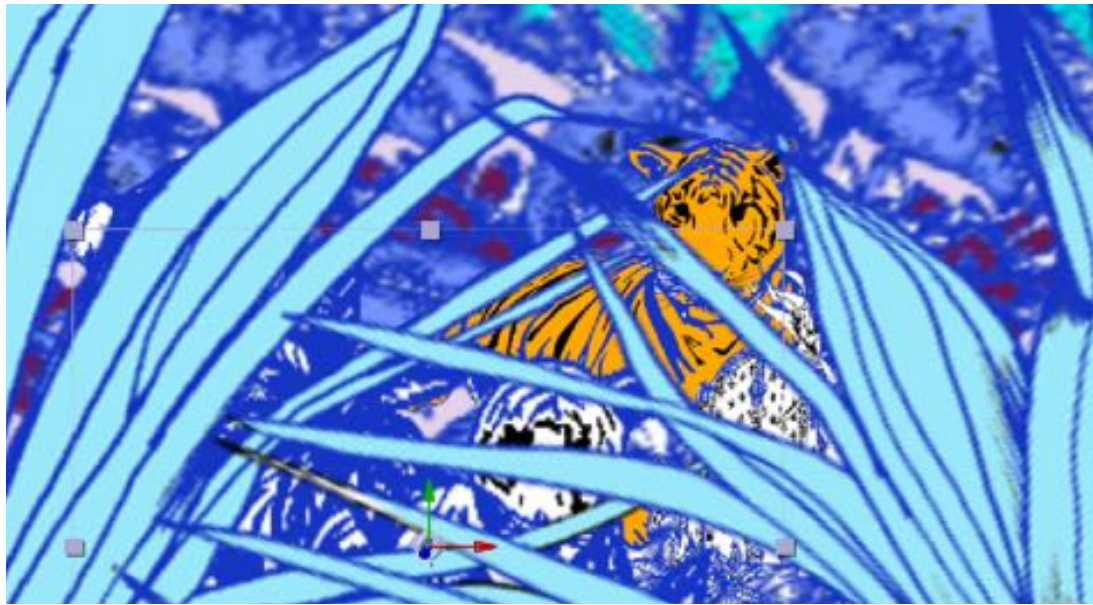


Figure 10. Screen still from animation.

I expressed an interest in animation and film as I felt it would set me apart from others and give a new platform to communicate my designs; this was added to my action plan. Initially the concept was to make an online look book or a small self-promotional film. The idea of being able to create 3-dimensional movement within a pattern and transfer this onto a garment became an intriguing avenue to explore; research into the possibilities of the After Effects software demonstrated how this could be used to its best potential. With technology forever expanding I am keen to present my work in a modern and forward facing way.

A weekly collaboration with a Film Studies tutor was set up to acquire skills in the program After Effects. Key framing, paralaxing and masking were the main skills acquired to manipulate designs into 3- dimensional movement. Once the

basic language was learnt, experimentation could begin with different effects being applied to create the look I had envisaged. With these skills, a short-animated film of my designs was produced intended to transport the viewer on a journey to the places I had travelled, feeling as if they were there with me. This relates to the theory of phenomenology and enables me to better share my experiences.

By splitting design into layers of background, midground and foreground, the process of parallaxing was used to create a 3-dimensional design. A camera view was added to enable the focus to move in and around the design; difficulties arose with the smooth transition of the camera however one to one tutorials helped improve the overall movement. This short film was then projected onto models wearing white garments and filmed as well as photographed.

Capturing the projection on the model or garment proved challenging because the room needed to be pitch black; this meant that not only did the model lose clarity but a large silhouette also appeared behind blocking out a large proportion of the projection.

Fashion Illustration

GET THE LOOK...



Figure 11. Get the look fashion illustration

To achieve a strong portfolio, it became apparent that designs would benefit from some fashion illustrations to help visualise the full collection. A one to one tutorial was organised to enhance these abilities. Drawing free hand onto a model template proved difficult and the result was flat and unrealistic. I adopted the technique of using photographs to trace garment shapes and gain proportion. This produced the desired result and helped establish a coherent style throughout.

Photo-shoot



Figure 12 &13. Edited photoshoot images,

Figure 14 & 15 projection
onto garments

A photo-shoot combined outcomes and ideas from both After Effects and fashion illustrations. The film made, using the program Adobe After Effects, was projected onto a model in a white dress depicting the journey across Thailand; the aim was to bring moving print to the future of fashion. The potential for animated patterns on clothing and interiors is an interesting concept to explore. Alongside the motion graphics footage, photographs were taken for portfolio purposes.

To develop the fashion illustrations, garments similar to those drawn were selected for both male and female to be photographed. Not content with paper, I wanted to bring my fashion illustrations to life and demonstrate them in real terms. I used similar shaped garments to my drawings and projected the animation onto them using a phenomenological approach to showcase my work. I introduced tropical foliage sought from a local botanical garden to bring a nuance of an exotic setting to transport the viewer into my vision. (see figures 12 & 13)

Portfolio

To secure a job a strong portfolio is needed demonstrating various skills from practical drawing and designing to research and trend analysis. As my portfolio consisted of mainly interiors work in the third year, it was important during my MDes to demonstrate strengths in fashion design; this will show my diversity within designing and hopefully appeal to a potential employer. The portfolio

demonstrates my autoethnographical approach to producing a concept, depicting images taken at the source of my research and leading the viewer through my journey to actualise these experiences as a creative project.

Instagram and online portfolio



Figures 16 & 17. Screenshots from Dasiyjenkinsdesigns Instagram

Along with a physical portfolio a strong online presence is key to being noticed in the design industry. Frequent posting on my Instagram, daisyjenkinsdesigns, increased followers and attracted the attention of print design studios worldwide (see figures 16 & 17). Social media provides an instant platform to exhibit my work and the processes of developing ideas. I can include my inspirations which demonstrate my autoethnographical journey from point of

inspiration to final outcome. Social media presence depicts my personality; it shows who I am as much as what I do. An obvious added advantage is that it is free and offers a worldwide audience.

Freelancing at Made in Brighton



Figure 18 & 19. Prints sold through Made in Brighton

Following a summer internship at the fashion print design company Made In Brighton I have remained on their books as a freelance designer. This has provided me with valuable experience gaining feedback from clients, buyers and others in the studio. I have been able to sell work whilst studying for my MDes managing both design processes separately. This has also given me a greater understanding of different markets; Made In Brighton for example have good contacts in the USA where they have different seasons and demands. For

enterprise purposes it is highly beneficial to have my name and work being circulated throughout the industry at this early stage in my career.

Critical appraisal of final proposition

Initial Aims



Figure 20. Print collection

The aim of this year was to create a collection of designs for fashion garments showcasing a range of skills including line drawn illustrations, detailed paintings, varying scales and placement along with contrasting materials and processes.

The idea of journey and movement from my travels was fundamental to the creative venture and demonstrating this within the collection. This was achieved through diverse imagery and styles of designs representative of all the different

places and experiences from Thailand (see figure 20). Translating work into digital form on After Effects enabled me to animate the designs; this literally gave them movement as well as suggestively taking the viewer on the journey with me.

Last year ended on a high note having discovered a strong style and identity as a designer. My degree focused on interiors however the company's that I secured internships with, meant that more experience was gained in fashion textiles leading me to choose this as my main focus for MDes. Initially I was transferring my interiors themes and styles into fashion design. It was suggested that this was far too similar and that something different needed exploring; this threw me. Not knowing what elements to keep, which colours to choose, what to draw, was challenging. On reflection I realised that my style did not need to change, but instead the content needed broadening so that something different was produced to the previous end of year collection. Despite this, a huge journey of discovery into different styles and techniques has been made that would not have been explored otherwise in addition to self-development as an artist.

I can now appreciate that the challenges faced created opportunities for broadening my skillset and exploring diverse alternatives. Adapting to change and coming out of my comfort zone, although a struggle, is rewarding and something I see as necessary and MDes has pushed me to do this.

Colour



Figure 21. Photo of my desk at the beginning of the project



Figure 22. Third year degree collection, Figure 23. Close up of beginning design

One of the main early obstacles experienced was the struggle to select a coherent colour pallet throughout the collection. Among the first round of designs, there were lots of clashing elements that did not gel, with a very sickly sweet pastel overall feel. This was not the look desired however in avoiding the dark theme

achieved at last year's degree show (see figure 22), the colours were taken to the extreme opposite. (see figure 21 & 23)



Figure 24. Tropicalia, Laura Garcia Serventi, June 2016

In order to understand my dissatisfaction with what I was producing, I began analysing other people's work of a similar theme such as Laura Garcia Serventi's "tropicalia". The use of colours was similar however the ratio at which they were distributed created a more pleasing effect. Tutors suggested that the basis for a collection had already been achieved and that focusing on the blues and greens and adding darker elements, whilst avoiding pink, would achieve the desired outcome. This was a key changing point for the creative venture as the collection finally started to come together. This allowed me to experiment with processes

such as textiles and leather cutting with designs in mind, giving my work purpose.

Garments



Figure 25. Flat garment shapes

Flat garment shapes were produced instead of constructing full items of clothing; this allows for the focus to be solely on the design, emphasising the print rather than the construction of the garment itself. I wanted to avoid a generic vest shape as I wanted to create the illusion of a full diverse collection with varying garments and prints. Research of View Magazine, Pinterest and Instagram highlighted current trends and helped generate interesting and innovative shapes suggestive of a range of apparels suited to the style of the collection. Screen-printing processes such as devoré, puff binder and foiling were then applied to the materials once printed to add texture and highlight a range of skilled abilities. Built up textures in addition to removal of texture replicate the

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nature of the scenes I was trying to recreate; clear skies, bold foliage and delicate details.

Previous experience of printing a design was limited to paper and digital print onto fabric. This year knowledge about types of fabrics, what they are made of and what processes can be applied to them has been gained and will benefit me greatly heading into a fashion print career.



Figure 26. Chanel Paris haute couture Spring/Summer 2015,

Figure 27. Laser cut leaves

Time and thought was invested into learning how to use the plotter cutter and laser machine to produce shapes for embellishment. Once my final collection had taken shape it was evident that these would be less prominent. Although I did not want these embellishments on many garments I liked the aesthetic appearance and impact and wanted to include them as part of my display, using

cut and assembled leaves to create a wall of foliage as a backdrop, experimenting with scale so as not to overpower the focal point of the garments (see figure 27).

After Effects animation

Adding an iPad screen to show the After Effects animation created a new platform to display my designs. This provided an eye-catching element that would hopefully give me an edge when exhibiting at New Designers in London.

Future Trajectories

New Designers

An immediate goal after graduating MDes is to prepare to exhibit at New Designers. This will enable my work to be seen, as well as provide the opportunity to gain contacts within the industry. The aim for this event is to find employment ideally but otherwise to secure internships for the summer period. Business cards will be made to distribute that stand out and represent an aspect of my work. Making note of people's names I have networked with will enable me to follow up with correspondence that addresses them personally. Look books will be beneficial to showcase and on occasion distribute to potential employers.

I understand that tropical designs have been on trend for several seasons however incorporating various Thai elements in my designs such as animals, temple doors and sceneries add a unique twist and set them apart. The After effects footage of my animated designs will add another dynamic and show a new and interesting platform to stand out from other textile designers.

Studio



Figure 28 & 29. Photos of my desk

During my time at university I have taken full advantage of the studio space and enjoyed the busy and active environment. I work especially well around other people, gaining feedback and motivation. Spending a lot of time in the studio it becomes almost home from home; my desk is a representation of my mind and the direction of the project at the time (see figures 28 & 29). My work is an extension of myself and relates to Terence Rosenberg who suggests that *'making produces a 'surrogate' of the body, which extends the body into the world'* (Rosenberg, 2013) which again supports my phenomenological methodology as a sense of being in the world. This atmosphere is something I would like to maintain within a work setting, being able to bounce off other people's energy

and knowledge to develop and form ideas. A job in a studio is essential therefore for my future trajectories, as opposed to working alone or at home freelancing. This would ensure I keep motivated and have instant peer reviews enabling me to grow as a designer as well as having a space to express myself and keep it separate from home life.

Freelance and Internships

Gaining experience freelancing for the print design company Made in Brighton in Bristol has provided the opportunity to have designs shown worldwide. This was a great way to receive feedback from clients, buyers and even others from the studio. This is valuable but also not a sustainable source of income therefore I will seek additional employment to supplement this. The period of the summer will be used to gain more experience and contacts by taking as many internship's as possible before leaving for travel in early 2018.

Travel

As discussed throughout the entire MDes, travel is key to informing ideas and fuelling designs therefore it is without question that more of the world is to be seen and experienced. I plan to save up money whilst freelancing and working, setting off January 2018. The idea behind the trip is to gather imagery, research and knowledge, along the way keeping sketchbooks and journals as well as photographs to use in the future. Whilst on my travels I intend to visit factories,

print studios and fabric warehouses to enhance my knowledge of the industry, beginning in India visiting a traditional block-printing studio. Although partially a reward for completing my Masters, I feel this will also enable me to create innovative work as a result of the experiences I will have gained. I hope to continue my freelance work whilst traveling to keep up to date with current trends.

Keeping busy

The most important thing for me upon graduation is to keep progressing and developing, utilising all the skills I have learnt. I love drawing and designing and will ensure it is incorporated into everyday life through keeping sketchbooks and updating my online presence. I have come to understand that my inspiration for design is derived from lived experience therefore my aim is to create a lifestyle which provides me with the funds and freedom to travel and gather as many life experiences as possible. These will provide me with a source of development both as a person and a designer.

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Appendix

Action Plan

Reflecting upon this project has given me the insight to create an action plan for future development. Producing a wider range of work would allow me to explore the possibility of the look book, investigating new avenues and pushing boundaries. Currently the look book created only held previous collections from my completed third year at university whereas an increased workload would demonstrate how my style of work has evolved. A possibility would be to create a series of books demonstrating each collection or project as part of my portfolio. This would be an interesting edition and a new playful way to display my work.

In order to create these books, sourcing better paper quality is vital and contracting out the production will ensure it is of the highest possible standard to display my work to its full potential. This may mean compromising on some of my more intricate cuts to bring the cost down however it will elevate the quality of the final product significantly and present a more professional product to prospective employers.

As previously mentioned increased learning of construction and binding skills would provide me with the ability to uncover a simpler way to produce numerous books whilst still retaining the personal, hand rendered touch to them. To do this I will need in-depth learning of software such as InDesign to create templates/ layouts that could be used to produce numerous books for varying collections and projects. The combination of the two should resolve any problems encountered during this project.

Further improvement to my website will be an essential tool for development as this would allow me to have an online version of the look book demonstrating my work, in turn elevating the quality of my site. Enhanced film/ animation skills would add a new and captivating element to my website in addition to professional photos improving the quality. Attending the “Digital marketing in a nutshell’ seminar delivered by Ben Wheeler, owner of Copper Bay Creative, would help educate my decisions and advise the most effective way of self promotion online.