

Title: *Natural forms and Positive Patterns for Sustainable Change*

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This essay aims to explore the future of design for interiors following the current Pandemic. The approaches in design that followed the second world war (WWII) in some ways mirrored how designers dealt with the pandemic of 2020. There are some similarities to the Modernist period (a part of the late 19th century to be finished in the middle of the 20th century). As such, Modernism will be looked at, with the introduction of innovative ways of creating pattern and the manufacture of cloth after the second world war. Also, the discussion will include how the 'new' was celebrated with The Festival of Britain and key designers of the time. Secondly, the discourse will continue and include current designers that are inspired by designers of the Modernist era, looking at their work and current practices in the design industry. However, drawing on the insights from the Modernist period, the focus will be on how designers can use contemporary technology to inspire pattern which celebrates human positivity, sustainably. The carbon footprint and the amount of interior furnishing waste, that ends up in landfill, will be investigated, and ways of creating more sustainable designs for the industry to celebrate a covid free, independent Britain!

Modernism is an artistic style or movement that began in the late 19th century and ended in the middle of the 20th century (Buchanan, 2010). The style falls between realism and postmodernism. During this time, designers faced trying to find something new and interesting to do with every experiment that has already been performed in the design industry. This has brought a range of artistic moments such as Abstractionism, Cubism, Dadaism, Futurism, Surrealism and many more. It is also the movement that has moved away from the classical or traditional forms and expresses the modern character, the quality of thought, technique, and expression (Stevenson, 2010). These indications means that this movements or style in the design industry likes to find new ideas and experiment with different methods.

Looking more closely into the term Modernism, when breaking up the word 'modern,' which relates to the present or recent times, it also relates to using the most up to date techniques, ideas, and equipment. And, moreover, when looking at the term modernism,

the suffix 'ism,' relates to a distinctive practice, system, philosophy, or a movement (Stevenson, 2015).

The direction of Modernism brought a new time to experiment with media and materials to create new art forms and other styles, or movements, followed. This was a time to investigate other ideas in design. Textiles offered new possibilities with pattern through applying different techniques, processes, and collaborations with others. The advancement of processes in textile crafts during this time and designs created continue to inspire new designers today. The processes also added cultural value to cloth by reinforcing meanings and the relation with people of the time (Jefferies, 2015). The impact of these processes on textiles is that designers wanted to create new possibilities to innovate latest ideas and collaborate with others to improve on how the advancement of processes continue to inspire new designers (Emily Baines, 1996, p. 14).

Creating a design of that time, came from an idea or an influence that inspired the drawing, followed by techniques or experiments that would include pure geometry, mark making and experimenting with colour (Emily Baines, 1996, p. 11). Other new modern approaches were applied had to have a freehand, loose and the freedom to explore new ways of how to draw, or other new material to experiment with (Jefferies, 2015, p. 43). These practical processes are still being approached in using drawing or other mediums to create a design. Other movements or styles have approached this practical practice of drawing and have had different outcomes within their design work. This applies to any start of a design process to gather drawing and other ideas onto paper before placing it onto a different surface such as, it being on cloth (Emily Baines, 1996, p. 14).

The style changed because it was the time to innovate ideas into other practices. It started due to new designers that were inspired by innovative technologies, were prepared to embrace these changes, and move on from the traditional methods previously applied. The war or other movements, political, social, cultural, and other global issues were a contributory factor for the changes. People wanted their spirits lifted after the depression of the times that they went through; it was time for celebration and something new (Sunshine, 2016). It brings people to explore different types of designs that are applied into different

furnishings to have a positive emotion in their homes. This shows that there are different ways how people or designers have applied themselves after the war or other global situations. "Its general success was that furnishings where a cheaper way to write a new habitat after the war, to satisfy the need for a symbolic environmental change" (Emily Baines, 1996, p. 13) .This is the interpretation that it was a time to figure out new ways how to create or change a way how to produce a piece of artwork. Further explanation into artists, designers that have relationships within materials in their work, expand into textile practice and the potential to influence (Dormor, 2020). It also presently shows that designers still think about creating designs and thinking of practical solutions to create their work, expand their knowledge and show their views to the public whether it is to show positivity or to show an aspect that is negative or a different emotion.

In the textiles industry, there are many ways on how to create pattern and design on cloth in applying a range of processes and techniques using 'new' technologies. Designers are always looking into ways to explore further into ways of creating new designs, patterns. They aim continue with applying innovative ideas to change the dynamic on how the public would view the 'piece' to gain an emotion (Jefferies, 2015, p. 44 45). Current designers in the industry are creating new contemporary practise and processes that link to this present time. For example, there are deeper understandings on how cloth is made and there are different processes or slight changes that help the ways of thinking of global issues, which will be discussed in more detail with contemporary designers.

Textiles processes are printing, stitch, and dyeing. All of these have many different processes and techniques that goes into each category.

There are designers or artists of the Modernist era that have become an influence on contemporary designers, with Lucienne Day being a name that is well known. Day's designs had an impact during the time when Britain was recovering from war. The idea of her designs was to create a sense of celebration that could transform interiors into an uplifting feeling, fun and modern when applied to home décor (Thorpe, 2018).

Her designs have a powerful sense of a geometric, retro feel that hints towards the motifs, with a graphic element worked over them as well. Theses reference to Days' work relates to

the innovative approaches to art forms of the time. They depict how a paired down type of drawing or mark making process can be recognised towards the moment of Modernism. They also show that Modernism brought the view to change in the subject of design (Vickery, 2017).

Day passed away in 2010 (Robin and Lucienne Day Foundation, 2012) after celebrating many successful years as a textile designer. However, her legacy continues and many of her designs are available at Willis Museum and Sainsbury gallery, Hampshire. The exhibit of her work, titled *Lucienne Day Living Design*, which was presented on 24 September 2019 to 11 January 2020 (Trust, 2017), focused on the celebration on the life and the most influenced designers of the post war generation. It related a story throughout the career of the Days when the exhibit unfolded a range of images and textiles that were from the archives of the Robin and Lucienne Day Foundation (Trust, 2017). Another exhibit called *Lucienne Day a Sense of Growth*, located at the Whitworth gallery, part of the University of Manchester (Manchester, 2017), was part of their gallery grow project to promote the benefits of improving mental wellbeing. There have been other opportunities where her works have been shown either in an exhibit, archives, or digital information. This shows the thinking of positive design, textiles being exhibited and showing the celebration of day's pattern designs.

The Robin and Lucienne Day Foundation was created by their daughter, Paula, in 2012. This is a design education charity. The organisations objectives are to make aware of the education to the public. This is by 'generating knowledge, appreciation and understanding of the nation's heritage in general, and the work of the Days in particular' (Robin and Lucienne Day Foundation, 2012). Even though there are many objectives that are outlined in the organisation, this really spoke that it matters to know or to try understanding personal heritages, in general or, in other practices such as a designer. What is shown in this quote, "Providing resources and opportunities which will enable the general public or students of educational establishments to further their study of design in general, and furniture and textile design in particular" (Robin and Lucienne Day Foundation, 2012). This gives students and the public to have an opportunity to gain experience into the study of design.

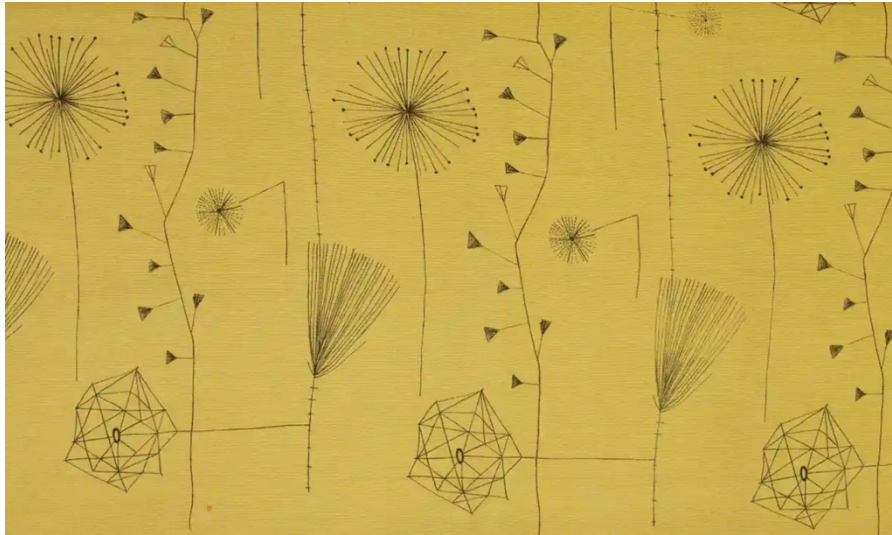


Figure 1: Dandelion Clocks (1953).

The design, figure one, above is titled Dandelion Clocks, which was created by Day. The design takes form of a retro style that is kind of vintage. The colourway is a mustard yellow, the motifs have a graphic and a geometric feel to the design, that is conducted in a black outline. The style of the dandelion clock brings in a new style after the war which brings in hope to create patterns to uplift people lives through the use of pattern design.

The design relates to the creating new ideas with how Modernism follows in linking different styles together, or to inspire new designers to follow their practise, such as Orla Kiely and other brands.

Kiely is an Irish designer, recognised for her retro graphic prints who takes mid-century, modernist pattern into her own creations of pattern and design. She has her own brand and sells homeware and accessories that depict her designs (British Council, 2021).

Her personal development of her work has developed through working on various jobs and projects to gain ways on how to progress with her own style. She stops when her likes, or dislikes have arrived at an idea. Her prints are produced on bags, furniture, fashion, and homeware. Kiely, as a child, was always mesmerised by the placement of pattern onto a variety of applications (Kiely, 2017, p. 5). In her initial drawings and some inspiration, she would find herself tracing organic forms and discovering how they would eventually repeat to form a design. She would often take inspiration from what was around her, the use of colour, her own childhood home that she has vivid memories of the white pattern tiled

surfaces, and a coloured ceiling that was painted in an orange-coloured gloss paint (Orla Kiely, 2010. P. 23). The many influences that inspire her work is through looking at many styles and trends at the time when she is creating contemporary designs. Some of the designers or brands that inspire her work are Lucienne Day, Heals, Mary Quant, Eileen Gray and many more (Wilder, 2021). Her source of inspiration is mid-century design that leans towards Scandinavian modern designs that first came some point after the Second World War, much like Day. These influences come from various artist and designs whose work follows a graphic element and all things vintage and retro. There are similarities to the application of block colour that Day applied to her early Modernist motifs that are evident in Kiely's work.



Figure 2: Stem, Orla Kiely

Figure two above, is one of Kiely's most popular designs in her collections. The design process of the stem collection started with working with gouache and then later using the computer to repeat the design and 'sharpen' the image. Part of the appeal of the design is to have simple clean and strong motif. what is also the appeal of her design is the muted colour tones that creates an effect of cool and some warm colours to the simple motifs. Her inspiration to create some of her designs if not all, is her mid-century modern and her appeal of a keen sense of a graphic element that relates to elements of vintage and retro

(Kiely, 2017. P.329, 339). Within her work, there are many ways how to uplift people emotions through the use of patterns and how to style it to connect to people what would be happening at the time, or it would bring in a calming effect.

Kiely refrains from the continuation to draw from a single form, such as a flower, or in the traditional floral style of posies and the renderings of leaves that come from designs inspired by traditional art forms (Orla Kiely, 2017. P. 426). While look at Orla Kiely designs there is a natural pattern form that relates to Day's designs. These can relate due to the subject matter of their design, and how they can be formed into pattern that is being related to natural such as floral forms. Kiely has always believed as a designer to focus onto the functionality of the design or the product as well as the pattern. As previously mentioned, she naturally produces her designs in a similar fashion to those of the early modern movement. For Kiely, it was a new time to discover new forms and scientific discoveries. From looking at Day's motifs, where the focus of the designs is created to see other parts of a structure, skeleton, or a silhouette, there is a new energy in Kiely's work to create a motif that could be arranged into another way in the space or on the surface (Kiely, 2017. P. 425). The aim for their designs is to uplift people at a challenging time through their use of pattern design.

The brand Orla Kiely, there is published news that the fashion brand has collapsed into administration (Petter, 2018). Other than that, her home and design brand has not been affected. Her range of accessories and homeware continue to be sold through other various distribution networks and retail outlets (Petter, 2018). Making further references to Day's Modernist style, and the influence that she continues to have on current designers, Sanderson's Interiors contemporary collection of fabric and wallpaper represents this in 2009, a well-known interiors brand, Sanderson, launched a collection that is under the heading of Sanderson one sixty wallpapers. Apart of this collection included this fun 50's retro pattern that is called dandelion clocks, it was designed by Fiona Howard (Group, 2021). The design featured a dandelion head that was stylised with the seeds coming from the centre. The design comes in other colour ways that include metallic/smoke tree, Chaffinch, Blackcurrant, Red, Slate and Coral. The design became one of the best designs that Sanderson selling onto fabric and wallpaper (Group, 2021). The design features a

dandelion head that was stylised with the seeds coming from the centre. The pattern and design have a similar block and graphic element to Day's earlier work Calyx, applying the same placement of pattern. Below in Figure three, Calyx is stylised by the use of the plant motifs that is almost to the point of abstraction that are linked in vertical and diagonal thin solid lines and dotted lines suggesting flower stalks. The inspiration that Calyx uses is a traditional source of a botanical form (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2021). This design at the time expresses the energy of new growth that goes together with the spirit of the festival and general social at the time.



Figure 3: Calyx, furnishing fabric, Lucienne Day, 1951, England. Museum

Referring to how the design relates to Modernism can be down to opinion or seeing how they can be applied by looking at other designers such as Day who created a similar version of the retro Dandelion Clock. The designer Howard, who designed the latest version of Dandelion Clock for the Sanderson brand, may well have taken inspiration from Day's version that was created in 1953. The inspiration could have been taken from the subject or style, the form of the motif, as it has a fun retro pattern that can draw an element of the past into the now, when the time brought innovative ideas or techniques together to introduce innovative pattern.



Figure 4: Dandelion Clocks, wallpaper, metallic/smoke Tree (2009)

As previously mentioned, The Festival of Britain brought a welcomed change to lifestyle, pattern, and furnishings (Gillilan, 2001) after a time of depression. Current times are also going through radical change. The planet is in danger of becoming destroyed due to pollution and the ozone layer becoming thinner (Laville, 2021). There is evidence of excess textile waste ending up in landfill and contributing to the high carbon footprint which needs to be closely monitored (Laville, 2021). Waste has become a major issue since the War. There are many lessons to be learnt here, the make do and mend ethic has returned due the need to minimise waste, not because of rationing and lack of materials readily available. In the textile industry, printing methods have changed with solvent-based materials being phased out and replaced with more environmentally friendly water-based products. Also, digital printing for printing designs on to cloth or wallpaper eliminates waste and is a quicker process, saving time. The digital age is being 'celebrated' during the pandemic, this has meant that people have been able to communicate virtually and safely without the risk of contracting the deadly CV-19 virus (Wainwright, 2020). The digital age will be present for some time, indefinitely, and will be used in most industries for manufacture and communication. As previously mentioned, political, social, cultural, and other global issues were a contributory factor for past changes. Since those changes, within the textile industry, there are new ways on how printed cloth is manufactured, with digital printing being accessible to specialists and hobbyists who need a quick turnaround. This can mean that

suppliers do not need to order large quantities/bolts of cloth that may not sell, which results in textile waste and landfill. It also allows for the industry to respond quickly to meet consumer demand. There have been many advances on the printing history, many printers have been changed and developed over the years to become more effective and environmentally friendly (Taylor, 2011). The environmental change on printed cloth includes manufacturers using inks that are water based, low-voc and free of toxins. The effects on using solvent-based inks and other chemical products in textiles are hazardous to humans and the environment.

Sustainable textiles have four main factors that includes the raw material, textile production, the added chemistry, and the end of life. The raw material means that it addresses the land and water that is used to grow in natural fibres such as cotton and wool. Textile production includes the water and energy is being used for the manufacturing. The production process has an impact with the amount of waste and the manufacturing companies have a responsibility to their workers and the communities around them. There may be an impact on textile workers or consumers with the final product by the added chemicals, this includes the dyes, finishes and coatings. As previously mentioned above, the end of life is the required infrastructure that can turn it into a new raw material. The performance of fabric is that it comes down to its longevity of the product (Hoguet, 2014).

To minimise the waste of the textile industry, the government has an action plan to minimise this waste by addressing the negative impacts of textiles. This includes supporting more sustainable design, improve consumer information, new business models and better recycling (Department for Environment, 18 March 2021). To address this action plan in the textile industry they have brought in research centres that can help to bring the government plan forward. WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme) is one of the companies that works with the government, communities, and businesses to improve their own waste management. WRAP is registered as a UK charity in 2014 that is base in wales and England which does intergreates internationally. Even though WRAP does focus into sectors of waste, one of the sectors that will be focus on is on textiles. WRAP states that for textile or fashion to build up targets and for to be an international standard. Then businesses must learn the impact of the waste on the planet, change their design choices, recycle materials and to

trade. Together they can bring awareness to businesses, government, and the public on the improvements on the benefits of buying, used and re-use/cycle textiles and clothing (WRAP, 2021). This gives the government and businesses a guideline on how the use of textiles should be approached globally, and how it can become more sustainable.

There are different sections where the textile industry plays a part within interior industry for example, furniture, wallpaper and furnishings. The similarities are from the different techniques, processes applied to surfaces (Taylor, 2021). For example, furnishings, wallpaper or furniture. There are many brands that supply wallpaper and furnishing fabrics. Also, there are manufacturers or brands such as Designers Guild, Farrow & Ball and others that continue to apply the traditional methods, these include screen printing, block printing, flocking and other methods to wallpaper. Brands such as Farrow & Ball specialise in paints and wallcoverings in traditional colours and designs. Additionally, the paper that they source from managed forests, that are manufactured in small batches at their Dorset factory are vinyl free, making them a more sustainable product. The result being beautiful durable products that are printed with their own paints (Farrow & Ball, 2021). When they are being printed, they use their branded water-based paint. This also contains no vinyl, which means it could be recycled. For their day-to-day operations they have taken the steps to reduce their impacts on the environment with their operational site using electricity that is powered by wind and solar farms that are around Britain (Farrow & Ball, 2021). They do have other policies that are in place with the recycling of the dry and wet waste. This shows how this sector of the industry is contributing towards improving the carbon footprint. Designers Guild have also taken measures in their company to reduce the carbon footprint.

Designers Guild produces wallpaper, fabrics, and furnishings. Their policies on the environment on their products includes many of the fabrics, papers are made from the natural fibres and are recyclable. Their paint range is completely water based, vegan and is low-voc, making them mostly solvent free. Low-voc stand for volatile organic compounds, that contribute to atmospheric pollution. The paint tins are manufactured in the UK, made from recycled steel, and can be reused again for paint or made into another container/product. Reduce and recycle paper, fabrics, soft furnishings, and furniture. The

waste fabric that they do not use is donated to various children's charities and all other remnants and end of life fabrics are recycled (Guild, 2021). This is a practice that is being adopted by many sustainably aware brands for example: Orange Box, Designers Guild and Bolia.

The Orla Kiley brand as mentioned previously, are conscious of global issues that are harmful to the environment. Since creating their first product they have always considered the effects of waste on the environment and are forward thinking towards using sustainable materials. The brand has a mission to improve on reducing waste. With their products and the packaging, they use reusable and recycled materials. This shows that designers are thinking from the initial design to the process whether being printed, dyed or stitch methods for the decoration of cloth. They are also being more conscious of how they can create these process' and what types of fabric, inks, and different solutions affect the environment (Kiely, 2021). It is positive to learn how these influential brands apply the re-cycle, re-use ethic within their companies.

Orange Box is a company that creates a range of furnishing products for office interiors. Orange Box has a commitment to build a future that focuses on the balance of economic and environmental outcomes, key to building a positive relationship with their suppliers, customers and communities (Orangebox, 2021). This encourages Orange Box to think purposefully how they impact the environment; how they improve their carbon footprint; their eco policy regarding locally sourced materials; minimising energy use and unnecessary waste. They minimise waste and the use of energy through reworking items and using low energy lighting. Their manufacturing facilities are based in South Wales. They make on demand, which means they only make what is required through ordering. They have digital fabric cutting machines that allow them to have small amounts of waste without having to stock materials. They buy enough for each order. This allows them to maintain the level of reject or rework to make the maximum effective use of resources. They operate in a clean, stable, reliable environment with planned maintenance and good housekeeping. Their eco policy facilitates the use of upcycling furnishing products to their original condition, or when it is not possible, they use suitable parts from unwanted furniture to make into new ones.

When it is unsuitable for repair, upcycling or reuse into new products, they would convert the waste into energy (Orangebox, 2021).

There is an environmental benefit to upcycling end of life furnishing fabrics or other products. Re-upholstering furniture can extend the life span of the item and help the environment by minimising the additional resources needed to make these products (Telegraph, 2016). Also, with crossovers between fashion/ interiors, the fabric at the back of an end-of-life sofa, for example, may not show signs of wear, the cloth can be removed and used to make an item of clothing, a leather or woven jacket. The item of furniture can be modified and re-upholstered. The Swansea Local Recycling scheme is in place for the public to swap items or re-use pre-loved items. For the residents, it is compulsory to recycle in Swansea, it should also be compulsory in other places as well (Swansea Council, 2021). There are many ways to recycle waste, the council also has in place at the landfill site, a 'tip treasure or reuse' shop, as it is also known by (Swansea Council, 2021). The purpose of this is to encourage residents to 'repair, reuse, borrow and buy.' The types of products available are clothing and furniture. There are many other plans that goes in further depth such as in textile waste and the sustainability which has been featured within the text.

Following on from these examples on demonstrating good practices in minimising the impact on the carbon footprint on the environment, some of the plan of textile waste is produced and how to they want to help or the sustainable ways.

Within the text are mentions on how designs and patterns are celebrated from the war, and it also mentions the pandemic. The time of 'post-pandemic' has yet to arrive. The virus continues to be present and may be around for some time yet. During this time, after slowly coming out of the pandemic there are design trends that call for celebration or for designers to share their views. When everyone had to stay at home, designers had to create from their homes and promote their work online.

There are growing trends within the interior sector that shows the meanings to bring in comfort furnishing, textures, and colour. Wallpaper and patterns will play a part in the celebration to uplift people in their homes. They can bring everyone to be transported by

means of colour and pattern. In designs there are emerging colour tones of clear colours of yellows, greens, light blues, and turquoises to brighten up interior spaces (Taylor, 2021). It appears that designers bring in trends to influence their designs.

Even though the World is slowly emerging from the pandemic, there is still an emphasis on sustainability whether it is for products or lifestyle practices. Looking into the wide range of a new generation of designers there was a common theme of exploring nature, their materials and how it could be translated into contemporary interiors. The meaning of nature being in their subject of designers investigating into meanings, places and finding out their place in the design world at that uncertain time. These designers have investigated several types of processes, techniques, and thinking around the types of the materials that they would use in their designs. This means that they were thinking about using more sustainable materials in their designs and designs that could be created at home with exploring and adapting what they have learnt to applied some of these techniques whilst being in lockdown.

One of the many designers uses their connections with the outside world to see a deeper meaning of beauty in nature and explore modern technologies to bring a new celebration of repeat patterns that we find in the natural world, and they can be applied into interior and homeware furnishings (New Designers, 2021). This brings new designers to have the joy into creating patterns, gathering inspiration from each other and other surroundings. Elise Rey is the designer who created a collection on optimism , the collection spoke of the bringing the feelings of hope and positivity throughout her designs by focusing on using bold, lively, and gestural marks (New Designers, 2021). With this expression to create a range of designs that shows a visual feeling at an uncertain time. The designs are created with a vibrant approach to colour, collage, and the use of their patterns that are uplifting.

After WW11, it took time for products to become readily available, due to the devastating effects of the war. People during that time lived with the make do and mend ethic until more jobs, money and products became available. Consequently, as a civilisation, we are now living in a time of uncertainty; the pandemic has alerted our attention to the damage made to our planet. Lockdown reduced the effects of fuel emissions from the lack

commuting on the planet, and made us think about conserving our resources. This experience has made us even more aware of the damage that waste has on the World. It has educated us that we need to be more resourceful in re-applying the ethics of reworking items as before. To reiterate, Orange Box are responsive to the damaging effects of waste, and are a leading example of a company that is making a good contribution towards manufacturing sustainable designs. Designers too are embracing change and creating collections based on nature/calm, isolated blooms, based on predicted trends (Patternbank, 2021). They will be able to offer a custom length service to avoid waste and energy in a way of celebrating the 'move forward' from an uncertain time, and will embrace new ways of working, whether this will be through technological advances of the future and/ or combining different skills . Writing this essay has informed me that, as a Surface Pattern designer, I need to be mindful of waste and the damaging effects it has on the environment, to consider the effects that political/global issues have on people and continue to produce work that is ethical and uplifting to the consumer. Also, I will need to keep ahead with new ways of working to be successful in the industry.

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