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MA Contemporary Dialogues (Textiles)

Confirmative Praxis

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Materialising the Suffragettes



Introduction

At its core, this project explores how alternative textile exploration can communicate feminist narratives that are pinned by historical and domestic contexts. The project chooses tea bags as a material that symbolises stereotypical female associations, being fragile and easily torn, while drawing on the cultural history of tearooms as early spaces of female solidarity and conversations within the suffragette movement. The project aimed to carry the ritual of tea drinking, historically rooted in domestic and female spaces, by merging material fragility with cultural strength. Through creating a series of garments made entirely from tea bags, each piece designed to represent traditionally feminine clothing, the project examines themes of fragility, resilience, and transformation.

Through unintentional environmental contributions, the project highlights the current impact of climate change and how it alters the way we work. The visual aesthetic, created through the staining of the tea bags, represents contemporary environmental effects. Intense UV rays across the summer affected the drying times, providing a glimpse into how materials behave differently depending on the climate. This altered the embodied experience of process and handling, and as a result created a variety of staining intensities and patterns that were out of my control. The evolving tea bags provide a visual archive of the increasing temperature of our climate.

Phenomenology provides an understanding of the project's material interactions and its association with domestic spaces. Core theorists such as Gaston Bachelard, whose notion of domestic space considers both the physical environment and the emotional responses attached to it, play key roles throughout the duration of the project.

From a craft perspective, the project then draws on our relationship with traditional techniques. The project uses Christopher Fraylings concepts of harmonising modern technology and approaches with traditional crafts, allowing heritage practices such as lace making to remain part of modern discourses. The lace explored in this project highlights skilled female craft and preserves the aesthetic of this craft's history.

Primary research, such as letters and firsthand accounts, strengthens the feminist context of the project, guiding and informing the garment choices. The corset was chosen for its daily presence throughout much of women's history, shaping cultural perspectives on women's bodies and identities. This cultural importance highlighted why this type of garment could be reimaged to tell core female stories. Looking closely at modern reclamations of corsets drew the project towards Galliano's 2024 spring and summer collections, where the association of the female hourglass, made possible by the garment's tight bounds, is wrapped and challenged.

Finally, the project explores how the final garments are going to be displayed.

Staging a photography shoot in a tearoom helps to highlight the tearooms links with female spaces and the domestic. The project looks to films with textile rich cinematography to provide staging suggestions and inspiration, largely informed by the 2019 movie Little Women for its female centred story line and use of textiles in domestic spaces.

Chapter 1

At the heart of my project lies the tearoom, the central thread that stitches together my material explorations with my theoretical research. The tearoom contextualises these elements to provide a holistic overview, grounding the project in coherence.

I began the project challenging the structural possibilities of the domestic tea bag. Over time, I found a natural progression through personal intrigue to investigate the social ceremonies of drinking tea. With a particular interest in history, I found myself unconsciously leaning towards research that piqued my historical interests. Delving into the ritual of tea drinking specifically in western culture, I found clear links between the establishments of tea rooms, and the rise of the Suffragette period.

Feminist historians argue that although many Suffragette conversations took place in village halls, there were very few places that were deemed acceptable for women to meet informally to discuss political views. Tea rooms, at the time, were “popular with both Suffragettes and Suffragists” (Crawford, 2012). Viewed as domestic places, tearooms represented a homely environment, and therefore, became socially acceptable places for women to meet up socially without the presence of men. Significantly notable Suffragette acts of defiance were planned in these tea rooms, notably a Suffragette named Kate Fraye, who in the Westminster tearoom Lyons, planned and positioned herself and a group of other Suffragette individuals, on the night of 21st November 1911, to smash the windows of government offices (WHN, 2012).

Following this socio- political line of inquiry led me into a deeper exploration of context and meaning of how important tea rooms were as a space for Suffragettes and women to gather under the veil of anonymity. I started to reflect on the possibilities that the humble tea bag has as a material of representation for the feminist approach. Considered phenomenologically, the tea bag evokes the ceremonies of tea drinking, in spaces like tea rooms or the home, which embodies a symbolic reference to the domestic sphere, places often taken up by women or gender typical roles.

Gaston Bachelard argues that “The house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace” (Bachelard,1958, p.6), suggesting that domestic spaces carry symbolic meanings. For instance, the kitchen, analysed by feminist theorists and artists such as Martha Rosler’s ‘*Semiotics of the Kitchen*’ (1975), explores the domestic gestures of women cooking in the kitchen. Engaging with artwork like Rosler’s, that interrogate women’s roles in the domestic, prompted me to imagine how these female stories can be represented through the medium of textiles.



Fig.1: *Ice Pick* (Martha Rosler, 1975).

The kitchen, a space of ritual for making tea, is often framed as a space for women to perform a “patriarchal construction of femininity” (Najeeb 2023). In this context, the tea bag becomes both a symbolic material for representing women in domestic spaces, but also as a reminder for how the Suffragettes utilised the domestic spaces of tearooms to advocate for women’s rights.

Impressed by the symbolic possibilities that the tea bag holds for representing female discourse, the project uses tea bags as a symbol of fragility, mirroring the way women have historically been framed as fragile. Its association with tearooms helps to represent the spaces where Suffragettes could organise feminist discussions.

Through a series of research and brainstorming sessions, (see figure 2) strong and consistent connections became clear between female historical clothing and feminist

movements, where women used clothing as a tool to display power in a male dominated society. In doing so it will allow for the tea bag to sit within a wider experimentation of materiality and broader feminist critique, not just as a space for female discussion but furthermore advocacy for women's rights.

Brainstorming Further exploring ideas of how tea bags link to women in the domestic setting as a domestic ritual and social space for women.

Refining the points:

- The home being a space traditionally for women both as a place of comfort and restriction as a place they were expected to occupy.
- Society was divided into areas, men in the public sphere being work, politics and leisure, whilst women being in the private sphere, the home.
- Tea bags as a material can symbolise how women were viewed, fragile, soft and easily torn, yet also enduring and essential to everyday life.

Why the Tudor Period?

My general thoughts from what I already know:

- **An era of female leadership:** a period marked by the successful rule of female monarchs.
- **Economic expansion:** rapid growth in trade and wealth through the early (and now controversial) beginnings of the British Empire, particularly driven by sugar exploration.
- **Fashion as politics:** clothing became extremely political, with strict rules dictating what colours and fabrics each social class could wear.
- **Elizabeth Tudor as a symbol:** Elizabeth I embodied the country's economic success and power through her clothing, using fashion as a tool to command respect and assert authority in the Tudor court.
- **A changing society:** set roughly a century after the end of the medieval period, this time saw huge changes in Britain's social and political structure.
- **Feminist perspectives:** debates raged over whether a woman could (or should) rule, and whether Elizabeth's divine right to the crown was legitimate given that her mother was Anne Bolyn.
- **Clothing as communication:** overall, it's a fascinating period to explore how fashion was used to make powerful political and personal statements.

Expanding these ideas:

Fig.2: *Brainstorming session* (Sophie Mayled, 2025).

The notion of creating a garment is not a new idea introduced into this project but rather an evolution from the concept of a tea dress that represented the ceremony of tea drinking (see figure 3). However, I recognised that this was an opportunity for deeper research around the act of tea drinking and feminist story telling. The emerging links between tearooms and Suffragettes, changed the project's

perspective from the obvious symbolism of producing a tea dress for the tea drinking ceremony, and became more about how it could represent layers of female stories through domestic spaces and constraints. Moving forwards, the garment's considerations became more purposeful, allowing for more distinct storytelling to happen.



Fig.3: *Tea dress research* (Sophie Mayled, 2025).

Practically speaking, the first garment began much earlier than the other two garments due to it incorporating multiple layers of slower processes, such as hand

stitching and tea bag preparation. Previous experimentation with tea bags as a material informed my practice and dictated how long this project was going to take. Early planning and creation were essential to meet the deadline of the final exhibition.

The original intention behind the design was initially focused on the structure and construction of the tea bags and this dictated the design of the shirt but as my research around feminism intensified, the focus evolved and so the project transitioned in a new direction. This garment represented this change in focus the most, due to its construction taking part mostly during the early stages of the project. The design evolved as my knowledge of the historical era and significance of the teabag increased.

Unexpectedly, the environment also changed the project in ways that I could not predict. During the explorative module, carried out in cooler winter into spring climates, the tea staining produced a specific visual staining effect (see figure 4).



Fig.4: *Tea staining, winter vs summer* (Sophie Mayled, 2025).

However, the intense heat waves of the summer, altered the aesthetic in ways I did not expect and could not control.

The staining of the tea into the tea bags left a 'scorched' like appearance but instead of trying to change this effect, I documented the result (see figure 5). From this journal type documentation, I captured the temperature of the heat wave which at the time was 31 degrees Celsius. At this rate the tea bags were drying at an exceptionally fast rate, meaning I could produce a high quantity of tea bags.



Fig.5: *Documentation of the summer's effects* (Sophie Mayled, 2025).

Although the tea staining method had not changed, the environmental conditions had shifted, producing more intense staining patterns. Instead of avoiding this uncontrollable change in my work, I adopted Donna Haraway's way of thinking. Rather than avoiding uncontrollable elements, Haraway suggests that "staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts" (Haraway, 2016. p.18). By embracing the lack of control, I had over the environment's influence on the aesthetic outcome, it allowed the project to gain a deeper meaning.

Although the project is rooted in feminist narratives and female storytelling, the tea bags now act as, from an archival point of view, an interesting documentation of the summer and a snapshot of the moment in time these tea bags were dried for this project. This brings together both past concerns of female representations and struggles, but also current and emerging issues.

During the early stages of the shirt's construction, I noticed that my unconscious decision making was already leading me towards a bias for historically inspired clothing. As previously stated, the beginning of the garment was inspired by the structural qualities and capabilities of the tea bag. However, researching female historical and socio- political events, and discovering the strong links between historical female fashion and stories, naturally informed the design of my garment.

Combining this discovery and realisation about my piece, I decided to embrace my personal interests and research into Tudor clothing from the reign of Elizabeth I, 1558-1603, as a starting point, in keeping with a female focus on fashion. The Tudor period is particularly interesting in terms of fashion as it holds deep levels of symbolism and hidden messages. Historian Harleen Kundan explores Tudor fashion with a focus on Margrette Tudor, the aunt of Elizabeth I. She describes how women could use their fashion to convey a “manifestation of power, wealth, and status” (Kudan, 2025 p.11) especially in the Tudor courts. Elements, such as the “colour of clothing would have been fundamental to communicating the power and status of queens” (Kudan, 2025, p.11). With Tudor courts dominated by male power, being seen to have power as a woman was important. Recognising how women utilised clothing as a tool for female authority, shaped my line of inquiry into Elizabeth Tudor's court fashion, a symbolic medium through which Elizabeth commanded power, despite accusations of illegitimacy.

These legitimacy accusations would shape important design choices for Elizabeth Tudor's clothing. Adorning a large ruff around her neck, created a symbolic image of a saint with a halo (see figure 6). Elizabeth's lace ruff symbolised her right to the throne and power. The large size of the lace ruff created physical distance between her and her members of court, creating a sense of untouchability, which reinforced her authority as monarch.



Fig.6: National Portrait Gallery – Elizabeth I (Sophie Mayled,

The delicate lace on Elizabeth Tudor's clothing was used to make an authoritative assertion over the court, and this was an element I wanted to replicate to represent female power in my garments. Both the lace and tea bags whilst made of a fragile material are also strong and representative of female stories and companionship; lace was created within female sewing groups, and the tea would have been the drink.

The lace was used as a delicate medium to provide authoritative assertion over Elizabeth's Tudor court and this was an element I wanted to represent as female power in my garment. The similar representations that lace shares with tea bags, both being delicate but having the ability to represent strong female stories sat well together.

The material creation of the lace for this project, took inspiration from mark making sessions utilising a traditional craft through nontraditional means, such as digital embroidery. Walter Benjamin may argue that this process loses the aura of the piece, since it is inspired by a historical handmade process, but is produced using modern technology, and thus is unauthentic (Benjamin, 1997, p. 67)

However, Christopher Frayling's notion of combining modern technology with traditional crafts, provided a powerful guidance for my project. Frayling describes how integrating technology into traditional craft can evolve the craft into contemporary dialogues (Frayling, 2017. pp. 20-23). This ideology of not shying away from new elements, reflects nicely with Donna Haraway's '*Staying with the Trouble*', as it encourages the collaboration with technologies rather than avoidance or trying to change them. My own project evolved alongside this ideology, reflected in

the traditional craft of lace making being made using digital embroidery, sitting harmoniously alongside handsewn smocking on the sleeves of the shirt.

Chapter 2

Having established feminism and craft as the central focus for this project, I decided to keep my inspiration historical, but broaden my inspiration in terms of garments, and the period of history I was researching. Thus, the corset instantly came to mind for its clear links to female representations and its significance in women's history.

Before beginning the construction, I researched into accounts of women wearing corsets. I wanted to understand what it meant to wear a corset, not just feminist critiques, but also women's firsthand historical experiences in hopes that I would gain a more holistic understanding of the corset, rather than basing it from my own perceptions.

An archive of Victorian letters, from Germany, recall personal accounts and experiences wearing corsets. These documents, collected over two decades of historical curation (Sylphide and Alex, 2021) provided me with firsthand accounts that allowed me to form my own interpretations, without relying only on modern feminist understanding. This allowed me to be confident in my project's core messaging, that my conclusions authentically aligned with my own feminist standpoint, rather than being solely led by the echoing of others' scholarly perspectives.

The letter titled, "*Letter from Aunt Helen to her sister*" is of a young woman, believed to be seventeen years of age, writing to her older sister. The letter is written around the time of her debut into society as a young woman on the marriage market. In the letter, the young woman expresses her excitement for a young man named John, who she is trying to gain romantic affection from, through his personal attraction to

smaller waists. "Then he happened to feel my waist and said how small it was!" (Helen, 1892). John even boasts that his mother, during his childhood, achieved a 'small figure', alluding to the fact that she had a small waist. With the desire to impress John, the young women started waist training to achieve the smallest figure she could, and she expresses how it impressed him. "but his admiration made up for the pain I was in" (Helen, 1892). Interestingly, the archives that I found the letter in suggest that some women expressed enjoyment and enthusiasm about wearing corsets. Although the argument is partly true, evidently seen through the positive writing of the young women, one can't ignore the fact that the young woman's enthusiasm is rooted in impressing John, rather than her own personal desire highlighting the power of the male gaze on women's bodies and the pressure women feel to alter themselves to meet male expectations.

Building from the more negative experiences of women and corsets, it felt natural to progress onto how the corset has been reclaimed in more modern years. John Galliano's 2024 spring collection reclaimed and reimagined the corset in expressive ways. Galliano disrupts the association of the female body and the corset by placing the corset onto a male body (see figure 7). The male wearer's movements are restricted by the corset alluding back to the corset's restrictive symbolism (Maison Margiela and Galliano, 2024). My own project has a focus on representing female stories however, Galliano's reclamation and gender exploration of the corset inspired me to consider the deeper representation, how they are seen visually and the structural qualities of the garment. From a textile perspective, creating pleats and folded structures into the material of the tea bag can help represent the constrictive and controlling nature of the corset.



Fig.7: 'Maison Margiela' (John Galliano, 2024).

Previous samples from the explorative module, where I distorted imagery through pleating, (see figure 8) provided relevant structural references for the corset design. These samples had imagery on them which were hard to see once manipulated. In these samples, the imagery printed onto them became distorted when pleated. I decided to apply this technique to imagery of women on tea bags, with the aim of distorting the image to the point of unrecognition. In doing so, the disruption parallels the stories of how much of women's history has been hidden or claimed by men.



Fig.8. Material pleating and manipulations (Sophie Mayled,

The images chosen for my garment were also carefully considered (see figure 9). I wanted to reclaim the corset by combining pictures of women performing traditionally male roles, with a garment usually associated with hyper femininity. The colour of the garment also took careful consideration. Choosing variations of purples, a colour strongly linked to the Suffragette movement, and a colour often seen from Suffragettes as “the royal colour. It stands for the blood that flows in the veins of every Suffragette, the instinct for freedom and dignity.” (Ryder, 2023. p 41). The tea bag then recalls the Suffragette tearoom associations, and the colour reinforces the idea of the movement, through colour symbolism.



Fig.9: Picture collage (Sophie Mayled, 2025).

Chapter 3

At this stage conversations around how these would be displayed in the show started to influence how I viewed the garments. Tutors suggested that it might be more impactful if the garments were purposely displayed unconstructed and unfinished. This discussion emerged from the fact that the corset garment was midway through its construction, and its unfinished look was providing a pleasing aesthetic. It highlighted the material, being made from tea bags, and the details of the fabric manipulation more effectively. It was suggested that completing the garment may take away from the work put into the material. These discussions altered my understanding of how I was viewing the garments, as presentation possibilities has not yet been considered during the project. Despite understanding the aesthetic appeal of the garment being left unconstructed, the story narratives that the garment held, such as the reclamation of the corset, were too strong an element, to leave out. The cultural significance of the tearooms and the Suffragettes, relies on the garment to tell the story and not solely the tea bag fabric.

Although I did not pursue the unconstructed garment suggestion, these discussions led me to be more purposeful in my selection for my third piece. Both the shirt and the corset represent more upper-class female representations, therefore, for the third piece I wanted to focus on a more working-class garment to bridge the social class representations. I shifted my focus from historical clothing (Tudor) to more contemporary that are relevant both historically and currently. In doing so it allows the project to broaden its relevance and allows the garment choice to fit more closely with the feminist narrative.

I ultimately chose an apron because of its connections with working class representations. It has associations with everyday labour and women, often overlooked, allows the project to broaden and balance its class representations, while still being an important female garment. Unlike the shirt and the corset, an apron has more modern associations, broadening the project's timeline investigations.

The WIP presentation became a crucial pause of reflection, helping me to realise the direction of the project and the significance of the core message. The environmental and feminist representation embedded in the garments, alongside the material staining and tearoom Suffragette narrative, had become lost in translation and needed more clarity.

The key realisation that emerged was that the project has multiple layers of concepts and the core message of the Suffragette's tearoom movement, needed greater emphasis. Due to the advanced stage of creation, reworking the garments was not feasible, so the decision was made that the curation of the garments within the exhibition would be used to strengthen the narrative and ensure the core message was realised.

In order to convey this, the logical step was photographing the garments in a tearoom setting. The environment helped the tearoom narrative to be expressed more effectively, rather than just through the garments alone. Through displaying the garments within the tearoom setting the historical and social narrative that underlies the project is resonated clearly. Bachelard suggests that space can hold memory and lived experience, and this felt particularly relevant to this stage of the project. "all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home" (Bachelard, 1964. p.

5). The tearoom thereby holds traces of the women who once inhabited this space further supporting the decision to place the garments within a culturally and historically significant environment.

Photographing the garments provided the opportunity to take close-up images which highlighted the unconventional material to the viewer. Photographing the garments felt like the missing component helping to bridge together the story of the tea rooms and the Suffragettes with the unconventional use of tea bags as a material.

I was inspired to investigate films for inspiration on staging the garments in the tearoom, as films can offer intentional staging that highlight textiles well, and offer visual compositions. Capturing the movement of the textile and the depth of textures, captured within the addition of historical context was important, therefore looking for films that capture this was integral. The 2019 film 'Little Women' resonated with the underlying female centric story telling within my project. It has moments of strong visual focus on textiles in intimate domestic spaces, which echoes my own project's use of the domestic space of the tearoom. Referencing these films allows for a more narrative driven and focused approach to the photography staging. Creating a visual mood board, (see figure 10) consisting of textile focused stills from the movie helped me to visualise and create purposeful and thought-out staging within time constraints.



Fig.10: Little women collage (Sophie Mayled, 2025).

I chose to direct the photoshoot in a local Georgian period tearoom, whose period features reflect the historical influence of the garments. This setting helped to reinforce the historical significance and influence that has been the basis of this project strengthening the visual coherence between material and narrative.

This was the first time experiencing having my work professionally photographed, which involved careful communication towards the vision I had in mind. Although the photographer, Alexander Williams, usually photographs athletes in sports venues, his experience with positioning bodies worked well when discussing the positioning of the garments. This approach resulted in the sense of a bodily presence, nicely reinforcing the 'story telling of the past' element of the project.

Original plans included staging the garments in a more human like manner, such as having the sleeve worn by an individual however time constraints shifted the focus towards capturing the material qualities and how the garments could be draped in the room. This approach unexpectedly led to aspects of hauntology being introduced into the project (see figure 11) The absence of bodies evokes the memory of Suffragettes who once gathered in such places and their long-lost conversations.



Fig.11: Tea room photography (Sophie Mayled, 2025).

The post- structuralist theorist Jacques Derrida suggests “There are discursive layers whose stratifications allow long sequences to remain subjacent to ephemeral formations” (Derrida,1994. p. 5) and this has quietly informed the way I have considered the Suffragettes in this work. The garments, being unworn, embody this unfolding story and shifts the story of feminism to current society.

Chapter 4

Displaying the garments in exhibition cases created a museum-like atmosphere, resonating with the historical aesthetic of the project. This display approach allows the garments to be viewed not just as pieces of fashion but as feminist artifacts that represent layers of feminine narrative. It might be suggested, that, this amplifies the concept of 'hauntology,' again referring to the work of theorist Jacques Derrida, creating a spectre of something in the past entering into the present. The exhibited artefacts allude to the suggestion of previous wearers, giving the garments a historical presence.

Laying the garments out in the cases revealed they would have more impact displayed individually. Each garment represents a different class, by having the garments sitting opposite each other, it creates a visual story, moving from working class to upper class. The spacing between the cases also allows for a natural pathway, inviting viewers to come and view the garments, and to get a closer look at the material qualities, encouraging a sense of curiosity

An early idea was to place the tables and then the images from the photoshoot on the walls behind them. Given that there is exhibition work either side of my work, adding additional pictures, could have overcrowded the space. The pictures are an important part of the project's narrative, linking the tearoom to the Suffragette stories. It was this key context I felt would get lost, if the pictures were not included. The proposed compromise was to place images inside the cases alongside the garments. Another consideration was that while the cases were positioned against the wall, it felt like the wall was part of the overall display raising the question

of the space feeling empty without images on the wall. This was a point of continuous discourse between me as the artist and those who were curating the space. Eventually, mutual agreement was reached on positioning the cases in a staggered position, which allowed them to feel like standalone pieces, away from the wall additionally reinforcing the museum like aesthetic of the display.

Conclusion

Using alternative textile exploration, this project has demonstrated how material can communicate feminist narratives that are pinned by historical and domestic contexts. The project explored the relationship between material interactions and how they can represent spaces and evoke historical and social associations, weaving together past female stories with echoes of current environmental concerns and a recognition of domestic spaces.

Working with the teabag through a textile lens has changed my perspective on the possibilities of waste materials. Initially believing that the teabags might be too fragile for repetitive handling meant that early experimentations were less adventurous. However, continuous interactions and growing familiarity resulted in unexpected possibilities, mirroring the historical perception of women's fragility and the frequent underestimation of their resilience and capabilities.

Unexpected environmental factors also shaped the visual aesthetic of the material and changed my perception of the role that environment can play in the outcome of a project. Climate conditions altered the drying time, and intense UV rays scored into the tea stains, leaving unique and interesting patterns. This challenged the assumption that climate conscious projects are always intentional rather than

coincidental. Donna Haraway's concept of working with the trouble was a core reminder of how a project can be affected by current concerns, in this case climate change, which can evolve the work in ways initially unintended.

The continuous interactions between myself and the material developed a tactile relationship that created emotional and sensory responses. Bachelard's notions of place and space helped me understand this physical engagement and evoked the historical and domestic associations that tearooms have with the Suffragettes, which are embedded in the material. Phenomenology made me more aware of how these tactile interactions with material can create a dialogue around domestic spaces and the climate. This constant interaction created new lived experiences for me, especially when making tea reminded me of the project. Physical touch and the visual results developed throughout the project, allowing the garments to provide lived experiences and enabling the feminist stories to be told through their design.

Fraylings writing encouraged the project to harmonise past and present, reinforcing the importance of allowing traditional crafts to evolve alongside modern developments. With the core of the project grounded in historical accounts of women's feminist histories, and quieter echoes of modern climate concerns throughout, it became important to create a discourse between the historical and the contemporary. Represented through lace that was digitally embroidered, the project adopted a historically led design approach that embraced the use of modern technology. The result was a time worn quality that fitted perfectly with the historical context of the project.

- Exhibition show reflection

After stepping away from the exhibition space for a while, it became clear that I still felt the wall space was left bare. The initial staging of the cabinets against the wall made the empty wall feel connected to the display, making it look static. The agreed upon solution was to move the cabinets away from the wall in a staggered position, offering a more dynamic curation. This was the right decision, however I still believe that as the photographs were an important extension of the tearoom storytelling narrative, their lack of inclusion meant this part of the story was lost. I understand why the photos were not included, to prioritise the curated wall displays of graphic design and illustration on either side, as they could benefit from a lack of overcrowding. But when observing the final display, I still believe the photographs would have strengthened my space without overwhelming the neighbouring curations.

Ultimately, this project highlights how a waste material can be transformed into a textile that carries the feminist historical stories of tearooms and environmental concerns, communicated through the final make of the project and the curated exhibition space.

List of Illustrations

[Figure 1] Martha Rosler, 1975, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, “Ice pick,” (video still)
School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Available at: <https://smarthistory.org/martha-rosler-semiotics-kitchen/>

[Figure 2] Sophie Mayled, 2025, Sections of research journal exploring garment types and the Tudor period. (screen shot)

[Figure 3] Sophie Mayled, 2025, Explorations of tea dresses worn during tea ceremonies. (screen shot)

[Figure 4] Sophie Mayled, 2025, Comparison of tea staining intensities during the winter and the summer. (screen shot)

[Figure 5] Sophie Mayled, 2025, Documentation during the summer heat wave. (screen shot)

[Figure 6] Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, 1592, Painting of Elizabeth I. (painting)
The National Portrait Gallery, available at: <https://www.npg.org.uk/schools-hub/queen-elizabeth-is-power#compare9-5>

[Figure 7] John Galliano, 2024, Still from the Spring Summer fashion show ‘Masion Margiela’, (screen shot), available at: <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/shows-reviews/gallery/maison-margiela-couture-spring-1236155207/>

[Figure 8] Sophie Mayled, 2025, Documentation of material manipulation through pleating and folds. (screen shot)

[Figure 9] Sophie Mayled, 2025, Collage of inspirational women in varying roles. (screen shot)

[Figure 10] Sophie Mayled, 2025, Collage of textile cinematography seen the 2019 movie Little Women. (screen shot)

[Figure 11] Sophie Mayled, 2025, Final photographs from the tearoom photoshoot, show by Alexander Williams. (photographs)

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