2021

Material World

How can we do better?



A student produced zine exploring contemporary practise in fashion and surface pattern design.

FASHION AND TEXILES

4 LOW IMPACT SURFACE PRINT

6 CARE-DESIGN TO BE REPAIRED

10 INCLUSIVITY



Norwegian Sweater, Celia Pym, 2010

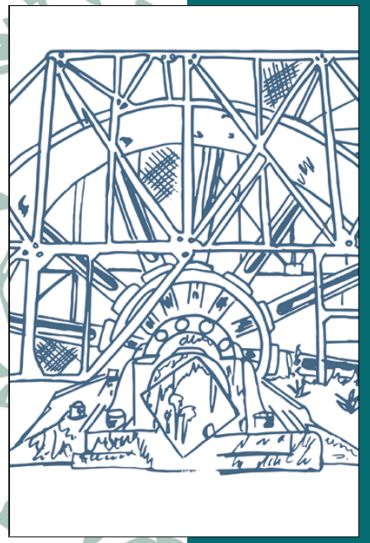


PUBLIC SPACES

12 WELLBEING

In my studies I would like explore methods that we can use to design for better. This includes low impact surface print, recycling and repair, inclusive design for age, gender and disability, and the promotion of wellbeing in the design for public spaces.

For me, fashion should be open to include everybody. In my opinion it is the most compassionate and empathic way in encouraging people to feel comfortable about who they are.



LOW IMPACT SURFACE PATTERN

Natural dyes can be extracted from plants, minerals and insects. Of these, plants provide the widest range of colours.

The colour achieved has more depth than synthetic dye methods, giving richer colours to the cloth. This is because they are made up of many particles of varying tones.



Eucalypts Dyed Cloth, India Flint, n.d.

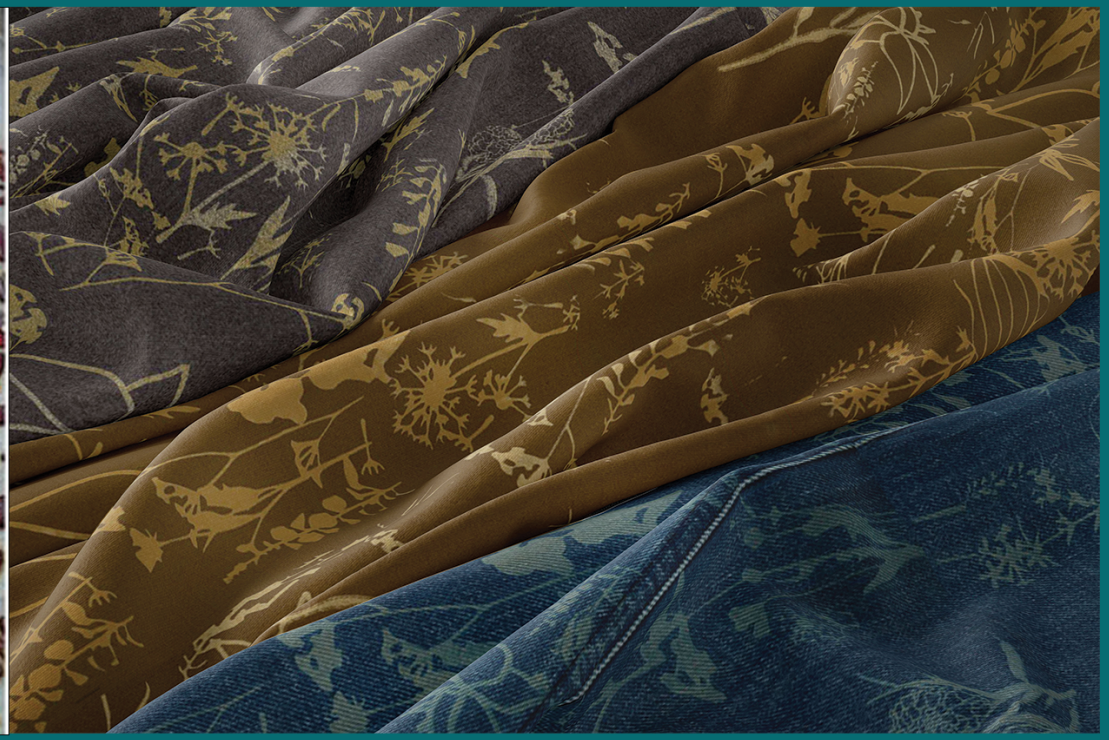
The use of natural dyes is limited to home and craft dyers, traditional artisans and a handful of small-scale brands. This is due to the unpredictable nature of the process. However, it is an invitation to feel more connected to nature.

One opportunity for low impact pattern is laser engraving. It is fast, efficient and has a low environmental impact. A range of materials can be used in this process, good quality is key. Very light-weight, sheer textiles are more problematic. Detailed and intricate designs can be achieved with this method that other processes simply cannot.

If the CAD is understood by the designer it can be explored commercially, for example, like creating aesthetically appealing personalised engravings onto a garment (Earley et al.,2019, p.3). It is clear, legible and permanent. Unlike printing techniques, it leaves very little waste behind as most of it is vaporised or extracted as particle dust. As long as there is sufficient extraction via a vent into the atmosphere and a fume filtration unit the designer is protected from dust and odours caused by the process.



Laser 'resurfaced' sample, upcycled non-woven textile, Kate Goldsworthy, 2007.



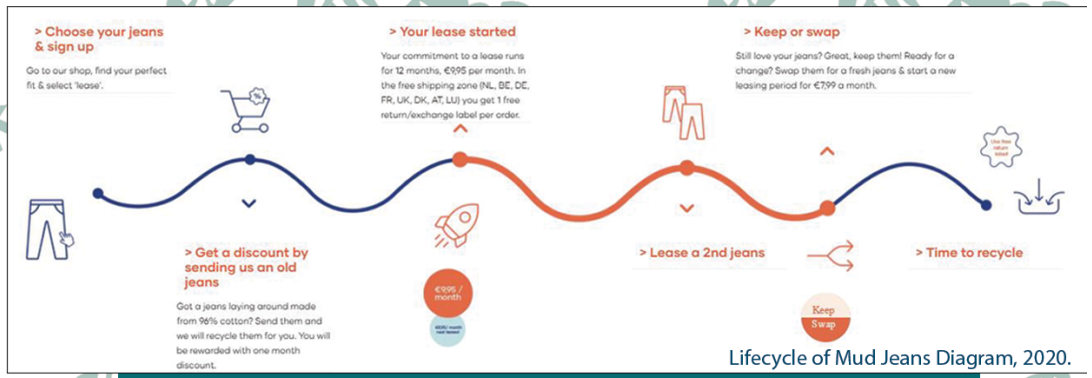
CARE - DESIGN TO BE REPAIRED

Collaborative consumption should be widely considered amongst consumers. The act of sharing, passing on or renting goods in order to extend its time in use. This term was birthed from "dissatisfaction of the society of abundance resulting from the [...] never-ending, never-satisfied escalation of consumption" (Binninger et al., 2015, pg.971). Extending the lifecycle of a product should be a consumer's priority.

The most effective way of reducing environmental effects of fashion is investing in your wardrobe. To produce and dispose of less. Buy cheap, buy twice is not good enough.

The use of organic materials and "recycling is an aspirin, alleviating a rather large collective hangover... overconsumption" (Braungart, 2002, pg.50).

Eco-efficiency would transform the industry into one that integrates environmental and social concerns.



Lifecycle of Mud Jeans Diagram, 2020.

The practise of stitch is thought to be restorative and therapeutic, beneficial to the mind and body. We unconsciously see a needle as a tool to repair damage. To use one is an act of forgiveness not to destroy or damage (Parker, 2010, p.xix). The creative process has a self -transformative impact on a person.



INCLUSIVITY

AGE

"The fashion industry is primarily populated by young people, and their values affect attitudes to designing for the older market, which is regarded as a marginal and low-status field" (Twigg, 2012, pg.1038).

GENDER

The 'youthquake' or 'baby boomer' generation blurred attitudes in fashion relating to gender rules. It became acceptable for women to wear what was considered masculine clothing. However, despite a few celebrity figures in later years like David Bowie's androgynous character Ziggy Stardust, it is still considered controversial for men to wear feminine fashion. I hope with Harry Style's appearance on the cover of US Vogue there is a resurgence of the previously short lived 'peacock revolution'.

DISABILITY

London Metropolitan graduate Ronja Thielmann graduate collection was derived from similar values. The capsule collection of six looks consists of adjustable, adaptable clothing that is both functional and visually appealing. Her easily accessible designs include 'stroke-friendly' zips, elastic cords for adjustability, lots of accessible openings for treatment and even an inside pocket for a catheter bag. She focuses on a street wear aesthetic that will appeal to a wide range of ages and disabilities. There is dignity in her concept.

SIZE

In the fashion world a Women's UK size 12 is considered plus size despite the average for British Women is a UK size 14 (Format, 2019). Changing the boundaries of this is made harder by manufacturers as many often do not produce elements of a garment above a 'desired' size (Tomlin, 2018).





Left- Look 3- The Double Opening, Ronja Inclusive Design, 2020.

Right- Look 5 - The Face, Ronja Inclusive Design, 2020.

WELLBEING

“Only during the most recent century did we stop living lives marked and influences by the conditions of nature. […] Modern city environments may be so unnatural as to cause us to more easily experience stress reactions” (Stigsdotter, 2005, p.11).

Through creating public places which foster feelings of security, connection, acceptance and empowerment, we can build places that strengthen community physical and psychological health.
Through the resurgence of reconnecting with the natural world we need to keep the momentum of embracing nature.





Exterior view of Gardens by the Bay, Singapore, 2012.

Public spaces need to promote wellbeing. Welcoming outdoor public spaces that share the site with a body of water. The relationship between land and water is a humble one, our instinctive urge to swim and splash in the open air runs deep. Marine biologist Wallace J Nichols believes water helps repair the mind, body and soul, the antidote to our modern busy lives. Our brain releases neurotransmitters associated with euphoria and wellness. Swimming increases this as the heart pumps up to 30% more blood around the body, our body is strengthened by the added dose of endorphins, producing a natural high (McCarron, 2020, p.106-109). Where there is water there is life. A wellspring often represents hope.

The pandemic may have come at a 'good' time, if there is such a time, as the 'extinction of experience' was higher than ever before. Generation after generation, fewer and fewer children are experiencing nature. Ecologist Robert Pyle coined the concept of 'extinction of experience' arguing that knowledge of the natural world is becoming less and less.

"It's premise involves a cycle of disaffection and loss that begins with the extinction of [...] common species, events [...] in our own immediate surrounds; this loss leads to ignorance, [...] alienation, apathy, an absence of caring and ultimately to further extinction (Pyle, 2015)".

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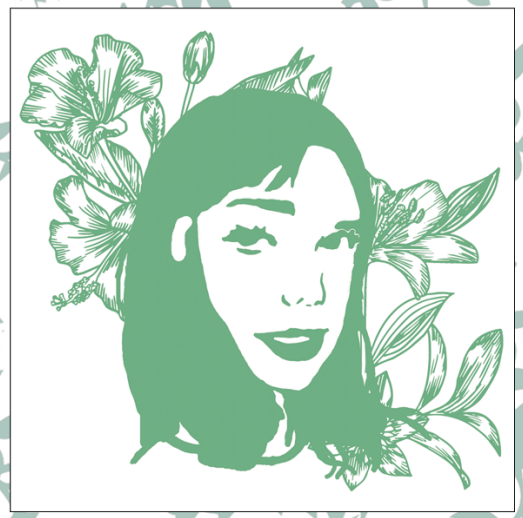
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ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Jessica is an alumnus of Bristol School of Art where she studied an FDA in Fashion and Textiles and a current student at Swansea College of Art studying in her fourth year towards an MDes in Surface Pattern Design for fashion. This talented designer puts her heart and soul into each new project, her intense passion for the natural world is reflected by her exceptional and highly varied portfolio.



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