



LISTAHÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS
Iceland Academy of the Arts



Unfastening Fashion

**A research experiment with a sustainable locally run workshop
in Reykjavik**

Fiona Mary Cribben

A document submitted to:

The Department of Design and Architecture, Iceland Academy of the Arts, in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design,
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Abstract

A considerable amount of resources is depleted by the textile and apparel industries every year in order to process raw fiber into a finished product. These resources include labour, energy and water. Supporting fashion trends and global-based production comes with complicated sustainability issues such as poor working conditions, cheap labour, low-quality fabrics, poor workmanship, excessive consumption and a lot of unnecessary waste. To combat these issues, a total shift is needed in the values and ideas of fashion, style and clothing design so we can ensure that sustainability becomes a standard paradigm. As designers, we can affect this change by controlling how clothing can be redesigned, so that it may in turn influence the consumer, inspire economic and social change in Iceland and afar.

Half and Half is an exploratory project that shows the importance of sustainable thinking, practice and reflective action in fashion design, through recycling and the usage of natural raw materials from Iceland. This project aims to foster social quality through crafted products, the value of creating relationships and reducing waste, in the hope of bringing people into a more authentic view of fashion. A fashion that is meaningful, a fashion that engages people and connects us to each other, ourselves and our world.

This research aims to inform consumers that there are other possibilities for expressing style, value and creativity in our clothing than by simply buying the latest disposable garment.

Keywords: Auto-ethnography, Sustainable Fashion Design, Local Design, Recycling.

For my boys Einar & Johnny & my wonderful clan, friends, teachers & colleagues.

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1. Introduction

Disillusioned by how large and how fast the fashion industry has become over the last sixteen years I decided to go back to do an Masters in design to understand how I can be a better designer for todays world. In the moments of crisis and uncertainty there is a call for human agency and I felt the responsibility to do something. There is an experiential gap between our future and us and I want to begin to contribute in bridging this gap and so to engage myself in the best practices possible. I have always been inspired by local craft and culture and I wondered if this could assist me in my research.

As a designer in Iceland, how can I affect change through craft and recycling so that it may in turn influence the consumer and in addition to inspire economic and social change here, in Iceland and elsewhere?

Unfastening Fashion is an auto-ethnographical exploration into the world of fast fashion and the individuals who are making efforts to change the way we teach fashion design, consume fashion, use fashion and recycle fashion as to encourage a closed loop system. In my research I use both narrative autobiography and ethnography, which connects a more personal experience to my design approach. I endeavor to show the cultural and contextual origins of how utilizing craft and recycling fabrics can begin to form clothing that has meaning and hopefully open up more discussion on the future of fashion. There were three research approaches utilized: 1) Reading literature 2) Designing/crafting artefacts with locals and recycling materials 3) Reflecting on my experience. It reports of the beginning of a small co-creative workshop between locals, artisans and designers in Iceland, who use a composite of found materials and manipulated Icelandic wool to give their products an Icelandic feel. This project aims to show what a small-scale transparent production can be like and so to rebel against the norms of fashion creation to produce a greater social, environmental and economical impact.

The Fashion industry has power over our behavior, our self-image, our spending, our storage space, our environment, our human rights and our future world. I love clothing and I am as much to blame as the next person for the state of disposable fashion and the consumer cycle.

‘Americans buy on average about 64 pieces of clothing a year’.¹ Facts like these have ended my lifelong love affair with cheap fashion and hoarding fashion I don't wear. I want a more meaningful relationship with my clothing. My work has led me to things like weaving a bag instead of buying one from the high street, learning how to tuft. I have also taken to mending my friends' clothing instead of them buying, for example, a new coat. I am interested to find out if this sense of craft can give a sense of fashion and style, to challenge the boundaries of the market of consumption?

As designers and consumers, we need to become more aware than ever of what consequences our choices entail. Whether it's deciding on methods of production or which fibers to use, the choice of materials of doubtful provenience which can involve exploitation of people or non-renewable resources of which many statistics will be shown later on in the thesis. Otto Von Busch, a Swedish philosopher and professor in Fashion Design in Gothenburg University, says in his PhD thesis entitled 'Self Passage', 'It is time for us to shift focus from the design of commodities to the design of capabilities in order to get a serious discussion going on what we really can be or do in the world'.² In other words, we create the future not by thinking about the future but by putting all our action into the present: where do we spend our money? How do we work with what we have? In an attempt to discover what possibilities surrounded me living in Iceland, I began to establish the connections necessary to create clothing from what I find, working with local people and using local produce, and in doing so putting myself in the driver's seat of change.

In this thesis I give an overview of statistics the fashion industry has caused over the years, which represented the starting point of my research. Through investigating this broad subject of sustainability, I came to a deeper understanding of how I can begin to be a sustainable fashion designer in Iceland. In working with clothing sourced at the Red Cross, I report on the beginning of a local sustainable workshop called Half & Half that offers a new context for what it means to redesign/recycle and bring clothing and materials back into usage in Iceland. In adding value to this old clothing through craft and design and using local raw materials in the process is it possible to still be stylish in this DIY way? Our aim is to be 100% transparent in our methods; meaning that others can see what actions are being taken,

¹ Elizabeth, Cline, *Overdressed – The Shockingly high cost of Cheap Fashion*, (New York, Portfolio/Penguin, Reprint edition, 2013) 5

² Otto Von Busch, *Self Passage*, *XXI magazine*, issue 108, April 2012, accessed 19th March 2015.
<http://www.kulturservn.se/wronsov/selfpassage/XXI/XXI-1202/1202.htm>

by whom the piece was made, what materials were being used, and how long the actual processes took. I would hope that the development and methods outlined in this thesis would identify and help maximize opportunities for the empowerment of future clothing designers and people interested in clothing at a local level and beyond. As McDonough and Braungart say in their book *Cradle to Cradle*, ‘To eliminate the concept of waste means to design things – products, packaging and systems – from the very beginning on the understanding that waste does not exist’.³

³ McDonagh W, Braungart, M., *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, (North Point Press, New York, 2002) 104

2. Context

2.1 The Reality of Fashion in the larger context

In the UK the annual volume of clothing and textile products discarded into waste streams is about 1.1 millions tons, which amounts to 18kg per person per year. That is equivalent to filling Wembley Stadium, or the capacity of 25,000 double decker buses, or 7 billion pints of milk.⁴ On the other hand, ‘A further 523,000 tons (8.5kg per citizen per year) is collected for reclamation in the UK via a ‘bring system’ comprising 18,500 charity shops and textile banks and household collection schemes’.⁵ According to the United Nations figures, ‘The UK is the second largest used clothing exporter after the US. It exported more than £380m, or 351,000 tons, worth of our discarded fashion overseas in 2013.’⁶ which means as little as 10-30% of what is given to UK charities actually ends up being sold across the counter. More often the stock is sold to textile merchants to sort, grade and export the surplus garments – thus converting what began as donations into tradable goods. (Ibid) This just proves that there is much money to be made in second hand clothing, especially when its sorted and graded.

In the book *Sustainable Fashion, What's next?* Jana Hawley talks about textile recycling as having a positive impact on our society. Not only does it help our environment by not going to the landfill, it also plays a significant role in economic growth by providing money for charity and disaster relief.⁷ So there are conflicting ideas here. She says that consumers who take part in the act of giving to charity by donating or recycling can reap good feelings for their efforts. We do have a lot of emotional connection to our clothing, Hawley quotes McCracken, ‘The emotional tie that we have with our things makes it difficult to discard, even at the end of their useful life’. Part of my design process is the idea that we can add more value to our clothing by adding on top of it. In showing methods of handcraft and making these processes stylish – can’t this become an act of change in itself?

⁴ Wembley Stadium Press Pack, *The FA.com*, accessed December 6, 2014, <http://www.wembleystadium.com/Press/Presspack/Stats-and-Facts>

⁵ Kate Fletcher, *Sustainable Fashion and Textiles - Design Journeys*, (London, Routledge, 2013), 116

⁶ Lucy Rogers, ‘Where do your old clothes go?’ *BBC News*, 11th February 2015, accessed April 25, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30227025>

⁷ Janet Hethorn, Connie Ulasewicz, *Sustainable Fashion, Why now? A Conversation about Issues, Practices and Possibilities*. (Fairchild Books, 2008) 122

Kate Fletcher, a design activist in sustainable fashion, and reader at London College of Fashion quotes the United Nations that by 2050, we as a global society will be facing a tripling of annual resource extraction and consumption and it is estimated that in order to maintain relative climatic stability, affluent countries (UK, Australia and America) will need to reduce resources by about five times the amount we are already consuming. Fletcher also argues that this type of fashion we buy will be out of date in a stylistic way within about six months and that we therefore throw away rather than repair. I find this argument somewhat obverse as I have found over the years that when people buy good pieces of clothing; their sentimental attachment to them becomes far greater.

As a starting point of this thesis research, I sent a fashion questionnaire consisting of 19 questions to 30 women between the ages of 21 – 42 who reside in various parts of the world. It was to understand if there was a sense of repair in these women but also to understand their consumer habits in shopping for clothing. 27 women answered the questions. In one of the questions I asked whether, if an item of clothing became damaged, would they throw it away, mend it or give it to a store? 20 of the women said they would mend it, 3 would throw it away and 4 would give it to charity. It became somewhat apparent that these women would mend clothing, even though this cannot qualify for a qualitative survey, it did give some clarification for my project to go ahead. In the end our consumer habits are what gives large corporations implicit permission to engage in the unnecessary business of fast fashion and this is one of the factors that is destroying not only our planet but also our fashion culture.

2.2 Fast Fashion

Is a contemporary term that refers to the low cost clothing that fashion retailers manufacture quickly to get trends from catwalk to shop floors in order to capture the current fashion trends. Unfortunately for this to happen modern day slavery still occurs in India, Cambodia and China to bring us the clothing we wear. Workers toil for long hours without any breaks and have to sleep beside their sewing machines. Poor working conditions are commonplace and often fatal; the

Rana Plaza collapse in April 2013 left 1,129 people⁸ – mostly garment workers - dead, serving as a tragic reminder of the true cost of fast fashion. There are several cases linked to labor rights where poor working conditions in the garment factories, in combination with short term contracts, poor government labor inspection and aggressive tactics. One example in Cambodia led to a report entitled ‘Work Faster or Get Out’. This report is based on interviews with more than 340 people working in the industry.⁹ The report reveals that many international clothing and footwear brands have not held up their part of the bargain with the Cambodian government for workers' rights. So where can we look to begin to change?

2.3 Design Principles being adapted by Designers

Designers are the catalyst to create and destroy value of a product by creating the fast changing trends that outdate the previous design and renders them valueless. This chart below Figure 1 was taken from a book, source unknown. It describes what the designer's role is in the future of our world in terms of design for expiration, meaningfulness, distribution, usability and production. This context of what I can be as a designer fuelled my research. I added my own parts to the chart.

I am especially interested in expiration design as I showed earlier, as there is a lot of money to be made and value in good fabrics that are no longer used. Much of this clothing can be given a new life and so to try to encourage people to see this as more stylish option than just buying latest cheap fast fashion knockoff. Furthermore in purchasing the cheap fashion products we are destroying valuable craft skills and local artisanal practices which in turn show our cultural heritage. This is also a reason why I wanted to engage all sorts of members of society into my design process to see if it is economically viable to work together. In saying that the clothing needs to have a great aesthetic appeal which leads me to my next point.

⁸ Sarah, Butler, Bangladeshi deaths spark action among high street clothing chains, *The Guardian*, June 23, 2013, accessed 27 April 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/23/rana-plaza-factory-disaster-bangladesh-primark>

⁹“Work Faster or Get Out”, Labor Rights Abuses in Cambodia’s garment Industry, *Human Rights Watch Publications*, March 12, 2015. Accessed 24th March 2015, http://features.hrw.org/features/HRW_2015_reports/Cambodia_Garment_Workers/index.html

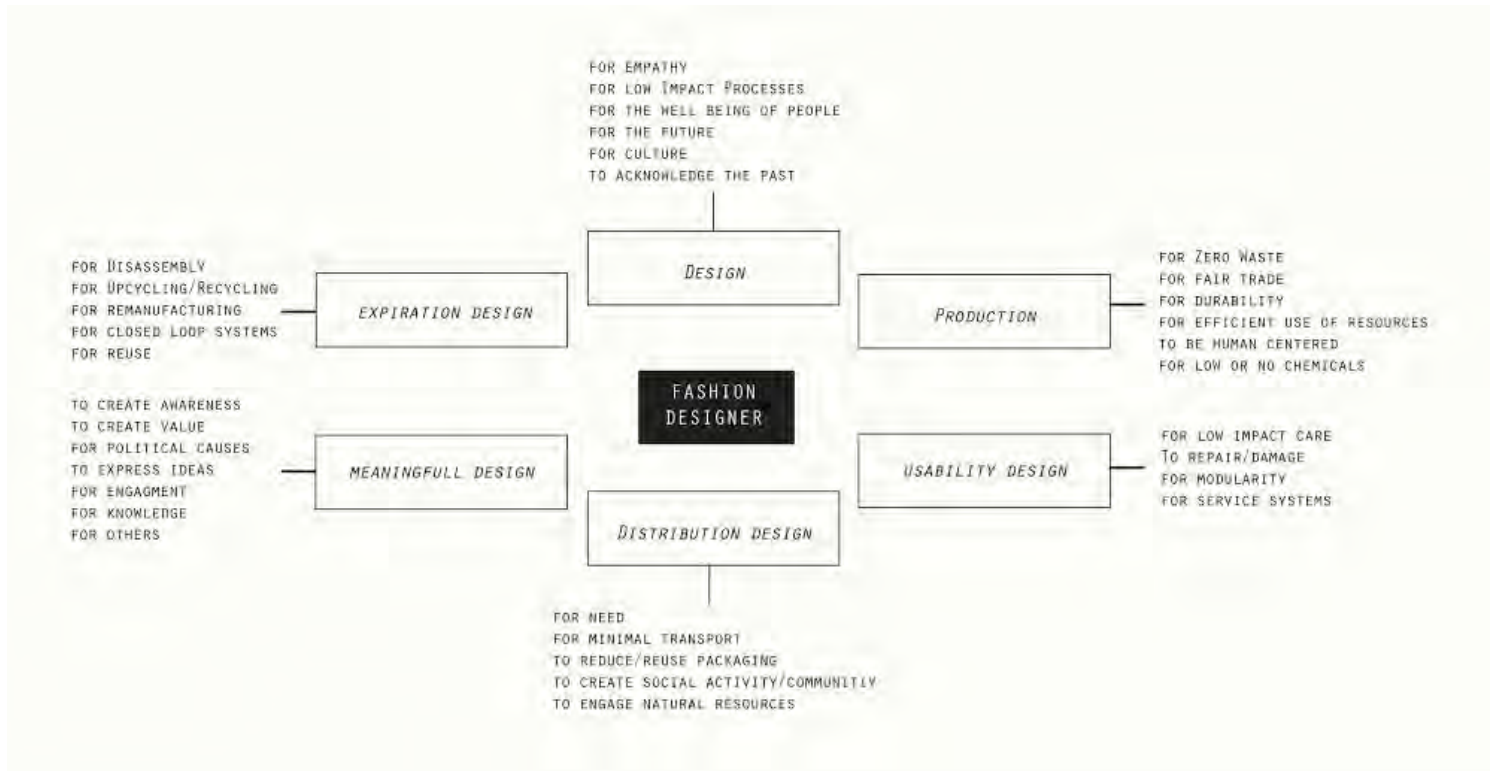


Figure 1 Design principles of a sustainable fashion designer

Fortunately, people are moving towards prioritizing quality when purchasing clothing, as we can see in this next quote from *The Guardian* newspaper.

Mainstream retailers saw a “flight to quality” during the last recession. This means customers moved away from the cheaper, value products to more design-led and added-value pieces. This could be an interesting way of moving mainstream fashion to more sustainable sources if we can demonstrate real design value in ethical alternatives.¹⁰

However the relationship between ‘aesthetic’ and ‘sustainable’ fashion and their respective appeal to consumers need to be addressed. *The Guardian* newspaper in the UK reported in 2013 that consumers do not have enough platforms to choose appealing ethical products at reasonable prices, and though many designers are incorporating ethical practices, they are not marketing this overtly due to

¹⁰ Jenny Purt, “Discussion round up: sustainability in the fashion business”, *The Guardian*, September 28, 2011, accessed February 6, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/sustainable-ethical-fashion-business>

sustainable fashion having a bad aesthetic.¹¹ Therefore, aesthetic needs to play a big role in the future of sustainable fashion in order to make consumers buy ethical and sustainable clothing.

One label on the fashion front is Honest by Bruno Pieter's. It was the first 100% transparent brand in the world. Pieter's work prompted my return to the tradition of creating clothing for a conscious consumer. I learned a lot about how to be 100% transparent through investigating his practice and took some of his methods onboard when creating my pieces by showing all the details of production.

2.4 What does being a Sustainable designer mean to me?

Sustainability offers a framework to ask myself philosophical questions: How do I create value in my design? How do I create for a better world? How do I engage people in my work? When beginning to create the brand Half & Half, I was mostly concerned that it was locally made. Why? This cuts down on transportation costs and fuel but also gives a more personable approach to the design. It can sustain the local economy by creating employment in the community if it works.

Another factor is that the goods should be ethically produced, that people must have safe and stable working conditions and be paid fairly. The incorporation of recycling and local materials is a necessary practice for any sustainable designer to minimize environmental impact, reduce waste and begin a closed loop cycle where possible. Using organic and naturally processed materials is important but this is not always so easy to find in recycling bins in Iceland. It will be small scale to begin and involve traditional methods and handcraft. I would like to think that my work is created to last; that it is well crafted, that the fabric is durable and that the style will transcend trend. Each piece is unique and the designs should be sold locally in a local boutique. I would like for all sorts of people to be able to afford the product and so it will need to have a variety of different price points and product to survive and provide profit. I intend for it to be ethically produced with low environmental impact for it was the UN who said, 'Sustainable

¹¹ Kibbe, Rachel, "Why sustainable fashion needs better aesthetics", *The Guardian*, September 18, 2013, accessed February 5, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/sustainable-fashion-blog/sustainable-fashion-better-aesthetics>

development is the development that meets the needs of the person without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.'¹²

¹² Brundtland Commission Report, 20 years on, Sustainable Development in action, *United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development*, April 2007, accessed 25th April 2015, http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd15/media/backgroundunder_brundtland.pdf

3. Literature Review

3.1 Inspiring Initiatives in Sustainable Fashion

My literature review offers design changes, challenges and happenings that are being arranged by other designers, writers and philosophers, in their quest for more sustainable practices in fashion design.

3.1.1 From the Anthropological Perspective

According to Ted Polhemus and Lynn Procter, fashion can be described as adornment and there are two types: fashion and anti-fashion.¹³ Anti-fashion is concerned with maintaining a political stance while fashion is more to do with a societal view. Anti-fashion is stagnant compared to fashion which is constantly being renewed, changing in the features, whereas anti-fashion remains fixed in its adornment. An example of anti-fashion would be how indigenous people or certain tribes often create their own textiles and accessories and adorn themselves with these, arranging and rearranging their accessories and jewelry to suit. Different textiles define a person's rank within their tribal and social hierarchies. Textiles have often been used to barter for food and to communicate certain religious meanings and messages.

This sort of anti-fashion has always inspired me due to both the reliance on local production and the concept of wearing what we make. I began to redesign old pieces of clothing that were for various reasons not being worn anymore. Garments would have holes or tears, and often they were badly sewn together from previous attempts at redesign. There is a sort of tribal instinct when gathering old clothing, so a natural progression of separating them into different color stories took place. It began as a mending project, but as it continued to expand with each piece I became conscious that many of the pieces spoke to each other as they hung there together collectively in my studio. It became apparent that I needed for them to work together not only for the exhibition, but for people to appreciate their aesthetic value. It was easier to read the clothing

¹³ Ted, Polhemus, Lynn Procter, *Fashion and Anti-fashion: An Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*. (Thames and Hudson 1978) 12.

when the pieces harmonized. When I worked as a visual display manager we always had to hang the clothing in colour stories.

3.2 Material choice

Kate Fletcher, the author of *Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys*, discusses how ‘Materials play an emphatic role in our current understanding of what makes fashion and textiles sustainable. They are more often than not, our starting point for change...’¹⁴ This was certainly true when it came to my design work as I began by looking at the raw materials around me here in Iceland and figuring out how I could manipulate them and use them in new ways to create. Fletcher is the instigator of several sustainable projects, including *Local Wisdom*¹⁵, which has engaged thousands of people worldwide in a series of storytelling scenarios with their clothing. People tell the stories of their clothing: how they acquired their garments, what they love about them and why they still wear them. These stories are intended to challenge the idea of consumption by bestowing more meaning on individual garments. Her *Local Wisdom* blog combines methods of ethnographic research and fashion design processes. Most fashion blogs promote fast fashion and luxury brands. *Local Wisdom* gathers the stories and images from many countries' peoples and photographs them at organized community photo shoots. The sorts of garments Fletcher looks to include, among other things, are garments that; are easily repairable; shared between people; enjoy a third, fourth or fifth life; or surprise the wearer each time they are worn. She aims to show or tell ‘the story of how it has been used, is worn in ways that defy the producer’s values, is worn regularly and has never been washed (and isn't leather!) is made up of interchangeable pieces that can be worn in different ways’.¹⁶ This concept of connecting the stories of worn pieces is a result of changing ideas about how we should treat our clothing. It offers an alternative view on the piece; it's not just about the piece itself, it's about the stories that it carries.

¹⁴ Kate Fletcher, *Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys*, (Earthscan, London, 2008) 3

¹⁵ Kate Fletcher, *Local Wisdom*, (blog), accessed November 10, 2014, <http://localwisdom.info/>

¹⁶ *Local Wisdom*, Ibid.



Figure 2 Woman wearing recycled sweater, Marin City



Figure 3 Woman in mended skirt, Wellington, New Zealand

The attitude represented in this blog towards old clothing connects people and makes clothing more people-centered. It is important that each piece we buy or create is meaningful to us. Where it was made, who it was made by, how it was made, the fabrics it was made with, how we will look after it and what we do when we are done with it are all questions we should ask ourselves. This blog made me reflect on my own textiles I was recycling. Will people cherish them? Will they be loved? Will they keep them for a long time or pass them on? It made me want to include all the aspects of the design process to be transparent so that maybe this can add value to each piece created.

3.3 Fashion versus Style

French literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes categorizes fashion and clothing as a way to style ourselves, to inspire, to celebrate a moment. Here Kate Fletcher interprets Barthes theory:

A large proportion of fashion consumption is purely of inspirational and immaterial nature - through fashion imagery. Fashion can be what is set in motion when a designer presents the new collection on a catwalk in Milan. But equally, fashion can be the moment when a teenager crops a pair of jeans, adds a badge to an old sweatshirt and paints her Converse sneakers. Fashion is a celebration of a moment where an individual - through her clothes - is in perfect sync with time and place.¹⁷

Barthes's distinction between 'fashion' and 'style' is helpful, fashion being 'intimately connected with the development of capitalism, and thereby with the changes of seasons, whereas 'style' is related to matters of tradition and convention, thereby changing at a much slower pace'.¹⁸ Here we come back to the idea of the difference between fashion and style. Buying fashion is usually about purchasing the latest trends in clothing that the high street stores have to offer. Styling is about mixing and matching and personalizing what one already has in one's wardrobe over time. Styling old clothing is one alternative to buying mass marketed pieces, whereby you can change your items of clothing around so they create different looks. In the recreation and reusing of old clothing in different ways we are using our imagination, so it is essentially a celebration of expressing ourselves. It can be a challenge to make

¹⁷ Kate Fletcher, Mathilda Tham, "Lifetimes: Fashion And Clothes", *Lifetimes*, 2004, accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.katefletcher.com/lifetimes/context3.html>,

¹⁸ Else Skjold, "The Daily Selection", *Open Archive Copenhagen Business School*, May 2014, accessed December 4, 2014) 16-17, http://openarchive.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10398/8992/Else_Skjold.pdf?sequence=1

old clothing look good. It's also a lot more difficult and time-consuming to rework old clothing, as it all needs to be ripped up and recut and so presents a real challenge to a designer. It is also expensive to hire a tailor especially in Iceland. They charge approximately three thousand five hundred krona (or 18 pounds) an hour. Therefore this was a niche I wanted to look at in terms of sharing design and time in the workshop scenario.

'Fashions fade, style is eternal.'¹⁹ - Yves Saint Laurent

Author of *The Fashioned Self*, Joanne Finkelstein, in her chapter about reworking knitwear, argues that 'if we are relying upon the properties of procured goods for our sense of identity, then we are compelled to procure again and again'.²⁰ In other words, if we are relying on our latest fashion purchase to show who we are as humans and what our personality is like, then we will need to buy and buy again, for the property of owning a piece will never show our true identity, only a fragment at that moment in time. So we need to buy clothing that will last, but therefore we should really know what we want to buy, know the difference between good and bad fabric choices, know about where it is made and by who and if it was fair circumstances. Humans are more complex than what a piece of clothing can express at a certain moment in time.

Cradle to Cradle focuses on the diversity of a product, which was interesting for my design process. The two authors, William McDonagh and Michael Braungart, suggest that one should not only design with the consideration of how a product is produced, but also how it is used and who is using it.²¹ Long-term use is the optimal solution for products and can be adjusted through changing certain parts of the design, thus contributing to sustainable design by it being able to change. This principle ideally confirms that after the phase of use of the product, it will continue in technical or biological life cycles, meaning that optimally it will either be composted or recycled into a new material (closed-loop cycle). The reutilization process constantly works to improve a product that maintains sentimental value throughout a long life cycle. Therefore the shift from a linear utilization to a cyclical means that ideally, zero waste is produced. This idea of zero waste is demonstrated in various ways – through pattern

¹⁹ Suzannah Ramsdale, "I don't Do Fashion, I AM Fashion", "The 50 best Style Quotes of All Time", *Marie Claire*, accessed December 19, 2014, <http://www.marieclaire.co.uk/blogs/542820/the-40-best-style-quotes-of-all-time.html#9SqbdRj0Q7wOfHCb.99>

²⁰ Joanne, Finkelstein, *The Fashioned Self*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991) 145

²¹ McDonagh and Braungart, 136-177

cutting, through the use of reusing, recycling and up-cycling fabrics - and will be explored in my experiments later. McDonagh and Braungart use Patagonia as an example, where they have introduced an initiative called Eco Circle: is a closed-loop fiber-to-fiber recycling process system developed with Tejin, a Japanese group that returns used fabric to fiber state and reuses it.

‘Garments should be judged by consumers, not by what they are but what they are capable of becoming,’²² said Kate Fletcher, author of the article *Durability, Fashion, Sustainability - Processes and Practices of Use*, suggests that it is more about the ideology of use of clothing rather than about the ‘garment’s physical robustness or the strength of the user-object relationship’.²³ In short, durability is user-based rather than product-based, though played out in material form. This suggests that in order to promote greater longevity and resource use consciousness in fashion production, the ‘craft of use’ (reusing our clothing and recreating with our clothing) is where we must turn our attention. For such processes recognize the social and experimental dimensions to fashion, which, facilitated by a garment’s materials, design, and construction, influence how long clothing lasts on the body.²⁴

3.4 Value in traditional skills

Fletcher and Grose state in *Fashion and Sustainability – Design for Change* that there is value in traditional design skills. It is an approach that draws on locally available materials and the skills of local people who contribute an innate cultural knowledge to the product itself.²⁵ Our heritage lies in our methods and processes, for without these there will be no sense of culture. In Iceland, of course, wool has been a large part of the heritage, although old-time methods such as weaving on a loom and felting and knitting are still done by a few. This is such an important part of the heritage to hold on to but also its important to keep modernizing it so it stands the test of time.

²² Kate Fletcher, *Craft of Use*, accessed 13th February, 2015, <http://craftofuse.org/home/roots/use-practices>

²³ Kate Fletcher, *Durability, Fashion, Sustainability - Processes and practices of use’ Fashion Practice*, Volume 4, Issue 2, (London, Berg, 2012), 221-238

²⁴ Ibid, 221-238

²⁵ Kate Fletcher, Lynda Grose, *Fashion and Sustainability – Design for Change*, (London, Laurence King Publishers, 2012).

3.5 Changing the Designer's Role

Otto Von Busch said in his PhD thesis entitled *Fashion-able: Hactivism and Engaged Fashion Design* aimed to explore the new role of the designer in fashion, a role that can be reverse-engineered, hacked, tuned and shared among participants. He argues that consumers are seeking new ways of purchasing products to which they feel attachment because of quality and value. Busch writes, “To change the goals or the paradigm of fashion requires a multitude of new ideas stretching from new business practices to the way we use fashion in our social lives”.²⁶ Busch defines fashion design and the fashion industry as always being the sign of exclusivity; but over the years in the developed world it has become more ‘democratic’, with luxury being the necessary evil. He suggests that the high number of collections produced every season creates a racing pulse in the fashion industry, which exerts a greater influence on design disciplines than ever before. Busch identifies continuous critical problems, which are only resolvable through communal effort solutions, from designer’s choice of materials to consumer patterns of consumption.

The *Dale Sko Hack Booklet – A Project Exploring Modes of Production and Re-form tactics* was a workshop and design project intended to develop new ways for designers and producers to create small-scale shoe production methods and in the process to save a workplace and develop the skills. The aim was to work with designers and local manufacturers to see if spontaneity could be added to production processes, thereby breaking down hierarchical systems within fashion design and aiming to use methods of collaboration and co-design to create a democratized fashion industry by active engagement in all parts of the process.

Shoe Hacking is a method exploring the forces at play between the global fashion system and small-scale local production using collaborative design practices. This method is an open approach to fashion design rethinking roles and linear assembly in industrial production.²⁷

²⁶Otto Von Busch, Post-script to *Fashion-able*, Or a Methodological Appendix to *Activist Design*, University of Gothenburg, *Art Monitor*, 2008 (accessed 5th December 2014) 24-43.

²⁷Otto Von Busch, *DaleSkoHack-booklet*, A Project Exploring Modes of Production and Re-form Tactics, *Kulturservern*, accessed 23rd April 2015, <http://www.kulturservern.se/wronsov/selfpassage/daleSkoHack/daleSkoHack-booklet-w.pdf#>

All of these writers are thinking of new ways to use local production, and the people who have been exemplary in slowing down design and reusing old materials have certainly sparked ideas of what future fashion design scenarios could be, and even implemented within my design practice. Design shouldn't be a trend. Design should have good quality and value. The construction of the garment should provide for the possibility of easy disassembly, as well as recyclability when the time comes to dispose of it. It's up to fashion designers to lead this process of transformation of sustainable thinking. Sustainable thinking enables and encourages individual critical thinking. It is a development that is translated into the action of participation and problem solving. by Donald A. Schön in his book *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* talks about,

How it is possible, by observing and reflecting on our actions, to make a description of the tacit knowing implicit to them... We may refer, for example, to the sequences of operations and procedures we execute; the clues we observe, the rules we follow; or the values, strategies, and assumptions that make up our 'theories' of action.²⁸

Through 'reflective practice', as Schön put it, and adapting 'tacit knowledge', we can document the beliefs, ideals, core values, thoughts and ideas ingrained in us all but not necessarily always captured. The designer does not always need to communicate ideas through language; often they can do so through observation, imitation and practice. Schön writes about reflection-in-action, which is where I have drawn upon past experience as a designer. This has allowed me to develop sets of questions and ideas about activities, and what my practice should be. Taking time out to do crafts really made me reflect on what I was doing as I was sewing. It became a very therapeutic process even though there was a short timeframe.

'Craft is the application of skills and ideas. Not only a way of making things by hand but a way of thinking through the hand manipulating a material'.²⁹

²⁸ Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner, Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions*, (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987) 25-38

²⁹ Nithikul Nimkulrat, Material Inspiration: From Practice-led Research to Craft Art Education. (*Craft Research*, 2010) 63-84.

4. Methodology

‘Auto-ethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. Thus, as a method, auto-ethnography is both process and product.’³⁰ Through this part of the methodology the auto-ethnography connects my design approach and my experiential learning.

4.1 Practical consideration

The creation of this small capsule collection was a sort of performance in terms of getting so many people involved within the short timeframe. It becomes very apparent here in my methodology that there were a few challenges. Firstly, I began this process in early March, and to complete my collection in full I had twenty-six days.

My motivation to be a local designer and to use the fundamental elements of local resources in the designing of my clothing meant that a lot of new methods came into play whereas others that I usually practice were left out. By that I mean the elements of deconstruction, construction, drape, craft, story, material fabrications and manipulations creation, timing all the processes of the making to calculate cost.

For this part of the work I will explain the process of four pieces. Altogether I created thirteen clothing pieces, three bags, one scarf, one art piece and one footstool for the capsule collection, as it was important to me to show the potential of the old fabrics and the mix of wool present in the pieces, for the viewers to get a real feel for the work. This work can be seen altogether on Figure 4: The exhibition showroom.

³⁰ Carolyn Ellis, Tony E Adams & Arthur P. Bochner, Auto-ethnography: An Overview, Volume 12, No. 1, *Art Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10 –January 2011, accessed 30th March 2015, <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>

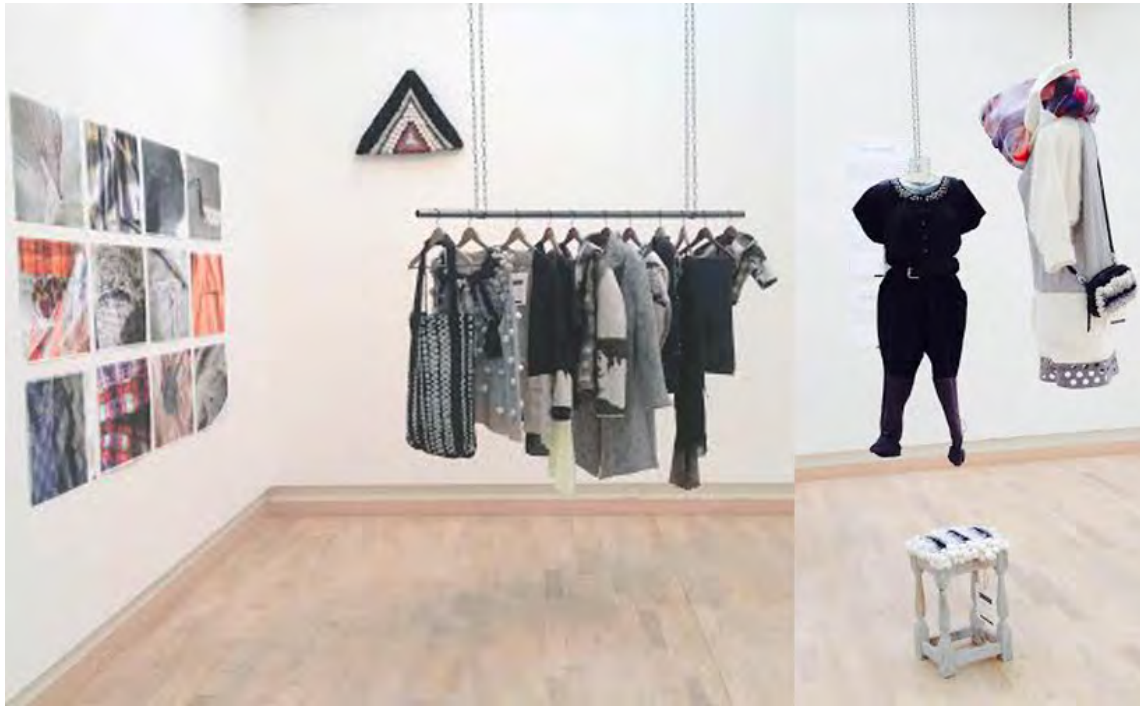


Figure 4 My exhibition at Gerdarsafn, Kopavogur, Iceland

4.2 Data Collection Methods

My practice in becoming a local sustainable designer had to consist of methods using old and found fabrics and materials and reinventing them (while still maintaining my own aesthetic through the transformation of each piece). In Iceland we need to import most of our fabrics and therefore the level of sustainability is less than ideal. Therefore, finding and using what I had locally through second-hand stores and charitable organizations was my goal to challenge consumption and my creativity.

Gathering a team in the process was a challenge. No one had ever worked this way before and many had never worked with the materials I had asked them to work with. Parts of the team were never introduced to one another because of the time frame, which meant that some didn't realize what they were actually doing. This made for some interesting and delightful surprises when the exhibition came around.

Bethina was my sewing technician, who became heavily involved in the project once she saw what was happening. She became an integral part of the process when creating so many items.



Figure 5 The people involved in the project

My approach to this collection involved taking methods of co-creation and collaboration and inserting them into the design process to operationalize the methodology. It is answered through the conceptual development of a capsule collection which happened through working with locals. Figure 5 shows some of the people who committed their time to the project. Some of who I knew and others who came onto the project due to interest and experience.

I never drew what I was going to design, which was a very new approach to my practice led research. The fabrics dictated what they could become due to them already being something else. The design outcome is the exhibition and the learned outcome, which for me and for others was through the process and discovery of what was achieved. This documentation of the process has certainly advocated a deeper commitment to sustainability. In documenting each design it was easy to show people the value and time spent on each item. In a sense, as Valerie Brown in her book *Tackling Wicked Problems – Through the Transdisciplinary Imagination* says:

Designs' role in this transformation should not only be in developing sustainable artifacts, but also in providing tools for developing sustainable change. Design can revise its practices to change the way in which it constructs our artificial environment towards making ecologically friendly stuff, doing more with less, lowering energy and materials intensity, recycling, reusing, multiple uses, multiple users and so on.³¹

4.3 The Users & Motivation

The user of my work and design is anyone interested in ethically made local clothing, who has a unique sensibility; consumers, designers, alternative life-stylers, those who want to consume and create ethically and share for a better world. Individuals who treasure old pieces of clothing and who might want a chance to bring them back to life, individuals who want to rethink the fashion system, people who strive to make a difference in what they do, those who want to make a positive change and who care for our future.

There is a need to change how we design and create clothing and also how we consume clothing, as you have seen in my context. I want to encourage more collaborative work in fashion and so I would hope that my work spawns new activities and play processes that can begin to contribute to new ideas, perspectives and methods in creating fashion and style. What I aim to achieve is to see a future removed from what we have become used to: fast fashion and disposable trends. Good design is based on a clear understanding of the end user.

³¹ Valerie .A Brown, John, A, Harris, Dr Jacqueline Yvette Russell, *Tackling Wicked Problems – Through the Transdisciplinary Imagination*, (London, Earthscan Publications, 2010) 249.

5. The Findings

This is the part of the thesis where I go through the design work. It is in six parts:

Design Experiment 1 – Metamorphosis from Coat to Bag.

The Creation of Half & Half

Design Experiment 2 – The Metamorphosis of Flemming's Tailored Jacket into a Coat with Rita's felt

The Creation of the Wall Piece

Design Experiment 3 – Social Felt balls

Design Experiment 4 – Repairing Procedure of Blankets

5.1 Design Experiment 1 – Metamorphosis from Coat to Bag

I began by visiting Istex wool factory in Mosfellsbær, which is a thirty-minute drive outside of Reykjavik. They have been making and selling their wool across the country and internationally since 1920. I began experimenting with the Icelandic wool as I wanted to use it in various ways, not just knitting. Figure 6 shows some initial experiments.

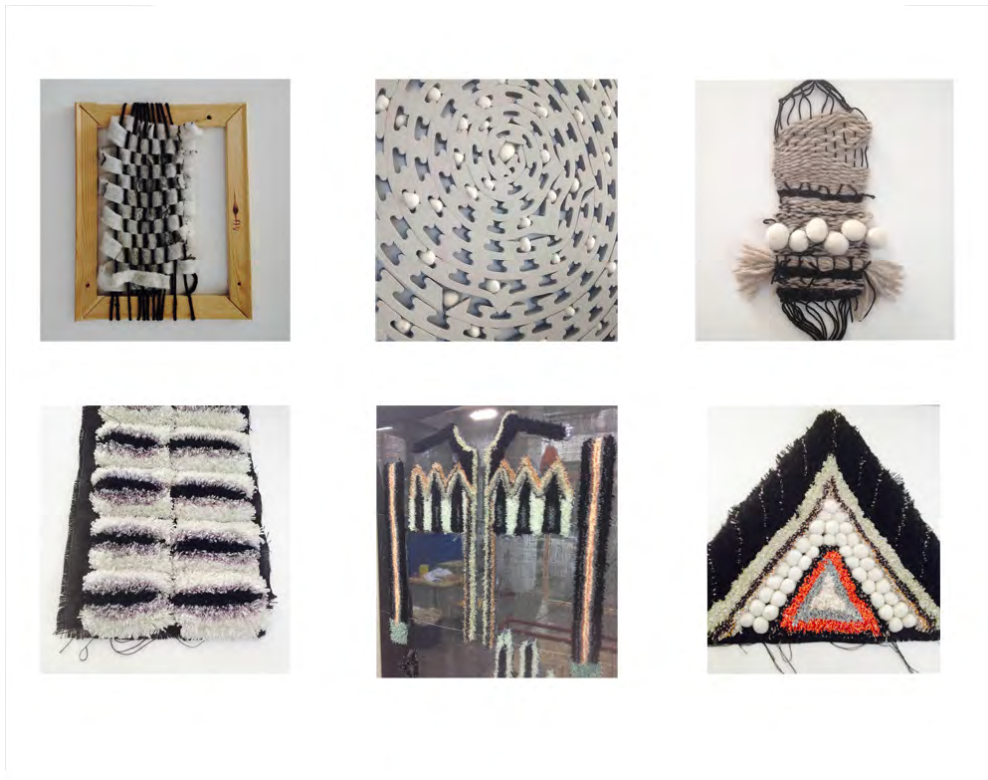


Figure 6 Experiments to use wool in new ways, learning new craft skills



Figure 7 The method of tufting, The Swedish School of Textiles in Borås.

Figure 7 shows how I began to tuft with the wool. I learned this technique at The Swedish School of Textiles in Boras, where I spent a month on Erasmus.

Method: A stiff polyester woven fabric was stretched over a frame to allow for a gun to be pressed up against it at a horizontal angle with the thread running through it. There was no natural large fabric big enough to work with for this experiment. I was instructed how to use the machine in a 20-minute session by the technician, after which I was left to my own devices. I began by drawing out the pattern of the coat on the large black stretched fabric. I held the gun tight to the fabric and shot up the wool through the gun with air contraction.

(As it is mostly used to create carpets, this was the first time it was being used to create a texture for clothing.) As I hadn't made the patterns yet for my clothing I made a rough jacket pattern and then created a pattern based on some Icelandic geometric patterns I had drawn up earlier in the year.



Figure 8 Digital ideas of Icelandic geometric patterns

But there was a problem when I took the wool (Figure 7) off the frame and began to use it for the jacket. I was going to sew it onto fabric but it was a slightly different shape and didn't work for the

fabric as it was too heavy. I therefore had to rethink the piece, and so the process of the redesign began. In the end, the structure I had created became more of a sculptural piece when I bent it around itself, sort of forming the design into a bag. Hence this was how the fabric said what it wanted to do essentially.



Figure 9 Figuring out what to do with the piece with Helga



Figure 10 Could it be a child's jacket?



Figure 11 Fabio putting on straps



Figure 12 The tufted bag with felt insert

The continuation of an Icelandic theme runs through the images and wool creations. This was intentional, as keeping the traditional look is important in my design ethos. This is the new part of the design process that I wanted to mix with the older fabrics. I think one advantage of being a foreigner in Iceland allows me to see Icelandic heritage and tradition and twist it a little.

From attending a wool conference in the north of Iceland, I met Rita. Rita is an artisan who makes handmade felt, and so we began a collaboration whereby she would make felt for my work to combine with the pieces. I requested she made 4 meters in natural grey and 4 meters in natural black. I first began the process of combing the raw wool for her to use to lessen her hours of work.

The last piece of the jigsaw puzzle was to put straps on the bag. I met up with my friend Fabio (local Italian upholsterer) in Figure 11 to help me with this. Figure 12 is the bag hanging at the exhibition. And Fig 13 is the description of the work that went into the piece.

HALF & HALF	
DESCRIPTION	Felt and Carpet Bag
OLD FABRIC	Old unused Wool
NEW FABRIC	Felt/Balls
REASON FOR REDESIGN	Was originally to be on a jacket but it didn't work!
DESIGN TIME	Designer: Fiona Sewing technician: Helga Embroidery: Fiona Straps assembly: Fabio
Pattern making time	2 hours
Cutting time	Carpet: 4 hours
Assembly time	3 hours
Hand Stitch	
Ironing/Beading	4 hours
Washing	
Embroidery	5 hours
Total hours	20
Price Per hour wage)	x 2,500kr (approx.)
Total Design Cost	50,000kr
FABRIC BOUGHT	
Used Fabric bought:	Carpet + Felt + hand stitching of strap
New Fabric bought:	
Wool:	11,000kr
TOTAL COST, DESIGN & FABRIC	= 61,000kr
PRICE CALCULATION	
Wholesale mark up x 1.0	= 122,000kr
Retail mark up x 2.0	= 244,000kr

Figure 13 Description tag of the Felt & Carpet bag

As I began to think about the fabrics I would like to marry with the wool, I decided that it would be best to recycle fabrics. I designed and made two more bags from found fabrics, as you can see here in Figure 14. My friend Mark helped create the bag from recycled leather. I created the carpet piece and Karolina did the embroidery. I also wove a bag in Figure 15 with some fabric from the Red Cross and the Icelandic wool. The back of the bag was black felt, again made by Rita. Fabio assembled the straps.



Figure 14 Small recycled leather bag

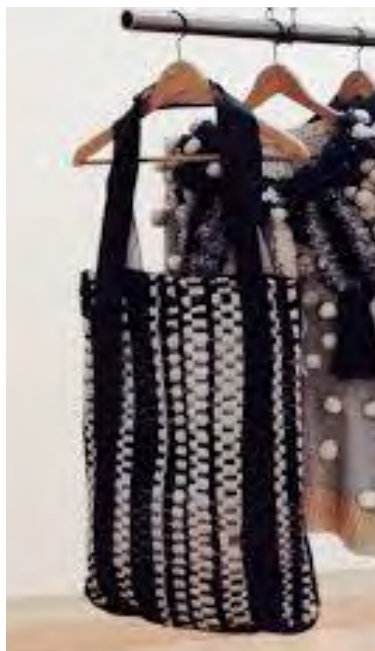


Figure 15 Woven bag

5.2 The beginning of Half & Half

I collaborated with a graphic designer to come up with the brand image of what we were creating.

Being a fashion designer really limits my visual expression sometimes as I don't know certain graphical programs. It's a hindrance to always need someone external to do graphics.

The brand idea was to utilize a composite of old materials and wool. During this process we went through many different ideas of what the brand was about and how it can inform people and consumers about buying - or, indeed, creating - differently, through the workshops I had in mind. But the name was born out of half old and half new. Half my ideas and half the others ideas as it became a shared workshop. Everyone was getting paid the same amount and was contributing time and effort.

I came up with Half & Half after weeks of deliberation. I wanted it to be a 100% transparent company whereby we would show all the work that is put into each garment on the label in the hope of adding a new cultural concept of clothing design. Half & Half became a hub of fresh ideas to use old materials and raw materials that involved local people in its processes.

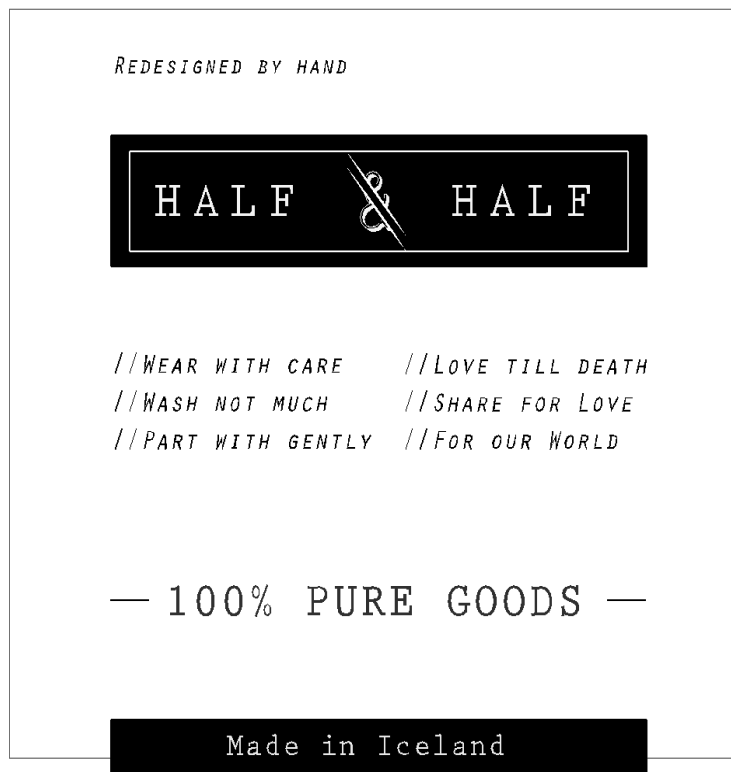


Figure 16 Half & Half logo and label design



Figure 17 Half & Half label design slides



Figure 18 Half & Half label design slides



Figure 19 Half & Half label design slides

H A L F & H A L F	
DESCRIPTION	
OLD FABRIC	
NEW FABRIC	
REASON FOR REDESIGN	
DESIGN TIME	Designers & Makers
Pattern making time	
Cutting time	
Assembly time	
Hand Stich	
Ironing	
Washing	
Embroidery	
Total hours	TOTAL COST, DESIGN & FABRIC =
Price Per hour wage)	x 2,500kr (approx.
Total Design Cost	
FABRIC BOUGHT	PRICE CALCULATION
Used Fabric bought:	Wholesale mark up x 1.0 =
New Fabric bought:	Retail mark up x 2.0 =
Wool:	

Figure 20 Half & Half description of clothing

5.3 Design Experiment 2 – Flemming’s Coat

It was during these meetings that Flemming (the graphic designer) told me about an old jacket he wanted to repair. It was a natural linen-style Italian jacket that was of very good quality but had a pocket that was not repairable and he didn’t want to have a patch on it. I took the jacket and brought it home to see what I could do with it. I asked him if it would be good to turn it into a coat and as he was in need of a coat at the time, he agreed.

I then began to photograph all of the clothing I had, to get a sense for the amount of work I had on my hands. Figure 20 is Flemming’s jacket that needed repair because of the hole in the pocket.



Figure 21 Flemming's jacket rip detail

Since coats are a highly necessary fashion design piece when living in Iceland, my second experiment was to create a coat from Flemming's jacket and mix it with Rita's handmade felt. I first needed to take apart the jacket. In fashion terms, the act of unstitching a garment is called deconstructing. It liberates a garment from functionality by taking it apart. By reversing its already engineered process, could this be said to be outdating the garment? This can also be done by anyone with a thread pick which allows for inexperienced people to be involved in the future processes.



Figure 22 Deconstruction of Flemming's jacket & assembly with Rita's felt

HALF & HALF	
DESCRIPTION	Flemmings Jacket - turned into Coat
OLD FABRIC	Italian Suit Blazer, linen Mix
NEW FABRIC	Grey Felt
REASON FOR REDESIGN	Hole in Flemmings jacket
DESIGN TIME	
Pattern Making	3 hours
Pattern making time	2 hours
Cutting time	3 hours
Assembly time	4 hours
Hand Stitch/pick	3 hours
Ironing	1 hour
Washing	
Embroidery/Felling	3 hours
Total hours	21.5
	+ lining - 2.5 hours
	Designer: Fiona
	Technician: Bethina
	Felter: Rita
	TOTAL COST, DESIGN & FABRIC = 72,750
Price Per hour wage)	x 2,500kr (approx.)
Total Design Cost	63,750kr
FABRIC BOUGHT	
Used Fabric bought:	
New Fabric bought:	lining 5,000kr / Felt transport 4,000kr
Wool:	15kr / Felt 10,000kr
PRICE CALCULATION	
Wholesale mark up x 1.0	= 145,500kr
Retail mark up x 2.0	= 291,000kr

Figure 23 Flemming's jacket description tag

Bethina began to sew the jacket. She kept many parts of the old jacket visible, using the side panels, front, collar and pockets. We did notice, however, that the felt was dehairing significantly. (It is very important that the person making the felt takes plenty of time making it, because otherwise its hairs will go everywhere. This became a slight concern when we noticed a good deal of the hairs covering other garments in the studio. The takeaway lesson for next time is that we now know the wool must be felted for much longer.) We included some old buttons and a new buttonhole so that the jacket closed in a few more places. We used old lining that was in the studio, the colour of it happened to match up with the collection.

The repair of this jacket allowed us to rethink what services could be on offer for people who cherish and recycle their old clothing. I became aware that it was a transformative procedure that created a personalized product. I told Flemming what I was doing and when he saw it he was so delighted with his new piece. He was happy that we had recreated something for him and the fact that we used the Icelandic wool was also very dear to him.

5.4 The Creation of the Wall Piece

I needed to find more clothing to experiment with and so I went to the Red Cross, where they gave me a large black sack of clothing for 4,000kr (20 pounds). I couldn't choose what was in the sacks when I went there, which was unfortunate. In addition, they don't organize the clothing into material values, which is also a great loss for me as a designer. Should they be organized they could surely charge more money. This is a later discussion.

When unloading the bags and seeing the array of colors, it dawned on me that I needed to have a good color story and fabric story if it was all going to sit together in an aesthetically pleasing way. Having created the tufted pieces with the wool in Boras and then using the grey felt in Flemming's jacket, I began to see the colour story forming see Figure 24.



Figure 24 Formation of colour story

I began to photograph the details of the damaged clothing and play with it in Photoshop in Figure 25 and this became the beginning of my mood board. There were many pieces that had small rips and had been hand-stitched, which I found quite beautiful. I began to document these pieces of clothing. I asked Flemming if he could pixelate the images so as to give them a slight affect. I thought this would make them blend a little better together and become more of an installation backdrop for the clothing in the exhibition. The photos complimented the clothing and reinforced my reasons for redesign but also glorified the damage in a way.



Figure 25 Posters of damaged clothing at the exhibition showroom

5.4.1 Reflection

It was during this time that I realized my methods of conceptualizing; creating and making clothing had completely changed. Instead of drawing up garments that I would like to create from a mood board and working with metres of fabrics I had chosen, I simply worked with what I had, and thus the choice of fabric was taken away from me. In a sense, the properties of working with the old textiles helped my creativity. It also made me be more of the stylist, referring back to Barthe's difference between fashion and style. Its not necessarily about what we are wearing – its how we wear it. Some people feel the need to always buy. I want to push the fulfillment to create.

The 'make do' scenario I put myself in made me realize my own creative potential. Bethina, the sewing technician, played with the fabrics on the table top, and when she did so, I would on occasion see new possibilities (as well as impossibilities) and so would she. It was an exciting new way to practice the creation of clothing. I began to trust it as I saw some nice pieces being made.

I took the images of Figure 25 to a local textile printer to get it printed onto silk and cotton. The results were very pleasing, and although they said that their textile manufacturer is not sustainable. They are looking into sourcing a sustainable supplier. Rather than waste the fabric I created a scarf from it, Figure 26, using another silk and felt piece. As can be seen here, we hand-tacked the piece before sewing it down on the felt. I wasted nothing during this time and people around me began to share and give things to me to aid the process.



Figure 26 Scarf being hand tacked and hung at exhibition

5.5 Design Experiment 3 – Local crafting with felt

It was very important for me in my practice to also involve locals, people who might not necessarily be doing anything but who might want to have extra work in the future. I went to the local nursing home back in November to ask them if they would like to help with some work. It was there that I introduced the ladies to creating felt balls. I initially introduced them to the project and then on my second visit I sat down and showed them the process, as you can see in Fig 27.



Figure 27 Ladies at Old Folks home creating the felted balls

It was here that we created the felt balls displayed on the pieces in the exhibition. We counted the hours spent on the process so we would be able to put the amount onto each description on the label. Although they were very happy to assist me (they didn't quite understand what I was going to do with the balls) until they came to the exhibition. It was there that they really saw the potential, and they were overjoyed to be part of the process. They really liked the sweater I had created and thought they could do some more work like this sweater as some of them are knitters.

In saying that it was the footstool that stood out for some people as it was a functional piece and it was an unusual piece. I found the base at a local market for 2,000kr (10 pounds) Figure 28 shows an old canvas bag I used to create the seat and cushioned it with old foam. Assisting me in creating the seat was Fabio. To create the stool, it took a total of 13 hours. When people showed interest on the piece at the exhibition it was more about how I created it rather than the price of it, so they were more interested in the process.



Figure 28 Repair or footstool

5.6 Design Experiment 4 – Blanket to two Coats

From the Red Cross Bag there was a half a blanket. I had another old blanket I'd acquired at the Red Cross earlier in the year that had two huge rips in it, and I now began to think what I could do with them. Bethina lay down a jacket pattern and we began the challenge of making two jackets from the two blankets. We were able to fit one adult and one baby jacket in the same style. We really wanted to show that it said Iceland on the jacket and so we couldn't make it in one piece.

Figure 29 shows the process of the redesign/repair. I was told these two blankets were actually made in old factories, one in Alafoss and one in Akureyri in Iceland. Both sparked a great deal of conversation at the exhibition about why we aren't still producing blankets in this country. Most of the blankets sold in stores in Iceland are made in Lithuania. Istex wool factory sends their wool there to create blankets from, I was told by Hulda the area manager.

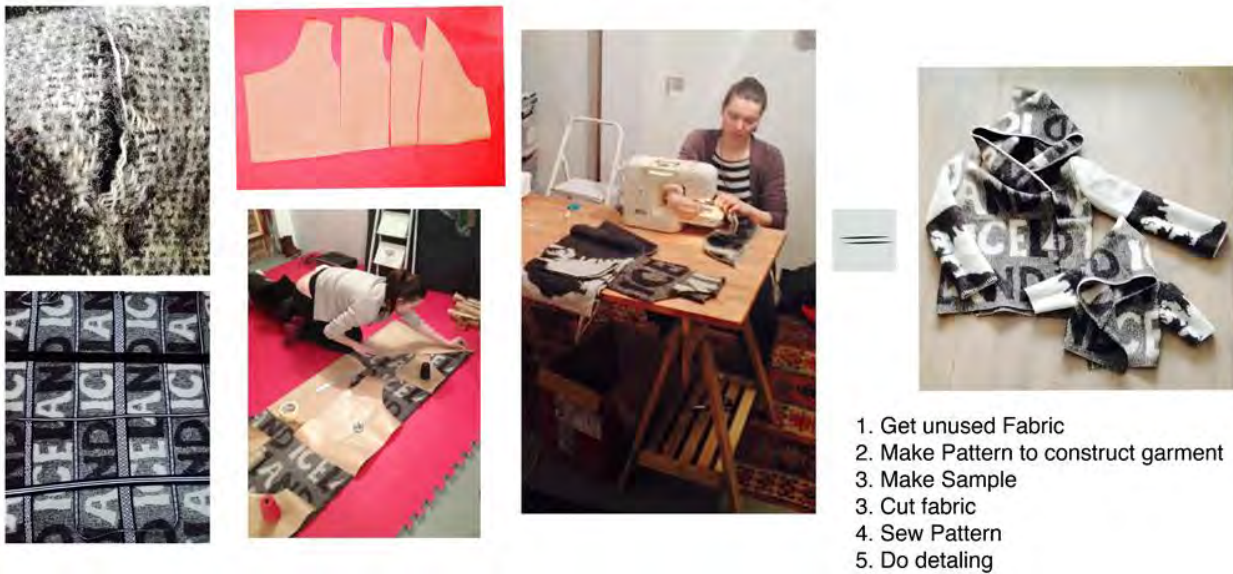


Figure 29 Repair of blankets

5.7 Discussion of Findings

In the creation of all of these pieces there is no doubt that the process of crafting the wool brought the direct experience, personal vision and mastery of mediums and textiles to work together. It became very apparent that it takes a lot of work to recreate and add value to certain pieces. It was only at the end when I began to add up the hours to pay the individuals involved that it became apparent that a lot more work is required to recycle and upcycle.

From meeting a few fashion peers they saw the potential of creating with used fabrics but they said that it would need a solid colour story running through for it to work, which is what I had already thought.

I could also use the wool to mend in future scenarios which could lower the price of some of the pieces.

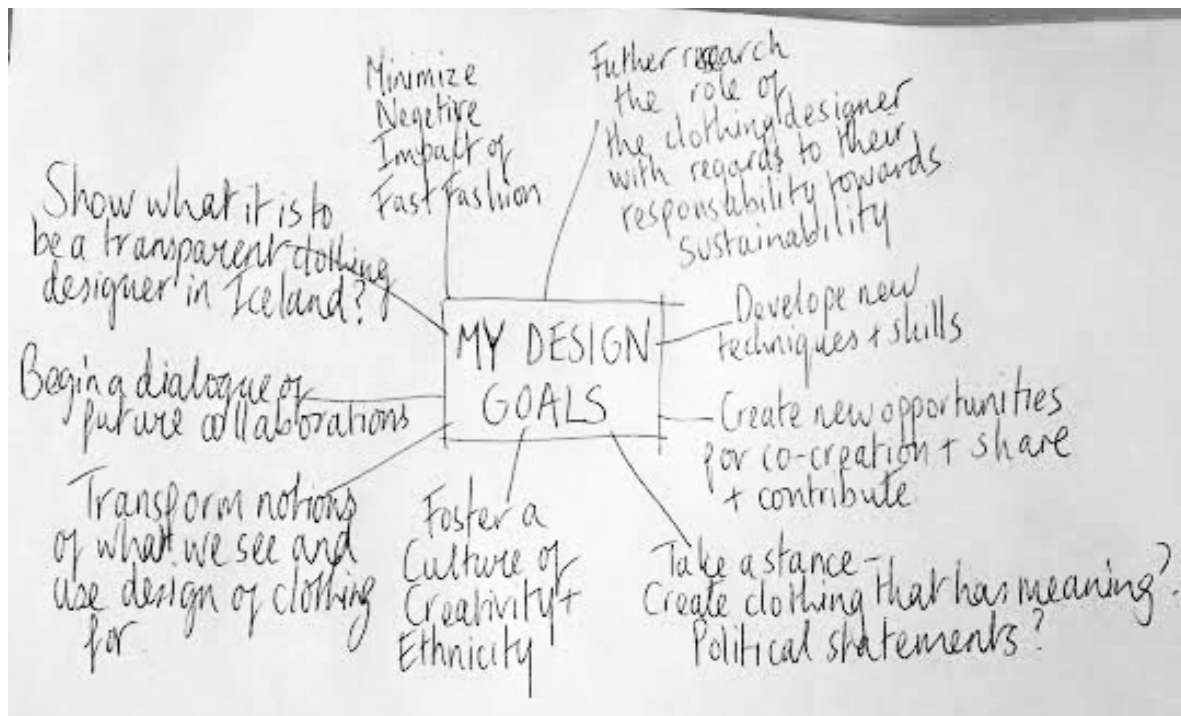


Figure 30 My original design goals

5.8 Reflection On Process – Auto-ethnography

Working as a recycling designer in Iceland with locals is not an easy task. Firstly I need to improve my Icelandic so I can converse properly with the older generation for example with Rita. In meeting these ladies I learned a lot about the culture of old Icelandic craft and we shared ideas on these processes.

Not having any tutors or peers who are fashion designers was quite difficult as I had no one to bounce ideas off so I felt quite alone in the whole process. I wasn't sure if I was doing the right thing until it came to the exhibition and people were inspired by the work.

There is no industry here in Iceland and it is very expensive to fuel such a small handmade production like this. I realized that there was a lot more to the organization of the project than what I had imagined. From the card descriptions it is obvious that a lot of work went into each piece. Sometimes even three people working on just one piece. Certain items of clothing might be too expensive for an average person to be able to engage in the procedure.

It would be an opportunity for the future to be able to work with the Red Cross and enable them to sort their clothing somehow.

During the exhibition, however, many people were very interested in learning about the craft of up-cycling their old clothing by themselves. Hildigunnar Sveirrisdottir (Head of architecture at The Academy of the Arts) even suggested I should run up-cycling workshops where we can share our time, she knits and I assist in sewing her clothing. She thought that many would be interested in this.

There were many mistakes made, which in fact enabled better working relationships with the people who assisted me on the project. I tried not to get emotional when something didn't work out, instead opting to make it part of the process. The limitations and the choices taken away from me as a designer, in terms of fabric choice, time and money enabled me to be more creative with what I had. I was happy that I was achieving some of my design goals I had set for myself at the beginning of the project in Figure 30.

This research project has had a large impact on my life and the future of my design processes and thinking. There are a great many other angles to sustainability I would like to explore, especially in the area of recycling. It was only yesterday on the television that a programme was shown about the recycling facilities in India and how they create fibre and threads from old clothing, all from Europe. In designing for a sustainable future, I see Half & Half as an ongoing body of work, where we create and gather information and knowledge through workshops which can then be shared and explored by other designers and individuals and so to form an more open design cycle that can perhaps spark other ethical bodies of work, both locally and internationally.

6. Conclusion

My idea of what sustainability is has changed from what I knew at the beginning of this research. There is politics, indifference, choice, greed, empathy, needs and hope. It is not just about materials and processes. For me it brought out my idea of culture and creativity. Practicing sustainability is a creative process and a journey where design, quality, collaboration and value create the core, instead of trend-laden fashionable outfits with cheap price tags. Sustainability implies that there can be accountability, communication and openness in the creative process.

Development that is translated into action and participation through sharing, practicing diversity, building good relationships, respecting people's needs, learning about technology, embracing traditions and being resourceful while maintaining ones aesthetic. Done in full awareness that the context we are operating from is what is needed in today's fashion design.

It will take a while yet to embed sustainable thinking into our fashion industry here in Iceland, however in showing certain processes and inviting people to see how they can start to bring about change in the way they view their clothing is the beginning of my future.

I conclude by saying that Half and Half's aim is to foster social quality through products which recognize the value of creating relationships and reducing waste, in the hope of bringing people into a more authentic view of fashion -- a fashion that is meaningful, fashion and products that engage people and connects us to each other, ourselves and our world and our future.

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