HANDMADE TEXTILE REVIVAL
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Task 1: Handmade Textile Revival

Relevance to emerging Designers and their Consumers

Introduction

Textile as a point of design is one of the earth's oldest design industries (BB 2014). As far back as documentation can go, textile application has been used. Development both for engineering and aesthetic purposes show that organic based textile outcomes have time and time again proved their worth and value factors.

Traditional crafting methods have made way for more destructive and less sustainable options (Textile Research & Innovation Centre 2009). Despite all the development in outsourced mechanical production, why does the consumer still above allultimately value locally handmade products? (Thomas 2014)

Contention

This paper will explain home-grown handmade textile solutions as a design field; it will dissect the relevance of fibres and their versatility to emerging local designers specialising in handmade production. The qualities of textile crossed with the charm of handmade goods are both respected and admired by users and designers alike. They lend to viable, accessible, and advantageous outcomes (Ford 1997).

Context

When designers speak about emerging textile trends and development in relation to industrial design, they automatically commence thought into smart textile developments (Ominetto 2011) . Although exciting for those in the ID field, complex production materials just do not cut it for the average consumer.

As a textiles specialised industrial designer, I believe that to make smart textiles a standard, it would create an even larger gap between consumer and producer, keep wealth in the hands of the wealthy, and those able to control and monopolise scientific development and production. This is often seen with the medical fields, where pharmaceutical patents can restrict further developments (Herper 2002).

Developments in the smart textile field are fantastic and deserve due credit, but are most relevant to fields (such as biomedical applications of silk (Ominetto 2011)) that cannot be micromanaged in production by both isolated or urban communities. Despite smart textile developments proving that there is a wealth of value within the (previously neglected) field of research of fibres, they still don't pose any answers or mark relevance to making community based design more efficient, accessible, or sustainable (Lee 2011).

This is why this paper will be focusing on the use of traditional textiles opposed to the development of so-called 'smart textiles'.

Ongoing Cultural Presence: Looking Beyond Fashion

Before getting into products, it's important to first understand textile's place within contemporary culture, and why it is a preference for artists and activists alike. When we understand the taxonomy of textile within modern culture, we can then understand the sentimental connotations given to handmade textile products, and therefore user consumer value inferred within their purchases.

Within 21st century art and culture, textile has had a significant role. It can be argued however that the most famous product designs and art pieces have not been so fibre heavy, and textile development in the mainstream eye can be mostly attributed to the fashion world. This is true, but when we look deeper, beyond marketing and organised business, we see time and time again that when the general populace take design – and moreover, design activism – into their own hands, first

and foremost, textile is there. It can be suggested that due to accessibility, value and flexibility, there is no material sector that has been more immediately useful to user creativity and viable to the users themselves.

CASE STUDY 1:
"Yarn bombing", for example, is the street art of taking a traditional textile product (yarn) and creating 'cosies' (coverings) for urban landscape items. Anything from bike stands, to trees, to even more contentious items such as war memorial statues and inactive tanks (TIME 2014) as a means of making non-destructive political commentary.

The product user becomes the creative producer with ease, without

needing large sums of money or high levels of training in order to work with textile in a relatively raw form.

CASE STUDY 2:
With this in mind, the work of Kaylee Hibbert can be reviewed as a case study (Hibbert 2014), exploring a more refined and retail adaptable iteration of string fibre for design outcome. Hibbert takes clear inspiration from the string art movement of the seventies and converts it to a clean cut installation wall fitting. By using geometry and spatial understanding, she is able to bring life and depth to string – making her constructed pieces desirable overall.

Effects on and Values for: The Consumer

Marketplaces have long been the go-to for unique handmade items – for anything from local souvenirs which then become exotic and foreign, to gifts that cannot be reproduced by any other than the original artisan themselves. Markets hold a romantic – yet chaotic – image when reflected upon, so what happens when you take the concept and then adapt it to web? Removing the physical hustle and bustle of the market place, what we are left with are two core items to the driving force of their timeless success: Value of the object itself, and value of the craftsperson.

O6

CASE STUDY 3:

To examine how the customer values the objects themselves we can easily make a case study of on-going success of online marketplace platforms that supply these goods. Amongst popular Australian web-markets such as MadeIt, Handmade Australia and Handmade HQ, the biggest and most well-known worldwide online handmade marketplace is of course ETSY.com (Yuk 2008). The ease of using these platforms is incredible, giving the user the ability to read reviews and critique workmanship, whilst being able to view a wide range of products without the disadvantages (time, space) that may come in to play at a traditional marketplace.

After interviewing Christina Thomas from the Kiozwi (Thomas 2014) – a local handmade goods store in Preston – in here experience of the industry and other industry professionals - there first of all is a heavy demand for locally handmade goods and that people are and will always be drawn to profound and beautiful things (Strickland 1995). Secondly, there is an almost entirely positive response regarding those items being at least catalogued online for the benefit and exploration of the potential customer.

CASE STUDY 4:

To discuss the way the craftsperson is valued we can look further and ask what exactly about these platforms gives the consumer an

ability to display an appreciation for the craftsperson without literally meeting with them. The way the products are sold – much like ebay (Ebay, 2014) – are through seller profiles. This gives the customer a feeling of one-on-one interaction with the designer (Riggs 2007). Once a product is bought, it is then shipped personally from the producer to the buyer, making the platform merely a distribution point between valued exchanges. The consumer then, just like with any other physical handmade market item, can go beyond the physical item and feel a real sense of connection with the artisan – especially if it has been personalised or commissioned specifically from the artist.

Effects on & Values for: The Designer

Of course, the value in handmade and/or textile goods is not limited to the user. There are great advantages for the designer as an individual, which have potential to add value to a designer's practice.

These include creating a local identity and demand is always welcome for the emerging designer and supporting local retailers and suppliers are not only good for industry reputation - it also creates an advantageous network. Beyond this, becoming a designer who values local supplies and then adding those products back into the community is more than a noble gesture – it is a way of maintaining an ethical and sustainable localised practice, injecting design narrative and giving a more sincere outcome altogether.

Although not always appropriate, I feel as a designer, it is important to try to follow through with as much 'honest design' as possible, where possible.

Case Study 5:
This kind of work ethic can be seen in the case study of local macramé industrial designer Sarah Parkes, working under the name of SmallTown (Parkes 2014). Smalltown create lighting pieces, pot hangings, and assorted interior features and commissions – all majority of which the material is rope used in a macramé style. The rope is locally sourced, supporting local producers, rather than a possibly cheaper, lower quality material from an industrial district in China or India (like what most larger scale interior product manufacturers would use). The style is clean and polished, but the textile and handcrafted composition is what brings a nostalgic ten-

derness to the items, making them desirable without needing the 'bells and whistles' approach of mass produced decor (Parkes 2012). Although the rope is made to order, the same ethic could be applied to using recycled fabrics too, making the process even more sustainable still, giving even more perspective on how far local upcycled sourcing could influence product design on a larger scale.

Conclusion:

Although sceptics within industry may claim that there will never be a fully localised product renaissance (Riggs 2007), there is still great potential within the sustainability and overall accessibility that localised textile crafts brings to designers and

consumers. Major concerns about the direction of industrial design have arisen; mass globalisation and reluctance in developing industrial scale sustainable outcomes have long been the norm (Ford 1997). However, people will keep wanting products, and there is overwhelming evidence to suggest they prefer handmade.

Textile is a timeless, sustainable solution. The only thing left to do, is to start doing.
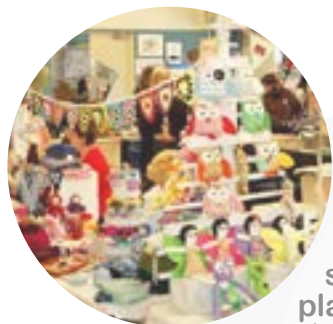
Consumer values

Marketplaces embody the spirit of handmade trade. With success of online marketplaces such as Etsy, it's clear there is still an ongoing value of crafted goods. Handmade creates a feeling of connection with the craftsperson, and the cultural connotations and nostalgia of textile craft brings a honest, personal quality

Designer Values

The advantages and possibilites of working with textile are endless. By using local supplies, you support the local community. By using textile, you have no limits to potential design outcomes. By working handmade, you form an identity with your personal touch, and create a legacy with your work, such as seen with Smalltown.

Cultural Presence

Textile is an often underrated yet integral part of modern design culture. Due to its accessiblity, value and flexibility we're able to see textile application weave its path through polished design outcomes - such as the work of Kaylee Hibbert - all the way through to grassroots design statements such as 'Yarn Bombing'

Case study: Kaylee Hibbert interior strig art pieces. (Cultural) **Advantageous.**

Case study: Etsy Marketplace as a platform (Consumer) **Accessible.**

Case study: Smalltown handmade macrame items (Designer) **Viable.**
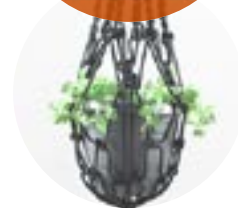
About.
Contention.
Context.

Textile: One of the oldest industries
Handmade: Crafted goods, local materials
Revival: Reclaiming relevance and value

Recent developments in fibre technology and industrial processes have left crafting - with its humble approach - behind in recent times. Has that erased a demand for quality locally handmade goods?

The handmade textile industry is still alive and well, with designers willing to take things 'back to basics' in order to bring fruitful & sustainable design outcomes

Handmade Textile Revival

Task 2: Design Practice Methods

Method 1: Collaborative Design Process

Collaboration as a method involves recognising and acknowledging your limitations as a specialised designer (or professional). When wanting to approach a large design project, it is often not feasible for a singular creative to also produce and manage all components. The process of 'bouncing back' (Seraj, M 2012), ideas and allowing some creative flexibility is advantageous, it allows for other perspective and skills to be present. It also allows the designer to understand the potential user interaction on a different level (Cova, B; Dalli D 2009), for better outcomes than those directed by the designer's own pride and – possibly unsuitable – idealisation (Yi, Y; Gong,T 2011).

Successful Example 1:

This can be used both as a designer with other professional input, or as a producer with input from the consumer. A classic – often successful - example of this is anonymous feedback or peer review forms, which have allowed for an anonymous criticism, without fear of being singled out in group or commercial scenarios.

Successful Example 2:

Another successful example is seen through the work of Melbourne fashion designer Jacqueline Stewart, with her fashion design company, Pho Sizzle Threads (Stewart, J 2014). After interviewing with Stewart about her business model, it became clear that her work centres on a collaborative effort. Whether the fabric is bought through markets, industry, or designed by her; Stewart makes a very conscious choice of believing in the Pho Sizzle team to assist her process. Although being creative director, she is open to discussion and flexibility, lending to creating the best possible outcomes.

Unsuccessful Example:

An unsuccessful example of this is seen in the Warhammer 40k gaming community (Belk, R 2013). Studies show that when a producer creates a collaborative platform, it is essential to credit the consumer, even in a token way (Jawecki, G; Fuller, J ; Gebauer, J 2011). For a long time, the online community had been collaborating, participating, and supplying feedback to game designers through official forums. They felt betrayed when Games Workshop failed to acknowledge their contribution, using it as market research and products, without explicit consent. They retaliated by starting their own online community and new gaming system based off the original licenced franchise.
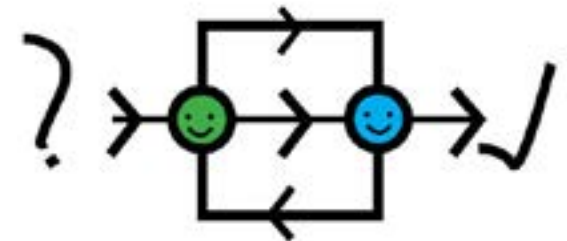
Method 2: "Coolhunting"

Coolhunting is a process coined and subsequently executed by the international design research team at Future Concept Labs (Future Concept Lab 2014). It is a process that involves real people going into popular places for trend-setting (known as 'hotspots') to observe people and their interactions with products within those contexts. Much like the process of "Fly on the Wall", it is usually a non-interactive process; focusing on what is observed as common or upcoming in target groups and demographics. This method is best employed for data collection and anthropological research regarding target groups for design fields - or even marketing - rather than for developing specific product outcomes.

Successful Example 1:

A successful application of this is seen within the work of fashion and design bloggers (Notcot Inc 2014; Pinterest 2014), who document the way trends shape society. Unless the posts are sponsored, they are observations of what is truly trending, which will be useful to a designer who wants to stay relevant, or connect with their target audience on a stronger level.

Successful Example 2:

Another successful example of this is websites which catalogue these trending elements (TrendHunter 2014; ∆ULIVE 2014), whether it be through a marketing or design lens. Websites like Moreinsipiration, Notcot, Trendhunter and Pinterest are all online and readily available tools for dissecting modern culture in different ways, and finding out what is up and coming.

Unsuccessful Example:

An unsuccessful application of this is when companies take this data and use it directly, just because of its perceived popularity. There are a lot of issues concerning infringement and intellectual property, that a lot of larger companies are making poor choices based on 'fads' (The ABC, 2013) . An example of this is how many companies are latching on to buzz words in hope of gaining greater support, and manipulating buyers (seen often in the world of food products with terms like 'natural' and 'organic' (Jollife, T 2014).

Method 3: Random Project Generation

Random project generation is a way of engaging with out-of-the-ordinary design processes and thought constraints in order to produce profound outcomes and work ourselves out of 'creativity blocks'. The way random project generation is constructed, is, through some arbitrary constraints, the designer is put in a position where their brief is not at all logical or sensible, and more provocative, enigmatic, and able to reach a new level of design finesse. The project could be a stepping stone into thinking about the original design issue you are having in a different way, or a design outcome worth presenting and documenting in its own right. That is the beauty of this design method.
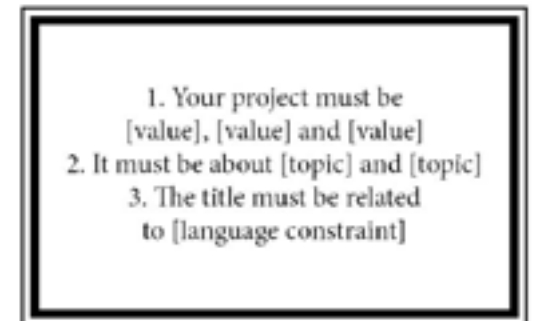
Successful Example 1:

A traditional – and notable - form of this exercise can be traced back to the Surrealist period (The Equisite Corpse 2014). 'Games' such as 'The Exquisite Corpse' (where players would all draw a separate section of an art piece without the others knowing) and Dada Poetry (where words are cut out of magazines and newspapers, and re-arranged in a random order) engage with this theory of balance and chaos to create (interesting, at least) outcomes.

Successful Example 2:

SIBI is an online platform for creating and fulfilling these randomly generated project goals (Fassone, R 2014). Created by Roberto Fassone, it brings the surrealist games of art and mind manipulation into the digital and modern world. Sibi is a 'game' that generates a project for the user, giving a set of criteria that follows a pattern within three sentences. The first sentence involves medium (three variables), the second is 'aboutness' (content – two variables), and the third is title (one variable). Each artwork objective is unique and challenging in its own way.

Unsuccessful Example:

Where this approach may fail is if pretentiousness replaces the spontaneity. This process has been used often in the post-modern art world, so discretion is advised when deciding whether or not to make the fruits of this kind of exercise a final outcome in its own right – on some counts it could be considered cliché, in many cases, it would be a valid criticism.

1. Your project must be [value], [value] and [value]
2. It must be about [topic] and [topic]
3. The title must be related to [language constraint]

Task 3a: Localised Handmade Textile
Privileges, Problems and Solutions

Keywords:

Research Question:

Why are handmade goods not consistently available in an accessible retail situation? Should they be, and can they be?

Abstract:

Issues & Concerns:

Mass production is in almost every industry in modern day (Sawyer 2005) and the greatest consumers are those who are working class to middle class, as wealthier people can afford to buy quality, artisan goods (Strickland 1995), and often do. Does this also seclude handmade products only to those who can afford them? Have handmade goods in turn, become elitist? It is important for designers of handmade products to make sure that their outcomes are not secluded to a single, particular market, when there is demand across many demographics.

Discussion:

It has been researched that consumers do prefer handmade goods (Thomas 2014), but still (locally produced) handmade products are not a central part of the in-house mid-range retail sector. Why are these products still a relatively niche marketplace item? (Govoni 2012)

Recently, Melbourne designers have understood this demand and found growing reception to their presence online (Ross 2014). However, as textile is highly tactile, is this doing justice to the values of textile products, and is there a better way to reach a greater market?

Argument / Contention:

I believe that research into this field is the best way to uncover both how to bring handmade textile products to a wider audience, and, as a consequence to address greater issues and demands made by a modern day mid-range market which craves quality products.

Opportunities / Design Activity / Product:

As an industrial designer with textile expertise, I feel there is a valuable knowledge and opportunity in researching the handmade textile field. There is clear value in minimising industrial waste and low-quality, mass produced products (Struning 2013). Not only that, but also, to meet the ongoing demand for these kinds of products (Stewart 2014).

The first steps in this research, is to create an Actor Network Map (Heimeier 2013) as actor network theory helps to discern the full spectrum of relating elements. Once completed, to organise those elements into different categories that reflect elements of their taxonomy. This step is important to help identify where to start and how to catagorise the information received.

This report will involve making several case studies of consumers, designers, and industry itself, in order to have a non-biased and completely well informed research piece, and to fully address the contention. Methods will include surveying, interviews, data collection and analysis, and broad research into cases of textile interaction vs virtual interaction, within the fields of design and art.

Methodology:
- Actor network maps
- Written research
- Surveying / Polling
- Interviews
- Data Collection

Proposal A:
Localised
Handmade
Textiles:
Privileges,
Problems &
Solutions

Presence in:
retail situation
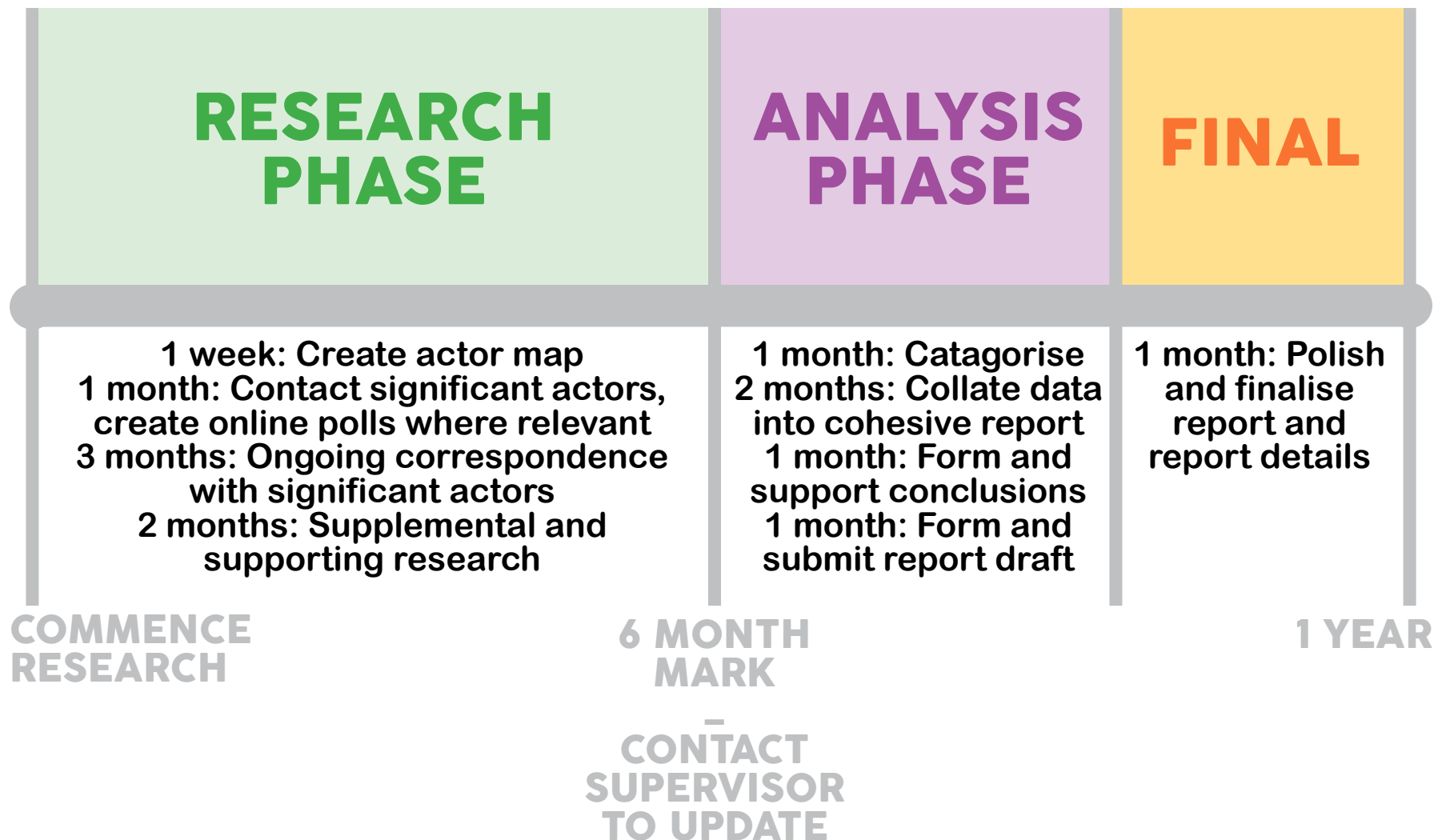- Should it be?
- Can they be?

Process:
Forming case studies
through methods.
Compiling case studies.
Reaching informed
conclusion.

Objectives:
Concluding on how
to approach a wider
audience through
retail means.

RESEARCHER

**DESIGNERS
INDUSTRY
CONSUMERS**

**RESEARCH
COLLATION
INTO CASE
STUDIES AND
POTENTIAL
DIRECTIONS**

**ACADEMIC
CONCLUSIONS
OF INDUSTRY
VALUE**

Visual Diagram

RESEARCH PHASE	ANALYSIS PHASE	FINAL
1 week: Create actor map 1 month: Contact significant actors, create online polls where relevant 3 months: Ongoing correspondence with significant actors 2 months: Supplemental and supporting research	1 month: Catagorise 2 months: Collate data into cohesive report 1 month: Form and support conclusions 1 month: Form and submit report draft	1 month: Polish and finalise report and report details

COMMENCE RESEARCH

6 MONTH MARK
–
CONTACT SUPERVISOR TO UPDATE

1 YEAR

Summarised Shedule

Materials/Printing: $400
Printing / Notetaking supplies / Digital equipment

Web: $100
Startup / Presence / Maintenance

Expertise: $3000
Embursement of industry professionals for advice

Publication purchases: $1000
Purchase of documentation and publications
not acessible through RMIT library or online

Indirect Costs: $1000
Circumstantial costs for travel and arrangements

Estimated Publishing: $300
Costs involved in finishing paper and making it available

Labour: $ n/a

Estimated grant needed:
$6000

Summarised Budget

Image Board

Task 3b: Localised Handmade Textile

Reclaimimg Retail Space

Keywords:

Textile / Experiment / Market / Retail / Handmade

Research Question:

Do consumers support a presence of handmade textile products in an accessible physical retail platform, is it accessible?

Abstract:

Issues & Concerns:

Textile based handmade design is not viable to dominate the retail market, as it takes an amount of effort and personal investment for a designer to create a truly worthwhile piece [source]. It is, however, important to not assume that domination of the market is the same as presence. Locally handmade textile product outcomes have very little presence in retail settings (Thomas 2014) beyond markets – and markets are not always accessible for designers (Stewart 2014) let alone consumers.

Discussion:

There is ongoing mutual respect between designers and artists who peel their work back to a sentimental, handmade approach (Ross 2014). According to these designers, there is a growing amount of likeminded creatives emerging who work with textile and other handwork materials, which is bringing about a handmade product revival.

Argument / Contention:

Although handmade goods are readily accessible online (Ross 2014) I believe that textile is a largely tactile material to interact with, meaning that some of the value of the product is lost to a soley online platform, such as online marketplaces (Riggs 2007). I believe creating and maintaining a locally designed textile based product platform within already established retail stores will generate positive outcomes.

Opportunities / Design Activity / Product:

Despite many online platforms making it easier for these designers to sell their pieces (Yuk 2008) it still poses a problem for textile involved design in particular – as textile based outcomes are often largely informed through tactile interaction.

I propose that design research methods should be used to uncover how consumers react to textile when placed within an accessible retail setting. I believe this can be achieved through referencing the system design structure found in "This is Service Design Thinking" (Stickdorn 2012) and collaborating with designers in order to create an in-house handmade textile product area at major retailers in Melbourne. I also feel it necessary to reference the iDEO design method card system (Pink 2003) while working with designers to find middle ground on what they want out of the experience and moreover to communicate how they feel as stakeholders within the proposed system.

Methodology:
- Contact designers
- Have workshops to collaborate and under-stand perspective
- IDEO / TISDT

Proposal B:
Localised Handmade Textiles: Reclaiming Retail Space

Presence in: retail situation
- How can designers create this?
- How successful will it be?

Process:
Find retail scenario to host handmade textile products, record and analyse results

Objectives:
Find out mid-range consumer reaction to easy acces to handmade textile goods in a common retail setting, define if worth-while to maintain.
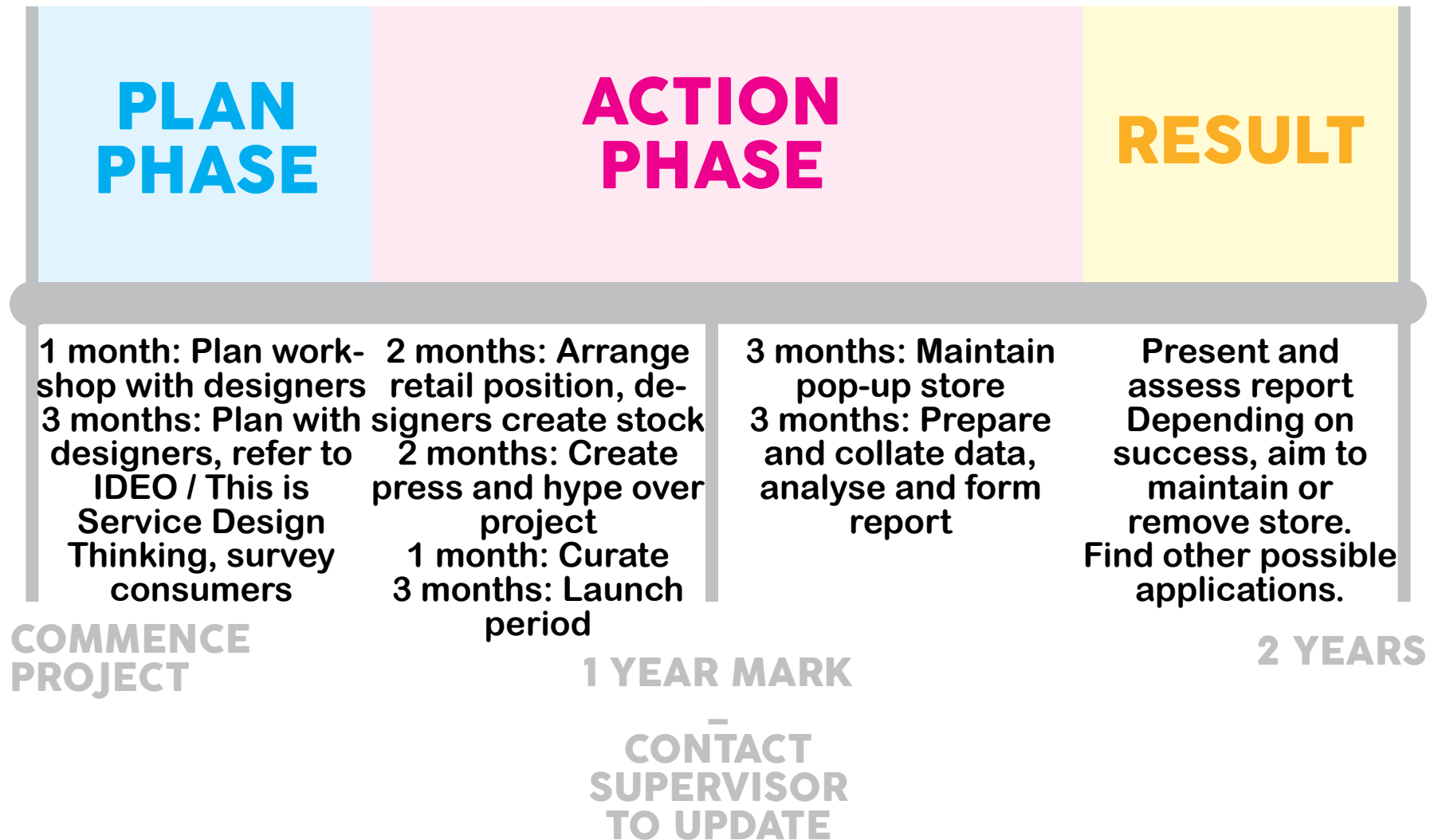
RESEARCHER

DESIGNER COLLABORATION AND PLANNING

INDUSTRY CONSUMERS

Create market
Collect data and analyse

MAINTAIN OR REMOVE POP-UP STORE, REPORT

Visual Diagram

PLAN PHASE	ACTION PHASE		RESULT
1 month: Plan workshop with designers 3 months: Plan with designers, refer to IDEO / This is Service Design Thinking, survey consumers	2 months: Arrange retail position, designers create stock 2 months: Create press and hype over project 1 month: Curate 3 months: Launch period	3 months: Maintain pop-up store 3 months: Prepare and collate data, analyse and form report	Present and assess report Depending on success, aim to maintain or remove store. Find other possible applications.

COMMENCE PROJECT

1 YEAR MARK
–
CONTACT SUPERVISOR TO UPDATE

2 YEARS

Summarised Shedule

Materials/Printing: $400
Printing / Notetaking supplies / Digital equipment

Web: $100
Startup / Presence / Maintenance

Expertise: $3000
Embursement of industry professionals for advice

Publication purchases: $200
Purchase of documentation and publications
not acessible through RMIT library or online

Indirect Costs: $1000
Circumstantial costs for travel and arrangements

Pop-up Shop Cost: $20,000
Rent / Stock / Staff / Fittings / Studio

Research Labour: TBA
Estimated quote for my service as a student

Estimated grant needed: $25,000+

Summarised Budget

Image Board

Journal Extracts:
Interview + Planning

Interview: Jaqueline Stewart

Q. How did you start with design?
A. After designing outfits for myself and taking a few short courses in pattern making. While I was overseas in a country that I couldn't fit any of the clothes, I became good friends with a tailor who I would design outfits with for myself.

Q. And as far as your fabrics go, how do you source that?
A. For business I source fabric in three different ways. Firstly, I source most of the African Wax cotton from China – however, when I was actually in West Africa I found some African Wax, and brought it back with me only to discover that it was also made in China anyway. So, the first way is from China. The second is through the markets of Hanoi, where my manufacturer lives. So, she'll go ahead to the fabric markets, send them to me immediately, and I'll say if I want them or not. In that case, it's end-of-reel situation, so it's not huge quantities. The third way is through another factory in China in where I've designed – and then created – my own fabrics.

So, okay, how do you decide what is worth the investment to buy or make?

Generally the ones that are chosen from Hanoi markets are more plain – plain linens or plain cottons. All the African Wax is chosen based on the pattern, and, I am particularly partial to animal prints. The fabrics that are designed, it's more about picking fabrics or designs that didn't exist yet. It's more about designs that I would want to wear as a consumer myself (and that are in line with other fabrics I've picked).

Q. Another big question – why African Wax?
A. Why African Wax? I was in Senegal there were all these amazing women in beautifully bright clothes. Firstly I felt there wasn't enough of a market in Australia for it; because I love bright fabrics so much, because I love patterned fabrics so much, I knew that it was the kind of fabric for me. And I hoped that people in Australia would feel the same way. There are a couple of other designers in Australia that use African Wax and it's a growing more and more.

Q. So, tell us more about the process of actually designing a fabric?
A. How do I design a fabric from scratch? When I was first brainstorming the current collection that I wanted it to have an underwater theme. I felt that anchors had been done to death, I felt the maritime theme was just a bit boring. And
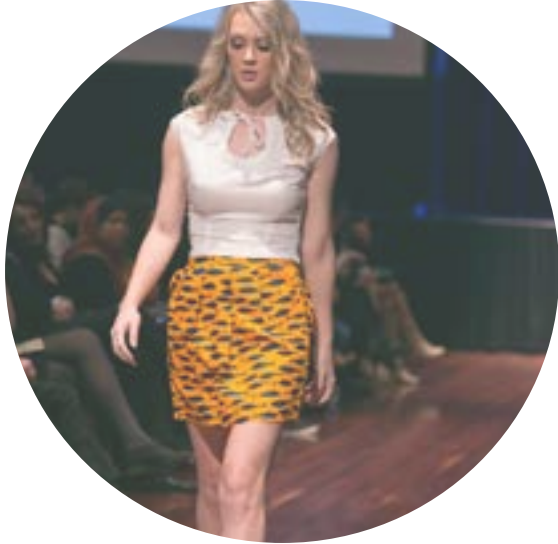
even things like mermaids had been done (to death!) so I went deeper into the ocean (heh) and decided to go with angler fish and lantern fish, and octopus tentacles – even though squid and octopus are kind of getting to the stage of cliché – I would argue they aren't there yet.

And how it got to final fabrics? After deciding that I wanted lantern fish, I looked up a bunch of pictures (all royalty free and creative commons) and looked at them and thought of what kind of print I wanted, and sourced out one of my old students from RMIT Hanoi who was always very good at graphic design. I told him what I wanted, and he drew me up a lot of lantern fish, I let him know which one I wanted, and that it needed to be whatever dimensions

and able to wrap and tile as a stamp pattern – very high quality – based on the instructions from the Chinese printers as what they needed. Finally, it was digitally printed.

I was looking (before going to digital printing) at dieing stuff (because it is a lot cheaper) but even with digital printing, the smallest run you can do is one hundred meters – with dieing, it's one thousand meters. I don't need a kilometre of lanternfish! It'd be amazing to see (or sea?); but anyway, that's the reason why I chose digital printing. Like the African Wax – you don't need huge minimum orders, which is perfect for a small business.

Q. And your garment patterns – how do you decide how they will look?
A. As I mentioned – my tailor and I have known each-other for three years. We have a relationship where I could go into her workroom with a drawing and say "I want this (bad sketch)" and she would clarify – but she would actually understand what I meant. And so, because of these three years of trying to figure out what I was talking about, my sketches are better and I can communicate more directly, with things like "I want an extra ten centimetres here, blah blah blah". She then draws it

back to me to check that we've got the right idea. She then draws them properly (in Sweden, she lives in Sweden now) – and sends them to our manufacturer in Vietnam who then cuts it out. I draw them, send to her, she sends them back to me, I approve, she sends the pattern to Vietnam, they get turned into clothes, and then sent back to Australia.

Q. Where do you think – as a designer – your personal process is? What place do these concepts come from?
A. Well, for this collection, I knew I wanted blues for the theme. If there's an animal motif I want to tie it into maybe something of cultural or seasonal connections. [writer's note: next season spoilers delicately removed here!]

Q. And your process almost seems like a worldwide event – are you considering taking this into foreign markets?

A. I do get some overseas traffic due to my own ties in blogging and fashion communities, but I am considering West Africa and Vietnam as eventual feasible markets. Probably the – maybe not the easiest – but the most beneficial market would be Sweden. If we market it right in Vietnam and West Africa we could try angle in as a niche nouveau-riche brand, but especially in Vietnam, I know my ex-students are spending money on what they perceive is a prestige brand. There are issues with expanding to both of those places though, and Sweden's just a bit easier. We'll see!

Q. It's interesting! Has there ever been a point of a creative block?

A. Not really, but the thing is, I haven't been doing it for very long. When I used to design for myself, I got most of my inspiration from 40s movies, and seeing dresses in old movies. Or, even old patterns, you know how you can find them, even for sale some times? I used to find websites with those and screenshot the front of them, and my tailor could re-construct that (which is amazing!)

Q. So, would you say you find some-thing you want, and then recreate it, or do you look for new things, then get it done?

A. I think it's a bit of both as a process. Like with this collection, there's things that have been very obviously been done before – like the sailor collar. But it's never been paired – to my knowledge – with the African Wax. And I'm also doing that with the lantern fish and the sailor collar – so I really don't think that's been done before. Then the navy blue (normal looking) rockabilliy type dress with the white buttons, is completely standard for most brands, especially alternative or rockabilly brands themselves to have a dress like that… so I chucked a big lantern fish on it where the poodle would traditionally go. Most of what I do is things I know people would want, because most women would want a wonderful dress like that, but then making it something different to make it my own.

I honestly try to go with what would look best on most sizes and most body shapes. I've tried to do that as a rule but sometimes it hasn't quite worked. I've done pieces for example that wouldn't suit apple shapes, and changing it was a very convoluted, difficult way of designing, after doing everything I could. I did try! (And admit I failed) but yeah, it's
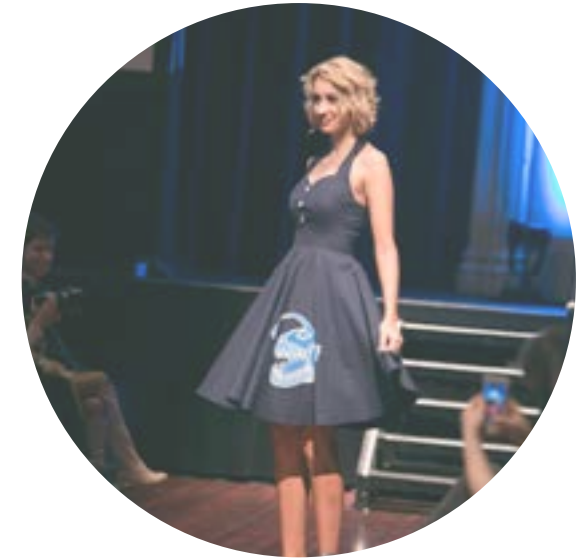
mainly that I try to make it well fitted to the kind of piece I am designing. Of course in product descriptions I try to be as accurate about fit as possible, because people need to know what they're buying.

Q. Would you consider one of your design objectives to bring the tailored culture of menswear back into contemporary womens wear?

A. Yeah, definitely. I haven't brought out anything that isn't particularly tailored just yet. I am bringing out something in a stretch-jersey, but still, even that will be quite tailored. Getting inspiration from old patterns and designs, re-jigging them somewhat, and then adding personal twists and details that I think would attract buyers.   END.

Field Actor Map

Notes on Field

Learning Testimonial

Having missed the first semester of university while on study abroad this year, I wasn't sure what to expect of this third-year-exclusive (and compulsory) course. I didn't really have much going as far as preconceptions went. Overall, although frustrating at times, I can definitely see how this kind of work is useful to us as designers, especially in preparation for fourth year and our proposals.

As far as my understanding as a designer goes, although I have always cherished textile as my major strength and interest, I never really gave it credit as a viable specialisation (amongst the more common interest of emerging industrial designers to work almost exclusively with new technology). However, now I can not only see myself specialising in this field, but also actually developing my knowledge to become an expert too, and that for me as a designer is really important.

This identity for me and my philosophies as a designer really deserved to get fleshed out, especially at this point in my studies. I don't think any other class I've had so far has really asked us to go by what we as designers want and are interested in – it's kind of a shame as we're not all going to work in the consultancy field. For those of us who won't, we need to be able to distinguish and express our critical opinions and our flavour as design individuals rather than ability as skilled professionals (which I feel is the main focus of the other major components of the course).

If anything, being able to research my true passions in an academic way has been an encouraging experience. Especially as the textile field – even industrial textile - seems as though it's not as widely covered. Textile within industrial design seems to be treated as a post-design aspect, rather than what could be a major component, and so I feel like my ability to bring that knowledge to the table is something I should be pleased with.

Beyond my field, learning about how to construct reports and proposals is also really important, and I'm glad to have experience with that. Also, thanks to learning how to use Endnote, I am now able to keep all my references in the one place, which is really valuable to know after having recently needed to replace my laptop, and losing all the papers I had stored on there.

I feel like I've put a good amount of effort into this publication, and I really do feel like this is one of the best pieces I've put together so far. I am pleased to include these pieces in my online portfolio, and I do think it reflects my ability as an academic, and my knowledge as a designer.

END.

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