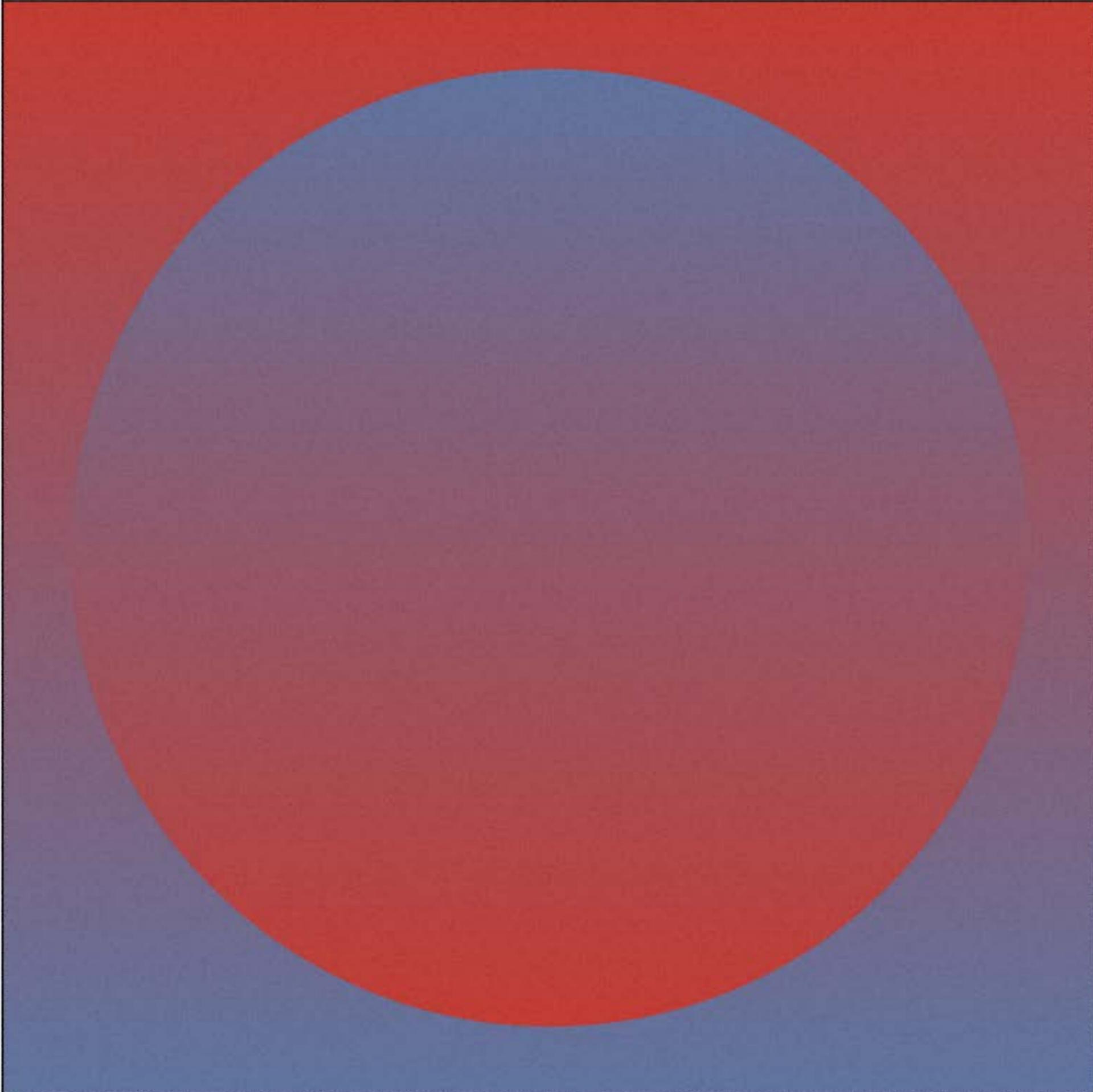


PORTFOLIO

SEMESTER 2

RESPONSIBLE DESIGN

DE7011



ANNA STOUT

MA Fashion Design  
(Sustainable and Ethical)

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# ABSTRACT

The aims of the research project are to understand the scope of the fashion design process as well as the methods and strategies utilised when considering sustainability. The research also intends to discover the barriers and parameters to sustainable fashion design in light of how and when designers consider sustainability, with the objective of suggesting solutions and intervention points within the design process.

Through primarily qualitative research in the form of a survey, interviews, design process mapping, action research and a design experiment, data is gathered and thematically analysed to discover insights in relation to the project aims and questions.

Initial findings show that fashion designers consider sustainability at various points in the design process. It is often incorporated through material choice, consideration of waste and garment durability. Independent designers had more control over decisions while larger brands faced difficulty in making changes for sustainability in their design process. Perceptions were that cost was a major barrier as well as the quality of sustainable alternatives and designing for garments with multiple components.

## KEY WORDS

sustainable fashion design;  
sustainable design processes;  
fashion designers; designerly  
ways of knowing

The fashion industry is a major contributor to the world's climate crisis, through unsustainable processes in supply chains that involve excessive CO2 emissions, water consumption and waste. The industry produces 8-10% of the world's CO2 emissions and 20% of the world's water pollution (Niinimäki et al. 2020).

There is an increased pressure for brands to commit to sustainable and ethical practices, as consumers demand more transparency and government incentives begin to be implemented (BOF, 2022).

With the understanding that 80% of a product's environmental impact is determined at the design stage (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022), it is clear that designers have the potential to be 'agents of change'.

In order to recognise how designers can contribute to this change it is necessary to understand sustainability, design processes and the opportunities and barriers surrounding fashion designers in the shift towards sustainable fashion practice.

# INTRO - DUCTION

The portfolio introduces the context of the research project by mapping out the evolution of the role of fashion designers, outlining sustainability & sustainable design approaches and sharing some key sustainable fashion designers, before demonstrating a PESTLE analysis of current issues relating to fashion design & designers.

The problem space is defined as well as key concepts and texts relevant to the project. A research gap is then identified and the aims, objectives, questions and purpose of the project is detailed.

Next, the methodology is described and findings for the survey and interviews are presented. The progress and plans for the action research and design experiments are then suggested.

To conclude, the plans for Semester 3 are defined in moving towards the writing the thesis and the research project is summarised.



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF SUSTAINABILITY

500BC AUTHORS HIGHLIGHT CONCERNS OVER ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

1800S INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION LEADS TO INCREASED CONSUMPTION AND POLLUTION

1970S THE WORD "SUSTAINABILITY" FIRST USED IN "A BLUEPRINT FOR SURVIVAL"

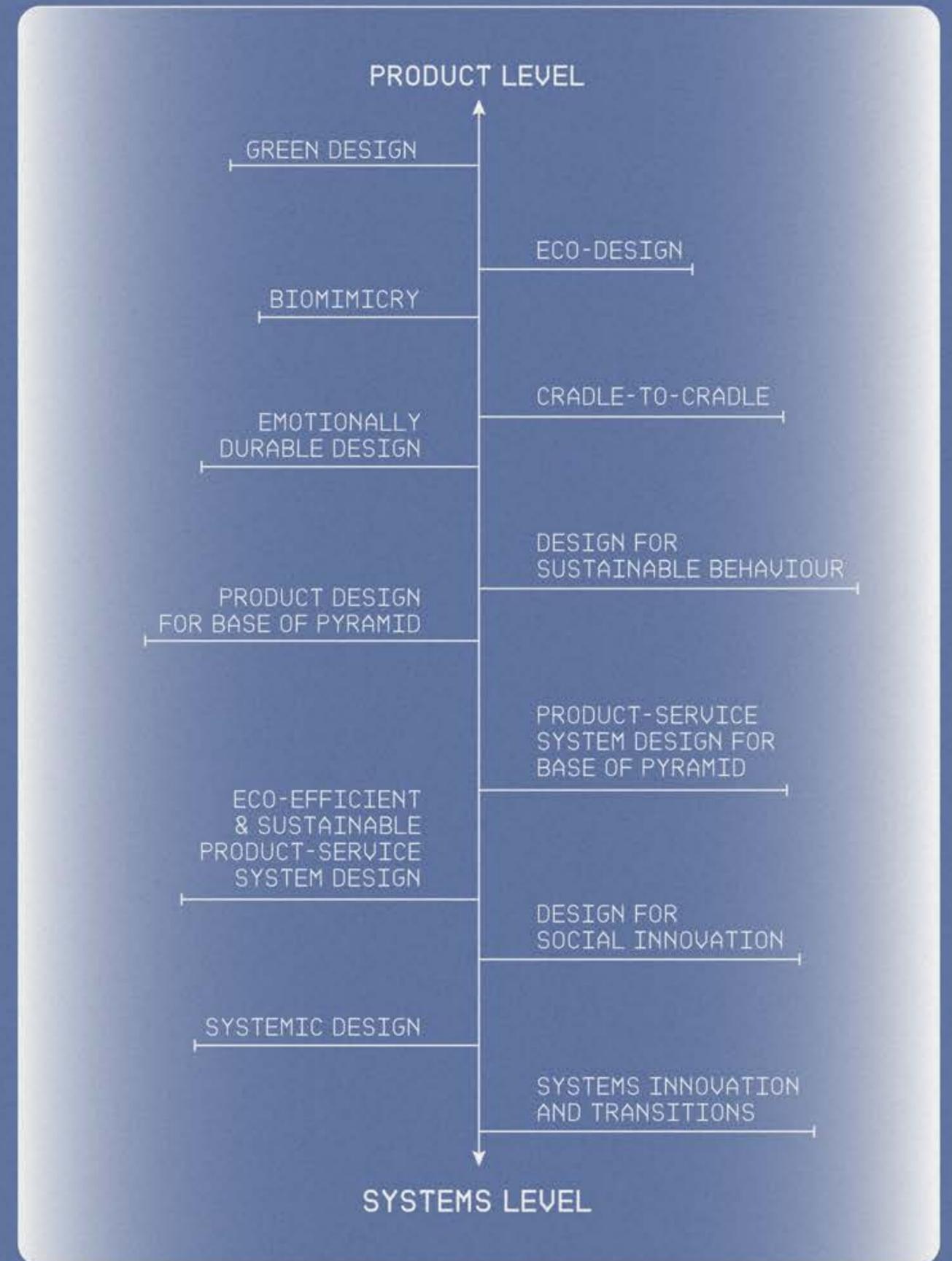
"DEVELOPMENT THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF THE PRESENT WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE ABILITY OF FUTURE GENERATIONS TO MEET THEIR OWN NEEDS"  
UN, 1987

1987 BRUNDTLAND REPORT DEFINES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2015 UN SETS 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR 2030 & PARIS AGREEMENT IS ADOPTED TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

(Dhanani, 2022)

# SUSTAINABILITY & SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

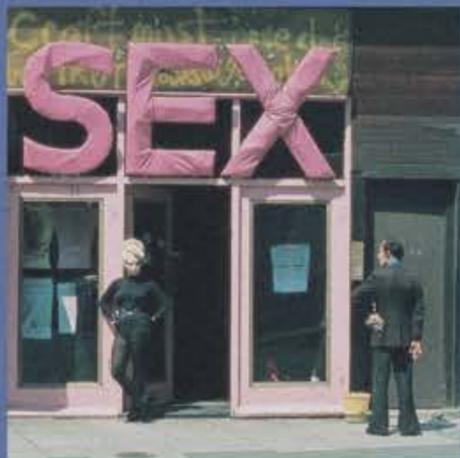


## DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY APPROACHES

(Bhamra and Hernandez, 2021)

# SUSTAINABLE FASHION

**1974 VIVIENNE WESTWOOD OPENS BOUTIQUE PIONEERING PUNK FASHION WITH DEADSTOCK & UPCYCLING**



The brand continues to use better materials & supply chain, highlighting heritage & activism for an improved world.



**2012 MUD JEANS WORKS TOWARDS CIRCULAR DENIM AND IS CERTIFIED B CORP**

Fig. 12.



**2014 SUZANNE LEE FOUNDED BIOFABRICATE, PIONEERING BIOMATERIALS**

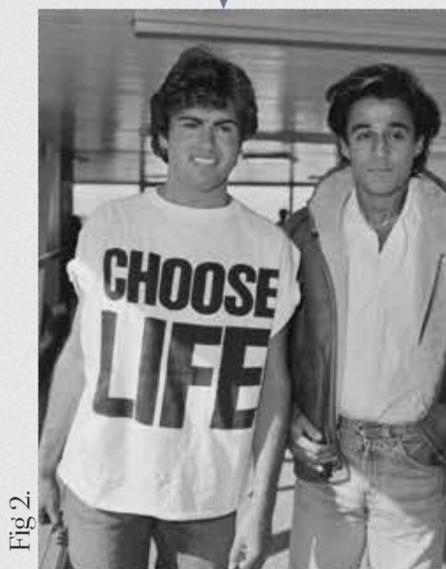


Fig. 2.

**1983 KATHERINE HAMNETT PRODUCES POLITICAL SLOGAN TSHIRTS & ADVOCATES FOR ETHICS & ENVIRONMENT**



Fig. 10.

**2012 H&M RELEASES 'CONSCIOUS COLLECTION'**

**2017 ARKET STORES OPENED AS SUSTAINABLE OPTION ON HIGH STREET**



Fig. 13.

**1986 PATAGONIA (EST. 1973) COMMITS 1% OF PROFIT TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHARITY**



Fig. 3.

They continue to prioritise ethics & sustainability with their initiatives & campaigns

**2018 MARINE SERRE RUNWAY DEBUT KNOWN FOR UPCYCLING VINTAGE GARMENTS & DEADSTOCK**



Fig. 14.

**2018 PANGAIA FOUNDED, BASED ON MATERIALS SCIENCE. THEY USE RECYCLED MATERIALS, NATURAL DYES & INNOVATIONS SUCH AS C-FIBER & FLWRDWN.**



Fig. 9.

**2009 REFORMATION PRODUCES 'FAST FASHION' WHILE COMMITTING TO SUSTAINABILITY GOALS**

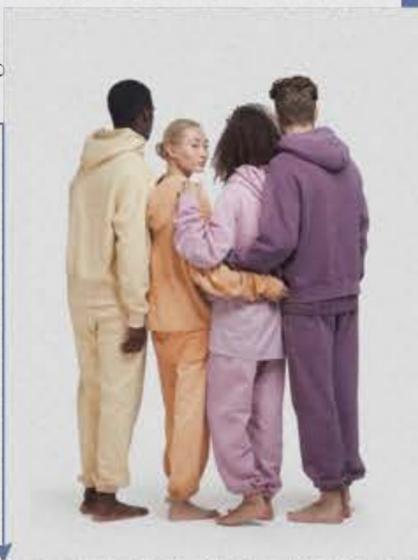


Fig. 15.

**2009 CHRISTOPHER RAEBURN LABEL CREATED, KNOWN FOR UPCYCLING SURPLUS FABRICS & MILITARY PARACHUTES**



Fig. 8.

**2018 THE FABRICANT FOUNDED, CREATING DIGITAL ONLY FASHION**



Fig. 16.

**2001 STELLA MCCARTNEY LAUNCHED. WITH A 'NO ANIMAL' POLICY, THEY AVOID LEATHER & FUR.**



Fig. 6.

They now use innovative fabrics such as Bananatex & MURUM, highlight regenerative farming, recycled fabrics & transparency.

**2002 MOTHER OF PEARL FOUNDED, COMMITTING TO ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**



Fig. 7.

Involved in 'Fashion Reimagined' documentary released in 2022



Fig. 17.

**2021 YES FRIENDS MAKES £9.99 SUSTAINABLE & ETHICAL TSHIRT**



Fig. 4.

**1984 EILEEN FISHER FOUNDED. THEY NOW IMPLEMENT CIRCULAR PRACTICES THROUGH THEIR RENEW PROGRAMME**



Fig. 5.

**1991 PEOPLE TREE PIONEERS FAIRTRADE CERTIFIED FASHION**

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FASHION AS  
ACTIVISM

DESIGNERS CAN USE  
THEIR DESIGNS AS A  
MEDIUM FOR ACTIVISM

DESIGNER AS  
INDIVIDUAL

IT IS IMPORTANT TO  
CONSIDER THAT DESIGN-  
ERS ARE INDIVIDUALS  
WITH THEIR OWN VIEWS  
AND OPINIONS

ECONOMIC FRAGILITY

INFLATION & RISING  
COST OF LIVING AFFECT-  
ING BUSINESSES AND  
CONSUMERS

COST DICTATES DESIGN

COSTS OFTEN INFORM  
DESIGN DECISIONS,  
EITHER ENCOURAGING  
CREATIVITY AND  
INNOVATION OR LIMIT-  
ING QUALITY

FASHION DESIGN AS  
CAREER

THE INDUSTRY IS VERY  
COMPETITIVE, OFTEN  
LOW PAID AND EXPLOITS  
YOUNG DESIGNERS

POVERTY &  
INEQUALITY

IN FASHION SUPPLY  
CHAINS WITHIN DEVEL-  
OPING COUNTRIES

SOCIAL JUSTICE  
MESSAGES IN FASHION

SIMILAR TO POLITICS,  
FASHION CAN BE USED TO  
ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL  
EQUALITY

TRENDS

TRENDS ARE A SOCIAL  
PHENOMENON, DICTAT-  
ING DESIGN, INCREAS-  
ING IN SPEED AND  
ENCOURAGING CONSUMP-  
TION

SOCIAL NORMS WITHIN  
ORGANISATION

AS AN INDIVIDUAL,  
DESIGNERS ARE PART OF  
COMPANY CULTURES THAT  
CAN INFLUENCE DESIGN

ARTIFICIAL  
INTELLIGENCE

AI TECHNOLOGY CONTIN-  
UES TO DEVELOP, WITH  
AI SOFTWARE ACTING AS  
DESIGNERS

VR & AR

VIRTUAL AND AUGMENTED  
REALITY IS BEING USED  
IN RETAIL ENVIRON-  
MENTS, ONLINE WORLDS  
AND AS A DESIGN TOOL

3D DESIGN SOFTWARE

SOFTWARE SUCH AS CLO  
3D IS BEING USED TO  
DESIGN AND REDUCE  
SAMPLING

TEXTILE INNOVATION

INNOVATIONS INCLUD-  
ING BIO-MATERIAL AND  
3D PRINTING MIGHT BE  
ALTERNATIVES TO  
TRADITIONAL FABRICS

WORKING CONDITIONS

SUPPLY CHAINS OFTEN  
CONSIST OF FORCED  
LABOUR AND POOR WORK-  
ING CONDITIONS

NEW LAWS

GOVERNMENT REGULA-  
TIONS COMING INTO  
PLACE FOR TRANSPAREN-  
CY

COPYRIGHT AND IP  
ISSUES

BRANDS OFTEN STEAL  
DESIGN IDEAS FROM IN-  
DEPENDENT DESIGNERS  
AND SMALLER BRANDS

EMISSIONS

CO2 AND GREENHOUSE  
GASES FROM  
MANUFACTURING AND  
DISTRIBUTION

WATER

WATER SCARCITY AND  
POLLUTION FROM  
TEXTILE PROCESSING  
AND FARMING PRACTICES

DEGRADATION

OF SOIL AND RAINFORES-  
TS THROUGH USE OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

WASTE

PRE AND POST CONSUMER  
WASTE ENDS UP IN LAND-  
FILL OR INCINERATED

P O L I T I C A L

E C O N O M I C

S O C I A L

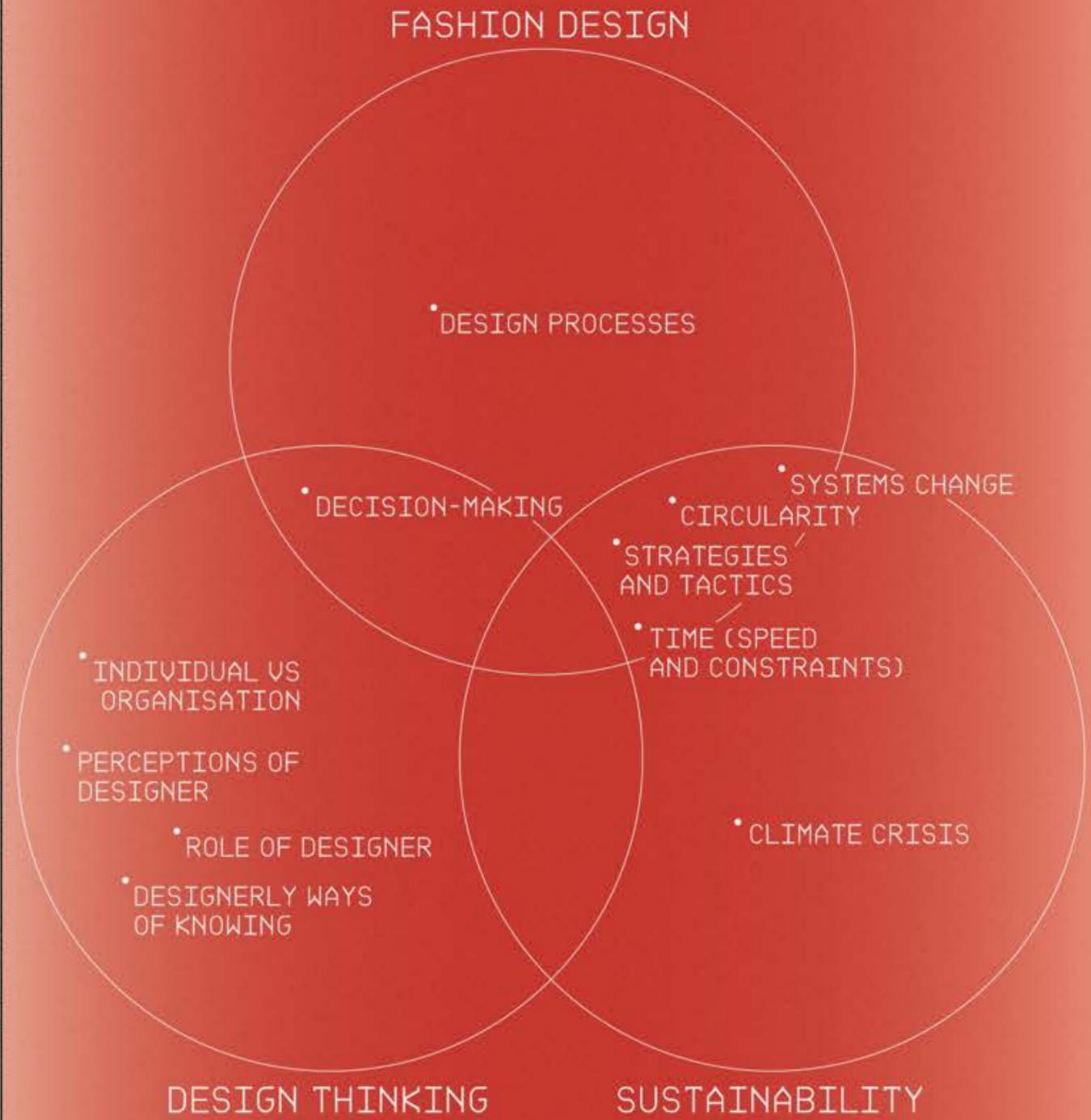
T E C H N O L O G I C A L

L E G A L

E N V I R O N M E N T A L

CURRENT ISSUES RELATING TO FASHION DESIGN & DESIGNERS

# FRAMING THE PROBLEM



“Decisions made under material and systemic constraints, during the whole lifecycle of clothing, by networks of actors, based on knowledge that is partially shared by many actors, partially exclusive to specific positions in the fashion system.”

(Payne, 2021)

FASHION DESIGN

The intangible and often indescribable ways in which designers consider and tackle ‘ill-defined’ design problems. Designers thought-processes and approaches are distinct from scholarly and scientific ways of knowing; being ‘solution-focused’ rather than ‘problem-focused’.

(Cross, 1982)

DESIGNERLY WAYS OF KNOWING

“Sustainable decision-making is now understood as based on a joint consideration of society, the economy and the environment.” - trade-offs between profit, environmental impact and ethics are often considered.

(Faber and Fackwitz, 2018)

SUSTAINABLE DECISION-MAKING

Approaches to sustainable design involving product level and system level considerations. These include material choice, manufacturing processes, zero-waste, slow design, design for transparency, circular design, upcycling, design for recycling, emotionally durable design and more.

(Payne, 2021)

SUSTAINABLE FASHION DESIGN METHODS, STRATEGIES & TACTICS

## CONCEPTS & DEFINITIONS

# KEY TEXTS

AUTHOR(S)	TITLE	KEY WORDS/ TOPICS	METHODS	FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS
HUR, E. AND CASSIDY, T. (2019)	PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FASHION DESIGN: ATTITUDES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABILITY IN FASHION	SUSTAINABLE FASHION; SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES; SUSTAINABLE DESIGN STRATEGIES	MIXED-METHOD - 5 INTERVIEWS WITH DESIGNERS AND LARGE SCALE SURVEY WITH DESIGNERS, STUDENTS & EDUCATORS (50 RESPONDENTS)	INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES: LACK OF KNOWLEDGE & DESIGN-LED APPROACHES, TRADE-OFFS, COMPLEXITY, LACK OF CONSUMER DEMAND & INCENTIVES
KARELL, E. AND NIINIMAKI, K. (2020)	A MIXED-METHOD STUDY OF DESIGN PRACTICES AND DESIGNERS' ROLES IN SUSTAINABLE-MINDED CLOTHING COMPANIES	SUSTAINABLE FASHION; DESIGN PRACTICE; CLOTHING DESIGN	MIXED-METHOD - 5 INTERVIEWS WITH SUSTAINABLE DESIGNERS & ONLINE SURVEY(31 RESPONDENTS)	DESIGNERS FOCUS ON MATERIAL CHOICE AND GARMENT LONGEVITY, LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ON RECYCLING. DESIGNERS INFLUENCE IS DICTATED BY BRAND STRATEGY
DAN, C. AND OSTERGAARD, T. (2020)	CIRCULAR FASHION: THE NEW ROLES OF DESIGNERS IN ORGANISATIONS TRANSITIONING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY	CIRCULAR FASHION; CIRCULAR ECONOMY; FASHION DESIGNER; ORGANISATIONAL ROLE, CIRCULAR DESIGN, SYSTEMS THINKING	LIT REVIEW & INTERVIEWS WITH 10 DESIGNERS AND 5 KEY INFORMANTS	TRANSITION TO CIRCULAR MODEL REQUIRES CHANGES TO DESIGNERS ROLE WITHIN ORGANISATIONS, EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE ON DESIGN
CLAXTON, S. AND KENT, A. (2020)	THE MANAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION DESIGN STRATEGIES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE DESIGNER'S ROLE	DESIGN; DESIGN MANAGEMENT; SUSTAINABLE FASHION, BUSINESS ORGANISATION	SURVEY WITH DESIGNERS AND MANAGERS (16 RESPONDENTS) & 9 INTERVIEWS	DESIGNERS HAVE LOW INFLUENCE ON SUSTAINABLE FASHION STRATEGY, INTEGRATION CAN BE ACHIEVED BY COMPANY CULTURE, ENGAGING DESIGNERS & TEAM COLLABORATION
PAYNE, A. (2019)	DESIGNING FASHION'S FUTURE: PRESENT PRACTICE AND TACTICS FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE	FASHION DESIGN PROCESS; DESIGNERLY NARRATIVES; DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY; BEYOND THE DESIGNER	ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE, FASHION SYSTEMS & 60 INTERVIEWS WITH DESIGNERS, RETAILERS AND MANUFACTURERS	SYSTEMS CHANGE IS REQUIRED FOR TRUE PROGRESS, FASHION DESIGNERS SHAPE MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL OBJECTS, EMERGING PROCESSES OF TAMING AND REWILDING

## RESEARCH GAP

There are many studies relating to the attitudes and perceptions of fashion designers when considering sustainability. However, there is a clear need for more practical approaches towards implementing these processes. The research project addresses this gap with an emphasis on the process of designing, the role of designers and designerly ways of knowing.



# METHOD - OLOGY

The research project implements primarily qualitative methods through the form of a survey and interviews as well as the analysis of design process maps in order to gain descriptive insights into the thought-processes and opinions of fashion designers, students and practitioners.

The data was interpreted through the use of graphs and thematic analysis, identifying key themes and comparing responses from designers working within different market levels.

Action research through reflection on the design processes of the researcher's self-directed design brief was also started and an additional design experiment will be conducted to complete the  
r e s e a r c h .

# SURVEY

A survey was conducted online, inviting fashion designers, students and those involved in a fashion design practice to answer questions about their design processes and thoughts on sustainability. (Responses can be found in Appendix A.)

## RESPONSES & FINDINGS

### DESIGN PROCESS

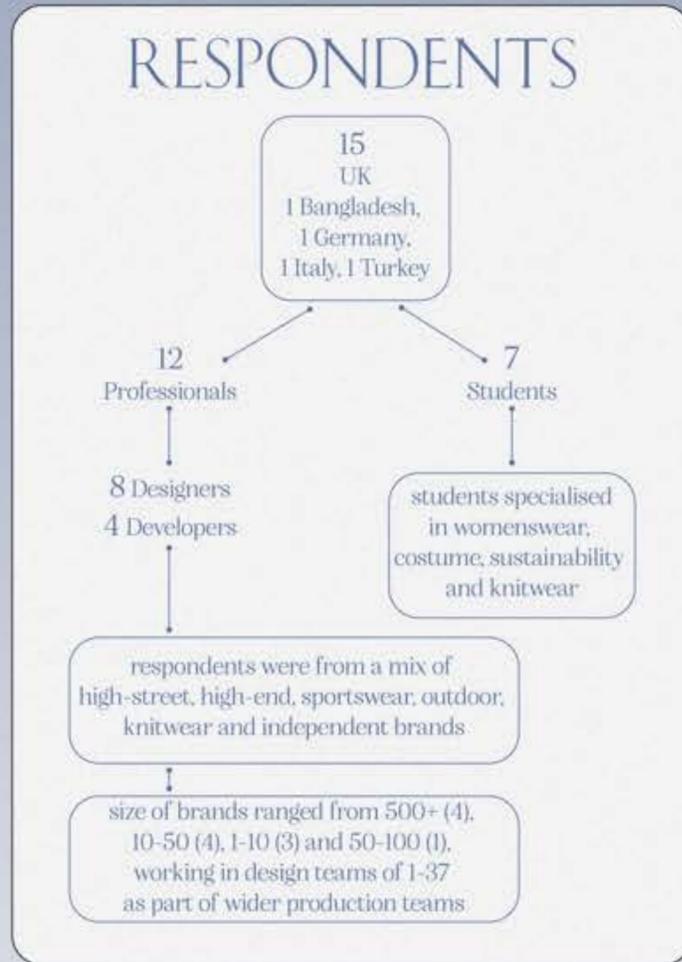


METHODS AND TASKS THAT DESIGNERS SPEND THE MOST TIME ON

Rank	Design Consideration	Average Importance
#1	CONSUMER	3.72 AVG
#2	COMMERCIAL VIABILITY	4.11 AVG
#3	COST	4.89 AVG
#4	FIT	5 AVG
#5	SUSTAINABILITY	5.67 AVG
#6	STYLE	5.89 AVG
#7	SILHOUETTE	7 AVG
#8	COLOUR	7.56 AVG
#9	FABRIC COMPOSITION	8 AVG
#10	TRIMS	8.33 AVG
#11	TRENDS	8.56 AVG
#12	PRINTS	9.28 AVG

IMPORTANCE OF DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS WITHIN DESIGN PROCESS

## RESPONDENTS



ALL DESIGNERS BEGIN THE PROCESS BY RECEIVING A DESIGN BRIEF OR RESEARCHING TRENDS & CONCEPTS AND THEN MOVE TO DEVELOPMENT

THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN THE DESIGN PROCESS ARE CONSUMER, COMMERCIAL VIABILITY AND COST

## DESIGNERS PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION DESIGN

94% OF RESPONDENTS WANT TO INCLUDE MORE SUSTAINABLE DECISIONS IN THEIR DESIGN PROCESS

IN GENERAL, RESPONDENTS HAVE A MODERATE ABILITY TO MAKE SUSTAINABLE DECISIONS

12 OUT OF 19 RESPONDENTS CITED COST AS A BARRIER TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

## SUSTAINABILITY IN THE DESIGN PROCESS



SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES CONSIDERED IN DESIGN PROCESS

"I TRY MY BEST TO DESIGN SOMETHING THAT WILL LAST"

"CUSTOMER PERCEPTION NEEDS TO CHANGE IN ORDER TO MAKE SUSTAINABILITY REALLY A STEADY PRACTICE"

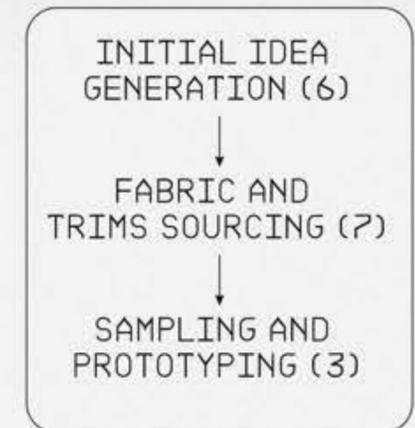
"CONNECTING IT THROUGH THE WHOLE BUSINESS AND FINALIZING IN A STANDARD PROCESS & POLICY CAN BE COMPLICATED"

"A LOT OF REALLY SUSTAINABLE FABRICS CAN BE QUITE UNSTABLE AND HARD TO WORK WITH"

"SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO CHOOSE ONE THING AND DO THAT REALLY WELL BEFORE YOU CAN TACKLE OTHER AREAS OF SUSTAINABILITY"

84% OF RESPONDENTS CONSIDER SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN THEIR DESIGN PROCESS

3 KEY POINTS IN THE DESIGN PROCESS THAT DESIGNERS MENTIONED CONSIDERING SUSTAINABILITY:



\*THERE WERE 5 MENTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERED THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROCESS AND 2 MENTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY NOT BEING CONSIDERED AT ALL

## INTERVIEWS

Three interviews were conducted with fashion designers from a range of market levels. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on each designers role and design process as well as their attitudes and thoughts on sustainability.

Two additional interviews with a luxury brand and a sustainable brand will also be conducted in order to compare responses with designers working within other markets.

The three identified markets were:

**HIGH STREET/FAST FASHION**  
online retailers and retail chains producing affordable, mass-market products.

**MID-LEVEL/MID-LUXURY**  
brands that bridge the gap between luxury and mass-market in terms of quality and price point.

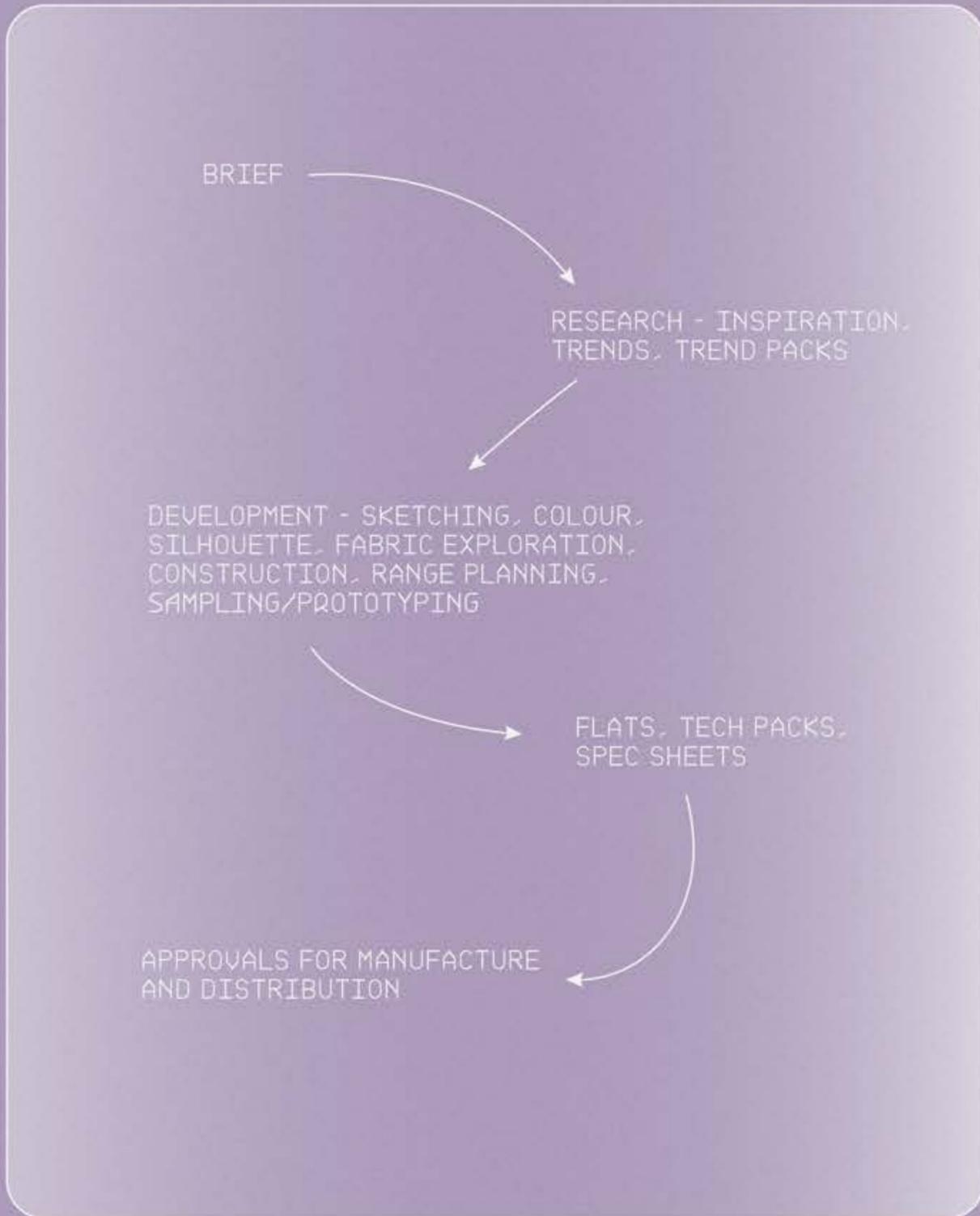
**INDEPENDENT**  
small brands funded by the founder(s), often grown organically. Varying price points.

The distinction between market levels is increasingly difficult to define because of brand repositioning, expanding and alternative strategies (Posner, 2015).

## PARTICIPANT PROFILES

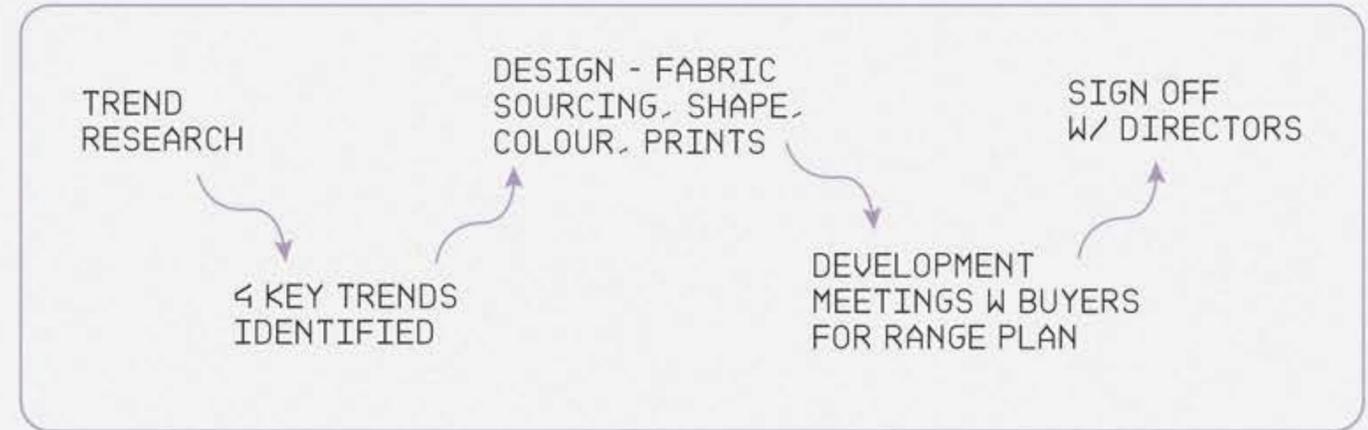


# TYPICAL FASHION DESIGN PROCESS

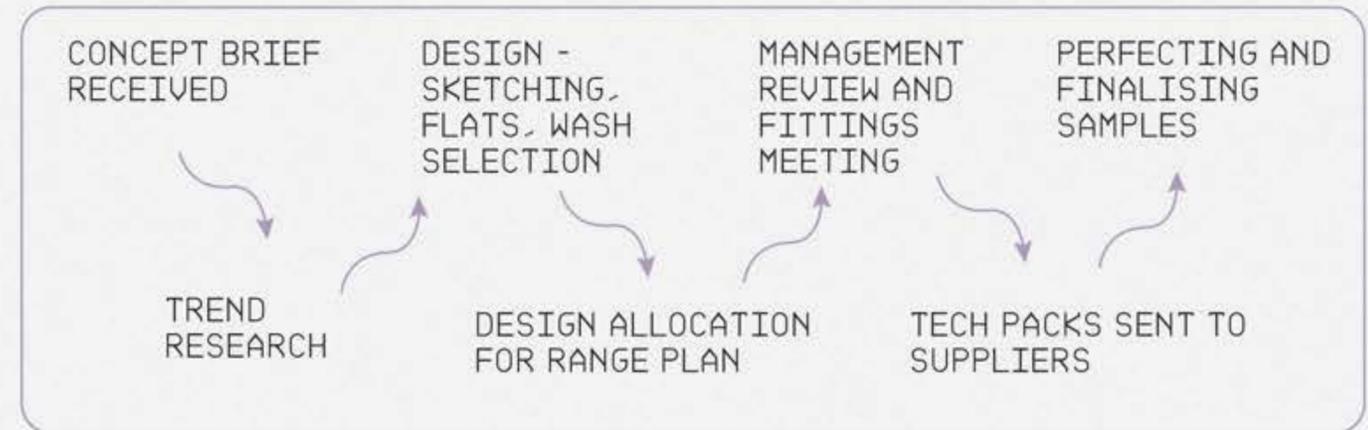


(Antoine, 2020) (McKelvey and Munslow, 2012)

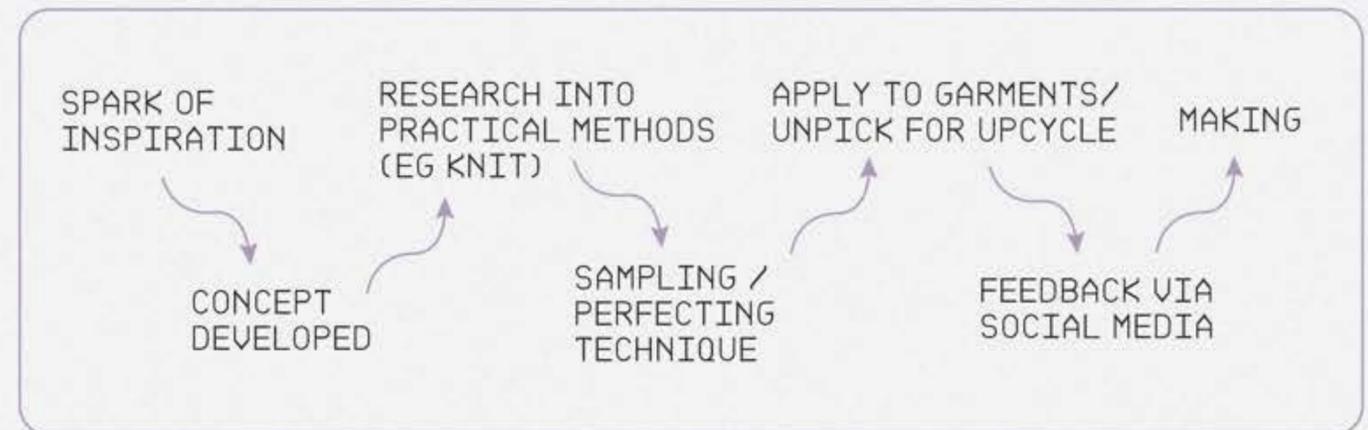
## PARTICIPANT DESIGN MAPS



DESIGNER A (HIGH STREET)



DESIGNER B (MID-LEVEL)



DESIGNER C (INDEPENDENT)

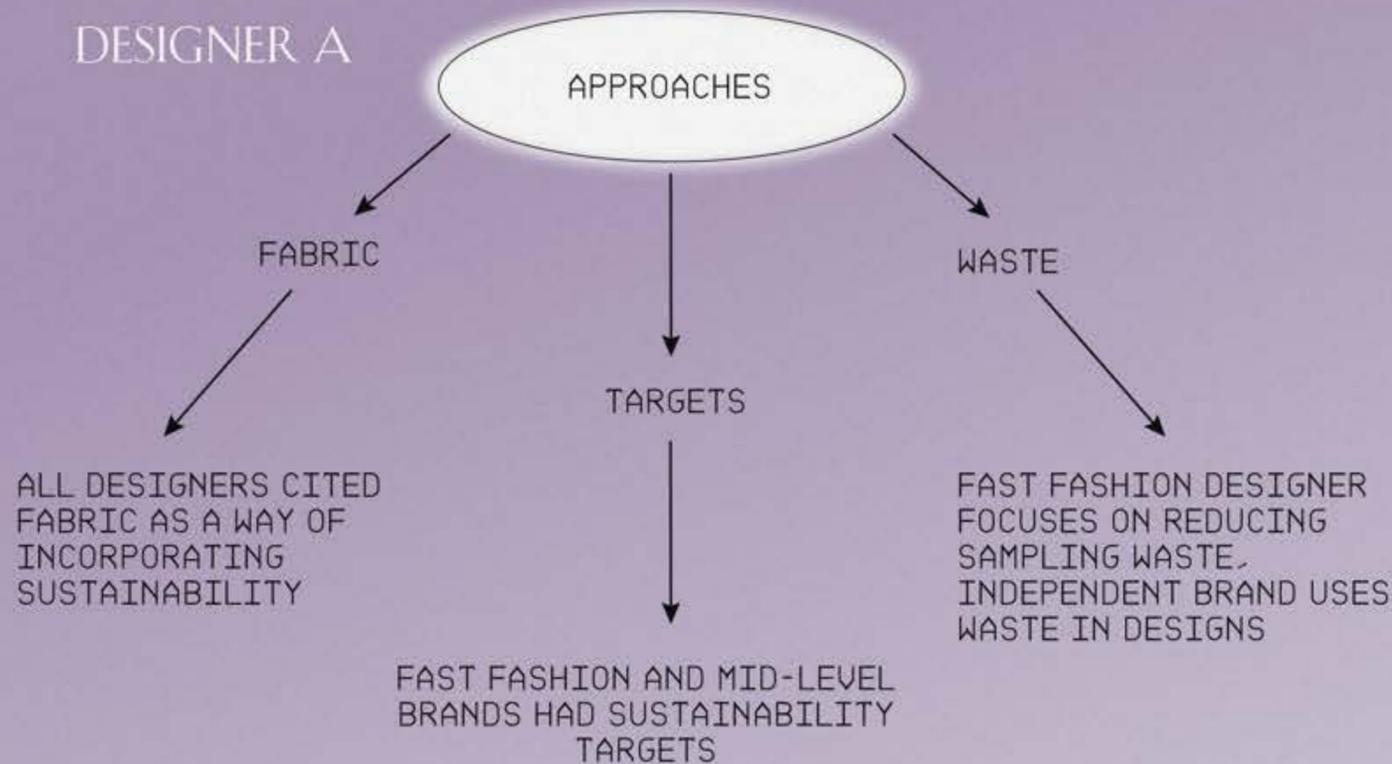
(Appendix D)

# RESPONSES & FINDINGS

INTERVIEWS WERE TRANSCRIBED (APPENDIX B) AND THEMATICALLY ANALYSED (APPENDIX C) TO DEVELOP THEMES, CODES AND NARRATIVES IN RELATION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

"MAKING SURE THAT WE AREN'T WASTING WHEN WE DO LAY PLANS"

DESIGNER A

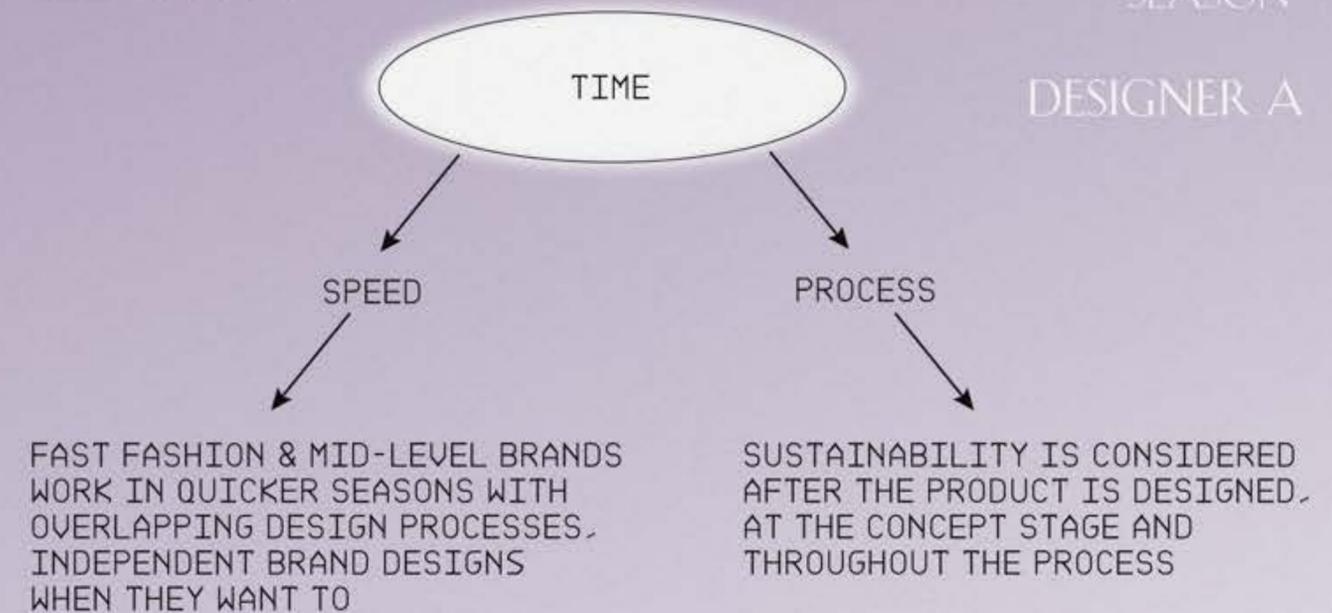


"I TAKE MY TIME WITH EVERYTHING. LIKE WHEN I RELEASE A NEW COLLECTION, IT'LL HAPPEN IN MY OWN TIME"

DESIGNER C

"IT'S A CONSTANT JUGGLE OF SEASONS AND WHAT YOU'RE DOING FOR THAT SEASON"

DESIGNER A



"WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING AT NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND FABRICATIONS IN TERMS OF FABRICS THAT REQUIRE LESS WATER"

DESIGNER B

## How and when do designers consider sustainability in the design process?

"SOME PEOPLE ONLY SPECIFICALLY DESIGN MAYBE IN DENIM. WHEREAS FOR ME, [...] I WANT MY BRAND TO ONLY DESIGN WITH SCRAPS"

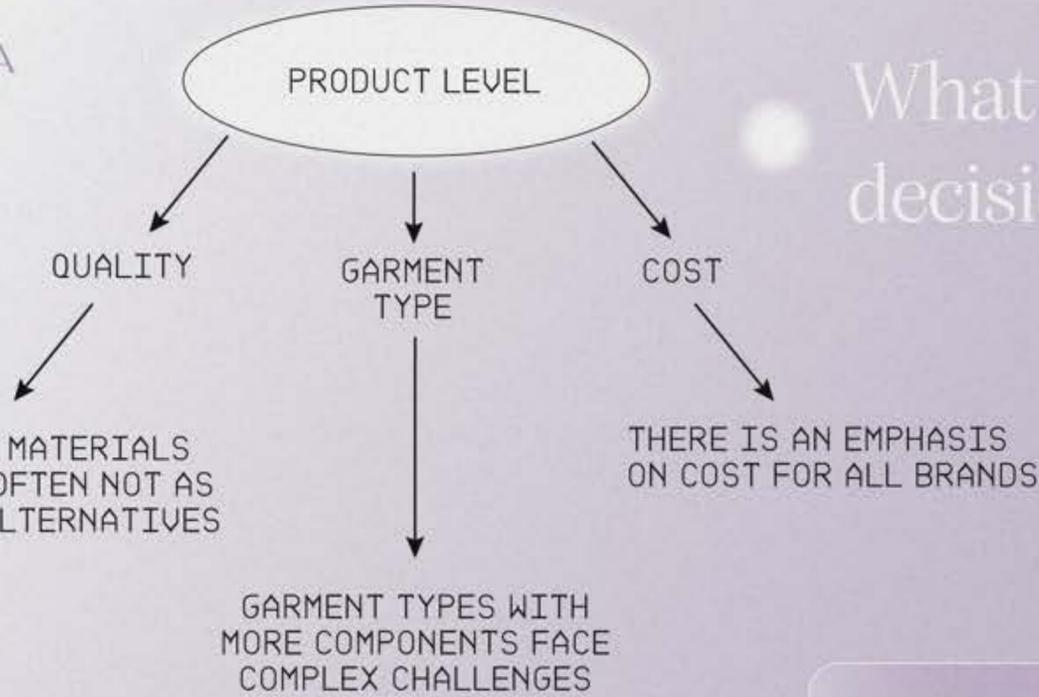
DESIGNER C

"SOME DEPARTMENTS ARE GETTING THERE MUCH SOONER THAN OTHERS [...] DEPENDS ON THE PRODUCT CATEGORY, SO SOME DEPARTMENTS ARE MUCH SIMPLER"

"A DESIGNER CAN LOOK AT STUFF AND WE CAN PUSH FOR IT, [...] WE WANT TO DO THIS IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY BUT ULTIMATELY IT COMES DOWN TO COST"

DESIGNER B

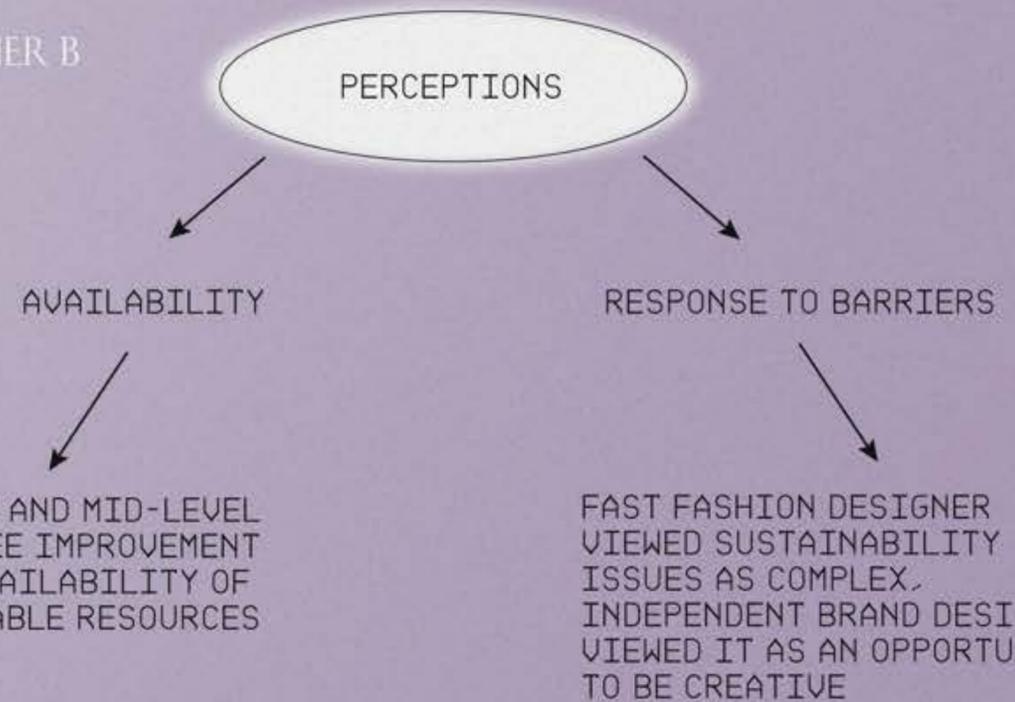
DESIGNER A



# What are the barriers and parameters to sustainable decision-making within the design process?

"EVERY SIX MONTHS (...) THERE'S MORE STUFF THAT BECOMES AVAILABLE AND EASIER THAT WE ADOPT. SO OUR JEANS ARE CONSTANTLY GETTING MORE SUSTAINABLE"

DESIGNER B

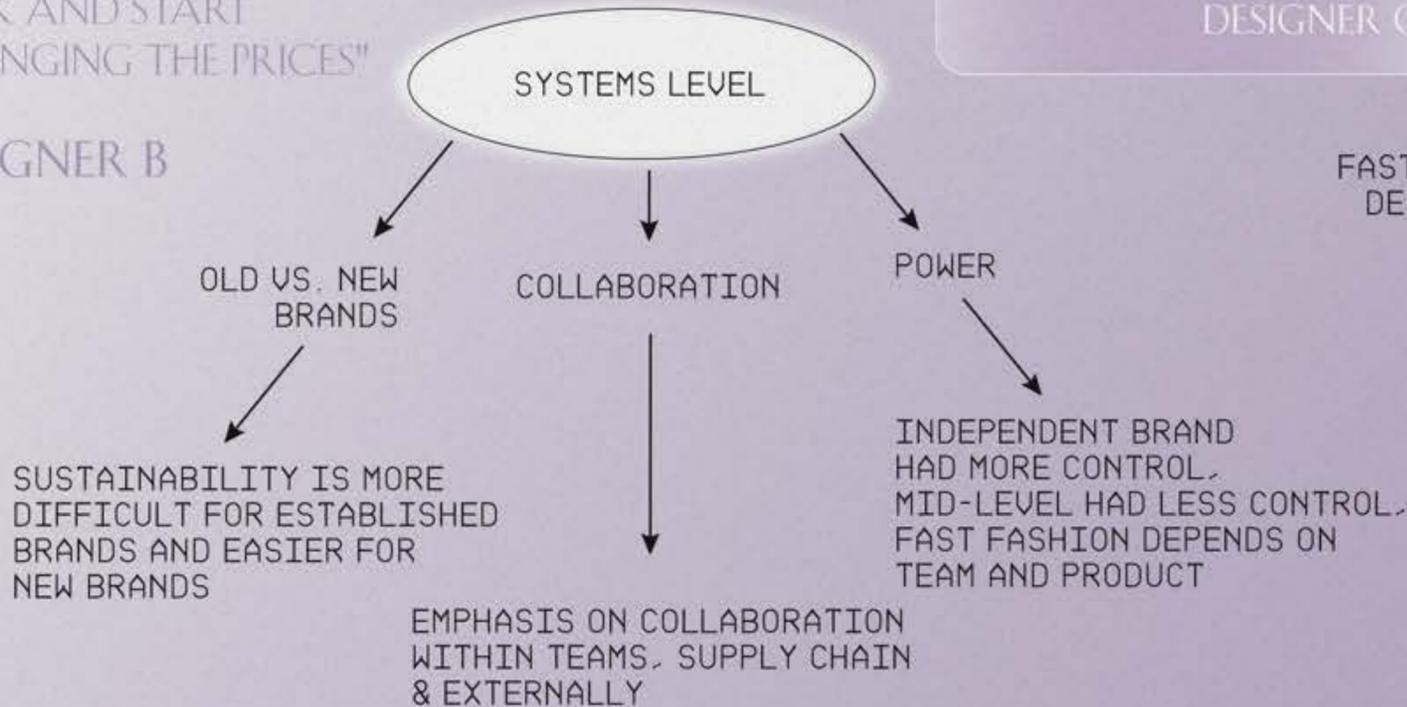


"IT'S QUITE HARD FOR AN ESTABLISHED BRAND TO GO BACK AND START CHANGING THE PRICES"

"I HAVE FULL CONTROL OVER WHAT HAPPENS AND WHAT DOESN'T HAPPEN"

DESIGNER C

DESIGNER B

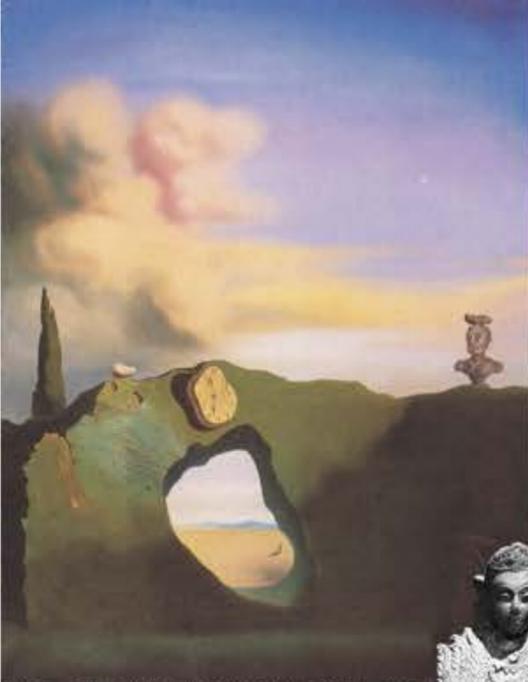


FAST FASHION AND MID-LEVEL DESIGNER SEE IMPROVEMENT ON AVAILABILITY OF SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

"IT'S REALLY GOOD TO HAVE LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES [...] YOU BECOME A BIT MORE CREATIVE AND THEN YOU'RE ALSO NOT CREATING JUST FOR THE SAKE OF IT"

DESIGNER C

# RICE AND BERE



"It was in winter that the islanders gathered round the hearth fire to listen to stories. Harvest was gathered in. The ears that had listened only to necessary farming and fishing words all the year of toil and ripening were ready for more ancient images and rhythms.

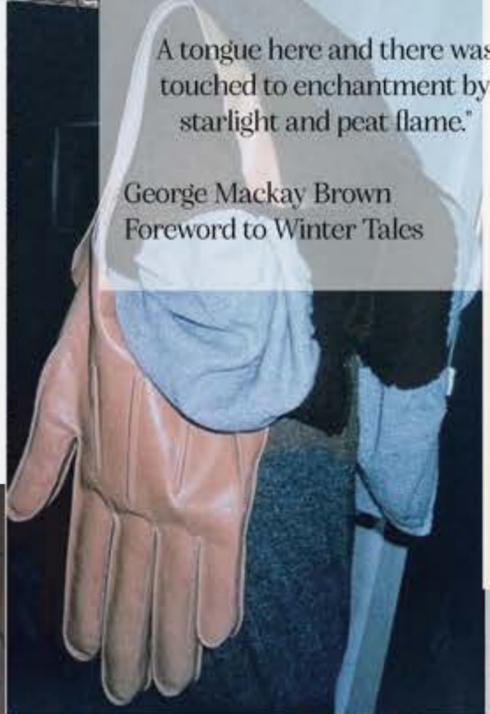


A tongue here and there was touched to enchantment by starlight and peat flame."

George Mackay Brown  
Foreword to Winter Tales



SEAL-FOLK LISTENING TO A MERMAID'S SONG



The design project is a self-directed brief aiming to develop practice and provide insights into design processes through action research and reflection.

'Rice and Bere' (working title) draws inspiration from the folklore of Thailand and the myths of the Orkney Isles - stories from the land and sea. Surrealism is explored through the art of Dali in the early 1930s, where alternate worlds are imagined. Digital speculative landscapes by Winkelman are also identified and key shapes and symbols are highlighted.

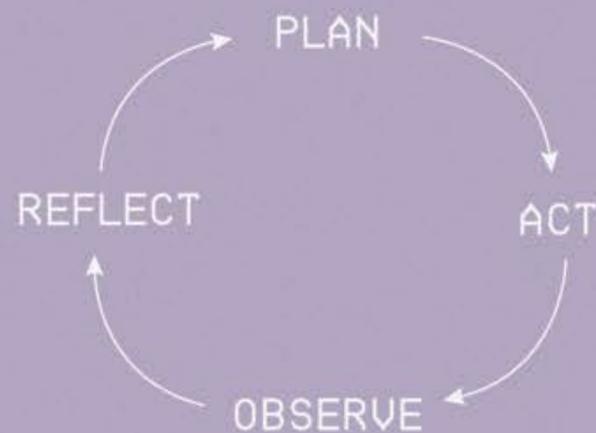
Through experimentation and development, the womenswear collection will feature long line silhouettes with deadstock and upcycled fabrics, and highlight emotional durability, designed for a woman who loves fashion but not trends.

The project is in its early stages, with development still in progress and the acknowledgement that concepts and ideas may take shape in unexpected ways.



# ACTION RESEARCH & REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Swann, C. (2002) makes connections between action research and design, explaining how designers can benefit from demystifying their design processes. Through action research cycles involving reflection, designers' design processes and thought-processes can be revealed to develop practice and gain new insights.



(Lewin, 1946)

# I N S I G H T S

"WITH COMPLETE FREEDOM FOR THIS PROJECT - WHY WAS MY STARTING POINT NOT TO USE SUSTAINABLE PROCESSES, MATERIALS ETC? I THINK I NATURALLY DO CONSIDER IT LATER IN THE PROCESS"

"I NEED TO CONSIDER SUSTAINABLE APPROACHES IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS PROJECT AND MY PRACTICE. THE PURPOSE IS FOR MY OWN PORTFOLIO, TO SHOWCASE MY SKILLS AND DEVELOP MY PRACTICE SO IT IS VERY OPEN AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE ENDLESS"

"PROBABLY SHOULDN'T GET TOO CAUGHT UP IN ONE FABRIC TOO EARLY ON - HAVEN'T REALLY DEVELOPED MY CONCEPT YET"

(Appendix C)

# DESIGN EXPERIMENT

A design experiment will be conducted with  
2 fashion designers...

1 sustainable designer

1 fast fashion designer

EXPERIMENT AIM:  
to gain insight into the design processes and  
thought processes of the designers

The participants will be asked to:

- answer pre-experiment questions via email
- participate in post-experiment face-to-face interviews

## EXPERIMENT PLAN

- 1/ designers will be given the same design brief detailing what they should design
- 2/ thought processes and design processes will be audio and video recorded as they:
  - a) research and sketch
  - b) verbally describe their thoughts

The data will be thematically analysed and design & thought processes will be mapped for comparison and interpreted to suggest potential areas for intervention or improvement for sustainable design decisions.

\* the emphasis will be on the processes rather than the finished outcomes of the design brief

## TO DO LIST

- reach out to potential participants
  - sustainable designer
  - fast fashion designer
- submit ethical approval forms
  - participant information sheet
  - consent forms
  - debrief sheet
- plan pre- and post- experiment questions
- write design brief
- conduct research and experiment
  - pre-experiment email questions
  - design sessions recording  
thought processes and design processes
  - post- experiment interviews
- transcription of audio and mapping thought processes and design processes
- thematic analysis and findings

# SEMESTER 3

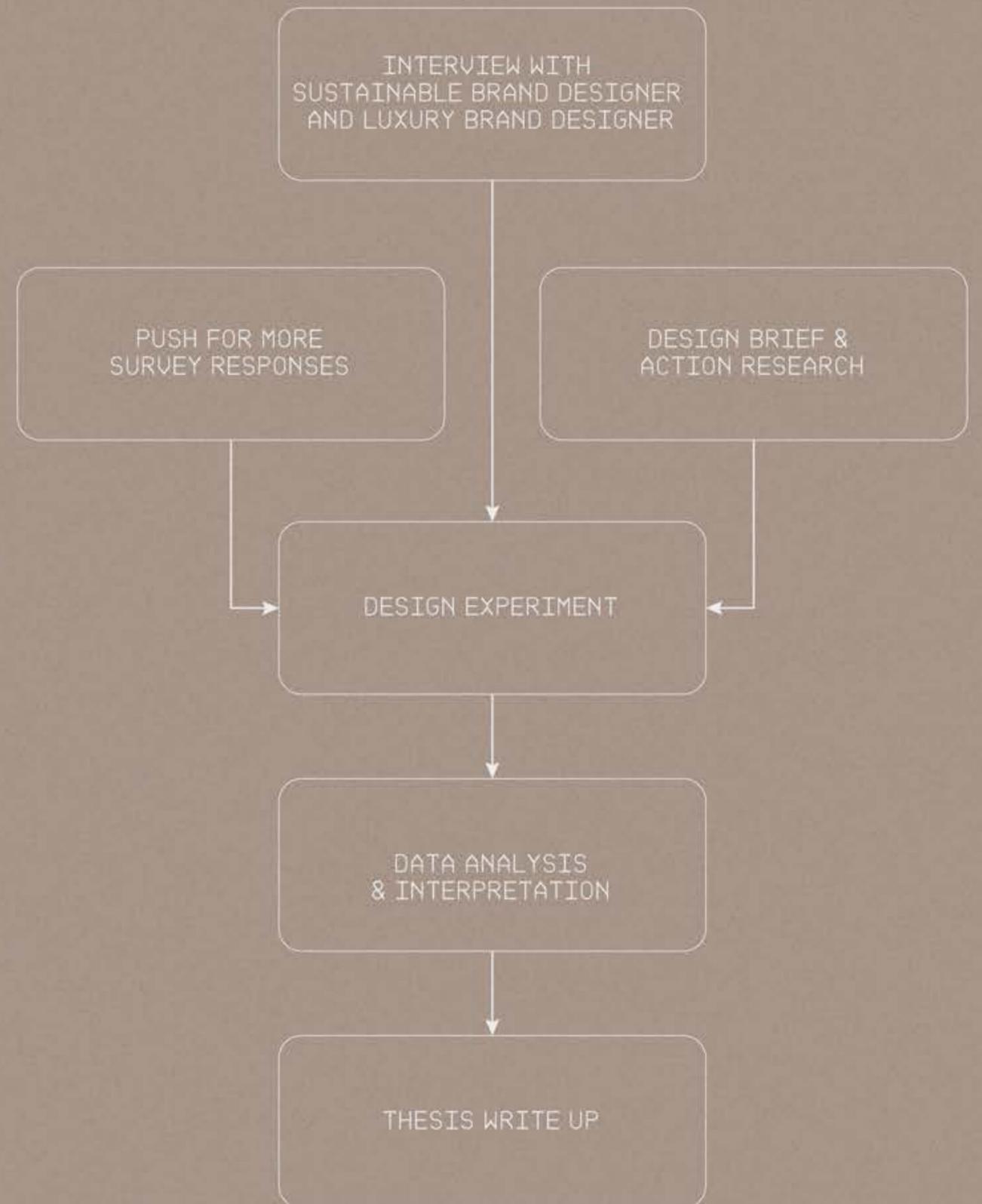
Semester 3 will centre around progressing with the research.

This will include conducting an additional 2 interviews with a sustainable brand and luxury brand designer in order to build onto the research findings from the initial 3 interviews and to develop a deeper understanding of the different processes and opinions in the context of each market level.

The survey will also continue to be distributed online and through QR code posters and cards in creative spaces with the aim to have 50 responses in total.

The design project will progress through design development and experimentation. Action research and reflection will be conducted throughout the process.

The design experiment will be organised and carried out before all data is collated and thematically analysed to build insights in relation to the research questions and objectives to inform the writing of the thesis.



# SUMMARY

The modern concept of a 'fashion designer' began with Charles Frederick Worth in the 1800s. Since then, fashion and the role of designers has evolved to what it is today - an industry that promotes consumption and contributes to environmental impacts & social inequality that has led to the development of 'design for sustainability' strategies borrowed from other industries.

The research project addresses the interlinking issues of the role of the designer and sustainable design strategies, identifying a research gap for design process mapping to identify and suggest opportunities and intervention points as a practical solution for fashion designers.

Primarily qualitative research is used through surveys, interviews, design process mapping, action research and a design experiment to uncover designers thought processes and design processes. Initial findings indicate that designers consider sustainability at various stages of the design process depending on their role and market level. Key barriers included cost, quality of sustainable alternatives and complexity of garments with multiple components.

Semester 3 will develop the research further to build deeper insights into designers from various market levels. Data will be thematically analysed and interpreted before the thesis is drafted.

The research project will develop recommendations for industry and education, referring to the way in which designers tackle the issue of sustainability within their design processes. Through consideration of brands and market levels, the research bridges the gap between theory and practice to build valuable insights for fashion design students and working fashion designers in different contexts. Applying these insights will help designers to apply sustainable methods and strategies in relevant and feasible ways and address the problems within their individual roles, markets and capabilities.



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# FIGURE TABLE

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