

A woman is seen from the chest up, focused on her work at a traditional wooden loom. She is wearing a white top and a dark, wide sash. The loom is filled with a dense array of threads, with a single, thick, vibrant red thread running vertically through the center of the frame. The background is a textured, light-colored wall. The overall lighting is warm and focused on the weaver and her work.

local
inter —
national

o 4

exhibition



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& Lobke Beckfeld**
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REVINYL

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ACCUMULATION

local international is an international academic exchange platform for fashion designers from Germany and Bangladesh focusing on sustainable design strategies, circularity and transparency in fair production methods within the textile and garment industry.

local international was initiated in 2014 by Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, weißensee kunsthochschule Berlin and Universität der Künste Berlin.

Design and sustainability are at the heart of local international. It is our aim to educate, inspire and encourage young designers to be visionaries and design thinkers. We hope to create a generation of informed designers that are pioneers at the forefront of changing the fashion and textile industry.

local international motivates designers to use materials and labour responsibly and to consider the entire life cycle of a product in their design.

local international fosters an awareness of the wide range of choices designers are presented with in their future working lives and the manifold responsibilities they take on in their work.

Since its inception in 2014, 74 fashion designers and fashion students from Germany and Bangladesh have been selected to join local international on four exchange projects so far. Our projects offer an inspiring syllabus reaching from international excursions, symposiums and lectures to practical workshops and best practice site visits of ethical and sustainably producing fashion companies.

In lectures and specialised workshops, participants are provided with an insight into the current developments and new research in the areas of sustainability and design, in order to develop their individual creative approaches, concepts, products and collections. We visit production sites and meet with NGOs, designers, artisans, workers and representatives of the fashion and textile industry in Bangladesh and Germany. Local International has been invited to visit outstanding industrial operations and beautiful individual design studios to show the wide spectrum of best practice in the area of sustainability.

Our Projects

local
inter-
national

°1

Professional development training and exchange programme for fashion designers from Germany and Bangladesh focussing on sustainable fashion design strategies

local international °1 started as a professional development training for fashion designers from Dhaka and Berlin. The pilot project aimed to raise awareness for sustainability, participation and fair trade within the fashion industry. Local production methods, sustainable design and production strategies, and cooperation on an equal footing were the main aims of this project.

local
inter-
national

°2

Professional development training and international design project exchange for fashion students from Germany and Bangladesh focussing on sustainable design in the fashion and textile industry

local international °2 started in October 2015, this time with fashion design students from Dhaka and Berlin. The group visited remote villages in the North of Bangladesh to learn the craft of indigo dyeing and to visit artisan villages.

local
inter-
national

°3

Sustainable Design Conference in Berlin for fashion lecturers and fashion designers from Germany and Bangladesh

The third edition of local international III was organized as a Sustainable Design Conference in Berlin in Dec 2016. It was aimed at fashion design graduates, postgraduate students and fashion design lecturers from Germany and Bangladesh and focussed on sustainability and fair production methods within the fashion industry.

local
inter-
national

°4

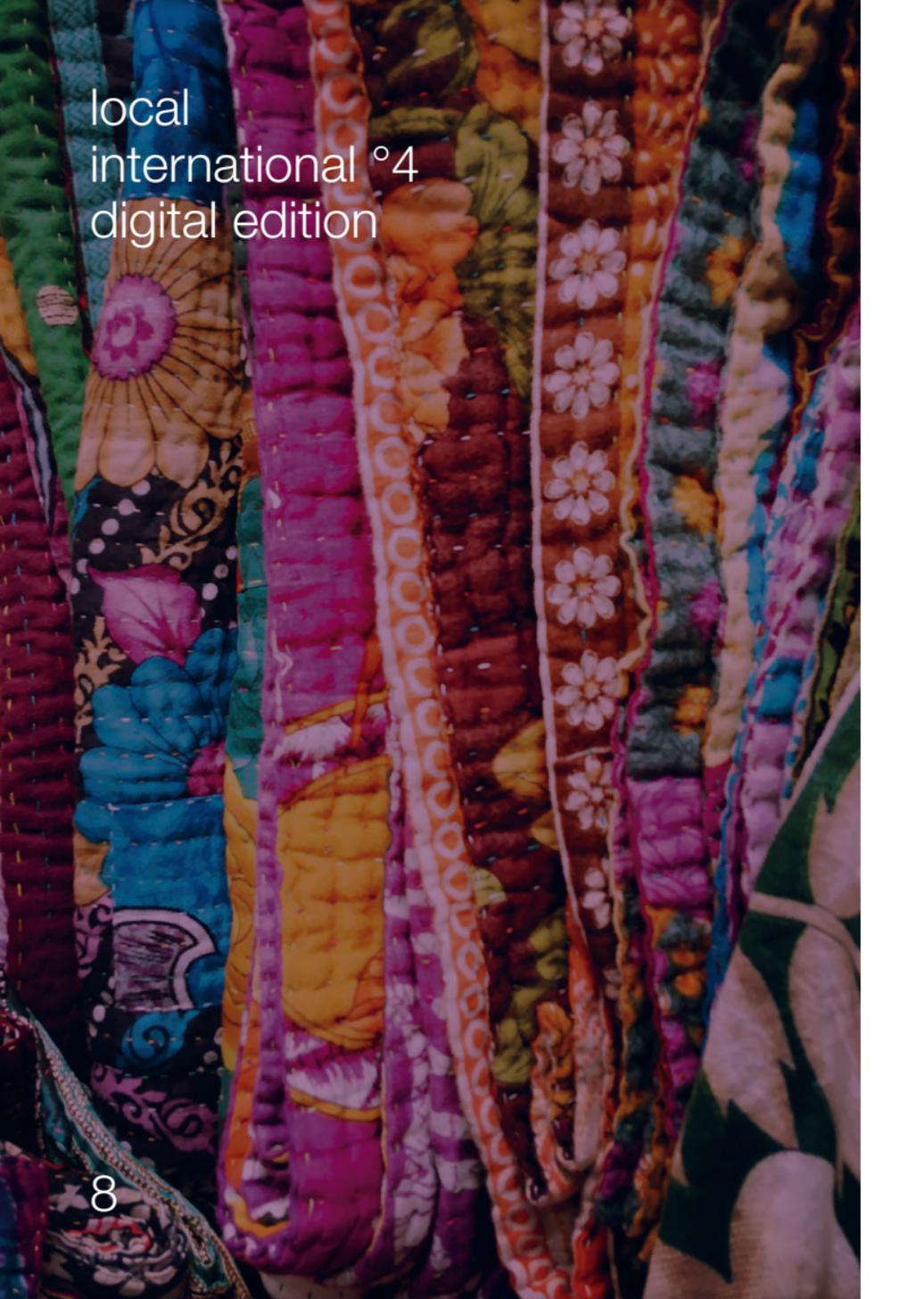
exhibitions

www.
localinternational.
org

digital semester focussing
on sustainability and crafts

Digital Edition April 2020 — Aug 2020
local international °4
was a semester of daily web seminars and digital company visits, video talks and online discussions focusing on sustainability with the aim to encourage the collaboration of designers with artisans. The project took place from April 2020—Aug 2020 in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, the BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology, the National Crafts Council of Bangladesh and was supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.

In the course of the project, all participants are encouraged to conduct design research and to create individual innovative concept ideas, strategies for sustainable products or conceptual design solutions within the wide field of sustainability, often alongside cooperation partners in the industry and NGOs. The project outcomes have been presented in three exhibitions in Berlin and Dhaka. The individual project results and our exhibitions are not the most important output of local international but its input into the way these designers will shape their industry in the future.



local
international °4
digital edition

The digital version of local international social design + crafts started as an experiment. Both the organizing team and the participants entered a steep learning curve and despite all obstacles, such as closed University buildings in Dhaka and Berlin, experienced a fantastic, lively and inspiring semester

local international hopes to have made a contribution to the promotion and preservation of the crafts and to have initiated international co-operation between designers, artisans and participating organisations.

To ensure that the project could take place despite the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, local international social design + crafts was delivered digitally, as a web-based semester with web seminars, videos and video conferences, as opposed to on-site teaching and study trips, which started in May 2020.

The participants worked under unusual conditions in a digital, international study space. Some of them in lockdown, all in different places, all severely challenged by the COVID-19 crisis and the limitations of life this summer. We are proud that we have come this far and reached the finish line.

In online seminars, the design students from Bangladesh and Germany visited NGOs and companies that use sustainable, traditional craft techniques to illuminate the diverse spectrum of possible solutions. In online lectures and practice-oriented digital workshops the participants received an overview of sustainable design and production strategies, local, handicraft production methods, best practice examples as well as workshops on topics such as social design, the ethics of global markets, fair trade, and sustainable design and production strategies in order to develop individual, creative approaches, concepts, products and/or collections in the further course of the project.

SONNET155

sustainability as a treat

SONNET155 is the upgrade to the ordinary paper bag. It comes in a wide range of colours inspired by the end of summer, the feeling of sun on the skin, exhilarant waters and a gentle wind. Each bag is a one of a kind piece, unique in its gradient pattern, subtly varying textures and vivid pastel colours, which derive from natural pigments.

SONNET155 is made from a composite of two raw materials: cellulosic production waste from the textile industry and pectin, a plant-based polysaccharide extracted from peel and pulp leftovers that are a by-product from juice production. Both materials can be sourced locally and – in combination – bring forth a sustainable material innovation fully integrated in a biological life cycle. The composite has the visual and haptic appearance of a translucent leather with the advantage of eventually biodegrading in water or soil. In this way, the bag can be worn, used and loved until it starts to dissolve.

The design of the bag follows a minimalist approach to enhance its texture and translucence. Thus, the elegant shape transforms the material into a desirable product, which represents sustainability as a treat rather than a burden. With SONNET155 we aim to establish and analyze interactions between practical design and material research in order to develop sustainable design strategies and to explore and develop new concepts for biocomposites.

Johanna Hehenmeyer-Cürten & Lobke Beckfeld



ARTISAN SOCIAL

inspire. educate. collaborate

Dhaka was renowned for the production of its high-quality cotton for millennia. The legend of the fine muslin called the ‘woven air’ has become a topic of the lore! Still today, the unique Jamdani weaves – purest cotton sarees and various types of exquisite hand embroidery – are produced at a large scale. But the stories behind these fine crafts are untold and underappreciated. They are known only to a curious few within its inner circle.

Artisan Social is a digital platform to promote our heritage to the global community. By visual storytelling, we document the craft processes, profile the artisans, do interviews to bring out the inside stories from a maker’s perspective. At Artisan Social we intend to preserve the tangible and intangible cultural properties associated with the crafts – through spreading knowledge and creating awareness, appreciation and collaborations.

Bangladesh is one of the very few places in the world where communities still pursue their occupation as their forefathers once did. Yet, to continue and refine these rich traditions, they need to gain more attention and interaction with the broader interested public. Through Artisan Social the potential of handmade crafts can be further explored and better implemented.



Farzana Yusuf



SONGS OF STITCHES

Recycle beyond

With Kantha embroidery, Bangladesh has got one of the most refined local hand crafts, which combines stitching and recycling. Having evolved about 200 years ago in rural regions, it is based on old sarees which are recomposed into new textile surfaces. Back then, because of a lack in the local market, even the threads for the stitching had to be recycled from the fabrics. A perfect example for an early no waste concept.

Kantha therefore hasn't lost its relevance at all, although as a time consuming craft, it is no longer as prevalent as before. This project can be seen as a re-interpretation of that old tradition, still made of the same recycled material (equally using the stronger border areas for the threads), but with a different outcome. The stitchings here add new abstract layers to the printed patterns, whereas the overall result is a collection of Kimonos.

Reviving this sustainable craft tradition, also responds to the bad circumstances of textile manufacturing in Bangladesh. Kantha can be practiced at home. It is time consuming, but easy to learn and thus allows for more empowerment and autonomy.



Imam Hassan



BREATHE!

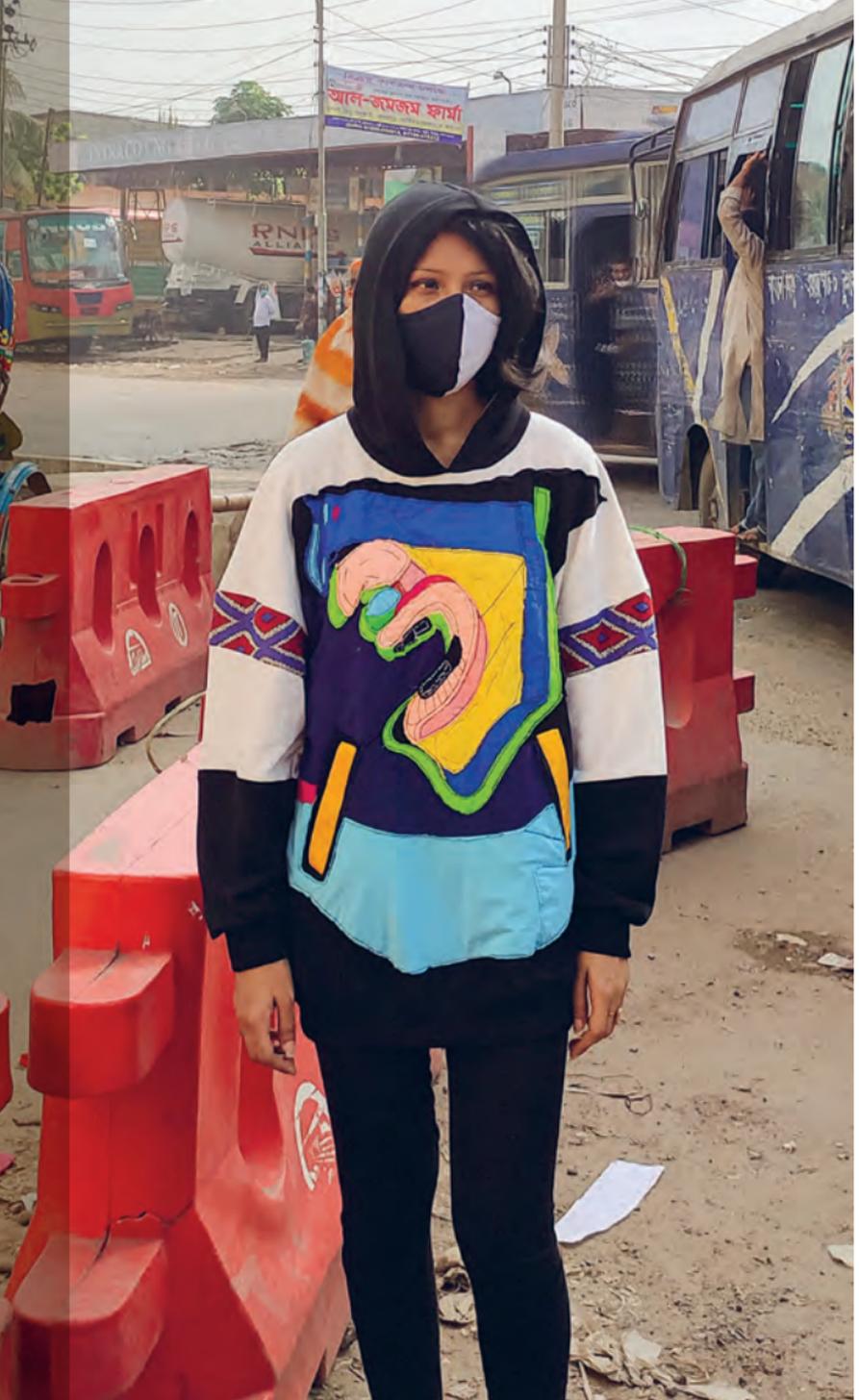
There is no room to breathe! We are lost and farther away than ever in an apocalypse of fashion residues, all scrambling for attention where we are unheard. What if we turned one-time use items into timeless Broqué pieces? Trash to Art; Silence to Woke! Upcycle all unloved and unworn fabrics into unique statement pieces for the youth to rise against Fast Fashion.

Breathe! Break the uniformity. We don't mind to be similar, because we are unique. Collecting bits and pieces of scraps from the metropolis Dhaka, we communicate through bold designs in combinations of used or waste fabrics, we take the daily aesthetics of unisex garments and overlay them with intricate textile assemblages through patchwork and applique technique. Each garment becomes part of an art and social movement.

Our garments and materials stem from social circulation and remain within it. Repairs are done free of cost, and at the end of their user shelf life, they can be returned, so their legacy is passed on to someone else. These unique pieces are multifunctional and low maintenance, for everyday wear yet communicating our personal attitudes.



Mahenaz Chowdhury | Broqué



HYBRID MEMORIES



On average, every person in Germany buys 60 new items of clothing a year and then wears them for only half as long as 15 years ago. No wonder we don't develop a personal relationship with them, let alone acquire a sense of responsibility for our material resources. So how can we start to take more interest in the origin and quality of our clothes again?

Instead of fabric stemming from the globalized textile hyper-production, this project uses the resources of high-quality garments that are no longer used. These textiles are completely or for the most part still unscathed and of a special, durable material quality, which adds a temporal and social dimension to the material one. For a shorter or longer period of time, they were integral to somebody's life – linked to one specific person and an expression of their personal style. Now the pieces are separated and, depending on their condition, either used as a whole or processed into a felted yarn, in order to become new hybrid garments through new arrangements and material connections.

Their origins mix and their materiality becomes a projection screen of abstract memory.



Judith Grath



Turtleneck

Turtleneck, Cable-knit

Cable-knit, Stripes

Turtleneck, Cable-knit

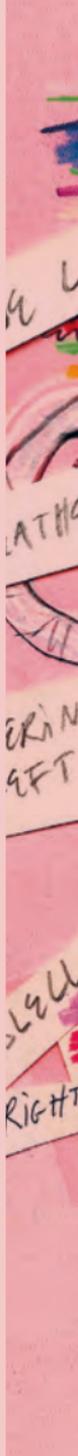


THE SUSTAINABLE SURFACE KIT

found at home — going places

The Sustainable Surface Kit provides its users with all knowledge and means needed to transform leftover fabrics from their personal household into attractive, intriguing textile surfaces. Its core component is a manual, outlining a simplified construction process of woven patterns, pairing step-by-step instructional texts with immersive, illustrated visuals. Furthermore, it entails a pair of finished fabric samples as well as a 'Color Code' progression system highlighting the various completion stages of individual design processes through a checkpoint system.

Applicable materials include any sort of unused or worn-out textiles available at home, often incorporating elements of personal history and intimacy, as well as their former everyday use. Thus the woven textiles may even be seen as records of individual lives. Finally, the Kit will provide links to an interactive online database of works completed in line with its design methodologies. Participants with completed works may choose to upload pictures of the starting materials and their results or exchange tips and details with one another.





NAKSHI DENIM

enriching the soul of denim

Let's make our old Denims new! "Nakshi Denim"- a sustainable fashion project where your old Denims will be given a new life by applying the traditional "Nakshi Kantha" hand stitched embroidery of Bangladesh. Working with local artisans of Bangladesh, fashion designer Samia Rafique offers a personal service of remaking, reusing and repairing the old used denims. The idea is to encourage everyone to re-use their old clothes, to help local artisans and save our environment. Why buy a new pair of denim pants when you can give your old pants an exclusive touch and a new life? It will not only prolong the life of a pair of jeans but also save 1500 litres of water!

Each design has its unique story. Not only is Nakshi Denim an exclusive sustainable product but it also creates an added value as well as providing an income for artisans. This year, the theme of the motifs is influenced by "Henna Art"- a form of body adornment that mainly uses decorative designs. Just like henna art develops from a single motif into detailed patterns, your denims will be unique in their design. Clients participate in the creation of their clothes and care about the social and environmental conditions of its production process. Join in and be part of this sustainable journey!



Samia Rafique



ReVinyl

Dhaka. Capital of Bangladesh. The city of dreams and colors. The streets are covered with countless posters and advertisements. Many brands flood the city with these advertisements every day. Short lived banners and billboards are printed mostly on PVC. Polyvinyl chloride is the world's third-most widely produced synthetic plastic polymer. It is the cheapest material for street advertising. When the banners have served their purpose, their life cycle officially comes to an end. Either they end up on a landfill or get burned. There is no other use for those old banners. It is clear, a plastic material like PVC can cause unrecoverable damage to nature.

Through "ReVinyl", perceptions are about to change. The concept is not only to extend the lifespan of the material, but to give it a functional approach. The characteristic of the material makes it waterproof. This property opens so many possibilities. The aim is to rescue the material from ending up in the landfill and combining the commercial design with a relative approach of cyclability by upcycling the material into more functional and usable products. The concept is all about how some simple and technical aspects can increase the further life of a particular material by adding value through design.

Md. Arafat Ali Khan



ROOTEDNESS AND LIBERATION

heirlooms — designed to last
forever

We often find inspiration in other cultures, but what about our own? Beyond the clichés a country might be known for, there are many regional peculiarities that are worth exploring. My interest in traditional costumes, which arose from my upbringing in the South of Germany, is directed at the sophisticated traditional techniques of handicraft, the quality of the materials and the inscribed stylistic codes, but also at the way in which traditional costumes connect with the landscape surrounding them, how they are an integral part of people's lives and are worn for many generations.

I found a local traditional weaving mill and a dirndl tailor. I got to know the people who are connected with this tradition, who have been preserving and developing it for years thus maintaining an important counterpart to the textile industry at mass scale. Starting from the traditional costume of Miesbach in Bavaria that I grew up with, I designed a collection of traditional costumes, influenced by the fabrics of the region and the nature that surrounds it. I used organic, durable materials, traditional hand craft techniques, plant based dyes and hand knits. The garments in this collection have the potential to become loved, favorite pieces and to become heirlooms - just like I am wearing pieces that my great grandmother created over a hundred years ago.

Miriam von Mengershausen



VEGAN LEATHER

from water hyacinth

In the world of fast fashion, it is important to address environmental issues. To acknowledge this issue, this vegan leather is created from water hyacinth. In Bangladesh water hyacinths are widely available, meaning they can be easily sourced which will in turn make the final product affordable. Most Bangladeshi people are not aware of vegan leather as an alternative to leather and are not very conscious about it. Vegan leather isn't as expensive as animal leather making it an affordable alternative for the general public. During production, PU and PVC were replaced with a wax to ensure that 0% harmful chemicals were used in the creation of this leather.

Even though the final product isn't yet ready to fully meet industry standards, further research can make it as qualitative as animal derived leather. Reasonable results can be achieved with only a few utensils at home. Given the right support and professional help, products from vegan leather have a good chance of entering the market.

Rehnuma Tasnim Khan



QUITE BLUE

exploring what indigo and stripe patterns have in common

As a young person, it's nearly impossible to remain unphased by trends and the zeitgeist. But how – in a world of constant changes – can design help us regain a sense of attachment to our clothing? Serving as a guideline for designers is the field of sustainability by promoting sustainable materials and production methods as well as social and economic equity which has a direct effect on the quality of products in terms of their design and durability and further offers concepts for recycling and re-use. Beyond these “technical” aspects, a sense for timeless design is just as important.

Quite Blue is a functional yet elegant wardrobe, that renounces any ornamental overload, instead highlighting only one element. Looking at history, stripes can be found on all kinds of garments: on royal clothing items as well as on sportswear, on maritime outfits or prison uniforms. With an either classy or ordinary, expressive or minimalistic appeal, they provide an almost chameleon-like adaptability.

Within this collection stripes appear in two versions: as single stripes of recycled denim assembled into larger surfaces; and as a pattern of vibrant structures created through meticulous manual dyeing processes. Within a preset formal order they lend themselves to an unlimited number of variations, expressions and associations – just as the unifying yet constantly shifting colour indigo blue.



Ronja Stucken



IT'S ARBITRARY BUT IT'S OURS

programming technique as a
starting point for manual design

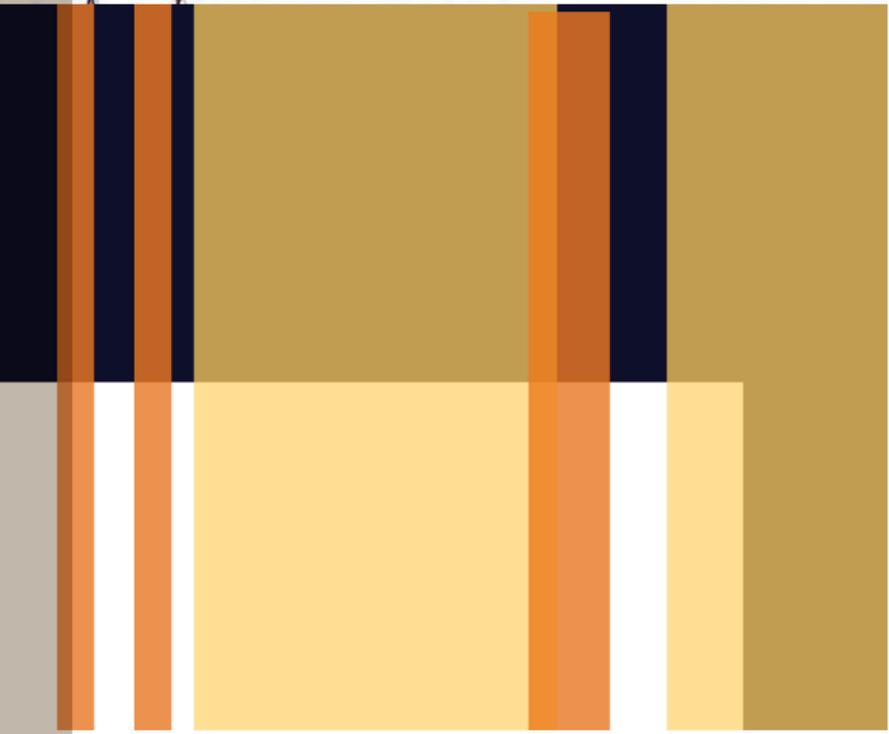
At the heart of the collection are irregular patterns created by generative algorithms which are then manually transferred into textile surfaces. Despite them following the same formal structure, the results make the gap between the virtual image plane and the real material plane immediately tangible. Both appear as random spaces, one created through a generative digital process, the other the result of a temporal, hands-on process, marked by involuntary deviations and the aptitude of the craftsman.

The work juxtaposes two concepts: that of sustainable, artisan production and that of replacing human modulation with algorithmic control. The roles between mechanical and human creation is playfully reversed, freeing both fields from their exclusivity and placing them in a possible relationship.

Within the zero waste collection the patterns are extended by an additional dimension – the dialogue with the body through the act of wearing. Based solely on rectangular sections that do not follow the fixed form of traditional garments, but rather calls for the invention of new forms.



Carla Renée Loose



FROM WASTE TO LUXURY

an aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly critique of wealth distribution

The fashion industry is the second most polluting industry in the world, with textile waste overloading landfill and toxic chemicals threatening the environment. An option to counteract is to upcycle textile waste into new quality products. But it can mean even more.

The collection consists of two elements. The first part are bags, which combine jute and cotton with textile waste materials that have a highly luxurious appeal. The other part of the collection are ponchos and similar outerwear, for which a combination of old sarees and waste pieces from the textile production were woven and stitched in zero waste patterns.

The idea was to convert production waste into seemingly international luxury goods, with the use of traditional local production techniques. They are not dissimilar to branded, “authentic” goods produced in the same Southeast-Asian cheap labour context, that are generating huge profits in other parts of the world. The difference here is that the products do not claim authenticity and value, but follow an opposite no waste logic and build on a sustainable relationship with the person manufacturing them. Formulating an implicit critique of the global distribution of wealth, they are also nice and environmental friendly items to use and wear.

Shuvadra Banik Nitu



THE PAWFECT PROJECT

How much pets have become part of our human life, we can see in the range of luxury products marketed at pet owners. But even more prevalent is “fast fashion”, made of cheap and often toxic synthetic materials, without any consideration of environmental and health impacts, let alone sustainable material cycles. How does this match with our deep personal affection and relationship with our pets? Why shouldn't they benefit from a more responsible and environmentally friendly lifestyle?

The Pawfect Project focuses on two aspects that are usually not connected: the pet's well-being and caring for the environment. Like ourselves, pets have a relationship with the objects that make them feel comfortable: toys, blankets, sleeping mats as well as soft body belts or harnesses. Materials matter very much here, which is why The Pawfect Project products are produced from organic textiles such as hemp, cotton, bamboo and jute. Another element is the use of synthetic end-of-roll textiles. The focus on reducing waste can even influence the design in a positive way. Do pets have aesthetic needs? Maybe not. But the minimalistic and easy to handle designs consolidate the ties between pet and owner, within a general idea of beauty and responsibility.

Tanzim Tabassum



T·YARN 2.0

activating textile t-shirt waste for sustainable high quality remanufacturing

If plentitude of source materials is a requirement for sustainable design, T·YARN is truly ecological: in Europe, more than 2M tonnes of textile waste are generated every year. In fact, T-Shirts at the end of life made of 100% cotton are a high quality and widely available resource that is usually landfilled or burned.

With this material, T·YARN created a new local cotton yarn that can be processed into high end weaves, knits, ropes or any textile you can dream of. Parameters such as style, mesh and construction of the base material make a difference to define the ideal second life use. T·YARN also tested multi color models to deal with the inconsistent shades of waste T-Shirts.

Cooperating with textile institutes and fashion designers, T·YARN customizes the yarns in size, colour and effects to fit the needs of various manufacturing techniques. Seeking strategies for positive impact, T·YARN reinvents high quality sustainable textiles while pursuing circular and collaborative paths for a better future.

Tau Pibernat



ACCUMULATION

The lungi is a traditional garment made from a rectangular woven cloth that is wrapped and knotted around the body. Wide, colourful blocks are woven to overlap in the weft and warp direction to create a vividly coloured surface. The starting point of this collection, however, was not the actual physical garment, but photographs of the lungi. Once the colour is removed from them digitally, a newly interpretable structural surface emerges.

The resulting images are digitally processed, and in a first step, new colours in a muted range are added in. Then, traditional floral embroideries are added and overlap with the structure of the lungi. As a third element, organic patterns complement the composition. While these collages seem to float in an immaterial, empty space, their basic design elements organize themselves again into new forms and arrangements. Variations of these endless digital combinations can then be transferred back and become real life garments.

The resulting collection of colour compositions and traditional checks is the result of a cooperation with Bangladeshi craftsmen. The newly created lungis could be woven by hand in organic cotton, the subtle dyes could be realized with plant dyes. In addition, hand embroideries take up traditional Bangladeshi ornaments and techniques. Inexpensive, traditional everyday clothes are transformed into fine handicrafts and convey the value of craftsmanship. The resulting slow fashion + craft collection, a timeless hybrid of European couture and Bangladeshi aesthetics and tradition, could help to secure the livelihood of Artisans in Bangladesh and Germany.

Theresa Grünfelder



In cooperation with

weißensee
kunsthochschule
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