

# scope

*Contemporary Research Topics*

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Fashion Design Process  
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[RE]CONSIDER  
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## [RE]CONSIDER

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### What fuels your design ideas?

Tailoring and structure, vintage details and traditions of making, including consideration of fabrics are always the starting point for me. Other inspirations and ideas feed into this process, but these I guess are always constants in that process.

More recently I've started researching how zero or minimum waste design/making process might be more integrated into production, therefore potentially more accessible to a wider audience. I love to problem-solve through process, which can become a continuum through which to explore further ideas. Inspiration also comes from memories of my nana's wardrobe, where every piece was valued, with quality items treasured and looked after.

### Who are the practitioners who you feel have influenced your design processes?

Vintage Balenciaga, Claire McCardell, Kenzo and Isobel Toledo as master cutters and makers; alongside the craftsmanship associated with the master tailors of Saville Row have been long-time inspirations. Another inspiration is the zero-waste patternmaking and designing of Timo Rasmussen. Working alongside inspiring colleagues, with many opportunities for conversations around the designing/making process constantly generates more thinking and development in my process too.

I have played for some time with the concept of 'jigsaw' non-traditional shapes which also draw on drape using varying weights and layers of cloth – exploring drape, pleats and ruching. Although this process aligns with my attraction to the works of designers such as Rasmussen, Kenzo and Toledo I found I was still curious as to how more conventional silhouettes might utilise this process.

A couple of years ago I found an article discussing the work/practice of Danielle Elsener's Masters project at RCA (London), designing and patternmaking zero-waste scrubs for the NHS as a project during lockdown in 2020. These were shared as open-source patterns, creating huge interest and positive feedback, including from manufacturers who were interested in generating full production runs utilising Elsener's methods. This inspired me to [re]consider how garments with a more traditional fit and function might also integrate minimum-waste processes that could easily translate to production situations.

### How do you describe the rangahau/research that you do as part of your design process?

Making! I will often start with a rough sketch, accompanied by scrawled notes that form a concept; this will then be transformed into a roughly mapped 'jigsaw' which then becomes a fabric prototype. Sometimes the initial prototype might only be a section or detail of a garment, but the active making brings more ideas and variations as I work through this process. Combinations of methods to define silhouette, fit, proportion and weight [layering] into the structure and visual aesthetic of the garments, always refining details [to a simple form again] where possible, for unfussy making. Considering the wearer's body is also a key part of the process – how the garment feels on and how it moves with the wearer. Working through this making/development/problem-solving process is the most enjoyable aspect of designing for me, whereby the complicated can become refined and resolved.

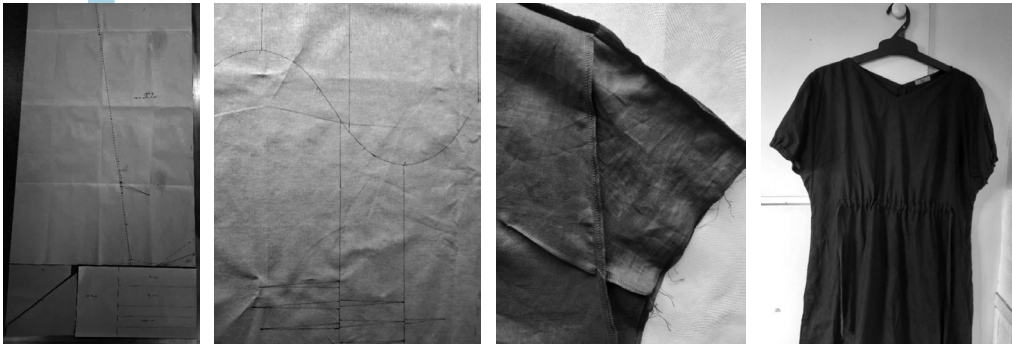


Figure 1. Mapping patterns to fabric constraints. Piecing together the jigsaw. Prototyping in fabric.

### What is most meaningful stage of designing for you and what happens at that moment?

When I can see an idea beginning to take shape as I make, which also begins to reveal further possibilities. This often generates many more scribbled drawings and notes that I'll file away, to refer back to when I have time! Embracing the uncertainty is essential at this point, exploring possibilities & pushing your knowledge beyond the familiar.

### What 2D / 3D methods or techniques do you use to explore ideas?

Sketching, note-taking and mapping of patterns and lines as a start point, followed by making up toiles (prototypes). The process becomes quite circular, with re-drawing lines directly onto toiles (or printed images of these) and creating the next iteration.

### How do you select or adapt your environment to best suit your modes of designing?

I'll note-take or sketch at any time to capture ideas as they happen, wherever I might be. I have a small studio/workroom at home where I can develop ideas and prototypes. I find it easier to work if I can have a quieter, uninterrupted time/space to keep working as the process evolves and unfolds. Once I am ready to move onto full-scale prototypes though I'll often utilise space at work – this is often where I share progress and discuss process with colleagues or students, which then generates more thinking and development.

### What role does working with others and collaboration have in your designing?

In 2008 I established the fashion label 'Iris' which retailed for about seven years, this was a great way to share my design/making outcomes with a wider audience. Although not focussed on minimum waste patternmaking at that point, I did focus on a more sustainable approach – each collection was intended to combine with and complement work from previous collections, so customers could select pieces from different collections to complement their individual style. I also felt that understanding how to refine designs from a production and cost perspective without compromising aesthetics was an important step in my process. Sharing my changing, developing process is also important to me – the area I am researching is not 'new' but integrating this practice into my teaching/learning is where I like to be.

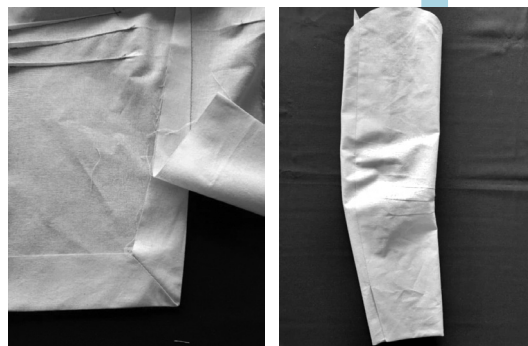


Figure 2. Tailored sleeve - creating shape with functional details and completed prototype.

### As tangata whenua or tangata Tiriti, how do you practice in our Aotearoa New Zealand framework; how is this reflected in your work?

I intend to continue exploration into responsible design. I think this is where my practice sits, considering how best to combine my love of traditional work such as tailoring and how that sits in a modern aesthetic and aligns with a changing understanding of best practice. For the future, I would like to utilise technology to assist with this, e.g. developing the 'mapping' process to fit fabric constraints with the use of digital patternmaking tools as a more seamless process. Having said that, for me I think there will always be a hands-on connection with making and mapping as a necessary part of the process.

Annette Cadogan is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Design at Otago Polytechnic where she teaches on the Fashion programmes (BDes and NZCertFashion, including co-ordination of NZCertFashion programme). Her academic and workplace experiences combine in her teaching practice, which focusses on understanding of the making process, both as a practitioner and learner. With a lifetime love of making, re-using and creating responsible fashion, she utilises her skills as a pattern cutter, currently exploring possibilities with (re) considering the designing/making processes for tailored or structured garments.