

scope

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Fashion Design Process
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What fuels your design ideas?

My ideas reflect significant events or emotions in my life. I use dreaming subconsciously (and then subsequently and consciously design) as a way of compartmentalising scary or upsetting things; simultaneously removing and connecting with them by visualising these thoughts as a separate thing. Although they are me, they become separate from me entirely and this gives me a chance to process things without becoming overwhelmed – I am disconnecting my mind from my body. This can then lead to a metaphorical and symbolical narrative, which then plays into my design narrative and final designs. This often lends itself to eerie, fantastical or macabre elements as part of my designs.

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

I work through an auto-ethnographic process/lens, with the conceptualisation of fashion design functioning as a response to the self, using analytic autoethnography in a way which then subsequently enables a design narrative. I will have several months of disturbing dreams and images with no obvious logic and reason, and then throughout the expression of these ideas in my designs, I will come to understand these dreams and how and why my brain has produced them. My examination and connection of the motifs in my dreams (self-analysis) leads to an understanding of which pivotal experiences are currently impacting me in my life, and then subsequently allows me to examine my personal life and feelings*, which in turn informs my art and/or design, and

creates an emotional connection between me and my work. In the context of my own work, I call this research process Dream Reflection Design Research.

(* This is never my only or main form of processing or examining these thoughts and feelings, and I encourage others to also use multiple methods such as therapy.)

What is the most enjoyable part of designing for you?

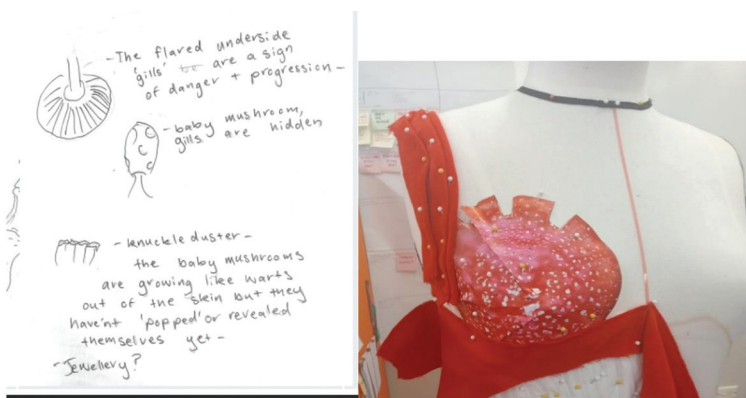
The most meaningful part of designing for me is the collating of my ideas – bringing together these little notes and images and drawings to puzzle them into a clear thematic narrative or design point of view. Also (of course) eventually seeing an idea from my head become a real tangible 'thing' – whether that's a piece of clothing, a print, a textile, or some other form of art.

Do you have sources of inspiration that you always revisit?

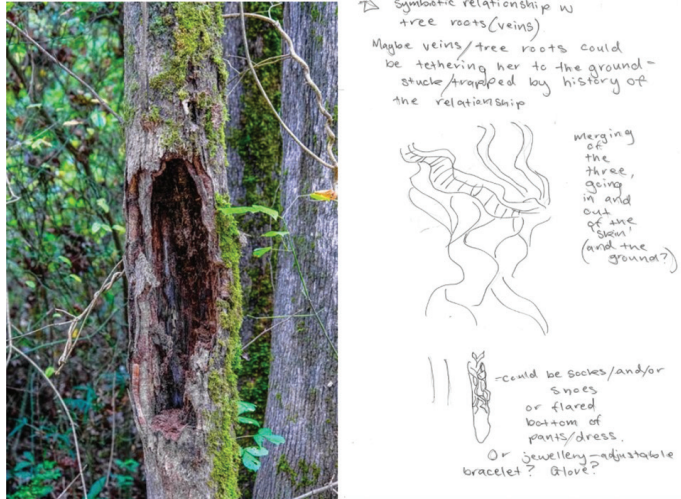
A source of inspiration I always tend to revisit (aside from dreams/nightmares and fantasy) is the body, and my relationship to it – whether that be positive or negative, or through the body as a manifestation of more metaphorical thoughts and ideas. I also am constantly drawn to plants and animals, which often inspires shapes, prints and colours.

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

Reflective observation is pretty much always my first step in the design process, typically through a notebook/visual diary and/or a reflective journal/research diary (either physical or digital, often both). This serves to document my stream of consciousness and/or a personal narrative. My ideas tend to come in fragments or as quick images or concepts so operating like this allows these ideas to be quickly expressed and noted, then in future they can be refined. I will move into other design research methods such as sketching, curation and visual glossaries.



Typically, I gravitate towards writing as a tool to analyse and steer the direction of my designs – to figure out the ‘why’ of my design. I also use notetaking/writing because it is easier to sort through and use to make my ideas logical, eventually enabling a coherent theme(s). During my design process, I continue to use these notes as my primary method of reflection – in action, noting new ideas, adjustments, problems and improvements as I experiment with ideas, textiles and toiles. I use sketching continuously throughout my design process to develop concepts and ideas from their original start and plan how they might look. I’ve found that I don’t always start my designs from a strictly fashion perspective, so if I need to translate it into a fashion perspective, sketching with the human body in mind helps focus and contextualise my ideas. I don’t tend to use one design research method at a time, and often several methods are used in tandem.



St Claire Marshall is an Otago Polytechnic Fashion Design Honours student and practitioner who loves exploring inside her brain, and all the new odd and interesting ideas or research that she happens across. In the future, she hopes to continue figuring out how to design and create as much as possible – and to continue having dreams.