

# scope

*Contemporary Research Topics*

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Fashion Design Process  
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Lilia Yip

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### What fuels your design ideas?

A new fragment of knowledge, a glimpse of an image, a particular textile, garment histories.

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

Yohji Yamamoto, Issey Miyake and Martin Margiela. Yohji Yamamoto (along with Rei Kawakubo) created a space in fashion, for people such as myself to feel seen. A space that as a student I could dream of one day feeling a sense of belonging within. I appreciate Issey Miyake's love for people, materials, traditional craft and his belief that good design brings joy and connection, as I hold similar values within my practice. With Martin Margiela, I learnt to appreciate the use of found materials and everyday objects as sources of inspiration and forms of resistance – with grace and a wry sense of humour.

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

I would describe myself as a cultural anthropologist. Fashion is about engaging with the world and the people in it. It is a unique language of communication that weaves histories, cultures and identities into the fabric of clothing. In my process, I look for fragments of knowledge that speak to what I feel needs to be revisited, reframed or reflected upon.

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

Choosing the right fabric to work with. When I have chosen a material that speaks to me and reflects my sustainable ethos, everything else starts to fall into place.

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

What is the most enjoyable part of designing for you?

The best part of being a designer/artist is meeting other kindred spirits. They are all over the world and quite often not working in fashion. I often present my work in places that are connected to the local communities of the area. These places function not just as artistic gallery spaces but as places where locals meet to socialise. I spend a lot of time in the space during that time, meeting new people,



Figure 1. My studio wall is divided into the following porous sections: Feeling - Silhouette - Materials - Colour - Relevance - Writings - Techniques - Details.



Figure 2. Creative pattern cutting and draping is a key process. I call it drawing with scissors.

exchanging stories, learning about the community and its cultures. It is the most intense, memorable and meaningful part of the design process.

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

Collaboration is a significant part of my work at the stage of communication and presentation. The work I make is multi-faceted as it is often about the larger human condition and our collective experiences. As such, with each collaboration, be they a curator, artist, musician or filmmaker, we start with a conversation about what we both value and appreciate. This stage is deliberately kept experimental and open, and my collaborators are given the

freedom to interpret and use my clothing and collection concept, taking from and interpreting it within their own artistic medium. The final outcomes could be a fashion show, a music video, a film, a dance performance, an exhibition and zine, a photo editorial, a workshop. There are many ways in which stories about clothing can be told and this collaborative approach brings a richness to the storytelling.

### Do you have sources of inspiration that you always revisit?

I have a love for ancient Asian clothing and traditional textile crafts. I am especially drawn to clothing made and worn by rural communities, minority groups and clothing that is worn in daily life or for specific rituals. In the book *Yohji Yamamoto Talking to Myself*, fashion scholar Kiyokazu Washida writes:

“In producing his clothes, Yohji Yamamoto has always borne in mind the point at which clothing ceases to be clothing – the most basic level where clothing functions simply as covering.” (Yamamoto, Washida. 2002)

It is in the places where clothing hover on the edge of Fashion, that I find most captivating.



Figure 3. I play with material finishings, experimenting with unusual ways to finish a garment edge.

Lilia Yip is a Singaporean fashion academic, designer, artist and musician threading the different strands into a creative practice that explores the boundaries between our cultures, identities, philosophies and bodies. Designing with empathy and respect for material and people are key concepts. Lilia works collaboratively across various art, science and analog/digital technology disciplines, exploring new ways of making, representing and experiencing fashion. Lilia graduated from the Royal College of Art in MA Fashion Womenswear and has collaborated with the British Council as their guest designer, showcasing work in the Philippines and running workshops in Saudi Arabia and Morocco. They have exhibited internationally in solo exhibitions and major group shows at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen and the Victoria & Albert Museum. They are a Senior Lecturer and Research Mentor at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts, London and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

### REFERENCE

Yohji Yamamoto, Sozzani, C. and Kiyokazu Washida (2002). *Talking to Myself*. Göttingen: Steidl.