

DESIGN PROCESS, DRAWINGS ARE RE-PRESENTATIONS OF IDEAS

col Fay

In terms of a design practice, fashion is often judged on the final resolution, an approach which diminishes the very robust and critical stages of process that inform the final outcome and cloaks the design resolution in the somewhat enigmatic posture of the creative genius. However, working with others and publishing in both fashion and architecture has shown that this approach is not universal, nor is it accepted as a finite and therefore concrete pathway in itself. Unveiling the process by allowing us entry into it through visual re-presentation goes some way to demystifying this creative practice and allows the breath of knowledge involved, both conceptual and tactile, to be acknowledged.

The Renaissance practise of *disegno*, a technique bringing together artwork and craftwork, acknowledges the importance of process in giving meaning to the act of 'making' or production. Originally applied to the arts of sculpture, painting and architecture, this practise suggests that to realise the potential of something before it is concrete is a necessary step in the articulation of making (Hartoonian, 2014). The concept of process proposed here suggests an authentic method of extracting meaning from a creative endeavour through capturing ideas through visual manifestations, namely drawing.

However, expanding the idea of "drawing" to include three-dimensional processes acknowledges the multiplicity of representational practices in a contemporary sense. "Drawing" can be considered as a process of imagining, seeing and representing ideas about the "ex-perience" – a connecting practice, a re-presentation. For Peter Downton (2004), sketch drawing or graphic representations executed on paper are no different from the act of drawing with paper. He therefore describes the surface of inscription as arbitrary, as within the creative process the intention is to make conscious thought tangible. Legitimacy therefore lies in the formalisation of the creative process, allowing it to be captured, critiqued and made visible; it suggests that within the process of making is a process of becoming.

For me, process is the major critical element within the development of any creative design project, as it allows for a rigorous interrogation of thought, trial and evaluation to occur simultaneously. For me, the qualities of making lie not in the intention to produce an object; rather, they are concentrated in the process of thinking that allows the form to materialise as an embodiment of an idea. The final realisation I term "residue" – a trace of the research. It is the manifestation of processed thoughts, suggestions and conversations, both with myself and with the work of others – elements that come together not finished, but rather are allowed to be fragmentary. Downton refers to process as "the immediate stages" of creation, which as critical parts will take their place in the whole when finalised. He speaks therefore of agency within the design process, the intention of making through creative exploration.

Nigel Cross (2006, pp. 34-38) refers to this type of practice as a "critical, reflective dialogue" that enables us to review our research as abstract ideas capable of interrogation and able to be manipulated, rather than as elements on their way to becoming refined solutions. For Cross, the design process – which I have interpreted as 2D and 3D explorations – is necessary in order for the design itself to undergo a critique that is both micro and macro simultaneously, a selective ordering of what is relevant. As a method it allows the design solution, played out through multiple explorations, to be a proposition rather than a resolution.

Process-driven practices, as represented in Hywel Davis's books (2010, 2013), go some way to making the process of fashion designers visible – and set a model for interrogating fashion beyond its final resolution. In this new section of the Fashion special issue of *Scope: Art and Design*, Special Issue Fashion Forward >> Disruption, we are offered insights into how varied and conscious the design phase of fashion can be, which opens up the discourse beyond a three-dimensional objective. These dialogues offer us a breadth of exploration into what fashion is, what fashion could be, and the things it must be conscious of – all suggesting that fashion is beyond formal classification and should be allowed an opportunity to expand its perceived boundaries. Collectively, these contributions represent a body of knowledge that is placed alongside the work of others in order to establish a connection to the ever-expanding field of fashion and its opening up to the multi-disciplinarity of practices.

What Davis's books and the exemplars presented here suggest is that they are not illustrations of a pre-design process, but rather a different kind of practise; not finished work, but fragments that are captured. This reminds us that it is not necessarily the point of arrival, but rather the journey, that is the practise itself.

col Fay is a modernist, with a preference for form and structure over decoration. She holds a MFA, and has a longstanding interest in those aspects of design that involve the body, jewellery, exhibitions, fashion and architecture. Her understanding of the importance of process and the role in which artifacts aid design development provides a unique and strong viewpoint for this introduction.

DOI links to the designers on the following pages:

Margo Barton	https://doi.org/10.34074/scop.1021009
Stella Lange	https://doi.org/10.34074/scop.1021008
Simon Swale	https://doi.org/10.34074/scop.1021007
Anessa Starker	https://doi.org/10.34074/scop.1021010

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<https://doi.org/10.7480>

What fuels your design ideas?

Cinematic visions in my head – sounds a bit mad, but I think these are very important fuellers for me. Also nature and materials around me, and people who may wear the pieces.

Is there a routine to

your design process?

Yes there is – it could be linked to a car or some other movement, dance or a swim maybe – *there's a rhythm.*

It usually starts slow, and considered, and usually at night or during a weekend. That part is about identifying the ember of an idea that could become a design. Often these things swirl around me; I can't quite grasp them, they are elusive or ethereal in their being. Sometimes I am not even looking for anything, it just comes. When the idea lands, so to speak, it can be softly, or with a big **BANG**, but either way the idea has some concreteness to it – although it

is usually a written-down idea or a drawn idea or a combination of the two.

The idea then undergoes a very rigorous investigation regarding its efficacy – *why* is the first hoop to jump through.

What am I saying or doing with this idea, this design? I am often caught up trying to ensure that it is good to go with the sustainability hoop, so many times it is a 'no.' And then I head back to the start.

The idea is sometimes stamped out for good – for example, the metal eyelets which were to be on pieces for the CTANZ Unbound exhibition. But sometimes the idea will smoulder away, waiting for the next opportunity to become a reality. Digital designing is great, as the material doesn't exist – that is sustainable – but I know that processing power is using up energy which has to be accounted for. Digital designing means that I can bring things to reality without concerns for their material impact, but digital designs as the endpoint can be a little frustrating for a fashion designer.

We love materiality!

Margo Barton

Do you experience an 'eureka moment' when you know a design is working?

Yes, I do. It comes after making and thinking and making, and the eureka isn't always what I expect, or always good, but there is a point, oh yes!

Do you have sources of inspiration that you always revisit?

Feelings, not words, usually expressed in different ways. I am drawn to the cinema, to the vistas and stories expressed by two directors in particular – Federico Fellini, in his dreamlike concoctions of realism and dreams, and the modernist, highly designed and funny slapstick of Jacques Tati. I am also drawn to how music feels (to mind and body) and where it takes me, the listener, to – for example, punk, post punk. Also to nature, the colours, the sounds, the feeling. As I said, feelings, not words. Inspirations from fashion also exist – in particular, vintage fashions, 1980s backwards. I am fascinated by cut colour, fabrication, makeup, hair, home interiors, cars and all the trimmings including food and music, of course. Exhibitions like Moholy-Nagy, sometimes fashion exhibitions like Pierre Cardin.

How would you describe your design process?

I have two processes – one is individual or self-instigated, and is usually involved with making fashion objects or experiences.

This will often be the seed of the second process, which is collaborative and can occur for curation, and for making fashion objects and experiences. I think I need to draw this one, it's complex.

What is the most enjoyable part of designing for you?

Identifying the glints of ideas and transforming the ephemeral into a reality.

Is there a specific time of day when you are most creative?

Definitely at night, and first thing in the morning, sometimes all night. When I am on a roll it can be all day and all night.

How important is research in your working process?

Research is also vital. It can be an accidental research direction – for example, being in the library and tripping over a book which is not what I am looking for, but which sparks a direction, a technique or method, etc. Sometimes the researching will come from deep within – tacit knowledge that I have acquired from a long time working in fashion – and I may neglect to identify it as research at all, as it just happens.

How important is designing in your research process?

Vital, I don't think I could undergo a research process that didn't have a designing element.

How does your research and design work evolve from 2D to 3D?

Yes, and vice versa. I think this comes from my background as a patternmaker. I am always looking at things and how they can be collapsed into 2D in order to evolve the idea and create another 3D.



Does your

design process involve photography, drawing or reading?

It also involves active resting (thinking), drawing (analogue and digital, 2D and 3D) and sometimes photography.

What materials are essential to your working methods?

Pencil and paper are the only essentials. Desirable is gouache paint or digital paint, tracing paper, computer with Rhino or other 3D software. Plus the material I am using to make whatever I make.

What is the best environment for you to work in?

When researching, reading, sketching and digital designing I like my office, believe it or not, especially very late at night when there is no one else around. In a workshop, when making or prototyping. I like the shared workshops in fashion and in product design, where conversation around the making can occur.

Do you have a team that is involved in the design process? If so, what do they do?

I often collaborate with other people, whether it be on an idea for an exhibition or for millinery to accompany a fashion designer's clothes. This is always a conversation. Usually, I am already working on something or have an idea simmering away, and the collaborator will ask me, for example, for a hat for a fashion installation or for a show – or I will pitch the concept to a long-standing collaborator like Dr Jane Malthus and see if the idea has legs. Looking at the timeline and what is, or isn't, possible is next.

How important is research in your working process?

Research is key – I research history, ideas, materials, forms, conventions and use. My research is both traditional academic and more contemporary exploration through making.

What fuels your design ideas?

Curiosity.

Stella Lange

Stella is a pracademic, with a deep curiosity around textile making. Her creative practice is positioned amongst contemporary online maker communities, allowing for global asynchrony connections to other makers – and formation of communities of practice. Material culture provides a way to consider the practices and knowledge's embedded as part of making garments, slow fashion, and history-bounding opens up doors to reconsider how historic and contemporary making informs and creates value in ways commodification and commercialisation does not. Her practice is three fold, personal development of knowledge, sharing that in both traditional academic and maker spaces – and physically embodying maker knowledge in designs shared with gallery and online communities.

What is the most enjoyable part of designing for you?

The research, the exploration and play that come from reading, context mapping, discussion of possibilities and the sheer pure joy of making, when all goes well.

Do you have a team that is involved in the design process? If so, what do they do?

I work as an individual, but I have a Community of Practice whom I meet with regularly – we share images, connections, and discuss our works and process. This community is essential to help me see my work and developments as others see them.

How would you describe your design process?

Fluid, incremental, iterative and exploratory – progressive and open-ended. There is always more to try, to test, to do and to discover.

Do you experience an 'eureka moment' when you know a design is working?

There are moments when I am sure of the next stage. Intuitively, I recognise a pathway or solution, and I have the confidence to progress my design – and yet as a designer I am cognisant of the reality that design without an audience is not design, and I worry that people may misinterpret my work.

Does your design process involve photography, drawing or reading?

I draw to make sense of the world – and I read to make sense of the world – sometimes this means too many ideas. I use photography to document, but find it lacks the sensitivity that drawing, painting or writing provides. Photography is a blunt instrument in my hands.

Is there a routine to your design process?

No, not really. I try to establish some sense of order. I make a point of stopping and recording key stages and steps, but sometimes the process takes over and the design evolves as I work with the ideas and materials.

Is there a specific time of day when you are most creative?

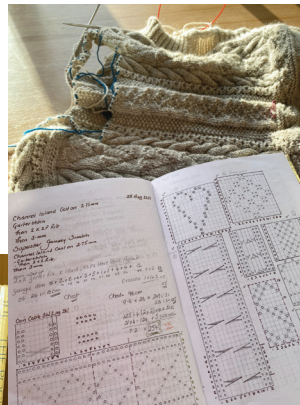
Mornings, I am a morning person – ideally before others are around in my workspaces. I love the early morning light, the calm anticipation of a new day and opportunities to work uninterrupted before others arrive.

What is the best environment for you to work in?

Quiet, and warm. I love the separation from the world that windows or rooms provide. At times I work best alone, yet I also enjoy the company of those who work in a similar manner.

How does your research and design work evolve from 2D to 3D?

I am a maker. My development requires making and exploring 3D. Much of my work involves fabricating a textile – hand knitting or embroidering; by their nature these activities are 3D in form and must be tested as such. Besides, my drawing skills don't allow me to approximate my planned outcomes in the way that making allows.



How important is designing in your research process?

Very – designing is part of my research process, as I develop knowledge about 'how' or 'which' or 'what.' If I already knew the 'how' or 'which' or 'what,' it wouldn't be design.



What materials are essential to your working methods?

Very few. I am a bit of a stationery geek – fountain pens with oddly coloured inks (brown and olive green are firm favourites), journals with high-quality paper, neutral colour palettes of materials, calico with cream thread, mid-grey yarn to sample with, tonal threads to stitch with, warmth and lots of clear light. I add bright lights to every space I work in.



Do you have sources of inspiration that you always revisit?

My inspirations are colour, materials and sensory aspects. For me, fashion design should be related to 'the here and now' – as well as working with history and the future. As a designer, my aim is always to develop clothing that provides comfort – physical, social, emotional.

How would you describe your design process?

*Conceptual,
immersive,
haptic.*

Is there a routine to your design process?

To paraphrase **Fran Lebowitz**,
“Read before you think,
think before you design.”

Simon Marcus Swale

Do you have a team
that is involved in the design process?
If so, what do they do?

No – but I
rely on a wide
network of
peers and
mentors who
contribute
in critically
evaluating my
work at various
stages.

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

I don't really work with 'inspirations'
as much as responding to the
physical world around me
– *this is my constant.*

I work across art and design, but my process is one, and any given project could produce either art or design outcomes, or both. I never actively seek 'inspiration.' As a concept lead practitioner; I am usually engaged in research on specific discourses that relate to understanding the world around us. This academic research is generally balanced by phenomenological research that relates to my own lived experiences of the world. Recent projects have, for instance, involved what I term "critical walking" – a means of researching that involves walking as exploration, discovery, thinking and knowledge creation.

A lot of my recent work has focused on globalisation and the global cultural economy, specifically the flows of consumer goods around the world. Besides my interest in the politics of production, my critical walking methodology led to an exploration of discarded packaging from consumer goods such as cigarette packets and banana boxes. Exploring cardboard packaging led in turn to a questioning of traditional fashion garments and materials, resulting in a series of transformative pieces that reproduced cardboard boxes at a 1:1 scale in a range of soft materials.

What fuels your design ideas?

Trying to understand the world around us...

Is there a specific time of day when you are most creative?

The dead of night.

How does your research and design work evolve from 2D to 3D?

Organically – reading, writing, drawing, making are usually all happening constantly and simultaneously.



The human body.

What materials are essential to your working methods?



How important is research in your working process?

Research is the driving force of all work and making.

How important is designing in your research process?

Designing is the research manifested.

What is the best environment for you to work in?

Alone and in silence.

What is the most enjoyable part of designing for you?

I enjoy all parts. I find that I start each section loving it – research, design, making, etc. Then I get to a point where I hate it and desperately want to move on to something else. So, at a certain point in the design process, I decide that I'm really a maker and want to make things – then I want to think about ideas. So mostly I follow myself around, I guess.

Anessa Starker

What fuels your design ideas?

Any idea I find interesting. I like modern art and history, so I read a lot around those topics.

What is the best environment for you to work in?

I work best in spaces with others around; being by myself in a room makes me a little crazy!

How important is research in your working process?

Research does take a back seat when I'm actually working. However, I would research pattern drafting, draping or construction techniques if I felt I needed to. Mostly my working process is a bit more experimental. However, I have often already researched a specific drafting/making technique earlier in the design process, which I then just apply in the working process.

How important is designing in your research process?

It has become increasingly important. Designing as I research or, at least, creating some visual response to ideas I'm researching helps to ground the research in a practical way. I'm always trying to come back to the question, "How does this idea relate to clothing?"

What are your sources of inspiration?

I get a lot of ideas when I wander around. I also often look at historical garments. I find inspiration often finds me unexpectedly.

Do you experience an 'eureka moment' when you know a design is working?

I don't usually experience a eureka moment, but there has been the odd time when I had a moment where I knew a design would work. Specifically, I designed a shift dress with a particular collar on it. That was an 'eureka moment.' I have gone on to design iterative versions of this dress in other collections.

How would you describe your design process?

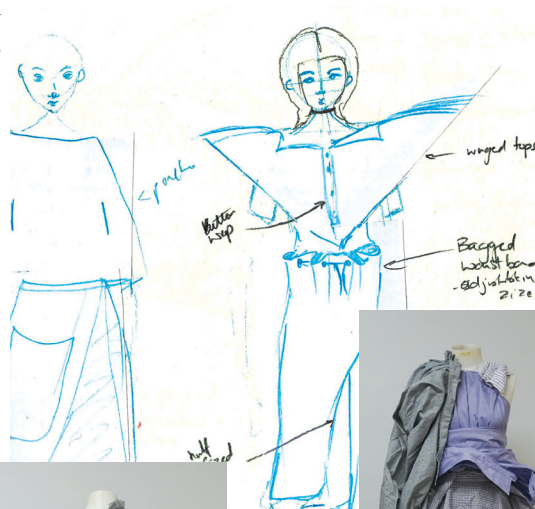
Probably as linear – one idea leads to another. I usually start with some research, then create mood boards or collages in response to that. Then I research some more. Eventually, I have enough of a position to start designing. From there I might have specific things I want to include, like collars or flared skirts. I sometimes make silhouette studies to get a feel for how I might want clothing to sit on the body. Once I have an initial line-up I might find fabric, if I haven't done so earlier, and do some seam and application samples to see which fabric will work for the design. I might then go back and redesign. After this, I usually start pattern making.

Do you have sources of inspiration that you always revisit?

I don't think I intentionally revisit the same sources. However, I do have some themes which I really like and often look into. For example, I really like historical military uniforms, so often look to those for inspiration.

What materials are essential to your working methods?

Coloured pencils, collagable images, set square (grading square), Fiskars' spring-handled snips, sewing gauge. I also generally have a lot of books, though not always the same ones.



research and design work

My designs evolve a lot from 2D to 3D. Going from 2D to 3D is for me the most important part of the design process, because it's where something purely theoretically has to be constructed in materials. For me, working within the real-world constraints of having a 'real' body, limited resources and materials available to bring something to life defines being a designer, as opposed to being an artist. Being a designer is a response to constraints, and the process of making a 2D design 3D defines that.

evolve from 2D to 3D!



to these spaces

Direct result of hypermobility (causing questioning the economy)

- encourages consumerism
- replaced traditional shopping experience
- anonymous shopping experience

neo-Marxism

- capitalism thrives on the exploitation of the working class
- present
- economic control produces class which leads to rebellion
- wealthy class of owners and poor class of workers

Body as commodity

The body gets abstracted, divorced & multiplied

↳ The body is used as a tool to sell product

↳ Body also fully complexed, always classifying & reclassifying

↳ The body is always in a state of flux

Is there a specific time of day when you are most creative?

No, I find that I have to keep engaging with different ideas for them to develop into something. However, I do often stay up late, especially if I feel I'm 'on a roll.'

Do you have a team that is involved in the design process? If so, what do they do?

No, I don't have a team.

Is there a routine to your design process?

No, I don't think so ...

Does your design process involve photography, drawing or reading?

My design process is very driven by ideas, so I often do a fair bit of reading before I start drawing. I would often start by making some collages of magazine images or found materials to figure out the mood for the collection. I have found that it's very important for me, personally, to work out how the idea can be related to clothing very early in the process – otherwise, I think the clothing gets lost in the design.