

## 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.