

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.**