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Responsibility – The New Sustainability?

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

Sustainability is a confounding term, with no one definition or meaning, leading some brands to ditch the term altogether. As the term sustainability becomes more widespread and accepted in the fashion industry, it is getting harder to distinguish between brands that are genuinely working towards a responsible business as opposed to those with a marketing strategy centred on sustainability despite unecological business practice, commonly known as greenwashing. Therefore, this thesis aims to develop a responsible business that balances brand ethos and identity with economic and environmental prosperity. Within the field of fashion studies, academics discourage the idea that the fashion industry can be sustainable due to its emphasis on economic growth. This view predominantly aligns fashion with the fast fashion model of business. In contrast, this work is lensed from an small to medium enterprise (SME) perspective and understands that fashion designers can limit environmental harm and remain economically viable when acting responsibly. Adopting a pragmatic approach to data collection, research is conducted through qualitative data collection and a mixed methods approach explored in two parts: A) communicating a responsible brand and B) the design and creation of a non-seasonal collection 'RHYANA'.

Part B adopts an iterative approach, enabling constant re-assessment and tweaking of garments based on stakeholder feedback and demand and desirability execution. The findings of part A facilitate a collective understanding of what constitutes ideal brand communication in terms of importance placed on language and transparency, subsequently informing the brand identity and market positioning. Overall part A and B inform the overall branding of RHYANA through visual imagery and tone of voice, whilst considering the overall operations of the business and how it is to function responsibly through a start-up perspective.

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Literature Review	3
2.1.	Tensions between Academic argument and Commercial Imperatives – can we really depart from growth?.....	4
2.2.	Responsibility – a shift in moral obligation.....	8
2.3.	Marketing and its close relationship to the economy	9
2.4.	Case Study Maggie Marilyn	12
2.5.	Case Study GANNI	13
3.	Methods and Processes.....	17
3.1.	Part A: Communicating a Responsible Brand.....	22
3.2.	Part A Findings.....	23
3.2.1.	Sustainable.....	24
3.2.2.	Responsible.....	26
3.2.3.	Clothing Favourites	28

3.2.4.	Summary.....	29
3.3.	Design Criteria.....	31
3.4.	Part B Design and Technical Process.....	32
3.4.1.	Mood Board.....	34
3.4.2.	Colour Board.....	35
3.4.3.	Fabrics and Fabric Sourcing.....	37
3.4.4.	Fabric Board.....	39
3.4.5.	Idea Generation.....	40
3.4.6.	Technical Development.....	45
3.4.7.	Mia Knit.....	49
3.4.8.	Wear testing and Critique.....	51
3.5.	Lookbook.....	52
3.6.	Website About Exert.....	55
3.7.	Outward Exposures.....	56
4.	Discussion and Conclusion.....	58

5.	Appendices	63
5.1.	Appendix A.....	63
5.2.	Appendix B.....	74
5.3.	Appendix C.....	74
5.4.	Appendix D.....	81
6.	References.....	82

List of Figures

Fig. 1. GANNI. “Goal 39: Measure if GANNI’s Work on Responsibility Increases Brand Equity” Responsibility Report 2020, 2020, https://responsibilityreport2020.ganni.com/prosperity/	16
Fig. 2. Workflow process, digital diagram by author, 2022.....	21
Fig. 3. AR design phase, digital diagram by author, 2022.....	33
Fig. 4. Clarissa mood board, paper collage by author, 2022.....	34
Fig. 5. Colour board, digital image by author, 2022.....	35
Fig. 6. Fabric board, digital scan by author, 2022.....	39
Fig. 7. Bathers dress sketch, digital scan and text by author, 2022.....	41
Fig. 8. Clarissa coat and Mia knit and stirrup sketch, digital scan and text by author, 2022.....	42
Fig. 9. Clarice shirt and Kirsten skirt, digital scan and text by author, 2022.....	43
Fig. 10. Jonas pant, digital scan and text by author, 2022.....	43
Fig. 11. Final line-up, charcoal and kraft paper sketch by author, 2022.....	44
Fig. 12. CLO3D [software process for CLO3D], n.d., www.clo3d.com/en/	45
Fig. 13. Design development process 1, Digital collage by author, 2022.....	47
Fig. 14. Design development process 2, Digital collage by author, 2022.....	48
Fig. 15. Mia Henderson, Mia Knit development, 2022, digital collage with text.....	50

Fig. 16. Lookbook RHYANA, digital lookbook by author, 2022.....	54
Fig. 17. About RHYANA, digital text by author 2022.	55
Fig. 18. Behind the scenes, personal photograph by author, March 2022.....	57
Fig. 19. Emma Anderson, Wuthering Heights, June 2022, photograph. Viva Magazine, Modern Luxury, June 2022. p. 86.....	57
Fig. 20. Amberly Colby, Ones to Watch, July 2022, digital image. Fashion Quarterly Magazine, The Optimism Issue, July 2022. p. 60.....	57
Fig. 21. Nicole Brannen, Introducing 9 Fresh Faces From Aotearoa, April 21 2022, photograph. Cool Pretty Cool, www.coolptretty.cool/introducing-9-fresh-faces-from-aotearoa	57

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Key, by author, 2022.	23
Table 2. Design Process Connect, by author, 2022.	32
Table 3. Wear Testing Feedback, by author 2022.	81

1. Introduction

Fashion's linear economic system works on the premise of take-make-waste, which is having profoundly disastrous impacts on our ecosystem. This wasteful and polluting model is not only exhausting planetary resources but has perpetuated an unhealthy relationship with clothing centred around desirability and disposal. Therefore, the importance of this thesis is grounded in the current predicament, informed by the climate crisis and sustainable obligation. While many consumers are doing their best to mitigate the climate crisis's effects, brands often take advantage of customers' concerns regarding the crisis – turning it into nothing more than a greenwashing marketing ploy.

Consumer distrust towards the language of sustainability is primarily caused by fast-fashion brands claiming to do better whilst not solving the underlying issue of growth and over-production. The exegesis is lensed through a small to medium enterprise perspective (SME). SME is a way to categorise small and medium enterprises which are independent and more innovative than their larger counterparts. Moreover, in this thesis, 'responsibility' refers to working towards environmentally friendly practices without making instantiated “sustainability” claims that only further de-saturate the term.

The exegesis begins with a survey of literature focusing on the interrelationship between consumerism, consumption and marketing – starting broadly with a discussion of the tensions between academic argument and commercial imperatives regarding the fashion industry's response to environmental concerns. Following on from this discussion is an advocacy for reframing the economic argument and a shift in moral obligation towards “responsibility,” which offers new departure points for business. The review then explores fashion marketing and

its relationship to the economy and environment – in particular, the distinction between responsibility and sustainability, supported by two case studies.

The methods and process section are split into two parts, A and B, and are intended to provide a greater understanding of communication in particular to branding my business RHYANA. The research is conducted through a semi-structured questionnaire, where the sampled participants are asked open-ended questions concerning their views on sustainability, greenwashing, responsibility, clothing, and design preferences. These responses later inform part B, which is the execution of a non-seasonal clothing collection that works through a responsible framework and design criteria from part A. The creative works manifest as a lookbook and copy for the website; outward exposures ground the creative work in the real world. Lastly, the discussion and conclusion summarise whether or not the project informs a responsible business that balances brand ethos and identity with economic and environmental prosperity.

2. Literature Review

In the fashion industry, the term sustainability and what constitutes sustainable practice is an area of increasing confusion, exacerbated by the divisive practice of fashion labels' "greenwashing." Numerous brands claim to adhere to an environmentally sustainable framework (which may contribute to confusion between what is understood to be 'sustainable' and what is not) yet seldomly are they established within a *responsible* system. Responsibility within a start-up context refers to a moral obligation on the fashion designer that sustainability does not require. Both terms have the same end goal, a holistic outcome – the ability to balance profit and ethos. However, responsible provides concise and transparent information on the fashion industries' relationship to economics and the environmental impacts of production lensed through a SME perspective. Alternatively, sustainability is often linked to the idea of greenwashing, most prominently in relation to larger fast-paced businesses. Academics, most notably influential fashion industry researcher and activist Kate Fletcher, have argued against an alignment of environmental sustainability and economics within the industry, as growth is seen as the driver for more consumption. However, this debate has little currency in most functioning labels or businesses, as a business is still required to be economically sustainable in order to survive. There is thus a divide between academic solutions to fashion's environmental problems and what is considered economically viable by leaders of functioning fashion labels and businesses.

Therefore, the review focuses specifically on understanding the fraught relationship between sustainability and economic imperatives and in particular, the interrelationship between consumerism, consumption and marketing.

Consideration of these factors aids in determining best practice for implementing a responsible business from a start-up perspective, especially understanding the academic emphasis on departing from fast-fashion's growth logic. Although the literature is lensed through an SME perspective, fast fashion must be discussed in relation to growth but does not dominate the discourse. Following on from the discussion of growth logic and its relationship to consumerism, consumption and marketing, I offer two key case studies to further cement the success and adaptability of 'responsibility' within an SME perspective. These cases demonstrate that businesses can balance responsibility with profitable future outcomes under the current economic paradigm.

2.1. Tensions between Academic argument and Commercial Imperatives – can we really depart from growth?

Fletcher argues that sustainability should not be a 'bolt-on' to a particular industry for a supposed 'greener' practice, and ultimately side-tracked by the bottom line (Fletcher and Williams). Rather, there is a need to evade greenwashing, caused by dishonest claims of environmental 'goodness' used to increase sales (Niinimäki 26). Fletcher advocates that rather than perpetuating an already flawed industry, a new framework or ecological paradigm must be created. Earth Logic, a manifesto by Fletcher and Mathilda Tham, provides their most radical rhetoric on the departure from "growth logic" – referring to the industry's unceasing growth. The market and profit gains at the expenditure of people and the planet, however Earth logic, the opposite of growth, puts the health of all species, humans and the planet, before industry. The manifesto is split into three parts, 1: values explicit – an evaluative framework for research and development 2: a checklist, designed to keep action research on track and 3: six holistic based goals directed at the whole fashion industry (Fletcher and Tham

14–16). While the manifesto is dynamic and radical, with the aim of averting the devastating effects of the climate crisis within the decade, the Earth Logic paradigm presents some difficulties for implementation. For example, Fletcher and Tham advocate for a drastic transformation in consumer behaviour, arguing that each individual should be able to fit all their belongings into a rowboat (18). Placing the emphasis on changing consumer behaviour is incomplete, however, as it emphasises consumers' habits without considering industries' control over consumption behaviours. It is integral to remove the sole onus on consumers and deflect blame back onto industry, which peddles the accumulation of more and more stuff as a supposed means of alleviating discontent, meaning “consumerism and waste are at the mercy of a constant human search” (Chapman 74).

It is up to the industry to encourage and educate change in consumption habits – it cannot come from consumers only, as consumers can only enact real change if the industry chooses to as well.

The demands and constraints of fashion concerning sustainability and the pre-existing market are commonly understood via the unregulated relationship between the economy and fashion. This unregulated relationship causes contradictions between the economic idea of growth, which is responsible for mass over-production, and environmental sustainability (see Fletcher, “Durability, Fashion, Sustainability”; Fletcher, *Craft of Use*; Walker). Fast fashion is a cyclical process of production based on cheap and fast trend-based fashion. The garments have built-in obsolescence, both in terms of the physical wearing out of fabric and a psychological (trend-based) throw-away culture, whereby “durable connections between users and their mass-manufactured counterparts are rarely forged” (Chapman 70).

The dominant discourse in fashion involves putting the market first, as in profit over planet, a continual churn of output and growth, and more notably, within the context of fast fashion, "sales and growth are increased by maximising economies of scale and minimising costs" (Fletcher, "Slow Fashion" 260). The most crucial part of addressing the problem is implementing scalable, sustainable solutions at industry level. The Pulse of Fashion 2019 Updates highlighted that the fashion industry is not executing sustainable solutions "fast enough to counterbalance the harmful impact of the fashion industry's rapid growth" (Lehmann). As such, no matter how radical an approach, the only solution should be aimed at "a quantitatively smaller sector" as "a prerequisite for a system that is delimited by a finite resource base" (Fletcher and Tham 47). Therefore, decoupling from fast fashion's growth logic (profit based on over production), could involve adopting an SME perspective, which is not driven by the same growth imperatives. The SME perspective, then, could inform a responsible system. Chapman states that "slowing down the feverish pace of interaction between people and things must not be seen as a commercially debilitating act [...] but slower modes of material engagement is also to propose [...] richer experiential landscape of user experiences in everyday life" (109). As such, responsible systems do not reject growth but rather embrace a slower form of it and an understanding of it that is not solely economic, but rather considers the use and experience of the product.

Although Niinimäki et al. suggests that sustainable business approaches are commonly met with the fear of de-growth, i.e., loss of profit caused by decreasing economies of scale and the lowering of their profit margins, approaches like responsible could offer new departure points for innovation, such as circularity and values-based design. Values based design is orientated towards future thinking and considers economic, cultural, ethical, environmental and social issues whilst taking into account the garments' use (Niinimäki et al. 34). Values-based

design, which is fundamental to sustainable fashion, could offer new systems for value creation. Niinimäki et al. indicates that value creation as an evaluative method could assess "manufacturing process, business models and marketing" (33). Therefore, through value creation, responsibility can encompass people, planet and profit (3 p's) while retaining a slower form of growth based on a higher price point and quality investment, encouraging consumers to own less and use items for longer– the very opposite of fast fashion imperatives (Niinimäki et al. 35).

Therefore, it is possible for small to medium enterprise to remain economically viable while taking meaningful action to support responsible design and business practice. Furthermore, unlike Niinimäki' et al. argument, Fletcher and Tham's argument is additionally somewhat improbable due to entrenched consumerist ideology. Their argument relies on a significant shift in macro-political and economic structures for the proposal to be adopted and accepted on a broader scale. However, consumerism, as Miles states, "[...] has become the very fabrication of modern life" (2). A re-evaluation of relationships towards consumption is needed and should be encouraged, however this cannot solely rely on idealistic segregation of the fashion industry from economic imperatives. Our relationship towards consumer goods in the western world dominates, cementing its significance as cultural and economic capital and the way we construct our everyday lives (Miles 2). The antithetical business approach seen in Earth Logic denies the possibility of adopting both economic viability and ecological prosperity, which offers little encouragement to those seeking to take an entrepreneurial and responsible stance within a pre-existing market.

2.2. Responsibility – a shift in moral obligation

Spiller et al. reframe the economic argument that has seen western businesses profit at the expense of communities and the planet, demonstrating that wise business strategies implemented through an indigenous Māori perspective can offer businesses searching for innovation a model that can deliver profit and shared value (Spiller et al. 223). The wisdom theorist position adopted through the ethical model of Kaitiakitanga or stewardship promotes further enrichment and humanness that the western understanding of business tends to lack. In this context human wellbeing is supported by environmental wellbeing. Western business tends to ascribe to the idea that the sole purpose of business is to produce profit, for instance, through mass production and fast fashion. From an indigenous Māori perspective, the process is emphasised above progress, and the integration of economic goals is intertwined with wellbeing in other areas (Spiller et al. 227). The purpose then of business is to create relational wellbeing and wealth (Spiller et al. 224). Wise business through the ethical model of Kaitiakitanga is therefore suited to a responsible system.

Chapman further believes that a “new economic system does not equate quality of life with quantity of production” but rather “successful partnerships, degrees of empathy and attachments” (158) are the new measures of success as well as a reduction in waste, pollution and depletion of resources, coupled with consumer satisfaction. Responsible appreciates that the point of sale is only the beginning and not the end of the garment’s story (Chapman 120). Furthermore, Guldager suggests that "consumption has to have a moral distinction" (74); much like responsible, it encompasses more than economic exchange. Miles summarises "If consumption is more than an economic phenomenon [...] consumerism can be said to have more of a sociological interest than consumption per se" (3). Correspondingly, Chapman states

garments are “storytellers and as users we share unique personal histories with them [...] narratives which form layers of significance, over time (113). Chapman understands that fostering meaningful relationships to garments through a slower model of consumption is still profitable, and can enable brand attachment and longer lasting connections. Therefore, the sociological interest of consumerism can be reframed to adopt a more holistic approach that balances economic viability with environmental prosperity, whilst the development of empathy towards a piece consumers own can “automatically nurture a visceral empathy with that particular brand” (Chapman 162), ultimately influencing the perception of a brand’s core values.

2.3. Marketing and its close relationship to the economy

From an SME perspective, sustainable marketing, as stated by Emery, "recognises that all human activity is dependent on the existence of the natural capital provided by the planet, and acknowledges that the long-term sustainable economic viability only results from both environmental stability and social equity" (24). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a type of private business self-regulation that hopes to contribute to societal goals (Carvill et al. 290). It is a pre-condition for stakeholders doing business with an organisation (Carvill et al. 5), but how the brand is being marketed drives consumer purchasing habits (see Ettenson and Knowles). Marketing's close relation to the economy can be problematic due to economic growth remaining the underlying principle for many businesses branding themselves as sustainable. Henninger et al. found that more prominent brands (think ZARA and H&M) play a role in circulating the core message of sustainability as they typically have an international market reach. Despite their 'actionable' accounts for sustainability historically being

questionable, their size and scale mean this message can reach more people. However, more prominent brands are also synonymous with fast fashion, driven by mass production and consumption. Therefore, many consumers understand sustainability as an oxymoron in that fast fashion engages in frequent turnover while promoting sustainability (Henninger et al.). Sustainable branding then relies heavily on communication, and due to the already confused and subjective understanding of sustainability, the communication aspect needs a "carefully considered execution strategy" (Henninger et al.).

Branding, therefore, must be entirely transparent and make a strong claim as to why they are classified as sustainable. SME brands can take issue with larger-scale businesses by challenging their sustainable and mass-produced views. Their agility allows a diverse, inclusive, and representative brand image, enabling the micro to challenge the macro and educate consumers in making suitable purchasing habits.

At this point it is essential to reiterate the distinction between sustainable and responsible business models. The term responsible relates to both the internal and external operations of the business, advocating a moral obligation to both people and the planet. Responsible could be seen as a derivative of Corporate Social Responsibility (due to its relationship to the three p's and being closely linked to brand reputation). However, it is crucial to understand the imperfect aspects, views, and nuances of CSRs' different schemes and complexities, particularly in relation to larger businesses with sustainable smoke screens (i.e., H&M) (Carvill et al. 12). CSR is often linked to economics and is a driver of growth and consumer habits, commonly met with confusion about its professed commitments to sustainability. Therefore, responsibility does not impart ideas of sustainability as an empty buzzword but instead encapsulates sustainable and ethical practices into the business's

core operations and jointly works towards transparent and holistic outcomes. When brands align with a responsible framework, with complete integrity, there is a higher success of both growth and prosperity for the business and customers alike; as outlined in the below case studies.

2.4. Case Study Maggie Marilyn

Responsible New Zealand brand Maggie Marilyn (MM) was founded by Maggie Hewitt (2016) with the vision to "use fashion to create a better world." Four years into the brand Hewitt ended their wholesale accounts, (which were available across 75 luxury retailers) operating as a fully direct to consumer brand (DTC) out of Auckland. The decision to pivot the business model four years into the brand was to align with the original MM vision, which Hewitt attests to in their impact report (2021).

The DTC shift meant that MM could focus on producing clothing not dictated by seasonal calendars like wholesale. Instead, MM now consists of two main product lines: Somewhere and Forever, which constitute 90% and 10% of the line respectively. Both mainlines are released when needed: Forever is designed for 100% sell-out and is created in tightly curated runs while Somewhere are circular essentials as they are made from natural or recyclable products. In contrast, Forever is circular through the paradigm of care and repair, hoping to create lasting and loving connections to the clothing (*Maggie Marilyn Impact Report 08*). MM and the pivot to DTC mean the business is designed to be a circular one in which they now can create end-of-life solutions for every MM piece (*Maggie Marilyn Impact Report 03*). The business is now fulfilling its original vision, which serves as critical evidence of how businesses like MM can continue to prosper in the future (*Maggie Marilyn Impact Report 02*).

Alongside the pivot to a DTC model, which enables full control of the brand's output, a hallmark of responsibility is accountability and proof of actionable measures, that then allow the general public to make purchasing decisions based on transparent claims.

The publication and release of MM's first bi-annual impact report is designed to keep consumers informed on their progress and to hold MM accountable for their actions in relation to their brand vision. The single most significant impact for MM was the pivot to DTC and will continue to be so. This shift and aligning of values has enabled MM to reduce its carbon emissions by 73% and become New Zealand's first carbon-positive fashion brand. In order for this impact report to have validity, the GRI or Global Reporting initiative is used as its guiding framework, in which they can be compared to other businesses (*Maggie Marilyn Impact Report 07*). The report is based on essential ideas indicated by key stakeholders and external consultation supported by Go Well Consulting.

Hewitt has built her brand around a transformative and activist stance to make fashion more sustainable. GANNI, on the other hand, does not centre its narrative around sustainability and instead, uses the term responsible. GANNI believes sustainability is already a prerequisite of doing business, but they make note of the implications of using sustainable terminology in their branding efforts.

2.5. Case Study GANNI

GANNI is working on becoming a more responsible version of themselves. The Danish trend-based fashion brand has gained cult status known for its viral sell-out designs at mid-high market accessible price points. Much of GANNI's success can be attributed to the cool and lust-worthy garments and the brands' goal to scale internationally, akin to the likes of tech start-ups (Kent and Crump).

Their strategy for sustainability is different from how most brands market their efforts. Instead, GANNI's social conscience is reinforced through why they are not sustainable and instead are 'responsible'. GANNI admits they are a brand thriving off newness; therefore, they are not sustainable; rather they are working towards becoming a more responsible version of themselves. Recognising the inherent contradictions of newness and sustainability, GANNI instead is committed to being honest about what they do, including achieving their goals but also acknowledging their failures, therefore avoiding the greenwashing trap. However, avoiding greenwashing at the scale and continued growth of the brand has to be met with sustainable frameworks to gain accreditation and trust that they are doing what they have claimed (GANNI LAB on Instagram: "*NO EXCUSES*").

The business has adopted four pillars (4'ps) to support their responsible framework, 'people, planet, product, and prosperity. The four pillars are different from the 3P's (People, Planet, Profit), which could, from a trend-based brand, indicate greenwashing and insincere practices, hence the decision to use the term "prosperity" rather than "profit." Prosperity, for GANNI, is said to alternatively encompass both economic and environmental health, meaning the viability of the business is financially sustainable and is not adversely costing the planet (GANNI LAB on Instagram: "*WHAT DOES 'PROSPERITY' ACTUALLY MEAN?*"). As understood, greenwashing is linked to large-scale brands, in particular through the promotion of newness. Brands that are working towards a responsible version of themselves address that they are not perfect but rather a work-in-progress.

From a communication perspective, this is one of the essential components in addressing being responsible and avoiding greenwashing. Second to this is working with established frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals or aiming for B Corp, which GANNI aligns to. The alignment of frameworks sets a barrier and pathway to achieving goals. Third, third-party consultants or sustainable advisory boards enable a non-biased and outside perspective on whether or not the brand is close to achieving its intended goals. Lastly, publicly disclosing all information (achieved goals or not) lends itself to accountability and building trustworthy relationships, all of which contribute to being a responsible business. For example, an impact report is the most valuable asset a brand could have. The report should be inclusive of social responsibility and the brand's environmental footprint. In the case of GANNI, it outlines all the goals achieved, started or not, with an easy and understandable measure of where they are at the moment of publishing. However, it is important that for an impact report to have any measure, it needs to be audited by specific frameworks and be easily comparable to other businesses (Mondalek).

Brand voice is how the brand outwardly communicates itself to their intended audience and is integral to the communication and authenticity of the brand. GANNI is hoping to measure the brand's voice (Fig. 1.) when it comes to responsibility. However, with the switch to a more responsible version of themselves, they have been unable to gain quantitative data on whether or not customers are buying or continue to buy because of the switch due to not having implemented 'responsible' into the brand's voice from the beginning. The collection of data would be critical to inform GANNI as to whether their responsibility efforts are growing their customer base or if they continue to love GANNI for its viral sell-out designs.

GOAL 39: MEASURE IF GANNI'S WORK ON RESPONSIBILITY INCREASES
BRAND EQUITY.

STATUS: 0%



In 2020 we became more vocal about our work on Responsibility, whether that be communicating switching to certified responsible fabrics or posting our journey on our @GANNI.lab instagram account. What is unknown at this stage, is the value that sustainability creates for GANNI. We do not know if our customers shop with us because of our focus on becoming the most responsible version of ourselves or how our work on sustainability is perceived. Over the course of 2021, we will look to set up measures to understand the perception from our community.

Fig. 1. GANNI. "Goal 39: Measure if GANNI's Work on Responsibility Increases Brand Equity" Responsibility Report 2020, 2020, <https://responsibilityreport2020.ganni.com/prosperity/>

Alternatively, MM had a built-in sustainable narrative as the brand's voice from the beginning. Therefore, MM's customers' perceptions are measured based on their investment in brand sustainability. MM's brand identity, image, and reputation are in unison, cementing MM as a crucial leader in the sustainable sector. Conversely, GANNI believes that being responsible is a prerequisite for business rather than the brand's unique selling point. Notably, however, GANNI should practice caution in that constant newness and a trend-based approach may not be consistent with responsibility or a moral obligation from an SME perspective. This is because constant newness drives obsolescence dictated by trend-based outcomes. Therefore, as GANNI does offer trend-based and viral designs, it is troublesome for them to measure its brand image based on a responsible version of itself.

3. Methods and Processes.

The overall research methodology uses a mixed-methods approach, understanding and synthesizing salient information from secondary literature and case studies, qualitative data, and subsequently building knowledge, understanding and innovation through creative practise.

The central aim of the research is to develop a responsible business that balances brand ethos and identity with economic and environmental prosperity. The use of a mixed methods approach whereby research is conducted through qualitative data collection is integral to understanding prospective customers' beliefs and understandings on areas of sustainability and responsibility, which subsequently informs my brand's ethos and identity. The data collected also informs design principles and preferences that are applied to the creative work(s) and are explored through action research (AR). Both the qualitative data collection and iterative approach (AR) are the best fit for approaching the development of a responsible business.

The Method and Design Process in this section is split into sections A and B.

Part A: Communicating a responsible brand: Qualitative data collected from a semi-structured questionnaire.

Part B: Design and creation of garments using action research and reflective research in an iterative design process.

The project is practice-led, and the research is conducted through a pragmatic paradigm. A pragmatic paradigm works best for design research as it analyses human experience and is oriented towards solving practical problems, enabling the evaluation and transformation of the real world (Morgan).

For this research, qualitative data is collected through semi-structured interviews. The key stakeholders are identified as those within the fashion industry in particular marketing and network acquaintances who are potential customers. Two participants work within the fashion industry as a brand manager for luxury leather goods and a renowned stylist and influencer, respectively. The remaining six are associates who openly express interest in fashion and sustainability.

The participants were invited to contribute to a questionnaire based on fashion and sustainable ethos. An email was sent with information which explained the aims of the research and the nature of the questionnaire, and how this data would be used along with participant consent forms. A Massey University Low Risk Ethics approval was carried out. The recruitment method of participants can be considered as limited with a degree of bias due to the small number and having linked acquaintances to the researcher. However, for the purpose of understanding prospective clients for a targeted market, the resulting responses were considered beneficial for analysis.

The semi-structured questionnaire approach allows the interviewer to ask specific open-ended questions to receive feedback in specific areas but also to receive more in-depth responses than a quantitative approach would allow. This approach also allows the interviewee to expand their response beyond the confines of the question, enabling personal thoughts and beliefs to be incorporated and understood.

Participants were asked to respond to six sections that were split into themes; Section 1: *Sustainable*. These questions asked about their understanding of sustainable practice, if it was important to them, other brands that they believe are sustainable and their thoughts on greenwashing. Section 2: *Greenwashing*. Participants were asked to plot a number from 1 to 10 based (1 = not important 5 = neutral 10 = very important) based on how much importance they placed on the following: tracing fibres back to farm, production and supply chain transparency, transparency of cost breakdown and profit margins and marketing consistency with clothing.

Section 3: *Responsible*. Participants were given a definition of what ‘responsible’ means as defined from my research proposal and asked if they believed ‘responsible’ was a better term than ‘sustainable’ with reasons, what a ‘responsible’ fashion brand looks like to them and what other fashion brands do they consider as communicating a ‘responsible’ brand ethos.

Section 4: *Clothing design preference*. Participants were asked to rate their design preferences for materials, sourcing and production, clothing style, silhouette and service by plotting a number from 1 to 10, 1 = not important 5 = neutral 10 = very important

Section 5: *Price point*. Participants were asked what they believe a garment should be priced at i.e., dresses, pants and skirts by plotting a number from 1 to 10, 1= \$100 5 = \$500 10= \$1000.

Section 6: *Wear*. Participants were asked to comment about their go-to everyday items as well as their go-to evening / special event clothing.

The questionnaire was valuable to gain a deeper understanding of my prospective customers' understanding of sustainability and responsibility as well as conducting a surface level market analysis based on the clothing they wear, what they would pay for pieces and the design preferences they have, which are then considered in the design process (B).

Action Research can be described in its simplest form as a tool for "improving practice, which involves action, evaluation, and critical reflection" (Koshy et al.). Action Research (AR) has been adopted to fit a design perspective as Swann suggests that AR and design principles "are so close, that only a few words would need to be adopted for a theoretical framework." Therefore, adopting AR as my working methodology for the physical creation of garments is best suited. Swann indicates that the act of designing is already a problem-solving performance, which is different from research and analysis. Therefore, it is vital to be able to hold design actions accountable by utilising the AR framework. In undertaking this method for the design and physical offering, I will implement instruments such as "problem/research – analysis – synthesis – execution – production – evaluation. This is a non-linear process and instead emphasises the iterative, where this process is implemented over and over" (Swann).

The workflow process as shown in the diagram (Fig. 2.) outlines the flow of how all pieces were created and adopted from AR through my own iterative framework. Designs and patternmaking worked iteratively through AR and involved a cyclical process, where each piece was considered aesthetically and scrutinised by the following criteria – did it work with the theme? Was it suitable for wearability and my prospective customer’s needs? And is it designed with an end-of-life solution in mind? From these questions I was able to iterate on the designs all the way through to final prototype.

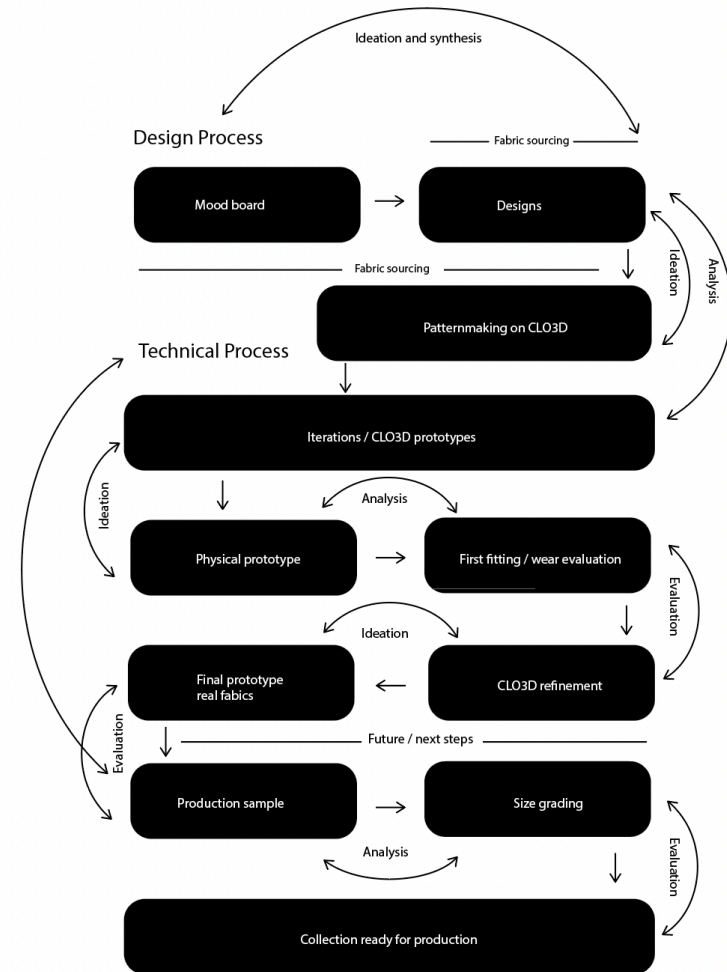


Fig. 2. *Workflow process*, digital diagram by author, 2022.

3.1.Part A: Communicating a Responsible Brand

Part A focuses on how to communicate a responsible brand through curating a brand identity and market positioning. Brand identity is a set of affiliations that the brand creates to influence consumers' perceptions, representing what the brand stands for and suggesting a promise to customers (Huggard and Cope 2). Tone, values, imagery, and visual communication are associations of brand identity and work to provide a transparent projection of how marketers aim to enhance brand desirability (Huggard and Cope 2). Therefore, my brandings ethos, – responsibility, is reflected through tone and can be visually read through the garments (their production) and supporting imagery. The recognition of the above affiliations helps differentiate my brand positioning from that of others.

To gauge the tone and understanding of prospective customers' knowledge on sustainability and responsibility, I surveyed a small sample size of industry connections and fashion associates.

I can use this information to help differentiate my brand from other brands' positionings and to contribute to my own responsible fashion practice. This can also facilitate a collective understanding of what constitutes ideal brand communication in terms of importance placed on language and transparency. A generalised overview of what my speculated customers wear and why they choose and wear the clothing will inform design decision-making within the subsequent iterative process and promote customer engagement.

3.2.Part A Findings

Below is the writeup on the survey findings. The survey comprised of six sections: *Sustainable, Greenwashing, Responsible, Clothing design preference, Price point* and *Wear, Clothing favourites*. The writeup comprises of thematic analysis of themes, and each of the eight participants are identifiable through participant number and relationship see table 1 below.

Table 1. *Participant Key*, by author, 2022.

P1F	<i>Participant 1 fashion associate</i>
P2BM	<i>Participant 2, brand manager</i>
P3F	<i>Participant 3 fashion associate</i>
P4F	<i>Participant 4 fashion associate</i>
P5F	<i>Participant 5, fashion associate</i>
P6F	<i>Participant 6, fashion associate</i>
P7F	<i>Participant 7, fashion associate</i>
P8SI	<i>Participant 8, stylist / influencer</i>

3.2.1. Sustainable

An overall analysis of ‘sustainable’ showed that most participants understood sustainable practices in the fashion industry as involving sustainable sourcing of materials such as organic and natural or recyclable – non-virgin synthetics and ensuring ethical treatment such as a fair / living wage for all workers. Secondly, participants emphasised the importance of employers making choices that have a less negative impact on the planet, such as the “designer is making the conscious effort to reduce impact they are having,” (P1FA) and furthermore “making choices that have a less negative impact on the planet,” (P8SI) and considers both employers and consumers decisions. Solutions could be sought through producing less, considering the design of the garment and the impact each piece may have, and encourage consumers to question their own purchasing habits.

Actions to combat sustainability issues were highlighted through individual action and obligation, driven by the climate crisis. P2BM noted that “we are living in a climate crisis, and I believe the fashion system is fundamentally flawed [...] I believe that change starts with the individual, so by educating myself and those around me by voting with my dollar, I have the power to contribute to and effect change that is greatly needed.” This was supported by P3FA “I do not wish to align myself with brands which use unsustainable practices [...] corporations are reasonable agents in mitigating climate change and as consumers we should support those who are with our dollar.”

Every participant stated that sustainability is important to them, each trying to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis by doing what they can such as, making conscious purchasing habits by researching and aligning their own ethos with like-minded brands. They also believe in

taking responsibility for their own actions and consumption. P7FA stated that “As a creator I need to take responsibility for what I am creating and consuming. Our planet is in a dire situation, and we need to recognise this and be responsible for our individual part.”

Responsibility is also expected from companies and individual obligation as highlighted by P8SI “We all have a personal and professional responsibility to be accountable for our impact on the planet.”

Participants had varying degrees of brands that they thought were communicating sustainability in a responsible way, however New Zealand brands were most popular with 4:8 stating Maggie Marilyn and 2:8 for both Kowtow and Rachel Mills. P3FA identified Rachel Mills as communicating sustainability responsibly because she is “open and transparent with customers about reducing waste through strategic cutting and using a pre-order / limited run system to produce the amount of garments requested.” Smaller brands as stated by P8SI “who have a slow model and thought through most aspects of their business” are considered more responsible but the participant goes on to state that “In terms of larger brands, I am not sure any of them are communicating in a responsible way – I would not say encouraging anyone to purchase new fashion is responsible.” It is worth noting that smaller brands who work at a smaller scale are likely to be perceived as communicating sustainability more responsibly, therefore are more trustworthy in the eyes of the consumer.

Participants are concerned and frustrated by green washing and its ability to “blindsight people who think they are doing the right thing” (P4FA). Greenwashing sells a “false reality” (P4FA), which is the “biggest threat to sustainability, tricks consumers to believe they are shopping ethically and sustainably” (P3FA). It is notable that greenwashing has the ability to misinform customers and can “mask the

potentially harmful practices that are actually going on” (P5FA), but as P2BM states it also “hinders real progress,” and is “unfair that big corporations who are contributing the most to climate change [...] are peddling the narrative that the onus is on consumers to make change [...] this deflects the blame and again hinders real progress.” P6FA also agreed that greenwashing “undermines genuine attempts to foster more sustainable practices, allowing the bare minimum of effort to address the magnitude of the fashion industry’s impact on the environment,” furthermore P7FA states that “looking after our planet is being used as a marketing ploy when a lot of these businesses have the power to make actual change.”

3.2.2. Responsible

Six out of Eight participants agreed that ‘responsible’ is a better term to use than ‘sustainable.’ They (6:8) believed that ‘responsible’ is more achievable than ‘sustainable’ as it “better reflects so-called sustainable practices.” Additionally, it was thought that the term removes many of the ambiguous connotations as “responsible is clearer cut and less weighted by marketing strategies” (P5FA). P4FA and P7FA agreed that responsible is more considerate than sustainable, citing “[...] consideration of how we feel about what we are doing to the planet,” (P7FA) and “responsible suggest that consideration is part of the process” (P4FA). However, P7FA stated that “both terms could be used falsely,” whereas P3FA believed “responsible is a catch-all term referring to responsible employment and production,” and that “responsible terminology is too vague,” P6FA was also in agreeance that shifting terminology from sustainable to responsible wouldn’t make a large difference stating that “in time responsible will also become a loaded term.”

A responsible brand, according to the participants looks to being highly transparent, with P4FA, P5FA, P6FA and P8SI all citing transparency “on how materials are made and used” (P4FA), “prioritising environment and people” (P5FA), being transparent with accountable and accredited frameworks “with recognisable goals” and “time frames to achieve these goals” (P6FA). Furthermore, P8SI believes that responsible seems to emphasise being “transparent with all aspects of their business.” With transparency also comes honesty in which P1FA states that “having honest conversations with their customers, taking criticism and being clear with why they are sustainable” is what a responsible business looks like.

Much like brands communicating sustainably, the same businesses came up again for communicating responsibly such as Maggie Marilyn (3:8) and Kowtow (3:8). New to emerge was the small company Loclaire (2:8), which focuses only on made to order pieces in New Zealand and works to monthly drops limiting size and output to only the demand wanted. Maggie Marilyn communicates responsibly through their “willingness to communicate to the customer on their website everything they do at each phase of production to ensure they are being environmentally aware” (P6FA). Kowtow pays a “living wage for all producers, ethical fabric sourcing – but still over produce clothing and follow ‘trends’ – and also have this information on their site” (P3FA). Communicating values and goals honestly as well as brand’s shortcomings are integral to responsible communications.

3.2.3. Clothing Favourites

The participants provided information on their preferred wardrobe, with most favouring button-up shirts – generally oversized and a preference for neutral colours, both for formality and ease of building with other existing wardrobe items. P2BM, P3FA, P4FA, P7FA all stated a preference for high-waisted pants, either straight or pleated, preferably black, but open to other neutral colours – as high-waisted pants gave the illusion of longer legs and a more “cinched waistline” (P3FA). Long dresses and skirts were more favoured than that of short skirts/dresses for everyday wearability. Long coats (P3FA, P4FA, P6FA, P7FA) also frequented the responses as they can elevate a more casual outfit, as well as “serve practically in a city like Wellington” (P6F) – again favoured in neutral colours.

P2BM stated that "many pieces from my formal wardrobe also appear in my daily wardrobe" and it would not be far-reaching to assume that all participants may borrow clothing from their everyday wardrobe for evening wear as many cited black pants and long skirts among their everyday and special occasion preferences. Moreover, they do not see the point of investing in clothing that can only be worn on the rarest of occasions. In particular, dresses (long P1FA, P3FA, P7FA) seem to be the most popular for evening / special occasions, with P6F noting a preference for “ fabrics not usually worn during the day. It creates a sense of separation from day looks and evening / special occasion looks.”

For sections 2: *Greenwashing* 4: *Clothing Design Preference* and 5: *Price Point*, please refer to appendix C for results.

3.2.4. Summary

The survey findings overall gave an in-depth understanding of how both industry professionals and prospective consumers view responsible and sustainable terminology. Although participants had an above average knowledge of sustainability (which is reflective of my intended audience) they all expressed common themes and pain points that generate a collective understanding of what constitutes ideal communication in terminology, which can be applied to the language and tone of my branding strategy.

Common understanding of sustainable terminology is primarily associated with greenwashing and there was frustration with confusion around the term due to misinformation, resulting in consumer scepticism. Common associations with greenwashing were that it is a scam, manipulation, and marketing ploy. They all believe that greenwashing hinders real change and damages the term ‘sustainability.’ The overall consensus on greenwashing is its ability to undermine and misinform consumers into selling a false reality.

Most believed that ‘responsibility’ considers how as a designer and as a consumer (a moral obligation), we are attempting to take the correct steps forward and be honest about the process rather than professing claims that are yet to be made or are designed to mask damaging practices elsewhere. However, participants cautioned that ‘responsibility’ could also become a loaded term, much like ‘sustainable,’ if misused in conjunction with dis-honest claims and a large throughput of goods. Participants emphasised transparency as the most prevalent answer for what a responsible fashion brand looks like as well as creating fewer and higher quality pieces that are not dictated by seasonal trends or encouraged by mass consumption.

Clothing design preferences as well as favourites showed that participants are likely to buy clothing that can serve interchangeably as everyday and formal wear and they prefer to purchase more staple items, keeping longevity in mind. All participants also had a high preference for production and supply chain transparency – the very basis of responsibility and preferred natural materials over synthetics as well as clothing made in New Zealand versus off-shore. Ideal price points varied and did not generally depict a viable cost for their demands based on quality pieces, supply chain transparency, manufacture in New Zealand and preference for natural materials. Although the question did not explore these parameters and rather simply asks what they would pay for a garment i.e., a dress with no context surrounding its manufacture. I believe most would be open to paying more if responsibility was communicated through each piece. Both the stylist and brand manager communicated higher price points than the rest, but consideration must also be taken into account that they are industry professionals whereas the remainder are either university students or have just finished studying and may not have the same income available. It is worth noting that working in the industry may also provide a better understanding of cost associated with creation.

The participants tended to have a preference for more fitted pieces, but this was not universally favoured. There was little interest in trend-based design however it would be fair to assume that despite claims otherwise trends may still be influential in their purchasing but purchased pieces may not be considered trend-forward like fast-fashion brands.

Overall, the collective understanding and design preferences have informed my design vision, which will manifest as a non-seasonal collection with interspersed items of clothing that is made up of natural fibres, made in New Zealand and works towards transparency, while creating clothing that is interchangeable between their everyday and special event pieces.

3.3.Design Criteria

Based on the findings from the survey I created a design criterion, which guides the design and technical process in part B.

- Natural fibres – preferably organic
- Made in New Zealand
- Longevity – preferably classic pieces
- Clothing that is interchangeable between day and night dressing
- Small on demand batches of clothing
- Manufacture considers minimal waste
- Considered customer relationship

3.4. Part B Design and Technical Process.

Design Process: Connect.

Table 2. *Design Process Connect*, by author, 2022.

Responsibility SDG 12	Customer (perception)	Aesthetic to RHYANA	Thematic
<p>Using (either) deadstock material (which combats waste that would've likely ended up in landfill or incinerator). Or Organic cotton and natural/ biodegradable materials (to be fully traceable in supply chain). 100% cotton scraps to be recycled through closed-loop recycling partnerships. Living wage + Creating clothing in limited runs adopting a design-sell-make model. Using leftover materials to be crafted into unique items, such as accessories or one off garments? Minimising waste in the sampling stage and throughout the manufacturing process. On-demand manufacturing/ design-sell-make model</p>	<p>Pragmatic Unfussed To dress with ease Always put together – but never overdressed (they balance between the two) Believe their wardrobe should be easily interchangeable between day to night. They value comfort and dressing for confidence They're functional, eloquent, calculative (in a good way) Passionate They have a hungry heart and an inquisitive nature Ethical, activists and prefer to vote with their dollar. They make smart purchasing habits and mix high end designer with smaller niche brands or vintage. Clothes to take them from office to dinner, to the grocery store and everywhere in between. Invest in clothing that they will keep in constant rotation. Simplistic but never boring.</p>	<p>Statuesque and tubular forms. Balance classic with subtle details. The twist of hand Dress and outer wear heavy. Clothing made for ease of wear. Combination of clothing that can be worn to and out of work, and can mix into your already existing rotation of everyday pieces.</p>	<p>Late Nana Clarissa Cowboy influence (line dancing) Comfort Towels Ice-cold pool Tassels</p>

The table (2) integrates four aspects that connect responsible business operations, understanding of prospective customers, my own design signature / aesthetic and how this interrelates with the thematic influence of the Clarissa collection synonymous with RHYANA.

The below diagram (Fig. 3.) shows the phases of the design and technical process in relationship to AR.

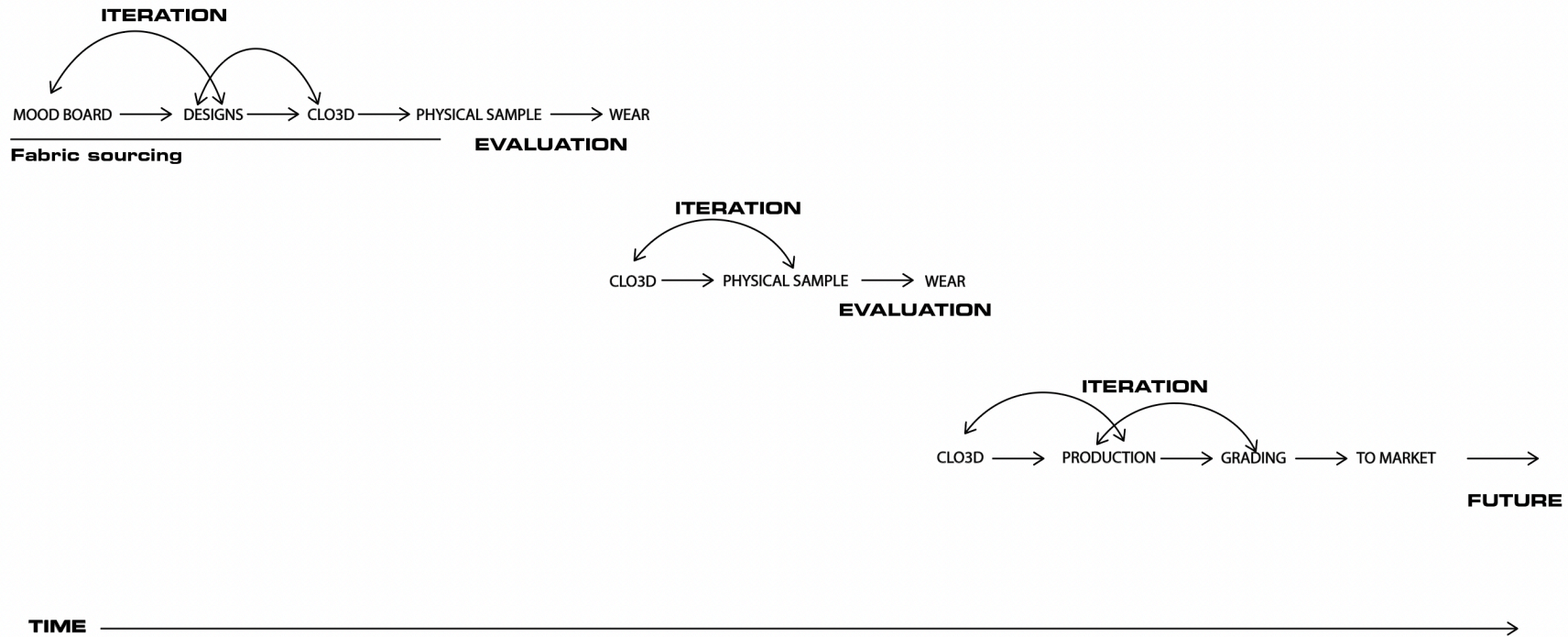


Fig. 3. AR design phase, digital diagram by author, 2022.

3.4.1. Mood Board

The overall mood board is explicit to the designs, alongside my own individual brand aesthetic.



Fig. 4. *Clarissa mood board*, paper collage by author, 2022.

3.4.2. Colour Board

The neutral whites and greys and blue tone colour palate were chosen based on memories associated with my nana and holiday activities such as the feel of the ice-cold snow, water and local skies, reflections of the brightly blue painted pool. The preference for neutral colours were also informed by the survey participants preferred wardrobe – for ease of building with other existing wardrobe items.

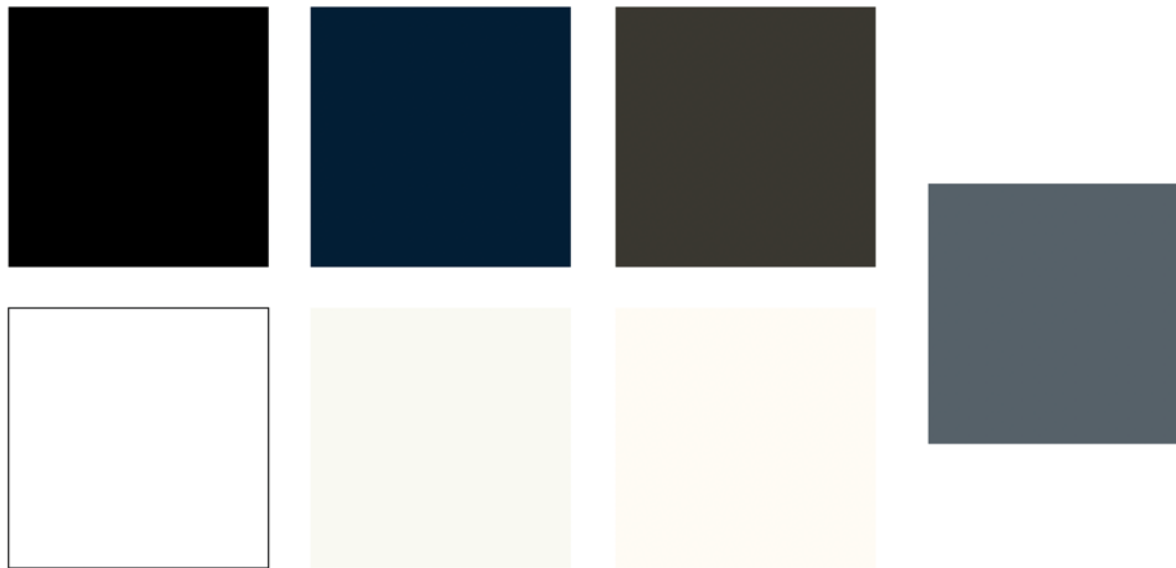


Fig. 5. *Colour board*, digital image by author, 2022.

Design idea generation focuses on an evolving theme, with a deliberate focus on nostalgia and emotional connection. The presence of nostalgia as Routledge states is “a relatively positive emotional experience concerning personally meaningful past experiences involving close ones, but also prominently featuring the self” (24). The collection Clarissa allowed me to travel back and revisit special moments that were previously held within the pages of a family photo album. My nana Clarissa was a line dancer and although I was too young to remember her dancing, home videos were often watched, the whole family reminiscing on days gone by.

The mood board took a seasonless approach that is integral to the declining prominence of seasonality in fashion. The inherent juxtaposition between summer and winter is linked through memories distinctive to my nana and I. Images of swimming “*Wrapping a towel around you after a cold dip in an ice-cold pool*” and line dancing images “*Boot-scooting to achy-breaky-heart – a line dancing anthem echoing in a small-town hall*” were the main influence and features of the above; and were taken both in abstract form and literally through western yoke detailings, tassels and twisting of material. Some items such as the Clarice shirt were generated from my nana’s existing wardrobe, (which I drew upon the silhouette of the garment) further cementing clothing as an emotional vessel. The silhouette of the Clarice shirt is featured throughout other pieces of the collection such as the Clarissa coat, which uses the same western detailing reimagined with fringing – inspired by line dancing, the inverted box pleat that runs down the centre back and the relaxed dolman sleeve.

Clothing can emit emotions, creating intimacy and connectedness that can anchor the bond between garment and user. As Chapman states, “storytelling may also be deployed as an agent of memory, where abstract scenarios can be woven into familiar narrative sequences to assist

in both the storage and recall of complex experiences” (124). I am hoping that my own reflective nostalgia can evoke a similar level of familiarity and connection in customers. This potential nostalgic transferral can render an emotional connection and add value to the apparel pieces promoting stronger attachment to the garments for purchase consideration, care of wear and longevity.

3.4.3. Fabrics and Fabric Sourcing

Concurrently to the mood board, fabrics were considered and are most integral to the responsible framework of the collection. If circularity of the pieces has to be considered at the design stage; the choice of fabrics plays a huge role in whether or not the pieces could be recycled or biodegrade at the end of their life. Transparency of materials was an important factor amongst my prospective customers as well as the use of natural materials which is vital to sustainability.

Fabrics were sourced and chosen based on their ability to either be recycled through closed-loop textile recycling partnership, formed with local Wellington business Little Yellow Bird or to biodegrade naturally in time. All fabrics had to be natural in origin, and there was a preference for organic and single fibre blends. Fabrics were sourced from the following based on their quality, cost effectiveness and their availability with no minimum order quantity.

The Fabric store was selected for its locale and stocking of ZQ premium merino and deadstock New Zealand jerseys. From Knit World (later sourcing directly through Crucci) I purchased 100% New Zealand sheep wool for the Mia knit jersey (see p. 49). I selected Hawes and Freer

for their range of certified recycled fusing and certified organic cottons. They are notable for their service and expertise in fabric knowledge and the NZ fashion industry as well as sourcing from both Europe and Asia, based on quality and working with mills that hold certifications and are regularly audited. Both Hawes and Freer and The Fabric Store (retail division of Wall Fabrics) are members of Mindful Fashion New Zealand a non-profit fashion collective of leading NZ designers, textile and trim suppliers with the intention to provide long-term sustainable success (“About Us”).

The collection is predominantly made up of 100% cotton sourced from Hawes and Freer, and all fabric scraps can be recycled through our closed-loop-recycling partnership to ensure waste reduction in the production stage. 100% wool/merino wool makes up the other portion of the collection with the exclusion of the Bathers dress which is 95% cotton and 5% elastane (the only piece from the collection not of single fibre) the choice was made based on the design needs of the dress but in future could be made in merino jersey, which has natural stretch. The Bathers dress is made from deadstock material, which was made locally in NZ. The choice of fabrics dictates what can be designed and are integral to the circularity of the pieces in future. All fabrics were considered carefully and fit for their intended design purpose.

3.4.4. Fabric Board



Fig. 6. *Fabric board*, digital scan by author, 2022.

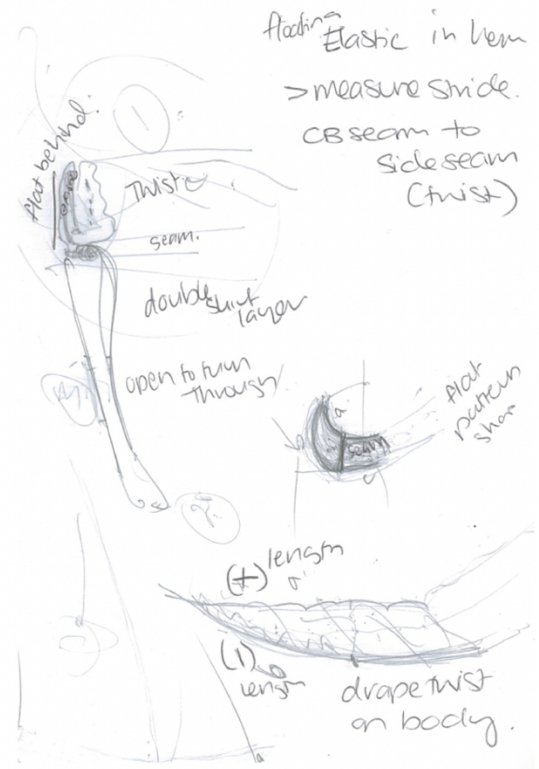
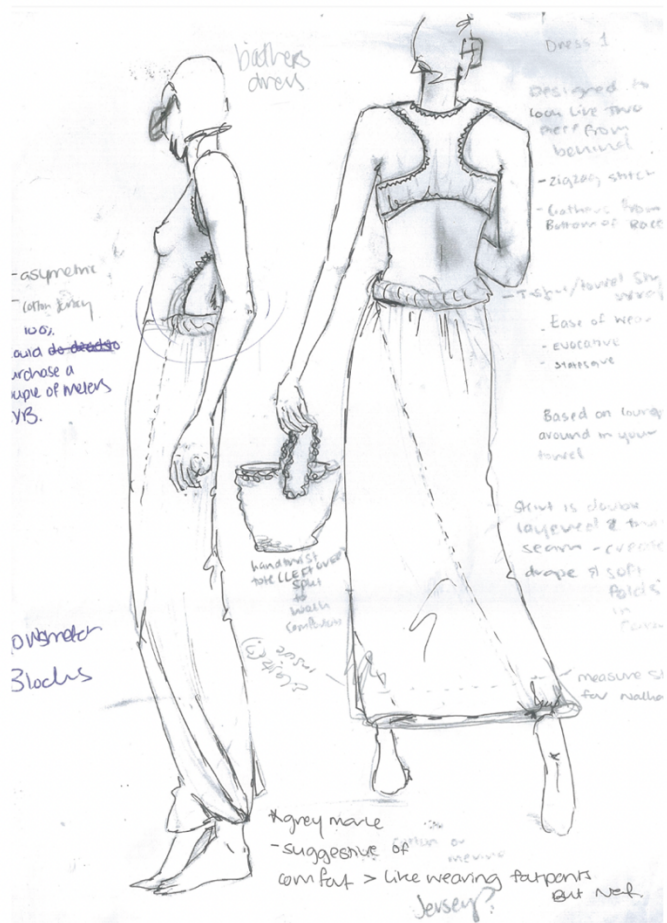
3.4.5. Idea Generation

Each design follows AR and is based on iterative evaluations. Each piece combines a design narrative while carefully considering the customer, who they may be and how the garments are worn and staying true to my design aesthetic and ethos synonymous with the overall branding (part A).

Sketch development worked through an iterative drawing approach. The designs were informed by Clarissa i.e., the Clarice shirt and by the information given in the survey (part A) where my prospective customers stated their clothing favourites and design preferences such as high waisted pants.

The sketch development worked as the basis for my pattern making designs and later design development along with 3D pattern making software (CLO3D) visualizations to further iterations. Designs are developed based on pattern execution, fit and overall wearability of the garment.

The following pages show the initial sketch development alongside annotation. It is worth noting that some of the sketch development was realised prior to the patternmaking while others were not, but all of the sketches are considered as early iterations and not final designs.



The Bathers Dress is inspired by wrapping up in a towel after a dip in an ice-cold-pool.

The dress imbues the idea of wrapping up with two areas to twist, much like the same ritual as a towel, whilst also featuring an ease of wear such as the racer back and softly draping skirt.

Fig. 7. Bathers dress sketch, digital scan and text by author, 2022.

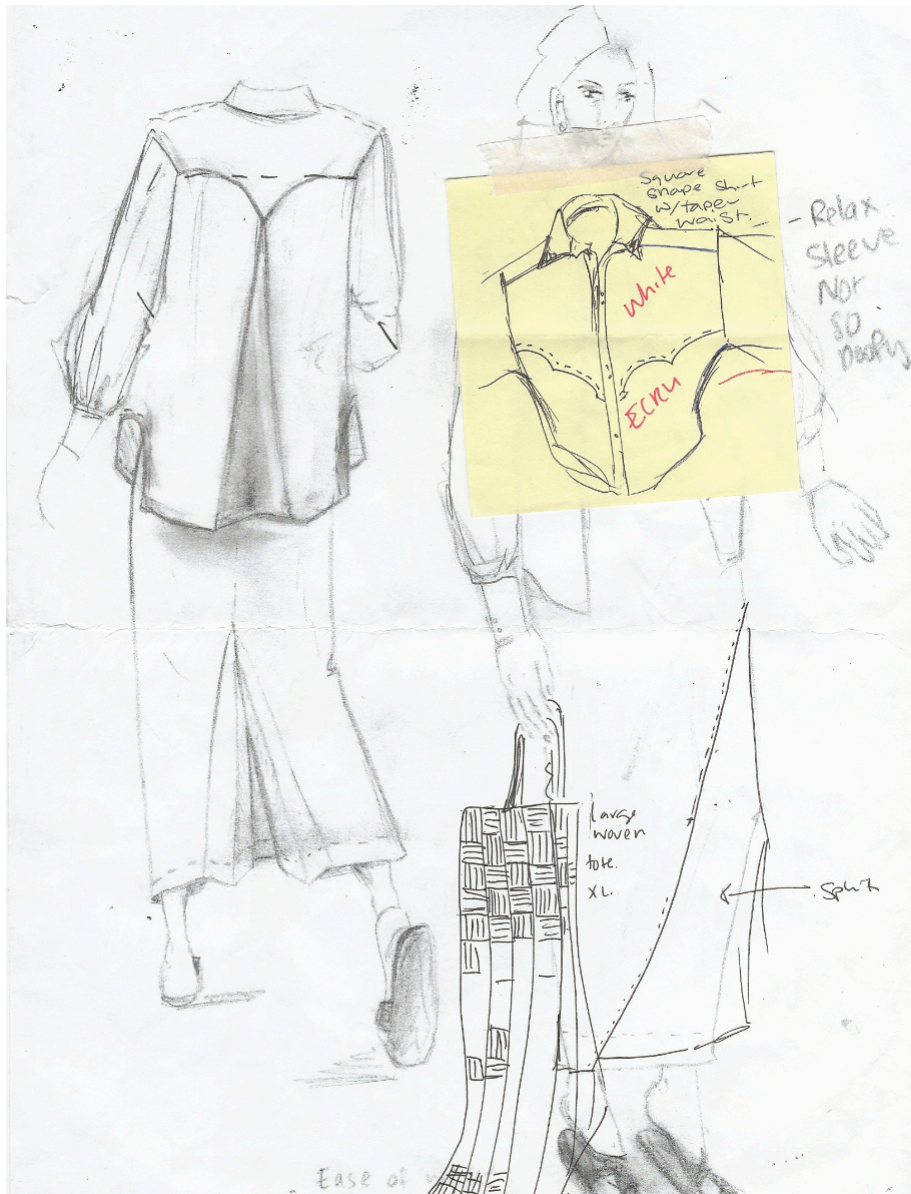


Fig. 9. Clarice shirt and Kirsten skirt, digital scan and text by author, 2022.

The Clarice shirt is heavily influenced by line dancing costumes and wearability, the shirt is subtle and features western design lines on the back yoke as well as an inverted box pleat which compliments the Kirsten skirt.

The Clarice shirt is shown in a long and short sleeve version. The yellow shows the an example of change developments in shaping.

The Kirsten skirt plays on the need for a skirt that is suitable for everyday errands and can be taken into the night. The also features RHYANA's signature double inverted box pleat and split back

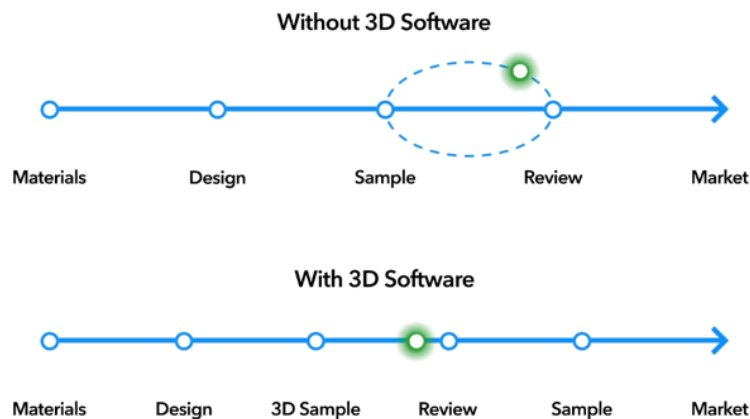


Fig. 11. *Final line-up*, charcoal and kraft paper sketch by author, 2022.

3.4.6. Technical Development

After the first iterations were sketched and decided upon, I started on the technical development process which includes pattern making and sampling. Each garment followed the same process (except for the Mia Knit see p. 49). The process involved pattern making on digital software CLO3D, which was integral for efficiency and design realisation. CLO3D's ability to reduce waste in the sampling stage is integral to the responsibility aspect of my business operations.

CLO3D was efficient from end to end and reduces time to market (see Fig. 12.). Designing with virtual garments reduced sample production



waste and enabled visualisation that takes the guess work out of the manual pattern making process which allows for more exploration and iteration quickly, an important factor in the continuation of my iterations. The visualisation also meant I could render in real time to see the fabric and fit on the avatar. I found CLO3D streamlined my production process, saving time and reducing waste, while accurately representing my designs and the pattern at once. For a start-up that is looking to manufacture in a streamlined and sustainable way CLO3D is a suitable and lean process. The technical development process also considered waste reduction in

Fig. 12. CLO3D [software process for CLO3D], n.d., www.clo3d.com/en/.

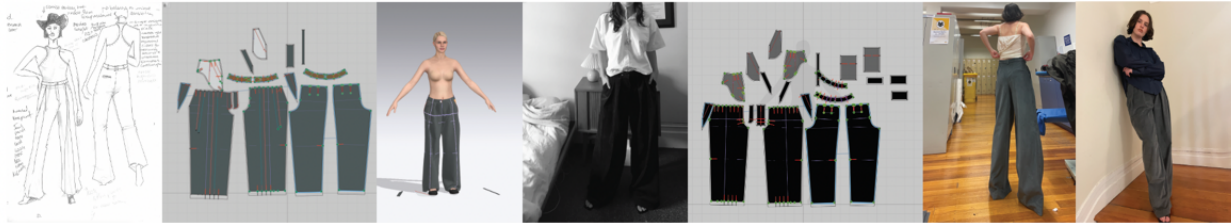
the prototyping stage. The first prototypes were made from existing materials I already had, or 100% cotton sheets purchased from an

opshop that could later be recycled with the buy-back-box purchased through Little Yellow Bird. The digital development was integrated into the physical sample and prototype stages. Evaluating the fit on the body and fabric behaviour was essential for design development. Changes were all integral to the wearability, comfort and quality of the garment and couldn't have been realised without an early prototype and wear testing.

The following imagery shows examples of the design process, sketches through to the virtual prototype, sampling and physical prototype;

- Bathers dress
- Clarissa Coat
- Clarice shirt
- Jonas pant
- Kirsten Skirt
- Stirrup legging

JONAS PANT



KIRSTEN SKIRT



STIRRUP LEGGING



Fig. 14. *Design development process 2*, Digital collage by author, 2022.

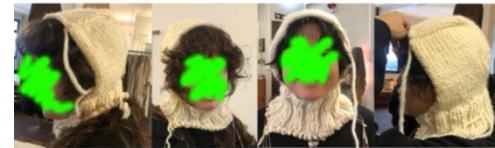
3.4.7. Mia Knit

The development of the Mia knit was created by working alongside local designer/ creator Mia Henderson for design and technical interchange and creative collaboration. Whilst CLO3D was not used in the process, a strong iterative development remained.

Creative collaboration with Henderson was an opportunity to utilise skill strengths of another designer that I did not have; furthermore, working collaboratively enabled an interchange of ideas and design development that was beneficial to wear-testing and a successful final outcome. Collaborating from a brand perspective, not only enriches and diversifies my own brand offering, but works reciprocally – positively impacting both designers. The wholesale partnership with Crucci for 100% New Zealand made pure lambswool and produced locally by Henderson aligns with the design criteria and further cements the capabilities of a responsible business framework.



After attaching the balaclava and finalising the sleeves, everything is looking great however the stitching at the base of the balaclava looks a bit too crafty and not neat, need to rethink how I can make this look sleeker. The back of the balaclava also doesn't fit properly, I need to decrease at the base back to make it fit seamlessly.



I've adjusted the back of the balaclava by creating a decrease V detail which I've fitted on a few friends to see how it looks. Firstly Sarah, who has a normal crown size but a lot of hair. Fits snug is easy to get on and off and with rib will wrap around the face well. Secondly Ina, who has a smaller crown, it fits well but without stretching the hood. Easy to get on and off and doesn't look big. Thirdly, Molly who has a very small crown but a lot of hair. The hood fits similarly to Ina. Lastly my mum who has a medium sized crown and not a lot of hair, the hood fits perfectly on her. I also fitted it against me. I have a large crown and it fits comfortably while stretched around my head. Is easy to get on and off too.



Fig. 15. Mia Henderson, *Mia Knit development*, 2022, digital collage with text.

3.4.8. Wear testing and Critique

The final prototypes were used for my look book photoshoot. I spent time (a week) wearing my physical garments assessing whether or not they were suitable for everyday wear and levels of comfort, including the choice of fabrics, were they suitable – do they crease and are they high maintenance or uncomfortable?

I also invited another wearer to experience the pieces (for a week) and give honest and critical feedback on the design detailing and fit (refer to appendix D). This process of taking more time within wearer evaluation was considered important at this stage as so often this is not carried out within standard industry practise. Going forward, feedback and wear testing from customers will continue to be exercised and is considered beneficial for small businesses. The considered customer relationship towards comfort, wearability and quality will not only retain brand loyalty but build longevity and value into the garments held by the customers.

From wear evaluations of the samples, I then onboarded any feedback and tweaked the patterns or materials where needed. This feedback will then be applied to my final patterns which will be sent to a local production factory in Waikanae with the improvements and new materials ready to go to market in the near future. The considered customer approach will also be reflected in the production samples with the construction knowledge held by the company and any further refinement welcomed.

3.5.Lookbook

The lookbook shot by photographer Bex McGill and model Madison Le Marquand, was created with the intent of producing high quality and visually appealing imagery that was pared-back in aesthetic and considered both the target market and the 'Clarissa' narrative. When planning the shoot, I liaised with McGill on my vision working with example imagery, what I believe my target market would consume and association with the RHYANA aesthetic. Camera angles were used to enhance certain design details, the close-ups and strong focus on Le Marquand was deliberate as I wanted the wearer to wear the clothes rather than the clothes wear the model and the portrait style photography was a subtle way of communicating this.

The intention of the lookbook was to balance both the design narrative of 'Clarissa' while carefully considering the customer with the objective of strengthening the brand identity – enhancing brand desirability and aspiration. Re-working with McGill and Le Marquand, who had previously shot and modelled for my undergraduate collection was an easy decision based on previous photographic success. The coupling of the two was natural, both executing on my design vision. Playing on moody natural lighting and a plain backdrop allowed the clothing and Le Marquand to be the main focal point. The deliberate pared-back aesthetic, of the photographs and lookbook layout is affluent and synonymous with the RHYANA aesthetic. Styling and close ups are suggestive of the RHYANA woman, and are communicated through the disparate dressing, it feels relatable but also individual and draws heavy from the customers beliefs that their everyday and formal wardrobe are one.

However, while the lookbook imagery of the collection was synonymous with the RHYANA aesthetic whether or not there is a disconnection between the thematic influence of 'Clarissa' and the final imagery displayed should be considered. The imagery was shot in a studio with no context other than the garments themselves. While visually appealing, the editorial style of photography may hinder an emotional connection to the garments due to the lack of real-world context, making the clothing feel less accessible or relatable and could contribute to early obsolescence. This is potentially important as emotional connection enables the fostering of more meaningful relationships to garments. Moreover Chapman believed the development of empathy towards a garment can influence the perception of the brand's core values (113) – which is central to the development of building a responsible brand that balances economic and environmental prosperity.

However, further contextual grounding beyond the scope of this project could involve content and marketing grounded in the real world that is more reflective of the 'Clarissa' mood. Spotlighting each piece, i.e., the Bathers dress and honing in on the narrative of "wrapping a towel around you after a cold dip in an ice-cold pool," could be a way to build the narrative further, while the visual imagery could reflect a hot summers day by the pool. Future marketing strategies focusing on the origin and storytelling could additionally allow for more of the garments' narrative to show through. Nevertheless, the branding at the current time reflects the overall ethos of RHYANA as a brand.

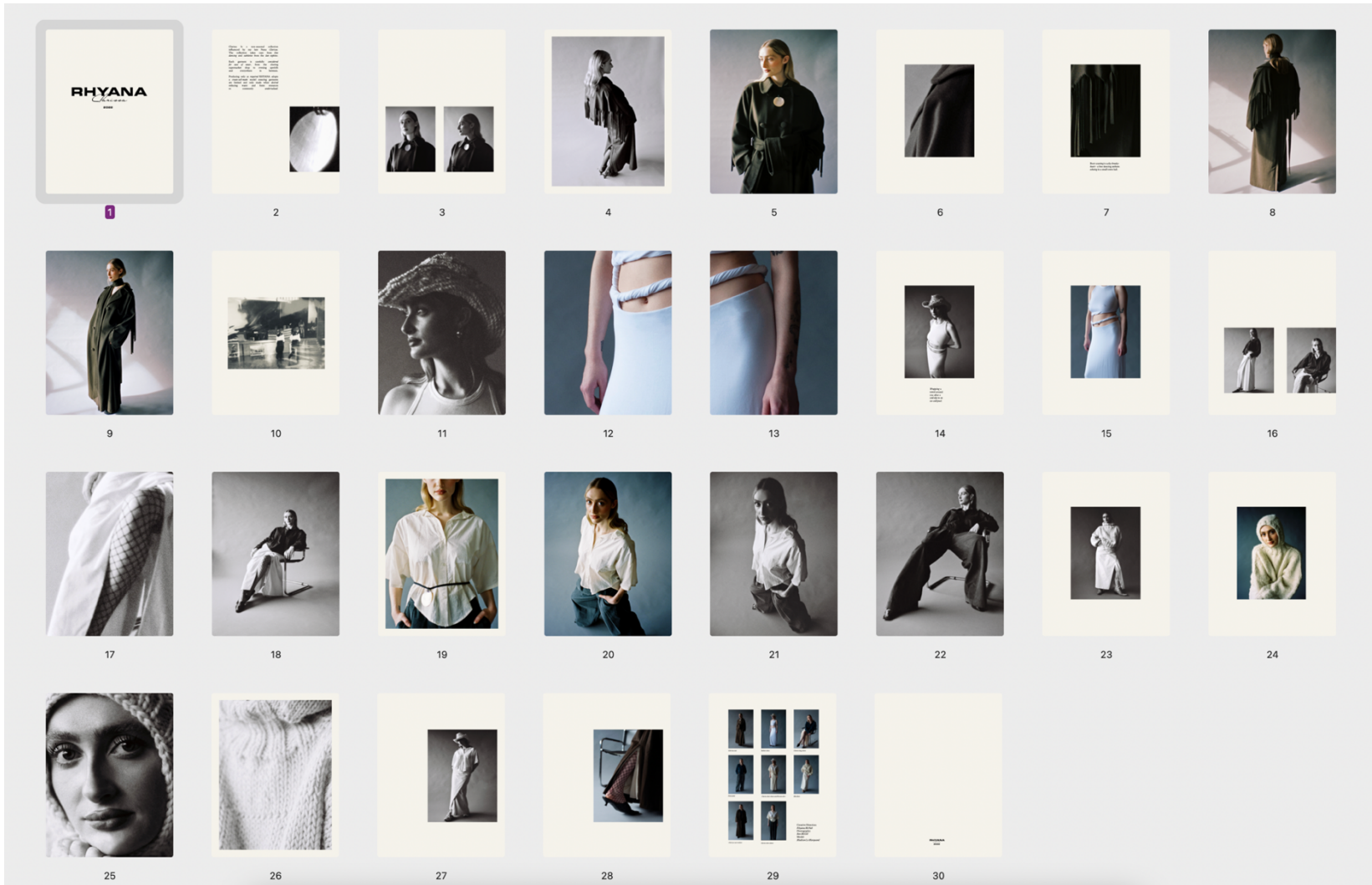


Fig. 16. Lookbook RHYANA, digital lookbook by author, 2022.

3.6. Website About Exert

Fig. 17. Is an exert from my website copy and was informed by the survey questionnaire (part A). The copy is a shortened introduction into the brand and the RHYANA persona. Paragraph one details who the RHYANA person is – modern and discerning. Two, tells the customer how the brand works – a snapshot into our responsible business model, and lastly the third paragraph highlights the wearability informed by constant wear-testing and suggests where the clothing may be worn in relation to my intended target audience.

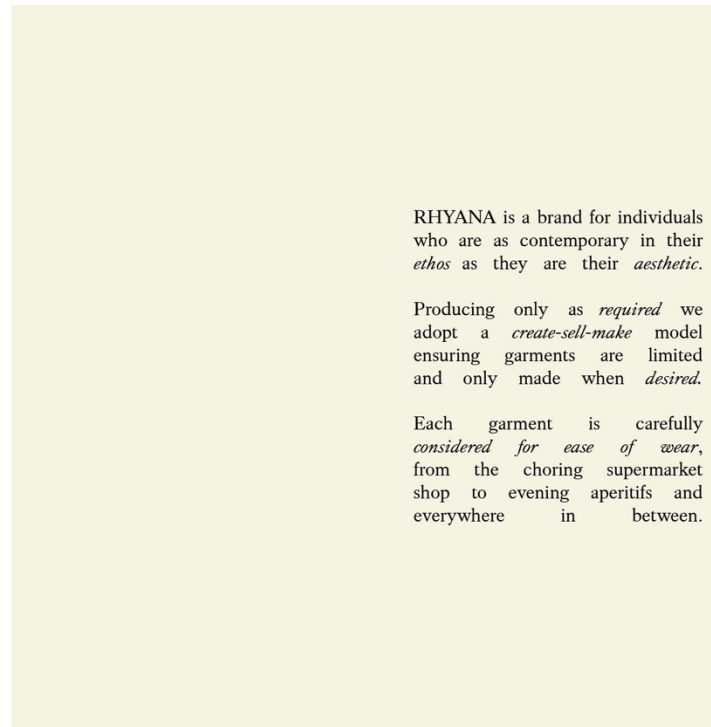


Fig. 17. *About RHYANA*, digital text by author 2022.

3.7.Outward Exposures

During the project, my collection was showcased as an independent designer alongside Starving Artist Funds, (Fig. 18.) furthermore, the Clarissa coat was featured in *Viva Magazine Volume Eight* (Fig. 19.) and I was profiled as a designer to watch in *Fashion Quarterly's Magazine* winter edition (Fig. 20.). Pieces from my collection also appear in *Cool Pretty Cool: Aotearoa's Fresh Faces* (Fig. 21.) and are frequently requested for freelance styling and content. The fruitfulness of the 'Clarissa' collection and continued success as a brand before launching has proven there is demand for the RHYANA aesthetic. Furthermore the relationships built with magazines and stylist is ongoing and builds earned media that is authentic and trustworthy from an outside customer perspective. *Viva and Fashion Quarterly Magazine* are New Zealand's top selling fashion publications, segmenting a large portion of my intended target audience. The interview for *Fashion Quarterly* was my first foray into establishing myself as an emerging designer and allowed me to outwardly express my visions as a designer and brand.



Fig. 18. *Behind the scenes*, personal photograph by author, March 2022.



Fig. 19. Emma Anderson, *Wuthering Heights*, June 2022, photograph. Viva Magazine, *Modern Luxury*, June 2022. p. 86.



Fig. 20. Amberly Colby, *Ones to Watch*, July 2022, digital image. Fashion Quarterly Magazine, *The Optimism Issue*, July 2022. p. 60.



Fig. 21. Nicole Brannen, *Introducing 9 Fresh Faces From Aotearoa*, April 21 2022, photograph. *Cool Pretty Cool*, www.coolpretty.cool/introducing-9-fresh-faces-from-aotearoa.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

One could speculate that the responsible business research, and alignment between brand identity and design aesthetic is successful based on public exposure outside the creative work. However, as I have not yet fully gone to market, the outcomes and branding has not been wholly communicated and tested; therefore, the exposure is only measured by a brand introduction and aesthetic success. Nonetheless, these exposures have validated the success of my fashion pieces to a degree and it is gratifying to see these in publications I have read so amorously over the years. Pieces from the collection have been featured in *Viva Magazine's* volume eight and frequently used as styling pieces for freelance stylists. I have also been spotlighted as an emerging designer for *Fashion Quarterly's* winter edition, where my interview enabled me to speak honestly of my aspirations as a eponymous designer, further aligning my own values with the brands. Earned media such as the exposure from the magazines will allow me to build trust within the New Zealand sustainable fashion market, leveraging the free coverage for when I do go to market.

While branding communicates values and shows how the business wants to be seen, it also helps tell the product's story. Designing the brand position for RHYANA aids the intended target market to understand what the business stands for and its position against competitors. Researching speculative customers (A) enabled the formation of brand language and a transparency strategy that can be crafted to suit RHYANA's responsible ethos and collectively understood – strengthening the messaging to consumers. While I was able to formulate brand messaging that resonates with the RHYANA ethos, the brand image – the perceptions the customer has about the brand cannot be assessed

within the project's scope. Ideally, the aspects of brand image I can control, e.g. tone of voice, imagery, or responsible framing, would align with how customers perceive the brand and success would be measured by the degree of this alignment.

Drawing upon Niinimäki' et al. idea of value creation as an evaluative tool for assessing business models, manufacturing and marketing (33), the target market was considered and scrutinised throughout the project in particular the data collection outlined in part A, which informed the design criteria for part B, becoming the foundational cornerstones of the collection and how the brand operates. Although the patternmaking and construction of the garments were not integral to the methods, the iterative approach towards creating clothing that considered the customer was necessary. While incorporating the narrative and genuine intent aids longevity through emotional connection as highlighted by Chapman, practicality and comfort are also necessary to encourage constant garment use. Wear-testing proved essential in assessing the wearability and feasibility of the items as well as providing further future improvements to consider before launching – and future considerations could include more participants of varying shapes and sizes to wear test the garments and provide feedback.

The design and technical development process was not integral to the brand identity but rather the business operations, which is the framework of 'responsible' and outlined in the design criteria. The use of CLO3D successfully reduced both time and waste, resulting in more successful adoption of samples from the beginning. Eventually, the final prototypes will be re-sampled at a local production company in Waikanae, where I can measure the cost of the garments and assess the viability of making each piece, which is integral to the pricing and target market outlined in my business proposal. The choice of a local manufacturer, while more costly in terms of production, is essential to

the responsibility of the brand – especially for transparency. Information on who made the clothes and where, will add additional value and better align with the ethos of the speculated customers.

The partnerships built throughout the scope of the project have facilitated authenticity into the business model, enabling circularity, purchasing natural fibres and manufacturing in New Zealand, all relating to my criteria of responsible design, outlined by my speculated target audience. Furthermore working with my business mentor Olga Speranskaya and Massey university's E-centre have furthered my knowledge of the fashion industry, from contacts through to help applying for grants. The continuation of these partnerships beyond the project, will be beneficial in navigating the industry. Continuing connections with magazines and stylist will help to build earned media – important in building a reputable brand and growing the brand's awareness.

The creative works made contributions to communicating a responsible brand from a start-up perspective through facilitating a collective understanding of what constitutes ideal brand communication in terms of importance placed on language and transparency, subsequently informing the brand identity and market positioning. Emphasis was placed on the research conducted in part A, which provided the criteria for design, including clothing preferences and fabric types and the speculated customers' demand for transparency. Designs reflected customers' preferences outlined in (A) while also working thematically. Transparency – considered the hallmark of 'responsible', involved solutions suitable for a start-up, and waste considerations had to be made in the patternmaking and prototyping stage as well as the produced garments' future solutions.

The creative works showcased an innovative and circular process that considered design and communications as the basis of launching a collection. Decisions were made from a start-up perspective, which considered responsible practices throughout the creation process. Moreover, while the creative works do not assess the overall viability within the scope of the project, it provides the foundations for launching a brand.

As a designer I work intuitively, however the project has challenged me to think strategically about my customers as well as outwardly reflect on my own understandings and assumptions. Others could learn from the documentation of creative work and synthesis of salient information connected to consumer analysis, which enabled a better formulation of a brand identity informed by consumers' pain points and understanding of sustainable terms. Other designers starting up their own business could adopt early data collection to further understand their speculated customers and how that could inform their brand identity and future alignment of consumers' perceptions towards the brand. In future, a more extensive sample selection of participants with a more diverse understanding of responsible and sustainable language would better round out a collective understanding, broadening the target market and reach. Further improvements would be a method for evaluating the internal alignment of RHYANA, wherein the identity created fits the consumers' perception of the brand.

Despite not being able to assess the full viability of the business within the scope of the project, the business plan intends to better secure the economic success of RHYANA's design-make-sell business model. I do, however, believe that I have developed a responsible business that balances the brand ethos and identity of RHYANA and have implemented the best practices from a start-up perspective in laying the foundations for economic and environmental prosperity. Through research and creative practise, I have learned the importance of a

consumer-led approach; as a designer, each piece of clothing should be edited and curated accordingly for prospective clients. I also believe that, while small in scale, SME brands are innovative, can create change in the fashion industry, and are supported by consumers – who demand a need for change and are willing to choose brands that better align with their ethos – given it is done responsibly.

5. Appendices

5.1. Appendix A



Responsibility – A Future Insurance Policy?

INFORMATION SHEET

Researchers Name: Rhyana McNab (Masters of Creative Enterprise).

The purpose of this project is to build understanding of a sustainable Fashion business model by developing a responsible system that balances brand ethos and design with profitable future outcomes.

You are invited to participate in Rhyana McNab’s research questionnaire and focus group as a part of her Masters of Creative Enterprise project:

Responsibility – A Future Insurance Policy?

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes.

The use of data is to gain an outside perspective of fashion in relation to sustainability and will help adopt an easy and understandable way to communicate a responsible business framework.

Once the data is obtained it will be collected and grouped into key themes; A) communicating honest and transparent marketing and overall brand purpose. B) implementing value into design aesthetic and its portrayal.

The storage of the data (both questionnaire and transcribed recordings) will be archived until after the Exegesis is published, before being correctly disposed of.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study (by no later than December 2021);
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Please feel free to contact the researcher(s) and/or supervisor(s) if they have any questions about the project.

Researcher: Rhyana McNab **Phone #** [REDACTED] **Email** [REDACTED]

Supervisor: Deb Cumming **Phone #** [REDACTED] **Email** D.M.Cumming@massey.ac.nz

LOW RISK NOTIFICATION

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Responsible – A Future Insurance Policy?

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I wish/do not wish to be involved in a focus group at a later date.

I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

Section 1.

Sustainable

- 1. What is your understanding of sustainable practice in the fashion industry?**
- 2. Is sustainability important to you? And if so why?**
- 3. Can you name any brands who are communicating sustainability in a responsible way?**
- 4. What are your thoughts on green washing?**

Section 2.

Green washing

Do you believe that total transparency makes a brand trust worthy?

How much importance do you place on the following:

1 = Not important 5 = Neutral. 10 = Very important

Tracing fabric fibres back to the farms.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Production and supply chain transparency – who made the clothes and where?

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Transparency of the cost breakdown and profit margins.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Marketing consistent with its clothing (i.e. organic t-shirt)

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Section 3.

Responsible

Responsible definition – Research Proposal

“In the fashion industry, the term sustainability and what constitutes sustainable practice is an area of increasing confusion, exacerbated by the divisive practice of fashion labels "greenwashing." The term "responsible" does not discard or delineate from the end goal of true sustainability but instead argues that companies should work towards environmentally friendly practices without making outrageous sustainability claims that only further de-saturate the term.”

Do you think responsible is a better term than sustainable, and why?

What would a responsible fashion brand look like to you?

What fashion brands do you consider are communicating a responsible brand?

Section 4.

Clothing Design preference

Out of a scale 1-10 please circle your level of preference

1 = Low preference. 5 = Neutral. 10 = High preference.

Materials

Using synthetic materials	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
Deadstock material (end of line fabrics)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
Organic cotton	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
Non-virgin materials (recycled)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
Upcycling previous clothes	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.

Sourcing materials/ Production

Made in NZ. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Made overseas. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Clothing Design style

Designs for longevity 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Trend based designs 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Everyday wearable pieces 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Unique – more artistic pieces – limited runs 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Combination of wearable and going out pieces 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

One off pieces – no two alike? 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Silhouette/ Shape

Form fitting clothing 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Oversized clothing 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Services

Small on-demand batches of clothing

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Fitting services – custom sizes

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Repair services

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Section 5.

Price point

Out of a scale 1-10 please circle a range that you believe garment price should be based at

1= \$10 - 100

5= \$500

10= \$1000

Dresses

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Pants

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Skirts

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Shirts

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Blazers

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Jackets

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Coats

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Singlets

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.

Write notes for exceptions:

Section 6.

Clothing favourites.

What are your go to everyday items of clothing and why?

What are your go to evening or special event items of clothing and why?

5.2. Appendix B

Responsible definition – Research Proposal

“In the fashion industry, the term sustainability and what constitutes sustainable practice is an area of increasing confusion, exacerbated by the divisive practice of fashion labels "greenwashing." The term "responsible" does not discard or delineate from the end goal of true sustainability but instead argues that companies should work towards environmentally friendly practices without making outrageous sustainability claims that only further de-saturate the term.”

5.3. Appendix C

Section 2: *Greenwashing*. Participants were asked to plot a number from 1 to 10 based (1 = not important 5 = neutral 10 = very important) based on how much importance they placed on the following: tracing fibres back to farm, production and supply chain transparency, transparency of cost breakdown and profit margins and marketing consistency with clothing.

Section 4: *Clothing design preference*. Participants were asked to rate their design preferences for materials, sourcing and production, clothing style, silhouette and service by plotting a number from 1 to 10, 1 = not important 5 = neutral 10 = very important and section 5:

Price point. Participants were asked what they believe a garment should be priced at i.e., dresses, pants and skirts by plotting a number from 1 to 10, 1= \$100 5 = \$500 10= \$1000.

Section 2: Greenwashing Answers

1= Low preference 5 = Neutral 10 = High Preference

Tracing fibres to farm

1. 6
2. 8
3. 8
4. 5
5. 8
6. 10
7. 10
8. 7

Production and supply chain transparency (who made the clothes and where?)

1. 10
2. 10
3. 9
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 10
8. 10

Transparency of the cost breakdown and profit margins.

1. 8
2. 7
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. 8
7. 8
8. 6

Marketing to be consistent with the clothing produced (i.e claiming to be an organic tee when not).

1. 10
2. 10
3. 7
4. 10
5. 10
6. 10
7. 5
8. 8

Section 4: Clothing Design Preferences Answers

Materials:

Using synthetic materials

1. 8
2. 5
3. 1
4. 3
5. 3
6. 5
7. 3
8. 1

Deadstock material

1. 4
2. 7
3. 7
4. 10
5. 6
6. 8
7. 5
8. 7

Organic Cotton

1. 10
2. 7
3. 9
4. 3
5. 9
6. 7
7. 7
8. 7

Non-virgin – recycled materials

1. 5
2. 8
3. 9
4. 8
5. 10
6. 7
7. 9
8. 6

Upcycling from previous collections

1. 8
2. 7
3. 6
4. 10
5. 10
6. 9
7. 9
8. 10

Sourcing materials / production

Made in NZ

- 1. 10
- 2. 9
- 3. 10
- 4. 7
- 5. 10
- 6. 8
- 7. 10
- 8. 8

Made overseas

- 1. 3
- 2. 6
- 3. 7 *only if produced ethically.
- 4. 5
- 5. 5
- 6. 5
- 7. 5
- 8. 5

Clothing design style

Designed for longevity

- 1. 10
- 2. 9
- 3. 8
- 4. 10
- 5. 10
- 6. 10
- 7. 10
- 8. 10

Trend based designs.

- 1. 7
- 2. 3
- 3. 5
- 4. 1
- 5. 5
- 6. 5
- 7. 5
- 8. 2

Everyday wearable pieces.

- 1. 10
- 2. 8
- 3. 7
- 4. 10
- 5. 10
- 6. 5
- 7. 7
- 8. 7

Unique/ artistic / limited runs

- 1. 10
- 2. 10
- 3. 10
- 4. 5
- 5. 6
- 6. 8
- 7. 7
- 8. 10

Combination of wearable and going out

- 1. 10
- 2. 10
- 3. 9
- 4. 7
- 5. 10
- 6. 10
- 7. 10
- 8. 6

One-off pieces – no two alike

- 1. 5
- 2.
- 3. 9
- 4. 7
- 5. 3
- 6. 7
- 7. 6
- 8. 8

Silhouette / shape

Form fitting clothing

- 1. 8
- 2. 6
- 3. 9
- 4. 6
- 5. 8
- 6. 7
- 7. 9
- 8. 3

Oversized clothing

- 1. 3
- 2. 8
- 3. 4
- 4. 7
- 5. 4
- 6. 5
- 7. 7
- 8. 6

Services

Small on demand batches of clothing

- 1. 7
- 2. 10
- 3. 8
- 4. 8
- 5. 9
- 6. 10
- 7. 10
- 8. 7

Fitting services – custom sizes

- 1. 10
- 2. 10
- 3. 4
- 4. 7
- 5. 3
- 6. 8
- 7. 8
- 8. 6

Repair services

- 1. 10
- 2. 10
- 3. 9
- 4. 9
- 5. 7
- 6. 9

- 7. 9
- 8. 7

Section 5: Price point

1 = 100 5 = \$500 10 = \$1000

Dresses

- 1. 5
- 2. 6/7
- 3. 4
- 4. 3
- 5. 3
- 6. 3/4
- 7. 3
- 8. 6
- 9.

Pants

- 1. 3
- 2. 4
- 3. 3
- 4. 4
- 5. 2
- 6. 2/3
- 7. 3
- 8. 5

Skirts

1. 3
2. 4-5
3. 2
4. 2
5. 1
6. 2
7. 2
8. 3

Shirts

1. 3
2. 3
3. 2
4. 4
5. 2
6. 2
7. 2
8. 4

Blazers

1. 6
2. 8-10
3. 4
4. 7
5. 3
6. 3
7. 3
8. 6

Jackets

1. 8
2. 8-10
3. 4
4. 8
5. 3
6. 2-3
7. 3
8. 7

Coats

1. 8
2. 9-10
3. 6
4. 8
5. 4
6. 5
7. 4
8. 10

Singlets

1. 1
2. 1
3. 1
4. 2
5. 1
6. 1
7. 1
8. 2

5.4. Appendix D

Wear testing

Feedback from the wear testing was based on wearability and comfort, initial impressions towards the garment and any future improvements. The future suggestions will then be onboarded for the sample productions and continued through to market.

Table 3. *Wear Testing Feedback*, by author 2022.

Garment	First Impressions	What worked	Future improvements	Other comments
Jonas Pant	The fit is incredible on me, they feel comfortable and are super flattering	Pleats are great, in this fabric they are not too thick. I like how the pleats are deep enough to carry through the leg, unlike similar pants I have tried that are too narrow and disappear at the upper thigh. The length is perfect, it just skims the floor so is ideal with a pair of shoes. Very comfortable pants.	I thought the rise would be short for me based on most pants I try, but these were not as short as I was expecting. Would love 0.5cm more in the rise, if that. Might just be me though..	I had a colleague compliment me on these asking where I had got them. She especially loved the corduroy. I can imagine this in a thick cotton twill too.
Clarice Long Sleeve Shirt	I would not usually wear navy so was unsure at first	The shape of the sleeve is amazing, especially with the waist/curved front.	Probably not applicable as it is a sample but the fabric creased quite a bit. I like how light it was but would probably wear it more if it were made in shirting.	Could experiment with a deeper/wider cuff maybe?
Clarice Short Sleeve Shirt	I was not sure how it would look on me proportionally, but I love how the cropped waist elongates the leg.	Colours, the back pleat, the overall shape. I wore this open over a tank with a pair of jeans.	Maybe scaling the collar slightly so it's more of a feature? I love the detail with the curves and would love to wear it peeking out under a vest.	

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