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ABSTRACT

In-Use Clothing concept

The benefits of repairing products have been eclipsed by fast consumption, faster production and a lack of attachment to the products we own. It is no secret that the apparel industry plays its part in the ecological crisis we are heading towards today. Waste appears in all areas of the apparel industry; manufacturing, over production low quality garments, 'disposable' clothing to name a few. Conventional methods of dealing with these issues have been criticised as being symptom based. The key point conventional strategies have not commonly addressed is, the way in which we consume (Chapman 2009).

This research focuses on the design durability and longevity of products, both physically and emotionally. It explores the idea that consumption patterns can be slowed if we are able to create a bond to the clothing we own. In order to change the way we consume we need to change the way we feel about our clothing and what that clothing can offer us. An emotional attachment to the product will change the value we associate with them (Niinimäki & Hassi, 2009).

The project looks at sustainable clothing being more than just a niche market. The INUSE CLOTHING concept is a method of design and business that can be applied to the design philosophy of multiple business sizes and collectives collaborating in economies of scale, and does not rely on an environmentally conscious consumer.

In-Use clothing design extends the lifetime of the garments in an attempt to reduce consumption and does not result in the loss of revenue for the manufacturer. Consumer involvement with the design and lifestyle affiliation and the tracking and recording of one's own history, with the garment, develops a sense of attachment and user investment. The consumer-garment relationship works on an ongoing repair-and-modify basis and supplies a visual record of garment maturation and individualisation, all contributing to the consumers sense of self. The same relationship also works to create a consumer-manufacturer bond generating brand and service loyalty, repeat purchase and longer product lifetimes, in local and global hubs. This project undertook a mixed method approach to research and design research. Exploratory qualitative research is carried out in the form of in-depth interviews that explore garment attachment, and long-term ownership of first-owner garments. The design development of the In-Use denim jeans went through a process of sampling experimentation deconstruction and reconstruction. Garments were wear tested and the denim went through repairs. All components of the In-Use model were brought together by a process of connecting many parts of research including existing literature on sustainable design in niche markets and research into how users are creating their own continued experience and emotional connections to garments, and design development practice.