

Angharad McLaren

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Darn Stylish I & II

Darn Stylish I (2014). [Damaged wool menswear garment, wool / nylon blend darning yarn & lurex thread]

Darn Stylish II (2014). [Damaged wool womenswear garment, wool / nylon blend darning yarn]

Mass-produced 'fast fashion' has changed our relationship with clothing – cheap and easy to acquire, we are unlikely to take time to undertake simple repairs or address issues of maintenance, often caused or exacerbated by poor construction and low quality materials. Extending the useful life of clothes has been identified as the most significant intervention in reducing the impact of the clothing industry, but many barriers prevent consumers from performing even the most basic of repairs.

Darning is a technique for repairing damaged or worn fabrics by weaving stitched threads across the surface and creating a new layer of woven material that is embedded into the original fibres. These darned garments were developed for a series of workshops and consumer engagement events at the Highland Wool Festival and in John Lewis stores around Scotland, for Zero Waste Scotland as part of WRAP's Love Your Clothes campaign. In response to research revealing the negative perceptions of visible repair, they explore decorative darning techniques as an attempt to reframe mending as a badge of honour that both adds value through design and communicates the importance of valuing our clothes.

By taking time out to darn and repair we can begin to appreciate the value of slowing down, build better connections with our belongings and reflect on the changes we can make to move towards a future without waste.

Angharad McLaren is a craft-based textile designer and researcher whose practice explores relationships between sustainability, fashion, design thinking and the role of designers through individual practice and community based, collaborative projects. Her former role as Research Fellow in Clothing Longevity at Nottingham Trent University (NTU, 2014-2016) was part of a wider Defra and WRAP funded initiative exploring how to embed sustainable design strategies into the fashion and textiles industry, including qualitative research into consumer perspectives on clothing purchase, use, care, repair and disposal. Alongside this, explorations into practice-based approaches to mending and repair consider the role fashion and textile designers can play in enabling solutions that support consumers to extend the life of clothing. Angharad is currently Lecturer in Textile Design and Sustainable Clothing Research Coordinator at NTU. Prior to this she worked as a self-employed creative design professional on a variety of projects including WRAP's Love Your Clothes campaign with Zero Waste Scotland and Creative Carbon Scotland, and as a weave and textile designer at textile mills in the UK, Italy and India.



Photo: Angharad McLaren