

# REDO Experience. Envisioning clothes that can stand the test of time.

Mila Burcikova

Centre for Fashion and Costume Thinking  
University of Huddersfield, UK  
M.Burcikova@hud.ac.uk

**Abstract:** This paper draws on my on-going PhD research which investigates how the concept of emotional durability can be applied in fashion design and making to enhance user experience of clothing. The paper presents a selection of garments created during the first, exploratory, phase of my project and discusses examples of design interventions that could contribute to increased satisfaction and well-being of users, designers and makers of fashion. It reflects on some of the challenges involved in designing for durability and proposes that these should be seen as opportunities for further research and exploration. Envisioning what currently seems unthinkable is a first step to materializing visions for the future, a task to which designers are well suited as creative problem-solving lies at the core of design thinking.

**Keywords:** clothing durability, emotional design, design for continuity, user experience, REDO

## 1. Introduction

This paper explores how designing for *continuity*, instead of *newness* (Skjold, 2016) can help REDO the everyday experience of designers, makers and consumers of fashion. In the currently dominant model of fashion production and consumption, designers are pushed to meet increasingly faster trend turnarounds, sometimes left with the pressure of only twenty-five minutes to produce a design (Rissanen, 2016). Fashion consumers, on the other hand, face frustration with low quality garments (Niinimäki, 2014) and uniform styles (Woodward, 2007), often feeling trapped in what Chapman calls “endless cycles of desire and disappointment” (2005, p. 17). In her *Craft of Use* (2016), Fletcher points out that the current business model encourages designers to imagine fashion objects that will sell but not those that will stand the test of use (p. 117).

My paper outlines a scenario in which *use* is at the foreground of the design process. Envisioning garments to be worn and enjoyed for extended periods of time is hereby approached as both stimulating and rewarding design opportunity. The paper begins with an introduction of my designer-maker perspective which informs my position as a researcher. It then moves to a discussion of current research in the areas of clothing longevity, emotional design and sensory ethnography, to frame the methodology applied in this study. The case studies of garments created in the exploratory

stage of the project then examine how some of the strategies identified through the contextual review could be translated to practice. The paper culminates with a reflection on some of the challenges involved in design for use and concludes with a recognition of the instrumental role that designers must play in addressing these challenges in the future.

My research interest in clothing whose appeal lasts well beyond the first few months or even years, has emerged from my practice as a fashion designer-maker. It has particularly developed over the last six years of interaction with the clients of my slow fashion studio [MISENSE by Mila B.](#) The studio produces original pieces, mini-collections and bespoke garments, all designed and made by myself in the UK. The studio also offers alteration and repair services and is a fully certified member of the Ethical Fashion Forum and Heritage Crafts Association. The *modus operandi* of the studio reflects my design philosophy in which personal contact with clients is at the core of all the design work. I entered the field of design practice with initial training in ethnology and cultural theory, maintaining a long-term focus on craft, activism and socially responsible design. My later professional involvement in *Design for All* consultancy significantly contributed to my strong belief that design professionals need to work closely with users and develop a deep understanding of users' everyday practices. As Norman remarks in his *Emotional Design: Why we love (or hate) everyday things* (2004) "designers who believe they do not need to watch the people who use their products are a major source of the many poor designs that confront us" (p. 74).

Each of my studio commissions therefore starts with an informal discussion during which I try to learn as much as possible about my client's lifestyle, the kind of clothes they feel comfortable wearing and their expectations of the garment I am making for them. I have found that these discussions become even more helpful if they can take place in the client's home. The home environment offers a valuable context provided by the rest of my clients' possessions and, importantly, their wardrobes (Miller, 2008; Woodward, 2007). Moreover, in comparison to a studio visit, clients tend to feel less self-conscious in their own home, less pressed for time and much more empowered to explain what they really want in terms of style, fabric choice and fit. The home environment helps them to think about potential new garments in relation to other things they already own, like or dislike (see also Skjold, 2014) which provides me with invaluable information for the design process. Over years of having these conversations, I have heard numerous stories of clothes that looked very exciting in a shop but somehow did not meet the same high expectations when brought back home. Many of them were worn once, or never at all, some were discarded straight away, others were kept for months or even years before they eventually ended up in a charity shop or a landfill (see also Woodward, 2007; WRAP, 2013). These "failed relationships" (Chapman, 2005) not only waste natural and human resources invested in garment production but they also perpetuate customer dissatisfaction, anxiety and frustration with the current fashion market (Woodward, 2007; WRAP, 2013; Twigger-Hollroyd, 2014; Skjold, 2014, Niinimäki, 2014). The overriding ambition of my studio has therefore been to offer a more user-centred alternative to the mainstream fashion market, with an approach that is informed by my clients' everyday experience of clothing. I aim to design versatile garments that will be worn and enjoyed for a long time. The care and the attention to detail I invest in this process (Sennett, 2009) makes me want to create a piece that my customers will not want to throw away (MacLachlan, 2011). In the words of British potter Edmund de Waal, "you must hope, if you make things as I do, that they can make their way in the world and have some longevity" (p. 232).

## 2. Practice informs design research

Considerable scholarly attention has been given to the alarming social and environmental consequences of the current model of fashion production (Alwood et al. 2006, Fletcher & Grose, 2011; Black, 2011; WRAP, 2012; Fletcher & Tham, 2016). Consumption patterns associated with fast fashion often reduce active lifetime of a garment to less than a season (WRAP, 2013). On the other hand, a substantial body of evidence also shows that people often wear clothes for a long time and form a deep attachment to certain garments (Solomon, 1986; Schultz Kleine, Kleine III and Allen, 1995; Heti, Julavits & Shapton, 2014; Skjold, 2014; Fletcher, 2016). The stories I have heard through my studio clients also prove that despite the seemingly overpowering presence of the fast, disposable fashion scenarios, there also exists a parallel world in which garments have the possibility to transform from a product into a process (Fletcher, 2016), a world in which clothes are being appreciated for the layers of meaning and emotion accumulated through time and repeated use (Norman, 2007).

A long-term client initially brought two dresses to my studio during her first visit. She hoped they could get a second lease of life. Both dresses were over twenty years old, she said she “loved” them and she also liked the ever more prominent holes which reminded her of all the years she lived through wearing these clothes. The emotional value of her dresses did not depreciate because of the holes. On the contrary, as Woodward (2007) comments, the holes were there “to authenticate” that the dresses were much “worn and loved” (p. 55). My client however felt that wearing clothing full of holes was getting perhaps less “socially acceptable” [sic] at her age (over 60) and so I was given a free hand to repair or alter these dresses in a way I found most suitable and interesting for me. Later I heard that she received many compliments on her ‘new dresses’ (see *Figures 1 & 2*) and I have repaired many more for her and other clients since.



*Figure 1 Alteration of a client's dress, Mickey Mouse pattern (design Ernest Le Gamin). Replacement of the front panel where original fabric fell apart because of frequent wear. Photo: Author*



*Figure 2 Detail: replaced front panel. Black cotton mix decorated with white machine-embroidered stripes to match the original design. Photo: Author*

All these cherished garments I have worked on have made me wonder if there are design lessons we could learn from the stories of continuous satisfaction and pleasure that these pieces have brought to their owners. The idea of designing a piece of clothing that someone will still be keen to wear after twenty-five years sounds exceptionally rewarding. Is this something that we, as designers, should now aspire to?

### 3. Design, emotion, durability

Numerous researchers (Mugge, Schoormans & Schifferstein, 2005; Chapman 2005; Norman, 2004) point out that no design can satisfy everybody and a truly timeless piece can rarely be created as a result of a conscious design decision (Mugge et al., 2005, p. 40). At the same time, emerging research suggests that durability of clothing can be enhanced at the design stage (WRAP, 2013; Connor-Crabb, Miller & Chapman, 2016). The *Design for Longevity* report (WRAP, 2013) highlights that changes at product design stage have “a significant impact on how long individual items remain wearable” (p. 3). The report proposes that the principal areas in which design impacts the active lifetime of clothing are: *size and fit, fabric quality, colours and styles and care*. A careful consideration of these and their appropriate balance in the design process can positively affect both physical and emotional durability of a garment. Where physical durability refers to a product’s robustness and resistance to wear and tear (WRAP, 2015, p.9), emotional durability affects how long can a product remain relevant and attractive to the user (ibid). Physical and emotional durability of products are therefore closely interconnected and the intricate relationship between the two is well illustrated by Chapman who notes that “there is little point designing physical durability into consumer goods if the consumer has no desire to keep them” (Chapman, 2005, p.52).

The complexities of physical and emotional aspects of products are examined in some detail by Don Norman (2004). In his concept of a three-level design (Norman, 2004), each of the three levels of design correlates with a different level of processing experience by the human brain. Norman, whose background lies in usability engineering, user-centred design and cognitive science, claims that humans process experience on three levels, associated with different levels of the brain. The first, *visceral* level, is 'automatic' and helps to make rapid judgments between good and bad, sending signals to the rest of the brain. Next is the more advanced *behavioural* level which affects most of the everyday human behaviour. The third and highest level is *reflective*, referring to the contemplative part of the brain. All levels play different, yet important, roles in our everyday interactions with the world around us, including, of course, the products we use. As experience is processed differently on each level of the brain, each of the three levels requires a different approach to design. The first, *visceral* level of *design*, requires a focus on appearance – the way things look. The second, *behavioural* level of *design*, needs to consider the pleasure and effectiveness of use – the way things work and feel. The third and last level, *reflective design*, is then directed towards self-image and memories associated with the product – in other words, the meaning of things. Norman's approach shows some similarities with the research of Gerald Cupchik (1999) who studied the varieties in meaning attached to products and the ways they relate to emotional processes. Cupchik's study identified the *sensory/aesthetic meaning* which includes qualities that have an immediate effect on experience, *cognitive/behavioural meaning* related to product's performance and ease of use and *personal/symbolic meaning* which is not necessarily related to product function or appearance. In addition to Norman (2004) and Cupchik (1999), user response to products was also analysed by Jordan (2000), whose approach stems from his human factors background. Basing his argument on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Jordan claims that designers need to extend their design considerations beyond pure usability of products. His model of consumer needs adopts Maslow's hierarchy (1943) and urges designers to acknowledge that as soon as people satisfy their needs on one level, they will demand more. Jordan's model of consumer needs therefore starts with the most fundamental Level 1 – *functionality* (product performance). It then continues through Level 2 – *usability* (ease of use) and culminates with Level 3 – *pleasure*. According to Jordan, the implications of these hierarchies for the design profession are that once people have "become used to usable products" (2000, p.6) they will soon expect more than just *usability*. They will demand "products that are not merely tools but 'living objects'... products that bring not only functional benefits but also emotional ones" (ibid). To illustrate his argument further, Jordan adopts four pleasure categories identified by American anthropologist Lionel Tiger (1992) to propose a framework of four pleasures to be considered by designers in the design process. These include physio-pleasure (bodily and sensory experiences), social pleasure (interaction and relationships with others), psychological pleasure (cognitive and emotional responses) and ideological pleasure (which is related to values) (pp.13-14). Jordan suggests that the four pleasures framework enables designers to gain a much more accurate understanding of the people they design for. In this way, the framework enables designers to develop concepts that will better respond to the pleasures which could be associated with particular products.

## 4. Design research informs practice

The links between the approaches taken by Norman (2004), Cupchik (1999) and Jordan (2000), with their respective focus on cognition, meaning and pleasure highlight the complex interconnections between the physical properties of products (including appearance and functionality), their symbolic meaning and their potential emotional value to users. The *Design for Longevity* report (WRAP, 2013)

also illustrates the way design interventions aimed at functional and aesthetic aspects of clothing - such as *size and fit, fabric quality, colours, styles and care*, can positively affect not only physical durability of a garment but also its long-term relevance to the user, potentially contributing to the garment's emotional durability. Several researchers have pointed out that user-product relationships take time to develop (see e.g. van Hinte, 1997; Chapman, 2005) and a strong emotional bond can hardly be established without "sustained interaction" between the user and the product (Norman, 2007, p.46). To reiterate, physical durability has little relevance without emotional durability, as the possible danger lies in the "designing of durable waste" (Chapman, 2005, p. 53). Emotional durability, on the other hand, is rarely possible if products fail (i.e. deteriorate in terms of look or function) before the emotional bond between the user and the product has had a chance to develop.

In terms of fashion design, the complex relationships between aesthetics, utility and symbolic aspects of design are often apparent upon a closer look into people's wardrobes - as exemplified through wardrobe ethnographies conducted by Woodward (2007), Klepp (2010), Skjold (2014) or Sadkowska (2016). Woodward, who studied women's everyday decisions about the clothes they choose to wear, claims that for her research participants the moment in front of the mirror is not purely visual. In fact, it extends far beyond the aesthetic aspects of the garment and has a considerable impact on the extent to which women feel *comfortable* in their clothing. Comfort, Woodward claims, "is not natural feeling engendered by the softness of a fabric; instead, ... comfort emerges in a dialectic between how clothing looks and how it feels" (2007, p. 99). Visual/aesthetic properties of a garment therefore often cannot be separated from its more utilitarian aspects such as comfort perceived through the softness of fabric or fit. Both aesthetics and utility then also impact the deeper symbolic perception of the garment, the extent to which it aligns with the current identity and values of the wearer, and how much it feels "me" or "not me" (Schultz Kleine et al., 1995).

In addition, the work of anthropologist Sarah Pink demonstrates that acknowledging the multi-sensory character of human perception can provide invaluable insights for those planning social or design interventions aimed at improving the everyday experience of products or services (Pink, 2015, p.21). According to Pink, we quite frequently focus our attention on one sense over others, without realizing their mutual interdependence. If we take fashion as an example, it could be argued that priority tends to be given to sight. Yet, on a closer inspection, there is a lot more to be accounted for when it comes to daily use and appreciation of clothing. For instance, the choice of materials and fastenings are not to be underestimated in this respect. In a discussion over a party dress design, a client once told me there was nothing she disliked more in a dress than the feel of a cold metal zip right next to her body. Woodward also maintains that "memories through clothing acquire a particular poignancy as they are evoked through the physical sensuality and tactility of clothing" (2007, p. 52).

## 5. Envisioning clothes that can stand the test of time

One of the key rules of design thinking according to Meinel & Leifer (2011) is that "making ideas tangible always facilitates communication" (p. xv). The designs presented here are therefore seen as tangible examples of how the theories discussed throughout this paper could be applied in practice. They are a work in progress, started in the first, exploratory stage of my PhD research. The aim was to embrace the challenge of striking the elusive balance between aesthetics, utility and symbolic meaning in design, as discussed in previous sections of this paper, while simultaneously addressing the recommendations for key interventions in the areas of size and fit, fabric quality, colours, styles and care outlined in the 2013 *Design for Longevity* report (WRAP, p. 3). Special attention was also



given to sensory experiences of all the garments through touch and feel. As a result, I was particularly interested to further some of the strategies already used in my design work by exploring ideas relating to:

- **Versatility and modularity**  
(addressing size and fit, fabric quality, colours and styles)
- **Easy care**  
(addressing fabric quality, care)
- **Easy repairs and alterations**  
(addressing size and fit, care)
- **Trans-seasonality**  
(addressing fabric quality, colours and styles)
- **Sensory experiences**  
(addressing size and fit, fabric quality, colour)

Numerous fashion designers and design teams across the world have focused their attention on exploring the wide variety of creative possibilities offered by implementing these strategies in design projects. The ideas of versatility, modularity and easy alterations have been addressed for example by designers Alice Payne with her 'Grow-Shrink-and-Turn-Coat', Holly McQuillan in her MAKEUSE collection or Anja Connor-Crabb in her 'Cut, Pleat and Shorten' project. The strategies for easy care and infrequent washing have long interested designer Emma Dulcie Rigby and were explored for example in her project 'Energy Water Fashion'. Trans-seasonality and versatility have been at the core of the designs of Carin Mansfield (Universal Utility), Natalie Chanin (Alabama Chanin) and Amy Twigger-Holroyd (Keep&Share) - among others. The aim of my design research, however, was to explore how all of these strategies could be combined in one garment, in order to achieve a balance between aesthetics, utility and symbolic meaning in every design (Norman's *visceral*, *behavioural* and *reflexive* aspects of design - as previously discussed). Moreover, my designer-maker background enables me to have regular contact with users and their experience of clothing, which positions my research in a context rarely experienced by fashion designers.

In this research, pre-consumer waste materials were used for both toiling and final garments. Blend fabrics were consciously avoided since these require complex processing in order to enable recycling (Fletcher, 2008, p 106). For the same reasons, the use of fastenings was limited to a minimum, recognizing the need for easy disassembly in the recycling stage (ibid). The decision to reduce the use of fastenings was also based on the research evidence which shows that failure of clothing components (such as zips or buttons) is among the most frequent reasons for early clothing disposal (WRAP, 2013). All garments were made using a combination of machine-sewing and hand-stitching. Hand-stitching was used to emphasize the care invested in the making of each garment (Swindells & Burcikova, 2012) and to highlight the connection to the maker of the item. The opportunity to relate a product to its maker can contribute to a product's uniqueness and is discussed by e.g. Chapman (2005, 2009), van Hinte (1997) or Mugge et al. (2005) among strategies for encouraging the perceived irreplaceability of products. Moreover, unique and personal products enable self-expression and can thus acquire meaning which potentially leads to a stronger emotional bond between the wearer and the product (see e.g. Mugge et al., 2005). Design strategies that address users' values and identity correspond to reflective and symbolic levels of design as described by Norman (2004) and Cupchik (1999), respectively. At the same time, these strategies tap into *ideo-pleasure* identified by Jordan (2000). The use of hand-stitching techniques therefore reflected my aim to work towards a balance between aesthetics, utility and symbolic meaning. For the sake of brevity, I will here present two design examples out of nine garments in total.



Figure 3 Documenting the making process: hand-sewing of hems. Photo: Petra Lajdova

## 5.1 Design example 1: Casual wear

Strategies employed:

- Versatility
- Easy care
- Easy repair and alterations
- Trans-seasonality
- Sensory experiences

The first design example includes a casual top and a skirt in 100% cotton lightweight indigo blue denim. The design is trans-seasonal due to the classic material, neutral colour, as well as its style which is not trend-driven but inspired by Slovakian folk costumes. Both material and colour also contribute to the design's versatility as they encourage easy combination with other garments and accessories. The top and the skirt can be worn either together or separately in combination with other items and can be easily dressed up or down (see *Figures 6 and 7*). The style of both also reflects the recommendations of the *Design for longevity* report (WRAP, 2013) regarding design of casual wear. As in casual wear comfort plays a key role, accommodations for fluctuations in body shape (e.g. loose fitting garments, adjustable features) facilitate long-term use. The 'batwing' top will fit a range of figures and has additional benefits in terms of care as the loose style of sleeves is less affected by perspiration in comparison to more closely fitted garments. The skirt has an adjustable waist, making use of pleats and movable sew-on snap fasteners. Both the top and the skirt are machine-washable (recommended 30°) and if hang to drip-dry right after washing, they do not require ironing. Both garments have a generous hem allowance sewn in a long decorative hand-stitch which adds a personal touch and at the same time allows for easy length adjustments. The extra fabric can also be used for any future repairs. The skirt has no side seams which means that the full



length and width of the fabric can be used in case the owner decides to have the skirt re-made into another garment in the future.



*Figure 4 Design example 1 – frontal view. Photo: Petra Lajdova*



*Figure 5 Design example 1 – pleats for waist adjustment. Photo: Petra Lajdova*



*Figure 6 Design example 1 – wear option 1. Photo: Petra Lajdova*



*Figure 7 Design example 1 – wear option 2. Photo: Petra Lajdova*

## 5.2 Design example 2: Occasion wear

Strategies employed:

- Versatility and modularity
- Easy care
- Easy repair and alterations
- Trans-seasonality
- Sensory experiences

The second design example is a convertible cocktail/evening dress in 100% polyester chiffon produced in two colour versions – light pink and black. The dress consists of four modular parts that enable easy transformation from a semi-formal cocktail option to an evening version. They can also be variously combined in at least three other wear options and lend themselves to many more possibilities to be explored by the wearer. The loose-fitting draped style offers versatility in terms of size and fit and the modular parts also enable length adjustments. Similar to Design example 1, the style is not trend-driven and the choice of colours allows for variety of combinations with other garments and accessories. This further contributes to its versatility and gives the dress relevance across seasons. The dress is designed for travel and easy care and can be folded in a small bag which comes with it. The bag can also be used for machine washing of all parts of the dress at 30°. Due to the crinkled texture of the fabric, the dress can be drip-dried without the need for ironing. Most of the dress was hand-sewn to give all the hems a very soft drape and a hand-crafted finish. The draped style accommodates the need for any future alterations and repairs, which can be easily disguised in the volume of the fabric. Just like in the case of the skirt in Design 1, there are no side seams on the dress which means that the full length and width of the fabric can be used in case the owner decides to have it re-made into another garment in the future.



*Figure 8 Design example 2 (light pink version) – wear option 1, front. Photo: Petra Lajdova*



*Figure 9 Design example 2 (black version) – wear option 1, back. Photo: Petra Lajdova*



*Figure 10 Design example 2 (light pink version) – detail of hand-stitching. Photo: Petra Lajdova*



*Figure 11 Design example 2 (black version) – wear option 2. Photo: Petra Lajdova*



*Figure 12 Design example 2 (black version) – modular parts for wear option 3. Photo: Petra Lajdova*





Figure 13 Design example 2 (light pink version) – wear option 3. Photo: Petra Lajdova

## 6. Envisioning experience

Design researchers Forlizzi and Ford suggest that “as designers trying to craft an experience, we can only design situations, or levers that people can interact with, rather than neatly predicted outcomes” (Forlizzi & Ford, 2000, p. 420). The designs presented in this paper are therefore no more and no less than tentative examples that attempt to facilitate further discussion on how research on clothing durability can help us design, make and wear clothes that we do not want to throw away (Maclachlan, 2011). My own experience of this practical design experiment enabled me to further develop some of the strategies already used in my design work in a wider context of research on design and emotion and clothing durability. I have found that several of the strategies employed had multiple benefits, contributing to both the overall design project and my personal experience of the process. This is illustrated in the example of hand-stitching that was used to highlight the garment’s connection to its maker. At the same time, hand-stitching is a technique which I find particularly enjoyable, as well as effective, because it improves both the drape and the hand of seams. The use of hand-stitching in this project was therefore seen as having two key benefits. On the one hand, it enhances the sensory experience of the garment (and potentially also the garment’s appeal on the symbolic level), while, on the other, it also makes the creative process very enjoyable and rewarding for me as a maker. In addition to this, most of the nine final garments (except for *Design example 2*) have been worn by myself for a period of over 10 months and my observations from wearing and care for the garments, including washing and ironing were recorded in my research diary. As a designer-maker, I fully agree with Fletcher’s claim that “design is empty without use” and “use impossible without design” (2016, p. 78). A personal experience of the way my own designs perform and feel in use was therefore considered an important contribution to the first, exploratory, stage of my project. I found that wearing the garments further informed my thinking on some of the design decisions I had made, such as, for example, use of pleats for waist adjustments. Although pleats are often considered a suitable solution for allowing flexibility in waist (see for example WRAP, 2013), their application in practice is not without challenges. Strategic



placement of pleats in a design is crucial for a flattering fit as pleats generally add volume to the silhouette. Enabling users to move pleats from their original position (in my *Design example 1* this was achieved by using sew-on fasteners) can add extra volume and attract undesired attention to the parts of figure that the wearer would rather disguise (e.g. hips, buttocks or stomach area). Moreover, from the point of view of easy care, pleats can be a potential source of frustration when it comes to ironing. Although in my designs this issue was negotiated by careful choice of materials and care instructions that recommended to hang the garments to drip-dry right after washing, following care instructions may not always be practicable in the strains and stresses of everyday life. I too have experienced the challenge of ironing my pleated skirts more than once. Another important insight from wearing my own designs was that the garments became real conversation pieces, “communication media” (Meinel & Leifer, 2011, p. xv) which enabled me to obtain further helpful feedback that will be given careful consideration in the next stage of my project.

## 7. Conclusion

The aim of my PhD research is to investigate how the concept of emotional durability can be applied in fashion design and making, to enhance user experience of clothing. In the first stage, presented in this paper, my project aimed to critically review relevant emotional design strategies and explore the possibilities of their practical application. I here discussed the key theories that provided the theoretical ground for the initial stages of my research, presented two design examples and outlined some preliminary findings and observations from the practical part of the project. The next stage of my research (currently in-progress) includes a series of in-depth wardrobe studies (8-12) that employ sensory ethnography and visual ethnographic methods to study user experience of clothing owned and used for extended periods of time. During this phase, the aim of my project will be to identify how people’s unique personal stories determine their attitudes to the clothes they wear. Fletcher maintains that “durability, while facilitated by materials, design, and construction, is determined by an ideology of use” (2012, p. 222). The second part of my project therefore builds upon my ethnological background as well as on my experience of discussions with clients, which tend to demonstrate that wardrobes (as opposed to single garments) offer important contexts for understanding how individual users experience and consume fashion. It is anticipated that the gathered material will provide essential information for further development of the design element of my research. The expected outcomes will include practical interpretation of material collected in Stages 1 and 2 of the project, through a series of fashion artefacts proposing innovative ways of enhancing user satisfaction by designing for *continuity*.

Design that provides a vision beyond the point of sale, focusing on *use* and *continuity*, is likely to face unpredictable challenges because there is no ‘one size fits all’ option for human experience. However, due to the very nature of design thinking, which often involves divergent tasks (Lawson, 2005), designers are well equipped to embrace scenarios that may currently seem unthinkable. As Wood (2007) aptly remarks in his *Design for Micro-Utopias: Making the Unthinkable Possible*, “while theories... can be developed quietly in libraries, artists and designers must more often make judgments that have to work in ‘real-time’ (Wood, 2007, p. 87). Envisioning what now seems “unattainable” is a first step to materializing visions for the future. I therefore argue that a true impact in clothing durability will only be achieved with creative help of designers who are prepared to make ideas tangible and put theories to test in their practice.

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**Mila Burcikova** is a fashion designer-maker and researcher with interest in craft, activism and socially responsible design. She is currently a guest editor for a special issue of the journal *Utopian Studies* (Penn State University Press) on 'Utopia and Fashion'.