

Session 4 - Designer/Industry Interface - Dr Jo Heeley

Jo Heeley:

I thought it would be quite useful to try to draw together the strands of today because it's been a very jam packed, exciting rollercoaster set of thoughts and ideas. I feel a bit of a metamorphosis, I feel that I need a butterfly net to catch all these wonderful ideas and things that have been going on. Does anybody else feel like that? [. . .] if we want to go back and start to apply some of these ideas and these notions of upcycling. How could we take these ideas forward and upscale them? How can we make it more mainstream so more people can do it?

Orsola De Castro:

I can say that, as the curator of Estethica I am seeing a huge surge in precisely these types of solutions for the future of sustainable design. As I said, I feel very much that using organic and Fair Trade is a decision, it's a boardroom decision, while recycling is a design solution to a problem. What we are seeing is a great surge of creativity precisely within upcycling and recycling in the new labels that are coming out. Personally, having been doing it for a long time I will take home the knowledge that, yes, I've been doing the right thing and perhaps, many times that I thought I should have compromised and I didn't, it's okay. I can also bring back the message that this is a street that people are following and are following it creatively, intelligently, funnily to a certain extent, and there's a lot more street to go. At the same time there are quite a lot of people walking it.

Emmeline Child:

Certainly on a practical level for you out there that actually want to go and tangibly start something, research is the key but there's a lot more networks out there now to support it and assist. I'm sure when you first started it was you, by yourself and perhaps a couple of other people. Since I've been in it myself, just year by year there are more and more networks out there to support people. That's going to help increase awareness and help spread the word about the possibilities with environmental issues, and recycling and upcycling in particular.

Marie O'Mahony:

Things are changing and I see a big difference with what we've seen and heard here today, compared to conversations or similar events even 5 and certainly 10 years ago. I'm not directly involved in manufacturing, so maybe some of our manufacturers would like to come in on this, but from where I am, what I see is very similar to what was happening in the technical textile industry back in the early 90's when I first got involved with it. When I first went to TechTextil in Frankfurt I was about the only female and found myself talking to people there about design and trying to use these

carbon fibres, glass fibres for product design. The actual design was an emergency housing shelter and I was working with ARUP on it but the technical textile manufacturers regarded that as design, in those days. They couldn't figure out how their product would fit in with what I was trying to do. I had a real struggle, it was a real Tower of Babel thing, trying to talk to advanced textile companies about that.

Now, 15 years on, going to TechTextil in Frankfurt, there are probably at least 50%, maybe 60%, what I would call creatives between product design, fashion, architecture, right across the board. It's really changed. You walk up to any stand, even first time stands and you can talk about design. That dialogue has happened not overnight but it has happened. To me, that's where we are with this. We are seeing people going out to China or Devon or wherever and talking about small production runs and discussing it, starting that dialogue going. From these small beginnings snowballs start to happen and things will eventually move up in scale. For instance, in about five years time we can all be sitting here and it will be, instead of three or four large company manufacturers that are out there, they're going to be down here and it's going to be a very different feel to it and a very interesting evolution and development. It takes time, it's not easy. Nobody's going to open the door and say 'Here's the resource, here's everything'. It's hard work but it's also a very exciting time and the doors are opening and the dialogues are starting, so it's good.

Jo Heeley:

I'm going to open it up to the floor now. Has anybody got any burning questions they'd like to put to our panel or to any of the speakers they've heard today? When you ask your question, will you stand up and say who you are and where you're from, please.

Kay Politowicz:

It's Kay Politowicz, I'm from Chelsea. I think it's a pity that Cindy Rhoades isn't here now only because I wanted to raise the issue of where Cindy appears to be, to an audience member anyway, to my mind, which looks like another stage on from the beautifully formed businesses I'm looking at now. She seems to represent a move into a bigger production. How do you all relate to that? Is it the sort of thing you might aspire to or would that kind of pattern only work for certain approaches and yours needs to stay small? It's the link to bigger things that I'm really interested in.

Rebecca Earley:

Cindy's product was a product that was introduced to an existing company that had networks set up already. Terra Plana has factories that work with its shoe design, so in one sense it was easier to explore those routes, to go to China and to invest and they went to the factory that was already making their shoes. I think for me, that's the problem, it's bridging the gap between being an individual designer or a very small

company, and then getting a larger factory to take on your production and having the orders to fulfil them. I think it's a good model for how these things can move forward. To work with the bigger companies that have the set up there and then to innovative within an existing set up. She's gone a stage further and said 'Okay, that works but I'm not happy with that, I want to make it more sustainable. I want to build it around local models in different continents.' She's rolling the idea out now from there. The thing about Cindy's trainers, they're £65, it's incredible really. I went to buy a pair and I expected to pay £120 but they're making them for £65 which is really quite amazing to put themselves in the market at that level. One of the real reasons behind putting today on, for me, was to start those discussions to see if we could start talking about those models. Unfortunately, all the big companies have left.

Orsola De Castro:

I've been twice in my 10 year career making very big numbers and working with very big productions. The first time it was a decision of mine not to continue. We did a collection for an Italian sportswear company, they do millions. We did cocktail dresses out of their football and shirting t-shirts. The idea was you could have this thing scrunched up and bring it down and it was perfectly ironed, jump in the pool, come out. We didn't take that into bigger numbers because of their wanting to operate with us. They were happy not to do it within the recycling but maybe scrunch a little recycled bit on to it but the possibility was there and the product could have held that production.

We produced in Poland up until a few years ago, quite large runs for a small company like ours, particularly for a recycling company. People always assume that you can't repeat with recycling but we were repeating things. We can make up to 500 pieces of one particular design and, for instance, with something like this skirt the difference would be fairly minimal. The reality is that, in an odd sort of way, since this whole eco thing our numbers have gone down. The eco has created a market which is very specific. It follows a certain customer and it has a certain price tag. For us, who have been quite happily selling alongside the same designers whose fabrics we use, very high end, the minute the whole eco thing came along, we became pigeon-holed into something that frankly we are not. It's been a question of recuperating.

The way that I see it and this is again, our story, that our type of recycling is absolutely reproducible, I'm not saying mass producible but it could even get to mass production the amount of waste that this is at pre-consumer level which by the way is unaccounted for. There are statistics as to how much the consumer consumes. There are no statistics as to how much the actual factories and manufacturers are getting rid of. I can tell you it's a lot more than what the consumers are going through because there's all the stuff that they get wrong. They get it wrong all the time, runs and runs of wrong things. There is the material there and the knowledge and the know-how to make big runs.

Jo Heeley:

Can I follow on that question. If there is all this waste in the manufacturing chain which we know there is, how can we get more companies to get involved and accept that, okay, we create this waste, let's make something valuable out of it?

Orsola De Castro:

We now operate with six or seven specific Italian manufacturers. Italy has lost an enormous amount of industry to the Far East so it's quite a dilapidated scene. You arrive at these wonderful factories that have been family run and were in the 1980's the top of modern technology. They've invested so much money in these incredible machines and now they struggle and they close. Every year a couple of them close. We've been doing this since approximately 2002 and I am the in-house recycler for a couple of these people. They collect the waste, very much like we would collect our household waste, according to our method, dividing it by thick and thin. The problem is really what they need is the patience to store, the place to store and the patience to store. It's a full-time job. This is why it should be run in collaboration with colleges, with other institutions to recuperate it because it is an enormous amount. We can just about deal with the hundreds of kilograms bales we rescue but we're tiny. It is an issue that the companies themselves should address on a regular basis. I think progressively if more designers were to embrace pre-consumer and show that out of rubbish can come a profit, then I think that companies are very quickly going to turn around and start looking in their own rubbish bin themselves.

Amy Twigger Holroyd:

Might it be a problem that the retailers don't own the factories so it's not their waste, like high street shops that manufacture in the Far East?

Orsola De Castro:

If I haven't done it in 10 years, obviously my thoughts haven't been successful. The fashion industry is one of these industries where you have to have an enormous amount of patience because the longer you're seen there somehow the more you are believable. I'm just waiting, I'm very patient. In the meantime, I'm doing whatever it is I can in order to make an environment whereby, because I can sometimes be quite persuasive, I'm given a chance to speak, like today. Estethica at London Fashion Week is definitely one of them. I am a believer. I don't know whether you can run a business and be an idealist at the same time but I'm trying. I believe that we have consumed so much for so long that we've already got everything on this planet to reuse in order to continue consuming. This message is going to be coming along over the next few years. More and more I see things coming out of colleges which are so mind-bogglingly inspiring in terms of creativity and solutions about how to transform one thing from another, it's almost molecular. I just sit and wait and hopefully it will happen within a few years.

Rebecca Earley:

I wanted to bring all those comments together a bit because it's about teaching, it's about education, today's about design and the comments about the consumers not being ready, not wanting recycled fashion or paying a bit more. When my students hand in a dissertation and they've written 8,000 words around one of these subjects to do with sustainable fashion, and their conclusion is that it's the consumers fault and that they're not ready to buy it. They behave really badly, they buy fast fashion, they go shopping on a Saturday afternoon and then they throw stuff away. When the conclusion is, it's the consumers fault; I get a big red pen out because frankly it's not good enough. It's not good enough as a designer to have that as the answer because this is about offering enough choice.

All of this started through the lack of good quality design out there, using recycled materials. We are so much further on than we were five years ago and it's so joyful to be able to draw together this group of people and have a look at this work. This goes from us making stuff as designers into us being tutors and disseminating this and working with students, improving the quality of design, education and sustainability issues. It is going on and rolling out from that point, offering good design ideas and good design approaches and offering a better range of products and the consumer will follow. It takes time, your point about time and waiting, yes, in the meantime we'll carry on doing what we do.

Can I just say one more thing and then you can carry on. The seventh strategy for TED which we are going to publish next year is the designer as activist, the designer not just designing products but being an entrepreneur that thinks about their business in a different way. About a curator that brings together other people and makes a change happen in the London fashion industry, about educating, holding workshops. It's about the designer taking on these other roles. Our job today and our message to take away as designers is to be involved in more ways than just making a product. Actually network and disseminate, set up websites, make links and be activists, maybe be political as well.

Marie O'Mahony:

Following on from all of those discussions we've still got a bit of an image problem. There is still a sense of 'buy this because it's good for you', 'buy this because it's the right thing to do'. You've got the oatcake and you've got the chocolate cake. Even though the oatcake might be very nice and the chocolate cake is actually a disgusting readymade thing or something, you will still go for the one that is being a bit naughty. You're out shopping, you want to do something that is good design and you don't want to feel like 'Oh, I should buy this.' It's the wrong attitude to buy something with. You don't want to have something like that. It's ok if you've got your food trolley and you think 'I'll buy some Fair Trade, but I can also get this other thing.' You don't have that really with larger products, clothing, furniture or whatever. The design is good,

what we've seen here today is fabulous stuff; it's good it doesn't need this extra tag. It should be inherent in it. The same as fit for purpose is inherent in products that we buy.

Participant:

It's not really a question, it's following on from what Marie said and what Becky said about choice. Surely a solution is – and it came about during a discussion I had at Central Saint Martins on the Textiles Futures Course – what if we take away that choice? A consumer is very savvy. A consumer by no means is stupid or unintelligent. We do follow trends, as pointed out with the advertising and all the rest of it, but what if we take away those bad choices? All we are left with is good choices but we don't know that they're there as in this eco label, that's all we can buy, that's all we can purchase. Surely that's what we should aim for?

Rebecca Earley:

That's good design then isn't it?

Emmeline Child:

I think that's the perfect idea and we'd all like to see that happen. Unfortunately, what we've got today in our consumer society is the fact that we've got large companies who are in control of the government. They're the ones that are keeping the economy of the country going. Unfortunately, they're able to call the shots more and they're money-making companies so they're wanting their high turnover. The idea behind that is lovely. I think the reality of taking away all manufacturing from China or wherever, is going to be a lot harder because effectively the world does run on money.

Kate Goldsworthy:

We're in a really interesting phase at the moment as well, in terms of material values, I think things are shifting. If you look at oil prices, the cost of these virgin materials is just going to keep going up. I can't imagine a time when it's going to drop back to what it was. Perhaps some of these economic levels will shift anyway as recycled fibres just become more economic. Talking to technology companies at Avantex last year, already I'd say there was a 50/50 split. There were still companies, these are technical textile non-woven polyester companies, saying that recycling still wasn't economic but on the other hand, there were people, mainly who had invested in more of the technology, saying that it was becoming cost efficient and beneficial to their processes.

Dilys Williams (in the audience):

I'm Dilys Williams, I run the Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion. A few things that have been said by Orsola, Becky, various people, posing a question really. Do we have to become big in order to be able to be commercial, to take on big companies, talking about having to become bigger? If we're lots of connected small [companies], can we not actually offer the public an amazing plethora of all these different design companies? It's really getting it out there. It's accessibility to customers, isn't it? How can all the little amazing different things be connected to make it a very different offer rather than trying to homogenise it into a bigger offer.

Orsola De Castro:

I totally see your point. If you think about it, historically speaking the great mass consumption in fashion is relatively new. We are talking franchising. We're talking luxury as being available to everybody. We're talking the end of the 1980s. This is really relatively new and we've been taught to want differently. When I was younger, [for the] older generation, it wasn't about, you have a fiver in your pocket and you match it to a pair of jeans. You have a fiver in your pocket, you wait until you have a tenner and then you get yourself the type you really want. It's our attitudes that have been completely discombobulated. I reckon that it's going to take enough time to go back to a different way of desiring and that's where we're going.

I have to say, going back to what we were saying before, I agree with Becky about better design but at the same time I really have been seeing design coming along. I disagree about ethical fashion or sustainable fashion being less qualitatively outstanding than mainstream. When was the last time one of you went into a trade fashion fair and left thinking everything I've seen was inspirational, it just doesn't happen. There is bad taste and good taste in all of the fashion industry. It just so happens that there are so many fewer people doing sustainable fashion. Sustainable fashion generates quite logically from a type of consumer that was interested in a certain type of design. It is again, up to the educators and up to the businesses to say 'Yes, okay, I'm taking that on board but I'm creating a new type of design'. There is no higher amount of bad design in ethical fashion than there is in normal fashion.

Rebecca Earley:

Can I jump back to Dilys' question because it's a really good comment and it's been on my mind because on the one hand, I'd like to reinvent thousands of Marks & Spencer's shirts using my techniques and my ideas. On the other hand I've been reading books like *The Long Tail* and *The Beauty of Small Businesses*, this American economic theory about small giants. About how these small companies perform so much better and they make a conscious decision to stay small. Inspired by those ideas I saw straight away that's what we've got really. We've got hundreds of recyclers and actually we could offer a great range of choice. It's about availability; it's about offering a sleeker marketed package. But what I can imagine is, through

using the internet and setting up groups and systems, designers becoming much more connected with each other.

Kate showed a great slide of the plastic bottle, one person who's taking waste already can't use all of the bottle. Kate's found people for the middle part and the top part and finally the bottle top. So you've got four people, haven't you? Last time you spoke somebody said to you, so, have you put them in touch with each other? That's the next stage maybe. That's a lovely model because that's the way the small people could network and work together. The internet offers a great potential for that to happen and lots of this activity can only be done on a small scale. That's what makes some of these products special. There certainly is a really strong argument for us working on models to keep small people connected. Then there's this other question as well of improving the level of design and improving the level of the recycled product in the larger stores too. Offering the consumer who just wants to go down Oxford Street on a Saturday afternoon, offering them something that they really want to buy too. That's not there yet.

Amy Twigger Holroyd:

We should interconnect the small people but not ignore how enormous the huge people are. These large high street retailers are monoliths, but they pretend they're all these different shops. They should be broken up and they should be sent to different parts of the country.

Orsola De Castro:

In a way sustainable designers are, in terms of business, an oxymoron. Here we are saying we want to slow down the industry, when all of those guys are saying 'No, we want to speed it up'. So inevitably, there's going to be a communication problem, which there is.

Participant:

We've had a lot of contact with the supply chain. On Wednesday I was talking to farming groups from West Africa, talking about their Fair Trade crop and talking about how we can set up the supply chain. So many people within the supply chain all want to do the same thing. As big as my company is [a major UK retailer] and as evil as people might think we actually are, we are trying to achieve something that the consumer actually does want to know of. The research is saying consumers want the sustainable products, they want ethical products and we're trying to deliver those things.

Amy Twigger Holroyd:

What I feel, from the meetings I've been at, is that the people from the really big companies are maybe not having the opportunity to dream up the next really lovely,

beautiful concept because they're feeling very defensive from everyone going 'Yes, the big companies and the sweatshops' and this and all that.

Participant:

I can give you a good example of that. We [major UK retailer] produced nearly a quarter of a million recycled polyester fleeces in our menswear group last year. We got numerous phone calls from customers saying 'I really don't like the idea of recycled polyester because I'm not sure if it's clean or whether it's hygienic'. When you've got 11, 12 million customers coming through the front door every day, you get lots of different messages coming back. We're trying to do the right thing, what the right thing is by sustainable fashion, and we're getting our customers asking these things. I take on board what you say. We can't just sit back and blame it all on the consumer but when you deliver these things that they've asked for and they don't buy them it clogs up your whole supply chain.

What can we do with all of this waste? We're trying to find a way of using that waste. If someone from this group here said to us 'Look, you've got all this waste fabric and we can find a home for it and we'll pay discount prices for it', that would be a solution to resolving one of the problems we have. But it's about linking all of those things up together and linking what is actually a global market, a global industry where you've got manufacturing units in China, India, Sri Lanka, back to the UK, and how do you actually put all those together? That's one of the difficult things as well. It's not just scale, it's not just about the consumer, it's about linking all these aspects of the supply chain up and actually delivering what the consumer wants and what the consumer's willing to pay for.

Rebecca Earley:

It's really funny that they phone up saying 'Is it dirty?'. You guys have got great poster campaigns going on at the moment and everybody is going to you and looking at the clothing and reading about Fair Trade and the dyes that you're using. You're one of the pioneering stores that are actually doing that. Stick a poster up and say 'Our polyester's not dirty, in fact it saves 72% of energy'. Stick a poster up, you're good at that.

Participant:

Really I was just following on from what Becky was saying. To me it's about marketing and communication. You have got millions at your disposal for marketing and communications.

Participant:

I'm trying to find those millions of pounds.

Participant:

Right, okay, you have a very tiny marketing budget. But if you put that at your disposal for this particular sector of your retail sales as you have done with food. Your answers in your food marketing are very clear and people are able pick up on the fact that you use free range eggs or Fair Trade this or that, and that message has got through. You could borrow from yourself, from your own expertise.

Katarina Gronmyr (in audience):

My name is Katarina and I'm from a small company in Norway, a small project in Norway called Fretex. We do post-consumer recycling. The company that I work with is a subsidiary of the Salvation Army in Norway, and we have started a project where we're trying to produce new design from used materials that we've been given. I wanted to comment on the design question and the market. What we did quite early on was we made a really slick look for the design because one of the agents told us that it's very good that it's redesigned, and it's even better when you can't tell. We are actually selling okay of the expensive things because it doesn't look like it's redesigned.

The other thing that we've done, we have developed more or less two types of products; one that we can produce easily that we're now looking to try to get produced somewhere and find out how we're going to deal with all the details. We're selling that to the company market as company gifts and that gives it a much better ratio between cost and income. It means that a lot of companies are very interested because they see this as part of a bigger marketing package and it makes it possible for them to say 'This is what we're doing'. Christmas gifts are given every year anyway, so there's a big market there for that.

Participant:

Yes, but you know that Christmas gifts usually end up in landfill.

Participant:

I can't remember who said it: 'All we can ever do is transform it'.

Orsola De Castro:

You cannot destroy matter.

Participant:

I was a bit concerned when I hear about all this pre-consumer waste. Surely that is a design problem at that stage. Why is there so much pre-consumer waste? If the designers at that stage were doing their job properly they would be much more

economical with the fabrics they had and wouldn't be producing so much pre-consumer waste.

Emmeline Child:

From my perspective because I'm a small company I can cut a dress, for example, out of a piece of fabric and then I can use the left over to make tote bags, and then scale it down even further to make little accessories, and then down further to make badges. So I'm using my waste but that's very labour intensive and very time consuming. When you're going through the normal CMT [cut, make and trim] process where you're laying up 50 sheets of fabric and then just cutting it out with an industrial knife, it's too labour intensive to start collecting all those excess pieces up unfortunately, well for the big companies it certainly is. To then start designing things that are going to fit in within the waste supply.

Orsola De Castro:

The real issue is not really offcuts, the real issue is damaged [products]. What happens is that at production level an enormous amount of stuff is damaged. Designers are not, although they are finding solutions, they're not capable of working with something that just didn't turn out the way that they were expecting it. Some of the bigger Italian fashion houses, if something shows up which is maybe 0.5 centimetre longer than the original pattern, that's considered waste. But because they have to protect their image they cannot resell it, either in charity shops or give it away because that would be against their image and they're protecting their quite strict quality control.

The other one is, particularly in terms of textile mills, again one of the biggest wastes is damaged fabrics. For instance, 90% of the jerseys we use are damaged. What do you do with a big ladder? We pretend that we have a fantastic laddering machine because basically we cut the panel bang in the middle and use the ladder as a decoration for that panel. Another enormous waste, and here we go, is colour charts. Every textile company has to produce, twice every year, vast amounts of fabrics to tell all of their clients, this is what I'm doing now, all of that is land filled and chucked. That's where the consumer waste comes from. Off cut is a relatively precious material which we are very, very lucky to get hold of but it's not the bulk of what is pre-consumer.

Jo Heeley:

Can I raise a point about fast fashion and slow fashion? When I was doing research into the major high street retailers, you've got your seasons and then you've got your phases, then you've got more phases. Is that still increasing or are you starting to see a slowdown of the phases because as you've got more phases and this is where we're speeding up and getting much more disposable fashion. What is the sense in the industry? Where are we at?

Participant:

I guess it's been speeding up from what we see.

Jo Heeley:

How long does a phase last?

Participant:

With some fast fashion retailers you're talking about four or six weeks and then they get the next products in. From a business point of view, we [major UK retailer] have to compete with these people. We have to find ways of doing that. We could go down the track of saying we'll do the same thing and do four week turnarounds or we could talk about trying to do sustainable. One of the reasons I talked about the consumers in my first question was, how do we actually link consumers with all this fast fashion? How do we get the fashion designers working to try and drive some sustainability into fashion retail? I don't know what the answer to that is and that's part of the reason why I'm here today is to just try and understand it.

Amy Twigger Holroyd:

To try and make the fast fashion actually fast, all the way through the process and not just fast in the time that you wear it and then throw it away. It still takes the same amount of time to make it and it still sits in landfill for the same amount of time.

Rebecca Earley:

So you can still have fast fashion but it has to be light.

Orsola De Castro:

Fast fashion ought to be biodegradable. That really ought to be the answer. You want to make enormous profits on fast fashion, lose some of your margin but use biodegradable fabrics. For the stuff you want to last longer use fabrics that aren't biodegradable.

Jo Heeley:

Can I bring in Emma's points because I thought there were some really striking images in there? So the billboard image was really pertinent but the City just said, right, we're not doing any more advertising and that's it. In a few months time or a few years time there will be that type of backlash and how would the high street deal with that?

Amy Twigger Holroyd:

Do you mean anti-advertisement or do you mean anti-fast with that backlash?

Jo Heeley:

Anti-advertising. I mean that's really strong. It's happened so far just in Sao Paulo in Paris in the last two years. People held protests like Becky was saying, more activism.

Participant:

I think we are seeing a shift, definitely. I go round a lot of schools and recycling is in the school syllabus now in the design technology part of their GCSE and everything. You see these children coming through up to then further education and they're very clued up about recycling and about the whole process. Unfortunately in my generation I've always been used to high street stores and being able to get that product and not really understanding where it's coming from.

Jo Heeley:

That's teenage though. They hit teenage, they forget all the primary school education and then they go out shopping. But can I just say I don't think people want to go to M&S for fast fashion. I think they go to Zara and Primark. I think people want things to last still, which is how things were. But I think if M&S went down the route of, not anti-fast fashion, but actually really pushing the idea that their clothes could be mended, looked after, exchanged, classics well made, really good quality and actually took - I suppose it sounds so political when I say take a stand against fast fashion. It's just that you don't go to M&S for a quick fashion fix. I know they're competing in that way at the moment and their advertising campaign tries to do that. But I still think people just go to Top Shop for the stuff that they want to throw away.

Participant:

I saw recently a high street fashion retailer in Denmark or Sweden has opened up a secondhand shop that only sells their secondhand clothes to show how long they last and how classically they've been designed. So that shop existing is a statement about what you can expect.

Jo Heeley:

Yes, there's a really good piece of research in the TED resource done by an undergraduate where they looked at Vivien Westwood's stuff selling on Ebay and Katherine Hamnett's stuff selling on Ebay, saying actually which is the most sustainable design. Vivien Westwood doesn't go out there to try to be eco and she was looking then for pieces of Hamnett that were eco and were they reselling. Of course, everything there is Westwood. It's lasting, it's being collected, it's actually been designed to last. The Hamnett stuff was down there.

Participant:

Just on that point about fast and slow fashion. I think fashion is inevitably going to slow down, that whole life cycle thing will slow down as the Chinese economy develops. It won't be cheap to produce in China and we'll never see that scale of cheap production, there isn't anywhere else that can go. The other thing is the oil and the economy is beginning to slow down. So I think those two things are with us.

Participant:

Sorry, I disagree with that because I think it will move from China. It will move to India, it will move to Africa.

Participant:

The thing is China can't keep speeding up forever, it can't get any faster. It will start to slow. We're already seeing people bringing some production back to Europe. We've now lost our machinery. Half of the machinery has been sold to Asia. We've now got a situation where certain products are no longer economical to ship. With the oil price going up they're becoming less and less economical. We've got now in parts of Europe really already beginning to really regret the loss of the industry and looking at solutions to bring that back. In Italy, in France, in Spain, that's happening already.

Participant:

Yes, but in Italy you're also getting crazy things. You're actually getting people being shipped over from China to do the work at Chinese labour rates.

Orsola De Castro:

| Absolutely and one of the biggest sweatshop's in Italy, they're Chinese.

Participant:

| That's because the skills are all in China now, the skills have died out [\[elsewhere\]](#).

Participant:

No, it's the economics because they're paying them below European rates, they're paying them the Chinese rates.

Participant:

Until I retired last year and I ran the Salvation Army recycling unit in the UK. It's a plea really to the designers. I'm actually gobsmacked of the sheer beauty of the things I've seen today. However, last year we completed a report for DEFRA, working with Leeds University. We buy two million tons of clothes every year. We recycle or we collect for recycling and reuse 300,000 tons. The charity shops use 50,000 tons. You get people who use 100 tons together perhaps, maybe, it doesn't really matter. But we throw 1.2 million tons into the waste bin, there is the real problem, not the 100 tons. What you do serves to lift awareness.

So I think my plea to you as designers, and you were saying about networking, about thinking about cradle to cradle, secondary and tertiary and more uses. Don't just think about turning these fibres, because that's what they are, into clothes, there are many, many other uses. The report on the website that I happened to know of DEFRA has got recorded there six new areas: air conditioning, automotive, hydroponics, plastic composites instead of glass fibre, insulation. I could go on and on and on. If we are going to think resource management, if we are going to manage our resource more effectively we can't just think about how beautiful it looks. We've got to look about the chemical and physical properties of the fibre so it can have a cradle to cradle use.

Rebecca Earley:

That's really good, thank you for that. We wanted it to be beautiful but I think to start the discussion and celebrate 10 years it needed to be beautiful. We were looking around for those people that are working at recycling and using the fibre reclamation in different ways, and wanting to actually hook up with them to see whether we can work with the products and actually improve the products too. The fastest growing waste stream out of that 1.2 is fast fashion, they've identified in DEFRA as well, haven't they? The group that are actually actively dumping it in landfill are the 15-25 year olds.

Participant:

No.

Rebecca Earley:

Fast fashion, no?

Participant:

No, the fast fashion. It's not 25 year olds that are using fast fashion. It used to be those that were trying to eke out their budget. It's now those that go on holiday and buy seven sets of this so they don't have to bring them back, etc, etc. It's now instead of buying one handbag at £100, goes in and buys five or six because they're all in different colours. The composition of the market and their audience has changed significantly in the last five years.

Participant:

Can I just come in on what you were saying about those other markets? I think probably why we're not seeing more of these people here is that it takes a lot longer to get something like that out there into the market, simply because you've got a lot more long-term health and safety issues and testing that needs to be done. Whereas with fashion, with accessories, this kind of area, it's relatively quick to take something in, do something with it and get it out there.

Participant:

I couldn't agree more. It's essential to work together, it's a team effort. It's not me, it's us.

Jo Heeley:

I think that's a really good point too.

Thank you very much for your questions everybody. Thank you to the panel.