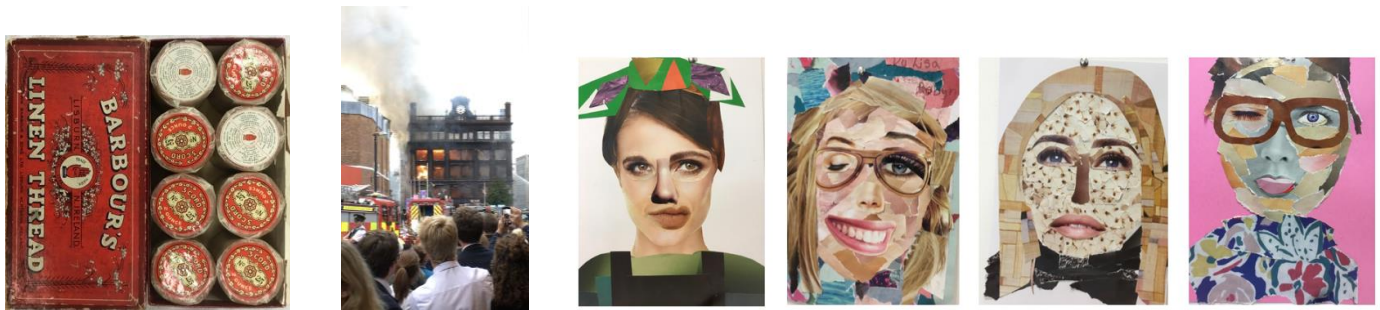


Sustainability Matters

Developing a sustainable future for Textile Art, Design and Fashion at Ulster

The textile and fashion industry is at a crossroads. The global textile industry which feeds the desire for fast fashion is under intense scrutiny for its treatment of workers and an overproduction of cheap clothing, a proportion of which heads to landfill without ever having been worn. Many raw materials require vast quantities of water and the routine use of pesticides in their production. There is an urgent need to develop sustainable approaches to the production of textiles and fashion. Staff and students from Textile Art Design and Fashion came together last year to raise awareness of the issues, rediscover our sustainable past and focus on the development of a more sustainable future.



We began by auditing our approach to teaching, redesigning workshops to reduce costs and waste and emphasizing the importance of re- using and recycling in all our classes.



We organized sustainability workshops, making new work from donated fabric, we ran darning and mending classes, addressing the need to slow down, to take care of our possessions and ourselves. We discussed personal and political perspectives, activism and consumerism, and shared our research, academic enterprise and design practice along with our hopes and fears for the future. We are asking ourselves and our students to become agents for change.



We held an exhibition in the foyer gallery which explored a series of responses to the overwhelming issue of sustainability from both students and tutors on BA Hons Textile Art, Design and Fashion. The work investigated a number of models for future practice aimed at raising awareness of the environmental impact of the industry and encouraging change.

Recycling, upcycling and repurposing industrial fibers, yarns and fabrics as well as found and collected objects led to new work. Using local and sustainable materials inspired other ways of working. Students also examined their own attitudes and practices around sustainability through photographic documentation.





Visiting speakers described their sustainable businesses and ethical stances, offering a crucial model for future careers. Masters and undergraduate students collaborated with Belfast City Council on a sustainable market and we collaborated with Breda Academy on a School Partnerships funded project to raise awareness of re-using, recycling and local biodiversity.



School Partnerships
Breda Academy
Sustainability Matters



These are a few of the initiatives we began in 18/19, many have become embedded in our practice but this is just the beginning.

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