

DISRUPTING PLACE-BASED FASHION FUTURES

Author

Martin Bonney,
Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore

Corresponding Author: martin.bonney@lasalle.edu.sg

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Abstract

The fashion system is still very much dictated today by western hierarchies, traditions and ways of doing fashion that is hard to escape from in our modern hyper-connected world. This suddenly seems dramatically amplified as we leap forward with technology in response to recent global health crises that have transformed the different ways of living, working and communicating across all sectors today. This increases a globalised ‘single world society’ that dominates the communication, production and practice of fashion. In turn, it reduces the local and regional practices and perspectives from other parts of the world. As the vast majority of us experience fashion today through digital screens, social media, we need to acknowledge that we are encountering endless ambiguous information from foreign perspectives. In order to allow for authentic fashion dialogues to not be lost in translation, we should ask if this current fashion system introduces significant contributions from regional locations and if education in these places are equipped to teach this? This paper explores the necessary introduction of disruptive pedagogical methods within higher education aimed to refocus non-Eurocentric fashion teaching for a more global and significant contribution to fashion futures. These aims offer new perspectives to ignite changes within the current system while equipping new designers with the necessary skill sets to navigate, communicate and refocus their lens locally. This is being explored through primary data collected over the course of five years from 2017 across the level 2 Ba Hons Fashion Design Course in Singapore, where five different briefs refocused the student fashion lens through a disruptive place-based perspective. Students learnt to understand the relevance of their own place, resources and habitat, which will then allow for greater depth to explore fashion for a global community. Thus generating a new range of fashion outcomes through films, business and products. The discussion and conclusion synthesise significant insights and best practices that can be adopted globally and applied for future fashion thinking. A disruptive methodology used to reflect upon the transformation of how we see fashion today but also how we practice fashion design for a better tomorrow.

Introduction

As fashion makers, curators, communicators, educators and researchers, we find ourselves at a point in time where the current fashion system feels locked into twentieth-century ways of doing and being. Following fixed hierarchies of Eurocentric mainstreams and industrial capitalist ideals of growth and profit that needs to be reinvented. This suddenly seems dramatically amplified, as we leap forward with technology in response to recent global health crises. That has transformed the different ways of living, working and communicating across all sectors today. This shift in our being has led to a change in our thinking. We have become more open to the discussion and consideration of greater equality, more mindfulness of our actions, well-being, and conversations surrounding mental health through to the larger, socio-technical eco-systems in which we exist. (Manzini, E., 2016)

As we embark on this change, we cannot ignore the evidence regarding the planet's limited resources and the effect we have on them. We have reached a moment in time where reflection is no longer encouraged but compulsory. These recent events have shone a spotlight on our faults and placed all of us in the state of reimagining and dreaming up new possibilities for better futures. Thus, it is only natural that we demand more from our fashion system, as we move forward. This is a dreamy and utopian direction at heart, however, fashion and design are perfectly equipped to tackle this issue, as problem-solving is the very nature of any great designer. It is, in this context, I want to share and discuss five projects from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore from 2017 to 2021, where five different design briefs embedded Place-based learning (PBL) to enhance the local culture within the existing fashion systems. The design briefs were conducted at the level two Ba (Hons) Fashion Design and Textiles and the Ba (Hons) Fashion Media and Industries courses respectively, where the projects were delivered in parallel. These reflections and observations highlight how we have disrupted the students' learning journey, offering insights into new PBL methods while proposing alternative future fashion practices. These new practices go beyond a global reductive culture by reintroducing local solutions with culturally significant circumstances based on relevant cultural transactions.

Design Cultural Shift

“Trouble is an interesting word. It derives from a thirteenth-century French verb meaning “to stir up,” “to make cloudy,” “to disturb.” We-all of us on Terra-live in disturbing times, mixed-up times, troubling and turbid times, The task is to become capable, with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response. Mixed-up times are overflowing with both pain and joy - with vastly unjust patterns of pain and joy, with the unnecessary killing of ongoingness but also with necessary resurgence. The task is to make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present” (Haraway, D, 2016, p. 1) Borrowing these poetic words of Donna Haraway helps bring about the understanding of our state of living today, with direction towards a renewed sense of joy. Despite the devastating pain in the wake of Covid-19, we need to reflect on and discover new design approaches, products and practices for better ways of living.

All designed products inclusive but not limited to fashion, have always emerged from our geographical place and culture, socially connecting us through a cultural ecosystem. Bound by: “physical, social, psychological, economic, religious and so on. and any combination of these.” (Dillon, P, J. 2015; 2017) Designed objects are a representation of the relationship between the designer, the biological environment and the socio-cultural processes embedded and the end-user. This cultural ecology is attributed to anthropologist Julian Steward (1955) who documented the ‘transactional relationship’ of ‘exchanged’ values as an active situation. (Steward, J., 1955). It is the combination of these attributes that the ‘transaction’ refers to the ‘act’ of doing something and shifting the situation ‘beyond’ its existing condition. This act of exchange is an active interaction that demonstrates how we as humans help shape our own futures, environments and human existence. (Dillon 2015; 2017). Through the characteristics of our place, “its people, individually or collectively, and every aspect of their environment” is connected. The makeup ‘culturally significant’ richness is built upon generations of practices. (Walker, S. et al. 2018) It is, through our desires and ingenuity as a human race that we traded these objects in exchange for different and new experiences. With each culture comes new techniques and different levels of innovation.

Design culture has always been in the business of exchange through crafted or designed products, documented through the vast silk road in the past to the web of digital connectivity seen today. Unsurprisingly, the design took deep roots in early twentieth-century Europe following the patterns of the industrial revolution and technological scientific invention. This foundation generates a global society that has grown complacent to the westernised free markets of trade, intercultural mass connectivity, capitalist growth-based systems that have squashed local practices of doing fashion significantly in the past. (Walker, S. et al. 2018).

It is this context that brings about the challenges of our global fashion problems. The current fashion system does not fully address the many different cultures, users and systems at play. We need to acknowledge that we are encountering an endless stream of ambiguous information from foreign perspectives. This is the way the vast majority of us experience fashion today through digital screens, social media, that dominates the communication, production and practises of fashion. Its the lack of depth of information and reduced local wealth that is lost in translation. These different cultural forms of fashion are diluted into a homogenising standard for globalised audiences.

Fashion has always been “a cultural system that tells individuals groups how to behave, moulding people into static identities.” (Simmel., G. 1957) It is this Fordist, industrial age that gave birth to the need for the designers to mass-produce globally. The power houses’ of thought like the Bauhaus or leading schools around the world today were set at creating the designer in this direction. Etched in these principles, the design specialists with similar aptitude are produced from these training. They are programmed to embrace problems, creating new products for the mass market. Fashion Designers are no different from our industry readiness, entrepreneur-thinking that is built-in most curricula today, following the same capitalist ideas. Focused on designed objects, products, services and systems that address a single global culture, the results are homogeneous cultural transactions. This industrial direction of production

‘moulds’ a globalised society and unfortunately this dominates the communication, production and practice of fashion today.

Overloaded Futures

The culture of fashion today is more complicated than ever before, its relevance is intimately connected to our daily lives and activities, even more so, as we adopt a hyper-digital state of living today. Fashion objects, products, services and systems continue to push the boundaries of digitality. We are no longer bound by physical properties as fashion makers, we blur the digital socio-cultural worlds of imaginable fantasy. Fashion embraces this global culture of value exchanges and it simultaneously offers both tangible and intangible connections to multiple socio cultures settings across various digital platforms. We shift into a world of interpretation and unknown meaning from different perspectives, where we can invent new materials and challenge the foundational design principles. We have the power to ignore the limitations of gravity and movement in this blurring of worlds. Apps like Dressx and specialist 3D design software have become a growing field of liberation and innovations. They allow consumers to filter and superimpose virtual fashion over themselves to share and communicate through social media, transforming themselves into social-political movements, urban trends or alien-like avatars. Fashion is redefining its very purpose in these ‘mixed up times,’ which reflects our global context and the shift into new design practice and our way of thinking and doing.

As we shift into this new way of creating and designing fashion, we are encountering endless ambiguous information from foreign perspectives. Hence, we need to acknowledge that this generates a blurred reality that reduces local and regional practices and perspectives of fashion. As we stir up our practices of designing and teaching fashion, it currently feels locked in painful eurocentric patterns of the past, succumbing to global culture and ignoring the local knowledge. Jeyon Jung and Stuart Walker unpack the relevance of place and culture in a chapter within *Designed Roots* greater unpacking, Patrick Dillon term ‘cultural transactions’ They discuss the importance of exploring this relationship of local exchanges and raising the contribution of cultural significance in the design process, fusing the designer's ability to embed meaning and cultural value in products. This continues a cultural tradition, becoming more future-focused from a ‘place-based practice’. It is in this “interplay between established ways of doing things and new possibilities that innovations can emerge.” (Walker, S. et al. p. 4 2018) Cultural significance is a future-forward principle, benefiting from

“multifarious set of interrelated factors related to tradition, place, community, sense of identity, spiritual well-being, aesthetics, local conditions, materials, technologies, skills and exchange of goods and services.”

(Walker, S. et al. p. 4 2018)

Designed Direction

Transparency and interconnectivity have reached a point of forced reflection in fashion and our 'mixed up' history. The global pandemic has brought about important existential questions about who we are? Questioning our identity within fashion and challenging how and why we are living or practising fashion in this manner? It is through the global connectivity today that both complicates, contradicts and possibly liberates designs' future. Not only do industry specialists bear witness to the devastation created by fashion but felt through the social screens that connect us all. Our end products fully represent the hands that picked the cotton and stitched the seams. We have given a voice and an identity to the most vulnerable and this change is happening across all sectors today. This new meaning of transparency has ruptured the very pipeline of fashion production and with it, we are demanding change. The pandemic has been a mirror of our inactions and wrongdoing of designing and producing.

Ezio Manzini discusses the practice of designing in his paper 'Design Culture and Dialogic Design.' (2016) He states that with more awareness and understanding of our ecoculture, we can embrace new methods and approaches for new ways of thinking and doing. "a means to tackle widely differing issues, adopting a human-centred approach ... It shifts from traditional, product-oriented design processes (that we have acknowledged above) to a process for designing solutions to complex and often intractable social, environmental, and even political problems." (Manzini, E., 2016 p. 53) Our role as designers and educators is then to redefine these tools, methods and apply critical analysis and reflection to extend the knowledge, and to produce new visions of fashion solutions.

Methodology

This reflective paper investigates and responds to the changes made to the Ba (Hon's) Fashion Design and Ba (Hon's) Fashion Media and Industries programmes at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. Over the course of 2017-2021, a focus of Place-based learning (PBL) was written into five project briefs across the Ba (Hons) Level two to enrich the local knowledge through an active system of cultural exchange. Supported through key literature that reflects the shifting design culture and design thinking. Its strategies and techniques are generally used and discussed in response to 'deep learning' that goes beyond the classroom. (Dewey, J., 1938) PBL that

"takes advantage of geography to create authentic, meaningful and engaging personalised learning for students. More specifically, Place-Based Education is defined by the Center for Place-Based Learning and Community Engagement as an immersive learning experience that places students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, and uses these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum."

(Placed Based Education, 2016 website.)

These strategising PBL for depth of learning challenged both the teaching practitioners and the learner for focused local solutions and engagement. The students' "learning is conceptualised as a spiral, rather than a cycle, as the learner's development deepens with each successive experience and resulting reflection, thought, and action." (Goodlad, K. Leonard, A. 2018 website.) This understanding of spirals happens when we collide and layer the experiences with meaningful and relevant knowledge, enhancing student engagement to ensure depth of learning through a local context.

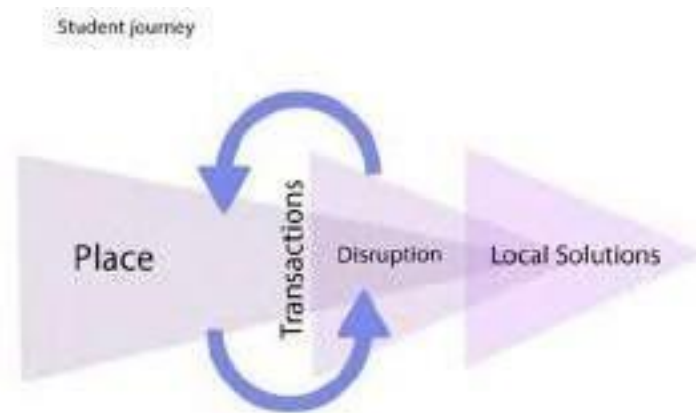


Figure 1. Disruptive Transaction Bonney, M. 2021

The five different designed briefs discussed below are structured thematically titled: Cross-Pollination, Indigenous Routes and Digital Interchange. Each project relied on the interplay of transactional PBL concepts that maximised disruptions whether naturally occurring or designed to generate local solutions. The disruption layers social geographical place values in a state of reflection and strengthen the relationship of exchanged experiences. This spiral of transactions develops as a "conceptual/relational ... ways of engaging with the work, or ways of being in the world, [as they] do not happen in isolation of each other." (Walker, S. et al. p. 53 2018).

Each project resulted in a series of exhibitions that will be used to support and probe the relevance of PBL with disruption. Findings include the influence of the project, its outcomes and perceived levels of student engagement, especially when compared to more traditional project-based briefs that allow for any direction. The author's reflections are based on his observations being documented and captured through the end of semester exhibitions and the author's insights as project lead.

ASEAN Spirals of Practice

PBL is reflected in five design briefs that focus student learning to ‘explore and expand these notions from an ASEAN perspective; allowing regional geographies, periods, habitats, cultures, behaviours, rituals, and beliefs to unfold.’ With this in mind, the fashion students at Lasalle worked in their respective courses and followed a shared design brief. Despite each brief being different year on year, they all had commonalities that ran throughout. For the focus of this discussion, the emphasis of our location and cultural heritage towards PBL is used. Students started with a fixed ASEAN lens, having to “explore and expand these notions from an ASEAN perspective; allowing regional geographies, periods, habitats, cultures, behaviours, rituals, and beliefs to unfold.” (Lasalle Assessment Brief AY21/22, 2021) As a team, we felt this was an important step in accepting PBL approaches within the student education journey. To break the belief that this homogeneous fashion is superior. By formalising PBL in our assessment briefs we directed students and the wider team with this strategy. We used these words to prompt student directions in the broadest spectrum to trigger cultural exploration addressing the much larger design ecology from our region. We found that the majority of the students joining us were fixated on the culture and influences of western fashion and nature when they have very little or no connection culturally to the west but at the same time knowing very little of their own heritage. Despite the broad direction of the fixed ASEAN context, they found it limiting and still preferred to design western fashion ideas and concepts.

In the past, this resulted in major shortcomings and multiple lapses in design education, where students are designing from foreign lenses, heavily reliant on secondary data that becomes weak or lost in translation. They did not fully understand the foreign ecosystems and cultures that rotated the project. For example; designing for western climates does not come naturally to someone who lives in an eternal summer-like Singapore. The biggest misconception when it comes to seasons and the complications and intricacies within the design challenge that climate alone creates. The understanding of winter materials, layers of clothing and acts of wearing fashion are vastly different. The details of windproof or thermal insulation are rather logical for anyone designing a winter jacket in Europe. The colour of the jacket, maybe darker tones or deep hues is common to complement the change in natural light. The limited hours of sunlight, which has emotional and psychological effects on our mood and relationships with other colours and details. With respect to this, we in Singapore have two very different conditions. On average 32 degrees every day being located on the equator, no change to sunlight all year round with one constant season. Living in Singapore is always humid and hot or you are bound in an air-conditioned environment. It might rain more one day from the next but how we live and wear fashion is different.

Accepting that fashion is existing in multiple ecosystems and is completely different around the world is the first step in realising that we need multiple solutions. Our location is a huge factor in this process of designing for different social-cultural ecologies and it can not easily be taught and learned outside of them. Especially when we consider the already heavy curriculum and technical information our students have to learn.

Cross-pollination



Figure 2. Forces of Nature Singapore, School of Fashion Exhibition. Huang, A. 2017

Cross-pollination is a teaching strategy where knowledge is exchanged between one discipline, culture or person to another to help fertilise new understandings. It is an active cultural transaction of processes explored within education and used within two of the briefs discussed: Force of Nature and Minimalism Maximalism. Forces of Nature was the first of the two collaborations with The Museum at FIT's curatorial team, LASALLE College of the Art's students and students from Hongik University, South Korea Fashion. All responded to the exhibition titled Forces of Nature at the Museum that launched in 2017 "with its core ideas of this collaboration centred around interconnectedness and imagination." (Bonney, M. Melendedz, T. E 2017) This body of work was exhibited at LASALLE College of Arts, Praxis Space and Project Space on the McNally Campus.

Forces of Nature, aimed to explore the complex relationship between fashion and the natural world from our regions while addressing a global fashion community. Through understanding the western lens we could then refocus and examine our own natural environment. The exhibition in New York was available for students to view online through the interactive website

"Force of Nature revealed how nature has historically influenced fashion, and how fashion can serve as an indicator of society's relationship with the natural world. In eighteenth-century Europe, for example, nature became an object of renewed

fascination as a result of overseas exploration. This fascination found expression in garments that featured depictions of exotic plants and animals.”

(Forces of Nature, 2017 Online.)

With a wide variety of both historical and contemporary fashion on display. This exhibition was also presented to students during a studio lecture where curator Tanya Melendez Escalante gave significant insight into the selected works.

Our students From Singapore used this as a starting point and precursor of what came before in the world of fashion. Like most projects, it followed a simple structure of research and inspiration, ideation and development, prototyping through to realising and final products. This fourteen-week project had two points of engagement with the curatorial team in New York for cultural exchange via conference calls. Where students shared moodboards in week three of the semester and gave a Pecha Kucha presentation in week seven. (Formative week) Each time along with the tutoring team, feedback and support was given directing the research to explore their own cultural system.



Figure 3. Tailored Shirt, Forces of Nature Singapore, School of Fashion Exhibition, Ng, Y.

2017



Figure 4. Untitled, Forces of Nature Singapore, School of Fashion Exhibition, Hongik University, South Korea 2017

The Student exhibition showcased research and works that included animations, fashion designs, textiles and accessories. Allowing students from LASALLE School of Fashion and Students from Hongik University to generate a wide social, environmental and artisanal response towards their natural environment.

Figure three, Work By Ng Jia Yi, was a tailored shirt with multiple pockets dipped in concrete that represented the brutalist nature of the Singapore landscape today. The garment symbolised modern aesthetics and responded to the pervasive westernised ideals in Singapore and its shifting social and cultural landscape. Figure four being created by students from South Korea held more historical notions of national dress and identity. Projecting a sense of locality and transition. I distinctly remember during the physical show how everyone in Singapore wanted to touch its woollen yarns and felted fabric. These fibres are rarely explored by our students in Singapore. Both Figure three and four represent different interactions of our ecosystem holding an embodiment of cultural values of exchange. Through the shared exhibition, we were able to unfold these differences and respect them while producing contemporary global fashion.



Figure 5. Minimalism Maximalism, Huang, A. New York, 2019

Minimalism Maximalism was the second cross-pollination with LASALLE College of the Arts fashion courses in response to The Museum at FIT exhibition Minimalism Maximalism showcased in 2018. However, within this year The Fashion School at The Fashion Institute of Technology FIT, New York took part. Both followed the same concept responding to The Museum exhibition being the precursor to which students in both cities responded. The fertilisation of cultural exchange happened not only with the richness of the exhibition and insights into the curatorial practice, but we disrupted the researcher flow of investigation and tutor-led mentality. Have students share moodboards Week three and video presentations in week seven from each other's cultural perspectives. This fourteen-week project introduced them to peer-to-peer across institutions. Learning cultural exchange through their own locally-based projects. Enhancing different PBL experiences and local understandings.



Figure 6. Minimalism Maximalism, Huang, A. New York, 2019

The students from both schools exhibited work in Singapore and New York side by side. Displaying a range of fashion outcomes from, videos, media packs, fashion and textiles garments and creative process journals. Seeing the work side by side as shown in figure six instantly communicates the differences in colour, material and technical methods. From drape screen-printed silks to circular rib knits, each school enables and embeds local relevances. Communicating their own design ecosystem while still responding to minimal or maximal styles outlined from the exhibition and design brief. Through disrupting the students' own research patterns into their own cultural place and actively engaging in a cultural transaction with students from FIT, we found they were able to understand how the same concept takes on different conceptualisations based on geographical, socio-cultural values through cross-pollination. This strengthens their sensitivity to cultural ecosystems and global differences.

Indigenous Routes

Indigo 2.0 conducted in 2019 was an initiative that we hope to continue post-pandemic, its indigenous values of exchange is unquestionable. Following the same fourteen-week structure, this project was a collaboration of craft artisans and practitioners from Bali Indonesia and

LASALLE College of the arts, Singapore where we all came together in Ubud Bali during week eight for workshops, talks and activities. This cultural excursion took place in the project week as an optional time to develop and explore indigenous cultures. The fashion students were tasked with this brief to investigate Indigo for this project from the region and its cultural significance. The brief was still fixed within its ASEAN lens and started with an introduction to Indigo from the Author of Indigo, Professor Jenny Balfour Paul. She was physical with us presenting her research on indigo, filling the room with her energy and insights. Following her talk students could then select elective Indigo workshops where she explored natural indigo vat recipes from local fruit sugars in our studio.

Shifting our students practice from a studio in Singapore to a small village in Ubud in the north of Bali, students were shocked by the rural way of living, working and practising crafts. This one week was packed with specialist talks, from local chiefs, Dyer tribal women who spoke of deforestation and performed local dances to simple dinners and gatherings with indigenous craft artisans. Students were able to learn from local master hands batik and ikat methods of doing. Shifting their perspective of modern life and conveniences blue dye in a bottle, Having to pick indigo leaves to learn how to ferment and the importance of pickling lime and aeration.



Figure 7. Master Weaver workshop Pacagusti, Bonney, M. Indonesia, 2018

This week for all staff and students who joined and those back in Singapore who shared in the experiences gained from the different crafted cultural transactions. Having lived amongst them and eaten with them, connecting throughout the day it was the shift in our physical location that both disrupted the learning and enriched it. Despite being a short period of time, we were immersed in a region that seems worldly different from our home comforts of Singapore. With students commenting on how they have never seen stars so bright being permanently based in a city or how they are now questioning the value of human labour and its importance in fast fashion systems. Shifting the classroom to a rural space and collaborating with a community of indigenous people has transformed our understanding of the cultural significance and the effects we have on the world around us.

Digital Interchange

Phantasmagoria was a design brief delivered in 2020 that started with the disruptions of having to navigate and function through the global pandemic. Understandably this project faced difficulties throughout for staff and students. Yet, seemingly one of our most promising offerings to date. Following the other briefs mentioned above, this was a fourteen-week project that placed the ASEAN lens as its cultural focus. However, we had no excursions and no special guests. It relied on the teams to deliver all core knowledge and guide the students in the studio consultations placing the emphasis on place, practices and ways of doing. It was through the brief Phantasmagoria that reflected the pandemic in its fascination with horror and imagination that allowed students to critically analyse the role and relevance of the current fashion system within a global pandemic.



Figure 8. Ripe, Zulfa, I. 2020

Not being able to showcase the work physically due to the pandemic, the team and students co-created a digital exhibition titled Phantasm, on the LASALLE's School of Fashion research website, www.1mcnallyfashion.com and School Instagram. This co-curated selection of fashion products and communications are the students' response to the sense of covid isolation, uncertainty and loss of locality in the fashion industry that the pandemic brought about. Through this disruption of the pandemic, we had implicitly challenged how we designed social and cultural practice. It naturally placed us all in a state of rethinking and wanting to design better. Promoting global social behaviour that questioned our consumption and other fashion

practices through the alignment of the given topic. This wouldn't have been possible without the PBL being inserted into the assessment briefs and investigation into Phantasmagoria.



Figure 9. Luxury 2.0, Drape Structure and Digitality. Fashion Design and Textiles showcase, 2021

Luxury 2.0, Drape Structure and Digitality, is the latest brief that directed the students in focusing their practice of fashion design into their place and the greater region. This body of work aims to engage and extend the conversation of rethinking luxury through drape or structure within our digital age. The garments and products were created following individual student research through the fourteen-week structure as above. No additional excursions or speakers were engaged and the students were relatively studio based this semester. Despite only having the brief and core lecturing team to direct them, they seem to have been able to follow the same patterns of understanding unlocking local codes, meaning and values associated with fashion from the region. Some are stronger than others but all projects stepped into a space of cultural transactional exchange.

The students have been fully engaged and delivering all aspects of the brief and this work was published online within the LASALLE's School of Fashion research website. We held a physical exhibition alongside the digital where the garments were projected onto the wall of the gallery seen in figure nine above. By only representing visual evidence of the work the lecturing team maximised the digital conversation to underpin the current state of digitality reflecting our local fashion context.

Students were able to demonstrate this through fashion outcomes connecting the present moment and demonstrating a practice of material and immaterial making based on a sensitivity to their culture and time. The garment on the far right is fully biodegradable and dyed using a process of fermented beans from the region. It created a silver fabric made from recycled linen that one absorbs within. The aim of this student was to shift away from the industry's use of

colour and bring about local natural processes that offer more depth and cultural value. From Biodegradable designs to rethinking the body and including embroidered LEDs that visually communicate approachability and openness. Naturally, not all students performed at this level across the batch but figure eight and nine give evidence that the students are shifting into more social design practice. That is pushing the boundaries of how and what fashion is from a local perspective.

Their garments and projects shifted into a speculative research pathway that did place the more technical based team members into an uncomfortable space, not sure how the notion of fit or human body operates in this speculative world. However, as we continue to transition into these new methods of teaching and learning it opens the questions, especially with the latest projects having a strong ability to cross both digital and physical worlds. Can we remain to communicate our cultures fluently across both? Would authenticity and our voice remain if we reintroduce the indigenous knowledge into these spaces? All crafts need to innovate. As students question their heritage and future traditions these outcomes can be somewhat uncomfortable. However, it is important to remember the present time in which we live and the extreme social-cultural stress we are under. Acceptance is not always needed, as it's through the disruption to our current state that helps project us shift into a space of designing for the future. I borrow Rabunow's terms to project hope in this direction, we "make visible what is emerging by both slowing down the present and speeding up that present's future." (2008)

Conclusion

Throughout the different projects shared above, the relevance of our place within our teaching is without question. This wouldn't have been fully accepted by all staff and students if it wasn't formalised in the assessment brief and written into the course. It allowed students to become more engaged in a wider range of research methods as they encountered different acts of cultural transactions globally. Students adopted greater primary approaches with a design anthropologist direction built-in sensitively understanding their own ecology being natural or second nature. This ability to cultivate criticality within their own place becomes a transferable skill that they can take to other regions. Having the skill set to respond to a problem or situation produces key designed products and thinking to evolve from any local place.

This brought the programmes new levels of contemporary material and immaterial worlds to collide from a local discourse. Offering students the possibility to trigger multiple transactions of cultural significance, through different rituals, understanding of aesthetics and practises of fashion outcome, going beyond PBL and focusing on the transactions. The Indigenous excursions allowed for deeper levels of stimuli and heritage discussion that gave a deep appreciation of their own cultural traditions. It was disrupting the students' learning environment or similar to the disruption due to Covid-19 that forced students and staff into reflection. Challenging our traditional frameworks of designing and teaching "past century big-go Design" (Manzini, E., 2016 p. 55) questioning the ideas of practises and methods for future research.

Through the documentation and reflection of this paper, It is clear that we at LASALLE are moving towards a more relevant future, generating new design cultures and possibilities. Shifting from ‘product for production’ approaches to ‘concepts enriched by our local exchange of values’. Moving away from the technical know-how of the past and offering as Manzini coins “solution-ism and participation-ism.” A designed solution that “encompasses the knowledge, values, visions, and quality criteria that emerge from the tangle of conversations occurring during design activities.” (Manzini, E., 2016 p. 54) These transactions of knowledge allow the designer to immerse themselves into this new way of conscious thinking with inbuilt cultural significance when working in a natural ecosystem. With this evolving design theory, we need to best understand how to navigate these complex sociocultural systems to avoid mainstream twentieth-century thinking and doing. Ensure that the exchange and transaction of cultural significance within our designs remain a natural process, not being translated from foreign perspectives but deeply rooted.

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