

**Material Memorialisation:  
New Narratives from Old**

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# **Material Memorialisation: New Narratives from Old**

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## Declaration

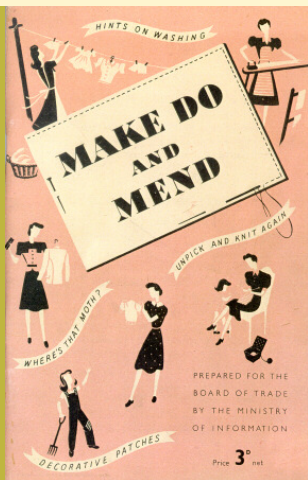
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Rebecca Gully  
30/3/2011

## Abstract

# Material Memorialisation: new narratives from old

By Rebecca Gully



I am interested in the designer as collector. A hoarder of artifacts and information from the past, which teaches us history, to inspire future work. This project involves research into the techniques and concepts behind *Make Do and Mend* of the WWII era (1939-1945) and subsequent rationing period.

Referencing mid-twentieth century garments and *Make Do and Mend* strategies for preservation, conservation, recycling and economy of materials collapses the distinction between the past and present. The vintage garment has its own history that becomes a quality or attribute of the garment. It is a unique and highly valued artifact of the past.

We can use vintage clothing as a means of making ourselves, our practice and our place in the design world knowable. The garment is a window through which the past might be understood; especially past ways of making and the value inherent in traditional skills.

Nostalgia is a psychological lens through which we construct, maintain and re-construct our identity as fashion designers. This project explores nostalgia as a critical framework and how it may inform contemporary and future design practice.



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# Chapter 1: Introduction

To know how is a much more powerful and enriching position to be in than merely to know of something.

(Dormer , 1994)

I am interested in the designer as collector. A hoarder of artefacts and information from the past that teach us history, to inspire future work. This project involves research into the techniques and concepts behind make do and mend. It encompasses rationing, materials, methods of construction and conservation of the WWII era (1939-1945) and subsequent rationing period. It involves experimentation with flat patternmaking and garment construction, as well as working on the stand in direct response to found/recycled materials. It will be a record of technique and craftsmanship.

Referencing mid-twentieth century garments and make do and mend strategies for preservation, conservation, recycling, and economy of materials collapses the distinction between the past and the present.

Working with previously worn and used garments, cloth and trim forms part of a narrative. The story has already begun, even before the hand of the designer continues to tell tales of our time – so that the associative memory of the maker, viewer or wearer of the garment weaves complex narratives based on personal and inherited social memory.

It is important to research and document the techniques and methods of make do and mend – part of our living history – as a method of creative engagement with historic principles. In borrowing from the past, we find new ways of doing things. It establishes a relationship with design history, engages with personal and social history and helps us understand our place in the world – that is, the social context of our own cultural practice. My research aim is to explore nostalgia critically (in relation to clothing) from a personal perspective, with a view to understanding how it informs my design practice. I am considering the purpose that nostalgia serves for me as a designer and maker. By asking what the methods of construction and conservation were used during WWII under the banner of *Make Do*

*and Mend* I can then go on to demonstrate how these historical ways of working present us with information and tools to take a design practice into the future.

The project itself revolves around the re-making and replicating of vintage lingerie in re-purposed materials. This then goes on to inform an evolving lingerie design practice. *Make Do and Mend* forms the framework – so I am also replicating past ways of making, as well as garments from the past.

There are four projects with the overriding *Material Memorialisation* project. *None of Your Business* is a small collection of lingerie cut from men’s business shirts (re-cut); *Lace Curtain Trousseau* uses the notion of a trousseau, and is made from one lace curtain (re-make); and *Love Me Love My Planet* is a collection made from a second hand top (re-model). The fourth project comprises two outfits that have been informed by vintage silhouettes and detail, and is framed as future trajectories.

My new knowledge may then be framed as follows:

- Viewing nostalgia as a tool for practice based research
- The active nostalgiac as researcher
- How looking back informs contemporary and future design

- Why traditional skills are increasingly important and relevant in terms of addressing sustainability
- Using *Make Do and Mend* principles in a contemporary context to address issues of disposability by up-cycling (re-cycling with value added).
- Analyzing how and why we learn from past examples (material and construction); and how this design genealogy becomes part of accumulated knowledge that in term becomes the basis for designing.
- Creating an original framework for an artisanal sustainable design practice/studio/business based on *Make Do and Mend* – and my “*Love Me, Love my Planet*” project

Nostalgia is often dismissed as a simplistic ideology – insignificant and uncomplicated. This has never made sense to me – otherwise why would it seem such an instinctive response? “Nostalgia” no longer refers to a longing to exist in past times, rather a longing for a sense of place, or “rootedness”; the need to feel part of a continuum. Nostalgia uses the past as a form of reappraisal. In representing information we are confronted with a past that is also



present – a present tense with a memory. I am interested in how memory, nostalgia and identity are linked; and how artifacts function as symbols of the past. Nostalgia is an active engagement with the past, and a juxtaposition of past and present.

Fashion - the marginalized design discipline – inhabited primarily by women and gay men – is not seen as having its own knowledges embedded in fashion design practice, so we are constantly expected to frame fashion through rather than in relation to other disciplines such as art or architecture. This is crucial if we recognize how particular frames, theoretical, pedagogical or otherwise, shape and limit the knowledge we produce, and most importantly how power is located in the cultural practice of enframing (Hesford, 1999). In fashion design, knowledge is taught, learnt and accredited through systematic programs of instruction, expanded through research and subject to on-going critical, self-reflexive dialogue that continues into professional practice. As fashion researchers we blur the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture and reflect the complex dynamics involved in the processes of creative fashion design practice. Practice in fashion design is under-pinned by structure and improvisation, order and creativity, experience and intuition. (Stewart, 2006). Studio based research in fash-

ion design explores the space between practitioner and garment, as well as between maker and wearer. This becomes the space for reflection, contemplation and revelation. Stewart (2006) speaks of the breaking of boundaries, including the temporal boundaries between past and present, and the impulse to reconnect with the historical antecedents of today and re-embody them. Having a sense of myself as part of a wider community, and embracing my design genealogy through the exploration of antecedent garments from my fashion family tree contributes to my understanding and experience of the discipline. This knowledge is needed as a “basis from which to create unique and divergent ways forward”; and my project shows how we can draw upon established traditions, “adapting and molding them to suit new purposes and research questions”. In this way techniques and ideas can be appropriated and fashioned from traditional methodologies, and used as points of departure (Stewart, 2006, p.7). My intention through this project is to use the studio as a laboratory of praxis where critical analysis enables a deeper understanding of my own work processes.

The function of my making within this research project supports and

contributes to the construction of an informed and substantiated written exegesis. This also involves myself as practitioner reflecting on the experiences as maker, in combination with the collection and analysis of historical and academic information that in turn supports my making practice. Formal research complements and supports the design artifacts developed during the projects completed. Heuristic engagement with the vintage garment is part of the research that in turn informs the project. Each project incrementally informs the development of ideas around my fashion design practice, and propels it into the future. This has led to a collection based on notions that arose during the projects, and a concept for a studio/retail space that is based on re-using garments and materials. This exegesis is a framework for viewing the projects that describes both my intentions and outcomes. The research content is evidenced through my own articulation of the issues and the way in which they underpin the practice (Douglas, 2000). It is also an attempt to negotiate authority on behalf of a marginalized discipline.

One of my primary objectives is the clarification of an existing form of professional practice from an informed perspective, and to develop the knowledge base of the fashion design discipline from the perspective of the maker. Until recently, fashion designers have not articulated or mapped the investigative processes they

use to allow their practice to be seen as research. In this new type of fashion scholarship located within practice, theories are generated, defined and qualified about the practice from inside the practice (Stewart, 2006). I also believe that traditional ways of making have legitimacy but have not been explained or recorded as such – or framed in a way that places tradition within a previously unconsidered context. Fashion design and making is a critical reflective investigative praxis that once framed and recorded can contribute to academic scholarship, as well as to teaching and learning.

The supporting text is divided into chapters, each of which explores my areas of research. *Nostalgia and the Souvenir* creates a critical framework through which to view the entire project. It touches on personal and social memory and definitions of nostalgia. The chapter explores the purpose of nostalgia for me as a designer and maker, looking at how we use nostalgia to construct identity and may use it as a tool to juxtapose past and present. This chapter also looks at the designer as a collector of artifacts and information from the past. In looking at vintage clothing it asks - what knowledge is embedded in the garment when viewed as a souvenir?

*The Project* looks at shortages of fabric and clothing, and subsequent rationing during World War II, in Australia, Britain and the United States of America. This led to the promotion of *make do and mend* as a patriotic way of extending the use of materials, and subsisting on garments and fabrics that already existed – by re-cutting, re-making and re-modeling. This chapter describes the Master of Arts project itself – nostalgic praxis. I have created a series of three projects in response to the make do and mend techniques I’ve researched – re-cut/re-make/re-model. This chapter then goes on to explore how historical techniques present us with information to develop contemporary and future design practice.

*The Maker* addresses the right to use experience as a basis of knowledge, and stresses the importance of reflecting upon tacit knowledge. I look at the relationship between making, knowledge and knowing.

*The Context* places the projects I have carried out in context in relation to other designers whose work has similarities. I have looked at fashion designers who re-cycle and re-use materials and garments; lingerie designers who use vintage references in their collections; and fashion designers for whom lingerie is always an inspiration. I

have also looked at a label that uses the notion of tradition and austerity, as well as reproducing found garments as part of their design practice.

Nostalgia is often considered a by-product of cultural modernity, with its alienation, and its much-lamented loss of tradition and community (Hutcheon, 2000). My lamenting the loss of tradition in my discipline is based on a fear of people losing very real skills in designing and making that are still, and will always be, essential in terms of creating beautiful garments. Tony Fry (2010) speaks of the need to maintain and develop rich craft traditions in order to implement “sustainment” as a physical secular value. He claims that neo-craft development, that produces small quantities; has a long life; and a high exchange value will create a quality economy in response to the need for sustainable design practice. There is now a movement that re-values traditional ways of making and a growing embrace of design where the hand of the maker is evident. I believe this will become increasingly important in terms of fashion design, and it reinforces the frame I have created for my project. Art critic Christopher Allen (2008) comments on a semiotically reductionist

way of looking at art (which I am extending to design) in which it is stripped both of any real sophistication or refinement of perception, and of any historical context. His view is that in order to acquire genuine visual sophistication, one must understand materials, genres, traditions and all the other elements that help to shape the meaning of a work of art (or design). History therefore is vital, as is learning to draw and to make.

In his essay on decadence, Robert Dessaix (2008) writes about the modern embrace of surface and superficiality -

Our sense of narrative – even of our age’s own place in any narrative – has begun to unravel. For storytellers in whatever medium this is a challenge. There is..... an air of exhaustion, a forgetting of tradition, an obsession with surfaces, (since depth has no meaning)...

And so I try to tell my small story, referencing mid-twentieth century garments and Make Do and Mend strategies for preservation, conservation and recycling and economy of materials. This collapses the distinction between the past and the present. Working with previously worn and used garments, cloth and trim forms part of a narrative. The story has already begun, even before the hand of

the designer continues to tell tales of our time – so that the associative memory of the maker, viewer or wearer of the garment weaves complex narratives based on personal and inherited social memory.

Within the bright forgetfulness of our modern blindness, acts of creativity cast their redemptive light.

(Dessaix, 2008)

## Chapter 2: Nostalgia and the Souvenir

The true collector loves things, fondles them as emblems that promise memory and knowledge about circumstances of production. Searching out the origin and durational existence of things, the collector, Benjamin tells us, knows about them in a way that appears archaic in an age of mass-reproduction.... Collectors, “physiognomists of the object world”, are people with tactical instinct, who engage in practical remembering, handling things that are loved both for their own sake and as windows through which the past might be understood...

(Leslie, 1998)

### Defining Nostalgia

**T**he term “nostalgia” originally referred to the medical condition of extreme homesickness experienced by Swiss mercenaries and was coined by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer in the late seventeenth century.

Nostalgia comes from the Greek word *nostos*, meaning “return home”, and *algia*, or *algos* meaning pain or longing. Hofer described the symptoms of nostalgia as persistent thoughts about

home, melancholy, insomnia, anorexia, weakness, anxiety, lack of breath and heart palpitations (McCann, 1940 cited in Wilson, 2005, p. 21). In 1863, Dr DeWitt C. Peters defined nostalgia as “a species of melancholy, or a mild type of insanity, caused by disappointment and a continuous longing for home” (Wilson, 2005 p.21); it was viewed as a “disorder of the imagination” (Starobinski, 1966 cited in Hutcheon, 2000). By the late 1800s nostalgia was no longer considered a disease, rather an emotion of wistful longing for the past. Nostalgia became less a physical than a psychological condition – there was a shift in site from the spatial to the temporal. Nostalgia was no longer simply a yearning to return home (Hutcheon, 2000). Wilson (2005) also believes there is a shift from longing for a particular place to longing for a particular time.

Nostalgia, Hutcheon (2000) states, “may depend precisely on the irrecoverable nature of the past for its emotional impact and appeal”. It is the very pastness of the past, its inaccessibility, she believes accounts for a large part of nostalgia’s power. Ralph Harper,

theologian and philosopher (1966, cited in Wilson, 2005, p.23) speaks to this notion:

Nostalgia combines bitterness and sweetness, the lost and the found, the far and the near, the new and the familiar, absence and presence. The past which is over and gone, from which we have been or are being removed, by some magic becomes present again for a short while. But its realness seems even more familiar, because renewed, than it ever was, more enchanting and more lovely.

This is most likely an imagined past, idealized through memory and desire that tells us less about the past than about the present. It may be the ideal not being lived now is projected into the past, so that the aesthetics of nostalgia might be “less a matter of simple memory than of complex projection; the invocation of a partial, idealized history merges with a dissatisfaction with the present” (Hutcheon, 2000).

Expressing and experiencing nostalgia requires active reconstruction of the past – active selection of what to remember and how to remember it. Political theorist Steve Chilton (2002, cited in Wilson 2005, p.25) suggests that “nostalgia goes well beyond recollection

and reminiscence”, these being “less actively creative”. While recollection and reminiscence require the “selection and ordering of facts,” this is less marked than with nostalgia, which is “more actively myth-making”. Jonathan Steinwand (1997, cited in Wilson 2005, p.38) suggests that nostalgia summons the imagination to supplement memory.

Does the nostalgiac really long to go back in time? Wilson (2005) believes it is more a longing to recapture the mood or spirit of a previous time. She also writes of the attempt to rediscover a former self, a truer self; hence nostalgic reverie as a phenomenological experience. Wilson uses the term “nostalagize” to describe the things that symbolize what we wish for. Nostalgia may be an attempt to find some higher meaning in our existence. When experiencing nostalgia we might feel that we are getting close to something fundamental, or a purpose. Wilson feels nostalgia can be viewed as a picture of our meaning. What we are nostalgic for reveals what we value, what we deem worthwhile and important. Remembering the past is a way of expressing concerns about the present, and about its relationship (or lack of relationship) to the past (Wilson, 2005,

p.26). Christina Goulding (2001) identifies a type of nostalgic behaviour she terms “aesthetic”. The aesthetic nostalgiac displays nostalgic reactions for a time way beyond any personal experiences; based on an interest in history, admiration for the arts and architecture, romantic identification, and a sense of loss of these in contemporary society. The aesthetic nostalgiac is also described as a vicarious nostalgiac, and the sense of identification with the past is based on a perception of aesthetic or intellectual superiority to the present. The vicarious nostalgiac feels the need to preserve aesthetic qualities they feel are being lost. Identification with an era is based more around an emotional or spiritual association, rather than a need to recreate a pastiche of that period. This type of nostalgia is always rooted in secondary sources. The aesthetic nostalgiac acknowledges the role of history in securing identity in the present and fears what may happen if we were to lose sight of where we came from. The aesthetic nostalgiac is stimulated by historical craftsmanship, and evidence of innovation and creativity. They feel overloaded by their social role, are acutely conscious of technological intrusion and feel a sense of personal “saturation”. An awareness of environmental destruction, the feeling of a lack of power, and an emotional sense of loss and contemporary emptiness sees the aesthetic nostalgiac seek solace in dreaming about a more romantic

age. There is a very real fear for the loss of aesthetics and real artists (Goulding, 2001, figure 2, p. 576).

Tom Vanderbilt (1994, cited in Wilson, 2005 p.32) identifies a form of nostalgia he calls “displaced nostalgia”. This refers to nostalgia for times that were not known to us firsthand. Fred Davis (1979) on the other hand, does not believe that this concept of the vicarious nostalgiac could, indeed, be described as “nostalgia”. He uses the term “antiquarian feeling”, when somebody longs for a pre-biographical past known only through secondary representation. He insists that the term “nostalgia” applies only to memories of lived experience. This notion has been challenged extensively since his pivotal text was written. In commenting on the idea that people are unable to be truly nostalgic for places never seen, or events not lived through, Tom Panelas (1982) writes that Davis fails to acknowledge the similarities between the two kinds of experience. He claims Davis ignores the extent to which the pre-biographical past may be made to feel eminently personal and writes –

Cultural practices, rituals, and representations create powerful collective archetypes which put the individual in close emotional contact with her or his cultural history and evoke feelings of attachment to these periods which may be experienced as vividly personal.

(Panelas 1982).

Similarly, Christina Goulding (2001, p.585) believes that those she describes as aesthetic display the criteria for nostalgia as described by Davis; the only difference being that their nostalgia is rooted in secondary sources.

Smith (2000, cited in Wilson, 2005 p.27) suggests that nostalgia is “a particular way of ordering and interpreting the various ideas, feelings, and associations we experience when thinking of the past”; the exercise of nostalgia, from her perspective, is actually the adopting of a particular attitude toward the memories that are recalled.

Sean Scanlan (2009) states that in contemporary criticism, nostalgia as warning, as “pejorative marker of certain historical changes”, has given way to “nostalgia as a more ambivalent, more engaged critical frame”. Now, he claims, “nostalgia may be a style or design or narrative that serves to comment on how memory works; rather than an end reaction to yearning, it is understood as a technique for provok-

ing a secondary reaction”. Thus, my use of nostalgia may be seen as a critical technique for exploring social memory, the memory of the discipline of fashion design, and my own design processes and knowledges.

## Using Nostalgia: the construction of identity

Janelle Wilson (2005) contends that in these postmodern times, when so many threats and obstacles to constructing and maintaining a coherent, consistent self abound, the acts of remembering, recalling, reminiscing, and the corollary emotional experience of nostalgia may facilitate the kind of coherence, consistency, and sense of identity that we need. What is life if not a constant search for meaning and understanding; especially understanding ourselves and our place in the social world? It is in the search that we find meaning. Individually and collectively the past is remembered, and in this act of recall, it is often re-created. There is an interplay between what is available culturally and the individual’s own biography, memory, and emotions. The *Material Memo-*



*realisation* project is an interplay between all these elements; an exercise in how individuals decide in the present how to recall the past. This process imbues the past with meaning. Boym identifies “reflective” nostalgia as a way of giving shape and meaning to longing. Reflective nostalgia’s concern is “not on recovery of what is perceived to be an absolute truth but on the meditation on history and passage of time” (Wilson, 2005, p.31). It is about individual and cultural memory. Wilson’s position is that whether nostalgic claims about previous times are objectively true or accurate is not as important as why and how those nostalgic claims emerge and goes on to ask, “What meaning is being constructed in the retelling? What purpose is being served (Wilson, 2005, p.8)?”

Nicky Gregson identifies a mode of meaning creation around the recovery of meaning and centres on the imaginative potential of commodities. This mode of meaning creation “revolves around profound association with, and attachment to, particular historical eras; this is referred to as “meaning creation through historical reconstruction”. (Gregson & Crewe, 2003, p.145) Davis (1979) suggests that “nostalgia is one of the means – or better, one of the more readily accessible psychological lenses – we employ in the never ending work of constructing, maintaining, and reconstructing our identities. Nostalgia facilitates the continuity of identity, and this nostalgia is

rooted in secondary sources – the artifacts. The attraction and value of a second-hand good lies in the imaginative potential of its former life. (Gregson & Crewe, 2003, p.145) The material object, the garment, has its own history that becomes a quality or attribute of the garment. It is unique, and a highly valued artifact of the past. We use clothing as a means of making both ourselves and our world knowable. (Cummings, 2000, p.6)

If nostalgia contributes to the meaning that each of us constructs and maintains about our own identity, then surely nostalgia can contribute to the identity of a design discipline? This may be why designers so frequently reference the past. It seems part of our identity as designers to know and understand the past in this way. It is not about passively recalling a static past, but about active engagement in observing and juxtaposing past and present designer identities. Wilson builds an argument for the relevance of drawing upon the past and remembering former selves in the ongoing process of identity construction.

For nostalgia to restore identity, the individual engages in selective memory and actively reconstructs former selves, while reconceptualizing and perhaps re-evaluating both past and present selves. Thus, memory, the actual recall of the past, and nostalgia, the emotional component of remembering and longing, are instrumental in one's quest to know who one is.

(Wilson, 2005, p.35)

I believe we can use this argument to support the ongoing process of identity construction within the discipline of fashion design. That is, drawing upon the past and remembering former designers and makers, as well as our own former selves throughout our lifetime as design practitioners. The work of self-construction or identity formation takes place in the everyday experiences of the individual. It involves memory of past selves, awareness of the present self, and anticipation of future selves.

I am interested in how my memory gives me a sense of identity in relation to a temporal continuum and the way in which I use memory as a designer, to interpret information.

## Using Nostalgia: a tool

**N**ostalgia is often dismissed as a simplistic ideology – insignificant and uncomplicated. This has never made sense to me – otherwise why would it seem such an instinctive response? Expressing and experiencing nostalgia requires active reconstruction of the past and active selection of what to remember and how to remember it. Nostalgia goes beyond recollection and reminiscence in that it is creative (Wilson, 2005, p.25) – involving an attempt to rediscover a former, or even true self. I am interested in how memory, nostalgia and identity are linked; and how artifacts function as symbols of the past. Nostalgia is an active engagement with the past, and a juxtaposition of past and present.

“Nostalgia” no longer refers to a longing to exist in past times, rather a longing for a sense of place, or “rootedness” - the need to feel part of a continuum. Nostalgia can be used as a tool through the look and feel of “pastness” – to trigger an emotional response through memory. It uses the past as a form of reappraisal. In representing information we are confronted with a past that is also

present – a present tense with a memory. This can be emphasised through the use of second hand materials.

Wilson cites sociologist Ann Swindler’s conception of culture as a “tool kit”; comprised of “symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems” ( Swindler, 1986, cited in Wilson, 2005). The contents of the toolbox can be regarded as “texts” open to interpretation. I believe we draw from these texts, re-interpret and re-imagine them to create our own narrative. So rather than seeing nostalgia as a fantasy withdrawal to a time that may never have really existed; we can see it as a narrative construct that aligns cognition and emotion to create a critical framework for viewing both the present and the past. Nostalgia can actually facilitate critical engagement with history.

Ostovich (2002, cited in Wilson, 2005, p.46) says:

Nostalgia arises from an awareness of distance between the past and the present, an awareness that something has been “shattered” and is in danger of being lost. And it is this shattering that creates the distance necessary for criticism... Living among the debris of the past, the nostalgic’s challenge is to construct a world and an identity out of this debris.

The debris may be the “symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views” that Swindler speaks of, textual debris that we use to construct the narrative that is our identity. If Postmodernity expresses a genuine and legitimate dissatisfaction with modernity and the belief in perpetual modernization (Huysen, 1993, cited in Hutcheon, 2000), can nostalgia not be seen to be doing the same thing? Hutcheon says the act of ironizing, while still implicitly invoking nostalgia, undermines modernist assertions of originality, authenticity, and the burden of the past, even as it acknowledges their continuing validity as aesthetic concerns. Does irony need to be present in order to do this? Can we not use nostalgia as a tool to reference tradition in a modern context? Hutcheon (2000) views the ironizing of nostalgia as one way that Postmodernism has of taking responsibility for our active response to nostalgia – emotionally and intellectually – by “creating a small part of the distance necessary for reflective thought about the present as well as the past”.

There may also be other ways of creating this distance – such as “interpreted nostalgia” as defined by Davis, where the role and unc-tion of nostalgia is explored critically from a personal perspective.

Davis (1979, cited in Wilson, 2005, p. 121) identified three successive orders of nostalgia – simple nostalgia, which believes the past to be better; reflexive nostalgia, which involves questioning the truth and accuracy of a nostalgic claim; and interpreted nostalgia, which involves the individual seeking to objectify the nostalgia they feel. The second and third types of nostalgia can be used to examine the role and function of nostalgia on a personal level, by asking questions such as what use does nostalgia serve for me and for the times in which we live? This exploration is critical for me in attempting to understand the relationship between nostalgia, vintage garments and my identity as a designer and maker. I feel the history of my trade very strongly, and the pull to the past that tells me of tradition and skilled workmanship. I believe that acts of recollection and reminiscence through objects and images can be applied in meaningful ways. These remnants of the past, brought together, give us insight into past experiences and memories, and tell us who we were and who we are. In the narratives that evolve, meaning is created and it connects me with past makers and helps to establish my identity as a maker. Narrative is a vehicle for constructing self and for facilitating continuity of identity. The narrative I am exploring started before I was born, so collecting the fragments that tell me of my past, and my disciplines' past, are essential parts of continuing the narrative in the here and now. Andrea Deciu Ritivoi

(2002) argues that identity itself is a narrative. Nostalgia's facilitation of continuity of identity, allows people, through narrative and sometimes vicarious experience, to "place" themselves in time and space, yielding a sense of themselves as time travelers.

Joe Moran (2004), in exploring the commonplace objects of the recent past that accidentally survive into the present, speaks of the shared history of the everyday. He cites Raphael Samuel's emphasis on active remembrance in the retrieval of visual and material traces from the past and the weaving of engaging narratives around them. He writes (2004, p.60) -

Against a traditionalist emphasis within the (history) discipline on written sources, chronological causation and the historical event, recent historians have often been willing to explore memory work as a way of emphasizing the diversity of potential source material, the validity of nonlinear historical explanation and the overlooked experiences of daily life.

A recent shift in emphasis within academia from design history to the study of material culture reflects a declining interest in what was

once viewed as the “aesthetically pleasing or culturally valued object”, and an increasing interest in the more mundane material of the everyday. Moran believes the commonplace objects that accumulate in homes, and then end up in charity shops and car boot sales, are interesting as repositories of everyday experience. They become part of a larger collective nostalgia, which then has the potential to become personal.

## Using Nostalgia: attributing meaning - the vintage garment as souvenir

Things have a bodily, temporal existence, a presence whose particular properties induce distinct ways of seeing and acting in the world. Objects are indeed different from the model of the arbitrary linguistic sign, as their materiality and durability are conditions of possibility for their movement across social and semiotic domains.

(Lazzari, 2007)

I have looked at the current search for the authentic (I am using the term “authentic” simply as having truth in origin), and how objects from the past can be imbued with new meaning through generating a narrative. An object from another place and time displaces the point of authenticity as it itself

becomes the point of origin for narrative. My purpose in using materials and methods from the past is to create a continuous and ongoing narrative. Within the development of culture under an exchange economy, the search for authentic experience and the search for the authentic object have become critical. In a seemingly homogenized mass of consumables – we seek something with a verifiable “essence” or legitimate history. The values attributed to objects are not properties of the things themselves, but judgments made through encounters people have with them at specific times and in specific places (Stewart, 1993; Cummings, 2000). This is the juxtaposition of history with a personalized present.

The artifact (in this case a garment), articulates the drives that underlie the desire to construct a material image of oneself – to order thought and feeling by finding their equivalence in material things. It anchors us in an intensely commodified present (Cummings, 2000, p.40). Although all objects exist in the present, first and foremost, they refer to a past. The artifact gives memory a form (Cummings, 2000, p.41) Integral to a sense of who we are is a sense of our past, and possessions are a convenient means of storing the memories and feelings that attach us to our sense of past (Belk,

1988, p.139). Radley (1990, p. 49) says, “when put aside or gathered into collections, everyday objects can be used as memorabilia to evoke a sense of their time and place.” An artifact may make tangible some otherwise intangible experience – especially for the vicarious nostalgic, who was not even born at the time of the artifacts’ creation.

There is a growing body of research on the ways in which objects, and iconography, create – or better, maintain – collective memories. For instance, Radley focuses on how people engage with the material world. He points to collective remembering via museums when he says, “people do not remember a series of personal events which touched their own lives but enjoy a sense of the past through the understanding of a history which other people appear to have created” (Radley, 1990, p. 51).

Nostalgia can place us in time and space. We can better understand who and where we are presently by looking at who and where we have been. We need to consider the relationship that individuals have with what is available culturally (artifacts, ideologies). It can be a way of achieving presence. Expressing nostalgia for a time unknown first hand, may be viewed as “displaced nostalgia” (Vanderbilt, 1994, cited in Wilson, 2005) or termed “vicarious”

nostalgia (Goulding, 2001). Material culture embodies nostalgia. Certain components of material culture may operate as significant symbols in that they evoke nostalgia not only among those who have actual recollections of the symbol, but also among those who have not directly experienced use of the symbol. Nostalgia is created in the present and thus the displaced nostalgia can be viewed as a commentary on life in the present.

Objects do not have inherent meaning in themselves. It is we who give them meaning. The meaning that antique or vintage garments have for individuals who collect them demonstrates a powerful connection to the past. This connection is established through an attraction to the aesthetic of an era, which manifests itself in the shape, construction and material of the garment. Vintage garments teach us about the past through looking at these aspects in detail.

Imagine how ‘meaning’ can coalesce in the tactility of a cryptic object. How representation occurs as a kind of re-presenting that stimulates and provokes rather than provides the closure of information, explanation, or code decoded. How people search for a profundity lurking in appearances.

(Stewart, 1997, cited in Wilson, 2005 p. 109)

As designers we learn how to make by copying established techniques. We replicate known ways of making with strong craft and trade traditions that demonstrate an understanding of the hand, eye, machine and material. We replicate methods and methodology in order to build our skills. These skills gradually become assimilated and so much a way of working they seem instinctual. As a designer I find profundity lurking in a vintage garment.

The vintage lingerie I collect becomes a special artifact, a souvenir, by reference to which a past era may be touched, read and seemingly understood. My eBay purchases are labeled according to country of origin (French Canadian, French, USA) in order to build my understanding of fabrics and styles from those countries at a particular time. As a fashion designer of lingerie I have made a personal decision that this lingerie is memorable and worthy of collection and recollection. These items of clothing were not intentionally created as artifacts – their former life was practical – but have come to be marked in a way which designates them as special possessions; as part of my cultural heritage as a fashion designer. Everyday objects from the past, such as clothing, eventually become interesting because they are displaced from their time, from their context, and from social practices as part of which they were viewed as functional. Their survival and displacement marks them out as indi-

ces of the past, as objects to remember by. This brings us to the notion of connoisseurship. Connoisseurship involves endless learning in order to gain a skilled aesthetic vision; it relies on knowledge as well as refined sensibilities. The ability to discern elements of shape, texture, structure and so on, is paramount to my expertise in this area. Stacy Anne Tidmore describes it as scholarship with an intuitive edge (2003, p.20).

I am able to remember past makers and their skill through my collection of vintage lingerie. These garments serve as monuments to their technical skills and ideals. Traditions are represented as the means by which our own lives are connected with the past. These material displacements (my vintage lingerie) render the garment a “memento”, an “historic artifact” with which to define the world of which it was a part.

Artifacts survive in ways unintended by makers and owners to become evidence on which other interpretations of the past can be reconstructed. This has given some artifacts a special place as symbols of the past.

(Radley,1990, p.58)

However, the lingerie is still wearable, so their original purpose is still an inherent part of the garment as artifact.

Paying attention to examples of garments that I have collected and carrying out repetitive acts of imitation can lead to a personal version of a traditional style. This replicates the way in which fashion designers learn to design and make traditionally – the system of the atelier. Henry Glassie (1989, p.243) writes about the artist-craftsperson as collector, and how the collection teaches people about their own history and the society to which they belong. “Since the collection is potentially a narrative within which the collector is an actor, its items are both meaningful and useful. They embody materially the tradition that will inspire future success.” The collection contains samples of techniques and is a repository of designs from which the new designer/maker can innovate. My collection of vintage lingerie is both my heritage and a model for future work. I am drawn to preserve these garments that tell a personal, strong and intimate history. These garments tell me of a particular way of life and I am attracted to the artistry trapped within them.

My collection teaches me about myself.

Little reveals the subjective nature of memory more than its relationship with the objects that designers study. According to Marius Kwint, in the Western tradition objects serve memory in three main ways. Firstly, they furnish recollection; they constitute our picture of the past. Secondly, objects stimulate remembering, not only through deployed mnemonics but also by the “serendipitous encounter” (Kwint, 1999). The souvenir may bring back experiences which otherwise would have remained dormant, repressed or forgotten. Thirdly, objects form records - analogues to living memory, storing information beyond individual experience. “Entering us through the senses, they become history, like the fragments that speak to the palaeontologist or geologist.” (Kwint, 1999, p.21) The idea of evocation through objects is crucial in art and design, and explains the continuing effects of vintage garments and their properties, such as the richness and lustre of old silk satin, the texture of tea coloured cotton lace and the elastic in the suspender of a well-worn corset. Evocation implies an open dialogue between the garment, the maker, the viewer and/or the wearer.

Hutcheon argues that calling something nostalgic is less a description of the entity itself than an attribution of a quality of response.



She argues that nostalgia is a powerful feeling when two temporal moments, past and present, come together; and it is “the element of response, of active participation, both intellectual and affective – that makes for the power” (Hutcheon, 2000). This active attribution explains how for me the intensity of an experience with a vintage garment can be so affective and inspiring. From a neurophysiological perspective, sensation involves physical and chemical changes to the body. Wearing evocative clothing not only stimulates us intellectually, but also physically. Memory connects with the entire body and mind. Kwint (1999) writes that objects (garments) have consequences and therefore a history of their own. He claims this opens up the proposition that human memory has undergone a mutual evolution with the objects that inform it; that, in other words, the relationship is dialectical. Simply viewing an amazing garment can stimulate imagination and desire. Because clothing touches the body whilst being worn, and we tend to feel it with our hands when it is off the body (for example, on a rack whilst browsing in a shop) – the touch blurs the distinction between subject and object, because the act of touching exerts pressure on both toucher and touched; or wearer and worn. Are we part of the garment’s ongoing narrative, or is it part of ours?

## Collecting and the Souvenir

Objects hang before the eyes of the imagination, continuously re-presenting ourselves to ourselves, and telling the stories of our lives...

(Pearce, 1992, p. 47)

**T**he souvenir (in this case a garment), articulates the drives that underlie the desire to construct a material image of oneself – to order thought and feeling by finding their equivalence in material things. Although all objects exist in the present, first and foremost, they refer to a past. The souvenir gives memory a form (Cummings, 2000, p.41) Integral to a sense of who we are is a sense of our past, and possessions are a convenient means of storing the memories and feelings that attach us to our sense of past (Belk, 1988, p.139). Radley (1990, p. 49) says, “When put aside or gathered into collections, everyday objects can be used as memorabilia to evoke a sense of their time and place.” A souvenir may make tangible some otherwise intangible experience – especially for the vicarious nostalgic,

who was not even born at the time of the souvenirs' creation. I am also placing my vintage lingerie in context alongside my collection of patterns, pattern catalogues, patternmaking books, leaflets and so on. Collectors who seek out what they love are involved in an effort of self-discovery and self-affirmation. This is characteristically human in itself, but my collection also informs my practice. Collections are the artistic creation of self out of self, part of the connection of past and present and the hope of a future. No matter how trivial others may perceive the material to be, when viewed as part of the collectors themselves, the collection can never be trivial (Pearce, 1992, p. 66).

Through narrative the souvenir substitutes a context of perpetual consumption for its context of origin. It represents not the lived experience of its maker but the "second-hand" experience of its owner. The souvenir is removed from its natural location, but it is only by means of its material relation to that location that it acquires its value (Stewart, 1993).

Vintage garments with historical associations are so invested with meaning, they seem to have an aura beyond their superficial qualities or originally intended purpose. This aura is not intrinsic to the object, but extrinsic, located in the relationship that people form

with the goods (in my case a garment) that they, individually and collectively, consider special (Barthel, 1996, cited in Wilson, 2005 p.110). Walter Benjamin's notion of aura is explored by Fredric Jameson, and explained as akin to that which anthropologists call the sacred in primitive societies; what we refer to as mystery in the world of human events, and what charisma is in the world of human beings (Jameson, 1969-1970 cited in Wilson, 2005 p.110). I would argue that vintage garments can be viewed as having charisma; they have absorbed the past, and transplanted, tell us tales that charm and seduce. Fascination with garments from the past is also linked to notions of authenticity, and the rejection of the throwaway. In pondering upon what the vintage lingerie means to me I think of their ordinariness, sensory richness, and view them as material images for reflection, recall and contemplation. The material object, the garment, has its own history that becomes a quality or attribute of the garment. It is unique, and a highly valued artifact of the past. The concept of authenticity in an object, and preferring the handmade to the mechanically perfect, is, according to Wilson (2005), the craving for an authentic self; an identity with meaning and continuity. I believe this means I am craving some notion of an authentic self as

maker, and in attempting to explore what constitutes authenticity to me – as a designer and maker – I can then embed something of that in my work.

A focus on the material asks me as a designer/researcher to try and understand materiality and identity. In *Material Identities*, Joanne Sofaer (2008, pp.1-2) explains there are two ways in which materiality has been addressed. One refers to the ways in which artists or craftspeople manage materials and work with physical media. It is about the ways in which artifacts “proclaim their presence” and provoke aesthetic responses. The other approach to materiality is to consider the relationship between people and objects, where the object (garment) can be seen as an agent active in creating social relations. In the intersection between the aesthetic and social approaches to materiality is where my work lies.

Since experience does not reside in the object but with the viewer, one way of getting a response is to direct the viewer’s attention to the formal properties of the object since its formal qualities affect the way in which the engagement with the object takes place...the response thus comes from components of materiality.

(Sofaer, 2008, p.3).

By using the vintage garment as a starting point, and studying it in depth, I am engaging with these components of materiality, the formal properties of fabrication and construction. Garments are actors in the story, not just the reflection of action. Our own experiential knowledge in relation to an object is of value. Placing oneself within a constructed form (the garment), with the possibility of modifying that form, or being modified by it, is the ultimate three-dimensional experience. We feel the fabric on our body, and respond to the texture and colour – where it touches our skin, conforms to, moves around or constrains our body. This means that by wearing particular clothing, the human body can be acted upon by the garment which has become subject. This is transformative. The garment can be seen as an active subject in a web of relationships between persons and things. This can be either an individual or collective experience where the garment acts upon both wearer and viewer.

Objects may have lives that are longer than our own, and have the power to carry the past into the present through their “real” relationship to past events. These objects, or souvenirs, can operate both in

the past and in the present - in fact they work to create the present. (Pearce, 1992, p.24). Pearce claims that the making of a collection is one way in which we organize our relationship with the external physical world; and that collection-forming is part of the relationship between subject (conceived as each individual) and the object (the whole world, material and otherwise). Collections are a significant element in our attempt to construct the world, so looking to collecting may help us explore our relationship with the world. Individuals select objects and specimens out from all the available material of the world and put them together in a way which renders the meaning of the group more than the sum of its individual parts. “We break into the world of goods, separating bits out of it and arranging them into new works” (Glassie, 1989, p.241). Collecting is a personal ensemble, a creative activity. As Belk (1988 p.154) notes, humans and animals once primarily assembled collections of necessities for future security, but today humans more often assemble collections of non-necessities for distinction and self-definition. Contemporary collections are more often specialized to allow the collector an ability to gain control and uniqueness within self-prescribed boundaries (Treas and Brannen 1976, cited in Belk 1988 p. 139). Demonstrable provenance, age, and sometimes “authorship” (through a label, such as a utility label during war-time), is important.

And so I place my vintage clothing and patterns, dated and documented in files and boxes, alongside a department store catalogue from 1941 (that sells garments similar to those which I own - and has tiny samples of fabric with pinked edges), and a sponge to apply leg make-up (when stockings were in short supply) - still in its crisp cellophane package. In this way I shape the collection, and develop a narrative that is personal and meaningful, as well as informative.

The notion of collection as the extended self helps me view my own collecting in relation to my professional practice. The vintage garments are “a portrait and a window and a mirror all at once” (Owens, 1999, as cited in Tidmore, 2003, p.12).

The capacity of objects to serve as traces of authentic experience is exemplified by the souvenir. The souvenir can cross-temporal boundaries, so that souvenirs may arrive from distant times and reveal invisible texts inscribed on them, like postcards from foreign lands – unimaginable until we hold them in our hands. Original government issue pamphlets, patterns and magazines from the 1940s help to connect my souvenirs to their original context. In col-

lecting, I am reminded of the object's original environment, the scene of its creation, and the world of its maker. It is up to me to place these souvenirs in my own context in the here and now. Csikszentmihalyi (1981, cited in Tidmore, 2003, p.34) focuses on the effects of the objects themselves within the world and thus carries the investigation of object relations literally into the future. He says "the things we make and use have a tremendous impact on the future of humankind". And so the souvenir is taken into the future as well.

Shaw and Chase (1989, cited in Wilson, 2005, p.118) write

From the time-worn but durable products of architecture to the humble tools of a now dead trade, from the industrial landscape itself to the ephemeral newspaper or admission ticket, almost all objects are at least capable of being appropriated nostalgically. They become talismans that link us concretely with the past.

All objects are polysemantic and open to a range of interpretations. The meanings of an object lie both in the object itself, and equally in the process which the viewer carries out in relation to the object (Pearce, 1992, p.217). There is a creative interaction when we look at, use or wear the object. We can bring to light the story or experi-

ence inherent in the object through whichever process we put in place. It may be viewing, it may be holding, touching or wearing; it may be replicating. Our creative urges are set in motion, our imagination is engaged, and the dynamic process of interpretation and reinterpretation begins (Pearce, 1992, p.219). With the vintage garment this interpretation moves far beyond the mere perception that the garment is to be worn. Pearce also discusses the way in which it is the convergence of object and viewer which brings the meaningful object into existence, and this convergence is virtual; being neither identical with the object nor with the individual personality of the viewer. Rather, it rests somewhere between the two. This virtual dimension endows it with present reality and gives rise to the dynamic nature of the object.

Stewart (1993, p.135) claims the souvenir generates a narrative which reaches only behind, "spiraling in a continually inward movement rather than outward toward the future", and then turns to Freud's description of the genesis of the fetish. I disagree for many of the reasons discussed in earlier in this chapter, in which I address nostalgia and the purposes it serves. Now, a nostalgic construct around an object is viewed more as an engaged critical frame in

which a style or design or narrative serves to comment on how memory works, rather than an end reaction to yearning. Nostalgia is understood as a technique for provoking a secondary reaction and is an active engagement with the past, and a juxtaposition of past and present, where the narrative is, in fact, projected forward. If it is the convergence of object and viewer which brings the meaningful object into existence – and this convergence is virtual, being neither wholly the object nor the viewer, but resting in between, how can the object be viewed as fetish? I view the object from the past as something possessing charisma and aura. In our imagination, collections of objects make other times and other places open to us. Rheims, cited in Pearce (1992, p. 51) writes:

An object's date is of prime importance to a collector with an obsession for the past. He values it for its associations, that it once belonged to and was handled by a man he can visualize as himself. The object bears witness: its possession is an introduction to history. One of a collector's most entrancing day-dreams is the imaginary joy of uncovering the past in the guise of an archaeologist.

Fallan (Fallan, 2010, p.ix) supports my idea that design culture is not elite culture – but everyday culture, and believes it is best explored through historical analysis. He cites Kingery (Fallan, 2010,

p. 44) to explain the take on material culture that I have been exploring – the marrying of artifacts and documents.

Not only do artifacts present new evidence to support historical arguments; they also suggest new arguments and provide a level of rhetorical support to arguments the mere documents cannot begin to approach. Artifacts, especially when used in conjunction with the sorts of history gleaned from documentary sources, widen our view of history...

Everyday life involves the fabrication of the past through a construction of the material world, either in its transformation or in its re-ordering. Design involves a re-fabrication of the past, and a transformation of this past through imagination and speculation. Designing itself is an act of remembering. Being engaged in the fabrication of material culture now myself, the “opportunities and directions for the appreciation of what has gone before can be re-assessed or re-enacted once again” (Radley, 1990, p.48)

I use these objects to know my world and my place in it. For me, it is not about escape, it is very much grounded in the here and now.

The vintage garment – a complex construction of its social time, its material, and the techniques and skills embedded in it through pattern making and hand sewing or machining – is a tool for understanding making. Nostalgia is a by-product of cultural modernity, with its alienation, its much-lamented loss of tradition and community (Hutcheon, 2000). My lamenting the loss of tradition in my discipline is based on a fear of people losing very real skills in designing and making that are still, and will always be, essential in terms of creating beautiful garments. Tony Fry (2010) speaks of the need to maintain and develop rich craft traditions in order to implement “sustainment” as a physical secular value. He claims that neo-craft development, that produces small quantities, has a long life, and a high exchange value will create a quality economy in response to the need for sustainable design practice. This reinforces the frame I have created for my project.

Nostalgia is often dismissed as insignificant, unimportant and uncomplicated – a passive view of the world. But “the act of reminiscence and the experience of nostalgia may result in our truly seeing, ‘that was then, this is now’”, and deepen our understanding of self and the construction and maintenance of a coherent identity (Wilson, 2005, p.160). For me, vintage garments resonate with my individual biography; in collecting them active engagement occurs

and creativity ensues. The garments are links that form part of the narrative that becomes my autobiographical memory, and in turn becomes a new and ongoing story that I have to tell.

## Chapter 3: The Maker

Materiality is a process of embodiment in the sense of incorporation rather than inscription, in which artifacts, like houses and landscapes, incorporate in their bodily form the rhythms of the practices that gave rise to them.

(Lazzari, 2007, p.128)

**T**acit knowledge refers to a body of knowledge gained through the experience of the senses and through the experience of making work. It differs from propositional knowledge in that it cannot easily be articulated or described in words. Janik (1988, cited in Dormer, 1994, p.21) in an attempt to explain the obscure concept that is tacit knowledge describes it as: “those aspects of experience which are wholly knowable self-reflectively...but by their very nature are incapable of precise articulation”. Because the thinking in fashion design often resides in the processes involving the physical handling of the fabric, it may be that we can only demonstrate our knowledge, not describe it. However, we may be able to describe our experience of using tacit knowledge. In order to validate this knowledge, we, as design researchers must attempt to articulate what it is that we do. We can describe the way in which we feel fabrics in order to assess their

malleability for specific purposes; or how the gradual tutoring of our senses has enabled us to hold elastic between our thumb and fingers to control the tension as we ease it on to part of a garment; how years of pattern making allows us to visual the shapes of flat pattern pieces that will form a sleeve, and so on. The making process itself, is after all, part of the subject matter itself, and must be scrutinized as part of research through making. We also need to remember that the theory of the design activity does not describe the practice of that activity. The essence is in the activity itself – and that activity is not random, it has its inner coherence, which is understood by doing and becoming expert in that activity (Dormer, 1994, p.62).

Design practice often precedes theory – especially fashion design practice, so it may be argued that our theory is embedded in and inferred from practice.

Dormer (1994, p.68) speaks of craft knowledge as genuine knowledge, and says “to possess it in any form is to see the world in an enriched way compared with someone who does not possess it”.

Juhani Pallasmaa (2009, p.13) writes that the head is not “the sole locus of cognitive thinking, as our senses and entire bodily being



directly structure, produce and store silent existential knowledge. The human body is a knowing entity.” He believes that the designer’s skill turns the design task into embodied and lived sensations and images, so that eventually the entire personality and body of the designer becomes the site of the design task; and the design task is lived rather than understood. This notion is expanded on as he says,

The craftsman needs to develop specific relationships between thought and making, idea and execution, action and matter, learning and performance, self-identity and work, pride and humility. The craftsman needs to embody the tool or instrument, internalize the nature of the material, and eventually turn him/herself into his/her own product, either material or immaterial.

(Pallasmaa, 2009, p.53)

Pallasmaa’s stance is that any meaningful reaction to a situation should be regarded as knowledge; and a sensory and embodied mode of thinking is essential in all creative work. Making is knowing; and the hand has its own intentionality, knowledge and skills (2009, pp.17, 21). He stresses the importance of acknowledging the tacit and non-conceptual wisdom of our embodied processes, and how the tradition of craftsmanship is being re-embraced in today’s

highly technical and mechanical world. He mourns the loss of the touch of the human hand in our products and environments (Pallasmaa, 2009, p.51). Peter Downton, too writes about the hand, and that the “way of hands is personal, contextual, indescribable” – so the knowledge of the hand is inarticulable and not only physical but experiential (Downton, 2004, p.20). The precision of the tactile sense of the hand is particularly important with fashion design, and used continually and seemingly innately in handling the fabric itself; the pin – as tiny tool, and the manipulation, easing and stitching of the fabric into pleats, drape and so on. “At it’s best, the mental and material flow between the maker and the work is so tantalizing that the work seems to be producing itself” (Pallasmaa, 2009, p.82). This is an experience known only to the maker.

So, one of my research aims becomes attempting to engage in the feeling of “those aspects of experience which are wholly knowable self-reflectively” in order to understand my design process effectively, in this way I become both researcher and researched.

The projects that I create in response to the framework of Make Do and Mend methods of re-making, are personal explorations of fash-

ion design knowledge and fashion design knowing “directed at the manifestation of knowledge in physical form and the creation of knowledge through the production of form” (Downton, 2004, p.10). *Material Memorialisation* is a public exploration of my own design practice involving inquiry, speculation, and a reflection upon the knowledge embedded in vintage garments and ways of working and the possible evocation in my own work in turn. It is important to view the project as research through designing and designing through making. Downton (2004, p.14) reflects:

The person making feels his way, tries to understand and utilize the particular characteristics of the material at hand, engages in reflection upon his actions and intentions, and modifies and develops these in keeping with the evolving work.

What is said about an object is not more important than the object itself. There is a huge difference between designing and making, and writing about designing and making. Dormer speaks of the radical difference between craft knowledge and propositional knowledge. “To know how is a much more powerful and enriching position to be in than merely to know of something.” (Dormer, 1994, p.103)

Fashion design, and its sub genres such as tailoring and corsetry, is craft centred in its truest sense. Fashion design, the design and development of ways to clothe the human body is an active involvement with the world in the most intimate and tactile way. Fashion is a practical and exploratory medium.

Empirical analysis and craft knowledge are the manifestations of observation and memory. “The simultaneous contextualization of practice in the contemporary environment and in the ongoing continuum of genre-history” enables craft and making to engage with the processes of change in the world claims Paul Greenhaulgh (2002, p.14). Things that last through generations pass on a core of values and encoded narratives, which succeeding generations reinterpret and embellish.

## Nostalgic Praxis: thinking through re-making

**R**eplication is an expression of my (nostalgic) connection with Make Do and Mend and past makers. My replicas express my understanding of pattern making and construction technique. This is not as simple as

a re-presentation, or representation of past work. What the representation means is in the craft and crafting itself (Dormer, 1994, p.35). The knowledge of practical thinking and the maker's tacit knowledge is not simply a straightforward fabrication technique (Dormer, 1994, p.62).

Observation becomes dialogue through replication. I think in materials and methods, which direct my mode of construction: the stitches used, the manipulation of the fabric through folds and stretches, and so on. Detail drawn from my observation of the vintage garment permeates my thinking and emerges later through my hands. Fabric, form and method are "radically inseparable factors" (Johnston, cited in Dormer, 1994, p. 85) in my work. The emotional content contained in the replication through re-making, re-cutting and re-modeling is mine alone in the experience of making. I muse over how I would construct the physical details of what I am observing. How has it been made? And then I start to work... the shapes are traced off and re-formed. The stitches are reproduced and the garment starts to re-emerge.

The original suspender belt is well worn, very soft and the elastic over-stretched. Peach-coloured rayon satin with a tulle frilled trim around the edges, and small machine embroidered bows. There is

no label, and I found in languishing in the bottom of a box of old underwear in an opportunity shop. Sad, and beautiful – it is one of the favourite pieces of vintage lingerie in my collection. It fits a twenty-six inch waist. I re-created this piece as part of the Lace Curtain Trousseau. Pale pink and delicate with frilled lower edge and lined with nylon – it has a hook and eye closure and small pink satin bow at centre front.

The cami-knicker is a one-piece garment - a camisole combined with French knickers. Made from lightweight rayon crepe-de-chine in a pinky-apricot, it has ribbon straps and waist tie. Three buttons across the crotch, and lace appliqué and trim. It is minimal in decoration and simple in style. I bought it on EBay from the United States. The re-creation is also part of the Lace Curtain Trousseau – sheer, light and airy with vintage appliqué and lace around leg edges and top – fastening with two tiny pink mother-of pearl buttons.

The bra replica is also made from the lace curtain. The original bra is made from organza; darted to a point across the bust, with elastic at the cup's lower edge. There are no stretch components in the bra itself, other than the elastic at the centre back and lower front edge.

None of the components in my replicas are new (except for the elastic, which is still bought from second hand sources)...this gives the pieces a sense of softness and familiarity. The garments themselves have told me how to re-make them.

Asa Harvard (2004, cited in Crabbe, 2008, p.13) believes that definitions of design process that focus solely on intention and creative action appear to overlook the significance of the artifacts created. Harvard puts forward the argument that “The designed artifact is, like a painting or a novel, itself eloquent about its process of creation. Hence artifacts themselves can ‘embody’ and communicate the knowledge required to design them”. Marisa Lazzari (2007, p.128) writes “materiality is a process of embodiment in the sense of incorporation rather than inscription, in which artifacts, like houses and landscapes, incorporate in their bodily form the rhythms of the practices that gave rise to them”.

Objects have lives that are longer than our own, and have the power to carry the past into the present through their “real” relationship to past events. Susan Pearce (1992, p.24) believes this is just as true for copies as it is for original material, because all copies bear their own “real” relationship to the impulse that created them, and have their own place in “the history of perception and taste”.

Contemporary aesthetics can be informed by historical practice. Re-making can be viewed as rigorous enquiry using analytical skills – to understand from the inside out. Re-making is commentary in itself. Robert Baines (Baines, 2007, p.58) writes that it is possible “to see and identify literal marks (on artifacts) as indications of the thinking of their makers”, and that “windows into the design thinking or strategies of the maker identify methodologies”. Awareness of these methodologies will contribute to my skill base as well as help to develop ways of building my design practice into the future. Visual information contained in seams and stitches can, for example, reveal the sequence of assembly in a garment. Bruce Metcalf (1987) believes that design is not only the artifact, but the experience of maker and consumer as well. Hence we should consider the conditions of its making. He insists that sheer craftsmanship has intrinsic meaning.

David Mitten (2007) also writes about how much our aesthetic appreciation and understanding of an object can be enhanced by learning how it was made, “how the mind, eye, and hand of the creator had imposed his desired form on the raw material”.

Dormer (1996, p.18) states that some people believe that if you want to truly understand a thing you have to make a version of that thing – “a model, representation or piece of mimetic art”. The vintage garment can be viewed as a depository for technique and therefore a repository of learning. Replication can be viewed as a descriptive response; my making can be seen as a description of the original. Re-making tells a story about making. Replication is also my account of viewing the original garment. Lingerie is a small, highly crafted garment and may impart insight into technique through layers of detail to the knowledgeable observer. I am actively engaged with the histories of my practice. Through re-construction I learn these techniques, and the question then becomes – how can I use this visual information and new knowledge in my own contemporary practice? What I have observed in the original vintage garment begins to percolate in my head then mutate into endless design trajectories that I attempt to capture on the page before, fleetingly – they disappear. What if...what if...?

This can then take me into the future by incorporating new technology to extend my making ability, not substitute for it nor replace it. Technology becomes a tool of my own tacit knowledge.

The processes through which the vintage garment was constructed are made manifest again and affirm a cultural persistence passed down the design genealogy tree. There is a parallel that may be drawn here with oral narrative traditions – the object tells me a story about making and material; which I then go on to tell again. If my making is a narrative, the story may be built around a replayed conversational exchange. There is a shift from recounting the past to re-enacting the conversational exchange in the here and now. There is a movement from past to present tense, and the story will change with the “artful deployment of repetition, parallel constructions, metaphors, shifting rhythms, and modulation of volume” (Miller, 1994, p.163). My relationship with the vintage garment is given significant meaning through the re-telling. This initial reiteration may not be original, but that is not its purpose. What is lost in newness is embedded with comprehensibility. Re-telling the story of the artifact also functions as a way of handing on technical standards that are beyond the scope of individuals to think up anew.

Everyday life involves the fabrication of the past through a construction of the material world, either in its transformation or in its re-ordering. Design involves a re-fabrication of the past, and

Design involves a re-fabrication of the past, and a transformation of this past through imagination and speculation. Designing itself is an act of remembering. Being engaged in the fabrication of material culture now myself, the “opportunities and directions for the appreciation of what has gone before can be re-assessed or re-enacted once again” (Radley, 1990, p.48).

“To engage with many of the craft practices is literally to be touching history.” (Greenhaulgh, 2002, p.10) The object (the garment) conveys through its materiality, past activity – of things being made and worn, and loved, and stored. In referencing historical garments to create something new, I am taking part in a discourse that is fed into the garment I am making. I am telling a story about past materials and shapes, techniques of construction, and bodies and wearing.

## Chapter 4: The Project



Figure 1: Future trajectories—shorts, replica bra and shirt from found materials—front view, Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 2: Future trajectories—shorts, replica bra and shirt from found materials—back view, Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011

## The Project

**M**y project *Material Memorialisation – New Narratives from Old* is intended to lead to a discipline-based increase in my own knowledge of fashion design; primarily to inform myself, to learn, and to enhance my abilities and knowledge in a specific area. (Downton, 2003, pp.17, 18). Drawing inspiration from mid-twentieth century garments, particularly lingerie has been a constant theme in my professional practice, and *Material Memorialisation* is an exploration of this, and an attempt to understand some of the informing drivers of my work. I am choosing to explore the WWII era (1939-1945) in the midst of rationing in relation to clothing, and the notion of “Make do and Mend” that emerged at this time. My attempt to understand the fascination I feel in relation to this era is documented in Chapter 2 *Nostalgia and the Souvenir*.

Make do and Mend, was an expression adopted as a catch cry by the UK and Commonwealth governments during WWII during a time of material shortages and rationing. The idea was that people would use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without. In May 1941 the Utility Scheme was introduced in the UK, and controlled half to eighty five percent of cloth manufacture – fixing its price, quality

and colour. On the first of June 1941 clothes rationing started. These were attempts to control the production, distribution and cost of clothing on sale to the general public. Initially all adults received sixty-six coupons per year; but by 1945 this was down to thirty-six (Cawthorne, 1996). In 1942 a series of Making of Clothes (Restrictions) Orders were introduced. These specified maximum widths and lengths; restricted pockets, pleats and buttonholes in an attempt to save fabric and labour required for the war effort. The United States worked to Limiting Order L-85, introduced in the summer of 1942. This was a less stringent version of British Utility measures – such as banning the use of rubber in girdles, zippers in civilian clothing, double yokes, sashes, patch pockets, embroidery and other embellishments (Cawthorne, 1996, pp.44, 45; Sladen, 1995, p. 14; Kirkham, 2005, p.205). The government and industry response was to suggest ways for civilians to clothe themselves and their families, by introducing booklets, pamphlets and posters that encouraged people to sew their own clothes and save materials and coupons. These suggestions revolved around cutting old garments up and re-making into new smaller ones; combining multiple garments into one new one; replacing worn parts with new fabric; patching, darning and mending; laundering with care; and using



scraps and small pieces of fabric – such as garments that can be made from only one yard of fabric. In Australia clothes rationing started in May 1942, and lasted until June 1948. People used varied and any sources of material to supplement fabric bought with coupons – such as blackout material, furnishing fabrics (especially curtains and bedspreads), and blankets. The elastic Control of Use Order 1943 No.90 – UK - prohibited the use of elastic in all garments except women’s corsets and knickers (Sladen, 1995, p.23). *Make do and Mend* was constantly framed as patriotic; the Commonwealth Rationing Commission released a booklet “New Clothes from Old”, subtitled “renovation helps the nation”; and even upmarket magazines such as *Vogue* were determined to do their bit. UK *Vogue* in 1942 featured a new dress made from three old dresses.

My own fashion design practice has been primarily lingerie based since 1996, so my focus in *Material Memorialisation* has been lingerie. For this reason I am particularly interested in restrictions placed on manufacture of intimate apparel during the war, how people made their own, and the garments issued to conscripted women. In the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force UK, inductees were issued with a kit that included: two bras; two vests, two roll on girdles with suspenders attached; six pairs of knickers—three white ones with short legs that buttoned at the side and three dark blue ones down to

the knees with elastic at the knee (Mary Hickee, 2006, pp.1,2 ). The dark blue ones were referred to as “blackouts”, or “harvest festivals” – as all is safely gathered in. Mary also writes about how they received twelve clothing coupons a year, which was “spent on French knickers, cami-knickers and grey silk stocking, so that we felt a little more feminine when off duty. The shops rarely accepted our coupons”. Kirkham (2005, pp. 217, 221, 222) writes about what she refers to as “talismanic markers” for women during the war; beauty aids and fashion accessories that functioned as “both magical protector and marker of resistance”. These were things such as lipstick, patriotic textiles and lingerie. Underwear and corsets were seen as morale boosting and the Ministry of Defence commissioned Berlei to create a corset for service women designed to “safeguard women’s femininity for the duration” (Kirkham, 2005, p. 222).

I am particularly interested in the way in which vintage garments hold knowledge about their maker and their material. *Material Memorialisation* analyses how and why we learn from past examples; and how this design genealogy becomes part of accumulated knowledge – that in turn becomes the basis for designing.

Heuristic engagement with the vintage garment is part of the research that in turn informs the projects within *Material Memorialisation*. Each project incrementally informs the development of ideas around my fashion design practice, and propels it into the future. This has led to small collections based on notions that arose during the projects, and a concept for a studio/retail space that is based on re-using garments and materials.

Downton (2003, p.54) writes about how design processes use knowledge and also produce personal knowing and collective knowledge. The knowledge produced in design is “stored, transmitted and learnt through works”. The vintage garment can be interrogated as a repository of knowledge: what is contained in it – intentionally or otherwise? The knowledge I glean from vintage garments is transferred through me to a new creative work that is, in turn a physical manifestation of knowledge once again. I also experience the knowing of doing, the knowing of observing, making, feeling and thinking. Fashion design epistemology can be explored through knowing and knowledge about design, making, clothing, and wearing.

This project is itself an exploration of the things I am constantly drawn to - the places I seek inspiration. It is an observation of and

reflection on my own research and practice. It is also about revealing the layers beneath and behind the work; the purpose nostalgia serves; my focus on *Make do and Mend*; the importance of making - and the knowledge embedded in making as well as observing the work of other makers. I have always been drawn to the clothing made and worn by both professionals and home sewers during WWII. The material culture of fashion design is the culture of the technologist – of the designer, doer and maker.

My collection of vintage lingerie and relevant ephemera tells me more than any text on the subject ever could. These remnants from a past era are containers of knowledge - knowledge about technique, material and maker. In fashion design, the knowledge that resides in the designed object (the garment) tells a multitude of stories about a tradition that encompasses methodologies (such as tailoring and drape); fabrication (for example - wool suiting, silk jersey, hemp); and construction (flat felled seams, rever collar, dolman sleeve).

In Hauser's paper *The Fingerprint of the Second Skin* she discusses the way in which forensic research into a pair of jeans has

...Inadvertently illuminated an otherwise hidden relationship between garment, maker, and wearer, for it is not just the traces of an individual wearer that are evident in those jeans...the most individuating wear patterns had themselves been primarily determined by the tensions along the seams and hems, tensions which were established by the movements of the maker's hands.

(Hauser, 2005 ,p. 164)

Hauser then goes on to state—

New clothes are evidently not simply waiting for our imprint to give them an identity...whilst we might imbue our jeans with our own shape, and mould their form and appearance through our habits, we do not do so on a tabula rasa – for these garments have their own unique structure, made by, and imbedded with the traces of, the actions and habits of invisible workers, in the prehistory of their existence as commodities.

(Hauser, 2005, p.164)

The appearance of a garment is the unique collaboration between maker, fabric and wearer. My re-made garments, imprinted with the touch of my hand, will in turn tell stories of their making to others. My own practice is very much about the designer as maker and the maker as designer.

Design knowledge resides as much in the processes as it does in the product. The strategies of designing reveal the intimacies of thought, while the design knowledge that resides in the product itself – the garment – is an embodiment of the process. The knowledge embodied in the processes of design is as valuable in design learning as the knowledge embodied in the products of design. And so I learn from the observation of garments others have made, as well as those I have made myself; and I learn from my own design processes, evidenced in annotated drawings, patterns and toiles. I learn from generating repetition and rhythms, writing and reflecting. And I learn from handling fabric, tools and machinery to create intimacy with my materials – an acquired familiarity that becomes second nature and so much a way of working that it seems intuitive.

## Re-cut: Re-make: Re-model

I have completed three projects using specific *Make do and Mend* ideas drawn directly from government pamphlets, dressmaking books, women's magazines and so on from across the Commonwealth, the United Kingdom and from the United States of America during the period 1941-1945.



Figure 3: Preliminary sketches for None of Your Business bra and shirt by Rebecca Gully 2010

## None of Your Business

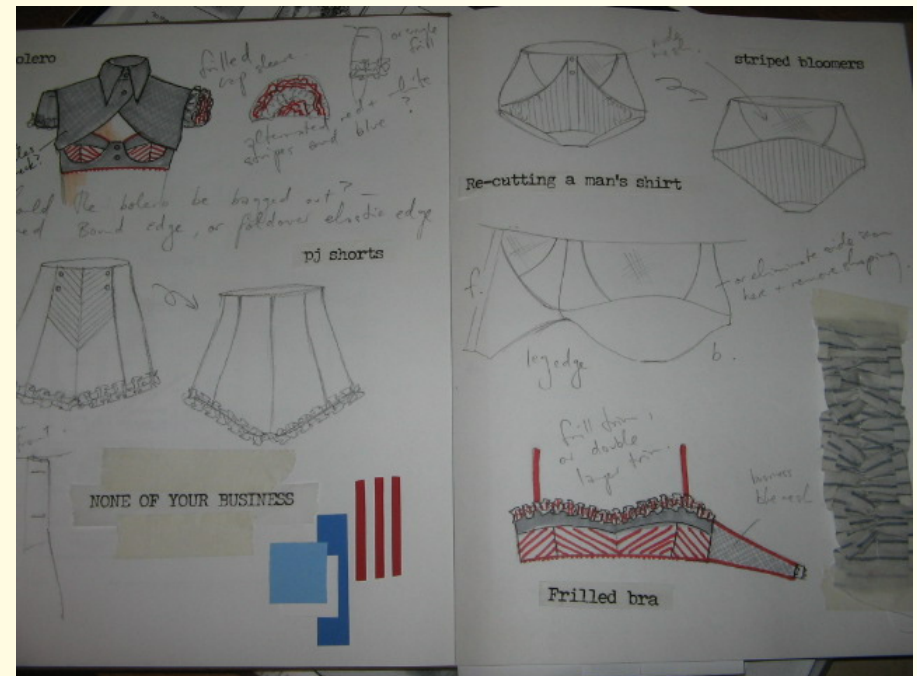


Figure 4: Preliminary sketches for None of Your Business bolero and shorts by Rebecca Gully 2010

The first is *None of Your Business*; a capsule collection of lingerie (eight pieces) based on re-cutting men's business shirts. The starting point for this project was information drawn directly from booklets of the era –



Figure 5: Shirt dissection for None of Your Business Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2010

specifically *Make and Mend for Victory* – “the shirt off his back”; *Re-make Clothes* – “if you have some men’s shirts”; and *Singer*

*Make-Over Guide* – “shirts are good to the last thread”. These all demonstrate ways in which men’s shirts can be re-made into new garments for women and children. I sourced second hand shirts from opportunity shops, and paid no more than six dollars apiece, aiming for four dollars or less. I chose blue because most business shirts available were blue and they would easily co-ordinate together; as well as a red and white striped shirt for contrast and highlights. These were my raw materials from which to construct a small collection of lingerie. They were cleaned and dissected, then re-constructed in response to designs I had started through drawing. All of the garments in this collection were toiled first to establish the correct shape, fit and size. All components but elastic and suspender ends were re-used from other sources.



Figure 6: None of Your Business– Bra Shirt and Knickers; front, side and back view. Frill Me Bra and Knickers with Suspender Belt; front, side and back view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2010

## None of Your Business... Look Stop Shop: State of Design



Figure 7: None of Your Business– Bolero, Bra and Shorts: front and side view. Window display for Look Stop Shop: State of Design Festival 2010. Photographs by Rebecca Gully

This project attempts to address the excessive and damaging production of the fashion industry and to demonstrate that ideals are not incompatible with industry practice. I am conscious of the creative, social and environmental conditions under which work is created and believe re-engaging the designer with the process of making is crucial. Power relations in society determine what is to be removed from the sphere of exchange (of wear and decay) and declared significant and permanent, or disposable. I believe designers are in a position to claim power over greater commercial interest by staking a claim in this sphere of exchange by reclaiming and recycling. By using second-hand economies of exchange the conscious designer creates new patterns of consumption by eliminating disposability – in relation to both materials and resources, as well as adding value to the designed object, in this case a garment. Local manufacture means a lower carbon footprint as well as retaining a skills base in Australia. Artisan skills have become lost and redundant in Australia because of offshore production. Skill revival and support in making high quality fashion garments allows local makers to survive and prosper in a modern world that is embracing slow fashion and evidence of the hand of the maker.

The collection was displayed as part of *Look. Stop. Shop. State of Design Festival 14-25 July 2010*. This was a showcase of installa-

tions in retail window spaces, with online and printed maps to lead visitors on a trail to discover each window space. The theme was *Change by Design*, to promote the value of design as a practical tool for the creation of sustainable communities and competitive industries. I presented my installation of garments made from repurposed materials. The principles borrowed from *Make do and Mend* demonstrate one way in which the conscious designer can innovate creatively, take greater ownership of the production process, and incorporate ideas about sustainability and community into industry.

## Lace Curtain Trousseau

The second project revolves around re-making; and is a lace curtain that has been made into a collection of lingerie, based on the notion of a trousseau.

*What you need is three brassieres, three night-dresses (or pyjamas), three pairs of camiknickers (or vest and knicker sets) and three slips. Corsets should be bought two pairs at a time, and three if you can find the money.*

(Chase, 1941, p.20)

My inspiration was an advertisement for Lux soap flakes claiming that “the best parts of worn out net curtains make lovely brassieres – ones that have a pre-war French accent!” (British Vogue, July 1941, cited in Sladen, 1995, p.21). The curtain was pale pink lace net, and was bought from an opportunity shop. Three of the lingerie pieces made in this collection are copies of original vintage garments – a bra, suspender belt and camiknickers. This replication is framed as thinking and learning through re-making; a concept I discussed in *Chapter Three, The Maker, Nostalgic Praxis: thinking through re-making*. Briefly - replication becomes a descriptive response. The replicas express my understanding of pattern making and construction techniques. This is not as simple as a re-presentation of past work - because what the representation means is in the making it-

self. It is a way of understanding a vintage garment, from the inside out.

I did drawings from the original garments, in order to observe them in detail; then copied the garments by tracing off each section carefully, or measuring and transferring the proportions. The pattern pieces were then laid out and re-measured to reconcile them exactly with one another. No toiles were made. These pieces were a deliberate attempt to tap into 1940s fashion aesthetics.



Figure 8 : The Lace Curtain Trousseau. Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2010





Figure 9: Lace Curtain Trousseau. Replica Bra with Panty—front, side and back view. Replica Bra with Panty and replica Frilled Suspender—front, side and back view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Lace Curtain Trousseau



Figure 10: Lace curtain Trousseau. Bra with French Knickers—front, side and back view. Soft Cup Bra and Hipster Panty—front, side and back view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 11: Lace Curtain Trousseaus Soft cup Bra with Open Bottom Girdle—front, side and back view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Lace Curtain Trousseau



Figure 12: Lace Curtain Trousseau. Cami-Knickers—front, side and back view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 13: Cami-Knickers—side front view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Love Me Love My Planet

The third small collection was created from a second-hand top bought from the Salvation Army opportunity shop. This top was made from interesting fabric, but the style was outdated. I combined the fabric with scraps of back and tan nylon mesh that I already had. The trim was made from re-used buttons cut from the shirts I used in *None of Your Business*. As with the other projects, the only new components were the elastic, straps and suspender ends. I re-used bra backs and under wire. Re-cutting an existing garment not only keeps it useful for longer – but up-cycling, adding value to it – makes it desirable. The Singer Make-Over Guide, published in 1942 and 1943 writes in an insightful way about making over old and discarded garments: “To begin with there should be a clear recognition of values. The value of the article as it is, as it might be, as it might be converted, or as it might contribute to other values”. This statement resonates with me in terms of looking at how we can contribute to sustainable values by re-using already existing materials.



Figure 14: Love Me Love My Planet—Underwire Bra and Bikini Brief.  
Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2010



Figure 15: Love Me Love My Planet—work in progress. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2010

## Love Me Love My Planet



Figure 16: Love Me Love My Planet— Underwire Bra and Bikini Brief; Soft cup Bra and Hipster Brief with Suspender Belt.  
Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2010

## Design Trajectories— moving my practice into the future

I have used my historical research and project development to inform a collection of contemporary lingerie pieces.

The purpose of these re-constructions and explorations of the vintage garment is that past knowledges combine with new, to tell the story of a design discipline. What it is that we do now, and know now, is the result of the ongoing dynamic between time and memory. Design knowledge includes knowledge of formal precedents, and research into precedents is a powerful way of tapping into the accumulated collective knowledge of the fashion design discipline. Engaging in a design process makes modifications to these sources of detail and form. This re-shaping and re-formatting leads the designer to new designs unrecognizable from the researched antecedent (Downton, 2004, pp.115,116).



Figure 17: Design Trajectories—Strap Me In Bra. Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 18: Design Trajectories—Body Suit— front view. Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 19: Design Trajectories—Body Suit—side and back view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Design trajectories



Figure 20: Design Trajectories—Strap Me In Bra and Hi-Rise Panty— side and back view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 21: Design Trajectories—Strap Me In Bra and Hi-Rise Panty— front view. Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 22: Design Trajectories—Organza Shirt, Girdle Shorts and Replica Bra—side view. Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011





Figure 23: Design Trajectories—Organza Shirt, Girdle Shorts, Reverse Slip and Replica Bra—front, side and back view. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Design trajectories





Figure 24: Design Trajectories—Organza Shirt and Replica Bra—front and back view close-up. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Design trajectories



Figure 25: Design Trajectories—girdle shorts—side front view close-up. Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Design trajectories



Figure 26: Design Trajectories—Reverse slip and Organza Shirt—back view close-up. Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Project Outcomes

The research and the making are parallel inquiries. The exegesis is not simply a description of the garments I have made, but an attempt to understand why I even wanted to make them. Some of the reading and writing was done before the making, and some after. The writing done before was about feeling my way towards the making. I was unsure about how I was going to physically represent my intentions, and felt that I needed to establish my theoretical framework strongly before starting to make. The chapters of the exegesis are the themes that informed and evolved from undertaking this whole project. The project is an attempt to gain knowledge. There are two types of outcomes from this project – those that can be seen and are made manifest physically; and those that are unseen, but felt by me; and have changed my knowledge as a design practitioner.

The projects contained within *Material Memorialisation* are outcomes themselves; and the garments within these projects are as well. The increase in my problem-solving ability in carrying out these projects is also an outcome. Re-cutting and re-making requires solutions to the problem of using limited materials, and the modification of designs and patterns in response. The patterns and

work plans for the garments I have made are also outcomes. I have increased my understanding of vintage garments, and expanded on my knowledge of WWII restrictions through reading and observation, as well as replication. All of this learning has resulted in a difference in both knowledge and knowing.

There is no way to understand making, other than going through the process of making. Drawing develops spatial reasoning ability, and visualization skills are necessary for envisioning, specifying and creating complex designs in 3D. Hands on making does this.

Learning from one's own design practice is important "because of the nature of design knowledge and the fact that it is so richly intertwined within designing itself" (Downton, 2003, p.51). Downton (2003, p.101) describes the design process as an interaction between the ongoing making of a representation and the evolving knowing of the designer making the representation. The representations in fashion are made through drawing and 3D construction, which may include toiling, towards making a prototype. Therefore, the designing – through drawing and making is also an outcome.



Figure 27: Developmental drawings—layered girdle and bra , *Geomesh* by Rebecca Gully 2010

## Developmental drawings



Figure 28: Developmental drawings—corset shorts and bra , *Geomesh* by Rebecca Gully 2010

## Developmental drawings



Figure 29: Developmental drawings—body suit and suspender brief , muslin slip by Rebecca Gully 2010

## Developmental drawings



Figure 30: Developmental drawings—cami-knickers, organza shirt and layered doyley skirt; suspender knickers and bra by Rebecca Gully 2010

## Developmental drawings

The fashion design outcome – whether two or three dimensional, demonstrates my knowing as well as my knowledge. The knowing is for the individual – a never-ending process that relates to doing; the knowledge will manifest itself physically in design outcomes. Knowing comes from self-reflection, and is the ability to understand the design processes and outcomes experienced – it may be seen as an awareness of the knowledge.

My design encounters focus on cognitive content through drawing, pattern making and toiling, as well as criticism and reflection. The use of these as studio tools has built my ability to generate ideas that become problems and to generate solutions to these problems (that becomes design development). I have used design process strategies that integrate making and thinking, that in turn become a loop of conjecture/ solution/ reflection that I, the designer, continually play.

The other outcome from creating the projects, that came about in direct response to the *Love Me, Love My Planet* collection, which was a spin off from the *None Of Your Business* concept of re-making and re-cutting existing garments – is the *Love Me Love My Planet* design studio. The exploration of *Make Do and Mend*, and my nostalgic reflection has led directly to a contemporary interpretation for a sustainable practice in lingerie design and manufacture.

My *Love Me Love my Planet* design studio concept creates direct engagement with the consumer through their choosing the fabric and colour-way (from a selection of sourced secondhand garments and fabrics), as well as the garments themselves (a series of prototypes in a full size range are available for the customer to try on). The pieces are then made specifically for them, creating a customized garment – although not bespoke as such. This creates a sense of ownership through participation, and therefore a stronger attachment to the garments themselves. The garment is imbued with more meaning and thus rendered less disposable. Recycling is only an engagement with the symptoms of overproduction, not the root problems. Therefore makers have a duty to create objects that will continue to function much longer; the underlying principle is to make objects with longevity – physical, emotional and psychological (Williams, 2002, p.71). Fashion is important, and buying clothing meets our human needs for pleasure, status and identity. Lingerie is particularly significant and strongly affects how women feel about themselves and their body. It is not only practical, but often a luxury good. It needs to look attractive, fit well, and feel good against the body. Recycling can become integral to manufacture without remaining obvious; wearing green credentials in the same way that



earlier “eco-fashion” did is not appropriate when designing and making intimate apparel. Lingerie has a limited life span because of frequent washing, but environmentally friendly washing instructions attached to the garment will extend this life span as much as possible. Women tend to throw away lingerie if they get bored with it, or may only want to wear it for one season. Emotional investment in the pieces will also contribute to the extension of lingerie’s limited life span. *Love Me, Love My Planet* creates a strong and nurturing relationship between consumer and producer. As a smaller maker, I can produce garments that are personal and specific to individual needs within this framework. Fletcher (2008, p.125) sums up as follows; “we will see beauty and greatness in garments that value process, participation and social integration, in pieces that advance relationships between people and the environment”.

My research contributes to a shared body of knowledge that ultimately may inform scholarship and academic and professional practice.



Figure 31: Love Me Love My Planet Studio Exhibition. Curated by Rebecca Gully 2011 photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 32: Love Me Love My Planet Studio Exhibition. Close-up 1. Curated by Rebecca Gully 2011 Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 33: Love Me Love My Planet Studio Exhibition. *No Materials Were Harmed in the Making of this Project* Curated by Rebecca Gully 2011 Photograph by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 34: Love Me Love My Planet Studio Exhibition. *Lace Curtain Trousseau*, *None of Your Business* and patterns. Curated by Rebecca Gully 2011  
Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 35: Love Me Love My Planet Studio Exhibition. *Strap Me In Bra and knickers, bodysuit and Love Me Love My Planet collection.* Curated by Rebecca Gully 2011. Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011



Figure 36: Love Me Love My Planet Studio Exhibition. *Fabrics and elastic.* Curated by Rebecca Gully 2011  
Photographs by Rebecca Gully 2011

## Chapter 5: The Material and Social Context

**T**he exegesis sits within the context of the project and the project sits within the context of the exegesis; the one reflects and informs the other. Graeme Sullivan (2005) writes that creative visual practice has a relationship between the practices of creating and critiquing. He also argues that from a position of personal insight and awareness of their own practice the designer-theorist is well placed to “critically examine related research, texts, and theories” and that in relating the outcomes of creative inquiry to relevant issues in the field “there is a degree of looking back involved”. This is because the research process first challenges the maker in creating new objects or artifacts, and then challenges them to use this new knowledge, or awareness, as the “critical lens through which to examine existing phenomena” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 191). I have already placed my work within a theoretical context; now my intention is to place the work in a material and social context in relation to other design practitioners and sustainable design practices.

I have looked at a number of different areas. The first is designers that re-cycle and re-use materials and garments. I am also placing the work in context in relation to lingerie designers who use vintage silhouettes in their collections; and fashion designers for whom lingerie is always an inspiration. In addition to this I have looked at a fashion label, Old Town, that uses the notion of tradition and austerity, as well as the reproduction of found garments as part of a design practice.

The key current trend for fashionable, low priced “disposable” clothing means the fashion industry is responsible for major environmental impacts arising from the use of energy and toxic chemicals as well as generating a huge amount of waste volume. In the face of this, designers are stepping up to try and address issues of waste and environmental degradation. Some of the ways in which this can be done are to re-use materials, reduce non-sustainable consumption and to recycle by using already existing materials.

## Sustainability and Slow Design: Re-use, Reduce, Recycle

Having grown out of, at least in part, our grandparent's make-do culture of mending and repairing, redesign has moved well beyond its historic roots to make use of otherwise unwearable items of clothing by cutting, piecing and embellishing them to create entirely new pieces, in many cases more desirable than the originals

(Brown, 2010, p.103)

There are three primary ways of attempting to address issues of sustainable design and production in the fashion industry. These are re-use, by using materials that are not bought new; reduce, by choosing materials made with environmentally friendly production practices; and recycle, by making garments from previously existing items. These theoretical waste management strategies are being embraced by a number of innovative designers and makers, making sustainability seem more real by infusing it with luxury, availability and social acceptability. Waste, by upcycling, is elevated to a thing of use and beauty, whilst also saving resources (Fletcher, 2008, pp.95, 96). The aim is to extend the life of redundant or damaged garments and

textiles, either as whole products or parts of the fabric and fibre.

Recycling can take many forms and should not be limited to the re-use of materials. As a practice it can also include the recycling (or regeneration) of ideas, traditions and symbols to retain relevance in contemporary society (Williams, 2002, p.61). This also forms part of my project as I am revisiting and re-contextualising principles of restricting the use of new materials, drawn from the notion of *Make Do and Mend* in wartime.

My project involves the recycling of existing textiles and garments by re-cutting and re-making whole products or parts of products. Not only does this keep them useful as long as possible – but it also adds value to the recycled product, making it more desirable. Kate Fletcher (2008, p.103) writes,

Restyled and reworked clothes tend to be hand finished and unique. They also frequently use vintage fabrics and garments, pieces that are themselves survivors, old things that have kept their value over time, and as such are easily associated with sustainability values.

The exploration of *Make Do and Mend*, and my nostalgic reflection has led directly to a contemporary interpretation for a sustainable design practice in lingerie design and manufacture. My *Love Me Love my Planet* design studio concept creates direct engagement with the consumer. Recycling is only an engagement with the symptoms of overproduction, not the root problems, therefore makers have a duty to create objects that will continue to function much longer; the underlying principle being to make objects with longevity – physical, emotional and psychological (Williams, 2002, p.71). High quality making techniques are also consistent with many sustainability values, and combine with participation – where the consumer takes a more active role in the garment’s production – to be more likely to trigger a repeated emotional response. This will help to deepen the relationship between the wearer and the garment. Victor Papanek’s book *The Green Imperative* argues in favour of the importance of building the end user back into the making of the product in order to -

open up the process of production so that we all have a chance to participate in the creative, productive phase, and in this way build a tighter web of relations between process and product, form and content, designer and user.  
(Papanek, 1995, p.67).

As an example of this participation, fashion designer Hussein Chalayan has used an oversized label in his ready to wear collection to invite the wearer to sign it as a piece of “future archaeology”. This creates an emotional bond and a strong sense of ownership. It assumes a long-term commitment to the garment (Fletcher, 2008, p.168).

Low quality disposable fast fashion is being counteracted by the slow design movement. Slow design acknowledges the value of tradition and wisdom - something embedded in vintage garments – and now lost to a whole generation of fashion shoppers. Slow fashion encourages the consumer to buy fewer high-value, slow-to-consume products. Historically an object bore signs of the maker’s hand which formed a tactile as well as a spiritual link between producer and the user (Papanek, 1995). People treasure something that is not mass produced; the romance associated with vintage and antique objects can be projected onto a new item, especially when it is made from re-cycled materials. By up-cycling, the designer can tap into the requirements of the conscious green consumer; that the item be unique, sustainable, aesthetically pleasing, and have a handmade quality.



There are many practitioners across the globe creating beautiful and innovative products within the re-use, reduce, and recycle framework.

## Designers Who Re-make using Traditional Skills and Re-cycled Materials

Fashion is an art and must be used to raise design quality, not lower it, speak the truth about the world, not lie about it, and do its best to make life better for everyone, not just an elite few.

(Small, cited in Brown, 2010 p.121)

**D**utch designer Piet Hein Eek (see Fig. 37) makes furniture from reclaimed scrap wood, and embraces the worn-in aesthetic to create new furniture with a memory. The beautiful craftsmanship adds value to the re-cycled material. Eek has said of his work “Everyone is trying to make perfect furniture so I did the opposite, I made furniture that is imperfect. I like using materials that are worthless and acting as though they are precious” (Scholtus, 2005). In a world with dwin-

dling resources and growing landfill, maybe all materials should be viewed as precious.

Similarly, the *Alabama Chanin* (see Fig.38) fashion label, formerly *Project Alabama*, uses traditional craftsmanship to create wonderful work-intensive pieces from recycled cotton T-shirts. Company founder Natalie Chanin says of the work -

Most of the techniques are based on the quilting and embroidery techniques of the Depression-era south, and others have been practiced by artisans for hundreds of years. I have borrowed this knowledge and made it the foundation of most of my designs.

(Brown, 2010)

She is attempting to preserve traditional ways of working through re-contextualizing them, placing age-old techniques in a contemporary context. Chanin sees their preservation as the makers and wearer’s connection to their roots, their past, their community and, consequently their present (Brown, 2010, p.15, 17). The parallels with my own work are strong and the intention resonates with me; bringing traditional ways of making into a contemporary context in order to innovate for the future.





Figure 37: Scrap wood furniture by Piet Hein Eek

Piet Hein Eek



Figure 38: Alabama Chanin

Alabama Chanin

*Taller Flora* (see Fig.39) is a workshop and fashion label that taps into traditions of making. Founder Carla Fernandez believes that “only radical contemporary design will prevent the extinction of craftsmanship” (Brown, 2010, p.49). Her work embraces the indigenous Mexican custom of creating garments from rectangles and squares and manipulating them through folds, darts, tucks pleats and gathers (Fernandez, 2006, p.17). She works with indigenous communities to design new a-temporal collections; working outside the seasonal fashion system to render traditional garments fashionable. Fernandez is careful to point out that tradition changes over time and is not about sticking to the past, but being truthful to something meaningful. Craftsmanship gives individuals a sense of belonging and identity within a community, and the sense of continuity I talk about when discussing nostalgia. The work carried out under *Taller Flora* taps into tradition and then takes it forward into new and exciting territory.

American designer Geoffrey B. Small is considered a pioneer in terms of using recycled design in fashion – introducing his first recycled menswear collection in Paris in 1996. He creates limited edition collections using recycled and reused vintage fabrications. His work is avant-garde and utilizes hand detailing (Brown, 2010, p.119, 120). The design includes antique patches, customized re-

pairs, re-fitting menswear into womenswear (similar to my *None of Your Business* re-made men’s shirts), and most importantly developing comprehensive standards of resizing and production methods for recycled clothing (Small, the Fashion Spot). This development of standards in recycled clothing is a new and innovative approach that takes it to a professional and sustainable level of production. Standardisation is also necessary for my *Love Me Love My Planet* studio, where a series of prototype garments are made for clients to try on and select from. I believe my studio concept is also a new business model for re-manufacturing.

The label *Preloved* re-works reclaimed and vintage fabrics into one-off garments. Brown describes the line (2010, p.124) as “beautifully rebuilt out of clothing from the past, including scraps of forgotten work trousers and worn-out curtains that reappear as elegant evening gowns or floaty summer dresses”. The designers re-cut second hand garments and re-combine into new ones, in the same way as *Make Do and Mend* worked; and in the same way as I have carried out my investigative projects.



Figure 39: Taller Flora, garments

## Taller Flora



Figure 40: Taller Flora, studio



Figure 41: Geoffrey B. Small

## Geoffrey B. Small and Preloved



Figure 42: Preloved

*Maison Martin Margiela* believes the past is an “endless source of compelling ideas and creativity” (Leung, 2008, p.10). The house reworks garments, fabrics and accessories by hand into unique pieces. This is considered a primary creative outlet for the label, and referred to as “artisanal” production, with a view to finding a new role and “force” for these second hand materials. *Maison Martin Margiela* use materials and garments from many sources and periods, and gives them a second life whilst respecting the history inherent in the re-worked pieces. (Leung, 2008, pp. 317, 231) They say “the traces of the passage of time help us to continue to build ... a moment in time may be returned to, to bring forward in all of its pertinence to today or tomorrow”. *Maison Martin Margiela* adheres to the belief that fashion should be seen as an ongoing creative process that involves seeking inspiration from the past and then transforming that information into new creations (Leung, 2008, pp.10, 11). This is also part of what I have been attempting to do in relation to my project.

*Old Town* is a label from the UK that makes to order from their workshop using traditional British cottons, woolens and linens. They cite as influences the years either side of and during the Second World War where a rather “self conscious British style emerged” (Old Town).

They say they “move forward by looking out of the rear window to see where we been”. They love the Ealing films of the post-war period that show British qualities of “the small, the eccentric, the individual and the collective”; and hope that their styles have something of the Spartan and institutional with a mothy comedy dinginess one associates with that time and genre” (Old Town).

Their garments’ authentic look lies in the fact that they copy original garments – to reproduce into a full size range. They use found garments as their starting point for pieces in their collection. A woman’s wraparound apron “languished for years in the broom cupboard of a pub in Tooley Street, seeing occasional use as a blackboard duster for darts players”; and their “popular Overall Jacket is the mutant offspring of a pre-war lamplighters jacket glimpsed on the back of a chair” (Old Town). They hope that their website and garments convey a sense of the “rag-and-bone man dodging originals” (Old Town). The garments are constructed using traditional ways of making work wear, with flat felled seams (Lewis, pp.40-41). Their intention is integrity through traditional ways of making, fabrication and silhouette. This is also my intention.



Figure 43: Maison Martin Margiela—re-worked clothing

## Maison Martin Margiela



# Old town

POST WAR AESTHETIC BUT UNRATED STYLE

The clock seems to tick a bit slower in Old Town. Its circa 1920s interior with brown linoleum floors and a range of no nonsense clothing fabrics make it hard to believe it's stepped back in time.

Will Brown and Marie Willey take their cues from the post-war aesthetic. The issue workwear of the Brown and Willey Visualise collection – fishermen's Guernsey jumpers, haulers' or porters' at Covent Garden plain brown grocers' trolleys laden with fruit and veg. Described as spartan, a major influence on Old Town were the years either side of and during the Second World War. They clearly relish the way Modernism was dampened by its arrival in Britain and was, as they put it, "tempered with craft, heritage and injected with bran that it became the welfare state consensus style of The Festival Of Britain".

Brown and Willey started by selling enamelware and bed-linen in Norwich 15 years ago but moved to the Georgian Market town of Holt in Norfolk six years ago as the clothes gradually took over. "I've always collected work-

wear to make their integrity. The clothes are over-locking but the garments are falling apart. The school airtight mainstays of the wool serge trousers, has cotton drills are. The Khaki drapery somewhere to the minimum required was terrifying, my garage is still full of the. The accessories are equally British both in substance. A local saddler makes the belts, the elastic braces come from Rutland, the woven made in Sudbury – a traditional silk weaving area – threads and trimmings are all from William Hackney. The rigour does not stop with the ingredi-

In effect this is a cottage industry, with pretty everything produced on site. Will designs, does the making and cutting, and shares the sewing with Marie. Marie designs the knitwear, that is then sent to



knitters. Managing the turnaround is tough. Everyone expects delivery in six weeks but they are never disappointed when the reassuringly unglamorous brown cardboard box stamped with the Old Town logo lands on their doorstep. The collection has two lines, Tin House and Old Town. The former offers back to basics workwear styles and the latter has a changing selection with one or two seasonal items. The gentle evolution of the range could be down to the couple's rare sources of inspiration. The originals for the trousers known as 'High Rise' were found in 1936, handed in and then mislaid behind a radiator in the London Transport Lost Property Office until redecoration in the 1980s. The model for their 'Plains' were the navy serge prison trousers left mysteriously inside a church porch on the north Kent marshes. All the pieces are known by name and bring to mind a particular type of Englishness. Marshalsea, Bungalow, Vauxhalls and Selsey are a reflection of the world Brown and Willey inhabit and it is a lovely place to visit. ●●● Clare Lewis

Figure 44: Old Town

## Old Town



## Lingerie Design

**E**namore is a UK fashion label that creates clothing and lingerie from organic and sustainable fabrics. All the fabrics used are at least fifty five percent organic or are recycled vintage fabrics. The lingerie has a vintage aesthetic, and is the only professionally designed and manufactured sustainable fashion lingerie on the market at this point in time. Unlike my work, *Enamore* does not use recycled fabric in their lingerie, only in outerwear. There are also many other lingerie designers who have a vintage aesthetic, such as *Fift Chachnil*, *Kiss Me Deadly* and *What Katy Did* – who make reproduction vintage garments in a full size range. Other lingerie designers such as Chantal Thomass, Lascivious and Marlies Dekker give traditional types of lingerie garments a different take, through fabrication, style and silhouette. The possibilities for my own lingerie practice in the future fits in with these contemporary but classically styled labels (Refer to Figures 43 through 49).

There are also a number of high fashion designers who consistently use underwear as outerwear in their collections. This work has informed the way in which I design lingerie to fit back in with other garments. These are designers such as John Galliano for *Dior* and

Jean Paul Gaultier, as well as the recent collections of Marc Jacobs (Refer to Figures 50 through 52).

I believe that all these practitioners are using some of the aspects of nostalgia that I have discussed – linking the past with the present – and looking to the past for inspiration and materials. These designers are using a re-fabrication of the past as their practice and as a result creating a continuous and ongoing narrative.



Figure 45: What Katy Did



Figure 46: Fifi Chachnil



Figure 47: Kiss Me Deadly



Figure 48: Enamore

## Reproduction Vintage Lingerie

## Lingerie Designers



Figure 49: Marlies Dekker



Figure 50: Chantal Thomass



Figure 51: Lascivious



Figure 52: Jean Paul Gaultier Lingerie inspired outerwear Spring 2010 Ready to Wear

## Jean Paul Gaultier Spring 2010 RTW



Figure 53: Marc Jacobs Spring 2010 Ready to Wear

## Marc Jacobs S2010 RTW



Figure 54: Galliano for Dior Ready to Wear Spring 2010 and Fall 2009 Couture

Dior S2010 RTW and F2009CTR

## Chapter 6: The Conclusion

I have created and constructed images, patterns and garments that form an evidential base that reveals my knowledge, and discussed the integrity of the artifact as a site of knowledge. The processes and designs that now exist in 2D and 3D as a result of this project embody the questions and ideas I have been exploring. They are a form of data that can be used as “evidence”. The research has been individually empowering and culturally relevant. I have become a more knowledgeable and skilled practitioner.

### Outcomes

*Material Memorialisation* has demonstrated how nostalgia can be used as a tool for practice-based research. My interest in mid-twentieth century design has been focused in on *Make Do and Mend*, so that I could explore original garments from the WWII era as well as documents, ephemera and historical research. My responses are a reflection of my own nostalgic journey through another time, where scarcity of materials made garments precious. Their survival into the here and now makes them even more so, which is why I have framed them as “souvenirs”. I have viewed these garments as repositories of knowledge, that show me rich craft

traditions and help me develop my work to reflect the growing interest of a movement that values traditional ways of making and a growing embrace of design where the hand of the maker is evident. These traditional skills of pattern making and construction are increasingly important and relevant in terms of addressing sustainability in fashion design, where longevity lies in the garment’s inherent value.

Looking back can inform design in other ways too. I have revisited silhouettes and details that have been lost and forgotten. Vintage garments are part of fashion design genealogy and help to place my work in context by showing antecedents as well as possible new trajectories. As a designer my accumulated knowledge becomes my basis for designing: in borrowing from the past I have found new ways of doing things.

I have used *Make Do and Mend* principles in a contemporary context to demonstrate problem solving through pattern making and cutting – and how garment design can respond positively to restriction and limited materials. Limited resources can stimulate creative responses. *Make Do and Mend* principles of re-using already exist-

ing materials also addresses disposability and the movement towards more sustainable design practices. The lingerie I have made from re-purposed materials, through re-cutting, re-making and re-modeling shows how up-cycling can create beautiful and desirable garments.

The writing in this exegesis communicates the support reading and research I have done to understand my design practice. The reflective statements, comments and musings also show how I have considered the concepts discussed. For me it has been crucial to defend nostalgia, and convey what I understand it to be and the purpose it serves. The notion of the vintage garment as souvenir has been important, and the exploration of material culture has supported this notion. Viewing vintage lingerie pieces as artifacts has allowed me to contemplate these garment's sensory richness, and helps bring history alive.

I have placed the work in context, in relation to practitioners who re-cycle materials– in order to show that my *Love me, Love my Planet* project is at the forefront in terms of innovation in this area. I have also shown examples of lingerie designers who use a vintage silhouette in their collections; and fashion designers for whom lingerie is always an inspiration – and often used in the context of

outerwear. In addition to this I have looked at a fashion label that uses the notion of tradition and austerity, and the reproduction of found garments as part of their design practice. The work can also be positioned in relation to other practitioners whose research is an investigatory inquiry into their own practice – some of whom have been cited in this exegesis - such as Peter Downton and Robert Baines. The broader cultural framework that I place my work in is that of a sustainable design practice. The *Love Me Love My Planet* design studio re-cycles materials to create original, custom-made garments in direct response to customer needs.

The initial stages of research revolved around reading theory about individual and cultural memory; and then texts about nostalgia and material culture. This gave me a framework through which to view the making – something I felt I needed in order to contextualize the garment ideas before I began to make. Once I had an understanding that my replications of vintage garments could be viewed as rigorous enquiry, I started to make. I learned about the hand and method of the original maker, and material and construction through this replication. I felt connected to antecedent makers, and now my task was to continue this line of enchainment into the future. I began to

design in response to my research and replication; thinking about how my own theory is embedded in and inferred from practice. My reading and writing about tacit knowledge has validated the notion that making is knowing – and that design is mental, physical and experiential – it lies not only in the mind, but in the hand. The use of *Make Do and Mend* also functioned as a tool – a tool for problem solving. How can I make a series of garments using three men’s shirts, a curtain, or one woman’s top? These three projects – *None of Your Business*; *Lace Curtain Trousseau*; and *Love Me Love My Planet* - were an experiment in pattern making, cutting and sewing that allowed me to participate in a past way of making – and start to take it into the future.

The use of nostalgia as a theoretical framework helped me to understand my attraction to the past, and showed me how memory, nostalgia and identity are linked. It gives me a sense of identity in relation to a temporal continuum; illustrates how I fit in and will in turn contribute to a design future. I have also looked at how vintage garments, when viewed as a souvenir allow us to touch, read, and seemingly understand a past era. These are the things I reflected upon while making.

The complete outcome exists somewhere in between the writing, the drawing, the making, and the thinking. All these outcomes have one strong and overriding connection – and that is myself as both researcher and researched. The outcomes all exist in, or come from me. I am my own research outcome.



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**IF YOU HAVE A MAN'S SUIT ...**



*Before*

*After*

**BUTTERICK**  
2817 - 2900

A man's suit that had been discarded in favor of a uniform was converted into a trim suit for the business woman. The jacket was remade according to Butterick #2817. Both pockets were left in their original position, but were made smaller at the side seams, new flaps were stitched above the old pockets, and the front jacket edges were recut with new buttonholes made. The skirt was simply a matter of following Butterick #2900. It was possible to recut and use the jacket lining, while even the vest lining was utilized to make a small dickey.



SKIRT 2900

JACKET 2817

FRONT

BACK

FACING

POCKET

SIDE BACK

FRONT

BACK

SLEEVE

COLLAR

\*SAND\*

PIECING

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