

Valuing



by Diana Gibbons

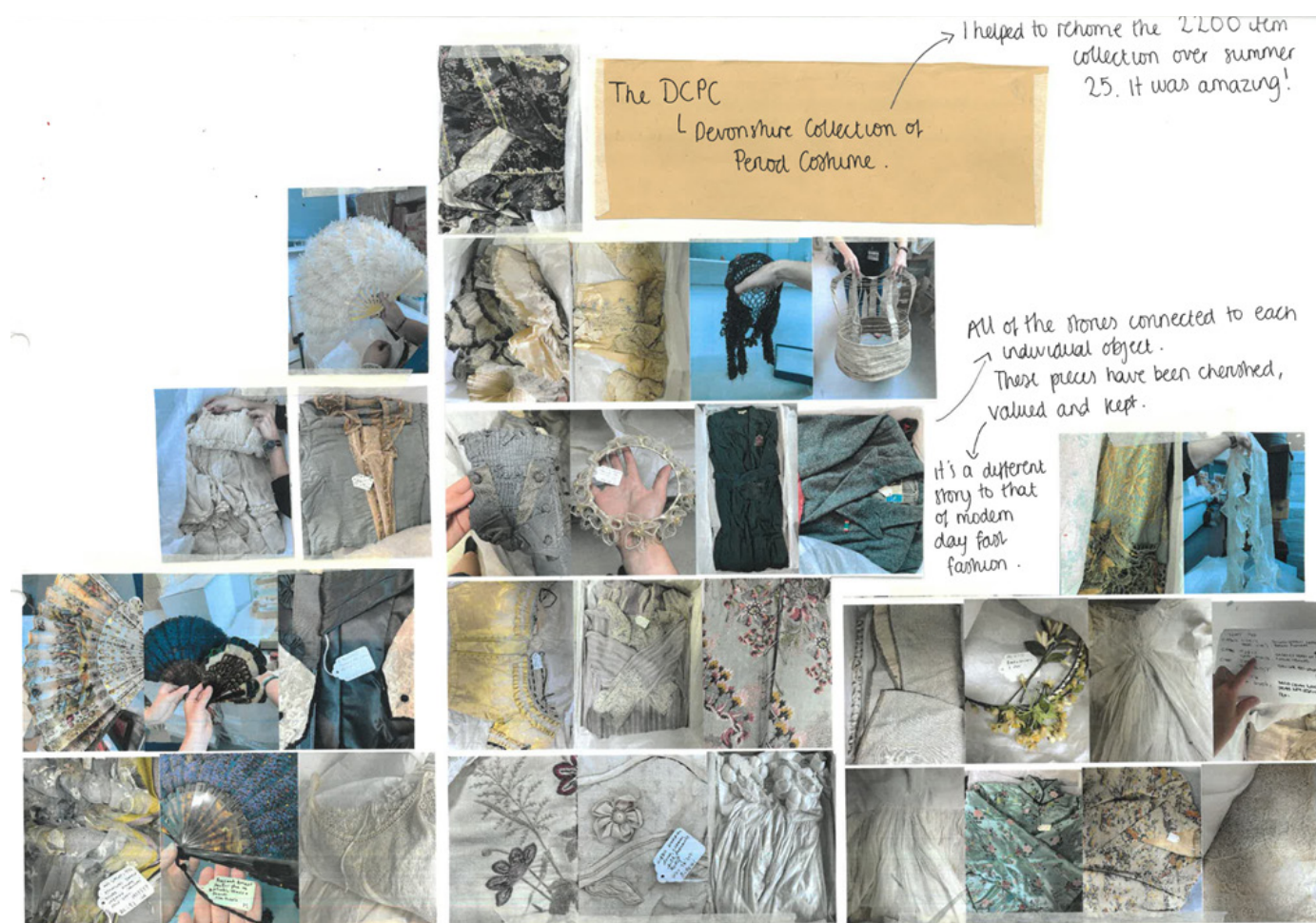
Tales of recyclability and the hand made

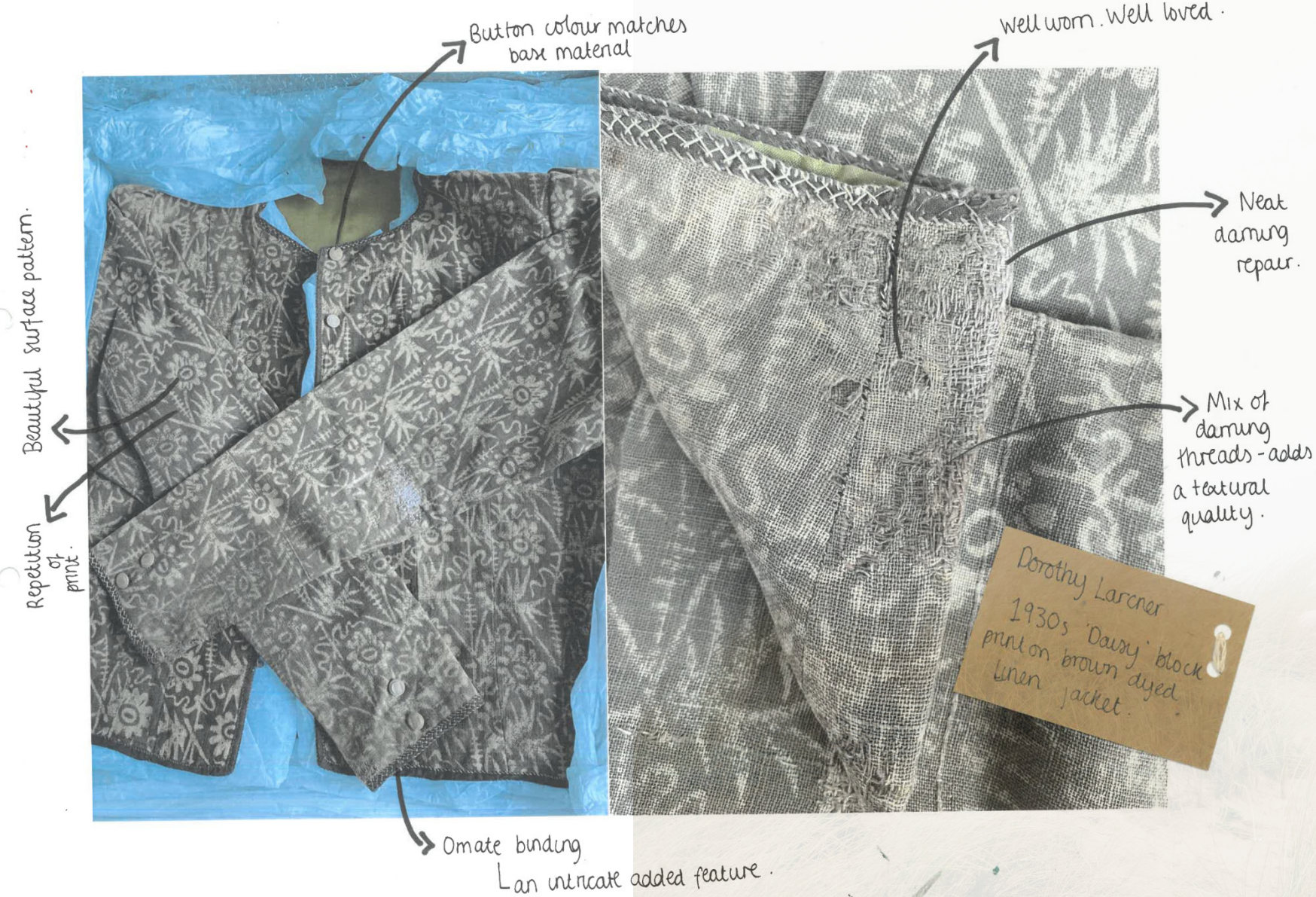


The
Devonshire Collection of Period
Costume (housed at the Fashion
and Textiles Institute at Falmouth
University).

I love all the intricacies of the small details. Even though these garments and accessories were made in a time without modern machinery, they are constructed beautifully and with genius. How have we lost this genius when our technology is technically more advanced?

Imagine a world where we get this back; where we value all our clothes like they have had countless hours put into their design and construction.





There
is such **beauty**
in the stitching
here. Both the
purposeful
embroidery and
the patching
stitches are
mesmerizing.



Imagine we valued the origins of our garments more. Both the plants and animals which fibres come from, but also the construction process.

Many people are surprised by the prices of The Knitwit Stable, with sweaters and cardigans of a few hundred euros each. "But we are a foundation, so we don't make a profit," emphasizes Reina. "This is simply the real price for a wool sweater if you pay the farmer fairly, treat sheep well, process the wool in Europe and don't exploit your employees. If you want it much cheaper, you will soon end up with workers in Bangladesh who toil behind a sewing machine six days a week for 150 euros a month. Or with goat farmers in Mongolia who keep so many cashmere goats in a small area that the soil is completely exhausted and the landscape slowly but surely desertified."

Every year about 1.2 million kilos of Dutch wool is lost because sheep farmers cannot get a decent price for it. At the same time, we buy mountains of plastic clothing, which are made in Asia under appalling conditions and wear out quickly. While a wool sweater can last up to 75 years... With The Knitwit Stable, Reina Ovinge wants to make consumption less the norm and show that – if you do it right – wool is a lot less damaging to the Earth than is often thought.



waste!
How can we make this waste into a valuable product?

"We have to make a huge shift: from quantity to quality"

"Our wool sweaters last 75 years, while a polyester sweater is worn out after an average of seven wears"

Wool as a driver for change

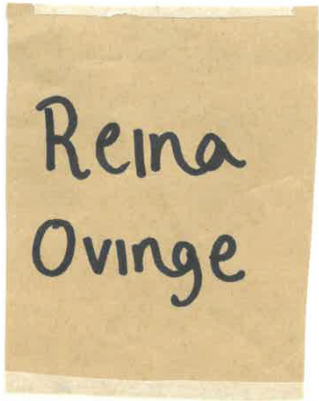
We believe the wool industry can be revitalized by restoring the value of Dutch wool as a sustainable raw material. Looking back at the vibrant wool industry the Netherlands once had, we combine tradition, innovation, and regenerative principles to bring it back to life.

The Knitwit Stable is a knowledge institute conducting research into the bio-circular processing of wool on a local scale. At our on-farm production facility in Baambrugge, our in-house brand The Knitwit Label serves as a showcase of a biocircular production chain. Through this, The Knitwit Stable aims to make the path to sustainable wool accessible, transparent, and tangible by exposing the entire production chain—from soil to sheep to textile and back to the soil as nourishment.

Through workshops, lectures, and masterclasses, The Knitwit Stable advises, informs, and supports businesses, educational institutions, and consumers. With our expertise and consulting in projects and collaborations, we connect different players in the supply chain and help pave the way for scalability.

In this way, we use wool as a driver for change within a broken textile system—closing the loop from exploitative to regenerative.

→ coming back to value – we need to value more



recognising the problems and actively trying to change.





Imagine
a world where people
wholeheartedly cared about our animals. **They**
provide us with so much.

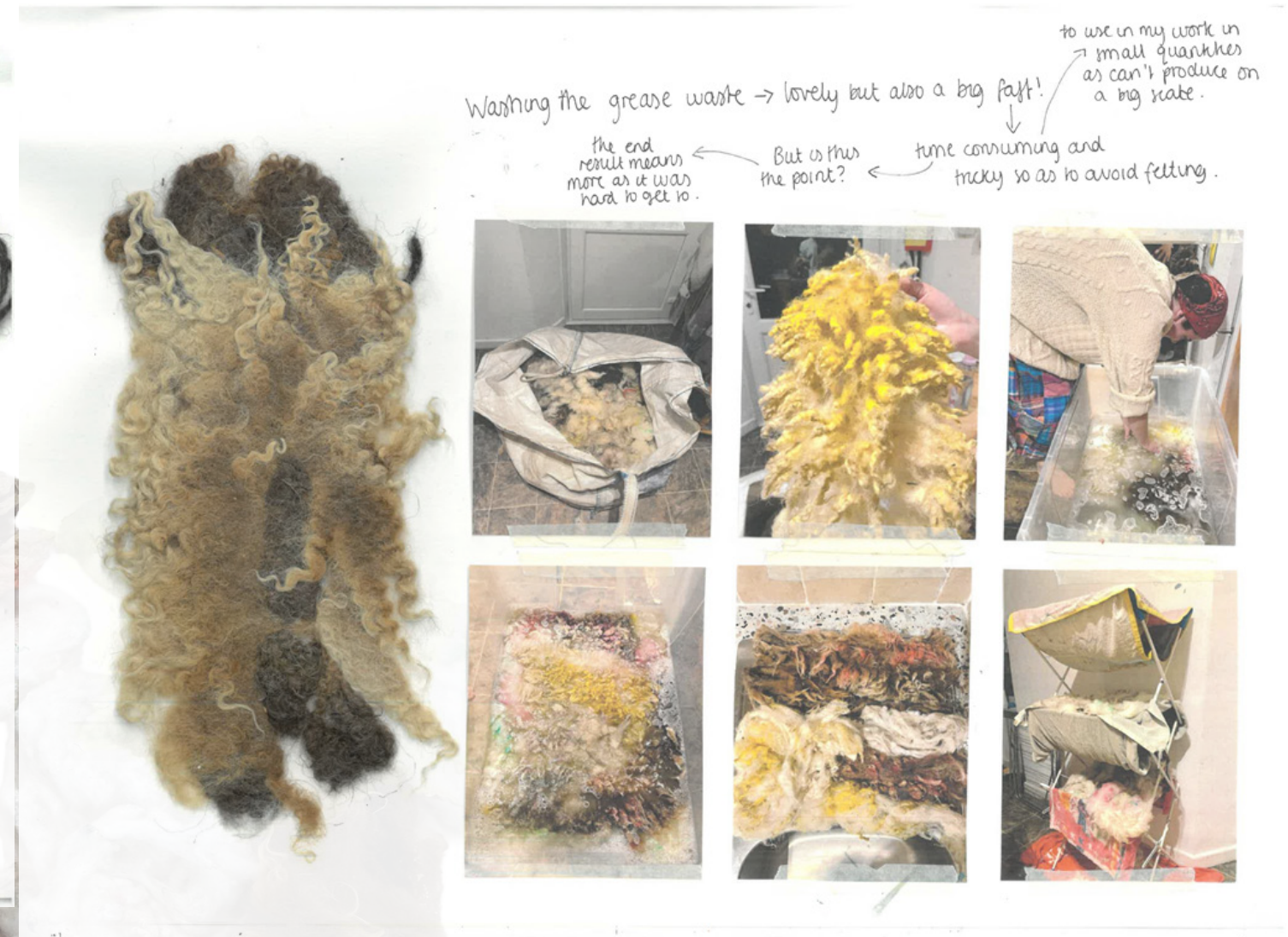
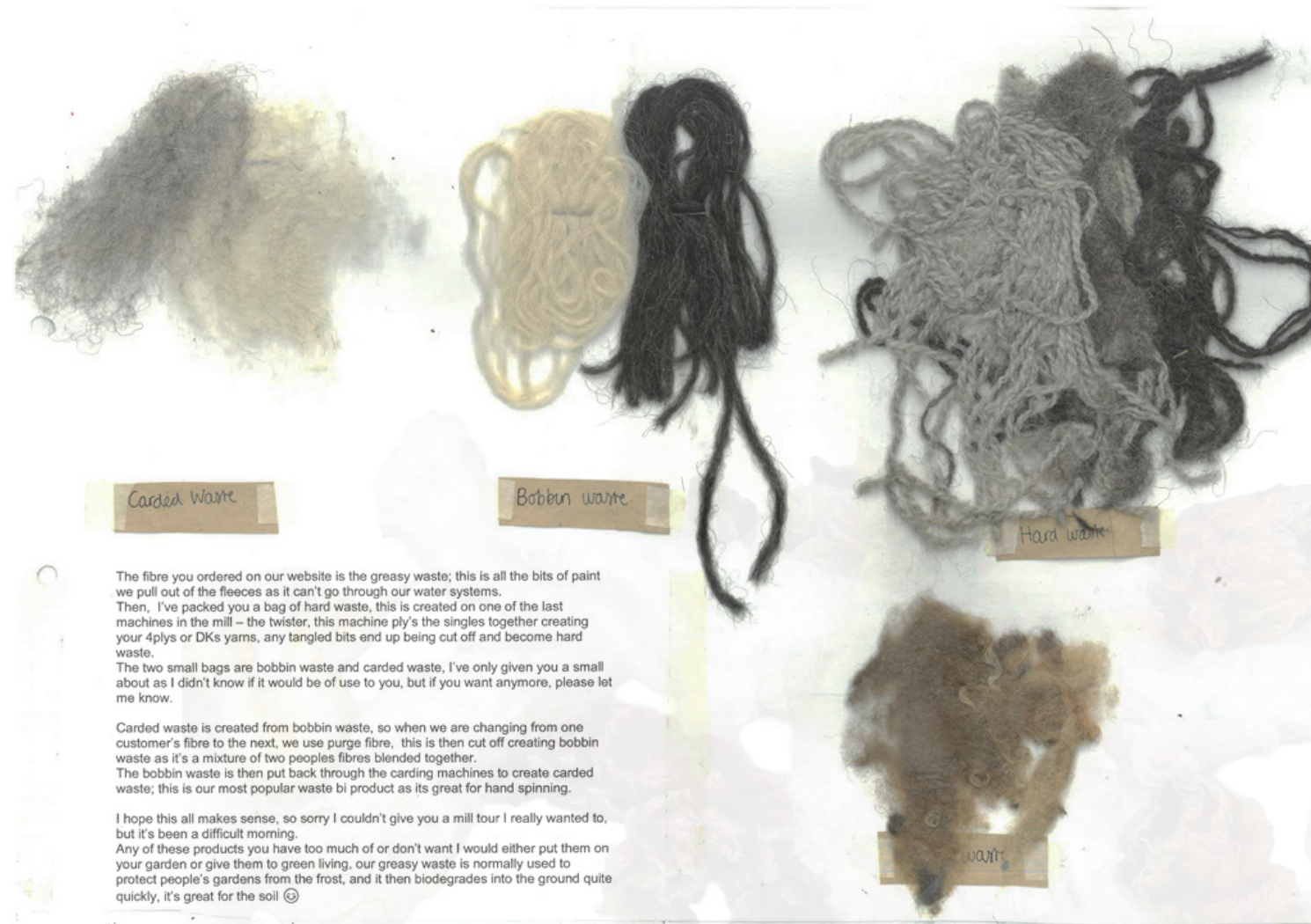


FERNHILL
FARM

**REGENERATIVE ECO FARM WITH
RUSTIC VENUES, A VARIETY OF
ACCOMMODATION, FARM PRODUCE
AND A FRESH APPROACH TO
YOUR IDEAS**

Welcome to Fibre Experience
Saturday 21st March 2026
10am - 4pm
Blade Shearing & Wool Handling
Celebration of Natural Fibres





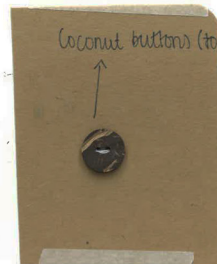
Waste fleece provided by The Natural Fibre Company.

It is only classed as 'waste' due to the paint on the fleece. This can be washed out and then used normally.

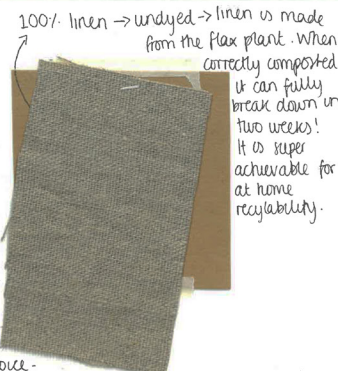
There is nothing **'waste'** about this; it still has beautiful colours, both natural and synthetic, and it still has its amazing curly texture.

Imagine **reconsidering** what the industry counts as throw-away.

Designing for recyclability



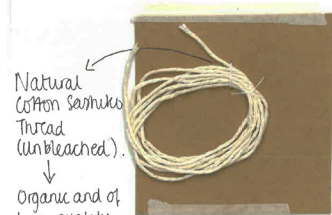
Coconut buttons (totally beautiful) from Michelle. → Totally biodegradable although the shell (the buttons) take several decades to fully decompose. So it can be put on a compost heap at its end of life but it is better to be repurposed, reused, recycled etc as it can endure the test of time.



100% linen → undyed → linen is made from the flax plant. When correctly composted it can fully break down in two weeks! It is super achievable for at home recyclability.

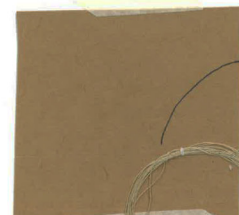
I want to encourage my garment to be reused, recycled, repurposed etc before someone says it has reached its end of life.

What if my garment could go on your compost heap? Then you could dispose of it yourself rather than relying on the industry which is overwhelmed already.
Recyclability is most achievable if your garment's are monofibres.



Natural Cotton Sewing Thread (Unbleached).

Organic and of high quality. Although not made from flax, this thread is made from cotton so is biodegradable and unbleached so no harmful chemicals will be transferred to the soil. It is a good alternative to using a flax thread which is not available yet. Cotton will break down within five to six months when correctly composted.



Polyester/cotton core spun thread.

Not ideal. I want to use flax thread so that my garment becomes a monofibre for its recyclability purpose.

But flax thread in an industrial capacity has not yet become available.

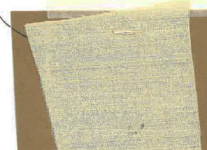
→ Cotton thread is polyester thread.

The cotton thread would be softer and make my garment entirely organic. But it isn't as durable as polyester. I want my garment to last a long time and its construction is a vital part of this. So I am using the polyester. If a consumer wants to fully recycle it at its end of life, they can unpick the garment. Not ideal but it's a compromise at this time when flax thread

Initial design choice -

100% cotton → I would have preferred to use linen so as to make my garment a monofibre but as it was from the university donated stock, I didn't have this luxury. Cotton is biodegradable, taking five to six months on a compost heap, which makes it a good alternative.

It still allows my product to be considered recyclable in a home capacity.

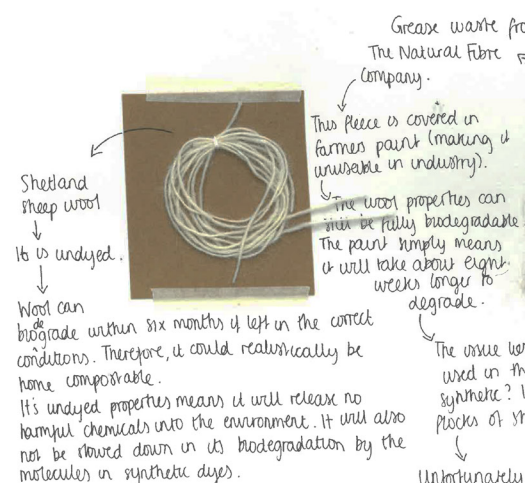


levels I was I wanted. Now I am using organic silk from the donated stock. Natural silk takes 1-5 years to decompose in your compost bin.

has not been produced in a durable and industrial way yet

Designing for a monofibre garment can be recycled on an industrial level.
Designing for at home recyclability through designing a fully compostable garment.

Designing for recyclability



Shetland sheep wool
It is undyed.

Wool can biodegrade within six months if left in the correct conditions. Therefore, it could realistically be home compostable. It's undyed properties means it will release no harmful chemicals into the environment. It will also not be slowed down in its biodegradation by the molecules in synthetic dyes.

Grease waste from The Natural Fibre Company.

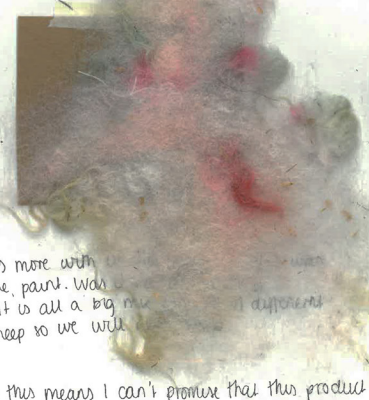
This fleece is covered in farmers paint (making it unusable in industry). The wool properties can still be fully biodegradable. The paint simply means it will take about eight weeks longer to degrade.

The issue was more with wool in the paint. Was synthetic? It is all a big mess of sheep so we will

Unfortunately this means I can't promise that this product won't be a bit harmful at its end of life by releasing some microplastics.

However, as this waste was destined for the bin anyway then I am preventing it from that end for longer which is beneficial for the environment. Also, in an ideal world then farmers would only use natural paints and TNFC would separate their waste fleece into farm specific bags so all fibres of the same composition were kept together.

→ This is a thought for the future of wool recyclability!



Hard waste from The Natural Fibre Company.

A mix of different types of wool from TNFC. At this stage, they are all dyed.

they are different wool, this does its contribution leaving a monofibre

Wool is 100% biodegradable so it is perfect for home composting once it has reached its end of life.

I am recycling this wool as it was destined for the bin without my intervention. Therefore, it is a recycled, redesigned product in itself.

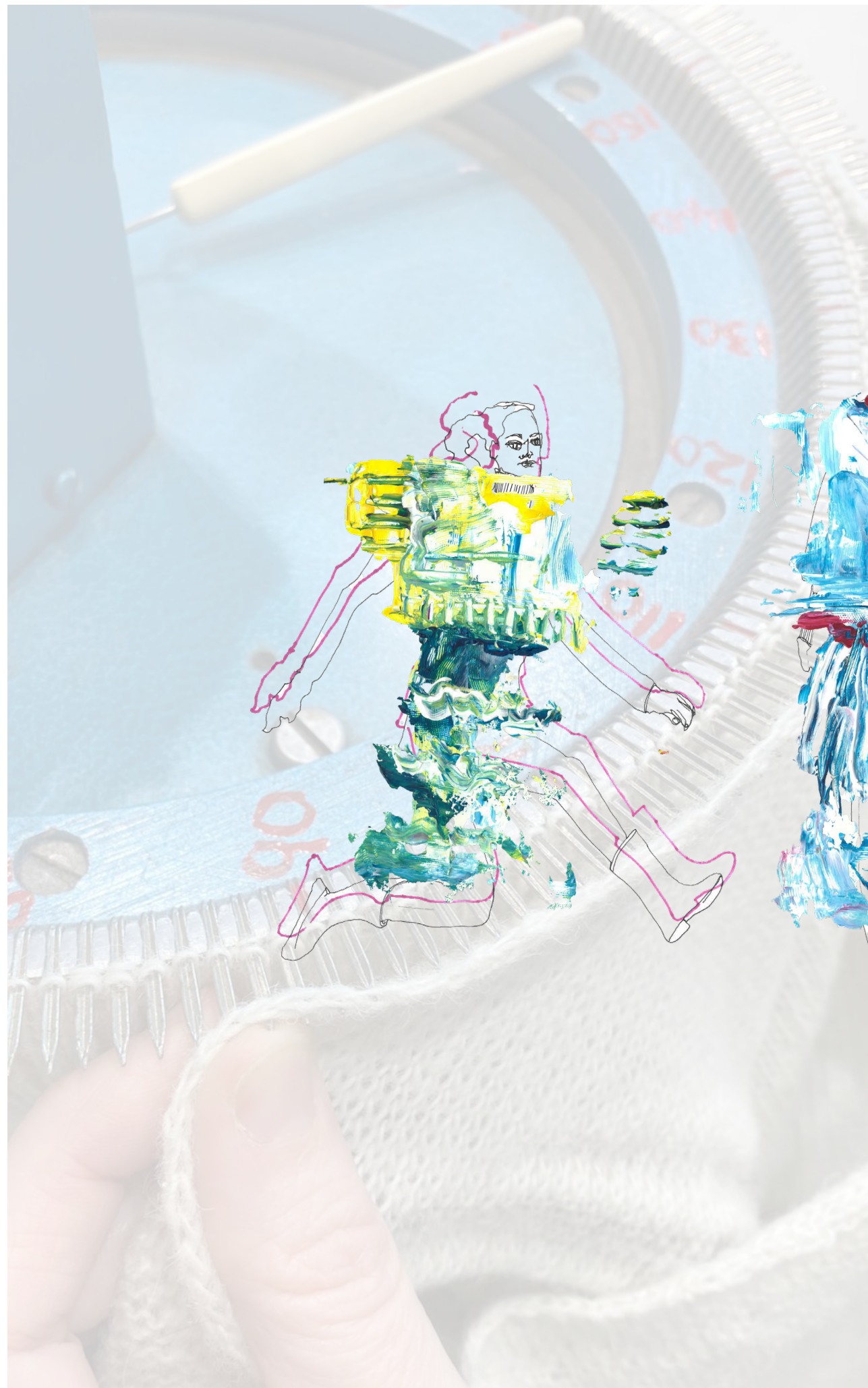


Circularity

You must design
with the end in
mind at all times.

It is my responsibility
as a designer as to how
my creations end their
lives. I **want** them
cherished for years;
pass down through
generations like
clothes were. I **want**
them countlessly
mended so that they
transform into a
completely different
character. I **want**
them regifted. I **want**
them to break down
in the soil quickly and
give back to the earth
where they came from
in the beginning.

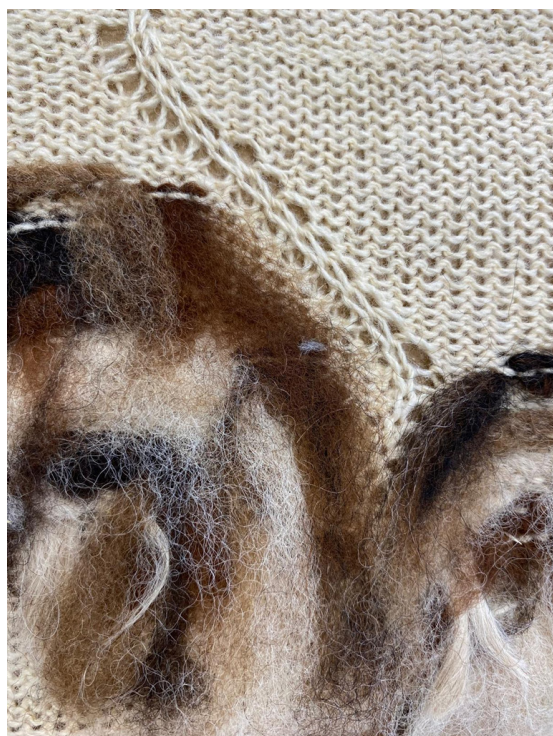




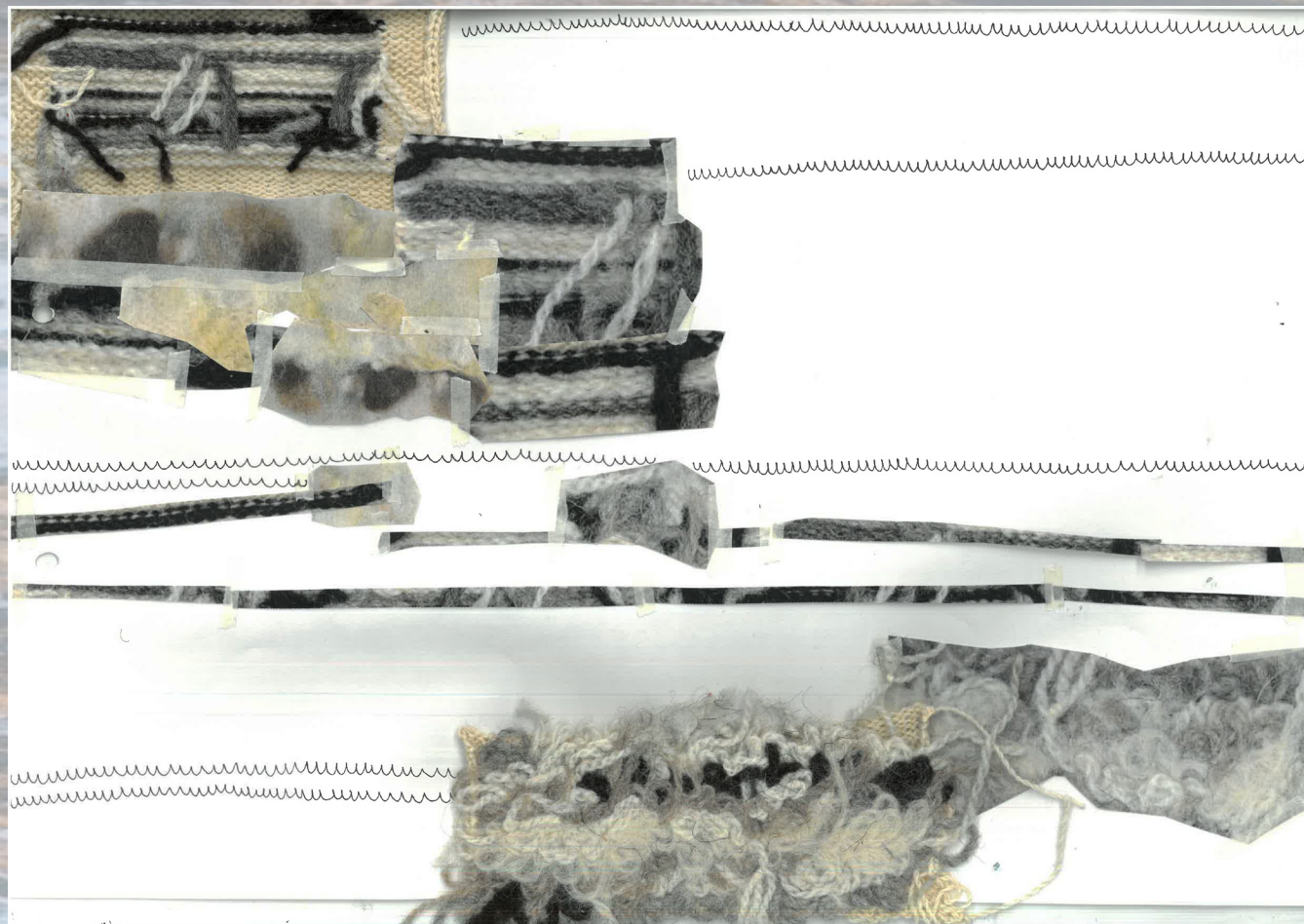
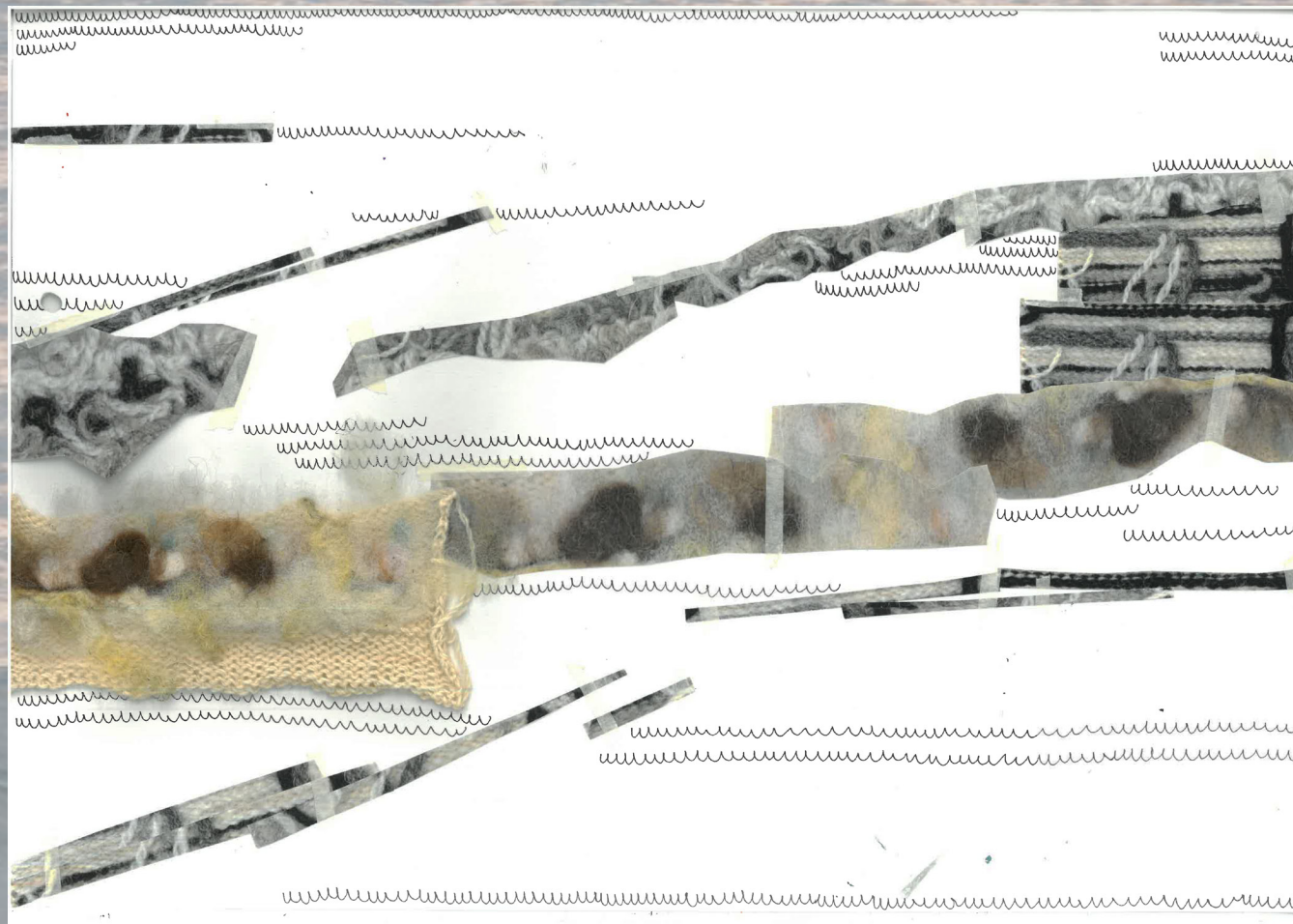
Photos by Alex Hooper.



Learning to card and spin my own yarn from the raw fleece provided by The Natural Fibre Company.



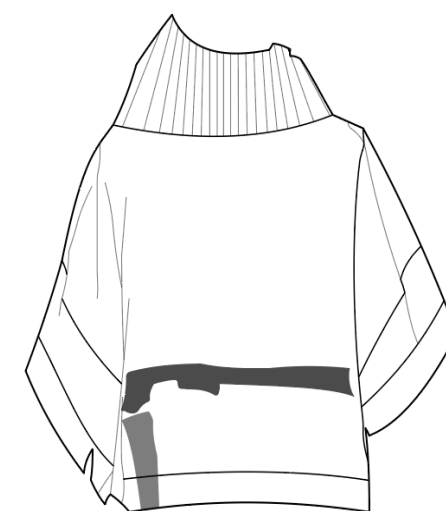
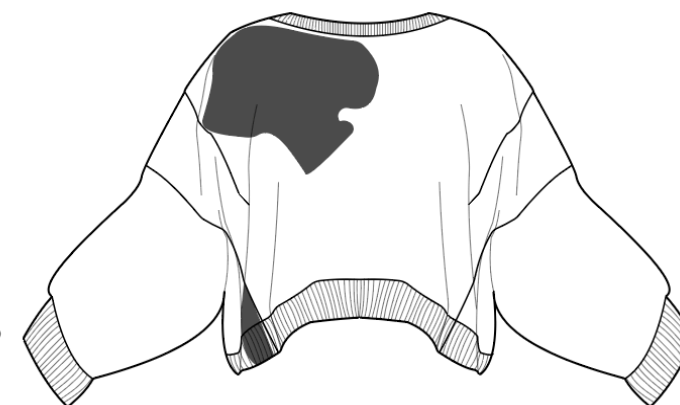
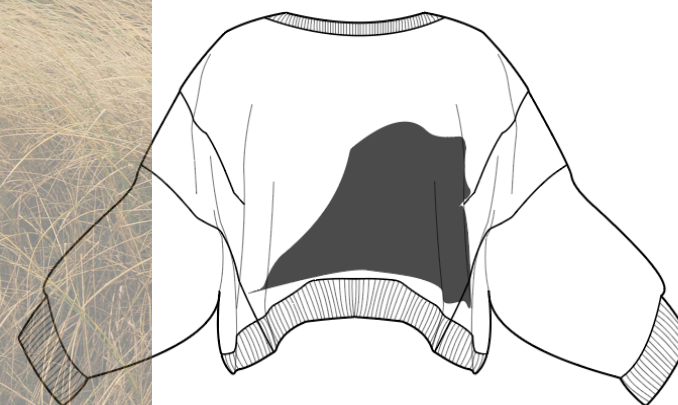
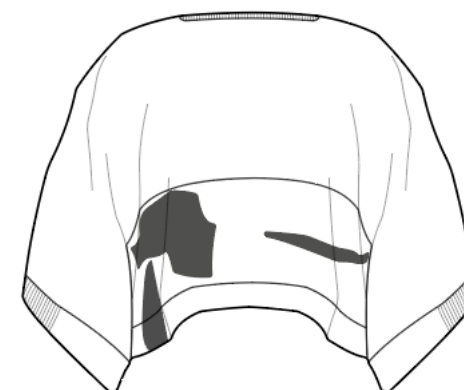
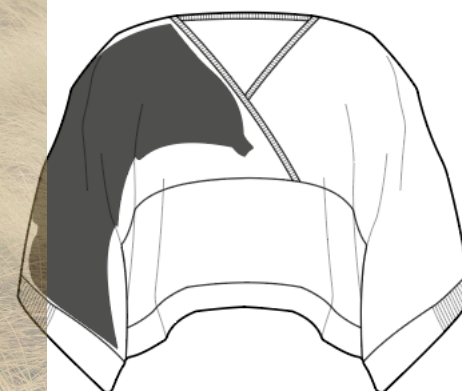
Looping in technique on a domestic knit machine, tension 6.
Experimenting with different types of waste from The Natural Fibre
Company.

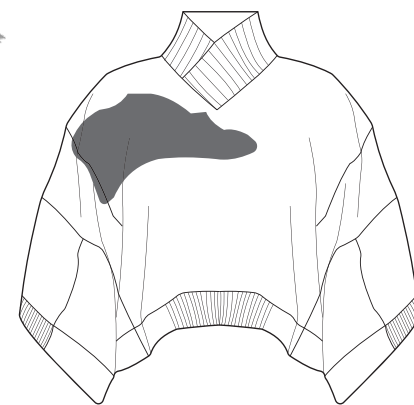
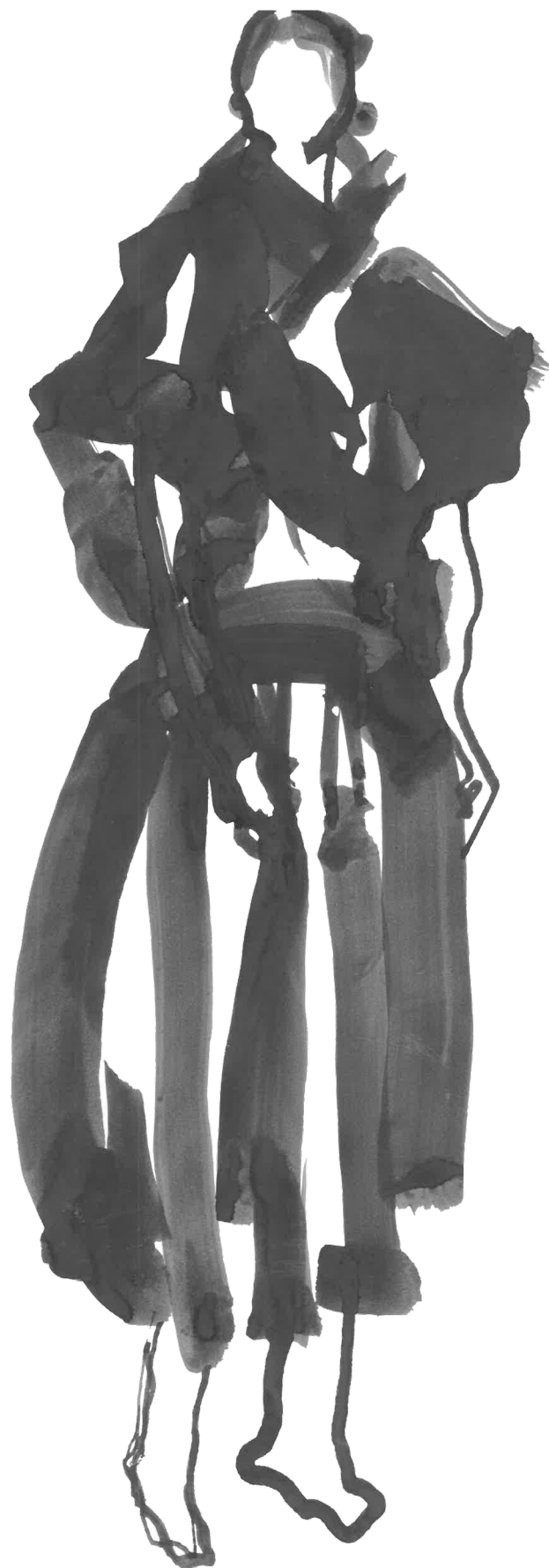


Taking
 inspiration from the Cornish
 landscape around me, I designed
 the weave on my knit based on the
 shapes I saw.
 Imagine a world where our clothes were
 designed in a place nearby. We
 could be truly
 proud of our
 story.



What if all
garements were
unique? All stitched in
different patterns
or gathered in
different amounts?





“narritives around craft and artisanship”



McKinsey & Company “The State of Fashion 2026” report



“expertise and quality”



Valuing dives
into an imaginary world
that does not exist yet. But it is vital to
understand that it could be a reality should we
strive for it.

The wool industry worldwide is suffering as farmers are not paid enough for the
wool their sheep produce. This means it is binned or burnt; simply wasted.

Educate society; make them want to care. Make them want to learn how fibres are grown or
produced because it matters what you wear next to your skin. Let people learn that clothes take
time to make and should not be simply discarded into a bin bag.

Be anti-consumerist. Anti-materialist. Bring back the knowledge of the past where
individuals knew how to hand sew. In our current world of crazy machinery, of fast
fashion, the past seems a long time ago. But people can be
re-taught needle craft and to see the beauty and intricacy of
this skill.

This education can exist for all. We should strive towards
it.

Included in my work is:

Shetland wool

A mix of waste wool

Linen

Silk

Cotton thread

Coconut buttons



Valuing by Diana Gibbons