

Sustainability Manifesto 2015

Alison Yule Textiles

This five year manifesto is a statement of intent as how my business will be conducted during that time. By the end of the five years my business should be in a position to be almost fully sustainable.

Design

- I always endeavour to ensure that I use my design skills to produce fabrics and products that are safe, use as little of nature's resources as possible and are also socially responsible from the beginning of their lifecycle to their end.
- During the design process I will be making sure that the colours in my fabrics are as sustainable as is possible (see: Sustainable alternatives. below).
- I intend to continue to produce quality fabrics that are long lasting and beautiful thereby reducing the need to replace them frequently.

Raw Materials

Reducing water consumption.

- I have cut down the amount of water I use in my dyeing practice, without compromising the quality, light and wash fastness of my fabrics. I will be writing a "best practice" manual for use by other dyers and hope to publish in 2018.
- I have cut down the amount of water used in finishing my fabrics, without compromising their quality.

Sustainable alternatives

- At present I use wool and linen from no further than Northern Europe.
- I have been making contacts within the Derbyshire farming industry to find the best quality British wool fibres and have contacted a number of small mills who spin British wool yarn. I have managed to get a small amount of Derbyshire fleece manufactured into my own wool yarn.
- I intend to use European linen.
- Most of my yarns are pre-dyed and I dye to order any yarns that need colour matching or if the yarn can only be purchased as a natural colour. By 2018, where ever possible, I will have transferred my dye practice from synthetic dyes to natural dyes.
- By changing this practice I will be using natural mordants to ensure good take up of dye on the yarn. I will only be using natural mordants such as tannin from plants for wool and cellulose yarns and will only use natural modifiers. By 2018 I will have done sufficient research to enable me to print my own fabrics using natural print pastes.

Production

Supply chain

- I purchase my yarns from a UK supplier who imports them from Sweden and a UK supplier who spins their own Shetland yarns. I am not sure of the provenance of these supplies and will be researching this over the next year.

Social costs

- At present I keep my fabric production local to my studio, the UK, keeping it as sustainable as possible and therefore there are no social costs.

Re-cycled pre-consumer/post-consumer waste

- As my fabrics are designed exclusively for each client, I could try to source some of my yarns from manufacturers waste yarns which are not repeatable, thus increasing the exclusivity. I will be researching this option and intend to have it in place by 2013.
- I try to limit waste fabric in my production, but any waste fabric is passed on to Darren Kelly of Serendipity Rocks who uses it when he up-cycles second hand furniture.
- Fabrics not passed on will be developed in to an exclusive range of home products which will be marketed in 2018.

Packaging and Transport

Reduction of solid and hazardous waste in packaging

- Where ever possible I use re-cycled packaging. If I have to use new packaging I use packaging that has been manufactured from re-cycled paper or cardboard.
- Any internal packing is shredded paper that I'm not able to re-use as note paper.

Local supply chain

- Up until recently I used a packaging supplier who set up a recycling plant to recycle local plastics, unfortunately he went out of business partly due to lack of support from the community. I'm still looking for another local supplier who can offer this service.

Consumer Use

Durability

- My fabrics are of a very high quality and should last far longer than manufactured fabrics.
- All fashion fabrics will be classic designs to ensure they are used until they wear out.

Emotional attachment

- The fabrics I hand weave are designed exclusively for my clients, therefore there is an emotional attachment before they are delivered ensuring continued use and thus fewer garments purchased.

Need to be cleaned

- Wool naturally sheds dirt and should only need to be vacuumed.
- For apparel fabrics
 - only wash if they are dirty
 - hang them up to air after wearing
- For all fabrics
 - spot clean with a wet cloth and small amount of soap
 - use cold water for washing and rinsing, won't shrink wool fabrics, and will get them clean!
 - be energy efficient by only washing if there is a full load
 - only ever line dry!

End of Life

Second life

- As part of the take back service my fabrics will be offered to other designers to use in their creative practice.
- Donated to those in need.

Upgrade and or repair

- I strive to produce very high quality hand woven fabrics and offer a re-dye service and / or repair service.

Recyclable/biodegradable

- I offer a take back scheme and, as all my fabrics are completely natural, at the end of their life I can compost them.

Business

- My core business is designing and hand weaving bespoke fabrics for interiors or apparel: <http://alisonyuletextiles.co.uk>
- I teach weaving spinning and dyeing: <http://spinningandweaving.weebly.com>
- I write books on spinning, weaving and design.

Social Responsibility

- I work with textile degree students from Derby and Nottingham Trent Universities, on a regular basis, offering internships.
- I've worked with a number of other students from craft based degrees to pre-degree students, A level students and secondary school students.
- I offer my local organisations, such as WI's and primary schools free talks and demonstrations.