

Heather Martin
Plymouth College of Art

UN-MAKE & RE-CLOTHE: Critically Making an Open-source Distribution Service Using a Circular Design and Make System

'Our 'fashion system' is completely obsolete'. Fashion futurist Li Edelkoort declares in ANTI_FASHION: A Manifesto for the Next Decade that a complete re-working of the system is needed to overhaul the many issues surrounding the fashion industry's design and production processes including its subsequent waste driven by consumption.

Innovative approaches through waste reduction in pattern cutting and construction are beginning to surface through zero and negative-waste design initiatives but currently the research is limited and does little to consider the scalability of production or the viability of business. By instigating design that dematerialises through systems and services the designer confronts the planned obsolescence and the throwaway culture of global capitalist production systems to offer up potential alternatives that are sustainable yet marketable. Holistically connecting the designer back towards the processes of manufacturing while extending the thinking towards feasibility in the market can stimulate a much-needed critical dialogue between designing, making and distribution where generative and constructive design-led insights can begin to unpack the transitional complexities for the mobilization of change within fashion's systems.

UN-MAKE & RE-CLOTHE is a forming practice based research project that challenges the conventions of garment production through design. It pilots investigations using the constraints of circular economy design ideologies to generate insight into how design can innovate future capabilities and systems change within fashion design.

The 1 + 1 Propositional Pattern Cutting System is the first design research output in the UN-MAKE & RE-CLOTHE project. It is a circular or modular design and make system that was initially conceived through an investigation that studied how the process of critical making could address gaps in knowledge and in practice to extend the limited body of research in ecologically, sustainable fashion design innovation. This submission to the Making Futures conference proposes to build upon the 1 + 1 system by utilizing it as a tool or a method to investigate further into the transformative opportunities that can be created through participatory design and action. Here an idea generation workshop is proposed to gain deeper knowledge into the feasibility of introducing the 1 + 1 Propositional Pattern Cutting System to an open source platform and a re-design and re-make distribution service.