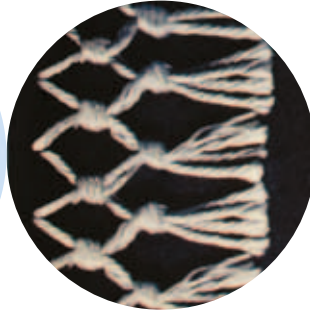


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# AWAKEN: CONTEMPORARY FASHION & TEXTILE INTERPRETATION OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

ARCHIVE UTILISATION | FASHION AND TEXTILES | CREATIVE PROCESS  
INSPIRATION | REINTERPRETATION



## ABSTRACT

THE ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS CENTRE (ACC) AT THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART (GSA) EXISTS AS A RESOURCE FOR THE STUDY OF ART, DESIGN, ARCHITECTURE AND EDUCATION. IT COMPRISES A WIDE RANGE OF MATERIAL FROM SCHOOL RECORDS, TEXTILE PIECES, GARMENTS, PATTERN BOOKS, POSTERS, ARTWORKS, ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, PLASTER CASTS, PHOTOGRAPHY AND A COLLECTION OF WORKS BY CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH.

This paper describes *Awaken*, a research project undertaken involving staff from the ACC, the Department of Fashion and Textiles, and the Centre for Advanced Textiles (CAT) at GSA. The project examined the conceptual possibilities of re-interpreting archive material for contemporary fashion and textile related design work. This was underpinned by an explication of the creative process characteristic of this specific approach to design. The following questions directed the project:

- To what extent will the ideas produced be derivative or unoriginal?
- Will we be re-interpreting, reproducing, initiating, appropriating, parodying or deliberately abstracting? Or will archive material simply act as a prompt, a trigger, or 'fodder'?
- How will working from archive material differ from our normal working practice?
- Will we be collaborating with the originator of the archive piece?
- To what extent will we make sense of the original artefact by working from it?

*Awaken* involved case studies with fashion and textile practitioners working individually and collaboratively. Data collection methods involved the practitioners observing, recording and reflecting on responses and processes using creative process journals (CPJs) and focus groups to stimulate critical reflection, share, question and articulate issues associated with the research. Content analysis provided the framework to relate the data collected to the key questions and emergent themes. The resulting fashion and textile artefacts were exhibited alongside extracts from CPJs and original archive material in the Mackintosh Gallery at the GSA. Aspects of the project were assimilated with visual material in a publication, which accompanied the exhibition.

This paper will provide insight into the *Awaken* project, detailing the archival items practitioners selected, the approaches taken, insights into the creative process, the contemporary artefacts produced and discussions surrounding the research questions and key themes. The findings from the project will be described, adding to the minimal existent literature surrounding fashion and textile design creative process involving the utilisation of archival material. The paper will also briefly describe a research project currently in progress by the authors involving the Stoddard Templeton Design Archive at the GSA.

## EXAMPLES OF NEW ARTEFACTS PRODUCED BY ART AND DESIGN PRACTITIONERS WORKING FROM ARCHIVES EXIST, BUT MINIMAL INSIGHT IS PROVIDED INTO THE RATIONALE BEHIND ITEM SELECTION OR UTILISATION OF THIS TYPE OF SOURCE MATERIAL IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS.

### AWAKEN: CONTEMPORARY FASHION & TEXTILE INTERPRETATION OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Existing literature regarding the design process and therefore design thinking tends to come from outside the textile and fashion disciplines. For example, Schön's (1985) account of the reflective practitioner in the design studio, reflecting-in and -on action is from architecture, Lawson's (2006) focus is also on architectural practice, whereas Cross (2011) analyses examples from automotive and industrial design. The nature of design process literature tends to dissect the developmental process into key stages. Labat and Sokolowski (1999) reviewed design process models from architecture, environmental, engineering, industrial product and clothing design to develop a three-stage design process for textiles, consisting of problem definition and research, creative exploration and implementation. The authors suggest the need for further '...exploration and understanding of design process...to advance the use of such processes in the field of textiles and clothing.' (Labat and Sokolowski 1999: 11) Fashion and textiles research undertaken by Parsons and Campbell (2004) describes a four-stage process consisting of problem identification, conceptual design, prototyping and solution.

Research has been undertaken which focuses on the initial stages

of the design process, for use in the development of digital design tools. For example, Mougnot et al (2008:331) undertook research with vehicle designers as '...the early stages of design remain incompletely understood, while the informative phase is identified as a crucial step of the design process.' Keller et al (2006) studied designers working in different disciplines and identified the collecting and collating of visual material as an 'ongoing process', assisting design problem understanding and solution development. Designers' sensitivity to aspects such as form, material, colour, texture and the social, cultural and technological environment is enhanced due to the collecting process (Keller et al 2006). In the textiles industry, a variety of images are collected for inspiration and idea development (Studd 2002). Collecting can be '...personal and intuitive...' or '...from trend forecasting, from visits to trade fairs...to identify colour, fibre and fabric trends, from trade press and from suppliers, consultants, customers and agents.' (Studd 2002: 45) Eckert and Stacey (2003a, 2003b) investigated the use of sources of inspiration in knitwear design. Described as a 'neglected' area of study, utilisation of inspirational sources and '...drawing ideas from previous designs...' is recognised as '...a universal part of human designing...' (Eckert and Stacey 2003a: 1) Sources of inspiration for knitwear design are categorised as

garments, fashion photographs, other textiles, artefacts and other designed products, works of art, natural objects and phenomena and yarn (Eckert and Stacey 2003a, 2003b). The transformative adaptations made to these references are categorised as 'literal adaptation', 'conscious simplification', 'abstraction', 'modifications to the source', 'association' and 'deviation' (Eckert and Stacey 2003b). A study into student textile teachers' design process inspirations, discovered variation, some had '...difficulties adapting and transforming inspiration sources into new kinds of design ideas...' (Laamanen and Sitamaa-Hakkarainen 2008: 111).

Museum, library and archive visits are different for each individual as they bring with them their own experiences and expectations that impact upon how these resources are approached (Holden et al 2006). Archives '...are constituted from records created as an integral part of the business...' or organisation; they are '...closely related to locational value...and they can normally be associated with their origins, in time and place.' (Schoeser and Boydell 2002: 5) The creation of 'new' replica artefacts derived from archival sources is common practice in textiles and fashion conservation. Replicas of historical garments provide a new form of research material, which, used as part of a handling resource, can extend a collection's potential (Davidson and Hodson 2007). Digital reproductions are also produced for commercial purposes, as with the fabric collections of *Classic Textiles* ([www.classicstextiles.com](http://www.classicstextiles.com)) and *After Bloomsbury: Rugs from the Omega Workshop, 1913-1916*, produced using original designs from The Courtauld Gallery collections (Geladell 2012). In a paper focusing on current and best practice regarding clothing and textiles museum collections in

the United States, a competition is briefly mentioned for professional and student fashion designers to redesign a collection object such as a paisley shawl (Marcketti et al 2011).

In the United Kingdom (UK) insight into undergraduate and postgraduate (graphics, illustration, interior, architecture, fashion and textiles) student learning, using museum collections and other sources of inspiration, has enabled consideration of student needs in future provision (Reading 2009). Some students use collections purely for initial inspiration whereas '...others were informed by deeper understanding of the design process, and used the collections for a greater variety of purposes.' (Reading 2009: 119) Student projects using museum-based and archive resources are described in existing literature. For example, Marr (2011) reports on a textile design student project, from a UK higher education institution (HEI) using the Jenisch House Museum, Hamburg. In this instance '...little details triggered the creative process...', narratives and insights into the lives of people living and working in the house '...captured the students' curiosity and imagination...' (Marr 2011: 42). In a paper, which provides an overview of a project where Masters students selected a sketch from a Swedish University to reinterpret through their own art and design work, archives are described as a '...great treasure for artists and designers...' (Turpeinen 2012: 7).

Examples of new artefacts produced by art and design practitioners working from archives exist, but minimal insight is provided into the rationale behind item selection or utilisation of this type of source material in the creative process. The exhibition *Carpets of Distinction* (Panel and Dovecot Studios 2012) included rugs produced by seven artists inspired by

items from the Stoddard-Templeton archive. A selection of archive items were shown alongside the rugs and a short statement provided brief insight into the artist's thinking behind each creation. The Nottingham Lace archive is used for visual inspiration and reinterpretation for student and staff research projects at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) (Briggs-Goode and Buttress 2011). The exhibition *Journeys in Lace*, featured work produced by staff from NTU, each selected a piece from the archive for reinterpretation resulting in the creation of a contemporary textile artefact (Briggs-Goode 2012). A brief statement reveals the archive item and key intention of the resulting exhibit. *Inventors of Tradition* brought together archive material from personal collections and Scottish textile companies, Scottish Screen Archive films and interviews with key individuals, to provide insight into the Scottish textile and fashion industry since the 1930s (Lipscombe and McKenzie 2011). Research using the archive material and into current manufacturing processes resulted in the creation of a new fashion collection, developed through working with Scottish manufacturers; the collection was presented through a series of travelling showroom exhibits (Lipscombe and McKenzie 2011). Currently in progress, *Experimental Archaeology meets Textile Design: The rediscovery of shadow tissues* involves research using the archives of the textile company Turnball and Stockdale (Belford 2011). Historical findings inform practical investigations which attempt to replicate and reinterpret the 'shadow tissue' process through the production of textile samples and through recording the processes involved (Belford 2011). The potential commercial application of utilising the uncovered and newly created textile production process will also be considered (Belford 2011).

Davies (2010) questioned a group of fashion designers about the sources of inspiration revisited and the importance of research to their working processes. Museums and archives were used to access vintage fashion collections (Six and Seven Eighths), view vintage issues of *Vogue* magazines (Basso & Brooke) and for natural phenomenon inspiration (Graeme Black) (Davies 2010). Personal archives were used for reference, described as ‘...my treasured archive of thousands of swatches and fabrics’ by Alice Temperley (Davies 2010: 24) and ‘...memories of all these different things as my main design repository’ by Tim Soar (Davies 2010: 184). The designer, Dries Van Noten (in Davies 2012: 64) provides further insight:

*‘I remain fascinated by the past, by history and the history of fashion. All of my work is rooted in this appreciation of what has been and gone. It is not to mimic something that’s already happened, but more to revisit certain elements with a contemporary vision. A modern approach to design is, for me, the space between an object from another time and its reinterpretation.’*

## RESEARCH PROCESS

The aim of the research project, *Awaken*, described in this paper was to add to the minimal existent literature regarding the textile and fashion design creative process, specifically related to utilisation of archive resources. The Archives and Collections Centre (ACC) at The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) ‘...houses a wide variety of items relating to the history of the School, its buildings, activities and personnel’ (Walters 2009: 36) The intention of the project was to examine the conceptual possibilities of re-interpreting archive material, using the ACC, for contemporary fashion and textile related design work.

Fourteen textile and fashion practitioners participated in the project; all were members of staff at GSA. Each of these individuals attended an induction session with the ACC archivist. Creative process journals (CPJs) were used by each of the participants as the primary method for data collection. Using this method enables creative practitioners to record, analyse, evidence and explicate their own creative process (McGilp & Stephen-Cran 2007). A research log is kept by the individual which faithfully records practice as it happens, the log contains ‘...detailed written descriptions based on direct observation’ and ‘...includes a range of approaches to documentation such as photographs, rough sketches, drawings, diagrams and videos... artefacts such as swatches and sewing notions may also be included.’ (McGilp & Stephen-Cran 2007: 126). This ‘raw data’ constituting the research log is interrogated, reflected upon, sifted through and edited to produce the CPJ that integrates ‘...text and visuals or other media to detail the ‘creative journey’’: (McGilp & Stephen-Cran 2007: 126) The intention of the CPJ is to represent to external viewers the key components involved in the creative process (Gillham & McGilp 2007). Explication of the design process using this method can enhance creative practitioner awareness and understanding of their own knowing in practice. As instigated by Pedgley (2007: 466) it is only through ‘... eliciting an account of designing from the originator... [that] the nature of design activity from the originator’s perspective [can] be revealed.’

Focus groups were used to stimulate critical reflection, share, question, and articulate issues associated with the project. Content analysis provided the means to interrogate the CPJs against the key research questions and emergent themes. This analysis





technique was applied to the data contained within the CPJs and involved ‘...two essential strands...identifying... substantive points; putting them into categories.’ (Gillham 2000: 59) Initial categories were formed from the research questions, with others devised and amended in relation to the CPJ content. In this way data was ‘...’interrogated’ through an inductive process where categories emerge as a result.’ (Gray & Malins 2004: 133) The fashion and textile artefacts resulting from the project were exhibited, alongside CPJ extracts and original archive material in the exhibition *Awaken*, Mackintosh Gallery, GSA, 24 January – 28 February 2009 (Stephen-Cran 2009a). An accompanying seminar for archivists took place to increase awareness of approaches to working with archival resources. Aspects of the project were assimilated with visual material in a post-exhibition publication (Stephen-Cran 2009b). The project informed undergraduate and postgraduate learning and teaching at GSA through student projects and further integration of the use of design process logs and journals in the curriculum.

## ARCHIVE ARTEFACT SELECTION

The ACC items selected to work from by the practitioners ranged from single artefacts, such as a textile sample (figure 1) or book, to numerous seemingly disparate items such as posters (figure 2), past GSA fashion show and exhibition opening photographs.

Certain participants selected items surrounding a particular individual or location. For example, a class

photograph, sketchbook and folder of information relating to the GSA student Daisy Anderson, the northern Italian and European tours sketchbooks of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, photographs of the Mackintosh Building (figure 3) and ‘Glasgow: Fifty Drawings’ by Muirhead Bone.

The Gillespie Kidd and Coia architectural practice archive contains photographs, plans and drawings (figure 4). Items from this archive were selected by one of the participants and by two practitioners electing to work collaboratively.

Two participants selected different bulletins from the Needlework Development Scheme (NDS) and a further two opted to work from the Travel Journal of John Walter Lindsay (figure 5).

Both of the participants who selected the journal also selected other items, which included an ephemera book and items related to the archiving process (figure 6), described as ‘ephemera – labels, wrappings, backings’ (Kinnersly-Taylor 2009).

## SELECTION RATIONALE

Analysis of the CPJs highlighted varying reasons for selecting archive items to work from. For certain participants this related to personal connections with the visual aesthetic and graphic content of imagery. The Gillespie Kidd and Coia items provided geometric imagery, graphical shapes, shadows and multi-layered qualities (Shaw 2009). Those using these items reflected on the aesthetic characteristics evident in their previous work as reasons for selecting this source of inspiration. Bremner (2009)

described this as a preference for working from an architectural and geometric source. Photographs (for example figure 3) were selected due to the shadows and negative space (Begg 2009). A particular fondness for a ‘retro’ aesthetic directed the rationale behind Bagley’s (2009) choice of items. With other participants, the reasons for selecting certain archive artefacts related to the aesthetic quality, technique and potential materiality. Telford (2009) described the criteria for selecting the textile sample, figure 1, as ‘...quirky, 3D technique, simplicity and great colour – overall pretty kitsch.’ The ornate, handmade collars worn in figure 7 were the reason for selecting this photograph, directed by the participant’s desire to translate these embroidered items into knitted accessories (Alexander 2009).

Highmore (2009) found the ‘stylised and wonky’ qualities evident in the toys shown in figure 8 appealing, expressing the enjoyment that would be had when drawing the embroidered elements.

The ethos behind particular items provided the reason for selection by certain participants. Kinnersly-Taylor (2009) felt a connection with John Walter Lindsay through his travel journal; engagement with this item was described as a ‘catalyst’ to take new ideas forward. Similarly, Dearden (2009) found the innovative teaching methods initiated by Macbeth and Swanson in their book fascinating and inspirational. ‘Fell in love with’ and ‘...blew me away...’ expressed Lipscombe’s (2009) response to certain items in the archive (for

example figure 3). For Lipscombe (2009), archive item selection and personal interests inspired the idea of paying homage to the ‘Glasgow Girls’, prompting the collection of further material and research directed by this theme.

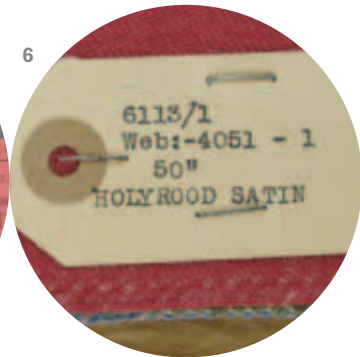
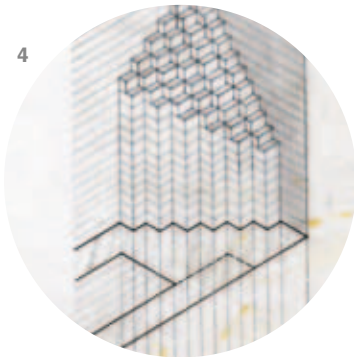
Visiting the ACC in the basement of the Mackintosh building triggered memories of Gallagher’s (2009) own student experiences of studying in ‘... the dark and gloomy underground studios...’ at GSA. Explaining initial ideas, he states, the ‘...idea of light, or lack of it, could be an area to look at...and could be an identifiable link between past and present.’ (Gallacher 2009) This participant selected the NDS Bulletin ‘Edgings and Trimmings’ (figure 9), which contains references to lampshades, highlighting the connection to his theme of light and lighting.

## APPROACHES TO ARCHIVE UTILISATION

Analysis of data contained within the CPJs revealed a variety of approaches to working from archive material. It was evident that some of the project participants adopted a number of different approaches, whereas others utilised a specific approach.

### PROMPTING ‘OWN’ ARCHIVE USE

For certain participants collecting the initial archive material triggered the selection and use of owned and previously collected material. For Telford (2009) this included a three-dimensional embroidery book, a Murano glass lampshade and Vernon Panton panels. These ‘own’ personal items had certain qualities that were seen to connect with the selected archive item (figure 1). A range of previously gathered items including passages of text, drawings of ships,



extracts from pottery books, posters and photographs were combined with archive material by Kinnersly-Taylor (2009) (figure 10).

The logbook was described as 'liberating' due to its 'magpie' nature and the fact that it permitted the '... bringing together of disparate items' (Kinnersly-Taylor 2009). A map previously collected by this participant was found to feature on the first page of the Travel Journal from the archive, providing a connection with the archive to a previously unconnected source (Kinnersly-Taylor 2009). Shaw (2009) also combined archive images with previously collected visual content, 'clipping' this material together in a sketchbook. Figure 11 shows a photograph owned by Gallacher (2009), the analysis of which enhanced insight into the structure of lampshades.

### COLLECTING ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

In addition to using previously collected photographs, Gallacher (2009) undertook further investigation into lampshades from historical and contemporary perspectives. Manufacturers, wire frames and other materials were sourced, lampshades purchased and deconstructed so that patterns could be made (Gallagher 2009). The decision to make lampshades rather than outsource manufacture resembled the 'make do and mend' approach evident in the NDS Bulletins (Gallacher 2009). Other participants collected both further historical and contemporary material. Alexander (2009) sourced knitting patterns from 70's and 80's magazines and examples of knitted designs relating to lace, collars and textured placement. The discovery of an example of fine lace work attached to a plain knit base provided an idea to be developed (Alexander 2009). Telford (2009) selected contemporary fashion examples found to be inspiring.



10

Bagley (2009) collected secondary visual information regarding product, colour, pattern placement, layout and image quality. Lipscombe (2009) was inspired by written texts in addition to other visual images and continued to collect items as her project evolved (figure 12).

### BRIEF WITHIN A BRIEF

From the outset the creative practitioners participating in *Awaken* understood the aims and intentions of the overall project. Although this provided the brief for individuals to follow, analysis of CPJs revealed the need for certain participants to set a further brief within the *Awaken* brief. In describing this, comparisons were made between working from the archive and 'normal' working practice. Telford (2009) found the lack of limitations 'unnatural' compared with her commercial design practice and was used to restrictions being imposed, such as season, colour, scale and budget. This '...yearning for a brief with restrictions...' resulted in Telford (2009) focusing on textile and material developments for a specific end product. Similarly, Shaw (2009)



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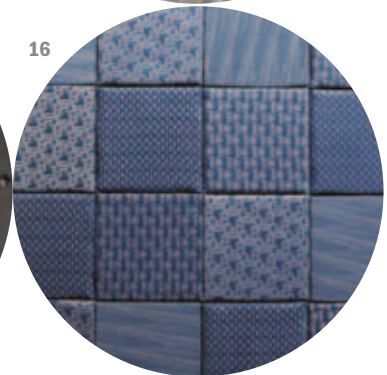
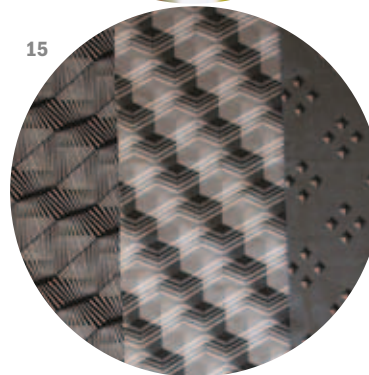
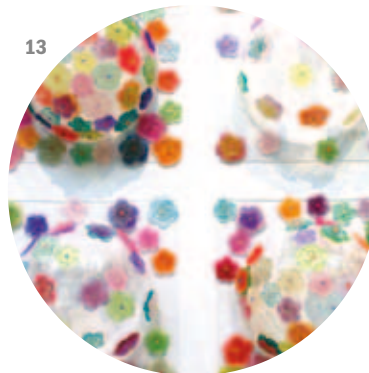


required a brief within the brief, as he did not enjoy working from a theme as open as archive utilisation. For Highmore (2009) the *Awaken* project reversed the design process, when working in a commercial context information is known about the intended end product at the outset, therefore, the target market impacts upon the visual content of the research collected. Highmore (2009) further explained ‘...not having an idea of the end product makes this unconstrained way of working quite odd.’ Change in dissemination context from normal working practice to designing for a gallery-based exhibition caused anxieties for Bagley (2009) and Britt (2009).

#### PRODUCT DRIVEN

Participants were driven by aspirations to produce certain end products. For some this derived directly from archive material, for others product ideas were informed by thoughts from archive and other collected material. Contrastingly, certain participants’ product ideas developed due to the nature of their current or previous practice or by a desire to create a new product. Gallacher (2009), Alexander (2009) and Dearden (2009) all developed product ideas from their selected archive items. For Telford (2009), the idea to create a series of panels (figure 13) occurred ‘quite early on’ and was informed by items from this participant’s ‘own’ archive.

During Lipscombe’s project, thoughts regarding concept evolved from assimilation of archive material, collected images, written texts, previous and current creative practice. To create her ‘Glasgow Girls’ Lipscombe (2009) dressed specific women in her Autumn/Winter collection, photographed them to mimic poses shown in archive photographs (for example, figure 9) and then created and printed a series of posters using



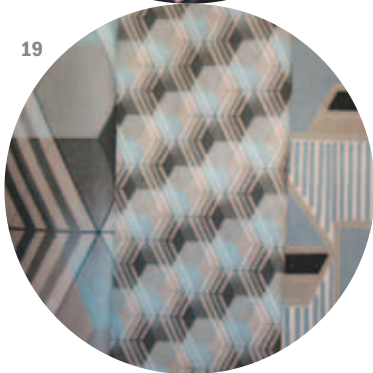
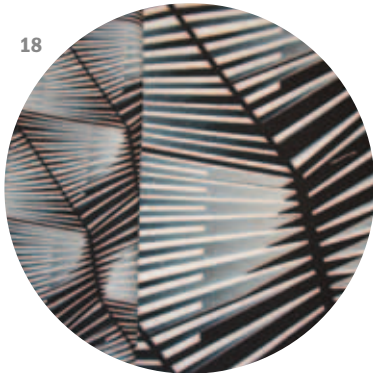
the photographic image (figure 14). The poster idea evolved from archive items (i.e. figure 2) and previous posters printed for fashion collections.

Shaw (2009) decided to produce interior textiles and focused on designing for upholstery. Similarly, Bremner (2009) and Britt (2009) intended to produce interior textiles, directed by a commission to produce an upholstery fabric and aspirations to design coordinating large-scale fabrics (figure 15).

Highmore (2009) also elected to produce fabric lengths due to the personal enjoyment gained from working on a large scale and as a reaction against the small motifs present in the archive inspiration (figure 8). Previous work by Bagley (2009) prompted the early decision to produce knitted fabric wall tiles (figure 16) for the project.

#### ARCHIVE IMAGES INFORM DEVELOPMENT

Begg (2009) elected to produce a collection of drawings, working from interior photographs (for example, figure 3). This participant reinterpreted qualities evident in the photographs through using traditional (pencil, pen, paint) and digital processes (drawing tools in Adobe Photoshop) (Begg 2009). Sweeney (2009) worked onto fabric and used textile processes; the intention was to examine ‘...the concept that an artist as reproducer is capable of discerning, protecting and even enhancing the aura of an original piece of work through the reduplicative processes.’ This resulted in the production of a series of canvases, which consisted of screen-printed images of the archive prints, with surface treatments and added embellishment (figure 17).



The majority of participants used images from the archive to inform design development. Participants translated imagery through varying processes such as drawing, CAD, screen-printing, stitching, knitting, casting and vacuum forming. Components within archive images were selected and digitally redrawn to create line-based motifs from which different pattern layouts were produced (Bagley 2009). Shaw (2009) also worked digitally, to extract and develop shape, colour and pattern. Working from architectural drawings and photographs, Britt (2009) used different tools in varying software packages to recreate visual components containing interesting combinations of shape and tone and to explore repeat, scale and colour options (figure 18). For Bremner (2009), initial drawing by hand was scanned, digitally redrawn,

manipulated and composed to develop designs (figure 19).

Components of archive drawings were photographed and CAD used to overlay other visual content in Campbell's (2009) work, described as 'using the imagery in a literal fashion'. Telford (2009) also believed the initial design stage to be 'literal', with textile sampling undertaken to recreate the embroidery process evident in the archive sample (figure 1). Referencing and developing ideas from own artefacts assisted in the development of the work and led to material explorations (Telford 2009). Highmore (2009) produced drawings to translate the embroidered imagery shown in figure 8 into print. Graphic components in archive items were drawn from by Gallacher (2009) to form textile content (figure 20) and printed textile technical exploration (figure 21).

Working from collated archive and own material, Kinnersly-Taylor drew and reworked visual content using a combination of generative, analogue and digital processes to create graphic images. Alexander (2009) produced drawings and cut paperwork to translate embroidery into knit and develop knitted collar and garment shape ideas (figure 22).

Other participants used archive material to directly inform garment design. The shapes of the clothes typically worn by the authors of the book, which inspired Dearden's (2009) project, influenced the simple dress shape produced. A variety of archive images inspired Lipscombe's conceptual and visual development, the paisley patterned waistcoat, shown in figure 23, led Lipscombe (2009) to produce a similar waistcoat.



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### TRIGGERING COLLABORATION

For Dearden (2009) the educational book by Swanson and Macbeth discovered in the archive triggered an aspiration to 'collaborate' with school pupils. A school was contacted and a lesson selected (figure 24) from the book and carried out with a group of pupils.

This resulted in the production of embroidered tray cloths, which were used by Dearden (2009) to create a digitally printed garment. Lipscombe (2009) pursued the idea of creating a series of posters, showing garments

that she had created, '...I wanted to create my version of the Glasgow Girls relevant to the past 35 years of my life, spanning the late 1970's, 80's, 90's to the present day' (Lipscombe 2009) A list was compiled comprising names of artists, designers and musicians, each were 'tracked down', contacted and asked to participate. Personal insight into each individual was gained through this process, further connecting the underlying concept to the resulting posters (figures 14). Selection of the same archive material, similarities in aesthetic taste, interests

in digital technology and working closely together in the teaching environment prompted Bremner (2009) and Britt (2009) to work collaboratively for *Awaken*.

### CONCLUSION

The archive material utilised varied between participants, ranging from the selection of one item to gathering collections of related or previously unconnected material. The archivist selected items from the archive for the participants to view, provided background insight into items and made suggestions regarding viewing other related material. Information searching was undertaken using records of the archives held in the library and available online. After the initial induction, participants found it necessary to revisit certain items and or look at other items related to their particular interests, or containing certain visual qualities. Participants expressed concerns that using archive items may cause the resulting work to be unoriginal or a 'pastiche'. Conversely, individuals also questioned the extent to which the resulting work had to link to the archive material.

It was evident that individual aesthetic 'taste' directed the selection of archive material. Participants also made connections with items beyond the purely visual content, for example, accessing the archive resource prompted reflection on memories and previous experiences. Also, practitioners were motivated to carry out further primary generative research activity. In certain examples, the line of enquiry required the involvement of other participants to realise the practitioner's ideas and concepts. There is potential to use the varying





FIGURE 1. CHRISTINE'S MATS

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approaches evident to direct projects with creative practitioners and students to extend insight into archive utilisation.

To form further connections with archive resources and for idea development, participants introduced items from their personal archives. These items included artefacts, images, colours, materials and texts previously collected and deemed interesting or appealing by the practitioner, used to inform the creative process. Archive material triggered the sourcing of further items relating to participants' projects including historical and contemporary visual references, product and market information, materials, technical process and written texts. This emphasises the need for practitioners to collect and source varying types of items and related information to assist with idea development.

Archive images directly informed the visual development stage of projects. Various digital and analogue mediums were used to replicate and reinterpret aspects of archive images. Replica textile techniques were sampled and garment shapes influenced by archive items. Creative practitioners' previous experiences appeared to direct decision-making regarding aspects such as material selection, design and technical processes and end product direction. Individuals also selected archive items due to their individual aesthetic tastes. These factors should be considered when formulating student projects involving archive utilisation, as it is possible that participants will still be discovering and developing their individual understanding, knowledge, skills and aesthetic sensibilities. Projects that compare student and practitioner use of the same archive would provide further insight.

A finding of the project was the necessity for certain participants to develop a brief within the brief. The necessity to have restrictions imposed that represented working in a commercial design context and anxieties felt, due to exhibiting work in a gallery space is interesting, although for some, not an issue. As the *Awaken* project was undertaken in a higher education institution, as a staff research project, the artefacts resulting from the project were not required to be commercially viable. This presents an interesting point for further discussion regarding the nature of creative practice undertaken by staff employed in higher education institutions. Projects could examine

archive utilisation to create products for distribution through commercial dissemination modes (i.e. trade shows, retail) compared with utilisation when the end focus is the gallery exhibition. Research could also be undertaken which examines archive utilisation in the textile and fashion industries.

CPJs were the primary method of data collection used. This method provided a tool to gain insight into creative practitioner design process and thinking. The format of the CPJs varied between participants meaning that the level of detail and therefore insight provided differed. The written content contained within the journals tended to be personal in nature; to enable subjective analysis the 'personality' within the text, to a certain extent, had to be removed. To capture insight at specific stages throughout the design process CPJs could be used alongside other methods such as interviews. Recording the focus groups, which took place throughout the project, would also provide further data for analysis. Research surrounding archive utilisation continues at GSA with a project funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. This examines the utilisation of archival resources in the design process, focusing specifically on the Stoddard Templeton Design Studio and Design Library, held at GSA.



## THERE IS POTENTIAL TO USE THE VARYING APPROACHES EVIDENT TO DIRECT PROJECTS WITH CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS AND STUDENTS TO EXTEND INSIGHT INTO ARCHIVE UTILISATION.

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## FIGURE CAPTIONS AND CREDITS

Figure 1: Selected by Susan Telford. Apples, by Mary Gribble, satin, leather and felt with couched metallic thread, mid 1970s. Archives & Collections Centre, GSA. Photograph, Sean Black.

Figure 2: Selected by Beca Lipscombe. Fabric poster, 1981. Archives & Collections Centre, GSA. Photograph, Sean Black.

Figure 3: Selected by Vicky Begg. Painting studios, The Glasgow School of Art, black and white photograph, c1960s. Archives & Collections Centre, GSA. Photograph, Vicky Begg.

Figure 4: Selected by Alan Shaw, Elaine Bremner and Helena Britt. Detail of architectural drawing, c.1958. Archives & Collections Centre, Gillespie, Kidd and Coia Archive, GSA.

Figure 5: Selected by Leigh Bagley and Joanna Kinnersly-Taylor. *Travel Journal* (detail) by John Walter Lindsay, 1950. Archives & Collections Centre, GSA. Photograph, Sean Black.

Figure 6: 'Typed Label', photograph from a series of details of archive 'ephemera', 2009. Photographed, Joanna Kinnersly-Taylor.

Figure 7: Selected by Christie Alexander. Class photograph from Daisy Anderson papers, 1892. Archives & Collections Centre, GSA. Photograph, Sean Black.

Figure 8: Selected by Chloe Highmore. Excerpt from *Needlework Development Scheme Bulletin 18B*, *Designing Toys*, c1950s. Archives & Collections Centre, GSA. Photograph, Sean Black.

Figure 9: Selected by Alan Gallacher. *Needlework Development Scheme Bulletin 27B*, *Edgings and Trimmings*, c1950s. Archives & Collections Centre, GSA. Photograph, Sean Black.

Figure 10: Detail of *Awaken* exhibition case showing inspiration, 'external artefacts' and development work, Joanna Kinnersly-Taylor, 2009. Photograph, Leigh Bagley.

Figure 11: Photograph from personal (external) archive, Alan Gallacher, 2009. Photograph Alan Gallacher.

Figure 12: 'Vitrine of Research' for My Glasgow Girls, *Awaken* exhibition detail, Beca Lipscombe, 2009. Photograph, Leigh Bagley.

Figure 13: Installation of vacuum formed clear acrylic panels with resin cast flowers, *Awaken* exhibition detail, Susan Telford, 2009. Photograph, Leigh Bagley.

Figure 14: 'My Glasgow Girls', screen-printed fabric posters, *Awaken* exhibition detail, Beca Lipscombe, 2009. Photograph, Joanna Kinnersly-Taylor.

Figure 15: GC&K Digital Textiles Collection, Elaine Bremner and Helena Britt, 2009. Photograph, Helena Britt.

Figure 16: 'Blister', knitted wall tiles, Leigh Bagley, 2009. Photograph, Joanna Kinnersly-Taylor.

Figure 17: 'The Barrow Market on Saturday after Sir Muirhead Bone', pigment screen print on cotton, hand painted with watercolour and dye, *Awaken* exhibition detail, Clair Sweeney, 2009. Photograph, Joanna Kinnersly-Taylor.

Figure 18: GC&K design, scale exploration, digital prints onto cotton, Helena Britt, 2009. Photograph, Helena Britt and Elaine Bremner.

Figure 19: GC&K designs, digital prints onto cotton, Elaine Bremner, 2009. Photograph, Helena Britt and Elaine Bremner.

Figure 20: Lampshade design development, Alan Gallacher, 2009. Photograph, Helen McGillp.

Figure 21: Lampshade, Expandex on felt wool with discharge printed fringe, Alan Gallacher, 2009. Photograph, Joanna Kinnersly-Taylor.

Figure 22: Machine knitted dress with hand-worked detailing, *Awaken* exhibition detail, Christie Alexander, 2009. Photograph Christie Alexander.

Figure 23: Selected by Beca Lipscombe. Exhibition opening, black and white photograph, c.1980. Archives & Collections Centre, GSA. Artefact photograph, Sean Black.

Figure 24: Selected by Juliet Dearden. Excerpt from *Educational Needlecraft* by Margaret Sawnsen and Ann MacBeth, 1922. Photograph, Sean Black. Reproduced by kind permission of Pearson Education Ltd, Essex.