

Methods of contextualising written response

Project statement

My group's project focuses on the topic of textile consumption at UAL and its environmental impact. I believe the methods we used to work on the project, such as mapping and embroidery using waste fabric from fashion workshops at CSM, support climate justice and UAL's Net Zero plan.

We created versions of a map between us, printing, cutting, folding and scanning to move countries in closer proximity, or to fracture the space. We sought to question the authority of the conventional map; experimenting with how to depict countries, journeys and data to communicate visually in a way that didn't use conventional tools. This made me reflect on how western countries historically often make decisions and actions which affect less powerful parts of the world, often where the majority of our natural resources live.

We used embroidery to create our visuals. Sewing was a record of our combined efforts and connected us as individuals together as part of a bigger effort; I think this draws parallels to the climate crisis and the Net Zero plan itself – something that requires all to participate for change to be made.

Annotated bibliography

2 texts from the reading list

The Conditional Design Workbook

Blauvelt, A., Maurer, L., Paulus, E., Puckey, J. and Wouters, R., 2013. Conditional Design Workbook. Amsterdam: Valiz

The Conditional Design Workbook describes a framework through a manifesto outlining their intentions throughout their project, which is carried out simply with paper and pens. We applied this thinking to our group project, setting rules for our process, such as thread colour, type of embroidery stitch, shape and formation of maps. We started by experimenting with all these elements before making set choices and creating a key.

As with The Conditional Design Workbook, we were led by the process. Initially, we knew we were going to make a map, but we focused on ways of depicting visually through experimentation; trying different types of maps, such as dymaxion, conventional map folded up, cut in to sections etc. We then tried sewing on top, sewing them together, fabric collage, taping and more. The focus was on seeing what we could each generate ourselves and then eventually incorporating aspects of each of our work into our final map.

By working in a way that focused on process, our dynamic working together remained playful, creative and social, not starting with a visual image of a final outcome in mind.

Census, Map, Museum

Anderson, B., 2006. 'Census, Map, Museum'. In: Imagined Communities. London: Verso.

Within this source, Anderson explores how we categorise people and spaces based on subjective ideas around geographic boundaries and national identities. The colonial practice of labelling, quantifying and categorising people went along with modern mapping, which at this time legitimised venturing in to "unexplored" territory.

Anderson's discussion of the abstract nature of labelling groups of people and places supported our perspective of the traditional map as a colonialist reality that we use day-to-day. We used this thinking to drive our experimentation with mapping, deconstructing and re-shaping the maps in our work. Maps suggest a primary point of view that is superior and universal, despite different cultures mapping in different ways.

We cut up the countries, placing them in a way that conveyed their importance in the production and manufacture of cotton. Our map was clearly subjective, serving our agenda of conveying several layers of information; the distance cotton travels after picking, the environmental impact of manufacture on the air and water around the planet.

2 texts that you find outside the reading list

The World Is on Fire but We're Still Buying Shoes

Leach, A., 2023. *The World Is on Fire but We're Still Buying Shoes*. London: Profile Books.

Leach argues that capitalism creates an unquenchable thirst for clothing items. We are sold an ideal version of ourselves that can be achieved by acquiring a garment. "Sustainable" fashion is often deceiving and there is little transparency around the full-scale manufacture and distribution of clothing, with brands only needing to disclose the last location a garment was handled as the place it was produced, when usually it is a global multi-country process.

We applied this critique and way of thinking to our project, attempting to visualise the realities of the actions of one group of people having consequences in another area. Items purchased in the shop at CSM have a much broader journey across the planet before they are sold, with the majority of the emissions effecting air and water quality in southern Asia and Africa.

In addition, the book focuses on the perspective of the individual and the importance of our singular choices, similarly, our work centred around a singular item and the consequences that come from one individual purchase by a singular person.

The Politics of Design

Pater, R., 2016. *The Politics of Design: A (Not So) Global Design Manual for Visual Communication*. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

The Politics of Design by Ruben Pater explores the authority and colonial power of the Mercator map, describing how inaccurate proportions reflect imbalanced global power dynamics. Pater highlights alternate ways the globe has been visualised, including the dymaxion projection and indigenous mapping techniques, such as Marshall Islands stick charts.

This reference provided an important lens which we used to frame our project; exploring ways we could depict countries involved in the growth and manufacture of cotton thread, changing the size and location to fit their importance in the narrative of our project. We wanted to create a map that would serve our inquiry, rather than a projection that reaffirms western depictions of the world.

Handmade maps such as Marshall Islands stick charts and Ammassalik wooden maps require physical labour and craftsmanship. Our interest in these maps which use alternative materials and shapes contributed to our iteration process, working with different forms, pushing the boundaries of the concept of the map.

2 design practices/projects

ultimate atlas

Stinson, L. (2019) *Reimagining the Atlas as an Ultra-minimalist Visualization*. Available at: <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/reimagining-the-atlas-as-an-ultra-minimalist-visualization/> (Accessed: 26 February 2026).

Theo Deutinger's book "ultimate atlas" renders data in an extremely minimal way, using only black, white and vertical lines to communicate information. Whilst our project was not minimal in its aesthetic, we took influence from the idea of using large, complicated data and attempting to present it in a simple way.

The book presents information about all aspects of the world; animal populations, human activity and the physical structure of Earth, creating a portrait of the planet. Within our project, we were visualising data about cotton thread, building a picture of the process of its production through information sets about cotton farming, processing, spinning, shipping, merchandising, sorting and distribution, turning this in to an image that could be interpreted and interacted with.

Deutinger represents the earth as a "spaceship" creating a metaphor which the reader can view the data presented as one window into a multi-dimensional vessel. Our project used the visual language of textile to represent the data of cotton, similarly, creating a lens within which to understand the data.

The Mending Project

LEE Mingwei The Mending Project, 2009

Mingwei, L. (2026) Perrotin. Available at: https://www.perrotin.com/artists/lee_mingwei/550/the-mending-project/48705 (Accessed: 26 February 2026)

Lee Mingwei's The Mending Project was an interactive installation during which people would bring a garment that needed mending to the exhibition, sitting with the artist while he repaired it. At the end of the exhibition, repaired items were returned.

Mingwei mending strangers' clothes created a moment of connection, with the stitches being a record, the item of clothing now transformed into a document of the experience of two people meeting. During our project, we spent a lot of time developing our sewing skills, learning to embroider. This was also time spent talking and connecting.

Within the context of a textile related project, we wanted both the medium and the message to be linked; embroidery using waste materials to commentate on the impact of textile production. In addition to this, there was a social element centred around connection, with the map we created being a record of this.