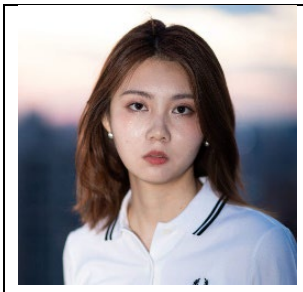
GSA Learning and Teaching Conference 2024
Student Panel Discussion: Environmental and Social Justice, and our Practice at GSA

Panellists

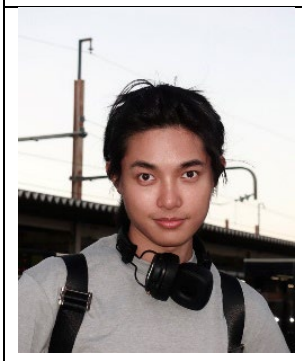


Rebecca Xu, Chair
BDes Product Design 2023

Rebecca is a Multifaceted researcher & designer driven by human-centred and responsible design practices. She recently graduated as MDes degree from GSA and won the GSA's highest honour for Postgraduate work in 2023, the Foulis Medal.

Research drives her practice. Asking "why" leads her to responsible "hows" – design work grounded in diverse perspectives. She utilises research through design and research for design approaches. Her cross-disciplinary knowledge and collaborative ethos enable her to integrate insights, designing innovative solutions focused on positive, sustainable change.

Instagram



Zhen Tang
BDes Product Design 2023

Project Name
Counterfactual Scenarios

Abstract
This project leverages counterfactual thinking, which involves exploring "what if" scenarios or contemplating the potential outcomes of hypothetical events. These hypothetical events represent alternatives to real events that could have occurred. In the design context, counterfactual thinking serves as an epistemic activity, connecting theoretical concepts with practical actions, such as interventions and design choices. By challenging entrenched environmental and societal issues shaped by economic,
infrastructural, and cultural norms within thought experiments, this project aims to uncover new design possibilities that encouraging designers to envision the world as it could be rather than merely as it is.

Showcase

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Valentina Uribe
BDes Product Design 2024

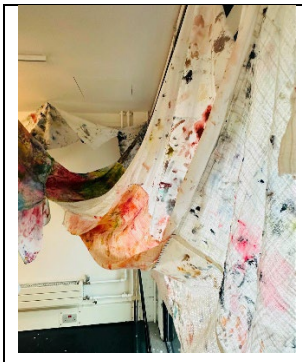
I am a product design student in my fourth year at Glasgow School of Art. I am interested in junctures in design between craft culture, sustainable consumption and cross cultural communications. I will discuss two of my projects completed for my final year: my dissertation and my 'self-initiated project'. Throughout my dissertation I explored the benefits of craft in light of an increase industrial production of objects that mimic artisan crafts. How in comparison, making traditions (traditional and contemporary) communicate memory and cultural heritage.

My self-initiated project has focused on rising awareness of indigenous crafts under threat, communicating the voice of the people and places associated with these crafts through the production of aspirational souvenirs. I have used I have used the Fair Isle Chair as a case study to direct this line of souvenirs. I have designed a selection of objects to be used as mementos celebrating different aspects of this making tradition, informed by research into the history of this chair, conversations with craft practitioners who continue this tradition, and an investigation into what features enable objects to translate memories. Each 'souvenir' carries a narrative specific to the craft history of the Fair Isle Chair; from the materials used and the processes applied to them, to the functions of these objects. The souvenirs are purchased by the external enthusiast or tourist, recalling them to the experience of witnessing the making with delight. This promotes endangered crafts by allowing them to delight in and share the memory through a medium that mutually benefits the craftsman. I hope to define and harness aspects of this process to apply to crafts under threat.

Instagram

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Panellists



Emma Scarlett
2nd Year Painting and Printmaking

As an artist I am motivated by the world around me, art in its many beautiful variations and my own thoughts. Increasingly I am frustrated by issues around capitalism, politics, and the environment. Feminism is of huge importance to me personally and the way I work, which directly links with all of the above. Through making work I am able to process my feelings, reactions, and opinions, to better engage with life.

In all my practical processes I strive to make engaging, relevant work in the most sustainable way possible. I collect discarded/unwanted materials such as textiles, wood, and paint, and reuse my own work. Additionally, I share the sustainable resources I have gathered or am aware of, as being an artist for me means being part of a community. I try to live and work with the ethos of taking responsibility for everything I buy or acquire, from its initial use to its reuse or disposal. This isn't always practical or easy, I could maybe be accused of hoarding. However, if I am successful in my endeavours at least half of the time, then it will have been worth it. Hopefully.

Instagram



Julia Römer

Julia is a PhD Researcher at the Glasgow School of Art. With a background in education, her research interests focus on sustainability in education and participatory/action research with children. She is currently co-researching with pupils their perceptions of sustainability education within 'green' primary schools.

GSA Website



John Thorne
GSA Sustainability Coordinator

John supports all staff and students at GSA to integrate environmental and social justice into their practice.

An environmentalist by trade, his approach is a realistic and positive one, recognising the skills and opportunities designers have to redesign our system, and for all creative people to help us connect emotionally to major issues.

GSA Sustainability website