

Textiles 3

Research



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Introduction

Understanding craft as a form of 'Mindful Enquiry' is a necessary new position as it enables knowledge and understanding of craft in the context of uncertainty, indeterminacy or change; offering a new way of analysing and evaluating craft practice.

(Valentine & Follett, 2011, p.3)

In the final level of your Textiles degree studies, you'll be following this *Textiles 3: Research* course alongside your practical creative investigation in *Textiles 3: Personal Specialism*.

We've started with the quote above because it provides a useful introduction to the language of written research. Many of the words it uses are applicable to the work you'll do during this course:

- You will be aiming to increase your **understanding**.
- You are expected to carry out an **enquiry**.
- You may need to take a **new position** on a topic.
- You will increase your **knowledge**.
- You will consider the **context** of your work and thinking.
- There may be **uncertainty** along the way.
- You may need to track or allow for **change** in your work or thinking, or that of others.
- You will need to **analyse**.
- You will need to **evaluate**.

This course guide will help you to build ways of doing all of these things, and other associated tasks, whilst taking you from start to finish in your personal investigation for your written research.

Achieving a balance between your own very strong personal development and the presentation of a grounding body of research for your practical work is very important at this stage. During this course, you'll research, formulate, present and, very importantly, question your personal viewpoint and analysis on a chosen focus of study. This will build to a 5,000-word critical review that will sit alongside, and support and be supported by, your practical work in the *Personal Specialism* course. This is quite a lot longer than any writing you've had to do before in your OCA studies, so to help you plan and prepare your critical review proposal and the critical review itself, and to plan and prepare your proposal for *Personal Specialism*, you'll get the opportunity to practise writing in a range of different ways, including proposal writing, analytical writing, report writing and reviews.

Your research will be self-selected and self-directed and indeed the majority of this course encourages you to think independently and work with a high degree of autonomy, whilst seeking input from your tutor and your peers to support you.

You'll build your ability to critique work, ideas and approaches, whilst identifying and making links to necessary theory and debates. You'll be encouraged to make strong links with the practical work you're developing and/or other practitioners or examples, where appropriate. Discovering relevant and appropriate sources to inform your writing will be key and you'll develop both your analytical and evaluative abilities and your academic writing skills, building on prior experience.

Textiles 3: Personal Specialism starts by asking you to define your own perception of what textiles means to you, in order to begin to formulate a direction for your personal specialism. Similarly, in this course, you should begin by considering what research is and what it means to you. Answer the following questions now and, where you have any uncertainty, consider how you can find out more.

- In your opinion, is research visual, written or both – or perhaps more than this?
- Can you write down some examples of research you have done in your previous work? Consider all the possible forms your research has taken or could potentially take.
- When is it important to carry out research?
- Is research necessary to contextualise your work? If so, how does it do this?
- How does research help you to communicate your ideas?
- What happens when you analyse and evaluate your research?
- How can analysis and evaluation inform your practical creative work?

As you begin this course, you'll work towards establishing the focus of your research topic for your critical review. As with your practical textile work, your topic may not necessarily sit within a traditional textile discipline and it may even work against it. You have the first two parts of this course to explore some forms of research and writing and also to take some time to discover what your focus might be; don't feel you have to decide right now.

Just as your chosen context for your practical textile work might be one that has evolved naturally from the work and materials you've engaged with over previous courses, you may find that your research topic is something that you have sown the seeds of previously. Whatever you choose, though, make sure it's a subject that you very much enjoy, can thoroughly engage with and feel passionate about.

This course works hand-in hand with the *Personal Specialism* course. If you're beginning to discover an area you're drawn to within your textiles practice, you may find you want to study that particular area in much more depth through the critical review. Alternatively, you may want to unite your experience of textiles with a different area of focus, which will help to move your textile work forward in a new way. This could be something you're passionate about, that you're using to influence your design work; it could be a technique that you've begun to develop or a topic you wish to investigate that will have a huge impact on your new work. Whatever way you approach your choice of research topic, though, the critical review you write should become a strong support mechanism for your textiles work.



Siba Sahabi, Atelier, *Between Two Rivers* work in progress (felt) www.sibasahabi.com
Photographer: Annemarijne Bax. Image reproduced by kind permission of the designer.

Textiles 3: Research will begin by taking you through a brief process of review and evaluation of your ideas and the kind of work and interests that really inspire you. You may have already reviewed your earlier practical textiles work in Part One of the *Personal Specialism* course and you'll begin this course in a similar way by reflecting on your previous written work and research. Over the duration of the course, your aim should be to consolidate all of your previous learning, interests, skills and talent and direct it towards your chosen ambitions on completing the degree. These interests and ambitions will be entirely different for, and personal to, every student. You'll find that your peers have quite different research outcomes and outputs from what you envisage for yourself.

You'll engage with the important task of identifying, reviewing, defining, shaping, re-shaping and, finally, editing your intentions for the major body of research that you'll create during your work on *Textiles 3: Research*. Your critical review proposal should give you both freedom and self-imposed constraints; it should guide you, push you and challenge you. You won't be able to research everything in depth in the time you have available. However, you can consider the critical review as a project that will allow you to explore a narrow area of focus in great detail. As well as linking with your textile work, the critical review may also serve as a launch pad for future exploration – not an end point in itself. So don't feel that you have to answer every question now. You'll get the opportunity to further develop the work you produce in this course in the *Textiles 3: Sustaining your Practice* course.

Your critical review proposal will be informed by the educational outcomes you're required to attain so now is a good time to take a look at the learning outcomes for this course.

***Textiles 3: Research* learning outcomes**

On successful completion of this course you'll be able to:

1. Analyse, evaluate and synthesise ideas which relate to both theory and practice.
2. Construct a written argument that informs and is informed by practical and visual investigations and is focused upon areas of personal interest.
3. Demonstrate a coherent and detailed understanding of subject knowledge and its context, some of which will be informed by recent research into textiles disciplines.
4. Demonstrate the use of appropriate primary and secondary sources as part of a range of research methodologies and produce a written body of work relevant to the chosen subject areas, showing skills in documentation and presentation.

Bear these learning outcomes in mind as you progress with your writing. At various points the course guide will direct you to use the outcomes to ensure that your critical review has the clarity and thoroughness that they demand. Do take the initiative yourself, however, and reflect on how well you feel you are meeting the learning outcomes as you progress through the course. Ask your tutor for advice if you're unclear about how to evidence them in your work.

Assessment requirements

The course assignments will ask you to submit work for tutor feedback. Your assignment submissions should build towards evidencing the learning outcomes listed above. The key pieces that the assessors will grade at the end of the course are your proposal (around 1,000 words, worth 10% of the assessment for this course) and your critical review (around 5,000 words, worth 90%). You should support these final written pieces with evidence of your research, investigation, analysis and organisation of the project and process. You will see from the following assessment criteria what you will need to demonstrate in your complete submission.

Assessment criteria for *Textiles 3: Research*

The assessment criteria are key to the assessment process for this course. You should take note of these criteria and consider how the body of work that you produce throughout this course will help you to attain these. Note that these criteria are different from the criteria used to assess your practical textiles work.

On completion of each assignment, and before you send your assignment to your tutor, test yourself against the criteria – in other words, do a self-assessment, and see how you think you would do. Note down your findings for each assignment you've completed in your research file, detailing all your perceived strengths and weaknesses, taking into account the criteria every step of the way. This will be helpful for your tutor to see, as well as helping you to prepare for assessment.

Assessment criteria points

The four assessment criteria are evenly weighted; each accounts for 25% of your final grade:

- **Demonstration of subject-based knowledge and understanding** – Application of knowledge outside its original context. Systematic and critical, detailed specialised knowledge and understanding of some specific aspects of visual and material culture.
- **Demonstration of research skills** – Capacity for critical, effective and verifiable information retrieval and organisation, using primary and secondary sources.
- **Demonstration of critical and evaluation skills** – Critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge with specialised skills. Critically evaluate concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills, and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations.
- **Communication** – Well-structured and relevant arguments supported with evidence. Engage critically with established ideas. Balance and present alternative points of view; use unfamiliar arguments constructively.

Textiles at Level 3

The structure and relationship between the three Level 3 textiles courses is different from Levels 1 and 2.

The courses you'll study at Level 3 are:

- *Textiles 3: Personal Specialism* (40 credits)
- *Textiles 3: Research* (40 credits)
- *Textiles 3: Sustaining your Practice* (40 credits)

You should work on the *Personal Specialism* and *Research* courses concurrently, to allow the predominantly creative work demanded by *Personal Specialism* to inform the predominantly research-based and written work of the *Research* course, and vice versa. The third and final course of the Textiles degree, *Textiles 3: Sustaining your Practice*, will be directly informed by the work you generate during these first two courses.

The diagram below shows how *Personal Specialism* and *Research* could work concurrently to give you the maximum benefit from both courses. Working to this schedule will also mean that you can carry on working on one course whilst awaiting tutor feedback on the other. You can begin work on your Sustaining your Practice course while you are still studying these two courses. Discuss when it would be a good time to start with your tutor.

Sequence of study

Sequence of study	Level 3: <i>Personal Specialism</i>	Level 3: <i>Research</i>
1	Part 1: Reviewing your work	
2		Part 1: Reporting and reviewing
3		Part 2: Defining and proposing
4	Part 2: Developing your proposal	
5	Part 3: Investigating and creating	
6		Part 3: Planning your critical review
7		Part 4: Developing your research and writing
8	Part 4: Developing your ideas	
9		Part 5: Final critical review
10	Part 5: Concluding and evaluating	

If you're able to follow this ordering, you should find you have space to identify and develop your focus for your research and written work in tandem with developing your own personal direction for your creative work. The work you do for each course will inform the other, resulting in a strong, integrated and robust body of work and thinking. But as with all OCA courses, you're free to work in the way that best suits you and fits in with your other commitments.

You'll have two tutors – one for each course. Tutors will only provide formal feedback on their own course but, in the light of the close relationship between the two courses, it may be helpful to keep both tutors updated on your progress with the Level 3 programme as a whole. Send your written work for this course to your *Personal Specialism* tutor as well as your *Research* tutor, so that he/she is aware of the focus and progress of your research.

Both courses build through a number of projects to allow you to put into practice different scenarios. These will enable you to explore different options for your *Research* and *Personal Specialism* focus and also allow you to gain new skills in formulating and testing new proposals and work ideas. You'll focus on generating a very thorough, well-researched and exciting body of written and practical work where every aspect is useful, informative and impacts on your self-directed learning and practice.

Expectations at Level 3

The course is designed to take around 400 hours to complete. At this level of study, though, you may find that you have to go over and above the suggested time to achieve the outcomes you're aiming for. The amount of time you spend may also depend on your confidence as a writer, so do seek help and guidance when you need it from your tutor.

Progressing from Level 2 to Level 3 will be a challenge and you'll be expected to raise the level of the work you produce and demonstrate professionalism in what you do. We expect you to demonstrate a thoroughness and in-depth knowledge and ability and be able to apply this new learning at an advanced level. With the support of your tutor, you'll be setting your own research proposal so you'll define your own direction, processes and the analysis that you intend to produce over the duration of the course. At this level, though, there's a particular emphasis on building and taking ownership of your own work as well as the choice of working methods.

Parts One and Two will guide you through a series of projects to get you started and encourage you to write and explore freely. In Part Three you'll develop your ideas and target your proposal for your critical review. Your research proposal should identify your direction, aims and intentions, state how you'll carry these out, justify the scope of your proposal and set a time frame for your critical review. Parts Four and Five will guide you through the process of writing and presenting your critical review. Throughout the course we encourage you to make clear links between your research and your textiles practice and to be innovative in both. However, it is very much your own project and it is your responsibility to manage your research in your own way.

Although you'll be working to your own critical review proposal, at this level of study you're encouraged and expected to push the boundaries of your project and to take it in unexpected directions. If your chosen topic is something that you're truly interested in and can truly engage with, you'll find that the possibilities are very exciting.

Your research file

It is important to think about how you will communicate what you are doing during this course– to your tutor, the assessors, your OCA peers and others. Start by reading through the whole course guide to get a feeling of how the course builds and so that you are clear about what the expectations are.

At Level 3, you must be able to communicate your work and ideas effectively. There's no single correct way to do this; you have to find the most appropriate and effective means to communicate your own projects and your own type of work. However, we recommend that you build a research file as part of the development of your work and to hold your written research and analysis.

It's up to you how you do this. Your research file is likely to begin with the initial projects set out in the early parts of the course and then grow to hold the research you carry out to help you form your proposal. Later it will hold all your supporting work for the writing of your critical review. You may find that you end up with digital files as well as a printed or copied paper file. This is fine, but you'll need to devise your own way to record, organise and align the information effectively.

As you progress through your Level 3 courses, you'll encounter different types of thinking and possible approaches you can seek to employ in a personal project. However, the examples given are by no means exhaustive and we hope you can work to challenge the norms and commonly accepted approaches, through strong research, reasoning, thinking and analysis to back up your ideas and results. Be brave, be experimental and be prepared to engage with the new and unexpected.

Referencing

As you'll know from previous OCA courses, you must reference all the material you've used in your written work using the Harvard referencing system, including images. You'll find useful websites on how to reference at [Link 1](#).

Your referencing should be clear and consistent throughout your writing. If you have any questions, ask your tutor at the outset. As you write your notes, be particularly careful to separate your own thinking and writing from material gleaned from other sources, which you'll need to reference. Write down the full reference to your sources as you go along; this is much easier than trying to chase long-forgotten references later!

Where you have slightly unusual resources to reference that aren't covered in the OCA guide, you may wish to refer to *Cite Them Right* by Richard Pears and Graham Shields. The details of this book are given in the recommended reading at the end of this course guide. You'll find a copy in most academic libraries. Visual and digital sources are becoming increasingly varied; if you wish to cite any of these within your critical review, this book will tell you how to do so correctly. But please remember that Harvard referencing must be your default position.

Submitting work to your tutor for review (not for assessment)

Organise your work from the part of the course that you've completed. Email your written work to your tutor for feedback. Make sure that you've clearly labelled and ordered your files and ensure that each piece of work is complete and correctly referenced using the Harvard system.

Reflect carefully on your tutor reports and any discussions you have with your tutor. You have the option to have video tutorials with your tutor during this course. These serve as key tutorial points in the development of your work. Your tutor may encourage you to adjust your coursework, and in particular your proposal and aspects of your critical review. This is a natural part of the development of your research and writing, and by taking time to reflect on and develop the pieces you produce, you will also be evidencing strength in your abilities to critique and evaluate your own work.

Textiles 3

Part one Reporting and reviewing



Ella Robinson, *Driftwood Hearts* (driftwood pieces and stranded cotton)
www.ellarobinson.com Image reproduced by kind permission of the designer.

Part One of this *Research* course focuses on getting you to write reasonably freely about subject matter that inspires and intrigues you without too many restrictions or limitations. You'll be responding to subjects and examples that you wish to write about within a gently directed framework. It is important that you take the opportunity to write about a few different personally chosen topics, taking slightly differing approaches towards your writing and analysis. This will help you to find topics and subject matter that hold your attention and will also build your writing practice.

If you're following the course order as set out in the introduction to this course, you'll already have carried out a review of your creative textiles work. At this early point in the *Research* course, it's also important to carry out a review of your written work. But don't fall into the trap of viewing your written work in isolation from your practical work. You should have got into the habit of making key connections between your written work and practical work on previous courses.

Your written work may previously have taken the form of essays, reviews, analysis, notes on exhibitions, working notes, technical notes and, of course, reflection on your own work in your learning log or blog. All of these are valid and useful forms of writing to look back at.

To quickly build on your writing practice so far, you'll start by undertaking a few projects to allow you to look, read, think and write about your thought processes. You'll both look at your own writing and write about the work of others.

Project 1.1 Reviewing here and now

Being able to analyse, reflect on and critique what you're looking at and engaging with – whether it's a painting in a gallery, a textile collection in a department store, a discussion you've had with an artist, or a series of textile experiments you've developed – helps you to present your opinions and set out your viewpoint. Very importantly, it also begins to allow you to make connections to examples and evidence that will support or perhaps even oppose your own views.

For this project, you'll write a review (of approximately 300 words) of your own previous written work. You can choose a single piece of writing or you may decide to write about a collection of notes or a particular notebook that has been very important to you. It will be helpful to make a copy of the piece of writing or key notebook pages you've chosen to examine.

When you review the selected writing, aim to be as critical as you can, but do first make observations on what it is about this piece of writing that is of interest to you to look back on. You may want to write down a few ideas first of all, outlining what you specifically want to critique. Here are a few possibilities:

- You could analyse and critique a previous essay you have written and its relevance to you now. Was it on a subject matter that guided or informed your practical work, and became more important than you realised at the time? Do you think it is still interesting or are some parts of more interest than others?
- You could analyse notes made in an old sketchbook. What were they for? Do they seem like reminders or perhaps they were for your tutor? Who do they talk to, and why? Do they tell a story of how you were thinking at a particular time, or in relation to a specific piece of work? Do the notes build to form a story about a particular project or piece of work? How could you improve on your annotations?
- You could analyse some earlier entries on your blog or learning log. Do you make points and observations that you have continued to benefit from? Assuming that some time has passed, do they seem tame or irrelevant now? Why are you drawn to these particular entries? What stands out in your writing?

These are some suggestions, but of course you can come up with your own idea for what you want to review and how you want to review it. Use this piece of writing to begin your research file. Your research file, built over the duration of this course, will ultimately include a broad range of material, including notes, reflection, analysis, facts, images, experiments, etc.

Being critical is something that will be demanded of you throughout the writing you do. Being critical of your previous work, or anything you choose to look at over the duration of this course, does not however mean being negative. The capacity you'll develop for critical review is built on being able to 'critique' not 'criticise' chosen sources, from a range of viewpoints.

Conclude your review by writing a brief list of some possibilities for interesting further research that could help to extend the points you've made. This list could be in the form of topics you would search for, or you may even be able to compile a short list of books, articles and links that you feel could help you to extend your knowledge on aspects of the subject or points you've written about.

This type of research involves finding information or debate that already exists that you can use to support, contrast or substantiate your own analysis, observations and reflection. It may be in the form of books, journal articles or any other form where the author has included their analysis and reflection on the subject.

For example, your analysis may have centred on the usefulness of making quick notes in a sketchbook and how, looking back, you can see that they present your thinking at the time in a very clear manner. You could extend and back up this writing by finding supporting research. You could perhaps examine how other artists have evaluated their use of sketchbooks to record their thinking. You could find out if any previous studies or research has been done into the value of sketchbooks and note-taking for artists and designers.

At the moment, it is enough just to write a list of possible sources or a list of the types of information you would seek to extend the analysis. If you were later to develop this stream of research, you might compare or contrast this contextual and supporting research with your analysis of your own work.

Ensure that you include a copy of the writing you have chosen to analyse along with your 300-word review and your research/reference list and send it to your tutor at the end of Part One.

Project 1.2 Gallery or exhibition review



Tonje Høydahl Sørli, *A Sudden Insight!* 2013 (woven textile) www.tonjesorli.com
Image reproduced by kind permission of the artist.

In this project, you'll write a 500-word exhibition or gallery review. Finding accurate and organised ways of recording your observations is an important part of primary research. If it's possible, seeing and experiencing work, places, materials, etc. at first hand can be infinitely more valuable than seeing it in a book or online (unless, of course, the book or digital piece *is* the work).

Make sure that you understand the distinction between primary and secondary sources. A primary source refers to unmediated first-hand access to a piece of work, for example a painting or a textile or an artist's account of their own work in a book or on YouTube. A secondary source, on the other hand, is one that is mediated through someone other than the artist, for example a biography or a television programme about an artist. Your research will encompass both primary and secondary sources. In this project the experience of viewing the exhibition constitutes primary research. Other primary research you might build into this project could be an interview with the artist or curator or attending a talk by the artist. (Remember that a lecture on an artist's work given by someone else is a secondary source.) Other devices you can use to gather primary research include questionnaires and constructing trials and tests, which may not be suitable for this project but could be useful later on in the course (see Project 3.3).

The exhibition you choose is entirely up to you. However, do bear in mind, and this will also be true of your critical review topic later, that it is much easier to write about something that you can engage with and have a connection with. The connection doesn't have to be an entirely positive one, but try to choose an exhibition or series of works that you respond to or that links to you or your work in some way.

Have a look locally or perhaps nationally at current exhibitions that are showing. You can choose any kind of exhibition from a one-day pop-up show to a three-month long retrospective. You might also consider choosing part of a permanent exhibition to narrow your focus.

Begin by considering what it is you think you might want to review about the exhibition, and note down some possible questions or avenues you might follow. You might need to be at the exhibition itself before you can finally discover what you'll focus on in your review. Considering the context of the exhibition, gallery or work can be a helpful starting point.

- What clues does the context give you?
- Will you review the work with close reference to the context of the gallery?
- Do you want to review it from a curatorial perspective, particularly if it is an exhibition containing the work of more than one artist?
- Is there something unexpected about the exhibition?
- Do you want to review the whole exhibition, or just one room, or even just one piece of work?
- Do you want to review it within the context of the artist's other work?
- Do you want to contrast or compare this work with other work done by the same artist or perhaps another artist's work?

Your review should be around 500 words, which isn't too long, so you should aim to be concise and clear. Leave out any information that isn't pertinent to your observations and analysis.

There are three pieces of content that you must include in your review and which you should aim to balance. These are:

- visual description of the work/context/environment/experience
- factual information or research
- personal viewpoint, analysis and reflection.

You can substantiate the content you view by including some brief factual or historical/contextual evidence. This would form part of your secondary research, whereby you can provide a frame of reference for the exhibition through supporting information or arguments or other viewpoints that support or oppose yours. You can also substantiate the content of the exhibition in the way that you extract information from looking at and reflecting on the work itself.

One key consideration is how you might strike a balance between explaining what you see and evaluating what you see. At this point you might find it very useful to begin a notebook for the course, so that you can jot down ideas, observations and questions that spring to mind and take down factual information from signage or written details of the exhibition or work. Of course, you can collect leaflets or booklets of the show to supplement your notes, and you might even take photos if it's permitted.

Just as you are encouraged to be bold and brave in your practical textiles work, think about how you can be bold in your writing too.

If you wish to gain some more experience of reviews and discussion on subjects around textiles, listen to some of the podcasts from *The Subversive Stitch* conference, held at the V&A Museum in London in 2013. They cover a range of approaches to considering textiles and their political, social, ethical, historical contexts and those associated with identity: [Link 2](#)

Project 1.3 Market, shop and design reports

This project focuses on looking at more commercial environments for textile work. Although the OCA textiles degree is a textiles art focussed course, it may be useful, depending on the direction of your practice, to engage with this section of the course. If so, choose one of the following options (or more than one, if you feel you would benefit from this):

1. A market report (giving an overview of a specific market segment)
2. A shop report
3. A design report

Option 1:

A market report can be extremely important in terms of providing you with a clear understanding of the design context for your textile work. Later on in this course, when you are planning your focus for your critical review, you may choose to analyse a particular market or commercial context connected to your creative textile work. You could even make the market analysis a main focus for your critical review, which would in turn fully support the development of your *Personal Specialism* work. Alternatively, you may find that market analysis becomes a component of the research within your *Personal Specialism* course and sits directly alongside your practical textiles work itself.

Examining the presentation of collections of textiles and their component individual textile designs, or curated groups of textiles, is key to understanding the market you choose to focus on for this writing. These textiles may be in the form of textile collections designed for use in a particular context or they may already have been applied within fashion collections, interior compositions and placements of materials, automotive interiors or perhaps installation design. You are likely to want to look across different examples of makers, designers and/or manufacturers to get a good feel for the market segment you choose to focus on. For this piece of writing, it is likely you will include both primary and secondary research, where possible. Again, choose a market that is of interest to you, but don't feel you can't tackle something that is quite new to you. You might have always loved the design house Marimekko, for example, but never thought too much about what market they are appealing to, who their competitors are, where their designs are sold, what types of interiors their textiles are used in, and whose furniture, architecture and styling adopts their work. Use this piece of research and writing as an opportunity to build a picture of your chosen market.

Textile design is an unusual design discipline because, in the majority of instances, textiles are not the end product. Textile collections are built and presented towards the next group of designers who will apply them within their own design context, including fashion, interiors, exteriors, automotive, etc. Alternatively, textile designers might work closely with designers of other disciplines so that the material development and product development occurs side by side.

You could consider analysis of a niche market like lingerie or a broader market such as active sportswear. Equally you may have an interest in textile markets that go towards car interiors and automotive design, or perhaps brick design and colour application. The choice of market you focus on is up to you, but do make sure it is of an accomplished level that you feel sets a high standard of design.

If you choose to carry out a market report, consider where your access to primary sources might lie and what secondary sources are available to you, and how you plan to gather and observe enough content to get a strong overview. Your report should be around 500 words long.

Option 2:

A shop report is quite a different undertaking and although it demands strength in information-gathering, analysis, reflection and presentation, the context of the shop will be the key driver. A shop is usually focused on a particular target market already, but may comprise more than one brand, designer or range of products. If you choose to write a shop report, make sure you choose a shop that is really inspiring to you, which feeds your ideas and makes you want to find out more or encourages you to think more. Your reasons for choosing a particular shop might be a good place to start your report, but you can swing your focus onto the textiles, materials or product components present. Try, where possible, to pull the writing back to your textile or personal art or design interests, but within the context of your chosen retail environment. Your choice can be anything from a pop-up shop, to a beautifully curated interior store, to a vintage clothes shop, to a section of a luxury department store, or a textiles trade-show stand. Anywhere that you would consider to be a well-presented or interestingly curated commercial space is valid.

If you choose this option, look back at the guidance given for both the gallery/exhibition report and the market report. A shop, in a sense, functions as a curated space, like a gallery or exhibition, and it also has to appeal to a specific group of people. The selection or grouping of pieces for display/sale, the individual items themselves, as well as the shop interior, visual merchandising and atmosphere, all play a role. Think about the role the textile or material elements play in this. They may become lost, or they may provide the key colour, texture, pattern or other quality that stands out. As with the other forms of report, see if you can make links to secondary sources of research to substantiate your own first-hand research, observation, evaluation and thinking.

Write around 500 words.

Option 3:

A design report is something that is slightly more loosely defined than a shop or market report. A shop report and a market report each place a lot of focus on the context for the textiles or other products. A design report can be more focused on a single designer, a single collection of designs, a single body of work, or even a single product or textile. It can allow for closer, more detailed examination and is likely to take you towards consideration of the designer, the maker or craftsman. You could also examine and evaluate the ways of making involved, as well as the means by which the design or designs have been developed.

This option will give you the opportunity to go into a lot of detail with an even narrower focus than the previous two options.



Martyna Barbara Golik, *Touch That Taste Collection – Sweet Pouf*, 2015

www.martynagolik.com

Image reproduced by kind permission of the designer.

Again, this report should be around 500 words long. We recommend that you choose a selection of designs that you can see and experience first-hand. This will give you the strength of being able to fully analyse and digest the designs, and examine their context too. It will provide the clarity needed for you to write about their importance and even their relevance to you.

Whichever option you choose, be sure to retain all notes, primary research and copies of secondary research in your research file and/or supporting notebooks. As you begin to introduce secondary research into your writing, make sure that you properly reference all of your sources using the Harvard method.

Project 1.4 Critical review of a designer or artist

Reviewing the work of other artists and designers could be key to providing the contemporary context for your own work. In a sense, you need to show what is happening around you in order to validate why your own textile practice is current, innovative and/or relevant.

Throughout your time as a textiles student, you will have been drawn to looking at, touching and experiencing textiles, as well as creating your own. At certain points you'll have wanted or needed to find out more about the background, the artist, the designer, the curator and the thinking or ideas behind pieces and bodies of work that you've made a connection with.

This project provokes you to make connections between a selected artist and how their work sits within a contemporary or historical context. Once again, it's up to you to choose the subject matter you'll write about and to direct your analysis of the artist, designer or practitioner and their work.

You've already reviewed a piece of your own written work in Project 1.1; in Project 1.2, you reviewed a gallery or exhibition of your choosing; in Project 1.3 you wrote a market segment, shop or design report. In this project you'll continue to build your experience of looking, reviewing, analysing and evaluating. Where necessary you should continue to back up your reflection through links with relevant and credible supporting research and information.



Julia Krakowski, *Coffee and Cigarettes*, 2006 (linen and Lurex) www.juliakrakovski.com
Image reproduced by kind permission of the artist.

When carrying out a critical review on an artist or designer and their work, you need to have a reason for doing it. Do you want to learn something specific about their approach or their work that might help you with your own work? Is there an aspect of their work that you can analyse, for example their use of colour in different contexts, or perhaps their changing use of media in relation to developments in technology, which can help you to form a response to their work? The main aim here is not to look at the artist or their work in isolation.

Write a critical review of around 500 words on the designer or artist you've chosen. Start by composing a short plan, question or brief proposal on what aspect of their practice, research, work or life you want to tackle and the perspective from which you'll tackle it. Essentially you need to set out a title or question that clearly describes what you will aim to discover and say in this short critical review. In order to do this, you'll probably need to do some initial background reading to give you a foundation of understanding on your chosen artist or designer.

At this level of your studies, you should be aware of what is considered a credible source of information. Look to published books and journal and magazine articles where the author is named. If you want to be very certain that a source is credible, you might wish to check up on the background and expertise of the author of the article or book you're referring to. Of course, online resources can be just as credible, but do make sure that the website you're viewing is a source that you trust and, again, that the author is named and credited. Also, take note of when a source was first published and consider whether it is still timely and accurate information. You may encounter other forms of secondary research too, including things that will not have author's names, such as exhibition leaflets or catalogues. Weigh up each element to determine whether you feel it is a reliable source.

You should be becoming increasingly proficient at describing and analysing the visual experiences you've encountered, as demanded of you in the last two projects. With this project, your choice of subject matter may mean that you won't be able to view the work first-hand, in a gallery or shop. Even if it is possible to view some examples of the artist's work, these may not necessarily be the examples you want to highlight, so feel free to support your writing with properly referenced photos if you feel this is helpful.

The majority of your sources for this project may be in the form of secondary research, so you're likely to need to digest more than you will actually need about the artist and their work in order to find your focus. Your choice of focus for this piece of writing is entirely your decision, so make sure it is on work and an artist or designer that you wish to know more about. Then, in turn, you can find a special point of interest that you can further research, digest and present and reflect upon. For example, your focus may turn more towards the thinking behind an artist's approach and how this connects with your own approach to your work. As you learn more about your chosen artist and begin to make connections with what they do, use your research file and notebooks to make notes and to keep track of key points and ideas that jump out at you. One of these observations may end up guiding the nature of your review.

On conclusion of this piece of work you should submit your short proposal or question that you used to direct you, as well as the 500-word review itself.

Assignment one

Please send to your tutor:

1. Your personal writing review, including a copy of the piece of writing you chose to review
2. Your gallery or exhibition review
3. Your market, shop or design report
4. Your critical review of a designer or artist

Where appropriate, include evidence of any back-up research or development. You should also include a list of references for each piece of work, where needed. Remember to reference all the images you include as well as any texts you draw from.

Self-evaluation

In addition, you should write a short self-evaluation (around 300 words) reflecting on the pieces of work you've written during Part One. If any of these pieces have given you initial ideas for your critical review, let your tutor know. If you have any questions in relation to these projects, or the course as a whole, this would be a good point to put them to your tutor.

You should also look back at the learning outcomes set out in the introduction to this course. You could choose to write your self-evaluation with reference to these.

Make sure that each piece of work is labelled with your name, student number and project number. If possible, email each document as both a Word document and a pdf version.

If you are following this course concurrently with the, *Personal Specialism*, course, email this work to your *Personal Specialism* tutor too. You won't get any feedback from your *Personal Specialism* tutor, but it will help to keep them up-to-date with what you're doing on this course.

Reflection

Check your work against the assessment criteria listed in the introduction to this course guide before you send it to your tutor and make some notes about how well you believe your work meets each criterion.

Reworking your assignment

Following feedback from your tutor, you may wish to rework some of your assignment. If you do this, make sure you reflect on what you've done, and why, as this will demonstrate responsiveness and learning to the course assessors. You may wish to create a section in your research file that is focused on the writing, feedback and development part of your writing process and include any further research, notes and adjustments you have made to your writing here.