I FEEL YOU

Applying Empathic Design Methods into a Pattern Design Process

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Abstract

Empathic design and improving the emotional user-product relationships could help to solve the ecological problems the textile and fashion industry is facing nowadays. This bachelor thesis focuses on emotional and empathic design methods in the field of textile and fashion design. It strives to define how the empathic design methods could help to design textile products that are intriguing and become dear to the user. It consists of the production of a scarf pattern collection. With the help of the research, the collection is designed based on five different customers using empathic design methods.

First, the empathic design methods in the textile design field will be researched, as well as the phenomena of emotional user-product relationships. After this, a methodology of interviews will be constructed, executed and analysed. Based on this data, the scarf pattern collection will be created. The customers will be consulted during the creation process, and after the patterns are finished, they are sent to production.

Research Question: How could empathic design methods help to design textile products that are intriguing and become dear to the owner?

Keywords: textile design, empathic design, emotional design, user-product bond, user research, pattern design, fashion textiles
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1 Introduction

Empathy could be seen as one of the essential traits of a designer. Putting yourself inside your client’s shoes; getting a glimpse of their thoughts, feelings, and taste can help to find new ways of inspiration and deeper connection. Empathic design methods help to better bond the user to the product. It can get us closer to the ultimate experience of understanding between both the designer and the client, and the designer and the product. Personalised products build an emotional link to the user and hence get a longer life span since designs that succeed well in terms of pleasing the customer’s needs will most likely be used longer.

This project will dig deeper into empathic design methods and their sustainable traits, especially in the field of fashion and textile. This field of design was chosen naturally due to previous experience and studies, as well as being an exciting and relevant field. The first phase will go through the definition of empathy and the role of empathy in the textile design universe. This phase strives to shift through different viewpoints to the empathic design process and its methods. It will also gather knowledge about the emotional bonds between users and products, to further investigate the deeper meanings that clothing can have to their wearers. Furthermore, it will help to create a base of knowledge for the production phase.
After this, the data and methods of the production process will be introduced and analysed. The second phase consists of the production process of a five-piece scarf collection. The collection will be executed with five different clients, based on whom five scarfs will be designed. By interviewing and observing the clients, an analysis of each five “personas” will be constructed. This analysis will be converted into a visual entity with mood boards and colour maps, that are later transformed into a pattern for the scarf. It is also important to take into consideration the collection as a whole and try to combine each “persona” into an interesting entity. During the process, the clients will be consulted for feedback, opinions and ideas using empathic design methods.

The creation of scarfs was chosen in this project since it allows the designer to entirely focus on the visual entity created based on the clients. Also, scarfs can be fully designed using textile design methods, compared to other fashion pieces that might require collaboration with fashion designers. Scarf as an item can be seen as a statement piece; it is a simple but expressive way to pull together any outfit from casual to formal wear. A scarf that is made with quality can be seen as a fashion piece worth cherishing, which makes it an interesting subject to this project.

Empathising the client can lead to a deeper user-designer connection and help the designer to understand their clients at a deeper level. This will boost the effectiveness of the design and bond the user even deeper into the finished product. Besides, getting to know your client better opens up a whole new catalogue of ideas and inspiration. Designers do not always have to create something new; just by sitting down with an interesting person, listening to them, and empathising with them can help to find new ways and viewpoints. After this all, there is left to do for the designer is to connect the dots.
Phase 1

RESEARCH
2 Empathy in Design

2.1 Empathy as a trait

Empathy is usually defined as the ability to sense the emotions of the people around us and imagine what they might be feeling in certain situations. Daniel Goleman (2008) narrates his conversations with psychologist Paul Ekman, an expert in empathy research. Paul Ekman describes three main types of empathy: cognitive empathy, emotional empathy and compassionate empathy. These different approaches might help us to position ourselves into situations that require empathising the people around us.

Ekman describes cognitive empathy as the ability to understand what the people around us might be feeling and thinking. It means that we can distinguish the perspective of the other person. On the other hand, Goleman (2008) argues, this type of empathy alone might be received as ‘being cold’ by others since it does not include efforts to take action for the empathised person. The next level of empathy is called emotional empathy. Ekman (2010) defines it as the ability to feel what the other person is feeling physically. He argues that this type of empathy also has a downside; by engaging excessively to others’ emotions, one might lose themselves into the emotion and thus exhaust themselves.
It would seem that we would need to find a balance between these two types of empathy. The third empathy type Ekman introduces is called compassionate empathy. It could be seen as the ‘ideal’ type of empathy, combining both cognitive and emotional empathy. This type of empathy needs the practice of emotional intelligence, and it moves us from understanding and feeling the other person’s feelings into taking action concerning them. (Goleman 2008) In other words, it is presumable that empathy is crucial when interacting with others and building deep relationships. Researching empathy could bring new viewpoints into textile design processes and broaden the viewpoint of our methods.

2.2 Empathic Design
Katja Battarbee (2004) defines empathy in design as “the leap from knowing to understanding”. She states that when using empathic design methods, the designer’s mindset needs to change from being the “expert” into being the learner and the listener. Empathising the user during the design process helps the designer to find the factors that are emotionally significant to the user. There can be many ways to help with empathising the user: observing the user, role-playing, body storming, heuristics, or even deep conversations. Empathic design methods challenge the designer’s thinking and help to find ultimate usability, as well as inspire during the creative process. Roberto Fraquelli (2015) states that empathic design places the user and their behaviours at the centre of the design process. The empathic design focuses on real-life experiences of the user, and the goal is to create a process for deep emotional understanding.

Swan and Combs (1976) state that succeeding in creating an instrumental (or physical) performance for a product will not by itself guarantee satisfaction from the user. They argue that the best way to create product satisfaction is by ensuring a good response to performance in the dimensions that are important for the user. Similar thoughts are presented by Van Nes (2006): he states that what customers are looking for is products that fulfil their constantly changing needs. The empathic design could be a way to broaden our perspective towards these needed dimensions. Like Niinimäki and Koskinen (2011) describe, empathic design methods strive to catch the complicated emotional relations between users and products, that otherwise would be missed during the research process in product
development. Rather than using a strict framework in the design process, the empathic design lets the user define what is most relevant.

Marc Steen (2011) introduces the different areas of human-centred design and discusses how empathic design differs from other approaches. In the universe of human-centred design methods, the empathic design differs from ethnography because it strives to focus on 'what could be' instead of 'what is', and is not afraid to intervene into the user's practices via methods like role play. (Steen 2011, p.53) He states that the difference between co-design and empathic design is the way of combining the designer and the user. The empathic design process seeks to place the designer closer to the user and their experiences. In contrast, in co-design, the user is usually invited closer to the designer and the project to help build it. (Figure 1)
2.3 Empathic Design and Sustainability

Niinimäki and Koskinen (2011) argue that by using empathy as an approach in design, the process can become more sustainable. They state that the best way to increase environmental durability in products is by extending the life-span of the product by creating deeper emotional bonds to the user. In other words, designers should aim towards creating long-term relationships between users and products. Similar ideas have been introduced earlier in the user-centred design field: Enzio Manzini (1994) states that the focus in product development should be concentrated on consumer behaviour when aiming towards more sustainable products. The excessive consumption culture of nowadays should be intervened with products that fulfil the user’s need for a more extended amount of time. By understanding the complex relationships, the user might have with a piece of clothing will drive designers to develop more sustainable design methods.

A framework has been created by Niinimäki and Koskinen (2011, 181-182) to describe the empathic knowledge in the field of design and combine empathic methods to sustainable product relationships. In this universe (figure 2), the field of a designer consists of the past, the present and the future. In the past level, the

![Figure 2: Empathic approaches in the designer's field to enable sustainable product relationships.](Niinimäki and Koskinen 2011, p.182)
designer is working with the user’s personal history, memories, and associations. This level enables to create unique designs by using empathic design as an approach. In the present level, the designer is creating excellent product performance, answering to the functional needs of the user and ensuring durability. Niinimäki and Koskinen state that in this level, the designer can combine empathic knowledge to user-centred research. In the future level, the designer must provide continuous, satisfying experience through the product’s quality and aesthetic traits. This level also includes new services for the product to create new experiences, or new emerging traits of the product to better fit the consumers changing needs and prolong the use. In this level, the empathic approach, experimental design, and service design capabilities are needed from the designer.

2.4 Possible Limitations with Empathic Design Methods

Like Niinimäki and Koskinen (2011) state, emotional product relationships differ with each user. This makes it challenging to define frameworks, and the creation of general ‘archetypes’ becomes complicated. Since it is not economically possible to personalise each garment, new ways to create universal clothing must be found. Schifferstein and Zwartkruis-Pelgrim (2008) propose, that the past-related dimensions (figure 2) of product attachment are unique to each individual, but that the future dimensions like experiences, style and utility could be more comfortable for the designer to tackle.

Doing thorough research about each client indeed takes a lot of effort and energy. It takes much time to authentically get to know and empathise each client, as well as create an environment, where opinions, ideas, and thoughts can be shared freely and purely. It also makes the process slow and inefficient. Thus, some kinds of tools need to be developed to ease the research process. This could mean, for example, that the process starts by the user taking a questionnaire that helps to define the methods needed, and creates the first glimpse into the client’s personality. Simply put, it is hard to create straight forward framework for complex entities; when using empathic design methods, the designer needs to accept the continuous uncertainty and constantly change their mindset in each situation.

Nevertheless, another possible problem arising from empathic design is the idea of do-it-yourself practices. By changing the focus to fully personalised and self-created products could discard the role of designers in the process. Thus, the level
of engaging the client to the design process must be defined. The balance between
the designer’s handprint and the client’s preferences is essential to ensure a
successful final result. The client must feel that they influence the process and that
they can detect traces of their persona in the final product. On the other hand, the
touch of a designer can deepen the user-product bond, since designed products
could be seen as something more valuable and worth cherishing.
As concluded in the previous chapter, understanding the complex user-product relationships will drive designers towards more empathic, and thus sustainable decisions. By understanding the meaning of textiles to their users helps to empathise the customer further, and create more authentic interaction during the design process. The phenomenon of emotional user-textile relationship helps to fuel and inspire the scarf collection production.

It has been proven in various experiments that clothing indeed can affect the wearer’s abilities, identification and mood (Adam and Galinsky 2012; Niinimäki and Koskinen 2011; Johnson et al. 2014). Stone (1962, p.87) states that the appearance of an individual is at least as important as verbal communication when it comes to the maintenance of self. Blumer (1969) introduces a definition for the symbolic interaction with objects: he states that (a) social interactions shape the symbolic meanings of things, (b) the meanings of things form the ways we behave towards them, and (c) the meanings of things is continuously changing in the process of interacting with oneself. Based on a similar definition, this chapter divides studies
into three categories:

1. Clothing as an influence on perceptions made by others
2. Clothing as an influence of the wearer’s behaviour
3. Clothing as a part of defining one’s identity and self

These three categories work interleaved with one another and create an ongoing circle of perceptions and experiences for the wearer and the people around the wearer (Pine 2014; Johnson et al. 2014).

3.1 Clothing as an influence on perceptions

The objectification theory, first introduced by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), strives to describe the effect that a sexually saturated culture can have on women. This theory has been used as a viewpoint to examine the influence clothes have on the perception of others. In a study by Gurung and Chrouser (2007), college women were shown pictures of female athletes wearing both a uniform and a provocative outfit. The athletes wearing something minimal and provocative were described as more attractive, feminine, desirable and sexually experienced, but at the same time, less capable, less strong and less intelligent.

Another theory concerning the effects that clothes have on the perceivers and the wearers is the colour-in-context theory. (Johnson et al. 2014) This theory argues that colours are perceived differently on different occasions. It states that the meaning of colours is either learned through multiple experiences and meanings that interlink with specific colours or comes from the biological tendency to react to certain colours in specific contexts.

A study by Roberts et al. (2010) examined the influence of different coloured shirts on their wearers and the perceivers. Both female and male models were photographed wearing a shirt in six different colours. In the first part of the experiment, the participants rated the models’ attractiveness. Both female and male models were rated most attractive when wearing a red or a black shirt. In the second part, the red and white shirts in the photos were covered with grey rectangles. Even if the colours were not visible, the models wearing red shirts were rated to be most attractive. In the third part, the photos were edited so that some of the white shirts
Figure 3: Clothing can influence the way others perceive the wearer.
were altered to look red, and some of the red shirts to look white. Still, the models wearing red were rated more attractive than the models wearing white shirts that were edited to seem red. Also, the models wearing red that was altered to white were rated more attractive than the models wearing unaltered white. This discovery concludes that the colour of clothing affects both the wearer and the perceiver.

### 3.2 Clothing as an influence on behaviour

The second viewpoint to the psychological phenomena of clothes is the influence they have on the wearer’s behaviour. Interested in how revealing clothes effect self-objectification, Fredrickson et al. (1998) performed a study on both male and female participants. The participants were placed into a dressing room and given either a swimsuit or a large sweater to try on. After this, they were given mathematic problems to solve while wearing the outfit. The results showed that the female participants, who wore the swimsuit to the mathematic test performed worse than the female participants wearing the sweater. With male participants, there was no difference between the ones wearing the swimsuit and the ones wearing the sweater. In conclusion, the researchers assumed that, for women, wearing a revealing outfit takes capacities out of solving the mathematic problems for self-evaluation.

Adam and Galinsky (2012) executed a study on adults wearing a white lab coat. They stated that a lab coat is usually associated with attentiveness. The participants were divided into three groups: the first group wore a white lab coat described as a doctor’s coat by the researchers, the second group wore the same white lab coat, but the researchers called it a painter’s coat, and the third group did not wear the coat but were shown a coat that was described to be a doctor’s coat. All of the three groups executed a Stroop test: participants were shown words of colours written in a different colour and asked to say out loud the colour that the words are typed with, not the colour that is written (Stroop 1935). The participants wearing the lab coat described as a doctor’s coat performed better than the other groups.

The study thus indicates that the clothes can possess symbolic meaning to the wearer and influence their behaviour. Due to these results, Adam and Galinsky (2012) defined a theory called enclothed cognition: “We argue that just like physical experiences, the experience of wearing clothes triggers associated abstract
Figure 4: Clothing influences the mood and behaviour of its wearer.
concepts and their symbolic meanings”. (Adam and Galinsky 2012, p.919) They state that the effects of clothes are constructed by (1) the experience of wearing a specific piece of clothing, and (2) the symbolic meaning the piece of clothing has to us.

3.3 Clothing as an influence on identity and self

Like the self-perception theory by Daryl J. Bem (1972) formerly suggests, a person forms perceptions about themselves the same manner they form perceptions about others. This insight has also been utilised in studies about the effect clothes have on our perceptions about ourselves. A study by Peluchette and Karl (2007) researched the effects clothing can have to their wearers. They noticed that when the participants were wearing formal clothing in their workplace, they perceived themselves as more authoritative, productive and trustworthy, but more friendly when changing into casual outfits. In another study (Kellerman and Laird 1982), students were made to take a test both whilst wearing glasses, and without wearing glasses. Although there was no major difference in the test results, the students evaluated themselves more intelligent when wearing glasses.

Guy and Banim (2000) gathered data from women of different ages and backgrounds about their relationships with their clothing. Based on the data collected, they were able to sum up three different perspectives on the relationship between self and clothes. The first category, ‘the woman I want to be’, consists of women that were using clothes to get closer to the desired self, and create positive self-projection with clothes. The second perspective, ‘the woman I fear I could be’, consists of women who had negative experiences with clothing. They were concerned about choosing the ‘wrong’ types of clothing that could, for example, highlight undesired body parts, or communicate the wrong values to the people around them. The third perspective, ‘the woman I am most of the time’, was the most liquid and self-reforming. The people in this category saw clothing as a tool to experiment and find new aspects of themselves during the process.
Figure 5: We can utilise clothes in the search of our identity and self.
Phase 2

PRODUCTION
In this chapter, the data collected for the production process, and the methods used in the process are explained and analysed. To help answer my research question, including the methodological base of the empathic design is needed. Thus, the production process will follow the framework of including the client to the design process. Certain steps were constructed to keep the process simple and ensure the balance between the designer’s work and the client’s ideas. The participants were chosen from acquaintances, making sure that a wide range of origin and personalities were covered to ensure a versatile result and an interesting collection. The participants consist of five people, out of which two were male, three female. The participant’s ages varied between 22 and 25 (see attachments for details).

Firstly, to collect as versatile data from the participants as possible, an interview was constructed with questions that can be answered with a broad selection of viewpoints. This way, the analysis of the data can be made about the answer themselves, but also the viewpoints and patterns of answering the questions. This type of interview helps to collect qualitative data and insight to the client quickly and efficiently. Admittedly, the fact that the participants were already acquaintances affected the result of having versatile data due to previous encounters. On the first
hand, this gives the ability to deeper empathise with the participants, but on the other hand, makes the design process more challenging due to the complex images of the personas.

The data from the interviews was converted into descriptive text to help create a complete image of the interview situation, and the interviewed person. This helped to analyse the data further and start the creative process. The methods of the creative process will be justified later in the text of the production phase.

4.1 Interviews

The interview was constructed to build an in-depth conversation around self, life and the meaning of clothing to the interviewed person. The point was to have a snapshot into the thoughts, feelings and memories of the person, to help further inspire and mould the design process. These five interviewees will construct the five personas represented in the patterns. The construction of the interview moves from the introduction of the person to their style and perception of clothing. Then it continues to more profound questions about life and the development of oneself as a person in interaction with the surrounding world. Each person was interviewed separately, to ensure a relaxed milieu and create the feeling that the interviewed person can express themselves in a more free manner, and be able to conclude more in-depth answers. The questions were used as a base structure, but the interview was constructed in a more conversational manner. Schifferstein and Zwartkruis-Pelgrim (2008) propose that while enjoyment plays a crucial role in forming a relationship with a new product, memories influence a lot our attachment to older products. Thus, the interview questions aim to open memories of the participants to resonate with the finished product on a deeper level.

Although the five people were chosen to cover a wide range of people and backgrounds, all of them were from a similar age group. The aim was to have as different viewpoints as possible by having people that represent different cultures. This can help to create products that are more diverse and create an interesting contrast between one another. Working with familiar people enable as deep dive into these people as possible and open communication during the interviews. Of course, later on, similar methods can be used with strangers, but with a broader constructed workshops to get to a similar point of understanding, that in this case
is possible to create based on only one interview and earlier interaction with the selected people.

4.1.1 Pia

"One who makes no mistakes makes nothing at all."

Pia is from Germany, Finland and France. She was born in Germany but has spent such a short time there; she does not identify herself to belong to any specific country. Pia spent her childhood in Finland and later moved to France, where she is currently living. She studies textile design in Paris, and states that she enjoys what she is doing, but has not found a specific direction for her career yet. She tells she loves fashion and her dream would be to work on that field. She emphasises her passion for expressing herself and working with something creative in France or, who knows, somewhere else.

She describes herself as self-confident. She wants to see herself as a strong individual and pursues to evolve towards her ideal self. She tells that she sees herself as a calm person and that other sometimes perceive this as being shy. She describes herself as positive; she always wants to see the bright side in all situations.

She defines her style as comfortable and classic, never over-dressed. Cashmere knits are her passion at the moment, and she hunts them from the Parisian second-hand stores. She loves statement pieces, usually vintage, that bring contrast to an otherwise simple ensemble. These unique clothes help her to stand out from others. She loves wearing clothes that represent her personality, with surprising patterns and colours. She describes that what she wears fluctuates with her personality and mood.

The meaning of clothes, she describes, is to match the outside with the inside. Clothes can be used to express who you are, and also what you are trying to become. Pia sees clothes as a fun way to explore oneself, and she describes clothing as almost like a hobby that she is very passionate about.

Her favourite piece of clothing is a black silk jacket, that is hand-embroidered
with pearls. She describes how this piece especially makes her feel sublime, almost like a noble. She tells how she keeps it in an airtight bag in her closet, since it is so special and fragile, and she only rarely wears it. This jacket is only for special occasions when she wants to feel like on the top of the world.

In her near future, she wants to explore herself and different opportunities. She would love to try different things and not get herself too fixed on anything specific. She is interested in many things that she wants to try out to find the thing she wants to do further in the future: fashion, music, textile, writing; the list goes on. All she knows is, that further down in the future she wants to work in a creative job and wake up happy every morning. She never wants to settle, always strive towards something new, and not get too comfortable.

In other people, she cannot stand ungratefulness; she states that it is vital to see what you have and appreciate the things you have achieved. Aesthetically, she says she tends to change her mind when it comes to dislikes, but one thing she does not like is inadequate make-up.

Pia tells that she had a hard time picking a favourite memory since she has many dear ones, but she ended up describing a memory from her childhood:

“It was the middle of the summer in Finland. We used to go to a beach with these big black rocks with my parents. We would each pick one rock to lie on and enjoy the sun. I still remember the sound of the waves and how the black rock felt so warm against my skin.”

Pia describes her ideal self to be creative and not shy about it. She wants to express and always evolve. Her ideal self would be someone who never stops creating and can jump into a creative flow anytime she wants. Above all, her ideal self is happy, positive and thankful. One person that she respects is Frida Kahlo; she adores her way of life and personality, as she seemed to be so full of life and positive energy. She was never afraid to express her opinions and was able to create beautiful things.

Pia tells that for her, the most important thing in life is love. That is the only point in life: to find love and spend time with people that are dear to us.

4.1.2 Alexis

"With good people around you, you can do anything."

Alexis comes from the French Caribbean, an island called Martinique. A few years ago he moved to continental France for business studies, and he is now working in Paris for his gap-year. Even though he has a structure planned for his future, he is still in a phase of trying out different things and collecting experience.

He describes himself as calm and positive. He loves to spend time with his friends, and the people around him are dear to him. He wants to enjoy life but finds himself stressing out about stuff sometimes. He would always want to have a clear vision of where he is going and gets maybe a little frustrated when this does not happen. He describes himself as a person, who always strives to figure out everything, but that this can be very tiring from time to time.

He tells that his style represents his personality pretty well: he likes to keep it classic and safe, but spice it up with original accessories. His weakness is sneakers; he states that shoes are a great way to bring colour to any outfit. Accessories are a way to express creativity, but keep the steady base of classic fits and colours. He sees clothing as a way to express yourself, but also connect with people around you. Clothing to him is a way of communication; with your clothes, you can show your true self to other people. His favourite piece of clothing is a pair of Nike Air Max sneakers. They are so dear to him that he even has a picture of them as a background image of his phone. He describes these wildly coloured sneakers as stylish but comfortable, a perfect way to bring something vivid to your outfit.

Alexis tells that what comes to the near future, he does not have any big plans yet. He will probably stay living in France and pursue further in his professional life. He would love to travel abroad, either to work or to study. He wants to gather new experiences as much as possible. In thirty years he sees himself moving back to Martinique, with the business he has developed during the years. Alexis wants to move back to be closer to his family and maybe start building one of his own. He feels that it is important for him to go back to develop something there and bring new value to his dear home island. The thing that he cannot stand is injustice; people are mistreated over money, and selfish actions are being taken by the rich.
towards the poor. What comes
to clothing, he hates baggy jeans, aka ‘baggies’, and on the contrary very tight,
skinny jeans.

Alexis tells about a remarkable memory from his past:

"I was ten years old, living in Martinique. We spent the day at my aunt’s house with my sister. My aunt is a huge Michael Jackson fan, and she wanted to introduce us to his music. We spent the whole day watching DVD’s of Michael and listening to his music, dancing and singing. That’s where my love for his music started."

Alexis ideal self is someone happy. He wishes to have enough money to do things that he wants to do. He wants to cherish his friendships and keep himself healthy. He says he does not have any idols because he does not want to see anyone as a ‘god’. He appreciates, for example, Michael Jackson, Kid Cudi, Kanye West, Barack Obama and Aimé Césaire.

He thinks that the most vital thing in life is friendship. He states that when you have good people in one’s life, one can do anything. With friends, your time is spent better. He strives to move forward through growth and experiences. He states that he wants to be a a better person every day.

4.1.3 Theo

"When life gives you lemons, make pasta."

Theo comes from Helsinki, Finland. He moved away from home when he was only 15, so he was forced to grow up quickly. After primary school, he graduated as a carpenter and a goldsmith from a trade school. He always tells crazy stories about the times he spent living in a dorm in Tammisaari, a Swedish speaking village in Finland. Currently, he is studying design. He states that he does not know where he is going at the moment, but that he does not feel stuck where he is. Theo sees graduating from the school as a milestone to catch. He still has not found a goal to focus on, but some of his dreams would be to build a new business and to search the options that are available for him.

He describes his personality as caring, positive and laid-back. He states that he can be very hardworking, but only when motivated. He also sees himself as a quite private person; he has many layers to himself, and sometimes he is kind of hard to make acquaintance with. On the other hand, he is also very social. He tells that he satisfied with his life, but always strives to be the best version of himself.

He does not know how to describe his style. In the past, he had all kinds of different phases, that now form a mix of stuff he likes to wear. He sees good quality as a big part in his style. Theo states that maybe if he would be wealthier, his style would be very different. He tells that he is not that expressive with clothes, but buys clothes with thought. Theo states that clothes are not a big part of his life. He tells that he does not mind ‘crappy clothes’, but that on the other hand, fresh clothes makes him feel good. He says that he has respect towards the formal etiquettes of clothing and always takes them in consideration. He tells that the environment he is in affects his fashion choices massively.

His favourite piece of clothing, other than his self-made jewellery, is his mother’s great grandfather’s jumper. It is at least 100 years old, made with green, black and white wool, and it is a little bit broken and frayed. It has much sentimental value, and it carries many memories. Theo tells that no one ever sees him wearing it because he never wears it going out.

In five years, Theo sees himself working perhaps in a design agency. He wants to maintain the current feeling of not being stuck where he is. Thirty years
from now, he states, he will be the same age as his mom right now. Life can change fast, and anything could happen, but he hopes to be happy also then.

Theo says he tries not to hate anything or anyone. On the first hand, what comes to clothing, he dislikes cheap stuff, because he thinks it is usually less durable and made with poor-quality. On the other hand, he does not want to judge people based on what they are wearing; he even states that he appreciates people wearing clothes that are generally categorised as ‘ugly’. Theo appreciates people going out of the norms and expressing themselves through their clothes. He also notes that he does not like the perception that clothes with high prices always come with good quality. In Theo’s opinion, selfishness and stubbornness are the reasons the world is messed up. He states that he sometimes feels he dislikes people in general. He emphasises that we need more empathy in this world.

Theo tells about a memory, that despite its controversiality is very dear to him:

"I was probably four or five years old. We were playing on a beach somewhere in Greece, jumping into the waves. Suddenly a big wave comes and just takes me underwater. My mouth fills with seawater and sand. At first, I panicked, but after a while, this sense of calmness takes over; a euphoric feeling that I still to this day remember vividly. Somehow, I managed to get back to the beach from the water and ran to my grandma and said: 'I am in heaven'. I thought that I had seen the light coming from the end of the tunnel."

Theo’s ideal self would be to become the best possible version of him. He wants to be able to speak his mind and say the things that need to be said. He wants to grow towards a more brave and bold version of him, and stop doubting himself.

Theo states that the most important thing in life is to be happy. He does not see himself as a materialistic person and really wants to emphasise, that there is always a difference in loving yourself and being selfish. He wants people to realise that nobody is perfect, and nobody is better than others.

4.1.4 Emmi

"Whether I run, walk or crawl, I’ll set my goals and achieve them all.”

Emmi comes from Finland, and she is 24 years old. She was born in Tampere, but later moved to Helsinki to work and study, and that is where she stayed. Just this year, she graduated as a Master in Management and Sustainable Business and works currently in a sustainable fashion start-up. She tells about her worries about the job since the pandemic is taking a toll on small businesses. She is afraid she will be unemployed in the near future. She states that she does not know where she is going, but her recent trip to Los Angeles made her interested in maybe living in the US for a while.

She describes herself as an introvert and emotional. She does not see the world as a compilation of hard facts but lives according to her feelings and tries to search harmony in her surroundings. She always tries to see the good in people and the situations she is in. She tells that she is always eager to avoid any kind of conflict; she is always open-minded and flexible. She is also very hard-working towards the things that motivate her. She would not describe herself as positive since she is not afraid to show the bad and dark sides of herself to others.

Emmi describes her style as timeless and classic. She likes to collect fashion staples that never go out of style, but also colourful pieces to break the subdued palette. She loves unique vintage pieces. She tells that after her trip to Los Angeles she found herself being drawn towards a style that is more “street hype” than it used to be; sneakers, oversizes t-shirts, skater style.

She states that clothes are like a second skin to her; she uses them to express her moods and emotions, and they give her comfort and courage. Her favourite piece of clothing is her beige Burberry trench. She had always said to herself that she is going to buy it when she has enough money, but one day she walked into a drift shop and found the same exact trench ten times cheaper: the ultimate drift shop find! It is timeless, classic, and goes with every outfit.

In five years, Emmi sees herself working with sustainable business. She wishes to have rooted herself somewhere, maybe owns an apartment, and feels more “adult”. In thirty years, she wants to go around the world and live in multiple
places. Emmi wishes to have a family, but only a husband and maybe a dog, no children. Alternatively, maybe she will be living still in a commune with her besties, who knows.

She despises people with too many problems; always pitying themselves and not putting their lives together. She also hates fast fashion and superficial people that do not think further than how they look. She also cannot stand influencers who make unsustainable decisions and market them to their audience.

She tells about a dear memory:

"We used to go camping in the north of Norway with my family. We would drive the whole way there from our home and sleep either in the car or in a tent. Once we parked our car next to a cliff in Norway. We had to put rocks next to the tires to prevent the car from sliding away. Then we just stood there on top of the cliff and looked at the view. I realised then how beautiful the world is."

Emmi tells she wants to be a person who spreads love and positivity around her. She would love everyone around her to feel happy and comfortable. She states that the most important thing in life is love. Love for yourself and the world around you.

*Report based on an interview in Paris 25th of March 2020 (video call).*
4.1.5 Giulia

*Pressure makes me run faster.*

Giulia comes from Modena, Italy. She moved to Milan a few years ago, and now she is living in Paris. Next year she will be moving to Stockholm for an exchange. In Modena, she was living a regular life going to high school and doing scouting and other hobbies. When she moved to Milan, her life changed a lot, especially because she was now living with her friends. She states that she is going where the world is leading her. She wants to search for challenges to broaden her perspective further. She thinks that finding new experiences is fundamental to better learn about herself and the world around her.

Giulia describes herself as social, reliable, loyal and funny. She is also very organised, sometimes moody, and a “thinker” person, both creatively and logically. She thinks her style is very regular; not very eccentric but still somehow original. She is wearing clothes that make her feel comfortable and herself, and that match together well. She is usually drawn to dark colours like black and navy blue and likes to mix them with denim. She states that she likes colours, but not when it comes to her clothes. The only colourful piece she has is an ocher-coloured sweater. Her style is immaculate and organised, so it represents well her personality. She states that wearing the things that feel right make her feel comfortable because they reflect who she is. She describes that she sometimes feels weird in certain clothes because she feels they are not “her”.

Giulia thinks clothes play a significant role in peoples lives; they are a tool to communicate the way you are to other people if they are ready to perceive it. She tells that she used to buy many clothes, but stopped for ethical and environmental reasons. Nowadays, she tries to be a more conscious buyer. She buys clothes less frequently and tries to go for more expensive, but durable options. Giulia also loves second hand and only wears Levi’s jeans found from vintage shops.

Giulia sees herself in Milan five years from now. She is either living with her boyfriend or her friends and working in the design field. She wishes her life to be like a sitcom; hanging out with her friends and having fun together. In thirty years she sees herself maybe back in Modena, maybe married. She probably has kids and is working with something she loves to do.
Giulia tells that she loves original thinkers and dislikes common sense. She does not like people that are careless towards everything, and refuse to see the problems around them. What comes to food, she hates parsley. She states that something she would never wear are trashy dresses she used to wear as a teenager. She does not like skirts, because they make her uncomfortable, and she cannot stand cheap plastic fabrics.

Giulia tells about a dear memory from her childhood:

“When I was a kid, we would go to Tuscany every summer with my family. We would stay in these villas that I thought were magical. I remember always playing and running around barefoot in the yard. I always impatiently waited to get to the beach.”

Her ideal self is happy and positive. She also wants to be a little stressed all the time, because it makes her run faster and be more productive. She wishes to stay as a down-to-earth person and be brave enough to fight for what she wants and what she stands for. She wants to feel achievement and fulfilment.

She states that the most essential things in life are friends and family, fulfilment, education, and social responsibility. And of course love and dogs. She sees her father as a role model and also reminds, that you can always learn something new from your friends.

5 Production Process

After the interviews, the production process can get started. To further summarise each persona, constructing mood boards with keywords is helpful. The mood boards also help to visualise the collection as a whole and help to set a framework for colours and styles for the five different patterns. After, sketches are made based on the mood boards. The finished mood boards and sketches will be shown to the interviewees to get feedback and new ideas to develop the sketches further. After this, the sketches are edited to their final versions and sent to be printed in a factory.

In this case, since each scarf is designed one-by-one and made uniquely to a certain person, the need for coherency can be questioned, besides it being hard to accomplish. However, even if the scarfs are being made individually to each client, assembling some kind of portfolio would be needed to communicate the concept forward to future clients. In this case, the collection should look unified but also versatile to further communicate the idea of customisation. Thus, creating scarfs that work together as a collection can help to communicate the idea and showcase the ability of the designer to create coherent unities. The role of constructing a collection in this production process needs to be noted and kept in mind while
creating the patterns.

Pirita Lauri (2017) discusses the meaning of collection coordination. She states that having a well-coordinated collection is a fundamental factor in the field of fashion and textile, but that it is rather limitedly studied. Unified collection varies from individually produced products to items that entirely depend on other pieces of the collection. She reminds that the level of coordination and the aim for the collection needs to be defined before starting the production. Lauri (2017, p.31) defines a coordinated collection as follows: “a collection is an inspiring and cohesive entity that is bigger than the sum of its individual parts”. In the case of this project, the scarfs are designed to individuals. Thus the coordination of the collection comes from the handprint of the designer, as well as from the concept behind the scarfs. The aim of the scarf collection is to create a new type of approach to textile collections, where different personas, as in the patterns, work together as a versatile unity. The collection thus needs to be constructed from patterns that compliment each other. In addition, the collection needs to represent the differences between the personas to highlight the concept of unique customisation. Since these scarfs are meant to be worn separate from each other, the collection comes to life when seen on the individuals that the scarfs were made for.

5.1 Mood boards
Creating mood boards during a creative process is a widely used method in the field of textile design and fashion. Mood boards can help to further define and communicate the ideas and atmospheres to clients, as well as help the designers themselves to clear out their complicated concept into a more usable form. Collins Dictionary (2020) describes the concept of mood boards as follows: “Mood board is a board used by designers on which samples of various colours and textures are mounted to help in deciding which elements complement each other.”

Pirita Lauri (2017) has done some research about mood boards. She states that the role of mood boards is crucial in defining guidelines for the design process, as well as serving as a source of inspiration. A mood board offers the designer a clear framework, and utilising the created mood board in the process helps the designer to stay on the desired path. Lauri states that working without a mood board, as in working without any limitations or base story, is difficult.
Due to the complexity of each persona, sketching can become tough since there are many different directions one may take based on a person. Constructing mood boards is helpful in this part of the process since they help to summarise each persona. By starting with something more conceptual, like mood boards, the basic structure of the collection can be detected right from the start of the project, which helps to direct the project to the desired direction. Also, the mood boards can help to further visualise the ideas of the sketches, when presenting them to the interviewees for feedback.

5.2 Sketches

After a basic view of each piece in the collection is defined with the help of the mood boards, sketching can begin. These pattern sketches are made with an iPad Pro and an Apple Pencil on an application called Procreate. This application works well to create different kinds of textures and finishes with hand-painted feel but without the need to convert the drawing from paper to digital form. Also, due to the current state of the Covid-19 pandemic, working with as little physical material as possible was crucial.

Some of the personas were easier to sketch with than others since the visual identity was more apparent for certain people. For example, ideas for Alexis’ pattern were created relatively quickly, whereas it was more challenging to capture the complex and multidimensional universe with Emmi. The five different people gave an insight into five different design processes; some of them were easier and straightforward than others.

Pirita Lauri (2017, p.33) introduces a concept of the two roles of the designer in the pattern design process: the artist-designer and the editor-designer. The artist-designer experiments and creates on a level of individual patterns. At the same time, the editor-designer looks at the work from a rather wide perspective, making sure that the coordination between the patterns is relevant and the collection answers well to the base story. Switching between these two roles gives the designer a comprehensive perspective regarding the project, and helps to perfect the required level of collection coordination and creativeness.
Moodboard 1: Pia

- adventurer
- brave
- calm
- independent
- graceful
- wild soul
- deep
Moodboard 2: Alexis

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Moodboard 3: Theo

- put-together
- wise
- ocean breeze
- relaxed
- mysterious
- sophisticated

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5.3 Consulting the Clients

The next step after sketching is to get back together with the client, in this case, the five interviewees, for feedback and ideas. Due to the pandemic, it was not possible to meet the clients face-to-face, which maybe would have ensured more open and deeper conversation about the scarf designs. Instead, the conversation was arranged via messages. To prep the client for the pattern sketches, the mood boards were shown and explained before showing the sketches. All the participants gave positive feedback about the patterns and felt like the patterns succeeded in summarising parts of their personality. Interestingly, almost all of the participants found even more connections between themselves and the patterns than were first intended.

The first interviewee consulted was Alexis. He liked the pattern right away and said the colours are perfect. He stated that the pattern has the same feeling to it than his Instagram feed. This was very interesting since his Instagram account was not part of the research for his pattern. The next client consulted was Theo. He said he likes the muted, mysterious colours of the scarf, and how the simple pattern has a rough touch to it. He wanted to see some of the other sketches as well but stated that he liked the first one and wanted to stick with it. Giulia liked her sketch as well. She stated that she agreed with the artsy and unfinished feeling of the pattern, and loved the neutral colours. After being presented with the option to change something about the pattern, she told some small ideas, but after stated she did not want to change the pattern after all.

After showing Pia her pattern, she also could indicate connections in it that were not thought about in advance; she could see some religious connotations in it, even though that was not something that was talked about during the interview. She also said she loved the flowery but sophisticated look. She suggested, that since she wanted the scarf to be bigger, adding even more details to it would make it even better. She was the only one of the interviewees that suggested a change to the pattern. The last person left to consult was Emmi, who immediately loved her pattern. She stated that she adores the colours and would not change a thing.

During the consulting process, the options for different sizes and materials for the scarfs were sent to the participants. After each person had chosen the material and the size best for them, the finalisation with the patterns could begin.

To enable a luxurious and soft feel to the scarfs, the use of silk was
suggested to the clients. Räisänen et al. (2017) describe that silk is made from the filament fibre of the capsule of the silkworm. Silk is a relatively durable material with an extremely soft touch and is thus an excellent clothing material. Another option suggested to the clients was a modal and cashmere blend. Räisänen et al. (2017) describe cashmere (WS) as one of the most expensive textile materials. It is made from the fine hair of the cashmere goat and used mostly in knitwear, scarfs or suit fabrics. Modal (CMD) is a cellulose-based material that is produced similarly to viscose (CV), but due to its high density, it offers more durable properties. Modal is mostly used in washable clothing such as under- and nightwear.

Emmi, Alexis and Theo chose a thin silk satin (100% silk), Pia a medium-thick silk satin (100% silk), and Giulia a modal cashmere blend (90% Modal, 10% cashmere).

5.4 Finishing and Printing
After the consulting, the final touches were made to the patterns. Most of them only needed a minimal cleaning and touching up the details, except for Pia, whose pattern was modified a little bit more. Letting the clients choose the size and material for the scarf before finishing the patterns was crucial since it affects the size and scale of the patterns. For example, Theo’s pattern’s scale needed to be resized. The size of the scarf also affects its usability, since it can be styled differently from small pocket scarfs to bigger full-length scarfs. After finishing all the small edits to the patterns, they were sent to the factory to be printed.

The choice to use digital printing was due to efficient and easy production, especially in small quantities. Eeva Heikkinen (Pellonpää-Forss 2018) states that digital textile printing enables exact result. Because it does not require the creation of a printing screen, the production of small quantities is also economically efficient. Constructing screens for singular prints is both time-consuming and unsustainable. Digital printing is comparable to regular printing on paper, and it uses the same CMYK-colour palette (consists of Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Key) with additional colours added to widen the colour range.

The factory chosen to print the scarfs uses reactive colours for digital printing. Using reactive colour enables a comfortable touch to the fabric, as the dye absorbs into the fibres of the fabric, and unlike pigment colour, does not stay on the surface.
affecting the feel of the finished fabric. Heikkinen (Pellonpää-Forss 2018) describes how the fabric is first prepped for better printing result (enables the colour to attach to the fabric and disables smudging), and the reactive colour dye is printed directly on the fabric. After the printing is finished, the dye is fixed on the fabric, usually with hot water steam, and then washed. The solvents, washing techniques, and temperatures used vary due to the dye colours, as well as the material of the base fabric. Eeva Heikkinen (Pellonpää-Forss 2018) states that the material and finishing of the fabric affects the final dyeing result, making the colours more vibrant or muted, with varying amount of absorption of the dye.

Digital printing does not require special preparation of the digital form of the design, like colour separation. The design can be scaled and constructed freely to match the needs of the customer. Heikkinen (Pellonpää-Forss 2018) states that sometimes the printed colour finish can differ from the colour designed on the computer screen. Thus, the designer needs to be careful when choosing the colour settings. She suggests that one way to fix this problem would be to make test prints, but in this case, there was no time to include this in the process. The printing factory offers a function in their website to test how your patterns look printed before placing the order, as well as multiple example pieces to help evaluate the colour payback. Happily, the final printing result succeeded to duplicate the intended colour scheme close to perfect.
Finished Pattern 5: Giulia

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6  I FEEL YOU
GIULIA
7 Summary

The excessive ways of consumption in the field of fashion textiles is one of the biggest environmental crisis we face nowadays. The material resources of the planet have run low, and the idea of slow fashion pieces, that keep themselves in style has been a rising trend. Experimenting with design methods, that produce a slower cycle of consumption is an exciting and relevant subject for any designer.

This thesis has performed an example of how using an empathic, emotional approach to the design process; the designer can create something unique, and worth cherishing for the customer. In empathic design methods, the designer uses a resource that is natural to us as humans: the ability to interact with the people around us emotionally. On the first hand, the research process done for empathy in design enabled the designer to further connect into the emotional ways of creating for the user’s needs. On the other hand, the research executed for emotional user-product relationships helped further to empathise the users’ interactions with the product, even after the design process would be finished. These two viewpoints: designer in the universe of the empathic design process, and the designer in the universe of the user-product interaction enable an interesting set of understanding and tools to base future works on.
Some discussion can be raised based on the production process. The first point to reflect on would be the fact that the customers were acquaintances before starting the design process. This is both a good thing since the empathic design methods used could remain simple since also former interactions could be used as data for the creation. This is also a downside since this might not entirely reflect the reality of how deep-diving the methods would need to be to succeed in creating similar results with total strangers. This part still needs to be tried out and researched in the future. Also, the creation process could have been communicated to the customers beforehand to enable better cooperation and smoother steps. The aim is also to continue following how the finished scarfs succeed in bonding with their wearers as time goes by.

In the end, all of the researched subjects of this bachelor thesis can be deepened and further researched. This type of thinking is becoming more and more relevant in the textile design field as urgent steps need to be taken in the industry regarding sustainability and slower consumption cycle. Creating products that bond to the user and become dear to them, both can help the textile industry to become more sustainable, as well as make the designer’s work that much more meaningful.
8 References


Participants, ages and home location

Pia, 24, Paris
Alexis, 22, Paris
Theo, 25, Helsinki
Emmi, 24, Helsinki
Giulia, 22, Milano

Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself: Who are you? Where do you come from? Where are you going?

How would you describe your personality?

How would you describe your style? Do you feel like it is a representation of your personality?

What is the meaning of clothes to you?

What is your favourite piece of clothing and why?
Where do you see yourself in the future (5 years or 30 years from now)?

What do you hate / dislike?

Tell me about a dear memory from your childhood.

What is your ideal self?

What do you think is the most important thing in life?

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Figure 2: Empathic design approaches. Graphics: Anna Poikonen, based on Niinimäki and Koskinen (2011, p.182).

Figure 3: Clothing as an influence on perceptions. Anna Poikonen.

Figure 4: Clothing as an influence on behaviour. Anna Poikonen.

Figure 5: Clothing as an influence on identity and self. Anna Poikonen.