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Creative cut: plenary

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## **Creative Cut Plenary**

**Power, E.J. and Almond, K.**

So what did this year's conference bring?

It opened with an insightful and inspirational key note from Timo "Slow down – we are creative". In this presentation the importance of tacit knowledge within creative disciplines was emphasised.

Slow the pace and value the workmanship involved in crafting the 3D garment form.

Timo re-defined copying as a means of learning, providing inspiration, rather than reproduction. After all what is innovation? Electric powered vehicles are perceived as new and novel – but the humble milk float has been around for decades. Innovation is quite often taking what currently exists and transforming it through a new application. Re-inventing the old with a contemporary twist – a concept that we embrace wholeheartedly in the fashion industry.

Timo challenged the misconceived perception that technology is not creative and recognised that there is a movement away from fast fashion, which allows time, but more importantly space to explore and experiment leading to new insights, perspectives and approaches. Again this was re-enforced through the pre-dinner conversation with Shelly and Juliana. Discussing the successful relationship between the designer and pattern cutter. Another theme carried through the conference as we are moving to design teams with shared ownership for design, development and make. Timo emphasised the role fashion plays in society as a whole – Interdisciplinarity is becoming more important and it is paramount that we prepare our learners for this step change. Design Council, Royal Academy of Engineering, Institute of Management and Research Council UK are all talking about this. Again a theme carried through the conference streams through, fashion and wellbeing, apparel for disaster resilience and health applications (to name a few).

The 2016 creative cut conference provided a mirage of ideas and novel concepts in creative pattern cutting, which upstaged the previous gathering both in terms of theoretical rigour and innovative practice. The conference highlighted some re-occurring themes such as the use of unconventional methods to create 3D forms. This was supported from both a pedagogical perspective and by theorising practice based approaches. A few highlights include the analysis of how a box can become a garment. The presentation identified the frustration of design students when learning technical patternmaking skills and expressed the view that new styles of learning are required to ensure talented creative students reach their potential using an array of pattern construction techniques including those that are deemed to be non-traditional and unorthodox. Many authors called for an exposure to a variety of creative pattern techniques as standard in fashion design education; since learner will find a method, technique that resonates and underpins later theoretical development.

Such approaches in creative pattern cutting have been presented in the last two days. What about the "kinetic garment construction theory" which challenged the conventional tailoring mix. This newly developed theory studied the intersection between fabric and the human form, using the grain of the fabric ingeniously to take creative pattern cutting to the next level. Other work has been presented that highlights the pressing issue of inconsistencies in the sizing of fashion and apparel and identifies

this as one of the most influencing factors in clothing dissatisfaction, often leading to high levels of garment returns. The over-reliance on material properties to solve fit issues has been criticised: since fit issues could be solved using creative pattern techniques. We have also explored the recent growth in zero-waste construction. Case studies have been presented to ascertain if the zero-waste approach is transferable to commercial production in different sectors. It is of no surprise that in this presentation the relationship between the designer and pattern cutter was discussed in some detail regarding creative ownership and equity. Within the conference it has been quite rightly recognised the creative contribution of both, and many have suggested that new methods of creative pattern cutting are required which require a creative partnership with new epistemologies.

We have explored traditional construction techniques used by Japanese designers including, deconstruction and origami (to name a few). This has resulted in a new understanding and theoretical perspective in creative design and an appreciation of different cultural approaches. Argument have been presented that creative pattern cutting should be a specialism and not part of a broader fashion design curriculum, a view gaining esteem with some universities now offering this as an academic discipline. It has been recognised that a seamless integration is needed between the designer and pattern cutter to reach new heights in apparel, fashion and clothing construction. One of the prevailing themes in this year's conference was the value of "learning by doing" (active learning) and the art of reflection. Bringing us back to the value of tacit knowledge and its importance within our discipline. This was embedded into all the tracks through professional practice, pedagogical developments and engaging research. The networks developed through the conference underpin some of the strengths of peer learning and moving forward the benefits of interdisciplinarity as a means of creative development will be an emerging theme, leading to the introduction of new skills, epistemologies, and creative impact leading to a new era in fashion design.

So we leave you today with a synthesis of the 2016 creative cut conference:

We require:

- Time to create
- Space to network and collaborate
- Vision to inspire learners to explore

The challenge is to think differently – what is innovation in creative pattern cutting? The conference has opened much debate and we hope that this provided the foundation for further research and collaboration in our discipline and beyond. We have certainly enjoyed this year's conference and look forward to reading in more detail some of the conference presentations that are to be published in a special edition of the International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education later in the year.

So thank you all for your valuable contribution in making this year's conference a success. If you do wish to continue the discussion twitter feed: #adaccc1.

Many Thanks and we look forward to welcoming you back to the next creative cut conference.