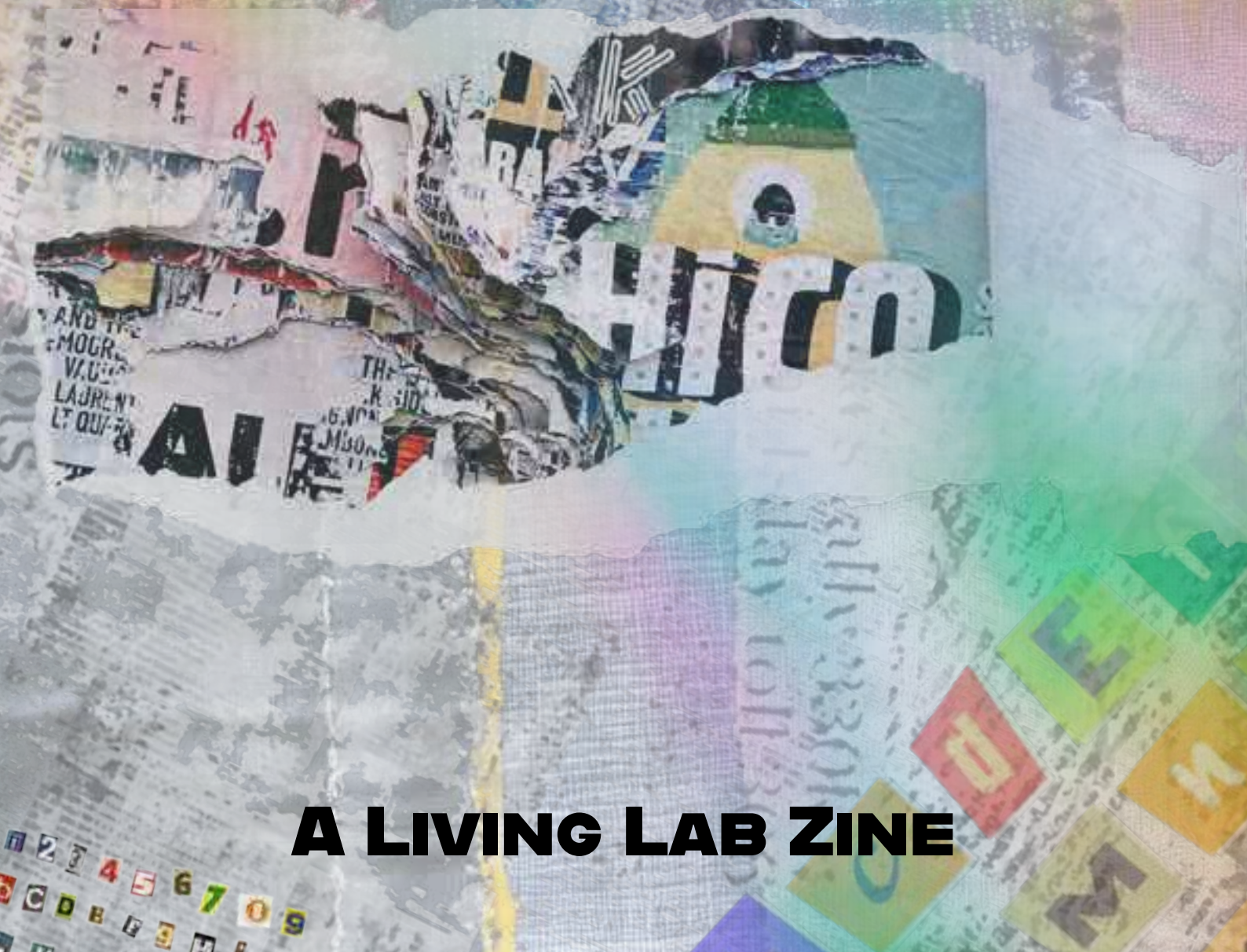


Out With the New In With the Old



A LIVING LAB ZINE

Editors' Welcome

We live in a fast world, life passes by quickly. Unfortunately, fast doesn't always mean good and sometimes slowing down and appreciating every carefully stitched thread and intricately designed pattern is what is needed to appreciate the beauty and art that every piece of clothing carries within it.

The aim of this zine is to encourage you, the reader, to think about your own clothes and ask yourself if there is a story behind them that you would be proud to tell. How do your clothes represent your identity, your beliefs and your impact on the planet?

We are grateful to every single person that helped make this zine possible, your time and effort have been essential. Thank you to the Living Lab community, especially Cath and Martha who have trusted our vision and have offered support at every stage. Thank you to Abbie, Poppy, Hollie and Emma for your help and ideas. And finally, thank you to everyone reading. Consuming with intention is in.

With Love,
Luciana & Lydia





The Living Lab is a network of staff and students at YSJ that explores local ecological justice issues. Through interdisciplinary collaboration across



schools, the Living Lab can contribute towards a more just and sustainable future and strengthen our community's resilience in a changing climate.

Get Involved!

The Living Lab is an ever-growing network and welcome informal enquiries about the project.

There are many ways to get involved in the Living Lab as a student, staff member or external organisation. If you would like to know more or to explore opportunities, email c.heinemeyer@yorksja.ac.uk.

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The Second-Hand Revolution

Buying second-hand clothing used to carry a heavy stigma, alongside being associated more with necessity than choice. However, today that perception has been turned on its head. Charity shops, resale apps, and community set-up clothing swaps are a huge reason why the second-hand fashion market has boomed within the last few years. Much of the population are showing off their thrifted outfits, and resale apps are booming. What was once niche is now beginning to reshape how an entire generation thinks and uses fashion. Mindset is at the heart of this change within society, with consumers becoming more conscious of what they buy, where from, and how often it is worn. This movement is a huge step toward sustainability, affordability, and individuality.

Thrift culture is fundamentally about reusing and reimagining clothes. Traditionally, thrifting was seen to discover low-cost basics, but now it is a key place to discover vintage pieces and one-of-a-kind items that cannot be replicated by fast fashion. Social media also played a huge part in elevating second-hand fashion, turning it into an identity and form of self-expression. Outfit videos, hauls, and challenges have become the centre of reframing second-hand clothing as a creative outlet and something to be proud of rather than something to shy away from.

Thrift culture is booming due to several forces. One main driving force is the environmental impact of fast fashion and the ethos of 'reduce, reuse and recycle'-ing your clothes. According to Business Insider, 85% of all textiles go to waste each year, sending debris into water systems, highlighting the overproduction of brands to appeal to mass, ever-changing markets. Affordability is another key factor when considering the rise in thrift culture. When considering the cost of living continuing to rise and garment quality declining, resale apps and charity shops offer access to good-quality clothing at lower prices. It also appeals to individuality. In a constantly changing social sphere, creating a unique, personal wardrobe is difficult and expensive when shopping at big-name retailers. Instead, thrifting and clothing swaps offer something unique and different to what you would find in high street retailers. Social media trends also weigh in massively, as garments and trends from the 1990s and 2000s recently resurfaced, meaning that cyclical fashion becomes more authentic and less wasteful.

Resale apps and digital platforming bring the idea of thrifting to a global and more accessible level. Apps such as Depop, Vinted and eBay allow users to buy and sell clothing with ease. These platforms effortlessly blend shopping with social media, curating an algorithm-based feed to show users more of what they search for. It also uses filters and search bars for optimisation, allowing buyers to search for certain sizes, colours, brands or styles. These apps are key for those wishing to monetise on their unworn garments that would've otherwise been thrown away. However, it isn't without complications, as sometimes the asking prices on these apps can exceed for trending items. There is also the continuous fault of the resale of fast fashion; Shein, Zara, and similar garments. While it does extend the life of the item, it still promotes overconsumption if users treat purchasing these fast fashion items as a feasible cycle.

Thrift culture, at its core, is about identity, as it allows people to step outside of mainstream fashion cycles and craft something more personal to themselves. As thrifted fashion tends to be much more unpredictable than the newest fashion trends, it guarantees that not everyone will have the same piece. This translates online to a carefully curated aesthetic digital storefront which reflects individual taste, which embraces a mix-and-max approach by blending different eras and influences in an organic rather than prescribed way.

Thrifted fashion doesn't come without its criticism. As second-hand shopping becomes more popular, prices have increased, which makes them less accessible for those who rely on them for day-to-day living. There are also many concerns regarding 'gentrification'. For example, Refinery29 reports that some Depop shops mark up prices from £3 to £30. These vintage shops cater towards trend-conscious consumers by putting their goods at higher price points, shifting the affordability that once defined secondhand shopping. Furthermore, while resale and thrifting are often framed as a sustainable option, they are not the complete solution. Without a further reduction in clothing consumption, the environmental impact of fashion remains incredibly significant. The Geneva Environment Network states that the fashion industry is the second-biggest consumer of water and is responsible for 2-8 % of global carbon emissions.

On the plus side, secondhand fashion is still growing. Sustainability is the main priority; therefore, we can expect to see a form of reduce, reuse, or resale being integrated into high street shops within the next few years. Long-term, Thrift culture offers hope for a brighter, better model of fashion, one where garments are designed to last and shared and kept around as long as possible. Thrifting, clothing swaps and resale apps are changing more than just how people shop; they are changing how people think about value, ownership and style. What was once overlooked is now celebrated to express individuality and reduce waste. In a social sphere, secondhand fashion offers something different: a reminder to slow down and rethink where our fashion goes.

Audi Dog

Audi Dog!

Eats Kibbles
Vegan treats
Good boy nibbles
Audi Dog

Wicker basket
Hand made toys
Sheepskin blanket
Audi Dog

In the Audi!
Great trip out
safe in my cage
Audi Dog

Getting older
Ramp for the car
Off to the vets
Audi Dog

Expensive treatment
(He's worth it)
Doggy physio
Audi Dog

Final day
(we'll miss him so much)
Can we get another?
Audi Dog

This wasn't written by
Brishti Begum, aged 11, Gazipur, Bangladesh

Clive Downing

Clive Downing is a student taking the Environment and Social Justice Master's degree. He is keenly interested in reducing the appalling impact of neoliberalism and consumerism on equality and the environment. This poem was inspired by the film Slumdog Millionaire.



As a second-year BA English Literature student, much of my work is shaped by reading, particularly novels that engage with real-world issues. Over time, this has developed into a broader interest in sustainability, not only as an environmental concern but as a way of thinking about value, use, and meaning.

Literature has played a key role in shaping this perspective. It challenges the idea that a book is "just words," and instead it reveals how texts hold histories, critiques, and lived experiences. With this piece specifically, I wanted to explore that same idea visually: how objects, like texts, can carry more meaning than their surface suggests. The starting point for this work came from that intersection between literature and sustainability. I had been reading texts that reflect on social and environmental issues, and I became interested in how meaning is constructed, not only through language, but through context. This led me to question how I might create something that embodies these ideas without contributing further to consumption. I wanted to create a project that encapsulated that theme but without creating excess waste. Rather than purchasing new materials, I set myself a constraint: to work only with items I already owned. This decision became central and crucial to the piece, shaping both its form and its message.

The process of making the work was rooted in reuse. The box itself is something I have used for storage for years and already carried its own sense of history and function. Inside it, I arranged a collection of objects drawn from different parts of my everyday life. The Monopoly pieces came from an old set that no longer had enough components to be playable. Similarly, the small plastic "burgers" were taken from another incomplete board game. These items, once part of systems designed for play and competition, had effectively become redundant. By incorporating them into the artwork, I was able to give them a new purpose. Instead of gathering dust, they have been reused and repurposed.

The book used in the piece also reflects this idea of transformation. It was too damaged to donate to a charity shop, and no longer suitable for its original function as a readable text. However, rather than discarding it, I used its pages as a foundation for the composition. In doing so, the book shifts from something to be read to something to be seen. But its presence still carries meaning. It continues to represent knowledge, narrative, and the themes I have been engaging with in my studies. This reinforces the idea that a book is never just "words" even in a fragmented or altered state, it retains its significance.

Bringing these materials together allowed me to connect two worlds: the conceptual world of literature and the physical world of objects. The board game pieces, money, and cards introduce ideas of value, consumption, and chance, while the book pages anchor the piece in themes of narrative and interpretation. Together they create a dialogue between how we assign meaning in texts and how we assign value in everyday life. Just as literature invites us to look beyond the surface of words, this piece encourages a reconsideration of the objects we often overlook.

Sustainability is embedded in both the process and the outcome of the work. By using only materials I already owned, I avoided contributing to waste or unnecessary consumption. More importantly, the piece reflects a mindset of reuse and reinterpretation. Items that might otherwise have been discarded, damaged books, incomplete games, unused storage, are instead reimaged. This approach aligns with a broader understanding of sustainability as not just a set of actions, but a way of thinking: one that prioritizes resourcefulness and the revaluation of what already exists.

On a wider level, the work engages with contemporary concerns about consumption and

excess. Many of the objects included are mass-produced and easily replaceable. Around 140,000 games of Monopoly are bought in the UK annually, and after five or six years most games are forgotten in attics or under beds once they are too damaged. They are designed for specific purposes, and once those purposes can no longer be fulfilled, they often lose their perceived value. By recontextualizing these items, the piece challenges that cycle. The piece suggests that usefulness and meaning do not have to be tied to original function, and that value can be reconstructed rather than replaced.

Ultimately, this piece is about seeing differently. It draws on my experience as a literature student, where meaning is constantly being interpreted and reimagined. At the same time, it reflects a commitment to sustainability through its materials and methods. By connecting these two areas, the work proposes that the way we read texts and the way we use objects are not so different. Both involve choices about attention, value, and care. And in both cases, there is always the possibility of finding new meaning in what we already have.



My Trousers Took Me on a Walk Today

My trousers took me on a walk today,
And people stared as they led me astray.
They made my legs long, and kept my strides strong
As they guided me along my way

My t-shirt told me I was cool,
Not to worry about stares or looking a fool.
Who cares about objections, to my band tee affections
After all, Oasis Rule

My shoes said you should stand tall,
But be careful, these platforms risk a fall,
But the feeling of towering, is oh so empowering,
I don't mind hazarding a sprawl

Today, my jewellery advised me to shine,
She told me to feel confident in the skin that is mine,
To hold my head high, to never be shy, and allow what must pass,
to pass by.

She said there is no guideline, no rulebook, or set design
That one must follow in order to align
So please wear us proudly, loudly if you can
For we will be your biggest fan

Lydia Berry

Retail in York: Recommendations!

- Expressions Vintage, 12 Walmgate, York, YO1 9TJ- Relied on by many for American sportswear pieces, Expressions has a fantastic range of styles and sizes in stock. Hundreds of ice hockey, American football, baseball and basketball jerseys are directly imported from the States every month to keep the regulars stocked up with shirts from their favourite players. Ask them about their request service - it means that you get first dibs if you want to request a certain jersey from a particular era.
- Rue B, 3-5 Minster Gates, York, YO1 7HL - Rue B's walls shimmer with the huge range of jewellery they stock and they've got thousands of pieces which is great for anyone buying, whether it's a Hand-made in England Sterling Silver piece or one of our many costume or fashion items you're looking for. People love their range of bangles, rings, earrings, bracelets and necklaces from St Justins and Danon's Hand Made Pewter range, brand's known for there charms and popular matt-look, offering something a little different.
- Sewcialising, 1 Coffee Yard, York, YO1 8AR - Sewcialising is an independent Fabric Shop and Sewing Studio located in the heart of York. As the city's premier destination for sewing and craft enthusiasts, we offer a stunning selection of fabrics, dressmaking patterns, lovely yarns, and sewing notions, along with charming gifts for crafters. Our welcoming studios host fun and inspiring workshops for beginners, intermediate sewers, and children, making it the perfect place to explore your creativity and connect with fellow makers.
- Spark, 17-21 Piccadilly, York, YO1 9PB - Home to the freshest selection of independent traders in Yorkshire. York's first choice destination for eating, drinking and shopping; our upcycled shipping containers incubate start-ups and provide a platform for growth and expansion. Located in the centre of York on Piccadilly, and open to locals and visitors six days a week, Tuesday to Sunday from 12pm. All ages are welcome, and fully wheelchair accessible. No booking is needed and entry is free.
- York Designer Dress Agency, 43 Fossgate, York, YO1 9TF - York Designer Dress Agency is unique to York, selling quality pre-loved designer, high end high street clothing and accessories at a fraction of the original price. Fashion conscious and forward thinking, sustainability is at the forefront of the York Designer Dress Agency ethos. The Dress Agency is a unique shopping experience with a welcoming and relaxed environment that celebrates all things fashion. Labels include Chanel, Mulberry, Jigsaw, Toast, Masai, Vivienne Westwood, Xenia, Grizas and so many more...

Lydia Berry & Luciana Medrano

What Do the Students and Staff at York St John Think about Fashion and Sustainability?

Fashion and sustainability can appear in conjunction in many different ways. We took to campus to interview YSJ students and staff and see how their styles shape them and what they think about the fast fashion crisis...

Catherine

What do you study/teach

Senior Lecturer in Performance and one of the core team at the living lab

How would you describe your personal style/Can you describe what you're wearing today?

Arts and humanities lecturer chic, I always like to have some colour, intense warmer colours as I wouldn't want to show up too boring to work! Today I am wearing my favourite boots, with shoelaces that were handwoven by my mother, so they adorn these shoes and make them very precious to me. I've got on green tights and a graphically embroidered skirt, I've got my favourite blouse and cardigan on, and I have this stone pendant with a celtic design that was given to me on my christening!

What makes you feel like yourself in this style?

I suppose I am top and tailed with things that have significance to me, I like to show energy in what I wear

What influences the way you dress?

Nobody is immune from fashion, we are all subconsciously influenced. I get caught by advertising like everyone else, but I feel by this stage of my life I am not particularly tapped into what people are wearing. I think about the weather and time of year, or what does this week need and increasingly I wear the same thing all week. I wear what I think will make me feel fortified for this week and its particular challenges.

Do you have any thoughts on fast fashion

It's a disaster. I am so heartened to see how many students and people generally are ready to really learn skills to combat it at a community level. I love repairing things, I love mending things, I like to have items that I have had since I was 18 that have a story and remind me of different times of my life, and I think everyone likes that and we are being duped into thinking that we need cascades of clothes from all over the world at low costs.



Maddy

What are you studying?

Film and TV

How would you describe your personal style/Can you describe what you're wearing today?

Mine changes a lot, sometimes I feel like I want to dress very casual and sometimes I want to dress up. Today I am wearing a white tank top and a red and white checked skirt

What makes you feel like yourself in this style?

I love the flowiness, I love lace

What influences the way you dress?

I like to look on pinterest a lot, and I get ideas from there

Do you have any thoughts on fast fashion

I don't like it, it really is a difficult one to navigate. I feel like everyone's idea of fast fashion varies. Micro trends that keep coming around that will end up being on vinted in two months is not great



Willow & Lauren

What are you studying?

Willow: Psychology

Lauren: Sports Journalism

Can you describe what you're wearing today?

Willow: I am wearing baggy low waisted jeans and a baby-tee. I would say my style is quite casual, like street style

Lauren: I am wearing baggy blue jeans, and then a long sleeve blue top with flowers on it. I normally wear jeans and a nice top.

What makes you feel like yourself in this style?

Willow: anything baggy or low waisted, and my sunglasses. Without my sunglasses I'm not me

Lauren: It depends on the day! I often wear graphic tees with a movie reference on it



What influences the way you dress?

Willow: sometimes it'll be things I see online that I think looks cool, but I really just try wear what makes me feel comfortable

Lauren: My sister will influence me, and I'll often buy clothes when I am with her and can get her opinion on it

Do you have any thoughts on fast fashion?

Willow: I shop on vinted, and I like to shop in charity shops. If I shop in a fast fashion brand I like to make sure I really like it and will continually wear it. I like to sew, so I try to change up clothes I dont wear as often into something I will wear instead of buying something new

Lauren: I avoid brands like shein or temu, and if I buy from places like H&M or Primark, it has to be something I can wear on multiple occasions and that matches everything I already own. I just try and be as conscious as I can when I am buying new clothes

Marcy

What are you studying?

Journalism

How would you describe your personal style/Can you describe what you're wearing today?

I feel like it varies, I just wear what I feel comfortable in, whatever is fun. Today I am wearing a very old white knit cardigan, and then these humongous, sort of zebra print pants, some chunky black boots and my silver bangles and jewellery

What makes you feel like yourself in this style?

I guess it depends on the day. Sometimes I want to wear really baggy and oversized clothes, sometimes I want to be very girly. I just try and make sure I'm wearing something for me rather than for someone else. I want to look in the mirror and think yea, I like this outfit, instead of worrying about how other people will judge my outfit

What influences the way you dress?

I try not to follow trends too much but sometimes it's a trend for a reason so, you know. I am influenced a



lot by musicians, I like this artist called Erica Badoo and she wears out there, big, bold clothes which I try and mimic a bit

Do you have any thoughts on fast fashion?

I hate it, it is horrible. It's very sad that people used to mend and repair clothes so they could have them for years and pass them down through families and now it's normal for someone to buy a dress and only wear it once before tossing it to landfill. All of the work that has gone into creating a piece of clothing, for it to go to waste is such a shame.

Kieron and Lauren

What are you studying

Kieron: computer science

Lauren: computer science

How would you describe your personal style/Can you describe what you're wearing today?

Kieron: I am wearing some nike court airs, some black suit pants and a camo t-shirt. My style is sort of minimal, comfortable but dressed up

Lauren: I have on blue jeans, blue Adidas trainers and a navy striped shirt. I don't have a specific style, sort of basic but comfortable

What influences the way you dress?

Kieron: I like to scroll on pinterest and get inspiration from there. I wouldn't say I'm necessarily influenced by trends, but I do tend to like a lot of the trends that crop up

Lauren: I like to look at what people wear in movies, that sort of influences me

Do you have any thoughts on fast fashion

Kieron: I'm not that big a fan, but I understand that for some people it's all they can afford. I think if you buy from fast fashion, you should make sure you wear the item and get good use from it. When I can afford to, I try to not buy from fast fashion brands

Lauren: I do agree, it's better not to buy from fast fashion brands but if you do, you should try to get good use from the item.



'In a World Obsessed With the Next New Thing, Be That Grandma'

I started going in charity shops more after I read that the average person buys sixty percent more clothing than fifteen years ago and keeps it for half as long. These statistics didn't sit right with me.

At first, I went for economic reasons, a way to save a quick penny, maybe for a student social or a birthday party. But after searching through shop after shop, excitement building at the thought of what would be in the next one - almost like a form of gambling, I began to understand that second hand shopping was less about saving money and began to sit with me on a more personal level.

Every garment had already belonged to someone else. The clothes carried histories in their seams, and this thought excited me - the thought of fashion becoming more human again.

One afternoon, I found a fuzzy coat hanging up, the fabric itself was soft and heavy, the sort of quality most high street shops no longer use. I imagined what the previous owner would have been doing in this coat, what it had been through and what that person had been through in the time they owned this coat.

I bought the coat for twelve pounds.

Fast fashion makes us believe that clothing is disposable. A shirt appears online on Monday, arrives by Thursday, and by next month feels outdated. You are not meant to love your clothes for long. You are meant to constantly reinvent yourself by following the next microtrend.

But the cost of fast fashion is not worth the thrill we get from these purchases. Garment workers sew dresses for wages that would not cover a student's coffee order these days. Sustainability reports attempt to soften this image, yet the factories continue to grow and clothes continue to get made at impossible speeds.

Most people already know this, including myself. We have read the headlines, watched the documentaries, clicked on articles about ethical consumption. Yet this knowledge does not change our behaviour. Because clothing allows us to announce who we are.

I think that is why charity shops have begun to resonate with me.

Over time, my relationship with clothing has slowed down. I have begun buying fewer things, but choosing them more carefully.

Friends sometimes joked that I dressed like "a grandma" which I accepted as a compliment. Yet occasionally this still hit deep.

Perhaps that is the problem. We have framed sustainable fashion as a sacrifice.

I wish people would see that there is intimacy in owning fewer things and knowing them well. Just like my new fuzzy coat, carrying me through my own journey, making my own history. Until its passed down to the next.

We often speak about sustainability as though the future depends entirely on it. This does indeed matter enormously. But understanding the value of an item can be the most important factor and that in itself is rather beautiful.

In a world obsessed with the next new thing, be that grandma.

DITCH SPOTIFY - DITCH AI

UPCYCLING CDS IS RETRO CHIC

WHY SAY GOODBYE TO SPOTIFY?

Spotify first debuted its most overated artist yet in 2014 ; AI. As of May 2026, over 94 million premium users have used the AI DJ tool provided on the platform, as stated on Spotify's official website. While spotify remains adamant that they do not use Artificial Intelligence to generate music, Spotify DJ requires generative features in order to custom make playlists acquired to each user's individual taste.



'AI IS PREDICTED TO LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN GLOBAL WATER USAGE FROM 1.1BN TO 6.6BN CUBIC METRES BY 2027. THIS IS EQUIVALENT TO MORE THAN HALF OF THE UK'S TOTAL WATER USAGE.'

- KENNY, RICH.

"AI'S THIRST FOR WATER - UK GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABLE ICT."

BLOG.GOV.UK, 17 SEPT. 2025

THE 2000'S ARE SOOO BACK BABY!

Creating your own playlists is fun, but decorating your own playlist is even better. All you need to make gorgeous Cd cases like these ones is scrap paper, markers, old articles or posters to cut images out of, glue and a friend to listen to your creation with. Tye and I like to use our time together to do arts and crafts whilst catching up on the week's gossip. Not only is upcycling a tool to improve your environmental footprint, it also unlocks the childhood whimsy of making art with your best friend.



MIXTAPE MAGIC:

We like our playlists to be specifcally for us, our own feelings perfectly wrapped up in a bow. So how do we curate our own mixes without spotify? My friend Tye recently showed me her own upcycled CDs (as pictured). You can purchase multi packs of blank CDs and blank cases for around £5 each or as an alternative to plastic you could craft CD sleeves from two squares of old clothes or fabric sewn or hot glued together . Blank Cds often hold up to 30 songs, giving you the perfect capacity for your own personal monthly playlist.

The Hidden Secret of a £5 T-Shirt

Who wouldn't be tempted into buying this t-shirt, it fits so beautifully, and I don't have one in this shade of yellow, after all, butter yellow is what everyone is wearing right now. Even better, it's only £5! I may as well pick up the same one in pink, seeing as it's so cheap...

We have all had the experience of walking into a clothes shop on the Highstreet and being tempted with shelves of affordable clothes, I mean, who wouldn't want to save money while keeping up with fashion trends? However, it is crucial to keep in mind that these low pricings may have a complicated web of hidden expenses. Many buyers have not been made aware of the possibility that these products have led to serious environmental damage and unethical labour practices.

The production of clothing, even a mere £5 baby tee, requires an enormous amount of water. For example, one kilogram of cotton can require up to 10,000 gallons of water. Because cotton-based clothing is so popular in the UK, enormous volumes of water are used every year. Additionally, the colours used in the creation of textiles frequently end up in water systems, poisoning rivers and seriously harming the environment. According to a report by the Environmental Agency, textile manufacture and processing are responsible for approximately 20% of industrial water pollution in the UK.

Another alarming statistic shows that approximately 300,000 tonnes of clothing are dumped in UK landfills annually. A disposable culture, in which clothing is worn only a few times before being thrown away, has been influenced by the fast fashion business. In addition to releasing dangerous pollutants into the air and land, many of these clothes are not biodegradable and can take decades to break down. As a result, the UK contributes significantly to the world's waste issues; it is one of Europe's biggest consumers of fast fashion.

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the air and land, many of these clothes are not biodegradable and can take decades to break down. As a result, the UK contributes significantly to the world's waste issues; it is one of Europe's biggest consumers of fast fashion.

Fast fashion does not only have a huge environmental impact, but a societal one too. Millions of women in South Asian and Indian garment factories are known to work long hours for pitiful wages in deplorable conditions. Women between the ages of 18 and 35 make up almost 80% of garment workers, according to the group Labour Behind The Label. This primary source of income is only about £100 per month in Bangladesh.

When the Rana Plaza plant in Bangladesh collapsed in 2013, the terrible and dangerous working conditions faced by garment workers came to the public's attention in a manner which they had not before. We came face to face with facts that many large fashion companies had been attempting to cover up for decades, successfully so. Women and children made up 80% of the 1,129 people that lost their lives when the factory collapsed. This served as a startling wake-up call for the fashion business at first. It brought unethical and dishonest labour practices to light. Some companies have improved their supply chains in the years after the catastrophe. Nonetheless, there are still a staggering number of companies that have not changed their unethical practices under which their products are manufactured.

The majority of fast fashion is targeted towards young women, and companies simultaneously rely on misusing young women to produce their products at warp-speed. No matter how big of a deal we believe we got, the consequences are extremely expensive. It appears that we are all being taken advantage of to differing degrees, and there are no winners. While feminism can mean many different things to various individuals, on a human level, it is about striving for equality, not just for ourselves, but also for those on the other side of the globe.

You do have the power to change things, despite the ever-familiar feeling of hopelessness that huge social issues like

this can lead us all to having. Purchasing ethical products is an excellent place to start, or donating your used clothing to charities in order to give it a second chance at life and makes fashion more environmentally friendly overall. There are numerous ways that we can help the men and women who work in the garment industry too. For some, that will entail pressuring businesses to take action and be transparent. For others, it means completely refraining from buying fast fashion. And for many, it simply means making every effort to participate in thrifting, upcycling, or second-hand purchases while being as mindful as possible, when it is possible.

All clothes have a story embedded in each and every stitch. We should be proud of the story that our clothes tell.

The Day That Trends Died

The day that social media trends died, nobody noticed at first. iPhones still buzzed and screens still lit up.

Influencers still smiled into their cameras, holding up their latest Zara purchase. Look at this. Must-have. Limited Drop. Fast Selling.

But the hooked unblinking eyes watching them started to blink. People scrolled.

By the end of the week, warehouses were full. Corporations spoke out the only way they knew how, by shouting. Louder campaigns and greener promises. Ethical. Timeless. Sustainable. Slogans. Empty promises. But nobody was asking and nobody was watching.

In quiet apartments people pulled old sweaters from the back of their drawers. A frayed sleeve was no longer a death sentence. Thread was bought and borrowed.

Feeds were full of sewing tutorials instead of polyester shirts. On the streets, clothing no longer spoke in unison. There were no seasonal palettes. No 'hot clothes of the summer'.

A coat patched at the elbows walked beside a dress with sewn sleeves. Nothing matched but everything belonged. Time slowed. People began to notice. The girl in front of you at the local coffee shop wears the jeans every Tuesday. Same crease at the knee, same soft fade at the pocket.

The weeks are measured by denim. The world without trends didn't collapse, it just settled.

Abbie Hicks

'Florable' on Second-Hand Shopping and Fashion

With a rise in interest in second-hand and vintage clothing, shops such as Florable have made their way off of Vinted and onto the street. For those not in the know, Florable is a small second-hand clothing store located in Spark, York. Yasmin, the owner, sources beautiful, sparkly, whimsical clothing featuring cult-favourite vintage brands such as Miss Sixty and Custo Barcelona, among others. Despite being less than a year old, Florable has cemented itself in York's second-hand clothing scene as a must-visit shop. Unlike most preloved retailers, Yasmin focuses mostly on women's fashion, with a strong emphasis on unique pieces with flair. The name, a fusion of 'floral', 'adorable', and 'affordable' summarises the shop's eclectic style well. I sat down with Yasmin to discuss her approach to fashion, her inspiration, and the local impact of her business.

On the creation of Florable:

Yasmin Arron-Gonzalez: My mum was very into her fashion. Growing up, she was a model in Spain. I used to see photos of her, and I thought "why aren't clothes like this anymore?" I'd go to Zara or H&M and everything was so boring. It was so hard to find the stuff I actually liked. Then, my mum showed me 'Sex and The City' and I realised this was what I needed. So, I started going to charity shops and I realised that is where the heat is - I'd have to go through loads of rails to find anything good though. Then I moved onto car boots and met some people in London who had their own second-hand shop. From that, I started selling on Depop and Vinted, and I just loved it. I loved finding new brands, and I was so inspired by the people around me.

On the future of Florable:

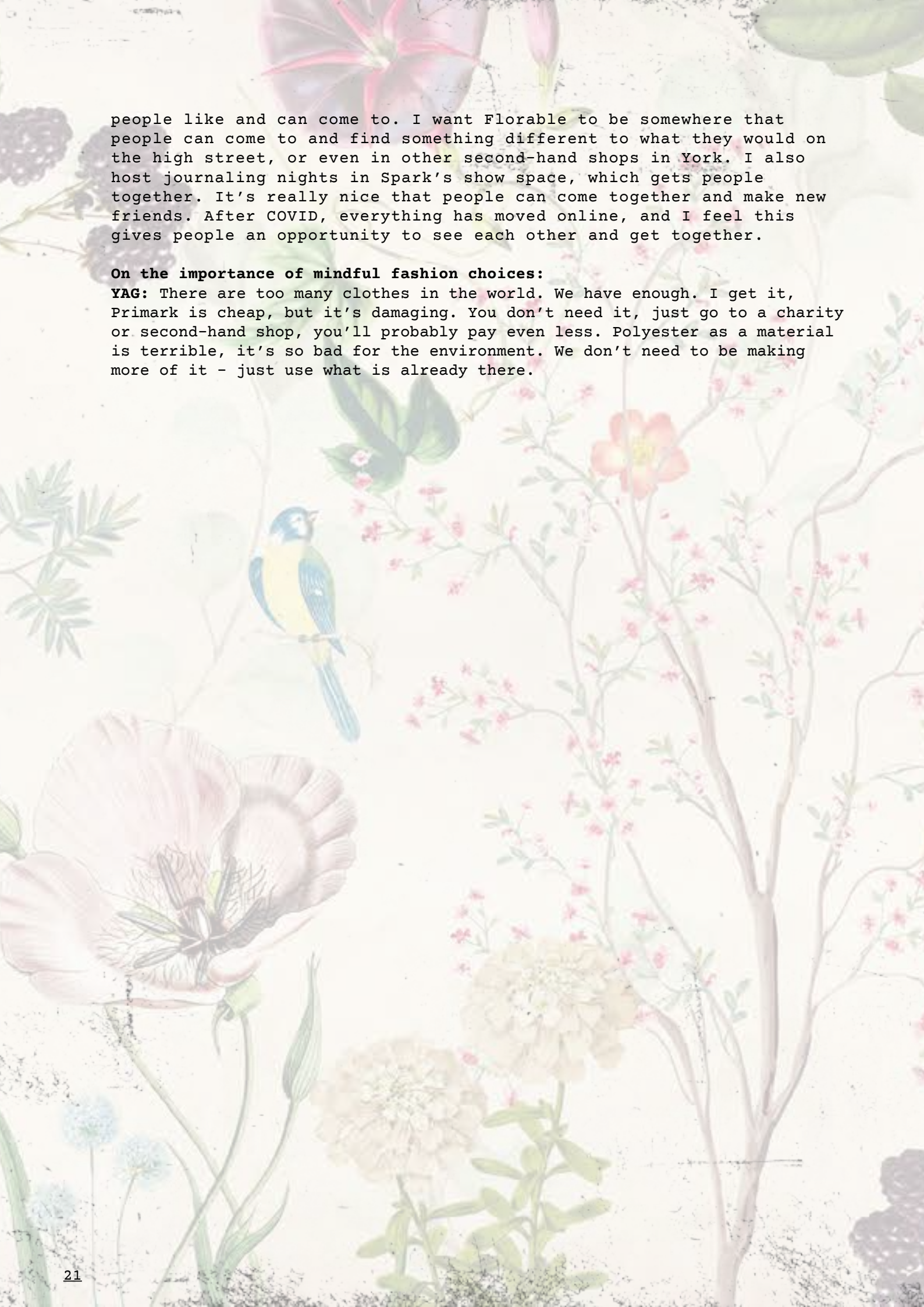
YAG: I would love to have other people selling their finds and creations as well. People are so talented, and they wish to have a store or a display, but never have the opportunity. I would love to give people that opportunity and make a haven for second-hand and upcycled fashion. My friend Edie has a shelf in my store currently, and I'd love to have more people's creations too.

On the lasting impact of COVID on fashion consumption and small businesses:

YAG: Independent businesses will always struggle, and after the pandemic big businesses were able to do huge sales to get people back in. People love to go to what they know, so why would they go to a small business when they know they can get their favourite stuff at a big chain? Thankfully, young people are loving second-hand, but I hate to say, it's also a trend. All the cool girls and influencers are thrifting right now, and it's hard to say how long that will last. Although, Vinted is one of the major retailers. It's currently above Zara and H&M, which is incredible. People love a bargain, and Vinted and second-hand stores have that.

On Florable's impact on the local community:

YAG: I love community. I love people. I love building something



people like and can come to. I want Florable to be somewhere that people can come to and find something different to what they would on the high street, or even in other second-hand shops in York. I also host journaling nights in Spark's show space, which gets people together. It's really nice that people can come together and make new friends. After COVID, everything has moved online, and I feel this gives people an opportunity to see each other and get together.

On the importance of mindful fashion choices:

YAG: There are too many clothes in the world. We have enough. I get it, Primark is cheap, but it's damaging. You don't need it, just go to a charity or second-hand shop, you'll probably pay even less. Polyester as a material is terrible, it's so bad for the environment. We don't need to be making more of it - just use what is already there.

Conformity

Kira sat with her chin resting against her hand, eyes wandering everywhere except the presentation at the front of the room. Forty minutes had dragged by in a blur of half-read bullet points and the dull hum of the lecturer reading directly from the slides without looking up once. Instead of listening, Kira watched people.

A girl two rows ahead crossed her legs, the sleeve of her jumper slipping slightly down her wrist. Stark white. Thin material. Black embroidery stitched delicately along the sleeves like vines. Kira narrowed her eyes slightly. She had seen that exact jumper online that morning over and over again. Different girls in different bedrooms, all wearing it the same way. Matcha in one hand, tote bag in the other. The captions all blurred together: *Winter essentials. University outfits. Things every cool girl owns.*

Kira glanced around the lecture hall again and realised two other girls were wearing it too.

The lecture ended with the scrape of chairs and the shuffle of students packing their bags. Kira followed the crowd out automatically, barely thinking as she boarded the train home. By the time she reached her house, she had already decided she was buying the jumper.

She opened her laptop before even taking off her coat.

The jumper appeared immediately when she searched for it, almost as if the internet had been waiting for her. The model in the photo looked effortless and certain of herself, the kind of girl who always seemed to know exactly who she was.

Kira clicked 'Buy Now' instantly.

A few weeks later, another package arrived at her door.

Kira carried it upstairs, already knowing what was inside before she tore the plastic open. A tight black long-sleeve top folded neatly inside thin bubble wrap. Minimal. Trendy. The kind of shirt every girl online seemed to own in multiples.

She tried it on immediately. The black fabric clung sharply to her frame, flattening her into something sleeker, cleaner. Online, people always said black made you look effortlessly put together. Mature. Cool. Kira stared at herself in the mirror for a moment longer, trying to ignore the strange disconnect crawling beneath her skin.

Over the past few months, her wardrobe had slowly begun to darken. Whites. Greys. Blacks. Creams. Somewhere along the way, colour had disappeared quietly from her life without her noticing.

A few weeks later, the club was crowded enough that the air felt heavy. Music throbbed through the floor beneath Kira's shoes while coloured lights flashed across the room in quick bursts. Every outfit looked strangely identical under the dim lighting, black tops, black skirts, silver jewellery. Kira blended in perfectly.

She was standing near the bar waiting for her friend to come back with drinks when she heard someone shout her name over the music.

"Kira?"

A familiar face pushed through the crowd toward her, smiling brightly. Sophie. Someone she had gone to school with back home. They hadn't seen each other in over a year.

"Oh my God," Sophie laughed, pulling her into a quick hug.

Kira smiled automatically. Sophie stepped back slightly, looking her up and down with amused surprise.

"Wow," she said. "You look... different."

Kira laughed softly. "Different good or different bad?"

"No, good," Sophie said quickly. "Just very uni now."

Kira frowned slightly. "What does that mean?"

Sophie gestured vaguely toward her outfit. "The monochrome thing. Black top, black trousers, black bag. You look like every girl I've seen since coming here. I mean, everyone dresses like that now," Sophie continued casually. "It's kind of the thing, isn't it?"

Kira suddenly became hyperaware of her clothes. The tight black top. The silver hoops. The plain jacket she had bought because a girl online called it a "capsule wardrobe essential."

Sophie tilted her head slightly. "Do you remember when you used to wear those ridiculous bright tights all the time?"

Kira laughed despite herself.

"You were obsessed with colour," Sophie said. "I swear you went through a phase where everything you owned was either green or pink."

The memory hit Kira suddenly and vividly, bracelets stacked up both arms, mismatched patterns, glittery eyeshadow badly smeared across her eyelids because she liked the shimmer of it.

Kira left the club earlier than everyone else that night. By the time she got home, the smell of cigarette smoke still clung faintly to her jacket and her ears rang softly from the music. For a moment, she just stood in her room. Then her eyes drifted toward her wardrobe. Rows of clothes stared back at her neatly from their hangers. White baby tees.

Dark trousers. Outfit after outfit carefully collected over months until everything blurred together into the same person.

Kira stepped closer slowly.

None of them felt familiar.

It hit her suddenly, quietly but completely.

Her wardrobe belonged to somebody else.

Kira sat heavily on her bed and opened her phone. Her thumb hovered for a moment before opening her camera roll. Lecture slides. Mirror selfies. Screenshots of outfits. She scrolled further back until suddenly, the photos changed.

There she was at seven years old in the middle of a supermarket aisle, grinning hard. Plastic princess heels clipped onto her tiny feet. Glittery fairy wings strapped unevenly to her back. A bright purple skirt layered over striped leggings because matching had never mattered to her. Another photo showed her in a feather boa in the garden.

Kira stared at the screen quietly.

Back then, nobody could tell her what to wear. She had dressed for herself without hesitation. Clothes were fun. Silly. Loud. She hadn't cared whether anyone else liked them because the point had simply been that she did.

So what had happened now?

Kira looked over at the dark clothes hanging silently across her room. They no longer looked aspirational. They just looked sad. For the first time in months, Kira opened a shopping app and turned the colour filters back on.

Quick Quiz!

Test your knowledge on the fashion industry: Answers on page 26!

1. How many litres of water does it take to produce one cotton t-shirt?

- a) 3,600 litres
- b) 2,700 litres
- c) 1,500 litres
- d) 4,300 litres

2. What percentage of global water pollution does the fashion industry contribute to?

- a) 5%
- b) 66%
- c) 42%
- d) 20%

3. Textile dyeing is...

- a) the largest polluter of water globally
- b) the second-largest polluter of water globally
- c) the third-largest polluter of water globally
- d) the fourth-largest polluter of water globally

4. On average, how much clothing waste is sent to landfills each year in the UK?

- a) 350,000 tonnes
- b) 215,000 tonnes
- c) 50,000 tonnes
- d) 4,000 tonnes

5. The UK is the _____ producer of textile waste in Europe

- a) largest
- b) second-largest
- c) third-largest
- d) fourth-largest

6. On average, how much textile waste is produced globally each year?

- a) 56 million tonnes
- b) 130 million tonnes
- c) 92 million tonnes
- d) 243 million tonnes

7. What percentage of microplastic pollution in the ocean comes from the fashion industry?

- a) 35%
- b) 5%
- c) 55%
- d) 15%

8. How much do Shein workers earn per item?

- a) £1
- b) £0.30
- c) £0.03
- d) £0.10

9. Between July and December 2021, Shein added between 500 and 2000 new styles to its app daily.

- a) True
- b) False

10. In textile hubs (e.g. Dhaka city in Bangladesh) groundwater levels are dropping due to the amount of water being used for fabric and clothing production.

- a) True
- b) False

ANSWERS

1. How many litres of water does it take to produce one cotton t-shirt?
(b) 2,700 litres
2. What percentage of global water pollution does the fashion industry contribute to?
(d) 20%
3. Textile dyeing is:
(b) The second-largest polluter of water globally
4. On average, how much clothing waste is sent to landfills each year in the UK?
(a) 350,000 tonnes
5. The UK is
(d) The fourth largest producer of textile waste in Europe
6. On average, how much textile waste is produced globally each year?
(c) 92 million tonnes
7. What percentage of microplastic pollution in the ocean comes from the fashion industry?
(a) 35%
8. How much do Shein workers earn per item?
(c) £0.03
9. True or false: Between July and December 2021, Shein added between 500 and 2000 new styles to its app daily
False - actually between 2,000 and 10,000
10. True or False: In textile hubs (e.g. Dhaka city in Bangladesh) groundwater levels are dropping due to the amount of water being used for fabric and clothing production.
True

Clothes Swaps: Trading Threads, Not Trends

Have you ever found yourself in the situation of having some clothes buried deep and forgotten in your wardrobe or drawers, and yet you still succumbed to the temptation of getting a brand-new top, jeans, jumper, or anything in between? We all probably have. There is nothing wrong with treating ourselves with a new outfit item every once in a while. However, that "new" item doesn't always need to be fresh out of the tags and hangers of a shop. It can be swapped for something another person doesn't use anymore, giving their item a second chance and yours the opportunity to find a new home.

The damage that fast fashion causes on our planet, water, energy, and society is unmeasurable. "According to an analysis by Business Insider, fashion production comprises 10% of total global carbon emissions, as much as the emissions generated by the European Union". That is terrifying to even think about! And yet a spotlight for this problem appears to be nonexistent. On the contrary, the numbers rise year after year.

To help fight issues like this, it is important that everyone does their bit. Even the smallest of efforts can bring surprising outcomes. That's why Poppy and myself, Luciana, organised and hosted two Clothes Swap in the Living Lab hub, one in collaboration with YSJ's LGBTQ+ society and the other one as part of the Calm and Connect Week as part of our internship as Living Lab space facilitators. The events were open to all YSJ students and staff who wanted to pop in, bring some clothes they don't use anymore, and take some other ones in exchange.

We advertised the event through posters hung around the university, social media posts, and by spreading the word, and a good number of people ended up participating and popping along. We ended up with more clothes that we started with, and since the beginning we had in mind a few new purposes for them. Most of the clothes were donated to charity shops, extending the idea of giving old clothes a new purpose and home whilst monetarily supporting good causes. The remaining clothes were used in the second Living Lab Crafternoon event, this time with the purpose of creating tote bags, upcycling the clothes as the main materials.

When it comes to helping our planet, every single action towards a more sustainable future counts and has an impact, as small as the action may seem. It's a matter of time before the choice to help becomes an obligation, so we better do our best to help soon. So if you ever see a Clothes Swap happening around you, make sure to dig through your clothes and exchange them for some new items! It's a win-win, for you and for the planet.



‘Out With The New, In With The Old’ is a creative zine showcasing voices across York St John University supporting and encouraging stories of sustainability and individuality while raising awareness of the climate crisis. This zine demonstrates the power creative expression has in mindfulness, progression, perseverance and compassion.

Exploring the relationship between identity, fashion and sustainability, these community-led pieces implore you to consider the hidden stories behind your own wardrobe.