

ARTIST

**HANNAH GARTSIDE**

PROJECT

**Knowing Fabric:  
Performance Lecture**

DESCRIPTION

In this performance lecture livestreamed from the artist's studio, Hannah Gartside unpicked the garments, fabrics and techniques she uses to assemble sculptures and installations that work with the physical qualities and emotional content of fabric, exploring universal human experiences of connection, tenderness, loss, desire, and pleasure.

Grounded in technical skills foundational to her previous career as a costume-maker for ballet and theatre, Gartside's artistic practice is invested in listening to found textiles, including previously worn clothing and fabrics. Responding to their histories, Gartside carefully and painstakingly constructs objects and installations that draw our attention to the profound sensuality and subjectivity embedded in these items.

In this performance lecture, the artist focussed on working with worn clothing, including garments of her deceased loved ones, animal fibres from her pets, and synthetic fabrics from intimate garments. Gartside talked through the techniques she employs in her practice—cutting, shredding, stuffing, wet-felting, and hand-sewing—and gave an insight into the incredible care, sensitivity and respect that underscores her work as she transforms these garments as a means of memorialising their previous owners.

ARTIST BIO

Hannah Gartside is an artist from Queensland, currently living in Narm/Melbourne. She works with textiles to make sculptures, installations and costumes, using cloth to honour memories and transform emotions. Before becoming an artist, she worked as a ballet costume maker, which has informed her understanding of the theatricality, and storytelling potentials of fabric. Hannah has exhibited with Ian Potter Museum, Artbank, Museum of Brisbane, Metro Arts, Blindside ARI, Kings ARI, Artisan Gallery, and Ararat Gallery TAMA (Textile Art Museum Australia), among others.

ARTWORK DETAILS

Hannah Gartside, *Knowing Fabric: Performance Lecture*, live streamed 6:30pm, Thursday, 25 June 2020

IMAGE CREDITS

Hannah Gartside, *Knowing Fabric*, 2020, livestream performance lecture. Video still: courtesy the artist



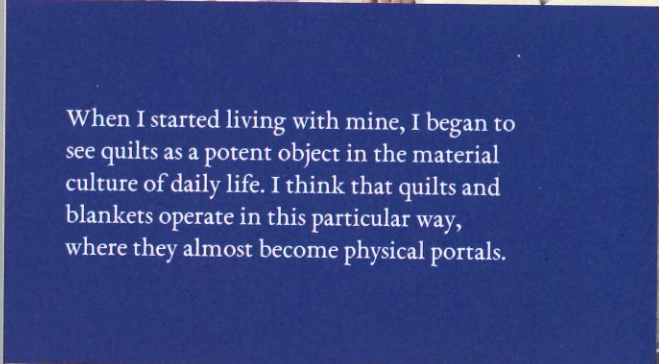




I want to speak about fabrics and everyday found materials and ways I've discovered of working with them.



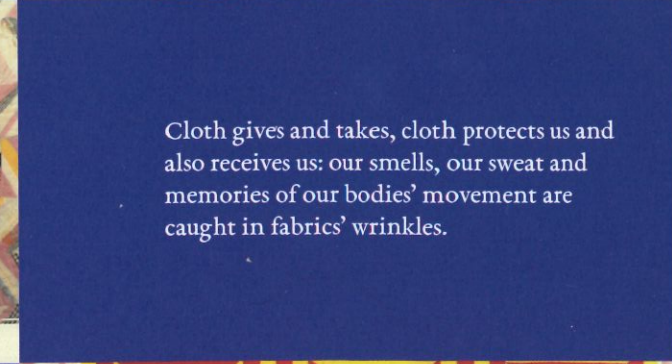
I understand life, and significant moments in it through fabric. Cloth sees us through from birth to death: We are swaddled in it when we are born, we use different colours and detailing to signify our cultural position within society, to align ourselves subconsciously or overtly to some people, and mark our distance from others.



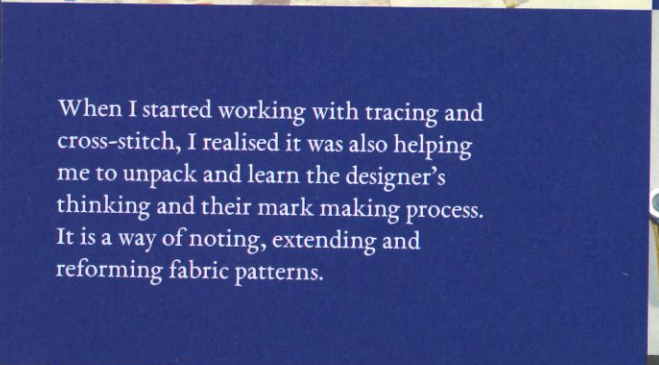
When I started living with mine, I began to see quilts as a potent object in the material culture of daily life. I think that quilts and blankets operate in this particular way, where they almost become physical portals.



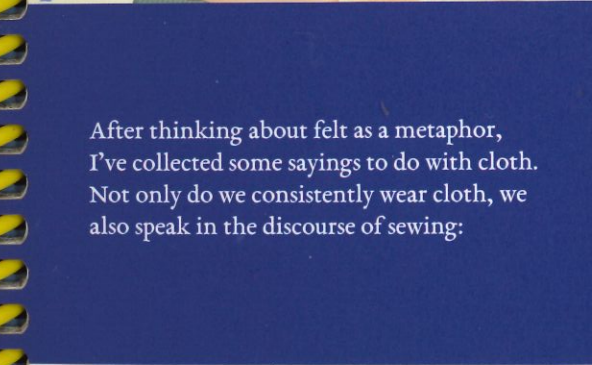
They are with us when we are alone, perhaps feeling into our own longing and loneliness, during sleep and dreaming accessing our subconscious or other information while lying under them, and also when we fuck: maybe under or on top of them.



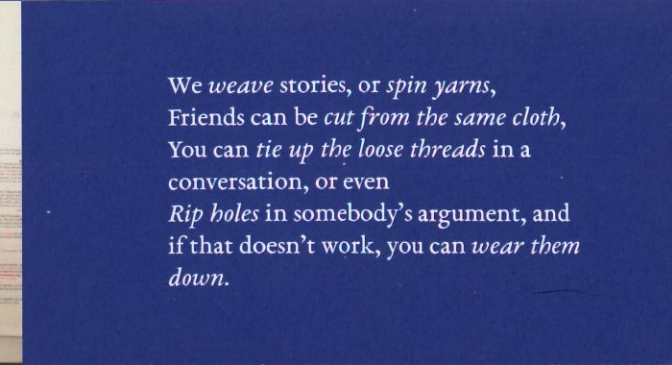
Cloth gives and takes, cloth protects us and also receives us: our smells, our sweat and memories of our bodies' movement are caught in fabrics' wrinkles.



When I started working with tracing and cross-stitch, I realised it was also helping me to unpack and learn the designer's thinking and their mark making process. It is a way of noting, extending and reforming fabric patterns.



After thinking about felt as a metaphor, I've collected some sayings to do with cloth. Not only do we consistently wear cloth, we also speak in the discourse of sewing:



*We weave stories, or spin yarns,  
Friends can be cut from the same cloth,  
You can tie up the loose threads in a conversation, or even  
Rip holes in somebody's argument, and  
if that doesn't work, you can wear them down.*