



let slip

Transforming materials collected from the world around her, costume maker-turned-artist Hannah Gartside explores themes of desire, longing and tenderness.

artwork HANNAH GARTSIDE

Tell us a bit about your art...

I make sculptural works and installations using all forms of found fabrics, including worn clothing and textiles, fibre such as sheep and alpaca fleece, and cat hair. I work with methods of patchwork quilting, wet-felting and dressmaking, and I draw on my technical sewing and cutting skills.

What do you love about found textiles?

I'm a collector, a scavenger, so working with found textiles is exciting – it informs the psychological and emotional content of the artwork. I aim to live gently on the earth, which has led me to seek out, use and revere materials that come to me later in their lifespan – objects that existed and functioned prior to my need for them.

What are your favourite materials to work with and why?

One item I've had great pleasure working with are pastel coloured nylon nighties and slips from the 50s, 60s and 70s. They hang limply; a sharp rotary blade cuts through the nightie fabric like it's butter. The nighties refer to both retrograde submissive femininity, and also their transformation by riot grrrls in the 90s who tackled sexism, normalised women's anger and celebrated sexuality.

You talk about 'aura' of the materials. Can you explain that?

I use the term aura to describe the energetic qualities or resonance that surrounds an object or material. This includes things felt, sensed or inferred in the object through its function or use, its materiality and construction: who made it, where, when, what from and why? When referring to worn clothing, in particular, I think about the now absent body that was inside the garment, where the item was worn, who by and how they might have lived. ☘

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