

# That's a wrap!

Hi!

For the last blog entry of the course, I want to write a little reflection and summarise the key things I have learnt throughout this course.

Even though I thought of myself as someone who deeply cared about the environment before, taking this course completely reshaped my understanding of the interconnectedness between built environments and ecological systems. The learning experience revealed a depth and complexity that initially felt overwhelming, as I was far from imagining the extent of the environmental emergency we are in, but soon became an inspiring and motivating force. It not only introduced me to foundational principles of sustainability and its evolution over time, but it also deepened my appreciation for the role designers play in fostering sustainable futures.

For me, one the biggest learning outcomes was moving my understanding of (environmental) design beyond a materialistic point of view to a more philosophical one. This course thought me to consider the broader responsibilities, ethics and cultural implications that come along design when trying to create harmony between human activities and the planet, and not just the aesthetic and functional characteristics of it. Exploring how that relationship between the environment and design has evolved over time and how designers have adapted to it, has also deepened my

understanding of it.

Another skill that I feel I really improved throughout this course is the ability to find and, more importantly, critically engage with academic sources in the field of design. I got to develop a vocabulary which allowed me to express what would be clear in my head but that I always struggled to back up with words.

Something else I have discovered over this course is my love for debates, which is something I had never done academically before. I really saw the benefits of challenging perspectives and discussing with my peers in other design sectors. Sometimes it would reinforce the ideas I already had, and sometimes completely changed where I was standing. It pushed me to think critically, challenge my assumptions, and refine my perspective.

Ultimately, and on a more personal level, this course has reinforced my motivation to create spaces that prioritise minimising environmental impacts and respect the ecosystems we live in. I am grateful to have learnt new perspective, methods and applications which will help me contribute to a more sustainable world.

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# Design as a solution (W10)

Hi! It's me again!

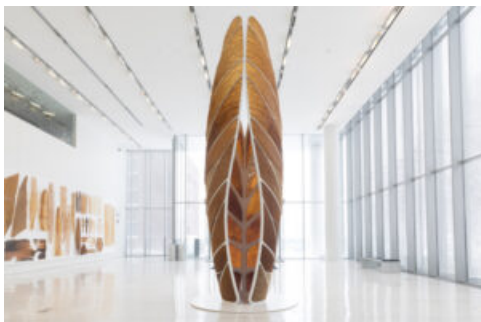
As an interior design student, my passion for design runs deep. I love what design brings to the world materialistically and ideologically as well as the conversations it sparks. However, I must admit, there was a time when my enthusiasm for the industry became quite tainted. It began to feel like a symbol of consumerism, pollution, and environmental degradation. The more I learned about the industry's impact on climate change and wildlife destruction, the more conflicted I felt, and I think more and more designers are also feeling this way.

However, throughout this course, my perspective shifted as I engaged with the deeper possibilities of design through research, lectures, debates, and workshops. I realised that design is not necessarily the problem; it can also be the solution. The power of design lies in its ability to adapt, innovate, and inspire change. And even though sustainable design does require effort and motivation, I believe that the creative genius designers have hold immense potential to address the urgent environmental challenges we face today.

An example of hat that has stuck with me for a couple of years now is Neri Oxman's *Aguaheja Pavilion* (Fig. 1). This installation was created

from organic matter found in insects and plants, its structure was robotically printed and shaped by water. It is very interesting to notice that it is not designed to last forever, but to serve its purpose and leave no trace behind. “Organisms will serve their purpose then vanish to create something else – unlike the 300 million tons of plastic produced globally each year. only about 10% of that will vanish.” (Zach Andrews I., 2019) The *Aguahoja Pavilion* challenges traditional notions of permanence and consumerism, advocating for a design philosophy rooted in cycles of regeneration rather than waste.

*Figure 1: Aguahoja by Neri Oxman*



Interestingly enough, I saw that this project had already been previously added to the *Environmental Design Good News Archive 2018* which does show its status as a great example of environmental design.

Projects such as *Aguahoja* remind me why I fell in love with design in the first place and are very inspiring as I continue my journey as an interior design student. They truly reignite my belief in design as a transformative force—one that can shape not only beautiful spaces but also sustainable futures.

#### Bibliography:

Zach Andrews I. (2019). *MIT Media lab's Mediated Matter Group Creates 'aguahoja' Pavilion*. [online] Designboom | Architecture & Design Magazine. Available at: <https://www.designboom.com/technology/mit-media-lab-mediated-matter-group-aguahoja-pavilion-03-28-2019/>.

Figure 1: The Mediated Matter group (2016). *Aguahoja*. MIT Media Lab. Available at: <https://www.media.mit.edu/projects/aguahoja/overview/>.

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## The Integral Urban House (W9)

Hello!

The Integral Urban House is an experiment conceptualised in the 1970s by Sim Van der Ryn, Bill

and Helga Olkowski, and other architects, which exemplifies the first efforts to integrate sustainability into urban living. Featured in Sim Van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan's *Ecological Design*, this house in Berkeley, California, aims to create a self-reliant domestic environment that promotes ecological principles at an urban scale. As an interior design student, studying such projects offers valuable information into the intersection of design and sustainability.

*Figure 1: The Integral Urban House by Farallones Institute*

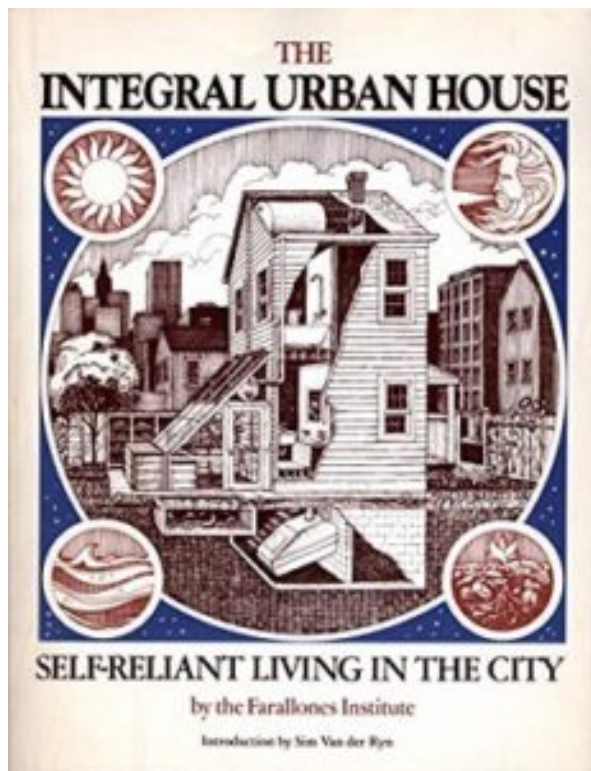


Figure 2: Photograph of the Integral Urban House



The house's design aligns with the five broad principles of ecological design outlined in *Ecological Design*:

1. **Grounds Design in the Specifics of Place**

Situated in Berkeley, the Integral Urban House reflected its unique urban environment,

demonstrating the importance of designing with sensitivity to local conditions.

**2. Evaluates Ecological Impacts**

The house employed measurable criteria—energy usage, water management, and waste management—to assess its environmental footprint. Comparing its systems to conventional housing revealed both the house's reduced ecological impacts and how traditional methods fail to.

**3. Minimizes Impact by Partnering with Nature**

By integrating natural resources, the house exemplified a harmonious relationship with the environment. Solar energy systems, biological composting, and urban gardening all showcased how nature can be a partner.

**4. Engages Communities Beyond Experts**

A key element of the project was community involvement. The house served as a laboratory, welcoming public visits and knowledge sharing to inspire broader ecological awareness and action.

**5. Transforms Awareness through Participation**

The house's functionality required active involvement from its inhabitants, making users directly responsible for ecological processes. For example, the compost privy necessitated active maintenance, fostering a deeper understanding of waste systems compared to the detachment enabled by conventional flush toilets.

Although the Integral Urban House was decommissioned



after a decade, primarily due to the labour-intensive maintenance it required, its principles remain relevant today.

You could even say that the house anticipated modern sustainability concepts like the circular economy (*Cradle to Cradle*, 2002), where waste becomes a resource in closed-loop systems. Its commitment to self-reliance and ecological harmony underscores a timeless approach to sustainability that cities can imitate as they tackle climate change and resource scarcity.

This project serves as a reminder of design's transformative potential in creating sustainable urban futures. By applying ecological principles, designers can shape not only spaces but also the behaviours and values of the communities inhabiting them.

#### Bibliography:

Farallones Institute, Olkowski, H., Van Der Ryn, S. and Olkowski, B. (1979). *The Integral Urban House: self-reliant Living in the City*. Sierra Club Books. (+Figure 1)

Sim Van Der Ryn, S. and Cowan, S. (1996). *Ecological Design*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Figure 2: UC Berkeley Environmental Design Archives (1974). *Backyard of the IUH with hutches, beehives, and Farm Plots. Critical Sustainabilities*. Available

at:

<https://critical-sustainabilities.ucsc.edu/integral-urban-house/>.

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# **Life in plastic, it's fantastic! (W8)**

Hello and welcome back to my blog!

In this post, I will be talking about PLASTIC and my thoughts on its impact and future in the design world as a combination of meaning and materiality.

Plastic is a material that has revolutionised society and remains one of the most dividing materials in the design world. It's versatile, affordable and functional and has completely changed everything from mass production to aesthetic creativity. Just looking around me as I am writing this blog, I can see so much plastic; headphones, keyboard, window blinds, juice bottle, ruler... It has completely changed our relationship to mass production, consumption and durability. Furthermore, plastic has had a particularly big impact in design by enabling unprecedented creativity (through material versatility), affordability, and functionality. Iconic designs like the Eames Moulded Plastic Chair (Fig. 1) and Philippe Starck's Louis

Ghost Chair (Fig. 2) demonstrate how plastic has defined modern design aesthetics.

Figure 1: Eames Moulded Plastic Chair

Figure 2: Louis Ghost Chair by Philippe Starck

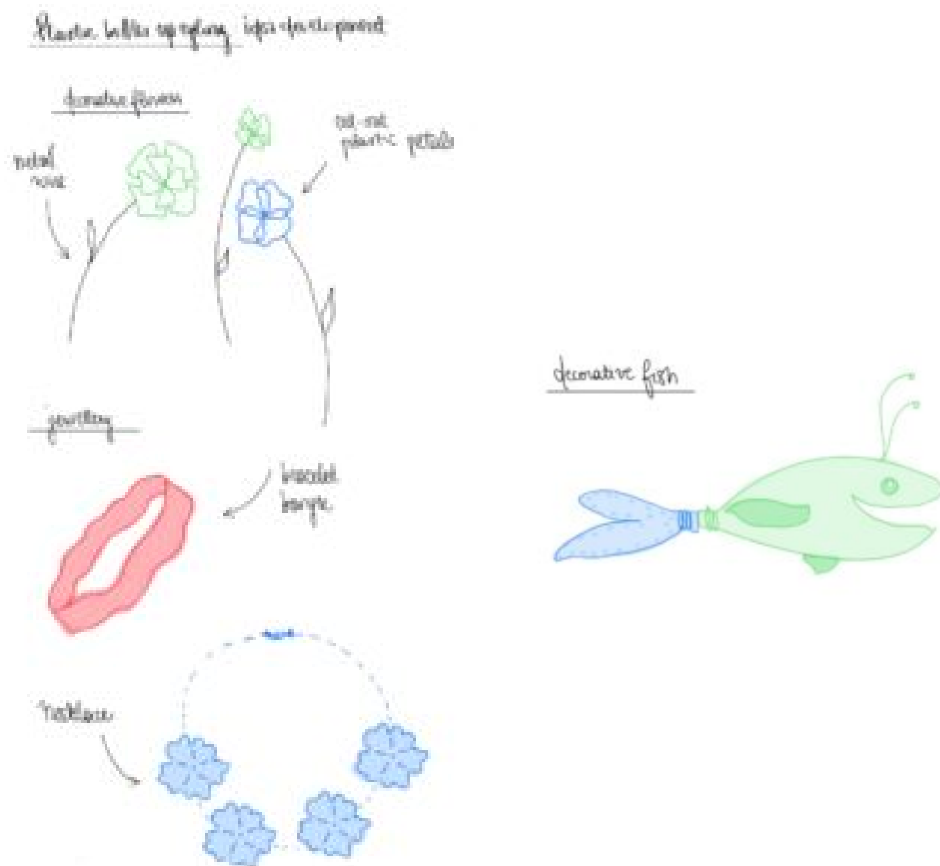


While plastic has brought convenience and innovation, its environmental persistence, health risks, and contribution to unsustainable practices highlight significant challenges. But the question is, how are we going to deal with it?

During the debate we had on Thursday, a very interesting point was raised which is that we can't make the huge quantities of plastic in the world magically disappear... And even though we urgently need to stop producing plastic at the rate that we do, 'cancelling' it because of the negative impacts associated with it will not get us anywhere either. We should learn to 'fall in love with it again' and innovate to up-cycle (not just re-cycle) all of the plastic that is already here. Just like the rise of plastic brought a new wave of innovation, we must now see the environmental impacts of plastics as an incentive towards new innovation and sustainable practices. Eco-conscious materials like recycled plastics and bioplastics must be integrated into designs to mitigate waste and pollution. I actually think that the urgent climate challenges we face, which can be illustrated with plastic, bring a really exciting opportunity for designers to think outside the box and I definitely want to be apart of that movement through my designs.

On a small scale, we did that exercise earlier during the day at the workshop where we up-cycled old plastic bottles into new designs. Here are the design ideas I had (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Plastic bottle Up-Cycling design ideas



## Bibliography:

Figure 1: Herman Miller (n.d.). *Eames Molded Plastic Chair*. Herman Miller.

Figure 2: Kartell (n.d.). *Louis Ghost Chair by Phillippe Starck*. Kartell. Available at: <https://www.kartell.com/gb/en/ktgb/shop/product/louis-ghost/66-530>.

Figure 3: Noel, E. (2024). *Plastic Bottle Up-Cycling Design Ideas*. own work.

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# Thing-power! (W7)

Hello and welcome back to my blog!

This week starts a new theme: 'Materials and (New) Materialism: Bodies, resources and pollution'.

Jane Bennett's 'Vibrant Matter' is a refreshing piece of work that shifts the perspective we have been looking at environmental design through from a traditional concept of matter to a philosophical and political point of view. To me, this new approach makes perfect sense as we are getting to a point where, with all the information we now have, the seemingly only solution is indeed to change our perception of materialism as a society.

One of the main ideas introduced in the preface and the first chapter is the one of 'thing-power' (rather than active human subjects and passive objects). 'Thing-power' suggests that non-human entities, such as objects, materials, and forces, possess a form of agency and an active role in shaping experiences, emotions, and behaviours.

This idea is something I have particularly noticed to be true for material selection in interior design. Materials like wood, metal, or glass and also elements like light and acoustics are not just passive elements; they have distinct qualities (texture, colour, temperature) that influence the

atmosphere and user experience. For instance, the warmth of natural wood might evoke comfort, while the sleekness of metal can convey modernity. This is something that was explored in the lecture given a couple weeks ago by Fiona McLachlan on colour theory.

Acknowledging 'thing-power' encourages us to be more careful and mindful in material selection, valuing the lifecycle and ecological footprint of items. Sustainable interior design can align with this philosophy by respecting the inherent "life" of materials and reducing waste.

#### Bibliography:

Bennett, J. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: a Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press.

www.rockfon.co.uk. (2022). *The Power of Colour Psychology: Interior Designing for Well-being*. [online] Available at: <https://www.rockfon.co.uk/about-us/blog/2022/interior-colour-design-for-wellbeing/>.

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# Annotated Bibliography (W6)

**Articles on the socio-environmental impacts of resource extraction and/or waste for/of interior design:**

Chouinard, Haley. "A New Study Shows That Interior Designers Have a Major Impact on Climate Change." *Businessofhome.com*, 17 Dec. 2020, [businessofhome.com/articles/a-new-study-shows-that-interior-designers-have-a-major-impact-on-climate-change](https://businessofhome.com/articles/a-new-study-shows-that-interior-designers-have-a-major-impact-on-climate-change).

This article discusses a study by LMN Architects highlighting interior designers' significant role in addressing climate change. It emphasises that design decisions, from material selection to energy efficiency, can greatly influence a building's carbon footprint. The study found that sustainable practices in interior design can lead to reduced energy consumption and waste, promoting healthier environments. Designers are encouraged to integrate sustainability into their projects, advocating for eco-friendly materials and methods. Ultimately, the article underscores the importance of interior designers in fostering a more sustainable future and calls for greater awareness and responsibility within the industry.

Celadyn, Magdalena. "Interior Architectural Design



for Adaptive Reuse in Application of Environmental Sustainability Principles." *Sustainability*, vol. 11, no. 14, 12 July 2019, p. 3820, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11143820>. Accessed 19 Aug. 2019.

This paper discusses an interior architectural design model to enable a sustainable design strategy for efficient resources/waste management. The proposed design concept, referred to as 'interior architectural design for adaptive reuse', is based on reintroducing reclaimed or salvaged building construction materials and products acquired from demolished or refurbished buildings, into the structure of interior components. The presented design approach puts circular design methods and techniques in interior design practice at the core of environmentally responsible design.

Máté, K. (2007). Using Materials for Sustainability in Interior Architecture and Design. *Journal of Green Building*, 2(4), pp.23–38. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3992/jgb.2.4.23>.

This paper provides a comprehensive guide to selecting and using materials that align with sustainable design principles. The book emphasises the importance of understanding the environmental impact of materials throughout their lifecycle, from sourcing and production to disposal. It explores renewable, recycled, and low-impact material options while addressing health, durability, and resource

efficiency. Máté offers strategies for balancing aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability, supported by case studies and practical examples. The book serves as a valuable resource for interior designers aiming to reduce ecological footprints and create environmentally responsible spaces.

McCoy, J. (2012). Sustainability: Environmentally Responsible Interior Design. *Journal of Interior Design*, 37(1), pp.5–6. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-1668.2011.01070.x>.

This journal explores how interior designers can integrate sustainability into their practice. It emphasises reducing environmental impact, enhancing occupant health, and optimising resource efficiency. Key topics include selecting sustainable materials, improving indoor environmental quality (IEQ), and implementing energy and water-saving strategies. McCoy advocates for adaptive reuse, modularity, and durability in design, urging designers to act as sustainability advocates. This guide bridges theory and practice, empowering professionals to create spaces that are eco-friendly, functional, and beneficial to human well-being.

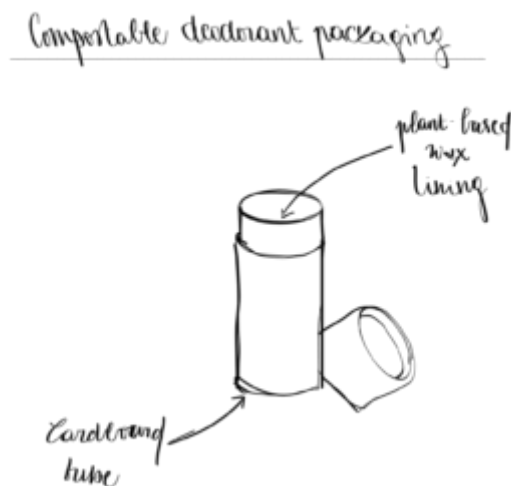
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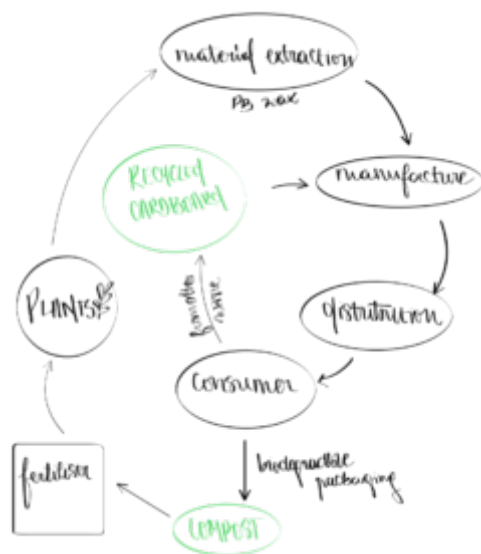
# The Circular Economy and its limitations (W5)

Hello hello!

In this blog, I am mainly going to talk about the debate that was held during the seminar as I have just walked out of it and found it very interesting, enriching and raised a lot of questions for me personally. I unfortunately did not make it to the workshop in the morning but tried to carry out the task myself (fig. 1).

*Figure 1: Circular Redesign idea – deodorant packaging.*





Today, I was on the 'against' side of the motion 'This house (i.e. we) would enforce a circular economy' and throughout my research I actually found a lot of limitations to the idyllic 'circular economy' model. There is quite a few reasons that this way of living would not be as beneficial as it sates to be in our current society and here are a few that stuck out to me;

1. The limits of recyclability is a big one, and especially in the design field where we are so reliant on a materials properties. Materials degrade and disperse over time and with use, and recycling will (more or less depending on the material) loose of their original high quality. This is definitely a limitation in interior design and specifically construction as it is extremely reliant on material properties of strength and toughness which could in the long run compromise safety and durability. Furthermore, restoring end-of-life

products to a reusable state requires a lot of energy and new material inputs.

2. Consumer mindset and behaviour is another, if not the biggest in my opinion, challenge as it requires us to detach from throwaway culture which is so deeply rooted in our current society. Changing consumerist habits that are so deeply ingrained is a big challenge and something that needs to come from a strong communal desire to do so. An individual living according to the circular economy model in a society that does not support it can only have a limited impact.

A lot of very interesting points were made by both parties of the debate and I can't cite them all but it was overall such a nice conversation and realisation that the incentive to make positive change is actually mostly there and that it is now about implementing it on a deeper level. But I really do believe that our governments will eventually have to follow through if we put enough pressure emphasis the common wish to do so. It is now about making it happen sooner rather than later.

#### Bibliography:

Braungart, M. and McDonough, W. (2009). *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. Vintage Digital.

Figure 1: Noel, E. (2024a). *Circular Redesign Idea* –

*Deodorant Packaging. own work.*

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## **Cradle to interior to cradle (W4)**

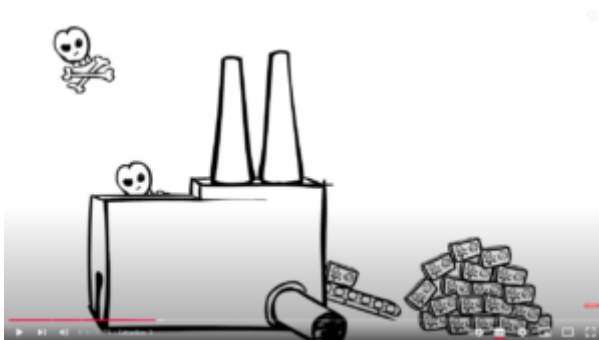
Hello! Welcome back to my blog.

This week has been very interesting, a little intense too because we are starting to uncover a lot of the root reasons behind the current environmental state of the planet and it is sad and at times discouraging.

However, it made me very happy to dig out the book 'Cradle to Cradle' which I had already read a couple of years ago. Re-reading certain chapters having now started a design-related degree gave me a whole new understanding of it. Interior design is a very 'material' field and feels like a never ending source of consumption as it is still so heavily dependent on aesthetic. I recently read an [article](#) about a study made by LMN Architects that found that, even though it has always been thought that the interior of a building 'would account for only 7 to 10 per cent of its overall carbon footprint', 'throughout an average building's life span, the carbon footprint of its interiors will equal if not exceed that of the structure's construction.'

Finding this out was quite shocking to me but I can definitely see how that is the case. Going back to 'Cradle to Cradle', it was very nice to hear examples of design practices that can make a difference, I thought the way it is written is not aggressive at all and actually quite encouraging, unlike a lot of publications that deal with similar topics. I really resonate with what they were saying about biological mass and technical mass and how keeping them separated is essential to a circular production cycle. In interior design, for example, avoiding to 'contaminate' timber with toxic substance such as chemical varnishes would allow for the timber to be completely biodegradable and 'return' to the earth.

Figure 1: Screenshots from ['The Story of Stuff'](#) video showing that contaminated products emit toxic substances when discarded. The toxic substances put in a product





They also talked about the benefits of creating 'product services', designing products to be disassembled which has so many benefits for the manufacturer, the consumer AND the planet as it creates incentive to design without hazardous materials, saves manufacturers billions of dollars in valuable materials and diminish the extraction of raw materials. This is particularly true in interior design, making all elements of construction and decoration able to disassemble would allow consumers to follow trends guilt free as they know that what they are getting rid of will stay in the production cycle (taken back by manufacturers) and the new elements they get come from the same production cycle. In the book, they use the example of carpets and that designing them to be disassembled would mean that 'when a customer wants to replace the carpeting, the manufacturers simply removes the top, snaps down a fresh one in the desired colour, and takes the old one as food for further carpeting.'

I look forward to talking more about this with my classmates during the debate next week and we all agreed that we really enjoyed that reading in the seminar this week.



### Bibliography:

Braungart, M. and McDonough, W. (2009). *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*. Vintage Digital.

Chouinard, H. (2020). *A new study shows that interior designers have a major impact on climate change*. [online] businessofhome.com. Available at:

<https://businessofhome.com/articles/a-new-study-shows-that-interior-designers-have-a-major-impact-on-climate-change>.

The Story of Stuff Project (2009). *The Story of Stuff*. *YouTube*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroigqM>.

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## **Experience and the environment; research workshop and debate (W3)**

Hey, me again!

This week we continued the exploration of the relationship between the human experience and the environment and I particularly enjoy the different tasks we carried out this week and how collaborative they were. In preparation for Thursday I researched

into the debate question and the arguments for (as that is the group I was assigned in). I also researched into its meaning specifically in the field of interior design.

After the lecture on Thursday morning we got split into pairs to have a closer look at some of the different elements of our surrounding environment and their entanglements with nature and culture. It was quite a tricky exercise as we had to think more deeply about everyday things that we don't usually think twice about. It was funny to observe how nature is culturally so immersed in our ways of designing and more broadly in our ways of living but yet how far apart humanity and nature can be placed sometimes. It was also interesting to see how different elements, like for example pubs, meant to s, my pair being from England and I from Belgium.

*Figure 1: Answers from morning workshop.*

<b>Agree</b>	<b>withdraw</b>	<b>leave</b>
→ explain	→ explain → City council the hall	→ north
<b>for</b>	<b>point</b>	<b>notes</b>
→ helped to → explain	→ the speaker's	→ Christian background
<b>major</b>	<b>charging</b>	<b>consequence</b>
→ make function	→ last step → looking	→ progress
<b>cannot</b>	<b>knowing</b>	<b>view</b>
→ personal cannot to do	→ whether related?	→ British branch of law
<b>body</b>	<b>force</b>	<b>fact</b>
→ force vague body	→ national force background	the building to account process
<b>dark</b>	<b>background</b>	<b>fact</b>
?	→ quite public	→ force → vague
<b>phasing</b>	<b>building</b>	<b>note</b>
→ climate change → explanation	→ space → window	→ background → notes

The debate that took place during the seminar in the afternoon was also super interesting. Before we started, we got into our groups, mine was 'for', and gathered our arguments and what it meant to each of us personally in our field of study. We opened the

debate by saying that even though there has been a collective intention to be more careful of environmental impact in recent years, the solutions implemented so far have been very superficial. We argued that, in the society we live in today, profit and the planet are unfortunately positioned against each other. Design for the environment will not make good profit, and design for profit will be bad for the environment. We argue that it is hard to make the consumerist world we live in today more sustainable and that the right approach would be to go back to our foundation and the root ideas we have of what design means. The other side of the room, the ones 'against' the debate prompt, argued that companies are making real efforts that should not be neglected and that we are actually in an age where we are being more conscious about the environment than we ever have been. I did agree with some of the things that they were saying but still believe that the approach we are taking today is too superficial, and often not even real (greenwashing!). We used the example of Patagonia's recycled cotton and polyester shirts that are advertised as being sustainable but that quite limited as that recycled piece of garment is actually not recyclable anyone after that (cotton and polyester are too hard to separate to be recycled again). This is example shows what I believe our problem is; our inability to see the bigger picture. Referring back to the Environmental Histories of Design article from last week, the physical is not just about bringing forth products, but it also, and most importantly, conditions life practices and shapes society (Ramia Maze). We need

to be better at considering the environmental impacts that not only the production, consumption and disposal of design has but also the habits they create, the values they promote and the sustainable or unsustainable ethics they advertise.

At the end of the debate it was very interesting to see that majority of the class actually agrees with the debate argument (even if they were in the 'against' group) and we all agreed that it is a shame that, even today, environmental design is not a bigger part of our studies. It is a shame that it is just an optional course and not a priority in our project briefs. I hope this changes soon and I hope to be part of the change.

I look forward to more debates like this.

Speak to you soon!

#### Bibliography:

Deleted: Fallan, K. and Jørgensen, F.A. (2017). Environmental Histories of Design: Towards a New Research Agenda. *Journal of Design History*, 30(2), pp.103–121. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epx017>.

Figure 1: Noel, E. (2024a). *Answers from Morning Workshop*. own work.

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# Exploring Environmental Histories of Design: Reflections and Insights (W2)

Hello! Welcome back to my blog!

This week I kept on reading the 'Environmental Histories of Design' article and which did eventually get a little challenging to understand but that I overall found very interesting.

*Figure 1: Venn Diagram illustrating Environmental Histories of Design.*



I actually really resonated with the first part of the article and what the authors were saying about the lack of exchange between environmental history and design history and how it is limiting our broader understanding of the environmental histories of design. Something I thought about a lot as well is what they were saying about design as an 'ideology' versus as a 'materiality' and how it is not just the physical design that has an impact on its surrounding environment but also, and sometimes

mostly, the ideas and symbols that come with it and how it can condition ways of life and shape society, especially in the consumerist world we live in today. It is interesting to notice that modern consumerism is more concerned with that matter of ideology rather than the matter of materiality. I don't know if that is necessarily is a bad thing but it definitely should be considered when designing, and especially when designing for the environment. In the world we live in today, it is hard, even for dedicated environmentalists, to place ourselves completely out of society. This made me think back on the 'environmentally conscious' design example I used in my last blog (a reusable cup) and how an object like that technically still contributes to consumerism.

As I said before the second half of the article is when I started to get a little bit lost but I did agree with their main point being that environmental histories of design would benefit from a wider variety of approaches. I later understood that this article serves as an introduction to the rest of the Journal of Design History which makes the brief summary of various article make more sense.

During the seminar on Thursday, I got to share my thoughts and questions and was reassured in noticing that quite a few people also seemed confused by the second half of the article. Together and with the help of our teacher we slowly made sense out of the structure of this second half. It was also very interesting to see the relevance of articles like



the one we just read in different sectors of art and design. For example, I personally really resonate with what was being said in this article and feel that the field of interior design could immensely benefit from a environmental histories of interior design but another classmate who studies animation found it harder to resonate with as most of the work she produces is digital.

I look forward to the debate next week and am very interested in seeing what comes out of it. Until then I hope to continue reading resources from the list and put together arguments for the debate.

#### Bibliography:

Deleted: Fallan, K. and Jørgensen, F.A. (2017). Environmental Histories of Design: Towards a New Research Agenda. *Journal of Design History*, 30(2), pp.103–121. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epx017>.

Figure 1: Noel, E. (2024d). *Venn Diagram Illustrating Environmental Histories of Design*. own work.

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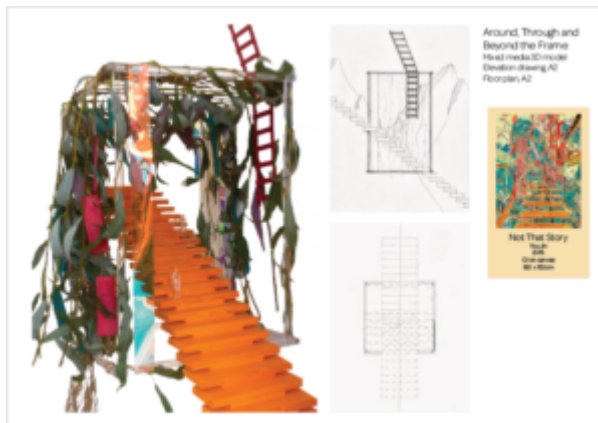
## Hello, I'm Emilie! (W1)

Hello! I'm Emilie!

I'm a third-year interior design student from Waterloo, Belgium and I am really looking forward to this course.

I am very passionate about art and design, but I am equally passionate about our beautiful planet and its conservation. Growing up, I was lucky to move around the world and explore the amazing wonders of nature, so I want to learn more about how we can avoid harming it or, even better, help protect it. I have always been very interested in the relationship between design and the environment and, a couple years ago, got to have a closer look at it with a research paper on ecological safari lodges in the Masai Mara in Kenya and the different approaches they undertake to minimise their environmental impact in a place where their surrounding environment is key to their business and success. Nature is always such a big source of inspiration in my works and can almost more or less be found in them.

*Figure 1: Pages from my portfolio of works inspired by nature.*





In my field of study, I am now particularly interested in scenography and set design which are areas that could do a lot better in terms of its environmental impact and quantity of waste material produced. I also look forward to applying what I learn in this class to the retail project for my interior design course.

I unfortunately could not make it to the first seminar this week but had prepared the environmentally conscious piece of design I wanted to bring along which is simply the reusable coffee cup that I use everyday. As a coffee lover, the number of disposable coffee cups I was using and throwing away every week was quite a lot and investing in a reusable cup is a simple investment

that has significantly reduced the amount of disposable cup I use. The cup I use is also made of recycled materials which further reduces its environmental impact. Single use plastics and containers make up a big portion of individual waste and is something that can easily be reduced by everyone.

This week I got started on reading the 'Environmental Histories of Design: Towards a New Research Agenda' article by Kjetil Fallan and Fin Arne Jorgensen. So far, I find their argument that there is a need to make more efforts to connect environmental history and design history very true. Their question 'what does it mean to be an environmentalist and live in a world of things?' has really stuck with me and is something I would like to pay more attention to in my everyday life. I look forward to hearing my classmates' thoughts on this article during the reading group next Thursday.

#### Bibliography:

Fallan, K. and Jørgensen, F.A. (2017). Environmental Histories of Design: Towards a New Research Agenda. *Journal of Design History*, 30(2), pp.103–121. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epx017>.

Figure 1: Noel, E. (2024c). *Pages from My Portfolio of Works Inspired by Nature*. own work.