

Media Release – For Immediate Release

Fit For Purpose

25 February – 17 April

UTS ART, Level 4, 702 Harris St, Ultimo NSW 2007

How can fashion contribute to an ethical, sustainable design culture that has environmental, cultural and human awareness at its heart?

— Armando Chant, Curator, *Fit For Purpose*



Fit for Purpose brings together six international designers and collectives whose work is driving change through explorative, sustainable, ethical and collaborative practices. Curated by artist, designer and lecturer in the UTS School of Design **Armando Chant**, the exhibition includes unique garments and shoes, process samples, patterns and sketchbooks together with video interviews with the designers.



These emerging designers embrace techniques of deconstruction and recycling as conscious components of an ethically-led design practice. Footwear designer **Helen Kirkum** reconfigures remnants of worn or discarded shoes into unique and collectable items in a practice that both challenges and embraces the cult of the sneaker.

By sourcing textiles and deadstock from the fashion industry, **Matthew Needham** creates garments that trace the life of their materials, allowing them to tell the story of their value and questioning whether the concept of 'luxury' is prescribed or if it represents something more emotional, accrued through time and wear.

As well as issues of post-consumer waste, *Fit For Purpose* proposes alternative approaches. Amsterdam-based **JOIN Collective Clothes** and designer **Elisa Van Joolen** question existing fashion hierarchies between designers, manufacturers and consumers.

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JOIN Collective Clothes re-imagines the fashion system as open, collaborative and adaptable, where the making is enacted through workshops and public events, and the value of creating is in the hands of the many rather than the few; while Van Joolen collaborates with brands and labels to reveal new processes and mutual ways of working.

Other designers envision fashion as a force for social change in the wider community. London-based **CONGREGATIONdesign** is an anonymous collective that demands that each contributor create garments from existing pieces, deadstock fabric, even plastic bags to create new items that celebrate skill, craft



and collective vision. **2019 British Fashion Award**-winner **Bethany Williams** proposes a socially-inclusive and community-engaged approach to making. She has employed women in Italy's San Patrignano drug rehabilitation community, as well as female inmates at Surrey's Downview Prison, to produce her garments, with a portion of the proceeds

from sales being donated to **Adelaide House**, a women's refuge in Liverpool, UK.

These visionary young designers demonstrate that fashion today is not just about materials but about value. Such a change re-imagines sustainability in the context of ethical, responsible and conscious decision-making, and brings responsibility back to designers.

Link to download high-res images/credits: <http://bit.ly/FitForPurposeMedia>

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