

Docent Touring Notes - SCRAPS: Sustainability/Reuse/Waste

Creativity and sustainability in the context of textile design in both industrial and handcraft arenas.

SUSTAINABILITY FACTS

Second only to oil, textile and apparel manufacturing is the most polluting industry in the world, producing approx. Fifteen million tons of solid waste in USA alone in 2013.

Textiles and clothing have among the longest and most complex production chains in all of manufacturing, and waste is produced at every step. (Spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing, printing, cut and sew operations)

POSTCONSUMER WASTE

In 2015 the USA generated approx. Twenty-five million pounds postconsumer waste. (Footwear, bedding, clothing, and other textiles). The average American throws away 75 pounds of clothing and other textiles EVERY year. Donating has both merit and detriment in developing countries especially. Free or inexpensive used garments reduces local production esp. hand produced goods.

FIBER CONTENT and SEPARATION for REUSE

Chemical separation produces toxic waste.

Progress is being made in Australia with non-chemical separation.

Homogenous garments & backpacks can be 100% returned to polyester granulate.

PRECONSUMER (postindustrial or virgin) WASTE

Waste produced by the manufacturer before items reach stores or consumers (fibers too short for spinning, yarn waste, loom ends, selvages, samples, errors in dye lots, print trials, garment cutting waste, faulty finished products, and unsold stock

Because of known fiber content 93% of consumer waste could be recycled. However, in developing countries where most clothing and textile production occurs waste usually goes to landfills or it's incinerated releasing fumes and toxins. In the USA, approx. 75% is "downcycled" for low value padding, felt etc. "Upcycling" could assist struggling textile manufacturers.