

The EcoChic Design Award

SOURCING TEXTILE WASTE



ORGANISED BY



WHAT IS IT?

Textile waste is a material that is deemed unusable for its original purpose by the owner.

Textile waste can include fashion and textile industry waste, created during fibre, textile and clothing production, and consumer waste, created during consumer use and disposal.

Pre-consumer textile waste is waste generated in the fashion supply chain before the textile reached the consumer.



Textile swatch waste is leftover textile samples.



Cut-and-sew textile waste is textile scraps generated during garment manufacturing.



End-of-roll textile waste is factory surplus textile waste leftover on the textile rolls from garment manufacturing.



Sampling yardage waste is factory surplus sample textiles that have been leftover from textile sample manufacturing.



Damaged textile waste is unfinished textiles that have been damaged, for example colour or print defects.



Clothing sample waste is part-finished or finished clothing samples from the design and production of clothing, which have not be worn by consumers.



Image credit Luke Casey

Finished clothing waste is unsold finished clothing waste that has not yet been worn.

Post-consumer textile waste is waste generated and collected after the consumer has used and disposed of it.



Secondhand textile waste is any textile waste (such as home furnishings or any non-clothing waste) that have been used and discarded by consumers.



Image credit Luke Casey

Secondhand clothing waste is clothing or fashion accessories that have been used and discarded by consumers.

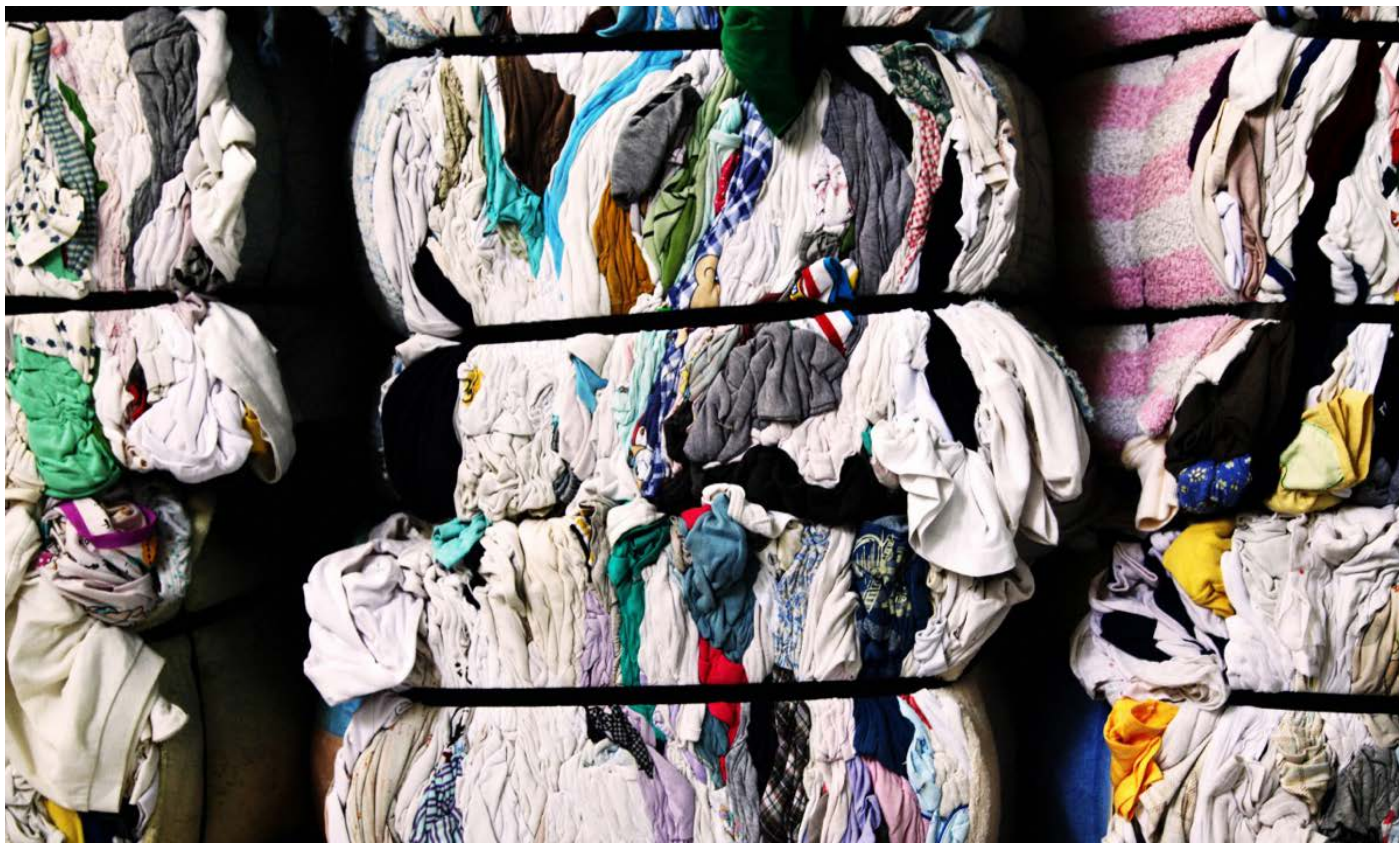


Image credit Luke Casey

Textile waste at a recycling station in Hong Kong.

WHY DO IT?

Producing textiles is an environmentally damaging process. Textiles consume vast quantities of natural resources, like water, oil and land, they use toxic chemicals and generate large amounts of carbon dioxide. But it's not just what we put into textile and fashion production – it is also what comes out during the production and consumer use processes.

Unfortunately, millions of tonnes of textiles are discarded every year. In Europe and America, it is estimated that 10 million tonnes of textiles are discarded every year.¹ In China the total annual production of pre and post-consumer textile waste is estimated to be over 20 million tonnes.² Not only does this textile waste pollute our environment and clog landfills around the world, but the precious resources that went into making these textiles are wasted. The good news is that by reusing textile waste, designers can divert textile waste away from landfill and prolong the lifecycle of the textile material.

The exciting opportunity is that textiles are almost 100 percent recyclable and they have the potential to meet our needs several times over. This means that we should creatively and environmentally strive to never discard or dump textiles away – every again!

¹ Recycling in textiles, Edited by Y Wang, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA, 2006

² China Association of Resource Comprehensive Utilization, 2013

HOW DO I DO IT?

1 FOLLOW YOUR OWN TEXTILE WASTE STREAM

This is the first and most important step to finding your preferred types of textile waste. As Orsola de Castro has taught us, if you follow your own waste stream you will find what you need. Ask yourself; Where is textile waste generated in my supply chain? How can I reuse this? How can I get a hold of more? Which other bigger brands use my preferred type of textiles and will they have textile waste for me?



Yuri Man, The EcoChic Design Award Hong Kong 2011 Finalist, used textiles leftover from her own production process to create this up-cycled outfit.

2 CONTACT FACTORIES AND TEXTILE MILLS

Contact factories and textile mills as they may have an endless supply of surplus textiles. Target factories and textile mills that produce the specific type of material that you are looking for. If you get in contact with the right one at the right time, this could be a goldmine of high-end textile waste, sold at a fraction of the price due to possible irregular shapes, sizes and quantities.



Lin Jia Xin, The EcoChic Design Award China 2012 Finalist, sourced production leftovers from a factory in China to create these up-cycled outfits.

3 VISIT TRADE FAIRS

Visit trade fairs to get a better understanding of what types of textiles are available and how to get hold of them. Speak to the exhibitors directly to see what they do with their textile waste. Start up conversations — you may get more than you can handle!

4 CHECK YOUR TEXTILE SHOP

Depending on where you live, there are textile shops and markets selling end-of-roll textiles and samples. Regardless of where you live, contact textile shops and ask them if they have any samples available.



5 GO ONLINE

Research, research, research! Dig online to discover where textile waste is going, who is selling it and who is buying it. Many companies and consumers sell samples, stock clothing, textiles and secondhand clothing online. Check ebay.com and taobao.com in your country.

Check out source4style.com to find more information about sourcing sustainable textiles and check out their selection of textile waste available for online purchase. Also check out ethicalfashionforum.com for tips and tricks to sourcing sustainably.



Gong Jia Qi, The EcoChic Design Award China 2012 Winner, sourced overstocked clothing online to create this reconstructed outfit.

6 REACH OUT TO YOUR NETWORK

Reach out to other designers and ask for their waste. Beautiful waste can be found at your friend's studio or even on the floor of your university design studio. Look around you and you might be surprised at what you can find.



Herlina Wiyaya, The EcoChic Design Award China 2012 Finalist, used collected textile waste she found on her university's studio floor and at a local design studio to create this up-cycled outfit.

7 RAID WARDROBES

Look in your own, your friends' and your family's wardrobes to see what is hanging around and not being used anymore. This textile supply may be varied, but on the up-side it may not cost you a dime!



Johanna Ho sources luxury secondhand clothing from her celebrity friends' closets and reconstructs them into new garments.

8 GO TO SECONDHAND STORES AND MARKETS

Go to secondhand stores and markets to find an endless supply of textiles. Be specific on what type and quality of textiles you are looking for. If you are looking for high quality and luxury textiles, then go to vintage and consignment stores. If you are looking for large quantities of secondhand jeans, then visit a charity shop or flea market.



Chen Qin Qzi, The EcoChic People's Award China 2012 Winner, sourced secondhand clothing from a secondhand market in Shanghai to create these reconstructed dresses.

9 GET IN TOUCH WITH RECYCLERS

Textile recyclers get an endless supply of textile waste in all shapes and sizes. Often high quality clothes are resold in charity shops and lower quality goods are sold to developing countries. Find out where the waste you want goes to and ask around at ways that you may access some of it. Contact the recycling companies to see if they are willing to sell you any of the clothing and textiles.



Image credit Goodone

Goodone sources a lot of their textiles from textile recycling banks.

Kelvin Wan, The EcoChic Most Promising Student Award Hong Kong 2012 Winner, sourced secondhand clothes and bed linen from Friends of the Earth Hong Kong's used clothing bins to create this reconstructed dress.



10 CONTACT BRANDS

Get in touch with brands to see what they are doing with their textile waste. They may have end-of-roll textiles and samples that are too small for them to mass produce, which they may be interested in passing on. Target the brands that are in your area and that have textiles that you like using. Be realistic and think of brands that might be open to selling or giving away their textile waste. Brands that have textiles with iconic patterns or logos will not usually be interested in this type of reuse by a third party.



Kelvin Wan, The EcoChic Design Award 2012 Hong Kong Most Promising Student Award Winner, used Esprit's surplus factory waste to create this up-cycled outfit.

11 SET UP A CLOTHING COLLECTION

'Take back' programs are becoming the hot topic in sustainable fashion. High-street brands, such as H&M, M&S, Esprit and Uniqlo, all have take back containers in-store around the world to encourage their customers to return unwanted clothes. Why not organise your own take back programme? Collect from your customers or organise a clothing collection in your community and work with what you get. Many people have overflowing wardrobes and they have no idea what to do with their unwanted clothes. Remember to let your potential clothes' donors know what you will do with their donated clothes and textiles.



Image credit Luke Casey

12 THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Yes we know this is somewhat of a cliché — but it works. Don't be restrained by common approaches. Let the sourcing journey inspire your designs and collections. Think of materials and sources that you might not have considered before and this way you will create a unique collection! What do hotels do with old curtains? What do airlines do with old uniforms? What do showrooms do with old display furnishings? What do textile shops do with their samples if they close down? Only your imagination is the limit...



Image credit Worn Again

Worn Again worked with Christopher Raeburn to up-cycle retired Virgin hot air balloons into parkas.



Image credit From Somewhere

From Somewhere up-cycled surplus material from Speedo's 'LZR Racer' swimsuit to create wearable and fashion-forward clothes.

13 FINALLY...

When you find your ideal source and type of textile waste supplier, try to build lasting partnerships with them so that you have an endless supply of waste materials. This way, you will know where your waste is coming from and your textile waste supplier, whether a textile mill or your best friend, will have a stable recycling route for their waste. Finding a stable source of textile waste supply will make sourcing textile waste easier every time...

LEARN MORE

WATCH THIS...

The EcoChic Design Award 2013 Sourcing Tutorial

YouTube <http://youtu.be/DTfBOfFYq80>

Youku http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNTQ3MDgzNDk2.html

READ THIS...

Recycling in Textiles edited by Y Wang, Georgia Institute of Technology

Reducing Waste by Re-using Textiles by WRAP

Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys by Kate Fletcher

CHECK THIS OUT...

c.l.a.s.s. www.classecohub.org

Interstoff Asia Essential www.messefrankfurt.com.hk

Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabric www.messefrankfurt.com.hk

Munich Fabric Start www.munichfabricstart.com

Ethical Fashion Forum Source Expo www.ethicalfashionforum.com

Source4Style www.source4style.com

TRAID www.traid.org.uk

LEARN THE LANGUAGE...

Clothing samples are samples from the design and production of clothing.

Cut-and-sew waste is textile scraps from garment manufacturing.

Damaged textiles are unfinished textile products that have been damaged, for example colour or print defects.

End-of-rolls are factory surplus textiles that have been leftover from garment manufacturing.

Finished clothing waste is unsold finished clothing waste that has not yet been worn.

Post-consumer waste is waste collected after the consumer has disposed of it.

Pre-consumer waste is manufacturing waste that has not reach the consumer.

Sampling yardages are factory surplus sample textiles that have been leftover from sample manufacturing.

Secondhand is a product that is acquired after it has been used by someone else and is not new.

Secondhand clothing is clothing or fashion accessories that have been used and discarded by consumers.

Secondhand textiles are any textiles that have been used and discarded by consumers, which are not clothing or fashion accessories.

Textile swatches are leftover textile sample swatches.

Textile waste is a material that is deemed unusable for its original purpose by the owner.