

DOCUMENTING A CREATIVE PROCESS: RUST AS MEANS TO CREATE  
INNOVATIVE TEXTILES FOR FASHION/ART

A RESEARCH THESIS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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BY

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## **ABSTRACT**

This practice-based research follows and documents an individual creative process. Rust was used as a means to create innovative textiles which were used to create a collection of garments and accessories that challenges the dual identity of fashion as art. This research consists of a practical as well as a theoretical component aimed at producing a reference of the creative process for the fashion, textile and art industries in Namibia as there are limited resources and the fashion industry needs to be innovative as well as creative. This study's creative process was compared to Wallas' four stages of creativity that includes preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Wallas' theory was also compared to other existing theories on creativity. These theories were then compared to this studies documentation of the creative process in order to create a theory that can be applied by Namibian artists and designers from a Namibian perspective.

The creative process was documented to highlight the challenges and practice that a designer follows in order to create new and authentic design outcomes. For the practical component, this study followed a creative process that involved textile manipulation and rust dyeing that formed part of a collection of garments and accessories that were exhibited in a gallery as fashion/art. The preparation and production of garments and the exhibition were documented through a series of extensive photographs that in turn formed the data that is discussed in the thesis with regards to the creative process. The research highlights the importance of following a creative process in order to create new and authentic Namibian design identities that have an impact locally as well as abroad even though each creative process can be unique to the individual.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis in Memory of my beautiful Mother whose creativity and talents inspired me from a very young age.

## DECLARATION

I, Chakirra Claasen hereby declare that this is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree to any other institution of higher education.

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Chakirra Claasen

November 2021

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Creativity is very often seen as something very individualistic and personal. As a result, the contributions made by creative individuals such as fashion and textile designers very often go unrecognized despite their influence on representations of creative identity and personal and place-based identity (Glăveanu and Tanggaars, 2014). This study highlights the complex structure of the individual creative process observant in a body of work that is both personal and place specific to designer (the creator), a Namibian in this case. Via the creative work and the end product, other Namibians (different audiences) are able to relate and link themselves to the creative work produced because it contributes to a distinct Namibian narrative. Therefore, it is imperative that Namibian designers realize the power and responsibility they have in their creative voice by producing fashion that has a creative identity that is personal and place specific to Namibia thus contributing towards creating a Namibian identity through clothing. This can be achieved by making critical design choices while following a complex creative process that is guided by personal experiences of a designer (the creator) or a community (different audiences) while using local resources, techniques and materials or by developing new techniques and materials that are linked to a specific place or time.

The fact that Namibia is a postcolonial and post-apartheid state, strongly affects Namibian nation-building and the construction of a strong Namibian identity (Akuupa and Kornes, 2013). However, advancement is progressively being made and since Namibia gained its

independence in 1990, Namibians have taken pride in their growing national identity, while mostly embracing and expressing themselves through their personal (individual) or cultural (group) identities (Mans, 2003). These individual and group identities are constantly changing; therefore people hold on to material “things” like fashion to identify themselves either as an individual or as part of a group (Harteveld Becker, 2008, p.1). As such, fashion designers have a major responsibility in producing fashion that gives its wearer a sense of (individual or group) identity and belonging.

After independence Namibia had eleven recognizable cultural groups each having their own heritage, traditions, beliefs and dress code (Sarantou, 2014). Merging all the cultures into a National identity would be both impossible and presumptuous, as it would be prejudicial to exclude elements from any of the many cultural groups given the country’s political history. Today, more than twenty years after Namibia’s independence, Namibians still mostly identify themselves culturally, rather than nationally. For example, when one Namibian asks another Namibian “where are you from?”, it means “but what culture do you belong to?” For some Namibians including the author of this study it can be a difficult question, as many Namibians are of mixed heritage that has not been well documented (Sarantou, 2014). These tormenting questions about our identity and who we are, are often difficult to answer. An interesting recent example of a Namibian publicly trying to understand her identity and what it means to be Namibian, is Ulla Dentlinger (2016) who describes her life story in a book of “jumping the colour line” by being reclassified from “coloured” to “white” (p. 7).

Regardless of these questions regarding identity, many Namibians have embraced all of the cultures and differences by expressing their national pride by, for example, wearing clothes normally symbolically represented by different Namibian cultural groups. An example is garments made from Ondhelela material that is commonly associated with the Aawambo culture. McRoberts (2018) says that “Ondhelela has become associated in a broad sense with Namibian cultural identity” (p. 182). The same author further maintains that “Ondhelela has become a fabric associated with a sense of Namibian cultural identity and is no longer solely considered to ‘belong’ to the Aawambo” (p. 197). Other popular representations of Namibian culture in terms of fashion includes ostrich eggshell accessories associated with the San culture, patchwork associated with the Nama culture and leather and beading that transcends many different Namibian cultures. These are some of the most common associations made in terms of traditional dress and contemporary Namibian fashion. Namibians from different cultural backgrounds are proud to wear these garments and accessories.

Still, even though traditional elements are strongly represented in the fusion of traditional dress and contemporary Namibian fashion, it is the researcher’s belief that through rigorous creative design process Namibian designers can explore deeper into their personal backgrounds and surroundings to further anchor their own personal and creative identities. Relph (1976), as cited in Ujang (2009), maintains that “place attachment dimensions can be used as the construct for the identification of the identity of a place considering the significance of place in developing and maintaining self-identity and group identity of and the composites if its characteristics features” (p.158). This exploration of self will surely result in unique and innovative ideas, techniques and

products that are personal and place specific to the designer and possibly the community as these new ideas will have a Namibian narrative (Sarantou, 2014). If Namibian contemporary fashion has a distinctive Namibian identity and narrative it can be identified nationally, continentally and internationally as Namibian design that can result in national pride, an important element of national identity.

## **1.2 Personal motivation for the study**

The motivation for this study is to produce a document for fellow Namibian fashion designers to assist them in their individual artistic creative processes that may result in the production of fashion garments and accessories that are personal and place specific with a unique Namibian creative identity and narrative. In order to document the individual creative process, the author explored the use of rust as a means to create contemporary Namibian fashion/art. Therefore, this study is presented in the first person's perspective as all aspects of the individual artistic creative process produced for this study was done by the author.

The idea to pursue rust printing and dyeing was originally inspired by a simple statement made by a fellow designer and friend, who pointed out that if a rust stain occurs on a white t-shirt from the washing line the stain can never be removed. This conversation was initiated in view of an exhibition titled *Metalmorphosis*, in which I wanted to participate in 2012. Contributors included goldsmiths and an ironsmith, and finding a justification for a fashion designer to participate in an exhibition of this type proved to be challenging. I needed to be both creative and innovative as metal is not usually used in the production of fashion garments and therefore decided to further explore the fact that rusted metal objects

can be used in its natural form in textile manipulation and dyeing. I finally participated very successfully in *Metalmorphosis* and after this experience; I continued to investigate rust as a source of creativity. Through this process, I became more aware of my immediate environment and concluded that discarded metal items could be renewed or reused for creative outcomes, particularly in fashion and textile design. The satisfaction that I experienced from rusting textiles resulted in an original idea that was effective in the creation of fashion garments with unique and innovative Namibian design aesthetics. Goldschmidt & Tatsa (2005) argue that “not every idea is creative, but every creative outcome can be traced back to good ideas that started it off” (p. 593). Therefore, the idea for this study can be traced back to 2012, when I first had the conversation about rust stains with my fellow designer friend.

The textiles created through the rust printing and dyeing processes were eventually developed into artistic, unique and innovative garments and accessories which formed a collection of contemporary Namibian fashion exhibited at the Project Room in Windhoek as fashion/art, titled “*The Iron Lady*”. The majority of textiles and materials used for the collection were recycled textiles and re-purposed items including clothes, curtains and broken ostrich eggshell accessories. The combination of material choices and the textile techniques used to dye and manipulate the textile relate to the theme of sustainable and ethical fashion. Debra Lilley, (2012) as cited in Kane & Philpott, (2013) defines sustainable design as “addressing key environmental impacts of a product across its lifecycle, alongside cost, quality and appearance requirements, but then goes further and considers social elements. It aims to generate as much utility and enjoyment as possible out of the smallest possible quantity of resource over the longest possible (or most

appropriate) period of time” (p. 2). Lilley’s definition of sustainability compares well with the sustainability efforts maintained for this study.

So in addition to developing the creative process in fashion and textile design, this research also promotes the use of unconventional and readily available resources in Namibia, where raw materials are limited. The goal is that it may inspire fellow Namibian fashion and textile designers and design students to be more critical in their design choices in order to create fashion and textiles that have a Namibian design aesthetic and narrative, while at the same time taking resource constraints into consideration. I hope to inspire other creatives to consider unusual materials and natural resources from the environment. Being aware and attentive to what is available and useable in the natural environment is very important, especially in Namibia where the local fashion market is emerging and where resources are scarce. Fox (2015) states that there is an increased awareness of the values of ‘slow’ processes, which foster an appreciation of responsible sourcing and mindfulness (p. 11). This being said, sustainable design is not a main focus of this study, but it is obviously an important factor to consider in the grand and smaller scale of things – many resources are finite, and this generation should play a greater role in ensuring the survival of species and the earth.

As mentioned above, in order to showcase the progress, methods and results of the creative process I went through, I presented the final garments in an exhibition titled ‘*The Iron Lady*’ to merge the perceived diverging worlds of fashion and art. The common perception is that fashion is not art and that the fashion designer is not considered worthy of artist status (Smith & Kubler, 2013, p. 8). The practice of displaying fashion as art in a gallery

forms part of a recent series of creative collaborations between the international worlds of fashion and art, as artists and fashion designers are now working together to create fashion that challenges the traditional margins set between these two worlds. Through this self-documented research process, I manage to show that fashion designers go through the same creative process as artists indicating that the two worlds are not that far apart, at least from the creative process perspective. By putting my rust garments on display, I enabled the viewer to see the artistic details and creative processes I have gone through. These details are not always visible in a fashion show, as the garments move quickly and are usually far away from the viewer.

This approach of art/fashion described above usually adopts the method where a fashion designer subcontracts another creative, whether it is a textile artist, painter, sculptor or surface designer to contribute to the final outcomes of the garments. On top of being the researcher for this study, I was also the artist and designer for the collection, but included other creatives such as renowned Namibian photographer Willem Vrey, who photographed the final garments on models in a Namibian setting. These artistic photographs formed part of the final exhibition and demonstrated how the garments fit and/or drape on the body, as well as how the rust prints and dye presented themselves on the garments. Other creative services rendered were from makeup artist MissJey and three of Namibia's most established fashion models Maria Nepembe, Emily Stefanus and Maria Hiwilepo. It was important to use Namibians in a Namibian setting, because this contributed to the Namibian identity and narrative that I wanted to portray. The photographer and makeup artist understood this concept and achieved my vision through their work. The models I chose embodied the epitome of Namibian beauty and made it

easy for me to identify the collection as ‘Namibian Chic’ as it easily fits into a Namibian context and were specifically designed to portray a Namibian design aesthetic and narrative.

Through the entirety of the creative process and the collection of garments created I was able to use my creative voice as a Namibian fashion designer by producing garments that are unique, personal and place specific to Namibia. As these garments are not linked to any specific Namibian culture, many Namibians can relate to the garments on a personal or national level as the garments are telling a distinct Namibian story.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

For a Namibian fashion designer to develop an authentic creative voice there is a need to follow a demanding creative process that will result in garments with a unique ‘Namibianess’. As fashion lecturer and industry professional, I have realized that fashion and textile students, upcoming fashion designers and some established Namibian fashion designers do not always anticipate the extensive amount of research and work that goes into achieving unique and innovative designs with a Namibian narrative and design aesthetic. Very often inspirations are drawn from trending (non-Namibian) fashion themes that does not enable the fashion to be distinctively Namibian.

The study outlines the creative process in a systematic and realistic document that is created from a Namibian design perspective and can assist fellow Namibian fashion students and fashion designers to be more critical in their design thinking and creative processes. The expectation is that Namibian fashion designers and fashion design students

will explore and use local natural resources to a greater extent that may result in garments that has a personal and place specific identity with an authentic Namibian narrative. Exploring local resources and materials will help in preserving different Namibian cultural heritages and also aid in creating new identities, as culture is not stagnant but evolves over time based on different social, political and environmental factors that influence a community or a nation at a specific time and place.

Producing and developing new local fashion and textile production processes while preserving traditional techniques and processes can result in sustainable practices that address the impact that global fashion production has on the environment. Fletcher (2008) states that many sustainable practices have developed from local initiatives that were developed to sustain communities (p. 140). Therefore, using local resources and production in fashion and textile design can result in job creation and connects the products to a specific place and its community.

Because there is not research documented on the creative process that is place specific to Namibia, this study will serve to inform the Namibian art and design community about the creative process, its challenges, solutions, problems and its importance and therefore fills a knowledge gap in Namibia.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

The study is based on four main themes - the creative process, identity, sustainability and fashion/art – and resulted in a number of objectives. These are summarized in a table below. This study was guided by research objectives and does not use a hypothesis due

to the nature of the research that is qualitative. The qualitative research used in the study is inductive and generates empirical data from the practical experience making the research objective a good starting point for the study that end with a theory generated from the data collected.

The main objective for this study was to document an individual creative process that can be used by fellow designers and design students, as there are not many references on the creative process document from a Namibian design perspective. This individual creative process was documented using a visual photographic diary. This method of documentation was specifically chosen, as it allowed the least hindrance to the natural working environment of the designer. The individual creative process documented was predominantly compared to and inspired by Wallas' (1926) four stages of the creative process - preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. This study is based on Wallas' (1926) process as it is cornerstone research that gave rise to many modern theories on the creative process.

The next objective was to produce a collection of fashion garments and accessories with a unique Namibian design identity, aesthetic and narrative that explored personal and place-based identity concepts. Creating garments with a Namibian design aesthetic and narrative will allow Namibians from different cultural backgrounds to relate to the garments thus giving them a sense of personal or group identity. This will also allow the garments to be distinguished as Namibian if compared to that of fellow African and international designers allowing Namibian designers to express their creative voice on dynamics related to Namibia.

Sustainability was not a main topic for this study, but is a result of the chosen production methods used during the creative process for this study. Therefore, the next objective was not sustainability, but to use rust oxide (a sustainable dyeing and textile manipulation method) to produce the rusted textiles and materials produced for this study. The rust oxide was sourced from recycled and discarded metal items. Recycled, discounted and cheap fabrics and materials were used in order to produce a collection that was attainable on an affordable budget, highlighting the notion that creativity and originality does not have to be expensive. Therefore, the production methods chosen automatically links the study to sustainability and ethical fashion.

The last objective was to produce a collection of fashion garments and accessories that can be considered as fashion/art thus narrowing the gap between the two distinctive worlds of fashion and art. To strengthen this concept the garments were intentionally revealed and displayed in an exhibition as this is usually how art is revealed and displayed.

**Table 1 – Themes and Objectives**

Theme	Objectives
Creative Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To document an individual creative process by using a visual photographic diary that can be used by fellow designers.</li> <li>• To develop a theory on the individual creative process documented during this study that can be used by fellow designers and design students.</li> <li>• To compare the personal creative theory developed with Wallas’ four stages of the creative process and other modern theories on the creative process.</li> <li>• To inspire fellow designers and design students to be more critical in their creative choices.</li> </ul>
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To produce a collection of fashion garments and accessories with a unique Namibian design identity, aesthetic and narrative</li> <li>• To produce a collection of fashion garments and accessories that explores personal and place-based identity concepts.</li> <li>• To produce a collection of fashion garments and accessories that Namibians from different cultural backgrounds will be able to relate to.</li> <li>• To inspire fellow designers and design students to explore local natural resources that can result in garments with a Namibian design identity and aesthetic.</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To produce a collection of fashion garments and accessories using rust as a sustainable source of textile manipulation and dyeing.</li> <li>• To use natural resources</li> <li>• To use recycled and repurposed textiles and materials</li> </ul>
Fashion/Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To produce a collection of fashion garments and accessories that can be considered as both fashion and art.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To narrow the existing gap between the worlds of fashion and art.</li> <li>• To exhibit the collection of fashion garments and accessories as fashion/art.</li> </ul>
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### **1.5 Methodological overview**

This study used a qualitative methodology, while following a practice-based research strategy (Candy, 2019, Borgdorff, 2015 and Leavy, 2017) and a reflective research approach (Schön, 1983 and Mäkelä et. al, 2011). Key methods for data collection include a photographic visual diary, random notes and observation. The data was analyzed by using reflection and qualitative content analysis.

The creative process started when I first had the idea to explore rust and ends with a collection of garments and accessories displayed as fashion/art that merges the boundaries between fashion and art. Following the selected methodological strategy of practice-based research, I had no preconceived ideas or expectations of what the textiles or garments were going to look like. Instead, I let the creative process guide the study and systematically approached challenges as they surfaced; relying on my experience and creative ability to improvise. These experiments, more than often, resulted in unique and clever solutions to design challenges experienced. This relaxed mindset was intentionally used to execute the production of the textiles and the garments as it allowed maximum creativity and innovation, where learning from the process was critical in creating new knowledge and understanding through experimenting and the making process. This approach eliminated

time, to some extent, and production constraints usually associated with a ready to wear product.

As the designer, artist and researcher I created contextualized and interpreted the work and the creative process followed for this study and documented each process with photographs. Mäkela & Nimkulrat (2011) consider this working process as “new knowledge gained in action through the maker and the making process”. The entire process from inception to exhibition was documented through a photographic visual diary. This documentation served as the data for this study that will eventually become a guide for fellow fashion designers and design students to assist them in their individual artistic creative processes. Scrivener (2002), as cited in Mäkela & Nimkulrat, (2011), asserts that “documentation can assist in capturing the empirical knowledge in the creative process, so that what the practitioner learns from within his/her practice becomes clear, available and communicable” (p. 2). This meticulous photographic documentation shows each step of the creative process, highlighting challenges the designer faced and the processes that were followed in order to create new and authentic design outcomes.

In order to understand the creative process, questions of “how” and “why” an idea originates and “from where” the idea comes can sometimes occur. Twyla Tharp (2006) maintains the importance of preparation and how habits in daily routine can lead to success in different creative endeavors. Tharp further maintains, “in order to be creative you have to know how to prepare to be creative. No one can give you subject matter to your creative content; if they could, it would be their creation and not yours” (Tharp 2006, p. 9). This encouraged the study’s mission to highlight the importance of experimental processes to

develop and create new products with contemporary design and craft identities that can be distinguished as authentically Namibian when showcased locally or internationally.

During this research, time played a major role in determining the end of the creative process. Money played a less significant role, as I improvised and used sustainable and recycled resources to my advantage. Bryan Lawson (2006) states that “time, money and information are often major limiting factors in design and a shortage of any of these essential resources can result in what the designer may feel to be a frustratingly early end to the design process” (p. 123). Very often, the creative process is cut short, eliminated or seen as a waste of time when immediate financial gain is not visible. Lawson (2006) argues that the design process cannot have a finite and identifiable end. He maintains that “the designer’s job is never really done and it is probably always possible to do better” (p. 123).

The collection was created as fashion/art and would never be reproduced in the same manner, but it is envisaged that the collection would inspire similar product, produced more economically for commercial purposes, because the end results should not only be artistically fulfilling but also financially viable for any designer or creative. Therefore, this study could be considered as part of the market research for a commercial line of clothing to determine the demand for such a collection. Kinnear & Taylor (as cited in Burns, Muller & Bryant, 2011 (p. 173) defines market research as “the systematic and objective approach to the development and provision of information for the marketing management decision-making process”. Therefore, based on the feedback received from

the viewers at the exhibition it would suggest that a collection of this kind could be financially viable for commercial purposes.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study is unique and important as it is based on a personal creative process that is place specific to Namibia. Research on the creative process has not been extensively documented from a Namibian design perspective. It is also significant, that the author of the study is both the researcher and the designer. Research on the creative process usually consists of a researcher and a subject or subjects that are being observed, therefore results are usually attained from the researcher's perspective and not from the designer's perspective. Therefore, this study is unique and cannot be replicated, as it is based on the designer-researcher's experienced accounts.

The textile techniques used in this study have not been used by any other Namibian fashion designer to produce a collection of fashion garments and accessories. The rusted textiles produced are unique to this study and cannot be exactly reproduced, but the designer encouraged fellow Namibian designers to mimic the techniques explored, or to develop their own new techniques using rust oxide and discarded metal. The garments created for this collection are experimental once-off pieces of fashion art. However, the collection and techniques used can be simplified for the consideration of a commercial fashion line as designers always have to consider financially viable options.

The fashion collection produced can assist in narrowing the perceived gap between fashion and art as the fashion collection produced exemplifies the strong connection

between fashion and art. Each item in the collection is a personal reflection of the designer, linked to personal memories, experiences or it is inspired by the Namibian landscape in terms of textures and colors, giving the collection a personal and place specific identity.

The study also has some limitations. These are described below.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

There are some limitations identified in this study. Firstly, the inspiration and themes developed for this study are personal to the designer limiting the themes to Namibian identities that are personal and place specific to Namibia and the designer. Secondly, the garments produced for this study are limited to sample garments, and are not intended for commercial purposes, even though this can be explored at a later stage. Thirdly, as result, the study is limited to documenting the creative process, and not the design process followed by designers to produce garments for commercial purposes. The garments produced were not produced for fashion marketing, but were simply produced as a means to document a personal creative process. Only rusted metal and rust oxide was used to dye and manipulate the textiles produced for this collection. Finally, the creative process developed for this study is specific to fashion and textile design, even though it may be transferable to other artistic disciplines that can benefit from this specific creative process.

### **1.8 The subject position of the researcher and artist statement**

I am currently a visual arts lecturer focusing on fashion and textile design. I have been lecturing for the past 13 years from 2008 on a part-time and full-time basis. I graduated in 2004 with majors in fashion design and art for advertising. As a student and later a young

professional, I have always been passionate about developing the Namibian fashion sector and producing garments with a strong Namibian design identity. This passion guided me to being one of the founding members of the Namibian Fashion Council that was launched in 2014. As a Namibian designer I have showcased my work locally, on the continent as well as internationally in countries like South Africa, Mozambique, Niger, Germany, Australia and Finland, just to mention a few. In Namibia I have been an industry leader and influencer who mentored many upcoming young designers due to my profession as a fashion lecturer and my passion for wanting to see development and growth within the Namibian fashion sector.

### **Artist Statement**

As a creative, I perceive myself to be both artist and designer, producing art and fashion. However, sometimes the art world needs you to define yourself and very often does not understand how you can be both. As a fashion designer, I like to challenge myself by producing garments that are unique, innovative and which very often challenge the conventional ways of doing or viewing things. As an artist, I can bring about change and awareness to some of the challenges we face in our society through my artistic expressions. This work expressed my need to create fashion garments with a unique and innovative Namibian design aesthetic, using sustainable, unconventional and readily available natural resources like rusted rubble and recycled textiles in our country, where material availability is limited. This disadvantage often delays creativity and originality within the field of fashion and textile design specifically. Namibia is an endless source of creativity that is found all around us, and we should just take time to explore, challenge and develop our ideas further by following an intense creative process. I feel that

Namibian designers can be more instrumental in creating a unique modern Namibian identity that represents us as a people not only to Namibians, but also to the rest of Africa and the world, making Namibian fashion relevant. This will not only create a Namibian identity, but will also raise pride, awareness and appreciation of our different cultural identities and natural resources.

I was excited by the experience, process and the outcome of rusting textile as it evoked a sense of satisfaction in the fact that I was producing work that was new, exciting and sustainable. The works produced were challenging the boundaries set between the world of fashion and art, and I was satisfying and delivering on my ambitions as a Namibian fashion designer and artist. This is because the garments created for this collection are modern, innovative, simplistic and totally unique. I tried to define the woman that I was producing the garments for, but I found it very difficult because an identity and definition of this woman did not exist, therefore I defined her as “Namibian Chic”.

In this chapter I introduced theories on creative process, sustainability, personal and place-based identity in fashion and textile art. I also introduced the background, motivation, problem, aims and objectives, methodological overview, significance, limitations, subject position of the researcher and artist statement. In the next chapter I will review existing literature on the key themes for the study including an overview of African fashion, sustainability, fashion/art, personal and place-based identity in fashion and textile design, creative theory and practice-based research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into three main parts. Firstly, to contextualize the topic of fashion, identity and creativity, an overview of African fashion and its position within a global context is given. Here African designers' narratives and current and traditional techniques they use are highlighted. Secondly, the use of rust to create innovative textile for fashion/art is discussed. This is a multilayered topic as links to both identity formations (including place-based and personal identity) in fashion and textile design, and sustainability are evident. Thirdly, the theme of identity and fashion is further discussed. Fourthly, the chapter deals with existing literature on the different categories and comparative elements of creative theory in order to highlight similarities and differences that guided my creative process. As stated before, the study is predominantly focused on a comparison of Graham Wallas' 1926 theory on the creative process to more recent theories of creativity and the creative process. Lastly, practice-based research which is the chosen methodology for this study is elaborated upon.

#### **2.2 An Overview of African Fashion**

Fashion is an important element of popular culture in Africa. While only a few can afford it, many Africans are exposed to it via magazines, television, billboards and the internet (Rovine, 2010). African fashion also inspires globally and has been influencing fashion trends for many generations (Shaw, 2011). While studying African fashion and textiles, Shaw (2011) identified the appreciation of Africa as the birthplace of humanity and the importance of its influences on the fashion industry. This view is supported by Nyanin

(2019) who states that African fashion is finally being welcomed globally for its “wealth of cultural agency and influence” (p. 2). Both Shaw (2011) and Nyanin (2019) further noticed that many international fashion designers of non-African heritage were all displaying distinctive designs directly inspired by African culture and heritage. However, there is not a lot of fashion trade between Africa and the rest of the world. Shaw (2011) suggests that this notion is changing as the quality of production in Africa has been highlighted and therefore suggests that there is a great potential for African-focused brands to join the luxury market, but that the challenge is also for these brands to market themselves internationally.

However, despite the challenges and misconceptions of African fashion, African fashion designers show great entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity (Shaw, 2011). Some of these designers are Kenyan accessory designer Adèle Dejak who uses reclaimed and recycled materials, emphasizing on sustainability and local communities and Ghanaian fashion designer Christie Brown who designs beautiful bespoke gowns, statement pieces and innovative accessories that give African women a modern sophistication that can transcend international borders. West African designer Lisa Folawaiyo focusses on Ankara fabric which she transforms by embellishing it with sequin, Swarovski crystals and beads. Laduma Ngxokolo focuses on Xhosa-inspired knitwear using traditional Xhosa beadwork motives and patterns as inspiration. All these designers are producing products (fashion, textiles and accessories) that are personal and place specific to their cultural identities thus sharing knowledge and narratives of their cultures and the importance between clothing and a specific place (geographic location) (Fletcher and Klepp, p.136).

Fletcher and Klepp (2018) defines “localism as a process to subordinate economic decisions to communities and nature” (p. 134). From a fashion perspective Fletcher and Klepp (2018) maintains that “it describes a highly decentralized textile and clothing system reflecting ecological conditions, changed economic priorities, community empowerment, heterogeneous products, local stories, myriad dress practices, and fewer goods” (p. 134). This perspective maintained by Fletcher and Klepp (2018) has however been practiced by many fashion and textile designers within the African diaspora. Through this study, I stress the importance of “localism” by creating fashion garments that maintain sustainable fashion practices that address the impacts fashion has on the environment and the community while creating local narratives that are personal and place specific to Namibia. This leads us to the interesting topic of sustainable textile design in the in the fashion industry. Here, the rusting of textiles will be discussed in detail.

### **2.3 Sustainable textile design and other sustainability related factors**

It is important to note that the main focus of this study is not sustainable fashion which is described as ‘a movement and process of fostering change to fashion products and the fashion system towards greater ecological integrity and social justice. Sustainable fashion concerns more than just addressing fashion textiles or products. It comprises addressing the whole system of fashion. This means dealing with interdependent social, cultural, ecological, and financial systems’ (Fletcher, 2008). However, an important element of sustainable fashion is the design and availability of sustainable materials such as the textile itself which is a focus here. One of the objectives of the study is to inspire designers to make use of readily available and easily accessible materials. Thus, in a nutshell, sustainability aspects here are related to textile design (using rust) and the locality of

production links to themes of community and place (localism). Sustainability outcomes are those for the environmental (i.e. using natural rust and not chemical dyes), societal and economic (i.e. job creation and using locally available resources) factors. Before taking a closer look at the literature on rust and eco-printing, the following section introduces the topic of ‘locality’, the availability of resources and why it is important that designers play a greater role in creating more sustainable fashion.

### **2.3.1 Locality and available resources**

Usually designers play a momentous role in the development of new fashion products and they can lead the choice of materials and services used within the manufacturing process (Gwilt and Rissanen, 2011). This study aims to encourage local fashion and textile designers in Namibia to be more critical in their design choices in terms of their use of materials, local resources, means of production and the narratives they wish to depict. Fletcher (2008) maintains that an awareness of local products inspires and challenges local communities while creating jobs and making use of local resources (p. 140). She further maintains that local action helps to develop human creativeness as communities responds to problems with resources while having the experts at hand (p.140).

Even though localism represents an opportunity for change as small communities see and senses the effects of their own actions on the environment and are quicker to see the benefits, by no means does local production replace global production (Fletcher, 2008). Therefore, we should adapt our appetites to where we live while developing knowledge on the resources and products we find in our locality. Even though products with discreet local identities are rare, there is certainly a movement of entrepreneurs who are producing

products that suit the land and the local culture and utilizes the skill sets of people who live there (Fletcher, 2008).

Further, cosmopolitan localism is the result of a particular condition characterized by the behavior of being rooted in the community and the place while being open to global flows of ideas, information, people, things and money (Manzini, 2008). Therefore, within cosmopolitan localism handicraft products emerge, which are linked to the identity of the place of origin and to the cultures and the social values that characterizes handicraft (p. 449). This means that even though Namibian design is already rooted within the community and place, Namibian stories can reach the wider global audience and bring a sense of accomplishment and relevance to Namibian design that is currently lacking. Following is a description of rusted textiles and materials. This study hopes to inspire Namibian designers to explore such methods and materials while at the same time building on a Namibian fashion identity.

### **2.3.2 Rusted textiles and materials (Eco printing)**

In this section the concept of rust dyeing and mark making as a sustainable method to produce innovative eco-friendly textiles is discussed. Rust, rust dyeing methods and rust sourcing will predominantly be discussed and rusting from a Namibian context will briefly be discussed. The paragraph will further review the work of textile artist that use rust to create textile art and fashion similar to the rust dyeing produced for this study.

In order to understand rust and rust dyeing, one needs to understand what rust is and how it is created. Touchette (2013) explains that rusting is an example of corrosion that is the breakdown of metal iron. In order to create the ‘chemical reaction’ that forms rust, also

known as ‘hydrated iron oxide’, iron, water and oxygen is needed to form a chemical reaction that produces rust. Brooks (2013) uses the same reactants as Touchette (2013), but specifically explains how to create rusted fabric while Touchette (2013) only explains the ‘chemical reaction’ to produce rust. After rusting the fabric, Brooks (2013) rinses the fabric in salt water to neutralize the chemical reaction or else the rusting will continue and the fabric will then eventually totally deteriorate. The same process used by Brooks (2013) of rinsing the textiles with salt water to neutralize the rusting process was used to create the rusted fabrics for this study.

Charlie Ross (2015) defines rust dyeing as “a process by which fabrics are coloured using objects that are prone to rusting” (para. 2). Ross (2015) further describes the rusting process in 6 basic steps that are similar to the rusting processes used for this study. Step 1 is to wet the fabric and place it in contact with rusty objects. Step 2 is to spray equal parts of vinegar and water onto the fabric. Step 3 is where the process of oxidation takes place. Step 4 is where you decide on the intensity of the colour you want to achieve. The longer you leave the fabric in contact with the rust, the deeper the colour becomes. Step 5 requires you to neutralize the fabric by soaking it in a saline (salty) solution. This will set the colour permanently. And step 6 requires you to iron the finished fabric once it is dry. Once the fabric is dry and ironed, it is also ready to be used (para. 4). Ross (2015) further maintains that the end product of rust dyeing is environmentally friendly as there are no harmful chemicals used in the process (para. 7).

Rusting in the Namibian context has been used for at least a century by Ovambo basket weavers to produce dark contrasting colours that are used with natural makalani palm (*Hyphaene petersiana*) fibers in their weaving (Kheoses and Shikongeni, 2006). Rusted

objects such as food and beverage tins are boiled in water. Palm fibers are added to the boiling solution to develop the dark brown colour (Sarantou, 2014). This practice serves as a good example how oxide dye processes were used in Namibian craft production over many years. I tried to use this technique for one of my experiments, but this technique resulted in a dark brown colour that was different from my other fabrics that had a rich orange colour that I desired for this collection. Fox (2015) uses tea in her rusting process that also results in a darker brown colour that is beautiful, but was not explored for this study (p.61).

For this study I reviewed the work of three textile artist that use rust to create textile art. They are Rio Wrenn, Alice Fox and Regina Benson. I came across these artists through an article by Wendy Feldberg (2015). I investigated these textile artists further because I could relate to their work and processes in various ways. Even though there is not a lot of published literature on these artists, I was able to understand and relate to their practices through their personal blogs and webpages, Fox's (2015) Natural Processes in Textile Art as well as the descriptive article by Feldberg (2015), who is also a fiber artist.

According to Feldberg (2015), Wrenn is a textile artist that uses a number of dyeing techniques, including rust, to manipulate her fabrics. Her rusting process mirrors her concepts in art that speaks of birth, death, decay and reemergence (p. 36). The artist's work supports this study as there are many similarities between her work and this research conducted. Like Wrenn, I also relate to the metaphorical concept of decay and renewal and I also associate rust with something that is old and very often discarded. When I use the discarded items, it is almost as if they are granted a new life through the marks that

they make on the new items giving them a new purpose and a reemergence through the new items created. Feldberg (2015), additionally, describes Wrenn as one of the few contemporary textile artists who incorporate rust into fashion garments, even though she mostly designs undergarments (p.36).

Additionally, Feldberg (2015) describes Benson as a committed environmentalist and fine artist. Feldberg (2015), states that Benson's work originates from the manipulation of intentional mark-making on fabric, from silk and cotton to horse-hair and industrial polyesters (p. 33). Her rusted art textiles are distinguished by carefully planned, complex mark making and have an enveloping physical presence (Feldberg, *Rust Dyeing: Corrosion to Creation*, 2015, p. 33). Benson's techniques are quite complex but contributed to my knowledge of rust dyeing and textile manipulation. According to Feldberg (2015), Benson mostly creates large textile installations where the viewer is drawn into the space, even though her work is just as magnificent when viewed from a distance (p. 33). Benson only creates textile for the purpose of art and is totally different to my work, but it inspired me even more to exhibit my work as fashion/art.

Fox's art practice combines traditional textile genres such as hand embroidery and weaving with printed processes that include natural dyeing and eco printing (Feldberg, *Rust Dyeing: Corrosion to Creation*, 2015, p. 33). Fox (2015) stated that she is fascinated with the exploration of different and sometimes unconventional materials (Fox, *Natural Processes in Textile Art*, 2015, p. 8). Like Fox, I mostly used found rusted objects from my environment as sources of rust, and employed pre-used textiles and materials that I already had available in my studio in an effort to be more sustainable. The desire to use

collected items and natural dyeing techniques in art is part of a growing movement to be more sustainable (Fox, *Natural Processes in Textile Art*, 2015, p. 11). This approach to use collected, recycled and natural resources is part of Fox's appeal to me as we both aim to be more sustainable in our design choices. Most of the textile samples created were used in the final creation of the 11 looks for the exhibition. I found that the best rust harvested is usually the first rust that comes from the source and when recreating a rust dyeing process, the results will never be exactly the same.

To summarize, rust is a sustainable and readily available resource that also has the potential to help with the forging of a Namibian fashion identity through creativity and a creative process. However, before exploring the creative process, which is a main focus of this study, the sometimes-controversial viewpoint of fashion being art, is discussed below.

#### **2.4 Fashion as art**

An ongoing global debate within the worlds of fashion and art of whether fashion is art has almost always existed (Sun Bok Kim, 2015, p.53). Kim (2015) claims that as early as 1959 Remy G. Sasselin a scholar of eighteen-century French art asserts that fashion is indeed art as part of his exploration of the relationship between fashion and poetry (p.53). Sandra Miller (2015) asks the same question of whether fashion is art, but also further enquires the question of what kinds of things can legitimately be regarded as such (p. 25). Miller's (2015) argument pertains to two questions, firstly the philosophy of art by analyzing its nature and definition (p.26), and secondly, the question pertaining to aesthetics, the concept of taste and purpose (p.27).

This debate is followed by the question whether fashion needs to be exhibited in a gallery for it to be considered as art. For this study, a gallery exhibition was specifically chosen as an exhibiting platform as opposed to a fashion show as I believed the viewer would be more open to consider the garments aesthetic value as fashion/art. Kim (2015) supports this notion by stating that exhibitions increased the emphasis on fashion aesthetics. Kim (2015) also claims that in the fashion and art world, confusion as to whether fashion is art has always existed as there is a lack of research on fashion aesthetics. This disagreement was sparked in 1983 when Yves Saint Laurent's exhibition opened at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Until then, exhibitions were only reserved for artworks or historic costumes, rather than for contemporary fashions (Kim, *Is Fashion Art?*, 2015, p. 52). Since then, many exhibitions dealing with art and fashion started to emerge and is made possible through a dynamic relationship between fashion, textiles and other art forms. However, fashion's connection to capitalist culture stands in the way of it being perceived as a valid art form, similar to "culturally and economically accessible contemporary media such as photography, film, graffiti or street art" (Smith & Kubler, 2013, p. 29). Miller (2015) concluded that clothes can be regarded in terms of their superlative qualities that enable them to fulfill their multiple functions, but can equally be regarded as beautiful objects of aesthetic contemplation by disregarding the concept, ignoring their functionality, therefore they could be objects in a museum (thus art) (p.39).

I support the point of view that fashion is art because the artist and the fashion designer both create and go through an extensive creative process voicing their believes, views and opinions on various concepts that shape human thinking. Therefore, as art fashions is also

created to provoke emotions in its audiences regardless of whether is positive or negatives, as long as it makes them feel and react to the work as art does.

## **2.5 Theories on creative processes**

In 1926 Graham Wallas developed a theory outlining the creative process into four definitive stages: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Wallas' seminal theory is still very relevant today as many modern theories are based on his outline of the four stages of the creative process. Popova (2013) summarizes and explains each of these stages and how they take place in a state of conscious or unconscious thinking in a voluntary and involuntary phase. During the preparation stage, the idea is to explore and investigate all possible directions of thoughts out of which to construct new ideas (Popova, 2013, para. 2). This stage entails part research, part planning, part entering the right frame of mind (Popova, 2013 para.2). This stage is the first stage and initiated voluntarily in a fully conscious state of mind (Popova, 2013, para.2). The second stage is the incubation stage where all the intellectual resources and investigations are combined in an unconscious state of mind (Popova, 2013, para. 3). During this stage no direct effort is made to solve the research problem being addressed and the idea is to voluntarily abstain from addressing the problem at hand (para. 3). This may be difficult for any creative as time constraints and deadlines usually pose a problem. Wallas (1926), as cited in Popova (2013), states that "voluntary abstention from conscious thought on any problem may, itself, take two forms: the period of abstention may be spent either in conscious mental work on other problems, or in a relaxation from all conscious mental work. The first kind of incubation economizes time, and is therefore often the better" (Popova, 2013, para.4). Therefore, the first approach would be to abstain from the problem at hand, but to

consciously continue with other work. During this period, it can be difficult to identify the incubation period, as work on a different problem within the same project can continue. The incubated problem will be addressed when insight to the problem arises even though the problem was being addressed subconsciously. The second approach is to enter a period of relaxation from all mental work (Popova, 2013, para. 3). However, creatives should be careful of this approach as it can easily be mistaken for procrastination. In this case, “Procrastination is based on the idea that somehow the future will become more certain if only we wait a little” (Lawson, *How designers think*, 2006, p. 114). The argument here would be that the waiting might never end and opportunities might be missed as a result. The third stage of Wallas’ creative process is illumination that may vary from a few seconds to several hours. “It is the flash of insight that the conscious self can’t will and the subliminal self can only welcome once all elements gathered during the preparation stage have floated freely around during incubation and are now ready to click into an illuminating new formation” (Popova, 2013 para.5). During this stage insight and vision to the problem will be experienced but it cannot be forced by the conscious self. Illumination will only take place when all of the research done during the preparation stage makes sense and falls into place, addressing the research problem at hand (Popova, 2013, para. 6). This then leads to verification. This stage is a fully conscious and a deliberate effort to validate and test the ideas and results that manifested during the illumination period (para. 7). Catherin Patrick (1937), as cited in (Götz, *On Defining Creativity*, 1981, p. 299), offered a more systematic approach to Wallas’ theory that included: preparation, incubation, insight (or discovery, illumination), and verification or concretization. Götz (1981) further describes that Patrick’s last stage often results in a product and that the appearance of the product may then be followed by a complex process

of evaluation. This conclusion of Götz (1981) supports arts-based research (ABR) and practice-based research (PBR) that focuses on new knowledge in the making process that often results in a product.

Since, Wallas (1926) theory on the creative process, there has been a trajectory of theorists that have developed their own models on the creative process. Botella, Zenasni and Lubart (2018) compared some of these theorists starting with Wallas (1926) theory (even though most of the models compared are based on Wallas theory) and ending with a more recent theory by Sadler-Smith 2016. The theories compared by Botella et al. (2018) identifies (sixteen) overlapping, but also distinctive divisions between some stages of the models (p.1). Even though Botella et al. (2018) compared (twenty) different models, only (four) models will be reviewed for this study. The (three) models selected include Carson's (1999) model that comprises of (preparation, concentration, incubation, ideation, insight, verification, elaboration and production), Cropley and Cropley's (2012) model that includes (preparation, activation, generation, insight and verification), the Botella et al. (2013) model that includes (idea of "vision", documentation and reflection, first sketches, testing, provisional objects and series) and Sadler-Smith's (2016) model that includes (preparation, incubation, intimation, insight and verification) (Botella et al., p. 3).

**Table 2** \_ Synthesis of identified creative process adopted from Botella et al. 2018

AUTHOR(S)		STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5	STAGE 6	STAGE 7	STAGE 8	STAGE 9	STAGE 10	STAGE 11	TOTAL STAGES
Wallas	1926		Preparation		Incubation			Insight	Verification				4
Carson	1999		Preparation	Concentration	Incubation		Ideation	Insight	Verification	Elaboration	Production		8
Cropley and Cropley	2012		Preparation			Activation	Generation	Insight	Verification				5
Botella et al	2013	Idea or Vision	Documentation and reflection				First sketches		Testing		Provisional Objects	Series	6
Sadler-Smith	2016		Preparation		Incubation	Intimation		Insight	Verification				5

The selected models include a combined total of (eleven) stages, with Carson (1999) having the most stages of (eight) and Cropley and Cropley (2012) and Sadler-Smith (2016) having the least stages of (five) each. Carson (1999) includes all of Wallas’s stages, but also includes a stage of concentration between Wallas’s stages of preparation and incubation. Carson further includes a (seventh) stage that leads to the elaboration of a solution and an (eighth) stage of its production (Botella et al. 2018 p. 2). Cropley and Cropley (2012) includes (three) of Wallas’s stages but omits incubation and instead includes (two) stages of activation and generation that would take place after Wallas’s incubation stage, but before the stages of insight and verification that Cropley and Cropley

(2012) also includes (Botella et al. 2018 p. 2). Botella et al. (2013) has the most distinct model as none of the stages are similar to that of Wallas. Botella et al. (2013) starts with an idea or vision in which an image, a sight, or a sound resonates with the artist (Botella et al. 2018 p. 2). Botella et al. (2013), “through interviews with professional artists identified a stage of documentation and reflection during which an artist’s gather information about the materials and technologies required to turn their visions into a reality” (Botella et al. 2018 p. 2). Botella et al. (2013) further confirms a stage of “first sketches to give a material form to the initial project, testing the forms and ideas that originated from reflection and preliminary work, and provisioned objects, “drafts” and almost finished products” (Botella et al. 2018 p. 2-3). Sadler-Smith (2016) reintegrated a (fifth) stage in the Wallas model called intimation that occurs between incubation and insight. Botella et al. (2018) describes intimation as an “association-train” on a fringe conscious level, between conscious and unconscious levels (p. 2).

Through this analysis, it is clear that the theorists discussed do not agree on the number of steps involved in the creative process as the creative process is complex even though these processes are described as if they are generic (Botella et al. 2018 p. 4).

Even though, the discussion thus far has been on the creative process based on Wallas (1926) model, other theories of creativity also exist. Tharp (2006) argues that creativity is the result of hard work and good working habits that can be learnt and achieved by anyone. Rhodes (1961) supports Tharp’s argument that creativity can be learnt by quoting Alex Osborn (1955) as follows: “I submit that creativity is an art-an applied art-a teachable art-a learnable an art in which all of us can make ourselves more proficient, if we will”

(p.308). Tharp (2006) believes that “in order to be creative you have to know how to prepare to be creative” (p.9). Tharp’s theory to achieving creativity can be summarized into five activities. The first activity Tharp (2006) describes as the ritual of preparation. Tharp advises you to create habits, routines and systems as the cornerstones of your daily life (p. 15). These habits will result in good working behaviors that lead you to achieving all you need to do on a daily basis. During this study, I indeed experienced that routine in daily activities lead to productivity and progress. Even though Tharp (2006) and Wallas (1926) both highlight preparation as the first stage of the creative process, their interpretation of preparation is entirely different. Secondly, Tharp believes that through hard work you can achieve greatness. Tharp compared this to Mozart who worked furiously hard throughout this life but this resulted in his hands being deformed by the age of 28 years as a result of his working habits (p. 8). Thirdly, one needs to eliminate or get rid of any distractions. Doing this allows to get back time and to lock into the subconscious state of mind. The next activity would be to read and to study others that have achieved greatness in similar fields of study. “You need to understand what greatness looks like and learn from it before you attempt to create your own craft. Research and reading should become a habit that is cultivated into your daily routine”, (Tharp 2006). Lastly, Tharp (2006) believes that one needs to be fit and active in order to have mental vitality (p. 63).

Bryan Lawson defines the design process as being endless since design problems cannot have a fixed and recognizable end (Lawson, How designers think, 2006, p. 123). Lawson (2006) further states that the designer’s job is never really over as designers always identify ways to improve on a project (p. 123). To identify the end of a design project usually requires experience. However, limited resources like time and money are very

often major limiting factors that can determine the end of a design process (p.123). This study's creative process end was determined by the time factor as I had to present my collection in the form of an exhibition that was booked in advance. If there was no date set for the exhibition, I would still have continued with my creative process. Secondly, Lawson (2006) states that there is no identifiable correct process (p. 124). Therefore, the design process developed during this study was an individual process that could only be used as a guide by other Namibian fashion designers. Lawson (2006), however, states that controlling and varying the design process is a very important skill that a designer can develop (p.124). This would support Wallas (1926) and Tharp's (2006) theories on the creative process, even though Lawson believes that creative theories will not guarantee a result. Lawson (2006), further claims that the design process involves finding as well as solving problems, as problems and solutions are very often identified simultaneously rather than one following the other (p.124). Thus, as the process continues, both the problem and the solution will become clearer. Additionally, Lawson (2006) claims that design involves subjective value judgment as designers find it difficult to remain unemotional about their work and their solutions (p.244). This is because designers are attached to their work on a personal level; therefore, objectivity might be impossible as designers often find it difficult to detach themselves from their work. Furthermore, Lawson (2006) describes design as a prescriptive activity unlike science that is a descriptive activity: designers tend to deal with questions related to what might have been, could have been and what should have been, therefore instead of understanding and predicting the future, designers play a role in creating the future (p. 125). Therefore, designers must do adequate research and exploration as designers are responsible in shaping our futures.

Lee & Danko (2017) identifies the need for more research to capture how designers work in real time, documenting tacit and implicit knowledge contained in each designer's creative process. Designers know their own creative processes but they cannot always explain their goals, steps and thoughts during their individual creative tasks (Lee & Danko, 2017, p. 660). Lee & Danko (2017) proposes a method that analyzes the sequence of the design process created through data collection by observing designers that were given a specific task. However, when designers are placed under pressure for example being observed by a researcher, they will most likely behave differently than what they would in a real scenario. This method of observing designers does not represent the designers own voice, but that of the researcher (Lee & Danko, 2017, p. 677).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The literature review started off by taking a brief look at the state of African fashion, followed by sustainability factors and discussion regarding the ongoing fashion/art debate. It is the fourth part though, the creative process that is the most important part of this study. The literature further acknowledged the fact that theorist still disagree on the number of steps involved in the (artistic) creative process. All of their theories are based on observations and interviews with designers and other creative including poets, musicians, architects, artists and scientists - thus their theories are generic and can be applied over the creative domain in general. This study addressed this gap in the literature by developing an artistic creative process that is specifically designed for fashion and textile designers in Namibian, but it can also be used by other designers and the artistic domain in general.

This artistic creative process was developed through practiced-based research including literature on practice-based research. Here an original investigation is undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of the practice (Candy, Practice Based Research: A Guide, 2006, p. 3). This definition of practice-based research (PBR) supports Borgdorff (2015), who states that art practice qualifies as research if its purpose is to expand our knowledge and understanding by conducting an original investigation in and through art objects and creative processes. The principal method used in this study is the documentation of an individual artistic creative process documented by the researcher. The researcher, who is also a fashion designer, also used a photographic visual diary. Therefore, the final theory developed is not based on an observation, but rather a firsthand lived experience that is also lacking in the existing literature. PBR is discussed further in chapter 3.

Sustainability and the use of local resources and production methods explored by African designers address “localism” or place specific and personal identity formation processes. There is an opportunity to explore sustainability further in this context as it is a complex practice that hosts many unanswered questions. Many of the production and manufacturing practiced used by some African designers are based on sustainable and ethical practices but the fight against environmental issues is urgent and the fashion and other industries in general, should do much better. Economic sustainability of the fashion industry, on the other hand, is viable as African fashion has the potential to infiltrate the global fashion market as African designs are producing quality works that carries a wealth of cultural heritage, knowledge and influence that is place specific to the African diaspora.

The next chapter will focus on the qualitative methodology used for this study including practice-based research strategies and a reflective research approach.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This chapter discusses the chosen research methodology and strategy used to conduct this study comprising of different identity formations and creative processes documented through artistic research practices using reflective research approaches.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study used a qualitative research methodology and employed practice-based research strategies using a reflective research approach to generate knowledge and an understanding of personal identity, place-based identity and individual creative processes through artistic research. I reflected on my own art practice during the artistic exploration of rust, rust dyeing and garment construction. This qualitative research study therefore uses practice-based research strategies to understand the complex procedure of creativity, identity and artistic research that results in artifacts (garments) that is central to this study. Candy (2006) defines practice-based research as an “original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice” (p.3). Candy (2006) further states that “while the significance and context of the claims are describes in words, a full understanding can only be obtained with direct reference to those outcomes” (p.3). Therefore this study consists of a documented body of work comprising of textile manipulation, garment construction and exhibited artifacts, ending in a written thesis. The documented work (processes) and the artifacts (garments) produced therefore becomes the data for this study. After the practical exploration and documentation of the study, reflective approaches used for analysis was employed to

analyze the data collected through a photographic visual journal. The reflective approach employed for the study includes reflection on memories that are personal and place specific to me as the maker during the making process, but reflection also occurred through the analysis of the documented data collected through the photographic visual diary where I become the critical researcher for the study. This form of gaining knowledge sheds light on the development of design research to include the traditional basis of the field, the creative practice, with a focus on the sources of knowledge - the making process and the maker (Leavy, *Research Design*, 2017). The interchangeable labels of research with the inclusion of creative practice embrace 'practice-based', 'practice-led' and 'artistic' research. The core concept of research labelled with these terms is the relationship between the researcher, who is simultaneously an artist, designer and researcher whose artistic process and production of artifacts is the target of the reflection. Therefore, this approach is conducted through the creative production of a photographic visual diary, placing equal emphasis on the theory and practice, as well as the reflection and the documentation of the practice (Mäkelä, Dash, Nimkulrat and Nsenga, 2011, p. 4).

The study predominantly used a creative theoretical framework developed by Graham Wallas' (1926) seminal model of creativity by exploring his four stages of the creative process namely; preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. This seminal model was then compared to modern theories by Sadler-Smith (2016) that incorporates intimation into Wallas model, Botella et al. (2013) that incorporates six stages, starting off with an idea or a vision, Carson (1999) that includes all of Wallas stage including concentration and insight, and Corpley and Corpley (2012) that also reviewed Wallas model, splitting the stage of incubation into two septate stages (activation and generation).

Other supporting theorists include Twyla Tharp (2006), Nigel Cross (2007) and Bryan Lawson (2006) to demonstrate an understanding of contemporary critical thinking across creative arts disciplines.

This research practice culminated in three major creative processes that included the rusting (textile manipulation), the designing (garment construction) and the exhibition (fashion as art), thus the work created during this study became the data for this thesis. In practice-based research, strategies are not predetermined, but emerge from action over time. Rather than starting with a narrow problem that needs solving, this study demonstrate how practice is used to develop, document and to reflect on data, allowing the researcher to develop their own divergent abilities (Vidal, 2007, p. 2).

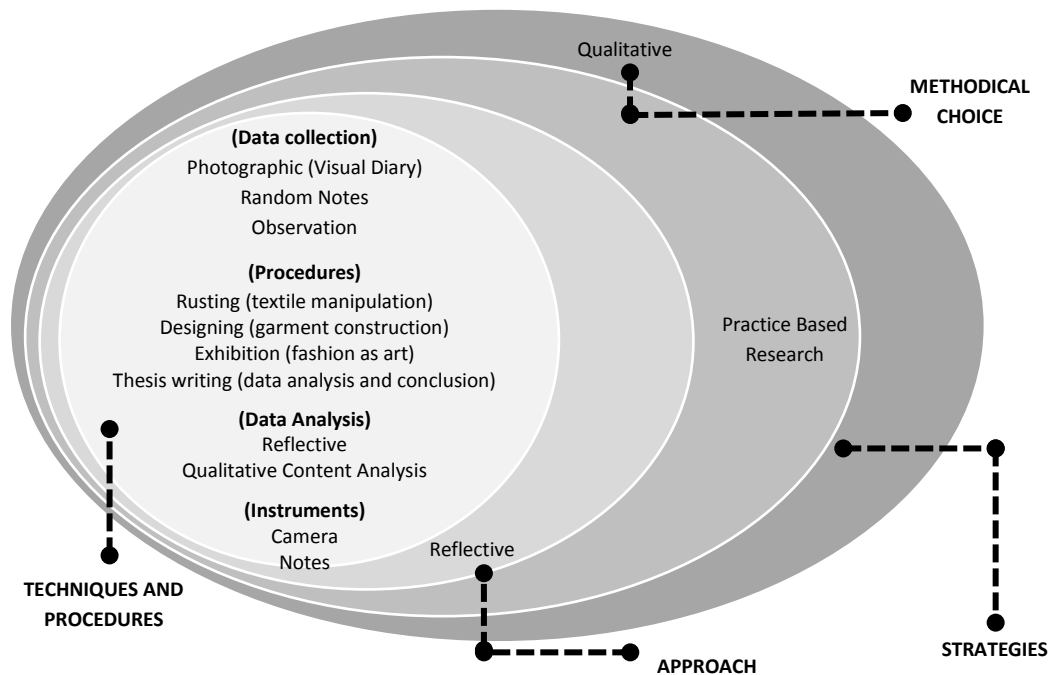


Figure 1- The research design

Adapted from Mark Saunders and Paul Tosey (2012)

### **3.2 Techniques and Procedures**

This study experimented with different rust and rust dyeing techniques that resulted in textiles that were used to create a collection of fashion garments and accessories. These were then exhibited as fashion/art. As demonstrated in figure 2, this procedure started with a unique idea step 1. This in all probability occurs subconsciously before choosing the idea as a consideration and concept for the study. This step was followed by three overlapping but distinct parts step 2-4. These steps comprise of all of the making or (creating) parts of the study including the creating of the textiles, the creating of the garments, and the set-up (creating) of the exhibition. Reflection mainly occurred after the making process when all of the data collected was analyzed. However, reflection also occurred during the making process when I reflected on immediate outcomes while finding solutions to problems experienced during the making process. Therefore, this practice-based research functions as a conscious reflection on and in action (Makela & Nimkulrat, Documentation as a practice-led research tool for reflection on experiential knowledge, 2011, p. 1). The basis of this investigation was documented through an electronic visual diary (photography) and random notes that served as data for this thesis. Using photography as a data collection tool, I was able to reflect on each series of photographs to determine the materials used, duration of the experiment, the site (location), the time of day and the weather.

This thesis consists of three main chapters (chapters 4-6) that focus on the three main events step 2-4 that were mentioned earlier. Each chapter reflects on the creative process documented during each event and how different factors for example the site, weather,

time, space and materials influenced the final outcomes of the works created. The documentation happened during steps 2-4. Reflection mostly took place in step 5 which is the analysis of the documentation. However, reflection also takes place during steps 2-4, because I reflected on different outcomes experienced during the creation process that happens through steps 2-4. There was overlapping and a back and forth motion between steps 2 and 3. Step 4 was considered from the beginning of step 1 when the idea was conceptualized. The final step discussed the conclusion and findings of the study. The photographic data collection method used for this study does not only serve as data for the study, but can also be used as teaching materials

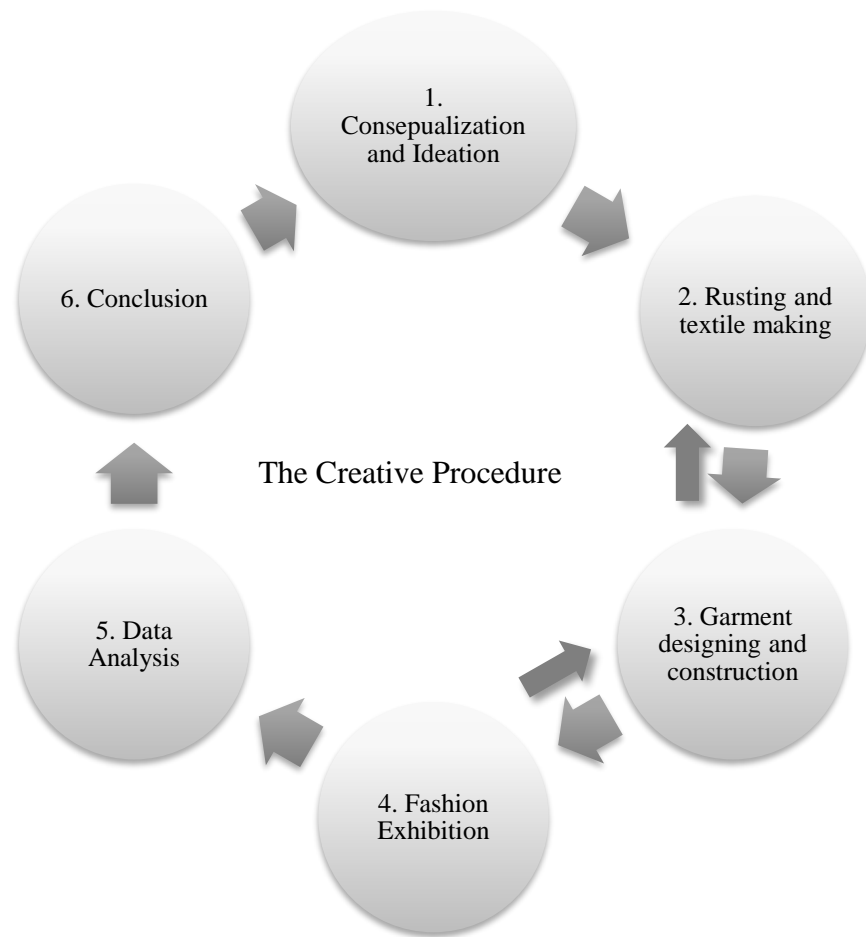


Figure 2 - The Creative Procedure for this study

### **3.3 Visual Diary and Photography (Data Collection)**

Mbonu (2014) states that the use of photography as a tool for documentation in the research process is highly recommended and that it can be an extremely useful way of recoding certain stages of the research and development process (p.106). Using photographic documentation enabled me to document all the works produced for the study. The photographs further enabled me to identify individual steps and processes employed during the study, highlighting breaks, continuation, discontinuation, the materials used, as well as the site used for the production of each process. Other important factors documented in each series of photographs included the time it took to produce each work from the sourcing of the material, to the final product. This revealed in detail how each sample changed over time and highlighted why some experiments took longer than others did. The weather played a very important role in each step. Through the photo documentation, I could see what time of the year it was. This enabled me to see whether it was hot or cold. The temperature plays a major role in how quickly or slowly the chemical reactions took place. The types of materials are identifiable through the photographs but also through the products and samples themselves. This enabled me to make comparisons to how the different materials reacted. Through the photos, I was able to see how the colours of the rust changed over time and what the material looked like before and after the rusting process. I was also able to reflect on my garment construction through a mock photoshoot where I was able to mix and match the different pieces enabling me to visualize the outcome of the final collection. The photos did not only record the successful experiments, but it also recorded the unsuccessful experiments, enabling me to identify flaws in my techniques when they occurred. Because of the duration between the making process and the analysis process, the photos help to trigger

my memory of certain events that occurred during the making process. Even though the photos recorded so much data and was able to trigger many memories, it was not able to record my emotions and psychological well-being at the time of production, which also contributes significantly to the outcome of creativity even though that is not explored for this study. The photo documentation further plays a significant role as the photos and visual data can be a useful teaching, and reflecting tool, for both the designer (maker) and the viewers (fellow designers and students) as they will be able to visually experience the making process through the photographic data.

### **3.4 Data sources and Documentation**

The data for this study consists of primary as well as secondary sources. These sources can be researched at any time and are found in the world around us. Therefore, it is important to be observant of our surroundings, as well as significant events happening all around the world in order to be relevant in the competitive worlds of fashion and art. Mbonu (2014) defines fashion research as “a creative investigation that can yield ideas, which then inspire and contribute to the design process” (Mbonu, Fashion Design Research, 2014, p. 11). These ideas were obtained as secondary sources that consisted of all collected information created by others, which then served as inspiration, knowledge and research for this study. This study can be divided into three major events. Firstly, I looked at rusting procedures and experimentation by other rust and textile artists identified through a journal review by (Feldberg, Rust Dyeing: Corrosion to Creation, 2015). For the creating and garment construction event, I drew inspiration from other African fashion designers, their creative processes and garment collections created (Jennings, New African Fashion, 2011). As for the third event, the exhibition, I looked at fashion designers

and textile artists that exhibited fashion and textiles as art (Smith & Kubler, 2013). The secondary sources form part of the research process for the study that was fundamental in creating a tangible concept for the creative process. (Mbonu, Fasfhion Design Research, 2014, p. 20). The primary sources comprised of all new research created during the practice that can also be divided into the three events mentioned above. These include all the textiles created through experimenting with rust dyeing and mark making: the materials such as discarded metal rubble used to create the rust: and the garments and accessories created from the rusted textiles. These creative events were extensively documented through photographs, notes and sketches that became the main source of the data for this study. This data was then studied through content analysis and reflection.

### **3.5 Research instruments**

The main research instrument used for this study was a camera as the study was documented using a photographic visual diary that also became the data for the study. These photographs were stored on an SD card and were then transferred to a computer. Other documentation tools included paper used to make random notes and printed photographs recorded during the making process to analyses as the study progressed. Because the study comprised of three distinctive, but connected sections each section comprised of a set of specialized tools and materials.

The first section comprising of the textile manipulation and rusting used recycled metal objects, rust oxide, water, salt and vinegar and textile and materials to be rusted. The second section comprised of the garment construction. To construct the garments, the rusted textile and materials were used, using a sewing machine, over locker, iron and other

sewing equipment including patterns and pattern blocks. The last section was the exhibition that included the collection of garments and accessories, the supporting photographs and artworks and the hanging and display solutions and tools.

### **3.6 Selected analytical approaches**

The data for this study was analyzed using methods of reflective and visual content analysis. Both of these approaches looks at the data from the designer's perspective as the maker during the making process, but also from the researchers (outside) perspective while reflecting on the data and visual content documented during the making process.

#### **3.6.1 Reflection**

Reflection for this study occurs right at the beginning of the study when I first reflected on my past experience of rust when I participated in the Metalmorphosis exhibition. My reflection of this experience initiated the idea of using rust as means to document the creative process for this study. Therefore, for this study reflection takes place even before the making process starts.

During the making process as the designer (maker) I constantly reflected on the rusting experiments as they progressed, because each step was a learning experience as I learnt and improved by reflecting on experiments already completed. This reflection occurred from memory, but also from the photographic visual diary that I was compiling during the making process. Reflecting on the photographic diary during the making process was a useful tool for me as the designer as I was able to identify significant occurrences during the making process, that might have gone unnoticed if not document in this particular way.

The most significant occurrences documented during the rusting of the textiles and materials included; how the rust changed in colour and texture over time, how the rust reacted to different textiles and materials and how the samples rusted looked before and after the rusting process. I also reflected on memories and experiences of my life that were personal and place specific to me as the designer. These reflections included memories of my mother teaching me how to crochet and knit and memories of my father as builder, as many of the rust sources were collected from this building materials that were stored in his backyard. Other memories reflected on was the result of the outcome of the rusted textiles and materials as the rusted textures and colours reminded me of the diverse Namibian landscapes as well as certain traditions from my culture.

After the rusted samples were completed, they were evaluated and then used for the construction of a garment that was most suitable for each specific sample. The garments were created as individual pieces, therefore the collection was not pre conceived, but developed through the creative process explored. A mock photo-shoot took place when half of the anticipated garments and accessories were completed. This assisted in the mixing and matching of the different sample garments and through the photographs recorded I was able to reflect on the different possibilities that lead me to the most desired and suitable outcome. This process also allowed me to visualize and see what the garments were going to look like on a person and as a final collection of garments.



Figure 3 - Reflecting on photos of completed garments to see if they needed more work, and to see if they were working together as a collection



Figure 4 - Model Beniece, during a mock photo shoot.

### 3.6.2 Creative content analysis

The visual data collected for this study was analysed using qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis can be defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the context of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or pattern (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Content analysis can be divided into 3 step, including; 1. preparation 2. organising and 3. reporting (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). For this study, the photographic visual data was divided and grouped into different stages of the creative process, through which themes and pattern were identified that would assist in achieving the aims and objectives outlined for the study.

Table 3 divides the 1550 photos taken during the study into 6 categories, including the three stages of production that includes; 1) Rusting the textiles and material, 2) Constructing the garments and accessories and 3) The exhibition. The other categories include the sources of rust, the photoshoot and other that includes elements documented that do not fit into the main categories identified.

**Table 3**

<b>COMBINED TOTAL PHOTOS</b>		
1.	Rusting the textile and materials	892 Photos
2.	Constructing the garments and accessories	336 Photos
3.	Rust sources	117 Photos
4.	Rust Photoshoot with Willem Vrey	9 Photos
5.	Rust Exhibition	119 Photos
6.	Other	17 Photos
<b>TOTAL PHOTOS</b>		<b>1550</b>

Table 4 divides first production stage that was the rusting of the textiles and materials into 30 groups. These groups comprise of the different experiments conducted to produce the sample textiles and materials. The names given to these groups, was either named after the textile used or the source of rust used in the experiment to make the group easily identifiable to me. The table further identifies patterns that are visible, by simply looking at the photographs and also identifies patterns that become significant once the photos are analyzed through reflection.

**Table 4**

<b>RUSTING THE TEXTILE AND MATERIALS</b>		
1.	African Print	23 Photos
2.	Animal Print Sparkle Chiffon	63 Photos
3.	Black Wool	23 Photos
4.	Blue and Orange Yarn	55 Photos
5.	Boiling Beads	18 Photos
6.	Calico Samples	2 Photos
7.	Car Tire Wires	60 Photos
8.	Circle Skirt Keys	28 Photos
9.	Cord	17 Photos
10.	Crochet Hat	32 Photos
11.	Fabric Swatches	16 Photos
12.	Feathers	4 Photos
13.	Felt	9 Photos
14.	Flower Lace	5 Photos

**PATTERNS IDENTIFIED THROUGH PHOTOS**

Duration of Experiment  
 Production Site  
 Material  
 Sources of rust  
 Attempts  
 Success  
 Techniques used  
 Materials before rusting  
 Materials during rusting  
 Materials after rusting  
 Number of samples created  
 Sustainable techniques  
 Sustainable material choices

15.	Flower Silver	18 Photos	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>SIGNIFICANCE IDENTIFIED</u></b>  <b><u>THROUGH REFLECTION</u></b>  Personal Memories  Associations to Place  Associations to Time  Associations to Culture</p>	
16.	Fringe	45 Photos		
17.	Green Silk	7 Photos		
18.	Leather	2 Photos		
19.	Mesh	15 Photos		
20.	Mustard Flowers Satin	75 Photos		
21.	Nails	86 Photos		
22.	Net	22 Photos		
23.	Nuts & Washers	27 Photos		
24.	Ostrich Egg Shells	52 Photos		
25.	Rectangular Grill	50 Photos		
26.	Ribbon	14 Photos		
27.	Round Grill	45 Photos		
28.	Sparkle Georgette	6 Photos		
29.	Wool	50 Photos		
30.	Zig Zag	23 Photos		
<b>TOTAL PHOTOS</b>		<b>892</b>		

Table 5 divides the second production stage into 9 groups. These groups comprise of different factors experienced during the production of the garments and accessories created. This includes pattern making, garment construction including knitting, sewing, the production of tassels, as well as the rusting of specific items like t-shirts, shoes and belts. Other factors experienced during this stage include a mock photoshoot and the

verifying of the final looks. The table further identifies patterns that are visible, by simply looking at the photographs and also identifies patterns that become significant once the photos are analyzed through reflection. Some of these patterns have already been identified in Table 4, but are repeated in this stage as the materials produced in the previous stage are used to produce that garment constructed in this stage.

**Table 5**

<b>CONSTRUCTING THE GARMENTS AND ACCESSORIES</b>			
1.	Verifying Looks	67 Photos	<p><b><u>PATTERNS IDENTIFIED THROUGH PHOTOS</u></b>            Production Site            Production Process            Changes made            Material            Success            Techniques used            Rusted Textile            Final Garment            Sustainable techniques            Sustainable material choices</p>
2.	Knitting (2)	96 Photos	
3.	Knitting	14 Photos	
4.	Mock Photoshoot	173 Photos	
5.	Nail Belt	14 Photos	
6.	Pattern Processes	80 Photos	<p><b><u>SIGNIFICANCE IDENTIFIED THROUGH REFLECTION</u></b>            Vision of final garment            Vision of 'Namibian Chic'            Vision of Namibian Identity            Personal Memories            Personal Design Aesthetics</p>
7.	Shoes	23 Photos	
8.	T-shirts	37 Photos	
9.	Tassels	19 Photos	
<b>TOTAL PHOTOS</b>		<b>336</b>	

Table 6 consists of 5 groups that are divided into the different sources of the rust used to produce the rusted textiles and accessories. This includes building rubble and random metal items finds from my father's backyard, rusted metal parts from a burnt car, nails,

nuts and washers that I purchased from a local hardware store. The table further identifies patterns that are visible, by simply looking at the photographs and also identifies patterns that become significant once the photos are analyzed through reflection. Some of these significances are place specific to where I found them and to what they were originally used for, there others are time specific as they are linked to memories of my father as a builder while I was growing up.

**Table 6**

<b>RUST SOURCES</b>			
1.	Bits& Bobs	51 Photos	<p><b><u>PATTERNS IDENTIFIED THROUGH PHOTOS</u></b></p> <p>Sources of rust Types of metals Identifying the source Site where source acquired Sustainable material choices</p>
2.	Building Rubble	3 Photos	
3.	Car Rubble	27 Photos	
4.	Nails	67 Photos	<p><b><u>SIGNIFICANCE IDENTIFIED THROUGH REFLECTION</u></b></p> <p>Personal Memories Associations to Place Associations to Time</p>
5.	Nuts & Washers	29 Photos	
<b>TOTAL PHOTOS</b>		<b>177</b>	

Table 7 consists of photographs taken by renowned Namibian photographer Willem Vrey. Willem took many photos, but only provided me with 10 of the best photos that he personally selected as this was our agreement. The purpose of these photographs was to bring my vision of the ‘*Namibian Chic*’ woman that I envisioned to life making ‘her’ visible not only to myself, but also to the views. The table further identifies patterns that are visible, by simply looking at the photographs and also identifies patterns that become

significant once the photos are analyzed through reflection. These reflections are place specific to contemporary Namibia and Namibian contemporary fashion.

**Table 7**

<b>RUST PHOTOSHOOT WITH WILLEM VREY</b>			
1.	Avis Dam	10 Photos	<p><b><u>PATTERNS IDENTIFIED THROUGH PHOTOS</u></b>  Photoshoot location (site)  Final look envisioned  Garments  Accessories  Models  Hair  Makeup  Techniques used  Namibian vegetation  Fit of the garments  Namibian Design Identity  Personal Design Aesthetics  Sustainable techniques  Sustainable material choices</p>
			<p><b><u>SIGNIFICANCE IDENTIFIED THROUGH REFLECTION</u></b>  Associations to Place  Associations to Time  Associations to Culture</p>
<b>TOTAL PHOTOS</b>		<b>10</b>	

Table 8 consists of photographs taken by Jose Claasen at the opening night of the exhibition that is also the third and last stage of the production stages. The exhibition culminates the creative process by revealing parts of the production process, as well as the final collection to the public for approval and feedback. The table further identifies patterns that are visible, by simply looking at the photographs and also identifies patterns that become significant once the photos are analyzed through reflection. The photographs

identifies some of the creative and production processes as they reveal the garments and artworks displayed at the exhibition, they also reveal the people in attendance as well as the feedback recorded in the attendance book. Significances identified through reflection include the outcome and success of the exhibition, and the final aim of the creative process.

**Table 8**

<b>RUST EXHIBITION</b>			
1.	Rust Exhibition	119 Photos	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>PATTERNS IDENTIFIED THROUGH PHOTOS</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Garments and Accessories Final Look Printed Photographs Framed Artworks Rust Sources Rust Techniques Garment Construction Techniques Garment Finish Curation of Exhibition People in Attendance Feedback in Attendance Book Sustainable techniques Sustainable material choices</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>SIGNIFICANCE IDENTIFIED THROUGH REFLECTION</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Outcome of Exhibition Success of Exhibition Responses and Reaction The Whole Creative Process</p>
<b>TOTAL PHOTOS</b>		<b>119</b>	

Table 9 reveals elements that were part of the creative process, but does not fit into the main categories identifies above. They include how the rust depleted and changed overtime, and activation and neutralizing agents needed during the rusting process.

**Table 9**

<b>OTHER</b>			
1.	Cleaning Old Rust	8 Photos	<b><u>PATTERNS IDENTIFIED THROUGH PHOTOS</u></b> How rust depleted and changed over time The chemicals needed to activate and neutralize the rust process
2.	Chemicals	9 Photos	
<b>TOTAL PHOTOS</b>		<b>119</b>	

Using qualitative content analysis assisted me in achieving all of my research aims and objectives outlined for this study. Through the documentation process and analysis of the study I was able to identify and highlight sustainable practices and decisions made during the production stages of the study. The data also reveals a body of work that is personal and place specific to Namibia telling a Namibian story through the creative aesthetic documented and revealed. The data documented for this study is inspiring and reveals a clearly outlined individual creative process that can be used by fellow Namibian fashion and textile designs, but can also be used by other creative practices within visual arts. The fashion garments created for this study are very unique and artistic and can definitely assist in narrowing the gap between fashion and art.

Furthermore, the study documented and created an individual creative process that was being compared to Wallas's four stages of the creative process and other modern theories of creativity. While this chapter discussed the methodological aspects including the research design, strategy and approaches, the discussions employed in chapter 4, 5 and 6 will include all the approaches developed and experienced in order to achieve the creative aims for the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RUST EXPERIMENTATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss how I created rusted textiles from found objects, recycled materials and sustainable purchases. As defined earlier, Touchette (2013) describes “Rusting is a well-known example of corrosion that is the breakdown of the metal iron. The reactants of the chemical reaction are iron, water, and oxygen, and the product is hydrated iron oxide, better known as rust” (Download Project, para. 2). Fox (2015) further describes the process by stating that once the rusting occurs, the metal will eventually break down entirely into iron oxide (p. 59). Therefore, rust can only be created if iron reacts with the natural elements, water and oxygen. The chapter will mainly discuss how I sourced and harvested my rust, the techniques I used to create new rust, the textiles and materials I rusted and what I created from each rusted textile and material sample.

#### **4.2 Sources of the rust**

The rust used to dye and print the textiles and materials created for this study was mainly found objects from my surroundings linking the objects to a specific place and time. The objects were easily accessible, and some were already exposed to the natural elements and as a result naturally rusted. This process of using found objects supports Fox (2015), which maintains “natural processes promote a way of working creatively with what is available and accessible in the home and surroundings” (p.57). Fletcher (2008) further maintains that using local materials is a solution to unsustainability and helps to develop creativity as solutions are invented to problems experienced with local resources and expertise that

is available in communities (p. 140). However, I also purchased some nails, washers and nuts that I could use to create repetitive patterns with. These purchased items were not rusted, so I had to expose them to the natural elements (oxygen and water) that results in rust. Even though these materials were purchased, they were sustainable choices, as they cannot only be reused for rusting textile, but they can also be reused for what they were initially intended and made for. Manzini (2008) describes a resource as the result of a deliberate activity which operates on an existing system, interpreting it and transforming it in relation to its purpose. Therefore creating rust from discarded products is altering the purpose of what the products were created for. This unusual way of looking at resources and materials aims to inspire other designers to be more open to using unconventional and local materials that result in original ideas with a local design aesthetic that local people can relate to. Fletcher (2008) further maintains that the best products are products that allow its citizens to look at the community with fresh eyes. Therefore, showing people what is possible with local materials is significant in encouraging local production. For that reason if designers develop local skills and competencies for the betterment of a community they will improve their actual aim towards sustainability (Manzini, 2008).

The first source of rust that I explored for this study was two metal iron sheets that were already rusted. These rusted sheets were the same sheets that I use when I first started to explore with rust. They were given to me by the same friend that triggered my thoughts into using rust as a source of textile manipulation and dyeing. Iron rusts very easily when exposed to moisture and oxygen. As I continually used these rusted iron sheets, I was depleting the layer of rust on the sheet. Even though new rust was constantly forming under the old rust, the colour started to change from a very bright orange colour to a very

dark brown and black colour. Packwood, (2001) claims that rust comes in about ten or more natural colours depending on what is in the iron or what the rust is made from. At this stage, the darker brown and black colours were not desirable to me, so I scraped of the old rust and then started to develop new rust onto the iron sheets.

The other sources of rust came from my parent's back yard. My father is a retired building contractor. He stored his building rubble, material and equipment in his backyard where they were exposed to the natural elements and had started to rust. Pierre, Mosse & Bassereau (2019) integrated building rubble found on a building site into new projects incorporated into the new building for example; pigments, fabrics or floor surfaces. "The transmaterialised memory of the past building therefore becomes a constructive component of the future structure" (Pierre, Mosse & Bassereau, 2019, p. 1). Therefore, remnants and memory of my father as a builder is incorporated into my new textiles, accessories and garments making them person to me and place specific to my home. The pile of building materials and rubble was like a treasure chest to me, as I found many interesting items that I sourced rust from. These sources include square tubing, iron sheets and pipes. Some of the smaller items included keys, chains, nuts, bolts, screws, metal disk brushes, hinges and various other bits that I don't know the names of (see Fig. 5). Some of these materials created very interesting patterns, but they also triggered the idea to create patterns from nails, washers and nuts. I would have liked to find the nail, washers and nuts not having to purchase them, but that was not possible at the time because of time constraints. Even though I purchased some of the nails, washers and nuts, it is still a

sustainable source, as they were not very expensive, and I would be able to use them for a very long time as a source of rust, or for what they were initially intended made for.



Figure 5 - Random items from building rubble. Photograph: By Author

The nails purchased was placed in empty plastic water bottles and partly filled with vinegar and water. The rusting process was rather slow, so I had to figure out why it was taking so long as very little rust appeared after 72 hours. I realized that the nails were not exposed to enough oxygen to start the rusting process because the bottle was filled with water, and the cap was place back on the bottle. I therefore placed the nails, washers and nuts onto flat trays spraying the items with the vinegar and water whenever I had a chance (several times per day). They immediate started to rust, as rust was visible within a couple of hours. Once the water dried off, all the nails were covered in bright orange rust (Fig.6).



Figure 6 - Nails covered with bright orange rust. Photograph: By Author

The next source of rust was a very lucky find. My studio at the time was in an industrial area, just opposite a recreational venue. One morning when I returned to the studio after a weekend, I found a burn out car in the street as seen in (see Fig. 7). This car was there for a while, so it naturally started to rust as all of the protective paints and rubbers were destroyed by the fire, exposing all of the metal to the natural elements. Therefore, I decided to see what I could harvest from the car for my rust experiments. I found lots of interesting items, but some of the most interesting items were coiled wire that came from the burnt tires of the car. I also found metal clasp strips that were used to keep the rubber seals in place. There was also other random part that was not as easily identifiable because they were burnt beyond recognition.



Figure 7 - Burnt car. Photograph: By Author

I had planned to go to the scrap yard to find more rust sources, but what I collected from my father's building materials and the burn car was sufficient as I managed to create more than 30 different samples from the rust sources I had collected. However, for this study, I will only discuss 20 of the most successful and interesting experiments conducted.

### **4.3 Rust techniques explored**

The dyeing and printing techniques explored during this study involved the rusting of the materials by either rust dyeing the materials, making shapes and patterns using a resist technique or by using rusted sources like nails and keys to create different marks and

impression onto the materials. The sources of rust mostly came from recycled and found materials therefore linking the textiles and materials rusted to a specific time and place (Fox, 2015, p. 12).

To start the rusting process, the materials were either soaked in or sprayed with vinegar water, and placed onto the rusted sources, or the rust source would be placed onto the soaked materials. Rusting fabric without vinegar is possible, but vinegar acts as a reactant and speeds up the rusting process (Packwood, 2001). This process is not an exact science, as each experiment reacted differently as uncontrollable factors for example; the weather (temperature) and the age of the rust affects each outcome in terms of the speed of the rusting process and the colour of the rust produces. (Fox 2015) supports this by highlighting the importance of the atmospheric conditions in a room by maintaining that anywhere to warm or direct sunlight should be avoided as this may dry out the colours before they have time to develop (p. 66). Warm weather was however inevitable with the Namibian climate, therefore I either covered the materials with plastic to slow down the drying, or I repeatedly sprayed the materials with the vinegar and water solution if the drying was happening to quickly. The rusting process took at least 24 hours to bond with the different materials, but each process varied. I inspected each experiment daily and decided whether the rusting needed a bit more time for a more desired result. Sometimes the experiments were left one week and were occasionally sprayed with vinegar water as water is needed for the chemical process of oxidation that is also known as rusting to continue. After the materials were rusted and the desired effects were achieved, the materials were rinsed in salt water. The salt acts as a neutralizing agent that prevents the rusting process to continue (Packwood, 2001). After neutralizing and drying the

materials, they were ready to be transformed to a fashion garment or accessory that will be further discussed in chapter 5.

#### **4.4 Materials, textures and colours**

I think that my attraction to rust and rusted textiles has to do with my subconscious memory of my country's natural beauty as I noticed and identified many similarities between my textiles and Namibian landscapes and traditions, even though it was not consciously intended. I think that the rustic orange and brown color created by the rust reminded me of the Namib Desert and therefore I was attracted to it in the first place, as I always like to have a Namibian identity and feel to my work. White, Walden, Drake and Echardt (1997) and Walden, White, Kilcoyne and Bently (2000) maintains that that the orange colour of the Namib desert sand dunes is linked to a high concentration of iron oxide found in the sand. Therefore, the colours found in the rust I created have such a similar resemblance to the colours found in the Namib Desert landscapes.

#### **4.5 Experiments conducted and documented**

At least 30 different experiments were conducted during this study. Each experiment was documented by extensively photographing all of the steps involved from the beginning to the end. This process allowed me to make notes in the form of a photographic visual diary, as photographs captured all the information that I would have recorded in a note book. The data that was recorded through the photographs for each experiment included all significant factors related to the work, the practice and the site. Adamson (2007) maintains that, "anything made by an artist can be a work; anything an artist does can be a practice; and anywhere this happens can be a site" (p. 167). Following Adamson (2007), all

products produced for this study are defined as work, all processes and techniques used can be defined as the practice and all venues used to produce or display the work at are the site. Therefore the site played a major role with what I was doing, and why I was doing it at a specific time and site. The site had a major influence on the sizes of the sample created. When I found myself working in a limited space, I had to adapt and improvise with how I was going to continue to be productive. This might seem like an obstacle, but it was in fact a needed challenge that allowed me to improvise, think out of the box resulting in very interesting and unique outcomes. Each site also resulted in different working routines and habits that were most suitable for the available context.

#### **4.5.1 African print**

Even though I have many African printed textiles in my textile cupboard, I specifically selected this textile as I was anticipating the end result linking the blue and white colour of the textile to the Namibian Atlantic Ocean, and the orange and brown colour of the rust to the Namib Desert. My first attempt at rusting this textile was to wrap it around square tubing that I sourced from my father's building rubble. This was unsuccessful, as the square tubing barely rusted the material. The material made very little contact with the metal because of the way I folded the material, therefore the lack of rust on the material was due to the fact that the material was not making contact with the metal. I then re-rusted this material by placing it onto the metal sheeting gathering one piece of textile vertically and the other diagonally. This created textured lines of orange and brown across the material, still allowing some of the blue batik pattern to be seen (Fig. 8). This material was used to create a short and crop corset top. This design choice was made as it was one

of the last garments made and I wanted to have a versatile collection and a short was not included.

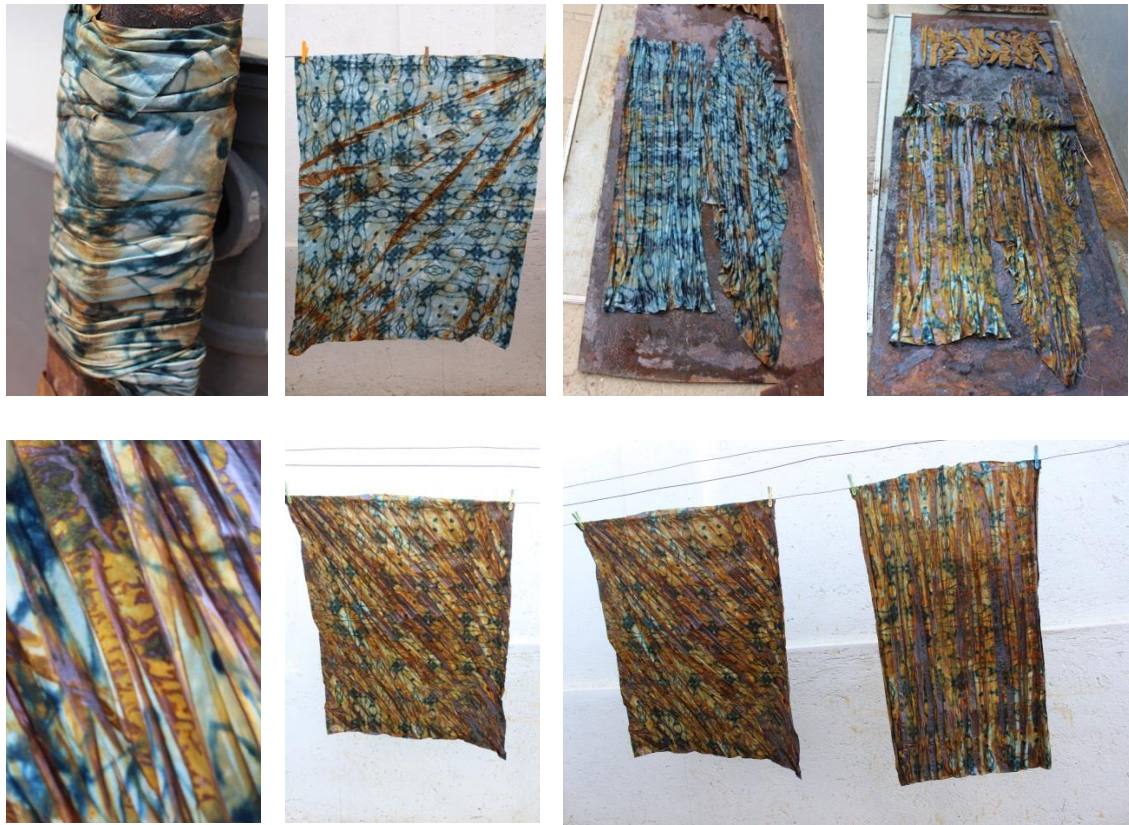


Figure 8 - Rust dyed African print. Photographs: By Author

#### 4.5.2 Animal print shimmer chiffon

I started off by wet the material with a vinegar and water solution and then gently crunched it over a metal sheet. After the first attempt, I liked the effect, but it created minimal rusted areas, as not all the textile was making contact with the metal sheet. I then repeated the same process for a second time that resulted in a rusted print that almost resembles an animal print, enhancing the print that was already on the textile (Fig. 9). I used this textile to create the ruffles for the t-shirt mini dress. This material was used for this design, as it was soft and flowing, therefore suitable to create the ruffles used in the design.



Figure 9 - Rusted shimmer chiffon. Photographs: By Author

#### **4.5.3 Blue and orange yarn**

This yarn was very interesting, as it was made from a flat woven cord and was dyed blue, orange and yellow, creating an interesting coloured texture. For the experiment I wrapped the yarn around the square tubing making sure that most of the yarn made contact with the metal. I then sprayed it with the vinegar and water solution. This yarn rusted very quickly and only took one day to create a bright orange colour. When I removed the yarn from the metal, I washed it, as the rust was very concentrated and was giving off a powdery rust residue. Washing the yarn removed most of the powder substance, but still resulted in a beautiful rustic orange colour. You could also still see the blue colour through the rusty orange (Fig.10). I then loosely knitted the yarn into a rectangular shape, not knowing what I was trying to create. This knit was then used for the front panel of a top.



Figure 10 - Rusted yarn rolled up on a straw. Photographs: By Author

#### 4.5.4 Boiling beads

This was the only experiment that I conducted that required me to boil my materials. Throughout the rusting process, I was collecting some of the rusty powder residue or “rust oxide” hoping that I would be able to use it later. I decided to use this powder to boil some wooden bead, hoping that this would result in a rusty orange colour. However, this was not the case, as the rust turned into a grey brown colour. This was pretty, but not the results that I had been hoping for. I later used the beads on shoes, but did not like the results and decided to not include them into the final collection.

#### 4.5.5 Braai grills

Barbequing also known as “braai” or “braaiing” in Namibia is a huge part of the culture. The grills were also found at my father’s house. This is not a surprising find as barbequing is one of the most popular ways of cooking in Namibia, therefore most households own a grill. Fox, (2015) links all of her rusted scavenged objects to the places that they were found forming a tangible link between the objects and the place that they were found at (p.60). This is interesting as the grills remind me of my Namibian upbringing triggering my senses of smell and taste, but also specifically reminds me of my family home where I grew up. The rust print created from the round grill was used to make a skirt. This simplistic design was chosen for this fabric to enhance the beautiful grill marks, but also to accommodate the size of the fabric that was not very big. (Fig. 11) displays the different impressions created by the round and rectangular grills.





Figure 11 - Rusted prints from a round and rectangular grills. Photographs: By Author

#### 4.5.6 Car tire wires

The material used for this experiment was pre-cut into a circle, knowing that I wanted to make a full circle skirt or dress from this textile. I then folded the material into quarters, placing the rusted tire wires into each of the layers. At this time, I was living in a small apartment, and space availability was limited. I therefore placed the sample under the carpet of my living room. Because it was difficult to check on, I left it there untouched for three days. When I eventually look it out, I was totally surprised at the result. The textile had a bright orange colour with beautiful brown delicate line textures created by the wires. Because the textile was so thin, the rust was able to penetrate all of the layers, resulting in a circular repeated pattern. I used this material to create a simplistic circle skirt as planned. (Fig. 12) demonstrates the thin wires inserted between the layers of material before rusting and also reveals the duplicate rusted impressions created by the wires after rusting.

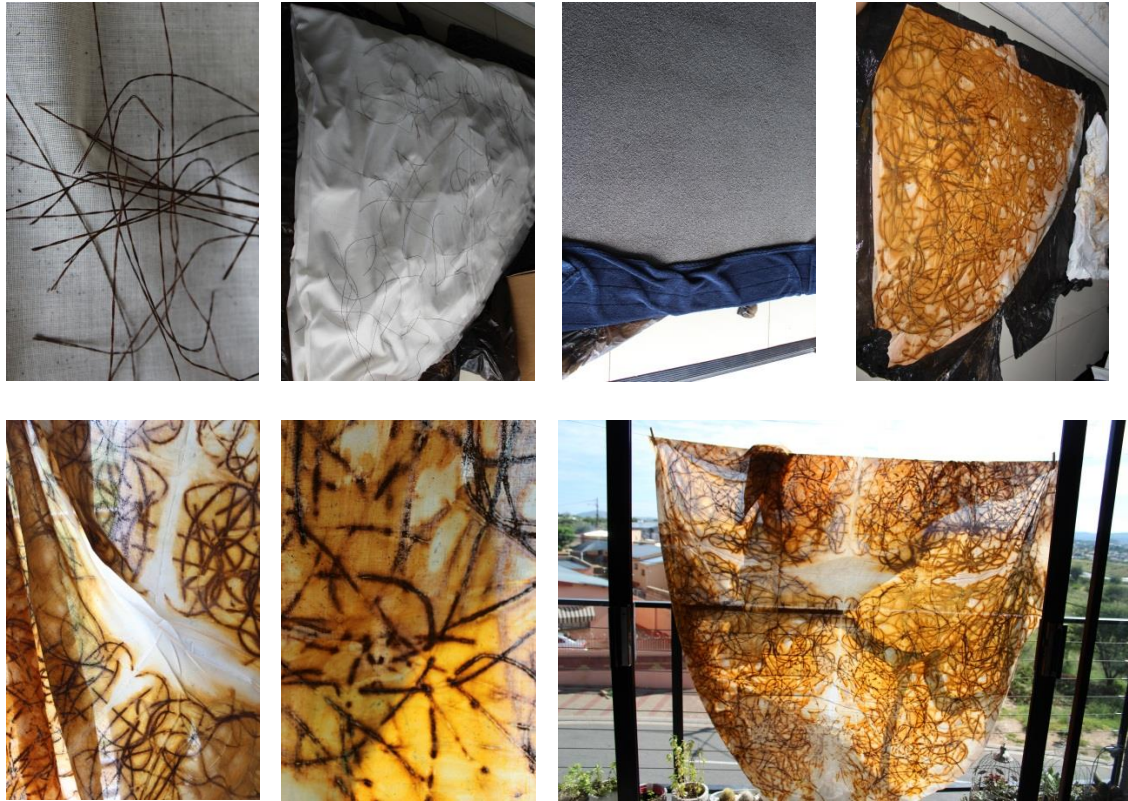


Figure 12 - Rust print from car tire wires, before and after rusting.

Photographs: By Author

#### 4.5.7 Circle skirt keys

For this experiment, I also cut calico material into a full circle, knowing that I wanted to create a full circle dress or skirt from the material. I folded the material into many layers and then wrapped the outer circumference of the circle around a rectangular grill. This resulted in a light orange outer rim of the circle, but I was not satisfied with the result at the time. I therefore, placed random rusted object like keys, earrings, screws chains and hinges onto the textile to enhance the previous dye effect. These resulted into beautiful impressions of the objects that were clear and recognizable, almost creating a photocopy of the object onto the textile (Fig. 13). Even though they were interesting, they spoil the

previous attempt that was actually not as bad as what I first thought. Even though the object impressions were interesting, I did not see this sample fitting into the look and feel that I was starting to achieve, and therefore did not incorporate this into the collection.



Figure 13 - Rusted key impression. Photographs: By Author

#### 4.5.8 Crochet hat

Linking the memory of my mother to my work was important for me as I have many memories of my mother teaching me how to knit and crochet as a young girl probably from the age of 5 years. Even though she is linked to the work by the skills she taught me, like the knitting and sewing, I also wanted her to have a strong physical presence as my father's building materials was having such a strong presence in my work. Therefore, I incorporated a hat my mother crocheted making this experiment very personal (Fig. 14). I simply just rusted the hat by dipping it into my vinegar and water solution and then

placing it onto the metal sheet. This resulted into a lovely light and dark orange and brown textured effect. I then shaped the hat buy using a sugar water solution to stiffen the hat. The hat was interesting and beautiful, but it was not having the feel that I wanted for the collection, so it was not incorporated into the final collection.



Figure 14 - Rusted crochet hat on mold. Photographs: By Author

#### **4.5.9 Fabric swatches**

The vision for the study was to be as sustainable as possible therefore, for this experiment I used fabric swatches from an interior design fabric catalogue. I picked swatches which had neutral colours with interesting patterns and textures. I rusted them by placing them onto my metal sheets spraying them with my vinegar and water solution. I used the most interesting one to create a bodice for a dress. The fabric swatches were suitable for this design, as they were too small to create a single design, but I was able to combine them by using each swatch for a panel of the bodice that it fit onto.

#### **4.5.10 Feathers**

I really thought that this experiment would not be successful, but I was pleasantly surprised. I rusted blue feathers, as I was experimenting with different materials that I had

available, but also with materials that could have a Namibian identity. The feathers were beautiful, and created a great contrast between the blue feathers and the orange rust. I however did not incorporate the feathers into the final collection, as I feel the collection ended up much more simplistic than what I originally intended and feather are rather dramatic.

#### **4.5.11 Silver flowers**

For this experiment, I wanted to create flowers on the bottom of a shiny silver material that was already cut into a circle as I recycled the material from a dress that I never completed. The idea was to create flowers all around the bottom of the circle. I created the flowers using a resist technique that I developed when I first started to explore with rust. This technique required me to cut out petals from self-adhesive plastic arranging them into flower shapes and then sticking them onto the textile (Fig. 15). This allows the plastic to form a resist to the rust usually resulting into a flower print. This time, the flower print was unsuccessful as the flowers were barely visible. Even though the flowers were not that visible the rust created two different but stunning prints on both sides of the material. The one side was subtler than the other, still having lots of the silver detail. The other side had lots of different colours including different shades of orange and brown, silver, as well as a blackish colour. It was very difficult for me to decide which side to use, but I eventually settled for the darker side with the many different colours. To me this was one of the most interesting results. I created a beautiful full circle dress from this textile as the fabric recycled from a previous design.



Figure 15 - Flower pattern created with self-adhesive plastic. Photographs: By Author

#### 4.5.12 Satin flowers

The fabric for this experiment was very beautiful and expensive. As I did not want to be wasteful I first created a sample before printing the whole textile, because I wanted to be sure of the outcome. I created flowers of different styles and sizes using my resist technique with the self-adhesive plastic (Fig. 16). The material had a dark gold colour. The result of the sample print was amazing and resulted in orange, gold and black textured flowers with very definitive shapes. I thought that this result would look amazing on a pair of trousers, so I cut the material into four panels making sure I had enough material to be able to create the trouser. For the front of the trouser, I wanted to have this amazing flower print, so I created the flower pattern, just like the sample on two of the panels. The rust

sheet was only big enough for two panels at a time, so I would have to rust the panels in two parts. I followed the exact same process as I did for the sample. I soaked the material in the vinegar and water solution and then placed the panels with the self-adhesive flowers onto the metal sheet and covered it with plastic. Covering the material with plastic slows down the drying process that result in brighter colours. The next day, I was very excited to have a look at the flower pattern. However, there were no flowers. Instead the rust created a textured pattern that looked like dry mud (Fig. 17). The cracking texture was a result of the plastic that was placed on top of the material. Even though I was disappointed, I loved the results just as much as the flowers. Next, I rusted the two back panels, using exactly the same technique as before, except without the adhesive flowers. This also resulted in a totally different effect, and was also not as pretty as the front panels or the flower samples. Therefore, I used this textile for the back panels of the trouser. The end result was a beautiful textured trouser that was incorporated into the final collection.



Figure 16 - Rusted flowers using a resist technique. Photographs: By Author



Figure 17 - Rusted panels for trouser. Photographs: By Author

#### **4.5.13 Fringe**

Recycled leftover cut off fringe from a fringe curtain that I used to make a costume for a client was used for this experiment. At this point I was not sure what I wanted to make from it, but I wanted to challenge myself and see if I would be able to rust the cutoff gold synthetic strings. I dipped the strings into my vinegar and water solution, and the placed it onto the metal sheet covering it with plastic. After the first day, very little rust was visible and only on the parts of the string that had contact with the metal sheet. I continued wetting and rotating the strings for several days until all the strings were covered in rust. The strings resulted in different shades of gold, brown and orange. After contemplating on what to do with the strings, I started to make tassels from the strings (Fig. 18). I really liked them, and incorporated them onto the bust line of a dress that was incorporated into the final collection, but I also tried to place them on other designs, but realized that they were not suitable for those designs



Figure 18 - Rusted tassels made from fringe. Photographs: By Author

#### **4.5.14 Green silk**

This olive-green linen silk rust pattern was created by folding the material with a zigzag overlapped fold on the metal sheet. This resulted into a subtle and simplistic repetitive pattern. I created a short mini dress with this material that was incorporated into the final collection.



Figure 19 - Rusted silk. Photograph: By Author

#### 4.5.15 Leather

Incorporating Namibian raw materials into the collection was important, and as Namibia does not produce any textiles, but produces a lot of leather, I explored this idea by rusting a sample of white genuine Namibian cow leather. I wanted to explore this idea, with the hopes of designing some accessories from the leather. The result was beautiful and created brown patches that almost resembled a Nguni cow (Fig. 20). Even though I loved this sample, I did not incorporate it into the collection, as I only created a small sample that was not enough to make any accessories. If I had more time, I would defiantly have explored this idea further as leather is easily accessible but also place specific to Namibia and Namibian culture.

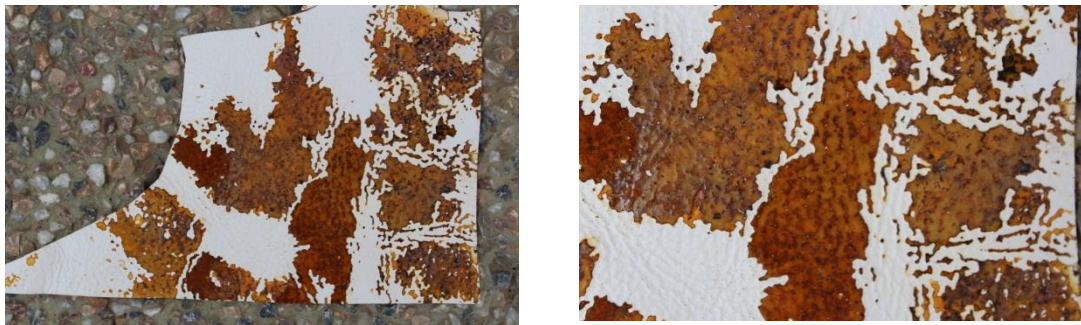


Figure 20 - Rusted leather. Photograph: By Author

#### **4.5.16 Mesh**

The material used to create this sample was an old mesh curtain that I found in my mother's linen cupboard. It was very big, so I folded it several times in order for it to fit onto my metal sheet. Because the material was thin, the rust was able to penetrate through all of the layers. This resulted in a mirror pattern that looked like an abstract head of an animal (Fig. 21). I thought that this print would be suitable for the front of a pencil dress. However, the dress was never made as I ended up with more looks than what I had anticipated. I did however use part of the textile to create ruffled sleeves on a top that was incorporated into the collection preserving the animal head impression in case I wanted to use it at a later stage.

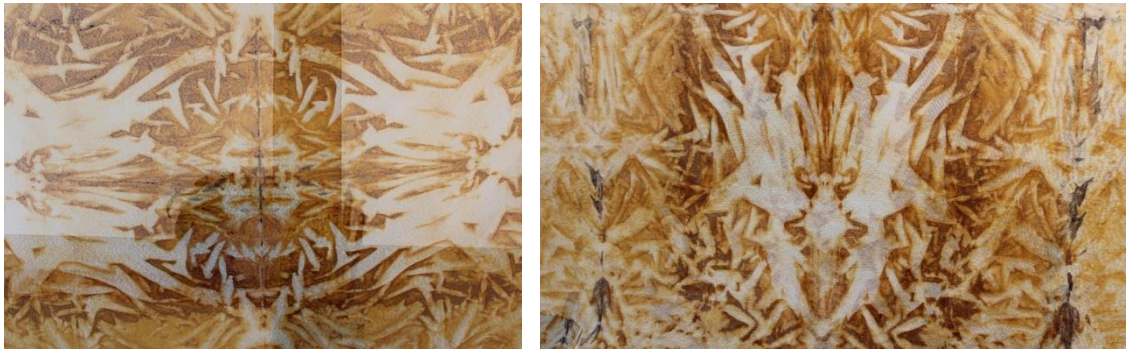


Figure 21- Rusted curtain mesh. Photograph: By Author

#### **4.5.17 Nails**

I had quite a few rusted nails (Fig. 6), so I was able to create many different patterns and sample with the nails (Fig. 22 Fig. 23, & Fig. 24.). For my first experiments, I placed the material on a table and then just started to create random repetitive patterns onto the material using the nails. Most of the patterns resembled flowers. When I usually draw, I usually draw flowers, and as I was basically doodling with the nails, I did not plan what I

was going to create, I think that creating flowers was something that just came naturally to me. After creating the patterns, I sprayed the textile with the vinegar and water solution. At first, I did not cover the textile, but it dried too quickly, thus resulting in a poor-quality print. I then tried to cover the textile with another piece of textile, hoping that I would be able to create a duplicate print. However, only the bottom print resulted into a good quality print. When I create a successful pattern, I sprayed it with my vinegar and water solution, covered it with plastic and then covered it with a blanket to weigh down the nails. This resulted in beautiful detailed prints as the weight of the blanket forced the fabric to make contact with the nails. This was a very therapeutic process as the process became a part of my daily routine for a few weeks, allowing me to relax while I create. I would create my patterns in the evening spray, and cover them with the blanket. In the morning, I would remove the blanket and the plastic and re spray them, not covering them this time, allowing them to dry. When I returned home in the evening, I would remove the nails, revealing my prints, before I started the next one. I created several textile prints using this technique, but only created four garments from these samples for the final collection. They included two skirts, a trouser and a top.



Figure 22 – Nail rusting process. Photographs: By Author



Figure 23 – Nail rusting pattern process. Photographs: By Author



Figure 24 - Rusted nail pattern designs. Photographs: By Author

#### 4.5.18 Nuts and washers

I did not have a lot of nuts and washers, but I manage to create a few interesting prints with what I had. Most of the prints were just repeating the shapes of the nuts and washers in very symmetrical graphic patterns (Fig. 25). They were also combined with the nails usually to create the centers of the flowers that I created with the nails. It was quite strange for me when going over the photo documentation that I did not incorporate any of these prints into the collection. This may be due to the fact that I only created small prints using this technique, as I did not have many nuts and washers to work with. I did however

combine the nuts and washers with an interesting flower print that I created onto one of the tops. I also made three necklaces using the nuts and washers as beads.



Figure 25 - Washers and nuts. Photographs: By Author

#### 4.5.19 Ostrich eggshell beads

I rusted ostrich eggshell beads of different sizes that I salvaged from broken jewellery pieces that I had. I rusted the ostrich beads by placing them onto the metal sheet and spraying them with the vinegar and water solution (Fig. 26). After the first day, the beads only had a very subtle rust colour on the side that made contact with metal. I repeated the process for several days turning them several times until all the beads were rusted with different shades of orange and brown. I loved this outcome so much that I purchased some more jewellery that was broken from a supplier at a discounted price. I did not know how

I was going to use the beads when I first rusted them, but I loved how they look, and also loved that they were a great representation of Namibian material culture as ostrich beads are used by the San communities of Namibia to make jewellery and accessories, as part of their traditional attire, but also for the tourist market in Namibia. The beads were incorporated into five garments and one pair of shoes. The garments beaded with the ostrich shells included two tops, two dresses and a skirt.



Figure 26 - Rusted ostrich beads. Photograph: By Author

#### 4.5.20 Zigzag

Calico material was used for this experiment, by folding it into a long strip. I then wrapped it around a square tubing pole at a diagonal angle. I did not know that to expect, but was pleasantly surprised when I unwrapped this sample. The diagonal folded material created

a zigzag pattern (Fig. 27). I however did not incorporate this sample into the collection. There was no specific reason for this other than having created enough garments for the collection.

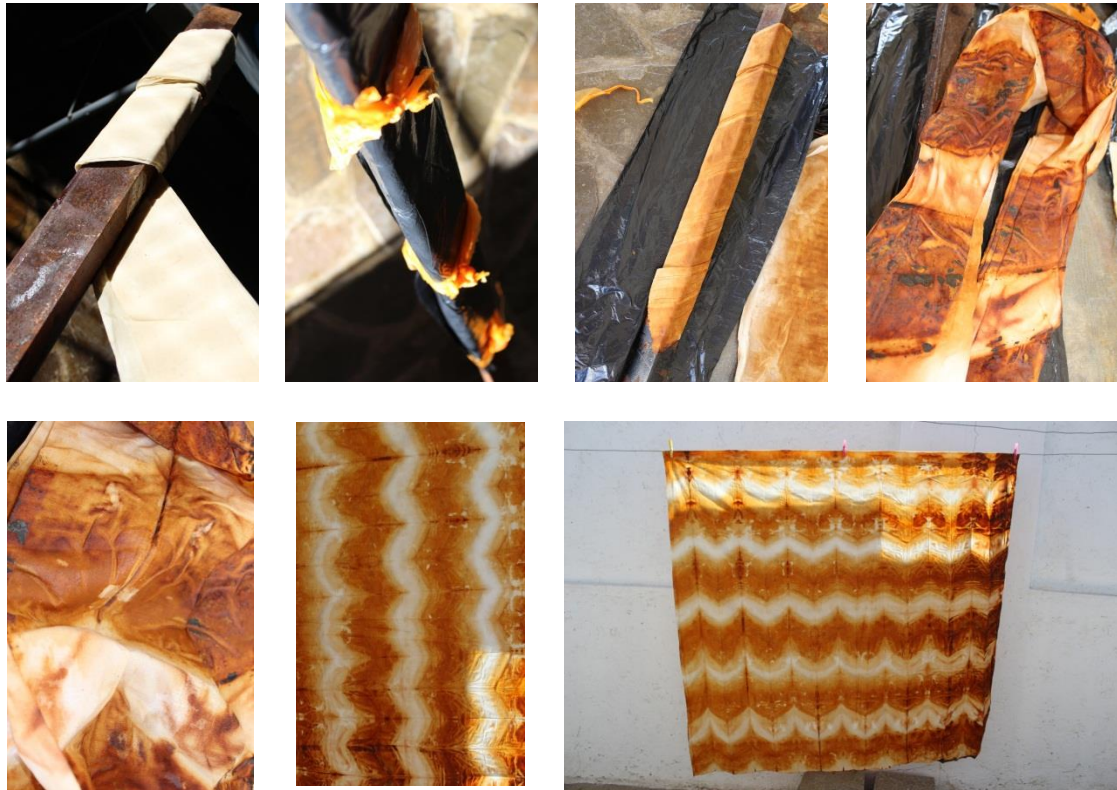


Figure 27 - Rusted zigzag calico print. Photograph: By Author

This chapter discussed the sources of rust, the techniques explored to dye and print the textiles and how each of the textile samples were created. After creating the rusted textile samples, they were used for creating a collection of fashion garments and accessories discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CREATING THE IRON LADY COLLECTION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter moves on from the previous chapter that explained the rusting process and continues with the designing and construction of a collection of fashion garments and accessories made from the rusted textiles and materials discussed in the previous chapter. The name for this collection is “*Iron Lady*” and it is also the name for the exhibition that was chosen by the gallery owner Frieda Lühl. She decided to call me the “*Iron Lady*” as the collection for the exhibition was made from iron oxide also known as rust. The chapter contains and explains the design processes and decision I made in order to create a collection of work that was exhibited as fashion /art. Miller (2015) maintains that clothes can be regarded in two ways: one being their multiple functional aspects and superlative qualities, but they can equally be regarded as beautiful objects of aesthetic contemplation by disregarding their functional characteristics. Miller (2015) further maintains that “They could be (as indeed they are) objects of admiration in a museum” (p. 39).

The chapter begins with a discussion that explains my reason to exhibit fashion garments as art. It then analyzes the motivation and design decisions made when constructing each of the garments. Furthermore, the chapter discusses how the combination of different factors used creates a Namibian design aesthetic through the creative decisions made during the course of the design process including the choices of materials, the construction of the garments, the selection of the models, the photo-shoot as well as the exhibition. Chun, Gurova and Niinimäki (2017) maintains that fashion designers in the contemporary

fashion industry play multiple roles including the formation of regional identities by being community members, active agents, storytellers, innovators and identity builders. Through this study and I created a collection of garments and accessories that have a strong Namibian design identity that represents Namibia's diverse landscapes and beauty through the textures, colours and materials represented in the collection.

## **5.2 The Iron Lady fashion collection**

The creative aim of this study was to create a fashion collection of garments and accessories that is unique and innovative with a Namibian design aesthetic and identity. The *Iron Lady* Fashion collection was created using the textiles that was created through rust dyeing and printing discussed in chapter 4. Each of the garments was created individually as I used the rusted textiles and materials created for this study to inspire each garment. Eckert (1997) maintains that anything visual can be a source of inspiration. Sources of inspiration are employed throughout the design process and can come from garments, photographs of garments, artifacts, images and natural objects (p. 4). Design sketches were made, but they were not always followed as I let the pieces of rusted textile guide the design decisions I made as I was creating the garments. Mete (2006) states that while some designers research a specific time period or ethnic culture for inspiration, some designers rely primarily on studying new fabric and texture trends. "Visual and tactile characteristics of materials, an intriguing fabric texture or interesting print might serve as the design foundation for a collection (Mete, 2006, p. 287). During fitting, it all went well and is flowing into each other as I envisioned. This was a very important set, as it gave me a new and fresh perspective to what I was doing and also enabled me to make important design decisions and changes before finalizing the collection. Mbonu (2014) maintains

that using photography as a tool is not only valuable in documenting the final outcome, but is also an invaluable way of capturing inspiration and generating ideas as you progress through the research and development process (p. 106). After this reflection, I had several other progress checks by changing looks and matching different pieces together, constantly documenting these processes by photographing and making mental notes to use for reflection at a later stage during the process. As the collection is interchangeable, I made changes until the very end while hanging the exhibition. The designs created are very simplistic in their cut and form. This was intentionally done, so that all of the attention could be drawn to the beautiful rusted textiles and materials. During the construction of the garments, challenges occurred because the rust was not always easy to work with. Ross (2015) experienced that when you leave the colour to long the rust can damage the material and cause holes, therefore it is necessary to neutralize the fabric as soon as you have achieved your desired effect. As with my experience, Ross (2015) also found it difficult to sew dark rust dye as it easily broke the needles. These challenges were approached and solved individually mostly through improvisation, and undoubtedly contributed to the design choices made for each individual garment. Therefore, the shape, size and design of rusted textile samples were a major influence in the final outcome of each of the garments created.

### **5.2.1 Iron Lady \_ Look 1**

The first look comprises of a structured corset top with a halter neck strap, a regular fitted trouser and a wire necklace (Fig. 28). The top was constructed with textile that was created using black raw silk material that was rusted with a graphic print using the resist technique that I created when I first started to experiment with rust. This print was created for the

*“Metalmorphosis”* exhibition, as an artwork, but was never used and could therefore be recycled for this study. The top was specifically created for the trousers in order to create a completed look. When I was rusting the textile used to create the trousers, I specifically had a trouser in mind and first rusted two panels. The panels were intended to have flowers on that were created using my resist technique. The technique was unsuccessful this time, even though a sample was produced successfully for what I planned before, using exactly the same technique. This was problematic as I could not plan ahead what the textile would look like, because the rusted textiles did not always come out the same way. Even though the rust did not create the desired effect, it was still very interesting and beautiful, so I was happy to still use it for the trousers. The back panels look completely different to the front panels, even though the exact same technique was used to create them. This confirmed, that you can very seldom create an exact replica of something using rust, as the rust is constantly changing as you are harvesting it from its source. The neck accessory was created from the wire that was found in the burnt tire of the burnt car wreck discussed in chapter 4. The reason for using the wire as found, allows the viewer to see some of the rust sources in their natural state as found. This look was the first look viewed when entering the gallery.



Figure 28 – Look 1 \_ Rusted trousers with halter neck top and wire accessory

Photographs: By José Claasen and Author

### **5.2.2 Iron Lady \_ Look 2**

This look comprises of a knitted halter neck crop top and regular fitted trousers. The top was constructed from a straight rectangular knitted panel. I started to knit the rusted wool, as I wanted to see the possible results using this technique. When I was knitting the panel, I had no idea that it was going to be used in this manner. In fact, after knitting the panel I explored with many other design ideas before I paired it with the trousers. When I was rusting the textile used to create the trousers, I had no idea what I was going to make from it. A large piece of light brown cotton textile was rusted using nails to create a flower pattern all over its surface that resembled the quiver tree. In this case, the textile design inspired the trousers, as well as the fact that I wanted to have a variety of pieces in the collection and this textile was suitable to create trousers.



Figure 29 – Look 1 \_ Rusted trousers with knitted halter neck top.

Photographs: By José Claasen and Author Image of the Quiver tree. Retrieved from

<https://www.gondwana-collection.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/quiver-4.jpg>

Accessed August 2019

### 5.2.3 Iron Lady \_ Look 3

This look comprises of a cropped laced corset and shorts set made from an African batik print (Fig. 30). As I aimed to be more sustainable in my design choices, I explored with many materials that I already had available in my textile closet. This print was chosen because of its simplistic pattern and also because of its colour. I thought that the blue and white colour and texture of the print reminded me of the ocean. As I want my garments to have a Namibian design aesthetic, I thought this was a good choice as the rich orange colour of the rust was already reminding me of the dunes of the Namib Desert. This textile was rusted twice, as it was too subtle for my liking at the first attempt, therefore I re-rusted it for a second time. This design was created to add diversity to the collection and catered as one of the more youthful looks of the collection. The turn-up shorts cuffs portrays the material as it was before rusting. This gives the viewer a good insight to how the material was transformed during this process as you can see what it looked like before. This look

reminds me of Swakopmund where the desert meets the sea delivering on my aim, as the ocean was my inspiration when I considered using this material.



Figure 30 – Look 3 \_ Rusted short and crop top set. Photographs: By José Claasen and Author Image of the Namib Desert. Retrieved from [https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DF\\_koLLWAAAjuM-.jpg](https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DF_koLLWAAAjuM-.jpg) Accessed August 2019

#### **5.2.4 Iron Lady \_ Look 4**

Iron Lady, look 4 consists of a knitted top, a short pencil skirt and black shoes. The top front is made from loosely knitted wool. This wool was knitted into a rectangular shape not knowing what I was going to be created from it. After the wool was rusted it was simply knitted into a textile. The back of the top was made from stretch cotton and was printed with the disintegrated wire from the burnt tire. The wires were disintegrated because they had already been used for a previous rust print. This textile was specifically created for the back of this top as the knitted wool was not enough. The front neckline of the top is embellished with similar sized cover buttons of different colours that were also

rusted, but not specifically for this top (Fig. 31). The rust created a circle outline on each of the buttons. The buttons were already covered and was recycled from material already available in my material cupboard. The buttons were added to the top after it was constructed and created an interesting and textured neckline for this top. Even though it was not intended, this necking reminds me of the fairy circles in the south west of Namibia.



Figure 31a - Look 4 \_ Rusted cover button top. Photographs: By Author

Namibian Fairy Circles. Retrieved from

[https://thumbs\\_prod.sicdn.com/fJgUUO1Cv1Ud4Xk5S2ZsCf0YTd8=/800x600/filters:n\\_o\\_upscale\(\)/https://public-media.smithsonianmag.com/filer/ec/5e/ec5ed12c-bf09-4c00-a17b-49085bd33a89/circles.jpg](https://thumbs_prod.sicdn.com/fJgUUO1Cv1Ud4Xk5S2ZsCf0YTd8=/800x600/filters:n_o_upscale()/https://public-media.smithsonianmag.com/filer/ec/5e/ec5ed12c-bf09-4c00-a17b-49085bd33a89/circles.jpg) Accessed August 2019

The skirt created for this look is simplistic in its form, but has very interesting graphic starburst flower printed with nails with a rusted ostrich egg shell bead center. Unlike the starburst flowers on the trouser previously discussed, these flowers are printed very symmetrically over the front and back of the skirt. This look is completed with a pair of black shoes also covered with the cover buttons that were used for the top.



Figure 31b - Look 4 \_ Rusted skirt with star burst flowers and beaded center.

Photographs: By Author

### 5.2.5 Iron Lady \_ Look 5

This look consists of a draped chiffon top, above the calf pencil skirt and a pair of white rusted shoes. The chiffon material is covered with chiffon flowers cascaded all over the material. I was lucky enough to trade this material with a fellow designer with whom I shared a studio. When I first saw the textile, I immediately fell in love with it. This top is one of the only two pieces in the collection that was not rusted. The rusted detail was added with small rusted ostrich beads that were beaded onto the center of each flower. The ostrich beads were considered as a detail for this collection because it has a strong reference to Namibian material culture as the San communities in Namibia use ostrich eggshell to create accessories that they adorn themselves with. The skirt has large starburst flowers printed down the center of the front panel. When this print was created, I specifically had a pencil skirt in mind and used the material as such. This look is completed with a pair of white rusted shoes with a rusted ribbon shoe lace detail.



Figure 32- Look 5 \_ Rusted skirt with flowers and draped chiffon top with beaded flowers.

Photographs: By Author

### **5.2.6 Iron Lady \_ Look 6**

Look 6 consists of a long halter neck dress, and a necklace (Fig.33). The dress is made from a georgette material with sparkle glitter details. When the material was rusted, the rust did not attach itself to the glitter; therefore the glitter was still visible, resulting in a beautiful sparkle rusted textile. When I rusted this textile, I knew that I wanted to create an evening dress from the material, even though I was not sure of the design. The dress bottom is translucent and the material sparkles when light fall on it from certain angles. The dress is accessorized with a necklace made from hessian string and bolts that were also used during the rusting process to create patterns.

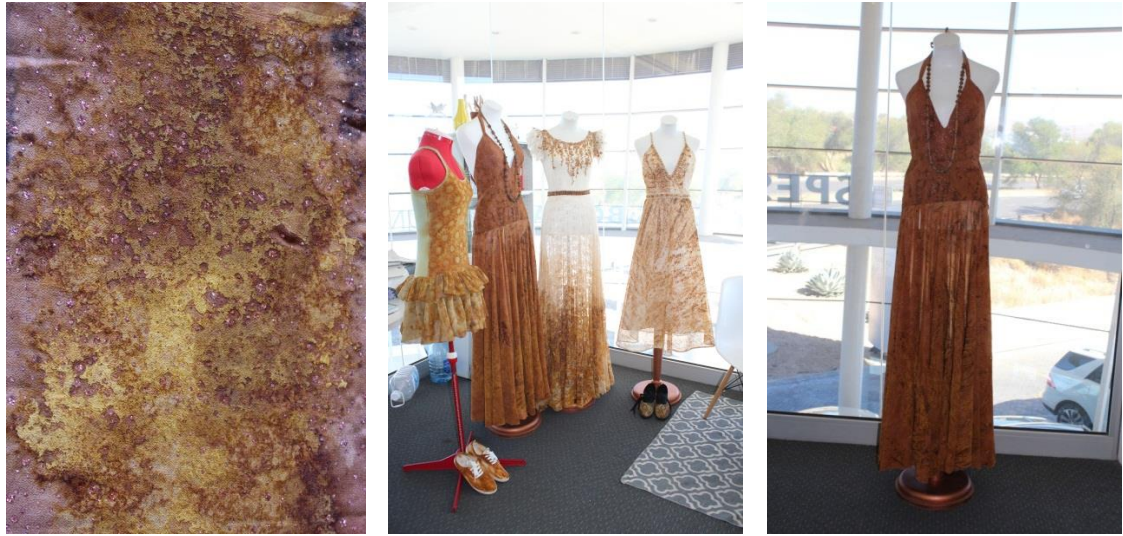


Figure 33 - Look 6 \_ Rusted georgette evening dress with glitter detail.

Photographs: By José Claasen and Author

### 5.2.7 Iron Lady \_ Look 7

Look 7 consists of a long formal dress and shoes. The dress was made from silver silky satin material for the bottom of the dress and printed upholstery material recycled from a material sample catalogue book for the bodice part of the dress. The material used for the bottom of the dress was pre-cut into a half circle as I knew that I wanted to create a half circle skirt or dress from this material. As for the trouser created for look 1, I also used my resist technique to create flowers over most of the bottom half of the skirt. Unlike the trouser, this print was more successful, but still not as successful as the sample that I had created as the flowers were just barely visible. However, the print that was created was still very beautiful and unique and caused me confusion as both side of the textile was interesting, but totally different in terms of the textures and colours that were created. In the end, I don't think I made a wrong decision, as either way would have been successful. The bodice neckline of the dress is embellished with lots of tassel (Fig. 34) that I made

from leftover fringe that I used for a custom garment made for a client. When I made the tassels, I knew that I wanted to incorporate them into the collection, but I did not have a specific design in mind. The dress is completed with a belt created from a hessian ribbon embellished with the rusted nails. This was very interesting as many people commented on the fact that they never realized old rusted nail could create such interesting and unique designs. This look is completed with a pair of black shoes embellished with small rusted ostrich beads that created a beautiful texture and pattern on the shoes.



Figure 34 - Look 7 \_ Rusted evening dress with tassels and nail belt details.

Photographs: By José Claasen and Author

### 5.2.8 Iron Lady \_ Look 8

Look 8 is very simplistic and consists of a short dress, ribbon belt and necklace. The dress is made from olive green silk linen material that I already had available. The material was very subtly rusted therefore the olive green colour is still very visible. The simplicity in the rust and the amount of material available inspired this look. Because the material was not very big, I was only able to consider a design which needed little material unless combined with something else which I did not even consider. The dress shape is very

simplistic in its form, but it has interesting shoulder cuff details and a ruffled bottom. This look was created without any hesitation and was completed very quickly. This look is very youthful, but could be worn by women of all walks of life. The look is completed with a knotted rope and washer necklace (Fig. 35).



Figure 35 - Look 8 \_ Rusted silk linen with washer necklace accessory.

Photographs: By José Claasen and Author

### **5.2.9 Iron Lady \_ Look 9**

This look consists of an asymmetrical knitted top and short mini skirt (Fig. 36). The 100% cotton wool used to construct this top was of the little material that I purchased for this collection. I purchased the wool as I wanted to incorporate more knits into the collection. However, the design was not intended to be an asymmetrical top. I wanted to knit a loose jersey top, but after knitting the very expensive ball of wool into a rectangular shape, I realized that it would cost too much, so I decided to change the design. I also did not rust this wool, as its natural cream colour blended beautifully with the rest of the rusted textiles. The rectangular knitted shape was then draped into this asymmetrical design that was

fastened on the side with large rusted ostrich bead buttons. The design is not only asymmetrical from the top, but also asymmetrical from the bottom. The skirt was made from bull denim material that was rusted with a round food grill. The grill created beautiful printed marks onto the textile. These marks reminded me of ‘rooster brood’ (Fig. 36) that is traditional Namibian bread made on a grill and an open fire. The grill usually leaves charred marks on the bread that was very reminiscent of the rusted marks left on the textile.



Figure 36 – Look 9 \_ Rusted grill printed skirt, knitted top. Photographs: By José Claasen and Author Rooster brood. Retrieved from [https://www.suziescoffeeshop.co.za/images/stories/virtuemart/product/resized/plain-roosterbrood\\_290x290.jpg](https://www.suziescoffeeshop.co.za/images/stories/virtuemart/product/resized/plain-roosterbrood_290x290.jpg) Accessed on August 2019

### 5.2.10 Iron Lady \_ Look 10

Look 10 consists of a single dress with many interesting textures and details (Fig. 37). The dress is constructed from textured lace mesh. This mesh was purchased on sale many years ago and I initially intended to use it for a very modern wedding dress and even tried to cut it into a design that was never completed. Therefore, this design was half made before I

started to rust the textile. The vision was later completed with lace and rusted ostrich details. The details include a lace belt with large rusted ostrich beaded details and thinner lace straps with small rusted ostrich beaded details. The rust highlighted the cord detail that was embroidered onto the mesh but also created darker marks where the mesh was more in contact with the rusted sheet used to create the rusted marks. These marks reminded me of cracked mud which is a very common feature in the dry Namibian landscapes, specifically in the areas known as 'Deadvlei' and 'Sossusvlei'. Once again, this was not intended, but merely an observation made once the textile had been rusted.



Figure 37 - Look 10 \_ Rusted dress with ostrich bead details. Photographs: By José Claasen and Author Mud cracks. Retrieved from [https://cdn6.dissolve.com/p/D1024\\_61\\_104/D1024\\_61\\_104\\_1200.jpg](https://cdn6.dissolve.com/p/D1024_61_104/D1024_61_104_1200.jpg) Accessed on [August 2019](#)

### 5.2.11 Iron Lady \_ Look 11

Look 11 only consists of a mini dress with a ruffle detail (Fig.38). The dress was constructed from a mint green coloured tank top combined with two layers of gathered ruffles made from animal printed chiffon. The tank top was printed with a sunflower looking shape, created from metal that was sourced from the burnt car. The metal

originally formed long strips that were used to hold all the rubbers used to seal the edges of the car in place. I broke the strips into even parts and rolled them into a flower shape that I found very interesting and I also wanted to create a different looking flower compared to the flowers that I created from the nails. I used the shapes to create a flower pattern all over the front of the tank top. The tank top was then later converted into a dress by adding the ruffle chiffon layers at the bottom of the top.



Figure 38 - Look 11 \_ Rusted mini dress with flower print. Photographs: By Author

### **5.2.12 Iron Lady \_ Look 12**

This look comprises of a tank top with ruffle sleeve details, a full circle skirt and a pair of shoes (Fig. 39). This tank top was printed with a very graphic starburst flower pattern created on the front of the tank top using nails and washers. The top was finished with ruffle short sleeve details made from the rusted recycled net curtains. The sleeves and neckline were beaded with bone and glass beads that created a beautiful trimmed edge. The skirt was created from a full circle, very thin cotton cheese cloth material. The circle was pre-cut as I knew I wanted to make either a full circle skirt or dress from this material. The rust was created from the wires of the burnt tire and was layered between each of the

layers of the folded circle. Because the rust was able to penetrate several of the layers it created a symmetrical print, where one half looks almost exactly the same as the other. The skirt hem was left to naturally fray which created a beautiful textured effect and was finished with a simplistic waistband. This look was finished with a pair of white rusted shoes.



Figure 39 - Look 12 \_ Rusted t-shirt with full circle skirt. Photographs: By Author

### 5.2.13 Iron Lady \_ Look 13

Look 13 which is the last look of the collection, and also my personal favorite comprised of a single sheer lace dress (Fig. 40). This dress was constructed for a previous fashion show which I ended up not participating in. It was made from very inexpensive lace, but it would still have been a pity to waste, so I decided to incorporate it into this collection. I first rusted only the bottom part of the skirt. This resulted in very rich brown and orange colours. After looking at it, I decided that it needed a little more rust, so I decided to rust it for a second time, a bit higher. This resulted in an ombre effect that I was very happy with. I then beaded the bodice and sleeves with small and large rusted ostrich beads following the naturel textures of the lace. The result was amazing and looked like the beads were dripping down the front of the bodice. Incorporating this dress into this

collection led me to the conclusion that it is a better idea to first construct your garment and to then rust it afterwards, as the rust was sometimes very challenging and sometimes even impossible to sew.



Figure 40 - Look 13 \_ Rusted ombre dress with ostrich bead details.

Photographs: By Author

### **5.3 Namibian design identity**

Namibia's fashion industry is still in its infant stage and there is still ample room to grow and develop. There are many contributing factors to this, but my personal observation is that many Namibian designers often look to other "international" designers for inspiration and very often ignore or undervalue Namibia as a rich source of inspiration in its diverse cultural heritage and natural beauty, thus resulting in garments that are not original or garments that do not have a Namibian design aesthetic or identity. Harteveldt Becker (2008) thus states that "awareness of identity and identity formation is of importance to any designer" (p. 2). Harteveldt Becker (2008) further stated that "culture is one of the identity dynamics and cultural bouquets of eleven recognized groups Namibia certainly boasts a rich cultural heritage, a fertile source of inspiration for Namibian (and other)

designers” (p. 2). Loughran (2015) maintains that Africa has been a source of inspiration to European designers for centuries therefore there is dynamic presence of African aesthetic and presence in European fashion arenas. Namibia is so beautiful and unique that I am inspired by my country and its people every day. I feel that it is our duty as Namibian designers to explore our own cultures, artifact, people, raw material, landscapes etc. to draw inspiration from and to present it to the world, because no one is able to tell our stories more authentically than Namibian themselves. I also feel that culture is not stagnant and that it is constantly changing and developing into new ideas and beliefs that fit into the contemporary world that we live in. Even though these cultures need to be preserved, they also need to be developed and explored in order to keep interest from the youth so that our cultures do not become extinct or forgotten, but rather remembered.

#### **5.4 The final photoshoot**

The purpose of this photoshoot was to show the viewer at the exhibition what the garments were going to look like on a real person, as the garments were displayed on mannequins during the exhibition. They also tell a story of Namibian fashion, raw materials, cultural identity and Namibian design aesthetics lends to the aims for this study.

For the photoshoot I intentionally chose Namibian models with strong Namibian features, because they represented the “*Namibian Chic*” woman that this collection was designed for. The makeup was subtle, allowing their Natural beauty to feature. Willem Vrey was my first choice as photographer, and I was thrilled when he agreed to do the photoshoot for me. I chose Willem, because he is very creative and produces work that truly reflects Namibia’s natural beauty and lifestyle. I explained my vision to Willem, and then we

brainstormed together sharing our ideas resulting in a final vision that we both agreed on. The location for the shoot was Avis dam which was the perfect setting for the rustic Namibian look I was trying to achieve to showcase my vision. The location allowed the garments to naturally blend with the surroundings, which highlighted the collection as being place specific to Namibia.



Figure 41 - Ombre dress \_ Model Maria Hiwilepo

Photograph By: Willem Vrey



Figure 42 - Ombre dress \_ Model Maria Hiwilepo

Photograph By: Willem Vrey



Figure 43 - Ruffled t-shirt dress \_ Model Maria Nepembe

Photograph By: Willem Vrey



Figure 44 - Full circle skirt with printed t-shirt \_ Model Emily Stephanus

Photograph By: Willem Very



Figure 45 - Corset top and trousers\_ Model Maria Hiwilepo

Photograph By: Willem Very



Figure 46 - Long dress with tassel bust line\_ Model Emily Stephanus

Photograph By: Willem Very



Figure 47 - Corset top and shorts set \_ Model Maria Nepembe

Photograph By: Willem Very

Chapter 5 documented the creative process during the garment construction phase of the process, while highlighting conscious and subconscious inspiration associations with Namibian landscapes and culture making the garments personal to the designer and place specific to Namibia. Chapter 6 will discuss the exhibition that is also the final part of the three phase creative process documented.

## CHAPTER 6

### FASHION AS ART

#### 6.1 The exhibition

The “*Iron Lady*” exhibition was hosted by The Project Room Namibia, 32 Jenner Street, Windhoek West from the 27<sup>th</sup> of October to the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2017. The exhibition consisted of the collection of fashion garments and accessories; glass printed photographs as well as framed artworks.



Figure 48 - Poster for the exhibition

#### 6.2 The Project Room

The Project Room is located in a newly renovated residential home in Windhoek and was started by Frieda Luhl a jewellery designer who identified the need for a gallery space that caters for applied arts like textiles, fashion, jewellery, ceramics and photography but also caters for the fine arts like paintings and sculptures.

The gallery space consists of a room with white walls, white low ceiling, and windows that lets in lots of natural light. This gallery space was ideal for the “*Iron Lady*” exhibition as its white walls created an amazing contrast for the rustic orange and brown colours of the collection. Even though the space is small, it creates a smooth flow that was perfect for this exhibition as it formed a very intimate feel between the viewers and the work displayed.

The gallery provided most of the tools needed to setup the exhibition and also provided a log book and catered bread and wine for the evening. The opening night attracted art and design industry professionals, students as well as the general public. The exhibition was open for 9 days and adhered to the open hours of the gallery that was from 9am – 1pm Tuesday to Friday and from 10am to 1pm on a Saturday.

### **6.3 The Final Collection**

The garments were displayed on a variety of dress mannequins that also represented the diversity of people in Namibian society. “The mannequins, for instance, with its allusion to the human form, is difficult to do away with, both a physical support for clothing and vehicle for its expression” (Smith and Kubler, 2013, p. 158). Some of the mannequins were displayed on stands, while others were suspended from the roof. The focal garment was displayed in the center of the room on a very tall mannequin and the volume of the garment was enhanced by pulling the volume out with fish line that was suspended from the roof. Two of the mannequins were placed outside the gallery space on the patio that served as a great welcome to all of the visitors. The flow of the room and positioning of the garments made it easy for visitors to view the garments allowing them to see all of the

details including the textures, colours, and finish of each garment. This was very important to me, as these details can very often be overlooked when garments are exhibited on platforms like a fashion runway where garments are usually viewed from far and also very quickly. When garments are exhibited on a fashion runway, some of these details are very often missed or overlooked by the viewer and could result in a lack of appreciation for the artistic and unique craftsmanship achieved by the designer.

#### **6.4 Results**

Selected photographs from the photo-shoot by renowned Namibian photographer Willem Vrey were displayed on the walls, as well as the fireplace that formed a pillar in the gallery. Each of these walls formed a focal point when viewed from different angles in the gallery space. The photographs were printed directly onto 3x A1 and 6x A2 glass sheets that were mounted with a smaller wooden frame at the back that serves as a hanging solution. The frames pushed the glass prints away from the walls by 5cm giving an illusion that they were floating in front of the wall. Because the light was able to pass through the glass, the prints were slightly translucent and thus resulted in a very interesting and unique effect. These photographs displayed the garments allowing the viewer to see my vision of the “*Namibian Chic*” woman I envisioned while designing the garments. This was important as the viewer is not always able to see this vision when only displaced on a mannequin that has no human characteristics like emotion and movement that is vital in portraying the Namibian woman that they were designed for.

## **6.5 Framed Artworks**

I incorporated framed artworks into the exhibition that were made from the rust sources, as well as the rusted textile that were used to create the collection. The purpose of these artworks was to give the viewer a sense of the whole creative process from the beginning (sources of rust) to the end (textiles and garments). I feel that displaying these elements allowed the viewer insight into the complex process that a designer goes through to create a unique and original collection of garments and accessories. I feel that because people are not always able to see this part of the creative process, they assume that ideas come easily to a designer and that they don't follow an intensive creative process in order to achieve new and unique ideas. The importance of this revelation is also aimed at young designers and fellow Namibian fashion designers that I feel don't always follow or see the importance of the creative process.

## **6.6 Feedback**

Much of the feedback was recorded in the logbook of the gallery as viewers eagerly commented on their impression of the exhibition. All of the comments were very positive as most people thought that the work was amazing and brilliant. The viewers commented on the originality, colours, shades, patterns, textures and details of the collection. They thought that the work was very innovative and that it portrayed a Namibian design identity that was one of the main aims of the collection.

Based on all of these comments and impressions I can proudly say that I achieved my objective that was to create new, unique and innovative designs with a Namibian design aesthetic. The comments also prove that presenting the work in the form of an exhibition

was a good decision as the viewers commented on things like textures, colours, thoroughness, pattern, shades, process etc. that might not have been noticed had the collection been exhibited in another manner. Some of these comments make me think that Namibians have been waiting for something different from the Namibian fashion scene, as it can very often become monotonous and uninspired because Namibian designs don't always follow a vigorous creative design process.

The end of the exhibition also indicated the end of the making process for this study even though all the findings and documentation still had to be analyzed and studied to prove the importance of the creative process.



Figure 49 - *Iron Lady* \_ Exhibition 1

Photograph: By José Claasen



Figure 50 - *Iron Lady* \_ Exhibition 2

Photograph: By José Claasen



Figure 51 - *Iron Lady* \_ Exhibition 3

Photograph: By José Claasen



Figure 52 - *Iron Lady* \_ Exhibition 4

Photograph: By José Claasen

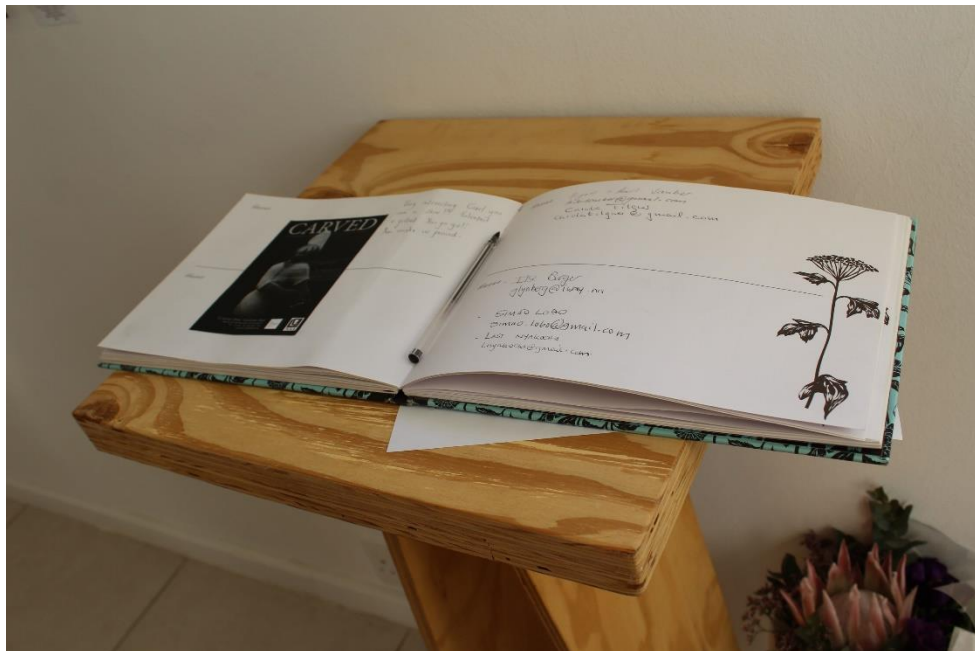


Figure 53 - *Iron Lady* \_ Exhibition 5

Photograph: By José Claasen

## **Responses from the audience**

Responses from the audience were recorded on the logbook of the gallery as viewers eagerly commented on their impression of the exhibition. Some of the comments were as follows:

- “Brilliant Exhibition! Amazing work Ms Chakirra. Keep it up!”
- “Amazing, Master piece, Technique revolutionary – (think of patenting it!!!)
- “Congratulations!! – Your Masters on its way.”
- “Brilliant idea & interesting innovation. Congrats, all the best on your journey.”
- “Rustic! Love the outdoor setting too. You’ve come a long way C! I’m proud of you!”
- “Absolutely in love with your creations! It really is a journey, noticing all the details, little nails in the belt, using nuts & bolts. You are amazing. Proud of you!”
- “I love the juxtaposition of the delicate tracery of the rust patterns with the delicate detail of the added decoration. Who would have imagined! So much
- beauty from rusty nails!”
- “Beautiful deigns! Original, fresh and natural.”
- “So absolutely beautiful pieces of fashion art. And just extra ordinary technique.”
- “Your works are as beautiful as the Namibia desert!”
- “It all comes a long way, started with the t-shirt Chakirra, this work is absolutely fabulous. I hope you creativity never ends. Keep up the good work.”
- “For me so far the most impressive Namibian design contemporary style, unique, raw yet as the speaker that, blending in harmoniously gently into each other the material, the colours, the mood). Fresh \$ crispy. Nice.”

- “ASEMROWEND!! I’m proud of you. May Jah Rastafari bless u more and more and more...”
- “This work is absolutely amazing and contributes so much to the Namibian fashion scene!”
- “So impressed by your work. You are one hell of a talented lady. I’m so proud of you my Sweetheart.”
- “Amazeballs, Amazeballs. We absolutely love this Chakirra. Amazeballs. Welcome back.”
- “All Monochrome would like to say is, awesome to have you back Chakirra.”
- “Great work Kirra, all the late night and early mornings paid off very well. Your work is gorgeous and it was a pleasure to wear them. I’m humbled! Keep up the good work.”
- “Absolutely fabulous work, amazing what can be done with rusty nails and a lot of innovation and such a good eye. Brilliant, you deserve two masters.”
- “Very inspiring – idea & creative results!”
- “Very nice colours and interesting shades and patterns. Great!”
- “Beautiful patterns & colours Chakirra!”
- “A+ from me. Congratulations”
- “I have only one word. Awesome!!”
- “Chakirra, you have done us proud. Wishing you all the best on your future endeavors.”
- “Best work I have seen so far!! The Namibian fashion industry never looked this good. Thank you so much.”

- “Your creativity and innovation is amazing! Your dedication and “always-find-a-way” attitude will take you places! Proud of you!”
- “Love the fabrics& prints. Very original & beautiful. Well done and congrats.”
- “Stunning design lady. Love them all.”
- “Chakirra darling, Im so, so super proud of you girl! May the mighty God bless you and your business always.”
- “Beautiful. A feast for the eyes and my need for thoroughness and perfect craft production. Looking forward to your next creations!”

Based on all of these comments and impressions I can proudly say that I achieved my objective that was to create new, unique and innovative designs with a Namibian design aesthetic. The comments also prove that presenting the work in the form of an exhibition was a good decision as the viewers commented on matters such as textures, colours, thoroughness, pattern, shades, process etc. that might not have been noticed had the collection been exhibited in any other manner. Some of these comments make me think that Namibians have been waiting for something that they can relate to in terms of local identity expressions from the Namibian fashion scene, as it can very often become monotonous and uninspired because Namibian designs don't always follow a vigorous creative design process. If I had the opportunity to redo the exhibition, I would have interviewed the audience to find in more detail how they relate to the collection, as the feedback recorded was limited.

The end of the exhibition also indicated the end of the creative process for this study even though all the findings and documentation still had to be analyzed and studied to prove the importance of the creative process. The analysis of the creative process will be discussed in Chapter 7.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DISCUSSION**

Chapter 7 reflects on the individual artistic creative process documented for this study through a series of photographs that displays the process from the beginning that starts from the idea or vision, to the end that is the reflection on the whole process. Through the photo documentation I am able to identify key steps within the creative process that will be compared to Wallas's four stages of the creative process as well as modern theories on creativity including Carson (1999), Cropley and Cropley (2012), Botella et al (2013) and Sadler-Smith (2014) as previously discussed.

#### **7.1 The process**

The process starts with a vision or an idea of what you are planning to do. These ideas can be linked to any issues or phenomena (personal, historical, social or political) that you wish to portray, or address usually revealed in the final product or by reflecting on the final product as this is what the viewer's gets to see. Of the theories identified, this stage is only shared with Botella et al (2013). For this study, the idea or vision was to "Document a creative process using rust as means to produce fashion/art". This is also the working title of the study.

When you have your idea or vision, the next step will be to conceptualize. During this stage, you are going to decide how you are going to accomplish your idea or vision and what you are going to need to accomplish your idea or vision. This stage is part of preparation that also includes the sourcing of your materials. The stage of preparation, is

shared with Wallas (1926), Carson (1999), Cropley and Cropley (2012), and Sadler-Smith (2014). Botella et al (2013) also shares this stage, but calls it documentation and reflection.

Once I prepared by sourcing all of your materials, you need to conceptualize again by deciding what you are going to do with all of your resources and materials acquired. For this study, these resources comprised of the sources of rust and the fabrics and the materials to be rusted. The conceptualizing is done through research and rough sketches, followed by the next two stages that are the experimentation and also the production of the textiles. During the conceptualizing and experimentation stages followed for this study, Carson (1999) includes a stage of concentration, Wallas (1926), Carson (1999), and Sadler-Smith (2014) includes a stages of incubation and Cropley and Cropley (2012) includes a stage of activation. I cannot include a stage of incubation in my process, as I never fully incubated myself from process and was fully conscious during all stages of production. When I experienced challenges or blocks during the production and experimentation process, I simply moved on to another experiment, but I never fully disengaged from the process. My production stage can be compared to Carson's (1999) ideation stage, Cropley and Crolpey,s (2012) generation stage and Botelle et al's (2013) first sketches stage. Next, Wallas (1926), Carson (1999), Cropley and Cropley (2012), and Sadler-Smith (2014) includes a stage of insight. This is where they reach illumination, where their ideas are coming to life. For my process, this insight was reached right at the beginning of the process during my first two stages of ideation or vision and conceptualization, because at this stage I already knew what I wanted to produce. Botella et al (2013) also omits the stage of ideation.

The next stage followed for this study would be the verification process, where I approved all of the rusted textiles, before finalizing the textiles produced by fixing the colours with salt water, and then drying and ironing the textiles. This finalization stage also brings the textile production process to an end.

The process for this study is different from a normal creative process, as the study comprises of two creative processes in one that are individual, but overlap one another, as they are happening interchangeably, and also conclude in one final product (or body of work). Therefore, some of the stages experiences during the textile production process are repeated for the fashion production process.

When the textiles were finished I had to go into another conceptualizing stage where I decided what I was going to make from all the textiles produced through rough and random sketches as each design was mainly dictated by the textile itself. This stage is part of preparation that includes sketching or some sort of design development. The stage of preparation, is shared with Wallas (1926), Carson (1999), Cropley and Cropley (2012), and Sadler-Smith (2014). Botella et al (2013) also shares this stage, but calls it documentation and reflection, just as in the textile production process.

When the design was finalized, I moved onto the next stage that is the production stage. The production stage includes two parts comprising of the pattern making and construction of the garments. As in the textile production process, this process also omits the stages of ideation and insight. Once the garments were constructed they were tested to see how well the garment fits and how the different elements were working together. The

testing was done by means of fitting the garments on a live model. The process was documented through a mock photoshoot. Of the theories being reviewed, only Botelle et al. (2013) includes a stage of testing, where Wallas (1926), Carson (1999), Cropley and Cropley (2012), and Sadler-Smith (2014) all include a stage of verification. The testing stage enabled me to identify problems and inconsistency giving me the opportunity to make changes as needed. Each look consisting of garment(s) and accessories was verified on a dress mannequin that was also documented through photographs. These photos were then printed to verify the final collection as a whole. The verification stage concluded the fashion garments and accessory production process.

The next step was to verify the concept bring my vision of a 'Namibian Chic' woman to life. This included a professional photoshoot with a professional photographer, professional makeup artist and professional models in a Namibian setting. The whole crew was intentionally Namibian. This was important as it contributed to my Namibian narrative that I was portraying.

The next step was the finalization stage that included the production of the artworks, the printing of the photographs and the setting up of the exhibition for the stage of revealing. None of the theorists reviewed include a stage of finalization or revealing. After verification and testing, Carson (1999) ends their process with a stage of elaboration and then a stage of production. Even though my process included two stages of production, they take place at totally different stages when compared to Carson (1999). Botella et al. (2013) ends their process with a stage of provisional objects and then a stage of series. For my process, my products would have been considered provisional objects if they were







made for mass, or semi mass production, but because they are once of pieces considered as fashion art this stage is also omitted from my process.

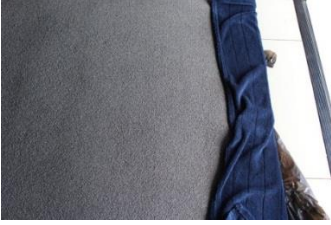





The creative process developed for this study end with a stage of validation. The validation was provided from my peers and the viewers at the gallery through conversations, comments recorded in the comment book of the gallery and articles written by journalists and bloggers that viewed the exhibition. The most important validation had to come from myself as I had justify whether I achieved my aims and objectives set for the study through the last stage of my creative process that is reflection.

The Table below reveals the creative process for this study through a series of photographs, a brief description of each photo and an identification of the stage of the creative process involved at the specific stage.



**Table 10 – Photo documentation and identification of stages for this study**




<b>PHOTO DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS</b>	<b>IDENTIFICATION OF THE STAGE OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS.</b>
NO PHOTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The initial intent of using rust as a means to document the creative process</li> </ul>	IDEATION OR VISUALIZATION

<p>NO PHOTO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How I was going to use rust as a means to document the creative process</li> </ul>	<p>CONCEPTUALIZING</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying a burnt car as a source of rust</li> </ul>	<p>PREPARATION SOURCING OF MATERIALS</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying exposed rusted metal that could easily be removed</li> </ul>	<p>SOURCING OF MATERIALS</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All rusted rubble collected and removed from the burnt car</li> </ul>	<p>SOURCING OF MATERIALS</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and deciding which rusted material to use for a specific sample</li> </ul>	<p>CONCEPTUALIZING</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deciding on what to do with the rusted wire</li> </ul>	<p>EXPERIMENT WITH MATERIALS</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finished layering the rusted wire on the fabric</li> <li>• Spraying the fabric with a solution of vinegar and water</li> </ul>	<p>PRODUCTION OF TEXTILES</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering the fabric with plastic and blankets</li> <li>• This sample was placed under my living room carpet as this was the only space I had. The blanket protected my carpet and floor from the rust</li> </ul>	<p>PRODUCTION OF TEXTILES</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revealing the rust. This was exciting as I was not able to look at it before the time, because of its tricky location.</li> </ul>	<p>VERIFYING FINAL TEXTILE PRODUCT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noticing all of the colours and textures achieved. Deciding if I was satisfied with the outcome or if I wanted it to continue rusting.</li> </ul>	<p>VERIFYING FINAL TEXTILE PRODUCT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carefully removing the rusted wire from the fabric. Rinsing the fabric in a salt solution. This helps to fix the rust</li> </ul>	<p>FINALIZING TEXTILE PRODUCT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hanging the fabric to dry, noticing the final colours, textures and the repeat pattern created through the layering of the fabric.</li> </ul>	<p>FINALIZING TEXTILE PRODUCT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studying the fabric to decide what would be the most suitable garment to make from the fabric.</li> </ul>	<p>CONCEPTUALIZING</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because this fabric was precut into a full circle the options were to make a skirt or a dress.</li> <li>• A rough sketch was made of the intended design.</li> <li>• The pattern was made and the fabric was cut into the pattern</li> <li>• The fabric was stitched into a garment.</li> </ul>	<p>PRODUCTION OF FASHION GARMENT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The look was tested during a mock photo shoot</li> <li>• During the photoshoot it was noticed that the look does not work, and a new top was made and pared with the skirt</li> </ul>	<p>TESTING FINAL GARMENT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final look was completed and tested on a dress figure</li> </ul>	<p>VERIFYING FINAL GARMENT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The look was compared with the rest of the garment to make sure it fits into a cohesive collection. The look was pared with a pair of rusted sneakers as an accessory.</li> </ul>	<p>VERIFYING FINAL COLLECTION</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept for the photoshoot was discussed and planned with the photographer and makeup artist. This was important as the photographer had to portray the designer's vision, while keeping his own design aesthetic and integrity. The look was fitted on a model for a photoshoot.</li> <li>• The photoshoot was completed and the final photos were selected by the photographer.</li> <li>• The final photos were printed on glass to be displayed as part of the exhibition.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">VERIFYING THE VISION OR IDEA</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the completed works and display materials were transported to the gallery. The exhibition was setup and curated by the designer and the gallery owner.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">FINALIZATION AND REVEALING OF FINAL CONCEPT</p>

 <p>Opening evening: 27th of October, 6pm ends: 4th of November Chakira Claasen showing her masters thesis</p> <h1>Iron Lady</h1> <p>32 Jenner Street, Windhoek West Opening hours for the duration of the exhibition: Tuesday - Friday: 10am - 1:00pm Saturday: 10am - 12pm website: www.ironlady.co.na</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The exhibition was opened.</li> </ul>	<p>FINALIZATION AND REVEALING OF FINAL CONCEPT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work was peer review and feedback was received through conversations and the gallery logbook.</li> </ul>	<p>VALIDATION THROUGH FEEDBACK</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibition closed and I was able to reflect on the whole experience</li> </ul>	<p>REFLECTING</p>

FIVE PART PROCESS	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5	STAGE 6	STAGE 7	STAGE 8	STAGE 9	STAGE 10	STAGE 11	STAGE 12
INITIATION	Idea or Visualization	Conceptualizing or Preparation										
TEXTILE PRODUCTION STAGE			Sourcing of Materials	Conceptualizing	Experimenting	Production	Verifying	Finalizing				
FASHION PRODUCTION STAGE			Conceptualizing (Sketches)	Production (Pattern)	Production (Construction)	Testing	Verifying individual	Verifying whole				
FINAL VERIFICATION									Verifying Concept			
EXHIBITION									Finalizing and		Validation	Reflection
A complex 5 part 12 stage individual creative process developed for this study.												
CREATIVE PROCESS FOR TEXTILE	Idea or Visualization	Conceptualizing or Preparation			Experimenting	Production	Verification	Revealing	Validation	Reflection		
A simplifies 8 stage general creative process for textile designers.												
CREATIVE PROCESS FOR FASHION	Idea or Visualization	Conceptualizing or Preparation		Production	Testing	Verification	Revealing	Validation	Reflection			
A simplifies 8 stage general creative process for fashion designers.												
WALLAS 1926		Preparation		Incubation			Insight	Verification				
CARSON 1999		Preparation	Concentration	Incubation		Ideation	Insight	Verification	Elaboration	Production		
CROPLEY AND CROPLEY		Preparation			Activation	Generation	Insight	Verification				
BOTELLA ET AL 2013	Idea or Vision	Documentation and Reflection				First Sketches		Testing		Provisional Objects	Series	
SADLER-SMITH 2016		Preparation		Incubation	Intimation		Insight	Verification				

Table 11 - The theories reviewed for this study in comparison with the theories created for the study.

## **7.2 The theories developed**

The studies creative aim was to develop an individual creative process for this study that can be used as a guide or reference by fellow Namibian fashion and textile designers. Because the theory was specifically designed for this study it is complex and comprises 12 stages and five steps of which six stages are interchangeable between the two steps comprising of the fashion and textile production processes stages.

The process starts with stage one that is the idea or visualization stage. Stage two is the conceptualizing or preparation stage. Stages three – eight comprises of two steps that involves the textile creation and the garment construction stages. These stages include the sourcing of the materials, conceptualizing, experimenting, production, verifying and the finalizing for the textile production step. The fashion production step includes conceptualizing (sketches), production (pattern making), production (construction), testing, verifying individual look, and verifying the whole collection. These two steps and stages happened interchangeably as the textile production and the fashion production was taking place at the same time. When textile and fashion production was completed, the process moved on to stage nine that involved the verification of the concept. Once the concept was verified, all components were finalized and revealed (stage 10) in the exhibition. Stage 11 was validation, and stage 12 was reflection that also ends this complex individual creative process.

The study additionally produces two individual creative processes, one specifically for textile designer and one for fashion designers to follow. These creative processes are simplified and general and were developed from the complex creative process developed

during this study. These processes can therefore be followed by any fashion or textile designers and can even be applied to other artistic disciplines.

The textile production creative process comprises of eight stages starting with the idea or visualization stage one, followed by stage two that is conceptualizing or preparation. This stage is merged with sourcing of the materials and the conceptualizing stages identified in the complex process. Stage three is the experimenting stage, followed by stage four that is the production stage. Once the production is completed the process moves on to the verification stage four. This stage is a combination of the verification and the finalization stage identified in the complex process. The process ends with the exhibition (or any other revealing platform) that includes the revealing stage six, validation stage seven and ends with reflection for stage eight.

The fashion production creative process also comprises of eight stages starting with the idea or visualization stage one, followed by stage two this is conceptualizing or preparation. These stages are shared with the textile creative process, as well as the complex creative process. Stage three is the production process that is a combination of pattern making and construction stages identified in the complex process. The production stage is followed by testing stage four. Stage five is a verification that merges the individual, whole collection and concept verification identifies in the complex process as three individual stages. As in the textile creative process and the complex creative process the fashion creative process ends with the exhibition (or any other revealing platform including a fashion show) that includes the revealing stage six, validation stage seven and ends with reflection for stage eight.

This chapter starts by revealing the individual creative process for this study through a series of photographs, comparing each stage with other theories on the creative process including Wallas's (1926) theory. The process is then developed into a complex creative process specifically designed from the individual creative process followed for this study. The complex process is then simplified a general creative process for textile designers and a general creative process for fashion designer. The next chapter will conclude the study.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION**

The main aim of the study was to document a creative process using rust as a means to create fashion art. To achieve this aim, a collection of fashion garments and accessories was created using rusted textiles and materials produced during the study. The collection was exhibited in a gallery and was displayed as fashion art. Based on the responses and feedback received, the aim of narrowing the gap between fashion and art was achieved. Because these garments were created as fashion/art, they are thus once off unique and individual garments that will not be recreated, but this creative process developed for this study, can be further developed to produce garments for commercial purposes using these techniques in a simplified and more commercially viable manner.

Additionally, the study aimed to document the creative process using a photographic visual diary. This form of documentation was specifically selected as it caused the least hindrance to the intuitive working conditions of the designer. The photographic visual diary enabled a visual portrayal of the creative process as it documented all the key elements needed to identify the key stages within the individual creative process documented for this study. This documentation resulted in a complex individual creative theory comprising of 12 stages and five steps. This theory is significant in the fact that it was created from the designers first hand experiences, whereas the creative theories reviewed for the study were developed through observation and interviews between researchers and designers, thus giving a second hand experience of the creative process.

Therefore, this study fills a gap within the existing literature reviewed for this study in regards to creative theories.

In addition to the complex individual creative theory developed for this study, the study further developed two additional simplified and general creative theories for fashion and textile designers. These theories also fill a gap within the existing literature, as the existing theories developed are generic and have been created for the creative domains in general. Theories that have been specifically developed for artistic research are also generic as these theories also incorporate many creative domains. The two theories for fashion and textile design are unique in the fact that they are specifically designed for each individual domain, even though they could be used by other artistic fields. Additionally, these theories may be scrutinized by international theories of creativity, but these theories are developed on a local concept of creativity, thus local designers and artists will be able to relate to these specific theories developed during this study.

Comparing the creative theories developed during this study to Wallas' (1926) four stages of the creative process, the theories developed only share two of Wallas' (1926) stages including preparation and verification. The theories developed omit incubation, as the designer at no point during the study totally disengaged from the entire creative process on a subconscious level. This can be related to the fact that a designer cannot afford the time to totally disengage from a project as fashion and textile design projects are usually fixed to a timeline or deadline. However, when a designer faces a challenge or a problem within their project, they simply move on to another part of the project as fashion and textile design is complex and multi layered and designers often work on multiple process

of a project at the same time. Therefore the designer might incubate from a specific problem, but never from a project as a whole. Because the designer never incubates from a project the designer can therefore not reach insight or illumination. Insight for a fashion designer is therefore reached at the beginning of the design process during the ideation or visualization as they will never start a project without insight of that they want to achieve or what they are going to produce.

The study further identifies the importance of place-based and personal identity within the fields of fashion and textile design as the study delivers on the aim to produce a collection that is unique, innovative, and personal and place specific to Namibian, portraying a Namibian narrative when viewed or reflected on. This aim of producing fashion that tells a Namibian story wished to inspire fellow Namibian fashion and textile designers to engage more with their surrounding and natural environment, using local and natural resources and techniques in their work that will result in work with a Namibian design identity and narrative. This approach will lead to Namibian fashion that is distinct and identifiable as Namibian when viewed or presented on a continental or international platform. This will highlight Namibians unique aesthetic making Namibian fashion desirable and competitive. New and innovative contemporary Namibian fashion created in this manner will result in new Namibian identities and narratives that can lead to personal, place-based and a national identity as Namibian are currently identifying culturally in terms of dressing and showing national pride. These new identities created can also bring about new cultural identities as culture is not stagnant but evolves over time making fashion more suitable for the current social, political and economic times we live in, without forgetting the past.

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## APPENDIX E: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

**Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FHSS/241/2017 Date: 6 June, 2022**

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

**Title of Project:** Documenting A Creative Process: Rust As Means To Create Innovative Textiles For Fashion Art

**Student:** Chakirra Claasen

**Student Number:** 9975551

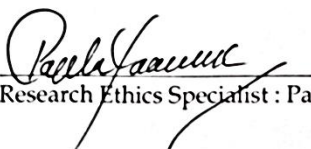
**Supervisor(s):** *Dr. Napandulwe Shiweda (Main) UNAM; Dr. Melanie Sarantou (Co) ULA*

**Campus:** MAIN CAMPUS

Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the HREC-H. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the HREC-H.
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by HREC-H
4. The HREC-H retains the right to:
  1. Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
  2. Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

  
Research Ethics Specialist : Pamela Claassen