

The Life of Dress, Mexico

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Abstract

This paper is a summary of a field study made in Mexico during six weeks in October/November 2012. The concept, process and findings from a practical project "*The Life of a Dress*", containing a participatory design workshop given at a cultural center in Mexico City are presented together with an overview of five Mexican design and slow fashion brands.

The brands presented are in different ways exploring alternative product development processes of producing and communicating design, identity and heritage through combining new design thinking with traditional handicraft manufacturing. The handicraft industry is a vital part of the Mexican economy and for many families in rural villages it is the main source of income. New products are developed in collaboration with craftsmen and respect are given to the time it takes to make the materials and products which are being made in close relation to nature.

The action research project "*The Life of a Dress*" is a traveling exhibition presenting a concept of revival of second-hand clothes through visual installations and hands-on workshops adding value to discarded clothes. The group of students which followed the workshop in Mexico City in 2012 created a collection of 50 dresses which were all labeled with a common brand "Hecho en Faro", collaboratively created in the premises of production. The project "*The Life of a Dress*" has been ongoing since 2009 and has so far been taking place in four different continents (Sweden, Hong Kong, Mozambique and Mexico). The aim of the project is to explore how design, traditional handicraft and waste clothing might be tools for capacity building and/or business development, on a local as well as global level.

| 13 minute short film from the project The Life of a Dress, Mexico |
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cp20qjeuR-c&feature=youtu.be>

| 4 minute interview from the REMEX project, October 2012, Mexico City |
<http://youtu.be/w9KbH56Te4U>