

**Katherine Taylor**  
**BA (Hons) Textiles: Innovation & Design**  
**Year of Graduation: 2015**  
**Job title: Artist in Residence**  
**Employer: Canford School**



## Your background:

I chose Loughborough University because I wanted to attend a campus university outside London, which offered a creative environment and a Textiles course with the freedom to pursue my own interests and to experiment. Before I started my degree, I had completed an Art Foundation Course and had taken a gap year during which I worked full time as a Fashion Intern at Alexander McQueen in London. I had initially intended to study Costume Design for Theatre and Film, but after beginning a degree at the London College of Fashion, I decided that the London lifestyle and course content were not right for me. I looked for something that would offer me greater creative freedom and a more rounded lifestyle that included social, cultural and athletic elements and applied to Loughborough.

During my degree I began to practice a Zero Waste Lifestyle, which means that I avoid disposable products and packaging, unnecessary plastic and things that are not biodegradable. I began to experiment with this idea during my final year at Loughborough after being inspired by blogs online and found it a refreshing and mindful way to approach my everyday life.

## Where are you now?

I am currently Artist in Residence at Canford School in Dorset and this allows me to continue to develop my creative practice and make new work. I have a studio in the Art department where I run workshops, activities and projects for pupils and staff and produce work for solo exhibitions and for sale. I also mentor the Art Scholars; this includes setting a brief for a project and curating an exhibition of their work.

I live on site at the school and am involved in sports and cultural activities, such as cross-country running in the surrounding heathland. I have also become involved in the environmental aspect of the school through my Zero Waste Lifestyle, giving a talk about the idea to staff and pupils and working to raise awareness through classes and seminars.

## How did you get there?

During my degree, I developed my creative skills and explored my intellectual interests, moving gradually towards a conceptually anchored artistic practice and away from the commercial fashion

industry. The companies that I worked for during my year in industry influenced and directed my growth as an artist maker and I became increasingly concerned with principles and moral issues related to the fashion and textile industries.

I was able to gain experience of different career areas during my year in industry and this really helped to inform my decisions about my career path, it made me aware of the options available and the skills needed to progress. I received excellent support and advice from my tutors on my degree, especially during my final year and this was significant in giving me the confidence to reach for what I wanted to achieve.

### **Where are you going?**

I hope to be flexible as my career develops as I have acquired many new skills this year in a different environment am open to new opportunities. I have gained confidence in my abilities, and support from a network of inspiring and enthusiastic people. I am considering further study and research with a view to tutoring and lecturing in the future; I would love to work in a higher education establishment that offers varied and stimulating activities; a combination of artistic practice, research and lecturing would be ideal.

I am also witnessing interest in my Zero Waste Lifestyle from those around me and in waste reduction more widely from the media. I am excited about the possibility of a career in this area too. I would love to work with companies or charities to make positive changes to our individual lives and wider infrastructure, to work towards a more sustainable future.

### **What if anything would you have done differently during your time at Loughborough University to help you prepare better for your career/life upon graduation?**

I would have taken better advantage of the wide variety of activities and societies on offer, especially in my first and second years! These opportunities are often expensive or scarce outside of university and once you have graduated, your spare time and your money are precious! It is great to have hobbies and interests when you leave university as this is the best way to meet people and bond when you arrive in a new place, I have certainly found this since I have moved to Dorset.

### **What advice would you give to a student studying your subject at university now?**

I would recommend making the most of your tutors and lecturers, taking the time to engage with them and build a good relationship. It may seem unnecessary while you are in first and second year, when contact is minimal, but having a tutor who knows you and who you trust is invaluable during final year as this is when you really need their advice and expertise. Be reliable and consistent when communicating with them, ask for time and advice if you are stuck, they are what you are paying for! If they see that you are dedicated and engaged, then they will want to help you succeed.

### **Additional information:**

My work and upcoming exhibitions can be found at: [www.ks-taylor.com](http://www.ks-taylor.com)