



# WHY IT MATTERS...

## CREATIVE ARTS



# Loughborough University

## Kerri Akiwowo

### Lecturer in Textiles

In 2019, the global textiles market was worth over 960 billion dollars (USD).

In the UK, approximately 550,000 people are employed in the Textile and Apparel Garment Sector alone. Other textile sectors include Textile Manufacturing, Fashion, Raw Materials, Technical Textiles, Medical Textiles, Textile Products, Household Textiles and Automotive Textiles.



In contrast, thousands of tonnes of textile waste are sent to landfill each year, which is devastating to the environment and society. Equally, conventional textile/clothing processing and laundering methods increases our carbon, water and waste footprints, according to The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

Therefore, as a practitioner-researcher focused on textile design, I use my knowledge and practical experience to investigate alternative textile coloration and patterning processes that address issues such as energy efficiency and cleaner manufacture, where possible, whilst pursuing design innovation. Creative objectives are at the core of whatever I do and stimulate other developments. The design aspect keeps things exciting and satisfies my artistic intuition.

#### Post 16 Education:

Fine Art, Graphic Design and Sociology  
BTEC Foundation Studies: Art & Design

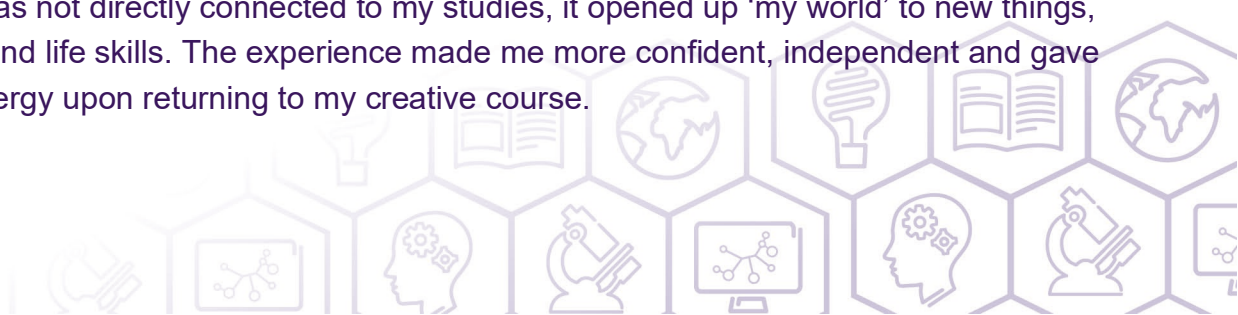
#### Higher Education:

BA (Hons) Textile Design, at Chelsea College  
MA Design for Textile Futures, Central Saint Martins College  
PG Certification in Academic Practice, Loughborough University  
PhD, Loughborough University

### Kerri's experience as a student

In my first summer as a first-year undergraduate student at the age of 18, I travelled to America with a friend to become a Summer Camp Counsellor in Maryland and backpack around the USA for three months. It was one of the most adventurous things I had done at the time.

Whilst the trip was not directly connected to my studies, it opened up 'my world' to new things, people, places and life skills. The experience made me more confident, independent and gave me a special energy upon returning to my creative course.





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### Kerri's Career

I am a Lecturer in Textiles. I teach mainly undergraduate students about principles and practices in textile design connected to the history of the subject as well as contemporary applications and future considerations. I assist students in their knowledge gain, design authority and ambitions.

My role also involves carrying out personal research, some of which is directly connected to textiles and some of it isn't, as well as pursuing enterprise activities which means I engage with projects outside the educational environment such as with industry, business and the community.

I began this role at the end of my PhD studies. Previously, I was a Senior Lecturer in Printed Textiles at De Montfort University, Leicester. Having an undergraduate degree in Textile Design to begin with was certainly instrumental and advantageous to my career progression as an academic within this subject.

One of my research areas is 'textile coloration and patterning'.

This work is concerned with the processing of fibres, yarns and fabrics; and the surface decoration of textile materials and products such as sportswear, footwear, clothing and interior applications. I explore innovative digital and physical techniques in dyeing, printing and patterning textiles such as laser and phase-change technologies. I work systematically and incorporate scientific measurement and analysis to advance knowledge in the field and propose new ways of treating materials in the textile industry.

**Kerri's advice:** Anything is possible.

Focus and determination is key to achieving your goals. Passion is good but be actively not passively committed to your own success. It is important to always believe in yourself because if you don't, how will others believe in you?

One of my favourite expressions is, "Fake it 'til you make it".

Why? When growing up, my elders always told me to "Look like where I'm going". So, in a nutshell, if you want people to take you seriously, then dress, speak and conduct yourself in a way that lets them know you are serious.

Loughborough University offer degrees in

Textiles, Fine Art, Graphic Design and an Art and Design Foundation Course