

Art Textiles

Past Student Profiles

Emma Helmke

Textile Design at Loughborough University with a sandwich year working in Industry.

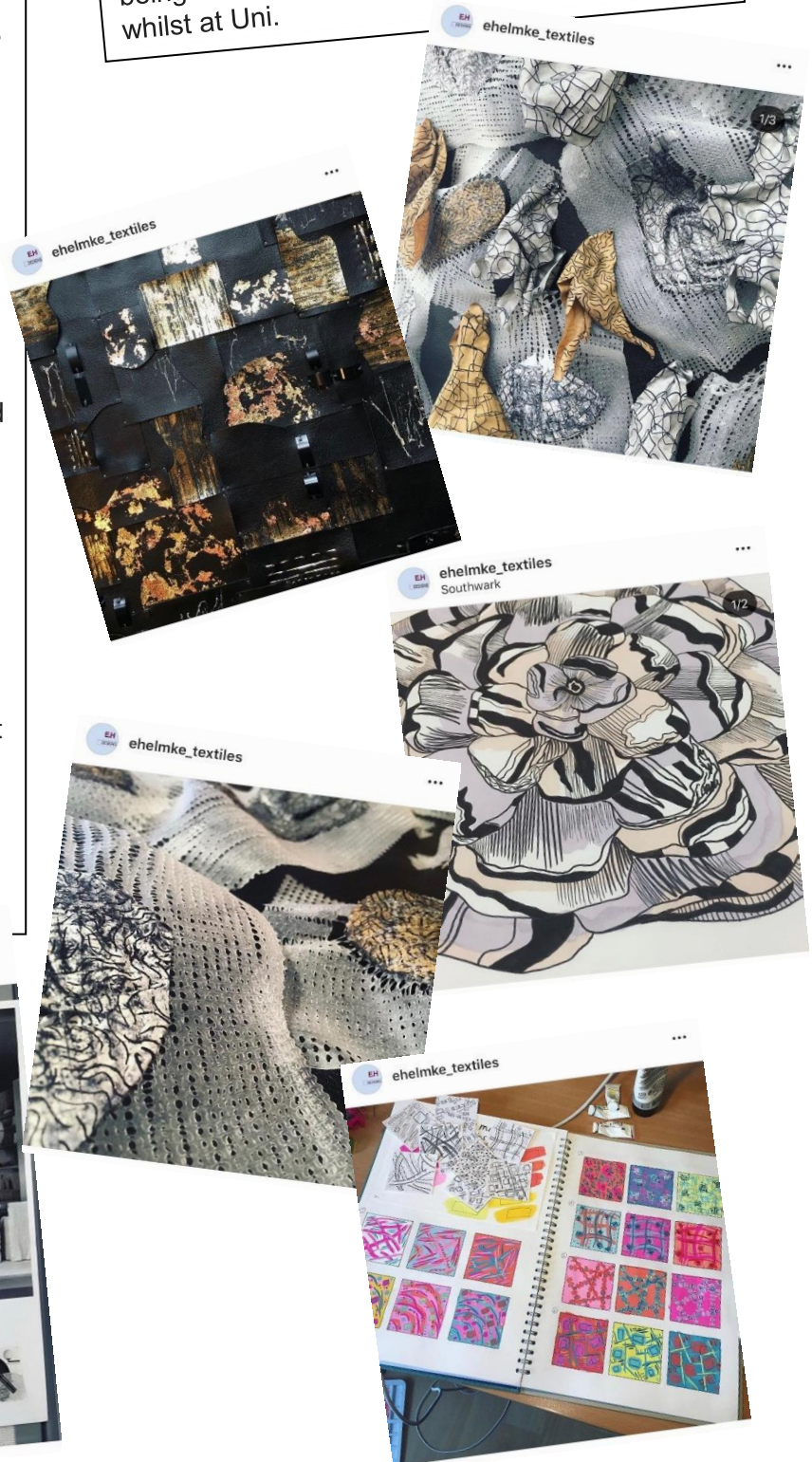
-First Year

It was very similar to a foundation course. You do lots of different workshops throughout the first semester, particularly focused on drawing and composition. Semester 2 is again workshops, however, more structured towards the pathways which you choose at the end of the year. This includes: Weave, Print, Multi-media and Digital print. These workshops were very helpful with choosing which pathway you wanted to take, along with talks with the 2nd year students to help gain a better idea. Alongside the practical side we had a lecture and seminar each week on 'Drawing, Discourses and Debates'. This ended in us having an exam about particular historical drawings and art movements we had studied.

I was torn between the multi-media and print pathway, however decided to go with multi-media as it would allow me to include print in my work also. My work is very much textural based, focusing greatly on contrasting fabrics and materials. I incorporate a lot of digital print to work alongside the heavy textures, therefore choosing this pathway was definitely right for me as it meant I'm able to include all options pretty much, being very free in my choices!

-Art Foundation

I did this at Stroud College and it was so much fun! I learnt so much there and loved how relaxed it was. I was able to engage in a range of processes. For the first half of the year you engaged in all pathways such as Art, Textiles, Photography and Illustration and then specialised on one for the rest of the year- I opted for textiles. Whilst there I also went to print workshops and life drawing workshops in the evenings to enhance my skills. I learnt a lot about Photoshop whilst there, along with different print techniques I hadn't done before, whilst at Uni.



- Second Year

This is a great year as you're able to pretty much create what you like, being very independent, however still sticking to a brief. You have your own workspace in the studio which, you didn't in the first year. Groups are smaller as you're split into your chosen pathways, therefore you're able to see your tutor a lot. Speaking to people at other uni's on a similar course, they would say how little they saw their tutor. Textiles at Loughborough is great for this, especially through group and individual tutorials where your work would be discussed with one another. Alongside the practical studies, in semester one there was a module called 'Professional and Business Practice'. This was very beneficial, particularly if applying for placements, as it was all about CV's, cover letters and websites so definitely worthwhile! In the second semester you had a range of modules to choose from. I chose 'Fashion Theory' which was very interesting to study. This covered things such as cultural appropriation, fashion as communication, the function of fashion and the damage that fashion creates. This resulted in having to write an essay of your choice on one of the theories we had studied.

- Placement year

At Loughborough there is the option to engage in a placement year in industry between 2nd and final year for 45 weeks. Loughborough has great contacts and are brilliant when it comes to supplying you with knowledge and different options available through lectures, visitors and one on one sessions with a careers advisor able to guide you with your CV, cover letter & online portfolio. There is also the option to do a placement abroad as well. A lot of people in textiles do more than one placement to get a better overview- however almost always unpaid. Year long placements are mostly always paid. I decided to do more than one to get a better feel for the industry and because of the uncertainty of whether the placement is correct for you. I spent 3 months in London at 'Amanda Kelly Design' which is a digital print studio supplying prints to companies such as ASOS, Urban Outfitters, Reiss etc. I learnt a lot about the process involved as well as the business side of things, being able to go to a lot of sales meetings. I'm currently at 'Sara Slade Interiors' in Cambridge for 6 months which is a very small company, yet great placement wise as I'm part of the team rather than just an intern. I wanted to do both fashion and interior placements to get a better overview career wise, with me definitely driven towards the interior design route (have been since school but wanted to check as I could've hated it!)

I would definitely recommend a year in industry as:

- 1) It's much more beneficial when looking for jobs as you have more experience & know what route you wish to take
- 2) You understand more about yourself and the way that you work- transferable into final year at Uni
- 3) You learn LOTS!

