

➤ Unit 1-- contextualizing

Statement

This project explores the intersection of environment, space, and scale through the lens of graphic design. Rather than merely seeking some specific solutions, we strive to build a new system of understanding that reveals the hidden environmental costs of the global supply chain through mapping. By deconstructing the colonial biases of traditional map-making, we adopted and modified the Dymaxion Map. Through its unique assembly, we broke conventional geographic boundaries to connect regions linked by industry but separated by vast distances. This shift makes the abstraction of "climate injustice" visceral, exposing how textile pollution is outsourced to the Global South while consumption prospers locally. To materialize this disconnect, we harvested waste textiles and threads from our own campus and sewed them onto the map. This act of stitching transforms the map into a physical site of memory and critique, making visible the severed relationship between what we make and what we consume.

Annotated Bibliography

Texts from the reading list

Blauvelt, A., Maurer, L., Paulus, E., Puckey, J. and Wouters, R. (2013)
Conditional Design Workbook. Amsterdam: Valiz.

- The *Conditional Design Workbook* argues that design under specific conditions should be an "open system," gathering information from its environment and feeding it back into the real world. This theory deeply influenced our team, helping us realize that design should focus on collecting external data and interacting with society, rather than searching for a single, absolute solution. Consequently, in our project, we moved away from using only large scale climate data. Instead, we focused on gathering and visualizing specific environmental information, such as air and water quality, and reflecting these findings on our maps. Specifically,

we used discarded threads and fabrics combined with abstract mapping to show the environmental impact of cotton from production to sale. This process allowed us to create a unique system for responding to environmental issues. By combining these physical materials in different forms, we aimed to pass critical information to our audience and engage them in a more interactive way.

Anderson, B. (2006) '*Census, Map, Museum*'. In: *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso, pp. 163–185.

- In 'Census, Map, Museum,' Anderson argues that maps are often products of colonial power rather than objective depictions of reality. Historically, maps were used as tools for colonization and military expansion, creating a "bird's-eye view" of the world that remains alien to those outside this power structure. This critical perspective challenged our team to rethink the authority of the maps we use today. To counteract this colonial legacy, we chose to base our design on Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion Map. Unlike traditional projections that fragment the world into isolated nations, the Dymaxion Map presents the Earth's landmasses as a single, continuous island in one ocean. This "one-world" visual logic deeply inspired our response to the brief. It supports our argument that environmental pollution does not stop at national borders; instead, as Fuller's system demonstrates, it flows through a singular, interconnected global system. Consequently, we reassembled and stitched our maps to emphasize these ignored ecological links. By moving away from colonial mapping traditions, we used the Dymaxion framework to visualize how local waste contributes to a shared global crisis.

Texts outside the reading list

Leach, A. (2023) *The World Is on Fire but We're Still Buying Shoes*. London: Profile Books.

- In this book, the author examines the deep contradiction between environmental awareness and the addiction to hyper-consumption. His analysis reveals how the fashion industry uses "planned obsolescence"

and emotional marketing to disconnect consumers from the waste they produce. This perspective pushed us to focus on the discarded materials within our campus and integrate them into our design. Leach's argument that "shopping is a symptom" helped us contextualize the textile waste found in fashion studios; these scraps are not just trash, but evidence of a "broken system of desire." In our response, we used discarded fabrics and threads to visualize the environmental harm caused during production. By stitching these waste threads onto maps using different techniques, we assigned specific environmental meanings to each stitch. We aim to make the audience confront the physical "debris" of their consumption choices.

Pater, R. (2016) *The Politics of Design: A (Not So) Global Design Manual for Visual Communication*. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

- The section on "Colonialism and Cartography" in this book provides a critical framework that aligns with Benedict Anderson's critique of state power. By deconstructing the Mercator projection as a "colonialist" tool that distorts global proportions to favor Western dominance, the text challenged us to reject standard map formats that simplify reality for the sake of control. This reference profoundly influenced our project by introducing the Dymaxion Map and Indigenous wooden maps as viable alternatives. The Dymaxion Map's "one island earth" logic supports our argument that environmental pollution flows through an interconnected global system, regardless of national borders. Furthermore, the Ammasalik Inuit's wooden maps which were "designed to be felt, not read" inspired our decision to use discarded threads and diverse stitching as a tactile visual language. This approach allows us to assign specific environmental meanings to the material itself, transforming the map from a tool of conquest into a powerful visualization of textile waste. Consequently, our design moves beyond traditional mapping to confront the audience with the tangible environmental consequences of their consumption habits.

Two Design practices/projects

Deutinger, T. (2019) Reimagining the atlas as an ultra minimalist visualisation (<https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/reimagining-the-atlas-as-an-ultra-minimalist-visualization/>)

- In this atlas design, the artist uses a very minimalist approach to show complex information, ranging from country sizes to global crop data. Unlike traditional maps, this work ignores exact geographical accuracy. Instead, the author created a new system using simple lines, where the density of the lines shows the scale, accompanied by brief text labels. This work inspired our team to break away from standard map formats and try a more abstract way to express our theme. By splitting and reorganizing original maps, we tried to break the traditional rules of geographical space. We purposefully joined two regions that are actually far apart to show that every part of the Earth is connected. This design choice highlights that no matter the distance, no region can escape the impact of environmental pollution. This practice deepened our understanding of the project by showing that maps do not just record facts, they can be used as a powerful tool to visualize the hidden connections between local actions and global consequences.

Lee, M. (2009) The Mending Project

https://www.perrotin.com/artists/lee_mingwei/550/the-mending-project/48705

- Lee Mingwei's The Mending Project inspired my project by demonstrating how simple materials and interactive, process-based approaches can reveal complex relationships. Just as Mingwei uses thread, fabric, and color to explore connections between self, others, and environment, I realized that the humble Gutermann cotton thread could serve as a medium to trace environmental impact and human interaction. His focus on process, subtlety, and physical engagement encouraged me to move beyond purely numerical data and instead use material exploration collecting scraps, experimenting with stitch techniques, layering textiles to communicate the cotton thread's journey. Furthermore, the conceptual framing of everyday objects as carriers of meaning highlighted that even a single reel of thread holds embedded stories of production, consumption,

and ecological consequence, guiding my approach to combine mapping, embroidery, and material practice into a visual and tactile investigation.