BEING HUMAN AT CRISP ST 2015
Habit(AT), a Centre for Sustainable Fashion research project looks at how fashion relates to its environment, community, people and place. A key part of this project is I STOOD UP, a way of using fashion to engage people in conversation about their concerns and ideas for change. Alongside noticing the ways in which fashion is linked with biodiversity and nature in and around Chrisp Street, in East London, I STOOD UP for (bio)diversity - this current iteration captured the thoughts and attitudes of the local community.

This work in progress was showcased as part of the Being Human Festival 2015, where CSF hosted a pop up exhibition in an abandoned shoe shop off Chrisp Street Market. Alongside CSF, the exhibition included work and activities designed by students from London College of Fashion’s MA Fashion Futures. Throughout the day, over 140 people from the local community and businesses participated.

Habit(AT) is led by Professor Dilys Williams with collaborators inside and outside of the centre, funded to date through AHRC and Erasmus. The core team comprises Dilys Williams, Renee Cuoco and Anna Fitzpatrick.
Habit(AT) is a project, conceived through thinking about fashion in relation to our appearances and activities in an increasingly city based world. Our lifestyles emerge through the habits, places and influences around us, so we are looking at aspects of fashion that can contribute to a healthy city metabolism, where everyone has the ability to do great things, to get and give in equal measure. This project has three phases, gathering voices, noticing habits and exhibiting some of the utopian and dystopian possibilities that emerge.
(BIO) DIVERSITY IN AND AROUND CHRISP STREET
Biodiversity is the variety of life on our planet - it includes all nature and wildlife. Biodiversity is the foundation for our world and has a direct impact on all of us, but right now, we face a biodiversity crisis - we depend on nature for everything (including our food, clothing, housing, medicine, etc), and it just cannot take the current pressure we are putting on it through land development, agriculture, pollution and climate change.

Whilst its parks, squares, cemeteries, waterways, brownfield sites, gardens and buildings are home to a surprisingly large variety of wildlife, Tower Hamlets has one of the highest density populations in the UK and this means opportunities for wildlife to flourish can be few and far between. Most of Poplar (where Chrisp Street Market is) falls within an area of deficiency when it comes to access to nature.

Tower Hamlets Priority Species for Conservation

- HOUSE SPARROW
- COMMON BLUE BUTTERLY
- HEDGEHOG
- STAG BEETLE
- BATS
- BLACK POPLAR TREE
NOTICING NATURE IN AND AROUND CHRISTOPHER ST
A: Meath Gardens (newly planted Poplar trees)
B: Victoria Park (Poplar trees)
C: Manchester Estate (hedgehog home)
D: Derbyshire Street (pocket park)
E: Matilda House (Insect Hotel)
F: Swedenborg Estate (Orchard)
G: Lincoln Estate (Urban Orchard)
H: Bethnal Green Nature Reserve
I: Lark Row (Community Garden)
J: Mudchute Park (Restored Ponds)
K: Poplar Dock Marina (Installed vegetated Rafts)
L: Winterton House (Organic Garden)
M: Limmo Peninsula Ecological Park
N: East India Dock Basin
O: Tree preservations
P: Poplar Recreation Ground (4 Poplar trees)
Q: Tower Hamlets Cemetery
NATURE & WELLBEING
Standing up on lifted, folded rock
looking out and down --

The creek falls to a far valley.
Hills beyond that
facing, half-forested, dry
-- clear sky
strong wind in the stiff needle clusters
of the pine -- their brown
round trunk bodies
straight, still;
rustling trembling limbs and twigs
listen.

This living flowing land
is all there is, forever

We are it
it sings through us --

We could live on this Earth
without clothes or tools!

Gary Snyder, By Frazier Creek Falls

Research indicates that natural environments can increase or reduce our stress, which in turn affects our bodies. What you see, hear and experience around you changes not only your mood, but how parts of your body’s systems such as your immune, nervous and endocrine systems are working.

Regardless of age, culture, lifestyle, humans find nature to be pleasing. We also rely on nature to sustain our lives. We rely on nature for food, clothes, the ability to breathe, the water to drink and a place to live.

The beauty that humans see in nature has been shown to reduce feelings of pain and increase recovery in patients (Ulrich study) and recently a proposal was made to government suggesting that part of the health budget be used to protect and maintain our natural environment since it is so important to our health and well being. Indeed, according to a MIND survey, 95% of those interviewed said their mood improved after spending time outside.

London is one of the greenest big cities in the world. Two thirds of its area is made up of green spaces or water, and ten per cent of its urban area is designated as Metropolitan Open Land. How can we make the most of this for our own wellbeing?
Everything that you are wearing has a direct link to nature. Fashion relies on nature for its materials, its manufacturing processes and its colours. Fashion is grown in fields (fabrics such as cotton), drawn from the ground (the oil used to make polyester and to power many of fashion’s factories), and draws on water sources (dyeing and washing). It affects nature’s balance and its diversity. Here are some surprising statistics about fashion:

1 Kg of cotton causes the same CO2 emissions as driving a car for 22 miles

1 t-shirt contains 2,700 litres of water

1 pair of jeans contains 11,000 litres of water

1 Kg of cotton causes the same CO2 emissions as driving a car for 22 miles

350,000 Tonnes of clothing end up in landfill each year in the UK

In 2015, the global apparel industry is expected to produce more than 400 billion square metres of fabric, enough material to cover the United Kingdom nearly twice.

The cotton used in the fashion and clothing industry creates the same amount of greenhouse gas emissions in one year as driving to the sun and back more than 1,000 times would do.

The polyester fibre which is made (from oil) into textiles each year emits as much greenhouse gas as 149 million cars’ annual emissions.

Fashion is a vital part of how we express ourselves, a necessary part of keeping warm and it is a means to fit into our culture, society and community. So how might we value its contents more highly?
I STOOD UP
Through conversations around our clothes, we are able to hear and see the concerns and interests of the city. What we stand up in relates to nature, business, culture, friends, work and our personal interests. I STOOD UP seeks to gather and voice environmental concerns so that might be able to act on them individually and collectively. This is the approach we used to start conversations at our Being Human at Chrisp Street event.

I STOOD UP is an ongoing piece of work about listening to peoples’ thoughts and ideas in exchange for a specially designed t shirt - an expression of each individual’s values as well as a collective representation of a community standing up for what’s important to them. We seek to create form, through fashion, around the responses of Londoners, bringing to light some of the ways in which people connect with each other and to the place where they live.
I STOOD UP FOR (BIO)DIVERSITY
Through I STOOD UP for (bio)diversity we wanted to see what the direct links between what we wear and where we wear. What are the ideas, cultures, materials, skills, businesses, personalities and nature’s resources contained within what we wear as we go about our daily lives.

At Chrisp Street we invited local people to talk to us about nature in their local community. In exchange for their thoughts we gifted them an I STOOD UP t-shirt - see next page for more. This t-shirt was especially informed by and designed for the Chrisp St locale, and it became a visual representation of each person’s participation in the project. Throughout the conversations of the day, a few themes emerged - nature is important for human wellbeing; fashion and nature are connected; and there is an overwhelming concern for a loss of nature in our everyday lives.
Images by Emmi Hyypää
T-shirt designed by Renee Cuoco
FASHION IN AND AROUND CHRISP ST MARKET
We asked MA Fashion Futures students to explore places, people & skills involved in fashion in and around Chrisp Street. They sought out places where fashion is born and carried out as well as habits and practices in its use. The themes below represent different stages of the fashion cycle as well as the starting point for each group's work.

**CONCEIVED**
Fashion rhythms are created and conceived by being consciously alive in connection to the life force energy, or soul, of Mother Nature. This is True Fashion. False Fashion is not conceived, and instead is merely copied and consumed. Are you just following the false Fashion rhythm Waltz?

**ACQUIRED**
The acquiring process happens in three ways: psychologically, physically and through acquiring knowledge. What is the psychological and physical process of acquiring when purchasing fashion? Is there a passing of knowledge? What do you think when you buy something?

**CARE**
From caring for to caring about, there are different meanings for what it means to care or not care. There is a strong sense of care within the community at Chrisp Street but what does it mean to care? How and why do the people of Chrisp Street care for fashion?

**MADE**
Fashion is formed and made through its location and culture, and it in turn fashion makes meaning and identity. How is fashion made in Chrisp Street? What are the skills that are used, shared and needed to create fashion which is meaningful to the people of Chrisp Street?

**REJECTED**
Rejection of clothing at Chrisp Street takes place through charity shops, clothes/shoe banks and vintage market stalls. Some wonderful and intriguing objects can be found here, proving that one person's trash is another's treasure. What are the extended and new life possibilities for once rejected fashion at Chrisp St?
Based on the themes each group explored, the MA students facilitated a series of activities as part of the Being Human at Chrisp St event.

**CONCEIVED**

Members of the public were invited to talk about how they describe the qualities of their clothes, whilst students documented their style by illustrating what participants were wearing.

**ACQUIRED**

Participants were invited into the custom built Chrisp St Wardrobe, to talk about what they think when they purchase clothes. This is especially pertinent since many of the stalls and shops on Chrisp St market are in the business of selling fashion.

**CARE**

With help from the students, members of the public were invited to design and create their very own washing symbol, based on the individual ways in which they care for their clothes.

**MADE**

In an effort to understand what fashion making skills exist in the local community, members of the public were asked to identify their current skills and hopes for new skills in the future. These included weaving, spinning, sewing, knitting, printing and embroidery.

**REJECTED**

In order to facilitate conversation around where and how the local community deal with unwanted clothes, this group of students invited members of the public to tell them their stories around rejected fashion.