



Thread Tales founder Katherine Maunder on how her brand – and her life – were influenced by her mother

Katherine Maunder, the founder of Thread Tales, was hugely inspired by her mother, Frances, as she was launching her business. Not only did Frances introduce her to the material made from the stems of lotus flowers that is now an integral textile in her collections, but her respect for nature and her determination to make a difference inform everything Katherine does.

To fete Thread Tales' autumn collection, we chatted with Katherine and Frances about their bond, supporting craftsmanship, and what it means to invest in handmade pieces.

Katherine on her childhood

I have very fond memories of my childhood, my mum and dad brought us up to be passionate about nature. We used to go on a lot of camping trips, and we learned to appreciate nature and live healthily in a very positive environment. We just learned to appreciate life.

Frances on what luxury means to her

Luxury is enjoying the natural things. Luxury really doesn't mean spending a lot. It means being with people.

Katherine on the most important thing her mum taught her

Never to give up and be determined. But, along the way, think about the people that you involve in your journey. Always be respectful of people and be kind. For that reason, when I went into fast fashion, it didn't really work with my values because everyone was out for themselves, there was no sense of community. I was always looking for a way out, but I still loved what I was doing. I still loved to be a designer and be creative. My mum was in my head all the time whilst I was doing that, so when she brought this amazing fabric back from Myanmar, it was the beginning of an amazing journey, one that meant something to me.

Frances on the example she sets for her daughter

As a midwife, working in isolated areas, you have to have courage to work hard, to know and understand how to cope with difficult situations. So in some ways those are the things I wanted to give her. That courage to do what she wanted and to learn hard and work hard if she wanted it, and you've got to learn to care for people along the way. That's what midwives are taught. And when I found the scarf made from the lotus fabric, you could see the care that people put into that product, and the love they put into that product.



On their strong mother-daughter bond

Katherine: Love, obviously love, unconditionally. The reason why we bonded again, once we got past those teenage years when you're figuring stuff out about life, I had a respect for her. She's a good role model, at the same time, she gave me the distance to experiment and live. And I think I had her sensible voice in my head, which stopped me from going along the wrong paths. But I think that worked really well.

Frances: Your children are part of you, and you've made them and you've grown with them and you learn that way. You form that total respect for each other, and a love, and also



acceptance that things are difficult at times, but you need to work through it and move forward and give that love and support that they need to get through life. And friendship. Friendship is such a bond.



Katherine on maintaining craftsmanship through generations

I like to believe that you can feel when someone's hands have made something. You look at a handmade textile and you can see it in the fabric. It's not a generic piece of fabric. It's got some kind of love and some beautiful property and each piece is different. You won't see that in a mass-produced material. Skill and craft is having a bit of a resurgence now, thankfully. I'm seeing it, so hopefully plenty of other brands who are supporting artisans will keep trying to get their story out there.

Katherine on investing in quality pieces

You have to remind the person who's buying it what it means to buy that piece and be able to create that emotional connection. And that's what we try and do at Thread Tales. When we sell our pieces, there's a story, and it resonates with people. It's not just a piece of fabric or a scarf or a wrap, it's got meaning and purpose behind it, and that's why we say wear something that means something. Unfortunately, consumers have been trained to think they have to be wearing the latest things to be recognized or noticed. But, imagine if you're wearing a scarf and you can tell the story of how it came about. Surely, that's got to be the way forward.