

#53 Zoe Edwards helps me with my sustainable sewing journey

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SPEAKERS

Zoe Edwards, Saskia de Feijter

S Saskia de Feijter 00:04

Hi, my name is Saskia. I've got over a decade of experience in running a small business in the needle craft industry. I'm obsessed with the healing magic of crafting and the power of community. dreaming big about a world where we rely on value based businesses, the kindness economy, and where we can fully say, Fuck fast fashion. A smaller life aims to inspire you to look at your wardrobe differently. Where do you buy? How do you use your clothes? And can you make some of it yourself? We learn from experts in the needlecraft textile and creative industry big names and small about what it's actually like to run a small business. I'm educated in marketing and photography and learn to do everything else on the job selling patented product design, teaching and running a needlecraft school. As a small business owner, you're in charge of everything branding, marketing, selling, promoting and cleaning the loo emotional talks with sellers about wins and woes, product and design conscious decision making, why we do it, how we do it, and what we need to become the future of fashion without burning the help apps. And I'm determined to lift our Cena for the world to notice so they can step away from fast fashion.

S Saskia de Feijter 01:35

A few weeks ago Zoey invited me to help her out with her yarn choice for a new project she started being the conscious grafter that she is she wanted to do it right from the get go. It was a fire and fast episode for her podcast, check your threads, Episode 66. If you are interested, I think and I decided I could use some help myself. So today we are turning the sewing table and I'll be talking to Zoey about my sewing plans and projects and get her expert experience on how to choose the best fabrics for a more sustainable animal and people friendly sewing practice. I hope you'll take away some inspiring information from our talk. And while we're on the topic. If you've been inspired and have gotten some value from the podcast, please consider becoming a Patreon. This allows a smaller life to grow and reach a wider audience so that more people can be inspired to look at their wardrobe in a different way. And more small businesses can be supported in the good work they do. Practically it means that I can offer

better quality pay the editor and myself or our work and make the podcast more accessible for a wider audience by making more comprehensive show notes and transcripts. That actually makes sense. But now let's hear from Zuri

Z Zoe Edwards 02:50

Hello, how are you?

S Saskia de Feijter 02:51

Hello. I'm good. I'm a little bit cold. Yes, I'm not wearing I have my really chunky sweater behind me but I was I'm not wearing it. And also the sun is really shining in my face. So I think the sun was listening when I just said

Z Zoe Edwards 03:05

that. She's cold quick.

S Saskia de Feijter 03:09

How are you? Good cold. I've got many many layers on. I've got a blanket on my lap and I've got like a kind of electric space heater thing next to my bomb. I love the color coordination that you have going on. i This is kind of my palettes. I've seen a little bit of a orangey red must be yellow, and emerald green and then some black and white. What is it? Panther? Yeah, answer prints. Really good look. Thank you.

S Saskia de Feijter 03:42

So I'm you're here to talk to me about how I can start my sewing practice off from the get go on the right foot and make some more sustainable choices. What did I go shop for? Or maybe not shop at all for fabrics. So Should I just tell you where I'm at in my sewing journey for? Yeah, okay. I have sewn garments or altered garments for as long as I can remember, maybe a little bit after. But I think at least from the from six years old or something I've been playing with needle and thread. And then what I wanted to go to art school I wants to become a fashion designer. And I would have like photo sessions like fashion photoshoots of me wearing particular outfits. I had no training except for my granny that helped me with some basic stitches and stuff. My mom had a sewing machine I would basically battle the sewing machine a lot. And I only recently learned why I was always like, like, so frustrated because I would get these nests of yarn on the bottom of my A fabric because apparently you have to always put the needle up when you take out your fabric. Well, obviously,

Z Zoe Edwards 05:07

but all the way out. Yes.

S**Saskia de Feijter 05:11**

So yeah, there's that. And then I did a bit of sewing here and there but never really got taught well how to do it. And then I think it's now almost I think about 15 years ago that I did a basic course, with a lovely lady that is actually now again by teacher. And from there on, I was so focused on knitting and my business that I never really, really got into it. But as I've set myself the goal, to make my whole wardrobe or curate or collect, like, my whole wardrobe, the dream is to have a wardrobe that's consciously put together in any shape, or form. And because my shape and form is quite luscious, I'm a big Lady, I have the opportunity to use sewing as a tool to get closer to what I love and what I want. So that's why I'm now taking lessons with Carolyn Volkow, who's in Rotterdam, if you're in Rotterdam, you can check her out. She's lovely, she's very experienced, and especially fun to have as a teacher. But I also have you as my friend and experts, and I wanted to know more about the sustainability side of things. What I did was within the online community that I host, we did something that's called a closet cleanup. So we took out all of our clothes, had a good look at them. I put them all on my body. I made a little video. No, no, not everybody did that. I'm really, really serious when it comes to these things. I put them all on my body, I figured out what kind of shapes I liked on me. I let things go. I said thank you Kumari style to them. And I looked at all the things that still sparkle joy and all of that, then I actually made an episode about this. But I don't know which one right now. I'll link in the show notes.

Z**Zoe Edwards 07:13**

Yeah, I loved it.

S**Saskia de Feijter 07:15**

You did? Oh, cool, awesome. And then I kind of made this notebook that describes the whole step by step thing. So we'll probably do something with that in the future. I know that I don't go to a lot of parties so I don't need a lot of party clothes. I need comfortable clothes that make me feel good, that look good on me. And also that fit my style. Because even though that I work from home, I do get out in the world sometimes. And I really like to kind of show people that you can look really good and fun and make the right decisions. So first of all, next on my list for things to make are stretchy things like T-shirts and leggings and the basics. And that's where I have my first quote unquote issue, because stretch is necessarily not necessarily very sustainable, is it?

Z**Zoe Edwards 08:11**

Oh, right. So, so my, the first thing that I was thinking of talking about when you invited me onto your burgers is basically what I consider to be the blueprint, which is pretty much I think that's basically what you have landed on yourself, like what you were saying is basically what I was saying. So when you start sewing, when you start anything, there's going to be mistakes, not everything that you make is going to be great, it's going to be a complete success, you're going to get loads of use for it. Bear that in mind that isn't a given, that's fine, you have to

make mistakes, you have to learn from them. Very often, if you make a garment that doesn't quite work in some way, it's very often that you can either reuse the fabric somewhat, or change it up in some way to get more use from it. And you can learn and that is very, very valuable. So but that having said that, that doesn't mean to say we can't from the very, very beginning, try to have the aim of creating long lasting, successful garments. So I banged on about this all the time in my podcast. But for me, I believe that we should be striving to make garments that fit our personal style, as you said, fit our body, as you've said, and fit our lifestyle, as you also said. So let's start with the first one. So personal style. I think we need to as well except that what you make today and you're in love with today or you find on the you know, shop or online or something that you love right now. You're probably not going to feel just as passionately about it in five years time. That is a given. People change. You change, taste change, society changes, trends change all of the above. So I think that we should definitely drive to make things that last a good amount of time, you know, and we're gonna get a lot of use, I think it's better to make something that you wear a ton for three years, then something that you might have in your wardrobe for 15 years, but you wore maybe five times, you know, like, that's not a good use of your time, the resources that went into that fabric, the energy and all of the above. So, having accepted that tastes do change, we can still really strive to make things that really do fit with our personal style. And as we were discussing the last time that we spoke, if you're already a knitter, you're already used to making decisions that are kind of connected to your personal style. So you already probably if you are a knitter or crochet out, have a good idea, for example, what color palettes you enjoy, what sleeve lengths, the amount of volume you like, in a garment, the amount of ease, so that you're used to making those kinds of decisions. So you can transfer some of that knowledge to your sewing things. Obviously, we're talking about different types of garments. So you might never have to really consider what kind of shape you prefer, or, you know, something like that, or what kind of leg lead for you like that, you know, there's other things as well. But there is so many ways that you can kind of fast track your knowledge about what you really can, you know, drill down really, to what your personal style is. So, I personally really enjoy using Pinterest. And also, I'm a quite a heavy Instagram user. So I'm often saving things that I really enjoy. So if you can't really name quite what exact type of things you'd like, if you just callate over a period of time, things that really you love them really kind of clicked with you, when you go back and you look at them as a whole, you can really start to pick out aspects like Oh, I'm seems to be that I'm really into like, cowl necks or I'm really into full sleeves, or whatever it could be, or I'm clearly really into purple, or you know, you can start to see those trends come through. So you don't have to be able to specify as right now, what it is, but also, you know, you've got a wardrobe of clothes, many of which you love, like, see what you enjoy the most wearing, you know, just take a little snapshot of yourself every morning or something, see what you know what you reach for again, and again, there's so many ways different ways you can do it. So that's personal style. And so your lifestyle. So as Yeah, exactly. There's, there's no point making something that is going to sit in your wardrobe for ages because you just don't have the ability to wear it very much. So you really do need to factor in do you work from home? Do you work outside? Do you go to fancy restaurants or go to parties? Do you have a kid? Do you have a baby? Are you on your knees a lot do you garden, you know, you really need to factor those things in. And it's not saying that necessarily you can't make things that fulfill those other functions. But I think generally, you don't want to make too many, you know, like I'm not really a dress wearer, I've got one dress that I made that last year and I wear it quite a lot of times I don't really need another because I just don't really enjoy wearing dresses. So I've got one, that's fine, I'm going to turn my attention to things that I do wear all the time, like dungarees and jeans and cardigans and things like that. But also there are elements that you really love in a designer and a pattern or something you've seen in the shop or something, there's often ways you can translate it so that you can wear it more often as well, you know, so for example,

you've seen puff sleeves already in at the moment. So say you like you've seen a blouse and put this big beautiful past sleeve and you love that but like you work from home, or you know, you do childcare, you could make a sweatshirt with a similar silhouette, there's lots of ways that you can translate those things that you enjoy into a fabric or a style or an overall garment that is more in keeping with with your life. You know, similarly the other way around, like you might see something amazing that some cute detail on a really casual garment, but you work in an office, is there a way that you can translate that into something that's more formal and more appropriate for, for your office job, you know, so there's that, and then was the last on your body? Now this I think is really the one that is the biggest learning curve. You're gonna have to, you're gonna have to do the work with this one a bit, though, in terms of your body, I think disregard sizing, in terms of shortboard sizing, completely disregard that, start to think of yourself purely as a collection of measurements, you know. So you might be like, Oh, I'm I'm always a size 14 in that shop. Like that doesn't mean to say you're gonna be a size 14 In a sewing pattern. You know, you have to let that go. And that's something that people fall down on all the time because they just didn't bother to measure themselves. And you kind of got to let go of the relationship that you might have with certain numbers and you think like, Oh, if it turns out you're an 18 in this same pattern, that's okay. Because that's just a number. Absolutely. And he doesn't, it's not like oh, you know, I had this I've had this all the time people making garments. They're just way too small because they know I'm always They let go of that doesn't matter.

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Saskia de Feijter 15:02

Do you want something that looks good on you because it has a good fit? Or do you want the number in your head to be right?

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Zoe Edwards 15:09

Absolutely. And it is completely irrelevant when it comes to sewing because every sewing pattern company has their own, block their own standard measuring their own kind of sample size, their own set of proportions that they work to. And some of those are going to really work for your body. But some of them, they're not going to work so well for your body. And you're going to have to do a bit of work to make it fit. Generally across the board, they are fairly consistent, but you will find that there are some variations and that is fine.

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Saskia de Feijter 15:46

Hi, there, it's just me, I hope you are enjoying the interview. Just wanted to talk to you directly for a second. I've been recording the podcast for two years now. And I hope I've been giving you lots of value and some inspiration. If you are ready to give back, I have a few ways you can do that. You can go to [www dot Yeah, hyphen bowl.com](http://www.yeahhyphen.com) and subscribe to my newsletter, you can become an active member of our yovel online community and work at your sustainable wardrobe, or get mentoring for your small business in our BBB BC program. And if you want to support more anonymously in the background, you can do that by becoming a patron of the show for the value of one cup of coffee each month. It's just a small Thank you. And it makes it possible for me to continue to talk to interesting people and share their secrets with you go to [www dot Yeah, hyphen wall.com](http://www.yeahhyphen.com). And find everything you need there. Thanks.

Z

Zoe Edwards 16:51

So beyond that, so always, always, always measure yourself before you start any project. Because unless you're making something incredibly stretchy, you don't have the amount of gear that you might be used to having if you are a knitter. So and also we fluctuate as well, you know, so what you are one week might be different. So always, always, always measure yourself, before you start a project. Do you want to do your full blast, your high waist, which is like your natural waist, and your kind of full hip, which is kind of the widest part around your bum, hip area, they addressed your basics, there are a million other measurements, you can take obviously like the length of your torso, the length of your arm, your height, but there's loads and loads of others. But those three basic forms are a really good starting point at least figure out what size or size is. You need to start with? Yeah. So it's so common for people to find that they're in a number of sizes. I certainly am. I'm always a size bigger on my waist and hips than I am on my bust. Yeah. So, so normal. So, so normal. So that's really good to know. So,

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Saskia de Feijter 17:57

so as a beginner, if I can just quickly grab on to this, please do I know that my the same as you I'm smaller on top, then I'm on the bottom. So as a beginner talking about that journey, where you learn as you do, do you think it's wise to already start learning to change patterns to fit your particular size? Or to just go with the bigger size?

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Zoe Edwards 18:25

No, absolutely start to make those changes from the beginning. They're not difficult. They are not difficult. That is it's it's very doable.

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Saskia de Feijter 18:35

Yeah, you don't need to really go into this, but it's just really a good thing. Because it

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Zoe Edwards 18:42

fit you up here, right? Oh, wait, if anything, start with the smaller size, because this around your shoulders around your torso around, you know, this upper bit is very hard to fit an altar. If it's too big, then, you know, changing just to blend out into the next size. So you always want to start with what's fitting you around the top. And then you can blend out into the larger size or the other way. Some people are the other way. They've got the very narrow hips or you know, no way so that always get it fitting up here. Yeah, because it's always easier to go in or out correct things going on down below.

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Saskia de Feijter 19:19

That makes sense. Yes, yes.

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Zoe Edwards 19:23

We'd like a gaping neckline and stuff, you're just not gonna want to wear it, it's gonna feel wrong, and so you're never going to reach for it. So yeah, it's great. And the more that you learn about your body and the things that you need to do for your specific body, I think we discussed this before, I think didn't we like via WhatsApp? Like there are hundreds of different alterations you can make that you may need to make. And once you learn the few that apply to you get so quick at them so good at them. You can apply them to any single core pattern that you see. And you can make it work for yourself. You know,

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Saskia de Feijter 19:57

I haven't thought of it that way. That's super helpful. And so, so this is talking about the shape that you aren't getting to know your body and letting go of sizes. And just focusing on numbers, which is not a number is not a it's not a judgment. And I think

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Zoe Edwards 20:16

it's something you could do even to kind of kind of flip the script on that. Yeah, most garment companies have a size chart that is in both metric and imperial. Oh, yes. Something that you could I don't really genuinely work it. You know, when I'm taking my body measurements, I got so used to doing it in Imperial, but you could swap it right? If you're so hung up on certain sizes in whatever your preferred measurement is not using the other one, because it means nothing to you, then it's just a number. Yeah, that's

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Saskia de Feijter 20:42

a great idea. Yeah, personally, I never had issues with that, I always feel much better if I have a garment that fits well, and I don't look at the size. But I know a lot of women or female identifying people that I know, do really have that issue. But at the same time, this whole journey could prove to be very supportive in the way that you look at yourself and finding ways to really look at your best features, the things that you feel really proud of, and bring them to the stage many.

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Zoe Edwards 21:19

So for example, because like yourself, as you're saying, I've always been a little bit more on top than I have been below. So I've always found semi fitted things to like really clean to my tummy. Yes, in a way that I've really felt self conscious about it. I mean, I'm not a big person. But I've always felt self conscious of my tummy, I naturally got a little round Tommy. And I've had it even when I was at my absolute thinnest in my 20s just your body, just my body. And I always hated it. And I hated on my belly for years, because it was always kind of showing because what video up here was too clingy here. Now I can do that really simple alteration of

blending between the sizes, it's not creating this tightness and this focus on my tummy. So I don't think about it because I'm not exactly cutting in. It's not on display in the same way. So it freed up a lot of brain space like that. Yeah.

S Saskia de Feijter 22:09

And then I also use a lot of Pinterest, and also really helps to look at, if I look at different shapes or styles, I always had to add plus size because it just looks different on the plus size body. And not all block size bodies are the same bodies or fat bodies. I'd like to say fat myself. But I do have a lot of inspiration from my sewing teacher who is a lot thinner than I am or a lot smaller or whatever you want to call it. But she has the same kind of shape. Like the proportions are same ish. Yeah, so and she's an expert Sower. So I can look at her and see how certain garments look so good on her things that I would never have thought to make myself No, I've, I've made some letter to pens. And I always thought that like these, these rules and restrictions that we keep telling each other like you should have elongated lines, because that looks better. Or never wear stripes across your chest because that makes your chairs look bigger. And then there's somebody that says that's not true. Or you can't wear yellow because nobody can wear yellow and all of these rules you can put to the site if you try them out. Or and then you can say yes, they were right. I don't feel good in bright yellow. Or actually these flare jeans make me look very Morticia like I love that.

Z Zoe Edwards 23:37

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, something you can do as well if you're not sure about whether or not something's going to suit you try something

S Saskia de Feijter 23:43

that suits you is much better way of putting it so for instance, people talk about flattering. I don't like that word that suits you is so much better. I'm gonna write it down and use this one from now on. Okay,

Z Zoe Edwards 23:57

thanks objective as well. Yes, absolutely. I get flattering, what people deem flattering. That sounds like it's yeah, it's like a rule. It's external. It's not about like how you feel. Exactly. Because I mean, it does take a lot of time and energy and resources to make a garment but a way that you can see if something is going to sue you is to try something similar in a shop I don't do this very much I probably should do this more. But you know, say there's like a new kind of neckline that's come out or a collar and you're like, I don't know if that's going to suit me like try something on like see before you invest all that time and energy and fabric into it. Yeah, so I'm just going to wrap up the the point that I was making about fit garments you make that are going to be more of a teaching exercise and a successful garment that you will learn so much more about your body going forward. So making a towel that is something that can really help although it from the outside it seems like an unsustainable thing. Like why are you making like a test garment? Isn't that always the fabric? But I really don't believe it is because

generally you're going to be making the toilet Have like you can, you can often use fabrics that are from a charity shop or bedlinen that you've got around the house that's got holes in or something you can often use, reuse something. But ultimately, I think if it's going to be saving precious fabric by, you know, figuring out any fit issues in advance, I do think that's a better way to go. Because then it's going to be a better experience for you as well. You know, if you've got a garment that fits you well from the beginning, because you bother to make the 12 aka muslin. It doesn't have to be the full bells and whistles, it doesn't have to be the complete garment. It can just be like the significant parts, you know, you don't have to do the pockets on the trousers, for example, or, you know, if you're testing the bodice of a dress, you don't have to add the sleeves, unless that's something you want to test as well, you know, so you can pair things back and and make it a quicker thing.

S Saskia de Feijter 25:47

Yeah, yeah, I've made two tours so far, both for trousers. And one is now it's made from a duvet cover. And it's not all my pajama pants, I love them, they have a lot of space around the tummy. So if I wanted to make them into an actual go outside pair, I'd have to do some work around the tummy. And then a neighbor gave me a bunch of fabric that she didn't use. And I use that for another pair. I thought it was going to make an inside pair, but it's actually pretty cool. So I've known that outside. And I think I felt like that I felt like it was so silly to like, double the things while you're strapped while you're trying to actually make less. But it does make sense. And it does connect to a question that I have

Z Zoe Edwards 26:39

you spent loads of money on some beautiful organic cotton, whatever. The right pair straight away. That would be a waste. Yes, wouldn't it? If you mess it up? Yes.

S Saskia de Feijter 26:53

Yeah, there's a lot of there's a lot of pressure to do it right. On the first

Z Zoe Edwards 26:57

I know every garment can be turned into pajamas. You know, like if you're making a coat on the right that offers like,

S Saskia de Feijter 27:07

yeah, yeah, I see that once you

Z Zoe Edwards 27:08

find the specific alterations, you know, if you've got like, square shoulders, sloping shoulders

forward sets, slanting shoulders, if you've got like super long arms, or if you've got, you know, like a full bicep, there's so many different adjustments you can do you know, like, short toes, torso, long torso, full timing adjustment, flat seat adjustment, full seat adjustment, not needed, just, you know,

S Saskia de Feijter 27:33

the height now,

Z Zoe Edwards 27:34

I know, but and you don't have to address them all, but and not all are relevant for the particular garment you're making. But just be aware, just kind of learn about these things. If there's so much help and advice online, you bet you might find that you only have a couple of these things. But even if you do going forward, make a couple of adjustments to the things that you make, the fit will be vastly improved. You'll feel so much better in it. And it will look better.

S Saskia de Feijter 28:02

Yeah, yeah. Oh, this is amazing, amazing. Great tips. And but's What if going into the little bit more of the more sustainable way of doing but I have one question that really links to what you just said. So I'm not the type to have a capsule wardrobe. I would love to I love the idea less stuff, buy better garments that lasts longer or make better garments, but not a lot. I don't need a lot, but I just need the variation. So I'm kind of struggling. My idea was, what if I could just have a good pair of pants, a good blouse, a good dress and then just do variations on them. That feels like it's a really solid way to go. But I can also see in the sewing world that there's trends and lots of different things coming up. Do you have any ideas around that she they just work on this basic pattern set that is made to measure for me and then I change up the materials and maybe doing different neckline and stuff is better smart way of doing things

Z Zoe Edwards 29:18

only if you ever always want to wear the same like woven top or the same rights. So particular kind of fit of trouser like I think that that if you literally do like That's great. That's a good way to go. But I feel that that would be quite restrictive. Like why would you restrict yourself in that way? I feel

S Saskia de Feijter 29:40

I don't know why I asked because I don't think I've ever knit the same sweater

Z Zoe Edwards 29:45

yeah twice. So if you know those few little adjustments or you need you know how to get a pretty good fit of any pattern then you are free to literally the world is your oyster everything

pretty good fit of any pattern then you are free to literally the world is your voice everything you know every thing is an option, if you like, oh, you know, because you might, you know, okay, I've got this well fitting trouser block, great. But if you see something super cool. And that's gonna be it's gonna as well that pattern cutting and patent drafting and pattern alteration is kind of an art. And it takes a lot of kind of study, and to get really good at it and to be very successful at it quickly. Otherwise, there's a lot of making 12 is going back to your pattern making another 12 Going back to pattern making it that's that's that's what fashion designers do is what fashion houses do they make these alterations, and they do it, you know, professionally. And you can do that. I mean, please do like mess with your patterns all you want. But know that that's not really that quick, if you do want to make a version that you have something you've seen, and you have to go back to your basic block that is actually really different to the thing.

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Saskia de Feijter 30:57

When I when I hear you talk about it's not all that different from knitting. Because what I do I, you kind of fall in love with a pattern that you see somewhere, you decide you want to make that pattern, if you are not fully equipped as a designer yet or don't want to put in the effort like myself, I just want to follow like a set of rules that that ends up looking like something that is on the picture. But as I start doing it, I'm like, I am thinking I like actually like a three quarter sleeve length. And that's pretty easy to adjust. And I guess you can do that in a sewing pattern as well. Like some things are pretty easy to adjust. And then by doing multiple different patterns along a period of time, that's when you learn more and more and more and get to Yeah, it does. It makes a lot of sense. Now, it's so interesting, though, isn't it that it's really helpful for you to kind of sketch that blueprint that outline, because I already know a lot of this, but I didn't know I knew it. Yeah. And also now at the same time. I know that I don't know that much yet, but that's okay.

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Zoe Edwards 32:10

Absolutely. It's a journey. Yeah, it's

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Saskia de Feijter 32:12

a journey, right? Talking about the the fabrics that's Can we start with with the stretchy stuff because I do want to make my own leggings and my own T shirts and I know that stretch and the plastic things are not so sustainable. So

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Zoe Edwards 32:29

so this comes back to like my whole basic point of like, the most sustainable garment or the most sustainable fabric is the one that a really suits the project that you're working on. And you wear a ton like if you make a garment that is yes it's organic cotton it was grown here it was hand dyed it was this and that. But a It's not suitable for your pattern. That's a dad that's a waste of every single resource or you don't make it you doesn't you don't like the feel of it. Or it's it's unsuitable for your climate or what have you, then that's a dad, you know, making

something that doesn't get worn is not sustainable. Right. There's just no way it no matter how it came to be, you know, the materials came to be making something out of a fabric. Yeah, obviously some things are more sustainable than others. Yeah, stretch fabric has got elastane slash lycra spandex in it, which yeah, there's it will release microplastics when it's washed. And ultimately when it ends up degrading, it won't biodegrade in the same way that cotton or linen or wool wood. But if you're going to wear it at a time and you're going to care for it, and it's suitable for what you need, then then just accept that you know, just accept it. And yeah, like you could make a pair of jeans that are 100% Cotton, but if the style you really want and that you feel suits you is like a Morris kind of tighter fitting skinny style that 100% cotton is not going to work and it's going to feel awful, and they're going to sit there on worn. Whereas if you did get some that had maybe like 3% elastane and it gives you that wearing ease and you want to wear them all the time. That's got to be better. Sure.

S Saskia de Feijter 34:15

Yeah, definitely. But is there a because usually it's 5% but they can the percentage can be more or less and that's

Z Zoe Edwards 34:24

it. I mean, you can get stretched in that is yeah, like 5% or you can get done in that Scott. It's called wearing ease and it's like a smaller percentage. Yeah. And surely

S Saskia de Feijter 34:33

some fabrics are more stretchy than others just from the way they're woven or knits.

Z Zoe Edwards 34:42

Not so much so so stretch comes in two forms it because you there is fiber stretch. So things like spandex. elastane what have you and there is mechanical stretch and that is whether or not it's been woven or knitted. Generally there's not so much variation in the knitted fabric. Production there are there is some, obviously, but the main categories are fairly limited. So you've got like single jersey, which is, you know, if you look at it under a microscope, it would look like tiny kind of plane and isn't it? You know, yeah. And that's what you generally have for like a T shirt like a classic t shirt, you can get double knits, which is thicker. Ponte Roma is a very popular and commonly found fabric in this kind of double knit category. And that is literally there. It's two layers that are knitted together. That's good for kind of more like tunics or like thin cardigans, it's just got a bit more body interlock. That similar, it's just a bit thicker than Jersey works in a similar way. You've got sweatshirt fabric, also known as sweatshirt fleece, you've got French Terry or Luke bacteria, which is very similar to sweatshirt fleece on the outside, but on the back instead of it being brushed these little loops, but they behave in a very similar way. And that's how I was, yeah, they're virtually interchangeable in terms of what projects you would use them for. I think they're the main categories really. And I just think finding a suitable fabric for the thing that you're making, making sure it's the right thickness and making sure it's got the right amount of stretch. Certain sewing patterns that really require

a lot of stretch, they will indicate how much percentage stretch a home you need. So for example, a close reading perhaps like the t shirt that you're wearing now, yes, it might say in the pattern instructions, choose a fabric that has 50% horizontal stretch. So that would be what you would do is you would find your fabric either it's in your stash or it's in the shop or whatever. Or it might actually say listed if you're buying something online, or you could always email them and ask them how much percentage stretch this fabric has. So what you do you take like a Tenzin, like it's a bit like a knitting gauge. You would find a section not at the edge that is 10 centimeters long. And against a ruler, you literally stretch it as far as it comfortably goes. And then if it goes as far as 15 centimeters, you know that that's got 50%

S Saskia de Feijter 37:07

rights. Gotcha.

Z Zoe Edwards 37:10

The other thing you need to think about in terms of stretch and suitability for a project as well as like the kind of stretching this in that way is whether or not it's a two way stretch, which is it stretches with ways or four way stretch is that it stretch which ways and lengthways. So if you're creating leggings, you really need to make sure you've got a fabric that stretches both with wave and lengthwise because you won't be able to sit down the length way stretch is as much as the width way stretch. You see what I mean? Because yes, some fabrics, they are kind of technically they're a four way stretch, they can stretch in both directions, but they don't stretch as much. So you just need to

S Saskia de Feijter 37:50

make sense. And with leggings, because my thighs chafe, there's always a lot of wear and tear there. And they they kind of grow a little so I can sew them back close. And I do that two or three times. But after a while that's yes gone. Is there any way that with patterns for specifically leggings, there's some sort of an extra, I don't know, gusset or something that makes it more wearable or a kind of fabric that that lasts longer and is stretchy. Any ideas?

Z Zoe Edwards 38:26

Sure. Yeah. So you really want to look for a really good quality jersey fabric that has got a good weight to it, you don't want to get the really thin stuff that is a bit more solid, it's still got the stretch, it's got a really good, you know, stretch and recovery, we call it not just it stretches and then it kind of stays stretch and recovers. But I'm sure there must be some sewing patterns that have already that factored in. Otherwise, there's nothing stopping you from creating if not a gusset then almost like a double layer by

S Saskia de Feijter 38:58

layer. Yeah, this tissue has a double layer as well on the front. For some reason. It's probably because it stays in shape rather than

because it stays in shape rather than

Z Zoe Edwards 39:07

forming that neckline without needing a band. There were a couple of patent companies that specifically create patterns for plus sized bodies. So there's cashmere it's I'll send you these links. I don't know how you pronounce it Munna and broad M U N. A and broad have some fantastic patterns. What is really good as well as doing a full bust adjustment is a very common thing that some like plus sized women and female identified people have to do. So some of those patterns, I think all of the Kashmira patterns that have a top half anyway and have a couple of bodies versions already so you can already use the cup size that's most appropriate for you. That's pretty cool. Yeah, they also have for some of their dresses and I think their jeans and their skirts. They have like an apple shape version and a pear shape. Sure, nice inbuilt. So if you are kind of more apple shaped, you don't have to do a lot of those adjustments already, they're already done for you that there are a couple of really good pattern companies to check out.

S Saskia de Feijter 40:12

Awesome. Lots that I've already learned. And how about because I love wearing jeans, which is a problem,

Z Zoe Edwards 40:23

not a problem. We have an amazing pair of jeans pattern called the Amy's jeans, a m e s, that would be potentially a good place to start.

S Saskia de Feijter 40:35

And how about fabric because that's where I feel it's the problem. It's the least sustainable option in terms of fabrics.

Z Zoe Edwards 40:43

You can sometimes get denim that has got a bit of stretch in it, but it's also made of recycled cotton fibers. So some ways that you can kind of factor in a slightly more sustainable. Yeah. Because if you're choosing a fabric that has the same behavior, and the same weight as another fabric that there'll be interchangeable, you know, so this might be a jeans pattern for 100% Cotton denim, but if 2% cotton twill but it behaves in the same way. It's the same weight that's interchangeable. Yeah,

S Saskia de Feijter 41:16

yeah. Yeah, yeah. And for gathering sustainable fabrics. So the big points that we've made so far is the rights Batson with the rights fabric so you wear it a long time if it is what you need

run is the right person with the right fabric, so you wear it a long time, if it is what you need, and if you wear it a long time, don't get hung up about the quote unquote details because you will be wearing it a lot. But what if I wanted to buy sustainable fabric because for me, I don't mind investing, because the cost per wear, I feel like it's a good thing to invest.

Z Zoe Edwards 41:54

First of all, there is no such thing as sustainable fabric, right? more sustainable. Yes, anything that is like Virgin, anything that has been freshly manufactured is not sustainable. Like you know, the thing is about fabric. There are so many factors that goes into its like the fiber growth, harvesting, manufacture, processing, dyeing, carting, weaving, finishing to its transportations rotation, yeah, to its its whether or not you're biodegrade its lifespan, there are so many factors involved in that there is no way that you can pick one fabric or one fiber that takes every single, the most sustainable way. So you kind of even beyond finding something that is suitable for your pattern or your project and that you want to wear. Beyond that, I think you kind of have to choose what's most important to you, you know, so personally, for me, I avoid polyester, I avoid acrylic by avoid manmade fibers, because for me knowing that they will not biodegrade, knowing that every time I wash them, they will be really releasing microplastics into the water system. For me, that is something that I really dislike. So for me, I no longer I have in the past. But now apart from if I'm buying something with a bit of stretching for wearing ease, I try to avoid that that was my choice. There are some ways that you can make sure that you're taking more of those boxes, for example, if you can find got certified so GOTS certification is a way of making sure you are taking a lot of boxes like it definitely will be organic, like it has to dump that the manufacturers have to jump through so many hoops to prove that it is organic, it's not been contaminated with anything else. Also, what I really like about the gods certification is it actually factors in a lot of the kind of human aspects as well. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So it's your it will guarantee that the workers are working in a kind of safe environment, and I think even be that they have to be paid a certain amount. I can't remember, I can check the details on the website, but it's got that kind of human element as well. So you know, that's kind of fair trade in that sense. There's also they have to prove that there is no chemical runoff into local waterways. So all the water has to be properly processed before it can leave the facility, which I think is really good. So that is one way to make sure that you are taking a lot of boxes, but still, it's grown in one country, it's probably processed in another country, it's probably in another country might have ticked all these boxes, but it's still travelled around the world. Many, many times it's been transported, you know, with fossil fuels, back and forth. So this is why I say there's no such thing as sustainable.

S Saskia de Feijter 44:40

Yes, and swapping and secondhand is also a way of finding it I guess this is same way as with yarn.

Z Zoe Edwards 44:49

Yeah, I mean, what the most stable thing is thing that already exists. Yes, you're new to sewing. You probably don't have your own fabric stash yet but there's a lot of people out there that do so one way of finding fabric that You can feel a bit better about ease by shopping

destash sales, either online on Instagram or eBay or Etsy. If you type in like the kind of fabric you're looking for, and destash find something coming up like that

S Saskia de Feijter 45:16

go into we have marketplace in our community as well.

Z Zoe Edwards 45:19

That's fantastic. I love that there are some places some actual locations do have like in certain groups, or there's some bigger businesses and charities and stuff that also kind of rescue fabric from landfill. And there's fab scrap in Philadelphia and in New York, for example, in the US, I know that there's one in New Zealand. The frustrating thing with that, obviously, is you can't think I want three meters of that. It's it's been cut, you know, say I really want some I need like 10 balls of that, oh, she's only got eight.

S Saskia de Feijter 45:51

Yes, that's true. But you can I think what I, what I tend to do, I don't have a huge fabric stash, I have some, I look at my stash first. And next thing I do is I have an online small business that specializes in organic, more sustainable type of fabric. So I looked there first. And I've taught myself to choose from what's offered in a certain container. So that I now never look at the picture and go, I want exactly that. Because that is very hard to get to when you want to tick the boxes. So I tried to choose from what's offered within my kind of value system. And with these pants that I'm wearing the black corduroy for their pants, it wasn't a sustainable fabric. I got it from my teacher. But I'm going to get a lot of wear out of this. And now I feel a lot better about it. Because there was not a better choice for me at that moment, and even beyond the moment. So thanks a lot for clearing that up. And also thanks a lot for having so many wonderful tips. I think we've gone through most of the questions I have at the moment, like halfway on my sewing journey, my more sustainable and more conscious sewing journey. So thank you so much. If at any time I want more information, I know where you are, and become a returning guest

Z Zoe Edwards 47:23

in my lounge. Yes.

S Saskia de Feijter 47:27

Thanks so much. So

Z Zoe Edwards 47:27

you so welcome. It's been really fun. Thank you for having me.

S

Saskia de Feijter 47:33

So that was super helpful. I think I was on the right track. But it's always amazing to know that you are when you listen to this and you have some questions, you can do different things, you can go to the show notes to [www dot j a hyphen wll.com](http://www.jahyphenwll.com). And there on the right hand side of the show notes, you'll see a button you can click and you can leave a voice message. This is so much easier than writing an email but you can also write an email at [info at Yeah, hyphen goal.com](mailto:info@Yeah.hyphengoal.com). And just ask me or Zoey a question. I'll move them forward to Zoe and who knows we'll do another episode or q&a. Just keep the conversation going and we'll we'll help you figure things out. Don't forget to listen to Zoe's podcast, check your threads and find the information on [check euro thread.com](http://checkeurothread.com) She's also an Instagram and she's very experienced fun and just a lovely, inspiring person. So go and check out her work as well. Thanks a lot for listening to this episode and I hope it was helpful for you. Hi.

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Saskia de Feijter 48:57

Smaller life is the animals completely free way for makers and sellers to learn how to be part of a healthier take on clothes and fashion. Yeah, well offers an online community where they can connect and inspire each other monthly topics with challenges for makers and coaching and support for sellers. We will move the needle for more information go to [J A hyphen w o l.com](http://JAhyphenwoI.com). Yep, oh