

An Introduction: Atwork Project with Ou Ning

My name is Leon Chong and I am currently studying a Masters in Fashion Brand Management at Polimoda. I came here because I want to learn more about the creative process in the fashion industry. I was brought up in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, then moved to Adelaide, South Australia for high school, before ending up in Edinburgh, Scotland to complete my undergraduate degree in law. I am passionate about art and fashion, which gave me an interesting approach to studying law at university. I do not intend to pursue law in the future, but I believe it has shown me a different way to learn and look at something.

I believe that we are all looking for meaning – in what we do, in how we live and in the people we surround ourselves with. I am always drawn to people who are passionate about what they do, regardless of what they do. 'All or nothing' is an ethos I live by, which has been a strength but also a weakness of mine. I often ponder about the purpose of life on earth, why we are here and how we can make our time here matter, at least for ourselves. In the past year, there have been changes in my lifestyle that have come to my attention. I have become a vegetarian, started practicing yoga, and am studying Buddhism. These have been ways I expressed my search for meaning in this life.

I am happy to have been nominated to participate in the Atwork project as I believe it encourages us to think about the way we express ourselves creatively. We are all creators, constantly creating the life we live, every second of the day. I am also fortunate to meet the artist Ou Ning, whose work I shall also be presenting in the Biblioteca Nazionale when I am not at the workshop. The Bishan project is one that encourages a slower life, giving value to what we produce with our hands and an emphasis on a more natural way of living. This is something that I hold true to my heart, as I hope to become more in touch with nature and the earth, to live a life that is natural rather than artificial.

Children today grow up in a world that is so forced, organised and excessive. The emphasis on material goods deters us from reality. We are constantly chasing something rather than enjoying the journey. I believe that the work that Atwork and Lettera27 are doing raises awareness in young adults lives, but also a grander idea as to what and why we are all chasing after? I hope that my participation in this project explores interesting discussions of how we express ourselves creatively and how to make ideas happen! I find a paper and pen my most effective way of creating and imagining for they are, to me, ultimately how I create meaning with my life.

Leon Chong