Textile influence: exploring the role of textiles in the product design process

Textile materials and textile design are a part of countless products in our surroundings, as well as of diverse design fields and industries, with very different material traditions and working methods. Textile materials and industry have undergone many changes during recent decades, in terms of how and where textiles are produced, and what textiles can be and do; in much the same way, the design practices that textiles are involved in have also developed. What these diverse and evolving design contexts in which textiles are involved have in common is that textile materials and textile design decisions somehow meet the rest of the design during a design process.

The aim of this thesis is to add to our understanding of the relationship between textiles and products in the design process, and to explore the roles that textile design plays when designing textile products, the roles they can come to play when textiles become more complex and offer new means of functionality and expressiveness, for example through smart textile technology.