



GREEN CYCLES

16. SYMPOSIUM
CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY IN THE
TEXTILE CYCLE

LOCAL MATERIALS LOCAL BUSINESS INITIATIVES: INTERNATIONAL FUTURES

FRIDAY, 21/11/2025
HYBRID SYMPOSIUM

JOIN THE DIGITAL SYMPOSIUM
AND ON LOCATION: DURBAN TEXTILE AND
LEATHER INCUBATOR, SOUTH AFRICA

09:00 – 14:00 HAMBURG TIME
10:00 – 15:00 DURBAN TIME

HAW
HAMBURG

GREEN CYCLES SYMPOSIUM 2025

DURBAN,
SOUTH AFRICA

Over the last years the conversation around textile sustainability has become ever more urgent and complex. From the material origins of fibers to the global systems of production, distribution, use, and disposal, textiles are at the center of environmental, social, and cultural debates. They hold contradictions: while textiles connect people through craft, clothing, traditions and culture, they now also reflect urgent challenges of overproduction, ecological damage, and ethical dilemmas.

The Green Cycles Symposium has emerged as a think tank and an international platform for dialogue in response to these realities. Initiated by Professors Renata Brink and Patrick Kugler of HAW Hamburg, the symposium has built a tradition of exploring how design, craft, and innovation can intervene and challenge these textile cycles.

This year located in Durban, South Africa (2025) and in cooperation with the Durban University of Technology (DUT), the symposium turns its focus to natural, alternative fibers such as hemp, brambles, and linen. These materials are not only resilient and versatile but also carry deep histories of use across different cultures and geographies. They represent a pathway toward reducing the ecological footprint of textiles, while opening new avenues for design, craft, and industry.

The symposium brings together researchers, designers and entrepreneurs, among others, to examine the entire cycle of natural fibers — from

cultivation and harvesting to design, production, use and recycling. By situating fiber in the wider context of social and ecological systems, we highlight not only material properties but also cultural meaning, community resilience, and economic opportunity.

Beyond material and design considerations, new business modes of organizing textile production and circulation are emerging that point toward alternative economic and social futures. These approaches rethink the relationship between ownership and access, encourage shared use rather than individual accumulation, and foster value creation through community engagement rather than mass production. They center transparency, care, and responsibility in their practices, often operating at the intersection of craft, social inclusion, and circular design.

In a time when “fast fashion” and rapid consumption shorten the life of textiles, this symposium advocates for approaches that slow down, value material knowledge, and embrace repair, reuse, and rethinking. By prioritizing the extension of product life, the creative reuse of existing materials, and the education and integration of marginalized communities into value chains, these models challenge conventional market logic. They illustrate how textile systems can be structured around principles of cooperation, longevity, and cultural continuity—offering tangible pathways toward more just and sustainable economies and more meaningful relationships with our textiles.

PROF. RENATA BRINK MA
Textile Design
HAW Hamburg

PROF. PATRICK KUGLER
Garment Engineering
HAW Hamburg

AGENDA

09⁰⁰ WELCOMING ADDRESS

10⁰⁰ Prof. Dr. Markus Oberthür
Dean Faculty of Design / HAW Hamburg
Durban University of Technology / DUT Durban

MODERATION

Prof. Renata Brink, Textile Design / HAW Hamburg
Prof. Patrick Kugler, Clothing Engineering / HAW Hamburg
Nokwanda Biyase / DUT Durban
Winiswa Mavutha / DUT Durban

MATERIAL

09³⁰ LINEN FIBER INITIATIVES

10³⁰ Prof. Renata Brink MA / HAW Hamburg

09⁵⁰ WORKING WITH BRAMBLES: 10⁵⁰ A SITE-SPECIFIC TEXTILE INTERVENTION

Annette Schmid, Design, BA / HAW Hamburg

BUSINESS MODELS – BEST PRACTICE

10¹⁰ GREEN ROUTE HEMP INDUSTRIES: 11¹⁰ PIONEERING HEMP FIBER AND LOCALLY GROWN, PROCESSED AND MANUFACTURED HEMP TEXTILE INNOVATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Mahlatse Mohlala, Founder and
Managing Director GRHI / South Africa

10⁴⁰ KLEIDEREI (LIBRARY / ARCHIVE)

11⁴⁰ Leoni Lojenburg / Hamburg

11⁰⁰ BRIDGE + TUNNEL

12⁰⁰ Dr. Constanze Klotz / Hamburg

11²⁵ – 12²⁰ BREAK

12¹² – 13²⁰

12²⁰ FRED RICH – UPCYCLING DESIGNS 13²⁰ HANDMADE IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Dinka Fredrich / Cape Town

12⁴⁰ ELPPAG

13⁴⁰ South Africa

13⁰⁰ REWOVEN – TEXTILE RECYCLING

14⁰⁰ South Africa

13²⁰ DTLI INCUBATOR INITIATIVES 14²⁰ AROUND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Poppet Pillay / Durban Textile and
Leather Incubator

13⁴⁰ HUMAN TOUCH: ENVISION THE 14⁴⁰ INVISIBLE – VISUALIZATION OF HANDCRAFT

Juliet Seger-Banks / Berlin

14⁰⁰ PANEL DISCUSSION

15⁰⁰

REGISTRATION

Registration and online participation
is free of charge:



Please register via our website:
www.green-cycles.de/register until
20.11.2025. Please state your University,
organization or company.

CONTACT

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