

Intro Music (00:00)

Ashar (he/him) (00:17)

Hello, hello, it's your host Ashar and I'm back with another episode of the Ecologies in Practice Podcast. Today I'm joined by Pramila Choudhary, a designer and researcher who specializes in sustainability, material culture and circularity. She holds a degree in textile design from the National Institute of Design in Aminabad, India.

For her PhD research, Pramila focuses on exploring the use of sheep wool in arid and semi-arid regions of India, specifically the Western, Deccan, and Himalayan areas. Her investigation encompasses crafts, community, culture, and commerce, while also establishing links and sustainable practices between India and Canada, utilizing sheep wool as a primary material. Hi, Pramila. Thank you so much for joining us today. How are you doing?

Pramila Choudhary (01:01)

Hello, Ashar. Thank you for having me here. And yeah, I'm a little nervous. It's my first podcast. So let's see how it goes. And thank you for the intro.

Ashar (he/him) (01:15)

Yeah, no, I mean, I'm really looking forward to talking with you. So let's get started. Can you talk a little bit more about yourself and your current role or focus?

Pramila Choudhary (01:23)

Yeah, I'm Pramila Choudhary, you already mentioned I grew up in a very small village in Rajasthan. So it was interesting where I... within Rajasthan, which is in Western India and geographically the whole state is so unique that it has a hard desert at the same time they have rivers and mountains. So I grew up in the East side where we had mountains and rivers - basically on a farm and all my summer vacations I spent with my grandmother in the Thar Desert. So it was like a very drastic contrast while growing up and I never knew how that will impact me as like, you know, charting out these different territories of design and craft and whatnot. But it was a really interesting area where I was given a lot of freedom in terms of there was no pressure in terms of, "you have to become this" or, "you have to do this kind of study" or, "you have to excel in certain things" because I was the youngest child at home. So I had all the privilege doing that and both my elder brothers took all that responsibility and that kind of cultivated a lot of free thinking in my mind and thanks to my parents also they never like forced in terms of doing certain things.

So I primarily grew up on a farm with a lot of flora and fauna and just running around water and all summer vacation in the desert. And later after my school... so I've done all my schooling over there till 12th and then I started moving to small cities, to tier one cities, to bigger metros and then different countries. So I kind of have a very wider understanding of the world, I would say in my own perspective, and that really shaped what I'm doing right now and how I started choosing my career choices along the way.

Ashar (he/him) (03:32)

Yeah, that's such an interesting and beautiful backstory. What sparked your interest in textiles in particular and how did your journey into working with them really begin?

Pramila Choudhary (03:42)

Yeah, that's a very interesting question. I often get it. And honestly, a lot of textile was happening around me. So as I said, I used to spend summer vacation with my grandparents. So we come from a farming background. So we used to have camels and sheep and goats and everything that was livestock. And all the afternoon, they will sit, all the women mostly sit and do hand spinning.

So that was my background understanding of textile started from there. But my mother is also like a very avid, I would say, crafter who's into knitting, crocheting, embroidering, stitching, everything like that. And we had a next door neighbor who were tailors. And I used to get those small scraps from them for my dolls' garments. So I used to stitch a lot of things around it.

And when my mom was not around, I used to use her hand sewing machine, which was funny because I end up breaking all the needles all the time. And one fine day she is like, "who's this person breaking these needles?" But she was really kind and, you know, I was really scared that now she got to know. I don't know what is going to happen. But she was very kind. She was like, "Okay, I'll show you how to thread the thread in it" I was like, "My God, this was that easy" So I started from there.

And then she also had this very beautiful hand drawn motif notebook or a big book, which she used to trace for her embroideries. And what I used to do - I don't know how to do embroidery and hold a needle - so I kind of traced them and I cannot use any tracing paper because she will get to know the marks will be there on the pages. So what I used to do just directly, you know, try to trace it with some nib which doesn't work and stuff like that and which kind of poke holes in the paper. So it was another way she got to know that, "Okay, somebody is doing something with my book."

But what I was doing that time was tracing those motifs and of course I had no idea about textile, but I tend to gather a lot of waste materials. So let's say there is a box somebody's throwing, I will collect that. I used to collect literally a lot of materials, which I had no idea why I was doing. So all the free time when I have from school, since my both parents, sorry, my both brothers are like, older than me, 10 years, we have a 10 years gap. So they moved out of the home early and I stayed back so I had the whole room with me and I can... so my playtime was to play with the materials. So I was creating a lot of things unknowingly what is happening with it. So with those motives, I will try to stick like some sort of plan, I will try to paint on it, I will make some collages. I will make cards. And when I'm making all of that, what am I going to do with it? So I used to gift a lot of these things to my friends.

And they are really amazed that what is happening? What are you doing? Why on my birthday I'm getting 10 cards or why after this holiday I'm getting like, you know, so many gifts. But these

are all handmade gifts, which I tend to find joy in making by hand. And that was kind of my playtime. And at the same time, all evenings I used to spend with my father on the farm. So there I'm kind of, you know, taking papers and like, having pencil or rubbing around the trees and making these marks or playing with the leaves and it was just so so much of material around me so it kind of when I say textile it's never a fibre it for me textile is all kinds of things which kind of you touch and feel and they they have like in a tree in a in a a pulp of wood also there is a fibre in it, which I understood when I came to design school, but before that, I had no idea what is the broader category as a textile is because otherwise you always consider yarn or a fibre as a textile. But I was working with a lot of materials and that kind of shaped my idea of working with materials and textiles altogether.

It's a long answer, but I think so... It was important to build this background because many people ask, "What are you doing? How you got...?" Because none of... I'm the first woman from my whole community who went out for the school or the university and we never had fashion or textile as a conventional career. So it was very unusual for everyone that, "What you're doing, do you think you will get some sort of a career out of it?" "Will you get some job out of it?" But literally thanks to my parents and my brothers as well, they never forced me to, "Okay, now you become a doctor or you have to go towards engineering" because that's a very common way of putting young kids into school in India. At least in my surroundings that was the situation. Either you do that or you just study and get married. So these were the two choices. Honestly, I chose the latter because if I keep studying, I can have my own space and own identities. All of these understandings happened later. When I was doing it, it was all kind of like how you do a brainstorming session and you're doing all kinds of things. So I was trying all kinds of things all that time.

Ashar (he/him) (09:35)

Yeah, yeah, it's such an incredibly beautiful story. Thank you so much for sharing. I love how those early childhood memories and experiences have shaped how you see the world now. And yeah, definitely, there's something about a handmade gift that just, you know, it has its own aura. It's, you know, compared to more conventional, you buy something for someone. And yeah, to be the first woman to have a career in fashion textiles from the community, that's also incredible. yeah, I mean, that's amazing. Thank you, thanks for sharing.

Now, you started your career with larger fashion corporations before transitioning to a more sort of creative community centered practice. Can you walk us through that shift and what inspired it?

Pramila Choudhary (10:18)

Yeah, it was amazing to work in that kind of environment. So I was into product development and design. So my role was mainly to have a bridge between a buyer and the team which we had on the ground. And I was working with really big international brands which are based in the US and UK and they have ways of working. They send you these big tech packs around trend forecasts and so many things and then you start working through it. And working with that organization what happened that was also I consider as an institution in my career at least

because they were very free and they were not restricting us that “Okay this is your role and you can only perform within this area”. If you have interest in some other things and you are capable to do it our mentors were really kind enough to open those areas for us.

So imagine a very big large factory and the big fabric is like, it's like coming hot out of the machines. And we were really curious and spending a lot of time on the floor, which was not in my job profile that I have to be on the floor to see that, but out of curiosity, it was the first time. Because what you see in the school when you read about these you make small collections and you make these tech packs, but you don't know how in the real life they will make these big like 10,000 pieces or one lakh t-shirts, how they have been made. So there was a wonderful experience and understanding but at the same time, you know, all my weekends. So this work was based in Ahmedabad, which is in Gujarat. And Ahmedabad is also very rich in handmade textiles. And at the same time, all the... at one time they used to call it the Manchester of India because they had a lot of mills and there is a history around it which is not so good but yeah it was there.

So all my weekends I used to go to this one artisan. At their place they practice a craft called Mata ni Pachedi which is basically Kalamkari. So Kalam Kari - *kalam* would be a pen and *kari* is something you draw with it. So they used to have like lot of... they have to prepare the fabric. It was like a very small workshop and they have to prepare a fabric. They have to draw everything with these natural, they have to prepare those natural dyes. They have to draw with it. So it was more like I used to take these monthly internships. So one month I will work with one artisan just out of curiosity. There is no monetary benefit, nothing. All I was giving is my volunteer hours and they were really kind enough to, you know, open their workshop for you to address all your questions. And the amazing part of that textile process is when they end the textile, they go to a river and they wash fabrics in running waters.

So the whole process of this versus what I was experiencing in the office was there are these two contrasts. And at the same time, we used to have this really I would say a renowned trend forecaster from Italy. They used to come to our studio and work with us for, like, two months. And what they used to get like a trend for, because at that time we didn't have WGSN, all of that. There were a few books that used to come. I'm talking some 15 years ago, like some 2007/8, that's the era. And they used to have these beautiful trend forecasts, which are a mix of printed material and some hand collages and stuff like that. What I used to do as my childhood, I didn't know what I'm ending up to. I was really curious, “how you're making this?” because just working with them for a month, we are sustaining the whole year. Right? And I was very curious that

Okay, one part I understood how the garment has been made. What is the cycle? What are the yarns, materials, everything else? But this part is really amazing. Like, “how you're doing this?” So I was constantly struggling with this question. So I had like these three parallel things going on and I decided to go for my second master's in textile design because I understood that fashion is not enough because fashion is mainly influenced or guided by textiles because if you

have more understanding of textile you can make better garments, you can create appropriate garments wherever you are whichever geographical condition you are.

So I was looking at going out of India because of this exposure so I can go for, like, one year do one of the courses and come back but at the same time I had a mentor, his name is Sharad Mehra, and he's like, "Why you want to go to study textile out of India? The whole world comes to India to study textiles." I was like, "You are right." First of all, that course is only for any year. The Indian course, which I'm looking at the design school I went to eventually, is two and a half or three years, which is a long time. And it's really India's first design school. So they take only, let's say, in our batch, we only had 15 students. So I was like, I'm not sure if I'm able to get into it, you know. It's not like how good or bad you are. They have limited seats. So, I mean, not everybody will be lucky enough to get into it. But he's like, "Let's try for it. If you don't get it, it's all right. You can choose whatever you want." I don't know. I mean, that's how I think we should always have mentors at different stages of our life. What they can see, which we can't see actually.

So I really took his words and he was kind enough to give me a small break with my work hours so I can prepare for this exam. And the interesting thing is, apart from the written exam, they have this interview and this interview is more like a life-changing experience. After that interview, I was like, "If I'm not getting into this school, I'm all right. I experienced something which I never thought I will experience." So there were four people on the panel. There was of course a psychologist apart from him, there are these pioneer textile faculty sitting in front of you and which you, kind of, admire them or listen to them, but you are sitting next to them. So I was carrying that year's my collection of autumn winter swatches that I've created and that whole portfolio I was carrying. But at the same time, other students had so much of portfolio work, which I was so scared sitting out there and waiting for if I'm going to get into it or not.

But constantly they were asking one question in the interview, "What you're doing right now, most of the people after the graduation from this school will aspire to do. So why do you want to come to the school?" I was like, that's interesting how I end up in that space is very organic. I never imagined that I will be in that space. There's another backstory which I won't get into because we have a limited time. But then this is important because I'm really curious how they are making these trends and how they are working. They are imagining something two years ahead of time. So was really curious about that.

And somehow, I don't know what they saw, they took me and this is like a really transforming journey in my life, I would say, started looking into everything around me in a very different light. Whether you are in a village or a big city, it doesn't matter what you're doing. And that school is based on craft studies. So, the modules were such that we tended to go to craft communities. Let's say there is something called craft documentation. So I'm spending a month long time working with these communities, the artisan and the faculty coming together in the classrooms. We had electives where interdisciplinary studies are happening. So it was truly interdisciplinary studies where I'm working with product designers, I'm working with filmmakers, animators, you know. So the school was, I understood why they're taking the smaller batches because it was

really a different world altogether. And it humbles you down in terms of the kind of people you are interacting with. And in my classroom, you won't believe I had... so my coordinator in that time, the tenure when I was there, she kind of called all her best friends as teaching faculties. And the interesting part of this school is we don't have lengthy long courses, we have small modules. So modules are one week, two weeks or if there are design projects, then there are four weeks of, like, module. And we were interacting with India's best of the designers to practitioners to everyone who were coming to the classroom, the people whom I am reading in the books, even artisans for that matter, you know, who are like really renowned and I'm looking at them or reading them in the book. They're sitting next to me and teaching us, you know, giving their precious time.

So it was a very transforming journey. And towards the end, it so happened that there was another school came to... first time there was a MAU and they were giving a presentation. And for my thesis, I had this exchange, which I went to Lucerne in Switzerland. And there is a, they had this big archive of silk fabrics which was only 200 years old and the project called *Silk Memory*, it's already on. So they were all inviting their international partners. So India has these craft practices from more than 2000 years old, right? But this Silk Memory project was archiving something which was only 200 years old. And they were wondering how they are sustaining at the moment.

So all these craft practices - right now also, if you happen to visit or interact with any of the artisans, they are so open to experiment. They are not threatened at all that, "oh my God, this is my work. I'm not going to share with you. You will copy or you will do something." They are so open that they know what their heritage generational practices are as traditionally, but at the same time, they're open to inviting these new experiences. Why? Because traditionally, also geographically, weather and the climate is changing so much. They have this adaptability. There's an example of Ajrakh village, for example. So they were, which is again in Gujarat, and they were situated in another village because of water quality, because the water impacts the indigo and other colors, natural colors, which are coming on their fabrics. But somehow something went wrong with the water and they could not achieve those same traditional colors. So they moved the whole village to another place and they call that village now as Ajkrahpur. Ajrakh is a textile piece, it has like 14 types of steps of like, resist printing and then dyeing in different steps. So it's very like, they are very... in terms of their adaptability to the climate is so much. They will not think twice to experiment, change anything if that is required to sustain that craft.

Again, I'm giving really, really long answers, but I think so... when I'm having this is my second year in Montreal, like I just completed my second year and when I'm having a lot of conversation with young people around me, they're really curious and most of them don't know what we do in other part of the world. And it's very unique in terms of both the worlds come together and we have really unique qualities to exchange. I think that anybody who will be listening, at least they have some context of what we are talking about and from where it is coming from.

Ashar (he/him) (23:25)

Yeah, no, thank you for taking the time to explain all of that. I definitely think it's very unique, but also how passionate you are about the material is really... like, it's infectious. So I just want to sit here and listen to you talk more and more about it. So no, but there are a few very interesting points that you brought up. And I did want to talk a little bit more about one statement that you made and I found that really interesting was when one of your advisors was saying that people come to India to study textile. So my question to you would be what role do you think women in particular, particularly in the context of India play in addressing textile waste and fostering sustainable practices in the field because circularity, craft-based knowledge, traditional materials, I know are core to your work, but also the work of artisans there. So if you could talk a little bit more about that - we'd love to hear about that.

Pramila Choudhary (24:17)

Yeah, of course. That's also one of my core areas in my PhD right now. So I'm looking at sustainability, material culture, craft practices and role, women's role. As you must have seen, I've been referring my grandmother or my mother from the beginning itself. That means they were always... these are the people I would say who are the custodians of these craft knowledges.

Of course, men equally played a role but I will not get into this whole gender idea of it because India is very, very fluid and it was very different. Like, what I saw and experienced in the village and when I came to the cities, it's very different. So what happened after independence? So India is a young country, if you know, after independence, it's just 70 years. So even my school when they were putting that school together, so they were building these institutions specifically to train these young generation. So my mother and my father's generation onwards, people started migrating to the cities to have these office jobs, right? But before that, if I see my own grandmother in that whole village, all the women who stay back, who take care of the farming land, who take care of the livestock, who also takes care of the craft practices, and men will go to army or these kind of works which are happening a little far away. So they come rarely at home during the holidays or the breaks. So the whole economical activity is also run by the women in the villages.

At the same time, when I did my craft documentation, is Himachal Pradesh, the place called Kinnaur, and it is very similar to what I'm doing right now with my textiles. So there also all the women stay back and either young children or some family people will go to the city to study or do these jobs. So women is kind of taking care of or holding this knowledge in their hands. Otherwise, it was difficult for us to, in today's time, have that access to the knowledge.

And right now, also, there is another organization I work with and I call them First Generational Artisan and they're all women. They never stepped out of the home. We started that work in 2018 onwards and it's been like five, six years now. And they learned the craft from the start in terms of we do macramé and hand weaving with banana fiber and cotton yarns. And the way they have taken over the knowledge system. In the beginning, they were not able to talk. They don't know what is happening. They're stepping out of the home first time because they were in these big urban areas and just doing home chores or had no other occupation as such. But

when they started coming here and the lives, what they have changed. So when I say women, what is happening, if you listen to their stories, they will be like, "I now, because I'm coming here, I'm earning my own money. I can send my daughter and son to the school now. I helped them buy the first bike. I helped them doing this. I'm buying these things for these things for myself." So these kind of if you see largely women when they start earning, they're looking into a bigger community upliftment. It's not only me, myself or my well-being, you know?

So I have been seeing a lot of change in this organization. We started with 15 women now. We have literally 700 women in different villages across the Gujarat and different parts of India working actively at the moment within like five, six years. Similarly, there are so many organizations back in India, like I happen to experience because I was working as a design consultant and I could travel to different parts of India. So there was another organization called Avani which is in Uttarakhand. And they had the similar model where all the men were not there because they went out and the nonprofit wanted to save these heritage practices or generate livelihood activities. So they again employed a lot of women from farming to weaving to everything, all kinds of work.

And now they are also first-generation artists, I would say, most of them they have been working past 25 years and they generated a lot of work. So they kind of take care of the natural environment. They revived a lot of practices which were almost vanished. And also they created a lot of job opportunities and example for the new generation that they can stay back in the village and they can still have a dignified work and, you know, work opportunity staying in the village and not migrating to a place where they're treated as unskilled people because their skills are very different than they haven't been to a school, most of them, to have a formal education where they can have these office jobs. So there was a big mismatch, but I feel in India there are a lot of organizations, even I can count right now from coming to industry to, there are so many who are working actively in different pockets of India. And most of them are running with the women, which a major part of it is running from women's knowledge system.

And they are also creating these examples that it is possible to go hand-in-hand with the natural environment and natural material. And if I see a lot of these organizations also working purely with natural materials, natural dyeing, having, let's say, handloom weaving where you have no energy involvement at all most of the time. If they're using other looms, that's a different thing. But many of them are just working with handlooms and handloom - it's so embodied that you just need your body and the machine to work together in harmony.

So I would say women play a really critical and important role in today's time where they hold this sustainable, when we say sustainable as a word and sustainability as a big word which we've been using right now because our bodies, I've been also reading right now for my comms exams and I came across this very interesting saying that women's body are also working in sync with the nature. So our menstrual cycles are in sync with the nature. That's why we are able to adapt natural knowledge and nature-based knowledge or keep it with us forever or in terms of work as a custodian and share that knowledge with our community because we have this unique ability which we kind of don't understand otherwise. I don't know how it is feel like

being a man or having a different body, but I can say about my own self because I tend to go to these small natural ways of doing, like, making a bioenzyme at home, getting these plants, know, growing these plants or having these saplings or try to like look into these kind of natural ways of growing things, which comes naturally to me. I don't have to push myself to learn that knowledge.

So... or maybe that is because of my farming background or unknowingly I've seen or learned that, but yeah, I would say women play a really, really important and critical role right now. The kind of world we are living in, the situation of the world, climatic situation we are going through. So we need to honor them and have them in forefront that they share the knowledge and take the communities further.

Ashar (he/him) (33:00)

Yeah, that's absolutely fascinating. And thank you so much for sharing all the work that's happening. I think we'll include some links to the organizations that you refer to for listeners that are interested in learning more about that.

So, final question to you, I'm really interested in this transition that you were describing, or mismatch between village, big city, but then also the fact that you're from India and then you moved to Canada. So I'm interested to know how you've reconciled the idea of sustainability, craft-based knowledge, traditional materials, because it's different to how I think we see the world in Canada versus how the world is seen in India. So if you could speak a little bit about that, how that's impacted your PhD research. And if you have any advice for individuals or communities that are interested in using textiles in a more sustainable or mindful way, yeah.

Pramila Choudhary (33:53)

Yeah, that's a very interesting question. As I said, as you see that my journey is like in a different... so I've become very comfortable being in different environments now because of these different variety of experiences. And at the same time, when I moved here, why first of all, I'm doing my PhD here. So my, as I said, my own design school where I learned my masters, they're the first design school. So they're the best, for example, in India. And they started PhD just five years ago. So there are not many design-oriented PhDs happening back in India.

And I was also interested to, now that I have this design background and I've worked in industry in various capacities to implement that knowledge, I wanted to incorporate knowledge which is around geography and environmental studies because it's a good mix finally in terms of where I'm looking at the future. So when I was looking at various universities, I've already had Europe as experience during my master thesis. So I was curious about North America and I was following a few artists from Concordia and their work and I kind of really got fascinated. I was like, maybe this is the school which is having a lot of textile based work happening. So I ended up coming here.

At the same time when I came here, I was really curious because you see in India, a lot of my experience was involved into a lot of these community-based organization or larger

organization, or even I was working with craft-based organization who are making products for the bigger brands, let's say West Elm or (unknown), these kinds of brands. So, I could see the potential of these handmade local craft made in India, but having a world exposure, world implementation of that knowledge. So that was one.

And other thing, when I came here, I was really curious and I came across this book. It's called *Sheep, Shepherd and Land*. It's written by Anna Hunter and I was really, that book was just launched that time and I was really curious and I reached out to them that, "okay I want to do an internship with you and I'm very curious what is happening in Canada and textiles" and honestly that was my best experience. It was in 2023 summer so we hop on a call and I find another person her name is Kristelle and they're two friends basically. And they also had a similar experience like me living in cities and all of that. And now they move back to the farms and they are doing their kids as a homeschooling. And why they are doing the farming is again to having these experiences of climate change and whatnot we are talking about at the moment. And they are sheep farms.

So what that book is about, they covered 12 farms across Canada, different provinces and they covered 12 stories. So I was curious that, "Okay, what is happening? Can I come to your farm and do some internships?" So they're like, "If you see the book, we are two friends and we wrote the book together." So one is a photographer and one is the person who's doing the documentation. And one is an artist and one has been working with this development sector sort of a work, but they had a different, multiple kinds of experiences they already had.

It was in Manitoba. So I was like, "Okay, fine. I don't know where is Manitoba. I just landed to Montréal. But it sounds exciting to farm to sheep farm in summer. Why not?" And they're like, "There will be a bicycle for you to go to both the farms and one farm will take care of your lodging, boarding and one farm..." So both the farm have sheep and one farm has specifically natural dying. They growing natural dying and harvesting that and they have a mini-mill as well and the other farm had this needle felting beautiful studio so they are creating textiles.

So it was like something happened to me or maybe they say you take chances and it comes to you and it was like everything... it was like a crash course of textiles in Canada through them learning with them firsthand and beautiful people and on the farm what is happening a lot of workshops are been taken care and there are lot of interactions happening within those farms. So I've been meeting a lot of people during my stay, which was only one month and I created a lot of textile on the loom, I worked with natural materials, I've dyed a lot of things. It was a really fascinating experience. So I would say, be it Canada, India or anywhere in the world. Again, here, if you see the women who are the ones who are taking charge of this revival which is happening here in Canada around sheep wool or environmental practices. I feel everywhere, somewhere we all share the knowledge system. And it is so fascinating to me that we all... right now we have this great connectivity to travel anywhere and connect through the internet, you know?

Earlier days, everybody was isolated in their own spaces wherever they were living but they all were practicing exactly the same way of making which is so fascinating. I was like, "How you know that these are the tool you need to use to, you know, spin the yarn - to weave?" I mean maybe the types of loom is different somebody's using let's say loin loom or the backstrap loom or the pit loom or a hand loom or whatever, that is what is being given to them and they have been exposed to different of course, invaders and lot of historical influence as well. But I feel it is really fascinating that all of us, as a human race, is connected through this textile thread, which is a first experience as a baby is born. The textile is the one thing which you are wrapped around, right? So that is your first material experience when you are born.

So I feel like coming to... choosing Montreal specifically, it was a great idea to come here because it has a great, the university of course has a lot of textile related work. Also at the same time, I'm able to work around gender studies and environmental studies, which is so new to me. I never did it in my life. Although I worked directly with such big larger group of people, but I never took these kinds of studies before. So it is making a lot of sense at the moment.

And at the same time, I came across a lot of people on school or apart from school where I was seeking like basically when I moved here, I was seeking a community where I find these like-minded people. And the city is having a lot of work going on right now. And most of the work is done by young people, which is fascinating. There is an organization called Growing Arc. So we met during this FibreShed meeting first time. Her name is Nadia and me and Nadia connected once and she has this organization which is purely made for young people that you experience how the textile have been made.

So they literally make all the... like they take the common public gardens they make these natural dying gardens over there. So people are directly involved in the making and the touching and feeling of the materials. So that your knowledge of what is synthetic or fossil fuel based material versus the natural material and how you can distinguish between them is very different because I can say that, "Oh my God, why these petroleum fabrics are there and they're spoiling the world." But if we are not doing these smaller solutions within our communities and we are not building these communities, it is never ending situation, right? If you and me are aware of these alternatives or these other practices and we know the benefit of it, then only we can implement it like in our daily lives also, for example, right? So I don't know if it has answered your question or not, but I feel I try to put a lot of things within this last question.

Ashar (he/him) (42:54)

No, no, definitely. You've answered it so well. That was so beautifully worded. And I'm wishing you all the best with your future projects. It seems like you've already been involved in so many lovely, rich experiences. But yeah, I'm wishing you all the best. Unfortunately, our time has come to a close but it's been an absolute pleasure being in conversation with you today, Pramila. Thank you so much for your insights, for sharing your experiences, your journey, your stories. The immense knowledge and passion for the work that you do is definitely... it flows through your words. And I really, really appreciate that. And I think just everything that you've described here today is such a welcome addition to the conversations that we've had this

season. So I really, really appreciate that from the bottom of my heart. And thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us today. Yeah, yeah, thank you.

Pramila Choudhary (43:51)

No, thank you so much for reaching out and initiating the whole conversation. Like, I didn't know putting one... because in Concordia, we also have different clusters and we're part of it. So we don't know where all our profiles are and who's seeing it. So I'm so glad that it is really helpful and reaching out, connecting with both of you was fantastic. I mean, you're doing a wonderful job and I'm looking forward to all the other podcasts on this series.

Music (44:18)

Ashar Mobeen (he/him) (44:25)

Ecologies in Practice is hosted by Ashar Mobeen and produced by editors Elysia French and Amanda White, with music and audio editing by Adam Wiebe. This season was made possible through the generous support of the Sustainability Impact Fund at Western University, in collaboration with Brock University and the Centre for Sustainable Curating. We'd love to hear from you. Visit our website at ecologiesinpractice.ca to get in touch. There, you'll find details about each episode, transcripts, and further information about our guests and links to relevant projects and organizations. The book *Ecologies and Practice in Environmentally Engaged Arts in Canada* is now available through Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Outro Music (45:02)