



Image from : Fitchet,L (2014) *Love Leanne Clothing*. Available at:
<https://www.loveleanneclothing.com/> [16 April 2024]

Placement at Love Leanne Clothing from 25th March to 5th April 2024.



- Love Leanne Clothing is a small costumier/ couture business, established in 2014.
- Originally, this placement was based in a studio in the Custard Factory in Birmingham but moved to the Jewellery Quarter over the Easter Weekend of my placement.
- LLC make made-to-order evening wear, bespoke women's wear (including prom and wedding dresses) and theatrical/ historical costumes (and other performance wear).

- Target audience- theatre companies, and alternative clothing wearers, not limited to the female form.
- The company is made up of a “pool of freelance local artists, designers, models and garment makers” (LLC, 2024).
- The main rivals/ competitors – larger, better-known costume and garment making companies,

Photographs are examples of Leanne's work from :
 Fitchet,L (2014) *Love Leanne Clothing*. Available at:
<https://www.loveleanneclothing.com/> [14 April
 2024





Love Leanne Clothing (2024) Starkey Peter Pan The Musical – Old Rep Theatre. Instagram, 19 January. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C2SodvBLjuD/?igsh=MTVodTl1enhzYXVpZg==> [accessed 29 March 2024]

While on this placement, I was given the task of recreating one of Leanne's existing corsets that would later be used for advertising a new colour of corset for the company's Etsy Page. This is the first time I have ever made a corset and I have learnt a lot about the construction of such a garment (*please see Day to day journal upload for full account*).

I was able to apply technical skills I already have to my role as Studio Assistant, these included (but not limited to):

- Machine sewing
- Hand sewing
- Pressing/ ironing
- Pattern cutting

These are basic but essential skills for any job in the costume/ fashion making industry, but it was useful for Leanne that I already had this knowledge as I am the first university student she's had for a work placement (other placement students being college students, where she has had to teach them these basics before they could begin).

Images top to bottom, left to right:

- Production photo from Peter Pan at the Old Rep Theatre (photo from LLC Instagram page),
- Corset from Peter Pan that I had to replicate in Pink
- Studio in the custard factory.



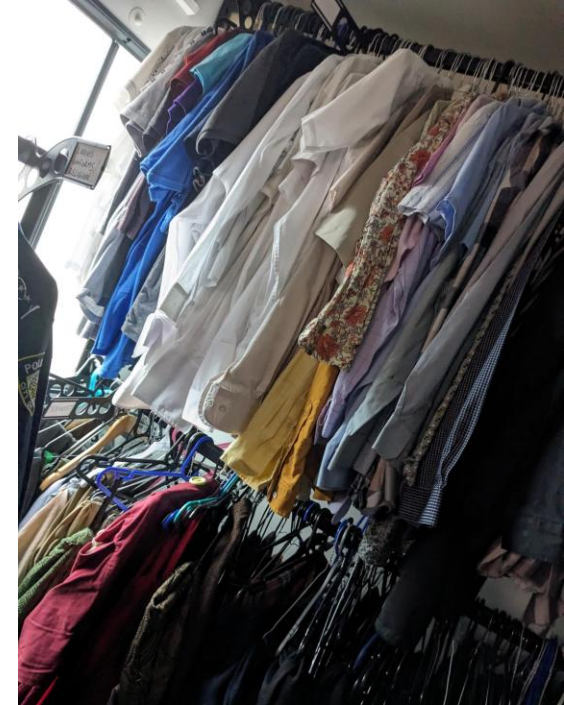
A visit to BOA Stage and Screen College:

- A combination of communication styles were used when initiating contact with the company, such as text messages and email. Once the placement started this changed more to verbal communication, allowing ideas and discussions to take place, as well as any queries and issues to be raised. Verbal and text communication was particularly important when last-minute changes to location were made, for example when we went to BOA.
- Leanne works here two days a week and while the college was on half term, we organised their new costume storage.
- I was able to apply leadership skills I already have from working in theatre wardrobe departments and apply it to how we organised the costumes here.
- This meant I could guide the other two employees and advise on whether costumes could be recycled or beyond saving, which meant that Leanne didn't have to stop every 5 minutes to check.
- Teamwork was also used here because we set up a sorting system which meant that the process went much faster than if it had been just one or two of us.

Photos top to bottom, left to right:

- Inside of the costume storage unit

- Two illustrations I did, inspired by a wall and clock in the Jewellery Quarter after Leanne showed me the new studio after we finished at BOA



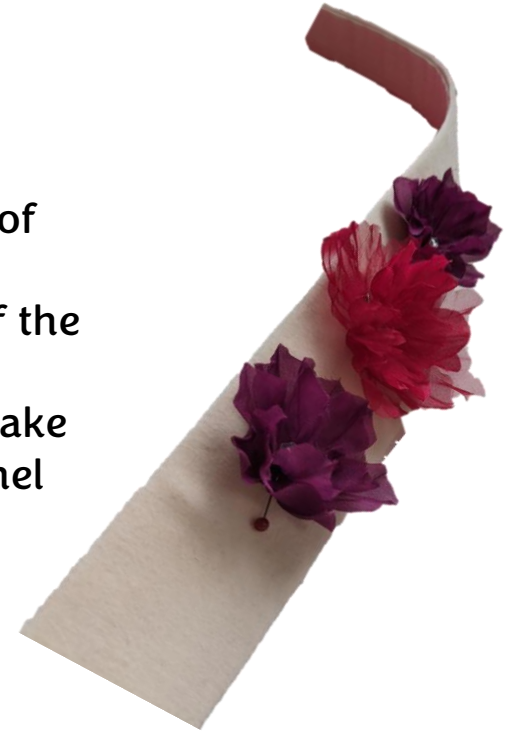


While on the placement I also got to work on a live project.

I had the incredible opportunity to work on a wedding dress for one of Leanne's clients.

I was given the task of making the silk flowers (*left*) and I finished off the belt (*right*), using Leanne's preferred way of doing a slip stitch.

This was a great learning opportunity as I was able to learn how to make the flowers using the same techniques as the Fashion Company Chanel would make theirs! Although this is a specialist technique, this is something I would love to take forward and try again, maybe with different shapes.



The wedding dress (*left*) is a colourful version of (what I would call) Leanne's staple dress – The black dress was featured at the Midlands Fashion Awards at the CBSO centre in 2018 (*right*), so it was cool to be able to see the dress in person and work on a wedding dress that is in a similar style to it.

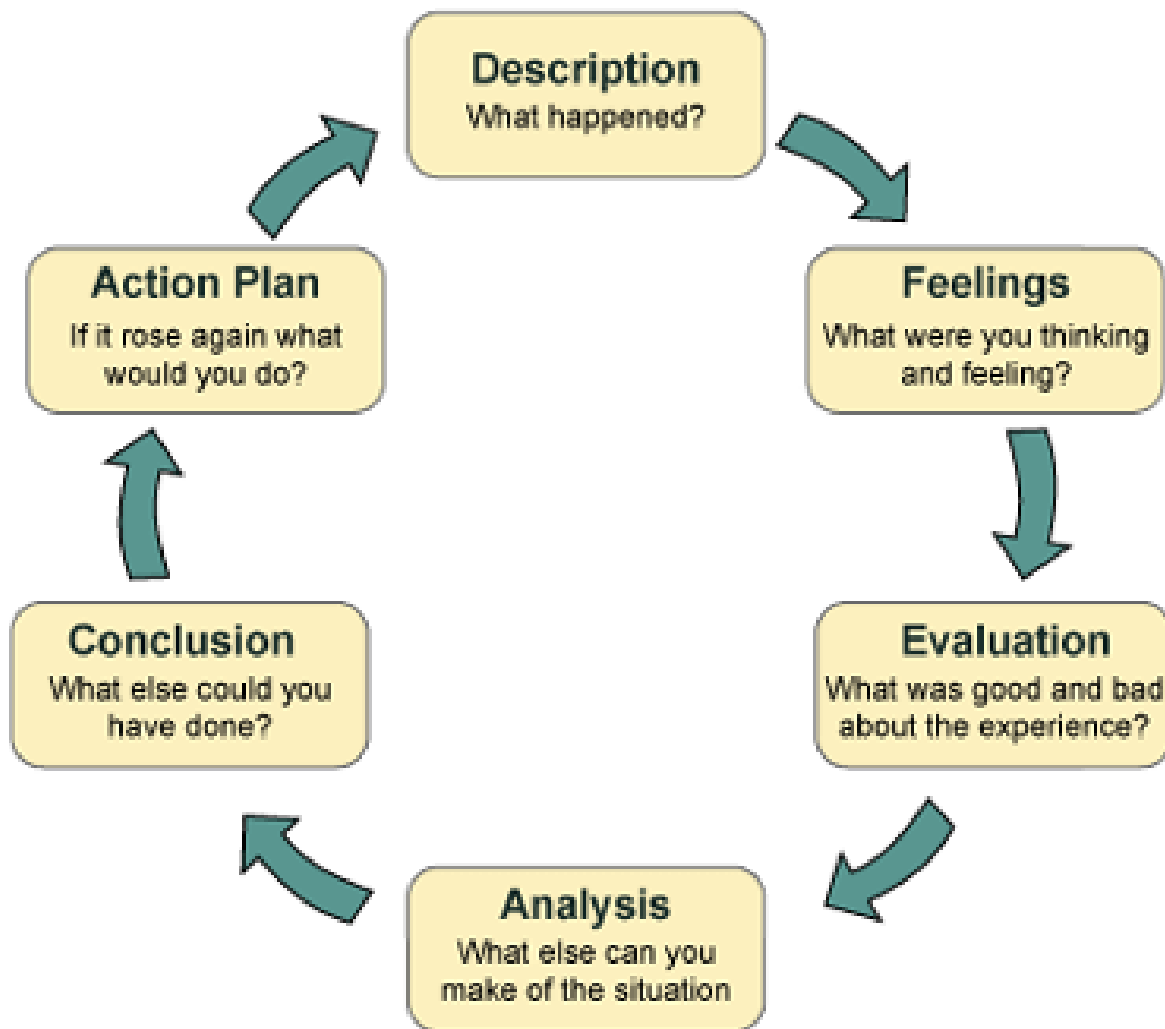


Photos of the finished corset and styling options.



(for further styling exploration, please see Day to Day Journal Upload).

Gibbs Reflective Cycle



I have used Gibbs reflective cycle to review the only error that arose while on this placement.

Description – Whilst doing the bias binding on the corset, I top stitched the binding rather than stitching in the ditch, as Leanne would have preferred

Feelings – At the time I felt confident doing the binding without support, however, looking back, I should have double-checked I was completing the binding as Leanne would have preferred.

Evaluation – The good about this experience was it enabled me to reflect and be more confident in asking for clarification before proceeding. The bad about this experience is that if Leanne wanted to sell the corset, she would have to undertake further adjustments to correct the binding to be up to the same standard as her other couture corsets. However, Leanne said that for a theatrical performance, the corset would be perfect.



Analysis – I was unaware that what I was doing was not as required, and I didn't realise there were so many variations of applying binding. But I now know that there are multiple ways of doing things, there is rarely just one way to do something so I will be sure always to clarify the way any future bosses want things to be done.

Conclusion – I have learnt that there are various ways of applying binding, some of which are specific to the type of garment being made.

Action Plan – If the situation arose again – I know that I would need to check what binding needs to be completed, and perhaps be more confident in gaining clarification at the start. From this newfound knowledge, I have been able to apply it to the Elmhurst costume to bind the foam top. Different people have different ways of doing the binding, so it is important to double-check with the company manager as to their preferred style or method.

My chosen artefact is the Employer Testimonial.

- I was pleasantly surprised when Leanne said my “technical making skills were very advanced”, and it was great to have such positive feedback from an industry professional.
- Upon reflection, I know that I need to be more confident in my abilities, and I will do this by continuing to practice skills and techniques to ensure they are the best they can be.

This is a sector of the industry that I am considering after graduation. I have no specific company in mind for after graduation, however, Leanne has offered me future work. I would be more than happy to accept work anywhere I can put my creativity to work, bounce ideas and learn from other creatives in the industry. Having an open mind about work opportunities is incredibly important in this industry.

“Amber’s passion for the costume industry is a breath of fresh air for this generation. Her technical making skills were very advanced and shows she has been building these skills for a long time. Every task she was set, she did with enthusiasm and a happy attitude. She’s pleasant to work with and always had a good story to tell. She’s already part of the industry and as soon as she graduated, she will go far. Having spoken to Amber about her current workload, it’s important to remember that rest is essential and not to take on too much at once. I will be more than happy to offer Amber work in the future.”

Quotation taken from the Employer Testimonial, for full testimonial, please see day-to-day journal upload.

Planning to enhance future employment:

Current Employment:

- I have started to put things into place to enhance my employability in the future. I have done this by having conversations with my boss (the wardrobe supervisor) at the Belgrade Theatre, about doing more on the costume-making side.

CV:

- I will do some background reading and research on CV templates and attempt a basic draft using this key information
- I will then speak to the ADM careers team about how to perfect my CV, as I do need to condense it down from 5 pages for future employers (This work placement did not ask me for a CV. Instead, we spoke face to face about experiences).

Networking:

- I will continue to network with other creatives- I am always looking for networking opportunities, and the next one will be on Friday 10th May, when I will be attending a networking event at Bristol University, organised by the Costume Society.
- I have also booked onto a virtual talk on the 15th May with costumer Amanda Hall where she will talk about her new book "Making Tutus" and her career from the West End, haute couture and ballet costumes at the Royal Ballet

What will success look like?

- For me, success looks like having an open mind and being willing to try new things, getting involved with any opportunities that may arise, and always learning- there's never just one way to do things and to push myself out of my comfort zone to learn new techniques etc, and to learn from mistakes. By applying this to every opportunity that I am given, I am sure I will find success in the industry.

