

[DOLLY PARTON, "COAT OF MANY COLORS"] Mama sewed the rags together, sewing every piece with love

She made my coat of many colors that I was so proud of

NINA MOINI: It's one of my favorites. This song, "Coat of Many Colors" by Dolly Parton, is a tribute to the clothing made at home with whatever fabrics on hand. And it captures the spirit of an event happening in Minneapolis right now. Textile Center opened its third annual slow fashion sale this morning. Director of Operations Erin Husted joins me now to talk about the event, which runs through Saturday. Thanks for being with us, Erin.

ERIN HUSTED: Thank you so much for having me, Nina.

NINA MOINI: I'm sure you're busy right now, in the middle of all the action, tribute so thanks for taking the time to talk with us. Could you talk about a little bit-- this is day one today? Or how's it going there at the Textile Center this morning?

ERIN HUSTED: It is going great. We actually had a small line this morning before we opened, which is always a good sign. And it has been steady and busy and so much fun.

NINA MOINI: So for folks who may not be as familiar with textiles, or they're not thinking so much about fashion, what do you describe as slow fashion? What does that mean, and why is it so attractive to so many people?

ERIN HUSTED: So slow fashion is really how fashion originated. Fashion is handmade. Every garment is handmade. Actually, even in the fast fashion industry, it's handmade. But slow fashion is the idea that we should really be caring for our clothes, that our clothes can last a whole lot longer than one season or one trend. And we can provide that care, take mending classes, learn how to mend our clothing and keep it in our cycle for a really long time.

And so we accepted donations from our community of handmade goods, handmade garments from people who have made things for themselves, made things for friends or family, and that people just maybe aren't using anymore. They're not picking it up. It doesn't fit their body anymore.

So they can bring it here and donate it. And then we price it and turn it around and sell it back to the community, to people that really appreciate the time and effort that went into making the pieces. And it's basically taking it from one home and giving it to another home. And it's a really fun matchmaking experience.

NINA MOINI: That's so cool. I feel like, in recent years, people have become more interested in making clothes or altering clothes. It seems like individualism and having a unique piece means a lot nowadays. Have you noticed that?

ERIN HUSTED: Absolutely. And every single piece at our sale is unique. There is not one thing that's like anything else.

NINA MOINI: So cool.

ERIN HUSTED: It's so cool. And also, it's just such fun, people watching, because everyone coming in has amazing style. Yeah. It's very inspiring.

NINA MOINI: So give us an example or some examples of the types of stuff that people have donated. You mentioned things that are not really-- don't have around anymore. Is it like different types of-- could it be cloths, or could it be just random things? What could it be?

ERIN HUSTED: So it's all garments. But we have a woman who was an incredible weaver and had woven all of her own fabric and then sewn it into garments. So these pieces took hours and hours to make, and they're stunning. And she donated them to us. It was so generous. We have such a generous and creative community here.

NINA MOINI: And so this is the third year in a row that you've had this event. Why did you decide it was kind of a necessary thing to have at this time?

ERIN HUSTED: I think, to your point, people are becoming more and more interested in how they can combat that fast fashion idea, that idea that we have to turn over our closets every season, and really are craving things that are well made, craving things that are art. Clothing is the fiber art we all touch. It's the fiber art that every single person engages with.

And people want to be thoughtful about it. And so we've really seen an incredible response to this sale, because I think it really does speak to that idea that we can put more thought behind what we get dressed in every day.

NINA MOINI: Yeah. There's a lot of waste that occurs too, with people turning things over. But this is something I thought was neat on the website. I saw that this year, there's a tailor on site. Because I bet a lot of people are thinking, what if I go, and nothing fits me? Then I have to go get it altered. Well, sounds like you thought of that this year.

ERIN HUSTED: We sure did. Abbie Kenyon is joining us this year. She's already-- I've seen her back there, fitting things to people. It's really exciting to have someone that knows, hey, I can make this work for you, for your body. And it's something, again, I think we all crave. It's really nice to be able to put something on and have it just fit, and you don't think about it again.

NINA MOINI: And as this kind of event grows year after year, are you seeing-- I'm just curious-- kids' clothes? Are you seeing-- grandma made me this, and I'm bringing it in now? [LAUGHS] What are you seeing in the range?

ERIN HUSTED: Really beautiful hand-knit pieces for infants this year. And then it really does-- it varies. One year, we got-- let's see. I think it was last year. We got a bunch of suits someone had made for her husband. And he'd retired, and he wasn't wearing them anymore-- but all these beautiful handmade suits. It was incredible. This year, no suits. So who knows? Every year is different.

NINA MOINI: What's your advice to people who may be interested in learning to make or even mend their clothes, but they don't know where to start.

ERIN HUSTED: That is a great question. So Textile Center actually offers classes. So you can go to our website and learn about the different classes we offer. I know this fall, we will have a class that we call Sewing for the Terrified. So it's our beginner-level sewing class. I plan to take it soon, because I am a knitter, not a sewer. But I'm ready to learn.

We also are offering some mending classes this summer and this fall. I'm teaching people how to mend. There's a variety of ways you can go about mending. You can overdyed something to cover a stain, or you can learn how to embroider or darning. So there's lots of different techniques. So if you're uncomfortable with holding a needle, maybe block printing is the way for you to do it. And we offer classes on all those different techniques and variety of ways to go about mending and getting more involved with your wardrobe.

NINA MOINI: Yeah. Tell us again just the hours and how people can get involved if they want to be a part of this.

ERIN HUSTED: Yeah. So textilecentermn.org is our website. And you can find all the information there. We are open Tuesday through Thursday, 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and Friday to Saturday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. We have exhibits that you can come see. They're free and open to the public. And then you can always sign up for classes as well.

NINA MOINI: All right. I wonder too, just before we have to go, are you working on any fabric art or any projects at home right now?

ERIN HUSTED: Great question. So I have three kids and two small boys, who keep me incredibly busy, but I do knit when I can. And so right now, I'm knitting a vest that I had a goal of getting done in time for this event. It did not happen, but that's OK. I've been working on it while I've been helping people with sales and stuff, so it's a lot of fun.

NINA MOINI: I love that. It's never too late to pick up something new or get started on something, and even if you don't finish it on time. [LAUGHS]

ERIN HUSTED: That's exactly right. That's exactly right.

NINA MOINI: All right, Erin. Thank you so much for stopping by *Minnesota Now* and telling us all about this. We wish you well. Have a great weekend. Good luck with all the events.

ERIN HUSTED: Thank you so much. Thanks again for your time, Nina.

NINA MOINI: Thank you. That's Erin Husted, director of operations at Textile Center in Minneapolis, again, having its third annual Slow Fashion Sale that began this morning and is running through Saturday.