

What has been forgotten

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Mentor Statement

The purpose of this project was for students to engage in design scholarship and creative problem-solving by designing wearable art to serve as a form of communication (Tonchi, 2018). One objective was to create awareness about real-world problems within the context of a unique design aesthetic. An additional goal was to research, explore and incorporate a range of sustainable design processes to add value and meaning (Fletcher & Grose, 2012). The project included identifying a problem and developing an artist statement that succinctly conveyed the chosen critical issue, and then designing and constructing a wearable art accessory. The research process encourages critical thinking and creative problem solving that is described later in the abstract (Wong & Siu, 2012). Next, a companion garment was constructed to complement the accessory and highlight the intended message for the purpose of exhibition. My role as experimental apparel design instructor is to mentor students to become proficient problem solvers while aiding in the development of their personal design aesthetic through textile sampling, apparel design exploration, documentation, and reflection. This ensemble stood out as a worthy submission due to the compelling message regarding sustainability that is evident in the artist statement and visible in both pieces. This ensemble was thoughtfully and meticulously executed, conveys an important message about sustainability and is also a viable outfit suitable for runway and or exhibition.

Designer Statement

What has been forgotten, highlights the potential of circular fashion in our current state while also drawing attention to the underlying issue of textile waste that stems from a much larger and global issue—overconsumption (Pucker, 2022). Fueled by the desire to maximize, overconsumption inevitably produces an endless amount of unnecessary waste. Therefore, the future of sustainable fashion does not solely lie within the circularity of textiles, nor in upcycling and recycling tactics. A sustainable fashion industry is only possible through a larger shift in mindset: one that urges conscious consumerism and recognizes the vital relationship between our natural world and our artistic world. One that seeks to restore the meaning of fashion as the physical continuity of thought, without exploiting the very resource that allows us to create. The purpose of my piece is to serve as an example of reusing and recycling in our current state, but also urges one to consider long term effects of reducing consumption. It is my desire to communicate through this project, the importance of a less is more mindset, while inspiring the continuation of innovation and creativity.

Through repurposing textile sampling, I chose to lean into the idea of slow fashion. Using fabric remnants from previous design work, the manipulation of these scraps is inspired by various patterns found in nature. Not only does this offer a reimagined way of designing—it also offers a physical manifestation of the relationship between textile waste and the natural environment. My accessory was largely focused on textural effects, as is evident in the recurring yo-yo motif. The relationship between the accessory and the body aims to add to this visual interest by interacting

at different points. Being revealing at some points, and concealing at others, creates a sense of intentional harmony. Abstractly, I believe this relationship reflects that of humans with the environment. The ways in which we interact with the world can often enhance or hinder our experiences. Therefore, it is necessary to find balance in our actions—much like the balance created within my piece.

The wearable art accessory is stitched together entirely by hand. This process reflects the idea of a slow fashion cycle while also minimizing energy output. Typically, when creating fabric yo-yos, the fabric is cut into circles to create a symmetrical motif. However, I wanted to minimize waste completely and was also intrigued by the organic yo-yo shapes created with irregular scraps. I chose fabric remnants that told a cohesive color story, reflecting that of the natural environment. Following traditional yo-yo making, I sewed a running stitch along the edges of each scrap and gathered the fabric to create a central puckering effect (Wolfe, 1996). After I had sewn the fabric yo-yos, I began to stitch them together. The method in which I attached each piece was inspired by traditional Sashiko & Boro stitching. This process of Japanese needlework, originated in the early 1600s as a way to mend and add strength to workers garments (Hayes, 2019). I was inspired by the slow process of this technique as well as its intention to extend the life of various textiles.

The garment beneath focuses on subtle modularity through manipulatable features. Adjustable ties throughout the bodice allow the wearer to alter the size, fit and silhouette (Fletcher & Grose 2012). The front and back of the bodice are also interchangeable, offering multiple styles depending on the wearer. I originally created a dress that incorporated removable skirt tiers to create versatility. I wanted to use a variety of materials that reflected those in the neckpiece, but that also added to the impact of texture. The piece on its own was aesthetically pleasing, however when paired with the accessory, the colors seemed too similar. The proportions felt slightly heavy and ultimately took away from the accessory. After discussing with my professor, I decided to simplify the color and design of the garment, while still holding true to my original message. Thus, I finally chose to incorporate a single color from my neckpiece into the bodice to create a sense of cohesion. I maintained my idea of modularity in the blouse and the skirt design through aspects of adjustability and size inclusivity. I believe the decision to change the coloration and silhouette of the garment ultimately strengthened my piece by adding cohesion and showcasing the accessory as the focal point.

Throughout the creation process, it was important for me to stay true to my own design aesthetics and values, while still pushing newness and innovation. As a wearable art accessory, it is both versatile within many settings and encourages a deeper contemplation about sustainable practices. I believe this design speaks to my intended message by calling attention to the underlying issues of overconsumption while offering new ideas of what sustainability can be. My own aesthetic is evident in the organic form of the neckpiece as well as in the color story that is created. Together, the visual nature of this piece and the message behind it represents and elevates my intentions as a sustainable designer.



Figure 1. Front View



Figure 2. Back View



Figure 3. Alternate View



Figure 4. Detail View

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