



Vivid Punk

Victoria Sales, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Mentor: Haeun (Grace) Bang, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Keywords: Upcycle, Punk, Do-It-Yourself (DIY), Freedom

Mentor Statement: This design was created as an outcome of a final design project in an undergraduate portfolio development course. The purpose of the project was to find an old, shabby, and useless material or product that the student had kept for a while but no longer use and recreate that in a creative way through upcycling. Students had to suggest 2 design ideas with design boards including illustrations and technical flats created by Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. One of these design ideas was selected and the actual product were created as a result. As a design mentor, I introduced various design approaches of upcycling fashion and provided feedbacks in every step. The reason why I decided to sponsor her work is that her outcome meets the need of successful upcycled product—functionality, aesthetics and sustainability. Also, her work does not only have a high quality, but also has a great story behind it that express her unique identity.

Statement of Purpose: Growing up, I enjoyed alternative clothing; from simple statement pieces to avant-garde streetwear, it all captivated me. Raised in a strict household, though, I had little or no opportunity to express myself verbally or aesthetically. In middle school a friend gave me a pair of Tripp pants she had outgrown. They were the epitome of cool. When I put on the black stretch denim, with its studs, zippers, and iconic waist chain, I felt invincible. After dressing in my darkest clothing, I was ready to leave for school. My mother was waiting at the door; she made me change then cut up and threw away those precious Tripp pants. Ever since then, alternative styles, especially the Tripp brand, have symbolized rebellion and freedom. When I started to make my own way in the world, buying a new pair of Tripp pants was a tangible expression of independence – my rebel flag. I wore those pants until they didn't fit, then retired them to a frame on my wall. When asked to create an upcycled product with sustainability in mind, I knew it was time to breathe new life into my Tripp pants.

Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact: The mood and aesthetic of this design is “punk”. Punk can be defined with the notion of “Do-It-Yourself” (DIY) style (Dunn, 2016). Multiple aesthetics can express punk, including dress, make-up and hairstyles. There are various iterations of “punk” or “punk style”, but certain distinctive pieces emerged in its earliest incarnations, such as plaid bondage pants, black leather jackets, and vivid-colored Mohawk haircuts (DeLong & Sklar, 2012). Originally, my Tripp pants were neon yellow superimposed with green plaid. To keep the plaid, but make it more subtle, pieces of the

pants were paired with black scrap fabric from a previous project to reduce on waste. Adding gold studs on the shoulders and an exposed zipper on the chest, achieved my goal. To continue the theme, a pair of biker shorts was created out of old band t-shirts. This brought the look full circle as the shorts were studded along the side seams, and two exposed zippers were added for visual interest.

Process, Technique, and Execution: When redesigning the pants, I wanted to make something distinct from the original product. This proved to be a challenge as they were skinny jeans made from a non-stretch denim, with multiple surface details. After trying several design ideas I decided to make a vest (Figures 1 & 2). The pants would be used as the main fabric, along with contrasting pieces that did not look out of place. The pants' back pockets had an eye-catching lightning bolt design detail, so I recycled them into front pockets for the vest. The pants had skull-shaped rivets along the front pockets, so I had to educate myself before reusing them. This project was my first experience with rivets; it was a challenge to learn to detach and affix them without damaging them. The biker shorts were created out of two old band t-shirts. The shorts were designed to have studs along the side panels, something I had done in previous projects. This meant attaching them as flat as possible to ensure the studs were comfortable along the body. Creating the biker shorts was a great opportunity for me to improve my design skills. For the working pattern, a shorts pattern and six mock-ups were completed. One challenge was splicing the fabric to maximize the finite amount of material.



Figure 1. The Original Tripp Pants



Figure 2. Design Board

Cohesion: These pieces embody punk style and put upcycling in the spotlight. Both vest and biker shorts include upcycled pieces, along with studs and exposed zippers as design details. Utilizing as much original material as possible, and using the same design and construction techniques for both, further connects the pieces stylistically.

Originality and Innovation: The vest and biker shorts designs are ones I had long wanted to explore. They were upcycled from unexpected materials with creative pattern making. While designing, searches on how to redesign skinny jeans as a top, and old t-shirts as shorts, did not yield relevant information. Given the lack of resources, I had to conceptualize solutions while emphasizing punk style since,

“creativity is intended as an antidote to the perceived loss of individuality that punks claimed accompanied mass society” (Häberlen, Keck-Szajbel & Mahoney, 2018, p. 244). The clothing used in this project holds a special place in my heart. My designs honor and celebrate the independence they represent.

References

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