



Re. Doll Haus XY

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Design Mentor Statement

This look was created as a part of the menswear course for the annual fashion show. The group collection theme was developed by the students in the course. My mentorship process was used to deliver knowledge and technical skills, provide emotional support, and develop trustworthy relationships with students. The student began gathering her inspiration, followed by creating initial sketches, selecting fabrics, and finalizing further design elements. During the process, I guided her to explore visual sources, such as cultural and historical events, articles, and design elements for the group theme. Furthermore, I provided constructive feedback on each process, including advising the appropriate finishing methods during the muslin samplings and live-model fittings. While the student was developing the garments, she faced technical challenges and pressures. To alleviate the situation, I was available for any advice and support she may have needed. As a mentor, I intend to create a comfortable and positive atmosphere for my students. I accomplished the goal of supporting the student successfully by communicating her concerns. I chose this student's outfits because she has achieved her conceptual goal using the group collection inspiration and expanded her original imagination and creativity. The end products are unique, represent excellent craftsmanship, and have maintained the cultural elements but have her originality.

Design Statement

The objective of this project was to upcycle a pre-owned kimono to create a look for the menswear group collection in the annual fashion show. The recycled kimono provided by a local cultural center was to be turned into menswear-inspired Lolita fashion. Generally speaking, as a subculture, Lolita, presents itself as a manifestation of a blend of Japanese culture and global pop culture. Paying homage to the Victorian era, this anachronistic form of self-expression is employed by males and females alike with garments resembling those of dolls (Winge, 2008). Incorporating Lolita elements into menswear presented the challenge of balancing masculinity and femininity within a single look. The Gothic Lolita concept, characterized by bold, elongated pieces typically black in color with red and/or white accents (Winge, 2008), was chosen to narrow the design inspiration to a specific Lolita genre. The transformation of the recycled kimono into new garments in turn has an effect on reducing environmental pollution, increasing consumer convenience, reducing costs, and increasing societal development (Shafie, Kamis, Ramli, Abu Bedor, & Ahmad Puadet, 2021). Designers were tasked to maximize the usage of kimonos and limit any waste production.

Aesthetic properties and visual impact

This three-piece look primarily features a shirt, vest, and trousers. The panels of the garments were made from recycled kimono fabric that features willow branches hanging downwards with a large folding fan as a focal point. The folding fan represents an object of prestige and aesthetics and symbolizes good luck in Japanese art (Harkins, 1994), explaining its dominating presence on the back of the vest. Feminine aspects of Lolita fashion, such as lace and bows, were balanced out by muted colors and the dominant black color for a bolder and masculine impression. Following a basic color scheme of red and black, the red contrasts the overall black garments with their high value and intensity; this element is one of the main Gothic Lolita concepts. All garments have a baggy shape with an overall rectangular silhouette. Having a slightly loose fit follows the characteristics of the kimono in its original form; the emphasis is on the clothes and not on the shape of the body. Black lace and satin were used as fabrics commonly seen in Gothic Lolita fashion. The lace shirt with a boxy fit for a mixture of feminine and masculine connotations. The kimono fabric collar was placed on the overall balance of the outfits. The vest employed color blocking of the kimono fabric to tie the whole look together by combining the black and red colors and drawing attention. Inspiration for the pants stemmed from pants worn by ninja (a type of spy-like warrior during the Samurai age) to highlight the Japanese cultural aesthetic. The other materials, black gabardine for the vest and black polyester rib weave for the pants, were chosen to create a muted color scheme and the voluminous puffiness of the ninja-like pants with the lace-up strings with kimono fabric. In addition, a coin-like embellishment was added to the strings to simulate Japanese yen coins.

Process, technique, and execution

After gathering inspirations from Gothic Lolita culture and creating rough sketches of the garments, the appropriate fabrics were sought out, and the garments were drafted using block pattern techniques. Pieces in this look were constructed one by one with the shirt first and followed by the vest, and then the pants. This sequence helped maximize the usage of the amount of recycled kimono. Kimonos are made from a long singular piece of fabric in the shape of a 'T' and bounded by vertical seams (Đurin, Danikov, & Ivin, 2013). Therefore, kimonos come back to a rectangle shape after ripping seams off. After the first muslin live-fitting was completed, the seams of kimonos were ripped for preparation for the second muslin. Kimono recycled panels, collar and string embellishment, were used on only one side of the kimono sleeve; the other sleeve panel will be used for different projects in the future (Figure 1). Moreover, the center back kimono seam was used for the vest's center back torso panel; it perfectly exhibited the kimono's motifs and characteristics. Each garment underwent several muslins, and four live fittings were conducted to ensure a proper fit to the model.



Figure 1

Cohesion, Originality, and Innovation

The use of the recycled kimono strategically placed throughout the shirt, vest, and pants ties the cohesive look together. The significance of creating *Re. Doll Haus XY* was the overall statement outfit characteristic of the look that fell in line with the self-expression aspect of the subculture. Throughout the research on Lolita culture and continued exposure to Japanese culture as a whole, pulling inspiration from Lolita fashion and using recycled kimono fabric presented an opportunity to enhance the creator's reconstructing innovation of cultural sensitivity and awareness of sustainable practices in fashion. Designed for those who are conscious of textile waste and are fascinated with kimono motifs, the originality of this look is the juxtaposition of incorporating cultural garments, kimonos and contracting different fabrics with an upcycling method to create stylish outfits.

Date completed: April 1, 2022. Measurement: Male medium (38"– 33"– 39")

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