

## Chinese Red in Spring

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*Key words:* Sustainability, surface design, couture techniques

### Design statement

#### Contextual Review and Concept

Over the past few years, the designer has saved many left-over scraps, half-completed prototypes, and extra design parts (e.g., laser cutting fabric petals). Sustainable apparel includes reused apparel and apparel made from recycled materials (Fletcher, 2008). Apparel designers have used old clothing or recycled materials to redesign new dresses (e.g., Boorady, 2015; Hahn, 2015). However, only using old clothing or recycled materials may limit a design's execution, because some parts may be easier to purchase rather than recycle (e.g., thread). Therefore, the purpose of the current design was to combine left-over fabric scraps, extra design parts, and some new materials to make a new design.

#### Aesthetic Properties/Visual Impact

To achieve balance and unity, the dress was constructed on a dress form. Details and proportion were slightly adjusted. Principles of design were applied. Mostly balanced left and right sides created a symmetrical effect. While flowers, leaves, and red striped veins, which are full displayed on the dress surface, created an asymmetrical effect. Hundreds of leaves with various shapes were placed on the waist part, creating a rich-layers repetition and rhythm pattern. Visually, this design created an overall harmonious effect.

#### Process, Technique, and Execution as described in the statement and visible in the photography

To represent Chinese red, all red fabrics, extra design parts, and prototypes were collected. The designer played around with the red materials on a professional dress form. To effectively use the materials, several sketches were created. One sketch, which symbolized plants and flowers' recovery in Spring, was chosen to make the final garment. A previous prototype, with a completed top and a half-completed front bottom part, was chosen as the foundation of a new design. The back-bottom part was completed by adding back skirt fabric.

Necessary design materials were prepared. The left-over parts were separated for four different purposes. First, red left-over petals, which were made with wires inside to adjust directions from a previous project, were layered together to surround the waist. Second, the other extra petals

were attached together to make various sizes of flowers. In addition, left-over colorful fabric rolls, which were created by overlapping two different colors of fabric scraps (e.g., orange and yellow colors) from another previous project, were used as the center of the red flowers. Third, the other extra left-over fabric rolls were collected for embellishing the dress. Fourth, red fabric trim tassel, which came from a previous purchase, was also applied.

Based on the sketch, more design details were needed and they were not in the left-over parts. Thus, the designer created new design parts. Small pieces of red fleece fabric scraps, which came from a local apparel manufacturer's donation, were glued together to be a big piece. Then the big fleece fabric was cut as 0.5 cm or 0.8 cm long strips. In addition, green leaves were also made from the manufacturer's donated fabric. The green fleece fabric was cut into ovate shapes, and each leaf was covered with midrib and vein.

After all materials were ready, the long red strips, like vines, were attached from the waist part to the skirt hem. Red flowers, green leaves, and colorful rolls were attached on the long red vines. More flowers and leaves were attached together on the left shoulder. For the skirt bottom, fabric trim tassel was attached.

### **Cohesion**

The designer used the left-over strips, extra parts from previous projects, and new design parts and fabrics to create a new design, Chinese red in Spring. By applying design principles and by using design techniques, the designer created an aesthetic pleasant cohesive sustainable design.

### **Design Contribution and Innovation**

This design contributed to what is known in sustainable fashion: make throwaways back into a new design. This design was also different from existing sustainable design, because it integrated new design parts into old and recycled materials. Future designers may use this method for their designs.

### **Reference**

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