**Every Which Way**

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**Mentor Statement**

 This design was created in a junior-level apparel draping studio course. The objective of the course is to teach students key apparel draping techniques and allow the students to apply these techniques to creative draped designs. The final project for the semester, inspired by Cobb, Orzada, and Roelse’s (2019) multi-course sustainable design challenge was a zero-waste upcycling project. Students were randomly assigned pieces of fabric that had been previously donated to the department and were tasked to drape and construct a garment of their choice that utilized the entirety of the fabric. The purpose of this mentorship relationship was for the student to explore a sustainable design approach and learn to take inspiration from the drape of the fabric. As design mentor, I guided the student’s zero-waste exploration through a draping activity. Through this exploration, the student determined a direction for their design and continued to iterate it using non-traditional draping techniques. I provided the student guidance and suggestions as they made their design choices. When a challenge presented itself, I stepped in to assist the student in the problem-solving process. I chose to sponsor this student because the student navigated a fabric that kept falling apart as they worked but found solutions to overcome this and work with the fabric properties. The student produced a final garment that is 100% zero-waste, impeccably sewn with high-quality construction techniques, and includes transformable elements.

**Statement of Purpose**

The excessive overconsumption in the fast fashion industry will lead to further irreversible damage if no further action is taken. Each year, the industry contributes 1.2 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere (Whalen, 2023). In addition, there is an estimated 92 million tons of textile waste from fabrics that go unused in garment production (Srauturier, 2022). There are ways to lessen this waste and better our footprint by using already available resources and finding new creative ways to produce garments, eliminating textile waste. One such way to eliminate this waste is to design using a zero-waste approach. Every Which Way, a two-piece ensemble, was created by using 100% of the piece of fabric provided to me through application of unique design elements. Although the garment is both practical and functional, it was created using a fabric not intended for clothing production. The fabric provided for this garment is the DWK Life Sciences Kimble Multi-Fiber Test Fabric which was created to record how different fibers reacted to certain dyes (Fisher Scientific, n.d.). The purpose of this ensemble is to show that seemingly impractical processes, like zero-waste production, and textiles can still create functional, one-of-a-kind pieces that many would not even know were created with the intent of eliminating waste.

**Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact**

With no space for available waste, I leaned into the direction of the fabric and explored a sleek design that complemented the color and textile design. The lighter colorway of the textile inspired a modern summer-inspired ensemble with a youthful twist featuring ruffles and lace. The asymmetric bodice hugs to the curves of the form to create a flattering and well-fitted look while crossing directions of the fabric to make the asymmetric strap stand out. The look is finished to ensure all seams were sewn lengthwise, playing an homage to the direction of the fabric and the ways in which fashion can go: Every Which Way.

**Process, Technique, and Execution**

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| A diagram of a skirt  Description automatically generated with low confidence |
| ***Figure 1.*** Marker layout. |

Once I received the fabric, I immediately began draping different looks to better understand how the material would lay and respond to draping techniques. Once I began draping with the fabric, numerous challenges became apparent. First, when working with the DWK multifiber fabric the finishes of the seams posed as a great challenge to the overall design process. The fabric consists of numerous types of textiles composed in a striped pattern and due to the differences in fibers, there was not a common seam finish to prevent the lack of stability in between the stripes, resulting in substantial fraying. The fabric was keen to fray as well as being incredibly heavy, posing a risk to draping as the weight pulled it away from the pins and lead to holes and snags in the delicate fabric. To work better with the fabric, I concluded I needed to create a piece that stabilized the fabric and allowed for wider seam allowances. Since I had just one piece of the fabric, I began measuring the dimensions of my dress form and carefully cutting a series of rectangles from my fabric (see Figure 1). Once divided into smaller rectangles, the fabric was easier to manipulate. I traced where I wanted the fabric to be enforced and sewed along the marking. The ruffled attachments on the skirt and hem of the bodice were measured to align to the skirt so the repeating stripe pattern stayed cohesive. These pieces were then measured and each one was hand pleated to add body in lieu of gathering, as the fabric could not gather. To finish the garment, the few scraps I had remaining were then used to create embellishments to place atop the asymmetric bodice. The bow and flower were hand-sewn with basting seams, allowing me to put the frayed edges within them to add strength and make sure no fabric was wasted. The flower piece also features up-cycled lace to give another trimming a second life. The bow and flower provide options for switching up the look, creating a 3-in-1 garment that leans into sustainable fashion as you can wear it more than once- without embellishment, with the flower, or the bow!

**Cohesion**

Every Which Way represents the direction of where sustainable fashion can go. This look incorporates a sleek and clean finished garment that is not often observed in zero-waste fashion. The unique asymmetric silhouette juxtaposes the consistent straight stripes throughout the garment. Accompanied by carefully measured ruffles and calculated pleats, this garment ensures no fabric will go to waste.

**Originality and Innovation**

This piece embodies the future of fashion and what can be accomplished through zero-waste design. This design remains true to the inspiration of the fabric and creates ways to utilize difficult fabrics. I wanted to create a piece that represents what zero waste can become. For many, they view the process as incapable of recreating more formal-looking pieces. When introduced to pieces that can be worn in many settings, we can see an evident influence of fashionable looks while promoting ethical and sustainable ways to produce such looks.

**References**

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