

## The Yin Yang Handbag

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### Contextual Review and Concept:

The act of creation often arises from the interplay between existing conditions and envisioned possibilities. This aligns with the concept of Yin and Yang in Chinese philosophy, where the interaction of opposing forces fosters new beginnings (Ye, 2017). In the current situation of the fashion industry, textile waste is a major concern for sustainable fashion designers. The clothing industry discards millions of tons of fabric annually, and finding ways to utilize this waste is a pressing challenge (Khandual & Pradhan, 2018). For designers, transforming these scraps into economic assets through product development holds significant value. It allows them to unleash their creativity while contributing to a more socially and environmentally responsible fashion industry (Nørup et al., 2018). Moreover, denim is arguably the most ubiquitous textile globally, with estimates suggesting that over half of the global population wears denim clothing at any given time (Miller & Woodward, 2007). The global denim market is currently exceeding \$70 billion and is projected for continued growth at a 2% compound annual growth rate (Grand View Research, 2019). A staggering 5% of all landfill space is occupied by discarded textiles, with denim undoubtedly making a significant contribution to landfill waste, creating a negative environmental impact (Aki et al., 2020).

Incorporating the Yin-Yang concept and fabric-slashing technique, this design aimed to explore a sustainable handbag using fabric scraps and second-hand denim jeans. The design approach prioritized pragmatic craftsmanship. It focused on working with the realities of the available materials and adapting to them rather than starting with a fully formed and predetermined concept of the final product. This method allowed for a more organic and responsive design process, where the final form emerged from the dialogue between the creator and the available resources.

### Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact:

The ancient Chinese philosophy of Yin-Yang posited duality as a fundamental principle of the universe (Dou, 1995). This concept of opposing yet complementary forces, such as light and dark or hot and cold, remained deeply ingrained in Chinese thought (Dou, 1995). The handbag's design embodied this unity through color, line, shape, and texture. Warm hues like yellow, orange, and red evoked energy and vibrancy, while cool tones of green and blue inspired relaxation and calmness. Furthermore, the interplay between brightness and darkness within each color tone reflected the inherent interconnectedness of Yin and Yang. The handbag's circular form with intertwining spirals further reinforced the connection to nature, where spiral patterns are frequently observed. The presence of contrasting colors within each semicircle visually represented the concept that Yin and Yang each contain the seed of the other – Yin cannot exist without Yang, and vice versa (Jaeger, 2012). The symmetrical balance in this handbag was emphasized by a symbol of Yin and Yang. Rhythm in each semicircle occurred

when curve lines were used repeatedly to create a feeling of movement surrounding the seed as a small circle in each half of this handbag.

### Process, Technique, and Execution:

This handbag prioritized a zero-waste approach by utilizing all components from a single pair of denim jeans for the pattern, including the outer and inner of front and back panels, side panels, and bag handle strap (see Figure 1). After cutting these panels out, a "slashing technique" was employed to create deliberate openings and textural layers. This technique, which was historically used to add depth and reveal contrasting materials in Renaissance fashion (Tamrakar & Hedge, 2024), offered a visually captivating element. Fabric scraps were strategically layered between the outer and inner panels, adhering to the previously established Yin-Yang color scheme in the following order: outer layer → multiple colorful layers of fabric scraps → inner layer. Zig-zag stitching followed pre-marked lines on the denim, and careful cutting ensured the integrity of underlying layers. The final steps involved serging the edges and assembling all panels to complete the handbag.

**Cohesion:** This design concept tackled global textile waste pollution and promoted environmental sustainability. Beyond simply upcycling denim and fabric scraps, it incorporated a customizable "stitching and slashing" technique. Through a mindful selection of raw material colors and textures, this technique created a unique aesthetic while expressing the Yin-Yang philosophy's balance in nature.

### Design Contribution and Innovation:

This handbag integrated the concept of recycled materials with the Yin-Yang aesthetic, employing a novel technique of slashing fabric on a circular base. The various elements and principles of design in this handbag made its distinction, including line, shape, color, texture, balance, movement, rhythm, and unity. This innovative design approach pushed the boundaries of conventional fabric manipulation, fostering the potential for increased sustainability and wider applications within the fashion industry. Future exploration could refine these techniques and investigate their potential across diverse design fields, including complete apparel ensembles and even interior or accessory design.

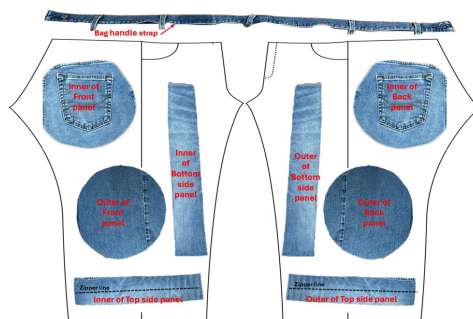


Figure 1: *Pattern layout of handbag on a denim jean*

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