

Buttoned Up

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Knit, upcycling, shirts

Upcycling and re-cycling are more and more common phenomena in fashion as the strive for a more sustainable fashion industry is progressing. However, it is difficult to catch up and get ahead when the mountains of trash keep building in the world. As a sustainable approach the reuse of textiles gives these materials a second life and limiting the waste of unwanted or used material. The idea of these fabric pieces as survivors, or old things that have kept their value thus also give the final garment an association to sustainable values (Fletcher, 2008). In this piece I have worked with the more difficult pieces to upcycle in a garment namely the collars. I realized as I was working on another piece in this series of combining upcycled shirts with the idea of the knit stitch that it would be a very interesting challenge to work with a more complex shape such as the collar and also see if I could take advantage of the features to create the garment. Using leftover collars from a previous project and experimenting on the form started the process with the idea of the knit stitch as an important feature of the design. In this piece the technique utilized is not a true knit stitch but more of a linking technique that creates the same look as that of knit or purl stitches in traditional knits. Additional embellishment from leftover shirt buttons decorates the neckline and the waist embroidered on in an untraditional approach to applying buttons in a way that they don't function but simply add an aesthetic value to the piece. Since the dress also created more of a net like structure I decided to add a liner dress underneath created from one of the shirts utilizing the collars. As the work progressed I realized I needed many more collars (dress totals about 120 collars) for the completion of the dress so now there is a new group of dress shirts waiting to be explored further through more woven knit stitches.



Fletcher, K.(2008). *Sustainable Fashion & Textiles – Design Journeys*. London. Earthscan.