

FASHIONING THE FUTURE

Using Unconventional Materials to
Address Society's Wicked Problems

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Weisman Art Museum & College of Design, University of Minnesota

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Much like the artists whose work is featured in the exhibition *Pressing Issues*, apparel design students from the University of Minnesota College of Design, Studio III course were tasked with responding to the current moment through the lens of design. Design, like art, offers imagination to not only solve the problems in front of us, but to imagine and create an alternative future than the one we seem headed for. From proposed solutions for a fashion industry plagued by labor and environmental injustices to the use of clothing as a tool to help those in their communities, the exhibition *Pressing Issues* was used as a prompt to push students to move beyond designing for consumption. This created an opportunity for designers to apply their skill set to develop new ways of thinking and working, new approaches required for living with and solving wicked, systemic and intersecting issues.



Erin Briggs

Trapped

foam, marker, shoelaces

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Historically, people who were revoked of their own voice for being “difficult” and mentally ill were controlled with vices like straitjackets, electric shock therapy, and even lobotomies with ice picks. Although many of these practices have been vetted, altered, and outlawed, abusive practices still exist. Agitation among patients today is met with handcuffs and padded rooms as well as heavy medication and tranquilizers instead of straightjackets and lobotomies. Solitary confinement continues, even though we have learned that solitude can lead to further mental instability. Help and stigmas for the mentally ill have changed minimally. When a person seeks help, they are often met with dismissive responses, belittling remarks, and insensitive comments. It should come as no surprise that people feel trapped and are afraid to open up and seek help. In reality, mental hospitals appear to be really different today, but a lot of the same problems still persist, including the way in which patients are treated once admitted.

Trapped seeks to draw attention to the stigma and treatment that coincides with psychiatric hospitals and tries to capture how many people feel when suffering from mental illness; trapped. The protective nature of the foam works to show how everyone, even people who suffer from mental illness, are humans that deserve to be helped. The garment is then restricted with things like shoelaces, an item that would be confiscated at a modern psychiatric hospital. Viewers have the option to release the tension in any of the strings, and in doing so, the garment will begin to take a new form. Moreover, there are other artistic elements in the design, such as brainwaves, that allude to the transition between the old and new ways in which psychiatric hospitals are run. While the appearance changes, the physical garment remains the same, serving as a parallel to that of psychiatric hospitals.

ERIN BRIGGS is an apparel design student at The University of Minnesota Twin-Cities. As a designer, Erin hopes to express her creativity and speak out on important and inspiring issues such as mental and physical disabilities. Much of her work is derived from the world around her and experiences that she finds most personal. She is interested in learning about all aspects of the apparel industry. Erin embraces many aesthetics, including anything modern to vintage, to aspects of wearable technologies. In the future, she hopes to be able to travel as much as possible and learn about different aspects of design around the world.



Jaden Evenson

Hidden Truths

cotton candy, chicken wire

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Hidden Truths is a sugar dress designed to highlight the impact of anxiety on mental health. Anxiety is a major issue in our present-day world. Fear has been ingrained in our brains as a basic survival instinct. Unfortunately, many people suffer from excessive symptoms of fear, such as panic, paranoia, worry, and an intense fight or flight response to many situations that are not actually dangerous, but are only perceived to be dangerous by the individual or sufferer.

The designer has many friends who struggle with some form of anxiety. Seeing the effort they require to get through the day and be functioning human beings inspired her to research different types of anxiety and show how it is different for each individual. Mental health is incredibly important but is often placed on the backburner or ignored altogether. Some of her friends have told her that they feel pressured by society to hide their mental health issues from public view. They suppress their emotions in public and explode or fall apart when they are alone. The designer feels blessed to have friends who feel comfortable

enough to tell her about their mental state, because she can say she knows the whole person instead of the facade or mask they use to hide from the world.

The designer was inspired to create a dress out of sugar because the consumption of sugar raises the risk of anxiety and intensifies symptoms. She also wanted to show that sugar comes in many forms, similar to the many forms of anxiety. One person's experience with anxiety may be completely different from another's. The installation is made of expired cotton candy floss, which consists of sugar, flavoring, and artificial color.

This dress has a fitted bodice with a flared skirt, which was inspired by the pressure of maintaining public image and the extent of unseen anxiety. The bodice has a flower and a stem that extends to the skirt symbolizing the facade that is shown to the world when people try to hide their anxiety. The flared skirt shows a root system that envelops the wearer to show what may be happening or what has taken hold beneath the surface. This reflects the depth and impact anxiety can have on someone's life. It is below the waist, underground, to show that anxiety may be hidden from view, but may still have an effect on someone's life. Hope is symbolized by the flower. The dress has a three-dimensional aspect, where the flower reaches out towards the viewer. It looks like it should be soft to the touch, but also has a crisp feel in the flower and roots. Because the garment is made of sugar, it smells sweet and has a slightly sticky texture. Viewers should be able to experience the entirety of the garment in person to feel its full impact. This dress shows that mental health concerns do not go away if ignored but remain below the surface.

JADEN EVENSON is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota studying apparel design. She has loved designing since kindergarten, when she designed her first costume for the school play. Through design, she captures the beauty of simplicity in a complex world. As a designer, she enjoys the minimalist approach, but also enjoys trying new things and stepping outside her comfort zone. Jaden plans to pursue a career in technical design, but she also loves creative design.



Elliot Floum

Reflection with Intention

CDs, aluminum cans, baseball cards, sponges, bubble wrap, super glue

DESIGNER STATEMENT

There were only 18 days in 2020 where a police officer didn't kill someone. The racial inequality of today is much worse than most would think. Throughout 2020, Minneapolis and general American police have repeatedly deployed weapons like tear gas and rubber bullets in an unlawful way against protesters. All too often, officers who kill or injure people after using force unlawfully are not convicted of their crimes. Many white people, including myself, have been able to reflect on the truth behind police brutality among Black and Brown people, and how it is not just "a few bad apples".

The shoe is made from CDs, aluminum cans, baseball cards, sponges, and bubble wrap. The main inspiration behind this design involves reflection and accountability. The CDs are the biggest part of the design. They are incorporated in the outsole/midsole of the shoe, and on the letters of “BLM” (Black Lives Matter) on the upper. These portray the reflection of themselves, seeing themselves in the movement, and holding themselves accountable for change. Black and Brown people aren’t supposed to be the only ones fighting for change; it

takes all of us, no matter what skin color we are. Rather than placing blame on the current governmental system or the history that we may not have been a part of, we as humans are required to hold ourselves accountable for what has been happening for hundreds of years. It is easy to blame others but blaming does not bring the necessary change. Change requires everyone, not just the ones being oppressed. Like many others, I shared a post on Instagram that involved (at the time) the recent events involving the killing of George Floyd. I initially thought that this was enough to provoke change, but through reflection, I realized I needed to do more, like get my friends involved, shop at Black-owned businesses, and give everything I am able in order to make a change. This shoe represents the actions that need to be taken to change our current system for the better. Voting the right people into the federal and local office, confronting white people to do more, and trusting people of color are all great examples of what this shoe is about. It requires all of us to make a change.

ELLIOT FLOUM is a student in his second year of the Apparel Design Program at the University of Minnesota. As a designer, he likes to use music as his main source of inspiration, because there are so many aspects of the music world that intertwine with fashion. He tends to gravitate towards more minimalist ideas when it comes to design. Elliot is especially interested in shoes, which he takes as a challenge to utilize in his designs. He hopes to bring new light to streetwear and make his own trends, rather than keeping in them.



Kylie Halvorson

Exposed

vintage jewelry, dryer sheets

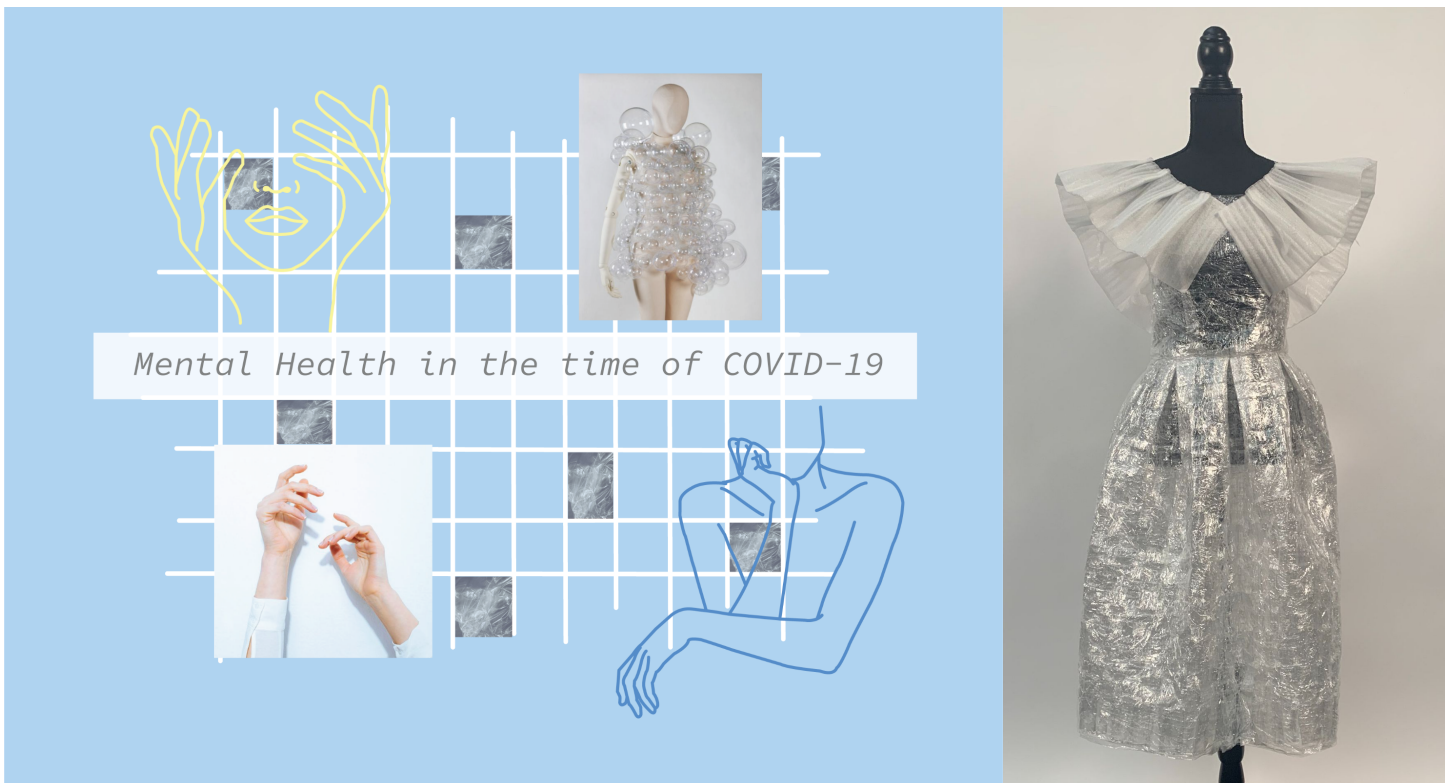
DESIGNER STATEMENT

Women have continued to break cultural barriers and pushed the boundaries of our society in order to fight for social justice. Social and economic movements of equality for women have progressed over time, but the sense of responsibility and commitment to advocate for women's rights is an overwhelming and exhausting burden to wear. As women continue to balance the expectations of work and home life, the weight of society's high standards rests heavily on their shoulders. I was inspired by the 1940's women's workforce movement during World War II and the perseverance of women to take on non-traditional roles of the time in order to provide for their families and contribute to their communities.

Exposed explores the beauty and burden of a modern workforce woman. Vintage jewelry and repurposed dryer sheets are fashioned into a versatile fashion accessory known as the dickey. Although dickeys are commonly worn under sweaters and button ups, the entire garment is often covered and hidden from view with only flashes of the garment on display, representing the unseen and unknown burdens women wear.

Curated vintage and antique jewelry as well as dryer sheets show the contrasting expectations of women in society. Dryer sheets were utilized to represent the past and present domestic roles of women in society. Combining both modern and traditional elements presented an opportunity to highlight various backgrounds of women in the twenty-first century. Layered pearls and chains intertwine with one another to symbolize the complexity and intersectionality of women's issues across various socioeconomic, religious, and racial platforms. The design features heavy, bulky amounts of jewelry to stress the literal weight of society's expectations for women today. As women continue to break glass ceilings and blaze a trail for future generations, it is important to recognize the emotional toll of fighting for equity.

KYLIE HALVORSON is a sophomore studying apparel design at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Her enthusiasm and love for fashion began at a young age with a Barbie Swan Lake tulle dress and a zebra coat. Kylie is greatly inspired by the nostalgic culture of her youth along with vintage and antique clothing. As a designer, she values creating bold garments that exhibit confidence and courage. Kylie intends to move to New York or London after graduation and create clothing that empowers people to be their authentic selves.



Abby Harrold

Translucence

plastic wrap, Styrofoam sheets

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Translucence addresses the growing mental health crisis affecting young people in the United States. COVID-19 has contributed to the increase of stress and anxiety and as the pandemic continues, it will continue to affect more and more people. Combined with the isolation that many are feeling, COVID-19 has been a contributing factor to the declining mental health of many people. Young people specifically are more likely to report higher stress levels. During the pandemic, a larger than average portion of young adults have been reporting symptoms of anxiety and depression. The inspiration and information for this design comes from the designer's own experiences with mental health struggles, as well as online research, statistics, and conversations with family and friends about their mental health.

By creating a translucent garment out of materials such as plastic wrap and thin Styrofoam sheets, Abby hopes to convey the idea that people experiencing mental health issues should be able to speak openly about their struggles without facing stigma or judgement. However, the garment is not totally transparent, symbolizing that we still have a long way to go before the stigma surrounding mental health is totally broken down. The textile created for this design is made using a messy or uneven weave of plastic wrap, showing the chaos and lack of control that those experiencing mental illness may feel inside, despite trying to keep everything together on the outside. Finally, the hyper-feminine silhouette of the dress is representative of the “performance” put on by many people experiencing mental illness to convince others that everything is fine; from far away, the garment looks just like a normal dress, but when you get up close it is easy to see the imperfections and the mess.

ABBY HARROLD is a sophomore apparel design student at the University of Minnesota. Abby has been drawn to art and fashion for as long as she can remember, so pursuing an apparel design degree seemed like the right choice. As a designer, Abby is drawn to the more creative side of the fashion industry. She is inspired by a wide range of designs, including vintage, couture, and avant-garde clothing. Abby’s favorite thing about apparel design is how she can express herself and draw from her personal experiences to create something beautiful.



Ally Holm

Technology Waste

keyboards, cables, hard drives, hot glue

DESIGNER STATEMENT

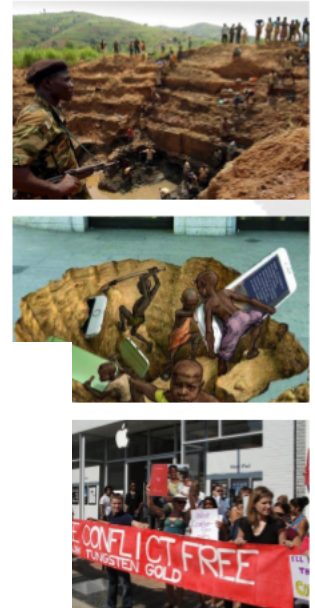
Technology consumption is rapidly increasing, resulting in large amounts of technology waste. This waste adds up to around 50 million tons, annually. This waste produces chemicals that not only harm the environment, but also the workers who are exposed to them every day. The fumes from technology waste have detrimental health effects on workers in developing countries, where the waste is often dumped. Companies like Apple constantly release new products and models, which persuades consumers to discard their old products for newer models, even if the older ones still work. In 2017, Americans spent \$71 billion on new communication products.

This design is a collection of various technology pieces, brought together to represent the growing problem of technology waste. To create this complex design, the designer used a collection of technology materials such as keyboards, cables and hard drives. The materials are all outdated or broken, unable to be salvaged for their original purposes. Using a series

of techniques, such as cutting wires open, detaching keyboard pieces, and attaching different types of wires, the designer modified and salvaged these pieces of technology to create a visually interesting garment. The pieces that make up this garment would have otherwise ended up discarded and unused. Instead, they have been brought together and repurposed, to create something that is representative of the issue. The surplus of pieces, enough to create a garment, is a physical representation of just how much waste is produced.

The sides are inspired by hanging sequins, but instead are made up of hundreds of keyboard keys, reattached with glue and wire. The keys gradually disperse at the bottom, representing the theme of falling apart. Wires around the design create movement, to draw the eye around the many pieces of the garment. The cables and pieces are cut open and exposed in order to show the complex nature of this waste. Using long cables, the designer cut hundreds of small pieces and attached them to the front of the garment. These cables are made up of multiple brightly colored wires. The inside of these wires are complex and usually unseen, yet they hide a bright, visually intriguing interior. This shows the viewer that the real mechanisms in our technology are hidden behind an outer shell, and often not well understood. This design attempts to change that and build an understanding of what's behind the technology that we use every day.

ALLY HOLM is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, majoring in Apparel Design. She grew up in Minnetonka, Minnesota and has always been interested in art and design. Throughout her life, she has explored many different mediums, including pottery, painting, photography and graphic design. Her love of art and design, combined with her background as a fashion model, led her to apparel design. As a model she observed designers working backstage, putting together looks and showcasing their designs. While she enjoyed wearing the designs, she was much more inspired to become a designer herself.



Bridget Holzer

Tainted Technology

aquarium rocks, circuit boards, electronic wiring

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Tainted Technology draws attention to a human rights issue hidden within our electronics. Many of the small components that make up the electronics we use every day are composed of minerals sourced in the Congo under unethical conditions. The minerals mined in the Congo are obtained through child labor, cheap wages, and sexual assault. Children are sent to the mines with their parents in order to make a barely livable wage. Women face additional problems in the mines and are often coerced into performing sexual acts to the mine owners for fear of reduced wages. Many consumers have begun to demand ethically sourced minerals; however, it is often difficult to trace where the minerals are sourced. There are many buyers and steps involved in the process of turning minerals into electronics. The difficulty in tracking the original source of the minerals and

lack of transparency make this issue difficult to fight against. This dark connection between the minerals and technology has left our electronics tainted.

The design represents the duality between the natural minerals and the man-made electronics. This is shown through the top piece made of rocks and the bottom piece made of circuit boards. The untraceable connection between the minerals and the electronics is represented through the messy web woven wires. Red wires were used to connect the garment, because red represents the tainted and painful truth behind our electronics. Lastly, the whole design is see-through to express the need for transparency when fixing this issue.

BRIDGET HOLZER is an apparel design student at the University of Minnesota. Her design work is inspired by a combination of nature and mystical/sci-fi aesthetics. Her designs tend to focus on exploring femininity through juxtaposing themes. This duality is shown by mixing gentle shapes with gothic shapes. Being inspired by nature and mystical ideas has helped shape the way she adds femininity into her designs with organic shapes and natural colors. In the future, she wants to design everyday clothing that feels otherworldly. She also wants to further push the idea of gender bending in clothing. She believes adding certain feminine elements, such as soft shapes and light colors, to a design shouldn't limit a gender from wearing it.



Katie Johnson

Shattered

stained glass offcuts, muslin, boning, superglue

DESIGNER STATEMENT

By addressing the exploitation of female garment workers, *Shattered* expresses a breakthrough of strength in femininity. The fashion industry has contained a consistent lack of transparency, particularly with the rise of consumerism and fast fashion. Beyond the environmental consequences, human rights are often overlooked for the instant gratification that affordable purchases can bring. The exploitation of female garment workers is a vital concern in developing countries, with factories that often lack workplace regulations and expose employees to dangerous and undesirable conditions. These women are compensated for their efforts with extremely low wages, that are often below the minimum wage. This, in turn, allows consumers of more developed economies, such as the U.S., to purchase on-trend clothing inexpensively. Katie's design finds inspiration in the empowerment of women in the workforce, as well as the recent encouragement of femininity in fashion silhouettes and designs. The structure of the muslin over-bust corset top, alluding to a women's hourglass figure, can feel like a limiting expression of what it really means to be a woman. The boning of the corset represents a suffocating structure in which women are expected to be. Broken shards of stained glass that reach from the center

chest exhibit a broken industry of fast fashion, in which we are almost able to see through to the truth, yet a lack of transparency is still persistent. Inhumane working conditions are not uncommon in the fashion industry and which further transparency is needed. By bringing attention to the need for further transparency within the fashion industry, a subsequent change in female empowerment will begin.

KATIE JOHNSON is a second-year apparel design student at the University of Minnesota twin cities. Katie was born with an active imagination and drive for self-expression, which eventually manifested in her love for fashion. As a designer, Katie is focused on both the technical and creative aspects of fashion, as she continues to build upon her skills. Katie is inspired by primarily vintage and avant-garde styles, as well as the push towards sustainability within the fashion industry. Katie designs clothing that allows for creative expression and individuality.



Hannah Kasner

Poisoning the Poseidon

bottle tabs, plastic food package netting, upcycled tent screen, plastic and rope

DESIGNER STATEMENT

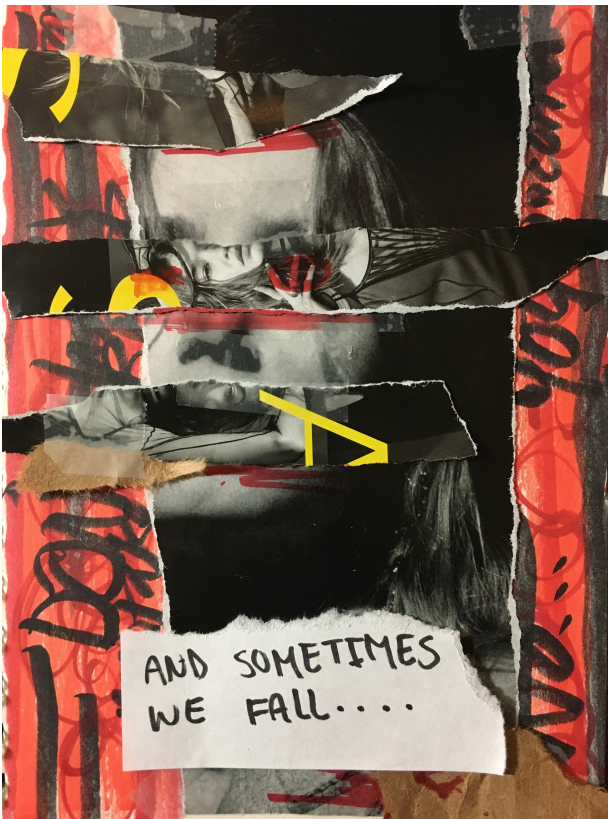
Pollution in the ocean is a significant and growing problem. With the rise of consumer goods and population, marine pollution is only increasing in severity. Billions of pounds of trash enter the ocean each year, and the majority of the pollutants come from human activity. The trash in the oceans poses great threats to marine and human life. Marine animals are likely to get entangled in or ingest debris which can cause suffocation, starvation and drowning. More than 800 species worldwide are affected by ocean pollution. In order to bring awareness to this pressing issue, *Poisoning the Poseidon* symbolizes the struggle that marine life faces while using majority waste products.

Poisoning the Poseidon is made from materials commonly found in the ocean; bottle tabs, netting from old food storage, plastic and rope. The design of the top symbolizes the entanglement of animals in trash found floating throughout the ocean. The final design is entirely composed of consumer waste. The overall goal of this design is to bring awareness to the dangers of ocean pollution.

HANNAH KASNER is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota, majoring in Apparel Design. She grew up in Plymouth, Minnesota, and knew that she wanted to continue her education in the state. Her educational background in fashion ethics and consumption has made her very passionate about sustainability in the fashion industry. She realizes that the industry has far to go in terms of sustainability and is contributing to that change.

through a more relatable medium of clothing. It includes rows of the color white, grey, and black to convey the sorrow of these children, parents, and other familiar members who are waiting for their family to be released from the detention centers. Each row demonstrates how there needs to be a streamline process for citizenship rather than making it difficult for one to obtain citizenship. The monarch butterfly in this design symbolizes dreamers and pro-immigration activists who strive to change people's views on immigration. Butterflies are able to roam free, which resembles migrants when they move from place to place. Overall, *Undocumented* aims to normalize talking about issues in immigration in order to bring awareness to these struggles, where they often remain hidden away from the public consciousness.

SONU LANE is a sophomore studying apparel design at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. Ever since grade school, she had a fascination with fashion and recognized the many ways how one could express themselves through what they chose to wear. Her designs consist of simple casual to fusion formalwear. Overall, apparel design to her means she is free to create without limitations and draw from other cultures as well as her rich Indian culture.



Cindy Leewood

Worn Out

dryer lint, tulle, t-shirt, safety pins

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Mental health problems manifest in people in different forms and shapes. The experience is unique to each person, but the hardship faced by each individual is undeniable.

Vulnerability and mental health problems are linked together. People become vulnerable when they show sides of themselves that they have difficulty controlling. There is fear in the uncertain reaction of peers, family, and friends. *Worn Out* conveys the perspective of what vulnerability feels like from Cindy's experience with mental health problems, and how the people around her have helped.

Worn Out is a shirt mended with patches created from dryer lint. Dryer lint is a characteristic of a garment that people don't think about. Like how our mental health embodies us, our dryer lint is part of the makeup of our clothes. We wear clothes close to

our bodies and it essentially becomes mixed with our essence. When dealing with mental health problems, it gets difficult to reach out to the people around us. This project became an opportunity to reach out and ask for people's lint and see how people were willing to help. The holes in the garment decrease the structure and creates a "worn out" look, a play on the saying, "I feel worn out", a common expression when people are mentally exhausted. The lint patches, representing the people around us, are used to mend to the cut-up garment. The mending process gives structure back to the garment and allows the garment to find some semblance of wholeness.

CINDY LEEWOOD is a sophomore majoring in Apparel Design at the University of Minnesota. She grew up in Cambodia before moving to the United States to continue her education. Through her studies she has become passionate about sustainability and ethical practices within the fashion industry. She is highly inspired by her cultural background and aims to incorporate it into her designs.



Tyanna Man

Two Day Delivery

paper packaging, plastic mailers, pillow feathers, spray paint

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Consumption has increased tremendously over the past decade because of the internet's ability to deliver instant gratification. International shopping platforms like Amazon have been at the forefront of online shopping. After reflecting on her personal online shopping habits over this past year, Tyanna has come to the conclusion that Amazon and their two-day free shipping has become an enabler for overconsumption in her own life. Over quarantine and the pandemic in 2020, she found herself ordering many things off of Amazon she didn't need. Tyanna has collected all of the Amazon packaging from her household and recreated it into something new. The design uses the packaging to highlight overconsumption and demonstrates how these items can and should be repurposed again.

The Amazon packaging has been repurposed to make a stunning evening gown. The dress was created with a pleated foundation made of paper packaging and accessorized with flowers made from plastic Amazon mailers. The flowers draw the eye over the shoulder and

down the right side of the dress into the cape train stemming from the waist. Old pillow feathers were hand dyed and added to the design for spunk. The design was composed of a bright blue color and is recognizably the Amazon brand. The purpose and message of this design is to highlight over consumption and find ways to repurpose waste into something new and beautiful.

TYANNA MAN is an Apparel Design student at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. She is inspired by travel and culture and is passionate about volunteer work. Inspired by the stories of people she encounters in her life, her main goal is to design ways to make their lives better. In the future, Tyanna plans to integrate these passions into one and create sustainable designs and systems within the fashion industry.



Neema Mochoge

Deforestation

Matchsticks, shower curtain liner, glue

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Trees have been around for millions of years, but what would Earth look like without them? Forests are very important because they provide the Earth with oxygen. Trees are cut down for purposes such as fuel, paper production, firewood and building materials. Trees are also cut and burned so land can be used for agriculture and growing crops. As trees continue to vanish, the amount of greenhouse gas in the Earth's atmosphere increases, causing temperatures to rise, which affects the growth of plants and soil. Other negative consequences include loss of biodiversity, increased extinction of rare species and a rise in soil erosion which leads to natural disasters including floods and droughts. Although a significant portion of the global population may not believe it affects them, people and animals that live near or in the rainforest largely depend on the natural environment for basic survival such as food, water, and shelter. Cutting down trees affects

individuals and creatures living around these areas, forcing them to migrate to gain access to these essential resources.

Created with matchsticks, the unique pattern created on the surface of the designs symbolized the forest's transition to deforestation. Every year, an average of 500,000 Aspen trees are cut down to produce matchsticks (USDA.gov). The method used to harvest the trees is the slash and burn method used by farmers to produce land for crops. The repetition of raze, plant, deplete, repeat is seen throughout uniform placement of matchsticks on the top. The bodice is a corset made from cardboard with matchsticks applied on top. The undergarment and skirt are made from a clear curtain liner. Matchsticks create a raised texture on the skirt and are arranged to achieve a branching pattern. To achieve the ombre effect for both the top and skirt, matchsticks were burned at different temperatures and for different lengths of time. As climate change continues to be the center of attention, many people are becoming more aware and educated on deforestation and its impact on the environment. Deforestation is showcased in the garment to emphasize the environmental damage humans inflict.

NEEMA MOCHOGE is a sophomore studying apparel design at the University of Minnesota. Her design perspective is based on a young individual who evokes feminine and masculine elements with modesty. Her designs impose a balance between spatial and asymmetrical patterns that are timeless and never before seen in the fashion industry. She loves to include childhood memories in her designs and use her mother's style and essence as a muse. Neema designs wearable, conceptual designs that are spontaneous, youthful, and make an individual feel confident and powerful.



Qianna Peterson

Work

Plastic wrap, stretch satin, mirrors, sequins

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Work was inspired by the *Burlycue* print by Kyra Markham included in *Pressing Issues*, which depicts burlesque dancers conversing with each other backstage during a show. Markham reveals through her artwork how sex workers are still devalued for their labor, even though this industry has been in high demand for thousands of years. Sex work has evolved over the years, from burlesque shows to exotic dancing to OnlyFans.

Work juxtaposes the devaluation of workers in general with the devaluation of sex workers. Even if someone works a socially ‘acceptable’ job, they are still treated like anonymous laborers by their employers as an essential function of capitalism. The design also comments on the ‘double oppression’ of sex workers both as workers in a capitalist system and as women in a patriarchal society.

The design consists of a pair of transparent coveralls with a lingerie outfit underneath. The coveralls represent a worker’s uniform that serves to make them more homogenous and

faceless, reducing their value as a unique individual while identifying them as an agent and possession of their employer. The coveralls are made from transparent plastic to show the lingerie outfit underneath, which represents sex workers. The shapeless, full body silhouette of the coveralls contrasts with the skin-baring, fitted lingerie outfit. The lingerie is made from red stretch satin and small mirrors and sequins. The red color is used by sex workers' rights campaigns to symbolize strength, courage, and empowerment. It is also used by labor rights activists to represent the blood of the workers who have died for the movement. The satin is soft and smooth against the body, while accentuating the figure, while the mirrors and sequins add a hard and reflective element to the lingerie. The mirrors ask the viewer to examine themselves and how they consume the labor done both by sex workers and by workers in general.

The materials and the silhouettes of the coveralls and lingerie are used to comment on the contrasts and similarities between 'acceptable' work and 'unacceptable' work. The work asks what society needs to do to change the view of workers and women from faceless, replaceable objects to valuable and unique human beings.

Through this design, Qianna hopes to bring attention to sex workers rights and to connect these issues to labor rights in general. For as far as the workers' rights movement has come, the rights of sex workers are still a long way off from catching up. Until then, sex work will still be devalued and sex workers will be oppressed.

QIANNA PETERSON has been interested in a variety of art forms since she was young. She's experimented with painting, sculpting, and fabric arts and brings this background into her designs. Qianna's interest and experience in the lingerie sector, along with her passion for social justice and feminism deeply influences her work. She prefers to work with unusual fabrics, vivid colors, and fresh silhouettes that accentuate the body and brighten the mood.



Siobhan Sullivan

No Way Out

coat hangers, paint

DESIGNER STATEMENT

In the long-term debate on birth control, women's bodies have been politicized by government officials and legislation. Consequently, women are forced to fight for reproductive rights, including abortion accessibility. Despite the progress of medical practices and the legality of abortion in the US, millions of unsafe abortions occur that can result in suffering, future complications, and death. An unsafe abortion occurs as a result of the lack of access to contraception or safe abortion services. In other words, a woman makes this decision because she has no other choice. Although the Supreme Court case *Roe V. Wade*, established a woman's right to an abortion, there is other legislation that impedes a woman's ability to practice that right. According to a Guttmacher Institute policy review by Heather Boonstra, federal law currently bans the use of federal funds for abortions, unless the pregnancy was caused by rape, incest, or can cause harm to the mother. Additional barriers include: waiting periods for procedures, parental consent or

notifications, and refusal of service from doctors who believe that abortions are against their personal beliefs.

No Way Out was inspired by stories from women who were forced to use unsafe abortion practices, both before and after the Roe V. Wade decision. Women who were brave enough to share personal feelings, emotions, and factors that drove them to unsafe abortion. *No Way Out* recreates that caged-in, inescapable fate. Wire hangers are utilized as a symbol of how abortion's past has followed us into the present. A coat hanger is a common household item, and it can be manipulated into different shapes, and used as a tool for abortion. The hanger wire was shaped to construct a menacing bodice that constricts the movement of the arms. The wires are all bent at different angles, drawing the eye around the garment, and following the lines created by the wire. The jagged edge skirt incorporates the shape of the hanger, and adds a perilous detail, to mimic the risk of unsafe abortion. Abortion is a safe medical practice and should be accessible to those who are in need of one, whether or not the pregnancy is a result of rape, incest, or poses a danger to the mother. Abortion must be destigmatized, and women must be freed of the political chains that prevents people from assimilating the connection between human rights and reproductive rights.

SIOBHAN SULLIVAN is a second-year apparel design student at the University of Minnesota. As a designer, she has learned to pay close attention to detail, and those small details in everyday life inspire her most. The multitude of shapes and colors in the world, natural and unnatural, pique her curiosity. She is passionate about inclusivity and advocates for equality throughout her work, designing for all people through gender inclusive clothing. More specifically, she aspires to add variety to non-binary fashion. Siobhan is also minoring in Sustainable Studies, to further her goal of sustainable innovation in the fashion industry.



Summer Vue

The Great Barrier Relief

Aluminum cans, zip ties, plastic

DESIGNER STATEMENT

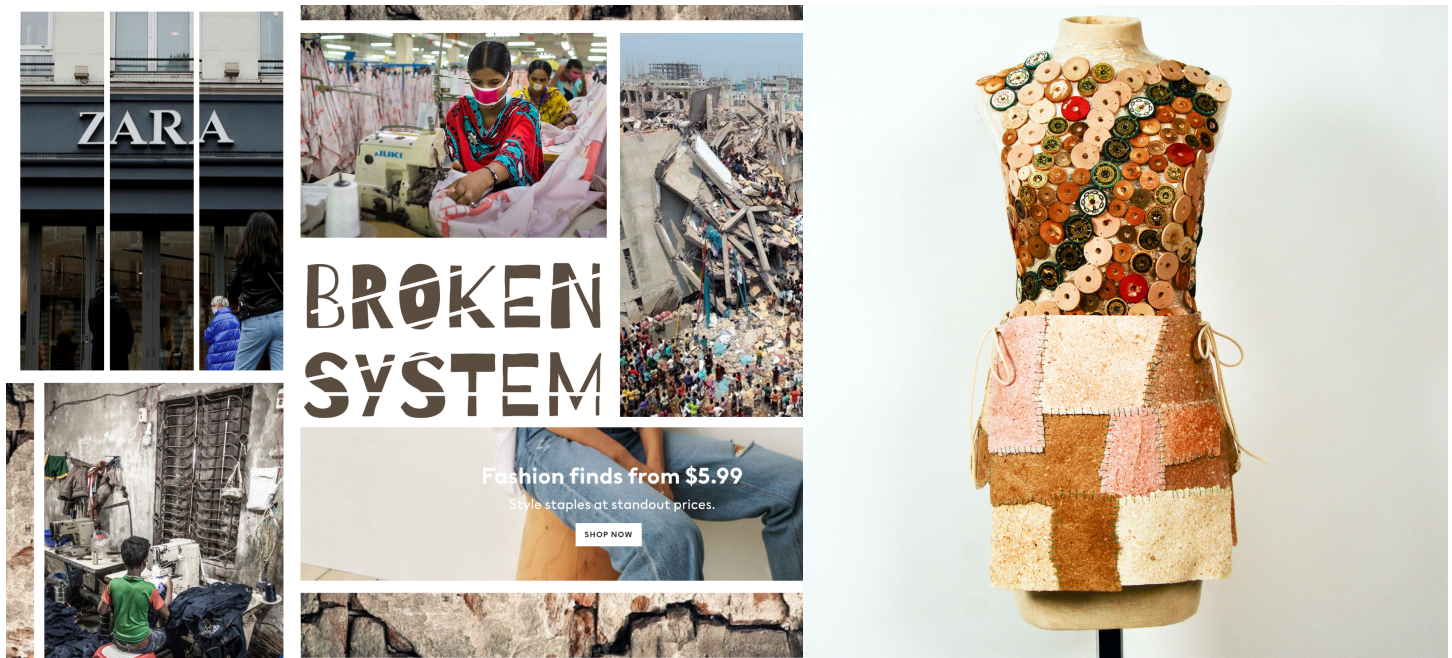
Climate change is a pressing issue that we must address before the planet becomes uninhabitable. *The Great Barrier Relief* focuses on how climate change has caused sea temperatures to rise, leading to the death of many coral reefs all over the planet. The Netflix documentary, *Chasing Coral*, inspired this project. In 2017, a group of individuals, consisting of divers, scientists, and photographers, went out into the ocean to film what is happening beneath the surface. These beautiful organisms are changing. Not only are they losing their color, but aquatic life slowly vanishes when reefs are no longer able to provide the security and nourishment that these other sea creatures so heavily rely on. These ecosystems are vital not only to our survival, but to the survival of all marine life. There are many contributing factors that are killing the remaining coral reefs that cover our ocean floors; unsustainable overfishing, tourism, and coastal development. Overfishing is increasing, which affects the ecological balance and biodiversity of the sea. Oftentimes, tourists and tourist attractions damage and kill coral through irresponsible business

operations and careless tourists. Coastal developments contribute to water pollution and sediment being disposed into the ocean, which affects the coral reefs ability to survive.

The Great Barrier Relief is made out of aluminum cans and plastic. These materials are significant because these are commonly found in the ocean but appear in many forms. For example, to-go containers, single-use utensils, cans, and plastic ring holders just to name a few. Experimentation led to different ways that this material could be manipulated to achieve a variety of shapes and structures that resembled coral.

The skirt is made out of the top of cans held together with wire and zip ties. The overlapping lines and asymmetry in the skirt create movement throughout. The top reflects the structure and shape of coral reefs created with manipulated cans and spray paint. The use of color in the design is symbolic, ranging from neon colors to duller colors to white, and represents the life stages of coral as they continue to die from increasing temperatures. As these reefs are in their last stages of life, some of them fluoresce. This phenomenon occurs when coral and algae work together to form a layer that tries to protect them from the sun's powerful rays. Unfortunately, coral bleaching causes them to lose their color and turn completely white. What remains are their skeletons. The different colors of coral are displayed to show viewers how the destructive nature of our lifestyles and the decisions that we choose to make are destroying other living organisms.

SUMMER VUE studies apparel design at the University of Minnesota. She is often inspired by social and environmental issues, nature, and different shapes, lines, and textures seen in architecture and interior design. Summer believes that the design process is a creative medium to incorporate and advocate for her values and beliefs. She believes designers have a responsibility to educate ourselves and others through our mediums. In the future, she hopes to better address and understand how to make sustainable alternatives accessible to more individuals regardless of socio-economic status.



Ava Wagner

Broken System

wooden thread spools, plastic wrap, Modge Podge

DESIGNER STATEMENT

Over 1,246 lives were lost as a result of loose safety regulations in two different garment factories which took place 102 years apart. The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire killed 146 hardworking individuals in New York, NY (History.com Editors, 2009). The 2013 collapse of Rana Plaza took place midday in Bangladesh, taking the lives of over 1,100 factory workers in addition to the over 2,500 people injured (TheNewYorkTimes, 2014). There is an undeniable parallel between the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in 1911 and the Collapse of Rana Plaza in 2013. These two disasters were the result of large corporations who do not prioritize the health and safety of the workers who make their clothes. Cries for help surged through the city as family members searched through the rubble for their loved ones. Popular brands such as Zara, Primark, Walmart, and JCPenney are all connected to this incident (TheNewYorkTimes, 2014). Knowing this, why are they still widely supported? The reform following the two events is very different, and shows that when an event does not take place on U.S. soil, people are not as willing to take action because it doesn't directly affect them

In *Broken System*, the construction of the bodice and skirt cast a light on the injustice taking place in the apparel industry. Sweatshops are common knowledge among people in the United States, so why is it accepted to put another person's life at risk for a t-shirt? American consumers willfully ignore what is happening behind the scenes. The design focuses on the collapse of Rana Plaza to remind viewers of the deadly working conditions in garment factories who have loose regulations. The entire look is made up of empty spools of thread, a tool used in the production process of garments. The silhouette of the garment is intentionally designed to look very trendy, similar to what is seen in fast fashion brands that were involved in the 2013 disaster. The wooden spools were pulverized to create a paper-like material which is broken and cracked, like the structure of the garment factory that collapsed. Inspired by the work of Ida Abelman in *Pressing Issues*, the spools are arranged in the shape of an "S" to symbolize the billions of dollars these corporations make off of the garment factories.

AVA WAGNER is a second-year apparel design student at the University of Minnesota. While she was young, she enjoyed getting her hands messy with paint, clay, and glitter. Finding a creative outlet has always been important to Ava, so she began using fabric and apparel as her outlet. As a designer, she is most inspired by the little things. From a flower blooming to a penny found head-side up, she believes inspiration can be found anywhere. In the future, Ava hopes to innovate and promote the accessibility of adaptable clothing in the fashion industry.



Laine Williams

Internalized

Sunscreen bottles, self-tanner bottles, resin

DESIGNER STATEMENT

After reflecting on the pressing issues in the United States, both past and present, Laine unexpectedly began a journey of self-discovery and reflection. In accepting a lifetime of suppressing microaggressions she came to identify with the term internalized oppression. Essentially, internalized oppression is when one internalizes the misinformation society communicates to them about their identity. For Laine, one of the most significant ways this has manifested is through how she chose to 'fit in' at a very young age by lathering herself in as much sunscreen as possible so that her skin would not get any darker in the summer months. Obtaining tan skin by choice is a privilege as it does not come with all of the baggage that occurs by having a naturally tan or dark complexion.

In using sunscreen and self-tanner bottles to create this garment, Laine conveys the juxtaposition of one of her biggest insecurities being a societal trend. The garment resembles a suffocating chest plate to express the feelings of conformity and the need to protect oneself. In addition, it has lace up sides for exposing the skin and rib cage, symbolizing vulnerability. Finally, the garment is designed to resemble a comic book with its playful colors and recognizable words to reflect the innocence of a child.

LAINÉ WILLIAMS is an apparel design major at the University of Minnesota, originally from Duluth, Minnesota. She is inspired by the expression fashion can provide individuals and sees it as an art form that can speak for itself. She also recognizes the growth to be had in the industry in areas such as human rights, diversity and inclusivity, and sustainability. Laine challenges herself to use her personal reflection in her designs and strives to invoke relatable emotions to inspire others. In the future Laine hopes to travel to the world and experience the different aspects the fashion industry has to offer, including couture, sustainable, and editorial fields.