



T-shirt Resurgence

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T-shirts are a very popular garment across all ages and two billion t-shirts are sold worldwide every year (Wallander, 2012). However, American people reach the point of having “way too much stuff,” resulting in the average person in the United States throwing away 81lb of clothing in 2016 (Savers, 2017). The textile making processing is energy and resource intensive in that for example, it can take 700 gallons of water to produce one t-shirt (Wallander, 2012). To save environment, it is important to show and educate consumers that the clothing that they throw away can be upcycled and repurposed.

The purpose of this design was to create sustainable clothing and help prevent fabric waste by repurposing old and used t-shirts. I found that use of old t-shirts as a medium to create complete a dress was an experimental opportunity, because previous work using recycled t-shirts have mostly focused on creating bracelets, bags, and other small accessories. It was a challenge to use braiding/weaving and knotting techniques from friendship and paracord bracelets to make a whole dress using t-shirt yarns.

The dress incorporates bohemian styles that bring a free spirit and happy mood to the garment. By using white and two blue colors, this garment creates gradient blue plaids with an accent of red. The bright contrasting colors of blues and red call to mind a lazy summer under the sun at the beach. In contrast to the front, the back exhibits lots of red and is used to provide additional visual impact. In addition, the bottom of the dress is left as playful fringe which captures the wind and provides movements and flow.

This dress is made with my husband’s old t-shirts; the old ones with holes and stains that served years of purpose, but had reached the end of life. I did not spend any money in creating this whole outfit. The t-shirts were cut with hundreds of half inch strips. Then, by using jersey characteristics (which tends to roll at the cut edges), the strips were pulled to make them roll creating t-shirt yarn. The dress was made using several hand braiding/weaving and knotting techniques, such as basket weaves for overall garment, backward and forward knots for waist and hem areas, and a three color fishtail for the shoulder straps. The dress was made directly on the dress form, and with the exception of the sown on hooks on the back, there was no sewing or needle engaged in creating the garment. Because this dress is made by t-shirt yarn, the garment stretches and comfortable to wear.

The dress provides a cohesiveness in overall garment design that create the sustainable dress and transfers bohemian beach wear, using recycled t-shirt, bright colors, and diverse garment details. This design is unique and original using recycled t-shirt and hand braiding and knotting techniques and show how recycled t-shirts can be revived and turned into a completely

different new look. This garment used techniques and materials that are used in small accessories but applied to the whole garment, thus this dress contributes to new fabrication of the garment, fit, and coloration using recycled material.

Reference

Wallander, M. (2012). T-shirt blues: The environmental impact of a t-shirt. *HUFFPOST*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mattias-wallander/t-shirt-environment_b_1643892.html

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