

## **Collaborative Wearable Art Design Process for Wearable Art Designers, Artists, and Industrial Designers**

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### **Introduction**

Collaborations between fashion designers and artists, traced back to 19<sup>th</sup> century, bloomed in early 20<sup>th</sup> century when fashion became a modern desire and was mass producible (Mackrell, 2005). Due to the complexity and ambiguity of the wearable art design process, wearable art designers usually explore inspirations from a multiplicity of sources, sometimes drawing from fine arts. Collaborations often occur between wearable art designers and artists that contribute differential resources and various talents to achieve complementary goals (Dodgson, 1994). For this design process study, the initial goal was to develop a framework for: (a) *initiating and completing* collaborative design projects, (b) *evaluating* the design ideas involving a wearable art designer and an artist who provided the artwork as the inspiration, and (c) *integrating a review critique* into the design process by presenting design ideation to a professional reviewer (with fashion design and wearable art background), an industrial designer, and collaborating artist.

### **Experimentation**

The artwork used as inspiration for this wearable art design was *CN-II* created by the collaborating artist. Before developing the wearable art, the designer visited the gallery that exhibited a series paintings of the artist and interviewed the artist in the gallery to comprehend the concept of the paintings. Based on the ideas of the painting and discussion with the artist, the designer started creating a series of sketches regarding the silhouettes for the wearable art piece. The sketches were sent to the professional reviewer for the review critique of the silhouettes and fabric options. A total of six silhouettes were finalized according to the discussion between the designer and the professional reviewer. The designer then developed final fashion illustrations along with the six silhouettes and the textile prints based on the drawing *CN-II*.

In order to collect the trustworthy feedback for the six designs, the designer developed a web-based survey including a detailed description of each design idea, fashion illustrations, score options according to the aesthetic of the design, and open-ended comments. The link of the web-based survey was sent out to the artist, the professional reviewer and the industrial designer to that each could the score aesthetic concept and reflections for each design. The designer collected the quantitative and qualitative data to compare with her own self-reflections about each design idea.

One of the designs was rated the most successful design. According to the comments and suggestion about that design, the designer modified the fashion illustration and sent back to the review critique members through email for the second round of review. There were three rounds

of reviews via emails until the design was agreed by each group member. The aims of the reviews were to determine whether the: (a) the wearable art expressed the spirit of the drawing, (b) wearable art reflected the overall aesthetics, (c) wearable art achieved the initial goal of the design, and (d) fabrications were appropriate to represent the concepts of the design.

The prints were engineered and printed using digital textile printing technology on cotton sateen and silk organza. The 3D model of the shoulder pieces was created by the industrial designer and printed by the designer using a 3D printer (*MakerBot: Replicator Z18*). The final garment was constructed by the designer. Photos of the wearable art were taken and sent to each review critique member via email for the final written review. Each member agreed that the final garment successfully expressed the spirit and the techniques of the initial drawing through a combination of digital textile printing and 3D printing technologies. Figure 1 illustrates the design process of this collaborative project and the relations of design concepts and the role of the group member.

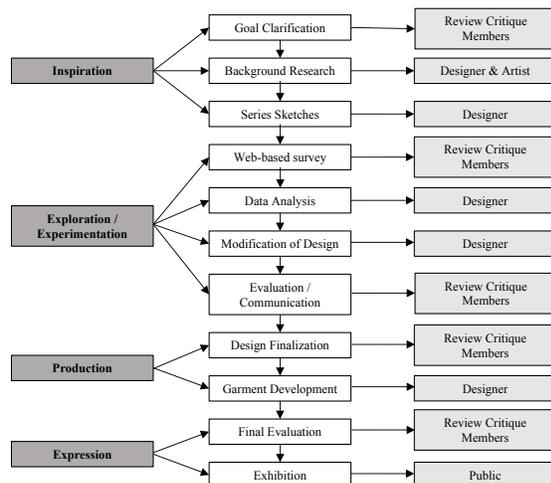


Figure 1. Design Process of the Collaborative Project

of the wearable art reflects the positive outcomes of the collaboration. Such outcomes include: a) sharing different perspectives of each group members to enrich the design ideas, b) improving ability to deal with complexity of creating the wearable art, c) learning new knowledge through the communications, evaluations, and practices and d) ensuring the wearable art reflecting the inspiration appropriately. In addition, the design process for this wearable art pieces provides a framework and an effective way for fashion design educators to create collaborative projects in fashion design courses and improve students' learning outcomes.

## References:

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## Conclusion

Creating fine art and designing wearable art are usually considered individual creative activities, representing the culture, beliefs, and lifestyles of the artist and designer. However, more and more fashion designers or artists seek the opportunities for collaboration in different fields. Collaboration with individuals in different fields can result in a variety of outcomes, but this study demonstrated a method of conducting design research using a web-based survey, review critique comments and conversations between a group of individuals. To ensure an effective collaboration, group members must understand their roles in the collaboration and perform their proprietary competences in the collaboration activities (Dodgson, 1994). The resulting quality