

Reed into It

Lindsay Shaughnessy, Helen Koo, and Pamela Ulrich, Auburn University, USA

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This reed dress and title were developed to suggest to viewers that they think (read) about all of the materials used in the garments they wear, as well as all of the work that goes into making those garments. Designers all over the world create things for people's enjoyment and admiration. However, can these things truly be enjoyed if there is no knowledge of the many details about the process of the design's development? My piece was created to invoke appreciation for the intentionality of all techniques, materials, and skills that a designer may choose to include in their work so that we may appreciate fashion and art to its fullest.

The reeds were the first thing chosen for the design. It seemed that the boldest statement, in regard to materials, that could be made would be most relevant in terms of the effect on the environment. Because of that, I chose natural materials to intentionally create a piece that was reflective of the environment. I had to try many different types,



widths, and thicknesses of reeds to find the one that could be molded to create the shapes. The weaving technique also had to be chosen very carefully while evaluating the various types of reeds. Each reed was judged by its ability to be curved and interlaced, and then also for its appearance after being stained.



The selected reeds are 1/2" strips of wood. They were woven to create a top and skirt. Then they were colored with a natural stain that was created with vinegar, water, pennies, and steel wool. To contour the stiff reeds,

they had to be wetted. A temporary chicken wire structure was created to help control the curving of the reeds to make the skirt, countering their tendency to not hold the curve as other reeds were intertwined. Clear gorilla glue and a natural thread were used to secure the top panel of the dress in place and to create a fan effect in the back of the skirt. The leather under dress was needed both to provide modesty and to serve as cushion between the reeds and the body, thereby making it wearable.