

Title: Morning Tide

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Measurements: Waist: 27³/₄" Bust: 36" Hip: 38" Waist to shoulder: 15¹/₂"

Mentor Statement:

I have mentored this undergraduate design student for the last two years in their exploration of a wide range of textile printing and dyeing techniques. In particular, the student is interested in finding more sustainable approaches to naturally dyeing synthetic textiles that have the possibility of being recycled, like polyesters. Initially, I was uncertain about this approach as polyester is not known to take natural dyes particularly well; however, this student was determined and developed a method to successfully dye polyester crepe using rusted recycled metal shards, indigo and cochineal with iron mordant. My guidance and mentorship of design students pushes them to consider the productive possibilities of integrating both textile and apparel design in their creative process. While my primary teaching focuses on textile printing and dyeing, I always require students to carefully, critically and creatively consider the textile's end-use. *Morning Tide*, is part of a larger collection that succeeds both aesthetically and conceptually by emphasizing water and asking us as consumers and witnesses of this design to reconsider the environmental impact of dyeing practices.

Design Statement:

Morning Tide is a look from a 6-piece collection called *Temporal*. The entire collection is inspired by the ocean tide and the life and beauty that the meeting of water and land creates. It captures the beauty of something seemingly mundane. This manifests itself in an ecosystem sustained by the shallow waters, the creation of smoothed pieces pebbles and coral from the undulating motion of the waves, as well as leaving simple yet beautiful marks in the sand. *Morning Tide* interprets the ambiance of the low, morning tide by invoking a soothing and tranquil feeling with a soft silhouette along with relaxed shell-inspired tones.

The fabric is a polyester crepe colored using a variety of natural dyes. Polyester is a challenging fiber when it comes to dyeing, and particularly when using natural dyes; however, I was determined to experiment with the possibilities of naturally dyeing polyester because this is a synthetic fiber that can be made from recycled materials. The design process therefore involved much experimentation, trial and error. I began by dyeing the fabric with cochineal in a case iron pot. The iron created a mordanting effect, which saddened the cochineal magenta into a subdued

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gray-purple hue. I then spread recycled metals shards along the edge of the fabric. I soaked the shards on top of the fabric using a mixture of salt-water and vinegar, thus dyeing the crepe a variegated rusty orange. The fabric was then dip dyed in an indigo bath four times at different lengths to create an organic splash of blue at the hem of the dress, mimicking a wave of water.

Everyday, thousands of factories in the fashion industry pollute waters by using synthetic dyes to get bright and colorful hues. This renders effluent water useless for drinking and agricultural irrigation and increases water turbidity, hindering photosynthesis processes and thereby harming surrounding ecosystems (Kant 2012). But this doesn't mean we must sacrifice the beauty of apparel to protect the environment. The wastewater from dyeing this garment will not be harmful to the environment because all of the dyes used come from natural sources and are more sustainable. The dress design reminds us of the fluidity and fragile nature of our water sources. *Morning Tide* shows that clothes do not always have to be dyed with the vibrant colors of synthetic dyes to be beautiful, and reminds us of our responsibility to re-think coloring techniques.

References:

Kant, Rita. (2012). Textile dyeing industry an environmental hazard. *Natural Science*, 4(1), 22-26.



