

## Sunrise over Rainbow Patch

Anna Perry, Colorado State University

*Key words:* Sustainability, textile innovation, couture techniques

### Measurements

Bust = 34.5 inches, waist = 25.5 inches, hip = 35.5 inches, length = 58 inches.

### Design statement

#### *Contextual review and concept.*

Designers have used old clothing or recycled materials to redesign a new dress (e.g., Boorady, 2015; Hahn, 2015). Designers have also used digital printing method to transform an image or a scene to a dress (e.g., Parsons, 2015; San, 2015). However, no designers has combined the above two aspects together and explored how to use recycled materials to transform a scene into a dress. Therefore, the purpose of the current design was to use recycled materials to make a scene, sunrise and red clouds over a rainbow patch, in a sustainable dress.

#### *Process, technique, and execution.*

The design process included problem identification and prototype development (Parsons & Campbell, 2004). At the problem identification phase, the designer's department met a problem. A local apparel manufacturer donated two huge bags of multiple single-color fleece fabric scraps, from 1\*4 inches to 4\*2 inches, to the designer's department. Because the size of the scraps were too small, the two bags of scraps were still in the sewing lab after one semester. Nobody wanted to use them. These scraps were going to the landfill. The designer took the fabric scraps to her office and began to consider this question: how to use these leftover small scraps to make a valuable design? Sketches were drawn. Small sample effects were tested.

Sustainable apparel includes reused apparel and apparel made from recycled materials (Fletcher, 2008). At the prototype development phase, recycled felt and an old gown were purchased from a thrift store. The recycled felt was purchased to add the colors of the fabric scraps to the apparel under construction. The old gown was redesigned. The hem was shortened and the volume of the gown was expanded. Fabric scraps and recycled felt were used to make colorful fabric rolls. For example, a half-inch width orange fabric strap with a half-inch width yellow recycled felt were slightly off overlapped and rolled together as a fabric circle, looking like a lollipop. Hundreds of colorful fabric rolls were attached to the bottom of the gown, representing rainbow patch. Red fleece layers, which were made of fabric scraps, surround the waist, representing red clouds. A symbolic sun, which was also made from fabric scraps, was attached on the garment top,

representing a sun rising effect. The entire dress displayed a scene of sun and red clouds over a rainbow patch.

***Aesthetic properties and visual impact.***

To achieve balance and unity, the dress was constructed on a dress form. Details and proportion were slightly adjusted. Principles of color and design were applied. Fabric rolls were made by rolling a piece of dark color fleece scrap and a piece of light color recycled felt together. From the dress' right to left side, the fabric rolls were arranged from cool colors (green and blue) to warm colors (red and orange). From the dress bottom to top, the fabric rolls were arranged from dark color (black, deep rose) to light color (light yellow and white). These arrangements created a visually interesting rainbow pattern. The emphasis point was the sunrise over the layers of clouds, which stands out by contrasting with the dark blue gown and catches the viewer's attention.

***Cohesion.***

In summary, by applying color and design principles, the current design integrated recycled materials to make a scene, sunrise and red clouds over rainbow patch, to create an aesthetic pleasant cohesive sustainable art-wear.

***Design contribution and innovation.***

This design contributed to what is known in sustainable fashion: make throwaways back into art. Rather than using a digital printing method, this design contributed to the apparel design field by showing an original way to use fabric straps to make a scene in a sustainable design.

Reference

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