



Fashion Design: A Guide to the Industry and Creative Process

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Chapter 3 Activities

Activity 1: Narrative theme

Team project (max. 3 persons) or individual project

Brief:

For this project, you will delve deep into the potential of narrative themes as a valuable approach to creative inspiration. You will explore a narrative theme of your choice, and will develop ample visual research for it, as necessary for the fueling of an extensive creative process.

Objectives:

- Gain familiarity with the properties and functions of narrative themes as a source of visual inspiration.
- Apply a variety of techniques toward the gathering of diverse creative research.

Strategy / Steps:

- 1) Start by establishing the central “narrative” upon which your theme will be based. This can be structure around any of the following:
 - A character from a movie, television series, or literary work;
 - A line from a poem or a song lyric;
 - A historical period or artistic movement;
 - Current events;
 - A random combination of words (e.g. “Seahorses in Space”).

Your central theme statement should be articulated in a brief sentence or phrase, which gives a sense of where you are heading, but leaves plenty of room for creative play.

- 2) Brainstorm your chosen theme fully, listing all possible elements that can connect to it, including all individual items relevant to silhouette, shape, colors, surfaces, materials, patterns, garment details, construction elements, styling, and overall mood. Be very thorough in this process; it is much better to have too many directions to work with than too few.
- 3) Gather or create original image research to visualize all elements listed through the brainstorming process. Each item listed should be considered as a jumping-off point, to be used to generate ample and diverse research. Consider all possible sources of visual material, including library and internet research, covering art, historical, and vintage sources, ethnic and religious sources, youth culture, current fashion, nature, and the built environment. Gather only images that can be printed out in good resolution (A4 page or 8.5x11 inches, at 300 dpi/ppi). The initial collection of research should include no fewer than 100 inspirational images relevant to your chosen theme. Keep in mind that designers regularly print out all their visual research and cover the walls of their studio with it, so as to fully immerse themselves in their chosen theme for a season.

As you gather imagery, allow further exploration of directions which may appear as a result of the initial research process, but that you may have overlooked in the original brainstorming process. Keep all research relevant to your theme.

Apply techniques for the development of original research, including observational drawing, photography, videography, or abstract visualization, as relevant to your chosen theme and brainstorming directions.



- 4) Once you have fully exhausted all possible avenues of visual research relevant to your chosen theme, identify the strongest images that communicate your theme most effectively, and compile them in a portfolio-ready Concept/Theme board using Adobe Photoshop or similar design software.

Deliverables:

- A collection of creative visual research (minimum 100 high-quality images) relevant to the chosen theme, which will form the basis for a thorough creative design process.
- A portfolio-ready Concept/Theme board, clearly communicating the chosen theme to a professional audience.

Estimated time required: approx. 1–2 weeks



Activity 2: Conceptual approaches

Individual project

Brief:

In this activity, you will be challenged to reinvent the way fashion design can be done. You are tasked with questioning the standard process of fashion design development, traditionally involving narrative theme or lifestyle inspiration, brainstorming, visual research, croquis sketching, and 3D execution through moulage, traditional patternmaking, and/or garment fitting. You will conceptualize and apply a unique and innovative method of design creation, in the execution of a portfolio-ready capsule collection of 6–8 looks.

Objectives:

- Gain familiarity with the traditional process of fashion design development.
- Structure and articulate an innovative conceptual approach to fashion design creation.
- Implement a unique conceptual approach in the development of portfolio-ready designs.

Strategy / Steps:

- 1) Start by researching the “traditional” approach to fashion design development. Identify the sequence of steps employed by most design teams to generate new fashion product ideas.
- 2) Identify ways in which the “traditional” approach identified in step 1 can be questioned or restructured, to lead to completely new, unique, and unexpected design outcomes. Redefining the design process may involve:
 - Removing a design process step;
 - Changing the order in which design processes take place;
 - Replacing a design process with an entirely new technique or approach;
 - Any combination of two or more of the options above.
- 3) Articulate your chosen conceptual approach to fashion design in a clear written statement or series of process steps. For example:
 - “This collection will be created by collecting iconic fashion garments from local thrift stores, and then either magnifying them or shrinking them by a randomly assigned percentage.”
 - “This collection will be created by implementing zero-waste apparel realization techniques.”
- 4) Apply your unique creative process (concept statement) to the design development of a broad variety of garments. Stick to your concept statement and do not deviate from it. Develop a diverse range of apparel options, taking into account a collection’s need for a multitude of garment categories (outerwear, woven tops, woven bottoms, dresses, tailoring, knitwear etc.). Be sure to develop enough individual items to support the final execution of a design capsule of 6–8 complete looks.
- 5) Document all your design explorations in a creative process book. Style the individual garments you created into a capsule collection of 6-8 complete looks, and present the resulting capsule as a portfolio-ready series of presentation boards, including concept, customer, materials and colors, process, lineup, flats, editorial illustrations (optional), and range board.

**Deliverables:**

A creative process book, driven by a unique conceptual approach to design development.

A portfolio presentation of a capsule collection of 6–8 complete looks, developed by applying a unique conceptual design approach. The portfolio presentation should include:

- Inspiration/Concept board
- Customer profile
- Materials and colors board
- Overview of creative process
- Lineup of rendered croquis for 6–8 complete looks
- Technical flats or specs for every garment, including front and back views and detail close-ups where necessary
- Editorial illustrations (optional)
- Range board.

Estimated time required: 4–8 weeks