



Fashion Design: A Guide to the Industry and Creative Process

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Chapter 4 Activity

Designing through material exploration

Team project (max. 5 persons) or individual project

Brief:

This assignment is focused on exploring the creative potential of original material development as a central tool to designing innovative and exciting fashion. Based on an inspiration of your choice, you will be challenged to apply a broad variety of original material techniques toward the execution of innovative fabrications, which are then applied into a capsule collection of apparel.

Objectives:

- Gain fluency in the processes and uses of competitive analysis and fashion research.
- Develop competency in a variety of original material development processes.
- Apply unique and original materials into innovative fashion designs, suitable for a chosen market segment.

Strategy / Steps:

- 1) Select a concept to work from, identifying whether you wish to explore a narrative theme, a lifestyle inspiration or a conceptual approach for this collection. Identify and collect all the necessary visual research you will need to support ample design exploration. While collecting research about your chosen concept, also spend some time looking at the types of materials currently employed by the brands you would consider as your competitors. Remember that if these brands are already using certain techniques, your own consumers can readily purchase these materials somewhere else. Your task will therefore be to engage your consumer creatively, by developing more exciting, unique, and appealing materials for your line.
- 2) Identify a color story for your collection. Select the 8–10 colors that tell the story of your concept most effectively. Be keenly aware that you may need to start this process by sourcing yarns, embellishments, and base fabrications which are already in the proposed hues, otherwise you will have to use dyeing processes to color-match the various textile elements you will explore.
- 3) Apply your visual research into extensive original material development process. Your experimentation must include at least half of the following categories:
 - Woven materials (e.g. tweed, stripes, or checks)
 - Jacquard/brocade patterns (visualized on paper)
 - Hand-knitted materials (e.g. cable, waffle, ribs, stripes, etc.)
 - Patterns for multi-color knits (intarsia, Fair Isle, etc.)
 - Non-traditional fabrications (felting, crochet, macramé, etc.)
 - Dip-dyeing variations
 - Resist-dyeing (e.g. Batik)
 - Tie-dyeing variations (e.g. Shibori)
 - Fabric painting
 - Print patterns (including all-over prints, placement prints, and engineered prints—visualized on paper)
 - Embellishment (combining embroidery, beading, sequin work, glued embellishments, etc.)



- Appliqué variations
- Sewn manipulations (e.g. quilting, pintucking, smocking, etc.)
- Heat-set manipulations (e.g. crushing, pleating, embossing, etc.)
- Surface treatments (e.g. washing, brushing, distressing, etc.)
- Laser-cutting (e.g. raster etching or perforation)
- New material processes (e.g. 3D printing, solution-based materials, etc.)

Document all experiments (even the unsuccessful ones) in a thorough creative process book.

Consider that your capsule collection will require a variety of weights of fabrics, suitable for a multitude of garment types.

- 4) Once all material development has been completed, apply your original materials into creative design ideation processes to generate exciting garments and looks. Explore a multitude of techniques of design ideation. Document all your creative exploration in the process book for this assignment.
- 5) Style, edit, and present your capsule collection (6–8 looks) as a portfolio-ready series of presentation boards, including concept, customer, materials and colors, process, lineup, flats, editorial illustrations (optional), and range board.

Deliverables:

An extensive process book, documenting the research, exploration, problem-solving, and design ideation generated for this assignment.

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: approx. 4–8 weeks.