

RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT BRIEFS

A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

You can choose any of the following six projects to help ensure a deeper understanding of the topic with students. We are thrilled to include a project contributed by Jay Quek, Senior Lecturer of Fashion Design, Raffles Design Institute, Singapore; Jennifer Whitty, Sustainable Fashion Systems Professor, Designer, Researcher and Writer, Parsons School of Design, The New School and Holly McQuillan, Fashion Designer & Author, who are part of our global network of educators and experts championing the move towards sustainable fashion. The inclusion of their important work further supports our learning platform and encourages the sharing of best practices across the world. We hope you will draw inspiration from their contribution to your teaching!

For each project brief, you are provided with guidelines which include the brief itself, the goal of the project and the deliverables. The layout of the brief is in a ready-to-print format, which you may choose to print directly and share with your students. Or, you may prefer to adapt the content -changing the length and adjusting the deliverables of the project to fit in to your own syllabus. You can also add assessment criteria depending on your course requirements.

We advise that you ask students to do a presentation at the end of the project to allow them to reflect and review on their learnings and share with one another.

TOPIC

CREATING A NEW LOOK USING SECONDHAND GARMENTS

TIME

1 week

DISCIPLINE

Design, Styling, Communications

GOAL

To understand the value of used, out-dated clothing for reuse in a contemporary setting, and to broaden experience in different types of textile sourcing

BRIEF

Source secondhand garments that are no longer in style and use them to create one look either for yourself or for a friend based on a current fashion trend, for example, taking inspiration from colour, silhouette, mood and/or print. You can source your clothes from secondhand shops, vintage stores, your own wardrobe, or ask friends and family for their unwanted clothes.

Use the skills of styling and minimum alternations (rather than redesign), to transform your original garments. For example, you might cut off sleeves, shorten the length or perhaps add darts to create a modern look.

DELIVERABLES

- A sketchbook documenting the research of your selected trend and the development of the ideas for the new look
- A photo series recording the original garments and the process of change including any alterations made
- A final photo of the look

REFERENCE



Slideshow #T4RC-08-1



Slideshow #T4RC-08-2

Redress, The 365 Challenge

redress.com.hk/the-365-challenge/

- The 365 Challenge is a one-year secondhand clothing challenge seeing Redress' Founder, Christina Dean, wearing 100% dumped and discarded secondhand clothes to promote the "Redress it, don't bin it" concept.
- Each month, Christina chose a different theme, working with a fashion KOL who styled her from the 'bins'. For the month of May with the theme 'On Trend', *ELLE Hong Kong* fashion editor, Vivian Lau, was challenged to create looks inspired by the latest trends on the runway.

TOPIC

RECONSTRUCTION WITH UNWANTED JEANS

TIME

2 weeks

DISCIPLINE

Design

GOAL

To understand the value of reusing unwanted garments as a fabric source for new designs to alleviate the dependence on virgin materials, in particular garment types that cause a large proportion of negative environmental impacts during the manufacturing process.

To experiment with the reconstruction technique using multiple pairs of unwanted jeans.

BRIEF

Jeans were originally designed as work wear in the late 19th century but have now become prolific in our wardrobes - an everyday item for all. The full lifecycle of a pair of jeans creates a significant detrimental impact on our environment. According to Levi's, a pair of their 501® jeans uses 3,781 litres of water in its full lifecycle.¹⁷

Reconstructing unwanted jeans is an environmentally sound option because it reduces the need to grow cotton for raw material – a water intensive process – and diverts waste from landfill. Although styles of our jeans may change, the fabrics are completely reusable as they do not change dramatically with shifting trends.

Your brief is to design a new garment using up to five pairs of unwanted jeans. You can source the jeans from charity shops, your own wardrobe, from friends, family or fellow students. Alternatively, contact a jeans supplier or brand for their unwanted samples or unsold stock.

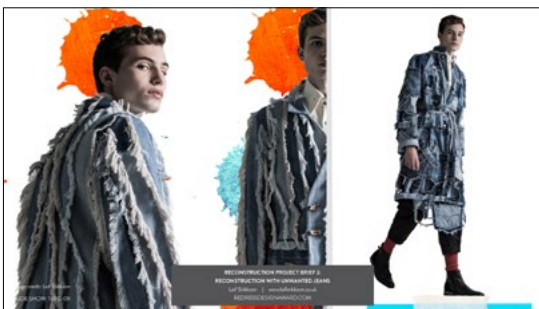
When sourcing and designing, pay attention to the features of the original garments, such as colour, fabric, waistband, zips, pockets and seams, as well as other details which may have contributed to their disposal, such as stains, rips and damages, and consider whether you want to discard them or incorporate them back in as design features. You might want to source some extra pairs for trials.

DELIVERABLES

- A sketchbook documenting the design development including details of the original garments, research of concept, illustrations and production drawings
- One mood board of your design concept
- One presentation board of the lineup drawings of the design
- One final mocked-up garment

REFERENCES

Leif Eriksson | www.leiferiksson.co.uk



Slideshow #T4RC-09

- Leif Eriksson is a UK sustainable fashion brand founded by Catherine Hudson, an alumni of the Redress Design Award. The brand focuses on timeless and handcrafted men's coats and jackets made in the UK using surplus textiles sourced from Europe. For her AW16 collection, Catherine experimented with surplus denim garments to create looks based on the theme "Architexture, with influences of Brutalism".

River Blue | www.riverbluethemovie.com

- *River Blue* is a documentary looking at pollution caused from the fashion industry, particularly the denim industry, and its impact on the world's rivers.

TOPIC

BE INSPIRED BY MARGIELA

TIME

1 day (preferably in a studio)

DISCIPLINE

Design

GOAL

To explore how an everyday, relatively low value item, can be used to create a new design based on Margiela's sock sweater created in 1991

BRIEF

Martin Margiela is considered as a master in reconstruction. His sock sweater, originally created in 1991, was made up of several pairs of surplus vintage military socks that were turned into this perfectly tailored garment. Some considered his use of recovered materials, such as this design, as an 'anti-fashion' statement. The sock sweater became one of his most iconic designs and was later 'replicated' in a mass scale when the fashion house collaborated with H&M in 2012. Although this collection was not manufactured using waste textiles, the replication of this idea demonstrates the appreciation and commercial value of the aesthetic as well as the authenticity of reconstruction design. A DIY version of the sock sweater was also published in *A Magazine curated by Maison Martin Margiela* in June 2004 (see Slideshow #T4RC-03-4 - #T4RC-03-6 of the original garment and the DIY version to understand the construction).

Study the sock sweater, paying attention to the design, cutting and use of colour to find inspiration for your own design.

Your brief is to create a new design made from several pieces of the same everyday and relatively low value textile item, such as socks, headbands, vests, woolly hats or gloves. The items should be waste, either pre-used items or samples sourced by contacting a supplier. Your finished design can be a complete garment or a section of a garment that could be incorporated into a future project, for example, a neckline, shoulder area, cuff or sleeve.

You might begin by sourcing your textiles before developing your ideas, as your source of textile waste will likely inspire your final design outcome.

- You are expected to prepare your idea and materials in advance and then create and complete the final piece in one day in studio.

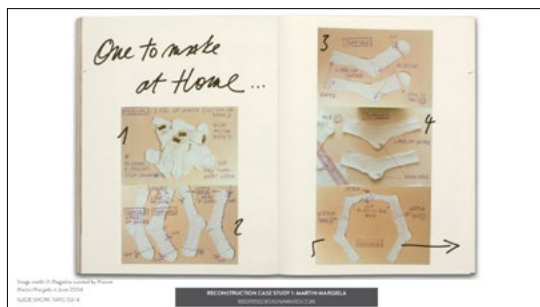
DELIVERABLES

- A sketchbook of the development of your ideas and relevant research
- A finished mocked-up garment or a part of a garment

REFERENCES

David Flamée (2011), Maison Martin Margiela Do-it-yourself Sock Sweater
blog.momu.be/2011/exhibition/margiela-knitting-instructions/

A Magazine curated by Maison Martin Margiela (2004)



Slideshow #T4RC-03-4 - #T4RC-03-6
Original Garment and the DIY Version

TOPIC

ANALYSING GARMENT CONSTRUCTION

TIME

1 week

DISCIPLINE

Design, Branding, Marketing and
Communication, Buying

GOAL

To investigate how the changes in clothing production and consumption in recent years have influenced quality, construction and design of clothing and how these changes might affect your decision to use garments for reconstruction design

BRIEF

Fast fashion is a term that refers to low-cost, low-quality clothing that is rapidly produced to replicate catwalk trends within a few weeks of shows. It has become a phenomenon in the last couple of decades and has had a significant influence on how clothes are now designed and produced, and a major impact on how consumers now buy, wear and dispose of their clothes.

Source two items of clothing, one vintage (preferably pre-1980s that you can source from the wardrobe's of older members of family or friends, or from a vintage shop) and a more recent and low-cost purchase i.e. less than 2 years old. Make your own comparison of the items based on the questions below and write an essay of your analysis. You should incorporate pictures of the two garments to support your comparisons.

- How are the garments constructed?

- Stitching
- Fabric quality
- Cutting
- Finishing
- Seams and seam allowance

- How would the differences affect the possibilities of creating new reconstructed garments from these pieces?
- Do you think these garments will still be around in 50 years time? Please explain your answer.

DELIVERABLES

- A 500-800 word essay with supporting images

REFERENCES

Elizabeth Cline (2012), *Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion*
Gordon K. Farley, Jennifer Farley and Colleen Hill (2015), *Sustainable Fashion – Past, Present and Future*

TOPIC

RECONSTRUCTED UNIFORM SHIRT PROJECT

TIME

3 days

DISCIPLINE

Design

GOAL

To study garment constructions by exploring details of an everyday garment through reconstruction and how this technique enables the extension of a garment's lifecycle.

BRIEF

Reconstruction is the process of making new clothes from previously worn garments and is considered to be a sustainable design method. During this workshop session, students will reconstruct discarded white uniform shirts into a new and innovative garment.

- Day 1 - Exploration & Experimentation

Each student will be provided with two shirts to be draped directly onto the mannequin. (Alternatively, students can be asked to bring in two worn shirts.) Experiment with interesting shapes and volumes by folding, pinning, tucking and cutting the fabric. Explore using the original shirt details (such as the collar, cuffs, sleeves, pocket and plackets) in innovative and unexpected ways. Students are also encouraged to experiment with creating surface textures, prints and patterns that would make the final garment more unique. Create sketches and take photos of possible design directions.

- Day 2 - Realisation & Creation

Decide on the design direction and reconstruct the two shirts to create a new garment.

- Day 3 - Presentation & Evaluation

Present the final reconstructed garment on the mannequin with the developmental photographs and design sketches for a group critique in the final session.

DELIVERABLES

- Final garment presented on a mannequin, neatly sewn, pressed and finished.
- A3 sized design boards to showcase the design and development process.
- 5 minute classroom presentation describing the creation of the reconstructed garment.

TOPIC

CONJOINED, SPLICED AND PIECED TECHNIQUES

TIME

1-2 weeks

DISCIPLINE

Design

GOAL

To explore reconstruction techniques using post consumer clothing waste.

To foster engagement and ultimately participation in fashion concepts outside of the narrow lens of consumption and the linear approach of mainstream industry.

BRIEF

The reconstruction technique honours clothing waste as a resource, instilling resourcefulness in its makers. Your brief is to create a garment using post consumer clothing waste, with one of the three techniques below. These techniques can be applied to any given clothing, including post-consumer corporate uniforms.

- The Conjoined Technique <https://vimeo.com/125533143>
- The Spliced Technique <https://vimeo.com/125533145>
- The Pieced Technique <https://vimeo.com/125533144>

Each technique sits on a sliding scale of zero waste to minimal waste to allow for variance in the quality of the post consumer clothing that is your raw material. Consider the suitability of each raw material fragment of the technique. The 'Pieced' technique' allows you to work around the 'flaws' in the post consumer clothing as it allows the use of a more traditional flat pattern making approach where you can cut panel pieces to an appropriate size. The 'Conjoined' and 'Spliced' techniques rely on good quality clothing as raw material as none of the original is removed - two or more are sewn together. The videos above should be thought of as a starting point or guide.

The most important thing when working with these techniques is to know your materials - examine their stretch. Be true to your materials, consider how much you want to celebrate the provenance or history with functional and aesthetic nods to their previous life. Or if the original clothing has been overly 'loved', you may need to remove or fix parts of it to transform it into a new item. You are therefore strongly encouraged to adapt, remix and make changes accordingly, depending on the wear and tear on the clothing. For example, removing certain areas or adding pleating, gathering or other methods. If you need to add trims from external items, try to improve your garment's overall sustainability by finding end-of-roll or cloth from past projects to do this.

Most of all, embrace the beauty of imperfection and having something that tells a story, was rescued from a destiny of becoming waste and is now truly one of a kind.

DELIVERABLES

- Final garment sewn, pressed and finished. Possible garment types include:
 - Dresses: Conjoined long dress, Spliced Dress, Spliced sweater dress
 - Tops: Sliced t-shirt, Conjoined cardigan, Spliced shirt, Conjoined shirt
 - Leggings: Pieced leggings
- A record (quantitative and qualitative data) of how much time it took you to make everything as a tool to share with others in whatever method is appropriate (online, physical exhibition etc.)
- 1-2 page write up on the process and how you have embraced the provenance or history of the original clothing and how this has altered its function and or aesthetics.
- A short video - in the spirit of open source Creative Commons - that demonstrates your adaptation of the original reconstruction technique - including any changes you made to your original design to share on social media channels, cite and reference, tag* or link to Space Between, Jennifer Whitty and Redress. Tell the community you have used the techniques so these processes take on a new life and share this as an alternative narrative for fashion.

* Social Media Handles

- Space Between
 - Instagram: @space__between
 - Facebook: www.facebook.com/spacebetween.co.nz
 - Twitter: @TeamBetween
 - #spacebetween

- Jennifer Whitty, from 'The Fundamentals Range' and Space Between
 - Instagram: jennifer_whitty_
 - #jenniferwhitty
 - LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-whitty-5909231b/
 - Twitter: @JenniferWhitty

- Redress
 - Instagram: @getredressed
 - Facebook: @redressdesignaward
 - #RedressDesignAward
 - Weibo: 缮Redress

REFERENCES

Whitty, J (2019) “A spotlight on: Space Between: fashion activism in New Zealand” in Global Perspectives on Sustainable Fashion by Gwilt, Alice Payne, A & Anicet Ruthschilling, E (eds) Bloomsbury.

Whitty, J. (2017). Operating in the third space; the Space Between. In R. Earley, & K. Goldsworthy (Eds.), Circular Transitions Proceedings (pp. 32-45). London: University of the Arts London. Retrieved from www.circulartransitions.org/

Whitty, J., & McQuillan, H. (2016). Models: Fundamentals project: Space Between. Fashion activism through entrepreneurial artefacts and information toolkits for open fashion. [Upcycled clothing, video, website, post-consumer clothing and textile waste]. Making Circles exhibition, Circular Transitions, Chelsea College of Arts & Tate Britain, London: University of the Arts London. Retrieved from www.circulartransitions.org/