



A+D

ZERO Waste

Fashion Re-Patterned

Curated by Arti Sandhu MARCH 3 – APRIL 16, 2011

Columbia
COLLEGE CHICAGO

ZERO Waste *Fashion Re-Patterned*

Contributing designers and artists include:

A Magazine

Nick Cave

Padmaja Krishnan

Maison Martin Margiela

Holly McQuillan

Derick Melander

Refinity + Berber Soepboer

Timo Rissanen

Since Charles Worth launched his first collection in 1858, the fashion cycle has gradually accelerated; today, the fashion industry provides us with ever-cheaper clothes at a dizzying speed. Planned obsolescence is perceived as an inherent part of fashion; a new season's offerings are designed to cancel out whatever came the season before. While volumes of second-hand clothing are recycled and shipped to the developing world, thus positively providing an affordable source of clothing for the world's poorest, the planet—the only one available to us—cannot sustain these volumes.

Waste comes into existence through categorizing and sorting: when we deem something no longer desirable or necessary, it becomes waste (Strasser 1999: 5). It can be easy to make these decisions without too much consideration; from packaging to clothing to furniture to white goods, things exit our lives with relative nonchalance. Popping over to the mall to buy a replacement or to simply add to a burgeoning assemblage of things—is convenient and increasingly inexpensive. 'Doing the right thing'—recycling paper and glass, for example, can lead to a false sense that everything is fine. Recycling does not address patterns and volumes of consumption; in some instances it may indirectly encourage them to escalate by way of misguided absolutism.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (2010), in the US approximately 12 million tons of textile waste was sent to landfill in 2008, accounting for 5.0 percent of total municipal solid waste. While the overall amount of textile waste supports a thriving reclamation and recycling industry, the efforts of which should be applauded, this staggering figure raises the questions: do we need all of this, and how much longer can this go on for? The brief answers are: no, and not any longer. Scenes from 'Hoarders' (A&E TV) underline the situation; clinical hoarding as a psychological disorder is a relatively new

phenomenon. One does wonder what links might exist between the disorder and the ever-escalating levels of production and consumption—the proliferation of stuff that we're exposed to daily—that the world has witnessed since the Second World War.

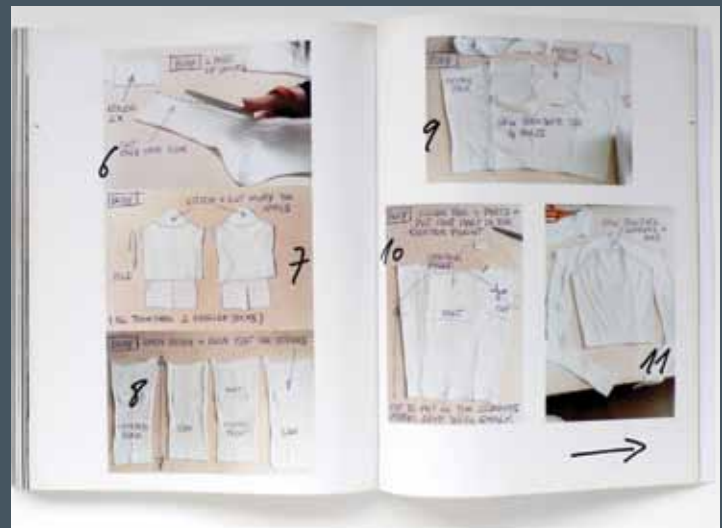
While it is easy—and counter-productive—to paint a pessimistic picture of the state of things, this exhibition demonstrates a broad spectrum of creative approaches and possible solutions to the countless problems relating to waste in fashion, decidedly creating a platform for a critical but inherently optimistic future vision for fashion. The participating designers and artists examine fashion and textile waste from a number of perspectives within a range of contexts, demonstrating that a richness of solutions is within reach. From some works, real-world applications emerge, while others serve as stimuli for us to consider fashion and waste in new ways.

Pre-consumer textile waste is created during manufacture of fiber, yarn or fabric. Whilst the goal should be to reduce and eventually eliminate, where possible, all of these, fabric waste may be the most significant kind to address, as it embodies the investments of fabric as well as fiber and yarn manufacture. When garments are manufactured by cutting and sewing fabric, approximately 15 percent of the fabric used is left behind on the cutting table. Recycling scrap fabric is arguably an inefficient way of harnessing the investments made during fiber, yarn and fabric manufacture, particularly in light of the further investments of labor, energy and other resources required by recycling. Furthermore, the original function of fabric—providing us with the particular properties of a given fabric in a given situation—is often not retained through recycling. Palmer's (2001: 205) proposition of "universal recycling" calls for recycling both material and function. Through conventional recycling value and quality are degraded, and much pre-consumer textile recycling, while better than sending the waste to landfill, is better

A Magazine

One to Make at Home, Pg 192-195

From A Magazine, Issue#1, 2004,
Curated by Maison Martin Margiela,
Pgs 192-197





Padmaja Krishnan

Rippled Skirt, 2010

'kosa' wild silks from of central India

Photo credit: Koushik Sarkar

Padmaja Krishnan

No Pattern 'Kali' Jacket, 2010

'kosa' wild silks from of central India

Photo credit: Koushik Sarkar



described as downcycling (McDonough & Braungart 2002: 56-9). Therefore, reducing and reusing waste are always preferable to recycling, with waste elimination the ultimate goal. Holly McQuillan's approach to zero-waste in fashion proposes creative patterncutting as an integral aspect of the fashion design process. When the three garments, trousers, top and dress, are cut from the one marker, no scrap is left behind. McQuillan's work highlights that zero-waste fashion design is not a mere technique but a philosophy of designing and making clothes. Nor is zero-waste a limit to creativity in design; it can in fact open up unforeseen opportunities for highly creative fashion design. This frugality in design and making—but not aesthetics—that McQuillan demonstrates is as old as clothes. At some point during the industrial revolution we forgot it.

Having come to the fore during the past two decades, today the fast fashion sector enables us to purchase and discard clothing in quantities not seen before, by producing ever-cheaper clothes at an ever-faster pace. The industry and media, governed by an economy based on never-ending growth, encourage an untenable level and pace in the turnover of clothing. To call this consumption is misguided, as most clothes are not consumed metabolically (Fry 2009: 192). The period of ownership is often too short for a garment to be worn out, leading to ever-increasing mountains of post-consumer textile waste. The Artisanal line from Maison Martin Margiela amounts to more than repurposing second-hand garments, accessories and other, at times unexpected materials (a 'fur' jacket made from tinsel garlands, for example). These pieces serve as a powerful visual reminder of the volumes of stuff cluttering our lives—there will be no shortage of material for the line in the foreseeable future. Traces of what once was make one question the ways in which one satisfies one's needs. Needs, such as those for participation and creation that would be more truly fulfilled through immaterial means, are nowadays often satisfied with products such as clothes. The Artisanal line by Margiela points towards fashion design that results in clothes embodying a sustained ability to meet human needs.

While traditionally fashion may be associated with an extraordinary ability to create waste, it need not be so. We need to discover and support environments in which new business models, decoupled from perpetual economic growth, can thrive, in order to create a waste-less future for fashion. Moreover, as the works by Padmaja Krishnan and Maison Martin Margiela remind us, fashion can and should enrich our lives through humor—easily forgotten with the seriousness of much sustainability discussion—contributing towards fashion that Kate Fletcher (2008: 123-6) describes as helping us flourish. There is beauty in humor, just as there is beauty in sustaining humanity and the world within which it exists. Foregrounding the creation of material and immaterial beauty, as this exhibition demonstrates, paves the way forward into a sustainable and sustained future.

– **Timo Rissanen**

Derick Melander

Compression, 2007

8 ft x 24 in x 24 in

Folded second-hand

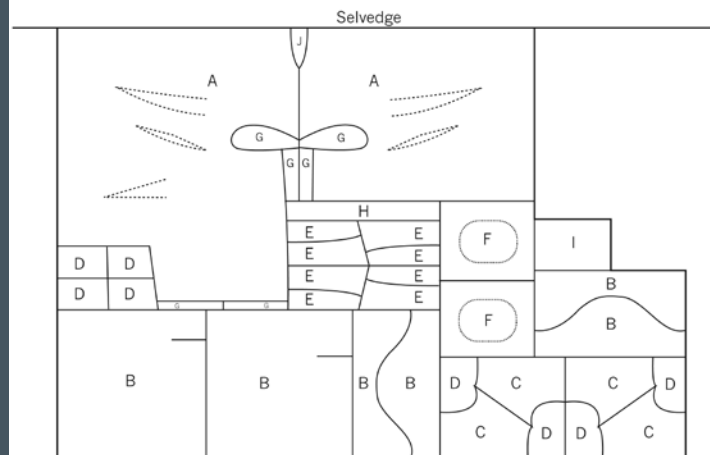
clothing, wood and

steel

800 lbs. of carefully folded, second hand clothing was crisscrossed around a central spine. Each article of clothing was categorized by relative value. The darkest clothing was placed at the bottom of the stack, while the lightest clothing was placed at the top.



Endurance shirt



Fabric: 100% Linen
Fabric width: 135cm
Yield: 176cm

A: Body
B: Sleeve (including top sleeve lining)
C: Yoke
D: Cuff
E: Collar & stand
F: Elbow patch
G: Sleeve placket
H: Internal waist stay
I: Internal back pleat stay
J: CB Yoke appliqué

Dashed lines indicate darts and dart-tucks
Dotted lines indicate fold lines

Timo Rissanen

Endurance Shirt (back detail), 2009

Photo credit: Silversalt

Photographic Services

Timo Rissanen

Endurance Shirt Pattern, 2009

Timo Rissanen is the Assistant Professor of Fashion Design and Sustainability at Parsons The New School for Design.

Prior to Parsons he taught fashion design at UTS in Australia for seven years. Inquisitive patternmaking and cutting, and sustainability concerns inform Rissanen's fashion design practice. From 2001 to 2004 he owned and designed for Usvsu, a menswear label in Sydney, selling to retailers in Australia, Italy and Russia. In 2003 Usvsu won the Mercedes-Benz Start-Up award at Mercedes-Benz Australian Fashion Week. His PhD project is titled Fashion Creation Without Fabric Waste Creation and Rissanen presented a collection of menswear from the project in *Bad Dogs*, a solo exhibition in Sydney in 2008. In 2009 he co-curated *Fashioning Now* in Australia with Alison Gwilt; a book drawing from the project titled *Shaping Sustainable Fashion* will be published by Earthscan in 2011. Rissanen has presented at several international conferences and contributed a chapter to *Sustainable Fashion. Why Now?* Rissanen's work on zero-waste fashion was included in a book by Kate Fletcher and Lynda Grose in 2010. He is co-curating an exhibition of zero-waste fashion design with Holly McQuillan from Massey University, to open in 2011 in New York and New Zealand.

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Maison Martin Margiela

Artisanal ski gloves blouson, 2010 AW06

Photographer: Marina Faust



Nick Cave

Regurgitate series

Untitled, 2007

Recycled dress shirts, buttons, porch screen, plastic tags

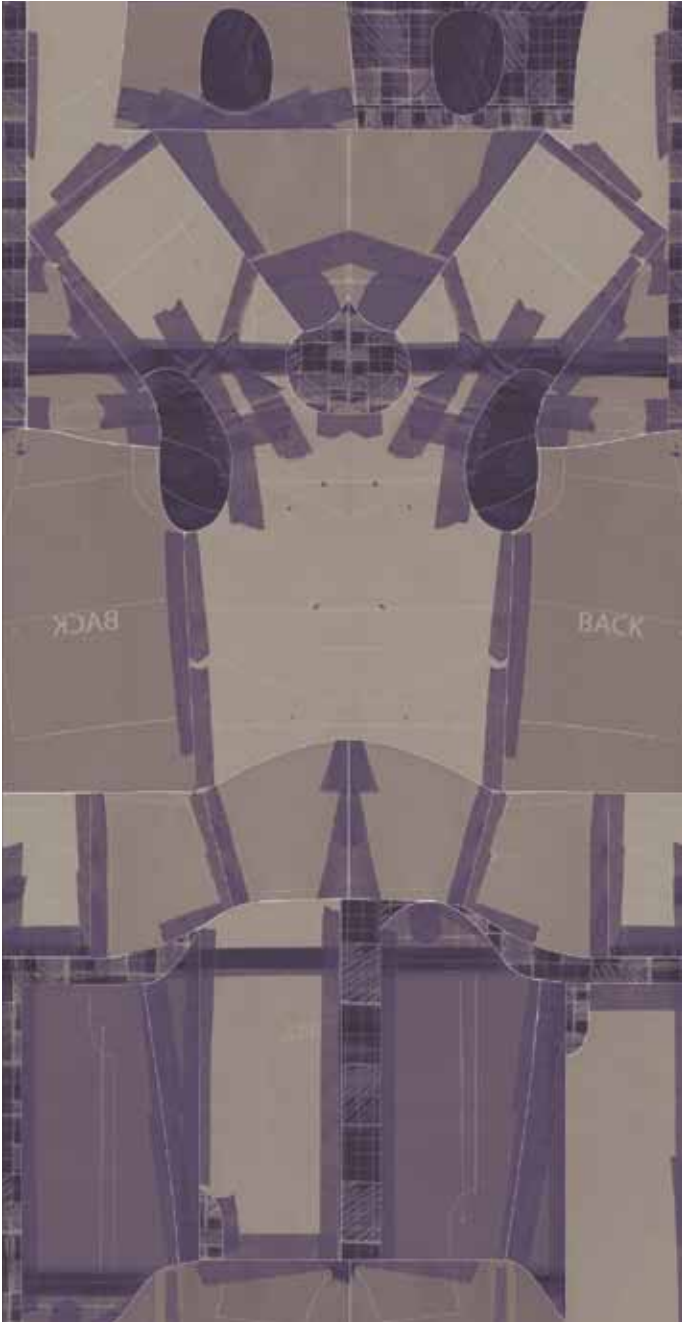
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Holly McQuillan

Twinset, Men digital pattern, 2010

This design exposes the process of design by printing the paper prototyping process onto the final garment in blueprint form.

Illustrator, Photoshop, masking tape, paper

Cover Image:

Fioen van Balgooi (Refinity) and Berber Soepboer

Fragment textiles - Stars Skirt, 2009

Laser cut Cradle to Cradle (C2C) wool flannel

create...
change

This exhibition is sponsored by the Art + Design Department and Fashion Studies Department at Columbia College Chicago. This exhibition is partially supported by an Illinois Arts Council Grant, a state agency. Special thanks to USAgain for their support of this exhibition, www.usagain.com.



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