

Reflection

Fashion is my voice. I am petite, reserved, soft-spoken and not very talkative, in part because I am dyslexic. Dressing up has always been a means to express my identity in ways that do not require words, which don't come easily to me. No need for small talk – I am a walking conversational piece. My sense of style has shaped the person I am today and helped me become more confident, make friends, and advocate for myself. This is why I aspire to be a fashion designer. I want to use my art and skills to help others find themselves, and empower them as it has me. That is why I decided to create my armor collection. I wanted to create a line that made my models feel confident as well as beautiful.

To begin my project I researched the different fashion marketing techniques to broaden my knowledge on brands and how the fashion world slowly changed over time. To my surprise I discovered that luxury brands were losing their influence on others. Smaller brands today have more of a say thanks to technology. As time passes traditions are broken, and the once-tight circle the fashion industry created is now taking down their walls. Today the message of a collection is a lot more important than a label. Many fashion companies are now hiring people with different body sizes, disabilities, and sexualities. Fashion today is more about helping someone express themselves and give them confidence than to belittle others for not having enough money to afford higher brands.

This paper taught me that my message had to be important for my collection. It needed a story, as well as an overall goal. The biggest goal I set for myself was to create two pieces that looked almost professional for my level of skills. I barely had any knowledge in sewing, and in the past I had only made clothing for myself. I chose two of my dearest friends to be my guinea pigs on this adventure. I wanted it to fit like a glove on my models. I also thought that it would be nice if I included my models in the experience of this entire project, so I ended up interviewing them. I asked them what their style represents to them. How would they like to be perceived? What is it like to be a woman today? Lastly, at the end of the project I asked them how this experience was for them, and how my clothing made them feel.

During my project I collaborated with two friends of my mother, Isabelle Wimmers who is a wonderful seamstress, and Eveline Topsakal who is an amazing fashion designer. I asked them if my designs would be doable in the time that I had. At the beginning my designs changed; I was designing a collection that would not be done in 3 months. I also asked them about techniques I would need to apply to make sure my fabric stayed together, as well as how to sew zippers on. The most important thing I asked them was where to measure my models, and finally, which types of fabrics I should look for that would be able to sustain the weight of my metal. They were a huge help! If it wasn't for them I don't think I would of figured it out nor finished.

The end product of my project was more than I ever planned it to be. I managed to finish my two pieces, as well as photograph my models. I created two pieces that I am very proud of. I achieved the vision I had in mind, and my intentions to make my

models feel powerful and badass at the same time was a success. While walking to our photo shoot location we were surrounded by cyclists, dog walkers, and runners who had to stop and admire my two beautiful ladies covered in gold foil, black makeup, and metal. They told me at the end that the experience was amazing, they never felt so empowered. At that very moment, watching my models strut in their new outfits, I had never felt so accomplished. I knew that fashion design was the right industry for me.

If I could do the project over I would manage my time better. I had a hard time coming up with two designs because the fabrics I was imaging were unattainable. They were not yet created, and I sadly did not have a warehouse full of women ready to create my visions. If I had come up with my designs sooner I would have been able to order my supplies earlier as well as have enough supplies. The outcome of my jacket was supposed to have a lot more metal on the studded side, but I did not order enough studs to completely cover my fabric. It can be said that it was enough, but I feel that my jacket doesn't exactly scream armor. It came out more casual than I had planned to. If I was smart enough to start earlier I probably would've made more clothing to my collection instead of just two pieces. I did have enough time to create a little clutch and necklace. Still I would've liked more diversity in my collection.

For the 21st Century Skills I feel that I have improved on High Productivity as well as Tech Literacy. The end products of my entire project was more than I had asked for. I feel that I created two designs that were close to being professionally done for my level of skills. I also drastically improved on my skills with Photoshop. I learned how to show the different fabrics I wanted on my outfits. For example, in Photoshop I

showed that I wanted to use leather for my sleeves on my jacket. For my magazine photos I learned how to remove dark circles and pimples. The 21st century skill I improved the least was Self Direction, specifically sticking to my calendar. I was all over the place and towards the end I was rushing to finish everything.

From this experience I will definitely know how to manage my time at Otis College of Art and Design. As I visited there I was informed that they create three collections at the same time. Being organized is key to creating your own collection. For this project I don't think I have put as much work as I have for any other assignment. I have broadened my skills in sewing, and technology. I also pushed myself to reach for the stars, but at the same time to design something that was realistic. As my mother has always told me, "For each project you do you must plan an idea that is related to skills and knowledge you already know, but to also take one step forward to improve yourself. Reaching for the moon is a long, tough journey. You must take your time and enjoy the stars and galaxy along the way. "

My presentation was nerve racking. I am not a public speaker, I stutter, forget my words, and I turn a beautiful shade of red. I felt a little pressure to present a project that was perfect and professional. Before the presentation I had a lot of people telling me how much they expected from me. I was worried that what I had done was not as the level people imagined. As I showed my designs, and my magazine photos there was a dead silence in the audience. Which concerned me, for other projects there was at least bit of a reaction. Finally, once I showed my articles of clothing in person that's when I recieved a reaction. Thankfully it was positive feedback. I also was persuaded to show

my other piece of clothing that inspired me to create my armor collection which was my mirror collection. I think the presentation gave me the satisfaction that my designs were creative, and that it was not just in my head. I also was really happy to hear that I inspired a Junior to do fashion for her Zenith Project next year.

This entire project and the presentation really gave me the confidence I needed. I learned so much about myself: I learned that I can create the designs I imagined, and that I was innovative enough for the fashion world. I kicked out my biggest fear of being a stylist because I now knew that I was meant to be a designer. I can honestly say that I have never been so happy as I was while watching my models walk in my clothes.

Being dyslexic, I have had to constantly prove to myself and others that I am not stupid, and that I can achieve my goals. This project has finally convinced me that I am a force to be reckoned with, that even though my dyslexia was once seen as a curse, I have claimed it as a gift. Because without it I don't think I would be the person I am today, and I would not have such a passion for fashion.