Project Brief: FINAL

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Senior Studio 1 | Fall 2026

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Discipline: Photography and Media Art
Topic: Recycled Fashion in Fine art Photography

Subject

My Senior Studio project explores how discarded and found materials can be transformed into fashion, costumes, environments, and visual stories. I will use materials such as newspapers, trash bags, packaging, old clothing, and fabric scraps to create objects that are different from their original purpose. Photography will be the main way I present these creations, allowing me to explore how costume, styling, lighting, setting, and composition can change the way ordinary materials are seen.

My interest in this subject began with the 2021 film *Cruella*. I was drawn to the trash dress in the film and the idea that materials normally considered waste could be transformed into dramatic fashion. This led me to create my own Trash Bag Dress project. A few semesters later, I developed the idea further for a personal final project using a 4x5 analog film camera. Looking back at these projects, I realized that I was interested not only in photographing clothing, but also in the process of building something physical and then creating a world around it through photography.

For Senior Studio, I want to revisit this earlier work and develop it into a larger body of media art. While photography will remain my primary medium, I want to explore costume construction, styling, lighting, video, sound, digital editing, and possibly installation. Through these different forms, I want to explore ideas of transformation, waste, fashion, identity, beauty, and storytelling.

Context

This project sits between several areas of art, including fashion, wearable art, costume design, fine art photography, constructed photography, and media art. Constructed photography is different from simply documenting something that already exists. It involves intentionally building or arranging the subject, environment, lighting, and other visual elements before creating the photograph. This approach is important to my project because I want to construct the world that the viewer sees rather than simply photograph recycled clothing as an object.

Suzanne Jongmans is an important professional reference because she creates costumes and portraits using discarded materials such as plastic packaging, foam, and fruit-protection mesh. She combines costume construction, “sculpture”, photography, and references to Renaissance and Old paintings. I am interested in how she changes the way viewers see disposable materials by transforming their texture and shape into carefully constructed costumes and portraits.

Nina Syc is another important reference because she creates artwear from recycled and found materials. Her work connects closely to my project, as I am interested in how she takes simple, flat materials and transforms them into three-dimensional clothing. Her work also shows how wearable art can exist beyond traditional clothing and become part of photography, exhibitions, and other forms of visual art.

The Prazzle Arts research I have looked at a variety of artists who transform waste into wearable and environmental art. It helped me see recycled fashion as something that can connect to performance, design, and environmental art rather than simply being a way to make clothing. These examples support my interest in using photography as my primary medium while continuing to explore other forms of media art.

Critique

My project focuses on recycled fashion and wearable art, utilizing constructed photography and media art. Unlike simply showcasing beautiful waste, I aim to enhance the meaning through material presentation. I investigate how altering the context of discarded items, like transforming a trash bag into clothing, shifts its perception. By manipulating lighting, styling, and photography, I explore this transformation in both the final images and the making process. Targeting viewers interested in photography, fashion, and sustainability, I hope to change how they perceive materials and encourage reflection on their original purpose and value, while highlighting the narrative created through this artistic endeavor.

Trajectory

As mentioned before, my current projects involve the Trash Bag Dress, an analog film project 4X5, and investigating recycled fashion and artists incorporating physical materials with photos. To gather and test materials such as newspaper, old clothes and use different techniques to make sketches, prototypes and then larger pieces. I will do this by taking photos of these works in controlled settings and by comparing the analog and digital approaches. As the work develops, I hope to use video, sound and digital manipulation, recording all the processes, for documentation and to include in the final body of work.

Dissemination

The end project is to develop a set of images that reveal the costumes and settings designed using recycled materials. May also involve using video, photo book, digital work, sound or a small installation. The goal is that the shoot will be a visual and media piece, rather than the typical fashion shoot, and photos should be displayed with physical components. The project will be presented in the Senior Studio exhibition, in order to draw attention to the process of using ephemeral materials for new visual purposes and new meanings, through the interaction of fashion, photography and media art.