



APPROACHING WALDEN

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123 Cambridge St, Burlington, MA
August 5, 2016

Fashion Design 1
Grades 10-12

Abstract

The fashion industry is the second largest polluter in the world. Human working conditions can be hazardous and pay very low. Students fail to realize the impact that clothing has on the environment, both on a local and global level. This unit will challenge students to take a step back from their wardrobe and understand how they can make less of a global impact and how to dress mindfully.

Essential Questions

- How does your own personal wardrobe impact the environment?
- How can you “live deliberately” in regards to your wardrobe choices?
- How important is clothing to you?
- How can you make less of an impact on the environment?

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to collect and organize information on the effect of the fashion industry on the environment on a personal level.
- Students will identify the importance of fashion in a person’s life and briefly study how it relates to transcendentalism.
- Students will create a garment mindfully, with an informed knowledge of nature and the environment.

Learning Activities

● About the unit

- The unit should be given after students have been given at least 2 sewing projects so that they feel comfortable as beginner sewers. Usually, December or later would be best.
- The unit should last between 4-8 weeks, depending on how in depth the garment construction will be.

● Lesson 1: “Thoreau and the Importance of Wardrobe”

- Wear your favorite outfit 2 days in a row. You are not allowed to tell anyone why you are doing it.
 - Should last 1 week. Students may choose any 2 consecutive days Mon-Thurs. the discussion will be on Friday.
- Fashion Journal:

- Pre- lesson question: how do you feel about this assignment?
- Write down how you feel on the first day. How do people react to your clothing.
- Document how you feel the second day. Have your feelings changed throughout the day? Have people looked at you or asked you questions?

○ Group discussion

- How did you feel on the first day vs the second day?
- Did you want to tell people why you were wearing the same outfit twice?
- How do you think other people feel when they only own one outfit?

○ Henry David Thoreau quote

- “Who could wear a patch, or two extra seams only, over the knee? Most behave as if they believed that their prospects for life would be ruined if they should do it. It would be easier for them to hobble to town with a broken leg than with a broken pantaloons.”
- What does HDT mean by this?
- HDT advocated for people to live deliberately and live mindfully to make the world a better place. What does that mean?

○ Discussion: What is transcendentalism?

- What is social reform and social justice? How do those terms personally relate to you?
- How could you be a transcendentalist?
- How can you relate these ideals to the fashion world?

● Lesson 2 & 3 : “How and Where is Your Wardrobe Sourced?”

○ Homework:

- Look through your closet. Write down where your clothing was made. Then, take a tally on how many articles of clothing are made with natural fibers vs synthetic fibers. Blends of both (i.e. cotton-polyester) should be grouped with synthetic.
- The teacher will gather the data and make a chart

○ Day 1: Discussion

- What percentage of synthetic vs natural did the class own?

- What is the difference between natural and synthetic fibers? How do they each impact the environment?
- Which countries produced the majority of our clothing?

○ Day 2: Working conditions

- Homework: Which country did most of your clothing come from? Research the working conditions of that country's labor field. Write down 10 facts about the country's labor field.
- Next day: each student share one fact.

● Lesson 4: "Recycled Garments"

- Create a garment using recycled materials
- Length: 4-8 weeks depending on the manner of construction

■ Steps:

1. Using non-traditional textiles, create 3 different treatments (textures) that you could use for your recycled dress. The class will discuss the textures.
2. Choose the material. What is easily accessible to you? What materials speaks to your style? Start collecting! How will you adhere or attach the pieces together?
3. Choose a style. Create some loose sketches.
4. Draw a 9-head croquis with pen and watercolor. Turn it in so we can talk about your design.
5. Start constructing. 80% of this garment should be constructed by hand. You MAY use a muslin lining constructed by you but it may not show in any part of the garment. The garment must be a dress. It can be multiple pieces but it must stand on its own, meaning that you cannot pair other designs with it (ie a pairing leggings underneath).

○ Critique questions to be written in the fashion journal

- How does your final garment impact the environment? How about if it was globally produced? Who would you hire and how would you source it?
- What was the creating experience like, having to think about waste and the environment?

● Lesson 5: "The True Cost of Fashion"

- A speaker from the fashion industry will come to class and speak about the impact of fashion on the ecosystem and the world. This speaker will come in for 1 day.
- Discussion:
 - If each person in the school has 3 outfits, how many articles of clothing is that? Multiply that by the number of schools in Middlesex county. That is just one county in Massachusetts and only includes high school students, not parents.
 - How can we make a difference and live deliberately in terms of fashion?

Link to MA state Art standards

Materials

- Students' own wardrobe
- Sewing machines
- Thread
- Fabric scraps and remnants
- Hand needles
- Recycled materials to be sourced by the student
- Muslin

Grading Criteria

- 1. Journal (HW grade)
- 2. "How and where is your wardrobe sourced?" activity (HW grade)
- 3. Recycled Dress

○ 20 points Critique ([rubric](#))

○ 80 points Recycled Garment

- What sets your design apart from other recycled fashions
- How is your garment ethically sourced?

- In what ways did you use your materials to create an interesting design and translate it into a 3-dimensional garment?
- In what ways did you use the materials?
- How do the materials speak to recycling or reusing?
- How did you work on your garment during class?

Bibliography

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