

To the Dean of the Graduate School:

We are submitting a thesis statement written by Rita Fair entitled *Making People Feel Beautiful through Design* for acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

Thesis Advisor

Committee Member

Committee Member

Dean, College of Visual and Performing Arts

Dean, Graduate School

A Thesis Statement titled “Making People Feel Beautiful through Design”

Presented to the Faculty

of the College of Visual and Performing Arts

in Partial Fulfillment

of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Fine Arts

Department of Fine Arts

Winthrop University

December 2014

By

Rita Fair

Abstract

The thesis statement examines my broad artistic journey over the three years I have spent at Winthrop University. My thesis work concludes with the exhibition of three purses that I designed using AutoCAD and 3D printing. Early on in the Master of Fine Arts Program, I created a series of sculptural boxes by exploring my emotions by creating lists of words, thoughts, and making sketches. In the boxes I experimented with fiber optic lighting that have very high optical qualities. These were a key part of creating *Ursula* (Figure 7), a resin filled mold of a life-size female torso containing black glitter and copper sulfate crystals. Inspired by Native American silversmiths and the idea of body adornment, I wanted to incorporate both history and legend with personal experience into a shark tooth necklace. It was this jewelry making that shifted my focus toward fashion and designing body adornment. My next project was *A Salute to Couture; Runway Fashion Show* (Figures 12-17). This project explored transformation and was designed to pay homage to our brave men and women in uniform, by raising awareness and funds for those who have been injured in combat. My culminating thesis project in 3-D printing challenged my way of thinking with regard to how objects can be created through technology rather than manually. The technology that exists to develop work on a computer screen and have a printer manufacture it, is the wave of the future. The three purses that I designed with this new fabrication technology are titled, *Brass Knuckles* (figures 18 & 19), *The Fingerprint Purse* (figures 20 & 21) and *Electric City* (figures 22 & 23). In each work, I incorporated functions that facilitate the use of phones, tablets, and speakers by the contemporary woman through the use of independent energy sources.

I dedicate this to my daughter Jasmine who is
smart, beautiful, sweet, helpful, kind, and
creative.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Dedication	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Images	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	3
The Journey to Fashion	3
Neon	5
Chapter 2	8
Creative Explorations	8
Family Ties to Material Selection	8
Accessories	9
Chapter 3	12
Salute to Couture Runway Show	12
Flower Installation	16
Chapter 4	18
3D Printed Sculpture, “CHARGE” Thesis Exhibition	18
Conclusion	22
Images	23
Works Cited	29

List of Images

- Figure 1 *Welcome Home Rita*, Oil paint, spray paint, textiles including lace and net, sequins, beads, 5' x 3', 2012.....23.
- Figure 2 *Gaga Glitter*, glitter, paint, & resin on wood panel, 12" x 18", 2012.....23.
- Figure 3 *Anxiety Box*, wood, paint, green el wire, polymer clay, 12" x 12" x 12", 2012.....23.
- Figure 4 *Sex Box*, wood, plexiglass, pink el wire, plastic, wire, zipper, 18" x 12" x 4", 2012.....23.
- Figure 5 *Barbie Doll Light Box*, polymer clay, Plexiglas, wood, paint, stockings, beads, wire, El wire lights, 12" x 12" x 4", 2013.....23.
- Figure 6 *Mascara Light Box*, wood, paint, glass, Plexiglas, toilet scrubbers, sugar cubes, El wire lights 2013.....23.
- Figure 7 *Fiber Optic Ursula*, resin, glitter, wood, fiberglass, black roses, railroad tie, copper sulfate crystals, color change fiber optic and remote control, 17" x 36", 2013.....23.
- Figure 8 *Iris Van Herpen Wearable Fiber Optics**.....23.
- Figure 9 *Envelope Box*, brass, teardrop faceted pink amethyst, titanium chain, LED Light, 1" x 2", 2013.....24.
- Figure 10 *Shark Teeth Necklace*, silver, leather, feathers, garnet, amethyst, jasper, shark teeth, 5', 2013.....24.
- Figure 11 *Solar Panel Butterfly Purse*, Plexiglas, Swarovski crystals, silk tassel, raised velvet textile, zipper, solar panel USB charger 2014.....24.
- Figure 12 *Parachute Dress*, white parachute, black tool, El wire, thread, netting, floor-length, 2013.....24.
- Figure 13 *Star Dress*, buckram, stuffing, recycled red satin dress, rhinestones, sequins, velvet, boning, lace, 4' x 4', 2013.....24.
- Figure 14 & 15 *Body Cast Corset*, plaster bandages, airbrush, glitter, rhinestones, 2013.....24.
- Figure 16 *White Paper Flower Installation*, White Paper, 50' x 50' 2014.....24
- Figure 17 *Salute to Couture Collection*, fashion show, documentary process video <http://youtu.be/Vmcmm9Me3xc> 2014.....24
- Figure 18 & 19 *Brass Knuckles*, PLA plastic, battery pack, light up USB wire, 2014.....25.
- Figure 20 & 21 *Fingerprint Purse*, PLA plastic, battery pack, light up USB wire, 2014.....25.
- Figure 22 & 23 *Electric City*, PLA plastic, speaker, battery pack, light up USB wire, 2014.....25.

*All images except those marked by an astric are created by Rita Fair (Also available to view at www.ritamaria.net).

Introduction

“All art was once Fashion. Art and fashion are only separated by the element of time...it is a continuous process of ideas, techniques, and interpretations.” Morris De Camp Crawford

The fulfillment I find as an artist comes from transforming a woman's image through design and fashion. I am drawn to all things feminine and the psychological aspects that are generated by the expectations and demands that are placed on women of today. Creating this series was both enlightening and therapeutic for me. I explore the combining of ordinary materials, patterns, forms, and textures in attempt to create something extraordinary. My work explores making people feel beautiful through design. My creative journey has informed my thesis and projects.

In Chapter 1, I will describe the significant artistic projects that I have completed over the last two years. This will include details regarding how I arrived at the ideas to create certain pieces, sources of inspiration and how environment and heritage have influenced my work. Additionally, I will explain my choices and the reasons for selecting the materials utilized in the various projects.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss my work in fashion design and accessorizing. I will explain the creative transformation and progression in my work. The combination of technology and style is the cornerstone of my current work. This section will describe how I was able to merge the two together by taking a simple item and making it useful in more ways than one.

In Chapter 3 my emphasis will be on my fashion runway project *Salute to Couture* (Figures 12-17) and how it evolved. It gave me a chance to collaborate with

students, faculty, and professionals in an interdisciplinary effort. Common goals and teamwork are important to my creative process. Personal concepts, the history of fashion, the influence of specific designers and artists have had a major impact on my work. This section will focus on how many art forms were actually brought together to complete this show.

Chapter 4 will describe the process and creation of the thesis work 3D printed sculpture. I will give the reader a closer look into the variety of projects that I completed using this new and exciting technology. From the *Brass Knuckles* (figures 18 & 19) clutch with the USB cable to the *Electric City* (figures 22 & 23) purse with the solar charger for multiple electronic devices, I will explain the inspirations behind the concepts for these works and the step-by-step process from start to finish.

The conclusion will look to the future and ponder developments in my work where I see my art making. I will reflect on previous work and consider new ideas and fresh thoughts as I move forward. As Diana Vreeland, fashion editor for *Harper's Bazarre* and *Vogue* stated, "There's only one very good life and that's the life you know you want and you make it yourself."

Chapter 1

The Journey to Fashion

Looking at myself in the mirror through the eyes of my ancestors, I attempted to answer the question: Who am I? Being distinctive is very important to one's artistic voice. I am a believer that art is everywhere and in everything. That mode of thinking led me to explore how technology and fashion could come together. I was named Rita after my Spanish grandmother, Rita Margarita from Madrid. I never met her because she died eight months to the day before I was born. She died of brain cancer and requested that I be given her name. She was married to a U.S. ambassador to Paraguay and Chile. At the age of seven, my family gave me all of her things that they had been saving for me. These included ornate cocktail gowns worn to stately dinners and gaudy cocktail rings made from oversized gems. I was allowed to doll myself up in them and make alterations to the bodices so I could twirl about in a heavy cloud of tulle. The garments made me feel like a character in a story. They opened up channels of emotion. I can still remember the textures of the fabrics between my fingers, the smell of the dresses combined with the beautiful blur of colors as I spun about in a white lace veil and a pale blue strapless organza dress. What I also inherited from Rita was realizing the power behind the design of a gown. In my work I want to evoke a strong sense of femininity. I was transformed into an imaginative world of creating fairytales, through the objects she created and left behind.

Early in the Master of Fine Arts program I wanted to create a painting to celebrate Rita. The Mexican Day of the Dead is a celebration that takes place each year on November first and second. The Mexican culture honors loved ones who died in the previous year, as well as their ancestors who died long ago. The Aztecs believed that when people die their spirits go on to an afterlife. The spirits spend years traveling through an underworld which has nine levels. The Day of the Dead is an opportunity to celebrate your lost loved ones; to remember them with food, drink, ceremony, and paintings. I used old photos of my grandmother to combine her face with mine and created a new composite work titled *Welcome Back Rita* (Figure 1). The painting was created with mixed media of oil paint, thread, mirrors, and beads, and feathers. While making the painting, I took a close look at the works of artists Liza Lou for her beadings, accumulation and excess; Mickalene Thomas for her fashion painting with appliqués of sequins, rhinestones, and patterns; and Frida Kahlo for her use of symbolism. Art critic, Peter Schjeldahl described Lisa Lou's the *Kitchen*, a sculptural installation comprised entirely of beads as, "a grueling transformation of mundane objects adorned with thousands upon thousands of glass beads." He continued to describe her work as "antic comedy, indignant satire, populist ceremony, and ultimately the product of a highly personal artistic vision." I am inspired by her attention to detail and her ability to take ordinary household items and transform them through the use of multiple beads to create something astoundingly beautiful.

Neon

During the first year of my Master of Fine Arts journey I began reading the influential poetry of Rilke and researching the work of world-renowned sculptor Louise Bourgeois. I began to see correlations in how Rilke expressed emotions through the written word and how Bourgeois did so sculpturally. The research inspired me to create a series of boxes that would visually begin to express the essence of these emotions. They include anxiety, eroticism and vanity. When I began contemplating designs for the series of light boxes I felt compelled to take a closer look at what these emotions mean to me and investigate a way to bring those feelings and ideas to life. By using this approach, I believed that it would reveal a deeper personal narrative in my work. I began each box by journaling on the specific emotion with lists of words, thoughts and sketches. The incorporation of different textures, line qualities and colors represent how distinct each emotion truly is. Anxiety to me is a state of uncertainty when thoughts are chaotic and racing. In the work titled *Anxiety Box* (Figure 3) I used dark green plexiglass, broken mirrors, neon green El wire, glow in the dark polymer clay forms, a found glass doorknob and a keyhole. The effect created inside the box was like an underwater landscape filled with moving reflections, endless darkness and mystery. Looking into the piece the eye moves endlessly without finding a resting point, prompting feeling of infinity and anxiety.

I expanded my material vocabulary as the series progressed and continued to use El wire lights. *The Sex Box* (Figure 4) was created with a wooden frame with a set of black plexiglass sliding doors on one side and dark blood red plexiglass on the other. This was then layered with red steel mesh, bolted to the outside of the box. To look inside, the

viewer gazes in through a slit framed with a zipper along the thin edge of the box. Inside was a myriad of wires growing out of the rear wall like hairs and it was illuminated by a hot pink plastic bulb filled with a neon pink el wire. The wire looks like light drawn in space. The intention is for this work to visually represent a woman's sexuality.

In the series of work titled Beauty Boxes (Figures 5-7), I wanted to explore the ideas of anxiety, eroticism and vanity with specific materials. I created three boxes titled, *The Barbie Box* (Figure 5), *The Mascara Box* (Figure 6), and *Ursula* (Figure 7). I made molds of Barbie dolls, created large mascara wands and utilized a dress form to be placed inside its own box.

The Barbie Box (Figure 5) has a white wooden frame with black graphic patterns and variously sized holes along its side. The holes contain florescent orange paper, filled with written descriptions of make-up techniques. Inside the box is a series of layers from front to back beginning with a plastic form that contains a woven orange El wire. The front of the form contains four stretched black pantyhose, encasing glow-in-the-dark polymer clay Barbie doll torsos. The beaded stockings are cut and stretched to reveal the forms that lay beneath them. The next layer possesses a piece of fluorescent orange plexiglass that holds rows of black Italian lace, sewn together with silver thread.

The Mascara Box (Figure 6) is made of wood and has baby blue plexiglass in the front. Inside there is a maze made from sugar cubes. There is also white El wire illuminating the sparkle of the sugar crystals. I made several large mascara wands from ordinary household cleaning items, transforming them by dipping them repeatedly in black paint. Mascara was invented by the Egyptians to place around the eyes by both men and women to ward off evil spirits and as eye protection from the sun. Mascara is worn

today to give the appearance of longer and more voluptuous lashes. The intention behind creating this work was to highlight the physical aspects of anxiety and how individuals cope with it through the use of cosmetics. Anxiety derives from being unsure about certain things and when we begin to question our beauty, the natural reaction is to cover or alter our appearance until a state of confidence is achieved.

When I created *Ursula*, (Figure 7) I combined fiber optics and a resin filled mold of a life-size female torso containing black glitter and copper sulfate crystals embedded in resin. The fiber optics I used are thin spaghetti like pieces of plastic that have very high optical quality. The visual effect of the colors changing and moving around the female form of the mold redefines the female shape. I looked to the work of contemporary artist Iris Van Herpen (Figure 8) who explores the electricity of the body. She states, “Experimenting with its (fiber optics) use in the field of creation, this collection seeks to portray its tangible movement and power. This ability of light and electricity to change states and bodies is reproduced using the most innovative technologies” (irisvanherpen.com). The work *Ursula* (Figure 7) uses an interactive remote control that allows the viewer to change her colors.

Chapter 2

Creative Explorations

“I like to make people feel beautiful,” was my artist statement when instructed to limit it to seven words. I have a North Carolina Cosmetology license. I went to school at the Aveda Institute after receiving my B.F.A. in Painting from Radford University, and then I taught high school for four years (drawing, painting, and digital photography). I then trained with Toni and Guy, a UK based beauty salon in Charlotte, for three years to become a hair color specialist. I have also done extensive training in makeup artistry and am a Mac Pro Artist. These activities transform people through product application and manipulation. As Yves Saint Laurent said, “The most beautiful makeup of a woman is passion. But cosmetics are easier to buy.” Body adornment transforms a woman’s appearance through makeup, tattoos, hair, and jewelry. Through the years, I have come to realize the possibilities of taking simple items like compact cases and giving them additional uses, like making it a power supply for a cell phone by adding a solar panel to the exterior with an outlet to plug it into. Exploration is truly the key to discovery. This would become a central idea of my thesis work.

Family Ties to Material Selection

Inspired by Native American silversmiths and the idea of body adornment, I wanted to incorporate both history and legend with personal experience into a *Shark Tooth Necklace* (Figure 10), which are objects I am connected to. My father is a geologist

and he would spend countless hours taking my family to the Maryland shore to scour the sand for teeth. These fond memories were the basis for beginning my design.

The silver that I used to make the three-square bases for the bezel set shark teeth is refurbished sterling from my great-great grandmother Clara's silverware. Clara was Rita's mother. I used spoons from Clara's family silverware, which I had refurbished into sheet 18-gauge sterling silver. In the early 1900's she traveled out west in a covered wagon to settle in California with her family and had many positive encounters with Native Americans-- both while on their journey as well as in their new homeland. They were fascinated with her blue eyes and told her that she must have a connection to the sky because of their color.

The shark teeth necklace that I designed contained three large teeth in a bezel set. A bezel is a thin sterling wire used to set cabochons and irregular stones. The wire is placed on the perimeter of the shape and then gently bent inward to hold the stone in place. The largest shark tooth is bezel set on the largest square in the center. During the creation of this particular piece, I wondered what it would have been like to live in a much simpler time and in today's world, how difficult it is to live without a cell phone charger or wi-fi. This thought would reappear later as inspiration for my thesis work.

Accessories

The main objective for my next project was to create a series of fashion accessories that explore a merger of technology, science and style. It is inspired by the idea of biomimicry and the concept that solar panels occur naturally in the materials of butterfly wings. I created a light blue plexiglass purse titled *Butterfly Purse* (Figure 11)

bending a square in half by applying heat. A solar panel was then installed into the outside of the purse that could be used to charge a number of devices including a phone or tablet. I put sunken rhinestones onto the outside surface of the purse in the pattern of a butterfly and inside, I placed a soft interior satchel made from upholstery cloth.

The purse, which is a fusion of fashion and technology, was finished with a baby blue silk tassel for a handle. Technology has given fashion designers the ability to transform things that were once just beautiful and make them useful in more ways than one.

“Fashion is at once both caterpillar and butterfly. Be a caterpillar by day and a butterfly by night. Nothing could be more comfortable than a caterpillar and nothing made more for love than a butterfly. There must be dresses that crawl and dresses that fly.”

Coco Chanel

I think the idea of metamorphosis is very important in the world of fashion. Fashion is about designing for the current times, utilizing the latest advances in materials, processes and technology. Creating accessories that can recharge devices would be as useful as they would be beautiful. Much like the caterpillar and the butterfly, the intention was to take something so simple and make it into something that could go anywhere and do things it could never do before. This project led me to ideas for 3-D printed works that also incorporate solar technology.

Following the plexiglass purse, I designed and created a series of compacts and cosmetic holders made out of plastics and silver. My main focus was innovation and fine craftsmanship. I expanded my exploration of accessories by creating clutches, materials such as rhinestones, leather, and textiles. I incorporated a color changing light-emitting

diode (LED) behind a white sapphire into a small clutch titled *Envelope Clutch* (Figure 9).

I found the possibilities to be endless, and the idea of prototyping pieces exciting.

My research focused around a book entitled *100 Ideas That Changed Fashion*

“The final idea in this book hints at the futuristic surprises that are just beginning now- computers integrated into clothing and prints that change with the push of a button, but what is coming next? If the last century is anything to go by, it is certainly destined to be challenging, dramatic and unlike anything we can possibly imagine today.” Harriet Worsely

Those words pushed my imagination and the boundaries in which I viewed the relationship of fashion to technology. I now believe that those boundaries do not exist.

Chapter 3

Salute to Couture Runway Show

I have always admired Coco Chanel for her vision and concepts as a designer and an artist. The fashion show that I put together was in part inspired by her vision. Whenever I read her words, I feel as if our views are aligned. She once said,

“Creation is an artistic gift, a collaboration of the courtier with his or her times. It is not by learning dresses that they become successful, (making dresses and creating fashion are different things): fashion does not exist only in dresses, fashion is in the air, it is borne on the wind, you can sense it, you can breathe it, it’s in the skin and on the highway, its everywhere, it has to do with ideas, with social mores, and with events.”

Coco Chanel

Salute to Couture (Figure 17), the runway fashion show that I showcased in the spring of 2014, was designed to highlight the transformation of the military’s use of colors and patterns in uniforms. I always find myself inspecting the shapes and designs of almost everything I come in contact with. Whether it be a dress, a car or a lighter, I am intrigued by the creativity that goes into everything.

The works of Andy Warhol had a profound effect on the vision I had for myself as an artist from the beginning. His celebration of pop culture was very influential in my development as an artist. I find myself intrigued by our modern day icons and influential figures. I am enamored by the intersection of art, fashion, music, and dance. ““What do you wanna wear this spring? What do you think is the new thing? Lady Gaga asks in her song *Donatella*” (Fury).

It was pop icon Lady Gaga (Figure 2) who inspired me to pick up a paintbrush when she gave a speech in the middle of a concert that I attended with my daughter Jasmine (who was seven at the time). She quoted the words of German Poet Rilke which

she has tattooed on the inside of her left arm, “In the deepest hour of the night, confess to yourself that you would die if you were forbidden to write. And look deep into your heart where it spreads its roots, the answer, and ask yourself, must I write?” I feel that she spoke to me in that moment. It reinforced the idea that I was meant to be an artist and if I was not creating then I was not really living. I was instantly compelled to create a series of works about her. While in the process of the series I regained my passion for fashion. Her fantastic theatrical costumes which are made for the red carpet by iconic fashion designers, re-energized my love of materials. It is my affection for couture that led to the idea of a fashion show. It was not a leap but a natural progression. The light boxes, silver-smithing, and accessories led me to create a fashion show which allowed me to combine all of these concepts and skills. I applied the principles of art to create utilitarian objects that include fashion accessories and body adornment. Sculpturally, I am fascinated with the effects of colliding materials, colors, repurposing textures, and changing physical states.

Fiber optic fashion pioneer artist, Annough Waddington said, "My work sums up a personal journey and comprises of traditional values applied to contemporary materials; I value a freedom to combine materials where form, line, color and movement should merge with fluidity" (annoughwaddington.com). The pieces of the Salute to Couture collection accent each other both in color and content. They are multilayered and complex, transforming the military aesthetic. They work within the margins yet push the boundaries of repurposing materials. All of the facets, complexity, and layers created an overall feeling of excess and whimsy in the designs.

Using camouflage and the patterns associated with the military origin, I applied vibrant colors to highlight the artistic designs that were initially used as camouflage. I wanted to transform military items into high fashion, such as the parachute into a dress (Figure 10).

Camouflage is a form of a mask. This is also what makeup and fashion attempt to do. The self is lost and the focus is now on something else. Hiding our flaws or highlighting our attributes is what differentiates fashion from mere garments to protect us from the elements. I strongly agree with Diana Vreeland that you can see everything in clothes, even an impending revolution. Clothes provide us with a way to express ourselves much like the pattern and color changing of a chameleon to signal social or physiological changes. As Catherine Deneuve once said of her friend Yves Saint Laurent

Indeed, the themes of contrast and duality were pervasive in the late designer's legendary body of work: Saint Laurent was the first to bring gritty street wear (leather jackets, for instance) into the somber and magisterial couture salon. He appropriated men's tuxedos and fedoras and put them on women. He glorified proletarian garments (the pea coat and the peasant blouse) in luxurious fabrics. And he debuted African and Asian models on what had been predominantly white runways. In constantly playing double Dutch with his divergent instincts, he created a new fashion template for the ultra-posh woman with a subversive streak. (Collins) page 4.

I transformed them by turning clothing built for the battlefield into ballroom gowns and fashion items. I put over seventy looks together for the runway show, ranging from men's apparel to women's dresses and children's clothing. The show took place at McBryde Hall on March 7, 2014. In addition, there were multiple accessory items that I handcrafted to be presented as well. Each piece that started with a sketch was constructed

using both sewing and structural methods. The first piece I created was inspired by a trip to the Army Navy Surplus store. It was a very large warehouse filled with everything from uniforms, boots, gloves, patches, and goggles to tents and parachutes. I selected items to be used directly or altered. The items became more original in form than I had imagined. The terms reuse, recycle, reinvent, technology, deconstruction, and fantasy were all ideas that I applied to the actual military pieces and gave rise to the design and transformation for the collection.

The project really turned into a performance piece with forty models, twenty female and twenty male (half of that number were military, wearing actual uniforms). Each model wore two looks. In fashion a *look* is a distinctive manner of dress. The collection of designs grew much larger than we expected and at the first model casting we realized things could get out of control. We held hundreds of auditions and wanted to grasp the opportunity to let the project explode. Then the volunteering started-- we worked Sundays, Christmas Eve, and late hours into the night. Everyone had ideas that were incorporated and reworked. Every piece, every look, every photo shoot was a collaboration of creativity. The models had a chance to provide input on the garments they would be wearing the night of the show.

My studio was instantly transformed into a House of Couture, a design factory. We took over the entire hallway from one end to the other, utilizing floor space to cut patterns, a parachute into a dress (Figure 12), a mesh tent into a feather trimmed hooded cape. My collection mixed athletic fabrics with couture handcrafting techniques such as in the *Star Dress* (Figure 13). The collection uses multiple techniques including weaving, hand stitching and bonding to create rich layers (Figures 13 & 15). Neon color shines

through dark sheer chiffons (Figure 17). While military gear and apparel represent ideas of consistency, uniform, repetition, and mass production, the alterations created opposite qualities of free form, uniqueness, transformation, and variance.

The entire project was interdisciplinary, combining choreography, dance, music, lighting, colors, jewelry, and fabric design. Collaborating with other people brings about a diversity of group creativity. Noted designer Alexander McQueen; “used new technology and innovation to add a different twist to his shows and often shocked and surprised audiences. The silhouettes that he created have been credited for adding a sense of fantasy and rebellion to fashion” (Rajini). I see myself not just as an artist but a facilitator of creative activity. It was about the balance of taking and relinquishing control over designs, ideas, and particular projects.

Flower Installation

I created an installation to bring drama and theatricality to the catwalk for the Salute to Couture show. To establish a setting for the stage (Figure 16), I designed an environment for the models to emerge from at just the right moment, right before their journey down the runway. It was a three-dimensional translation of camouflage and each set was to create a changeable smokescreen experience. The models emerged from floating colors and shapes that blended and matched similar shapes found in their looks. To do this, thousands of white paper flowers were created and assembled into twenty-one panels, each approximately 3x 4 feet. Projections of abstract videos were cast upon the flowers to change their color to correspond with each section of the collection. We

created the installation by using two by three feet panels of white paper. We created templates of shapes that were to be repeated forming hybrids of roses, daisies, and tulips. The immensity of the installation of flowers takes you into an imaginative world. Abstract videos were projected onto the paper flowers to coincide with each section of the abstract collection and a kaleidoscope of neon shapes and patterns for the neon collection were projected on the flowers, creating a fantastic interpretation of camouflage for the models to walk through.

Chapter 4

3D Printed Sculpture

My thesis exhibition titled “CHARGE” focuses on the design and fabrication of a series of purses where function intersects with fashion. As we move into even more of a technological age, my ambition is I want to design to accommodate developing technology. “More technology is not the right answer, but the right technology can help us find new answers” is a quote from Eric Chan, ECCO Design from a book titled *Designing the 21st Century*. He went on to say, “If we can successfully navigate the crosscurrents of culture, technology and human emotion, and use our knowledge to create products that truly enhance our feelings, then we can build intrinsic meaning into them for users and producers (148).” From personal experience, I can say that not having some of my most trusted pieces of technology at all times is frustrating. This inspired me to make a series of clutches that caters to a contemporary world. My intention in the design of the bags was to reflect a contemporary design aesthetic and explore the ideas of renewable energy, recycling and sustainability. “The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new” (Socrates page 1). My objective is to take the things we already need in everyday life and make them work more efficiently through consolidation and cohesiveness.

Volvo designed a vehicle known as, “Your Concept Car” which was designed by women for women is made to target independent professional women. Smart storage, easy to find and locate things, more room and minimal maintenance were the design concerns that I shared with the Volvo Design Team. “We want cars to make life easier

for their owners, not complicate things for them,” Eva-Lisa Anderson, project manager of the Your Concept Car said. Instead of mass-producing, I created custom accessories with functions that enable the needs of an individual: technology ergonomics. I have fashioned the purses to contain battery packs with solar panel docking stations in order to power cell phones. Processes that use less power and produce less waste are important for the sustainability of fashion. 3D printing allows for personalization of designs rather than mass production. I designed three purses with these functions and ideas in mind. I started sketching shapes and patterns created from urban water drains and sewer covers. “Street-inspired styles like ‘heroin chic’, the growing emphasis on androgyny epitomized by pop star Marilyn Manson and the high-keyed color resolution of a kind of ‘virtual fantasy’ style inspired by computer simulation are examples of recent breaks with conformity” (Benezra 106)). I wanted to take masculine elements found in a city terrain and combine them with color and textures to create feminine and alluring purses.

When I read the article, “The 10 most attractive key fobs”, which are both decorative and useful items that are used as a remote to operate specific features on automobiles, I felt similarities in the way I designed the clutches to the fobs because the creators also saw the need for style as much as functionality. Dirk van Braekel, the Director of Design and Styling for Bentley, summed up the current trend in key fob design by saying: “The design idea was to create a piece of jewelry, something special that an owner can hold.” My inspiration for this work came from the grates in the road, specifically the patterns, textures and shapes. The first clutch titled, *Brass Knuckles* (Figures 18 & 19) is a cylinder container designed to hold a standard cell phone, a battery pack, and compartments that open like drawers designed to specifically hold makeup.

The brass knuckle design creates a unique way to carry the bag. The idea that a knuckle duster is violent and masculine, which contrasts with the femininity of the bag. The overall shape is determined by the technological pieces held on the inside. Raised geometric shapes of plus signs and dots create a texture on the outside of the purse that was inspired from a surface of a manhole cover. At the top of the purse are four connected rings to allow the hand to grasp the bag. The surface of the top of the rings has several bezels designed to hold different shaped gemstones. This gritty texture was inspired by the way that the sun bounces off of the asphalt and creates a sparkling effect.

The second clutch, known as the *Fingerprint Purse* (Figures 20 & 21), is rectangular with a hinged lid. This work was inspired by the many lines and patterns that make up a single fingerprint. There is no handle on the box, but instead it has finger imprints enabling the hand to obtain maximum comfort from the grip on the box. The idea behind this design was to create an interesting connection between the hand and the bag. “The future of design is seduction (Fiell 196).” The enlarged fingerprint pattern on the top has raised ridges as well as cut-outs. The negative space and elevated lines create a texture. The impression of the hand and the pattern of the fingerprint provide a variety of tactile experiences. The glowing Universal Serial Bus (USB) cord is woven around the raised ridges from below and will light up the negative spaces when the devices are charging. Inside the box there are two spaces for cell phones and a cylindrical battery pack in the middle. On the front of the flap there are four rows of bezels in which to place rhinestones. This texture was inspired by a water drain pattern.

The third purse *Electric City* (Figures 22 & 23) is game-like in the way that the pieces come together. The purse is rectangular with a handle on the top, sliding side

doors, and a speaker in the middle. The speaker is the focal point of the design with a grate pattern radiating from the center. The patterns used in this work relate to the photographs taken of the grates. This purse has the ability to be used for phone calls as well as playing music. The bag also contains a high capacity battery pack that can charge both the speaker and a phone at the same time. I was inspired by the text on the grates and I wanted to incorporate text into this work. The text 'ELECTRIC CITY' is spelled across the arched top of the handle in a relief. The title was a play on the word "electricity" found on the manhole covers. The mesh-like patterns on the sides and top were inspired by water drains. When I took a closer look under the grates I was intrigued by the tiny holes in the tops of them and the tiny stalagmite formations below. This visual characteristic was implemented into the handle through hundreds of tiny holes.

The thesis show "CHARGE" consists of a projection of images of computer generated designs that relate to the three prototype bags. The images will be projected in large format on the opposite wall from the entry. In the middle of the room will be a frosted glass table and an interactive station for the viewer in which they can experiment with the abilities of the three purses. They can charge their phones and play music on the speaker. Whenever they plug in a device the red, blue, and white corresponding USB cables will light up.

Conclusion

It has become most evident that the key to preserving our wonderful planet is to stop relying on the traditional energy sources that have resulted in air pollution and erratic climate change. Recycling and reusing energy sources will be the cornerstone of my future work and I hope to create a contemporary form of green fashion. I plan to continue to explore new ideas and forms that merge science, technology and function in design thinking.

The many works that I have developed on my own, and in collaboration with others, will always have an effect on my future projects. I am excited about the possibilities of art, the myriad of skills I have acquired and the journey which I am ready to embark. I hope to see my work have a profound and positive effect on people as well as communities.

Having something I can call my own has always been a driving force behind the work that I do and in the near future, opening my first beauty salon will finally become a reality. The name, *Dream Salon*, represents how everything starts with an idea paired with ambition and through all the relationships that I have formed and all of the skills that I have acquired, I felt confident enough to take that next step into business ownership. I look forward to all of the challenges that I will face in my future endeavors, and through those challenges, I hope to continue to grow as an artist and as a person.

Images



Figure 1: *Welcome Home Rita*



Figure 2: *Gaga Glitter*

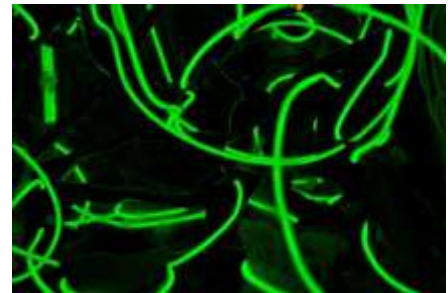


Figure 3: *Anxiety Box*



Figure 4: *Sex Box*



Figure 5: *Barbie Doll Light Box*



Figure 6: *Mascara Light Box*



Figure 7: *Fiber Optic Ursala*



Figure 8: *Iris Van Herpen Wearable Fiber Optics*



Figure 9: *Envelope Box*



Figure 10: *Shark Teeth Necklace*



Figure 11: *Solar Panel Butterfly Purse*



Figure 12: *Parachute Purse*



Figure 13: *Star Dress*



Figure 14: *Body Cast Corset*



Figure 15: *Body Cast Corset*



Figure 16: *White Paper Flower Installation*



Figure 17: *Salute to Couture Collection*

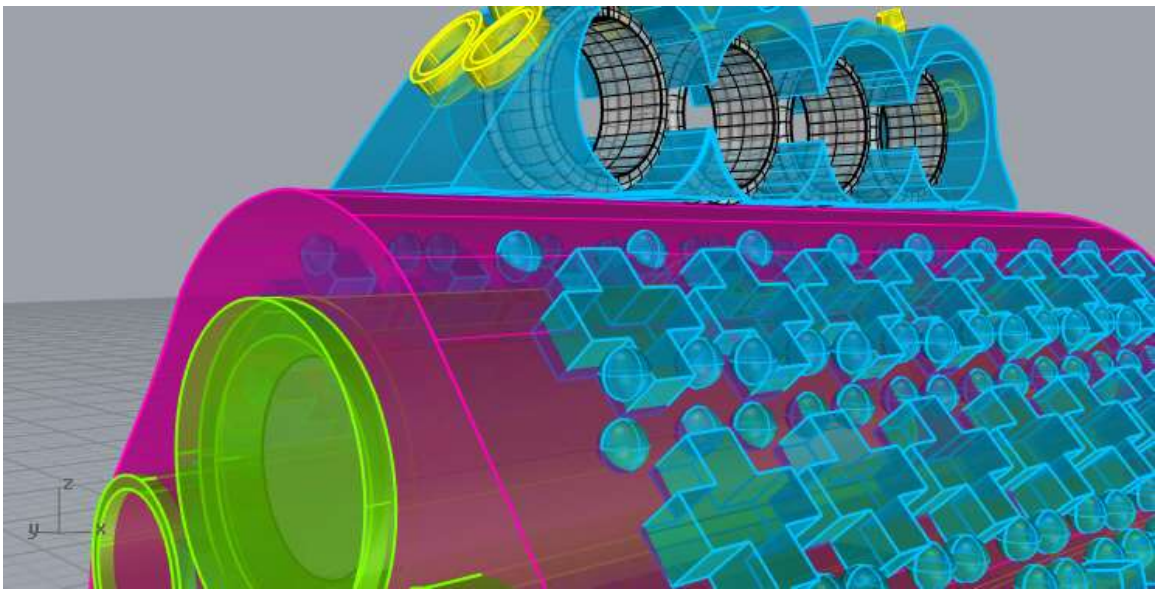
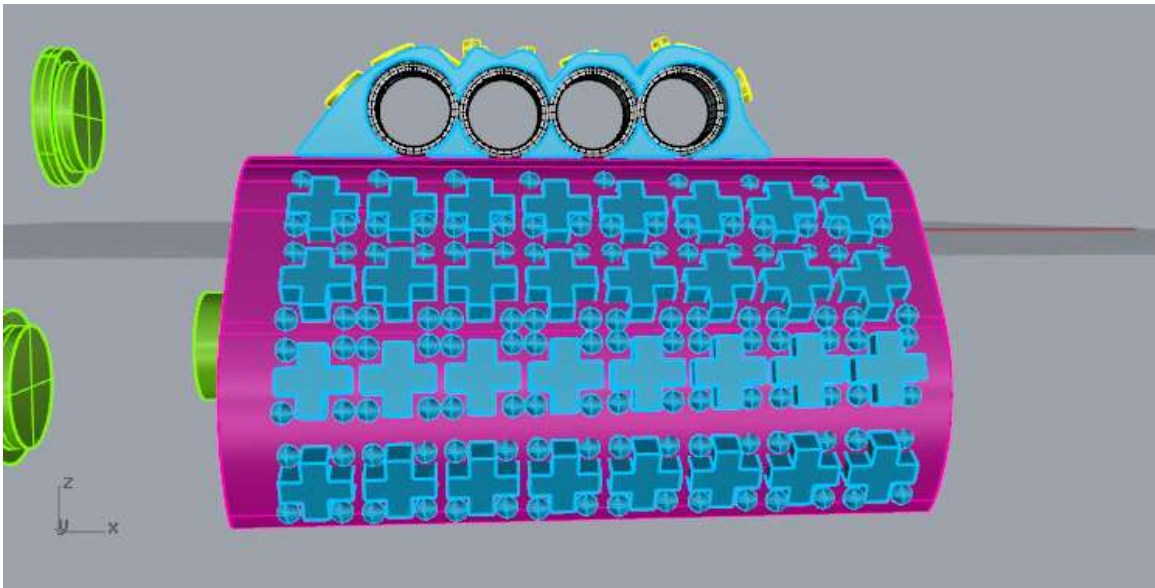


Figure 18 & 19: *Brass Knuckles*

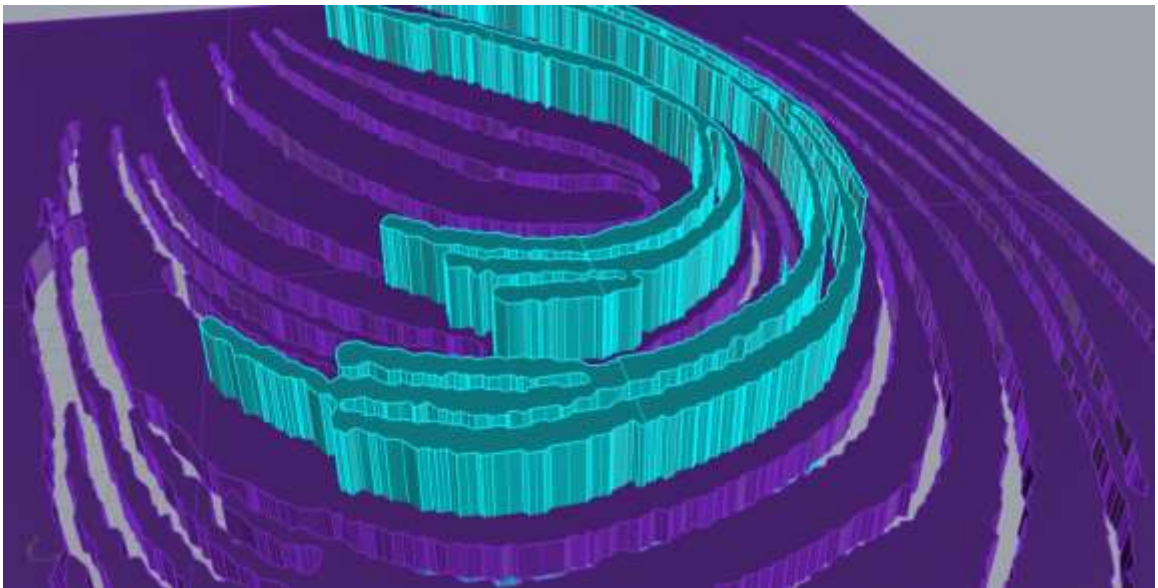
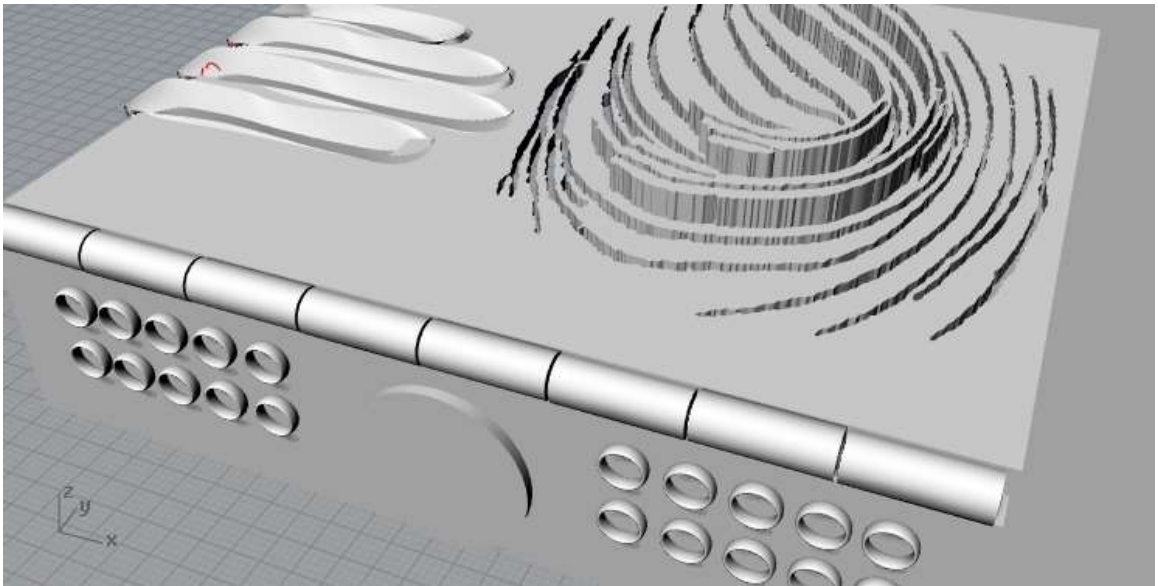


Figure 20 & 21: *Fingerprint Purse*

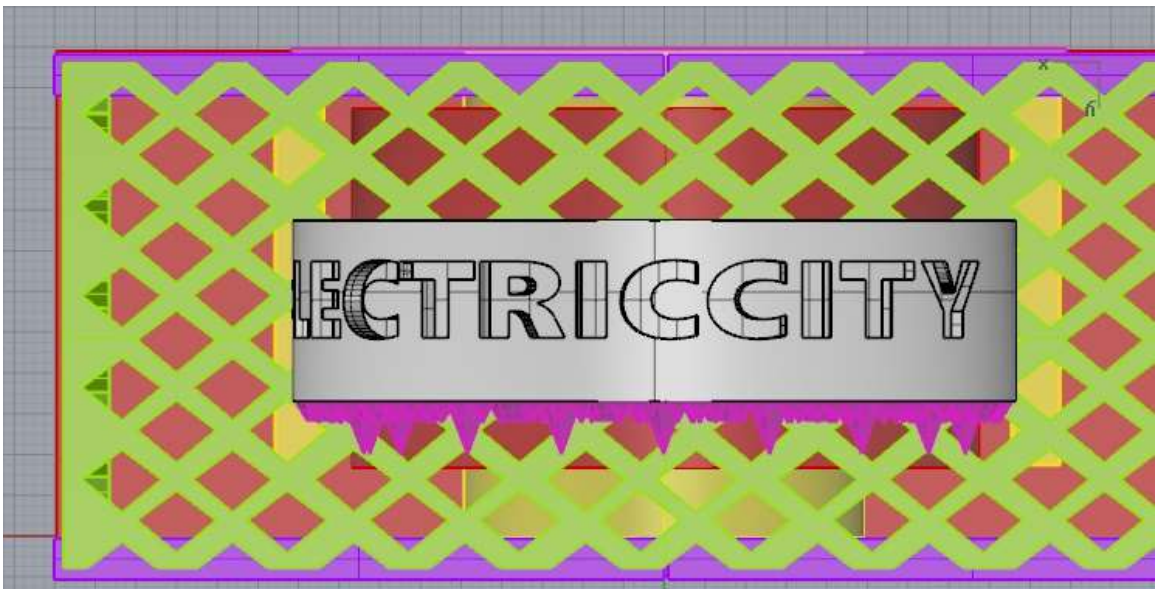
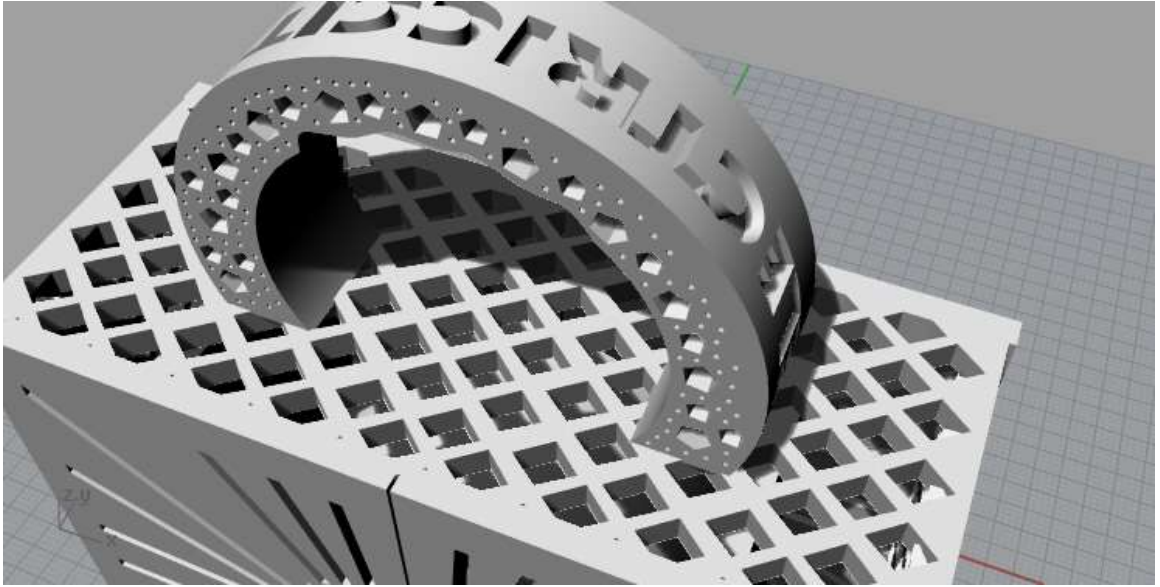


Figure 22 & 23: *Electric City*

Bibliography

- Abrams (2011). *Coco Chanel*. New York: Chelsea House. 4-120.
- Bahti, M (2007). *Silver + Stone*. Tucson: Rio Nuevo Publishers. 2-119.
- Ball (2010). *House of Versace; The Untold Story of Genius, Murder, and Survival*. New York: Random House. 12-
- Batterberry (1977). *Mirror Mirror: A Social History of Fashion*. Canada: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. 10-378.
- Benezra, David.(2000) *Regarding Beauty*. Washington D.C.;Hirshhorn Museum of Sculpture and Garden. 1-231.
- Bolton (2004). *Wild: Fashion Untamed*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art. 11-173. 309.
- Boone (2011). *Marc Jacobs*. New York: Chelsea House. 9-93.
- Bott, D, 2005. *Chanel: Collections and Creations*. 1st ed. New York: Thames & Hudson.
- Bostrom, P.. (2004). *Shark Tooth Weapons*. Available:
<http://lithiccastinglab.com/gallery-pages/2004augustsharkteethpage1.htm>. Last accessed 10/23/13.
- Cerimedo (2010). *1000 Ideas by 100 Fashion Designers*. Beverly: Maomao Publications. 14-317.
- Collins. (2009). *The Things Yves Loved*. Available:
http://vanityfair.yvessaintlaurent/thethingsthatyvesloved_collins.htm. Last accessed 1st Feb 2014
- Crawford (1967). *One World of Fashion*. New York: Fairchild Publications. 2-184.
- Gerval (2008). *Fashion: Concept to Catwalk*. Buffalo: A&C Black Publishers. 16-194.
- Fiell, Charlotte and Peter (2001). *Designing in the 21st Century*. London: Studio X. 1-560.
- Forden (2000). *The House of Gucci*. New York: Harper Collins Publisher. 11-257.
- Fury. (2014). The changing face of Versace: Lady Gaga is face of fashion label for Spring 2014. *The Independent*. 3 (Life/ Fashion), 1-6.
- Harvard Museum. (2012). Thunderbird & Whale (mythology). Available:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wik/Thunderbird_\(mythology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wik/Thunderbird_(mythology)). Last accessed 10/23/13.

- Kopp (1972). *New Fashion Areas for Designing Apparel Through the Flat Pattern*. New York: Fairchild Publications. 2-247.
- Leese (1991). *Costume Design in the Movies*. Mineola: Dover Publications. 5-163.
- Lowery, D. (2011). Native American Use of Fossil Shark Teeth in the Chesapeake Bay Region. *Archaeology of Eastern America*. 39 (Fossils), 93-108.
- Mazzeo (2010). *The Secret of Chanel No.5 The Intimate History of the World's Most Famous Perfume*. New York: Harper Collins. 60-202.
- Milbank (2002). *The Couture Accessory*. New York: Harry N. Abrams. 9-177.
- Montebello (2001). *Extreme Beauty: The Body Transformed*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art. 1-158.
- Mower. (2009). *Spring 2009 Chanel Couture*. Available: www.style.com/chanel2009.htm. Last accessed 1 Feb 2014.
- Pochna (1941). *Christian Dior: The Man Who made the World Look New*. Paris: Arcade Publishing. 1-286.
- Shaffer, C, 1995. *Distinctive Details: Great Embellishment Techniques for Clothing*. 1st ed. Newtown: The Tanton Press.
- Swearington (2013). *Printing on Fabric*. Ontario: Sterling Publishing. 22-66.
- Taylor, J, 2012. *Painting and Embroidery on Silk*. 1st ed. London: Cassel Villiers House.
- Thurman. (2002). Swann Song. *The New Yorker*. 3 (21), 21-27.
- Unknown. (2013). *Native American Shark Mythology*. Available: <http://native-languages.org/legends-shark.htm>. Last accessed 10/23/13.
- Unknown. (2013). *Navajo Silversmiths*. Available: http://www.native-american-market.com/navajo_silversmiths.html. Last accessed 10/23/13.
- Vaidyanathan, Rajini (12 February 2010). "Six ways Alexander McQueen changed fashion". BBC News. Archived from the original on 22 February 2010. Retrieved 12 February 2010.
- Watt, J, 2012. *Alexander McQueen: The Life and Legacy*. 1st ed. New York: Harper Design.
- Wilcox (2001). *Radical Fashion*. London: V & A Publications. 1-143