

Title: Re-interpreting Fast Fashion

Author: Maria Smith, Director, Teacher Center, Madison-Oneida Board of Cooperative Educational Services, NY

Subject Area/ Grade: Art/ High School

Students will study the “fast fashion” industry to better understand the detrimental effects on the environment, on labor markets, and on the American psyche.

Goals

Students will understand the detrimental effects of the “fast fashion” industry on the environment, on labor markets, and on the American psyche. Students will interpret an article of clothing or outfit of their own closets using non-traditional materials.

Content Area and Standards

HS Visual Arts:

- Explain how traditional and non-traditional materials may affect human health and the environment...
- Redesign an object, system, place, or design in response to contemporary issues.
- Make, explain, and justify connections between artist or artwork and social, political, and cultural history.

Activity

Name of Unit: “Reinterpreting Fast Fashion”

Students will view videos, read articles, and engage in discussions on the current trend in the fashion industry known as “fast fashion”; and fast fashion’s effects upon the environment (where do clothing articles go once disposed of?), world labor markets (seamstresses in third world countries, most of whom as women, do not earn a living wage); and the “waste mindset” of American consumers.

Students will identify articles of clothing in their own closets that are categorized as “fast fashion”, that is, are of inferior fabric and workmanship, were marketed within a two-week fashion cycle, are very trendy and not likely to be worn after the current season.

Students will select one or more articles of clothing and reinterpret the using non-traditional materials, such as:

- Fused plastic bags
- Recycled fabric/leather/buttons from articles of clothing

- Natural objects (leaves, flower petals, tree bark, etc.)
- Paper (newspaper, book pages, magazines, tissue, paper bags, etc.)
- Fiber (yarn, string, woven material, etc.)
- Cardboard
- etc.

Reinterpreted garments may be two- or three-dimensional, to scale (i.e., actual size) or on a smaller scale.

Students will collectively put on a fashion or runway show to exhibit their reinterpreted pieces, while wearing their actual “fast fashion” garments.

Joy2Learn Artists /Videos that Support Project

- Frank Gehry on Designing
- Frank Gehry on Interaction as a Creative Force
- Elizabeth Murray

Art Forms that May Be Included

- Sketching ideas
- Photographing selfie in fast fashion garment or outfit
- Putting on an art show or exhibit

Connections to Students Passion Areas and Interests

High school students of all ages are fashion conscious. While their style preferences may range from grunge to preppy, sporty, casual, or dressy, all students strive for a “look” or settle into patterns of style. Typically these styles include trendy clothing from the fast fashion industry. Having students recognize the pernicious effects of the fast fashion industry on countries around the world, and their costly effects upon peoples and the environment is important for teens to become more conscious stewards of the earth and more responsible consumers.

Materials Needed

- Fused plastic bags
- Recycled fabric/leather/buttons from articles of clothing
- Natural objects (leaves, pressed flower petals, tree bark, etc.)
- Paper (newspaper, book pages, magazines, tissue, paper bags, etc.)
- Fiber (yarn, string, woven material, etc.)
- Cardboard
- Scissors, seam rippers, dress forms (two- or three-dimensional)

- Glue, materials for hand or machine sewing

Collaborators

Students may work with partners as “critical friends” or may interpret the garments of a class partner.

Assessment

Students will be evaluated on:

- Innovative use of non-traditional materials
- Adherence to style elements of original garment (e.g., basic structure, design elements such as buttons, collars, ruffles, etc.)
- Written reflection on their process and thinking about the fast fashion industry

Timeline

- Week 1 (five days): Fast Fashion Industry
- Week 2 (five days): Project strategies (how to fuse plastic into fabric, de-construct garments, hand and/or machine sew, construct a two-dimensional dressmaker’s shape)
- Weeks 3 & 4 (eight days): Work on reinterpreted garments
- Week 4 (two days): Plan, prepare for, and host fashion show/exhibit