

Personal Project Brief – IDE Master Graduation Project

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PROJECT TITLE, INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM DEFINITION and ASSIGNMENT

Complete all fields, keep information clear, specific and concise

Project title Emancipating in Style; Empowering garment lifecycle extension inspired by historical sewing practices

Please state the title of your graduation project (above). Keep the title compact and simple. Do not use abbreviations. The remainder of this document allows you to define and clarify your graduation project.

Introduction

Describe the context of your project here; What is the domain in which your project takes place? Who are the main stakeholders and what interests are at stake? Describe the opportunities (and limitations) in this domain to better serve the stakeholder interests. (max 250 words)

The fast-fashion industry is a key contributor to global warming and the destruction of the natural environment. Up to 100 billion individual garments are produced and 92 billion tonnes of textile waste is disposed of each year. The industry has additionally created a social and physical environment in which users no longer are able and willing to extend to repair, maintain, customize or create garments themselves. This has sped up the lifecycle of garments, making them last shorter and lose their value faster.

Because of this, both Fashion and Industrial Designers have sought to create ways to reduce the environmental footprint of individual garments. Most of this work, however, has been related to material properties and production technologies (De Jager). Leading to both the beginning- and end-of-life components of fashion's lifecycle being well-covered by technological innovation, but very little research exists on the extension of a garment's lifecycle throughout its use by consumers themselves.

This is an interaction with garments that, historically, many people practiced (Banner), since the initial creation and purchase of textiles was much more expensive and maintained a high value through the years. This material would seldomly be disposed whenever the garment went out of fashion or would wear down, but would rather be adjusted, mended, repaired or turned into a different textile product.

These practices are still possible today, but are rarely applied by users because of a dominating matrix of oppression towards home-craft and creative expression by the worldwide fashion industry. A system which seeks to create a wholly dependent consumer base with the purpose of maximizing monetary profits.

References:

Banner, B. (2022). *Make, Sew, and Mend: Traditional techniques to Sustainably maintain and Refashion your clothes.* (1st ed.). Page Street Publishing Co.

De Jager, S., McQuillan, H., Mulder, I., & Delft University of Technology. (2024). 3D woven denim as an exemplary design manufacturing technique to shape sustainable fashion ecosystems [Journal-article]. *Discern: International Journal of Design for Social Change, Sustainable Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 5–2, 51–68. <https://www.designforsocialchange.org/journal/index.php/DISCERN-J>

Hirscher, A.-L., Niinimäki, K., & Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Design Department, Helsinki, Finland. (2013). Fashion Activism through Participatory Design. In *10th European Academy of Design Conference - Crafting the Future* (p. 1).

Mugge, R., Schoormans, J. P. L., & Schifferstein, R. (2009). Emotional bonding with personalised products. *Journal of Engineering Design*, 467–476. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09544820802698550>

image / figure 1 List of references used in the introduction

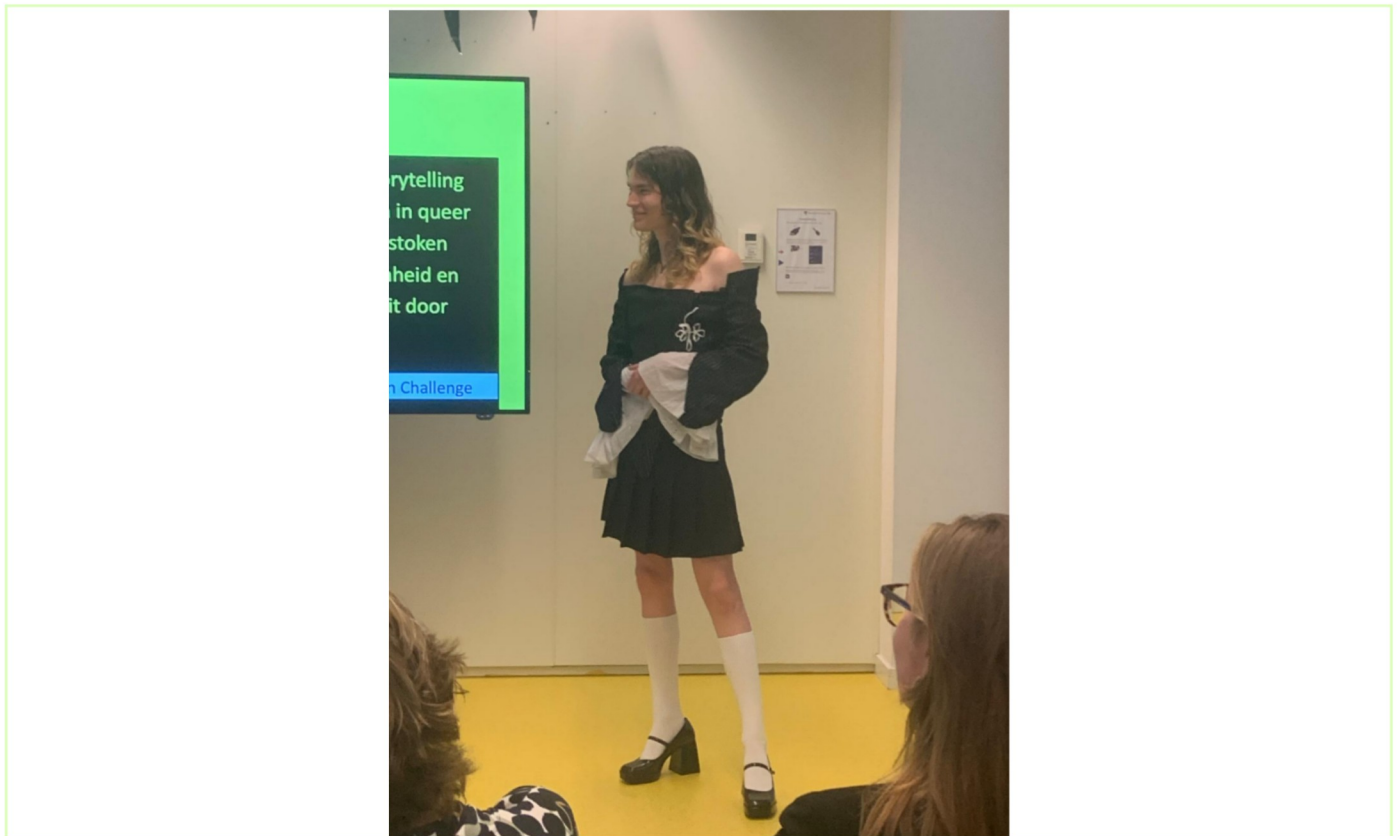


image / figure 2 Dress made through upcycling methods by Student

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Problem Definition

What problem do you want to solve in the context described in the introduction, and within the available time frame of 100 working days? (= Master Graduation Project of 30 EC). What opportunities do you see to create added value for the described stakeholders? Substantiate your choice. (max 200 words)

The disappearance of needlework practices has to do with the overall monopolization of the fashion industry by larger corporations with the motivation of growing profits. But the creation and possession of garments is a primary basic human need and has a direct impact on the kind of life any person can live. The prioritization of profit over quality is actively leading to an impoverishment of general quality of life and is therefore an unacceptable symptom of the capitalist system, directly contributing to what Intersectional Feminism refers to as 'the matrix of domination', systematic structures that contribute to the oppression of marginalized groups and individuals on multiple levels.

Historically, there are many needlework practices that are capable of extending the lifespan and increasing the value of a garment; colloquially known as 'Upcycling'. But to create momentum for the reintroduction of these practices, a different approach must be taken to user-garment interaction by moving the practice away from the capitalist systems it is currently absorbed by. The customization of products has been proven to stimulate emotional attachment (Mugge) and increases the likeliness of investment in repair and maintenance. At the university of Helsinki it a similar study was conducted to prove that the act of co-creation of clothing by users can lead to sustainable behavioural change towards the resulting fashion products (Hirscher).

In this graduation project, historical sewing practices can be studied, positioned in an Intersectional Feminist framework and proposed to be reintroduced to consumers in the form of co-creative upcycling recommendations and guidelines.

Assignment

This is the most important part of the project brief because it will give a clear direction of what you are heading for. Formulate an assignment to yourself regarding what you expect to deliver as result at the end of your project. (1 sentence) As you graduate as an industrial design engineer, your assignment will start with a verb (Design/Investigate/Validate/Create), and you may use the green text format:

Design/Investigate a collection of upcycling guidelines for fashion consumers to extend their garments' lifecycle in alignment with intersectional feminism.

Then explain your project approach to carrying out your graduation project and what research and design methods you plan to use to generate your design solution (max 150 words)

Gather, read and review literature on Intersectional Feminist design and Historical home-sewing practicees from the 19th and 20th century in northwestern Europe. Through Research through design/doing, discover modern applications for these methodologies without contributing to the 'Matrix of Domination'. Design a preliminary collection of intersectional feminist upcycling techniques.

Facilitate up to 8 one-on-one co-creative sessions with fashion consumers to experiment with these techniques and gain inspiration for further iterations of the collections and different methods of reintroducing these historical practices.

Facilitate one larger co-creation session at the end of the project to demonstrate the intended effects.

Project planning and key moments

To make visible how you plan to spend your time, you must make a planning for the full project. You are advised to use a Gantt chart format to show the different phases of your project, deliverables you have in mind, meetings and in-between deadlines. Keep in mind that all activities should fit within the given run time of 100 working days. Your planning should include a **kick-off meeting, mid-term evaluation meeting, green light meeting and graduation ceremony**. Please indicate periods of part-time activities and/or periods of not spending time on your graduation project, if any (for instance because of holidays or parallel course activities).

Make sure to attach the full plan to this project brief.
The four key moment dates must be filled in below

Kick off meeting	1 Apr 2025
Mid-term evaluation	26 May 2025
Green light meeting	5 Aug 2025
Graduation ceremony	10 Sep 2025

In exceptional cases (part of) the Graduation Project may need to be scheduled part-time. Indicate here if such applies to your project

Part of project scheduled part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
For how many project weeks	
Number of project days per week	

Comments:

Motivation and personal ambitions

Explain why you wish to start this project, what competencies you want to prove or develop (e.g. competencies acquired in your MSc programme, electives, extra-curricular activities or other).

Optionally, describe whether you have some personal learning ambitions which you explicitly want to address in this project, on top of the learning objectives of the Graduation Project itself. You might think of e.g. acquiring in depth knowledge on a specific subject, broadening your competencies or experimenting with a specific tool or methodology. Personal learning ambitions are limited to a maximum number of five.

(200 words max)

The main motivation that drove me to start this project is built on my passion for artistic design. The line between what is considered 'art' and what is considered 'design' is very thin in my eyes and yet harshly enforced at the IDE faculty of the TU Delft. The academization of the creative process of course leads to an amount of professional credibility, but it has a side effect of dampening the spirit of creativity in its participants. Which is why, in this project, I hope to walk and cross the line between art and design through the validation of creative authorship as a means of lowering the threshold of participation in co-creation.

As a learning goal, when it comes to general design capabilities that I have built during my time at the Industrial Design faculty, something I have found difficult to master is an oversight of existing design methodologies and schools of thought. So during this graduation project, I would like to gain a better understanding of how to find/create the right design methodology for the right assignment. In addition to this, by constructing a design methodology in this project, I hope to develop experience and skill that allows me to create and adjust design methodology to the needs of my work

Finally, I am considering eventually applying to a PhD after I have finished my master's degree, so if I could try out what it would be like, that would be a valuable experience to gain.