INTERWOVEN CULTURE

DR 2014 Wearable Technology, Fashion and Design

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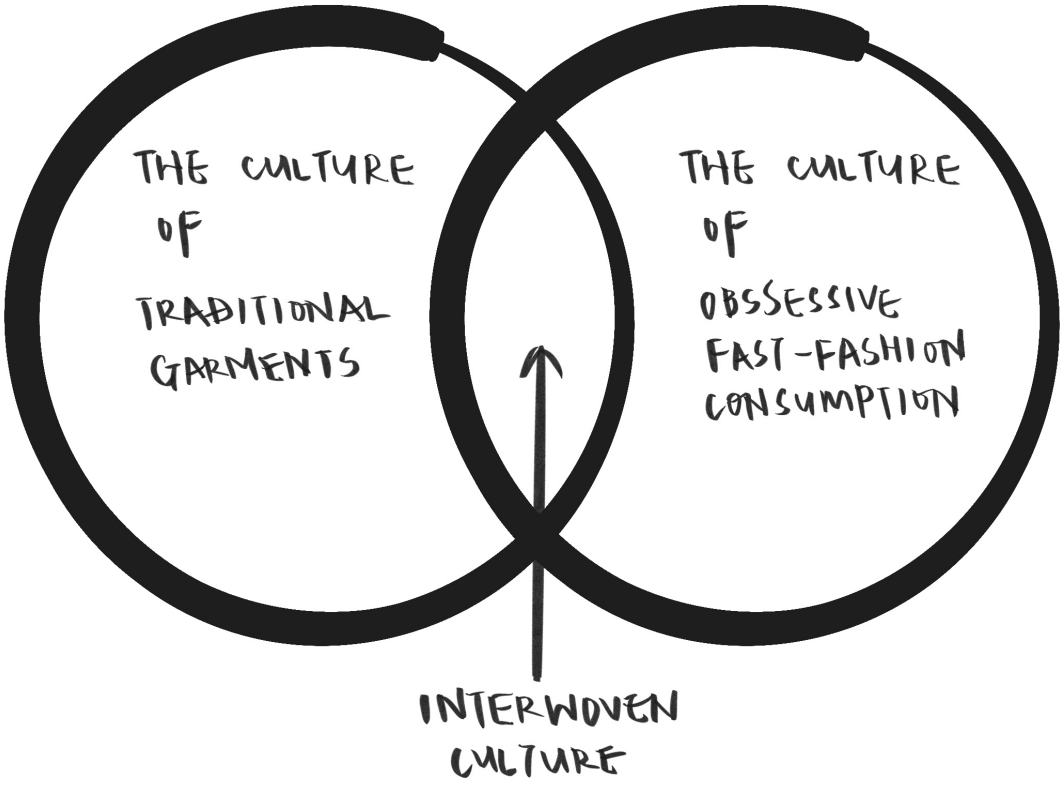
Research

Culture - the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society.



The Culture of Traditional Garments

When a piece of traditional garment/the culture of wearing traditional garment is handed on to the next generation, it is done with confidence of it not being diluted but instead, glorified generations upon generations.

As years of advancement in the fashion industry go by, the popularity of traditional garments get diluted and overwritten by upcoming trends and thus, traditional garments are started to be seen as 'outdated' and 'unfavorable'.

My chinese heritage of traditional garments are inclusive of CheongSam (Qipao).

The Culture of Obsessive Fast-fashion Consumption

Very commonly seen in these days, are uprising trends of new styles of fashion statements. With every new publication of a fashion magazine and every new instagram post by a famous designer/influencer, the trends advance and beautiful creations and clothings are produced to fit the demands of this forward going industry. But with that, also comes along obsessive over-consumption of fast-fashion.

Too many times, consumers chuck aside pieces of old clothings in the corner of their wardrobe or donate them to accomodate their new thirst of buying new clothings to flow with the new trend.

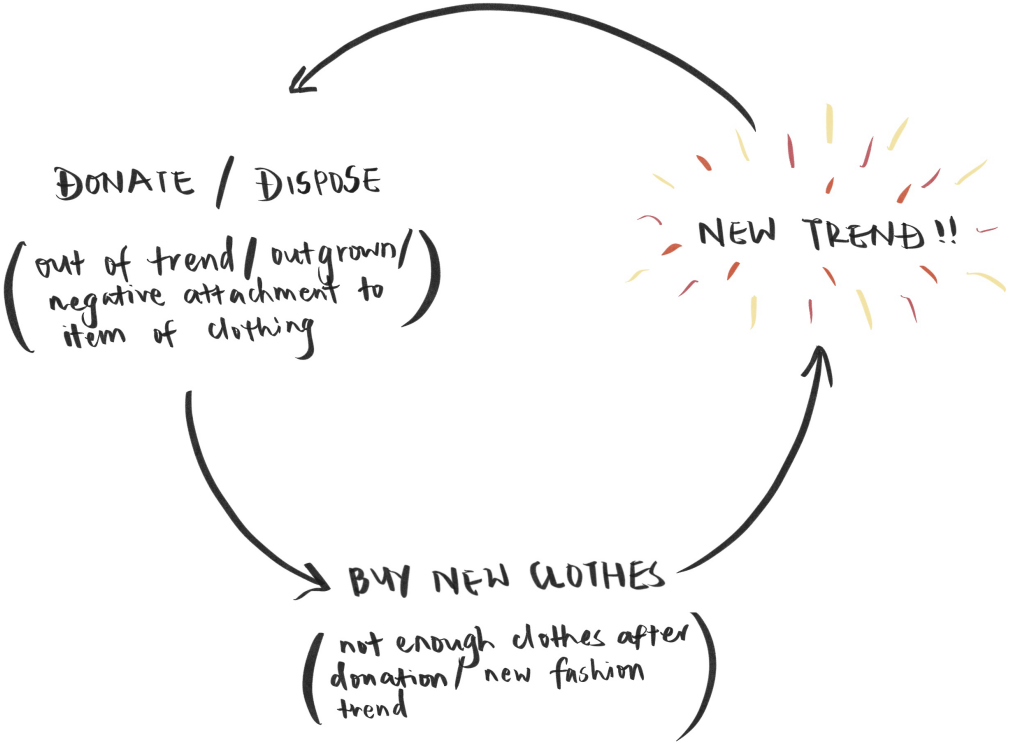
As a consumer of fast-fashion, I have decided to find more meaning in my purchases and think about the sustainability issues of this bad habit.

Old clothings can be made into attractive pieces without over-consumption.

Sustainability

The topic of sustainability in the fashion industry is also brought into light in my project. An article, "Death by waste: Fashion and textile circular economy case" shows an average global annual consumption textiles have doubled from 7 to 13kg per person and has reached the threshold of 100 million tonnes of textile consumption because of improved global income and living standard, which resulted in overproduction for suggested demands and up-changing trends.

I have decided to go about this project by repurposing unwanted pieces of clothings. My intention of collecting donated clothings is to use them as part of my garment, to consolidate unwanted clothings and find a new purpose for it, and to create a garment without excessive usage of unsustainably attained fabrics.



Sustainability

I have also requested a little connotation to the donated pieces from donators to find out the reason as to why the clothings are unwanted anymore, and to bring across a point that sometimes clothes that are donated are not just clothes that dont fit anymore. (I find an emerging practice where people donate away completely mint condition clothings because of trend changes and/or negative emotions attached to them.) I believe that behind every piece of donated clothings holds some emotions to the previous owner, be it of fond memories or just a piece of basic piece that brought them through spontaneous casual lunch dates, they all hold some kind of anonymous memories in each individual pieces.

Execution Plan

I am going to deconstruct old garments and bring new life and significance to it, making a collative work of strangers' memories into a singular garment. The act of accumulating different stories into one chapter while keeping the human act of "fashion chasing" sustainable. Almost like keeping montage of the old and 'dismissed', incorporating the culture of traditional garments and obsessive fast-fashion consumption together.

I plan to amplify the element of overlooked memories into an interactive experience whereby viewers can have a tangible sense of how special each piece of discarded clothing is. I will receive stories and emotions of different discarded pieces and why people not want them anymore.

As the model walks down the runway, the model will trigger a sensor which lights up a row of white soft-glow lights, panel by panel on the back of the cape. This signifies the igniting of new life into the "unwanted" clothings, bringing a new purpose to the interwoven piece of garment.

Moodboard

traditional chinese cheong sam
- prints
- floral
- lucky charm (red)
- chinese characters
- clouds
- dragon tail
- gold
- oriental embroidery
80s singaporean women outfit
'traditional' fit of chinese cultural garment
- headpiece
- structured cape
- vibrant colours
- mandarin collar
- phoenix, auspicious bird
- body fitting
COLOR PALETTE
YELLOW GOLD EMBROIDERY
DEEP RED SATIN
CREAM
DIRTY PISTACHIO ORGANZA

Inspirations

Research

Keywords

Whimsical
Romantic
Feminine
Flamboyant
Powerful
Nobel

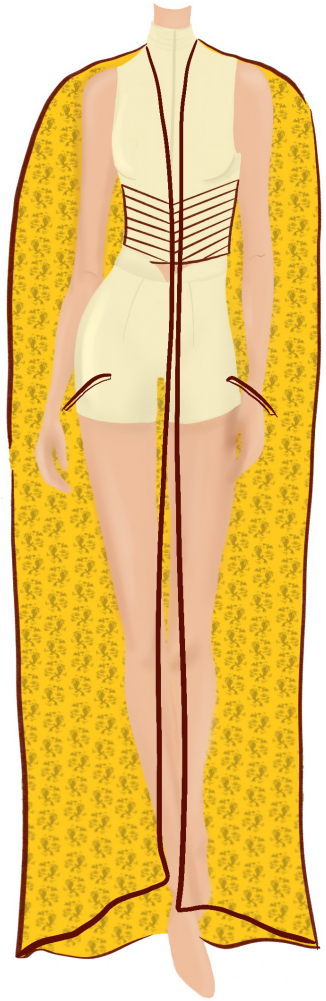
Research

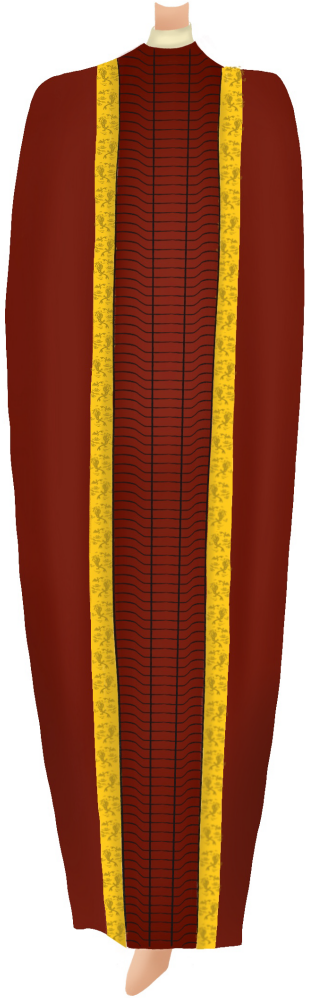
I went on do search up some images on Google for Chinese Soap Opera outfit fittings and found interesting similarities between their outfits and elements of GuoPei's garments and got inspired by its fittings.

The characteristics are:

-Huge flare-out sleeves
-Flamboyant 'shoulder pads'/collars
-Waist-cinching
-Robe styled wrap-around
-Robe train/Excessive draping fabric
-Mandarin collar (cheongsam)
-Oriental Dragon/Phoenix embroidery

Sketches (draft)





Deep red satin, paired with yellow gold embroidery.

Silk-like material to replicate the luxury of emperor robe.

Back panel will be done with upcycled clothings.

Process

Deconstructing of clothes and cutting them into 10 x 4 inches of fabric each, measuring them with an acrylic template I made, and ironing them flat.

Placing the individual fabrics onto cape to determine which colour goes better together. Color swapping

Process

After making my initial design for the back panel, I realised that the ratio of the sides would not be complimentary to the centre fold because of the limitation of space (width too short).

So I decided to use a single stitch instead of having a center fold and it turned out better with the width space available.

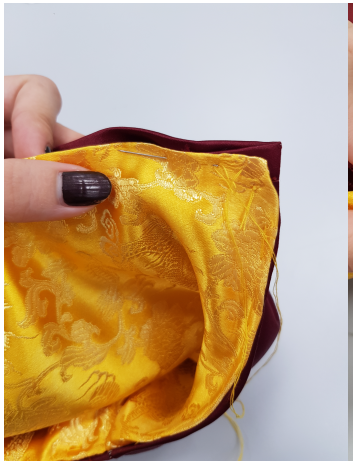
Single stitch down the center makes the fold and form of each horizontal panel look more organic, which was what I intended it to look like.

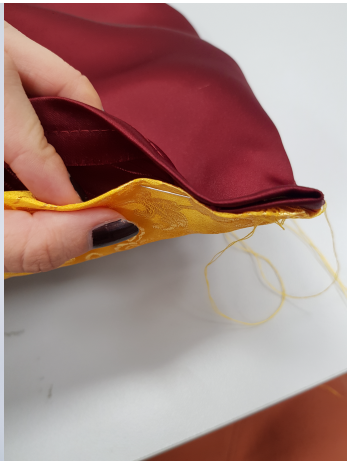
Outlining the satin with my prototype coarse muslin before cutting as I was facing the problem of shortage of satin as the entire cape requires quite a bit of fabric.

Process

Selection of embroidered fabric.

Yellow or Orange?

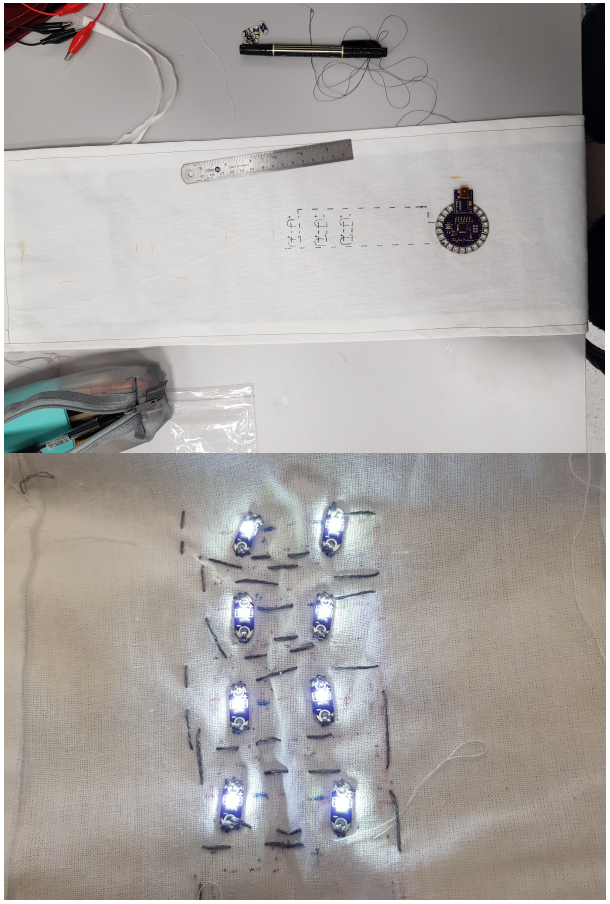


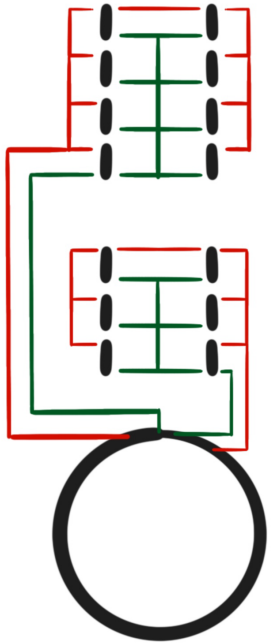


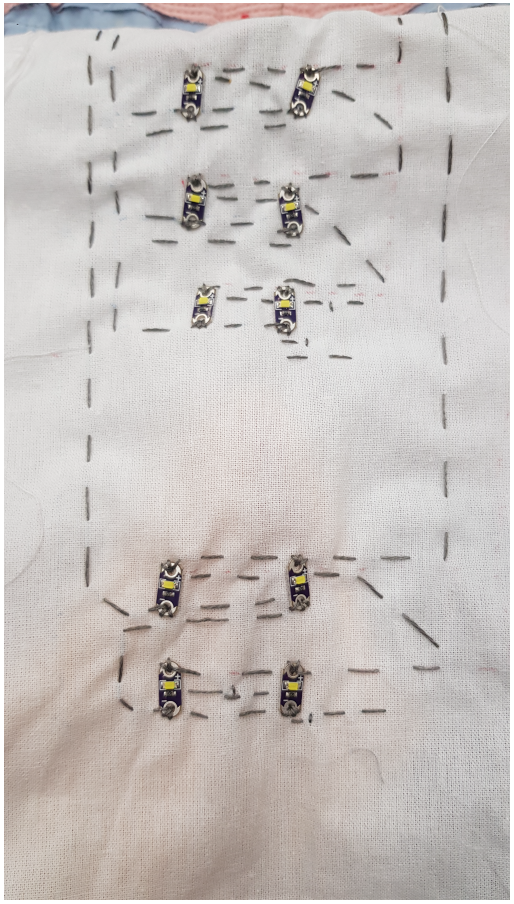
Hand stitching the outer cape and inner lining to prevent seams from showing on the outside.

Hand sewing of LED lights onto the flats on the back panel.

Process



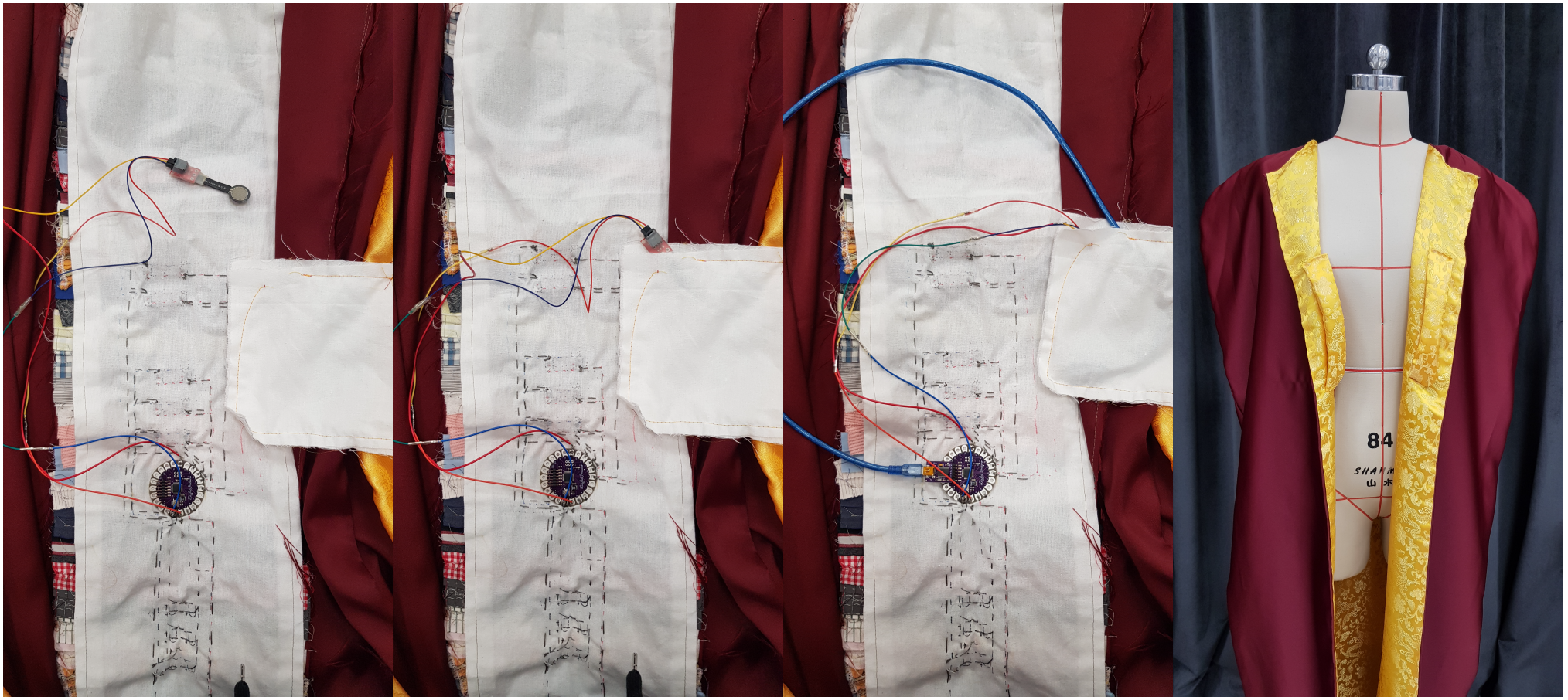




Adding on the tech component was a struggle personally as I had no clue on circuits and wires.
There were a lot of troubleshooting with the code and physical circuit as I did it with conductive thread.

One of the major difficulties I faced was that the circuit did not work (code was fine because there were flickerings of on and off as I moved the garment around) and I could not figure out which part went wrong (e.g. thread touching each other).

Process



Pressure sensor and power cable connects to a pocket on the inner lining.

Additional 'handle' added onto cape for grip.

Process

Photoshoot

Photoshoot

Photoshoot

Runway Day