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World Wore II

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Mentor Statement

The purpose of this mentorship relation was to guide the student through the design development of her senior collection. With marketability and sustainability as main focus, the six collection looks also had to highlight all the skills and technology mastered during the entire undergraduate design education experience. Multiple sketches were developed and edited down to achieve variety and cohesion of materials, techniques and silhouettes. Various body types and shapes were included, providing commercial versatility to the designs. This entry represents one of the looks, however, the marketability focus of this collection made it hard to decide which specific combination is the most successful, as all garments are interchangeable and imbedded with creative use of technology. From extensive use of Optitex for patternmaking to laser cutting, metal casting and digital printing on fabric as well as on finished product, this design also showcases the student's ability to creatively design marketable accessories that complement the garments in the collection.

Concept

World Wore II is a combination of street wear pieces drawn from the parallels of 1940's/WWII era seaming and colors, vintage craftsmanship, and modern-day women's wear. My favorite designs are by Thome Brown or Elsa Scapparelli; both are known for creations that are full of character and driven by craftsmanship, which I strive for in my own work. By producing garments using inspiration from old to inspire new, technology becomes a successful tool of creating marketable new craft.

Processes and Techniques

In order to bring a modern flair to my historical inspiration, I designed garments that would fit into today's contemporary wardrobe. They are not only current in design, but also in construction techniques, with several of the patterns drafted using Optitex. The top piece includes seaming that draws from the feminine lines found in 1940's women's clothing, and is made from an eco-friendly cotton/bamboo fabric, top-stitched with metallic thread, and finished with contrasting rib knit collar and cuffs. The cap sleeve darts add a tailored retro detail to the commercial sweatshirt silhouette.

The cotton sateen pants make reference to the WWII military uniform, and were drafted in Optitex directly from the pants block. Besides functional details such as the inseam and cargo

pockets, a metallic zipper was added at the hems to aid the leg opening and add textural interest. The metal buttons, both at the waistband and as cargo pocket closures, were hand cast in bronze using the *cuttlefish* method, which offers a richly complex texture. The cuttlefish was cut in half using a hacksaw, sanded into two flat parts, and the shape of the buttons was then carved out. Pieces of graphite were used to create holes in the buttons, the halves were affixed together using steel wire, and bronze grain was melted down and poured into a hole at the top of the carved cuttlefish mold. The newly formed buttons were then cleaned, sanded using a Foredom flex shaft, and hand-sewn onto the pants, becoming valuable creative artifacts not just disposable buttons.

The backpack was inspired by WWII paratroopers, and was first constructed using Optitex to create the pattern and Adobe Illustrator to laser cut the leather flap. The cow leather straps were cut, sewn together on a leather machine, attached to a four-way buckle, and a sealing edge treatment was applied by hand. The cotton canvas pattern was first painted with acrylic on Bristol board, manipulated in Adobe Photoshop, and then printed sustainably with environmentally friendly dyes. The tassel detail was cut by hand from pig leather and affixed to the closure, adding texture and using the left over leather.

Bronze knuckle jewelry was made using the *lost casting* method. First carved in hard wax, a plaster investment mold was made from the wax shape, and bronze grain was melted down and hand poured into the mold. Afterwards, the bronze knuckles were hand sanded, filed, and finished with a white diamond compound on an electronic polishing wheel.

The pattern for the earrings were created in Adobe Illustrator, laser cut in goat leather, and paired with hand cut brass strips. The brass strips were cut with a guillotine, holes drilled with a drill press, shaped with a Foredom flex shaft, and then were given a patina using liver of sulfur. Additionally, the top, pants, and backpack, were all given a small copper logo that was both cut and stamped by hand, then also given a similar patina treatment. This branding touch creates value for the consumer, adding to the sustainability message that garments are the result of engineered craft and should not be easily discarded.

Design Innovation

To create the perfect blend of old-meets-new in this 1940's inspired look, I utilized technology in ways to elevate my preexisting skill sets. My pattern making abilities were enhanced with the use of Optitex, I was able to take my leather work to a different level by using Adobe Illustrator and laser cutting, Adobe Photoshop and modern dye techniques boosted my textile design, and traditional metalsmithing practices were improved with modern machinery. The methods used to create this look prove that technology can exponentially heighten within the world of apparel and textiles.

