

**Title** – Paper Silhouettes: An Applied Study of Recycled and Unconventional Materials in Couture Fashion Design

**Program of Study** – Fashion Design and Business Marketing

**Presentation Type** – PowerPoint

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**Category** – Creative and Artistic

This presentation of research explores unconventional and recycled materials as they relate to couture fashion, expanding upon the idea that fashion is a diverse art form and means of expression. For decades, designers have been using garments and runway shows to highlight social, cultural, political, and environmental issues. By using various mediums of design, ideas are able to be portrayed in the form of wearable art, bringing an entirely new element to the fashion industry. In recent years, issues regarding garment waste and pollution have come to light, introducing a movement toward sustainability in the production of textiles and clothing. Sustainability in this sense encompasses practices that do not bring harm to the earth or its resources, thus valuing the well-being of people across the globe. One method of sustainability that has gained momentum in this movement towards responsibility is the recycling of resources. I chose to implement this method in a collection of two garment designs, both of which incorporate and emphasize the recycling of paper and the beautiful impact that this can have on our planet. In this process of research and design, I chose to hand-recycle my own paper by gathering large amounts of used paper, breaking that paper down into pulp by means of blending with water, and creating sheets of paper using a mould and deckle. After straining the water from

the pulp, this process created new and aesthetically pleasing sheets of paper. This process taught me a great deal about the importance of creativity and thinking outside of the box in the area of sustainable processes. The paper-making process was relatively easy, but was able to bring new purpose and life to previously used paper. I incorporated these hand-recycled sheets of paper into my two garment designs, applying them to fabric in order to create the appearance of a new and unique textile. As a result, the idea is conveyed that recycled and unconventional materials are not only beneficial to the planet, but elements of beauty in themselves. Through these garments, a statement is made regarding the attractive nature of responsible fashion – that a shift towards sustainability not only spares Earth's resources and introduces a pure production process, but also reveals a potential for genuine beauty.