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## **SUSTAINABLE EVENING WEAR FASHION COLLECTION FOR SRI LANKAN LADIES, INSPIRED BY TURKEY TAIL MUSHROOMS**

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Fashion is a captivating aspect of society that attracts both men and women. It allows individuals to express their uniqueness and enhance their attractiveness. This innovative project endeavours to transform the overlooked into the extraordinary, drawing inspiration from the resilience and ecological significance of turkey tail mushrooms. Thriving on decaying stumps and dying trees, these mushrooms not only embody longevity and health in various Asian cultures but also serve as a symbol of the interconnectedness of life and the environment. Motivated by these principles and guided by the overarching theme "Be great with confidence," the project sets out to heal the environment by breathing new life into discarded clothes and fabrics through the art of upcycling.

Inspired by the enchanting beauty of Turkey Tail Mushrooms (*Trametes versicolor*), designs were enhanced with its intricate curved lines, captivating shapes, and vibrant colours. To infuse this collection with uniqueness, I transformed these organic curves into delicate ruffles, echoing the mushrooms' graceful contours. Each piece embodies the natural elegance and mesmerising patterns found in these woodland wonders. The creative process involves advanced techniques such as fabric manipulation, texture development, colouring techniques, and draping techniques. These methods provide a sustainable and aesthetically pleasing solution for repurposing discarded textiles, turning them into unique and fashionable pieces.

Focusing on the upcoming spring and summer seasons of 2023/ 24, the project introduces a line of evening wear collections for young women aged 25 to 35 in urban areas of Sri Lanka. Notably, these evening dresses are exclusively crafted from upcycled old clothes and fabrics, aligning with the project's commitment to eco-friendly practices and symbolising a harmonious relationship between fashion and environmental consciousness.

**Keywords:** Upcycling, Eco-friendly, Fabric Manipulation, Sustainability

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Fashion is a captivating aspect of society that attracts both men and women. It allows individuals to express their uniqueness and enhance their attractiveness. To be considered a fashion, a style must be embraced by a sufficient number of people for a considerable amount of time. The fashion industry, while focused on predicting individual clothing choices and desired public image, cannot fully control this societal and cultural trend. Flexibility is crucial in maintaining fashion. Factors such as age, social class, generation, occupation, and geography greatly influence how fashion is perceived in a society (Clothing and Fashion Design Objectives, 2022). Glamour is closely associated with fashion, boosting people's confidence and courage. Fashion also facilitates to happen nonverbal communication between individuals as well. The project mainly deals to develop with developing a sustainable fashion collection that is environmentally friendly through the designs, productions production and marketing as well (Black, 2012).

This project primarily focuses on upcycling and designing sustainably, offering solutions for discarded old clothes and fabrics. Its aim is It aims to identify market problems and provide improved solutions. Under the concept of "be great with confidence," the objective is to design evening wear dresses for young women aged 25-35 living in urban areas of Sri Lanka. The collection will be presented for the ready-to- wear ready-to-wear market in the upcoming spring and summer seasons of 2023/ 24. As the value addition technique for fashion collection, fabric colouring, fashion draping and fabric manipulation techniques were practiced and practised.

### **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this project is to create an evening wear collection for spring and summer 2023/ 24 for young women who are aged 25-35 with evening wear fashion collections inspired by Turkey Tail Mushrooms using fabric manipulation, texture development, colouring techniques and draping techniques as value-added elements to this project and trying to provide a sustainable solution for discarded old clothes and textiles under the concept of "Be great with confidence". Additionally, specific objectives include expressing brand identity, addressing market gaps, attracting customers with innovative designs, navigating market competition, delivering top-quality products, and promoting understanding of fashion styles among enthusiasts.

### **METHODOLOGY**

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to explore various aspects of the fashion industry, including its conceptual underpinnings, prevalent challenges, market dynamics, target demographics, notable brands, seasonal trends, and emerging techniques (Black, 2012). Information sources for fashion developments were consulted include including academic journals, industry reports, fashion magazines, and online resources. Inspiration analysis involved involves delving into the inspiration behind the design concept, and analysing its structural elements such as colours, patterns, lines, shapes, forms, and textures. Visual references were collected from diverse sources, including nature, art, culture, and contemporary trends, to inform the design development process.

Furthermore, trend analysis identified current and future fashion trends through a thorough examination of fashion forecasts, trend reports, and industry insights. This involved studying consumer preferences, cultural influences, technological advancements, and socio-economic factors shaping the fashion landscape. Additionally, questionnaires were administered to young women aged 25-35 in urban areas of Sri Lanka to gauge their preferences, behaviours, and attitudes towards fashion, providing valuable insights into consumer preferences.

Data collection and analysis involved gathering information from diverse sources, including fashion websites, magazines, journals, social media platforms, and fashion-related literature. The collected data was meticulously analysed to extract relevant insights and trends, informing the design development process.

### Conceptual Approaches & Design Development

Drawing upon the identified inspiration “Turkey Tail Mushrooms (*Trametes versicolor*)” (Figure 01), key design elements such as lines, shapes, and textures were developed (Black, 2012). This involved synthesizing visual references and conceptual ideas into cohesive design elements that formed the basis of the collection. Rough sketches were created to translate these ideas into visual representations, allowing experimentation and iteration.

Storyboarding and mood boarding were employed to visually articulate the design direction, aesthetic vision, and thematic elements of the collection. These visual tools facilitated communication and alignment among stakeholders. Feasibility designs were developed by translating 2D sketches into feasible designs, considering material availability, production techniques, and market viability.



Figure 01: Turkey Tail Mushrooms

Figure 02. Concept and Design Developments

### Final Product Development

Denim fabric was selected as the main fabric type to construct the six design outfits. Denim fabric with different thicknesses was used to get final desired appearance. Initial sample product experiments were conducted to test fabric manipulation works, garment accessory settings, and construction techniques. Feedback from these experiments informed further design refinements.

The final designs were then launched as a product brand, incorporating elements of sustainability, innovation, and consumer appeal. The launch strategy encompassed marketing, promotion, and distribution channels to maximize brand visibility and market reach.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The customer survey results offer valuable insights into the preferences and behaviours of our target demographic (Gwilt, 2020): young women aged 25-35 in urban areas. With a vast majority falling within this age group, it's clear that our collection should be tailored to their tastes and needs. The data reveals a strong preference for clothing, with a significant willingness to invest in quality pieces. Despite varying income levels, consumers prioritise factors beyond price, such as uniqueness and fashion trends (Black, 2012). Notably, the survey highlights a high receptiveness towards upcycling garments, indicating a growing awareness of sustainability among consumers. Preferences for fabric types and alternative evening dress styles provide valuable guidance for our collection's design direction. The use of preferred fabrics and styles will further enhance the appeal of our collection. Additionally, insights into garment styles and colour preferences offer opportunities to create appealing and on-trend designs (Gwilt, 2020). Highlighting the uniqueness, fashion-forward trends, and sustainability of our products in marketing campaigns will attract our target demographic. Additionally, showcasing our commitment to quality and craftsmanship can help build brand loyalty. Overall, these findings provide a solid foundation for shaping the design and marketing strategies of the evening wear collection. By aligning our offerings with consumer preferences and values, we can develop a compelling product range that resonates with our target audience and positions our brand as a leader in sustainable fashion.





(a) Front looks of the six designs

(b) Back looks of the six designs

Figure 03: Front & back look of the range development



(a) Look 01

(b) Look 02

(c) Look 03

(d) Look 04

(e) Look 05

(f) Look 06

Figure 04: Final appearance of the six design outfits illustrated in Figure 03

These six-evening wear looks offer a range of sophisticated and contemporary styles suitable for various formal occasions. Figure 03 shows the finally designed front and back looks of six designs and Figure 04 shows the final product development according to the designs shown in Figure 03.

According to Figure 04, Look 01 exudes timeless charm with its blue hues and elegant ruffled sleeves, while the asymmetrical design elements and contrasting fabric panels add a modern twist. In Look 02, a knee-length dress with a patchwork pattern of blues is elevated by delicate ruffled detailing, adding elegance and texture. Look 03 presents a stylish option with its knee-length silhouette, patterned design, and flattering fitted waist, making it an elegant choice for any evening outing. Similarly, look 04 offers a chic asymmetrical design with blue patchwork and flutter sleeves, highlighting the figure with its fitted waist and versatile knee-length cut. Look 05 combines elegant and modern elements with an asymmetrical top featuring ruffled detailing and a patchwork pattern, paired elegantly with flared pants adorned with white lace at the hem. Lastly, look 06 offers a unique take on denim, blending casual and formal with its off-shoulder design and layered, ruffled sleeves, paired harmoniously with flared jeans featuring additional ruffled elements for a contemporary look. Each ensemble showcases sophistication, elegance, and individuality, making them perfect choices for special evening events.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing inspiration from the turkey tail mushroom, my upcycling concept for the Spring/Summer 2023/24 collection will serve as a strong motivation for both designers and customers. It focuses on giving new life to unused materials, offering an environmentally friendly and sustainable solution for repurposing old clothes and fabrics. (The VOU, 2022). With the techniques such as fabric manipulation, Texture development, colouring techniques and draping techniques these unused old clothes and fabric



are turned to designs that will definitely attract young women who are in age 25 to 35 and living in urban areas in Sri Lanka. Women are naturally drawn to items that are unique and stand out. Although upcycled clothes tend to be more expensive, their high quality justifies the price. As a result, despite the higher cost, the market demand for them remains strong. So, the chance of me upcycled clothes for ready to wear in my spring and summer collection with higher probability of becoming a success to the brand and also stands out in the entire fashion industry in Sri Lanka.

For this turkey tail mushroom-inspired spring and summer collection to succeed, certain measures must be taken. These include conducting ongoing market research to stay updated on evolving trends and understanding the daily needs of my target market, allowing me to adapt my designs to meet their preferences. Market research is crucial for staying abreast of evolving trends and emerging market needs, enabling timely design adjustments. Gathering consumer feedback through online and offline surveys, as well as market testing, will provide insights into how well my designs meet customers' needs and expectations. Additionally, conducting further research on colour trends, materials to be reused, and new techniques will help enhance both the quality and durability of my designs. This will not only better satisfy customers but also progressively draw them to my collections.

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