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# **LASU Journal of Humanities (LASUJOH)**

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# 16

## A Redesign of Punk Fashion for Delight

*Bello, Zainab*

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### Abstract

*This study is deliberately tailored towards people with non-design background, aiming to help people conduct fashion design independently with their imagination and practical ability. The requirement is to design the wearable clothes with unconventional materials which occupy a few percent of the total materials. Inspiration originates punk fashion and abandoned tape rule from textile and fashion design studio with the sense of ready-made garment. The Redesign of punk fashion were explored through fashion illustration using free hand and Computer Aided Design. The products are expected to give delights to fashion audience and potential buyers.*

*Keywords: punk fashion, redesign, unconventional material, sustainability.*

**Introduction** Innovation in fashion has many facets: shaping a new silhouette, a particular mood or a new style, but the originality of the materials plays the most significant role. According to Andreou (2015), the use of unusual materials in fashion design has become a trend in recent years. Because technology is evolving at a faster rate than ever before, designers of all types are attempting to incorporate technology and its by-products into their collections. Recently, there has been a surge in the use of unusual materials by designers to create outstanding wearable works of art. (Andreou, 2015). Unconventional materials such as zippers, newspaper, coffee filters, ribbons, plastic bags, plastic water bottles, paper, cord, string, hair, fabric flower petals, playing cards, cupcake liners, condoms, tea bags, CDs and so on were manipulated for surface creation on a piece of clothing. (see figs. 1-6)



Garment made from conventional materials can seem difficult to wear, but create exceptional, surreal designs. Apparel Resources (2015) notes that designing fabric or its surface is a key moment in product design, presently. Some fabrics begin with the thread, while others are defined by a specific finishing or undergo postproduction treatments.

The recurrence of these unconventional fabrics on runways demonstrates that the trend is in its early stages, and that it will gradually trickle into the retail sector in its own distinct form. These are the influences that will have a big impact on exporters' upcoming collections, as they attempt to re-create similar aesthetics with local fabrics, resulting in innovation. ([Apparel Resources, 2015](#))

## The punk fashion and its aesthetics

Clothing ceases to be in service of beauty in favour of vindication, becoming the garments and the body itself a means of communication. Punk is an aesthetic and subculture centered on the punk rock movement of the 1970s, which was inspired by the abrasive, acerbic, the Hippie movement of their way to The Punks were loud,

and went out



*Fig 1: Fabric flower petals dress. Source: elizabethsaitta.com*



*Fig 2: Cupcake liners dress. Source: elizabethsaitta.com*



*Fig 3: Playing cards dress. Source: pinterest.com*



*Fig 5: Teabag dress. Source: medium.com*



*Fig 4: Condoms dress. Source: medium.com*



*Fig 6: Dress with CDs. Source: medium.com*

offend members of the status quo. While the Hippies were more about peace, love, and harmony. By rejecting the prevailing capitalist philosophy of the time, many preached anarchism, far-left politics, and spitting in the face of the establishment. ([https:// aesthetics.fandom.com/wiki/punk](https://aesthetics.fandom.com/wiki/punk)).

Punk fashion is political and breaks with capitalism, consumerism, bourgeoisie society and its norms such as sexism, racism and classism. (<https://www.yolancris.com/icons-vivienne-westwood-part-ii/>). Rotman (2017) opined that, the goal was to recreate the heroes of youth rebellion in the present day. Punk fashion was no longer interested in romanticized icons; instead, they immersed themselves in their neighborhood's neon-colored hair and tight spandex.

Although not all punk variants (such as Steampunk) are visually similar to the original 1970s American punk, they all contain similar messages about society's potential for decline. Most aesthetics with the '-punk' suffix share a defiance and/ or rejection of mainstream society, there are a few that are completely unrelated. (<https://aesthetics.fandom.com/wiki/punk>). Bloomfield (2016) states that, Punk embodied a do-it-yourself approach to fashion as a reaction to the consumerism of 1970s Postmodernism, where image was everything. Young punks wore a jumble of repurposed clothing, most of which came from charity shops. As a protest against the affluent's pristine clothing, garments were destroyed, torn, and defaced in a style that was more anti-fashion than fashion. Straps, which were frequently attached to the legs of trouser legs, were a clear reference to sexual bondage gear.

To challenge gendered clothing, men wore tartan kilts with laddered fishnets, and women wore tartan kilts with laddered fishnets. Extreme hairstyles, body piercings, and an aggressive demeanor all pushed the social envelope. (Bloomfield, 2016). Punk style's most enduring legacy can't be boiled down to a particular item or value as shown in Table 1. It's more about the idea of being authentic, selfexpression and the values attached to what you wear.

**Table 1: Aesthetic visuals of punk style**

Motifs/Items	Colours	Values
Mohawk, leather jackets, shirts with a skull on them, spiked collars, spiked wristbands, tattoos, piercings, long or short pants, distressed jeans, boots, delinquency, guitars, motorcycles, safety pins and inflammatory words such as “perv,” “rock” and “scum” emblazoned across the chest. Vests had zippers directly over the nipple and pants were adorned with glitter glue. Bleached chicken bones were attached to certain pieces.	Black with bright contrasting colours like red, green, yellow.	Mutual Aid, Egalitarianism, Anti-Authoritarianism, Anti-consumerism, Anticorporatism, Gender equality, Racial equality, Animal rights, Disability rights, Anti-gentrification, Health rights, LGBTQ+ rights, Antifascism, Decolonization, Humanitarianism

*Source: Bello Zainab, 2022*

Designers Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren began producing punk-inspired clothing for their London shop SEX soon after punk's emergence. T-shirts with anarchic slogans were among the punk fashions created by the couple (see Fig 9). This became an iconic, albeit more expensive, version of punk fashion, and it helped to formalize sub-culture fashion statements. (Bloomfield, 2016)

Whether or not punk has been hijacked by the mainstream at times, its impact on arts culture and, in particular, fashion is undeniable. Never before has a subculture had such a strong influence on our clothing choices. “Punk's influence on music, movies, art, design, and fashion is no longer in doubt,” said designer Malcolm McLaren.

### **Punks' rebellion through style**

The punk subculture is built on rebellion. Rebellion against society, against social inequalities, and, last but not least, against conformism. Conformity is defined as “a change in a person's behavior or opinions as a result of real or imagined pressure from another individual or group of individuals.” (Aronson, 1972). As a result, punks' rebellion was primarily directed against prevailing modes of thought; what ‘ordinary’ people took for granted, such as the need for a good and secure job, the blame on homosexuality, and mistrust of other races, was simply not accepted as the only and best code of conduct.

In punk fashion, conventional notions of beauty and attractiveness were rejected. The hair was dyed bright colors and styled in spikes and a Mohawk. Body piercing evolved into self-mutilation, with studs and pins piercing brows, cheeks, noses, and lips. Make-up was used in a massive and impressive way by both boys and girls: cosmetics became paint to be used in creating alien masks to hide behind (as shown in Fig. 7). As Hebdige (1979) argued, “beneath the clownish make-up there lurked the unaccepted and disfigured face of capitalism.”

According to UKEssays (2018), punks felt free to offend as many people as they could while claiming to be anarchists and nihilists. They wore terrorist/guerrilla outfits, as well as desecrated religious objects and sexually deviant accessories, as well as directly offensive T-shirts covered in swear words or fake blood (see fig. 8)



*Fig. 7: Punk style of makeup. Source: pinterest*



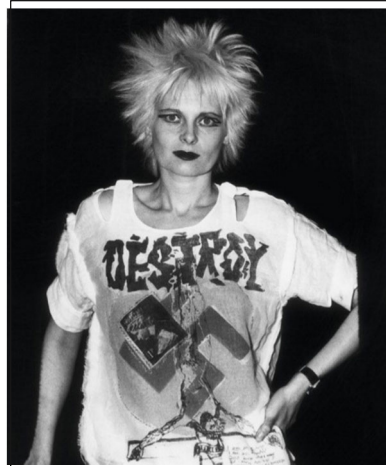
*Fig 8: Rebellion offensive shirt. Source: pinterest.com*

The swastika was undoubtedly one of the most divisive symbols used by punks. During Bowie and Lou Reed's Berlin period, this symbol became available to punks (see Fig. 9). It conjured up images of a decadent and evil Germany, as well as a sense of "no future" that was inextricably linked to the punks' mood. As a result, in the punk's eyes, it had nothing to do with Nazi ideology. Punks, on the other hand, were staunch supporters of the antifascist and antiracist movements. The swastika lost its traditional meaning in punk fashion, and it was worn solely for its shock value. The swastika has always stood for "enemy" and "hate," and being hated was exactly what punks desired. (UKEssays. November 2018).

### **Punk DIY concept**

One of the most well-known examples of punk's "Do It Yourself" (DIY) philosophy. In general, the DIY ethic refers to the practice of being self-sufficient by completing tasks oneself rather than relying on others who are more experienced or capable to do so. As a rejection of the need to purchase items or use existing systems or processes, the DIY ethic is linked to punk ideology and anti-consumerism. (UKEssays, 2018).

Obviously, punk fashion followed the DIY philosophy: the clothes suited the lifestyles of those with limited financial resources due to unemployment and low-income school leavers in general. Punks ripped apart old clothes from charity and thrift shops, destroyed the fabric, and refashioned outfits, creating a completely new way of dressing that had never been seen before. This stylistic innovation drew the attention of the media, prompting two reactions: While a large portion of the British press still stigmatized punk as ridiculous and offensive, the newness and creativity of punk fashion began to be not only accepted but also celebrated in the fashion pages. (UKEssays, 2018)



**Fig 9: Controversial t-shirt by Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren. Source: dazeddigital.com**



**Fig 10: The use of safety pin in the punk era. Source: vogue.com**

## Safety Pin and the Punk era

The safety pin has had a long but mostly quiet life, serving its original purpose of fastening pieces of fabric and clothing together for more than a century. However, when the safety pin became popular during the punk rock era of the 1970s, that humility was shattered (see Fig 10). Caballar (2016) explains that, safety pin has returned to its punk-rock roots as a symbol of opposition as a tiny object of dissent. Although the safety pin's origins as a fibula emphasize class differences, its current meaning of solidarity emphasizes support for marginalized communities. The safety pin has always served as a means of securing clothing. It now goes beyond that utility, promising to keep people together as well.

Punks: A Guide to an American Subculture, by Sharon M. Hannon (2009), describes New York punk fashion as "black straight-leg pants, black leather jackets, short spiky hair, and torn t-shirts held together with safety pins." Safety pins became part of punk culture, even becoming body piercings, after this outfit became popular among punks. Joshua (2021) notes that, safety pin is a symbol of perseverance. It demonstrates that you are a person of high integrity who does not give up easily. The image of a safety pin also has a cool and old school vibe to it. Table 2 below shows, the role of safety pin in various countries.

**Table 2: The role of safety pin in various countries. Source: Bello Zainab, 2022**

Countries	The role of safety pins
Ukraine	safety pins are attached to the inside of children's clothes to ward off evil spirits.
Mexico	safety pin placed as close as possible to a pregnant woman's belly is thought to protect her unborn child from loss and diseases.
Philippines	a safety pin is used to pin charms or amulets on a baby's clothing to protect against bad fortune
India	safety pins are used by women to protect themselves against harassment in public spaces
U. K	A #safetypin Twitter campaign suggested wearing safety pins to show support for immigrants experiencing racist attacks after Britain's vote to exit the European Union.

U.S.	Wearing safety pins in the United States has become a show of solidarity for those who have been subjected to hate and vitriol in the aftermath of Donald Trump's election victory. Members of the L.G.B.T community have been wearing safety pins as a form of protest against Trump's hate speech since his election as US president. People wear safety pins to show they oppose Trump's racist and xenophobic campaign rhetoric.
Netherlands	During the Nazi regime in the Netherlands, the Dutch would wear pins hidden beneath the collar of their shirts. The purpose was to signal to those who were being abused by the Nazis that the person wearing the pin was a trustworthy person. This quickly spread across the country, and wearing a safety pin was soon made illegal under Nazi law.
Countries	The role of safety pins
Nigeria	In southwest Nigeria, the use of safety pins on garments during pregnancy is a common cultural practice. Its use in pregnant women is attributed to a variety of cultural beliefs, including the protection of the fetus from evil spirits and assisting in a safe delivery.

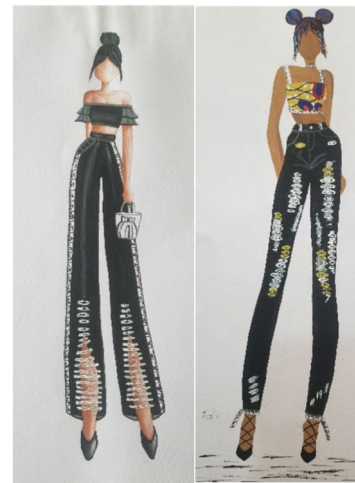


In sports, the safety pin is also very useful. Caballar (2016) affirms that, despite technological advancements that have improved every aspect of sportswear, the safety pin remains popular for attaching a race bib to a runner's shirt. "Safety pins still trump self-adhesive labels, as the latter still depend on how dry the material is when applied, and can sometimes come unstuck during rain or when the athlete gets sweaty,"

Designers have been using clothing and runway shows to draw attention to social, cultural, political, and environmental issues for decades. Ideas can be portrayed in the form of wearable art using a variety of design mediums, adding a completely new dimension to the fashion industry. Concerns about garment waste and pollution have surfaced in recent years, igniting a movement toward textile and clothing production that is more sustainable. (Blanke & Matalie 2021) Due to the pressure of environmental deterioration and resource shortage, the circulating utilization of tailoring accessories has become the most efficient method to cope with abandoned tailoring accessories. The use of assorted tailoring accessories (safety pins and tape measures) gives fashion products flexible expression methods and plasticity makes it beneficial to the creativity of the design.

### Design manuscript

The design inspiration is originated from punk fashion and the utilization of an abandoned tailoring accessories precisely tape rule and safety pins. The use of environmentally unfriendly materials was regrouped and arranged on the garment to present the application of environmental protection concept in modern fashion design. Safety pins with different sizes were obtained, abandoned tape rules from textile and fashion studio were also collected.



*Fashion illustration of redesigned punk fashion. Zainab collection, 2021*



*Redesigned punk fashion via CAD. Zainab collection, 2021*





*Product samples, Redesigned: 1. t-shirt; 2. trousers; 3. crop top Zainab collection 2021*

## Methodology

Studio-based research in art and design according to de Freitas (2002) refers to those research projects in which creative practice plays the most important role in the cluster of research methods used. It is usually initiated by the artist or designer in response to his/her own particular studio or design practice. Art and design studio practice results in artists and designers acquiring knowledge about concepts, materials, processes and applications. Studio-based research method was chosen because various materials were interacted and manipulated in a creative manner based on concepts that are likely to produce desired results. The researcher deemed it appropriate to employ this method since it is a practical oriented process.

## Analysis

Fashion illustration utilizing freehand (see plates 1 and 2) and CAD were used to the redesign of punk fashion (see plate 3 and 4). To make it more acceptable in the milieu in which they find themselves, the punk fashion concept was mixed with ready-made (plates 1 and 4) and wax print material (plates 2 and 3). The safety and tape rule, which served as accessories, were placed in such a way that they could be seen from any angle. This type of high-street fashion is also known as Punk

D.I.Y.

## Sample Making

Sample making is an essential part of the fashion design process. It involves creating a prototype or a sample of a design to test its fit, function, and overall aesthetic appeal. Sample making is critical because it allows designers to see their designs come to life in three dimensions (as show in Plate 5 to 7). The

completed samples were examined for any issues with the fit, construction, or overall appearance.

Based on the analysis of the above materials and styles, the ready to wear garment was blended with tape rule and heavy decoration of safety pins to express a kind contemporary and derivative design. Meanwhile, the design work based on tape rule and safety pins own relatively high practical value, viewing value, artistic value, unique styles, strong recoverability and utility. The new garment gives unexpected delights from the fashion audience and potential buyers. Unlike the punk fashion, the garment was constructed in such a way that seems easy and decent to wear with futuristic sense.

## Conclusion

The surface interest of the new garment was less enhanced, and still gave it a strong visual impact and effect. The garment newly-invented textures produced with unconventional materials by innovative techniques breaks through the traditional appearance and process of fashion design or focuses on the futuristic concept beyond the functional aspect of fashion. The inspiration from punk fashion provides more opportunities and methods for executing unrealized design concepts and thus creating more creative surface in fashion.

## Recommendation

It is recommended that other researchers, textile artists and DIY students should be encouraged and utilise alternative materials and techniques within the environment to produce textile arts. Textile art producers should place emphasis on concept-based art rather than the physical properties of textile art.

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