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Zero Waste Fashion Design by Timo Rissanen and Holly McQuillan (Fairchild Books, 2015)

Zero Waste Fashion Design, has been written by two of the leading protagonists in the field; Dr. Timo Rissanen and Holly McQuillan. Dr. Rissanen is, Assistant Professor of Fashion Design and Sustainability at Parsons, The New School for Design in New York. He describes his research on sustainability in fashion is being inseparable from his design practice. Rissanen's PhD, focused on zero waste fashion design and was arguably the first doctoral study in this area. Holly McQuillan is a Senior Lecturer in Design at the College of Creative Arts at Massey University, New Zealand. Her research centers on the practice led aspects of zero waste fashion design and she articulates this through exhibitions and writing, which focus on wider issues of sustainability and their links with risk taking in fashion design. Both authors began working together as a means of conveying their intentions and motivations after developing zero waste concepts in isolation. Although the book is written as a singular voice both recognize there are different ways of creating zero waste fashion and the overriding aim is to embrace this diversity of practice throughout the book. It is a well illustrated, comprehensive and practical volume that contributes to the emerging literature on this subject and to the wider literature related to sustainable fashion. The work is pragmatic and should be marketed towards fashion students and designers who wish to develop this process within their work. It aims to support a sustainable, fashion design approach through descriptions of zero waste techniques and exercises developed to promote an understanding of the zero waste process.

In zero waste fashion, the designer creates a garment by working with the entire space of the fabric width, utilizing the pattern cutting process. The design of the garment is entirely influenced by this method, formulated to eliminate textile waste through a holistic development of pattern pieces that use all of the fabric. The concept of zero waste fashion is not new. Examples of garments that adhere to the manufacturing principles of the idiom include the sari, the kimono and the Greek Chiton. These long established costumes have arguably inspired the development of the production processes of zero waste. They are generously detailed in the book through images that demonstrate the manufacture of various zero waste garments, developed by the authors themselves, as well as leading designers and pattern cutters within the field. This emphasizes the process of fashion design and pattern cutting as unified, a generative rather than a reactive activity, in which pattern cutting can often be the motion that produces the idea. It is emphasized that one of the key challenges for zero waste fashion design is developing an understanding of this approach within the mass market, where the separation of both the pattern cutting and design roles, is often traditional. The book provides a useful and inspiring addition to the plethora of works that describe pattern cutting and fashion design methods and helps to widen the scope of pattern cutting and its creativity within the

fashion industry. Interviews with pattern cutters and designers provide a useful and inspirational insight into different approaches to zero waste and the different types of designs and fabrics that can be used to create an effect.

The book focuses on a how to do it, tool kit for producing zero waste garments. It has six chapters, as well as a useful glossary of terms and a reference section. The work begins with a historical overview of key, zero waste fashion designers and their creations, providing both background and context. It references the activities of Dorothy Burnham, a curator at the Royal Ontario Museum, who published an exhibition catalogue, "Cut my Cote," (1973) to accompany an exhibition of the same name. It is suggested that Burnham was perhaps the first to place the efficiency of cut as integral to the relationships between fabric width, garment cut and the resulting waste. This section also discusses the work of the 1950's sportswear designer, Claire McCardell and the creations of Zandra Rhodes, who both used similar approaches. Chapter two is an overview of the ways pattern cutting can be used as a design tool and provides the context for chapter three, which investigates the basics of zero waste fashion design. Chapter four examines how certain phases of zero waste fashion design can become easier and faster with the help of CAD systems for pattern cutting. The challenges of manufacturing zero waste garments are discussed in chapter five, which describes different ways to create ranges of zero waste garments, without squandering any fabric. The final chapter is inconclusive as the authors invite the reader to use the knowledge gained from the book in order to develop their own zero waste fashion designs as an ongoing, shared conversation of questioning and discovery.

The book provides a well documented, practical approach for the student and designer to develop zero waste ideas and is arguably the first book to do so, I would suggest the area is ripe for a more scholarly investigation of the principles of zero waste and it could be a focus for future research. This could explore the wider implications of zero waste within the arena of sustainability and the developing area of Slow Fashion. Emanating from the Slow Movement (2005), which advocates a cultural shift towards slowing down life's pace, Slow Fashion encourages taking time to ensure quality production, give value to the garment, and contemplate the connection with the environment. Ultimately, Rissanen and McQuillan's book advocates the development of non-wasteful fashion design which is also imaginative and both are arguably key to the continued creative development of the sustainability and slow fashion movements.

References

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