

Exposed Shoulders

An interactive wearable

Andrea Mestre

Proposal

I want this project to reflect the double standard surrounding women's clothing and the implications we are encouraged to draw from them (i.e. conservative clothing being seen as prudish vs skimpier clothing being seen as sexual). The project would consist of a corset that detects distance and outputs harmful stereotypes and gendered slurs via speakers depending on the proximity of the subject approaching the corset. The closer the person gets to the corset, the more harmful and loud the messages become, reinforcing the idea that people who feel entitled to comment on a person's clothing are contributing to these harmful and negative stereotypes.

Research Questions

How can a wearable be aesthetically pleasing while also functioning technically?

How can I use interactivity and reactivity to encourage people to critique how we are pressured to judge other people's sexual preferences, habits and histories based on their clothing (or lack thereof)?

How can I make this wearable as sustainable as possible so that it has a life after this project is over?

How can I make the code as simple as possible while still wielding impactful results in my final project?

How can I remind people that intimacy is not directly related to how people physically present themselves?

Research Questions

- 1) I want my project to disrupt spaces that encourage patriarchal values about gender, sexuality and the male gaze. I want to disrupt the idea that clothing is an indicator of how sexuality is performed publicly and privately. I think my project would be most impactful in a public space surrounded by people, as people would naturally be drawn to someone wearing an unusual article of clothing like a corset in public. This piece is made for everyone who has ever been harassed in public or online because of their performed sexuality, their story of sexual assault, their lack of solidarity or simply their desire to see a cultural change among ourselves.

Research Questions

2) I want the user to think about how easily they might feel getting too close to people without their permission or how we often feel entitled to stare at women if we aren't comfortable with their attire. We often condemn them for wearing revealing clothing, wearing clothing that is too conservative, clothing that society has deemed "unflattering" or clothing that simply does not fit the feminine gender constructs we surround ourselves with. Since my wearble will be a symbol of feminine constriction, the corset, I believe that it will evoke a sense of feminine pride while also deconstructing how patriarchal western societies have commodified femininity and reinforced it as the only feasible goal for women to obtain.

Research Questions

3) I want the user to think about how easily they might feel getting too close to people without their permission or how we often feel entitled to stare at women if we aren't comfortable with their attire. We often condemn them for wearing revealing clothing, wearing clothing that is too conservative, clothing that society has deemed "unflattering" or clothing that simply does not fit the feminine gender constructs we surround ourselves with. Since my wearble will be a symbol of feminine constriction, the corset, I believe that it will evoke a sense of feminine pride while also deconstructing how patriarchal western societies have commodified femininity and reinforced it as the only feasible goal for women to obtain.

Research Questions

4) I want my project to be meaningful by promoting solidarity and unity. We live in a world that fetishizes our differences as a way to compete with others rather than encouraging us to understand and learn from others. I want my piece to be brash and unapologetic but I also want people to leave reflecting on their own actions and deciding if any of the messages they have heard are things they have heard or said. Hopefully people will take away that sometimes we need to observe the negative aspects in life and actively change our behaviour in order to change the world.

Keywords

Lingerie

Violence

Fashion Design

Sustainability

Sexual Assault

Femininity

Mindfulness

Rape culture

Privilege

Life cycle

Social constructs

Wearable

Gender Roles

Narrative

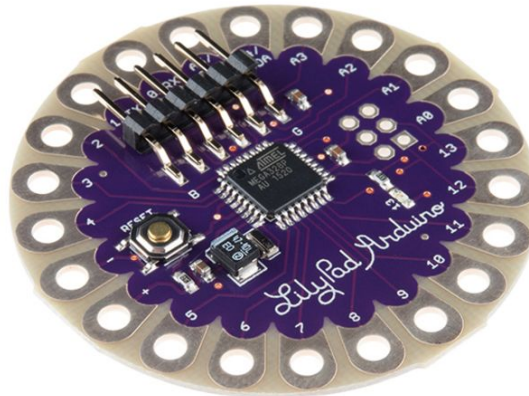
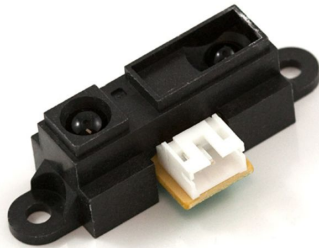
Materiality

Message

Sensors

I would need a proximity sensor to detect the participant's distance from the piece. I would most likely need a **Sharp IR distance sensor** as well as a microcontroller better suited for wearable like a **Lily Pad** or a **Gemma**.

For the output I would need a/multiple speaker(s) small enough to embed in the clothing but powerful enough to travel across spaces so that the participant can hear the reaction.



Inspiration- Ying Gao *Neutralité: Can't and Won't* (2016)

Neutralité: CAn't and Won't (2016) is a wearable art piece designed by Montreal based artist and professor Ying Gao. The work uses facial recognition software to trigger the dresses to move organically, but only if the model remains stoic and still (a reversal of traditional FRS works that usually encourage a more playful over the top expressiveness).

[Watch Video](#)



Inspiration- Anouk Whipprecht *Spider Dress* (2015)

Spider Dress (2015) is an interactive wearable by Dutch designer Anouk Whipprecht. The dress explores themes of boundaries and personal space using mechanical components and sensors. If someone approaches the person wearing the dress in an aggressive manner, the 3D “spider legs” shoot outwards to create an obstacle. On the other hand, the legs will not assert themselves if the person approaches the model peacefully and calmly.

[Watch Video](#)



Inspiration- Behnaz Farahi *Caress of the Gaze* (2015)

Caress of the Gaze (2015) is a gaze-activated wearable designed by Iranian-American architect Behnaz Farahi. The vest has a camera embedded within it that recognizes the facial features of the person observing it and reacts accordingly. This project encourages us to consider our relationships to our clothes and the unknown people and environments that surround us.

[Watch Video](#)



Impact

My project will be impactful because my background in burlesque and research on Western gender roles, sex work, LGBTQIA2+ issues and feminist issues will allow me to be upfront about the problems and patterns that affect the people in these communities, primarily plus-size women, transgender women, women of colour and sex workers. I will encourage those who interact with my piece to have solidarity for the people in these communities and educate themselves about how patriarchy can negatively affect everyone regardless of gender, race and class.

Story Board

