

Infinite





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CYNTHIA FANG SHOT BY ALEXANDER LAMAN.



Letter from the Editor

My first pair of pants did not fit. The crotch was too high and the legs were too thin.

You never really think about the construction and labor of your \$20 Zara pants, until you try making pants yourself. First, figuring out the geometries and pieces that are involved and then determining the order of sewing. In a way, it is a bit like engineering. Perhaps, that is what drew me to fashion in the first place—a curiosity for construction.

Through the process of making pants, you also realize how antiquated the fashion industry is. There are no robots that fully fabricate pants—someone has to hand assemble them at a sewing machine. And with that lies an incredible opportunity to break the central tenets of the fashion industry. We must question the materials, the forms, and the methods of garment creation, and MIT is just the place to do that.

While that goal may be years away, we created this magazine as a starting point and as a platform. It is an outlet for student designers and writers to share their work and thoughts with the MIT community, shining light on artists that

otherwise go unnoticed. This magazine is meant for experimentation, providing an opportunity to create something new and different. Most importantly, there are no rules on what should or can be published.

The name *Infinite*, not only embodies MIT, but also the boundless expanse that is fashion. A human body can be adorned in an endless array of materials and silhouettes.

Our hope is that this magazine chronicles the evolution of fashion at MIT. Think of it as a capsule of lifestyle and thought, reflective of a particular point in MIT's history.

There are an incredible number of opportunities at MIT, but for me, I have found the most solace sewing on the floor of my fraternity bedroom. I hope this magazine allows others to feel that same joy.

To many issues to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hannah".

Infinite



FEBRUARY 2018
ISSUE 1

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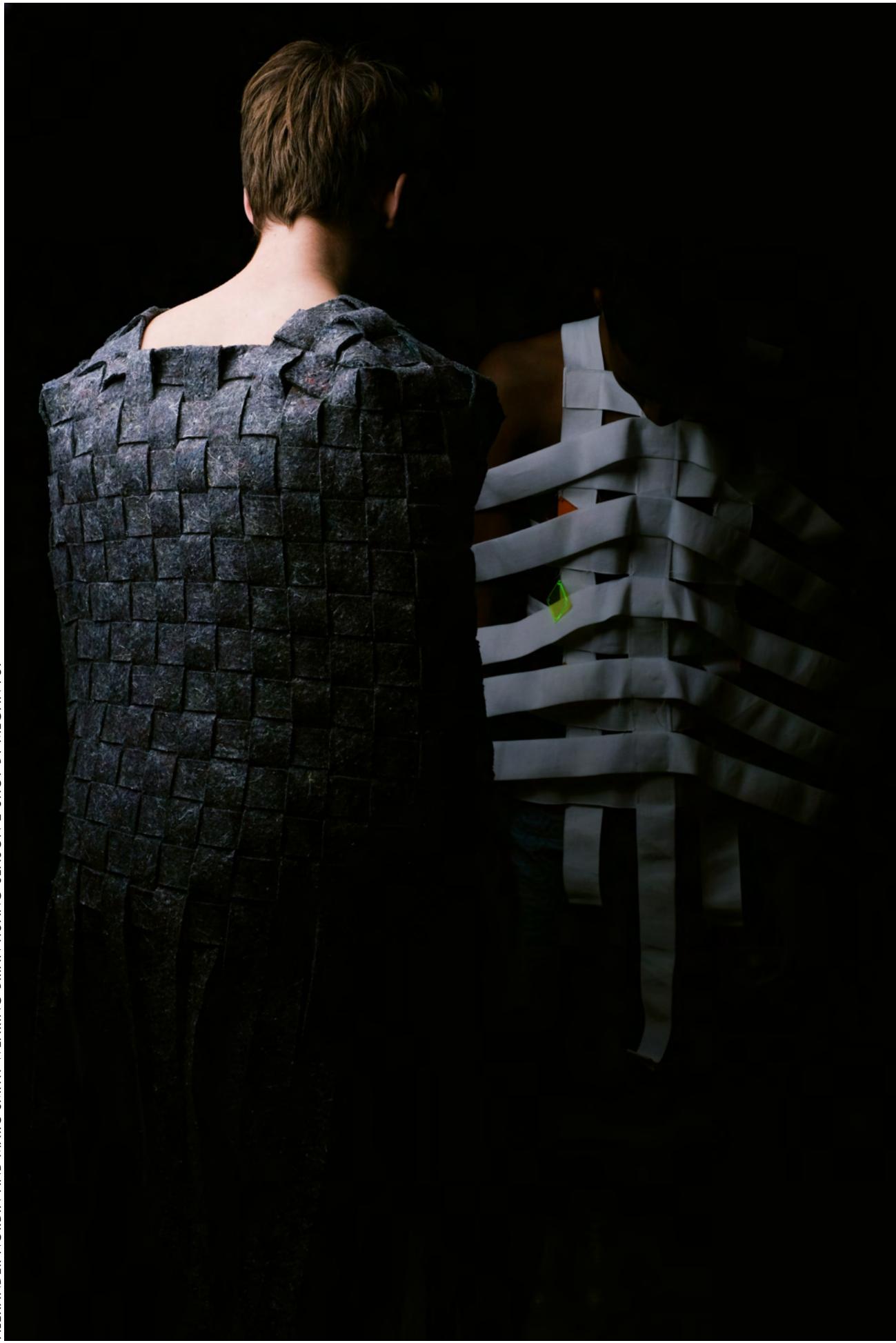
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ERIKA ANDERSON WEARING DRESS BY BRIAN HUANG AND JULIA RUE SHOT BY ALEXANDER LAIMAN, STYLING BY CYNTHIA FANG, MAKEUP BY SEFA YAKPO.

Gender Fluidity

Garrett Souza



shot by Alexander Laiman and styled by Cynthia Fang

Fashion is expression. It provides context and coherence to all facets of one's being, framing gender, race, sexuality, and culture through the lens of style. The choices we make surrounding personal fashion serve as the first front against the discretizing eye of society, granting opportunity to resist labels and confinement in favor of a more robust analysis of the individual. However, this fight for expression is largely limited for men by the self-imposed boundaries placed on what they can and cannot wear. Colors, textures, prints, fits, and silhouettes have all been gendered within the cultural binary, leaving men with narrow margins for expressing themselves.

Gender fluid fashion is a direct response to this dilemma – a movement which seeks to destabilize visual conceptions of gender and identity through stylistic decisions that reflect the individual rather than the label they've been assigned. In practice, this has been implemented through more androgynous looks – looser fits, flowing silhouettes, and textured fabrics that mask visual cues for gender. While some have sought to completely strip gender from fashion

through minimalist designs and cuts that mask the body of the individual, it is important to note that gendered fashion is itself not the issue. Rather, there is a push to attain more mobility and diversity within the clothing options currently available, allowing us to present ourselves in ways that align more closely with our individuality. The result: identity informing clothing, rather than clothing informing identity.

Take Gucci's creative director and head fashion designer, Alessandro Michele. His designs often blur gender lines, finding fluidity through contrast and ambiguity. As Alice Newbold of Vogue writes, "Just as he cross-pollinates history and culture for inspiration, his fluidity always extends to gender. Why shouldn't a man be able to wear the same patterned pussy-bow blouse as a woman?" These gender-fluid looks push culture, and antagonize lethargic notions of masculinity and femininity. The movement is not about genderless fashion, but rather breaking down binaries and providing options for all individuals to feel comfortable and represented in their style.



WORK WEAR

*Garment District Cropped Black Button Down (\$25) and Black High-Waisted Pants (\$10), Kohls
White Mesh Tank (\$7), Target Steel Loop Belt (\$13), Rose Bowl Market
White High Tops with Elongated Laces (\$20).*



FORMAL WEAR

Good Will Black and White Checkered Coat (\$7), Macy's Red Loose Trousers (\$35), America Eagle Black Turtle Neck (\$14), Home Depot Steel Bead Chain (\$6), Vans Checkered Socks (\$5).

I'm tired of choosing between solids and stripes – of sifting through racks of shirts that solely vary in color and neckline. Why are distressed jeans the most exciting pants I can find in a men's section? I find myself consistently frustrated with the monotony of retailers, and with the unwillingness of these fluid looks to trickle down from high-fashion. As I have come more into my identity, and therefore into my personal style, I've had to stray from my traditional sources of clothing. I either timidly venture into the women's sections of my favorite stores or simply borrow from the wardrobes of my female housemates. As a cis male, I cannot comment on nor imagine the struggles of personal expression that accompany those who do not fall under these labels. However, in searching for new and more nuanced methods of personal expression, the rigidity of men's fashion standards has been constraining.

I started out with three main objectives: to discover Boston retailers that cater to a more expansive and fluid style, to create a look that more wholly encompasses my identity and desire for self-expression, and to not break the

bank. The third goal ended up informing the first, and I found myself shopping at The Garment District in Cambridge, as well as Boomerangs and Good Will in Central Square. The Garment District, in particular, proved to be a cost-effective option for finding unique pieces that could lend themselves to a more fluid look.

◦ ◦ ◦

Dressing up shouldn't feel performative. Clothing shouldn't limit self-expression. Regardless of who you are, how you identify yourself, or what your financial situation is, there should be clothing options that make you feel comfortable and represented. Venture outside the monotonous men's sections of mass retailers. Break free from the suffocating polarity of gendered fashion. Make them think. Be Bold Be Brazen. Be Blessed.

- Garrett Souza □



ATHLETIC WEAR

Good Will Cropped Iowa
Hoodie (\$6), Target Athletic
Shorts (\$15), Nike White
Socks (\$10).



Josh, a store associate and good friend of mine, sporting a look that was all under \$50.

How to Look Like \$1M with \$40 or Less

Samira Okudo

We all know that creating the perfect winter look can be a challenge especially when you're on a budget. However, I'm here to tell you about one of my fashion secrets that always leaves me, my wallet, and my wardrobe very happy, and that's: thrifting!

Thriftng is something I enjoy doing from time to time because it allows me to find unique pieces at unbelievable prices. I find that vintage pieces (*ahem...* jeans) often fit better than their contemporary counterparts, and I definitely don't mind the low price tag.

My most recent trip took me down to 563 Mass Ave, the home of the local thrift store, Boomerangs! If you don't know about Boomerangs, it is the award-winning

thrift store owned & operated by the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts. It sells a variety of high-quality, new, vintage & gently-loved merchandise to provide critical funding to AIDS Action in Massachusetts.

Overall, I have to say that it was fun putting looks together at Boomerangs. Knowing that price wasn't a problem and that my purchase would contribute to a worthy cause, my creativity was free to run wild. I highly recommend that you go to a thrift store like Boomerangs for an experience you'll never forget and your wallet won't notice.□



Trashion with Lisbeth Acevedo

Lisbeth Acevedo is a junior majoring in Architecture (course 4). She is interested in the fashion industry and has been involved with MIT's annual Trashion show twice. It was a pleasure to meet Lisbeth two weeks before the 2017 show, and discuss her passion for Trashion.

Hi! How have you become involved with Trashion?

Freshmen year, unfortunately, I did not get to participate in the show, so I went all out my sophomore year. I really enjoyed it so I'm about to design again this year.

Awesome. So what exactly is Trashion?

It's held by the UA Sustainability committee to raise awareness about sustainable fashion because a lot of the current practices in industry are bad for the environment, especially in light of the rise in "Fast Fashion." For example, companies like *Forever 21* mass produce several items without cleaning up the side effects in a sustainable manner. So Trashion raises awareness of these sustainability issues as well as encourage creativity. For example, ordinary and more eco-friendly objects that have been recycled or donated are used to create different pieces.

In terms of designing, how does it work? Are there different themes each year?

There aren't general themes you have to stick with. It really depends on the designer. However, last year, the main focus shifted towards sustainables, so the criteria for getting 1st, 2nd or 3rd place awards were more heavily judged in terms of the longevity of the outfit. For example, the materials used during and after the creative process were questioned. Yet, there still weren't any restrictions on what styles you could do. It depends on the designer and their vision.

As you work on a much smaller scale in Trashion compared to industry, how does your design incorporate sustainability?

I really wanted to use materials that I already had. So, I split cardboard which had the wavy texture in the middle, in half to get single-face corrugated cardboard. I felt so lucky to find them in the tunnel! Aside from cardboard, I incorporated some twine into my design. Corrugated cardboard was the main material because it can be recycled easily.

Very interesting! So what exactly was your design?

I was heavily inspired by an STS (Science, Technology, and society) class I was taking at the time called "Technology and Experience." We learned about technology in clothing such as wearables and armour. For one project in particular, we went to the Natural Museum of History at Harvard where we saw a war exhibit on different civilizations and time periods. It was really interesting to learn about the dif-

ferent tools, weapons and armor. I wrote an essay on a really cool breastplate I found, which influenced my Trashion piece. It had leather strings at the bottom that inspired the fringe skirt, and a woven texture on the top section I used in the piece. After Trashion, I ended up presenting my piece to the class.

How was the actual experience of being involved in the show?

It was a really great opportunity for me to be creative and do something different from my usual schedule. Although I had a lot of fun, there were stressful times when all I would do was Trashion, Trashion, Trashion. I wanted the piece to be very cohesive and presentable so I dedicated a lot of time to it. People from different majors participated in the show, which was really nice because I got to see diverse designs. It's not something that happens regularly at MIT, so I was really excited to win 2nd place.

Oh wow congrats!

Thank you! The top 3 pieces were displayed in the Prudential for a week during IAP. It was an amazing feeling to see people stop and take pictures. I was very proud of myself for participating and going through with my designs.

Absolutely! Do you feel like your positive first-time experience motivated you to participate a second time?

Partly. I really enjoy having that creative outlet to participate in projects outside my normal studio work. Working with my hands in a different art form to make wearable designs really excites me. Thinking about the makeup, hair and functionality also gives me a buzz. But yeah, having a positive experience was definitely a plus.

What was your theme for this year?

Although I was inspired by war last year, I wanted something more high-fashion, avant-garde and unusual for this show. I used pages of books donated by people to make a piece called, "Unbound." It has some futuristic yet old-school aspects. The paper pieces are distressed, burnt on the edges, and stained with coffee to give an antique look.

What inspired the name "Unbound"?

laughs I was speaking to my friends while taking the books apart and we realized we were doing the opposite of what a book does. So we were like unbound, right?

I love that! Thank you for teaching me a lot about Trashion! Looking forward to seeing your design.

To learn more about MIT's Trashion show, check out trashion.mit.edu - Kasi Ugo-Beke □



SAMIRA OKUDO WEARING LISBETH ACEVEDO SHOT BY CYNTHIA FANG.

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COTTON CANDY TWO-PIECE SET, INDUSTRIAL CHOKER, BASIC BODY CHAIN, RAZORBLADE EARRINGS, **CYNTHIA FANG**

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a

m



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l



DOUBLE BUCKLE CHEST PIECE, CHAIN
EARINGS, CYNTHIA FANG.

(OPPOSITE) DECONSTRUCTED DENIM
SKIRT AND BELT, MONOGRAM STAR
BRALETTE AND BUCKLE CHOKER, RA-
ZORBLADE NECKLACE, CHAIN EAR-
RINGS, CYNTHIA FANG.



Fast Fashion

Admittedly, fast fashion has its appeal. In an era of virtual shopping carts, ephemeral Instagram trends and increasing globalization, it's becoming desirable and more importantly, conceivable, to stuff our closets with "must haves" at dirt cheap prices. Most of us can relate to the experience of being in severe pursuit of a certain trendy garment and stumbling upon an unknown website with a hodgepodge of inconsistent product images boasting unimaginably low prices (and, of course, the consequent recon process of scouring the internet for reviews of said website). And that's the point at which we get sucked in. The desire for inexpensive, on-trend clothing we wear only a handful of times drives us directly into the growing market of unsustainably-produced, low quality garments that constitutes fast fashion.

Behind the façade of pretty clothes and enticing prices lies a disconcerting truth – the clothing industry is heavily damaging to the environment and is second only to

the oil industry in its pollution capacity. Present consumer habits, in large part driven by the fast fashion industry, only exacerbate this problem. *The Economist* reports that consumers today hang on to clothing items for only about half as long as they did 15 years ago and that the majority of fast fashion garments are discarded within a year. Based on my first, and likely last, experience with a fast fashion website, I think I see why. Simply put, every item I received was flawed – the initially bright golden choker faded to a splotchy brass color after a single wear; the ankle boots came with uneven back stitching and a questionable stain near the toe; the dress came with faulty stitching and a hole in the arm. Truthfully, I got what I paid for. But more interestingly, I made the observation that the combination of low prices and lack of quality is exactly what fast fashion runs on. Often made of low-cost, man-made materials like polyester – a derivative of petroleum – these clothes aren't built to last. So, of course, people are junkies going back for more garments to replace the shoddy ones that fall apart,

“The clothing industry is second only to the oil industry in its pollution capacity.”

fashion

justifying the stream of new purchases with the affordability of prices. Hence, the cycle of cheap production and avid consumerism feed viciously off each other.

The steady rate of purchase means an equal rate of discard. Due to the lower quality of the fabrics used by fast fashion brands, most discarded clothing – 13 trillion tons, specifically – ends up in landfills in the US, left to contaminate soil and groundwater with unsavory chemicals. This leaves a marginal amount of clothes to consignment shops, of which only a tenth actually gets resold. Furthermore, it's not currently feasible to recycle materials like polyester due to the exorbitant cost attached. Fortunately, some clothing companies are taking steps to lighten the environmental burden of clothing production. H&M has removed certain toxic chemicals used to waterproof clothing from its lines and is also committed to using “better cotton,” which is grown without harmful pesticides and with better water management. Meanwhile, Nike is cutting down 60% of its waste by knitting some types of shoes instead of piecing

components together. Patagonia is trying to prevent customers from disposing off clothes by offering to repair items they've bought instead.

As consumers, we wield a great deal of power on this industry. While we can't change the fact that workers in third-world countries make 12-18 cents/hour producing clothes we discard after a few uses, our consumption patterns have the ability to alter some of the unpleasant forces in the clothing industry. Forbes reports that investing in fewer, better quality clothing may actually save consumers money in the long run. This has the potential to set off a constructive chain reaction since higher quality fabrics will stay out of landfills longer and have a better chance at being sold second-hand. So as much as I love binge-watching those “Is this website a scam?! I spent \$400 there!” videos, I'll definitely be exercising some restraint while browsing fast fashion sites. □

Looking Like a Snack

in a world of hor d'oeuvres

There is a common misconception that you have to break the bank to look great. This is absolutely false. Let's face it, most of us are college students trying to pursue our own renditions of living our best lives. To MIT undergrads, this can span from getting involved in extracurricular activities, to focusing on academia, attending social events, or exploring different cultures. Whatever the case, I refuse to let our limited funds restrict us from serving looks. Thus, I am here to spill the tea on how to look like one thousand bucks spending the bare minimum. Do tune in.

First of all, I just want to clarify that contrary to popular belief, wearing branded clothing such as Vineyard Vines, Ralph Lauren, Balenciaga and the like does not equate to fashion god or goddess. However, if there are certain looks from the runway or high-end stores that I am attempting to emulate, my go-to stores include Zara, Topshop, Topman, French Connection, Urban Outfitters, Mango, Pull & Bear, Gap and Miss Selfridge. Not only do they sell much more affordable options, but they are up-to-date on different looks and appeal to various tastes and body shapes. Nevertheless, I have indeed seen some wild price tags – so be sure to always check out the discount and out-of-season options, because it is never too cold to rock crop tops and miniskirts when layered appropriately.

Growing up in the U.K., my mum would always take me to department stores such as Debenhams, Selfridges, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, House of Fraser, Liberty, Harvey Nichols, and Harrods. As a little kid, I found them quite overwhelming, especially as I mostly associated these large complexes with hasty 'back-to-school' shopping. However, I have now seen the light. I have become my mum and a huge advocate of retail stores. To save time from go-

ing in-store, I love perusing the websites of the U.S. counterparts (e.g. Macy's, Nordstrom and Lord & Taylor) where I'm able to snag some highly deducted bougie-looking gear and analyze customer reviews on a wide range of items.

If you're like me and have barely grown over the past years, then you're in luck. No need to revamp your closet! Let's face it, fashion repeats itself. Remember rocking those ponchos and flared jeans back in middle school? (Okay, maybe just me.) Well, guess what? They're in vogue. So don't be too brisk to get rid of old clothes, as they are the real OG vintage. Which brings me to my next tip: wearing timeless pieces and solid colors can give you a sophisticated allure. Thrift stores and charity shops are great places to scout affordable, classic items. Nevertheless, we still have some clothes that we would probably never wear (again). Trade them in at resale stores or reuse the material to create new fits (for example a bandeau top and skirt from a pep-lum dress) for an environmentally friendly way to save your cash!

There aren't half as many outlet shopping centre's near London as there are in American states, so spending some summer vacations in the U.S., my mum and I would always dedicate a couple of days to venture slightly out of the city. For reference, an outlet store is a brick and mortar where manufacturers often sell items for lower prices than you would encounter in their other stores. They are usually not located in the most convenient places, and not always the best quality. However, if you are very dedicated to buying certain labels, it is worth taking a trip to an outlet mall. A few around Boston are Wrentham Village Premium outlets and Assembly Row.

Overall, looking like a premium pie is easily achievable on a humble budget. Regardless of if you care about your daily style or not, we all like to dress up every now and then. Venture out to some of these department, retail or thrift stores and grab some great deals. Better yet, upcycle your old clothes and exude debonair vibes. Follow these steps and reach your three-course meal potential. □

Love always,
Kasi xx



GARRETT SOUZA SHOT BY ALEXANDER LAIMAN.



Brian Huang

by Charlotte Chazen

Awaiting Brian Huang's runway show, students perched atop the window sills of the *Green Center* for Physics atrium. Jóhann Jóhannsson's *Fordlandia* began to echo throughout the U-shaped halls, and the floor's eighteen-foot squares of red, orange, yellow, green and blue geometric shapes poured with glass and epoxy terrazzo seemed conveniently emblematic of Brian's obsession with construction and his yearning to challenge the materials we wear.

Brian, a senior with a double major in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (6-2) and Management (15) and a minor in Architecture (4), recalled from youth having approached his clothing choices with "perfection-

ism." Fashion enabled Brian to "be how [he] felt on the outside without saying how [he] felt on the inside." In middle school although he emulated the popular "preppy" style of his home town Potomac, Maryland, Brian experimented with varying colors for his Abercrombie Polo shirts.

Brian's interest in design and construction, however, initially manifested in his fascination with architecture and cars. He devotedly read architecture magazines, followed Tesla, and practiced drawing automobiles. Brian asserts he "think[s] better in 3D space than in 2D." Nonetheless, he remembers contemplating if fashion functioned as "a fine art or a craft" and sought to apply his love of construction to clothes.

The summer following Brian's sophomore year at MIT, he earnestly pursued his interest in fashion. Approaching apparel design like another engineering challenge, he devoted nights after his internship at a Chicago trading firm to sewing men's pants in his room. Despite admitting to having created "boxy shirts," Brian noted that "shirts are pretty simple" and that pants captivated his focus. He grew fixated on understanding "how the shapes connect" at the crotch and "how to sew them in three-dimensions." While driven to devise new fabrics for clothing, Brian strove for functionality when designing his looks and questioned, "could I wear it myself?" He experimented with zippers and pockets for brown corduroys.

After struggling to find time to sew his junior fall, Brian courageously created a Facebook event for a runway show to incentivize him to design. He had not crafted any looks and with 100+ Facebook attendants, he forced himself to orchestrate his show within a two-month span. The show featured eight women's wear looks exploring constriction and constraint. He described his first season as "very dark—lots of black and dark green, lots of metal." He had aimed to convey feelings of suffocation and angst: "I often felt constrained at MIT in what I was allowed to do—trapped in a way; people think in a very similar way to each other and are often on the same trajectory." Brian sought to escape the engineering mindset of MIT and the lack of expression with students' paralyzing busyness. "Everyone is in their PSETs; you have a life to live," Brian remarked.

To evoke suffocation, he utilized rigid materials like metal and plastic. He also experimented with religious allusions; the models wore crosses, and the MIT chapel served as the runway. Despite the show's success as evidenced by its outpouring of attendees, Huang "wasn't too happy." His



SHEA LANDENE WEARING BRIAN HUANG SEASON 2 SHOT BY ALEXANDER LAIMAN.

NIKITA KODALI WEARING BRIAN HUANG SEASON 2 SHOT BY MGEAN FU.



persistence drives his prolific production and spurred him to create another Facebook event this past fall.

His newest collection for the December 8th show emulated the transition from youth to adulthood. Six looks explored how our acceptance of our sexuality and our growing focus on the future shapes our development. Brian experimented with colors given the subdued tones of his previous collection, and bright shades symbolic of hope transitioned to dark colors representative of an unsettling questioning of the future.

Models Erika Anderson and Mark Smith launched the first “pure youth” look. Anderson sported a tight white dress with a frock of dangling orange acrylic diamonds, and Smith wore a loose-fitting woven white top. Brian defined this look by “blissfulness, ignorance, remembrance of good memories, and a lack of cognizance of what the future holds.” For the second phase, Millie Dethy wore an open-back, white blouse with painted birds. The theme transitioned from innocence to sexiness. Brian depicted Dethy’s piece as vaguely representative of one’s college years during which one discovers his sexuality and “tries to make himself hot.” Nikita Kodali’s long, white-felt trench coat emoted a more conservative aura representative of “one’s calming out of his seductive phase” and an acceptance of the path on which he embarked. For the final look, Huang draped Alexander Nordin and Shea Landeene in grey felt woven pieces. They

represented elderly distress and regret of “what could have been.” In his show Brian illustrated ideas in their most extreme form with the intention of taming them for everyday wear.

In addition to his personal work, Brian conducts research on biomaterials. In Neri Oxman’s lab, he helped to construct a twenty-foot bio-pavilion structure from 3D

printed panels of cellulose, cytosan, and pectin. For Skylar Tibbits, Brian devises active materials that react to heat, moisture, and light for application to garment design.

Eager to create, Brian ultimately envisions himself launching a fashion company. He describes fashion as “the easiest way to emote oneself,” and one’s clothing as a choice reflective of how one seeks to craft his public perception. Brian also appreciates the bodily connection of fashion as an art form and the intimacy with which it allows for self-expression. He claims that fashion most closely mimics singing, for unlike “other types of expression that are not as physically close to the body,” music projects di-



rectly from one’s being. Brian hopes his work encourages the MIT community to “experiment” and approach fashion “less seriously.”

His training in engineering and management equip him with both design and business acumen conducive to excelling in the industry. □



Erika Anderson

is a junior from California, studying mechanical engineering with a minor in product design. She designs and hand makes clothing in her free time and has modeled for Brian Huang's season 1 and 2 runway shows. After running around Sloan to find a good spot to chat, Erika and I settled on the comfy sofas near the large entrance windows where the sun ironically shone through in mid-November.

Can you tell us about your designs for the magazine?

The first pieces I made were from a project I worked on a few months ago. I really enjoy taking fabric and clothes from thrift stores and cutting them up. Since I'm living on a college student's budget, I can't easily purchase expensive fabrics from a fabric store *laughs*. I like to cut long dresses or skirts into two-pieces to make pairs of shorts or skirts with tops. These pieces have more of a boho design because I created them during the summer. I was living in Boston where it was really hot and humid, so it was nice to have something quite airy but also cohesive.

Completely understandable! Now that it is getting colder, do you think these outfits are transferable to winter?

You can definitely layer them with tights and a black sweater or long sleeved top. Two of the outfits I made were t-shirts with high-waisted shorts, which might be a little more diffi-

cult than the skirt to transition, but I've definitely worn the shorts with tights underneath.

You mentioned earlier that you go thrifting. Do you go with the intention of creating your own designs or actually picking out outfits that you would wear?

It depends. When I have something specific in mind that I want to create, I go in with the mindset of finding something super textured, crazy patterned, or very plain. If I'm bored or have some extra time, I just like to browse for any items that stick out. I really love velvet which is a lot cheaper to find in thrift stores rather than seeking out yards of it elsewhere.

Is your family really into designing?

My mom is really good at sewing and actually made all the comforters and curtains in our house. She used to make my sister's and I's Halloween costumes. So, I grew up thinking it was way more fun to design your own clothes rather than buying them. My mom would do all the work and have me try pieces on periodically, but I started helping her as I got older. I began by sewing a couple of buttons on, and she later taught me how to sew using her machine. I started making my own costumes for Halloween, and then extended that into making clothing for everyday wear.

Did you choose a major in mechanical engineering because of the hands-on design aspect? Given your upbringing, why did you choose

I am actually majoring in 2-A, which is a flexible version of the mechanical engineering program, rather than straight 2. I want to eventually work in consumer product design because I've always enjoyed working with my hands. I was always that kid who would take toys apart just to put them back together. I selected the design minor because it pulls away from the industrial side of mechanical engineering. I don't envision myself working in manufacturing or analyzing super industrial machines – I prefer a more creative path. Studying mechanical engineering helps me think about design with a different perspective than I would have if I went to an arts school. For example, I have used tools such as 3D printing and laser cutting in my projects, which I probably wouldn't have been exposed to in a standard arts program. When it comes to designing clothing, mechanical engineering has widened the limitations and helps me extend things further than just fabric.

As an MIT student, how do you think design, art, and fashion fit or don't fit into MIT culture?

It fits in some places more than others. There's definitely a culture for it here as the people working on this magazine all enjoy it. An audience also exists because I have spoken to people who casually tell me they regularly alter clothes and accessories they buy, or who are intrigued by some of my outfits. However, I do not think it is as broad as many other interests on campus.

What effect would you like this magazine to bring to MIT culture?

I hope people see that there is a cool and artsy side of technology. People think tech is strictly electronics, coding, or biotech, but I think they'll be able to see how tech can be applied in a fun and urban perspective.

You have bold, colourful hair and have modelled for Brian Huang's shows. How important is it to express yourself?

I think that wearing the same clothes from the same de-

partment store is boring. For example, I tye-dyed the shirt I'm wearing right now. It's a lot more fun that way and I feel a sense of pride when I can wear something I made myself, which helps with my confidence. Today, when I put on this shirt, I thought to myself, "Yeah I made this shirt! I'm wearing this shirt. I'm going to have a good day!" I also believe that when you express yourself outwardly, you can connect with people of similar interests. When I go to class and I see someone else with coloured hair, I feel an instant connection.

Which designers inspire you?

I am a big fan of Project Runway because I love seeing what people come up with. I'm also a fan of more structured and geometric design. I like it when things are intricately embroidered. I guess those are opposite ends of the spectrum, but there are times when I want things to be very detailed and other times where it's nice to have it clean cut and structured in a specific way. Gareth Pugh is a big inspiration to me even though you might not see it in my designs for this magazine.

He's amazing! I'm looking forward to seeing your next designs. Any last comments?

Don't be afraid to express yourself. If you like something in a store, buy it, wear it, and own it. People have said to me, "I like your coloured hair. I've thought about dyeing mine but I couldn't pull it off," which re-

ally bugs me. Don't limit yourself. If you want to do something, please just do it. If you confidently commit to it, people will feel the vibe – so you can definitely pull it off.

Well folks, you heard it here! Thank you once again Erika, it was great to learn so much about you. Really looking forward to your final product.

- Kasi Ugo-Beke □





Sefa Yakpo

is a senior at MIT studying Management Science and French. Growing up between Accra and London with a father who spoke French, she became interested in the French language and culture from a very young age. These diverse cultural influences have played a major role in defining her conceptions of style and beauty. Sefa documents these ideas and experiences in her wonderful blog, Peaufiné, which can be found at www.peaufinay.com. I had the pleasure of hanging out with her in Boston, where we did facemasks, drank wine, and talked about her trajectory through the realm of style and beauty.

So, to start, when did you first get into makeup, and what were some of your first experiences with it?

Oh my god, as soon as I could stand, I was into makeup. I actually lost my front teeth when I was two because I fell trying to reach my mother's lipstick. I would play with her makeup a lot; she had this elaborate dressing table filled with drawers and baskets of lipsticks, eye shadows, mascara and perfumes – I would spend hours and hours playing with them and giving myself makeovers as I developed my style.

How would you describe your style? Can you go a little into how it has evolved and if there have been any recent changes in it?

I guess the best way to describe my style is minimalist with a little edge. When I turned 13, I became obsessed with TopShop and H&M – everything I wore was from either of those stores. For the past few years I have pretty much just worn a ton of Zara, but I spent this past summer in Paris and I think that really influenced my current style – I'm a lot more into dark colors, nudes, simple cuts and well-crafted shoes.

Apart from finding new ideas from stores and different cultures, do you look to any specific people for inspiration?

Definitely my mother, for one. Her style is very classic and graceful. I follow lots of bloggers as well – my favorite at the moment are Lizzy Hadfield, Courtney Trop, Claire Channelle, and Lydia Elise Millen. Beauty-wise I adore the blog, Beauty is Boring, by make-up artist and photographer Robin Black. The looks she creates are absolutely incredible.

Are there any new trends you've seen these people pushing that really interest or excite you?

For some reason I'm obsessed with bright, matte eyeshadows with plain, glossy lips and very light foundation. I think it looks stunning.

Now, to shift a little bit, I'm interested in knowing how you express yourself through your makeup, fashion, and style? Is it something that you align really closely with yourself, or is it more just an independent part of you?

My clothes and makeup are always a direct reflection of how I'm feeling – sometimes I feel super organized and on top of life, and then I'll dress a bit formal, wearing a white work shirt with some jeans, boots and very subtle makeup. Sometimes I feel very “extra”, because I'm bored – today, for example, I wore a turtleneck dress and beige thigh-highs.

Do you have any advice for people that have problems with their skin, or are self-conscious about their natural look?

I can't stress it enough: If you don't care for anything else – your hair, your nails, your clothes – please, please look after your skin! It's an investment that will last you a lifetime. The first thing I would recommend is to establish a basic skincare routine: cleanser, toner, and moisturizer. After that, you can add in things like a hydrating eye-cream, acne treatment, and masques to target specific problems. Drink lots of water, exercise, and if your skin is still problematic, definitely see a dermatologist – they are so helpful and so knowledgeable, and can diagnose any possible hormonal

causes. Doing all of these things will go such a long way in helping you embrace your natural look, because your skin will feel – and look – so much healthier.

Lastly, I just wanted to get your thoughts on and experiences with representation of diverse skin colors within the cosmetics industry? How have you navigated this and managed to find the products that best suit your complexion?

Diversity is a big, big issue in the industry. You wouldn't think it, but it really still is – I think that's a huge reason

why Fenty Beauty has been so successful; finally, we have an affordable, good quality make-up brand that acknowledges human beings don't exist in only 10 shades. I can count on one hand big-name brands that I feel offer a diverse range of shades, and up to this day, I haven't been able to find a single popular BB cream in my shade from any high-end brand. A lot of work remains to be done, but I think with the rise of social media



platforms like Instagram and YouTube, we're seeing a lot more men and women of color in the public eye, which has prompted brands to start expanding their reach.

I was drawn to how Sefa described makeup and styling as a conduit for her personality. Both cathartic and revelatory, her style and beauty regimen are a sort of externalized self-care that has been evolving since she was a child. If nothing else, I hope this interview pushes others to embrace simple acts of self-care, experiment with their style, and find beauty in their natural look.

- Garrett Souza □



MILLICENT DETHY WEARING BRIAN HUANG SEASON 2 SHOT BY MEGAN FU, MAKEUP BY LISBETH ACEVEDO, SEFA YAKPO.



