

Sustainable Marriage Project

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OVERVIEW:

The wedding gown is perhaps one of the most iconic and symbolic garments in humanities wardrobe. Historically and culturally it has been an ever-present ceremonial garb announcing not only the union of two individuals, but entire families, countries, cultures and moral and political ideals. Every culture and civilisation has had its interpretation and manifestations of this highly valued and emotionally empowered garment. The sustainable Marriage project marks an equally significant union, the union of art and technology, design and scientific innovations. It is the result of an interdisciplinary collaboration between Fashion and Engineering students studying at Sheffield Hallam University. The gown and all its transformational incarnations are manufactured with biodegradable and dissolving fabrics. The Sustainable Marriage project culminated with an exhibition in the Furnival Gallery from 7th May-16th May 2010, with a preview on the evening of 6th May. The exhibit has now been moved to Sheaf 4311 for Creative Spark and will remain there until 19th June. On the evening of the 19th June the dresses will be worn on live models at the City Hearts Fashion Show at the City Hall in Sheffield.

WHAT WENT WELL:

The Sustainable Marriage Exhibition was picked up by national and international press including radio, websites, fashion blogs. Working towards the exhibition was a good motivating tool for the students. Positive feedback from external examiners, colleagues, general public etc. Interesting mix of art and science at the opening night. Engineering had material experimentation demonstrations. Over 220 school children have visited the exhibit and been supported by material experimentation demonstrations and fashion student ambassadors. Project brought seemingly diverse groups to produce and ingenious idea that may have birthed the beginning of disposable material in fashion, especially wedding. It has aroused the interest and possibility of sustainable material.

WHAT DIDN'T GO SO WELL:

First year fashion students worked with Master Engineering students, this proved difficult at times because of differing timetables and course structure. A closer academic study year would possibly work better e.g. Third year Fashion and Master Engineering. Further interesting developments would help too, suggestion from several master students: Team spirit building – The familiarity between groups of both engineering student and fashion student should be given more attention. Peer Grouping – A high level of interaction and understanding is expected between age/class mates, therefore for subsequent project, it would propose that similar level of students in both of the educational line involved should be used.

Public Feedback from Visit to the Exhibition / Demonstration

"Absolutely Brilliant!" Alan Law . Lord Mayor of Sheffield
 "Concept is brilliant evoking many emotions. Its practicality is null but fashion implications are fantastic. The concept of withholding what's precious appeals to me and is most likely a metaphor for the bride contained within." Josh (Degree student)
 "Just Perfect! I really like the whole idea and creation. The concept is amazing and it gives you the feeling that it has a feature with a nice taste." Marel Joanna
 "I completely agree with the idea of sustainable marriage. My mother's dress is infact in our loft and the material is being wasted. I particularly like the first design with the photos, lace and pearls. My preference is always to wear something intricate and interesting. This embodies that notice. A fabulous collection, that the onlooker can really relate with." Jack Smith
 "Wow Absolutely Amazing! Jill (Year 7 pupil)

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