Cotton the Rain
Innovative, Functional Rainwear for the On the Go Customer

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Utilitarian, Rain Resistant, Transformable, Print Design, Functional

Design Statement
The purpose of this project was to develop a new look for raingear utilizing Storm Denim and Storm Cotton. Raingear and the outdoor apparel industry are dominated by synthetics because they can wick away moisture from the body and prevent the absorption of external water (Prudeng, 2017). Although effective, synthetic material tend to make garments stiff and unbreathable and causes raingear to utilize function over form. Traditional outdoor gear companies spend years developing technically superior products, but these strides in innovation don’t appeal to all markets. These developments tend to target people at the peak of their sports, but are not as welcoming to those not as hardcore (Roberts, 2015). There is a large gap in the markets for raingear that appeals to the on to go customer that wants to be stylish as well as shielded from the rain, rather than look like they are ready to climb a mountain.

Advances in technology can assist in finding a solution to raingear’s unfashionable tendencies. Innovations in textile technologies have expanded the versatility of cotton. Over the past decade, advances in the textile chemistries such as Storm Denim and Storm Cotton has allowed cotton to make advances in the outdoor apparel category (Prudeng, 2017). Storm Denim and Storm Cotton seemed like the perfect solution to merge the gap between function and fashion in the raingear industry. These fabrics utilizes water repellant technology to offer protection from the rain, while maintaining the comfort of cotton.

Realistically, Storm Denim and Storm Cotton would have been used to create this collection. But only two companies in the United States supply these specific fabrics, and both only supply production amounts of the fabric, meaning around 10,000 yards of fabric. As students, it was impossible to get Storm Denim and Storm Cotton for this collection. The garments also utilized the fabric printing technology of the Kent State Textile Lab, which requires that we use fabric that they provide. Alternatively, the garments in the collection consist of one percent cotton fabric treated with water-resistant coating to create the same effect as the Storm technology.

Our garments were inspired by the WGSN trend for Spring/Summer 2019 called Creative Manifesto which explores bold, unapologetic designs that make an impact (Sinclair, 2017). We were inspired by utilitarianism shown by functionality of the pieces, exposed hardware, and exaggerated pockets. Instead of typical muted olive and khaki we opted for a more unexpected, bright color palette, bringing a fun and child-like approach to the designs. The print design plays a large role in adding a playful attitude to the clothing. The elements of the print were hand painted then scanned onto Photoshop and enlarged to make the dress and jumpsuit into statement
pieces. Additionally, the design print is featured on the lining of the hood in order to tie the collection together.

In the Spring, there is a constant shift between warm and cold temperatures and varying chance of precipitation. Unpredictable weather patterns increase the need for garments that are not only rain resistant, but also adjustable based on the climate. Features in these garments are designed to be transformable depending on the weather. The full-length dress can be converted into a jacket by unbuttoning the sleeve from the side seam in the lining, releasing the three drawstring cords, flipping the jacket up, and zipping the shoulder seams shut. This allows for the wearer to shield herself if she gets caught in the rain without worrying about carrying an extra garment around with her all day. The denim jacket has several separating zippers allowing for different styling options based on preference and weather. The collar can zip off and a hood can be attached instead if it starts raining. The sleeves have a separating zipper at the elbow and shoulder, allowing the jacket to become short sleeve jacket or a vest based on the temperature.

In conclusion, the technological advances of cotton have allowed for new styles of raingear to be possible. Storm Denim and Storm Cotton have created the ability to have garment that are both functional and fashionable. The main goal of the collection was to create a new normal for the on the go, stylish customer caught in the rain. The garments were completed on October 4th, 2018.

**References**


