

The Courtauld



FASHION SENSE?



Some background

The Courtauld Institute of Art was established in 1932 by Samuel Courtauld, along with Viscount Lee of Fareham and Sir Robert Witt. The aim of the Institute was to further the study of art history, making available Courtauld's Collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artworks to as wide an audience as possible. At this time Samuel was chairman of the family company, Courtaulds Ltd textiles manufacturers, and it was the success of the company that enabled him to collect his artworks. Combining the heritage of Courtaulds Ltd and the artistic vision and passion of Samuel Courtauld, The Courtauld National Partners programme involves loans of some of the major works in our Collection to partner organisations in eight areas of the UK with links to Courtaulds Ltd. Alongside this we are working with schools and colleges in each of these areas to make connections between local heritage and these artworks through an art history approach.

About the project

The Fashion Sense? project has been designed to take place alongside the *Renoir and the New Era* exhibition at Ulster Museum (November 2020-February 2021). The project takes Renoir's painting *La Loge* (The Theatre Box) (1874) as its starting point, sparking questions about the gaze and fashion. Students are asked to draw from the artist's depiction of fashion and society to make a comment on fashion and identity in contemporary culture.

The project brief

People use zines in many different ways to self-publish their ideas and views on fashion and society. We would like you to create a front cover and a double-page spread of a zine using drawing, words and photography that makes a comment on fashion and identity in contemporary culture.

This zine

This zine is intended as a guide and sourcebook for teachers for the Fashion Sense? project, providing a range of examples of some of the layouts, tools and techniques that can be used to create a zine. It includes research material about *La Loge* (1874), along with several suggested activities and examples from professional illustrators. The zine has been produced by artist and illustrator Toya Walker in collaboration with Alice Hellard (Regional Heritage & Learning Officer at The Courtauld), both of whom have a long term personal practice of making their own clothes.

C O N T E N T S

Intro to Renoir's *La Loge* 4-5

Talking points around the painting 6-7

ZINE BACKGROUND 8

Using collage to generate ideas 9

Text source page 10-11

Image source page 12-13

MAKING AND PHOTOGRAPHING A GARMENT 14-15

Layout tips 16-17

Example cover and spread 18

Making a cover and next steps 19

References and inspiration 20



La Loge (Theatre Box) (1874)
Pierre-Auguste Renoir

La Loge (1874) is considered to be a brilliant example of Renoir's skill as a painter. He uses delicate and fluent brushwork without crisp contours to give suggestions of the forms of their dress and embellishments, while the model's face is painted with a finer attention to detail. Theatre in Paris was a rapidly expanding industry during the 19th century, and it dominated the cultural life of the city. The theatre was an important place to see and to be seen. Wealth was flaunted, fashions paraded, allegiances made, and engagements announced. In turning away from the performance, Renoir focused instead upon the theatre as a social stage where status and relationships were on public display.

The Gaze

The concept of 'the gaze' began to gain attention in the 1960s, when social theory and philosophy became more popular. A theory driven by the relationship between the viewer and the subject, the gaze in visual culture can address the balance of power between subjects, or the nature of their relationships. It can also convey information about what is or is not depicted in the artwork.

La Loge is a complex example of the gaze, asking us to consider what we (the viewer) are looking at, what the subjects are looking at and who is looking at them, as well as what the painter intended. Importantly, this painting is a prominent early example of the subject looking almost directly at the viewer, and this was very new for the audiences of the time. Explicitly involving us in the painting, our position as the viewer represents the mass public and it helps us to imagine who else is in the scene and who the woman might be looking at, with plenty of visual clues (the opera glasses, for example) that provide this context.

There are direct links we can make between this painting and the idea of the **'male gaze'** at the time, but it can be argued that the artist, Renoir, was also making a comment on the developing position of women in the mass fashion market, as consumers.

In this painting **the woman's direct gaze contrasts with established social etiquette** that encouraged women to look away, and may demonstrate that women at this time were now able to use a range of gazes, often exploited by fashion advertising, depending on their social status. The **direct gaze** of the woman in *La Loge* was another aspect that contributed to confusion about how to interpret her status.



Anaïs Toudouze, Untitled plate from *Le Conseiller des dames & des demoiselles*, November 1856, hand-coloured engraving.
The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld

The subjects' relationship is ambiguous, seeming more engaged with the audience than each other. Edmond gazes away from the stage, upwards to another box, while Nini poses, gazing almost directly at us, the viewer, aware that we are looking.

HOW DO THE SUBJECTS' POSE AND VIEWPOINTS AFFECT HOW THE VIEWER INTERPRETS FASHION AND ITS AUDIENCE?

The models were Renoir's brother Edmond and a model named Nini Lopez. Nini's nickname was 'fish-face' (*gueule de poisson*) which suggests that she did not conform to conventional standards of beauty.



HOW IS PHYSICAL BEAUTY REPRESENTED AND CONSIDERED IN TODAY'S CULTURE?

In 1874 the theatre box was an unusual subject for a painting, although writers and cartoonists often used the theatre box to poke fun at fashion faux pas and romantic intrigue.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE METHODS AND IMAGES OF OUR CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL COMMENTATORS?

HOW DOES NINI'S GAZE MAKE YOU FEEL?

WHY HAS RENOIR DONE THIS?



The woman wears a 'demi-toilette' dress made from black ruffled tulle and white silk gauze. Although striped dresses were fashionable at the time, black and white was an unusual combination. This style of dress and jewellery would usually be worn by a wealthy married woman, but the heavy make-up she wears might be seen as less respectable, even giving a sense of disrepute.

WHAT COMMENT DO YOU THINK RENOIR IS MAKING?

WHAT DOES THE PRESENCE OF THE GLASSES ADD TO THE COMPLEXITY OF THE GAZE?

DOES MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND OUR CONTEMPORARY LENS CREATE BOUNDARIES AROUND STATUS, OR IMPACT WHAT WE SEE AND HOW WE SEE IT?

The man is gazing into the audience through his opera glasses while the woman is holding hers in her gloved hand. Theatre glasses symbolised a certain status and also helped people see what was happening on stage from their box.

The man wears formal evening wear that was typical dress for the first night of a play, and the viewer's eye is drawn to his starched bluish-white shirt. His appearance isn't quite typical for the time though. His longish hair and moustache and beard were less common, and suggest he is stylish and artistic.



WHAT ARE SOME CONTEMPORARY IMAGES OF MALE INDIVIDUALITY AND STYLE?



Renoir deliberately blurred social boundaries in his use of fashion and style, which reflected the shifting rules of fashion at the time. Critics at the time were baffled by how to interpret the couple, or more specifically the woman.

WAS SHE A RESPECTABLE MARRIED FIGURE OR SOMEONE GRASPING AT THIS FROM A MUCH LOWER SOCIAL STANDING? WHY MIGHT THIS HAVE MATTERED TO THE CRITICS?

ZINE BACKGROUND

Zines have been a way of sharing ideas and/or documenting subcultures using DIY methods since the 1930's. They are self-published, usually via cheap reproduction techniques like photocopying. Existing outside mainstream publishing houses and editors allows them to offer very personal or political viewpoints.

Mainstream fashion publications often represent a narrow view of fashion and who it is for. Fashion zines can challenge that and document fashion subcultures or particular viewpoints, which can in turn influence mainstream trends. Some good examples can be found on page 20.

LOW FI vs. HI TECH

Traditional zines are often made by hand and reproduced cheaply using a photocopier. Digital ezines offer new possibilities. They can reach a wider audience without any reproduction costs.

All the low-fi techniques described on the next page could be explored digitally too. If you want to experiment with software such as Photoshop or InDesign try using some of the same methods with images, words and drawings overlaid on different layers.

Is there still value in a hand made physical zine? Might it offer genuine appeal and hold more attention as a physical object in your hand?



Image courtesy of Grace Attlee (graceattlee.com)

A NOTE ON COPYRIGHT

IF YOU ARE USING SOMEONE ELSE'S IMAGES OR ONES THAT YOU HAVE DOWNLOADED AND PLAN TO REPRODUCE AND DISTRIBUTE YOUR ZINE, YOU NEED TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THEIR PERMISSION AND THAT YOU CREDIT THE WORK IN YOUR ZINE. COPYRIGHT CAN BE A COMPLEX ISSUE TO EXPLORE, SO IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHETHER YOU HAVE SOMEONE'S PERMISSION TO USE AN IMAGE IT'S BEST NOT TO USE IT.

DO I DRESS

for myself



OR FOR

OTHERS?

USING COLLAGE TO GENERATE IDEAS

Start by using text photocopied from the following pages, or find your own words cut out from fashion magazines, articles or other texts.

Use images from magazines, vintage fashion illustrations (there are some examples on the following pages), photocopies of paintings or your own photographs and sketches.

Cut out the images and text that you find interesting, appealing or provoking and play around with different combinations on a page. Notice how juxtaposing different words with images can change their meaning. This is also true when you combine images and words from different eras and times.

You might then choose to experiment with layering more images and words.

One way to do this is by tracing other images over your work using graphite paper.

A good technique for creating your zine might be to use only black and white photocopied images, words and drawings layered onto a coloured

paper background. Or perhaps try photocopying images using the single colour options so they are reproduced just in red or blue. Using only two colours helps to keep reproduction and copying costs low, and also adds to the visual style of the zine.



In this age of black suits for the sterner sex...

luxé embellishment ushers in the new season

a model known as 'fish-face'

WHAT TO WEAR

CRITICS WERE DIVIDED

A rubbish truck of clothes is burned or landfilled every. single. second.

HEY BABES

Step away from the loungewear and into new season fits.
We're crushing on florals and puff sleeves.

"A lady is never so well
dressed as when you cannot
remember what she wears."

A conspicuous traveling dress is in very
bad taste, and jewelry or ornaments of
any kind are entirely out of place.

Modern Woman
remains effeminate in
her choice of fabrics!

STYLE ICON

Polyester microfibres are released every
time polyester clothes are washed

Critics were divided

How *he* did it

step out in style

In this age of black suits for the sterner sex...

her gaze slightly unfocused as if she knows she is being looked at

SHOP NOW.
WEAR NOW.
PAY LATER.

Subversive from
the very start

Influencer

dangerous temptations
of the fashion industry

DRESS TO SUIT YOUR INTERIORS

COMFORT
AND JOY

YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD
-YOU REALLY TRUELY CAN

Two-faced

another praised her elegance

upgrade your wardrobe

discerning details for a look that still
exudes a considered effort

SWEATSHOPS ACCUSED OF MODERN SLAVERY

Strike a pose

desires to make a favourable impression upon society

MODERN MENSWEAR

FAST
FASHION

Fashion is the world's second-largest
polluter after the oil industry

FEMININE SILHOUETTE

get the look for less

find the perfect clothes for you

bourgeois,
androgynous,
glamorous

A QUIET GIRL

most wanted

Step away from the loungewear and into new season fits

GARMENT WORKERS PAY A HIGH PRICE TO PRODUCE CHEAP
CLOTHES FOR THE UK HIGH STREET.

Do not be too submissive to the dictates
of fashion; at the same time avoid oddity
or eccentricity in your dress.

ELEVATE THE LOOK

EFFORTLESS CHIC

find your
personal style

exudes a timeless appeal

this season's must-have pieces



Attractive Sunset and Gold Evening Coat in a heavy
Tapestry fabric made from Courtaulds Rayon.
Courtaulds
myvintagevogue.com

Advertisement for
Courtaulds textiles,
from The Rayoneer,
Autumn-Winter 1959,
pg 14. Published by
Courtaulds Ltd

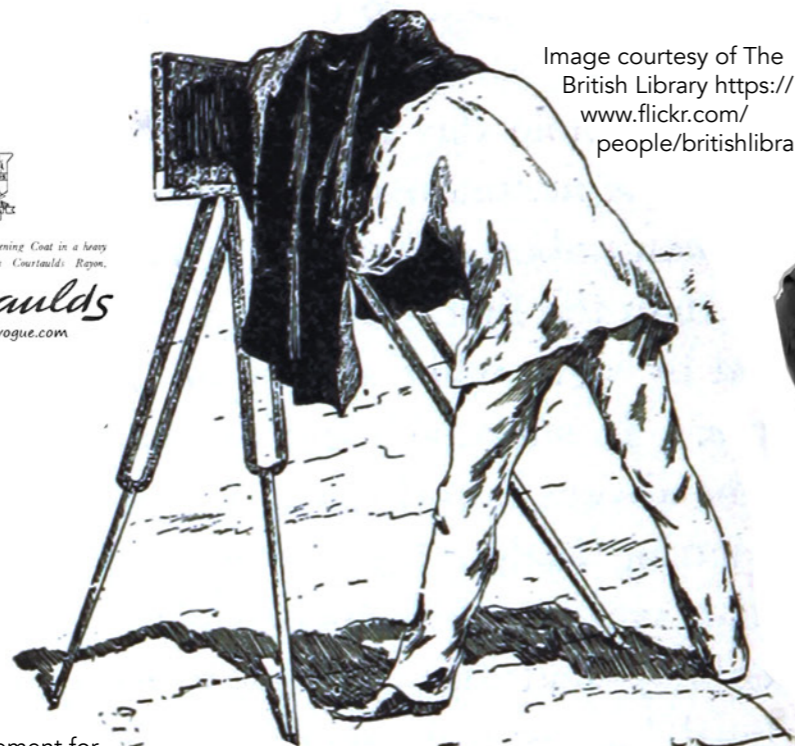


Image courtesy of The
British Library [https://
www.flickr.com/
people/britishlibrary/](https://www.flickr.com/people/britishlibrary/)

Courtaulds yarns and fibres

in the fabric of industry



Image courtesy of All Go
@canweallgo via unsplash.com



Image courtesy
of Marcus Santos
@marcussantosr
via unsplash.com

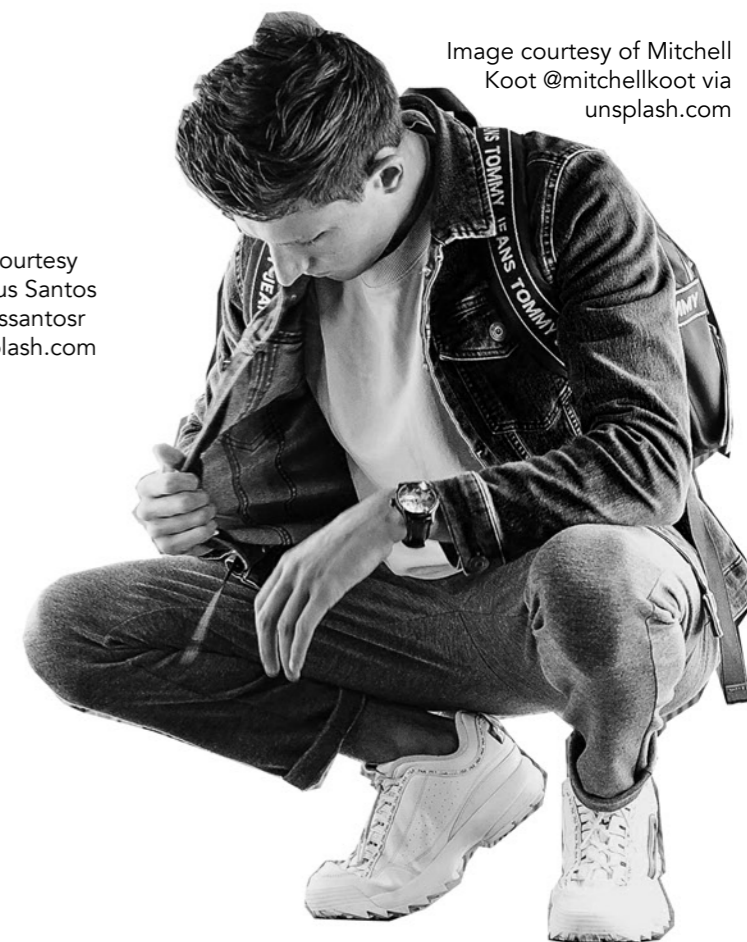


Image courtesy of Mitchell
Koot @mitchellkoot via
unsplash.com

Courtaulds Ltd – pioneering fabric manufacture

In the early 20th century Courtaulds Ltd acquired the patent for rayon, a manufacturing process to create artificial fibre and fabric. Under Samuel's leadership the company became internationally renowned in the manufacture of fabrics with the drape and handle of silk, but which were longer lasting and had a more vibrant colour. Rayon became widely used in fashion and other areas of manufacturing because it was affordable and easily mass-produced, and today it is a wardrobe staple.

If you want to you could use some of these images as inspiration for your collage. You might also want to use fashion magazines and images from the media.



"How small these gloves
make ones hand
look!!"

Image courtesy of
The British library
[https://www.flickr.
com/people/
britishlibrary/](https://www.flickr.com/people/britishlibrary/)



Image courtesy
of Faruq Al' Aqib
@faruqalaqib via
unsplash.com



Image courtesy of
Angela Franklin
@leafandlotus via
unsplash.com



Image courtesy of
The British library
[https://www.flickr.
com/people/
britishlibrary/](https://www.flickr.com/people/britishlibrary/)



Image courtesy of Daisy,
Yr 10 student

WHEN RAYON WAS FIRST DEVELOPED BY COURTAULDS LTD.
IT MADE SOME OF THE QUALITIES OF SILK AVAILABLE FOR
A MUCH MORE AFFORDABLE PRICE & THEREFORE TO A MUCH
WIDER AUDIENCE.

DOES THIS RELATE TO FAST FASHION AND THE MASS
PRODUCTION OF CHEAP CLOTHING THAT FOLLOWS FASHION TRENDS?

COULD THIS BE SEEN AS THE
DEMOCRATISING OF FASHION,
OR THE BEGINNING OF
UNSUSTAINABLE EXPLOITATIVE
CONSUMPTION?

DOES THE LOOK AND MEANING
OF THE GARMENT YOU MADE
CHANGE WHEN YOU MAKE IT
WITH FOUND OR EVERYDAY
MATERIALS?

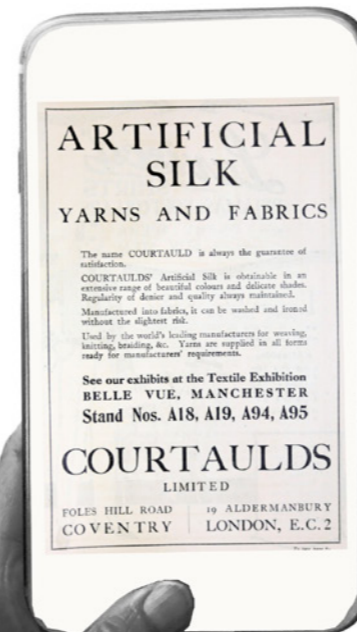


Image source: www.gracesguide.co.uk



MAKING AND PHOTOGRAPHING A GARMENT

'One of the things I find most enjoyable about making clothes is the practical challenge and the sense of magic that occurs when 2D pieces of fabric or other materials become 3D sculptural, wearable objects.'

In fashion, there are a whole series of skills and people involved making this happen from the fashion designer to pattern makers, garment technologists, fabric cutters and machinists. This challenge will allow you to explore some of those processes in a more instantaneous way with any materials you can find to hand.

YOU WILL NEED:

- Reference image for inspiration – you might choose something from a fashion magazine, a painting, a social media feed or a fashion exhibition. See page 20 for places that we found inspiration.
- Camera – any kind of phone or digital camera will work fine
- Materials to use as fabric – this could be newspaper, old plastic bags, bed linen etc.
- Materials to construct with – use what you have available which, depending on your choice of 'fabric', might be sticky tape, stapler, elastic bands, pegs, string or belts.

THE MINI BRIEF:

Create a garment inspired by your reference image using the materials you have gathered, and photograph it. You can do this as a very quick challenge or take your time to make something more intricate. You may choose to work alone or in a team. The challenge will allow you to...

- ➔ experience the different qualities of your choice of materials and problem solve the technical challenges that may arise
 - ➔ explore the pieces and techniques needed to create different 3D shapes and silhouettes
 - ➔ take a photograph and frame an image to record and showcase your work
- Remember the nature of the challenge is practical and experimental.

Take a look at the #metgalachallenge where people have recreated garments worn to the Met Gala using objects and materials they have at home. Some of these include paper and recycled materials. There are similar challenges which involve people recreating famous paintings too (<https://www.instagram.com/tussenkunstenquarantaine/>).

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS:

Make sure you get your model (whether it is you or someone else) positioned well in the frame. Try at least one that shows the whole figure. If your model would prefer not to have their face appear in the picture they could turn their head or you might like to include a prop.

Whilst you can get interesting images with light coming from different places it is usually most effective to make sure your light source is behind the photographer shining onto the model and not behind the model. In bright sunshine try not to have lots of different shadows casting on your model as this might detract from the lines of your garment.

Pick a background that is either quite plain (like a blank wall), an open space or one that relates to your outfit concept.

LAYOUT

tips from a pro

On the following pages illustrator and animator Natasha Francis give some tips that might give you some more ideas. Specialising in digital image making and with a love of printmaking, Natasha is a recent graduate from Kingston University with a BA in Illustration Animation. As well as her own freelance design practice, she currently works as a teaching assistant for UCA.

using the tips...

The tips from Natasha will help you to decide on the layout of your pages. Use your photographs and collages of words, imagery and drawing and decide how best to lay them out across your double page spread and cover. You may choose to treat your double page as two separate pages or as one cohesive spread.

Gather your content and start moving it around on your double page spread in the same way that you approached your initial collages – playfully and without sticking anything down until you've tried lots of different combinations.

You may have a strong idea of the message you are trying to convey, but at this stage it is also fine if your content is just about exploring the different ideas in the project. Sometimes the messages in zines are clear and focussed but they can also be hinted at, or serve as a record of research, like a sketchbook or journal.

Composition

With magazines there is a hierarchy – what do we want the eye to read first, what is the most important aspect on the page that the viewer must see first?

Below there are examples of different types arranging hierarchy with layouts, these are only a guide and not to be followed exactly!

A quick exercise you can do to help develop your composition: cut out some shapes of rectangles and squares in different sizes in 2 different colours and arrange them in different forms. Move the blocks around to achieve a pleasing arrangement. Where does your eye go? Does it feel balanced?

With all this in mind you must always ask yourself, what is the most important part of the page? What is the mood? Does the flow of the page represent how I feel about the topic?

EXAMPLE



rule of thirds



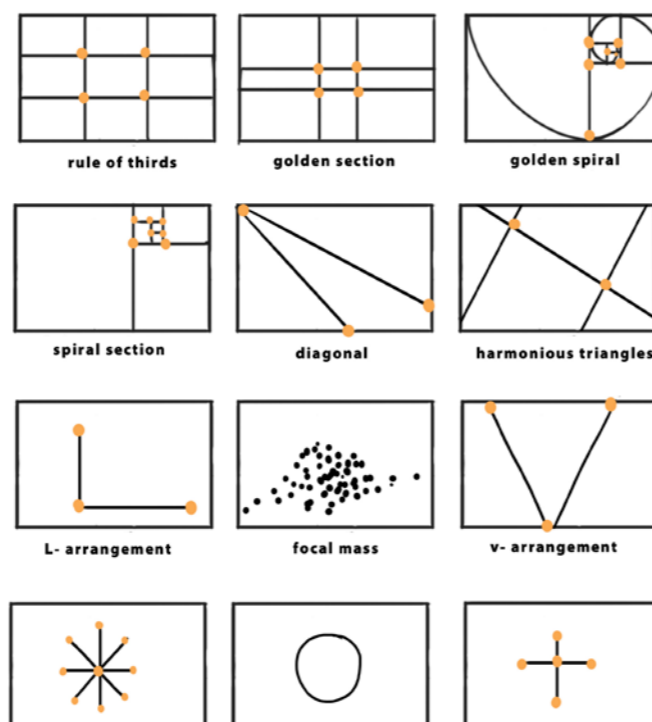
golden spiral

Pick one third to focus on



Example of how to use colour and composition notes together

1. Pick a layout for the foundation to work from. I'm going to use the harmonious triangles and a complementary colour scheme.
2. Below, I'll use the lines as guidelines for where I should place the text. I've decided that I want to place majority of the text on the upper 3 triangles and have imagery on the bottom 3.
3. Now I've put the complementary blue on the bottom of the 3 triangles and I've used a bit of the yellow, so it "connects" to the bottom piece, so it doesn't feel too disconnected from the top.
4. Now I am adding in some collage for more visual interest and some illustrated lines to tie it together.
5. Finally, remove or rub out the composition template and it's finished!



Colour

How colour is used in publications can determine the audience, what is being presented and what it portrays. Colour also helps set up hierarchy, and generate emotion based on association.

- Calming, represents cleanliness, technology, a sense of trust + strength
- Energetic, confidence, friendly, welcoming
- Optimism, clarity, warmth, happiness.
- Excitement, bold, danger.
- Nature, youth, fortune, money.

Types of colour scheme

- + Harmonious colours – selecting hues that are of closely related and positioned near each other on the colour wheel create a unified, balanced effect.
- + Complementary – selecting colours opposite to each other on the colour wheel creates a bold effect.
- + Analogous colour schemes – selecting hues along only one side of the colour wheel creates a calming effect.

It's best to use one of these colour schemes in the zine. This will help to make your work look more refined and focused on the message you're trying to get across.

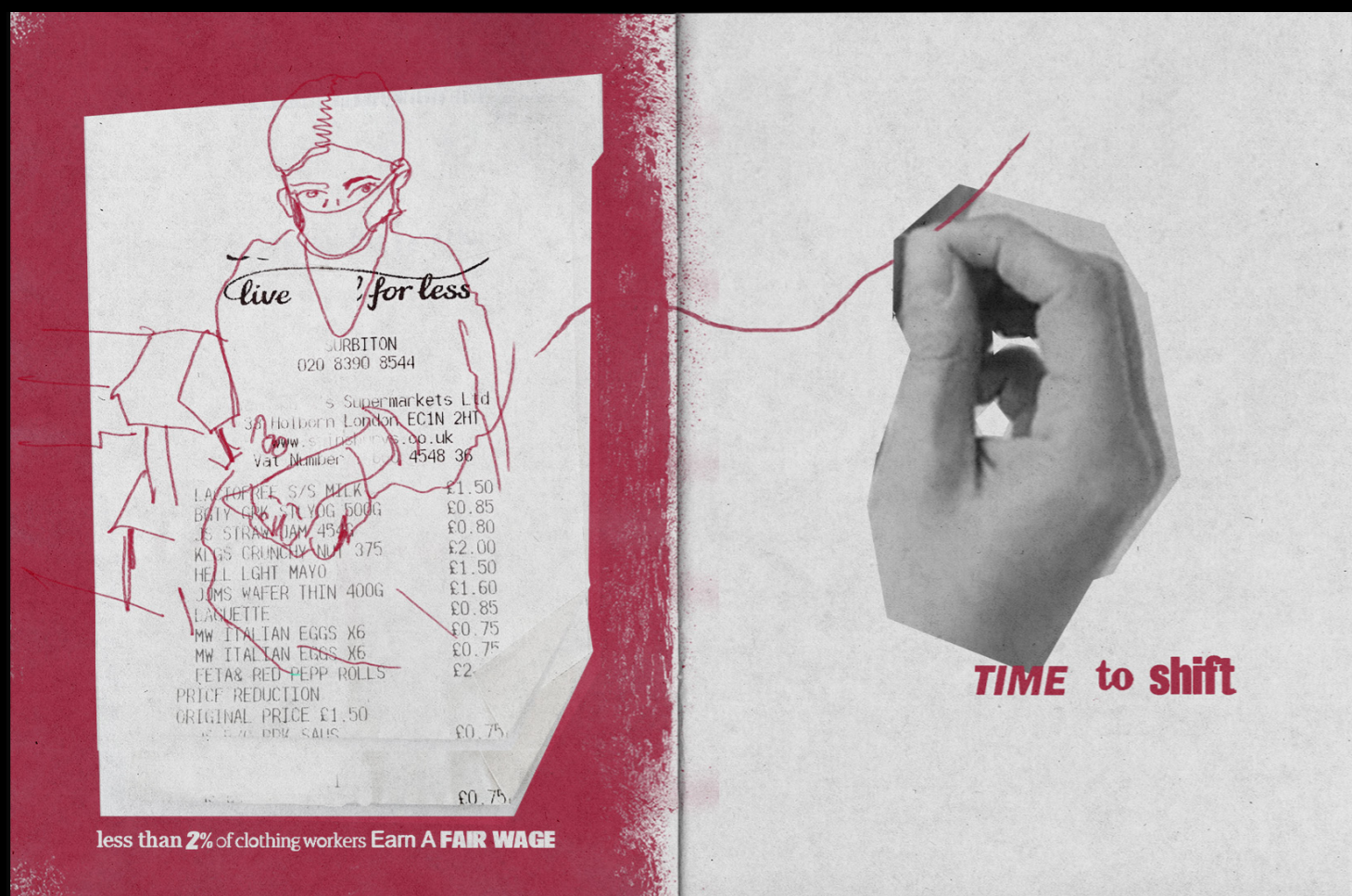
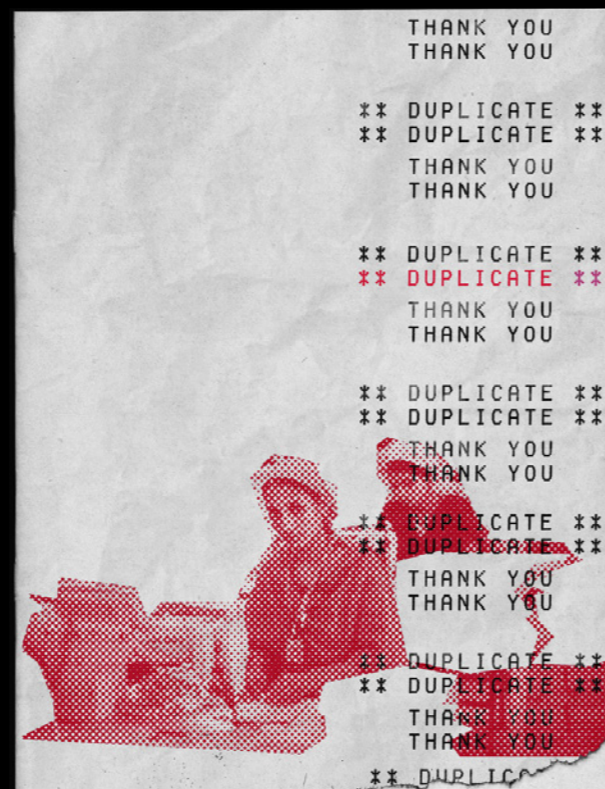
About my layout ...

Natasha explains the decisions behind her own design.

I wanted to focus on the aspect of exploitation of fashion, and how fast fashion relies on the less wealthy to buy it and to make it. In relation to *La Loge*, I wanted to focus on the wealth aspect of the artwork and translate that it is still relevant today. Not to say that fashion is bad, but non-sustainable fast fashion is. A lot of it relies on cutting corners, for example quality, and workers who make it are underpaid. Because of the quick and cheap nature of an item of fashion we tend not to appreciate it and might not wear it as much. So, we're more inclined to throw it and buy whatever is the next trend.

My design is based on receipts and visually showing the relationship between how quickly we might buy clothing and how quickly it is made. This idea came around from a large "duplicate" text I saw on a receipt I had, so I scanned it in and repurposed it in photoshop to give a different message. Below we have a cut out of a worker who is staring directly into the camera as she is making garments, this being a reference to how the lady is also looking directly at the viewer in the *La Loge* painting. I have edited my cover in a Risograph style which is a print method traditionally used for making multiple duplicate prints.

The double-page spread is a combination of just painting on paper, receipts, tracing paper and collage. The left side is paint on paper, then I collaged a receipt on top and I altered it so it reads "live for less". A line-drawn worker is overlaid so it looks like the text is a part of her shirt. I have collaged text from magazines and newspapers that say "Less than 2% of clothing workers earn a fair wage." Leading this onto to the next page is a strip of thread with a sewing needle onto a hand that is centred in the page. This implies that fast fashion isn't sustainable, and we can change how things work, in a literal sense, by taking it into our own hands.



THOUGHTS ON

MAKING A COVER

FROM ARTIST/ILLUSTRATOR TOYA

When thinking about cover design, it might be useful to look back at traditional fashion magazine covers. They often follow a very similar format with a photograph of (what the industry/society considers) a conventionally attractive model wearing a statement outfit. This image usually represents a commercially driven representation of people and fashion. The brand title/logo appears in bold letters at the top and the issue name or particular focus is written over the model towards the bottom of the page, usually in the centre. There is also some smaller text giving some clues to the special features or content inside.

For a zine cover the range of possibilities are much bigger and you are free to explore this as much as you would like because you are the publisher. The standard format of fashion magazine covers could be utilised and/or subverted to good effect. Some good examples include work by artists Hattie Stewart and Ana Strumpf.

- ✦ What are the main ideas you are exploring in your zine? Pick a word or short phrase that relates to these ideas as a title.
- ✦ You might choose to print them out in a few different fonts and sizes or experiment with handwritten fonts in different materials like ink or pencil crayon.
- ✦ Create an image that draws further on these ideas using the methods explained on page 9 or 15 or perhaps combine both.

In general, a more simple image in combination with your title may be most effective. Other ideas might include introducing other materials like monoprinting or embroidery.

For the cover of our zine we made an embroidered version of Renoir's *La Loge* (1874) and photographed it worn as a shirt. This was intended to help show that the project was inspired by the painting but links to fashion and textiles. For another approach, see the previous page for Natasha Francis' cover and spread sample.



NEXT STEPS ...

Create more pages to make a finished zine focussing on some of the ideas around fashion and gaze that interest you most. You could do this individually or as a small group or collective.

You might choose to compile a single zine from all the spreads in your group or class and then work collaboratively on (or vote for) a cover.



Reproduce your finished zine using a photocopier. If you stack individual A4 pages in order you can use the booklet function on most photocopiers to create a magazine type layout at A4 or A5 scale. You can then bind your zine using a long-armed stapler or by stitching through the spine.

Places we found inspiration...

In exhibitions

***Renoir and the New Era* at Ulster Museum, November 2020-February 2021**

Taking Renoir's *La Loge* (1874) as its centrepiece, this exhibition explores the Impressionists in the late 1900s. Refocusing attention on their position as agitators and anarchists against the established art system. *Renoir and the New Era* looks specifically at the 1874 'First Impressionist Exhibition' (that featured *La loge*) and how the painting itself, and the movement, represented the democratisation of culture and a new era of thought around art, politics and representation.

Accompanying works on paper by Berthe Morisot, Édouard Manet and Camille Pissarro raise the subjects of the portrayal of women in Impressionism, new approaches to drawing the figure, and depicting daily life. The exciting opportunity to display work by such important figures in art history allows for conversation and exploration on the impact Impressionism had on modern art and our current visual culture.

In zines

One of My Kind (OOMK)

<http://oomk.net/>

Fashion Revolution fanzine

<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/fashion-revolution-fanzine-library/>

Sew Irregular

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/IrregularZines>

On Instagram:

@natzfaa

Natasha Francis, illustrator and designer

@madebytoya

Toya Walker, artist and illustrator

@documenting_fashion

Rebecca Arnold, Senior Lecturer in the History of Dress and Textiles, The Courtauld Institute of Art

@fashioninterpretations

Fashion Interpretations, an AHRC fashion networking project

From The Courtauld

La Loge (1874) In Detail

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=860FRThc-9U>

Documenting Fashion

<http://blog.courtauld.ac.uk/documentingfashion/>

Fashion Interpretations

<https://sites.courtauld.ac.uk/fashioninterpretations/>

In podcasts

Bande à part Dressed

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ua/podcast/bande-%C3%A0-part/id1332462256>
<https://www.iheart.com/podcast/105-dressed-the-history-of-fas-29000690/>