Fashion has no labels

Words: Liza Esquibias | Art: Whitney Powell

Listen to: “Fashion” by David Bowie

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With clothes scattered across her bedroom floor and splatters of paint still drying on her now one-of-a-kind pair of jeans, senior Lawson Rudd prepared to debut her newest display of art.

Rudd works at Res Ipsa, a one-of-a-kind boutique in the Malibu Country Mart. She said the merchandise at the store inspired her to make some of her clothes more unique — often through adding her own designs to clothes to give them a story.

“I think it’s a really effective way to stand out when you wear something that really feels like yourself, or wearing something that you made, or added some flair to,” Rudd said.

Whether it is through sewing together an old pair of jeans and a quilt to make a good-as-new denim jacket or sketching on canvas sneakers, creativity has no bounds when it comes to fashion design, Rudd said.

“Fashion is much more than clothes draping people’s bodies — it tells a story, brings people together and expresses creativity in a way everyone interprets differently. Fashion has less to do with what people see and more to do with what people think it is,” Rudd said. "We’re not out here chasing trends and trying to sell as many garments as possible, " Barnea said. "We want to inspire people to take a second look at things and to really get them to think deeper about the world around them."

The art of a fashion show

Runway shows, red carpets and events like the Met Gala exhibit the art of fashion and design, Selva said.

Attachments’ fashion shows follow a narrative style. “Those in attendance go for an experience, not just a viewing,” Barnea said.

“CLOTHING DOESN’T HAVE TO HAVE A GENDER — COLOR OR PATTERN DOESN’T HAVE A GENDER.”

- JUSTIN SELVA

For us, that’s what a fashion show is all about — telling a story,” Barnea said. 

Attachments’ most recent show highlighted the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles, Barnea said. The room, runway and models embodied what it is like to be unhoused, and Barnea and

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Growing up in a musical household, “A big thing that we like to focus on is through sewing together an old pair of jeans and a quilt to make a good-as-new denim jacket or sketching on canvas sneakers, creativity has no bounds when it comes to fashion design, Rudd said.

“Fashion is rooted in craftsmanship,” Barnea said. "It’s rooted from that person who was interested in garment-making and in those techniques that allow for the construction and the foundation of garment-building, which grew into this large industry that we now call the fashion industry."

The art of design

As owners of Attachments, a clothing brand aimed at innovation and raising awareness of social issues, Atias and Barnea said they merged their strengths together an old pair of jeans and a quilt to make a good-as-new denim jacket or sketching on canvas sneakers, creativity has no bounds when it comes to fashion design, Rudd said.

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Atias said they wanted to shock the audience.

The contrast between what attendees thought they would see at a fashion show — luxury and exclusivity — and what they got — reality and unrest — was meant to display the impact the homelessness crisis has on the city where many people live in a bubble and ignore it.

“It kind of encompasses the whole idea of, even in LA, people think about it as, California and LA is Beverly Hills, Hollywood, the land of celebrities and rich people,” Barnea said. “Then [they] come here, and this is what you see — more homeless people than you see rich people or celebrities or whatever you want to call it. So we really wanted to raise awareness of that.”

Atias said a runway show, or any presentation of fashion, should give insight and nuance into the fashion.

“We want people to feel like there’s development in our brand and they’re seeing it unfold,” Atias said.

They put great thought into each element of a show, Barnea said — through the stitching on the garments, the lighting of the room or persona of the models.

“We love creating,” Barnea said. “We love telling a story. We love the choreography [of a fashion show], you know. We spend months and months hand-making each garment and selecting which model we think would look best in it and color-coordinating that, and then going with makeup looks to really emphasize the story.”

The art of styling

Selva said his favorite part of each day is getting ready. It is a time when he feels he can give people a look into who he is through the styling of the clothing on his body.

“When I put together an outfit, I kind of focus it on something that has to stand out first,” Selva said. “I think about what’s going to make my outfit pop, whether that be the pants, whether that be a patterned shirt, I focus on something that’s going to grab your attention.”

Selva said art is about thinking outside the box and transforming one’s imagination into something tangible, he said, and fashion has allowed him to do that.

“I think it’s definitely cool to mix it up a little bit and see what really works for you and realize that not everything has to be gender-based or anything like that,” Selva said. “Clothing doesn’t have to have a gender — color or pattern doesn’t have a gender.”

Atias and Barnea said Attachments focuses on the idea of creating cohesive yet clever looks out of materials or styles that traditionally would not go together.

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“I just try, try, try, try, try on,” Rudd said. “My closet is always a mess after I’ve gotten ready.”

Both Rudd and Selva express themselves artistically by repurposing items to wear. Selva said he often buys an oversized shirt and cuts it to fit him right.

Rudd and Selva both said they enjoy purchasing unconventional clothing — such as statement pieces made up of material that otherwise would have been thrown out — because it brings life to their outfits.

“No one else is going to understand that outfit the same way I do, and I love that,” Rudd said.