

Worn to be Seen: Sculptural Footwear

Quest University

Amara G. Hark-Weber

amara.harkweber@gmail.com

Shoes are not always worn for comfort. This class will explore shoes that are created explicitly to be seen. Drawing upon traditional shoe design and production, we will create soft shoes that will be nailed, sewn, screwed, tied, glued, or otherwise attached to a sculptural base. Each student will create shoes that are conceptually driven and expertly crafted to create performative shoes that are worn to be seen. Assessment will be based upon full completion of class assignments and student activity in design, concept, and craft.

Design:

Students will fully design the shoe objects made in class. Additionally, they will create a design portfolio of fully articulated illustrations presented in a mindful way. These designs will be peer reviewed through critique, giving students an opportunity to edit collaboratively, and hone their ability to create, discuss, and edit design elements constructively.

Concept:

Students work will reflect personal research and exploration, with ideas being used as the underpinning to visual work. Shoes designs must meet basic criteria: accounting for heel to ball strike and considering the bearing of weight. Research will be undertaken in a library as well as online, with standard citations as all university level research require. Elements from their conceptual design portfolio will be integrated into their constructed work. All assigned readings must be completed for discussion and assimilation into conceptual work.

Craft:

Through demonstrations, discussions, lectures, and assignments students will build their understanding of the anatomy of a shoe, fit, and the intricacies of shoe construction and embellishment. By practicing new skills and undertaking foundation level projects, students will gain increased levels of craftsmanship on each of their works. *Fine art is the happy marriage of consciousness in craft and concept.*

Course Outcomes:

Students will learn shoe anatomy, building their ability to converse in design discussions fluently. Students will hone their critique skills by participating in class critiques, peer and self-evaluations. Students will increase their ability to both see and create strong designs on paper and with patterns to be used in 3D format. Students will hone their hand eye coordination, and overall craftsmanship by practicing for perfection with all elements of their projects. Students will maintain the order of the workspace by treating the machines, their projects, their peers, and themselves with the utmost respect.

Course Requirements:

- Come to class, arrive on time and be prepared to start at 9:05. You may miss up to two classes with an excuse, but are responsible for collecting any information missed. If you are absent more than two times, you will not receive credit for the course. *If you are 20 minutes late more than 3 times, this will count as an absence.*
- Attendance on critique days is MANDATORY. If you are absent without prior notification on a critique day, you will not receive credit for the class. Any exception must be discussed with the instructor.
- Please come to class prepared. We will be working in class, so bring any tools and materials needed for your project. *Please eat and sleep before class, so as to be best prepared for a full day.*
- Dress to work. We will regularly be using high power industrial machines in which loose fitting clothing, dangling jewelry, and loose hair can get caught.
- Please silence all mobile devices. Music can be listened to with headphones during classroom work time. Please do not answer phones during class.
- Please clean up. Be respectful of the classroom and shared facilities by always cleaning up. Ask before borrowing tools, and be respectful of other's projects.

Course Outline:

Week One

Nuts and Bolts: Idea Generation, Information Gathering, Tools and Techniques

Monday:

- What is a shoe? Terms, Types, Ideas, Iterations
- Construction of class notebook
- Intro to Video Assignment

Homework: Video assignment DUE WEDNESDAY, Reading, Questions

Tuesday:

- Discussion of reading
- Soft shoe introduction
- Patterning -- How to read and make

Homework: Generate 15-20 designs for soft shoes, generate 2-3 basic patterns and construct in paper, walking assignment morning

Wednesday:

- Patterning discussion, mini-critique
- Volume/Form (hard and soft introduction)
- Sewing/Sewing machine introduction

Homework: Generate 15-20 designs incorporating volume/various sewing techniques, view videos collected by class, 1-3 page written response DUE FRIDAY, walking assignment afternoon

Thursday:

- Introduction to the wood shop
- Embellishment Techniques: embroidery, hardware, paint, dye
- Attachment Techniques Ideas and Research

Homework: Generate 15-20 designs incorporating embellishment techniques and wood, research attachment techniques to demo, prepare for demo, walking assignment evening

Friday:

- Attachment demos
- Group discussion/questions/check-in, student/instructor evaluation
- Personal meetings with instructor to review designs, samples, ideas, questions, etc. and begin to plan individual project

Homework: Edit designs for group critique collecting best 15-20 designs, Develop 5 samplers DUE MONDAY, Walking Assignment (spend at least 30 exploring the following ways of walking: mindful, silly, slow, rapid, hopping on 2 feet, hopping on one foot, skipping, running, jogging, sprinting, uphill, downhill, stairs -- choose one to focus on, 1-3 page response)

Week Two

Patterning, Prototyping, Testing

Monday:

- Group critique of design illustrations and samplers
- Discussion of walking assignment
Homework: solidify design for final project, fully illustrate with swatches, style research project DUE WEDNESDAY

Tuesday:

- Group check in, discussion of final illustrations
- Lecture: Modern history of footwear in relation to movement and clothing
Homework: Style research project, begin patterning final project

Wednesday:

- Style Research Presentations, 10-15 minutes, discussion
- Work day: Pattern, Research, Prototype
Homework: Prototype construction, plan base and attachment method, artist/designer/craftsman research project

Thursday:

- Present prototype to class with questions
- make necessary changes to pattern
Homework: prototype construction manipulation, artist/designer/Craftsman presentation

Friday:

- Artist/designer/craftsman presentation 10-15 minutes, discussion, student/instructor evolution
Homework: Prep for final project, gather all materials, make peace with techniques that will be employed (i.e. practice! experiment! play! explore!), 1-3-hour walk and 1-3 page response

Week Three

Making, finishing

Monday-Friday:

- Work time, daily group check-in/progress report.

Week Four

Documentation, Exhibition, Reflection

Monday:

- Group critique of completed work
- Daily walking assignment wrap-up
Homework: Written reflection to project DUE WEDNESDAY

Tuesday:

- Exhibition/documentation/performance/???

Wednesday:

- Group check in/reflection/evaluation/wrap up

Assessment:

Small Assignments: 35%
Papers/Presentations: 15%
Discussions/Participation: 15%
Final Project: 35%

Books:

Anthony, Claire (2012) Shoegasm: An Explosion of Cutting Edge Shoe Design. New York: Race Point Publishing.
Benstock, Shari and Suzanne Ferriss (2001) Footnotes on Shoes. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press.
Small, Lisa (2014) Killer Heels: The Art of the High Heeled Shoe. New York: Prestel.

Assignments List:

1. Walking Journal
2. Video Assignment and response
3. Reading
4. Paper pattern and paper construction
5. Attachment demos
6. Design portfolio(s)
7. Walking assignment and response
8. Edited design illustrations (for class critique)
9. Samplers
10. Final design illustration
11. Style Presentation
12. Artist/Designer/Craftsman Presentation
13. Final project (for critique and presentation)

Walking Journal:

Please spend 20-30 minutes each day walking. During this time, you may focus on the physicality of walking itself, on an area of your body associated with specific kinetic motion, on the sounds, sights, sensations of the act of walking. Or, you may let your mind wander. Please walk in different areas, at different paces, and try different types of walking. Record your walks in your class notebook/journal. Please write a response to these walks, due at the last Monday of class.

Video Assignment:

Please find 1-3 videos to share with the class, and view the videos discovered by your peers. The videos must deal explicitly with footwear, however can be of any type (i.e. music video,

dance, news, product development, etc.). Your videos must spark an internal discussion about footwear and movement. Please write about your video contributions, and respond to the videos chosen by your peers in a 1-3 page paper.

Examples:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nB7CQRni50&index=1&list=PLKWDu_G_YsIxOP6I7JGcQFk7r2IwmPLYX
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVaaGdXRx7M>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIURh36WGek>

Reading:

Please read the introduction to Footnotes on Shoes, and come to class with three questions, and three points of interest for discussion.

Paper Pattern and Paper Construction:

Please flat pattern 2-3 designs, and test these designs in paper. These designs may be based on patterns provided in class, but must be altered in some way per student vision. Come to class with the flat patterns and constructed paper shoes. Don't forget seam allowances!

Attachment Demo:

Each student will be assigned a method of attachment to research and demonstrate to the class. These include: braiding, tying, knotting, lacing, weaving, sewing, strapping, gluing, riveting, tab inserting, buckling, and nailing. Please find visual examples of your method, and be prepared to be the expert, teaching your peers the in's, out's, advantages and disadvantages of this construction. Demos will should be 6-12 minutes long.

Design Portfolios:

Please imagine 15-20 individual footwear designs incorporating elements from the daily class demos. These designs may be illustrated, and must be discussion ready. They may be related (i.e. a collection), or can be totally unrelated. Please let your imagination fly -- these are ideas that may or may not be make-able in class, and as such can be as fanciful as you choose to make them.

Walking Assignment:

Building on our daily walking exercises, please spend at least 30 minutes exploring the following walks: mindful, silly, slow, rapid, hopping on 2 feet, hopping on one foot, skipping, running, jogging, sprinting, uphill, downhill, stairs. Try these walks with various footwear, barefoot, inside, outside, and on various surfaces. Choose one element to focus on in a 1-3 page written response.

Design Portfolio for Critique:

Please choose your strongest 15-20 designs to fully articulate visually and in color. The portfolio will be discussed with your peers, and each image must be shown on a single office sized piece of paper so that others can easily see them. Designs may be drawn in profile, from the top, sides or bottom, and each of these angles must be considered.

Samplers:

Please choose 5 techniques discussed in class to practice as samplers. Samplers must be 12x12 cm, and demonstrate both design vision and craftsmanship.

Final Design Illustration:

Please fully illustrate the design that you will be undertaking for your final project. Include material samples, and multiple angles. Must be to scale.

Style Presentation:

Please research one of the following styles (assigned in class): Oxford, derby, monk, stiletto, wedge, t-strap, espadrille, winklepicker, chelsea boot, cowboy boot, wellington, athletic shoe. Learn about how this type of shoe developed, why, and when. Please come prepared with images of the shoe in history and as it is most often currently seen. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes long.

Artist/Designer/Craftsman Presentation:

Please find one artist/designer/craftsman whose work you find inspiring/challenging/interesting or otherwise compelling, and whose work somehow relates to the class, or your work in this class. Please prepare a brief biography including dates of working, location, education, etc., and bring images of their work. Please be prepared to discuss the relationship of this artist to the work being done in this class.

Final Project:

Please design at least one pair of soft shoes and at least one sculptural base. These designs will then be flat patterned, and the patterns used to generate the work itself. Please consider heel to ball striking motion of average human gait, as well as weight bearing and balance issues.

Critique Format:

Critiques are an opportunity to see your work through another's eyes. It is your time to ask questions, and elicit feedback on issues that you need to resolve before moving forward. This can include technical, conceptual, or design issues. Typically the following areas are covered, but as the recipient of the critique, you have full freedom to shape the conversation as you see fit.

1. What do you notice about the work?
2. Warm Feedback
3. Cool Feedback
4. Questions raised

5. Artist response/discussion