

Module 4

UNIT 1

INTRODUCTION TO TAILORING
CONCEPTS, MATERIALS AND
PROCESS IN UPCYCLING

Duration: 8 hours



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Overview of the Unit

This unit introduces students to the fundamental concepts, materials and techniques of tailoring essential for upcycling. It introduces the basic tailoring tools and materials, offering a comprehensive guide to the essential items used in this craft. You will learn how to assess a garment's potential for restyling, focusing on the necessary tools and materials. Safety practices are emphasized to ensure the correct use of tailoring tools and equipment safely and effectively.





Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Unit, you will be able to:

1. Assess a garment's potential for restyling
2. Apply the correct techniques of tailoring in a upcycling context
3. Use tailoring tools and equipment safely and effectively.

Pre-requisite knowledge

No prior knowledge is required for this Unit.

Estimated Reading Time
15 minutes

Learning Objective



The aim is to understand and provide an overview of tailoring in upcycling, helping students grasp the role of tailoring in transforming old garments into new, stylish pieces.

Target Audience

This Unit targets people/learners/entrepreneurs, young with legal age and adults including: NEETs, low skilled adults looking for a job, professionals already working in the artisanal tailoring area, students graduated by Secondary Schools with fashion design and/or textiles clothing production curricula. A special regard will be given to women with economic fragilities or due to their refugee and migrant condition.

Key concepts

restyling potencial, tailoring techniques, tools and equipment..

For this Unit's you will need a laptop and a notepad and pen.

Necessary equipment





01

Teacher's Profile

Fundamentals of tailoring and knowledge on the upcycling process and conscious fashion.

01

Methodology

Theoretical introduction with demonstrations of restyling examples, tailoring techniques and proper use of materials and equipment.

Overview

A garment's potential for restyling

Repair; Redesign; Repurpose

Techniques of tailoring in a upcycling context

Disassembling; Patchwork, Resizing, Embellishment, Embroidery, Appliqué, and Visible Mending.

Tailoring tools and equipment

Tools and equipment that are necessary for the tailoring techniques presented



A garment's potential for restyling

We can say that restyling is the heart of upcycling and emerges as a crucial step in the upcycling process. Each used garment presents unique characteristics, requiring individualized attention to maximize its potential. Innovation plays a key role in addressing the unpredictable quality and quantity of discarded materials available for upcycling. To be able to measure a garment's potential for restyling let's look at the different ways we can restyle:



Repair

The potential of fashion items to be easily repaired/maintained, ensuring they are kept in use for longer. This can be enabled by including components that can be replaced.

Case Study – [MENDEED](#)



The founders of **MENDED** say:

“There are enough clothes out there to dress the next six generations. Instead of adding more, we make the good better. We are working towards our vision with new services and new stories. Our services increase the value of every product we touch - for brands and people. Our content redefines the way repair feels, sounds and looks like. Turning the 'dusty image' to Oscar-worthy. Turning repair from niche to norm.”

MENDED



Redesign

Remaking an existing garment to make it suitable for more wear, altering an existing garment to create a new design often involving size adjustments or stylistic changes (fit, color and trim ...).

Case Study - Rentrayage

Rentrayage



The founder of **Rentrayage** says:

“Rentrayage was born out of the concept of reimagining and reanimating what has already existed; creating beauty and value, new shape, new form, new style from what has been discarded.

Inspired by Louise Bourgeois, Rentrayage is a French word to mend and to “make whole again,” we bring old clothes, vintage fabrics, and dead-stock back to life. But this goes beyond stitching things back together in a new way; this is the groundwork for a new way of thinking along with innovative methods.

As a sustainable small business, we work to continuously improve and learn.”



Rentrayage



Repurpose

Repurposing is giving a new function to a discarded item that wasn't originally intended for clothing, such as using old belts as bag straps.

Case Study - Wintervacht



Wintervacht

is the creation of a Dutch design duo who are creating elegant yet edgy outerwear and accessories from old blankets and curtains. The vintage textiles mostly originate from the 19th Century textile industry that boomed in the Netherlands, and are now being repurposed in an extremely innovative way. Each piece of material found can be used to hand make only one or two garments, meaning that every Wintervacht piece is completely unique, and carries with it its own story. Equally, this production method largely reduces the need for new materials, saving energy and valuable resources, and at the same time decreases the volume of waste ending up in landfill sites.



Wintervacht





How to assess a garment's potential for restyling?

01

Fabric Quality

02

Easy dismantling

03

**Pattern
components
dimension and
shape**

04

**Look out for wear
marks**

Fabric Quality

The quality of the fabric is extremely important to ensure that it maintains its quality for a long time after being reused. Twill or taffeta fabrics made from natural fibers such as cotton, wool and silks are the most reliable.

Easy dismantling

The process of undoing the seams is time-consuming and can cause damage to the material if it is not done well or if the seams are very difficult to undo. Sometimes, if we don't want to use the seam, it is preferable to cut the piece.

Dimension and shape

The size and shape of the piece we are transforming may affect the feasibility of its use. We must ensure that the dimension and shape we need for our creation can be taken from the piece in question.

Look out for wear marks

When reusing a used piece of clothing it is natural to find worn areas, we want to ensure we do not use them for quality reasons. In this sense, if a piece has many worn parts, even if it is made from a good quality fabric, we should rethink its use.



Techniques of tailoring in a upcycling context

Upcycling applied to fashion is a form of transforming discarded clothes and materials and converting them into new products of higher value and functionality. It refers to reusing and transforming a piece of clothing without degrading the material it is made from.

To achieve that result we can use different tailoring techniques, which can be applied in different situations.





Disassembling

Disassembling is carefully taking apart a garment at the seams to salvage usable materials (fabric, buttons, zippers). Design for Disassembly is a design strategy that ensures products can be easily deconstructed at their end of life to enable recycling, upcycling or re-use of separated elements

Patchwork

Patchwork is sewing together scraps of fabric to create a new piece of material or even as a larger textile piece (fabric), often used for creating unique patterns and textures

Resizing

Resizing is altering a piece of clothing, to make it suitable to wear, by shortening, lengthening, tightening/ tapering or enlarging..

Embellishment

Embellishment is adding decorative elements such as beads, sequins, or embroidery to enhance the aesthetic appeal of a garment or accessory.

Embroidery

Embroidery is the technique of decorating cloth or clothing with patterns or pictures sewn directly onto the material.

Appliqué

Appliqué is ornamental needlework in which pieces or patches of fabric in different shapes and patterns are sewn onto a larger piece to form a picture or pattern. The technique is accomplished either by hand stitching or machine.

Visible Mending

Visible Mending is the technique of repairing damaged fabric in a way that is aesthetically pleasing and becomes part of the garment's design.



Disassembling

An important step in the production process of upcycling is the dismantling of the clothes. The individual diversity of the sorted models makes this production phase complex and time-consuming. The aim of this phase is to process the garments in such a way that they are easy to handle when cut into new shapes and patterns.



Application of design for disassembly in men's jacket: A study on sustainable apparel design, Hae Jin Gam (2011)



Disassembling

Challenges

- ❑ **Disassembly is largely manual and time consuming. In most cases, garments have to be dismantled individually.**
 - ❑ Do not underestimate this phase! It takes a lot of time, so don't forget to include it in your total cost of ownership.
 - ❑ In addition, it is usually not necessary to completely dismantle the source material and loosen all the seams. Therefore, always take into account the following operations in the production process, so that only what is necessary is dismantled.

- ❑ **How should the garments be disassembled depending on the source material, the desired processing and the available cutting techniques?**
 - ❑ Step 1: Analyse all necessary dismantling operations in advance so that you can cut
 - ❑ Step 2: Check which tools and techniques can facilitate dismantling - it will depend on the type of seam and fabric
 - ❑ Step 3: Work in a large smooth table, with good lighting - a place to sort and group everything.

Patchwork

Before starting patchwork work, two decisions must be made: the purpose of its use and the design or pattern we want to apply. To answer what type of design or pattern we have to take into account our **level of experience**, the **construction techniques** we will apply and the **material available**.

During the patchwork process there are key rules that we must follow for a good final result:

- ☐ The fabrics used should ideally have similar and stable behavior (non-elastic) - see unit 4 on how to combine different fabrics
- ☐ Seam allowance must be respected
- ☐ Each seam must be pressed after being made



Bymariestore

Resizing

Clothing resizing are adjustments that are made to custom fit a garment to an individual body: the goal is to make a garment functional as well as to have a fit that makes the wearer feel positive about their appearance in it. Garments can be taken in (made smaller) and let out (made larger as well as shortened or lengthened).



Embellishment

Embellishments go a long way toward making a garment visually engaging. From applying beads, buttons or ribbons to embroidery, there are so many different kinds of embellishment that you can always find something new.



Embroidery (by hand)

Embroidery is the art of decorating fabric or other materials using a needle to stitch thread or yarn. Embroidery may also incorporate other materials such as pearls, beads, quills, and sequins..

Some of the basic techniques or stitches of the earliest embroidery are chain stitch, buttonhole or blanket stitch, running stitch, satin stitch, and cross stitch. Those stitches remain the fundamental techniques of hand embroidery today.



(Freehand machine) Embroidery

(with domestic machine)

Free Machine Embroidery, or freehand machine embroidery, is a type of sewing that allows you to draw with your sewing machine through drawing different shapes and profiles.

The only tool you must have for Free Machine Embroidery is a sewing machine with the ability to drop the feed dogs (the part of the machine that feeds the fabric through to make stitches), an embroidery presser foot and your creativity.



Appliqué

Appliqué is the process of sewing smaller pieces of fabric onto a larger piece to create designs or motifs. These smaller pieces can be stitched on using various methods such as hand appliqué, machine appliqué, or fusible appliqué.

Reverse Appliqué: In reverse appliqué, fabric layers are stacked, and the top layer is cut away to reveal the fabric beneath, creating a design or motif. This technique is often used in combination with other patchwork methods to add depth and complexity to the design.



Visible Mending - Darning

Popular upcycling methods of visible mending - frequently used simultaneously, knitting, weaving, crochet, dyeing, darning, cross-stitching and more.

Darning is the art and act of repairing a hole or a worn area of fabric with needle and thread. This can be done on knits or wovens and by machine or by hand.



Darning - to mend with interlacing stitches, reproducing a plain weave

Visible Mending – Boro

Derived from the Japanese word boroboro, Boro when translated literally means “tattered or repaired”. This technique combines layers of fabric and running stitch, combining bits of old cloth to patch and mend textiles. These fabrics were made by repurposing carefully saved garment pieces and other handspun fabrics in order to extend their use.



Visible Mending – Sashiko

Sashiko, on the other hand, whilst still made up of running stitches, is put together to form patterns. Pronounced 'sash(i)ko', the 'i' is almost silent, when translated it means "little stab or pierce".

It evolved as a rural domestic craft in Japan during the Edo era (1615 - 1868) and was originally invented for warmth and thrifty recycling, and strengthening work clothes, it is both practical and decorative.





Tailoring tools

01

General Tools

02

**Disassembling and
Resizing Tools**

03

Embellishing Tools

**Also for Embroidery
and Visible mending**

04

**Patchwork and
Appliqué tools**

General Tools

Measuring, Marking, Cutting, Pinning and Sewing

Rulers : clear plastic ruler; tape measure, seam gauge, L square, french curve, hip curve, metro ruler, fashion rulers

Makers: wax chalk, clay chalk, fabric makers, pencils, tread marking

Scissors: dressmaking scissors, tailors shears and thread snips

Pins: dorca pins, ball head pins, silk pins, flat head pins, safety pins

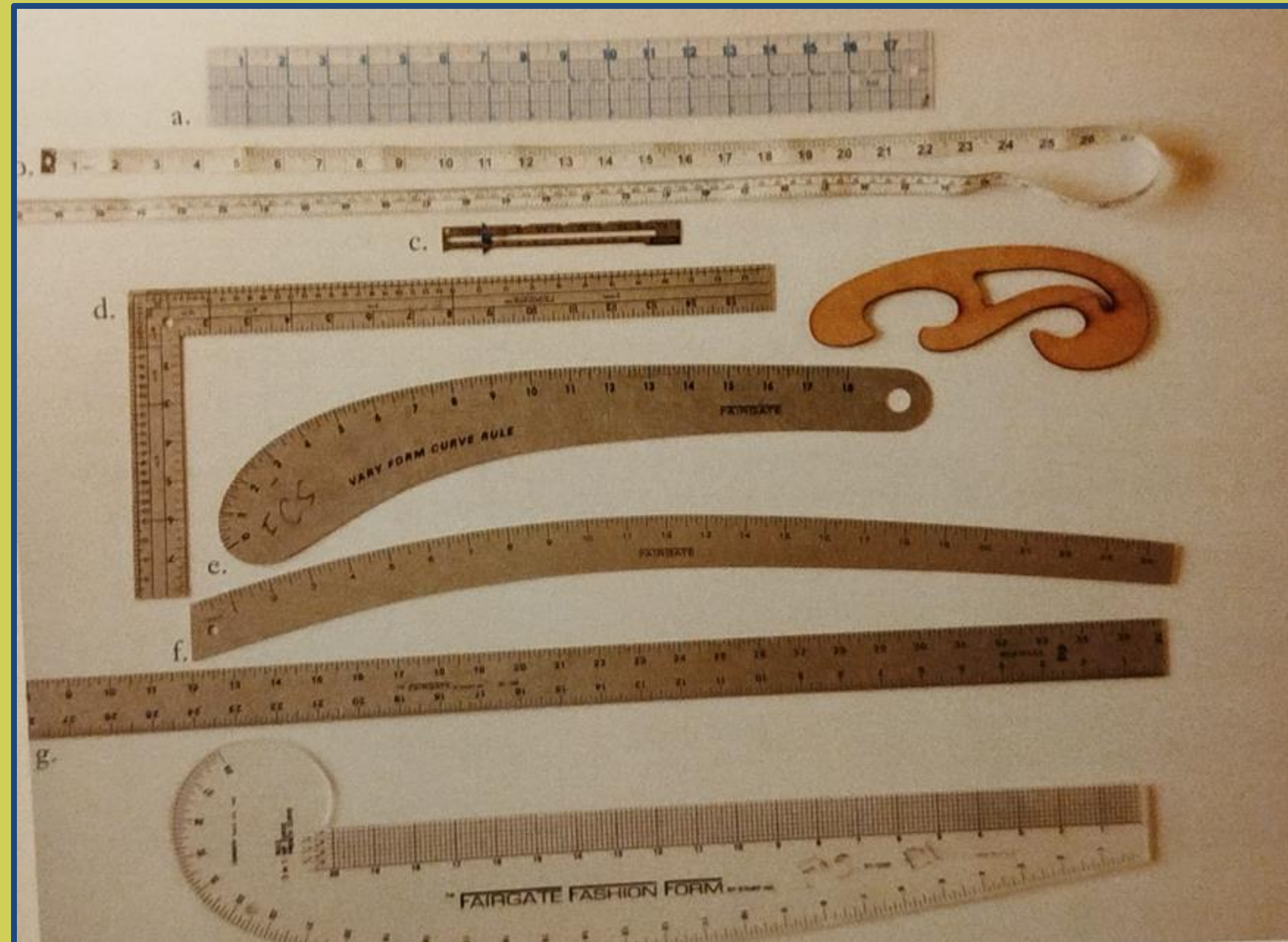
Needles: hand sewing needles, thimbles, needle threaders, machine needles

Tread: hand sewing thread, machine sewing thread, basting thread, thread conditioner



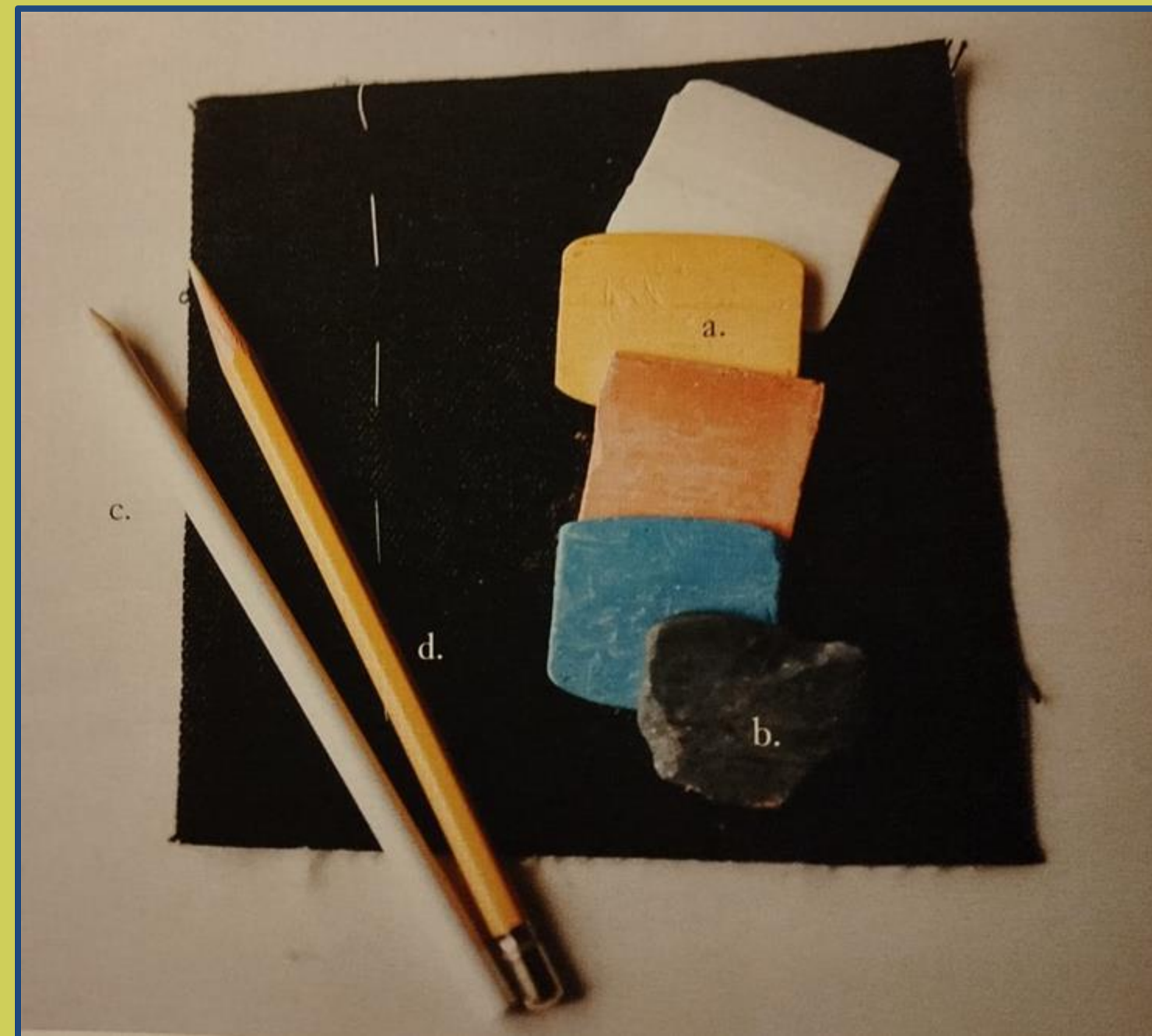
Rulers

- ☐ clear plastic ruler
- ☐ tape measure
- ☐ seam gauge
- ☐ L square
- ☐ french curve
- ☐ hip curve
- ☐ metro ruler
- ☐ fashion rulers



Markers

- ❑ wax chalk
- ❑ clay chalk
- ❑ fabric makers
- ❑ pencils
- ❑ tread marking



Scissors

- ❑ dressmaking scissors
- ❑ tailors shears
- ❑ thread snips



Needles

- ❑ hand sewing needles
- ❑ thimbles
- ❑ needle threaders
- ❑ machine needles



Pins

- ❑ dorca pins
- ❑ ball head pins
- ❑ silk pins
- ❑ flat head pins
- ❑ safety pins



Tread

- ❑ hand sewing thread
- ❑ machine sewing thread
- ❑ basting thread
- ❑ thread conditioner



Disassembly and resizing Tools

Measuring, Marking, Cutting, Pinning and Sewing

Disassembly: dressmaking scissors, tailors shears, thread snips and seam ripper

Resizing: dressmaking scissors, thread snips, seam ripper, seam gauge, any chalk or fabric makers, dorca pins, safety pins, hand sewing and machine needles, hand sewing thread, machine sewing thread and basting thread



Embellishing Tools

Also for Embroidery and Visible mending

- ❑ embroidery scissors
- ❑ fabric markers
- ❑ thimbles
- ❑ needle threaders
- ❑ embroidery needles (darning* and sashiko)
- ❑ hand sewing thread
- ❑ embroidery thread (sashiko thread)
- ❑ embroidery frame
- ❑ darning tool (eg. egg)



- Darning needles have a blunt tip and come in various sizes and lengths.

Patchwork and Appliqué Tools

- ❑ appliqué and cutting scissors
- ❑ fabric makers
- ❑ rotary cutter and cutting mat
- ❑ seam gauge and tape measure
- ❑ hand and machine needles
- ❑ hand sewing and machine thread
- ❑ flat head pins
- ❑ clear plastic ruler





Tailoring equipment

01

Sewing

02

Ironing

03

Haberdashery

Sewing

- ❑ home/domestic machine
- ❑ industrial machine
- ❑ serger/overlock machine
- ❑ coverstitch machine



Ironing

- ❑ ham
- ❑ sausage roll
- ❑ steam iron
- ❑ clapper
- ❑ sleeve board
- ❑ ironing board



Haberdashery

- ❑ buttons and beads
- ❑ trims and ribbons
- ❑ zippers
- ❑ elastic bands
- ❑ bias binding
- ❑ interfacing



Unit Summary



In this Unit you have gone through the different ways we can restyle looking into specific examples of Repair, Redesign and Repurpose through case studies. You have also learnt how to access a garment's potential for restyling, while learning the different techniques we can apply in the upcycling process: Disassembling; Patchwork, Resizing, Embellishment, Embroidery, Appliqué, Visible and Mending, as well as all the tools and equipment necessary to apply those techniques.

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