

You've Come a Long Way Baby

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So much of what our contemporary society is focused on a need for self-articulation. I have a continued interest in clothing's mutability of meaning and how we as a society manipulate personal image. We need to feel equally part of a group yet be seen as an individual and this is often expressed through our clothing. Another manifestation of this idea is seen through the use of online anonymous confessionals. It is a way to express personal feelings without the responsibility of acknowledgement.

Women often participate in online confessional blogs creating groups that are not restricted to physical environment yet have emotional commonalities that bring them together. Women use these anonymous confessionals to express fear, anxiety, anger, and frustration or to have their feelings validated. This duality is expressed in my work as singular clothing pieces that are inspired by online communities.



This dress, completed in 2014, uses confessions from websites that express frustration with housework, husbands, work and domestic inequality along with an inability to balance everything that contemporary working class women must face. The quotes express disillusionment with what these women imagined their life would be like and the way it actually is. The ironic title of the piece reinforces the notion that while many may think that our society has achieved gender equality, there is still much to be done.

The confessions are arranged in an Illustrator print in different handwriting fonts to convey a sense of intimacy and individuality. The digitally printed silk organza and silk shantung suggest traditional femininity and fragility. The pleats are arranged in a fictitiously imposing shape. The exaggerated silhouette exemplifies the dichotomy of both expressed strength with grandeur and the inherent objectification and vulnerability of women. The layers of fabric are dyed at the hem to suggest the visual weighing down of the dress while also constricting the ankles as a metaphor as a sense of powerlessness.

