

Cilia

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Textural and tactile, the jacket design “Cilia” explores conversations of the senses. The surface of the jacket is dimensional, offering play in the movement of each individual cilia-like felt tab. Cilia are finger-like organelles within some cells in the human body. Identical in structure to flagella, they line the surfaces of certain of our cells where they beat in rhythmic waves. They are an important part of many of our organs including eyelashes, the inner nose, and our digestive system. Among other functions, cilia increase the surface area of organs to transport external materials through the body, or to increase interactions with various substances.



The cilia-like tactility and density of the repurposed industrial felt tabs utilized in this garment challenge the senses of both the wearer and observer, and encourage interactions between them. “Cilia” taps into our desire to connect and communicate. The tactile nature of the jacket encourages a conversation by engaging chance-met people in a new dialogue, uniting them with the wearer in a singular tactile experience. The key feature, electric blue felt tabs, represent the ability of cilia to prolong interaction with others and the wearer.

Fashion and clothing are forms of nonverbal communication that do not use spoken or written words (Barnard, 2002). In a world where communication is reduced to texts and tweets, tactile communication through touch offers a low-tech alternative to contemporary trends of digital communication. Touch is the most highly developed sense at birth, and precedes language development (Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1996). Tactile communication, or physical touch, promotes cooperation between people,

communicates distinct emotions, soothes in times of stress, and is used to make inferences of warmth and trust (Kraus, Huang & Keltner, 2010).

The theme, cilia, is expressed through heavyweight texture and volume with a naive touch. Exaggerated textures offer increased surface area and volume. The jacket pattern, a men’s suit

jacket block, was developed with the assistance of Optitex software. The silhouette is intentionally boxy to increase the surface area for application of the felt tabs. Extra seam allowance (1" seam allowances) was applied to each pattern piece to accommodate extra volume of the felt tabs. This support layer was then cut from bottom weight cotton twill weave.

Felt tabs, were applied using a lockstitch industrial sewing machine to each pattern piece before garment assembly. Volume and density of the felt tabs were built up row by row by positioning rows of tabs one half inch apart until the surface areas of the pattern pieces were completely covered (excluding the seam allowance). After embellishment, the garment panels were joined by hand. The jacket was then garment dyed using acid dyes in a warm bath. The use of hot water was not used for dyeing due to the nature of the needle punched felt. Additionally, the felt tabs were applied to the base fabric prior to dyeing to stabilize the felt. Pre-tests indicated that dyeing the felt tabs independent of a fabric backing and in boiling water caused the felt to degrade and dissolve. Once dry, seams were reinforced with additional hand stitches to compensate for the additional weight of the garment. Finally, a cotton/spandex lining was installed by hand.



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