

STRONG SUITS

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LEARN

Being a part of Strong Suits has been one of my most formative experiences at Notre Dame to date. Prior to the class, I could only guess at the intentionality that goes behind creating a fashion label like Thom Browne. After this course, I believe TB is successful because of its distinctive brand story that uses iconic yet common visual elements that have come to signify Thom Browne.

This class followed Thom Browne's process of building America's own heritage brand by looking at the various facets of the industry. The class topics that inspired this project were "Gender and Uniform" and "Fashion as Art". Through this project, I aim to recreate Thom's process and explore the intersections of fashion and gender through the subversion of a traditionally male garment, the grey suit. As students interested in the larger process and workflow of running a luxury fashion brand, we wanted to attempt our own version of a TB shoot. After listening to his lecture in our class, I wanted to emulate his creative process. We paid homage to Thom's attention to detail throughout the conceptualization, designing, and photography process.

I began this project without mood boards and sketches, as Thom would, and began pulling together inspiration from Thom's past work and more contemporary silhouettes. Once I had a clear vision in my head of the looks I wanted to create, I put my ideas down on paper so my project partner, Taylor, and I could come up with a unified vision. My favorite lessons from Strong Suits were the ones focused on the fashion and journalism facets of the industry, so the bulk of my contribution to this project was grounded in these lessons. After creating sketches of the outfits I wanted to make and style, we began sourcing garments from thrift stores and our own closets.

Once we gathered our materials, I started sewing. I made a button-up shirt dress by sewing together the ends of two men's shirts that would be worn by our female model, Jordan, layered under a grey suit material mini skirt. I also crocheted a cravat to be worn as a tie with Jordans dress. I deconstructed her blazer and we added the iconic red, white, and blue ribbon to the seams. I paired this outfit with grey Thom Browne socks and hightop sneakers.

For our male model, Josh, I took a pair of men's trousers and turned them into a skirt. To create a more rugged look I added ribbons in the slits of the skirt and added distressing to the seams. This was styled with a Thom Browne grey striped rugby shirt, socks, and loafers. Thom spoke to us about the importance of fashion shows and creative direction for his brand. This was something that I took to heart as creative director of a fashion magazine at Notre Dame. This concept of the fashion spectacle, whether it be on a runway or in a magazine spread, is central to how Thom Browne communicates brand identity. Through my creative direction of a fashion photoshoot, I tried to capture

the essence of Thom's brand. I wanted to highlight the deconstruction of the suit and how garments can be worn by anyone. I also wanted to show the power of uniformity and how the perceived lack of emotion can also communicate feelings.

We chose to set the shoot at the South Bend water treatment center, an older-looking building with a red brick facade surrounded by greenery. We brought set pieces and props to bridge the gap between the location and the outfits; a football, a briefcase, a folding chair, and a Tom Browne shoe box. I posed the models on the chair, among the trees, and on the grand stairs of



the building. We wanted the shoot to have the serious tone of all of Thom's shoots and had the models stand upright without smiles. The final photos are featured in this digital magazine spread. An important aspect of design is being able to marry text and image in one unified creation, which is what Taylor and I set out to make. With my contribution to the visual elements of the project, she was able to transform these images into the magazine you are reading now. This project brought together topics from this course, as well as the strong suits of Taylor and me to create this digital magazine.

by: Gracie Simoncic

YOUR STRIPES



“NEVER PUT A LIMIT



ON ANYTHING”



The Thom Browne experience Notre Dame has provided me with this year has altered my time at Notre Dame in the best way. I have always had a passion for all things creative and fashionable, and having the opportunity to participate in experiences straight from Thom Browne has provided me with knowledge like no other.

The year started with being selected to participate in Thom's annual football photo shoot. I was shocked to hear that this was to be hosted on Notre Dame's campus, with Notre Dame students as models. I was eagerly nervous to participate in this shoot, especially after being selected as a football player, which placed me outside my comfort zone. This shoot quickly became one of my favorite things I had ever done. Having the opportunity to witness a professional photo shoot in action, understanding the styling, production, photography and more provided me with invaluable knowledge.

On campus I have dedicated my time to all things creative. This year I had the opportunity to work as Co-Editor in Chief of Strike Magazine, a student-led fashion and culture magazine on campus. Both the Thom Browne photo shoot and Strong Suits course provided me with lessons that I could take back to Strike and strive to make us stronger as a group. I had the opportunity to learn from and speak to Thom and his staff. I gathered a glimpse at professional production and the organization, dedication, and creativity that is included in each and every aspect.

Thus, when it was time to create our final project, Gracie and I wanted to create what we do best. With both of us being executive members of Strike, we wanted to use the best of our creativity, passion, and skills. We created and styled outfits, held a photo shoot, and designed our own magazine spread.

When creating this, we worked to put our best assets together. We wanted to address Thom's creative vision, alluding to the American fashion he creates. As Creative Director of Strike, my project partner Gracie used her creative mind to put hand to sewing machine and create outfits. We wanted to ensure that our outfits emulated Thom in our own way, paying attention to his color scheme and deconstructive way of styling.

As Gracie created and sewed our outfits, I worked to create a designs spread that would deliver Thom's message. When creating this, I was influenced by the sophisticated, creative, and all-American theme Thom alludes to

in his creations. I wanted to create a design that would show both my skills as a designer along with the influence Thom has had on my creativity throughout this semester. Thom's brand identity is what inspires me the most. Although simple, it is instantly recognizable and sophisticated, it is unique in terms of luxury brands. I strived to emulate this elevated design in my creation, uniting fashion design with digital media and text. Gracie and I strived to create something that unified all facets of design along with elements of each of our class sessions. From sports to journalism, fashion to digital media, we wanted to



create something that highlighted each element of Thom Browne. We worked together, using our own strong suits, to create something that highlighted our creative passions.

By : Taylor Dellelce

FASHION'S



NEW COACH