

The concept for this work was to make a “trashpunk survival fursuit”, stemming from my anxieties about homelessness and unemployment – a practical garment that would provide protection from the world should I be without access to shelter and good clothing. In this sense it largely failed as a practical garment – it’s hot, heavy, awkward, and limits my vision and hearing – and I frankly also consider it something of a failure as a fursuit – it doesn’t look nearly how I wanted it to look, and it’s something where I’d need to study fursuit creation and armormaking if I wanted to get close to anything like what it looked like in my head.

It connects to my voice as an artist by creating an extension of the self – I associate myself with canines because I value my loyalty, affection, enthusiasm, and fury, and creating a wolf costume lets me express those qualities visually. It also expresses why I make art – it’s a process of fucking around and finding out, seeing what I can do with new materials, rather than trying to create something that other people are necessarily going to enjoy.

Materials-wise, it also seems counterproductive to my original goals of repurposing trash as a protective garment, as very little of it was necessarily scavenged – I had the rubber purchased for me, and the inner tubes appeared unused rather than aftermarket, and the leather scraps were cut-offs from the leathermaking process, not repurposed garments. Most of the metal and fittings came from stuff lying around the Reed studio to be expressly used by students. I was trying to draw on the aesthetics of post-apocalyptic media by creating a leather, rubber, and metal garment, but I’m not sure how well I succeeded there.

I did learn how to grommet thick materials and use a pop-riveter, and I think the riveting process I used to flatten an inner tube into a cape was pretty ingenious, but most of what I was doing was learning only on a subconscious level – for the most part, I was playing with materials and seeing what took shape under my hands.

I was thinking that the audience would be random passersby who would encounter me wearing it, but because it’s hard to wear, its audience has become more limited, which I’m not pleased with. The participatory aspect I had planned would be in the decision of how to interact with me – I have worn it out once, and got a range of reactions: Reedies were largely blasé about the whole thing; small children were afraid or suspicious of me; I got smiles, nods, and slower traffic waiting at the bus stop; one guy threw the horns at me; a little old lady on the bus called me the height of fashion.

I don’t have specific artists to cite, merely the existence of furry fandom as a subculture and the practice of creating fursuits – a mascot costume to express an animal caricature of one’s own personality.



















