



# NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

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## SINGAPORE

DD3016 - HISTORY OF DESIGN  
FINAL ESSAY

**QUESTION 1:**

*Given the purview of past design movements which flowed with changing contexts (social, political, economic, scientific, technological, philosophical, environmental, etc), what could be a potential emergent design manifesto, ethos, movements, styles, trends or directions, which you could creatively adopt for your FYP/Graduation Project?*

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## HISTORY OF DESIGN - ESSAY

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Economic growth and consumerism are the driving forces that shaped our society's progress and mentality as a civilisation today (Ann). Sustainability has been an uprising issue as it is a global crisis affecting our Earth and our resources are running out. Many influential people are trying to address this issue by making a 'No Plastic' policies at certain shops and using environmentally-friendly and biodegradable materials to replace plastics.

I believe that our society and the design industry should work towards a sustainable consumption and weed out the mentality that consumerism and economic growth is one of top priorities to move forward in terms of development as a society and personal growth. As designers are trained to be critical thinkers, our role is not to be a follower of trends and profit. We should start prioritising on the well being of our users and environment. It is difficult as a designer to change the mindset of people towards purposeful consumerism in the face of this impending environmental crisis but we can focus on what we can control - "circle of influence" according to Stephen Covey and design things to sing a sustainable tune (Core).

Gearing towards sustainability is not necessarily having to sacrifice certain aspects such as quality and connection between the product and user. Rethinking of design is essential as it can compensate the change in archetypal form, material and aesthetic that we are used to. The integration of technology to develop a hybrid form of an existing product can be an innovative way to contribute to this sustainable movement by making it more purposive which initiates a dialogue besides being a functional product.

My objective for my FYP is to design a hybrid purposive product using sustainable materials and technology, and be a part of the shift of mentality towards sustainability. Exploring and experimenting technological, environmental aspects through a combination of integration and interactivity to develop a connection between the user and the product so it becomes a part of their daily lifestyle.

Being heavily inspired by the Supernormal and Droog design movements, the emphasis on practical use(function) of the product in its environment which creates value overtime as it creates a relationship in the one's daily life (Fukasawa & Morrision) is one of the concept I want to incorporate into my FYP. The style of interaction will be the integration of technology and the biodegradable and sustainable materials to make it a phenomenal design which gives off a strong sense of energy to its surrounding.



Fig 1. Home accessories of the "tresta" range

With the rise in the innovative development of new sustainable materials and technology such as 3D printing, designers have endless possibilities to experiment and develop environmentally conscious products.

A German designer Katharina Hölz developed 'pomace' which is made out of residues of wine production combined with natural binders, resulting in a new biodegradable material. Pomace was used to create the "Tresta" home accessories (Fig 1.). It can be used in 3D printing as an alternative to plastic and mixed with other compounds such as pulp to make it more robust, stable and sound-absorbing (Red dot).

Hence, another element that I want to challenge myself is being experimental with the material selection. Hopefully, creating a new innovative sustainable material by combining existing disposed materials with other compounds. Relying on unwanted and disposed materials can be challenging. However, with technology and implementing the design principles such as functionality, a sense of empathy and a purposive direction, products can be intelligently designed that can spark up a conversation about sustainability when they are interacting with the product.

In addition, packaging and marketing of how our product is made is one of the important components of my FYP project to spread the knowledge of responsible and ethical production. Not only that, users are able to connect and understand the product better and enjoy their daily interaction with it that adds ambience and value to their life.

Designers are one of the driving forces and influencers that can change our mindset towards sustainability. It is important that we take up the role to incorporate ethical production methods and material selection into our decision making and make it a norm.

Thus, establishing the subject of conservation and environmentally conscious decisions firmly into our design process. I believe by dedicating my FYP project to this movement, I can make a change environmentally by spreading the message that you can enjoy good products without comprising any functional or aesthetic aspects in responsible manner.

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