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September 27, 2021
FCS 208 Introduction to Fashion Design
Sister Mann

W03 – Career Kit: Reference Guide (Part 1)

I discussed my Burn Lab results with my sister, Ann.

She was immediately curious about the manmade fabrics that melt, “How do they melt? What does it look like?” Since I tested twelve different fabrics from my stash, I was able to identify several man-made fabrics and observe the difference between fusing, melting, and burning. Many of these fabrics fuse in a similar fashion when heat is initially applied, but some of the fabrics melt and bead immediately where others melt and drip. This information can impact fabric choices when constructing a garment for a particular use case.

She was also curious as to how the various weaves of fabrics with identical contents impacted the burn results. My test included cotton fabrics with different weaves and surfaces. These had similar burn traits, but the length of time the burn lasted varied as did the amount of recognizable fabric remaining. It was as if the texture or weave impacted how the heat interacted with the core of the fibers and thus altered their rate of burn.

Being able to identify the fabric contents is important because about half of the twelve fabrics I tested have sat there with unknown contents. I had initial guesses, but discovered they were not all correct. I now have insight into their care and suitability for projects.

I am still uncertain on the blended fabrics and their exact contents because some blended fabrics reacted differently than expected. I hypothesize that this is due to the individual fibers

themselves – synthetics can burn off quickly leaving behind a natural fiber that is less impacted by the direct flame. Upon sticking a couple of samples back in the flame, the results were closer to the remaining fabric in the blend on the second exposure.

I will be searching for more thorough references about burn testing and fiber characteristics to further my understanding.