

Cayman Chen

Design Studio 1: Personal Identity

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12/14/2025

### Designer Statement

The 'desire path' is a small, unplanned trail that emerges through repeated erosion from human and animal traffic. Desire paths often exist in contradiction to an established, intentionally built pathway, and their existence demonstrates our human tendency to follow our nature and express our individuality, despite whatever established pathways, systems, norms, and institutions may already exist.

The attitude of following one's own desire path is built into the culture and sport of snowboarding. Snowboarding emerged from a desire of the boardsports community to get involved with snowsports and resulted in them creating this new sport that disrupted the established world of skiing. Furthermore, the sport itself requires athletes to forge their own path, requiring them to find their own line in the snow and to explore and move as they wish amongst an open playground of terrain. At the heart of snowboarding culture is freedom of movement and expression.

In the process of researching snowboarding culture and media, I was reminded of the experience of watching a great snowboarding film – or even better, a great snowboarder in real life. In watching these athletes perform, you are witnessing them build and follow their desire paths in real time: they choose what type of terrain to ride, which features to hit, where to drop, what line to take, what tricks to throw and when they throw them. As the viewer, this experience of watching is characterized by two competing emotions. The first is one of disappointment and regret at not having the skill to perform at such a high level and, consequently, not having access to the same sense of freedom that comes with it. The second feeling is one of immense

aspiration and inspiration: the feeling that you *can* one day reach that level and that it could all be within your grasp. I believe that the tension between these two feelings is best captured by the moment that the athlete floats mid-air, often frozen in time in photography or caught in slow-motion in film. In that moment, the viewer imagines a seemingly endless number of pathways and opportunities that the athlete can follow – inspiring an endless number of pathways and opportunities available to the viewer themselves, as well.

In order to translate this feeling into a fashion collection, I have drawn on iconic elements of snowboarding media and culture. First and foremost is the fisheye lens, which is used across all boardsports media to distort the frame and make the subject appear 'larger than life.' The silhouettes and inverted pleated structures in this collection create a 3D fisheye effect, distorting the archetypical garment into a blown-up silhouette. The voluminous silhouettes in this collection



also reference the oversized and baggy silhouettes often worn by snowboarders, which allow for both freedom of movement and expression. I have been inspired by the patterns, repetition, and rhythm that are common visual techniques in snowboarding photography and graphic design, alluding to the rhythm of snowboarding in motion and the repetition of the desire path. The concept of the desire path is also built into each garment through the use of snaps, zippers, and reversible designs to allow the wearer to manipulate and rearrange as desired.

The system of the golden spiral has played a core role in my process of construction. My incorporation of the golden spiral emerged from the words 'systematize' and 'nature', which I was assigned to research at the beginning of this semester. From my research and experimentations, I developed a system of pattern making that begins from the shape of the golden spiral and results in voluminous, rounded, flowing structures that complement my collection's concept. These shapes are brought to life when worn on the body in motion, the excess fabric tracing the movements of the body.

This collection can be considered performance-inspired sportswear, created from a refined/upscale perspective. I situate my collection amongst brands such as Y/Project, Stone Island, Sacai, and Lutz Huelle, which are known for experimental silhouettes, transformable pieces, and working at the intersection of utility and luxury.

