

STOP WASTE

May the 4Rs Be With You Contest 2024

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Our 4Rs: Recognize, Responsibility, Redesign, and Research

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QUIZ: ARE YOU A ZERO WASTE WHIZ? EXCLUSIVE! PAGE 23

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Our (Re)Generation Action Story:

Recognize: To begin, we believe it's crucial to recognize the history of the United States'—and many other wealthy countries'—hyperconsumption trends. The end of WWII issued an era of mass consumerism and mass marketing to boost the U.S. out of an economic depression. This, in turn, resulted in retailers endlessly producing and advertising products for anything consumers may be willing to buy—even if they didn't necessarily need it. This age also introduced “planned obsolescence” which is when manufacturers intentionally made products that would break down or no longer be in trend which led to consumers having to buy something new every few years. As years have passed, we've seen an increase in people's desire to buy more and get rid of stuff with every new trend or season that comes and goes; our planet cannot continue to sustain this pattern. For many decades, magazines were a popular form of advertising the latest fashion trends and new product models, so we wanted to put our own spin to the 90s/early 2000s' eye-catching magazine style, but instead promote anti-consumerism and sustainability awareness.

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Responsibility: We understand that not everyone is in the position to only support sustainable options (i.e. buying local foods, buying from eco-friendly brands, thrifting, etc.) because that can come with higher initial costs or time commitments. However, choosing to spend your money in ways that reflect your values is an effective way to take back some of the market power unsustainable/unethical corporations hold. We need to acknowledge the responsibility and role we have as consumers when deciding whom we give our business to. Every dollar is essentially a vote. This ties in with our magazine/catalog design as we tried to advertise eco-friendly options/practices we both do, such as using reusable bottles and public transportation. Making choices also doesn't have to just be what we choose to buy—it can also be what we don't buy that can make a positive difference.

Redesign: We hope we'll all be able to redesign a future where sustainability is a top priority in our economy. We want to highlight the fact that hyperconsumerism has been methodically integrated into American culture; so, unraveling this system will require both collective and structural change. Maybe our current system will always remain the foundation, but we believe that with large enough strides towards intentional spending habits—such as buying less, using what we already have, selling or donating items we no longer want, and shopping more sustainably/second-hand—a world where items get more than one life is more than attainable. It's up to us, the consumers of the (re)generation, to use our voices and dollars to steer our future in a greener direction. In this project, we “redesigned” a classic early 2000s-styled magazine and added an environmental twist to it.

Research: Misinformation surrounding sustainability is sometimes used by companies who try to profit off of the climate change movement. False advertising, or “green-washing”, can make people think they're supporting environmental efforts when they actually aren't. Therefore, educating ourselves on sustainable practices is important to spread awareness. In addition, it's helpful to research different ways we can implement easy changes in our lives. From trying plant-based recipes to taking advantage of programs offered by local libraries, people from all over the world are constantly sharing new ways we can live more sustainably. To make this magazine-inspired art, we used various sources and tried to include different facets of sustainability to hopefully encourage people to delve deeper.

Photo Description: This is our take on an early 2000s magazine: sustainable version. Many magazines from that era were focused on fashion, beauty, and gossip so we used those as inspiration. (Note: "tea" in the title uses the slang definition, referring to gossip.) We used Canva and did a mixture of digital drawing, photographing, and collage making to create this cover/product catalog that we hope carries the essence of the decade's iconic style while also spreading awareness on environmental issues. Most elements in the cover relate in some way to sustainability or have a double meaning. The catalog page is also inspired by those during the early 2000s, but again, we "greenified" it using various graphics and fun facts to show things people can use or do to support a lifestyle that is gentler on our planet. Some notable items are the thrifted/hand-me-down/crocheted clothing pictured in the center; green onions we're regrowing in water; and reusable bags we've been using for years!

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