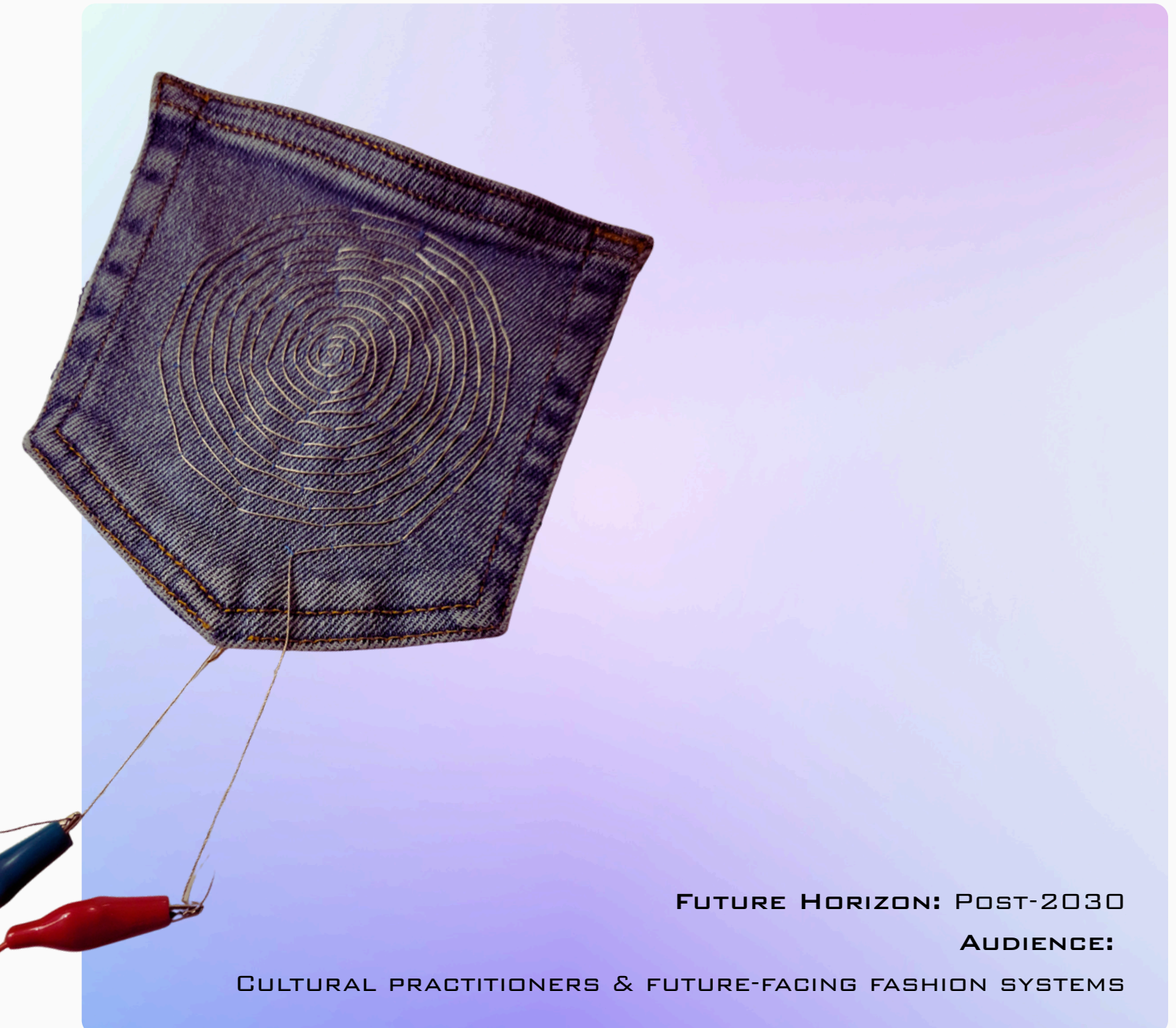


RE-IMAGING FASHION THROUGH THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA



REPORT TWO

WEARING FREQUENCY



FUTURE HORIZON: POST-2030

AUDIENCE:

CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS & FUTURE-FACING FASHION SYSTEMS

07 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fashion has long operated within a visual perspective. As digital saturation deepens and visual fatigue intensifies, the limits of this model become increasingly apparent.

Post-2030, a new orientation begins to emerge, one that expands fashion beyond visual appearance and into embodied resonance.

This report explores a speculative, research-led future in which sound, vibration, and frequency reshape how fashion is experienced. Drawing on sonic histories within diasporic cultures, experimental textile development, and interviews with musicians and cultural practitioners, it identifies a shift from visual identity toward a sensory experience.

In this future, the body is understood as a resonant instrument. Clothing functions as a mediator, supporting regulation, collective gathering, and energetic exchange. Fashion becomes participatory and activated, its meaning generated through use, rhythm, and presence rather than static display.

Post-2030 fashion systems may begin to:

- Design garments that respond to movement, sound, or environmental vibration
- Reframe fashion spaces as listening environments beyond the viewing platform
- Prioritise collective experience over individual ownership
- Measure value through resonance and memory rather than accumulation

This situates clothing within a broader sensory field, acknowledging the cultural infrastructures that have long sustained communities beyond visibility.

As fashion confronts the exhaustion of image-based expression, the future may depend on its ability to listen. This report is directed toward designers, technologists, musicians, spatial curators, and cultural strategists exploring how embodied resonance may reshape fashion beyond the limits of visual culture.

08 - CULTURAL CONTEXT

In interviews, diasporic participants described music as a spiritual or grounding practice, whilst 90% of workshop participants positioned music as a main connection to roots

Fashion's visual bias is not neutral. It is entangled with histories of colonial classification, spectacle, and control. Bodies were catalogued, hierarchised, and rendered legible through appearance, while other forms of knowledge, in particular sonic and spiritual, were marginalised or suppressed. Sound, in particular, was often treated as threatening. Drumming bans across enslaved and colonised communities demonstrate how rhythm functioned as encoded communication and collective power.

This visual hierarchy persists within contemporary fashion systems. Clothing circulates primarily as image, accelerated through digital platforms and increasingly detached from embodied experience. Identity is performed for visibility, often at the expense of depth and relation. Even garments designed to signal heritage or resistance risk flattening when reduced to surface aesthetics.

As image circulation accelerates, signs of fatigue are emerging. The visual alone no longer provides coherence or connection. The body begins to seek alternative modes of orientation, resonance, vibration, and shared rhythm.

In this context, fashion's expansion beyond surface is not speculative excess, but a cultural response to saturation.



The Mannequin is a film displaying the body breaking free from clothing and into its natural form, the body, the thing that exists before clothing



The speaker coat pays homage to the sound system, the very thing that the diaspora used to emit music that connected to the consciousness.

09 - RESEARCH GROUNDING

Interviews with musicians, workshop participants, and cultural practitioners revealed a consistent hierarchy: sound was described as grounding, spiritual, and collective, while fashion was framed as expressive but surface-bound.

Emerging Patterns

- The majority of all participants across the Workshop and interviews associated music with spirituality or ancestral continuity.
- Sound systems were discussed as sites of governance and collective care during interviews, during the Workshop they were included during worldbuilding
- Clothing was referenced as aesthetic language, but rarely as ritual practice.



Across 4 Interviews:

- 4/4 described emotional regulation
- 3/4 referenced physical vibration
- 4/4 linked music to memory

Across 12 Workshop Participants:

- Sound most frequently cited as connection to "home"
- Fashion rarely described as ceremonial

"Music...its such a spiritual thing...It touches me in my soul where i connect to my roots"

Rio Sterling 2025

This direction emerged directly from primary research conducted with 12 workshop participants and 4 Caribbean musicians based in the UK. Across storytelling exercises, speculative worldbuilding, and in-depth interviews, sound consistently appeared as the strongest site of diasporic continuity.

All four interviewees described music as a form of emotional regulation, a mechanism for grounding, release, and survival. Bass and rhythm were discussed as physical sensations: something felt in the body. One interviewee described standing inside speakers as a child; another referred to vibration as a way to "link with our ancestors." Across interviews, music was framed as spiritual technology rather than entertainment.

Workshop findings reinforced this pattern. When asked to articulate a connection to "home," participants most frequently referenced colour, rhythm, celebration, and communal gathering. Clothing, by contrast, was rarely described as ceremonial or spiritually anchoring. It functioned as an expression.

Across both qualitative dialogue and survey responses, sound emerged as an emotional archive, communal governance and embodied memory. The diaspora already "wears" rhythm through everyday gestures such as tapping, humming and movement. The proposition of wearable frequency, therefore, does not introduce something foreign; it amplifies an existing cultural condition.

These findings show the importance of music to the Caribbean diaspora, using this narrative to frame fashion as a frequency that we emit rather than cloth that we can see. Music has a strong spiritual placement for the diasporic people; this is more than the entertainment value that is usually experienced with music

"Music isn't just songs, it's sound and vibration. Certain frequencies open you up."

- DJ Xrated

10 - CORE INSIGHTS

Diaspora already embodies frequency; fashion has yet to recognise it.

Primary research revealed that sound operates as infrastructure within diasporic life by regulating emotion, sustaining memory, and anchoring collective belonging. While clothing circulates visually, rhythm circulates relationally. This imbalance signals a structural opportunity: the expansion of fashion into embodied resonance. The artefacts developed in response to this research explore how garments might operate within a sonic ecology.

Implications

- Emotional regulation becomes a design consideration rather than a by-product.
- Garments operate as carriers of vibration as well as visual language.
- Collective resonance gains value alongside individual expression.



1. The Speaker Coat positions clothing as a resonant vessel. Projecting sound both outward and inward, it collapses the distinction between private listening and collective broadcasting. The body becomes a site of circulation by receiving rhythm, transmitting memory, and sustaining diasporic presence through vibration rather than image alone.
2. The Frequency Hoodie externalises internal resonance. By visualising emitted vibration within public space, it repositions identity as energetic expression rather than static representation. Frequency becomes visible.
3. The Drum Shoe translates rhythm into movement. Each step generates beat, linking wearers through pirate radio infrastructures that historically sustained diasporic communication beyond institutional visibility. Here, fashion functions as connective technology, synchronising bodies across distance through shared tempo.

Together, these works do not propose novelty for its own sake. They amplify an existing cultural condition: diaspora already moves through rhythm, bass, and vibration. The expansion of fashion into frequency, therefore, operates as recognition by aligning garments with embodied memory and shared attunement gains cultural value.

1 1 - FUTURE INSIGHTS

How Frequency Reshapes Fashion Systems (Post-2030)

As fashion expands beyond visual dominance, post-2030 systems begin to integrate resonance as a design language and governance tool. Early manifestations may include:

- Garments embedded with haptic or sonic technologies that respond to movement, environment, or collective rhythm
- Fashion spaces reconfigured as listening environments — prioritising immersion, vibration, and shared tempo over spectacle
- Diasporic sound infrastructures, including pirate radio and community systems, informing decentralised fashion networks
- Design collaborations between musicians, technologists, textile developers, and spatial practitioners
- Value measured through participation, emotional impact, and communal memory rather than image circulation alone

In this horizon, clothing operates within a broader sensory field. Garments mediate atmosphere, regulate emotion, and enable collectivism. Fashion shifts from surface display to relational activation.

This trajectory does not replace the visual. It destabilises its dominance. By recognising sound as cultural infrastructure rather than entertainment, fashion begins to align with embodied practices that have long sustained diasporic continuity beyond visibility.



1 2 - CLOSING REFLECTIONS

This project articulates two speculative horizons:

one grounded in the revival of Indigenous techniques, the other expanding fashion into embodied frequency.

While presented separately, they are not different futures. They operate on different sensory registers of the same structural reorientation.

The near horizon (2028–2030) addresses material repair. It responds to ecological rupture by repositioning land-based knowledge as governance, restoring relational accountability between garment, maker, and environment. Its urgency lies in continuity. Instead, it encourages the relearning of practices that already understand limit, reciprocity, and care.

The post-2030 horizon extends this logic into the sensory field. Where the first future reimagines material relation, the second reimagines perception. By recognising sound and vibration as cultural infrastructure, fashion expands beyond visual dominance into embodied resonance. Here, garments operate not only as objects, but as mediators of collective attunement.

Together, these trajectories propose a shift from linear production logic to relation, from image to infrastructure, from isolated production to shared systems of meaning. They suggest that fashion's transformation will not emerge through innovation alone, but through realignment and acknowledging knowledge systems that have long sustained community beyond visibility and beyond industry.

The split format reflects the layered nature of change. Repair and expansion occur simultaneously. Land and frequency operate in dialogue. Material and resonance inform one another.

Rather than predicting a singular future, this project offers frameworks for reorientation, grounded in diasporic knowledge, participatory research, and speculative articulation.

The question is not what fashion will look like.

It is how fashion will listen, relate, and sustain.