



Thriftig & Thriving

A&T designer discuss balancing being a student & creative



Fast fashion has been an impacting environmental issue since the late 1990s. It is the business of replicating

runway and high fashion designs at a fast rate with little to no cost and shipping them to retail before the demand for them dies down. Traditional fashion practices, like mass production and overconsumption, contribute heavily to pollution, waste, and resource depletion. A multitude of students here at A&T is guilty of contributing to the fast fashion issue by buying clothes that are trending and then never wearing them again. Collin Semien, a double-major rising Junior here at A&T, is on a mission to promote sustainability on campus through fashion.

Semien is the designer behind SEMI Stitched a sustainable fashion brand that turns upcycled and thrifted materials into practical modern fashion. “I’m more into upcycling because I disagree with manufacturing. We see how people are being treated, we see how the clothes are made improperly or how they’ll get here and people don’t want them which causes them to be thrown away and then they buy more stuff and the cycle repeats. I disagree with that whole system and how it impacts our environment.”

His admiration for sewing derived from his dream of becoming a tailor and having to alter his clothes growing up that didn’t fit how he wanted them to. “Back then skinny clothes were a thing and we had to wear uniforms but the only thing that would determine your uniform from somebody else’s uniform was how they fit and what shoes you had on so I would try to make my khakis skinny and the way to do that was learning alterations and how to alter my clothes.” Upon

graduating high school he purchased his first sewing machine. He only imagined himself altering clothes during his time at A&T, yet, an idea arose that took him on a new creative journey. “My friend came to me and said, “Oh I know you have a sewing machine and I saw on TikTok this person turning shorts into a skirt, you think we can do it?” and me being me I was like yea let’s do it and that just started SEMI.” For Semien school and business coincide. As an agriculture major concentrating in sustainable land and food, doubling in fashion, he can apply the concepts he grasps in class to his life and business. “One of the things I also do is try to do my homework on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. Tuesday if I need to.

I try to do all of my homework a week early so the rest of the week I have time to do whatever I feel like doing.” Creating this iron-clad schedule has allowed him to allocate enough time responsibly and effectively between school and his business. Despite being black-owned and self-employed, SEMI Stitched has amassed hundreds of custom orders and alterations after only being in business for a year and continues to rapidly grow and flourish on campus.

“My biggest promotion is just constantly working, constantly posting what I make. I used just to make something every day and post it and I did that for two months. I feel like consistency is what makes the art relatable.” After being booked for a month and a half, SEMI Stitched will open its booking back up on March 16th. Semien is looking forward to doing different designs with heavy or thin materials and is excited to drop his Spring 2024 collection. He encourages every Aggie to be on the lookout for what he has stitched up his sleeve.

By: Karisma Dunn

