

# **SCIENCE FICTION** **FASHION:**

Dieselpunk Artifacts  
inspired by *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015)

Hannah Moon  
April 2020  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Prof. Lisa Yaszek  
Senior Project



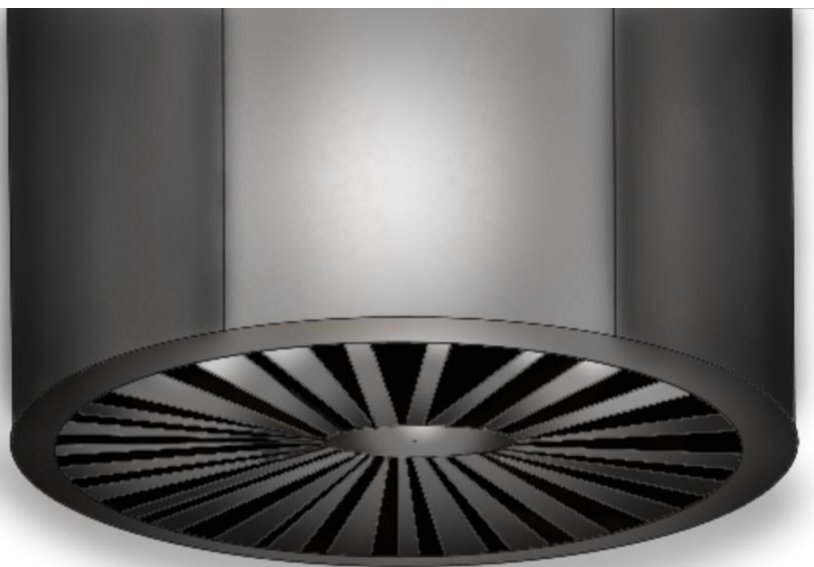
## Armored Chest Plate: (front)



Armored Chest Plate: (back)

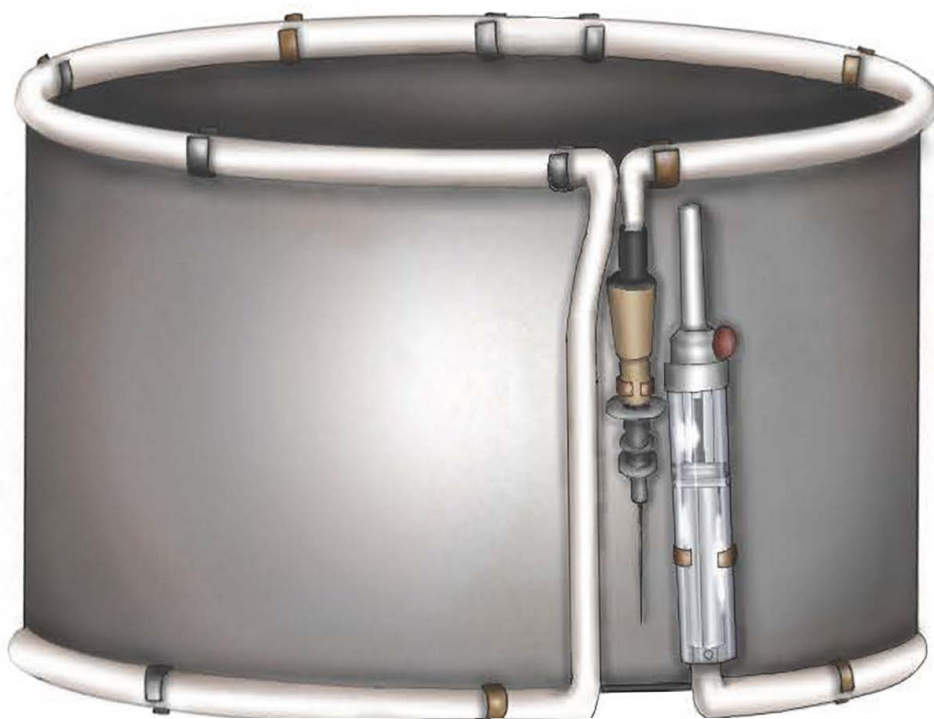


(Detailed view)

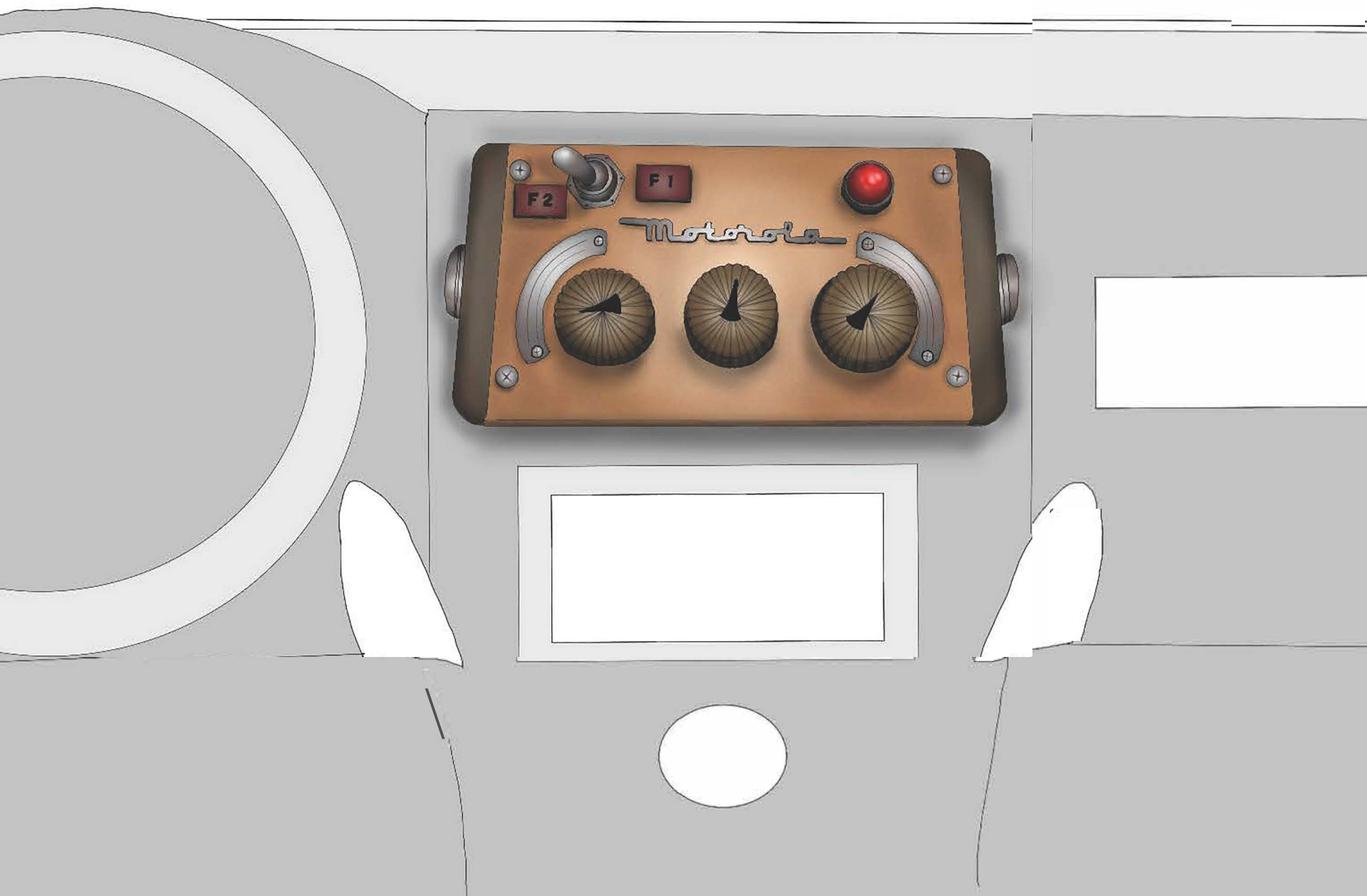
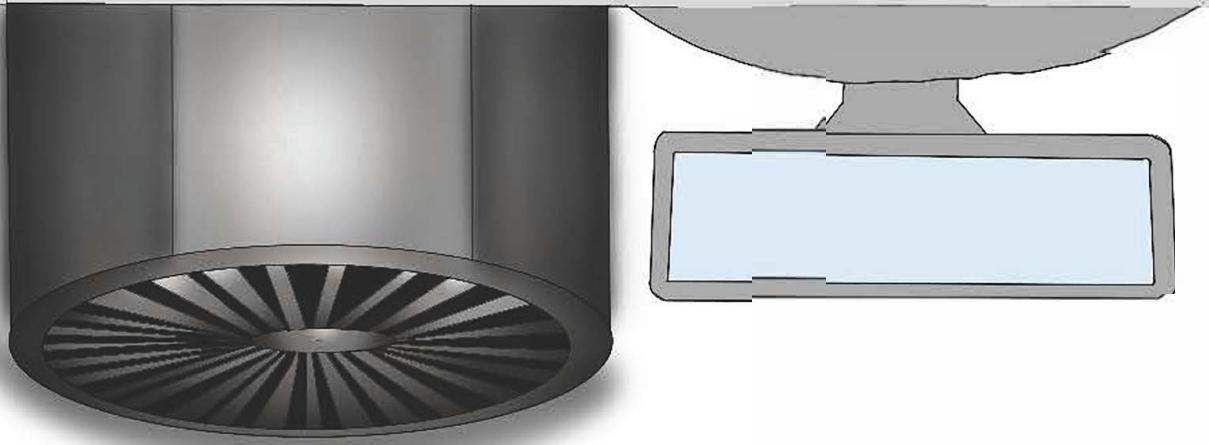


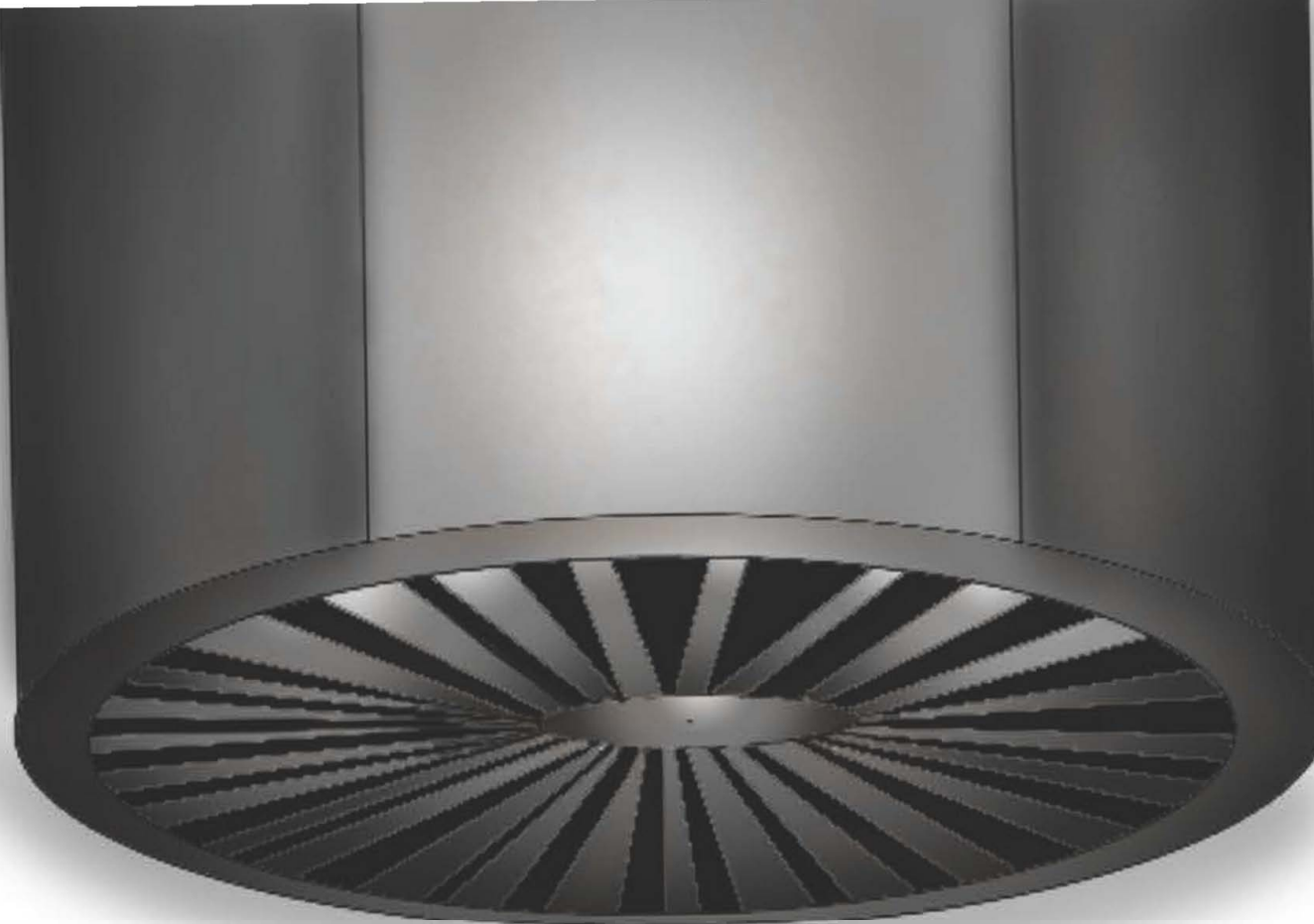


## Health-Tracking Armband:

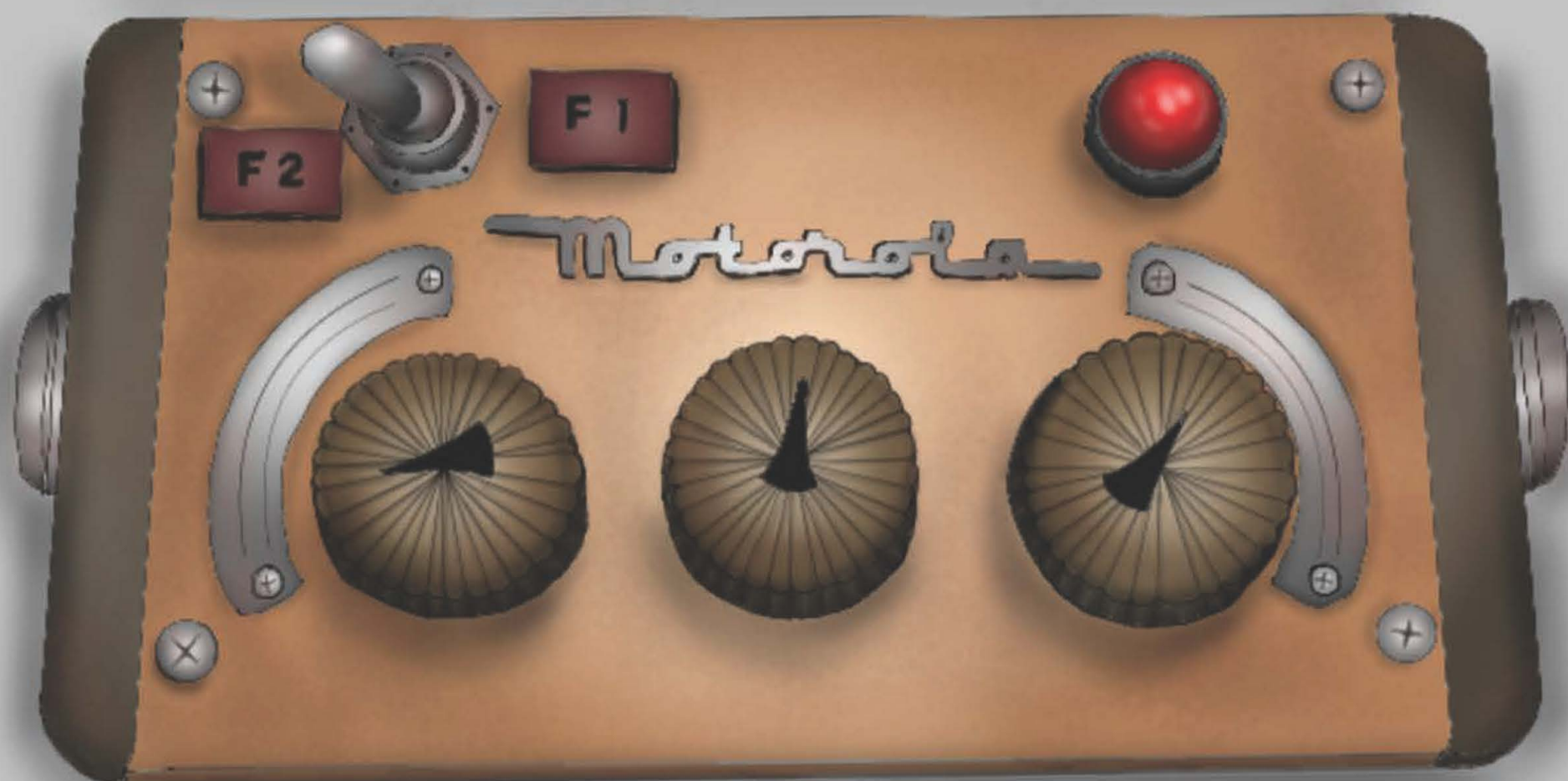


## Two-Way Car Radio: (in-car view)





Two-Way Car Radio: (detailed view)



### Artist Statement

My final project is to design a series of objects based on George Miller's *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015). The science fiction world of this movie combines dieselpunk with fourth-wave feminist themes within the retro-futuristic, post-apocalyptic dystopian future wasteland. I aim to showcase the movie's dealing with fourth-wave feminism by designing specifically for Imperator Furiosa, a war captain and driver that turns against her abusive and vile patriarchal leader Immortan Joe. The three primary artifacts include an enhanced armored chest piece for battle, an upper-arm band for health-tracking, and a 1940s-inspired two-way car radio for communication. Each artifact incorporates feminist goals as well as post-apocalyptic and dieselpunk style, including attention to chrome, steel, leather, and 1940s allowances – each of which I coated in a bit of rust, corrosion, and grime.

As seen in the film, Furiosa normally wears a brown leather piece that's secured with belts around her waist. I have designed a different armored chest piece that could substitute this one and aid in self-defense. An artifact of fourth-wave feminism, it serves as the antithesis of a corset. The new design is made of silver steel, common to dieselpunk aesthetics (Romano), and thus serves as a more protective armor that would defend against threats (like when she was stabbed in the gut in the film). The silver steel material hypothetically derives from an armored car, whose material would better protect her in warfare (Pazderka). Accordingly, the chest piece would allow her to defend herself without the aid of a traditionally heroic male lead, in addition to rejecting the notion of a corset that would unrealistically slim women's waists. A possible caveat lies that in dieselpunk, commonly, "the only cars that can survive in a post-apocalyptic wasteland are older cars made of steel and muscle," especially those found in the 1920s-1940s



(Romano). However, the film is still set in the future; therefore, an armored vehicle could exist and certainly survive along with those made of steel and muscle.

Furthermore, the chest piece still features belts around the waist, as they are highly prominent in dieselpunk as well as the film (Romano). However, the belts have added cases or pockets attached to hold tools, including a knife, bullet casings, and a fuel/oil bottle. The fuel bottle would primarily be for Furiosa's mechanical arm that has a tube of fuel allowing its operation (Fandom, "Imperator Furiosa"), for all the equipment in this world is "powered entirely by diesel" (Romano). The bullet casings are for her handgun, an essential tool as she proves "to be a better shot [than Max]," because unlike him, "she uses her head" and is "wily and resourceful" in ways that all other male characters aren't (Smith, Wikiwand "Imperator Furiosa," Lane). Thus, these added pockets would uphold her strength and autonomy as a feminist character, as well as reject the long tradition in fashion design that leaves pockets out of women's clothing to create a "slimming silhouette" and historically constraint "women's clothing, privacy, and property" ("No Pockets in Women's Clothing Isn't High Fashion, It's Sexist," Summers).

Finally, on the back, a detachable shield is secured to the chest plate in the same manner as the steering wheels attach to vehicles in the film ([as seen here](#)). Thus, Furiosa could hypothetically remove the shield from her back and attach it to her mechanical arm to use as a defense when needed. This artifact would aid her as a 'driver' during her trips to retrieve oil from threatening parties or while fighting back against Immortan Joe – embracing fourth-wave feminism's independence and rejection of normative (and repressive) patriarchal power structures ("Feminist Science Fiction"). Additionally, standing apart as "both smarter and more adaptable" than male counterparts, this shield would embrace a clever defensive tactic not taken

(or even thought of) by male characters who solely operate in offense with guns, knives, and other weaponry.

Secondly, I have designed an armband that would go around Furiosa's upper arm and serve to read vital signs and blood pressure. In this dystopian wasteland, the narrative heavily involves the theme of health and use of blood as a sort of rejuvenating energy in a world where disease is rampant, water is scarce, and blood transfusions are virtually the only resort for healthcare (Hawkins, "Mad Max: Fury Road"). Therefore, tracking vital signs would be extremely important, as is having a device for blood transfusions on-hand at all times. This measure would also help her keep her focus on helping other repressed women, like the five wives, rather than worrying about her own health, which she can now easily monitor. Even more, a tube for blood transfusions hooks in and wraps around the edges of the band to be used in case of emergency, especially during frequently travels as a 'driver.' Many people use these tubes in the film who serve as universal blood donors, or "blood bags" like Max, to aid others.

Lastly, I have designed a 1940s style two-way radio that would be inside of Furiosa's truck and allow her to communicate with others. Fourth-wave feminism centers the use of "social media to collaborate and mobilize, speak against abusers of power in seeking for the empowerment of women and seeking justice against assault and harassment, and for bodily autonomy" ("Fourth-Wave Feminism"). However, most digital technologies have not survived this post-apocalyptic science fiction wasteland where, as stated before, everything is "powered entirely by diesel" (Romano). Therefore, this radio would adhere to post-apocalyptic and dieselpunk limitations that focus on the 1920s-1940s technology and materials while also serving fourth-wave feminism to unite and mobilize through media platforms. Therefore, this wide-range radio would allow for communication between Furiosa and other women, like the five wives and

the Vuvalini (The Many Mothers), to unite, collaborate, and mobilize against abusers like Immortan Joe. In terms of its design, it combines two 1940s two-way radios, one that has a speaker above the dashboard and the other that has a more simplified radio system that would be installed in the dashboard (Dees, Tworek). Commonly practiced in dieselpunk, and much like Furiosa's mechanical arm, these two radios would be tinkered to work together. The five wives would hypothetically use another radio (similar to that within the dashboard) while at the base where Immortan Joe used to rule.

Altogether, these three artifacts adhere to fourth-wave feminism by aiding the strong, smart, and autonomous leading female, rejecting the limitations of normative women's clothing, and allowing unity and mobilization through communication with media. At the same time, they each combine dieselpunk's retro-futuristic style, limited 1940s technology and materials, and focus on weaponry in a world of "constant, widespread warfare" ("Dieselpunk").



## Works Cited

- “Diesel Punk.” *TV Tropes*, TV Tropes, [tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/DieselPunk](http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/DieselPunk).
- “Dieselpunk.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 18 Apr. 2020, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dieselpunk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dieselpunk).
- “Feminist Science Fiction.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 9 Apr. 2020, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist\\_science\\_fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_science_fiction).
- “Fourth-Wave Feminism.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 29 Apr. 2020, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth-wave\\_feminism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth-wave_feminism).
- Hawkins, Cynthia. “Mad Max: Fury Road and the Spectacle of Damage and Disease.” *The Nervous Breakdown*, TNB: The Nervous Breakdown, 22 May 2015, [thenervousbreakdown.com/chawkins/2015/05/mad-max-fury-road-and-the-spectacle-of-damage-and-disease/](http://thenervousbreakdown.com/chawkins/2015/05/mad-max-fury-road-and-the-spectacle-of-damage-and-disease/).
- “Imperator Furiosa.” *The Mad Max Wiki*, Fandom, [madmax.fandom.com/wiki/Imperator\\_Furiosa](http://madmax.fandom.com/wiki/Imperator_Furiosa).
- “Imperator Furiosa.” *Wikiwand*, Wikipedia, 2015, [www.wikiwand.com/en/Imperator\\_Furiosa](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Imperator_Furiosa).
- Lane, Anthony. “Maddest Max.” *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 15 May 2015, [www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/05/25/high-gear-current-cinema-anthony-lane](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/05/25/high-gear-current-cinema-anthony-lane).
- “Mad Max: Fury Road.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Apr. 2020, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mad\\_Max:\\_Fury\\_Road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mad_Max:_Fury_Road).
- “No Pockets in Women's Clothing Isn't High Fashion, It's Sexist.” *Hindustan Times*, Hindustan Times, 3 Aug. 2018, [www.hindustantimes.com/editorials/no-pockets-in-women-s-clothing-isn-t-high-fashion-it-s-sexist/story-EiT2P6KGmwRoGL7IQjza0O.html](http://www.hindustantimes.com/editorials/no-pockets-in-women-s-clothing-isn-t-high-fashion-it-s-sexist/story-EiT2P6KGmwRoGL7IQjza0O.html).

Pazderka, Bob. "How Are Bulletproof Vehicles Made?" *The Armored Group*, The Armored Group, 13 May 2019, [www.armoredcars.com/how-are-bulletproof-vehicles-made/](http://www.armoredcars.com/how-are-bulletproof-vehicles-made/).

Romano, Aja. "'Mad Max: Fury Road' Is Not Steampunk, and That's Important." *The Daily Dot*, The Daily Dot, 1 Mar. 2020, [www.dailydot.com/parsec/mad-max-fury-road-dieselpunk/](http://www.dailydot.com/parsec/mad-max-fury-road-dieselpunk/).

Smith, Kyle. "Why 'Mad Max: Fury Road' Is the Feminist Picture of the Year." *New York Post*, New York Post, 14 May 2015, [nypost.com/2015/05/14/why-mad-max-fury-road-is-the-feminist-picture-of-the-year/](http://nypost.com/2015/05/14/why-mad-max-fury-road-is-the-feminist-picture-of-the-year/).

Smith, Kyle. "Why 'Mad Max: Fury Road' Is the Feminist Picture of the Year." *New York Post*, New York Post, 14 May 2015, [nypost.com/2015/05/14/why-mad-max-fury-road-is-the-feminist-picture-of-the-year/](http://nypost.com/2015/05/14/why-mad-max-fury-road-is-the-feminist-picture-of-the-year/).

Summers, Chelsea G. "The Politics of Pockets." *Vox*, Vox, 19 Sept. 2016, [www.vox.com/2016/9/19/12865560/politics-of-pockets-suffragettes-women](http://www.vox.com/2016/9/19/12865560/politics-of-pockets-suffragettes-women).

Tworek, Heidi J S. "Wireless Telegraphy." *1914-1918-Online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, International Encyclopedia of the First World War, 8 Oct. 2014, [encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/wireless\\_telegraphy](http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/wireless_telegraphy).

"Women in SF." *SFE: The Science Fiction Encyclopedia*, The Science Fiction Encyclopedia, 31 Aug. 2018, [www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/women\\_in\\_sf](http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/women_in_sf).