



Most disposable masks are made with the thermoplastic polypropylene, which is the same material used as stuffing in artificial down jackets. | Photo source [Zambotti & Saastamoinen](#)

[Innovation](#) > [Fashion & Beauty](#) > [Fashion that makes a statement with a coat made from medical waste](#)

FASHION THAT MAKES A STATEMENT WITH A COAT MADE FROM MEDICAL WASTE

 FASHION & BEAUTY

Design students have created a puffer jacket that is made from discarded disposable masks

Spotted: It has been estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic has generated as much as 7,200 tonnes of medical waste every day, much of it made up of disposable masks. Many of these masks have ended up littering the ground or, even worse, floating in the ocean. A 2020 article in *The Guardian* highlighted this problem with the headline, “More masks than jellyfish.” Recently, two Icelandic designers have created a coat that draws attention to this problem.

To highlight the issue of waste from disposable masks, designers Tobia Zambotti and Aleksi Saastamoinen created Coat-19, a blue puffer jacket made of discarded single-use masks combined with organic wool and transparent recycled laminate. Zambotti collected the masks from the streets of Reykjavík, then disinfected them with Ozone and shipped them to Aleksi Saastamoinen, Fashion Design student at the Aalto University in Helsinki, who used them as a filling for the coat.

The idea is not as absurd as it may at first appear – most disposable masks are made with the thermoplastic polypropylene, which is the same material used as stuffing in artificial down jackets. The designers added cotton wool to give the jacket a puffy appearance. The outer layer is made from a semi-transparent bio-laminate. It was chosen so that the mask interior is visible – a reminder of the damage caused by littering.

While Coat-19 can certainly be worn, it is also intended as a message. Zambotti has described the creation as, “a forward-looking puffer jacket that wants to highlight this absurd pandemic-related

environmental issue.” He also **points out that** “Icelandic winds can be very strong, this means that the masks that we see on the streets can quickly pollute our natural environment.”

Even at the best of times, medical waste is a huge issues with staffed hospitals producing up to 33 pounds of waste each day. The coronavirus pandemic has further highlighted this problem. At Springwise, we have seen a growing interest in tackling this, with innovations such as an automated **mask recycling** system and a **recyclable**, single-use PPE glove.

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21st October 2021

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Takeaway:

Coat-19 is an excellent example of using rubbish to create something new. However, it is telling that the rubbish used was collected from the street. In fact, the coronavirus pandemic has greatly exacerbated the amount of all types of waste that is being discarded. From a greater use of plastic to wrap items and chemicals for sanitising to the mountains of single-use PPE, the pandemic has been an environmental disaster, as well as a human disaster. In the future, there will need to be more effort made to create sustainable ways to keeping people safe and to reducing medical waste.