

Manifestations of Self Through Art Objects
By Elizabeth Gálvez

Vault Skirt is a piece that challenges the prescriptive society in which we live. As a child, one is encouraged to play and move freely throughout space. Yet as an adult, one can no longer simply play. Rather, the adult must engage in conventional activities, hobbies, or social interactions to have “fun.” Certain movements, especially those performed freely as a child, become accepted only in correlation to specific settings and activities. Un-restrained movement, furthermore, usually becomes unacceptable during adulthood. What becomes the adult’s outlet for the intrinsic play of childhood? Which activities return us to our most cherished experiences of pure enjoyment?

Vault Skirt seeks to transform a current tradition and social activity—dance—into one that allows for a free notion of play and movement. This work projects forward the typology of the skirt used within Mexican *Baile Folklórico* (Folkloric Dance). At the center of *Baile Folklórico* are the mesmerizing and colorful textures created by repetitive ensembles of skirts. These are the performances of twirling color and fabric that fascinated my eyes and mesmerized me into unencumbered imitations as a child. Vault Skirt reimagines a future for *Baile Folklórico* where the skirt becomes equipment to return us to the free movement of a child. By tweaking a simple element within the existing parameter of the original Folkloric Skirt, this work creates a vault-like enclosure to be controlled by the user. Vault Skirt allows the user to decide on the level of collectivity of the dance. As Vault Skirt falls downward, one may participate in a social dance; as one engages the vault-like structure, one is able to mask the face and play as an individual.

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