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AN EXPLORATION OF COSTUME DESIGN FOR DAVID EMERSON TONEY'S
FRANKENSTEIN: DAWN OF A MONSTER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Costume Design at Virginia Commonwealth University.

By

Emily Atkins
MFA in Costume Design
VCU
2015

Director: Toni-Leslie James
Head of Design, Associate Professor of Costume Design, Department of Theatre

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Abstract

AN EXPLORATION OF COSTUME DESIGN FOR DAVID EMERSON
TONEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN: DAWN OF A MONSTER*

By Emily Atkins, MFA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Costume Design at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2015

Director: Toni-Leslie James

Head of Design, Associate Professor of Costume Design, Department of Theatre

This thesis details the Costume Design process for David Emerson Toney's *Frankenstein: Dawn of a Monster* at Virginia Commonwealth University. Toney's original adaptation interprets Mary Shelley's genre-defying novel as biography, directly influenced by the tragic events of her young life. Costumes differentiate the two narratives, with Mary Shelly in gray scale, regency-inspired modern dress and the novel in period and color. This follows the design process from concept to production to execution.

Introduction

In December 2014, I received David Emerson Toney's original play *Frankenstein: Dawn of a Monster* as my final show assignment as a Costume Design graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University. I could not have, in the farthest reaches of my mind, imagined the adventure that lay before me. With no experience working on a new script, I approached Professor Toney, set to co-direct with department chair, David Leong, early and often. Toney's collaborative generosity in these initial conversations established a relationship unlike any I had ever had with a director. Together we formulated an evocative, workable concept for a story that is simultaneously well-known and totally new.

Toney's script re-imagines Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* as biographical, intertwining scenes from the novel with events of her tragic early life. The construction of Frankenstein's Monster parallels the demise of her relationship with Percy Shelley. To illustrate this connection, one actor doubles as the diabolical surgeon and famous poet. The actor portraying Mary's step-sister, Claire Claremont, also appears as Victor Frankenstein's finance, Elizabeth. Through these doublings, the novel appears as a terrible dream, a young girl's attempt to understand her own broken heart.

Dawn of a Monster presents two worlds, Mary Shelley's and her novel's, that are both interconnected and totally separate. The script rapidly falls from one world into the next, the two stories frequently overlapping or occurring simultaneously. As the costume

designer, it was my responsibility to indicate the distinction between these two worlds. In addition to being immediately evident to the audience, the distinction between the two worlds must accommodate fast and fluid changes for the actors. As a costume designer, it was my responsibility to depict Mary's life and her novel as two distinct narratives that, at times, occupied the stage simultaneously. Not only did the distinction between the two worlds needed to be immediately evident to the audience, but also allow for fast changes and fluid transitions. I developed two different aesthetics to clearly mark the two storylines. Characters from the novel appear in colorful, Regency-era costumes while Mary and her contemporaries wear grayscale, period inspired modern dress. This thesis is a record of my process, from research to opening night.

Script Summary

The play opens with an evening at the Wollstonecraft-Godwin manor. Seventeen-year-old Mary Godwin and her step-sister, Claire Clairmont, talk about boys as they get ready for bed. Mary, daughter of prominent academics William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, confesses to an affair with her father's progeny and burgeoning poet, Percy Shelley. Although both of the girls hold Percy to heartthrob status, Mary, in her late mother's feminist footsteps, finds their artistic collaboration just as thrilling as their budding romance. The anticipation of her father's disapproval also adds to her excitement. Claire, initially afraid of losing Mary to the exciting Intelligentsia, warms at the promise of meeting the famous, and infamous, Lord Byron. The clock strikes and Mary leaves for a rendezvous with Percy, assuring Claire of their everlasting bond on her way out.

The lovers meet in Mary Wollstonecraft's mausoleum. The obstacles facing the couple, such as Percy's dependence on Mary's father and Lord Byron, come to light in between passionate embraces and poetic declarations. Despite his current wife, Percy proposes to Mary with a music box. He then quickly leaves for an appointment with Lord Byron.

Mary's unease at this encounter ushers in the first scene of her novel in historical flashback. Dr. Frankenstein, played by the same actor as Percy, receives a delivery of fresh corpses at his laboratory. Cheerful grave robbers, Jack and Benjamin, deliver the bodies.

Pleased with their product, Frankenstein discloses that he is going to bring the dead back to life and hires the pair as his suppliers.

Mary, insecure regarding her relationship with Percy, decides to research the more bohemian aspects of Percy's lifestyle. She takes Claire to an opium den but, once she purchases the opium, gives it to Claire and asks her to describe the experience. Claire refuses, disgusted by Mary's attempt at impressing people she's admitted to finding unpleasant. Mary reveals that she is pregnant and placates Claire with the possibility of meeting Lord Byron.

The opium den transitions into a brothel. Lord Byron browses the selection with a disinterested Percy. Byron has been secretly informed, unbeknownst to Percy, that he has plans to escape to Paris with Mary. The severity of Byron's reaction suggests that he is more than Percy's patron. He spits insults at Mary and their unborn child and threatens to destroy Percy's career. After a heated, intimate scuffle, their tension subsides and the two men venture deeper into the brothel.

Percy, Byron, Mary and Claire attend a salon in France a few months later. Mary, now heavily pregnant, is embarrassed Claire's star struck behavior and overcompensates by insulting Lord Byron in front of the entire party. She alienates Claire who, un-phased, impresses Byron with her flattery and wit. In private, Percy and Mary quarrel about the impression she has made on the intelligentsia and the effect it will have on his reputation. Mary expresses her fear that she will die during childbirth like her mother.

At the lab, Jack and Benjamin comfort Dr. Frankenstein, who has been unsuccessful in his experiments. A joke they tell to cheer him up inspires an epiphany. As Jack and Benjamin get back to work, the play transitions to a scene in which Mary is in violent labor. Her French midwife, Genevieve, does her best to sooth her despite the language barrier. Percy briefly appears at this wife's side and offers laudanum in the place of emotional support. When she surmises that he has been with Byron instead of her, Percy decides that Mary's pain and fear are beneath him and leaves. A storm rages as Mary's contractions increase. Simultaneously, Dr. Frankenstein and the grave robbers attempt to bring his creation to life. They are successful, and the Monster animates in the same moment that Mary delivers her stillborn child.

Weeks pass as Dr. Frankenstein tries to teach the Monster basic words. Frankenstein is discouraged but the Monster, as playful and uncoordinated as a toddler, absorbs more than he lets on. Jack and Benjamin spend time with the Monster, teaching him songs and basic motor skills. The visit turns dark when the Monster, unaware of his own strength, hugs Jack so hard he dies. Frankenstein and Benjamin take Jack's body to a peaceful wood. Frankenstein contemplates turning the Monster loose in the wild, but decides that he is too dangerous and helpless. The doctor reluctantly shoots his creation, and the men proceed to bury the bodies.

Back in France, Genevieve distracts the grieving, abandoned Mary with a French lesson. While Mary conjugates verbs, the Monster rises from his grave. Strengthened by Mary's voice, the Monster exits fully verbal and out for revenge. He arrives at

Frankenstein's estate and finds a child: William, Frankenstein's younger brother. The boy greets the Monster with understanding and warmth. They are friendly until William's adoration of his older brother reignites the Monster's rage and he strangles him.

Months have gone by and Mary, still secluded in France, is seen laughing and enjoying Genevieve's company. They receive an unexpected visit from Lord Byron and Claire. Claire, now an opium addict, confesses that she is pregnant with Percy's child.

Following William's death, Frankenstein returns to his estate. He learns that there have been break ins at his home and Elizabeth, his fiancé, has sensed an unknown presence in her room. The Monster confronts Frankenstein in the garden and promises to remove himself from society if the doctor builds him a companion. With the help of Benjamin, Frankenstein creates a beautiful, sentient bride for the Monster but, afraid that they will procreate, dismantles her. To punish Frankenstein for his failure to provide a mate, the Monster hides under Elizabeth's bed and kills her.

The Monster, determined to destroy his creator, leads Frankenstein on a deadly expedition to Antarctica. Overcome by grief, exhaustion, and guilt, Frankenstein dies in the Monster's arms. Mary appears, Percy's music box in her hand, to deliver a triumphant soliloquy claiming ownership of her novel and her life.

Analysis and Preliminary Thoughts

Early on, David Toney stressed the importance of his play reading, not as a factual depiction of renowned writers, but as a portrait of young love's destructive power.

Frankenstein's monster is born from that destruction, fathered by Percy's cruelty and nurtured by Mary's pain. We also wanted to ensure that the scope of Mary's agony, and her legacy, did not overshadow her youth. This is a play about, and written for, young adults. The college-aged actors playing these characters and filling the audience should be able to see themselves in these literary giants.

Keeping in mind Toney's thematic priorities, I began working through my primary challenge as a costume designer: clearly distinguishing Mary's world from the novel's. I began with separating the narratives by color palette, Mary in black and white and the novel in color. I quickly realized that color, especially in terms of the doubled roles, was not a strong enough device. To further separate the two, David Toney and I decided to move the aesthetic of Mary's storyline to the present, while still keeping hints of Regency style. Taking Mary Shelley out of the nineteenth century and placing her in a contemporary setting shortens the distance between her experience and the audience's. In addition to serving the story and Toney's objectives, contemporary clothes were a far more accessible, economical option to period dress.

The sheer size of this script presented my second major challenge. The draft at the start of production called for nearly fifty costumes. In addition to the five principal actors,

the cast included a six-person ensemble, each member playing as many as six characters.

The script also spanned a wide variety of locations between the two narratives. As the costume designer, it was up to me to establish location, time period and situation.

Period Research



Figure 1: Robert Jacques
François Lefèvre, 1815

The first step in my research process was to assemble a basic timeline of Mary Shelley's life surrounding her relationship with Percy Shelley and the writing and publication of *Frankenstein*.

Percy had as strong of a hold on Mary's career as he did on her heart. Only after his death could she write, and live, for herself.

In 1814, seventeen-year-old Mary Wollstonecraft began a relationship with married, twenty-two year old Percy Shelley.

They married in 1816, following Percy's wife's suicide. That same year, while vacationing with Lord Byron and Claire

Clairmont, Mary wrote the first draft of *Frankenstein*. In 1818, *Frankenstein* was published anonymously. She published a second edition under her own name, but with heavy contribution from Percy, in 1822. Mary suffered three miscarriages before giving birth to a surviving son in 1819. Percy drowned in a boating accident in 1822, Mary was twenty-five. In 1831, Mary published the third, and most popular to date, edition of *Frankenstein* with Percy's edits removed.

Using paintings, photographs of preserved garments, fashion illustrations, Costume History texts, and online search engines, I researched the clothing of 1814 to 1831 and organized them chronologically, visualizing the characters' dress as it corresponded to the events in their lives. Once Professor Toney and I limited period clothing to the novel's

storyline, I focused my research on the late Regency Period (1811-1820), when Mary wrote the first edition of *Frankenstein*.

The waistlines on women's dresses are the most notable features of this period. Also called an Empire waist, the seam fits directly under the bust, creating a short bodices with open necklines. Other characteristics of women's clothing included fitted sleeves, which often had details such as puffs or rows of trim near the sleeve cap, and horizontal bands of trim bordering the hem of the skirt. Outerwear followed the dress's silhouette. Spencers were short jackets, cut right under the bust, with knuckle length sleeves. Long coats, called pelisses, had fitted bodices full-length skirts, and were cut similar to the dresses, sometimes completely covering the dress underneath. Bonnets and shawls were popular accessories.



Figure 2: Illustration of a 1820s Spencer



Figure 3: Double Breasted Spencer 1815



Figure 4: Spencers and Bonnets in a 1814 Fashion Illustration



Figure 5: Poke Bonnet, 1830



Figure 6: Bodice Detail, 1815

Selected Women's Period Research

During the 1810s, men wore cut away tailcoats, either single or double breasted, waistcoats, and fall front trousers. To accentuate fashionably trim waistlines, trousers were full at the hip and narrow at the ankle. Waistcoats, or vests, were often decorative and colorful, cut straight and ending at the anatomical waist. Ruffled shirts and starched cravats filled in the high collars and open necklines of the waistcoats. Common overcoats, also called “inverness” or “garrick,” had as many as five cape collars. Men often completed their looks with gloves, canes, and top hats.



Figure 7: Fashion Illustration of 1821 Couple



Figure 8: Portrait of a young man by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres



Figure 9: 1815 Tail Coat



Figure 10: *Portrait of Nicholas-Pierre Toiler* by Francois-Edouard Picot, 1817



Figure 11: Fashion Illustration of an Inverness Coat, 1811

Selected Men's Period Research

Color Research

One of the first decisions Professor Toney and I made was to separate Mary's life from her novel with two distinct color palates. The rapid transitions, and sometimes simultaneous action, called for a severe contrast between the two narratives.

To make the distinction as obvious as possible, I designed one world in color and the other in black and white. Inspired by the 1998 film *Pleasantville*, in which a 1950's sitcom gradually turns Technicolor as the town experiences a



Figure 12: *Pleasantville*, 1998

cultural awakening, I decided that the novel, as the emotional world, would be in color.

Frankenstein reveals Mary Shelley's vibrant, terrifying inner life and allows her to display a depth of emotion she craves in her own life.



Figure 13: *Chaplin: The Musical*, 2012

As an example of gray scale costumes, I looked to Martin Pakledinaz and Amy Clark's design for *Chaplin*, which premiered on Broadway at the Ethel Barrymore Theater in 2012. *Chaplin's* monochromatic palette brings mind an old photograph, like the audience is watching a memory. The

black and white palate strips characters of their vitality, evoking an environment in which nothing can grow.

The novel functions as Mary's internal world, the blood and guts underneath the surface. Sally Mann's haunting and amniotic *Untitled Polaroid* (1983) served as an initial reference for the novel's pallet. I wanted to limit the colors to things found in bodies and in nature, fresh and dried blood, the tones of a bruise as it heals, browns and greens of the earth.

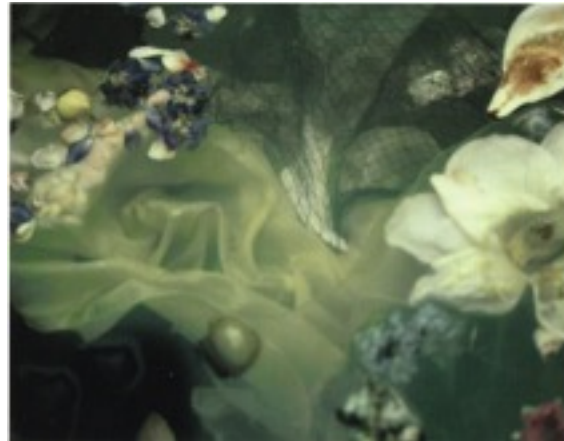


Figure 14: *Untitled Polaroid* Sally Mann 1983

I refined the two palates during the swatching process. Instead of sampling fabrics with specific costumes in mind, my usual method of swatching, I used this stage of the design process as another type of research. On a smaller scale, I could look at the show as a



Figure 15: Preliminary Swatches

whole, see what worked, what didn't. I was able to visualize what stood out within the monochrome palette as well as within the show as a whole. I could see that the graphic, black and white with no gray area, threw the starkest contrast to the novel's palate. I also



had to keep and mind that I could not build the entire show, and therefore swatch, the entirety of the play. I chose to limit myself further to solid black and white pieces with the knowledge that they would be easier to buy, pull and rent.

Figure 16: Graphic Black and White Research

Stylistic Research

As I developed my two color palates and conducted period research, I collected mood and stylistic inspiration. Once I knew more about the script, I realized that the two worlds could not be distinguished by color alone. The difference had to be visceral, immediately felt when a character from either narrative stepped on stage.



Figure 17: Untitled, *Stern*, 2005. From *Gothic: Dark Glamor*

Inspired by Valerie Steele's *Gothic: Dark Glamour*, an exploration of death-obsessed counter culture from the Middle Ages to modern metal music, I researched ways of introducing darkness and edge into the monochromatic world of Mary and the poets. By using the searchable tag features on websites such

as Pinterest and Tumblr, I collected images of gothic, contemporary fashion. My intent was to use the details and treatments of fabric, such as layered sheers and combinations of texture, in period style lines.



Figure 18: Alberta Ferretti, Fall 2012



Figure 19: James Lacroix, 2014



Figure 20: Vera Wang, Fall 2012

Selected Stylistic Research for Women



Figure 21: Gothic Street Style



Figure 22: Asymetric Coat by URBANDON Menswear



Figure 23: Alexander McQueen Fall 2009

Selected Stylistic Research for Men

Eventually, after consulting Professor Toney and Toni-Leslie James, I realized that color and detail would not be enough to distinguish the two worlds. I chose to separate them by time period as well. However, I couldn't completely remove Mary from her historical context. Knowing that the actor playing Percy and Dr. Frankenstein would have to wear fall front trousers the whole show, I began exploring ways of indicating Regency period through modern clothes.

Sourcing

My next, and final, step of the research process was sourcing garments to be purchased for the production. Operating within my \$6,000 budget, I looked towards



Figure 24: MenzTrenz Jacket

moderately priced, trend-driven retailers like Zara and ASOS for affordable contemporary pieces with runway-inspired elements. I looked for Regency details, like those offered by the online store MenzTrenz, which incorporates historic details into sleek jackets. I also gravitated towards asymmetrical designs, inspired by the apocalyptic touches in my punk research.

For the women, I looked for empire waist dresses and cropped jackets suggestive of Spencers. The current commitment to a defined natural waist made this more difficult than I anticipated. I compromised with lines that fell a little lower

than the true under bust and, in some cases, shift dresses that evoked the Regency era's column-like silhouette.



Figure 25: Spencer-Like
Cropped Leather Jacket, ASOS



Figure 26: Empire-Suggested Detail,
Free People

Resources

The decision to introduce modernity into Mary Shelley's world increased the availability of bought items exponentially. For the novel, and a few contemporary pieces, I turned to rental companies and designed pieces to be built by VCU's talented costume shop.

Rentals

It is very rare to find quality, affordable period pieces for sale. Renting garments from other theaters is often the best, and most affordable, option. Locally, VCU has renting agreements with Colonial Williamsburg and Virginia Reparatory Theater. The period clothing at Colonial Williamsburg fell too early, their latest costumes dating around the turn of the eighteenth century. Virginia Rep's Children's Theater was a great resource for William Frankenstein, played by ten-year-old Ryan Poquis.

Oregon Shakespeare Festival is one of the best costume rental resources, with their entire extensive inventory available, with pictures, online. Unfortunately, OSF needed the majority of their Regency offerings for their own production of *Count of Monte Cristo*, produced that same season. With major period pieces, such as Dr. Frankenstein's tailcoat and Paulina's dress, unavailable, I designed pieces to be built by VCU's costume shop.

VCU's Costume Shop

In addition to myself, two graduate students and twelve undergraduates work in VCU's shop, with Professor Neno Russell at the helm. Under Neno's tutelage, every major learns to read a rendering, drape and draft a paper pattern from scratch, fit an actor, and beautifully finish a garment. The support of such a strong shop let me be specific in my design decisions and confident in the execution.

After determining what could be bought or rented, I drafted a Build List. Neno then assigned Drapers and Stitchers to each garment. The drapers, all juniors and seniors, worked closely with Neno and me on pattern and fit while the underclassmen stitchers assembled the garments.

Rendering Process



Figure 27: Early Percy Sketch

As a costume designer, renderings are my best communication tool during the production process. Renderings are referenced in conversations with the director(s), drapers, and members of the production team. Renderings also help actors visualize their costume, whether in developing their character or planning for a quick change.

I usually start drawing character sketches very early in my design process, as a way to tactually explore my research. No matter how many images I collect, or garments I source, I cannot not fully visualize the elements of a costume

until they are drawn on a body. These preliminary sketches were great tools to have in conversation with both David Toney and Toni-Leslie James. A completed drawing, more so than a collage of inspiration images, allowed us to talk through the practicalities of each garment. While some of the details I wanted to incorporate were compelling, I simplified my design to accommodate the actors' constant and quick changes. I built the contemporary looks around pieces, with each actor starting in



Figure 28: Early Mary Sketch

a base costume and adding items to indicate shifts in scene or character.

Streamlining the costumes also simplified my rendering process. I took a paper doll approach to my final black and whites. I sketched the character's base costume on drawing paper and, using that figure as a template, drew the added pieces on tracing paper. I then combined the images in Photoshop, digitally dressing the actor. Photoshop also allowed me to develop a template with the title of the play, sketch number, scene, etc. Once the clean line drawing is inserted into this template, the image is ready to print onto bristol board.

Paper Prep

I wanted these renderings to feel aged and weathered, like the pages of an old journal. To achieve this effect, I printed the black and white renderings on treated paper. The natural inconsistencies of coffee dying yielded the exact dimension and texture I wanted. After submerging the fresh bristol board into a solution of coffee grounds and hot water, I hung the paper to dry over my bathtub. Overnight, the coffee dripped down the page creating irregular tones and patterns. Once the paper was dry, I brushed off the remaining grounds. The paper warped significantly during the dyeing process, which wouldn't have been a problem if I was planning on drawing directly onto the paper. However, my paper needed to be compatible with a highly temperamental printer. To flatten my paper, I simply ironed it with high heat and steam using a pressing cloth. This got the paper flat enough to send through the printer. Whenever possible, I stored the paper under a stack of heavy books, which flattened them totally over time.

Finished Renderings

After printing the black and whites on treated paper, the rendering is ready for color. I use gauche and, occasionally, colored pencils to evoke the color, texture, and form of the finished costume. Often, the details of the black and white are lost during this stage in the process. To recover those details, and contribute to the journal-like quality I wanted to achieve, crosshatched over the painted rendering with black ink. Inspired by the frenetic, uncredited, illustrations in Hubert Venables' *The Frankenstein Diaries*, I crosshatched over the painted rendering with black ink to recover details and further indicate a journal-like quality.



Figure 29: Illustration from *Frankenstein Diaries*



Figure 30: Finished Rendering Detail

Designs

Principle Bases

For Mary, Claire/Elizabeth, Percy/Frankenstein, and Lord Byron, I designed base costumes that worked under a variety of pieces, but could also function as complete looks on their own.



Figure 31: Mary Base Rendering



Figure 32: American Apparel Baby Doll Dress



Figure 33: Base Dress Fitting

I ordered an American Apparel Baby Doll Dress I sourced for Mary’s base and was delighted to see that it looked great on Becky Granger, the actress playing Mary Shelley. My only misgiving was that the white of the dress was much hotter than it appeared in the online image. Unfortunately, in my attempt to “tech down” the bright white, the dress shrank so much that it was unwearable. Instead of eating the cost of a replacement dress and compromising on an imperfect color, a new dress was built out of draping polyester, using the American Apparel dress as a mockup.



Figure 34: Claire Base Rendering



I originally sourced a simple dress with a short placket from ASOS for Claire’s base. When this dress was no longer available in Shelby Smith’s size, I searched for other options. After several failed attempts, I found a cross front night gown with fabric substantial enough to read like a dress.

Figure 35: Original Base Dress, ASOS



Figure 36: Fitting of Discarded Option



Figure 37: Final Base Dress, Jacaranda Living

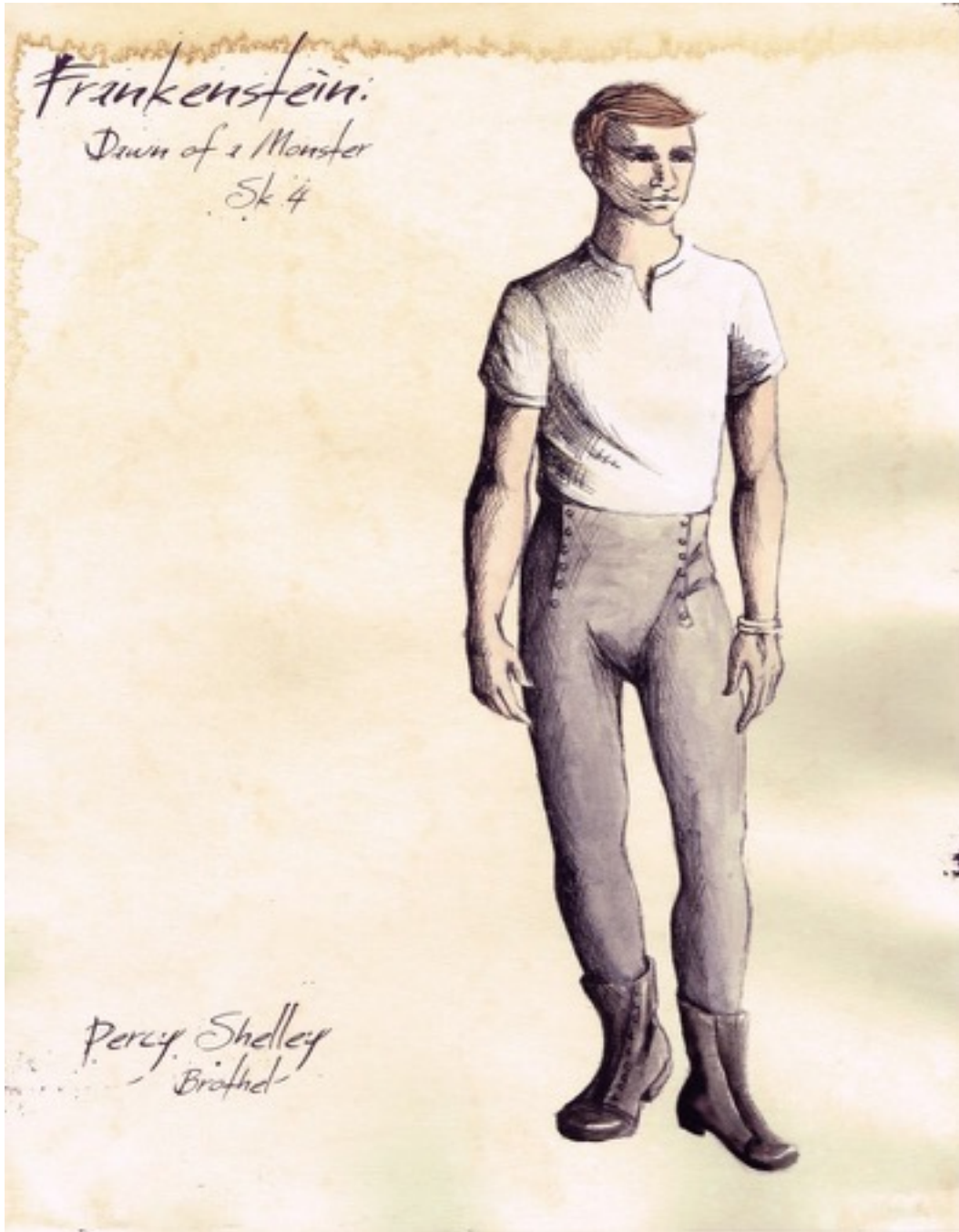


Figure 38: Percy Base Rendering

The base look worn by Andrew Reid, who doubles as Percy Shelley and Dr. Frankenstein, was the corner stone of the contemporary aesthetic. To accommodate his numerous changes, he wears the same gray fall front trousers the whole show. I sourced an affordable pair of fall front trousers from Gentlemen’s Emporium, an online store specializing in nineteenth century clothing. When the fall front trousers were not available in Andrew’s size, we built them out of wool spandex to preserve the fitted look.

I topped the fall front trousers with a simple t-shirt, something streamlined that would fit under a wide variety of pieces. Andrew wears combat boots as Percy and riding boots for Frankenstein, each pair zipping up the side to ease his change.



Figure 39: Gentlemen’s Emporium
Fall Front Trousers



Figure 40: Trousers Mock Up Fitting

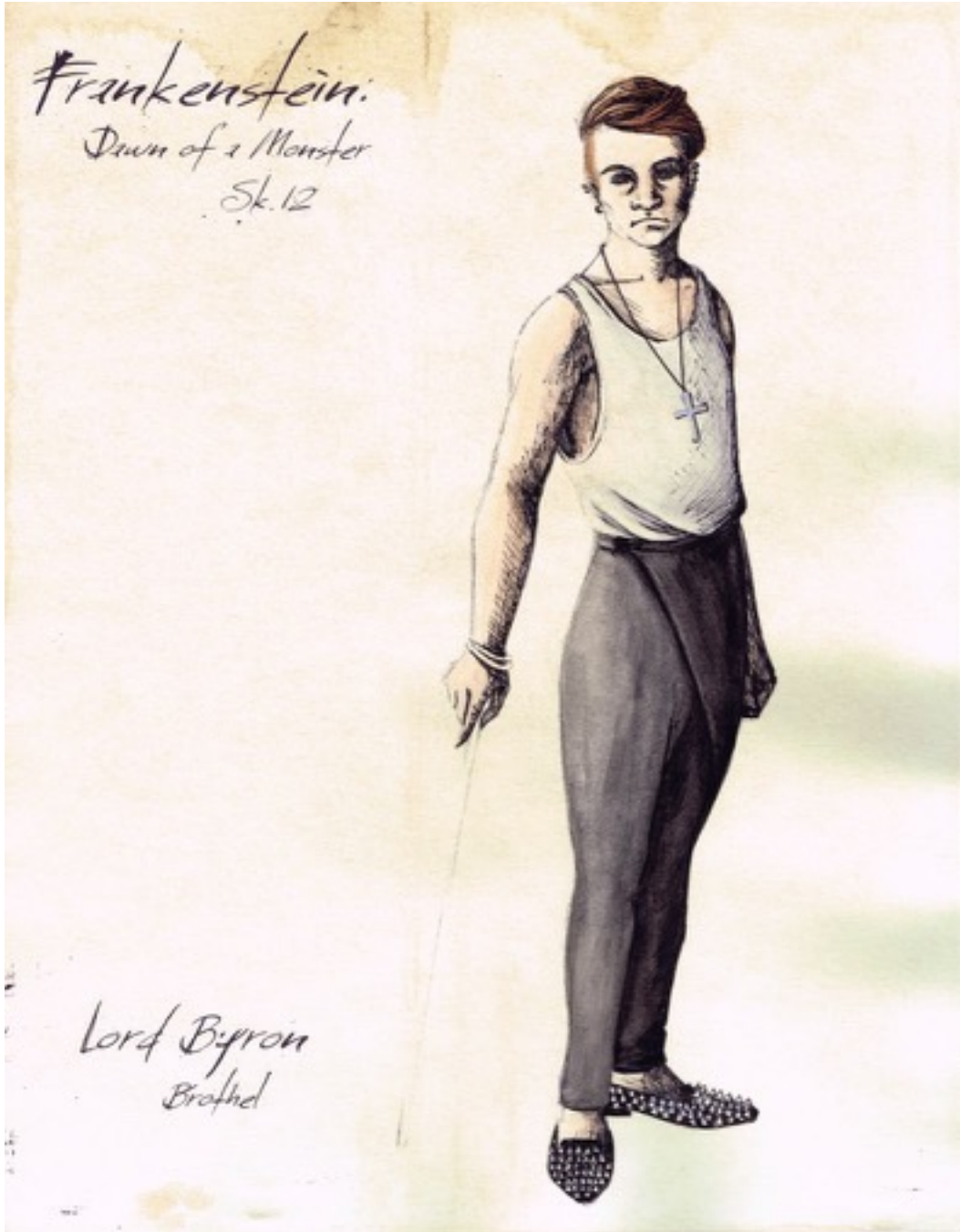


Figure 41: Lord Byron Base Rendering

Lord Byron's base costume needed to be in the same vein as Percy's, but reflect his more dangerous, sexier reputation. I wanted contemporary pants that felt and fit like the fall front trousers, and was delighted to find a pair with an asymmetrical drape from Zara. Studded loafers and lots of jewelry complete his look.



Figure 42: Lord Byron in Production



Figure 43: Draped Pants, Zara



Figure 44: Studded Loafers Inspiration

Mary and Claire's Bedroom



Figure 45: Mary and Claire's Base Looks in Production

The play opens with Mary and Claire's playful bedtime routine. The sisters appear in their base dresses, which function, in this scene, as night gowns. Mary's over-the-knee socks are in anticipation of the boots she puts on when she sneaks out.

Mausoleum



Figure 46: Mary's Added Boots and Jacket in Production, Daryl Morgan Photography

Mary pulls on a cropped leather jacket and knee high boots on her way to see Percy. These pieces, the first indication of her rebellion, needed to be made in a seamless transition for her very physical encounter with Percy in the mausoleum.

I had originally sourced a MenzTrenz sweatshirt for Percy to wear in this scene but, when it didn't fit, I replaced it with a less compelling but still functional option from H&M.



Figure 47: Percy in Mausoleum in Production, Daryl Morgan Photography

Opium Den



Figure 48: Claire and Mary Visit Opium Den in Production

Several months later, Mary brings Claire to an Opium Den, one of several stops on a tour of Percy's torrid haunts. Outside the intimacy of their bedroom, the girls confront the seedy realities of a world that once seemed glamorous. Claire approaches the new situation with girlish curiosity, while Mary, now pregnant, has given up on the fairytale. For this scene, they add pieces to their base white dresses. With these pieces, I wanted to preserve their youth, as if they had just come from school, in contrast to the artistic underbelly they are so eager to join.

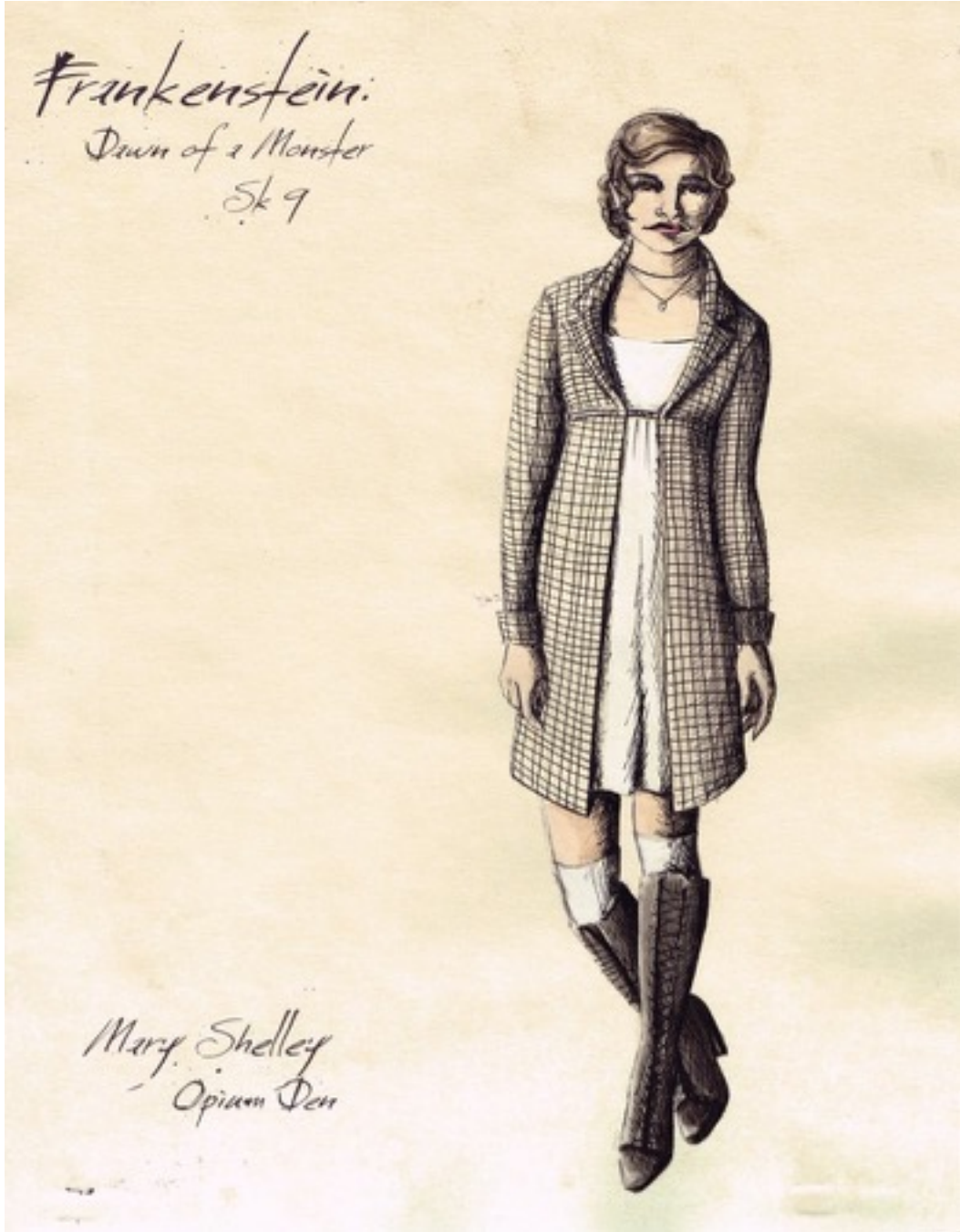


Figure 49: Mary Coat Dress Rendering



Figure 50: Regency Walking Coat



Figure 51: Leather Piping of the Fiddle-Back Seams

Mary repeats her knee-high boots from the previous scene and adds a plaid coat with Regency details. This piece, more than any other in the show, was a product of necessity and collaboration. I based my design off the Regency walking coat, pictured above, preserving the Empire waist and other period details. For this garment I used wool plaid fabric from Rosen & Chaddick, which we had in stock. I then collaborated with the draper, Sophia Choi, who had just designed *Pride and Prejudice*. Sophia brought her own knowledge of the period to the pattern, drafting a fiddle-back bodice. I was so delighted by this detail, I asked Sophia and her stitcher Lauren Venezia pipe the seams in leather. This collaboration inspired me to add a leather belt and cuffs to the coat, culminating in one of my favorite garments of the whole show.



Figure 52: Claire Opium Rendering



Figure 53: Shrug Sweater Option

In contrast to Mary's tough look, I wanted Claire to appear prim and a little prude. My initial thought was that she would appear in her school uniform, blazer and saddle shoes. None of the cropped blazers I sourced were short enough to evoke early 19th century spencers. Next, I tried shrug-like sweaters, which all read as too unconstructed for the period and lacked the polish of the character's social standing. Ultimately, a

dancer's wrap sweater evoked the right amount of feminine innocence and polish. When the saddle shoes did not work on stage, I elevated Shelby Smith's look with heeled oxfords.

Brothel



Figure 54: Lord Byron, Percy and Prostitutes in Production

When Lord Byron and Percy meet in a brothel to discuss Mary's pregnancy, and its impact on their complicated relationship, they appear in just their trousers and white t-shirts. Similar to Mary and Claire's bedroom scene, the base costumes allow for an emotional and, in this case, physical, intimacy between the two characters.

In early drafts of the script, the brothel served as a reflection of Lord Byron's notorious promiscuity and sexual depravity. Professor Toney and I discussed ways this would manifest, from amputees to outrageous themes. When the concept for this scene was

pared down to focus on Percy and Byron's relationship, I dressed the prostitutes in black satin and lace. In addition to flattering the actresses, the simpler choice brought the bickering poets to the forefront.



Figure 55: Rendered Concepts of a Clown and a Lion for a Circus Themed Brothel

French Salon



Figure 56: Percy and Mary at the Salon

The salon Mary, Claire, Percy, and Lord Byron attend in France is the only scene that utilizes the entire ensemble. To economically achieve a striking effect, the party guests appear in all black formal wear. Percy and Lord Byron add jackets to their base costumes, with Percy in his Regency riding boots to ease the following quick change into Dr. Frankenstein. Mary, seven months pregnant,

wears a stylish, draped maternity dress. Claire charms

Lord Byron in simple white jersey, draped by Sophia Choi.



Figure 57: Lord Byron, Claire, and Party Guests at the Salon



Figure 58: Mary Labor Rendering

Labor

Abandoned by Percy and haunted by her mother's maternal death, Mary goes into labor at the end of Act 1. In his lab, Frankenstein harnesses the power of a violent thunderstorm, raging in time with Mary's contractions, to bring his creation to life. More than any other moment in the script, the simultaneity of these events establishes the Monster, and the novel, as a manifestation of Mary's emotional state.

Heavily influenced by Greg Kadel's photograph of Anabela Belikova, the dress I designed for this scene emphasizes Mary's vulnerability. Dwarfed billowing sleeves and a full skirt, which is first filled by her swollen belly and then hangs flat, Mary appears at her most fragile and childlike. I also stripped her of any contemporary details to connect her more with the novel, which, as Mary is consumed by her grief, dominates the narrative.



Figure 59: Labor Dress Fitting



Figure 60: Anabela Belikova by Greg Kadel for Numero



Figure 61: Gentlemen's Emporium Lab Coat



Figure 62: Altered Lab Coat in Production
Daryl Morgan Photography

Genevive, a midwife turned companion, is Mary's only source of comfort in her exile. During Mary's delivery, Genevieve wears a scrub top inspired by uniforms I came upon in a pharmacy that were reminiscent of Dr. Frankenstein's lab coat. I bought, altered, and dyed a Steampunk-inspired lab coat from Gentleman's Emporium.

Once her relationship with Mary evolves from caretaker to friend, Genevieve wears an asymmetrical gray cardigan, repeating her black pants and comfortable Nurse's shoes.



Figure 63: Genevieve Comforts Mary in Production
Daryl Morgan Photography



Figure 64: Lord Byron and Claire in Production

Lord Byron and Claire interrupt Mary's healing process as an unlikely, and devastating, pair. Traveling in style, Lord Byron adds a linen blazer and black and white scarf to his base costume. Byron's unlikely companion, Claire, stumbles on stage dressed in a similar, yet tattered, version of his look. An opium addict and pregnant with Percy's child, she wears a shapeless black dress, ripped tights, and a dirty denim jacket.



Figure 65: Frankenstein Lab Coat Rendering

Dr. Frankenstein's Lab Coat



Figure 66: Lab Coat Fitting

The novel plot in Act 1 takes place almost exclusively in Dr. Frankenstein's lab, with Dr. Frankenstein drawing closer to completing his creation as the tension between Mary and Percy rises. I found virtually no record of early nineteenth century lab coats- doctors and burgeoning surgeons in that time practiced in their street clothes. I felt that it was important for Frankenstein to have a lab coat, honoring the iconography associated with this

well known story.

I designed the lab coat primarily for ease during Andrew's numerous quick changes. The asymmetrical lap closed with snaps under false buttons. During dress rehearsals, Velcro was added in between the snaps for extra security in the more physical scenes.

Draped by Neno Russell, three different lab coats were built. Using acrylic paint, I painted the second and third lab coat to look like they were covered in blood, fresh and then dried. Andrew first appears as Frankenstein in a clean white lab coat. As the experiment evolves, and Frankenstein wrestles with the gravity of his objective, blood, both the Monster's and his own, stain his coat. Meant for scenes set in his laboratory after the Monster's birth, the third lab coat was cut in dress rehearsal.



Figure 67: Dr. Frankenstein with Jack and Benjamin in Production



Figure 68: Painted Lab Coats



Figure 69: Second Lab Coat on Stage,
Daryl Morgan Photography



Figure 70: Dr. Frankenstein Estate Rendering

Dr. Frankenstein's Estate



Figure 71: Waistcoat Research

Outside of the laboratory, Dr. Frankenstein wears a waistcoat and tail coat appropriate for any Regency gentlemen. Originally, I planned to rent these pieces from Oregon Shakespeare Festival. When they were no longer available, and none of the waistcoats or tail coats fit Andrew's broad shoulders and narrow waist, I added the items to the build list.

For the waistcoat, I chose a floral Chenille Brocade from B&J Fabrics. The wool gabardine I bought for the tail coat appeared much redder online, but I was ultimately satisfied with how it worked in my palate.

Dr. Frankenstein works with his new, infantile creation in the waist coat and shirt sleeves and adds the tail coat when he returned to his estate.



Figure 72: Fabrics on swatch card



Figure 73: Dr. Frankenstein and the Monster in Production



Figure 74: Dr. Frankenstein Fitting



Figure 75: Finished Tail Coat



Figure 76: Monster Rendering

Frankenstein's Monster

David Toney and I spent a lot of time talking about what the Monster. Even though this play is first and foremost about Mary Shelley and her relationships, the audience, going into a play entitled *Frankenstein*, is going to be looking for a monster. We both immediately agreed to depart from the classic, high forehead, neck bolt sporting creation of the 1931 film adaptation. An early idea was to, capitalizing on the emotional link to Mary's miscarriage, treat the Monster as a horrible fetus born on stage in an embryonic sack. I researched the possibilities of replicating Dr. Frankenstein's methods as described in the novel, piecing together ill-fitting parts from obviously different sources (variation in skin tone, unmatched facial features). We also considered forgoing makeup all together and convey the deformity solely through the actor's physicality. But the Monster, as the embodiment of Mary's emotional state, he needed to look as wounded as she feels. Giving the audience the opportunity to look at Dr. Frankenstein's handiwork allows them to actually see the pain that Percy has caused Mary.

As with every other aspect of this production, the simplest, most functional option ended up being the best. David Toney and I decided to not make Brandon Starrett, the actor playing the Monster, look like anything other than a whole person. Instead he would have connecting scars, placed to indicated parts from disparate people were sewn together. To limit the amount of skin real-estate, a full length pair of fall front trousers cover Brandon's legs when he first appears in the creation chamber. Brandon's feet and chest were bare for

his first few scenes on stage, to showcase the makeup and make him seem less like a person. He adds pieces once he requires language, becomes more threatening.



Figure 77: The Monster in Production,
Daryl Morgan Photography

I collaborated heavily with makeup designer, Professor Maura Cravey, on the appearance and placement of the scars. Together we decided on the placement of the scars that read as medically possible and would withstand the actor's athletic performance. I also assisted her in the casting process.

We made two casts: one of Brandon's torso and another of his head. Once the molds were made, Maura made plaster casts of his body so she could sculpt the raised scars with clay.



Figure 78: Torso Mold



Figure 79: Finished Plaster Torso Cast

To cast his chest, Brandon had to sit with one arm propped up while we wrapped his torso, shoulder, and bicep with plaster strips. After the two coats dried, we cut him free. Maura filled the mold with plaster and let it cure, creating a near-perfect replica of Brandon's torso.

The face casting process was much more involved. Brandon needed to be prepped for over an hour of sitting totally still, eyes closed, breathing only through straws in his



Figure 80: Alginat Setting



Figure 81: Removing the Head Mold

nostrils. Brandon had already shaved his head, but we needed to make absolutely sure nothing would cling to his body hair. I covered his eyebrows and eyelashes with Vaseline while Maura plugged his ears with cotton balls. We covered his entire head in two layers of

dental alginate, an extremely detailed casting agent. Once the alginate cured, we wrapped his head in plaster bandages to stabilize the mold. We had left a clear line across Brandon's skull, from the top of one ear to the other, so that, when dried, the plaster and alginate could be separated in to a clear front and back. (picture).



Figure 82: Maura's Sculpted Clay Scars

Here my involvement ended.

Maura repeated the same filling process she used on the torso to create a replica of Brandon's head. Using clay, she sculpted the scars onto the plaster reproduction. During this

stage, Maura, David Toney, David Leong, and I made decisions about the wounds themselves, their placement, the effectiveness of their depth, the thickness of the staples. Maura then made her final mold, of the wounds themselves. Using this mold, she was able to make several sets of silicone scars, to use throughout the run. With dyed silicone, she was able to cast the scars the color of the deep wounds and staples. After applied, makeup was used to blend the prosthetics into Brandon's skin tone. Bruises were added to help mask the transitions and give him a more wounded, inhuman feel.



Figure 83: Scars Ready for Application



Figure 84: Application Process



Figure 85: Monster in Production

Jack and Benjamin



Figure 86: Jack and Benjamin Renderings

Jack and Benjamin, characters original to this adaptation, are resurrectionists. In the early nineteenth century, resurrectionists provided medical students with newly dead bodies, either from the seedy streets or freshly dug graves. Despite the morbidity of their occupation, Jack and Benjamin take pride in providing Dr. Frankenstein with the best “raw material” they can find and are delighted when he invites them to become his assistants.

As the comic relief, Jack and Benjamin provide warmth amid high emotional stakes. They should feel grounded, both in terms of wanting to do good honest work, and as lower class. I took the opportunity to introduce texture in such a solid show.

The pair underwent several casting changes throughout the rehearsal process. Chandler Matkins was originally cast as Jack, with Billy Borst as Benny. After early table reads, the directors decided to switch their roles. Luckily, I had designed their costumes for the actors, rather than the characters they were playing.

When Borst dropped out of the production, David Rogozinski, originally cast as Trammel, stepped in to play Jack. I originally planned to build one item each

for these looks, a plaid vest, paired with shopped

trousers, for Chandler and rust colored trousers, to match a striped tailcoat from VCU's stock for Billy. When, in a routine pitfall of online shopping, the largest size trousers were too small for Chandler, I had to quickly find a different approach. The only rented option, a pair of red trousers from Colonial Williamsburg, did not complement his vest, which was well on its way to completion. I had ordered enough extra vest fabric (double faced?) to make a pair of trousers, but we didn't have anyone to build them. Luckily, David's slimmer build made it easier to pull things, so he wore camel trousers from stock and Chandler got pants built out of the wrong side of the fabric.

Jack carries a gun the entire play, it is fired twice on stage. I originally imagined Chandler sticking the gun in the back of his waistband when not in use. After further conversation with David Leong, the back of the waistband was deemed unsafe. While a



Figure 87: An illustration of famed Resurrectionists, Mess. Cruncher and his son.

gun holster was the safety ideal, I felt strongly that that was neither appropriate for the character or the period. We compromised on a belt, which wouldn't look correct with the fall front trousers. To accommodate a belt, and the weight of the gun, I decided to concede to fly front trousers for Chandler.



Figure 88: Jack and Benjamin in Production,
Daryl Morgan Photography



Figure 89: Paulina Rendering

Paulina

The dress Paulina, William Frankenstein's governess, wears as heavily influenced by a preserved 1820's dress up for auction. Draped by senior Cierra Coan and built by sophomore Bianne Levandowsky out of green floral from Artée Fabrics, I decided to replace the angular shoulder piece with ruffles for a softer effect.



Figure 90: 1820s Dress



Figure 91: Green Floral Fabric



Figure 92: Paulina Fitting Photo



Figure 93: Paulina and William in Production



Figure 94: William Frankenstein Rendering

William Frankenstein

Although William Frankenstein's costume depended entirely on what was available, I used Henry Thompson's painting of Master Roger Mainwaring as research for children's Regency clothing. I rented a vest and trousers from VirginiaRep. Maybe intended for a later period, the trousers were very full, so we did a temporary alteration to bring them closer to the leg. I added tall, white dress socks, simple black loafers, and a necktie.



Figure 95: *Master Roger Mainwaring* Henry Thompson 1812



Figure 96: William Fitting Photo



Figure 97: William and the Monster in Production



Figure 98: Elizabeth Rendering

Elizabeth



When Shelby appears as Elizabeth Frankenstein, it is in complete contrast to the struggling, strung out Claire from the scene before, Her ensemble is based heavily off of this image of a Regency walking coat. Floral and feminine, she is Dr. Frankenstein's, and Percy's ideal. The look is broken up for a later scene, when the Monster drags Elizabeth under the bed. Because of this stunt, I had to forego the signature Regency hem ruffle and built the dress out of a durable lavender polyester.

Figure 99: Regency Walking Ensemble



Figure 100: Over Dress Detail



Figure 101: Under Dress in Production,
Daryl Morgan Photography



Figure 102: Ombre Dress Rendering

Ombre Dress

The play ends entirely in the world of the novel, with Mary observing and orchestrating the events on stage. Mary watches, with varying action depending on the draft of the script, as the Monster kills Elizabeth on the eve of her wedding to Dr. Frankenstein. The final scene brings Mary, the Monster, and Dr. Frankenstein together in the Arctic (the actor playing Percy is Dr. Frankenstein). These scenes aren't a bridge between Mary's world and that of her novel, they are outside of time and place. At this point she isn't of either world, and needs to look as liminal as her experience.



Figure 103: Laurence Ellis for Amica Magazine June 2014



Figure 104: Julien Fournié Fall 2012



Figure 105: B & J Ombre Chiffon

B&J Fabrics carries a line of ombréd chiffon and matching silk linings that are so beautiful I've been waiting for a chance to use them. Mary's liminal space, when she is neither in her world nor her novel, neither gray scale or color, seemed like a perfect opportunity. I knew that I wanted the deep red at the hem of the dress, almost as if she were standing in a pool of blood that slowly consumes her from hem to neck. In order to achieve that effect, we would have to get the full length of the dress out of the 56" wide fabric. Taking this, and the expense of the fabric and matching lining, into account, Neno



Figure 106: Rit Dye Tests

and Toni suggested that the dress be built out of a white fabric and then dyed.

I did a few dye tests on my own using wine Rit Dye. I submerged the wet sample almost all the way into the solution and then gradually lifted it out of the dye. The colors were almost exactly what I wanted, but I got

noticeable striations.

I enlisted the help of Dean Christina Lindholm, a seasoned craftsperson, to help with the dying process. She suggested building the fabric out of 4-ply crepe silk, which drapes beautifully and holds color well. Instead of Rit, we used acid dyes which, in addition to setting faster, yield much more vibrant colors on wool, silk, and nylons. We tested various combinations of reds and browns on long strips of the 4-ply crepe to judge the scale of the effect as it would appear on the shift dress.

I knew that we couldn't get the smooth transition of the B&J fabric, but I desperately wanted to avoid the obvious stripes of color I got during my dye test and had seen in my online research. We were initially planning to use the most common method- fully submerging the fabric and then gradually bringing it out of the dye. Because acid dye reacts so quickly, those dreaded lines were even more inevitable. We developed a bobbing method, where you raise and



Figure 107: Acid Dye Tests

lower the fabric into the dye for several minutes, leaving the bottom, the darkest part of the ombré, in the pot the whole time. This worked really well for the middle range of the dye, but I wasn't satisfied with the beginning of the ombré where the lightest pink met the white fabric. On the test strips, we used syringes to squirt dye in selected areas, which had an interesting, painterly effect up close but would not read from a seat in the audience. When dyeing the dress itself, we used a combination of syringes and squirt bottles filled with diluted solutions of the red bath to ease that transition.

Still wet from the dye, the effect was exactly what I wanted. Even though we lost some the range and depth when the dress dried, I was still pleased. However, after seeing the dress under stage lights, I wish that I had taken the time to dip the hem of the dress again to get a darker, richer red.



Figure 108: Immediately After Dying



Figure 109: Ombré Dress Hem Fitting



Figure 110: Ombré Dress On Stage,
Daryl Morgan Photography

Production Bible and Paperwork

One of the most valuable things Toni-Leslie James teaches her students is to design within their resources. Every aspect of the process, from sourcing to rendering to budget, comes down to production. A costume, no matter how compelling the concept, does not serve a purpose unless it can be realized. As a designer, I need to know where every item comes from, whether it be bought, borrowed, or built. I collect all of that information and additional paperwork (such as a script breakdown, piece list, budget, receipt copies, actors' measurements, fitting photos, and swatch cards) in a production bible. The bible, with all of the information necessary for realizing a design, functions as a living reference for the shop and a blueprint for any future mountings of the production.

Budget

My budget was \$6,000. In addition to the prices of individual costume pieces, fabric, and any rental fees, I had to include the cost of makeup, rubbering shoes, and all shipping charges. To manage my budget, I started with an excel document of every item worn by every actor, organized by scene and sketch number. I then, as I flagged items online for purchase and chose fabric swatches, filled in that information, including vendor, SKU number, yardage, and price. That way, when it came time to start buying, all of my shopping information in one place. As the production process evolved and things changed, like needing to re-

source a bought garment that did not fit, my assistant Casey Jones and I continuously updated the document. I like to highlight items that haven't been purchased or need to be rethought so that I can look at the budget and know what still needs to be done.

Updated 2/26

Frankenstein Working Budget
TheaterVCU Production

Costumes by Emily Atkins
Directed by David Leong
and David Emerson Toney

Actor	Character	Sc.	SK	Item	Vendor	Price	
Brandon Sternett	The Monster			Makeup		\$ 1,200.00	
				Breeches	Stock		
				Boots	Zappos Robert Wayne Jonah	\$ 89.95	
				Boot Materials		\$ 100.00	
				Coat	Stock		
Rebecca Granger	Mary Shelley			Bodysuit	Macy's 553040	\$ 60.00	
		1-1	1	Dress	American Apparel march303	\$ 52.00	
				Socks	Modcloth	\$ 13.99	
		1-2	1	Jacket	Gyuss #12380164	\$ 81.45	
				Boots	Modcloth Glance Magic Glance	\$ 14.99	
		1-4	9	Coat/dress	Stock Fabric		
				Lining	Joann's 3yds @ 5.99	\$ 17.97	
		1-7	16	Dress	ASOS 570494	\$ 38.52	
				Bootsies	DSW Madriana Bootie	\$ 59.95	
				Bracelets	Forever 21	\$ 8.90	
		1-9	27	Dress	Mood Ivory Silk Georgette FS26378 5 ynds @17.99	\$ 69.95	
			3-1	40	Dress	C&J Fabrics 4-ply Crepe 4 ynds @36.5	\$ 146.00
				Dye	Dharma Trading Co. 2 oz. 402, 428, 440, 454, 458	\$ 44.60	
		Andrew Reed	Percy Shelley	1-3	4	Bracelets	Fine Mountain Gems Brown Leather cord .3mm
				Shirt	Target (Pack of 6)	\$ 14.49	
				Trousers	Gentleman's Emporium	\$ 109.95	
				Boots	Nordstrom 1004687	\$ 99.90	
1-2	5			Hoodie	Eby Gracekarin Co. 200968545595	\$ 25.62	
Dr. Frankenstein	1-3		8	Glasses	Asos 458652	\$ 37.00	
				Boots	Stock		
				Jacket	Gray Lines Linnen Judy #3 15 ynds @12	\$ 180.00	
Percy Shelley	1-7		19	Water	Edry (Browesworld)	\$ 28.37	
Dr. Frankenstein	2-5		37		Vest	B&J SKU 9871 Chenille Brocade 1yrd	\$ 42.95
		Necktie			Stock		
		Tailcoat			B&J SKU 74935169 Wool Gabardine in Cyenne 3.5ynds	\$ 139.83	
		Top hat			W&ARep		

Figure 111: Sample Budget Page

Additional Paperwork

Last Updated 3/28/15

Frankenstein Script Breakdown TheaterVCU Production

Costumes Designed by Emily Atkins
Written by David Emerson Toney
Directed by David Leong and David Emerson Toney

Actor	Character	II.i	II.ii	II.iii	II.iv	II.v	II.vi	II.vii	II.viii	II.ix	III.i
Actor	Character	Birth(s)	Basement	Burial	French	Forest	Visit	Forest	Bride	F Estate	Arctic
Brandon Starrett	The Monster	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Rebecca Granger	Mary Shelly	X			X		X			X	X
Andrew Reid	Percy Shelly/ Dr. F	Dr. F	Dr. F	Dr. F				Dr. F	Dr. F	Dr. F	Percy/Dr. F
Shelby Smith	Claire/Elizabeth						Claire	Elizabeth		Elisabeth	
Tyler McAnney	Lord Byron						X			Servant	
Chandler Matkins	Benjamin	X	X	X					X		
David Rogozenski	Jack	X	X	X							
Tyler Stevens	Laval/Ensemble									Servant	
Sean Pugerude	Paulina/Ensemble					Paulina		Paulina		Paulina	
Tyree Albert	Trammel/Ensemble										
Ashley Davis	Genevive/Ensemble	Genevive			Genevive		Genevive				
Rachel Hindman	Natty/Ensemble										
Annabelle Bradstreet	Bride/Ensemble								Bride		
Ryan Poquis	William					X					

Figure 112: Script Break Down

Actor: Becky Granger
Character: Mary Shelley
Date: March 18

Item: Coat Dress
Draper: Sophia
Stitcher: Lauren

*Frankenstein:
Down of a Monster*
Costume Designer: Emily Atkins

Notes: Make waistband 3/4". Close CF with 1 1/4" gap. Drop CF 1". Add 5/8" to CF bodice and skirt, 0 at hem. Hem 2" shorter. Add 1" of flare to skirt at SS. Vent CB seam at pin. Make SS straight. Curve waistline of skirt AP. Move sleeve up AP. Cuff same width as waistband. Cuff, waistband, 1/4" lapel detail, pipe back princess seam in pleather.



Figure 114: Sample Fitting Notes

Updated 4/3

Frankenstein: DOAM
Production Piece List

Costumes Designed by Emily Atkins
Written by David Emerson Toney
Directed by David Leong and David Emerson Toney

Actor	Character	Scene		Garment
Becky Granger	Mary Shelley	I.i	Top of Show	body Suit
				leather choker
				t-shirt dress
				thigh high socks
		I.i	Into Mausoleum	add leather jacket
				add thigh high boots
		I.iv	Opium Den	repeat sans jacket
				plaid coat
		I.vii	Salon	pregnancy belly
				grey maternity dress
				black heeled booties
				hourglass necklace
				earrings and bracelets
		I.ix	Birth	repeat belly
labor dress				
II.iv	French Lesson	repeat all		
II.v	Visit	repeat all		
III.i	End	ombre dress		
Shelby Smith	Claire	I.i	Top of Show	body suit
				white dress
				knee socks?
		I.iv	Opium Den	add black wrap sweater
				saddle shoes
		I.vii	Salon	white jersey dress
				black lace up booties
				pendant necklace
				earrings
		II.v	Visit	black swing dress
	white denim jacket			
	white knee socks			
	II.vii	Forest	combat boots	
			purple underdress	
purple overdress				
black loafers				
II.ix	Frank. Estate	white tights		
		bonnet		
		repeat sans overdress, bonnet		

Figure 113: Working Production Piece List

Frankenstein: Dawn of a Monster

Costume Designer: Emily Atkins
Directors: David Leong and
David Emerson Toney

Actor: Becky Ganger Character: Mary Shelley
Scene: 1:iv Sketch #: 9

Item	Coat	Wings
Vendor		
Item	leather accents	
Vendor	<u>Joan's</u>	
		

Figure 115: Sample Swatch Card

Conclusion

From the very beginning, this living, breathing production forced me to approach my role as a costume designer in a totally different way. Usually, my process, from research, to rendering, to reality, is entirely in service of the script. However, at least in the beginning, there was no script. Aside from the doubled roles, plot barely came up in my early meetings with David Toney. Toney mentioned broad concepts, like relationships and religion, but really, he posed questions. How much control does Mary have over the events on stage? Is god the aftermath of religion? Where does pain come from? With Mary Shelley's life and her novel as a framework, I set out, not to answer these questions, but to establish an environment in which they could be asked.

The newness of *Frankenstein* gave me an opportunity to build a world. I hoarded details, garments, and ideas that I tailored to the needs of each new draft. I almost feel like I found the story in my research, rather than the other way around. When confronted with logistical demands, such as the dual stories and the number of costumes, I was able to turn to my mood research for solutions. The reciprocal relationship between narrative and research also allowed me to accommodate dramatic revisions to the script. When a new scene or character appeared in a draft, I could reach into my arsenal and find something that worked. On a more specific level, I approached the sourcing process like a stylist, building a closet for each character and selecting pieces for situations as they were written.

Moving Mary Shelley into a Regency-inspired present allowed me to make clear, flexible choices that adapted with the script and firmly separated her from the novel's storyline. While I'm confident in my concept, I feel like there could have been more nuance in the execution. The Regency costumes worn by the characters in the novel struck a balance between accurately representing the period and accommodating the, at times vigorous, on stage action. Looking at the production pictures, some of the contemporary looks feel like a first draft. The ease of limiting my bought items to solid blocks of color read flat at times. I wish that I had not shied so far away from texture and pattern, and worn down the pristine black and whites. The ideas are there, they just need more grit and wear and life.

The more I reflect this production, the more I feel like Dr. Frankenstein. I spent a full year up to my elbows in history and ideas, trying to piece them together. The entire process was messy and crooked and totally alive. The experience of working on a totally new script, and being a part of early, abstract discussions, forced me to breathe new life into my approach to design. Costumes have the ability to not just support, but drive a narrative, transforming the familiar into something new and vital. As a costume designer, my new mission is to capitalize on that power, clothing characters in the necessary armor to tell compelling, challenging stories.

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VITA

Emily Atkins was born and grew up in Richmond, VA. She attended college at St. Mary's College of Maryland where she earned a BA in English and minored in Studio Art and Theater, Film, and Media Studies. She is working toward her MFA in Costume design at Virginia Commonwealth University, anticipated 2015. Emily is a costume designer and craftsperson who has worked for companies including Busch Gardens, Williamsburg, VA; The Arundel Barn Playhouse, Arundel, ME; Quill Theater, Richmond, VA; TheaterLAB, Richmond, VA; The New Group, New York, NY; and Mansion House Productions for PBS, Richmond, VA. Emily studied costume design under Toni-Leslie James and currently lives in Richmond.