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Seams Brash

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Peer Review

This work has undergone a double-blind review by a minimum of two faculty members from institutions of higher learning from around the world. The faculty reviewers have expertise in disciplines closely related to those represented by this work. If possible, the work was also reviewed by undergraduates in collaboration with the faculty reviewers.

Abstract

Seams Brash was created to permit student exploration of new sewing techniques such as pleating and beading in addition to working with a variety of body types. Inspiration was drawn from many current and historical designer collections. The goal of the line was to create functional gowns with elements of surprise and a touch of couture with the hand pleating and beading. Each dress represents a different individual with unique lines, fabric choices, silhouettes, and proportions.

Keywords

Apparel Design, Draping, Beading

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The following collection is a faculty-driven student project that took place during a six-month period. During the conceptual process, the student did extensive research on fabric choices, color forecast reports, current and future trend analysis, and advanced sewing techniques that would broaden her knowledge of garment construction. The student referenced *Women's Wear Daily*, *Pantone.com*, and *fashionserved.com*. Once the desired design elements were compiled, the professor and student set up multiple design concept meetings to finalize the designs. A timetable was then developed to facilitate the entire design process from conception to creating the final products. This calendar provided due dates and a structured timeline of when the garments needed to be draped and trued, completion of pattern pieces, finished samples, dates and times of model fittings, and completion of the garment. Creating the calendar increased productivity and held the student accountable to deadlines.

The professor and student chose several sewing and design techniques that would challenge the student and provide multifaceted garments. Choosing fabrics was challenging, due to the nature of the print on the chiffon. Fabrics throughout the collection had to be compared and matched to the hues in the print. Since it was the student's first time working with a print, information on trends helped determine what would be aesthetically pleasing and drape attractively on fit-models. Working with transparent fabrics also posed a challenge for choosing linings that would complement the various colors used. The fabric, which had a delicate, flowing hand, was assessed for the effects of manipulation, gathering, and pleating, as well as for appropriate seam finishes and zipper insertion.

New York dressmaker Adrianna Papell was a main source of the student's inspiration. The student favored Papell's bold style and her use of bright colors and busily patterned fabrics. Another source of inspiration came from Aya Ayoung Chee, winner of *Project Runway, Season 9*. Chee's garments are extremely free-flowing, which inspired the skirts of numerous garments. Several other designers and design houses such as Marchesa, Elie Saab, Valentino, and Christian Dior were influences as well. Their use of intricate fabric manipulation, such as pleating, gathering, and abundant draping, was featured in several of the dresses.

Goals were created for each garment in the collection involving the fit, construction, and sewing techniques to be learned throughout the process. The overall goals of the collection were to explore the use of a print and to create formal attire inspired by haute couture design collections.

Using draping and sewing techniques beyond the student's knowledge and comfort zone was also a key objective in creating these garments. By using pleats throughout the collection, the student designer had to study the anatomy of the human form and place folds where they would lie best and look good while being worn.

Stunning Cut

This design was one of the biggest challenges of the collection. The purpose of creating the pleats in various directions was to emphasize, flatter, and fit closely to the fit-model's curves.

Adrianna Papell was a main source of inspiration for this specific gown. She creates Grecian-inspired gowns that have an abundance of pleats, gathers, and extensively draped bodices and skirts. The goal was to create a gown that had the structured element of the tightly fitted and pleated bodice contrast with the flowing skirt. The combination of these elements and the original inspiration are on dramatic display in this gown.



There are 21 panels on the front and back, each sewn in a different direction. Once the panels were draped, trued, and cut, white crepe chiffon was then hand-pleated and basted onto the original panels. The fabric was heavily starched to stiffen the bodice and to help the pleats stay closed and close to the body. The skirt was manipulated and draped several times in order to achieve the desired seamless look. A single, three-yard cut of white crepe chiffon was attached to the bodice. The skirt met at the front right princess seam and was draped to form a waterfall effect.

This design posed many challenges surrounding the fit of the garment. The fit-model had a very tiny natural waist and a wider hip. Many of the pleated panels did not lie smoothly against the body; instead they puckered in some places such as the hips, while lying flat on the abdomen. In order to fix the puckered panels, they were pinned in the correct position, the seams taken apart and then resewn. It took many fittings to mold the panels into a flat appearance.

The viewer's focus is first drawn to the thigh-high slit that is finished with a rhinestone-beaded appliqué. The lines of the garment draw attention up through the bodice to the rust-colored panels that trim the cups.



Illusion

The goal for this design was to create a gown that would be form-fitting and comfortable to wear. Elie Saab's use of embellished fabrics and simple designs was the source of inspiration for this garment.

The bodice draws attention to the small waist of the fit-model and the craftsmanship in the horizontal and vertically gathered panels. These panels were gathered in several directions to tighten the waist and add details to the bodice. The skirt was made from six yards of printed chiffon and gathered to create fullness. The emphasis of the gown is the waistline and is designed to draw attention to the gathered panels and up to the bodice and face.

Featherlite™ boning was used throughout the bodice to conform to the body and hold the dress up. The biggest challenge of this garment was creating the bust cups. The cups had the tendency to lie open and away from the chest. In order to achieve the desired look, additional boning was added to the top edge and underside of the cups to create the necessary support and to hold them closer to the body.



Midnight Glass

The unique design element of this gown is the chiffon overlay. This was draped from an oval piece of fabric that was connected by one side seam. Pleats were added to both sides of the hips, which allowed the fabric to drape in different directions and create flowing, transverse pleats.

Under the chiffon is a princess-seamed, fitted dress constructed out of crepe-back satin that features a thigh-high slit. A rhinestone-beaded appliqué was hand-sewn at the top of the slit and the print overlay was hand stitched under to assure that the chiffon would remain in place.

The print overlay posed the biggest challenge in the garment. The fit-model was very curvaceous and the chiffon overlay was designed to slip over the head instead of having a zipper. The chiffon was draped on a dress form that was padded to have the same measurements as the model's hips. This ensured that there was plenty of room to slide the overlay over her shoulders and lie in an aesthetically pleasing manner on her hips.

The purple dress has an hourglass silhouette. When pairing the dress with the chiffon overlay, the silhouette drastically changes because the dress is slightly hidden. A main focus of this dress is the thigh-high slit. This element breaks up the deep purple swath of skirt and creates an edgy effect. The viewer's attention moves from the slit through the diagonal pleats and up to the face.



Bare Elegance

This design was based on the trend of sheer maxi skirts that are lined with a shorter skirt. This garment uses an over- and underskirt but creates the illusion that there isn't a shorter skirt underneath when the overskirt is closed.

The goal of this garment was to explore sewing techniques used to create bias tape that trims the cups and straps. Stitching in-the-ditch and understitching were the sewing techniques used for most of the bodice construction.

There are several overlapping pleats in the crepe chiffon overskirt. The extra fabric in the pleats allows the overskirt to close when the wearer is still, and when the wearer moves, the crepe chiffon opens and the underskirt is visible.

The asymmetrical waistband was constructed of purple, crepe-back satin and embellished with a rhinestone-beaded appliqué. The cups of the bodice form a deep V-neckline and are trimmed with purple crepe-back satin that is found on the waistband and short underskirt. The viewer's focus begins at the bodice, moves down the garment to the slit and underskirt and back up to the face.

There was a fitting issue with the bodice. The straps were originally designed to go straight down the back and attach at the back princess seams. When attaching the straps this way, the cups puckered on the sides. The problem was solved by crisscrossing the straps and attaching them at the bottom of the armhole on the bodice.