



## Interpreting the Human Silhouette into Art

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**Design Mentor Statement:** This design was created as an outcome of a final project in an undergraduate course titled Fashion Draping. The purpose of the mentorship relationship was to help the student design and create a ready-to-wear look using an inspiration from a chosen artist while incorporating draping techniques learned from this course. As a design mentor, I demonstrated fundamental draping and construction techniques via pre-recorded demo videos and virtual lectures. I also met with the student to answer questions and provided feedback throughout the process including research, designing, sketching, muslin creation, fabric selection, and construction of the final design. I chose to sponsor this student's work because her outcome not only exceeds the project requirement of creating an outfit using draping and construction techniques learned from this class, but her work also explored innovative design ideas of a multifunctional garment with unique seamlines, carefully considered design details, and skilled construction.

**Design Statement:** The creation of any art form begins with the inspiration around us, ranging from nature to manmade. For this design, I was inspired by artwork from Alexander Archipenko. Archipenko is a Ukrainian American artist, painter, and sculptor born in 1887. He is best known for his Cubist style in paintings and sculptures, and was one of the first to apply Cubism to sculptures. Cubism is flat, two dimensional, geometrical shapes depicting humans and other forms (Britannica, 2021). His artwork is full of colors, textures, shapes, and overlapping layers. I took these elements into consideration as a vision for my design materialized.

Equally novel and inspirational, Archipenko created a kinetic work and patented it as the first changeable picture known as "Archipentura" (Barber, 2019). The concept of changeable art has inspired me to create a multifunctional garment. "Multifunctional fashion garments can be defined as clothing or clothing systems that allow different uses in different scenarios, such as adaptation (dynamic or not) to diverse social situations or weather conditions, or just clothing that has different characteristics in different body areas in order to have different functional features, such as different permeability characteristics and different flexural properties in specific areas of the garment, among others (Cunha & Broega, 2009)." Multifunctional garments can help slow down "fast fashion" since it can be worn in different ways along with other garments. It can prolong a garment's life cycle, reducing environmental impact (Chen & Li, 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this design was to create a multifunctional dress, inspired by artwork from Alexander Archipenko, that could function in separate design iterations for distinct purposes.

The process started with research on the artist and his artwork. I collected numerous artworks from Archipenko that stood out to me and from there I sketched out three different designs. I wanted to portray a human figure in abstract ways, so I played with various shapes and colors to form different silhouettes, along with overlapping layering effects gleaned from his artwork “Archipentura”. A loose-fitting dress was chosen for this design in order to play with shapes that form body curves and layering effects (Figure 1). I chose to work with oval shapes and subtle curves to create an abstract body form of the waist, hip, and legs. The color I selected represents Archipenko’s color palette he often used, and it helps contrast and form the abstract body silhouette. Pockets were added to the dress along with a cape-like top to be worn on top of the dress. These elements combine to form a layering effect accentuating both Archipenko’s interchangeable artwork and multifunctional purpose. The cape has the same oval shapes and contrast colors. It is pleated on the top half, with hook-n-eyes front closure, and straps on the side to tie together (Figure 2). The fabrics for this design are lyocell, linen, and cotton. I chose these fabrics because they are lighter in weight, easy to layer, will not create bulkiness, and are natural fibers. Putting the final two-piece garment together creates an overlapping look and a fun abstract silhouette. Paired together, it has a subtle elegant look that is perfect for a formal occasion, however, the garments can be worn separately. The dress without the cape looks more casual so that it could be worn on a daily basis, and as for the cape, it can be paired with outfits that are either casual or professional depending on the occasion.



Figure 1. Design sketches.

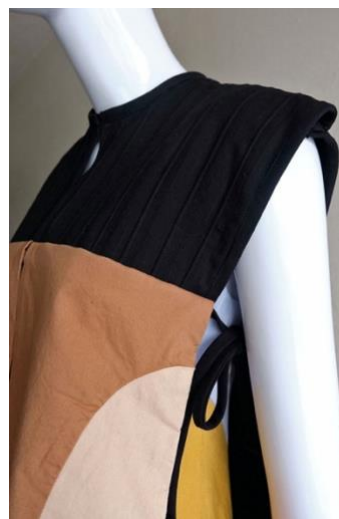


Figure 2. Cape details.

In this project, an artist inspired ready-to-wear piece was created with draping techniques and multifunctional concepts. This set garment is a combination of subtle sophistication and casual modernity, whether wearing it alone or together depending on the occasion. The design purpose was achieved by incorporating elements and ideas inspired by Archipenko, while also considering sustainable values. This work contributes to the field of incorporating artistic inspiration into contemporary design for a multifunctional purpose.

## References

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