

Contemporary Interpretations of Matisse

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Mentor Statement

This student has excellent skills and is a strong and dedicated student. The goals established for the senior capstone collection were achieved and this and several other pieces were designed down to the small detail, well-constructed, and clearly represented the innovative style of both the designer and the inspiration source. Mentoring this student was a pleasure and seeing this design and others in the collection come to fruition with such attention to fine construction and detail, was rewarding. Mentors were consistently impressed by both design and construction skills, as well as ideation and conceptualization in the design process. The student was mentored through design development, digital file preparation, and construction processes, however the student executed high-quality work very seamlessly and independently due to a strong skill base.

Conceptual Review and Concept Statement

While it may be known in the fashion industry that art plays a prominent role in inspiration and design elements, to many outsiders, art has been held at a superior ranking to fashion. Fashion has been seen as frivolous and unserious compared to established artists and artistic movements throughout history, when in reality, fashion and art go hand in hand. “The ties between fashion and art are close, but nonetheless fraught. They are discussed more in fashion circles than by critics and historians of art, for whom it is a common blind spot” (Geczy, 2021). It has only been within the last few decades that the line between fashion and art has started to merge, being recognized as a collaborative relationship. Even though Karl Lagerfeld, world-renowned German fashion designer, maintained a persistent belief that art was distinct from fashion, there is proof in his designs that there are heavy influences of historical art that he looked to for inspiration. He may have often said “Art is art. Fashion is fashion,” (Marcel, 2023) but he, along with all other fashion designers, have created works of art and it deserves recognition. “Developments in fashion itself and the growth of the relatively new discipline of fashion theory in the last few decades has reoriented this stance dramatically” (Geczy, 2021). Fashion to me, and to many people, is a form of art, so the purpose of my design, *Contemporary Interpretations of Matisse*, was to merge fashion with the influence of an artist/artistic period and my own artistic abilities with sewing and construction.

Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact

The design’s main inspiration came from the artist, Henri Matisse. Matisse is a French artist who is known for his expressive paintings and use of color. He utilized bold colors that made a statement while also executing fluidity throughout with abstract shapes that enhanced the movement. This influenced the unique silhouette of the design by layering through multiple pieces and textures such as layered organza, beading, pleating, and buttons. The aesthetic of Matisse’s paintings also stood out to me because of the correlation and familiarity of Mexican architecture and culture. The historical buildings in Mexican cities such as Guanajuato and San

Miguel de Allende display great architectural designs in both shape and vibrant colors. The visual themes from Henri Matisse's painting style are carried throughout my design in a contemporary way with line, texture, and color.

Methods: Process, Technique, and Execution

All the components of the design were developed through draping techniques, along with some flat pattern manipulations. To develop the first muslin sample, the style lines were mapped out on the dress form, then draping cotton muslin onto it while pinning the areas needed to fit the shape of the body. This included darts in the top and bottom of the bust cups of the strapless corset, fisheye darts going down the bodice, and darts to shape the waist and hip of the skirt. After sewing the first sample, modifications were made to adjust the ease in the bust and waist, along with ease along the neck piece for comfortable movement. The final design is constructed with 100% polyester stretch taffeta and organza for the sheer part of the skirt. The bust cups of the corset were hand pleated before cutting the pattern and stay stitched down the back of the pleats to allow for more durability when being sewed together. It also contains boning from the bust cups down to the waist to add more structure when worn. Having invisible zippers for both the corset and skirt creates a seamless look. For a seamless and clean look on the inside, all the components of the design are fully faced/lined. The neck piece is faced with the same shell fabric and under stitched along the arm hole pieces to keep the fabric in place. The corset is also fully faced with the shell fabric and under stitched along the top of the bust/back, and bottom of the hem. The skirt has a waist facing with the shell fabric and a lining with silk fabric to allow for smoothness against the skin when putting on. The sheer organza bottom of the skirt is attached to the inner lining. Hand beaded details were added to the neck piece; beads were placed on eye pins and clamped to the chains with a wire looper, then sewn along the neck collar and bottom hem. Colors and patterns of the beads were carefully thought out to enhance the design's colors, add texture, dimension, and movement.

Cohesion

The combination of colors paired with a fabric that has a slight iridescent sheen show a vibrant color palette reflecting the painting style of Matisse. The 100% polyester taffeta creates a cohesive look throughout the garments, also allowing for structure for the silhouette. The neck piece with beading, pleating along the bust, and sheer bottom on the skirt create visual interest and dimension.

Design Contribution

Contemporary Innovations of Matisse is a design that encapsulates the uniqueness and creativity of art, and how it inspires fashion. While it may not be practical for an everyday wear, it is for the consumer who chooses to stand out and embrace their creativity. It contributes to the idea of merging art and fashion and encourages uniqueness of style and design.

References

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