

Natsukashii (Nostalgia in Japanese)

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Purpose

With the idea of “upcycling” in mind, this project presents the challenge to explore the various uses and potential designs with military wool and parachute fabric. This ensemble would be targeted toward the environmentally conscious market since it is upcycled from parachutes and wool. Given the design of the gown it is for occasions such as galas and formal eco conscious events.

Process

After sketching the initial croquis, some Japanese aesthetic was apparent from the bodice’s overlap closure. The minimal lines and silhouette of the skirt also attributed to the silhouette one might find in a kimono. However, my conscious inspiration draws from the Edwardian period of dress from the early 20th century, particularly the Gibson girl. So with these two concepts of Japanese and Edwardian dress, I felt a strong presence of nostalgia in the overall look of the ensemble. The bittersweet sensation one feels from recalling memories, happy yet tinged with a distant melancholy of knowing those times cannot be relived but only recalled; hence the decision to title the piece *Natsukashii* in Japanese, or *Nostalgia* in English. After receiving recycled parachute and wool fabric, a sample dress was first constructed, using draping techniques. It was discovered during this crucial process that the light rib-stop nylon parachute fabric could not be attached to the high waist wool skirt due to the pull and weight of the fabric. For the bodice, a kimono sleeve was draped with a long cowl in the back for a low drape exposing the neck and back. I decided to specifically work with a low cowl in the back to update the overall look of the ensemble and to play off the of kimono’s drape along the nape of the neck. The closure of the bodice piece is a wrap in the front, imitating the Japanese kimono.



Image 1: Front (Left)

Image 2: Detail (Right)

Techniques: The seams were finished using French seams. Gathered wool cuffs use paracord ropes as closures. The skirt was draped along the princess seam lines on the dress form and they flare out at the hem. The finishing on the inside includes a 2 inch facing and is fully lined with rib-stop nylon parachute material. An invisible zipper with a hook and eye serves as the closure of the skirt. The bodice is finished with French seams and is fully lined with the face fabric. The wool skirt is lined with rayon lining and is boned along the princess seams with individually constructed channels between the lining and face fabric.

Materials: 100 rip-stop nylon, U.S. military wool (60 % polyester and 40% wool), paracord ropes, rayon, plastic boning

Measurement: Bust 35 inches, waist 27 ½ inches, and skirt length 60 inches.