

## Suit for Magritte

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In spring 2012 the Fashion Design and Retailing faculty at Framingham State University and the MetroWest Medical Center, a teaching hospital in Framingham and Natick, Massachusetts, sponsored a student/alumni/faculty competition. The purpose of the competition was to design an art/fashion piece using a surgical blue material as a statement for sustainability. The hospital's main use of the disposable textile is to protect sterilized surgical tools; it is used once and then quickly discarded. So what are the sustainability issues? One obvious sustainability issue is how to reuse the material. This became the initial impetus for my potential statement.

My design process started with an exploration of the blue surgical textile. This polypropylene, non-woven disposable textile was not easily manipulated. It could not be tailored, dyed, stretched, or ironed. It did not react like all the other

textiles that I have draped, tailored, and embellished. I immediately felt a connection with the non-traditional fabric to the surreal ideas of the trompe l'oeil artists. I have been inspired by Renee Magritte for his questioning of reality, and Fornasetti's son Barnaba for his exposing what is within a structure.

This art piece, "Suit for Magritte" is a trompe l'oeil suit. It was created quite differently. The basic seams of suit were put together with a sewing machine but everything else about the garment was drawn on using markers and one bottle of white out. It is only two pieces even though it looks like more. The pleated skirt, wrinkled shirt, tie, and fitted vest is all one flat surface. The illusion is emphasized with the jacket's illustrated pockets, patches, trim, and buttons. Even the topstitching is drawn on.

I believe the overall effect of the piece is one that makes the viewer question what they are looking at. Issues of sustainability will require questioning the way we look at things, hopefully "Suit for Magritte" helps express this idea.

