

Night in Shining Armor

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Keywords: Metalwork, Armor

When I decided to take the ITAA class during my senior year at Auburn, I immediately knew I wanted to make a dress out of metal. My mother is an architect and my father an engineer, so I believe this is the reason I pursued fashion design to begin with. When I was younger, “helping” my parents at work was one of my favorite things. I wanted to push my abilities and create something that was utilizing the geometrical and structural mindset I learned from them. Over the years I have gained a love for historical costume: Dr. Ulrich, HBO’s series *Game of Thrones*, and the resurfacing steampunk trend all contribute as the base of my inspiration.



Figure 1

Elegance and strength are two adjectives that came to mind while I was building this piece. My design aesthetic usually includes a lot of colors or patterns. For this dress, I decided to use a neutral color scheme to not take away from the complexity of the metal finishes and fabric textures. My bodice was hammered and shaped out of aluminum while the hinges and rivets are all made from brass. To assure that the bodice fit my model, I taped up a dress form to her exact measurements in order to shape the pieces to fit the form perfectly. I used a table saw to cut the pattern pieces initially and then trimmed it down using a handheld electric saw and sander. Welding together and grinding down two bust darts allowed a smoother finish and a more fluid curve. A handheld buffer and grinder is how I achieved the spiraled pattern on the surface of the aluminum.

The opening on the back is connected using Velcro but at the very top, a brass ball is screwed into the top rivet hole in order to hold the piece closed. While I did use a sloped pattern initially, the underdress was mostly draped onto the custom size dress form. It

was constructed from cream Burberry quilting fabric and a buff colored English mesh. Metal chain is rolled up along the hem of the English mesh in order to weigh it down more firmly. There is a brass zipper on the side seam, and it is a gorgeous piece that could be worn by itself. I learned so much during the making of this dress and I hope to utilize these skills in many more ways of application during my design career.



Figure 2