

Pleat Perspectives

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Pleats can be used to shape textiles and apparel in a multitude of ways, transforming flat fabrics into three-dimensional forms. The purpose of this research was to explore the importance of pleats in fashion, to identify the methods, uses, history, and design possibilities of pleats, and then to create a design based on one of the many pleat inspirations. An additional purpose was to use digital textile printing to further investigate the creative possibilities of pushing 2D and 3D perceptions through surface design, thus expanding the visual range of pleated fabric manipulations. The creative process began with an examination of pleated garments throughout history, from early Egypt to Fortuny and Madame Grès (Killam, 1995). Pleats have been used for both functional and purely decorative purposes. Because they allow the fabric to expand and contract they can be used to contour to the body or create extensions away from the body. Issey Miyake was a pioneer in the use of pleats combined with technology to create sculptural forms (Miyake). *Pleat Perspectives* began with an understanding of pleat forms, and with a goal to incorporate digital textile printing to heighten the appearance and depth of the pleated surface.

Pleat Perspectives began with an understanding of pleat forms, and with a goal to incorporate digital textile printing to heighten the appearance and depth of the pleated surface. I chose to explore the uses of pleats for decorative purposes and to extend away from the body, experimenting with shapes through both flat pattern and draping techniques (Figure 1). The print images are of a cathedral ceiling, manipulated to have two versions with different contrast. The contrasted images were alternated in a stripe pattern the size of half a folded pleat. The contrasting stripes were folded and stitched to create the pleated side skirt extension and attached to the dress like cartridge pleats. The final garment was printed on silk shantung for a



Figure 1. Front.

light but crisp hand. The pleat print was used as a flat surface design on the bodice. The skirt print is a reverse of the full ceiling image. The contrast of the angled pleated panel balances with the diagonal lines on the bodice.



Figure 2: Front detail

Killam, S. (1995, Summer) "From the Boudoir to the Battlefield." *Fiberarts*. 50-51.

Issey Miyake Pleats Please. (n.d.) Retrieved from
http://www.isseymiyake.com/en/brands/pleats_please.html