Architectural Clarity

Kathleen Kowalsky, University of Missouri, USA

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Many designers are examining the possibility of eliminating apparel industry fabric waste. Not a new concept, traditional and non-Western garments historically used squares, rectangles, and minimal fabric cutting (Burnham, 1973). Contemporary zero waste pioneers such as Timo Rissanen, among others, have re-envisioned current cutting practices (Rissanen, 2007). These zero waste innovators focus on the importance of reversing design processes, placing patternmaking as a first step. The purpose of *Architectural Clarity* was to create a prototype jacket using zero-waste patternmaking and draping techniques, and incorporate digital print into the final product. The design process began with draping a series of long rectangular fabric pieces cut in various sizes to allow creative investigations of shape around the body. The draping process went through multiple iterations. Some pieces incorporated tucks, while others were fitted together and folded back on themselves (Figure 1). The plan ultimately moved back and forth between pattern pieces and body form so shapes would fit together tightly in a layout and still have a design with an aesthetic that reflected the images chosen for the printed surface. The digital print inspiration came from photographs of New York City urban architecture. The outer garment is a rendered photo of the exterior of a dilapidated building. The lining image was created from a photo taken of the interior ceiling of Javits Center overlaid with a textural image of a taxi floor after a snowstorm. To create a lined and reversible coat and facilitate construction, each rectangle was individually lined and the pieces joined with topstitching. Because some rectangles loop or fold back, both images are visible (Figure 2). Silk shantung was used for the coat to provide a crisp but lightweight fabric for the layered pieces. With the rectangles stacked in a structural way, it loosely suggests the illusion of a skyline, and with the digital printing, the jacket provides a story that juxtaposes new and old architecture, and new and traditional approaches to the design process.

Figure 1. Front view

Figure 2. Back view

Burnham, D. (1973). *Cut my cote*. Toronto, Canada: Royal Ontario Museum.

Rissanen, T. (2007). Types of fashion design and patternmaking practice. Nordic Design
        Research Conference. Retrieved from:
        http://www.nordes.org/opj/index.php/n13/article/view/185/168