

Empress

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The purpose of this design is to celebrate the dynamic between grace and strength through the use of contrasting textile elements; some of these elements evoke a soft and fragile feel, while others instill a hard and structured feel. Overall the design is meant to entice the viewer through movement and the visual appeal of the silhouette, on the outside as well as underneath the string.



The design process began by drafting the pattern for the shoulder piece and draping the patterns for the undergarments. The shoulder and chest pieces had to be shaped and structured in order to hold the weight of the string, which required trial and error as well as testing. After several fittings the final fitting with the model was completed and the garment was constructed using the specific chosen materials.

The shoulder piece is composed of laser cut leather. The leather is placed on both the outside of the piece as well as the underside of the piece, with a thick layer of interfacing in between the two layers. The strings that hang down from the shoulder piece were sewn into the seam of the shoulder and chest in order to firmly hold them in place and allow for movement. The strings that were used for this piece came from a string curtain and are composed of polyester. The undergarments are made of a medium weight white neoprene that makes up most of the top as well as the entire bottom piece. A knit mesh was used for the center of the top undergarment piece to add visual appeal and interest.

The combination of form-fitting undergarments and hanging strings shows the beauty of contrast between graceful curvature of the body and the linear outer shell that moves with the body. The placement of the string over the entire body is appealing because it covers the model while still revealing the undergarments underneath. The more the model moves in the piece, the more her body, as well as the undergarments is revealed.

The most challenging part of constructing this piece was getting the shoulder pieces to stand away from the body, allowing the string to also stand away from the body. The positioning of the piece is crucial if this final affect is to be achieved. The undergarment top helps to support the shoulder piece through strap support. Straps were placed along the edges of the shoulder pieces and can be attached to the cross body straps on the back of the bra-top as well as straps in the front of the bra-top. This not only keeps the shoulder pieces in place, but also allows them to stand up.

Finally this outfit will make a contribution to scholarship in the field of apparel design because it shows that movement can be created in garments and textiles, allowing for imagination and creativity to combine in order to construct and portray movement in various ways. Movement not only draws the viewer in, but also brings more appeal to a garment as a whole. This piece also shows how hard and soft elements can be combined to create a final look that evokes both power and elegance.