



**Title:** Oneness

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**Keywords:** Couture techniques, textile innovation, sustainability

**Measurements:** Waist- 27.5 inches, Bust- 32.5 inches, Hip- 36 inches, Length- 46 inches

## Design Statement

*Oneness* is a creative outcome of a research project that aims to examine how the different perspectives toward the body in Eastern and Western cultures affected dress. The comparison encompasses the meaning and form of Eastern and Western dress before the westernization of modern fashion, as well as the way cultural perspectives continue to be expressed in current fashion design.

People in the East and the West think, behave, and see things differently (Nisbett 2003). This phenomenon was more obvious in the past than today because most Asian countries are now westernized in many ways and it seems that cultural gaps have lessened between the East and West. However, many signs of profound cultural differences still can be found in various aspects of human life in both cultures since the cultural legacies are so powerfully and deeply rooted that they persist generation after generation. People in the East and the West have displayed different ways of seeing and perceiving the body as a concept and form (*Iching*, n.d.; Bonfante, 1989; Schipper, 1993; Yuasa, 1993; Zito, n.d.; Hay, n.d.; Bandy, n.d.; Kuriyama, 1999; Thorp & Vinograd, 2001; Matuk 2006). Many ancient Greek philosophers separated the body from the mind, and Descartes established a dichotomy in the relationship between body and mind in Western culture. Until Merleau-Ponty deconstructed the concept of "body-mind dualism" in the 20th century and asserted that the human body is an embodiment of flesh and mind, Westerners believed that the body was not only separate from the mind, but also placed in a subordinate position under the mind's control. Whereas in Eastern culture the body and mind are inseparable, so they have been understood and perceived as one. It is believed that this body-mind oneness originated from the theory of energy (氣, pronounced *gi, qi, ki* in Korean, Chinese and Japanese respectively). This is because energy is not only a foundation of the universe, but it also connects and interacts with the body and mind (or spirit). As a consequence, no distinction between the body and mind exists in Eastern culture. This disparate perspective toward the body has dictated not only how it has been represented in visual art, but also how it should be treated in medicine in both cultures.

Inspired by the different perspectives toward the body in the Eastern and Western cultures, this design project focused on the development of innovative design principles in order to represent the concept of 'oneness,' derived from the harmonious union of *yin* and *yang*, an ancient underlying philosophy and practice that is still imprinted in every facet of the Eastern culture. The designs of *Oneness* captured the

complementary relationship between contrary elements (e.g., earth and sky, darkness and light, body and mind, female and male, etc.) and the dynamics generated from their infinite interaction. Through the marriage of two completely different forms (2-dimensional one-legged pants and a 3-dimensional gathered skirt), symmetrical balance was achieved within asymmetry. Continuous strips that wrap around the body represent interdependence between the elements and their connection within the universe. The main colors used for this project are black and white, reflecting the *yin-yang* symbols. Various types of fabrics such as mesh-neoprene, clear vinyl laminated with tulle, tulle, cotton shirting, and silk taffeta, were layered on top of each other to create unexpected and complex surfaces and textures. The innovative design principles employed for this project demonstrate how an abstract concept can be manifest through a form of dress. *Oneness* will invite the audience to acknowledge and appreciate the beauty of cultures—their own and others, as well as to celebrate the rediscovery of cultural heritage as an inspiration for creators in all fields.

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