



The Concrete Jungle 1

Kelsey Kasom / Columbia College Chicago

Textile innovation

Couture techniques

Non-Apparel 2-D or 3-D design

Bust: 32A, 34A Waist: 25" Hip: 35" Height: 5' 9"

Mentor Statement

I teach a course that explores fabric manipulation techniques. For most students this is a creative experimental outlet from the pressures of collection development and academics. It can almost be therapeutic as students are forced to work with their hands, slowing down normal expectations for results. Kelsey, with her ability to master techniques quickly was like watching a chess player who is capable of seeing steps ahead. She has an innate ability to work out how certain techniques or combinations of techniques, when executed with a particular textile and scale, will manifest in her garments as distinct, well-crafted components that support the whole. She is a tireless worker often losing all concept of time as she is completely immersed in her craft. As a true artist, she is driven to produce, practice, refine and push the limits as far as she can for the sole purpose of creation and learning through that creative process. She showed great determination throughout our relationship to fully realize her vision. She sought out the advice of design faculty, synthesized and implemented, experimented until it worked, never taking the approach that it wasn't possible. I have never seen a more dedicated and thoughtful student.

Designer Statement

I want to convey what the body really is. We have flesh to cover our feelings and inner wounds. Beneath the skin is how we as organisms function. We can't see much of what is going on in someone's life from the outside, but from the inside it's a different story. Our hearts are protected by the ribs, and sealed with flesh. In life we encounter storms, but if we work through our struggles, we can find the light in darkness. As an outcome, character and strengths are often the byproducts not of pleasure, but of pain. Therefore, strip yourself from emotion and problems that puzzle us and make us falter. Find your light, take flight and understand being confused is an opportunity for clarity.

Design Process

For me, this process is how I cope. I approach my work as art, free of rules, bound by purpose, and executed with couture finishing. Through meticulous attention to detail my work is a piece of me, past, present, and future. Therefore, I made use of the leather, contoured into a second skin, one that we develop over time. On top of that I painted a window into my childhood. My inner skeleton and what lies beneath the surface is the foundation that has shaped me into the young adult I am today. The Blue Jay is the life source in this painting. It makes up the heart and the growth of my surrounding as a child. But this Blue Jay is trapped within a “cage” trying to be free and fly into its true potential. The silk chiffon overlay moves like the wind because it is light like a feather. The colors echo the forest, water, and sky. The drape falls soft, the texture delicate, and the silhouette feminine like a young girl. The three layers of silk chiffon are trimmed in horsehair, handmade silk chiffon bias, and 33 yards of hand stitched hem. The silk overlay is constructed similar to the style of a halter, attaching across the bust with macramé straps around the neck leading to the third addition of this look, the neckpiece. The neckpiece is 6 yards of cotton knit. Like life heavy on our shoulders this piece is made up of my ambition, intricate in detail. Its fabric manipulation is innovated into intersecting pleats, my own style of warped macramé, and additional handwork. The headpiece is the mind of the garment: unique, thoughtful, complex, slightly insane, but very organized.

