CRAFTED EXPERIENCES:

WEAVING THE CRAFT OF DRESSMAKING INTO RETAIL SPACE

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

The intersection of fashion and architecture centers around the user; it is their interaction, experience, and memory that give a space meaning. With the introduction of fast fashion, clothing retail stores morphed into anonymous spaces with generic designs and became volatile to trends, resulting in a lack of authentic engagement with clothing. Previous academic research has tried to understand the relationship between fashion designers and their clothing, but there is limited literature addressing the reciprocal role of the making of their garments and the spaces in which they are presented to potential consumers. In this line of thinking, this thesis examines how the act of crafting dresses can inform the design of retail space while creating a deeper connection to clothing. Three dresses are designed, crafted, and curated to investigate clothing's ability to influence the autonomy, emotion, and movement of the body. The finished dresses are conceptualized into architectural retail space, allowing consumers to experience the designer's intention and creative process. This research aims to deepen the understanding of reciprocal relationships between craft, architectural design, fashion, and the human experience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Finally, to Cello and Polo, the goodest dogs who always greet me with an abundance of enthusiasm every time I come home. Thank you, Cello, for working all day and night with me. I know my sewing machine is scary to you.

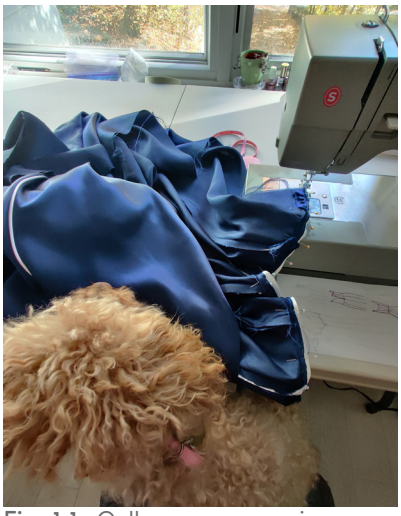

Fig. 1.1 Cello accompanying me as I sew.

DEDICATION

To those who long for time to dive into their undiscovered passions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

All images produced by author unless stated otherwise.

LIST OF FIGURES

All images produced by author unless stated otherwise.

LIST OF FIGURES

All images produced by author unless stated otherwise.

LIST OF FIGURES

All images produced by author unless stated otherwise.

LIST OF FIGURES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

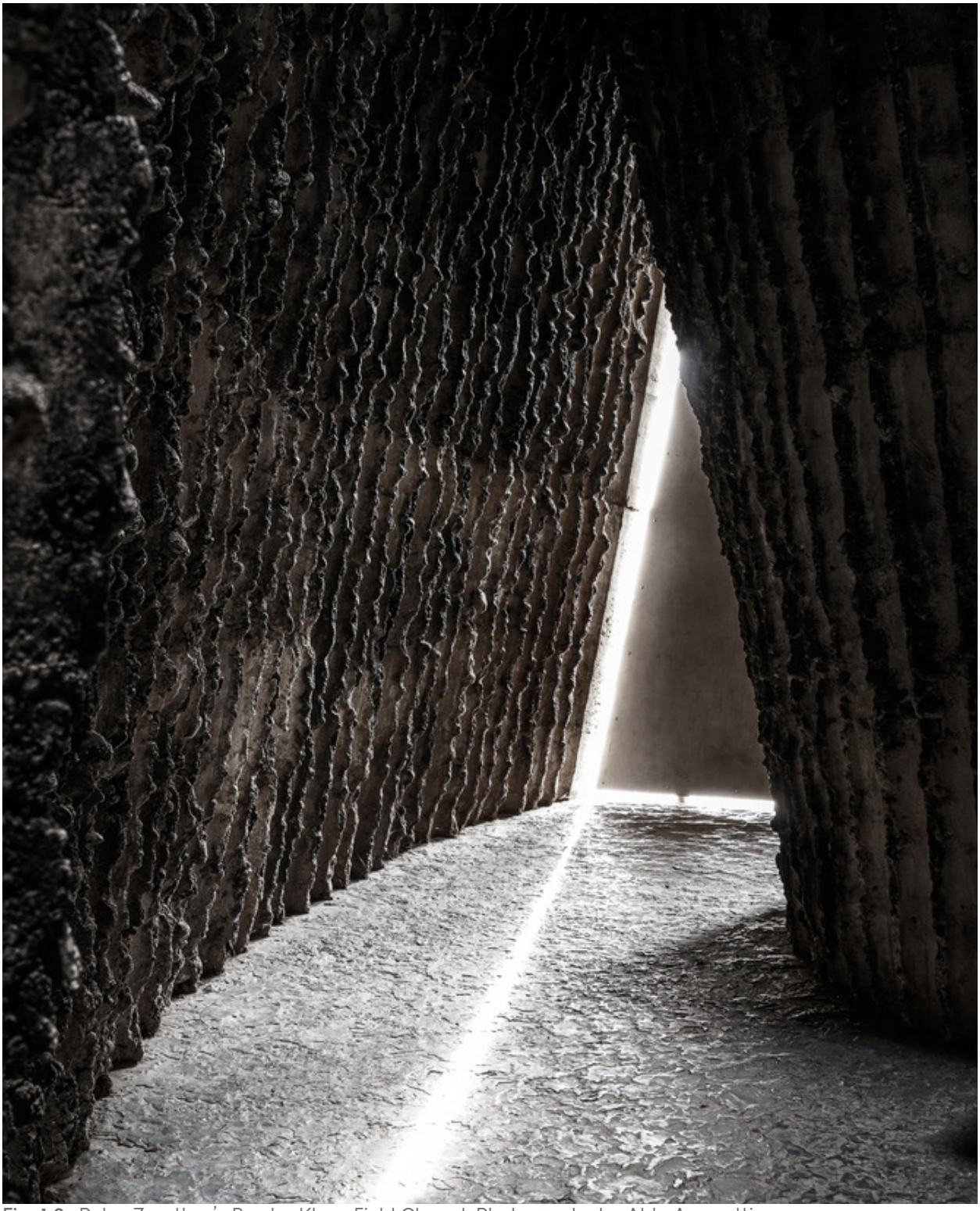

Fig. 1.2 Peter Zumthor's Bruder Klaus Field Chapel. Photography by Aldo Amoretti.

Architectural space is more than aesthetics, it's a careful curation of texture, material, scale, colour, and lighting that stimulates the senses of the human body to create unique feelings and experiences of space. Architecture exists in both a direct and indirect sense. Architecture in the direct sense can be seen in the built environment through buildings, interior spaces, and sculptural work. Architecture in the indirect sense can be understood by the way spaces create different atmospheres experienced by users. These are known as the sensory properties[1] in phenomenology, atmospheres can be imagined through physical contrasts in space like vast or small, light or dark, and cool or warm spaces. (Fig. 1.2) The architectural focus of this thesis is on creating atmospheres that rely on sensory properties to convey those impacting sensations.[2] These atmospheres are studied as interior spaces, specifically in retail stores for their dedication to catering to users.[3]

Clothing can also be understood as a space designed for people; it's the bounds within which a designer creates for a body to bring life. Andrea Shin Ling, a 2007 University of Waterloo Master of Architecture graduate, described how spaces can be found beyond architecture. In her thesis *The Girl in the Wood Frock*, she wrote:

> "Take for example, the envelope created by a kimono. A kimono comes in only one size and is made of six standardized rectangles of fabric. Without the body underneath, the kimono is flat, uniform, perhaps even meaningless, without spatiality or form. When worn however, the kimono becomes an original space, no longer standard but instead unique."[4] Fig. 1.3

Fig. 1.3 Outer Kimono for a Woman (Uchikake). Japan, 1920–1930. Image from the Khalili collections.

1 Rethinking The Future, "Coming Back to Our Senses: What Is Phenomenology in Architecture?," RTF | Rethinking The Future, April 24, 2019, https://www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/article/coming-back-to-our-senses-what-is-phenomenology-in-architecture/.

2 Gernot Böhme, *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres* (London: Routledge, 2016), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315538181.

3 Gensler, "Gensler Design Forecast 2021," 2021, https://www.gensler.com/uploads/document/750/file/Gensler-Design-Forecast-2021.pdf.

4 Andrea Shin Ling, "The Girl in the Wood Frock" (UWSpace, 2007), 52, http://hdl.handle.net/10012/3032.

Fig. 1.4 Zara in Richmond, BC.

This abstract understanding of space can be understood as any boundary that contains a user. The connection between clothing and a person is well understood in life. Clothing acts as an additional layer of skin, to shield the body from social expectations and provide a comfort zone for individuality. It's a form of expression of self, class, or culture regardless of how intentional a person's choice of clothing might have been that day.[5]

> When you try something on in a fitting room, you can already tell if you're going to like what you're wearing. Whether it's a feeling of ease in sweatpants or excitement in a ruffled skirt, clothes can instantly influence your emotions. You feel the way it moves with your body, hugging it tight or brushing lightly. In this small space, you feel compelled to test its structural limits by sitting down or stretching. When you step out or look in a mirror, you may ask yourself how you look or whether the clothing suits you. *Is it something I would wear?*

With the introduction of fast fashion, trends have taken over a large portion of consumers' purchasing which led to retailers designing their spaces solely based on products alone.[6] Clothing retail stores

5 Linda Grant, *The Thoughtful Dresser* (London: virago, 2009).

6 Muntaka Chasant, "Mountains of Clothes Washed up on Ghana

become volatile to these trends, morphing into anonymous spaces with generic designs creating a lack of authentic engagement with clothing.[7](Fig. 1.4) And in recent years, primarily from the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become increasingly apparent that brands need to shift their priorities towards building customer-focused retail experiences.[8] The global design and architecture firm Gensler created a 2021 design forecast in which they emphasize the need for retailers to shift their focus from selling products to building connections with customers.[9] This implies that brand loyalty will come by mixing customer engagement well into a company's values. Designers are now challenged to create welcoming and functional spaces that prioritize community over product-pushing. Designing spaces becomes a negotiation of staging experiences not to entertain the customers but to engage them.[10] This thesis proposes the recentering of retail spaces around the human body rather than around the products designed for them. The study of architectural spaces in Chapter 2 centers on the potential for architectural elements to create engaging atmospheres with the body.

Beach Show Cost of Fast Fashion," Shutterstock, July 27, 2022, https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/fast-fashion-ghana-clothes-waste-b2132399.html.

7 T Kent, "Creative Space: Design and the Retail Environment," *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 35, no. 9 (2007): 734–45.

8 Gensler, "Gensler Design Forecast 2021."

9 Gensler.

10 B Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy*, 1999.

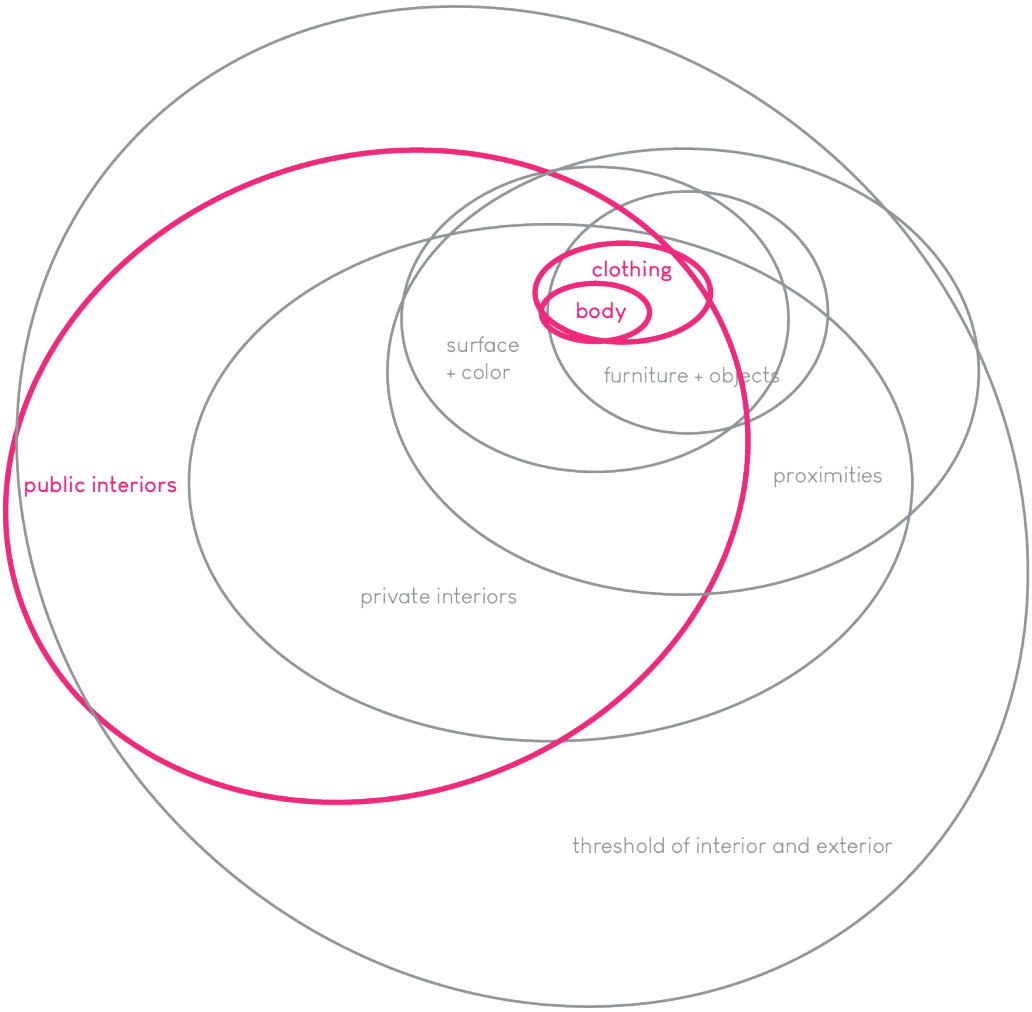

Fig. 1.5 Lois Weinthal's Mapping Interior Adjacencies diagram edited by author to highlight "body", "clothing", and "public interiors" as focus of this thesis.

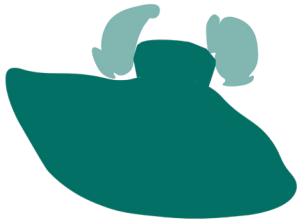

Fig. 1.6 Illustration of Dress 1 on Autonomy.

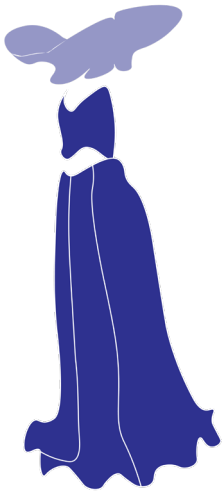

Fig. 1.7 Illustration of Dress 2 on Emotion.

Fig. 1.8 Illustration of Dress 3 on Movement.

Lois Weinthal, a Professor of Interior Design at the Toronto Metropolitan University, created an abstracted onion diagram to map the interactions of physical elements in interior spaces.[1] Ranging from the body to exterior space, her diagram includes 8 elements. Each element's layer grows as the diagram extends outward, overlapping with the previous one, biasing towards or away from the "body". This thesis focuses primarily on the relationship between body, clothing (dress), and public interiors, as highlighted in Fig. 1.5. The research starts by public interiors (retail and select exhibition spaces) to highlight ways that architectural elements influence the user's experience of space. Then, fashion designers are studied to uncover how their designs impact consumers' emotions and movement and how a designer's identity can influence their brand and the subsequent affect that has on the consumer. In this thesis, the intersection of fashion and architecture centers around the user; it's their engagement and experience that give a space meaning. For this thesis, this engagement between a person and a garment is categorized into three experiences. They can be identified as: *autonomy*, *emotion*, and *movement*. *Autonomy* is defined here as the personal connection a garment forms with the body of the wearer and how that affects the person's autonomy over the dress or over the space. (Fig.1.6) *Emotion* is defined as the influence clothing has on the direct and indirect thoughts and feelings of the wearer and audience. (Fig.1.7) *Movement* is defined as the way the garment moves with the body and how it influences their movement through space. (Fig.1.8) These three experiences between person and garment are tested through the craft, fit, and display of three dresses then translated into sensory properties to be implemented into the design of clothing retail stores.

11 Weinthal, "Mapping interior adjacencies."

1.1 SCOPE OF THESIS

This thesis approaches research through a method of research through crafting, specifically focusing on dressmaking. The driving research question is "How can dressmaking be used as a method to understand designing experiential interior retail spaces centered around the body?" Drawing inspiration from Andrea Ling's thesis (Chapter 2.2), it's evident the intimate connection that's formed between garment and crafter. Because of this, the research conducted in this thesis will be through dressmaking from scratch as opposed to purchasing or reconstructing existing clothing. This research seeks to continue the dialogue between garment and body through the lens of an architect-craftsman.

The scope involves researching unique interior spaces and the influence of fashion designers'[12] clothing on consumers. This research is limited to selected case studies of retail stores[13] and exhibition spaces,[14] chosen based on the author's personal experience. Each space will be analyzed in their architectural properties described through Volume, Circulation, Materials, Lighting, and Display. The properties will focus specifically on the consumer's journey through the space (rather than an employee's). The investigation into fashion designers will center on autonomy, emotion, and movement, unfolding into a discussion on the impact of personal motivations and design process on garments.

12 Kimberley Gordon of Selkie; Couture designers Alexander McQueen and Guo Pei; Issey Miyake of PLEATS PLEASE; architect Oskar Schlemmer from Bauhaus.

13 Aesop Yorkville designed by Odami Architects in Toronto, Canada; Burberry Flagship store designed by Vincenzo De Cotiis in London, UK; Harrods department store in London, UK;

14 Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Rooms in London, UK; OMA's Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams Exhibition in Tokyo, Japan

The continuation of this research will be done through the craft of a 3-piece dress collection, each representing an experience of clothing (Autonomy, Emotion, and Movement). These dresses will be carefully documented and analyzed, through process, photographs, and text, to understand the relationship between design decisions and their impact on wearers and audience. From this research, the experiential qualities understood in each dress will be described as spatial analogies that can be broken down into smaller spatial elements applicable to designing interior retail spaces. The schematic design of the spaces will mirror the experiences of wearing each dress.

The limitations of this thesis include the author's skill level and the overall time constraints of the master's program. Although I (the author) have prior experience in hand sewing, the first time I ever sewed a full garment using a sewing machine was in September 2022 when I began my thesis. My skill level has improved since then, but being completely self-taught, I chose to accept the imperfections of my dresses, favoring the process of crafting a finished prototype over iterating until perfection. The time constraint of this thesis required me to narrow my scope. When I first began, there were many ambitions of learning new software and skills used in the contemporary fashion industry like Blender and 3D-printing on fabrics. However, considering sewing full garments was already a new skill for me, I needed to prioritize that at risk of overwhelming and distracting my focus. Those additional skills can unlock new opportunities in the future for others to further research my thesis involving the reciprocal relationship between architect, craftsman, and consumer.

2.0 CONTEXT

Fig. 2.1 Aesop Yorkville, Toronto.

2.1 EXPERIENTIAL SPATIAL DESIGN

This section covers architectural case studies on unique retail stores and exhibition space. Each store has a unique approach to introduce the customer to the company. Brands are woven into the architecture. Each space will be annotated to identify how volume, movement, lighting, materials, and displays are used to create atmosphere and induce emotional reactions that support the company's intentions. Volume will be measure by the size of the store in reference to human scale. Movement is the experience of a shopper navigating through the space and how the architecture influences their interactions. Lighting primarily notes the use of natural and artificial lighting used to highlight consumers, space, and products affecting the overall atmosphere. Materials will cover decor and finishes including colour, textures, and fixtures. Product displays will be assessed by how they heighten or diminish aspects of the product.

2.1.1 AESOP

Aesop is a high-end skin, hair, and body brand started 1987 in Melbourne, Australia. The brand prides itself in meticulous detail and "intentionally weaving themselves into the fabric of the street".[1] Most recently, a new location opened in Yorkville, Toronto in 2022, designed by local architectural and interior design firm Odami. (Fig. 2.1)The small storefront is tucked away on a pedestrian side street a block away from the main road, creating a quiet nook for this welcoming store.

Volume – The store is 89sqm,[2] creating an intimate space for two employees and a few customers (approx. 4) to comfortably occupy the space.

Movement – The circulation of Aesop begins outside the store with a bottle of moisturizer outside the door labeled tester. (Fig. 2.2) The entrance to the store is met with a central sink. Walking in a clockwise direction, customers are directed towards a display wall then led to the sink to try the product. (Fig. 2.4) The employees walk customers through the space, explaining different formulas and scents of their products. Maintaining the customer's attention, the employee encourages the customer to wash their hands, giving them the opportunity to try out more products like soap and hand cream. This Aesop store had a perfume diffuser for customers to try, placing their scarf (or similar) inside and waiting 10 minutes. The multi-step circulation is an effective way to encourage customers to take their time in the store, test products, and get to know the brand. The cashier's counter is located towards the far end of the store rather than right at the entrance. (Fig. 2.3) This establishes a sense of trust between the customer and the employees, customers are not as pressured to leave with purchases. At the end of the loop in the corner is a secondary sink and cabinet area for an independent shopping experience to test products as if the customer is at home. (Fig. 2.5)

1 "Our Story | Aesop Canada," Our story | Aesop Canada, accessed March 5, 2024, https://www.aesop.com/ca/en/r/about/.

2 "Aesop Store Yorkville / Odami," ArchDaily, September 7, 2022, https://www.archdaily.com/988561/aesop-store-yorkville-odami.

Fig. 2.2 Tester bottles outside of Aesop Yorkville, Toronto.

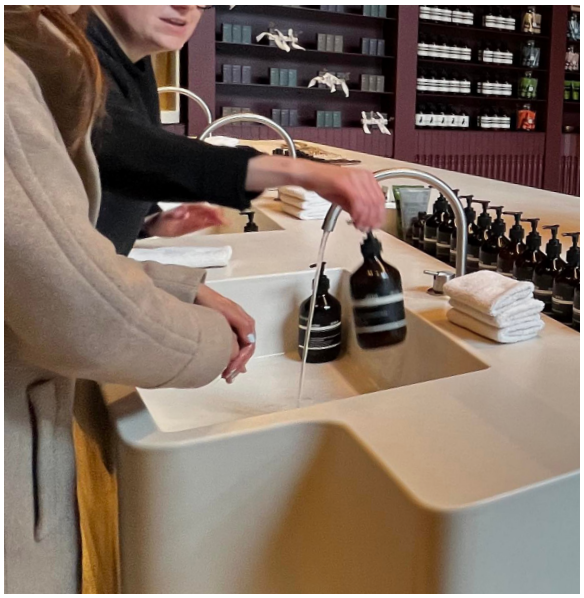

Fig. 2.4 Central sink for customers to test products.

Fig. 2.3 Cashier's counter at the back of the Aesop store.

Fig. 2.5 Secondary private sink area.(right)

Lighting – The lighting in the store is primarily recessed lighting with one frosted window at the front. The warm and diffused light fills the space brightening the dark interior and illuminating the white accents of the wash basin and products. The warm and natural light temperature adds to the welcoming and intimate atmosphere.

Materials – The store is painted in a deep burgundy colour and the walls are detailed with Victorian porch inspired wainscoting to mimic the architecture of Yorkville's houses.[3] The central wash basin is made of one solid white mass with carved out counter space and storage. The edges and corners are all rounded to reinterpret Victorian pedestal sinks.[4]

Display – Aesop's products display is integrated into the walls with only one or two rows of product on each shelf. The sparse and consistent amount of displayed goods maintains a minimalist and uncluttered look. (Fig. 2.6)Aesop's displays are meant to encourage customers to focus more on how the product feels rather than looks on their skin by not having any mirrors in the main area and without displaying price tags on the merchandise.[5] (Fig. 2.7)

3 "Aesop Yorkville," Odami, accessed October 30, 2023, https://www.odami.ca/aesop-yorkville.

4 "Aesop Yorkville."

5 "Aesop Yorkville." Referenced from the store clerk the author spoke to while visiting the store.

Fig. 2.6 Aesop products on display.

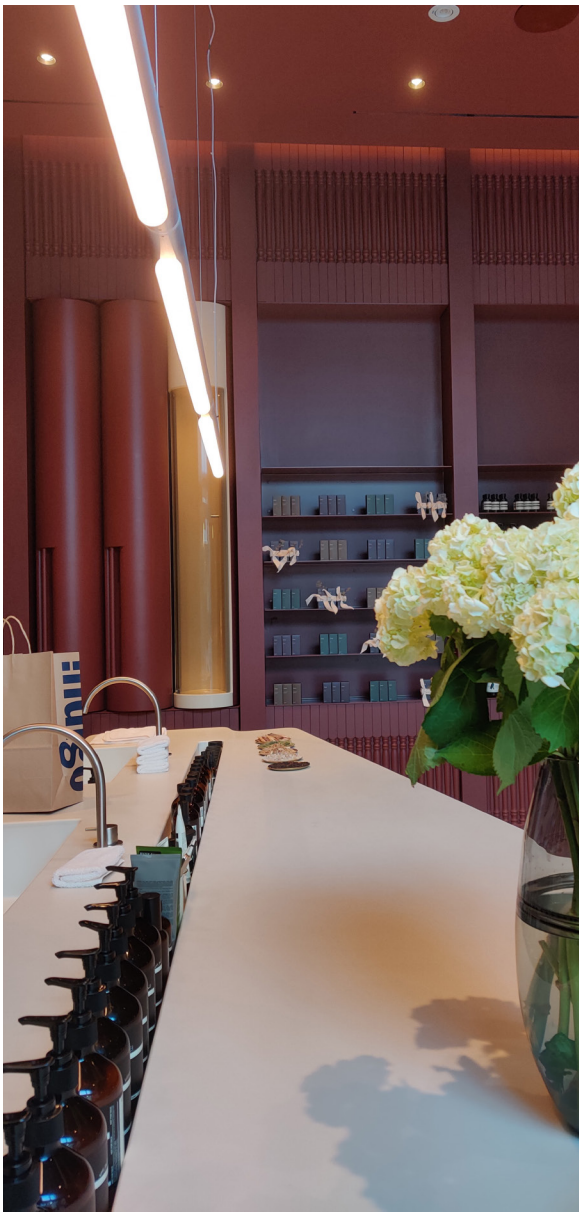

Fig. 2.7 Interior view of the Aesop store.

Fig. 2.8 Central staircase with mirrored ceilings to reflect the plaid pattern.

Fig. 2.9 Interior view of Burberry Flagship Store.

2.1.2 BURBERRY

Burberry is a British luxury brand founded in 1856 most known for their trademarked check and trench coat.[6] Their flagship store in London, UK designed by Vincenzo De Cotiis[7] in 2021 is a great example of how architects work with retail companies to represent branding through architecture.

Volume – The store is three-storeys and 857sqm. With low ceilings on the second and third floors, the products are emphasized towards the lower half of the room with nothing hanging down from the ceiling.

Movement – Navigating through the three floors is a central staircase encased in a glass box. (Fig. 2.8) The store has dedicated floors for men and women's clothing and accessories, which are suggested by architecture rather than signage. This way of separating floors encourages customers to shop with specific goals in mind instead of taking in everything at once.

6 "Burberry Heritage | Logo & Trench History | Burberry® Official," accessed March 5, 2024, https://ca.burberry.com/c/burberry-heritage/.

7 "Vincenzo De Cotiis Pays Homage to Burberry Check in Brand's London Flagship," Dezeen, August 10, 2021, https://www.dezeen.com/2021/08/10/burberry-london-flagship-vincenzo-de-cotiis/.

Fig. 2.10 Men's floor shoe section at Burberry, London. (left)

Fig. 2.11 Women's floor shoe section at Burberry, London. (above)

Lighting – The store is illuminated by direct and diffuse light in the form of pot lights and LED strip lights. The lights run linear throughout the store along the ceiling and, pairing with strips of black paint, create the iconic check pattern of Burberry. Recessive lights highlight key displays like the shoe displays and the curved central pod. (Fig. 2.9)

Materials – Burberry is known for their signature tan, white, and black check pattern. This signature check is used throughout the inside of the store, through the structure of the feature stair, lighting, and ceiling. The designated men's floor is aesthetically masculine featuring dark, industrial, and more sharp-edged furniture and fixtures. (Fig. 2.10) The women's floor by contrast uses neutral, soft, and rounder furniture for a feminine look. (Fig. 2.11)The windows differ from the two floors, with rectangular for the men's floor and round-arched windows for the women's.

Display – The store is designed with a gallery-like atmosphere through the abundance of glass, lights, and open space paired with minimal stock on display. This theme gives customers the freedom to wander the store at a leisurely pace. Products are displayed at eye-level, hung at the same height, making it easier to peruse and imagine on the body. Shoe displays are accompanied by seating and coffee tables.

2.1.3 HARRODS

Harrods in London, UK is one of the largest and oldest department stores in Europe. The building today stands on the roots beginning in 1880.[8]

Volume – Harrods is a 90,000 sq m department store with 330 departments spread across 7 floors.[9] Being among the largest stores in Europe, it's incredible scale towers over any flagship retail stores. Each company within Harrods has their own designated area where they have freedom to curate according to their brand. This translates to a variety of scales juxtaposed by department type. In the lower-end sections, brands use creative ways to showcase themselves in small areas. In Fig. 2.12, for example, brightly coloured furniture to draw attention to their clothing.

Movement – Navigating the 7 storeys, the architectural treatment of vertical circulation is given monumental weight. Each elevation change made the escalator or staircase the focal point through interesting shapes or dramatic decor. (Fig. 2.13) With how immense the store is, Harrods is equipped with physical and digital way finding to help guide customers, Fig. 2.14. At the start of each section sits a display highlighting every designer featured in that area. The store is sectioned into plaza-like large rooms divided by long promenades. Each area is organized in unique layouts with varying aesthetics to suit the merchandise. The decor acts as landmarks to help navigate through the store.

Lighting – The lighting throughout the store is relatively generic and simple to accommodate for the brands that vary over the years. A mix of track lights, overhead florescent lights, and centerpiece chandeliers are used to illuminate the merchandise. The lights illuminate the customers as much as the merchandise making it less about an experience and more about the priority of shopping.

Materials – Matching the grandeur of the store, the materials used throughout are sophisticated, vivid, and polished. From the high gloss floors of the jewelry department to the carpeted shoe section, the materials suit the needs of the department. Gold details are found within the architecture of spaces emphasizing the Harrods colours of green and gold.

8 "History of Harrods Department Store," *BBC News*, May 8, 2010, sec. Business, https://www.bbc.com/news/10103783.

9 "History of Harrods Department Store."

Display – Numerous architects and designers have worked on the store since its establishment in 1849, making it truly unique and have diverse interior and exterior architecture. Each department has specific decor and architecture used to accentuate the featured articles - dried flowers to match the colours of dresses and jewelry, built-in glass cabinets to display meats and cheese, fashionable busts for hats, wooden dining sets for funky clothing. (Fig. 2.15)

Fig. 2.12 Bright furniture to correspond to La Double J's clothing at Harrods.

Fig. 2.13 Escalators in Harrods.

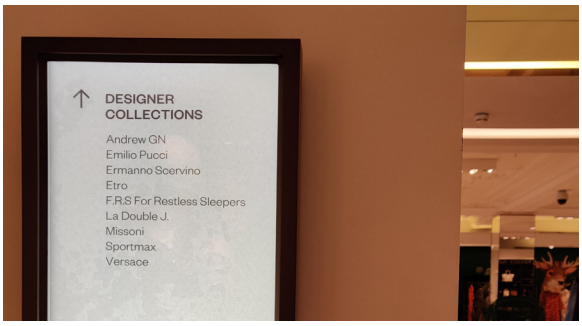

Fig. 2.14 Way finding in Harrods.

Fig. 2.15 Jewelry department in Harrods.

Fig. 2.16 Yayoi Kusama's Chandelier of Grief.

2.1.4 YAYOI KUSAMA: INFINITY ROOMS

Yayoi Kusama is a Japanese contemporary artist focusing her work on pop-art, abstract expressionism, and surrealism.[10] She became well-known for her pop-art and polka dots work in the 1960s while she lived in New York. At the Tate Modern Museum in London, UK, two of her immersive installations are found.

Volume – The Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Rooms consists of two temporary built rooms within the exhibition hall, each about 14sqm.[11] The gallery employees allowed ten people to enter each room at a time.

Movement – The first room, Chandelier of Grief has a single chandelier centered in the room encased in six panes of glass. (Fig. 2.16) Patrons enter and exit from one door and walk in a circle around the chandelier. The second room, Infinity Mirrored Room – Filled with the Brilliance of Life, Fig. 2.17, has a built-up walkway guiding patrons from

10 Tate, "Yayoi Kusama Born 1929," Tate, accessed March 5, 2024, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/yayoi-kusama-8094.

11 Tate, "Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirror Rooms | Tate Modern," Tate, accessed March 5, 2024, https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/yayoi-kusama-infinity-mirror-rooms.

start to finish. Patrons are encouraged to walk carefully on the narrow path while gazing at the lights and colours surrounding them.

Lighting – Both rooms are completely black using lights, props, and mirrors to create infinite projections, lighting the rooms. In the first room, the only light comes from the bulbs on the chandelier. In the second, hundreds of strings of lights hang from the ceiling to the floor falling just above the water. The mirrors and water reflect the light across the space; however, the room remains dark with a spectacle of colour. In the second room, the rooms remain dark enough to barely see where to take your next steps.

Materials – In the second room, the walkway is raised above a thin layer of water. With both the path and ground beneath the water painted black, the passageway is hard to see. The only visual distinction of the path from the water is from the lights reflecting off the water.

Display – The exhibition rooms use mirrors and lights as both the display and the centerpiece. In the first room, encasing the chandelier from first glance gives the impression of a simple display, however upon approaching the case an infinite number of chandeliers are projected into an expanded fantastic world.

Fig. 2.17 Yayoi Kusama's Filled with the Brilliance of Light.

2.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF CLOTHING

The following research studies the work of couture fashion designers, architectural researchers, and social psychologists to understand the effect that clothing has on its wearers. The references are organized into three categories addressing the ideas of how clothing can influence the sense of control, emotions, and movement of their wearer.

2.2.1 ON AUTONOMY

The following section covers a social psychology study, an architectural designer's master's thesis, and a luxury fashion designer's brand that have all used clothing as an opportunity to bring a new sense of self to its wearer; be it for increasing academic performance, (redefining themselves and) finding true love, or healing their inner child.

Social psychologists, Adam Galinsky and Hajo Adam, from Northwestern University published a paper on "Enclothed Cognition" in 2012. This was a study of how a clothing's symbolic meaning, even if physically identical, can influence the performance of a wearer.[12] Through three experiments, they held three focus groups to understand the implications of the tangible garment of a lab coat. The first group divided in two performed a series of tasks, one group performed in the presence of a lab coat hung in the room, the other without. The second focus group members wore a lab coat while performing the same test, without being told that the coat had any significant meaning. The third group all wore the same lab coat; however, half the members were told they were wearing a painter's coat, and the other half were told they were wearing a doctor's coat. Throughout the experiments, the researchers evaluated the results to see that the physical and symbolic meaning of the lab coat impacted the subjects' performance. In the end, the greatest performance was found when the members both wore the lab coat and were told it was that of a doctor.

The identification term "enclothed cognition", should encourage designers to be aware of the potential meanings

12 Hajo Adam and Adam D. Galinsky, "Enclothed Cognition," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48, no. 4 (July 2012): 918–25, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2012.02.008.

behind specific clothing items and how the final garments are presented or described before someone wears it. From Galinsky and Adam's experiments, it's understood that including a feature with significant symbolic meaning, whether intentional or not, will likely affect the experience of the wearer. Designers can experiment with other notable accessories with similarly strong symbols and use its enclothed cognition to help influence the wearer's sense of self and control.

Andrea Shin Ling, a Master of Architecture graduate in 2007 at the University of Waterloo, presented a thesis titled *The Girl in the Wood Frock*. The thesis follows folktale *Fair Maria Wood*, the story of how a girl's identity changes dramatically based on what dress she wears.[13] The story is one of many based the folklore, *Allerleirauh*, where a king promises his dying wife that he will only remarry someone as beautiful as she was, which unluckily he finds only to be his own daughter.[14] To delay the wedding with her father, the daughter asks him for impossible silk dresses to be made, each one more beautiful than the last. The final dress she asks for was to be made from a tree (so that she can hide herself in it). She wears the wooden dress over her silk dresses to protect them then runs away to hide in a forest. Later, a prince finds her and seeing her wearing the unappealing wood dress, he wrongfully assumes her identity and takes her in as one of his servants. When he hosts a ball, she attends wearing one of her silk dresses but changes back into her wood dress before the prince recognizes her. The story ends with the prince coming to the realization that the girl in the beautiful silk dress is the same person as his servant in the wood dress. He recognizes her beauty and marries her, freeing her from her father and welcoming her to a new life.[15] Ling designed and made three dresses in reference to the ones from the story, one made of felt, one of rubber, and one of wood. (Fig. 2.18, Fig. 2.19) Her thesis centers around the relationship between body and clothing and the construction of each dress.

13 Ling, "The Girl in the Wood Frock."

14 "Grimm 065: All-Kinds-of-Fur," accessed April 16, 2023, https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm065.html.

15 Thomas Frederick Crane, "Fair Maria Wood," in *Italian Popular Tales*, 10 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), 48–52, https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/crane010.html.

Fig. 2.18 Andrea Ling's wood frock dress. Image from "The Girl in the Wood Frock."

Fig. 2.19 Andrea Ling's felt dress. Image from "The Girl in the Wood Frock."

Fig. 2.21 Leiper, Kate. Illustrations for "An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Folk and Fairy Tales." Floris Books, 2012.

Fig. 2.20 Selkie's French Puff dress. Image from Selkie website.

Kimberly Gordon's *Selkie* is a ready-to-wear high fashion women's clothing brand that rapidly gained popularity over the past four years. (Fig. 2.20) Her brand specializes in plus-size romantic princess dresses and aims to help women reconnect with their inner child and express their femininity.[16] The Selkie brand is inspired by the Nordic folktale of selkie women, who live in the sea clothed by the skin of seals. Periodically disrobing from their seal skin, the women enjoy the sun on the shore. However, should a man steal her robe, she is forced to be his wife until she can recover it from him. The story concludes with the woman returning into her seal skin, reclaiming control over her life, and going back to her home in the sea. (Fig. 2.21) This rekindling relationship between a woman and her identity through a skin of a seal serves as a metaphor for understanding clothing's ability to allow the body to reclaim control.[17] The brand Selkie prioritizes their sustainability and ethical manufacturing with both Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP) and Business Social Compliance

16 "About Selkie," Selkie, accessed February 22, 2023, https://selkiecollection.com/pages/about-selkie.

17 "About Selkie."

Initiative (BSCI) production certification.[18] Through pre-orders and small batch releases, Selkie works with their manufacturer to ensure low waste and minimize excessive production.

Like the young girl in Ling's thesis slipping into her silk dresses to find joy, Selkie clothing gives women the freedom to dress as they please. Her inclusive-sized clothing allows for women of sizes XXS – 5XL to find themselves through their clothing. Selkie's successful consumer basis[19] proves a longing in the clothing market for unapologetic embraces of feminine symbols, like flowers, ruffles, and pastel colours. (Fig. 2.22) This success inspires the idea of designing as you please with the comfort of knowing that there is an audience who will feel themselves represented and accepted. Because her brand offers a wide range of sizes, Gordon was asked if her brand's primary focus is size inclusivity, she denies and says:

> "But for me, it's bigger than bodies, it's more about womxn[20] embracing the story of themselves and their own myth and fantasy. I want to ignite women to feel powerful enough to live their stories with pride, to change their lives with imagination, to get back up and go for it. Clothing is one of the greatest tools we have to express ourselves, and I think that accessible pastel, nostalgic voice was lacking in fashion before Selkie."[21]

Her response encourages inexperienced creators to center their journeys on exploring their own voice as a designer.

Fig. 2.22 Selkie Pouf Dress. Image from Selkie's website.

18 "More about Selkie," Selkie, accessed March 7, 2023, https://selkiecollection.com/pages/learn-more-about-selkie.

19 Condé Nast, "The Enduring Appeal of Those Viral Selkie Dresses," Glamour, August 19, 2021, https://www.glamour.com/story/the-enduring-appeal-viral-selkie-dresses.

20 "Why Womxn with a 'X' ? – Womxn's Center for Success." Accessed October 16, 2023. https://womxnscenter.uci.edu/why-womxn-with-a-x/. "womxn" is a term to encompass women, gender non-conforming individuals, genderqueer folk, and non-binary individuals.

21 "Small Brand Spotlight: Selkie's Fancy Frocks Make Dressing Up at Home Fun Again," *Daily Front Row* (blog), August 13, 2020, https://fashionweekdaily.com/small-brand-spotlight-selkie-kim-gordon/.

2.2.1.1 AUTONOMY AS A DESIGNER

A designer's work is a clear representation of themselves, it displays their aspirations, values, and passions. To recognize the sense of reclaiming autonomy as a designer, studying the biographies of famous designers can help to recognize the way personal journeys typically align with and lead to the design of their product.

Two designers that have clear narratives through their work is Kimberley Gordon of Selkie and haute couture designer Guo Pei. Kimberley Gordon tells the story of how she and her childhood friend founded a company together for almost a decade when her partner decided to take the brand in a new direction and cut her out of the company completely. This dramatic shift in her life's work left her feeling a deep sense of loss. In an article on *Fashion Week Daily*, she shares how she finds comfort in folktales. In that time of her life, she emphasized most with the story of Selkies.

> "I thought about all the women out there that have been trapped, soul searching, starting over, the women who had their dreams crushed, and how they must be like me looking for themselves again. I wanted to make a brand that was exciting and playful, and make women celebrate who they are inside."[22]

With this story of reclaiming control of life and redefining self worth, Gordon developed the brand Selkie. Her emphasis on romantic fabrics and silhouettes offers a sense of joy especially amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

22 "Small Brand Spotlight."

Fig. 2.23 "One Thousand and Two Nights" Guo Pei collection seen in the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. Photo by Gary Sexton. 2022.

Guo Pei's view of women (her main clientele) shows through in her designs. Her opinion is that "women should be like water: it looks soft and tender, but it's very powerful."[23] She grew up in a household with a very traditional view of gender roles and with her mother telling her stories of how ladies would dress before the Qing dynasty fell. A large part of her ambition as a designer is to bring back that greatness in Chinese fashion. She says her work expresses "a visually deprived nation's pent-up longing for imperial grandeur."[24] As a couture designer from China, Guo Pei is known for breaking the narrative of only cheap quality garments being made in China. She represents a revolution of acceptance of Chinese designers. Having entered the haute couture realm, she often negotiates between conflicting Eastern and Western expectations of beauty and high fashion. Her balance manifests into using her Western-oriented ready-to-wear line of clothing to help finance her Eastern-oriented impractical but "soul-fulfilling"[25] pieces that become magnificent expressions of art. (Fig. 2.23)

23 Judith Thurman, "China's Homegrown High-Fashion Designer," *The New Yorker*, March 14, 2016, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/21/guo-pei-chinas-homegrown-high-fashion-designer.
24 Thurman.
25 Thurman.

Fig. 2.24 Guo Pei's gown worn by Rhianna at the 2015 MET Gala. Image captured by Mike Coppola.

2.2.2 ON EMOTION

The following section covers clothing's ability to affect the emotion of the wearer, highlighting haute couture designers Guo Pei, Alexander McQueen, and Shaun Leane for their ability to transfer emotion from their garments to the models who wear them and to the audience who observes.

Guo Pei is an haute couture Chinese designer who became well-known in North America after the 2015 MET Gala when Rhianna wore one of her gowns. (Fig. 2.24) Her work is praised for her art piece-like gowns, unapologetically Chinese patterns and colours, and imperial grandeur.[26] Guo Pei draws her inspiration from the Qing dynasty royal garments. Through her designs, she shares and explores her own Chinese culture, introducing people to a new form of beauty in fashion. Her work challenges the negative connotation of fashion being "made in China" implying poor quality, cheap materials, and unethical labour.[27] She strives to prove that Chinese

26 "Bio," Guo Pei, accessed March 7, 2023, https://www.guopei.com/bio.

27 "Guo Pei's Couture Designs Are Inspired by the 'Extravaganza' of Chinese Royal History - Los Angeles Times," accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot/entertainment/tn-wknd-et-guo-

Fig. 2.25 Alexander McQueen's Microscope Glass and Ostrich Feather dress from VOSS collection of spring 2021.

Fig. 2.26 Shaun Leane's mouthpiece jewelery redefines the body's intervention in the space around it.

designers have a lot to offer and uses this motivation to embody pride and splendour into her clothes. She emphasizes that her designs are meant to be displayed in a museum more than to be seen on a runway or on the street, giving observers the opportunity to be drawn in and slowed down to appreciate and be moved by her work.

Another luxury designer is Alexander McQueen, known world-wide for his iconic clothing. Alexander McQueen and Shaun Leane are recognized by their aggressive and almost frightening clothing and jewelery (respectively) that trigger emotions of female empowerment in the models and explicitly projects those emotions onto the viewers as well.[28] In McQueen's spring 2021 VOSS collection, he designed a dress made of red microscope glass slides and ostrich feathers to speak to the conventions of women being aggressively scrutinized. (Fig. 2.25) "When you see a woman wearing McQueen, there's a certain hardness to the clothes that

pei-20190311-story.html.

28 Bradley Quinn, *Techno Fashion*, Illustrated edition (Oxford: Bloomsbury Academic, 2002), 46.

makes her look powerful. It kind of fends people off."[29] His work has a signature look that remains featured in all his work. His clothes, no matter whoever wears them, speak his language, conveying his concepts to the wearer and the observer. Alexander McQueen uses harsh silhouettes and stiff materials to shape and control the wearer. There are examples of his work using unconventional materials as fabrics including elements like chain-mail and armour which can be physically uncomfortable for the model to wear. This can cause her to feel a genuine sense of fear or pain that's displayed in the garment.[30] One of Saune Leane's jewelery pieces can be seen on the runway, Fig. 2.26. He is known for his jewelery pieces in Alexander McQueen's collections, and this one is an example of how his pieces inflict that idea of fear and aggression on the observer.

Fashion can be a powerful tool used to alter the impressions of a wearer to others and themselves. McQueen considered female empowerment together with aggression,[31] contrary to Pei achieving the same design goals through embracing traditional femininity.[32] Guo Pei compares herself to Alexander McQueen as being "night and day"[33] where her approach is much more joyful in its beauty rather than aggressive. Their dresses though completely opposing aesthetically are both impractical and runway-only attire, it's obvious that the models of either would not be able to do daily tasks in the dresses. The gold cape by Guo Pei that Rihanna wore at the 2015 MET Gala weighed over 40lbs.[34] In an interview with Rihanna, she explained that the grandeur of the gown made her almost feel silly with how fantastic it was before she stepped out and onto the red carpet.[35] In this way, Guo Pei follows a similar goal of haute couture designers and aims for shock factor in inflicting impressions onto the observer and wearer.

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29 Andrew Bolton et al., *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*, Illustrated edition (New York : New Haven, Conn: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 60.

30 Quinn, *Techno Fashion*, 47.

31 Bolton et al., *Alexander McQueen*, 60.

32 Thurman, "China's Homegrown High-Fashion Designer."

33 Thurman.

34 Condé Nast, "Rihanna Says She Felt Like a 'Clown' in Her 2015 Met Gala Dress," Vanity Fair, July 31, 2020, https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2020/07/rihanna-met-gala-2015-guo-pei.

35 Nast.

Fig. 2.27 Das Triadiches Ballett Costumes designed by Oskar Schlemmer. From Aaron Peasley's "The Legacy of Oskar Schlemmer".

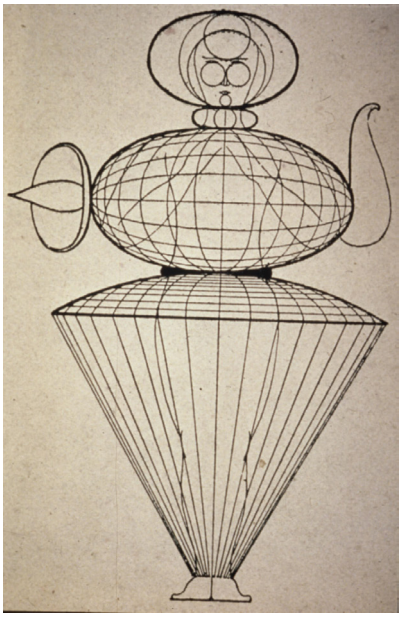


Fig. 2.28 Triad Ballet Costume sketches by Oskar Schlemmer.

2.2.3 ON MOVEMENT

The third expression of clothing explored in this chapter is on clothing's ability to influence the movement of the wearer's body both in the dress and through space. The following section focuses on luxury designer Issey Miyake and Bauhaus designer Oskar Schlemmer and the way their garments are designed with the intention of encouraging specific movement from the wearer.

Oskar Schlemmer is known for his exaggeration of the body through costume, primarily for theatrical performances.[36] His ambitions can be seen in his drawings of exaggerated geometric shapes layered over parts of the body. He sections the body into dramatic shapes, appending extensions to the existing curves and edges of the body. These costumes alter and enhance the movement of the dancers for the audience. The harsh manipulation of a dancer's body effects their performance and their interactions with other dancers, forcing them to move in specific ways to accommodate for the garment. (Fig. 2.27, Fig. 2.28)

36 Aaron Peasley, "The Legacy of Oskar Schlemmer," The Present Tense, January 9, 2018, https://present-tense.thefutureperfect.com/articles/oskar-schlemmer.

Fig. 2.29 Frankfurt Ballet Company dancing in Issey Miyake's PLEATS PLEASE.

Issey Miyake's PLEATS PLEASE is a Japanese luxury clothing line that specializes in a method of creating permanent pleats. One of his objectives with the clothing line was to help solve the issue of wrinkles in clothing, particularly for women traveling who need to iron or steam their clothes upon arrival. His pleats hold perfectly, being able spring back to their original condition with no signs of handling. Contrary to Oskar Schlemmer's constrictive costumes, Issey Miyake's pleated garments offer "the freedom of expression and its resulting joy" [37] to the people who wear them. His clothes inspire free-form movement, like dancing. Miyake once gave a collection of his garments to the Frankfurt Ballet Company to try and upon giving the clothes to the dancers, Fig. 2.29, Miyake noticed how his clothing influenced their movement:

> "From the moment they slipped into their costumes, they just started to move. For fun, the male dancers tried on the women's costumes. They ignored my instructions and started dancing in whatever suited their fancies. They seemed to be moving with such joyous abandon, I left it up to them." [38]

This act of dancing extends the body's spatial boundaries, encouraging movement in a positive light. His first inspiration for

37 Issey Miyake, *Pleats Please* (Taschen, 2012), 46.
38 Miyake, 36.

the pleats was a scarf, "folded in four and pleated at an angle"[39] and how unfolded, it transforms to a much larger fabric. Working in conjunction with his manufacturer, they built a mechanical system specifically to create his garments, rendering the garments to be timeless pieces rather than changing systems to follow fleeting trends.[40] Makiko Manigawa, the head of PLEATS PLEASE's textile department, developed a specific manufacturing method and machine to produce the clothes. Rather than typically pleating fabrics before sewing pieces together, the garments are fully cut and sewn to create an enlarged garment and then passed through the pleating machine to form the permanent pleats.[41] His designs become these lightweight, yet highly structured garments. The spaces formed between the body and fabric allows for plenty of air to move in between. This allows for the silhouettes of the body to be redefined. Issey Miyake's work is well documented both in the process of creating the garments and their finished look. The photographs are telling and curated such that the viewer can understand the relationship between clothing and body. (Fig. 2.30)

Fig. 2.30 PLEATS PLEASE featured in Vogue captured by Francis Giacobetti, 1999.

These two designers present different ways of approaching the same concept of extending the body's space. Issey Miyake's manipulates textiles in a way that focuses on fluidity to achieve changing silhouettes and inspire movements, whereas Oskar Schlemmer uses rigidity in his fabrics and structures to create restraints of the body.

39 Miyake, 34.
40 Miyake, 72.
41 Miyake, 82.

2.3 STATE OF THE ART

The following section covers work that investigates similar questions to those posed in this thesis.

2.3.1 SARAH LIPSIT: BODY MEETS SPACE. SPACE BECOMES DRESS.

Sarah Lipsit, a 2018 Master of Architecture graduate from Toronto Metropolitan University, wrote her thesis "Body Meets Space. Space Becomes Dress". Her thesis focused on the intersection of fashion and architecture through the method of making. Working at a diverse scale, she produced over 100 prototypes testing fabric manipulations from garment making, deconstructing, and casting. Her thesis questions "soft architecture" to operate within the space between body and envelope and explores how fabric can be used as precedent for interior space.[42] As part of her material explorations, Lipsit casts fabrics in concrete then uses a thimble to represent a scaled figure occupying the casted space, Fig. 2.31. Her thesis work concluded in a curation of her thesis defense room, displaying her work, Fig. 2.32. This thesis draws inspiration from the documentation of her thesis and continuing the discussion of translating clothing into architecture.

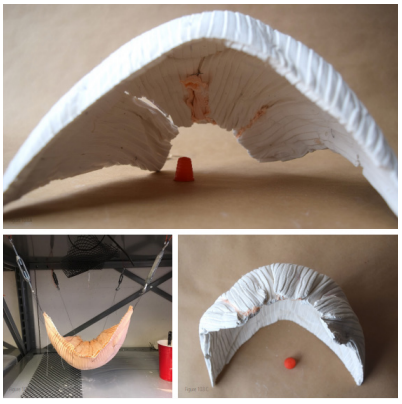


Fig. 2.31 Fabric casting done by Sarah Lipsit in her thesis.

42 Sarah Lipsit, "Body Meets Space. Space Becomes Dress." (thesis, Toronto Metropolitan University, 2021), https://doi.org/10.32920/ryerson.14648382.v1.

Fig. 2.32 Thesis defense exhibition photograph and plan of the space by Sarah Lipsit.

2.3.2 CHRISTIAN DIOR: DESIGNER OF DREAMS EXHIBITION, JAPAN

The 2023 Dior exhibit in Tokyo, Japan designed by OMA is an example of harmonious space and garments, Fig. 2.33. The aim of the exhibition is to celebrate Dior and its relationship to Japan.[43] Through 22 curated rooms, OMA worked with different techniques, materials, and motifs that reference traditional Japanese culture and the history of Dior.

> "In one of the key themes of the exhibition, "Dior and Japan", a winding path and pockets for display along it, akin to stations of the Japanese Tea Garden, is expanded vertically and horizontally. The wooden structure is wrapped in backlit Tenjiku fabric and Awagami washi paper, creating a layered, luminous backdrop for the garments and artifacts. The three-dimensional landscape is projected onto with various patterns and motifs to further activate the space."[44]

The rooms follow a narrative of the fashion house's close and evolving relationship with Japan. The storytelling is both "very tectonic and modern but grounded in the restrained and disciplined beauty authentic to Japanese culture,"[45] explained Shigematsu, one of the partners at OMA. One of the other rooms, uses traditional Japanese washi paper as part of the interior wall finish to help reflect the strong influence Japan had on Dior. The architecture of the exhibition celebrates the garments by acting as the perfect backdrop. Extending washi paper to such an extreme scale in an artful and whimsical way makes the architecture feel like an artifact among the clothing, Fig. 2.34. This exhibition helps inspire the proposed retail space of the dresses produced in Chapter 4. In the same way the Dior exhibit caters the space to enhance each garment's properties, creating a reciprocal relationship between space and dress, so will the approach to retail spaces be in the thesis. Through nuanced changes in eye-level, mannequin, lighting, and backgrounds, even adjacent garments are understood uniquely.

43 "OMA Creates 'Stage for Storytelling' for Dior Exhibition in Tokyo," Dezeen, February 10, 2023, https://www.dezeen.com/2023/02/10/oma-scenography-dior-exhibition-japan-storytelling/.

44 "Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams," OMA, accessed November 12, 2023, https://www.oma.com/projects/christian-dior-designer-of-dreams.

45 "OMA Creates 'Stage for Storytelling' for Dior Exhibition in Tokyo."

Fig. 2.33 "Garden of Flowers" by artist Ayumi Shibata and OMA's Shohei Shigematsu.

Fig. 2.34 Feature room using Washi paper by OMA's Shohei Shigematsu.

3.0 METHODS AND MATERIALS

3.1 RESEARCH THROUGH DRESSMAKING

The methodology of this thesis follows a structured approach that integrates research, design, and experimentation in the craft of dressmaking. (Fig. 3.1) The process of dressmaking will be as followed:

1. Design Ambition: Critical analysis of relevant literature to establish clear objectives.
2. Pattern: Development of dress elements through drawing and layout, translating design concepts into fabric.
3. Execution: Implementation of the dressmaking process, focusing on craftsmanship and attention to detail.
4. Documentation: Comprehensive documentation through annotated process photos and supporting text to capture the making process.
5. Display: Curating and presenting the completed dresses to visually communicate their impact and the feelings associated with wearing them.

The dressmaking is then presented as a series of sensory properties that can used in the design of experiential spaces.

The duration of this thesis project is estimated to be 20 months, encompassing the research, experimentation, design, and presentation of findings.

3.2 MATERIALS

The Singer Heavy Duty sewing machine is used to construct the dresses. The fabric used to create Dress 1 is 1 yard of cotton and 3 yards of organza. The cotton acts as the lining of the dress to give the organza opacity. The organza gives the dress the lightweight and voluminous shape. Dress 2 uses 4 yards of satin and 2 yards of organza. Satin is chosen for its luxurious shine and non-stretch properties. Dress 3 used 8 yards of polyester. 100% polyester is required for holding pleats because it the heat applied melts the plastics in the fabric, deforming the fabric.

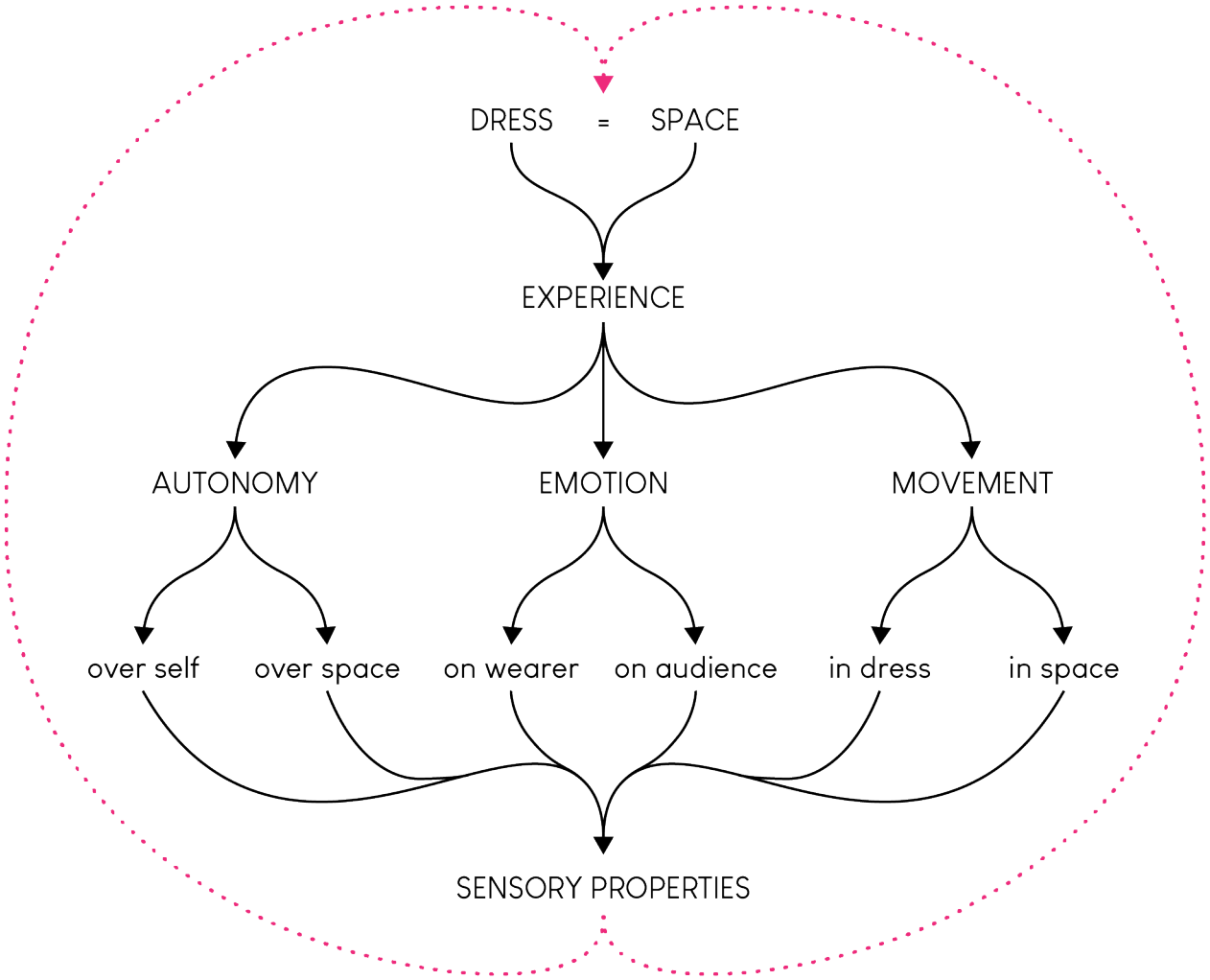


Fig. 3.1 Methodology diagram.

4.0 F/W 2024 EXPERIENCE COLLECTION

4.1 DRESS 1// RECLAIMING AUTONOMY

Fig. 4.1 Close-up on hem of Dress 1. Photography by Leah Dingman.

4.1.1 DESIGN AMBITION

The intention of Dress 1 was to mimic Kimberley Gordon's Selkie Puff Dress that first debuted in 2020.[1] (Fig. 4.2) Styled after fairytale whimsical wear, the Puff Dress went viral; inspiring women to "heal their inner child"[2] by allowing themselves to indulge in playful and colourful dresses. Sewing this dress without the use of an existing pattern and documenting the process will explore experimenting with contrasting volume and structure in fabric. The ambition of this dress is to use dressmaking as a method for reclaiming self and space much like the Selkie women in the folktale.

The dress will be comprised of three key pieces: the bodice, sleeves, and skirt. The bodice will be a simple assembly of panels hugging the chest. The sleeves will be exaggerated voluminous puffs designed to make the dress appear as though it is hanging from the body. The length of the sleeves will fall just above the elbow. The skirt will be a circle skirt, with multiple layers connecting just below the breast line to create the iconic empire waistline puffy silhouette. This combination will result in a dress that sits comfortably on the body of the wearer, securely fastened around the chest, and welcoming to joyous movements like twirling and jumping. (Fig. 4.3) Having the skirt start above the waist allows the legs to move freely. The layering and density of the skirt thickens the distance between the legs and the air around the body. The design of the skirt and sleeves supports the body's reclamation of space by widening the physical proxemics around the wearer. The resulting dress is intended to encourage feelings of joy and freedom.

Fig. 4.2 Image from Selkie's Pouf dress collection.

1 "The Puff Dress," Selkie, accessed March 27, 2023, https://selkiecollection.com/collections/puff-dresses.

2 "More about Selkie."

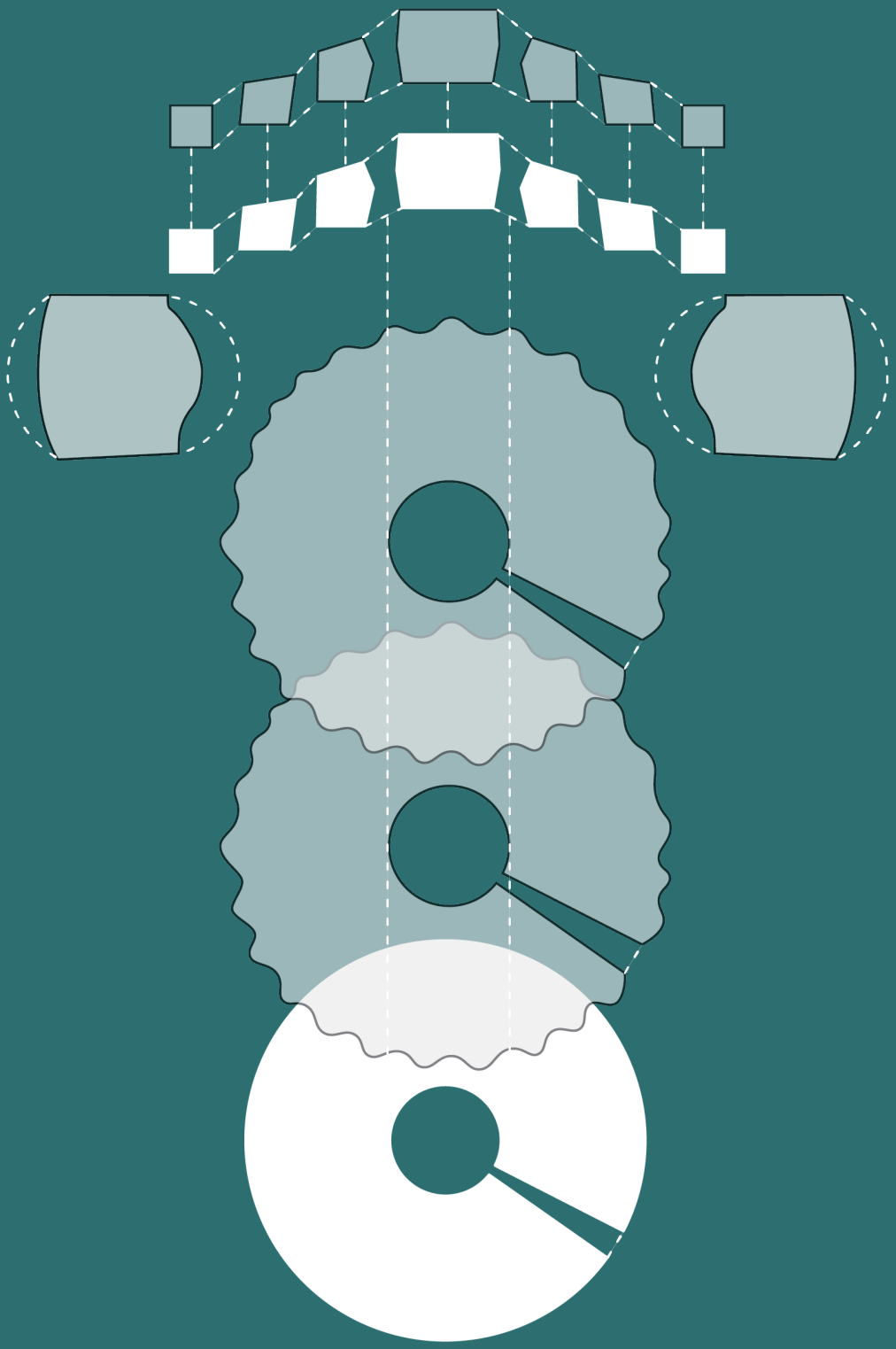
Fig. 4.3 Sketch of Dress 1.

4.1.2 PROCESS

Dress 1 began with the custom design of a new pattern. Tutorials were relied on for guidance in approximating shapes and dimensions, primarily for the design of the sleeves.[3] The dress was designed to consist of a 10-piece pattern as seen in Fig. 4.4. The patterns were cut from paper and laid over fabric, with sufficient seam allowance. Seam allowances are necessary ½-in margins along all edges of the stitching line to account for overlaps of fabric when creating seams. For the skirt, the circumference was limited to the width of the fabric and was designed to provide optimal volume while making efficient use of the fabric.

Fig. 4.4 (right) Diagram of all components of Dress 1.

3 DIY / Puff Sleeve Dress *dreamy Fairycore | Merry Sewbean EP 1, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DNXeiEKN3M.



4.1.2.1 BODICE

The bodice pieces are double layered, the inner layer is black cotton, and the outer layer is green polyester organza. (Fig. 4.6) To add contrasting volume and structure to the dress, the bodice is designed to be well-fitting to support the dress on the wearer. For extra structure, French seams are used to connect all the pieces of the bodice together. This consists of enclosing four layers of fabric into a narrow channel acting as faux boning to give the bodice more structure and support. (Fig. 4.5) The bodice can be made longer to alter the height at which the skirt attaches to the chest. This dress was designed to have the skirt flow from just below the bust, creating an empire waistline. (Fig. 4.7)

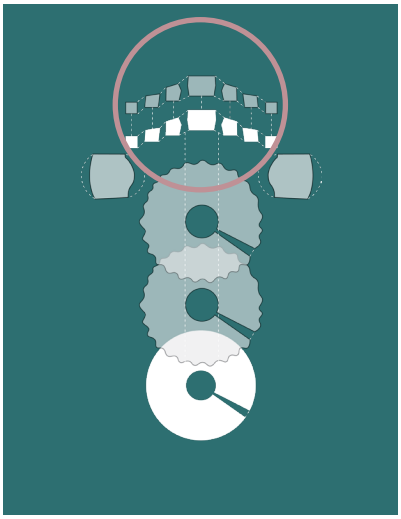


Fig. 4.6 Dress 1 key diagram.

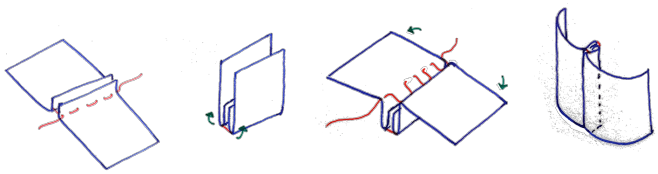


Fig. 4.5 Diagram of a French seam, raw edges are fully encased within the fabric.

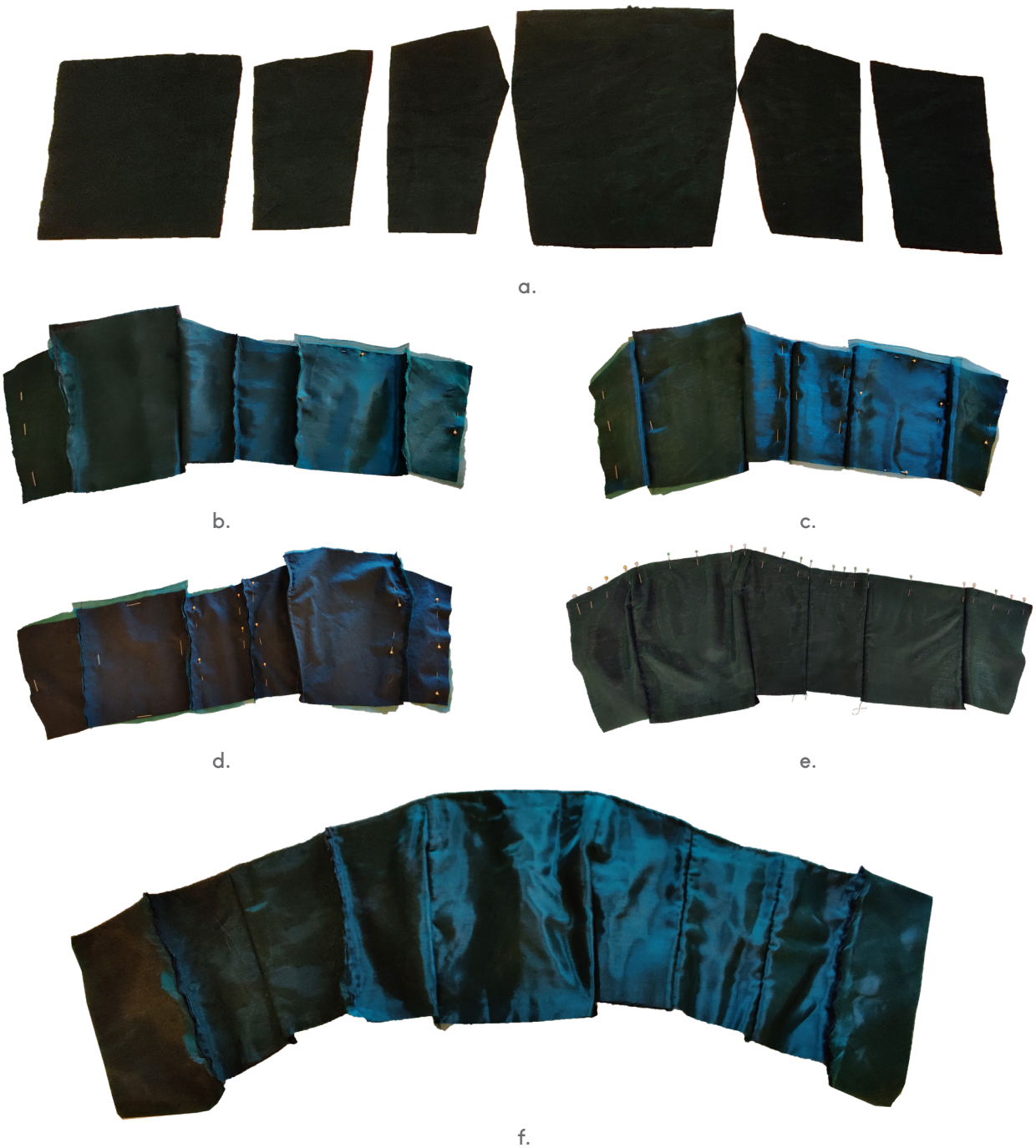


Fig. 4.7 Bodice construction.
a. Cut out the bodice pattern.
b. Sew wrong sides together.
c. Sew right sides together.
d. View from back side.
e. Fold over raw edges and apply a top stitch for a cleaner edge.
f. Append additional panels to attach the zipper.

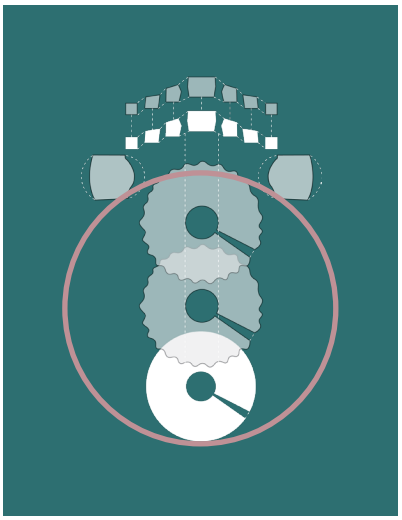


Fig. 4.9 Dress 1 key diagram.

4.1.2.2 SKIRT

The primary qualities of the skirt are its cloud-like silhouette and ruffled hem. (Fig. 4.9) A variety of fabric gathering techniques were tested to achieve the desired silhouette. (Fig. 4.8) While sewing machines can create an even fabric gathering through tension and stitch length adjustments, the final gathered length is unknown from the start. Gathering the skirt layers required working with a limited length of fabric needed to fit to the inner circumference of the skirt, making manual gathering the most viable choice. The manual process of shrinking the larger outer layers to align with the inner layer's circumference resulted in complications. Inconsistencies in gathering led to uneven puffiness along the circumference of the skirt. Fortunately, with two layers of organza, the imbalance of the first layer could be masked with the second layer. (Fig. 4.10-15)

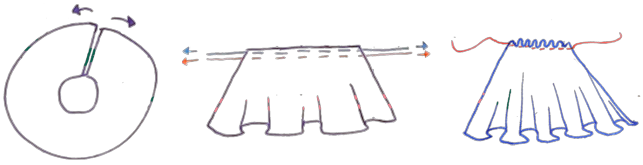


Fig. 4.8 Diagram on how to gather fabric using a basting stitch.

The skirt's hem presented a challenge in selecting the best finishing technique. Organza's delicate nature and alternating weaves make it prone to fraying without proper care of finishing its edges.[4] Three edge treatments were tested: rolled hem, overlocking, and lettuce hem. A rolled hem involves folding the edge inward to conceal the raw edge, then sewing it shut. However, due to organza's transparency and difficulty in folding, it was difficult to execute. The transparency revealed uneven folding, and fraying was visible despite the sealed edges.

Overlocking hems require the use of a serger machine. Despite multiple attempts, the fabric kept getting caught in the machine, resulting in uneven stitching and ruined edges. The serger was too intense for the delicate fabric. The machine would easily lift and catch on the edges of the organza, getting it caught in the machine and tearing it.

4 "What Is Organza Fabric: Properties, How Its Made and Where," Sewport, accessed September 17, 2022, https://sewport.com/fabrics-directory/organza-fabric.

Fig. 4.10 Cutting out the outer organza skirt layer by folding a square piece of fabric into quarters then cut out arcs.

Fig. 4.11 Cutting out the inner cotton skirt layer with a smaller inner radius.

Fig. 4.12 Unfold skirt layers, shown overlayed.

Fig. 4.13 Sewing a basting stitch across the inner circumference.

Fig. 4.14 Aligning the outer layers to the inner layer of the skirt.

Fig. 4.15 Gathering the skirt layers and sewing together.

The third method was a lettuce hem, Fig. 4.16, which consists of gently rolling the edge, pulling on the fabric, and applying a tight zigzag stitch. The abundance of thread wrapping the edge of the fabric paired with tension of the thread and the inner tension of the fabric creates the ruffled, lettuce-like edge. When this technique is repeated on all three layers of the skirt creates a beautiful assembly of ruffles. (Fig.4.17, Fig. 4.18)

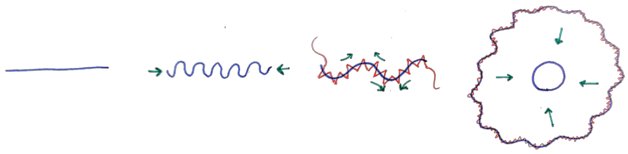


Fig. 4.16 Diagram of skirt hem treatment. The use of a zigzag stitch to create internal tension in the skirt resulting in a lettuce hem.

4.1.2.3 ASSEMBLING SKIRT TO BODICE

To assemble the skirt and bodice together, the pieces need to be sewn and for a zipper to be added. (Fig. 4.19-Fig. 4.22) The pieces are pinned to a dress form mannequin first to ensure the desired a baby-doll silhouette. To keep raw sides inside, right sides are sewn together and ironed smooth. Sewing an invisible zipper requires precise pinning and stitching as close to the edge as possible. Sewing pins are used to hold the teeth of the zipper open and then carefully sewn along the zipper. The zipper spans from the top of the bodice to 4-inches down the skirt. It's important to ensure that the dress opening is wide enough to put on and take off the body. The remainder of the skirt is lastly sewn together.

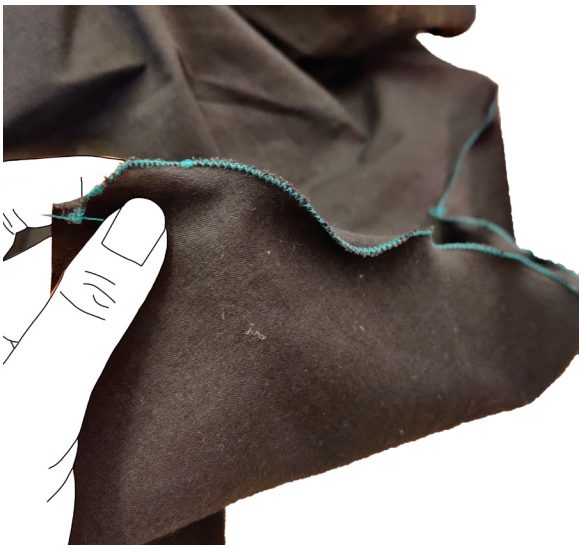


Fig. 4.17 Applying a lettuce hem to the inner cotton layer.

Fig. 4.18 Applying a lettuce hem to the outer organza layer.

Fig. 4.20 Pinning and sewing together the bodice to the skirt.

Fig. 4.22 Unfolding the dress.

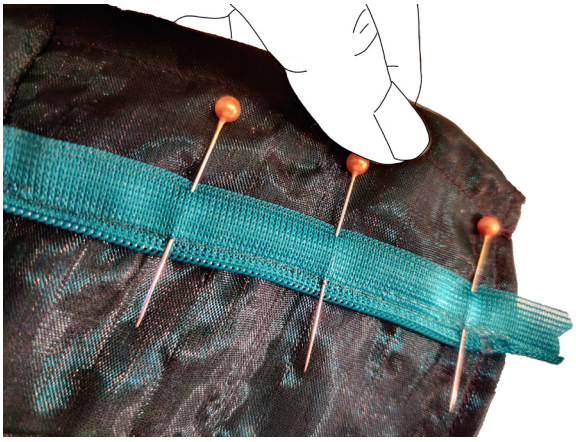


Fig. 4.19 Pinning the zipper to the bodice.

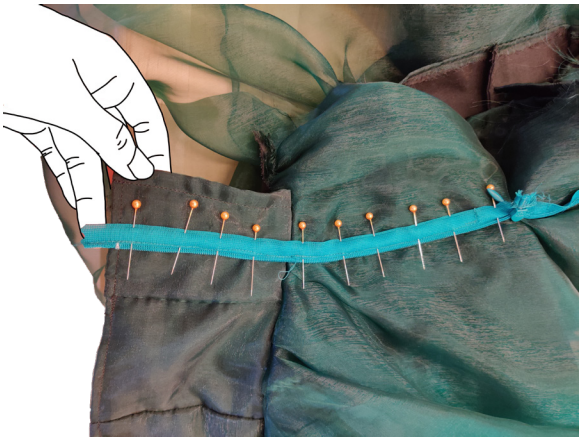


Fig. 4.21 Aligning the zipper to the assembled dress.

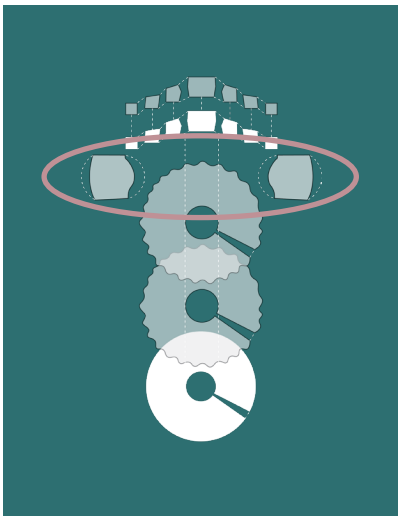


Fig. 4.28 Dress 1 key diagram.

Fig. 4.25 Completed bodice.

Fig. 4.23 Back view of the skirt pinned to the bodice.

Fig. 4.24 Side view of the skirt pinned to the bodice.

4.1.2.4 SLEEVES

The dress sleeves are made of one layer of organza each. (Fig. 4.28) They are first cut to the shape of the pattern, then channels are made along the top and bottom edges of the sleeve to thread an elastic around the shoulder and elbow. The channels automatically gather the fabric to the length of the elastic, creating puffiness on both ends. Like hemming the skirt, the sleeve edges are finished in a lettuce hem. After stitching the sleeve into a tube, they are pinned and attached to the bodice, completing the dress. (Fig. 4.23-27)

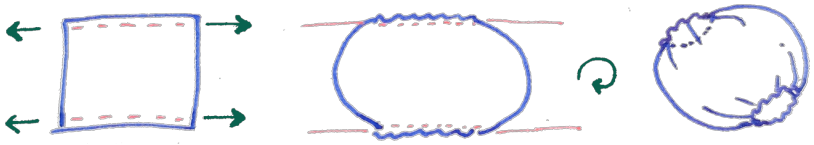


Fig. 4.26 Diagram on using the basting stitch method from the skirt to the sleeves.

Fig. 4.27 (right) Making the puff sleeves.

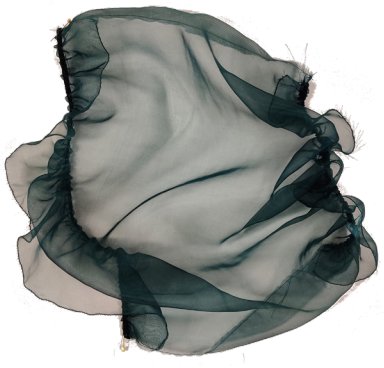
a. Cut out the sleeve pattern.
b. Apply zigzag stitch to all edges of the sleeve.
c. Create a channel at the shoulder for elastic. Fold the fabric two inches in to create an extra ruffle.
d. Create another channel and the bottom of the sleeve.
e. Insert elastics measured to the circumference of arm and shoulder.
f. Sew the sleeve together. Pin and stitch it to the dress. Then repeat for second sleeve.

a.

b.

c.

d.



e.

f.

4.1.3 EXPERIENTIAL ELEMENTS

Stepping into the short puffy dress, she pulls it over her body. The dress envelops her chest in a delicate yet firm embrace. As she slips her arms through the sleeves, they form weightless bubbles around her. The skirt floats down to its complete length, thickening the distance between the skin of her legs to the air around her.

As she takes her first steps, the cloud-like skirt takes on a life of its own by responding to her every step with a graceful bounce. The dress becomes a companion to the wearer, like a childhood best friend, it encourages her desires and mirrors her movements, while remaining loyal to its own shape. The dress accompanies her as she takes larger strides, leaps of joy, and twirls. The skirt floats above her knees extending her body's radius for a moment.

Out in public, the dress harmonizes with her inner self. It brings out the joy and childlike wonder of her personality. It shares her spotlight, highlighting her best features and giving her the confidence to do as she pleases. The dress becomes more than clothing on her body, it becomes a feeling, a feeling of lightness, grace, and enchantment.

Fig. 4.29 Dress 1 skirt flared.

Fig. 4.30 Dress 1 seated.

Fig. 4.31 Dress 1 twirling series.

Fig. 4.32 Dress 1 dancing series.

4.2 DRESS 2 // EMPOWERING EMOTION

Fig. 4.33 Front of Dress 2. Photography by Taylor Murray.

Fig. 4.34 Guo Pei's Couture Fantasy, Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 2022. Photograph by Gary Sexton.

4.2.1 DESIGN AMBITION

The understanding of femininity in couture by Alexander McQueen and Guo Pei, as outlined in Chapter 2, is based on grand gesture (exaggerated silhouettes, vibrant colour, bold detail). In their work, the garments impact emotions of the wearer and viewer. Alexander McQueen's feminine garments differ from Guo Pei's by being harsh and almost violent compared to Pei's ornamental details and luxurious look. (Fig. 4.34) For this second dress, it will combine concepts of sleek silhouettes, decorative elements, and grandiose pieces to speak to both designers (Fig. 4.35). The silhouette celebrates the feminine figure while the decorative elements will exist as ornamental tectonics. Tectonics are understood as a structural expression of joinery designed to be either expressed or hidden. In this thesis' collection of dresses, it's understood as the connection points between two pieces of fabric. In Dress 1, connections were specifically hidden with French seams. In contrast, this dress draws attention to the edge condition through highlighted white trim. The grandiose element to Dress 2 is an accessory collar and train. The collar's exaggerated floral shape and long train adds a dramatic effect to the simple bodice and open back.

Fig. 4.35 Sketch of Dress 2.

Fig. 4.36 Front of Dress 2. Photography by Taylor Murray.

Fig. 4.37 Back of Dress 2. Photography by Taylor Murray.

4.2.2 PROCESS

The process for Dress 2 began with a desire to add structural elements into the fabric to see how that might affect the final product. Part of the goal of adding structure is to highlight the tectonics (connections and seams) of the fabric, making it contrast Dress 1. This highlight is created by white satin piping edge trim sewn along each connection point of the skirt and edge of the bodice (Fig. 4.36). Structure is used further in the accessory collar to create a framework for organza to be stretched and flow from. The accessory neckpiece surrounds the wearer in a floral like vessel at the neck, that then floats to the floor behind them.

The dress hangs on the body from two points on the shoulders and is comprised of two key pieces (the bodice and the skirt) connected by a string of beads along the front and back (Fig. 4.37). The bodice is made from a simple fabric that gently clothes the model's chest. The A-line skirt is panelized in 8-pieces, that gently flows out from the waist and falls to floor-length. The dress plays with negative space by using delicate connecting points between the two pieces of the garment. The connections of the dress are outwardly celebrated in two ways, through the string of beads and through satin piping between the 8 panels of the skirt. Fig. 4.38 shows a diagram of all components of the dress.

Fig. 4.38 (right) Diagram of all components of Dress 2.

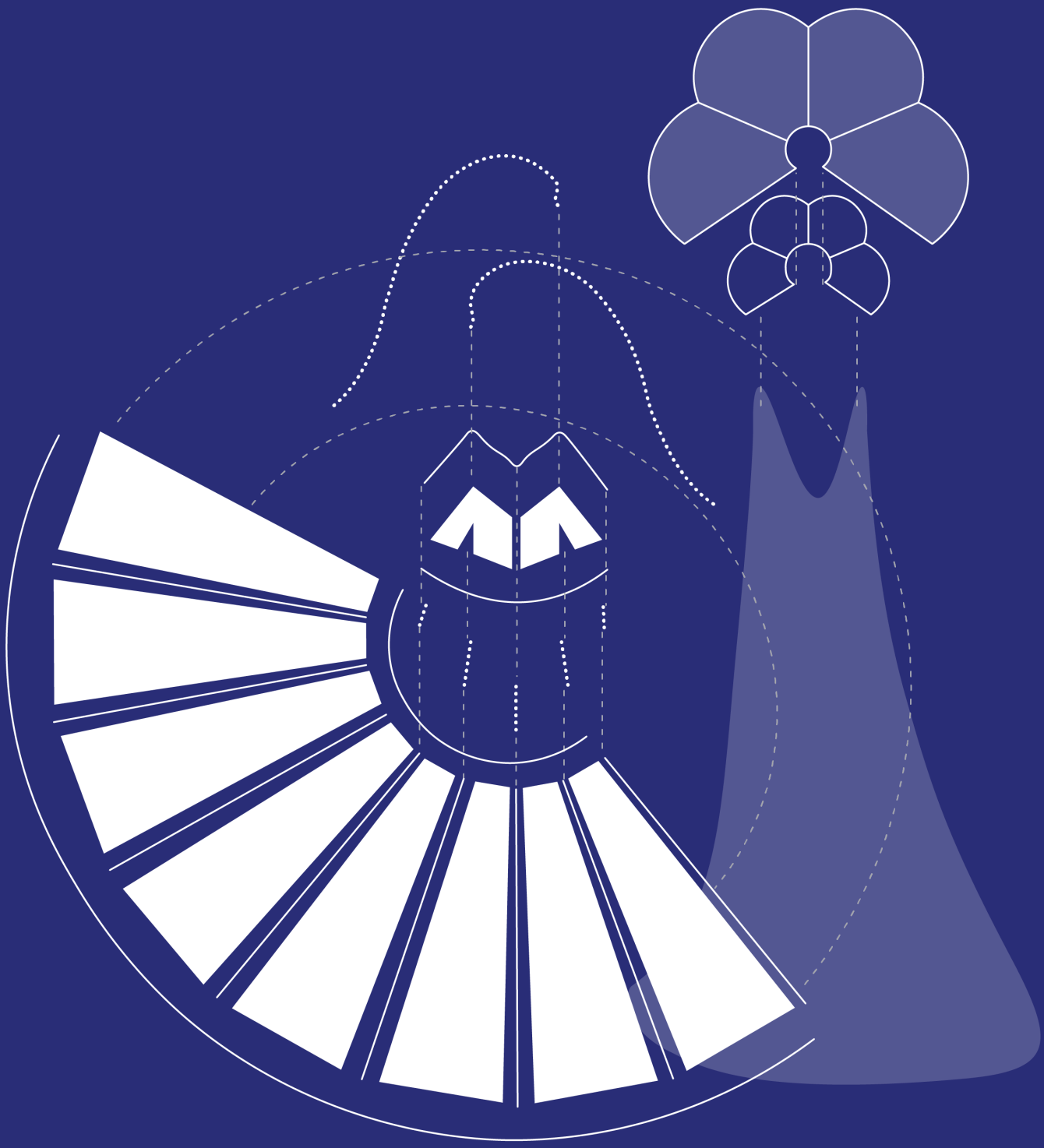


Fig. 4.42 Dress 2 key diagram.

4.2.2.1 BODICE

After sketching out some potential ideas, a first bodice was made of scrunched-up organza bounded to a flat piece of cotton and stitched into a corset-like top (Fig. 4.39, Fig. 4.40). The seams were external using upright channels with zip ties as boning (as typically used as an alternative in making corsets) (Fig. 4.41). The shape of the bodice and fabric choice was too similar to the look and feel of Dress 1. Because of this, the approach shifted from working with organza to satin, which is intended to speak to Guo Pei's regal style.

Fig. 4.39 Basic components of the first iteration of the bodice laid out.

Fig. 4.40 Components of the first iteration of the bodice.

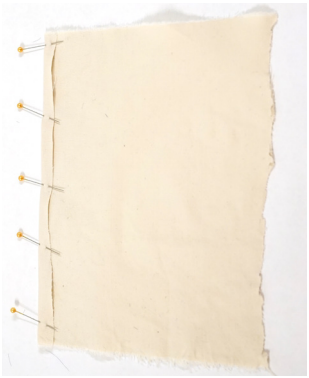
Fig. 4.41 (right) Process of creating the first iteration of the bodice for Dress 2.
a. Laying organza piece with under-layer panel.
b. Ruching organza and measuring to fit to under-layer panel.
c. Pinning the organza in place for the desired ripple-like effect and trimming it to shape.
d. Straight stitching organza to the under-layer to secure the two pieces.
e. Creating a channel out of cotton under-layer fabric.
f. Sewing the channel in place then cutting it to size and sliding the zip-tie boning inside.
g. Pinning the boning to the bodice, aligning raw edges together
h. Sandwiching the boning between two panels of the bodice by placing right sides together, then straight-stitching along the outer edge of the zip-tie.
i. Unfolding the panels to reveal the boning between the panels.

a.

b.

c.

d.



e.

f.

g.

h.

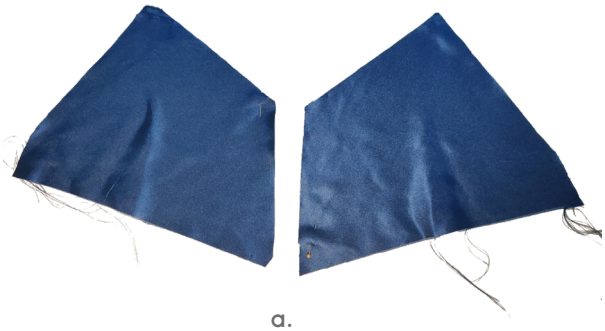
i.

Fig. 4.43 Pinning the bodice to a mannequin to map out the darts beneath the bust.

Fig. 4.44 The completed bodice on the mannequin.

A second prototype was mapped on the mannequin, noting where the darts (V-shaped cuts made to taper fabric) are needed to contour the body (Fig. 4.43, Fig. 4.44). The final bodice was made of two symmetrical pieces of satin, covering the chest and aligning with the seams of the skirt. Using the satin piping, the bodice is outlined by folding over the edge of the fabric and tucking the raw edge behind the piping (Fig. 4.45).

Fig. 4.45 (left) Process of creating the final bodice for Dress 2.
a. Cut out the two panels of the bodice.
b. Sewing the two pieces together along the centre.
c. Pinning and sewing the white trim along the top and side edges of the bodice.
d. Sewing the darts beneath the bust to follow the natural contours of the body.
e. Pinning and sewing the white trim along the bottom edge of the bodice.
f. Completed bodice.



a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

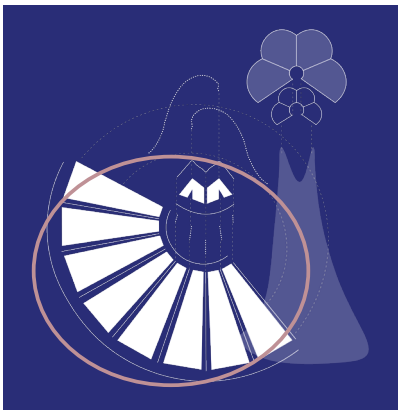


Fig. 4.46 Dress 2 key diagram.

Fig. 4.47 Attaching the white trim to the panels of the skirt.

4.2.2.2 SKIRT

The design of the skirt began by mapping the waistline of the skirt on the mannequin. Maintaining the feminine and luxurious intentions, the waistline drops to create a low back. Based on the paneling of the original bodice, the skirt is made of 8-pieces laid out to make a semi-circle (Fig. 4.48). As opposed to the cloud-like skirt in Dress 1 that used the geometry of a circle, a semi-circle results in a subtle twirl, falling more straightly around the wearer's legs. Before stitching the panels together, the satin piping is sandwiched in between to offer structure and visual interest (Fig. 4.46, Fig. 4.47). Creating the seams through the sandwiching method is difficult to ensure straight lines since it requires sewing blindly through the multiple layers of fabric. The height difference under the sewing machine foot between the fabric and the piping results in an uneven surface to push the fabric through. Since the cleanest look comes from sewing closely to the edge of the piping, the non-straight sewn lines are corrected by hand sewing. See Fig. 4.49 and Fig. 4.50 for the last steps of the skirt in attaching the white trim and zipper.

Fig. 4.48 Completed skirt with white trim between each of the 8 panels.

a.

b.

c.

Fig. 4.49 Attaching the white trim to the waistband of the skirt.

a. Pinning the white trim to the waistband of the skirt. Image shown from the inside of the skirt.
b. Straight-stitching the trim in place. Image from the proper side of the skirt.
c. Ironing down the raw edge of the trim and hand-sewing it in place.

Fig. 4.50 Attaching a zipper to the side of the skirt.

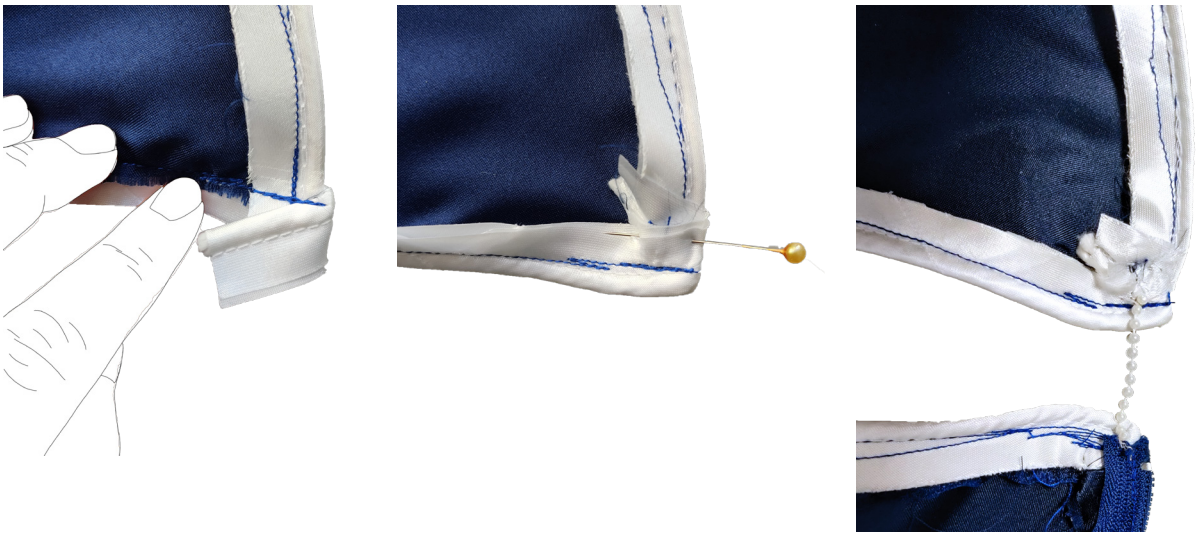
Fig. 4.51 Bodice and skirt after attaching beads view from front.

Fig. 4.52 Bodice and skirt after attaching beads view from back.

4.2.2.3 ASSEMBLY

The dress pieces are connected by a string of beads hand-sewn into the fabric (Fig. 4.54-Fig. 4.56). The beads create the straps holding the dress on the body. Drawing cross on the back from the left shoulder to the right lower back and right shoulder to left lower back creates a more secure fit to the body (Fig. 4.51-Fig. 4.53). This cross method for straps ensures the dress stays on the body with movement. The beads create a stark contrast from the opaque and vivid colour of the dress.

Fig. 4.53 String of beads connected to the dress forming a cross pattern at the back.



a. b. c.

Fig. 4.54 (above) Images showing the edges of the trim on the bodice are finished at the corners.

a. Condition of the raw edge of the trim hanging off the bodice.
b. Folding the excess trim up and pinning in place to sew.
c. Sewing the trim to conceal raw edges and adding the string of beads to connect the bodice to the skirt.

Fig. 4.55 Hand-sewing beaded string to bodice.

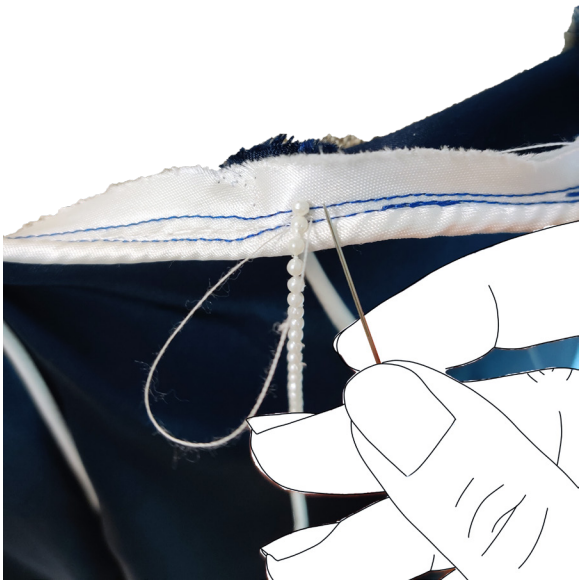


Fig. 4.56 Securing the beaded string to the skirt by looping and tying knots at the junction of beads.

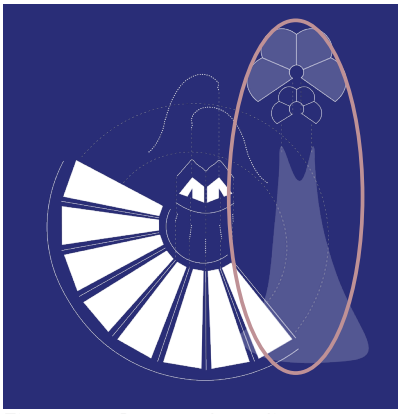


Fig. 4.61 Dress 2 key diagram.

4.2.2.4 NECKPIECE AND TRAIN

To construct the accessory collar, a first prototype was made using wire and cotton (Fig. 4.57). The structure was insufficient to hold the shape of the collar so a new different approached was needed. To start, 18- and 22-gauge wire was measured, cut, and bent to fit the circumference of a neck. A stack of three was made, chained together and built to a height of 2.5in (Fig. 4.58, Fig. 4.59). Then, using the 18-gauge wire, four large arcs were connected to the main neckpiece to create a floral assembly (Fig. 4.60-Fig. 4.63). Cutting another four pieces of wire, the process was repeated and attached to the lower collar.

The second part of making the neckpiece was to add organza. The organza is the same fabric that was used in the first attempt of the bodice. The fabric was measured and cut to cover the sculpture then pinned and hand-stitched it in place. The collar itself is held by wrapping around most of the neck, the sharp edges of the metal are cushioned by the organza. (Fig. 4.65-Fig. 4.69)

Fig. 4.57 First prototype of the accessory collar using straight pieces of metal and cotton.

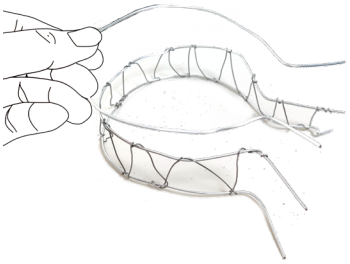


Fig. 4.59 The collar starts from three pieces of 18-gauge wire measured to friction fit around the neck.

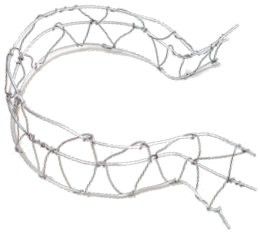


Fig. 4.58 The three pieces of wire are attached using a 22-gauge wire to create triangular intersections for structure and stability.

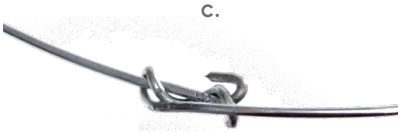
Fig. 4.60 (right) Step-by-step process of tying three pieces of wire together at the intersection of the petals.

a. Straight piece of wire to form the petals at the edge of the collar.
b. Tip of wire is curled into a loop using pliers.
c. The attaching wire is inserted to the loop.
d. The attaching wire is looped around the first wire to create a knot.
e. The two wires are folded to compress the loops into a tighter knot to ensure they cannot rotate out of place.
f. The third attaching wire is threaded through any loop opening.
g. The process is repeated, looping the third wire.

a.

b.

c.



d.

e.

f.

g.

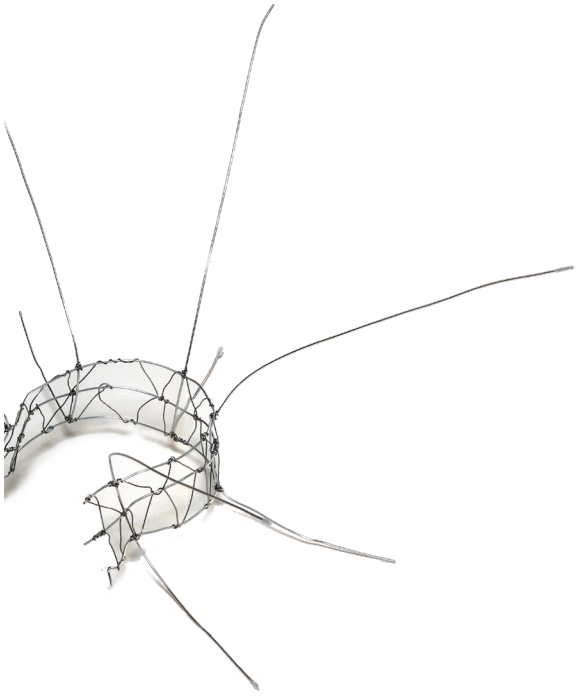


Fig. 4.62 Wire collar with added petal stems.

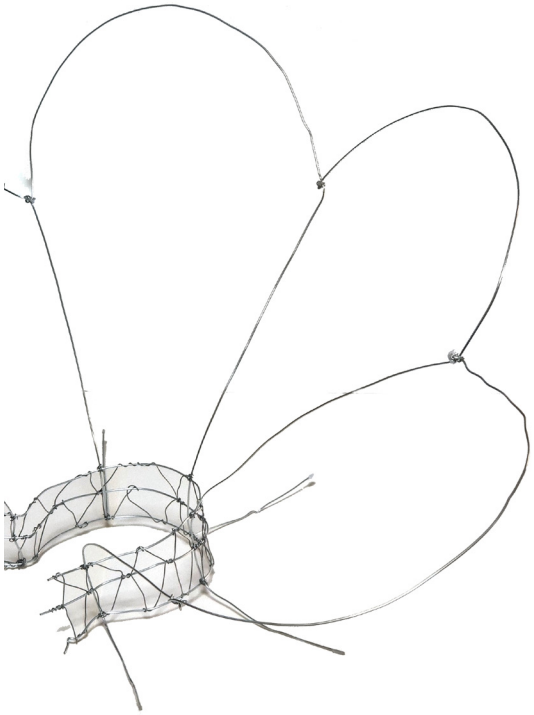


Fig. 4.63 Wire collar with rounded petal pieces attached.

Fig. 4.64 Organza cut and hemmed to drape over the floral neckpiece.

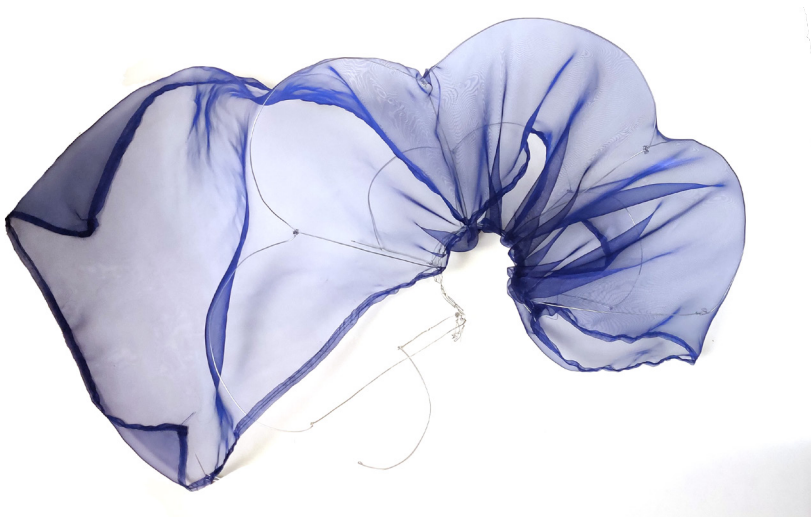


Fig. 4.65 Draping, pinning, and hand-stitching the organza over the floral neckpiece.

Fig. 4.66 (right) Excess organza around the collar before it's ruched.

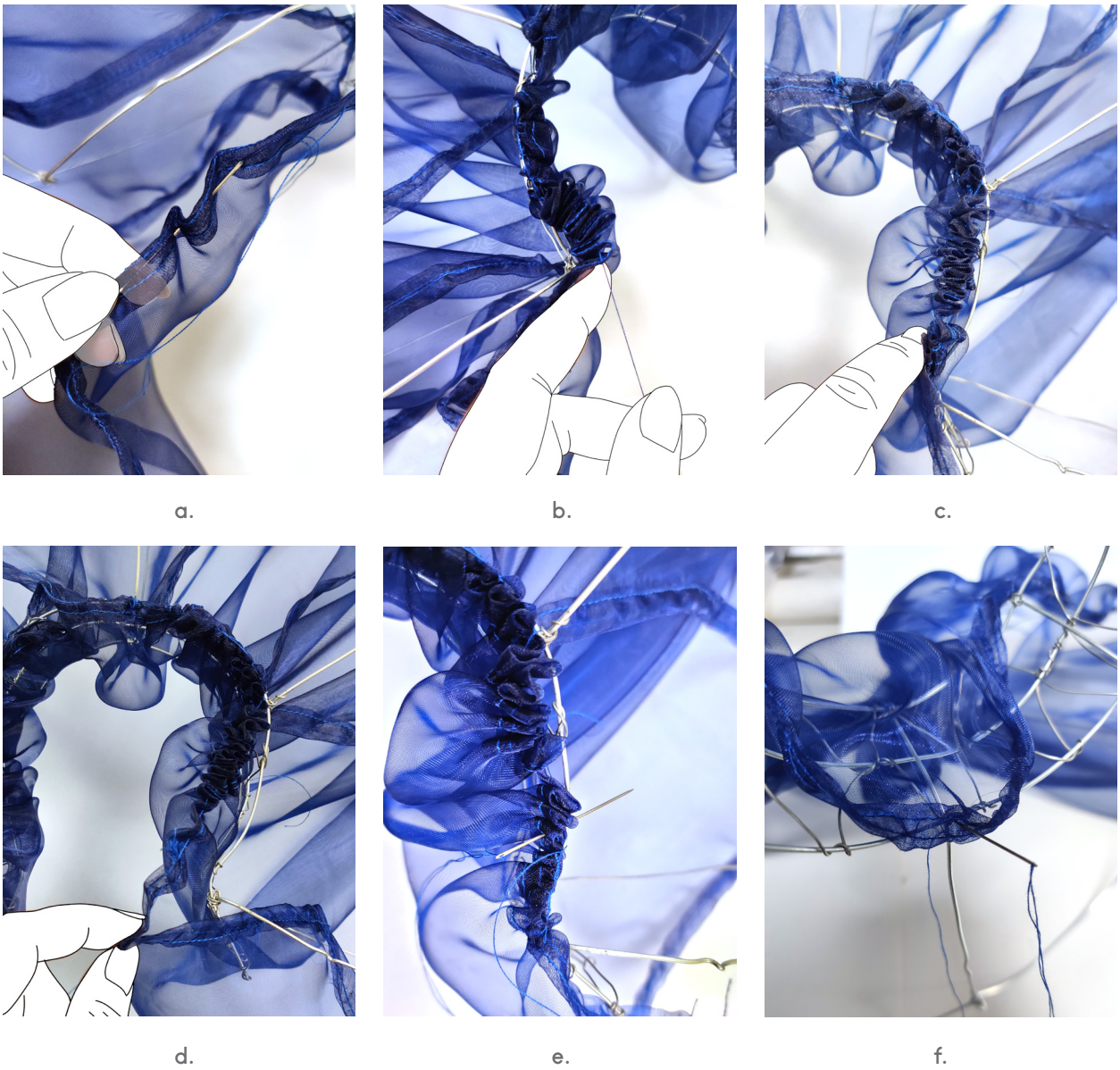


Fig. 4.67 Step-by-step process of tying three pieces of wire together at the intersection of the petals.

a. Straight piece of wire to form the petals at the edge of the collar.
b. Tip of wire is curled into a loop using pliers.
c. The attaching wire is inserted to the loop.
d. The attaching wire is looped around the first wire to create a knot.
e. The two wires are folded to compress the loops into a tighter knot to ensure they cannot rotate out of place.
f. The third attaching wire is threaded through any loop opening.

Fig. 4.70 Top of train hand-stitched to the corner of the lower petals of the neckpiece.

Fig. 4.68 Completed floral neckpiece view from above.

Fig. 4.71 For added strength, the top of the train is wrapped around the metal then stitched again in place.

Fig. 4.69 Completed floral neckpiece seen on mannequin with the dress.

2 yards of the organza were used to create a long train. The train starts from two points by the shoulder of the neckpiece (Fig. 4.70, Fig. 4.71). Draping the fabric to the floor, it was cut into shape then finished to conceal raw edges. The train is cut lengthwise, along the non-stretch grain of the fabric, resulting in the finished vertical edges maintaining a straight line. The bottom of the train is shaped in an arc and is cut partially along the bias where the fabric has the most stretch (Fig. 4.72-Fig. 4.74). Similar to Dress 1, cutting and sewing along the bias results in a lettuce-like hem. The train was completed by hand stitching it to the neckpiece.

Fig. 4.72 Organza draped into the train of the neckpiece to help determine length.

Fig. 4.74 (left) Finished train with lettuce hemmed edges to respond to the ripple-like effect throughout the dress.

Fig. 4.73 Organza trimmed to desired length.

4.2.3 EXPERIENTIAL ELEMENTS

Unzipping the dress, she slips her legs into the skirt and pulls the beaded straps over her shoulders. Standing up, the slippery satin sweeps across the front of her body trailing its way into place. The skirts' edge hits the floor.

As she begins to walk, she feels the weight of the dress and the train following behind her. Each step she takes carefully. Pushing the heavy satin against her legs, she's forced to take smaller steps as to not trip or accidentally step on the dress itself.

The neckpiece collar feels tight around her neck, it's almost aggressive in its embrace. Pressing against her skin, it will leave a faint imprint once it's gone. Wrapped in a delicate organza, the wire and fabric harmonize together to offer a shimmering veil for her face and body. It softens her silhouette while revealing glimpses of her exposed skin underneath.

Despite the discomfort, she feels a sense of empowerment wearing the garment. As she moves through the room, all eyes are on her. She walks with pride knowing how majestic she looks, knowing that beauty can often require sacrifice.

Fig. 4.75 Looking through the floral neckpiece.

Fig. 4.76 Seated wearing the completed dress highlighting the shimmering effect of the organza train layered over the satin dress.

Fig. 4.77 Dress 2.

Fig. 4.78 Dress 2.

Fig. 4.79 Dress 2 train veiling the body.

Fig. 4.80 Dress 2 train veiling the face,

Fig. 4.81 Dress 2 train as veil.

4.3 DRESS 3// MANIPULATING MOVEMENT

"In their movement, the dancers breathe life into the artist's shapes and space, offering experience, touch, and feel as they close the gap between the abstract and the human."[1]

1 Chen, "The Man in the Machine."

Fig. 4.82 (left) Dress 3 skirt close-up.

4.3.1 DESIGN AMBITION

The third dress will draw inspiration from the works of Oskar Schlemmer and Issey Miyake. In Schlemmer's Triade Ballet, Schlemmer designed ballerina costumes made from stiff materials to project basic geometric shapes like spheres and cones over the human body. This results in rigid and comedic movements.[2] Issey Miyake's pleated clothing allows for similarly extreme amplified silhouettes but offers a free sense of movement. Through the densely pleated fabric, the garments can stretch and expand to cover the body. (Fig. 4.82) The design of this dress aims to achieve a similar exaggeration in both fixed and flexible movement. In the fixed sense, the dress will have a distinct shape when the body is in a neutral position. In the flexible sense, the garment focuses on following the expansion and retraction of the human body. (Fig. 4.83)

4.3.2 PROCESS

Pleats are the optimal choice of material manipulation for this dress because of its ability to return to original shape upon being stretched. Unlike the first two dresses, this dress focuses on responding to the body rather than compelling it. Dress 1 presented the wearer with comfort, joyful innocence, and support to move their body while preserving the dress' silhouette. Dress 2 projected a royal and extravagant aura and restricted the movement of the body. By contrast, Dress 3 exists as its own silhouette then evolves with the body of the wearer, adapting itself to the shape the body creates. The dress consists of five parts: the bodice, front skirt, back skirt, undergarment, sleeves. (Fig. 4.85)

2 Bagtazo, "MOVEMENT STUDY."

Fig. 4.83 Dress 3 sketch.

Paul Jackson's Folding Techniques for Designers[3] served a basis to understand and create pleats. He includes diagrammatic drawings to simply explain the pattern of folds required to create each pleat. These diagrams, Fig. 4.84, will be presented throughout this section to help communicate the process.[4]

Conventional pleating of fabric begins by folding two identical moulds, typically made of some type of paper or card-stock. Fabric is then cut to the size of the mould and sandwiched between them. Together, the three layers are re-pleated into the mould's pattern, using the card-stock as a guide for the fabric to follow. Heat is applied either through an iron, steamer, or oven.

4.3.2.1 PLEATING FABRIC EXPERIMENTS

A series of explorations are conducted to determine the ideal combination of mould material weight, fabric thickness, and pleat pattern.

3 Jackson, Folding Techniques for Designers.
4 Jackson, 8.

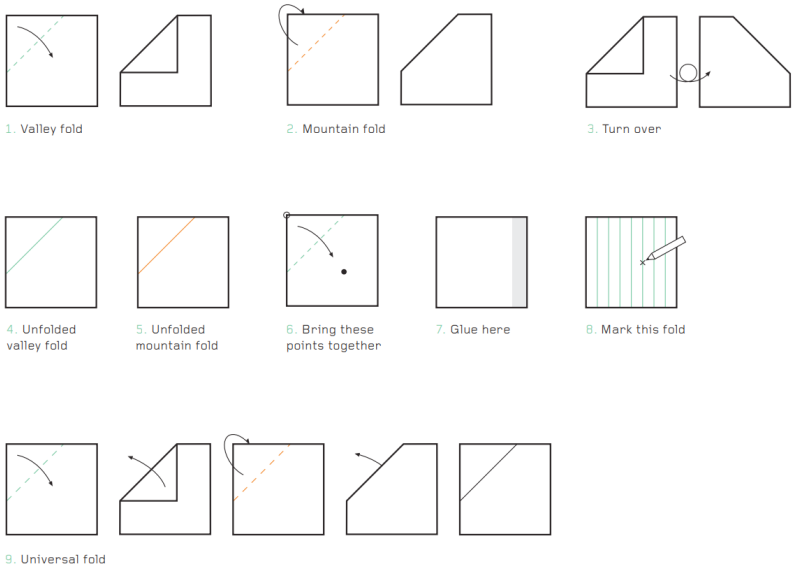
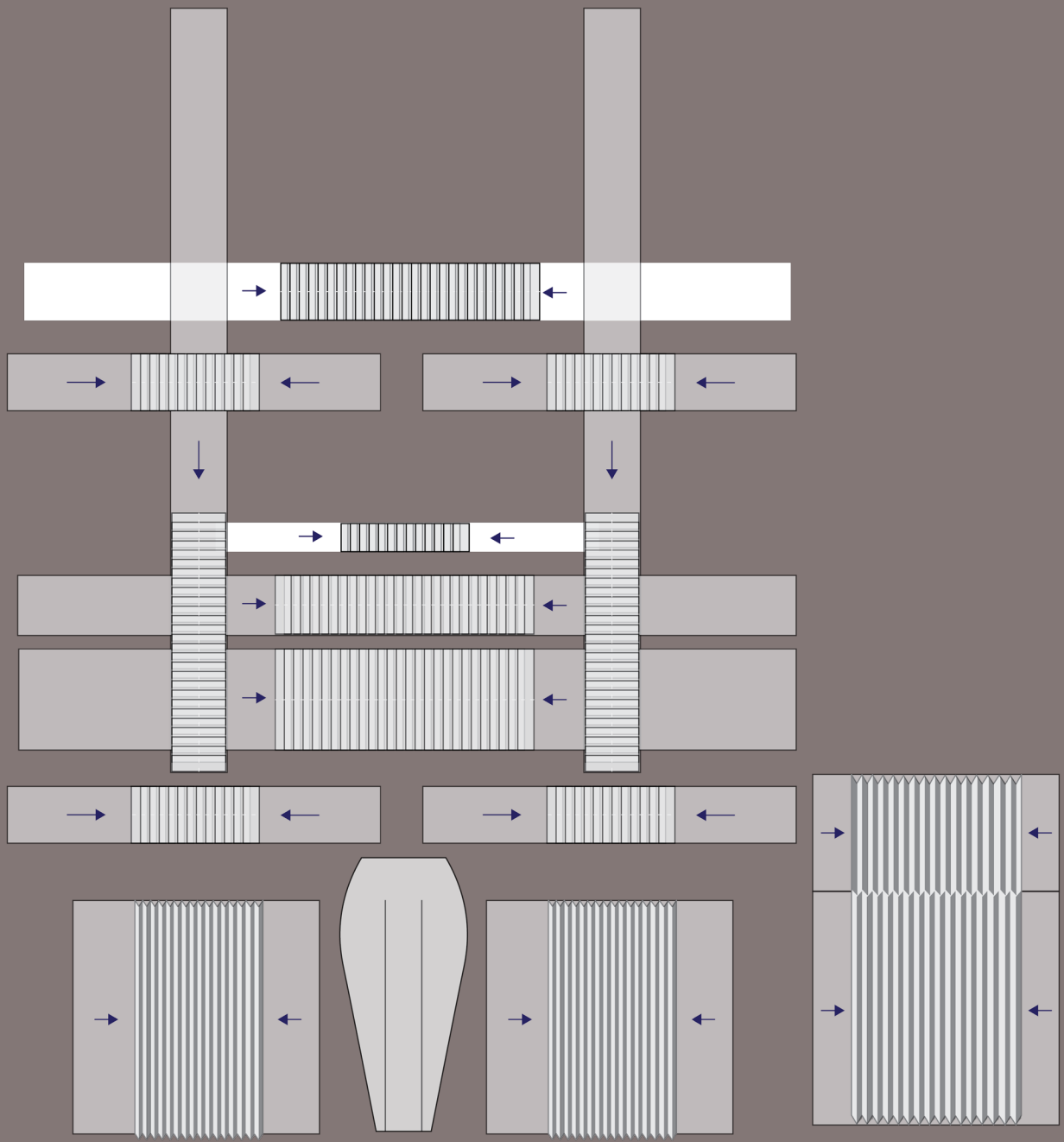


Fig. 4.84 Paul Jackson's basic folding techniques guide.

Fig. 4.85 Diagram of all components of Dress 3.



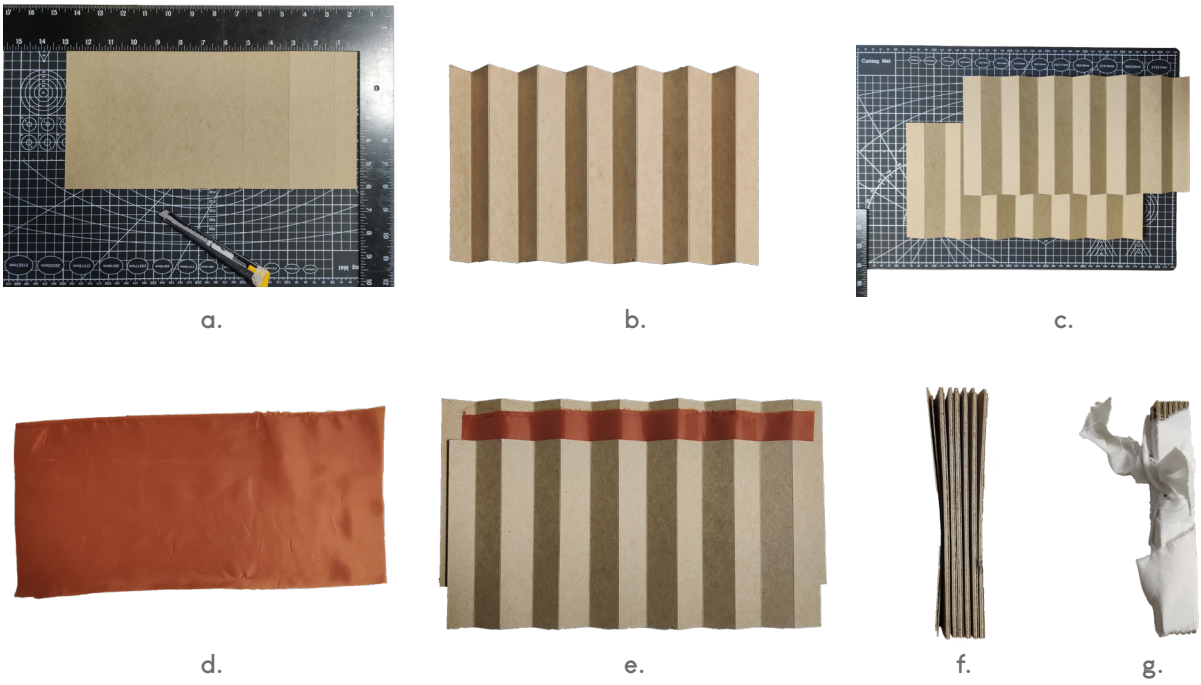


Fig. 4.86 Accordion pleats using millboard as the moulds.

a. Score both sides of millboard following the pleat pattern.
b. Fold along scoring.
c. Repeat process to have a complete mould.
d. Cut a piece of fabric to the size of the mould.
e. Sandwich fabric between mould.
f. Compress assembly (mould and fabric combined).
g. Tightly wrap assembly in strip of cotton fabric to then iron, cool, and unfold.

Fig. 4.87 Accordion pleat pattern diagram by Paul Jackson.

The first two tests used millboard as the mould material and lightweight polyester fabric for an accordion pleat[5] (Fig. 4.87) and a glide pleat.[6] (Fig. 4.89) Millboard's benefit is that scoring the thick material makes the pleats even and straight, and the heft of the board secures the fabric in place. However, scoring both sides to create universal folds weakens the material to the point of ripping, and steaming or ironing the mould doesn't work well due to the millboard's absorption of humidity and its thickness. (Fig. 4.86, Fig. 4.88)

5 Jackson, 17.
6 Jackson, 40.

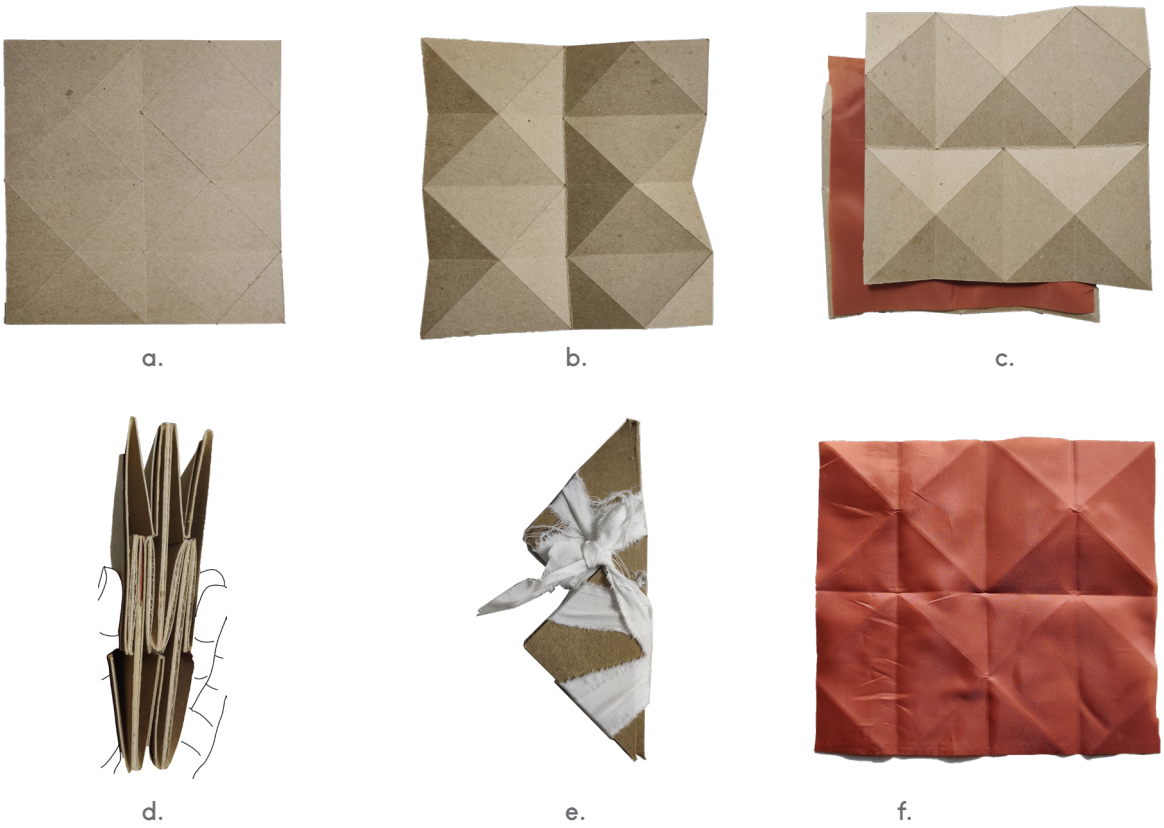


Fig. 4.88 Glide pleats using millboard as the moulds.

a. Score both sides of millboard following the pleat pattern.
b. Fold along scoring.
c. Sandwich fabric between mould.
d. Compress assembly.
e. Tightly wrap assembly in strip of cotton fabric
f. Iron, cool, and unfold.

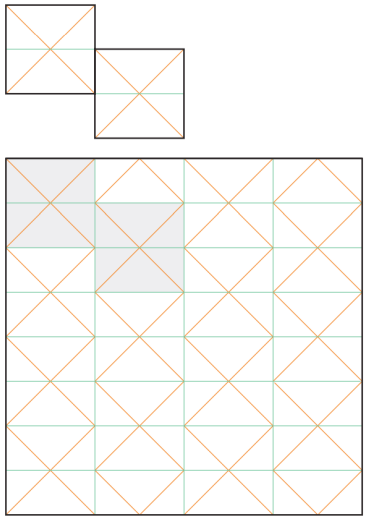


Fig. 4.89 Glide pleat pattern diagram by Paul Jackson.

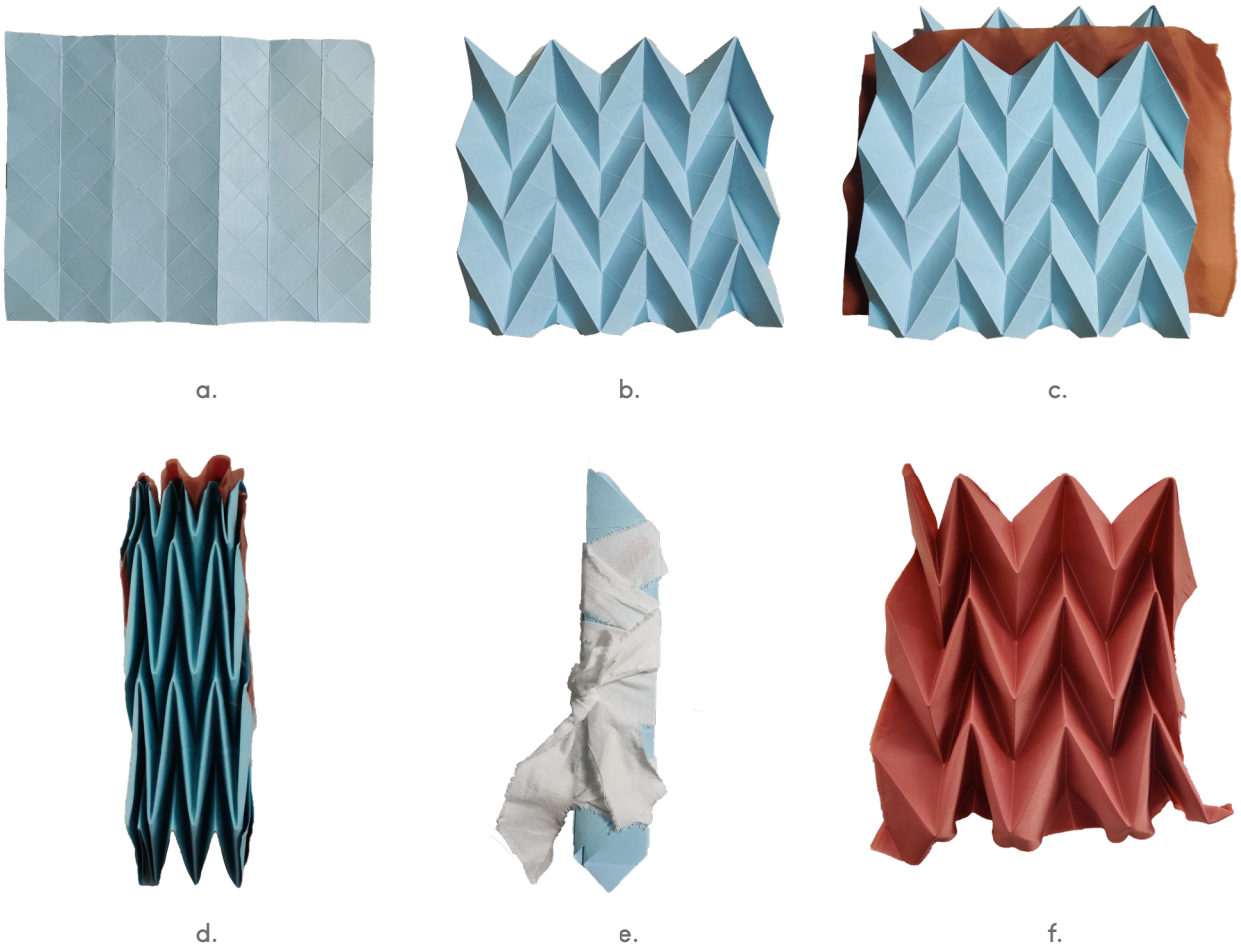


Fig. 4.90 Grid V's pleats using card-stock as the mould with lightweight polyester.
a. Crease both sides of card-stock following the pleat pattern.
b. Fold along creases.
c. Sandwich fabric between mould.
d. Compress assembly.
e. Tightly wrap assembly in strip of cotton fabric
f. Iron, cool, and unfold.

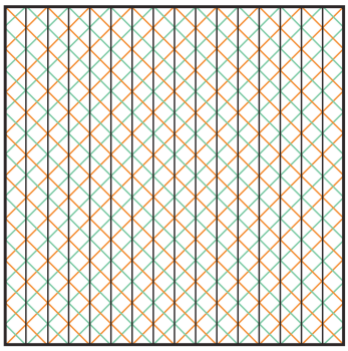


Fig. 4.91 Grid V's pleat pattern diagram by Paul Jackson.

The second and third experiments used card-stock paper for the mould material for a grid V's pleat[7] (Fig. 4.91) with lightweight polyester. It was easy to work with, creating clean folds, and could withstand the heat of the iron. The limitation was the size of the card-stock, using only 8.5" x 11" sheets, making it difficult to create seamless transitions from stitching multiple pieces together. (Fig. 4.90, Fig. 4.92)

7 Jackson, 124.

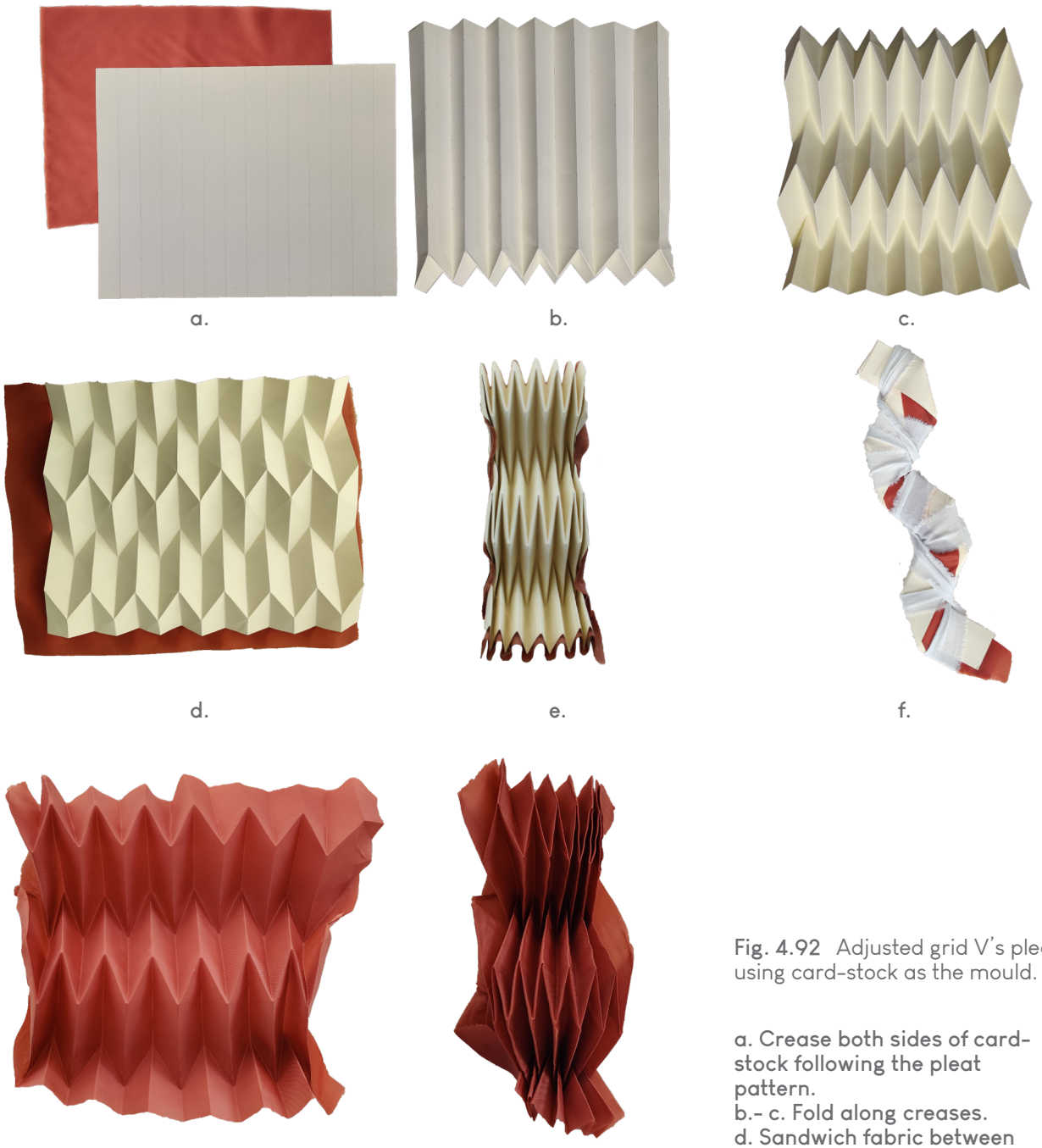


Fig. 4.92 Adjusted grid V's pleat using card-stock as the mould.

a. Crease both sides of card-stock following the pleat pattern.
b.- c. Fold along creases.
d. Sandwich fabric between mould.
e. Compress assembly.
f. Tightly wrap assembly in strip of cotton fabric
g. Iron, cool, and unfold.
h. Re-pleat and iron fabric again for more crisp folds.

a. b. c.

Fig. 4.93 Accordion pleats using 48" x 60" paper as the mould with heavyweight polyester.

a. Fold paper following accordion pleat pattern.
b. Sandwich fabric between mould and slowly and evenly pleat the assembly together. Tying as I go, the fabric started shifting between the moulds.
c. Trying to recover it, I uncovered a portion of the mould to see the fabric had rippled too much that it couldn't be forced in. The fabric was too strong for the paper.

The fourth experiment used regular paper at 48" x 60" for the mould material and heavyweight polyester fabric for an accordion pleat. However, the fabric was too thick for the paper, causing shifting inside the mould, losing control, and tearing the paper. (Fig. 4.93)

Testing with regular paper again, the fifth test paired it with lightweight polyester for an accordion pleat. Working at an intermediate scale, at 18" x 24", it was easy to control and fold the assembly together. Using the iron to heat the assembly was successful, and re-pleating the fabric after removing it from the mould made the folds crisp. (Fig. 4.94)

a.

b.

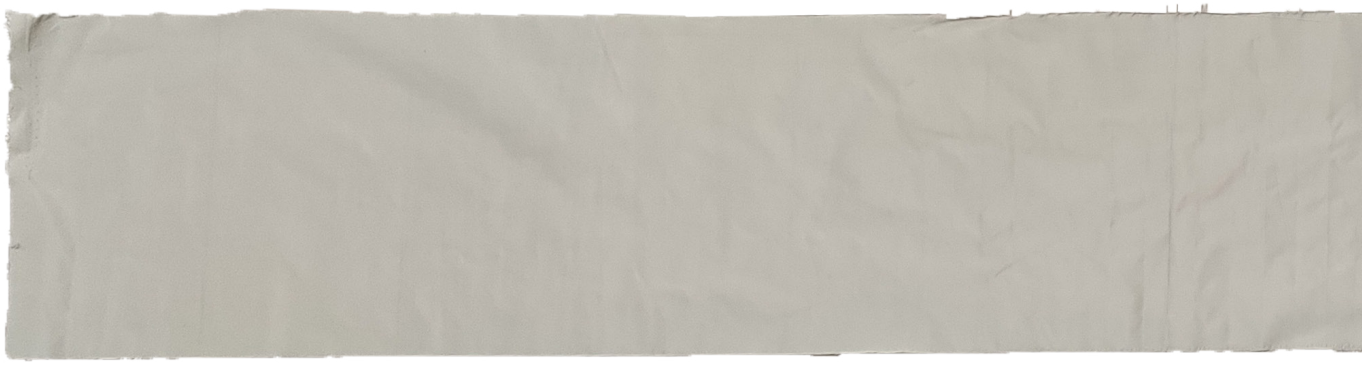
c.

d.

e.

Fig. 4.94 Accordion pleats using 18" x 24" paper as the mould with lightweight polyester.

a. Fold paper following accordion pleat pattern.
b. Sandwich fabric between mould and slowly and evenly pleat the assembly together, using binder clips to hold assembly in place.
c. Compress assembly.
d. Iron assembly, heating both sides for 10minutes.
e. Cool and unfold.



a.

b.

c.

d.

Fig. 4.95 Knife pleat pattern diagram by Paul Jackson.

The sixth test used the same assembly combination as the fourth but with a knife pleat.[8](Fig. 4.95) Knife pleats are a horizontal translation from accordion pleats, with the pleats not overlapping. This gives the collapsed pleat a fixed 33% length rather than the 100% in an accordion pleat. To fold knife pleats, a pleating board is made from card-stock where the fabric is pushed into the folds and pressed one pleat at a time. This allows for the length of fabric to be as long as possible as the fabric is pleated in sections, shifting the board as necessary. (Fig. 4.96, Fig. 4.97)

8 Jackson, 95.

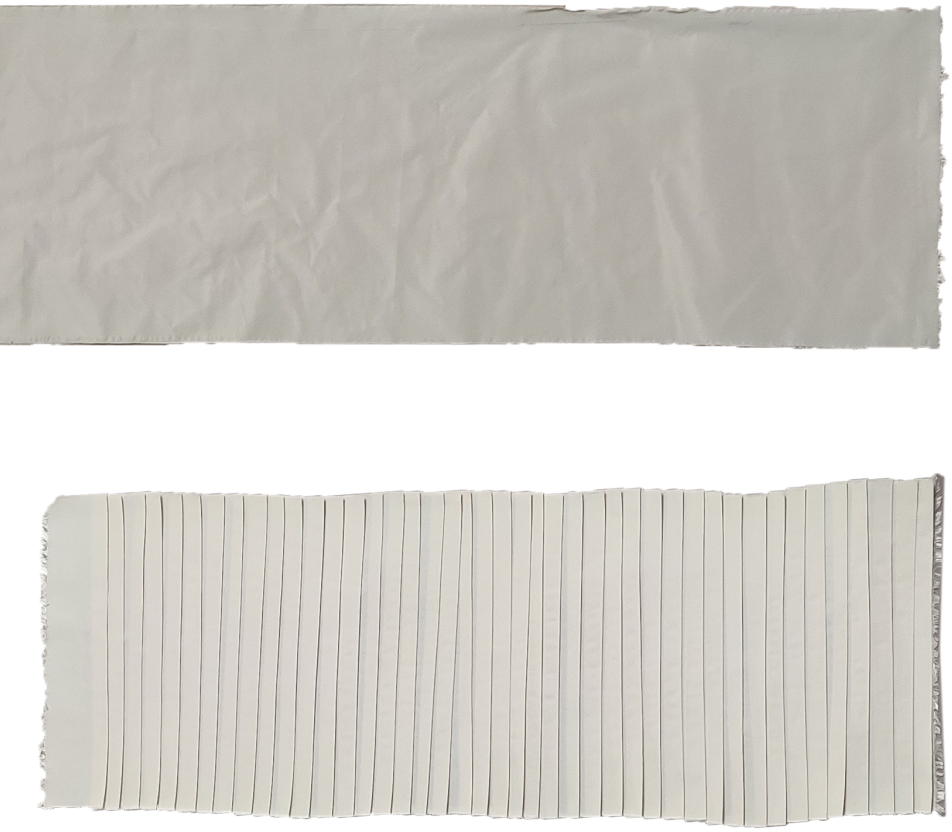


Fig. 4.96 Knife pleats using card-stock pleating board (mould) and heavyweight polyester.

a. Original length of polyester fabric at 60".
b. Use binder clips to hold the end of the fabric parallel to the pleating board. Push the fabric in between the folds of the board.
c. Iron, cool, then tape down the pleated section and carefully remove the fabric. Then realign the fabric, using the last pleat of the previous section as a starting point for the next section
d. Repeat process for the rest of the length of fabric.
e. Remove all tape. Final length at 23".

e.

Fig. 4.97 Knife pleats using lightweight polyester allows the pleats to curve and open with flexibility.

Fig. 4.98 Accordion pleats using 48" x 60" paper as the mould with heavyweight polyester.
a. Crumple the top of the fabric and wrap it tightly in a strip of cotton fabric.
b. Tie the end to a door knob or something sturdy and secure then twist the fabric in one direction as much as possible continuing to the other end of the fabric.
c. Tie the twist together so it doesn't come undone.
d. Heat the assembly for 20min.
e. Wait until cool and unravel.

The sixth experiment involved not using a mould at all and twist the fabric instead. This created good horizontal stretch but resulted in difficulty controlling the unevenness and creating clean pleats. (Fig. 4.98)

Ultimately, the two pleats used for the dress are the accordion pleat using a paper mould and the knife pleat using a card-stock mould both paired with lightweight polyester.

4.3.2.3 SKIRT

The front skirt (Fig. 4.99) takes a slim-fitting long skirt silhouette and inserts two large panels of accordion pleats. (Fig. 4.100-102) This allows for the skirt to dramatically transform when legs are sprawled.

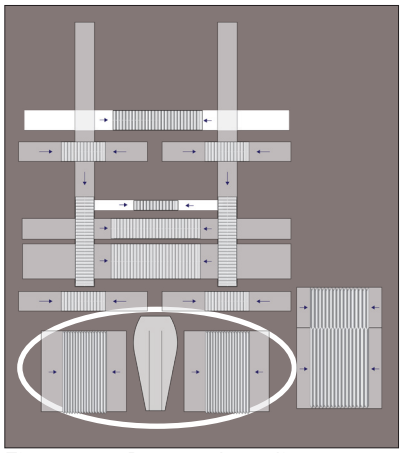


Fig. 4.99 Dress 3 key diagram.

a. b. c.

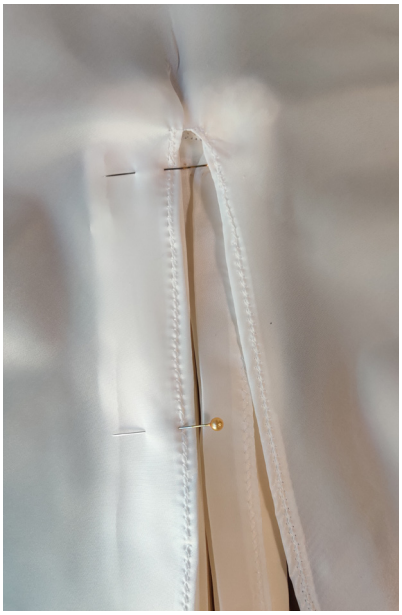
Fig. 4.100 Making the accordion panels for the front skirt.
a. Two 18" x 24" accordion pleats in lightweight polyester fabric.
b. Finishing the edge and stitching together the two panels.
c. Finishing all edges of the completed accordion panel. Repeat process.

a.

b.

c.

d.



e.

Fig. 4.101 Preparing the front skirt.
a. Cutting out the pattern for the front skirt based on a long, slim-fitting skirt.
b. Measure and cut a straight slit in the skirt following where the leg would be, cut up to the where the leg joins the pelvis.
c. Fold over and sew the raw edges of the slit to prevent them from unraveling. Repeat process for the other leg slit.
d. Unfold the pleats in the middle, center and pin it to the inside and top of the slits of the skirt. Pin along the length of the slit and pleat.
e. Close-up showing the outside of the pleat insert.

a.

b.

c.

Fig. 4.102 Sewing in the accordion pleats to the front skirt.

a. Sew the outer edges of the pleats to the edges of the slit.
b. Close-up showing the close straight stitch used to attach the pleat to the skirt.
c. Repeat process for the other leg slit.
d. Image of the front skirt with pleats compressed.
e. Image of front skirt with pleats expanded.

d.

e.

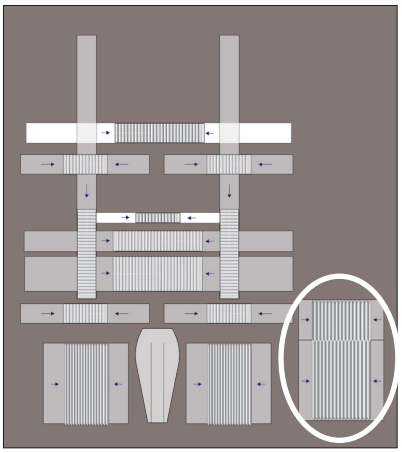


Fig. 4.103 Dress 3 key diagram.

The back skirt (Fig. 4.103) uses the same accordion-pleated paper mould as the front panels. However, the fabric is now folded in half before being inserted between the mould. When unfolded, this creates a clean edge as the folds are opposing, keeping the edge at its widest. The pleats then take their shape and collapse together at the waist and ankle of the skirt to create a diamond shape. (Fig. 4.104)

Fig. 4.104 Making the back skirt.

a. Fold polyester fabric in half then insert between accordion moulds.

b. Pleat the polyester into accordion pleat using the paper mould.

c. Iron, cool, and unfold the pleat to reveal the accordion pleat.

d. Unfold the polyester and trim the top to the length between the waist and hips. Hem all edges of the fabric using a zip-zag stitch.

e. Re-iron the top and bottom of the skirt to reform the diamond-like shape.

f. Overlay the back skirt onto the front skirt to attach.

g. Pin side edges of the back skirt to side edges of the front skirt.

h. Completed skirt.

i. Completed skirt on mannequin.

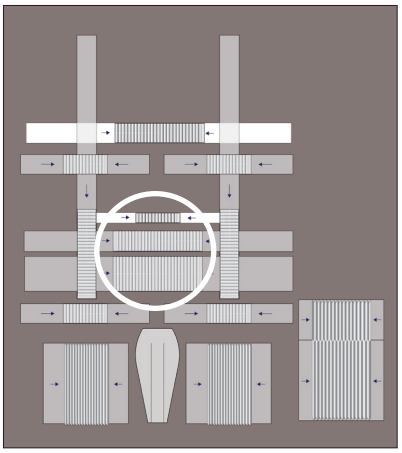


Fig. 4.105 Dress 3 key diagram.

4.3.2.2 BODICE

The bodice (Fig. 4.105) is made of long rectangular sections of knife pleats layered over each other. Each rectangular section is hemmed with a lettuce-hem (Fig. 4.106, Fig. 4.107) allowing the lightweight polyester to dance at each edge. (Fig. 4.108)

Fig. 4.106 Hemming the edge of a pleated piece of fabric after it was ironed expands the pleat along the seam. This is a way to show off the existence of the pleat without the use of movement to reveal itself.

Fig. 4.107 Sewing straight down the center of knife pleated fabric paired with the lettuce-hem allows for dancing edges when the piece is twisted.

a. Pleat a wide section for the waist of the dress.

b. Use the tape as a guide to sew a center line perpendicular to the pleats. This holds the knife pleats in place.

c. Hem the edges.

d. The waist of the bodice is used to hide the top edge of the slit of the skirt.

e. Series of images showing how the waist layers over the skirt from the front and side.

f. Process is repeated to create one more waist section reaching up to the bottom of the bust.

Fig. 4.108 Making waist of bodice.

Fig. 4.109 Process of sewing the twisted knife pleats for the bust of the dress.

The bodice covering the bust uses heavyweight polyester for additional coverage. Also made with knife pleats, the pleats are sewn in place along the top and bottom edge of the bust. The bottom edge of the pleat is sewn in place in the opposite direction for added dimension and interest with light and shadows. (Fig. 4.109-111)

Fig. 4.110 Completed bust portion of the bodice on the mannequin.

a. Bust element of the bodice.

b. Connecting the mid-waist element to bust, front view.

c. Sewing the two together following the center stitch of the mid-waist element.

d. Elements connected, back view.

Fig. 4.111 Sewing together the bust element and the mid-waist element.

Fig. 4.112 Under-dress fabric panels.

4.3.2.4 UNDER-DRESS

Due to the sheer quality of the lightweight polyester, an under-dress needed to be made to modestly cover the body of the wearer. A simple dress was created following the shapes of the bodice, skirt, and open back. The bodice and front skirt are attached to the under-dress.

(Fig. 4.112-Fig. 4.118)

Fig. 4.113 Front view of under-dress draped over mannequin.

Fig. 4.114 Back view of under-dress draped over mannequin.

a. Pin top of under-dress to inner top edge of bodice.

b. Close-up of under-dress top edge.

c. Sew closely along top edge.

Fig. 4.115 Attaching the top under-dress

Fig. 4.116 Pin and sew under-dress top to under-dress skirt.

a. Under-dress attached to the bust and mid-waist pleats.

b. Finish the edges of the under-dress by rolling over the edges to sew a straight stitch. Pin zipper open and sew along edge.

c. Repeat process to finish the edges on the other side of the dress and zipper.

d. Sew another straight stitch to lay the fabric flat against the zipper. This pulls the fabric away from the zipper to prevent the fabric from getting caught while using the zipper.

e. Close-up demonstration of zipper.

f. Completed under-dress view from back.

Fig. 4.117 Attaching the zipper to the skirt of the under-dress.

a. Sew front skirt to the outside of the under-dress skirt.

b. Sew waist pleats panel to the dress, aligning the centerline of the waist pleats to the waist of the under-dress and front skirt.

c. Sewn waist pleats to the dress with pleats compressed. Note how the waist pleats cover the top of the front skirt slits.

d. Completed dress with pleat layers frilled.

Fig. 4.118 Sewing the dress to the under-dress layer by layer.

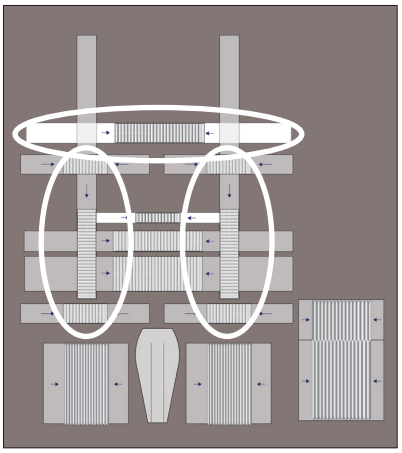


Fig. 4.119 Dress 3 key diagram.

4.3.2.5 SLEEVES AND COLLAR

The sleeves are connected to the shoulder and neck in three long rectangular sections. (Fig. 4.119) The collar is made of one panel of knife pleats with heavyweight polyester to give structure and sharper angles to accentuate the neck and shoulders. (Fig. 4.120, Fig.4.128) The sections along the arms hang down to form perfect arc shapes and can be wrapped around the arms to create a spiraling array of pleats. (Fig. 4.122-125)

Fig. 4.120 Collar is made of one panel of knife pleats with heavyweight polyester.

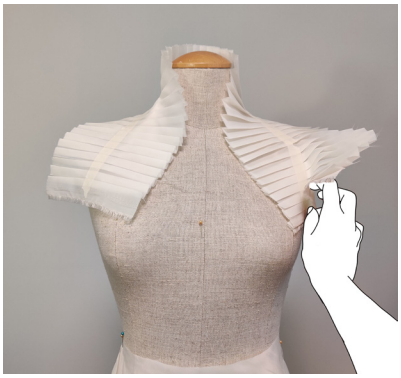


Fig. 4.121 Draping the knife pleats panel around the neck.

Fig. 4.122 Each sleeve is made of two knife pleated cuffs wrapping around the wrist and bicep of the wearer and a connecting knife pleat section connecting them together.

a. An elastic to measured to fit the circumference of the wrist/ bicep. Pinned in place, the elastic is stretched as the pieces are sewn together.

b. The elastic is sewn to the cuff using a zig-zag stitch for added reinforcement and flexibility rather than a straight stitch.

c. Cuff view from the outside. The cuff's edges are then sewn together to create a tube.

Fig. 4.123 The knife pleat cuffs are gathered and sewn to a piece of elastic measured to fit the circumference of the wrist. The process is repeated to fit the bicep.

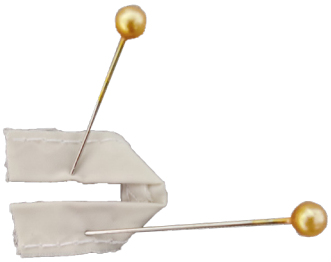
Fig. 4.124 Cuffs are attached to the sleeve perpendicular to each other.

Fig. 4.125 Sleeves are stitched to the collar by aligning the centerline edge of both components.

4.3.2.6 ASSEMBLY

Little loops are made to allow the back of the dress to be laced up. (Fig. 4.127, Fig. 4.128) This concludes the craft of the dress! (Fig. 4.126)

a. Cut out a narrow piece of fabric, roll over the edge and sew flat to enclose raw edges.



b. Fold fabric to create a loop for string to pass through.

c. Sew little loop to the inner edge of the back of the dress. Repeat process to make 8 loops.

Fig. 4.126 (left) Completed dress on mannequin.

Fig. 4.127 Making loops for lace-up back of the dress.

a. Sew 8 loops to the back of the dress. Flip dress inside out to pin the loops with ease. Ensure the loops are evenly spaced and mirrored on the two sides.

b. Thread string through the loops to finish the lace-up back.

Fig. 4.128 Completing the lace-up back of dress.

4.3.3 EXPERIENTIAL ELEMENTS

With careful assistance, she's laced into the pleated dress. Shapeless without her, it waits for her body to enter. Immediately she feels the weightlessness of the fabric envelop her. Her helper finishes lacing the dress, with each pull, the dress conforms, adapting itself to the unique contours of her body.

As she moves, the dress becomes a canvas for the fluidity of the human body. With every expansion, contraction, and rotation, the pleats respond, shifting and flowing to follow her movements. The front of the skirt opens and closes with each step. The back compresses into geometric shapes amplifying her silhouette as she moves. The sleeves become free-floating extensions to her arms. Able to be draped or spiraled around her limbs, she chooses her movements to tell them where to go.

When she jumps, she feels the weightless fabric lift off her body for a moment. The pleated frills fan out like a thousand wings, she defies gravity. Even if only for a moment, she's able to fly. The dress becomes a collaboration between itself and its wearer, a dance of fabric and flesh.

Fig. 4.129 Dress 3.

Fig. 4.130 Series of Dress 3 conforming to the body's movements.

Fig. 4.131 Dress 3 front skirt plie.

Fig. 4.132 Dress 3 jump.

Fig. 4.133 Dress 3 close-up.

Fig. 4.134 Dress 3 back.

Fig. 4.135 Dress 3 front.

5.0 EXPERIENCING DRESS AS RETAIL SPACE

5.1 DRESS COLLECTION ANALYSIS

Reflecting on the three dresses, their design began with an ambition to investigate three experiences of space: autonomy (Fig. 5.1), emotion (Fig. 5.2), and movement (Fig. 5.3). After designing, making, and documenting the dresses, the distinctions between each dress became less defined as the experiences overlapped and blended from one to another. Recognizing shared aspects between the dresses concluded that there is a range of experiences in the dresses that can be recognized as three experience dualities. The three axes became comfort and discomfort, autonomous and non-autonomous, and exposure and concealment.

To visualize the experience of the dresses, the diagram of mapping interior adjacencies introduced in Chapter 1.1 is adapted to include these experience dichotomies. (Fig. 5.4)Autonomy is the power the wearer has over the dress and while in space. The autonomous experience is seen through freedom of movement and independence of the body from the dress. The opposite of autonomy, non-autonomy, is the power the dress has over the wearer, seen through restricted movements and the body being overshadowed by the dress. The comfort or discomfort felt by the wearer includes the way the dress sits on, wraps, compresses, or drapes over the body and how it feels for the body to move in the dress in space. Lastly, is the amount of exposure or concealment the dress offers its wearer. Each dress is mapped on the diagram to visually convey the relationship each dress allows the body to connect with the experience.

Fig. 5.1 Photograph of Dress 1.

Fig. 5.2 Photograph of Dress 2.

Fig. 5.3 Photograph of Dress 3.

Fig. 5.5 shows how each dress measures on the three scales. Dress 1, depicted in green, experiences a high sense of comfort and exposure, and remains neutral in autonomy. This is because the dress empowers self-confidence in the wearer, bringing them a sense of peace. This confidence extends to reclaiming space, however the dress itself does not alter its shape to suit the body's changes. The skirt sits on the body beginning well above the hip, leaving the legs completely free. When the body spins, the centripetal force causes the skirt to lift exposing the body. Dress 2, depicted in blue, experiences a high sense of non-autonomy and discomfort and slightly exposed. This is because the dress physically limits the body, the neckpiece instills discomfort onto the wearer, and the organza on the neckpiece and train act as a veil for the face and body, covering an otherwise very exposed bodice. Dress 3, depicted in beige experiences a high sense of autonomy and concealment, and remains neutral in emotion. The design of the dress allows the body to move freely, using pleats to comply with the expansion and retraction. The dress became quite concealed, covering most of the skin to achieve the adaptability and exaggeration of the body's movements.

5.2 DRESS EXPERIENCES AS SENSORY PROPERTIES

The following section uses the dichotomies described by the dress experiences to illustrate a series of architectural properties that aim to be a reference applicable to designing retail spaces. A set of isometric diagrams are presented with reference to the five concepts annotated on the case studies from Chapter 2: volume, movement, lighting, materials, and display.

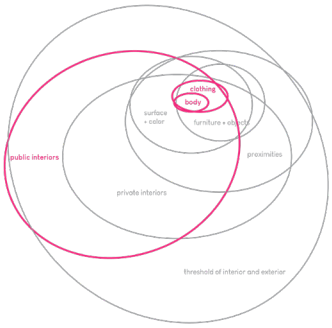


Fig. 5.4 Refer back to 1.1 scope.

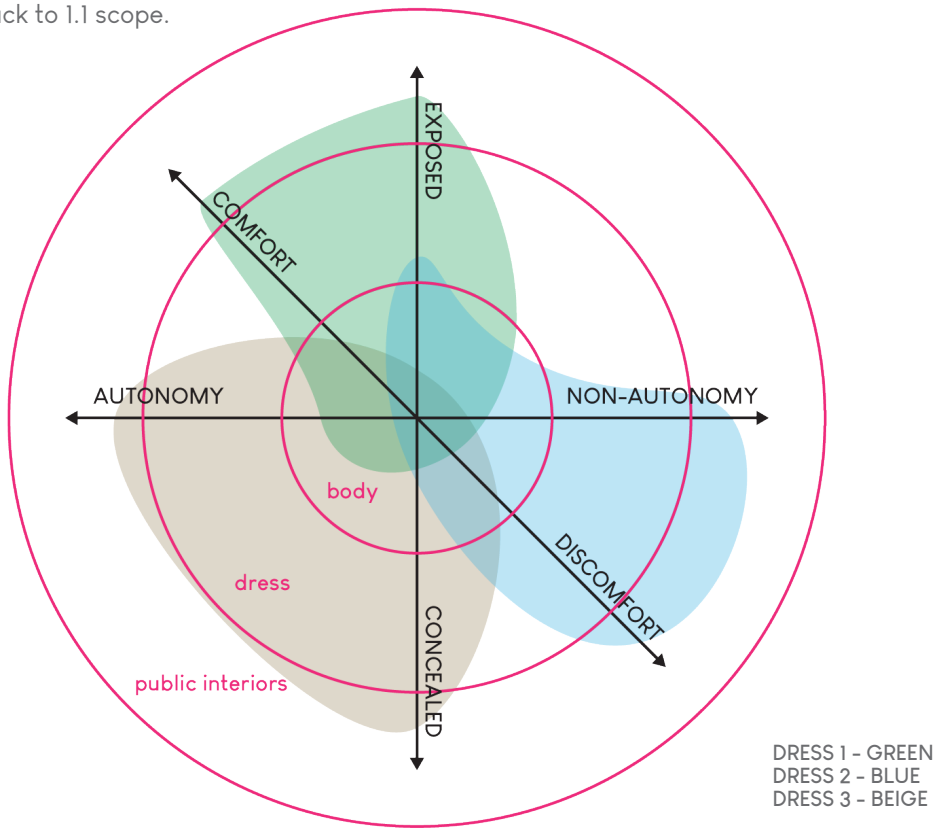
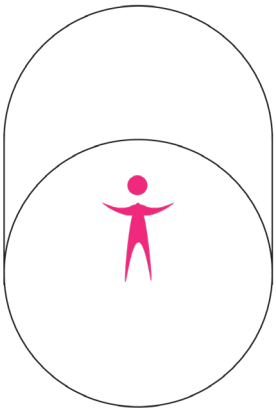


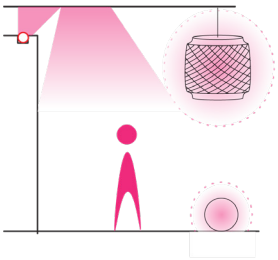
Fig. 5.5 Diagram mapping the dichotomies that exist within each dress. Note the overlaps and differences between the collection of the dresses.

5.2.1 COMFORT AND DISCOMFORT

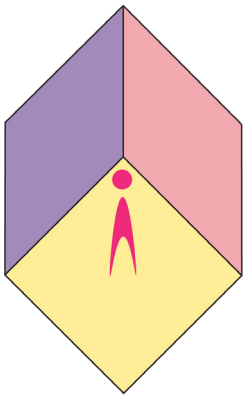
The sensory properties of comfort are illustrated in Fig. 5.6.



Large and round spaces create a vast volume for the body to exist within.



Diffuse and indirect lighting provides users with an evenly lit space and pulls focus away from any specific user or object in the space.



Bright and light colours to attract and entertain customers.

Soft and plush furnishings to provide comfortable seating for customers.

Fig. 5.6 Series of isometric diagrams depicting comfort in architectural properties.

The sensory properties of discomfort are illustrated in Fig. 5.7

Long, narrow, and short spaces create confining boundaries to the body.

Harsh and direct lighting creates an imbalance of lighting in space. A spotlight on the body makes the person a focal point in space.

Dark materials and enclosing the body around mirrors to disorient customers.

Sharp, uneven, and cold materials and finishes to reflect the uncomfortable space.

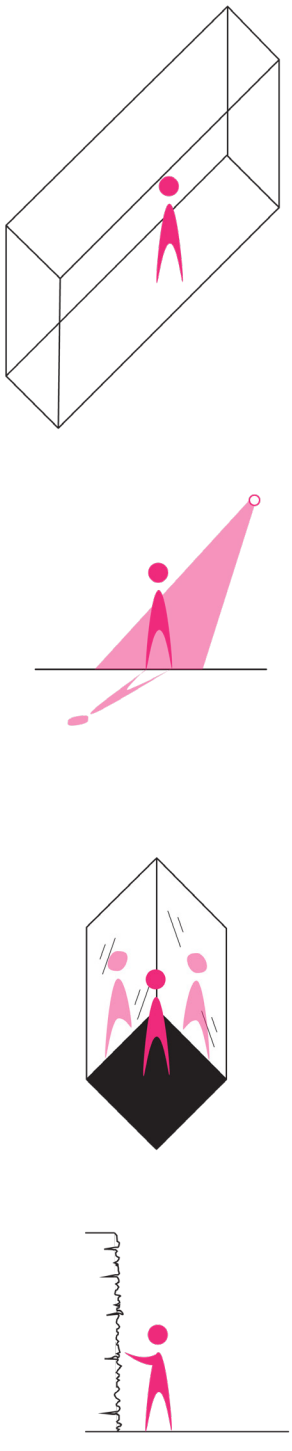
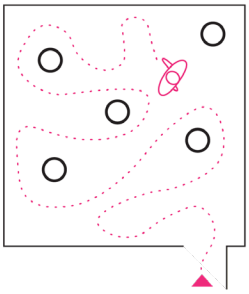


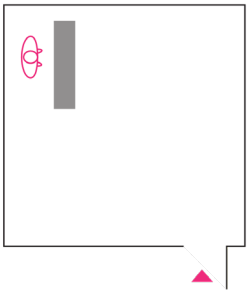
Fig. 5.7 Series of isometric diagrams depicting discomfort in architectural properties.

5.2.2 AUTONOMY AND NON-AUTONOMY

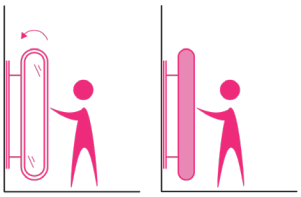
The sensory properties of autonomy are illustrated in Fig. 5.8.



An open plan encourages users to meander in space unguided by the architecture.



Placing the cashier further back from the entrance of the store establishes a sense of trust and lessens the pressure on customers to leave with a purchase.



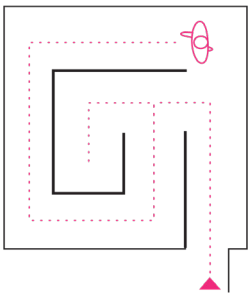
Small moments of agency in private spaces can be designed, like the choice of looking in a mirror in a fitting room.

Movable furniture can offer another moment of agency to customers, allowing them to alter space.

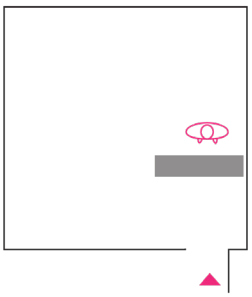
Fig. 5.8 Series of isometric diagrams depicting autonomy in architectural properties.

The sensory properties of non-autonomy are illustrated in Fig. 5.9.

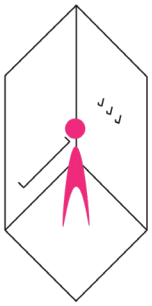
A fixed layout with linear circulation limits the customer's agency to determine their path of travel, keeping them focused on a pre-planned route.



Placing the cashier at the front of the store immediately acquaints customers with the company's employees and can heighten the pressure on customers to purchase.



Removing the sense of agency in private spaces forces users to feel like guests in a space rather than feeling at home.



Fixed furniture confines waiting customers to a specific location. Backless seats can discourage users from staying for long periods of time for the inability to relax in their seat.

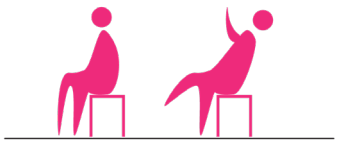
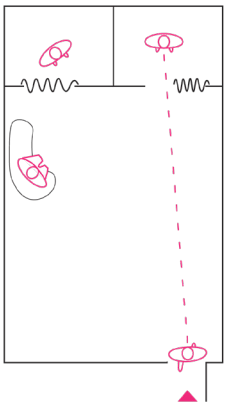


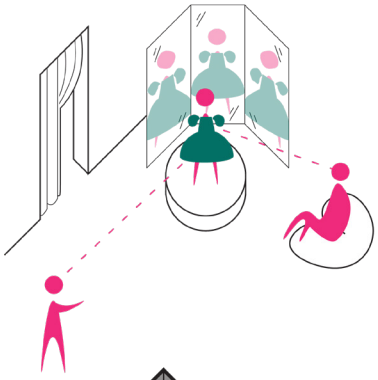
Fig. 5.9 Series of isometric diagrams depicting non-autonomy in architectural properties.

5.2.3 EXPOSURE AND CONCEALMENT

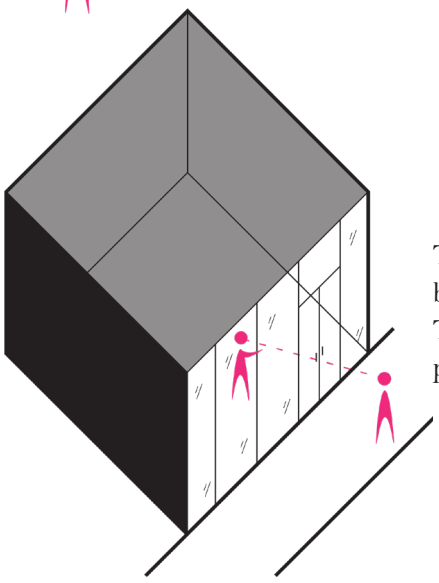
The sensory properties of exposure are illustrated in Fig. 5.10.



Creating direct sight-lines in space, especially from the entrance of the store to the fitting rooms can make customers feel exposed.



Placing mirrors outside the fitting room, rather than inside, encourages customers to step out to see themselves. This can have the positive benefit of encouraging customers to concern themselves first with how a garment feels on their body rather than first concerning themselves with how they look in a garment. But this also has the negative consequence of making customers feel exposed or rushed by stepping out to where strangers can see them.



The storefront has potential to create direct sight-lines between customers and pedestrians with a glazed storefront. This also allows the store to present their interior to potential customers without their need to enter the store.

Fig. 5.10 Series of isometric diagrams depicting exposure in architectural properties.

The sensory properties of concealment are illustrated in Fig. 5.11.

Sight-lines in space can be mitigated with partitions and furniture to offer customers additional privacy.

Designing large fitting rooms accommodates for customers wanting to test the limits of the garment, look at themselves in the mirror in private, and feel less rushed.

The storefront can use solid materials to block sight-lines between shoppers and pedestrians. This adds a level of mystery to potential customers as they cannot see the interior of the store, which can encourage them to enter.

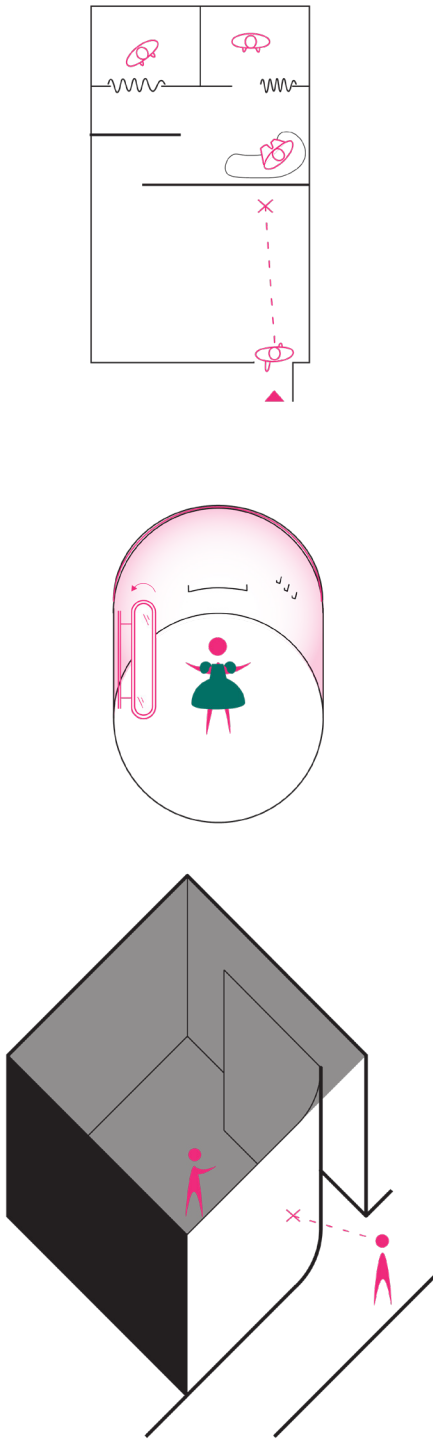


Fig. 5.11 Series of isometric diagrams depicting concealment in architectural properties.

5.3 DRESS EXPERIENCES AS RETAIL SPACES: IMPLEMENTING SENSORY PROPERTY DICHOTOMIES

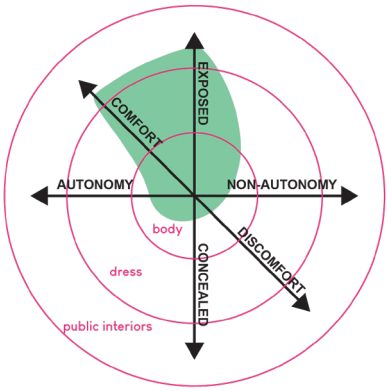


Fig. 5.12 Mapping Dress 1's experience.

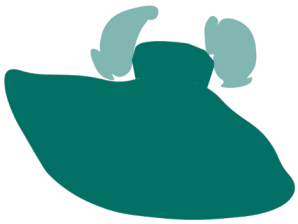


Fig. 5.13 Illustration of Dress 1 on Autonomy.

The schematic design of these stores presents a method of translating the craft and finished garment into architectural space. The design of these stores aims to appreciate the craft of the products while understanding the vision of the brand and focus on the curated experience for customers.

5.3.1 DRESS 1 EXPERIENCE – COMFORT AND EXPOSURE

This illustration, Fig. 5.14, uses the list of sensory properties as a method to describe Dress 1 as a retail space. (Fig. 5.12, Fig. 5.13) The first schematic retail space uses the first dress's experience of comfort and exposure by thinking of spaces that provide intimacy in a public setting.

The store layout is one open space, with a fitting room in the corner. Comfort is immediately presented to the customer by creating a quiet shopping experience using acoustic panels. The fitting room is spacious, offering the customer enough space to try on clothes, testing the fit and feel of each item on their body. The mirror of the fitting room is located outside of the room, forcing customers to step into the public space of the store to admire themselves. As the dress provides the customer with a sense of control, their presence demands attention in the store. By having the customer in the store wearing the clothes, it promotes the product to the other customers as they see the joy and freedom the dress offers. The cashier is located at a distance from the entrance of the store establishing a sense of trust as customers shop freely. The lighting accompanies the sense of trust with a warm welcome with the use of diffuse lighting from recessed lights along the walls and lamps distributed across the store. The store uses soft furnishings and finishes like bean bag chairs, pillows, and carpets to complement the comfortable environment. By using moveable furniture, the customers have agency to create spaces of rest. Whether the customer leaves the store with a purchase or not, they will leave with a smile on their face and a comforting association with the store and brand.

This approach to designing retail space should be used when the brand wants to make the client feel like a guest in a home.

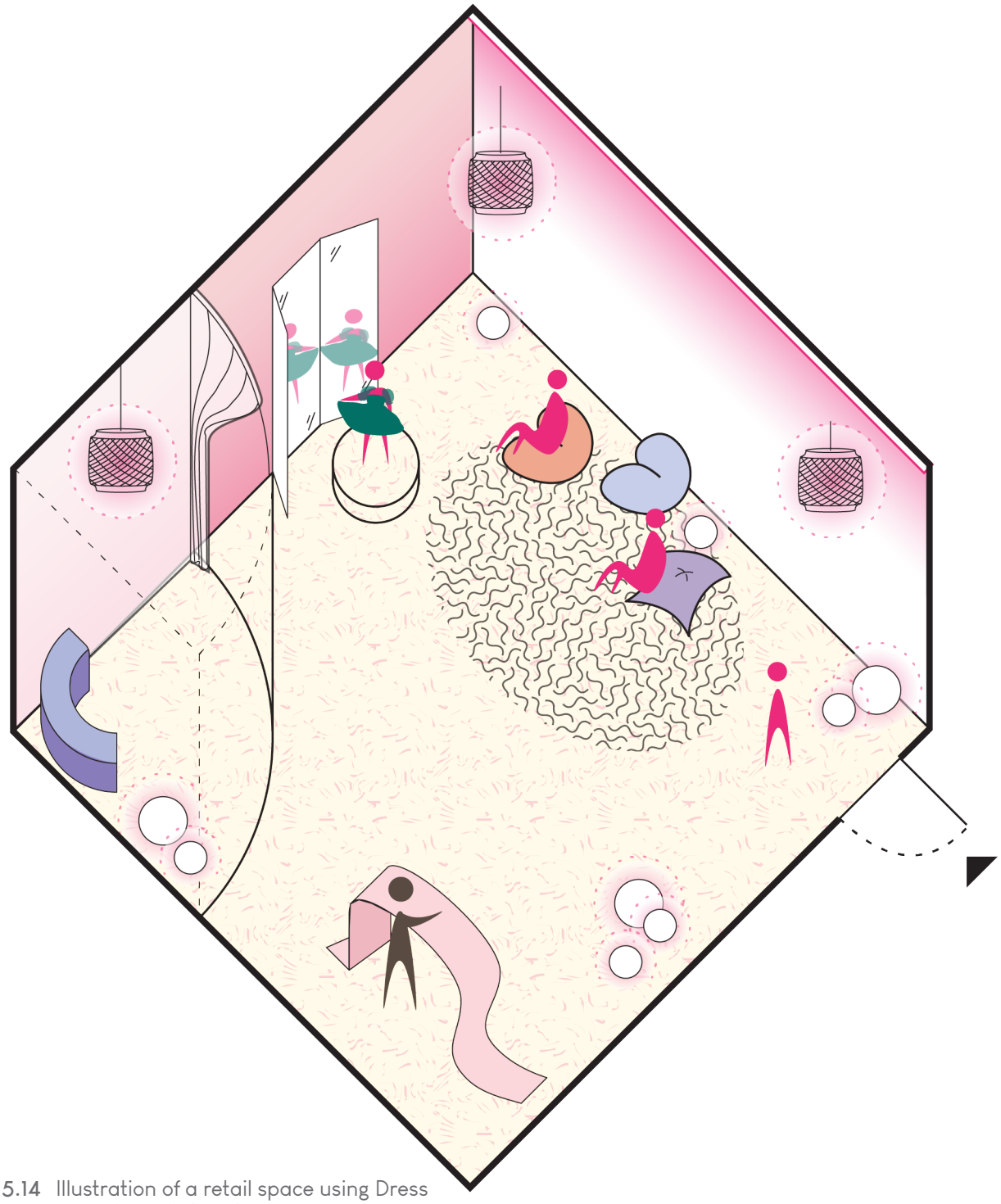


Fig. 5.14 Illustration of a retail space using Dress 1's experience of comfort and exposure.

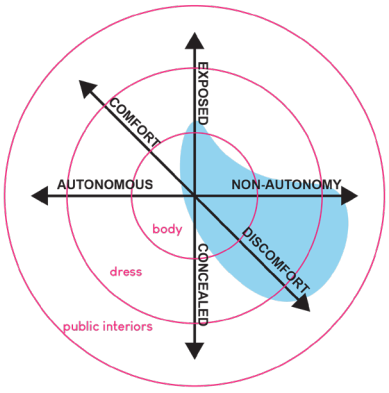


Fig. 5.15 Mapping Dress 1's experience.

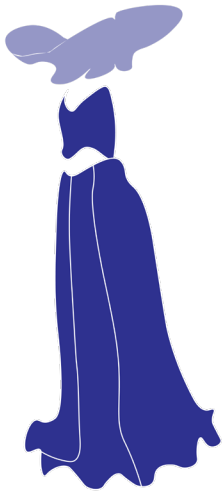


Fig. 5.16 Illustration of Dress 2 on Emotion.

5.3.2 DRESS 2 EXPERIENCE – DISCOMFORT AND NON-AUTONOMY

This illustration, Fig. 5.17, builds on the experiential property strategies to imagine Dress 2 as a retail space. (Fig. 5.15, Fig. 5.16) The second designed retail space mirrors the experience of the second dress's discomfort and non-autonomy while making the wearer feel special.

Using the same base volume as the first space, this store is subdivided using partition walls to create narrow and linear spaces. This forces the circulation of the customers, removing the opportunity for agency. The customer enters the space, immediately steps under a spotlight, and is greeted by the cashier. The close presence of the cashier and direct light starts their experience off with feel immediately noticed and important. From there, they move in a spiral through the store. Every surface of the store is covered in hard textures, reflective marble floors and stone walls, the spotlights guide the path for the customer to move forward towards the dresses on display under a spotlight at each turn. The customer moves with careful certainty. The circulation centers around a singular fitting room. The fitting room is a narrow and tall space with just sufficient space for a person to try on a singluar garment. The room is a dark interior covered in mirrors to confront the customer with themselves and can contribute to a disorienting and interesting space. The path loops around the fitting room and ends with a small area for displaying the garment to others. Becoming one with the product, the customer steps onto a pedestal, lifting them above everyone else, fueling them with a sense of pride and power. Feeling a newfound sense of empowerment, the customer purchases the dress and leaves the shop.

This strategy should be used when the company wants to make the client feel important, while curating very specific moments for them.

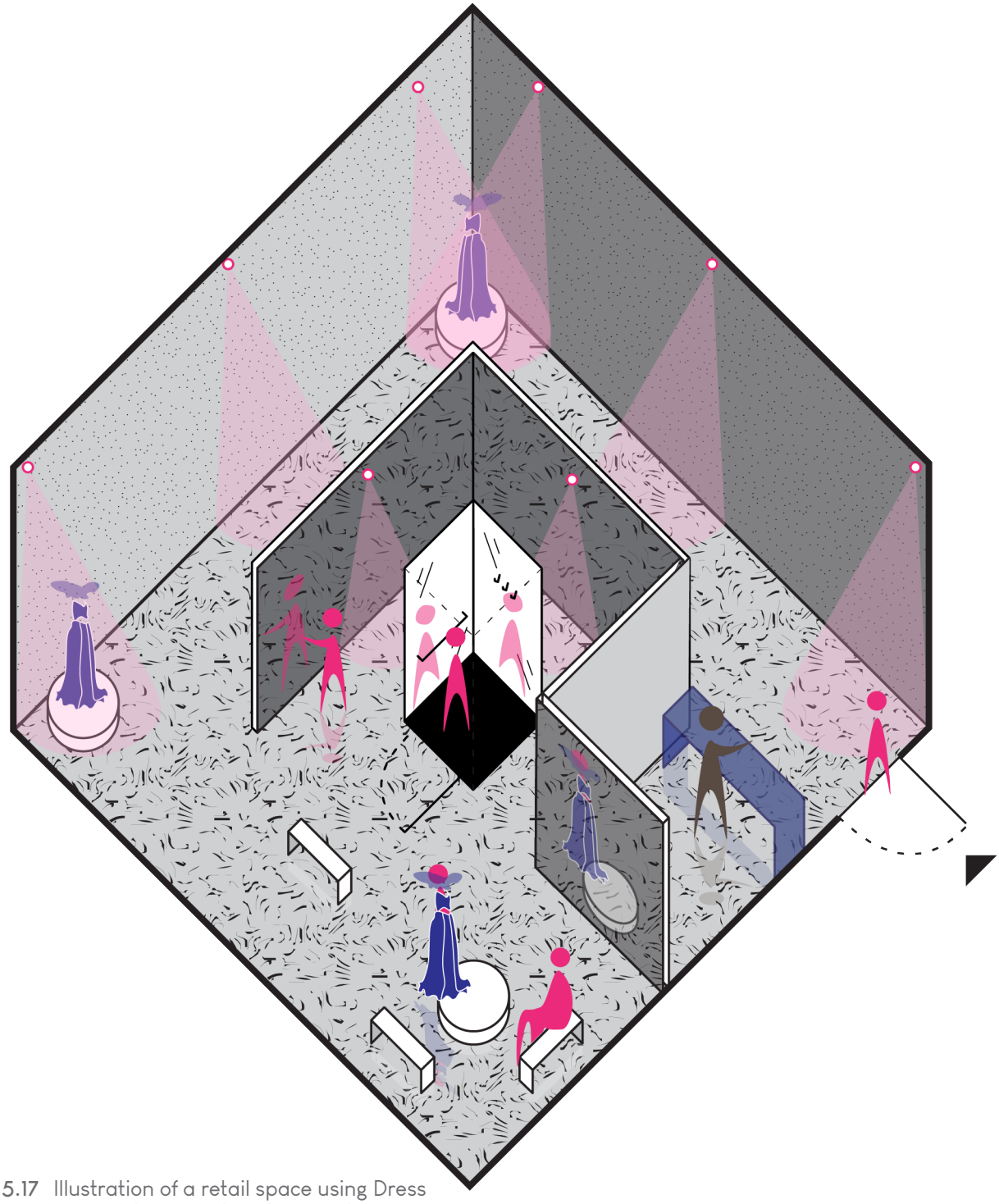


Fig. 5.17 Illustration of a retail space using Dress 2's experience of discomfort and non-autonomy..

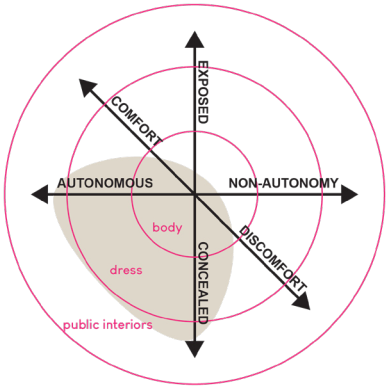


Fig. 5.18 Mapping Dress 1's experience.

5.3.3 DRESS 3 EXPERIENCE – AUTONOMY AND CONCEALMENT

The third designed retail space, Fig. 5.20, presents the third dresses embodied autonomy and concealment to create an open space while focusing on varying degrees of transparency. (Fig. 5.18, Fig. 5.19)

Using the sensory property strategies, the store first recognizing autonomy with a non-linear circulation by subdividing the store into three spaces, the entrance, display, and fitting rooms. To enter the store, customers are given a hint of its interior by the storefront's backlit wall as silhouettes of the shoppers inside are projected. Sparking curiosity, customers enter the store. The fitting room takes up a large portion of the store using a sheer curtain to conceal it from the rest of the store. The fitting rooms provide customers with agency through moveable furniture and adjustable mirrors and lights to customize brightness and colour temperature. The secondary space between the private fitting room and the store allows for employees to assist customers and give the customers room to enjoy the clothing while being selective of their audience. After taking their time, customers make their purchase and may choose to stay longer in the store with their new friends before leaving together.

This approach should be used when the brand wants to allow customers to find freedom in the products to make them feel like their own.

Fig. 5.19 Illustration of Dress 3 on Movement.

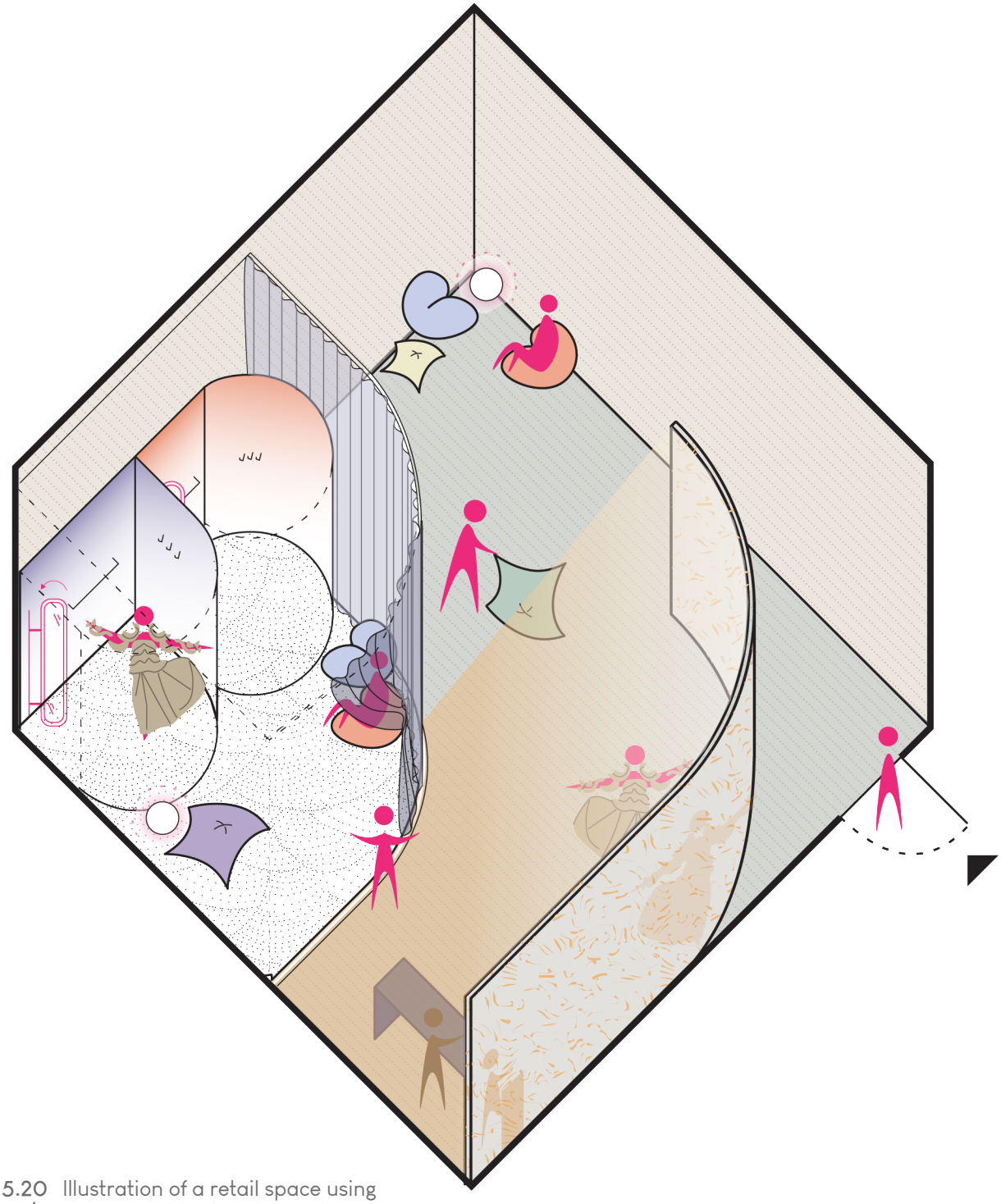


Fig. 5.20 Illustration of a retail space using Dress 3's experience of autonomy and concealment.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 SHIFT IN FOCUS IN RETAIL SPACES

The shift in retail design from centering products to people is well-explained in Gensler's design forecast for 2021.[1] It outlines the negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the relationships between people and their ability to connect through space. The concept of social distance reminded people of the value and impact of physical places. Gensler's goal for designing post-pandemic spaces focuses on "establishing meaningful, authentic consumer connections and new concepts that restore our sense of closeness and community."[2] In their forecast, there is a section dedicated to inspiring ways of adapting retail space to improve customer loyalty, listing trends such as increasing the convenience of products and establishing brand values that resonate with customers.[3]

The focus on connecting with customers by communicating through brand is studied by the case studies in Chapter 2.0. For instance, in Burberry's flagship store design in London, the branding colors and patterns are prominently displayed. Covering the ceiling in the signature check pattern, limiting the color palette to the brand colors, and guiding linear circulation all serve to clearly present the Burberry brand to customers visually. (Fig. 6.1)While this makes the brand memorable on a visual level, it may not necessarily foster a deeper connection with the customer. Customers may not feel compelled to try on the products to understand the brand or products further.

On the other hand, in Odami's Aesop store design, the focus is on encouraging customers to test the products to leave them with a physical memory of the brand. Aesop promotes health and wellness through high-end skincare products, effectively presenting the brand through architectural design considerations. For example, the absence of a mirror in the main area of the room encourages customers to focus on the feel of products on their body rather than the vanity of their appearance. (Fig. 6.2) The wellness aspect of the brand is reflected in the warmth of the color palette, rounded fixtures, and minimal materials. These design decisions leverage the company's values to establish a connection with the customer beyond visual branding.

1 Gensler, "Gensler Design Forecast 2021."
2 Gensler, 96.
3 Gensler, 124.

Fig. 6.1 Central staircase of Burberry flagship store in London.

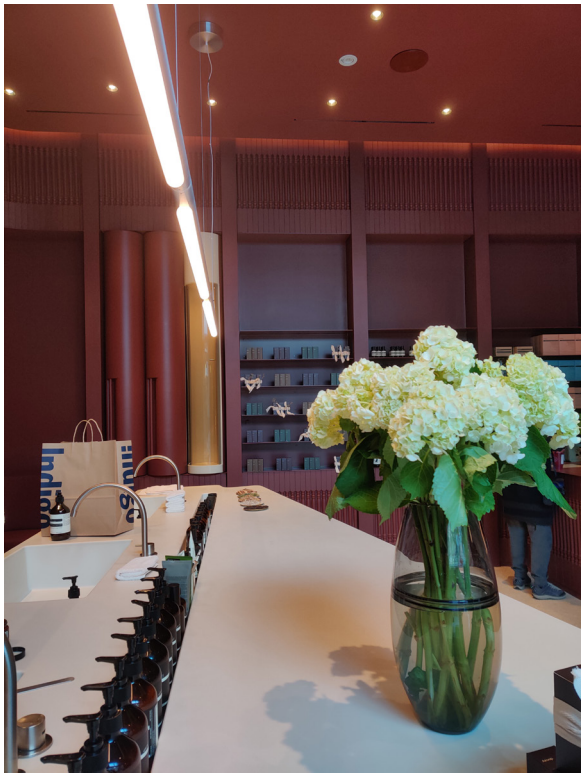


Fig. 6.2 Central sink in Aesop Yorkville.

The impact of this research is to propose an additional method to establish connections between retail space and customers through the engagement of the body with sensory experiences of the products. Immersing customers in the experience of the product requires retailers to deeply understand their products. It requires them to present them in a way that is engaging and sparks curiosity in consumers. An example of poor product presentation is the way Selkie's dresses are displayed at Harrods in London. (Fig. 6.3) The dresses, which inspired the design of Dress 1, are hung tightly on a rack with only a singular sign of the brand visible. Displaying the dresses on a clothing rack compresses them together, providing customers with only a limited view of their qualities. This presentation fails to convey the dresses' core design concept of taking up space physically when worn. It disconnects customers from the designer's values of autonomy and discourages them from taking interest in the products.

Through the meticulous analysis of the dressmaking process in this thesis, each design decision and its resulting experience were carefully examined. This analysis allows for the clear articulation of the experience and its translation into space. This approach encourages a thoughtful analysis of products for sale to tailor the retail space accordingly.

6.2 RESEARCH THROUGH DRESSMAKING REFLECTION

Dressmaking combines personalization with craftsmanship to create emotional connections to garments. By creating the dress collection myself, I held multiple roles as the designer, craftsman, test model, and photographer. This allowed me to develop an intimate connection with the dresses as I saw their development through every stage of design. Tailoring each garment to fit my body's measurements provided me with opportunities for experimentation and adjustment with every cut, stitch, and fold. Through this hands-on approach, I gained a sensitivity to the dress's qualities, discerning nuances such as the feel of seams against my skin and the air between fabric and body. For example, each layer of Dress 1 seemed to thicken my skin, extending that space between my legs and the fabric and my arm by my side. The tactility of testing the fit and feel enabled me to understand each dress experience at a bodily level.

Fig. 6.3 Selkie dresses found on display at Harrods.

Fig. 6.4 Photograph Dress 1 prior to adding sleeves. Photography by Leah Dingman.

As discussed in 1.1 Scope, crafting the dress collection was the start to my ability to sew complete garments. With Dress 1, I heavily relied on Selkie's Pouf dress as a reference, leveraging it to help me gain confidence in experimenting with sewing techniques and developing my unique style. Crafting the dresses proved to be a process of continual iteration, relying heavily on trial and error during the making stage and the documenting stage. For each dress, I tested the dress designs as I crafted them, ensuring that I was satisfied with every fit and feel. And for the first two dresses, I initially modeled them both which provided insights into the dress experience but limited my perception to a close-up view. This also meant that my understanding the dresses from the audience's perspective was incomplete until I looked at the photographs.

After photographing both the first and second dresses, I discerned from the images that they lacked a certain element. Consequently, I revisited the designs, adding additional features (sleeves for Dress 1 and neckpiece and train for Dress 2) and retaking photographs with a friend as the model to capture their essence more accurately.

Fig. 6.5 Photograph of Dress 2 prior to making neckpiece and train. Photography by Taylor Murray.

The photographs of the sleeveless first dress embodied the vulnerability and innocence captured in both folktales that inspire the dress. (Fig. 6.4)It presented the exposed selkie woman being naked from her seal skin and the princess hiding from her kingdom. The dress didn't, however, capture the empowerment and comfort the women feel once reunited with their skin once again. To address this, I added sleeves matching the skirt's silhouette. This addition enhanced the wearers' sense of empowerment and comfort, ensuring the dress remained securely in place on the chest, yet allowing for unrestricted movement of the arms and legs. The addition of sleeves to Dress 1 was a significant decision, acting as both a functional aspect and a symbolic tone. By incorporating sleeves, the experience of the dress evolved the sense of protection and comfort reminiscent of the selkie folklore. Recognizing the significant change sleeves brought to the overall experience of the dress deepened my understanding of how clothing can influence both the physical and psychological comfort of the wearer.

Augmenting the experience of Dress 2, from the original dress (Fig. 6.5) involved experimenting outside of traditional

garment construction with the use of alternative materials and structural elements, like metal wire. The decision to incorporate a neckpiece and train was inspired by a desire to create a sense of drama and grandeur reminiscent of Alexander McQueen and Guo Pei's work. Using metal wire and intricate beading, Dress 2 became a dress of pride and extravagance, inviting the wearer to engage with the garment on both a tactile and visual level. The result was a dress captivating to the eye of both wearer and audience through the veil of fabric distancing them.

Learning from the first two dresses documentation, for the third dress, I incorporated adjustable elements and photographed just once using a friend as the model rather than myself. The sleeves and collar are connected as one piece. The collar has the flexibility of being worn infront or behind the neck and the sleeve pleats can be spiraled or straightened around the arms. (Fig. 6.6, Fig. 6.7)Working with a model allowed me to curate the dress accordingly to capture its essence through the camera.

Overall, the method of research through dressmaking teaches the power of craftsmanship and tactility. By approaching the design process with an open mind to change and a willingness to experiment, it can push the understanding of craft. By balancing tactile and visual sensitivities, the garments come to life, telling a story not through the words of the craftsman but through their touch. Enveloping the body in experience made from fabric serves as an exploration of the idea of creating space.

Fig. 6.6 Dress 3 collar worn infront of the neck with sleeves spiraled around the arms.

Fig. 6.7 Dress 3 collar worn behind the neck with sleeves straighted by the arms.

6.3 APPLICATION OF SENSORY PROPERTIES

In chapter 5, the experiences of the three dresses were categorized into three dichotomies and presented as a series of sensory properties. (Fig. 6.8) These sensory properties are small ways of creating unique experiences of space in architectural built form. Encompassing properties like volume, movement, lighting, material, and display, the aim of the series is to act as a reference when designing spaces that center around the body's experience of space. Comfort is imagined in physical space as vast spaces with diffuse lighting, soft furnishings, and colourful finishes. Autonomy is imagined with open circulation, sense of mutual trust, and agency in the customization of private spaces. Exposure is depicted as stores directing customers to be in direct sightlines with the public and each other. This is done through open plans, glass storefronts, and placing mirrors outside of fitting rooms. The opposite to these experiences, discomfort, non-autonomy, and concealment, use opposing architectural properties to convey their attributes.

The sensory properties are juxtaposed together to recreate the experience of each dress as a retail space. In chapter 5.3, the use of each element is described. The first space is driven by feelings of comfort and exposure. Rooms Coffee in Toronto serves as a good example of a space with varying levels of privacy. (Fig. 6.9) With plenty of seating and clear sightlines, the coffeeshop

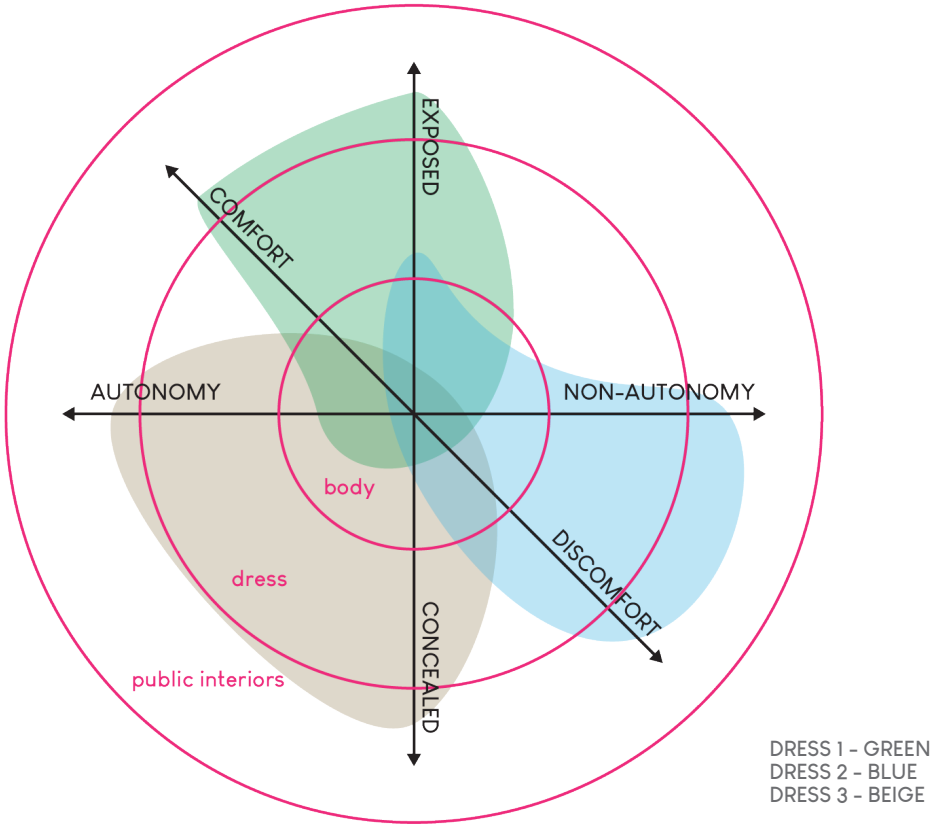


Fig. 6.8 Diagram mapping the dichotomies that exist within each dress. Note the overlaps and differences between the collection of the dresses.

Fig. 6.9 Rooms coffeeshop.

is intimate in creating smaller nooks in the shop but public in the ability to converse with strangers. The second space is driven by experiencing discomfort and non-autonomy. The disorienting elements, like the consistent use of fully mirrored rooms (Fig. 6.10) and one harsh material (Fig. 6.11), are inspired by the Hershel store in Vancouver's fitting rooms. The third space, embodying autonomy and concealment focuses on a meandering pathway much like one of the sculpture rooms at the Fondazione Prada in Milan but with varying degrees of transparency. (Fig. 6.12)

Fig. 6.10 Hershel Vancouver fitting room area. Photography by Marco Chow.

Applying the series of sensory properties to the design of three schematic retail stores tests their effectiveness in physically describing the experiences of each dress. (Fig. 6.13-15) Some aspects of each store appear more effective than others, but overall, they speak to the reciprocal impact designers and craftsmen can have on the body of consumers. The hope is for this research to inspire designers to investigate the way they design spaces for the body. The series of sensory properties can potentially be used as reference for a designer when carefully curating the intimate and public spaces in a store. This research seeks to encourage designers to recognize the importance of critically analyzing their products to design around the effect of products physically and sensibly on the customers.

Fig. 6.11 Hershel Vancouver fitting room.

Fig. 6.12 Sculpture room in Fondazione Prada, Milan.

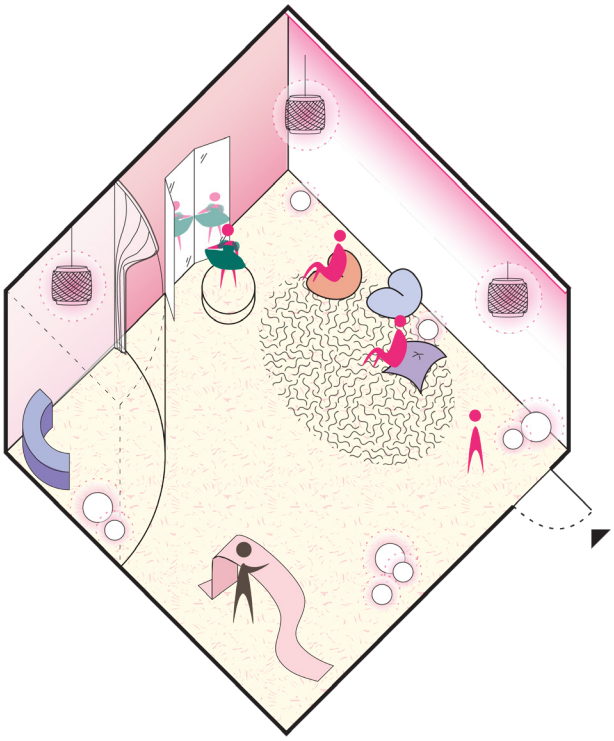


Fig. 6.13 Illustration of retail space 1 based on Dress 1 experiences comfort and exposure.

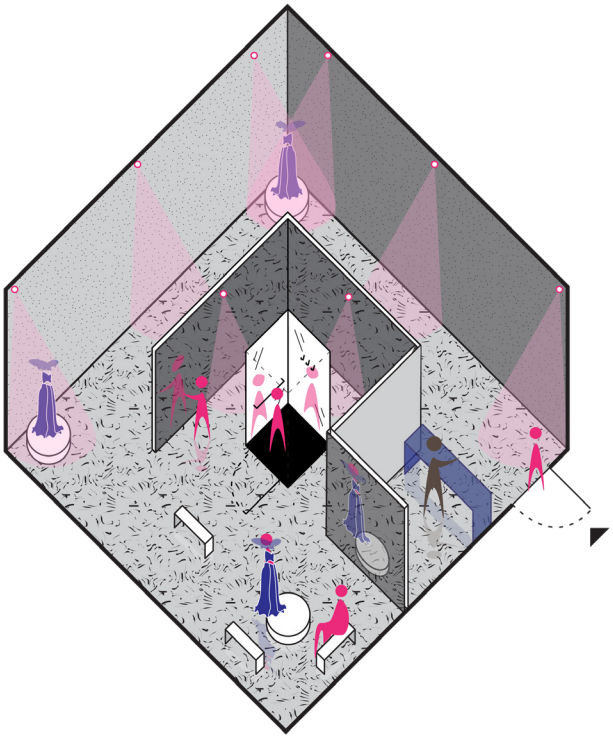


Fig. 6.14 Illustration of retail space 2 based on Dress 2 experiences discomfort and non-autonomy.

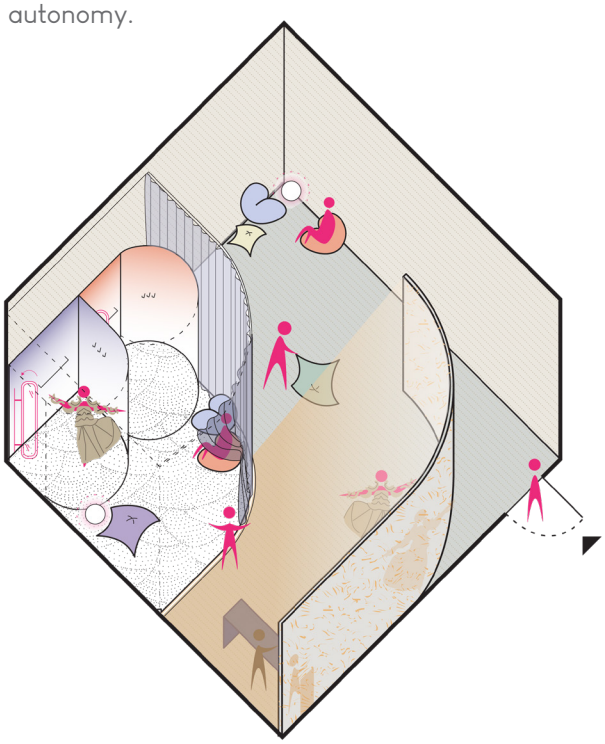


Fig. 6.15 Illustration of retail space 3 based on Dress 3 experiences autonomy and concealment.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Architecture encompasses both direct and indirect aspects of space, influencing users through sensory properties. Clothing can be perceived as a different form of space designed for the body, offering a unique vessel of spatiality and form. The relationship between clothing and the body extends beyond physical style to encompass self-expression through projections of autonomy, emotion, and movement. Retail spaces, particularly in the fashion industry, recognize the importance of shifting focus towards customer engagement and experiential design rather than solely on products. The intersection of fashion and architecture centers around the user's experience in spatial design. Through research on selected case studies of retail stores and exhibition spaces' engagement with customers, along with fashion designers' influence on consumers, three key experiences between individuals and space (built or garment) emerge: autonomy, empowerment, and movement. These experiences convey the relationship between the body and the garment as well as the body's new engagement with space. The thesis approaches research through dressmaking to understand experiential interior retail spaces. The craft of a 3-piece dress collection uses the three key experiences as a basis for their design. The dressmaking serves as a tactile exploration of the design and craft of space and its impact on wearers and audience. The dress collection is analyzed and described as three scales of spatial experiences: autonomous and non-autonomous,

comfort and discomfort, and exposure and concealment. Each scale is then drawn as a series of sensory properties seen in architectural space that can be applied to the design of interior retail space. Testing these properties, the schematic design of three retail stores attempts to encapsulate the dresses' experiences. The limitations of the thesis include the author's skill level and time constraints, prioritizing the process of crafting completed garments over perfection and distilling experiences into tangible properties. The narrow scope of a master's thesis opens opportunities for further investigations on the reciprocal relationship between architect, craftsman, and consumer. As this thesis focused on three dimensions of experience, autonomy, emotion (specifically empowerment), and movement, and their application into retail space, future studies can extend beyond these. The selection of a different emotion would lead to new developments and additions to the sensory properties concluded from this thesis. Their application may vary from the architectural typology of clothing retail spaces to other spaces that aim to center on the user's experience, such as museums, exhibitions, restaurants, or hospitality venues.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to contribute to an ongoing exploration of the commonalities between architectural design, fashion, and the human experience, encouraging the enhancement of engagement between body and space.

Fig. 7.1 Dress 1.

Fig. 7.2 Dress 2. Photography by Taylor Murray.

Fig. 7.3 Dress 3.

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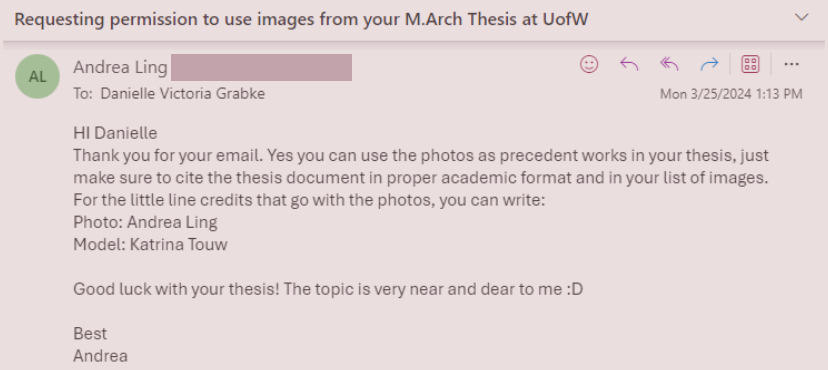

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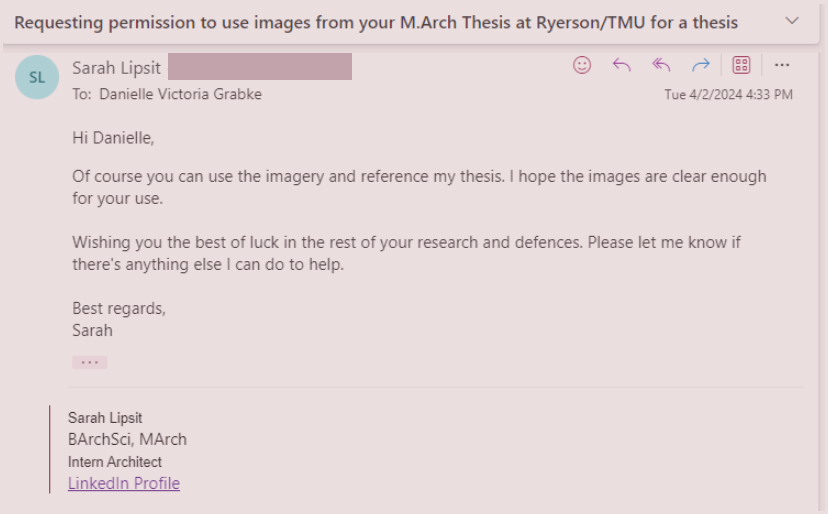

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Best regards,
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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – THESIS DEFENSE

The thesis defense was presented in the Design at Riverside Gallery in Cambridge, Ontario on April 15th, 2024. The three dresses were curated together in one room for the first time. The three dresses are linearly juxtaposed together contained by a red carpet on the floor and the audience seats are arranged on both sides of the carpet facing the front.

Dresses 1 and 3 hang from the ceiling and Dress 2 stands on the dress form used for the dressmaking research. The lights are adjusted to suit each dress, with light surrounding the first dress to highlight its shimmering and light quality, direct light on both the front and back of the second dress to highlight its importance in the center of the room, and direct side lighting to bring attention to the pleats on the third dress.

At the back of the room sits the process table displaying the sewing machine used for the thesis and the pleating experiments from Dress 3.

Fig. 7.4 Dress 3 hung in the defense gallery. Photography by Ethan Zhang.

Fig. 7.5 The defense gallery.


SINGER | Heavy Duty

Fig. 7.6 Table of material experiments and sewing machine. (top left)

Fig. 7.7 Three dresses curated linearly. (bottom left)

Fig. 7.8 Hanging Dress 3. Photography by Ethan Zhang.

Fig. 7.9 Hanging Dress 3. Photography by Ethan Zhang.

Fig. 7.10 Dress 1 displayed in gallery.

Fig. 7.11 Dress 2 displayed in gallery.

Fig. 7.12 Dress 3 displayed in gallery.

Fig. 7.13 The presentation. (below) Photography by Fred Hunsberger.