Dripping with Color

Keywords: Textile Innovation, Couture Techniques, Conceptual/Experimental

Mentor Statement

The purpose of this mentorship was to assist the student to create a wearable garment with a reflective fabric, which was specially manufactured for safety/sporting purposes. This design idea was started with incorporating the lighting effect into the garment. The student and I researched several different kinds of reflective fabrics and chose the appropriate one for this design. To emphasize the lighting effect into this design, the student created the different width of strips to add a sort of randomness to the design and then these stripes were played around with the color layout until it was visually pleasing to the eye with reflective fabric. The designed stripes were digitally printed into 82% polyester and 18% Lycra fabric. The student successfully created the wearable garment with combining reflective fabric and various colors of stripe, digitally printed. I highly recommend this design to exhibit in 2019 ITAA design exhibition because this design is a good example of the wearable art piece, which utilized the unusual materials into the fashion with the new technology by using the digital textile printing techniques.

Design Statement

Dripping with Color is a wearable art piece that incorporated the new trend of reflective fabric being used other than for safety/sporting reasons. The design process started when the designer wanted to figure out a way to incorporate lighting and reflectivity into a garment, finding ways to make the garment look different depending on the way light shines onto it. “Reflective material is created with tiny spherical glass beads (1/2 the size of a human hair). Made from optical-grade glass, these perfect microscopic spheres are coated on one side with aluminum and then organized aluminum-side down and adhered to material to create a reflective surface. The process allows light to bounce directly back to its source (Brilliant Reflective 2018).” Reflective material was an innovation first invented in the 1930’s, and clothing was not its first use (Brilliant Reflective, 2018).

When first looking at *Dripping with Color* it is interesting, but there is a surprise once a flash is shined onto the garment. A flash will reveal the rainbow reflective material that is layered in-between the printed fabric of the drips. When there is not a flash, the reflective material looks more like a black matte vinyl fabric.

Dripping with Color was draped onto a size 8 dress form to create the bodice and skirt pattern pieces. Once it was draped, all the pattern pieces for the layered drips on the skirt and bodice were all hand cut. The fabric design was made by the designer using Adobe Illustrator and then sent off to Contrado, a fabric printing company, to be specialty printed onto a cotton satin fabric. Once the fabric was received the pattern was then cut out. All of the layered drips on the garment took 8 hours to hand cut and then were sewn together to attach to the bottom of the bodice and the skirt.

The bodice was designed to show off the body, a tiny top with low-cut features. For the bodice, the hand cut details on the hem were not surged since the drips were so finely cut, so to prevent fraying of the cotton fabric, No-Fray was applied to all the edges of the drips of the cotton fabric. This was done before sewing it onto the bodice to prevent the No-Fray from getting on any other part of the garment. The bodice also has an exposed zipper sewed onto the front and has topstitching all around the waistline to match the co-ordinate skirt.

The skirt was designed to form to the body to show off curves, to match the bodice. The skirt also contains drips all around the edge and had No-Fray applied onto it as well, in the same way the bodice had it applied. As mentioned before the skirt and top mimic each other with their enclosures with an exposed zipper and topstitching.

This experimental garment is innovative by using a material that is not so often used in creating garments. Reflective material is usually used in small features in clothing, but this garment lets it be used in an innovated shape and style that is not just for sportswear or safety.

Reference

Brilliant Reflective. (2018). What is Reflective Material. Retrieved April 23, 2019, from https://brilliantreflective.com/what-is-reflective-material/

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