

## Cape Dress: Interpreting a Historical Style through Modern Inspiration

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**Design Mentor Statement:**

This ensemble was completed in an upper level creative apparel design course. The purpose of the mentorship relationship was to guide the student in developing a marketable line of apparel for a focused target market. This ensemble is one of five samples developed for the apparel line. The mentorship process began with informational lectures on each step of apparel line design and development. The purpose of the mentorship relationship—development of an apparel line—was guided and met through the completion of a series of assignments that built on each other. The student received both formative and summative feedback at each step. Steps included: (a) design brief development, (b) target market research, (c) inspiration research, (d) brand design statement development, (e) trend research, (f) mood board development, (g) color and fabric board development, (h) fashion illustration of ensembles, (i) technical sketching of garments, (j) first pattern creation, (k) first sample creation, (l) production sample creation, (m) presentation of 1st samples, (n) line plan development, (o) specifications/tech package development, (p) line sourcing, costing, & pricing, and (q) promotional materials development. This project was selected for submission due to its excellent interpretation of inspiration and historic research through fabric and design to create a unique and dramatic ensemble. The student also conducted appropriate experiments to learn how to successfully sew challenging fabrics.

**Design Statement:**

**Statement of Purpose:** This dress was a result of a senior capsule collection that stayed true to the aesthetic and theme of the line, Bricklane to Buckingham. This piece is part of a five ensemble collection. The purpose of Brick Lane to Buckingham is to show the juxtaposition of the new edgier generations and the traditions of the older generation wrapped into one. The traditions and inspirations in this collection include The Vaults (Figure 1), whose mission is to “collaborate and conspire, embracing artists from all walks of life to come together and inspire others” (The Vaults). The Vaults incorporate the edgy and traditional generations.



Figure 1 The Vaults in London

This design piece also incorporates this through the traditional cape, because the royalty in Britain often used capes as a fashion piece, “In the 1950s, designers reimagined the cape completely, eschewing



Figure 2 Visual impact of dress worn with cape attached

functionality by abbreviating the length to the chest and closing the front (Figure 2). It was seen as a fashion statement, with an emphasis on shape, fabric, and seamless lines” (Cheng). The design also brings in the edginess of the new generation through patent and leather, which is very prominent in London's current streetwear.

Aesthetic properties and visual impact:  
This dress is very convertible. Without the cape it is a beautiful evening wear piece, but putting the cape on gives it a huge visual impact (Figure 2). It is definitely a piece that stands out from others and needs a bold wearer.

Process, technique, and execution:  
The process started similar to other designs in this collection, draping a sample. The sample was created out of muslin. After draping the sample, marking of the CF, CB, SA, etc. were made onto the body form then taken out from the pins. The pieces of muslin were laid on a cork board and traced with a tracing wheel over patternmaking paper. The patterns were then adjusted on the paper and seam allowances added with rulers and hip curves. Once the patterns were created, the cutting process began. I cut out patterns for sleeves, front and back top bodice, seven-panel dress, and three layers for the cape. For the execution of the sewing, started by combining the panels of the princess line dress, and then the tulle bodice and sleeves. The cape was assembled on its own. Hooks were added to the inside of the cape and eyes onto four spots on the back of the panel dress to hook the cape on and off. The neck and arm holes were finished with open snaps for flexibility, as well as leather binding. The center back of the panel dress has a metal zipper to incorporate more edginess with the design. I feel that through this design, the use of tulle as sleeves and combined with other materials, was a technique that was mastered.

#### Cohesion:

Cohesion is seen when the collection is all together.

The embroidered tulle, faux leather, and patent is seen in multiple pieces of the collection. The fabrics and mixture of girly and edginess is also cohesive along the whole collection, especially this piece.



Figure 3 Layering of tulle and patent in the detachable cape

**Originality and Innovation:**

The originality of this garment is the unique pairing of girly tulle and edgy faux leather. The cape also incorporates patent combined with tulle on one side and faux leather on the back side. I created my own original fabric by combining the patent and tulle for a beautiful combination (Figure 3). The cape makes this design extremely unique and more runway than ready to wear. This piece is for the women who wants to stand out from the crowd.

**References:**

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