

## Mystic Girls and Butterflies - CNIII

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Fashion designers, especially wearable art designers, often explore fine art drawings as sources of inspiration. Collaborations between wearable art designers and fine artists occurred not only in contemporary fashion world, but can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and bloomed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> (Mackrell, 2005). Many famous designers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century collaborated with artists to create representative works establishing their position in the field of fashion. One of the most famous and successful collections derived from fine art, *Mondrian Look*, was designed by Yves Saint Laurent in 1965-1966. For *Mystic Girls and Butterflies*, a piece of wearable art, the designer was inspired by an experimental drawing titled *CN-III*, created by the collaborating artist. For *CN-III*, the artist used figurative representation and formal abstraction to create multilayered meditations upon time, space and a particular sphere of existence. The goal of this experimental drawing was to print multiple digital drawings on separate sheets of clear plastic. All the printed plastic images were stacked together to create one, two and a half-dimensional image. In *CN-III*, thousands of lines and shapes to translate complex spatial relationships between people, places and things familiar to the artist. Thus, the purposes of creating this piece of wearable art were to: (a) experiment utilizing fabrics to emulate spatial relationships and (b) explore digital textile printing, 3D printing technologies, and handcraft techniques to transform a two and a half-dimensional drawing to three-dimensional garment.

Digital textile printing technology has been widely used in fashion education and industry for over 30 years. Its advantages include fast production, high resolution, low waste levels of water, and maximizes high energy efficiency (Memon, 2012). The designer used digital textile printing technology as the main design concepts to transfer the *CN-III* drawing onto the fabrics. The initial drawing was finished in Adobe Photoshop with multiple layers, which place the objects file at. Each layer contained a line drawn object illustrating the concept of perspective. The designer combined several layers and divided the layers into six groups according to the objects categories, and the perspectives of the space. Garment flat patterns were created in Lectra Modaris Classic 2D V7R2, then fitted to a body form, and modified by draping for examining the accuracy of the flat pattern. The final paper patterns were digitized into Modaris system and converted into DXF files to be opened in Adobe Illustrator to engineer the print. In order to represent the space via a garment, there were three layers of two kinds of fabric used, cotton sateen and 8mm silk organza. Cotton sateen is the base layer not only because of its stiffness and the characteristic of high chromaticity with digital printing, but also represents the bottom layer of the inspiration art work due to its dull surface. The purpose of using two layers of the silk organza was to establish the space and express the initial drawing idea and technique, which used fabrics to replicate the clear plastic material in the original inspiration drawing.

The three pattern pieces (front and back) of the dress and the images (include girls and butterflies) were engineered in Adobe Illustrator in order to match the prints on the seam allowances, and placed the prints based on the width of fabric. The engineered garment patterns with ½” seam allowance were digital printed on the cotton sateen using a Motuh 1638X digital textile printer. The image of the middle layer was for adding the perspectives of the object and space. The top layer was created to emphasize the main objects of the drawing, so images of the girls and butterflies matched the base layer. Then the engineered garment patterns were digital printed on the 8mm silk organza. The three layers were sewn together at the neckline panel. Brown ribbon bindings were attached on the hems to emphasize the relations of the layers and functionally support the A-shape of the dress.

3D printing technology rapidly gained attention by artists and designers. It was considered as the next life changing technology (Hoskins, 2013). To contrast hard and soft materials, which was shown as the soft lines and glass-like materials in the drawing, the designer used 3D printing technology to create the shoulder pieces. The silhouette of the shoulder pieces was directly draped using paper on the dress form and then digitized into the computer. The 3D printing model was structured in Rhino software. The motif patterns on the shoulder pieces were inspired by the floral shapes appeared in the drawing, representing the movement of the lines. The motif patterns overlap on the two layers of the shoulder pieces. The 3D printed structures were printed by a Makerbot 2-18 printer over 48 hours. The 3D printed pieces were sanded and spray painted with dark brown pigment to match the color of the dress. The center back of the two pieces were laced-up with a brown satin string. The front shoulders were laced-up to the top of the dress.

The only colors of the initial drawing were the tattoo on the girl’s arm and butterflies. The designer used the concept of the butterflies as the embellishment on the dress to enhance the 3-dimensional effect. The wings of the butterflies were collected from died butterflies and donated by a butterfly research center. The designer used needle-felting techniques to make the bodies of the butterflies. The wings were then glued onto the felted “body” and sewn on the dress and wearer’s left shoulder. This wearable art piece demonstrates a successfully collaborative work between a fashion designer and a fine artist. It achieved the goal of using layers of the fabric to enhance the perception of space in the environment and among the objects. The final garment serves as a physical record of both the artist’s and designer’s visual experience.

#### References:

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Image 1 – Front (above) Image 3 – Side (Below)



Image 2 – Back (Above) Image 4 – Detail (Below)

