

Elevation

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This design, “Elevation,” expresses nature’s ability to create beauty through its most basic phenomenon. It is inspired by the concept of rise and fall, and introduces elements of repetition and variation. Such phenomenon is exemplified by the graceful rippled patterns left in sand by the action of waves as the tide recedes, and the tessellation of a crystal forming or a bee building a honeycomb. Nature creates such fluidity through its everyday processes and this piece captures this elegance. The dress is meant to be viewed from many different angles. As the eye moves around the piece, the sharp points that create the transition between bodice and skirt gracefully move up and down. The asymmetrical hem emphasizes these transitions.



The process was started by draping and fitting a basic fitted muslin with princess seams to shape the torso. Each design line was then drafted on this muslin, and carefully transferred into digital format to create final patterns using the Optitex computer program. Two different muslins with different widths of panels were cut and tested using a laser-cutting machine, which created precise pieces. Each pointed seam was carefully sewn in three steps using a lockstitch industrial machine to ensure a fluid and precise transition from the skirt (a faux dupioni) to bodice (lighter weight polyester Charmeuse) at the many locations where four panels came together into a precise point. The computer patternmaking and laser cutting technologies were critical to the development of this design, as the slightest shift in a seam would result in a distortion of the transition between seams. The use of such sophisticated technology to achieve what nature creates so gracefully and effortlessly is perhaps ironic.