

Tribute to Schiaparelli

Carol J. Salusso, Dongming Zhao, Washington State University, USA

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Elsa Schiaparelli, an extraordinary couture designer in the 1930's and 1940's, was well known for her sense of fun, touches of surrealism, and attention to making novel designs aesthetically intriguing. Renewed enthusiasm for Schiaparelli's designs emerged in a 2012 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Even more exciting is creation of new designs resulting from acquisition of the brand and reemergence of House of Schiaparelli couture collections from 2013 onward (Secret, 2014).



We designed this coat as a tribute to Elsa Schiaparelli. Since Schiaparelli was among the first designers to embrace synthetic fabrics, using auburn striped faux fur was a natural choice. She was also known for unusual silhouette and structural novelty. We draped the garment using

intersecting bias sections to form a rectilinear silhouette with dropped back hem and contrasting areas of bias that highlight the acrylic faux fur stripes and texture. Schiaparelli innovated broad shoulder designs noted as making Marlene Dietrich a fashion rebel (Secrest, 2014). Our shoulder design was exaggerated through widening both shoulderline and sleeve cap; gathering the sleeve from cap to armhole level; and supporting the horizontal shoulder line with a wooden dowel. To add of touch of Schiaparelli's trademark surprise, the collar was designed to literally guard her neck via vertical sculpting around the back ending with framing her face in the front. This was accomplished using grouped zip ties to form rigid stays intermittently around the back collar and horizontal ties to finish the collar edge. As in typical fur coats, the design meets at center front and is closed with invisible hooks. The garment is fully lined in rayon crepe.

The outcome of our Schiaparelli tribute process is a unique and audacious design that reflects the energy of Schiaparelli's challenge of "dare to be different". We offer this design in recognition of renewed interest in Elisa Schiaparelli's approach to design.

Brockman, H (1965). *The Theory of Fashion Design*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Secrest, M. (2014). *Elsa Schiaparelli: A biography*. New York: Knopf.