

One Day in Spring

Li Liu, Kent State University, USA

Keywords: New Technologies, Couture techniques, Textile innovation

Measurements: Bust 34", Waist 26", Hips 37"

Mentor Statement: This design was created for a flower-inspired project in a Fashion Design Studio course. The purpose of the project was to create a collection based on inspiration from a local botanical garden. The project challenged students to be open to new technologies that could be used to create interesting garments. Students were required to present a portfolio consisting of design process and 8 final looks at the end of a 5-week period. Additionally, one of the final looks from the portfolio must be made into a finished garment with fashion fabric. Inspired by the Moth Orchid photos provided by the botanical garden, the student was able to create a wearable art piece while utilizing technologies such as digital printing and laser cutting.

As the course instructor, I worked with the student throughout the process from introducing the concept of the project, demonstrating different construction techniques, and finalizing the design. Several exploratory drapes were created to confirm the idea and two muslin samples were reviewed to test the chosen design. The orchid's image was processed in a computer program, then digitally printed on natural fabric and laser cut into shapes. To enhance the detail, the student was able to incorporate peals and fake flower petals on the dress. The design she created not only represents a unique botanical inspired wearable art, but also demonstrates ingenuity and inventiveness by combining different technologies and handcrafting.

Design Statement: Digital textile printing and other technologies provide for a continually expanding range of design possibilities (Campbell & Parsons, 2004). For example, scholar Tameka Ellington has used digital printing with leather to create wearable art pieces inspired by nature (Ellington, 2014). By understanding this past research of innovative fashion technologies, I wanted to contribute to future research and create a design utilizing these technologies while also using nature as inspiration.

This design was inspired by the Moth Orchid, which was showcased at a local botanical garden. The purpose of the design was to create a wearable art piece representing a scene of a flower fairy in spring by using fashion technology and handcrafting. Using orchids as the visual and conceptual focus of my design, I decided to recreate the visuals using a digital textile printer, laser cutter, and hand crafting.

For the project, design sketches were created first with the Moth Orchid images providing inspiration. Four pattern piece, front bodice, front skirt, back bodice, and back skirt, were created by draping on a size 8 dress-form. The pattern pieces were then digitized into a computer

program utilizing a garment digitizer. To create the textile, the orchid pictures were repeated and processed on Adobe Photoshop to adjust the colors and shapes. The orchids were then placed and arranged on the digital pattern pieces in Adobe Illustrator. A Mimaki DS-1600 Textile Printer was then used to print out all the pieces on silk charmeuse. By going through the process of pretreating fabric through steaming, washing, drying, and pressing, the digital textile printing gives the fabric a realistic look of orchids. Instead of covering the body with a full piece of fabric, some areas were laser cut to emphasize the shape of the orchids. The extra eases were taken and seams were attached by overlapping some of the flower petals and sewn with blind stitches. Snaps were used for the closure on the right shoulder seam and side seam. In order to combine 2D textile with 3D flowers, the design deliberately creates a simulation of orchids on the dress. To achieve this, fake orchid flowers were taken apart, trimmed, and sewn onto the piece with pearls in their centers. A nude color cami slip dress was made for the under dress to finish the look.

In this project, an orchid-inspired wearable art piece was created with fashion technologies and handcrafting skill. The beautiful simulated orchids that reflects natural beauty was obtained through digital textile printing and laser cutting. Details were hand sewn with pearls and flower parts on the center of orchids. In contrast to most of the garments that were made by the full image from digital printing, the distinctive textile was created by cutting out background areas and overlapping some of the piece to create a fitted and natural look.

Ellington, T. N. (2014). Baobab a.k.a. the upside down tree. *ITAA Proceedings 2014 Creative Design Professional: International Textile and Apparel Association*. Retrieved from <http://cdm16001.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16001coll5/id/18679>

Parsons, J. L., & Campbell, J. R. (2004). Digital apparel design process: Placing a new technology into a framework for the creative design process. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 22(1/2), 88-98.

