



Les Nymphéas – Trees Reflections

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As one of the eight Les Nymphéas (Water Lily) compositions, Tress Reflections added more peaceful dimensions to the series as the dominant blue tone calms and meditates the viewers. The inspiration of this coat came from the colors and serene feelings created by the branches of weeping willow as they fuse into the water in the painting. The purpose of the design was to incorporate Monet's unique artistic interpretation of nature to surface design elements in conjunction with the environmentally friendly dyeing technique.

The main design elements were color and texture. In order to create swirly lines of willow branches, bouclé, soft double-knit weight, and bulky wool yarns were chosen for the textural differences. During the design development of this project, we searched for a way to dye the yarns without using harsh chemicals. Natural dye was not the best option for loosely twisted wool yarns because many of the natural dye require long heating and stirring process which may cause felting of the wool. Therefore, we chose a form of acid dye using Kool-Aid drink mix. The food coloring and acidity of the Kool-Aid were perfect conditions for dyeing wool. Yarns were dyed in different shades of blues, blue greens, and blue violets.

Instead of traditional knitting or crocheting, yarns were machine couched onto the black wool gabardine. First, a redingote silhouette was created as a base garment through a combination of draping and flat pattern. A redingote was a gown that was worn by women in the mid-1780s and was inspired by a man's stylish sporting coat (Woodyard, 2016). After cutting out main pieces and marking the swirly brushstroke lines on the fabric, yarns were machine stitched individually to create somewhat of an ombré effect. The loose ends of each yarn on the garment were pulled through the wrong side using an embroidery hook. The loose ends of yarns at the hemline are felted with added black wool roving. In order to increase fiber migration, each yarn was untwisted before felting process.

The design contributes to scholarship of teaching by documenting the process of dyeing and surface design techniques for use in teaching demonstrations. This design also contributes to the field of textiles and apparel design as it demonstrates the significance of using knitting yarns in unique ways to create textiles. Carefully controlled yarn application created soft movement of artist's brushstrokes; while the textural transition of the felted hemline created the willow reflection harmonizing into the water.

Techniques: Dyeing, Couching, Felting

Date Completed: May 2016

Measurements: Bust 36.5", Waist 29", Hip 39"

Materials: Undyed yarns: bouclé (54% mohair, 23% silk, 18% wool, 5% nylon), superwash double-knit weight (100% Merino wool), and Peruvian Highland bulky (100% wool). Black Gabardine (100% Wool), Black Roving (100% Merino wool), and Kool-Aids

Reference

- Monet, C. (1915-1926). *Les Nymphéas: Reflets d'arbres* [Painting]. *Les Nymphéas*, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, France.
- Woodyard, S. (2016). Redingote gown, 1715-1785. In J. Blanco F., M. D. Doering, P.K. Hunt-Hurst & H. V. Lee (Eds.), *Clothing and Fashion: American Fashion from Head to Toe* (p. 236). Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO.

Front



Couching Detail



Back



Felting Detail

