

Hands with Holy Grail Mini Dress Design Statement

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The intention of this process is to illustrate the direct influence fine art can have on fashion design. Fine art painting provides inspiration for my two-dimensional fabric designs, and the integration of those 2-D designs into a three-dimensional garment is my design challenge – to form a beautiful 2-D design into a creative and innovative 3-D form, using the human body as the supporting structure and the 2-D design as ornament. This dress could be remade in another fabric print, but the resulting dress/print design would not be integrated in the way it is with this particular fabric. Many fabric prints are made from simple repeats of mark-making, and most dress designs are made to be constructed with a variety of fabrics. This fabric print was developed over several months of iterations on Photoshop from parts of a painting that took three months to complete. The painting was chosen because I was curious about how the series of hands that appeared in it could wrap around the body in the shape of a dress. The resulting mini length in front was dictated by the maximum printable width of the printer itself.

The Hands with Holy Grail Mini Dress is from my collaborative dress collection “From Fine Art to Fashion”. All of the dresses in this ongoing collection have been one-of-a-kind dresses made from textile patterns that were derived from paintings. The surrealistic imagery and harmonious color sense featured in my collaborator’s paintings inspired me to develop digitally-printed fabrics, which then inspired specific dress designs. Using Photoshop and sections of a painting, I designed a repeat that was printed on woven cotton (see bottom left photo), then draped on a mannequin. The tucks in the front of the dress were started with a simple pinch of the fabric at the edge of one of the printed motifs. Many pinches, pins and tucks later, they were hand and machine-stitched into place symmetrically to create waist definition and surface dimension (see bottom right photo). Neckline finger cutouts were faced, and side seam pleats formed the hip shape. The back of the dress has diagonal bodice pleats and the skirt is self-lined, falling to a long deeply-pleated fishtail point in the center back (see top right photo). The title of the dress reflects the combined imagery in the center of the bodice, the cut-out hands at the neckline from the original painting, and the chalice-shaped figure that resulted from the repeat technique of mirroring. This mirroring technique was used to create a surrealistic feeling, to follow through with the painter’s original style and intent.

Celebrating color and exploring its expression in texture, pattern, and form, this design integrates two-dimensional textile design with three-dimensional fashion design. Designing and creating original textiles has enhanced my ability to design innovative garments. I focused on developing a contemporary garment that utilizes natural fibers, and traditional production techniques mixed with contemporary manufacturing technology.

Photos follow on following page(s).



