

## Nostalgia

Designer: Qiyao Xiong; Mentor: Ling Zhang, Iowa State University, USA

*Keywords:* Digital textile printing, engineered print, natural fabric

**Mentor Statement**

*Nostalgia* was created in a digital textile printing course for undergraduates. The goal of the course was to introduce the design strategies and understand the design process for the creative scholarship incorporating digital textile printing technology. The purpose of this mentorship relationship was for the student to utilize digital technologies such as digital textile printing and digital pattern making to create Ready-to-Wear or wearable art. As design mentor, I demonstrated digitizing paper patterns into the Optitex and modifying the patterns in both Optitex and Modaris. I also demonstrated creating engineered prints based on the digital patterns, providing advises and resources to the students. The student came to the class with strong fine art background but lack of CAD design skill. She was struggling to develop the textile prints based on her original art works. I demonstrated the necessary tools in the Photoshop and gave her advice on how to develop a unique print. I chose to submit this work due to the superb creativity of the prints, unique garment silhouette, and good quality of the construction, and the tremendous growth on the problem solving skill.

**Design Statement**

The purpose to create this design, *Nostalgia*, was to bring out the intrinsic power and the feeling of reminiscence of the wearer via pattern manipulation, engineered prints, and digitally printed fabric. *Nostalgia* is a sportswear ensemble that embodies art, minimalism as well as deconstruction in an oversized silhouette. Additionally, monochromatic colors are used to emphasize the reminiscence and red is also included in the color scheme to break up gloom.

In terms of inspirations for this project, they came from various aspects. One of them is *Comme des Garçons*, the Japanese androgynous fashion label founded by Rei Kawakubo. The brand offers a bold, feminist reconsideration of the body, moving away from the stereotyped “female” and into something more transgressive, even aggressive. Kawakubo constructs distort shapes of the human form, and in doing so, proposes new ideas of beauty (Fury, 2017). As explicit as to its name, *Comme des Garçon* means “like boys” in French which symbolizes the blurring of gender norms. As for the color palette of CDG, Kawakubo used the color black and scarlet consistently throughout her designs, and she described those two as the colors for strength. Inspired by CDG’s unconventional brand philosophy, *Nostalgia* shares many similarities in silhouette as well as the color scheme. Moreover, the prints on *Nostalgia* are formed by a mixture of personal stories of the designer and the “Cloud Gate,” a public sculpture in Chicago also known as the bean (see Figure 1). Each print seems to be unrelated to others, yet everyone conveys a message from the designer’s life path along with subtle sentiments. As one of the most ancient animals existing in the world, the lizard has learned how to survive under harsh circumstances. The sketch of its eye was to show the determination to thrive and to overcome



Published under a Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided properly cited.

ITAA Proceedings, #76 - <https://itaonline.org>

hardships. The photograph “*Little Prince*” implies the story behind it that every encounter and farewell are part of life, and people learn from them, then grow up through these moments. Lastly, incorporating the landmark into apparel design can be interesting sometimes. In this case, the slightly curved sleeves (see Figure 2) of *Nostalgia* were to resemble the arch of the bean, and the image was copied four times and reflected horizontally to generate the overlay effect.

The next stage is the prototype design process. *Nostalgia* initiates with draping and patternmaking. In order to create the loose-fitting silhouette, additional ease needs to be added throughout the garment especially around the waist. Thus, the draping fabrics were mostly big rectangular pieces and were modified into box shapes with straighter lines and angles using patternmaking techniques. Besides, the style is asymmetric on the lower part of the ensemble which strays it away from the typical button-down shirt. There is a cutout design around the right waist that creates visual interest. The right bottom panel is connected to the entire back piece and was draped to wrap around the hip. A mandarin collar was draped for mixing of aesthetics. The sleeves were flat patterned and cut into two sections for the knit and woven panels. There are eight simple  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” buttons evenly spread out for closure that balance out the busy prints.

When it comes to developing the print pattern, Adobe Photoshop comes in handy. The aforementioned images were merged in one in Photoshop, and the stamp tool helped to blur their edges so they look more consistent. Garment patterns were digitized into Optitex and exported as an AI file and converted to a PSD file. Then, prints could be arranged properly for each pattern piece. For *Nostalgia*, there were three seamless patterns that laid right next to one another with seam allowances. The canvas size was adjusted to 44”x 78” which was also the size for desired print fabric. The print pattern was eventually saved as a TIFF file, and the actual printing process was ready to go.

As for the fabric choice of *Nostalgia*, cotton sateen was primarily utilized for the outer shell due to its great absorbency, wrinkle resistance and breathability. Rib knit was used for the under panel of sleeves to create a gathered effect. In addition, the garment was lined partially with a lightweight fabric made of 80% cotton and 20% polyester for comfort and aesthetic purposes.

*Nostalgia*, as a versatile and avant-garde ensemble, can be worn as a shirt dress or a jacket. With digital textile printing, a more sophisticated look adds to the design. The application allows many possible combinations of concepts along with the designer interpretation of minimalistic and deconstructive fashion for the young generation.

#### References:

- Bowles, M., & Isaac, C. (2015). *Digital textile design* (2nd ed., Vol. 8). London: Laurence King Publishing.
- Fury, A. (2017). 7 Key Themes in Rei Kawakubo's Career. *The New York Times*. Retrieved



**Figure 2.** Curve sleeve of the shirt dress.

from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/28/t-magazine/fashion/rei-kawakubo-comme-des-garcons-themes.html>



Image A: Full Front View



Image B: Full Back View



Image C: Side View

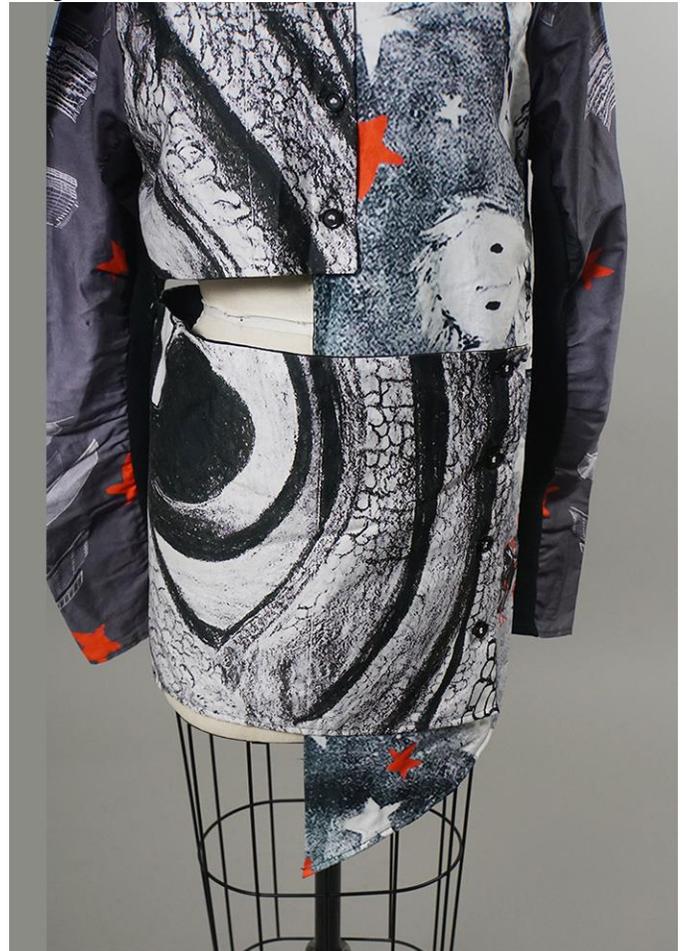


Image D: Interesting Detail