

MEMORIES: apparel design blending art, craft, and digital technology

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Abstract

This practice-based research draws on knowledge from the visual arts, craft making methods, and digital technology to combine engineered digital textile printing with the principles of the Helmholtz illusion in the design of a garment that is comfortably loose yet gives the visual illusion of an hourglass shape. This creative work is executed using traditional cut-and sew garment construction methods alongside digital tools, merging art and design principles fluidly in the process. The use of digital textile printing allows the designer to develop ideas in a digital environment, reduces environmental impact, introduces customization options, and integrates textile and garment design. Additionally, the decision to explore stripe as a design feature was inspired by the communicative and descriptive power of the use of line in art and design. The use of striped fabric as line to create a visual silhouette is used by apparel designers to create a variety of illusions to flatter different body-types as well as change the way wearers perceive their body shape. In this work, instead of designing to a specific body-type the principles of illusion create an hourglass silhouette on a loosely fitted garment. To develop the garment, fabric was draped directly on the form to manipulate and rotate the stripes across the body creating the desired effect. The colorway and repeat print used in the engineered stripe was inspired by a wildflower, the *Castilleja coccinea* from the designer's homeland and was developed using Adobe Photoshop. Renderings of various colorways were evaluated digitally before selection of the final design. Once the final design was established, the individual garment pattern pieces were digitized and the print applied to prepare a print layout. In this digital setting, the pattern pieces were arranged to maximize fabric. Because the pieces would be printed with the engineered stripe, their placement was not restricted to accommodate matching across pre-printed motifs or stripes, which often causes additional waste. Using the capabilities of digital textile printing enables the designer maximum creative flexibility in matching stripes or engineered designs without the added textile waste. Additionally, design risks can be taken in the digital environment before consuming actual material. In this way, the textile printer enabled the designer to explore the use of visual arts and design principles on textiles to develop a garment both visually appealing and functional.

