

“Push/pull’ ...cloth directed”

Exploring possible draping techniques based on Madame Gres’ method to create shape and form.



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1.1 Representative images of work

Design 1 - Irmgard 2013



Photo: Jahanne Kowalski, 2013

Design 2 - Irmgard 2013



Photo: Jahanne Kowalski, 2013

Design 3 - Irmgard 2013



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Design 4 - Irmgard 2013



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Design 5 - Irmgard 2013



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Design 6 - Irmgard 2013



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Design 7 - Irmgard 2013



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Design 8 - Irmgard 2013



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Design 9 - Irmgard 2013



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Design 10 - Irmgard 2013



Photo: Jahanne Kowalski, 2013

Design 11 - Irmgard 2013



Photo: Jahanne Kowalski, 2013

Design 12 - Irmgard 2013



Photo: Jahanne Kowalski, 2013

Design 13 - Irmgard 2013



Photo: Jahanne Kowalski, 2013

1.2 Abstract

This study is concerned with the development of a method for creating shapes and form in clothing with minimum exertion on the cloth, using simple construction techniques. It is an exploration of an approach to producing clothing in a less familiar manner to the usual way of working which involves, almost always, drafting or flat-pattern making. With the expression of the movement of the textile around the body as the main aim, the 'push/pull' principle is employed to direct its flow in both a symmetric and asymmetric fashion. It is a principle inspired by Madame Gres, the French designer of the 1930s to 1980s, famous for her neo-classic inspired gowns. The textile, usually a rectangle, is manipulated without cutting into it but by pushing and pulling first, through the upper limbs of the body, and then 'worked' around the rest of the body, using draping and pleating to create shapes which are spontaneous, elaborate and not pre-determined. Furthermore, the approach explores the aesthetic potential of draping and combining the Filter 80 PPI, an industrial textile used for filtering, with conventional clothing materials, linen and/or cotton in this case. The parallels and contrasts of this mix are noted, together with the distinct expressions, which nonetheless both display a simple approach in construction, minimal manipulation of the textile, the use of the upper limbs as natural obstacles, and the 'no-cut' principle of the rectangular piece of cloth. With free form construction and reflection, one discovers expressions possible only through the use of an experimental approach in working.

1.3 Keywords

Draping, pleating, push/pull, movement, free-form, experimental, expressions, symmetry, asymmetry.

2 Introduction

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore advances in pattern making and the myriad of expressions, seen in some fashion collections currently on offer. In recent years, there has been an increasing move towards creating clothing in far less traditional ways, by exploring practices which clearly challenge the status quo, both as a channel for artistic development and artistic expression. In the competitive environment of fashion, where change is paramount, inventiveness cannot be overvalued and the dynamism of experimental work gives a competitive advantage.

To date, research on the subject of draping has tended to focus on the aesthetics of draping, how this represents the skill of the designer and the properties of different textiles used. Throughout this paper, the term draping will refer to arranging cloth in folds or the cut of clothing on a figure form. Far too little attention has been paid to the actual *doing* in a construction process, especially in draping. 'Push/pull...cloth directed' is put forward below as an apt description of the process of creating shape and form in an ensemble with the use of draping and pleating. What is presented is a proposition to explore more than just technique and to make the processes of design stages equally important. When explored as a method, the action of pushing and pulling of cloth around the body, together with reflection and reworking will yield interesting 3-D construction results. Other possible actions in draping include twisting/turning and wrapping/knotting.

With draping becoming an increasingly popular method in construction, a personal interest arose in the subject, as well as a desire to explore further, hence this study. The flexibility and expressions draping offers practitioners as they work, is good enough reason for its widespread use, as opposed to the 2-D flat-pattern making, where a design is concluded from the onset.

This report has been divided into three parts. The first part offers a brief overview of the history of clothing construction, and looks at the depiction of draping and pleating in art, clothing, fashion and design. The second part deals with different perspectives which affirm the beauty and utility for the practitioner, of a rectangular piece of cloth around the body or figure.

Finally, the third part deals with the method to test the hypothesis and realise the objectives of the study.

2.1 Introduction to the field

With draping being the main method in the investigation of shape and form in this program, pleating is also employed to fulfil part of the aim, which is to direct the movement of cloth around the body. To gain some understanding in both subjects and also as a way to develop the proposed program, several sources have been referenced to indicate the widespread use and importance of both methods in history and present day.

Draping

Draping is and has always been considered an important part of clothing construction and a skill to have.

Merriam-Webster dictionary describes draping as an act “to hang in a pleasing way or to cover (someone or something) with a cloth — usually + *with* or *in*”.

- to cover or adorn with or as if with folds of cloth
- to cause to hang or stretch out loosely or carelessly
- to arrange in flowing lines or folds

Furthermore, Merriam-Webster dictionary describes draping as the following:

- the cut or hang of clothing
- arrangement in or of folds

According to Wikipedia Drapery is a general word referring to cloths or textiles (Old French *draperie*, from Late Latin *drappus*^[1]). It may refer to cloth used for decorative purposes – such as around windows – or to the trade of retailing cloth, originally mostly for clothing, formerly conducted by drapers.

Sarah L. Harrer, eHow Contributor, describes draping as *the process of positioning and pinning test fabric on dress forms to design clothing*.

According to Gigi Starr, eHow Contributor, *Draping entails a period of work with muslin (or fashion fabric) during which the designer manipulates and works the fabric into the desired look. Used since the beginning of clothing construction , draping can render simple, flat looks or ornate, detail-rich touches. However, it's an intricate art that requires much study, if not college-level schooling*.

Draping in art

According to Wikipedia, in art history, drapery refers to any cloth or textile depicted, which is usually mostly clothing. The schematic depiction of the folds and woven patterns of loose-hanging clothing on the human form, with ancient prototypes, was reimagined as an adjunct to the female form by Greek vase-painters and sculptors of the earliest fifth century and has remained a major source of stylistic formulas in sculpture and painting, even after the Renaissance adoption of tighter-fitting clothing styles. After the Renaissance, large cloths with no very obvious purpose are often used decoratively, especially in portraits in the grand manner; these are also known as draperies.

For the Greeks, as Sir Kenneth Clark noted, clinging drapery followed the planes and contours of the bodily form, emphasizing its twist and stretch: "floating drapery makes visible the line of movement through which it has just passed.... Drapery, by suggesting lines of force, indicates for each action a past and a possible future." Clark contrasted the formalized draperies in the frieze at Olympia with the sculptural frieze figures of the Parthenon, where "it has attained a freedom and an expressive power that have never been equalled except by Leonardo da Vinci". Undraped male figures, Clark observed, "were kept in motion by their flying cloaks."

Poppaea, wife of Nero



Nanosanchez - Wikimedia Commons

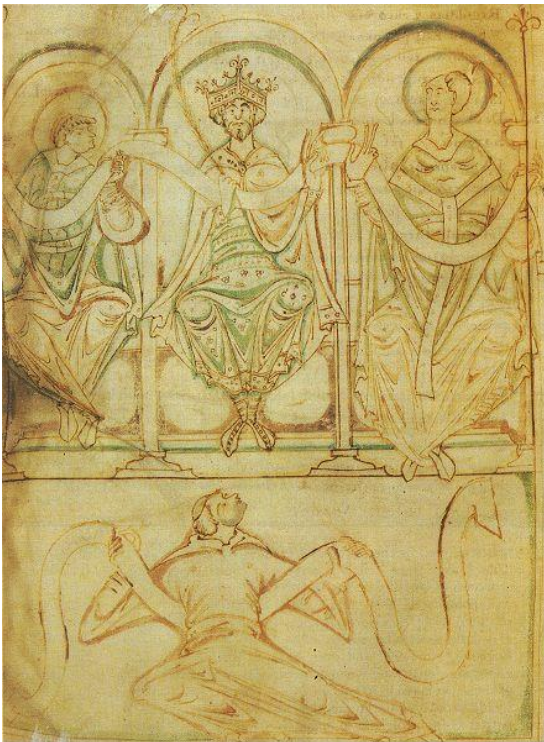
Other depictions of drapery in art

The Bamberg Apocalypse



Bamberger Apokalypse Folio 59v, Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Signatur Msc.Bibl.140

11th century Anglo-Saxon miniature



Transferred from en.wikipedia

Portrait by [Joshua Reynolds](#) of one of George III's sons, with lavish robes and including a hanging drapery above



The Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, Derbyshire, UK

Image comes from [english wikipedia](#), taken from ABC Gallery

Draping in clothing construction

In history of clothing construction, a simple act of wrapping and/or folding of cloth and usually, no sewing at all, is all it took to create the forerunners of clothing as we know them today. According to Wikipedia, a **sari** or **saree** is a piece of cloth of about four to nine yards in length, women drape over their bodies in various styles. It still is an important item of dress today, and was traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished during 2800–1800 BC.

Girls in traditional Mysore sari, long pleats are trademark of Traditional Mysore sari. (Wikipedia)



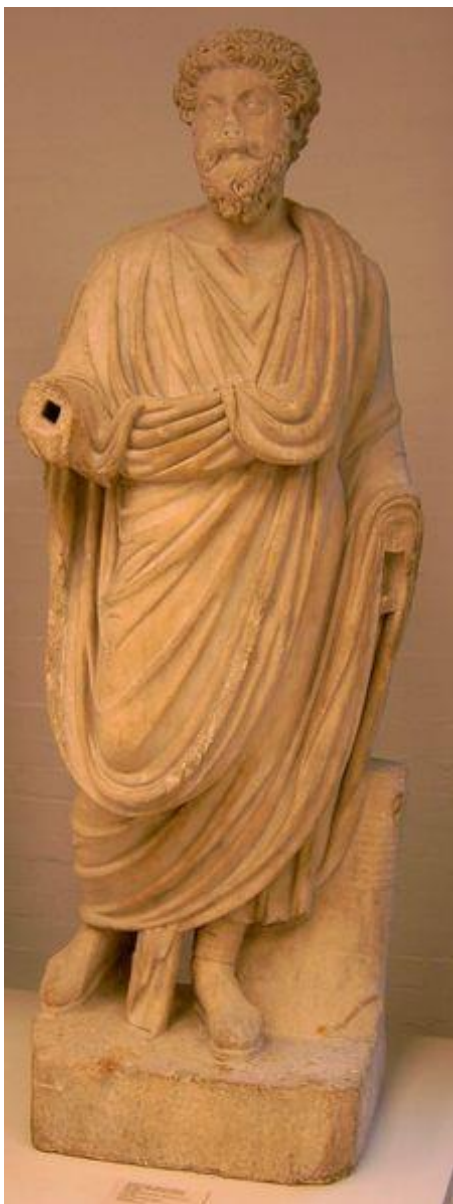
Vintage Albumen Photograph India Mysore 1880

Gigi Starr, eHow Contributor, asserts that draping is the most basic design technique in fashion. She argues that both the Roman Toga and the Scottish kilt are simply sheaths of cloth draped around the body and held by a belt for the toga, the kilt, is pinned, pleated and folded.

The Toga

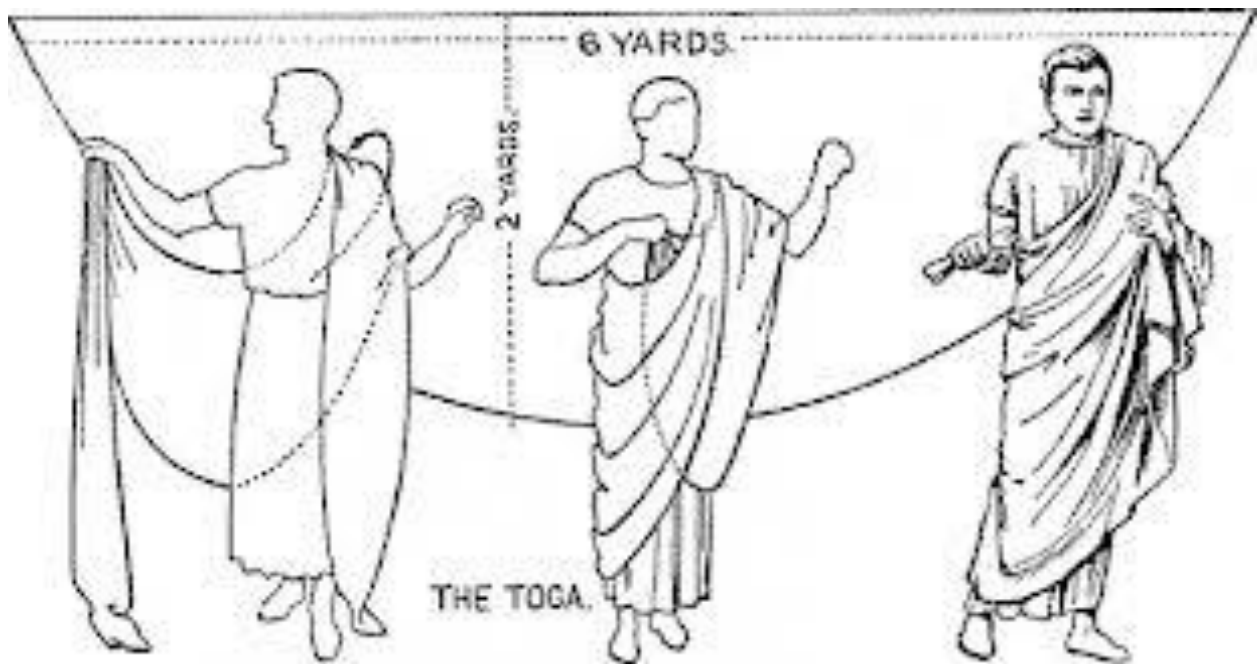
Wikipedia describes the **Toga**, as a distinctive garment of Ancient Rome, was a cloth of perhaps 20 ft (6 m) in length which was wrapped around the body and was generally worn over a tunic.

Statue of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180) wearing the toga. Proconnesian marble. Made about AD 176-180. From Alexandria, Egypt

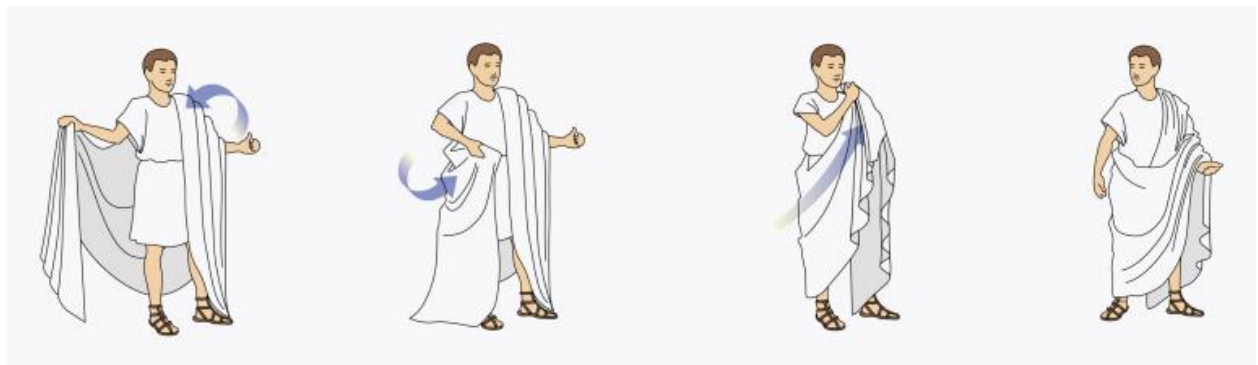


Klaus-Dieter Keller, Germany

The Toga



www.howtomakeatoga.info



Dorling Kindersley

The diagram shows how a yardage of a toga is draped around the body. Wikipedia's description on how to make a toga involves 'holding a piece of cloth under the right arm, half behind, half in front. The back part is folded over the left shoulder, and the front part is then folded over the left shoulder too'.

According to Wikipedia, the **History of the Kilt** stretches back to at least the end of the 16th century. The kilt first appeared as the belted plaid or **great kilt**, a full length garment whose upper half could be worn as a cloak draped over the shoulder, or brought up over head as a cloak. The **small kilt** or **walking kilt** (similar to the 'modern' kilt) did not develop until the late 17th or early 18th century, and is essentially the bottom half of the great kilt.

Lord Mungo Murray [Am Morair Mungo Moireach], 1668 - 1700. Son of 1st Marquess of Atholl



John Michael Wright, (1617-1694)

Draping in Fashion

According to Mears (2007). *Madame Gres' the Sphinx of fashion*, 'draping and tailoring are the two major disciplines of clothing construction'.

This notion is held by many dress designers even during the Mid-century America, Evans (1955), *Draping and dress design*, 'a number of Parisian as well as American artists prefer to work out their ideas directly in fabric, many of them employing the classical method of draping on a form or a mannequin in "toile" – crinoline or cheap material ...".

In high fashion and couture fashion houses, draping continues to be one of the widely used methods in construction, affording a designer an opportunity to experiment with cloth and the way it folds and hangs on the body or figure form as a way to create new designs and great fit. This is unlike with the majority of companies which still rely on 2D pattern making.

Early twentieth century designers such as Madeleine Vionnet and Madame Alix Gres are highly regarded with regards to draping, their contribution continues to be an inspiration to fashion and to this study as well, which endeavors to understand their work practices and methods.

Kirke (2012). *Madeleine Vionnet*, argues that, 'Madeleine Vionnet's greatest distinction as a designer was her discovery of the bias cut. Cutting patterns along the bias forces the fabric to cling to the body and move with it, which created her trademark look of draped, form-conscious clothing'.

Madeleine Vionnet's greatest contribution to clothing construction of the 1920s and fashion in general, was her use of the bias cut, a method which Breward (2003). *Fashion*, claims Vionnet had not introduced as previously believed. 'Vionnet was not solely responsible for introducing bias cutting (the practice of sewing against the grain of the fabric to ensure a clinging elasticity has a much longer history)'. Wikipedia attests to her experimenting with cutting textiles on the diagonal or bias as a way to accentuate the natural female form, in her quest to explore comfort and movement in dress, at the time when corsets, padding and stiffening were the norm. She was averse to anything that distorted the natural form of a woman's body but was inspired by the freedom of modern dances by Isadora Duncan and the fluidity of dresses depicted in ancient Greek art.

Madeleine Vionnet (French, 1876–1975)

We do not know exactly when this method was introduced but that according to Breward, C. (2003), *fashion*, the *Vogue* of April 1927 had this to say about Madeleine Vionnet's working practices: '...about twenty wooden manikins [*sic*] frozen in majestic poses stood in solemn assembly round the empty room. Mademoiselle works on these figures; with a length of material, scissors, a few pins and unwavering determination, she seeks to solve the problem of form'.

Madeleine Vionnet



Photo: Thérèse Bonney, circa 1923.

Copyright © AFP / Albin-Guillot / Roger-Viollet

Evening dress, spring/summer 1938

Dress – back – c. 1936

Dress 1932



The Costume Institute



Metmuseum.org



The Chicago History Museum

Together with her predecessor Madeleine Vionnet, Madame Alix Gres, have also been known to have contributed considerably to fashion of the 1930s to present day with regards to draping. It was Gres' formal training in sculpture which was to influence her draping style and set her apart from her contemporaries at the time. She was known to include this sculptural element in her designs, best exemplified in her Grecian-inspired gowns from the 1930s. In his review of 'Madame Gres: Couture at work, Almond (2011), *Madame Gres – Goddess of Drape*, attests to her inherent skill and advantage, 'Madame Gres possessed an acknowledged sculptural approach to making clothes, she used her hands to fashion jersey, crepe and taffeta into garments that both stroke and caressed the body. Like an sculptor she both pushed and pulled cloth into structural forms as opposed to cutting into it'.

Madame Gres (Alix Barton) (French, 1903–1993)

Madame Gres



Photo: Eugene Rubin 1946



Photo: Irving Penn Vogue 1964

Installation view of the Musee Galliera's Madame Gres exhibition at the Musee Bourdelle, Paris 2011



Photo: Pierre Antoine

Gres' famed Grecian-inspired gowns received critical acclaim for their seemingly minimal and simplicity at first glance, yet concealed her complex technical tricks and skill; Almond (2011), *Madame Gres – Goddess of Drape*, in his review of 'Madame Gres: Couture at work', he confirms this about her work, 'the beguiling simplicity of her art conceals the technical complexity of its expertise'.

The draped Grecianesque gowns by Madame Gres



Photo: Ingrid Mida 2011

More gowns by Madame Gres

Evening gown, 1954



metmuseum.org

Evening dress, 1937



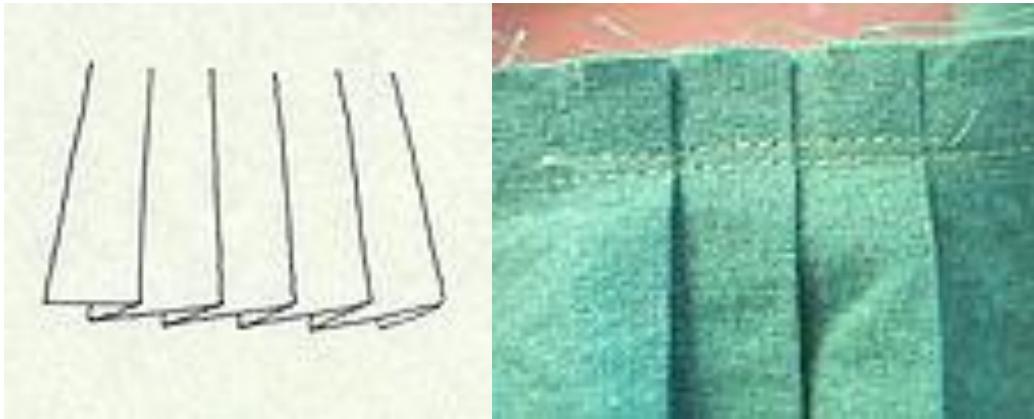
metmuseum.org

Furthermore, the parallels drawn of Gres' predecessor, Mariano Fortuny's pleated tea gowns from the early twentieth century and her work, revealed her emphasis on movement line no other. Mears (2007) *Madame Gres the Sphinx of fashion*, made this assessment: 'his, (Fortuny's!) overall production of pleated gowns more closely resembles the garment depicted in the sculpture of ancient Greece than do those by Gres, except that his designs lack one crucial component that Gres always included in her designs: the emphasis on movement. As long as the wearer remains stationary, Fortuny's designs are effective in evoking classical statuary, but he was never able to capture a sense of fluidity as Gres did'.

Pleating

Wikipedia describes a pleat as a type of fold formed by doubling fabric back upon itself and securing it in place. To pleat is to gather a wide piece of fabric to a narrower circumference. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, describes it in almost the same way, as ‘a fold in cloth made by doubling the material upon itself and then pressing or stitching it into place’.

The knife pleat is the basic pleat used in sewing. Knife pleats with the construction and seam stitches shown.



JF Perry - wikimedia

kellyhogaboom

According to Wikipedia, pleating is commonly used in clothing and upholstery, both for practical and stylistic reasons – in clothing specifically, to provide fullness and freedom of movement to the wearer. Pleats are categorized as *pressed*, that is, ironed or otherwise heat-set into a sharp crease, or *unpressed*, falling in soft rounded folds. Pleats sewn into place are called tucks. Various pleat types came in use throughout history for the same reasons.

Wikipedia describes a Kilt as ‘a knee-length garment with pleats at the rear, originating in the traditional dress of men and boys in the Scottish Highlands of the 16th century. Since the 19th century it has become associated with the wider culture of Scotland in general, or with Celtic (and more specifically Gaelic) heritage even more broadly. It is most often made of woollen cloth in a tartan pattern’.



copyright © 2005 by James F. Perry

The Kilt

The diagram showing the making of a Regimental kilt.



<http://www.rendallsedinburgh.com/>

Regimental kilt - Cameron of Erracht tartan, pleated to stripe.



Deborah Kommalan

Pleating in design

Pleating also has a widespread use in interior design. Its use ranges from window treatments, (in the form of curtains!), upholstery and soft furnishings such as cushions, lamp shades, etc.

LE KLINT was a brainchild of Peder Vilhelm Jensen-Klint, a Danish architect, designer, painter and architectural theorist, who created the first pleated lampshade in the start of the 20th century. According to LE KLINT.com, It was his son Tage Klint, who established the LE KLINT family handicraft and pleating skill into a real business, with the other son Kaare Klint, designing some of the lamps which have become the company's best sellers today.

Peder Vilhelm Jensen-Klint



LEKLINT.com

Pleated lampshades were already in use at the time, the Le Klint versions spotted an important detail which no other had, an elastic collar, supposedly, to keep it fixed to the lamp. Various other lampshades have been introduced by the company and many enjoying iconic status such as the 'lantern' which already in the sixties, was featured in the movie, "Let's Make Love", with Marilyn Monroe and the French actor Yves Montand.



Kaare Klint
Architect, brother of Tage Klint



Danish Museum of Decorative Art
The Lantern in the niches towards the garden



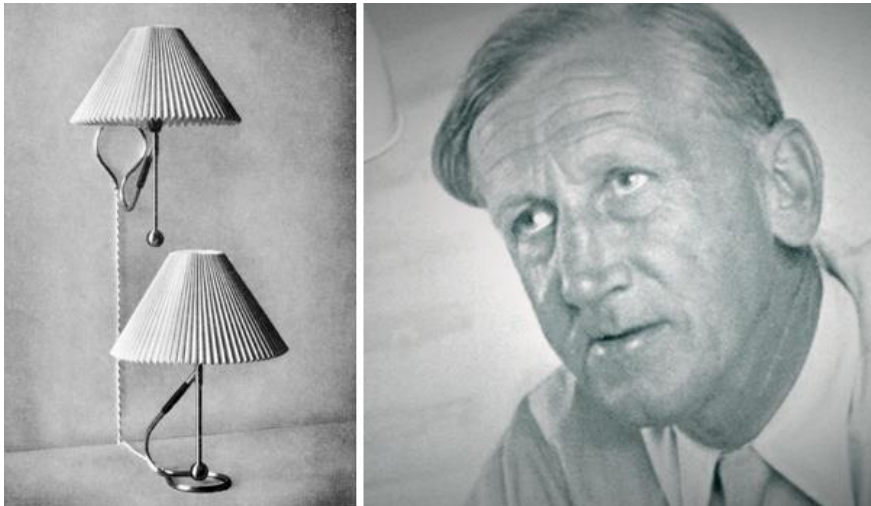
Marilyn Monroe in the movie
"Let's Make Love"

Leklint.com

According to LeKlint .com, “the Lantern is often considered one of the most fascinating lamps from LE KLINT, and is indeed still one of the company’s most popular lights. The lamp fascinates with its combination of craftsmanship, technology and design. It is almost unbelievable that a piece of rectangular paper can be folded into a three-dimensional globe with such a beautiful and complicated pattern. The lamp draws a line back to the Chinese paper lanterns, yet it remains one of a kind by virtue of its characteristic cross pleats”

Further, *The Lantern attracted favourable notice on the big screen on several occasions. Most famous is probably its appearance in the tragicomic movie “Let’s Make Love” from 1960, where the lovely Marilyn Monroe acts opposite the French actor Yves Montand. In the picture, you can spot the lamp behind Marilyn Monroe in a bedchamber scene, where she sings the title song wearing a light blue pleated dress that matches the pleats of the lamp beautifully.*

Some of the iconic Le Klint lamps which are still in production today.



LE KLINT 306 - The Versatile Lamp. Kaare Klint

1945



LE KLINT 306 - The Versatile Lamp today

Other lamp designs



LE KLINT 101 - The Lantern designed by Kaare Klint in 1945

LE KLINT lamps which are a collaborative work with other design architects



LE KLINT 335 - The Sax Lamp designed by Erik Hansen in 1952



LE KLINT 172 A designed by Poul Christiansen in 1971

Pleating in Fashion

Issey Miyake

Pleats Please Issey Miyake/Aoyama by Tokujin Yoshioka



<http://sewmanydesigners.wordpress.com/2011/12/03/chapter-3-issey-miyake/>

www.dezeen.com

“Pleats Please” is a line of clothing which according to Wikipedia, was launched by Issey Miyake in 1993, following his experiments in the late 80s with new methods of pleating that would allow both flexibility of movement for the wearer as well as ease of care and production. This eventually resulted in a new technique called garment pleating in 1993's Pleats Please in which the garments are cut and sewn first, then sandwiched between layers of paper and fed into a heat press, where they are pleated. The fabric's 'memory' holds the pleats and when the garments are liberated from their paper cocoon, they are ready-to wear. It was based on a collaboratory project between Miyake and choreographer William Forsythe, for his dance act, “The loss of Small Detail” and also work on ballet "Garden in the setting". Costumes created with pleats were intended to allow dancers in the Ballet Frankfurt, “unrestricted movement, thus, initiating, a new collection and fabrication process.

Jacqueline Marcus, a contributor to Dazeddigital.com, claims that the inspiration behind the “Pleats Please” project, comes from a creased handkerchief that inspired Issey Miyake's new way of conceptualising the pleat’.

Furthermore, according to Dazeddigital.com, his work has been compared with the Grecian-inspired gowns by Mariano Fortuny on many levels, first, for their use of fine pleating and secondly, for their intended use for everyday. In the case of “Pleat Please” collection, however, their lightweightness and engineering affords the wearer freedom of expression and movement more so, than Fortuny's tea gowns.

Pleats Please - Issey Miyake Stylert 5



<http://www.prlog.org/11721307-pleats-please-issey-miyake-stylert-5.jpg>

Further, Issey Miyake Inc. attributes the growth of the “Pleats Please” brand, to its positioning as a comfortable product which, for its lightness in weight, handle and easy to wear, makes it suitable for daily use – a ‘fashion of creation, technology and business’.

Collection Pleats Please Spring – Summer 1994



<http://mds.isseymiyake.com/mds/en/collection/#>

Other terms

Free-form

Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes free-form as:

- having or being an irregular or asymmetrical shape or design.
- created or done in any way you choose : not required to have particular patterns or forms

Bias

Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes bias as:

- a line diagonal to the grain of a fabric; *especially* : a line at a 45 degree angle to the selvage often utilized in the cutting of garments for smoother fit
- DIAGONALLY <cut cloth *bias*>

on the bias

Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary describes on the bias as:

- in a slanted directed — used to describe the way cloth is cut or sewn ▪ The material for the dress was cut *on the bias*.

Sculpture

Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes a sculpture as:

- the action or art of processing (as by carving, modeling, or welding) plastic or hard materials into works of art
- work produced by sculpture (2) : a three-dimensional work of art (as a statue)
- impressed or raised markings or a pattern of such especially on a plant or animal part

Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary describes sculpture as:

- the process or art of carving or molding clay, stone, metal, etc., into a sculpture

Experimental

Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes experimental as:

- of, relating to, or based on experience or experiment
- serving the ends of or used as a means of experimentation <an *experimental* school>
- relating to or having the characteristics of experiment : TENTATIVE <still in the *experimental* stage>

Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary describes experimental as:

- using a new way of doing or thinking about something

Different Perspectives on the field

The advancement of draping in fashion is by and large, a result of a designer's pursuit for artistic expression and seeking to create a strong signature which is afforded in part, by the unlimitedness of this method. With draping generally understood in terms of bias cut and flowing, billowing shapes and loose folds; the opposite of this, is still draping. The program attests to this claim, and sees the approximation of a design from a single piece of textile on a figure form, *using simple actions*, with natural obstruction in place and minimum or no cutting into at all. Below are a few examples of some of the perspectives set forth by different practitioners to creating apparel and fashion, using draping.

In her Spring/Summer collection of 1997, "Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body", Rei Kawakubo for Comme des Garçons, used bumps and lumps in the collection by inserting them in different places in the clothes and then draping over them to create unusual forms. According to <http://ninasimoneaux.wordpress.com>, '...Kawakubo used sculptural form and technique to create fashion that goes beyond the scope of clothing'. The knowledge of Kawakubo's work, past and present is very much about the skill and artistry of doing things but most of all, it is a social commentary and critique on the western aesthetics and idealism.

Classic-style or traditional draping is still in use today and it involves cutting or the placement of cloth on the bias, at parts where elasticity, (a result of this action!) is required to allow for a smoother fit and fall. This is a method pioneered by dress designers of yesteryear, such as Madeleine Vionnet, Paul Poiret and the like, generally applied to classic evening and wedding gowns. According to <http://fashionhow-to.com>, as observed by curators Harold Koda and Andrew Bolton, the curators of the recent exhibition of Poiret designs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Paul Poiret (1879-1944), "dethroned the primacy[of tailoring] and destabilized the paradigm of Western fashion [through draping]." His loose billowing dresses are often credited with liberating women from the tailored confines of the corset. Madame Gres' draping is a variation of the classic-style method and is distinguishable for its visible sculptural component, which is best illustrated in her Grecian-inspired gowns of the 1930s. She emphasised movement in her gowns, which she created by sculpting cloth into geometric shapes and symmetry. Her gowns had a mix of flowing lines and structured forms, all fashioned from a single piece.

Draping is an individual sculptural activity which is defined and re-defined as one goes... With understanding the rules, one is at liberty to explore the many possibilities draping presents by working with and/or against them, a general departure of many practitioners of the craft. This is based on an extract, "You've got to know the rules to break them. That's what I'm here for, to demolish the rules but to keep the tradition." -Alexander McQueen, from *Alexander McQueen "Savage Beauty"*, Bolton (2011). For McQueen, this was his way to assert his work practises. Similarly with this program, however,

Different perspectives - Sculptural Draping

Mix of technique and critique

Comme des Garçons

Rei Kawakubo



Rei Kawakubo at Bendel's



Photo: Courtesy of WWD

Photo: Thomas Iannaccone - CONDÉ NAST ARCHIVES / CORBIS

Comme des Garçons' "Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body" collection for Spring - Summer 1997, is often referred to as the "lumps and bumps" collection, according to Wikipedia. It contained fabric in bulk and balls on the garments. In the same year, Rei Kawakubo, the proprietor of the brand, collaborated with New York-based choreographer Merce Cunningham for the dance act *Scenario*, using pieces inspired by this collection.

According to <http://ninasimoneaux.wordpress.com>, for the collection, "Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body", Kawakubo used sculptural form and technique to create fashion that goes beyond the scope of clothing, a notion which is not uncommon with the designer. Her use of bumps and lumps in the collection is a critique to an unhealthy idealised female body ideal. She seemed to be proposing imperfection of sorts, as the new body ideal with this collection.

According to <http://www.fashionprojects.org> the costumes for the dance piece *Scenario*, were made such that the dancers' movements interact and enhance the "lumps and bumps", creating 'unexpected bodily formation-which reinforced Cunningham's exploration of the limits and scope of bodily movements'.

Reflection

Closer scrutiny of the costumes created, reveals a construction which is achievable by sculpting, stuffing and wrapping therefore, by draping, because of their ingenious 3-Dimensionality.

Runway Presentation of Comme des Garçons' Spring/Summer 1997



<http://m.pinterest.com/metaboyana/comme-des-garcons/>

Scenario, BAM, 1997



<http://ninasimoneaux.wordpress.com>

The bodily formation created by the dance moves and the lumps and bumps in the costumes is a dialogue between body, space and dress.

Different perspectives – Creating new patterns from drape designs

Draping a single piece of cloth first, and then creating a pattern of it afterwards

A recent review by the trends web forum Pattern Pulp, of a series of patternmaking books, 'Drape Drape', by the Japanese designer Hisako Sato, confirms the artistry and skill involved in taking a drape design apart to create a pattern – an activity which 'always yields interesting results and is not always for the faint of heart'.

Book Review: Drape Drape



Photo: Laurence King Publishing Ltd

Furthermore, eHow attests to this method working, 'so it's important to perfect the look and fit on a dress form before putting together the final sewing pattern. Using a dress form to design evening wear offers the opportunity to make unique dresses that fall and drape in a variety of ways'.

Different perspectives - Classic-style Draping

A mix of draping a single piece of cloth first, and then creating a pattern of it afterwards, and/or adapting pattern blocks for a drape idea

Astrid Olsson

Fashion designer and founder of the Swedish clothing brand, V Avenue Shoe Repair, Astrid Olsson, is one of the draping enthusiasts to present her work at a seminar held recently at the Swedish School of Textiles. Astrid deliberated on the subject of draping as a way to demystify the craft, as well as sharing the 'tricks of the trade' on draping designs she would mass produce. She confirmed her use of taking a drape design apart, using a system she has developed to transfer important fold lines and points onto paper. This is both as a way of preserving the drape designs she comes up with and for archiving patterns for future reference. It is a method she uses for the drape collections she produces every season.

Collection from the web shop of V Avenue Shoe Repair



<http://www.vave-shoerepair.com/>

Different perspectives - Freeform

The use and fusion of traditional techniques of origami and draping in fashion

Chinese designer, Te-Pei Candice Liou, uses folding techniques of origami to inspire the line and cut of her collections, which she then drapes in various ways. Strips cut from the folding are draped to create sketches which inspire her experimental/ freeform collections.

Origami inspired draping design, showing different steps of the process.

Inspiration image



Te-Pei Candice Liou

Draping an origami folded-cut piece



Te-Pei Candice Liou

Draping an origami folded-cut piece



Te-Pei Candice Liou

Draping an origami folded-cut piece



Te-Pei Candice Liou

<http://www.coroflot.com/Te-Pei/Origami-inspired-draping-design>

Different perspective – strategic cuts

Exploring simple ideas - exploring a single piece of cloth, cutting into it and then, draping.

“The no seam form - body as Joint”, is a project by designer Yitzhak Abecassis, where a single piece of neoprene cloth is strategically cut to allow for movement and creating interesting forms. It is a proposition to ‘a life without buttons, zippers, or even sewing machines’.

Body as Joint – Neoprene



<http://www.yankodesign.com/2011/09/16/seamless-wear-of-the-future/>

2.2 Design program

This program is a proposition to creating different expressions of cloth by manipulating it to indicate the direction of its flow when sculpted into various shapes. The movement of cloth is directed by using draping and pre formed pleating, creating interesting shapes and forms.

To frame this program, some of the structural and stylistic elements of the work of Madame Gres, are examined for possible interpretation and application to a ready to wear collection which pays homage to draping as an art form and a work method.

Structurally, the program adopts a simple approach to creating shape and form. A single rectangular piece of textile is appropriated on figure form without cutting into it but by pushing and pulling with pleating and draping. This work practise has been adopted as one of the key factors in realizing different expressions in this program. It is an approach Almond (2011) *Madame Gres – Goddess of Drape: Review of ‘Madame Gres: Couture at work’*, attributes to Madame Gres. ‘Like a sculptor she both pushed and pulled cloth into structural forms as opposed to cutting into it’.

A simple system of pushing-pulling



happening-here.blogspot.com

For this program, the upper limbs serve as the main obstruction, an area to contend with and the start point in the creation process. For the simple yet complex expression of the collection, a display mannequin with arms and an upright stance is used, both as way to emphasis symmetry and as a design descision. Designs in the industrial textile, best exemplify this. Cloth is then guided first, through the upper limbs on the figure form with this action of pushing and pulling and then worked to the rest of the body, before it is ‘trued’ up into a wearable piece. The mobility of the human body is taken into account, so does the resolve for the upper limbs and ensuing designs are all explored as shape and form are created, using pleating and draping.

As a way to strengthen the variable to the expressions of the Industrial textile, The process of appropriating the linen and cotton on a figure form lends an improvised expression much like in “process art”, which employs serendipity and is averse to predictability. The ‘make it up as we go along’ approach is evident in the flow of the cloth which appears unplanned but still indicates its movement as per the aim and encourages freeform construction.

It is the stylistic element of Madame Gres of minimal exertion on the cloth, which has been interpreted in this program to mean, less manipulation and constraint to be exercised in certain steps of the process for better results. According to Mears, P. (2007) *Madame Gres' the Sphinx of fashion*, Gres said, "I have always respected the body structure and the natural movement of a given material. I limit the number of seams in order to give a better impression of freedom, of suppleness, of the silhouette."

Furthermore, opposing notions such as minimalism and maximalist, symmetry and asymmetry, static and flowing will be explored and exemplified in every ensemble in the collection, both for aesthetics reasons and also to highlight the difference.

It explores the variables with the use of different textiles for different expressions.

Prior MA projects

Earlier MA projects were sympathetic to what was the manifesto at the time, which was to 'reference the body in the process and practise of fashion'. The interpretation to this was mostly literal, owing to a previous work practise and an aesthetics whose sole aim was to make the body beautiful and overlooked the prospects of a different discourse.

The projects are an attempt to create for the body by varying the extend it is referenced. With the body as inspiration, two perspectives are identified – posing questions as to how we relate to the body in general and how it is projected or perceived when, (in the last project!) it is modified with the use of sculptural forms to adorn it.

How the projects relate and connect to each other

The notion, 'dress becomes body becomes dress', was explored in a previous project when carded wool was moulded onto a figure form using a felting technique. This was both a literal and metaphoric depiction of the body.

Exploring draping with subsequent projects, illustrated how the space between body and dress is dealt with – the proximity of the dress to the body. Tie-belts were incorporated in the designs to vary the space between body and clothes.

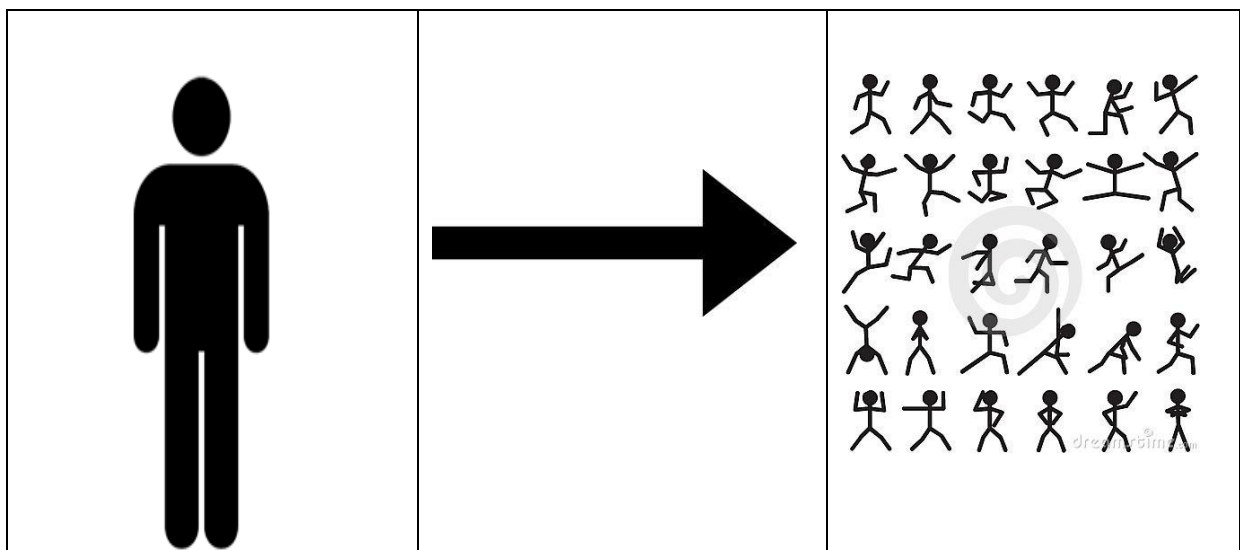
The projects are a way to understanding different perspectives of dealing with the manifesto set forth.

Prior MA Projects

Stick figure

The idea is to investigate possible expressions to a simple image, (the stick figure!) an image we all have come to know, for its use in public areas to give directions or communicate to a universal audience. What is expected is a metaphoric expression a stick figure will assume after discovering 'what happens behind doors he stands guard'.

To investigate the reaction of 'felting wool' when printed with an image of a stick figure, using Ausbrener and felted in a washing machine with different wash programs.

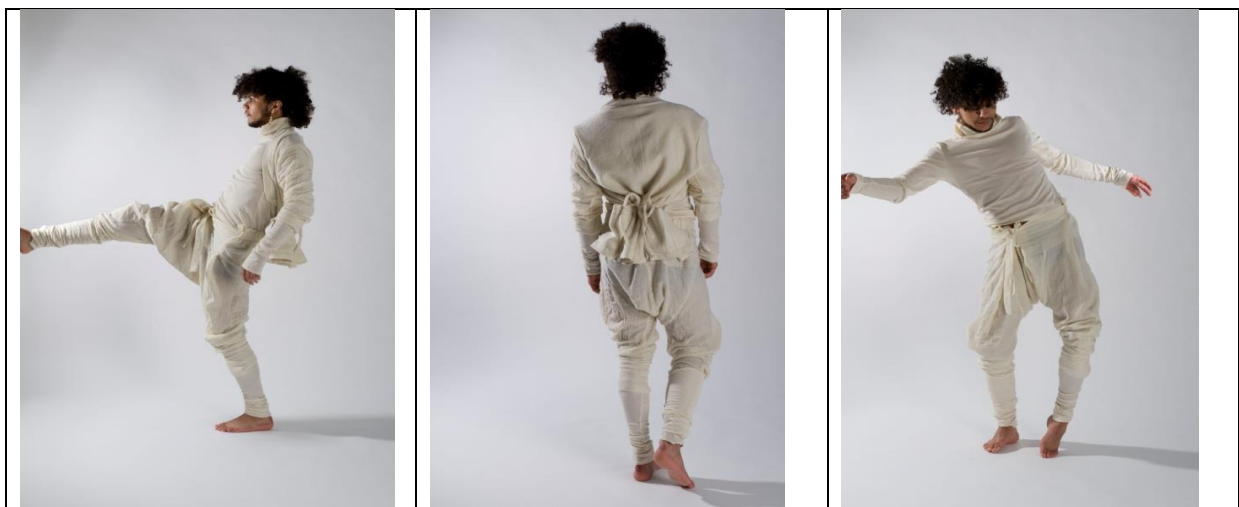


Clipartist.info

Skyward Sword **Arrow**

Dreamtime.com

Designs Realised



Irmgard 2011

Sketching on the figure form

Felt Dress

The artistic mission for this project, is to use the body as a design narrative to produce and inspire fashion. Wet felting was used to fashion carded wool on a figure form, creating what seems like a 'second skin' to the figure form, which translates into 'dress becomes body becomes dress'.



Irmgard 2011

Sketching on the figure form with cloth

Experimental designs, which involve draping a single piece of linen cloth on a figure form, a single seam allowed and tie-belts to help create the structure. The idea was to see how well one does within certain perimeters.



Irmgard 2012

Sketching on the figure form

Sketches intended to explore form, idiosyncrasy, silhouette, scale, technique, possible expressions and contrast, rhythm, repetition, flow, structure, degree of manipulation, etc.



Irmgard 2012

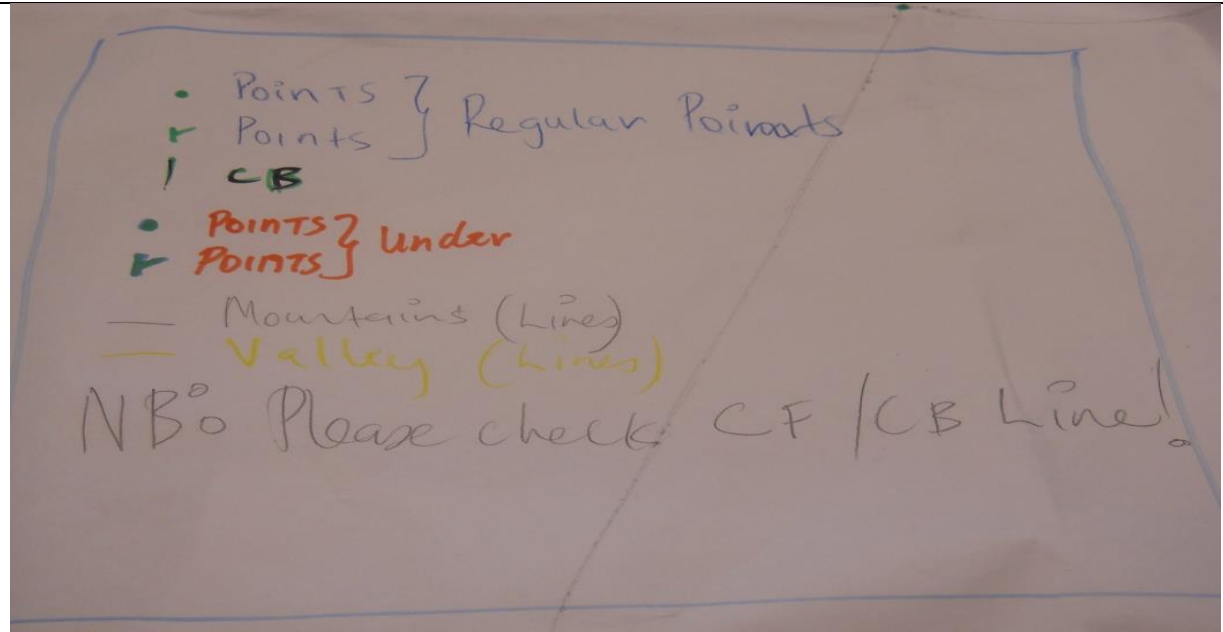
Sketches from creating a system to take apart and put together drape designs



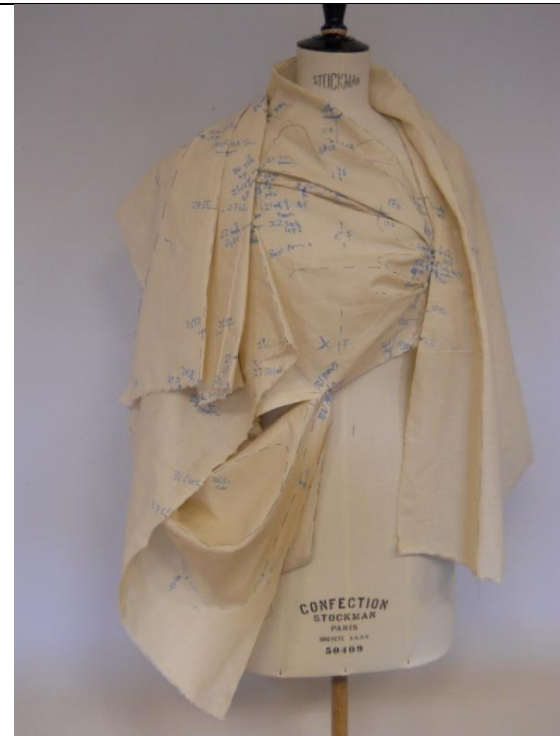
Irmgard 2012

Continued!

Points and Lines-log



Before



After



Irmgard 2012

Aim

To develop a better system to take apart and re-assemble the drape-designs successfully and efficiently.

Initial sketches to understading Madame Gres' method of draping



Irmgard 2012

Own interpretation of Madame Gres' draping methods

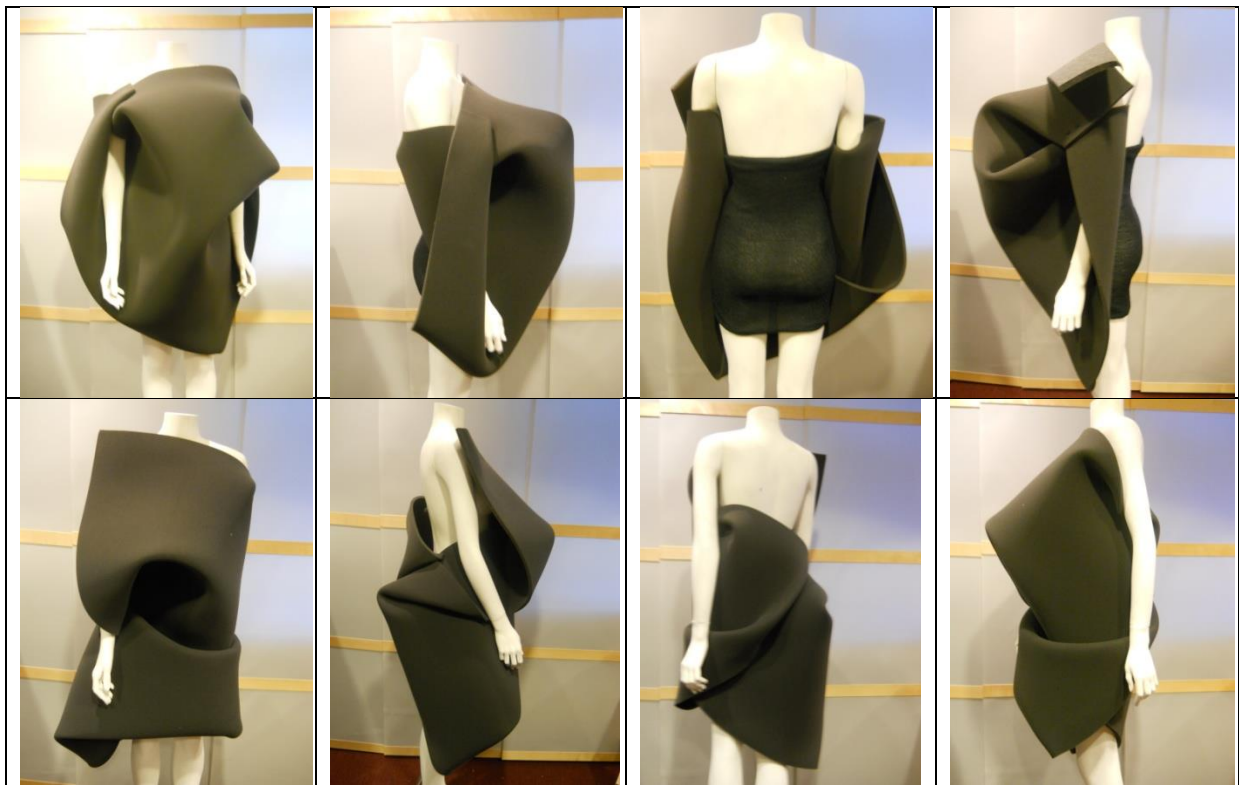
Preliminary Sketches in Linen – showing draped pleated-lengths



Irmgard 2013

Preliminary Sketches in foam – showing different expressions from four angles

Assymetric rendering



Symmetric rendering



Irmgard 2013

2.3 Motive and Idea discussion

“State of the art”

Different perspectives are noted of how a lot of designers and fashion houses approach and utilise draping as a method of construction. With the general consensus that, experimenting with draping offers one options and expressions you otherwise will not archive with using flat patterns, also, the pontential to develop artistically, creating a strong handwriting which today, has become an important means to set you apart and be noticed.

“The Gap”

To advance knowledge in the field of fashion design and also, as a way to argue the design program, draping and pleating are combined in an ensemble for variables in individual and combined expressions.

The program proposes an unconventional approach to construction; here a simple act in a process, (push/pull in this case!) is explored and developed into a work method and technique to create elaborate shapes and form in a less complex manner.

Furthermore, it proposes exploring the aesthetic potential of draping and pleating both or individually, an industrial textile and a conventional cloth for clothing, in an ensemble.

Further, it proposes exploring possible expressions with draping and pleating the aforementioned mix of textiles, when draped with the natural obstruction in place and minimal manipulation. So, construction in free form is emphasized and the use of draping and pleating allows for both exploration and experimentation.

Discussion

With draping being the main method in the investigation of shape and form in this program, pleating is also employed to fulfil part of the aim, which is to direct the movement of cloth around the body. To gain some understanding in both subjects and also as a way to develop the proposed program, several sources have been referenced to indicate the widespread use and importance of both in history and present day.

The program is both an aesthetic and technical investigation of cloth manipulated on the figure form into sculptural expressions and some visible fluidity using draping and pleating. The idea is to ‘direct the movement’ of cloth around the body, much like Gres according to Mears (2007) *Madame Gres the Sphinx of fashion*, ‘...one crucial component that Gres always included in her designs: the emphasis on movement’. The title of the program itself is a proposition to working in this way and takes its cue on the work methods of Madame Alix Gres.

Aesthetically, the program is a medley of various factors, brought together to complement each other and/or as a way to emphasize one or the other. Two main expressions noted with this program are more than just the choice of cloth but more to do with its 'handle'.

Essentially, cloth is manipulated to the minimal with both, one more than the other, and as a way to highlight the difference in the character of each piece and harmony of this contrast.

The program enlists the minimalist principle of 'Less is More', which according to *Wikipedia*, 'the simplest and fewest elements are used to create the maximum effect', further, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was known to have adopted it as his aesthetic tactic. Cloth is manipulated to the minimum, more specifically, the simple act of pushing and pulling of the industrial textile between the upper limbs, is all it took to create the shape and form.

The linen and cotton, being the conventional textiles used in this combination, have a sculptural expression of a different kind, firstly, partially-hand-pleated lengths are draped in freeform and secondly, asymmetry is emphasized in the way cloth is directed on the body. Zippers are used for this reason, in some cases. This is an adaptation of the review of Madame Gres' work by Almond (2011), *Madame Gres – Goddess of Drape*, 'Madame Gres' signature clothes were primarily sculptural, asymmetrical and draped,...

Technically, the movement of the cloth with the industrial textile is first, directed through the upper limbs and then to the rest using the push/pull principle. With the linen, the start to create a design can be anywhere and anyhow, for instance, the bottom end of a pleated length, (usually broadest at this end!) can be placed at front/shoulder neck point to begin, or vice versa. This will provide the viewer with a different sense of the movement of cloth in whatever configuration the pleats are draped. Another way is to start on a part which is unpleated, and the flow of the piece worked to include the pleated bit at different points. The emphasis is on freeform which allows for randomness.

For the shape, the program takes its cue from the theories of the Process art movement which, according to Guggenheim Foundation, 'emphasized the making of art (rather than any predetermined composition or plan)'. Forms created are a result of serendipity, a common theme with the movement.

Techniques do not have to be complex to be effective, simple actions which are accessible to everyone are likely to be received favourably. Pleating by hand can be done by anyone, with little or no experience at all. This requires no major infrastructure – just a few tools. Draping is a skill that gets better with time. For most, it is self taught, and can be kept that way, as long as one knows the principles – the sculptural exploration can only get better.

2.4 Aim

The aim of this work is to explore expressions of using pleating and draping to direct the movement of the cloth around the body.

3 Method & Development

The method and development of the prototypes is concerned with the use of construction which maybe considered unconventional which in this case, involves exploring a simple act of pushing and pulling cloth around the body to create shape. With the presence of a natural obstruction in place, construction in free form is still emphasised and the development of the designs is both an exploration and resolve for movement as well. The nature of draping and its use allows for experimentation and development of unexpected expressions.

3.1 Design method & Design of experiment

Wikipedia describes methodology as “a guideline system for solving a problem, with specific components such as phases, tasks, methods, techniques and tools. It is also defined as "the systematic study of methods that are, can be, or have been applied within a discipline".

With this program, like every other research work, it is essential to illustrate an in-depth understanding of the area of study in terms of how things are, how they were and how they can be. This will require a system to be established which will guide the design work through phases using different methods and techniques to attain an objective.

Furthermore, the program employs the qualitative research methodology which according to Wikipedia, investigates the *why* and *how* of decision making, not just *what*, *where*, *when*. Hence, smaller but focused samples are more often needed than large samples. With this program the reasons for doing things and for doing them in a certain manner is clarified.

Specific working method

The program is formulated such that construction of the prototypes is experimental and realized by appropriating a rectangular piece of textile on a figure form into designs which are both pleasing and wearable. As a method, draping offers the opportunity to see and critique the design idea as one goes – a property which is inherent in its nature.

It is a technical exploration of a rectangular piece of textile which is appropriated on figure form with draping into designs which are structurally pleasing and wearable.

Both of the expressions proposed, have a specific method of how they were created but follow the principle of simple construction and minimum manipulation. The ‘no cut’ cutting principle is applied to a rectangular piece of textile which is to become the whole garment

when draped. It is both the individual and the combined expression in every silhouette or the overall feel of the collection, which is central to this study.

Specifically, the designs produced from the industrial textile the Filter 80 PPI, the upper limbs are used as an obstruction and a starting point of the design. The textile is pushed and pulled through the upper limbs, from the back to the front or vice versa, before it is appropriated into a preferred design. This action is performed first, from the one arm, (almost always from the left!) and then repeated with the other, in a similar rhythm. Symmetry is paramount with this expression.

The designs from the conventional cloth on the other hand, have a more random expression and a strong emphasis on asymmetry. It is both as an aesthetic departure and a contrast to the more structured mirrored designs of the industrial textile, the Filter 80 PPI. A zipper in a contrast color is used to further archive this.

The movement of cloth is directed by draping a partially-hand-pleated length on a figure form. The design in this case has no particular start area, meaning any point on the pleated length can be a point of departure. Cloth is 'worked' or directed in freeform on the figure form, meaning traditional rules of construction are disregarded. The grain of the cloth for instance, is not followed with this expression; firstly, the hand pleating is done on the bias; secondly, it is twisted and/or turned at sections to reveal the inside and/or outside at different points on the length.

Excess fullness is retained and not trimmed off; making it easier to reuse the piece once the zippers are removed. This also helps to add to the volume of the design.

Process

Structurally

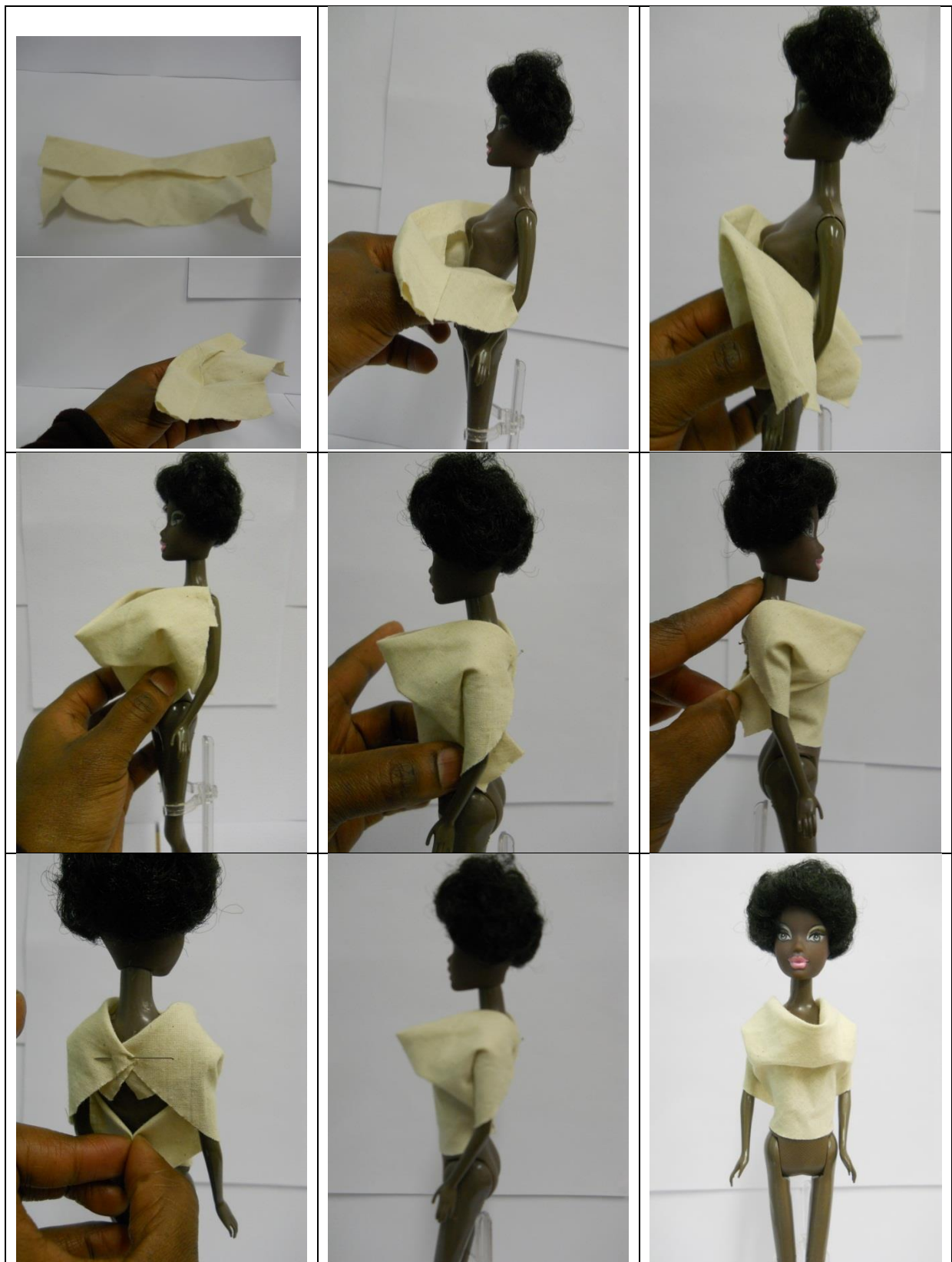
The program adopts a simple approach to creating shape and form. A single rectangular piece of textile is appropriated on figure form without cutting into it but by pushing and pulling first, through the upper limbs of the body, and then 'worked' to the rest, using draping and pleating to create interesting shapes. This work practise has been adopted as one of the key factors in realizing different expressions in this program.

Stylistically

It is the stylistic element of Madame Gres' work of minimal exertion on the cloth, which has been interpreted in this program to mean, less manipulation and constraint to be exercised in certain steps of the process for better results.

Sketches illustrating the 'push/pull' principle

Design 1



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Design 2



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Developments and Findings

Technical

It is a development of an alternate way of constructing clothes which can be considered unconventional. The extent cloth is manipulated, depends on its properties before it loses its appeal structurally.

Materials

The industrial textile used, was chosen for its form-keeping properties; its application to clothing makes for an unusual but interesting effect. It lends a sculptural expression which is mainly due to its structural properties and the minimal manipulation this program proposes.

The linen and cotton on the other hand, lend to this combination a crisp and fluid expression of the draped pleats. Both the hard lines of pleating and the soft unpleated sections of the linen and cotton are in contrast but in complement as well.

Aesthetics

By combining pleating and draping or rather, draping a partially pleated length of cloth on a figure form, gives a complex expression of the linen and cotton, resulting in a certain displaced feel of the various elements that are brought together. As a process, draping offers opportunities to reflect and to improve on the design as you go.

The minimal manipulation of the Filter 80 PPI using the proposed process in directing the movement of the textile into clothing, gives the collection an outlandish expression.

Sustainability

As a design process, the program requires less processing time and infrastructure since the idea is to exert minimum manipulation of cloth. In the case of the industrial textile, the edges are straightened out with a blade cutter before it is draped. The conventional cloths on the other hand have their edges been finished off with a straight-stitching machine whilst the pleats are held with a few loops of hand stitches.

The fact that no cutting is involve and excess cloth is retained and not trimmed, the piece can be re used once the zippers are removed.

Rationale

The use of a 2D pattern method to construct elaborate shapes and form is limited, unlike draping which is done directly on a 3-dimensional body or figure form. With this method, cloth can be directed to the optimal since the application is in the actual scale of the garment.

Results

The design method used in this program is an interpretation of the possible work practice of Madame Gres she used when creating her Grecian-inspired gowns. Two distinct approaches have been used, the first, being the action of directing cloth by pushing and pulling it between the upper limbs and then, to the rest of the body. The second, being the direction of cloth in a random and asymmetric way. The movement of cloth is emphasised in both cases, resulting in forms which indicate different degrees of the exertion of the textile.

Overview of the sketches



Overview of the collection



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Lookbook - Irmgard 2013



Photo by Johanne Kowalski, 2013

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