Presentation

Design Process

Irmgard Mkhabela, May 25, 2012

Background

As you may recall, my manifesto is to reference the body and to explore art and construction techniques in the process and practice of fashion.

This time, my reference enlists a study of a drape-technique to create form and volume. The expression of cloth is observed as it hangs from a figure form and allowed to redefine the proportions of the body into 'sculptural poetry'...

Idea

I am specifically exploring, taking a drape-design apart, and transferring it onto paper with markings such as lines and points, after which I attempt to put it back together into the original design.

The process in brief!

Method - what have I done?

I have put together a set of experiments to illustrate my attempts of different drape designs which gives a 3D effect.

I have also explored different expressions where the designs are controlled, (with more 'arranging' of cloth) and free styled or less constricted.

I have created a system to take a drape – design apart and to re assembled it.

I have monitored my development and can actually say when exactly I felt I was reverting to my old way of working...

Below are images that illustrate the 'before and 'after' state of some of the drape-designs, each with comments...

Experiment 1

Before   After

First design – Diagonal folds with a 3D effect.

The design was re assembled without the original image, so resemblance is not great because I was working from memory!

Experiment 2

Before   After

The first complex design I did.

The design itself was not concluded because I was anxious to see if my technique would work.

The outcome can be improved!

Experiment 3

Before   After

The folds in this design are 'more arranged' and it was a bit complex to re assemble, even though I have spent a great deal of time with the markings!

The resemblance to the original is a lot better!

Experiment 4

Before   After

A more relax attempt with a slight trick – the design twists at different points!

Some lines and points are marked from underneath and were effective in re assembling the design, which was a success!

Where am I in the process?

I have started with simple vertical drapes, to medium range draping and proceeded to more complex designs:

Simple

The width of the pleat, including the distance from the pleat to the next is determined prior.

Medium Range

The cloth is twisted to appeal on both sides.

Complex

The cloth is draped from between the legs and it is tucked-in at places, wrapped around the limps and folded over across to the side of the waist.

Freestyle Designs

A less contrived approach which came with gaining some confidence along the way.

More Examples

It takes some confidence and a trained eye to let go and say yes to freestyle!

Slightly controlled designs

A result of reverting to one's old way of working! Visually appealing though!

More Examples

Deep folds and billowing shapes have become a hallmark of this attempt.

Marking System

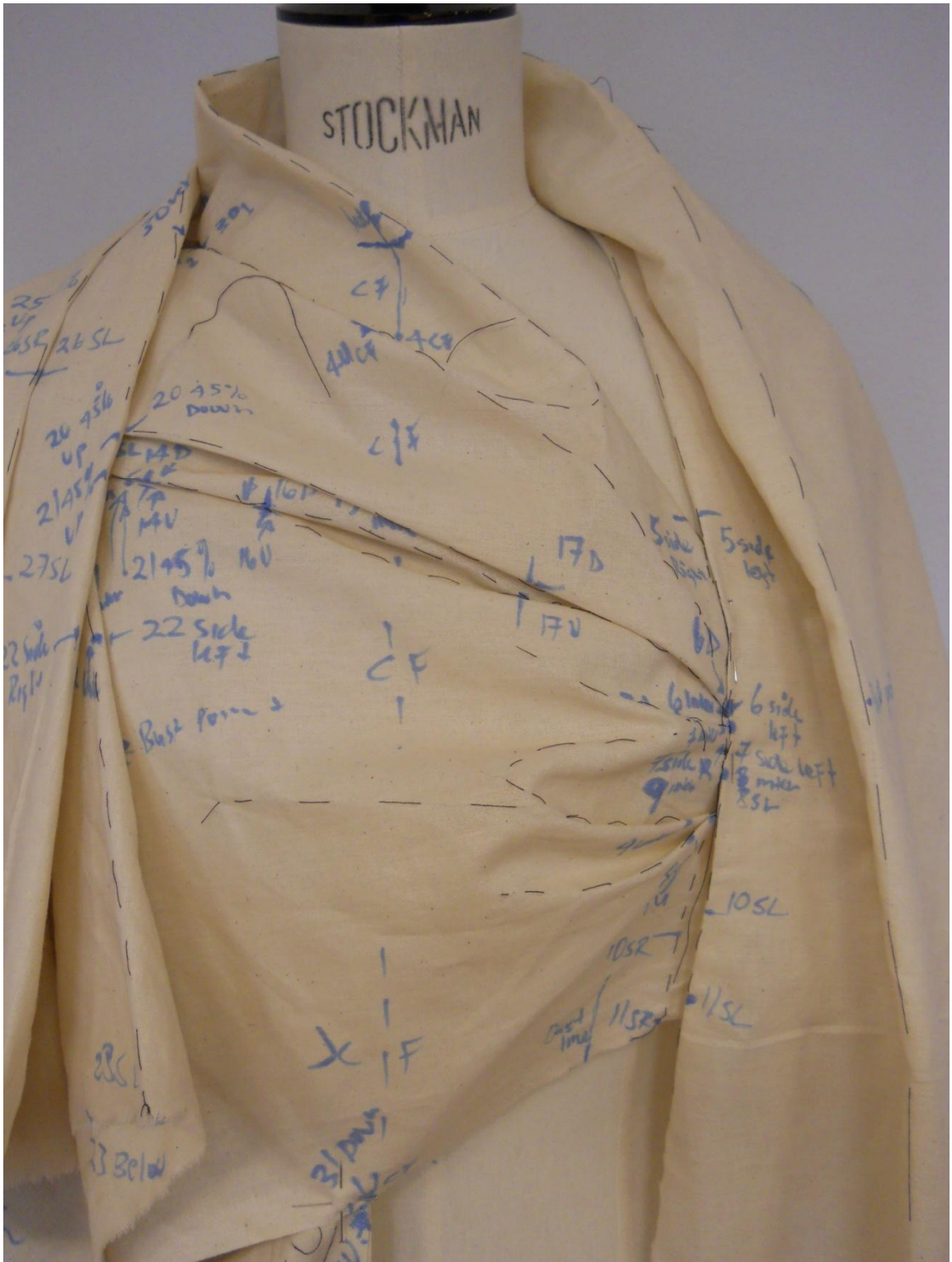I have also created a provisional point-marking-system which will change as I discover more things…

Examples of marking system

Point system:

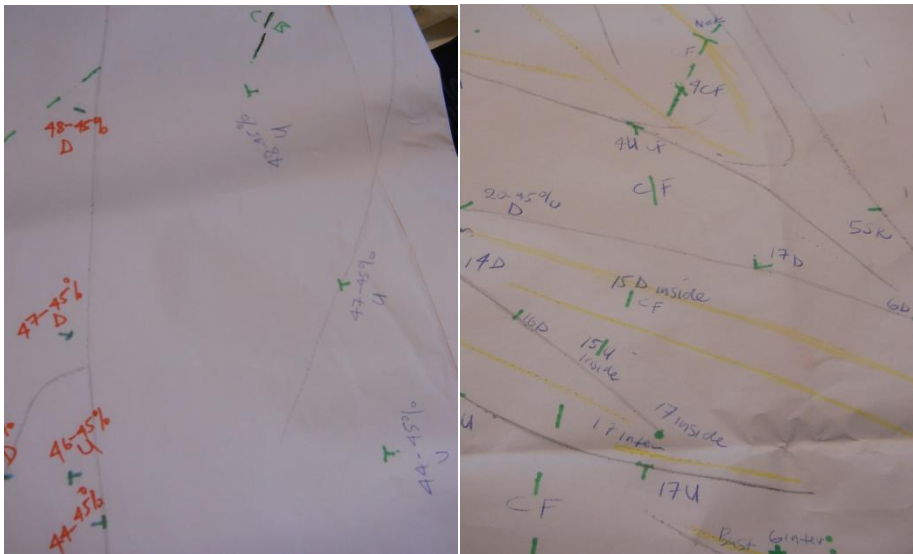| Point	Start Point	Opposite point
1	1A U – 1AUp	1A D – 1A Down
2	1ASL –1ASideLeft	1ASLR – 1ASideRight
3		
4		
5		

I aim to create a system that will reproduce the drape-designs successfully…ambitious?
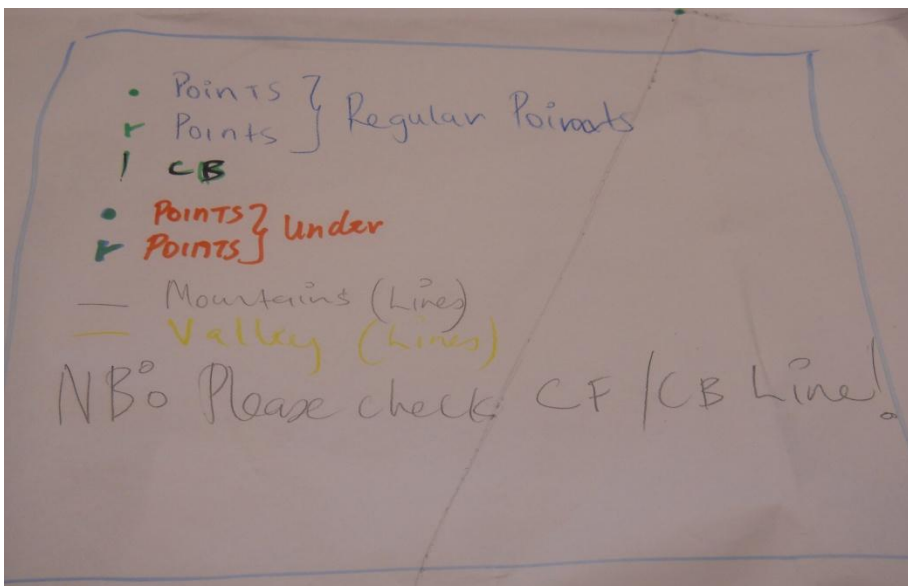
Points Applied:

Points and Lines

Fiber pens and Coloured pencils are
used to denote different lines and points

Points and Lines Log

Where am I heading, (what's next?)

1. The next step will be to investigate more fabric types, (Ulrik's suggestions):

• Textures – hard and soft

• Transparent

• Stripes/checks/polka dots, etc.

NB: The 'right' and/or 'wrong' choices of material will give a different expression.

2. Develop a better system to take apart and re assemble the drape-designs efficiently and successfully.
3. Create volume – more volume…
4. Explore the raw edges by adding them to other pieces, which I will then drape

over the original design – creating other expressions, for example!

NB: It is not necessary to always finish or tuck the edges neatly! The edges can be 'another point of departure', so to speak!

5. Take advantage of pleated sections by joining to their edges other pieces that can be folded inwards to create more volume and other expressions.

6. Explore the expression of the fold lines where the basting stitches run. These presents a potential area for further exploration:

• The basting stitches on their own can be used as a feature.

• Perforation can run along the fold lines.

- A broken-line print can run along the fold lines.

7. Explore the pattern created even further:

NB: Use the template to develop other patterns to:

- Create more expressions.
- Create interesting shapes.
- To add on to create more volume.
- Etc.

8. Cut out shapes along the fold lines of a pattern to build 3D sections.
9. Explore draping around the limps.
10. Explore more free style designs without constrictions!

Observations

1. The breaking down and re assembling of the designs is still a challenge but something can come out of it!

2. I have also discovered that it is much easier taking apart and putting back again, a 'pleat-type' drape than a 'wrap-twisted-pleated' type.

3. It is important to mark and label the points clearly and the direction of the folds, to avoid confusion.

4. One need to remember which lines are 'mountains' and which ones are 'valleys'.

5. One may need to remember which direction a point must face, whether

Up or Down, Left or Right, Right angle Up or Right angle Down, etc.

6. One may also need to mark lines and points that are hidden from sight and/or that are inside folds. Valleys are what they are called and these need to be denoted in colours different to fold lines or 'mountains'.

7. One may need to assemble the design from a bigger image – it is actually better viewing it on a computer screen than a camera's.

8. To identify these lines, one may need to 'press' the drapes against the figure form to create fold lines you may otherwise miss.

9. It might be best to create a pattern whilst you still remember the design, (soon after draping!)

10. Conclude the design before you reproduce it!

11. One might need to leave the drapes to 'set', (so to speak!). Let gravity, 're shape' the folds.

12. In the beginning I was a bit lag with the marking of points and lines specifically, I had points which were just 'floating', were not marked and were not pointing in any direction. this causes confusion!

Conclusions

1. I do not know exactly where the process is taking me but will continue exploring more shapes and form, using different textures of material for varied expressions and results.

2. Draping offers the opportunity to learn techniques of handling material and the potential of creating spectacular shapes. The ability to reproduce these shapes can be an added advantage.

3. There is a potential to create one's own 'draping-vocabulary' - I have managed to identify some common traits in my drape-designs thus far and will continue doing so.

4. It is an exciting way to express one's individual style.
5. It is a skill that gets better with time.
6. I hope that the expression of cloth in all these attempts, indicate my different state of confidence with the technique I have used.

See attached copy for my reflections of the draping process for this exercise!