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Destrozada

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Destrozada

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This design was created for a project in my first year studio class, intended for students to explore different properties of different materials. Each student drew an artist to base their design from. My inspiration for this garment developed from the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. I was moved by the strength she exhibited despite having endured a tumultuous and shattered life – which inspired the title of my design: Destrozada, meaning “shattered” in Spanish. As I began sketching for this project, I found myself designing a look for Kahlo herself. I aimed to celebrate the strength, beauty, and perseverance she embodied throughout her troubled life. Her artwork influenced my concept as well, in particular her 1926 painting entitled “Self Portrait in a Velvet Dress” which inspired my color palette. The materials for my garment are all silk: the base of the bodice is silk organza, the base for the embroidery is silk habotai, and the skirt is silk crepe de chine. Silk fabrics suggest a delicacy and femininity that I also wanted to contrast with some of the more rigid elements of my design.

With this design I wanted to create a strong sense of rhythm throughout the garment. This is evidenced by various contrasts: jagged structured lines in the bodice paired with a delicate, sheer base fabric; sultry hues of crimson paired with somber black; long, flowing, sweeping skirt paired with a close-fitting, seamed top. I also strove to put most of the emphasis on the bodice – representing Kahlo’s shattered yet strong core.

For emphasis, I created a mosaic design for the front and back of the bodice which resembled shattered pieces spread apart. For a unique textural element I wanted to utilize embroidery software and machine embroidery in this bodice design. I spent many hours familiarizing myself with the embroidery software and testing out various stitches and techniques. I was unfamiliar with the software before experimenting with this design, and I learned a great deal about the capabilities of this fascinating technology. Through this testing, I was able to develop a beautiful design by experimenting with the intricacies of the software. My final choice of embroidery was using the cross-stitch technique combined with an ombre effect of crimson hues, offering a depth to the design and a nod to Kahlo’s frequent subject matter of Mexican folk art. Further echoing the shattered theme, the cross-stitches are made in hectic, crisscrossing lines between the borders of the embroidered pieces. The second technique I used in this design was applique. After embroidering the shapes onto silk habotai, I cut them out and applied them onto silk organza, the fabric of the bodice base. Through rigorous experimentation with machine embroidery and software, I was able to develop an innovative contribution to the span of embroidered garments in fashion.

