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Simply String Art

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Simply String Art

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Key Words: String art, surface design



Purpose: *Simply String Art* was inspired by an art piece at the Saint Louis Art Museum. I was intrigued by a painting where the artist had created a three dimensional effect with a string art application over highlighted areas of his painting. I wanted to apply this visual element to the surface of fabric used in apparel construction. The purpose of this piece was to explore string art as unique artistic interpretation for a surface design element. I have long been interested in intricate details that draw the eye and take something seemingly simple to the realm of elegance.

Process: The design process began with a research of string art and its many interpretations. This research included both printed material and Internet documentation of its use. Dating back to the 1800's string art first became a popular form of artistic interpretation in the 1970's. However, its many documented renditions did not appear to include any references of string art applied to apparel. Works were characterized by long runs of string wound around a grid of nails to form abstract geometric patterns or representational designs. What

became obvious was the long string lengths used and the need for a grid to control the placement of threads. With an awareness of long thread runs creating a snagging problem as a surface design in clothing, designs were explored that had the potential for size alteration while keeping the integrity of the design. Designs that could conceivably be reduced in size were examined closely. A decreased size would allow for minimal lengths of thread runs needed to execute the bézier curves and connections of the art form. After design selection, samples of various designs were created. Testing of designs included potential grid applications, thread choices, and interfacing/stabilizers that could support the thread lengths of the bézier curves while maintaining the integrity of the designs. As various designs were executed, the running patterns of string art seemed ideal for a hemline border or insertion at the base of a garment. The design process then moved back and forth between the samples created and imagery of the string art

applied as an embellishment to a dress rendering. It was determined that a dress with simple lines would more suitably showcase the technique.

Techniques: Using flat pattern techniques, a sheath dress was designed with an empire waist and a ray of pleats at the neckline to add visual interest. Once the pattern pieces were completed, the final dimension of the hemline was determined. This measurement established the number of repeats of the string art design needed. Size adjustments were calculated for a single repeat of the design to allow for complete repeats once the insertion was attached to the sheath dress. With the final size of each repeat verified and the number of stitches known for comprising a single repeat of the design, an outline grid of stitches was sewn to a length of fashion fabric to replicate the number of repeats needed for the hem dimension of the garment. This machine stitched grid became the anchor points for each stitch insertion. The length of machine stitches for the outline was adjusted to match the number of hand stitches required to complete each repeat of the design. Hand stitches were then applied to the machine stitched grid. Once the band of embellished fabric was complete, the sheath dress was constructed and dimensions of the embellished band was verified to match the sheath dress. The band was then inserted into the completed sheath.

Materials: The dress was created from 100% wool crepe and embellished with 100% polyester variegated thread.



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