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My Girl Friday

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Mentor Statement

The purpose of this mentorship relation was to guide the student through the design development of her senior collection. Early on the conceptual stages, research sources and methods were presented in class, helping her to gather various visual elements related to the idea of a contemporary, wearable and especially comfortable collection. The six looks of the collection also had to highlight all the skills and technology mastered during the entire undergraduate design education experience. Multiple sketches were developed and edited down to achieve variety and cohesion of materials, techniques and silhouettes. Various body types and shapes were included, providing commercial versatility to the designs. This entry represents one of the looks, however, the marketability focus of this collection made it hard to decide which specific combination is the most successful, as all garments are interchangeable and imbedded with creative use of technology. From extensive use of Optitex for patternmaking to laser cutting, metal casting and digital printing on fabric as well as on finished product, this design also showcases the student's ability to creatively design marketable accessories that complement the garments in the collection.

Concept

"My Girl Friday" is an exploration of 1940s/WWII inspired street wear that draws parallels between the tailoring and craftsmanship found in vintage looks, and the relaxed clothing of today. I am also often inspired by the work of Thom Browne, because his collections always marry classic tailoring with quirky, innovative concepts. I wanted to deliver the same sort of idiosyncratic intermix to my work, targeting a customer who can wear this look as an easy Friday morning brunch outfit. It was really important to me to create a head-to-toe look that included both accessories and outerwear, in order to prove that through the use of technology, we can draw traditional craft into the present day.

Processes and Techniques

In keeping with the theme of modernity and technology, many of the patterns were drafted using Optitex. The idea of using CAD to create a tailored coat, which involves hours of hand work, reflects the desire of bringing conventional hand-crafted techniques into current practice. The asymmetrical over-garment is made of a lightweight wool suiting fabric with a subtle weave pattern, and it is lined in a contrasting dark blue fabric. The top-stitching and curved seams reflect the vintage garment details that inspired me, and the pockets and built-in backpack target

the contemporary functional customer. The leather used to make the straps on the backpack was upcycled from a car seat cover, highlighting sustainability concerns for the designer of the new age. The hardware was hand-stitched using a leather needle.

The print on the hood of the blouse was first hand painted, then the artwork was manipulated using Adobe Photoshop, and afterwards sustainably printed on bamboo/cotton jersey yardage using no water and 100% biodegradable inks. The same pattern from the hood was screen printed onto store purchased white tights. The hooded blouse was designed aiming at a layered look, using the print on the hood, two shades of grey solid colors of the same fabric on the bodice and sleeves, and rib knit cuffs. The princess seaming along the back and front are top-stitched with a metallic thread, and reiterate the femininity found in my 1940's historical inspiration.

The skirt is a versatile mix of both woven and rib knit fabrics, which give the garment a streamlined look, all while allowing for freedom of movement and comfort. Both the earrings and leather holster were constructed from laser cut goat leather. In order to create the holster, I used both Optitex and Adobe Illustrator, and included a front cell phone pocket. The earrings include hand-cut strips of brass in which holes were added with a drill press, shaped using a Foredom flex shaft, and given a patina using liver of sulfur.

Design Innovation

In order to produce a visual juxtaposition between the look of tailored, feminine 1940's garments and the more modern streetwear apparel worn by women today, I created a look that strives to draw a direct parallel between the old and the new. Time-honored crafts and skills, such as patternmaking, metalsmithing, tailoring, textile design, and leather work, are infused with exciting modernity via use of Optitex, laser cutting, and screen printing. This project shows that technology can elevate textiles and apparel in endless combinations, and creative employment of technique and technology can lead to sustainable marketable designs.

