Jan 1st, 12:00 AM

Afterglow

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Afterglow

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Keywords: Technology, Conceptual, Functional

Design Mentor Statement

This design was created as part of a mini-collection in a senior capstone course. In this case, technology, functionality, theatricality, and durability come together in a woman’s uniform design for marching band. I chose to sponsor this student’s design not just because of the effort in craftsmanship and creativity, but because this concept is highly unique for a final collection. Further, there is a large gap to be filled in the uniform market that this design investigates. There are challenges in construction and execution that technology and durability bring in the creation of a theatrical uniform. This student pushed through those challenges and created a design that uses technology in a creative and expressive way, but a purposeful way as well.

Concept

Fitting in to the fast-paced evolution of marching band uniforms, Afterglow reimagines the traditional marching band uniform by experimenting with wearable technology, new silhouettes, and garment sustainability to create a theatrical band uniform inspired by the afterglow of the sunset. The sunset begins with pink hues infiltrating the light blue sky, and as the sun reaches the horizon, brilliant purples, pinks, yellows, and oranges glide across the sky. A frenzy of overlapping and intermingling hues soon takes over before giving way to a pink afterglow remaining in the dark sky. The sunset symbolizes the transition from day to night, revitalizing those who take the time to observe it. This look showcases the climax of the sunset, where the sun reaches the horizon and the bright colors take hold of the sky. Worn by female marchers, this uniform epitomizes the current innovation and theatrics in marching band shows.

Process and Techniques

Combining some aspects of the traditional band uniform, with new silhouettes and fabrications, this look includes vibrant hues, structure, and movement through line. Traditional band uniforms include jumpsuit bib pants, a jacket, and a shako hat with a feather plum. Afterglow innovates this silhouette by shortening the jacket to a cropped length with short sleeves, and adding a stretch knit top under the jacket. The knit top is cinched by the jacket worn on top to create a ruffled effect. The combination of woven and knit fabrics allows the uniform to maintain its uniformity in structure, but also allow for the marcher to have range of motion while performing. A vertical line is created in this look through the bursts of color that start at the triangular inserts at the ankles and continue to move through the LED sunlight rays in the jacket, all the way to the color-blocking on the shako and into the feather plum. LED wire is inserted into
organza casings that are sewn into the curved seams of the jacket to express the glow effect of the sunset afterglow.

**Design Innovation**

Afterglow uses technology and sustainability to innovate the marching band uniform. The use of LED lights inserted into the seams of the jacket through organza casings incorporates technology to innovate the marching band show viewing experience. Marching bands typically perform at night, and although uniforms are known to include metallic, light-up uniforms have yet to be explored. Afterglow experiments with the visual effect lights can have to express the emotions of the music and the theme of the show. Afterglow’s modular structure allows the lifecycle of the garment to last longer than the typical marching band uniform. This structure utilizes detachable parts to allow for quick disassembly and reassembly of the garment. Being able to detach certain parts of the garment that soil more easily allows for less laundering, as areas that are susceptible to odor or staining can be washed more frequently than areas that are not. In addition, the modular structure allows for variation in styling. For example, the uniform can be worn with just the bib pants and jacket, just the bib pants and knit top, or all three garment pieces.