Melancholy

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Melancholy

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Melancholy is my last design in the Brushstrokes series. This final design is a self-study exploration of surface design techniques inspired by various cypress trees reflected in Vincent Van Gogh’s paintings. He found cypress trees to be a captivating subject as demonstrated in the well-known Starry Night which was painted during last years of his life in asylum. The main objective of this project was to incorporate Van Gogh’s unique artistic interpretation of nature to surface design elements.

Although I am fascinated with the vivacity expressed through Van Gogh’s convulsive brushstrokes, I was intrigued how his mental health may have influenced his paintings. Melancholy is my interpretation of his paintings produced during the somber years of his life. Instead of impulsive, energetic movement of brushstrokes, more subtle shapes were used to reflect Van Gogh’s brushstroke techniques and adopt the colors of lifeless trees.

During the design development of this project, I was searching for a unique way to use textured yarns versus traditional crocheting, knitting, weaving, or felting. To create this design, I utilized a sewing machine to stitch the yarns on the backing fabric. First, I created black knit strapless dress front and back as a foundation. After drawing the swirly brushstroke lines, bouclé yarns were machine stitched individually to create an ombré effect. In order to keep the fabric stretchable, the fabric was pulled through the sewing machine while applying the yarns through multiple zigzag stitches. The hem line is created by crochet chain stitched strands to portray lifeless branches hanging from trees.
This design contributes to the field of textiles and apparel design as it demonstrates the significance of using knitting yarns in unique ways to create textiles. Carefully controlled yarn application created soft movement of Van Gogh’s brushstrokes while the texture of bouclé yarns represented the roughness of his brushstrokes in the creation of a dress. The unique combination of the boucle yarns and zigzag machine stitching created a dress that looks and behaves similarly to the jersey dress for its flexibility and stretchiness.

Materials: Multi-color bouclé yarns (88% Acrylic, 12% Nylon), black wool yarns, and polyester jersey knit