



Skeptic

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## **Mentor Statement**

This design is from one of my most talented students, and this particular look is part of her senior collection. She has been an avid researcher during the conceptual phase of the collection development, and each of the designs she created have complex construction and surface design explorations. She is continuously reaching out for suggestions and critique, not afraid to take risks and extremely skillful with draping and patternmaking. I had a very hard time deciding which piece of her senior collection I should sponsor, as each is different in its own way and yet, all together make a wonderful statement for the creative process, wearable works of art that do not look like class projects.

## **Concept**

Humans encounter existential questions of understanding whether we control our realities in this world or actually submit to illusions not of our making. It takes knowledge to understand even a little of one's reality, but we hardly have a grip on it because time does not stand still. It is difficult for me to explain my own feelings and life experiences, because these are not tangible items, but I have learned to try and comprehend my realities through imagery and literature. Edgar Allan Poe's "A Dream Within A Dream", resonates with my own life by touching upon the idea that nothing in reality is concrete. Our lives and experiences feel like dreams and sometimes it can be difficult to decipher between reality and illusion. The collection's jewel-toned colors, silhouettes and fabric details reflect the dramatic imagery in the poem such as, "I stand amid the roar- Of a surf-tormented shore, And I hold within my hand- Grains of the golden sand"( Poe, 2012, p. 768 ). The poem's exaggerative and abstract analogies inspire the asymmetric shapes, hand embroidery, fabric choices, tailored seams and structure of all the looks of the collection, with this entry as one of the most successful ones.

## **Process and Techniques**

*Skeptic's* gold and purple tones act as representatives of colors for the human emotion, which is unchanging in uncertain realities. The cross-dye weave of the silk dupioni fabric plays these colors on the light. Construction techniques include pin-tucking, tailoring and corsetry. The corset was systematically draped on the dress form and patterned with zig-zag pieces to emphasize asymmetric lines and drama. The hand embroidery and gathering details are conflicting focal points that elude to the poem's narrator not being able to grasp the golden sand (his reality). Using my sketches as a starting point, I used draping to allow the shimmering fabric

to take control of the outcome. The fabric manipulation transforms surface into texture in each of the three garments in this look, in creative and innovative ways. I treat each garment as if it possesses an imaginary life in which it goes through phases of trial and error. Each garment went through several muslins and stitch samples.

The asymmetry of the shapes and details reflects both the lines in the poem and the conceptual narrative between reality and illusion. While each garment composing this look has its own construction complexity at patternmaking and fit levels, the purple cashmere fabric corset uplifted the challenges. Each of the corset's seams are reinforced with boning, that was individually shaped for the curved seams, and the understructure is provided by hair canvas hand stitched to the wool fabric. The seams are top-stitched and hand embroidered with gold thread, to capture light and give a hint of a surface patterning. The corset's back closure includes brass eyelets laced with satin cord, and the two back pattern pieces extend and fold over to reveal the purple silk charmeuse lining. The structure of the corset is therefore organically transforming into an overflowing shape, creating cohesion with the soft ruffles of the top and the slight flare of the pants.

To accentuate the waves emulated in the poem, the top garment was draped on the form by slashing curved vertical seams running down on the body from the gathering volume of the off shoulder neckline. To eliminate fabric waste, I used the selvage edge of the dupioni to create ruffles around the neckline. The vertical seams were topstitched and the top was lined. The trousers were created with eighteen pattern pieces to produce a perfect fit with an elegant flare at the hem, highlighted by a narrow purple contrast piping. The wider purple silk charmeuse outseam insert adds contrast and flow to the silhouette, similar with the water-like feel that slips on the body when the silk dupioni fabric is touching the skin. The stripe guides the eyes from the top to the bottom of the look.

### **Design Innovation**

Just as the literature by Edgar Allan Poe has remained current and beautiful today, this collection piece is an art form that is both wearable and timeless. As a future designer, sustainability is a main concern. Therefore creating pieces that are less likely to be discarded as commercial fashion was a guiding principle of my entire collection. While using natural fiber textiles such as wool and silk, and applying near zero waste construction principles, I was able to communicate the symbols from my inspiration poem into a collection full of innovative design details.

### **References**

Poe, E. A. (2012). *Complete Stories and Poems of Edgar Allen Poe*. Doubleday.

