



Phalaenopsis Amabilis 1

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Design Statement

With advancement in technology, numerous leading fashion designers and fashion brands have been increasingly adopting and using technology to explore new possibilities for expressing their creative ideas. This is certainly true in the case of digital printing, which has been used by, for example, designers like Mary Katrantzou, and sports brands Under Armor and Adidas, to make strong product statements ranging from mass market to customized and high-end products to sportswear (Arthur, 2017; Bumpus, 2015). Digital printing technology has particularly been used for apparel, taking us closer to achieving fully customizable clothing. Advantages of such practices include 1) processes can be accomplished at a distance, 2) little extra time is needed for fitting; 3) design potential is relatively unlimited and could be completely personalized (Campbell & Parsons, 2005).

The purpose of this project was to customize a design and create a contemporary evening dress for a client, a school donor, who was attending two University events: a university founder's ball event, and a botanical garden's orchid show entitled "Fashion meets Botanical Garden". The first aim of this project was to experiment with and showcase directions in which technology can take us closer to full customization with respect to patterns, prints, colors, sizes, and shapes best suited for customers. Second, the dress was purposely designed to showcase the increasing impact of digital technology in the world of fashion. Third, the designer designed and produced evening wear that would feature how new technologies such as digital textile printing can open up a continuously expanding array of creative possibilities and spawn a complex set of solutions for designers. Fourth, the intention was to create a sensible, ready-to-wear, contemporary garment that could potentially be marketed by any large retailer. Finally, the dress was to demonstrate the designer's own interests in how integration of technology, particularly digital textile printing, allows designers to visualize and explore new creative possibilities during the design process.

The research question driving the design process was therefore "How can I create a dress that will show the designer's own interest in integration of technology, especially digital textile printing?" Because the dress was to be worn at two different events, the University Founders' Ball and the Botanical Garden orchid exhibition, the inspiration for this dress came from an orchid, *Phalaenopsis Amabilis*. This flower was chosen as the source of inspiration for printing because its meaning represents the beauty, luxury, love, and strength that emblemizes our client who plays roles in society of mother, wife, and philanthropist.

Design process: Since the client was based in California, the conversation began and was continued via email. The client first sent pictures of herself dressed in evening wear to represent her taste in clothing. From these pictures, the designer was able to identify her preference for contemporary dresses. The design process began by analyzing the client's body shape to identify a silhouette that looked best. The client's age was in the late 50's, she had a fit body, and she loves and enjoys wearing contemporary silhouettes. The designer began the design process with three preliminary sketches that were then made into muslin prototypes, following which a meeting with the client was arranged. After a design was chosen, a flat pattern was developed using 2D patternmaking software OptiTex, exported into Adobe Illustrator to develop clarity of line, and rendered as a textile print using Adobe Photoshop. An orchid print was transformed into a set of 2D patterns and digitally printed onto 100% silk charmeuse. Using a digital printer to print the orchid pattern onto fabric helped create a hyper-real orchid image that resulted in a one-of-a-kind dress for the client. The University's color, blue, was selected for the primary dress color to suit the associated project purpose of promoting the University.

Since most customers, including my client, are not very familiar with how integration of technology, especially digital textile printing, supports the fashion industry in exploring new creative approaches, the purpose of this project was to show and educate customers with respect to how unique customized design can be performed with the help of technology, and to showcase how such new technologies can open up a continuously-expanding array of creative possibilities and spawn a complex new set of solutions for designers.

References

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