

Reminiscence of Redingote, Versatile Coatsdress

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Keywords: Sustainability, natural dyeing, redingote, Monet

Measurements: Bust: 36” Waist: 28” Hip: 36”

The purpose of this project was to create a versatile design for couture and designer markets that implements sustainable concepts and strategies through natural dyeing and “Design Light”. The Design Light concept suggests that the design has multiple functions, providing a versatile option which reduces the need for additional dresses. In turn, we can do more with less and leave less environmental footprints (Fletcher, 2008). In this project, the versatility was achieved with its removable sleeves.

This coatsdress incorporates design elements of redingote. A redingote was a gown that was worn by women in the mid-1780s and was inspired by a man’s stylish sporting coat. “Redingote” was a French word derived from the English term “riding coat.” This style was unique in that its feminine gown-like cut was combined with a man’s sporting coat of the same period including a large collar, double-breasted front, and the fitted long sleeves with cuffs and buttons. The redingote maintained a mannish aesthetic with its coat-like appearance. It could be made out of silk, wool, cotton, or linen (Woodyard, 2016).

To create an androgynous look in our design, a feminine silhouette of cowl design for the skirt was combined with a large notched collar. Asymmetrical line of the skirt and the fitted bodice creates informal balance and unity. The coatsdress has a single breasted one-button front closure. The lantern sleeve design was added for a dramatic look.

For the surface design, an inspiration came from *The Water Lilies: Setting Sun* by Claude Monet (1840-1926), one of the eight *Les Nymphéas* (Water Lilies) compositions (“Water Lilies: Setting Sun,” n.d.). Physical resist techniques and natural dyeing were used to recreate the painter’s dappled brushstrokes and the color schemes of toned down blush pinks and variegated browns.

Design process started with a rough sketch followed by draping the muslin on the dress form while the design was finalized. The princess seams were utilized to create the fit of the bodice; the pleated cowls to the left side of the skirt and the flared line to the right side of the skirt. There were no side seams on the skirt. The front and center back lines were delicately curved to create an elegant mode. The lantern sleeves were created using the flat patternmaking with a slash-spread technique.

The fabric used was plain weave 100% linen. For the surface design, the fabric was first cut and the bodice was sewn. The bodice and sleeve pieces were twisted and tied by rubber bands and cotton threads to create a serendipitous patterning and uneven coloring. They were pre-mordanted overnight with the mix of aluminum sulfate, soda ash, and soy milk at 50% weight of fabric. Afterwards they were dyed with the mix of Sandalwood and Annatto in the simmering pot, trying to create gradient effect that those darker shades were produced at the bottom. Next, the mix of Cutch and Alkanet was used at the bottom of

the bodice and the sleeves in the simmering pot. They sat on the pot with a room temperature overnight. The crinkle effects of texture were achieved due to the characteristics of the linen paralleled the mood of our inspiration.

On the other hand, the separate pieces of skirt fabric were pre-mordented without being physically resisted to create different shades and patterning from the bodice and the sleeves. After they were dyed with the mix of Sandalwood and Annatto, each fabric piece was twisted and tied, and dyed with the mix of Alkanet and Cutch in the simmering pot only being dipped certain areas to create the ombré effect.

The French seam, bias binding, and bias facing techniques were used to complete the bodice and sleeves. The bias strips were cut using the fabric dyed with the same process as the bodice fabric. The 18” zippers were applied to the sleeves and the armholes of the bodice to create a versatile garment with detachable sleeves. The skirt was lined with the same 100 % linen fabric (dyed with the same process as the skirt fabric), attached to the bodice, and top-stitched. The bound button hole was made and a 1 ½” size button covered with the same fabric was used. The button fabric was dyed and free motion stitched with the shapes of tree roots using 100% variegated cotton thread. Finally, natural hemp cord, dyed in an exhaust dye bath, was prepared to complete this versatile coatdress.

This original design contributes to the field of textiles and apparel by exemplifying the sustainable design concept to create a versatile garment. This design is also unique in adapting the historical garment, the redingote, to develop a modern look for those women who want a unique and dramatic look. In addition, the garment can be used in a historic costume class to illustrate how designs of the past can be used as an inspiration for modern fashion.

References

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