

Flora: Dress for a Destination Beach Wedding

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The *concept* for this design was an uncomplicated and graceful evening dress with an emphasis on surface patterning and tactile texture. The *purpose* of this wearable art design, was to create a hand-pleated silk ensemble for a client to wear at a destination wedding in the Bahamas. She wanted a dress that would 1) show off her tan, 2) had an elegant neckline without being fussy, and 3) that included a shawl that was part of the ensemble so that she didn't have to carry it.



In working with the client, the designer developed sketches of the garment and color swatches of two versions of the digitally printed silk. The first version had an all-over repeat print design with peony-inspired blossoms randomly arranged on a dark turquoise ground. The second

version of the design was a spot design of a cluster of the blossoms situated within a large amount of turquoise background space. The second version of the print was preferred by the client.

Several *techniques* were used to create this client-centered ensemble. The textile design was created using Lectra Kaledo print CAD system and was digitally printed. The solid turquoise fabric was digitally printed, then hand-pleated using an adaptation of the traditional Japanese Arashi Shibori technique. A medium weight, satin weave silk which was pre-treated with sodium alginate and backed with paper was used for all of the digitally printed garments in this ensemble.

To *implement* the design process, the pleated fabric was draped on a size 4 dress form to create the halter top and skirt. Cording was covered with the digitally-printed turquoise silk, and braided to form the neckline trim. The halter top was designed to fasten with two snaps in the back and the skirt has a covered elastic waist. All hems were hand-rolled for a couture finish. Snaps were covered with digitally-printed turquoise silk and hand-sewn on the shawl, so that it could drape on top of the skirt or be worn over the client's shoulders later in the evening.

This design was completed in April 2013, and conforms to a garment U.S. size 4.