**Title:** Botanically Knit

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**Keywords**: Textile Innovation, Couture Techniques, New Technology

**Measurements:** Bust: 34" Waist: 27"        Hips: 38"

**Level of Production:** LP (Limited Production- Couture)

Botanically knit is a couture design utilizing digital print in combination with finger knitting in an effort to create a garment focusing on a mix of new technology and the ancient and simple technique of finger knitting. Inspired by images from the Orchid Mania exhibit at the Botanical Gardens the flower design was manipulated in an effort to create a textile where the flowers turned into yarns in an array of colors. Through the exploration of the digital print, I have been intrigued by Kim Hahn's approach to manipulating the design and fabric after the print is completed as we can see in so many of her design such as Azure Striations from last years' annual ITAA conference or Magma Shrouds from the 2014 conference. In her design she takes advantage of the digital print technology while manipulating the look of the material through her second surface application. Through this design it was my intention to create a dress that followed a similar approach, however, focused the second surface technique around the knits stitch.

Through my current work the knit stitch is a main focus and looking at how the approach to the simplicity of the stitch can be utilized through different perspectives looking at shaping in woven garments, such as this one, as well as scale of the stitch and the visual approach in the design of piece. In this design, my traditional design process which typically focuses around a very  limited color story, was challenged by the beauty of the orchids and joy of being able to use color in a way I not often seen in my work. As a designer and a scholar I find it important to step out of the comfort zone every now and then to find new venues of exploration. This was such an opportunity where the chance of using photographed orchids as a starting point for the design drove the idea further.

Starting the design from digital images opened a new perspective as I started the design process. Due to time restrictions the fabric needed to be design first and then the pattern and final design would evolve. Being that I naturally need to explore in fabric as a way to design, the process started with quick test drape where I looked to see how much gathers I could create from slashing and knitting fabric then draping it on the form to get an idea if the shaping this somewhat controlled gather could create in the bodice. Once I found that the idea and technique could work I needed to figure out the length and height of the slashes as well as how many stitches I would need to cover a bodice. From those basic measurements I was able to develop the digital print and manipulate and stretch out the flowers to create the striations that would form to replicate the idea of orchid yarn. Once the fabric was printed the rest of the dress took form through draping and the bottom skirt and back was hand painted to give a more natural flow to the colors.

The development of this dress created an opportunity to use an innovative approach to knit shaping in garments as well as a new way of approaching the mix of techniques in digital print and knitwear two areas that don't often

combine. It was a joy to be challenged by a new approach which will bring my scholarship further and has opened new ideas to mixes of techniques for the future.

References:

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