A TENSION PLEASE

- Exploring tension in stretch textiles by using pleats as a method to create weight.

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ABSTRACT

This work aims to explore the stretch of textile materials by using cartridge pleats as a method to create weight and thereby create tension as gravity pulls down the fabric. This method is used to find new expressions in womenswear combining structures and contrast of textiles.

The main focus in the process is to find and define how far you can take the stretch ability of textiles by using weight and then how to translate these investigations in a new fashion expression. Through research in materials and stretch fabrics versus heavier woven textiles the work strives for expressions in movement as well as new ways of combining lightness and weight.

Experiments in combining pleating with fabric draping and the method of trial and error has been used to find tension and elasticity expressions that can be applied to construction of garments. The results are various examples of the design method where the stretched textile is pulled down by the weight of the pleats.

The value of this work lies in the possibilities of what you can do with fabrics, allowing design to create itself when gravity and movement occurs and showing how far one can distort materials. It questions the traditional way of thinking about textiles and ready to wear garments.

KEYWORDS

Stretch, Tension, Materials, Distortion, Elasticity, Construction, Fashion, Expression
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STRETCH TEXTILES

When it comes to stretch fabrics, they can be stretched, distorted, twisted, pulled and folded in numerous ways. Due to its basic construction, jersey fabric or fine knits are most suitable to change properties. This chapter will explain the characteristics of the stretch in textiles, how it behaves and its possibilities and how the characteristics can be interpreted in many, many ways.

In the book *Fundamentals and Advances in Knitting Technology* the author Sandra Chandra Ray (2012) states that “[l]oop structures are easily distorted under tension in application, which impart more freedom of movement and comfort of the wearer”. However, the bias of a woven fabric can be stretched in various amounts as well. Going diagonally across the selvedge of the fabric makes it much more unstable and creates flexibility and better molding characteristics (The Cutting Class, 2014).

Construction wise, jersey fabric consists of stitches and loops and can be divided into two groups, *weft knitting* - where the yarn goes horizontally and *warp knitting* - where the yarn travels vertically. When using weft knitted fabrics, the desirable qualities are usually stretch ability and elasticity. Warp knits can also be given properties of stretch ability and elasticity to more inextensible ones. Plain knitted fabric, also called single jersey is one of most common knits with one knit side on the front and one purl side on the back. Other terms when talking about single jersey is stretch ability and low horizontal stretch ability; the yarn travels the shortest way from needle to needle making it difficult to stretch, however the elasticity is good and what is stretched out will come back. In comparison with rib fabric that is equilateral with both knit and purl stitches on both sides. This type of jersey has high stretch ability due to the fact that the yarn travels both on the front and back and has a longer way to travel, as it also has good elasticity sideways (Peterson, 2007).
PLEATING

Since both the pleating technique and the stretch is used in this degree work, the following column will explain the meaning of pleating.

The word pleat goes back to Vulgar Latin where “plicitum” or “plictum” means fold (Ayto, 2005). Technically, pleats are usually stitched down at the top and allowed to open out at the bottom. The fabric used to create the pleats will be reduced to a less amount of the original width as it continues to fold (Singer, 2013). Consequently, when gathering fabric to create the pleats, the more fabric you use the heavier the weight. This was illustrated in the historical dresses of the 17th and 18th centuries. Hart and North (1998) carefully describe women’s fashions of this period. A successful train or “tail” was artfully done and a source of pride to the wearer. It was all about achieving the perfect effect and to make a notable appearance which is seen in the richness of the skirts of these periods.
WORK OF OTHERS

In the following pages some examples of contemporary fashion are presented which all reference to either stretch or fabric manipulation techniques. The work of these designers is analyzed to state the relevance, insight and importance in relation to fashion. It is relevant to know what already exists in the world in order to frame the own work and to fill a potential gap. (Thornquist, 2010).
STRETCH TECHNIQUES IN FASHION

In his fall/winter of 2012 collection presented by Style.com, Yohji Yamamoto plays with stretching and distortion of garments. He uses the range from fine knits to heavier ones to illustrate different expressions in dress. He illustrates a wrapping garment in a red dress (fig. 4) and pulling of fabric and garment in a black dress (fig 5). The fabric is formed and sculpted into a new shape, “the most sensational being the twist: curved to the body through winding the garments into a rope by hand before setting in a steamer” (Menkes, 1993).

Haider Ackermann (Style.com, 2009) is another designer who has used the characteristics of jersey fabric in his collection for spring/summer of 2010. Some garments were turned and distorted as the fabric was twisted and stretched. A lilac dress appears to be draped across the body, stretching various points around one arm and then hip. The back part of the dress has multiple straps pulling in different directions and is combined with some drape at one of the sleeves (fig. 6-8).

In these two collections, garments seem to stretch across the body, overlap each other and then go under them selves again. As a viewer it makes you wonder if some garments are randomly constructed and if fabric is uncarefully thrown over the body as a last resort to create something. It is difficult to know weather the draping is carefully done and has a distinct pattern construction or just casually put together. Ackermann shows these designs in different ways in many collections, using fabric to wrap the body and create new form expression.

These two collections are both interesting due to how the designers use the characteristics of the stretch and how the stretch always is combined with a drape. Another interesting point is that even though the body is wrapped, it is not restricted.
Similar to the designers already stated, Parsha Gerayesh (University of Westminster, 2013) has explored tension in a more sculptural way. With his graduate collection from the University of Westminster, Gerayesh has investigated the tension of jersey by using wooden frames to expand the fabric. In his degree work he presents a collection of stretched fabric over wooden frames where the silhouettes appear once the body meets the fabric and pops out of the plain surface. His garment plays with volume, architectural lines and creates a graphic silhouette. The wooden structures combined with soft fabric offer another view on garment construction (fig. 9-11).

In 2010, Jean Paul Gaultier was selected by Elle Decor to decorate the former apartment of Jacques Carlu at the Cité de Architecture. Inside the vestibule you can find Gaultier’s signature marine blue and white stripes covering the walls and furniture. As the print turn the edges of the furniture the stripes are askew in certain spots making an optical illusion (fig. 12) (Bray, 2010)

In comparison with Gerayesh, Gaultier’s work follows the same line but also has the dimension of a print that becomes distorted and highlights the principal even more. By using vertical lines you can clearly see how the line changes its straight path and starts following the direction of the fabric. The lines change from thin to thicker as the print stretches out and the proportions become distorted. Thanks to the optical illusion you can follow the characteristics of the sofa, for example how wide the cushions are, and the lines of the arm rests.
FABRIC MANIPULATION

In 2010, Central Saint Martins MA graduate Matthew Harding, (Style.com, 2010) presented a collection in jersey where he used a pleating technique to create fine lines. With the help of galvanized copper he made a repetitive s-shaped boning and constructed it into garments to support the structure (Lau, 2010). The result is an architectural expression where the boning is placed at various points to create different silhouettes (fig. 13).

In Issey Miyake’s collection Pleats Please, the garments can be worn in several ways as the designer makes multi-functional pleated fashion. From tube dresses to cardigans, skirts, shirts, or pants in 100% polyester, the clothes all come with permanent pleats. The industrial process allows both texture and form to be created at the same time as vertical pleating is used to create different effects (Taschen, 2014), (fig 15).

Just as Miyake, the dress Serendipity (fig. 14) was designed to exemplify pleated silk fabric by Diane Sparks in 2004. Using hand-dyed Shibori pleated fabric, the design intent was to create a slender, stretchy garment that fit close to the body. The main areas of local interest in the dress were sleeves that extended beyond the shoulder/upper arm, the luster of the pleated fabric, and the organic hemline. A single length of fabric measuring 120 inches was pleated using Sparks adaptation of the Arashi Shibori process, which is more carefully explained in the method section.

These examples of fabric manipulation are important to the work as they illustrate how pleating can be applied to a garment. In Harding’s work the pleats are mostly applied in a decorative way, where the boning inside the garments are actually the ones that are creating the shape. In comparison Sparks dress from 2004, illustrate how the pleating changes the shape at the arms and at the bottom hem. The importance of this has been to divide applied technique (Harding) and how the technique changes the actual shape (Sparks). Miyake’s wrap-around “coat” is in the middle between the two others, as the pleats are slightly shape changing but also decorative.
PROBLEM FORMULATION

The majority of fashion today and most of fashion schools around the world seems to be about using ornamentation applied to already constructed garments. The way of thinking about ready-to-wear is in many ways stuck in a traditional form; can this be worn to work, to the store, to a club or maybe to a venue? Since not every one is Lady Gaga and can wear meat dresses to parties, why do we need to make clothes that can’t be worn anyway? These days minimalistic fashion rules the fashion world and continues to be viewed as the so called good taste. But what happens when less is more becomes less and less, making fashion just a cycle of copying existing ideas and where fast fashion delivers everything the day after the couture shows in every possible color? Why do we need to push the ideas of fashion if we can’t really wear the clothes anyway? I would like to follow the direction of finding form by exploring materials and waging them against each other, challenging the traditional way of looking at garments, for example a coat, a dress or a trouser.

In Pleats Please from 1993, Issey Miyake explored the possibilities of pleating. Traditionally, pleats are permanently pressed before a garment is cut, but he did it the other way round by cutting and assembling a garment two-and-a-half to three times its proper size. (Sato 1998). As I developed some toiles, I noticed I worked in the same way, constructing patterns x times its proper size before making the pleats.

As stated in my background, pleating and shibori go hand in hand. Combining the two and all their subordinate techniques would in this sense be a beneficial concept. In Gaultier’s work from 2010, his design has the dimension of a print that becomes distorted and highlights the stretch even more. The vertical line changes its straight path and starts following the direction of the fabric. The lines change from thin to thicker as the print stretches out and the proportions become distorted. This also shows in the dresses of Miyake from 1993 and later in Sparks from 2004, where the sleeves extend beyond the upper arm of the latter one. Therefore developing a shibori technique that makes lines in the fabric should be a positive outcome.

The value of this work lies in the possibilities of what you can do with fabrics, allowing design to create itself when gravity and movement occurs and showing how far one can distort materials. It questions the traditional way of thinking about textiles and ready-to-wear garments. This work aims to be an exploration of materials and weight where one way of exploring the relation between the two concepts is to work with contrasts and putting lightness versus heavy and stiff materials versus light ones.

By experimenting and using the method of trial and error, a technique was found to create pleats. As the amount of fabric increased so did the weight, making the lower layer of fabric pull down the upper one and thereby creating stretch. This technique would become the basis for this work.

AIM

To find expressions in stretch textiles by using pleating as a method to create weight.
DESIGN METHOD & DESIGN RESEARCH

In this section general design methodology is presented as designers have endless possibilities of adapting different design methods.

In the article called *Programs, Experiments and Exemplary Design Research*, one can read that “Design is inherently about proposing a change in man-made things” (Jones cited in Binder & Redstrom, 2006).

Another view of design research in action is to think about design as research (Laurel, 2003). It is suggested that design as research uses its own media to perform the investigations and that it is necessary to have a flexible and expanding methodology of design. In a similar manner Thornquist (2010) explains art as science. The result of basic art research is universal and precise as well as valid and fierce. In the history of science, experimentation has been used as a common methodology for exploring and construction of knowledge. In conclusion, experimenting as a method for research within art, can be used to state fact and build new knowledge. The outcome should be seen as results of the experimentation.

An early and influential supporter of experimental science was Francis Bacon. His works established and popularized methodologies for scientific inquiry. His demanded organization of investigation in order for science to be useful. Bacon believed that in order for a genuine advancement of learning to occur, the prestige of philosophy had to be elevated, while that of history and literature needed to be reduced (Simpson, N.d).

In the article by Frayling (1993), the author states that “where artists, craftspeople and designers are concerned, the word research – the R word - sometimes seems to describe an activity which is a long way away from their respective practices”. He claims that the emphasis tends to be put on the, re “- as if research always involves going over old territory”, while art, craft and design are concerned with the new. In his paper Frayling argues that much of the debate and a confusion about the subject has revolved around a series of stereotypes of what research really is, what it involves and what it delivers. The author reflects about the debate of; “does an exhibition of paintings count as research or doesn’t it?”
PLEATING METHODS

Issey Miyake is best known for his original pleating technique. With his textile director Makiko Minagawa, he introduced the collection Pleats Please in 1993. Traditionally, pleats are permanently pressed before a garment is cut, but Miyake constructed the pieces the opposite way and cut and assembled a garment two-and-a-half to three times its proper size. He then folded, ironed, and oversewed the material so that the straight lines remained in place. Finally, the garment was placed in a press between two sheets of paper, from which it emerged with permanent pleats (fig 16) (Sato cited in Kawamura, 2005).

Another Japanese process for pleating is called Arashi Shibori. The Shibori process is a bound-resist techniques that is primarily used as a way of creating surface designs on fabric (Proctor & Lew, 1995; Wada, Rice, Barton, 1983; cited in Sparks, 2004). The earliest Shibori techniques date back to the 9th century B.C. and include methods of binding, stitching, and folding (fig 18). By dyeing fabrics that have been manipulated in these ways, resist patterns emerge (Kearney, 1992). The same technique could be used to create pleats if you instead of dyeing were to shape dampened fabric, “the pattern created by the shaping would become the fabric design”. In the same matter, the Devore technique where you use chemical substances to remove the cellulose from polyester or silk fabrics is a similar process used in conjunction with Shibori pleating (Fricke, 1997; Stabb, 1997 cited in Sparks, 2004). Pole-wrapping is one of the methods when creating shibori. When doing the wrapping, monofilament thread is best suited and less likely to slip across the surface. Fabric is wounded around the pole several times, to make a continuous manipulation (fig. 6). You can also bind, stitch, fold or create any sort of resistance to either shape the fabric or when dyeing, stop the paint from soaking in.
DESIGN METHOD & DESIGN EXPERIMENTS

The process for this work started by working with jersey and its different characteristics such as stretching, distortion, twisting and wrapping. As the focus in the beginning was so broad and the aim quite vague, experimentations were done in all categories, mostly by draping on the body.

In 2002, Julian Roberts published a selection of garment cutting techniques. He called them Subtraction Cutting because the resulting shape was created by the removal of fabric, rather than the addition of it. The removal created empty spaces for the body to occupy, but also effected how the fabric draped around the body. The similar technique was used at an early stage for this work as jersey fabric was cut and draped around the body. At times the holes where cut first and then altered in front of the mirror; at other times big pieces of fabric where draped on to the own body and cut while standing in front of the mirror. One set of experiments where tension in the fabric was achieved was created when wrapping the body and creating expression as the jersey left the body and re-entered again (fig 17). The continuation of this was to cut random holes in jersey and stepping in and out of them to create expression by tension and wrapping (fig 18). The question arose, if the jersey became stretched out and distorted, would a placed artwork or print do the same? (fig 21).

The method Tempo, described in Thornquist (2010), is based on the philosopher Jean Baudrillard’s idea that “speed creates pure objects”. By alternating and increasing the tempo until you stop to think before the hands act, several draping designs emerged and were photographed. When analyzing the experiments later on, a common find for all experiments was the existence of anchor points. In the various experiments when draping on to the own body and cutting of holes, the procedure of “stepping in” to the fabric occurred, letting the feet become anchors in the cut holes as the jersey created tension while the rest of the fabric remained attached on to the shoulders or arms. In figure nineteen the anchor point is at the crotch keeping the fabric in place, avoiding it to pull back to its natural position, while in figure twenty, the natural weight of the arms creates the stretch from head to hands.
Having the research and Matthew Harding’s work in mind, a reconstruction of the pleating technique was made. By sewing fabric on to a strip and then pleating it and attaching it on to another surface, fine rows of fabric were created. Depending on which side one looked the expression changed. Another interest point arose when stretching out the piece, as the tension accentuated all the fine rows even more (fig 22.) In continuation the goal for the next experiment was to put the pleating in use in such manner that the tension in fabric was illustrated throughout the whole garment. The achieved result was partially successful as the tension mostly was illustrated from the neck down, however the tension diminished longer down in the garment and in the end the model felt too much pressure at her neck making it a difficult prototype for someone to wear (fig 23).

The idea to work with gravity arose after analyzing the difficulties of the now finished prototypes. When looking at the draping experiments the anchor points where noted and the obvious solution to work with weight arose. This was something that naturally existed in the process from the beginning but not as an external element. In previous experiments the arms of the body were used to force down the fabric and in others the feet or crotch as anchor points from where tension started. It was therefore a natural solution to incorporate weight to create stretch and tension and as follows the pleating technique could easily be incorporated as it already is a method to create weight in fabric. Consequently several elaborations with pleats were carried through, using them in a bigger way with heavier contrasting materials to the light jersey. As a result the aim became much more narrower and specific to the stretch of the fabric, reducing wrapping, distortion and twisting.
The images show a series of experiments with stretch fabric versus weight created by pleating. Investigations were done with heavy wool fabric, various jersey layers and pleats out of metal boning. Some of the experiments have different pleating arrangement with the lighter fabric constructed in the heavier pleating and other ones with the lighter fabric sewn separately. Interest points lay in the heaviness of the bottom fabric in contrast to the lightness of the upper one. In some experiments the bottom fabric is so light to create a pulling effect of the top fabric (second marked figure). Structure gives additional weight to the fabric and the separate placket on to which the pleats are sewn on to can be different in size, broader ones give a more exaggerated silhouette (first marked figure).
The experiments done were later draped onto the body to find silhouettes and to investigate the weight versus the stretch of the upper fabric. Chosen interest points were the draping made in heavy wool, the structure of the torn up fabric and the colors in the cement prototype (marked figures to the left). The reasons behind these choices was that the wool prototype seemed the best combination in relation to lightness versus heavy. The torn-up fabric was chosen for its natural expression but this was also the starting point for wanting to create a knitted material. The colors of the third experiment were random at first. As the work progressed it became natural to find colors close to the monofilament thread and the white fill yarn. Later when the line up almost consisted of greys and dull blues, pink was brought in to make a contrast.

The combination of snap-shot photography and Photoshop drawing was later done to create rapid prototyping, in other terms called digital sketching (Thornquist, 2012). The experiments were selected and extracted from the photos and placed upon a sketched body. By distorting, mirroring and scaling the objects, different garment prototypes were done. Now with a reference point, toiles were made to try to copy the silhouette of the sketch. These toiles were then photographed on a body or dummy and again scanned to be re-worked digitally in Photoshop and later interpreted in a new toile and so on. This process of making toiles, photographing them and digital sketching has been ongoing since the first experiments were made until the final result.
MATERIALS & COLORS

Throughout the process the materials have been in either white or black colour. However the choice of using lighter colours have dominated to make clearer representative pictures where one can clearly see the pleats, depths, shadows and structures. In the process of developing structures, a test of jersey was knitted with elastane which gathered the threads and made rows that later were cut. The fabric was knitted in a single jersey machine but consisted of four threads with wool and elastane in the bottom, monofilament on the top and polyester fill yarn as floatation in between. When cutting the rows, fuzzy structure was created and see-through monofilament worked naturally with the white fill yarn (fig 29-31). In another test with grey threads as the top layer, the colour combination doesn’t seem as harmonic in relation with the polyester filling. The conclusion was that the shiny monofilament worked best, leading to try out colour combinations with similar threads as polyester radiant thread and the colour palette of that thread (fig. 23-25).

In another experiment of creating weight, the structure of a knit was deconstructed and torn to “hide” the pleat to emphasize the contrast between the shear jersey and heaviness of the bottom fabric. This contrast was again achieved when using cement as another element to create weight, which also is off-white in its natural colour (fig. 26-27). The relation between hard and soft could therefore again be illustrated by using light versus dark colours and fragile materials versus destructed ones. In figure twenty-eight, destruction is illustrated by the devorée technique.

In the article Peter Eisenman Speaks On Deconstruction And Architecture At The Deutsches Haus, the architect demonstrates an example of “two columns supporting the weight of a structure that only requires one, making the other superfluous” (Hartz, 2012). Eisenman states that these paradoxes are central to the role of deconstruction, questioning contradictions and hierarchies. According to the architect, when you can sense the incompleteness of a finished structure, it is a paradoxical experience. He continues by arguing that if the parts that make up the whole are in conflict the sensation of the incomplete underlines the fact that the structure is in fact, a finished and fully enclosed space.
CREATING STRETCH MATERIALS

It has always been important in the process to develop a material that shows the principal of the stretch and as mentioned, an important focus point was the knit made out of elastin, monofilament and fill yarn.

The fabric was developed from a smaller sample in the knitting lab previously made from one of the technicians. The idea to cut the fabric came from an earlier experiment done on a piece of a left over fill yarn experiment from another student. When the monofil/fill yarn fabric was in its natural position, rows of fill yarn cover the surface, but when cut and extended, the rows separate from each other and reveal the color of the layer underneath. Together with the technician, several try outs were done to investigate the stretch-ability of the material using different threads but also the possibilities of coloring the different materials.

The development of using this material in to a garment has been done so that the material has been strategically placed as the upper layer, with the intention of being pulled down by weight to be able to show its characteristics (fig 32-37).
DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN RATIONALE

When arguing for choices under the process of the degree work, the main focus was how the under layer affected the upper layer. As earlier stated prototypes were done by distorting, mirroring and scaling smaller experiments on a dummy - in Photoshop. As toiles were made to try to copy the silhouette of the sketch, the reference points were to work with two materials - one upper and one lower one, to use use heavier and lighter fabrics, and gradually going from ready-to-wear to more conceptual garments.

Developing a garment was mostly done by randomly arranging the firsts experiments on a body. The pieces were in the next step sewn together creating a dress, placed differently on to the body. Digital sketches were then made from the toile to try to change proportions, cuts and colors. The same dress prototype was then made in a different material to see how it behaved differently. Digital developments were made again of the toile to quickly find other expressions. It was in these stages that the colors for each outfit was found, playing with transparency, color hues and saturation. New toiles were made again and again and alternated digitally, each time a step closer to what seemed to be the most interesting material expression which in the end was the criteria which was most relevant. When placed on a body, the toile was also alternated proportionally.

In the final stages of the toile for the first garment, a monofilament weave was used for the bottom part, referencing to the monofilament yarn in the knitted fill yarn material previously described. For the upper layer a “radient thread” textile was best suited, also referencing to the luxus thread in the fill yarn knit (fig. 38).

From this toile, other styles later arose (fig 39).
FABRIC DEVELOPMENT

During the process several things were discovered. For example that there was probably no coincidence that pleating and shibori went hand in hand as, unknowingly about the relationship between the two or the history behind them, both methods were used to create shape and fabric manipulation. For example, when constructing toiles, the pattern pieces where first sewn at a much bigger scale and then pleated to the correct size. It was in this stage where the fit of the garment could be controlled (fig. 40-41). Issey Miyake constructed the pieces for the Pleats Please collection in the same way, cutting and assembling a garment two-and-a-half to three times its proper size and then finally placed in a press from which the garment emerged permanent pleats (Sato cited in Kawamura, 2005).

In an early stage in the process experiments with the devoree technique was done to investigate the relationship between transparency and heavier woven fabrics. This technique is a bound-resist technique that is primarily used as a way of creating surface designs on fabric (Proctor & Lew, 1995; Wada, Rice, Barton, 1983, cited in Sparks, 2004). Resist patterns emerge by doing this process and the same technique could be used to create pleats if you instead of dyeing were to shape dampened fabric. “The pattern created by the shaping would become the fabric design” (Fricke, 1997; Stabb, 1997 cited in Sparks, 2004). In the same matter, the devore technique where you use chemical substances to remove the cellulose from polyester or silk fabrics is a similar process used in conjunction with shibori pleating.

Tests were done with thread wounded around fabric several times to make a continuous manipulation but tests including taping fabric on a flat surface were made as well (fig. 42). This was to try to illustrate the lines of Gaultier’s distorted stripes (Bray, 2010). But although pleating and shibori, technically have close relationship, the tests were unsuccessful due to the final expression. The stripes looked un-thoughtful and too randomly placed and the line was not distorted enough when stretching the fabric. Due to time issues the printed devoree fabric was eliminated since there was not enough time to elaborate more specifically with the stripes. Instead it was replaced with a knitted jersey with two different threads, making the fabric striped and with an organic behaviour resembling the pleated fabric from the Serendipity dress (Sparks, 2004)(fig. 43). This fabric was dyed in suiting colors.
The lineup started when several combinations of the digital sketches were combined and put together. The dress in the left corner was the starting point for several of the styles.

The line ups have always been changing from sketched to photographed.

Pink was introduced as the over all look seemed to grey and dull.
DISCUSSION

This work concerns the possibilities with pleating and incorporating weight to create tension as a design method to lead to an expressional form. It questions the possibilities of materials with its stretch follows gravity principle and explores other values such as the possibilities of ready to wear garments as well as the possibilities of stretch materials.

The results are various examples of the design method carried out in different proportions and materials. The garments show how the method could be used in ready to wear manner and a more conceptual way to build expression. They argue for a new way to work with the concepts of pleats and stretch and highlight the discussion of ready to wear fashion versus conceptual work.

In the analysis and reflections over this work discussions will be done from different perspectives and pin point some of the questions raised during design seminars and in the final critique after presenting the work at the examination. Possible ways to develop the work further and try to place the work within a context will also be made.
EVALUATION OF RESULT

After having presented the final proposal for a complete line up, there were some comments about the result versus the sketched line up. The work would be stronger if the final result had more of the different color scales as the sketched line up. The composition was fine but could benefit from more levels of grey and rearrangement of outfits in the line up. Some garments were too close and difficult to set apart from each other. The solution for this would simply to re-color the fabric, which has been done on the coat (outfit two on sketch or number one in photograph). As for this specific outfit, the upper fabric and lower was at the examination the same one. As a critique to this the two fabrics should be different to keep consistency in the line up. The upper one should therefore be in jersey, and the lower in woven as the rest of the outfits. This change was also done after the presentation.

The shorts (outfit number five) were up until the examination attached to a smaller short inside the garment to prevent the drape at the sides to reveal too much of the body and the model’s underwear. This was done due to that the pleats in the garments are sewn on to a loose strip of fabric and as a solution to incorporate both technique and undergarment the strip was added to fitted shorts. After the critique this was later changed to a pair of separate shorts and a separate strip, also for keeping consistency in the line up.

By experimenting with the pleats and stretch in different scale and on different places, my aim was to investigate its aesthetic values in various ways. Experiments with the same technique in different scale in relationship to the body can show how form and fit can challenge our perspective of dress and its interaction with the body (Thornqvist 2012). When working with this design method the idea to create a larger scale of the principle arose. In outfit six the expression and material choice is deliberately more conceptual than the others. For this outfit, critique was given that the final expression should be more like the sketched line up, symmetrical at both front/back and sides, but after consideration the skirt part still works in two dimensions, being more narrower from front and back but revealing its wide-ness sideways.

A vision during the process was to create garments that didn’t need complementing undergarments which only purpose is to cover the revealed body. The goal was to create garments that could stand on their own making the solution of matching garments underneath, un-necessary. As an interesting aspect and another project would be to make even more abstract, conceptual expressions of the method.
**REFLECTION**

“Less is a bore – more is more”

As previously questioned, the way of thinking about ready-to-wear is in many ways stuck in a traditional form; can this be worn in a every day life or why do we need to make clothes that can’t be worn anyway, etc? It’s a question about why we need art in this world and why we need conceptuality. The reasons are many but one of them is about pushing boundaries and questioning what is beautiful, what is ugly? What is meaningful and what is not? It’s about conventional thinking and subjectivity, who is to say what fashion is or trends? Questions arise about culture as well.

Japanese subcultures are full of different styles and extreme expressions. The distinctions of “high” and “low” become meaningless. In comparison with Stockholm street-style for example were there is a distinct hierarchy of whom to wear or low-class to high-class brands.

Fashion is a sort of a revolt and a statement as well as a time capsule. In the 2000-era less has become less due to the cycle of copying and where fast fashion delivers everything the day after the couture shows. We need to push the ideas of fashion and make clothes we can’t wear in a everyday life to keep inventing the wheel and to keep pushing forward like all other technology. In the end that is what fashion is as well, new hard-ware for the body. We need this to keep evolving. The same way human beings are programmed to walk, our minds are constantly searching to discover and conquer.

With this degree work, the aim was to play with the possibilities of what you can do with fabrics, allowing design to create it self when gravity and movement occurred and showing how far one can distort materials. The meaning was also to question the traditional way of thinking about textiles and ready-to-wear garments. As a result the work does lay in the ready-to-wear field. Most of the garments can be worn to a party or other night function. The conceptual outfit (number six in the line up) is most successful in the choice of materials and in side-way. Of course the silhouette could always be bigger but in try outs the knitted fabric tended to give a drowning expression to the model inside, stepping away too much to the whole expression of the line up. This is why the current size was chosen. As a quick solution one can just pick a smaller sized model to wear the garment if wanting a bigger expression. This specific knitted material could also be the focus for a development of this work if one were to work only with this material and its characteristics. The reason for not doing so earlier in the process was the lack of enthusiasm from tutors. Looking back or looking forward(!) – the development of shapes with this material would be the most interesting development.

“Kill your darlings”

- William Faulkner

As stated in my background, pleating and shibori and all their subordinate techniques would go hand in hand. As time became an issue for the project, there was not enough of it to really investigate or interpret ate Gaultier’s work from 2010, where the print becomes distorted in the stretch. Maybe it would had been to many variables for this work to investigate both knit, woven and printed material. As time went by it became more and more crucial to reduce elements that would be explored enough. It was a question of editing even though it would had been beneficial to the project to have a print of this kind.

In conclusion, the replacing material for the print was partially successful as it changed in behavior depending on the stretch. The aim was to have something that resembled the pleating of Miyake (1993) and Sparks (2004) and in several outfits it does have the same expression although the opponent at the examination had some critique towards it, as he thought the material was to shear and fragile.

This work aimed to be an exploration of material and weight versus stretch. It is successful having other criteria in mind such as wanting it to be a ready-to-wear concept. It will be easy to put in context and commercialized and also easy for others to digest, where people in the fashion field will think that the sixth outfit is a nice conceptual garment and the ones on the outside will think it doesn’t have it’s place in the collection.

Finally the frame of which the collection will be presented in the fashion show, will be to go all in with accessories such as shoes, sunglasses, bags and other “girly” elements, but since it should not be mistaken for a “fashionista” collection, targeting only high class consumers or be seen as a trend and not as a material and shape investigation, a beneficial context would also be to bring in humor or photograph it in a more down to earth setting with an older model for example.


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