The Story of a Dress

INVESTIGATING THE VISUAL AND FORMAL FEATURES OF AN EXISTING GARMENT
& PROCESSING THE FINDINGS INTO A NEW DESIGN

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THE STORY OF A DRESS LINEUP
ABSTRACT

This project explores the features of a dress through two-dimensional imagery. It uses trompe l’oeil techniques to investigate and highlight the qualities of the garment. This proposes new ways to use trompe l’oeil designs and new ways to draw inspiration from an existing garment.

The dress has been studied visually; through looking at it, tracing its shape and through drawing and painting it. The shape of the dress has been studied and developed through pattern construction.

The design elements found in the dress have been expressed and enhanced into new designs. Embellishments and prints are used, to create a refined expression. The project has resulted in a seven outfit collection, where each outfit expresses one or two design element(s) from the inspirational dress.

The collection shows a way to use decorative techniques to express findings in an artistic garment investigation. It also shows a way to draw inspiration from an existing garment to create an independent new design.

KEYWORDS:

Trompe l’oeil, drawing, painting, dress, embellishments
INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD

I got into this work with an interest to investigate two-dimensional imagery of garments. In fashion history, this has mainly been carried out as a form of embellishment. In this project, I will show new functions for two-dimensional images of garments, through using them in a garment investigation.

THE GARMENT AND ITS PROPERTIES

The garment is the fundamental frame of fashion design, as it concerns itself with designing and producing garments (Hallnäs & Thornquist 2005).

Garments are divided into categories, such as dresses, trousers, skirts etc. Each of these garment categories are defined by specific elements of design, such as a certain silhouette, fit, details, trimmings, colour, pattern, function and material (Diamond and Diamond 2013).

According to the features described above, a classic white men’s shirt would be made in a bleached cotton popline and in a loose fit, with knäppkant, small buttons, a breast pocket, a collar of appropriate proportions and a cuff in the end of the sleeve. If any of these features are changed, the design is no longer a classic, but a reinvention.

This is explained by Barnard (2002) as syntagmatic and paradigmatic differences in garment design.

... syntagmatic difference is the difference between things that form a signifying sequence or whole. Syntagmatic difference, then, is the difference between the constituent parts of a garment. /.../ Syntagmatic difference is the difference between the collar, cuffs, buttons, sleeves, shoulders, front panels and back panels of a shirt, for example. All are necessary to form the syntagm or signifying whole that is the shirt.

Barnard further explains that the paradigmatic difference in regard to fashion design is the difference between equals, meaning things that are replacable, such as different styles of a collar or sleeve. He then mentions the example of a 1988 Commes des Garcons shirt featuring two collars and buttons of different sizes. Barnard writes: "... the rules of syntagm and paradigm are being playfully manipulated and ‘broken’. The normal rules for shirts would be that, in the syntagm of a shirt, one collar from the paradigm of available choices would be chosen". (Barnard 2002 p. 91)

Hence, through breaking the syntagmatic and paradigmatic rules of the features of a garment, a new and innovative design can be created. A 20th century example of this is the work of the swedish fashion designer Sighsten Herrgård (see figure 1), and his 1970’s gender-neutral overalls.

TROMPE L’OEIL

Trompe l’oeil is a french term and translates to ‘fooling the eye’. In fashion design, trompe l’oeil motifs mimic the three-dimensional design elements of a garment, such as the collar, buttons or a deco bow, in a two-dimensional print or intarsia knit. These elements are classical and widely used in a number of garments and therefore easily recognisable. In order for the trompe l’oeuil effect to work, the viewer must recognize the details depicted.

The designer Elsa Schiaparelli, who was acquainted with and worked with several of the most important surrealist artists of her time, was the pioneer of trompe l’oeil motifs in fashion. Her debut collection in 1927 included the first of her well known looks of trompe l’oeuil sweaters (see figure 2). (Parkins 2012)
In these examples the designs question the role of the garment, the borders of the garment and the three-dimensionality of the worn garment. The hierarchy of the worn garment is questioned – is it the “real” garment we ought to be looking at, or is that merely acting as a canvas to the printed garment? These motifs evoke questions of a greater complexity than the trompe l’oeil designs of the mid-20th century.

In figure 3, the result of one of many collaborations between Elsa Schiaparelli and an artist can be seen. Schiaparelli invited the art deco artist Jean Dunand (artnet n.d.) to paint a trompe l’oeil motif directly onto one of her dresses. Schiaparelli is modelling and the photograph is taken by Man Ray in 1934 (Murphy 2012).

The Italian brand Roberta di Camerino is also known for its knitwear trompe l’oeil designs (see figure 4) from the 1950’s and -60’s (Phelps 2016). An important aspect in trompe l’oeil design is its simplistic and somewhat naive expression, and the graphic clearness of the motif.

THE IMAGE OF A GARMENT IN A GARMENT

The technical development of digital printing techniques has made it possible to use photographic images when working with trompe l’oeil effects. This can present a more accurate and thereby more efficient illusion, more likely to fool the viewer. It is just as useful as the traditional trompe l’oeil techniques for highlighting the difference between the image and the reality, and to question our perception of garments.

Martin Margiela was a pioneer of digital trompe l’oeil prints in his Spring/Summer collection of 1996 (see figures 5-7).
MOTIVE AND IDEA
STATE OF THE ART

MOSCHINO
The Spring/Summer 2017 collection of Moschino alludes to paper dolls. The trompe l’oeil motifs are conveyed through print, and displays more details than the previous knitwear trompe l’oeil designs. The collection is showing intricate images of drapes, voluminous shapes and the body in bikinis and underwear. The adding of the white strips make the reference to the paper doll toy very clear, and is a novelty among trompe l’oeil designs (Phelps 2016).

EDDA GIMNES
Graduate collection from 2016 by Norwegian fashion design student Edda Gimnes from London College of Fashion. The collection shows the trompe l’oeil theme in a hand drawn expression. Drawings of a quick and spontaneous style are printed onto white fabric, which is sewn into simple garment constructions. The designs depicted are archetypical and undefined – it is a dress, but could really be any dress. A few garment details are depicted, such as the belt in figure X, but the expression of the pencil is in focus, rather than the depicted garments.

FIONA O’NEILL
In Fiona O’Neill’s graduate work from Central St Martins, 2014, she worked with painted trompe l’oeil designs. The technique of painting is used to create depth in the garments, such as shadows and highlights. A contrasting black fabric is used as a frame for the motifs, which creates a strong graphic visual effect and alters and skews the perception of the body. The body is also included in some of the paintings, which questions the division between body and garment.

FIONA O’NEILL

MOSCHINO

EDDA GIMNES

FIG. 8-11 MOSCHINO SS17

FIG. 12-15 EDDA GIMNES

FIG. 16-19 FIONA O’NEILL

THESE WORKS IN COMPARISON TO THE PROJECT OF THIS PAPER
This selection of recent works shows that two-dimensional imagery of dress is a living and widely spread interest in contemporary fashion. The analogue techniques, as shown in the two last examples above, display a new take on trompe l’oeil designs. They incorporate new materials and a new way of expressing a two-dimensional garment. The motifs and themes of both the last projects are clear, but they lack details. In the project of this paper, an existing garment will be used as a source for inspiration. This creates a frame for the work and it provides a wealth of information regarding details and trims, that can be used in the work to create a greater number of details and combinations of materials.
INSPIRATION FROM AN EXISTING GARMENT

The use of an existing garment to extract inspiration for a new design is a very common design method in the fashion industry, and thus it needs to be developed and challenged. Malmgren de Oliveira describes how fashion houses search for inspiration for an upcoming collection by visiting flea markets and second-hand stores to collect vintage garments. (Malmgren de Oliveira 2016 p. 258). In commercial fashion companies, it is not unusual to look to items from fashion brands of a higher price tag for inspiration.

This method is used because it provides access to the knowledge of previous designers. In his book Designerly Ways of Knowing, Nigel Cross claims that there is knowledge stored in objects, and that this knowledge can be attained through studying the objects. Through learning from the past, the designer can get information about how to shape the future (Cross 2006 p. 9).

However, as any tool widely used, this method runs the risk of being taken for granted and becoming stagnant. It needs to be reinvented. This work can provide insights on how to use this method to create new designs with a strong expression, without losing the connection to the inspirational piece.

CRAFT AND EMBELLISHMENTS

Hand crafted embellishments can add a special value to a garment, a value that goes beyond the price tag: it is the fôrmimmelse of the hands’ work in the material. According to Andrew (2013), handmade textile processes in textile art and design can increase the viewers’ experience of the textile as a unique medium, representing qualities such as softness, tactility and domestic connotations.

Decorative trims is the common word for embroidery, beading, lace, fringes, appliqués and the like. According to Brannon (2011), “…trim serves three purposes: To create a focal point, To accent edges and lines in the composition, To add distinctiveness and interest to an area of the design that is too plain”.

As beading, embroidery, sequins and the likes draws attention, it is an effective means to convey a message to the viewer. In this project, they will be used to convey trompe l’oeil motifs. In the article of Pöllänen and Ruotsalainen (2017), they argue that traditional craft techniques applied in contemporary art can overbuild the traditional separation between art and craft, and that the use of craft can help artists to “transcend borders and traditions” (p. 12). This is done through applying a craft based way of making, but having an artistic way of seeing.

TROMPE LOEIL IN ANALOGUE TECHNIQUES (OR THE DIGITAL IMAGE AS A FRAUD)

Analogue techniques, such as painting and drawing, are more rare among trompe l’oeil designs. Digital printing provides a clear representation, but is also therefore traitorous as they claim to be accurate. All imagery and depictions are created through a number of decisions made by the image maker. The result can never be said to be “accurate”, and the analogue techniques can highlight this. The analogue depiction is in one way more honest, because it clearly states what information has been valued and what has not. It’s not trying to be objective, as opposed to the digital image.

AIM

To investigate and to extract the design elements of a dress, from a three-dimensional and two-dimensional perspective. To enhance and vary the elements, by the use of scale, graphic contrasts and embellishment techniques, into a fashion collection.
METHOD AND DEVELOPMENT

METHOD

DESIGN METHODS IN GENERAL

IDEA
A design investigation often starts with an idea that is sparked in the mind of the designer. An idea is an opening into a future of a great number of possibilities. The idea or starting point works as a frame to limit the investigation and to focus it upon what is relevant to the work. This is crucial when going into the next stage of the design process.

EXPERIMENTATION OR DIVERGENCE


In the initial divergence phase, the limitations and definitions of the design are not yet stable. The design work should therefore start with a broad research phase where no idea is disregarded. Experimentation is an effective way of creating novelty in a design situation. As Loschek writes: “The experiment is an empirical method in both scientific and artistic fields. ... It is an attempt at renewal with an open outcome, based on the possibility of trial and error” (Loschek 2009 s 64). What defines an experiment is that its outcome cannot be fully predicted on beforehand.

EVALUATION OR TRANSFORMATION

The stage of transformation follows upon the divergence phase. This stage could be described as an analysis of the results created in the first phase, making the decisions on what to carry on working with. The ambition in this stage in the process is to deepen the design investigation. When working experimentally, we can produce design suggestions that we initially do not understand ourselves, and that require analysis and reflection to do so. As Cross writes: “the world of ‘doing and making’ is usually ahead of the world of understanding” (Cross 2006 p 9). When working in this way, new knowledge is gained – knowledge that can be invested in the project through further experimentation.

It is important to note that experimentation and analysis are not separate stages in the process. Rather, throughout the project there is a constant movement from idea to making to evaluating, and then back again to idea for the next try-out. In the absence of a time limit, this comfortable flow between idea, making and evaluation could continue forever. In design, however, there is often a deadline and an expected result to take into consideration.

CONVERGENCE

When the process has been taken far enough, or when the time limit imposes the need for it, the designer will decide the intended design.

By Jones, this phase is called convergence. The convergence is the last stage of the process, where the most successful results of the process are merged into the final design suggestion. In fashion design, this demands careful consideration of the materials, colours and proportions of the resulting outfits.

THE DESIGN METHOD OF THIS PROJECT

THE IDEA
The idea of the work is to explore an existing garment through two-dimensional and three-dimensional design experiments. This will collect material for new design developments. Trompe l’oeil motifs and embellishment techniques will be used to express the findings of the garment investigation.

SETTING FRAMES: GARMENT, ATELIER, MATERIALS
One single garment will be used, which gives the opportunity to study it thoroughly and deepen the investigation more than would be possible if several garments were used.

A private atelier space will be used to perform investigations on this garment. To be able to move freely between making and evaluating experiments on a body, the designer’s own body will be used for evaluation, with the aid of a mirror and a camera with a self timer. The primary materials for the experiments will be a clear plastic, felt pen, acrylic paint and fabric.

STUDYING THE GARMENT THROUGH EXPERIMENTATION
As the garment is taken into the atelier, an improvisational work method will be used, where the results of the work will not be planned or even suggested in advance. This method is chosen due to its possibility to evoke new knowledge beyond predetermined conceptions. The aim of these experiments will be to understand and to visualise the design components in the dress.

ANALYSING THE EXPERIMENTS

The analysis of the experiments will be done through looking at the photo documentation and formulating what can be seen. Thus the experiment can be understood and the descriptions can inform the work. Using headlines or short descriptions to explain what has been found in the experiment can be a useful way to clarify the results.

ENHANCING/REINTERPRETING

The findings of the initial experiments will form the basis for the collection work. They will be reinterpreted into new designs with the aim to enhance the expression of each component of the original dress. This will be done through working with scale, colour, material and graphic contrasts. The primary goal is to create a visually intriguing and strong collection.

CONVERGENCE THROUGH DIGITAL LINEUP SKETCHING

Digital lineup sketching will be used to develop the lineup and to evaluate the outfits in relation to one another. Digital sketching makes it possible to combine photographs of samples, toiles, finished garments, and digitally drawn features which have not yet been tried out physically. This makes it easy to visualise new ideas and the possibility of incorporating them into the lineup. The development of the work will be clear and easy to follow when studying the progression of the lineup sketches.

POSSIBLE WEAKNESSES IN THE METHOD

It is possible that the tracing does not accurately enough capture the image of the garment. When a tracing is made, the garment is laid out flat and its shape is traced on to an overlaying material. However, when a garment is worn, the body fills out the space within the garment and gives it a different shape, outline and width. The method of drawing the garment in full scale could be needed in addition to the tracings.
The work started with a number of experiments encircling the theme of two-dimensionality in garments, flatness in relation to volume and trompe l'oeil effects. These experiments lacked focus and an aesthetic direction.
DEVELOPING A METHOD

To bring in more focus and to develop a more clear method, the decision to do a garment investigation was made. A burlesque looking second hand dress was chosen due to its clear graphic design features, which would provide a lot of material to work with. The dress was brought into the atelier and studied in an improvisational manner, by depicting its features on calico fabric and clear plastic using paint, felt pens and fabric. The features were continuously combined with each other. The features investigated include: purple ruffles, stripes, contrasting colour fields, cut, silhouette and details.

PURPLE DRESS EXPERIMENTS

TRACING THE DRESS
The experimenting started out by laying the dress out flat and tracing it using a black felt pen on plastic.

SILHOUETTE, SEAMS & DETAILS
The resulting tracing of all seams, details and gatherings. Felt pen on plastic.

COLOUR FIELDS
The purple colour fields depicted in pigment print paste on a calico fabric.

COLOUR FIELDS + TRACING
Combination of the two first experiments.

COLOUR FIELDS + TRACING - SKewed
A skewing of the tracing was added.

COLOUR FIELDS + TRACING + STRIPES
Adding physical ruffles.
**PURPLE DRESS EXPERIMENTS**

**COLOUR FIELDS + TRACING + STRIPES + PAINTED RUFFLES + PHYSICAL RUFFLES**
Physical ruffles were added.

**COLOUR FIELDS + TRACING + PAINTED RUFFLES + PHYSICAL RUFFLES**
The stripes were removed.

**COLOUR FIELDS + PAINTED RUFFLES + PHYSICAL RUFFLES**
The tracing was removed.

**COLOUR FIELDS + PAINTED RUFFLES + PHYSICAL RUFFLES + STRIPES**
The stripes were made to assume the original shape in the dress, then grown.

**SHAPE + COLOUR**
The silhouette of the dress cut out in black jersey, sewn onto the fabric painted in purple. This creates the same fit as the original dress.

**SHAPE + COLOUR + TRACING - SKewed**
The tracing was added, skewed in relation to the shape.

**SHAPE + COLOUR + OUTLINE**
The tracing was removed and a wide outline added, cut out of black fabric.

**SHAPE + COLOUR + OUTLINE + RUFFLES**
Physical ruffles added again.

**SILHOUETTE + CONTRASTING COLOUR**
Cut out of black fabric and pinned onto a blue square, painted in acrylic paint on plastic.

**OUTLINE**
Cut out of black foam.
The purple dress served its purpose as a material for developing the method. The aesthetic of it was however not very promising. A new dress was purchased at Beyond Retro, Stockholm. It was chosen for its many interesting features, trims and details. The dress was brought into the atelier and investigated in a similar manner to the purple dress, but in a more structured way and without combining the elements. The dress showed an interesting ambiguity in regard to its style. The cut of the bodice implies a look from the early 20th century, whereas the material, a cheap polyester, speaks of the 1980’s. The pink colour, the lace trims, the polka dot pattern and the gathering in the sleeve are all features heavily connoted with pre-pubertal femininity, but the dress is in the appropriate size for a grown woman. All these were considered intriguing features of the garment.

FRONT - DETAIL IMAGES

BODICE. NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE IN TRANSPARANCY
ELASTIC IN THE WAIST
SPACED TUCKS, ROSE & BOW, LACE TRIMS
COLLAR WITH LACE TRIMS
SLEEVE WITH RUFFLE-LOOKING CUT
WIDER LACE TRIM IN THE HEM
The dress was laid out flat and traced with a black felt pen on clear plastic. The first tracing focuses on the shape and details of the dress. The other main features of the dress were depicted in the same manner.
COLOUR - PINK
The pink colour fields were depicted using acrylic paint on plastic.

OUTLINE - NARROW
The outline of the garment was traced. Black felt pen on plastic.

NEGATIVE SHAPE
The silhouette of the dress was cut out of a black fabric, and the left over fabric creates a negative image of the dress. The fabric was pinned onto plastic.

COLOUR - WHITE/LACE TRIMS
The white fields of colour (which consists of lace trimmings) were depicted, using acrylic paint on plastic.

SILHOUETTE, SEAMS & DETAILS
Tracing of all seams, details and gatherings, made using a felt pen on plastic.

OUTLINE - WIDE
The outline, cut out of black fabric and pinned onto plastic.
ELASTIC
The elastic in the waist separated. Elastic on calico fabric.

ROSE & BOW
In the front of the dress, there is a small rose and bow made from a polyester satin ribbon. This feature could be emphasized through upscaling it. The images show quick try-outs of the scale.

ALTERING THE SCALE

TWO-DIMENSIONAL ELASTIC
The separated elastic piece described above was traced using a black felt pen on plastic.
The opaque dress.

The semi-transparent dress.

The opaque and semi-transparent part worn together, creating a repetition of the original dress.

SHAPE INVESTIGATIONS

The original dress has one opaque and one semi-transparent layer which are sewn together. The layers were separated into two new patterns, which are named the opaque pattern and the semitransparent pattern. These patterns form the basis for further shape developments.

The lace trims of the dress replicated in an upscaled version. Lace trim pinned onto plastic.

The lace trims separated, investigating what would happen if the lace trims are allowed to stand on their own, without an underlying material. This was disregarded due to that the lace collapses down on the floor and would be easy to trip on for a model.
SHAPE DEVELOPMENT - SCALE

The semi transparent pattern upscaled to 200% in the width and to 120% in the length. The fit in the neck and sleeve ending were not upscaled, in order to make the garment appear as a wide dress rather than an upscaled pattern.

The opaque pattern scaled up in the same way as described above; to 200% in the width and to 120% in the length.

SHAPE DEVELOPMENT - ELASTICS

The elastic in the waist of the original dress were to be enhanced through adding more elastics and increasing its influence in the shape of the garment. A new pattern was made, which incorporates more of the original cuts of the dress, such as the seams on the bodice. The pattern is 150% in the width but kept in the original length.

Elastics were added in the waist, but also at the hem, sleeve endings, neck line, in the seam on the sleeve and at the round seams at the back and front upper piece. Through the force of the elastics, the dress shrinks back to the original size.
In order to try out a more extreme version, a new pattern was made. The scale here is 200% from the original pattern, width- and lengthwise. All the seams from the original dress were included.

Elastics were added in every seam, making the dress shrink almost into its original scale and giving the material a heavy drape.

SHAPE DEVELOPMENT - SPACED TUCKS

This shape experiment was made to enhance the role of the spaced tucks which can be found on the front upper body piece. The pleats were upscaled to 1000% in the width and to 300% in the length. The upper body pattern pieces are upscaled accordingly, in front and back. This moves the waist line down to around the knee, and makes the upper body pieces dominate the outfit. (The skirt part will probably be increased in length to fit on a longer model.)

The idea occurred to enhance the tucks graphically through adding black trims to the edges of the pleats. This was tried with satin and velvet trims in different widths.
The tracings made with a felt pen on plastic were not durable or refined enough to be brought into the final result, and an alternate solution was needed. The ambition was to find a textile technique that could express the graphic clarity of the drawing on a light and transparent material. Printing would not do it, as the light construction of the fabric can not hold enough print paste to create a strong blackness in the print. The conclusion was that a contrasting material needed to be added to the transparent fabrics. The first try-outs were made with embroidery, but none of these examples were considered graphically strong and clear enough to represent the drawings.
MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT
- PEARL EMBROIDERY & APPLICATIONS

Try-outs in beading and pearl embroidery followed. The pink outline marks the test considered the most successful. The small black beads create a strong and defined line, with the possibility of altering the thickness of the line according to the motif.
The aim of these tests was to express the polka dot pattern of the dress in a different material than the original textile print. The try-outs started out through hand stitching pearls onto transparent materials. This did not work, as the threads were showing through the material and this gave a sloppy and undefined look to the samples. In an opaque material, however, it worked well. Flatback pearls and rhinestone beads were purchased and glued onto the transparent fabrics using a rhinestone glue. This worked very well. The successful tests are marked by a pink outline.
MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT
- PEARL EMBROIDERY & APPLICATIONS

As the pearls and beads now were brought into the work, the idea to depict the lace trims of the dress through pearl embroidery occurred. The rounded shape of the lace trims were used as a motif. This worked better in large pearls than with the smaller beads.

MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT
- PAINT ON CANVAS, WITH ELASTIC

Material tests for a canvas outfit, using paint and elastic in the waist and a linen painters canvas. The tests show that a wide and strong elastic is needed to gather the very stiff and coarse material. The seam through the canvas is clearly visible on the right side. Therefore, the fabric ought to be painted after the elastic is sewn on.
MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT
- CONSTRUCTION OF OUTLINE

Material tests for the outline outfit. The idea was that the outline could be made from a stiff material which holds out the shape from the body. The material needed to be stiff and light, in order to hold up its own shape. It also needed to be made in an intensely black colour to create a strong graphical effect. A shape is cut out in foam and covered with three types of black fabrics. The material which will be covering the body is added, to try out the construction and finishing.

2 LAYERS OF FOAM, COVERED IN COTTON JERSEY. PVC PLASTIC ADDED.
1 LAYER OF FOAM, COVERED IN POLYAMID JERSEY. POLYESTER ORGANZA ADDED.
1 LAYER OF FOAM, COVERED IN A BLACK SUEDE IMITATION. SILK CHIFFON ADDED.

MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT
- ROSE & BOW

Material tests for the upscaled rose and bow. The roses were constructed according to various youtube tutorials. The first rose turned out too high and not wide enough. The second rose trial proved a better relation of width and height, but was too dense and heavy. The colour will be changed to white, as in the original dress.

CONSTRUCTION OF ROSE NO. 1
ROSE NO. 1, READY
CONSTRUCTION OF ROSE NO. 2
ROSE NO. 2 READY, WITH FABRIC BOW
MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT
- POLKA DOTS IN PRINT & DYE

Print samples of an upscaled polka dot pattern. The pattern was tried in 8 variations; four with the polka dots as the print motif in different scales, and four with the space surrounding the dots as the print motif, again in four different scales. The patterns were applied in a number of print mediums on different materials.
The print samples were evaluated through pinning them onto a dummy in layers, to see how the layering would affect the pattern and colours. Polka dots in pearls and rhinestones were also added. These are considered the most successful combinations, and among them a small number of chosen combinations are marked with a pink line. Strong colours and polka dots of contrasting scales were considered the most interesting result to bring into the lineup.

As the tracing was along considered a weak method of studying the dress, the decision was made to set up a drawing and painting workshop to study the dress in this manner. The dress was put on a mannequin and drawings and paintings were made using a variety of mediums, techniques and time frames. The most successful examples are marked with pink.
LINEUP DEVELOPMENT

LINEUP 1 17-12-04

Digital lineup sketching has been an important tool in the design process. Photographs of toiles, samples and real garments have been used alongside digital sketches of design ideas. Some ideas were formulated early on and is therefore changed very little in each lineup. In lineup no. 1 the idea of making a broad outline in some sort of stiff foam material is set for outfit no. 1. The solution for it is however not yet developed. The idea to make no. 2 in a linen canvas instead of a transparent material has also been thought of, to underline the material of the acrylic paint. These two ideas are therefore not changed much in the progression of lineups. Other outfits have been unclear from the start and gone through many different suggestions before the final design is decided.

LINEUP 2 17-12-12

The second lineup is completed with three explanatory material samples. The lace look has replaced the weaker elastics tracing.

LINEUP 3 18-01-04

The results of the painting and drawing workshop were to be used in the work as motif for a beading and for the canvas outfit.
LINEUP 4 18-01-23

OUTLINE + lace in pearls
TRACING + the upscaled semi-transparent dress pattern
LACE + the upscaled opaque dress pattern
POLKA DOTS + DECORATIVE PLEATS
COLOUR: acrylic paint on canvas, elastic in the waist
ROSE & BOW + decorative tracing
ELASTIC + free standing tracing

LINEUP 5 18-01-30

OUTLINE + polka dot rhinestones on an opaque material
TRACING in embroidery on a transparent material + elastic version 1
LACE in pearls on a transparent material + the upscaled opaque dress pattern
POLKA DOTS: crepe de chine printed with pink polka dots, heat press printed and burned out dots, pearls and rhinestones
COLOUR: acrylic paint on canvas, elastic in the waist
ROSE & BOW + DECORATIVE PLEATS + black taping to graphically enhance the pleats
ELASTIC + free standing tracing

LINEUP 6 18-02-09

OUTLINE + polka dot rhinestones on an opaque material
TRACING, embroidery on a transparent material + elastic version 1
LACE in pearls on a transparent material + the upscaled opaque dress pattern
POLKA DOTS: crepe de chine printed with pink polka dots, heat press printed and burned out dots, pearls and rhinestones
COLOUR: acrylic paint on canvas, elastic in the waist
ROSE & BOW + DECORATIVE PLEATS + black taping to graphically enhance the pleats
ELASTIC + free standing tracing

LINEUP 7 18-02-09

OUTLINE + polka dot rhinestones on silk chiffon?
TRACING in beaded matte polyester organza + elastic version 1
LACE in pearls on a transparent material + the Upscaled opaque dress pattern
POLKA DOTS: white dots on pink, burned out large scale dots, pearls on plastic, rhinestones on matte polyester organza
COLOUR: acrylic paint on canvas, elastic in the waist
ROSE & BOW in white satin + DECORATIVE PLEATS + white satin taping to graphically enhance the pleats
ELASTIC + free standing tracing

LINEUP 8 18-02-12

OUTLINE + polka dot rhinestones on silk chiffon?
TRACING in beaded matte polyester organza + elastic version 1
LACE in pearls on a transparent material + the Upscaled opaque dress pattern
POLKA DOTS: white dots on pink, burned out large scale dots, pearls on plastic, rhinestones on matte polyester organza
COLOUR: acrylic paint on canvas, elastic in the waist
ROSE & BOW in white satin + DECORATIVE PLEATS + white satin taping to graphically enhance the pleats
ELASTIC + free standing tracing

LINEUP 9 18-03-01

OUTLINE + polka dot rhinestones on silk chiffon?
TRACING in beaded matte polyester organza + elastic version 1
LACE in pearls on a transparent material + the Upscaled opaque dress pattern
POLKA DOTS: white dots on pink, burned out large scale dots, pearls on plastic, rhinestones on matte polyester organza
COLOUR: acrylic paint on canvas, elastic in the waist
ROSE & BOW in white satin + DECORATIVE PLEATS + white satin taping to graphically enhance the pleats
ELASTIC + free standing tracing

RESÅR: fristilande teknik i glansiga svarta pärlor 10 mm på stället
LINEUP 10 18-03-01

KONTUR +
SPETS i pärlor på transparent material + opakt uppskalat minkter
TECKNING i svart pärlbroderi på matt polyester organza (verkar liknande pärlsteinarn)
PRICKAR: vita prickar på rosa, ausbrenner & transfertryck, pärlor på polyester organza + Swarovski stenar på plast
FÄRG: akryl på canvas, resår i midjan
ROSETT i vit satin + stråveck + vita band i satin för att grafiskt förstärka stråvecken
RESÅR + frilstående teckning i glansiga svarta pärlor 10 mm på ståltråd

LINEUP 15 18-03-01

LINEUP 16 18-03-09

LINEUP 17 18-03-21

OUTLINE
Foam covered in black suede imitation. Silk chiffon with rhinestones.

LACE on transparent fabric, opaque upscaled dress beneath
BEADED DRAWING, dress with elastics in silk crepe satin beneath
POLKA DOTS in pigment printed habotai silk as bottom layer, heat transfer printed & burnt out dots in middle layer, pearls on plastic as top layer
PAINT in acrylic on linen canvas, elastic in the waist
PLEATS in synthetic salmon pink, ROSE & BOW in white satin
ELASTICS in bubblegum pink silk dupion, WIRE & BEADS over

LINEUP 18 18-04-11

1. OUTLINE
Foam covered in black suede imitation. Silk chiffon with rhinestones.

2. LACE on transparent fabric, opaque upscaled dress beneath
3. BEADED DRAWING, dress with elastics in silk crepe satin beneath
4. POLKA DOTS in pigment printed habotai silk as bottom layer, heat transfer printed & burnt out dots in middle layer, pearls on plastic as top layer
5. PAINTED DRESS in acrylic on linen canvas, elastic in the waist
6. PLEATS in synthetic salmon pink, ROSE & BOW in white satin
7. ELASTICS in bubblegum pink silk dupion, WIRE & BEADS over
PAINTING: TOILE

Making of toile for canvas outfit. The elastic was sewn onto the fabric before it was taped up for the painting.

After the painting, the front and back pieces were put together with a bottleneck seam in the neck and shoulders. The toile was considered slightly too big and too strong in colour.

PAINTING: FINISHED PIECE

Making of the finished piece and finished piece, before and after the arm holes are cut. The scale was slightly diminished in comparison to the toile.
Making of the pleats outfit. The pleats have been marked with hand stitches on the pattern piece.

Making of the fabric rose. A strip of white polyester satin has been stitched double and spinned into a rose shape, while being attached to a felted white viscose. After the scale was tried out on the finished dress, the rose was finished by folding in and hiding the felt on the backside.

Making of bow. Two ways of constructing the bow was tried, first in paper and then in a polyester satin fused in double layers. The first construction was a direct repetition of the bow on the original dress and was made like a folded ribbon. This construction did not work in the fabric, because it could not hold up its own shape despite the added stiffness through the fusing. Therefore, a traditional bow was constructed. This was applied through hand stitching on the dress, and the rose was added on top.
The dress was re-traced to find the shape of its outline. From the tracing a pattern was created, with a 20 cm wide edge around the inner shape of the dress, and edge pieces in 5 cm, the same width as the thickness of the intended foam. It was decided to do a big sample of the garment instead of a whole toile to save time. The upper part of the garment was chosen due to that it encompasses the critical points of the hole for the neck and the waist. The pattern was cut out in foam and glued together, as the foam pieces were too small for the shape. The front and back piece and the edge pieces in the black fabric were sewn together and the inner edge pieces attached to the chiffon. The foam was thereafter put into the shape. The intention was to close the shape in the inner seam, by the edge of the chiffon. This proved impossible in the sewing machine, and the conclusion was that the piece has to be finished with a seam on the outer edge.

Note: When the garment was to be tried, it proved impossible to put on as the whole in the waist was too narrow for the shoulders. The conclusion was that the piece should be made like a sandwich, with the front and back as separate pieces which will be attached using velcro.

MAKING OF OUTLINE OUTFIT

Applying rhinestones to the silk chiffon in a polka dot pattern.

Correcting the pattern, making it less detailed since the steep curves in the outline was too difficult to sew in the chiffon. Cutting the black pattern pieces. Glueing together the pieces of foam and cutting the foam into the shape. The glueing was done before the cutting, opposite to the toile, so as not to produce visible edges.
The chosen drawings were photographed, brought into Photoshop to correct the scale of the backside, and printed on large paper. A polyester organza was attached to the print and the beading begun, using small black glass beads. The beading of the drawing continued by 2 hours per day, with some additional help. Important tools were the beading needles and an extra light source, as well as a private table space that could be occupied for a long time. After the beading was done, the paper was removed and all the loose threads secured.

Documented progress of the back side, made in the same way as described above.
MAKING OF BEADING OUTFIT

The beaded fabrics were ironed, excess material was cut away and the edges were finished by folding 8 mm twice and stitching it down. A bottleneck seam was made by the neck and shoulder. After consideration, more material was cut away and the edges were finished in the same manner.

MAKING OF LACE

The experiment featuring painted lace trims was used as the shape for the lace outfit. Lace trims were hand sewn onto one layer of light pink tulle to imitate the placement of the lace trims in the dress. After consideration, more excess material was cut away over the shoulders so as not to make the lace by the neck sag downwards.
MAKING OF WIRE SHAPE TOILE

The idea occurred to make a wire shape with black pearls in imitation of the cut and outline of the dress, as illustrated in the lineups through the image above. This will be worn over the elastic dress, therefore the wire shape was made on top of the elastic toile. The wire marks the collar, waist, hemline, cuffs and all seams apart from the tucks in the front. The shape will be opened and closed through hooks and eyes that will be shaped in the wire in the center back.

MAKING OF WIRE SHAPE

The wire shape was constructed according to the tryout described above. Metal wire and 8 mm glass pearls were used. The combined weight of the materials make the shape collapse a lot more than in the sketch, but the expression was still considered successful. A bit of the hem is currently missing pearls because a too small number of pearls were purchased, and this will be completed for the presentation.
After the pattern was cut out of a silk dupion, the pieces were overlocked. The pieces were then sewn together. In every seam allowance, a channel was created through making an additional seam at the edge of the seam allowance. In these channel elastics were put in. The image sequence directly above show the steps and the transformation of the bodice piece as the elastics are put in.
MAKING OF POLKA DOT OUTFIT

SILK SCREEN PRINTING

Silk screen printing with acrylic based pigment print. When the screen had been prepared, the repeat system was controlled using talcum powder. Thereafter the fabric, a habotai silk, was glued to the table. Then printing began. When the entire fabric was printed, the print was fixated in a heat oven.

HEAT TRANSFER PRINTING

A digital print using a heat transfer print was made onto a devore fabric in polyester and cotton. The motif was first printed onto transfer paper, and then the fabric and the paper were treated through a heat press. In this process, the ink binds to the polyester fibres in the fabric and the print occurs.

DEVORE PRINTING

Another silk screen was made, matching the pattern of the heat transfer print. The repeat system was first tried out using talcum powder. The motif was printed with burn out paste onto the previously heat transfer printed fabric, which was then fixated in a heat oven and washed in the washing machine. The burn out and transfer print now came to show.
APPLYING PEARLS TO PLASTIC

The pattern pieces were cut out in plastic. The pieces were placed over a dotted paper and the pearls applied with gem glue according to the dots of the template paper. The application was left to dry for 24 hours.

SEWING THE DRESS

The pattern pieces were cut out in the dark pink printed fabric and the light pink devore printed fabric. The pieces were layered with the three layers on top of each other and sewn together in all seams, except for the skirt part. The skirts were put together separately and are held together only in the waist seam. The hems of the two fabric layers were finished through folding 6 mm twice and hand stitching an invisible stitch.

The nearly finished dress can be seen to the right. The hemlines of the different layers were later cut into different lengths.
RESULT

LINEUP
OUTLINE – Light pink silk chiffon with light pink Swarovski rhinestones applied in a polka dot pattern. Foam dressed in a black flock velvet material. The back and front are held together by velcro.
LACE – Bottom layer: The opaque pattern in the dress upscaled, made from a polyester duchesse. Closed with a hidden zipper in the back and a hook and eye in the neck.

Top layer: Light pink tulle with hand applied lace trim of two widths. Put together with a bottleneck seam in the neck and shoulders.
OUTFIT 3 - PLEATS, ROSE & BOW

PLEATS & BOW – Dress with upscaled tucks, made from a salmon coloured polyamide. Polyester satin trims are fused onto the dress to graphically mark the pleats.

The front of the dress features an upscaled bow and rose made from polyester satin. The rose is hand stitched onto a viscose felt and the bow is fused in two layers of satin. The bow and rose are applied with hand stitching to the dress. Closed with a hidden zipper and hook and eye in the back.
BEADED DRAWING & ELASTICS – Bottom layer: An upscaled dress made from a polyester satin, with elastics added in the horizontal seams. Closed with a hidden zipper in the back and a hook and eye.

Top layer: Beadwork with the motif of a life drawing of the dress, using small, black glass beads on a matte polyester organza. Front and back put together through a bottleneck seam in the neck and shoulders.
PAINTING – Linen painters canvas with the motif of the dress painted with acrylic paint, depicting the front and back. They are put together with a bottleneck seam in the neck and shoulders.
POLKA DOTS – An upscaled dress made from three layers. The bottom layer is a habotai silk with a fuchsia polka dot print. The middle layer is made from a polyester/cotton material treated with heat transfer printing and burn out print. The polka dots are printed in a larger scale than the silk fabric. The top layer is a PVC with flatback Swarovski pearls applied in a polka dot pattern. Closed with a hook and eye in the center back.
ELASTICS & FREESTANDING DRAWING – Bottom layer: An upscaled dress with elastics added in every seam, shrinking the dress back into the original fit. The dress is made from a bubblegum pink silk dupion. Closed with a hook and eye in the neck.

Top layer: The cuts and outline of the dress shaped in wire, with black 8 mm glass beads secured on the wire.
This work has resulted in a method to investigate a garment. Formulations regarding design properties have been displayed through experimental design work and textual analysis. The findings of these experiments have been refined and composed into a collection of seven outfits, where each of the design components of the dress are represented.

The creation of the collection has involved a mini investigation of how to express each of the design elements. One example of this could be the polka dot pattern, that has been explored in a number of scales, printing techniques and applications of pearls and rhinestones. When composing the collection, it has been important to balance the design elements both in the lineup and in each outfit, so that each part gets the space and attention they need. No more than two elements have therefore been included in one outfit.

The aesthetic of the work has been largely influenced by the chosen dress. The materials that do not derive directly from the dress have been chosen from the area of feminine evening wear, as this suits the aesthetic of the dress well.
Dress silhouette made from silk chiffon with applied Swarovski rhinestones in a polka dot pattern. Outline shape, 20 cm in width, made from 5 cm thick foam. The foam is covered in a black suede imitation fabric, with separate pattern pieces for the sides, 5 cm in width, making the seams follow the edge of the foam. Front and back are made as two separate pieces, held together with velcro. The shapes are closed through a stitching in the meeting between outer side piece and inner outline piece.
Inside and side view of the garment. The inside sketch shows the placement of the velcro which holds the garment together.
Dress made from polyester duchesse. Facing by the neck and armholes and invisible zipper in the center back. Elastic band in the waist, sewn onto the seam allowance. The hem is finished with a 4 cm facing and a hand sewn invisible stitch. The detail sketch shows the hidden zipper, the facing and the stitching holding the seam allowance down.
OUTFIT 4: ELASTIC DRESS

Dress made from polyester satin. The dress features a standing collar, gatherings in the sleeve starts and endings, and cuffs at the sleeve ending. Elastic ribbons are sewn onto the seam allowances of the seams in the waist and in the decolletage seam in the front and back. Elastic are also added in the french seams in the sleeves. 3 cm wide elastic ribbons are inserted in the collar and sleeve cuffs. In the center back, a hidden zipper and a hook and eye closes the garment. The hem is finished with a 4 cm facing and a hand sewn invisible stitch.
OUTFIT 7: FREESTANDING DRAWING

Outer garment/accessory made from stainless steel wire and 8mm glass pearls. The garment opens and closes at the center back, where five hooks and eyes are shaped in the wire. Each pink asterix marks the placement of the hooks and eyes. These can be seen in close up on the detail sketch. All other joints are fixed permanently by twisting the wire together.
DISCUSSION

SUMMARY OF THE WORK
This work performs an investigation of an existing garment, listing its properties and repeating them in separated experiments. It also encompasses a shape development, where the pattern of the original dress is varied through scale. Through a drawing and painting exercise a thorough visual study of the dress is conducted. The findings of these investigatory experiments are used to create a fashion collection. The features found in the original dress are enhanced by the use of scale, material, embellishment techniques and graphic contrasts. They are separated and combined in new compositions into seven outfits.

THE PROCESS
The clear plastic has been an important material in the development of the method. The plastic did not only allow the tracing of the flattened dress, but also created the possibility to layer the findings on top of each other on the body; inspiring new combinations of design elements. The tracing created flat depictions of the feature of the dress, which made a lot of sense in regard to the initial interest of two-dimensionality. As the work progressed however, the tracings as the sole way of investigating the garment seemed insufficient. Hence, a shape investigation was opened, to bring more variation of form into the work. Imitating the original pattern of the dress and manipulating it in different ways, allowed for a deeper understanding of the original dress. A drawing and painting workshop was also carried out. Here the dress was depicted worn by a dummy, instead of flattened on the ground. This visual study of the dress through the act of portraying it invested a new type of knowledge about the dress into the work. It also made it possible to include new pieces into the lineup with a more interesting expression than the tracings.

THE RESULT
The collection is created through an unusually wide range of techniques and mediums, for such a small number of outfits. This is motivated by the fact that each outfit expresses a different feature in the dress. The techniques have been chosen due to their ability to manifest each feature as clearly as possible. The dress as the common factor makes the collection cohesive despite the differences in technique and medium.

As the aim expresses, the findings in the dress have been enhanced and displayed through new materials. As the ambition has been to keep the connection to the original dress, the features have not been overly manipulated or multiplied. In the final lineup, no more than two design elements have been included in one outfit. One could argue that this stands in conflict with the wish to create a strong collection in terms of visual expression. It is possible that a bolder expression could have been found without the limitation of applying the logic of the original dress on the collection. However, that could have run the risk of making the connection to the process and method less apparent and less significant in the work. It is my belief that the collection displays a pleasing balance between expression and the logic of the method. The resulting collection carries the story of the original dress within it, but is also a fully independent design project.

THE AESTHETIC
The aesthetic of the work is a result of the choice of garment used as a study material. As the choice fell upon a pink dress with many features coded as feminine, the collection as a whole expresses femininity in a clear manner. The use of excessively feminine aesthetics have been applied many times in feminist associations, with the riot grrrl movement of the early 1990’s as one example. As Monden writes in an essay on the Japanese Lolita style, expressing feminine sweetness without looking for the appreciation of the male gaze can act as an act of resistance against the objectification of women (Monden 2008).

COMMERCIALISATION
The study of existing garments is already a common method in commercial companies, but in this method the study is deepened and more information is gathered and processed from one garment. The design components found in this work could easily be applied to more wearable garments. The upscaling and enhancement of the elements would be cancelled in a commercial situation, and the expensive techniques of beading and pearl works could be replaced by textile printing techniques. This could express the idea and visual component of each outfit in a cheaper and more wearable way. The loose hanging rectangles of fabric as canvases for the motifs could be replaced by simply printing the motif on the underlying garment. With a slightly more simple cut, the dresses would work well as a background for the print, and this design could be easy to produce and interesting for a customer.

FURTHER POTENTIAL
There is great further potential in the method developed. It could be applied to any garment, which offers an endless number of aesthetics, cuts, prints and patterns, colours, trims and details to investigate and to build new collections of. The method itself could also be developed further, into a more structured and complete study of the garment. There are also great possibilities for further development within the collection. Each of the features encompasses many design possibilities and could be developed into whole new collection on their own. As seen within the material samples, the alternatives within for example the polka dot pattern are close to endless. This only proves the force of the method developed in this work.
WORKS CITED


