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### **Statement Sleeves at FIT Museum**

Statement sleeves play a significant role in shaping one silhouette. Colleen Hill, who curates at the Museum at FIT for costume and accessories mentioned that statement sleeves enable designers to create and showcase their innovative style (Petrarca, 2024). Each sleeve designed by designers shows different elements such as rank, flavor, and emotions. In the present time, social media influences others on how they can present themselves, especially how sleeves change one's modern closet (Bateman, 2024). As one gets exposure from their screens on their hands, they become expressive and personal with their preferred style. Statement sleeves are challenging to create and some of sleeves are not operational (Petrarca, 2024). Statement sleeves can gather many attention, giving one a center of attention.

Different types of sleeves can change and impact the silhouette of one's garment. Fabrics that were embellished makes the fabric more appealing than dull by sewers who sew on patterns (Shah, 2023). Embellishments give the sleeves a sense of sophistication and a focal point. Ruffles on sleeves or other parts are piled laces and or frill fabrics of the body (Morton, n.d.). The usage of ruffles on sleeves is reduced or enhances the wrist or shoulders. While puffed sleeves make the sleeves shape fuller by being assembled from the top to the bottom (Morton, n.d.). Puff sleeves give off a sense of motion and features. A sleeve that is exaggerated makes the garment stand out (Parent, 2023). Exaggerated sleeves creates a bold mission statement by changing the simple to an attention seeking garment.

Color in the fashion industry and in art is important because color connects with emotion. In the fashion industry, designers use a palette of colors in their collection to set a tone and to transform the look and texture of the garment (Byrne, 2023). Color translates the designer's personal style. In Figure 1, the garment created by Rudi Gernreich consisted of the color black and cream. The sleeves consisted of the color cream while the length of the dress from the torso to above the knee of the garment is black. The color black has many moods and its own spectrum on how it is reflected. The color black symbolizes strength, luxury, sophistication, sinister, fear, and sinfulness (Johnson, 2023). There are many emotions when one chooses the color black which makes them mysterious. The color cream is mostly connected with pure, grace, and luxury feels but also presents as one is sophisticated and enhances the garment (Braam, 2024). The color black and cream have some sort of connection such as elegance and sophistication. Tone in fashion are hues that are related within the family tree (Bryant, 2019). The tone of palette Figure 1 falls into is the neutral tone palette. One can see the shadows and shades under each tier of ruffles on the arm sleeves. The sleeves fall within the lighter value while the body of the garments falls into the darkest level of value.

Line guide and lead how the presentation represents itself (Bell & Ternus, 2002). In Figure 1, one can see the flow of the garment drooping vertically. However, another can see that there are horizontal lines between the tier of ruffles. Yet, another would claim that the horizontal line is correct but the lines between the ruffles are curved. Another would counter that claim and say that the lines are diagonal. The body of the garment gives the appearance an elongated look, while the sleeves give the arm a wide sight.

Rhythm is a movement where an element captures the focus from another element (Bell & Tetanus, 2002). As one sees the garment the main focus would be the sleeves. The body of the

garment is in the color black which can be set as a background for the sleeves to shine. The sleeves are in the color cream and have movement making one gaze gravitate to the sleeves. There is no movement of the dress, however, one may disagree and claim that they see the dress first before the sleeves.

A form that confines an area of the garment. There is more weight on the sleeves since there are more fabrics and layered ruffles on top of each other. There is height in the garment where the tip of the ruffles are shaped and tall. While the body dress height is straight making the height of one tall. The form of the garment is a vertical form where if one were to wear the garment their waistline would not be defined but their arms would be flattered.

Balance is an object that may be symmetrically aligned or the object is asymmetrical where there is unevenness (Bell & Ternus, 2002). There is a balance in Rudi Gernreich creation in Figure 1. The dress is vertically straight and the length of the dress is straight horizontally. The ruffled sleeves on both sides of the arms look to be identically the same. The sleeves have the same volume, shape, and size on both sides of the arm. The length of the sleeves falls on top of the wrist.

Contrast is defined as when there is an exact distinction while juxtaposition is when there is a difference in lines and forms (Bell & Ternus, 2002). One can see a contrast in the garment where the sleeves look like layered white foxglove flowers. The sleeves flares have their own forms and lines. While the dress looks like a solid block or black hole. The dress of the garment is simple but what makes the garment dynamic and unique would be the sleeves due to its extravagant look.

Dominance refers to an object that has authority over another (Bell & Ternus, 2002). The sleeves in Rudi Gernreich garment dominate the garment look due to its color and features.

Although, there are perspectives as others might think that the dress due to its dark color and in the center may be the dominance of the garments. However, in this gallery, Statement Sleeves, the sleeves and its ruffle are the main characters. The mannequin is in the color brown to not take away the focus of the sleeves but can give viewers an idea how the garments would look at one's appearance.

Proportion is a composition that relates to the size and scale of one's element (Bell & Ternus, 2002). The ruffle sleeves are larger which makes the arm look enlarged in width. A visitor may not find the garment to be a bit proportioned while the other may find the garment is proportional. The dress is proportionally balanced where it does not make the mannequin look wide. However, the shape of the body looks to be a rectangle shape.

Repetition refers to a thought that continues to repeat (Bell & Ternus, 2002). One can see that the ruffles repeat down the arm vertically. The ruffles are layered on top of each other but are not close to each other. The ruffles have enough space between each other to give the visitors a sight of flow. This style of garment does repeat in fashion where it can be used on dresses, skirts, and neck.

Texture is a visual or physical feel of a garment (Bell & Ternus, 2002). The texture of the dress is smooth and flat. The ruffles on the sleeves are smooth and flat. However, the ruffles and its layered position add texture to the looks of the garment. The surface of the garment does not shine which shows the garment does not have a sheen.

Statement sleeves have been in the fashion industry and in everyday life and will still continue to influence and exist in the future. In Elle, Hill mentioned that in the 19th century the length of the garments convention and that sleeves implement social status, strength, flavor, and one's nature (Bateman, 2024). While in the 1980s, sleeves were voluminous with expensive

fabrics. In the 1930s, the stereotypical sleeves were the shape of tubular where designers can customize the sleeves to make it their own style from the other designers (Barrett, 2024). The purpose of the sleeve is used to pair up with the seasons and temperature of that day. Fashion historians align sleeves usage to certain types of the year (Bateman, 2024). At some point in history, sleeves were not adjusted and were left untouched. Billowing sleeves appeared in recent years for the spring and the summer where it looks to be a pair of deflated balloons or airbags. Billowing sleeves allows for airflow within the arm but also modest covering the arm. Each era has their own trending statement sleeves that evolved over time.

Designers of statement sleeves deserve to be recognized and celebrated for their creation because of how innovative and historical the sleeves can be. Designers need to figure out the juxtaposition of the sleeve and see if they are able to match the garment (McKee, 2019). It is not easy to come up with when historical designers have already invented and imprinted their signature designs. Designers have to take the time to comprehend the construction of a garment, textile manipulation, and different types of techniques to stitch (Andrada, 2023). There needs to be precise planning that goes into creating statement sleeves to ensure the end result comes out as planned but to also impact the era.



Rudi Gernreich's numerous fashion-forward ideas—such as the topless “monokini” and designs for unisex clothing—often overshadow his creations inspired by the past. *Worn & Wearing* referred to this dress as a “medieval” look, but its sleeves are more reminiscent of the ruffled tiers of fabric found on some mid-nineteenth-century women’s dresses.

**Rudi Gernreich**  
Black and off-white wool dress  
1967  
The Museum at FIT, 86-136.30  
Gift of Ruth Ford

This is a version of Hubert de Givenchy’s “Bettina” blouse, named for the couturier’s premier model, Bettina Graziani. Givenchy designed the blouse for his debut collection in 1952. Its signature sleeve flourishes—likely modeled after styles worn by flamenco dancers—were widely copied.

**Givenchy**  
White cotton lawn blouse with broderie anglaise trim  
Circa 1952  
The Museum at FIT, 73.57.14  
Gift of Mr. Rodman A. Heeren

**Givenchy**  
White cotton lawn blouse with broderie anglaise trim  
Circa 1952  
Admire the intricate broderie anglaise trim on one of Hubert de Givenchy’s earliest designs.



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White cotton lawn blouse with broderie anglaise trim  
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Figure 1. Rudi Gernreich Black and off-white wool dress 1967



*Figure 2. People walking past the Museum of FIT*



Figure 3. Marilyn holding brochures in front of the Statement Sleeves gallery





*Figure 4. Marilyn photographed the untying the bow gallery*

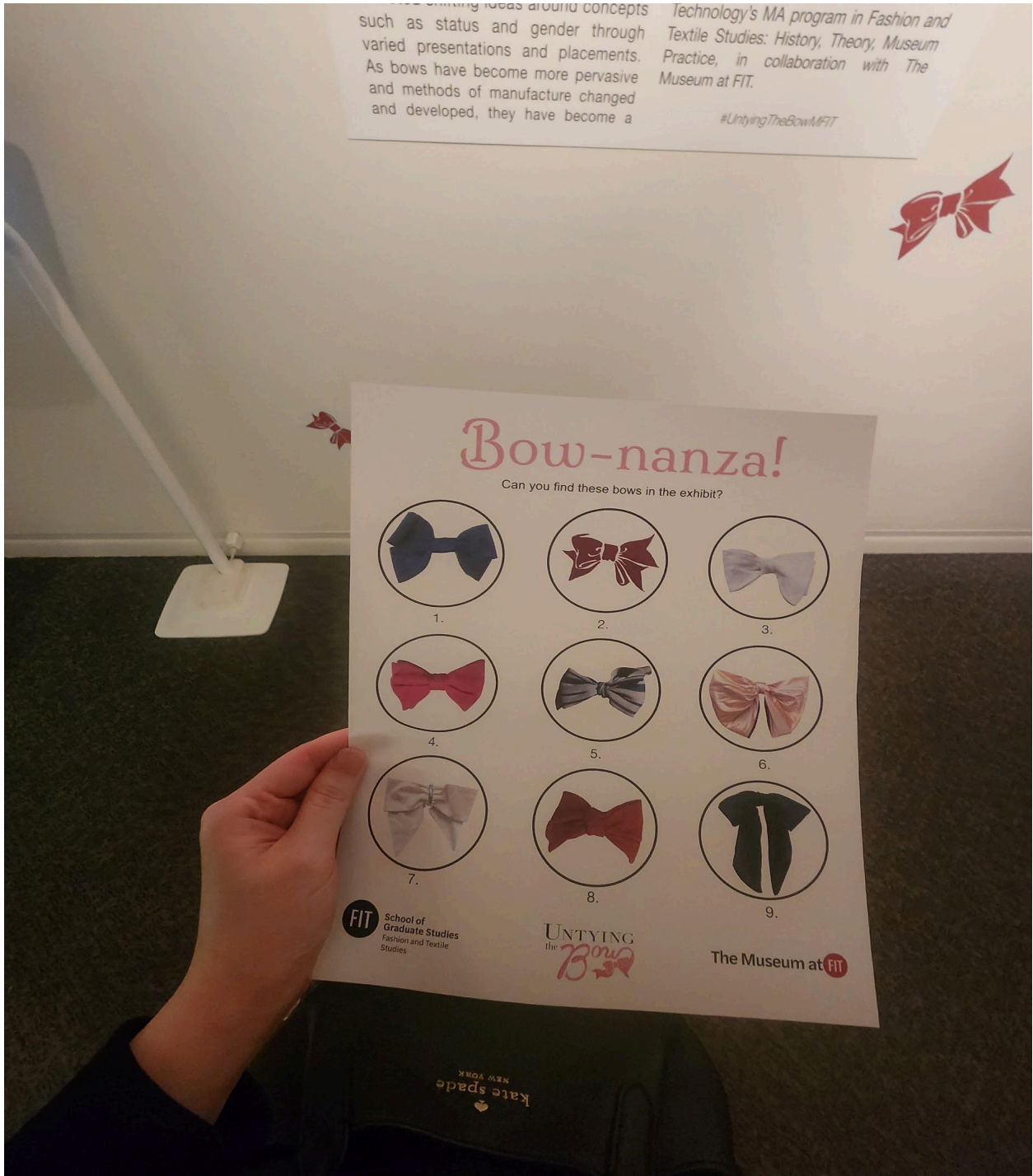


Figure 5. Marilyn photographed one of the handouts for the untying the bow gallery



*Figure 6. Marilyn photographed the Statement Sleeves Gallery*

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