

The Statement Sleeves Exhibition Midterm

Sandra Nicolas  
New York City College of Technology  
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Alyssa Dana Adomaitis, PhD  
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The statement sleeve is a garment that has sleeves that are unusually large or elaborate. According to Colleen Hill the curator of the “Statement Sleeves” Exhibition at the Museum at FIT “the concept of statement sleeves in fashion, is that they’re as exaggerated, embellished, or eye-catching sleeve styles that define a garment (Hill,2024).” Statement sleeves can be used to make a variety of different statements. They can be used to add drama and flair to an outfit, or they can be used to make a more subtle statement about the wearer's personality or style. Statement sleeves can also be used to draw attention to the arms or shoulders, or to create a more balanced silhouette. Designers often reinvent traditional sleeve styles such as bell, bishop, and raglan sleeves, incorporating new sizes, shapes, and embellishments. The history of dramatic sleeve styles can be traced back to ancient Egyptian and Renaissance eras, where sleeves were used to signify social status. Statement sleeves are a mode of self-expression and explore their role in reflecting fashion eras, trends, and personal style. This exhibit features over 70 examples of statement sleeves from the 18th century to the present, one of which is the 1970s multicolor checked cotton dress by Pauline Trigere.

The statement sleeve is a defining feature of the 1970s Pauline Trigere multicolor checked cotton dress. The sleeves are long and flared, with a dramatic bell-shaped split cuff. They are made of the same multicolored checked fabric as the dress, this creates a striking visual effect that draws the eye to the sleeves. The sleeves are also quite wide, which gives them a sculptural quality. They are not just functional, but also decorative. The sleeves are bold and display an eye-catching design that gives the dress a unique and distinctive look. The statement sleeves on this dress are a perfect example of how a sleeve can define a garment.

The different colors of the garment can convey different messages, and they can also be used to create different effects. The different colors featured are colors of the rainbow arranged in checked boxes to create a unique pattern, this creates a very bright, and contrasting effect. Starting with the tones and shading, the bold and colorful checkered pattern of the dress immediately captures attention. Each color segment blends seamlessly into the next, creating a dynamic visual effect. Hues ranging from sunny yellow to opulent purple create a visual symphony that brings a mass of feelings and associations. Each color holds its own symbolic weight: yellow radiates happiness and optimism, while orange exudes warmth and sociability. Red ignites feelings of passion and love, contrasting with the soft, sweet femininity of pink. Green invokes the tranquility of nature and the promise of growth, while blue offers a sense of calmness and serenity. Meanwhile, purple embodies notions of royalty and luxury.

The statement sleeve can be used to illustrate all eight elements of design. “The elements of design cover the basics like shape, color, space, form, line, value, and texture, which are crucial for putting together any visual piece (Masterclass, 2024).” Line, as a design element in clothing, holds significant potential for creating various visual effects. Whether vertical, horizontal, curved, or diagonal, each type of line carries distinct characteristics. Vertical lines, for instance, are adept at conveying height and can give the illusion of a taller, slender figure, exuding strength, and authority. Horizontal lines tend to emphasize width, resulting in a shorter, broader appearance, while also inducing a sense of calmness and serenity. Curved lines introduce movement and grace, infusing designs with femininity and fluidity. Diagonal lines, on the other hand, inject dynamism and excitement, instigating a sense of action and drama. The dress is a maxi-length dress, with a loose fit and a flowing A-line skirt. The dress has a V-neckline and

long, wide sleeves. The sleeves are split at the elbow, creating a cape-like effect. In the context of this garment, the strategic use of lines serves to elicit specific sensations. For instance, in a dress adorned with rainbow-colored stripes, the diagonal lines propel a sense of vibrancy and motion, while the vertical lines of the silhouette contribute to an impression of height and slenderness. This harmonious interplay of lines results in a visually striking and flattering garment that captures attention effortlessly.

Rhythm, as a design element, infuses a garment with a dynamic sense of movement and vitality. Achieved through repeated patterns, colors, or shapes, rhythm adds a captivating flow to the overall aesthetic. In this garment, rhythm is orchestrated through the repetition of a plaid pattern, composed of colorful squares arranged in a staggered formation. This arrangement generates a lively visual tempo, compelling the eye to travel across one square to the next, diffusing the garment with energy. The combination of these rhythmic elements causes a captivating sense of motion and vibrancy within the garment, elevating its visual appeal through a harmonious interplay of patterns, colors, and shapes.

Instead of creating form through a three-dimensional physical shape, designers create the appearance of form on a flat surface by using light, shadow, the appearance of an object's contours, negative space, and the surrounding objects around the subject matter. "Form pertains to the way that a shape or physical configuration occupies space (Masterclass, 2024)." The dress has a loose, flowing form. The A-line skirt and the wide sleeves create a sense of volume and movement. The dress is also quite long, which adds to its sense of fluidity. The garment has a

very sculptural feel to it because the fabric is draped and folded. This form is further emphasized using color, as the colors create a sense of depth and dimension.

Balance in design can be achieved through two main approaches: symmetrical and asymmetrical balance. Symmetrical balance, also known as formal balance, involves creating a mirror image where both sides of a design are identical or nearly identical, evoking a sense of stability and harmony. On the other hand, asymmetrical balance, or informal balance, maintains evenness by distributing visual weight evenly across the composition without mirroring each side exactly. This approach creates a dynamic and engaging visual tension while still achieving overall balance. The dress is an example of asymmetrical or informal balance. It is made of a lightweight, flowing fabric and has a fitted bodice. The skirt is full and flared, and it falls to the ground in a graceful sweep. The dress is trimmed with a thick belt that cinches the waist. In this dress, the bodice is fitted, and the skirt is full and flared. The bodice is also shorter than the skirt, which creates a sense of visual interest. The garment's matching multicolored belt cinches the waist and helps to create a sense of balance.

Contrast and juxtaposition are design techniques set to enhance visual interest in a garment. Contrast, characterized by sharp differences in elements, is showcased using different colors and patterns in the garment. This garment perfectly contrasts colors and patterns creating a captivating visual attraction, drawing attention effortlessly. Juxtaposition involves placing contrasting elements side by side to generate a fictitious visual effect. In this garment, juxtaposition is evident in a loose, flowing fit with a fitted bodice. Additionally, color blocking further enhances the rhythmic effect by juxtaposing solid areas of contrasting hues, intensifying

the visual contrast, and guiding the viewer's gaze seamlessly.

Dominance in design entails ensuring that one element stands out prominently, commanding attention within the overall composition. This element serves as the focal point, drawing the viewer's gaze and anchoring the design. The dominant element in this garment is the color. The bright, rainbow colors are eye-catching and create a sense of excitement. The color also creates a sense of unity, as all the colors are related to each other. The pattern of the dress is also important, as it creates a sense of movement and interest.

Proportion in fashion design refers to the harmonious relationship between the sizes, scales, and perceived "weight" of different elements within a garment. It involves carefully calibrating the dimensions of components such as the bodice, skirt, and accessories to achieve balance and coherence in the overall design. The dress is made up of a bodice, a skirt, and a sash. The bodice is fitted to the body, has long split sleeves, and has a V-neckline. The skirt is full and flared, and it falls to the ground. The sash is long and thick, and it is tied around the waist. The proportion of the different elements in the dress is used to create a sense of balance. The bodice is smaller than the skirt, and this helps to create a sense of visual interest. The sash is also smaller than the skirt, and this helps to create a sense of harmony. The proportion of the different elements in the dress is also used to create a sense of scale. The dress is made for a woman, and the size of the different elements is in proportion to the size of her body. This helps to create a sense of realism and believability.

Repetition is the repetition of a design element, such as a color, shape, or pattern, to create a sense of rhythm and unity. In this garment, the repetition of the rainbow-colored checks creates a bold and eye-catching effect. The checks are repeated in the same size and shape throughout the dress, creating a sense of uniformity. The repetition of the checks also helps to create a sense of movement, as the eye is drawn from one check to the next. The overall effect of the repetition of the checks is one of visual impact and cohesion.

Texture is the surface treatment or "feel" of a fabric. It can be visual or physical. Visual texture refers to the way the fabric looks, while physical texture refers to the way the fabric feels to the touch. The fabric of this garment is bright, rainbow-colored plaid. The plaid pattern is created by weaving together different colored yarns. The yarns are woven in a way that creates a slightly raised surface. This raised surface gives the fabric a nubby, textured feel. The texture of the fabric is also enhanced by the way it is cut and sewn. The dress is cut in a loose, flowing style. The sleeves are extra-long and split to the elbow, and the skirt is full and flared. This cut of the dress creates a soft, feminine silhouette. The fabric and the cut of the dress combine to create a garment that is both visually and physically textured. The dress is a unique and eye-catching piece that is sure to make a statement.

The statement sleeve, a timeless fashion staple, serves as a versatile canvas for making bold statements in attire. It transcends age and size, offering a means to inject personality into any ensemble. The evolution of the statement sleeve over time reflects shifts in societal attitudes, fashion trends, and cultural movements. Initially, statement sleeves emerged as a bold fashion choice, showcasing extravagance and opulence in attire, often associated with aristocracy or high

social status. “The Rational Dress Society, founded in London in 1881, aimed to promote practicality in women's clothing, particularly in response to the expanding rights and opportunities for women in the workforce at that time. By advocating for sensible attire, society aimed to accommodate women's evolving roles and activities in society (Hodin, 2024).”

women's clothing of the time was often impractical, restrictive, and uncomfortable, reflecting outdated societal norms and expectations. It's important to recognize that traditional women's clothing, with its corsets, voluminous skirts, and restrictive layers, hindered women's ability to fully engage in various aspects of life, including work, leisure, and physical activity. In response, The Rational Dress Society sought to empower women to lead more active, independent, and comfortable lives.

Today, designers continue to innovate with statement sleeves, showcasing an array of styles and colors to suit diverse tastes. Celebrating designers' ingenuity, statement sleeves elevate ordinary garments into extraordinary pieces, reflecting wearers' individuality and flair. “Today's era is dominated by mobile consumption, donning a statement sleeve offers a simple yet effective means to capture attention even on a small screen (Petrarca, 2024).” The manufacturing of a statement sleeve isn't a light skill to have, as designers are trying to make a name for themselves well diverse artists will draw inspiration through art and fashion before them. Embraced across ages and cultures, statement sleeves remain a symbol of the times, embodying the growing trend towards embracing uniqueness and self-expression in fashion. As designers push the boundaries of creativity, statement sleeves continue to reign as a timeless trend, enriching the fashion landscape with their vibrant charm and individualistic spirit.







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