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BUF 4900

Internship Midterm Essay Exam

Statement Sleeves: “Silver Metallic Lamé Evening Dress

Thierry Mugler’s “Silver metallic lamé evening dress” is one piece that stood out at The Museum of FIT’s exhibit “Statement Sleeves”. It is considered “one of the most visionary collections of the late twentieth century” according to The Museum at FIT (2024). The designer’s vision was that women would wear lame dresses that would include shoulder pads that were boasted and pleated flanges down to the arms. Although the dress was part of the Spirale Futruiste Collection for the fall of 1979, it looks as if one could still find a design like this being worn today. In modern times, wearing a shoulder pad symbolizes female strength, power, command, and capability (Bolton, 2024)

The color of the dress is a metallic silver. This is because lamé is a fabric that is woven or knit with threads made of metallic fiber. These fibers are then combined with natural or synthetic fibers such as nylon, spandex or silk. Since the dress was made with a pleating technique, this adds different dimensions one could see with the eye. It causes there dress to have different tones, shading and value. The value in this dress would be that it has a tint since it is a light color, rather than a shade meaning that it would have black on the dress (Adomaitis, 2024). The color of the lamé fabric used brings forward all of the elements that can be seen on the dress.

Throughout the entire dress, one can see the lines in the garment because of the pleating. Specifically in the sleeves, these lines run horizontally. This creates an illusion in the arms to appear wider. The horizontal line also diminishes the vertical effect, which also makes the wearer

appear less taller. (Adomaitis, 2024) Since these lines are usually meant to make one feel restful and calm, the use of it also contradicts itself since the sleeves are exaggerated making a bold statement rather than calm.

The rhythm usually leads the viewer's eye from dominant object to subordinate object (Adomaitis, 2024). In this dress, this could mean that one might feel that they cannot focus on just one part of the dress such as the sleeves, but also on the design around the waist. While both sleeves have the same rhythm by having the same pleating technique going in the same direction, the pleating made on the rest of the dress is different. The sleeves are identical and symmetrical to each other. They both are wider at the top and become more narrow at the wrists.

Mugler's even dress demonstrates different forms in around the garment. The form of the dress would refer to the volume, shape and fit of the dress (Scholastic, 2024). The shape of the dress would be in a v-line. The fit of the dress changes throughout different parts of the dress. For example, the sleeves would be loose at by the shoulders, and tighter around the hands. While the dress might feel form-fitting around the waist, hips, and thighs, it becomes loose at the bottom of the dress because of a drape.

Symmetrical or asymmetrical elements in a garment are what create it's balance. In this dress, there are symmetrical features that create a mirror image. The deep V-neck line and a gather in the center of the waist creates this mirror image illusion. The sleeves are the same size, color and shape. They both start and finish on the same parts of the arm.

Contrast is when one could find a sharp difference, lines or juxtaposition of different forms in a garment (Adomaitis, 2024). One could notice the juxtaposition by simply looking at the center of the dress to find the two different styles used. For this dress, this would be found in the fact that there are lines going in different directions throughout the entire dress. Since there is

a tied knot in the center, all lines begin from there and never connect. The sleeves strictly go in a horizontal line and separates themselves with the rhythm of the rest of the dress.

According to (Adomaitis, 2024), dominance in a garment are elements should controlling, and often times are the mannequin. Although the dress have many features, what makes the statement of the dress are the sleeves. A viewer's attention is taken away by how the sleeves are bigger than usual. The designer has done this by inflating and overemphasize the arms just with the use of a little more fabric in the shoulder. The mannequin used to display this dress also has its arms down which assist in demonstrating this better.

Proportion is a the relationship between the size, scale or weight among the elements (Adomaitis, 2024). While the length of the dress is long, the sleeves also appear long as they stop below the hips. Because of the exaggeration of the sleeves, the sleeves next the body of the dress look bigger than the entire dress. The size of these sleeves are considered to be long sleeves. The size of the entire dress would be considered a maxi dress.

A repeating or reiterating an idea or motif is another element in a composition of a garment (Adomaitis, 2024). Because the dress was made with a pleating technique, this can easily be identified. The pleating process allows for one single piece of fabric to have the same design. This could be seen in every folded part of the fabric in order to create the straight ironed lines on the dress. The sleeves also have a repetition in an idea for having the same exact design, size, color and length as each other with this pleating technique.

The texture of the fabric used, lamé, could be described as having a smooth but crisp texture. This is because this lamé fabric with two sides. While one side of the fabric is shiny, the other is a crepe texture. Lamé is also sheer, opaque, and lustrous. This fabric is lightweight and is usually used for garments that need drapes.

The exhibition “Statement Sleeves” influences one’s understanding of self-expression in a deeper way, and how it is used in fashion. When one hears of demonstrating their personality in their wardrobe, one might automatically think of the colors used. One might think of the type of clothing people like to wear because it suits how comfortable they need to feel, or how professional they have to look because of their status. Rarely so we ever think of this could also be thought about in sleeves and how the style of a sleeve can represent a certain time period one might enjoy dressing up in. As one can assume that someone might like to dress with that of a 70’s style clothing because of wearing flare pants, we could also see that in the use of wearing flared sleeves. Designers of the statement sleeves should be celebrated for putting an emphasis on the history of sleeves. Today, sleeves can be designed simply for trends in fashion, but historically they had different uses and meanings (The Museum at FIT, 2024). In the past, sleeves were designed to provide ease of movement. This would not be as important as it was then because of the barriers that have been broken in fashion to allow people to become more self-expressive with feeling comfortable in their clothing. It was not until the renaissance that sleeves became a fashion statement (Sterlacci, 2020).



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