

**Experimentation with an unconventional raw material as a form of
self-expression in fashion design.**

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(PROPOSAL)

Thesis/Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Baccalaureus of Technologiae in Fashion Design degree,
Department of Fashion and Surface design,
Faculty of Informatics and Design,
Cape Peninsula University of Technology

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Research Problem

Designing with hessian is considered to be an unfavourable selection of fabrics for a ladies clothing range.

1.2 Background to research problem

Context: The study within my context is one of a personal nature with regards to the suitable selection of fabrics for a ladies clothing range. I've always played around with the idea of designing a ladies clothing range using hessian as my fabric of choice, this however was not received well, it was considered by lecturers, my peers and family members, as an inappropriate selection of fabric for a ladies clothing range. This lead me into thinking that as a designer I am bound by design ideals which restricts my creativity as a fashion designer to explore and experiment.

Inspiration: I'm inspired by particular periods in history that have produced fashion that symbolises an expression of youthfulness and rebellion, where self expression is key, also where iconic designers have made their mark in fashion history. Roland Barthes (Barthes,2006) he refers to Freudian symbolism, "for here there is a subtle difficulty for all work on clothing: "how to give objective value to something which seems insignificant because it is experienced subjectively". I'll be incorporating hessian into all my garments. The hessian fabric symbolises liberation, freedom of self, my freedom of expression and choice.

I'm also inspired by the late Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel (Barthes,2006), with regards to her contribution to the fashion industry, Barthes refers to Chanel as a designer who does not write with paper and ink but with material, forms and colour, he also compares her as being rebellious like the "Grande Mademoiselle" whose nickname and function she borrows (Barthes,2006). The colour black ,besides the fact that it was her favourite colour, is reminiscent of Chanel's iconic" little black dress" (Mackrell,92).Today the colour black is generally associated to mourning and death, so I'll be incorporating this colour as an accent into my designs as an ode to Chanel's legacy, my iconic designer of all time.

1.3 Significance to Knowledge/Knowledge Gap

Chanel's successor Karl Lagerfeld produced a Spring-Summer range for 2009 at the Grand Palais, Paris (Mower,2009), Here he presents a ladies and men's range of clothing produced from hessian or better known as hopsack. I'll be expanding on his concept.

1.4 Topic Areas

Black - significance of the colour, what it meant to Chanel and the meaning it has today.

Flapper - the origin with regards to styling of 1920's.

Mini - the origin with regards to styling of the 1960's.

Burlesque -the origin with regards to styling as a contrast to the two decades.

1.4 Clarification of basic terms

- Unconventional: adjective: not conventional; not conforming to customary, formal, or accepted practices, standards, rules, etc. (Your dictionary,2010)
- Burlesque: synonym: usually associated with visual arts or visual effects in literary works, implies exaggeration of characteristic details (Dictionary Ref.2010)

Burlesque to mock the operas, plays and social habits of the upper classes in the 19th century (Kenrick,2003).

1.5 Objectives of the research

The aim of this research is to experiment with an unconventional raw material called hessian, I'll be incorporating this fabric traditionally known for it's non-fashionable quality into fashion design, to produce innovative eveningwear that symbolises a form of self expression and experimentation, the styling of these garments depicts the different eras of rebellion in fashion history.

1.6 Research Questions and sub-questions

Research Question

Can experimenting with an unconventional raw material like hessian form part of self-expression in fashion design?

Sub Questions

1. What is the relationship between self-expression and iconic design?
2. What unconventional raw materials are utilised in contemporary fashion today?
3. How can a fabric, perceived to be inappropriate for clothing, be used as a form part of self expression when creating women's wear?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Keywords

Inovation, expression, nonconformist, liberation, experimentation

2.2 Theoretical Underpinning

My theoretical underpinning which in particular forms part of a self expression by experimentation in design, this deals to a large extent with the iconic designer Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel's individuality and her contribution to the fashion industry as well as the Deleuze theory (Jeanes,2005) with regards to expression of design experimentation.

What Chanel gave to *haute couture* a look of classic chic. Her iconic designs form the basis of what is known today as modern fashion (Mackrell,92): the three-piece cardigan suit; and frocks, and the little black dress.Chanel produced more of a style than a fashion. Marcel Haedrich, editor-in-chief of *Marie- Claire* when he met Chanel in 1958, has written: 'she was herself 'a Chanel creation' (Mackrell,92) She was admired and copied for her innovative style of clothes and accessories. She claimed to have designed clothes first of all for her own requirements.

She was an innovator in textiles (Mackrell,92) this was confirmed by her introduction of jersey as a fashionable fabric. The name jersey in the sixteen century derived from a worsed made of wool from the Channel Island of the same name. Then by the late nineteenth century it was identified as a close-fitting yet elastic woolen that was likened to fine knitting. Sportsmen wore garments made of jersey and fishermen wore jersey sweaters. Chanel became interested in the jersey fabric in 1916. By this time the fabric was used mainly for hosiery and deemed unsuitable for haute couture by way of it's drab, beige colour and hard-to-handle weave. The textile manufacturer Jean Rodier hoped he would be able to use it for French sportsmen, but French athletes pronounced it to be too dry or too scratchy. Rodier was left with a large supply of his wool jersey lying unused. Needless to say Rodier was

surprised when Chanel not only showed an interest in it but bought his entire stock. It was exactly what she was looking for, a machine made knit. As she claims, In inventing jersey," *I liberated the body, I eliminated the waistline (which I brought back only in 1930) and created a new silhouette...To the great indignation of the couturiers, I shortened dresses.*" (Mackrell,92)

She had taken a humble material, a fabric predominately used by men or more precisely fishermen that even they themselves have shunned, and she turned it into a fashionable fabric. In the process Chanel accelerated the growth of the ready-to-wear industry for it was a fabric within the financial reach of the majority of women who wanted to dress fashionably but were not well off. The March 1917 issue of *Les E'legances parisiennes* had a fashion article illustrated three jersey suits designed by Chanel.

She also dramatically shortened hemlines which had an effect on hairstyles for only the very short, bobbed style suited Chanel's jersey suites

With reference to the Deleuzian perspective on creativity (Jeanes,2005). He explores creativity as an intellectual activity, with particular reference to philosophy, although also the arts and to a lesser degree the sciences and the creation of concepts. Deleuze argues that philosophers should not reflect on things; that mere representation alone imposes rules on our thinking and is inherently limiting (Deleuze,1994:135).

Instead Deleuze believes that what (good) philosophers actually do is create, by generating new concepts. His concern is to open us up to new powers of thinking, and it's power of becoming. This creative thinking is a freedom, although a freedom not entirely our own, for thinking is transformed by what is outside us and by chance events Deleuze looks to a form of thinking that strives for " production, mutation and creation....we-do philosophy to expand thought to it's infinite potential"

"Thinking is always experiencing, and what we experience and experiment with is always actuality, what's coming into being, what's new, what's taking shape" (Jeanes,2005). Deleuze substantiates the concept of experimentation in design as Chanel has so boldly done with regards to her jersey suites, and eventually what I'd like to achieve with my range of ladies clothing made from hessian, by Chanel using a fabric that was considered to be an unsuitable fabric for ladies clothing, this could be seen as a form of her self expression whereby she did not allow the opinions of fishermen for example, to deturr her from her own vision of experimentation and individualism.

3.Methodology

How can a fabric, perceived to be inappropriate for clothing, be used as a form of self expression when creating women's wear?

I'll be using hessian in all my garments, concentrating on three categories, depicting the different origins of iconic designs through fashion history where women took on a new sense of liberation and freedom of self, I will also simulate Chanel's little black dress by using dyed hessian as my final garment. With regards to the concept of using unconventional fabrics in a ladies clothing range in contemporary fashion design, I'm strongly influenced by a few designers work. Namely Roberto Capucci (Capucci,2001). He incorporates unconventional fabrics and design styles into his clothing ranges. He considers his work to be a study of the figure. His preparatory experimentation using materials and drawings are his studies of the female figure. In his dresses, his creations are so dazzling that it arouses wonder of a creative freedom that focuses on exploring and celebrating the endless possibilities of a form of invention and creation that includes the imaginative use of materials, an explosion of liberated forms. My other influential designer is Jean Paul Gaultier.

He quotes " *My fashion is a lot about projecting a strong, unique character to the outside world*" (Mcdowell,2000). Jean Paul Gaultier experiments with a number of fabrics mixing the conventional with the unconventional. He takes traditional luxurious evening materials like taffeta, satin, chiffon and tulle and teams them with non-status relaxed materials like crochet and knitting to create a new form of modern, youthful evening wear.

3.1Approach

The approach I'll be taking with regards to my range development is divided into three categories, depicting the different origins of iconic designs through fashion history where women took on a new sense of liberation and freedom of self.. In the first category I'll be concentrating on the miniskirt, By 1966 Mary Quant was producing short mini dresses and skirts that were set about thirty centimetres above the knee, known as the Chelsea Look. . In the second category I'll be concentrating on the the origin of the flapper, the name given by the Americans of 1920, Chanel's youthful,slender and boyish look,meaning women who rejected the pre-war Victorian image, for a daring youthful image and attitude.Art Deco styles of geometric shapes in glittering sequince and beads decorated flimsy flapper dresses (Dyer,2006:20). In the third category I'll be concentrating on the Burlesque aspect in the form of a tail added onto the skirt or dress as a contrast to the 1920's and 1960's.

Lastly I'll be simulating Chanel's little black dress with hessian that I've dyed in the appropriate colour as my final garment to the collection.

3.2 Data collection Methods

My data collection method is a Secondary method. The secondary method will be done through research via internet searches, online articles, fashion sites, books, journals and magazines.

4 Delineation of the research

This research will focus on using a raw material as a means of experimentation and self-expression in creating a ladies clothing range. My experimentation will focus on the use of hessian in my clothing range, I would also include a new craft that I have taught myself recently as an added component to self-expression through beading.

5 Significance of the research

This research will explore my freedom of choice, with regards to fabric selection when creating a clothing range. It defines my self-expression as a designer to explore and experiment.

6 Expected outcome, results and contributions of the research

The aim of the clothing range is that it would reflect a form of experimentation using a raw material. After doing the relevant research a youthful cocktail clothing range will be created. The end product will be a product of self-expression, and documenting my range process aswell.

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DECLARATION

I, Malecia Sylvester, declare that the contents of this dissertation/thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation/thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.



Signed

23/10/2010
Date

ABSTRACT

The study within my context is one of a personal nature with regards to the suitable selection of fabrics for a ladies clothing range. I've always played around with the idea of designing a ladies clothing range using hessian as my fabric of choice, not for any particular reason in mind just simply,...."that's what I felt like doing at the time", this however was not received well, it was considered by lecturers, my peers and family members, as an inappropriate selection of fabric for a ladies clothing range. This lead me into thinking that as a designer I am bound by design ideals which restricts my creativity to explore and experiment. Is it then not a possibility that I could set my own design ideal?

Given the negativity surrounding such a proposal, I chose to research this concept regardless, that is after all what research is about, exploration and experimentation.

I chose to follow in the footsteps of the late Gabrielle "CoCo" Chanel.

"In order to be irreplaceable one must always be different."

Chanel(icelebz.com,2009)

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- My Heavenly Father, for directing my path.
- Bryan Ramkilawan, for the support shown for this concept from inception to completion as well as the input given on the technical aspects during conceptualization.
- Maryna Bezuidenhout, for input given on the technical aspects during construction.
- Avryl Dahl, for the guidance given on the theoretical component for this degree.

DEDICATION

For my late father Ivan.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to produce fashion using an unconventional raw material. I will incorporate the hessian fabric traditionally known for its hard to handle weave and its non-fashionable quality into fashion design, to produce innovative eveningwear that symbolises a form of self-expression and experimentation. The Hessian fabric symbolises liberation, freedom of self, my freedom of expression and choice.

Research Question

How can experimenting with an unconventional raw material like hessian form part of self-expression in fashion design?

Sub Questions

1. What is the relationship between self-expression and iconic design?
2. What unconventional raw materials are utilised in contemporary fashion design?
3. How can a fabric, perceived to be inappropriate for clothing, be used as a form of self-expression when creating women's wear?

In Chapter Two, my theoretical underpinning deals to a large extent with the iconic designer Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel's individuality and her contribution to the fashion industry and the work of Roberto Carpucci in the 1960's. Chanel is well known for her iconic little black dress, and jersey suits. The work of Roberto Carpucci is also discussed with regards to his experimentation with materials and geometry. The theory by Deleuze (Jeanes,2005) is also discussed in this chapter. Deleuze looks to a form of thinking that strives for production, mutation, creation and the expansion on thought to its infinite potential (Jeanes,2005:3)

Thinking is always experiencing, experimenting and what we experience and experiment with is always actuality, what is coming into being, what's new, what's taking shape (Deleuze,1995:106)

In Chapter Three, I will outline the methodology, concentrating on era's depicting the different origins of iconic designs through fashion history where women took on a new sense of liberation and freedom of self, with specific reference to "Co Co" Chanel from the 1917's and Mary Quant in the 1960's.

Further reference will be made to the Burlesque era of the 1840's as a contrasting aspect. With regards to the concept of using unconventional fabrics in a ladies clothing range in contemporary fashion design today, I'm strongly influenced by a few designers, namely Jean Paul Gaultier's work in the 1990's (Mcdowell,2000).

Here Gaultier successfully experiments in one instance with denim and leather in his Spring/Summer collection 1990 and in another instance with wool in his Winter 1998-9 collection, both collections are set in an eveningwear range.

Further experimentation with an unconventional fabric has been done by Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel's successor Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel. Here Karl used hopsack in his collection in 2009 (Style.com,2009), however it would appear as though the hopsack has been treated before production, as apposed to my collection where I'll incorporate the hessian fabric in it's raw form excluding my final garment where the fabric has been stripped and dyed as an attempt to simulate the iconic little black dress which is synonymous with the Chanel brand.

Chapter Four deals with the product development. Here I'll discuss the difficulties I found when working with this fabric, also how I have managed to overcome these problems. Furthermore the design process will be explained with regards to the template I used to illustrate my garments, as well as an old craft that is self taught for example beading.

Here I've not only added the beading to the hessian as a form of my self-expression but I've experimented with the style of beading as well, which enhanced my contrasting aspect to the collection namely the burlesque aspect.

Here the beading is raised to form a three dimensional aesthetic, which will be elaborated on in this chapter.

Chapter Five concludes what I have accomplished in this research also my recommendations as to a further experimentation with this fabric with regards to other fabrics or methods that could be incorporated to this fabric as an accent, also the implications such an experimentation could have on the South African Economy.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework based on the hessian fabric and the theory of experimentation and self expression by Gilles Deleuze, also the concept of "style" which is the true result that emerges from our times, will also be unpacked with particular reference to the iconic designers Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel and Roberto Capucci.

What is Hessian?

According to the free encyclopaedia, Hessian is a woven fabric usually made from the skin of the jute plant or sisal fibres, it could also be combined with other vegetable fibres to make rope, nets and similar products (Wikipedia.org,2010). Hessian or burlap, is a dense woven fabric, it has been historically produced as a *coarse fabric*, but more recently it is being used in a refined state known simply as jute as an eco friendly material for bags, rugs and other products.

Hessian was first exported from India in the early 19th century. It was traditionally used as backing for linoleum, rugs and carpet. Hessian is often used to make sacks and bags to ship goods like coffee beans, these can be described as gunny bags in Europe. It is breathable and thus resists condensation and associated spoilage of the contents. It is also durable enough to withstand rough handling in transit; these properties have also lead to it's use for temporary protection of setting cement and concrete by the construction industry. Due to it's coarse texture, it is not commonly used in modern apparel. However, this roughness gave it a use in a religious context for mortification of the flesh, where individuals may wear an abrasive shirt called a *cilice* or "hair shirt" and in the wearing of sackcloth on Ash Wednesday.

Owing to it's durability, open weave, naturally non-shiny refraction, and fuzzy texture, Ghille suits are often made of hessian, Ghille suites are camouflaged suites designed to resemble heavy foliage or shrubs. It was also a popular material for camouflage scrim or combat helmets in World War II. Burlap scrim was also woven onto shrimp and fish netting to create large military camouflage netting.

2.2 Theoretical underpinning

What is the relationship between self-expression and iconic design?

The hessian fabric to me signifies a form of experimentation and self-expression. As a creative designer, I intend to be experimental to have the freedom to choose which materials I would like to use to create my garments, with reference to the theory of Deleuze (Jeanes,2005).

He explores creativity as an intellectual activity, with particular reference to philosophy, although also the arts and to a lesser degree the sciences and the creation of concepts. Deleuze argues that philosophers should not reflect on things; that mere representation alone imposes rules on our thinking and is inherently limiting (Deleuze,1994:135) Instead Deleuze believes that what (good) philosophers actually do is create, by generating new concepts. His concern is to open us up to new powers of thinking, and it's power of becoming. This creative thinking is a freedom, although a freedom not entirely our own, for thinking is transformed by what is outside us and by chance events Deleuze looks to a form of thinking that strives for "production, mutation and creation.....we-do philosophy to expand thought to it's infinite potential" (Jeanes,2005)

Thinking is always experiencing, experimenting, and what we experience, experiment with, is always actuality, what's coming into being, what's new, what's taking shape (Deleuze,1995:106)

With regards to experimentation, Deleuze and Chanel, had something in common, by following Deleuze it is worth exploring the suggestion that: "creating isn't communicating but resisting" (Deleuze,1995:143). The communication we propose should be resisted is that of 'common sense' and 'consensus sense' and 'consensus in modes of thinking' resisting creativity as currently construed. Perhaps through this resistance, through this 'active' thinking, through simply 'working' we can provoke new experiences and possibilities, and ultimately create something worthwhile.

Furthermore as Andre' Courrèges (Barthes,2004) states that Fashion does not interest me. I don't know what fashion is; what interests me is style: they are two completely different things.

Fashion is something superficial, a regular change, dependent on tastes, moods, which has nothing to do with real style.(Barthes,2004). What is style? Style is the true result that emerges from our times.

The difference between style and fashion is that which has a fluctuating value over time, gaining or losing value, coming in and going out is “fashion”. That which defies change in a pursuit of the timeless is “style” (Polhemus,1996)

2.3 Gabrielle “Co Co” Chanel 1917-1966

The late Gabrielle “Co Co” Chanel has a strong sense of her own personal style, with regards to her contributions to the fashion industry, I’m intrigued by Chanel’s rebellious streak as explained by Barthes (Barthes,2004) Barthes refers to Chanel as a designer who does not write with paper and ink but with material, forms and colour, he also compares her as being rebellious like the “Grand Mademoiselle” whose nickname and function she borrows (Barthes,2004).

What Chanel gave to *haute couture* a look of classic chic. Her iconic designs form the basis of what is known today as modern fashion(Mackrell,92) the three-piece cardigan suit; and frocks, and the little black dress.

Chanel produced more of a style than a fashion. Marcel Haedrich, editor-in-chief of Marie-Claire when he met Chanel in 1958, has written: ‘she was herself ‘a Chanel creation’ (Mackrell,92) She was admired and copied for her innovative style of clothes and accessories. She claimed to have designed clothes first of all for her own requirements.

She was also an innovator in textiles (Mackrell,92) this was confirmed by her introduction of jersey as a fashionable fabric.



Figure 2.1 Gabrielle “Co Co” Chanel
1917, Three jersey suits

The name jersey in the sixteenth century derived from a worsted made of wool from the Channel Island of the same name. Then by the late nineteenth century it was identified as a close-fitting yet elastic woollen that was likened to fine knitting. Sportsmen wore garments made of jersey and fishermen wore jersey sweaters.

Chanel became interested in the jersey fabric in 1916. During this time the fabric was used mainly for hosiery and deemed unsuitable for haute couture by way of its drab, beige colour and hard-to-handle weave.

The textile manufacturer Jean Rodier hoped he would be able to use it for French sportsmen, but French athletes pronounced it to be too dry or too scratchy. Rodier was left with a large supply of his wool jersey lying unused. Needless to say Rodier was surprised when Chanel not only showed an interest in it but bought his entire stock. It was exactly what she was looking for, a machine made knit.

As she claims, In inventing jersey, " *I liberated the body, I eliminated the waistline (which I brought back only in 1930) and created a new silhouette....To the great indignation of the couturiers, I shortened dresses*" (Mackrell,92)

She had taken a humble material, a fabric predominately used by men or more precisely fishermen that even they themselves have shunned, and she turned it into a fashionable fabric. In the process Chanel accelerated the growth of the ready-to-wear industry for it was a fabric within the financial reach of the majority of women who wanted to dress fashionably but were not well off.

The March 1917 issue of *Les E'le'gances parisiennes* had a fashion article which illustrated three jersey suits designed by Chanel. She also dramatically shortened hemlines which had an effect on hairstyles for only the very short, bobbed style suited Chanel's jersey suites, Chanel it is said, keeps fashion on the edge of barbarism all the more to overwhelm it with all the values of the classic order: reason, nature, permanence, the desire to charm and not to surprise; people are pleased to see Chanel in the pages of the Figaro newspaper where she occupies, alongside Cocteau, the fringes of polite culture.

Chanel's inventive spirit and her instinctive response to the sense of touch is not surprising that she would work with a very magical fabric, *cire' satin*, in combination with fur, known for its tactile qualities.



Figure 2.2 Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel
1918, Cape(mackrell,92;49)

In about 1918 she designed a three-quarter length cape made of *cire'* satin trimmed with a high fox fur collar (Mackrell,92;49). Lined in brown silk crepe, this garment bears the label Gabrielle Chanel Paris and the couture number 14000. The *cire'* process involves treating a fabric with wax, heat and pressure and applied to satin produces a lustrous, smooth, shiny surface.

Cire' satin is the material most associated with the fantasies of the 1930's, yet here Chanel has successfully experimented with it so much earlier. Her *cire'* satin cape gives the effect of liquid drapery it's sensual quality highlighted by swirl of fur.

Chanel being Chanel, went back to her roots in 1930, creating an evening ensemble with such attention to detail that it was considered to be a perfect example of her little black dress for the discerning eye of the 'poor little rich girl' of the time.

Who were the 'poor little rich girls' of the 1930's with the means to buy it?, by 1932 Chanel halved her prices. Fashion in the 1930's was also about 'the new economy' as British Vogue called it (Mackrell,92).

Chanel's favourite was black sequence as shown in (Fig 2.3)



Figure 2.3 Sequined evening coat, Chanel, 1930's (Mackrell, 92:50)

After her return in 1954 Chanel developed her little black dress. These black dresses have a mystique, and almost dreamy quality about them, perfect for the haunting quality of the *novelle vague* films. The enduring popularity of Chanel's post-war little black dress is attested to by the fact that leading fashion designers still include it in their collections.

The little black dress is considered to be an iconic piece to the Chanel empire.



Figure 2.4 Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel 1960, The little black dress (Mackrell, 92:77)

American Vogue announced 'here is a Ford signed Chanel, the frock that all the world will wear' (Mackrell,92), by predicting that her little black dress would become a world-wide uniform for women, and by comparing it with the massed produced Ford car, it recognised the beginning of a standardization in fashion.

Henry Ford's philosophy: "*You can have it in any colour, as long as it is black*" (Mackrell,92). Today black dresses in general is considered a must have in any woman's wardrobe, same is said for a pair of blue jeans and a white tee. It is then safe to assume that the legacy of Chanel's little black dress lives on in the wardrobes of every woman today, making her an iconic designer of her time as well as ours. Chanel has received much acclaim for her iconic designs since the 1920's. Traditionally black was associated with mourning or with the colour of servants clothes, "Co Co" elevated it into a popular/fashionable colour, and her styling was also innovative.

In keeping with her depth of knowledge about fabrics, and instinctive flair for using them, Chanel in 1966 designed a suit in the unusual material, silk *cloque*' (Mackrell,92;75)



Figure 1.5 Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel 1966, Ivory textured silk *cloque*' suite (Mackrell,92;75)

Derived from the French word meaning blistered, *cloque*' denoted a fabric with a raised and irregular surface. The collar of the jacket is small and turned down and stitched in rows of floss silk, a decorative device that gives the suit a fine, light, downy touch. The skirt has a crossover front and inset waistband, it included a short skirt as it was the period of the mini-skirt style.

With her death in 1978 her successor Karl Lagerfeld has revolutionised Chanel into the twentieth century still in keeping with the Chanel style. Concentrating on the most successful periods of her life, from the 1920's to the 1960's, I've noticed a similarity between these two decades, that being of a ready-to-wear aspect, the designs were aimed at a more youthful market and that of an emerging shortened hemline, ironically enough a shortened hemline was not a Chanel favourite. What I have come to realise in this chapter is the significant role Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel played in the fashion industry. Her iconic pieces, her iconic styling and her ability to experiment and express herself through the innovative use of materials. I would like to achieve this in my range of youthful cocktail wear, in keeping with her *impeccable craftsmanship and skill*.

2.4 Roberto Capucci 1966

I am also drawn to the designer Roberto Capucci (Capucci,2001) his work has a sense of a timeless creativity.

"When I design, I am freed of all my fears and there are moments when I feel as if I have been drugged with the joy of creativity" (Capucci,2001)

He feels that experimentation is a necessary aspect of an artist. What is typical of Capucci is his eccentric expression in forms and materials that he uses to create what are now historically recognised as "sculptural dresses". His work is based on continual, spontaneous experimentation with materials. Capucci devoted himself to the invention of women's clothes.

"You must always feel free to do what you want" (Capucci,2001)

What is modernity? What is modern fashion? It is the creation of a personal vision. This is why Capucci's timeless designs are perfectly modern. They escape "the whip and scorns of time" and remain icons. In his dresses, the luxury is so dazzling that it arouses a creative freedom not influenced by financial restraints or marketing strategies that focuses on exploring and celebrating the endless possibilities of a form of invention and creation.

This includes the understanding and imaginative use of materials, an explosion of liberated forms, and the creation. Capucci's designs of the mid-Sixties gave a tangible sense to the expression "new textiles" within an aesthetic in which the fabrics, whatever their origin, were the substance of a vision.

The two famous dresses created by Capucci in 1966 was firstly a veil of plastic trimmed with white grosgrain (Fig 2.6) and the other made from white cotton lined with transparent plastic with white embroidered inlays (Fig 2.7), these remain a unique and comprehensive lesson in style today.



Figure 2.6 Roberto Capucci 1966, Geometry and Experimentation (Capucci,2001;59)



Figure 2.7 Roberto Capucci 1966, Material Experimentation (Capucci,2001;58)

SUMMARY

Both designers namely Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel and Roberto Capucci, have proven to be innovators in textiles. Chanel with her suits made from jersey knit, her cire' cloak and her cloque' suit. The same can be said for Roberto Capucci with his experimentation in Geometry and materials namely plastic and grosgrain which still remains a unique and comprehensive lesson in style today. These designers have shown me that an experimentation with unconventional fabrics is not only possible, but worth the experimentation, I am not only motivated to do so, but inspired as well.

CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate my styling approach with reference to the 1920's and 1960's iconic styles, these two decades are similar with regards to it's ready to wear styling of ladies garments and that of an emerging shortened hemline, as a contrast between the two decades I'll introduce a burlesque aspect. I'll also investigate how current designers are using unconventional fabrics in their clothing ranges today, namely Jean Paul Gaultier and Karl Lagerfeld.

What unconventional raw materials are utilised in contemporary fashion design?

3.1 Burlesque 1840

In contrast to the simple and restrained styling of design catering to a younger and more modern market, which can be associated with the 1920's and the 1960's, is a more flamboyant style namely Burlesque.



Figure 3.1 Burlesque 1840's,
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/burlesque.aspx>

In the 1840's through to the 1960's, burlesque at it's best was a rich source of music and comedy that kept American audiences laughing. Some sources try to describe burlesque in a mantle of pseudo-intellectual respectability. It involved transgressive comedy and songs, but

the primary attraction of burlesque was sex, in the form of humour and immodestly dressed women.

Although many dismissed burlesque as the tail-end of show business, with regards to styling it literally is the incorporation of a tail to a skirt or dress. Its influence reaches through the development of popular entertainment into present (musicals101.com). Burlesque's principle legacy was that of the role of the American woman on stage and later influenced her role on the screen. The very sight of a female body not covered by the accepted costume of the bourgeois respectability forcefully if playfully called attention to the entire question of the "place" of women went to great lengths to hide their physical forms under bustles, hoops and yards of frills, the idea of young women appearing in tights in public proved to be inappropriate(musicals101.com). At first the American press praised burlesque to be "indecent" only made the form more popular (Kenrick,2003)

3.2 The Flapper 1920



Figure 3.2 Joan Crawford 1928

http://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_6j7tL74iFIO/R69ry4ePcnI/AAAAAAAABgc/x8aI4QDlv34/s200/joanie.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.movietone-news.com/2007_11_01_archive.html&usq=FM9qZvw_mPQgNjHDgSIU_-JFwo=&h=200&w=131&sz=9&hl=en&start=15&zoom=1&itbs=1&tbnid=IQ75Xfha6gDgCM:&tbnh=104&tbnw=68&prev=/images%3Fq%3DJoan%2Bcrawford%2Bposes%2Bagainst%2Bart%2Bdeco%2Bstyle%2Bbackdrop%2Bin%2B1929%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DG%26gbv%3D2%26tbs%3Disch:1

The 1920's was known as the era of the "flapper" made famous by "Co Co" Chanel's styling of these dresses. Flapper's did not truly emerge until 1926. Flapper fashion embraced all things and styles modern of that period.

A fashionable flapper had short sleek hair, a shorter than average shapeless shift dress, a chest as flat as a board, wore make-up and applied it in public, smoked with a long cigarette holder, exposed her limbs and epitomised the spirit of a reckless rebel who danced the nights away in the Jazz Age (mucicals101.com)

Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel worked in neutral tones of beige, sand, cream, navy and black in soft jersey fabrics and cut with simple shapes that did not require corsetry or waist definition. They were clothes made for comfort and ease in wear, making them revolutionary and modern. To be set free from corsetry and wearing simplified clothing modern women were able to indulge in sports. Soon swimming, golf and tennis along with keeping fit were the passions of young ladies. Shorts became acceptable to wear for cycling and for skating, normal dresses were roomy enough for movement. The fashionable modern women of the twenties unlike their Edwardian laced and boned mothers truly belong to the twentieth century (Kenrick,2003)

3.3 The Mini Skirt 1960

The 1960's was the era of the mini skirt, In 1965 she had taken the idea from the 1964 designs by Courrèges the shorter styles appealed to her and she made them even shorter for her boutique Bazaar. She is rightly credited with making popular a style that had not taken off when it made it's earlier debut, by 1966 Mary Quant was producing short waist skimming mini dresses and skirts that were set about thirty centimetres above the knee.



Figure 3.3 Mary Quant 1966

http://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://www.avizora.com/publicaciones/la_mujer_y_su_mundo/imagenes/0040_minifalda_mary_quant_09.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.avizora.com/publicaciones/la_mujer_y_su_mundo/textos/0040_minifalda_mary_quant.htm&h=408&w=519&sz=43&tbnid=JVLB5hCtA3b2bM:&tbnh=103&tbnw=131&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dmary%2Bquant&hl=en&usq=__8gL2bkmZ2gnwn8z86Xk7rf0ggAl=&sa=X&ei=hvo-TPf08tKcOMSrJwH&ved=0CB0Q9QEwAA

Quant found London girls seeking newness or the latest look and fashion, to be more than willing to try her new daring short mini skirt. The fashion trend took off because it was so different and in order to wear it well you needed to be youthful to get away with an outfit that was so controversial particularly among adults. The Quant style was soon known as the Chelsea look. The shapes Quant designed were simple, neat, clean cut and young. They were made from cotton gabardines and adventurous materials like PVC similar to that used in raincoats. The fashion mini skirt became one of the icons that symbolised this era (Kenrick,2003)

3.4 Incorporation of an Unconventional Fabric 1999

In order to execute three iconic design approaches using an unconventional fabric, whilst still in keeping with Chanel's impeccable styling, to eventually produce a range of youthful cocktail wear, I've researched the work of Jean Paul Gaultier as to how he implemented an unconventional fabric into his evening gowns.

He has never failed to produce collections of total originality that inspire as much as they shock, to such a degree that he has achieved the ultimate accolade of becoming a household name across the globe. It is often forgotten that Gaultier is one of the most accomplished and consistent creative talents in Paris. Colin McDowell's frank and open exploration of Gaultier reveals one of the most creative minds working in fashion today (Mcdowell,2001)

Gaultier experimented with knits as Chanel has done in previous years, but he incorporates them in a modern way as shown in (Fig 3.4) and (Fig 3.5)



Figure 3.4 Jean Paul Gaultier 1999
Winter 1998-9(Mcdowell,2001:49)



Figure 3.5 Jean Paul Gaultier 1999
Winter 1998(Mcdowell,2001:92)

Gaultier uses the past as inspiration only as a jumping-off point for the present, one of his designs shown in (Fig 3.6) shows an evening gown made totally up-to-date in denim feathers. The other form of experimentation on his part was the evening dress made from leather as shown in (Fig 3.7) Jean Paul Gaultier approaches fashion in ways uniquely his own (Mcdowell,2001)



Figure 3.6 Jean Paul Gaultier 1999 Spr/Sum 98-99(Mcdowell,2001:63)

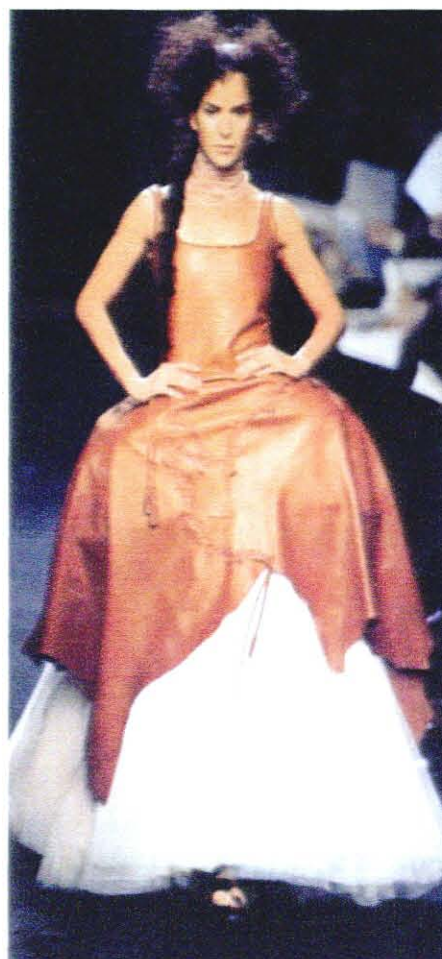


Figure 3.7 Jean Paul Gaultier 1999 Spr/Sum 98-99(Mcdowell,2001:63)

The same could be said for Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel's successor, Karl Lagerfeld. Karl revolutionised the Chanel brand into the twentieth century, still in keeping with her unique and iconic elegant styling, as shown in (Fig 3.8), (Fig 3.9) and (Fig 3.10). Karl is synonymous for his couture skill and unbridled imagination. He continues to produce delightful and witty designs.



Figure 3.8



Figure 3.9



Figure 3.10

Karl Lagerfeld 2009 (CHANEL) http://www.style.com/fashionshows/complete/slideshow/S2010TRW-CHANEL?event=show1982&designer=design_house22&trend=&iphoto=67

SUMMARY

This is how unconventional raw materials are utilised in contemporary fashion design today. These garments I see as bold and expressive, they depict the designers own unique flair to a fabric that would be perceived as being inappropriate for certain settings namely, cocktail or evening wear.

I've also discussed the styling approach to the cocktail range shown in Chapter 4, still in keeping with Chanel's iconic style of a chic and elegant look.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine and discuss my product development, which relates to my sub problem three. Initially what I'd like to achieve, is a comprehensive range of cocktail wear made from the hessian fabric as my unconventional fabric of choice. I have also incorporated another form of my self expression on the hessian fabric through beading.

How can a fabric, perceived to be inappropriate for clothing, be used as a form of self expression when creating women's wear?

I chose the hessian fabric as I've drawn a similarity to the fabric and myself, that being that I have observed that we both have a tendency to rub people up the wrong way. The hessian fabric has a rugged and abrasive quality, and I chose to place this fabric in a conventional setting, namely a cocktail setting.

Through experimentation and my self expression reflected in the use of an unconventional fabric and beading, I'd like to illustrate the following, a style that is closely equivalent to the standard set by Chanel, and a chicness that I have come to appreciate from her as my iconic designer of all time.

Chanel's influence is strongly apparent in my collection, through workmanship which has a classic line and an heir of simplicity, and the colour black as an accent. The colour being her favourite, and reminiscent of her little black dress, it was meant as the fashion ideal: a perfectly simple, yet sexy object (vintagetextile.com,2010). Her bold and innovative way of thinking, which contributed to her success in a business dominated by men at the time.

4.1 Obstacles and Solutions

On the production of my collection of youthful cocktail wear I've come across many obstacles and in doing so I needed to find solutions to these problems to meet my objectives.

4.2. Fabric Complications

One of my primary objectives of this research is to explore and experiment with hessian, I have worked hard and planned the process well with regards to managing the fabric and controlling it to transform this material into a cocktail range that is sophisticated, classic yet edgy and sexy. After careful examination of the fabric as part of my preliminary process I discovered that the fabric as part of my preliminary process I discovered that the fabric is prone to a considerable amount of snagging, unravelling and irregularities in the weave.

4.3 Preliminary Process

In order to overcome these obstacles, I chose to highlight any flaws in the fabric with a black marker as seen in (Fig 4.1) and (Fig 4.2)

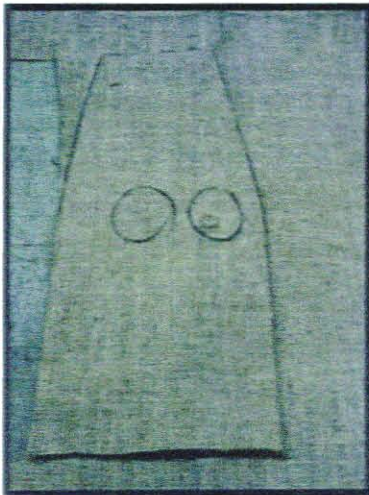


Figure 4.1 Fabric Marking



Figure 4.2 Fabric Marking(enlarged)

As all flaws are clearly marked it is then easier to place pattern pieces strategically. The second obstacle I faced was the fabric's innate ability to unravel or fray, to overcome this obstacle I chose in one instance to use the frayed edges as an aesthetic, as seen in (Fig 4.3) and (Fig 4.4)

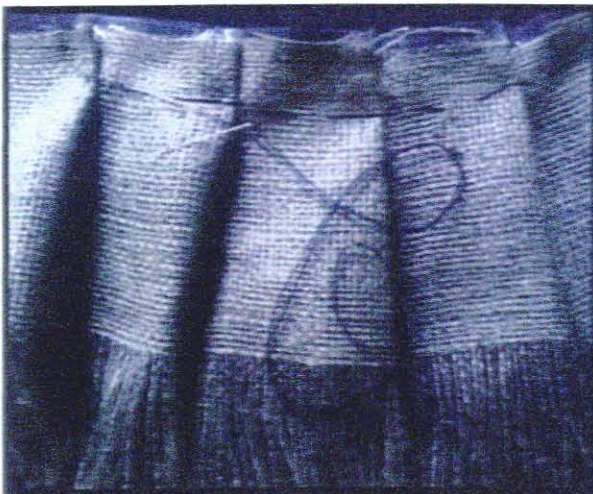


Figure 4.3 Gathered Fray



Figure 4.4 Gathered fray with tulle

4.4 Practical Methodology

The approach I have adopted to this research is that of a process research; meaning that it is experiential, experiential, experimental, and emergent. This has allowed my theoretical and practical work to develop fluidly and to allow my research to run its course from start to finish in an evolving and developmental manner.

4.5 Design Process (illustration/boards)

The three categories with regards to my styling approach with reference to the 1920's and 1960's iconic styles and the burlesque of the 1840's as a contrast to the two era's. I drew my inspiration for my illustration boards from design websites namely www.chanel.com , www.chanelworld.com/history.htm , www.history.com , and browsed through the Chanel web pages and visuals, I tried familiarising myself with her styling approach. The model I chose to use in my illustrations is a Chanel sketch done by Illustrator Steven Broadway (2010). The illustration appealed to me as it is youthful and trendy.

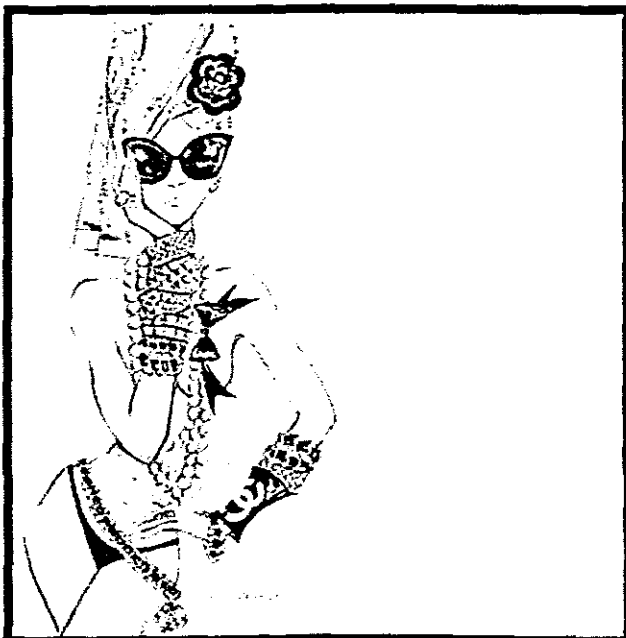


Figure 4.5 Illustrator: Steven Broadway, March 2010

http://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_ZQiuTmUIQ5I/S4yp70jX5KI/AAAAA AAAAz8/zEvIK5rE3uY/s400/Brooke%2BHagel-fashion%2Billustrator-steven%2Bbroadway-chanel-sketch.jpg&imgrefurl=http://fabulousdoodles.blogspot.com/2010/03/illustrator-steven-broadway.html&usq=beaWc1choQyLQnHxz_qaT5xAE5M=&h=400&w=400&sz=29&hl=en&start=178&zoom=1&itbs=1&tbnid=Z3kM5KzSIBtSVM:&tbnh=124&tbnw=124&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dchanel%2Bsketches%26start%3D160%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26gbv%3D2%26ndsp%3D20%26tbs%3Dis ch:1

4.6 Craft/Beading

I've added a craft to my garments in the form of beading. Beading is known as an old craft, seeing as how I've only recently taught myself this process I thought it to be a perfect opportunity to implement it in this instance as it would form part of my self expression and simultaneously giving this craft a youthful appeal.

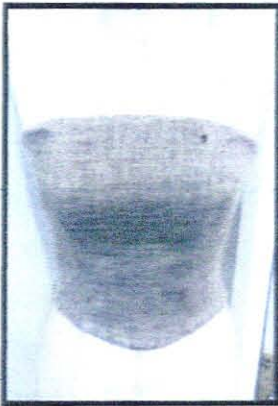


Figure 4.6 Hessian Corset



Figure 4.7 Corset & Beading



Figure 4.8 Beading with wire



Figure 4.9 Side view of beading



Figure 4.10 Front view of beaded wire
Detail

From the earliest times, beading has been used as a form of decoration (Giltsoff,1971) both the primitive and more advanced civilizations chose to adorn themselves and their possessions to achieve a richer surface than the original. In Europe during the nineteenth century, this craft became really popular, when all manner of things were given the added embellishment of bead work. As bead embroidery is an expensive craft, serving no real purpose other than aesthetics, or decoration, we are more selective with our embellishments today. It is for this reason that I chose to source my beads from Beads for Africa in Parden Island, Cape Town, as buying in bulk served my needs and purpose adequately.

I chose to re-create in my own personal way, the ancient art of 'surface enrichment', this basically means that it would aid me in giving the garment an exclusive quality and increasing the value of a fabric perceived as being dull, dreary and un-interesting. Firstly I took into consideration the weave of the fabric, It's a 1/1 weave, meaning that it's a basic weave which is understandable as the initial purpose of this type of construction was for an industrial purpose and not an aesthetic one. With the yarns woven so loosely, it caused some concern with regards to the size of the beads and the fact that the beads might sink through the weave and be caught between the fabric and it's lining, as all garments are fully lined. I lined the garments with a black poly cotton lining, I chose this as it works well for absorption purposes. Taking that fact into consideration I opted for wire, the beads are strung on wire first, then the beaded wire is bent into my desired shape or design and every second or third bead is reinforced onto the fabric with a double tack stitch. When my desired shape is in place the interior of the design is filled with sequence, and secured with a single bead in the centre of each sequence. This would then serve as my "flat beading", however with the raised designs or 3d aesthetic, I basically followed the same step up until the point of securing every second or third bead to the fabric, here I used tulle, lace and leather, the wire is twisted at the ends as seen in (Fig 4.11), my fabric is cut in the exact shape, and the fabric is secured with a tacking stitch in between every bead as seen in (Fig 4.12)

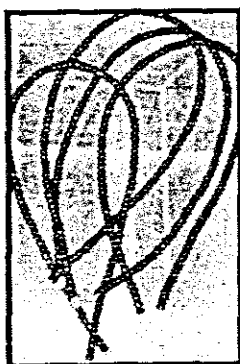


Figure 4.11 Beads on wire with twisted ends

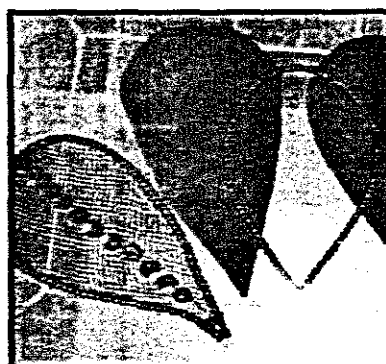


Figure 4.12 Fabric cut-outs and secured to beads

4.7 Design 1 (Burlesque 1840's)



Figure 4.13 Fashion Illustration:
Burlesque 1840's

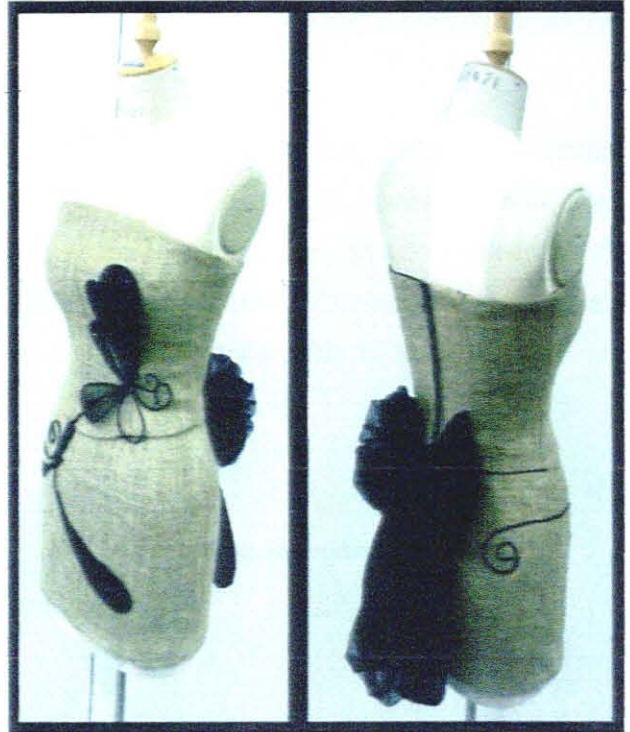


Figure 4.14 Fashion Garment

The burlesque era was during a time where the French plays were mocked by theatre goers, it was referred to as burlesquing the plays. In fashion this phenomenon was reflected by the incorporation of a tail to a dress or skirt.



Figure 4.15 Schonbrunn Palace
2008

http://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://photos.viennalarouge.com/other/smalledel.jpg&imgrefurl=http://viennalarouge.org/FAQ.htm&usq=_tmiRynZ7by1C4P8TRyvKk9FLAOo=&h=530&w=330&sz=65&hl=en&start=50&zoom=1&itbs=1&tbnid=mLHlyU4_nWKCJM:&tbnh=132&tbnw=82&prev=/images%3Fq%3D1840%2527s%2Bburlesque%2Bcostume%26start%3D40%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26gbv%3D2%26ndsp%3D20%26tbs%3Disch:1

With regards to the approach I have taken to this era is basically unchanged, by the incorporation of tulle in the form of a bow, I'd like to simulate the burlesque tail to a mini skirt, still in keeping with Chanel's iconic style, however still giving me the freedom to experiment further as I have chosen this era as my contrast.

Where my self expression with the beading is concerned, I chose not to do a conventional style, but to raise the outlines with beads strung on wire. This method proves successful as it gave me the perfect shape. It also gave me the extended opportunity to add different fabrics to the bead design in itself, for example the tulle, lace and leather. This was highly enjoyable for myself as I could explore with different fabrics as further accents to my final designs.

4.8 Design 2 (The Flapper 1920's)

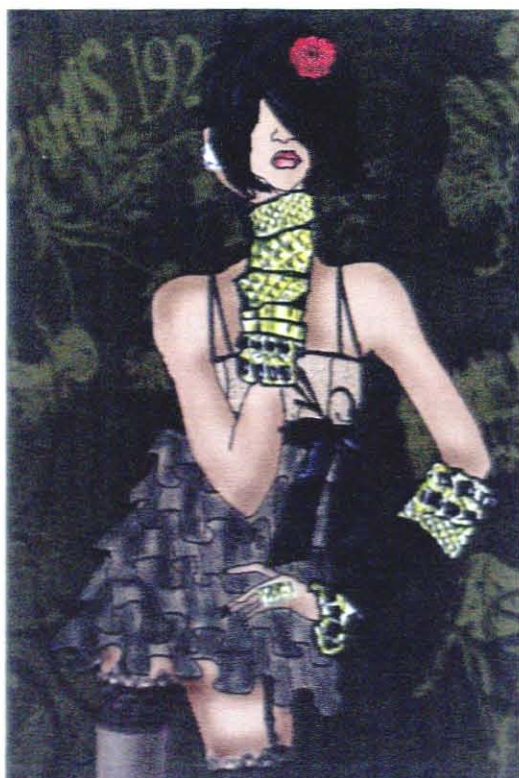


Figure 4.16 Fashion Illustration: The Flapper 1920's



Figure 4.17 Fashion Garment

The Flapper dress was designed in an era where young teenagers rebelled against their parents and society; this followed a shapeless silhouette, followed by continuous layered frills or fringes.



Figure 4.18 Deborah
[slatestrant.blogspot.com/2010 04 01](http://slatestrant.blogspot.com/2010_04_01_archive.html)
 ar...(April 2010)

http://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_8uCeLmSOjzE/S8SnNS7d8VI/AAAAAAAFs/vYP1-dA-iA/s1600/a_flapper.jpg&imgrefurl=http://deborahslatestrant.blogspot.com/2010_04_01_archive.html&sq=4UyA6sJ6MpipFEpF2kDNZA8Jtts=&h=481&w=316&sz=50&hl=en&start=13&zoom=1&um=1&itbs=1&tbnid=W0JitBTvPvqT4M:&tbnh=129&tbnw=85&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dflapper%2Bdress%2B1920%2527s%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26tbs%3Disch:1

The way I approached this era was to include a tapered waist as the hessian fabric already has a bag-like look and feel, by tightening the waist area I've achieved a chic like appeal, however the added black layered tulle creates the illusion of the shapeless dress from the lower bust area to just above the knee.

4.9 Design 3 (The Mini Skirt 1960's)



Figure 4.19 Fashion Illustration: The
 Mini skirt 1960's



Figure 4.20 Fashion Garment

The 1960's was the era of the mini skirt, the shapes designed were simple, neat, clean cut and young. My approach to this era was simplistic, chic and elegant. The added incorporation of the tulle gathered together to form a pom-pom like fringe, creates the feel of a playful and youthful look.



Figure 4.21
Sophie(2010)diaryofayoungdesigner.blogspot

http://www.google.co.za/imgres?imgurl=http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_6u2T5u0E-dM/ShVzhrtiVvi/AAAAAAAAAb8/kf9iOQL24sU/s320/miniskirt1.jpg&imgrefurl=http://diaryofayoungdesigner.blogspot.com/2009/05/history-of-mini-skirt-dress-summer-2009s.html&usq=__GA8w8VWLHalBBpSyip6W-tfLkXQ=&h=320&w=247&sz=28&hl=en&start=28&zoom=1&um=1&itbs=1&tbnid=P_50FZ6HuBpsdM:&tbnh=118&tbnw=91&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dthe%2Bmini%2Bskirt%2B1960%2527s%26start%3D20%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DN%26ndsp%3D20%26tbs%3Disch:1

4.10 Design 4 (The Little Sack Dress)



Figure 4.22 Fashion Illustration, The Little Sack Dress



Figure 4.23 Fashion Garment

In an attempt to replicate Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel's iconic, little black dress, I needed to dye the fabric in order to achieve the iconic black dress colour as seen in (Fig.4.22), here the garment is merely in it's dyed state and no embellishment is added as yet. In order to achieve the garment to it's dyed state, I stripped the Hessian first, thereby removing it's natural colour and some of it's impurities. This was done by using household bleach as seen in (Fig 4.23).



Figure 4.24 Dyed Hessian

What I've observed during this process is the following; apart from a strong ammonia smell, I noticed that by holding the bleached fabric it felt warm, taking into consideration that the fabric was handled only in cold water. In the following Figures; (Fig 4.24),(Fig.4.25),(Fig 4.26).



Figure 4.25 Front View of Black Hessian Dress



Figure 4.26 Side View of Black Hessian Dress



Figure 4.27 Enlarged Side View of Black hessian Dress

These visuals illustrates the fit of the black hessian dress. In achieving the black colour I followed a cold water dyeing process, this dye was purchased at my local pharmacy. I have found however, in the first dyeing process that the colour was not as intense as I would have liked it to be. I then opted to reduce the volume by cutting my pattern pieces, securing each piece with over locking and then I repeated the dyeing process. After this process I achieved the desired colour. With regards to the shrinkage of the fabric if any, any shrinkage would have occurred during the first dyeing process. As my illustration in (Fig 4.21) would suggest that tulle and beading is present, this will be added at a later stage as to match my illustration.

SUMMARY

These era's displayed in my range and illustrations, is that of an elegant chic look at the hessian fabric. I chose to take a classic approach with regards to my styling technique, I felt that working with an unconventional fabric in itself has it's own character and personality, so by toning the styling technique down a bit I was positive that I would be capable of achieving an aesthetic that is in keeping with the style of the late Gabrielle "Co Co" Chanel. This would be apparent with the final design, the black hessian dress which is reminiscent of Chanel's little black dress. The style of the iconic dress is elegant, chic and youthful.

CHAPTER FIVE

MARKETING THE LITTLE SACK DRESS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter, relevant to this research a service will be provided to the young and mature shopper who are interested in purchasing a range of cocktail wear made from an unconventional fabric namely hessian. This serves as a story as to where the business initiative started, what the concept is based on and how the business name is to be marketed and to whom

According to Forsyth (2000) He separates marketing into three sections, those being marketing as a concept, as a function and finally marketing as an "umbrella term for a variety of techniques that are used within the function,"(2000:3). Forsyth further says that a marketing concept should be people based.

According to Abingdon (2005) He says that a business should consider it's customer's needs first. He says this will help build a good name for business and he warns that a bad name spreads faster and could lead to a bad business.

According to Kotler (2004) He says marketing means that one should have an eye for good opportunities. He says that opportunities can be found everywhere and in all aspects that affect change in life.

The Little Sack Dress will be marketed by word of mouth and an exhibition held at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

5.1 Market Research

The purpose of a market research being implemented is in order for a business to know it's target market or customers, in doing so a company reduces the risks involved when promoting itself.

The Little Sack dress has a clear target market which consists of young females who are hip, trendy and stylish individuals, however, there is an awareness that the unconventional cocktail wear range would appeal to an older female group with regards to the couture styling/standards, quality and attention to detail, so it's important that garments are not only offered to the younger customer but the older customer as well.

In the fashion industry, an emerging designer is unable to start a viable business unless; they either once belonged to particular brand or were under the wing of a well known designer as competing with already established brands is risky.

“Internationally the branded market is extremely competitive and offers little space for the launch of new brands to compete with established labels, not least because of the enormous resource requirements attached to the international promotion of new brands” (Rogerson.2006:217)

5.2 Competition

Competition in general are the any industry who has taken an unconventional approach to their products, however in The Clothing and textiles Industry there are a few in the Cape Town area, they are as follows:

- Fundudzi: A collection created from organic fabrics including bamboo, soy and corn. Where dyes are used, they have been certified as being environmentally friendly (Fundudzi.com,2010).
- Lunar: Since it's inception Lunar has been sensitive to the environmental concerns, making use, almost exclusively of natural fibres and pigment dyes. Each collection reflects their essential design philosophy (Lunarlife.co.za,2010).
- Hemporium is a South African hemp company. Their aim is to educate people about hemp's potential through the use of innovative products while creating an awareness of all that hemp has to offer (Hemporium.com,2010).
- Eco Trend Collection designs and manufacturers clothing and accessories that are handcrafted using blends of natural and organic raw materials (Urbansprout.co.za,2010).

5.3 The Little Sack Dress Swot Analysis

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The business is owned and managed by one person, which means that there is only one decision maker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single owner is liable for any damage and debt of the business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business needs can be adjusted according to how ever much capital there is without any pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital is limited
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the business cannot be continued it can be sold or closed The company only works with a few clients at a time, so it's able to give each client enough attention, it means communication is direct and easier to maintain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited business skills Production will be limited because only one person is liable for production of the promotional products Promotion and distribution of the products will also be limited
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The business is based on a 'customer comes first' concept The promotional products and the marketing is made by the owner which works out cheaper 	

<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many people show a positive response to new innovations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are many businesses that offer similar services to The Little Sack Dress, and they are already popular
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The promotion of self development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The promotional items might not sell as expected.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The popularity of economic development 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The encouragement of a collaborative business 	

SUMMARY

I have a competitive advantage over my competitors as I cater for the young and hip generation. I consider this a niche market as garments made from hessian are not yet on the market. These garments are special in the sense that they are all hand beaded by myself, and careful attention is given to the fit and detail of these garments.

CHAPTER SIX

OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to examine whether the experimentation with an unconventional raw material like Hessian could form a part of self expression in fashion design. This research is especially timely as it is motivated by the need to boost the employment rate by promoting unconventional materials in Fashion Design.

Through the combination of my thesis and practical components, I aimed to make young women aware that there is beauty in all things, that just because something whether it be a material or a discarded object is considered unappealing or inappropriate for a certain setting or occasion, that it is not necessarily the case.

As Gilles Deleuze states that *"Thinking is always experiencing, experimenting, and what we experience, experiment with, is always actuality, what's coming into being, what's new, what's taking shape (Deleuze, 1995:106)"*

If we alter our way of thinking, or how we perceive things we manage to open a door of possibilities far beyond our expectations.

6.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

What I have accomplished in this research is a range of youthful cocktail wear through the use of the hessian fabric as my unconventional fabric of choice. I chose this fabric as a form of my self expression with regards to it's rugged and abrasive quality I have drawn a similarity between the material and myself, that being that we both have the tendency to rub people up the wrong way. In any event I achieved this far beyond a belief that it cannot and it should not be done.

Furthermore I have added beading into my collection as an attempt to express myself further and in doing so I achieved a style that is closely equivalent to the standard set by Chanel, and a Chicness that I have come to appreciate from her as my iconic designer of all time Chanel's influence is strongly apparent in my collection, through workmanship which has a classic line and an heir of simplicity, and the colour black as an accent.

The colour being her favourite, and reminiscent of her little black dress, It was meant as the fashion ideal: a perfectly simple, yet sexy object (vintagetextile.com,2010). Her bold and innovative way of thinking, which contributed to her success in a business dominated by men at the time.

I have worked hard and planned the process well with regards to managing the fabric and controlling it to transform this material into a cocktail range that is sophisticated, classic yet edgy and sexy.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Experimentation into other design styles, with regards to style approaches for example; evening or bridal gowns, ladies suits, ladies pants and ladies coats.
- Experimentation with other fabrics as accents for example; densely woven fabrics (denim, twills, tweed), and lightly woven fabrics like silk, chiffon and satin.
- Experimentation in the dyeing process for example; tie-dyeing, piece dyeing and the bleeding of fabric
- Experimentation in the flaws of different fabrics and adding them together to form a new aesthetic.

6.3 FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

According to Rogerson (2006) in South Africa, two of the largest clothing manufacturers are both in the Western Cape and the Natal Provinces. With regards to the employment decline in the clothing industry many fashion enterprises have come up with significant regional and/or local development ideas. These are projects that are established to promote self-employment, through collaborations, and innovative business ideas. He also says that the future prosperity of local clothing economy lies in value-added design and manufacturing around a certain niche product/s and markets.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research has been taxing on myself both mentally and physically. I feel that this would not have been the case had my proposal for this research concept been accepted from my first presentation thereof. The adversity faced has been my motivation to push on and do my absolute best.

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