WHEN FASHION ENCOUNTERS THE ARTS: AN HENRI MATISSE INSPIRED SPRING/SUMMER 2014 WOMEN’S WEAR COLLECTION

A thesis submitted to the Kent State University Honors College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for University Honors

by

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May, 201
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my family—without the love, care, and support of my parents I would have never be able to complete my education so far away from home, much less an entire Honor Thesis. I would also like to thank Ms. Jean Druesedown, who from my professor became my thesis advisor, because without her guidance and patience I would have never be able to finish my work. A very special thank you goes to Professor Trista Grieder and Professor Gianna Commoto for believing in my work and so kindly agreeing to be part of my oral defense committee. Last (but not least!), I would like thank Linda Meixner, my sorority sister, advisor, and friend for always believing in my potential and giving me the necessary help and support during my American college experience.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When it came the time for me to start my senior honors thesis, I had always been certain of one thing: I wanted to do a creative project. I was not sure of exactly what I was going to do—either a collection of short stories or an actual clothing collection—but I had always known that my thesis would incorporate much more than research. I wanted to make an impact on people and somehow change their view of fashion.

Fashion has typically been considered by many as something vain and frivolous: Just think about how many times you have heard someone say (or have even said it yourself) something like “I will never pay hundreds of dollars for a piece of clothing. That is absurd!” or “This designer must be insane. Who would ever wear something so outrageous in real life?” What people fail to realize, however, is that fashion is much more than merely the clothes you wear on a daily basis: Fashion is a concept. Before you get down to a simple outfit of jeans and a t-shirt, you have to go through an entire creative process to choose silhouette, style, colors, textiles, and every other detail your clothing may have. Now, what exactly does that remind you of?

If your mind wandered off to arts, then you understood exactly what I was trying to say. The creative process to create a piece of art is fairly similar to that of a fashion garment—you have to choose all the right materials, like brushes, canvas, paint, colors; you will start with a sketch and later move on to the real, final piece. And as far as I’m concerned, that makes fashion and art two parallel industries that often overlap. Some
may argue that fashion could never be compared to art because fashion is made with the intent of sale, but in our contemporary capitalist society, what is not made with the intent of sale? More so, just like the arts, fashion reflects the historical period in which it is created. They are both equally important and relevant, but the main difference between them is that art has a much more respectable reputation; whereas fashion carries the stigma of being superficial and controversial because of issues related to body image, sexuality, sweatshops, and the extravagant prices of some garments.

Besides believing that the industries are so closely aligned with each other, I also believe that they share an enormous potential for collaboration and can transform each other. On one hand, we have seen fashion represented in artworks multiple times, and some painters have done it so well that it has even raised questions as to whether or not the garments existed in real life. Fashion, on the other hand, through the works of important designers such as Yves Saint Laurent and Sonia Delaunay, has done the same to art, and transformed very important art pieces into high fashion and wearable garments.

Yves Saint Laurent is perhaps the best example to illustrate the degree to which art can influence fashion and how it can be transformed into something wearable. In fall 1965, the designer presented the world with the “Mondrian Collection,” which comprised “a group of bold dresses based on intersecting black stripes and blocks of primary colors” inspired by the abstract paintings of Piet Mondrian (V&A Search the Collections, n.d.). The collection was featured on the cover of French Vogue in September 1965 and later in many other fashion publications, the designs were immediately copied by mass
manufacturers, who transformed them into shoes, bags, and even swimwear. The dress made history, and to this day remains one of the designer’s most famous and acclaimed creations. And Mondrian was not the only artist to influence Yves Saint Laurent’s work; an exhibition entitled *Yves Saint Laurent: The Retrospective* (Denver Art Museum, n.d.) held at the Denver Art Museum in the summer 2012 presented other pieces made by the designer that could very well be considered tributes to the artists. From a short cocktail dress inspired by Tom Wesselmann to a jacket embroidered with sequins and pearls inspired by Vincent Van Gogh and a wedding dress inspired by Georges Braque, the exhibition showed just how intricate and beautifully made art-inspired garments can be.

Thus, my thesis is as follows: Inspired by the work of Henri Matisse, I have created my own fashion collection to present as a creative project for my senior honors thesis. A spring/summer 2014 women’s wear collection, it comprises 19 different looks, each one inspired by a different painting, and also presents the same painting as printed textiles used for the garments. My motivation was as follows: My undying dedication to all things fashion and the arts and my passion for the debate over art vs. fashion were applied to show the world how fashion is much more than expensive clothes; when linked to someone else’s work such as that of Henri Matisse, it becomes an inspiration, showing that fashion requires more than just cutting pieces of fabric and later sewing them together. It shows the importance and relevance of research in fashion and the intricacy of the creative process when you are trying to put an entire collection together. It shows the public just how important and relevant fashion really is and how much we underestimate it, especially when it is always so readily and rapidly available to us.
through mass manufacturers, such as Forever 21, Zara, and H&M. Fashion is an industry that generates millions of jobs, and it should be understood in terms of its relevance.

My initial idea was to create a collection based on paintings from multiple artists and art movements; I wanted iconic pieces that would be easily recognizable to the viewers, making it easier for them to identify the prints and the message I was trying to convey. That idea, however, would not create a cohesive collection: The prints and color palette would have been too diffuse as would be the silhouettes and designs. Tailoring my concept to a single artist, I settled upon Henri Matisse. I chose Matisse after acquiring Matisse, His Art and His Textiles: The Fabric of Dreams, which accompanied an exhibition of the same name presented at the Musée Matisse (Le Cateau-Cambrésis), the Royal Academy of Arts (London), and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York). The author vividly showed the various ways that the painter used his collection of exotic Persian carpets, delicate Arab embroideries, and richly hued African wall hangings, to furnish, order, and compose his works of art. Besides his vast and extremely impressive and inspiring collection of textiles, what struck me the most was the representation of the textiles in his paintings: They often appear as tapestries hanging from the walls, carpets, blankets, wallpapers, and even clothing. The representations were so masterfully done that I wished that those textiles could be available in real life for purchase; and that was when I realized they could indeed become real, and I could bring them to life myself through a Digital Textile Printing process. After breaking apart multiple paintings to retrieve the perfect textile representation from Matisse’s paintings, I now have a women’s wear collection ready to show the world.
I hope that whoever comes across my project understands the message I am trying to convey and can appreciate the collection as my way of trying to link the two worlds of fashion and the arts. The following chapters will provide the reader with more insight into how it coalesced, including research about trends for the spring/summer 2014 season and how they are translated into my collection, information about Henri Matisse’s life and his own inspirations, other artists that influenced my collection, the creative process behind the designs, and the printing process used to bring the designs to life.
CHAPTER II
SPRING/SUMMER 2014 SUMMER FORECASTS

The two main forecast companies that I used to create my collection were WGSN, the world’s leading fashion forecaster; and Doneger Creative Services, the trend and forecasting division of The Doneger Group. Both companies are extremely well known in the fashion industry for providing fashion and design businesses with the necessary intelligence to create commercially successful products and services, such as color and fabric direction, and up-to-the-minute retail, street, and runway analysis.

One of the primary macrotrends proposed by WGSN for the spring/summer 2014 season was the New Digital Aesthetic (NDA). This particular macrotrend indicated that “the way we look at the world is changing” because we spend so much time of our lives looking at the world through a screen—be it from a cellphone, TV, tablet, or computer. According to the trend the ways humans and machines “see” the world are becoming weirdly intertwined. One of its main philosophies is Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), which proposes that “all things exist equally, on a level playing field—human and non-human, machines and living beings.” For fashion, it can be translated through jarring prints, crude cutouts, and color palettes that clash against one another (WGSN, 2012, July 27). The trend also brings relevant information for textile prints as well—it’s all about digital printing, texture created through computer software, and disrupted digital minimalism (WGSN, 2012, July 30). Images, motifs, and designs are expected to be distorted and to look odd; it does not matter whether the repeat is not perfect or whether
the continuity is wrong. What matters is that everything is made digitally to symbolize the core concept of the trend.

Doneger Creative Services by contrast presents the macrotrend Wanderer, which proposes that we “carelessly meander from place to place and throw all inhibitions to the wind. The modern day pioneer embarks on a laidback journey of freedom and recreation” (2013). The trend is then divided into two smaller, more specific trends: Caravan and Vagrants. The latter is the key one because it represents the primary inspiration for my collection by proposing “a ripe mid-tone range of artistic color [that] sets a fresh and funky vibe. An urban expedition [that] unfolds wherever the wind takes you” (Doneger Creative Services, 2013). Prints are the key element for this trend—and lots of them. It does not matter whether they clash with one another: They must appear in abundance—“a vibrant and ripe array of jewel toned prints, indigo touches, paisley fever,” florals (oversized or spaced out, abstract or blurry), must all be present as well as plaids and distorted checks. The exoticism of the Eastern world is also very welcome for prints and ornaments (Doneger Creative Services, 2013).

I used both trends for inspiration, and the ways they complete and complement each other are key to understanding the concept of the collection. The prints are its main element, appearing on every single one of the garments—no solid colors, only prints on prints and sometimes prints that may look as if they are clashing with one another, especially in looks containing multiple pieces. My idea was to give the viewers a feel for Matisse’s inspirations as he painted his artworks—African, Baroque, Eastern culture—all mixed with contemporary impulses. The prints are clearly digitally done, even if they
represent a part of a painting; the viewer is looking at a painting, yes, but through the eye of a computer because the painting has been digitally altered (broken down and resized) so that it is hardly the same painting anymore.

When it comes to silhouettes, I tried to simplify them so as not to make the collection any more extravagant than it already is because of the abundance of prints. I included no ambitious or over-the-top design because I wanted the prints to be the main focus for the viewers, and an overload of information would have occurred had the silhouettes and designs been too much on the conceptual side. The viewer would then feel overwhelmed, and the prints would lose the importance they have for the designs.

Following a ready-to-wear direction, I used inspiration from key items that had appeared during the most relevant and important fashion weeks around the globe: New York, Paris, Milan, and London. Sheer fabrics were a recurrent item on all runways and appear quite a few times in my collection to inspire femininity and give the silhouettes a soft feel (WGSN, 2013, October 13). The influence of sportswear that has been present during the past few seasons remained for spring/summer 2014 along with references from the 1950s (flare dresses) (WGSN, 2013, September 25), the 1970s (cropped trousers and half-circle skirts) (WGSN, 2013, October 13), the 1980s (asymmetric skirts and abstract graphic prints) (WGSN, 2013, September 13), and the 1990s (bralettes and bandeau tops) (WGSN, 2013, September 25). Crop tops are still relevant this season, and the lengths of the skirts vary considerably. Below-the-knee seems to be the length of choice for dresses and skirt styles, yet the short and flirty miniskirt is still very much present on the runways this season for younger looks (WGSN, 2013, September 13). Maxi dresses, tunics,
oversized silhouettes are also still very much in as indicated by the Vagrant trend because they inspire a nomadic feel for the wearer (Doneger Creative Services, 2013). WGSN (2012, July 30) also claimed “fit-and-flare shapes, peplums, and sculpted tailoring continue to accentuate the feminine silhouette” during the spring/summer 2014 season, and that “tailoring gains momentum as a versatile everyday staple.”

With all of these references in mind, I tried to create a collection that is very feminine at the same time that it is practical, modern, and trendy. All of my designs were inspired by the trends they were based on and definitely give the wearer many different options for dressing; I am confident in saying that I have included a look for almost every occasion and that the women wearing the garments will not be disappointed when trying to decide what to wear for any special occasion.
CHAPTER III
HENRI MATISSE AND HIS TEXTILES

Born in Le Cateau-Cambrésis in 1869, the industrial heartland of northern France, Henri Matisse, the son of a successful seed merchant, discovered his passion for art relatively late. From a young age, Matisse was pressured by his father to prepare himself to take on the family business, which was something he had never looked forward to because he had his own aspirations of becoming a circus performer or an actor (Munson, 1999, p. 41). In 1889 the pressure led to Matisse’s hospitalization, during which time he met a fellow patient who advised him to take on painting as a form of distraction and to relieve stress. His mother soon brought him a paint box and two pictures, and as Matisse painted his first water mill, he felt as if he had some kind of revelation. He recalled, “Before, I had no interest in anything. I felt a great indifference to everything they tried to make me do. From the moment I held the box of colors in my hand, I knew this was my life” (Munson, 1999, p. 42).

The beginning of his art career, however, was unsuccessful. His teacher, William Bouguereau, also known as the “pope of the French art world,” told Matisse “he could not draw and would never learn” (Munson, 1999, p. 42). The first time he showed one of his paintings at the Salon de la Nationale in 1897, titled The Dinner Table (1896–97), the public despised it (Munson, 1999). The only reason he did not turn away from painting was the support he received from those around him, including the Impressionist Camille
Pissaro, who told Matisse “you are gifted. Work, do not listen to anything anyone tells you” (Munson, 1999, p. 42).

Matisse was greatly inspired by textiles from youth; Le Cateau-Cambrésis, where he was born, was known for its woolen mills. St-Quentin, where he went to school, was famous for its expanding lace industry, and Bohain, where he grew up, for its luxury fabrics (Brunner et al., 2004). He started collecting textiles as a “poor art student,” and spent all of his money on scraps of tapestry from “Parisian junk stalls” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 15). He called his vast fabric collection a “working library” and took sections of fabrics with him whenever he needed to switch between studios in Nice and Paris, often sending for others when he needed them, and constantly visiting shops and clothing stores in order to continue to expand his collection (Brunner et al., 2004). What inspired him the most about textiles, however, were the dynamics of light and color, not the couture designs and finishes (Brunner et al., 2004).

Throughout his life, textiles remained a “practical, as well as imaginative, resource on the simplest and most basic level” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 22), and he usually started his creative process as a painter by setting out a still life on fabric. He believed that textiles were “humble, adaptable, unpretentious, as far removed as it was possible” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 22) from the subjects, and in his hands, they became “an increasingly disruptive force used to destabilize the laws of three dimensional illusion” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 23).

One of the most important features of Matisse’s artwork is the interaction between the various levels of materiality, which he conveyed for the most part with the use of
decorative motifs, such as the arabesques and repeated floral patterns contained in his representations of tapestries and textiles (Brunner et al., 2004). They provided him with a flexible constructive element that was at the same time subtle and powerful because it was very helpful in expressing his vision of a “world in perpetual flux” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 34). The motifs provided him with a sort of dynamic element that could be played off against other geometrical forms and rhymed with figures and objects, allowing him to suggest an interaction between the different order of things, “to extend the energy within individual things beyond their physical boundaries and to create, in effect, a kind of metaphysics of decoration” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 34). More so, because a piece of a fabric is a real object, it contains its own pictorial field, which can work as a kind of “picture within a picture” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 34) and be made to interact with its surroundings in an imaginary as well as a physical way. These decorative motifs from the textiles provided Matisse with a “dynamic and effective means of suggesting energy and growth, and of making the space of his painting seem to expand beyond its physical bounds” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 35), and that is one of the main reasons that we see them appear in so many of his artworks.

During the final years of his life, his studio in the South of France had become a “treasure-house stocked with Persian carpets, Arab embroideries, African wall-hangings, cushions, curtains, costumes, patterned screens and backcloths” (Brunner et al., 2004, p. 15). He had transformed a two-room apartment in Nice with the help of a local carpenter into some sort of film or stage-set through the use of costumes, curtains, and backcloths, and even had a folding screen to help in changing the set up of his set depending on the
subject he was going to paint (Brunner et al., 2004). His use of textiles and decorative motifs gained such momentum that it served not only to enrich his paintings but also as a form of symbolism as well, such as when he painted *Odalisque with Magnolias* (1923 or 1924); the blooming flowers served as a sumptuous metaphor for her sexuality at the same time that the rest of the composition depersonalized it (Brunner et al, 2004).

Matisse provided us with such rich materials that it is a shame they have not been explored more in terms of fashion and textiles. Had they been reproduced or somehow replicated, the fashion industry would have definitely benefited from it. And it was with this in mind that I decided to create a spring/summer 2014 women’s wear line inspired by the textiles present in his paintings.
CHAPTER IV

INFLUENCES EXPLAINED

Before I present my collection, I would like to explain in further detail some of the major inspirations and artists I researched when deciding to create my collection—Yves Saint Laurent, Sonia Delaunay, and Henri Matisse—and how their works relate and compare to each other: Yves Saint Laurent was a fashion designer who happened to love all the arts; Sonia Delaunay was an artist turned fashion and textile designer; and Henri Matisse was an artist that had an undying love for textiles. Understanding their work will perhaps facilitate the reader’s understanding of my fascination with fashion, the arts, and how I believe they should come together.

As I explained in the introductory chapter, Yves Saint Laurent and the “Mondrian Collection” might serve as the best example to illustrate the degree to which art can influence fashion as a result of the popularity achieved by the collection; however, I believe that is very important to notice the degree to which art influenced his designs by examining the garments themselves. Some of the best examples I could find follow:
Figure 1. Yves Saint Laurent, short cocktail dress, haute couture collection fall/winter 1965 and *Composition II in Red, Blue, and Yellow* (1930) by Piet Mondrian.

Sources: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (dress); College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, California (painting).

Figure 2. Yves Saint Laurent, short evening ensemble, haute couture collection spring/summer 1988 and *Irises* (1889) by Vincent Van Gogh.

Sources: Denver Art Museum (jacket); iBiblio.org (painting).
As the reader can see, even Yves Saint Laurent was inspired by Henri Matisse’s artwork. All of his garments are masterfully and beautifully done with the artworks’ inspiration very apparent. The viewer knows exactly where he got his influences with as much as glance at his creations (granted, the person has to have seen the paintings beforehand to be able to identify the inspiration). Saint Laurent makes clear to the viewers that his inspiration came from paintings, never trying to conceal the origin of the motifs that appear on his designs. The main difference between my collection and Yves Saint Laurent’s creations, however, lies in the way he makes use of the artwork that inspired him—instead of using the paintings as prints, he “copied” them, reproducing the motifs and creating a new print to decorate his designs. Even the Vincent Van Gogh-inspired jacket, which at first look might look like an exact representation of the print, is not—taking a closer look, one can see that it was actually altered in color and shape. The inspiration, in his case, is not the most important part of the design; it is almost as if the print stands on a second plane and serves the purpose of complementing his designs.

Take *Composition II in Red, Blue, and Yellow* (1930), for example: It is a composition of different colored squares and rectangles, perfect shapes to fill the straight and almost rectangular silhouette of the dresses in the Mondrian collection.
Decades before the work of Yves Saint Laurent, in 1909 Sonia Delaunay arrived in Paris from Russia with her husband Robert as designers for the Ballets Russes. Coming from a family in the textile business, she applied the notion of simultaneity in art to textile and fashion design. This concept can be described as the “idea that contrasting colours create movement and take on a life and meaning of their own” (Salter, 2011).

Delaunay is primarily remembered today for her abstract artwork, but much of her career focused on textile design and she even opened her own fashion house — the Maison Delaunay—in Paris, France, in 1925. Her designs, bold and geometric, “encapsulate[ing] the verve and daring of the new modern woman. . . [were worn by] American socialites, French film stars and Surrealist poets” (Salter, 2011). Delaunay’s artistic background played a very important role in her clothing designs because her knowledge of color, medium, and dimension were precisely what motivated her to create her own textiles. Unlike Yves Saint Laurent, she did not need to copy anyone’s artwork because she had her own artistic background from which to draw inspiration—the artist saw color as “the skin of the world,” gave colors their own names (crocodile for beige to brown, cactus for green, and capucine for orange, to name a few), and loved experimenting by applying them to a wide range of mediums (Salter, 2011). Designing clothes and textiles were just an extension of her artwork; another medium that she could apply color to. Examples of her work as both artist and fashion designer can be seen as follow:
Figure 4. Market at Minho (1915) and Rythme (1938).

Source of paintings: WikiPaintings.

Figure 5. Sonia Delaunay’s fashion sketches.

Source of sketches: Kate Davies Designs.
Figure 6. Dress, France, 1925–1928; printed silk sating with metallic embroidery; Skirt, Tissu simultané no. 186, France, ca. 1926; block printed wool jersey; Scarf, produced by Liberty’s of London, France, ca. 1967; printed silk voile.

Sources: Textiles Art Center (dress); Monica D. Murgia (skirt and scarf).

As one can see from the examples, Delaunay remained faithful to her design aesthetic, no matter the medium in which she designed, reminding me in a way of what Henri Matisse did with the textile representations in his paintings. As explained in the previous chapter, Matisse had been heavily influenced by textiles his entire life; they played a very important role in his artworks, and are present in the majority of them. Matisse used textiles as the starting point in many of his paintings by placing objects on them as he prepared his scenario, and because the representations look so real, one may say that he used a reverse of the process Delaunay used. She started as an artist and later
became a fashion designer. The same could be said of his creative process when compared with Saint Laurent’s—Matisse sought out fabrics to create his artwork, whereas Saint Laurent often sought out artworks to embellish the textiles that would constitute his garments. The commonality among the three artists and designers is the overlap of fashion and the arts in their most famous pieces.
CHAPTER V
THE COLLECTION

My spring/summer 2014 women’s wear collection comprises 19 looks, each one inspired by a different painting by Henry Matisse. Even though the paintings may not have all come from the same art movement, they share one very important detail: The representation of textiles on them. The paintings provided me with the materials I needed to develop the prints and silhouettes that follow, and served as a type of singular inspiration for each look; at the same time they come together and complement one another as a collection. The pieces could very well be mixed and matched, worn separately or as a complete look; they come in so many different styles that they could be worn for pretty much any occasion that the wearer has to attend.

I began my creative process by researching all the trends for the spring/summer 2014 season and then tailored the ones that would most approximate my original idea; I had always known that the collection would be full of prints and colors, and if none of the forecasts indicated room for any of that in the upcoming season, I would see no point in even trying to create the collection. After I completed the trend research, I looked up all the Matisse paintings that I could get my hands on, searching in books, on the Internet, and in museums; they became allies to my research. Then, it was finally time to start drawing; I looked at each painting hundreds of times before I chose them, and I let them “talk” to me: I wanted the painting itself to tell me the kind of garment on which it would like to be a print and sketched all of the designs by hand. After the sketches were done, I
digitized them using Adobe Illustrator, and with the help of Adobe Photoshop, I broke down the paintings into numerous tiny images that would possibly become prints. Back on Illustrator, I played around with the images, putting them in the garments in every possible way and direction before selecting the one that would become the final print.

The overall process was long, tedious, tiring, and sometimes very frustrating because some paintings were just not meant to become prints. But overall, I am pleased with the final outcome; I created a collection of which I am very proud, one that I hope will inspire other designers to explore the world of the arts in greater depth and implement it in fashion. I already have many ideas for other projects (imagine just how beautiful a collection based on Impressionists would be) and cannot wait to see whether I will have the opportunity to bring at least one of these designs to life!
50s Sundress Inspired by *Still-life with Blue Tablecloth*, 1909

Figure 7. *Still-life with Blue Tablecloth*, 1909 and 50s Sundress.

Source of painting: State Hermitage Museum.

The fit and flare silhouette of the 50s sundress—a very recurrent silhouette for the spring/summer 2014 season—inspires the idea of a modern day Sunday brunch, a picnic at the park, or an afternoon five o’clock tea. For some reason, those scenarios initially came to mind when I looked at this particular painting even though it does not really
contain anything that relates to them. The mix of shades of blue inspires calm and tranquility, and the swirls of the tablecloth remind me of movement, which is something a fit and flare dress definitely has. The way the objects look as if they are somewhat floating also gave me the idea of movement, much as when the wind sweeps the skirt of a dress when the wearer walks outside. The objects on the table served to give the composition a pop of color the same way a stylist would do when choosing the accessories that would go with the outfit; you do not want your composition to be monochromatic at the risk of appearing boring, so you always want to add a pop of color to help guide the eye.
Split Maxi Dress Inspired by *Odalisque with Yellow Persian Robe and Anemones*,

1937

*Figure 8. Odalisque with Yellow Persian Robe and Anemones*, 1937 and Split Maxi Dress.

Source of Painting: Barton Galleries.

Henri Matisse was famous for painting odalisques; he did realistic paintings of them and more cartoonish ones as well, such as the one used to make the print for this
dress. They appear either in long robes or at some stage of undress, but all of them have always inspired the same feeling in me: A feeling of unknown, of old souls, women who have experienced much and have many stories to share. The vibrant colors used in this painting relate so well to the Vagrant trend forecast by Doneger Creative Services that it was easy to think about the silhouette of a maxi dress when looking at this painting: It relates to traveling and to the way nomads are always moving around, especially in the Eastern world. Much like the painting, the dress is summery, vibrant, spunky, and very cheerful; it was made for the summer season, to be worn outside, not to be hidden away behind closed doors.
Bra Top and High-Waisted Flare Pants Inspired by *The Moorish Screen*, 1921

*Figure 9. The Moorish Screen, 1921 and Bra Top and High-Waisted Flare Pants.*

Source of Painting: WikiPaintings.

Much as Matisse enjoyed juxtaposing prints and patterns, always somewhat overusing them, I thought it would be interesting to present contrast by using a feminine painting to create a somewhat masculine design with tailored pants and a more risqué
design with the bra top. This is probably my favorite look in the entire collection because it still inspires the same softness and femininity of the painting even though it is so different from what the original scene portrays—a pair of women (most likely a mother and daughter), wearing summer dresses while chatting about their everyday tasks. The outfit is much more empowering than a summer dress and would require a considerably confident woman to carry it off; however, because confidence is key in empowerment and femininity, I truly believe this outfit perfectly fits this painting.
Peplum Hem Shift Dress Inspired by *The Dream*, 1940

*Figure 10. The Dream*, 1940 and Peplum Hem Shift Dress.

Source of painting: WikiPaintings.

Much like its name, this painting creates in the viewer an instant feeling of reverie, of calm and tranquility. It is very soft, as you can see by all the rounded edges of the design. Besides the zigzag detailing on the blouse, no pointed edges appear, and even those are not sharp enough to disrupt the softness of the overall design. The silhouette of
the peplum shift dress is the same—no sharp edges, only soft curves coming together to create a very comfortable, feminine, and practical dress.
Smock and Mini Shorts Inspired by *Seville Still-life*, 1910-11

*Figure 11. Seville Still-life*, 1910-11 and Smock and Mini Shorts.

Source of painting: Henri-Matisse.net.

Inspiring another one of my favorite looks in the collection, this painting provides such an abundance of patterns and motifs that it was quite difficult to develop a single outfit for it, but I knew from the outset that I would create a more laidback look because of the countryside feeling that the painting engendered in me. Denim is a crucial textile
in country clothing, and I especially like the way the blue cloth on the painting could be used to create shorts that resemble distressed denim because it is mixed with beige. The loosely fitted smock gives balance to the fitted mini shorts, making the outfit appropriate for an afternoon outing as well as an evening one. The pattern I chose for it was the fabric covering the coffee table because its intricate mixture of colors would go well with and complement any skin color.
Handkerchief Hem Dress Inspired by *Two Young Girls, Yellow Dress and Tartan Dress*, 1941

*Figure 12. Two Young Girls, Yellow Dress and Tartan Dress, 1941 and Handkerchief Hem Dress.*

Source of painting: Art Prints.

Although it may seem a little obvious to create a dress out of a painting of two dresses, something may be said about the silhouette of a handkerchief hem dress. I was
particularly inspired to create it after seeing this painting because of the abundance of textiles present. The dresses have so many layers and so much fabric for being made at the time they were, that as they drape around the girls’ legs, it seems as if their hems are asymmetrical instead of overall circular. I wanted to create a different kind of dress, a garment that would capture people’s attention as soon as they laid eyes on it, something out of the ordinary; and what would be better than a different version of a dress that is already present in the painting? Think of it as a form of customization. I felt as if I had the original dress in my hands and merely reshaped it to look like the new one. The crisscrossed design at the neck was inspired by all the lines and checks in the prints and was later inserted on the final dress to give it a more modern and feminine feel.
Peplum Vest and Split Pencil Skirt Inspired by Unknown

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image13.png}
\caption{Unknown and Peplum Vest and Split Pencil Skirt.}
\end{figure}

Source of painting: WikiPaintings.

Peplum designs, as the reader may already know, are a very important feature for the spring/summer 2014 season as they are in my collection even though they have been around for quite a few seasons already. I could not find the name and/or date of this
particular painting, but the signature on the bottom identifies it as a true Henri Matisse artwork. Inspired by the floral motif of the wallpaper and the pastel colors, which are a perfect match for the spring season, I tried to create a feminine and delicate design that is still modern and fashion-forward, even somewhat “spicy”; the modern woman wants to feel sexy just as much as she wants to feel feminine. The peplum vest, which can be considered quite risqué because of its plunging neckline, is softened by the higher waist and peplum hem; the pencil skirt also gains a sexier feel to it with the split, losing a bit of its seriousness and the stigma of office attire.
A-Line Bandeau Dress Inspired by *Woman in Blue*, 1937

*Figure 14. Woman in Blue*, 1937 and A-Line Bandeau Dress.

Source of painting: WikiPaintings.

Another dress based on a dress, and this time the reference and inspiration that I took from the painting is also very apparent. The A-line silhouette, inspired by the full skirt of the original dress, also gives my creation a feeling of customization; it seems as if my design was created after cutting away all the extra fabric on the original dress to
reveal a shorter dress for a much more fun-loving modern-day teenage girl. Although it was not exactly my intention, I really like the end result: The shorter dress is flirty, feminine, and so current that it feels as if one could find it for sale at numerous well-known stores.
Cropped Three-Quarter-Length-Sleeve Sweater and Slim-line Cargo Inspired by

*Seated Odalisque, 1926*

*Figure 15. Seated Odalisque, 1926 and Cropped Three-Quarter-Length-Sleeve Sweater and Slim-line Cargo.*

Source of painting: The Guardian.

This was one of the hardest designs for me to create; I wanted to create a look inspired by this painting because of all the interesting patterns that it presents: the
intricate wallpaper that could very well be an actual mosaic, the sheer blouse that looks as if it has a metallic pattern or that the odalisque is wearing golden chains, the striped chair, and even the diamond shapes in the tile floor. The options were many, but to create another dress or a flirty, feminine look would be too obvious. The odalisque in this painting has such a serious air that it seemed a lot more fitting to create a look comprising pants and some kind of top. Even though it can look kind of obvious as well because the odalisque is also wearing pants and a blouse, the primary difference lay in the silhouettes and the way the garments fit the body. In a way, the new look really evokes a modern odalisque, or at least the outfit looks really close to what she would be wearing if Matisse were to paint her today.
Boxy Cropped Shirt and Below-The-Knee Circle Skirt Inspired by *Corner of the Artist’s Studio, 1912*

*Figure 16. Corner of the Artist's Studio, 1912* and Boxy Cropped Shirt and Below-The-Knee Circle Skirt.

Source of painting: WikiPaintings.

This look was fairly easy for me to create because the painting inspired me with the exact outfit I created: A cropped top and a loose circle skirt, something that you
would wear on a warm summer night to go on a date or to go shopping with your girlfriends on a Saturday afternoon. The folding chair in the corner gives the painting a summer feel, and the flowers on the wallpaper are reminiscent of spring; the abundance of cool colors (greens and blues) are soothing and relaxing, and inspire a very calm environment. Even the warmer tones (yellows and oranges) are subdued with cooler undertones, creating the perfect vibe for any stress-free getaway.
Soft Tailored Jacket, Bandeau Top and Bermuda Shorts Inspired by *Odalisque with Grey Culottes, 1926-27*

*Figure 17. Odalisque with Grey Culottes, 1926-27 and Soft Tailored Jacket, Bandeau Top and Bermuda Shorts.*

Source of painting: Style Court.

Still using the Vagrant trend as theme, I chose to create a look from this painting that would present clashing prints in abundance. Stripes on stripes are something very hard to pull off, especially because it may look to be too much at first glimpse; however,
done in the right colors, it can look fun and trendy. The colors on the Bermuda shorts complement the colors on the jacket, making the outfit very pleasant to look at. The sexiness of the bandeau top is subdued by the longer length of the Bermuda shorts and the jacket, which does a very good job of covering it, still leaving it exposed at the same time. The Bermuda shorts came to me as an inspiration after analyzing the odalisque’s culottes, which were something very popular at the time the painting was created but are rarely seen anymore these days. Full of bright colors, the options for creating a fun look were endless for this particular painting, but as I mentioned above, Matisse’s odalisques always seem so serious that when I created outfits inspired by them, I automatically feel an obligation to make the look a bit more serious and respectful.
V-Shaped Tee and Cuffed Pleated Pants Inspired by Still-life with Apples on a Pink Tablecloth, 1924

*Figure 18. Still-life with Apples on a Pink Tablecloth, 1924 and V-Shaped Tee and Cuffed Pleated Pants.*

Source of painting: Fine Art America.

This look might as well be the simplest design of the entire collection; a simple V-neck shirt accompanied by cuffed pleated pants, it is something that you could think of any women wearing, and at many different occasions. This painting inspired this
particular outfit for a single reason—the dichotomy between the scenery and the actual scene. If you were ever to enter a house with such flamboyant wallpaper/tapestry on the walls, with the contrasting bright pink tablecloth, your eyes would definitely be drawn to the scene; it is something very eye-catching because of the bright colors at the same time that the scene itself is very ordinary. What we see are merely apples set on a table on the top of a pretty tablecloth. The contrast between the ordinary scene and flamboyant background inspired me to create a look that would represent the same thing: A simple t-shirt with ordinary pants but with bright colors and details so eye-catching that it is almost impossible not to look at.
A-Line Maxi Dress Inspired by *Still-life with a Red Rug, 1906*

*Figure 19. Still-life with a Red Rug, 1906 and A-Line Maxi Dress.*

Source of painting: WikiPaintings.

The abundance of fabric in this painting reminded me of the Vagrant trend and the way nomads always have many layers of clothing when travelling through the desert, especially in the Middle East. Their type of clothing always consists of something similar to an A-line maxi dress, baggy and somewhat flowing to allow room for movement while still protecting their bodies from exposure to the sun and wind. Even
though I had already created a maxi dress for the collection, a second one, with three quarter-length sleeves and a full back and no slit, seemed very appropriate, especially for night outings. Even the colors on this dress contrast with the other design, much more muted and not so vibrant. The way the fabric lies on the top of a table in the painting gives the viewer the idea of drapery and movement, something that I also wanted to achieve with this dress. It is chic and contemporary and also something that you could see on women from many walks of life.
Coatdress Inspired by *Still-life with Blue Tablecloth*, 1905-06

*Figure 20. Still-life with Blue Tablecloth, 1905-06 and Coatdress.*

Source of painting: WikiPaintings.

Despite having the same name of the painting used for the first design in the collection, this painting could never inspire in me the same things that the first one did. For starters, it is much darker and serious, even though it has a lot more vibrant colors popping out in the middle. For this painting, I wanted to create a design that would differ
completely from the first one while still relating to it since they are part of the same collection. I started out trying to design an outfit comprising shorts or pants, but when the idea of a more professional dress came to mind, I immediately started exploring it. The coatdress is still very feminine, but its longer length and neck coverage allow it to be worn in a more professional setting, such as a business. A fashionable businesswoman would definitely be able to wear it to work without being chastised for dressing inappropriately and would gather so many eyes towards her that she would definitely want to make this dress her everyday uniform.
Abstract Sheer Sweater Inspired by *Basket of Oranges*, 1912


Sheer fabrics are so in for the spring/summer 2014 season that it would be a shame not to include them in my collection. Sheer sweaters designed with abstract shapes were very popular on many of the most prominent fashion catwalks for the season, and the idea of playing around with the paintings in such an abstract way made it
essential that I would have to include something of this sort in my collection as well. Instead of manipulating a pattern that was already abstract, I chose to play around with the floral motif on the tablecloth—not only are florals a symbol of the spring season, but they are also very fun to look at in both a constructive and deconstructive way because you always know that you are looking at flowers when you see the motifs, whether or not they appear in only a portion of the garment or all over it. The striped pattern of the curtain (or perhaps tapestry), also led me to an idea of layers, and that is why I decided to create layered shorts to accompany the sweater. A skirt or simple mini shorts would be rather too obvious, so why not play around and give consumers something fun?
Cocoon Top and Retro Hot Pants Inspired by *Portrait of Greta Moll*, 1908

*Figure 22. Portrait of Greta Moll*, 1908 and Cocoon Top and Retro Hot Pants.

Source of painting: The National Gallery.

The pastel colors on this painting are remarkably pretty, and very indicative of spring; the shades of blue remind me of the sea and of a summer breeze. It might seem a striking contrast to design such a revealing outfit based on the portrait of such a well-covered lady, but in my opinion, they go very well together. The retro hot pants,
although short and revealing, are still feminine and not vulgar in the least. To compensate the shortness of the bottom, the cocoon top, which has a more ovoid shape, covers the wearer’s torso completely, and could be worn with any other bottom, including jeans, shorts, or skirts. The contemporary look evokes the beach and contemporary, making it something that one would be able to find at many retail stores during the spring/summer season.
Peplum Evening Dress Inspired by *Interior – Flowers and Parakeets*, 1924

![Painting and Peplum Dress](image)

*Figure 23. Interior – Flowers and Parakeets, 1924* and *Peplum Evening Dress.*

Source of painting: Neo Alchemist.

The one thing my collection was missing was an eveningwear option, and I decided to create a peplum dress for its very feminine shape, since it reminds me of a Greek goddess. The painting, despite its lack of allusion to Greek mythology in any shape or form, has very vibrant colors and patterns that would go very well with a softer
silhouette. They also help provide the dress with an edge and a little extra spark because it would have been a very obvious design had it been done in just one solid pastel color. The print on the bottom of the dress is also different from the one on the top, providing the illusion of a two-piece garment instead of just one, making it even more interesting to view. The vibrant colors guarantee that the wearer will always be noticed, no matter where she is; and it would be the perfect option for any event during a hot summer night.
Mini Skirt, Structured Bustier and Sheer Shirt Inspired by *Seated Odalisque with Raised Knee*, 1922

*Figure 24. Seated Odalisque with Raised Knee, 1922 and Mini Skirt, Structured Bustier and Sheer Shirt.*

Source of painting: WikiPaintings.

To avoid creating any confusion, this look comprises three different and separate pieces: a sheer shirt, a structured bustier, and a mini skirt. The structured bustier could
very well be worn separately from the sheer shirt, but I decided to include it as a third piece on the look to complement and enhance it. I consider this particular look very versatile and believe that any of the three pieces would go very well with other outfits. This is the fourth look of the collection that was inspired by a painting of an odalisque, and much like the others, it is very feminine (sheer fabric and mini skirt) yet with a dash of seriousness (long sleeves and high collar). The many patterned textiles present on the painting helped me create a look that is colorful without being flashy, and all the patterns complement each other in a very chic way.
Paneled Sleeveless Shirt and Sheer Skirt Inspired by *Purple Robe and Anemones*, 1937

*Figure 25. Purple Robe and Anemones*, 1937 and Paneled Sleeveless Shirt and Sheer Skirt.

Source of painting: University of Louisville.

For the springiest look of the collection, I felt that this would be the perfect way to close the collection on a good, happy, and inspiring note. The painting is colorful and
cheerful, and so full of patterns that it was hard to decide which parts of the painting I would use. Even though the flowers are not actual textiles in the painting, I decided to use them as a pattern for the sheer skirt because it was the part of the painting that would better fit the garment, which is fresh, feminine, young, and fun in a very subtle way. The paneled sleeveless shirt is the one piece that complements this skirt the most, and is very colorful and cheerful without being too much all at once. I am sure that women from a wide age range would feel comfortable wearing this outfit because of all the soft and happy feelings it evokes. Creating this look was very effortless, the way I believe fashion and dressing up should be—getting ready to go out, despite of where you are going or what you are planning to do, should be a fun and relaxing process, not a torturous and stressful one. This painting inspires in me lightness, a relaxing day at home, and many other beautiful things, the same way I feel when I look at the final design I created.
CHAPTER VI

TEXTILE PRINTING PROCESS

The printing process chosen to recreate Henri Matisse’s paintings on the textiles of my collection is the Digital Textile Printing (DTP) process, which uses ink-jet printers to print motifs and designs directly on the fabric.

Digital Textile Printing is the most modern technique of textile printing we have. The process is fairly simple: Designs print directly on fabric from a computer with no other additional step (DigiFab, n.d.). No block, engraved roller, or screen is involved, and it provides images in a much more prominent way than traditional printing methods (Online Clothing Study, n.d.). This basically means that, once you have finished creating your design, all you have to do is print it on a fabric just as you would print a report on paper. The only requirement is that the fabrics you choose receive a treatment before you print on them so they can “hold the ink better, and achieve a wider color gamut and quality output”; furthermore, some inks may also require a posttreatment, such as steaming or heat setting (DigiFab, n.d.). The DTP process is also very short when compared with rotary screen-printing; however, its price is also much higher. One of the main advantages—that can also be considered an economic drawback—is that the process does not require hiring laborers; if you know how to work the printer yourself, there is no need to hire anyone else to do the work for you.

By using this particular process, one can manipulate any kind of image on a computer and print on the fabric exactly what he or she wants. This is particularly
important for my collection because the pieces often present only parts of the paintings as prints as opposed to their entirety. This process allowed me to break down each painting into numerous smaller pieces, providing the opportunity to focus on very specific patterns, colors, and motifs that would later become prints. This was crucial during the creative part of the process because it allowed me to mix and match the different parts of the design endless ways to achieve the final combinations. Some examples of the “break down” process that I went through when choosing the prints can be seen as follow:

*Figure 26. Still-life with Blue Tablecloth, 1909.*

Source of painting: State Hermitage Museum.
Figure 27. *The Moorish Screen*, 1921.

Source of Painting: WikiPaintings.
Figure 28. Seville Still-life, 1910-11.
Source of painting: Henri-Matisse.net.

Figure 29. Odalisque with Grey Culottes, 1926-27.
Source of painting: Style Court.
Figure 30. Still-life with Blue Tablecloth, 1905-06.

Source of painting: WikiPaintings.

Figure 31. Purple Robe and Anemones, 1937.

Source of painting: University of Louisville.

The smaller images accompanying the full-sized paintings are examples of the exact areas of the paintings I have selected to be featured on the garments as prints and, therefore, represent what I would have to have printed through the ink-jet printer on the textiles that make up my designs.

The DTP process is also characterized by a very distinct graphic sensibility. Printers are now able to reproduce unlimited colors in extremely fine detail, and
designers are no longer restricted to pattern repeats: Through this process, one can print from tiny motifs to images so large they can fill an entire cloth bolt (Lui, 2008). By enabling designers to incorporate graphic design elements on their textiles, such as photographs or Photoshop and Illustrator files, digital printing has also expanded and improved designers’ creative process; what you can reproduce in a computer is unlimited, and you can print at any desirable scale to fit your needs (Lui, 2008).
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

To say creating this collection was an easy task would be complete falsehood. It took me endless days and sleepless nights, many sketches gone wrong, and an awful lot of research that went to waste. However, as I sit here and write the final chapter of my thesis, I feel such a bittersweet feeling that I cannot even start to describe it.

When I initially decided to design a fashion line, the first thought that came to mind was this: “But so many people design fashion lines. What will be so special about mine that will make people notice it?” Now, as I look at it as a whole, I know that although it may not be the most salable line ever created, it is still something very inspiring. It may never come to life in the form of actual garments; nevertheless, I will always be proud to know that I was influenced by one of the greatest painters of all times. If he were alive and ever to see this collection, he would probably approve of it, for his love of textiles was so great. Can you imagine Henri Matisse watching as a printer brought his very own motifs and illustrations to life in the form of a textile? He would be blown away! This might sound very pretentious, but when you think about how many things I have accomplished by creating this line, it really is not: I united the worlds of art and fashion, recreated existing prints from very famous paintings, and made use of the Digital Textile Printing process, the most modern printing process that we have today, to print them in the garments I created. It is such a mixture of past and future that it makes the project even more special.
Technically, I did not create something completely new because I started off the thesis by introducing the marvelous work that Yves Saint Laurent has done by incorporating the works of famous painters in his designs; yet I am proud to say that I created something that I hope will inspire others designers to do the same. The material available is almost infinite (I did not even begin to cover the numerous artworks of Matisse, much less other artists!), and if the Digital Textile Printing technology were something more used by designers, it would facilitate wonders for the fashion industry. We all know that it is still an expensive process, but if it were to be developed and used more widely, the availability of machines and demand for the printed textiles would increase rapidly, helping to lower the prices.

I hope that artists, art educators, and enthusiasts alike are not offended by my approach, and that they understand the message I was trying to convey: it is not about destroying or deconstructing a masterpiece to create a piece of clothing. My collection is about uniting two of the most amazing and creative entities that exist. If fashion and arts had a more intensely reciprocal relationship, their practitioners could achieve wonders. And to say that fashion is completely irrelevant for the arts would also be an untruth. Have you noticed just how many important museums have wings entirely dedicated to costume today?

I opened the Introduction of this thesis stating that I wanted to make an impact on the world, and that is exactly what I hope to have done. Something inside me tells me that I have already ignited a spark. Now I just have to watch it as it catches fire.
REFERENCES


