Introduction

The purpose of this project is to design a collection of garments that perform adequately in travel situations, which is determined by a series of characteristics that differentiates the garments specifically for travelwear. Clothes designed for travelwear must meet a defined criteria based on the physical and aesthetic needs of the target audience. In this project, the target market is a young American woman in her early 20s who is traveling abroad for professional or educational purposes. These circumstances require a higher level of modesty, professionalism and aesthetic interest due to the international context. The cultural context within which one is traveling must be taken into account, as some styles of clothing or certain uncovered body parts may be deemed inappropriate in foreign cultural settings. Cultural and social expectations are in place for those who do not meet these requirements of dress.

Functional Design Process

The act of travel itself encouraged me to design an innovative and high-functioning wardrobe for a young female traveling abroad. Designers commonly gain inspiration from their experiences, nature and the environment constructed around them. Thoughtful consideration of past experiences during travel influenced this project throughout the functional design process. Exploring the inspiration to develop the project further guided the research needed to design the garments in this collection.

The functional design process is outlined in the chart from Watkins, which details decisions made throughout the process. In this project, the problem structure was perceived, following observation of myself and others while traveling abroad. Critical factors of a travelwear collection were then brainstormed. It was determined that a successful travelwear collection must function thermally, ventilate the wearer, allow movement, protect one from rain, and provide comfort both physically and psychologically. The collection is comprised of two dresses, pants, a wrap, and a raincoat. Many students go abroad during the summer months, so these garments are designed to accommodate conditions of humidity, heat, and rain.

Textile Considerations

Silk charmeuse and silk crepe were chosen. Silk charmeuse is a high-quality textile that is lightweight, dries quickly and drapes beautifully. Heavyweight silk crepe of 35 mm has significant resilience and resistance to wrinkling because of the density of its fiber content, but also does not dry as quickly as silk charmeuse due to its heavyweight quality. The raincoat was constructed of blue polyester microfiber material because of the performance aspects making it suitable for use in a garment designed to shield the wearer from rain.

Design Features

After selecting the appropriate textiles for each garment and layer, the garment was draped on the human form. The garments were then constructed with focus on proper fit and innovative design for the market of young, contemporary women who require a wardrobe of separates that perform well for travel abroad. Designing separates allows for a wardrobe that would function well in conditions of sun, rain, wind and humidity. A rain jacket, two dresses, pants and a wrap were included in this collection.

Dyeing

To prepare the fabric for garment production, a palette of three colors was created that are complementary to the pure blue microfiber fabric of the raincoat, over which I had no control of color, as the fabric was ordered predyed. In creating a cohesive colorstory, the individual shades of turquoise must work together symbiotically as a visual group and with blue microfiber. To dye the silk fabric, Colorhue Dyes were used because they are non-toxic, in liquid form, which makes them easier to work with and less harmful to those dyeing the silk. These dyes are a very concentrated form of liquid dye that bonds immediately to the silk fibers, setting instantly without the use of synthapel, which is a concentrated form of detergent used to clean away excess particles of dye left after a dye bath. The dyeing process with these Colorhue Dyes is abbreviated and relatively simple due to their liquid form and the instant setting of the dyes.

Conclusion

The challenge of creating a line of wearable, functional and aesthetically pleasing clothing for travel was multifaceted. Understanding the wardrobe needs of contemporary, chic and sophisticated female travelers encompasses the activities of traveling and of socializing with people within the culture visited. Keeping the traveler comfortable, functioning for multiple uses and remaining sharp looking while away from the luxury of a washing machine and permanent closet is essential to designing a successful travel collection.

The style line, fabric used and colorways of the travelwear collection are all equally important in providing the wearer something aesthetically intriguing and socially functional for traveling abroad. These designs were made from silk crepe, charmeuse and polyester microfiber. All coordinate throughout the collection and are easily layered for style and comfort within many weather conditions. They are also resistant to wrinkling or easily steamed by hanging in a bathroom where showers will be taken, resist soiling, and are easy to care for in situations with limited ways to launder clothing. Thus, this design project illustrates the process of balancing aesthetics and function, appearance and comfort, utility and style.