

Mannequin Dressing Mounting Garments for Display

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Curatorial Considerations

Research / Assess / Collaborate

Consult relevant references: designer / artist catalog raisonnés
exhibition catalogs, costume history books

Historical periodicals : LIFE Magazine, Harper's Bazaar, Vogue
Online – Googlebooks or Print – library

Historical patterns: Vogue, McCall's, Butterick

Museum Collections (online or print): The Costume Institute,
V&A, The Kyoto Costume Institute, IMA, LACMA,
Museum at FIT, CAM, etc.

Other: FashionEncyclopedia.com, VintageFashionGuild.com,
FashionEra.com





Curatorial Considerations

Assess & Collaborate

Highlights of the ensemble: What is the most important to aspect a particular piece regarding its design? How does that design element reflect the thesis of an exhibition?

Institutional Preferences: Mood, Style, Attitude

Conservation Considerations

Assess & Collaborate

Safety of the Garment

Condition

Inherent Vulnerabilities

Minimize Handling

Create the Desired Appearance

Assess Garment

Condition

Inherent Vulnerabilities

- Knit
- Heavy Embellishments
- Bias Cut
- Etc



evening dress by Callot Soeurs, about 1926
IMA 77.360

Inherent Vulnerabilities

- Knit
- Heavy Embellishments
- Bias Cut
- Etc



Halston, about 1977
IMA 1983.124

What matters?

Featuring important design aspects of an ensemble



evening ensemble by Halston, about 1976
IMA 82.216ab



evening dress by Halston, 1981
IMA 82.846ab



evening gown with cape, Christian Dior, about 1954
IMA 1984.414ab



People are passionate about mannequins / Institutional preferences

anonymous Says:

May 16th, 2010 at 9:30 am

I'm glad you selected natural skin tones for the mannequins in this exhibit, and I hope you continue this in future exhibitions. I think it does violence to a garment to treat it as an abstraction independent from the body that wears it. While it may be desirable to separate the identity of a garment from the identity of any particular person, I think it's important to select mannequins that are as generally human as possible and I appreciate the improvement that this exhibition represents. This leads to another point. I have noticed in past exhibitions that the IMA tends to select more lifelike mannequins for more recent garments, and that older period garments are displayed on alien-looking mannequins with awkward and unrealistic contours. I find these less-lifelike mannequins to be detrimental to the appreciation of the garments they support, and I wonder if some sort of bias is at play that leads the IMA to display period garments on hideous mannequins. Perhaps the widespread use of corsets in the past makes it difficult to find mannequins that can fit period garments, but if the IMA is willing to modify mannequins for the present show, I would hope that they could do so for future displays of period garments. It would bring the periods represented to life more fully, and would better convey the intended aesthetic affect of the garments, to see them displayed on mannequins with more human contours and flesh tones.

Mannequins

Make them work for you

Types / Selection / Test Fittings

Headless

Half-legged

Dress forms

Custom adjustments



Jacket by Mason Martin Margiela, S/S 1997
IMA 2010.229



suit; 'Bondage' by Westwood / McLaren, 1976
IMA 2011.175a-c

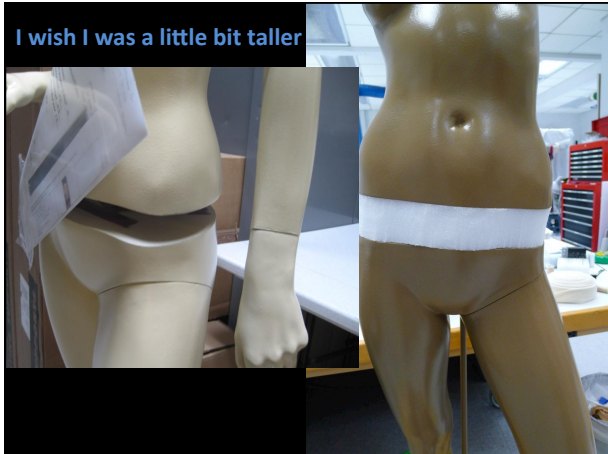


blouse by Franco Moschino, 1990s
IMA 2009.21

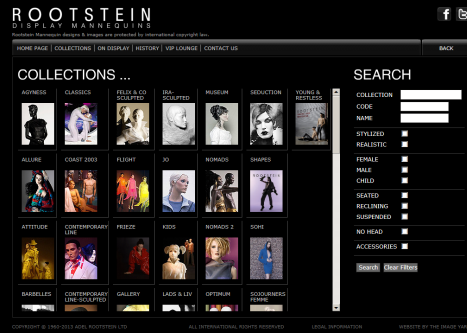


Customized Mannequins



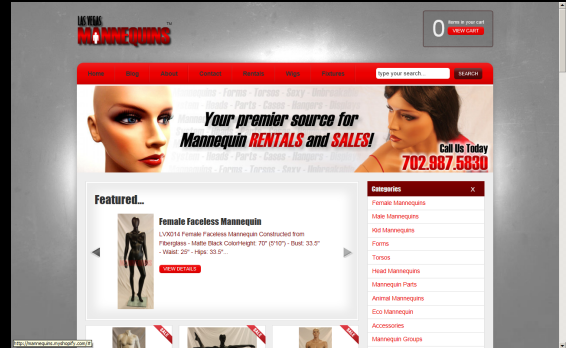


Mannequin Resources:



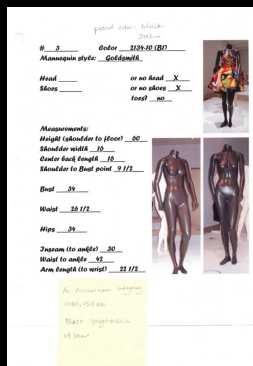
Rootstein Display Mannequins <http://www.rootstein.com>

Mannequin Resources:



Las Vegas Mannequins <http://www.lvmannequins.com>

Mannequin Management



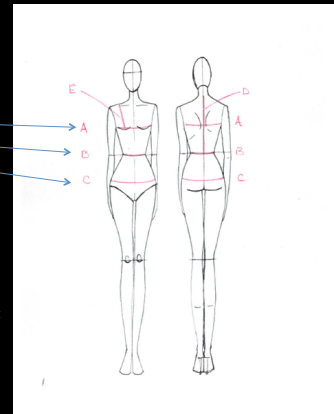
Measurements

The most critical are:

- A. Bust Circumference
- B. Waist Circumference
- C. Hip Circumference
- D. Center Back Length—top of spine to waist
- E. Shoulder to Bust Point

Will the mannequin fit the garment?

- Measure the inside of your garment
- Measure the mannequin
- Reduce excess garment handling



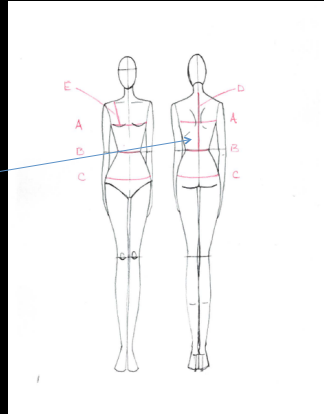
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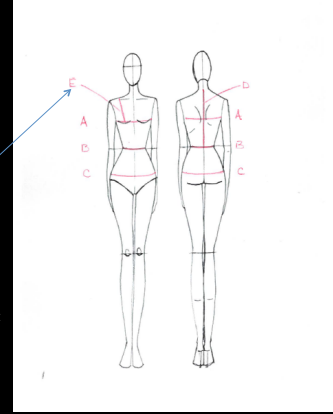
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Tools



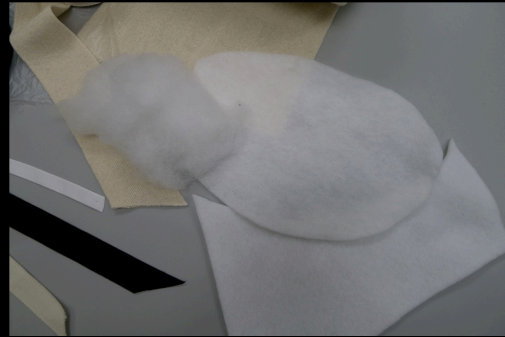
Materials and Supplies

- Tubular cotton surgical stockinette – 2" and 8"
- Polyester needlepunch batting & polyester fiberfill
- Twill tape
- Nylon net/tulle
- .3 mil HDPE (high density polyethylene) light duty plastic sheeting
- Cotton sewing thread



Materials and Supplies

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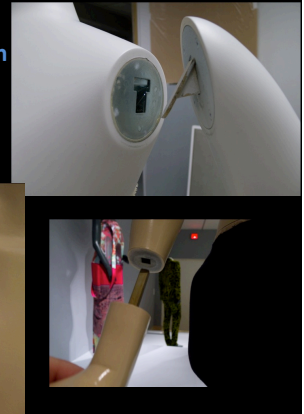
Materials and Supplies

- Cotton sewing thread
- Knit covering fabric



Before You Begin: Understand the Mannequin

- Arm, hand, waist & leg attachments
- Be sure the mannequin is clean and smooth



Before You Begin: Understand the Mannequin

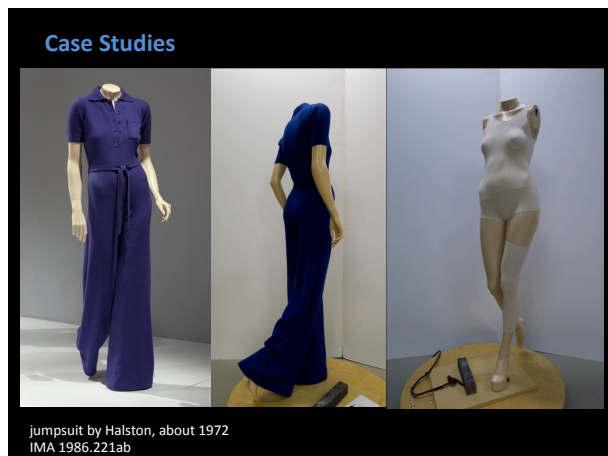
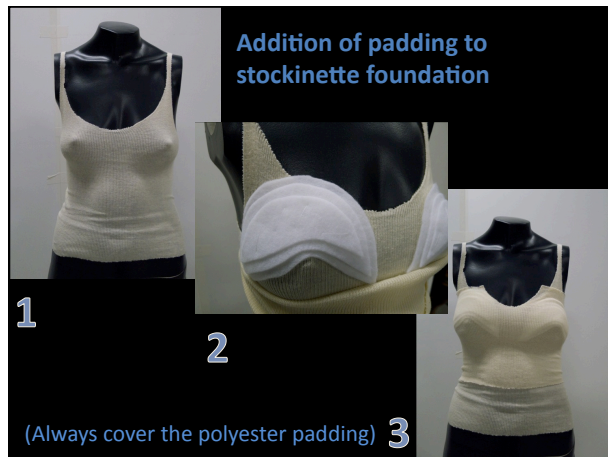
- Also, be sure your hands are clean and smooth

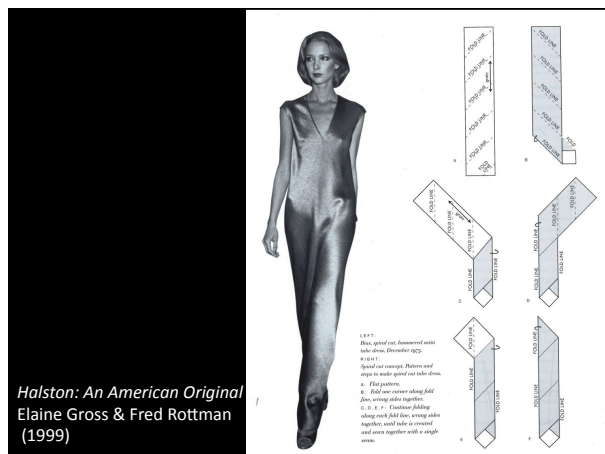


Basic Procedure for Adding to a Mannequin

1. Cover the mannequin with tubular stockinette, pantyhose or another close fitting archival quality material to provide a surface to anchor to or secure padding under
3. Add padding—polyester needlepunch batting and/or fiberfill—under stockinette or stitched to the top of stockinette, as necessary for desired modifications
3. Cover any exposed polyester batting with an appropriate finishing fabric—tubular stockinette or another fabric



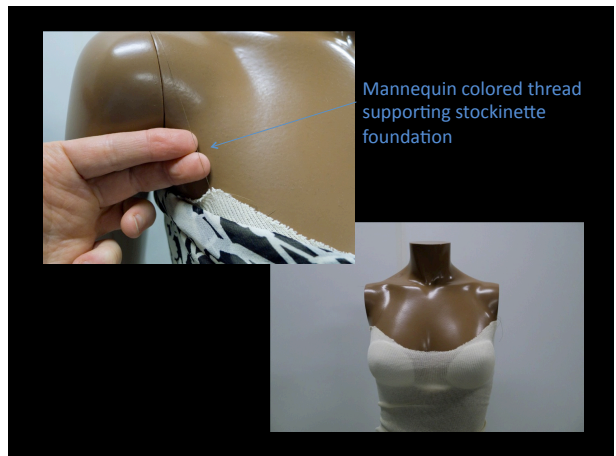
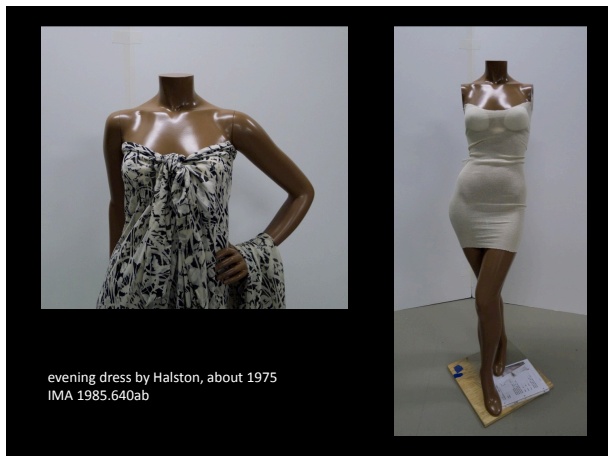


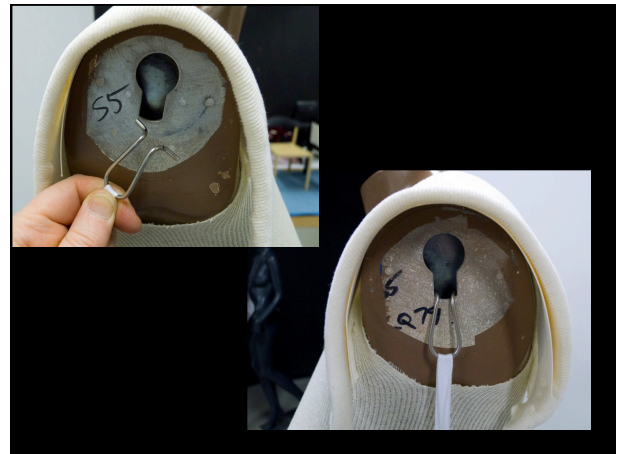


Halston: An American Original
Elaine Gross & Fred Rottman
(1999)

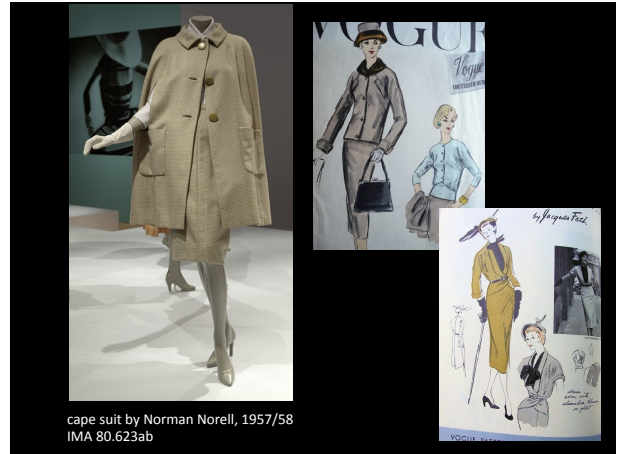


evening dress by Halston, about 1977
IMA 1983.124





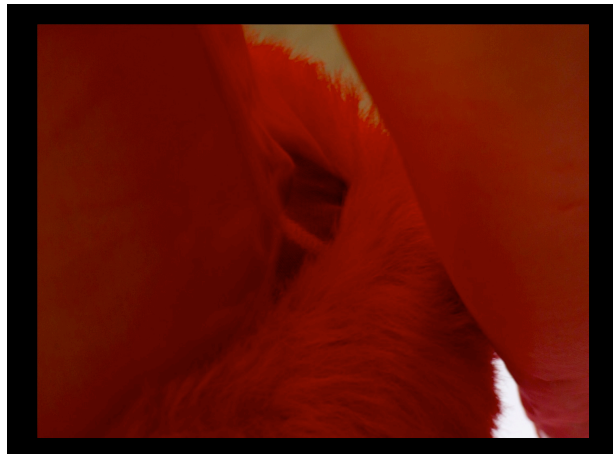
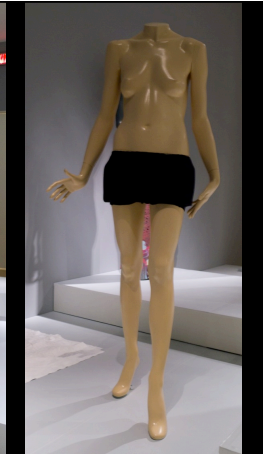
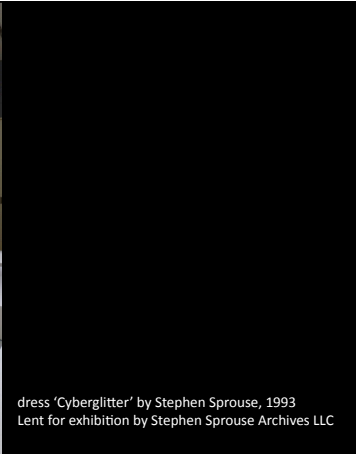


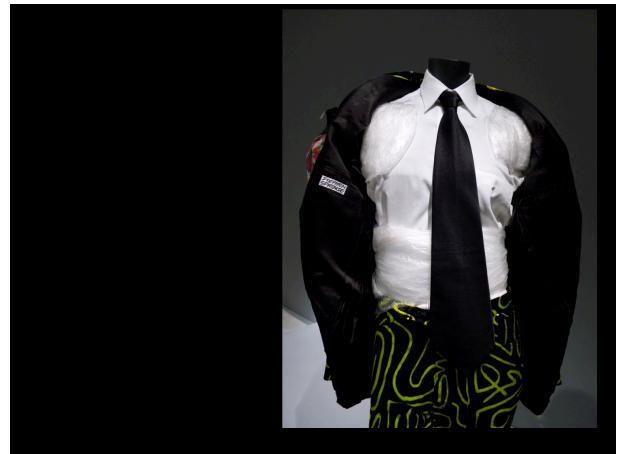
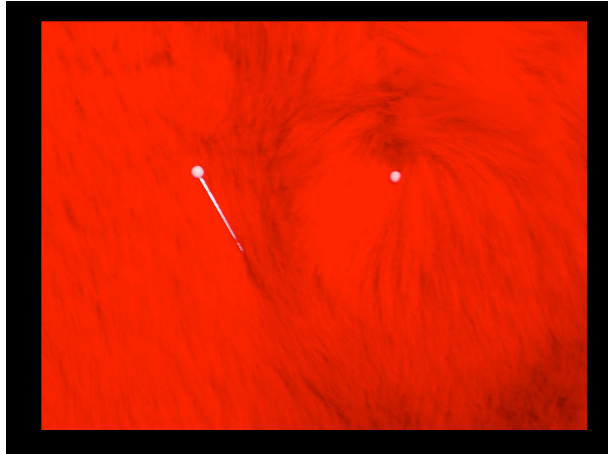




day dress by Norman Norell, about 1957
IMA 1985.211ab









evening dress by Halston, about 1971
IMA 1984.96



Exhibition view: *Simply Halston*
IMA [April 12, 2008-January 4, 2009](#)



Halston
Steven Bluttal (2001)



evening dress by Christian Lacroix, 1988
IMA TR11507/a-c



There is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us, and not we, them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking.

Virginia Woolf

Evening dress by Christian Dior, 1956
IMA 2002.143