

Structure, symmetry, and shelter are three main sources of inspiration that I used to construct my garment. While creating my material alphabet, I had to correspond my letters with the theme of symmetry. In order to do that, I created an axis of symmetry in letters that were symmetrical, in order to separate them into two halves. One side of the letter framed the other half. Each line was made of three wooden sticks to make it look more structural. In order to convey this idea of symmetry, I attached Chinese fans to the bodice, reflecting the patterns.

In Chinatown, I observed the different forms of architecture and how the people protected themselves against the environment. What stood out to me the most was the multitude of vendors out on the streets. They all had umbrellas or blankets hanging from the rooftops in order to escape the blistering heat and the rain. This led me to thinking about traditional Chinese umbrellas. They fit well into the theme of shielding oneself from the elements.

I decided to make a dress inspired by these umbrellas. I got several umbrellas, a straw hat, and some fans. I specifically noticed how the umbrellas were built. They have several wooden sticks aligned in a circle to frame the shape of the umbrella. This inspired me to create a sort of straight hoop skirt in my garment to frame the rest of the skirt so that it would hang out to the sides more. Over the chest area and the skirt I designed a layer of clear plastic, inspired by clear ponchos and umbrellas. This adds style and shows off the hoop skirt. Near the top of the skirt I will solve the problem of it being see-through by deconstructing umbrellas, flattening them out, and making them into a mini skirt underneath the hoop skirt.