

The Dress with a Story to Tell

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Age 13, Grade 8

Vision

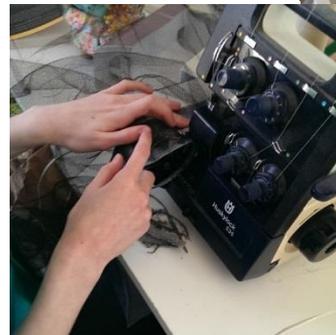
The general idea of my dress was to have a bell tutu on a denim bodice with a swinging grapevine of ruffles and doodads. From sketch to the finished tutu, the dress is my original work. Enjoy the story of my dress with pictures and facts.



Process

Putting together the dress was really fun. Here are some of the steps I took to do it:

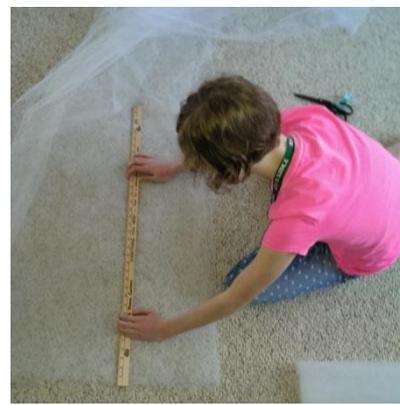
- Draped fabric on the dress form to see what would work
- Took the denim, sewed it into one long piece, serged the edges, and attached a zipper to construct the bodice
- Sewed darts into the denim to make it fit my dress form and cut the armholes
- Cut the bottom off of a 2XL tshirt, gathered it, and attached it to the bodice
- Cut two long strips of white tulle, gathered them, and sewed them to the skirt where it met the bodice- Repeated the process for a second layer
- Cut red tulle with a wavy rotary blade, used a gathering foot to gather the red tulle and sew it to a piece of red ribbon- tacked the ribbon to the bodice
- Inserted horsehair hoop into the hem of the tshirt
- Serged a piece of black tulle to some denim and tacked it to the skirt between the red and white layers of tulle
- Put bias tape in the armholes to finish the edges to create a strong under layer for the straps
- Took the red ruffle and tacked it to the bodice to form the dress straps and finished edge for the top of the bodice
- Braided the red ruffle, red tulle, and trims to create a wave across the bodice and skirt
- Tacked on the white flowers on the back at the top of the zipper and at the end of the braid on the front of the dress
- Glued rhinestones to the black tulle layer



Materials

A combination of sewing “stashes” came together to provide the materials for this project. The only new material in the dress is the thread in my sewing machine. Below is a list of the rescued items I used with their previous uses:

- Denim- old work jeans
- Black Tulle- an underskirt from an old prom gown (the material from the gown was already used in a project and this tulle was leftover from that)
- Tshirt- a two year old 4-H Duck Race shirt given to me as a prize
- Black Trims- leftover from a Steampunk doll gown I made this year
- Ruffle- leftover from a Civil War Ball gown I helped to make two years ago which was originally from a prom gown
- Bias tape- purchased as a rescued item from Sew Green and given to me as a gift last year
- Zipper- rescued for reuse from Sew Green and given to me as a gift last year
- Rhinestones- leftover from a beading project for a prom gown from many years ago
- Flowers- Dryer sheets I saved and vinyl which was left here when the previous owner of our home left some of her sewing stash for me (knowing I love to sew!)
- White/Red Tulle- leftover from projects in a friend’s sewing stash
- Serger Thread- The thread is 30 years old and came with my serger which was given to me as a gift from an online friend of my mom’s who sent it to me after reading that I would love to have a serger.



The Finished Project

I love the way the dress turned out. My favorite parts are the swooping braid across the front and the flowers. The best parts of the process for me were putting in the darts and adding the details. Before I began, I knew I wanted to incorporate the dryer sheets and the flowers seemed to be the perfect way to use them.

This dress was made using the draping technique, although I typically prefer to draft my own patterns. Drafting patterns is appealing to me because it makes me more familiar with the pieces and I know how they all fit together. Drafting patterns helps me to deconstruct the garment in my mind and shows me why parts of the process have to be done in a certain order. The best reason of all is that working from my own designs and patterns/draping gives me independence – it's my pattern, my way.

