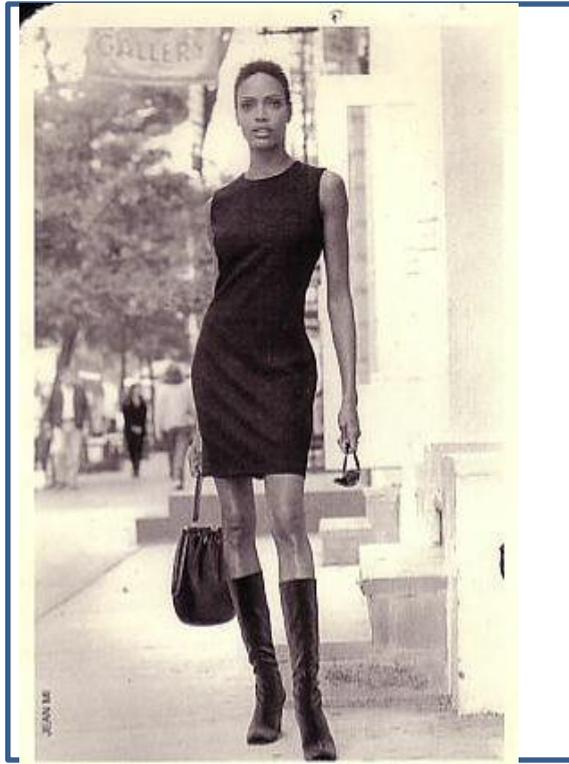
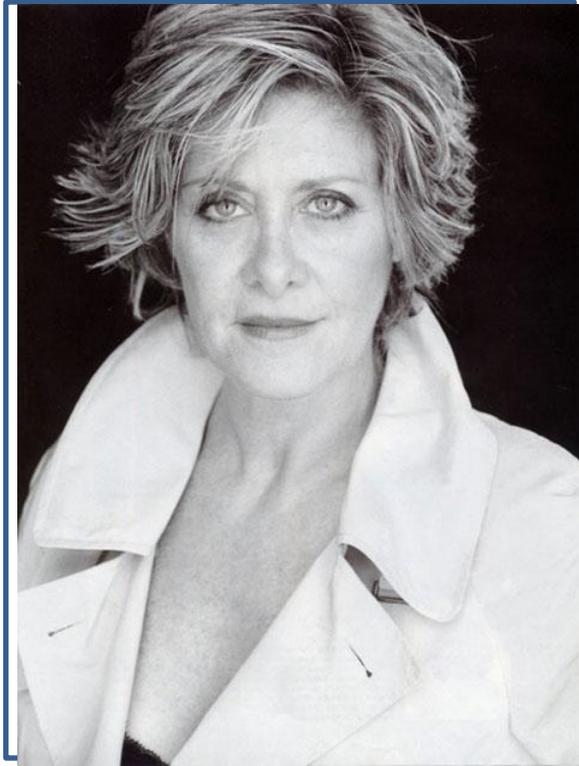


Coco Mitchell, 56 years old, runway fitting model, former girlfriend of John De lorean, first black Sports illustrated swimsuit model, fitting model for Bill Blass



Coco Mitchell, fitting model, runway, 56 years old



Helen Powers, size 8, 52 years old



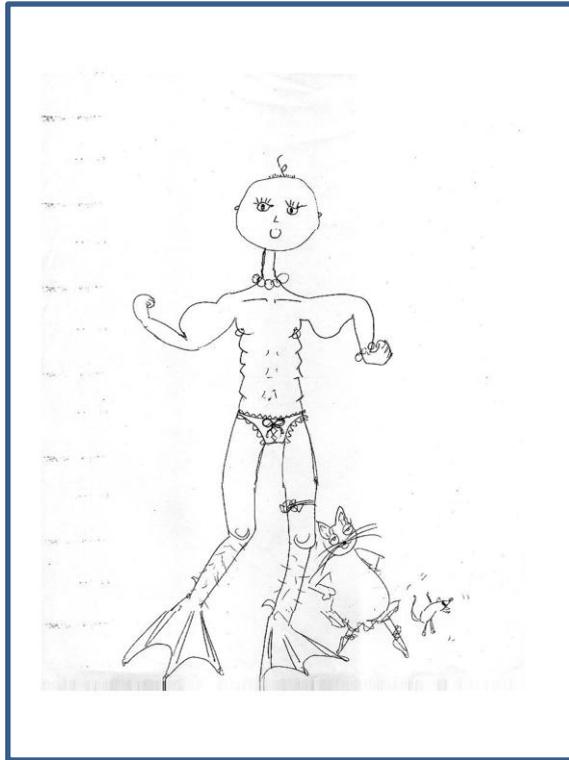
These are sketches made by Peter Som- you can see that they are easy to interpret- the proportions are closer to a real woman's body. And the details are larger.



The muslin is where the designer has an opportunity to explore a few options 3 dimensionally- typically a designer will spend as long as an hour reworking one dress or gown. We cut necklines or sleeves or hems. Pin on additional pieces. Use masking tape to fill in areas.



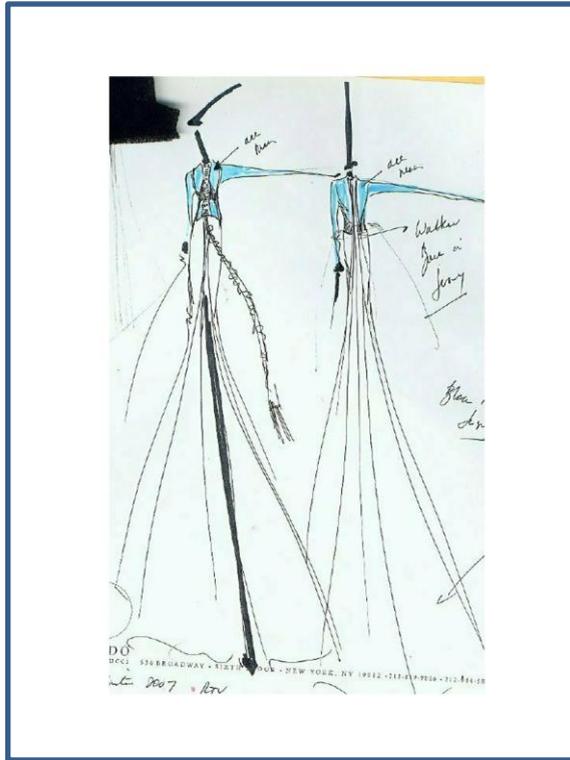
Finished dress on the runway. Note the knot detail just above left waist and on right hip. Oftentimes a designer will want to continue w a detail from a previous season, these knots have turned up in Peters work for several seasons



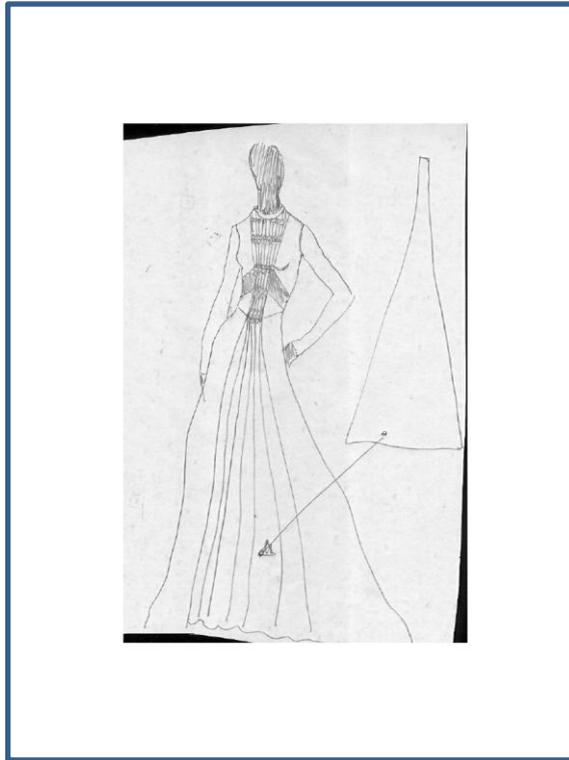
Some of Peter Som's design method is to create a fictional customer and place her in a fictional setting, a sort of design improvisation, and he then designs the collection with that person and story in mind. This example of the drawing game Exquisite Corpses is an example of how a creative person like Peter has fun with his design and drawing ability Peter drew the bottom third,



This season the story that Peter told was of a madwoman trapped in an insane asylum, He always likes for the woman to look a bit disheveled, that means if you are making tucks, they will all be pointing in different directions, and be different depths, hems will be twisted, linings will be sheer so that you can see thru them to the construction on the outer shell. Often when I present a muslin to Peter he will complain that it is too perfect and I should mess it up!



To contrast a sketch by Ralph Rucci



Here's an example of how I have redrawn one of Ralph's original sketches to more normal human proportions.



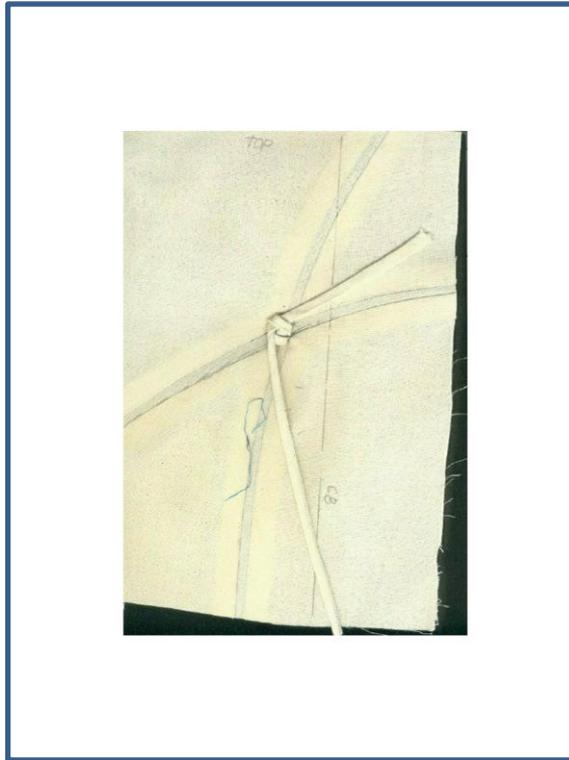
The muslin does not have the actual knot work on it,
that is determined later



The knot work is sampled in a small area , then added to the gown later.



Another view of the finished gown



The most effective way to test an idea is to make a sample. This detail is one that Ralph wanted on a duchess satin infantia. A much easier way to create a similar look would have been to edgestitch bias binding onto the surface of the gown in the shape dictated by the artwork, but Ralph wanted an inset so that the 1/4" bias would look integrated into the dress rather than applied on top. This was the sample that I made for him to approve before we cut the sample. I cut a portion of the actual pattern so that the sewing sample would be to scale.



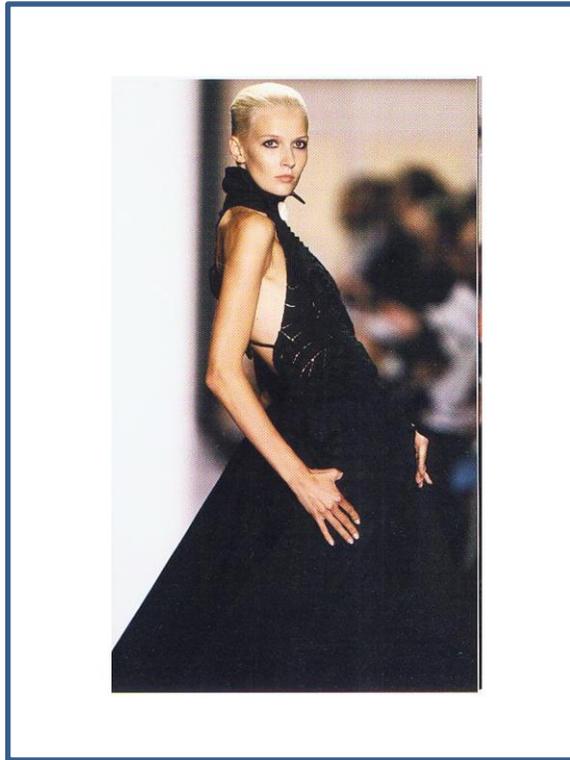
The completed gown, the edges of the circles were hand stitched in running stitch.



Sampling fringe made on bias, make a stitch, unravel with a pin.



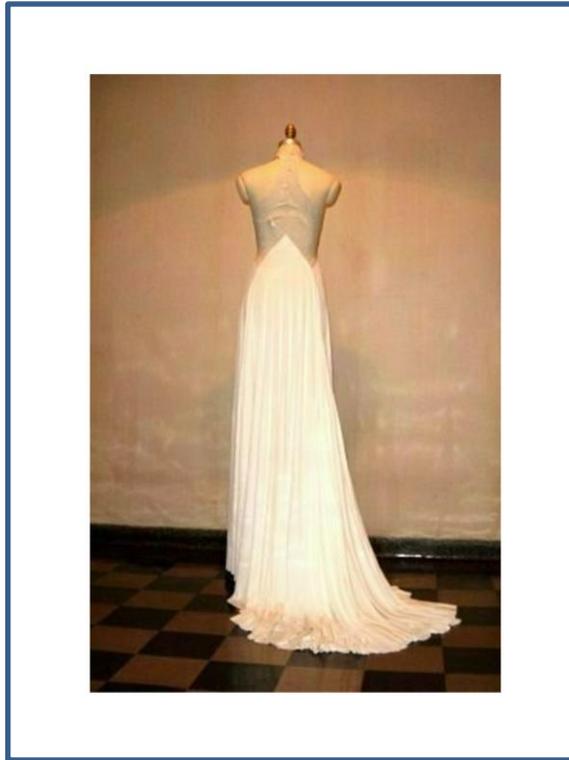
Ralph is inspired by embroideries that are offered by houses like Lesage, he will build a gown using the embroidery as a focal point, I especially liked the embroidery was used on the back of the gown, the motif was made with different thicknesses of black chiffon spaghetti, which were braided and coiled, I drew the motif on pattern paper and reinforced it with shipping tape so that it would be sturdy enough to use in a fitting on the live model



This is the front view of the finished gown, in the originally design the collar was white and had large pear shaped pearl drops suspended from the collar points. I presented the muslin w pearl drops, he later removed them made the collar black, and chose a Noh face brooch to wear at the throat.



Here is a closeup of the fluting construction on a jersey gown. Fluting is a couture technique created by Madame Gres, Couture is about handwork!! You may think that the tiny folds are tucks in a piece of fabric they are not, they are narrow strips of bias fabric that are stitched onto the foundation, each one by hand



The back view of the toile of the gown- the stitching pattern of the fluting is drawn on the muslin foundation for the designer's approval, The patternmaker must include the yardage for the fluting for costing the gown



Ralph has worked with one of the mills to recreate Vionnets jersey, which he uses in fluting. Fluting looks like tucks but it is bias strips of jersey or chiffon that are folded in half, and stitched by hand to a foundation. The stitching pattern is determined by the patternmaker.



This gown is duchess satin cut in bias spaghetti, and hand applied to a tulle foundation. Ralph has made many pieces using this technique. Besides the extensive handwork the grading for the artwork must be done specifically for each size- that is to say the size of the artwork remains constant, and is adjusted to meet smoothly at the side seams. Grading the artwork to scale with the pattern makes artwork that loses its delicacy in the higher size ranges.



People often wonder “who wears these gown?” He is one of Ralph's devoted customers, Mrs. Deeda Blair, wife of William McCormick Blair, Jr., served as our Ambassador to Denmark and the Philippines,

Mrs Blair is very active in charity fundraising, During her twelve years on the Board of the American Cancer Society, Mrs. Blair has raised millions for cancer research.



You may recognize Tatiana Sorokko, a longtime friend of Ralphs, a former model, has studied fashion history at The Academy of Art here in SF, she is a contributing editor to Harper's Bazaar magazine and has styled numerous fashion shoots. Mrs Sorokko named in 2000 to the "International Top 100 Best Dressed" list by American Vogue, and in 2007 to the "Best Dressed Women of All Time" list by Harper's Bazaar

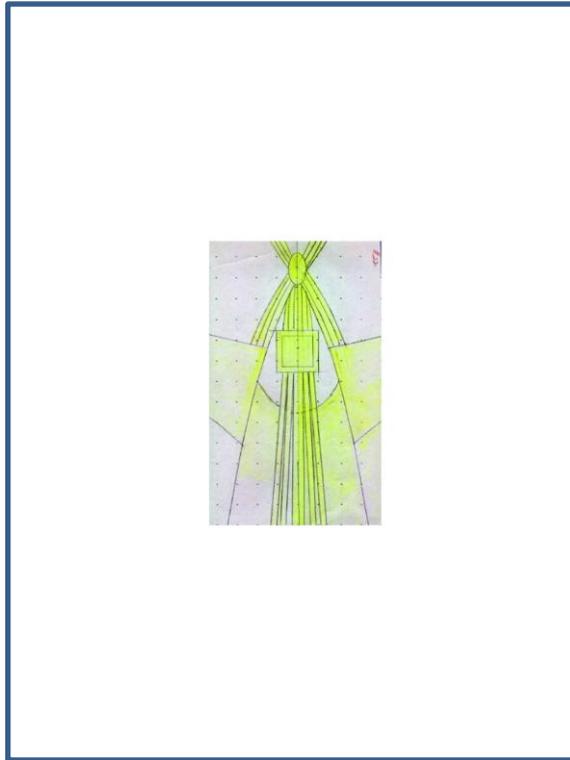
The gown she is wearing on the left was made for her to wear to the opening of a new casino in Las Vegas, it is ivory silk chiffon dotted w burnt ostrich feathers, over gold lurex



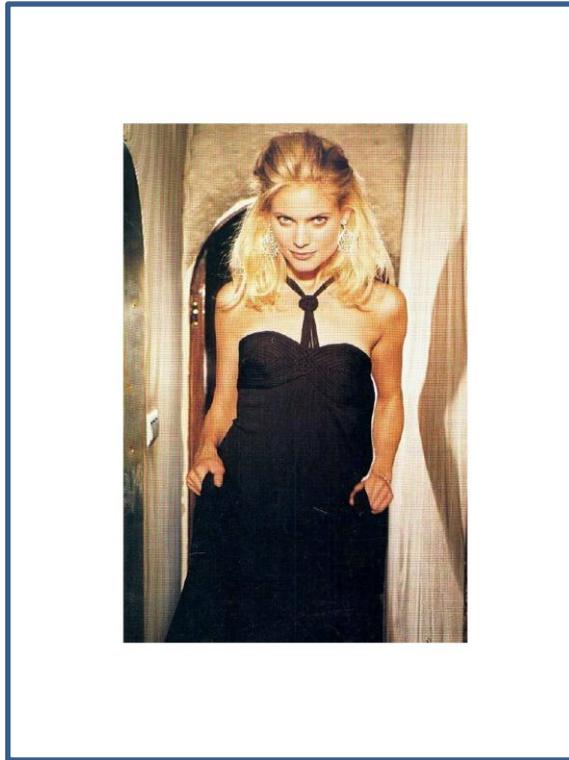
This is a Peter Som look from his Look Book- photo album sent to editors, buyers and special clients- now sent on CD, use dot be sent in 3x5 photo format.- nice keepsake for the shows



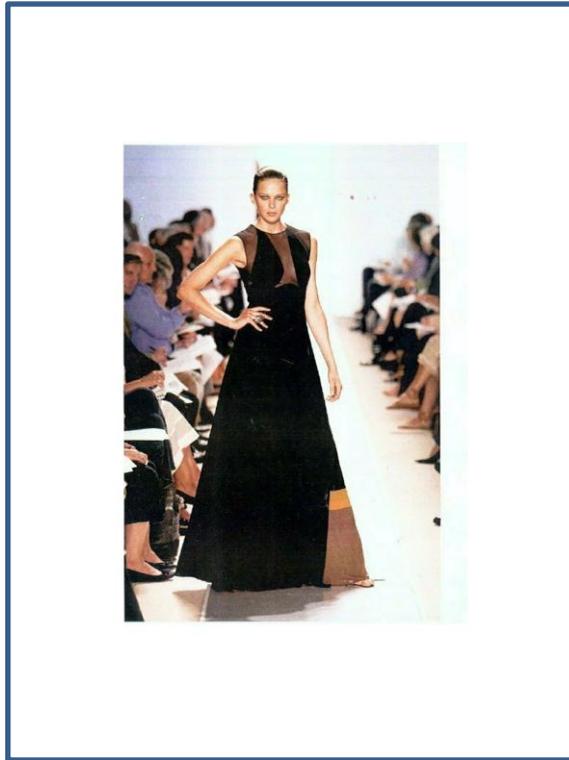
Meryls streep's daughter on the red carpet



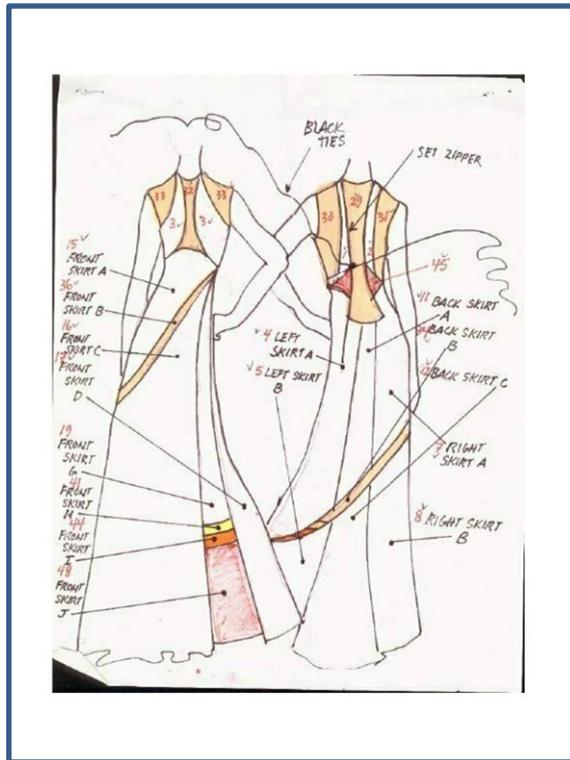
Everything must be documented, 'Making a life size drawing has been the best method that I have found-



Once you figure out how to accomplish a detail, you must be able to record and explain the work as well. Oftentimes the original sample will be at a trunk show or on loan to a client or store, so your records must be understandable, should the original not be available when production is being made.



Ralph sold this gown to Princess Nouria of Saudi Arabia. On the surface it looks like a fairly simple color blocked gown. In instances like this it is important that the cutting be correct, so I do my best to clarify the assembly of the gown

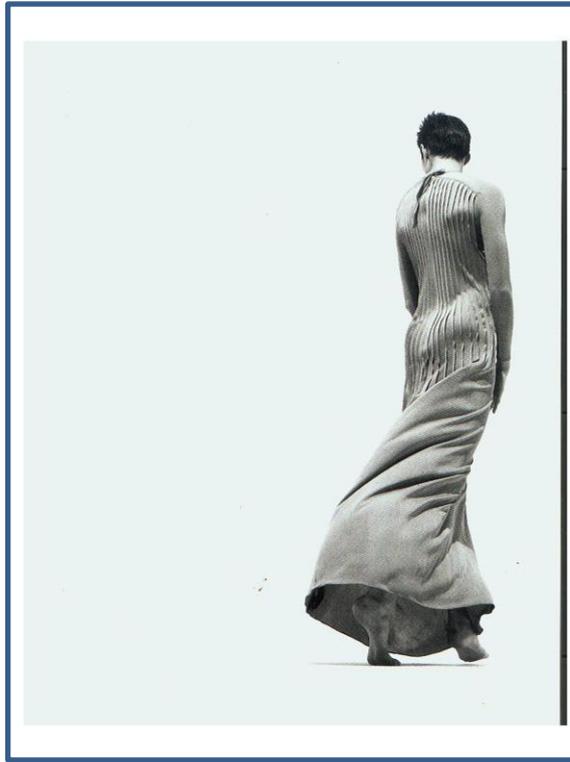


In addition to using single notches on the front pieces and double notches on the back parts, I include a schematic drawing, labeling all the parts so that operator can see the way they should be assembled. If there are many many pieces, I will number the notches, so that the samplemaker can match the numbers to put together the gown

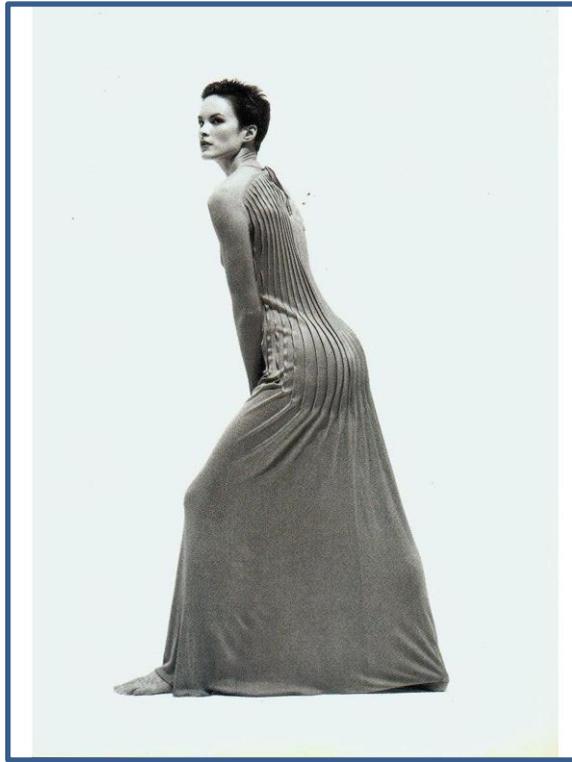
This is the top layer of the gown



The same gown on the runway for Spring 2010,
For production the stripes were reworked so that
the stripe that covers the bust is wider than the
others.



Mr. Beene has said that this gown was his favorite from his entire career. Mr Beene had the same draper for over 30 years. Charlie pipia understood what Mr Beene wanted almost before Mr Beene knew himself, Although I did not work on this project, I include it today because it exemplifies the type of collaboration that can occur between a designer and patternmaker. Mr. Beene was in Italy at the time, Charlie was in the studio in New York. Mr Beene had the idea that he wanted to make a dress that would look like a man's hand traveling down the back of the woman. He told this idea to his draper, and this is what Charlie made





Ralph said that this one one of his favorite gowns of all time. The facing of the funnel neck is constructed in 8 pieces, with hymo, which some of you may know as hair canvas- and the outer shell is stretched and molded to the foundation to achieve the funnel shape.

The slab of jade that the model is wearing is a Chinese artifact that was purchased from an antique dealer.



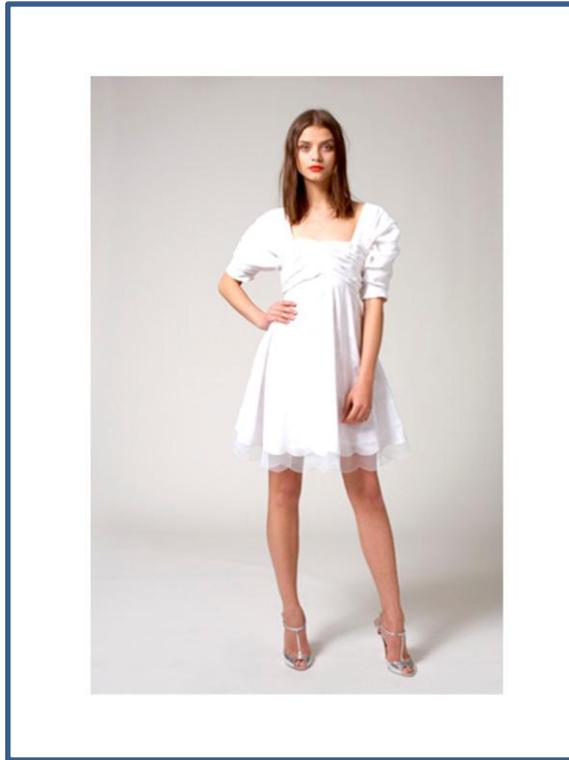
Another molded neck neckline created with the same technique. Duchess satin does not want to form easily, so you have to stretch it along the bias edges to make it conform to the shape of the foundation. This is the type of construction that you can only do in custom clothes because the handling must be impeccable and you must take great care not to damage or overpress the satin.



Here is a style that began as a skirt, Peter developed it into a dress which later appeared on the cover of elle magazine.



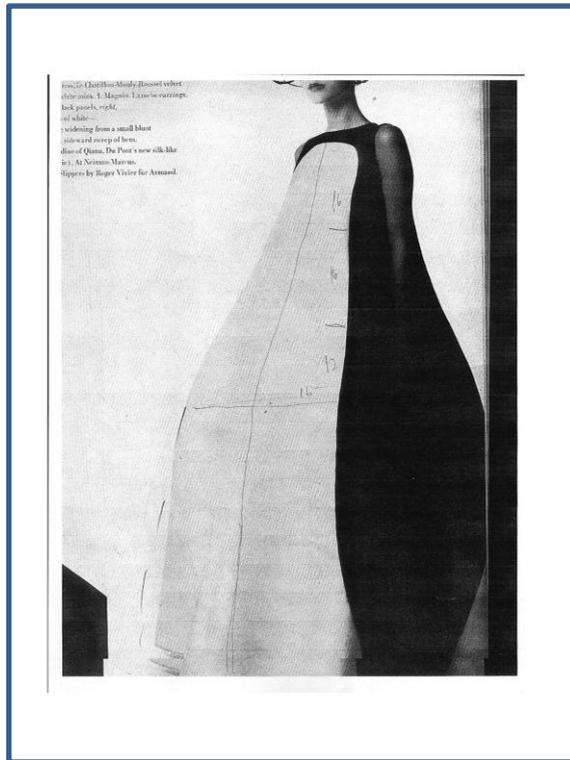
The skirt of the dress is the same as the muslin you just saw, then the top was added.



Occasionally Peter will incorporate [arts of a vintage dress, in which case you rub off the part and adapt to fit the design and a modern fit. This style used the sleeve of a vintage dress from Paris.



This is the same silhouette, refabricated and longer, different skirt.



Here is the original magazine page, you can see that I wrote my measurements on the photo when I was mapping the stylelines.



This Ralph Rucco gown was a recreation of a Balenciaga gown, it was an homage to Balenciaga,



This is a toile of one of my favorite pieces- I love the very dimensional ones- this skirt is made of alternating ribbons of satin and organza. The fullness of the skirt is determined by the distance between of peaks of the ribbons where they are tacked to the bottom of the satin yoke. I made several different spacings, photographed them, and Ralph chose the one he liked.



And the finished ensemble on the runway in Paris.

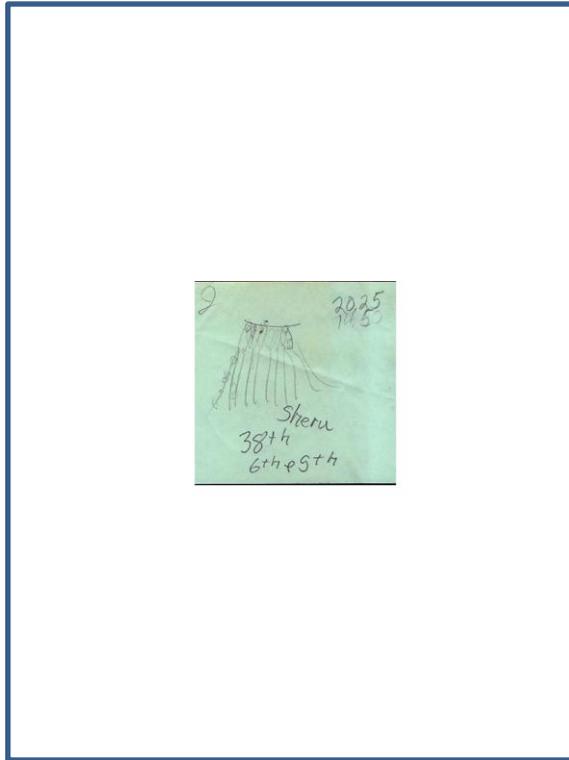
This was Ralph's first couture collection. Ralph is the first designer to show under his own name in Paris. In order to show in Paris you must apply to the Syndicat du Couture, you must be recommended by several French businesses, and you must be sponsored by a House that is a member of the Syndicat du Couture. The sponsor and references must state that your work is of the caliber of the rest of the French couture.



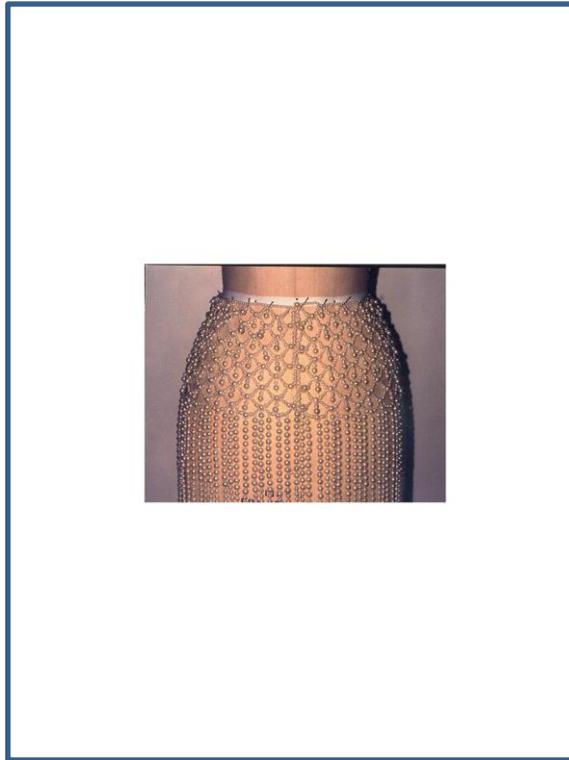
Model Alaïa with dress
a splendid number of
ruffles—the perfect
picture of a
woman. The simple
lines of Rucci's pieces,
opposite page, emphasize
her clean lines
and suggest a feather-
light ease.

This is the finished ensemble





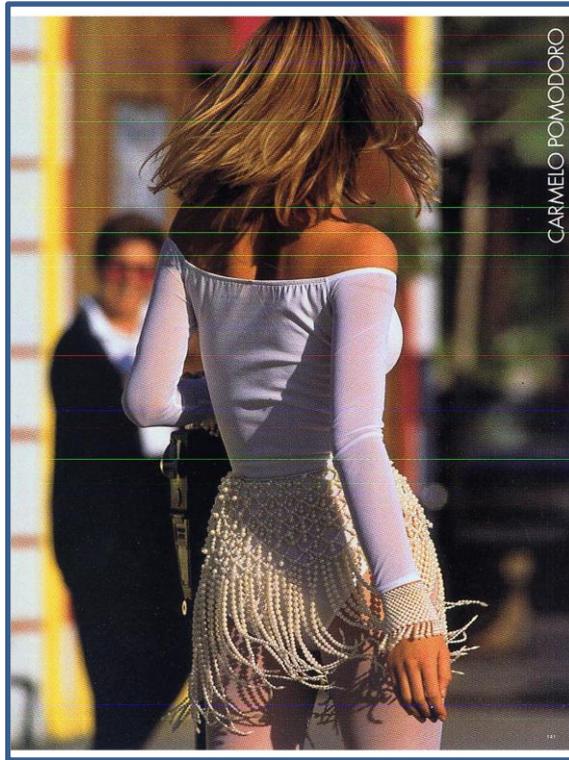
This project was one of the most demanding, frustrating and ultimately rewarding ones of my career. Carmello Pomodoro, asked if I would make a beaded skirt for their collection. When I arrived at their office the assistant presented me with this sketch, and a paper sack of pearls. That was all the information I was given. They wanted this to be part of the wedding gown for their show, The wedding gown is the final piece of the show, and is usually a fantasy piece, I decided that the yoke would be a segment of a circle, and I would begin by making one fifth of the circumference as a sample. Carmello approved the sample with minor changes. The construction of the skirt moved slowly, but without incident



With a non traditional material the choice of closure becomes a design problem. I generally prefer closures that are assimilated into the design of the item, so that they are unobtrusive I make buttons and loops for the back of the skirt. I worked on the skirt flat on the table with the pattern pinned to a piece of foamcore., so I did not see the skirt upright until it was complete. That was a mistake



The problem was that once I lifted the skirt onto the dress form, gravity took over and affected the fringe. Notice that the fringe is constructed of graduated pearls, big at the top and small at the hem. Because the stringing thread is nylon fishing line, it stretches. The Weight of the big pearls pressing down on the smaller ones, combined with the stretching of the fishing line caused each of the fringes to bend a bit. I had not noticed this effect when I made the sample because I used regular thread to make it, having no fishing line around the house,. This disaster is the sewign equivalent to having a warp that stretches or chirnks , that you discover because yhou didnt sample!!

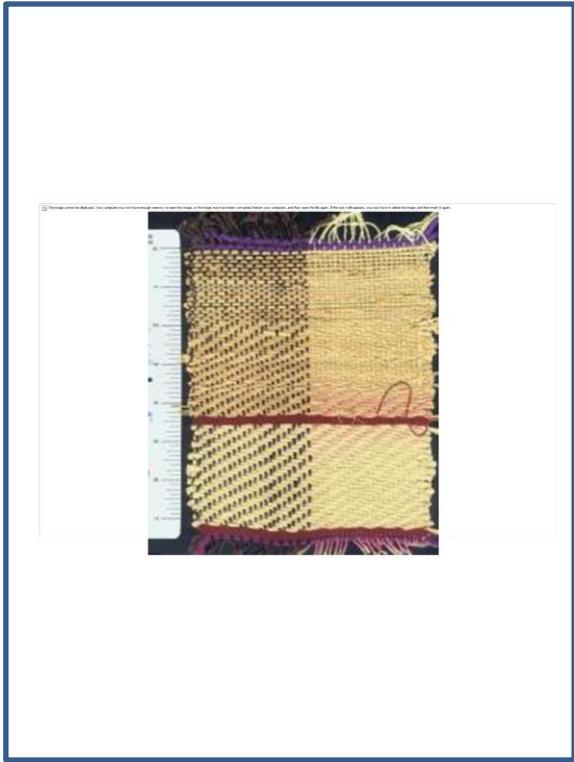


The only way to correct the fringe was to redo using a strong but less stretchy thread. I redid the fringe using Nymo beading thread, But that wasn't the end of the surprises

Seeing the skirt on the runway was the first time I saw it on a live model. It was so much more animated than I ever expected. The model walked to the end of the runway, she topped so that photographers could shoot, but the skirt kept moving. I also made the pearl cuffs that she is wearing, and someone did wear the skirt as part of their wedding gown







The image shows a person playing a harp on a stage. The harp is illuminated by a spotlight, and the person is wearing a light-colored outfit. The background is dark, and there are other people visible in the shadows.

