

DIGITAL AGNES

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Dare de LaFemme

Patterns for All Bodies: Repatterning the Collection of Canadian Dress at Agnes

Recorded 5 January 2024

SPEAKERS

Dare de LaFemme

KEYWORDS

Drag, Kingston artist, fashion history, Collection of Canadian Dress

TRANSCRIPT

Dare de LaFemme: When I was invited to be part of this project, I knew that it was a waistcoat that you had planned for me. But I had no image in my head of what that would -- well, I guess I had an image, but I didn't really know what to expect. So, I think I had watched a little bit too much, like, *Downton Abbey* type of stuff because I had pictured this, like, wildly ornate waistcoat. And then so my, like, mental image and what I saw weren't the same, but I thought it was a really interesting garment, especially knowing how long it had been around for. And some of the things that I really focused in on with this garment were these little polka dots that are all over the front of it that I thought were so interesting. So, there's, like, gold thread polka dots that were just so charming. Other things that I thought were really interesting about the garment were this, like, almost vertical but short collar. I thought that there were a lot of ways that that could be reimagined. And also, the pocket shape. These pocket shapes on the front of the garment are almost, like, an upside-down crown shape, which I thought was really engaging, and something that I thought had a lot of possibility.

How did I re-envision this historical garment? I would say I really wanted to make it feel, like, heavy and luxurious. I wanted to invite a lot of colours in because that's very much a part of my drag. I know that the original garment was white, but I wanted to shake that up entirely and bring in really, like, heavy velvet-type fabrics. But I wanted to keep the playful elements that were the things that originally caught my eye about the garment. So, I wanted to keep all of these gold Polka dots, even if that meant attaching something onto the front of the garment. I wanted to dramatize the pockets with extra detailing to draw the eye to them, as well as the detailing down the front. I really wanted to keep those elements and almost make them larger than life in a really playful way. And the same thing with the collar. I was -- like, I want this collar to be huge. And to me, that felt very drag, is taking something -- I was, like, a more practical piece that would have been, like, worn by somebody and then making it larger than life. It's kind of -- to me, it's the same thing that we would do with gender. And drag is taking, you know, a normal display of gender and dramatizing it, making it larger than life. I wanted to bring that into my reimagining of the garment as well.

I am so excited about the finished garment that was made for me. I think it's bright and colourful and really draws the eye in. I love the velvet and how it was put together. I love the little gold accents. We ended up with these little gold buttons, beads that were stitched onto the front of the garment to really give it this, like, playful element and bring in the Polka dots back in but in a different way. And then we also attached these giant poofy sleeves -- poofy white sleeves as well as a fluffy cravat-type neck piece. And I think it all just really adds this dramatic flair and I'm very excited to wear it and show it off.

In terms of accessorizing my waistcoat, accessories are a really big and exciting part of any drag outfit. So, there's definitely a few accessory pieces that I want to highlight in talking about how I might accessorize it. The first one is that we actually worked with a drag nail designer, and she received fabric samples of all of the fabric that we used, so all of the nails match the fabric that we are wearing. And they're really glamorous. And she's added all sorts of embellishments onto the nails. They are probably the most elaborate nails I've ever worn, and I think they work really well with what I was going for in the garment. Another thing is hair. This was actually the first time I attempted to style my own wig and I'm pretty happy with how it came out. What I was really going for was both height and length. So, I teased up the top to give myself a little bit of the height I am so lacking. But that didn't feel like enough to me. I really wanted to add -- to tie in the bedazzling that's happening on my body I wanted to bring that up to my hair as well, so I added these glamorous hair pieces on either side of my poofed-up wig. And then there are also long pieces of the wig that come down onto my body as well. It comes about to my waist and that is, like, a platinum blonde wig. So, I think it kind of ties the drama in by bringing it a little bit higher and a little bit longer. And then in true Dare de LaFemme form, I had to have a massive boot. So, I have massive, sparkly black boots to really bring the drama all the way down to my feet, as well as a gold pant to really just keep the sparkle going throughout the entire garment. In terms of jewellery, I'm going to be wearing, like, a ring or two and maybe an earring, but the garment itself is quite bedazzled, so there won't be a whole lot extra added on top of that.

I imagine it being a performance that doesn't move too fast because I want the audience to really be able to drink in the garment. So, I imagine it being performed in a way that is slow and dramatic with a lot of, like, prolonged eye contact with people, to really, like, give them permission to stare. I mean, the garment is bright and colourful and glitzy, and I want people to be invited into that experience with me.