

LAURA KIM & FERNANDO GARCIA



Teach Creative Collaboration
and Fashion



MasterClass

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MEET YOUR INSTRUCTORS

Laura Kim & Fernando Garcia

This creative duo have wowed design critics, dressed movie stars, injected new life into the legacy fashion label Oscar de la Renta, and launched their own line of luxury clothing—and they’ve done it all as a team



LAURA KIM

Some people were born to dress up. Laura Kim—designer, creative director, and dresser of stars—fits well into that category. Born in Seoul, South Korea, Laura’s first brush with the fashion industry came early: She remembers perusing fabric markets at the tender age of four with her grandmother, who worked in textiles and would pass along glossy magazines. Soon, Laura was learning the basics of sewing, sketching, and pattern making, developing a critical eye toward the latest trends.

At eighteen, she moved to New York City to study fashion at the Pratt Institute, one of the most renowned art and design schools in the world. Prestige brands like Donna Karan, TSE Cashmere, and Oscar

de la Renta all ushered Laura into their studios as an intern while she was pursuing her degree. She’d been warned by her parents that becoming a fashion designer would involve more behind-the-scenes work than red-carpet outings. But that’s exactly what Laura wanted from her career. She didn’t particularly enjoy the spotlight; she’d rather be in the studio or the factory.

This made her an excellent fit at Oscar de la Renta, where she went on to work for more than a decade after graduating from Pratt. She became the company’s design director, a catchall position that involved supervising everything from the development of collections to the designs of fabric, knitwear, and accessories.

This all-encompassing set of re-



sponsibilities also prepared her to launch a fashion brand, Monse, with designer Fernando Garcia in 2015. The duo's debut collection featured deconstructed pieces that creatively reimagined the simple, white button-down shirt as both stately gowns and less formal attire. In a bold move, Laura and Fernando made the decision to present their collections for both Oscar de la Renta and Monse back-to-back, without a break, in one big runway show.

For Laura, these chic looks don't just turn heads, they can also change the relationship people have with themselves. "I love seeing people in pretty clothes, making them feel better when they're in a beautiful dress or well-made suit," she says. "I love it for myself, too."

FERNANDO GARCIA

Fernando remembers how, as a child in the Dominican Republic, he'd watch star-studded awards shows on television with his mother, noting how the fashion on display would change year by year. "That's when I started to notice that there was more to it than just a dress on a girl," he says. That sent him down the rabbit hole of global fashion, researching some of the most influential designers—France's Nicolas Ghesquière (Louis Vuitton), Israel's Alber Elbaz (Lanvin), England's John Galliano (Givenchy and Dior), America's Tom Ford (Gucci)—to better understand their techniques and inspirations.

Still, Fernando didn't think a career in fashion was possible. He enrolled in architecture school, graduating from Notre Dame, a storied university in the American Midwest, in 2009. But his dressmaking dreams never faded. When a family friend

connected Fernando with Oscar de la Renta, he leaped at the chance to join the Dominican-born designer at his eponymous label as an intern.

There, Fernando began his fashion career as Laura's aide, and to say their pairing was fortuitous would be an egregious understatement. Right away, Fernando saw that he and Laura were "the people in the room telling each other the harsh truths every single moment," he says. Their refreshingly candid dynamic also proved harmonious and complementary on a technical level. (Fernando prefers to sketch, while Laura is an expert draper.) In addition to acting as creative counterpoints and business partners, they enjoy a strong personal bond; in the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, Laura cooked comfort foods for Fernando, leaving them at his doorstep. On tough days, they like to sketch and send each other motivational illustrations.

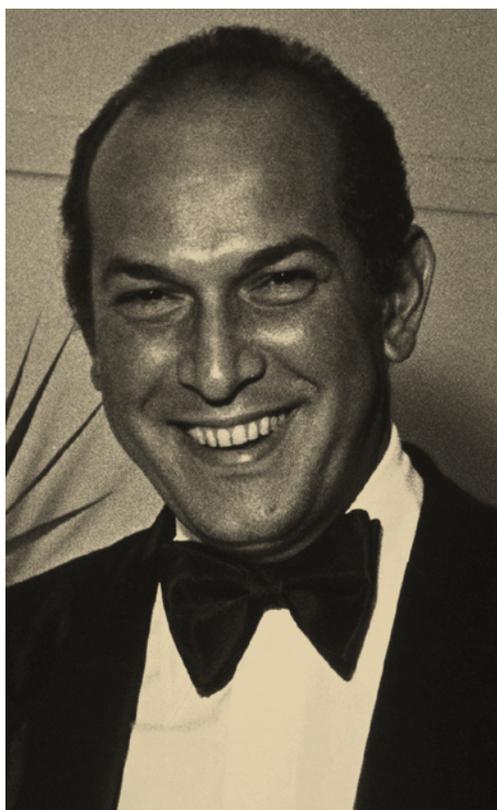
Many of Fernando's designs are inspired by his colorful childhood in the Caribbean, and they deliver a *joie de vivre* that's hard to fake. He recommends approaching the design process like an ever-unfurling story. "The collection is going to tell you where it wants to go as you develop it," he says.

Right away, Fernando saw that he and Laura were "the people in the room telling each other the harsh truths every single moment," he says.



Three of a Kind

Tracing the evolution of fashion industry giant Oscar de la Renta (and the meteoric rise of his two most successful pupils)



Oscar de la Renta



Oscar de la Renta is born in Santo Domingo, the capital city of the Dominican Republic.

1950

De la Renta relocates to study painting at Madrid's Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando.

1956

De la Renta is commissioned to design a dress for the daughter of a U.S. ambassador; the design lands on the cover of *LIFE*, one of America's most popular news and culture magazines. The following year, he begins apprenticing under legendary Spanish couturier Cristóbal Balenciaga.



Jackie Kennedy, First Lady of the United States, wears a de la Renta-designed dress during her first diplomatic visit to India.

1963

Following a stint in Paris working for the famed Lanvin fashion house, de la Renta moves to New York and joins the couture arm of the Elizabeth Arden brand.

1965

Anne Ford, an heir to the Ford automobile fortune, asks de la Renta to design her wedding dress, solidifying his reputation as a favorite dressmaker to American socialites. He also joins New York designer Jane Derby as a partner; when she retires, he takes over operations and begins designing his own clothing line.

1973

After becoming an American citizen, de la Renta is elected president of the Council of Fashion Designers of America, the country's top industry association, serving until 1976. (He later

holds the position again, from 1987–1989.)



Boy Scouts uniform



De la Renta redesigns the uniforms for the Boy Scouts of America, one of the nation's largest youth organizations, introducing the club's now iconic tan-khaki color scheme, bright neckerchiefs, and baseball caps, as well as key functional improvements—like socks with elastic cuffs instead of garters.



Jackie Kennedy

1991

De la Renta becomes the first American fashion designer to show at Paris Fashion Week, focusing on light, wearable pieces. The next year, he's also asked to design the top runway show for Balmain, making him the first American to design for a French couture house.



Hillary Rodham Clinton

1998

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton appears on the cover of *American Vogue* magazine wearing a velvet Oscar de la Renta gown. Clinton and de la Renta strike up a friendship; he

begins designing her signature pantsuits in a range of pastel colors.

2003

Laura starts interning at Oscar de la Renta while completing her fashion degree at Pratt Institute in New York City.

2008

De la Renta incorporates references to technology in his gowns, including sequins in formations that look like computer chips.

2009

Fernando joins Oscar de la Renta as an intern, reporting to Laura.

2014

De la Renta dies at his home in Kent, Connecticut, at the age of eighty-two.

2015

Laura and Fernando launch Monse, a luxury fashion label that deconstructs menswear and classic tailoring. The brand is swiftly embraced by celebrities, including pop-music stars Lady Gaga, Selena

Gomez, and Rihanna, as well as Hollywood actors Kerry Washington, Lupita Nyong'o, and Sienna Miller.

2016

Laura and Fernando are appointed co-creative directors of Oscar de la Renta.

2017

Laura and Fernando grace the cover of the "Top Designers" issue for *The Hollywood Reporter*, a premier U.S. entertainment industry magazine. They also take home the Swarovski Award for Emerging Talent at the prestigious CFDA Fashion Awards ceremony.

2019

Monse debuts its puppy-themed collection, featuring strappy heels made of dog-leash fabric, luxe collars and leashes, and dog-sized sweaters.

2021

Laura and Fernando dress actor Sarah Jessica Parker for the premiere of the style-centric Amer-



Sarah Jessica Parker

ican television program *And Just Like That....* They also design singer Billie Eilish's dress for the fashion-forward Met Gala—a buzzy annual benefit for the New York Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute—receiving acclaim from the press as one of the evening's most stunning looks.



FASHION'S FINEST



du *OS*

By leveraging complementary skills to realize a shared vision, Laura and Fernando are following in the footsteps of fashion greatness. Here's a look back at some powerhouse pairings who made creative magic (and, in some cases, shook up the industry while doing so)



Misfit & Manager: **Rei Kawakubo & Adrian Joffe**

Rei Kawakubo, the Japanese avant-gardist and founder of Comme des Garçons, is known for her provocative, architectural cuts that explode our understanding of what clothing can be. During the 1980s, her hallucinogenic, alien-like forms shocked the fashion world, presenting a bombastic vision for the future of clothing. In 1987, Kawakubo met her South African-born husband, Adrian Joffe, and they married in 1992. Today, he serves as president of Comme des Garçons, and while the two live in separate apartments in different metropolises—Joffe in Paris, Kawakubo in Tokyo—they see each other at least once a month and take a week to travel between collections. (Kawakubo once told an interviewer from the fashion magazine *Elle* that “one’s lifestyle should not be affected by the formality of marriage.”) Kawakubo rarely grants interviews, so Joffe also serves as her media interpreter.



Prince & Power Broker: **Yves Saint Laurent & Pierre Bergé**

Creative partners for almost fifty years, this twosome made the Saint Laurent brand a household name. Bergé and Saint Laurent founded the fashion label in 1961 as they were entering into a romantic relationship; in fact, it was Bergé who urged Saint Laurent (then a designer at Christian Dior) to set up his own house. They jointly launched the sub-brand Rive Gauche, offering more affordable, ready-to-wear designs appealing to younger consumers—a revolutionary market strategy for a luxury brand at the time. Their personalities proved complementary, with Bergé tempering Saint Laurent’s rough edges; although their romance ended in the late 1970s, they successfully worked together until Saint Laurent’s death in 2008.



Much & Muchness:
Viktor Horsting & Rolf Snoeren

The work of this Dutch duo is often described as a mash-up of high art and fashion, with meme-ready gowns that seem more like mobile art installations than anything you'd find at the nearest department store. No wonder, then, that both Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren curated postmodern exhibitions in galleries across Europe before making a splash in the world of high couture. Friends since meeting at the age of eighteen while applying to the Academy of Arts in Arnhem, the two are confidants who share everything with each other—from problems in their personal lives to urgent work matters. Snoeren considers it a nonjudgmental partnership, which works well because of their many similarities—namely a seemingly innate desire for artistic provocation.



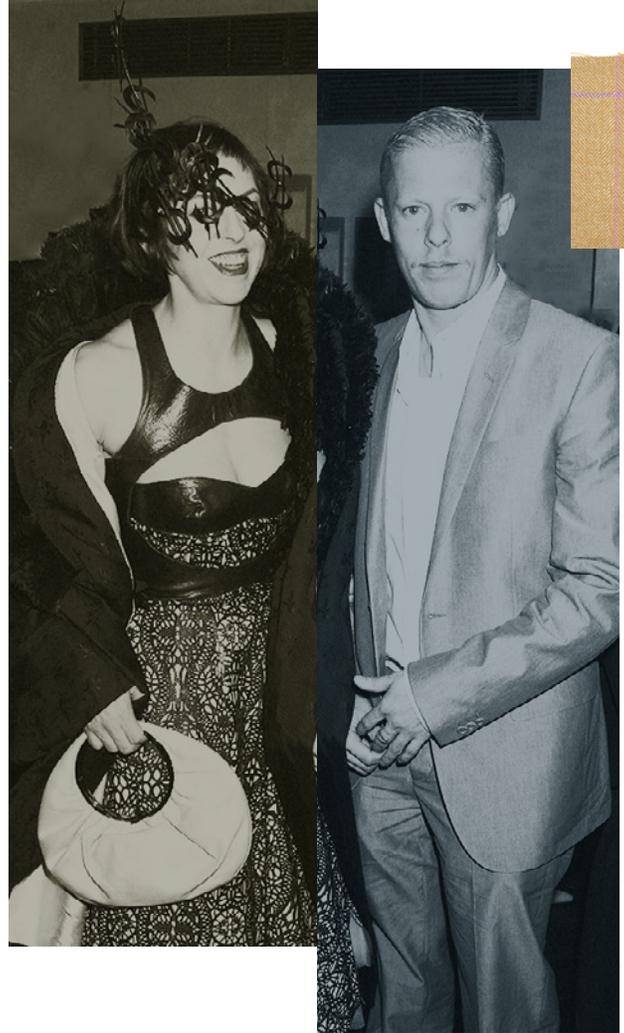
Prophet & Apostle:
Telfar Clemens & Babak Radboy

It's no coincidence that Telfar Clemens, the visionary Liberian American designer, officially launched his unisex Telfar brand after meeting Babak Radboy, a conceptual artist who's now the company's artistic director, responsible for corporate negotiations and brand messaging. Together, the pair built a label that lets them do things on their own terms (while cleverly commenting on topics like cultural appropriation and Black erasure). Radboy is known for pushing Clemens to market his goods in innovative ways, like redesigning employee uniforms for the fast-food chain White Castle. The strategy has proved fruitful: The Telfar tote bag—made of faux leather—was ranked third on a 2020 quarterly Lyst Index of the most desirable women's products. Which is all the more remarkable given the ubiquity of lower-key, quarantine-minded fashion staples like sweatpants and hoodies.



Rebel & Romantic: Vivienne Westwood & Andreas Kronthaler

In 2020, English designer Vivienne Westwood came out of COVID-19 quarantine, donned a canary costume, and perched inside a giant birdcage to protest on behalf of Australian publisher Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks. This performance was extremely on-brand for the fashion icon, whose rebellious spirit is nurtured by her devoted husband, Andreas Kronthaler. The two met when Westwood was teaching fashion design at the Vienna School of Applied Art; he's since compared their immediate connection to "enlightenment" and "having his soul touched." They married in 1993; Kronthaler was twenty-seven years old and Westwood was fifty-two. In the decades since, as signature looks from Westwood's brand helped define the aesthetic of London's punk movement, Kronthaler has taken over designing the menswear collections, with both of them working on the Gold Label, a semi-couture line.



Enfant Terrible & Eccentric: Alexander McQueen & Isabella Blow

Fashion history is filled with tales of designers and their muses. Few were more fruitful (or tumultuous) than the relationship between Alexander McQueen and Isabella Blow. The former was a tailoring prodigy from London's East End housing projects, the latter an English socialite and fashion editor known for wearing intricate headpieces to ward off "vampiric" fashion colleagues. Blow emerged as an early patron and champion of McQueen's work, encouraging the young designer to fully embrace his provocative, darkly theatrical vision of sartorial beauty. Their dynamic was complex and intense, eventually becoming dysfunctional and souring, but the results proved nothing short of iconic. McQueen's runway shows during the 1990s helped make him one of the world's most revered designers.



4^D PICTURE POST SEASIDE GIRL COMPETITION
ASK HER! SHE MAY SAY 'YES'!
HIROSHIMA TODAY: Exclusive picture report

HULTON'S NATIONAL WEEKLY
WEEK ENDING 6 AUGUST 1955
WEDNESDAY



FINDING CREATIVE INSPIRATION

Don't just sit around waiting
for a big idea to strike you
like lightning

Cristóbal Balenciaga, the Spanish designer who reigned over haute couture in the twentieth century and mentored a young Oscar de la Renta, had a multidisciplinary approach to inspiration. He found creative prompts in an eclectic range of cultural mainstays, from bullfighting and flamenco dancing to Catholicism and the history of painting. Balenciaga said that a fashion designer must combine the instincts of an architect, a sculptor, a musician, and a philosopher.

Likewise, Laura and Fernando see

their fashion as influenced by a host of factors, some of which are subconscious. Fernando believes his “fearlessness” with color was sparked by his childhood in the Dominican Republic. For Laura, designs can be influenced by movies she’s recently watched, food she’s eaten, or people she’s seen on the street.

Whether you’re feeling daunted at the start of your design journey or stuck somewhere in the middle, here’s how to get out of your head and find more inspiration in your own life.



ESCAPE THE ROUTINE.

Off-the-wall ideas are practically fashion's lingua franca. When avant-garde perfumers at Comme des Garçons were developing a fragrance called Odeur 71, they took inspiration from disparate industrial sources like the smell of dust on a hot light bulb, warm photocopier toner, and lettuce juice. (Yes, really.) Helmut Lang, the pioneering Austrian fashion designer, drew inspiration from astronauts, underground clubs, and bulletproof vests. Other designers have emulated IKEA bags, psychedelic jam bands, bistro chairs, and ugly running shoes.

All of which is to say: Being an oddball can work in your favor! If you're not feeling particularly odd, try doing something different near where you live; you might tour a factory, visit your city's offbeat museums, or take a road trip to an abandoned town. Bring a notebook and write down every detail of your experience—sights and smells, but also feelings. Let the experience marinate. Pay attention to any ideas that bubble up. The fashion you bring into the world will be enriched by escapes from normalcy.



LOOK TO THE PAST.

Fashion is all about what's next. But it's also constantly revisiting (and revising) the past. European Renaissance fashion has influenced designs by everyone from Christian Dior to Alexander McQueen, while designers like Ralph Lauren have expertly channeled the ruggedness of clothing once worn by cowboys and ranchers in the American West. Even vintage materials pop up in modern designs: Those famous synthetic Prada bags are crafted from the same type of water-resistant nylon (called Pocono) that was stitched together on nineteenth-century sewing machines to make military parachutes.

To get a sense of historical perspective, try visiting a vintage-fashion store in your city or perusing the shelves of rare books at your local library. (Many libraries also offer remote access to digital photo archives that allow for fashion queries by decade.) Other options include the costume and textile collections at local universities and art museums, which you can often visit either in person or online.





KNOW YOUR REFERENCES.

When drawing inspiration from another time, make sure you understand that era. Books like *Dress Codes: How the Laws of Fashion Made History* by Richard Thompson Ford and *The African Lookbook* by Catherine E. McKinley explore how fashion upholds systems of power. Dress has been used to enforce social prejudices (for example, at numerous points in history Jewish people have been forced to wear specific symbols as a form of othering) and pilfered by tastemakers from those with less sociopolitical power (including many African creatives).

Depending on your background and the communities to which you belong, fashion and design can present opportunities to reclaim certain aspects of your culture or history. Still, even seemingly benign visual references can be fraught. Before pulling from a historical concept or motif, learn as much as you can about its context. Do the research and consider the implications. Make sure members from the culture or community that you're referencing are involved in the project (and listen to what they have to say). Use good judgment.

RAID THE FILM ARCHIVES.

Film is a visual medium that floods the brain with an ever-changing variety of architecture, objects, wardrobes, backgrounds, tints, and silhouettes. No wonder, then, that it's long served as a font of inspiration for fashion designers, both by way of individual muses (think glam Hollywood icons like Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn, and Grace Kelly) or the costumes designed to achieve a particular aesthetic (like the moody noir films of the 1940s). Laura and Fernando, meanwhile, have designed collections based on the films of American directors Wes Anderson and Sofia Coppola, both of whom are known for their intricate, offbeat visual styles.

For your own celluloid inspiration, seek out bold-looking and aesthetically transgressive films—decadent dramas, neon-lit indies, sleek period pieces. You can also watch films with characters whose impeccable or idiosyncratic style of dressing has become iconic. No matter your taste, pay close attention to the color palette and outfits the directors have used to evoke specific moods. And if one of those moods resonates with you, run with it!





FASHION FUNDAMENTALS

Harness the power of sketching, draping, and color theory

Laura and Fernando's approach to fashion design, both for Oscar de la Renta and Monse, is evocative and often conceptual. In terms of execution and process, though, the duo remain firmly rooted in the real world, relying on the strength of practical skills in order to bring their vision to life. Using these foundational tools will make you a better designer, too.

SKETCHING

Many designers depend on drawings in the early stages of the creative process. Fernando is no exception. For him, the sketchbook isn't only a place to explore ideas—it's a method for conveying crucial information about his vision to other team members. Sketches “do not need to be perfectly detailed,” he says. “They just need to express an emotion so that the person you're passing this sketch [to] understands what you're trying to get to.” Basically, if you can capture the gist of your concept on paper, you'll have better luck collaborating with others to make it into a reality.

Even if you've got a clearly defined idea, Fernando recommends letting the design flow from your mind, through your hand, and onto the page. He usually starts with a lightly drawn figure sketch (see “How to Draw a Fashion Figure” on page 22) in black or gray pencil then builds the garment onto its body, allowing room to make mistakes and change his mind as he goes. In the early stages of a sketch, he keeps the garment details to a minimum. This is as much a matter of practicality as a personal preference: Too much penciling leaves heavy carbon, which can muddy colors he might add later.

If the brand moves forward with a design sketch, it'll serve as a blueprint for Fernando's colleagues later in the fashion production process, including the patternmakers and print designers, as well as those sewing the garment. Accordingly, Fernando stresses the importance of design clarity, specifically when adding color; he'll add the skin tone of the figure first, framing in the negative space of the blouse or dress, so it's clear how the fabric lies. “If there's some transparency, you try to add a little bit of that [tone] into the

sketch so that they know that this is meant to be translucent,” he adds.

Fernando also likes to use *line weighting*—a term that describes the relative “weight” of a line, referring to its lightness, darkness, or heaviness—to give the team additional information about how he imagines light will hit the fabric. (This is a technique he picked up in architecture school, where he'd use line weighting to add depth and shape in flat sketches of building facades.) Once his drawing is colored, instead of spending time adding shadows and shading, he'll simply use a dark pencil to “double down,” retracing lines on the unlit side of his figure and garment. He'll also do a final once-over, adding even more weight to “defining lines” to emphasize the hems, neckline, waist, and any other contours (like a shirt cuff or leg slit) so the patternmaker can see how to cut the garment's panels.

± 2"
separate stripe
→

#13
15.34
16.5

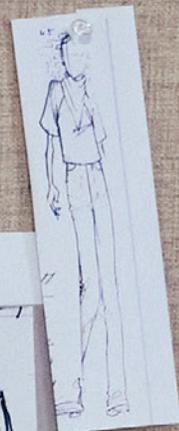


Keep this detail

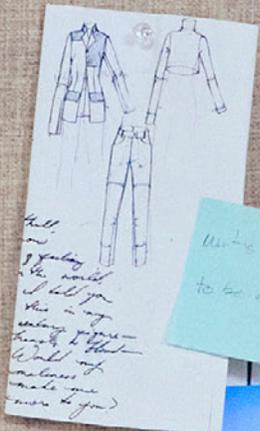


Keep Pattern
* Low Cut
* Low Blue
* Keep Yellow

material ideas
Harris tweed



add to
seams



Waist need
to be adjusted



Little Pink dress
* Home
* Hopper
* Heels
* Home teeth

NO ROUND
- SQUARED OR
- ROUNDED



17.6
17.94
8.48



fluted
clash
tapered

BACK TO
BASICS



ASSIGNMENT
Experiment
With Utensils

When it comes to putting pencil to paper, everybody has their own approach—and yours may not involve pencils at all. “Some people love pastels, some people love acrylic. Some people love ballpoint pens,” Fernando says. To him, it’s a matter of which implement “will express with the most honesty your vision for the final outcome.” On scratch paper, explore the utensils that Fernando mentions (and others). Which one feels smooth on the page? Which is most delicate? What about the heft? Sharpness? Keep going until you’re acquainted with the line and movement each utensil creates. Now whenever you get an idea, you’ll know which instrument is right for the garment you’ve got in mind.

How to Draw a Fashion Figure in 8 Steps

The body proportions of a fashion figure aren't the same as a human body. Generally, a fashion figure follows the industry standard of a nine- or ten-head length: This means the length of a fashion figure is approximately nine or ten times the size of the drawing's head. These elongated proportions help to showcase garments, particularly dresses and skirts.

1. Draw a vertical line down the center of the paper.

This line, which stretches from the head to the feet, will be the figure's center of balance.

2. Separate the paper into nine equal sections.

The nine sections will include the head, chest, waist, hips, thigh, calves, ankles, and feet. Draw horizontal lines, roughly an inch and one-eighth each, to separate the nine sections.

3. Draw the pelvic area.

In the middle of the balance line, draw a square for the pelvis. This can be angled in different directions in order to create different poses.

4. Draw the torso and shoulders.

Draw two curved lines upward from the top of the pelvic

square to create the torso. The lines should bend inward and outward again to create the waist. The shoulders should be approximately the same width as the pelvis. Angle the shoulder lines according to the pose you've chosen for this figure.

5. Draw the neck and head.

The neck should be one-third of the shoulder width and half the length of the head. Draw a circle for the head in proportion with the body.

6. Draw the legs.

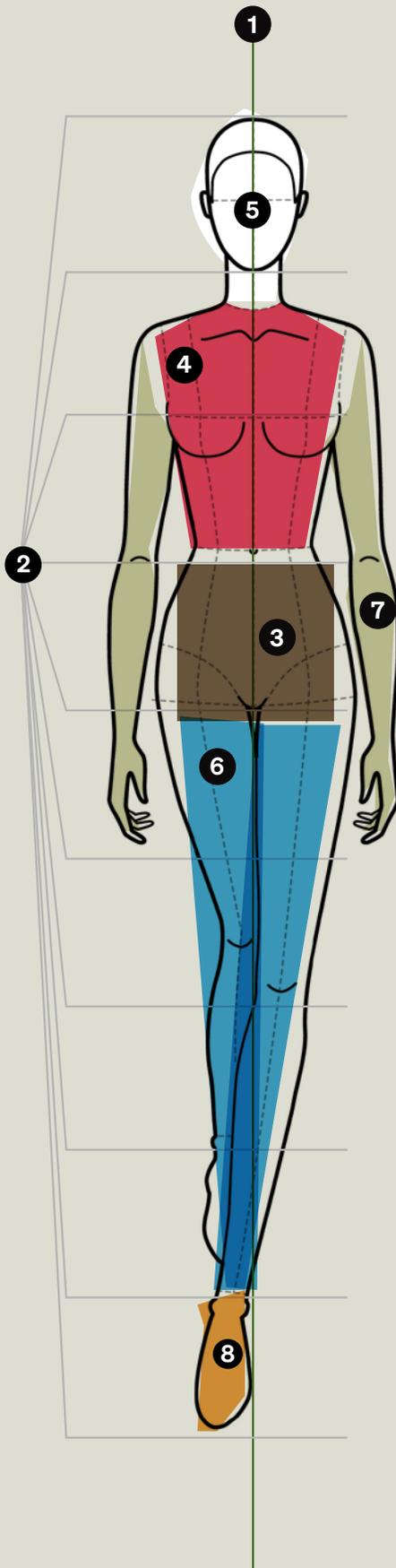
These should be approximately four times the length of the head. Portion the legs equally into two sections: the thighs and the calves. In terms of width, the top of the thighs should be equal to the head (ear to ear). Taper down to the knee, expand the width for the calves, then taper again, so the ankles are one-fourth the width of the head.

7. Draw the arms.

Create the arms with tapered lines to the elbow, then again to the wrist. The arms can hang alongside the body or be posed with hands on the hips.

8. Draw the feet.

These should be approximately the length of the head.



Now that you've drawn the basic figure, you can begin to sketch out your garment design on top of it. Shade the garment to show movement in the fabric and/or highlight where material gathers. Color in the drawing and add any fabric embellishments that you envision. Enjoy!

DRAPING

When it comes to the design process, Laura prefers to spend more time on draping—using fabric and pins to three-dimensionally prototype ideas on a mannequin or dress form. This skill, like sketching, can be essential, allowing fashion designers to convey crucial information about a garment to collaborators and other stakeholders in the process. Laura also notes that you don't need a fully realized concept to start draping; it's okay, she says, to "just play on the form"—especially if your personal strengths are more tactile than conceptual. Take cues from your material and follow an idea until you arrive at something. "I am very good with my hands; I love molding, crafting, sculpting, painting," she explains. "So I think this is my forte as a designer, what I'm good at in my process."

Draping allows you to see how the details of your idea translate at scale, as well as evaluate fit and movement. It can also help determine practical aspects of a garment, like how well it might breathe or adapt to motion, or how certain sections might need support or internal structure. Generally, you drape using a fabric that's light in color ("so you can actually see the lines," Laura says) and cheaper than the fabric you'll use for the actual garment (see "Make Use of Muslin" on page 26). Don't break into the pricey silk or chiffon until you're making the final prototype!

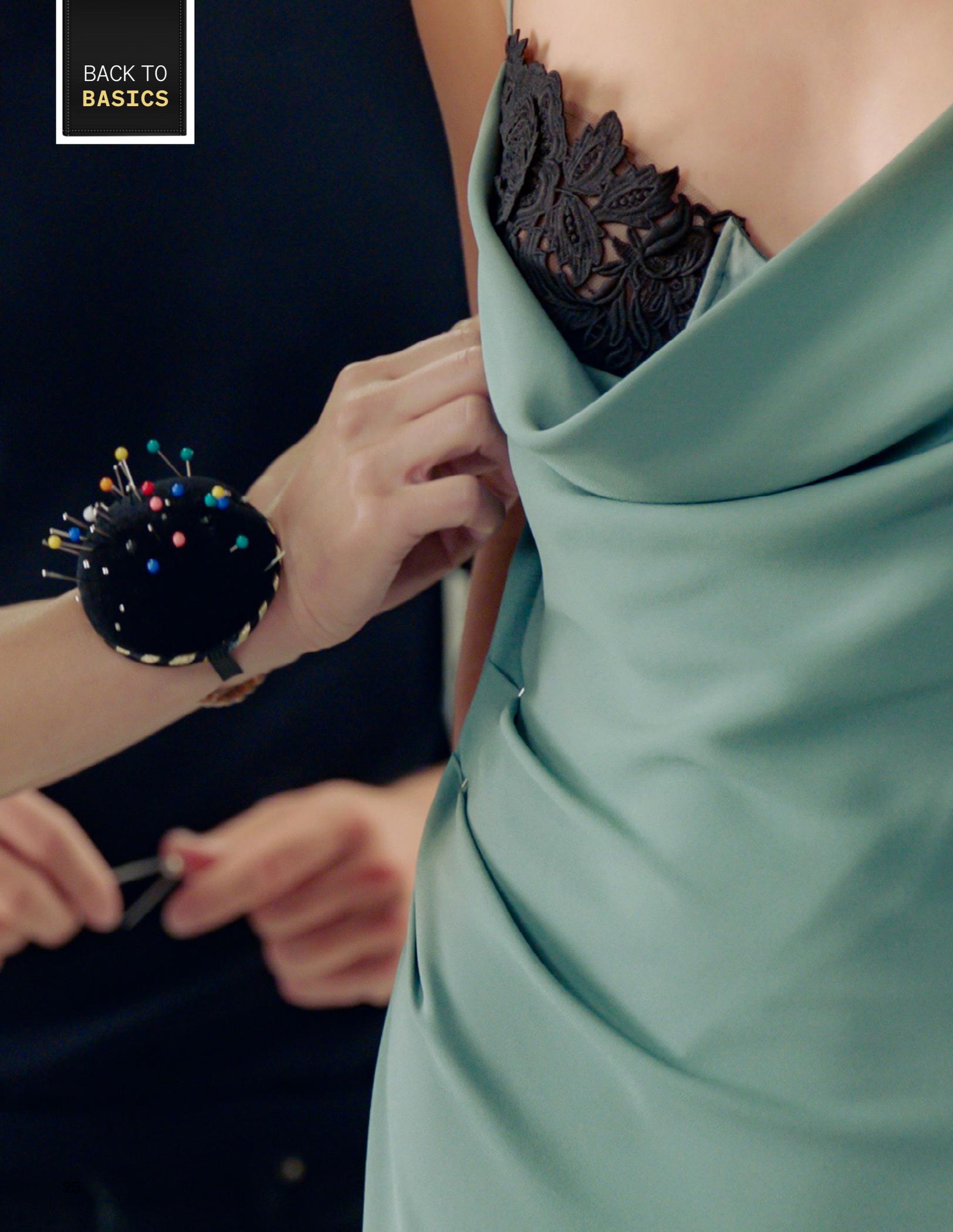
In terms of process, draping is deceptively simple: Start by measuring and cutting your fabric into generous pieces, then swathe the mannequin or dress form with the fabric, section by section, pinning and fitting the material to the form itself. Continue to tailor until you've achieved the look you imagined (or keep experimenting until you're pleased with the results), adding some indications of where the seam lines should go. Once you finish making all the relevant notches, pleats,

tucks, and so on, take the draped pieces carefully off the dress form. Now you're ready to create your final prototype: Using the garment's intended fabric, sew it together for fitting on a live model.

While almost anybody can pin fabric onto a dress form, maximizing the potential of draping takes time, practice, and, perhaps most importantly, a nuanced understanding of fabric and construction. Every dart, fold, gather, and stitch matters. Legends like Cristóbal Balenciaga, the twentieth-century Spanish couturier whose eponymous brand remains a stalwart, and Madeleine Vionnet, the French dressmaker whose bias-grain cuts (see "Know the Gain" on page 26) revolutionized eveningwear during the 1920s, were able to drape garments to perfection, giving their pieces stunning structure and unique movement. Similarly, Laura has developed an ability to manipulate various fabrics to achieve the desired aesthetic (and functional) outcome.



BACK TO
BASICS



Practical Tips for Draping

Draping garments will prove more helpful as you become more acclimated to the process. Consider these four tips to improve your draping technique.

Make Use of Muslin.

Although many textiles are suitable for draping, muslin is one of the most common. This light, inexpensive fabric allows amateur designers to repeatedly prototype their creations without breaking the bank. Whether you're designing a simple top or full-length dress, muslin (quite literally) affords you creative wiggle room.

Know the Grain.

During prototype fittings, Laura is always careful to note the fabric's grainline—the direction in which the yarns of the textile are woven. The lengthwise grain runs parallel

to the selvage (the self-contained edge of the fabric); the cross grain runs perpendicular to the selvage; the bias grain runs diagonal at a 45-degree angle. Cutting on the grain, across the grain, or on the bias makes the fabric fall differently—and may require different methods for sewing and assembly.

Get Creative.

The art of fashion draping should be just that: an art. So long as you're using cheap fabric, you don't have to get it "right" the first time. Take a cue from Laura and experiment with your garment's design. Let the fabric dictate

your creative direction. The end result might be different from—but far better than—your initial idea.

Mind the Specifics.

As you move through the draping process, pay attention to the finer points of your design. Don't let an overfocus on one aspect of a prototype lead you to disregard another. Instead, hone in on each specific element of the garment as you go, like Laura does. Conclude by looking at the entire design holistically.

ASSIGNMENT **Tell Your Color Story**

Color brings coherence to a fashion collection, establishing a shared narrative that allows space for designs to be distinctive without feeling disparate. To articulate and refine a color story for your own collection, match your reference or mood board images with free paint-chip cards from a hardware store. Cut the samples into various sizes, then juxtapose them side by side, noting how different proportions look in context. Tape the strongest combinations into a page of your sketchbook. Continue experimenting with the temperatures of these colors until they harmonize—and convey the mood for the collection you're envisioning.

COLOR

For the standout piece in Oscar de la Renta's 2022 interseason collection, a green-gold ombré gown, Laura and Fernando drew inspiration from the work of Ugo Rondinone. The Swiss-born artist is known for his large-scale totem sculptures, constructed from organic materials and painted in a succession of bright, vibrant colors to kaleidoscopic effect. When Laura introduced imagery of Rondinone's installation *Seven Magic Mountains*, Fernando immediately latched onto the artwork's juxtaposed hues.

"The color combinations that we found were quite amazing, one of which inspired me right away," Fernando recalls. "The citrine and the forest green...it really felt fresh to me. I hadn't seen that color combination in a very long time, if ever."

It gave him an idea: Combine several Oscar de la Renta heritage elements—luxurious chiffon, elegant pleating, smart draping—with a bold new pattern. The resulting piece showcased Laura and Fernando's keen ability to apply (and, when needed, subvert) the tenets of **color theory**. These are the general guidelines used by stylists and designers for mixing, combining, and manipulating colors.

Harmony describes color pairings that please the eye and provide a sense of visual order. Color schemes based on complementary (yellow and purple) and analogous colors (blue, blue-green, and green) are generally perceived as harmonious. But as Rondinone's *Seven Magic Mountains* demonstrates, cohesion isn't formulaic; there are no universally "correct" colors for achieving visual impact.

Laura and Fernando's print for the chiffon

gown also plays with **temperature**—a principle that deals with breaking down colors into warm tones (reds and oranges) and cool tones (blues and greens). This is part of what makes their design feel so bold: The neckline and hem exist on opposing ends of the temperature scale. And the difference in movement between the two—gathered and taut on top, flowing at the bottom—emphasizes the contrast.

All of these factors interact with the **context**, as colors behave differently depending on their application and the surrounding elements. For instance, a rusty orange may seem subdued when placed beside a vivid yellow, but when paired with a dark purple, the orange suddenly appears much brighter. Or, as you can see in Laura and Fernando's design, a bolt of citrine expertly paired with forest green can elevate both colors, giving these two gem tones a new shine.





The Color Wheel

Designers use the color wheel—a circle diagram that illustrates the relationships between different colors—for myriad purposes, from sketching and swatching to curating collections. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the German writer and aesthete, is credited with developing a common, modern template during the nineteenth century; his symmetrical, six-color wheel is similar to those you'll often see today. To get a better grasp on how colors interact, study up on the three tiers of a Goethe-style wheel.

1. Primary

Within the traditional RYB model, these colors are the core: red, yellow, and blue.

2. Secondary

Mixing any of the primary colors together results in secondary colors: green (yellow and blue), orange (red and yellow), purple (blue and red).

3. Tertiary

Mixing primary and secondary colors yields tertiary colors: magenta (red-purple), vermilion (red-orange), amber (yellow-orange), chartreuse (yellow-green), teal (blue-green), violet (blue-purple).



- PRIMARY
 - Yellow circle
 - White circle
 - Red circle
- SECONDARY
 - Orange circle
 - White circle
 - Purple circle
- TERTIARY
 - Yellow circle
 - Orange circle
 - White circle
 - White circle
 - Blue circle
 - White circle

ASSIGNMENT Tell Your Color Story

Color brings coherence to a fashion collection, establishing a shared narrative that allows space for designs to be distinctive without feeling disparate. To articulate and refine a color story for your own collection, match your reference or mood board images with free paint-chip cards from a hardware store. Cut the samples into various sizes, then juxtapose them side by side, noting how different proportions look in context. Tape the strongest combinations into a page of your sketchbook. Continue experimenting with the temperatures of these colors until they harmonize—and convey the mood for the collection you’re envisioning.



- PRIMARY
 - Yellow circle
 - Blue circle
 - Red circle
- SECONDARY
 - White circle
 - Green circle
 - White circle
- TERTIARY
 - White circle
 - White circle
 - White circle
 - Blue circle
 - White circle
 - White circle
 - Light green circle



- PRIMARY
 - Yellow circle
 - White circle
 - White circle
- SECONDARY
 - White circle
 - Green circle
 - White circle
- TERTIARY
 - White circle
 - White circle



- PRIMARY
 - Yellow circle
 - White circle
 - Red circle
- SECONDARY
 - White circle
 - Green circle
 - White circle
- TERTIARY
 - Yellow circle
 - White circle
 - Magenta circle
 - White circle
 - White circle
 - Light green circle



Building a Happy Business Marriage

The keys to getting along
with your cofounder

From the beginning, Laura knew she'd found a creative partner in Fernando. As coworkers at Oscar de la Renta, their conversations were refreshingly honest. They both quickly recognized the value in this type of candor, she says. "And so we sort of leaned in on that."

What Fernando lacked, Laura made up for in spades—and vice versa. They forged a strong bond, allowing their creative (and business) endeavors to grow from the foundational dynamic of their friendship: The two were able to give and receive crucial feedback

that made both of them better at their jobs—without hurt feelings.

When you're looking for your own Laura or Fernando, it's important that you choose wisely, then put in the necessary work to keep your partnership thriving.

ASSESS YOUR DYNAMIC.

First, ask the important questions about how your working relationship may play out. Do you have mutual respect for each other? Can you be real about your differences? Are you good at listening to each other? Achieving a healthy work relation-

ship requires a significant amount of mutual appreciation. Here, Fernando doesn't mince words: "You have to respect your partner."

WORK TOGETHER FIRST.

It's easy to overestimate your compatibility with someone if you've never worked with them before. How will you know if they perform well under pressure, get along with others, or deftly manage a team? If you've never interacted with a friend in an office setting, consider chatting with your potential partner's former colleagues and asking how they handled mistakes, conflicts, and their own weaknesses, and then assess whether your working styles mesh.

SHARE VALUES AND GOALS.

No matter the venture, talk to your partner about where they envision themselves in the next five years. Are your goals complementary? It's okay if destinations shift, so long as you continue to sync up with your partner about your ever-evolving desires. "We were always working towards similar things, similar values," Laura says. "That's why it's easy for us. Make sure that you're each able to take responsibility for your actions when things go wrong, as they inevitably will: In those rare moments when clients are unhappy with their work, Laura says, "We're both like, 'You know what? That's my fault. We should change that.'"

SPEAK YOUR TRUTHS.

Creating opportunities for open communication is key to a successful business marriage—one that can evolve and grow. "We [always] want to better each other," Fernando

says. Adopting a learning mindset can help you see feedback as a means to self-improvement, rather than a threat, and can help you weather the inevitable turbulence of an honest relationship. That said, Fernando and Laura are sensitive to when the other is ready to hear their hot take. "It'll come in a natural way and when that person's ready and receptive and open, which is not the case for us every hour of the day," Fernando adds.

TRUST EACH OTHER.

When you trust each other's talents and work ethics, it's much easier to give your partner the freedom to pursue their creative visions, no matter how outlandish. Laura knows that Fernando will drive relentlessly toward whatever goal he chooses, and Fernando knows Laura will approach her work with meticulousness and grace. "If you don't have that complete level of trust, everything else kind of falls apart," Fernando says. "You've got to have a similar sense of ambition."

FIND SOMEONE WHOSE SKILLS COMPLEMENT YOUR OWN.

In some ways, Laura and Fernando might seem like an odd pairing—Laura describes herself as "type A," while Fernando is more spontaneous—but opposites attract. Laura has learned how to account for his working style when developing a new collection. "[Fernando's] chaos is built into my plan," she says. Similarly, Fernando has learned to trust Laura's instincts about the practical aspects of an idea. These two creative powerhouses are, in a word, simpatico.



Professional Advice

If you're planning on joining the fashion industry in earnest, take heed

UNDERSTAND THE ECONOMICS.

The fashion industry as we conceive of it now is a relatively recent phenomenon. Early fashion was made from plants, animal skins, and bones. Up until the nineteenth century, virtually all clothing was handmade by dressmakers, tailors, or the general public. But the sewing machine's emergence in the 1860s drastically changed the game, allowing manufacturers to pump out ready-to-wear apparel in finished condition and standardized sizes, while limiting the need for alteration.

Today, the global clothing and textile industry is a massive enterprise, employing folks with a wide range of

skill sets. From the rarified world of high fashion, where bold statement pieces reign supreme, to the more accessible apparel items you might find at a department store, clothes are a ubiquitous commodity. And even though the COVID-19 pandemic took a big bite out of sales, fashion revenue remains a formidable force, contributing around 2 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). Before you dive headlong into a fashion career, take the time to research the fundamental economics of the industry—how and where the money goes, who's involved, pricing models, the intricacies of manufacturing and distribution, where to



scrimp and where to splurge. If you're struggling to grasp the dollars and cents, that might be a sign that you should consider partnering with somebody who brings financial know-how to your burgeoning brand. (See page 30 for more.)

TARGET A CUSTOMER BASE.

To break into the fashion world, you need to know what you're selling—and who might want to buy it. Your customer base could be anyone from suburban hypebeasts to women golfers or chic camping enthusiasts; it's all game, so long as you perform key demographic research. First, identify (roughly) how much income your

potential customers may earn and provide an age range into which they may fall. Age ranges can also help you strategize how to market your product—targeting younger demographics on Instagram or older demographics in big-box stores, for example. Bear in mind that, no matter your strategy, you will likely need to continually research and track consumer demographic and sales patterns, making adjustments based on what you learn.

CREATE DESIRE.

Unlike many other industries, success in the fashion world isn't about the intrinsic value of your product,

but the desire you're able to drum up. And because the fashion industry is so strongly affected by larger cultural trends, designers' strategies for stoking that desire are always changing.

In the not-so-distant past, the road map to creating buzz was fairly straightforward: sell a line of clothes to a premium retailer, get published in a glossy fashion magazine, produce shows in Paris, and establish international storefronts. But these days, upstart fashion companies rely on creative social media advertising and well-designed e-commerce sites, as well as deep-pocketed wholesale buyers. Venture capital players have also emerged to fund fashion brands, though they're often more interested in the algorithm-based fashion of consumer desire than enabling designers to push creative boundaries.

Every year, the industry pumps out 150 billion pieces—roughly twenty pieces of clothing for every single person on the planet.

Still, one adage remains: Creating desire means striking the right balance between exclusivity and ubiquity. Put too much product into circulation and you risk becoming passé; too little and you won't turn a profit. So whether you're exploring a direct-to-consumer sales model, pay-

ing social media influencers to advertise your wares, or seeking out funding from a venture capital firm, be mindful of how many products you've made available to customers.

SHOOT FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

There's no getting around it: Modern fashion is a wasteful enterprise. Every year, the industry pumps out 150 billion pieces—roughly twenty pieces of clothing for every single person on the planet. As you might imagine, a significant percentage of that clothing ends up in a landfill or incinerator. In 2015, for example, the United States generated 16.1 million tons of textile waste; that's about a hundred pounds *per person*, and a 400 percent increase since 1960. Fast-fashion brands have even built waste into their business models: H&M failed to sell \$4.3 billion worth of clothing and still turned a profit for the year.

Donating your old clothes might give you a warm feeling but it's not going to solve our underlying problem. Our global waste-management system isn't equipped for this amount of clothing: from landfills in Ghana to polluted rivers in China, the planet can't survive our appetite for constant clothing production. Thankfully, there's a newfound appetite for upcycling in fashion. When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down fabric mills, designers turned to deadstock (leftover fabric from previous collections) for their new creations. Magazines, social media influencers, and stalwart brands have embraced the idea, too. But the change also reflects a reorientation of consumers' desires—moving from products that are disposable to those that can last a lifetime.

The Fashionable Person's Guide to Sustainable Thinking

Four ways to begin breaking the cycle of waste



1. Perform a Closet Audit.

Before putting new fashion out into the world, consider the environmental impact of the clothing you've already purchased. A closet audit can help you grasp the sustainability of your own wardrobe, while also giving you insights into the energy required to keep you dressed. Most importantly, it'll provide insights about how your actions connect to the global supply chain. Start by checking the tags on your clothing to see where it was made, noting that clothing produced in faraway countries requires more carbon to reach your door. Then check the materials; some textiles, like wool, are better for the environment than others, like synthetics. Finally, note which items came from fast-fashion outlets (and are low quality) and which ones you can imagine wearing for years to come. Keep the pieces you can't live without and donate everything else.

2. Learn How to Sew.

The more you're able to tailor your own clothes—patching up the odd hole, sewing a recent rip—the less tempted you'll be to buy replacements. This can change your relationship with your own shirts, pants, and dresses, helping you connect to them on a more meaningful and personal level rather than treating them as a disposable commodity. Sewing also viscerally connects you to the invisible labor that goes into all of your garments; if you're not sewing up an old shirt, you can be sure someone else is sewing up a new one. So invest in a sewing kit, attend a virtual embroidery workshop, seek out and follow sewing-pattern brands on social media, watch online tutorials on how to patch your jeans. Start doing more with the clothes you already own!



3. Get Acquainted With Eco-Friendly Fabrics.

It can take upward of seven hundred gallons of water to produce a T-shirt. Nearly a thousand gallons are needed to produce a standard pair of blue jeans. Eco-friendly fabrics last longer, require fewer (or no) chemicals to make, and produce less overall waste. Organic cotton, for example, uses 62 percent less energy and 88 percent less water than conventional cotton. Recycled cotton is produced using postindustrial or postconsumer waste. Other sustainable fabrics include organic hemp, organic linen, and organic bamboo.

4. Take the "No New Clothes" Challenge.

For the fashion savvy, the idea of refraining from new clothes may sound intimidating—or even impossible. But unshackling yourself from the fashion industry is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint, save money, and get more creative with the stuff you already own. (Think of it as a design challenge: How can you modify staid old garments into something new and exciting?) Consider buying only secondhand clothing, except for essentials like socks and underwear. And, instead of emotionally purchasing the latest trendy items, look for high-quality used garments that will last you a long time.





Monse's Resort 2022 collection celebrates the concept of escape (yes, those are mushrooms)

ASSIGNMENT

Create a Capsule Collection



Coined by London boutique owner Susie Faux in the 1970s, the term *capsule collection* refers to a range of functional, timeless, and aesthetically harmonious clothing. Donna Karan popularized the concept a decade later, releasing a capsule collection of fashionable workwear that she called “Seven Easy Pieces,” including a bodysuit, a tailored jacket, a cashmere sweater, a dress, a leather jacket, a white shirt, and a skirt. These garments could be worn any which way and still create a stunning silhouette. Capsule collections deliver key looks, but there’s no one way to put them together. The point is to curate a collection so adaptable it can last a lifetime. Ready to create your own? Keep this guide on hand as you’re working through the process.

● CONDUCT MARKET RESEARCH

Clothing brands are constantly investigating trends in the fashion market. Sometimes that means conducting a “comp shop” wherein an employee will scope out offerings at a competitor’s retail outlet, analyzing the stitching, design, and fabrics. The goal here is to identify market niches and to create something of value to a consumer.

ACTION ITEM: Wander the aisles of your favorite boutique and analyze the clothes they’re selling. What’s missing? What’s something you’d want to buy there? If you’re feeling stuck, try asking a salesperson what they wish the boutique stocked.

● CREATE A CUSTOMER PROFILE

High-end brands create clothing with their clientele in mind. When Laura and Fernando are designing for Oscar de la Renta, for example, they often cater to customers interested in feminine and luxurious clothing. Sometimes a brand will also cater to a muse—an inspirational or ideal customer who embodies the brand’s

essential style. (Note: This can be a real person. For example, French couturier Hubert de Givenchy famously cited Hollywood actor Audrey Hepburn as his archetypal customer, while beloved Italian designer Gianni Versace looked to his stylish sister, Donatella, for creative inspiration.)

ACTION ITEM: Think about the type of customer you’d love to see wearing your clothes. What’s their occupation? Where do they reside? What are their lives like? Try writing a short bio.

● ASSEMBLE A MOOD BOARD

Mood boards and color palettes (see page 27) can help designers lock into a theme or create a cohesive look for a new collection. Some brands use trend-forecasting companies, but you might draw inspiration from magazines, museum exhibits, or your own camera roll. Don’t limit yourself; the images you choose can be abstract, off the wall, seemingly disconnected from fashion. One of Monse’s resort collections, for example, was inspired by traditional British porcelain. Your

ASSIGNMENT

Create a Capsule Collection

mood board could also reflect the current political or social climate—fashion often reflects (and sometimes antagonizes) the world around it.

ACTION ITEM: Go to your favorite newsstand or bookstore and page through the magazines on display—not only the fashion glossies, but also food, art, music, and sports. Notice your physiological responses: Which images quicken your pulse? Buy publications that excite you (or snap photos of their pages) and assemble those images on a poster board or inside a notebook, arranging them so they complement each other.

● SKETCH SOME SILHOUETTES

Sketching a dress gives designers a chance to begin to understand the infrastructure of their clothing. Fernando likes to keep a dress silhouette “super simple.” Still, there are a few factors you’ll want to bear in mind, including drawing in a way that communicates the type of fabric you intend to use. If there’s transparency, for example, make that obvious in your design. You can also explain the depth of the garment by showing where the light is hitting. (See page 19 for more.)

ACTION ITEM: At this stage in your process, it’s time to start mocking up a design! What striking form will your design take?

● SELECT YOUR FABRICS

In picking your collection’s visual identity, perhaps no other choice is as crucial as fabric. Designers will sometimes travel thousands of miles to fabric exhibitions like *Première Vision* in Paris, while others buy directly from traveling fabric merchants. A sample length of fabric is usually ordered, which can be massive—if only a small amount of fabric is needed, designers will often pay far more for it.

ACTION ITEM: For your collection, explore the nearest fabric stores. What fabrics are you drawn to? Keep

in mind that the fabric should work with the design you’ve sketched. (Example: If your design is rigid and structural, chiffon probably isn’t the best textile option.) If there aren’t any fabric or craft stores in your area, visit the local vintage store. Is there anything there that you can cut into an interesting design?

● PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

In the final stages of creating a new collection, a designer will combine the key aspects of their research—including their sketches, fabrics, silhouettes, and mood boards—to present their collection to a potential buyer. This “look book” also typically includes patterns, toiles (muslins), specification sheets, and rough cost estimates for each look.

ACTION ITEM: Try putting together your own look book by combining your market research, fabric samples, sketches, and mood boards in one document. As you work on the book, you might find yourself editing ideas or incorporating completely new ones. Good! What’s important is that your finished line tells a visual story.



This look from Monse's Resort 2022 collection features a paracord motif, emphasizing sportiness and functionality

*“Latch onto people
who are strong enough
to push you but also
vulnerable enough to
listen to your ideas.”*

— Fernando Garcia





*“Understand who you
are as a person. Find
someone who can do
stuff that you can’t do.”*

— Laura Kim

Credits

**Image of Laura Kim and
Fernando Garcia with Carine Roitfeld**

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**Footage from “Making of a Red
Carpet Moment: Monse”**

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Footage of Billie Eilish

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