

**2016 Research Week Proposal Instructions and Template**  
**Posters and Presentations**

**Proposal**

**Title** – Nature’s Fierce Feline: Cotton Couture Fashion Inspired by Nature

**Program of Study** – Fashion Merchandising in the FACS department

**Presentation Type** – **Choose one of the following:** PowerPoint Presentation (residential)

**Mentor(s) and Mentor Email** – Mrs. Matalie Howard (mhoward@liberty.edu)

**Student name(s) and email(s)** – Rebecca Floros (rjfloros@liberty.edu)

**Category** – **Choose one of the following:** Creative/Artistic.

**Abstract example:** Nature’s Fierce Feline is a haute couture garment designed to resemble a cheetah in the wild and incorporates design techniques that form the garment to appear as a sculpture. The piece is a work of art that represents the creative versatility of cotton and should encourage other designers, textile marketers, and apparel specialists to examine the usefulness and innovative qualities of cotton. The cheetah is one of nature’s most fearsome animals and represents strength, agility, attitude, and beauty. In Nature’s Fierce Feline, the model and the garment are blended together to become like a feline stalking from inside brush.

The garment is made of two pieces, the corset and skirt. The corset face is made from cheetah faux fur that is strikingly life like. The lining of the corset is made of 100% polished cotton and requires boning and interfacing to keep the form tight and fitted. The corset gives the garment form, strength, and fearsomeness while symbolizing feminine beauty. The neckline of the faux fur is meant to mimic the outline of a cheetah’s head and resembles the shape of the leaves on the skirt.

The skirt is made from 10 yards of 100% polished cotton and is covered in an array of leaf like structures that are gathered at the ends. Each leaf is supported by 22 inches of copper wire. There are over 90 leaf-like structures on the garment that represent the brush in which the feline stalks her prey. All leaves were carefully and strategically placed with Velcro dots, a fixture not often recognized in the fashion industry, to hold their place and then hand sewn onto the skirt. The use of Velcro dots allowed for perfect placement of the leaves before they were permanently stitched onto the skirt. The use of Velcro dots saved an immense amount of time and could become a popular time-saving method in the future. There are also pleats and many gathers in the skirt to add volume. The polish on the cotton adds an extra dimension to the leaves and causes the garment to shine and stand out under light.

The measurements for the finished garment are as follows: Bust: 32”, Waist: 26”, Skirt: 26” long, Skirt Circumference around hips: 46”. The materials used were 90% - 100% polished cotton (10 yards), 10% Faux Cheetah Fur (1 yard), ¼ inch poly/cotton covered boning, interfacing (90% Polyester/10% Rayon), 22 gauge copper wire (50 yards), Velcro dots and cotton thread.

Reference:

The Complete Photo Guide to Sewing. (2009). Minneapolis, MN: Creative Publishing International.

Photos of Nature's Fierce Feline



**Christian worldview integration:** My Christian worldview has enabled me to pay great attention to detail which is a necessary component of my craft. It has motivated me to seek the advice of people who I consider extremely talented and has allowed me to humble myself and be taught by those who have more knowledge and experience. When a designer, mentor or teacher presents a new concept to me or helps me to better understand the art of making couture clothing, I take what they have taught me and add onto it. For example: cotton has been used for centuries but it is not a common fabric for couture wear. Last year, I was challenged during the FACS Fashion Show to design a couture garment made from cotton. Nature's Fierce Feline was the garment that I designed and it took the versatility of cotton and brought it to a whole new level. Also, the incorporation of Velcro dots in my design is something that I nor anyone I know in the industry has never seen before. I came up with this idea because I did not want to spend hours

tacking leaves into place just to go back and replace the tacks with more secure methods. I wanted to be a good steward of my time as well as with the resources the Lord has given us.

Cotton is an amazing fabric used for many things from household products to high fashion but many times people are not aware of the incredible things cotton is capable of. I feel that my job as a Christian designer is to bring to light the wonderful natural resources that God has given us and make use of them for His glory. Making people aware of the abilities cotton has is important to cultures in large because it is a renewable natural resource. Being able to create clothing with a natural fiber means that you will have more sustainable clothing. Sustainable clothing are not only good for the environment, which is a huge concern right now, but sustainable wear is also healthy for humans because they can have little to no chemicals applied to them during the manufacturing process. God calls us to be good stewards of His creation and of our own bodies which are temples. Using more cotton in the apparel industry will lead to a more sustainable and healthy lifestyle that honors God as well as His creation.