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## A METHOD FOR INVISIBLY MOUNTING COSTUME USING FOSSHAPE

CYNTHIA AMNÉUS AND MARLA MILES

**ABSTRACT**—A method for mounting costume using a new material called Fosshape was devised for the exhibition *Contemporary Japanese Fashion: The Mary Baskett Collection* at the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C. Because the forms for this exhibition were to be suspended in the galleries, a material lighter in weight than polyethylene foam was desired due to weight restrictions on the ceiling. Fosshape proved to be lighter in weight, less time-consuming to use than carving multiple forms, and less abrasive and easier to work with than buckram. The resulting forms were constructed to be invisible unless otherwise desired and were able to support accessories, including tights, shoes, and hats. The materials and methods for constructing Fosshape forms are described along with material testing results. Additional suggestions, adaptations, and limitations are discussed and sources for materials are provided.

**TITRE**—Une méthode utilisant du Fosshape pour supporter des costumes de façon invisible  
**RÉSUMÉ**—Une méthode pour supporter des costumes, utilisant un nouveau matériau d'appellation commerciale Fosshape, a été conçue pour l'exposition *Contemporary Japanese Fashion: The Mary Baskett Collection* (La mode japonaise contemporaine: la collection de Mary Baskett) au *Textile Museum* de Washington, DC. Étant donné que les formes utilisées devaient être suspendues aux plafonds des salles d'exposition, imposant ainsi une limite de poids, un matériau plus léger que la mousse de polyéthylène était recherché. Le Fosshape s'est avéré à la fois plus léger que la mousse de polyéthylène et son usage plus rapide, éliminant le besoin de sculpter plusieurs formes de ce matériau. Le Fosshape est aussi moins abrasif et plus facile à travailler que le bougran. À moins d'indication contraire, les formes obtenues ont été conçues pour être invisibles et capables de supporter les accessoires, tels collants, chaussures et chapeaux. Les matériaux et les méthodes pour construire des formes de Fosshape sont décrits ainsi que les résultats des tests des matériaux. D'autres suggestions, des adaptations, ainsi que les limites du matériau sont discutées et une liste de fournisseurs est incluse.

**TITULO**—Un metodo para montar un traje en forma invisible utilizando Fosshape  
**RESUMEN**—Para la exposición *Moda contemporánea japonesa: la Colección Mary Baskett* en el *Textile Museum*, Washington, D.C., se diseñó un método para hacer soportes de trajes utilizando un nuevo material llamado Fosshape. Siendo que los soportes para esta exposición iban a ser suspendidos del cielo raso, se buscó un material que pesara menos que la espuma de polietileno, por restricciones de peso del cielo raso. Fosshape resultó ser menos pesado, se necesitó menos tiempo que el que se necesitaría para tallar los múltiples soportes, es menos abrasivo y mas fácil de manejar que el lino para entretela. Los soportes se construyeron para que fueran invisibles o no según cada diseño, y para que pudieran soportar accesorios incluyendo medias pantalón, zapatos y sombreros. Los materiales y métodos para construir con Fosshape se describen, lo mismo que los resultados de las pruebas que se hicieron. También se discuten sugerencias adicionales, adaptaciones y las limitaciones de este material, lo mismo que los sitios donde se puede conseguir.

**TÍTULO**—Um método para montagem invisível de vestuário usando Fosshape  
**RESUMO**—Um método para montagem de vestuário usando um novo material chamado Fosshape foi idealizado para a exposição *Moda Contemporânea Japonesa: A Coleção Mary Baskett* no *Textile Museum*, Washington, D.C. Uma vez que as formas para essa exposição precisavam ser suspensas nas galerias, era desejável um material de peso menor do que o da espuma de polietileno por causa das restrições de peso no teto. O Fosshape mostrou ser mais leve em peso, demandar menos tempo para o uso do que esculpir múltiplas formas, e ser menos abrasivo e mais fácil de se trabalhar do que a entretela. As formas resultantes foram construídas para serem invisíveis, a menos que se quisesse diferente, e eram capazes de suportar acessórios que incluíam meias-calças, sapatos e chapéus. Os materiais e métodos para construir as formas com Fosshape são descritos juntamente com os resultados de teste do material. São discutidas sugestões adicionais, adaptações e limitações, bem como são fornecidas fontes para o material.

## 1. EXHIBITION BACKGROUND

A method for mounting costume using a new material called Fosshape was devised for the exhibition *Contemporary Japanese Fashion: The Mary Baskett Collection* at the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., October 17, 2009, through April 11, 2010. Mary Baskett is the former curator of prints at the Cincinnati Art Museum, the owner of Mary Baskett Gallery, and a nationally known scholar of Japanese art. Since the early 1970s, she has been collecting and wearing contemporary Japanese fashion—specifically the designs of Issey Miyake, Rei Kawakubo, and Yohji Yamamoto. When these designers presented their collections in Paris for the first time in the early 1980s, they redefined Western fashion concepts. Their designs were characterized by asymmetry, unconventional construction, oversized proportions, raw edges, and monochromatic palettes. Although such attributes are commonplace in fashionable clothing today, these ideas overthrew existing norms at the time. These three designers set the stage for what is termed the postmodernist movement in fashion, and continue to be three of the most influential designers working today. Baskett has amassed a collection of more than 100 pieces.

## 2. MOUNT OBJECTIVES

Given the avant-garde nature of the work created by Miyake, Kawakubo, and Yamamoto, an equally avant-garde presentation was desired. Because the objects were in good to excellent condition and contemporary in nature, a nontraditional invisible mount was both feasible and preferred over a traditional mannequin. An invisible mount would allow the visitor to experience the sculptural nature of the work without the distraction of a head and limbs and solve the problem of any nonresemblance in both facial features and body size or shape to the collector.

The exhibition was designed with most forms suspended over platforms with wire that would experientially be invisible to the visitor's eye. Because the gallery spaces called for objects to be hung in concentrated groupings, the amount of weight the ceilings could support was a concern. Therefore, the suspended mounts needed to be exceptionally lightweight. Standard dress forms and carved polyethylene foam mounts were considered, but both were thought

to be too heavy for suspension in groups. In addition, some ensembles included accessories, such as tights, shoes, and hats. The mounts needed to safely receive and support these elements (fig. 1). Alternative solutions were ruled out based on aesthetics or production difficulty. For example, suspending a hat above an ensemble on a headless dress or polyethylene foam form created an undesired sense of disembodiment, whereas the fabrication of carved and padded polyethylene foam legs to receive tights and shoes was a time-consuming process that could result in less than realistic approximations.

Fosshape proved to be a material that was both visually and practically acceptable. Mounts could be created reasonably quickly with relative ease and no mess. It was both light in weight and could be formed into heads and limbs strong enough to support accessories where needed. In the exhibition it proved equally successful as a mount for both lightweight polyester gowns and heavier wool ensembles.

## 3. FOSSHAPE

Fosshape is a white, nonwoven, heat-activated fabric that is a proprietary 100% polyester polymer blend with no additives or posttreatments (fig. 2). Individual fibers are composed of two polyesters, each with a different melting point: the outer shell of the fiber has a considerably lower melting point than the core. The fibers are mechanically entangled to form the fabric. When Fosshape is introduced to a heat source, the outer core of the fibers begins to soften or melt, causing the fibers to contract and become rigid on cooling. The material activates in the range of 100°–130°C (212°–265°F) with either a dry or steam heat source (Dazian; Williams 2011).

Fosshape has been traditionally used in theatre settings to create a wide variety of forms, including lightweight props, scenic elements, puppetry, and costume elements, such as millinery and masks. It is a felt-like fabric that does not fray. It can be sewn by hand or machine in both its treated and untreated states. It can be cut to any shape, molded over forms, layered and adhered to itself for additional strength, and dyed, painted, and embellished (Ruskai and Lowery 2010). When dry or steam heat is applied to the material, it will shrink up to 30%. The level of stiffness in the final material is achieved by adjusting the application period of heat and pressure.



Fig. 1. Installation photograph of the exhibition *Contemporary Japanese Fashion: The Mary Baskett Collection* at the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C., showing designs by Issey Miyake in the foreground and Rei Kawakubo in the background on invisible Fosshape mounts.

Fosshape can be purchased in two weights or thicknesses, 300 and 600.

### 3.1 TESTING

The Oddy test was performed on 12 samples of Fosshape: four untreated, four hardened with dry heat, and four hardened with steam heat (Bamberger et al. 1999). Test results indicate that the material is safe to use near and in direct contact with objects. Two samples of each preparation were tested in the standard method, whereas two additional samples of each were tested in direct contact with the metal coupons (silver, copper, lead). The test was run with two controls for 3 weeks at a temperature of 60°C. Corrosion of the metal coupons was negligible in all tests and did not differentiate from the controls. However, as a protective measure, an inert barrier between the Fosshape and objects is recommended when used for long-term display or storage (Emery 2009).

Fosshape was also examined with Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy. Both the 300 and 600

grades best matched polyethylene terephthalate. X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy analysis, testing for additives such as brominated fire retardants, reveals that Fosshape does not contain significant amounts of elements associated with harmful compounds, such as bromine or chlorine. No active, sulfur-containing compounds were detected after performing a sulfur test using iodine and sodium azide solution. An acid test was also performed using Image Permanence Institute's A–D Strips containing bromocresol green. The strips were placed in direct and indirect contact with Fosshape, sharing airspace with the material in a sealed jar. No detectable acidic compounds were found (Eng 2011).

## 4. MOUNT FABRICATION

Fosshape mounts for this exhibition were constructed for a variety of ensembles from lightweight polyester gowns to heavier wool dresses and suits with both trousers and skirts. Torsos both with and without legs

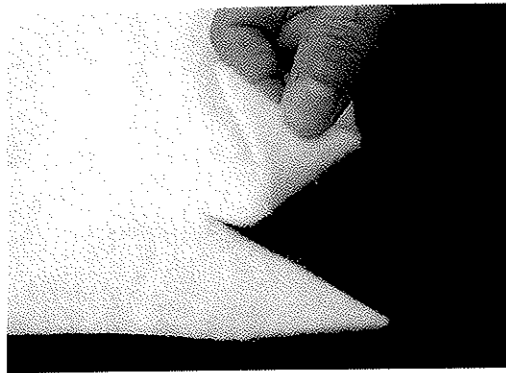


Fig. 2. Fosshape 600 in its raw or untreated state. It is a felt-like material that can be cut easily with a scissors and sewn by hand or machine in both its raw and hardened states.

were produced. Heads were constructed to accommodate hats shown with a few ensembles.

#### 4.1 FABRICATING A DRESS MOUNT

The mount created for a dress designed by Yohji Yamamoto (b. 1943) for his spring/summer 1998 collection is representative of the versatility of Fosshape and provides a suitable example.

Constructed of black polyester, this jumper-style dress is midcalf length, has narrow shoulder straps, and is sleeveless with armholes cut to waist level. The deep V front neckline is framed by asymmetrical lapels, and the back neckline is equally low. A narrow back panel is seamed to the fuller fronts, creating a shape that fits the waist loosely. The dress is held on the body by two snaps at the center front.

A standard small-size dress form was used as the base for creating the Fosshape mount. A small form was chosen because the costume fit comfortably on this mount and allowed room for any additional padding needed to fit and support the piece appropriately.

Two approximate torso shapes—a front and back—were cut from Fosshape 600, measuring approximately 10 cm (4 in.) larger than the bust, waist, and hip measurements of the dress form. The front and back were machine sewn along the side edges with a 1.6 cm ( $\frac{5}{8}$  in.) seam allowance using 100% polyester thread and a machine needle suitable for medium to heavyweight fabrics. Seam allowances were trimmed to 6 mm ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in.), and the shape turned so the seams were on the inside. This baggy

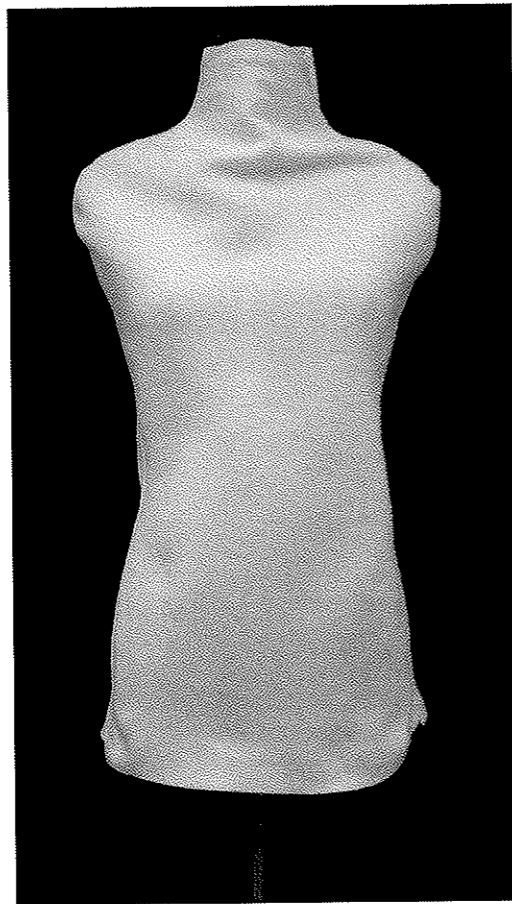


Fig. 3. A machine-sewn, baggy Fosshape 600 form pulled over a standard small-size dress form in preparation for application of steam heat, which will shrink the material to the form.

approximation of the desired final shape was pulled over the dress form (fig. 3).

Steam heat was applied all over, causing the Fosshape to shrink and conform to the shape of the dress form. The material was allowed to cool—a matter of minutes (fig. 4). The shrunken and hardened Fosshape was cut down the center back with an adjustable utility knife, without marring the dress form, and removed (fig. 5). This cut line was stitched closed by hand, edges flush, with a whipstitch using a doubled 100% polyester thread and a Sharps size 8 needle.

Polyethylene foam approximately 20 cm (8 in.) thick was carved to fit into the bottom of the Fosshape form. The foam provided both stability for the

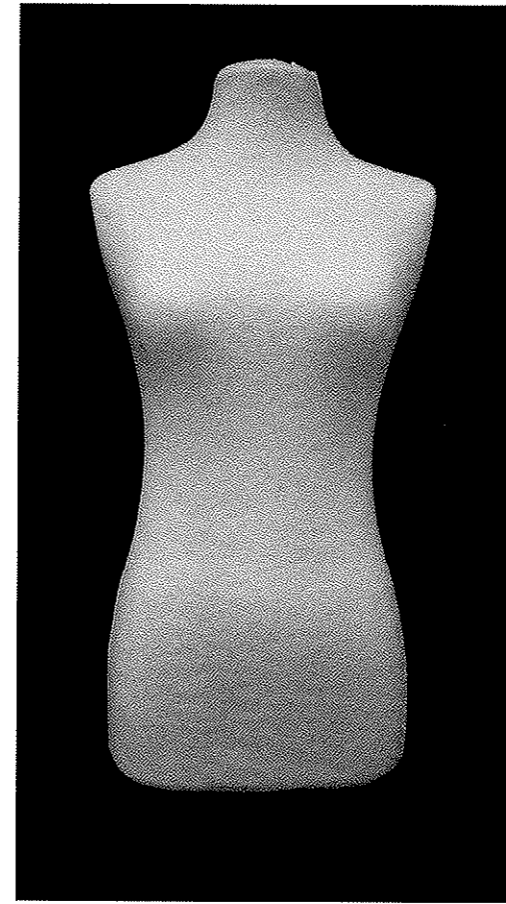


Fig. 4. The steamed Fosshape conforms to the dress form perfectly after an overall application of steam heat. Fosshape will shrink up to 30%.

hollow form and acted as a receiver for mounting hardware. In this case, the dress was to be suspended from the ceiling at the top and tethered to a platform at the bottom to prevent any rotation while on view. Four 2.5-cm (1-in.)-diameter dowel rod pieces approximately 5 cm (2 in.) long were fitted with 1.5 mm to 20.6 mm ( $\frac{1}{16}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.) screw eyes. Two holes were drilled in both the top and bottom of the polyethylene foam with a spade bit, and the prepared dowel sections were hot glued in place with clear LB Jet Melt Adhesive (fig. 6). The foam insert was then glued into the hollow Fosshape form.

One additional hole was drilled into the bottom of the foam insert. This hole was used to temporarily

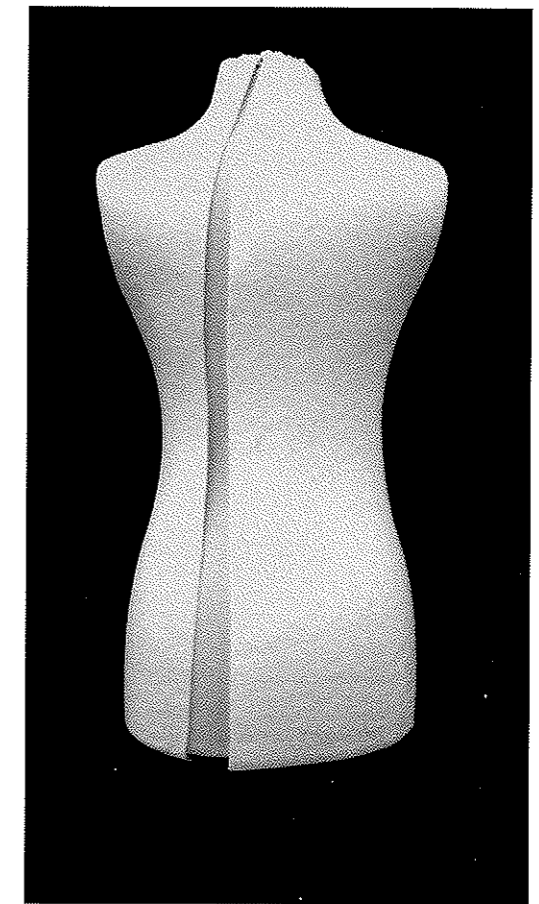


Fig. 5. The hardened Fosshape shape is cut up the center back so that it can be removed from the dress form. This cut edge will be whipstitched by hand with edges flush to close the form again.

mount the Fosshape on a dress form post while it was customized for the costume. With the dress on the Fosshape form, the edges of the deep necklines and armholes were carefully marked with pencil. After removing the dress, the Fosshape was cut away with a utility knife to mimic the shape of the neckline and armholes. The rather narrow shoulder straps needed additional reinforcement; therefore, an additional layer of Fosshape was cut to shape and adhered with steam and pressure.

With the neck area cut away, it was convenient to install the wire from which the form would eventually hang. Carbon steel wire, .4 mm (0.016 in.) diameter, was looped through each screw eye at the

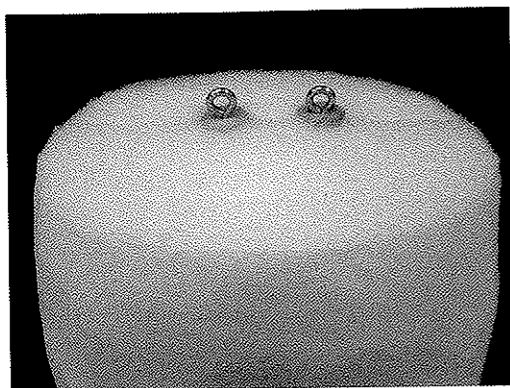


Fig. 6. A polyethylene foam core carved to fit into the bottom of the Fosshape form. It is outfitted with hanging hardware—2.5 cm (1 in.) diameter, approximately 5 cm (2 in.) long dowels with screw eyes. This core will be glued into the bottom of the form.

top and bottom and secured with a crimper using 6 mm (¼ in.) length, zinc-plated copper stop compression sleeves, leaving excess length that would allow for adjustment when deciding the final hanging height during installation. The wire was rolled up and temporarily secured in place inside the form and to the bottom of the foam insert to prevent damage to the object during customization of the Fosshape form.

Padding was needed on the hips and bum for the dress to fit appropriately, and 100% polyester batting was added to the form in these areas (fig. 7). Black 100% cotton knit was attached with a running stitch and 100% polyester thread to the inside and edges of the bodice section of the form to make it completely invisible. Because this dress was significantly longer than the Fosshape, an extension of 3 mm (⅛ in.) sheet polyethylene was attached with 100% polyester thread in a running stitch to the bottom of the form and trimmed a few inches shorter than the hem length. The areas of the form padded with polyester batting were covered with 100% cotton knit barrier fabric. The dress was easily mounted on the Fosshape form, which was virtually invisible to the exhibition visitor (fig. 8).

#### 4.2 FABRICATING LEGS

For a suit with pieces that included a jacket, shorts, and tights designed by Issey Miyake (b. 1938), a mount with legs was necessary. Designed for Miyake's fall/winter 1988/1989 collection, this

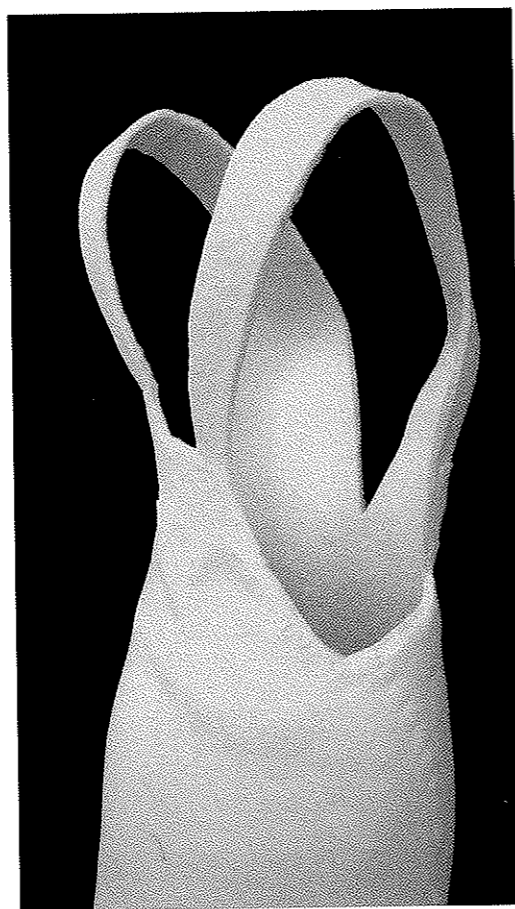


Fig. 7. The customized Fosshape form for a Yohji Yamamoto black polyester dress (spring/summer 1998) seen from the proper right side. The front and back necklines and armholes have been cut away to mirror the shape of the dress. The hip and bum areas have been padded with polyester batting and covered with 100% cotton knit as a barrier.

ensemble is constructed of fine gray wool. The jacket has long sleeves, a pleated front, and peplum. It closes at the center front with a single button. The shorts are above-knee length and blousy with a front zipper and waistband button. The original cotton, opaque tights were specifically designed to be worn with the suit and had a gray stripe running down the back of the leg.

Because there were mannequins on hand and realistic anatomy was desired, mannequin legs were used as a base form. A straight, forward-facing pair of legs was chosen to avoid diverting attention from the



Fig. 8. Installation view of the invisible Fosshape form in fig. 7 mounted with Yohji Yamamoto, *Dress*, 1998, polyester, from the collection of Mary Baskett. The form is suspended from the ceiling and tethered to the platform below.

ensemble and to display the stripe at the back of the tights most effectively.

Fosshape legs were fabricated in a fashion similar to that of the torso, each leg being constructed separately. A single piece of Fosshape 600 was cut 5 to 7.5 cm (2 to 3 in.) larger than the diameter of a mannequin leg as measured at the thigh, knee, and ankle. A baggy assimilation was constructed with a single machine-sewn seam at the center back. Once steamed and shrunk, the Fosshape form was cut down the side back with a utility knife, the form was removed, and the cut edges were whipstitched securely together.

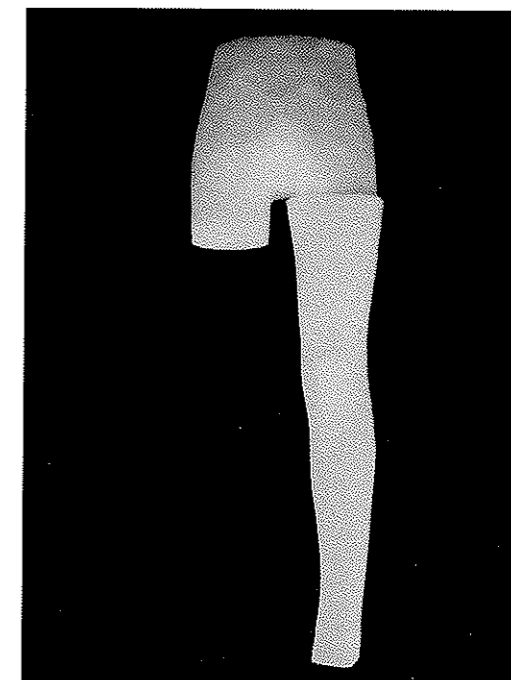


Fig. 9. An elongated torso form is carved from polyethylene foam with leg extensions to which one leg has been attached. The polyethylene form will be glued into the bottom of the Fosshape torso.

A polyethylene foam insert was carved as with the dress mount but was shaped and elongated to include an approximation of the lower torso with short leg extensions approximately 15 cm (6 in.) long. The extensions were carved to fit into the top of the thigh of the Fosshape legs, which were glued in place (fig. 9).

Polyester batting was used to refine the bum and abdomen. Truncated and tapered polyethylene feet and ankles were carved to easily accommodate the shoes shown with the suit. The ankles and feet were glued into the ends of the legs. A pair of black, nylon pantyhose was pulled over the legs to secure the padding and provide a smoother surface over which to mount the Miyake-designed tights. The Fosshape legs proved rigid enough to withstand the pressure of both the pantyhose and the tights without caving inward (fig. 10). In this case, the ensemble was suspended only from the ceiling with wire, with the shoes resting lightly on the platform beneath. The

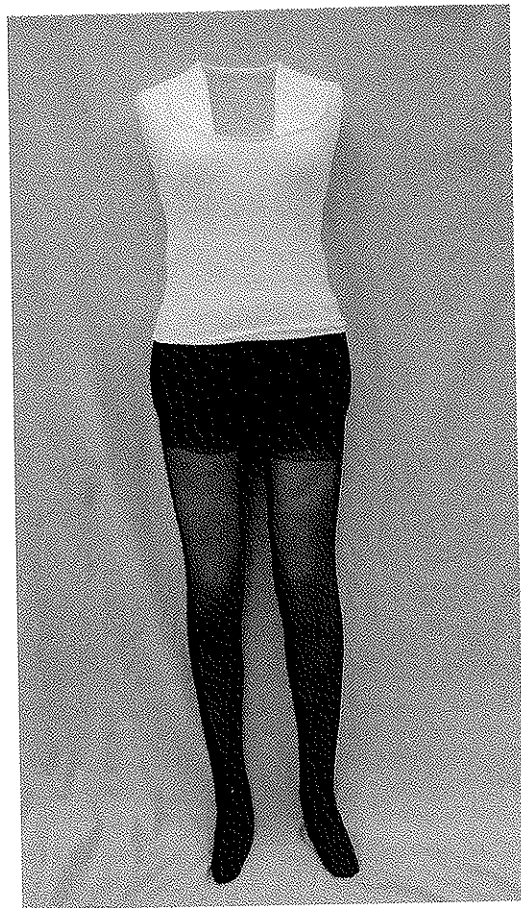


Fig. 10. The finished form with Fosshape torso and legs, showing barrier pantyhose and purchased tank top for Issey Miyake, *Suit: Jacket, Shorts, and Tights*, 1988, wool, from the collection of Mary Baskett. The Fosshape legs were able to withstand the pressure of both barrier pantyhose and original tights without caving inward.

ensemble was situated on the platform in an angled position with both the back and front visible (fig. 11).

#### 4.3 FABRICATING HEADS

A number of the ensembles in this exhibition included hats. One suit in the exhibition posed a particular challenge because the accompanying hat was large and weighty. Designed by Yohji Yamamoto for his fall/winter 2006/2007 collection, this ensemble consisted of a gray wool jacket and skirt, ivory knit bodysuit with a low round neckline, and a large, black, double-brimmed felt hat.



Fig. 11. Installation view of the invisible Fosshape form seen in fig. 10 mounted with Issey Miyake, *Suit: Jacket, Shorts, and Tights*, 1988, wool and cotton, from the collection of Mary Baskett. The form is suspended from the ceiling with the shoes resting on the platform.

Again, because mannequins were available, they were used as a base form for heads. Unlike the torso, the shaping of the head form proved far more complex because of the need to define basic facial features—eyes, nose, mouth, and jawline. Fosshape 600 was pinned snugly around the head and neck,

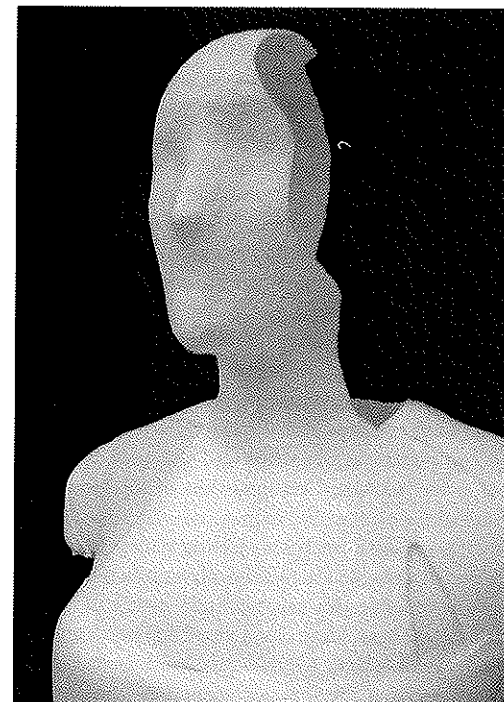


Fig. 12. The Fosshape head created for Yohji Yamamoto, *Suit: Jacket, Bodysuit, Skirt/Trousers and Hat*, fall/winter 2006/2007, wool, from the collection of Mary Baskett. The head, neck, and upper chest were formed on a mannequin and partially cut away for display. Because of the weight of the hat, the head is reinforced on the inside with boning.

cutting, trimming, and adjusting as necessary to accommodate the curved form of the head. Excess Fosshape was left at the base of the neck. The cuts in the Fosshape made for shaping were whipstitched closed by hand with 100% polyester thread while the Fosshape was still on the mannequin. Special attention was required during steaming to delineate the facial features. For example, immediately after applying steam to the eye areas, pressure was applied to the still malleable Fosshape to define eye cavities and continued until the Fosshape had cooled. These areas were avoided while the remainder of the head was steamed to prevent loss of facial relief.

The excess Fosshape that was left below the neck was steamed and formed over the mannequin shoulders and chest, extending to the bust line. This technique was important for this particular garment to avoid a visible stitched seam line at the base of the



Fig. 13. Installation view of the Fosshape head in fig. 12 mounted with Yohji Yamamoto, *Suit: Jacket, Bodysuit, Skirt/Trousers and Hat*, fall/winter 2006/2007, wool, from the collection of Mary Baskett.

neck because the neckline of the garment was low. The finished head and neck form was glued in place on the torso (fig. 12).

In keeping with the contemporary nature of the clothing in the exhibition, the side of the head was partially cut away, allowing easy access to the inside of the form. Because this particular hat was weighty, a band of Fosshape was adhered to the neck-torso junction on the inside of the form for added strength. Also, a length of fabric-covered metal boning—a stiff band traditionally made of whalebone, reed, or metal that is used in clothing construction to maintain structure—was stitched up the inside of the neck and head, where it would not be seen when on view (fig. 13).

The hat precluded the possibility of hanging this ensemble from the ceiling. Because the suit included a skirt, it was able to be attached to the platform with a pole mount that was inserted into the polyethylene foam in the bottom of the Fosshape form.

#### 5. ADAPTATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The approach outlined creates a basic form that can be adapted as desired. Fosshape can be formed over any base—from a standard dress form or mannequin body to a customized form. If an appropriately sized base form cannot be obtained, a single custom polyethylene foam form can be carved from which multiple forms can be made, particularly for small or

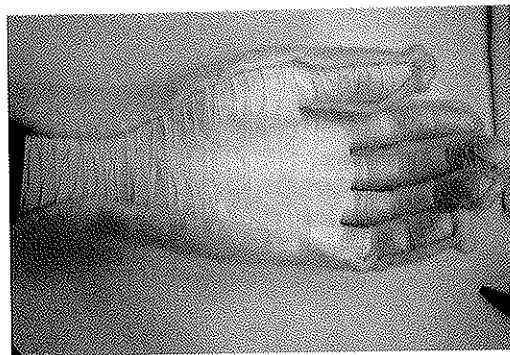


Fig. 14. A mannequin hand covered on the top only with Fosshape. The material is secured across the palm with thread and ready for steaming.

unusual body sizes. For complex forms, more intricate shaping is required. More recent experimentation with creating a Fosshape torso from an active mannequin pose required specialized shaping and darting of the material before steaming.

If an invisible mount is desired, the basic Fosshape form can be easily customized by cutting the material away with a scissors or utility knife, leaving a clean edge that will not fray. For instance, a neckline can be rounded, shaped as a V, or cut away drastically to support thin shoulder straps (figs. 7, 8). Like any traditional mannequin or other types of costume mounts, the form can be modified with polyester batting to fit and support the object appropriately. Any visible edges of the form can be covered with a fabric similar in color to the costume being mounted, or, according to the manufacturer, the material can also be painted or dyed.

Overall, the customized Fosshape forms were sufficiently rigid to support the objects in this exhibition. In a few cases, reinforcement was needed. The somewhat narrow shoulder straps of the described Yamamoto dress paired with the deep neckline cuts necessitated a double layer of Fosshape. In another instance, particularly thin shoulder straps needed the addition of boning stitched to the underside of the Fosshape to support a multilayered ensemble. Overall, however, the Fosshape forms are remarkably strong when shrunk to capacity. Because the material will adhere to itself with heat and pressure, multiple layers can result in a significantly more rigid form than a single layer provides.

General recommendations include using Fosshape 600—the thicker of the two grades—which produces a stronger, sturdier structure and seems best for large forms. It is important to be thorough when heating the Fosshape to ensure overall strength and rigidity. When cutting the form to remove it from the base shape, it is important to determine a cut line that will not compromise the structural integrity of the final Fosshape form after additional cuts for neckline, armholes, or other alterations are made. Once removed from the base form, it is not advisable to heat the material further because this can cause undesired malformations. Steam heat seems to work better than dry heat for complex shaping. The head forms required much trial and error because of the complexity of the shape and the need to delineate facial features. Customization of this process is required for each application.

Experimentation with creating partial hands for this project was successful, although ultimately hands were not used in this exhibition. A basic hand shape with thumb and fingers was cut from Fosshape and laid over the back of a mannequin hand. Long basting stitches secured the material around the fingers and palm of the hand for steaming, resulting in a realistic hand shape (fig. 14).

Although testing suggests that a barrier fabric is not essential for short-term display, rigid Fosshape has a slightly abrasive surface. Because of this abrasive surface, a barrier, such as pantyhose, nylon spandex fabric, or cotton knit, is advisable, particularly for fragile pieces. The contemporary examples in this exhibition were in good to excellent condition, and, in some cases, a barrier was not used over the entire form. Fosshape is not fuzzy once hardened, and lint transfer was not a concern.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The creation of mounts for *Contemporary Japanese Fashion: The Mary Baskett Collection* from Fosshape proved highly successful. Carved polyethylene forms were first considered as the material of choice, but the Textile Museum staff was concerned about the weight restrictions for the gallery ceiling from which the pieces would be suspended. The use of buckram was discussed and could have been handled in a similar fashion as the Fosshape, but it was not

desirable because of the mess, drying time, and rough nature of the material. Fosshape is lightweight, will conform easily to a desired shape, can be easily customized, is in most cases sufficiently rigid, creates less mess, is less abrasive, is less time-consuming than carving polyethylene foam or molding buckram forms, and is relatively inexpensive. Oddy testing as performed by the conservation staff at the Cincinnati Art Museum has indicated it is safe to use near and in direct contact with objects, although an inert barrier is suggested for long-term display or storage. Fosshape also passed the Image Permanence Institute acid test, sodium azide test, x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy, and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy screenings as performed by the Conservation Center at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

As with any costume mount, each object requires individual problem solving and unique, intuitive solutions. Thoughtful consideration must be given to the object to be mounted—its fragility, weight, and length of time on view. Fosshape has been widely used in the theatre for millinery, masks, puppetry, lightweight props, and set design. Viewing the manufacturer's website is recommended for more information about the material, handling properties, and additional uses. A tutorial is also available online that outlines a variety of theatre-related applications (Cosplay Supplies).

Far more cost-effective than traditional mannequins, Fosshape is a versatile material that provides another alternative and viable choice for costume mounts. Although Fosshape will not be the solution in all cases, it has many advantages to existing types of mounts. Like polyethylene foam or buckram, it can be customized to the object but is lighter, is easier to work with, and has a smoother, more object-friendly surface. However, its limits have not been tested in terms of particularly heavy garments, such as Native American regalia or substantial fur or beaded objects, for extended exhibition periods. Better methods for mounting hardware inside the form could be investigated or alternative methods devised based on the needs of the object or desired exhibition presentation.

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## SOURCE OF MATERIALS

Fosshape 300 and Fosshape 600  
Dazian Fabrics  
East Coast Sales/Showroom  
18 Central Blvd.  
South Hackensack, NJ 07606  
201-549-1000  
877-232-9426

West Coast Sales/Showroom  
7120 Case Ave. (Burbank Airport Business Park)  
North Hollywood, CA 91605  
818-287-3800  
877-4432-9426  
www.dazian.com

Polyethylene foam  
Hinkle Manufacturing Inc.  
Fifth and D Streets  
Ampoint Industrial Park  
Perrysburg, OH 43551  
419-666-5550  
www.hinklemfg.com

Hot glue: LB Jet Melt Adhesive; clear  
Netherland Rubber Company  
2931 Exon Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45241  
800-582-1877  
www.netherlandrubber.com

Barrier fabrics  
Testfabrics, Inc.  
PO Box 26  
West Pittston, PA 18643  
570-603-0432  
www.testfabrics.com

Polyester Batting for short term display  
Mountain Mist  
2551 Crescentville Rd.  
Cincinnati, OH 45241  
513-326-3912  
www.mountainmisttp.com

Gutermann Brand 100% polyester thread  
Banasch's Fabrics  
3830 Red Bank Rd.  
Cincinnati, OH 45227  
800-543-0355  
www.banaschs.com

Wire and compression sleeves  
McMaster-Carr Supply Co.  
PO Box 7690  
Chicago, IL 60680-7690  
330-995-5500  
www.mcmaster.com

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MARLA MILES was the fashion arts and textiles preparator for the Cincinnati Art Museum from 2007 to 2011 and was contracted as mountmaker for the exhibition *Contemporary Japanese Fashion: The Mary Baskett Collection* at the Textile Museum, Washington, D.C. She received her BA degree in art history from Indiana University, completed a conservation internship with the Mathers Museum of World Cultures in Bloomington, Indiana, and has worked in costume production for theater, opera, and ballet. She was a poster presenter at the Second International Mountmaking Forum at the Smithsonian Institution in May 2010. She is currently a graduate student in the fashion and textiles studies program at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Contact: [marla.e.miles@gmail.com](mailto:marla.e.miles@gmail.com)