

Recreating Agnes Eriksen's 1954-1956 Fashion Designs

by
Anna Roth

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

Honors College

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Apparel Design
(Honors Scholar)

Presented November 12, 2020
Commencement June 2021

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Anna Roth for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Apparel Design presented on November 12, 2020. Title: Recreating Agnes Eriksen's 1954-1956 Fashion Designs.

Abstract approved: _____

DeMara Cabrera

In the years from 1954 to 1956 Agnes Eriksen filled three fashion sketchbooks that contained 1/8 scale patterns, fabric swatches, and styling notations for eighteen garments. I plan to recreate and sew together Agnes Eriksen's fashion designs into a small snapshot of these three years. The 1950s is a particularly misunderstood era for fashion as there are many of misconceptions about how people dressed. Focuses of this era are usually on the high fashion magazines, or subcultures, so this documentation will provide more real-world context for this time. The recreation of Agnes' garments will serve as a snapshot of her life, and a documentation of life and fashion in the 1950s.

Key Words: fashion, encapsulate, snapshot, 1950s, patterns, fashion sketchbooks

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Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Apparel design project of Anna Roth presented on November 12, 2020.

APPROVED:

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Ann Vong, Committee Member, representing Apparel Design

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I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

Anna Roth, Author

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I wanted to take a moment to thank all the wonderful people who have helped me with this project. **DeMara Cabrera** was my mentor on this project but has also been my mentor throughout my time at Oregon State. I am not sure how I could have done this project during a pandemic without the skills that I have learned from her and working at the Costume Shop. Thank you for providing such a warm and brave space for students like me to work, learn, and most importantly make puppets.

Thank you to my committee members **Ann Vong**, **Shelley Jordon**, and **Dawn Figueroa** for your support and feedback. Understanding that this project combines elements from all facets of my degree made it critical to get a committee with diverse expertise. Ann Vong has taught me nearly everything I know in technical design and pattern making. Thank you for your working with me for the last two or three years in Apparel Design, and for always going above and beyond for your students.

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Lastly, I want to thank my small group of friends that came together during a global pandemic to figure out how safely work together and turn my living room into a photo studio. **Brittnee Barry** was able to drive into town to photograph and document my work, using minimal equipment, while still getting great photos. **Emily Cline** was gracious enough to model 2 garments and cheer me on during the shoot. And **Catherine Le** was there beside me during this entire process, pinning hems and giving any feedback she could. This project would have been lopsided and puckered without you, so thank you for being there for me every step of the way.

Dedication

Figure 1

Agnes Eriksen



(Olsen, 1970?)

There have been people in my life who have passed away before I was able to ask them the right questions. Questions I did not know how to ask until now. These were relatives who were more like me than I knew, and I regret not listening closer to their stories. Now I sift through heirlooms, boxes of art supplies, things they treasured. I ask the right questions to people who may or may not have all the answers to them. I meet my relatives after they are long gone, through their journal pages and notes. Many people in my family were artists and seamstresses by hobby or necessity. I fancy myself a seamstress by trade. My Great Aunt Agnes had many occupational pursuits, but her hobbies included a love for high fashion. She passed away when I was eight and I did not know her well. But I wish I did.

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Introduction

Figure 2

Cannon Beach, July 29, 1929



Agnes second from left. (Olsen, 1929)

Agnes Eriksen was born on July 6th, 1910 in Portland, Oregon. Her mother was from Sweden and her father was from Norway. Her family moved around in Northeast Portland when she was a child, but in 1933, her mother was able to buy a home and moved Agnes and her brother, Julius, to “1101 NE Wilder Street” (XIII Kathleen Allen-Kirsch, 2013). This home was a part of the Lloyd Center Project “and was located in what is now the Safeway parking lot” (XIII Kathleen Allen-Kirsch, 2013). Agnes married Henry Eriksen in 1941 and they lived on Sacramento street in Portland with their daughter Anne. Similar to her mother, who operated The Vernon Needlework Shop and then Anna Caroline’s Tearoom, Agnes was also an entrepreneur. Agnes and Henry opened The Eriksen's Boulevard Restaurant on Barbur

Boulevard. The restaurant provided a Scandinavian menu, and they sold Scandinavian goods in their gift shop (XIII Kathleen Allen-Kirsch, 2013).

Figure 3

Agnes in front of The Ericksen's Boulevard Restaurant



(Olsen, 1960?)

Agnes's parents came to the United States from Scandinavia with only a few items and little money. They began businesses and worked hard to create lives in Portland. She took pattern-making classes in Lake Oswego in 1954 and began making design books. These books were essentially the complete instructions and design to create a pattern for a garment and show how frugal and organized she was in making her clothing. Between 1954 and 1956 she designed 30 garments in sketchbooks, planning out yardage, alterations, fabric swatches, and adding lists of prices for fabric and notions. She planned sloper alterations with 1/8th scale slopers cut from newspaper next to her design. On some pages she noted when the garment was started and when she had finished the garment. To summarize garment costs, at the end of each book, she detailed what she made and how much she spent on the garments.

Unfortunately, these garments have not been seen in person or in photos, and family members have not been able to locate the garments, so we can only assume that she completed those listed in the book. Agnes's books were given to me through my cousin Melanie and my Aunt Kathy. My aunt is Agnes Eriksen's niece and she inherited these books after Agnes had passed away in 2006. Along with these books, *The Domestic Sewing Guide* (copyright 1946) was part of the collection; this was a basic pattern and sewing book. Assuming this book was used in the course Agnes took in Lake Oswego, she would have used this as a guide for how she wanted her garments to be put together. Modern home sewing has not changed much since 1954, but this book can be utilized as a guide to better understand how Agnes constructed her garments, and why she decided to create the patterns the way she did.

In addition, there are a few designs in her book from 1956 that she did not create patterns for, and one design she drew out from an existing design. Some designs will be left out of this recreation, but I still honor their documentation and contribution to a snapshot of her life.

It is my intention to recreate the patterns from Agnes Eriksen's notes to make her garments. I will also source fabrics that match the swatches she collected in these sketchbooks or recreate the prints from the swatches. Additional materials like buttons and zippers will also be sourced to match her notes as much as possible. This will be done to create a snapshot of her life, and therefore another perspective into this short time period.

Literature Review

Time Period and Existing Research

The 1950s, particularly the years between 1954 and 1956 when, Agnes Ericksen designed these garments, is considered a hyper-feminine period of fashions. *Fashion Since 1900* states the Marshall Plan of 1947 was a tool used to spread wealth after the war, relieving European countries after intense wartime rationing (Mendes & de la Haye, 2010). This allowed designers to use more fabric in their designs; they were also aided by a growth in textile technology during this time, which gave them a wider variety of fabrics to choose from. For reference, larger pattern pieces like a dolman, or batwing shape, uses more fabric than a basic blouse because the sleeve and top pieces are connected. Dolman and batwing sleeves were popularized, feminine styles at this time. Additionally, men returning from war, effectively pushed women back into “traditional roles as homemakers” (Hennessy, 2019). As many women left their wartime jobs, the housedress became popular and advertised as a garment that made household chores easier. Many famous housedresses were made by designer Claire McCardell; these dresses are looser, fitted at the waist, with pockets, and perceived as more functional than a dress that would be worn to go out. In the late 1950s developments in textiles created new wash and wear fabrics like “Cotron” a cotton rayon blend, that was marketed as cheaper and easier to clean (Hennessy, 2019). For other facets of a typical woman's life, like going out to dinner or an event, “a more stylish, fitted dress was recommended” (Hennessy, 2019). In these instances we can look at the basic silhouettes that were popularized by high fashion designers like Christian Dior, Charles James and Cristóbal Balenciaga; these show a hyper feminized form, tailored to the waist, with broad shoulders, and structured hips that rounded the silhouette into the hourglass shape. This is from the revived romantic styles seen in couture collections from the thirties. This change is formulated to be a common pattern for fashion in the 20th century. Women’s skirt hems rose in the 1920s and the 1940s, in order to make their garments more functional, with looser and

more “masculine” silhouettes, so women could go to work and mirror the men who enlisted in the military. After each world war, hemlines dropped, and more feminine silhouettes were adopted for women's fashions as women fell back into traditionally feminine roles (Mendes & de la Haye, 2010).

Additionally, the advertisements and sewing texts from Agnes’s lifetime and those specifically from the 1954-56, period can be analyzed to more fully understand this time period. Inside the package of my great aunt’s designs is the *Domestic Sewing Handbook*, along with two clippings from *Better Homes and Gardens*. One clipping is from November 1988 and features holiday place-setting ideas by Jim Williams and Jilann Severson. The second clipping is from May 1960 and gives “Tips for Busy Gals” with details on how to hem a flared skirt; it shows how to make an “even and flat hem” by turning, pinking, controlling fullness, pinning and consequently blind hemming. Because of the dates I assume the *Better Homes and Gardens* pages were saved inside these books after Agnes had completed her collection.

Figure 4

Better Homes and Gardens, May 1960

Suddenly your dishwasher washes up to 30% better

With other detergents from food soil stays water greener than **finish** soaks.

With new, advanced **finish** full water power, water washes dishes thoroughly. Prevents spots.

advanced formula
with Foam Control

finish

For Spotless AUTOMATIC DISHWASHING

Removes water patches up to 200.

Advanced detergent assures spotless dishwashing

It's remarkable the improvement you see the minute you start using advanced **finish** in your automatic dishwasher. Water spots start to disappear immediately. Leading dishwasher manufacturers wholeheartedly approve advanced **finish**. So will you! Try **finish**. won't you.

Another **finish** product of ECONOMICS LABORATORY, INC. 220 Park Ave., New York, N. Y.

NO OTHER BOOK MAKES SO MANY JOBS SO EASY

HOW TO DO YOUR OWN home maintenance and repair—eagerly. How to improve your home, do building and decorating jobs—at less cost.

WE CAN GUARANTEE that the 510-page *Better Homes & Gardens HANDYMAN'S BOOK* will save you more than its cost within the first 6 months. Get it at your book or hardware store—or send check or money order to 5605 Meredith Bldg., Des Moines 3, Iowa. Only \$4.95 (Canada \$5.50)

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Clear, simple instructions and 1660 step-by-step pictures make even difficult jobs easy.

Tips for busy gals—

How to hem a flared skirt

Just a few extra stitches make a neat, inconspicuous hem in a circular skirt.

The trick is making an even, flat hem in a full skirt: stitch gathering threads along the cut edge of the hem width. These control-threads ease excess hem fabric into tiny gathers and eliminate the bulky ridges. Take out old hem; press out crease mark. Put on garment, wearing appropriate shoes. Chalk or pin new hem line.

Turn hem on marked line. Pin folded edge of hem to get it even and flat; baste hem a ¼-inch from the folded edge. Cut hem to a 2-inch width or less; very full skirts should have narrower hems. Press the new hem fold to shape it to skirt; don't press raw edge, for that may leave an unwanted crease mark.

Control fullness with machine stitching ¼ inch from cut edge; stitch from seam to seam. Pull up bobbin threads to gather; distribute fullness evenly, matching seams. Steam press to shrink out extra fullness. Insert pressing cloth between fabric layers to prevent crease marks.

Pin seam binding to hem; machine-stitch it about a ¼-inch from cut edge of hem. Binding should cover control-stitching. Fold seam binding over hem's edge. Pin it to garment, then baste it in place.

Blind hemming with seam binding makes sturdy hems in circular skirts; it's quick and easy. To blind-hem: catch only one fiber of the garment and take a large stitch in the binding. Stitches must be invisible on garment's right side. Final steps: remove basting threads; steam press carefully.

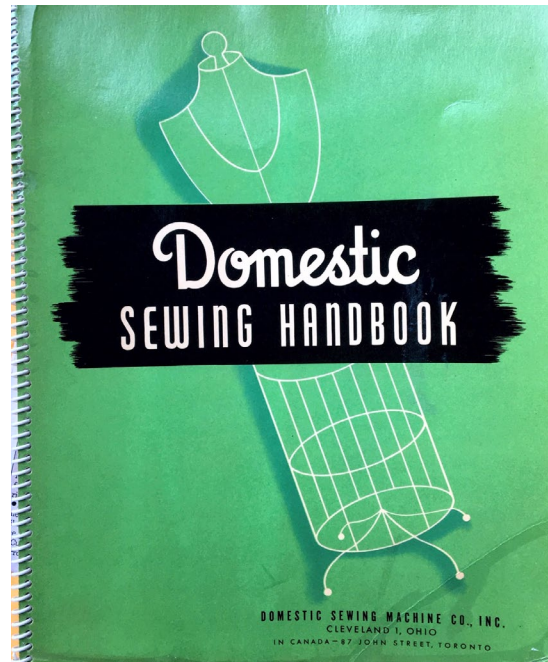
BETTER HOMES & GARDENS, MAY, 1960

(Better Homes and Gardens, 1960)

As for the *Domestic Sewing Handbook*, the date is 1947; and while I cannot pinpoint exactly when she bought this book, I can assume it was around the time she took a dressmaking course in Lake Oswego. This book details what tools a dressmaker would need, how to properly press, steps to make a garment, muslins fitting and alterations, how to find the grain of the fabric, and many more techniques needed in dressmaking.

Figure 5

Domestic Sewing Handbook cover



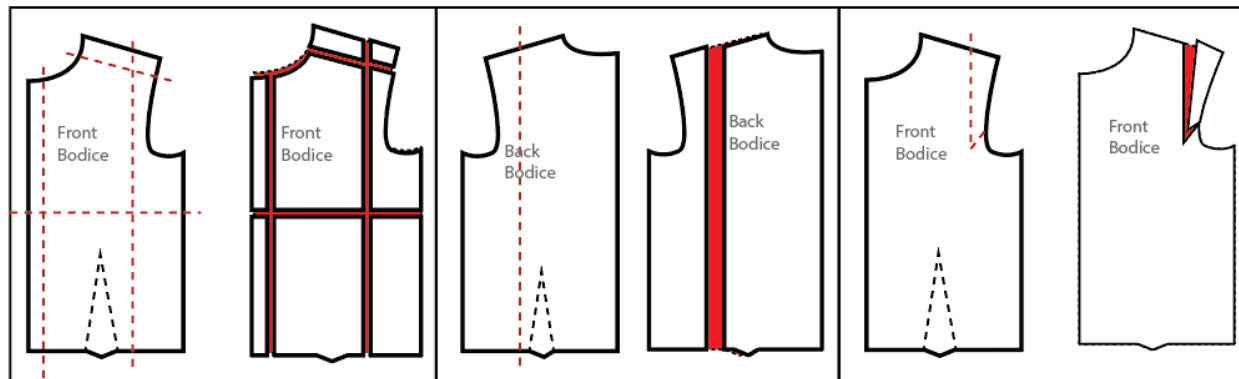
(Domestic Sewing Handbook, 1947)

This book does not teach a person how to create their own pattern, but it has a strong focus on how to fit and alter a pattern to *generally* fit different body types. I emphasize generally, because this book lacks an explanation on how bodies are shaped differently and why changes in measurements change the fit of a garment.

The *Domestic Sewing Handbook*, while outdated in some language, is a testament to how little basic patternmaking and dressmaking techniques have changed in the last 70 years. A prominent technique is the Slash and Spread method, used by cutting a line through part of a pattern to make it longer or wider. The diagram below explains this method, from how it is used in grading a pattern piece (making a pattern bigger or smaller), and how this method is used to create certain parts of a garment larger or smaller. The examples from the *Domestic Sewing Handbook* include “Broad Shoulders and Back” and “Square Shoulders” (pg. 17-23).

Figure 6

Illustrations of basic front bodice alteration methods



This can also be used to make the pattern smaller by overlapping the edges of the cut line, but more often the garment is taken in and fitted on a model or dress form. Other fitting techniques shown discuss how to flatten fabric of a garment to a body when there are drag lines or excess fabric that create ripples in the garment when worn. These lines explain how the body is proportioned in respect to the dimensions of the pattern, like “Large Upperarm Muscle”, “flat chest”, or “large hip line”, as the *Domestic Sewing Handbook* explains. However, this language does greatly generalize how pattern making and fitting intersect. This text primarily looks at how a garment lays on a body, and to fit a garment a tailor would look for wrinkles or pull lines, rather than looking specifically at how the body is measured and shaped. Over the past 70 years, great advancements have been made in measuring and sizing human bodies to simplify mass production into fewer sizes. Modern fit research is more precise and explain this fit concept less generally, so a person can make more informed decisions when patternmaking. For example, *Patternmaking for Fashion Design*, a modern pattern making text has references to different industry size standards, such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), and is for pattern making on a mass scale, rather than for home sewing (Armstrong, 2010).

Figure 7

Domestic Sewing Handbook, pages 18-19



(*Domestic Sewing Handbook*, 1947)

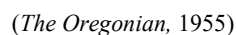
Additionally, these texts give us more context to social life in the 1950s and the influence of advertisements. The language used in the *Domestic Sewing Handbook*, like the *Better Homes and Gardens* articles, depict gender roles and assumptions about home making for this era. The book only refers to women as dressmakers and discusses how a woman may use this book either for saving money or for a hobby. It is important to note the social relationship dressmaking had on women's lives, as well as how women taught other women. It is customary in my family, as it is for many others, for mothers to pass along sewing skills to their daughters, and to their daughter's daughters, and so on. This idea was prominent in the American nuclear family model of the 1950s.

Newspapers were vital sources of information for Oregonians in the 1950s. *The Sunday Oregonian* showed who was married each week- picturing the bride holding a bouquet of flowers, and a

description of who attended the ceremony- and where people traveled. Besides the news, people were able to document their personal lives. For example, in my search to find documentation on Agnes in *The Oregonian*, I came across a photo of a “doubleheader” flower that she had sent into the newspaper in 1952. They were also important for sharing social activities related to Agnes’s business; she joined Chefs Choice, a social group with other restaurateurs, and was pictured in articles for her restaurant and others.

Beyond sharing society or business news, *The Oregonian* was a helpful tool for marketing clothing. While popular fashion catalogues were Mademoiselle, Glamour, and Vogue, the local newspaper showed what was available to buy locally, in Portland. In one article, Associated Press writer Dorothy Roe detailed an emerging trend for the summer of 1955: the reemergence of “the Flapper girl” (Oregonian, 1954). The shapeless silhouette of the 1920s was popular in clothing but was also seen in bathing suit designs; the same dropped waistline was reinvented in the 1950s. Many dresses, some that Agnes designed, show a waistline, or at least a horizontal seam at the hip, but rather than copying the boxy shape from the 1920s, the garments are still fitted to the waist and flare to the hip.

March 6, 1955. P.5 of The Oregonian



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brim of your breton!” and shows highly decorated hats with netting, flowers, and ribbons. In 1956 Easter was on April 1st, and this advertisement was likely imploring people to shop for their Easter outfits, as the advertisements show more formal attire.

In *Fashioning the 1950s “Vassar Girl”*, author Rebecca Tuite uses testimonials and images from the late 1940s through the 1950s to create a snapshot of the styles and lives of women attending Vassar College. Two general trends emerge from this study: the “Vassar Girl” and the “Workwear” or “Preppy” trends. The Vassar Girl trend, which promoted wearing highly feminine styles of clothing, made the wearer look more “sophisticated” and older than they were. Tuite analyzes this trend to not only reflect the immense wealth and privilege of the students of Vassar, but also the societal pressure to impress and comfort men. They found 95% of women during this time had goals to be married during or soon after college, and with testimonials to back this up, showing that a woman was told to dress “towards greater sophistication”(Tuite, 2013). They see this pattern, “termed [by Anne Fogarty] ‘wife-dressing’”, leading women at the time to wear clothing that reflected mothers and wives of the time, with pearls, furs, dresses and cardigans (Tuite, 2013).

The workwear and preppy trends in this study show women adapting to men’s styles of clothing, reflecting styles seen at Ivy League schools for men like Harvard and Yale. These trends had women wearing Bermuda shorts or jeans, button down shirts, and loafers. This type of dress is analyzed to be “pre-feminist thought” as women dressed more comfortably, however Tuite still found that women were dressing for men and not themselves. These styles, while not being inherently feminine, were masculine adaptations to their wardrobes in order to gain equal stance with men (Tuite, 2013). The campus identities at Vassar are emblematic of major themes of 1950s lifestyle, such as homemaking and the balance between feminine and masculine dress for women.

Tuite’s “snapshot” of fashion history focuses on wealthy white women, primarily in Poughkeepsie, New York, but they also allude to their fashion impacting societal perceptions of the Vassar Girl fashions. This is seen as Vogue had used college students from Vassar in a 1950s issue.

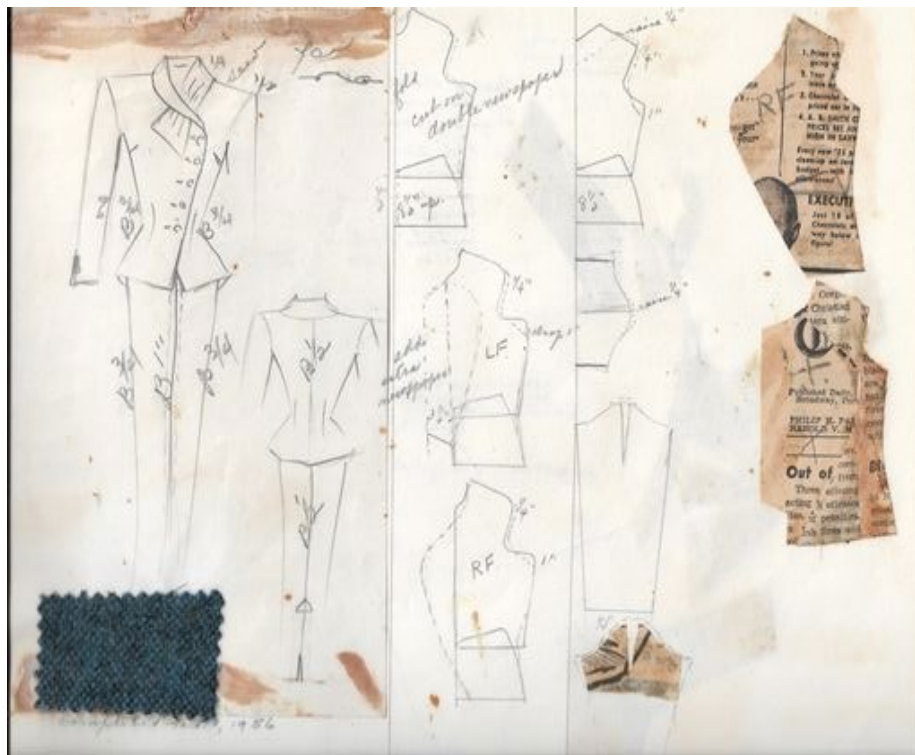
Within this snapshot Tuite has narrowed in on a very wealthy and young class of individuals, and although they had inspired trends through Vogue, some of their styles, most notably mink furs, were highly unattainable for a lot of people at this time. My research, although only focused on one person, and with few living testimonials, will give another perspective of fashion and style in the mid-1950s. I believe that Agnes Eriksen, whom my research is based upon, will show similar trends in homemaking skills, but also give a fresh perspective of the period between 1954 and 1956 and how women navigated society at this time. Additionally, this paper's intent is to focus not only on the fashion trends of this time but to analyze the process of how Agnes created her garments.

Analysis of Source Material

Agnes's design process was likely guided by many factors, but a top factor was high fashion. The influence of high fashion can be seen in her designs. In this 1956 design (Figure 9) she likely draws inspiration from Dior.

Figure 9

Agnes's Design from 1956



(Eriksen, 1956)

For example, her asymmetrical skirt suit which is reminiscent of clothes in the Smithsonian's *Fashion: The Definitive Visual Guide* (Figure 10, left) and the 1951 Gala evening gown found in *Fashion Since 1900* (Figure 10, right).

Figure 10

Pages 301 and 302 from Smithsonian's Fashion: The Definitive Visual Guide



(Hennessy, 2019)

This design is like many of her designs that mimic high fashion of this era; a wool skirt suit that becomes slimmer with a jacket that hugs the waist and flares to accentuate the hips. I found that this design reflects a few of Dior's designs created in the early 1950s as the collar style stands out. Like Dior, she has created an asymmetrical collar that begins like a shawl collar. One side of the widened neckline, creating a shawl collar is extended and gathered back into the form as the garment is worn. The 1951 gala gown is another example of this detail but used in a slightly different way; the extended and gathered piece sits at the front of the gown as decoration, which creates a pulled illusion. Additionally, in a 2014 exhibit of Dior dresses from this post-war era, the curator, Oliver Saillard said that the grey asymmetrical dress "Bernique" is "the most representative of the era" (Jacobs, 2014). Further showing how Agnes

found inspiration from these popular designs is her 1956 design, which was created only a few years later as she toyed with a new interpretation of the wool suit.

Figure 11

2014 exhibition featuring Dior's "Bernique"



(Jacobs, 2014)

Further, the Smithsonian text discusses how designers in the 1950s were creating new ways of framing a female body within the context of suiting and tailoring. Two popular designers that are celebrated for revolutionizing women's suiting in the 1950s are Balenciaga and Charles James. Common silhouettes created by such tailors included rounded shoulders, suits tightly fitted through the top to the waist, and flaring to accentuate the hips. While Balenciaga or Charles James could also be sources of inspiration for Agnes, her 1956 design (Figure 11) reflects more details from Dior's designs at this time. While fashion and trends often trickle down from luxury designers and her original inspiration might have come from a J.C. Penny catalog that mimicked this style, it is more likely that she had seen Dior's originals. Her family that she was fascinated by high fashion, which was centered in Paris and London at this time; American couture designers only slowly gained traction in the early 1950s.

Another contributing factor to how Agnes designed clothing was her local newspaper. Her *Oregonian* paper clippings are scattered throughout these books. She used the newspaper primarily for creating $\frac{1}{8}$ scale slopers, but occasionally she takes inspiration from the newspaper itself. Later in this paper I will explore instances where Agnes looks clippings from advertisements in *The Sunday Oregonian* as she drew inspiration from the latest styles shown.

Method

In order to recreate these garments, I will focus on several components: fabric and fiber type, color and prints of fabrics, and the pattern construction she provides. The fabric she bought for these garments were likely purchased in 1954 at the J.C. Penney that was across from the Rose City Golf Course. Many swatches are titled by Agnes with either brand names or fabric and fiber types, and are likely information copied from the bolt that the fabric came on in the store. However, these details can only be assumed. Like many designers, I assume that Agnes went to the fabric department to scout out fabric and prices and obtained a swatch for her design. Then she could have gone home to plan out her yardage, and total up how much the garment would cost to make.

To recreate her fabric swatches, I need to look at fiber and weave type. Fiber is the material that makes up the fabric, like cotton or wool, and the weave or knit type is how the yarns are structured together to form fabric. To inspect the fabric swatches, a pick is used to gently pull length and widthwise yarns, while the pick glass is used to observe and determine what weave or knit type the fabric is. How the yarns interlocks into the fabric determines what type of fabric the swatch is. Fabrics for these recreated garments will be chosen to closely resemble the corresponding 1950s swatch for each design.

To determine fiber type, a yarn will be pulled from the swatch and a burn test will be performed (see chart below). Since only 3 square inches are provided of each fabric, this part must be done conservatively. Once the yarn is either lit on fire or burned the flame is removed and the fiber is determined by smell and burn type. Natural protein fibers like hair will self-extinguish and smell like burning hair under a flat iron. Cellulosic fibers have “fluffy ash” and will continue to burn. Synthetic fibers like acetate and nylon melt and the singed fiber looks brown or tan. Like picking the right woven or knit fabric, the fiber type for the recreated garment will be as close as possible to the 1950s design, if not match the original swatch.

Table 1

Textiles, 12th edition, Chapter 3, Identification by Burning.

Table 3.7 Identification by Burning

Fibers	When Approaching Flame	When in Flame	After Removal from Flame	Ash	Odor
Cellulose (Cotton, Flax, Lyocell, Rayon)	Does not fuse or shrink from flame	Burns with light gray smoke	Continues to burn, afterglow	Gray, feathery, smooth edge	Burning paper
Protein (Silk, Wool)	Curls away from flame	Burns slowly	May self-extinguish	Crushable black ash	Burning hair
Acetate	Melts and pulls away from flame	Melts and burns	Continues to burn and melt	Brittle, black, hard bead	Acrid, harsh, sharp odor
Acrylic	Melts and pulls away from flame	Melts and burns	Continues to burn and melt	Brittle, black, hard bead	Chemical odor
Glass	No reaction	Does not burn	No reaction	Fiber remains	None
Modacrylic	Melts and pulls away from flame	Melts and burns	Self-extinguishes, white smoke	Brittle, black, hard bead	Chemical odor
Nylon	Melts and pulls away from flame	Melts and burns	May self-extinguish	Hard gray or tan bead	Celerylike
Olefin	Melts and pulls away from flame	Melts and burns	May self-extinguish	Hard tan bead	Chemical odor
PLA	Melts and pulls away from flame	Melts and burns with slight white smoke	May self-extinguish	Hard tan or gray bead	Slightly acrid odor
Polyester	Melts and pulls away from flame	Melts and burns	May self-extinguish	Hard black bead	Sweet odor
Spandex	Melts but does not pull away from flame	Melts and burns	Continues to melt and burn	Soft black ash	Chemical odor

textile fibers and their properties

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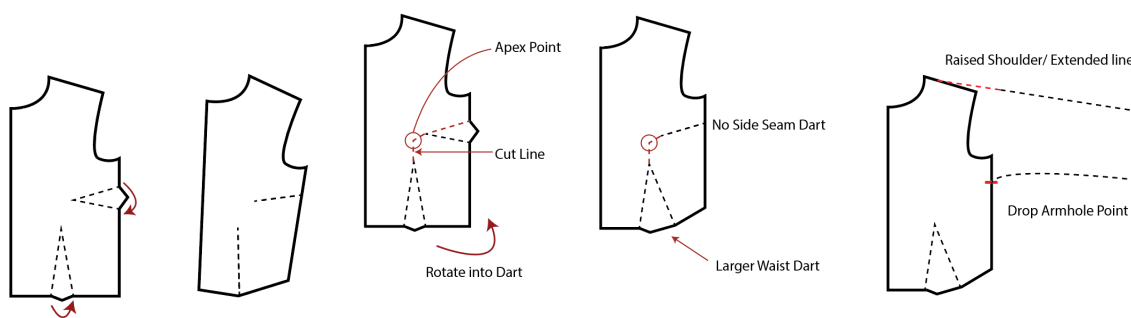
(Kadolph;Marcketti, 2017)

To get the correct fabric print, Adobe Illustrator drawing software will be used to recreate and expand on the existing print. The swatch will be scanned digitally as a JPEG file, and image traced in Illustrator or hand-traced using a Wacom tablet and the Blob brush tool. Creative liberties may need to be taken to expand on the design of the print and cohesively blend it into a repeat print block. The print created in Illustrator will then be exported into a Portable Network Graphic (PNG) file and opened into Photoshop to ensure a white box does not appear around the print block. The final PNG file will be uploaded to Spoonflower and sent to their printing company in North Carolina. Spoonflower has limited fabric types with pre-determined fibers, so creative liberties will also be used here to choose a fabric that best suits each garment design.

Finally, in order to recreate the full-scale pattern pieces, I will start by tracing off of PGM 8 slopers, or standardized “size 8” pattern blocks, provided by the Oregon State University Sewing Lab. For the slopers to fit my models for this collection, I will add roughly an inch in width, and angle most shoulder lines upward to increase the room for the arms. Most of the dresses and tops are raglan or kimono sleeves, so there is no need to alter the shoulder seam. After the patterns are cut out from fabric and sewn together, they will be fitted to models to perfect the shape of the garment. Agnes’s instructions show that her slopers have a side seam bust dart, and a shoulder seam dart in the back. This is slightly different from the PGM 8 slopers I am utilizing, which have darts in the waistline. In most cases the darts in the waistline are utilized but for kimono sleeves the side seam dart is folded down to alter the arm shape (Figure 12). Meaning, the darts in the side seam are eliminated, by moving the fullness from their dart to somewhere else in the pattern. A patternmaker can take this dart and move it to the waistline, as many of these designs have paneled pieces that cross the waist, so the waistline darts are converted into seams. Some instructions and measurements are missing, so in these cases I will decide what looks best to recreate the garment.

Figure 12

Rotating darts and adding a dolman sleeve to a front bodice.



Agnes's Accounting & Costuming

Agnes Eriksen kept track of prices of everything that it took to create the garment. While being a frugal woman, who grew up with little money, these details show her conviction to purchase designer fabric like Forstmann. This could also be a clue to how many other people lived at this time, not trying to buy more than they need. Planned obsolescence skyrocketed after this time period, along with increased consumerism after the war and eventually becomes fast fashion.

In the backs of each book she calculated how much it took to make each garment, summarizing her designs and totaling her work. The first two books are highly detailed in this regard, but the third book is slightly less so, as it has unfinished designs and few blank pages. This could be due to the opening of the Boulevard in the late 1950s early 1960s and the time Agnes and Henry took to plan out the business. But this could be one of the myriad of other things that makes life busy for a person.

Figure 13

List of expenditures from Agnes Design Book I.

Book I Expenditures	
Blue Carter cotton	6.00
Surg. shorty coat	14.00
Navy silk faulle coat	22.00
Slite rayon fig dress	8.00
" " " "	9.00
specious wool bolero	11.00
pink blue fig rayon	6.50
Long rayon shawl	3.00
Bridge full length coat	29.00
Milron (dow) ensemble	15.50
Sub Total	124.00
II	
Red impish wool shirt	6.00
" blue fig rayon blouse	2.00
Blue Forstmann wool dress	13.00
Red check jacket	12.50
" wool shirt	2.00
Blue towel suit	19.00
" blk jersey dress	11.50
Red Rufflen cotton "	5.50
Total	201.50
III	
Bk. short - blouse set	15.00
Striped Blouse	5.00
fig rayon shirt	2.00
Blue Carter cotton blouse	3.50
specious fig Rufflen	3.50
gon in ABC. set	5.00

(Eriksen, 1955)

At first glance, the tables in the front of her design books looked like an accounting of her supplies. But, on closer glance, I noticed she had written “costume either.” I figure this space was more likely her designated area to plan out her own “costume plot”. In costume design a costume plot is used to plan out what actors will wear and when, but here she paired her designs with garments and accessories she already had in her wardrobe. This shows her thought process in how her designs will seamlessly fit into her existing wardrobe, as she creates space and proves that the designs work into outfits. The last book in this regard is much less thorough and she does not lay out complete outfits. She describes the suit or dress, the topper or blouse, scarf, jewelry, shoes, and hats that would go together to make outfits.

Table 2

Costume plot from Agnes's Design Book I.

<i>Costume either Suit or dress</i>	<i>Topper - Blouse</i>	<i>Hat - Gloves</i>	<i>Shoes - Bag</i>	<i>Costume Jewel Scarf etc.</i>
<i>Brown velvet wool suit</i>	<i>Mid blue coat or Lawn/maiden scarf or Tan bow tie dark wool top</i>	<i>Brige hat or May buy burg. hat.</i>	<i>Brige gloves Black pumps</i>	<i>Saddle bag Gold earrings & bracelet Surg. box, fig. ad.</i>
<i>Black plaid (gray) wool dress or Red wool dress (black tie)</i>	<i>Blue wool coat Lawn</i>	<i>Black velvet hat</i>	<i>Black gloves Black pumps</i>	<i>Black tag Silver & blk</i>
<i>Navy crepe dress, fuch. flare dressy shirt</i>	<i>Red fitted coat - blk. person card trim</i>	<i>Navy or blk hat</i>	<i>Blk gloves Blk pumps</i>	<i>Blk tag Rhinestone or pearl earrings & brooch</i>
<i>H. Bond wool suit</i>	<i>Blk. stole (poodle cloth)</i>	<i>Blk. red hat</i>	<i>Blk gloves Blk pumps</i>	<i>Blk tag Blk. wht. polka. may</i>
<i>Slate blue suit</i>	<i>Blue coat or chick top wht. blouse</i>	<i>Blk hat</i>	<i>Blk gloves Blk pumps</i>	<i>Blk tag Pearls - "</i>
<i>Gold (heavy) suit Leopard trim</i>	<i>Chick top rust blouse</i>	<i>Brige hat</i>	<i>Brige or Lawn gloves "</i>	<i>Tag Bag Gold - gold or Silver scarf</i>
<i>Navy shirt - wht. blouse knit suit</i>	<i>Navy, gray check shorty</i>	<i>Navy hat</i>	<i>Black gloves Navy or red shoes</i>	<i>Navy tag Pearls - - Navy wht. pocket may</i>
<i>White orlon knit suit</i>	<i>Pale blue orlon shorty</i>			
<i>Blk. faile (lined) velvet collar suit</i>	<i>Fur scarf Fur sweater jacket Surg. shorted coat</i>	<i>Blk velvet hat</i>	<i>Blk gloves Blk pumps</i>	<i>Blk velvet tag Pearls or Rhinestone</i>
		<i>Surg. short hat</i>		

(Eriksen, 1954)

Table 3

Costume plot from Agnes's Design Book II.

12-55 Costume Suit or dress	Topper - Blouse	Hat - gloves	Shoes - Bag	Costume jewelry scarf etc.
Dark brown sweater suit	Teal - shorty Turtleneck or large front length	White Turtleneck	Black Black	
Blue fig rayon dress	Navy silk fitted fitted waist	White	Black	Black patent
Blue linen 11 fig cotton Turtleneck rayon	yellow haler	White	"	"
Dark brown jacket ensemble	sheath dress	Black pant suit	"	"
Blue Fortmann wool	Large front length	Blue braided	"	"
Black blue wool jersey	"	"	"	"
Blue tweed suit	"	"	"	"
Red navy white check jacket	(SPORT) no skirt			

(Eriksen, 1955)

Results

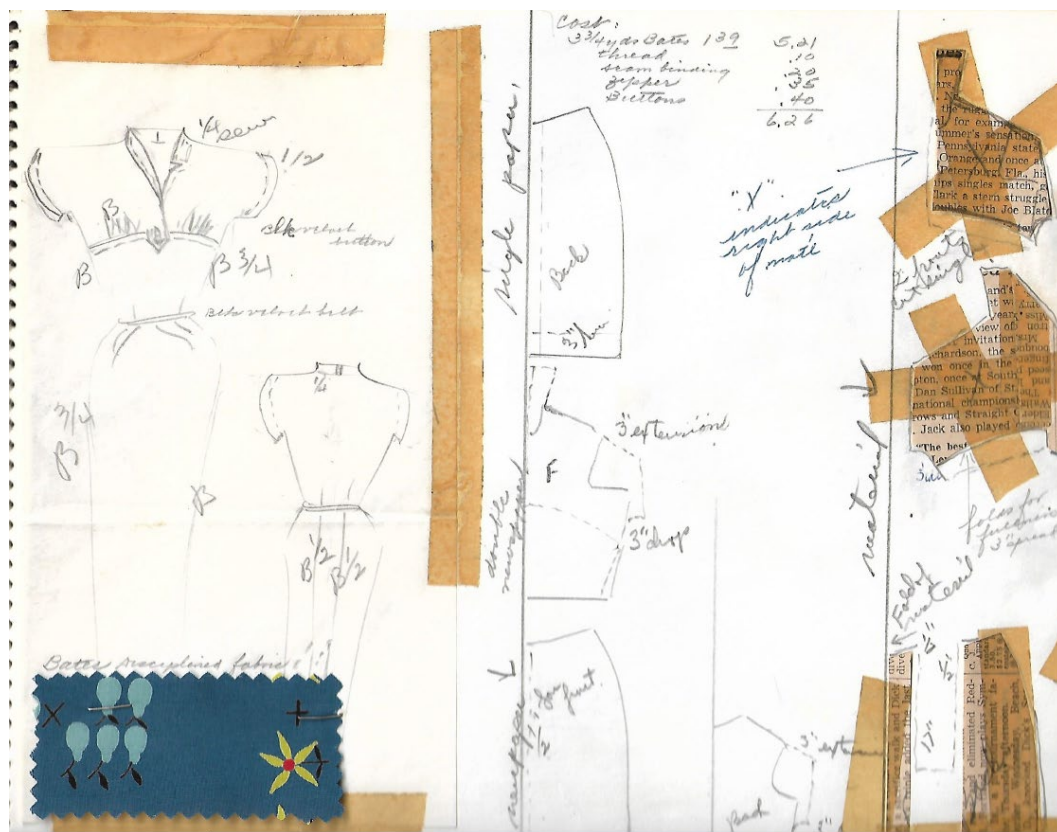
Book 1

Agnes Eriksen's first sketchbook spans late 1954 through 1955, with 11 designs. These designs are for dresses, suits, coats, as well as a few ideas for hats and accessories to match.

September 1954

Figure 14

September 1954 design page.



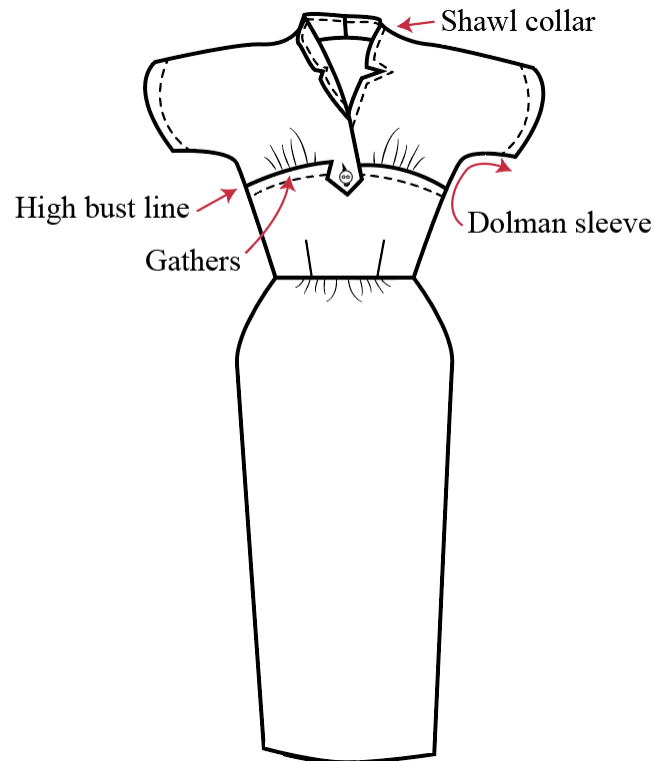
(Eriksen, 1954)

This dress was created in September of 1954 and is the, first pattern in her books. Based on the fabric and season this was likely a day dress as it is casual and there are not many holidays or gatherings that happen in late September when this dress would likely have been completed. The silhouette is fitted

with pleats and gathering for ease of movement and to give areas of added fullness. A couple key styles that carry throughout her designs are seen in this one: the dolman style sleeve, a high bust line sectioned from the bodice and gathered to add fullness, and a shawl collar.

Figure 15

September 1954 design callouts



To recreate the Bates print from the original swatch I started by using the Image Trace function in Illustrator. From this trace I simplified the motifs down to make them smoother graphics. This was done by selecting roughly 6 colors to use for this design. I then used the pear, flower, and cross motifs to recreate the part of the swatch that I can see, I then began to expand on this design, rotating and scaling the motifs, creating a 4-way pattern. Making every design in this collection a 4-way pattern was important, so I could lay a pattern piece on the width or length either way and the piece would look right side up. This also made it so I could order less fabric. After adjusting the print by taking it to the swatch

window, it is saved as a PNG file and uploaded to Spoonflower. As this was my first time working with Spoonflower, I failed to print a swatch first, and the print ended up printing roughly two times too large.

Figure 16

Prints for September 1954 design.



Left: Recreated print, right: Original print (scanned), (Eriksen, 1954)

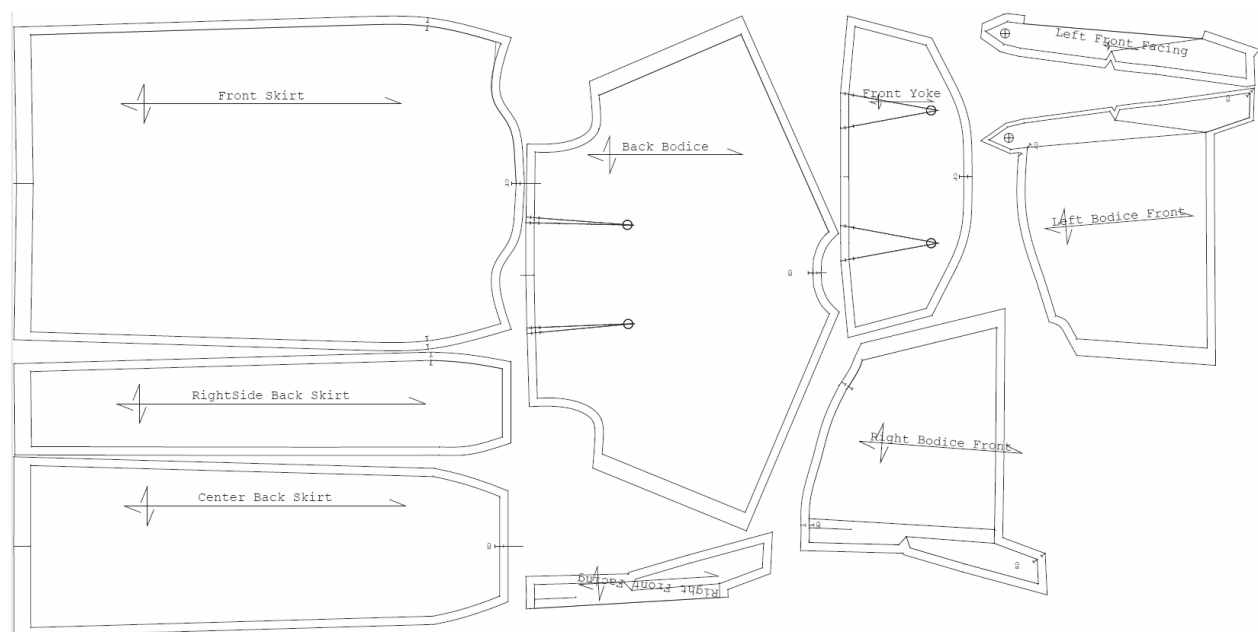
The swatch is titled “Bates Sraciploried fabric,” though the vowels are difficult to discern in the “S” word so I may be slightly incorrect in the spelling. Analyzing the fiber through a burn test I found that it burned with little to no ash and self-extinguished (refer to Fabric Notes, Table 6). The fiber melted as it burned created a residual melted brown bead. This leads me to believe that it is polyester or a poly blend as it feels and drapes like a cotton fabric of this weave type but melts instead of ashing. The Spoonflower fabric was printed on their Petal Signature Cotton, which was only slightly stiffer and thicker than the original swatch.

To recreate this pattern, I began altering the bodice sloper. First, to create the silhouette with a shawl collar I extended the neckline, so that when the front bodice is sewn to the back bodice it wraps around the back neckline to create a collar. A triangle notch is taken out from the front of the collar. Starting with the left side of the bodice the instructions call for a 3” armhole drop and 3” extension from the shoulder to create a dolman sleeve. The measurements in the final product were adjusted to better form a garment that looked more like the original sketch. Once the left front bodice silhouette was created, it is sliced in half to create the bottom yoke. The top part of the bodice is then spliced from the bottom edge and spread apart to add fullness that will be gathered when attached to the front yoke. Since the front top of the bodice is asymmetrical the left must be mirrored for the right side and then 2 inches

are added to the center front line and extended down 1.5" for the front tab where a buttonhole is marked. Two facings are then created from tracing the collar, down to the front tab. The back bodice is simpler than the front, as the sloper is only adjusted to create the dolman sleeve. The front skirt is created by adding fullness to the waistline, by splicing the darts towards the side seam, creating a short s-curve on one half of the waistline. While her instructions do not specify for the skirt to become slimmer towards the hem, the sketch does indicate that it would. The back skirt is made from three panels that draw straight lines down from the back dart. In my case, I had to combine the two darts the skirt sloper already contained, and then splice the skirt apart from the single dart. The closure on this dress is a zipper that starts below the armhole on the right-side seam, and is covered by the front bodice, which is topstitch.

Figure 17

Optitex, digitally rendered pattern layout for September 1954 design.



A detail that was missed while creating this pattern are the kick pleats that are hidden behind the fabric swatch on this page. This would help for walking in this dress as the skirt does become slimmer. For the recreated design, the skirt does not become as slim or long as the illustration represents to address this issue. And different from the following patterns this pattern was created in Vstitcher, which allowed

me to create this garment into 9 separate sizes. VStitcher also allowed me to see how the garment would fit on a model and allowed me to adjust the shawl collar and front bodice fit in particular.

Figure 18

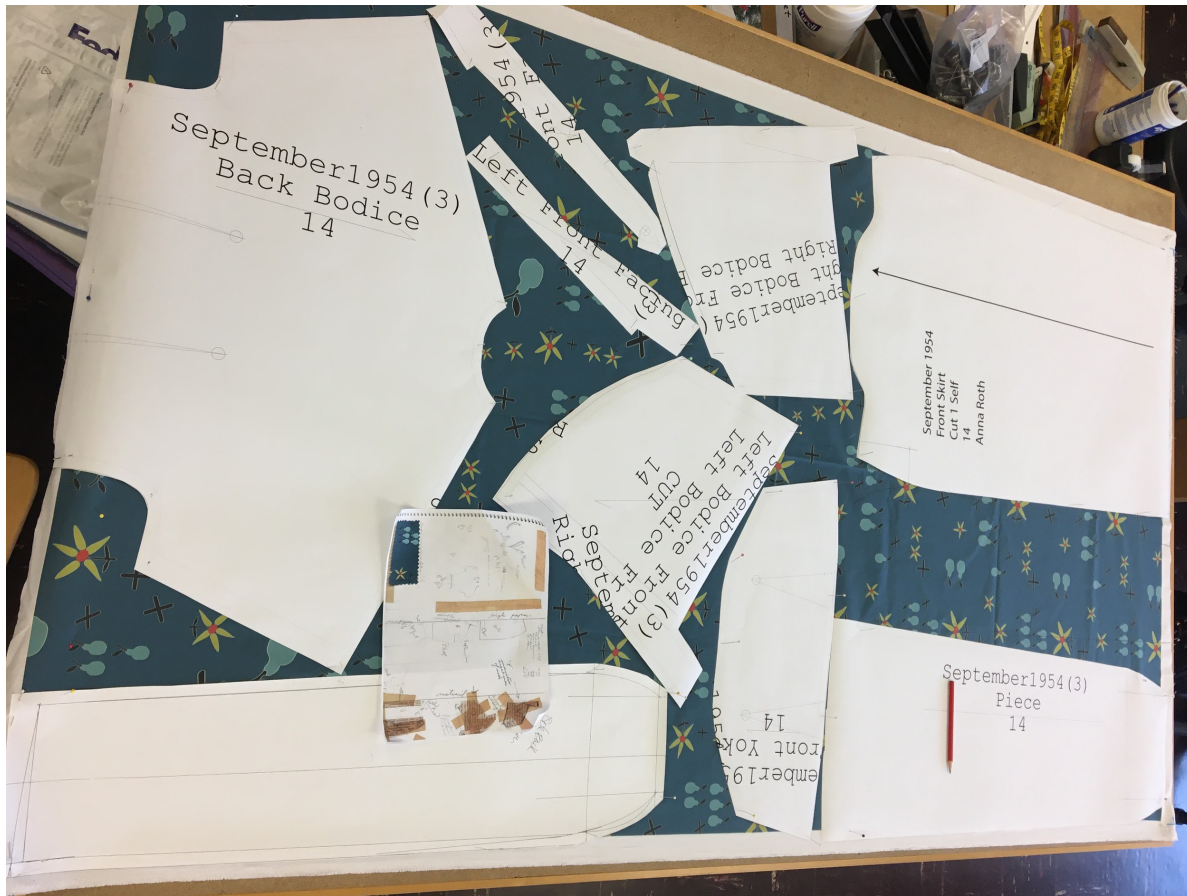
Browzwear, Vstitcher 3D rendered September 1954 Design. Front, side, back.



In constructing this garment, the top front bodice pieces were flipped when cut so the top is a mirrored version of the illustration. Although I missed the two back kick pleats in this garment, I did follow her design for the topstitching and blind stitching.

Figure 19

Pattern layout on physical fabric.

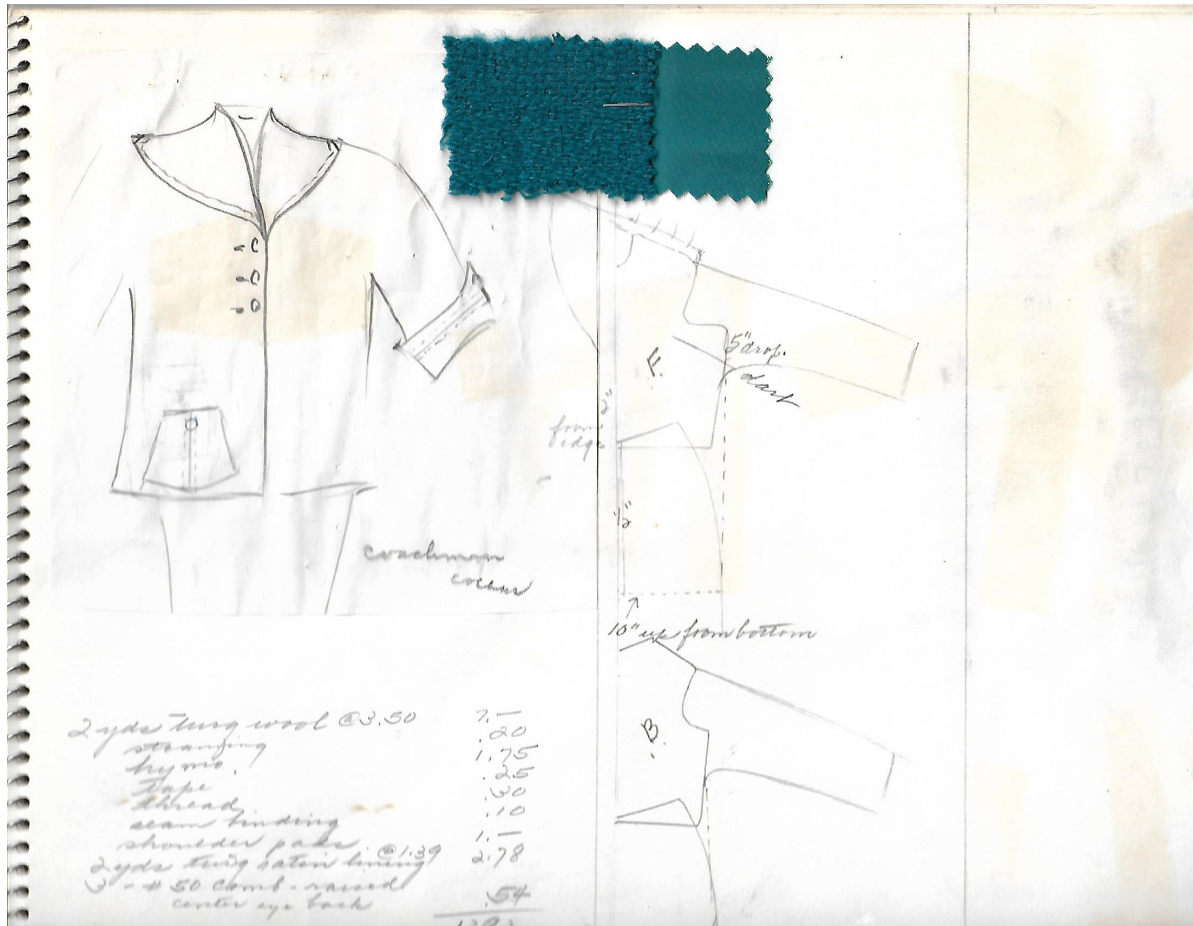


Additionally, this design also calls for a black velvet button that sits on the center front tab on the neckline. The velvet button was also created from a stretch velveteen fabric, which wouldn't have been the same kind that she would have used, as it contains fibers like elastane that weren't created at this time, but it is a close match aesthetically. For completed garment see page 101.

January 22, 1955

Figure 20

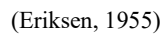
January 22, 1955 design page.



(Eriksen, 1955)

Jumping from 1954 to 1955 Agnes began the year designing this turquoise coat. Like the ideas explored in the literature review of the reinvention of 1920s styles in the 1950s, this coat is meant to be large and boxy on a fitted silhouette. But instead of the long sleeves in the 1920s this coat has wide cropped sleeves, presumably to show off the style of gloves worn with it.

January 22, 1955 design page 2, 1/8 scale plan.



31

regenerated fiber from bamboo and can be engineered to have a certain hand or texture. The lining of this coat is also much shinier than the original, but they are both satin weaves, so the drape or the way the fabric falls is similar but the hand or feel on the original is less slick than the bought fabric. Shoulder pads were also in her materials list but are not added into the final garment.

As per Agnes's instructions to create this coat, it requires simple slash and spread techniques to add more room to the pattern, as well as the creation of dolman sleeves and a large "cardigan collar". I began by extending the shoulder line, dropping the armhole, and curving and extending the side seam line, as shown below. Then according to Figure 20, she adds 2" for a center front overlap, and then I estimated where to begin the curve for the large shawl collar, as it protrudes outwards. This collar also calls for a raised shoulder line, to add ease. The shoulder line is then extended straight past the neckline roughly 5" to create the collar. This extension then connects to the curve that begins in the center front overlap. Then I copied the dolman sleeve measurements to the back piece to the shoulder/upper arm and side seam/underarm so they would match front to back. The bodies of these patterns split apart, drawing lines from the High Point Shoulder (HPS) to the bottom of the piece. This allows the piece to flare out to create a fuller coat. Then a back collar is formed using the back-neckline measurement and front collar measurement. From here I drafted a rounded edge for the outside edge of the collar, to match Agnes's sketch. From here I began changing the pattern slightly. Instead of creating facings I decided to cut the lining from the same patterns, front and back coat pieces, as well as the collars so the lining could act as an accent detail. For this purpose I also changed the shape of the cuff pattern, as it was originally a fold over cuff, so the lining wouldn't be visible if worn, and I created a "rectangle" style cuff, that has a pointed outside edge to create the pointed detail where the button lands. The design for the cuffs is also slightly confusing on where to fold the cuff and how to attach it to the coat as a seam can be seen in the sketch, between the two lines of topstitching. A solid line refers to a seam and dashed lines illustrate topstitching. From Agnes's sketch there is a seam line that horizontally spans the middle of the cuff. Perhaps the cuff was patterned out to have multiple pieces for this to make sense, as cuffs are often sewn

to a garment where the edges lie. Meaning if there are two edges sewn together, they would attach to the edge of the sleeve. If there were other pieces for this cuff there is a high probability that they may have fallen off due to the lack of archival glue. Through this process many pieces have fallen off and I have glued them back onto their corresponding page with a Ph neutral adhesive that will not stain the pages. Pieces were pasted, taped, or glued into these pages as her motive to create these books were likely not to have them last for 70 years, so the adhesives have stained or worn poorly as they weren't meant to last.

Another detail to this coat is the patch pocket on the right side of this coat. It doesn't have patterned details, but from the sketch I realized it was either two pieces sewn together and topstitched, which is noted from the solid and dashed lines, or it is what I created, which is a pocket with a box pleat in the center. Creating a pocket with such a pleat allows the pocket to expand or lay flat against the coat when needed. This option was the more functional option, but perhaps not exactly what she intended.

Figure 22

Pattern layout on physical fabric.



This coat is constructed slightly differently than a coat would typically be constructed as there is no facing. Understanding this, fusible interfacing was cut and applied to the wrong side of the center front, to make the structure for a faux facing. Additionally, buttonholes were created by a home sewing machine, which could be different from how she may have made this coat, depending on the settings on her machine. In the *Domestic Sewing Handbook* there are instructions on how to hand sew buttonholes, which is demonstrated later in this thesis. There are 3 buttons on the center front overlap to create the main closure, 1 button on each cuff, and one on the pocket that sits in between the pleats allowing it to open and close. The cuff also does not have the top stitch lines or a seam line like design intended as it was patterned out differently. This way of patterning made the cuff wrinkle or drape out from where the button holds the cuff to the sleeve. For completed garment see page 103.

February 1955

Figure 23

February 1955 design page.

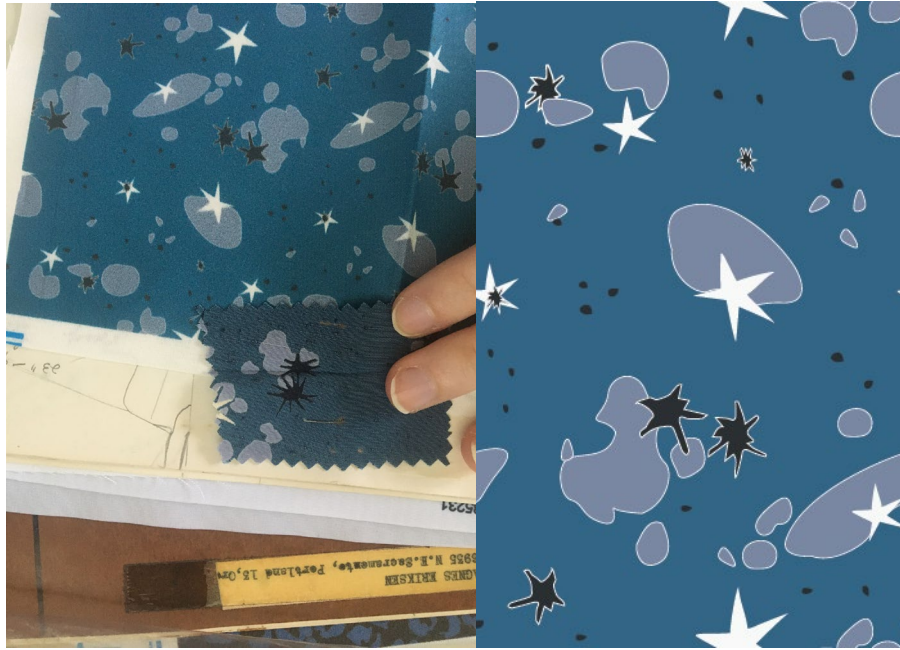


(Eriksen, 1955)

In February of the same year she began designing this 8-gore dress. This is not her first flare dress designed in this book, but it is the first one that is recreated for this project. This dress would most likely be worn with a petticoat to support the flare of the dress, or she could have soaked the dress in sugar water or starch to make the skirt crisper.

Figure 24

Fabric comparison with the original and recreated.



Left: Printed Spoonflower fabric next to the original swatch. (Eriksen, 1955), Right: Digital recreated print.

Agnes's swatch is listed as the Cohama print and a rayon fabric. Cohama is a fabric brand popular in the 1940s and 1950s, like Diane Von Furstenberg, and Forstmann fabrics. Based on the Alvin Lustig papers on Modern design from 1915-1955 shows another Cohama print from 1945, that similarly, uses geometric and scattered design (Lustig, 1945). Although the print from 1945 there looks more calculated in how the print is laid out, the swatch from Agnes's collection is tossed print, at least from what I can see in the section that is visible. A tossed print meaning the viewer cannot tell where the print block design begins to repeat itself, without close inspection. This mid-century modern design is fairly plain compared to many other designs like this as they only utilize a few colors- 4 are used for the recreated print- of similar hues instead of the bright pops of color that are often used in similar mid-century modern or modernist designs, which looks to be part of the transition of the design movement into the pop art of the late 1950s and 1960s. This swatch is also a plain weave rayon fabric that melted to a dark brown bead during the burn test. The fiber is a smooth filament fiber which creates a light drape and soft hand.

Starting with the front bodice pieces, Agnes gives details for a 23” dolman sleeve, with a 3” drop at the armhole. A shawl collar is created by widening and extending the neckline, so when sewn together the extended portion will wrap around the back neckline. The neckline is also dropped from the sloper's original line to create the “v” shape. The bodice is extended downward 5” to the hipline as a kind of faux dropped waistline; the side seam curves outwards to match hip measurements. Diamond darts are then created to close the waistline darts that are already present in the sloper. Then the bodice is separated in half at the diagonal line drawn to create the “empire cut” that she wanted, (see above) starting at the center front neckline and through where her side seam dart would be. The top piece is then cut in 3 places from the separation line to the shoulder and fanned out to create fullness for the pleats. Facings are traced from the shawl collar. The back bodice is created from the back sloper, utilizing the same techniques from the front to create the lengthened bodice and the dolman sleeves. Then the skirt gores are drafted by using the measurements Agnes gave, altering the top and bottom measurement to match the hip and the flare proportionally.

Figure 25

Physical layout of pattern pieces on fabric.

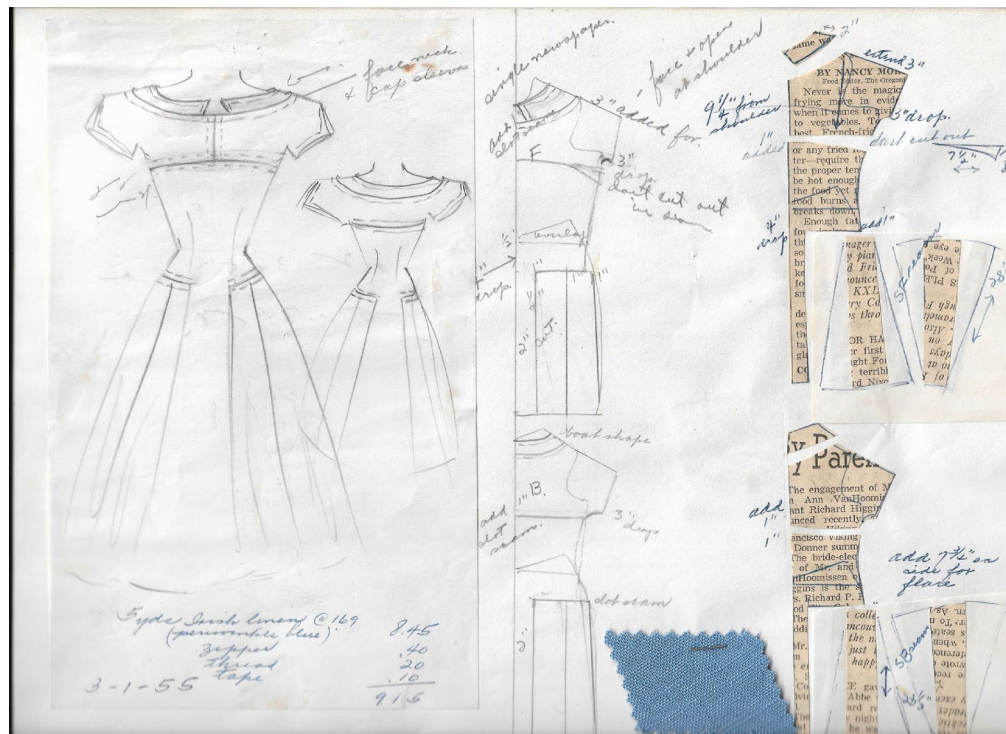


To construct this garment, I added a side seam zipper, 3" down from where the sleeve begins. Top stitching and seam allowance are added per Agnes's sketch. The gathering shown in the sketch on the sleeves is unclear in construction, or perhaps that is how she would style the garment. But it seems most likely that the garment gathers for a few inches at the end of each sleeve for this dress to look like the sketch. For completed garment see page 105.

March 1, 1955

Figure 26

March 1, 1955 design page



(Eriksen, 1955)

This periwinkle blue dress was designed in March, presumably as a day dress. This dress does not seem to be included in her “Costume Either” at the beginning of this book, but I believe it is referenced in the beginning of her second as the “Blue linen” dress. There she pairs it with a yellow bolero, a white hat,

black gloves, black patent leather shoes, and a black bag. This list was created in December of 55' which might make sense of how she paired many dark accessories with a light dress designed in the spring.

Figure 27

"Costume" Chart. Listed on the first page of Book, Dated December 1955

<i>12-55 Costume either Suit or dress</i>	<i>Topped - Blouse</i>	<i>Hat.</i>	<i>Gloves</i>	<i>Shoes</i>	<i>Bag</i>
<i>For March several suits</i>	<i>Teal - long, shorty or beige full length</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Long velvet</i>	<i>Blk</i>	<i>Blk</i>
<i>Blue fig rayon dress</i>	<i>navy silk faille fitted waist</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Blk</i>	<i>Blk patent</i>	<i>Blk.</i>
<i>Blue linen 11 fig cotton</i>	<i>yellow belero</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>"</i>

(Eriksen, 1955)

The fabric listed for this dress is an Irish Linen, which is a fabric made in Ireland, woven from spun flax. After examining this fiber in a burn test, there was support found that this is a cellulose fiber as it burned readily with feathery ash, like paper. The fabric used to recreate this dress is a 55% linen and 45% rayon blend. Hand and texture wise the swatch is nearly the same as the rayon blend as rayon can be a good imitation fiber. The color of the rayon blend has less of the purple hue in the periwinkle swatch, and is more of a light blue color, but it makes for a close modern interpretation.

Like Agnes's September 1954 design, the bodice is split right above the bustline, and has a dropped waistline (4") with diamond darts like her February 1955 design. This design also includes capped sleeves and an angled flat collar. To create the "cap sleeve" she uses the same design she has before with the dolman sleeves. Per her notes, the armhole is dropped 3" and the shoulder is extended 3". The neckline is also altered as it is dropped down a few inches (not indicated) and is rounded out to sit farther away from the neck on the shoulders. In the place where the neckline is carved out, a 2" flat collar is created and notched at center front so the top edge points to the center. The back bodice is created similarly to the front but lacks the center seam on the top yoke and the collar continues throughout the

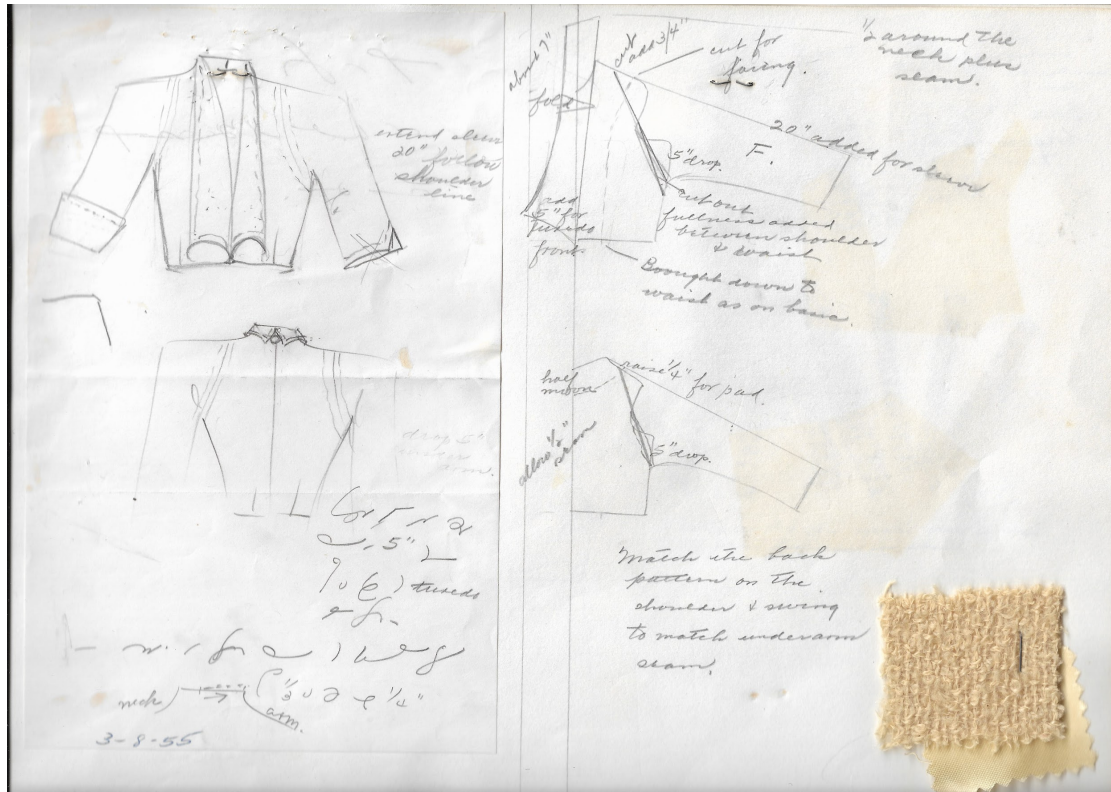
neckline in the back. The bottom center 4" section of both the back and the front of the bodice she has extended to create a panel for the front and back skirt. Eight corresponding gores create the sides of the skirt are drafted to fit the side front and back spaces, while measuring 28.5" lengthwise, and 9.75" are added to either side of the piece to create a flared appearance (see 1/8 scale design above).

In construction, the gores had to be cut on a slight bias of the fabric to fit all the pattern pieces. The grainline is parallel to one edge of each piece, which makes the skirt drape into those seams. But this can also be changed slightly when a petticoat is worn underneath to help shape and support the dress. Topstitching had to be done systematically as the dress was pieced together to not have to topstitch in a rounded or awkward fashion when the garment was all together. Additionally, a side zipper is also placed on the wearer's right-side seam. Many of her garments have a side closure like this one, which was fairly common in this time period, however it does make it more difficult to put on and take off the garment, as the zipper only gives room for the wearers bust and shoulders to get past the waistline, while the shoulders and neckline do not open up. For completed garment see page 107.

March 8, 1955

Figure 28

March 8, 1955 design page.



(Eriksen, 1955)

Another garment from March of the same year is this bouclé wool coat. This garment feels more formal, with a large lapel/collar, and oversized cuffs. The small and bold details within this design would make it more of a showstopper piece, in a casual closet. This coat is also form-fitted, differing from the January coat, which may show how it is less of a functional piece for warmth or to carry items, but as purely a style piece.

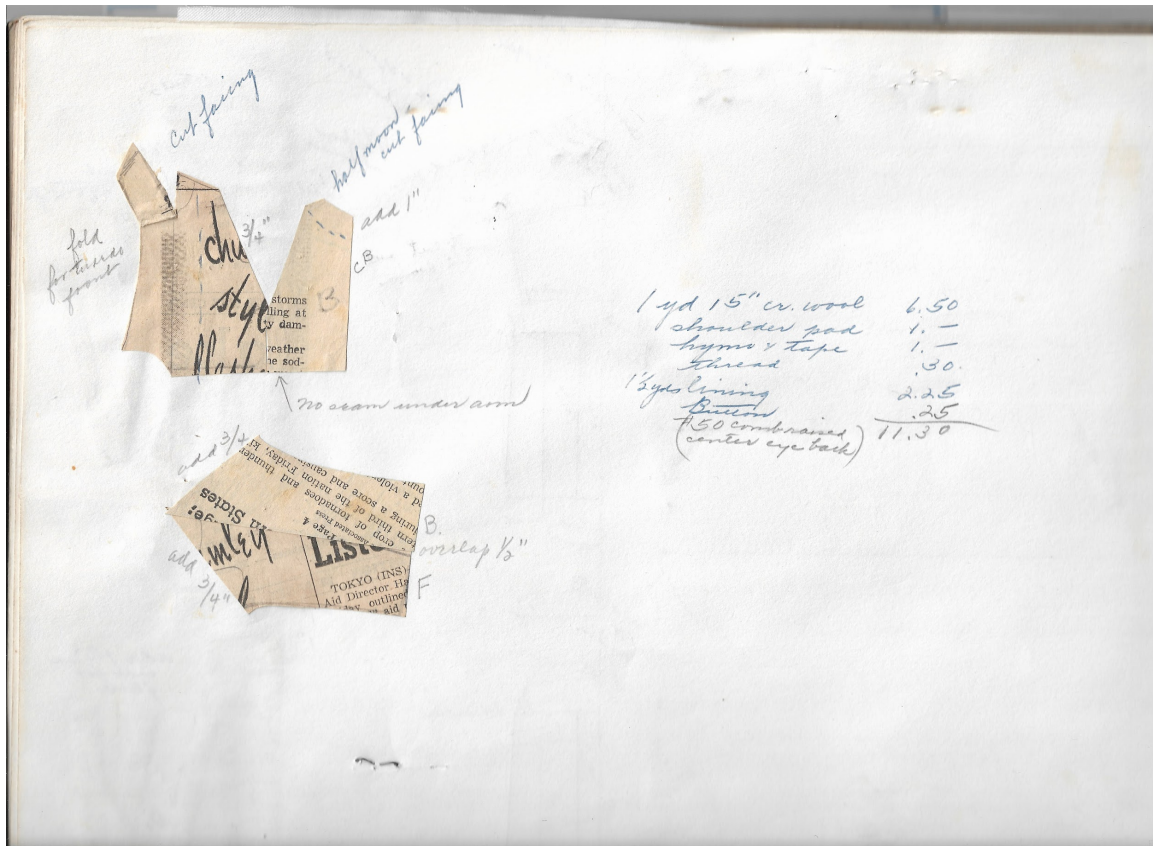
There are two swatches for this coat, one for the bouclé wool shell and one for the satin lining. The bouclé knitted fiber self-extinguished when burned, and left dark brown ash, and the lining fiber burned quickly, melting into a bead. From this I believe that the wool fabric is indeed made from wool,

and the lining could possibly be acetate. The lining is a manmade fiber as it is a filament and therefore extruded from a solution, so that the yarn and fabric can be very smooth. Purchased fabrics were close in texture, but not color. The shell is a 46% Polyester, 40% Acrylic, 14% Wool knit with bouclé yarns to create the curly texture. The lining for the recreation is a polyester, crepe back satin. Just like the recreation of the January 22nd coat, the lining here is also more lustrous than its original. The fabrics are also more white and grey than the yellow hue that is seen on the original swatch.

This pattern is interesting as it lacks a side seam and almost has Raglan type sleeves. The front and back pieces are created like the other shawl collar and dolman sleeves. The shawl collar splits at center back halfway through, so the line for the shawl collar is angled down to the center, as the collar will not be completely sewn together in the back. Agnes specifies a 5" armhole drop and a 20" extension for the upper sleeve measurement, following the shoulder line. 5 inches are added to the center front, and the shape of the shawl collar, lapel combination is drafted to mimic the drawing. A facing is traced from the center front of the bodice, estimated to look like the line drawn in the drawing. The back bodice is created like the front, minus the collar and the facing, and $\frac{1}{4}$ " is added to the outer corner of the shoulder seam, creating room for the shoulder pad. Then the sleeve is adjusted accordingly to match the front piece. Both the front and back are separated diagonally from below the armpit to a few inches away from the collar. In her directions she has cut out the side seam dart in this process to remove the extra fabric of the dart. Then the front and back bodice, and the front and back sleeves are then joined to create the bodice and sleeve pieces (see figure 29).

Figure 29

Second page of the March 8, 1955 design, with materials list.



(Eriksen, 1955)

The sleeve pieces are overlapped $\frac{1}{2}$ ", possibly to remove fullness, as there is no top sleeve seam. Then the lining is created from the bodice and sleeve pieces minus the space for the front and back facings. The facings are outlined in her sketch, marked with a dashed line. Seam allowance is marked on around her pattern, if not she has noted to add $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Something missing from Agnes Eriksen's instructions is the pattern or notation for the end of the sleeves. She has two possible designs for these patterns within the original sketch, a large cuff, or a sleeve that has a notch where the upper seam would be at the hem. The latter is crossed out with an "X", so I drafted a large cuff to match the right. By matching the measurement of the end of the sleeve, adding a 1"

for fullness on the outer edge of the cuff, so when flipped up onto the sleeve there is space between the sleeve and the cuff.

For the construction of this coat, after constructing the outside shell and the lining/facing coats, they are sewn right sides together and flipped right sides out. Interfacing, although not included in Agnes's materials list, is also placed on the front facings to create stability. I also chose not to use shoulder pads for this design; after fitting the garment I found that the shoulders were still quite small, and I did not want to add extra bulk. Another material I chose to not use was the hem tape. I folded the bottom hem of the shell to cover the bottom of the lining. Before hemming I attached the cuffs, cut out of the lining fabric. Some of the topstitching was also eliminated from this design, however the most prominent topstitching is still present around the collar and on the cuffs. Finally, to hem this garment, like the other garments thus far I used the blind stitching technique that is presented in *The Domestic Sewing Handbook*. For completed garment see page 109.

March 29, 1955

Figure 30

March 29, 1955 design page.



(Eriksen, 1955)

In 1955 Easter was on April 10th, and based on the formal look of this dress, and Agnes's fabric choice, this dress could have been for the holiday. In April of this year she added a ribbon swatch to add to a blue hat (See image below), which she most likely created as she lists a frame and "bregaro" yardage, tricot covering, a braid (meaning the ribbon), and a rose.

Figure 31

Second design page of the March 29, 1955 design.



(Eriksen, 1955)

Based on the materials list, she would have worn a slip or thin dress under this one, as she does not have lining fabric on the list. In our recreation I used a plain weave white cotton fabric to line the dress. In the list she wrote the fabric down as a nylon fabric. During the burn test, the fiber burned quickly and left behind black ash. These characteristics are not noted for nylon, but rather for a cellulosic fiber, so this could possibly be a nylon cellulosic blend. The burn test isn't a definitive test for fibers but for this project it is used to quickly generalize the 1950s swatches to get a better idea of how to match the originals.

Figure 32

Digitally recreated print.



The fabric appears to have been printed twice as a second pass would be needed to add the silver lines, which heated the nylon and made it bubble in the spaces between the metallic print. To recreate this print, I again took the design into Adobe Illustrator and used the Blob Brush tool to trace over the design already there. This allowed me to create several motifs that I expanded on and created new versions of. As I redesigned this print I knew that I could print it on Spoonflowers Chiffon, which is lighter and softer than the original. Additionally, I knew that I could not print with the glittery lines within this design from Spoonflower alone. For this project I decided to use a metallic silver paint and paint on some of the grey lines within the recreated print to resemble the original.

Figure 33

Physical fabric in the process of being painted.



To begin this process, she again drops the armhole 3” and extends the shoulder 3”, adjusting the under sleeve to match the length. The neckline is also dropped and widened several inches to create the V-shape she wanted. And the center front point is brought down to make another v shape. Additionally, she uses similar alterations that she has done before to cut up the bodice above the bust, cutting into the side seam dart and arching down into the center front line. The bottom piece of the bodice is separated from the top and fullness is added to bustline, which will be gathered back into the top yoke. She also notes ½” added to the bottom of the yoke and 2” added to the top of the bottom bodice piece. I found that this was too much fullness for the proportions I was using, so I altered accordingly. The back bodice is like the front bodice basic shape, so I transferred the alterations to the back without making the bust line cuts. To construct the skirt pieces, she removed the space where the bodice center point dips into the skirt sloper, and then cut and spread the skirt pieces to add fullness. For this skirt she wanted it to be 13” from the ground, so measuring down from the waist to 13” off the floor I found my side seam length and brought the center seams to meet that length. Per her instructions she has the skirt pieces cut “maïé end to end”, and for the bodice pieces cut lengthwise of maïé. Maïé is not a term that I have heard of before within sewing or patternmaking, nor can I find the origin of its usage, but I believe it is about the grainline of fabric. Agnes also creates facings for the neckline and sleeves, however in recreating this dress I had

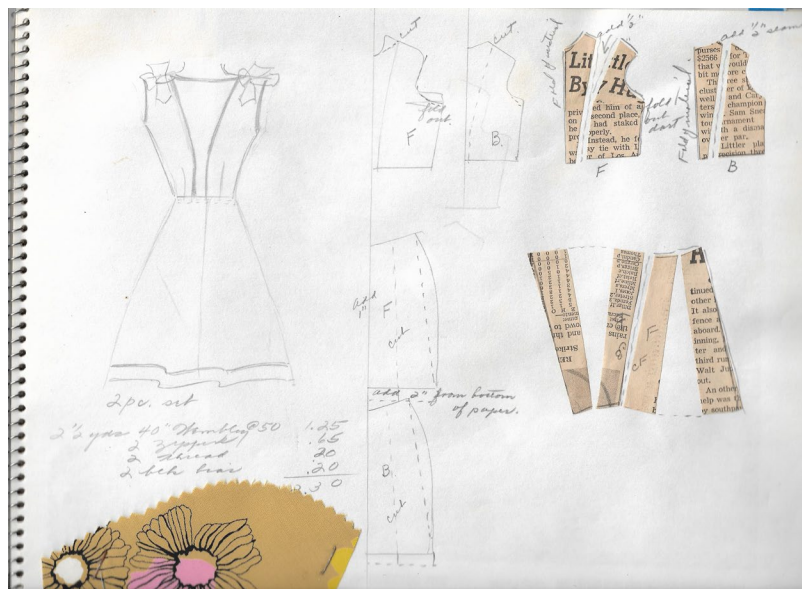
opted to finish the sleeves and neckline by turning the fabric under and topstitching, as there were already topstitch lines in the design.

To construct this dress, I began painting each fabric pattern piece with a metallic fabric paint. This paint did run out $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through painting the pieces and the replacement batch of paint was the same brand but different manufactures, so the paint ended up being darker than the first batch. This did not seem to be too noticeable in the final garment. For the bodice I decided to baste stitch the chiffon and cotton lining together, to hide the seams, as there are more seams in the bodice than in the skirt. The skirts seams were French seams which enclose the raw edges of the fabric and split on the right side to attach to the zipper. This is a tricky garment to fit, as the pattern calls for extra fullness in the bust, and the gathering spans into the armhole. I found that the bustline needed to be taken in several inches, but the darts and center seam can only be tapered in an inch or two before the front yoke is tampered with. Additionally, the neckline had to be lowered another inch, and widened a half inch. The bodice tends to sit backwards on a person's frame, so the shoulder seam sits behind the shoulders and not on top of them. This could possibly be due to pulling from the back bodice, meaning that the back bodice is too short and is trying to match the difference between the front bodice and back skirt. Additionally, I found it challenging to get the v shape of the bottom of the bodice to the skirt to stand out, and the waistline pulls the shape outward and flattens the shape. For completed garment see page 111.

Sometime between March 1955 and April 1955

Figure 34

Design page for 1955 design sometime between March and April.



(Eriksen, 1955)

This dress is created without a date but was designed sometime between March and April, as those are the dates of the garments surrounding this one. This dress is shorter and less mature than previous garments. This could mean that this dress was for Agnes's daughter, Anne, or it could have just been for sporting events as it is short and sleeveless. There is another possibility that her garments were only designs and not finished garments, as she was using these sketchbooks for a class she was taking. Oftentimes for a design student, they practice creating a design laying out the pattern pieces like she has done here (image above), without cutting and sewing the garment. This possibility seems less likely as she has the swatch and costs for materials listed.

Figure 35

Recreated and original print physically compared.



Top: Recreated, Bottom: Original (Eriksen, 1955)

The fabric for this dress is listed as 40" Wembley, most likely connected to the Wembley tie company. Under a flame the staple fiber of this swatch burns readily with little ash but does not melt. From this as well as the hand and texture of the swatch it is most likely a cellulose or a blend of a cellulose fiber and polyester. To recreate the print, I again used the blob brush in Adobe Illustrator to trace and expand the print, using 5 colors that I sampled from the image of the swatch. The final print ended slightly more yellow and orange hue than the slight green hue found in the original swatch. It is printed on Spoonflowers Perennial Cotton Sateen. The recreated print is also slightly smaller than the original. Another fabric that was used in the recreated garment but not listed in the original, is a cotton plain weave for the center panels to act as a contrast piece, as the dress' designed features did not stand out without a contrast.

Figure 36

Digitally recreated print.



Additionally, this pattern uses a different alteration style, as she is cutting vertically through the bust, instead of horizontally to create fullness. The front and back bodice pieces are almost identical, with a rounded-out neckline, and seams that cut from the center of the shoulder to about an inch away from the center waist point. While the front is clear that this line avoids the darts, the back doesn't have a sketch, so it is assumed that it does the same, except a center back zipper was added for an easier closure to work with. She notes $\frac{1}{2}$ " to be added to where the pieces were separated. For the skirt pieces she has created an A-line silhouette by cutting the skirt into two pieces and spreading the bottom line to flare the skirt. She also notes to add 2" to the hem of the skirt, however it is impossible to know the skirt length without knowing how long her skirt slopers were.

Figure 37

In progress photos taken during fitting session.



This garment had a few construction issues. The first being that the zipper kept wrinkling in the back, which was partially due to a bend in the zipper tape, and partially because the initial pattern for the back bodice was too long so it began to wrinkle in the center back. The bows on the dress could possibly counteract this wrinkling, but fitting alterations were made to shorten the center back seam on the bodice of the dress. Orange satin ribbon was purchased to add to the skirts hem and was combined with pink grosgrain to create the bows on the shoulders. Fusible hem tape was also used to finish the armholes and neckline, while a blind hem was used on the skirt. For completed garment see page 113.

May 1955

Figure 38

Design page for May 1955 dress.



(Eriksen, 1955)

Fast forwarding to May of 1955, Agnes designs this sleek geometric dress. The silky fabric and long skirt create a formal look, while the cap sleeves and geometric bodice design keeps the dress casual and playful.

The fabric swatch is listed as a “rayon surah remnant”, meaning that she had gotten the last bit of the bolt of fabric, which is often discounted. For the burn test the filament fiber melted into a black bead, indicating it was a man-made fiber, from a plastic-like solution. This fiber could still be rayon, but possibly blended with another fiber. Spoonflowers match this fabric was the Silky Faille, although the original is more lustrous and ribbed, the hand and drape are both close. The print was then constructed from tracing the original in Adobe Illustrator, and expanded upon, making sure the grid of squiggly lines match side to side and top to bottom so the print brick repeats.

Figure 39

Recreated print comparison.



Left: Digitally Recreated Print, Right: Comparisons between the final fabric, the original swatch, and the first draft.
(Eriksen, 1955)

To create this pattern, the bodice is made into the dolman short sleeve style- 3" armhole drop, 3" shoulder extension, adjusting undersleeve accordingly- and the neckline is shaped. The back shoulder and side seams match the front and is cut on a fold to mirror its shape. She doesn't have specific measurements for the neckline, but essentially the shape begins as a V-neck, and 1 1/8" is measured and drawn straight out from the center front. This line connects to the dip in the neckline to create the V-neck, and then half the triangle center point is drawn out from this connection back up to the center. Again, there are no measurements for this, but for this recreation the center front point lands 2" above the flat line that draws from the center front to the rest of the neckline. The front bodice is split into three main pieces, the center front panel, the side front panel, and the cap sleeve panel. The center front panel is 2 1/4" wide and per her design should have added fullness, vertically, to be gathered or ruched in the final garment. The fullness in the recreation was eliminated so that the pointed center panel could keep its shape in its satin like fabric. A shaped facing is created to hold the shape of this neckline. Then, to create the other two panels a line is drawn between the side seam bust dart, and roughly a 1 1/2" over and above

the cut off from the center panel. This separates the sleeve from the side panel. With slopers used that have waistline darts, the waistline darts have to be eliminated by moving them to the side seam and putting them in the cut line where they are created into a seam, instead of a dart. The sleeve is then cut in two places above the side panel seam and fanned out - 1 ½” apart in each split- which creates fullness, so that they can turn into pleats. The front skirt is then created by moving the points of the darts to the side seam. While technically this changes the fit of the garment as the point of the dart signifies the apex of the body within the garment, the point moving will then gather the fabric differently. For this design, this technique works as Agnes’s goal was to create pleats that drape fabric throughout the wearer’s midsection and out to the hips. The hem of this skirt should lie 12 ¾” off the floor, so the length is measured according to the wearers dimensions and tapered as it gets to the calves. Then the back skirt is created by splitting down the center dart and eliminating the outside dart (depending on the sloper). The skirt is split into two panels, without darts, and fullness is added to the hem, only on the side where the panels come together. This then creates the kick pleats for the back.

To construct this dress, topstitching is needed throughout the piecing together of the front bodice in order to match Agnes’s design. Fusible interfacing, while different from the original design, is applied to the entirety of the center panel to keep it flat and standing. The back-skirt center and side panels get a staystitch, or long stitch line, to mark where the pleat folds. These lines are pressed later to create the kick pleats. A side zipper is added 2” down from the armpit, through the top of the skirt to the hip. A blind hem finishes the skirt and the sleeves, and the facing for the neckline is sewn with fusible interfacing attached to create stability. For completed garment see page 115.

Book 2

The second sketchbook begins like the first book, with a costume plot style chart that lists out her designs and what she would pair with them. This book starts in late 1955 and goes to 1956, with 10 designs, many of them dresses, and a few blouses, jackets, and skirts.

Table 4

Book II original costume plot.

Costume either Suit or dress	Topper - Blouse	Hat - Gloves	Shoes - Bag	Costume jewelry Scarf etc.
Brn marin wool suit	Furs- Turq. Shorty or Beige full length	White Long velvet	Blk Blk Blk	
Blue fig rayon dress	navy siek faillie fitted wat	White	Blk Blk patent	
Blue linen fig cotton Turq. Rayon	yellow balno	White	" "	
Brn merin jacket ensemble	sheath dress	Blk patent	" "	
Blue Forestmann wool	Beige full length	Blue brown	" "	
Blk blue wool jersey	"	"	" "	
Blue tweed suit	"	"	" "	
Red navy white check jacket (SPORT) red skirt	(SPORT) red skirt			

(Eriksen, 1955)

Table 5

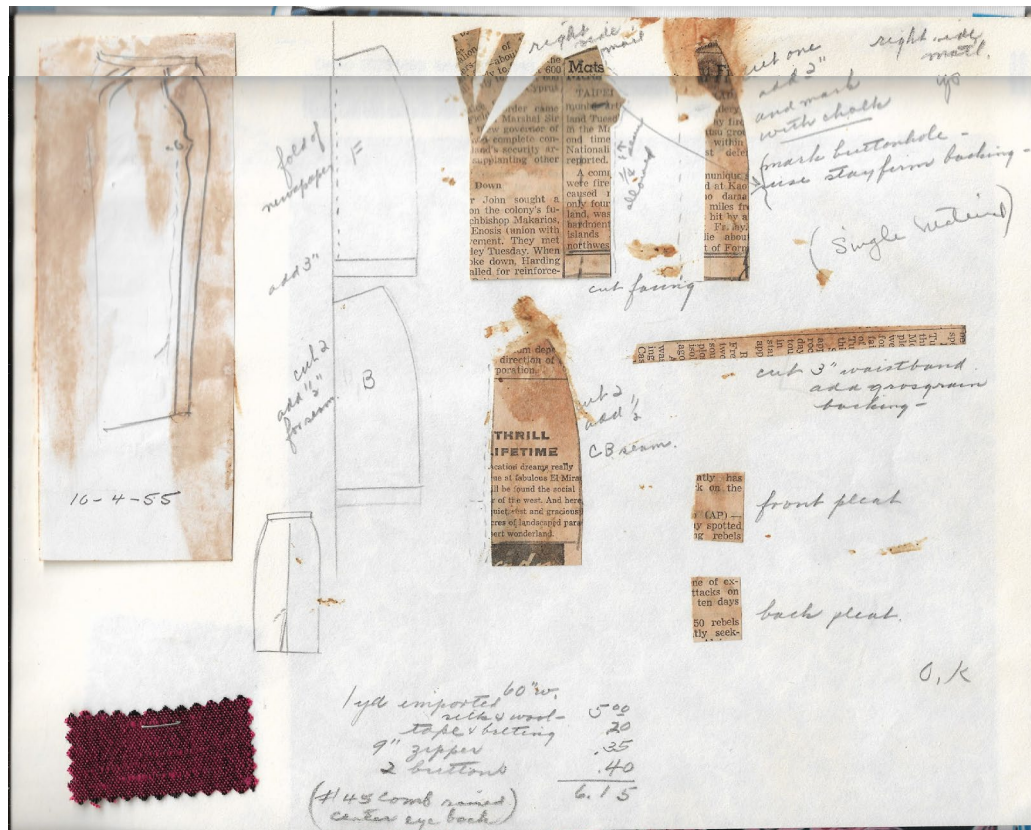
Book II retyped costume plot.

9/12/1955	Costume either			
Suit or Dress	Topper - Blouse	Hat - Gloves	Shoes - Bag	Costume Jewelry Scarf etc.
Brn marin wool suit	Furs- White Turq. Shorty or Beige Full long th	Turq. Velvet Blk	Blk Blk	
Blue fig rayon dress	navy siek faillie fitted wat	White blk	Blk patent Blk	
Blue linen Fig cotton Turq. Rayon	yellow balno	White		
Brn merin jacket ensemble Sheath dress		Blk patent		
Blue Forestmann wool	Beige full long th	Blue brown 		
Blk blue blk blue wool jersey Blue tweed suit				
Red navy white check jacket (SPORT) red skirt				

October 4, 1955

Figure 40

Design page for October 4, 1955 design.



(Eriksen, 1955)

October 4th of 1955, Agnes designed this simple tapered skirt, reminiscent of her dress design in May of the same year. This skirt is longer and made with a wool and silk fabric for the cooler fall weather.

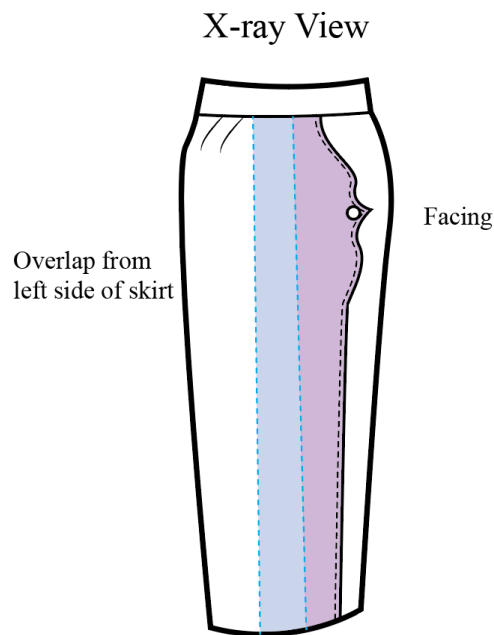
The swatch is a plain weave made from imported wool and silk, according to Agnes's notes. The burn test supports this as the fibers burned slowly and left black ash, which indicates a protein fiber like silk and wool. While searching for a fabric match to this, twill weaves proved to match the weave of the original's aesthetics. The original fabric has the pink yarns in the filling direction (horizontally) and black yarns in the warp direction (vertically). Many modern twill designs have this same effect but have a

herringbone (chevron) or houndstooth pattern. The match for the recreation is a cotton flannel herringbone. Aesthetically it looks like the original with red and black yarns, but it is softer and thicker than the original.

The front skirt is asymmetrical, so the skirt is mirrored, then the right side of the skirt is created as the front design line is drawn. Without measurements the line is estimated 3" off the center front line, and the design around the button is hand drawn based on the original sketch. The front skirt only has pleats on its right side and are constructed the same as the May 1955 dress. In her notes she adds 3" to the bottom of her slopers, and in this case the skirt length is measured to the model's lower calf, and tapered in. A buttonhole marker is added an inch from the point of the design. The right side is separated from the left by the design line, a facing is traced 4" in from the design line, and the left side negative space is filled into the center front line. This space will act as the underside, like a faux wrap skirt, and will be stitched to the right side (refer to Figure 40). The back of the skirt does not have darts, so it can be drafted by meeting the waist and hip measurements and matching the side seam to the front length. She also drafts a simple rectangular 3" waistband, that has a grosgrain backing. The waistband is measured to match the skirt's waistline, plus 2" for overlap on the right-side seam. An inch of this 3" width is folded and stitched to the grosgrain, a 1/2" on either side, making the height of the waistband 2". Pleats are also drafted and have to be approximated in measurements from the drawing, so they were made two 9" by 10" rectangles, that are folded and stitched to the skirt as kick pleats.

Figure 41

Technical illustration for October 4, 1955 skirt design

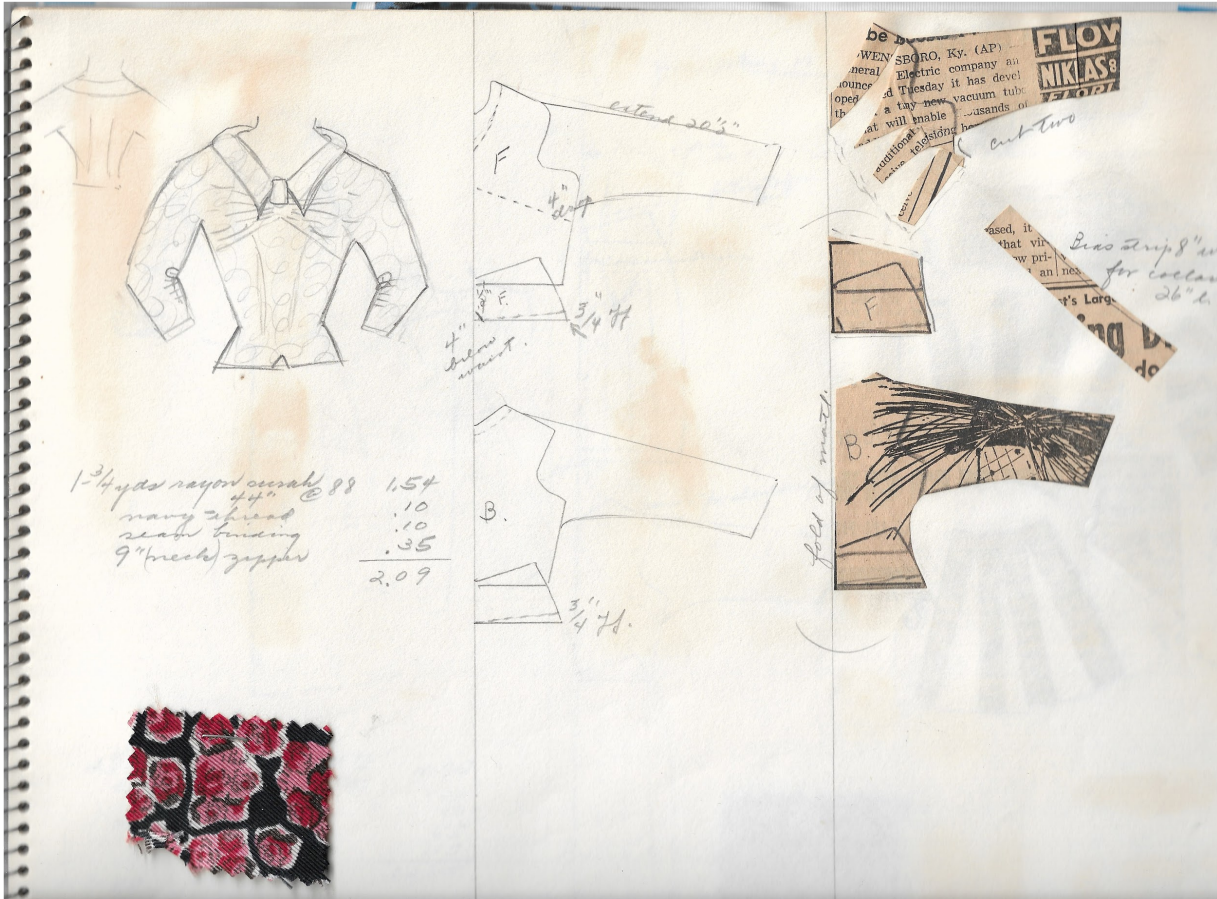


To construct this skirt, fusible interfacing is attached to the front right facing, and then attached to the right panel before being stitched down to the left. In the center front and back the kick pleats are sewn to the right and left panels, pressed, and then tacked to the skirt. This allows the tapered skirt to move as the wearer walks. The front pleat could possibly be eliminated from this design as the left front skirt panel covers the backside of the right panel enough to act as a kick pleat. A side zipper is created on the right-side seam with a front lap to cover the zipper. Traditionally side seam zippers are installed on the wearers left (for right hand dominated wearers), but this was a mistake in translating her design to the garment. In Eriksen's design, there would be a button at the waistband portion of the closure, but for recreation a skirt hook closure is used instead. The seam down the front is top stitched to the point that the kick pleat begins and then the edge of the kick pleat is topstitched to finish the front stitch line. The skirt is finished with a blind hem, and a button where the buttonhole mark was made. For the recreation, a buttonhole was not actually added as it isn't functional, but Agnes's sketch does show a buttonhole to give the illusion of a wrap skirt. For completed garment see page 117.

November 1955

Figure 42

Design Page for November 1955 design.

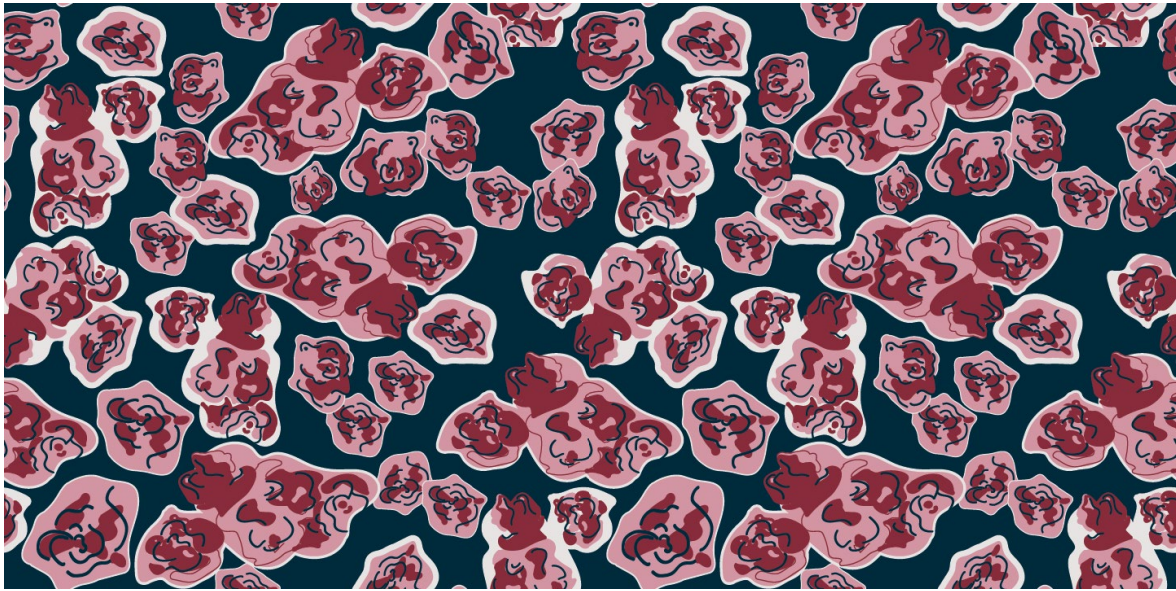


(Eriksen, 1955)

November of 1955 Agnes designed this shaped floral blouse. This blouse follows trends from this time, with narrow sloping shoulders, a tight waistline, and material flaring at the hips. Like Agnes Eriksen's other designs, fullness is added to the bustline, to help create the classic 1950s hourglass shape.

Figure 43

Digitally recreated print.



The swatch for this design is stapled onto the page with its wrong side facing out, so to see the right side, the swatch has to be lifted. The recreation is slightly larger than the original design but was drawn the same way as the other prints, with the Blob brush tool in Illustrator. The fabric is listed as rayon surah, which is supported by its burn test as the fiber had a distinct paper burning smell, left black-grey charring, and burned rapidly. The burn test showed signs of a cellulose fiber, which often burn to a white-grey ash, but the rayon is a regenerated fiber from cellulose, which may cause a slightly different colored charring. Spoonflowers closest match to this fabric swatch was their Silky Faille. Seen in the photo above, the Silky Faille does not have the same ribbing effect as the Rayon Surah, but the slick and cool hand is similar to the original.

Figure 44

Print comparison of original and recreated.



Left: Original, Right: Recreated printed on Spoonflower Silky Faille, (Eriksen, 1955)

Agnes created this pattern by lowering the neckline, extending the shoulder 20 ½", lowering the armhole 4" and extending it to meet the upper sleeve measurement. The waistline is also dropped 4 inches at the center front and tapered up ¾" at the side seam. A ½" triangle notch is created at the center front hemline. The front bodice is split from 2" down from the center front neckline through the side seam dart, or right below the armhole drop. The sleeve/yoke piece is then cut from the center front line and spread to create fullness, that is gathered back into the center. The bottom bodice piece has a diamond dart created, to close off the waistline dart. The back bodice is created nearly the same, but without splitting the bodice into two pieces or adding fullness. Agnes then gives instructions to make a collar with an 8" wide strip cut on the bias, matching the neckline, minus an inch or two for the front "knot". In the recreation the strip is not cut on the bias, which will make the collar less stretchable.

Figure 45

Pattern layout on physical fabric.



Pattern layout: Yardage is folded in half, selvage at bottom of photo

The pattern pieces were laid out slightly differently than how Agnes had created the layout in the sketchbook. Seen above, the top bodice piece is laid perpendicular to the rest of the pieces, still maintaining its grainline but using cross grain instead of straight grain. The pattern was able to be cut off cross grain as the print is a 4-way design, meaning there is no up/down, right/left directionality to the print, allowing the pattern to utilize less fabric.

Agnes lists a 9" zipper in her materials list, which can only be on the side seam, as there are no front or back seams. In the recreation of this garment it is constructed with the side seam zipper facing

down, meaning that the zipper pull zips closed at the bottom of the garment from the armpit. It is likely in the original that the zipper was put in the opposite direction and only opens the garment up enough to allow the width of the bust and shoulders to get past the waistline of the garment. Oftentimes, garments with side seam zippers are built this way. For the recreation, the zipper had to be installed this way as the garment fell short on the model, and the waistline landed 2" above the model's waistline. Additionally, the silhouette of this garment does not cater to broad shoulders as it is built with a small bottom opening, with little give for the arms and shoulders to move past the bustline of the garment with ease. The zipper is also finished with a facing, to shape the peplum. Fusible interfacing is also attached to the facing to add structure to the rounded shape of the peplum and the center front notch. The center front seam line of the top bodice pieces is stitched separately with two rows of long baste stitches that are pulled to gather the center front, and then are stitched together. On this seam, another pattern piece needs to be created, that is absent from the original design, is the "knot" of the collar. This knot is created from a 2" by 6" rectangle that is folded and sewn in half. Then is hand stitched, or tacked, down to the top of this center front seam. The collar pattern piece was half of one side of the collar, so it was cut on the fold (see photo above) twice, to create the top and underside of the collar. These pieces are sewn right sides together, and then turned right side out. Then sewn to the neckline, with a "stitch-in-the-ditch" technique to hide the top stitch line, while stitching the underside of the collar to the neckline, stitching into the seam from the top collar sewn to the neckline. For completed garment see page 120.

Design page for January 1956 jacket.



To begin the year of 1956, Agnes creates this suit jacket that goes with a contrasting skirt (see next design). This jacket has a boxy and straight silhouette, and while still fashionable for this time, emulates the redesigned 1920s style; it looks to be for a professional setting. While many of her previous designs had many design elements, like different fitting techniques, paneling, and creation of design lines, this garment is plain and straightforward.

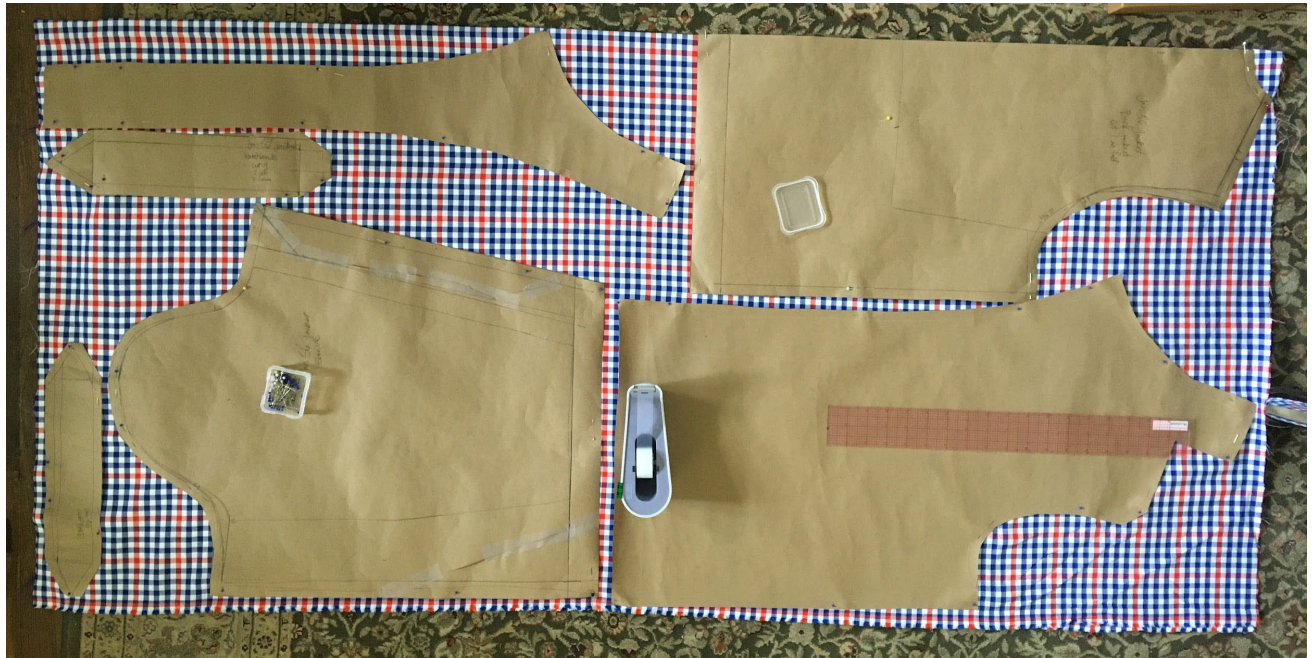
The fabric for this design is labeled as Check Merino, which is a kind of wool. The burn test showed that this fiber melted and left a brown singe look after burning. This may mean that this was an imitation wool, made with a manmade fiber like polyester or acrylic. This fiber is woven into this twill, gingham design. It is a thicker fabric, which would work well for the cold winter. For the recreated

garment, a similar gingham design was purchased, although the fabric is a cotton shirting. Meaning it is much lighter than the original fabric so there are discrepancies between the way the original and the recreated move and function.

However, the patterning for this jacket is still very technical. The basic shapes of the bodice pieces are extended 8 ½” and the fitting elements, like darts, are eliminated as the shape of the garment is not fitted to the wearer. In Agnes’s notes she explained how to widen the armhole, and expand on the sleeves cap, to create room for shoulder pads. She made the cap, or rounded top part, of the sleeve piece wider with a more gradual slope, so it has a looser and more boxy fit on the wearer. The shoulder of the bodice is extended and raised by a ¼” to create room for the shoulder pad. And the armhole is dropped 1”. When creating the pattern for the recreated garment, measurements were also taken to match the top of the sleeve to the armhole, and 1” is added to the cap of the sleeve for ease and shaping of the sleeve. The center front line of the bodice is extended by 2” from the bottom and then slopes out from the bodice to create the collar extension. This technique is similar to the design of the blue coat she made in January of 1955. The shawl collar that is part of the angled extension on the front line is also an extension of the neckline. From the sketch it looks like 2” were added, but unlike the 1955 blue coat design, this shawl collar is made like her other shawl collars, where they extend upwards to attach around the back neckline. This shawl collar and front extension piece is then separated from the front bodice, so it can be cut on the bias. The back bodice, like many of Agnes’s designs, is created like the front, matching the shoulder measurement and the side seams. The back bodice is cut with its center back on the fold, so it has a mirror line that marks the center back line. Agnes also gave pattern pieces for 3 different bands; two bands go on either side of the bodice on the waistline, two go on each cuff, and one is drawn out to go on the skirt design (see next design).

Figure 47

Pattern layout on physical fabric.



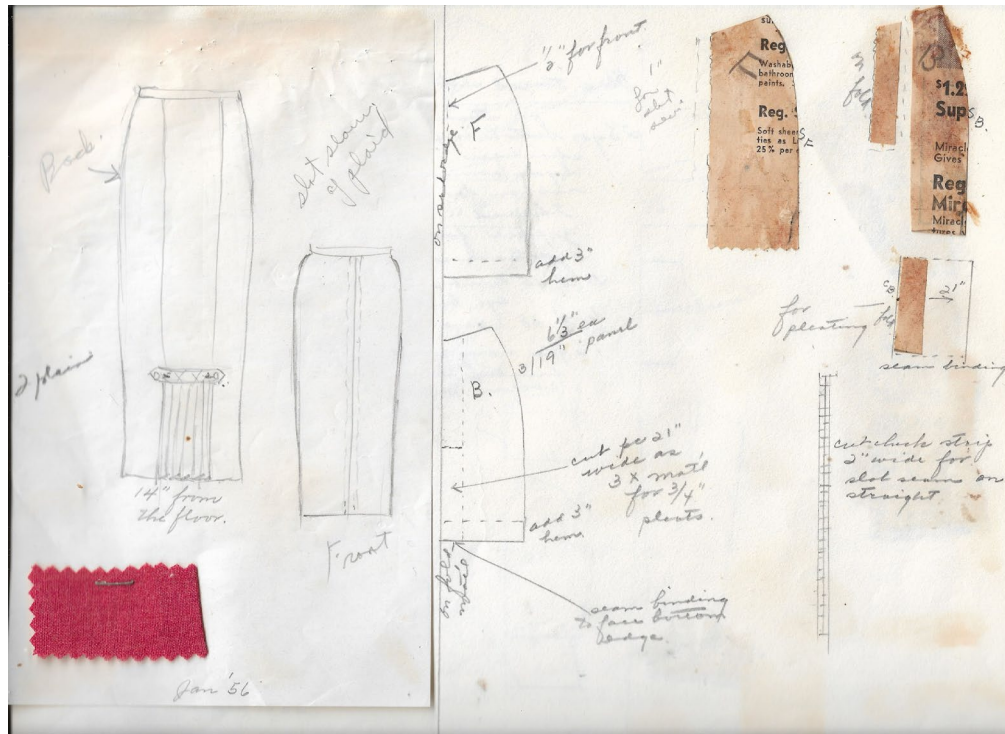
Pattern Layout: Fold at top of photo

To construct this jacket, lining pieces need to also be cut. This process mimics how facings and lining pieces were cut for the white coat made on March 8th, 1955. Additionally, in this lining a back shaped facing is created to make a half circle shape below the back collar. For the recreated jacket, the pattern differs slightly from the original design as the front extension/collar is not separate from the front bodice, so there is no illusion of a button placket and separate collar. Shoulder pads for the recreated design are also made from bra cups, so they may be thinner and rounder in their shape than the original. These pads are sewn in between the lining and the shell of the jacket, with the stitches in the shoulder seam. In Agnes's sketch she had the shoulder pad stitch line go across the shoulder from front to back, so they would be visible. eleven buttons are used for this design: five on the center front closure, two on either side of the body of the jacket to hold the waist bands, and one on either cuff band. For completed garment see page 122.

January 1956

Figure 48

Design Page for January 1956 skirt.



(Eriksen, 1956)

The second design from January this year, is this tapered skirt to go with the check jacket (Figure 46). Like the jacket this skirt is fairly plain with clean lines, with touches of details to make it fashionable. Unlike the check jacket, this skirt is highly fitted and has a section of knife pleats at center back to allow the wearer to walk.

The fabric for this garment does mix in the check from the previous design, but also uses this pink plain weave fabric. This fabric was noted to be a merino wool in the book, and the burn test supports this claim as the fiber self-extinguished, like hair or protein fibers. The fiber burned brown with little ash which is uncharacteristic of wool in the burn test, but there are many factors that could impact this (the fabrics aging and preservation) as only the burn test was done to evaluate the fiber. The fabric used for this project is a plain weave cotton fabric, which is a slightly less vibrant pink-red color.

To pattern this skirt, Agnes eliminated the darts and cut the front skirt on the fabric's selvage edge. She also noted to extend the pattern by 1" on the center front and to add a 3" hem, or measure 14" from the floor. While the front darts are not shown how they were to be eliminated, I suspected they were measured out. This would mean that the extra room from the waistline and hip line (across from the dart) are taken in from the side seam. The back darts are most likely eliminated the same way, or a new skirt is drafted by waist and hip measurements, but they can also be taken out through the seam lines that go through the back. Three back panels are created for the back skirt. A line is drawn to separate the sloper into center back and side back pieces. The center back is then split into the center back and center back pleats pieces. Agnes did give some math for dividing the center and side back pieces: $19/3 = 6 \frac{1}{3}$ ". 19" would most likely be her back-hip measurement, split on the grain into three equal panels. For the recreated pattern, the sketch and the pleating panel were taken into more consideration than this equation. The original garment would have had equal panels, while the recreated has a much larger center panel. The pleating pattern piece is noted to be 21" wide, but is also cut on fold, which was deciphered as a 42" panel, when it should be 21" in total. So the back panel has double the amount of pleats and width, but this pattern is also recreated to be larger, so the proportions are more accurate than as they would be if the pleats were to be adjusted to the width of the back panel at the doubled width. Each pleat is noted to be $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide, and while the height of this panel is not noted I assumed that the band above the pleats hit at the back of the knee. One detail Agnes noted was missed in the recreation: a 2" strip of fabric to create a slot seam on the center front. Therefore 1" is added on both sides of the center front seam, so the slot seam, or contrast fabric, could pop out there.

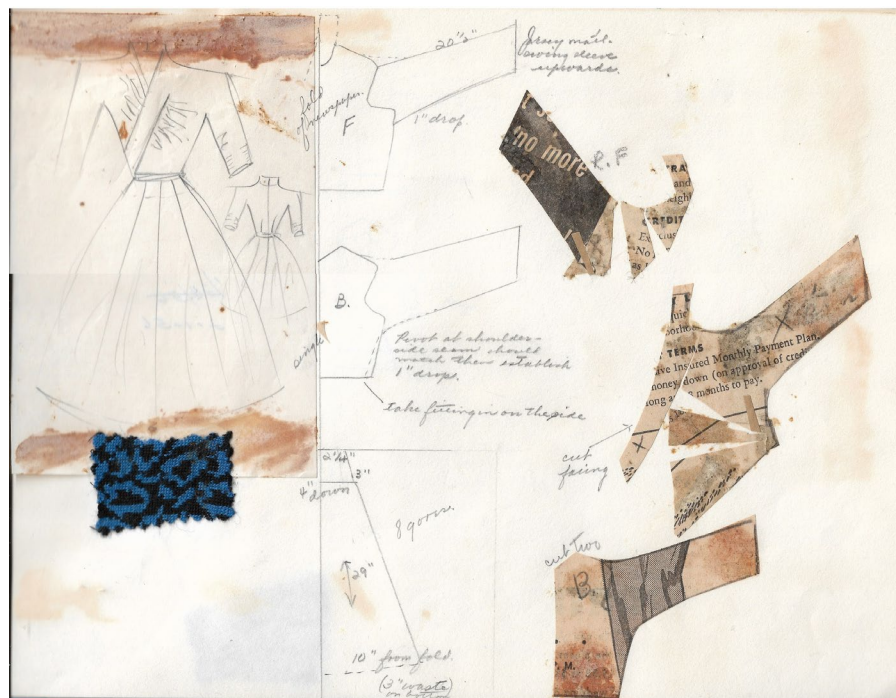
To construct the knife pleats, the pleat panel is folded like an accordion, so that the folds create stripes along the width of the fabric. The piece is pinned and stay stitched so that the pleats stay in place. This panel is then sewn to the center back panel and this process is repeated until the garment is finished. The band of check fabric noted in the previous design is tacked down above the pleats. In the recreation, the slot seam on the center front was missed, so the center front seam is a plain seam with the seam

allowance topstitched down on either side. Lastly, the waistband is attached, with a lapped zipper closure on the right side. For completed garment see page 122.

February 1, 1956

Figure 49

Design page for February 1, 1956 dress.

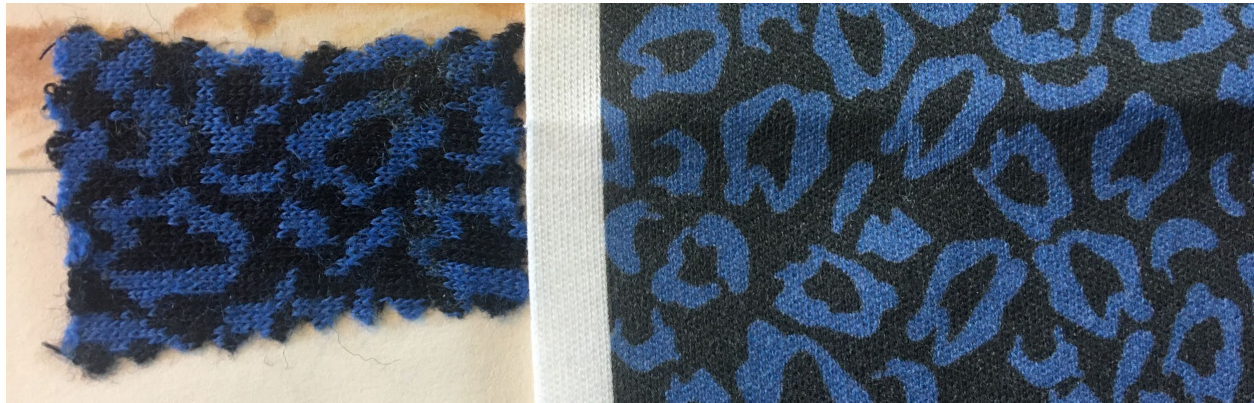


(Eriksen, 1956)

In February of the same year Agnes Eriksen designed two garments with a knit cheetah print fabric. The first is a more formal dress, with a diagonal band running through the front bodice, which is discussed in the Analysis of Source Material section of this paper. The second is a top she designed to work with small remnants of the fabric she had left after creating the dress.

Figure 50

Print comparison between original and recreated.



Left: Original 1956 swatch, (Eriksen, 1956) Right: Recreated design

The fabric for this garment is a yarn dyed jersey knit. No description is given for this fiber, but the burn test showed that the fiber burns to black feathery ash. The burning smelled like burning feathers or hair. This may mean that the fiber is a protein fiber, like wool or silk. Based on the wooly appearance and fuzzy texture this knit may be made of wool. While it is not feasible to create a yarn or fiber dyed fabric for recreation, the fabric will be a surface print like the rest of the recreated prints. The print again was re-designed in Illustrator using the blob brush to trace the cheetah spots, to make several motifs, and then they were placed on a black background. This design was printed on Spoonflowers Organic Cotton Knit Ultra, which is thinner and smoother than the original, but still has the same jersey knit structure. Additionally, with printing through Spoonflower the black and dark blues often appear lighter once printed on their white fabric.

Figure 51

Digitally recreated print.



To create the pattern for this dress, Agnes began by adding a dolman sleeve and a shawl collar to the front bodice. This dolman sleeve is different from the rest of her designs as it slopes up from the shoulder instead of a straight extension from the shoulder. She added a 1" drop and a 20 ½" extension upwards from the shoulder at roughly a 30-degree angle. In the photo above, the dashed line drawn from the shoulder to the sleeve represents how Agnes tapered the shoulder line up into the sleeve. Because the sleeve is angled upward, this created gathers on the undersleeve when worn. Continuing, the neckline is lowered to make a V-neck that tapers into the shawl collar. This front bodice is then mirrored to the other side of itself to make a whole front bodice piece. Then a design line is drawn from the point of the v neck through the right side of the bodice to the side seam. There are not specific measurements for this, so the lines are drawn based on estimates from the proportions of the drawing. This line separates the left and right bodice pieces, which are then slashed in two spots and spread to add fullness. The right side, the fullness is created from slashes that go from the design line to the shoulder. The right side has another line drawn roughly two inches down from the center front point on the neckline and follows the design line that goes into the side seam. This line would also have to extend into the left shoulder for the bottom side to expand. When sewing this seam, part of this line is turned into a dart to take away some added fullness. After this line is split and spread away from the bodice to make the band part, the bottom left part of the bodice gets added fullness from two cuts that are spread open. A new line is drawn to round out the added fullness that will be gathered into the diagonal band. Facings are also created from tracing the collar and neckline. The back bodice is created in a similar fashion, matching the neckline to collar extension, the shoulder/sleeve, and underarm/side seams to the front. The skirt is made up of 8 gores or sections that are 29" long. Agnes gave specific dimensions for her gores, but for the recreation they are enlarged slightly to fit a different wearer.

To construct the dress, the collar and back bodice is constructed like many of Agnes's other designs. The right front bodice is gathered, stitched, and sewn to the center band. While the left side is also gathered and topstitched, but when sewn to the band a dart is created at the beginning of the split

between the band and the bodice. Additionally, the pattern shows a vertical line as the end of the sleeve, but at the angle it slopes up: the cuff of the sleeve becomes pointed on the over arm seam instead of being blunt and gathered. As a result, for the recreation the sleeves are wider and pointed. In Agnes's materials list, she had a belt that would go with this dress, which is recreated with a purchased belt, covered in a black woven fabric, and painted with blue acrylic to mimic the cheetah spots from the print.

Figure 52

Design page for February 1, 1956 top.



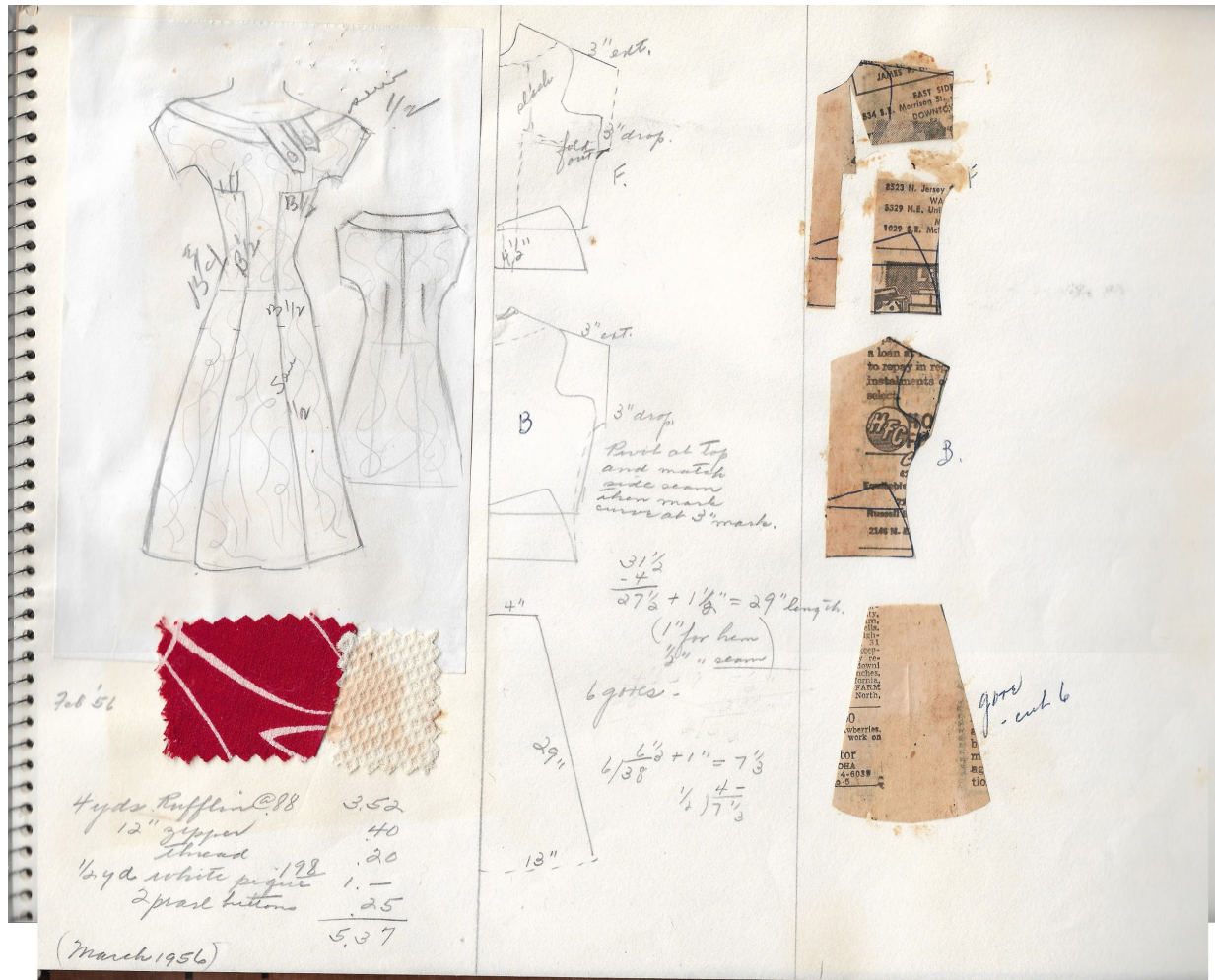
(Eriksen, 1956)

Then to create the pattern for the remnant top, she cut a basic bodice with an extension towards the hip, into small pieces to use with the fabric that was left over. The arm hole is dropped 2", and the shoulder/underarm is extended slightly to make a short sleeve appearance. The sleeves are separated and

become rectangle pieces. The neckline is also lowered and rounded out to become a wide oval neckline. The front is sliced above the bustline and through the waistline darts. This creates a side and center panel with a top yoke panel that is spliced and spread from the neckline to create fullness. Additionally, a triangle notch is created in the center front at the hemline. The back has the same fullness added to the neckline, after the top piece is separated from the center diamond piece and side panels. Again, Agnes did not give specific measurements, but I made an educated guess based on the proportions of the lines on the drawing.

To construct this top, I ran out of the cheetah print fabric for the entire top and used my own remnants from projects I finished throughout 2019 and 2020. The panels and fabric design stood out in this garment as the eye is not overwhelmed with the busy print. Agnes also did not illustrate how she would have gathered the neckline, so a piece of black ribbing was used,; this also matches the sleeves. The rectangle sleeve pieces were cut on the fold, so the ribbed knit has a finished edge on the outer edge of the sleeve. The neckline is made similarly to the sleeves but is stretched out to gather in the neckline of the top bodice pieces. The neckline back details are topstitched to make the design lay flat and to prevent the neckline from folding over. For completed garment see 123 for the dress and 117 for the top.

Design page for March 1956 dress.



(Eriksen, 1956)

Designed in February 1956 and completed in March 1956, this dress was most likely another dress designed for Easter. That year Easter was on April 1st, and Agnes used imagery and clippings from *The Oregonian*, which begins advertising for Easter in late February and early March.

Figure 54

Digitally recreated swatch.



The swatch for this dress is labeled as Rufflin, and the white contrast material is noted as white pique. Pique is a woven fabric design that is also known as waffle cloth for its waffle-like texture. While Rufflin might have been a fabric brand in the 1950s, there is no description for fabric named Rufflin available and Agnes wrote down the brand of the fabric swatch in previous designs. This red plain weave swatch has staple fibers that readily burn with fluffy brown ash. It is likely that this fabric is a cotton or cotton blend. The closest Spoonflower match available was their Petal Signature cotton. The original swatch has a looser woven structure and a lightly textured surface, while Spoonflowers cotton is smoother and lighter. The print was redesigned in Illustrator, but had to be expanded upon, as the design is large and is incomplete in the swatch. I took creative liberties: the three or four white lines are traced, and then the lines are attached to larger motifs. These motifs were created from inspiration of Agnes's sketch. In her sketch she did a loose interpretation of this design by drawing squiggly lines where the red fabric would be on the dress. Using a Wacom tablet to draw with a brush tool within Illustrator, several squiggly line motifs were created, then compiled together into a print. The white fabric was sourced from a seller

that had a similar white waffle cloth fabric. The pique I bought is thicker with a larger design than the original, but still has the same overall design feel.

Figure 55

Pattern layout on physical fabric.



To recreate the pattern, Agnes started by lowering and rounding the neckline, extending the shoulder seam 3" (and dropping the armhole 3") to create a cap sleeve, and extending the bodice 4 1/2" to the hipline. The front bodice is cut up through the waist dart and horizontally through the side seam dart, so that the fullness from the darts are put into the panel seams. The center front panel is left in a half "T" shape, and a 2-3" strip is cut from the neckline; this will become the contrast piece. The other part of the "T" shape is cut from where it meets the top of the side panel to the contrasting neckline panel. Then the piece is spread from the bottom of the cut to create fullness for the three pleats. The back is constructed in the same way as the front; however, it does not have the added fullness or design lines, and instead has diamond darts due to the extended waistline. The skirt is made up of 6 gores, which Agnes noted were to be 29" long. She also did the math to ensure that the gores line up with the side seams, center, and side panels of the front bodice. This is so that their seams create long lines that connect through the bodice and

skirt. Two more patterns, which are not listed, are for the bands that come off of the neckline. These are drafted as they are essentially rectangles with one pointed end on each. Buttonholes are also marked inside the pointed section of each band.

To construct this dress, the added fullness of the center bodice panel is taken into three pleats at the top and, on either side of the bustline. The neckline pieces are doubled so that the neckline has a facing with fusible interfacing. Fusible interfacing is also attached to the two bands, that are doubled, stitched right sides together, flipped right sides out, and topstitched. A similar construction is done to the neckline while the front and back necklines are attached together and topstitched on the neckline, then attached to the bodice pieces. A zipper would likely be attached to the side seam of this dress, like previous designs, but for recreation it proved easier to install a zipper in the center back bodice seam. This means the zipper is enclosed into the garment and does not separate at the top as the center back seam only goes to the contrasting pique piece. This design also calls for two pearl buttons for the two bands at the neckline; two pearl buttons with rings of gold-plated metal and black plastic were sourced from a box of thrifted buttons.

Figure 56

Design page for March 1956 hat, with materials list and inspiration images.



(Eriksen, 1956)

A part of this design is a hat design that accompanies it. Agnes used a hat advertisement from Old's and King from *The Sunday Oregonian* from March 4th, 1956 as inspiration for a hat she makes to go with her March 1956 dress (Figure 53). She listed straw cloth, a narrow white velvet ribbon, and a wire band for this hat. For completed garment see page 126.

Figure 57

March 4th, 1956. The Oregonian. P. 5, Hat Advertisement.

Stoles, Fur Jackets Accent Spring's Elegance



The long, flowing stole and the wide-brimmed hat are the latest in fashion. The stole is made of a soft, warm material and is perfect for the spring season. The hat is made of a similar material and is perfect for the spring season.



This hat is the perfect for the spring season. It is made of a soft, warm material and is perfect for the spring season. The jacket is made of a similar material and is perfect for the spring season.

your life companion
withings
"Spring" Chanel

Capelans
VANCOUVER

ONEIDA'S VANCOUVER - 1001 W. VAN - SU. 1051

Italian Designer Approves 'Sound'

THE ROMA DESIGNER, who has been in the United States for several years, has approved the "sound" of the Italian designer's work. He has been in the United States for several years and has been in the United States for several years.

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This Exquisite
ROYAL PASTEL
Mink COAT



Only \$2295

YOU IN THE COAT
* * * * *

Take us home as you go to bed
SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN IN THE COAT

ed hamilton furs
"On the Mink Side"

500 N. W. - Portland - O.A. 2-5145

Cape Shape Next Style

The cape shape is the next style in fashion. It is made of a soft, warm material and is perfect for the spring season. The hat is made of a similar material and is perfect for the spring season.

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This Exquisite
ROYAL PASTEL
Mink COAT

Only \$2295

YOU IN THE COAT
* * * * *

Take us home as you go to bed
SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN IN THE COAT

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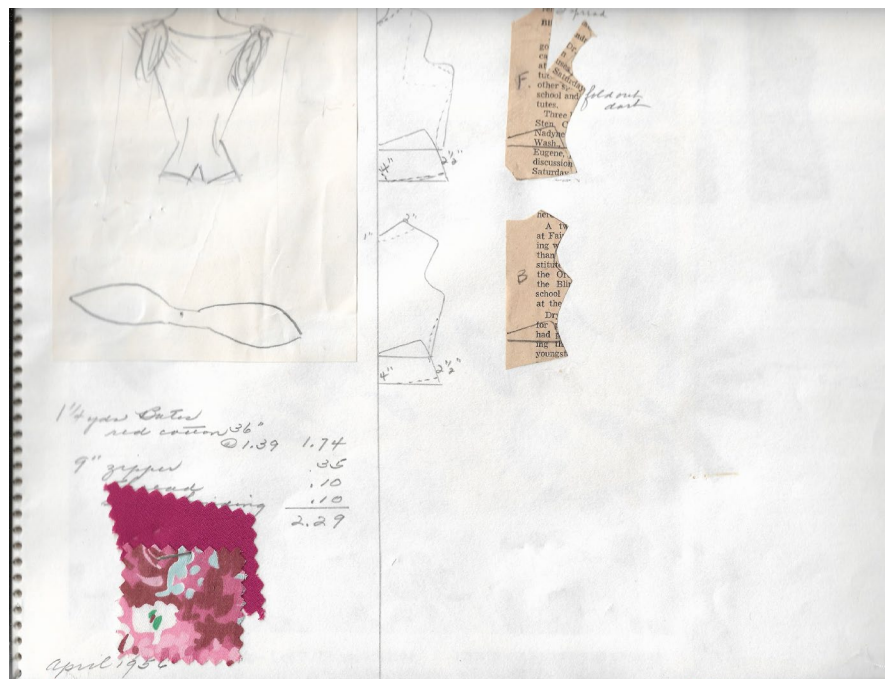
Book 3

This book has fewer designs than the first three. There are a few designs in which she had patterns for, so they do not include her pattern design and only a few sketches are stapled to the back of the book, that were waiting to be designed. For this book I only recreated three garments.

April 1956

Figure 58

Design page for April 1956 Top

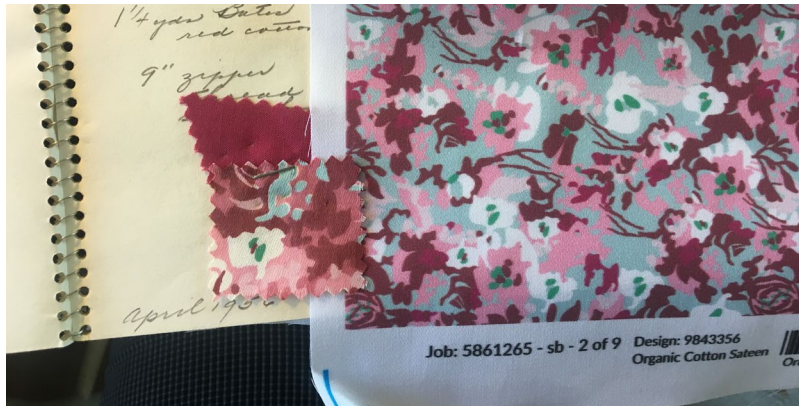


(Eriksen, 1956)

In April of 1956 Agnes designed a floral skirt set. This simple and playful set looked forward to the summer months with light fabric and lack of arm coverage. The design doesn't show a lot of details for how she envisioned the garment, so the placement of closure and how the bows are attached were improvised.

Figure 59

Print comparison of original and recreated.



Left: Original (Eriksen, 1956), Right: Recreated

The swatches for these two pages were labeled as Bates Red Cotton and cotton satin. Bates Fabrics, Inc. was a new brand in March of 1937 (*The New York Times*, 1937). This Bates cotton refers to the fuchsia swatch that sits underneath the printed swatch. The cotton satin is the printed swatch, and the fabric that will be focused on this project. When conducting a burn test, a yarn from this swatch burned to fluffy white ash and burned quickly. This can be supporting evidence that this fiber is indeed cotton, as cellulosic fibers often burn readily and leave paper-like ash. The print was created in Illustrator with a brush tool, traced over parts of the swatch to create separate motif and placed them on a teal background. While this print is a floral, it is also reminiscent of curvilinear or gestural abstract art. For example, František Kupka created some of the first rectangular pure abstract paintings (Barr, Miller, Fantl, & Newhall, 1936). Their work, like the print on the cotton satin, focus on the use of bold colored shapes to create a scene. While the print for the April 1956 design has some representational shapes that look like leaves and branches, Kupka's early 1900 painting was not clearly painted to represent something other than the painting.

Figure 60

František Kupka, Red and Blue Disks, 1911 - 1912, MoMA



(Kupa, 1911-1912)

Of course, the print on this fabric could also be seen as generally a part of the modernist art and design movements of the 1950s if the fabric were designed and made in the time period that Agnes had bought the fabric. Modernism however often contains cleaner lines and geometric shapes, which this fabric design has. The recreated print was printed on Spoonflowers Organic Cotton Sateen Ultra, the closest Spoonflower match to the original.

Figure 61

Digitally recreated print for April 1956 design.



Figure 62

Pattern layout on physical fabric.

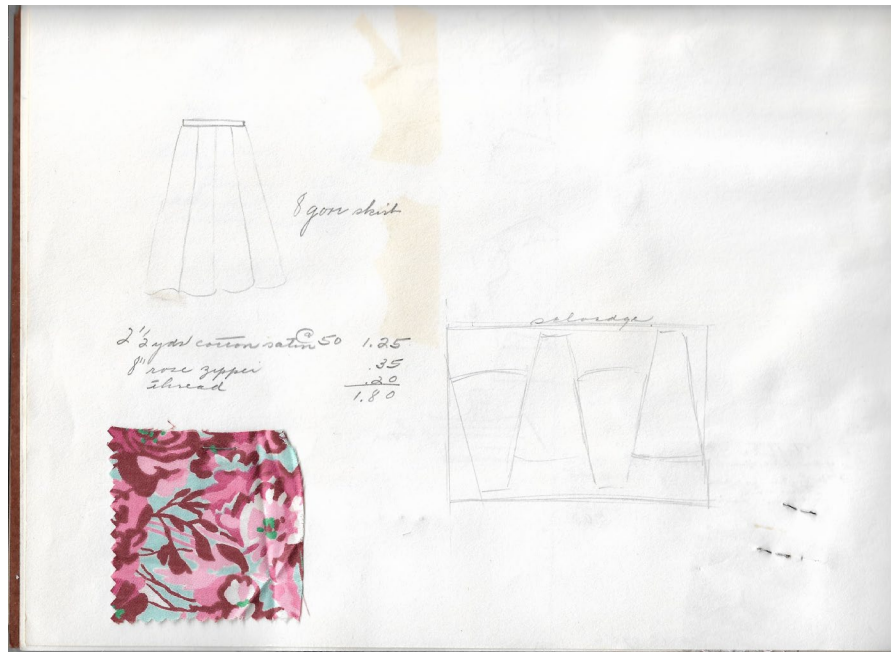


Folded edge at bottom of photo.

To create the pattern for the top, Agnes extended the waistline from the center 4" and 2 ½" on the side seam. A triangle notch is also clipped out of the center front, starting from the extended 4" and over roughly an inch, cutting up into the centerline. Diamond darts or double ended darts are created in order to continue the dart shaping below the waistline. She also carved out the neckline, dropping it 1" in the center back, and cutting into the shoulder line 2" on the front and back. She then moved the front side seam dart to the shoulder, by cutting down from the shoulder line to the side darts pivot or apex point, then folded in the side dart to close it and open the new shoulder dart. The back of this top is not drawn so I decided to make a center back seam to allow a center back zipper to function as this top's closure. No measurements were noted for the ties that attach to the shoulders of the top, but they were drafted twice for the recreation. Once to get the general shape of the ties as Agnes drew them in her page above, and another time to create longer versions so they fit proportionally with the drawing.

Figure 63

Design page for April 1956 skirt.



(Eriksen, 1956)

The eight-gore skirt does not have many instructions or details; to create a simple 8 gore skirt the model's waist and hip measurements were taken, ease was added, and the measurements were divided by 8. This creates a trapezoid-like panel with a rounded bottom, which is cut from the fabric 8 times to make this skirt. The waistband is a simple rectangular waistband that matches the waist measurement, with 2" added for an overlap within the closure.

To construct these garments, the top needed a shaped facing for the hem line, like the November 1955 blouse with a similar shape. This facing had fusible interfacing applied to keep the garments shape. The armholes and neckline of the recreation were finished with bias tape. Bias is strips of fabric that are few inches wide, cut on the fabric's bias, and then applied to garments to finish raw edges of the fabric. A zipper is applied to the center back seam line, lapped to one side to hide the zipper. The ties were created by cutting out four pieces of the tie pattern, and then sewing the right sides together and turning right sides out. These were then pressed and tied in a simple half knot around each shoulder, ensuring that the

tie ends pointed to the front and back. Then the skirt was constructed by attaching all 8 gores together, leaving 10-12" for a zipper on one seam so it sits from the waist to the hip lines. The zipper is lapped to the back. For completed garment see page 129.

May 17, 1956

Figure 64

Design page for May 17, 1956 dress.



(Eriksen, 1956)

One of Agnes's last designs was created May 17th, 1956. This dress was likely made as a piece for early autumn as she swatched a medium weight fabric, and the dress has short sleeves to transition as the warm weather cooled off. This garment is also extravagant in a different way than her other formal dresses, complete with a "mermaid" silhouette. It is fitted to above the knee and then flares out to create an effect that is modernly known as a mermaid dress.

Figure 65

Print comparison between original and recreated print for May 17, 1956 design.



Left: Reprint ontop of original swatch, (Eriksen, 1955). Right: Digitally recreated print.

The swatch for this dress is listed as “yellow sufflin” and its contrast fabric is “bon cotton.” Under a flame this fiber burned readily and left black ash behind. Cellulosic fibers often leave a grey or white ash, so this may indicate that this fabric is a cotton blend. The print for this fabric, from what is visible, is a lot like the previous April 1956 print as it has a color blocked floral design. This design is more spread out than the April design making it look less abstract. I used Illustrator to recreate and expand on the motifs from the existing shapes. When I imagined this print as a complete design, it made sense that the right side of this swatch has flowers or oak/maple leaves. This is derived from fall colors (maroon, yellow and orange) and from the only full shape that is visible, is a leaf shape. Like all the other recreated designs for this project, the print maintains the motif present in the original swatch but extrapolates added features into the final design.

Figure 66

Pattern layout on physical fabric.



Agnes created the pattern for this dress by putting her bodice and skirt slopers together to create a basic dress shape. She lowered the neckline in the center front 2", and 1 1/2" at the shoulders. 2" was added to the center front to create an overlap for the buttons. Generally, the rule of thumb for button down openings is to add the diameter of the button to the open for a button placket. Agnes also noted to extend the skirt length down 1". This is partially arbitrary for the purposes of this project as it is impossible to know the dimensions of her slopers. A front facing is drawn 3" from the center front line and wraps around the neckline. The skirt length is estimated to land right above the knee based on the illustration of this dress. Then, a circle skirt is created, and in Agnes's notes she made a rectangle pattern piece that matched the hem width of the dress front and back. This rectangle was then split into sections that fanned out into a half donut shape. For the recreation, this piece was cut on the fold to make one whole circle/donut shape. To create the cap sleeves for this dress she shortened her sleeve sloper and added 3/4" of fullness to the top of the cap. The cuffs for this design are not detailed on this page, and it is difficult to discern what they should look like in the illustration. In the recreation of this dress, the sleeves were hemmed, and the hem was flipped to the outside of the sleeves and topstitched. This was to create a cuff look on the sleeves as a contrast fabric was not sourced for this garment. The contrasting fabric was also intended for the collar. The collar construction is not indicated in her notes, so some improvising was

necessary. The pattern piece is drawn as an arrow-like shape, like the bands in the January 1956 jacket design. She noted this collar should be 6 ¼” wide and 12” long, or however long to match the neckline. After recreating the dress, I realized that this collar probably acts as a butterfly shape with its center folded and attached to the neckline. In the recreation however, to make this collar work, it is an inverse of this shape, so it was able to have the folded edge away from the neckline.

Figure 67

Circle skirt pattern layout on physical fabric.



This autumnal dress is sewn together with interfaced front and back facings and sleeves. The mistake in constructing this dress was attaching the sleeves on too early in the process. The 2020 pandemic has made it, so I had to fit each garment to my own body. This causes complications as I have to move or bend my body to fit and pin the garments to fit my exact measurements. The cap sleeves in particular are very fitted to my arms, so they tend to move the dress as I move my arms to pin the garment in place. Additionally, it is difficult to discern if there are diamond darts that go vertically through the waistline or not as Agnes indicated where the print goes on the dress with squiggly lines. In any case, diamond darts here proved important to fit the dress properly. Continuing with the construction, the skirt is added to the bottom of the dress, with the two facings overlapped so the buttons can go through the buttonholes and create the front closure. In reality, Agnes listed a zipper in the materials list, meaning that

this zipper would sit on the side seam and the front buttons would be decorative and the buttonholes would not be ripped open.

Figure 68

Hand Sewn buttonholes.



Left: One completed handsewn buttonhole, Right: Tracing paper layout to mark buttonholes.

Additionally, this dress was the only garment from this project where I had hand sewn the buttonholes. The other garments had buttonholes created by the machine. Sewing machines in the 1950s had buttonhole making functions with an attachment of a buttonhole foot, but buttonholes can also be created without this foot. My decision to hand sew these 6 buttonholes, was to show another way Agnes could have created these garments. *The Domestic Sewing Handbook* illustrates how to sew a buttonhole this way. The buttonholes created on this dress are roughly a ½ cm too large, as the yarns of the fabric are able to come apart with a larger gap between the top and bottom of each buttonhole. Above shows the process that *The Domestic Sewing Handbook* recommends, which is to pin tracing paper to the garment with the holes traced out. This is to create a guide for the buttonhole stitches.

For completed garment see page 131.

Table 6
Fabric Test

	Fabric/ Pattern Name	Started/completed	Fabric name if applicable	Woven/ Knit Fabric Structure	Burn Test	Filament/ Staple Fiber	Actual Fiber	Spoonflower "match"	Bought Match
1	Sep-54	9/9/54 - 9/27/54	Bates Sceciplined Fabric	Plain weave	Self extinguish little to no ash burns brown	Staple	Polyester	Perennial Sateen Grand/ Cotton Poplin	Blk velvet button and belt
2	Jan-22	Finished 1/22/55	Turg. Wool	Double weave L-satin weave	Shell: self extinguish Lining: burns readily	Shell: staple, boucle yarn Lining: filament	Shell- wool Lining-	N/A	Shell: "Maywood Studio Woolies Flannel Poodle Boucle Teal", 100% Cotton
3	Feb-55	N/A	Cohama print	Plain weave	Melted brown/ black, beads	Filament	Rayon	Perennial Sateen Grand/ Cotton Poplin	Organic cotton Sateen
4	3/1/1955	N/A	Irish Linen	Plain weave, linen?	burns readily	Staple	Linen	N/A	"Linen Rayon Blend Solid Light Blue", 55% Linen, 45% Rayon
5	3/8/1955	N/A	Cr wool	Shell: woven-plain Lining: Satin weave	Shell: Self extinguish, brown ash Lining: maybe acetate? Burns quick	Shell: Staple Lining: Filament	Shell: wool Lining: Acetate	N/A	Shell: "Telio Curly Cue Boucle Ivory", 46% Polyester, 40% Acrylic, 14% Wool Lining: "Casa Collection Solid Crepe Back Satin Fabric", 100% Polyester
6	3/29/1955	N/A	Nylon	Chiffon	Burns quick, black ash	Filament	Possibly cellulosic or a nylon blend	Chiffon	Spoonflower: Chiffon
7	March (Tan Floral w/o date) 55'	N/A	Wembley	Plain weave	Burns readily, little to no ash	Staple	Cotton or a cotton blend	Perennial Sateen Grand	Spoonflower: Perennial Sateen Grand
8	May-55	4/30/55- May 9-55'	rayon surah remnant	Twill weave	beads up-black bead	Filament	Rayon	Silky Faille	Spoonflower: Silky Faille
9	10-4-55	N/A	imported silk & wool	Plain weave	slow burn, black ash	Staple	Wool	N/A	Cotton flannel Herringbone
10	Nov-55	N/A	rayon surah	Twill- faille	Distinct Smell, Black char, Burns rapidly	Filament	Rayon	Silky Faille	Spoonflower: Silky Faille
11	January 56'	N/A	Check Marion	Gingham	Brown Singe, melts	Staple	Acrylic	N/A	Shell: "Gingham Cotton Shirting - Blue/Red/White", 100% Cotton Lining: "Crepe Back Satin Navy", 100% Polyester
12	January 56'	N/A	Meron Wool	Plain weave	Self extinguish little to no ash burns brown	Staple	Wool	N/A	Thrified match, possibly a cotton plain weave.
13/14	2/1/1956	N/A		Jersey knit	burns black, burning feathers, fluffy ash	Staple	Wool	Organic Cotton Knit Ultra	Spoonflower: Organic Cotton Knit Ultra
15	Mar-56	feb '56- March 1956	Rufflin	Plain weave	Readily burns, brown fluffy ash	Staple	Cotton	Petal Signature Cotton	Main: Petal Signature Cotton Contrast: "White Linen/Cotton waffle fabric, 145cm wide"
16/17	Apr-56	N/A	Cotton Satin	Satin	white ash, burns readily	Staple	Cotton	Organic Cotton Sateen Ultra	Spoonflower: Organic Cotton Sateen Ultra
18	17-May-56	N/A	Yellow sufflin bon cotton	Plain weave	Burns readily black ash	Staple	Cotton	Petal Signature Cotton	Spoonflower: Petal Signature Cotton

This table was created to catalog all the swatches used in this project. Through burn tests and Agnes's notes, fiber types are listed with fabric structure and name, and the fabric used for the recreation.

Reflection and Conclusion

Agnes Eriksen created these sketchbooks in 1954 and continued designing through 1956. Her designs allow us to see the variety of trends and silhouettes she liked, as well as how she paired and wore them. In general, she designed necklines that hit right below the collarbone, gathering below or at the bustline, hemlines right below the knee, full skirts that require a petticoat, or tapered skirts with kick pleats. Aside from one or two garments, her designs offered a hyper feminine look, such as a fitted waist, rounded hip and bust. These sketchbooks are just a peek into her life from 1954 to 1956. Her notes show how basic pattern alteration tactics have not changed in the past 70 years, even when production of garments have. While many of her swatches have modern-day matches, inventions of new fabrics have proved to make more comfortable clothing.

Agnes's designs can also give clues to what clothing she needed or aspired to own in these years. As people in this era often dressed more formally than people today, her clothing has a purpose in their design: from going out on the town, something to do housework in, to fashions to wear while running a business. I was aware while recreating her designs that they were made before she opened The Boulevard with Henry Eriksen and after its opening there were no more designs. I also understand that she loved high fashion, and most likely drew from famous designers when deciding on what to create. The recreated designs were more formal garments. She designed many party dresses as well as clothing that she could have worn for a job. The sleeker silhouettes with muted colors in the swatches would likely be for everyday or work occasions. The gown-like dresses with fun details would most likely be for parties or celebrations. The swatches on the designs also give information about what each garment was used for, depending on their print design, weight, hand, or construction. Many of her swatches were designer fabrics, or well-known fabric companies. This likely means Agnes's intent was to make designer quality or formal attire.

While recreating Agnes's designs, I created a process for how to copy designs in order to capture another person's life. I only had a few select photos of Agnes in the 1950s, as well as a small packet of her design books and article clippings. This does make my process different than another process may be, as the recreation process is unique to the individual that is being recorded. There is an importance of history preservation recorded in this thesis as well. To better understand the past and to not paint the past so simply that people in a contemporary society forget what really happened. Within fashion and design, it is important to fully understand how trends emerged from changes in attitudes and regulations, like the end of war time rationing, or societal ideals of the modern homemaker. These topics were prominent in 1950 but reached Agnes in a unique way because she was an individual. Agnes was not just wearing the Meier & Frank version of a Claire McCardell dress, she was looking at high fashion through the perspective of someone who was hardworking and ambitious. This is not to say that my aunt was the only hardworking and ambitious woman in the 1950s, but it's important to note how every individual in a period of time has a unique perspective of their environment. This idea is presented as I recreated 9 prints on Spoonflower fabric, 18 garments that Agnes had designed, and I interpreted.

Opportunities for Additional Research

More research can be done in the specificities of 1950s dress. Many resources found for this project only discussed general styles and themes throughout this period of fashion. There is research done on region specific dress of this period, but it focuses on young people and collegiate dress. There can be more focus into defining how older people would have dressed in this period, as they would have likely carried over styles from the 1930s and 1940s. Someone could also look at the importance of homemaking and a woman's typical role in society, and how this was reflected in fashion. Another way to look at trends would be to look at where women were getting their information in the 1950s. Agnes consulted her local newspaper, *The Oregonian*, and magazines like *Mademoiselle* and *Vogue* were popular channels for

people to find fashion trends. At the same time Agnes could have been an outlier in how people searched out fashions and created garments at this time.

Language is another area that could be explored more within this time period. Agnes used the word in “Maié” in a few places. This is a word about grainline, but there is not any clear definition to what it meant in the context of pattern making or dressmaking. There is an opportunity here to catalog and define dressmaking terminology throughout time, in order to better understand and analyze older designs, like those found in these books.

Reflection

Throughout this process I thought a lot about how different 1955 is from 2020. For one, living through a global pandemic created a strain on this project. I wondered if Agnes had help fitting her garments onto herself, or if she tried it solo. Due to the pandemic in 2020, and my inability to fit garments to others, I taught my roommate how to properly pin a hem, forgetting how fitting is not as straightforward to someone who is not a seamstress. Fitting garments on myself was particularly difficult, as many of the garments are dolman sleeves, with tight waistlines, creating restrictions for my body to move enough to pin the garments in place. Fashion and sewing are a largely collaborative process, even just for an individual designer. Usually I am able to talk to people when shopping for supplies, making patterns, and fitting garments. I talk to my mentors and models while I go through these steps, so it felt a bit strange to do this on my own. My original intent was to show these garments at Oregon State University’s annual fashion show, sponsored by our Apparel Club, AATCC. These garments would have been fitted to other people to model them during the show. While it is a quite different experience to only have the garments in print, in this thesis, they are still documented and saved in time.

Figure 69

Personal record, Behind the scenes from project photoshoot



Left: Photographer, Brittnee Barry, Right: Anna Roth (Myself)

With lack of open studio space due to the Corvallis campus being closed, and few options, I turned my living room into a photography studio space. I borrowed film lights from my cousin, moved all the furniture to one side of our living room, and proceeded to make a tripod out of books. My roommate became my dresser and production assistant; I also hired two of our close friends, one to photograph the garments, and one to model.

Figure 70

Behind the scenes from the project's photoshoot, part two.



Day of Photoshoot. Left: Makeup and lighting test, Right: A midday break

Vintage gloves from the 1950s were given to me by my grandmother, and the vintage (dating from 1950 to 1980) jewelry was given to me by my grandmother's sister. I purchased vintage 1950s heels online and a petticoat to complete the flared skirt looks. Additionally, I made two pairs of to go with the white jacket and the cheetah print garments.

Figure 71

Glove pattern and creation.



Glove Patterns. Left: white satin gloves, Right: black sheer gloves

As I have been working on this thesis in quarantine during the 2020 Covid-19 outbreak, I created matching masks for 3 garments. Agnes survived the 1918 Spanish Influenza, which occurred when she was 8 years old. While she was much younger than I am now, and the world is much different than it was in 1918, I made many connections between the time of making these garments to when the garments were designed.

Figure 72

Matching mask to the April 1956 design.



For one, the Covid-19 pandemic has been compared to the Spanish flu of 1918, allowing us to compare and understand our current circumstances as well as to learn from the past. Along with this theme, the Black Lives Matter Movement brought civil rights issues back to mainstream attention. For both, we have been warned to not separate the past and the present, as we are currently living through history as we always have. Events, like the Civil Rights Movement, and the Spanish Influenza, are directly related to how American society works today. We cannot talk about current issues without

understanding how they are drawn through history. The masks were created to draw a line between 1955 and 2020. Masks, particularly reusable masks, are a new accessory that everyone is or should be wearing to be aligned with social distancing. New trends within COVID-19 have emerged with masks, like the continuation of matching sets, and matching a mask to an outfit. Masks have become a part of most people's everyday lives.

While this thesis is not about infectious diseases or civil rights issues, it does give more context to the past. I would not have recreated the garments this way exactly without being in self-quarantine for more than six months. The recreation process in this way connects 1954, when Agnes designed and likely created these garments, to February of 2020 when I began to analyze her designs.

However, I also thought about the similarities between 1955 and 2020 for Agnes and me. Both at pivoting points in life, generally in the world and our personal lives. Agnes had just lived through World War II, which was right before she began her business. In 2020, I am currently living through a world-wide health crisis, and through public outcry for civil rights. I am close to graduating and starting my career. Agnes may have begun to plan for her restaurant and maybe she had bigger plans for her designs, just as I hope to make an impact with my designs. Although my family says her designs was a hobby for Agnes, other factors could have made influenced her decision to not see this as a practical career. But, I am only able to infer this from the notes she left behind, and from our family that continues to retell her story.

Figure 73

3 matching masks to recreated garments.



Photoshoot

September 1954





January 22nd, 1955





February 1955





March 1st, 1955





March 8, 1955





March 29th, 1955



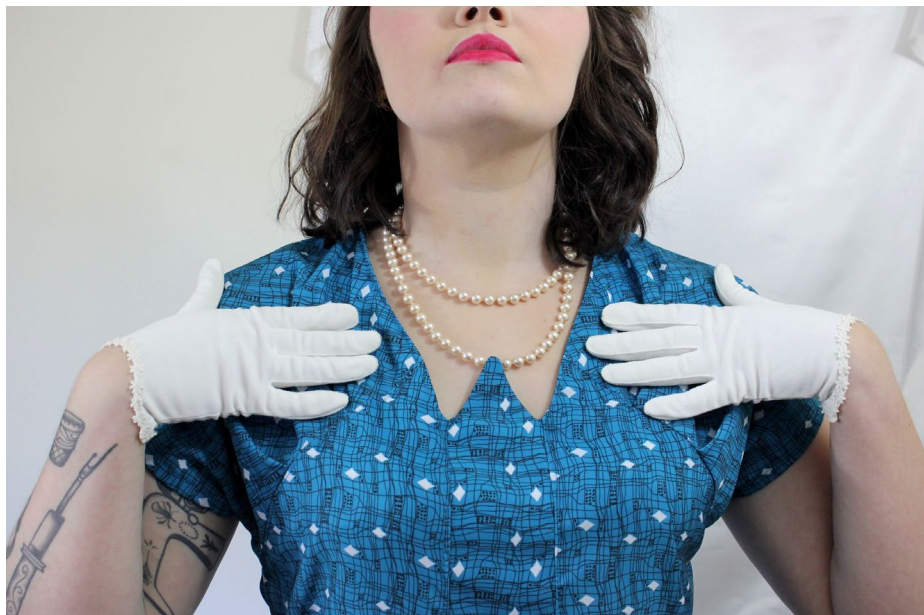


March 1955





May 1955





October 4th, 1955 | February 1st, 1956







November 1955





January 1956





February 1956





March 1956







April 1956





May 17th, 1956







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