

the **HatMag**azine



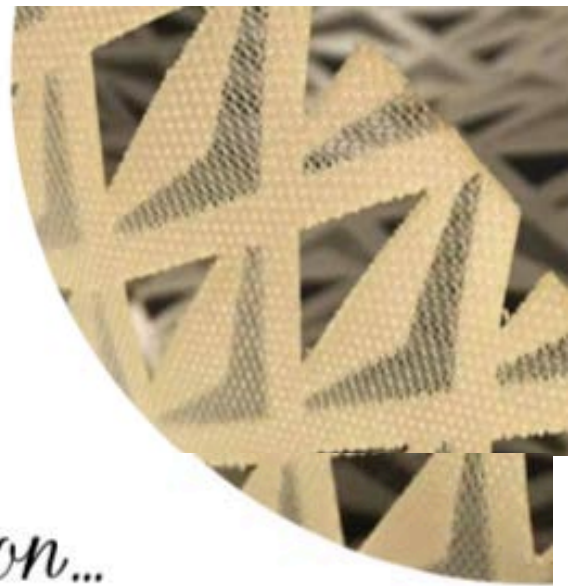
#82

AUG 2019

Royal Ascot hats

End of term reports

Workroom: Feather pompoms



A milliner's vision on...

working with synthetic layered fabric

Every six months, we visit *Première Vision* in Paris to keep up to date with the trends in colours, fabrics and accessories for the upcoming seasons. All forecasts and trends presented at *Première Vision* to the visiting stylists and designers are reflected six months later in the fashion and millinery brands' collections on show at trade shows such as *Première Classe*, *London Fashion Week*, *DATE*, etc.

Because of the many beautiful and inspiring fabrics on display at *Première Vision*, we just can't resist the temptation of getting an advance glimpse of the new collections. So we ask manufacturers if we might buy a metre of one of their fabrics and use this to have a unique design made by a milliner.

The design

When we saw the synthetic layered fabric manufactured by Schmid (see the *Première Vision Trends* report in Issue 81), we immediately pictured Paul Stafford making one of his signature laser cut designs with this fabric. The fabric needed a different approach compared with the fabrics he usually works with, as he told *The Hat Magazine*.

Paul Stafford: How I normally work

While at the Royal College of Art, I spent most of my time in product design workshops, with vacuum formers, woodworking equipment and the laser cutter. Working with the laser cutter particularly has been key to the aesthetic of my pieces – it allows me to work with raw edges, while reducing fraying as the heat melts synthetic fibres, fusing them together.



Paul
Stafford
of *The Season Hats*

As the process works through the laser following lines drawn on a computer, I can create (and recreate) pieces with very accurate measurements and finer detail than could be achieved through conventional cutting. It's very rare that I work with wire – so all of the structure in my pieces is innate to the materials that I choose and dependent on pattern cutting/folding techniques. I tend to work with a very limited range of fabrics, as I have found particular materials that suit my needs well, so being presented with a completely new fabric is an unusual challenge.

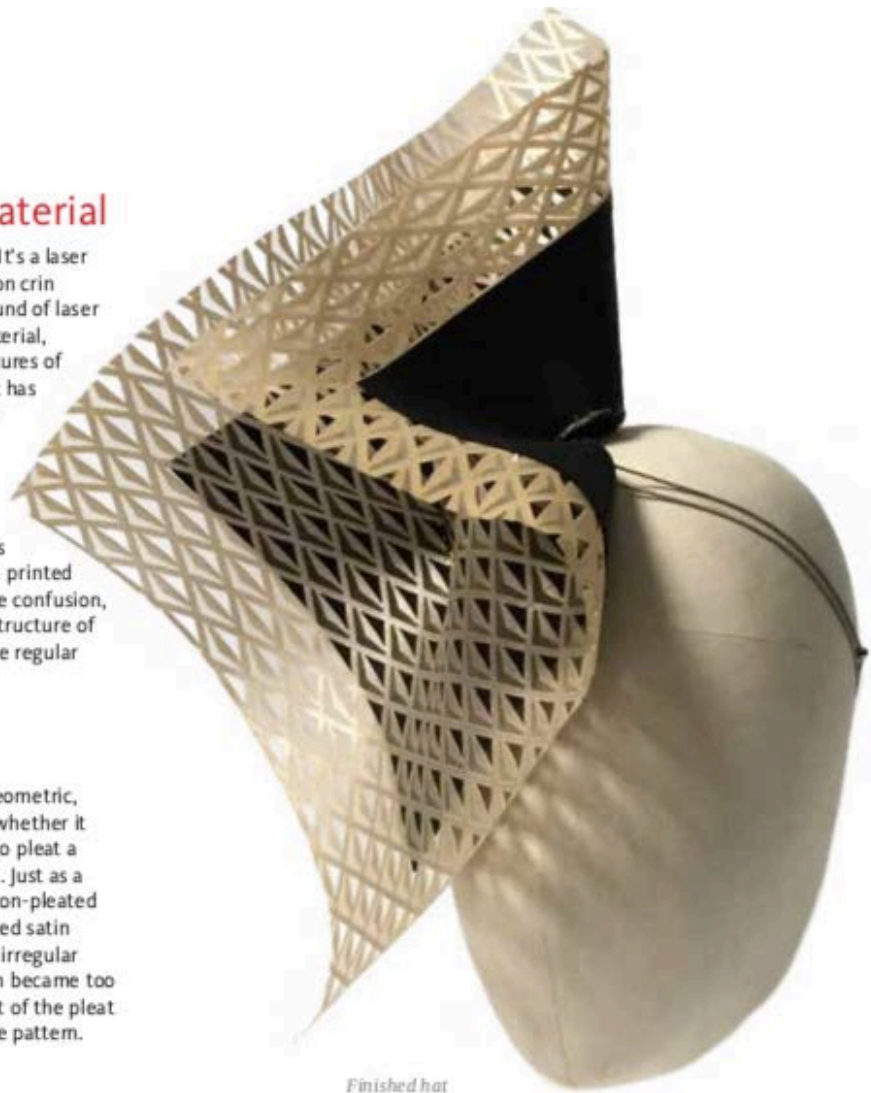
Description of the material

The material chosen for me is beautiful. It's a laser cut nylon satin which is bonded to a nylon crin base, and laser cut again. The second round of laser cutting is through both layers of the material, creating the geometric pattern with textures of satin, crin and negative space. The fabric has a lot of body as the crin creates a sturdy structure.

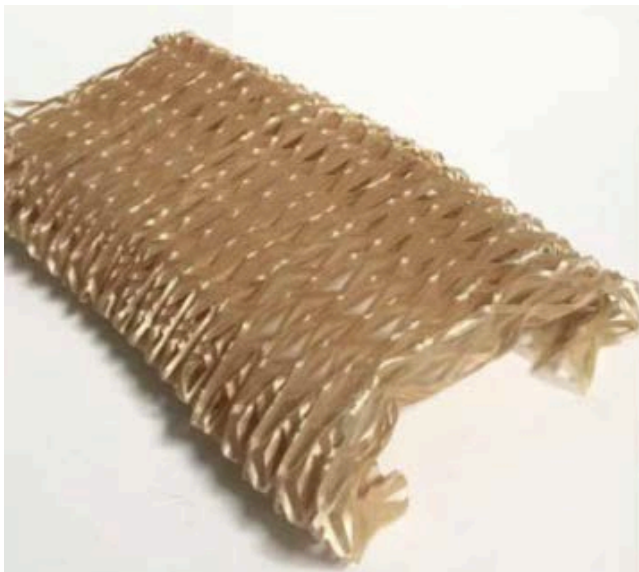
Effectively, the laser cut pattern is like working with a print, which is not something that I have used in collections for The Season. Where I've sampled with printed fabric before, I've found that it can create confusion, distracting from the pleats or other 3D structure of the piece. However, this is a tighter, more regular pattern than I've tested previously.

Initial testing

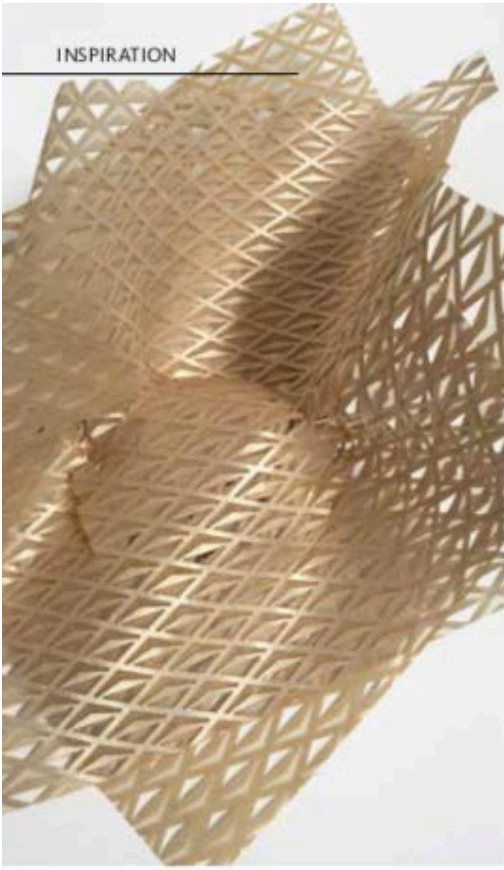
As the pattern is detailed, regular and geometric, I wanted to see how well it pleated and whether it remained beautifully crisp. I'd not tried to pleat a material of this thickness or body before. Just as a test, I folded a rectangle into my accordion-pleated beret pattern. The thickness of the bonded satin didn't lend itself to this, giving rounded, irregular folds. Once pleated, the laser cut pattern became too hard to read, and worsened as the height of the pleat did not correspond to the intervals in the pattern.



Finished hat



INSPIRATION



Two pattern pieces with irregular darts in order to create a ruffle

I wanted to test if the body of the fabric itself was sufficient to hold a form, so I cut two pattern pieces with irregular darts in order to create a ruffle which stands away from the head. I tried this in two layers so that the laser cut holes within the fabric were unlikely to disrupt the construction of the piece. I found that the structure of the fabric was not sufficient for this, so decided that the selected design would need a more structured base in addition to the provided fabric.

Construction of the piece

For the finished piece, I fused polyester to a thermoplastic to create enough structure to support the nylon crin/satin. Overlaying the nylon over the solid black really emphasised the pattern of the fabric, while allowing the nylon to continue beyond the base gives more lightness and casts interesting shadows upon the wearer.

More information

www.theseasonhats.com



The fabric

The layered champagne-coloured fabric 'Sweet dreams' was developed by Schmid's own R&D department. It is a sophisticated fabric achieved through the use of two of their best seller basic articles: tulle and satin, and its composition is 80% polyamide and 20% polyester. The fabric is part of the new spring/summer collection. Schmid's textiles are mainly selected for the production of feminine accessories and this specific fabric has been chosen by famous brands for sampling. They are looking forward to see how it will be interpreted by these brands' stylists.

More information

www.schmid.it