Interpretive Fashions of the Yoruba Tribe

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Supporting Items of Thesis
This visual presentation is a representation of the popular fashions of the Yoruba Tribe found in Nigeria. The purpose of this fashion line that I have created is to bring culture awareness of this tribe to everyone who comes into contact with my line. The purpose of this line is also to display my own modern interpretation of the Yoruba tribes’ main cultural aspects. I have done this by doing extensive research on the West African tribe and reinterpreting it into a 5 piece apparel line shown throughout this presentation. All garments shown in this presentation were designed and produced (sewn) by myself.
Initial Concept Board & Sketch
Presentation Visual Display
Garment
 Breakdown
Egungun, meaning powers concealed, is masquerade costume wear that performers wear during annual festivals and funerals to worship ancestors. The masquerade performers dressed in Egungun are seen as the figures who close the gap between the living and the dead. Egunguns are typically used to cover the performer from head to toe with panels of different inexpensive fabrics throughout their body. Each year they are said to add new layers to the garment celebrating a new year. During their performances it’s typical that the performer twirls around in these garments to music allowing the panels to rise up and flow in the wind. This trend became extremely popular during the early 1900’s throughout the Yoruba tribe. (Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2005)
Look # 2: Ere Ibeji

Ere Ibeji’s are decorative figures that represent the death of a twin. According to Dr. Peri Klemm, “the Yoruba tribe has the highest reported birth rate of twins in the world. It is said that out of every 1,000 births, 45-50 results in twins” (Klemm, n.d.). Due to lack of resources for the mother and child to stay healthy one of the twins usually pass before or shortly after birth. The Ere Ibeji dolls, mainly made of wood, are decorated with precious beads and fabrics by the deceased twins’ mother. Other materials also used on these dolls are jewels, pieces of wood, shells, and glass beads. The shape and look of the doll are mainly created to mock the “idea” look amongst the Yoruba tribe, not necessarily the looks of the deceased child. The mother first takes care of the wooden doll by cleaning it, bathing it, and feeding it. Once the surviving twin becomes of age where they can take on responsibilities, the twin doll is then passed on to them to take care of. Twins for the Yoruba tribe are considered good fortune so they go to this extreme extent to celebrate their lives. (Klemm, n.d.)

Ere Ibeji
Look # 4 & 5: Iro & Buba
(Wrap Skirt & Blouse)

Traditional female garment from the Yoruba Tribe. Can be dressed up for special occasions like weddings or dressed down for everyday wear. For special occasions prints and colors usually worn to match males outfit. Textiles and prints used determine the occasion for the garment.
Iro & Buba
Traditional male garment from the Yoruba tribe worn over a buba (blouse) and shokotos (trousers) then topped with a fila (cap). Can be dressed up for weddings, ceremonies and other special occasions or dressed down for everyday wear. Textiles and prints determine the impact of the garment.

For this particular garment I used a wax resistant technique called Batik to create the prints added on the side of this garment.

*See next slide for more information on the Batiking process.*
Agbada
Batik is a multi-color dying technique in which wax is used as a resistant to prevent dye from reaching certain areas on a piece of fabric. The batik process involves apply wax onto a piece of cloth (preferably 100% cotton based) in a form of a desired design then submerging fabric in dye. Once the fabric is dyed and washed, you then boil the fabric in hot water to remove the wax. Although many sources state that it was first invented in Asia and brought by travelers from the Indian subcontinent, it is reported that the Yoruba tribe was the first ones to adopt to this method calling it Adire Alabela (wax resist). (Batik Art, 2017)
Reference Summary

