Retail Innovation Shout Out: 3D Prototyping Takes the Runway at the Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show

by Caitlin White

While the masses have been discussing different aspects of 3D modeling over the years – everything from 3D eyewear worn at the movie theater to 3D CAD models in footwear – Victoria’s Secret is a pioneer in the effective implementation of this technological advancement for fashion and apparel. Because the Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show is about so much more than lingerie, beautiful models, and the high profile celebrities in attendance, it should be no surprise that this show continues to incorporate more and more elaborate innovation into the costumes.

Bradley Rothenberg, this years’ fashion show architect, took the famous designs to a whole new level and integrated 3D printing. One example of the 3D printed pieces is the snowflake inspired bustier worn by supermodel Lindsay Ellingson. This bustier showcased delicate detailing using a moving textile, and the work that went into it took months. It required 3D body scans of Lindsay’s body for proper fit, definition of print resolution to make sure it translated well into the actual printing of the full sized piece, and the materials required the ability to weave. The weave – white nylon in this case – gives the textile more versatility and wearability.

Longterm, Rothenberg envisions extending 3D printing to additional fabrics, but right now the focus is on weaves. Bitoni, another designer working on similar a project, is currently leading workshops at Pratt allowing students the opportunity to work on 3D dresses.

Victoria’s Secret always aims to amaze at its annual fashion show but this one may be for the books, as a fashion industry pioneer leaps into 3D prototyping and the pursuit of faster product development timelines.

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