

From Wearable Electronics to Wearable Projections

Written by Bob Snyder
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At the 55th annual Grammy Awards, singers were told by organizers not to dress “sexy” in an attempt to stop the arms race of music porn that decorates MTV today. Needless to say, that mandate felt limiting to many of the stars used to flaunting it as part of their act.

One singer found a different route: Oklahoma country music superstar Carrie Underwood, who recently celebrated her 17th No. 1 song.

Underwood came on the Grammy Awards stage in a big, flowing gown and stood the whole time fixed in the same spot. It immediately seemed slightly awkward to fans who had expected an animated performance with Underwood wandering the stage.

Before the fans had time to react, something spectacular happened to her dress: the white gown lit up with a series of striking changes, changing into a brilliant blue, a fire-engine red, and even patterns of roses and more.

Most fans were awestruck and described the designs as “holographic” and “looks like Avatar,” although there are always those who hate change and rant against any novelty.

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In consumer electronics the hot trend is “wearable electronics,” but Underwood’s trick was actually projector mapping. Two projectors (no, we don’t know which brand...yet) hung more than 20 meters high (70 foot) above the stage created the patterns...and Underwood performed while standing on an apple crate to help along the effect.

Underwood’s Creative Director came up with the idea for projector-mapping the dress. The actual gown-maker had only two weeks to design and make the gown-as-projection screen. The gown-maker said he was inspired by shape and look of the new World Trade Center in New York and he probably used as much fabric as WTC used concrete to get the amount of billowing dress needed to act as a projection screen.

This, of course, was not the first time someone has thought of this. There are several instances of creative dance troupes using this trick (mapping not an individual dress but the whole troupe)...but this is the first time mainstream TV has seen the magic of projector mapping on the clothing of a superstar in Prime Time.

Go [The Making of Underwood’s Projector-Mapping Dress](#)