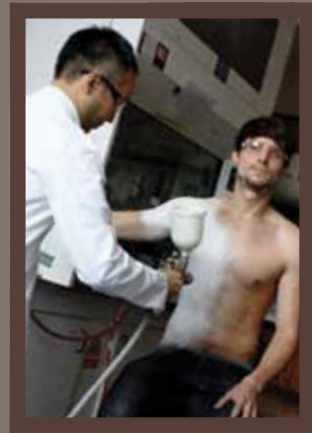


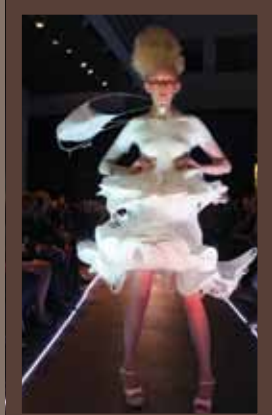


spray-on science



Silly string sprayed by party goers was the inspiration for this à la mode collaboration between chemical engineer Professor Paul Luckham and Spanish designer Dr Manel Torres (top l-r). The duo met in 1998 when Manel was at the Royal College of Art, working on ways of making fashion more futuristic.

Over the years, they experimented with mixtures of fibres, polymers and solvents, so that their liquids would turn into fabric when sprayed onto a surface. They explored particle and aerosol technologies, and learnt how to balance one-off artistic creations with reproducible scientific results.



They set up Fabrican Ltd to commercialise their products: the technology for spraying liquids using pressurised spray guns or aerosol cans; materials of different strengths, colours and softness; fabrics that stick strongly to surfaces and those that can be peeled away. Their breakthrough came when they sprayed a T-shirt that could be taken off and put on again.

For London Fashion Week in autumn 2010, Manel transformed Imperial's Main Entrance into a catwalk. He designed a spray-on Spring Collection of white dresses that was the talk of the town and captured the imagination of journalists from around the world. Healthcare, design and transport companies have since been in contact about other uses for the technology.

PHOTOS: LEONARDO DOMINGUEZ TEIXEIRA, IAN GILLET, JODY KINGZETT, CAROLINE PREW, SLOBODAN PADOŠAVJEVIĆ, LAYTON THOMPSON