CLEVELAND BALLET

CREATIVE CROSSROADS: ALEXANDER GUZMÁN'S ART IN MOTION



HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN DESIGN? WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START COSTUME DESIGN?

I've been passionate about art for as long as I can remember. My interest in design really took off when my sister competed in Miss Teen World Puerto Rico and won the title of Miss Teen Americas. I spent a lot of time backstage with her, surrounded by the gowns of renowned designers. That experience inspired me to pursue fashion design in my hometown of Ponce.

My first opportunity to design costumes came while I was still learning the basics of fashion, creating pieces for my ballet school's productions. Later, when I moved to the United States, I became an apprentice dancer with Kentucky Ballet Theatre. That's where my costume design work really began to grow. I designed for many of their ballets. I also had the opportunity to create new costumes for Ballet de Camagüey in Cuba for their production of *The Nutcracker* and NA2 Dance Theater corp., for their NYU Dance Program graduation.

HOW DOES BEING A DANCER INFLUENCE YOUR DESIGN APPROACH AND STRATEGY?

Being a dancer has a huge influence on how I approach costume design. It gives me a deep understanding of how a costume needs to move with the body and how it can support or enhance the dancer's performance. As dancers, we don't want to feel restricted by what we're wearing, the costume should move in harmony with us, not work against us.

My experience on stage helps me design pieces that not only look beautiful but also feel comfortable and allow for full range of motion. I always aim to create costumes that elevate both the movement and the story being told.

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YOU ALSO WORK IN ONE DIMENSON, HAVING DESIGNED CLEVELAND BALLET'S NUTCRACKER LOGO AS WELL AS SEVERAL T-SHIRTS. HOW DOES THAT TYPE OF DESIGN DIFFER FROM COSTUME AND HOW DOES IT RELATE?

I consider myself a creative person, and graphic design is often the first step in my costume design process. Creating logos, posters, or t-shirts is quite similar to designing a costume on a conceptual level - both involve visual storytelling.

The key difference is that a costume comes to life on a moving body, enhancing the narrative the choreographer wants to share on stage. Graphic design, on the other hand, engages the viewer visually and invites them to connect with the art in a more static, yet equally impactful, way.



