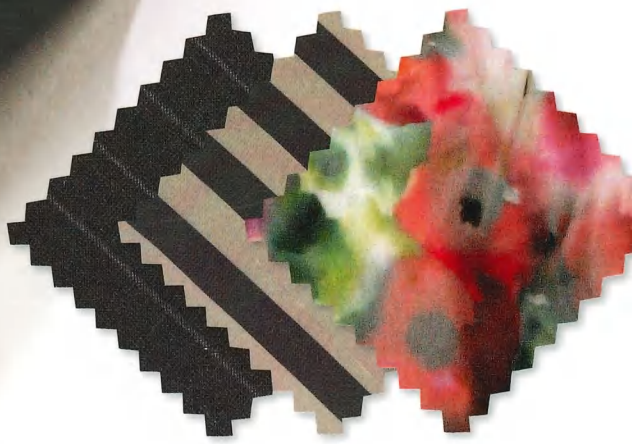
THE FASHION DESIGNER'S TEXTILE DIRECTORY

A guide to fabrics' properties, characteristics, and garment-design potential

GAIL BAUGH



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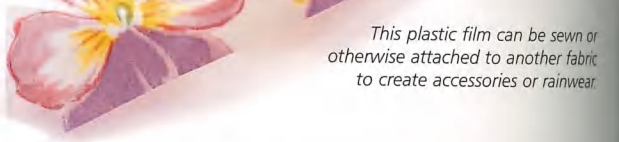
Plastic sheets

Film, usually produced from a plastic material, is not made from fiber at all. Although still a two-dimensional surface like other fabrics, film is neither porous nor breathable.

This fabric can be very uncomfortable to wear, because body perspiration does not evaporate, so garments produced from film become wet on the inside. Care must be taken to add absorbent fabrics to the inside of these nonporous fabrics.

Film fabrics are used in shower curtains, accessories, footwear, and rain gear. Most common materials are polyurethane or polyvinylchloride (PVC). Latex, a natural rubber, is also used.

Bonded fabrics often combine film and another fabric for functional use. For example, film can be laminated to the face of a cotton calico fabric (see page 57) for a water-resistant fabric in children's rain gear. Thin foam layers can be laminated to a polyester tricot for added weight and thermal insulation.



This plastic film can be sewn or otherwise attached to another fabric to create accessories or rainwear.

Another use of film is to emboss the surface to imitate leather grain or other fabric surfaces. These embossed surfaces are then bonded to a fabric backing and are used for the fabric face. See Faux leather and suede on pages 124–125 for more information. Embossed film fabric is a common bonded fabric used in accessories, handbags, shoes/boots, and jackets.

Finally, film fabrics can be bonded to many different fabrics, such as mesh, plain weaves, and tricot knits. Highly textured surfaces do not bond well at all.

Film embossed to look like denim
The twill-like surface embossed onto this film is bonded to a lightweight fabric to add strength. The embossing can also encourage flexibility in a usually stiff plastic surface. Due to the nonporous film, an absorbent fiber lining is recommended.

Embossed face on bonded film
Note the embossed texture that imitates a woven fabric surface. The film has been bonded to a knitted interlock backing.

Clear film on cashmere
This matte-finish film is bonded to a soft cashmere fabric to create a water-resistant surface and soft inside for a novelty outerwear coat.