



COSTUMES

The Fabric of a Legend

Michael Jackson's visual iconography is firmly entrenched in the minds of his fans. In fact, some of these visual icons – Michael's white glove, penny loafers, fedora hat and shades – are at the very core of the storyline of *Michael Jackson ONE* and are charged with symbolism and have the force of talismans.

"My creations are all rooted in Michael's world and his songs, and radiate his spirit," says Zaldy Goco, who designed the wardrobe for *Michael Jackson THE IMMORTAL World Tour*. "My goal was to find ways to make an impression and surprise Michael's fans with my costume designs."

Light and Dark

The storyline of *Michael Jackson ONE* inspired Zaldy to group the characters' costumes into two families each with its own distinct look and esthetic: one represents light, Michael's world, while the other represents dark and the world of the character Mephisto, the hero's nemesis. The former is represented by the color white, rainbow colors and light tones, while the latter features black, navy and red. The color red is associated with Mephisto and his minions, including the "Smooth Criminals", the Paparazzi, the Tabloid Junkies and Dirty Diana.

Graphic Look

Zaldy wanted the costumes to have a graphic, Manga-style illustration look and feel. To bring his vision to life, he needed a material with which he could create stiff shapes, yet that was stretchable and flexible in order to free up the artists' movement. He found the perfect material in neoprene, which he used for most of the show's costumes. Neoprene is a synthetic rubber used for a wide range of applications, including sportswear, wetsuits, laptop-computer sleeves, drum practice pads and other waterproof products.

Visual effects

The costumes in Michael Jackson ONE brim with visual effects and illusions of all kinds. For example, the shape-shifting gangster-type characters in the “Smooth Criminal” scene remove their navy blue trench coats, revealing their pinstriped suits underneath. The artists’ backside is all white, but when the lights go out, the black light reveals UV drawings all over the artists’ backs and faces. The drawings represent dragon tattoos inspired by the real, full-body tattoos traditionally worn by the yakuza, members of Japanese organized crime.

Inflatables were used in the costumes of the characters in the “Tabloid Junkies” scene. During their act, the artists trip a switch in their costume that causes a CO₂ (carbon dioxide) explosion in their tiny backpacks. A hood in the shape of a dog’s head pops out of the packs and over the artists’ head, instantly turning them into dog-like characters.

The artists’ costumes in the “I Can’t Stop Loving You” and “Billie Jean” scenes are equipped with hundreds of LED lights. The costumes are designed in such a way that the performers disappear completely and the only thing the audience sees is the movement and changing colors of the LED lights.

Costume Close-ups

- Michael Jackson loved gold, crystals and things that glitter and shine. He was fond of Swarovski crystals, and the use of this material in the show was self-evident. In itself, the “Dirty Diana” costume contains over 7,000 Swarovski crystals.
- The glitter on the costume of the guitarist who plays the Muse character – a conduit for Michael’s music – was created with the same technique used for one of Michael’s costumes in the *THIS IS IT* show: the costume is braided with clear pockets filled with Swarovski crystals. With the Muse’s costume, Zaldy pays tribute to the last ever costume designed for Michael Jackson. Her guitar shoots 30-foot streams of pyro.
- The material of the trench coats worn by the “Smooth Criminal” characters looks like silk. It is made of a high-end French fabric woven from a plastic material that gives the costume a liquid shine. When the rhythmic gymnasts do cartwheels, their coat seem to hang in the air, emphasizing their graceful, swirling motions.
- The capes of the “Tabloid Junkies” characters are lined with tabloid headlines about Michael Jackson in several languages.
- The fedora hats used in the show come from the same maker that made Michael Jackson’s fedora hats.
- There are approximately 1,150 costume pieces in the show.