

## FIELD TRIP

# Blink, think and turn pink? WHAT A DRESS!

Over the years, Yak's Corner has written very few stories about cool clothes and fashion trends. The Yak isn't a fashion magazine, after all.

But we recently saw a dress so exquisitely beautiful and technologically astounding that it qualifies as an artwork. The Henry Ford thought so, too, and has acquired the "world's first cognitive dress" for the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation. (Cognitive means able to think.)

The gossamer-like dress is in a glass case next to the ever-popular Oscar Mayer Wienermobile. A hot dog car parked next to a dress with a brain: Don't you love it?

The dress looks like something a 21st Century Cinderella would wear. It was co-created by Marchesa, a New York-based fashion company, and IBM, a global information technology firm. Marchesa designed and sewed the dress. IBM gave it a "brain" using Watson, a program that "can understand all forms of data, interact naturally with people, and learn and reason." Whoa!

Karolina Kurkova, a famous Czechoslovakian model and actress, wore the dress last year at the Met Gala, an annual fundraising event for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute, in New York.

The dress is decorated with dozens of LED lights that were hand-embroidered into fabric flowers so fragile they look like butterflies. Its brain can receive social media posts, and instruct the flowers to change color, based on the emotional tones of those messages.

A dress that reads Twitter feeds! At the museum, you can tweet the dress or, if you don't have a cell phone, take a short personality test on a computer monitor. The dress will interpret the emotional context of your tweet or learn your personality type from your test results and communicate the information to the flowers!



Photos Courtesy of The Henry Ford

The flowers on the dress are embedded with LED lights and change color.

The flowers will turn pink, red, blue, purple, or yellow based on whether the dress thinks are you joyful, passionate, excited, curious, or encouraging of others.

Lillie Auslander, 9, loved the dress and said she wished she could wear it.

"It's got lots of flowers on it and it's sparkly and it's white and it lights up," said Lillie, a third grader from North Carolina, who was visiting the museum with her parents. The family had been visiting Lillie's grandparents, who live in Toledo, Ohio, over spring break, and stopped at the museum on their way to Detroit Metro Airport to fly home.

Lillie was wearing a bright pink dress. When she took the test, the dress turned pink, too, reflecting her personality type: joyful.

Don't miss this fun new, permanent display next time you visit the Dearborn museum. For more, go to [www.thehenryford.org](http://www.thehenryford.org).

By Patricia Charget



AP Photo

Model Karolina Kurkova was the Cognitive Dress at last year's Met Gala in New York City. The dress changes colors by responding to tweets. The dress is now on permanent display at The Henry Ford, in Dearborn.