

Connie Osaremae.

THE AFRICAN ART OF APPEARANCE



This project is a celebration of Nigerian culture and a love letter to my Nigerian and English heritage. The collection explores Esan tribal traditions, expressions of femininity and the concept of cultural authentication. Silhouettes reflect a reinterpretation of the traditional Nigerian woman's attire. This is

comprised of the Buba (blouse), Iro (wrapped skirt) and the Pele (fabric draped on shoulder). The collection takes traditional elements of this dress and pairs it with soft tailoring and ornate bead work to show a narrative of African dress that is inspired by my lived experiences.



The survival and revitalization of the Yoruba *aso-oke* tradition in the late twentieth century has been closely tied to broad-based ingroup patronage. Market demand for *aso-oke* has remained strong because the cloth appeals to the Yoruba pride in ethnic identity. The initial impact from the British on *aso-oke* cloth production was slight with local demand remaining high due to a strong patronage base. The wearing of *aso-oke* was not tied to social class; in the nineteenth century all Yoruba wore it for ritual and social occasions. The influence was most apparent in the introduction of machine-spun yarn, which was quickly recognized advantages to machine-spun yarn, which was faster to weave than hand-spun yarn. Weavers readily experimented with the new palette with pre-dyed yarn and imported regularly using machine-spun yarn (Clarke 1996b: 99). Preferences in *aso-oke* colors remained white and white being prominent through the nineteenth century, though colorful cotton and rayon yarns were introduced in the early twentieth century and weft-float patterns (Clarke 1996b: 99). In 1960, *aso-oke* production became oriented towards urban consumers, influenced by the colorful cloth for sale in the marketplace. *Aso-oke*, like other successful handwoven cloth, was associated with the rise of this new class and the colonialism expansion of cash economy and living standards (M. Johnson 1978: 100). *Aso-oke*, in particular, has been adopted by the Yoruba as a symbol of prosperity, status and pride in ethnic identity. In the textile industry (see Chapter 4), the Yoruba have been a motivated patronage of wealthy

An interview with my aunt Josephine about fashion, clothing and traditional dress in Nigerian culture. Discussing how it's changed it's english influences and how it informs gender.

APPENDIX A INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPHINE OLU-OSAGIE

CONNIE - How did you decide what your wedding dress would be like?

JOSEPHINE - Usually in Edo State we have clothes you wear when you're from Edo State, it's native attire for brides. It's usually red- with the beads and the cup (fitted bodice) that's how brides to be in Edo State or Esan tribes usually dress. You can use any material if you want but traditionally it's red material and traditionally a wrapper but it's more modern now to make a gown- like a ball gown.

CONNIE - Yeah! I thought it looked a bit more modern than some other Nigerian dresses I've seen, I was wondering did you design it or buy it?

JOSEPHINE - Yeah I designed it, but it was inspired by something I saw online. I found the image online and bought the fabric from the market and I gave it to my tailor to make for me.

CONNIE - So it had to be red and it had to have beads, was there anything else it had to have on it?

JOSEPHINE - Yes that's it, just underneath it needed to have like the ne you use for a ball gown, I'm not sure what its called but just to give it shape.

CONNIE - Ah ok that's interesting! At th and the UK and I wanted to know is fa

JOSEPHINE - Yeah usually it is very im where in the country you come from. In and Yoruba.

CONNIE - So each group usually has a

JOSEPHINE - Yes each ethnic group h smaller ethnic groups, they kind of hav groups.

CONNIE - Is the beading part of that c

JOSEPHINE - Yeah! For Edo State the the bag are all traditional for a bride to

CONNIE - What do you like most abou

JOSEPHINE - Erm... I don't know? I thi come from! Like if your are in Nigeria y culture. But when I am here (UK) and I A Nigerian body in the UK but it's lovel colourful.

CONNIE - How would you describe yo

JOSEPHINE - Ah ok, more in Nigerian you wear with a blouse under and you the ball gown styles like the red one. I special occasions, I also wear the tie w to make an outfit which I loved.

CONNIE - Do you prefer wearing tradi



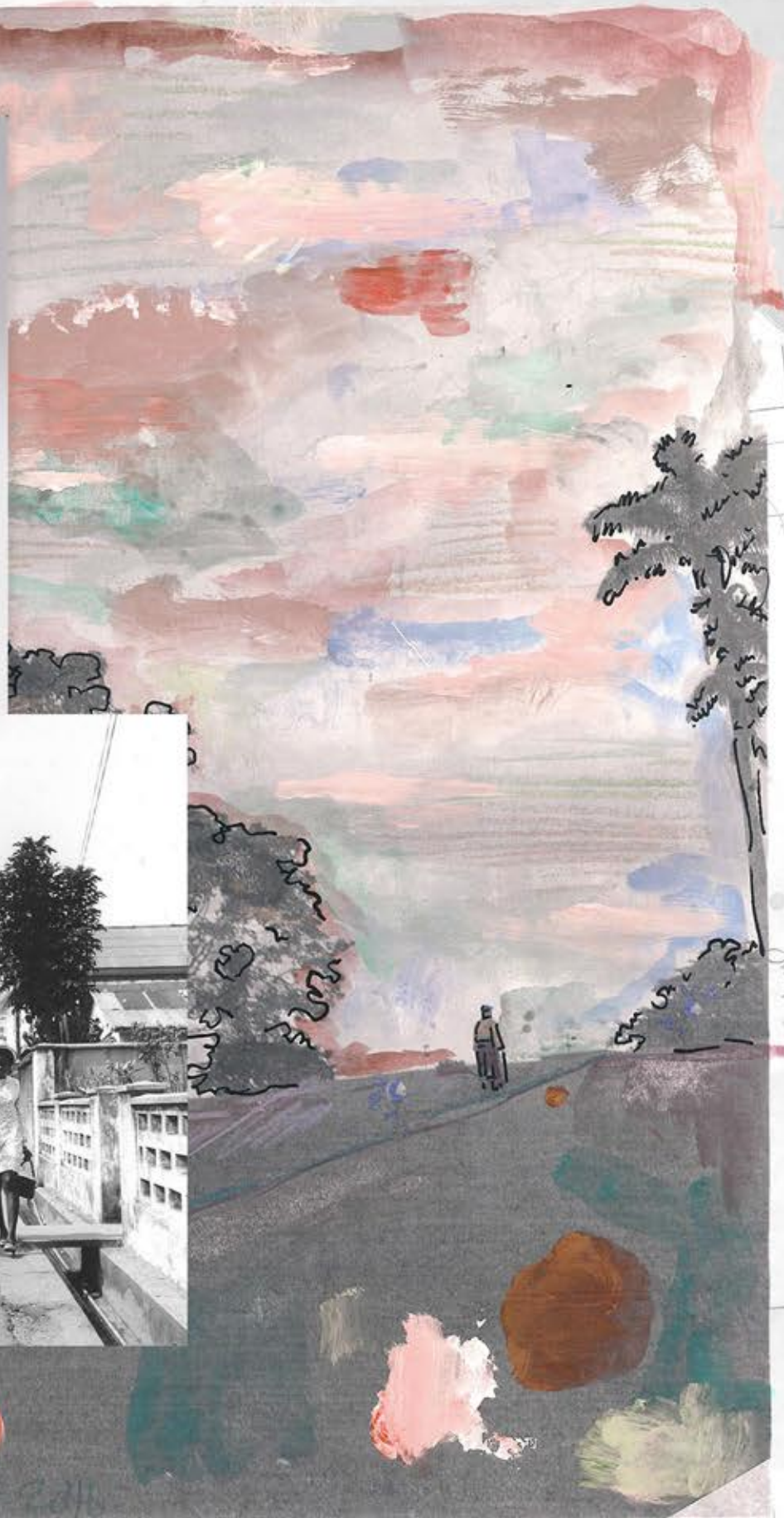
11 Aug 2020

Forwarded



NOW LOOK HERE
THE AFRICAN ART OF APPEARANCE

**VISIT THE
POP-UP
EXHIBITION
25.1 — 23.2**



The idea of centering my research around Nigerian fashion and factors impacting its evolution, stemmed from a desire to understand more about my own heritage and challenge common stereotypes surrounding African dress. Premises devised by Craik & Jansen in the text "Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity through Fashion" (2018) acted as an undercurrent to my investigation into Nigerian fashion networks.

* My own photography from a visit to Nigeria. Photos taken at a traditional wedding, on the road in Lagos and fabric markets.

Heritage and family plays a big part in the evolution of my design. I want to work from my own experiences as a second generation Nigerian to create a different narrative of what is considered "African fashion".



Images of roadside Lagos I took while visiting a few years ago. I think it shows small snippets of real life and things that slipped out as we were visiting in the side of the road.

I want to develop these images into some form of print/book more into the style scene in Lagos.



Photography of men's traditional Nigerian dress the motif is.

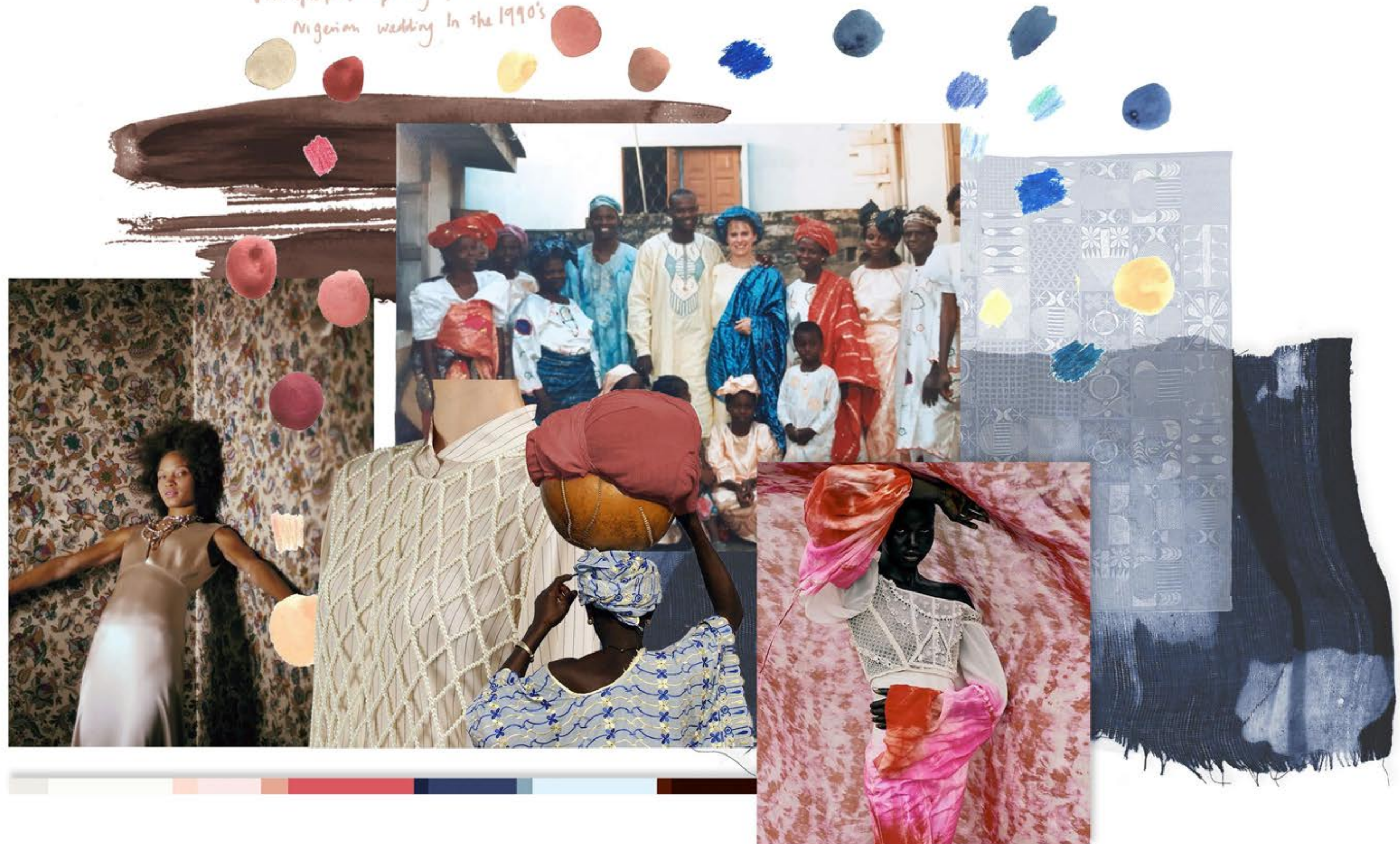


DRAWING ON MY NIGERIAN HERITAGE TO CREATE A PERSONAL VIEW OF AFRICAN FASHION

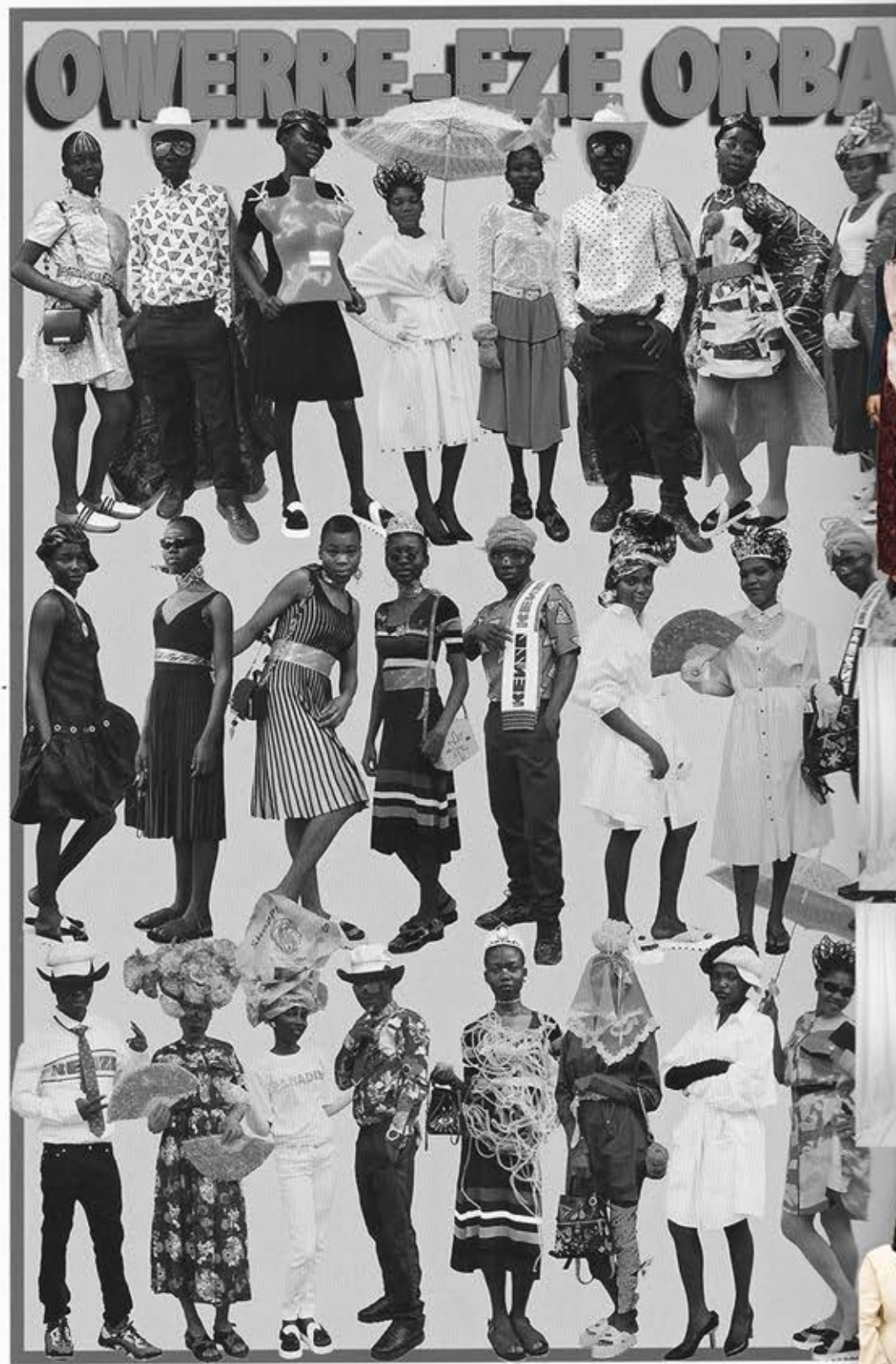


Digital draping experimentation using photographs by Chief S.O. Alonge which capture the Benin royal family and their court ceremonies over a timespan of 50 years, alongside imagery of modern Nigerian fashion.

Colour Story Inspired by the
Photographs of my parents
Nigerian wedding in the 1990's



Colour is still a very important element and in Nigerian culture, it is not uncommon for guests of weddings to ask “kolo wo ni won pe?” - a Yoruba phrase meaning ‘What colour has been specified for the occasion by the celebrant?’ (Olugbemisola et al., 2018). families of the bride and groom will send out wedding invitations specifying the chosen colour for the celebration.



"Tradition implies that something is bounded, confined, and limited,
but these assumptions must be questioned."
(Eicher & Ross, 2010: 4)

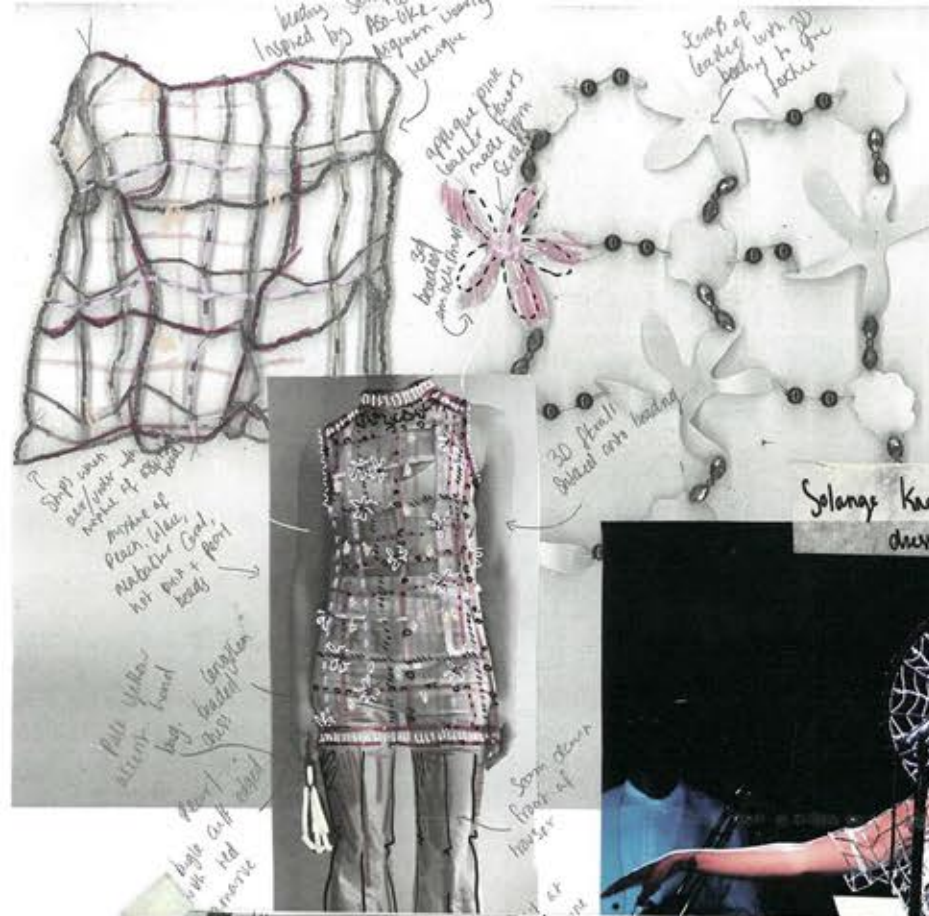




RE-IMAGINING AFRICAN FASHION THROUGH TEXTILES AND EMBELISHMENT



Generally, cloth made a suitable currency. Taking the form of standardized wheels of cotton strip cloth in West Africa and bundles of raffia palm cloth in Central Africa, it was easily transported and stored. It was always valuable because of its subsistence and social importance. In its life history, 'money cloth' could be removed from currency status. When used as clothing, implications of value were retained so that 'it was possible to wear one's fortune and save it at the same time' (Johnson 1980: 194). In currency status, cloth surpluses played an important role in long-distance trade exchanges for essential goods. The Baule of Côte d'Ivoire for example, traded cloth to



Solange Knowles in Custom Clothing by Erickson Beamon



I found that beading as a domain of dress was more commonplace in Afrocentric fashion systems compared to those based in Europe. Many African cultures do not limit what is considered appropriate body covering to just cloth, and often beads are used as a form of dress or to show identity in the same way as fabric.



Inspired by grid shape Ankara Cape







Blue Ink
Sleeve on
Silk Satin

Blue Tone
Postcard Print
on Poly Satin

Pink Postcard
Print on
Velvet

Pink
Sleeve on
Poly Satin

Pink Postcard
on Denim Tulle

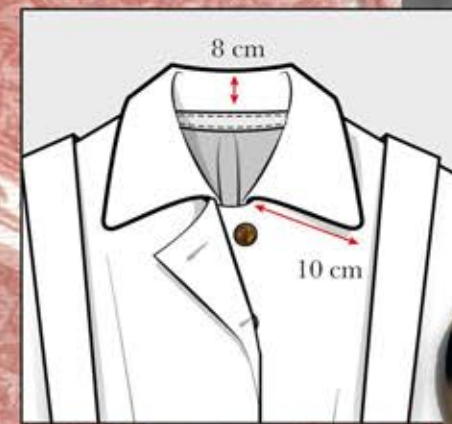
Hill Top Sleeve
on Denim Tulle

Besides alluding to wealth and status, fabric in Nigeria can tell us a lot about the identity of the wearer. The phrase of 'aso-ebi' originating from the Yoruba tribe of western Nigeria, loosely translates to 'family cloth'. It

refers to identical dress worn to express group affiliation, it can show pride of family, political membership and even friendship by tying your personal identity to that of a group (Nwafor, 2010).







2.5cm Italian mock horn coat button





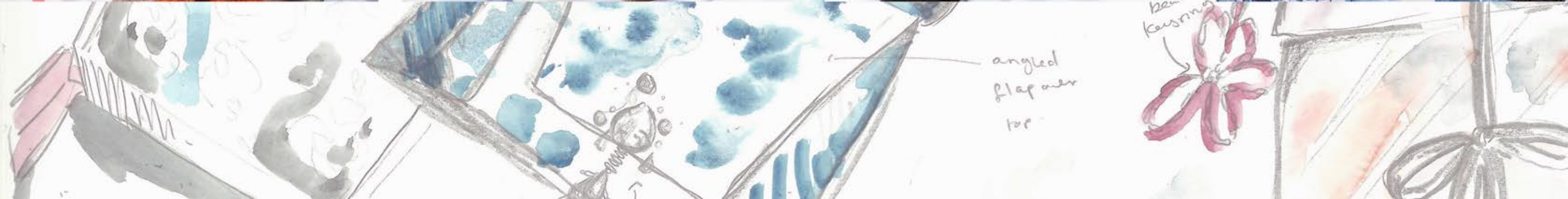
INITIAL BAG DESIGNS



Inspired by
mini 90s/2000s
bags

Canvas
brace.

Cross
body
bag strap



angled
flap over
top





Photos of guests at my parents' Nigerian wedding.



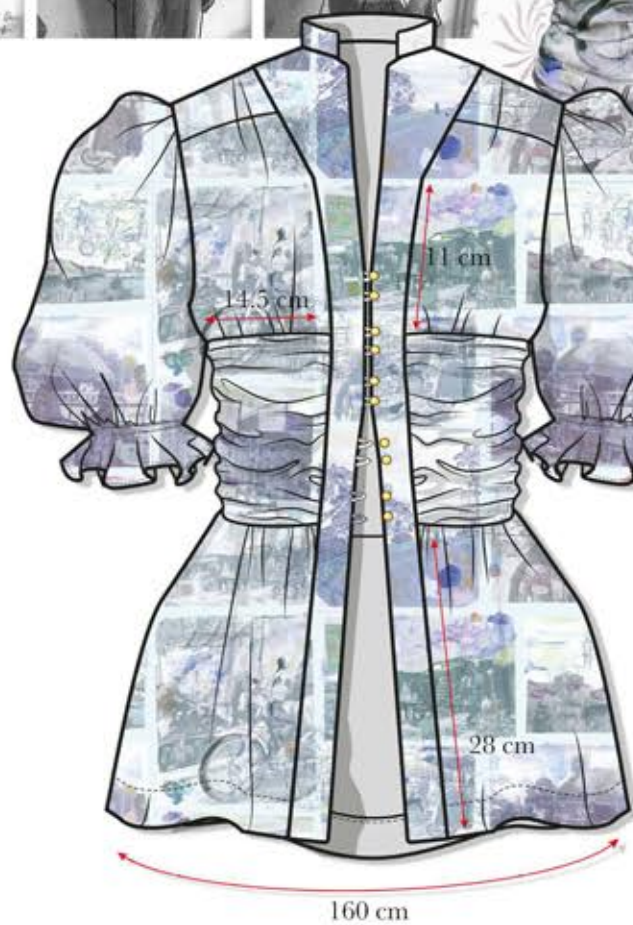
Experimenting with the lace - lace sample on the body.



lace overlay on solid fabric





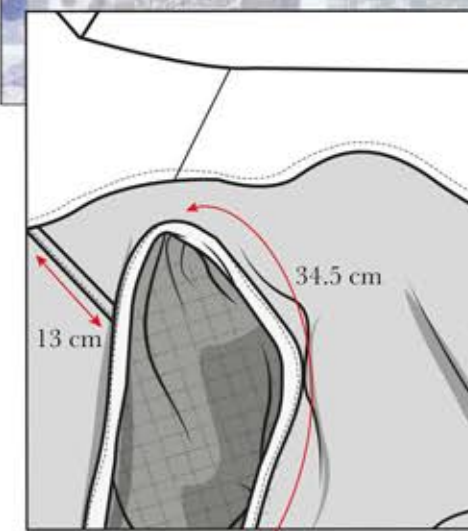


1cm pearl ball button

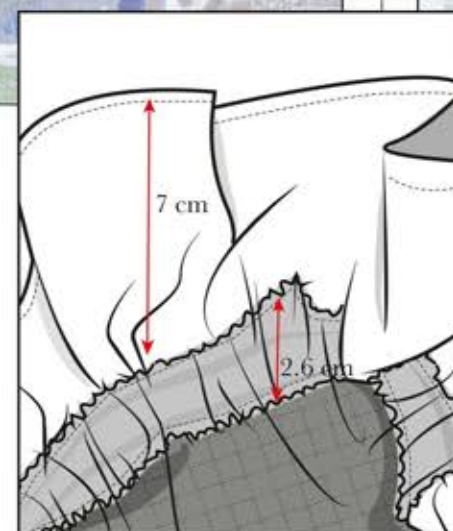
Layplan for bias cut pattern pieces (print placed diagonally)



Layplan for standard cut pattern pieces (print placed along the grain)



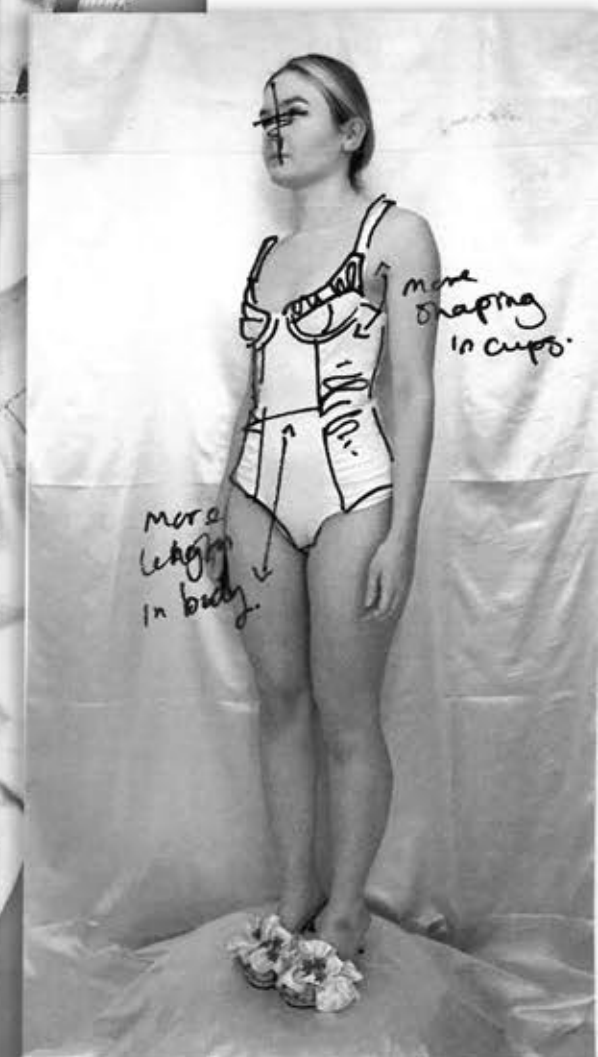
Inside detail of bound armhole and tulle inner sleeve

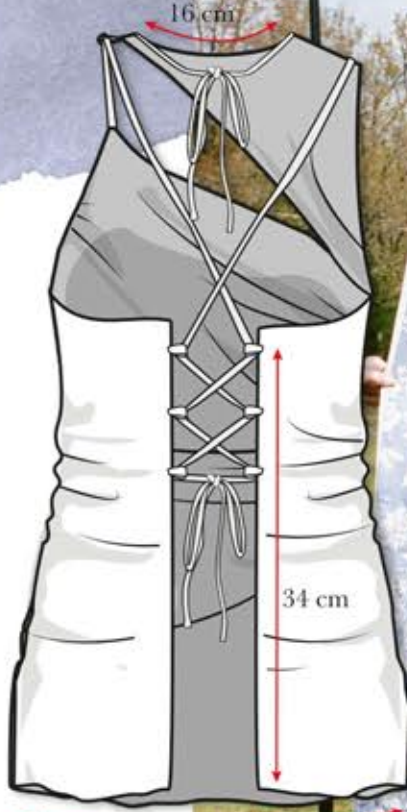
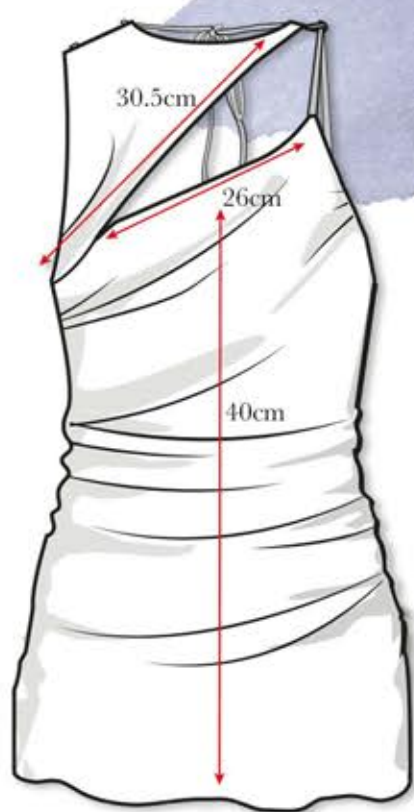


Sleeve cuff detail of elastic channel and tulle inner sleeve

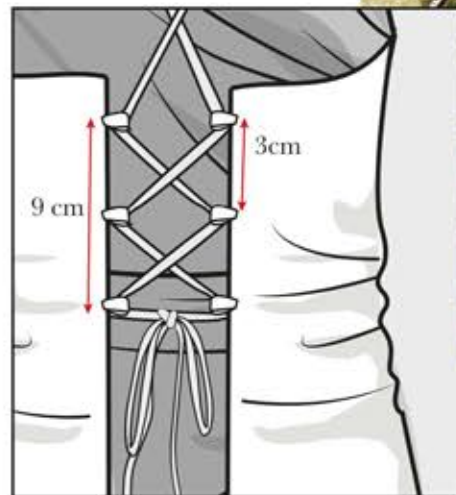


Rouched detail Bodysuit
In pink velvet





High neck lace up top
front and back view

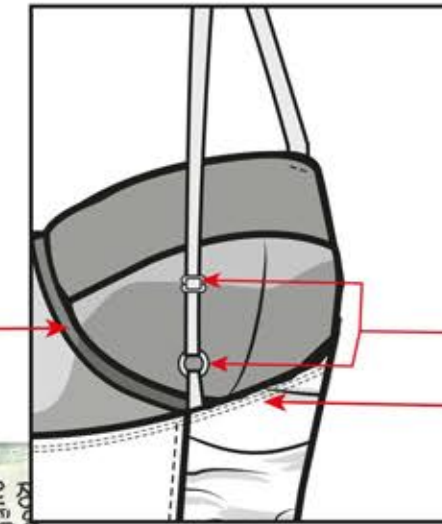


Details of lace up
silky top back view



DOUBLE COVER STITCH
1cm FROM EDGE

1.2cm lilac
underwire casing



Strap details

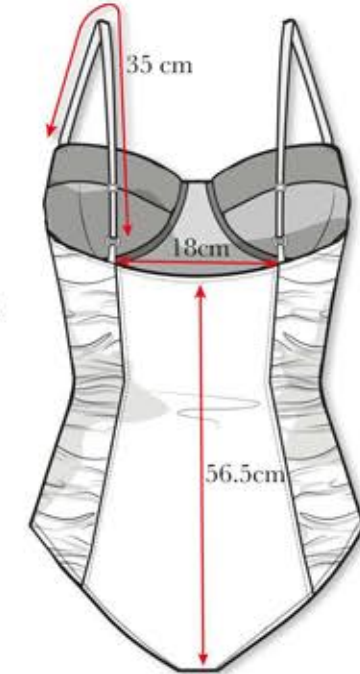
1cm Pale blue
metal lingerie trims



Double coverstitch
0.5cm from edge

1cm Pale blue
satin strap

Underwire velvet bodysuit
front and back view



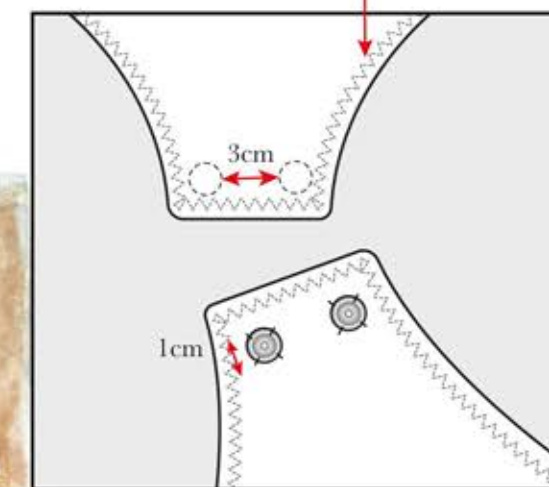
OVERLOCK
SEAM +
POWER-M

BODYSUIT FINISHING
SAMPLES

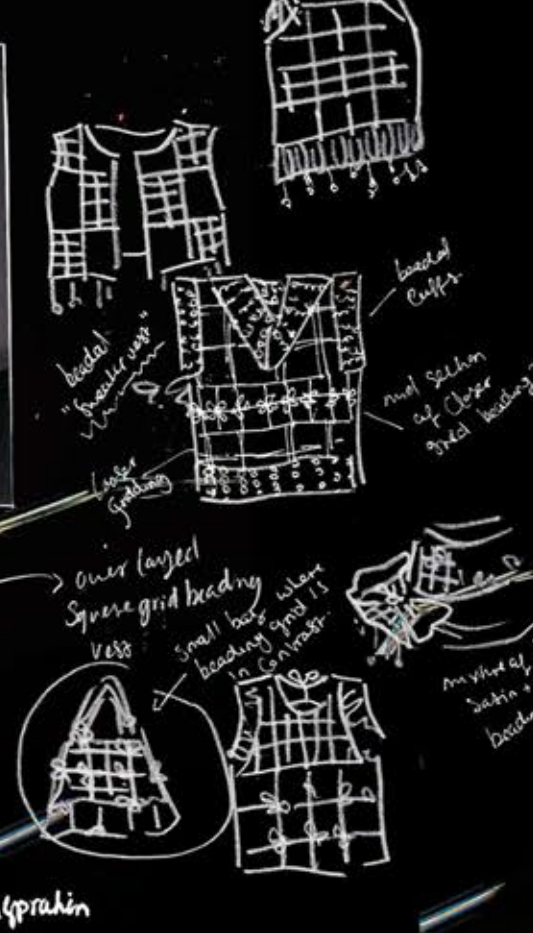
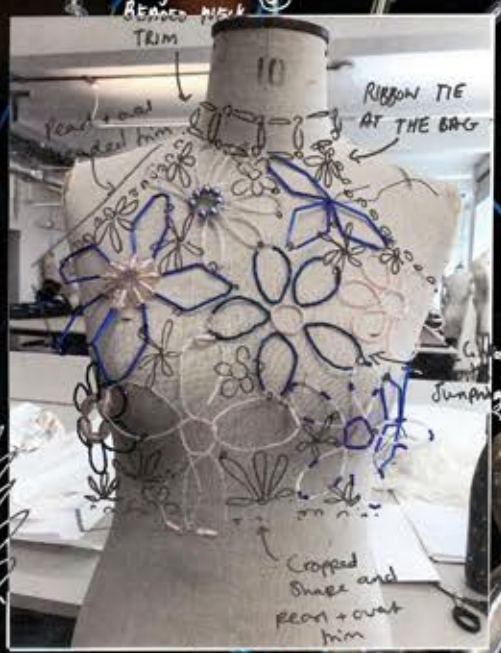
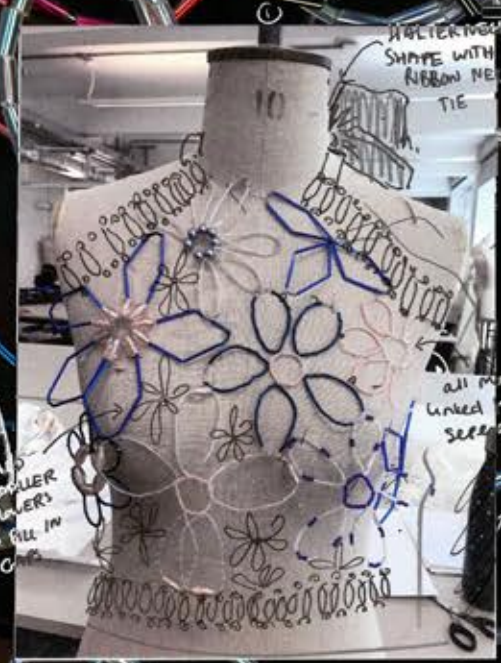


SINGLE COVER STITCH
0.5cm FROM EDGE

0.5 cm zig zag
stitching



Crotch detail on velvet underwire
bodysuit



not making multisized jewelry

beaded accessory inspiration
floral beading overlaid with beaded grid
this could be a necklace



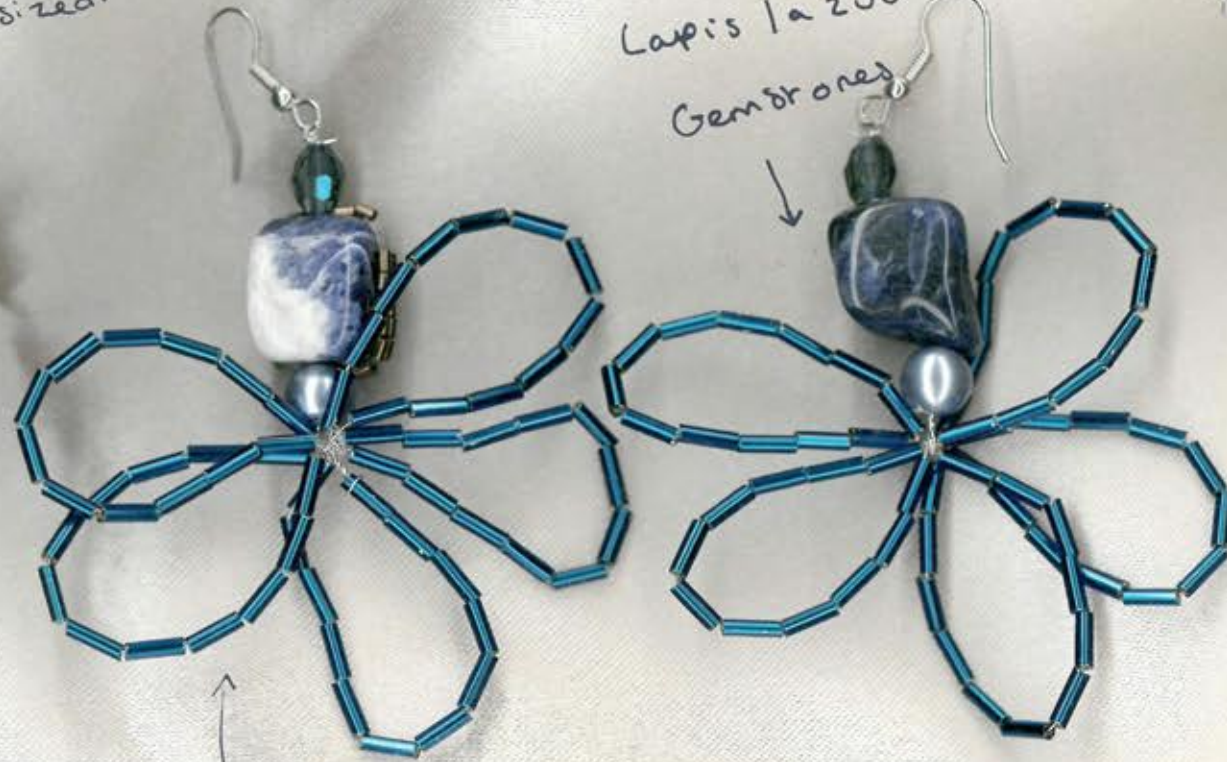
Abstract
Navy wine and
cream Pearl



Could make this
oversized.

Jewelry
testing and
sampling.

Lapis lazuli
Gemstones



Add more
diamond
drops



Faux Coral and
diamond drop
earrings.

Double drop
hot pink
earring



Coral + Pearl
Coral linked
findings.

Metallic
blue bugle
floral
monif

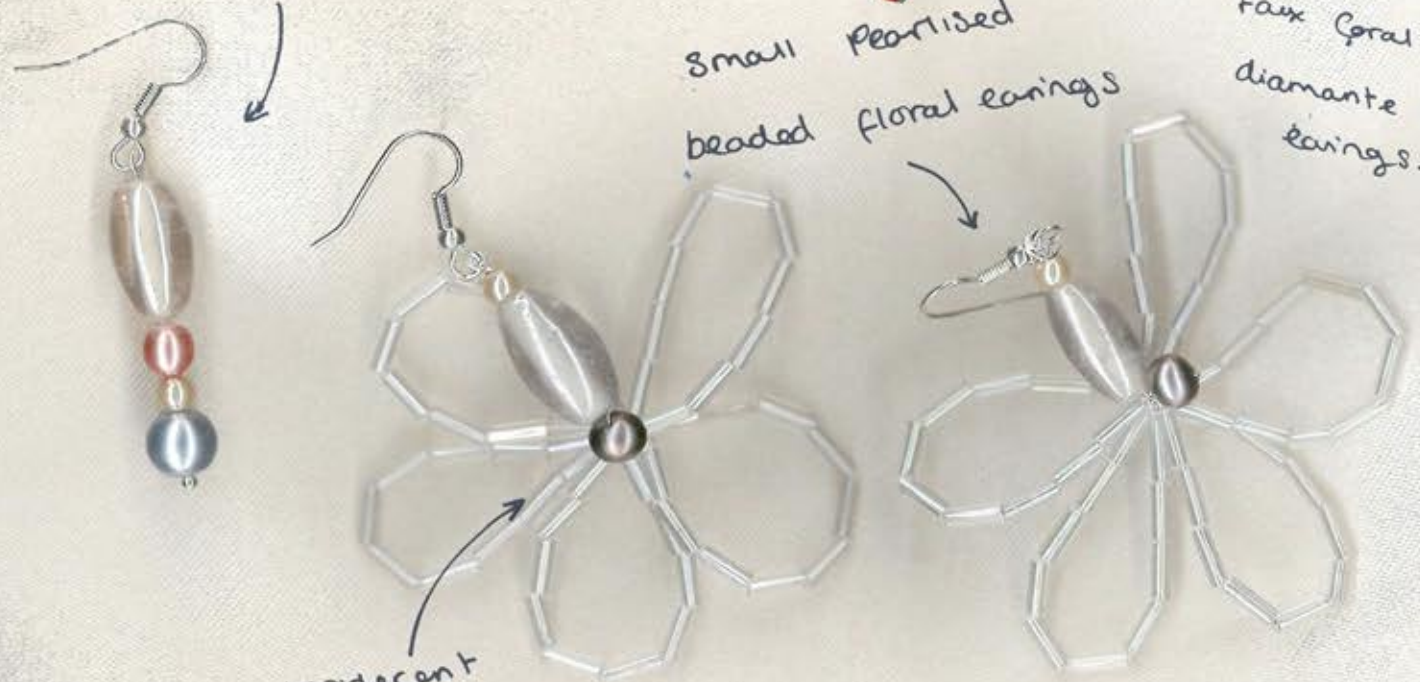
Missmatched
Pearl and Coral
drop earrings.



make longer

Small Pearlised
beaded floral earrings

Irridescent
dark fresh
water Pearl
Centre





lion over wh
ally understa
from another
teen Mary



DARK NAVY
+ BLACK ON
COTTON
POPLIN

An important element in tribal dress, which I believe still impacts the Nigerian fashion system as a whole, is the use of traditional textiles. Their ability to give hints to the identity of those that wear them and to demonstrate a pride in one's own culture mean that despite the techniques of manufacture being generations old, they still remain very popular today.



ESPRESSO BROWN
ON SILK ORGANZA



BLACK ON
SILK ORGANZA



DARK NAVY
ON SILK SATIN



SILK SATIN
WITH EMBELLISH-
MENT



POWDER BLUE
ON SILK ORGANZA



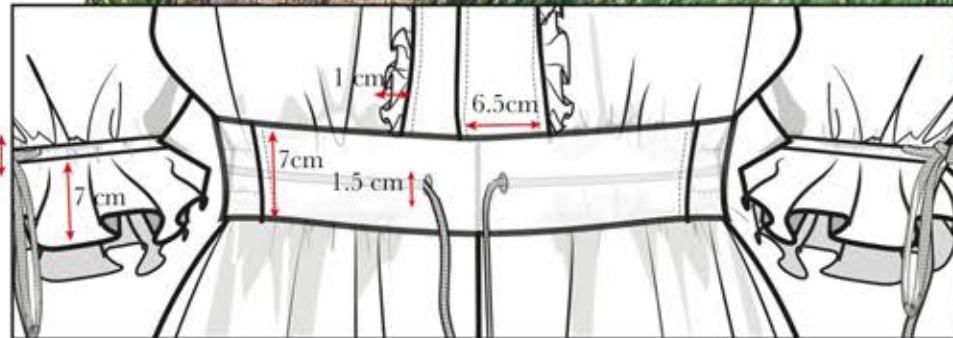
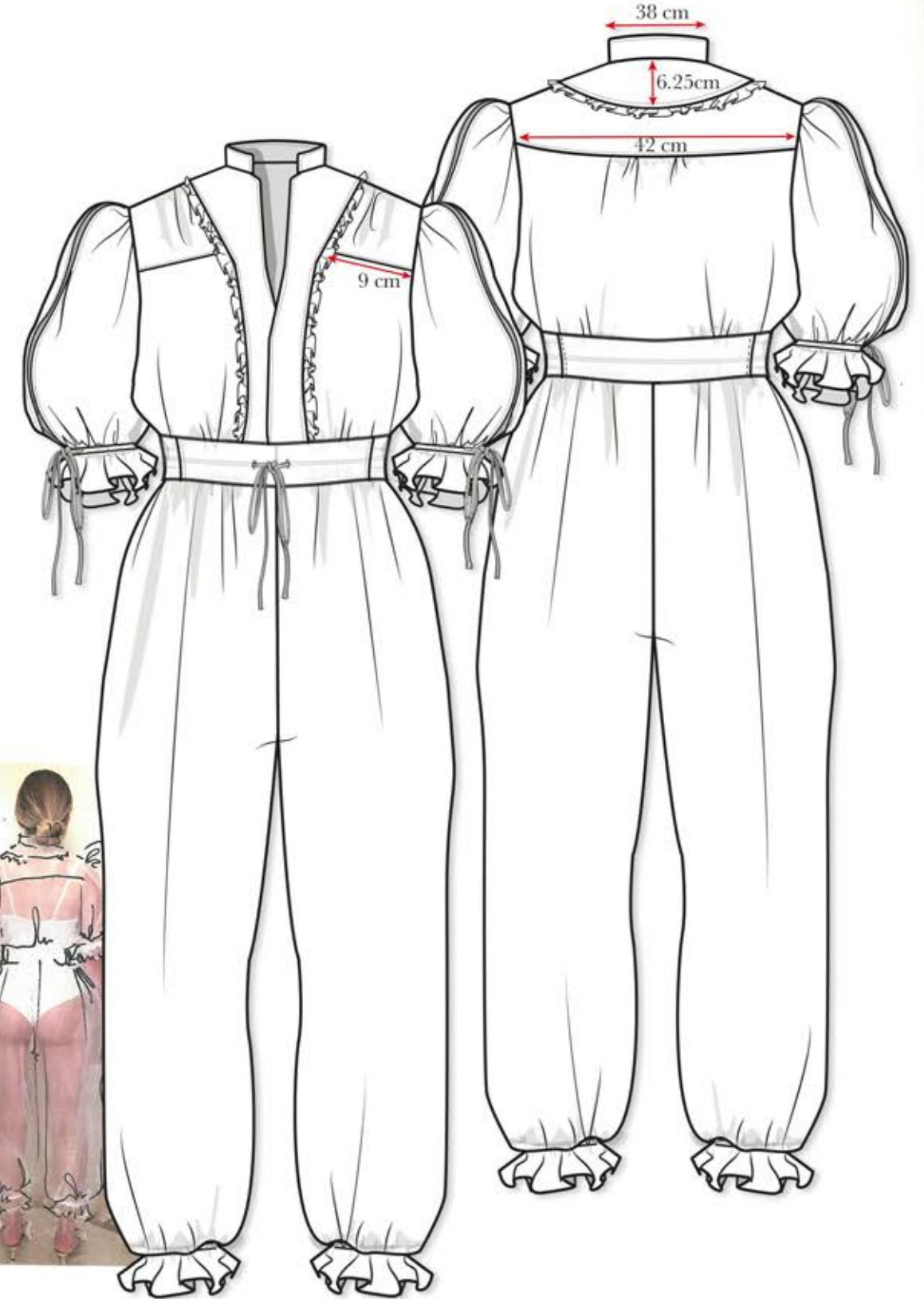
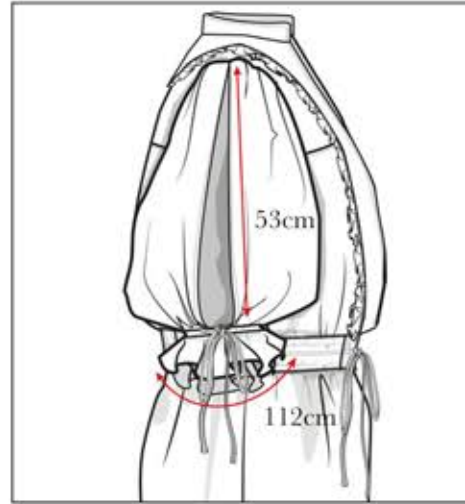
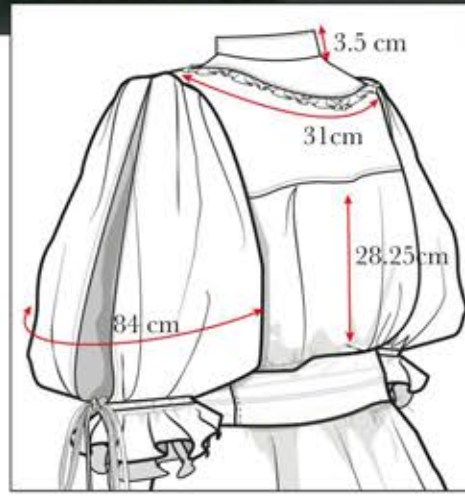


experiments draping with Biba - looking at hemlines, fabric and Seve ideas

help me to figure out the next steps



Look 2







-PRE-SHOOT STYLING
05/05/21.

