

## Coal religion

This concept is inspired by the coal mining strikes in 1984/85, and is a collection centred around identity, rebellion, and strength. The concept originated from research into my heritage, with my great grandfather once being a coal miner in the Welsh Valleys. It began with visual research into the coal mines in Rhondda, and led me to investigate why coal mining ceased in the 80's. Coal miners all over the United Kingdom protested with industrial action to oppose the closure of collieries. The closures meant that working-class families would lose their only source of income, and this was caused by Margaret Thatcher. Dubbed the 'Iron Lady', Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative government opposed the strike, believing trade unions to be harmful organisations, and wanted to reduce their power. This led to mass protests, thousands of arrests for violence and breach of the peace and eventual imprisonment. In the end, coal mines were shut down. The concept was important to highlight as I wanted to honour the bravery and solidarity of coal miners in the UK who were fighting for their livelihoods, and protecting their families. Strong visuals of coal mining towers came through in this collection that developed into a complex interwoven irregular print, as I wanted to highlight the reason for rebellion in the first place. The collection has powerful visuals of oversized elements to help hint to the strength of the protestors, while also using black to represent coal and colour extremes like red and blue to help give contrast – as there was contrast between the views of the government and the working-class miners. Tufting was used to give a slight hint to violence, which give a nod to the ripping and pulling of garments by police officers during the protests and also to the working-class garments worn by families during this time. Garments would be fraying and worn, but I have chosen to look into the beauty of that. I did not want obvious links to this, hence why I created a check pattern to compliment the complexity of my print – which all links back to the complexity of the social structure during the coal mining strikes.























