

Qué Bonita: A Remarkable Story of Family, Structure, and Love

HONORS THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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1.1.1 Proposal summary

Traditional bridal wear is often described as white dresses made for women to wear on the day they marry a man to become a wife. This description does not include the many different social identities and cultural variations that people inhabit. Today brides are not just looking for dresses or even white garments: today people are looking for a special outfit to marry the person they love whether that be a man or woman: they are looking for an outfit that will make them feel special and beautiful.

Through the use of practiced disruptive design techniques, I aim to transform the bridal industry into a space that's inclusive and empowering to both people and the environment, starting with the way we view ourselves and society's definition of beauty by drawing inspiration from culture.

Through my inspiration from Mexico, the Catholic Church, their heritage, and spectacle, this collection will make people feel special, important, and confident. It will allow them to love themselves as they start a new chapter in their lives. As an esteemed bridal designer, Vera Wang once said, "It's not just another dress, It's the dress you'll remember forever" (Wang).

2.1.1 Design Philosophy:

I aim to design with the allure of glamor and awe. The collection is inspired by my life experience at the intersection of the Catholic Church and Mexican culture.

My ambition for the collection is to demonstrate that bridal design is an art form that speaks to the fantasy of fashion at the highest level of luxury and haute couture. This collection is very personal to me: I want to honor both my cultural background and the broader culture of Mexico by creating a collection that is not only a work of art but also creates a space of Latina representation in fashion that as a young girl I wished existed for me.

3.1.1 Table of Contents

1.1.1 Proposal Summary	2
2.1.1 Design Philosophy	3
3.1.1 Table of Contents	4
4.1.1 Objectives	7
4.1.2 Project Schedule	8
5.1.1 Muses	9
5.1.2 Muse One	9
5.1.3 Muse Two	12
5.1.4 Muse Three	16
5.1.4a The Power of Dress	17
6.1.1 Definitions	19
6.1.2 Color Story	21
6.1.3 Fabric Selection	23
7.1.1 Target Consumer	26
7.1.2 Demographics	26
7.1.3 Psychographics	27
7.1.4 Sustainability	28
7.1.5 Inclusion Statement	29
8.1.1 The Creative Process Continuum	30
8.1.2 Eureka Moment	30

8.1.3 Breaking Down The Problem	33
8.1.3a Part One: History Of Bridal Design	33
8.1.3b Part Two: What makes a fashion collection 'remarkable'	35
8.1.4 Thematic References	37
8.1.5 Conceptualizing Design Ideations	40
8.1.6 Initial Criticisms of Project	46
8.1.7 Develop Ideas Further	46
8.1.8 Test Ideas in Textiles/Materials (Swatches)	48
8.1.9 Explain Ideations	50
8.1.10 Accessories	58
8.1.10a Veils	58
8.1.10b Jewelry	63
9.1.1 Style and Photography	65
9.1.2 Presentation One	65
9.1.3 Presentation Two	66
10.1.1 Detail a Production Plan	68
10.1.2 Tech Packs	68

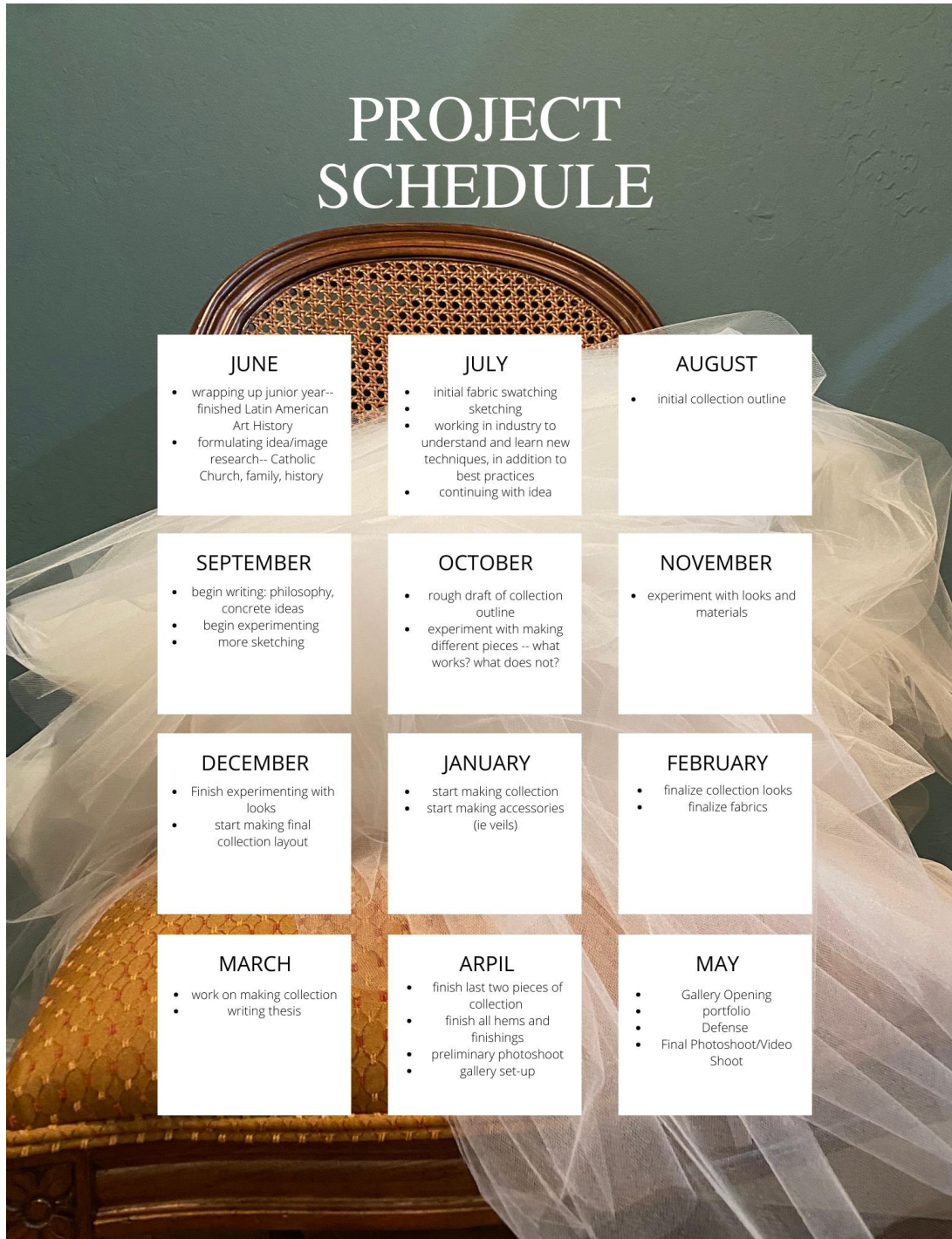
10.1.3 Ethical Statement	75
11.1.1 Detail Marketing Plan	
11.1.2 Costing	
11.1.3 Social Media	79
11.1.4 E-commerce opportunities	80
11.1.5 Cross-hemisphere merchandise types	80
12.1.1 Conclusion	81
13.1.1 Acknowledgments	81
14.1.1 Referenced Materials	82
15.1.1 Appendices	85

4.1.1 Objectives

Upon completion of the thesis project, I will have gained an understanding of:

- the importance of research
- my family history
- my design development process
- the process of trial and error within the design process
- How to write a thesis design report
- how to produce a collection of eight professionally made looks using bridal and haute couture techniques
- how to appreciate a culture without appropriating it
- how to tell a story through design about the beauty of family and culture

4.1.2 Project Schedule



5.1.1 The Muses

5.1.2 Muse One: The Catholic Church

Romans 13:8: *Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

Love, peace, compassion, and reconciliation are a few of the values institutionalized by the Catholic Church. Infused with beliefs from the bible and tradition, the Catholic Church is one of the largest Christian denominations in the world and has an intense effect on the Western world-spanning ruling governments to architecture.

The Catholic religion is strictly hierarchically, structured with the Pope in Rome presiding over cardinals, who in turn preside over archbishops. Archbishops lead archdioceses which are split into parishes led by priests who interact directly with worshipers. The religion follows strict tradition- with only men allowed to enter the priesthood and women serving as nuns. The congregation of the Church has a goal of following and participating in the seven sacraments throughout their lives, one of which is matrimony.

During the Middle Ages, the papacy began to gain authority over the church. Missionaries worked to expand the faith beyond geographic boundaries. The largest most dramatic and violent mission was the Crusades (McKenzie). Christian learning began to be incorporated within schools, with cathedral schools replacing monasteries which became universities (McKenzie). By the 10th century, the institution of Catholicism had been planted and the emergence of theology began (McKenzie). Themes included the idea of God, humanity, the world, salvation, the divine, worship, and the study of the last times. Marked by decay and corruption, the 10th century marked a time of decadence for the Catholic Church which became

one of the wealthiest entities of the Middle Ages. By the 11th century around the year 1000, many of the traditions still followed today had been established including the sacraments. Although the church was built on what was believed to be good values, those opposing them were viewed as heretics and faced severe punishment including death.

In the early 16th century, Mexico was conquered by the conquistadors, soldier-explorers, of Spain and allied countries led by Hernán Cortés. Alongside illness and death, the conquistadors brought the traditions of the Catholic Church (“Roman Catholicism - The Crusades | Britannica”) to Mexico. During the fall of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan modern-day Mexico City, the now-enslaved Aztec people were forced to build churches for the Spanish. The first cathedral was built on top of El Templo Mayor, a temple in Tenochtitlan dedicated to Tlaloc, the Aztec god of rain, and Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec Sun and War God and God of Tenochtitlan. This was one of the biggest sites for worship in the Aztec culture. (Cohen-Aponte)



Figure 1. Part of El Templo Mayor Ruins with a back



Figure 2. Front view of Mexico City Cathedral

Due to the many similarities between the Catholic saints and the Mesoamerican gods, the conversion of people came fairly easy especially due to the fact that the place of worship remained the same. There are even folklore tales of underground tunnels connecting the Cathedral with one of the pyramids of the temple. This mix of religions was the start of the Mexican Catholic church. Although architects for many of these buildings were Spanish, the craftsmen were Indian creating a new mestizo style combining architectural styles (Cohen-Aponte). These awe-inspiring spaces were the start of the inspiration for my collection.



Figure 3. Interior of the Church of San Francisco Acatepec, Puebla, MX



Figure 4. Exterior Cathedral Basilica de Zacatecas, Zacatecas, MX



Figure 5. Interior of Cathedral de Puebla, Puebla, MX

5.1.3 Muse Two: Mexican Heritage



Figure 6. My maternal grandmother in her beloved garden

My grandparents immigrated from the state of Jalisco in Mexico in 1960. They moved to Vacaville, California, a small farming town, now best known as a pit stop on the way to the world-class ski destination of Lake Tahoe. They raised a family of ten on a ranch on Rogerslane, a street that became formative in many of the lives of their children. Both of my grandparents worked in the apricot and peach orchards in the Northern California area near Fairfield. In addition to strictly following the beliefs of the Catholic Church, my grandmother was extremely superstitious. She infused fantasy to me at a young age through both the stories of the church and Mexican fairy tales. I was told to never get my palm read because God's plan was the only plan.

To say the sign of the cross whenever passing a cemetery is a way to pray for those lives. To care for the flowers like one would care for people. The idea and sanctity of life heavily influenced culture and religion in much of Mexican culture and certainly in my family.

Upon moving from the ranch to their first home, my grandfather built my grandmother a garden; it was a child's fantasy land of cactus, pomegranates, apples, oranges, kumquats, figs, peaches. The garden wrapped around the small one-story family home and my grandmother was always found somewhere hidden among the flowers and the fruits with her second children— her canaries. The birdcage sat in the center of the garden, next to two chairs under the apple tree and a large cross. As a little girl, I'd sit there with my grandmother in between playing hide and seek, scared to touch the cactus plant around the corner. She was the head of a strong matriarchy, followed by my mom, aunts, and older cousins, that shaped my family and the culture of my childhood.

Although my Spanish was never strong, I felt like we had our own language. I always understood what she said, "Mi Bonita".



Figure 7. My grandmother eating while continuously tending to her garden

Although we never fully celebrated the Day of Dead or Día de Los Muertos, we followed many of the beliefs attached to the holiday. The holiday was a blend of Mesoamerican, European, and Spanish cultures. The tradition spawned from ‘All Souls Day’ a pagan celebration that the Roman Catholic Church adopted in Mexico as a way to blend cultures. Medieval Spain celebrated all Souls Day, bringing wine and pan de animas to the graves of loved ones in addition to flowers and candles. Conquistadores carried these traditions with them, aligning them with similar beliefs of ancient Mexican cultures. There are debates as to whether the holiday was endorsed by the Church to aid in the blending of culture or was celebrated by the Mexican people as a way to regain their cultural roots separating away from the church. The Aztec and Nahua people of ancient Mexico believed in a cyclical view of the universe and saw death as an integral, ever-present part of life. My grandmother had a similar belief of life and death, although the holiday did not become popular in Western American Culture until recently. Children's films such as

Disney's *Coco* and 20th Century Films *The Book of Life* explore the holiday and its importance in Mexican culture.

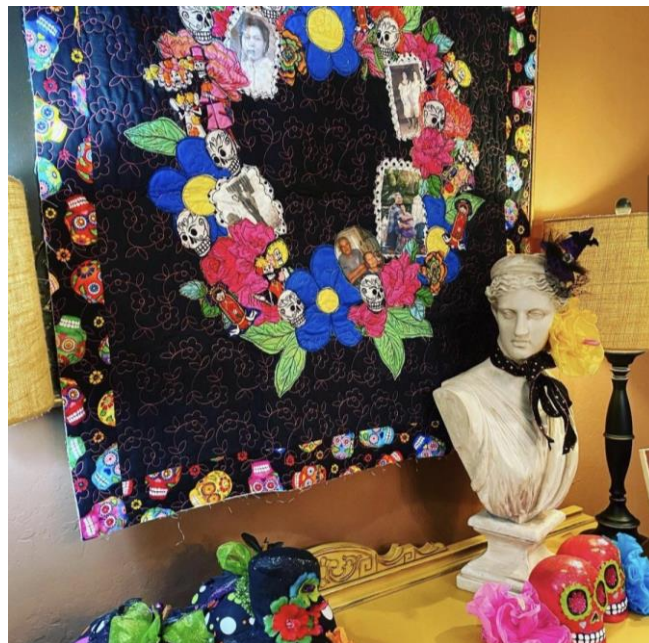


Figure 8. Day of the Dead Art Quilt by Sandi daRoza, my mom, on an altar for the Day of the Dead within our family home

5.1.4 Muse Three: Family Heritage



Figure 9. My baptism, the first Holy Sacrament of the Catholic Church (From left to right: dad, maternal grandmother, my paternal uncle and godfather, my maternal aunt and godmother, mom, me, paternal great uncle and priest, maternal grandfather, and paternal grandmother)

As a predominantly Mexican-Catholic family, we attended mass every Sunday with my family and spent hours gazing into the beauty of the stained glass windows and never-ending columns. My knees would hurt from kneeling while viewing at the elaborate altars filled with candles and flowers.

We said grace at dinner. Attended events at our Church. Celebrated every religious holiday. The Catholic religion became a fundamental pillar of my childhood.

Drawing upon this background my collection will highlight an intersection of culture, beauty, and representation. I plan to incorporate different aspects of hand and design work inspired by my Mexican Catholic heritage into my collection.

5.1.4a The Power of a Dress

The importance of a dress or piece of clothing can change one's perspective, it can encourage importance and confidence. It can become a part of one's family history. Designers hold the power to break down barriers by creating a lens through which others can see the world. As someone who strives to make others feel seen and special, I intend to create a lens to improve humanity by disrupting design within the bridal industry. Through this change, we as designers have the power to make people of all identities feel important and confident in themselves, similar to the way my grandmother felt when putting on her white dress.

After joining the Mexican Military Services with his brother to support their family, my grandfather traveled throughout Mexico. In 1953, while still in the military, he traveled to Sayula, Jalisco, a larger town in the area hosting a festival.

My grandmother, after enduring a dark childhood with the loss of her mother and an abusive father, spent most of her time with her maternal grandmother. My great-great-grandmother spent much of her time sewing and helping prepare for their town's festival in Sayula. For the festival, she made my grandmother a white dress with embroidery all along the edges and insisted she attend the event. My grandmother refused. Being twenty-five years old at the time in 1953, she felt out of place and like an 'old maid'.

After some persuasion, my grandmother, put on this special white long sleeved mid-length dress and attended the festival with her girlfriends. Although she wanted nothing to do with strangers, that day she met a traveling soldier, my grandfather.



Figure 10. My grandparents upon meeting

6.1.1 Definitions

The modern trend of wearing white to one's wedding began in 1840 when Queen Victoria wed Prince Albert. Prior to this brides often wore their most expensive dress which was often of a dark color so that it would not dirty as easily as white would. The white trend has stayed fairly steady over the last century with few expectations, one being the period of World War II. Due to fabric shortages, some brides resorted to creating gowns out of their future husband's parachutes (Yellin). However, in the United States, the American Association of Bridal Manufacturers lobbied against fabric shortages. They stated in 1943, "American boys are going off to war and what are they fighting for except the privilege of getting married in a traditional way? They're fighting for our way of life, and this is part of our way of life" (Schoeny).

I chose to stick mostly to the white color family including some bright whites, and ivories for the collection.



Figure 11. Color Inspiration: Queen Victoria's wedding dress

I had a difficult time choosing to just do white looks, as I felt that the Mexican Catholic culture is so colorful and full of life while white symbolizes prosperity and virginity. White felt stiff in comparison to the fluid colors I felt were representative of Mexican culture. I choose to incorporate color through accessories and styling choices so I could incorporate my inspiration from the Mexican Catholic culture while still incorporating some aspects of traditional bridal wear.



Figure 12. Color Inspiration:
photo of a table in Sayulita, MX and
color inspiration



Figure 13. Use of
colors in accessories



Figure 14. Colors in Jewelry

6.1.2 Color Story



Chart 1. The color palette is inspired by traditional bridal wear, and the colors of Mexico and Cathedrals

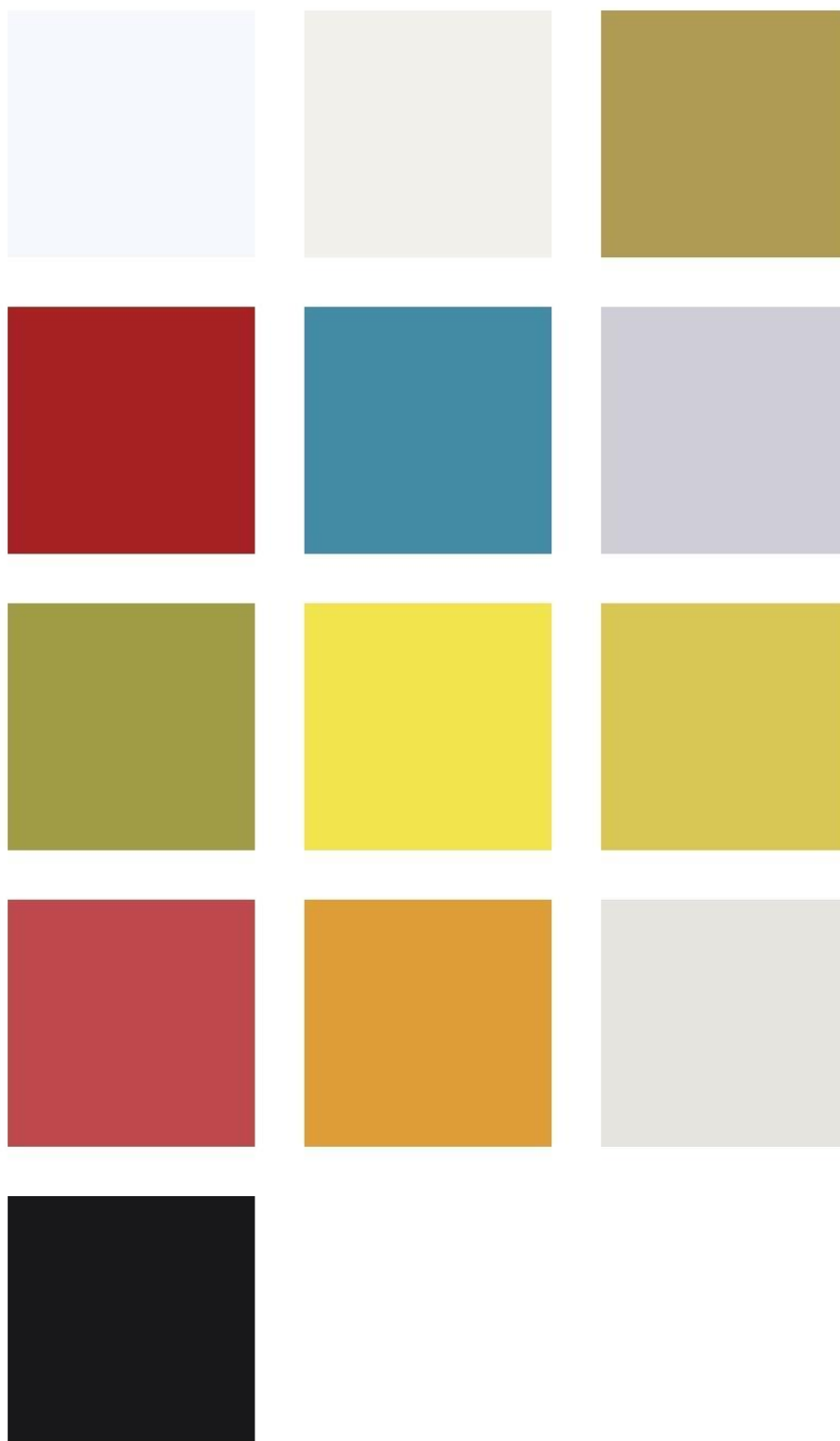
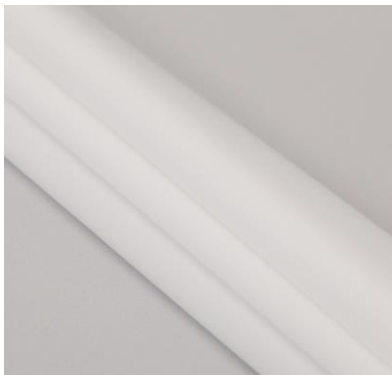


Chart 2. Pantone Colors for Accessories including veils and jewelry

6.1.3 Fabric Selection



Double Faced Polyester
Georgette

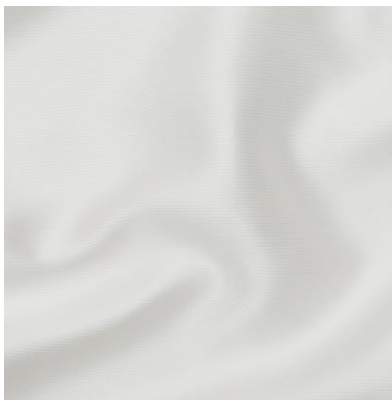
Mood Fabrics \$7 a yard
Gul Ahmed Fabrics INC \$6 a
yard



Polyester Silk Mikado
Exclusive Fabrics
\$10 a yard



Ivory Silk Charmeuse
Mood Fabrics \$37



White Silk Charmeuse
Mood Fabrics \$37



Ivory Silk Taffeta
Mood Fabrics
\$32 a yard



Silk Twill
Mood Fabrics
\$18 a yard



Ivory and Gold Floral Lace
Britex Fabrics
\$275 a yard



White Corded Lace
Britex Fabrics
\$55 a yard



Ivory Tulle
Britex Fabrics
\$3.49



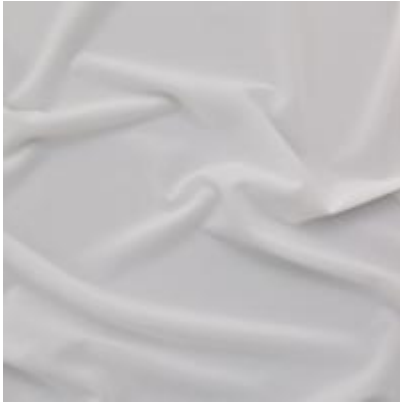
White Tulle
Britex Fabrics
\$3.49



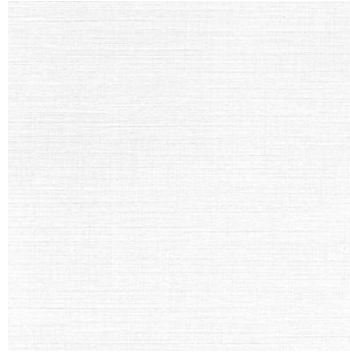
Soft Tulle
B& J Fabrics
\$33 a yard



Mesh
Spandex World
\$6 a yard



Silk Lining
New Star Fabrics INC \$13 a
yard



White Linen
JoAnn's Fabrics
\$9.99 a yard

Chart 3. Fabrics used in Final Collection

7.1.1 Target consumer

My client is chic and elegant but also dramatic. They are knowledgeable about the fashion industry and looking for a piece that will become a family heirloom, not just another wasteful garment in this world. They are a bride who draws an allure of glamour and awe.

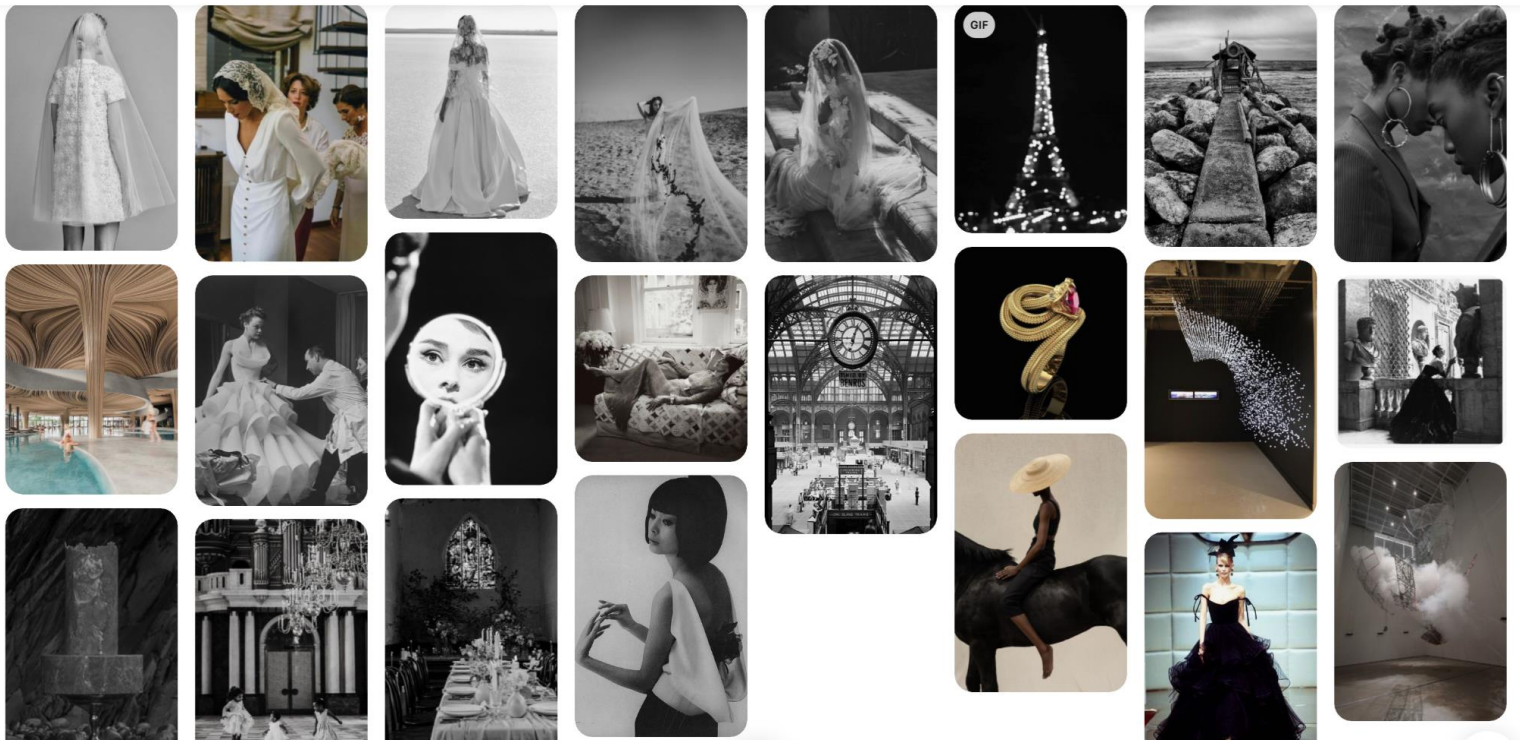


Figure 15. My Bride/ My Client

7.1.2 Demographics

Emelia is a twenty-six-year-old woman living in a two-bedroom walk-up apartment in Chelsea, New York City, with her college best friend. Emelia, also known as Emmy or Em to close friends and family, is from the suburbs of Boston where her large Hispanic Mexican- Irish

family call home. She has two sisters, one older and one younger, followed by many cousins, aunts, and uncles. She is very close with both her mom and grandmother on both sides of the family. While visiting home, she enjoys spending time with her whole family, especially during dinner time when her dad cooks. Although she loves her family, she is a very independent person and enjoyed moving away from home. She works as an architect at OMA, a renowned international architectural firm in the New York City offices, where she makes upward of \$90K a year. Her job allows her to travel both domestically and internationally where she has made some of the best memories and met even better people. Although she loves it, she dreams of one day opening her own boutique firm with a focus on wellness spaces including spas, resorts, and restaurants.

7.1.3 Psychographics

In her free time, Emmy loves a good fitness class. Yoga, spin, barre she does it all when she gets the chance. She believes taking time to empower the mind and self-care should be a priority in one's life. At night she loves to go out with friends to their favorite speakeasy, Bathtub Gin, down the street from her apartment. On the weekends, she enjoys attending the latest art gallery openings with her roommate, Annie, who works at Christie's, or checking out the newest brunch spot. Emmy has the gift of finding the best hole-in-the-wall places in any city she is in and loves finding new ones. She values genuine friendships like the ones she has with her college friends and works colleagues. Although she has social media— Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Twitter, VSCO, and Pinterest— she is not the best at using it as she tries to only post genuine moments yet those are always the moments she is not on her phone.

Emmy has a very particular taste and a special eye for real quality pieces. She truly tries to have “quality versus quantity” in all aspects of her life, especially in her fashion sense. She

stays updated with the latest in the fashion industry following accounts like New York Times Fashion, Vogue, and DietPrada. She also follows some of her favorite designers including Gucci, Manolo Blahnik, Valentino, Stella McCartney. She does not feel compelled to follow all of the micro-trends, really staying true to who she is.

Emmy met her fiancé, Josh, on a very casual Wednesday night after work. Emmy and her friends had all decided to stop off at Bathtub Gin on their way home from work after a long day. On the way back from the bathroom she accidentally bumped into a table with a group of guys. Upon apologizing, her friend's table moved next to this group of guys where the groups spent the rest of the night. She'd been with Josh ever since that night two years ago. He recently proposed to her during one of their date nights: he left the table to go to the bathroom and on the way back pretended to trip getting back into the table where he landed down on one knee and with a ring in Emmy's lap. He proposed with his grandmother's beautiful vintage emerald and diamond ring, a dream ring.

They are planning a late Spring/early Summer wedding at the end of May at the Boston Public Library. Emmy has registry accounts with bridal companies like Over the Moon and has been following The Lane, Brides Magazine, and VogueBrides to plan her perfect wedding. She has been looking at some dresses and accessories designed by Santo Costa, Danielle Frankel, Monvieve, Lili Hod, and Liz Martinez.

7.1.4 Sustainability comment

One dress for one day for one moment in one's life. It sounds like the definition of unsustainability. However, each dress is made with the finest Haute Couture techniques that can last a lifetime. They become not only a 'dress' but an heirloom that can pass down from generation to generation— the fabric, the lace, embroidery, all aspects that can be removed and made into

something new or fitting of that time. Although much of the materials in the collection are new, many aspects were made from previous collections emphasizing the idea of wedding gowns being remade into something new whether that be another gown or something entirely new.

The second aspect of sustainability incorporated into the collection was trying to avoid, as much as budget allowed, using polyester or synthetic materials that could not decompose. All of the laces in the collection are cotton-based. With the exception of the polyester Mikado and polyester georgette, all other materials come from a natural fiber base.

7.1.5 Inclusion Statement

This collection is designed for anyone who desires to have an intimate moment with themselves. To feel beautiful and celebrate in one's skin. Although designed with the purpose of being for a wedding, that word has so many meanings. Any of the pieces in this collection could be worn in a Cathedral ceremony, a courthouse, or in one's backyard. These pieces are meant to make someone feel special as they start a new chapter in their life filled with love and happiness.

8.1.1 The Creative Process Continuum

8.1.2 Eureka Moment

“We are Catholic. It’s a sin. She wouldn’t, never ever.”

~Silvia Moreno-Garcia, *Mexican Gothic*, 152

Although, I grew up in a very religious household I often struggled with religion. My sister and I both attended a Jesuit high school, where many of the same values from my church-going childhood were reinforced upon us. We followed religion/religious classes, and participated in weekly mass; I even had to partake in a week-long silent religious retreat. The retreat is one of the biggest secrets amongst the student body of my high school and is known as Kairos. Almost the entire senior class goes on this retreat in different groups throughout the year, keeping the secret that it is a silent retreat. Once the retreat is over, you are sworn to keep the secrets of the retreat a secret for the next group to experience the ‘magic’, as some might call it, of the trip.

On coming to college, I abandoned much of my faith. Despite my high school experience as I got older, the strictness or imposition of belief began to fade. During my senior year of high school, my mom got sick, which pushed both my parents back towards the church, while my sister and I became more distant from it. The more important events of dance practice and school work overtook family dinners and attendance at mass. While the ideals and values of the religion lingered, many of the acts were long gone.

Sitting around in my family home during the pandemic, I was reminded of many of these small religious moments. The baptisms, the confirmations, the enormous family brunch that

occurred post mass. I re-discovered the many religious relics that remain in my family home—crosses, photos from various religious occasions, the rosary, and even the statue of Mother Mary in our garden all served as reminders of religion.



Figure 16. Virgin Mary and angels statue in the backyard of my family home

During this time at home, I picked up the novel *Mexican Gothic* by Mexican-Canadian author Silvia Moreno Garcia. The story centers around a twenty-something girl growing up in a wealthy religious family in Mexico. She fears her cousin's life is in danger within her new marriage, taking the story to a small mining town in Mexico. The family did not believe in fantasy, but in faith. With vivid imaginative illustrations, the imagery all felt too similar. The yellow canaries singing in the gardens, the crosses on the wall, the figurines of saints, and the love of family all reminded me of my family and my cultural history.

The story is set in the 1950s, a time when many questioned race, ethics, morals, and religion similarly to the time of 2020. As someone of mixed race, I never really felt part of one race or culture more than another. My family followed many practices of the Mexican, Chinese, and Portuguese cultures. I know the languages, the foods, the countries, the special holidays. Yet, I would not necessarily identify with any or one specific culture. The one main connector between my family culture is the Catholic religion.

Upon arriving back at school, I decided to take a Latin American Art history class where I fell in love with the history of Mexican culture. I saw so many connections between ancient Mexico and my life as a Mexican American. All of the imagery from the class in addition to my childhood background imagery came together to inform this larger picture of what my collection was to be.

Religion, race, art, culture, family, belief. I became so curious about what it all meant, what it all had to do with me. What was my family history, how does that intertwine with these beliefs, and where was the beauty in all of it? That is what my collection focuses on— finding the beauty in this long history of culture, art, and religion.

8.1.3 Breaking Down the Problem

8.1.3a Breaking Down the Problem part 1: History Of Bridal Design:

After working for a variety of different fashion companies, it became clear to me that there was a gap specifically in the bridal market. What is Bridal Design? Is it fashion designed for reality, based on fast fashion in the sense that those designs are being fit as a means to an end and mass-produced? Or is bridal design an art form that speaks to the fantasy of fashion design at the highest level of luxury and haute couture?

This collection questions where bridal design falls in the intersection of fast fashion and haute couture. The collection response will focus on the art and detail of bridal wear, with the goal of pushing the boundaries of “traditional” bridal wear. Incorporating wovens to create a remarkable ensemble, this collection will prove that bridal wear is an art form and worthy of fashion's critical taste.

Bridal wear, for too long, has been pushed aside by the fashion industry when it was once the pinnacle point of a fashion collection. Bridal wear often ended each runway show with the most dramatic moment, speaking to the connection between fashion and haute couture (Wischhover). “A moment of fantasy”, as Carmela Spinelli, the chair of SCAD’s fashion department described in an interview with writer Cheryl Wischhover for *Fashionista*.



Figure 17. Jean-Paul Gaultier
Fall 2017 Couture



Figure 19. Chanel Fall 2012
Couture



Figure 20. Christian Lacroix
Fall/Winter 2009

Fashion needs that moment again; it needs the allure of glamour and awe. In this post-pandemic world, people are craving glamour and the need to dress up (Maguire and Binkley).

As the end of the pandemic allows for more events to occur, brides are being introduced to a new era of what a wedding is. Many have had to downscale or cancel their original plans over the last few years, leaving the idea of extravagance out (Kambhampaty). With over a year of Zoom events and ceremonies, bridal wear has changed with the times. My bride is one who is aware of the cultural and sustainable implications of our new world. However, my bride is a person who wants a ‘fashion moment’ after succumbing to many of the pandemic trends. The pandemic changed the whole process of bridal wear starting with how to shop for a bridal dress. This familial, special moment was taken from a lot of brides who had to choose their closest one to two people to shop with or were forced to pick a gown virtually via a zoom appointment. Many forwent even buying a dress starting separate trends of pantsuits, minidresses, or bridal separates. Looking toward the future, I aim in this collection to bring those moments of glamor

back while still adhering to the trends of the current time. For years, the most esteemed fashion houses closed their runway shows with wedding gowns including Chanel, Guo Pei, Jean-Paul Gaultier, and many more. However, in the last few years, fashion has discarded this tradition of the “last bride”, either not showing a white gown at the end of the show or doing a completely separate show for bridal. Separating the two -- couture and bridal-- has created a gap and allowed the bridal design to fall out of fashion and into mass retailers. It is no longer necessary to create a ‘fashion moment’ as it was when bridal was included and recognized by the fashion industry as fashion. Brides today might buy a wedding gown from a catalog or online just as they would fast fashion.

My goal is to bridge the gap of bridal within the fashion industry while finding beauty within my cultural background and history.

8.1.3b Breaking Down the Problem part 2: What makes a fashion collection ‘remarkable’:

Remarkable, is defined by the Oxford dictionary as worthy of attention. For years fashion designers have created ‘remarkable’ collections. For example, Alessandro Michele’s Spring/Summer 2019 collection for Gucci created both fashion and music history within the show with a performance by Jane Birkin. Kerby Jean-Raymond’s Spring/Summer 2020 collection for Pyer Moss intertwined gospel, hip-hop, blues, and fashion. John Galliano’s spring/summer 1998 extravaganza collection for Dior did so. All of them included at least these five aspects that I have defined as making a remarkable collection:

1. **Fit:** Fit plays an incredibly important role in a collection. Even oversize pieces have an aspect of fit. This is where scale comes into play, does a skirt overpower the bodice? Does the bodice overpower the skirt? Is it tight around the bust? Maybe the garment is tight around the waist? Or maybe the garment is not tight at all? How does it interact with a model? Can he/she/they move in the garment?
2. **Mystery:** How does the body play with the sense of mystery and wonder embedded in the garment? Are the eyes saying something behind a veil or headpiece? Are there any aspects of delicacy that keep an audience on their toes? How does material usage aid in the aspects of mystery?
3. **Emotion:** A collection should evoke some sort of emotion; what should the audience be feeling upon watching the collection? Is the collection conveying a story? In this case, is it one of family and cultural heritage? How should the model feel while wearing the garment? Is it a happy emotion? Stoic? Does the audience feel affected? How does texture play into this? How does the concept convey this?
4. **Fun:** Does the audience want to see more? Is it exciting? Are the shapes new or done differently?
5. **Cohesion:** Is there a sense of flow? Does it make sense with the concept? Is there a clear connection? If not, was that done purposely?

8.1.4 Thematic Reference

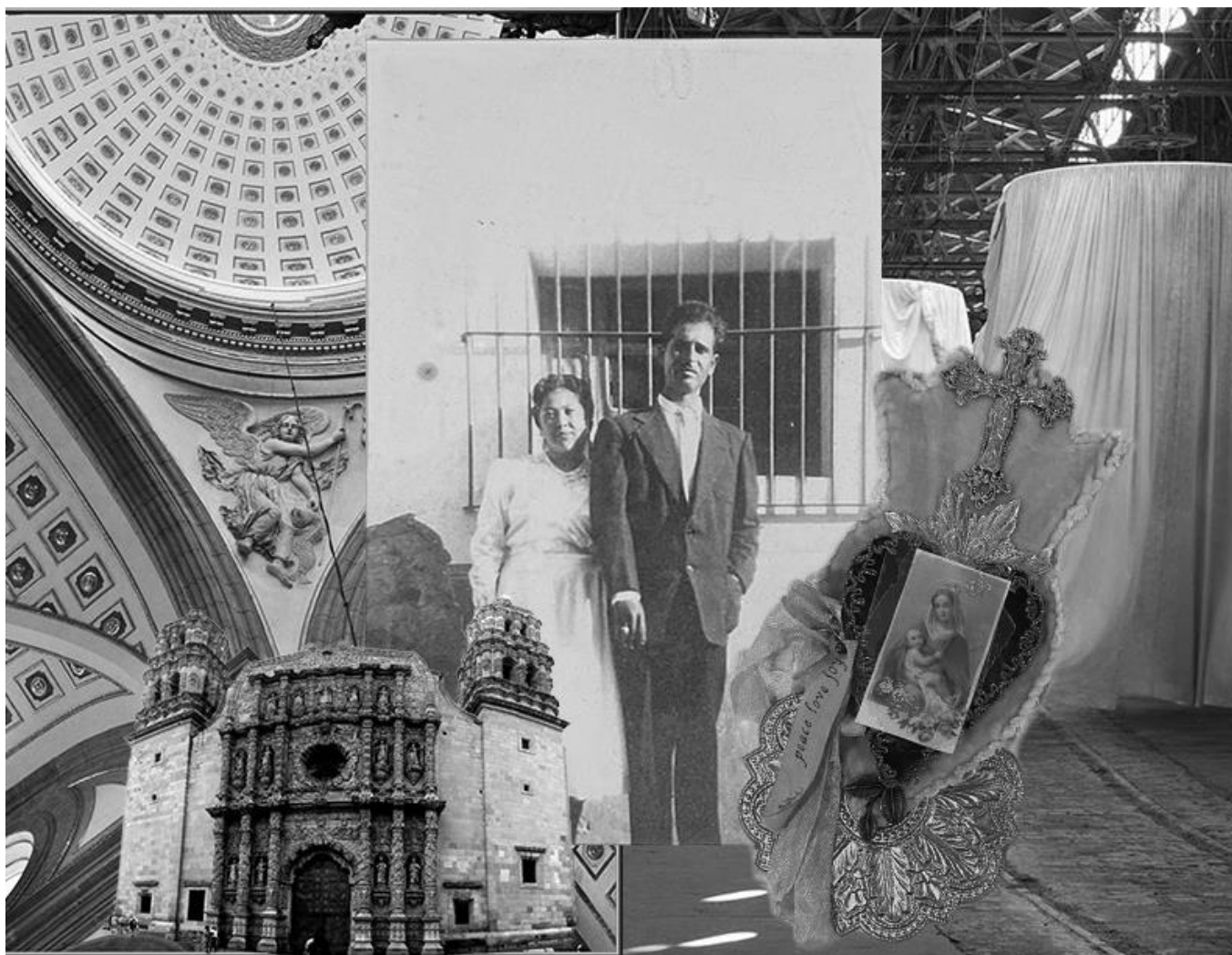


Figure 21. Mood Board One



Figure 22. Mood Board Two

My imagery research into references began with looking at Catholic Cathedrals all over Mexico. I focused on gothic architecture, tile, details, stone, color, and mostly the play of scale. I loved the dynamic of the huge open spaces with small intimate corners and rooms filled with artwork, stonework, and figurines. From here, I began looking into family imagery. I found old images of my grandparents allowing me to catch glimpses into their lives in Mexico and in California. I looked at images from baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and other family

gatherings. I then began using the many religious and cultural relics in my family home as references. This included rosaries, prayer cards, and statues.

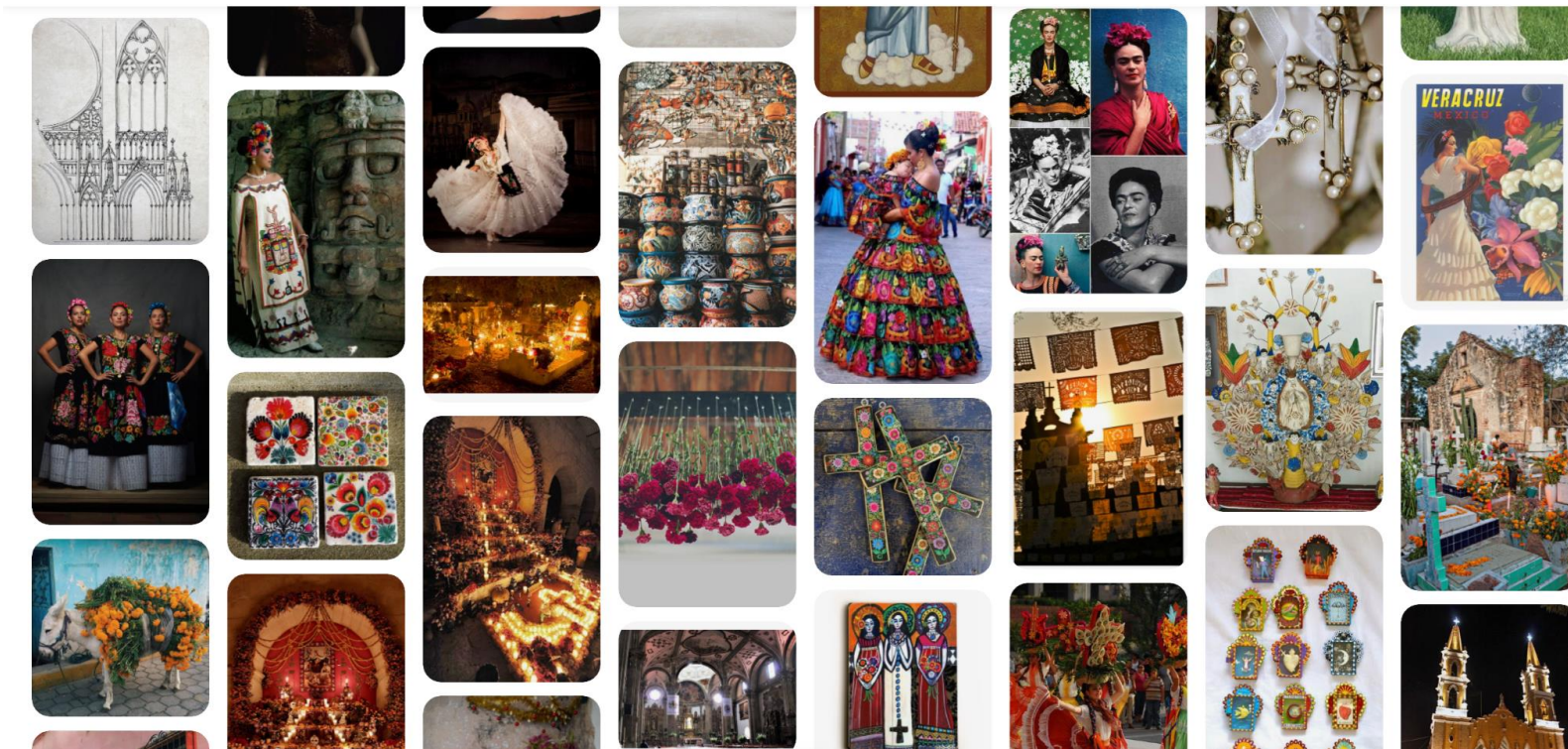


Figure 23. More Mexican and Religious Inspiration

Lastly, I referenced bridal trends including, but not limited to, cuts, necklines, styles, and material usage.



Figure 24. Bridal Trend Inspiration

8.1.5 Conceptualize Design Ideas

Using all of my research and inspiration boards, I began my design process by sketching on a dress form. This allowed me to conceptualize the front, side, and back of each look. I went through hundreds of sketches picking the top fifty, then the top twenty, then the top ten. I continuously edited drawings moving from drawing on dress forms to free-hand sketching. I started with an initial line-up all done by hand on the printed dress forms.

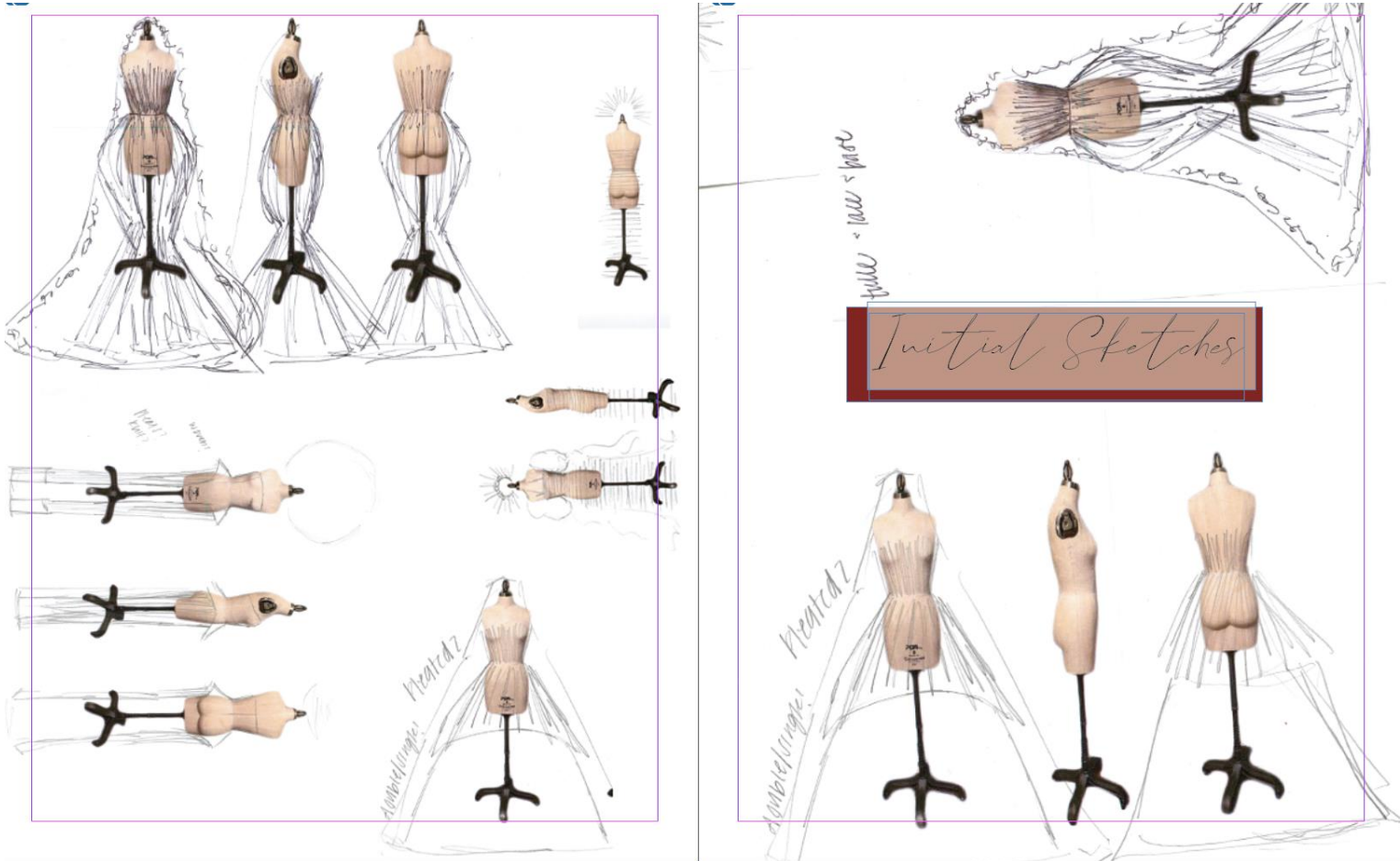


Figure 25. Initial Sketches

I found myself continuously drawing pieces with textured shapes. These ideas were among the first I explored in my design process. The design, a column dress with a textured top and sleeves, with a large cape in the back that fanned around the shoulders and neck, played with both scale and texture.



Figure 26. First Design Front



Figure 27. First Design Sleeve



Figure 28. First Design Back

In my next design, I continued to play with texture. I again started with a simple column dress and then began draping. I originally played around with cowl necks draping in both muslin and polyester silk. Due to a mistake of pinning, I landed on this interesting shape around the hips. The fabric moved with the body. I loved it. I tried recreating the shape in paper, muslin, and again with the silk. However, upon further analysis, the shape became more complicated to recreate and more difficult when I changed fabrics.



Figure 29. Second Initial Idea: Drapery

I moved back to working with cowl necks trying to recreate the aspects of movement and texture. I went back to designing a variety of cowl neck bodices. Cowl neck backs with boat neck fronts, front cowl necks with a back cowl neck and so on. I knew I wanted to design a suit in the collection and suddenly began playing with the idea of a cowl neck suit. I was curious on multiple levels about how to do this. The front needed structure to convey the shape of a suit and for the lapels, but the back needed drape for the cowl. I was intrigued. This design played with

fit, scale, movement, and even texture. My initial pattern was simple— take the front and back of a jacket pattern, but replace the top back with a low draping cowl. Keeping all of the original darts of a jacket, I made the pattern in muslin. Then the problems arose. What material would speak to the whole design? Do the darts work? Is it fitting tightly enough around the waist to support the structure and drape?



Figure 30. Original manipulation of darts

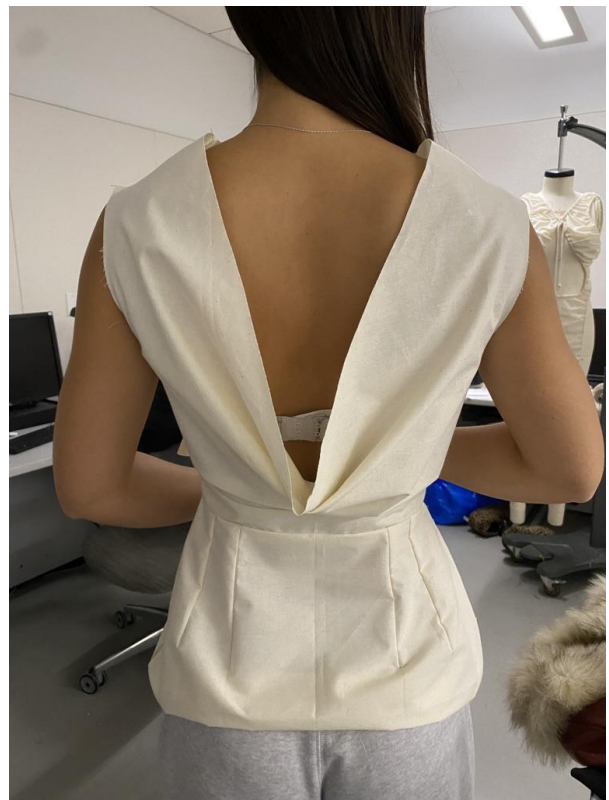


Figure 31. The original cowl

I tackled each problem in a particular order. I started with the fit, as this would affect the darts. I played with cutting the fabric on the bias and added a yoke to support the cowl. Then I

moved to the darts. This was a game of chess. Each new dart design affected the support of the cowl. I moved the original darts, to combine into a single bust dart and a fish eye dart. In the next rendition, I tried removing the bust dart completely to only have a fisheye dart. There continued to be slight fit problems around the curvature of the bust. I added the bust dart again, but this time curved the end of it so the dart would curve more around the bust. It worked. I then realized for the design and fit to fully work I could only have one front dart. I reworked the darts again for what felt like the fiftieth time. I kept the curvature of the bust dart but then shifted the bust dart to start closer to the waist to compensate for the excess caused by removing the fisheye dart. The final design contains an elongated front dart that fits perfectly around the chest and still supports the back. Due to this, the yoke's size and shapeshifted. The final yoke shape was a curved moon-like strip. This supported the cowl but allowed the jacket to sinch around the waist. I left the two back darts for a better fit around the hips.

This was the beginning of the draft of my final lineup. I included all of the exploration designs I had begun and developed other designs based on inspiration and how the collection was forming.

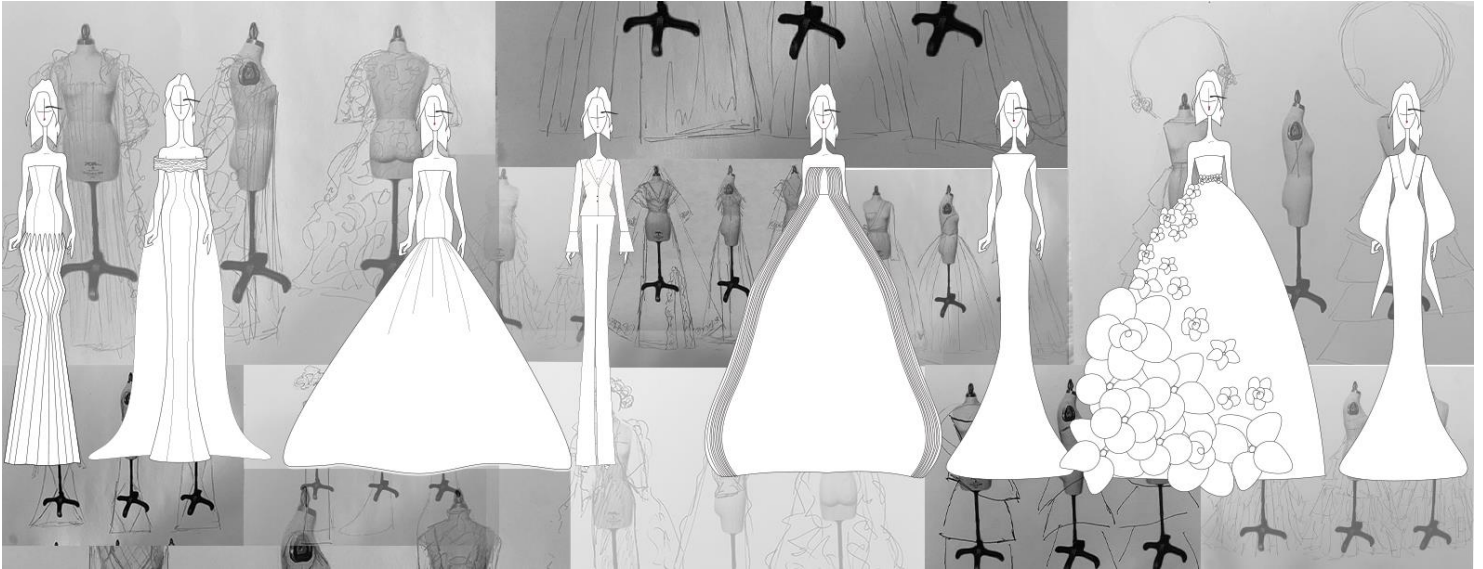


Figure 32. First Line-up Order

8.1.6 Initial Criticisms of Project:

Analyzing my line-up I began hating the collection. Something felt like it was missing. I started disliking designs, finding them boring and not authentic to where I started. Discussing it with Erica Johns, Cornell's Fashion and Textile Librarian, the collection felt incohesive. One of my main goals was cohesion. I needed to go back to the drawing board. I needed to be reminded of the beauty, color, and design inspiration of the Mexican Catholic Church and my family heritage. I fell too far into the trends of bridal design, which was one of my goals to not do. I did not want to fall into the 'basic' bridal, I wanted this to be a fashion collection not a mass-market bridal collection for the basic bride.

8.1.7 Develop Ideas Further:

I went back to my sketches and original ideas. I re-examined my inspiration slide decks. I began adding the accessories. I needed to see the full collection. This is when I began to cut

ideas. I cut two of my original exploration ideas, building off them to create better designs. The original exploration did not feel like it fit with my original concepts, or with my collection's shift in direction.

I wanted the collection to focus on fit, movement, scale, and attention to detail to highlight the aspects of a strong collection— fit, mystery, emotion, fun, and cohesion. I finalized my collection to respond to each of these.

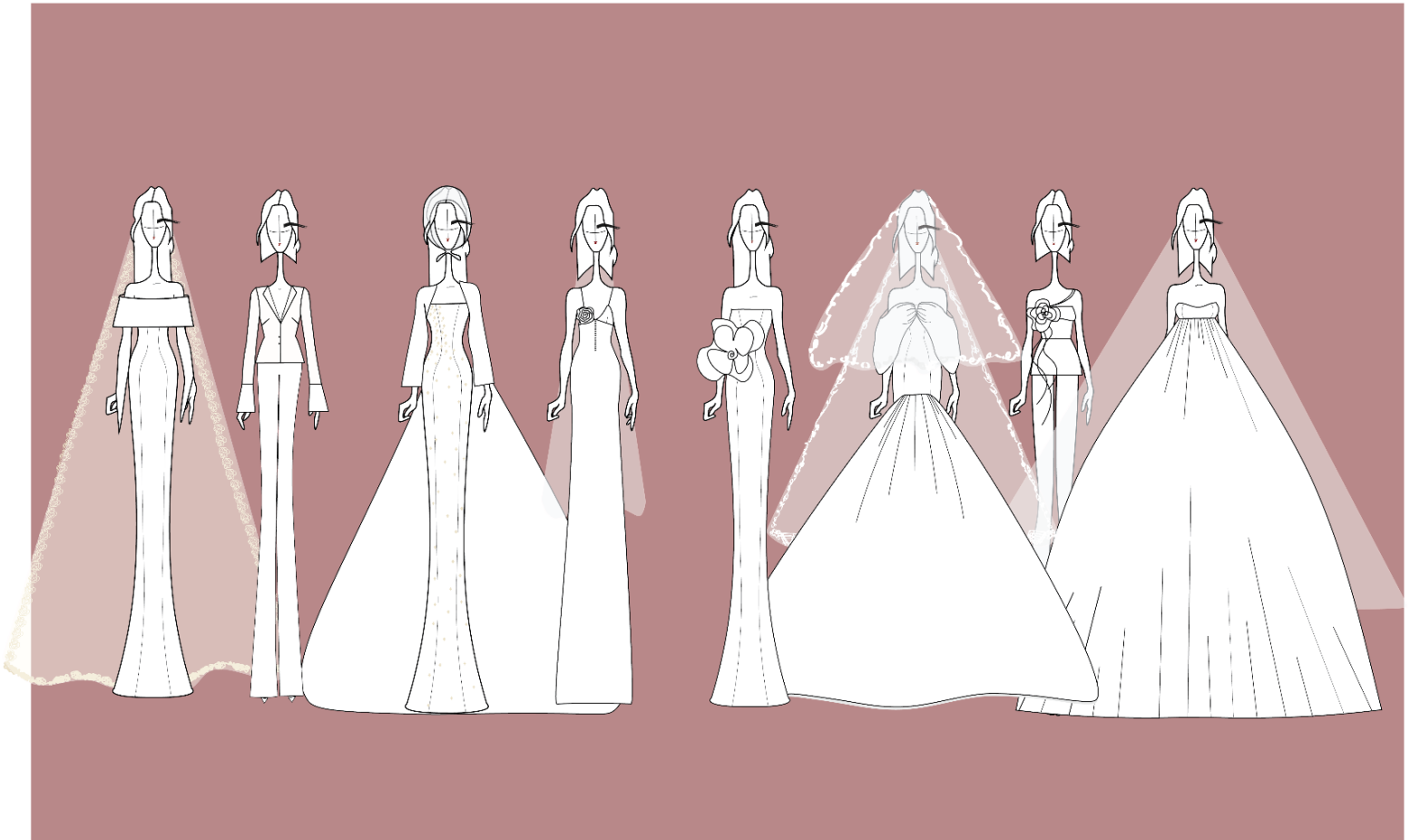


Figure 33. Final Lineup

8.1.8 Test Ideas in Textiles/Materials (Swatches)

Throughout the process, I tested out a variety of different techniques. I focused on embroidery, beadwork, texture, and placement. Although not all of the techniques made it into the collection, each idea informed the final product.



Figure 34. Test of attaching Milagros to dress, tried four different knots and two different threads



Figure 35. Sleeve Detail, took four different sleeves to get the correct sinching movement



Figure 36. Test of beadwork, two of eight beadwork flowers. They were very tedious to make.



Figure 37. Figuring out flowers and placement. I played with four different shapes and ideas starting from the chest covered in two large flowers to doing small ones before landing on one large singular one.

8.1.9 Explain Ideations



Look One:

After looking at so many aspects of the Catholic Church and Mexican Culture, the first thing I associate with the two is prayer. Inspired by the shapes of Catholic vestments and prayer shawls, I started creating shapes around the shoulders that prevented the shoulders from moving but allowed the arms to move specifically into a prayer position. I explored a few different shapes before deciding on the first rendition, a clean-cut top bodice.



Look Two:

Straying from the traditional gown, I wanted to create a bridal suit inspired by the architecture of the cathedrals I looked at. After draping a suit jacket, it felt very stiff and masculine. I played around with the idea of a cowl neck back which posed a variety of problems. The front needed structure, but the back needed drape. It was the most difficult piece in the collection to make.



Look Three:

In a lot of the inspiration I looked at, many of the saints, in particular Our Lady of Guadalupe, wore multiple layers often a jacket or shawl with a more fitted dress. This look is my interpretation of that with the fitted dress paired with an oversized jacket meant to wear off the shoulders. I noticed many of the images of Our Lady of Guadalupe were adorned with gold or rays of light. She was also often adorned in Milagro charms. I used Milagros, which are Mexican luck or protection charms, for embellishment on the dress. Each one was hand sewn on.



Look Four:

My grandmother's garden was filled with so many different fruits, vegetables, and flowers including marigolds. In Mexico, marigolds are used for a variety of things besides decoration. For the Day of the Dead holiday, marigold gold flowers are often found on ofrendas. It is said that the flower helps guide souls between the living and the dead. Looking at the flower I was inspired by the literal shape and created my own version. I played around with size, shape, and placement (reference Test Ideas in textiles/material- swatches). I wanted the shape to feel natural and effortless, not prim and perfect like a Hallmark flower.



Look Five:

I continued playing with the floral shapes but in a different fabric. The polyester Mikado fabric created a fluffier shape than the silk did. I again played around with a few different shapes, exploring both literal floral shapes and more abstract shapes. I ended on a fuller floral shape for the final. I also played around with placement but liked the shape on the side. Although the waist is covered, the eye creates a waistline due to the cut of the dress.



Look Six:

For the last look inspired by the marigold shape, I went back to using silk. The look is a mini skirt and crop top made of silk twill. This look broke up the collection in terms of length and scale. The silk charmeuse flower was attached to the right side of the chest with a strap on the left side. Similar to the silk flower in Look Four, but slightly different, this flower had strands of different lengths falling from it, some even longer than the length of the skirt. The veil paired with the look has a mix of floral shapes in white corded lace. The edge blusher is two roses facing each other, which is a symbol of mutual love and affection.



Look Seven:

I call this dress the 'angel' dress because when the sleeves are puffed out correctly they mimic angel wings. With a corset and boning underneath, the sleeves are attached at the neckline until the underarm, where they then drape down and are attached at the back by the zipper. The skirt is a high-low skirt in the sense that it starts higher on the hip in the front and drops below the hips in the back, with more fullness in the front.



Look Eight:

The last look in the collection honors the traditional bride with a large full skirt and empire waist. I choose not to do a dress with the waistline at the waist as it felt too ‘princess’ and ‘cupcake’ bride, which is what I wanted to stray from. Inspired by a 1745 oil painting, the *Black Madonna Mexican painting* also known as *The Virgin of Guadalupe*, the shape of the dress encapsulates the body. The empire waistline allows for fullness around the whole body and support around the chest, with a similar shape to the dress of the Madonna. A dress starting at the shoulders with the same fullness would not have had the same effect.

Chart 4. Thoughts and Process of the Collection

8.1.10 Accessories

8.1.10a Veils:

Over the summer of 2021, I learned the couture techniques of veil making from both Cornell Alumna and Creative Director of Monvieve, Allison Miller, and the Creative Director of Sarah Nouri, Sarah Nouri. I used these skills and applied them in my collection and process of veil making.

The first veil I worked on is similar in length to a chapel veil at two and a half feet long and ~106 inches wide. I started by cutting the tulle. I knew I wanted this veil to be a mantilla veil so I cut the base wider than the top and eliminated the length for a blusher. Next was the lace. I spent months researching lace: where I wanted to get it, how I would cut it, and most importantly how I would organize it. I did veil studies creating designs with paper before purchasing anything.

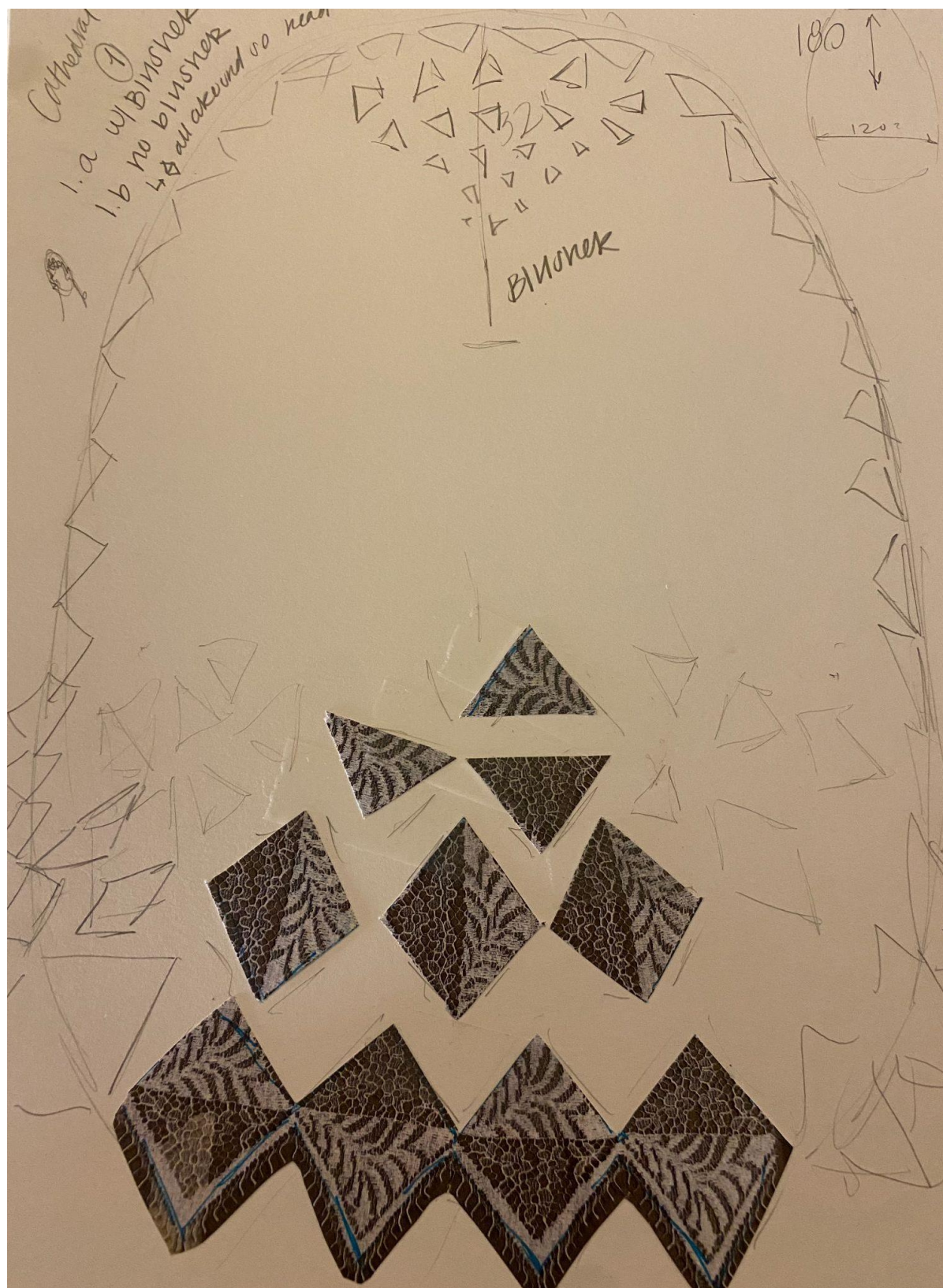


Figure 38. Veil Study

During winter break, I picked out three different laces in varied white tones. A bright white Chantilly lace, an ivory corded lace, and an ivory Chantilly lace corded with gold. I chose the latter for the mantilla veil. I carefully hand-cut each piece of lace and laid it out on the tulle playing with different designs. Once I finalized the design I liked, I hand pinned each piece of lace onto the cut tulle then hand stitched the lace.



Figure 39. Veil One

The second veil I designed is similar in length to the first veil, however, it also includes a thirty-two-inch blusher. I used a white floral corded lace that outlined the edges of the tulle.



Figure 40. Veil Two

The third veil in the collection was the longest of them all. It was about five yards long, 110 inches wide at the front with a 34-inch blusher, and 120 inches wide at the end. It was made with an English tulle, so unlike the two veils with lace, it is thicker and less opaque in color.



Figure 41. Veil Three behind Veil One for comparison

8.1.10b Jewelry:

The jewelry of the collection was inspired by a mix of Gods and Goddesses from Teotihuacan and from jewelry of the Catholic Church, particularly rosaries. I took the most inspiration from the supreme deity of Teotihuacan, the Great Goddess. Her statue was found near the pyramid of the moon and a print of the Goddess was rediscovered in 1890. She was associated with water, caves, and fertility. She later became a symbol of national identity and pride. Images of the Goddess were found all over in different forms— stone statues, paintings, carvings, drawings, etc. The Goddess was distinguished by a few different traits, including her cleft head, which was a reference to the mountains; the symmetry of her body and face; and her headdress. However most notable were her ear spools, almond-shaped eyes, and arms decorated with bracelets. (Cohen-Aponte)



Figure 42. Great Goddess Statue



Figure 43. Great Goddess Print



Figure 44. Jewelry Process three



Figure 45. Jewelry Process Two



Figure 46. Example of Jewelry on

The circular shapes of the beads I chose was inspired by the Great Goddess ear spools. I played around with symmetry making many of the earrings asymmetrical in both shape and length.

The bracelets were both inspired by the Great Goddess and the rosary.



Figure 47. Sample of bracelets

9.1.1 Style and Photography

The collection was presented at both the Cornell Fashion collection and within the Martha Van Rensselaer gallery space in the show “Behind the Collections: An Exhibit” open from May 1 to May 8, 2022.

9.1.2 Presentation One: Cornell Fashion Collective

Garments were styled with a variety of accessories including veils, earrings, and bracelets. Each girl's hairstyle was inspired by different traditional styles of braids in Mexico

with flowers incorporated into their looks. Their makeup was inspired by artist Frida Kahlo, images of Selma Hayek in the film *Frida*, along with other Mexican iconography.



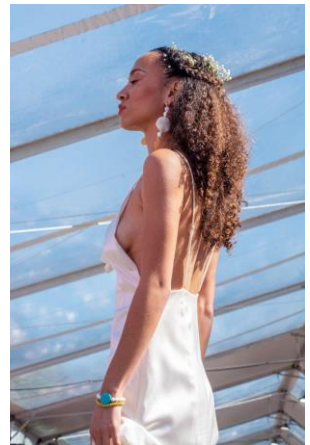
Look One



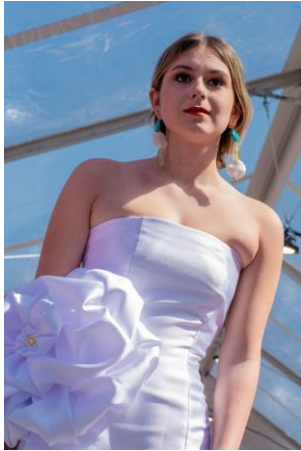
Look Two



Look Three



Look Four



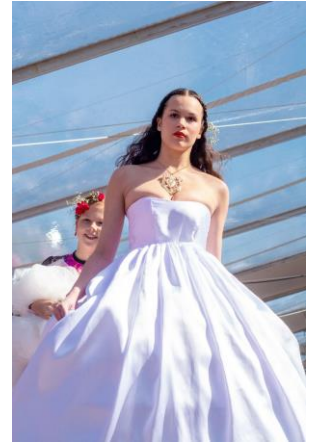
Look Five



Look Six



Look Seven



Look Eight

Figure 48. Images from the Cornell Fashion Collective Annual Show 2022

9.1.3 Presentation Two: Behind the Collections: An Exhibit

The display was inspired by a variety of museum theories for best practices for display of cultural objects. Although the collection includes a few physical cultural objects, it was fully inspired by the culture and all of the objects within that culture. On the wall behind the work, the frames are set up in a salon-style of exhibiting work. The salon-style was established by The Royal Academies of Art in France and England in the late eighteenth century. These men held a monopoly on what ‘good’ art was. The wall style that is behind everything represents the colonial roots that led the Catholic Church to be in Mexico which created this beautiful culture. The first Catholic Cathedral in Mexico was originally the site for El Templo Mayor, a place of worship for the Aztecs in Tenochtitlan, modern-day Mexico City. The site was dedicated to the

gods Tlaloc, god of rain, and Huitzilopochtli, god of sun and war also known as the Turquoise prince. The jewelry made for the collection was symbolic to many of the Aztec gods and goddesses. The tablespace that holds the jewelry is pushed against the wall to represent an altar of sorts again to honor the original culture. The flowers on that table and around the space shift the time period and are representative of marigolds that are used for Day of the Dead altars. This celebration is a blend of Mesoamerican, European, and Spanish culture, exactly like the Mexican Catholic culture.



The left side of Gallery



Close up of the Salon Wall



Part of the Wall side

Figure 49. Photos of the Gallery

10.1.1 Detail a Production Plan:

Looking towards the future this collection would be one of the collections produced by J.daRoza, a medium-sized company. Production would be done both in-house at the company

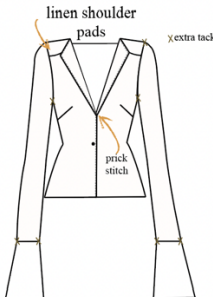
facilities, and locally sourced throughout the New York area. Work would include a mix of hand and machine techniques to produce the highest quality garments.

10.1.2 Product Summary Tech Packs:

Tech Pack For Look Two


[illegible]


DATE:	5/4/2022	FABRIC A:	DOUBLE POLYESTER GEORGETTE
COMPANY:	QUE BONITA	FABRIC B:	LINEN
DESIGNER:	JULIANA DAROZA	FABRIC C:	
STYLE #:	SS22- 102	TRIM 1:	BUTTON
DESCRIPTION:	THE SUIT-JACKET	TRIM 2:	
SAMPLE SIZE:	2	TRIM 3:	

STEP DESCRIPTION		CONSTRUCTION DETAILS
OPERATION	JOIN STITCH	
1. SEW BODICE LINING TOGETHER	301	
2. SEW LINING BACK TOGETHER	301	
3. ATTACH LINING FRONT AND BACK TOGETHER	301	
4. ATTACH SLEEVES TO LINING	301	
5. ATTACH LINEN SHOULDER PADS TO LINING	HANDSEW	
6. SEW ENTIRE SELF TOGETHER	301	
7. ATTACH CUFFS TO SLEEVES	301	
8. TACK CORNER POINT OF EVERY PIECE TO PREVENT STRETCHING	HANDSEW	
9. HEM	HANDSEW	
10. PRICK STITCH EDGES	HANDSEW	
11. ATTACH BUTTON	HANDSEW	

COMMENTS:

DATE:	5/4/2022	FABRIC A:	DOUBLE POLYESTER GEORGETTE	
COMPANY:	QUE BONITA	FABRIC B:	LINEN	
DESIGNER:	JULIANA DAROZA	FABRIC C:		
STYLE #:	SS22- 102	TRIM 1:	BUTTON	
DESCRIPTION:	THE SUIT-JACKET	TRIM 2:		
SAMPLE SIZE:	2	TRIM 3:		

FABRIC DETAILS				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Double Faced Polyester Georgette</p> <p>Mood Fabrics \$7 a yard Gul Ahmed Fabrics INC \$6 a yard</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>White Linen Joanns Fabrics \$9.99 a yard</p> </div> </div>				

TRIM DETAIL						
						
	Polyester Double Silk Georgette Covered Button					

COMMENTS:

76

[illegible]

DATE:	5/4/2022	FABRIC A:	SILK TAFFETA
COMPANY:	QUE BONITA	FABRIC B:	SILK LINING
DESIGNER:	JULIANA DAROZA	FABRIC C:	TULLE
STYLE #:	SS22- 107	TRIM 1:	ZIPPER
DESCRIPTION:	THE ANGEL DRESS	TRIM 2:	BIAS HEM TAPE
SAMPLE SIZE:	2	TRIM 3:	BONING

FABRIC DETAILS



Ivory Silk Taffeta
Mood Fabrics
\$32 a yard



Silk Lining
New Star Fabrics INC \$13 a
yard



Ivory Tulle
Britex Fabrics
\$3.49

TRIM DETAIL



Ivory Bridal Zipper from Panda International of NY 1.50 ea



Bias Hem Tape from Joanns \$4



Boning from Joanns 4.49 a yard

COMMENTS:

10.1.3 Ethical Statement:

Each piece is made with the ethical considerations of the planet and company workers. Workers are paid competitive wages and compensated for their time and talents. Everyone within the company is treated with respect and fairness.

11.1.1 Detail a Marketing Plan:

The collection will be marketed within the J.daRoza showroom in New York City, NY, and Los Angeles, CA. Along with a variety of retailers around the US, for example, the Bergdorf Goodman Bridal saloon in NYC and the Neiman Marcus Bridal salon in San Francisco, CA.

11.1.2 Costing:

Fabric Rating				
Rating	Amount (yards)	Width	Cost PM	Wholesale
Double Polyester Goergette	6	60"	12	6
Silk Lining	3	60"	26	13
linen shoulder pads	0.5	48"	10.00	5.00
Thread	1	NA	6	3
Zipper	1	NA	1.7	0.85
Button	1	NA	5.00	2.50
Rating Calculation:				
6x 12=	72	6x 6=	36	
3x26 =	78	3x13 =	39	
1x10=	10	1x5=	5	
1x6=	6	1x3=	3	
1x 1.70=	1.7	1x 0.85	0.85	
1 x5 =	5	1 x2.50 =	2.5	
	172.7		86.35	
Make	5.75	Make	5.75	
Total	178.45	Total	92.1	
Total x 1.22	217.71	Total x 1.22	112.36	

Full Garment Costing Sheet			
COST SHEET			
Product	Women's Suit		
Style no:	102	Country	USA
Buyer:	BERGDORF GOODMAN BRIDAL	Fabric	Double Polyester Goergette
GSM/Width			
	Particulars	Details	Amount (INR)
Garment Costing			
	CMPT Charges		
	Stitching:	32	39.5
	Cutting:	6.5	
	Finishing:	10	
	Packaging:	20.5	
		69	
	Sub Total		108.5
	Overhead	12.00%	13.02
	Margin (after overhead)	25.00%	27.125
	Ratio/Rejection	3.00%	3.25
	Charges for On Board		1
Total Garment Price			152.895

Costing Look Two

Fabric Rating				
Rating	Amount (yards)	Width	Cost PM	Wholesale
Taffeta	8	60"	64	32
Silk Lining	4	60"	26	13
Tulle	8	45"	6.98	3.49
Thread	1	NA	6	3
Zipper	1	NA	3	1.5
Hem Tape	0.25	NA	\$8	\$4
Boning	3	1/4	8.98	4.49
Rating Calculation:				
8 x 64=	512	8 x 32=	256	
4x26	104	4x13 =	52	
8x 6.98=	55.84	8x 3.49=	27.92	
1x6=	6	1x3=	3	
1x 3	3	1x 1.50	1.5	
1 x8 =	8	1 x4 =	4	
3x8.98=	26.94	3x4.49 =	13.47	
	715.78		357.89	
Make	5.75	Make	5.75	
Total	721.53	Total	363.64	
Total x 1.22=	880.26	Total x 1.22=	443.64	

Full Garment Costing Sheet			
COST SHEET			
Product	Women's Gown		
Style no:	107	Country	USA
Buyer:	BERGDORF GOODMAN BRIDAL	Fabric	Silk Taffeta
GSM/Width			
	Particulars	Details	Amount (INR)
Garment Costing			
	CMPT Charges		
	Stitching:	32	39.5
	Cutting:	6.5	
	Finishing:	10	
	Packaging:	20.5	
		69	
	Sub Total		108.5
	Overhead	12.00%	13.02
	Margin (after overhead)	25.00%	27.125
	Ratio/Rejection	3.00%	3.25
	Charges for On Board		1
Total Garment Price			152.895

Costing Look Seven

11.1.3 Social Media

J.daRoza has a social media audience on Facebook, Tik Tok, Snapchat, and Instagram. Most of our followers are on Instagram, using Tik Tok and Snapchat to share process images or videos.

Our main audience is between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-eight, around the ages when people begin to seriously think about their wedding. Our audience occasionally attracts an older audience looking for items for garments for their family members including daughters, granddaughters, nieces, etc.

Our social media accounts share details of upcoming trunk shows and fashion events, photos of the latest collection, submitted client images, and love stories.



Figure 50. Example of Social Media Story for Instagram

11.1.4 E-commerce opportunities

Using our social media accounts, we emphasize our digital website where clients can book appointments or get immediate help with questions about their orders. On our website, they can view the latest collection via photos and videos. While clients can order garments via our website and send in measurements, we highly suggest they visit a store in person for measurements. Clients can order veils and accessories via the website.

Our blog, which is linked to the website shares more in-depth stories that are also highlighted on our Instagram.

11.1.5 Cross-hemisphere merchandise types

In addition to our bridal gown and accessory collections, we carry a line of bridal lingerie and robes. More excitingly, we have branched into the wine world. In all of our showrooms, we carry our own brand of Champagne. We currently have one bottle we serve, Roza Blanc. With flavors of honey, citrus, green apple, and melon this champagne is the perfect pairing for saying yes to the dress. Our champagne is for sale on our website along with a handful of local retailers in New York and California. We hope the scents, flavors, and happiness of our wines will carry with brides throughout their wedding journey to be shared with family and friends not only while picking out their dress but during bridal showers and bridal parties.

12.1.1 Conclusion

Through my collection I hope I was able to shine a light on a beautiful culture and tell my family's story, one that took me a long time to acknowledge and fully understand. There is still so much work that needs to be done with cultural representation in fashion, but I hope that this project was my start in creating my space of representation in the fashion industry. I hope that it was also the start of bridging fashion and bridal back together, creating moments of glamour and awe.

13.1.1 Acknowledgments

I would like to thank:

Professor Van Dyk Lewis

Committee Members: Professor Melissa Conroy, Professor Fran Kozen

Special thank you to Professor Kelly Presutti and Professor Ananda Cohen-Aponte

My studio family: Mel, Will, Ruby, Melvin, Drew, Alena, Beca, Anastasia, Shane, Mattie, Simone, and Ally

The Amazing aid of: Kat, Kate, Jenny Leigh, Smruti, and Erica

My housemates and friends: Mel, Sarah, Kelly, Diana

My models: Sarah, Tia, Chase, Nadine, Samantha, Kiara, Imari, and Maya

My 'dream team': Skylar, Chidere, Ryan, Gillian, and Hye Lynn

All of the staff at JoAnn's Fabric

Tyler, Naomi, and Mason at Mood Fabrics

The staff at Britex Fabrics

New Star Fabrics

Alison Miller from Monvieve for taking me under your wing and teaching me so much about this industry

All of my friends and extended family for their support

My sister, Tessa

My grandparents: Ama, Apa, Grandma, and Grandpa Peter

My aunts, uncles and cousins especially the ones who helped with interviews- Ana and Maria

And lastly my amazing parents, I could not have achieved this without the two of you.

14.1.1 Referenced Materials

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15.1.1 Appendices

Seminar One:

"Fragile Knowledge: Owning the Scars of Second-Generation Holocaust Survivors in Latin America" by Annette Levine, LACS Seminar Series"
February 14, 2022

Identity can be a difficult concept. What does one do when their identity has to be hid or changed drastically? It was interesting to hear the family stories of second-generation Holocaust survivors who struggled with their identity after moving to a variety of Latin American countries. The talk discussed the dynamics of religion, identity, and family all topics similar to my work. The speaker brought up the concept of known vs not known vs kept a secret. I felt like this particular concept was very relatable as in any family there are things that are unknown and things that are secrets. Both are unknown but one is purposefully unknown. The talk also connected to my research of how culture and religion can be intertwined and sometimes difficult to do so. Many of the guests at the event talked about how they struggled to fit in as Jewish in places that were predominantly not Jewish and even in the same towns with Nazis in hiding.

Seminar two:

Beyond Waste | Keynote Speaker | Colonialism, Climate Change, Consumerism, and the Need for Collective Change with Aja Barber

Feb 24, 2022

Aja Barber was so fascinating to listen to regarding her thoughts on climate change, consumerism, and collective change. However, I found most interesting her thoughts on colonialism. This relates directly to my research as the Catholic Church only got to Mexico due to colonialism and the conquistadores. In terms of sustainability, Barber discussed how so much excess often ends in foreign countries that are home to predominantly black and brown people. Another example she discussed regarding fashion and colonialism was the role of India and the British. One of the many reasons England colonized India was to cut off trade routes of the numerous fashion products India was creating – cotton, silk, dyes, pigments, etc. The other aspect of her seminar that I felt was very related to my project was the conversation on cultural appropriation vs appreciation. This was an aspect I myself struggled with, as someone who is Mexican how do I appreciate this culture within a collection without appropriating it. I really tried to show the beauty of a culture within the collection without overstepping. Lastly, she discussed how fashion can institute positive change for black and brown communities. I truly

hoped that people looked at my collection and saw the beauty of Mexican culture and hope that any child of that culture can see themselves in my garments and within the fashion industry.

Seminar Three:

Sustainable Systems for Fashion: Biomimicry and the Future of Fabrics by Tricia Langman
March 25, 2022

Tricia Langmans discussed so much about sustainable systems for fashion within her talk, particularly about the future of fabrics. She reminded viewers of the importance of biomimicry and how we have to think sustainable. We are out of time to do otherwise. Thinking from the perspective of the Bridal industry, it's fascinating to me how sustainability will be further implicated. At the root of bridal fashion is the notion of people needing a dress or dresses for a single day or maybe a weekend. Then that dress gets preserved and possibly passed to the next generation or lands in waste. It's the exact opposite of sustainability. Therefore Langmans talk about the future of fabrics was particularly interesting to me. Can these bridal dresses and fabrics be reused for other things? The answer is yes, but that other thing has yet to be figured out.

Seminar Four:

"Sandy Rodriguez Final Keynote Presentation"
April 28, 2022

Sandy Rodriguez discussed her work with the Florentine Codex, a book I studied almost a year ago when learning about Mexican history and Mexican art history. The book inspired some of the original shapes I was creating, especially the flora and fauna. It was an incredible talk to hear as my project was wrapping up and came full circle from one of its original inspirations. With a background in museums, she was also a great resource for discussing the placement of cultural objects within a space to both respect and acknowledge their origins.