

Animal Instincts

By Heather Anderson

My project - Animal Instincts - is a satirical look at the need for women to constantly protect themselves from others. I chose to make body armour for women meant to both build a physical space around them and 'repel' men by highlighting features that are not part of our conventional beauty standards. I was inspired by Victorian satirical cartoons which often mocked women's fashion trends. I wanted to find a way to oppose these sexist undertones and make a commentary on modern issues. I was most drawn to the caricatures depicting women as animals, such as a peacock or a snail, comparing fashion trends to animal features such as a snail shell for a bustle. I decided to play with this concept to create my own humorous take.

I chose to focus on features that are advantageous to animals but usually unattractive to us, such as flat duck feet and rounded bird bodies. I was most drawn to the really big legs of a kangaroo and thought they fit well with the overexaggerated style of caricatures. I decided to make a leather thigh piece which would build out from the body to exaggerate the thighs and create my protective armour. The Victorian caricatures often mocked crinolines as men didn't like that crinolines gave women physical space in society while also denying men access to them. I was really interested in this idea of the crinoline being a cage which both created presence and formed a barrier. I wanted my garment to serve a similar purpose, the oversized form would create a forced distance from the wearer, while the rigid leather structure prevents anyone from getting closer. The overall silhouette is also meant to intimidate adding an additional layer of protection, while also being an empowering and stylish piece which the wearer will want to wear for themselves.

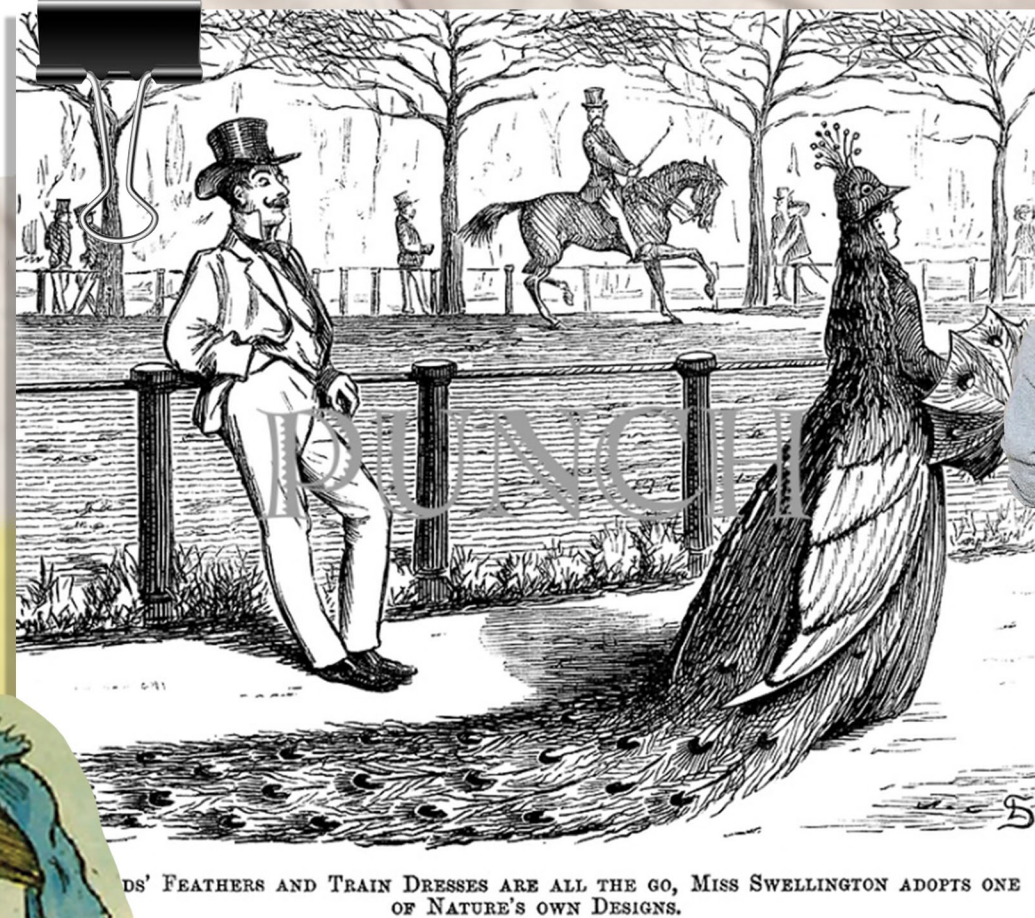
I researched armour and crinolines to get an understanding for construction. I took reference from armoured animals such as armadillos to create the texture and appearance of my garments. To go along with the thigh piece I made a waist piece to further exaggerate the figure and to create a silhouette that conveys strength. I chose to work with leather for these pieces for its structural properties and durability. I used a thick cowhide leather that was able to stay rigid, creating a dramatic 3d form.

Sustainability was an important consideration throughout this project. I chose to make the leather pieces multi-functional allowing them to be worn around the body increasing the use of the garment. For this I used metal rivets so at the end of the garment's life the rivets can be removed allowing the materials to be separated and recycled. However, my hope is the choice of such a sturdy material, as my thick cowhide leather, will allow the garment to last for many years before it has to be retired. I also chose to use waste materials, working with deadstock leather which would have otherwise been discarded. Through this I wanted to make sure my humorous, yet thought provoking piece was not just an artwork, but also a functioning garment.



Inspiration

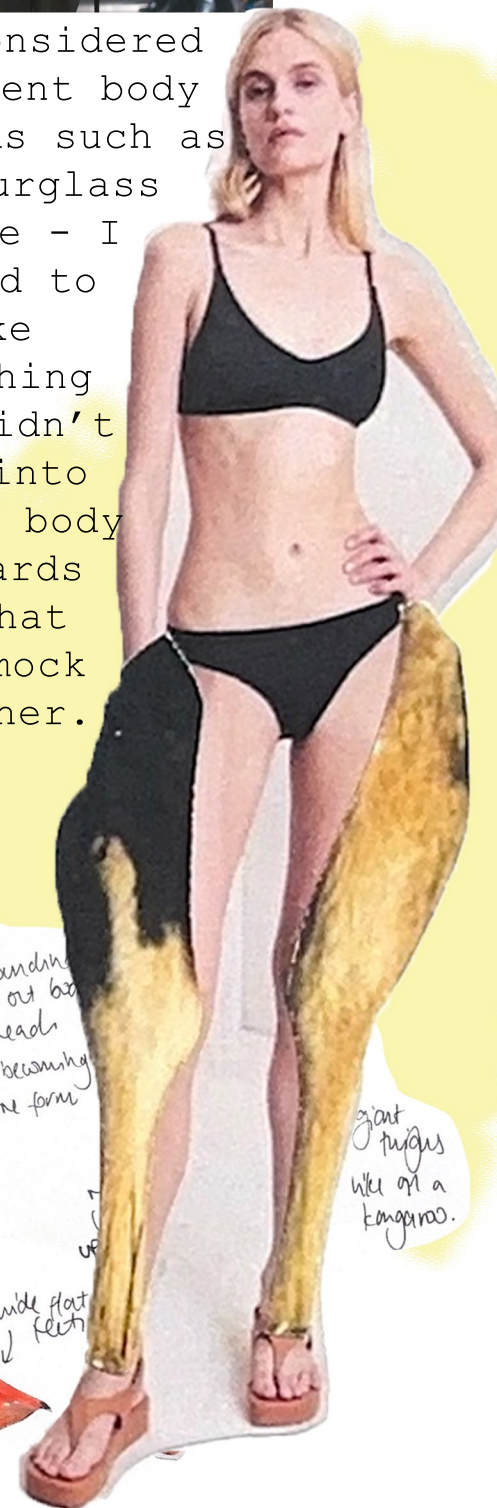
I was inspired by Victorian satirical cartoons. I was interested in the sexist undertones of them - especially how most caricatures depicting women were mocking their fashion trends. I wanted to explore how I could counter this, making a caricature of the caricature.



I wanted to take a humorous approach so I decided to combine animal features with humans. I focused on elements that are advantageous to the animals but unattractive to us.



I considered current body trends such as an hourglass figure - I wanted to make something that didn't feed into current body standards but that didn't mock them either.



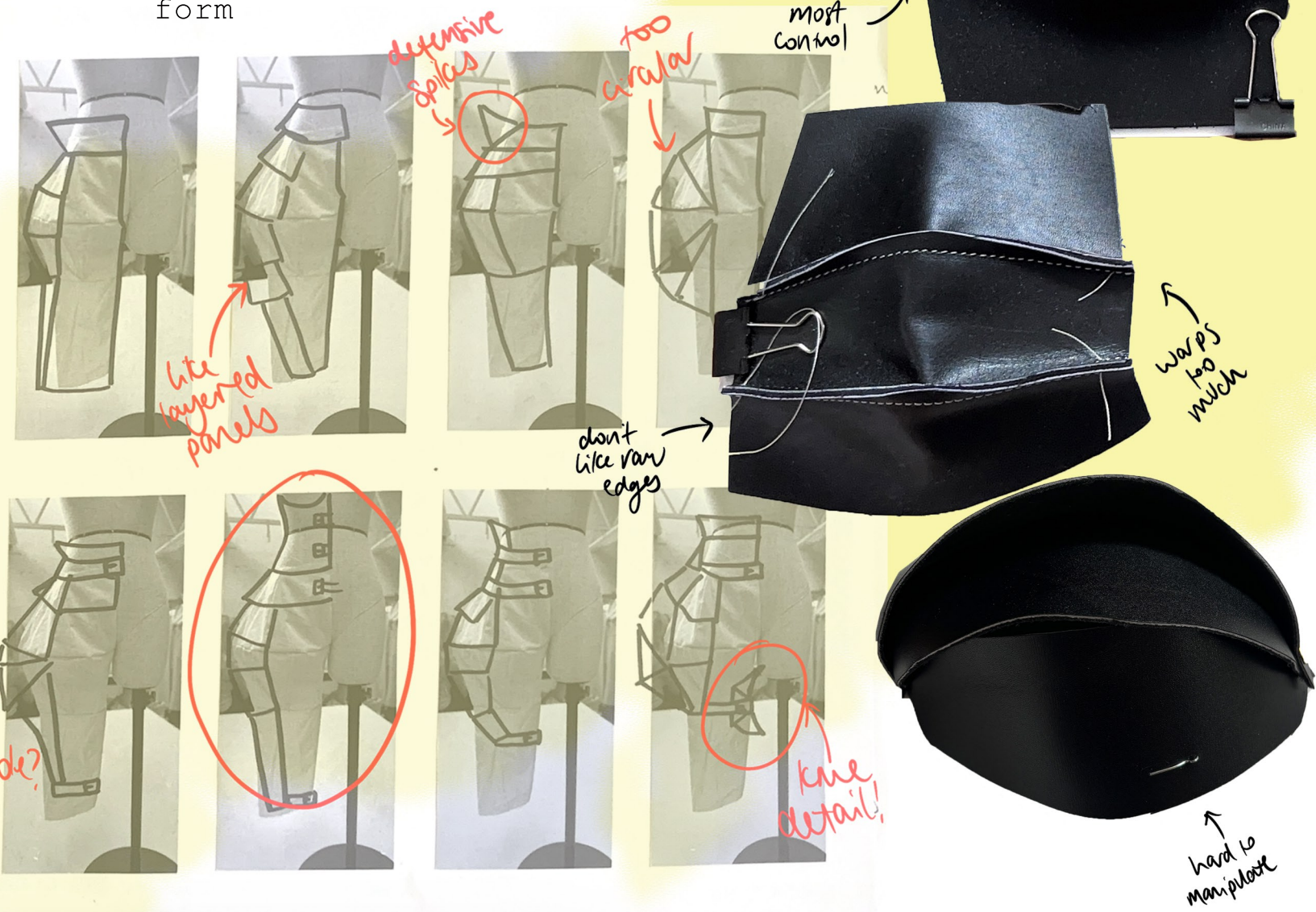
I was most interested in the cartoons that depicted women as animals. I wanted to explore how this might look today with our current trends.



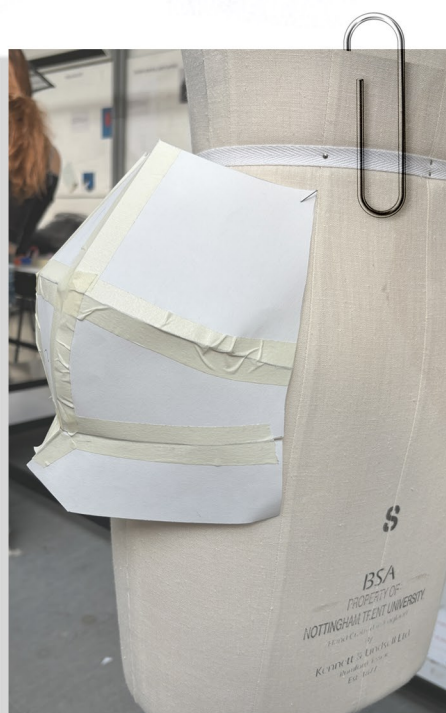
Refining Technique



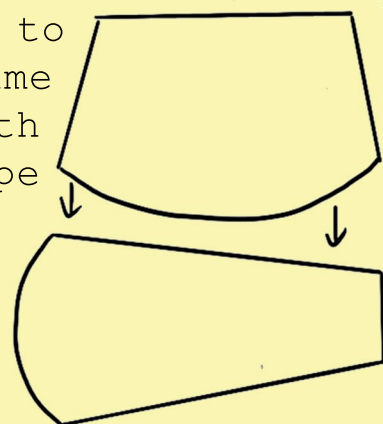
I looked at crinolines and armour to help understand construction and how to create a 3d form



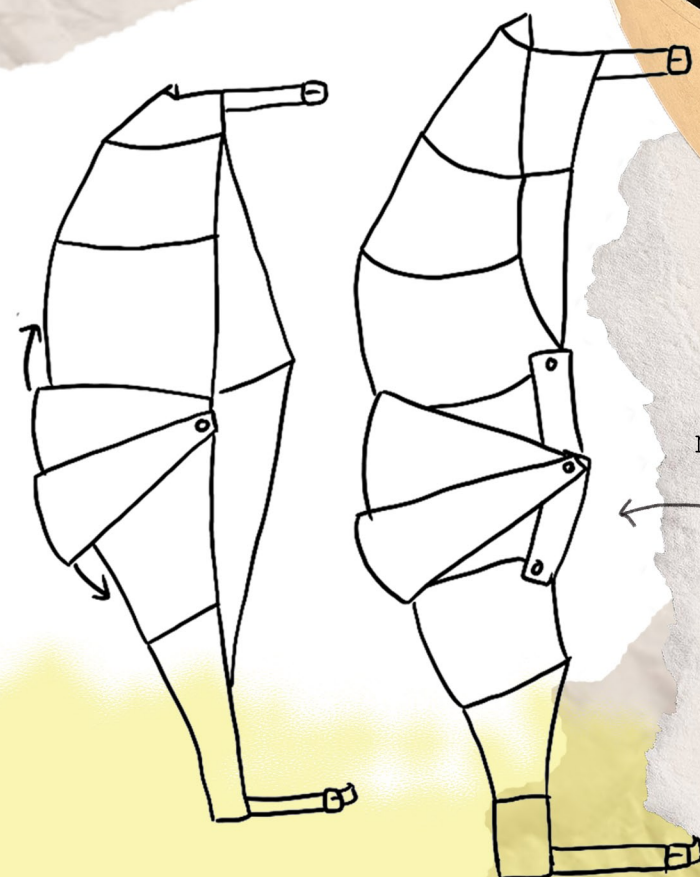
Construction Development



connecting
curved panels
to straight
edges helps to
create volume
and a smooth
curved shape

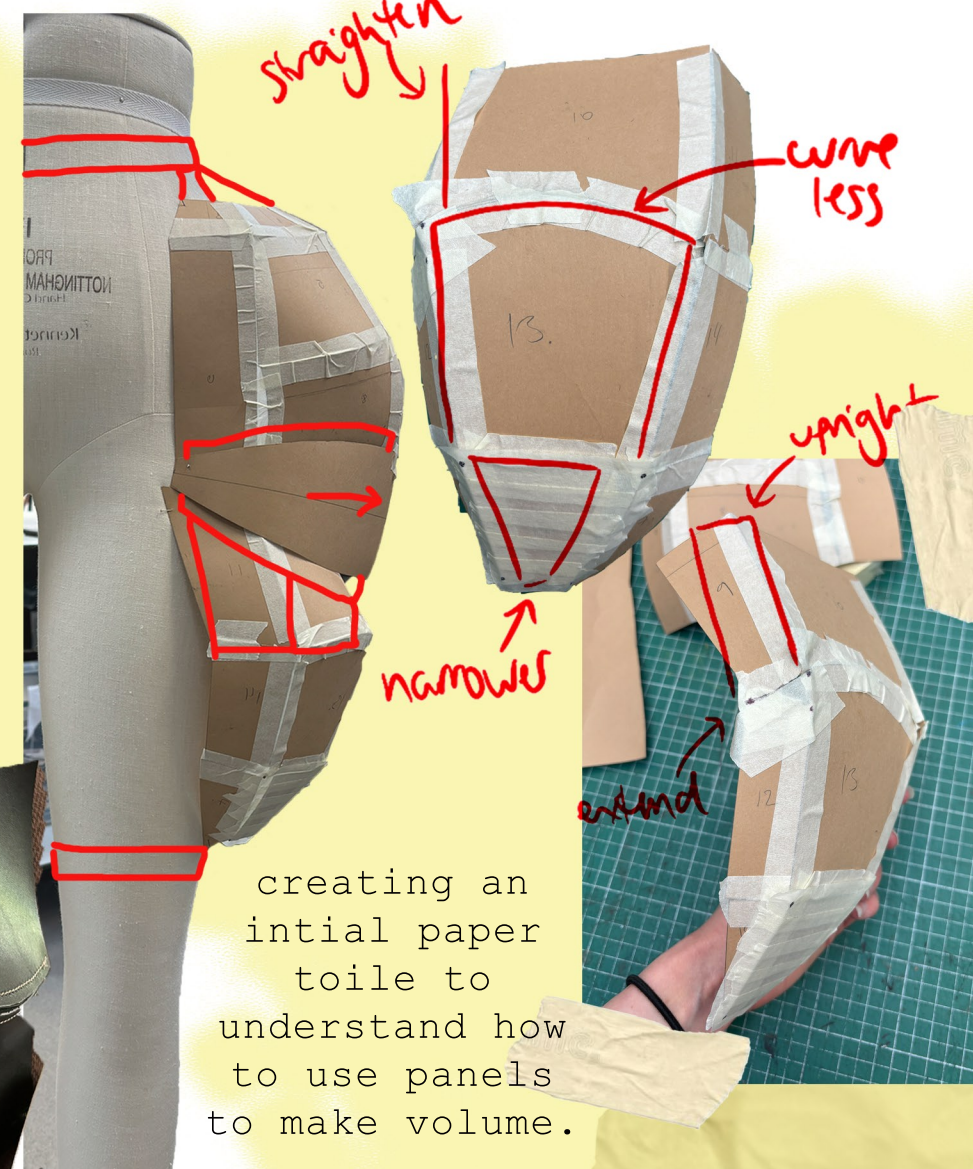


I decided to add moveable panels to allow it to be worn on different parts of the body, and so it could move with the body - like armour. I wanted a piece that was multi-functional to make it more sustainable.



testing
different
methods of
attaching the
moving panels.

This hinge system worked best so the panels didn't collapse together.



Toiling Process

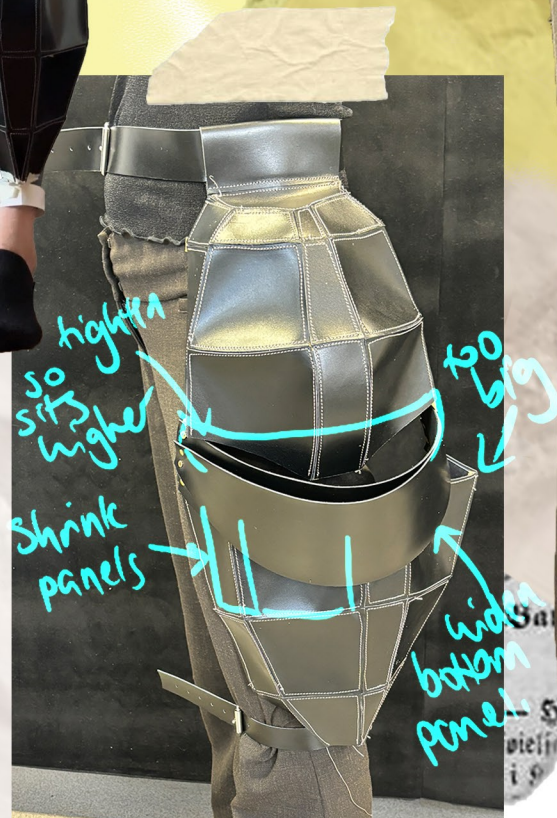
moving the
toile around
the body to
test its
movement and
functionality

finalised
hinge
system for
moving
panels

completed
toile one
using all
hardware
and
fastenings

moving rivets to create
a perfect fit which
allows the moving panels
to stay in place

CAD designs
adding texture
to the waist
piece



toile development
for the waist
piece which
layers over the
thigh piece.

I looked at warning colours on animals to select the bright colours. For the browns I took inspiration from animals which are camouflaged.

inaccessible

camouflage

hide-away

perimeter

siren

warning

Material Breakdown

I used metal rivets and buckles where necessary. The rivets allow for movement, but are also removable allowing elements of the garment to be dismantled and recycled at the end of its life.

All leathers donated to my university come from certified brands which adhere to sustainable leather practices. I also used these leathers in my experimentation and toiling process.

I used offcuts from my pattern cutting to cut out circles to create the textured detail around my waist piece. I tried to be conscious of waste and cut all my pattern pieces as efficiently as possible.

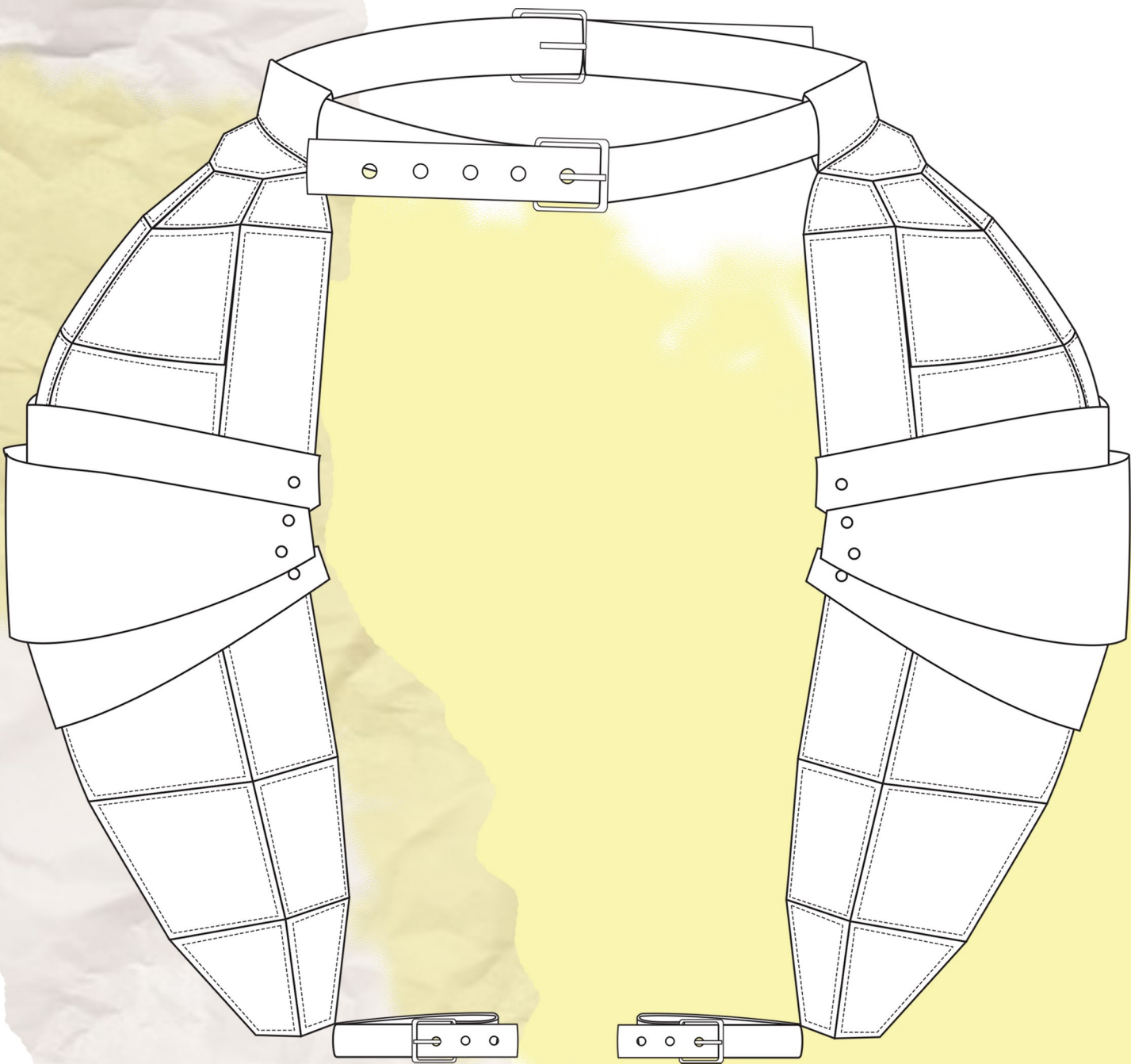
I used taped seams to construct the thigh piece as this allowed me to manipulate the form. For the tapes I used a thin suede leather which allowed for flexibility along the seams. For this I used off-cuts from our university's scrap supply, to again use up waste materials.

My main material was a donated deadstock cow hide leather. This was a more sustainable choice as the deadstock otherwise would have gone to waste and it meant not producing new materials. I chose this leather as it was very thick allowing me to utilise the structural properties of leather for my piece.

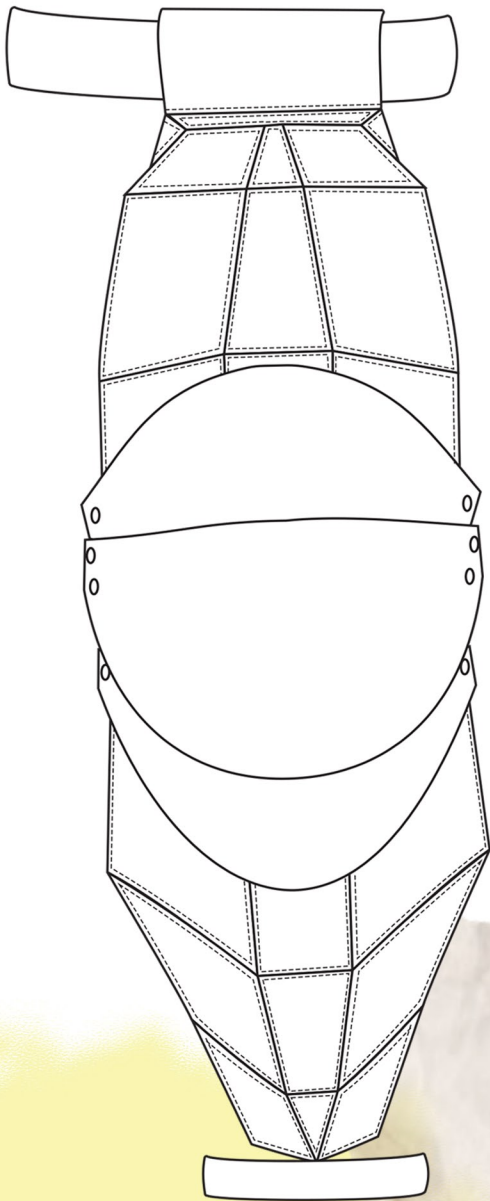


Technical Drawings

Front/Back View



Side View



Tech Pack		
Designer: Heather Anderson	Garment: Thigh Accessory	Fabric: Leather
<p>Front/Back</p> <p>This diagram shows the front and back views of the thigh accessory with several callouts: 'Hinge Attachment' points to a small metal bracket on the side; 'Rivets' points to the circular holes on the side straps; 'Taped Seams' points to the internal stitching of the segments; and 'Taped Seam Attachment' points to the bottom edge of the accessory. A legend at the bottom left shows 'Black Leather' and 'Seam Tape Leather' with corresponding color swatches.</p>		

