

SECOND SKIN

UPCYCLED LEATHER RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

MITCHELL GARDNER
MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY



DESINGER PROFILE

MY NAME IS MITCHELL GARDNER. I AM A SECOND YEAR (BA) FASHION STUDENT AT MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY. MY PRACTICE IS CENTRED AROUND LEATHERCRAFT, SUSTAINABILITY AND MATERIAL INNOVATION WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON UPCYCLING AND RECONSTRUCTING DISCARDED LEATHER GARMENTS INTO CONTEMPORARY FASHION PIECES.

I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF TRADITIONAL LEATHERWORK THROUGH EXPERIMENTATION, CRAFTSMANSHIP AND UNCONVENTIONAL CONSTRUCTION METHODS. BY COMBINING HAND CRAFTED PROCESSES WITH CONTEMPORARY DESIGN, I EXPLORE NEW WAYS OF EXTENDING THE LIFE CYCLE OF EXISTING MATERIALS WHILE PRESERVING THE CHARACTER, DURABILITY AND QUALITY THAT MAKES LEATHER UNIQUE.

SUSTAINABILITY IS AT THE CORE OF MY CREATIVE PRACTICE. RATHER THAN VIEWING WORN OR UNWANTED GARMENTS AS WASTE, I SEE THEM AS VALUABLE RESOURCES WITH THE POTENTIAL TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO SOMETHING ENTIRELY NEW. THROUGH DECONSTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION AND MATERIAL MANIPULATION, I AIM TO CHALLENGE PERCEPTIONS OF WASTE AND DEMONSTRATE HOW FASHION CAN EMBRACE CIRCULAR DESIGN PRINCIPLES WITHOUT COMPROMISING CREATIVITY OR INDIVIDUALITY.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

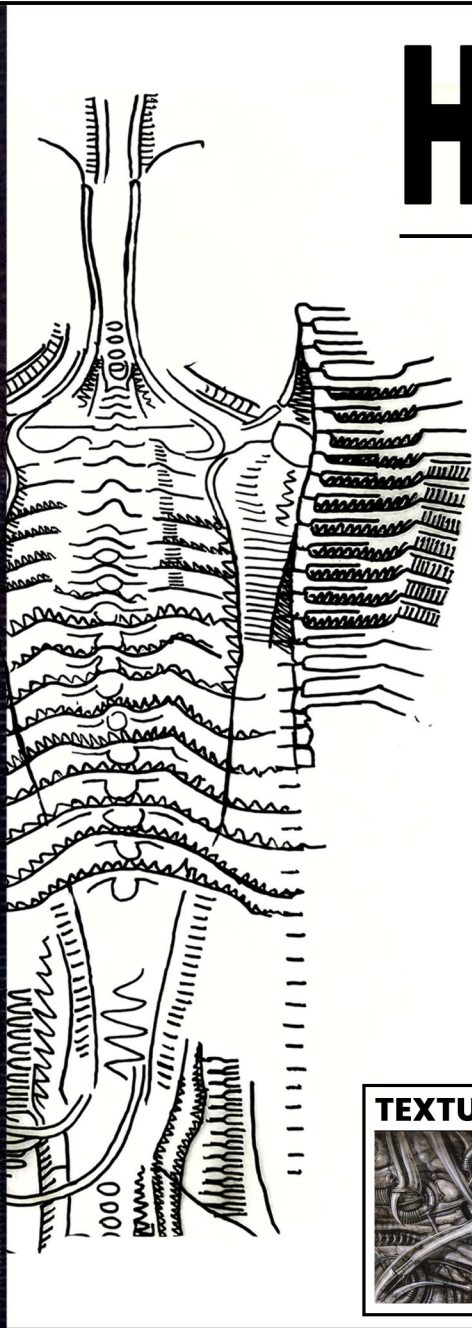
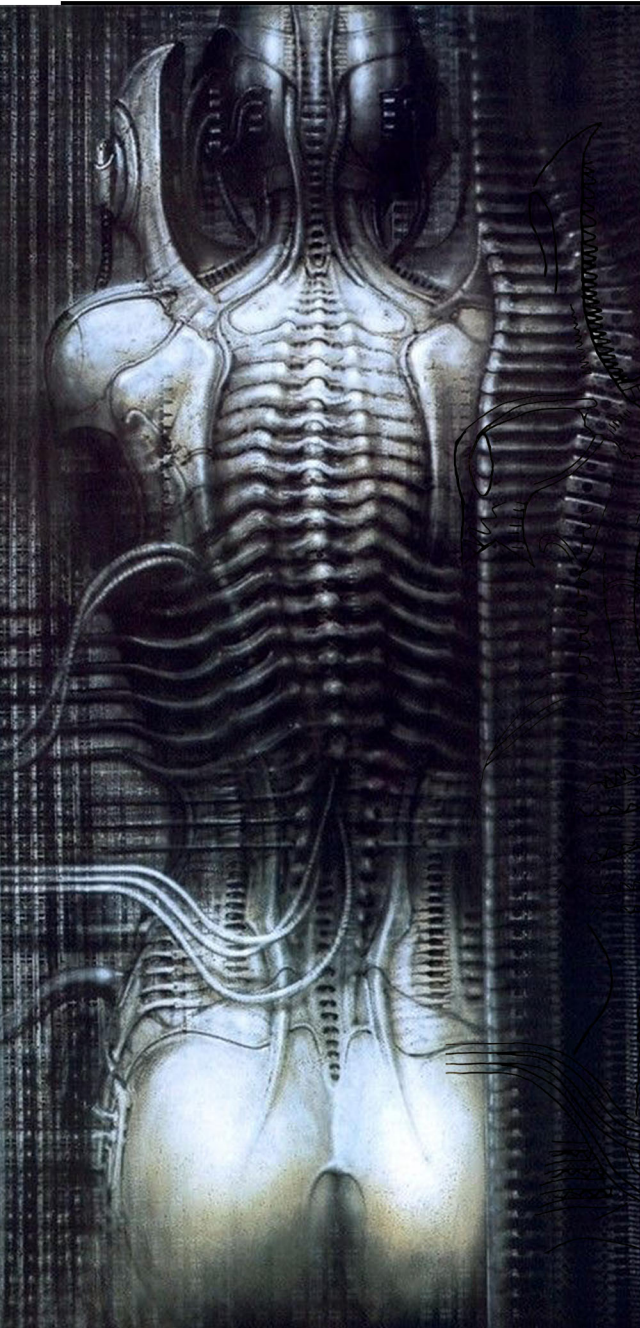
SECOND SKIN EXPLORES IDENTITY, PROTECTION AND TRANSFORMATION THROUGH RECONSTRUCTED LEATHER GARMENTS MADE FROM DISCARDED LEATHER PIECES AND OFF CUTS. GROWING UP IN MANCHESTER, AN INDUSTRIAL CITY SHAPED BY MACHINERY HAS INFLUENCED MY BIOMECHANICAL AESTHETIC AND DARK VISUAL LANGUAGE. AT THE CORE OF MY PRACTICE IS UPCYCLING LEATHER GOODS AND WASTE TO GIVE DISCARDED MATERIALS A NEW LIFE THROUGH RECONSTRUCTION, SHOWING HOW GARMENT LIFE CAN BE EXPANDED. THIS PROJECT IS INSPIRED BY THE BIOMECHANICAL VISUALS OF H.R. GIGER AND THE DARK SCULPTURAL SILHOUETTES OF RICK OWENS.

RICK OWENS FALL
2010
READY-TO-WEAR



H.R. GIGER
BIOMECHANICAL
ARTWORK,
C. 1980'S

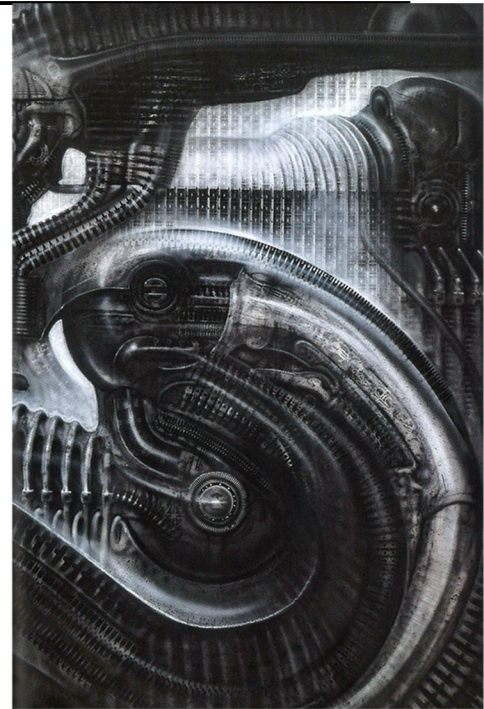




H.R. GIGER

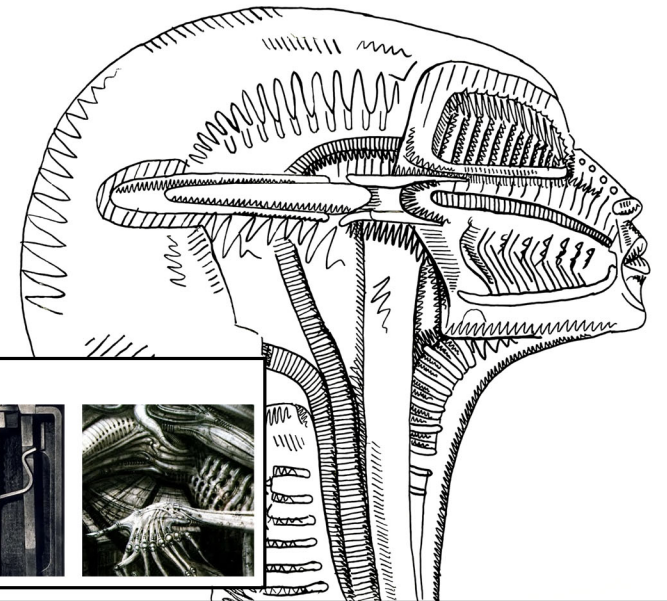
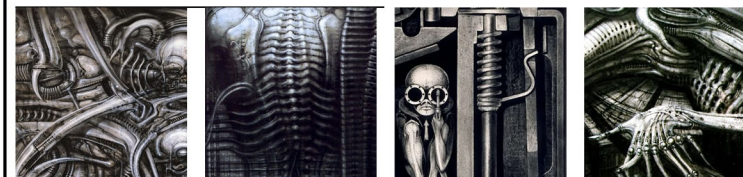
TECHNIQUES & FEATURES:

- BIOMECHANICAL STRUCTURES
- RIBBED TEXTURES
- EXOSKELETON FORMS
- HORROR / NIGHTMEAR INSPIRED
- AIRBRUSHING TECHNIQUES
- MONOCHROMATIC COLOUR PALETTE
- INDUSTRIAL TEXTURES



"IF I HAVE THE SAME
DISAGREEABLE DREAM
REPEATEDLY, I'LL PAINT IT TO
LIBERATE MYSELF FROM IT."
- H.R. GIGER, 1994

TEXTURE REFERENCES:



RICK OWENS



RICK OWENS X SWAMPGOD

A CHANCE COLLABORATION WITH RICK OWENS

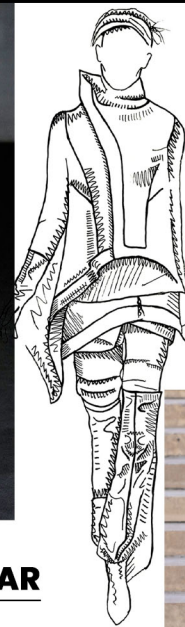
By late 2020, Boem's Instagram posts caught the eye of [Rick Owens](#), the avant-garde American designer celebrated for his dark, draped silhouettes. This virtual recognition led to an extraordinary opportunity: Owens invited Boem to create upcycled capsule collections using fabric remnants, off-cuts, and unsold samples from Rick Owens' previous collections. This mentorship and creative partnership unfolded between late 2020 and June 2022, culminating in 19 distinct capsule collections totaling over 1,000 pieces, each crafted entirely by Boem himself.

Why is Swampgod a truly sustainable fashion brand?

Swampgod is a sustainable fashion brand because it is built entirely on upcycling and material reuse. Instead of producing new fabrics, designer Arturo Boem transforms deadstock garments, factory cut-offs, and recycled hardware into unique, one-of-a-kind pieces. This approach reduces textile waste, minimizes the environmental footprint of production, and challenges the industry's reliance on mass manufacturing. By giving discarded materials new life through bold, deconstructed designs, Swampgod proves that high fashion can be both creative and environmentally responsible.



**FALL 2009
READY-TO-WEAR**



**SPRING 2026
MENSWEAR**



**SPRING 2019
READY-TO-WEAR**



COLOUR + FABRIC



TOPSTITCHED LEATHER SEAM
FROM UPCYCLED LEATHER
JACKET

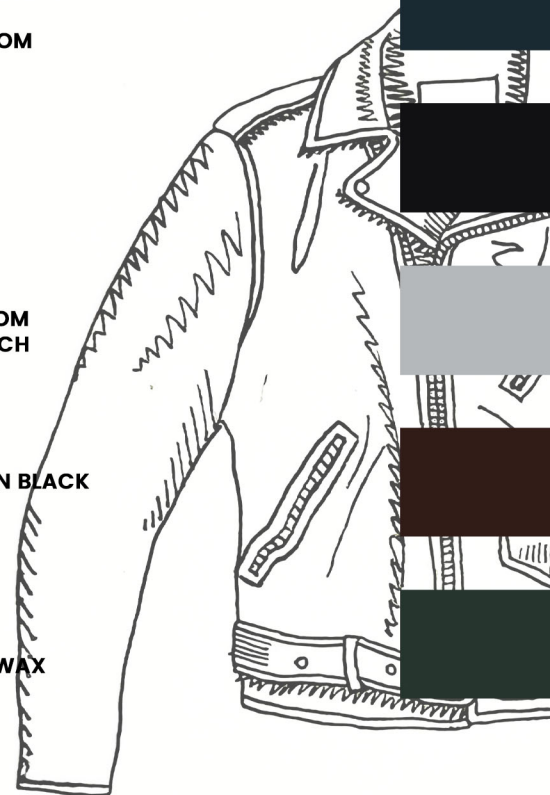
LEATHER SCRAPS FROM
FACTORY OFF CUTS

LAMB SKIN LEATHER
IN BLACK

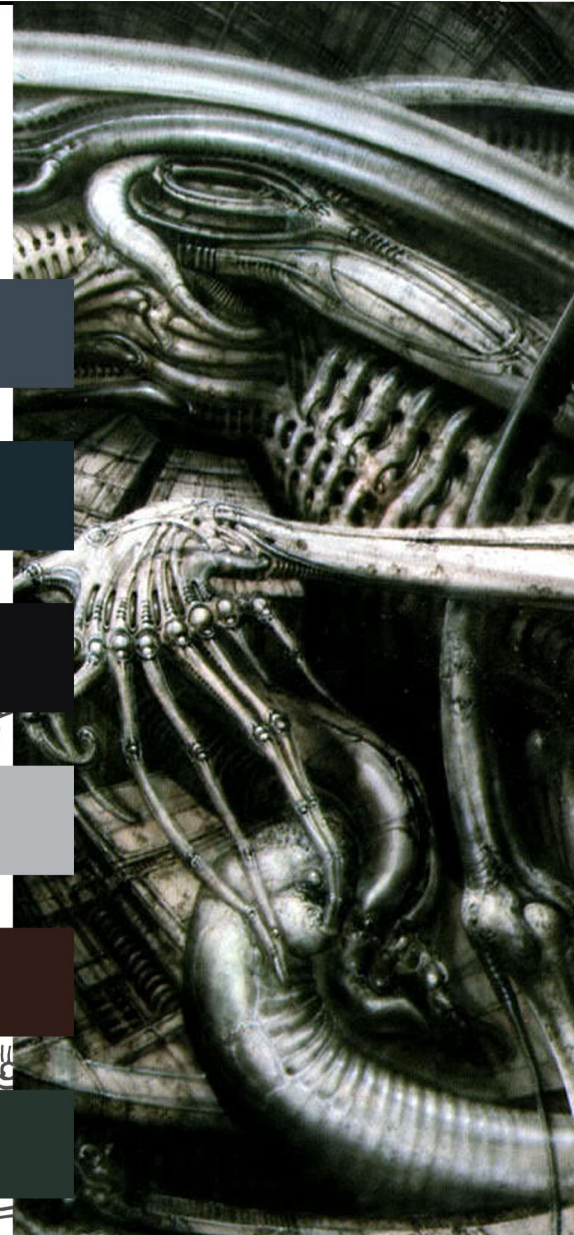
BROWN LEATHER FROM
UPCYCLED OLD COUCH

COWHIDE LEATHER IN BLACK

CROCHETING WITH WAX
THREAD AND BLACK
COTTON YARN



PALETTE:



MATERIAL EXPLORATION



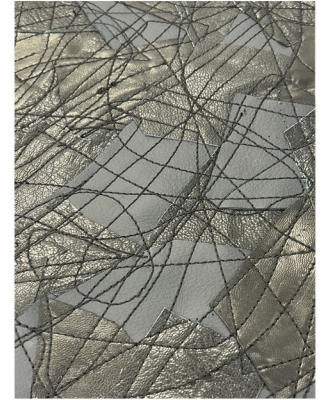
1. SCRAPS

LEATHER SCRAPS FROM
UPCYCLED GARMENTS,
COUCHES AND FACTORY
OFF CUTS.



2. LAYERING

LEATHER SCRAPS LAYERED
AND TOPSTITCHED USING A
WALKING FOOT MACHINE TO
CREATE A WORKABLE
TEXTILE TO CUT PATTERNS
FROM.



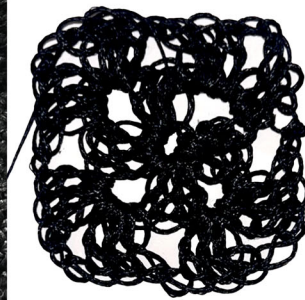
3. RECONSTRUCTED TEXTILE

THE RESULTING TEXTILE
READY TO BE CUT AND
REIMAGINED INTO NEW
GARMENTS.

COMBINATION OF UPCYCLED LEATHER MATERIAL, CROCHET
AND BRAIDING TECHNIQUES.



THIS PAGE DOCUMENTS MY EXPERIMENTATION WITH
UPCYCLED LEATHER SCRAPS, CROCHET, BRAIDING AND
RECONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES. THROUGH LAYERING,
STITCHING AND MANIPULATION I TRANSFORMED
DISCARDED MATERIALS INTO NEW TEXTILES AND SURFACE
TEXTURES THAT INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY
GARMENT.



CROCHETING WITH WAX
THREAD AND BLACK
COTTON YARN.



SAMPLES

LEATHER SAMPLES:

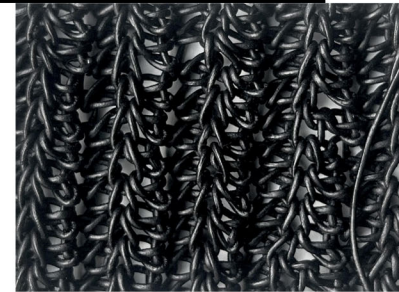


EXPLORING TEXTURE, MANIPULATION AND RECONSTRUCTION THROUGH UPCYCLED LEATHER. FOCUSING ON TECHNIQUES SUCH AS BRAIDING, WEAVING AND PATCH WORK.

UPCYCLED LEATHER
BRAIDING WEAVED
IN AND OUT OF
LEATHER



UPCYCLED
LEATHER SCRAPS
TURNED INTO
WORKABLE
TEXTILE



CROCHET SAMPLES:

EXPLORING CROCHET THROUGH THE USE OF WAX COTTON THREAD, LEATHER THONG AND CROCHETING INTO ACTUAL LEATHER PIECES.

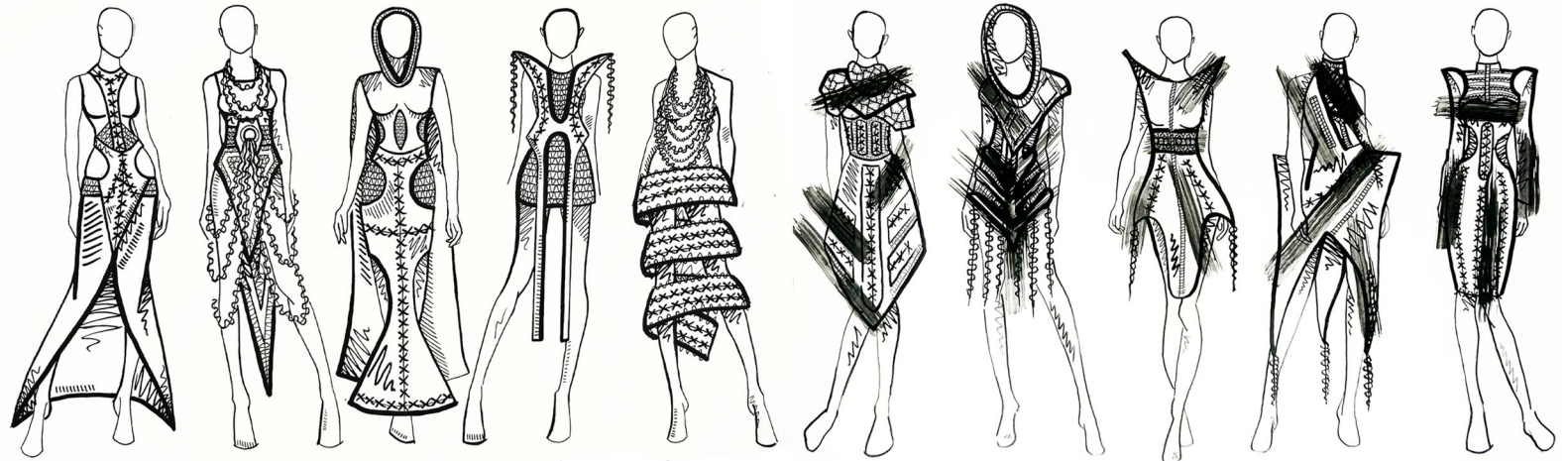
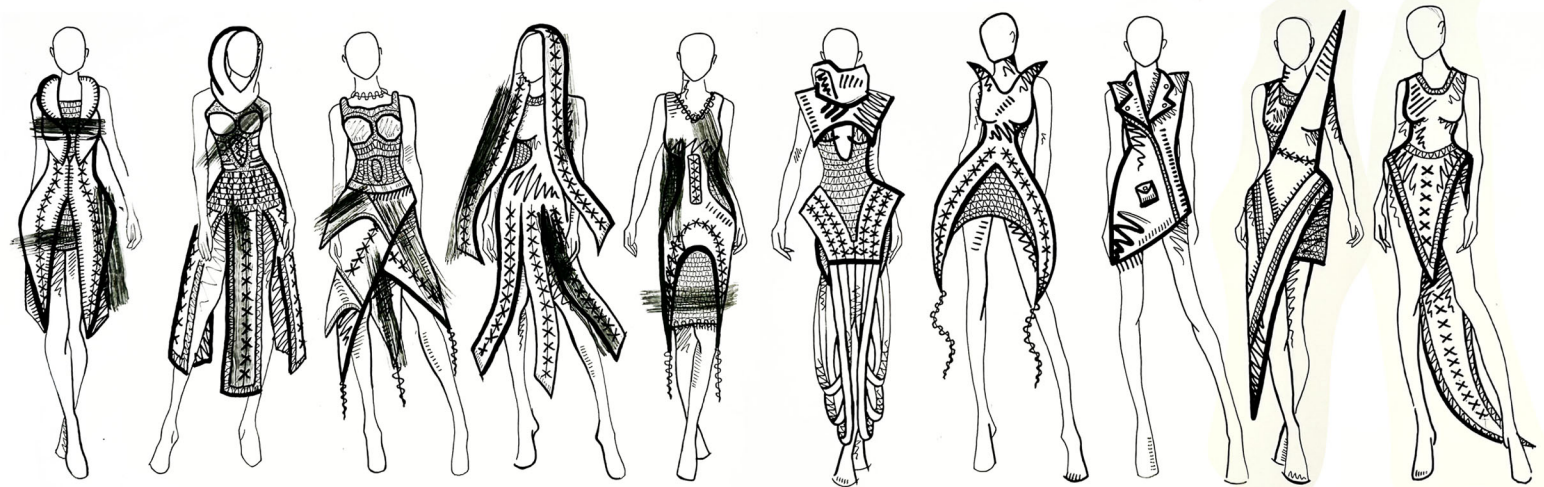


MANNEQUIN APPLICATION:



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT OF POTENTIAL GARMENT DESIGNS THROUGH SKETCHING SCULPTURAL SILHOUETTES, SURFACE TEXTURES AND MANIPULATION, AND FEATURES INSPIRED BY RICK OWENS AND H.R. GIGER.



COLLAGE DESIGNS

COLLAGE EXPERIMENTS EXPLORING EXAGGERATED SILHOUETTES, RECONSTRUCTED LEATHER FORMS AND BIOMECHANICAL IMAGERY FROM THE WORK OF H.R. GIGER AND PIECES FROM RICK OWENS, INCLUDING MY OWN SAMPLES AND EXPERIMENTATION. I AIM TO CREATE GARMENTS FROM UPCYCLED LEATHER JACKETS TO EXPLORE UNCONVENTIONAL WAYS OF WEARING LEATHER, USING THESE COLLAGES TO REFINE AND DEVELOP MY DESIGN IDEAS.



FEATURED MUSE: INSTAGRAM - @AVOIDEVERYONE

FINAL LINE-UP

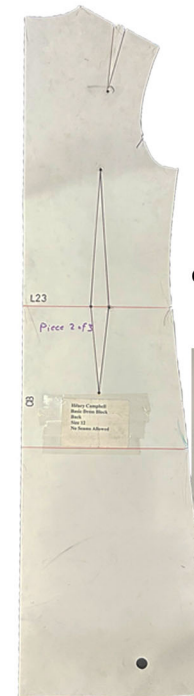
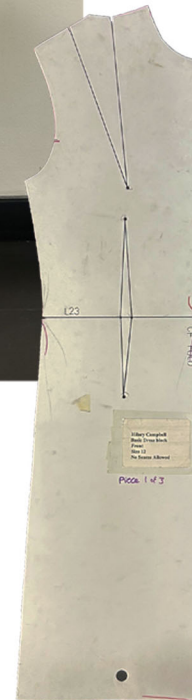
THESE FIVE LOOKS REPRESENT THE FINAL DIRECTION OF SECOND SKIN. DEVELOPED THROUGH MATERIAL EXPERIMENTATION, COLLAGE AND RECONSTRUCTION. EACH GARMENT COMBINES UPCYCLED LEATHER WITH HANDCRAFTED TECHNIQUES INCLUDING BRAIDING AND CROCHET. THE COLLECTION EXPLORES PROTECTION, TRANSFORMATION AND IDENTITY THROUGH SCULPTURAL SILHOUETTES INSPIRED BY BIOMECHANICAL FORMS.



FITTINGS



BASIC DRESS BLOCK
PATTERN (SIZE 12)



ADDING DARTS TO THE UNDERARM
SEAM AND AT THE BACK OF THE
GARMENT TO FIT MORE TO THE MODEL.



DRAWING SHAPES ONTO TOILE THAT WILL BE
CUT OUT READY FOR PATTERN DEVELOPMENT



GARMENT DEVELOPMENT

TOILE 1:

DRAWING SHAPES ONTO TOILE THAT WILL BE CUT OUT READY FOR PATTERN DEVELOPMENT



PANNELS CUT OUT FROM TOILE
READY TO BE WORKED WITH.

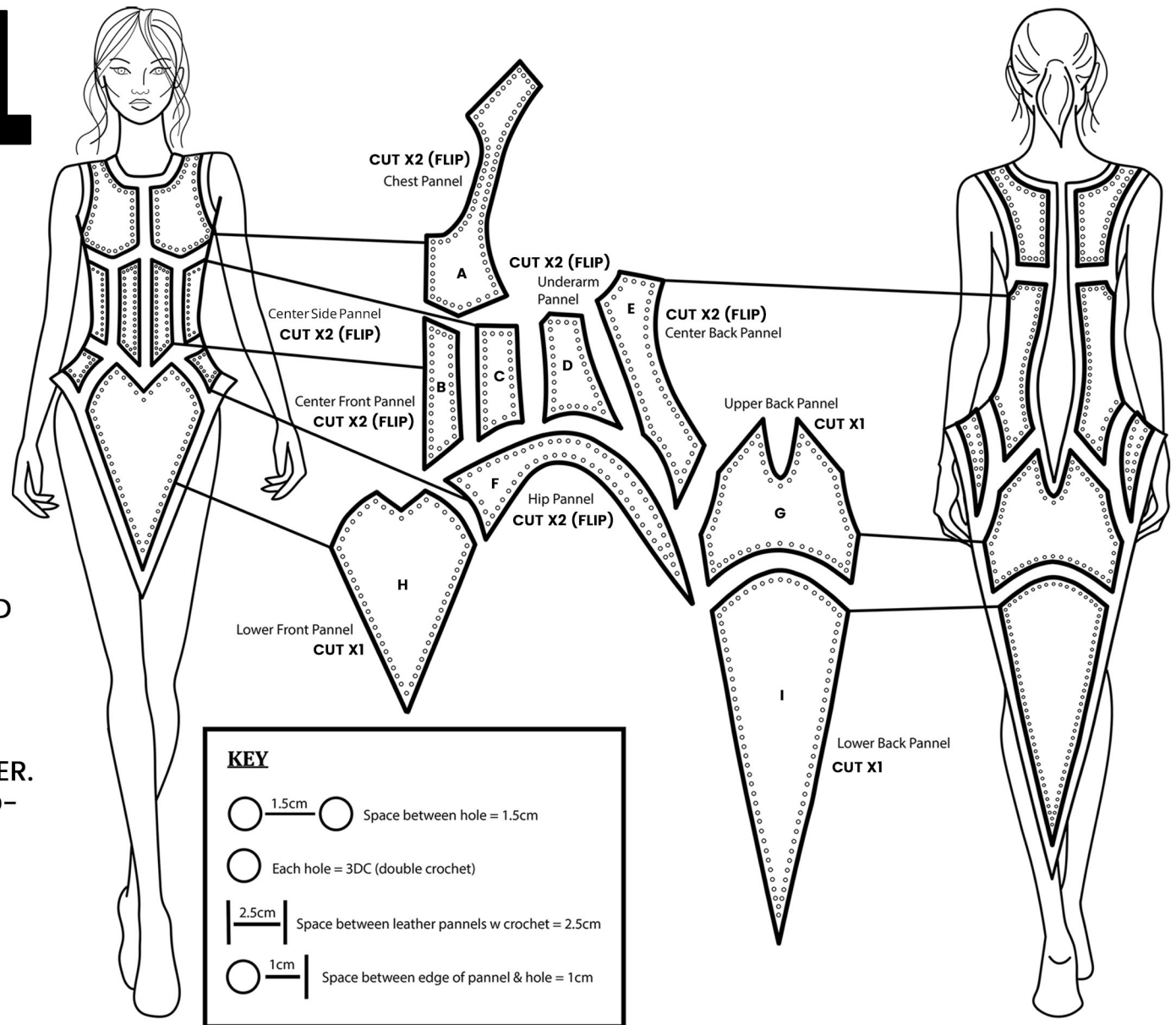
FINAL TOILE:

THE FINAL TOILE IS MADE UP FROM COTTON YARN AND UPCYCLED LEATHER FROM AN OLD COUCH. THIS FINAL TOILE SOLIDIFIES MY FINAL GARMENT AND HOW I WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE MY FINAL DESIGN.



TECHNICAL DESIGN

THIS TECHNICAL DESIGN EXPLORES UPCYCLED LEATHER AND CROCHET TECHNIQUES. THE LEATHER IS PUNCTURED AROUND THE EDGES BEFORE BLACK WAX THREAD AND COTTON YARN ARE CROCHETED INTO EACH HOLE TO FRAME AND CONNECT THE PANNELS TOGETHER. BRAIDED LEATHER TECHNIQUES CREATE A BIO-MECHANICAL, EXOSKELETON APPEARANCE SIMILAR TO THE WORK OF H.R. GIGER.



FINAL GARMENT



BEHIND THE SCENES

THE FINAL GARMENT WAS SHOWCASED THROUGH A FASHION FILM AND EDITORIAL SHOOT ACROSS MANCHESTER'S INDUSTRIAL BACKSTREETS. THIS IS WHERE THE GARMENT FELT MOST AT HOME. STYLED WITH HANDMADE LEATHER GLOVES AND CROCHETED HOOD. THE OVERALL LOOK HIGHLIGHTS THE COMBINATION OF LEATHERCRAFT, UPCYCLING AND CONTEMPORARY DESIGN THAT DEFINES MY PRACTICE. VIDEO COMING SOON...

CREW:

MODEL:
@AMELIEWELLER.ARTIST

VIDEOTOGRAPHER:
@WILSONMADETHIS

VIDEOTOGRAPHER:
@IANSZLOCH

VIDEOTOGRAPHER:
@JAKKUOI

VIDEOTOGRAPHER:
@MIAANDHERCAMERA



FINAL GARMENT



DETAILS

