

Layal Balubaid

I have begun forcing myself to take things less seriously, fighting with my instinct to be an absolute perfectionist. I appreciate that paradox, and I now find that being visible throughout my design process; I almost find humor in any attempt to be 'deep' in my design process. Coming from an academic background, I feel the pressure to always have some profound story to tell. While I now have begun to overcome that, I still find myself hiding deeper meaning in my design. My influences come from all over, but I've found myself looking at my own nostalgia and history for inspiration. Little cultural references are hidden in my designs, behind the humour. I want my designs to have their own humor and personalities, creating characters through each piece (the pieces are alive, not the people). I always begin with drape, to which I inject creative pattern cutting.

My pre-collection looks at my own nostalgia, but more so the nostalgia I never experienced that still feels familiar. The collection is an amalgamation of so many little memories that are extremely insignificant yet massively memorable. I enjoy using unexpected textures and bold colour palettes that evoke a sense of childhood wonder and subversive playfulness. I also added an element of my culture to the collection by using Saudi shemaghs (sourced from my father) as one of the key fabrics in the collection and accessories.

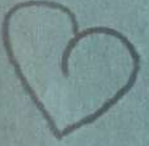
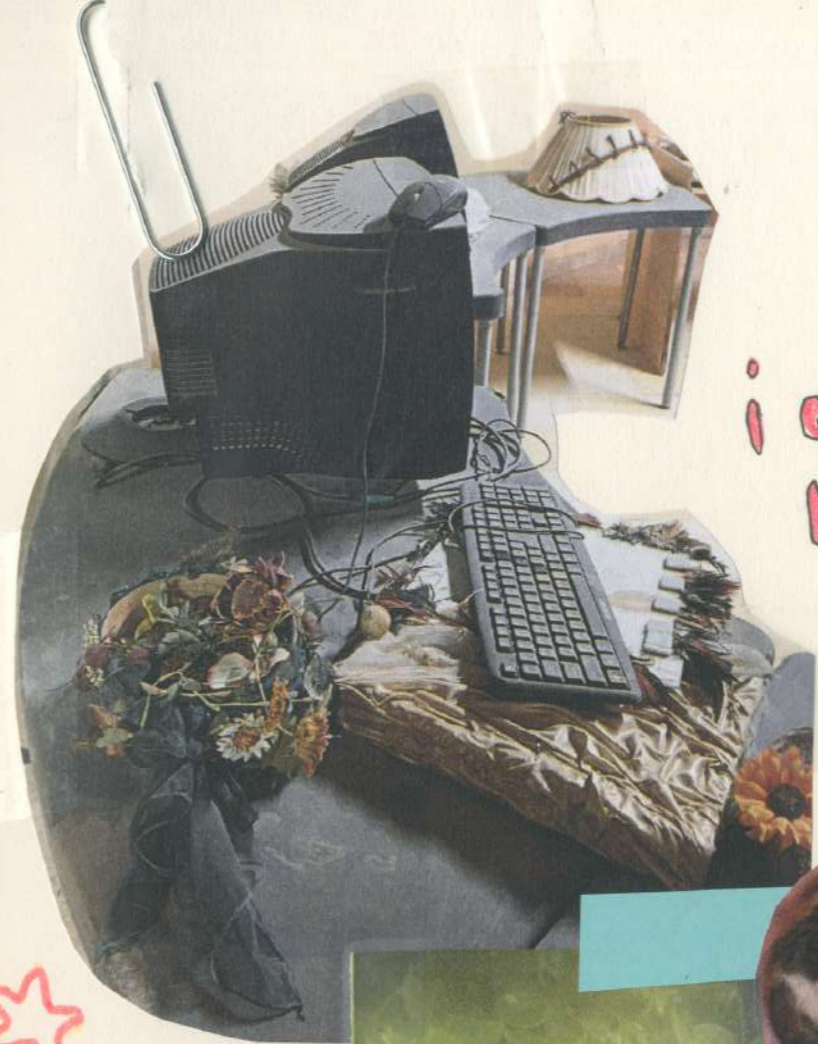
My final collection takes inspiration from 'Rat King', a historically documented phenomenon where a group of rats die with their tails entangled. This entity was never proven to be naturally occurring, which led me to explore faux authenticity, and the recreation of found objects. I used Cat in the Hat as a muse to explore this concept, as they both challenge perceptions of reality. The Rat King embodies physical and visual chaos that somehow forms a coherent entity. The Cat in the Hat brings chaos into a structured environment (a neat house) but does so in a controlled and joyful manner. This resulted in a collection that is a blend of chaos and whimsy.

Ultimately, I want my designs to go past the gimmick and still hold their own beauty. I enjoy taking 'unseriousness' seriously, and find adding an element of humor being essential to my design process.

in two parts..



You'll stay
in my heart
even when I
die.

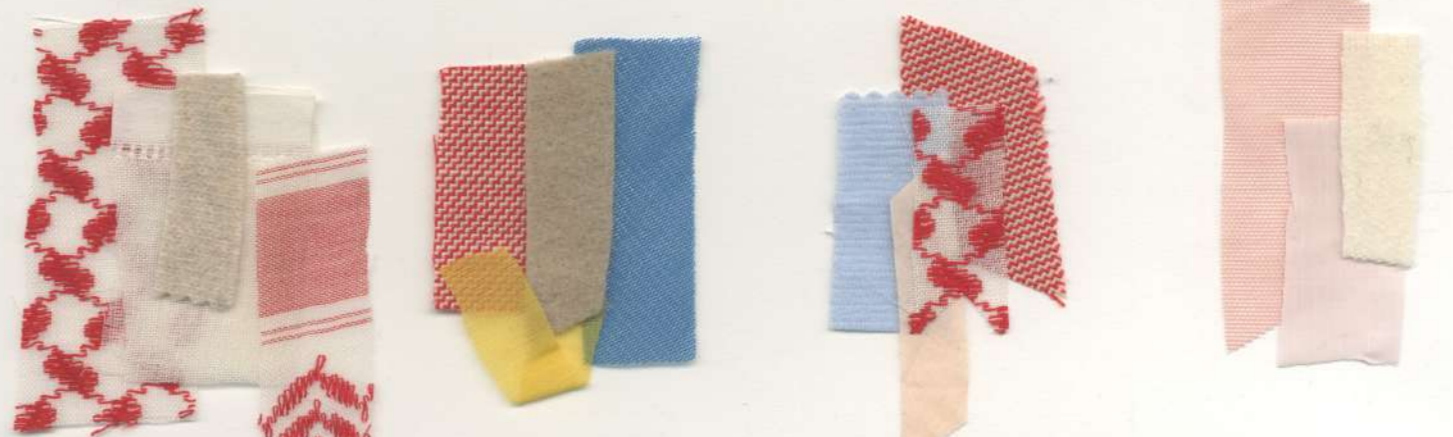
i dont
know!!



why :c

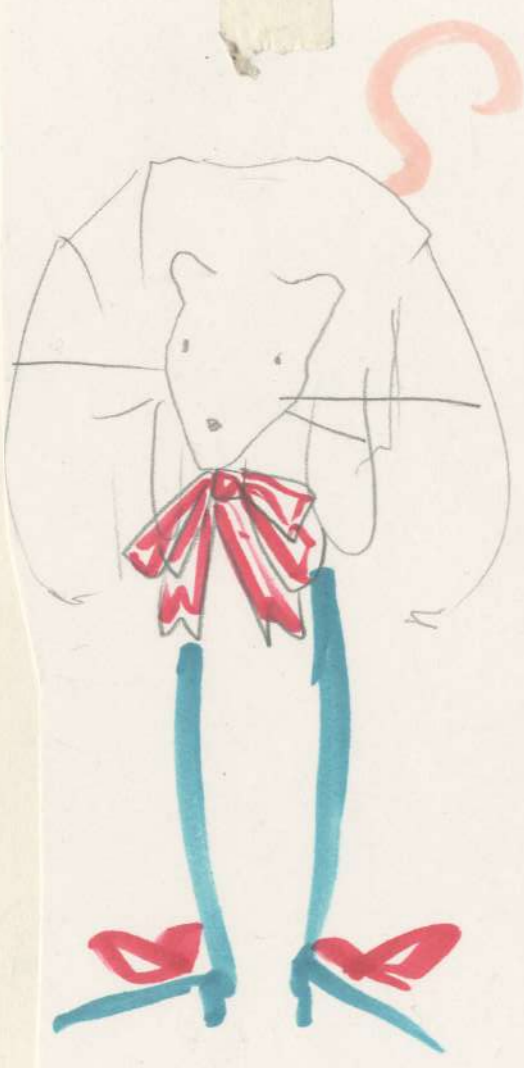


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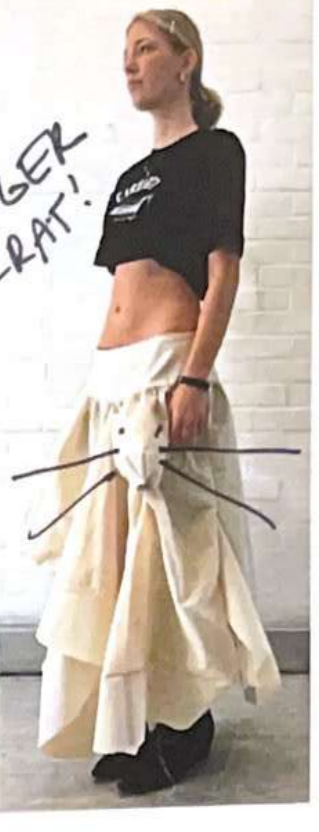
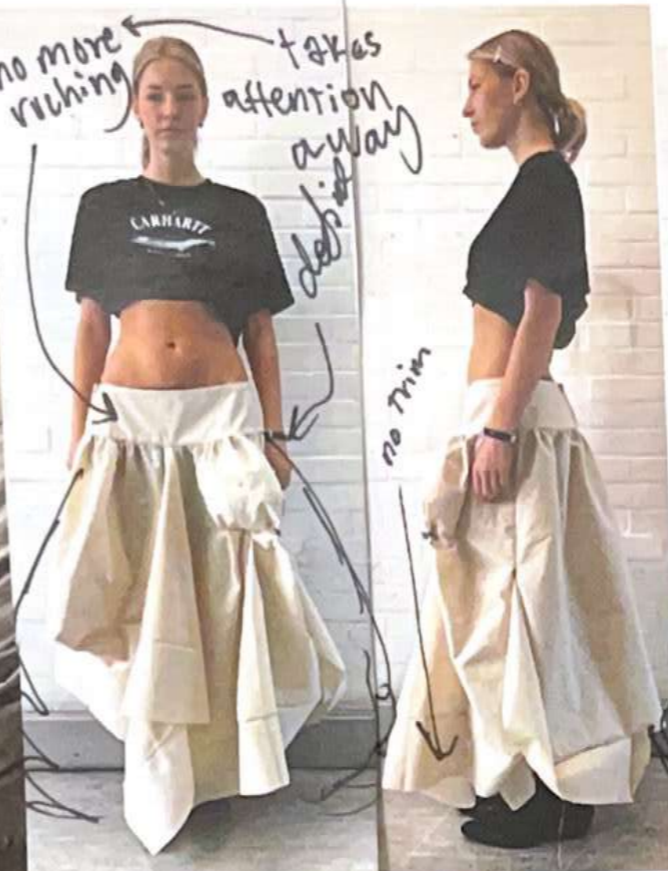
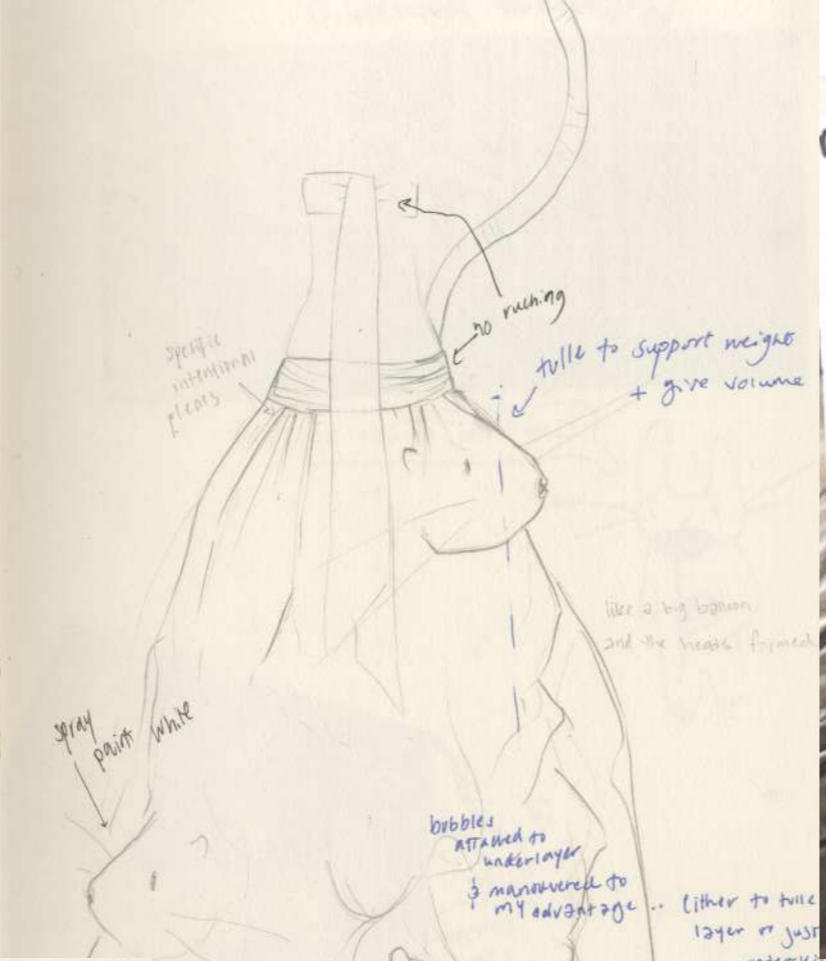




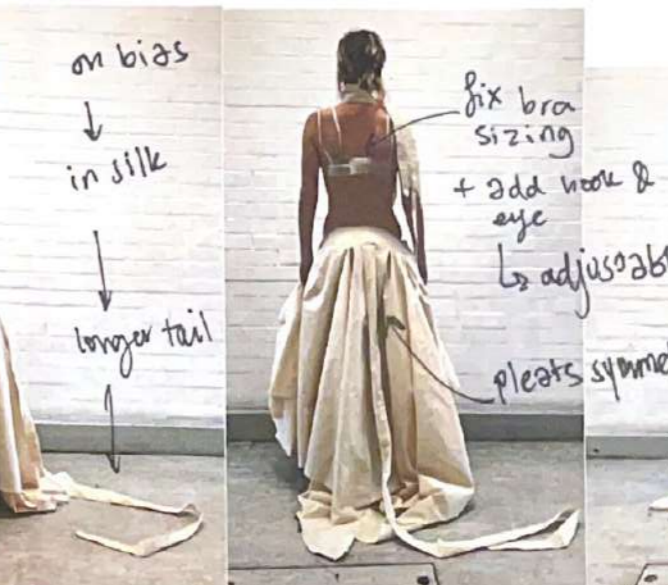
I DON'T WANT GIANT RAT!
IM STRESSED







rat tail comes out of back

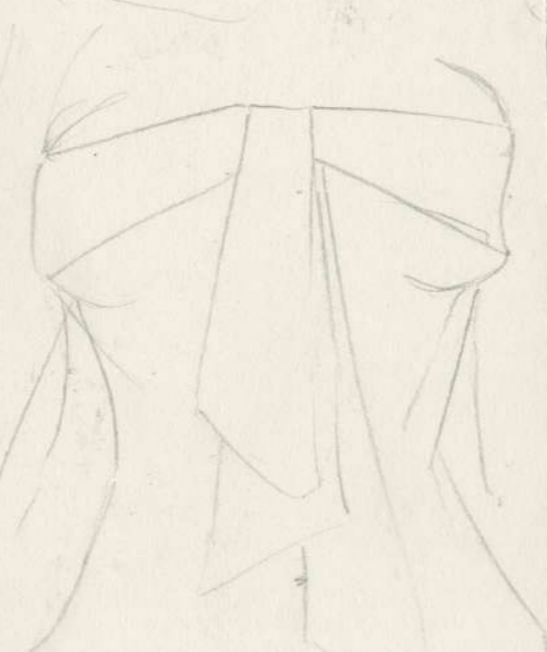


Whole skirt out of white!

so rat head obviously longer - don't want short bubble skirt



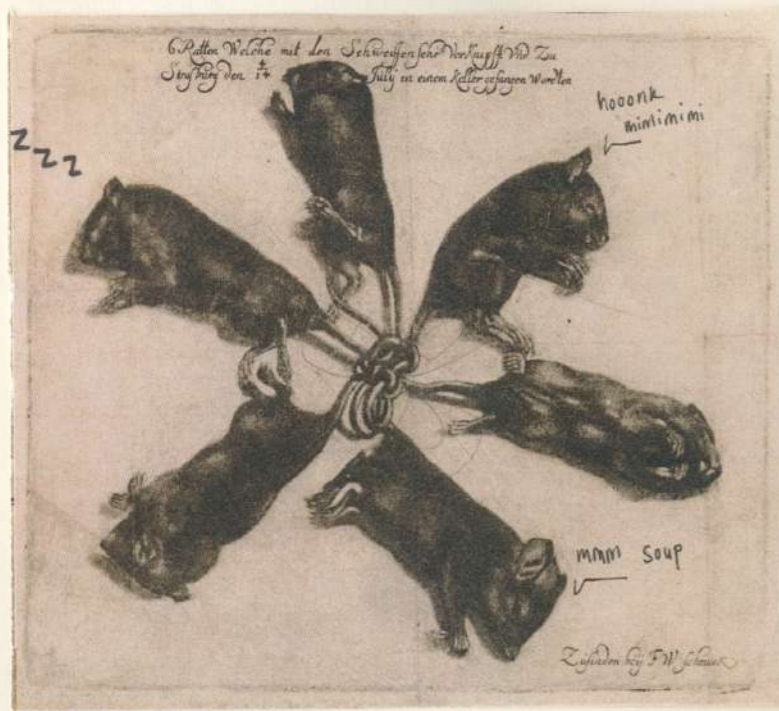
a bit too mousy - want more RAT + defined so needs to be made + attached





Sweet stuff looks
very
cute on you
→
girl





documented throughout the years
never confirmed to be naturally occurring

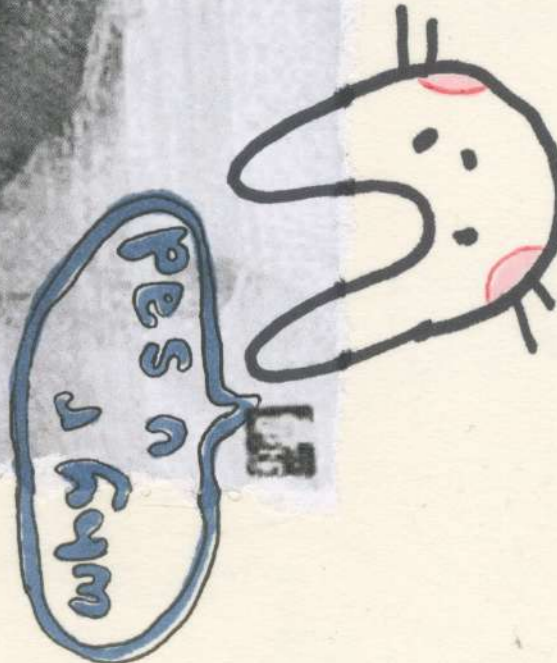
no confirmation on authenticity
it is a false "found" object

they are so heavily tangled together
that they are unable to separate & die
would this be done post mortem? as a
sick experiment when they're alive?
or is it just buddies in a confined space
forgetting where their tails are

maybe they're all just best
friends who got sneezy together



they r all just so small
and cute! like me :)



so floppy and soft...



faux suedel
cotton moleskin
fabric...
for... but not
weird symmetric
ugly fur...
secondhand real?
or something
unique ...

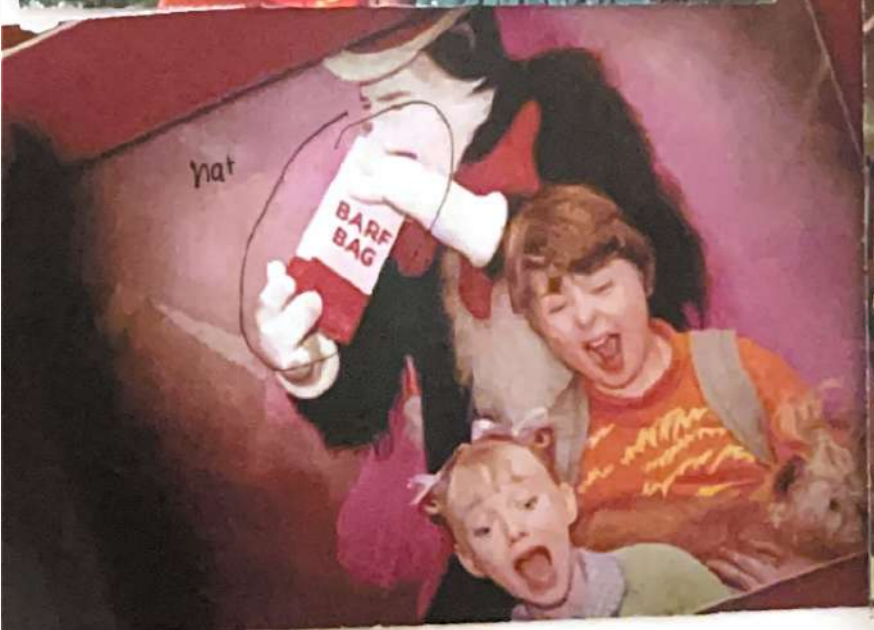
tails galore!



me and my friends if anyone even cares. circa 2003



he's not even real



oh kitty... im hungry





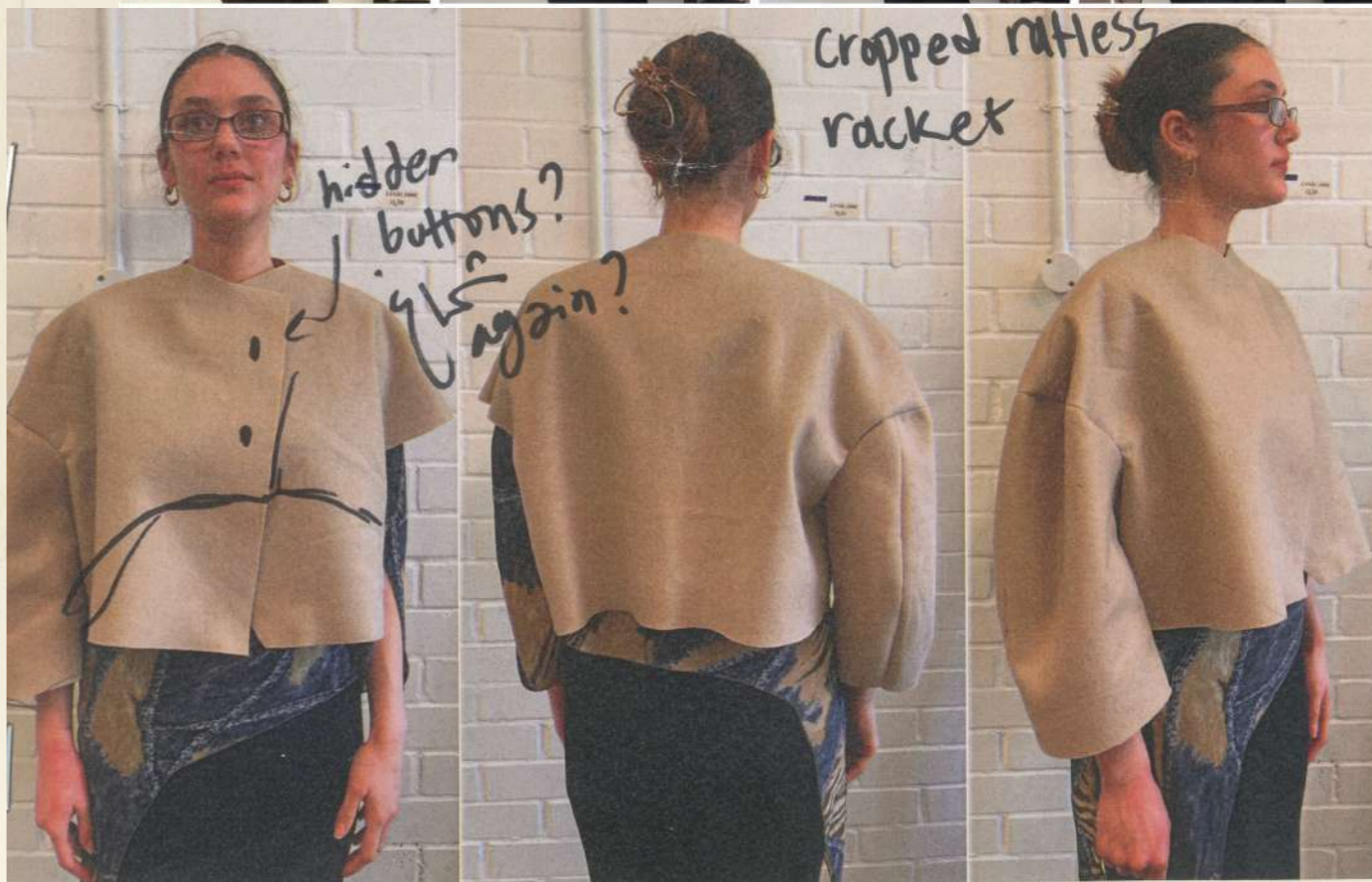
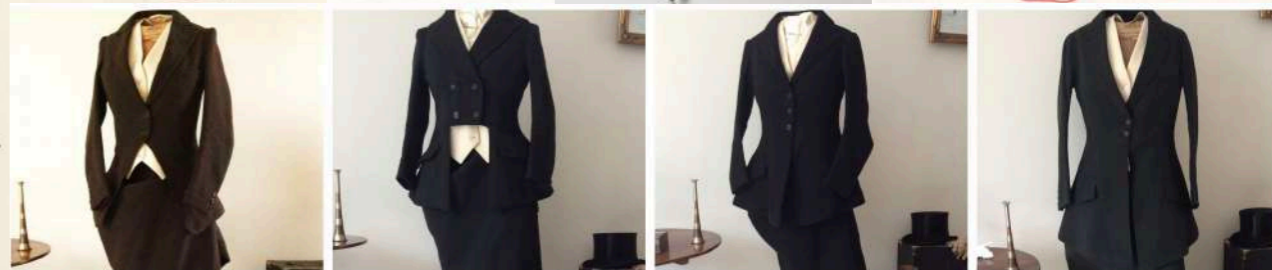
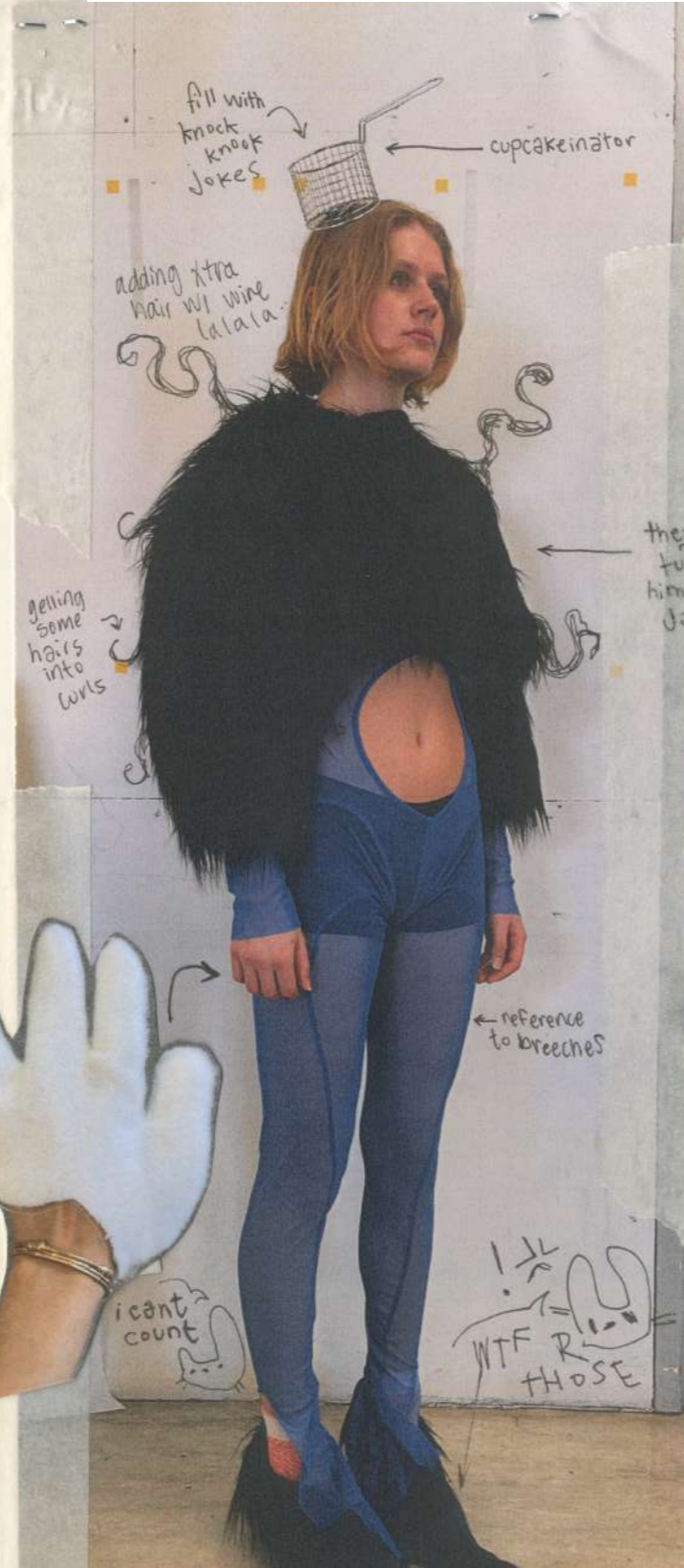
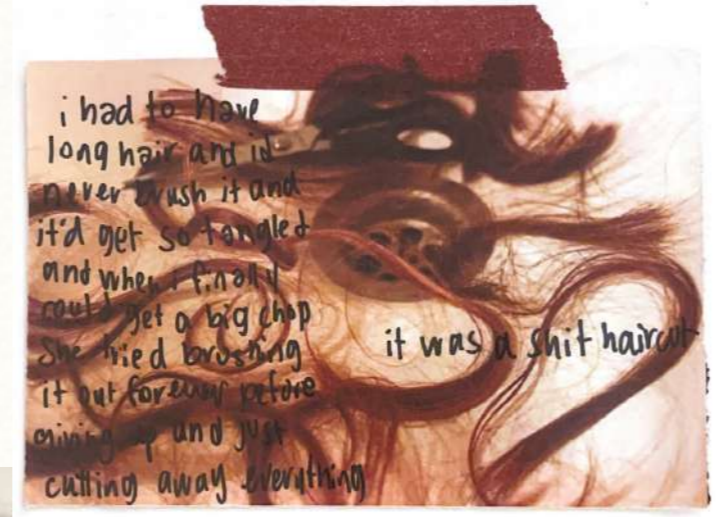
شماغ سعودي



REAL CAT FUR!
(not actually)





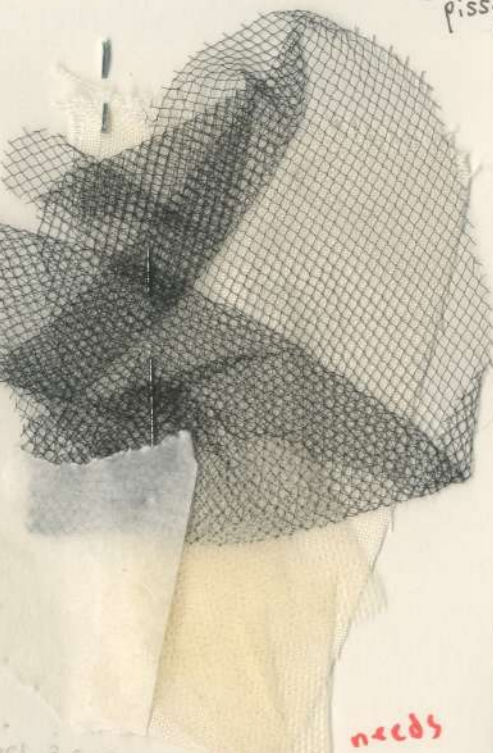




y bride ...

rip lil man... 

zoe pissed off....



bridal inspired bodice



needs bigger heads! 

layer black tulle over cream

use as shading to create rat eyes + nose + other deets

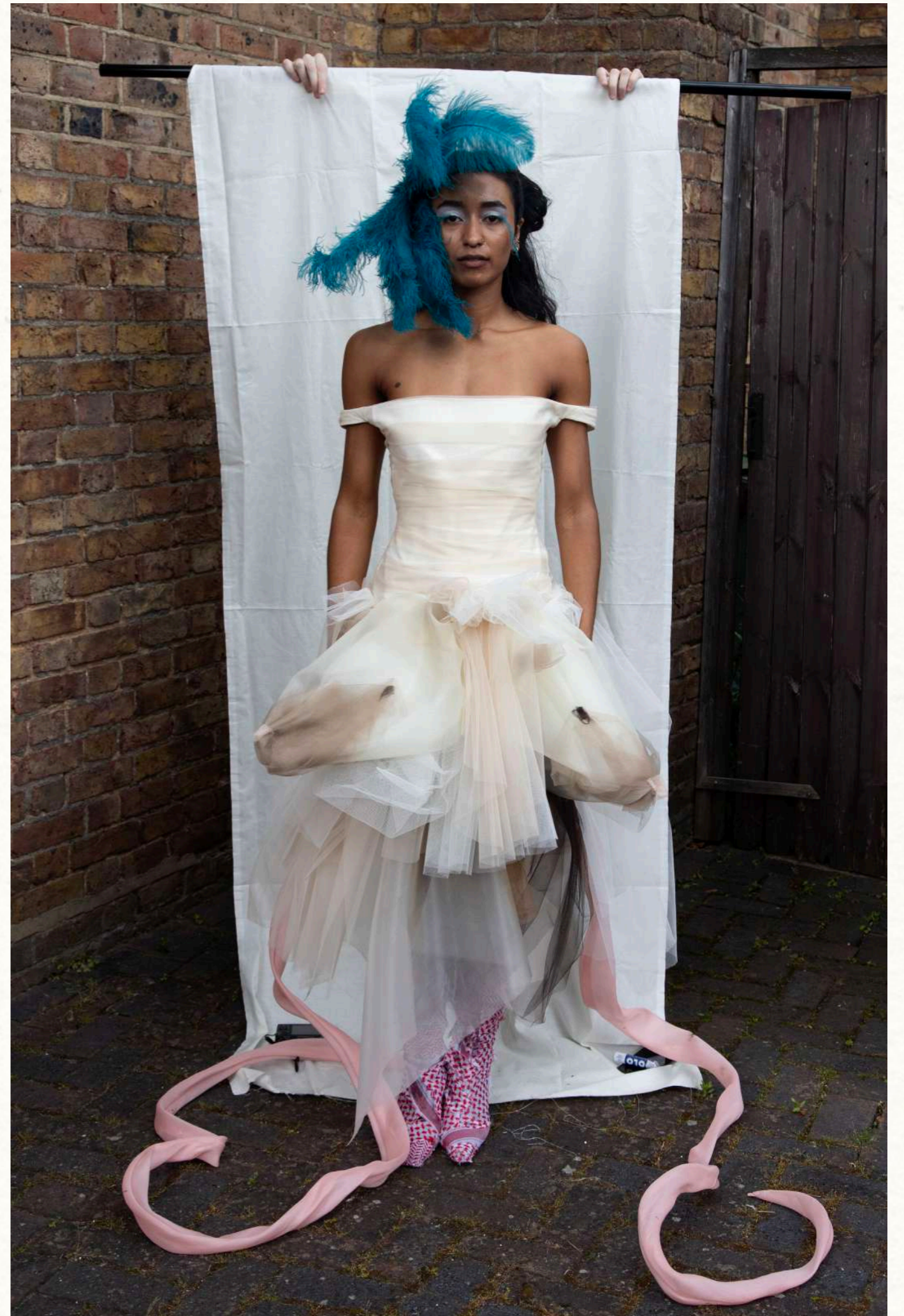
just double cream darker no deets to shade

bouncy tails using steel millinery wire

silk bias cut rat tails

think of late 1800s - early 1900s side saddling...





Loyal

sweet
Loyal
stuff



Loyal