

LET US EAT CAKE



ROMY MONAGHAN





THE CONCEPT

This project is centred around cake and dining, a subject which across many cultures is a cause for joy and celebration. Cake brings people together and is the centrepiece to memorable experiences. It offers an appreciation of life, diversity and people. The visual extravagance, colour and artistic nature of cake decoration demonstrates the energy and joy it - physically and emotionally - brings to the table.

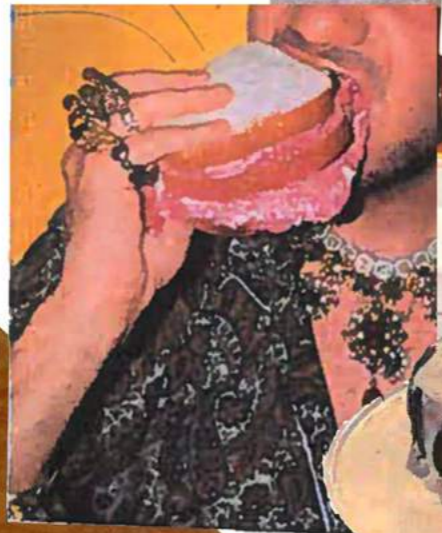
Moreover, the concept examines how emotional associations with cake-making and dining can be linked to the significance of clothing in a person's life. Through spontaneity or delicacy, the creative expression that goes into cake making can be reflected in the way one dresses themselves. Using the metaphor of cakes and picnics - a social and nostalgic subject for many, my work advocates for the emotional placement a garment must have in a wearer's life to incentivise its upkeep and longevity. Constructing garments with whole knitted panels and pattern-cutting techniques inspired by the way cakes are wrapped, the collection ensures minimal wastage throughout manufacture. Many garments take direct influence from a picnic blanket, where construction is entirely zero-waste and the aesthetic is instead dominated by its bold, tactile materiality.

This approach to garment design is important to me, as I believe adorning the body with intricately designed textiles allows garments to fulfil a longer lifespan. By designing more fluid, adaptable silhouettes, garments can support a wearer through changes in their lifestyle, whilst also offering potential for the textile's future regeneration. Alongside this, enticing tactile and aesthetic qualities in a garment are integral factors in creating a bond with the wearer, urging its upkeep and physical durability. These values are particularly vital in contributing to positive changes in the fashion industry's environmental footprint.



THE PICNIC BLANKET

● The picnic: a gathering of people united with an eclectic array of food, drinks and cakes. The atmosphere buzzes with an appreciation of the outdoors, good weather (finally!), and good company. ● Moreover, the eclectic nature of the spread of picnic food brings a sense of celebration, surprise, and vibrancy. Care and consideration has influenced each dish's making, packaging, and sharing with others. ● The emotional values brought by a picnic: tactile, social, and spontaneous, can be applied to fashion. Clothing must promote enjoyable and cherishable experiences to the wearer as well as serving functional purpose to facilitate its prolonged usage by the wearer. If the same sensibilities present in picnic gatherings and food preparation were applied to clothing, a garment would maintain a stronger emotional placement in a wearer's life.



● Similar thinking can be applied to cake. Cake is a subject commonly associated with celebration, nostalgia, and excitement. Throughout history and across every culture, cake is a cherishable item to be shared and enjoyed.

● Additionally, cakes are a visual centerpiece of colour, texture and elaborate decoration. Icing piped meticulously with beaded trims, or three lopsided homemade layers spontaneously loaded with berries and sprinkles... the construction of a cake is an opportunity for creative freedom, expression, spontaneity.



PICNIC ATTIRE

HISTORICAL TO CONTEMPORARY...

● Aiming to capture the appropriate aesthetic for a picnic scene in my spring/summer collection, I expanded my contemporary fashion research to find how other designers have created summery, romantic, eclectic styles. ● Looking at historical archived pieces by French designer Marithe Francois Gerbaud, and more recent pieces by Vivienne Westwood, Celine, and Margiela, I collaged and styled some standouts. ● This drove a research method where I styled my own clothes to create spontaneously mismatching outfits.



● I began creating knitting samples of checks, stripes and other prints using punch cards on the domestic machine and knit-weave techniques on the industrial to reflect the eclectic, bold and textural nature of a picnic blanket. This urged me to incorporate knitwear into my silhouette designs.

● Other fabrics sourced from local Scottish mills, such as deadstock wool from MacNoughton's Group, informed this aesthetic. Woolen stripes and checks created diverse and clashing combinations of prints. Sourcing fabric and yarn locally is an important value in my practice for providing cultural context and heightened sensitivity towards customers within my designs, and moreover, also is the ecological benefits of using deadstock

WRAPPING: HOW THE PACKAGING OF FOOD CAN INFLUENCE FASHION DESIGN?

● After encountering a book called 'How to Wrap 5 More Eggs' which drew upon the careful and delicate style of Japanese paper packaging methods, I thought of the tenderness and care which goes into baking and prepping food for celebration. ● This approach to food packaging should be enacted in the treatment of clothing. Food, in particular cakes, is packaged and handled with delicacy in the knowledge that it will be sent on a journey to be shared and enjoyed by someone. If a garment carried the same emotional value, it would be cared for in the hope of extensive enjoyment and usage. Simultaneously, cherishing and upkeeping clothing correctly will result in its longevity.



● The beauty in the accidental appearance of parcels of food, strung tightly with a string or ribbon also proposes a method of zero-waste materiality; an opportunity for sustainable practice in the fashion industry today. ● If garments were structured through folds, scrunching and tying rather than typical cut-and-sew methods of tailored clothing, enticing silhouettes can still be created while optimizing and adorning a textile in its whole form. This would reduce offcuts whilst also enabling adaptability of sizing and future garment regeneration, ultimately enhancing its longevity. My silhouette development became informed by these packaging methods, such as the 'Jam Jar' method (see right).

THE FEATHER ICING KNIT



● A patisserie classic: the feather icing technique is a traditional cake decoration and delicacy common in Europe, from Mr Kipling's French Fancies, Bakewell slices and Millefeuille. The marbled icing is as enjoyable to create as it is delicious to eat...



● Initially using a punch card on the domestic knitting machine, I explored larger prints using AYAB digital knit technology. Combining the icing motif with felted lambswool ties together traditional celebration cakes with the woolen tactility and aesthetic of picnic blankets.



PROTOTYPE & SKETCH DEVELOPMENT



● Design development largely intends to combine the extraeagence of cakes with the sensitivity, traditional, yet ecclectic nature of picnic attire and rugs. This included use of wool, stripes, checks and the feather icing print.

● Silhouettes aimed to reflect these values too, with zero-waste construction being at the center of pattern cutting. Experimenting with ruching and tying, I used large stretches of fabric with minimal cutting in order to create dyanmic silhouettes which mimicked my 'packaging' and 'picnic rug' research motifs. This included accessorizing garments with handkerchiefs of my felted knits.



Make base inside out
Make bottom rim hem 2cm
5A
easy



22/22. 5 inches



DEVELOPMENT OF FELTED KNIT

- The felted garments aligned with the 'RUG' concept, such as both the boldness of prints/colours on wool, as well as the structure of the garments being large, spacious silhouettes tied and draped around the body like a blanket would be.
- The felts were knitted on a domestic knitting machine using 'AYAB' software to translate my digitally generated icing prints onto the machine. After knitting, each panel was washed at 40 degrees in order to transform into felt, before being steamed, heat pressed, and sewn.
- The patterns aim for a zero-waste approach; for example, the coat consists entirely of 30 rectangular panels assembled together in a kimono style, whereas the jacket contains numerous panels which were sized and knitted as closely to each pattern piece's dimensions as possible.

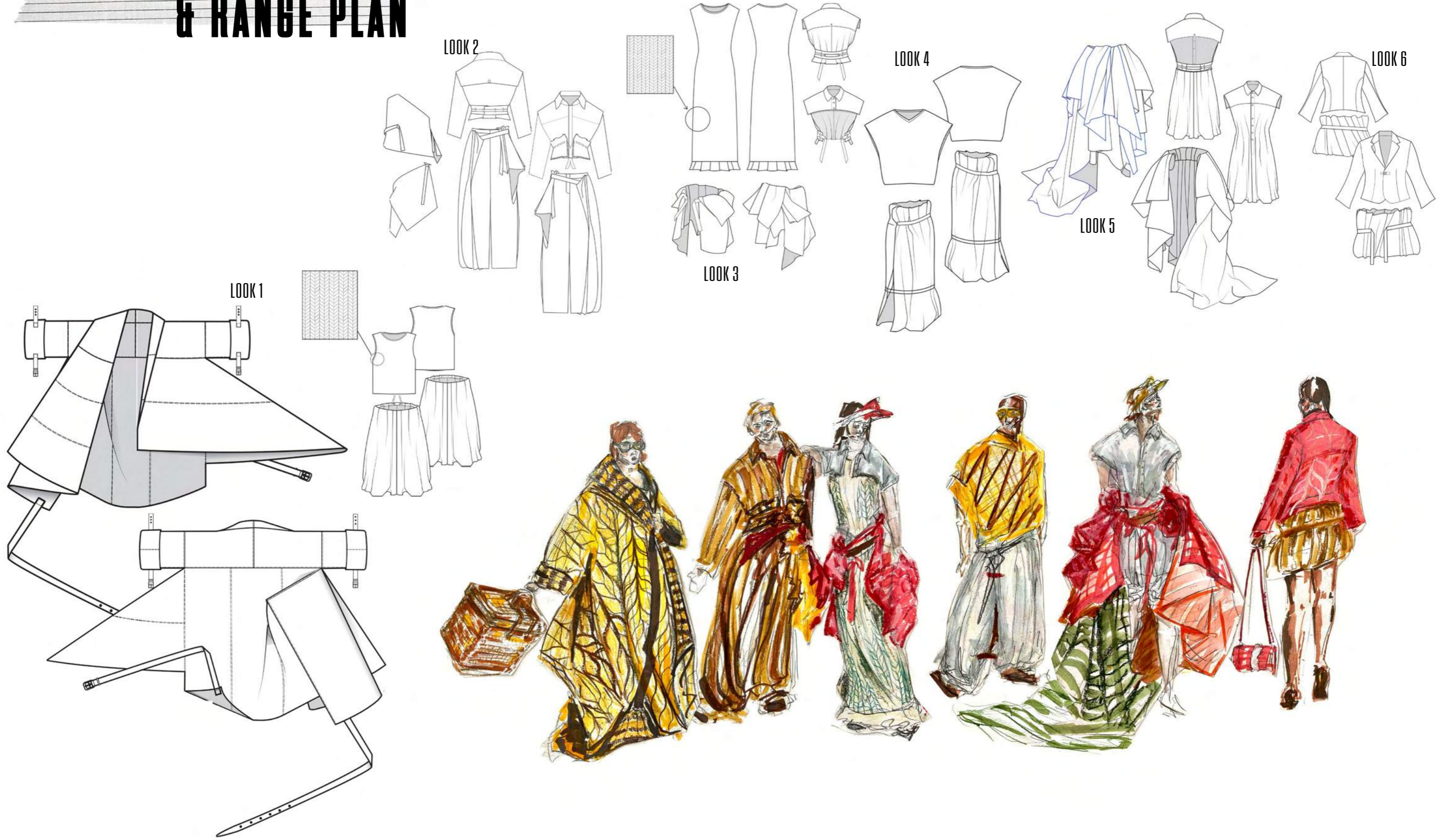


SWATCHES & RESOLVING LINE-UP



● Sketch development to decide on final fabrics. Sketch and prototype development incorporated a waterproof/outerwear fabric- such as the donated Burberry twill, shirting fabric and striped wool in various colours from McNoughton Mill's deadstock fabric in Perth. ● Considering a variety of fabric weights when matching with my felted lambswool, I opted for the light shirting fabric donated by Margaret Howell, and in order to counter the potentially formal/suited aesthetic of this pinstripe, I paired with a heavier wool for its resemblance to the 'picnic rug' aesthetic of bold stripes and prominent grain. Final illustrations aimed to reflect the bold clashes of my knitted textiles and fabrics, using mixed media to do so.

FINAL LINE UP & RANGE PLAN





LOOK I





LOOK 2



LOOK 3



LOOK 4

