



PARERE



## Designer's note

The following is a fashion design thesis portfolio. The research is done purely from a fashion designer's perspective and it will not include speculation or statements about health in any way. The opinions presented in this thesis are the designer's own unless otherwise stated. They are formed from personal experiences and deductive processes, panel conversations from online communities as well as articles written on the subject. Taken that – to designer's knowledge – plus size fashion has not been under excessive inspection on a university level before, the research material for this thesis has been primarily collected from interviews with people tied to the plus size fashion industry.

LUAS Institute of Design  
Design major  
Fashion design  
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BA thesis  
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138 pages



**PLUS SIZE  
FASHION DESIGN**

**FAT  
REPRESENTATION**

**BODY POSITIVITY**

**YAYOI KUSAMA**

**PRINT ON PLASTIC**

## ABSTRACT

My thesis PARERE is a spring / summer conceptual collection for plus size women. In the research I open up the design process of plus size wear. In the collection I handle the aspects of fat women often seen as negative through foil print. Inspired by the Narcissus Garden installation by Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, I use unconventional materials, such as plastic in the making of PARERE.

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## TIIVISTELMÄ

Opinnäytetyöni PARERE on konseptuaalinen kevät / kesä mallisto pluskoon naisille. Tutkimusosiossani avaan pluskoon muotisuunnittelun tuotekehityksen prosessia. Mallistossani käsittelem usein negatiivisina nähtyjä lihavan naisen attribuutteja folioprintin avulla. PARERE:n epätavalliset materiaalivalinnat, kuten muovi, ovat inspiroituneet japanilaisen taiteilija Yayoi Kusaman Narcissus Garden installaatiosta.

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# DICTIONARY

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<b>androgynous:</b>	Being neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine, as in appearance or behaviour
<b>basic block pattern:</b>	Basic pattern that has been constructed from a person's measurements and serves as a base for the block pattern for the other styles of a collection
<b>bbw:</b>	an internet term, short for big, beautiful women, often used in a pornographic context
<b>blanket term:</b>	Word or a phrase used to describe multiple groups of related things, f.ex, white/black/asian (people), or R&B music
<b>body con:</b>	common term for a skin tight body conscious dress or skirt that emphasizes the contours of the body
<b>body positive movement:</b>	A feminist movement that promotes loving one's body and self and actively. Exists most actively in the online blogging environment.
<b>desexualisation:</b>	To take away the sexual quality of something or someone, to deprive of sexual character
<b>fair trade:</b>	Organized social movement that aims to help producers in developing countries to make better trading conditions and promote sustainability.
<b>fatshion:</b>	made up term by the body positive fashion blogging community, short for fat fashion
<b>fatphobia / fat shaming / fat discrimination:</b>	Oppressive and insulting behaviour due to bias way of thinking. Assumptions are based on a person's weight and size.

<b>fit(ing) model:</b>	A person used by a fashion designer or clothing manufacturer to check the fit, drape and visual appearance of a design or basic block pattern mock up. Key measurements consist usually of height, bust-waist-hip circumference, arm length, shoulder width and other key measurements depending on the design and garment type. Grading of the design is often tested on a variety of fitting models. For female models there are five basic types of fit: junior, contemporary, missy, petite and plus size.
<b>infantilisation:</b>	To treat or condescend to as if still a young child, to reduce to and infantile state or condition
<b>marker:</b>	Patterns of one garment laid down on fabric width for cutting
<b>nonbinary:</b>	A.K.A genderqueer; refers to any gender that is not exclusively male or female. Nonbinary people use they/them pronouns instead of he/him or she/her.
<b>plus size:</b>	Over the range of straight sizes, US 14, EU 44, UK 16 and above
<b>pochari / pocha pocha:</b>	japanese for 'chubby', a more polite term than 'debu' which translates to 'fatty'
<b>pochative:</b>	made up term by plus size fashion magazine La Farfa. It is combined from words 'pochari' and 'positive'
<b>straight sizes:</b>	Regular sizes, typically from EU 34 to EU 44
<b>user friendly vs. practical:</b>	Designs are made with user's comfortability in mind, but aesthetics have not been compromised for practicality (such as product care, material etcetc)
<b>w sizes:</b>	Women's sizes, marked with a W in the front of a size label. Used in the US, has a more womanly fit compared to the smaller "junior" sizing. f.ex. W 18

# FAT

The word fat contains so many different connotations and preconceptions. For women, fat is something that controls our lives from a very young age and long into adulthood. Fat women are talked about but fat women don't get to talk about themselves. They are given the role of bystander when it comes to fashion and lately the pressure has begun to rise to make the fashion scene more inclusive. But why is it that fashion designers fear the fat body so profoundly? What is it that makes fat women settle for more expensive, ill fitting and uninteresting clothes?

Is any of it in any way logical or fair?



# PART 1.

## THE PLUS SIZE WOMAN

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## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH – what and why

The reason I chose the method of qualitative interview is that it allows the exploration of personal views, beliefs and opinions that have little scientific backing. The topic is often very emotional and delicate. Therefore especially when it comes to should and should not's, the values of the interviewee are especially influential to the answers. Many themes concerning the plus size industry and the development of plus size style evolve around personal experiences and expertise which easily get lost in large amounts of data.

A focused interview can be either qualitative or quantitative. (Hirsjärvi – Hurme 2000: 47-48; Routio 2007) The information gathered with the interview is always relative with the research environment. Qualitative interviews always relies on the descriptions of the interviewee and their willingness to discuss the matter. (Kylmä – Juvakka 2007: 79-80)

Themes used as guidelines of the questions should be vague enough to ensure revelation of the multilayer nature of the topic. It is the duty of the interviewer to ensure that all the predetermined themes are covered but the range and depth can vary throughout the process, depending on the interviewee. (Eskola – Vastamäki 2001: 26–27).

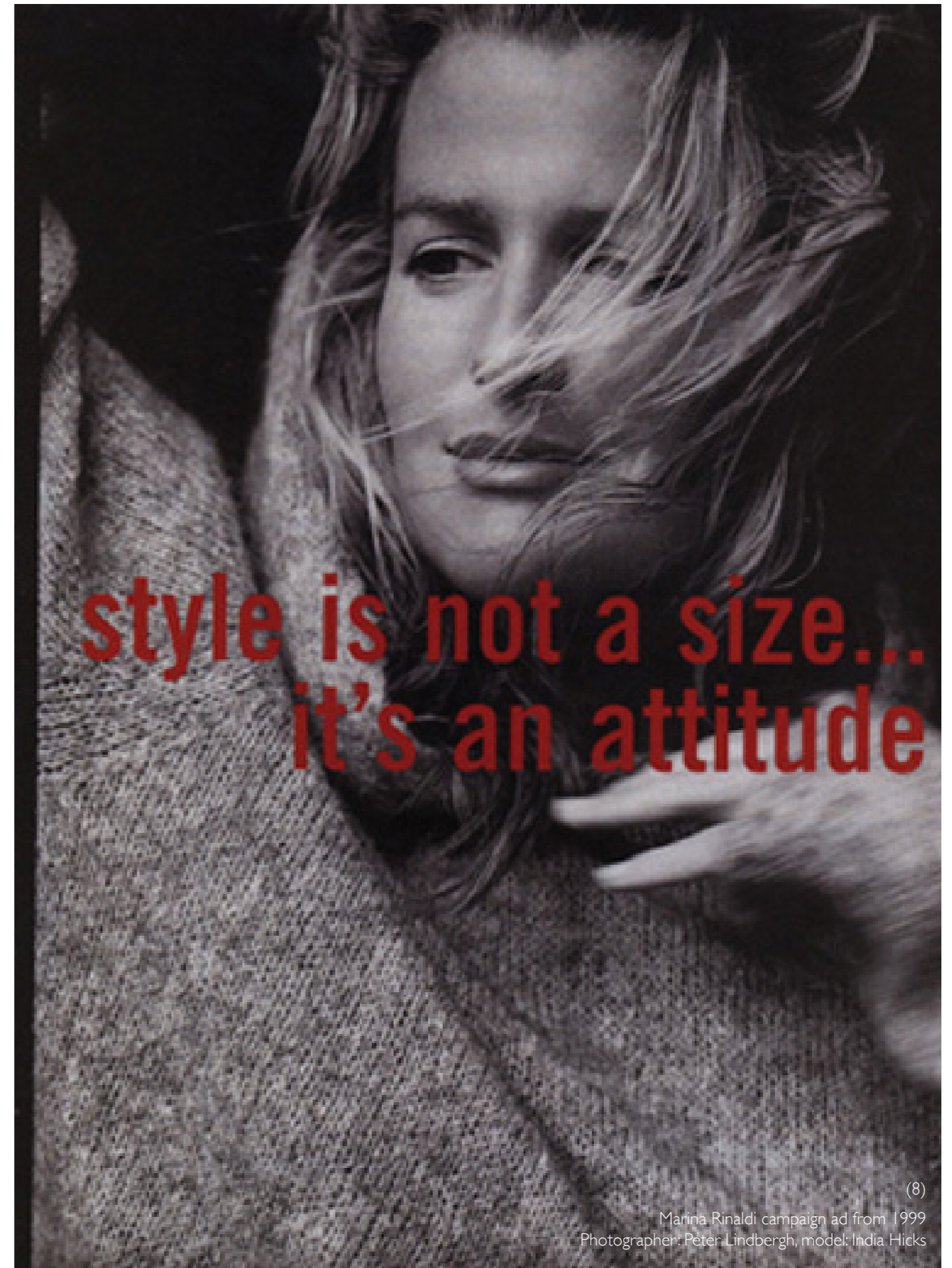
## WHAT IS PLUS SIZE?

Wikipedia defines plus size clothing as follows: *"Plus size clothing is a euphemistic term given to clothing proportioned specifically for people whose bodies are larger than the average person's. When it comes to actual sizing, plus size is identified as US sizes 14-24, super size as sizes 4X-6X and extended size as 7X and up. According to Susan Barone, owner of the online store, Alwaysforme.com, "Plus sizes are sizes 14W - 24W. Super sizes and extended sizes are used interchangeably for sizes 26W and above. Sometimes the size 26W is included in plus size". (PLUSModel magazine 2015.)*

The first plus size line came out from the brand Lane Bryant in the early 1920's labeled to be intended for "stout women". 1977-1998 was the first boom in the plus size fashion due to the baby boomer generation's aging and expected weight gain. However it took until 1980 for the first high end plus size clothing line to emerge. It was called Marina Rinaldi by Max Mara. The first plus-size fashion line to show at Mercedes Benz Fashion Week was "Cabiria", featured in the Fashion Law Institute fashion show at Lincoln Center on September 6, 2013. (Wikipedia 2015, marinarinaldi.com/heritage 2016.)



Cabiria models behind the scenes of the Fashion Law Institute fashion show 2013



(8)  
Marina Rinaldi campaign ad from 1999  
Photographer: Peter Lindbergh, model: India Hicks

Nowadays there is a legitimate fixed market for plus size fashion. In the UK alone, there are over 60 brands that offer plus size options (wikipedia 2015). The plus size market's net worth was over 17,5 billion dollars in the year 2014- 5% more than the year before - according to NPD group study. What's more the study defined plus-size' as US size 18 and up, whereas in the fashion industry it starts from the size 12, meaning the growth may well have been much larger.

One of the few high end designers with a plus size agenda is Jean Paul Gaultier. In his SS/2007 haute couture fashion show Jean Paul Coultier used the plus size model Velvet D'amour to showcase his lingerie. After singer Beth Ditto modeled for his plus size looks in his SS/2011 collection in 2010, the artist has actively campaigned in favor of plus size women. In December 2015 Ditto announced that she was going to launch a plus size collection alongside a special-edition T-shirt designed in collaboration with Gaultier.



Beth Ditto promotion shoot for her collaboration collection with Gaultier with the designer's signature corset for Madonna as print.



Above: Beth Ditto closing the Jean Paul Gaultier SS/11 show  
Right: Beth Ditto

The most recent triumph for the plus size community was the win of the 14th season of Project Runway designer Ashley Nell Tipton in end of 2015. Tipton came through as one of the four finalists from the initial 16 designers. She was the first designer ever to enter the finale fashion show and win with a plus size collection.

Yet even with these leaps into the right directions, according to Modcloth's survey, only 28% of plus size women feel they are part of the fashion community. (see page 58)



# AIM & OBJECTIVE

For my graduation thesis I am designing a nine look capsule collection for plus size women. The base for the collection is the size C48. The visual starting points for the thesis are Narcissus Garden installation by Japanese artist Kusama Yayoi and the attributes of a fat body.

The aim of my thesis is to study the aspects of the current state of the plus size fashion industry as well as open up the product development process to the consumer. I will open up the social structures such as body shaming and body positivity community that affect the stature of the plus size fashion industry. With my thesis collection I want to contribute my own input to the plus size community.

I hope to break stereotypes of how plus size women are supposed to present and dress themselves. In the collection I wish to challenge the idea that clothes should be flattering or slimming as default. I wish that my thesis collection arises as much attention as possible. I want the products of the collection to embody uniqueness and a sense of prestige. I will achieve this by for example using foil printing on plastic. Fat women are a fast growing demographic of fashion yet are also one of the largest underdogs in the industry. Their needs are hardly met as consumers. To my knowledge, there is next to none of academic study on the matter and overall health seems to dominate the conversation when it comes to plus size fashion. I feel I have know-how to contribute that doesn't focus on health but rather on the aesthetic and the cultural sphere of plus size fashion.

There is a thriving online community of fat and body positivity. It focuses on the normalisation of all, but especially fat bodies. The activities organized by the bloggers of the community as well as the direct cooperation with fashion brands has led to a steady improvement of the stance of plus size women. By absorbing the influence of the movement to my thesis collection and using its conversations as research material I am on my own part validating body positivity as a proper section of modern day feminism.

In both the body positive community as well as amongst the plus size consumers, I've personally noticed a growing discontent towards the state of the fashion industry - especially when it comes to the aesthetic choices of designers. The various differences between straight and plus sizes, such as the availability and price of the products, cause anger and uncertainty among the userbase. My goal in my thesis is to open up the causes of this discontent in layman's terms.

I am myself an active member of the body positivity blogging community. With my own personal experiences I have managed to study the problems of the plus size fashion scene for some time now. During my school years I've designed plus size products on several occasions and gathered feedback on them from different groups of people. I want to enhance the exposure of plus size women in fashion and I believe my thesis collection will bring new perspective into the conversation.

On top of several qualitative interviews with people of different careers as well as feminist literature I will use my own subjective experiences as a fat woman in the development of my thesis collection. Additionally my perspective as a fashion designer will help in the process.

I believe that by breaking the rules of how fat women should present themselves I will generate the strongest impact with my collection. With the use of self-irony I strive to challenge the viewer to question their view of the right and wrong way to dress and desert the idea that flattering should outweigh interesting when it comes to design. With my products, I intend to emphasize how odd materials, purely aesthetic choices and imaginativeness are valid options in plus size fashion design just as much in the regular size design. Therefore, even though me taking the inspiration for my collection from a fat body's attributes might seem grotesque, channeling it to fashion will lighten the political message of my collection and make it more easily approachable.

The dominating visual elements in my collection will be layers, see through -effect, opposites and lush forms.



Some of Ashley Nell Tipton's Project Runway Season 14 Finale collection looks on the runway (13)

## THESIS RESEARCH QUESTIONS

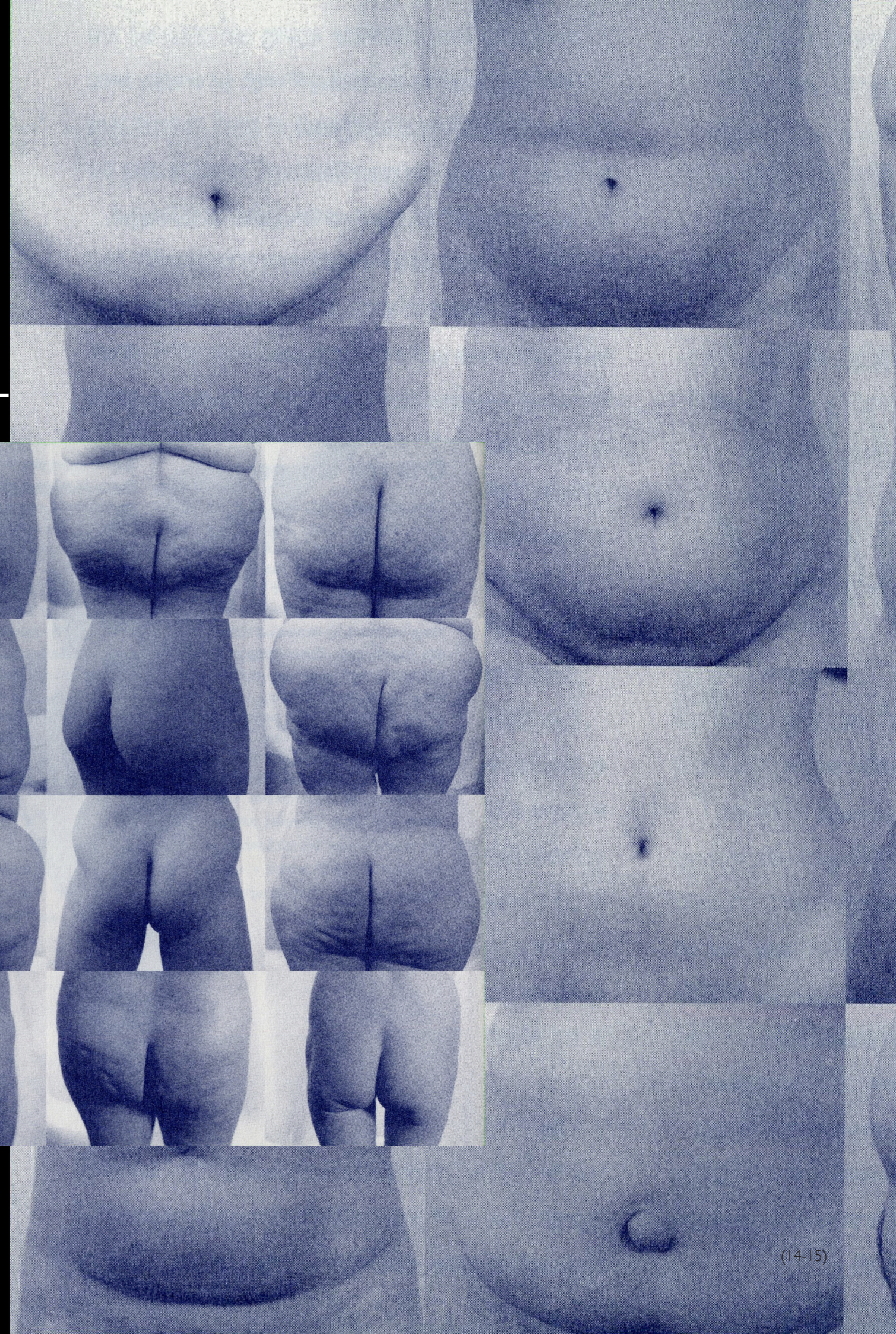
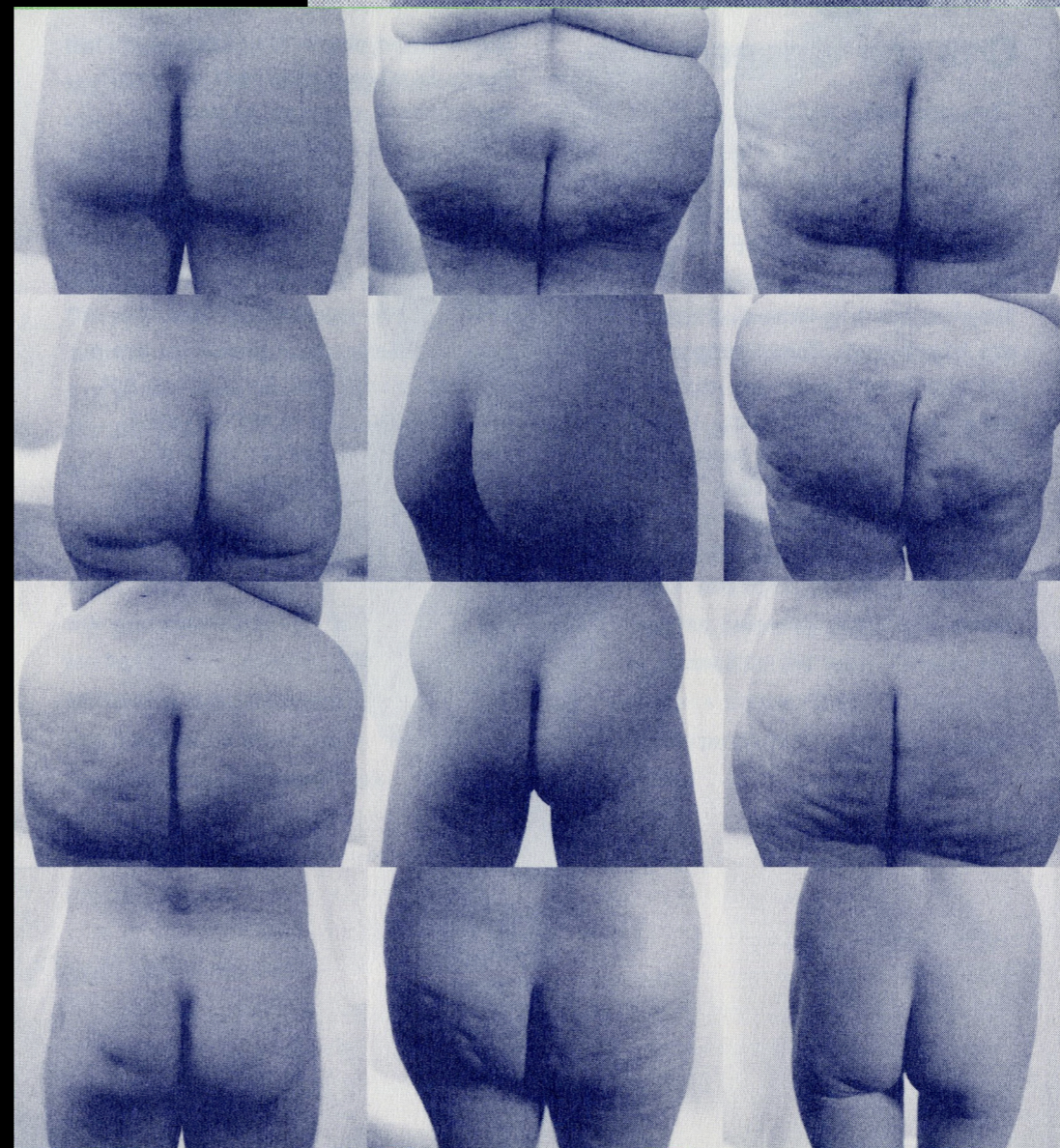
1. WHAT IS THE PLUS SIZE DESIGN PROCESS LIKE AND DOES IT DIFFER FROM THE PROCESS OF STRAIGHT SIZES?

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2. HOW TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF PLUS SIZE WOMEN?

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3. HOW IS THE STATURE OF PLUS SIZE WOMEN AS FASHION CONSUMERS?



## FAT REPRESENTATION & THE IMPACT OF FAT PHOBIA

Just to be clear: beauty standards set by the society and enforced by the media affect every single woman. They are harmful to everyone. In the awarded feminist documentary *MissRepresentation* (2011, directed by Jennifer Siebel Newsrom) it is stated that 53% of 13 year old girls are unhappy with their bodies. That number increases to 78% by the age of 17.

*"You never see an image of a beautiful woman that has not been digitally altered and girls are pressurised to achieve this idea younger and younger,"* sums up filmmaker Jean Kilbourne in the documentary.

But when talking about the steady rise of body politics, many old school fat activists have decided to distance themselves altogether from the whole body positivity agenda. *"In recent years, fat positivity has largely been subsumed into "body positivity," a toothless shadow of the overtly politicized embodiment the former once embraced. Body positivity applies to everyone, it treats all bodies the same, and it places the insecurities of a slender, conventionally-attractive young woman in her early 20s on the same level as the psychological gauntlet run by a middle-aged woman wearing a size 28 who dares to go to the beach in a bikini."* summarises blogger and a long time fat activist Lesley Kinzel. (2015)

Fat is so much more than just body mass. Existing while fat has become a political statement in modern society. Being fat does not limit to the person who is fat but the whole social structure reinforces it. Representation is everything. *"You can't be what you can't see"* states Marian Wright Edelman in *MissRepresentation*. It's precisely that.

It would be beneficial to all women that there'd be more diversity in fashion. *"The new career woman is always thin. The competent mother is always thin. The middle aged woman returning to work is always thin. Images of (the new) women are always presented to us as thin and such ideas about thinness become insinuated into each woman's sense of herself so that she sees thinness as an important part of the way she should be"* (Susie Orbach: *FIFI*, 1989). In today's society the whole idea of proper womanhood is capitalized and corporations use the media to make money of our insecurities. After all, the billion dollar dieting business fueled by self loathing seems to be far more profitable than encouraging fat women to enjoy themselves.

But could we just stop fearing the f-word already and state out the obvious? Being fat is something that is rude to point out because it is seen as a failure of character. There are so many negative connotations to the word fat: it is used as a synonym for lazy, uninteresting, dumb, incompetent, and unattractive. The founder of Universal Standard clothing, designer Alexandra Waldman said that *"Plus-size women are too often seen as uncool, unstylish or even not affluent enough to be worth catering to. As a plus-size woman, I really honestly don't think that this is going to change until we change our perception of beauty. It's like they've (retailers) been walking away from cash on the table for a very long time. They will not do it until the bigger girls are considered beautiful and attractive, and that's perhaps when they will create something in a more inclusive size range."* (mic)



(16)

Simply Be's body love campaign in response to Protein World's weight loss campaign presented in London's subway in spring 2015

Above all, being fat means to hide. It feels like society is built on the construct that life begins once one is thin. That is why the body positive movement has met such aggressive opposition. The resentment for this movement stems from these women being challenging, selfish and loud about themselves rather than hiding and hating every inch of themselves. Fat people are encouraged to be so held up by self hatred that they are not supposed to focus on anything else. Bloggers are said to promote unhealthy lifestyle or obesity simply by posting a picture of themselves online or stating publicly that they don't hate themselves for being fat.

Admittedly during the past few years the situation has seemingly improved for fat women. The body positivity movement is seeping to the fashion world and women are seen challenging dieting campaigns and demanding more diverse representation. The plus size blogging community has become more and more important for the userbase. It's also gaining credibility and some brands are smart enough to take advantage of it (see the chapter "why is it nowhere to be seen"). In 2015 plus size model Tess Holliday, size US 22 (EU 52) was enlisted by Milk Model Management making her the largest plus-size model to be signed to a mainstream modeling agency. It's undeniable that her success as a model is an improvement.

There have been several campaigns telling women to reclaim their bodies. Lane Bryant's I'm No Angel campaign, Dove's several body love campaigns, mainstream brands such as H&M's 2013 beachwear campaign, alongside with almost every plus size section head banner. However, usually the displayed bodies are either regular sized bodies with a few rolls here and there or smoothly photoshop toned fat bodies with larger breasts and hips. This problematic phenomenon culminates in Calvin Klein's "Perfectly Fit" campaign in November 2014, starring Myla Dalbesio. Dalbesio is a size 10, which corresponds to a EU38. The media was quick to label her as the first plus size model to star a Calvin Klein campaign and the internet went haywire. Amidst the immense backlash the campaign received, she talked about her feelings on being cast as a plus size model in several other campaigns.

The latest similar media outrage was aroused when fashion magazine Glamour added comedian Amy Schumer to their list of plus size women who inspire them. Schumer, size US 6/8 (EU 38), called out the editors in her instagram for falsely labeling her as plus size.

"Plus size is considered size 16 in America. I go between a size 6 and an 8. Glamour Magazine put me in their plus size only issue without asking or letting me know and it doesn't feel right to me. Young girls seeing my body type and thinking that is plus size? What are your thoughts? Mine are not cool Glamour, not glamorous," she criticized in her post. (Amy Schumer, instagram, 2016)



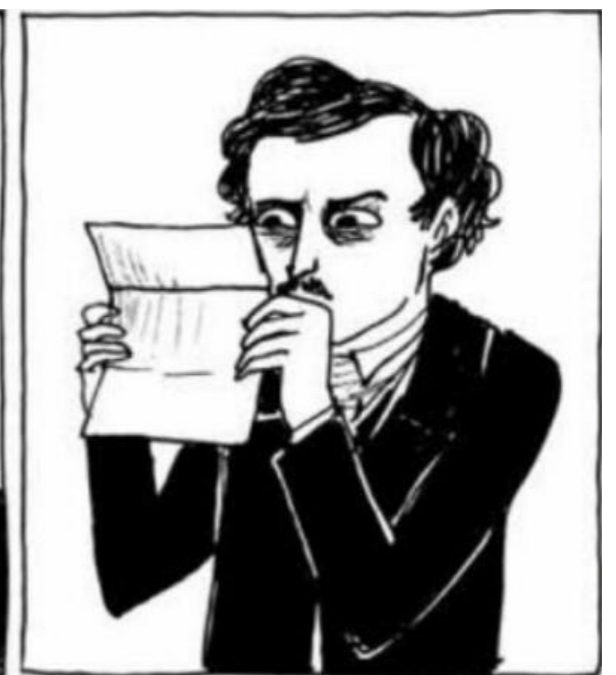
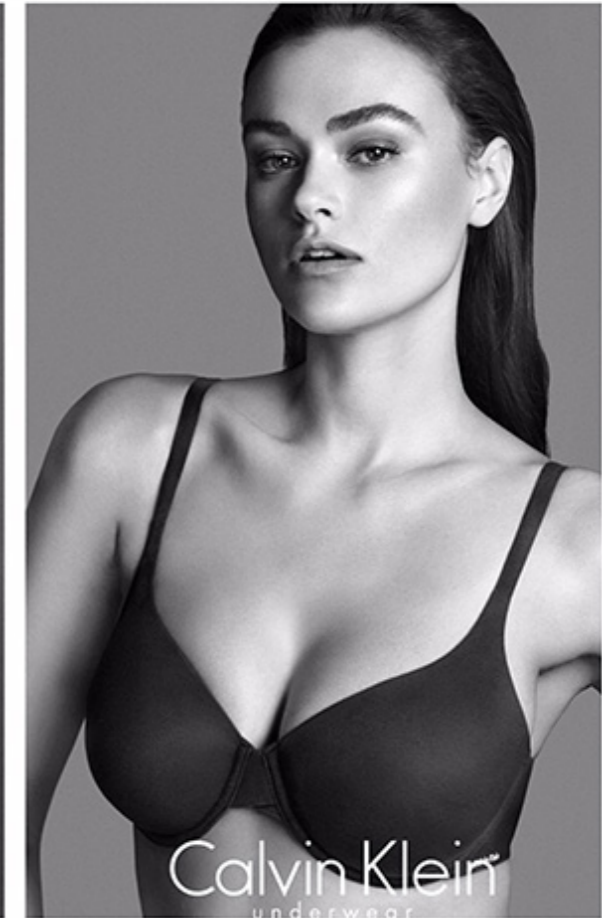
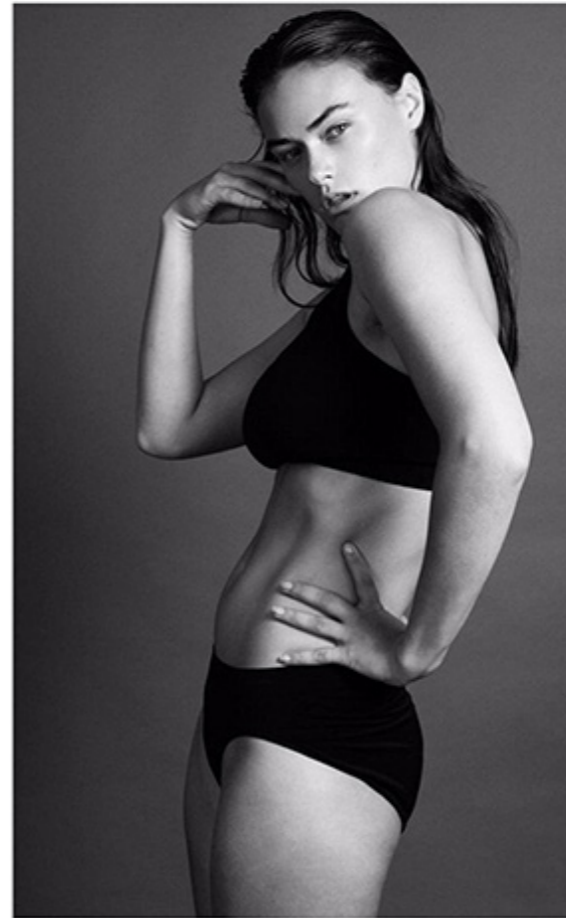
Tess Holliday in Sea swimwear collection by Monif C. in spring 2015

(17)

ELLE ELLE Magazine (US)  
@ELLEmagazine

Follow

The newest plus-size modeling star on why her body isn't a trend:  
<http://t.co/TimRHJUvR9>



Media coverage of Calvin Klein's underwear campaign in 2014 gathered a lot of outraged social media responses

(18)



More often than not high street plus size brands use these size 10 to 12 models and use a special padded underwear to create the perfect hourglass figure. Not only does this take away job opportunities from the actual plus size models, it creates a very disturbing new beauty standard.

Being skinny does not exclude you from being curvy and fat women are just as fat even though they don't have large breasts and booty. It also implies that womanhood is somehow determined by the size of one's chest-waist-hips ratio. This kind of fake, smoothed body positivity is excluding people who don't fall into traditional beauty standards just as badly as the regular kind of media coverage. It is just as bad as using regular sized models to showcase plus size clothes. It is understandable that it's easier to accept new or odd things from a body that represents your own ideal. The good fats bad fats -logic is however creating a false jollygood attitude that the problem is solved and that fat women have achieved equal grounds within the fashion industry.

It's also very disheartening to see many campaigns pit fat and thin women against each other in hopes of seeming body positive. This bitter take on the movement is not only just as disempowering as any other body policing media content, it usually revolves around men. Slogans such as "real women have curves", "only dogs go for bones", or Meghan Trainor's hit song All About That Base lyrics including verses like "Boys like a little more booty to hold at night" lean on the assumption that fat women somehow want and need to get back at thin women especially through the attention of men in order to feel good about themselves.



#EmpowerALLBodies

DIVERSITY  
IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU THINK

## FAT WOMANHOOD

### - hypersexualisation and the big girl collective

The bottom line is that fashion is a key element in achieving and heightening body satisfaction. It would be ignorant to claim otherwise. Having women control the way other people view them is a huge factor in their body confidence and the level of self esteem. Clothing and style communicates to others about a person's values, interests and possibly personality traits. It also allows the wearer to express their sexuality in a way they desire. Basically, what you wear says about who you are, and what you get to wear determines in many ways who you get to be. (Marilynn Wann 1999, p128) With limited clothing style options, expressing their identity is especially hard for for example nonbinary fat people.

Fat is a trait that is not desired in a woman. Therefore fat women are traditionally seen as frowny and unwomanly. (FIFI p92 and la farfa interview) Fat women are thought to not care about how they look or willing to invest in their looks. It is thought as if the fight has already been lost and there is no point in using resources on fat women. They are not seen as proper competitors and maybe that is why there is little motivation to expend plus size selection in fashion.

Sexiness and how women control their sexuality is a big part of the fat/thin dilemma. Being sexy is seen as a woman's duty so in our society sexy basically equals power. Therefore fat women are seen and also feel less powerful than their thin counterparts. As Melissa Afabello has said, "you can't oppress people who have social power." Fat is seen as desexualizing and therefore fat women are forced to execute femininity far more aggressively than skinny people in order to be seen as proper women. F.ex. the so called comfy girl casual aesthetic celebrated with thin women is looked down upon when executed by fat women. (Raisa Omaheimo interview, 2015) This leads to hypersexualisation of fat bodies through presenting them always in lingerie, pin up or otherwise sexualized get up. Turning fat bodies into a fetishized oddity distances fat women from what is considered normal in the society and causes them to be overlooked as normal human beings.

Another dark side of desexualisation is the infantilisation of fat bodies. It is largely practiced in the media and marketing - the so called big girl - collective. In FIFI, Susan Orback says it might be a relief for a fat woman, that her fatness takes them away from the category of a woman and into the androgynous state of a big girl. The word fat has so many negative connotations it's understandable that the fashion industry has been searching for a more working alternative. The f-word has been demonized and people are encouraged to use words like chubby, curvy, or buxom to make the description feel more positive. In retail, plus size lines are often named in attempt to hide the fact that the customer is fat. As much as it might be a positive attempt, it feeds the assumption that fat women ought to hide from the fact that they're fat, behind terms like 'curvalicious', 'bbw'. As if wearing the right clothes could stop them from being fat.

*"Since my chubby self could never resemble Barbie, I never imagined myself as a grown woman." - (Fat!So? p 155)*



## PLUS SIZE OR SIMPLY PEOPLE?

There is a lot of debate on what plus size women should be referred to. Brands tend to shy away from openly pointing out the term plus size and use euphemisms to describe fat women, like big and beautiful, full figured, big girls, great girls, curvy, buxom, stout... the list is endless. Recently people in the plus size blogging community have started to jokingly refer to their demand bigger size as "size fat".

However some plus size models and body activists have claimed that secluding fat women to a specially crafted category is degrading and increases discrimination. Actress Melissa McCarthy stated "You're taking your biggest category of people and telling them, 'You're not really worthy.'" Plus size model Stefania Ferrario posted a statement on her instagram page where she declared "I'm often labelled a 'plus size' model. I do NOT find this empowering.... Let's have models of ALL shapes, sizes and ethnicities, and drop the misleading labels. I'm NOT proud to be called 'plus', but I AM proud to be called a 'model', that is my profession!"

The ones wanting to shake off the plus, argue that it implies there is a definition of normal plus size people are not accomplishing. Considering that in the US the average size is now US14 (EU 46), it's a pretty understandable argument. That's also the sentiment behind the #DropThePlus campaign, which argues that modifiers like plus alienate bigger shoppers and reinforce skinny-as-norm. It's also why ModCloth recently dropped its plus-size category and changed it to "extended sizes". The founder of the brand, Susan Koger argued the term "extended sizes" will allow the company to be even more inclusive in the future, since the term can apply to petite and tall sizes as well. (stylemic.com 2015, bbc.com 2015)

However on the other hand plus size as a term can be used as an empowering tool. For example brand LaneBryant created a campaign called #PlusesEqual to emphasize their effort to amplify the status of their plus size buyers. Some bloggers argue that having a blanket term helps fat women to gather and feel part of a more



specific movement rather than an ambiguous pool of humans. It is also overall practical to have a specified section for plus size options if not all style options in the collection have the extended size range. That way the customer has no problems with finding their wanted size. "I hope we get rid of the word 'plus,'" Universal Standard's designer Polina Veksler told Mic.com "It's a useful term. It's a shortcut term. But I'd like to see the the concept of plus not exist." she summed up.

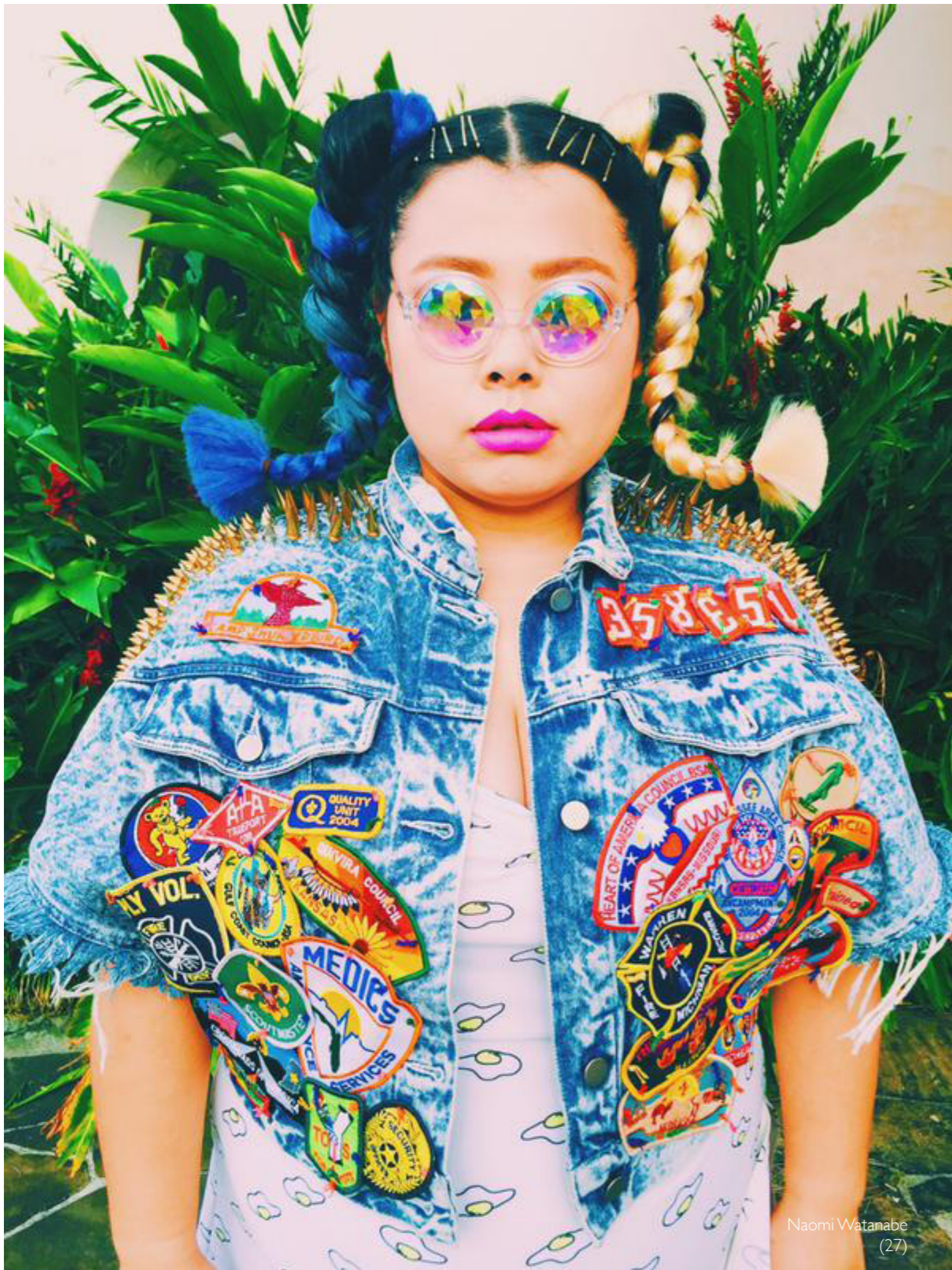
Personally I don't feel offended by the term plus size but rather feel it reflects the industry's situation as it stands at the moment: There are straight sizes and the one's with added length and width, which are called plus sizes. I understand why plus size as a term is partly problematic, but in my opinion, is the best of the current options.



*“People WILL stare.  
Make it worth their while.”*

*– Harry Winston*





Naomi Watanabe (27)



(28)

Now, in order to understand why these cutesy and clearly infantilizing names are actually a good thing, one first must understand the Japanese cultural frame. The “kawaii”-culture (japanese for cute) has defined the concept of beauty quite the opposite to the western way of looking at the matter. Being seen as cute is everything to Japanese women and the social stigma of fat has been draining the self esteem of Japanese fat women especially hard. That is why it is exceptional for an official media outlet to recognise fat women as a valid demographic. As stated earlier, sometimes it helps to have a blanket term creating a positive feel around a phenomenon.

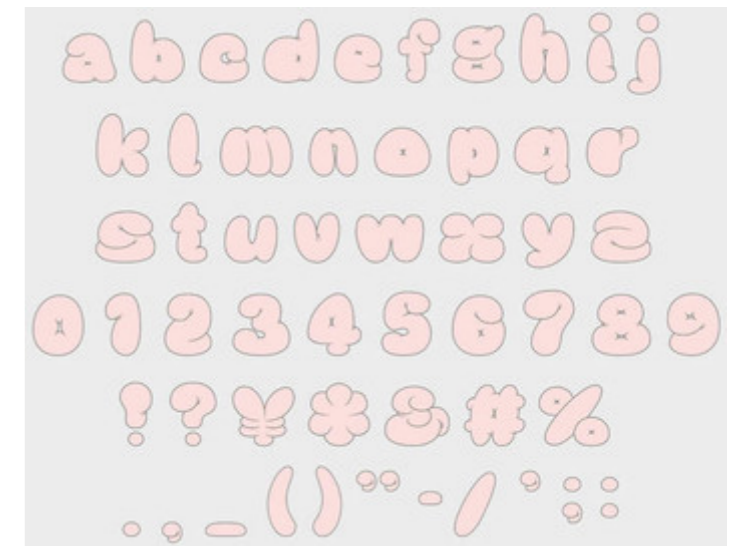
In my interview with the representative Hazayama Kubonoya of La Farfa, we discussed widely about the stature of fat women in Japan. He told me the image of fat women in general has been moody and really unfashionable in Japan. Kubonoya admits to having these preconceptions but the cheerful attitude of the models of the magazines have changed his image of them. Kubonoya claims that this change in image is the most important thing that needs to happen in order for the stature of both plus size fashion and fat women to improve. According to him, social media and rising selfie culture is a major contributor to the exposure of fat women. This normalisation of fat stylish women is showing others that fashionability doesn't require a certain size.

There are several plus size brands in Japan that are doing an exceptional job catering to the needs of their target groups. Punyus is a street style brand that has gained prestige even overseas. Created by the comedian Naomi Watanabe, Punyus offers clothes in both straight and plus sizes. Naomi herself models for the brand often. The brand strives to create an equal ground to plus size and

straight size women and bring fun into the scene of larger sizes. In Punyus the largest available size is 6L which corresponds to EU size 52. (bust 134cm)

SmileyLand is a special case in all ways possible. Their whole concept has been designed to cater to every need of fat customers. Even the layout of the boutiques is specially designed to plus size customers' needs. The passageways are wider; the clothes positioned in order to decrease squatting. The fitting rooms are significantly larger compared to regular ones and there are face wipes and a sitting area. It's also possible to lounge with friends and read fashion magazines while being in the store. The staff of the store consists also entirely of plus size women so the customers are able to get good guidance on size, fit and style.

Both brands are in tight cooperation with the plus size magazine La Farfa. Their products are featured in every edition.



Punyus has even released a special font type to celebrate its positive readers (29)



(30)

## DO'S AND DON'TS OF FAT FASHION

The invisible rules made up by the fashion community are endless. According to *bustle.com* blogger Marie Southard Ospina, the ten no-no's of plus size are the following:

1. Horizontal stripes
2. Skin tight bodycon dresses
3. Crop tops
4. Bright colors or bold patterns
5. Pattern mixing
6. Above knee skirts
7. Shorts
8. Anything sleeveless
9. Printed bottoms
10. Skinny jeans

When talking to La Farfa representative Hazayama Kubonoya about style rules, he stated that they're not set in stone. Trends are a big factor in this. For example, full white has long been seen as a fashion catastrophe for fat people because it's thought to make one appear bigger whereas black is seen as slimming. However Kubonoya states that full white is now seen as fresh, cute and light in Japan and black as harsh and heavy.

La Farfa encourages its readers that there are no rules when it comes to fashion and everybody should wear what they want. For example crop tops and printed bodycons are seen as cute and happy. Kubonoya also emphasizes that all fat women want is to look like anybody else and follow trends and when they do so when, their appearance becomes much more easily acceptable to other people. Just like a regular sized person's.

Kubonoya states that naturally everyone has attributes in their body they want to hide such as their arms, belly or thighs. Large breasts are also a source for insecurity in Japan. In La Farfa there are columns that help to conceal parts of the body that cause insecurity without compromising aesthetics.

定番も! ラファモがガチではいた! トレンドも!

# 人気ブランドパンツ

# はきくらべ31

ぽっちゃりさんのパンツ選びって本当に難しい。「ウエストが入らない…」とか「太ももでアウト…」など、悩みはそれぞれ。サイズ別に3人のラファモがはき、それぞれを真剣に評価しました! 自分のサイズに近い子を参考にしな。

撮影/高嶋佳代 スタイリスト/ヤギ (PUNCH) ヘア&メイク/小坂沙織  
※服のクレジットはアイテム名 サイズ展開 ¥への順で表記しています。

5L以上代表!

自分に合うパンツは絶対にある!

XL・LL代表!

3L・4L代表!

model data  
チャグさん  
身長164cm 体重126kg  
@135@115@140

PANTS DATA  
サカゼン  
はき心地  
★★★★☆  
スタイルアップ度  
★★★★☆  
トレンド度  
★★★★☆  
パツと見は固そうなのに、しっかり伸びて動きやすいよ!

model data  
Naoさん  
身長159cm 体重69kg  
@100@85@98

PANTS DATA  
サブストリート  
マイスタンダード  
はき心地  
★★★★☆  
スタイルアップ度  
★★★★☆  
トレンド度  
★★★★☆  
お尻〜太ももがゆったりに作られてて、かなりはきやすい!

model data  
西木野さん  
身長154cm 体重83kg  
@117@93@115

PANTS DATA  
カラーパンツ  
はき心地  
★★★★☆  
スタイルアップ度  
★★★★☆  
トレンド度  
★★★★☆  
柄がめっちゃ私好みのパンツ! しっかりストレッチ素材。

濃い色デニムは大人カジュアルコーデにピッタリ☆

デニムパンツ 34~44インチ ¥6,825、パンプス ワンサイズ ¥3,045 / ともにサカゼン馬喰町店 ニット 13・15号 ¥5,990 / エウルキューブ (イトキン) ハート柄ブラウス 19・23号 ¥15,540 / VARAL DE MODA + イヤリング ¥315、ネックレス ¥315 / ともにパリススキズ原宿店

花柄パンツ ウエスト76~100 ¥3,990~4,494 / plump (セシル) パール付カーディガン 13・15号 ¥6,990、レースニットトップス 13・15号 ¥4,990 / ともにエウルキューブ (イトキン) カチューシャ ¥315 / パリススキズ原宿店 パンプス M~LL ¥1,980 / 神戸レタス

カラーパンツ 13~19号 ¥16,800、ニット 15、19号 ¥14,595 / ともにサブストリート マイスタンダード シャツ 13~17号 ¥5,990 / エウルキューブ (イトキン) パンプス 22.5~25cm ¥4,725 / NUOVO (ABC-MART)

# WHY IS MEN'S STANCE IN PLUS SIZE DIFFERENT FROM WOMEN'S?



When observing men's fashion in contrast to women's, the differences become more and more dramatic. You hardly ever see different sections for above average sized men, and the advertisements for larger males is more neutral and visible than women's. The aesthetics in menswear stay the same even though the size gets larger. Even though menswear has its own difficulties in plus size, this thesis focuses on womenswear.

Men are fundamentally not restricted by society regarding their weight. Men are more easily seen to have other merits than just their appearance. They are not seen as failures because of weight gain. Almost the opposite: there are several positive associations for fat men such as wealth, laid back and merry attitude and power. All in all, in contradiction to women, men are socially allowed to take space. Women are especially not supposed to be larger than men. (Fat!So?, p.52) Even if the weight is seen negative, men are thought to compensate it with their other redeeming qualities such as intelligence. This results in social and economical consequences. For example, fat men are 11% less likely to marry, but with women the presentage is 20%. (Fat!So? p 168)

In the whole men's fashion is still fixed on the pre-industrial (before 1900's way of thinking that the clothes should fit the person, rather than the other way around. Made to measure clothing is a normal aspect of menswear and there are several types of special fits in commercial lines. Men's bodies gain fat in more predictable way than women's - rather than differing in different part of the body, it is more likely for the fat to gather at the waist. This allows the manufacturers to focus more on the known problems in fit.

It is also important to acknowledge that men's fashion is not driven by fast changing trends as women's. Where as women can have up to 52 seasons per year, men's is usually fixed on four: spring, summer, fall and winter. Therefore, the pressure from the retailers for manufacturers to cater to the ever changing trends rather than sizing is stronger in women's wear. Because of the need to answer to the demand of different style options, it is more of a risk to also focus on different sizing. In men's wear manufacturers have the capacity to offer multiple options in fit due to the smaller demand of style options.



Plus size menswear brand Gelisen flora luxury top on AliExpress and their model info sheet presented alongside with the products

## 模特信息 Model Info

ONCE TRIED ALWAYS USED



MODEL

Height: 180 cm Weight: 98 kg  
Shoulder: 49 cm Chest: 110 cm Waist: 109 cm

Matthieu France

Tops Size: 3XL(175/115C)

Bottoms Size: 3XL(175/115C)

Size	Waist		Hips		Pant Length		Thigh CIR	
	cm	in	cm	in	cm	in	cm	in
XL(170/98C 42)	96	37.8	114	44.9	55	21.7	67	26.4
XXL(170/105C 44)	100	39.4	118	46.5	56	22.0	68	27.2
XXXL(175/115C 46)	104	40.9	122	48.0	57	22.4	71	28.0
4XL(178/120C 48)	109	42.9	127	50.0	58	22.8	73.5	28.9
5XL(180/130C 50)	114	44.9	132	52.0	59	23.2	76	29.9
6XL(185/138C 52)	119	46.9	137	53.9	59	23.2	78.5	30.9

## WHY DOES IT COST MORE?

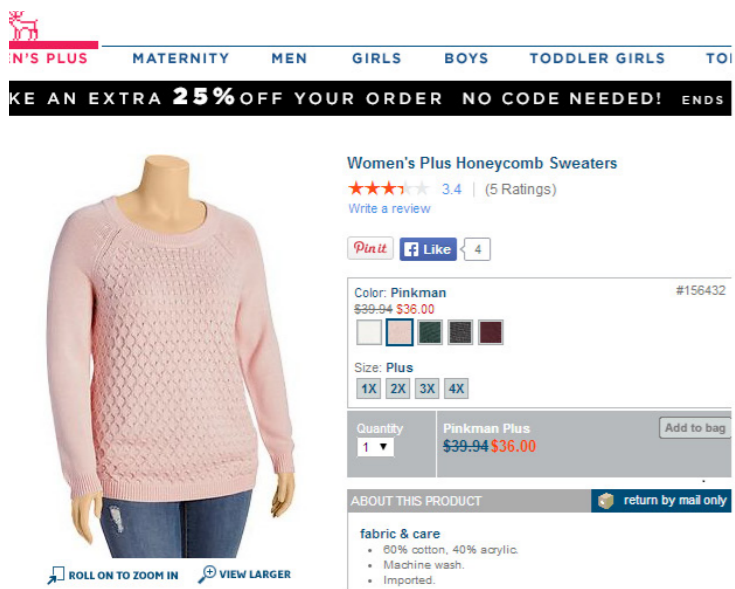
The biggest discord in the plus size community is the higher retail price of the seemingly same clothes as the other straight size lines. It is a fact that the making of plus size clothing costs more than their regular sized counterparts. Rightfully so. The user base has not been given satisfactory explanation for this, which has caused great discontent.

The overall misconception in both straight and plus sizes is that sizing is some kind of fixed system that has been determined by general consensus. In her blog "Incubating-Fashion", Kathleen Fasanella - pattern maker and author of for example "The Entrepreneur's Guide to Sewn Product Manufacturing" - opens up and simplifies her views about the system behind the fashion industry.

Sizing fluctuates in several ways, between both companies and countries. This is mainly because the 'medium' represents the average of the size range the company/manufacturer offers. The sizing range is based on the medium because more mediums are sold than any other size. Which explains why the measures of a medium are constantly evolving. If a manufacturer is selling more larges than mediums, it means their medium is too small. The large becomes the medium and the other sizes are adjusted accordingly.



Kathleen Fasanella  
(35)

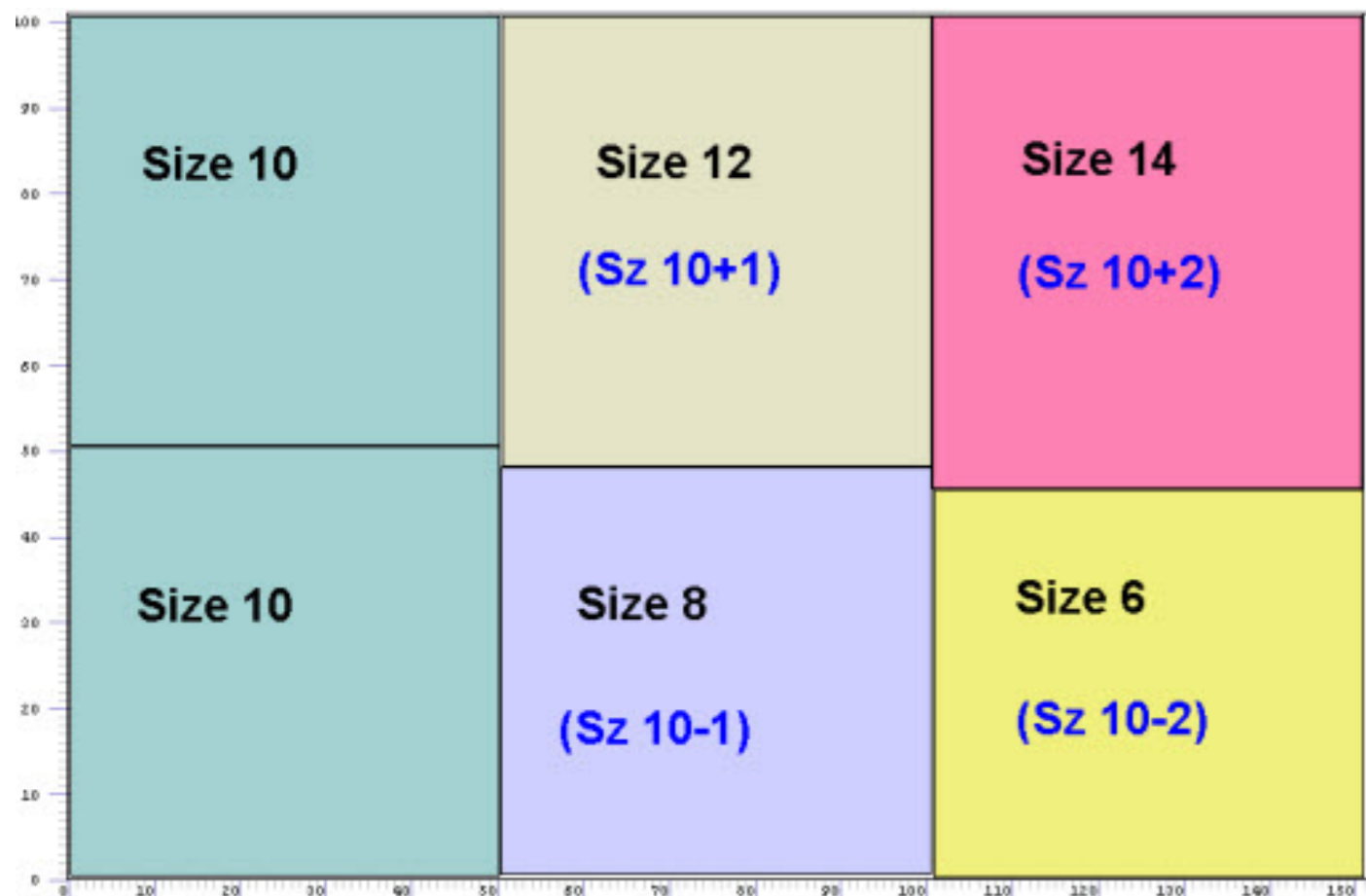


An example of an aesthetically same product sold in the same webstore for a higher price as plus size (36)

### EXAMPLE OF USING MEDIUM AS POINT ZERO

Medium is used as a type of point zero when laying down the marker and so it uses the space evenly. Therefore, the sizes above the medium (size UK10 in the example) are marked M+1, M+2 M-1, M-2 and so on. (See graph 1, courtesy of fashionincubator.com 2015)

In graph 1, you can also see that for every size above the medium, there is a correspondent smaller size, filling up the fabric left unused by the bigger size. So in order to cut larger sizes, you need smaller sizes on the opposite end of the spectrum in order to reduce fabric waste and thus cost. (see graph 1, courtesy of fashion incubator.com)

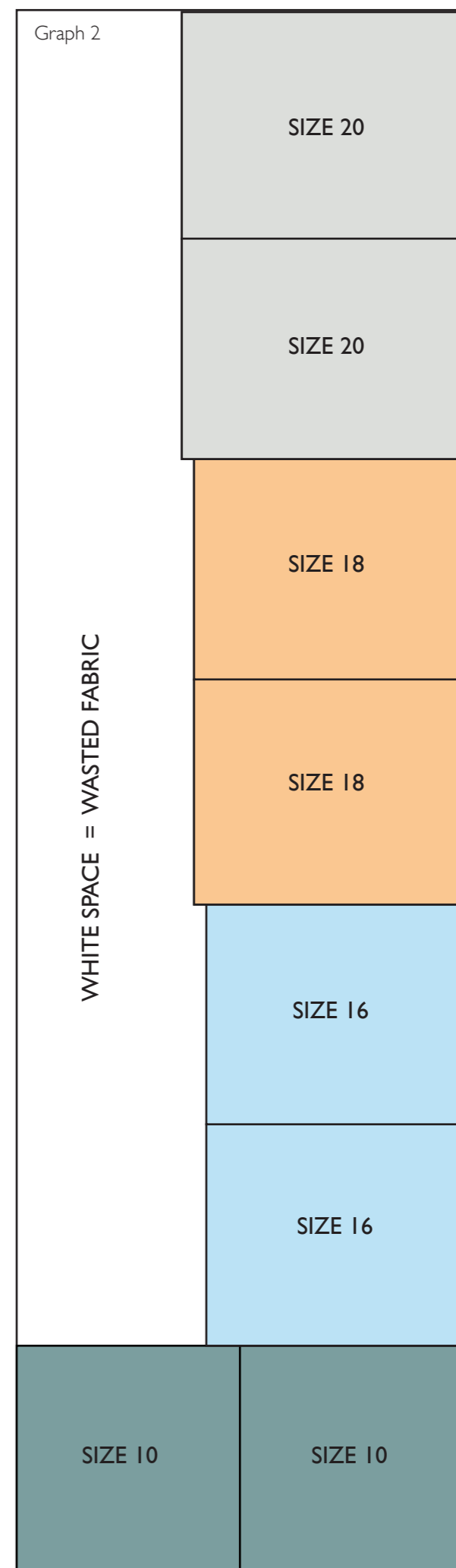


Graph 1

Usually these sizes 0-4 are not available from manufacturers who offer sizes 14-20 because it doesn't fit their target customer. Therefore the retailer doesn't order the correspondent smaller sizes, thus causing the cost of the waste produced to be added to the price of the bigger sizes. (see graph 2, courtesy of fashionincubator.com). Even if the manufacturer produces the sizes 0-4, the problem of demand still remains. For example, let's imagine that there's one hundred buys for the size 20 but only fifty buys for the size 0. You can't keep costs down by overproducing fifty size 0's so there will only be fifty size 20's cut to match the order of the size 0's. In the opposite situation however, you can cut three size 0's from a size 20's marker, so eventually, the manufacturer can match the order without much extra waste even though the correspondent size 20's will not be produced. Of course the example above is theoretical because small tweaks and adjustments in the fit are required when enlarging the pattern of a straight size pattern to fit a plus size customer.

All in all, it is undeniable that plus size garments use more material than straight sizes. With the obvious increased width and length also come the larger demand of buttons, thread and trimmings as well as longer zippers. Yet even though yardage is usually given as the sole reason for "fat tax" as it has been named by the plus size community, there is actually an abundance of reasons why plus size garments are rightfully prized higher than straight sizes.

When handling larger portions of fabric, the time used to making the actual garments increases. Sewing, cutting, and finishing takes more time, space and skill. In addition, the block patterns used for the regular sized lines cannot be exponentially widened, but they have to be crafted by special personnel. Training these special pattern makers takes time and effort and consequently their pay is higher than a regular worker's. The patterns must be made with new measurements from a plus size fit model - preferably several to represent more than one body shape - and proper mock up pieces must be produced. This is why specially measured lines such as 'petite' and 'tall' also cost more for the consumer, because the patterns have been altered to fit the new type of customer. In plus size lines, for example when cutting large hems, the fabric width might not be sufficient and the pattern must be cut into smaller pieces in order to achieve the desired shape. The pattern pieces might also be impossible to lay side by side on the fabric width, causing more waste as they have to be laid in line. This is the reason why the smallest size in the plus size line might be available in the regular line as well but costs more in the plus size section - it's pattern is moulded and made to fit the plus size body more effectively than the straight size garment.



Graph 2



There's more to the retail price than meets the eye as you can see in this chart from brand EVERLANE (37)



The special requirements for plus size garments are not limited to the making of the actual garment. These invisible costs might be easy to miss but have strong impact to the retail price none the less. The bigger and heavier the garment, the more money is spent on shipping per item. The more items the manufacturer can fit into the allowed shipping weight, the more pieces the retailer can sell with that shipping cost. When displaying the items in shops, plus size items require a separate set of mannequins, higher and wider tables, and racks, as well as bigger hangers. It has to be said however that if all these in store display items would be alterable from the get go, it would be easier to accommodate plus sizes later on.

It is perfectly understandable that fat women are angry. They are being sold ill fitting, un-trendy clothing for almost twice the price of regular sized women and the only explanation provided for them is that they're simply too fat to be included. Fat women are not stupid. They have the right to know what amount of work and special knowlege goes into their garments. To illustrate, environmentally aware people gladly pay

more for products - even regular t-shirts - that they know to be ecological and ethical. Simple thruth is that people in general should consume less and better quality. I understand that after being denied the height of hyper consumerism, fat women feel left out and frustrated that they never got to experience the fast fashion hysteria that blossomed in the 21st century. However the thruth is that the industry is slowly changing and more responsible designs are being demanded all over. Plus size fashion should not be an exception.

In conclusion, it is perfectly reasonable for plus size clothing to cost more than their straight size counterparts. It is not discrimination, but rather cost effective business savvy. However the real problem in the industry is that none of these perfectly understandable reasons are made clear to the customer, leaving them feeling frustrated and discriminated. Fat people need to be taken seriously as customers. Just as people will gladly pay more of a fair trade garment, fat consumers are happy to pay more for their clothes as long as they cater to their needs as consumers.



In Japanese brand SmileyLand's stores the interior and display items such as racks are designed to match the needs of a plus size client.

## WHY IS IT NOWHERE TO BE SEEN?

A big problem with the industry is that starting a new plus size focused line is just as time and fund consuming as establishing an entirely new brand. As indicated in the previous chapter, the need for a new set of block patterns, fit models and facilities can be overwhelming for especially smaller brands. With bigger brands, the investors see the introduction of a completely new line as too much of a risk. Often plus size lines also are expected to cater to a more substantial range of body types in order to seem worth investing in. Perhaps brands fear they will seem unfair to offer choices for only some of their customer pool? However, especially in plus size executing a proper fit is essential. Proving the effectiveness and need for the new line takes time, enormous tenacity and money and especially in times of economic depression, most chains just don't see the point in trying. However, it is likely that the consumers relate to the already known brand more easily than to a completely new one. Already established media space and brand stature can also be used in advantage of the new line.

It feels as many aspects of the "can't do's" of the plus size fashion industry could be fixed but without enough pressure to the retailers the situation will likely remain the same. Even if the industry doesn't answer to the consumer's needs, there isn't much impact on the choice of the consumer. There simply isn't enough competition - especially aesthetically - on the plus size market to force the chains to change their concepts to serve the customer. Even if the consumer refuses to use the survival clothes aesthetic, the remaining options - making clothing yourself or supporting indie brands - are expensive, time consuming and uncertain. In contrast, if a regular line fails to interest the customer, there are hundreds of other options for the consumer to choose from and the changing flow of money will let the brand know the line is not desired. That way the consumer has the power to influence the flow of products and the structure of the collection itself. The plus size consumer has little power regarding the options of clothing they are offered.



(38)



Denise Bidot showcasing Chromat SS/15 (39)

They say that in times of financial depression people retreat back towards more traditional values and gender roles. It seems as though the plus size fashion industry has also taken a step back along with the image women have to conform to.

Then there's of course the impact of the designer itself. Most designers to my knowledge fall to the range of regular sizing. Those same people are in charge of answering to the needs of fat women. The question is however: can skinny people design for fat people? The amount of fat designers is depressing no doubt but just as you don't need to identify as a man to design menswear, you do not need tummy rolls to design for fat people. It is however,

the designers responsibility to reach out to the fat fashion community and gather the needed insight. Luckily, due the popularity increase in the fashion world, some brands have started to use bloggers as advisors when it comes to collection development.

A very good example of this is the brand Eloquii. The CEO Mariah Chase has hired Sarah Conley, a plus size blogger, as a media consultant who gives insight of the trends in the plus size blogging community. Additionally, f.ex. Chromat has a close relationship with their plus size line's muse and lead model, Denise Bidot and take her opinions into an account in the product development. (Becca McCharen interview 2016)

# PART 2.

## THE DESIGN PROCESS

### 4. DESIGN

4.1 Fuck flattering - starting points of PARERE\_\_\_\_\_ (56-62)

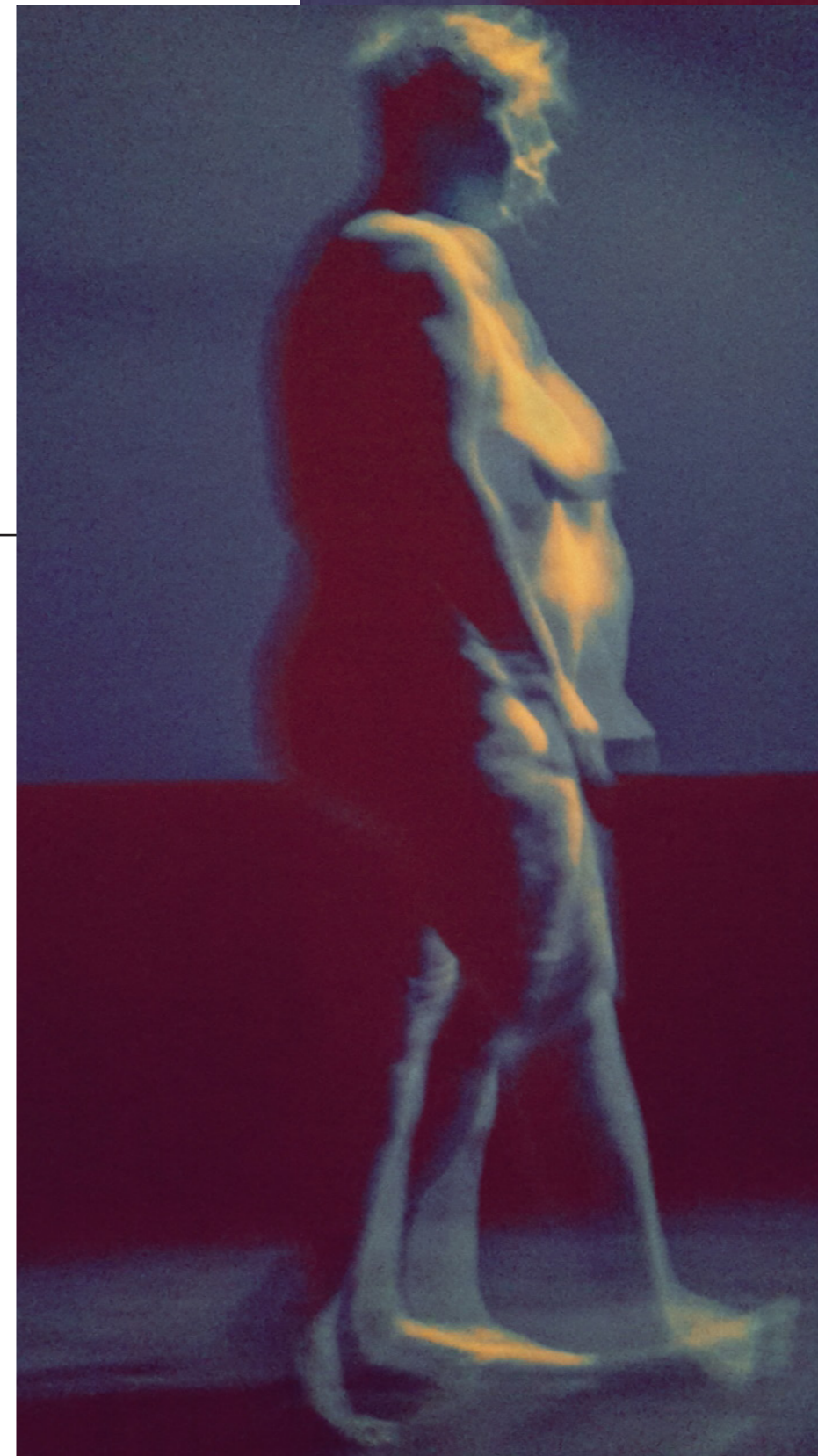
4.2 Target group\_\_\_\_\_ (63)

### 5. USED TECHNIQUES

5.1 How to work with plastic?\_\_\_\_\_ (64-71)

5.2 Print development\_\_\_\_\_ (72-75)

5.3 Why these materials and techniques?\_\_\_\_\_ (76-77)





**sneakingferocity**

I wish plus sized fashion chains didn't use language like "tummy concealer" and "problem area" and my personal fav "provides extra camouflage" like what fucking camouflage?? I'm a fat chick at the beach not a fucking sniper in the jungle can you please not insult your core demo so blatantly

Social media users have been active in sharing their thoughts about the state of the plus size industry.

## FUCK FLATTERING

The main problem in the plus size fashion design is that the main goal often is for the clothes to look flattering. It all boils down to the aim to look slimmer, smaller, and diminish the mass you have. Yet when this remains the key goal, other motives like trends as well as interesting details become less and less relevant. It is a shame that consumers obviously crave for the plus size collections to showcase trends (see graph below) etc but are always met with the same concerns on whether or not the garments will be flattering or not.

There are an abundance of fashion rules and no no's when it comes to plus size fashion. To list a few:

1. No crop tops or other items that show your belly area!
2. No bold colors or prints - especially stripes!
3. No shorts or skirts above the knee!
4. No sleeveless tops or dresses!
5. No textures or details on the belly area or on the sides of the body!
6. No see through items!
7. No body conscious items!

Basically, don't be loud and don't draw attention to yourself.

To fat people, society enforces the idea that clothes are just for covering up, instead of celebrating your personality. Of course it is understandable that the weirdest clothes seldom turn out to sell out, especially considering the high retail prices in plus size fashion. However, the consumer buys what is marketed for them. If the media and retail environment is filled with messages of how everything should be avoided when a person's size climbs over a certain threshold, single attempts to break the mold rarely succeed and the retailers return to their old molds.

It is very limiting to a designer if you constantly have to keep in mind that you have to focus only on just slimming down the body. The reality is that the booty isn't going anywhere whether it is in a draped dress or tight jeans. The faster you make peace with allowing the size of the person show, the easier it gets to actually design the clothes as fashion items and not camouflage. That said, while designing PARERE, I aimed to approach the looks with primarily the aesthetic in mind.



## CLOTHES MATTER!



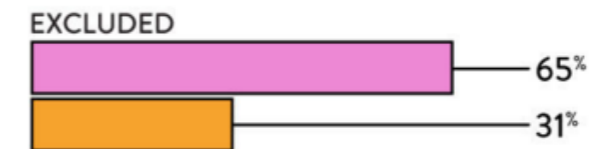
ALL women agree that plus size women are ignored, excluded, & under-represented in the fashion industry as a whole.



## MORE IN STORE?

In-store shopping is harder for plus size women...

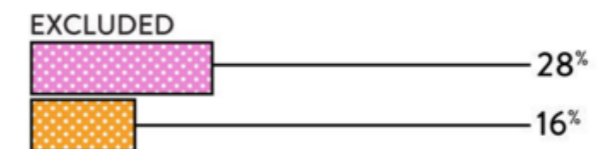
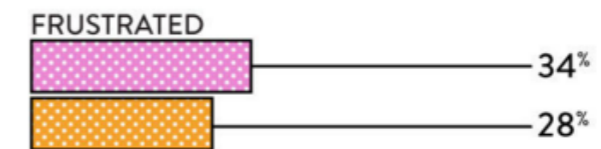
They describe feeling:



And less likely to feel:



Online, all women report similar feelings...



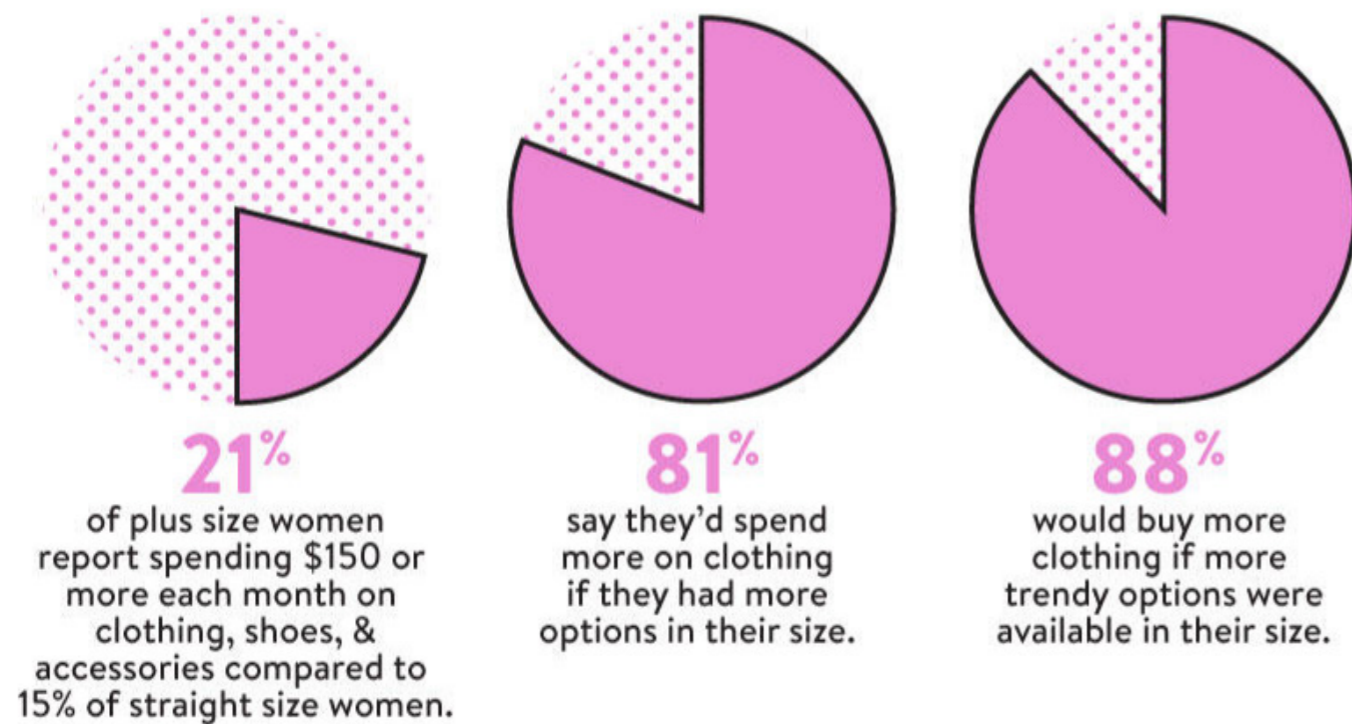
Results of US brand Modcloth's survey amongst its customer base, summer 2014 (41)

# WHO IS THE PLUS SIZE SHOPPER?

There are a lot of women wearing plus sizes...



and they want to shop more!



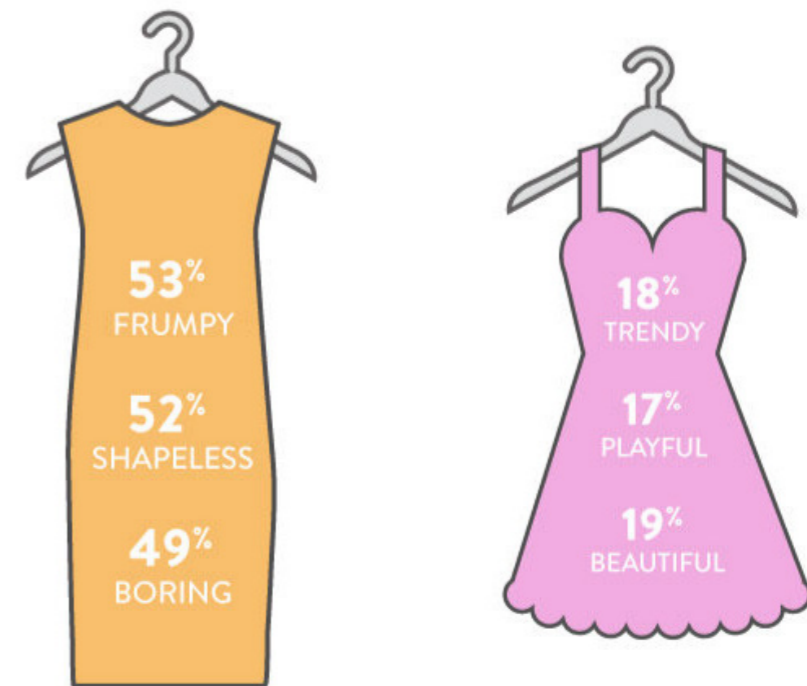
While designing PARERE, I've taken into consideration some functional aspects that make the items more suited for a plus size customer. Even though personally I don't believe clothes should necessarily be flattering or slimming, some design decisions in PARERE support this.

By taking size C48 as base in the patternmaking, I've enabled that the collection answers primarily to the needs of bigger plus size women. Too often plus size designs seem to concentrate on the smallest end of the size spectrum and end up fitting the proportions of barely regular sized women, let alone women with wider hips and bigger bust and belly. There are several things that the designer can take into consideration in designing plus size items in order to heighten customer satisfaction while still keeping the products interesting. One mustn't mistake usability with practicality. A common problem for example is that in the high waisted products of plus size lines is that the waist doesn't reach high enough and the result is uncomfortable for the user. When designing for a heavier person with proper belly, failing to follow the changed curves of the body can result in disproportionate looks. If the lengths of the items are designed with the risen waistline of a plus size body, looks showing the midriff as well as waistline seam placement become much more pleasing to the eye and the clothes fit better.

The placement of zippers and pockets also plays a big part in the overall feel of the product. Zippers can be really painful when digging into the belly when sitting or just hard to keep looking composed due all the folds of the body. In PARERE, all the zippers are either on the side or on the center back of the product for added comfortability.

Another grave mistake is to make all the items straight lined and boxy. In contradiction to the popular belief, fat women have a waist. Especially with non-elastic pants and dresses it is frustrating when designers decide to take the cost efficient but easy road and just make the entire item the same width. This causes the garment to be tight from other spots while hanging loose from others. It also helps the fit if there are deep darts embedded into seams on the sides of the center front. Sure, it is more expensive to cut round edges and add seeming unnecessary seams but well placed curves help the garment to fit well for people of different body types but roughly the same size.

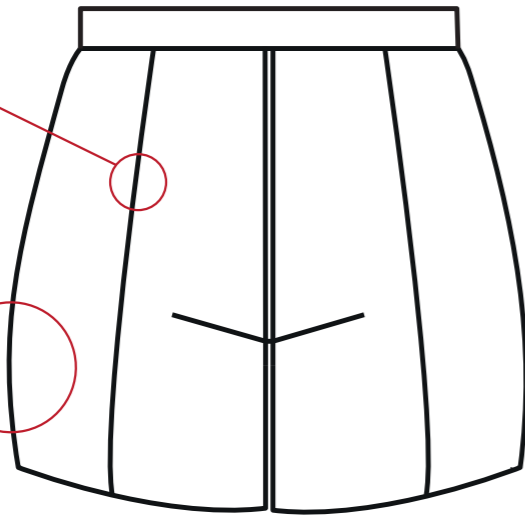
Plus size women describe clothing marketed to them as:



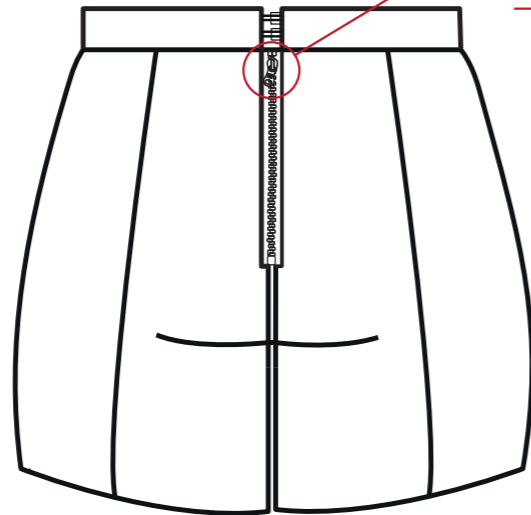
Results of US brand Modcloth's survey amongst its customer base, summer 2014 (41)

Additional curved seams enable a better fit for a curvier body

Curved side seams prevent uncomfortable fit issues with the products



Moving the zipper from front to center back helps the fit, keeps the lines of the garment clean and prevents the zipper from digging into the flesh uncomfortably



When designing high waisted products, the waistband must be set high enough

Additionally, from my personal experience as a plus size woman, one usually feels more comfortable if the outfit has an element of security or comfort the user is used to mentally lean on whenever they feel uncomfortable about their appearance. For me personally these elements are pockets and scarves. From what I've gathered, usually some form of layering items helps the wearer gather the confidence to heighten the confidence level of the clothing.

That is why in PARERE, there are lots of separates, feel of layering, as well as pockets. I've also made an effort to having range in the products of the collection so that each customer can find something they feel comfortable using. With these simple details it's easy to make the user more comfortable in their skin. All of these decisions raise the cost of the product so it is understandable that they are usually avoided in mainstream plus size lines. Yet as earlier stated, plus size women will gladly pay more for better quality products that actually suit them rather than paying slightly more for ill fitting garments. Provided that the reasoning behind the more expensive prices are explained. After all, not everything can be spandex.

## TARGET GROUP

Too often brands are reluctant to narrow down their plus size customer profile. They tend to be generic in order to not exclude anyone of the customers who already have only a small selection of options to begin with. Doing this however, the clothes actually don't specifically fit anyone's aesthetic. The lack of a strong concept makes it really difficult for plus size customers to find a brand that fits their aesthetic and hinders them from expressing their personality through their fashion choices.

My target group includes plus size women with the age range of 20s to 30s. These trend aware individuals scout the up to date pieces to match the all time classics in order to make up the perfect personal wardrobe. They're unapologetic about their size and wear their statement pieces with pride. They're not afraid to break norms and don't care for style rules. These women pick their clothes with aesthetic as their primary goal. For them comfort and practicality is important to a certain extent but as long as they feel confident in their outfit, effort in upkeep is forgiven.

In their clothes PARERE customer looks for interesting as much as or even more than pretty. The details in in print and texture are important for them and they like for the clothes to be fun. They like to play with proportions rather than aim for the perfect hourglass figure.

I've been and active member of the fatshion blogging community for over two years now. I get a lot of my inspiration from fellow bloggers - their fashion choices, attitude and clever modifications they do for products at hand in order for them to fit their aesthetic. Fatshion community is full of dialogue about different tricks that will enhance the confidence and comfort of a plus size woman. I think that this dialogue between customers and the designer is really important and it has really allowed me to include important details into my designs.



A close-up photograph of a person's face wearing a translucent, gold-foiled plastic mask. The mask covers the eyes and nose, leaving only the mouth and part of the forehead visible. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture and sheen of the plastic material.

# HOW TO WORK WITH PLASTICS?

I've been interested in material manipulation techniques and innovative material options for quite some time. After using foil printing in previous collections, I became interested in how it could be used in unusual materials. Plus size fashion is more often than not focused on the more practical materials and comfort, rather than flashy and innovative solutions - even on the runway. Since transparency is a key factor in PARERE, I decided to explore whether or not plastic could be used as a special factor in the collection. After several shaping experiments, I wound up using foil printing as a technique.

Due to technical difficulties I was forced to let go of the idea to make entire garments of plastic material. Even so, the gold foiled plastic brings edge to the collection and was an interesting approach to work on.

# PLASTIC SHAPING EXPERIMENTS

9/9/2015



## CONDITIONS

Executed with a hot air gun

Molded by hand while hot and laid on a mannequin

## RESULTS

- hard to control and extremely hot
- sharp and interesting shapes achieved with diligence
- the matte texture of the plastic stays and resonates with the shapes
- 3D shapes are hard to maintain
- lovely lighting effect
- mannequin forces plastic into shape but leaves a bubbly texture

## IN CONCLUSION:

Difficult technique but excellent for interesting shapes.



The result is uneven and hard to use as clothing material.



# PLASTIC FOIL PRINTING EXPERIMENT

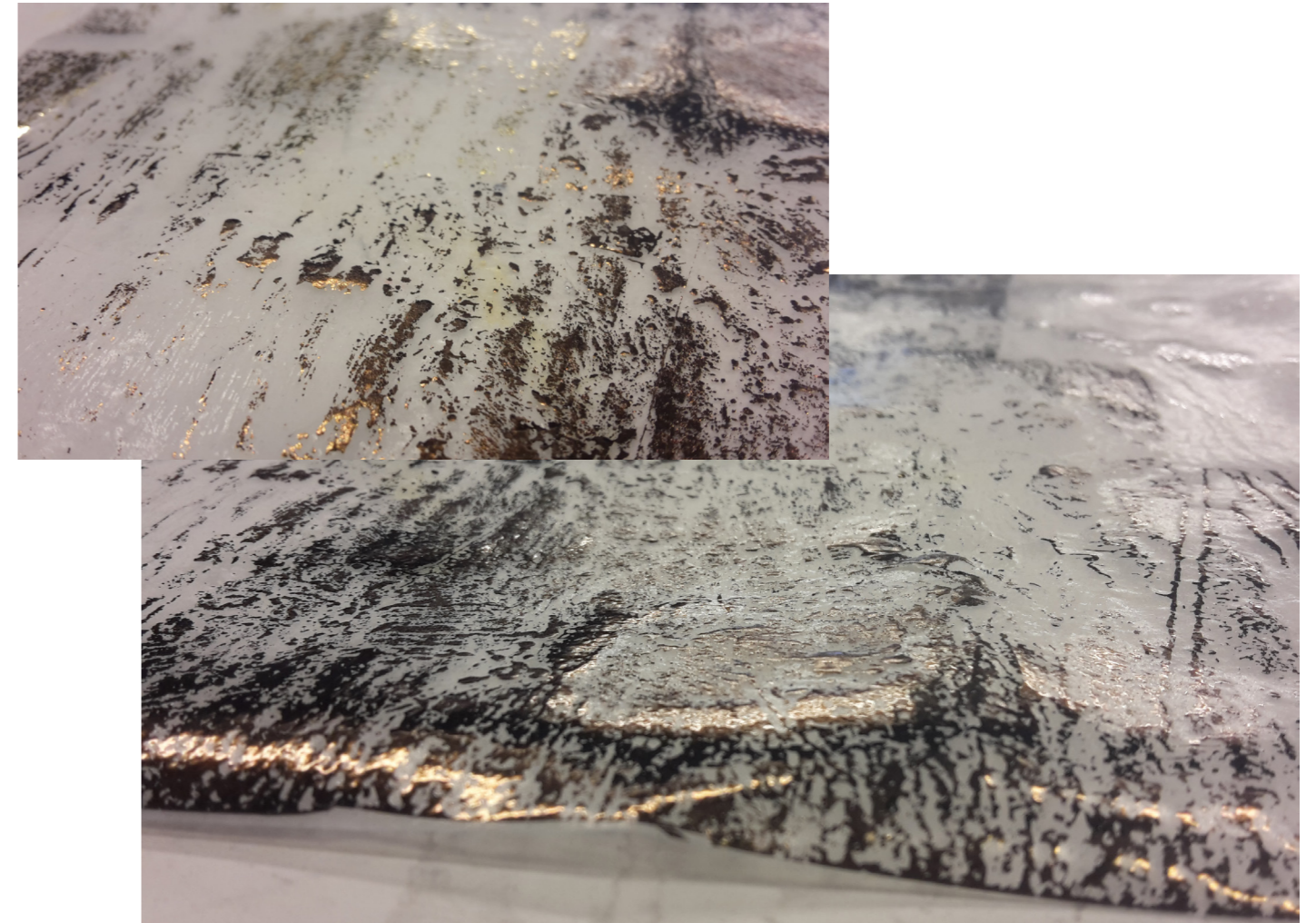
27/11/2015



The regular temperature used in foil printing (140°C) caused the plastic to crumple severely, creating air pockets between the plastic and the foil and thus preventing the foil from latching on to the material.



Edges of prints were visible but looked messy because of plastic's texture. The glue normally used for foil printing chipped off the plastic's surface along with the foil.



The result is uneven and hard to use as clothing material.

## CONDITIONS:

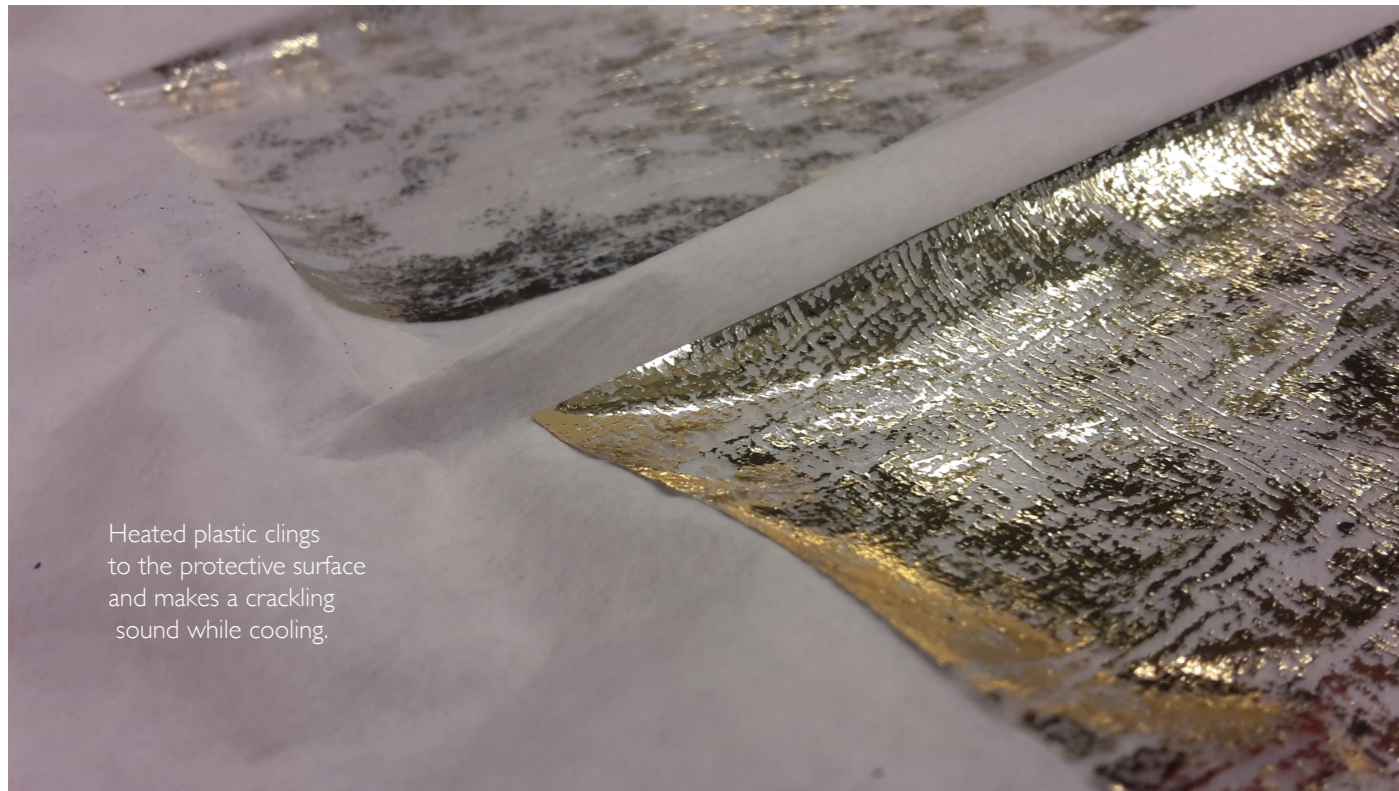
Foil print on plastic using thermal adhesive and treated in the presser in 140°C for 15 seconds. Testing on different colors in order to check if different foils react in different ways.

## RESULTS:

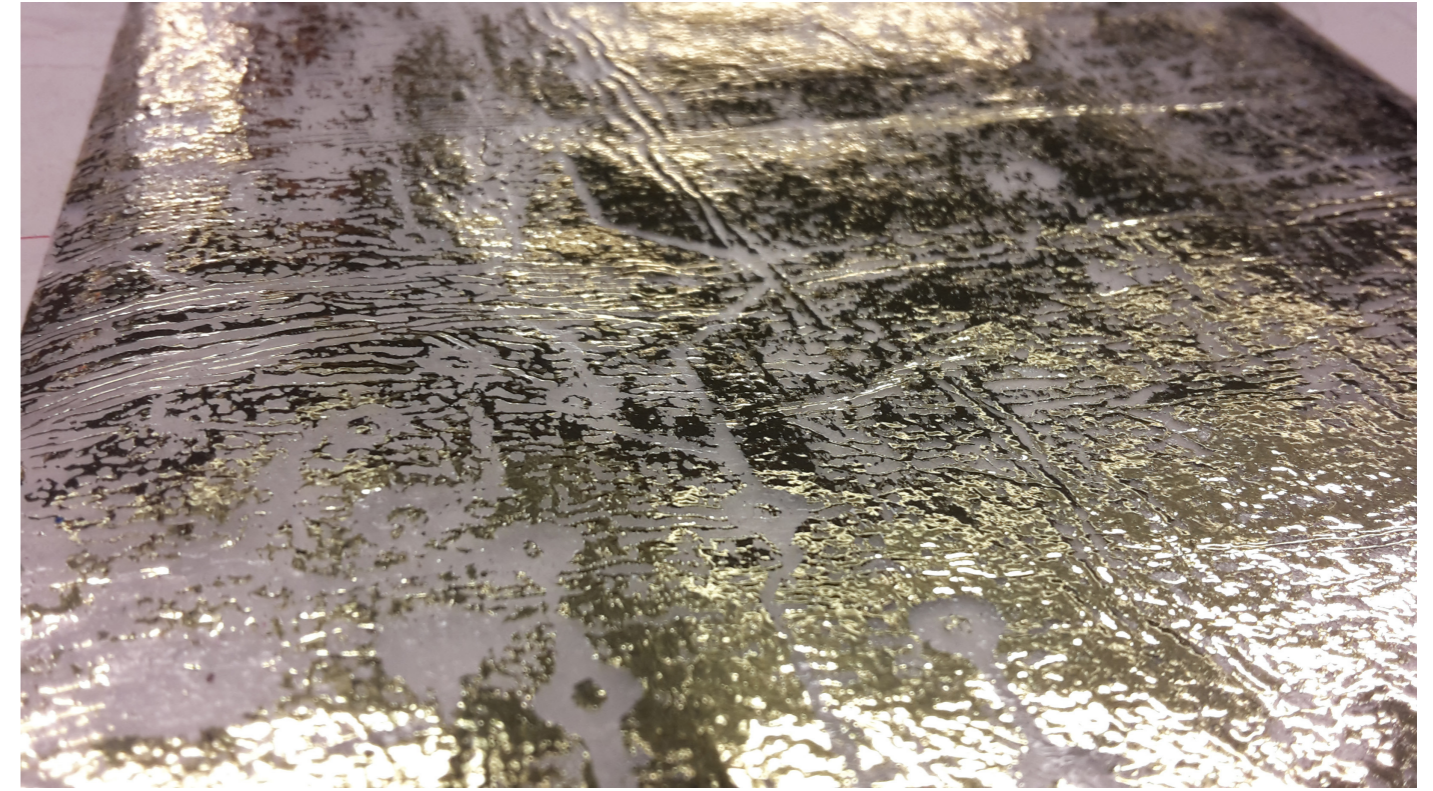
- Glue doesn't stick and peels off from the slightest of touch in the absence of fibers to latch onto.
- Foil color doesn't affect the results.
- On the spots where there's no glue, the plastic absorbs the foil into itself but due to the high temperature, the result is uneven and bubbly.

## IN CONCLUSION

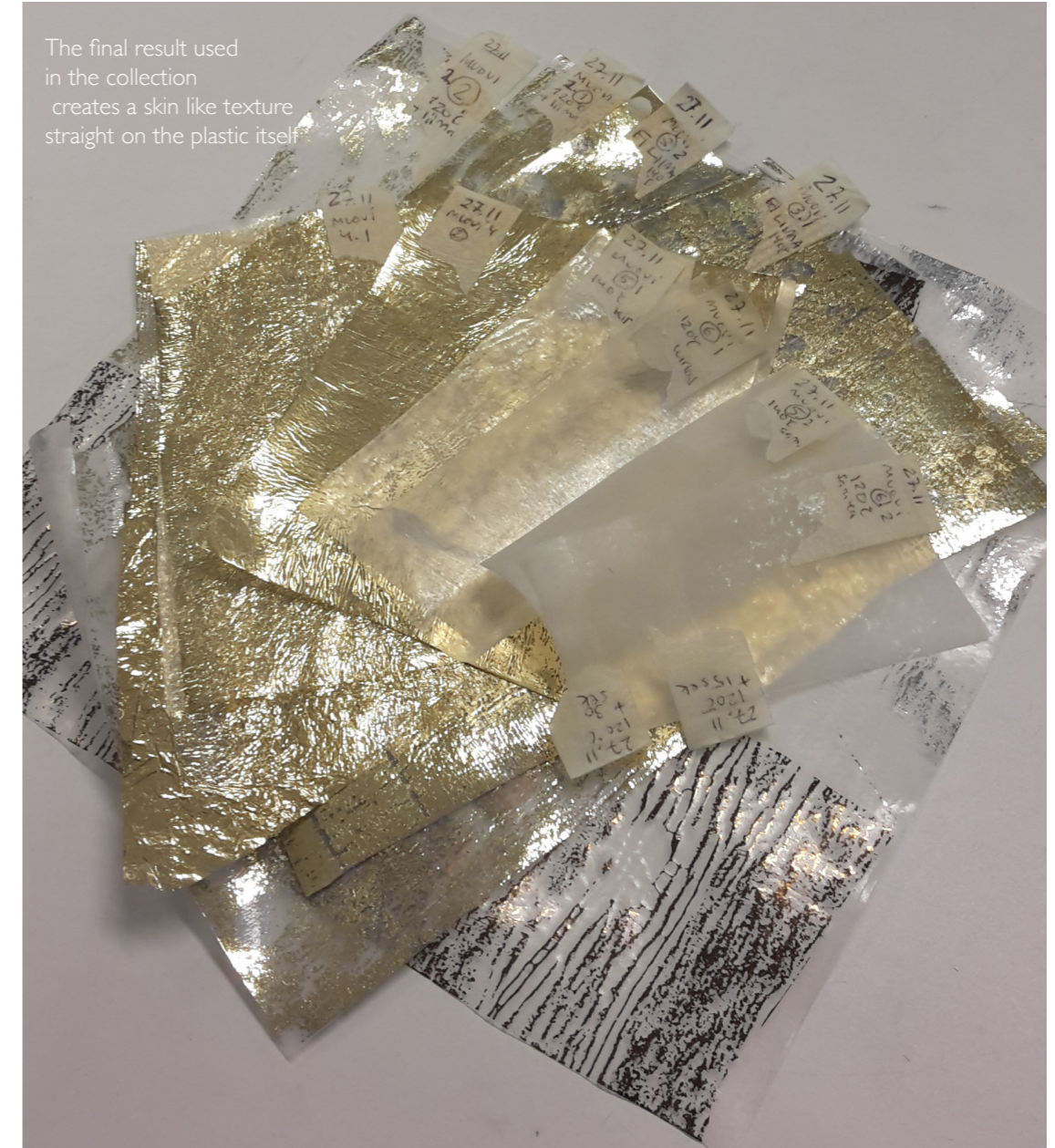
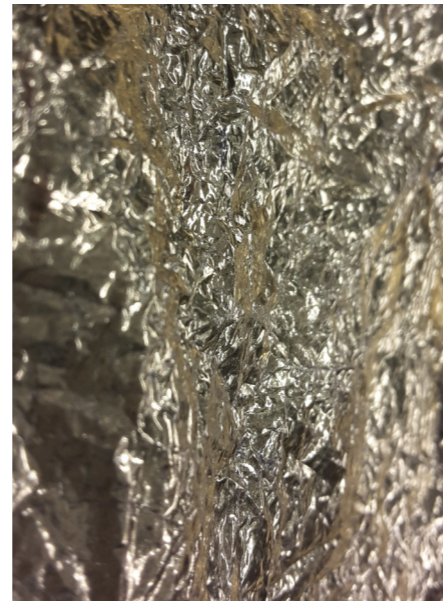
- Foil printing on plastic is possible
- Thermal adhesive is not necessary or possible to use and therefore, it is impossible to specify patterns on plastic by using screen printing.
- A lower temperature and longer time in the presser is needed



Heated plastic clings to the protective surface and makes a crackling sound while cooling.



Wrinkled foil is best suited for foil treating plastic materials.



The final result used in the collection creates a skin like texture straight on the plastic itself.

#### CONDITIONS

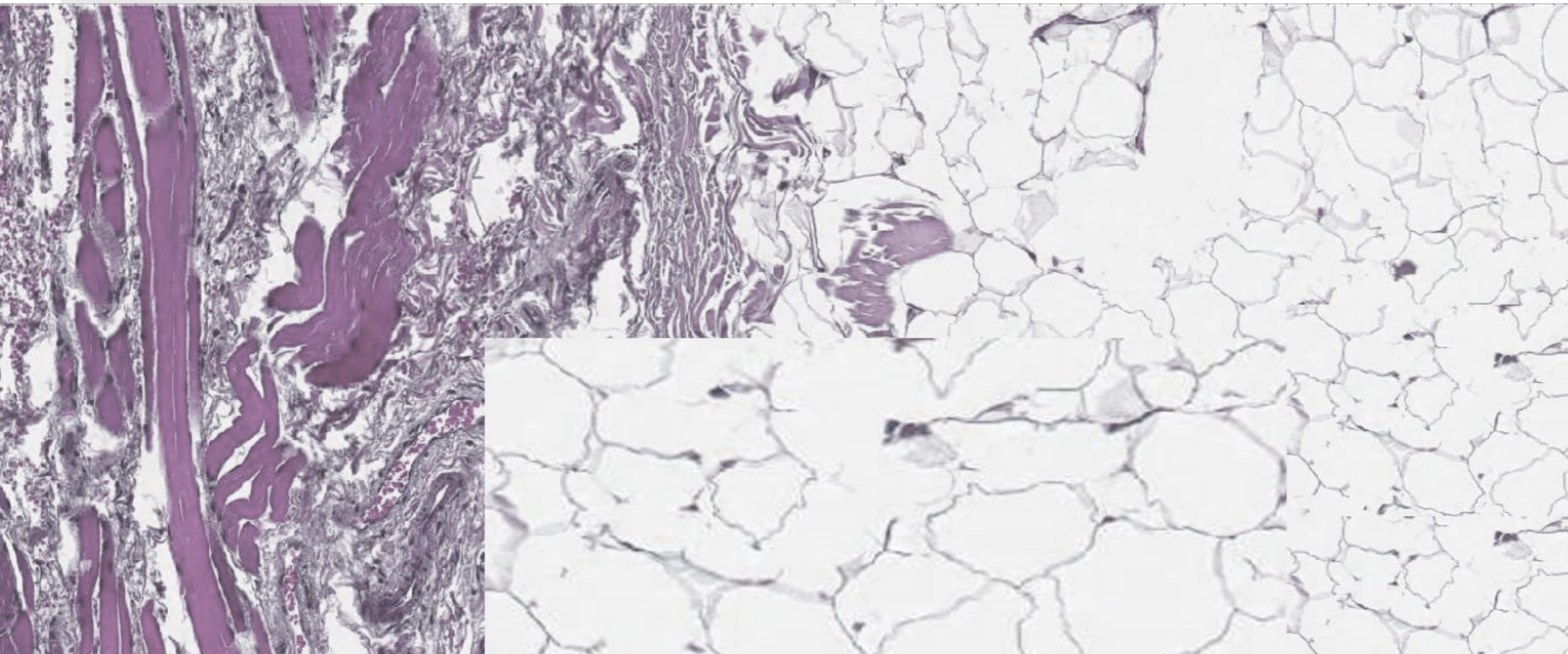
Foil print on plastic without glue in different temperatures and presser times (starting from 140°C and 15 sec) and protective materials (paper and fabric)

#### RESULTS

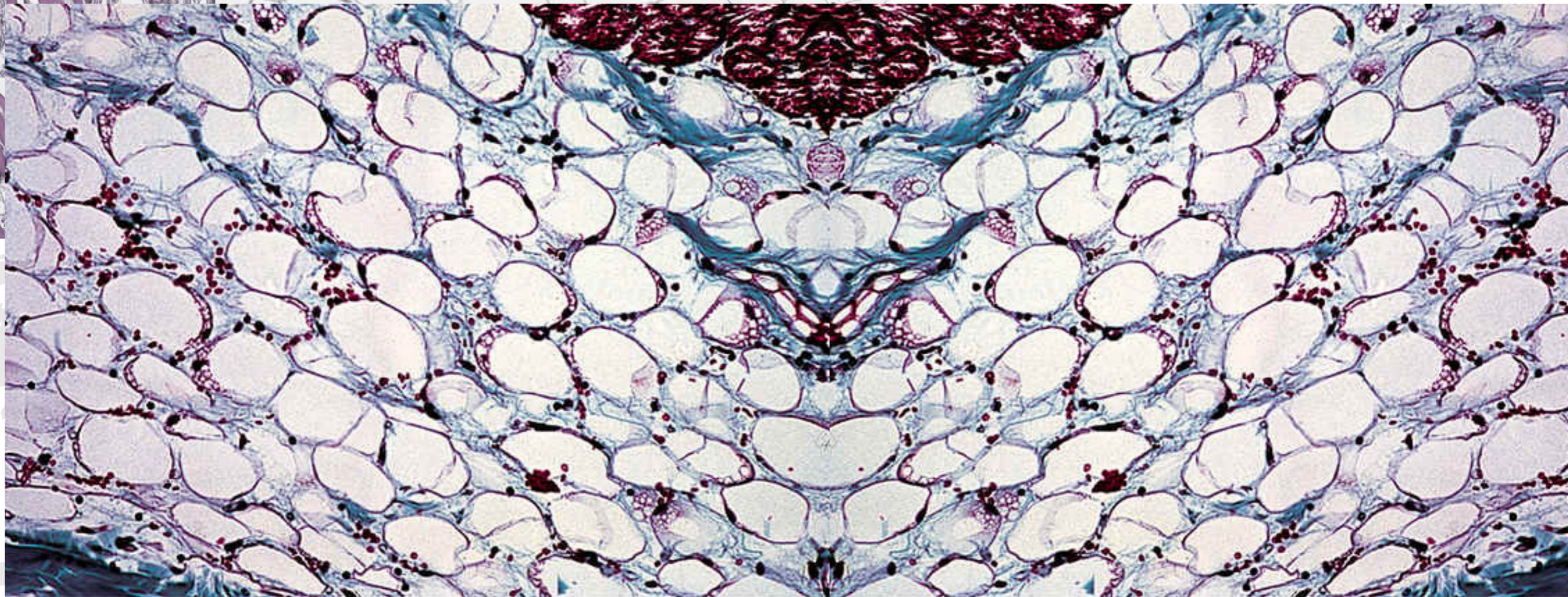
- Foil mels into the plastic itself
- Foil clings to the protective material. If fabric is used, the weaving is visible in the plastic. However the paper will stick to hot plastic.
- Broken, used or wrinkly foil produces more interesting aesthetic results
- Plastic without foil will turn smuddy matte, low temperature enables even results

#### IN CONCLUSION

- Foil should be properly wrinkled before use
- Paper should be used as protective material in the presser
- Final presser temperature 120°C for 45 seconds
- Treated pieces should be left untouched for a couple of minutes and then peeled off the paper for clean results.



# PRINT DEVELOPMENT





The print used in PARERE is inspired by natural element of a fat body - stretchmarks and adipose tissue. I aimed to have a print with a pattern that wasn't visually too clear but that would have some symbolic significance. This print also resonates with the skin like texture of the foil printed plastic.

Stretchmarks and cellulite are generally seen as a flaw, but personally I find the textures of a person's skin interesting and beautiful. I wanted to showcase this juxtaposition by executing the print in gold foil. Gold is generally associated with luxury and beauty so it upgrades the motif to another level.



Stretchmark study 28.12.2015

Initially I planned on taking advantage of the occurrence of stretchmarks in the placement of the print. In the end I feared the uneven placement of the print might take away the visual impact and topple the proportions of the clothes themselves. The main motive for PARERE was to achieve an interesting and aesthetically successful collection, therefore I decided to make the print placement more traditional.



## WHY THESE MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES?

From the get go I wanted to have interesting, materials that communicate with each other and the concept of the collection. I drew inspiration from the installation called Narcissus Garden from Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama. In the installation, dozens of mirror spheres were laid out on the ground at Venice Biennale. The artist was photographed lying in the midst of the balls, engulfed in her own reflection. The idea of self love and pride in oneself when talking about fat women is really a taboo in the modern society so the idea of the installation felt really perfect for PARERE.

Inspired by Narcissus Garden, I went for transparent materials that could be used to create different dimensions and fun proportions in the products. My general aesthetic is also very lush and abundant in shape which the see-through materials would compliment. With the light materials mixed with the golden foil printing, the user of PARERE clothes can feel covered while also standing out and showing skin.

The layering technique and general round shapes used in the collection is to mimic the natural rolls in the body.

# PART 3.

## THE COLLECTION

6. PARERE	
6.1 Materials and colors	(80-81)
6.2 Sketches	(64-85)
6.4 Collection lineup	(86-87)
6.5 Collection overlook	(88-89)
6.6 Outfits 1-9	(90-107)
6.7 Editorials	(108-117)



MOODBOARD 9/2015

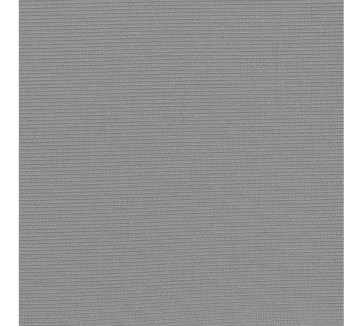
# MATERIALS & COLORS



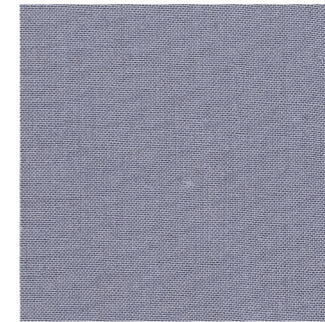
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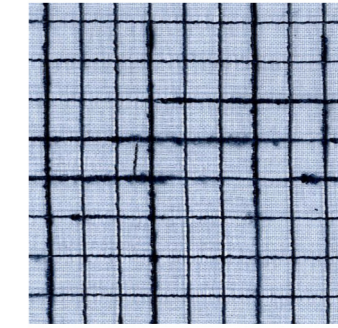
GOLD FOIL PLASTIC



100% PES SCUBA



100% CV



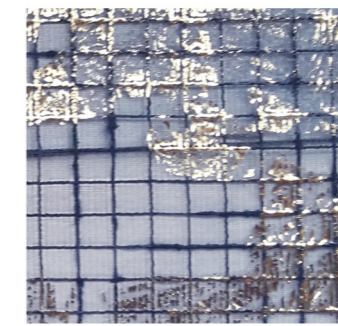
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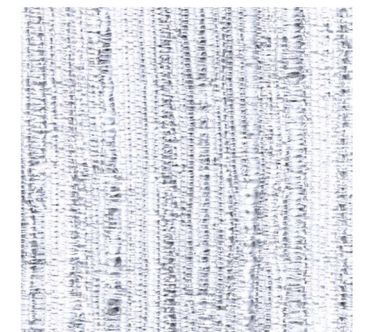
100% PES + GOLD FOIL



100% CV + GOLD FOIL



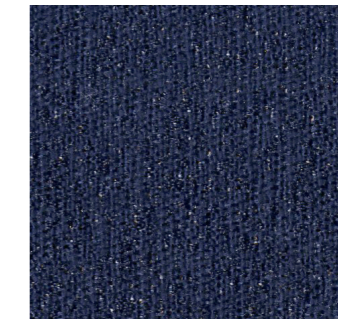
100% PES + GOLD FOIL



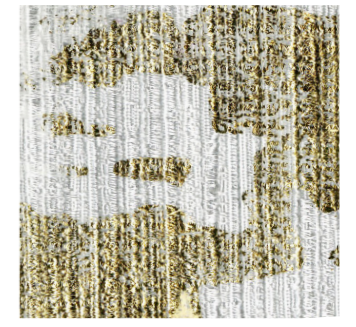
100% PES



LEATHER



PES/CO



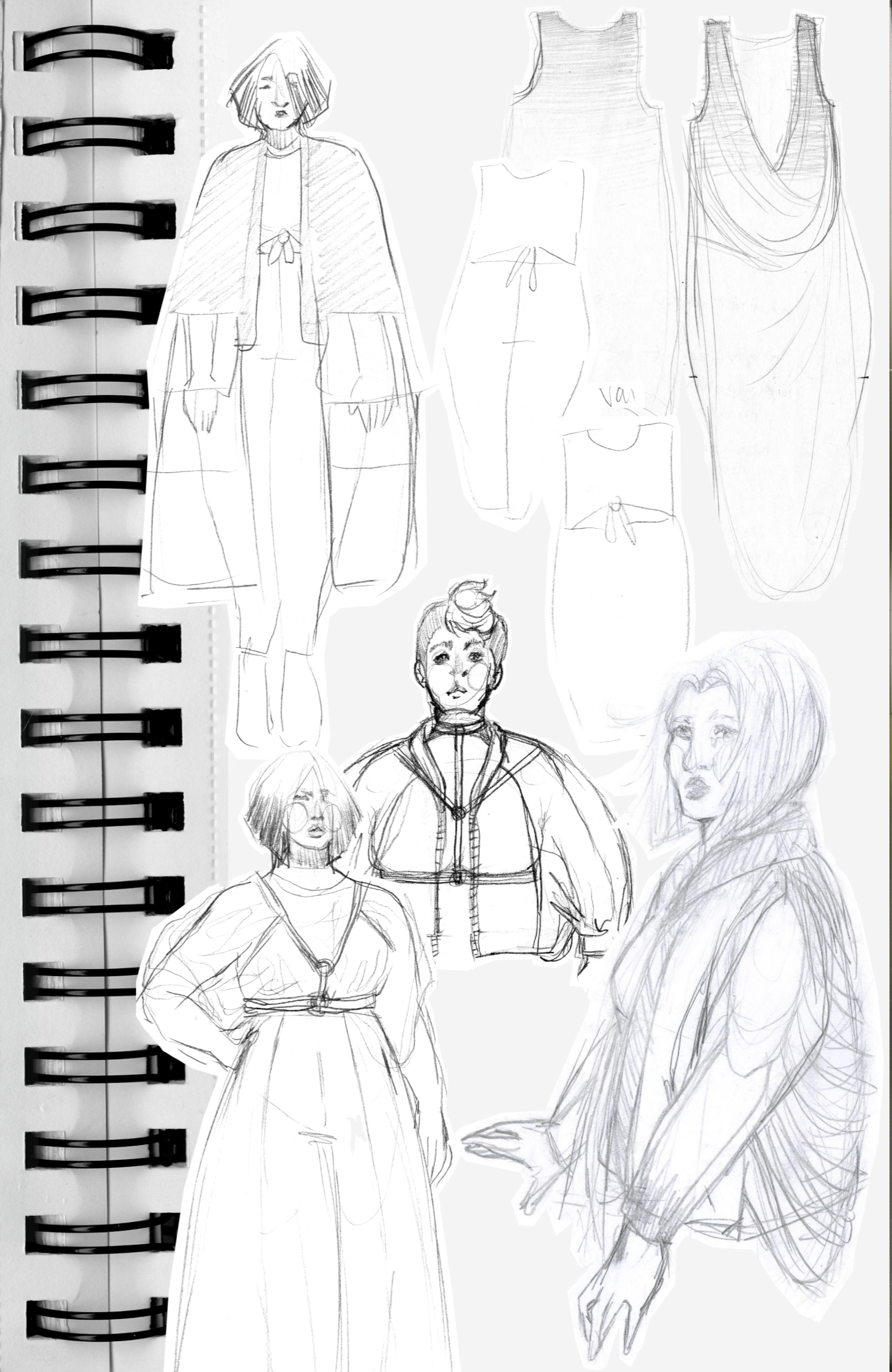
100% PES + GOLD FOIL

# TRADITIONAL SKETCHES



ABOVE: Final lineup sketch  
RIGHT: Sketches from winter 2015

I feel it's immensely important to work with both traditional and digital media when sketching. I personally prefer to start with traditional media, focusing on feel of the collection and possible silhouettes. Drawing by hand for me creates more depth to the development of the collection and makes the process more personal. Developing an archetype customer or a muse through sketching is a very important part of the design process for me. It makes it easier to make a believable concept for the collection. Sometimes this is accompanied with silhouette trials with photoshop.



# DIGITAL SKETCHES

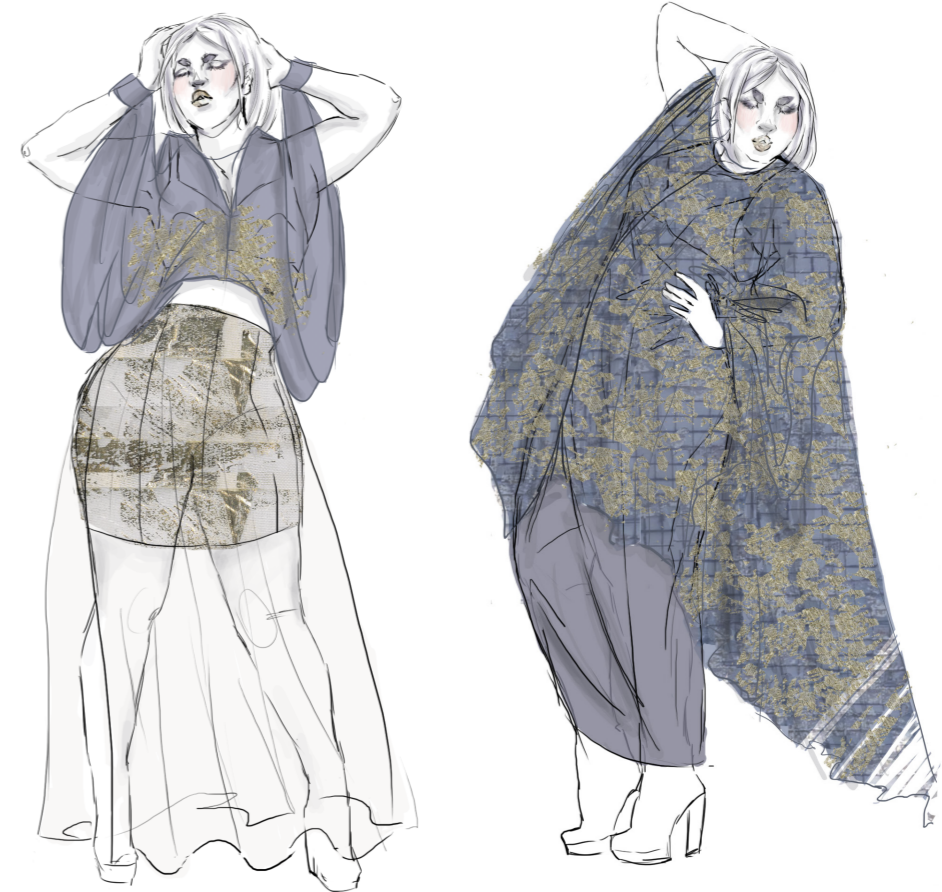
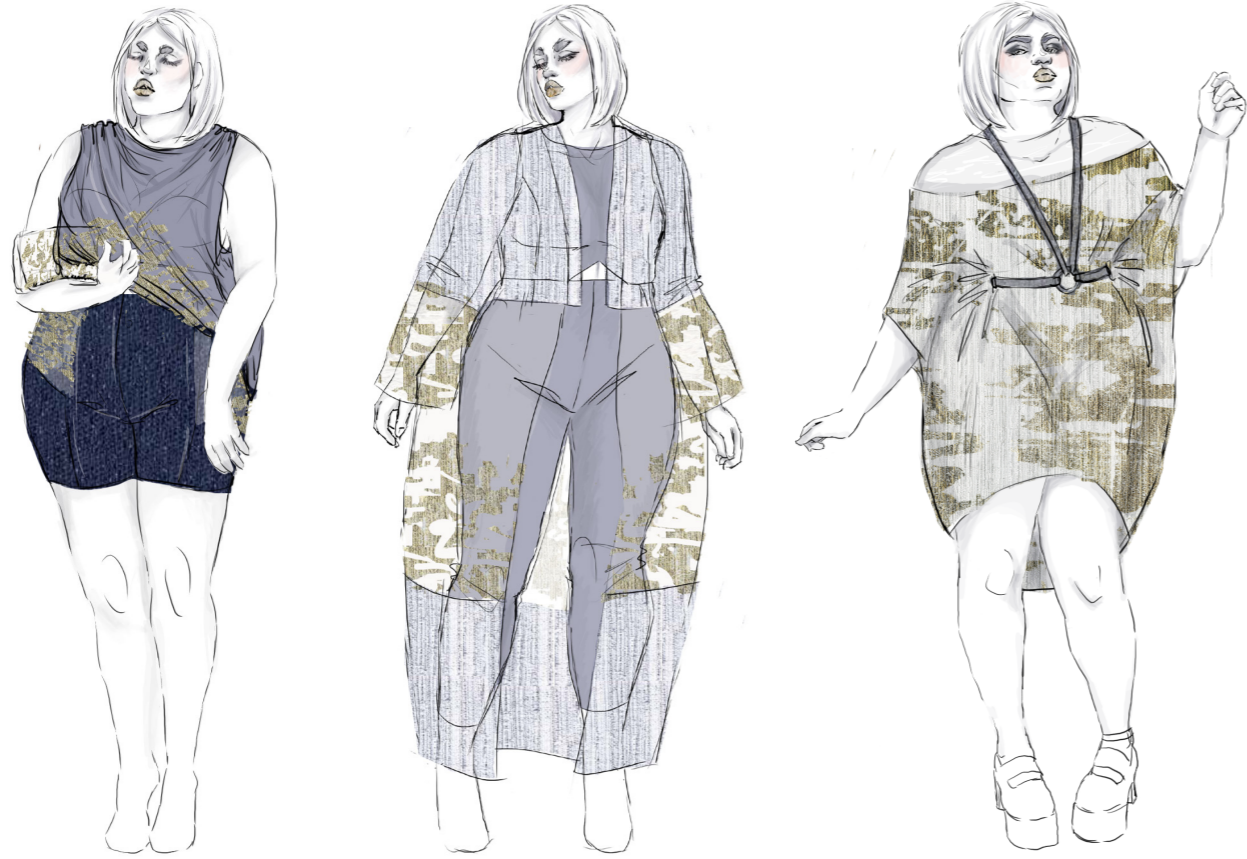


Sketching with digital media is a very handy technique for plus size designers. By using photographs, it is easy to collect a collection of different body type bases to utilize in the sketching process. The sketches of designed clothes can then be compared on different templates, which makes it easier to design clothes that fit more than one body type.



# COLLECTION LINEUP

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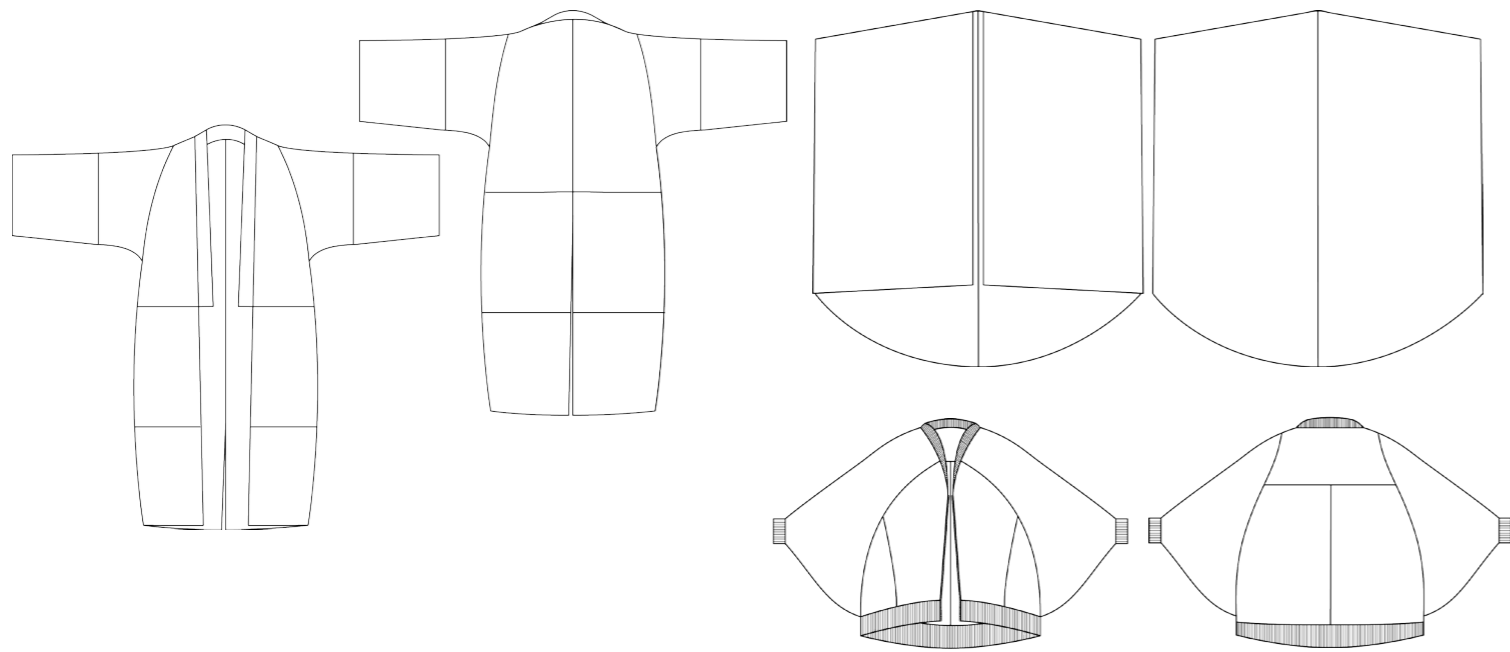


# COLLECTION OVERLOOK

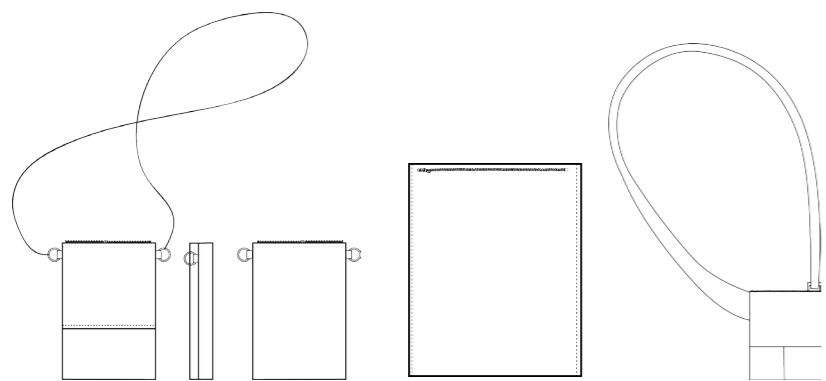
## TOPS



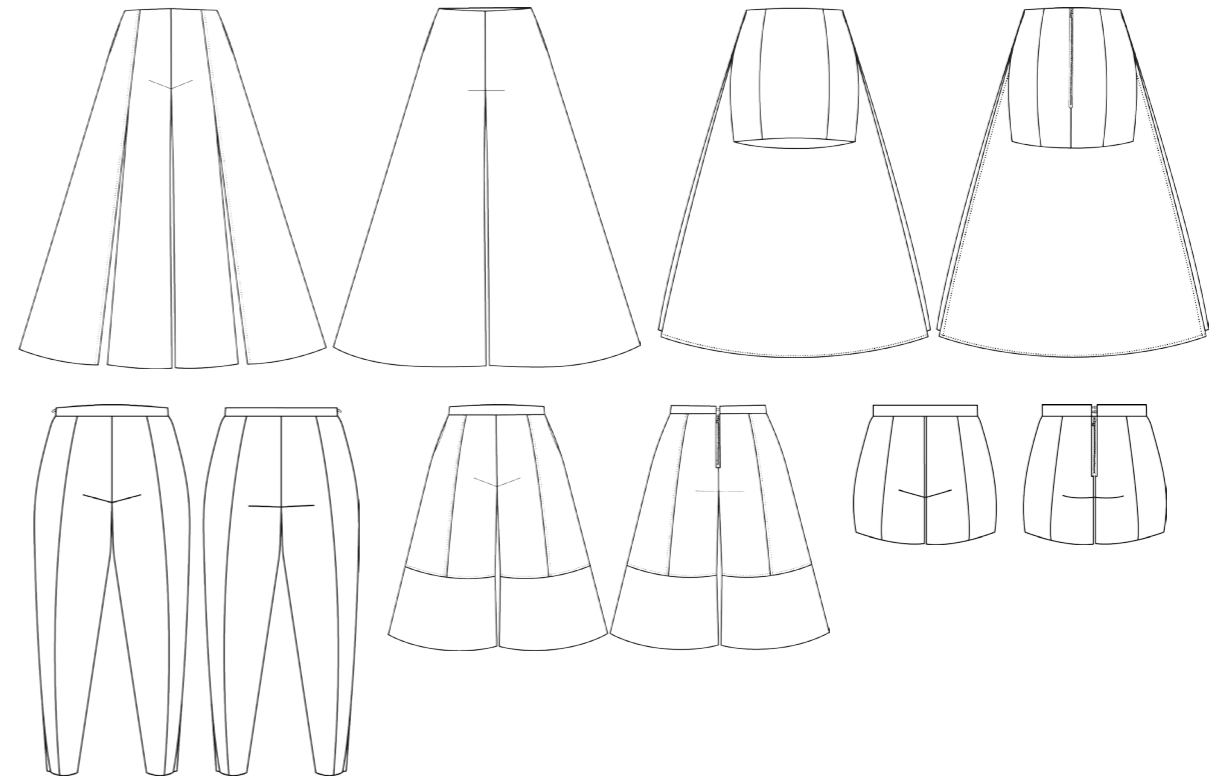
## OUTERWEAR



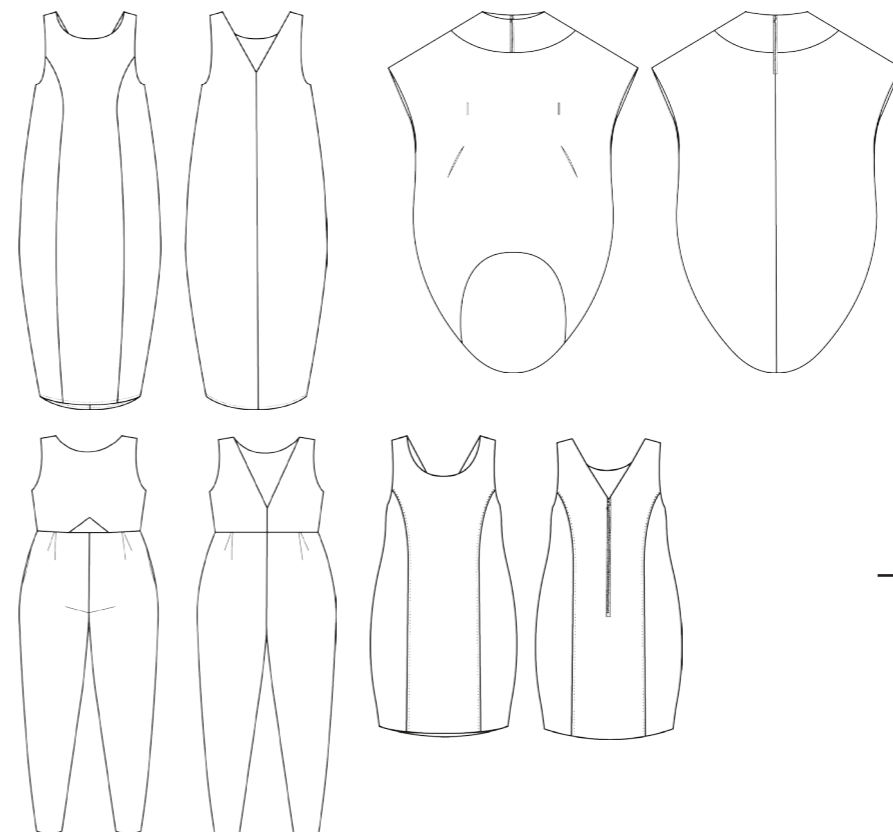
## ACCESSORIES



## BOTTOMS



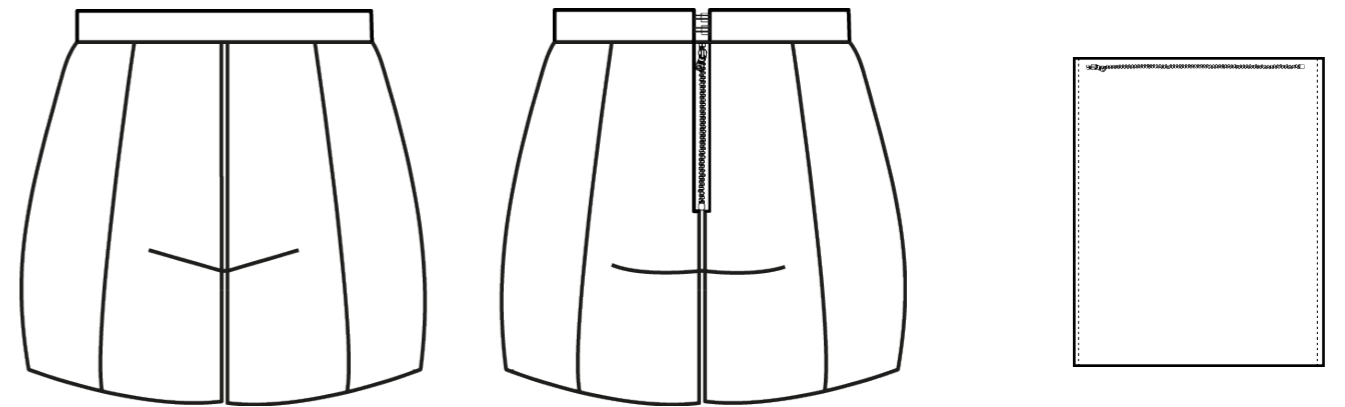
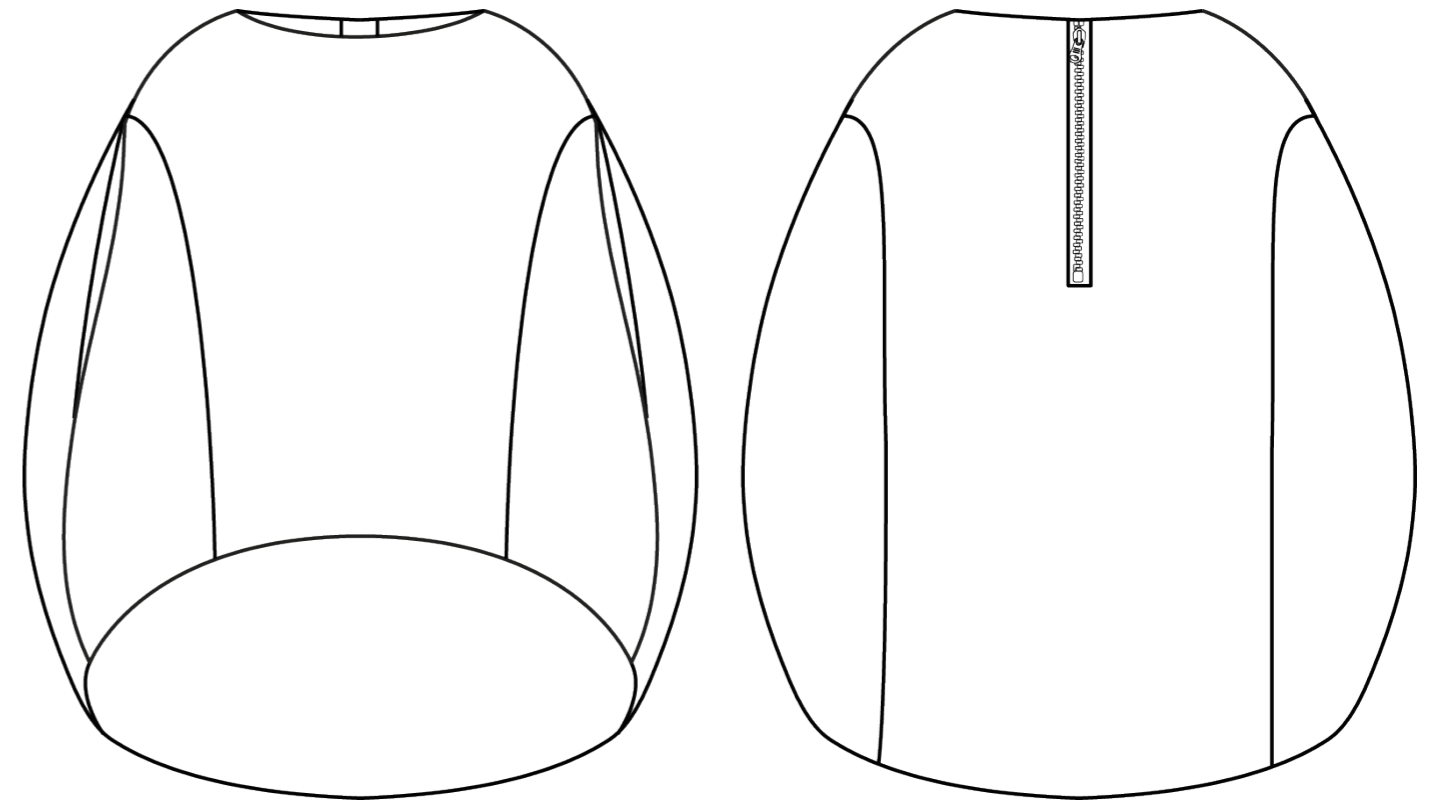
## DRESSES & JUMPSUITS



Total amount of products: 20

Tops: 5  
Outerwear: 3  
Accessories: 3  
Bottoms: 5  
Dresses & Jumpsuits: 4

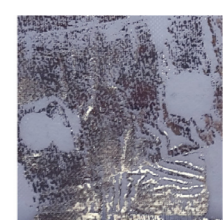
OUTFIT 1.



PES/CO

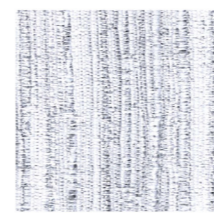
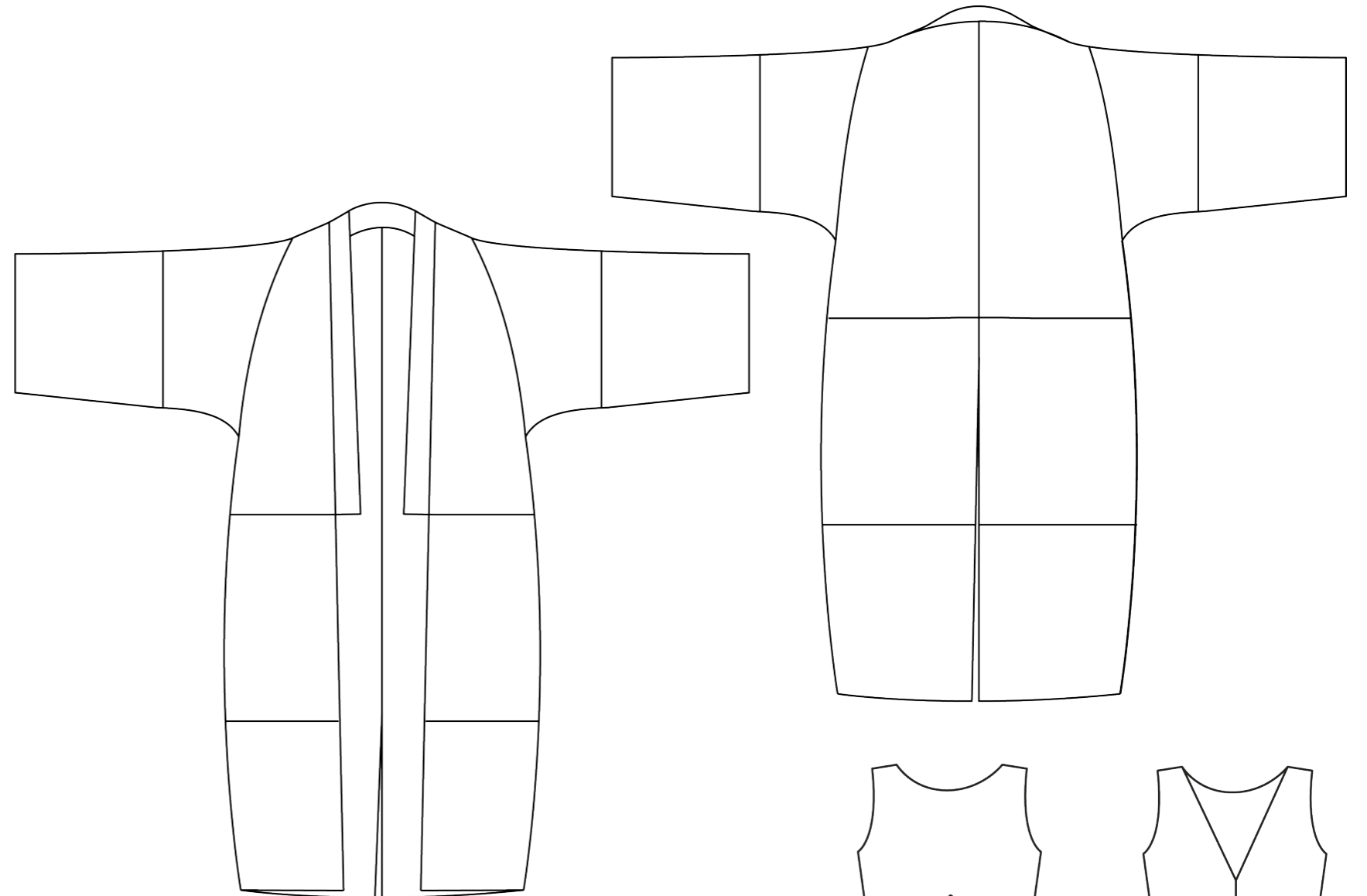


GOLD FOIL PLASTIC



100% CV + GOLD FOIL

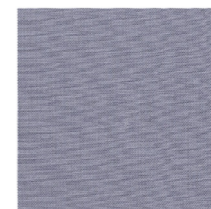
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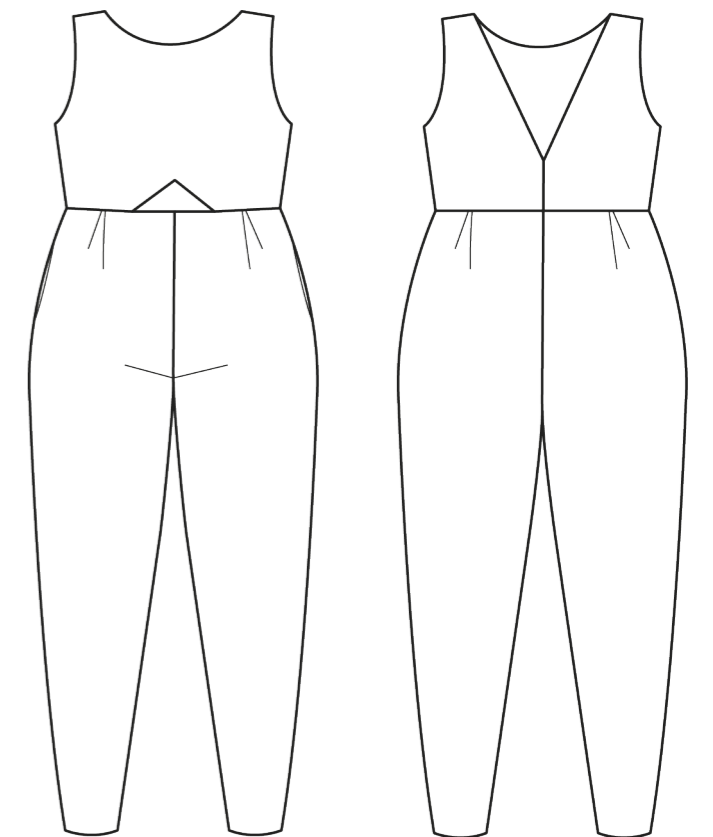
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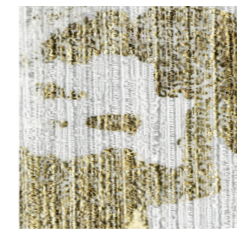
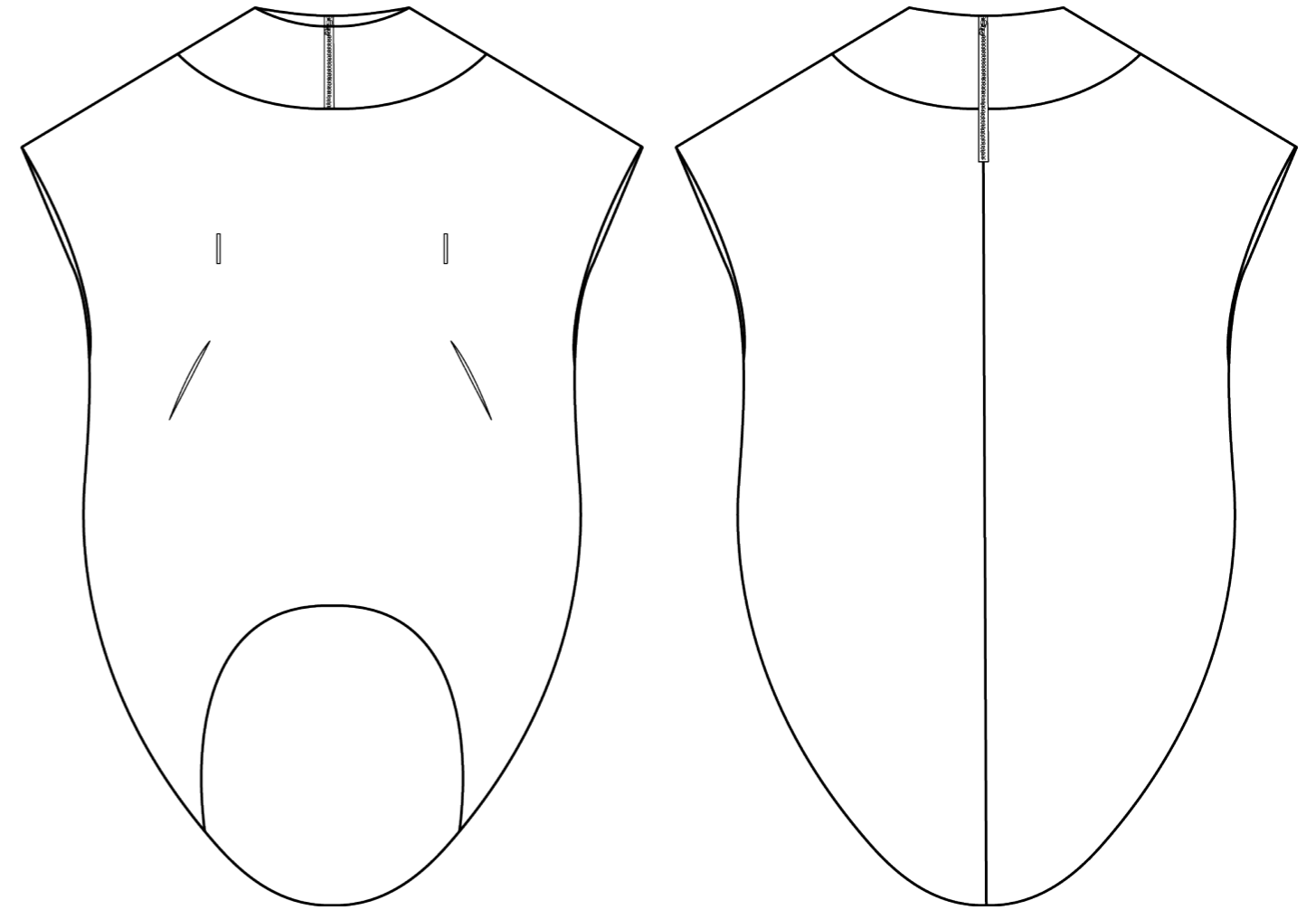
GOLD FOIL PLASTIC



100% CV



OUTFIT 3.



100% PES + GOLD FOIL

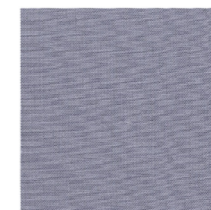
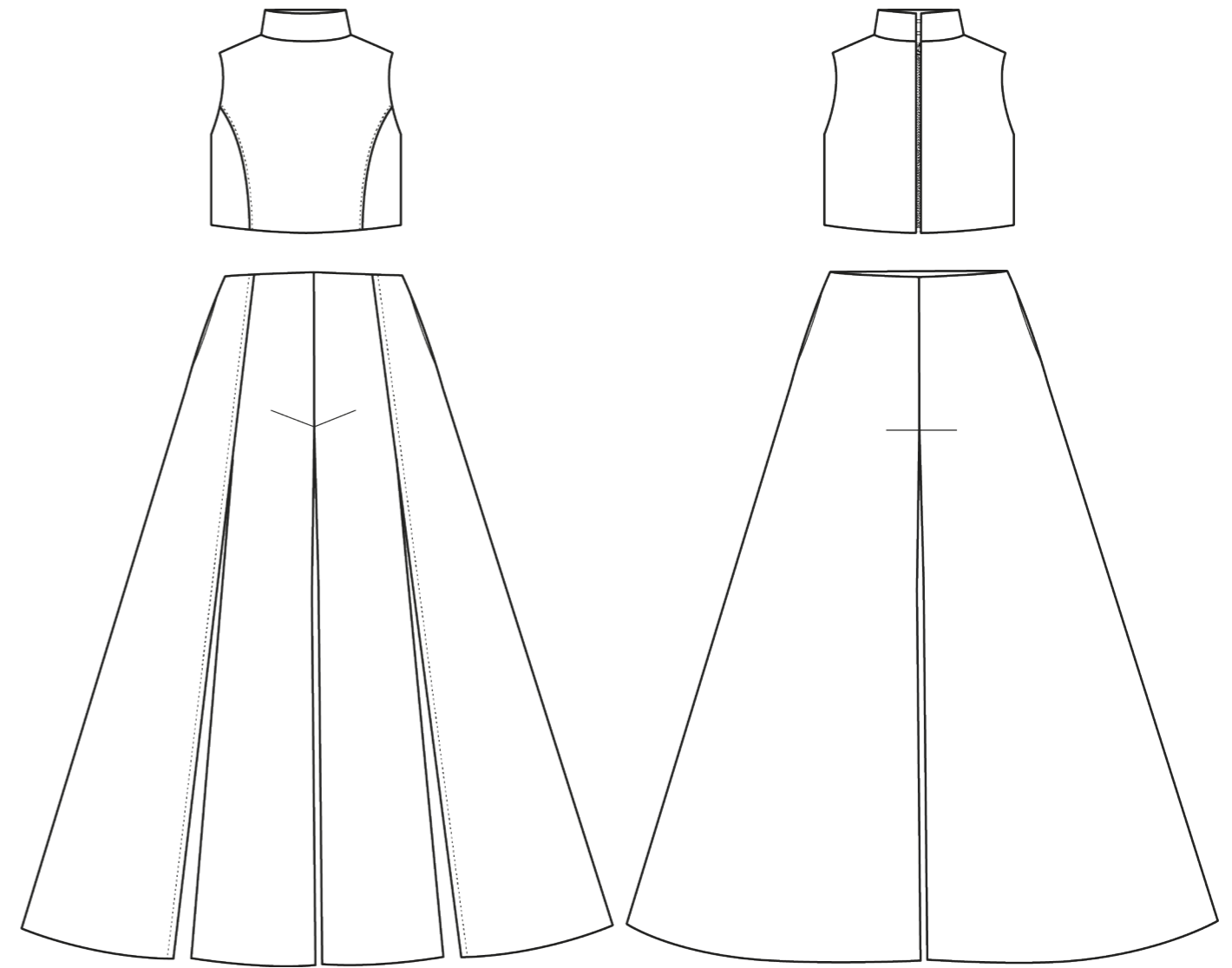
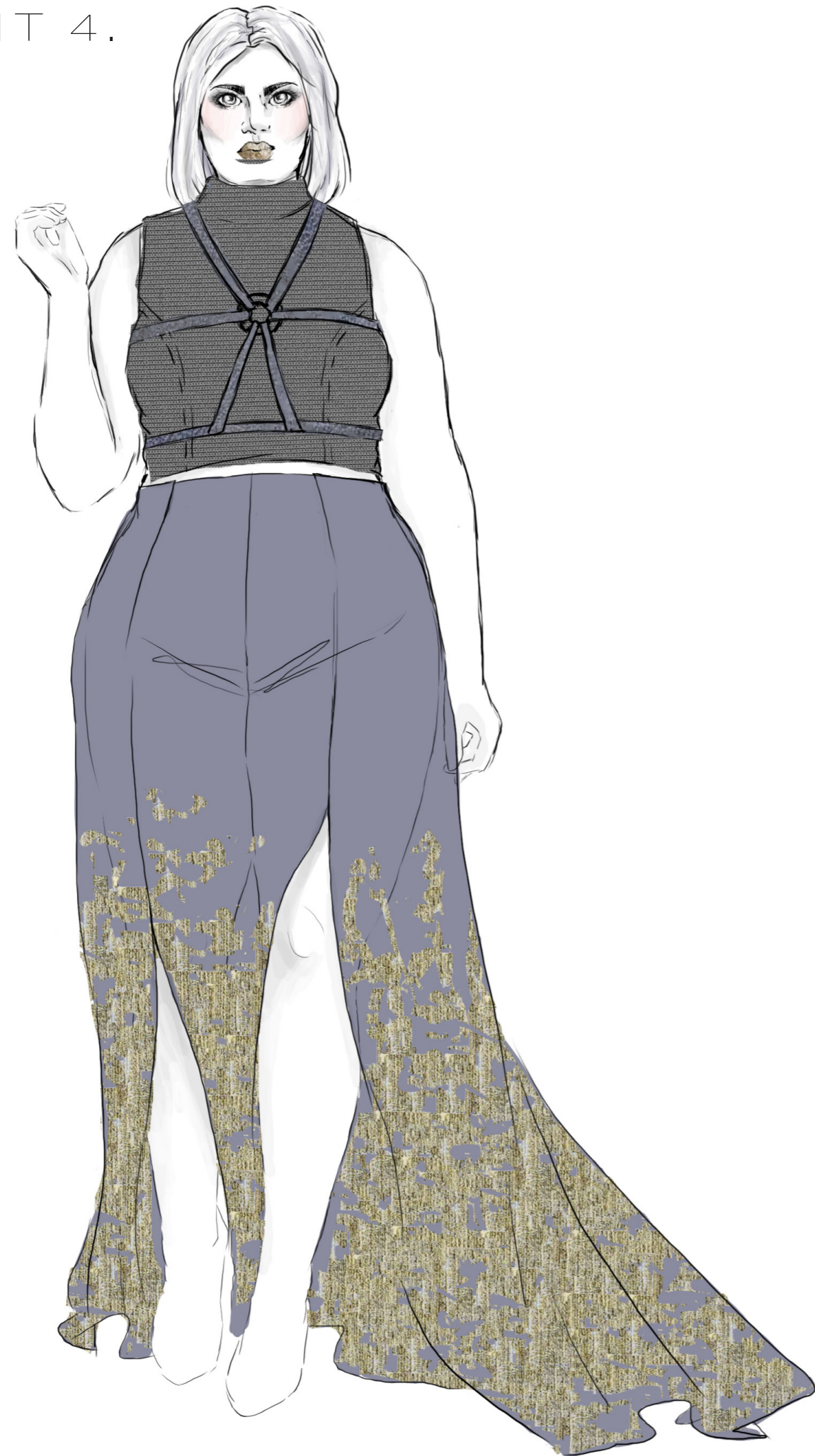


100% PES ORGANZA

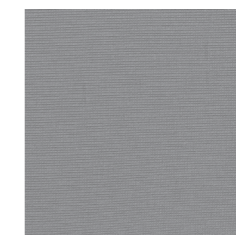


LEATHER

OUTFIT 4.



100% CV

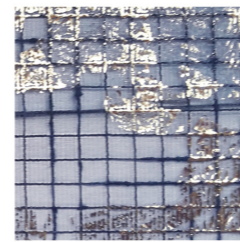
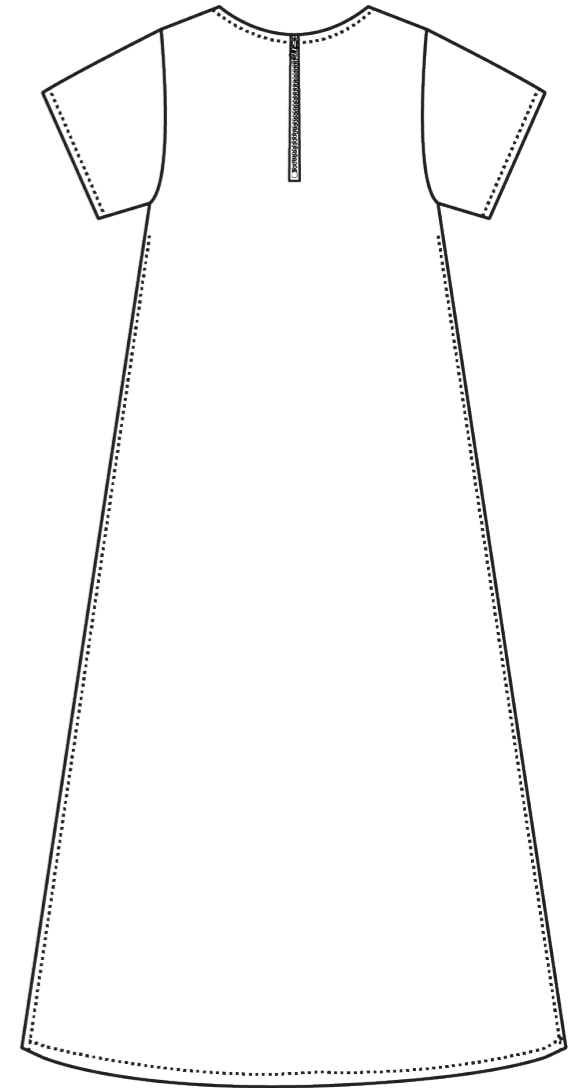
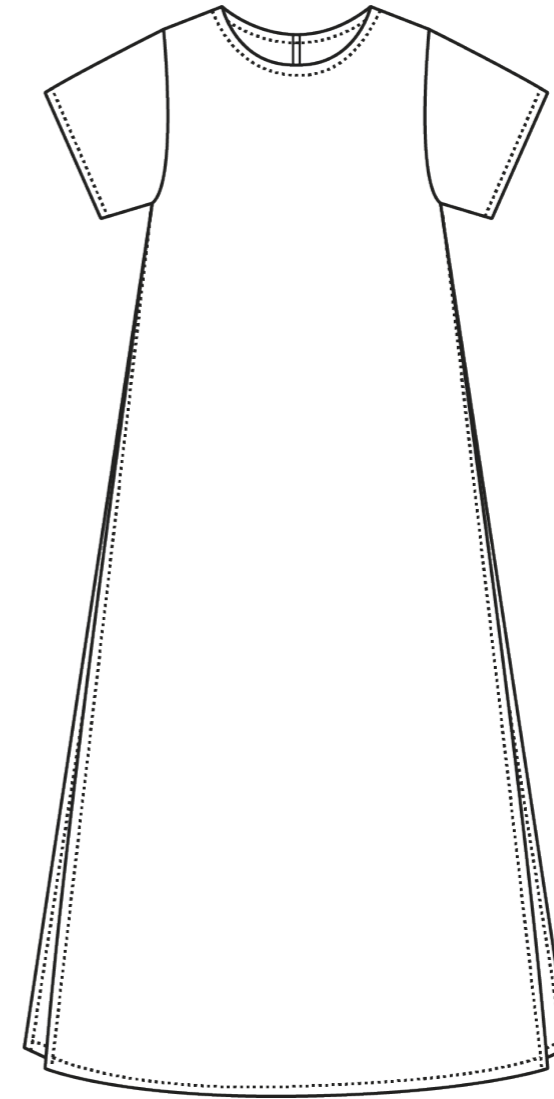


100% PES SCUBA

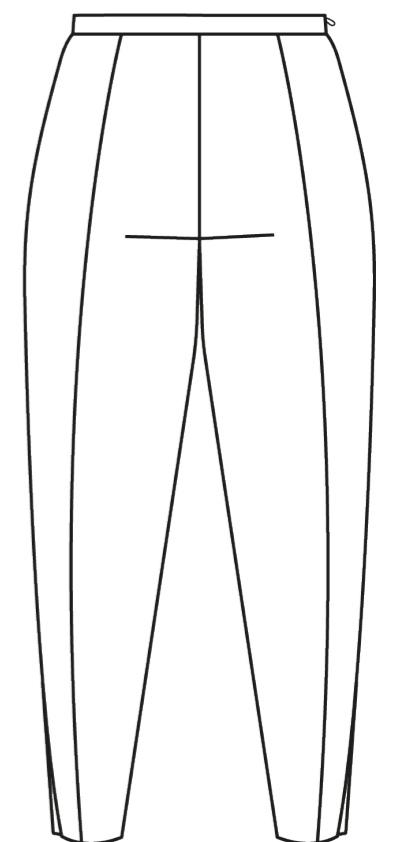
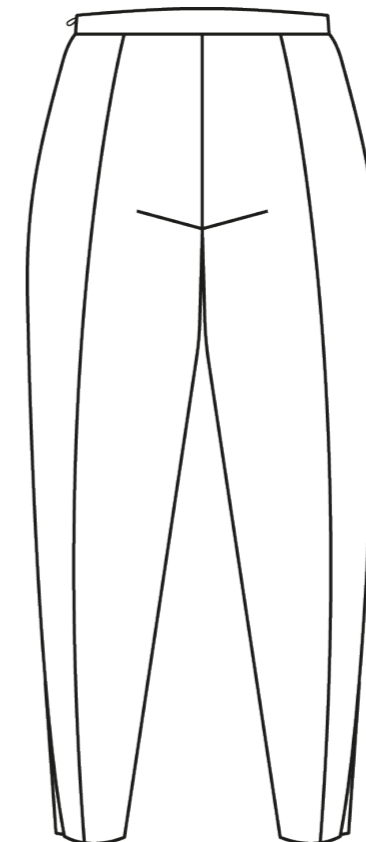
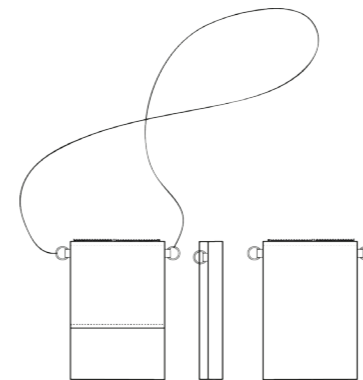


LEATHER

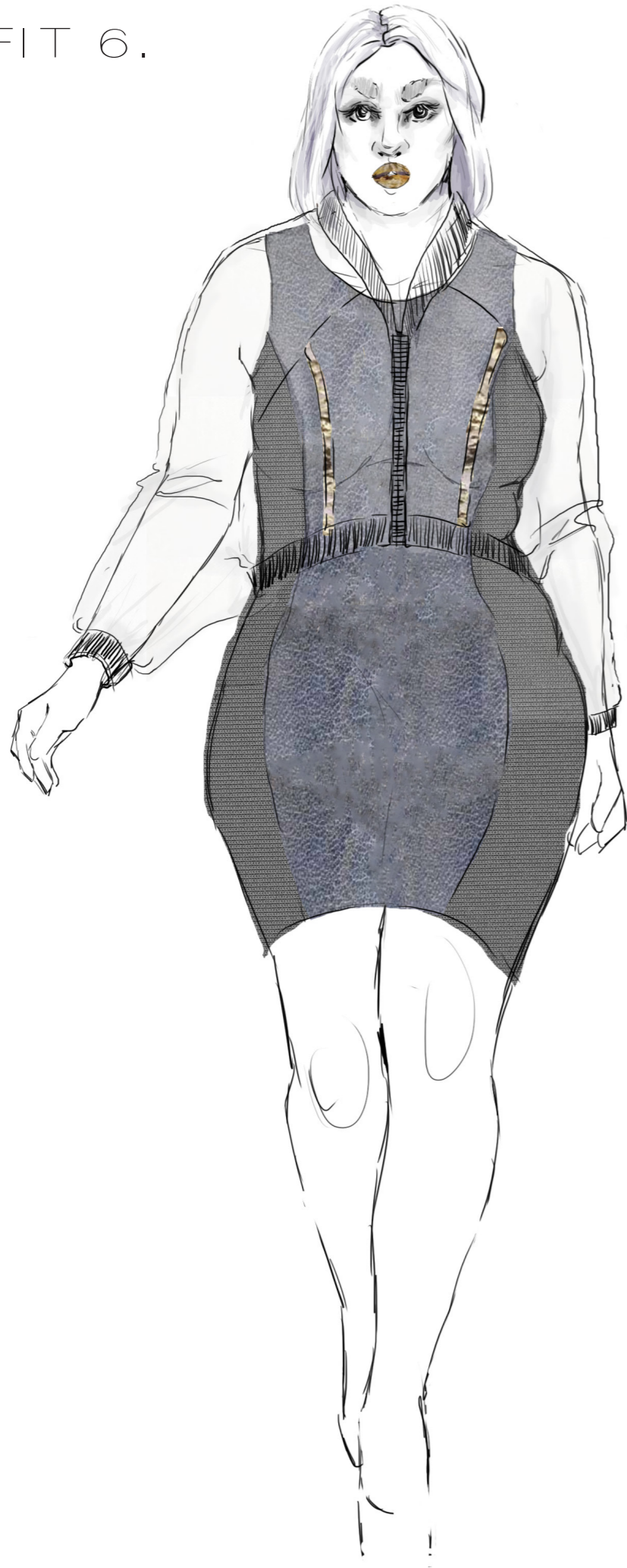
OUTFIT 5.



100% PES + GOLD FOIL



OUTFIT 6.



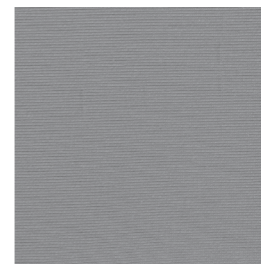
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100% PES ORGANZA



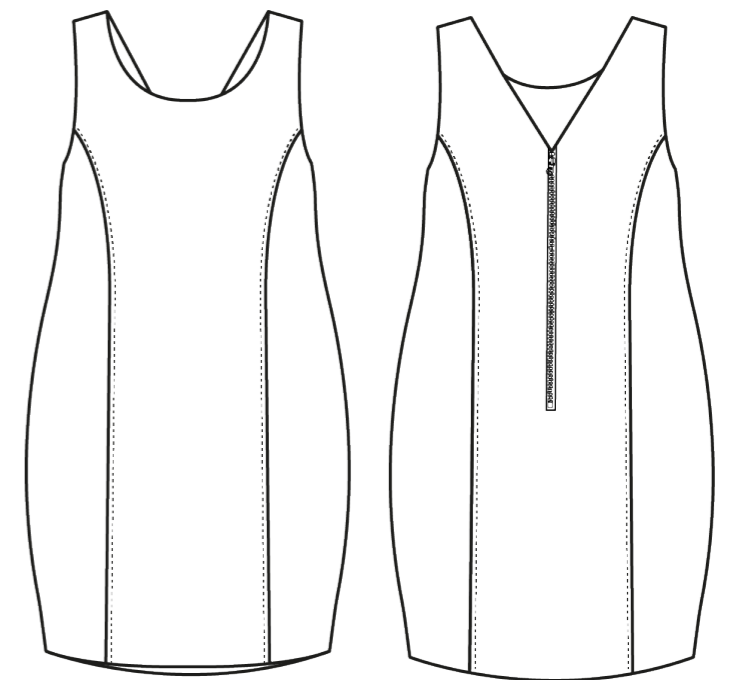
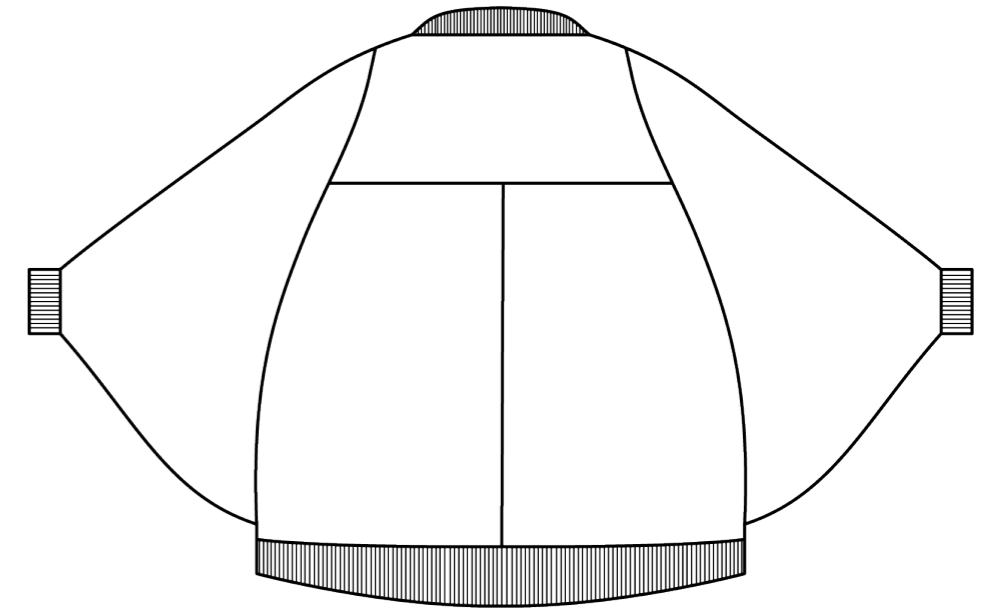
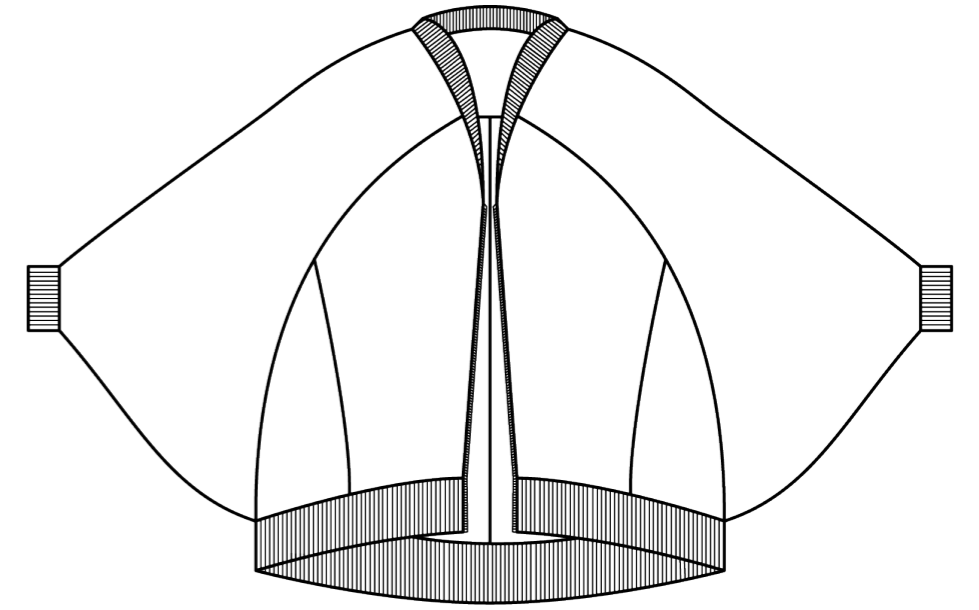
LEATHER



100% PES SCUBA

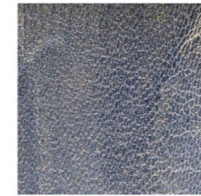
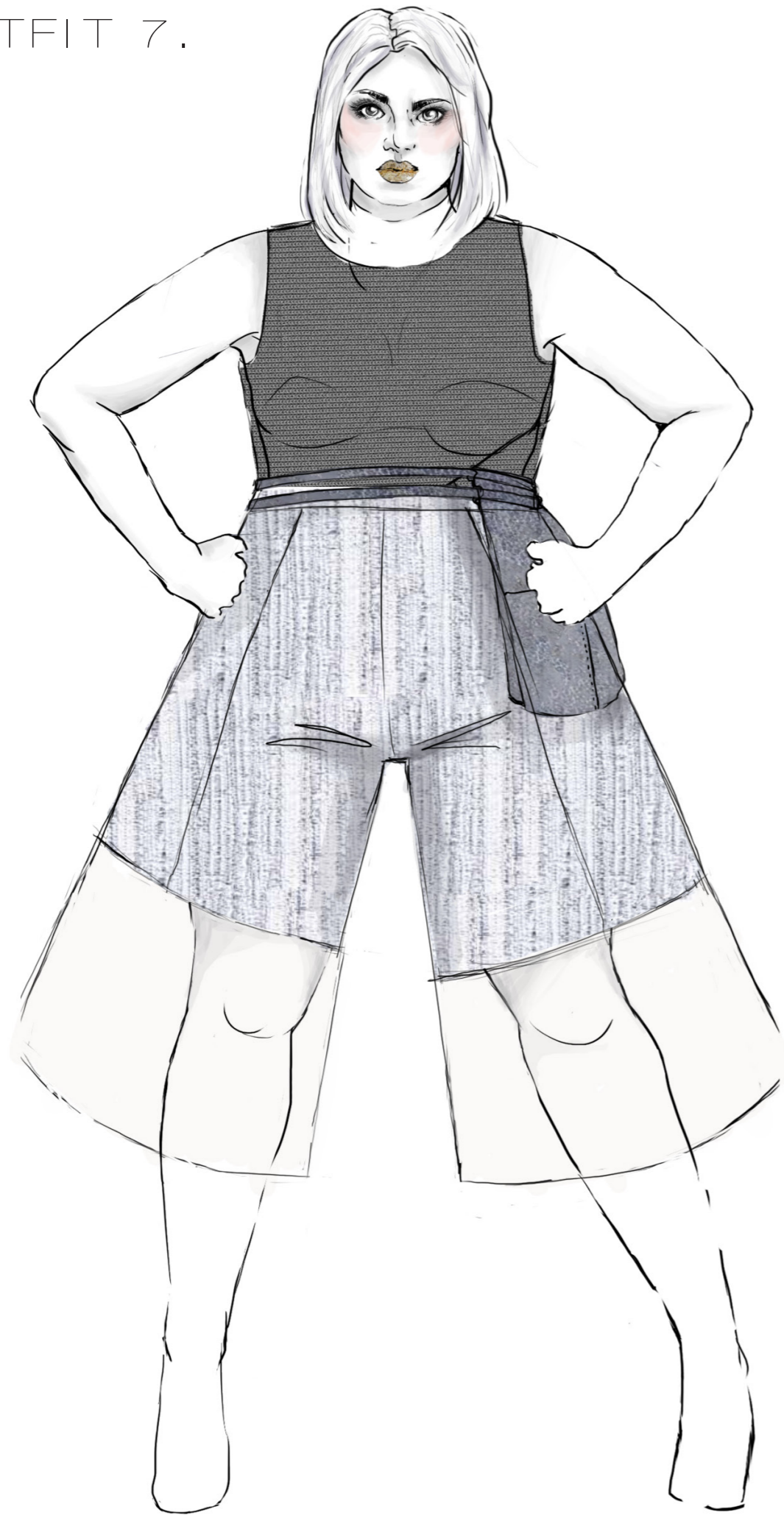


GOLD FOIL PLASTIC

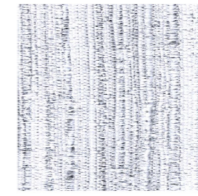


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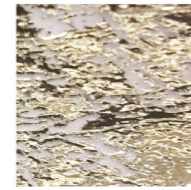
OUTFIT 7.



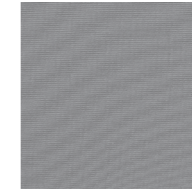
LEATHER



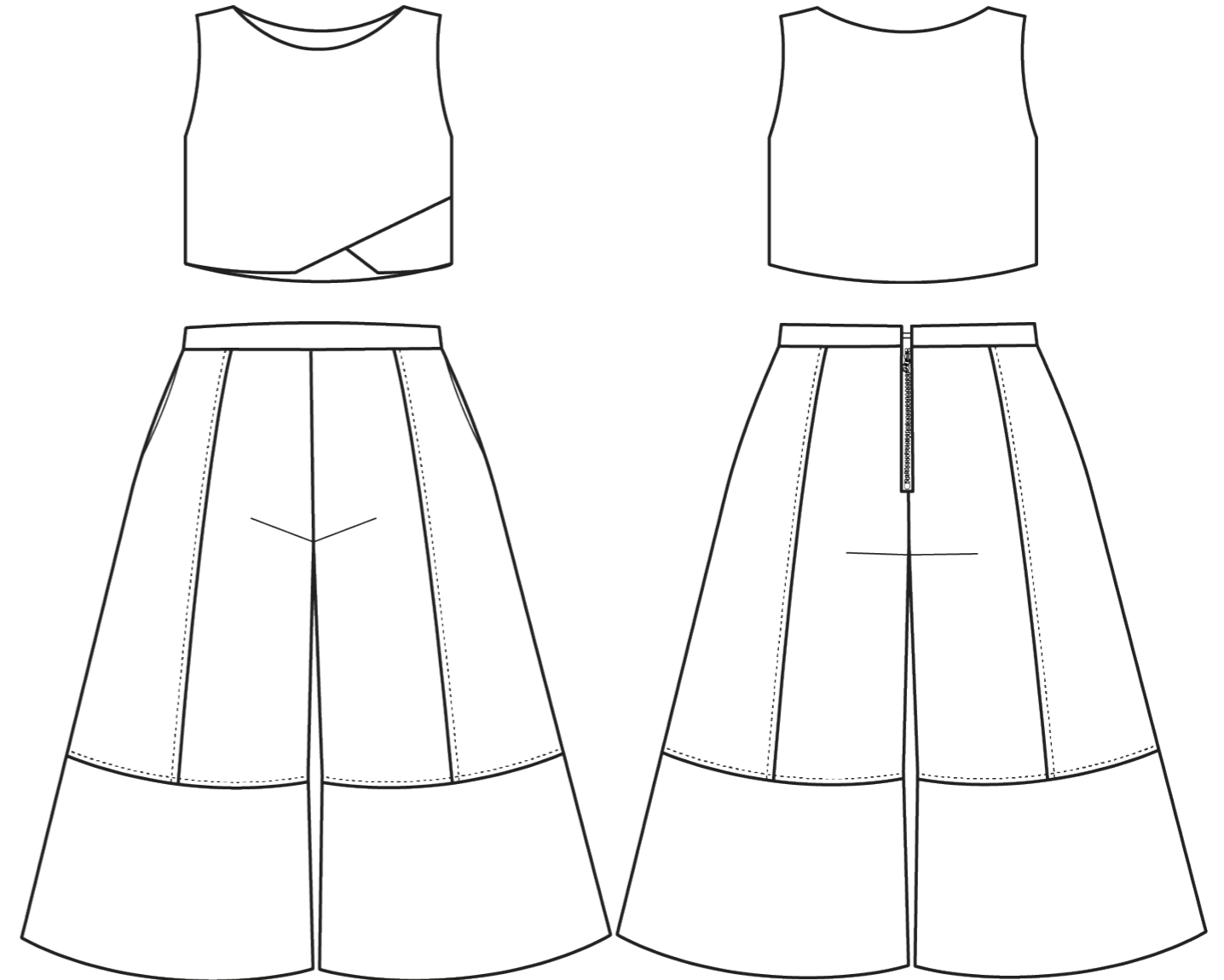
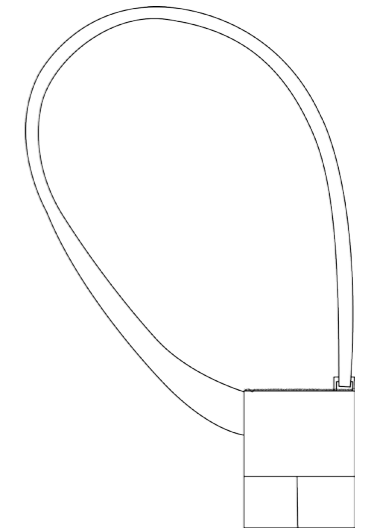
100% PES



GOLD FOIL PLASTIC



100% PES SCUBA



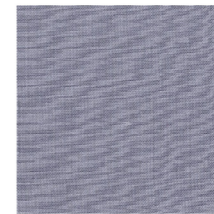
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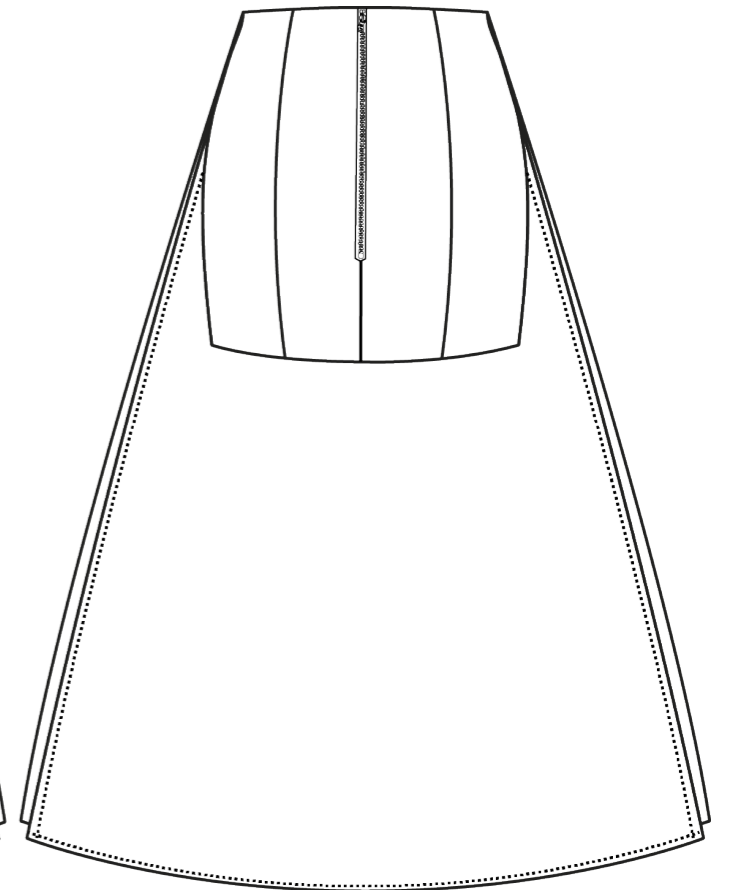
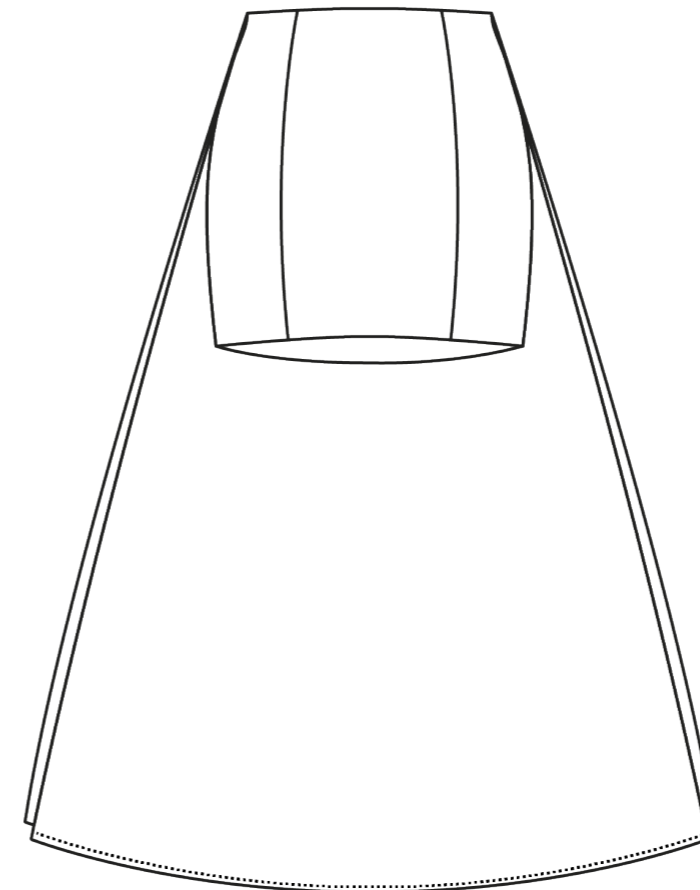
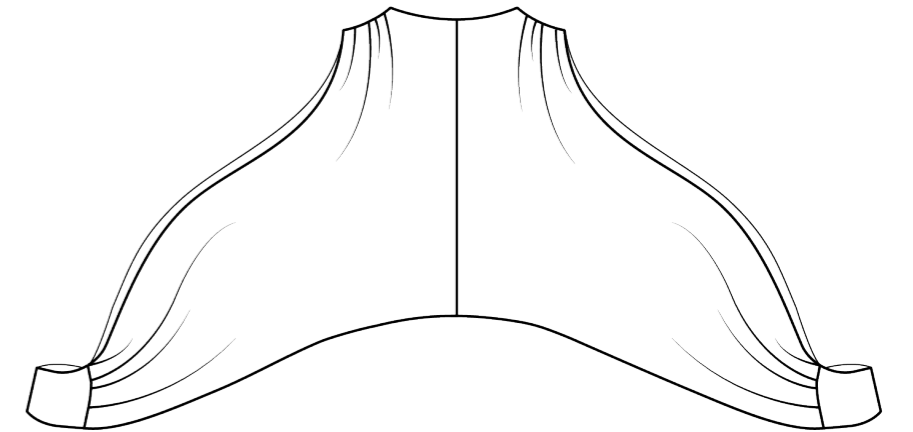
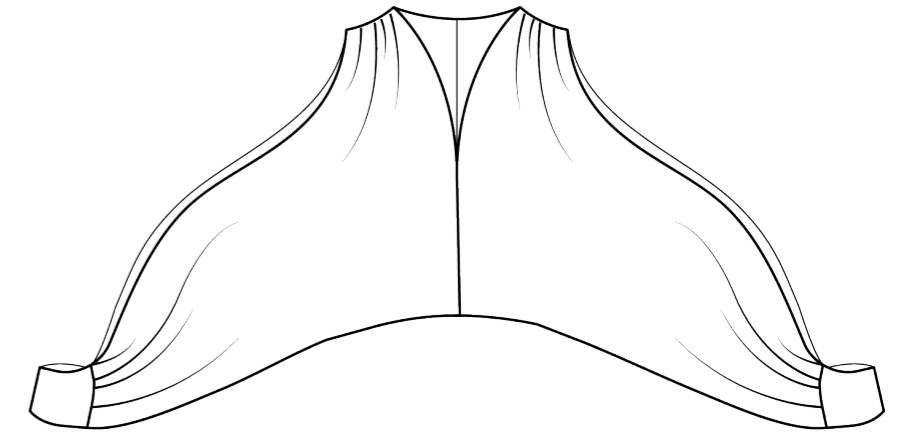
100% PES + GOLD FOIL



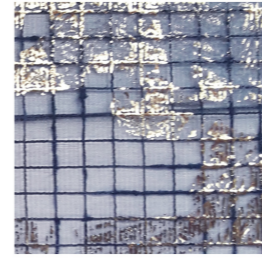
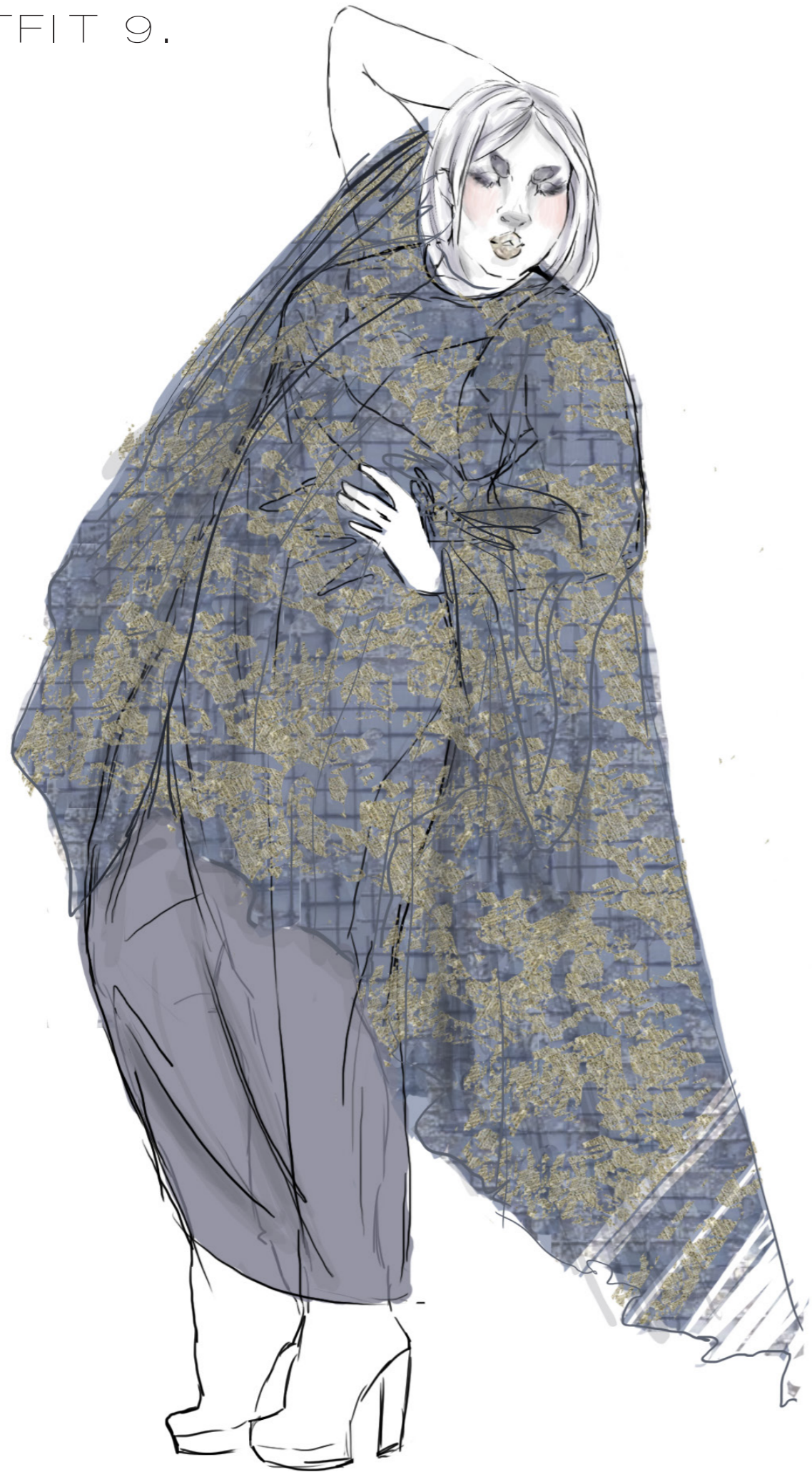
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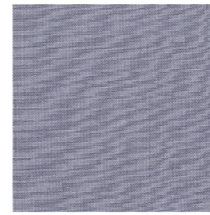
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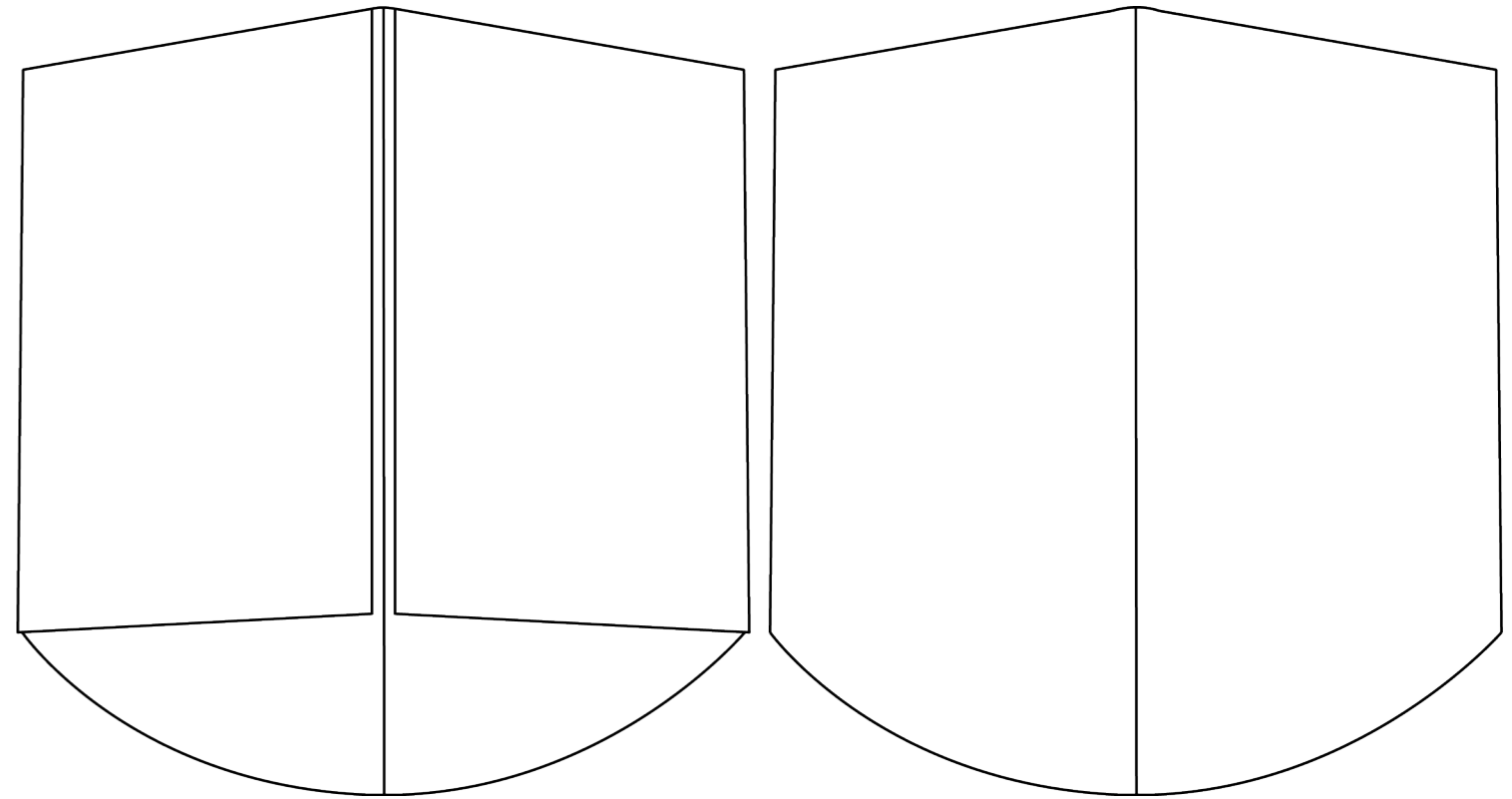
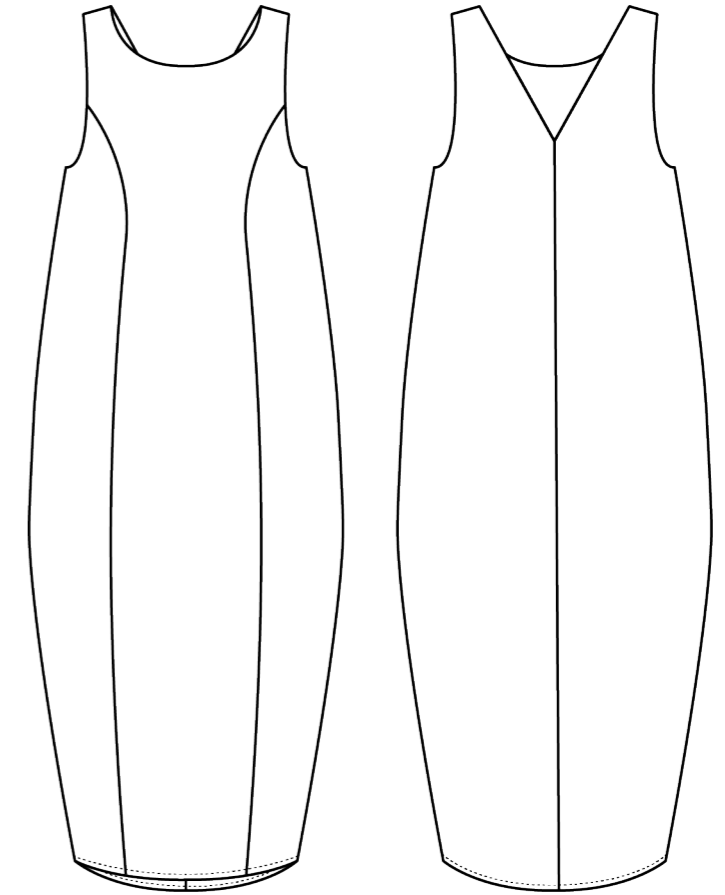
OUTFIT 9.



100% PES + GOLD FOIL



100% CV

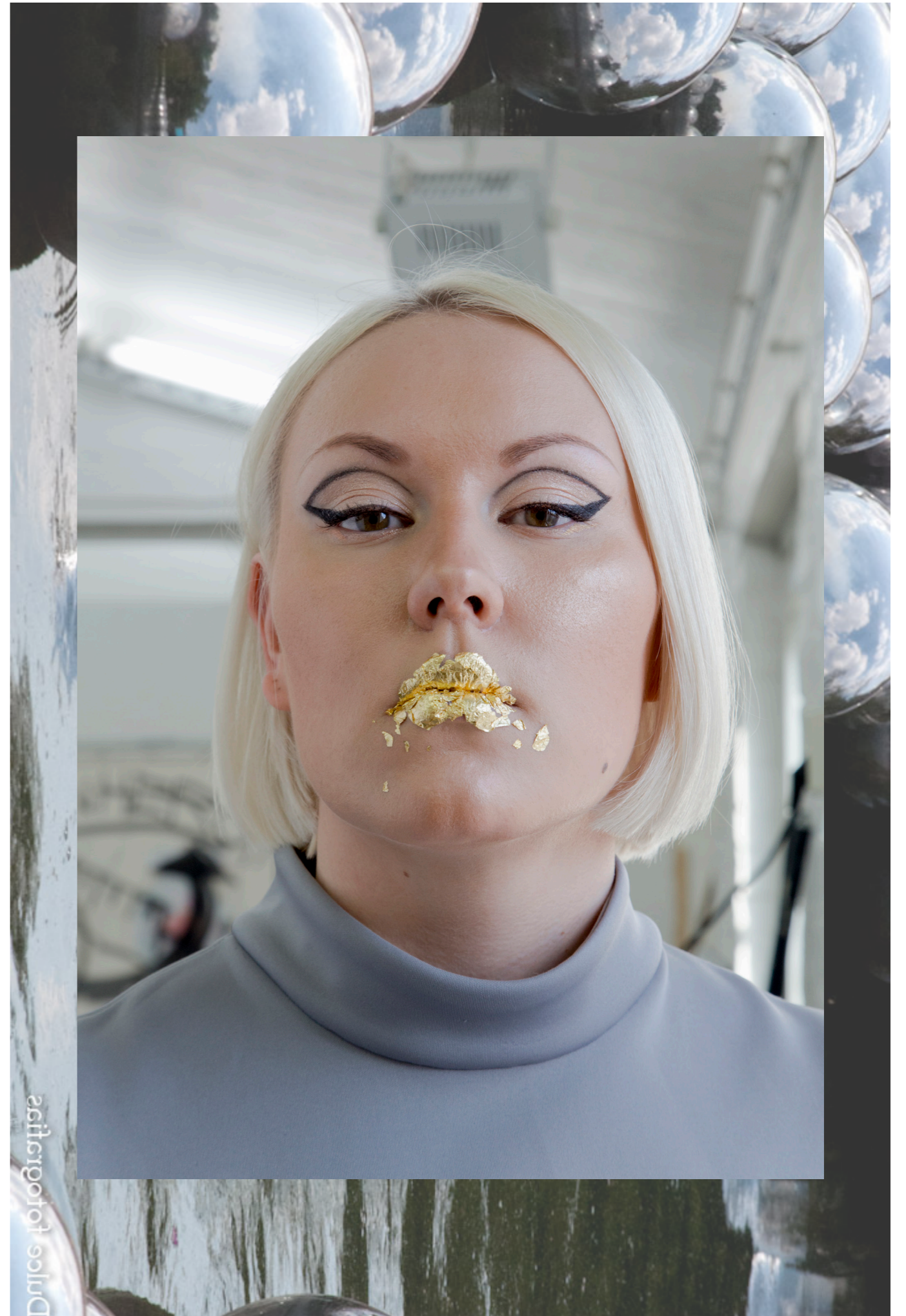


# EDITORIALS

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Clothes	Minnaleena Jaakkola
Photographer	Ida Enegren
Model	Nora Akkanen
MUAH	Leena Waggoner
Location	Lahti Art Institute
Shoes	Zebra Lahti







*"I really love me.  
I adore myself."*

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– Kusama Yayoi





# CONCLUSIONS

Fat is definitely a widely discussed and very current subject. I set out to explore the aspect of fat fashion deeper than the blogger world. The more I dug into the topic, the more I was certain that this was a thesis that needed to be done. Not just for the sake of doing a thesis collection but for the fatshion community itself. Even before starting out, I was aware that the amount of academic research material on the subject was scarce so I was set on gathering much of it myself. It was exciting to think that I would be among the first ones to make a thesis collection about plus size fashion. However, I was pleasantly surprised when the exploitable research material - such as LÄSKI monologue by Raisa Omaheimo - kept popping up along the evolution of the thesis. I was also happy that my interviewees were so excited, interested and willing to participate in my thesis. That pushed me further to the topic.

Personally I feel more comfortable working in an English speaking environment. Being able to write PARERE completely in English really in my opinion helped me to make a more solid research, not to mention use my Japanese research material to their full capacity.

The whole reason for doing PARERE as my thesis, I wanted to shake the fashion scene in Finland and raise awareness to the neglected state of the plus size industry. Fatphobia is a key element in today's capitalism and it clearly holds back the evolution of plus size fashion. The customer base of plus size fashion is growing and there is no reason for the industry not to respond to the discontent they've expressed. Additionally, as the society is slowly shifting away from hyper consumerism, I feel it's extremely important to make clear to the customers how much work, effort and money goes into the garments sold to them and how it is divided throughout the chain of production. Especially in plus size clothing, where the retail prices are rightfully higher than their straight size counterparts, it is so important that the design is interesting enough to satisfy the customer's needs.

Through the process of making PARERE, I've discovered that designing for plus size women is aesthetically no different from designing for a smaller size. It all comes down to defining the concept of the collection, points of interest and really knowing what your customer base wants from a garment. There is no need for a plus size garment to be slimming. However if it's the goal of the customer one's designing for, that's a different story.

The collection itself has been designed with the opinions and my personal experiences as a fat woman in mind. It is interesting, aesthetic driven and it has a range of different products. The design team is the one that shapes the customer's view on what they are allowed to wear and in PARERE, I've taken steps to promote that there are no rules in fashion. Even though it is important to listen to the customer, it is the designer who in the end makes the design decisions for the good of the collection.

In the future I would very much like to continue the research on plus size fashion and the aspects of society that affect its development. The next step would be to develop store concepts to enhance the shopping experience of fat women.

# SELF EVALUATION

This whole process of PARERE engulfed me fully from the start. Being a fat woman myself, and an active fatshion blogger, the success of this thesis was very meaningful both personally and professionally. I am a very ambitious person so even though the whole process was all in all very draining, I was set on making an impressive and challenging thesis.

The amount of work I've put into the research of PARERE is immense. I think I've really been able to gather all the necessary information on the subject that one needs in order to understand the aspects of fat fashion. I even managed to clear some of my own prejudices and aggressions towards some of the topics I argue about in PARERE. The thesis is not made from a single perspective, but inspected closely from different standpoints. There wasn't a lot of research material available so I relentlessly waded through articles, brand surveys and other non academic material that could be used to support my deduction process.

The PARERE collection itself represents my aesthetic. There are loose and fitted silhouettes and lots of interesting details. The products have range from outerwear to accessories and there are different types of elements that the users can be drawn to. There are both covering and revealing products in PARERE, which allows the user to choose products they feel comfortable in. The materials are interesting and suit the theme of the collection and reflect the installation Narcissus Garden perfectly. Even though in my thesis I speak against the idea of flattering clothes, I still wanted the collection to be pleasing to the eye. I think I succeeded.

I was slightly skeptical when I first got the idea of executing print on plastic. I had planned to have some new technique in my thesis and the idea of using something unconventional as a material really intrigued me. I've dealt with acrylic sheets before in making jewellery, but this was something more ambitious and experimental. The technique required a lot of developing but once the right conditions had been found out, the results were visually very interesting and beautiful. I am really proud of the technique I've developed. The plastic was surprisingly easy to sew into the garments as details. However eventually had to give up on making entire products from the plastic due to its unfit behaviour as a clothing material which was really a shame.

Before I entered Lahti Institute of Design, I had next to no sewing or pattern making experience. During the past two years, dealing with plus size patterns I've learned more about pattern making and fit than I expected and I'm very proud of how far I've come in terms of construction of a garment.

I honestly think I have truly specialized in plus size fashion design and it is the right field of profession for me. The plus size industry is full of heated debates, and I feel I am both opinionated and quick-witted enough to open up the conversation about how the plus size industry should develop.

Overall I think PARERE is a very successful thesis and I wouldn't change any of it. Even though for a BA level thesis the written part is long, it is a solid piece of work and there are no unnecessary chit-chat involved.

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- Eevaliina Frigren, designer, Seppälä (FI)
- Becca McCharen, designer, Chromat (USA)
- Remi Ray, designer, (UK)
- Hazayama Kubonoya, La Farfa, Bunkasha Publishing (JAP)
- La Farfan models, conversation (JAP)
- Raisa Omaheimo, journalist/playwright/lecturer (FI)

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PICTURES NOT SOURCED ARE DESIGNER'S ORIGINALS

# ATTACHMENTS

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Interview analysis, La Farfa (JAP)

Interview analysis, Seppälä (FI)

Interview with Raisa Omaheimo, artist (FI)

Interview with designer Becca McCharen, Chromat (USA)

Interview with designer Remi Ray, (UK)



## INTERVIEW ANALYSIS LA FARFA

Interviewee: Hazayama Kubonoya, La Farfa Fashion Magazine, BUNKASHA

I conducted an interview with the representative of La Farfa Magazine in Tokyo in August 2015. La Farfa is a Japanese plus size fashion magazine that is focused on creating a fun and positive image of plus size women and to help them in their day to day fashion choices.

One of the key motives of La Farfa is creating a positive outlet for fat representation. The editor in chief, Harumi Kon, is a plus size woman herself and she is keen on creating a more approachable fashion media for Japanese plus size women. She feels that now that the general atmosphere is more accepting, this kind of diversity is possible. According to the magazine, fat women have not been properly represented in the media so it is hard for plus size consumers to figure out where to shop for clothes. They also wish to break the assumption that plus size women are gloomy and unfashionable and that life can only be enjoyable if one's skinny. The magazine has gotten a lot of positive feedback from both the industry and the general public.

Most importantly La Farfa focuses on showcasing fashion and trends just like any other magazine of the genre without condescending to fat shaming or body policing. In the interview Kubonoya states that everyone has something in their body they are concerned about. Whether it's the belly or thighs etc, La Farfa hands out advice to enhance the parts of the body readers feel confident about rather than focusing on how to hide themselves. Kubonoya states that trends have a big impact on this which is why it is important that plus size media stays on track with the industry.

The magazine has established new, more positive descriptive words that they use in the magazine to describe their clients, such as pochako, marshmallow girl or shiratama girl. Creating an inclusive, cute vocabulary for plus size women is an important thing in Japan. Recent popularity of reality as a genre has opened up a new platform for fashion, where women can see more of an inclusive variety of body types through selfies and idol culture. La Farfa's models are scouted amongst real women and they take part in events organized with shopping malls and amusement parks. In these events, the models and the magazine's representatives have panel conversations about fashion and answer readers' questions.

All of the interviewees in La Farfa viewed the plus size market as a viable and growing industry.

## INTERVIEW ANALYSIS SEPPÄLÄ

Collection: Great Girls

Prize range: average

Amount of products per season: 12-15 pieces per month, knit and woven 50% - 50%

Interviewees: Johanna Haliseva, Katja Tuhkasaari, Eevaliina Frigren

I conducted interviews during summer 2015 for Seppälä's designers who had worked on the Great Girls plus size line. The designers were circa 35-40 years old and had several years of experience in the GG line as well as a lengthy career in Seppälä in general.

The design process itself in GG – collections follows the same fundamentals as the regular sized Woman – collection: it carries the same trends, colors and materials researched for the main line. The style of GG all in all is kept as similar to Woman as possible and the minimum amounts of materials are achieved by using the same materials in both collections. However, as the Woman line is the main focus point – larger in both the number of products designed and sold – it is always designed first. Due to more delicate approach to the fit of the garments, the opinions of the tailor are taken more into consideration.

The designers empathized that the user has not been defined for GG in person's characteristics but rather in the style they represent. The products are aimed to be as flattering to all body types as possible but mainly focused on X and O types as they occur most commonly in the Finnish female population. Compromises are made in the design in order to reach the average. Seppälä has gathered customer feedback on the matter and the suitability has been improved with the selection of various types of models used in GG fittings. The designers get steady customer feedback of the collection, but nothing in particular stands out. The feedback usually concerns the prizes, fit and the materials.

All of the interviewees viewed the plus size market as a viable and growing industry. While they felt that it is good to constantly aim to improve all the collections, they acknowledged that the plus size industry is in need of attention.

The reason why the GG line has a smaller amount of products available is that it is a specially tailored collection with a smaller clientele compared to the main line. The price range is higher than the regular sized Woman line because of the sizing.

# INTERVIEW WITH RAISA OMAHEIMO, LÄSKI MONOLOGI

(via email, 12.1.2015)

1. Nimi/ikä/ammattistatus  
*Raisa Omaheimo/ taitelija*
2. "Läski" on monologi kehonkuvasta, fat shamingista, ja siitä millaista on olla lihava nyky-yhteiskunnassa. Miten olet päätenyt body positivity -aiheen pariin?  
*Keho on ollut aiheeni vuosien ajan. Minua on aina kiinnostanut mm. kehojen representaatio, ja normittaminen. Olen tutkinut mm. performanssiteoksissa kehoa maisemana ja karttana.*
3. Millainen toimija koet olevasi body positive -skenessä? Mitä haluaisit tehdä tulevaisuudessa? (Toimijana tarkoitan, mitä edistät, minkä tekemisen parissa toimit, miten edistät.)  
*Tällä hetkellä toimintani on ollut aika arkista; seuraan mediaa, puutun sosiaalisessa mediassa näkyvään fat shamingiin, jaan meemikuvia. Omassa elämässäni isokokoisena ihmisenä olen pyrkinyt näyttämään että läski saa ja voi tehdä mitä haluaa ja pukeutua miten tahtoo. Läski-esityksen myötä viesti saavuttaa toivottavasti useampia ihmisiä, ja kokemuksellisuuden myötä paremmin.*
4. Onko mielestäsi representaatiolla merkitystä eri medioissa? (Myös muodin ulkopuolella.)  
*No todellakin on. Elokuviissa pahiksen tunnistaa siitä että se on läski ja hikoilee. Kevennystä leffassa saadaan kun joku läski sivuhenkilö käy kääntymässä. Toimivia läskisubjekteja leffoissa on tosi vähän; Precious tulee mieleen ekana. Kirjallisuudessa läskien representaatio on inasen monipuolisempi. Musiikissa nautin aina kun joku uusi nuori naisartisti saa olla niin iso kuin haluaa (miehethän saavat aina, se ei ole mikään juttu, heh).*
5. Uskotko, että muodilla on suuri vaikutus body positive -liikkeeseen?  
*En tiedä miten suuri vaikutus, mutta kyllä se mukana on. On iso asia onko plus koon muoti esimerkiksi peittämiseen pyrkivää, vai paljastavaa. Tai että onko plus koon vaatteissa monipuolisuutta (ei pelkkää verhokuosista tunikaa).*
6. Millainen tilanne lihavilla ihmisillä nykypäivänä on? Mistä luulet tämän johtuvan?  
*Kysymys on valtavan laaja. Lihavilla ihmisillä on monenlaisia tilanteilla, monilla hyvä elämä. Epäkohtana pidän rakenteellisia ongelmia, kuten vaikka sitä että ylipainoisen voi olla vaikea saada lääkäristä apua vaivoihinsa, koska kaikkien vaivojen syy on ylipaino (vaikka puhuttaisiin korvasärystä). Henkilökohtaisesti olen kokenut raskaaksi viime vuosina täällä pääkaupunkiseudulla yleistyneen ilmiön jossa minulle voidaan kertoa että olen ruma ja lihava, keskellä päivää, noin vain. Se on raskasta.*  
*Mistä luulen tämän johtuvan? Monista asioista. Laihdutustuotteet ovat valtava bisnes, ja siksi on taloudellisesti kannattavaa stigmatoida lihavuutta ja tuputtaa väitettä siitä että normalipaino/ hoikkuus on avain onneen. Se, että yhteiskunnallisella tasolla halutaan kontrolloida naisen ulkonäköä on ikivanha asia. Joskus pohdin mitä kaikkea saataisiin aikaan jos oman kehon muokkaamiseen käytetty energia käytettäisiin johonkin muuhun.*
5. Suomessa on ajatellaan laajalti, ettei saa tehdä itsestään numeroa, äänekkäästi yrittää parantaa tilannettaan tai "rinsota". Koetko että tämä ajattelutapa hidastaa/estää body positivity liikkeen kehitystä Suomessa?  
*En tiedä onko tuo nimenomaisesti suomalainen ilmiö. Enemmän koen että body positive -liikkeen on vaikea saada jalansijaa koska vaatii yksilötasolla paljon asettua koko kulttuurimme läpäiseviä ihannekeho- ja kauneuskäsityksiä vastaan. Joukossa on voimaa.*
6. Usein tuntuu, että lihavat ihmiset nähdään jo synnyttäeinä keski-ikäisinä naisina. Koetko, että nuoria, trendikkäitä lihavia ihmisiä ei näytetä / haluta näyttää?  
*Kuten ylempänä kirjoitin, lihaviin mediapresenssi on tosi pieni. En siis osaa sanoa tähän oikein juuta enkä jaata.*
7. Miten paljon uskot ns. body policing -ilmiön vaikuttavan lihaviin ihmisten ostokäyttäytymiseen ja pukeutumiseen? Anna tästä esimerkki.  
*Body policing vaikuttaa ostokäyttäytymiseen mm. niin että on vaikea pukeutua oman makunsa mukaisesti kun valikoimat ovat niin suppeat. Läskit ostavat peittäviä väliä vaatteita ihonmyötäisten sijaan. Esimerkki: Kauppa tarjoaa koossa 52 ainoasaan farkkuja joiden lahkeet ovat reiden levyiset koko matkalta vs. pillifarkut koossa 52.*
8. Mitä mieltä olet termistä "plus size"? Mitä nimitystä sinusta tulisi käyttää puhuttaessa lihavista ihmisistä? Onko nimityksen käytössä väliä kuka puhuu, lihava vai joku muu?  
*Minä halluan ottaa haltuun termin läski, ja tehdä siitä adjektiivin ilman tunnelatausta. Se kertoo että olen ylipainoinen. Emansipatrisesti haltuunotetuissa sanoissa on tärkeää se, että asianomaiset käyttävät niitä. Kadulle läskiä huuteleva ei ole neutraalilla meiningillä liikkeellä. Pidän neutraaleista sanoista kuten "ylipainoinen". Vihaan sanoja kuten "iso tyttö" (mikä tyttö??)*
9. Koetko, että reclaim the word fat - liikkeellä on positiivinen vaikutus?  
*Ehdottomasti. Kts. yllä.*
10. Mainitse 3-4 inspiroivaa body positivity -piirien henkilöä. Miksi juuri he?  
*Beth Ditto tulee ekana mieleen. Aktiivisesti ja näkyvästi toimiva mimmi. Näyttää toiminnallaan että läski voi olla seksuaalinen, aktiivinen, sensuelli, lahjakas ja rohkea. Ei anteeksipyytele itseään. Tosi vaikea nimetä. Teoreetikoista esimerkiksi Susie Orbach on kirjoittanut hyvin.*
11. Olen huomannut, että yleisesti ottaen lihavat ihmiset joko infantilisoidaan (big GIRLS, great GIRLS) eikä heitä nähdä naisellisina tai vastavuoroisesti hyperseksualisoidaan (pin up, paljon meikkiä, kiharat, pitkä tukka) vaatien heiltä feminiinisyyden korkeampaa suorittamista kuin hoikemmilta kanssaisariltaan. Ns. comfy girl -estetikka (huolittelematon olemus, juoksu housut, pizzaa) tuntuu kääntyvän lihaviin ihmisten kohdalla helpostilähestyttävästä luotaantyöntäväksi. Onko sinulla mitään ajatuksia tästä?  
*Jaan ajatuksesi, se on juuri näin. Saadakseen olla läskinä viehättävä pitää osoittaa että on tehnyt hommia sen eteen.*
12. Missä näet pluskoon muodin ja body positivity -liikkeen 5 vuoden päästä?  
*Näen että se lisääntyy samalla tavalla kuin feministinen toiminta.*
13. Onko sinulla jotain lisättävää/jotain kantaa jonka haluaisit ottaa esille?  
*Ei tähän hätään.*
14. Viestisi pluskoon naisille?  
*Lainaan Beth Dittoa: "Käytä vaatteita jotka parantavat itsetuntoasi. Käytä vaatteita joissa sinulla on itsevarma, hyvä, seksikäs olo. Älä piiloudu vaatteisiin. Katso itseäsi useammin. Koske itseäsi. Tutustu vartaloosi, erityisesti alastomana." Lähde: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/nov/23/gender.uk>*

# INTERVIEW WITH BECCA McCHAREN, CHROMAT

(via email, 30.9.2015)

1. Name, age, occupation / Becca McCharen, 31 CEO, Chromat
2. How long have you designed plus size fashion?  
*I started out by making custom pieces for friends, but Chromat officially introduced Curve to our offerings in September 2014.*
3. Is the design process the same when you design for plus size women? If not, how does it differ from straight sizes?  
*We don't design with any constraints. Once we've designed and edited a collection, we then comb through and decide which pieces will translate best into a spectrum of sizes.*
4. Are there people specializing in pattern making involved in the designing process itself or do they consult in some way?  
*Our head designer Alyse also makes all of our patterns.*
5. Do you design your plus size garments to a specific body type in mind? What's your target customer like?  
*Our muse for Chromat Curve is Denise Bidot, who we met through photographer Christine Hahn. She has an amazing hourglass figure. Our goal is to make Chromat available to as many #ChromatBabes as possible.*
6. How's the feedback of your work with plus size been?  
*The industry has really applauded the diversity of our runway casting (by Casting Director Gilleon Smith), and our audience is really excited to see a range of bodies in the spotlight. It means a lot to us to read about girls being inspired by someone who looks like them on the runway.*
7. What do you feel are the challenges or difficulties of plus size design?  
*The most difficult challenge we've run into since introducing Chromat Curve is finding a fashion-forward luxury boutique to stock Chromat in Curve sizes. We were disappointed to have put so much effort into making Chromat Curve a reality and to get such a positive reaction from our audience only to find that there wasn't an existing high-fashion retail market for the size range. I hope to see this change in the future.*
8. Do you think you'll continue working in plus size in the future?  
*Chromat is committed to celebrating Chromat BABES at every size!*
9. Do you think fat representation is important?  
*Representation is everything. Seeing positive role models doing amazing things who you can relate to opens up your world.*
10. Why do you think the high street plus size sections are so drastically smaller than regular ones when it comes to the amount of the products? Also, why do you think it is that the regular sized clothing lines don't continue beyond the EU size 44?  
*This is something I'd like to know myself.*

11. How would you describe the plus size industry at the moment? Where do you see the scene in five years?  
*Right now the industry seems to be about celebration and visibility. I hope to see that continue!*
12. Do you have a favorite plus size advocate? Why them? (celebrity, designer, model, blogger, etc.)  
*Denise Bidot is not only such an inspiring woman to work with, she's a mother and an advocate for loving yourself, owning your body and celebrating being a woman.*
13. How do you feel about the term plus size? In your opinion, what should the plus size women be called?  
*It's up to each woman to define themselves how they see fit.*
14. Do you have any tips for plus size women about how to dress? Do you think there are certain fashion rules to live by when you're plus size?  
*There are no rules, other than to love yourself and wear what makes you feel confident. But my official advice would be to wear Chromat!*
15. What is the greatest thing that's happened to you while designing for Chromat?  
*Each time someone new tries on a piece we've made and it fits perfectly. Also, seeing Beyonce in Chromat! :)*
16. Do you have any tips for prepping the plus size models for the runway?  
*Walk fast, strong and powerfully, like you're here to take over the world!*
17. Do you think there's work to be done in the plus size industry? Should it be developed further and how? Do you feel plus size women should be represented better?  
*Yes. I definitely feel there needs to be more high fashion retailers who represent a larger range of sizing. Also the culture needs to change. We need to see positive female role models of all sizes in media- TV, movies, music, fashion, etc- who are confident, unafraid and beautiful!*
18. Do you have anything you'd want to add about the subject? Do you have any message for plus size women?  
*<http://chromat.co/blogs/news/19153291-there-is-no-wrong-way-to-be-a-woman-a-conversation-with-denise-bidot> "There is no wrong way to be a woman." -Denise Bidot*

# INTERVIEW WITH REMI RAY, REMI RAY LONDON

(via email, fall/2015)

1. Name, age, occupation ?  
*Remi Ray, 28, founder of Remi Ray London and the British Plus-Size Fashion Weekend*
2. How long have you designed plus size fashion?  
*Its different but not majorly - i use fit models that represent the consumer i want to buy into my products. These women have butts and wider arms and require garments that understand their bodyshape*
3. Is the design process the same when you design for plus size women? If not, how does it differ from straight sizes?  
*Its different but not majorly - i use fit models that represent the consumer i want to buy into my products. These women have butts and wider arms and require garments that understand their bodyshape*
4. Are there people specializing in pattern making involved in the designing process itself or do they consult in some way?  
*Most of the time the pattern cutters dont have experience with plus-size fashion but i work with a team that has been in the industry for many years and have worked for some of the biggest high street brands and also runway and i tend to be the voice for the plus-size customers being a plus-size woman.*
5. Do you design your plus size garments to a specific body type in mind? What's your target customer like?  
*I design for me - my problem areas in a style that suits my body shape - these areas tend to be the same for many plus-size women butts, thighs, stomach and arms.*
6. How's the feedback of your work with plus size been?  
*Always really appreciated - but the plus-size consumer seems to be slow in adapting to quality over quantity i see this changing very soon.*
7. What do you feel are the challenges or difficulties of plus size design?  
*I dont see much difficulty but sourcing great fabrics is another obstacle*
8. Do you think you'll continue working in plus size in the future?  
*I would love to do as much as i can - but the market is becoming very saturated and business for independent designers is becoming harder - so we will see.*
9. Do you think fat representation is important?  
*Sorry don't understand the question.*
10. Why do you think the high street plus size sections are so drastically smaller than regular ones when it comes to the amount of the products? Also, why do you think it is that the regular sized clothing lines don't continue beyond the EU size 44?  
*I think in all cases the high street work with demand and there is much more on offer than ever before and slowly you will see and increase. In relation to size its just about looking around online.*
11. How would you describe the plus size industry at the moment? Where do you see the scene in five years?  
*In the next 5 years the industry will no longer be seen as niche and we will have to find other topics to discuss lol*
12. Do you think it's better to have fat women designing for fat women?  
*No essentially some of the best designers in the world are men f.ex. Tom Ford and Oliver for Balmain*
13. Do you have a favorite plus size advocate? Why them? (celebrity, designer, model, blogger, etc.)  
*I dont have a favourite tbh as they are all equally important.*
14. How do you feel about the term plus size? In your opinion, what should the plus size women be called?  
*I agree with plus-size as its widely understood. We should stop allowing words to define us and concentrate on the bigger picture allow bigger women to be seen as equals in main stream fashion.*
15. Do you have any tips for plus size women about how to dress? Do you think there are certain fashion rules to live by when you're plus size?  
*Find a great tailor to ensure your clothing fits perfect. Great underwear and always buy your size*
16. What is the greatest thing that's happened to you while designing for plus size consumer?  
*At the age of 23 creating the biggest platform for the plus-size market to expand and being nominated by cosmo mag for body confidence twice.*
17. Do you have any tips for prepping the plus size models for the runway?  
*All about practice and confidence*
18. Do you think there's work to be done in the plus size industry? Should it be developed further and how? Do you feel plus size women should be represented better?  
*Its a process and all things take time.*
19. Do you have any message for plus size women?  
*Stay true to you.*

*“There is no wrong way to  
be a woman”*

---

– Denise Bidot



## THANK YOU

LUAS, Institute of Design

Minna Cheung

Kia Koski

Marjut Yli-Mäyry

Tuija-Maija Piironen

Heikki Saros

Elina Töyrylä

Sari Ahvenainen

Ida Enegren

Päijät-Hämeen Kulttuurirahasto

Tanya Matthews

PARERE models

Interviewees

MUVA 12

Family & SQUAD

Lotta "LowD" Karhuvaara

Mocha, Latte & Limppu



(48)



Dedicated to Mocha

