

PERSONAL *UNIFORM*



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Maisterin opinnäytetyöni on kaksiosainen, ja se koostuu kirjallisesta tutkimuksesta sekä seitsemän asukokonaisuuden miestenvaatemallistosta. Kirjallinen osa erittelee ja tutkii malliston syntyyn vaikuttaneita tekijöitä pureutumalla sen tematiikkaan ja rinnastamalla sitä luovaan prosessiin. Opinnäytteen otsikko “personal uniform” viittaa vaatteisiin muodostuviin tunnesiteisiin, ja työ tutkii henkilökohtaisuuden, yksilöllisyyden, sekä ajan käsitteitä vaateen kontekstissa.

Malliston lähtökohtana toimi yhdenmukaisen pukeutumisen tutkiminen, ja keinot miten yksilöllisyys ilmenee sen kontekstissa. Tutkin mallistossa ihmisen ja vaateen suhdetta ja miten aika ja käyttö muovaa vaateen ulkomuotoa, sekä tunnesiteen muodostumista. Mallisto pyrkii yhdistämään henkilökohtaisia muistoja ja aistikokemuksia fiktiiviseen narratiiviin ja luomaan eheän kokonaisuuden joka samalla kommunikoi sen lähtökohtia mutta on myös avoin tulkinnalle.

Työn kirjallinen osuus pyrkii täsmentämään malliston lähtökohtia jakamalla ne elementeiksi, ja teorian sekä introspektion avulla ymmärtämään niiden merkitystä luovassa prosessissa. Lopputyön keskeisiä kysymyksiä ovat: Miten uniformut muodostuvat? Mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat vaatteisiin muodostuviin tunnesiteisiin? Millainen merkitys ajalla ja muistoilla on tämän suhteen muodostumisessa? Mikä on yksilöllisyyden ja henkilökohtaisuuden relevanssi suunnittelijan työssä? Teoriakatsaus pohjautuu kirjallisuustutkimukseen, sekä omaan pohdintaan jolla haen taiteellisen työn ja teorian tutkimuksen yhtymäkohtia. Teoriaa ja suunnittelua analysoivaa tekstiä yhdistämällä pyrin luomaan tekstiin laajempia temaattisia yhteyksiä, jotka auttavat muodostamaan eheämmän kuvan työn prosessista.

Opinnäyte pyrkii hahmottamaan luovan prosessin lähtökohtia ja vaiheita, ja sen tavoitteena on syventää ymmärrystäni omaan arvomaailmaan ja suunnitteluidentiteettiin vaikuttavista tekijöistä, sekä löytää keinoja lisätä merkityksellisyyden tunnetta suunnittelutyössäni.

Avainsanat Uniforms, identity, time, fashion, clothing, design process

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This master’s thesis consists of a written part and a seven look menswear collection. The written part is a dissection of the elements that played a part in developing the collection. The title “Personal Uniform” derives from the emotional relationships that are formed around clothes. The thesis is a study of that relationship, and how it’s connected to the concepts of time and identity. My thesis work studies the concepts of personal relationships, individuality and time in the context of clothing and fashion.

The starting point for the collection is visual research into uniform clothing and conforming ways of dressing, and how identity manifests through unity. It’s a study of the relationship of a person and their clothing, and how time and ways of wearing shape that relationship. The collection combines personal experiences and memories with imagined histories, and it aims to create a cohesive narrative that is simultaneously open to interpretations.

The written part of the thesis aims to pin down the components of the creative work by dividing them into themes, to better understand their significance in the process through literature research and introspection. The core questions present in the work are: How do uniforms develop? What elements effect the ways we form emotional relationships with clothes? What is the importance of time and memories in the forming of that relationship? What is the relevance of personal experiences in the work of a designer? How can a designer facilitate the concepts of time and feelings in their work? Each chapter combines theoretical writing with fragments of the creative process, to find the intersections that connect the two bodies of work.

The thesis intends to trace and open up the starting points and the process of design work, and both components, written and collection work, aim to complete each other. The written part reflects the methods and rhythm of the creative work, by entwining the theory and practice through mutual thematics. The goal of this thesis is to better understand the components that play a part in the developing of my values and identity as a designer, and to gain tools to design in a way that is more meaningful to me.

Keywords Uniforms, identity, time, fashion, clothing, design process



1.

PERSONAL UNIFORM

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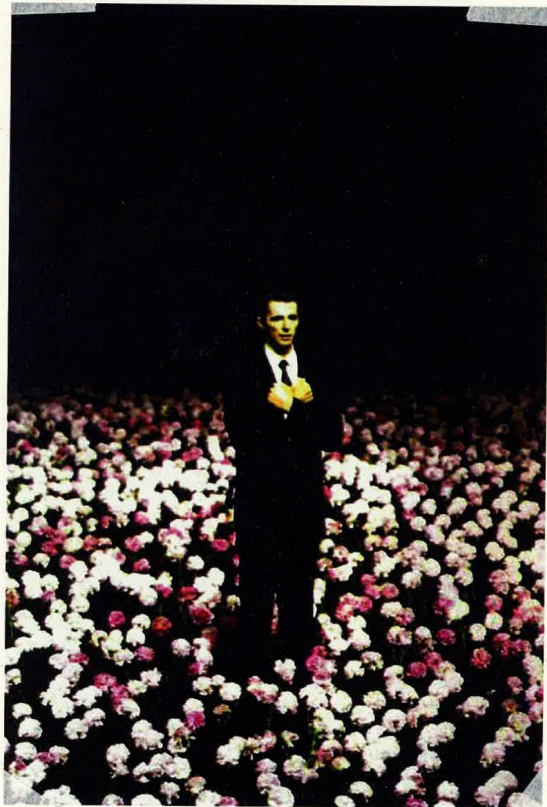
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2.



1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of my master's thesis is the concept of a personal uniform. I'm fascinated by the relationship a person forms with the things they wear, and in this thesis I'm studying that relationship through the theories of uniformity, time and wearing. This thesis consist of a written part, and a productive part, a seven-look menswear collection, designed, made and presented during the academic year of 2018-2019. The role of the written part is to open up the thematics of the collection, and the dialogue of the two is intended to mutually expand each other.

The topic I have chosen is the end result of narrowing down that took some time. The elements present in the collection differ in the sense that they are more abstract, personal and instinctual, rather than framed under topics. Nevertheless the spirit of the two parts of work is the same, and the importance of this written part, completed almost a year after the collection, is to trace down the things that played a part in developing of the collection, and establish steadier ground by looking into some theories behind them. The title of the work *Personal Uniform*, is a sum of the two main elements present in both sections of this work, the personal as the identifiable and subjective, and the uniform, the anonymous and repeating.

The reasons I got to studying fashion in the first place was the thrill of self-expression, to be able to study and explore identity and visually communicate that. Being able to work from sensations brought by music, films, words and art and to be able to translate those into something that can be worn, shared, changed and kept for later. I'm intrigued by the emotional bonds formed towards objects, how some things are kept for life, how they obtain meaning and evoke memories. That bond feels slightly disrupted today, maybe due to the pace at which things are consumed. There seems to be a disconnection with materiality that contradicts the amount of things accumulated, resulting in having more stuff than ever but not feeling a particular way about anything in special. It's a strange time to be studying fashion, with the knowledge of the harm the field imposes both ethically and environmentally. It's also a good time to be exploring solutions, and among them is readjusting the way we relate to the material things in our lives.

The concept of time is another reason that drove me towards my topic. I find myself constantly navigating towards things that are less and less visually impressive, but their magnetism is based on something else, an aesthetic that is more subtle, a silent tension. I get exhausted by the amount of things I'm exposed to, and decided very early on to frame the production part of this work quite tightly. The items I chose to work with were few and repetitive, and I did that with the intention of clearing out the clutter of endless possibilities and hopefully in that, give those few things the attention they deserve.

Time is present in this work in the way that it's connected to building memories and feelings. Time is an essential part in the growth of any relationship, whether it's with other people, things or with ourselves. Not all relationships require it in large quantities but many good ones do, and the time that is invested into forming good, meaningful and balanced relationships with the material things in our lives seems scarce and in need of better focus.

The forming of a personal uniform is not a static state of being or an ultimate goal but a lifelong process that requires nothing but time and introspection. The forming of a wardrobe or a style is not a final result, but more a by-product of getting to know yourself better, what makes you feel good and the way you like to express yourself.

The way something makes me feel seems to be the ultimate driving force these days, and as it's something that tends to take me to the right places, I'm choosing to follow that instinct as much as I can. Therefore: I chose to write about feelings, how they are stored in clothes, how they can be evoked through the act of getting dressed, not for other people or for the use of the society, but just for yourself. Although this is something that is important to me personally, I find that these things, if sincere, tend to be universal, not just in the mind of a single person but sentiments that are shared by many.

The goal of this process was simply to enjoy it as much as possible. There is something very beautiful about the spirit of student work, that is almost impossible to translate into working life. My intention was to dive into that enthusiasm while I still had the chance, and hopefully connect with it in a way that I would be able to find it also later, in life outside of the safety of a school environment. I placed a lot of trust in the process, believing that if it is rich enough it will eventually also show in the final result.

I found myself struggling to find the wording for the things I'm trying to describe. I feel like the topics of my study have a tendency of escaping analysis, and dissection deflates them, reduces them to a dimension in which they don't thrive. I hope that by gently forcing myself to rationalize my thought processes, I will be able to reach a better understanding of their underlying meanings, my personal motives, and their potential in the future of my design work. Some of the things I worked with felt ambiguous and frail at first but I have found that by giving them some time and patience, I am able to pin them down.

I structured this written work to reflect the total process, consisting of fragments that hopefully, when brought together, form an entity that traces my intentions. The text is composed of three theoretical pillars: uniforms, time, and dressing. Each consists of an overview of the subject, through theory and reflection, together with excerpts of my personal work. In the chapter *Personal Uniform* I conclude the results of the theoretical study and introduce the collection through the components that felt most relevant to me.

3.



7

2. RESERVOIR OF MEANING, *UNIFORM*

I’ve been fascinated by repetition and a sense of staticity throughout my studies. The topic of my final work rose from those points of interest, and I wanted to work with visual and written material that would somehow capture a sense of permanence. I’m intrigued by the meanings embedded into the things we wear and the communicative aspects of clothing, and I find it more stimulating to approach fashion through the person wearing it. The starting point for my collection research was uniforms, not a particular uniform but groups of people dressed the same. I was fascinated by visual togetherness, identification, and the relationship of a person and their surroundings. I was looking for some neutral point, a way of dressing where the garment is not so relevant, but the characteristics come from the meanings embedded into it and the way it has been worn.

When studying imagery of unified clothing, I found myself scrutinizing the pictures for signs of distinction, to find traces of the person within a group. Simultaneously, an image of a uniformed individual separated from the group, felt out of place, bound to their pack through their clothing but physically alone. My thinking thrives best through restrictions, and by studying conforming clothing, I was able to focus more on the nuances, the small forms of self-indication, both intentional and accidental. The parameters of uniformity are not dissimilar to the way that fashion operates, and I’m fascinated by the individual in a group, the balance of the need to belong, and the need to express oneself.

The title of this chapter is borrowed from Patrizia Calefato’s definition of uniform, a reservoir of meaning (*Calefato, 2000:195-204*). The title contains a broader definition of uniformity, applicable to established, regulated clothing, but also to contemporary uniforms, or quasi-uniforms. By studying uniforms, the ways they develop, and how they communicate, I wish to gain better knowledge on how clothes convey meaning and how they contribute to experiencing and enacting roles in social context.

In this chapter I will look into the historical background of uniforms, their use, how they convey meaning and how uniforms react to time and transgression. I have singled out the topics for their relevance in my creative work, and the way they resonate with my identity as a designer. This chapter contains the

starting point for developing the framework for my collection, and I will finish the chapter with the introduction to the concept of dressing, and the connection of uniforms and time.

The goal of this study is familiarize with the theories of uniformity and draw out the elements that have influenced my design work. It is not to introduce a large quantity of different uniforms, as depending on the definition, their numbers are infinite. The intention of this chapter is more to study some circumstances that have given birth to uniforms and look into the way that uniformity operates.



4.

noun

: dress of a distinctive design or fashion worn by members of a particular group and serving as a means of identification broadly : distinctive or characteristic clothing

: of the same form with others : conforming to one rule or mode : consonant

(*Merriam-Webster dictionary*)

Uniform is a type of standardised clothing that is inscribed with meanings based on rules or attributes that the uniform is to represent. Uniforms operate through an agreed set of symbols and signs, that can indicate the status or role of a person within a group. A uniform often contains the notion of how it should be worn, and the rules can extend to other parts of appearance, such as hairstyles, piercings and overall neatness.

The concept of a uniform comes with an idea of permanence. Not all unified clothing is uniform, but many things have the capacity to become one, depending on their longevity and their ability to obtain meaning.

Uniforms appear in infinite variations but they could be categorised to a few sections according to their use and context:

- *Occupational uniforms*, key attributes of the occupation, visually directing social encounters: medical uniforms, fire fighter, flight attendant, police officer, priest/ nun

- *Institutional uniforms*, characterised by control and obedience, sometimes about creating a sense of equality among members (by stripping indicators of economical background) but also about establishing hierarchies within the institution: prison uniforms, school uniforms, military uniforms

- *Quasi-uniforms*: unofficial, self-imposed unified clothing, individual but in similar ways: working clothes such as the men’s suit, subcultures, student uniforms, clubbers, sports spectators, ceremonial clothing. An ambiguous category which could be excluded from a stricter definition of uniformity, but being my main point of interest is included in this work.

(*Craik, 2005:3–18*)



5.

6.



SA ME
SOME
PUT
DIFFERENT



7.



9.



8.

Let's make
uniforms
with a difference



of uniforms in its early years. The uniform remains somewhat unchanged, consisting of a long belted blue coat, matching knee breeches, yellow socks and white neck bands (*Christ's Church Hospital School*).

Restricting the use of fine materials, such as gold and silks, was a way to control excessiveness and navigate through material shortages, but also a way to monopolize luxury good to aristocrats and higher classes. An example of this control are sumptuary laws, first developed in ancient Greece, but used throughout Europe in the middle ages, in feudal Japan, and during the final era of the dominance of European monarchies in the 19th century (*Craik, 2005:3-18*). Fabric, prior to the developing of industries, was time and labour consuming, extremely valuable, and therefore ideal for the measure and display of wealth. Regulating the use of precious fabrics was a way of monopolizing luxury and visually maintaining hierarchies.

Creating collective identities, and expressing them visually has been important in the building of a sense of nationality, of religion and establishing and maintaining hierarchies. Though societies have changed, the need to distinguishing the “us and them” remains.

2.2 UNIFORM AND MODERNITY

The main focus of my work are the uniforms present in everyday life, formed through use and conforming by coincidence. The origins of these *quasi-uniforms* could be traced to the time of the Industrial Revolution, and the emerging of modernity.

Hierarchies and social roles have been maintained by establishing rules on what people can or cannot wear: certain materials, symbols or items have been reserved only to specific groups. These rules are the grounding principles of the uniform we know today. (*Craik, 2005:3-18*) The developing of uniforms coincides with the emerging of modernity, and their role provides good insight on the changes in society, economy and the changing meaning of consumption and products. Towards the end of the 19th century, and the beginning of the 20th century, the French Revolution changed the structures of society, marking the beginning of a new era, with new ideals

The revolution gave birth to a new approach to building a society, less favourable to noble birth and with a goal of equality. The emerging of new social

classes changed the hierarchies of society, and the developing production methods for yarn and fabric kickstarted the birth of new economical systems, changing the meaning of consumption. The shift in power dynamics and wealth didn't remove the need to maintain hierarchies, on the contrary, the upper classes now had the need to differentiate both from aristocracy, and the working classes, and this need shaped a new, more subtle way of indicating status, denouncing the monopoly of luxury of the aristocrats.

The Revolution gives some interesting examples of clothing being used as a symbol of revolt, such as the *Bonnet Rouge*, the red bonnet of the militant revolutionaries, and the term *Sans-Culotte*, referring to the long dark trousers adopted by revolutionaries to distance themselves from the frivolous silk knee-breeches worn by the French aristocracy (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). The garments, first used by extremists, were later adopted by people as a display of patriotism. The revolution also shifted the initiative in fashion from aristocracy to the bourgeoisie, changing the direction in which new styles circulated among different social classes. (*Wollen, 2003:131-142*)

New social classes identified themselves through attire, some through choices of fashion, as the higher classes, and some through the practical necessities of industrial work. Heavy labour in industrial fields required clothing that was durable and protected from harsh conditions. Specific fabrics and colours, such as heavy duty cottons and wools, chosen for their qualities and affordability, became the visual identifiers of factory workers.

If at first a materialisation of class differences and oppression, a material could also become a symbol of resistance. Friedrich Engels describes an instance of Fergus O'Connor, a worker-rights activist with a wealthy background, appearing before a crowd of factory workers in a suit made of *fustian*, a heavy cotton material widely used by the working classes. He reinforced his display of solidarity upon his later release from prison in 1841, again clad in a fustian suit, as he announced “*I have appeared Brother Chartist and working men amongst you in fustian, the emblem of your order, in order to convince you, at a single glance, that what I was when I left you, the same I do return to you*” (*Stallybrass, 1998:pp.193*). Choosing a garment to represent solidarity can be a way of reclaiming it from the quali-

ties previously inscribed into it. Although the fustian suit was not a uniform imposed upon workers by an institution or an employer, born more out of lack of financial resources and its practical qualities, it became to symbolise the struggles of the working class. Reappropriating clothes for the purpose of activism was a way of drawing strength from the struggle, and a way of creating a symbol with the power to unite workers, giving a cause a uniform.

By the end of the 19th century production of clothes moved from homes to factories, which marks the beginning of mass produced garments. The ability to produce almost identical pieces in large quantities, lead to a new visual oneness. The societal shifts within the span of a century directed fashion towards a more sombre aesthetic. The spirit of modernity was captured in the works of Charles Baudelaire, and his descriptions of the crowded streets of Paris were quoted later by Walter Benjamin in his piece *The Arcades Project*: “*the solitary who, to be sure, fades into the multitude, but not before appearing with singular physiognomy to one who allows her gaze to linger*” (*Benjamin, 1999 [1920-1947]:333*). This solitary described by Baudelaire, the singled out individual, emerging from a group only to merge back in again became the focus of my work.

The history of menswear is especially entwined with the history of uniforms. Military dress gradually shaped civilian dress, due to their practical solutions and representation of the ideal attributes of masculinity, evoking a sense of discipline, glory and heroism. Many essential menswear details and constructions, such as lapels, cuffs, straps and pockets derive from military uniforms (*Craik, 2005:21-50*). These elements have been adopted into civilian clothing in numerous ways, to the extent that their origin is no longer evident.

2.1 EARLY UNIFORM

Body paintings, tribal tattoos, piercings, body modifications, armour, heraldics, the tunic of a peasant, the cape of a monk, the jewels and silks of a monarch. Even before the definitive term of a uniform, clothing has been used to indicate roles and positions in communities and societies, to regulate and control the body of an individual, and those of masses. Inscribing attributes to garments, and imposing rules on how, and by whom they should be worn, is a main principle on how uniforms operate, but also very much present in the way that people have always dressed.

Official uniforms can be traced back to the militaries of the Ottoman and Roman empires, but regulating dress has been a part of establishing hierarchies throughout history and around the world. It's hard to trace the very first uniforms, but it's safe to assume that most are adopted from pieces used by the military. The record of oldest producer of uniforms, is that of *John Brooke & Sons*, a company founded in 1541 and a supplier of wool for the British troops (*Kaslow 2006:323*). An early example of a school uniform can be traced to Christ's Hospital School, in West Sussex, founded in 1553 and adopting the use



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14.

2.3 CONVEYING MEANING, *INSIGNIA*

To me, clothing is an important form of communication. Whether it is by means of self-expression, conformity or practical preparation, clothing always communicates something about the wearer, regardless of the intention. Uniforms operate through premeditated, organized means, but personal style is also in dialogue with the outside world, where the language can be composed by the person themselves.

A uniform could be defined as a piece or a set of clothing that represents ideas. The uniform is the abstract bound into physical form through the a system of symbols and signs. Patrizia Calefato defines the uniform as a *reservoir of meaning*. She writes about uniforms, but similar principles are present when inspecting the more personal ways of dressing, self-expression and visual identities.

Uniforms operate by appointing rules, roles, and desired attributes and communicating them through clothes. The clothes can represent an institution, an ideology, a workplace or a cultural movement, and the idea of a uniform is to distinguish the *us & them*, to visually identify and unify the members and non-members of the group. Uniforms can be used to structure and direct interactions, through assigned roles, *the self* transforms into the *uniformed self*, performing the attributes and tasks inscribed in the uniform.

"The clad body represents a system of signs through which certain social meanings are uttered and through which their sense is produced and organized" (Calefato, 2000:pp195-204). In this Calefato refers to the way that clothing contributes to making sense of our social encounters. Clothing can indicate occupation, social roles, ideologies and kindredship, and interpreting ways of dressing aids us in navigating through encounters on a daily basis. Some uniforms function to protect or to hide, some to set an individual apart, to enhance a sense of authority or status. The mismatched uniforms of youth cultures are pieced together from seemingly different elements, yet merge into coherent attire that visually binds likeminded people together. Small details often function as indicators, taking the place of official insignia, their meaning given to them by members of the group and often recognisable only to those who are a part of it. The communicative spirit of clothing is crystallized in uniforms as something more precise and intentional.

Calefato uses the term *"rhetoric of detail"*, by which she refers to the communicative abilities of visual elements in clothes (Calefato, 2000:pp195-204). The meanings in uniforms can be inscribed into colour, shape, ornaments or other insignia. In contemporary *"quasi-uniforms"*, the rhetoric of detail can be the minor differences in cuts and materials, the understanding of which is a sign of insiderness as such. Small details and references can be a way to display knowledge in fashion or culture, and a certain fluency in reading the rhetoric of detail a way to connect and create a sense of belonging and togetherness between strangers.

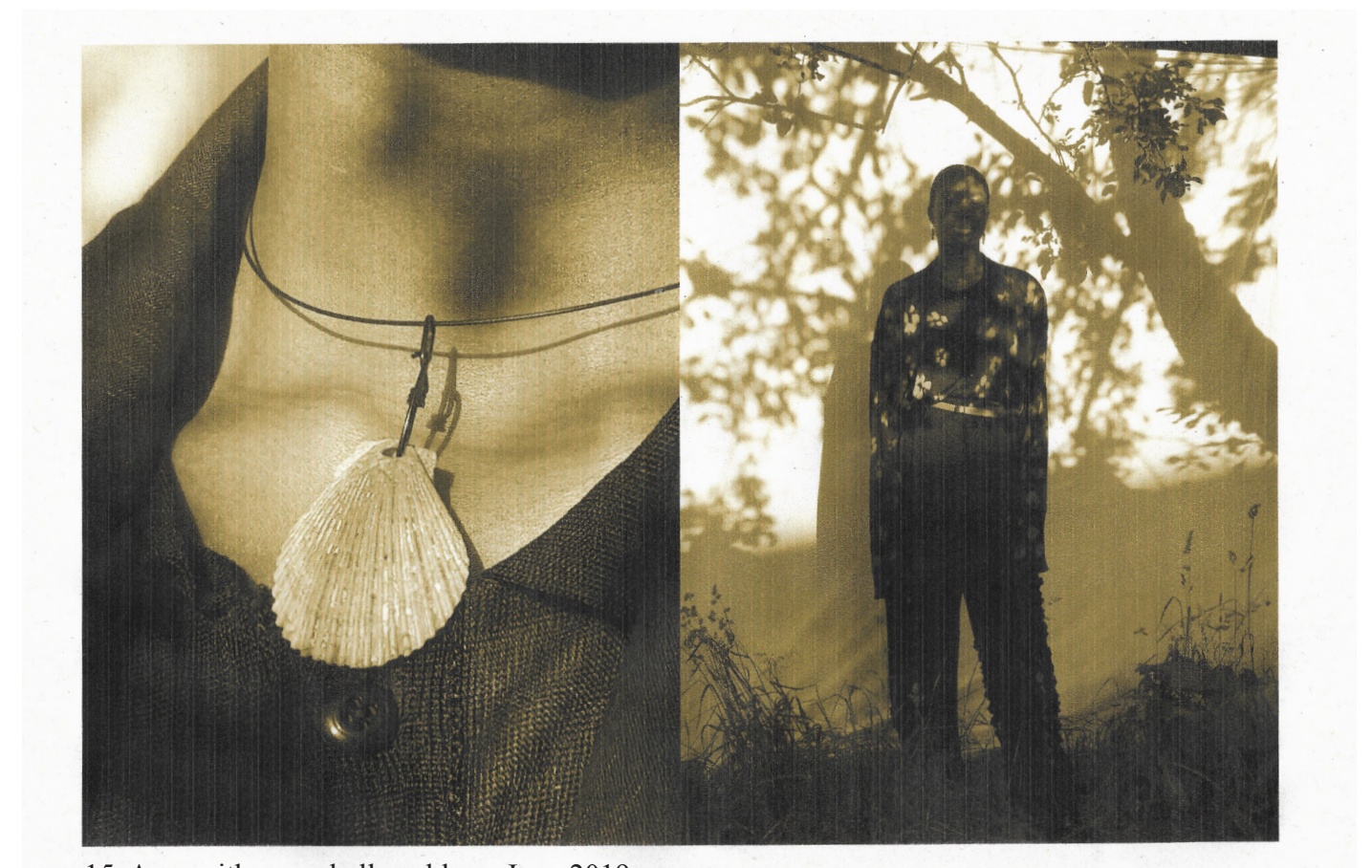
A uniform isn't defined only through the material components of clothing but also through how they should be worn, the rules and regulations imposed extending beyond their materiality. *"Wearing a uniform properly – understanding and obeying rules about the uniform-in-practice and turning the garments into communicative statements – is more important than the items of clothing and decoration themselves."* (Craik, Jennifer 2005:3-18). Controlling the way something is worn extends to controlling the body, by imposing the regulations of the uniform into behaviour. The anonymity provided by a uniform doesn't erase the person, but it hides visual indicators that communicate about the individual.

Control through regulating clothing is efficient due to the strong connection of clothing and identity. Identity, or *the self*, is often reflected through clothing, and to strip away the visual indications of personality is to symbolically strip a person of their identity and assign them to a new one, represented by the uniform. The range of meanings infused into elements of a uniform are numerous, and can represent authority, status, control, as well as equality, trust, and revolt. The uniform can be a tool for oppression through conformity, but also a tool for equality and display of the dignity of work. In its highest magnitudes, uniformity creates a collective body that operates as one, declaring the message, attributes and tasks assigned inscribed into its sartorial elements.

In her essay *"Destroy"*, Maria Luisa Frisa goes as far as declaring all clothing as uniform. (Frisa, 2000:190-194) In some sense, the essential functions of a uniform are those of all clothing: to protect, to indicate a position, to unify or to distinguish, and to convey a message of the intention of the person.

The uniform has the power to create group identities by visually merging people together, and making a visual distinction of *insiders* and *outsiders*. The individuals in this group, bound by the things they wear, think and act as a collective body, fulfilling a task, showing support of reflecting an ideology shared by its members. There is strength in numbers and the desire to belong seems to fill a very basic human need.

When looking beyond the means of control and restrictions, the total merging of a person and clothing, present in uniforms inspired me at the starting point of the collection work. I find it beautiful how ways of dressing can be used to communicate ideas and beliefs, and how coinciding coordination in clothing can create a sense of togetherness. The rhetoric of detail, is present in the ways that clothes are used for self-expression, and the ways that self-identification are explored, even in regulated environments. Clothing is similar to language, in the sense that it helps to make sense of the abstract. It provides us not only with visual symbols, but movement, tangible surfaces and a space that surrounds the body. The use of that language is sometimes regulated, but the meanings, attributes or tasks inscribed into clothes can be harnessed into exploring and communicating the self.



15. Ama with a seashell necklace, June 2019

2.4 STATICITY, *TRANSGRESSION*

Fashion's infinite fascination with uniforms is partly connected to their potential for disruption and manipulation. As anything based on rules and regulations, uniforms almost call for their perimeters to be challenged. The same way uniforms are have been to strip away identities, subverting uniforms could be considered a way to symbolically claim that identity back. Reclaiming the symbols used by institutions, such as military- or school uniforms, has been a way of challenging the establishment and revolting against the status quo of what is considered appropriate.

Jennifer Craik describes the uniform as having *overt* and *covert* lives. By this she refers to the difference in the intention of uniforms and experiencing them, to the interplay of the *intended symbolism* of uniforms and the *informal codes* of wearing them. (Craik, 2005:9-11) The inscribed meanings of uniforms require correct use and interpretations., which makes them sensitive to changes. By regulating what to wear and how to wear it, there is always a suggestion of the opposite. This fascinating tension, the duality of permanence and vulnerability is fertile ground for subversion and interpretations. Breaking and rearranging the components of a uniform is a way of taking apart the thing it represents, something that political revolts, youth cultures and fashion has made good use of.

Many garments that we now associate with rebellion and anti-authority movements, such as biker- and bomber jackets, have been adopted from the military and subverted by popular culture into items that still contain a sense of danger, rejecting the establishments they have previously represented (Craik, 2005: 21-50). The reappropriation of school uniforms often plays with the underbelly of obedience and discipline, unleashing the anarchy and sexual tensions of adolescence.

Not all reappropriation is based on revolt. Uniforms have been influenced by the fashions of their time, and likewise, elements of uniforms have been adopted into everyday fashion. The allure of uniforms is tied to the attributes they represent, but also simply to good design. Great examples of normalised uniform pieces are the trench coat and the parka, both items designed for military use, but adopted by people for their practicality and aesthetic quality.

The process of uniforms also works in reverse. Provocative new styles and the attire of subcultures takes up the function of a uniform, identifying members of the same group connected for instance by taste of music, culture or beliefs. The uniformity of distinction is well documented in *Exactitudes*, the extensive photography work of Ari Versluis and Ellie Uyttenbroek. Their social documentation of groups of people dressed alike, ranging from normative to transgressive, draws out the characteristics shared by strangers, and a great example of visual indications of belonging and togetherness (Antoni Ferrer, *Exactitudes*). Reading the insignia of these social typologies requires a certain sensitivity to their subtleties, the understanding of which is a sign of insidership as such.

Borrowing elements from uniforms, both official and unofficial, is at the core of the works of designers such as Demna Gvasalia, Raf Simons, Helmut Lang and Miuccia Prada, done in a way that plays with a sense of familiarity, function and transgression. The most iconic take on the anonymity of uniforms has been by Martin Margiela, the allure of mystery materialised in the white coats worn by employers. Uniforms are infused with archetypes, and the use of their elements in fashion adds a layer of interpretation formed by their history, cultural meanings and personal experiences.

The structures of uniforms and fashion are different in their relationship to time: while fashion is based on its capacity to renew itself, uniforms lean on a sense of permanence. Controlling the ways of wearing is a way of imposing staticity, by attempting to halt the evolving of appearance and personalisation of uniforms. Nevertheless, as uniforms are a collection of aspirational attributes, they are also a product of an era, a time capsule of the ideals of their time. The dialogue of uniforms and fashion has contributed to the visual evolving of both, and the interpretation of uniforms is vulnerable to the shifting of times. Regardless of regulations, no uniform is immune to change, whether through intentional manipulation for the purpose of distinction or transgression, or through the insidious teeth of time.

In the research phase of the collection, looking at unified clothing made me think more, not of conformity, but the ways it can be bent. How warping the proportions and materiality of a garment shapes its connotations. How the same thing would look different when worn by another person, and how life

would gradually grow on those pieces, slowly setting the clothing apart from their starting point, gaining a new identity through the process of use. I find more tension in nuances, and and my focus was on how the uniform, or the impersonal becomes personal.

A more subtle transgression, a silent revolt, is the way clothes age. The wearer is slowly imprinted on the wears and tears accumulated over time, and the presence of the individual eventually seeps through, regardless of restrictions.



16.



19



17.

Research on volume, top left: Comme des Garçons Homme Plus SS85, photographed by Peter Lindbergh, bottom left & right: Yohji Yamamoto FW94 photographed by Ferdinando Scianna

3. TIME, MEMORY, FEELINGS

"You know the feeling, you put on new clothes, you look at yourself in the mirror you're content, excited about your new skin. But this with this shirt and this jacket it was different. From the beginning, they were new and old at the same time, in the mirror I saw me, of course, only better, more me than before, and I had the strangest sensation, I was wearing, yes I had no other words for it, I was wearing the shirt itself and the jacket itself. And in them I was myself, I felt protected a knight in his armour."
(Wenders, 1990, 00.07.30-00.08.05)

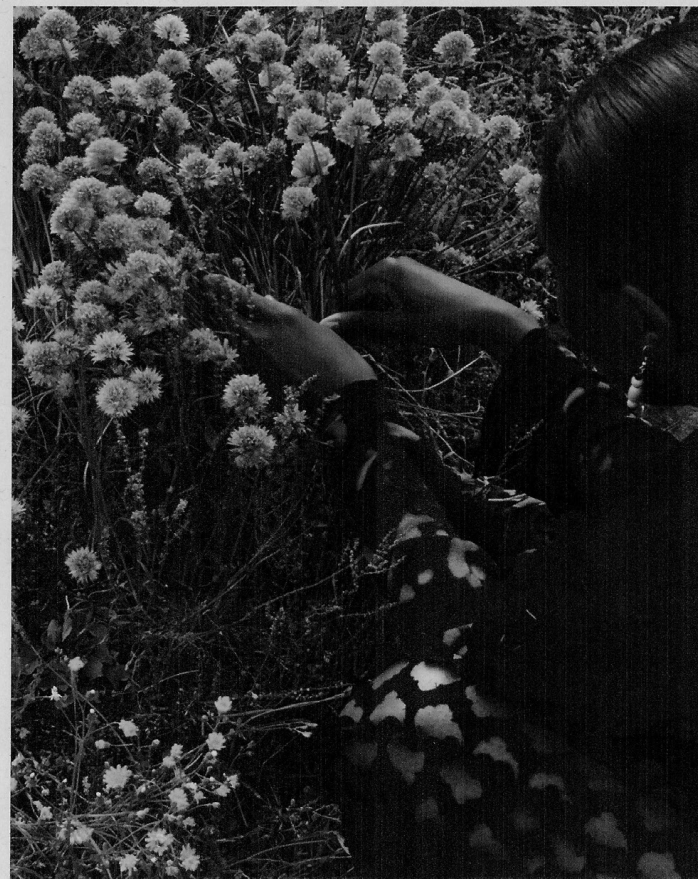
Fashion has a peculiar relationship with time. Visual indicators of passed time are often things that I'm drawn towards in clothes and artefacts, and it has caused me some frustration, figuring out how to grasp the passing of time in the making of new things. The presence of time feels meaningful and grounding, maybe because of my sentiments about the times we live in, and the state of the fashion industry of today. My approach to the design of my graduate collection was to study the way clothes transform in use, how they become personal through the process of wearing. The frame established through the study of uniformity became the starting point, and I began to implement the attributes I wanted to project on those pieces, and look into the ways shape could receive signs of use.

The visual research consists mostly of images that I felt embodied the symbiotic state of a person and their clothing, where clothing appeared to be an extension of the person. Many of those images portrayed a person at ease with their environment, and this simultaneous symbiosis, a merging of a person and their surroundings was something that drew me in, something that I felt that clothes play a big part in facilitating.

My goal was not create exact replicates of old pieces or fabricate fictional histories, but more to create hypothetical and real bridges between the past and present and translate some of the curiosity and warmth that I felt radiated from those images. The making of this collection emphasised the process more than the result, and the methods I chose all in some way involved the contribution of time and coincidence, of which I will explain more in a later chapter of this writing.

To extract the presence of time as a designer, I guess all there is to do is to create design that gives space to ageing. The choice of materials and shapes can nudge the process towards a direction but the rest is up to chance, whether and how the piece will be kept and worn. The staticity of uniforms is challenged by time, because no thing in the end remains static, fabric adapts to the body and life leaves its marks in use. The sense of permanence I seek is maybe more a better connection to time, an understanding of the ephemeral and the eternal that don't negate each other but coexist in balance. The beauty of time is maybe in that it can't be fabricated, it just needs to happen and be experienced.

In this chapter I look into the concept of time and memory and what role those things have in the context of fashion. Through studying time, I attempt to find a connection in how we relate to objects. By understanding how emotional relationships to objects are formed, and what role the subjective experiencing of time plays in that, I wish to find ways to design better, in a way to enable that relationship to grow.



18. Ama picking flowers by our house in June 2019

3.1 EXPERIENCING TIME

“We are apt to think of the past as dead, the future as nonexistent, the present alone as real; and prematurely wise or disillusioned counselors have urged us to burn always with “a hard, gemlike flame” in order to give “the highest quality to the moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake.” This no doubt is what the glowworm does; but I think that man, who alone is properly aware that the present moment passes, can for that very reason make no good use of the present moment simply for its own sake.” (Becker, 1932: 226)

In 354 AD, St Augustine writes that perception of time is in the mind. That the duration of the present, or an interval in time, is measured by the memory of it. Late 19th century philosopher William James defines the term *specious present*, first introduced by E.R Clay, as the prototype of all conceived times, the short duration of which we are immediately and incessantly sensible (*Le Poidevin, 2019*). The study of human perception of time is a broad spectrum of sciences but this acknowledgement of the subjective quality of that experience and its connection to the mind and memory is what is essential to this work. The experience of the present, is always connected to what is considered the past, and the approach to the concept of past is what defines it.

In an attempt to strip the term *history* to its simplest form, early 20th century Historian Carl Becker defines: *“History is the memory of things said and done.”* Becker parallels knowledge and memory, memory being the precondition for knowledge. He equals the past to events, and when scrutinising the word, *the past*, he explains that it is dependent on how and who has experienced it, therefore concluding *the past as things said and done*. Becker states that defining history is a process of selecting and affirming facts or more so, events. Therefore even the most scientific study of histories is vulnerable to the personal voice of whoever conducts it, and the impression that it is not, is an illusion that reaffirms this.

His essay in The American Historical Review, from 1932, is titled *Everyman His Own Historian*, and he notes, that history, as a memory of things said and done, is composed of human experiences of events. The approach to history, and simultaneously the experiencing of time, through memory, resonates with the way this body of work attempts to approach

the concept of time and personal histories. As a sum of experiences, memories of things said and done. (*Becker, 1932:221-236*)

3.2 EPHEMERAL, ETERNAL

In the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, poets and philosophers began dissecting the spirit of modernity, and many of them did that through analysing the significance of time in the concept of fashion. Writers such as Charles Baudelaire, George Simmel and Walter Benjamin saw the connection of fashion and modernity not only because of their coinciding timings but also due to the familiarity of their spirit. Baudelaire described modernity as a contrast of the immediate and immutable, in his essay *“The painter of Modernity”*, on the artist Constantin Guy, he writes: *“modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immutable” (Bretas, 2013:151)*. Baudelaire wrote intricate descriptions of clothing in artworks, and his aesthetical philosophy and *dandyism* was tightly linked to the appreciation of fashion. His appreciation for antiquity wasn’t contradicted by the transient nature of fashion, but instead he demanded for the extraction of poetry in fashion, *“to distill the eternal from the transitory”*, to challenge the surface of what is perceived as fashion to unveil its grasp on something more permanent. In the spirit of modernity, the present could only exist because of the past. The nature of fashion was not dissimilar, as Baudelaire believed its fleeting nature to contain some fragment of the eternal and sublime beauty (*Lehmann, 2000:9*). Fashion’s relationship to time was also a point of interest in the writings of Walter Benjamin. He conjured the term *“Tiger-sprung”*, to describe the fluid, trans-historical nature of fashion: its ability to leap between points in history, unlingering, the past and the present equally represented. (*Lehmann, 2000:xix*)

3.3 NEWNESS

Within its trans-historical nature, fashion is driven by the insatiable yearning of *the new*. The new manifests in the way design strives for innovation and originality, and emphasis on attributes such as progress and youth. Roland Barthes states that every fashion is a refusal to inherit, a subversion against the oppression of the preceding fashion (*Barthes 1990:273*). This is apparent for instance in the structure of seasons, as well as in the abrupt switches in aesthetics that have created the different eras in

fashion that we refer back to today. Heike Jenss writes that fashion is understood to immerse us in the now, by generating distance to the past and a desire to forget. (*Jenss, 2015:1-14*).

However, the new of today is often the old repurposed, relived. Design doesn’t stem from a void and newness doesn’t necessarily mean aesthetically new or unseen. Along with subversion, fashion operates by referencing and celebrating its history. The history of fashion is a vast pool to draw inspiration from, and a thorough knowledge and understanding of history gives better perspective on the idea of newness, that now appears harder and harder to achieve.

The cycles in which entire aesthetics re-emerge has become quicker, and it often feels like something not that far behind is already “coming back”. Our times are strangely marked with a fixation on reproducing a spirit of some other time. Referencing seems to be lead by a sense of escapism, that maybe through visual reminders, something great, considered gone, could be resurrected. The past is a refuge, more real, more authentic, than the world of today. Though aesthetically present, this dichotomous approach to time, of then and now, creates a distance nonetheless, if not to the past, but to the present, creating a sense of detachment and a lack of vision for the future. Fashion works by quoting and revolting against its own history, without which the present time would be hollow.

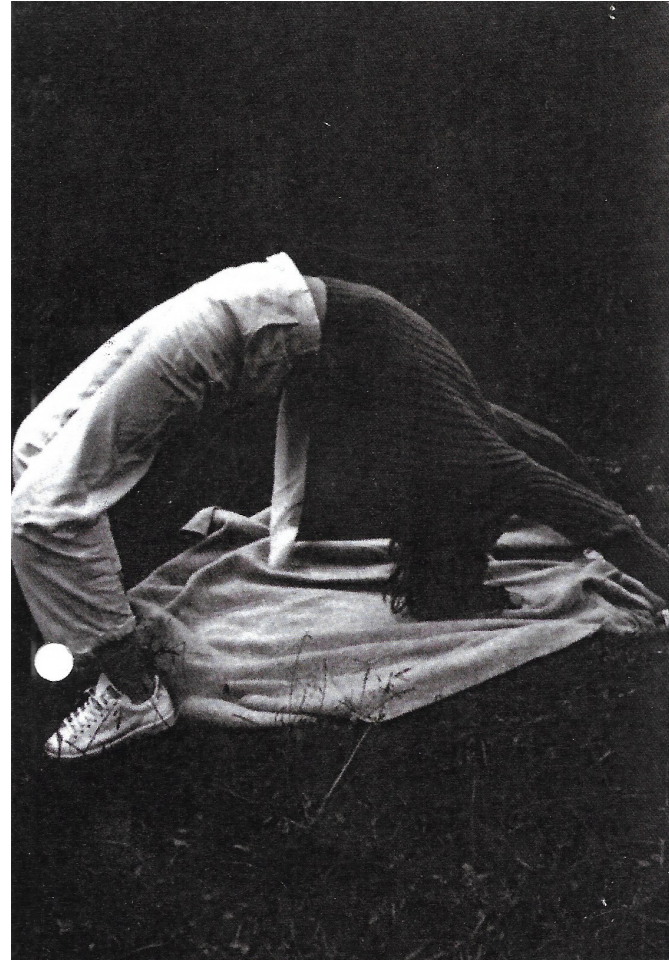
By maintaining a relationship with the past, we can better understand our being in the present, and look into the future. Referencing and challenging the past is an active process, a process of defining the now, creating the cultural myth of our times (*Wilson 1990:209–36*). Newness is inevitably fleeting, and it is an illusion as much as permanence is. Like uniforms, even pieces considered classics in fashion, the trench coat, a black suit, have once been a product of their time, and the concept of the new, of now, always contains the notion of the things preceding it and the knowledge of its passing. If fashion, in some way is always present in the now, the aim of since-re design should suffice to reflect and interpret the present without an unnecessary strain on capturing *the now* or *the new*.

3.4 FASHION, DEATH AND REINCARNATION

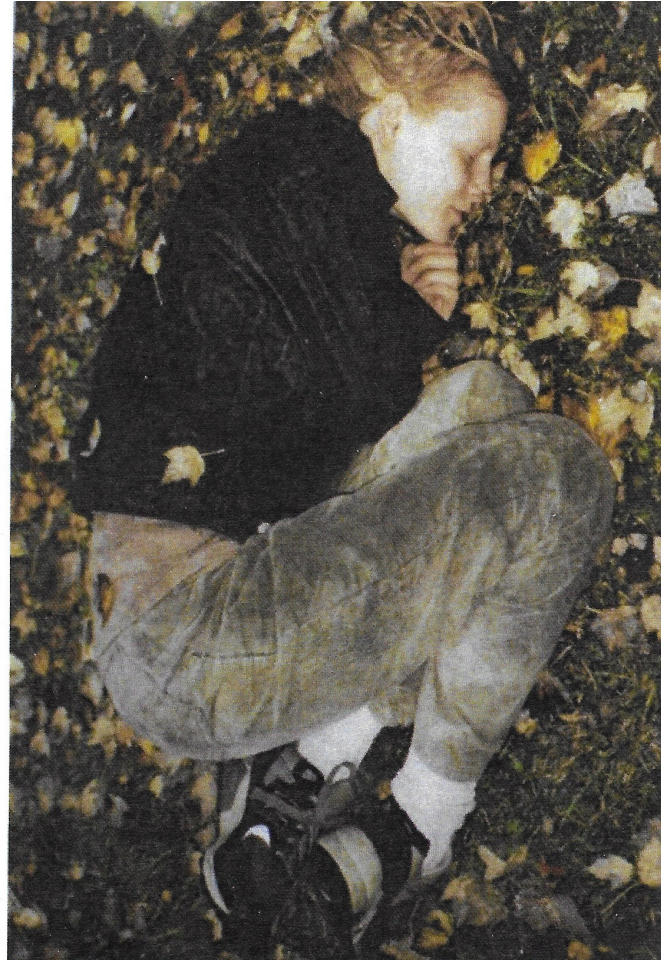
Essential to how fashion operates is its ability constantly renew itself. Simmel remarked that *“it is fashion’s fate to “die” in each moment of its wider acceptance, while being reborn at the very same instant setting again in motion the cycle of embrace by a sartorial vanguard, dissemination by the media, general following, and stylistic demise.” (Lehmann, 2000:235)* This plays into the dance of ephemerality and eternity, the two forces that keep the evolving of fashion in motion.

Both Baudelaire & Benjamin wrote about fashion’s metaphorical relationship with death. According to Benjamin fashion contains the denial of the natural course of things, a way of cheating destruction and death: *“That is why she changes so quickly; she titilates death and is already something different, something new, as it casts about to crush her” (Benjamin, 1990: 63)*. This thought stems from the observations of Baudelaire, who wrote about fashion as the as a *sublime deformation of Nature*, or the permanent and repeated attempt at her reformation. According to Baudelaire, eternal, mysterious beauty can be distilled from all fashions, which gives them all their particular charm. (*Lehmann, 2000:18*). The relationship with fashion and time is the cycle of birth and death. Fashion avoids regression by diving towards its demise, by advancing its own abolition only to be born again as something else. (*Lehmann, 2000:231*). The acknowledgement and acceptance of the changing nature of fashion, the inevitable death of things, places a sense of hope and curiosity to the moments of resurrection and rebirth. The good thing about the cyclical rhythm of fashion is the repeating opportunity to reflect and learn, to pick up on things and reinterpret the past.

The notion of the eternal lingers in past fashions, maybe forgotten for now, but always there until rediscovered. Baudelaire declared for the reimagining of discarded clothes, to understand their spirit and meaning, not as dead things but reanimated, brought back to life, once worn by a person (*Bretas, 2013: 153*). The presence of time in clothes can also come from a sense of familiarity, provoked by a style, a shape or a material. This sense of familiarity is connected to personal experiences and memory, but it can be facilitated in the design of things, through precise referencing, careful material choices and a shift of focus from the new into the real.



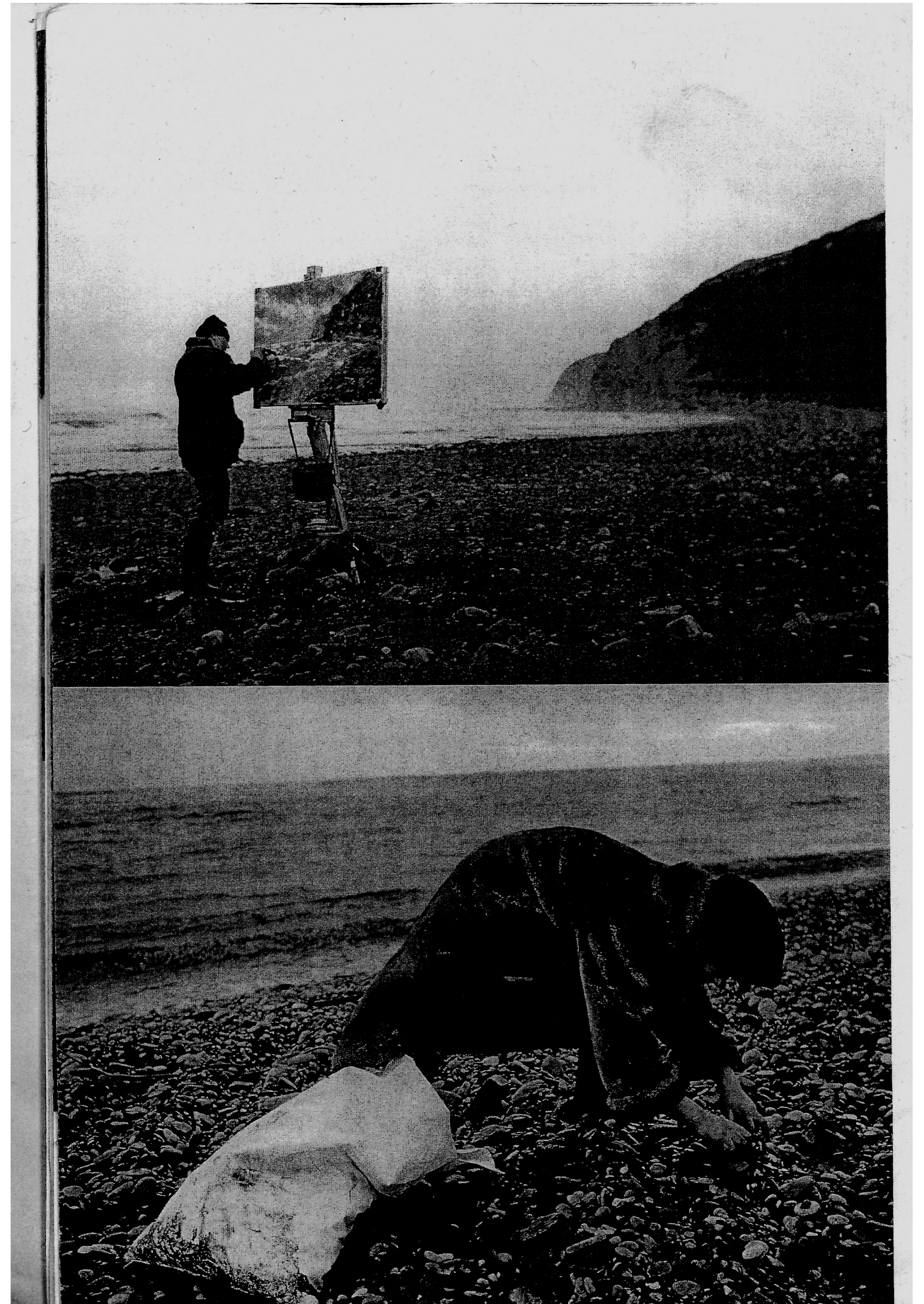
19. Cecilia Chancellor by David Sims, 1993



20. Kirsten Owen by Juergen Teller 1998



21. Mike Brodie, *Tones of Dirt and Bone*, 2002-2004



22. Len Tabner painting *Skinningrove*, Chris Killip, *In Flagrante* 1988

23. Moira Hand Picking in the *Very Good Fur Coat*, Chris Killip, *Seacoal* 1982-84

3.5 MATERIAL MEMORY

"If I wore the jacket, Allon wore me. He was there in the wrinkles of the elbows, wrinkles which in the technical jargon of sewing are called "memory"; he was there in the stains at the very bottom of the jacket; he was there in the smell of the armpits. Above all, he was there in the smell.

The magic of cloth, I came to believe, is that it receives us: receives our smells, our sweat, our shape even. And when our parents, our friends, our lovers die, the clothes in their closets still hang there, holding their gestures, both reassuring and terrifying, touching the living with the dead.

In thinking of clothes as passing fashions, we repeat less than half-truth. Bodies come and go; the clothes which have received those bodies survive."
(Stallybrass, 1993: 35-50)

In the process of sorting out the possessions of his deceased friend and collaborator, Peter Stallybrass writes about the way that his garments evoked his presence when nothing else did. The traces of the movement, of the smell, of its previous owner lingered on a coat, and spoke of the qualities that are maybe harder to grasp in words or images.

Clothes, as objects, are particular in the sense that they are so incredibly close to our physical bodies, and function as an extension of thoughts, dreams, ideals and habits. The process of wearing documents life, gradually identifying a piece to a person. In his piece, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Karl Marx claimed trade to strip objects from their past and identity, through erasing the presence of labour, sentiments and love by giving an object a price, turning it into a commodity, "the animated object of human labor and love into the evacuated nonobject that was the site of exchange" (Stallybrass p.186-187). The process of wearing could be seen as a way to reclaim it, a way of re-identifying a commodity into a personal object.

Memory, and collective memory, has the ability to overcome individual and partisan interests and transmit a sense of purpose and obligation. A sense of continuity with past generations enable the celebration or subversion of what they stood for. (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy, 2011:42). Despite their apparent staticity, uniforms are a product of their time, consisting of the popular visual elements and aspira-

tion attributes of the period of its birth. Through the connection to time, a clothed individual merges into something eternal, something beyond an individual, bridging personal biographies. Uniforms connect to collective memories of cultures, nations and movements. The uniform as a personal item records the history of an individual in relation to that collective memory, positioning a person within a group, within a time.

Making sense of the past and the way things are remembered, shapes the way that the self is experienced and communicated in the present, as well as directs the way the future is approached. Remembering is not an escape into something that has been, but an active process of positioning oneself in the present. The clothes we wear document this process, either discarded when no longer relevant, or remaining, becoming a component in a visual identity and a part of who we are and what we wish to say about ourselves. Shapes and materials record life, and bridge the past and present by triggering the senses, unfolding a memory of a person, a place or a time.

The capacity for memory in things that are new, in objects whose history is yet to happen, can be evoked by a sense of familiarity and a connection to the past. Ways of treating fabrics and shape, ways of making, are a tool in finding that connection between times. The charm of heritage weaves, of traditional ways of making and craft lies in their ability to transport to a different time, expanding the present in which they exist. The sense of familiarity is a personal experience, the spirit of which I find most accurately captured by Wim Wenders, describing the sensations from trying on clothes by Yohji Yamamoto:

"What secret had he discovered, this Yamamoto? A shape, a cut, a fabric? None of these explained what I felt, it came from further away, from deeper. This jacket reminded me of my childhood and of my father, as if the essence of this memory were tailored into it. Not in the details rather woven into the cloth itself. The jacket was a direct translation of this feeling, and expressed it better than words. What did Yamamoto know about me, about everybody?"
(Wenders, 1990,00.08.10-00.08.41)

3.6 WEARING, DRESSING

—Only then one looks at the dress, or rather at a clothed body presented in its shape and posture with all the flexibility and warmth of life; one looks thus at the face, body, and dress together; one looks at a humanbeing.
(Lehmann, 2000:5)

Clothes and fashion have a strange relationship with memories and time, and that relationship blooms in the process of wearing, of getting dressed. Clothes are designed to be worn, and in some way, only through being worn, a garment becomes real. A clothed person isn't perceived as separate, the body and adornment, but as one visual entity, the perception of which is also shaped by how things are worn and how the person feels wearing it.

The naked body, not lacking in meaning in itself, is extended by garments, by reflecting the self. According to Calefato, the clad body is a cultural element, as opposing to the naked one being a natural element. Clothing, or the act of getting dressed is something that transforms the body, and the combination of signs, such as garments, hair-styles, make-up, tattoos and decorations convey social meanings and give the body a context in the world. (Calefato, 2017:373)

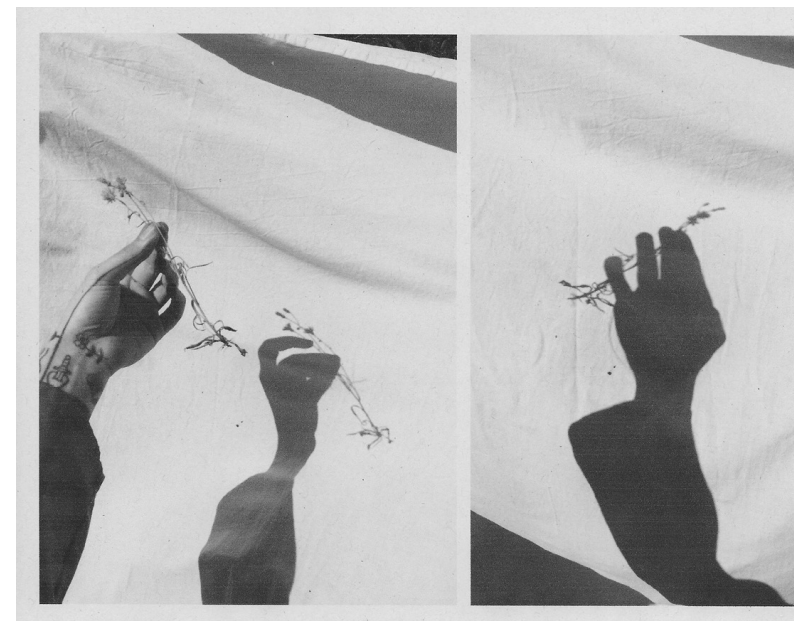
In *The Language of Fashion*, Roland Barthes, makes a distinction between the concepts of the dress and dressing: "the former is basically a social reality, whereas the latter is an individual reality by means of which the individual translates to general institution of dress onto himself/herself" (Calefato, 2017:369) The elements included in the concept of dressing, include the way things are worn, how an object transforms in the use of a person. These qualities include the size of the item, its degree of wear, untidiness or cleanliness, for example.

This process of wearing, the act of dressing is the process that shapes the relationship a person forms with their garments. Barthes writes about translations, the way that an images or written words interpret, translate or convey a physical piece or real clothes, that he refers to as *the mother tongue* (Barthes, 1983:5). Barthes agrees that the language of fashion escapes the parameters of linguistics, the communication not being based on words, but more on sensations and interpretations. The way that fashion communicates is about providing context

and meaning to something that is material.

The dialogue between the imaginary and the real, the existence of clothing as material objects, and their presence in idea form, is complemented by the way clothes connect with feelings. This is a realm well exploited by the systems of fashion and marketing, by the means of selling dreams, appealing to our emotions and evoking a sense of desire. (Barthes, 1963:xii) The way that clothing connects with feelings, memory and the abstract unreal is a rich world that bridges the material world and the world of dreams. Physical items, worn and kept, are a way of simultaneously exploring the imaginary and the real. Clothes play an active part in both the making and evoking of memories, as well as in the shaping of an experience of the present, in a cultural and personal context. Wearing is a slow lifelong process of documenting experiences and recording the developing of the self.

The dreamscape of clothing is just as important as the material reality of them. I sometimes find myself disconnecting from one or the other, and I have to consciously balance things out by shifting focus. Fashion can at times feel alienating to me, and approaching clothes through the process of wearing, of becoming real, has helped me feel grounded and reconnected to design. I'm intrigued by how the process of wearing can initially inform a design, and how the actuality of wearing the piece develops it further. Designing and making a piece is just the first part, but what it becomes after is dependent on how, where and by whom it is worn.



4. PERSONAL UNIFORM, COLLECTION WORK

By personal uniform, I mean the garments that have become a part of the self, that contain fragments of a person and their life. A personal uniform is a visual indicator, or reminder, of personal histories, of things said, done and experienced, and it develops throughout the life of a person, sometimes static and stable, other times as vibrant, alive and evolving. I don't see identity as a static thing, but it does contain a sense of permanence, a founding ground from which the self is explored and manifested. The physical proximity of clothes as a layer between a body and the rest of the world, makes them unique instruments for documenting life, containing in their material form storage for dreams, memory and feelings.

My creative work was a sum of many things and writing about the process proved surprisingly difficult. A thing that felt very clear to me, was hard to put into words and to divide into clear phases of working. The process of writing has helped me to make sense of the less tangible and frail parts of my work, and position them in the developing of this collection, and some sense of identity as a designer. Many of the things written here are not strictly garment related, but for that reason exactly they resonate with me, and help me to connect my work to a better sense of reality. I don't see clothing or fashion as a separate entity that operates in its own universe, but it's connected to everything else we experience in the world. To me fashion has always represented a way of translating and interpreting reality, and the things I find meaningful in life in general are equally important in my work as a designer.

In the previous chapters I have tried to trace the components that shaped my work, and the emotional relationships a person forms with their clothes. The things I chose to write about were the ones that resonated with me the most, and I singled out the elements that directed the development of my final collection.

In the next chapters I will introduce some elements of the collection work that contain the most important parts of the process, and conclude with the looks of the final collection and a project collaborating with Meeri Juvakka in creating the imagery of the collection.



24. Sami with seashells for eyes on the rocks outside our house, July 2019

4.1 THE SUIT, SOCIAL DOCUMENTATION

“O, black-lined black suit, so tight is does not button, borrowed from perfidious Albion who inflicts it on every rank from a Peer of the Three Kingdoms to a Street Sweeper! Livery of Wealth and Poverty alike, of baptisms and weddings, of burials and visits of condolence, of tears and laughter, good for everything, same for everyone! Modern adornment of the undertaker and the guest, the conquering hero and the supplicant; black suit of my first communion and my last visit, suit that presides over what little I am, and over everything I seek. “
(Perrot 1994:34)

The traditional approach to the making and purchasing of suits makes it, despite its visual neutrality, a very personal item to have and wear. A suit is a uniform made to measure; maintained over time, adapted to different occasions and adjusted to the changes in the body of its owner. The suit is a fairly straightforward format, that essentially comes down to cut and material, the variations of which reveal a broad spectrum of communication, readable to the ones with knowledge and interest in its particularities.

I chose to work with suits instead of military uniforms because of the overpowering connotations I had with the pieces, I felt I wouldn't be able to use them in a way that felt natural for me. A suit has a similar quality of withstanding time, adapting to change with tweaks in cut and details, yet somehow remaining the same. The suit has an ability of soaking up influences and meaning, and for me the studying of suits, inside and out, was a way of studying a particular time, the personal history of its owner and the hand of whoever made it. Something so unifying can also be very distinctive, depending on the context and the ways it is worn.

When developing the frame for the collection, I went through the work "Documentations" by Zofia Rydet, a Polish photographer who documented people and gatherings in cities and provincial towns between 1950-1978. She participates in the movement of social documentation, made maybe most famous by the works of August Sander and Irving Penn. Her way of photographing people is observant in depicting people, and the online archive of her work consists of thousands of images. *Documentations* is a predecessor to her monolithic body of work, *Social Documentations*, where Rydet is said to have want-

ed to "document every house in Poland" (*Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2015*). This ambitious intention, uncompleted during her lifetime, speaks of a certain democracy in the approach to selecting and portraying people in photography. Her images simultaneously contain an intimacy and as well as a distance that doesn't seem to objectify, but more so give space to studying the particularities of the person in the photograph.

I came across her work through a tiring search for images I hadn't seen before, that didn't have a predefined fashion context. I was interested in conforming ways of dressing, and I wanted to find signs of distinction through the unity. I started out by looking for visual material of people in groups, in everyday activities and study the way they are dressed, searching for similarities and repetition. In the end, the images I chose to work with were of men of varying ages, but mostly old men, in suits.

The way that those suits appeared in the images was shabby and collapsed, like anything would after being worn for years. I was drawn to the way that the clothes seemed somehow secondary, that the image was focused on the person and what they were doing. This gave me space to observe and interpret the clothes and the ways they had adapted to the life of that person. In looking at the images I was looking for characters and small distinctions. The suits were simultaneously neutral and personal, the way it was worn by the person defined the silhouette and the material feel of it. I felt a sort of rhythm in the mismatched repetition of the garments, and the personal distinctions both broke and enforced it.

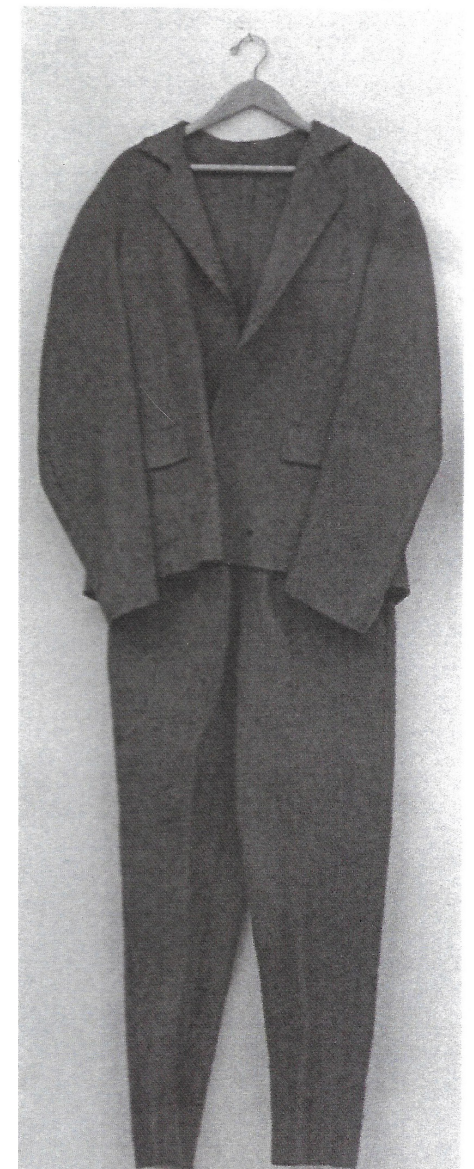
Repetition is an element that derives from uniformity, but also an element that has always been present in my work. I use repetition to gain a balance of tranquility and tension, and I prefer to explore variations of the same thing instead of introducing multiple looks or pieces that are completely different. I often base my collections on a narrative, or a mood and that repetition gives space for it to grow. I find that restricting the amount of shapes gives me more space to sprawl with ideas related to details and material treatments, that combined with varying styles would feel out of balance.

Studying the suits gave me the first notion of a narrative, imagining each suit as a person, and the visual elements of that suit as deriving from the life of the person wearing it. Before starting out with visual

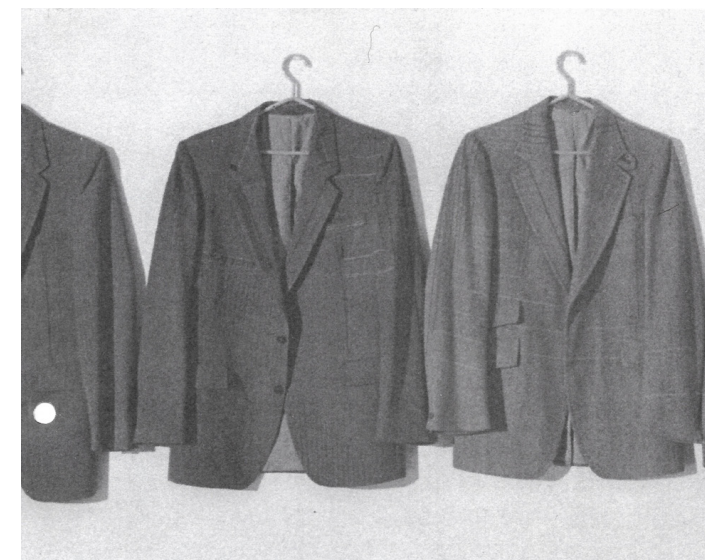
research I had written down things that I wanted this collection to be about. Many of those were attributes or states of being, that were important to me, which I felt that clothes could help facilitate. Studying uniformity gave me an idea of how to translate those attributes into material shape, and hopefully communicate through being worn.

The suit of the collection had starting points in pieces I owned, but it was slowly built up through fittings. I varied the shape combining volumes and proportions, until I felt I had reached the version I wanted. The final version, that repeats, as it is, three times in the collection, and three more times as variations, had an ease to it that found its place after numerous attempts to make the shape into something that just didn't communicate what I wanted. The final lineup consists of one jacket, that repeats in different materials, once as a vest, once with the pattern zoomed up 115% and once placed on a square piece of wool to become a coat that opens up into the shape of a simple tent. There are two different tailored trouser shapes, one that is narrow and one that is wide. The different volumes give the silhouettes some air and bring out the different qualities of the fabrics and treatments.

The material palette of the suits was determined by a selection of deadstock wools, complemented by one wool flannel and one light pinstripe wool I bought to be able to work with laser cutting. The quantities available were varying but small, and by maintaining a sombre colour palette I was able to combine the fabrics organically regardless of the quantity of a single material. To contain the chaos that my work process often becomes, I tried to maintain a sense of rationality in the selection and placement of shapes and materials. Creating a clear framework was a way of establishing a system that I could lean on when feeling overwhelmed by a turbulence in the process.



25. *Felt Suit* Josep Beuys 1970,
One in an edition of a hundred made.



26. *13 men or Penelope* by Rutch Scheuing, 1989



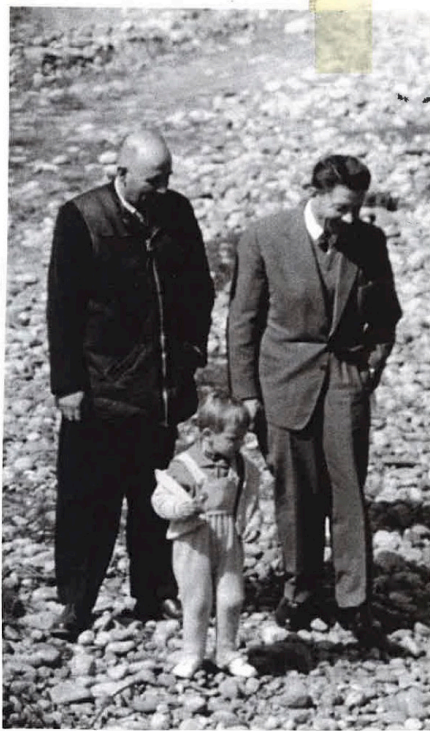
27.

NOVEMBER
SUN
AGREEMENT
- PICTURE OF P-1
CLOTHING + 100% TIR



28.

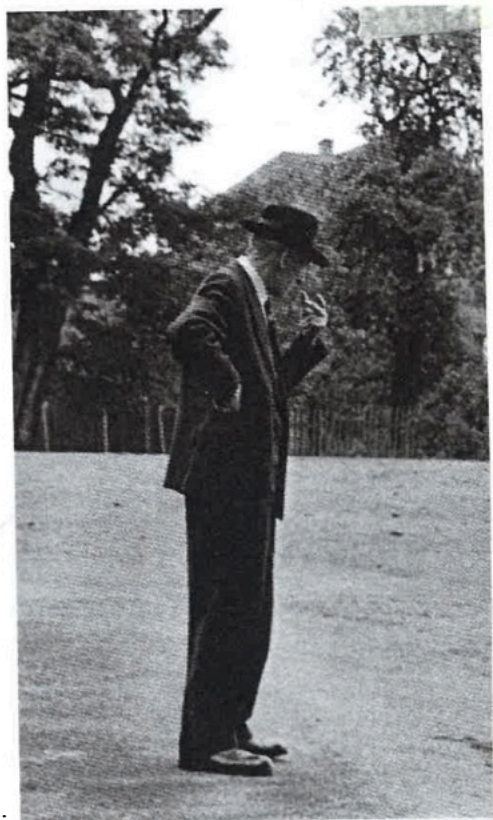
TIRE JUMP TO A
FOR SQUATMAN
STABLE, POSITIVE
DECOMPOSITION
(CONTRASTION)
A RELATIVELY



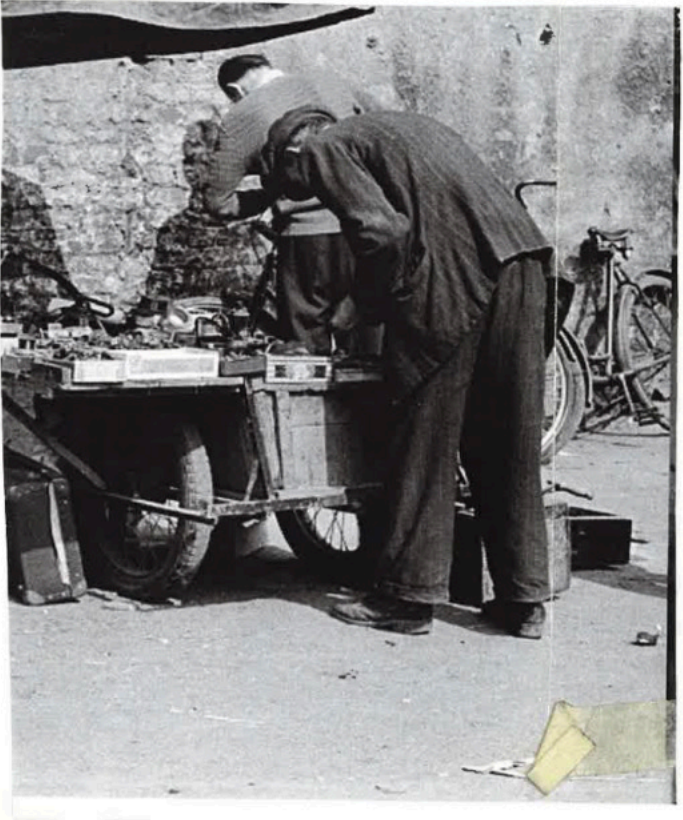
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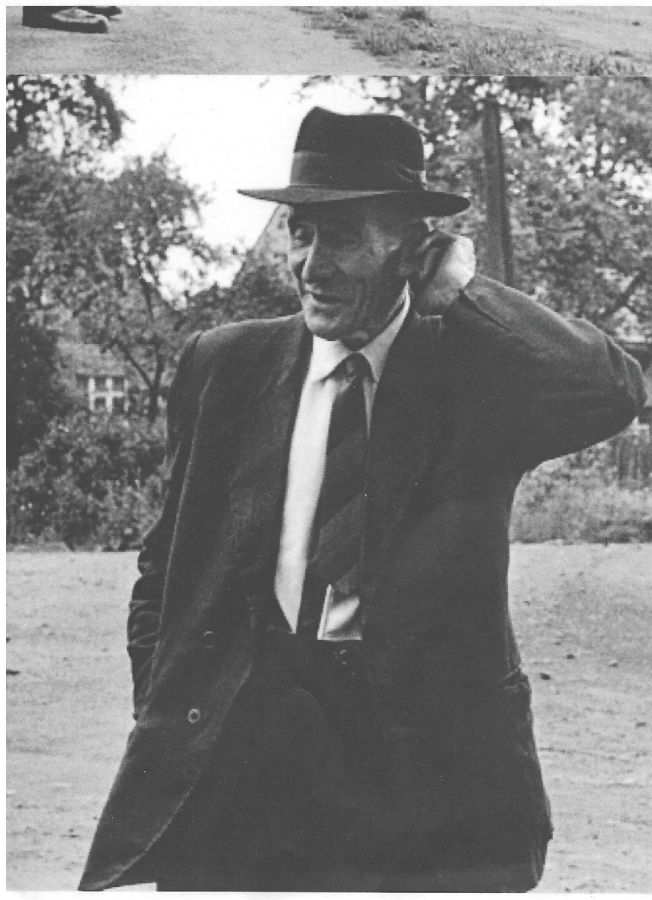
30.



31.



33.



32.



34.

THOUGHTS, MIND, JOURNAL

4.2 FLOWERS, ANONYMITY, PROTECTION

"The one makes something unreal recognisable: the other makes something real unrecognisable."

—Hugh B. Cott
(Behrens, 1988:291-296)

Jennifer Craik categorizes camouflage into two typologies: one to terrify an enemy, such as red dye or blood, blue woad, face paint, and the wearing of animal furs. The second one is for disguise, to hide and blend into the background. (Craik, 2005:21-50) There is something almost shamanic about the worn skins channeling the bestial energy of the animal, and relying on the refuge provided by nature through imitating her surfaces.

The protective camouflage colours and patternings appearing in nature have been studied as early as 1890, in the volume by sir Edward Bagnall, *The colours of Animals*, and the 1896 article by the American artist Abbott H. Thayer *The Law Which Underlies Protective Coloration*. The first section *de camouflage* was established in 1915 by French academic painter Lucien-Victor Guirand de Scévola, and the connection of camouflage and art had also been noted by Pablo Picasso. During both World Wars, a number of painters and sculptors were called on to develop the patternings to be used in warfare, including the participation of artists such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Ellsworth Kelly and Roland Penrose and (Behrens, 2005). The developing of camouflage patterns during both, the First and Second World War, was influenced by the Cubist and Surrealist movements, making use of the ways artists challenged and disrupted the concepts of perception and identity. The camouflage we use today is the result of meticulous studying of natural phenomena and interpreted into patterns and surfaces through the work of artists.

In uniforms, the anonymity of both, the wearer and the designer, intrigued me. The idea of camouflage, at its core, is about protection, the merging of a person into an environment. I was inspired by the way the early camouflage developments broke down and reassembled surfaces to distort the perception of the body and visual realities. The imagery I studied was of both early developments and camouflage pieces in use, and I found many of their elements strangely endearing and poetic. I interpreted the images through a sense of ease between the person and their

surroundings, the garments as a reflection of the relationship between the person and their environment. I further explored the idea of garment as shelter, of blurring the borders of an individual until you can't separate them from where they are. The clothes were to imitate the surfaces and shapes of the environment and create a space for hiding. Clothes function to physically protect the body, but I find they are more significant in providing protection for the mind and the self, as a way of defining your own visual boundaries by choosing what to communicate, or not communicate about yourself. I started working with the concept of camouflage by pulling out elements from the surfaces of military pieces and developing them into something else, less severe, warmer.

The idea of camouflage surfaces was translated into the floral cutouts, the use of net and the tent shaped coat. All three were based on extracting an idea from camouflage, but taking it somewhere else, through the methods and narrative of the collection. I liked the idea of using naive and graphic motifs, but through something other than print. The cutout technique derived from military clothing, and I was interested in its play on negative space and the ambiguity of the patterning. The initial cutting samples were with more classic motifs, but they felt flat and uninformative, and out of the spirit of my work. I cut the first floral samples into an old jacket with kitchen scissors, and even though the sample was clumsy, I liked the three dimensionality of both the motif and the technique. It gave the fabric a new personality, and the flower seemed to grow out of the piece, the stiff shape turned more organic and the cuttings seemed to extend the motion of the jacket. The cutouts of the trousers mimicked the cutout patterning in military blankets and nets, the floral motif making it more naive.

The tent shape derives from a play on thoughts on concept of shelter. I was intrigued by a garment that has a dual purpose, and I started looking for a shape that could be stretched out into a simple shelter, a tent. The development process of the piece was a lighthearted experiment, resulting in a long coat and a tailored jacket, the patterns placed on a rectangular piece of fabric, with perforations to tie up and stretch out with ropes and sticks. The hypothetical shelter, not exactly a functioning one, made an interesting shape when worn, and due to issues in sourcing material, I ended up making only one version, which is the tailored jacket.

I introduced the net material through sampling layering with tied nets and tailoring fabrics. The sourcing of the final fishing net, used in the collection, changed the spirit of the samples, more focused on the illusion of three dimensional shapes that folding and wrinkling the net onto fabric created. The headpieces in the final lineups are strips of the net, tied to a knot at the back of the neck and falling longer at the front to cover the face of the model. The headpieces address the allure of anonymity and add a sense of distance between the wearer and the spectator.



35. A study of a body, positive & negative, by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy



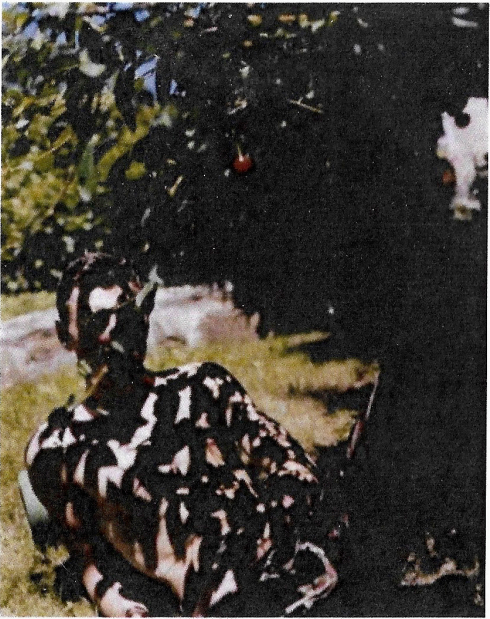
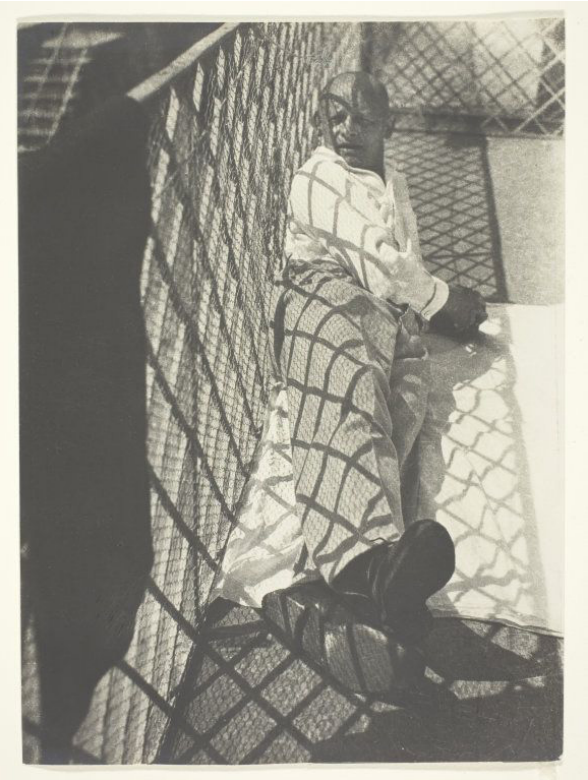
36. A study on camouflage by Roland Penrose, Lee Miller draped in a net, photographed by David E. Scherman



39.

40.

37



38.

38 - SURFACE CAMO w/ DIFFERENT MOTIFS?
TO NAL, NO STRIKE

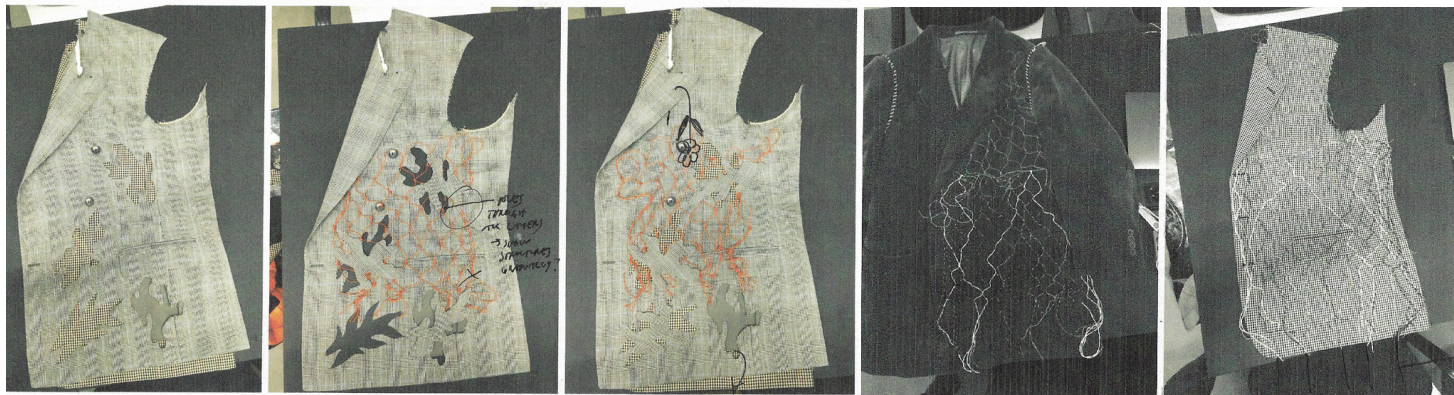
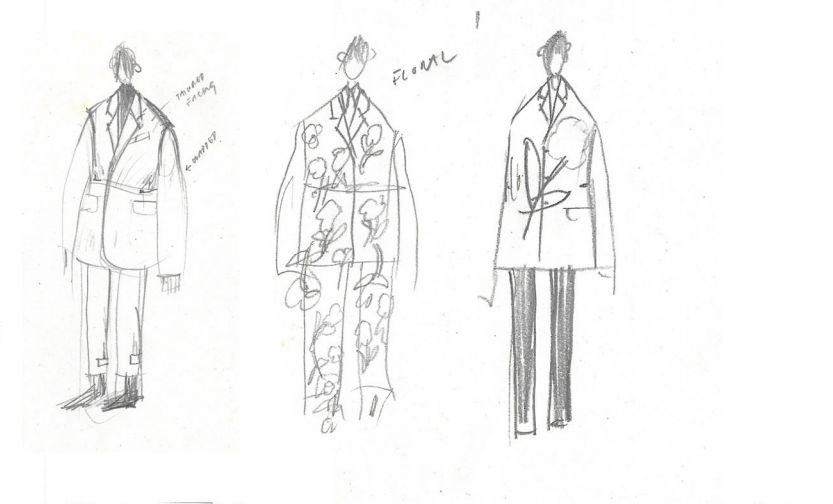
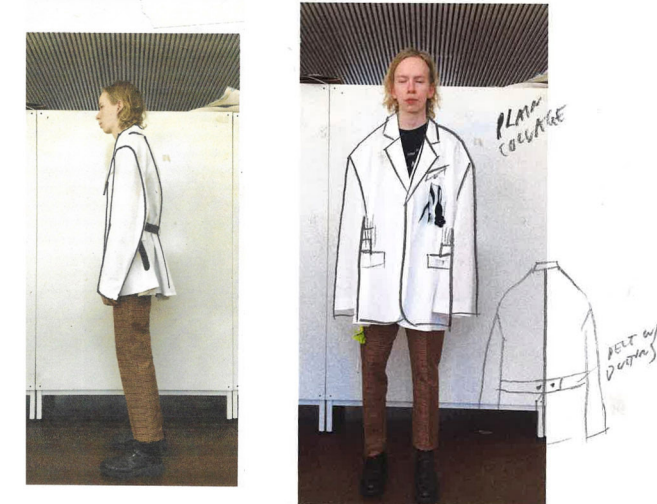
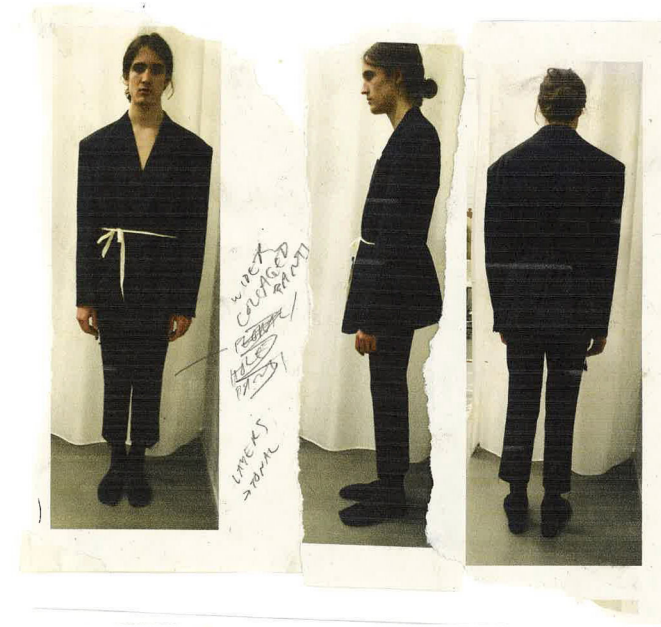
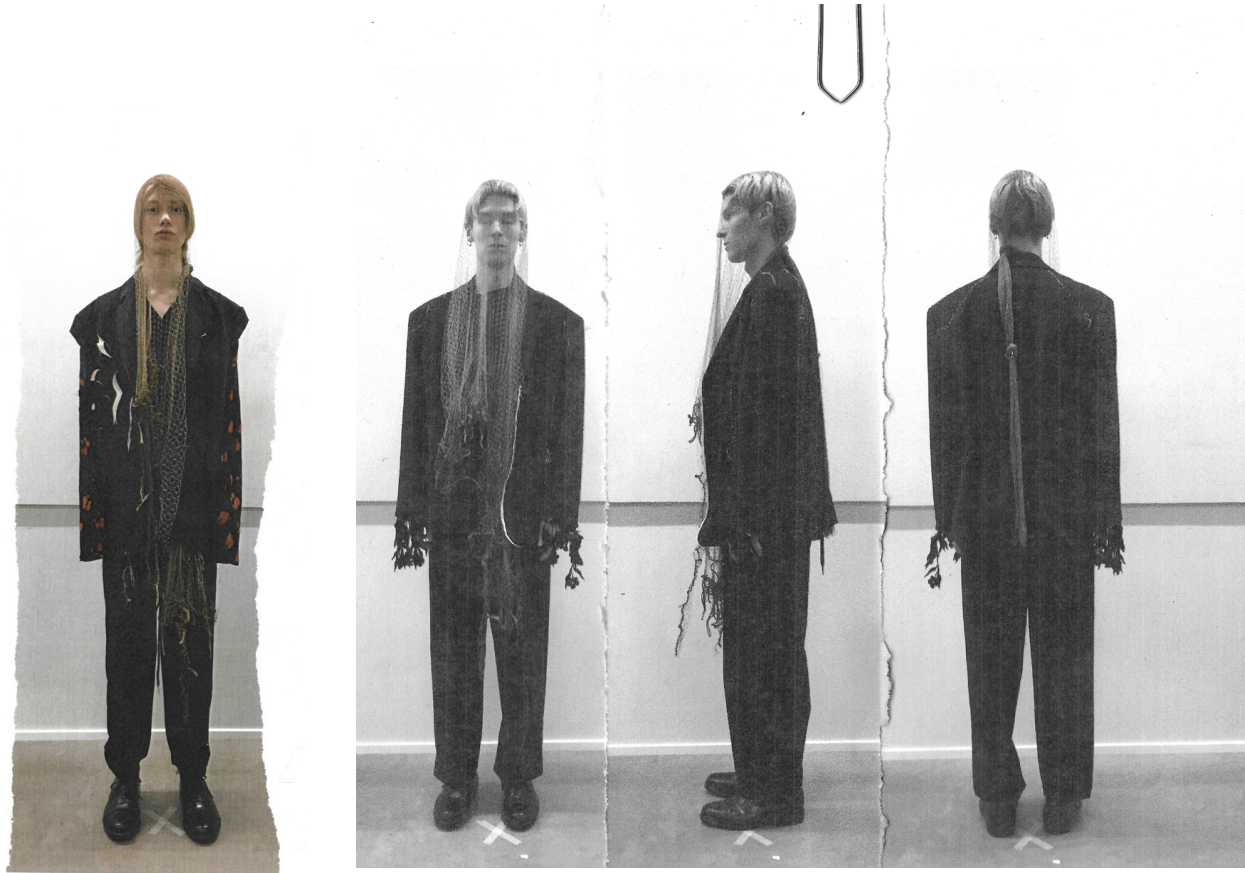


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
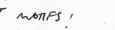
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Study on body and shadow, left: Laszlo Moholy-Nagy 1926, right: Collier Schorr 2001

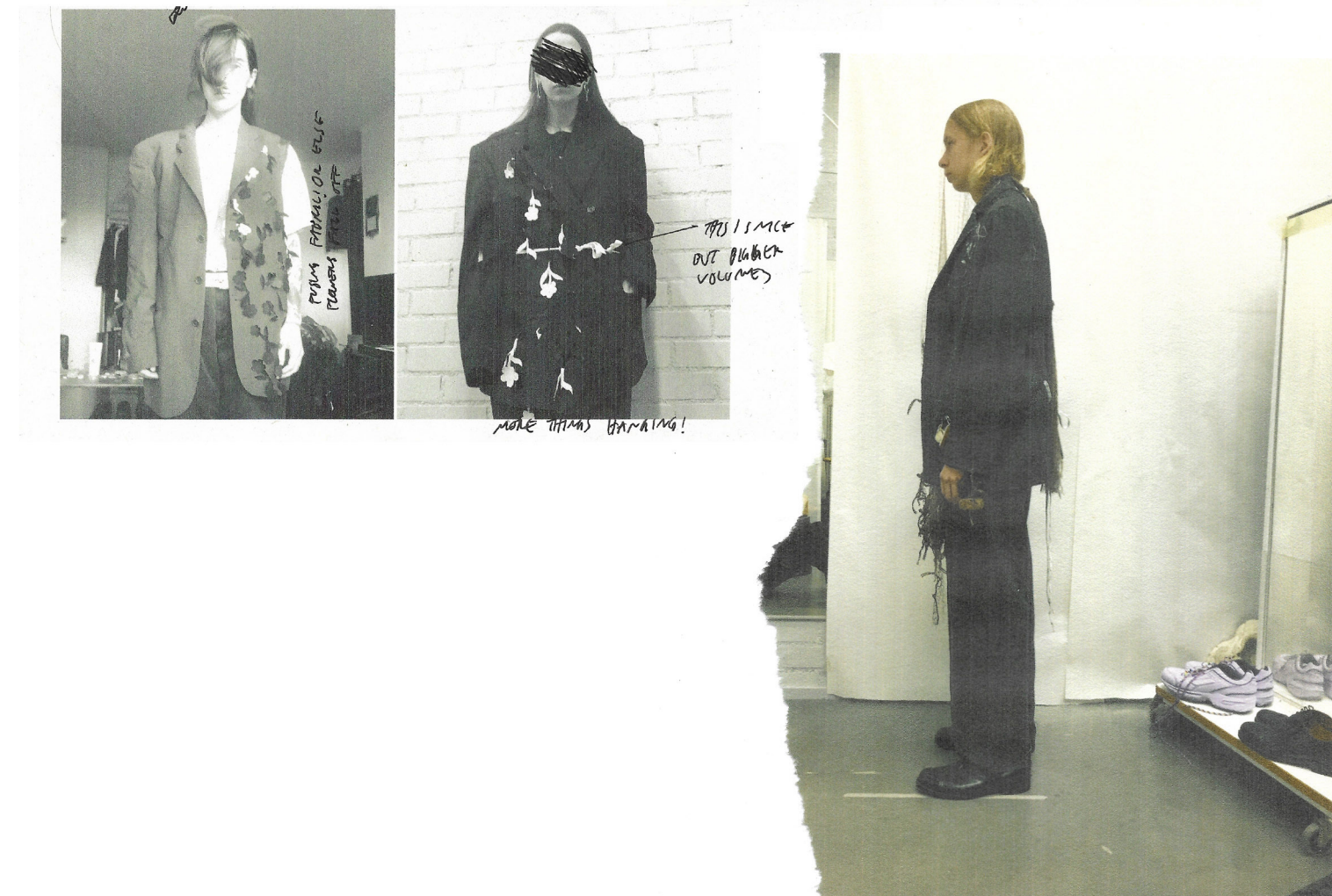
sketches on floral-shapes for knitwear and lazer-cutting

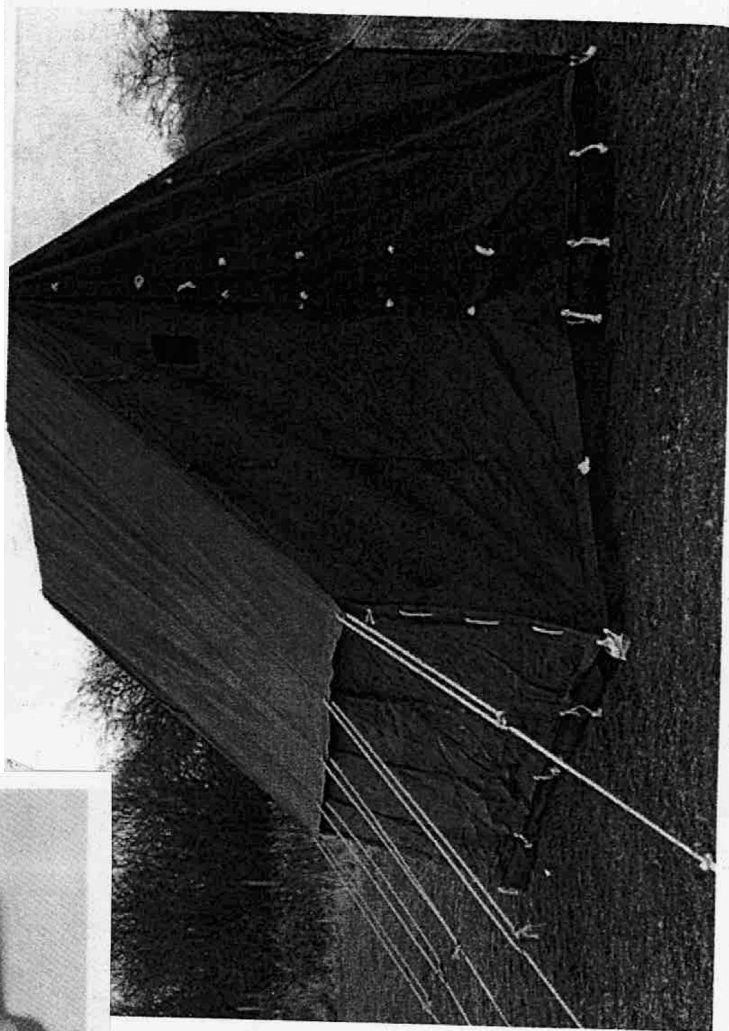


SOMETHING OTHER THAN CAMO
SOO CLEAN & DIFFERENT MOTIFS!

 OR  PATTERN?

~~NIKEA~~ NIKEA YARNS,
→ NEAR? MADE? NET?





SHOULDER ?
DOES IT NEED TO BE FUNCTIONAL
OR CAN IT BE ORNAMENTAL ?
→ CURRENT AS SHELTER FOR IDENTIFICATION

42. Edgar Warpol: Man with Suitcases, Tadeusz Kantor 1968



4.3 COLLECTING, AGEING, MAKING

I have a habit of collecting discarded objects and I amuse myself by imagining their origin. I enjoy sourcing materials from unexpected contexts, and it creates similar sensations for me as finding a strange object on the ground. Finding a material with a completely different initial purpose makes my imagination work better, and I find it to make an interesting dialogue with existing fabrics. I've been trying to steer myself away from excessive craftiness, by focusing some of that energy into slow methods and finding new materials to work with. Repurposing materials is motivated by concerns regarding sustainability, but even more than that a curiosity of the possibilities of non-clothing materials in the making of clothes.

A small selection of recycled materials play an important part in completing the atmosphere of the collection. Since I chose to restrict the amount of silhouettes, I wanted to be precise about the selection of materials so that they would give those pieces the life they needed. The collected materials bring a different presence to the collection, and they also directed my design process in some way, by making me find ways to work the other elements around them.

The first of these materials I acquired was a fishing net. I had been making samples from yarns to imitate camouflage nets and to insert colour and another layer to fabrications. The results and the technique were not exactly what I was looking for and I spent some time looking for pieces of old nets to take it somewhere else. I found this particular net online and I bought it on a whim although it was not what I had initially thought of.

The net arrived, brought to me by a man who told me it had belonged to his father who was a fisherman. It was huge, and braided neatly in a garbage bag, the net smelled like tar and salt and maybe a garden shed. I loved the way the ropes had faded, the stained cork buoys and the frailness of the net itself, even the murky grey colour. Even before opening the net from the braid the smell of it was so nostalgic, reminiscent of the sea and summer and boat sheds in small islands we used to go to when I was a child. The rush of that memory, just from the smell, was so intense I wanted to find ways to use the material and communicate it. That sensation and the finding of the net set a very clear image in my head of where I wanted the collection to go, and this sort of became a

repeating pattern in making decisions for me.

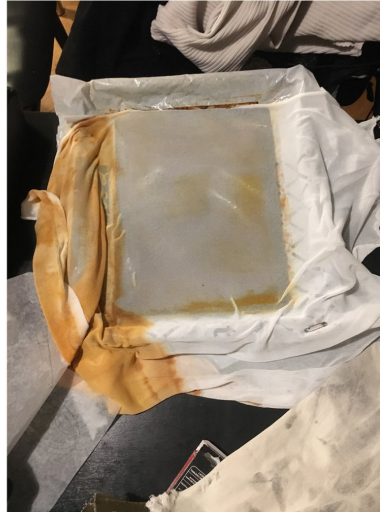
The second material in this spirit is a Russian Plash Palatka-tent, a heavy olive green cotton with an oily treatment, with a strange crisp but flexible handfeel. The fabric again had a familiar scent, something that reminded me of candle wax and a toolbox. I had used the fabric the year before for a jacket in a project and I liked the weight of it and the marks that were left from the old stitching I took apart.

A third element was the seashells that were used as decorative elements together with pieces taken apart from the fishing net and lasercut flowers. The initial ones I had collected from a family holiday that autumn and I had a habit of carrying some around as small objects to fiddle with in my pocket. I like the idea of a good luck charm, that an object can help you focus, feel grounded or protected in some way, and I wanted to develop them into some form of adornment based on that thought. The shells were beautiful as objects and they reminded me of the act of passing time, walking around on an empty seashore. I re-imagined them as memorabilia and a set of personal insignia.

Using these materials gave me a sense of reaching time, tapping into the emotional realm that is connected to memory. I chose them for their distinct material qualities, their colour, weight and handfeel, but also for the sensations I got when handling the materials, less tangible but therefore more intense. Not all of these objects were personal to me, but the way they had belonged to someone and the way that traces of that still lingered, gave them a character that other, new materials didn't have. I wasn't sure how they would communicate to other people, but the way they made me feel affected the way I worked with them and pushed me to find solutions to give them space and make them communicate with the rest of the materials.



43. Pulling up nets in Lappo 1973, image taken at a small museum on the island during a sailing trip in 2016



44. "Members of the Doncaster Home Guard, two wearing camouflage net veils over their faces, swim across a river during an assault exercise", 1942

4.4 RUST

As with the floral motifs, I wanted to find a way of treating material in a way that wasn't print or traditional dyeing. The images I had collected were of dirt and stains, greasy shirts and traces of being outside. I felt strange about trying to replicate them, just because their charm came from actually doing the things that had marked the clothes. I had done a number of failed experiments in making various waterproof treatments, based on mixing beeswax and linseed oil with pigments, charcoal and finally latex. The samples were rigid and apart from the latex, the surfaces remained lifeless and stifled. The latex made an interesting surface when mixed with ink, but the feel of it was sticky and I disliked the industrial smell of the substance.

I wanted to pursue the concept of ageing further, and started researching ways to develop surfaces over time, with simple methods and everyday utensils. I approached this more like a kitchen science project, and wasn't so concerned about the end result, more just curious about the process and excited about the possibilities of something I couldn't fully control. In the middle of a stressful spring, doing something lighthearted at home felt relaxing, and in a way restored the joy in making things. I read about the chemical process of rust, and with the basic knowledge of how different fibres behave, I did samples on a few potential materials to see how the process would affect them and to figure out the duration of getting results.



45. Ama under a tree, wearing knit with two weeks of rust



In the mornings I would set up a swatch to soak in vinegar, water and salt, and place a sanded plate of steel over it, sprayed with the same liquid. In most cases I would have results the next morning, the quickest and most visible being my knitwear samples. The knitwear I was making was from viscose yarns, given to me by Varpu Rapeli, and the knit itself was light and absorbed the vinegar-salt-water mix better than other fabrics. The rust spread through the yarns in an interesting way, and as the yarns I had were either black or white, this gave me a way to use them in more various ways.

I overdyed some of the swatches with tea, as tannins react with the iron, turning the brown tones into ash grey. The process of a single swatch didn't take that long, but the plates of steel I had were the size of an A4 paper, and the dimensions of the knitwear pieces were each a few times larger than that. Despite trying out larger plates I could find in hardware stores, only the smaller ones worked in creating strong colours and interesting surfaces, why that is, I'm not really sure. The largest pieces, a long sleeved knitted shirt, took altogether two weeks to thoroughly rust, and the smaller pieces, the knitted tops, took only a couple of days. Somehow knowing that the process couldn't be speeded up was simultaneously stressful and calming, as there was not much else to do except systematically keep moving the plates and wait for the rust to develop.

GREY SUIT

PATCH POCKET
WITH BLUE FLOWER
DRAWSTRING BACK

LOOSE TROUSER

COLLAGED TEXTURED
DEADSTOCK WOOLS
HANDSTITCHED DETAILS
IN WHITE LINEN YARN

PIGMENT SPRAYED
VISCOSE KNIT TOP

TWO MILITARY BELTS

FISHING NET VEIL

SEASHHELLS & CORN BUOYS
AT SLEEVES & POCKETS

CHARCOAL SUIT

GREY SPECKLED
DEADSTOCK WOOL
VEILED IN FISHING
NET

NARROW TROUSER

CHARCOAL FLAT CHEVRON
DEADSTOCK WOOL
HANDSTITCHED DETAILS
IN BLACK LINEN YARN

VEILED IN FISHING NET

LIGHT VISCOSE KNIT
TOP

SOAKED IN RUST & TEA

SEASHHELLS & CORN BUOYS
AT CUFFS & POCKETS

MACINTOSH COAT

BLEACHED TENT &
FISHING NET

LOOSE TROUSER

CHARCOAL FLAT CHEVRON
DEADSTOCK WOOL
HANDSTITCHED DETAILS
IN BLACK LINEN YARN

COLLARED LONG SLEEVE
VISCOSE KNIT
SOAKED IN RUST FOR
2 WEEKS

2 MILITARY BELTS

BLACK TORN SILK SCARF

FISHING NET VEIL

SEASHHELLS & CORN BUOYS
AT SLEEVES

VEST WITH A
FLOWER SHAPED HOLE

BLACK PIASTRIFE WOOL &
CHARCOAL CHEVRON DEADSTOCK
WOOL

LOOSE TROUSER

FLORAL MOTIF ALL OVER
LASERCUT

COLLARED LONG SLEEVE
VISCOSE KNIT
HAND PAINTED BLEACHED
FLOWERS

FISHING NET VEIL

LASERCUT FLOWERS AT
POCKET



look 1 look 2 look 3 look 4

TENT SHAPED TAILORED
JACKET

COLLAGED SPECKLED
CHARCOAL DEADSTOCK WOOL
EYELETS & COTTON BINDINGS

NARROW TROUSER

FLORAL MOTIF ALL OVER LASERCUT

VISCOSE KNITTED TOP
SOAKED IN RUST

FISHING NET VEIL

CORN BUOYS IN EYELETS
LEAD WEIGHTS AT POCKETS

BLACK SUIT

BLACK BRUSHED WOOL FLANNEL
PATCH POCKET & DRAWSTRING
BACK

WHITE HANDSTITCHED DETAILS
IN LINEN YARN

LOOSE TROUSER

BLACK MINTAIRD WOOL
HAND STITCHED DETAILS
IN BLACK LINEN YARN

BLACK VISCOSE KNITTED
T-SHIRT

FISHING NET VEIL

LASERCUT FLOWERS
AT CUFFS, POCKETS, LAPEL

FLOWER SUIT

BLACK LASERCUT WOOL FLANNEL
FLORAL CURTAINS
HANDSTITCHED DETAILS
IN BLACK

NARROW TROUSER

BLACK BRUSHED
WOOL FLANNEL

VISCOSE KNITTED
T-SHIRT WITH HANDSTITCHED
DETAILS

FISHING NET VEIL



look 5 look 6 look 7



47.



48.



49.



50.



51.



52.

4.5 FEELINGS, RELATING TO OBJECTS

I have been trying to approach design from analyzing the things that I would wear myself. I don't think that as a designer it's necessary to design clothes from that perspective, but it's something I enjoy and I find it a useful way to study proportions, construction and finishings. I looked through the garments I owned and noticed how there were things that I had had for a long time, not all of them items that I would wear on a frequent basis, but things I felt very attached to, and that I would pull out to wear whenever I needed to feel grounded and comforted. There are certain things, materials, colours, silhouettes, that that make me feel more like myself, that I feel could be laid on the ground and they would somehow take my form, that can be identified as mine, if hanging on a rail. Other things I wear to break from that frame but still somehow their place is defined in relation to the base, of those core pieces. Many of the things I've worn have changed over the years, but there is a certain spirit that is present in many different things that I gravitate towards, for what reason, I don't really know.

56 In this work I study the concepts of uniformity and time, and both things really come down to the way we relate to the material things in our lives. It makes no sense to design a garment to last through life, if it's not something that will be worn, just as much as a designer can't impose a personal uniform on anyone else except themselves. For those reasons I wanted to focus on how things become meaningful, and maybe figure out how that process can be facilitated through design. I wanted to use the opportunity of personal work, through designing and making, to challenge and study my own relationship to garments.

As a designer you make choices, define your aesthetic, and instead of choosing from all the possibilities that exist, you work with the things that resonate with you specifically. My driving force has been the affection I develop for a shape or a material, and the source for that affection is the emotional relationship I form with pieces of clothing.

Not all clothing needs to be heavily loaded with meaning or sentiments, things can just be good to wear, beautiful as such or simply practical. Yet it should be vital to develop a certain respect and understanding of all the things that go into the making

of a garment, from labour and material to creative resources. As a designer, the weight of things that are wrong with the fashion industry can feel burdening and overwhelming, which is why it's so important to occasionally remind yourself of the ways that garments bring joy to life. How dressing can be a form of communication, thinking and self-expression, and the empowering sensation of making, of giving form. Re-evaluating my relationship to material things has been a way for me to stay motivated, to keep working things through. The appreciation for the material and immaterial qualities of garments pushes me to work in a way that is more considerate and respectful, both in the making and wearing of clothes.



53.

4.6 FIELD STUDIES WITH MEERI JUVAKKA

The shooting of the imagery for my collection initiated from conversations with Meeri Juvakka. The conversations happened over walks, and they were centred around observations of our surroundings and discussion about the charm of found objects. We share a habit of collecting things and a fascination towards their tangible qualities. The habit of collecting was reminiscent of that from childhood, of finding an object that could have been anything from a rock, a piece of wood, or a coin, the thrill of finding it and keeping it in your pocket to fiddle with and to study at home. The habit of the walks and conversations provided me with good points of reflection, and a soothing habit that helped me to feel grounded during the stress of working with the collection. The naive thrill of observing, exploring and finding was restoring, and throughout the spring and summer it progressed into ideas of imagery.

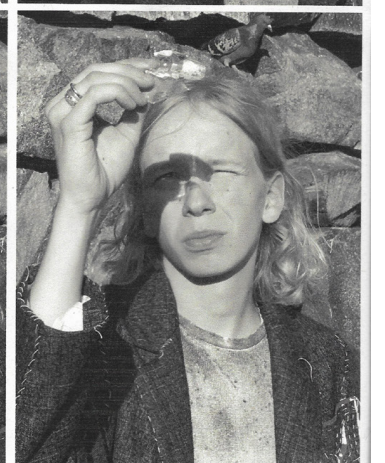
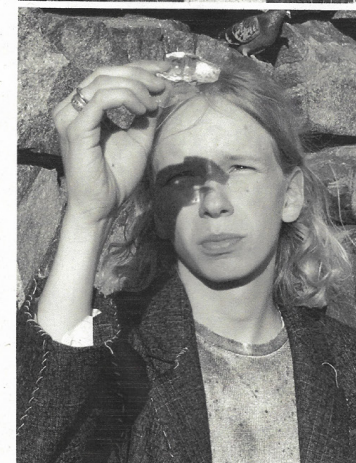
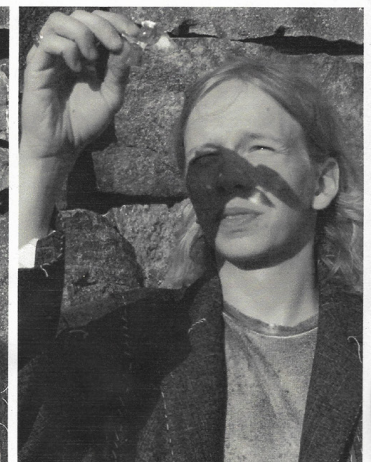
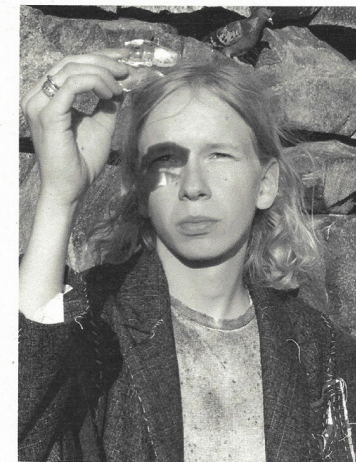
We decided on a concept that would function as an extension of the collection work and simulate the things we had discussed over those walks. The idea was just to take a few hours with a person and study them in an environment. The imagery consists of pieces from my collection but also of the objects we had collected on our walks and objects our friends keep with them.

The process of shooting the collection was never finished, which, in a way, I feel good about. Finishing a collection is cathartic but it always comes with a wave of sorrow, letting go of the work that defined the past year of life. Though the process of shooting has been on a halt due to schedules and geographical distances, giving it time also seems somehow appropriate, and gives space to a different process to take place, keeping the ending of it open.

57

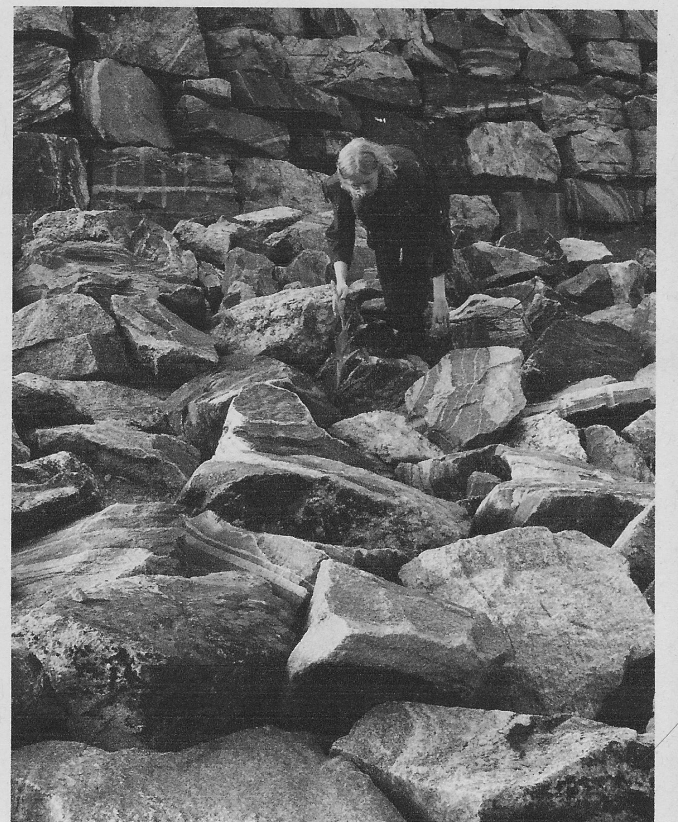
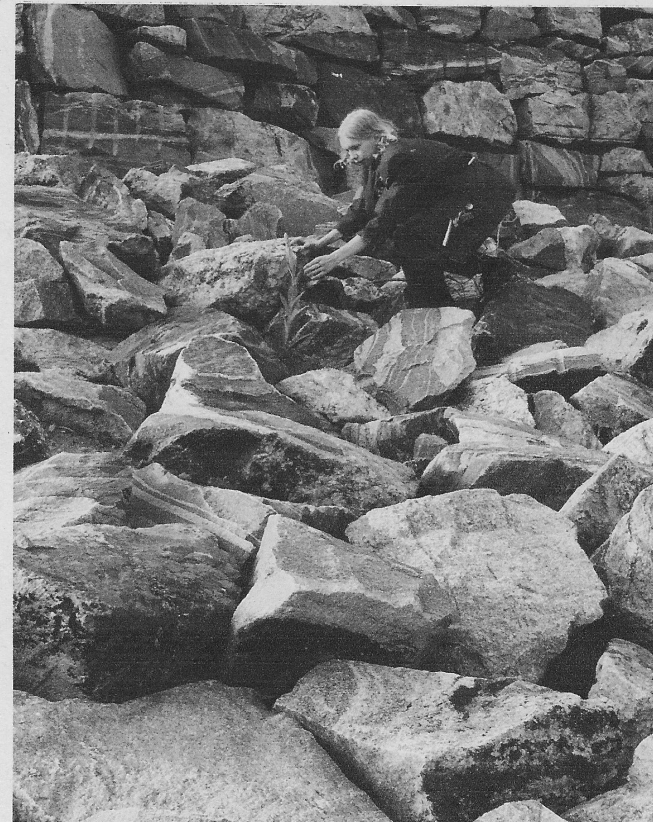
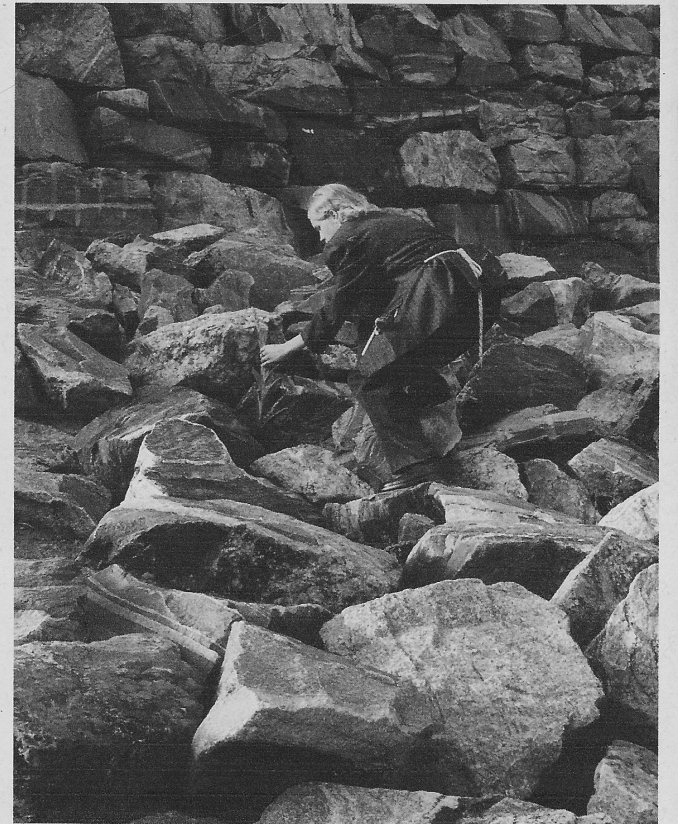


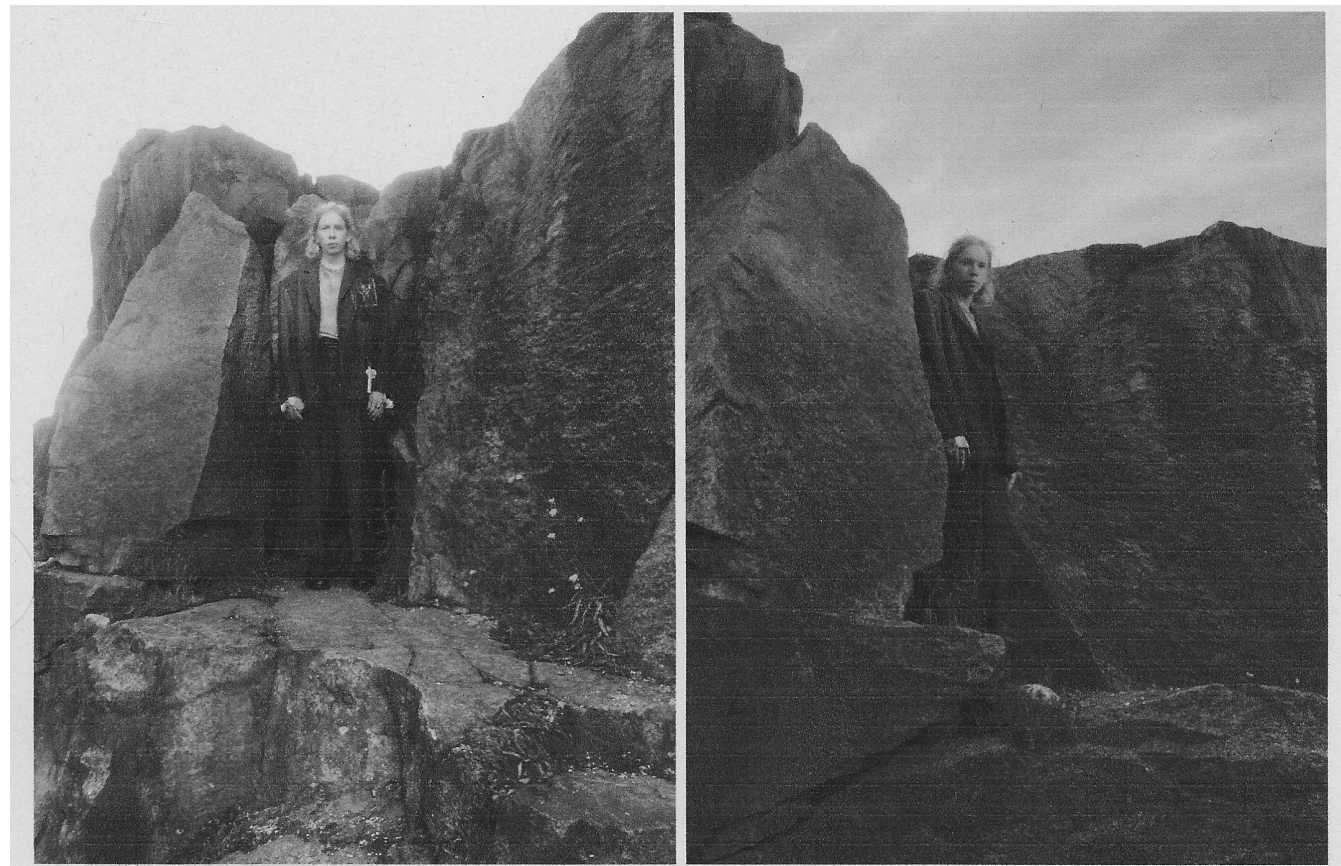
With Sami in July/ Field studies with Meeri Juvakka

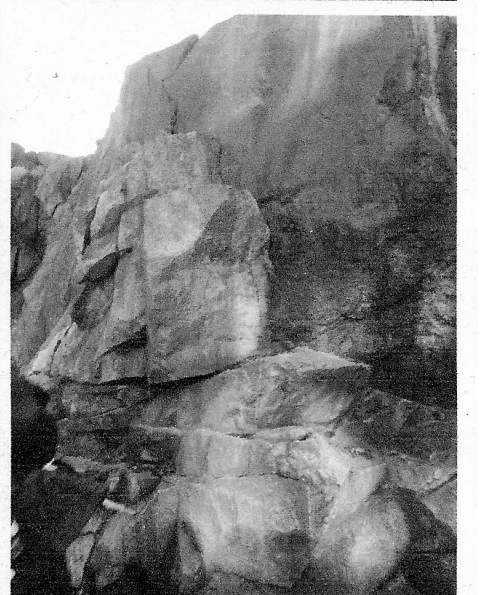
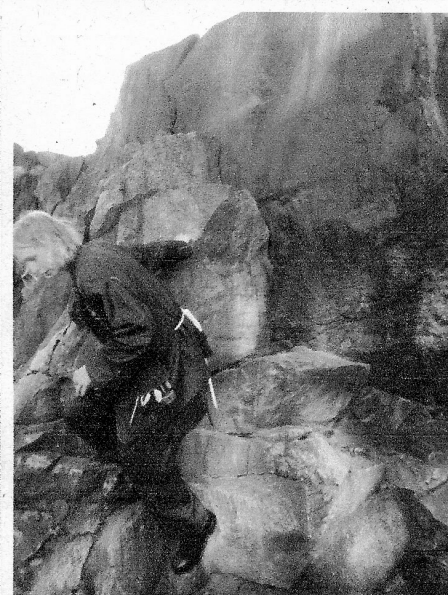
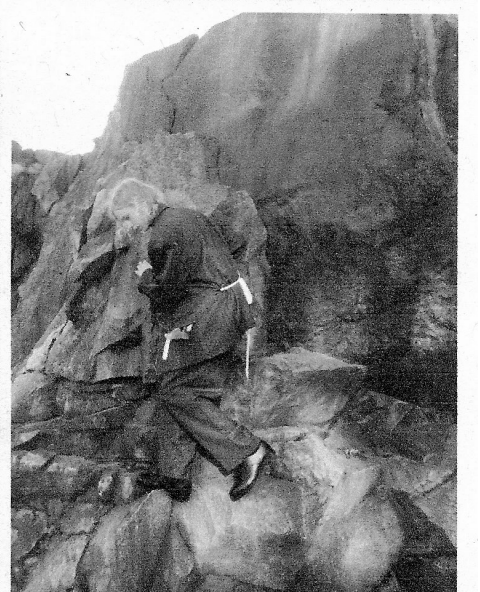
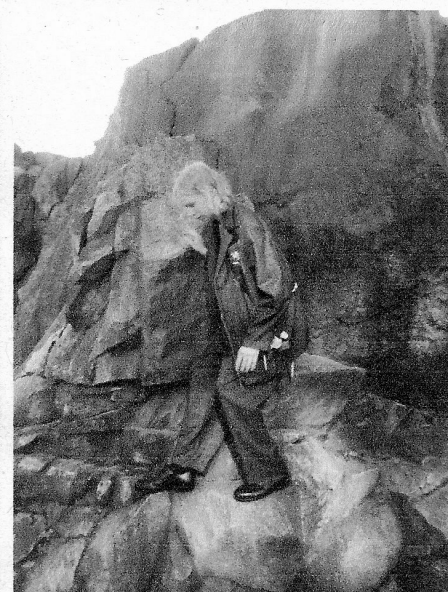
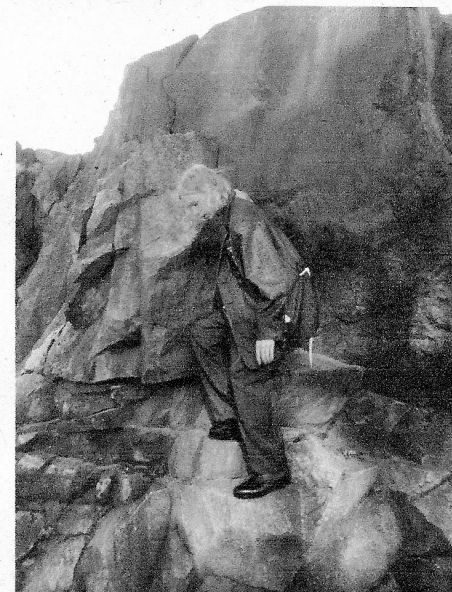
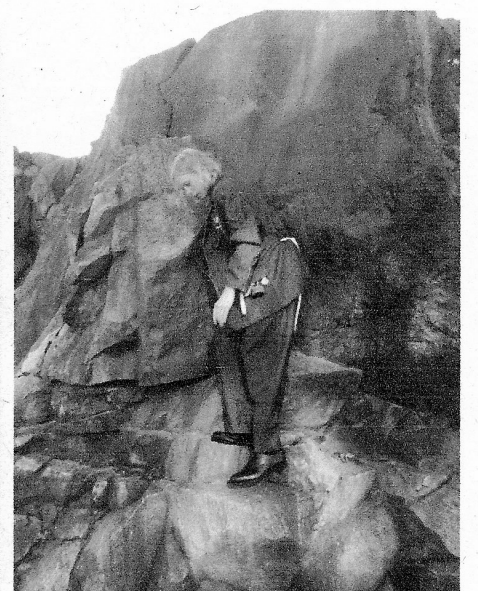
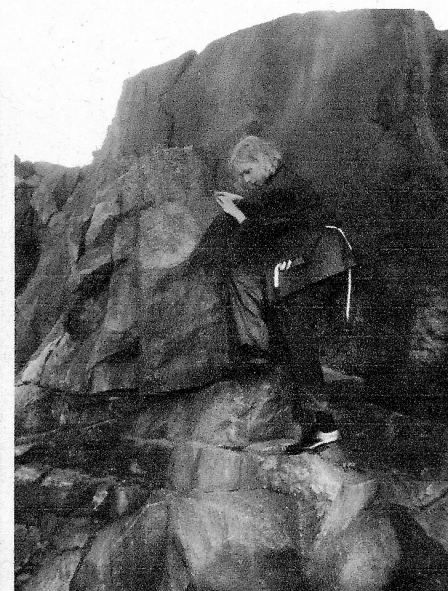
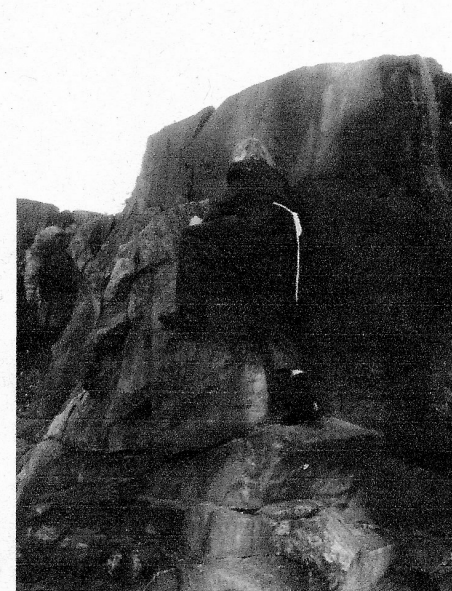
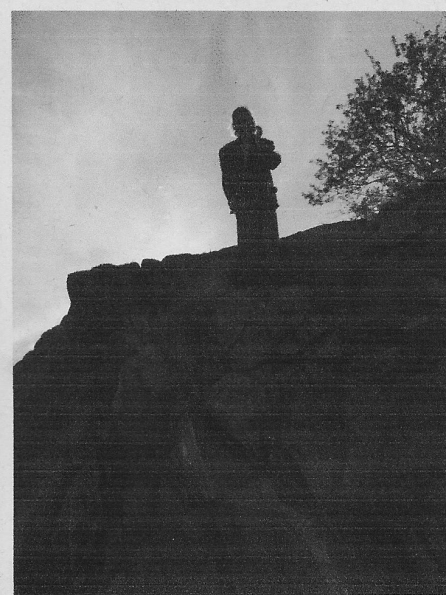
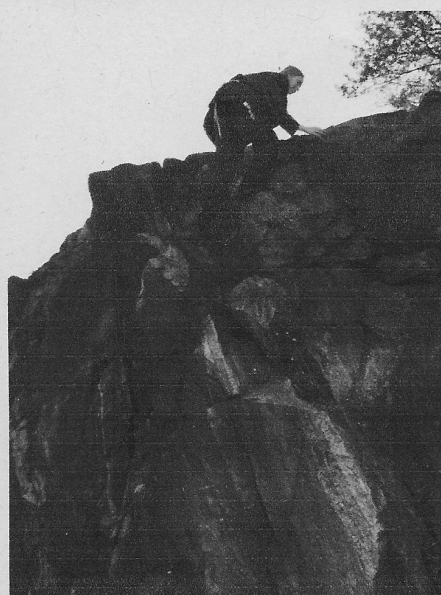
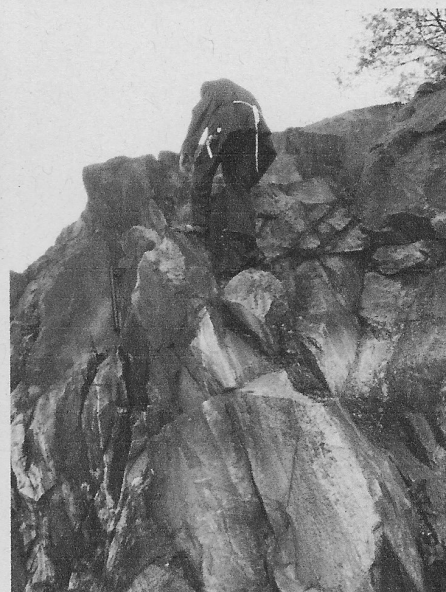
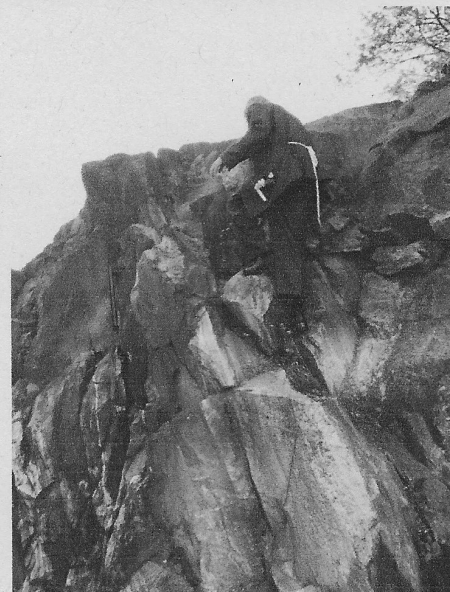
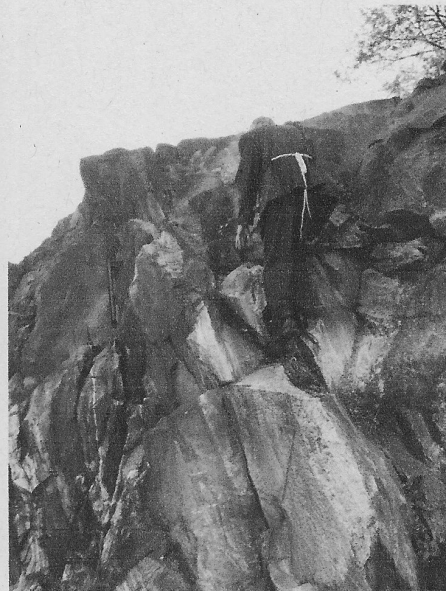


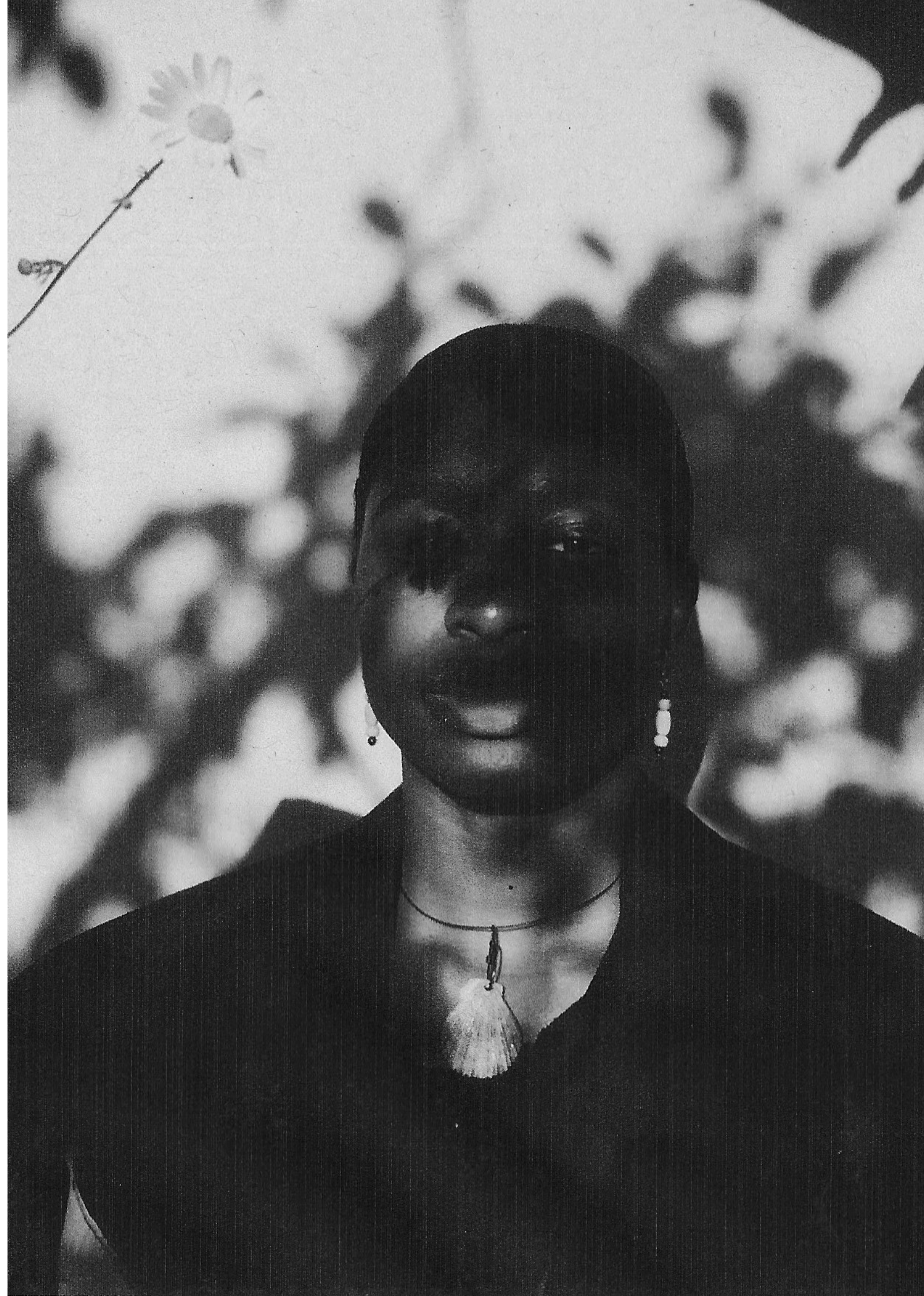


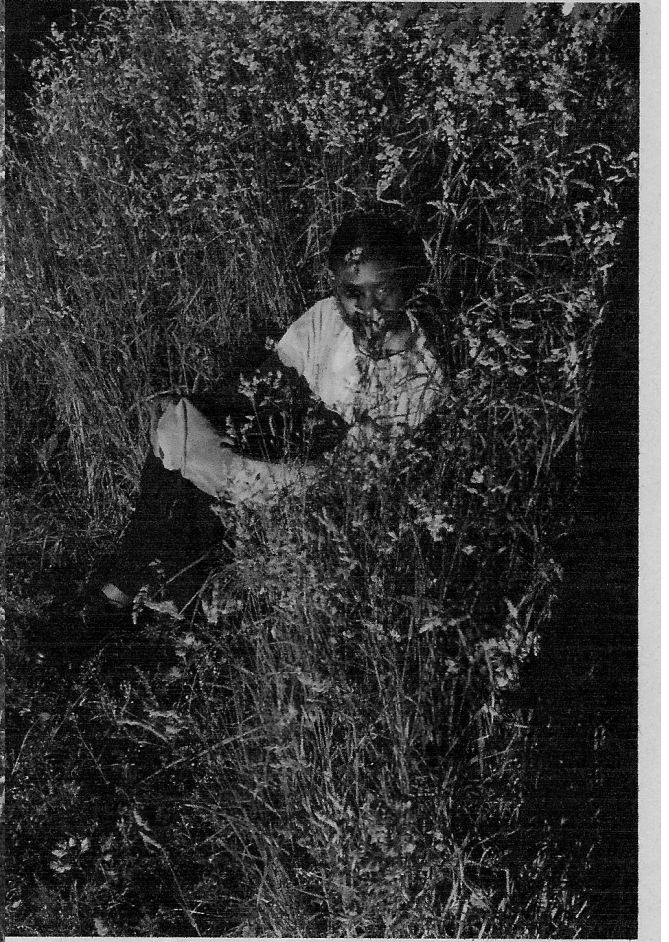
With Sami in July/ Field studies with Meeri Juvakka

















Meeri Juvakka
Ines Kalliala

pictured:
Sami Samaletdin
Ama Essel

5. CONCLUSIONS

The whole process of this written work has in some ways been a broad introspection. The reason I have included so much of that in the previous chapters is how entwined it is to the process of this particular work, and leaving it separated to the very end would have deflated the text from the very things I have been trying to describe.

This collection process started at a time when my interest in fashion was at a standstill, and I needed to find more reasons for design than experimenting with new aesthetics. I enjoy working with *real clothes* and I need to incorporate a sense of rationality to balance out the romanticism I associate with fashion. I don't consider myself a functional designer and convincing myself that the pieces I make would fulfil some practical need, by providing technical solutions to things, would feel artificially imposed.

I was drawn into into the way that the designs of uniforms withstand time, and how their details and technical solutions are practical and simple. There is an honesty in the shapes and selection of materials that I wanted to learn from, and I felt was something that would be useful to incorporate into my work as a designer beyond this final project. I didn't feel the need to replicate or reference any particular pieces, but more so develop my designs through some of the same principles.

The process of the writing has in many ways been similar to that of the collection work. During the collection process I had a strong sense of the things I wanted to do, but at times I found it difficult to grasp. I struggle with a contradiction of longing to work with things that are personal, and an embarrassment of dwelling in sentimentality and presenting that work. Having taken time in between degrees for internships has provided me with better working skills, but also created a distance from diving into personal work, and I sometimes get too careful about the things I feel I can work with. Nevertheless, having been away from a school environment maybe made me appreciate the creativity that comes from the mess, the emotions, the sensitivity and the experimenting that is at the heart of student work.

An uncertainty and a fear of failure is always present in personal work, but I tried to approach it keeping in mind the differences of professional and student work, that the year was an opportunity

to make bad decisions and use methods that were messy and impractical, and that a potential failure of result or not finishing on time was not the end of the world. I'm not saying that I always managed to do that, and I had forgotten how emotionally consuming the process of making a collection can be. However, being able to occasionally detach and switch to a lighter mindset towards work helped maintain an *almost* endurable level of stress and enable the enjoying of the process in its ups and downs alike.

At the beginning of the writing I felt uneasy about my choice of topic and its framing. When cutting sections away, I felt I lost many of the things that were significant, simultaneously trying to include everything would have been impossible and unnecessary, leaving little space to the actual studying the subject. The final body of writing is slightly fragmented, but I feel settled about it and I feel it holds all the things that I intended it to. It took me quite a while to get started, first from the deflating feeling of completing the collection, later due to my time being taken up by an internship. The distance in time to working with the collection has given me some space to reflect the work and it's maybe easier to trace the steps now than they would have been during the summer or autumn of 2019.

Both the creative and writing work have taught me important things about self-management and communication. I like to try to figure things out by myself, but sometimes it's hard to tell when it becomes too much. Many of the things I found difficult and much of the stress could have been reduced significantly through improved scheduling and talking about it on time. Nevertheless, this work has also enhanced my understanding of the things that I'm good at, a sense of ease about my aesthetics, and ways of working that suit me best.

The smartest decision of my thesis was to try to enjoy the process of it, and by reminding myself of that decision I have been able to get past the things that I would have otherwise found incapacitating. During the collection work, the presence and help of student colleagues was irreplaceable in creating a warm and supportive working atmosphere, and regardless of the stress, a very memorable way to finish school. Numerous things went wrong in the collection work, due to lack of technical skills, being unfocused or tired or just out of bad luck, but somehow I've gradually learned to accept that as a crucial part of any creative work, and that it usually provides an opportunity for learning, and at its best, results in good things. I look back on the process with gratitude and I feel that the end result is more or less exactly what it was supposed to be all along.



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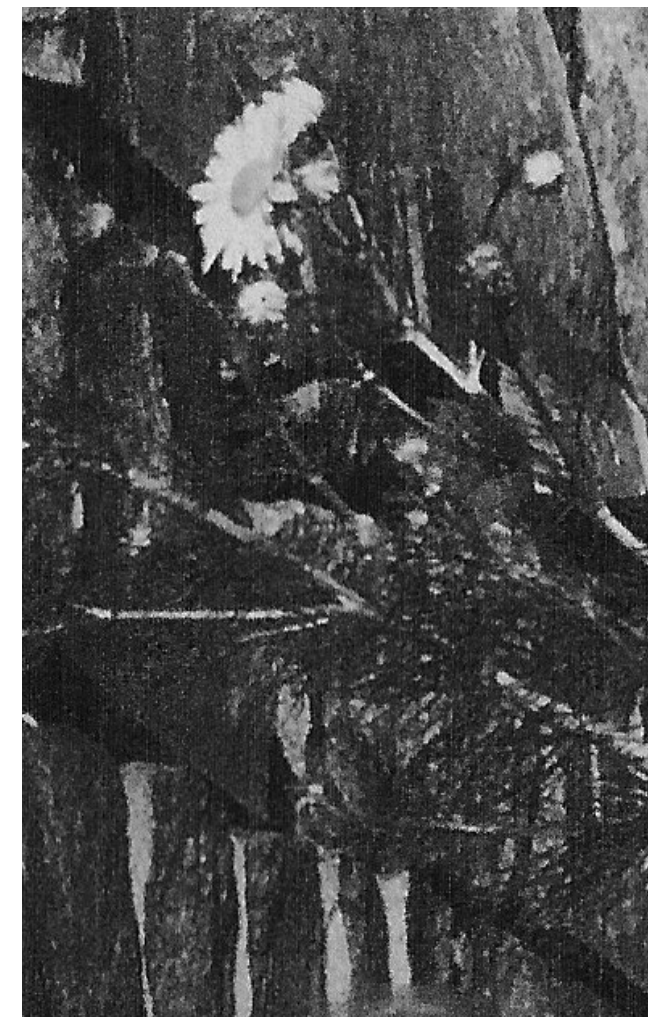
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