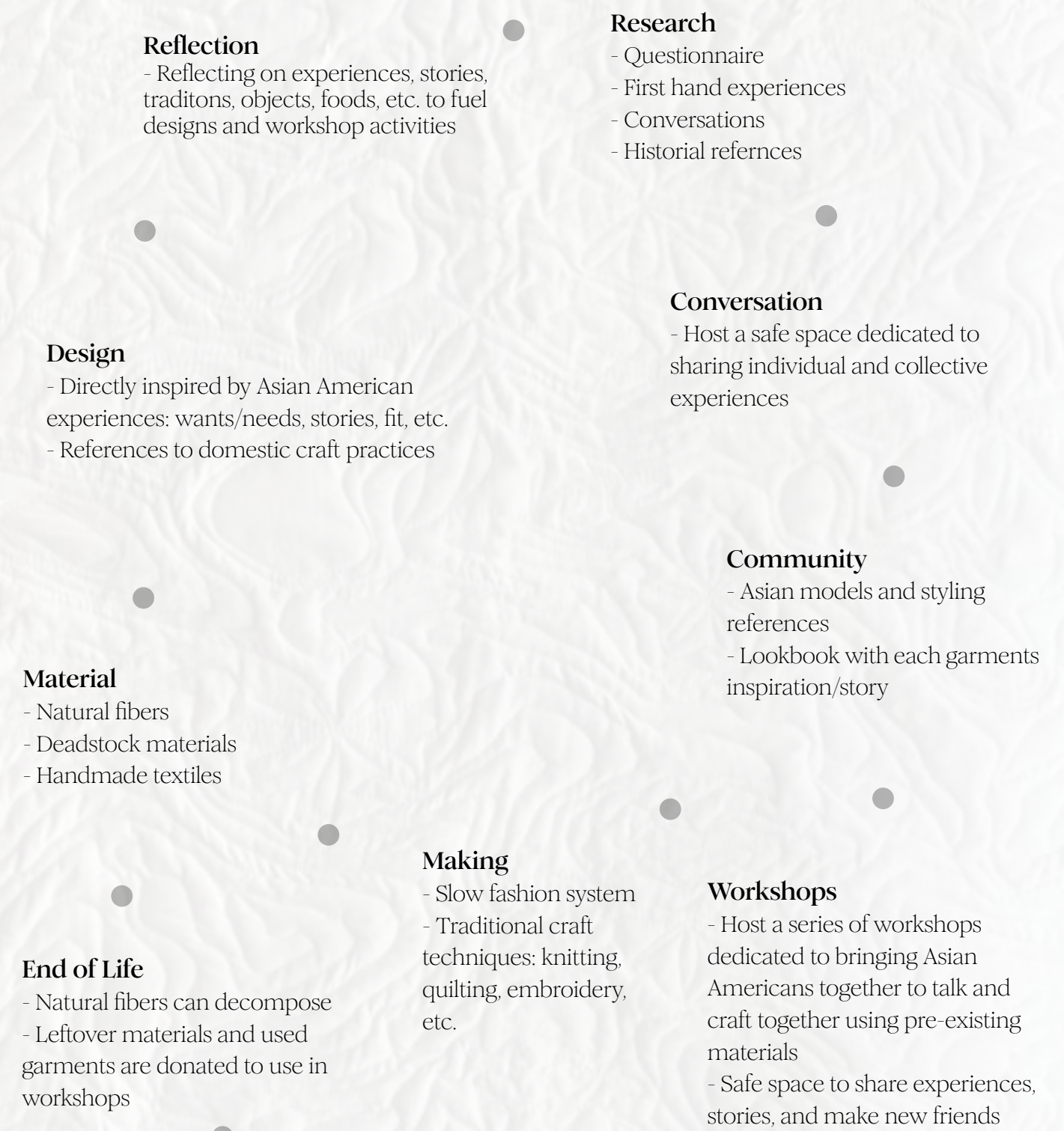


crafting community



community crafting

This is a fashion system designed with and for **Asian Americans**, utilising traditional craft techniques and referencing **lived experiences** to bring a sense of **togetherness, representation**, and **inspiration** to our community.



This project began with a questionnaire for Asian Americans to share their experiences with fashion in relation to American culture, their own heritage, and forming an identity.

From the answers, follow-up one-on-one conversations, a collective reflection on prominent cultural motifs, beliefs, and traditions, and a deep dive of my personal family archive, this project was born from a collection of real lived experiences.



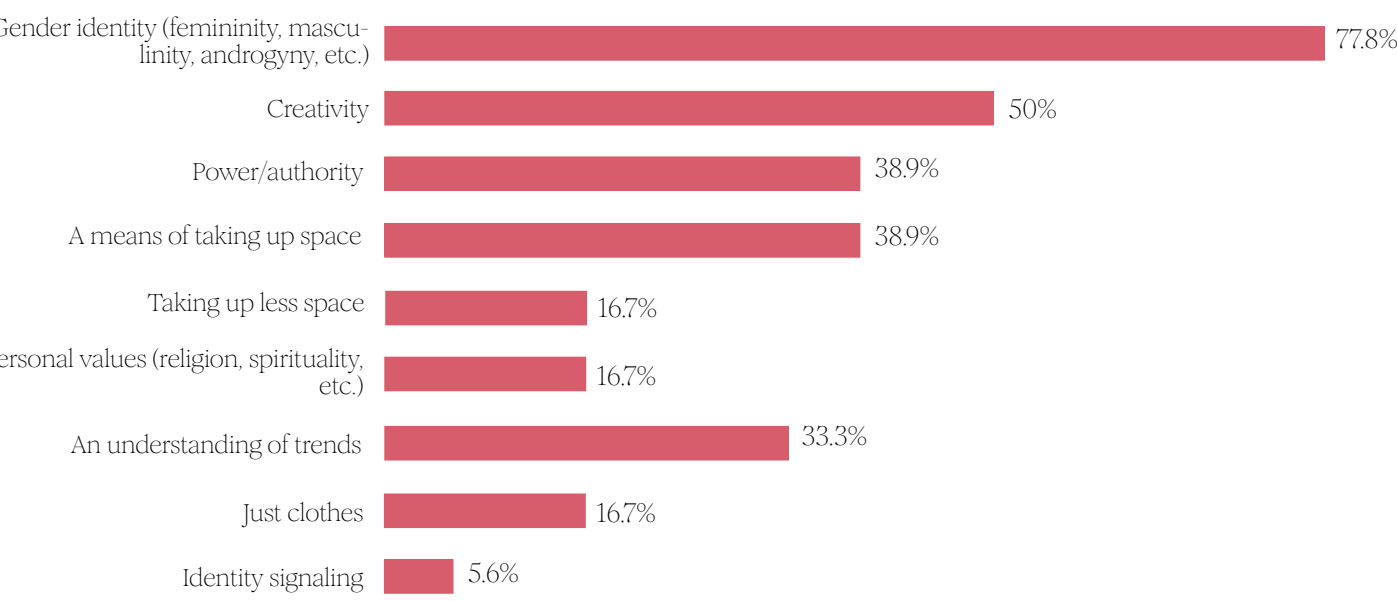
*Jessie and Minnie 1936
Hong Kong*

Collected Research

Participants ages ranged from 19-56 years old

88% Women
6% Men
6% Non-binary

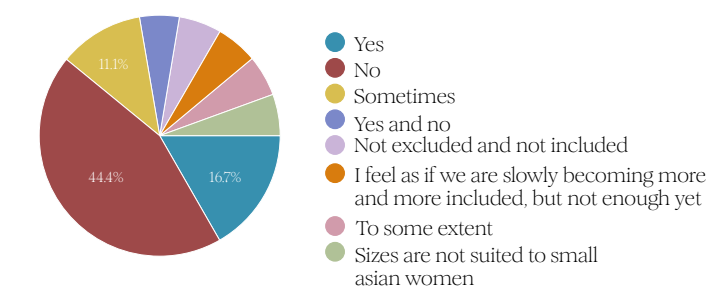
Your style is a tool for expressing:



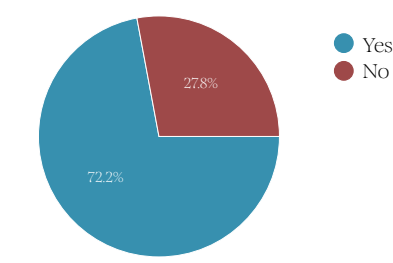
We would like to see more:

- Asian models
- Cultural influences on style
- Thoughtful material choices
- Asian designers
- Asian leadership
- Clothing made with Asian proportions in mind
- Fashion taught more culturally
- References of genuine lived experiences of the Asian community

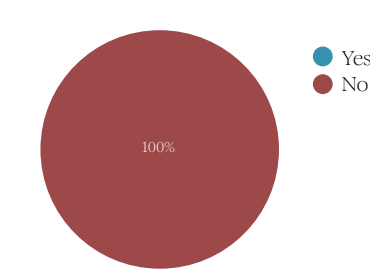
As an Asian person, do you feel included in American fashion and culture?



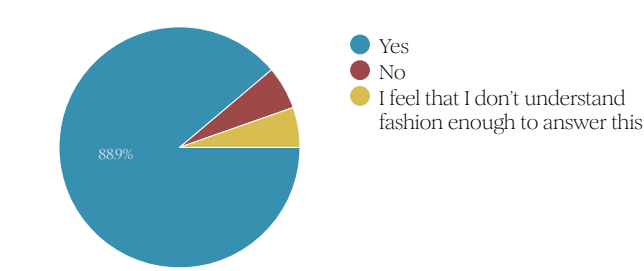
Does fitting in with American fashion help you feel included in American culture?



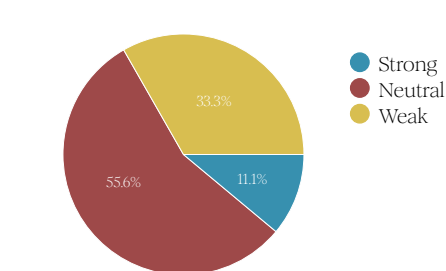
Is there enough Asian representation in the fashion industry?



Are there harmful stereotypes about Asians within fashion in America?



The effect of your heritage on your personal fashion style is:



“The aesthetic fetishization of both Chinatown locations is unoriginal, and worse, unintentionally cliché. Not only is there a tired history of the Western gaze exploiting racialized eccentricities of Asian cultures for cheap inspiration, but also the trend of opening experimental art galleries and high end stores in hyper-local Chinatowns is so ubiquitous today that it’s beyond boring.”

- Philip Poon, Dear Mike Ekhaus and Zoe Latta, in Best! Letters from Asian Americans in the Arts, 49



*Wings Le family business
1072 Rue St Urbain*



Howard and Lana's Wedding 1956

“Asian American youth have successfully carved out a unique cultural space for themselves that is, in part, a consequence of their constant negotiation between the traditions of their immigrant families and the marginalization and exclusion they experience from the larger society... In doing so, they negotiate between ‘American’ and ‘Asian’ traits, which often results in an ‘emergent culture of hybridity’ that mixes elements of both worlds”

- Min Zhou and Jennifer Lee, Introduction: The Making of Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity among Asian American Youth, in *Asian American Youth*, 22

“I had spent my adolescence trying to blend in with my peers in suburban America, and had come of age feeling like my belonging was something to prove. Something that was always in the hands of other people to be given and never my own to take, to decide which side I was on, whom I was allowed to align with. I could never be of both worlds, only half in and half out, waiting to be ejected at will by someone with greater claim than me. Someone full. Someone whole.”

- Michelle Zauner, *Crying in H Mart* pg. 107



Howard and Lana's Wedding 1956
(Mina - my grandmother
as maid of honor)



*Lee family 1957 Montreal
(Mina, Lynn, Ding, Gavin, Arthur)*

“Other scholars have specifically examined the ways in which second-generation Chinese American youth often renegotiated their ethnic identity distinct from their parents’ immigrant generation. Sucheng Chan, Gloria Chun, and Haiming Liu argued that children growing up in the early twentieth century often rejected the old-fashioned customs of their immigrant parents, favoring Western, not Chinese, traditions. However, the painful realities of racism thwarted their efforts to assimilate into mainstream American society and enjoy the full benefits of citizenship.”

- Wendy Rouse Jorae, *The Limits of Dress: Chinese American Childhood, Fashion and Race in the Exclusion Era*, in *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 41. No. 4. 45

Inspiration Photos

“Mothers often embroidered powerful animals such as dogs, pigs, tigers, or dragons on collars, shoes, and hats as protection. Waist-coats, jackets, aprons, collars, and trousers often bore images of propitious plants and animals such as plum blossoms, peaches, lotus flowers, chrysanthemums, willows, narcissi, bats, deer, fish, phoenixes, crabs, and rabbits. Other common symbols on children’s clothing include the eight trigrams, swastikas, the Chinese characters representing happiness and longevity, and images of a variety of deities. Decorative features added to hats and shoes, such as red string, tassels, pom-poms, and bells, were intended to distract or repel lingering evil spirits”.

- Wendy Rouse Jorae, 457



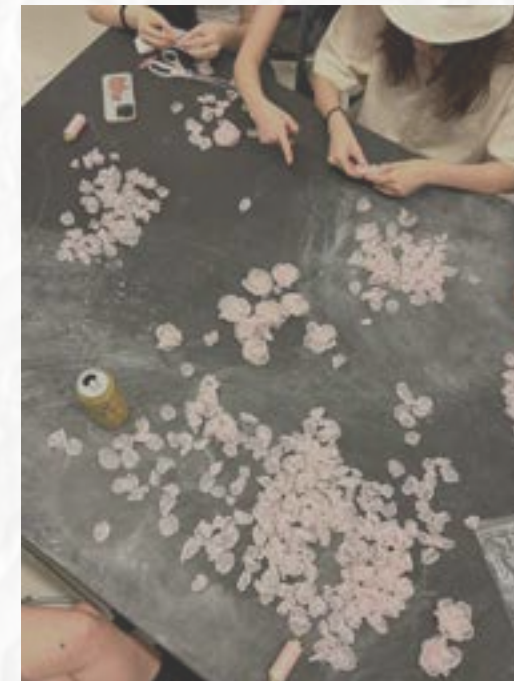


Workshop

This workshop is focused on creating a **safe space** for Asian Americans to **share their stories, connect with one another, and work with their hands.**

All provided materials come from past projects: deadstock fabrics, fabric scraps, leftover beads, thread, yarn etc. in efforts to be as **sustainable** as possible.

Participants were encouraged to interact with materials and create collages, imagery, or work on ongoing projects while engaging in **conversation.**



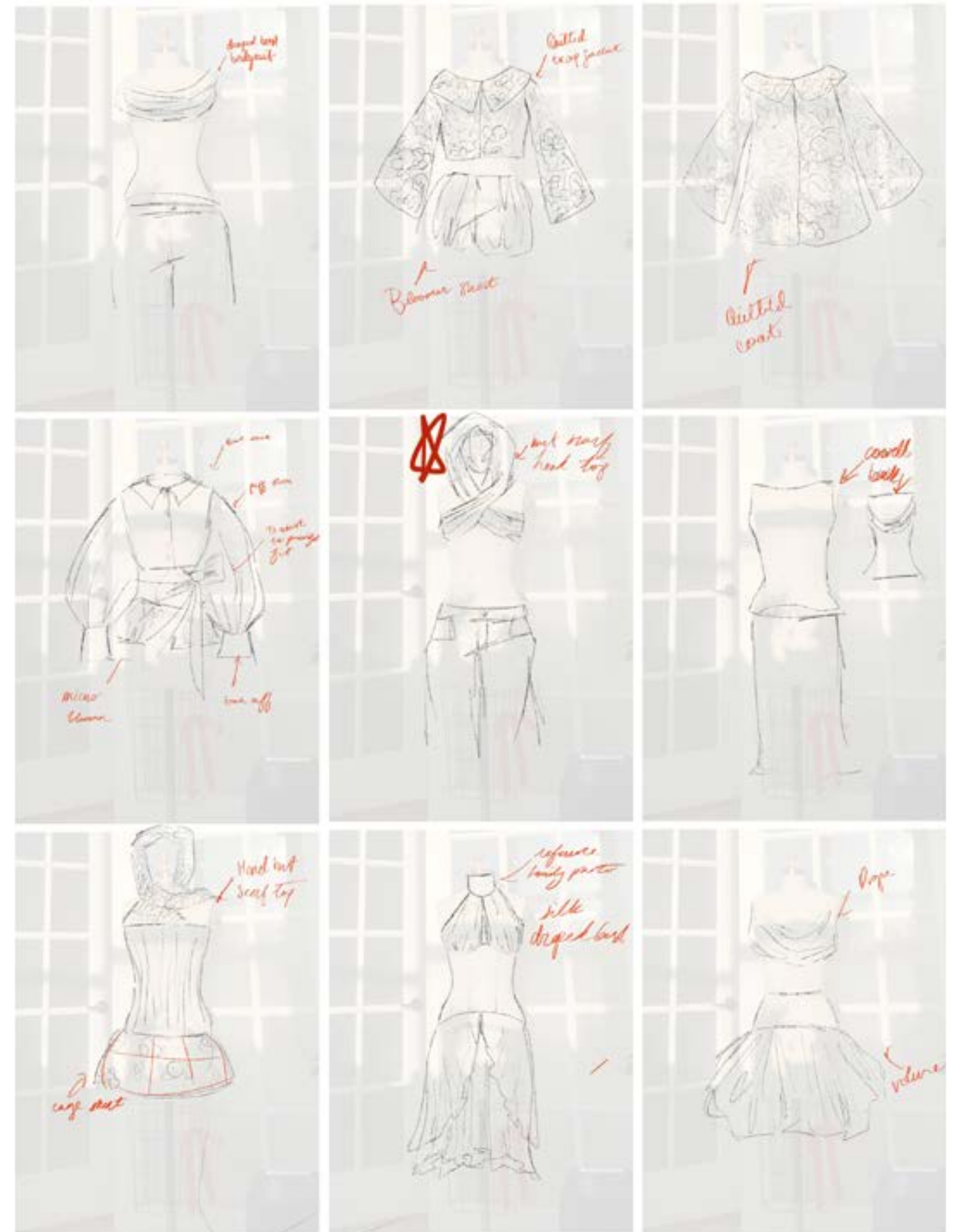
Inspiring Design

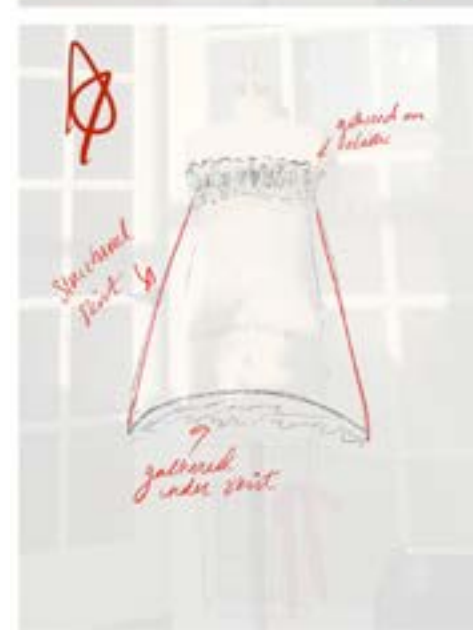
From the stories shared and artworks made, the following collection comes from the lived experiences of our community. The designs are made as a product of love for one another, and the beauty that can come from a safe space for sharing and supporting, not another collection that aestheticizes our culture. Our experiences lie within the looks as subtle references, motifs and symbols to remind of us of how we got here.

Design Methodologies and Iterations

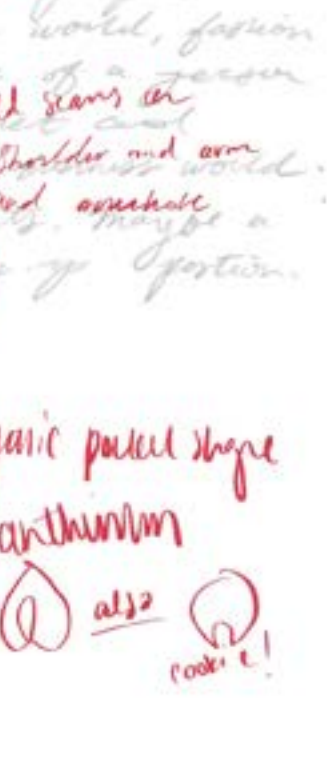
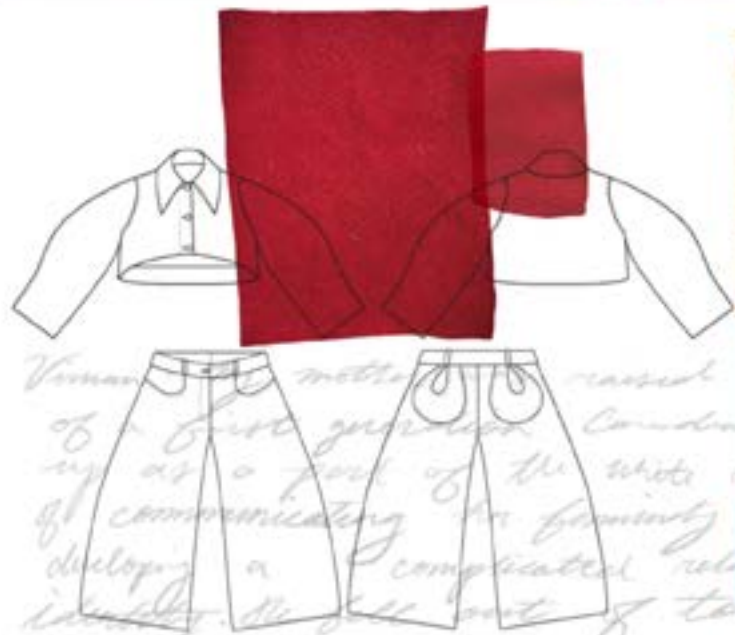
Referencing the stories and significant objects, symbols, and motifs from our communities lived experiences, the following design iterations directly reference what has been shared through conversation and quality time spent with our community.

In my designs, the silhouettes, subtle imagery, textures, and colors all reference real, lived, formative experiences. From colors in our homes or favorite restaurants, to the jacket worn on a family trip, a personal touch lives within every design.









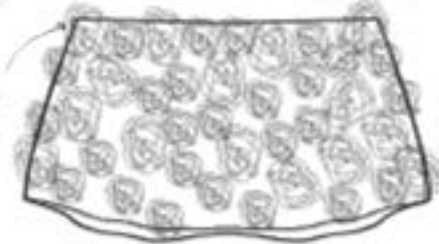
I can not Howard. Wedding in 1956 in Montreal. I was 18 years old. My mother's uncle
 Lora had moved from China to marry Howard. He was a very good man. He introduced
 my grandmother. My mother had helped Lora adjust to Western society, introducing
 her to friends, family, and fashion. They shopped together, choosing a dress
 that felt in the whole was feminine. It had pearls, and white ribbons. It carried quite flowers in the bouquet
 and held a more traditional Chinese bouquet for the wedding.

Woman's mother raised
 of a first generation Canadian
 up as a part of the white
 of communicating the femininity
 developing a complicated relationship
 identity. He felt part of the...
 through what he was an adult, trying to find...
 with a similar experience moving into
 became a uniform and...
 with grace and...
 submission especially...
 Even today...
 result of not...

oversized collar
 flat fold seams on
 shoulder and arm
 and...
 organic pocket shape
 anthurium
 also
 rocks!



My grandmother has been a central part of my identity. As a girl, I was curious and understanding, my own femininity. I loved clothes that were as more as the paper and to fit in with the white girls I idolized. Because there has been a lot of pressure on me, at least in a glamorous sense - I have been struggling my identity because I'm not fully Chinese. In both worlds I felt held back and I could never make myself look, it was always so painfully obvious I couldn't do it right, endlessly searching for validation from white people.



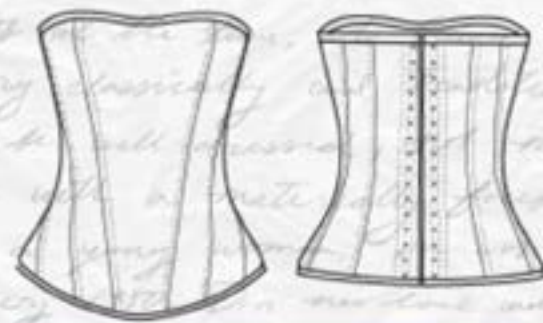
Peonies

A garden of prosperity, femininity, beauty, love and status.

Like if my grandmother gave me a peony in her garden, I'd give it to you and after I'd give it to you, then she'd give it to you and so on. It's a cycle of giving and receiving, and we would all flourish from her gifts to make a bouquet for my own.



Mum - My grandmother moved to Canada as a young woman in the late 1940s, studying sewing at McMillan in the 1950s. As one of the only Chinese women in the industry, she gained an experience in the very classical and traditional Chinese feminine. It became a fashion that was not only necessary to build a fashion brand in a Western world, but also to date with what was then considered the most fashionable of Chinese traditions. The brand was a mix of connected people, both Chinese and American commodities, and a mix of styles.



Buoyant, channels to change, light.



Final Line Up



Barter Collaboration Looks



Flats for Looks 1-4 of the Final Line Up

