

Practitioners' Statement

Untitled

Lili Hristovski

My brief required me to construct a high fashion, runway, female garment, drawing inspiration from industrialism and the structured style of Alexander McQueen's contemporary work; the final piece aspired to empower the feminine figure with a twist on masculinity.

In my early idea conception, I ensured no stone was unturned in the world of body armour; this initially was to be the core concept. Visual investigations in to superheroes, soldiers, and samurai proved too overdone and predictable to create an original design. I became stuck, however, after one fateful *Netflix* filled evening, I came across a program entitled *Vikings*, and found myself overcome with inspiration. I began conceptualising immediately; (pelts, plates, laces, tanned leather, robes, runes and headpieces) nothing was off limits. While this newfound obsession took my folio in a severely contrasting direction, I quickly found myself completely immersed in Norse religion, culture, tradition, mythology, and the fictitious take on Vikings, which I discussed with anyone who would listen. I drew on the abstract concept of Vikings as heroes, seeing their brutish violence, thievery and anarchy as pleasing to the gods; bringing them honour. I was still faced with the challenge of combining structure, newfound fiction, and fashion. I knew key components of integrating masculinity in to a dress would be up to structure and juxtaposition; finding the right balance of curves and geometrics.

I became over-inspired during the idea generation stage. One of my biggest challenges was making a decision, combining my favourite components, while being realistic with myself; concerning my abilities and time frame. While I had initially planned to work with a local artist *Lauren*, who specialises in welding, fate had other things in store for me, and I had to create this final on my own. Alternative to the thick, industrial plates, and metalsmithing I dreamed of, I had to turn to hand craftsmanship and imagination. I settled on using alternate materials: metal-look paints, papier-mache, and aluminium barbecue trays.

I applied my knowledge of sewing circle-skirt patterns to cardboard to create a sturdy strong base for my garment, after I refined my design to a four-tiered, voluminous skirt; alternating two designs between each metal layer. In the top and third layer, the garment is covered in hundreds of "dragon scales", achieved by decapitating cheap, plastic spoons, and using the heads in staggered layers; this was very cost effective. The second and fourth layer, however, were formed with trimmed aluminium trays, parallel to one-another. The top-half of the garment was purposely kept simple, ensuring the design was balanced and the skirt remained the focal point. It was a form fitting, multi-strapped singlet, accented with Nordic runes, cut from leftover metal, sewn across the neck line; tying everything together.

I feel I successfully met my brief, and found envy in my tiny-waisted mannequin; as I wanted to wear this myself. My final design feels as though it is formed from the slain skin of dragons, and blacksmith's freshest steel. I believe my piece would empower any model on the runway, letting her feel like a strong, unique warrior for a brief moment in time.