JESSICA PONTORIERO 2025

Witherwill

A design project about the “Future Consumer 2027 Emotion" of “Witherwill". Witherwill is the longing to be free from responsibility. I was particularly drawn to this emotion because it is talked about that through this emotion, consumers are gravitating to a slow living lifestyle, which is ultimately the main inspiration for my design project.

Summary Of Research

Witherwill — 2027 Trend Summary
"The longing to be free from responsibility" (Napoli et al.)

In response to the Great Exhaustion and constant digital stimulation, 2027 is defined by Witherwill—a widespread emotional and lifestyle shift where consumers long to disconnect, slow down, and reclaim their energy. This trend reflects a collective desire to escape pressure, expectations, and responsibility, and instead pursue curiosity, softness, and emotional healing.

Key Design Insights:

- Emotional Landscape: Overwhelm, burnout, empathy, loneliness → transforming into aspirations, freedom, and love
- Color Psychology:
- Sage Green — balance, growth
- Muted Blush & Pink — compassion, carefreeness
- Warm Ochre — grounding, emotional warmth
- Misty Blue — solitude, self-reflection
- Fabrics & Textures:
- Flowy chiffons, soft silks, and embroidered florals evoke lightness, romance, and a dreamlike quality
- Rougher textures like raw silk and wool symbolize resilience and natural simplicity
- Silhouettes:
- Bold and angular cuts express inner strength and struggle
- Soft, flowing lines represent emotional vulnerability, grace, and surrender
- Together, they reflect the journey from burdened to free

Mood & Visual Inspiration:
A sunlit meadow, drifting petals, soft winds, and silhouettes that feel as if they could float away—a wardrobe for a world seeking to breathe again.

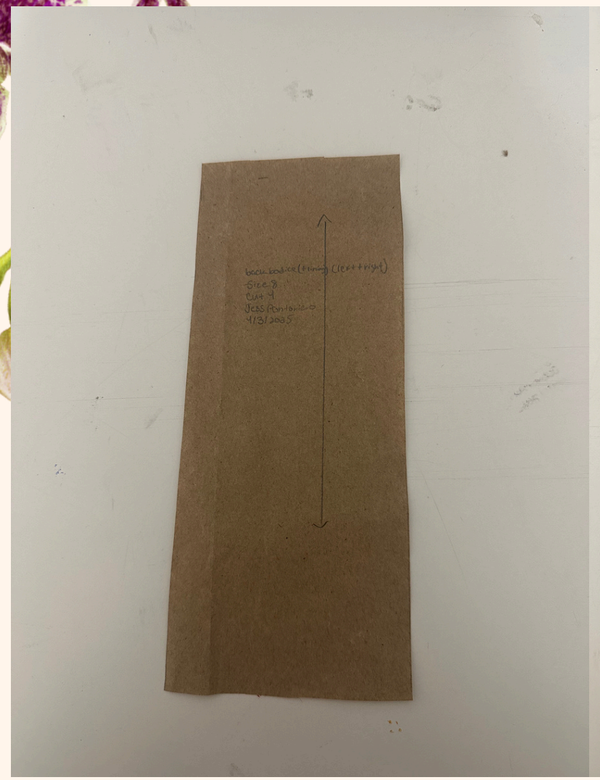
Mood Board

Design sketches & process development

Design Sketches

Final Design Sketch

Patterns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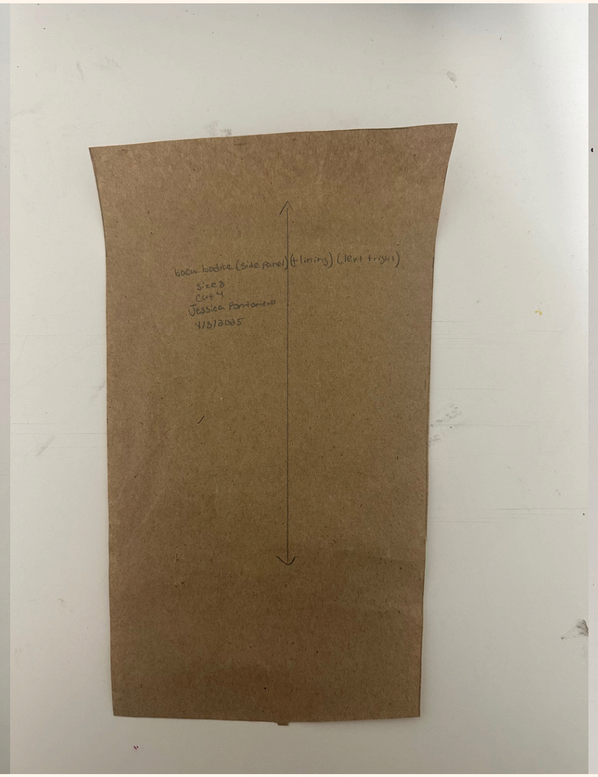
Jessica Pontarelli
4/3/2025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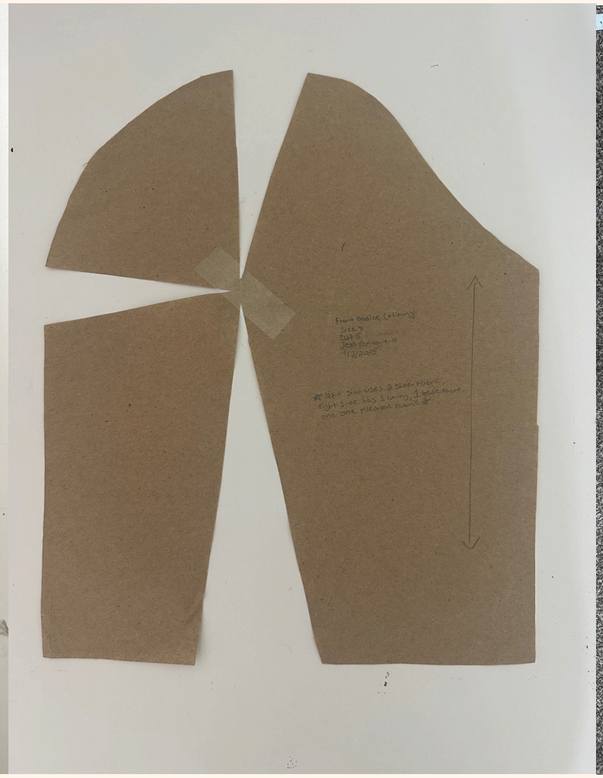
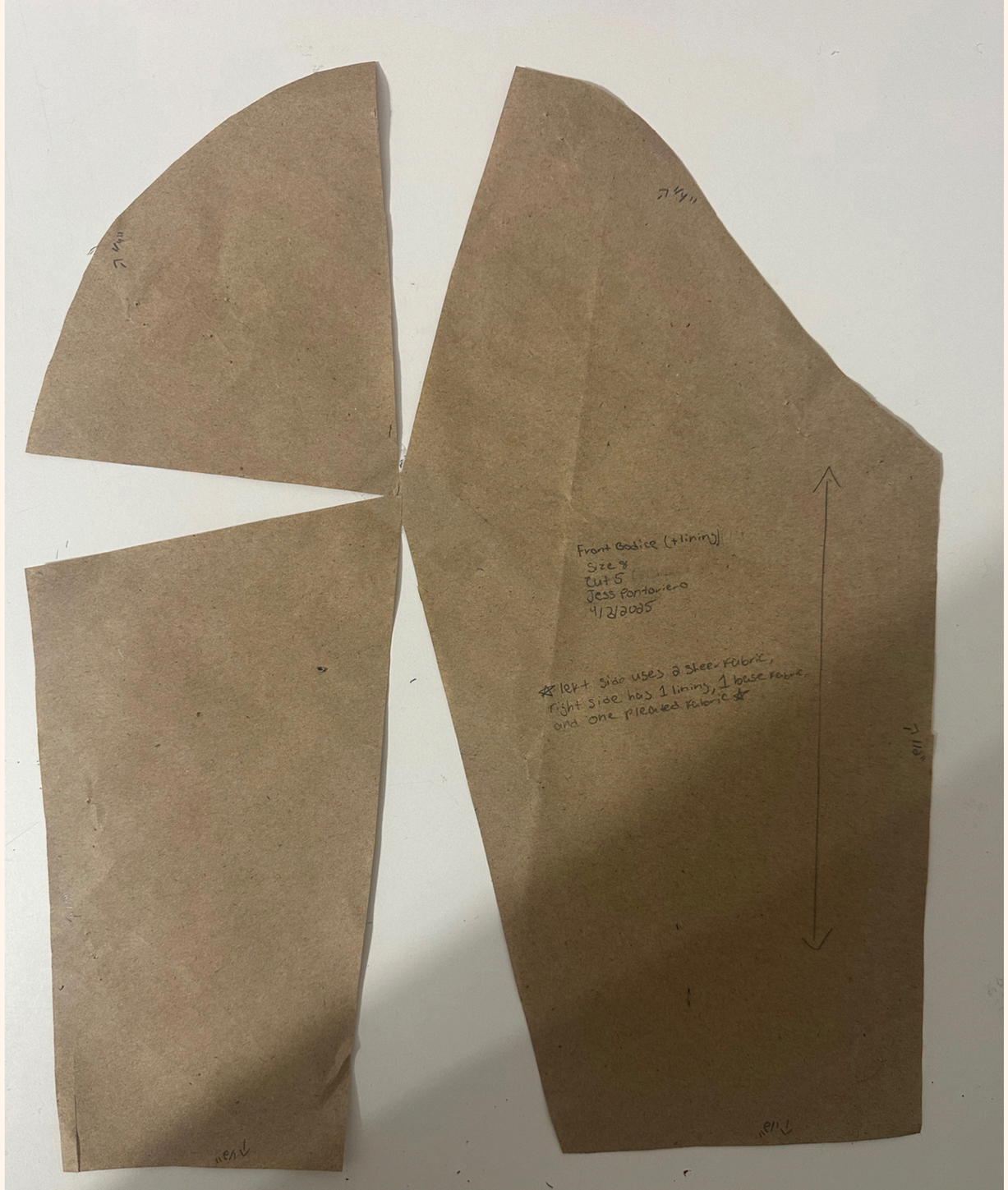


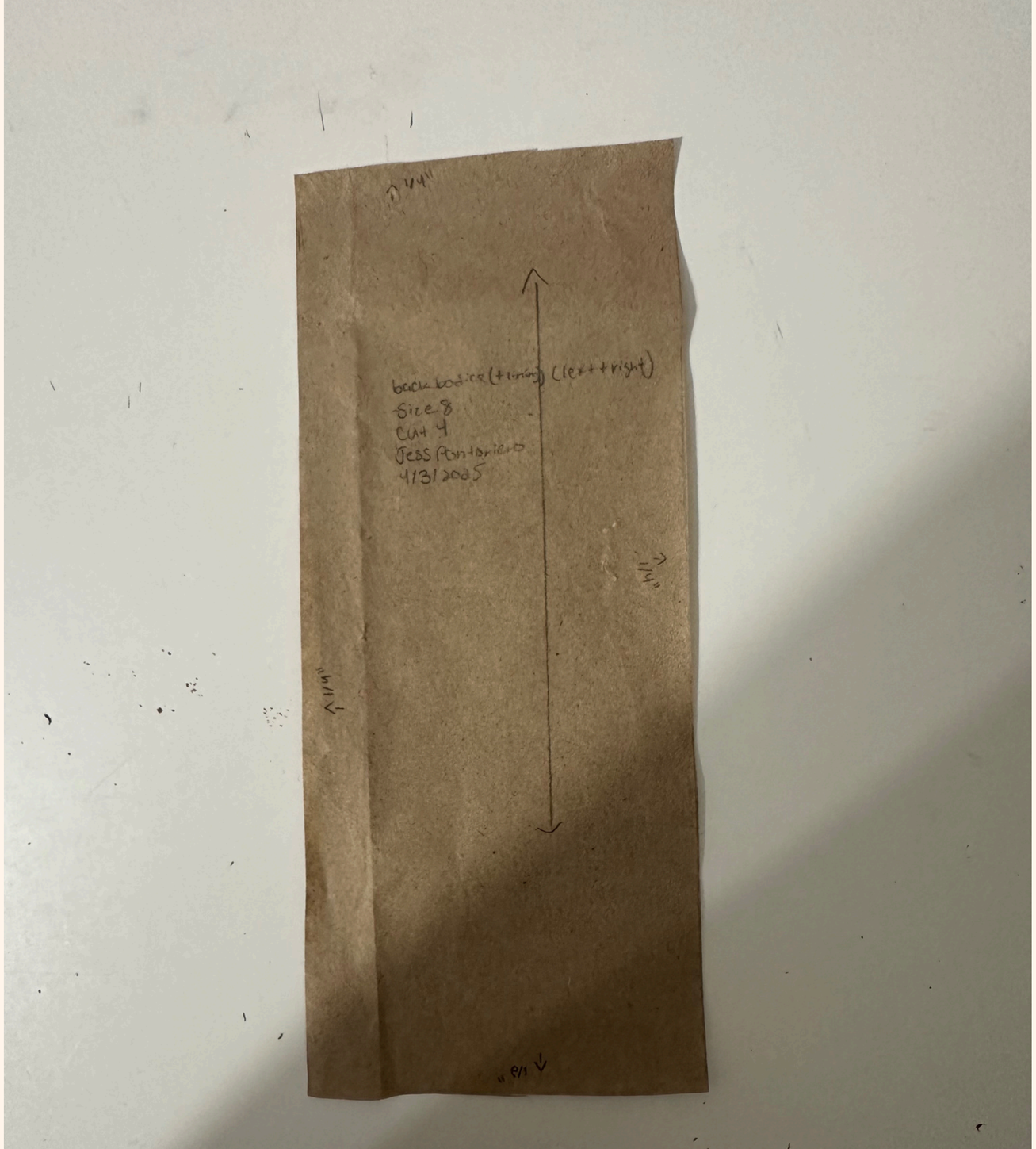
Front Bodice

I utilized the “Strapless Princess Bodice" pattern from page 407 in the textbook. I utilized pattern manipulation in order to adjust the shape of the bodice that I wanted by raising the curve up, and adjusting the darts along with it. This pattern acts as the support for the left side of the bodice, and will be cut from 2 pieces of sheer fabric, as well as 2 pieces of base fabric (one piece for the lining) and one piece for the pleated fabric that will go on top. That is how the pattern can be “cut 5". ¼ inch seam allowance is included throughout the pattern, with ½ inch for the side seam and the bottom.



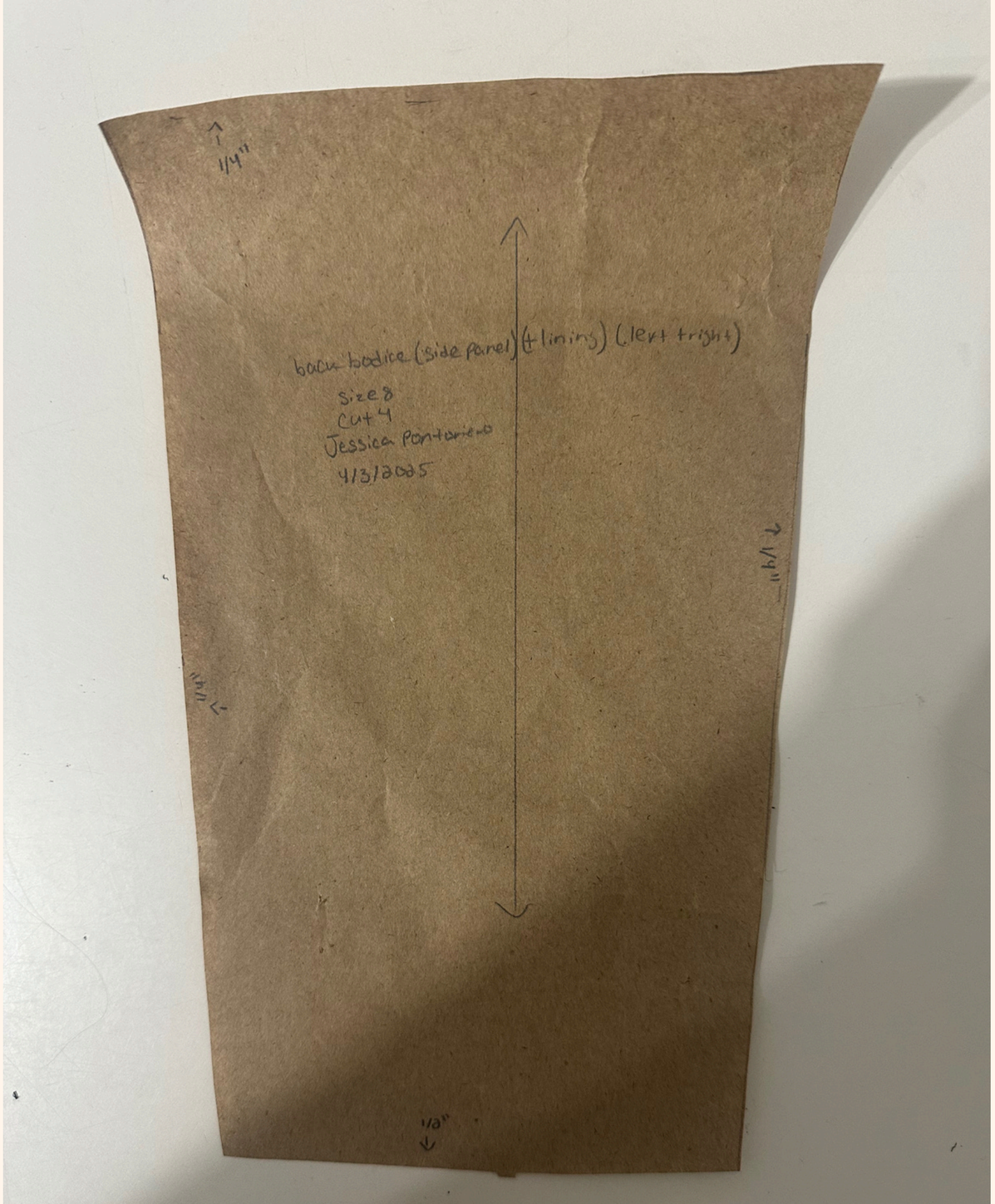
Back Bodice

I utilized draping methods to achieve this pattern piece. I took a piece of muslin, pinned it to my dress form, and used a marker to outline where I wanted the bodice to sit on the dress form. I then transferred this draped fabric onto a pattern piece. This pattern is for both sides of the back, and will be where the eyelets will be placed for closure on the bodice. This is cut 4, two of the base fabric, and two for the lining. ¼ inch seam allowance is included around the pattern piece, with ½ inch on the bottom.



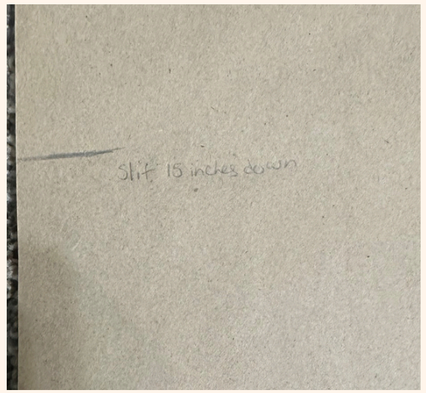
Back Side Bodice

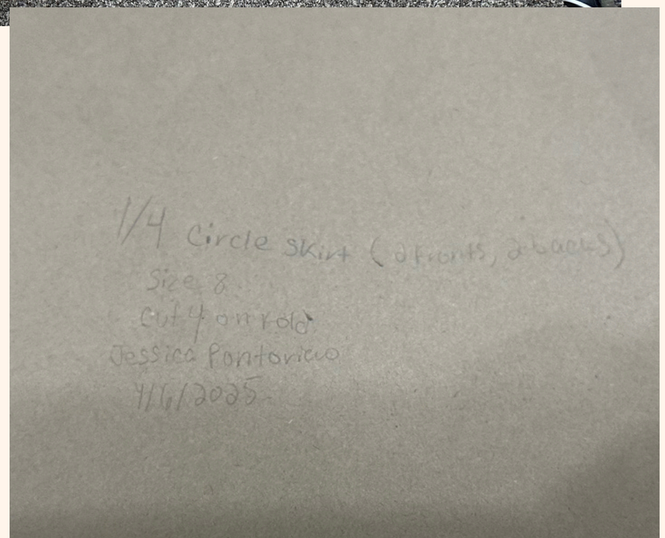
I utilized draping methods to achieve this pattern piece. I took a piece of muslin, pinned it to my dress form, and used a marker to outline where I wanted the bodice to sit on the dress form. I then transferred this draped fabric onto a pattern piece. This pattern is for both sides of the back, and is a cut 4 pattern piece. This fabric will be the sheer fabric, and will be lined with the sheer fabric as well, to achieve the desired look/add a clean finish. ¼ inch seam allowance is included around the pattern piece, and ½ inch on the bottom.



Skirt

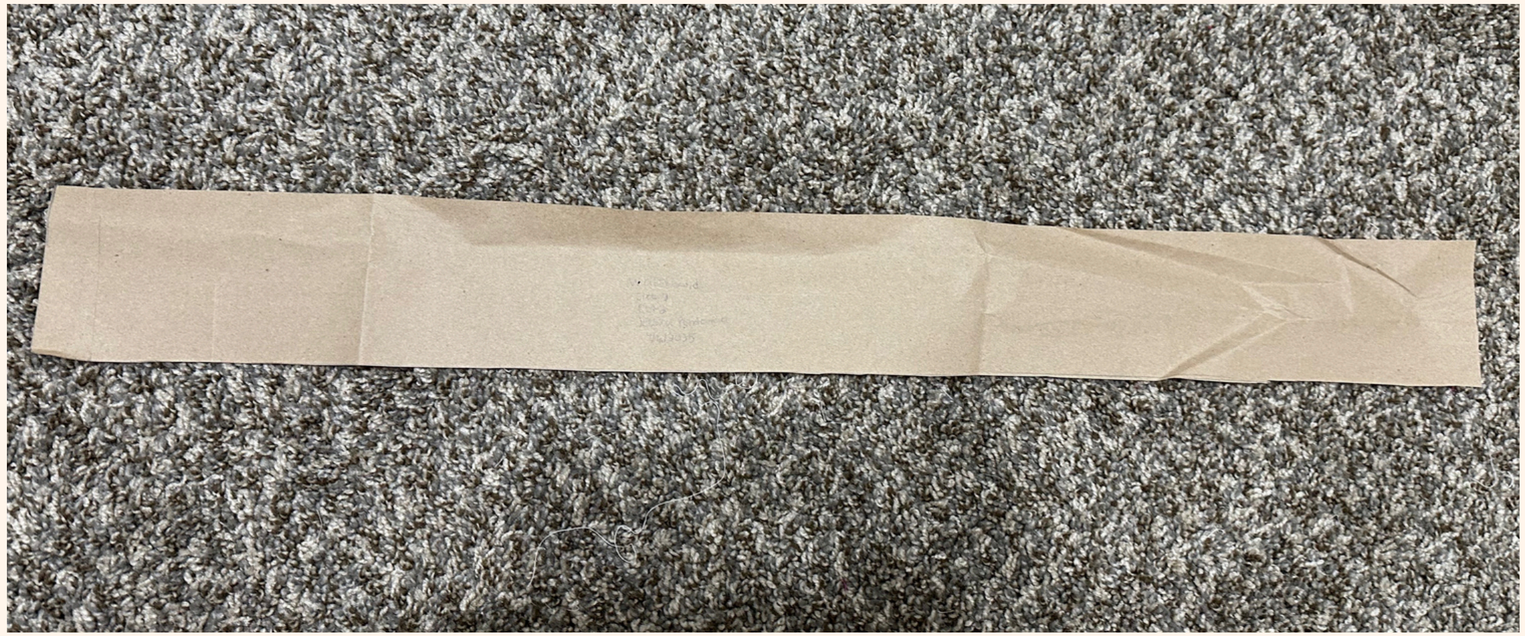
I utilized a ¼ circle skirt calculation in order to make a gathered skirt. I doubled the waist measurement of 26.5, making the new measurement 53 inches. If i divide that measurement by 4, the measurement is 13.25. In order to make the skirt even more full, I will be placing the pattern on the fold, so I divided 13.25 by 2, giving me 6.625. I added one inch for seam allowance (1/2 inch on each side), and that made my waist radius 7 ⅝ inches. I then got my length of 50 inches for my skirt, and added 2 inches to the bottom for the hem. I marked down 15 inches on the side to mark how far to sew for the slit in the skirt. There will be 4 pieces of this skirt, all placed on the fold.

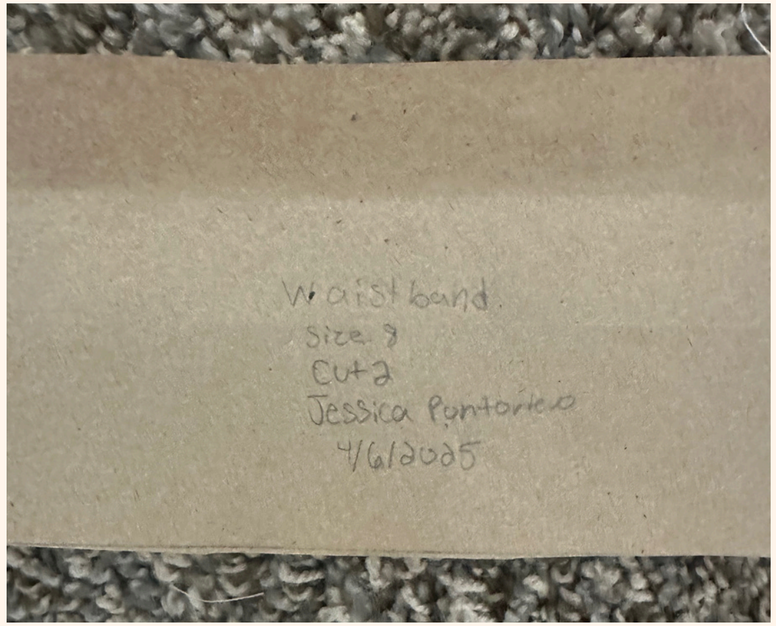




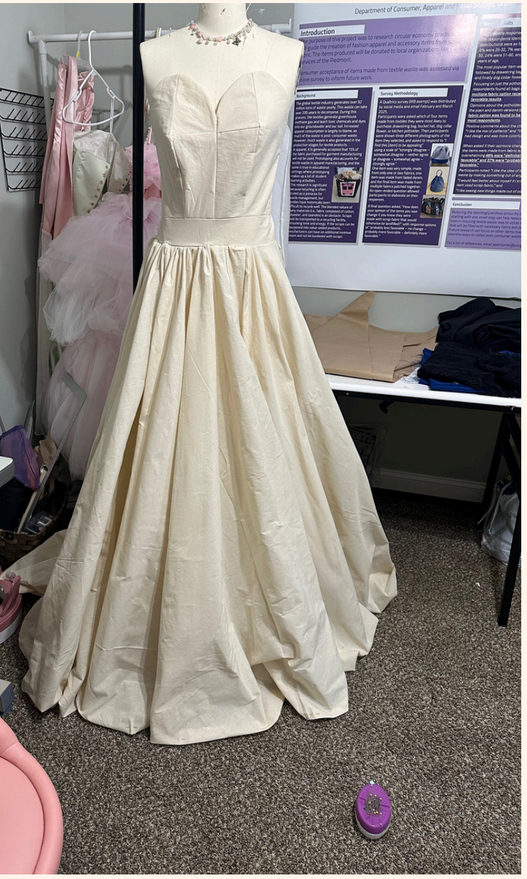
Waistband

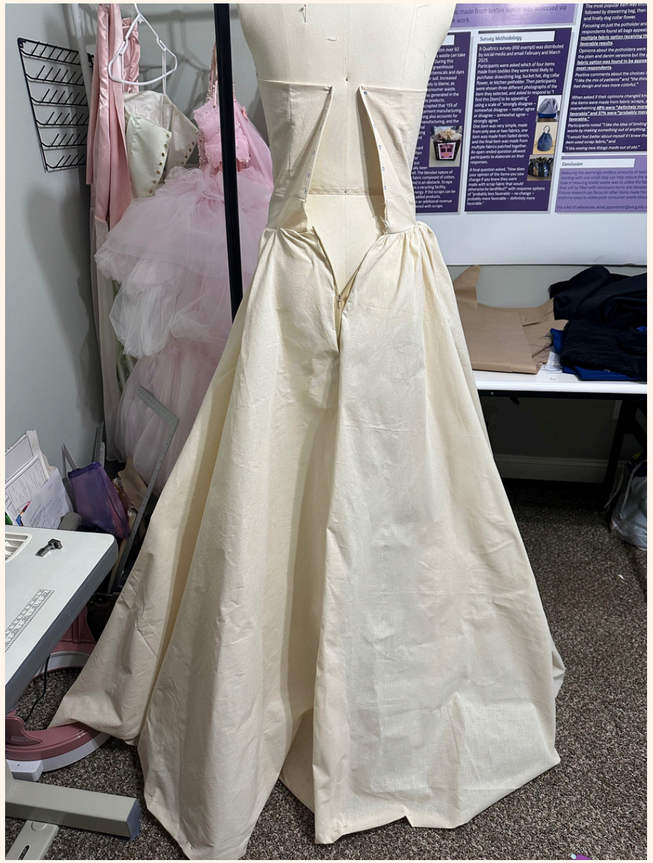
I created a 2 inch waistband to connect the bodice of the dress to the skirt. I used the waist measurement of 26.5 for the length, and added one inch (1/2 in on each side for seam allowance), and I added seam allowance to the width as well (1/4 inch for the waistband to be turned around on each side (1/2 inch total), ½ inch for the connection of the waistband to the bodice/skirt (1/2 inch each side) totaling to 1 ½ inch total. The waistband is cut two so that it can be turned around for a clean finish. (I added 2 inches to the width to add some additional room based on the mock-up).

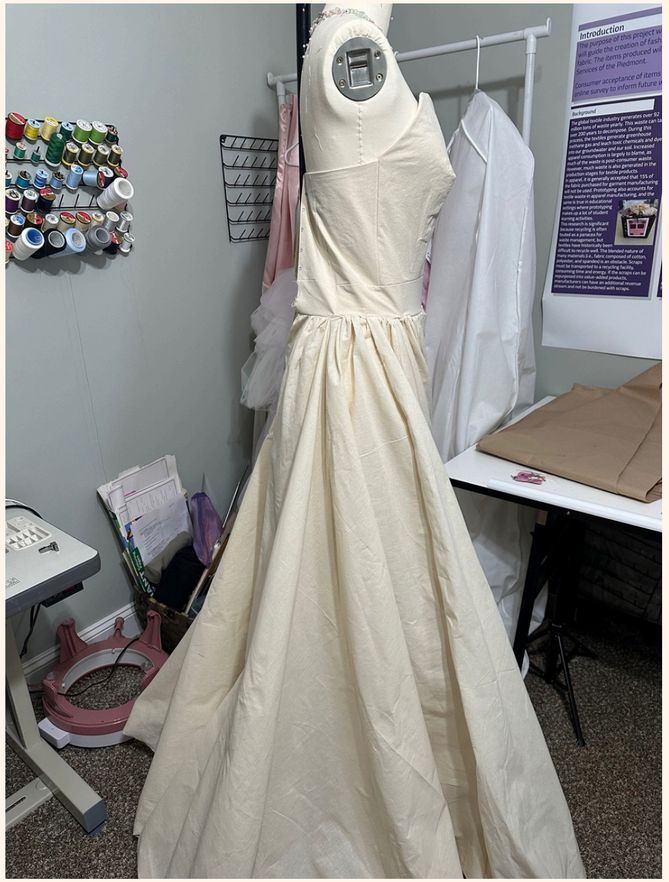




Sample garment







Final garment

Final garment

Reflection of AI's role

Throughout this design project, artificial intelligence played a significant and multifaceted role in shaping the creative process, providing inspiration, and enhancing efficiency. From ideation to visualization, AI tools allowed me to explore design directions that would have been more time-consuming or less accessible otherwise.

In the early stages, AI helped generate references and mood boards, providing endless combinations of color palettes, silhouettes, and embroidery styles. This allowed me to experiment with ideas quickly, drawing inspiration from high-fashion aesthetics such as the soft floral motifs and ethereal textures seen in haute couture. One example is how I was able to compare my physical garment with AI-generated dress visuals—this helped me refine the silhouette and placement of embroidered elements to elevate the romantic and elegant tone of the dress.

AI also supported the development of my final concept illustration. The dress sketch, particularly its structured bodice and floral embroidery details, was informed by AI-generated visuals that mimicked designer couture styles. These visuals inspired both the layout of the floral design on the bodice and the color transitions on the skirt. Furthermore, AI-enhanced tools helped visualize fabric drape and movement, which informed how I chose and layered materials in the construction phase.

While the final garment is the product of my craftsmanship and design choices, AI served as a creative collaborator—an endless source of visual exploration and a problem-solving assistant. It didn't replace the human touch, but rather expanded the boundaries of what I could imagine and create.

Problems/challenges faced

Transitioning from concept to construction brought a whole new set of challenges that reminded me just how different digital design is from physical making. While AI visuals and sketches gave me a clear direction, actually creating the garment involved a lot of trial, error, and adaptation.

One of the biggest challenges was translating the embroidery layout from a flat design into a three-dimensional form. Stitching floral motifs onto a curved bodice was especially tricky—some flowers warped or lost shape once sewn, and I had to redo certain sections to maintain the look I envisioned. Placement was also key; balancing the design so it looked organic but not overcrowded took patience and precision.

Sewing the pleated bodice presented its own struggles. Keeping the pleats even and structured was difficult, especially with the fabric's tendency to shift. It required constant pressing, pinning, and resewing to get a clean finish. The asymmetric design of the top also meant I couldn't just follow a standard pattern—I had to customize and adjust everything as I went.

Another issue was working with delicate materials. The chiffon-like fabric I used for the skirt was beautiful but unforgiving. It frayed easily, was hard to hem without puckering, and moved constantly while sewing. I had to slow down my pace and handle the fabric with care to avoid ruining pieces I'd already invested hours into.

Fitting was also a challenge. The AI design didn't account for how different body shapes would affect the look, so I had to do multiple fittings and adjustments, especially for the bust and waist areas. Even something as small as choosing the right zipper placement became a balancing act between aesthetic and functionality.

Despite these struggles, the process taught me a lot about patience, problem-solving, and the craftsmanship required to bring a vision to life. AI may have inspired the design, but building it by hand is what truly gave it heart.

Lessons learned

This project taught me that creativity and craftsmanship go hand-in-hand, and that the journey from idea to execution is just as important as the final piece. I learned to embrace flexibility—what looks perfect in a sketch or AI rendering may not work in real life, and that's okay. Adapting and problem-solving became part of the creative process. I also discovered the importance of patience, especially when working with delicate fabrics and intricate embroidery. Every stitch required focus and intention. Most importantly, I gained a deeper appreciation for the physical art of garment-making. While AI supported me in visualizing concepts, it was my own hands, choices, and persistence that brought the dress to life. This project helped me grow not only as a designer, but also as a maker.

Thank You.