

dim lit

mai usami

20027132

Fashion Design and Development

Y3 GroupD

Digital Portfolio



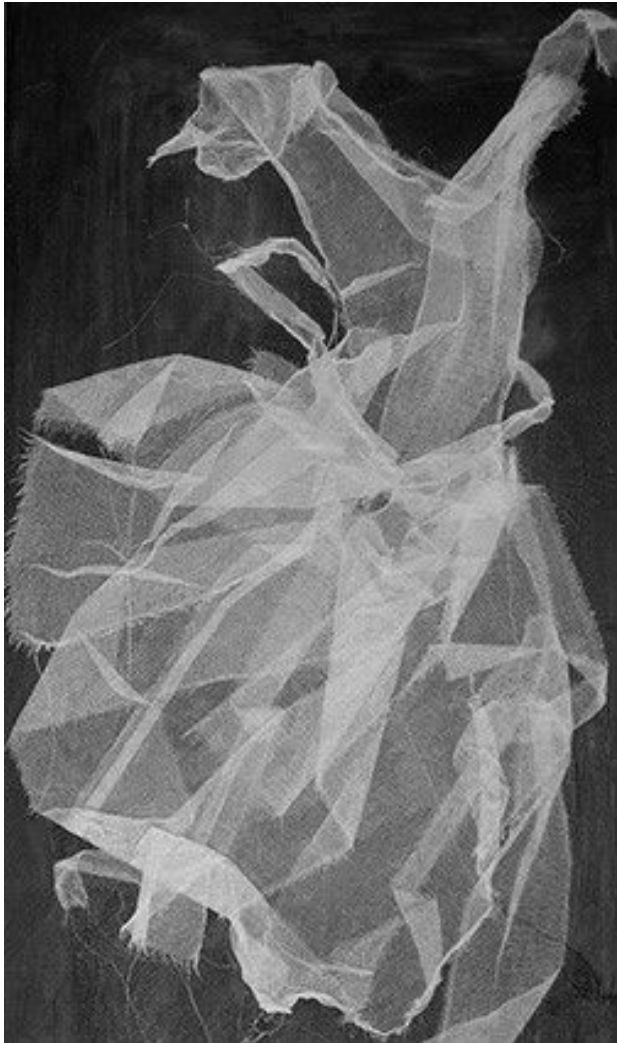
Manifesto

mai usami is a womenswear brand based in Tokyo, Japan. Grown up in Gifu, educated in both Kyoto and London, Mai explores a new world of sensibility with the mixture of delicacy and boldness by merging Japanese and Western codes which references both cultures and histories.

Mai has interested in the strength and fragility of women which came from her background of being born in countryside Japan and studied BA international relations. Mai's challenge is encouraging all women to express themselves and use their femininity for themselves with our clothes.

mai usami celebrates Japanese heritage and women revealing their femininity. We create the clothes which gives women self-confidence and raise the spirit.





Brand ethos

Mai's design is initially inspired by the emotions stirred by her memories of childhood and experiences. She also looks at the history of Japan and Western countries to get ideas for silhouettes, details, patterns and motifs to express femininity which is interpreted differently in different times, countries and cultures, as well as women's strength and delicacy.

The brand committed to source fabrics and materials in Japan and attempt to select sustainable materials such as natural, organic and recycled fabric as much as possible. Our products are all manufactured in local Japanese reliable factories, and our unique and delicate fabrics are created by using Japanese traditional technique and colourways.

Brand Values

Japanese heritage

We Support the preservation and development of Japanese culture by using Japanese fabrics, actively incorporating traditional Japanese techniques and color palettes, and partnering with traditional craftsman and artisan. Our production is carried on in trusting relationship with local Japanese factories which enabled us to achieve well-considered garment construction and design in terms of its longevity which allowing clothes to be worn for decades instead of seasons. Our customers enjoy the benefit of made-in-Japan quality and reassurance.

Sustainability

The brand always respects the people who spin, weave, dye, embroider, sew and knit our every garment. Mai always goes to all production sites in every part of Japan to understand how the artisans, seamstresses and staffs work in the system, environment, and wages. We develop long lasting relationship with suppliers that share our same philosophy of respect to create a better product.

Not 100% of our materials are sustainable at the moment, but we continue to work on the use of selecting sustainable fabrics which is less harmful to environment.

The information about suppliers and materials are all opened at our brand official site, which can provide transparency to our customers.



USP

Mai's design inspiration stems from her personal emotion of her upbringing in a traditional rural town where a strong male chauvinism and patriarchal fatherhood still existed, and her working experience in Japan.

In Japanese society, women feel huge pressure on how society sees you and they should follow fashion expectations and tips. Women are even evaluated and judged by men based on their appearance and clothing. These tendencies are stronger in the countryside than in the city.

Mai was not allowed to wear pink princess dresses when she was little, and it might be because her mother had an unconscious misogyny instilled by rural patriarchal community and an aversion to clothes with lace, frills, ribbons, and other feminine details.

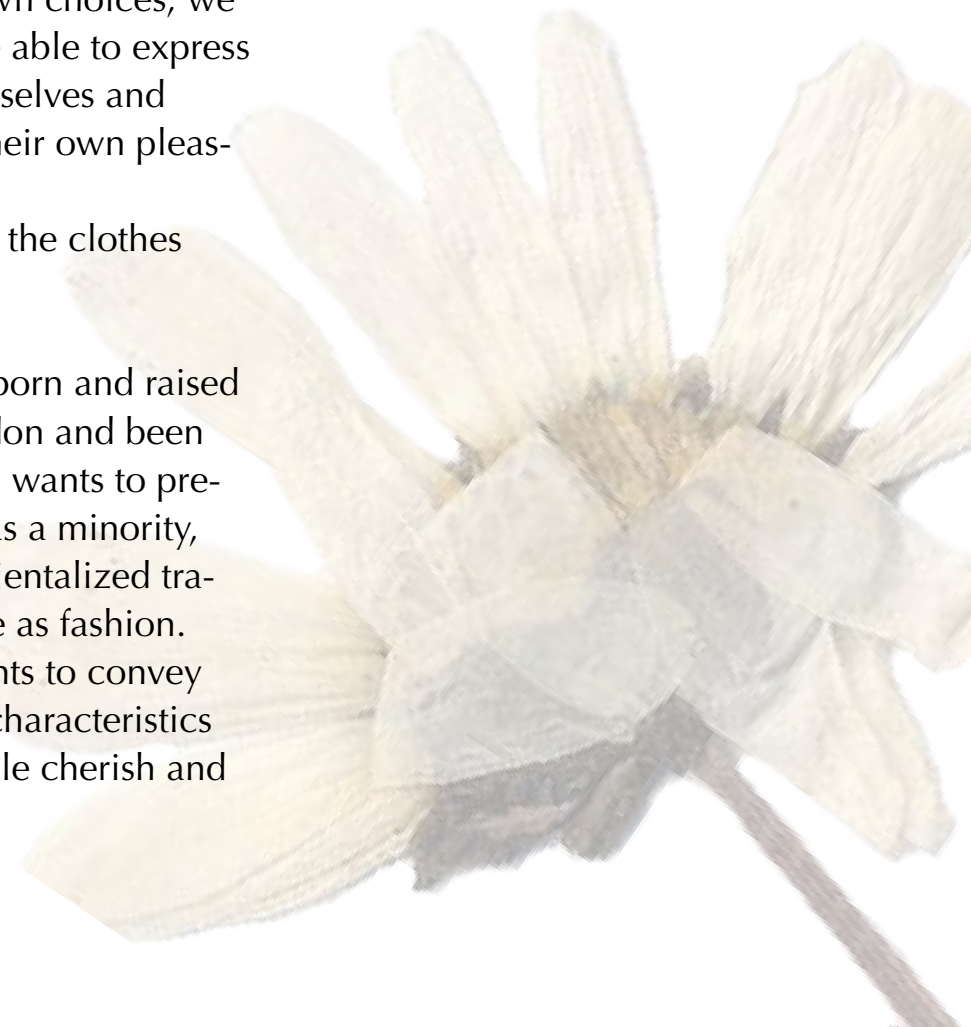
On the other hand, when women dare to seek power in a patriarchal society, they use their femininity as a masquerade to make herself appear less threat-

ening to prevent expected retaliation from men. (Riviere, 1929)

Instead of excessively denying details and silhouettes which are considered 'feminine', or conversely using femininity as a shield against social reactions rather than their own choices, we would like women to be able to express their femininity for themselves and choose the clothes for their own pleasure and self-confidence.

Our brand aims to create the clothes which liberate women.

Moreover, having been born and raised in Japan, moved to London and been surviving in Europe, Mai wants to preserve Japanese identity as a minority, rather than consume Orientalized traditional Japanese culture as fashion. Through design, she wants to convey Japanese history, racial characteristics and what Japanese people cherish and carry on their back.





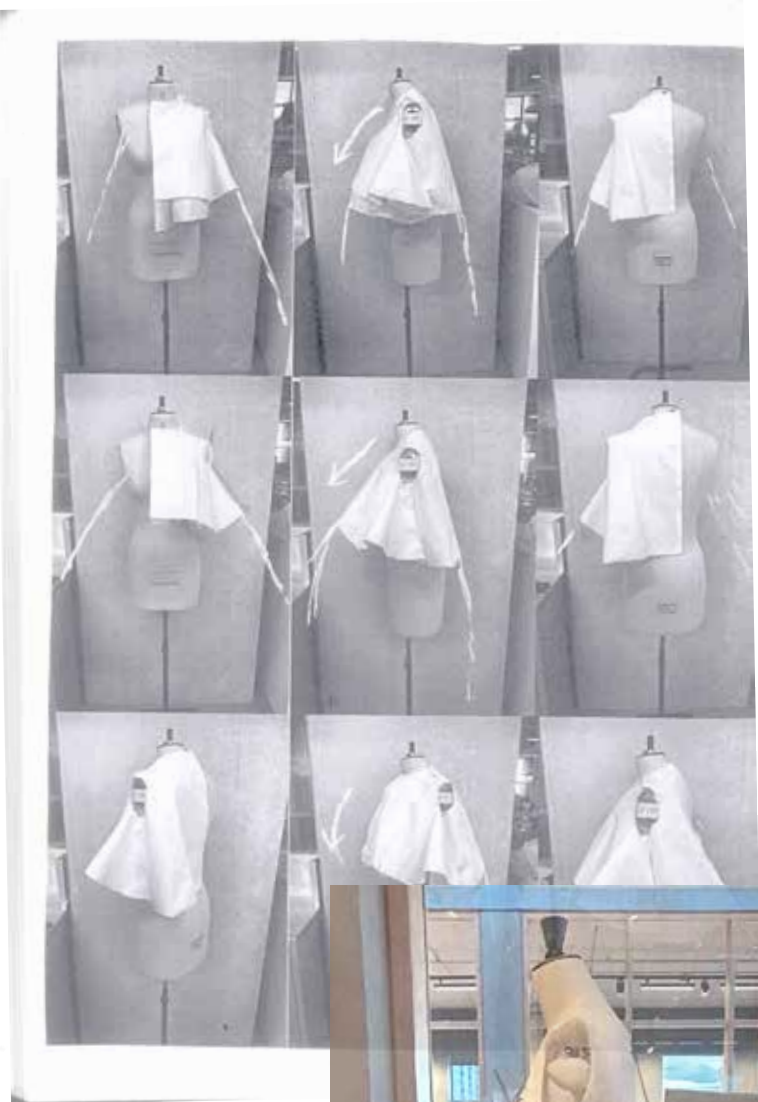
Collection Concept

Dim lit is a reflection on the deep, half-remembered primordial landscapes that linger in our minds — those hazy memories that never quite fade away. Grown up in rural Japan, in a time before the internet and surrounded by fields and mountains, I knew little of the world beyond. Reality felt dim, unfamiliar, and sometimes a little bit unsettling. My only escape was the world inside my head, built from books and imagination — boundless and private. As I grew older, reality expanded. Alongside it came the feeling that I didn't quite belong — misaligned with the world, speaking into a void. Growing up, it seems, is learning to sit with that sense of isolation.

Still, in those quiet moments, the landscapes of my childhood come back to me: the outlines of the hills at dusk, the scent of wet rice fields, the stillness of an empty road. Even now, they offer a kind of comfort — a reminder of something untouched. In traditional Japanese aesthetics, there's beauty in the shadows, in the blur, in what's not fully seen. It's a pull towards the quiet, the subtle, the space between things. Dim lit is a way of tracing those fragments — the memories that remain, flickering softly in the half-light.



When I was daydreaming
 in my small world, I didn't know anything
 about outside of my world very well.
 Although my world was very tiny,
 my visionary world was unlimited.



Whenever I think back to my childhood, the world always seemed a little dim. On the contrary, my imaginary world was colourful, free and a little odd.

I feel like I didn't really see
the world around me
when I was a little ...

When I think back my
childhood, the world my
memory is faintly bright,
not much colours



As I grew up, I became more
aware of my heterogeneity.
- Perception of myself as
a foreign entity
or alien

Now, my real world became way
wider than when I was a child,
but I sometimes overcome by a
feeling of loneliness.

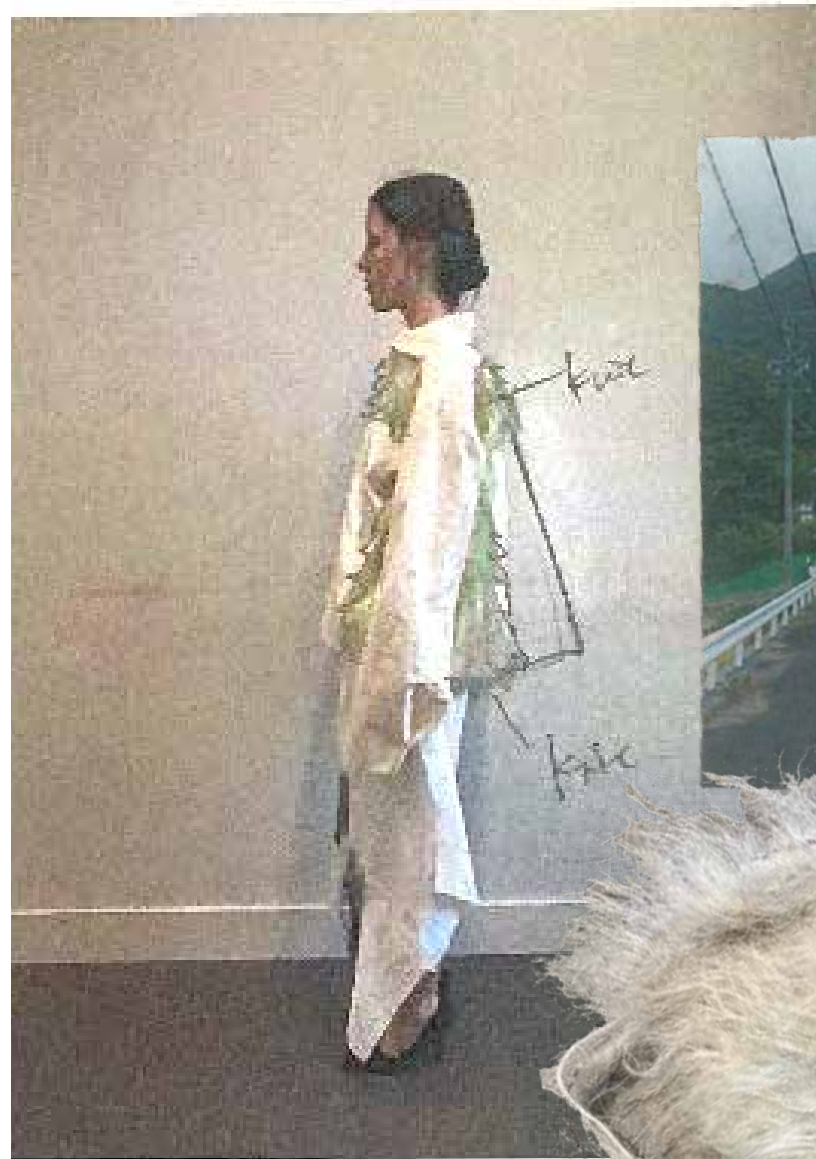
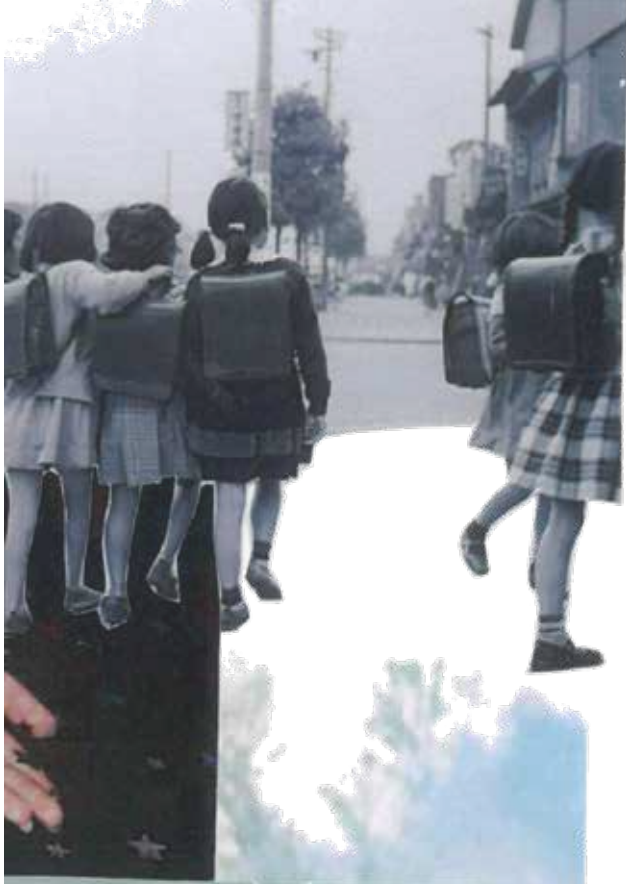




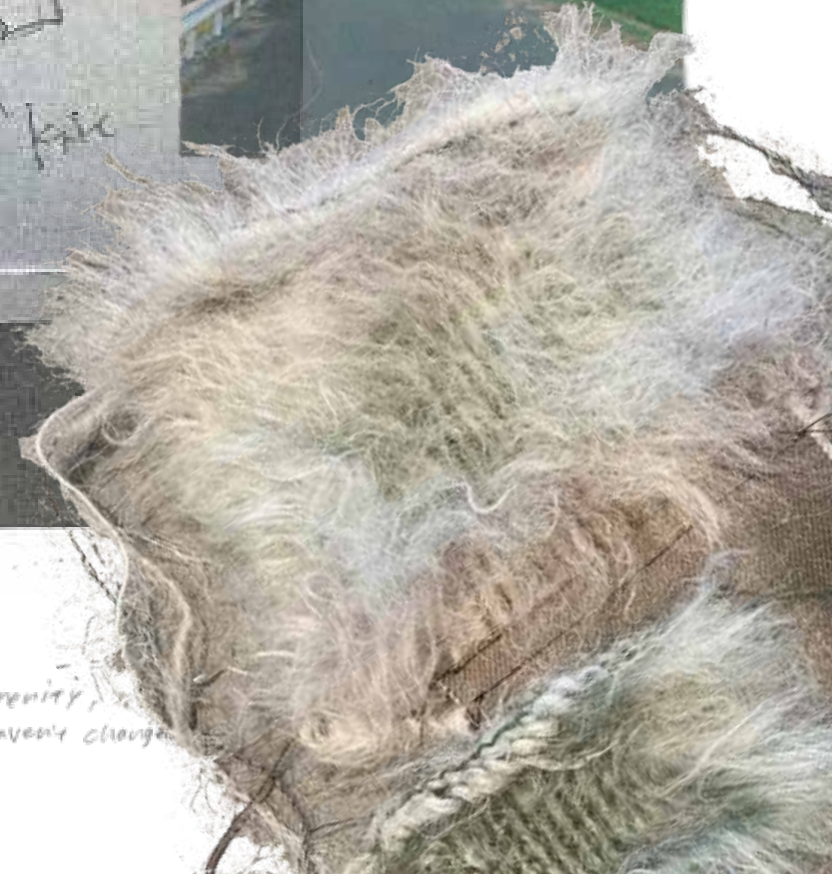
Getting old is making real world wider and lighter
and getting along well with solitude

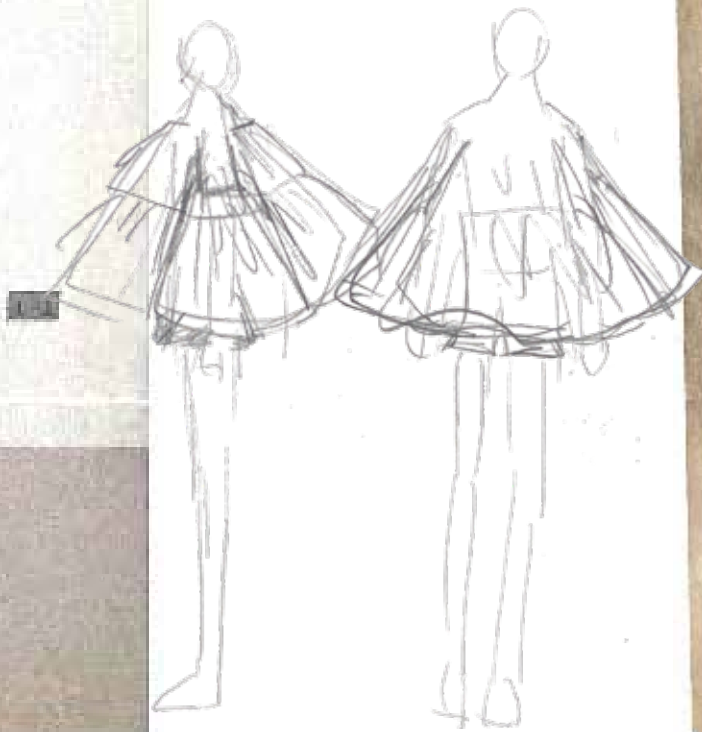
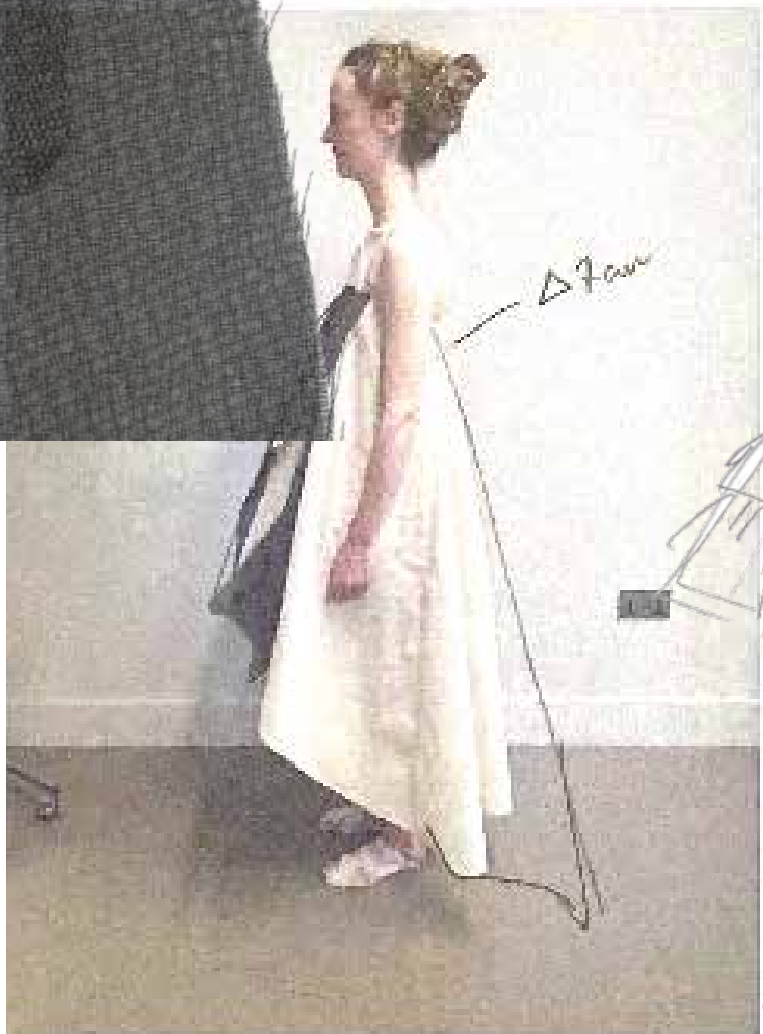
~ when I am overcome by loneliness, I always recall
my original scenery in my mind.





Retelling my original scenery gives me a little serenity,
makes me feel safe and reminds me that I haven't changed
since I am a little girl



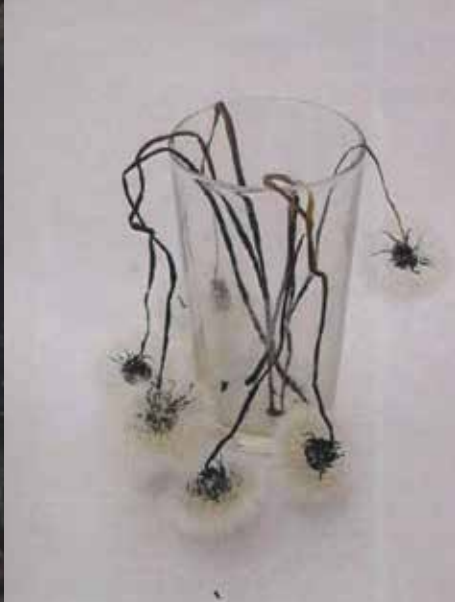




Claudine Douy
Solstree

Final mood&concept

Claudine Douy
Van Beauty, 2007





Final fabric&colourway

Final Lineup



Final Lineup

