

MA womenswear

LIBBY SHIJIA LIU

Fig. 1 cutting plan (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)



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INTRO

Fig. 3 look3 coat toile scan (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

I have always wondered why we wear clothes as separate garments.

A shirt, a coat, a jacket, a pair of trousers - each one an isolated unit, stitched into a system that requires styling to make sense. We are taught to match, to layer, to curate our identities through fragments. But I began to question: must it be this way?

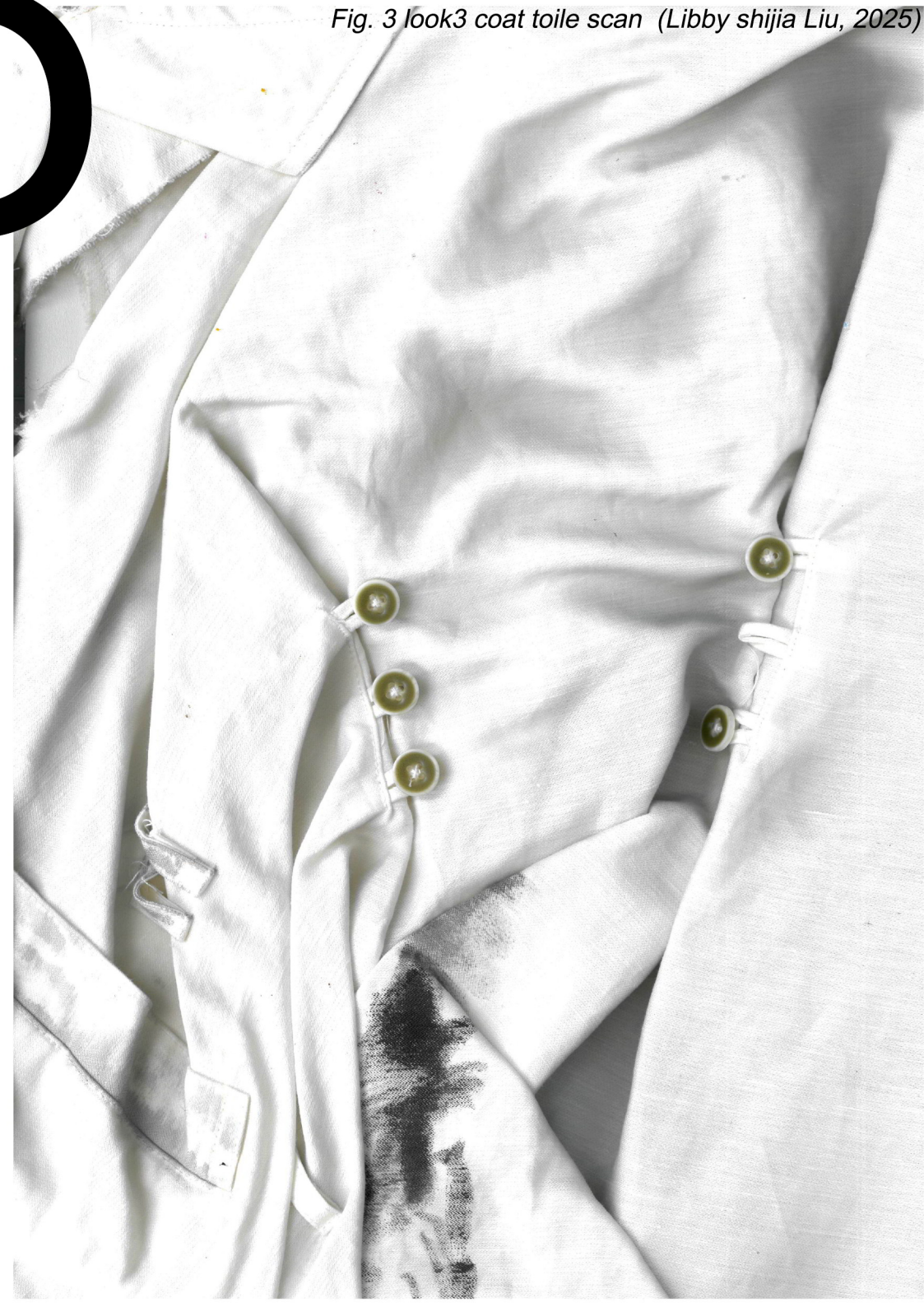
My research asks whether garments could once again become whole, not through layering, but through structure.

I explore how Eastern flat-cutting techniques and geometric construction might merge with the Western pattern cutting understanding of clothing to create a single, continuous form.

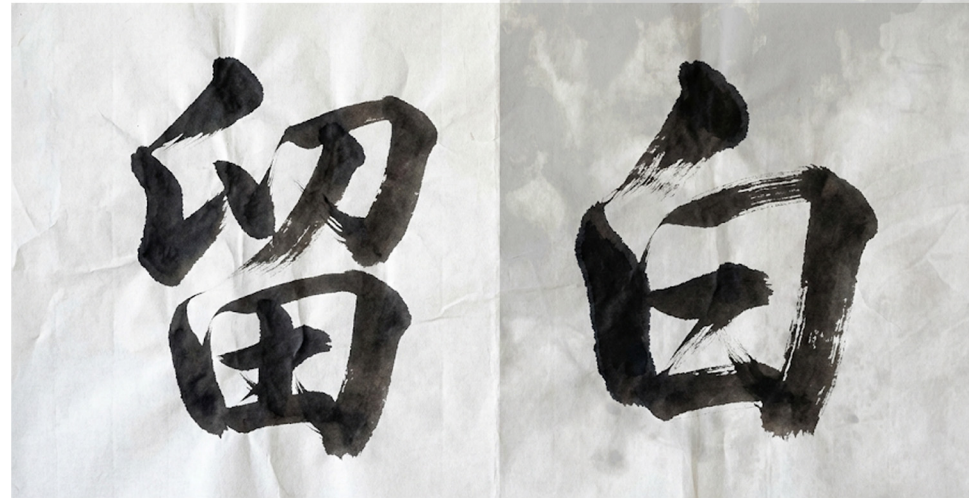
*I imagine a moment —
a customer stands in front of me and says,
“I love your brand, the mood, the way everything comes together.
But if I buy it, I’m not sure how to style it on my own.”*

*And I say:
“You don’t have to. That’s the point.
You can buy it all - it’s all in one piece.”*

*Because this collection isn’t about styling.
It’s about connection - garments that already know how to belong together.*



My project began with a small yet persistent question: *what does it mean to choose what is shown and what is withheld?*



Liubai
Leave The Blank

To understand *liubai* in a way that feels grounded rather than symbolic, I first needed to explain the form that shaped my thinking. In traditional Chinese art, a handscroll is not a framed picture. It is a long, continuous artwork that can extend for metres, sometimes for an entire room. It remains rolled up until the viewer slowly unravels it from right to left. Only a small portion is visible at any given moment. The experience is sequential. The eye moves through time, not across a flat surface. Even the mounting is part of the work, with silk backing and careful finishing that turn the scroll into a two sided object.

Before I turned to garments, this question lived in something as ordinary as an envelope. An envelope window reveals only a fragment while promising more. It frames absence as intention. It chooses what the viewer can see. When I realised that this selective visibility echoes the principle of *liubai* (leave the blank 留白) in Chinese aesthetics, the project found its conceptual beginning. To explore more of my research on *liubai*, please see Appendix D1.

landscape painters arranged mountains, rivers, trees and figures among large unpainted passages. These unfilled areas create rhythm, breath and a sense of distance.

A dense cluster of marks is followed by a stretch of quiet space, and the alternation between fullness and openness forms the emotional structure of the work. In *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains* (Wang, 1113), which I studied through *The Most Beautiful Chinese Paintings* (Yi and Jia, 2022),

the landscape unfolds in this measured cadence. The composition reveals itself through movement. You advance the scroll a little, stop, take in the scene, then continue.

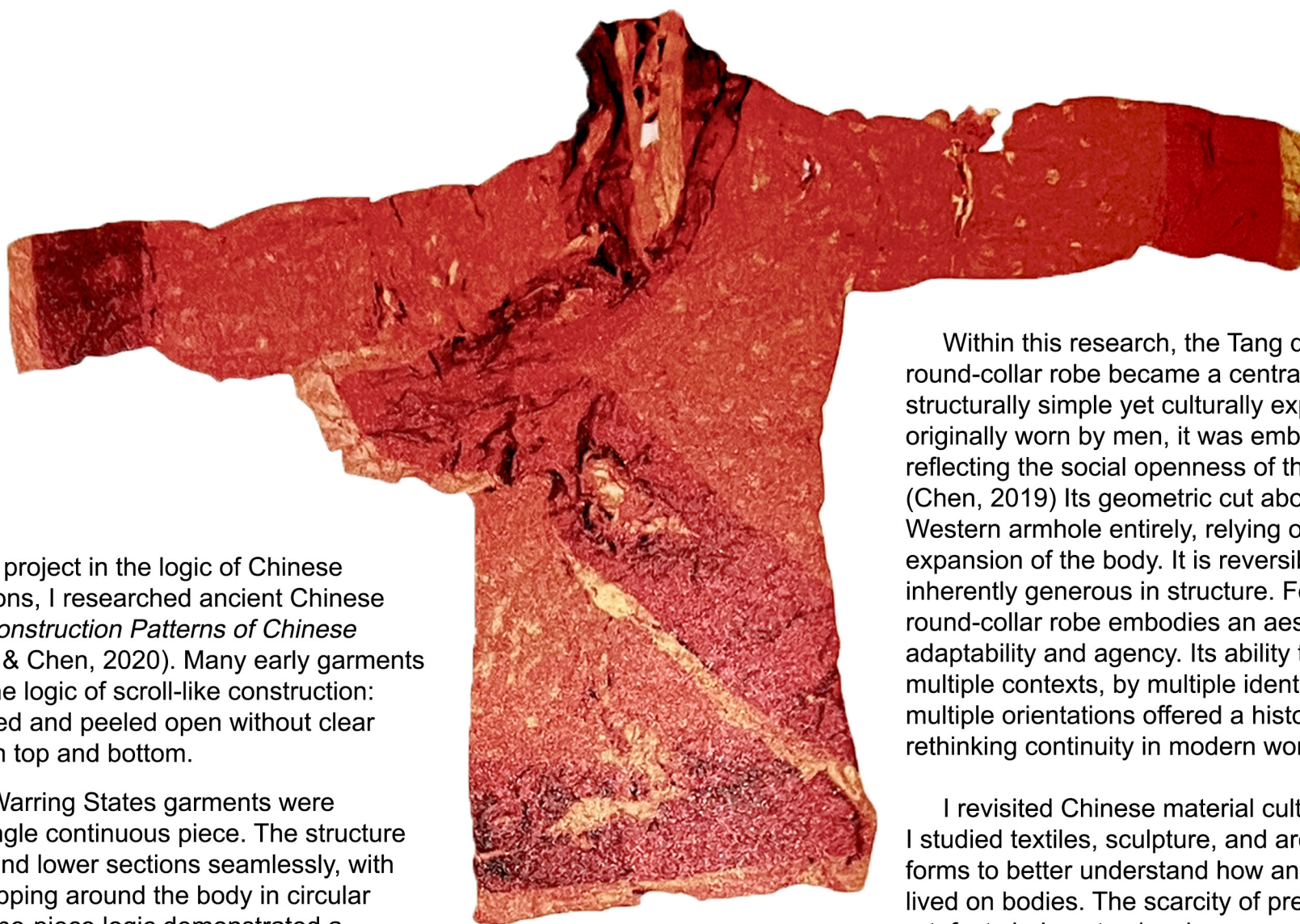
This way of seeing made me reconsider what a garment would be.

I began to imagine clothing that behaves like a scroll, where structure is not fully visible in a single glance but is discovered through the actions of dressing, undressing and handling the piece. The idea of continuity, of something unfolding rather than presented all at once, became the foundation of my approach to pattern cutting and composition.

Further research into Chinese ink paintings can be found in Appendix A2.1–A2.12, where I analyse additional examples to deepen the understanding of rhythm, spacing, and sequential viewing.

Fig. 5 *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains* (Wang, 1113)



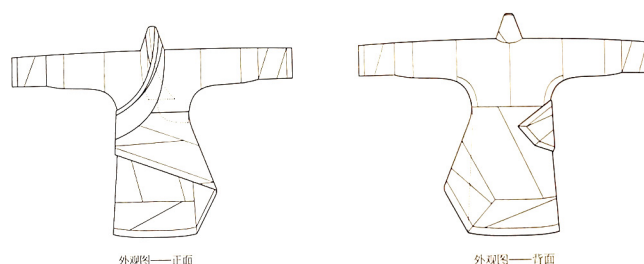


To ground my project in the logic of Chinese flat-cutting traditions, I researched ancient Chinese garments from *Construction Patterns of Chinese Costume* (Zhang & Chen, 2020). Many early garments already carried the logic of scroll-like construction: structures wrapped and peeled open without clear divisions between top and bottom.

For example, Warring States garments were conceived as a single continuous piece. The structure integrated upper and lower sections seamlessly, with layered hems wrapping around the body in circular formations. This one-piece logic demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of material use and structural design.

Within this research, the Tang dynasty round-collar robe became a central reference. It is structurally simple yet culturally expansive. Although originally worn by men, it was embraced by women, reflecting the social openness of the Tang period. (Chen, 2019) Its geometric cut abolishes the Western armhole entirely, relying on a T-shaped expansion of the body. It is reversible, layered, and inherently generous in structure. For me, the round-collar robe embodies an aesthetic of adaptability and agency. Its ability to be worn in multiple contexts, by multiple identities, and in multiple orientations offered a historical anchor for rethinking continuity in modern womenswear.

I revisited Chinese material culture more broadly. I studied textiles, sculpture, and archaeological forms to better understand how ancient clothing lived on bodies. The scarcity of preserved textile artefacts led me to visual sources. The Tang sculptures and carved drapery in *Bingling Temple Grottoes* (炳灵寺石窟) revealed the movement, weight, and layered rhythm of clothing more vividly than any surviving fragment could. These artworks demonstrated an aesthetic in which fullness is balanced with openness, and layers breathe rather than suffocate. This visual logic aligned strongly with the spatial thinking I aimed to cultivate in my own work.



中华民族服饰结构图考
汉 张 华 编

Fig. 6 Example of garment in Warring States period (Zhang & Chen, 2020, p. 46).

End of

Fig. 8 ink landscape drawing (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

Contextual Review



Fig.7 Infinite Landscape Pavilion, (Ryo Yamada,2022)

Ryo Yamada's Infinite Landscape Pavilion (2022) situates the viewer inside a continuous architectural passage across water. Rather than a static object, it becomes a bodily experience of movement and shifting perspective. I was drawn to how Yamada turns the act of passing through space into a sensory encounter with landscape and time.

This thinking resonates deeply with my collection. For me, a garment should not only be worn but experienced. Just as the viewer becomes part of Yamada's installation through movement, the wearer becomes part of my design through dressing, undressing and being seen. The unfolding of fabric, the revealing of linings and the peeling of layers function like walking through an architectural corridor.

More research can be found in Appendix D1.

I knew from the beginning that this project would involve real compromise. Many aesthetic possibilities cannot survive once the garment becomes one piece. Certain volumes must be simplified, and some ideas must be let go to preserve continuity. Yet these negotiations are necessary if the structure is to remain elegant, fitted, and genuinely unified.

Even so, I do not feel discouraged. This challenge is exactly why I chose it. It represents the end of my Master's study and the beginning of my identity as a designer. I want to build a new structural logic that belongs to me, one that merges conceptual ambition with refined craftsmanship. I am prepared for the technical difficulty, the engineering problems, and the long process of rethinking and refining.

Could I create a womenswear collection which an entire outfit becomes one continuous garment peeling off frame Body, like a Chinese Landscape handscroll?

What does it mean to choose what is shown and what is withheld? my project starts from here.

留白 (leave the blank)

I design for people who refuse to be limited by how clothing is "supposed" to work.

I believe garments can be continuous and connected, unfolding like a handscroll rather than divided into parts. My work joins Eastern flat-cutting with modern tailoring to show that structure itself can be poetic, and that Chinese pattern logic is not old but deeply forward-thinking.

If my designs open even a small doorway to a different way of experiencing clothing, then they have done what they were meant to do.

commentary of

In this project, methodology and commentary cannot be separated, because the development of my garments is inseparable from the way I create them. Every structural decision emerged through experimentation, revision and discovery on the mannequin rather than from a predetermined plan. The garments evolved step by step, each stage requiring reflection before moving forward.

Combining these two sections presents the project honestly: a fluid, iterative process in which research, experimentation, reflection and structural invention happened simultaneously.

Landscape of One

ONE

The Landscape



The handscroll *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains* (千里江山图, 1113), painted by Wang Ximeng during the Northern Song dynasty, became a particularly important reference. Measuring more than 11 meters in length, it is one of the largest surviving scrolls in Chinese art history, depicting an immense, idealized landscape of mountains, rivers, villages, and pavilions in mineral blue and green.

The scroll is not meant to be seen at once; rather, it is gradually unrolled, revealing one scene after another in a continuous rhythm. This act of partial concealment and progressive revelation produces a unique form of immersion, as the viewer becomes absorbed in an apparently endless.

My choice to work with Chinese landscape painting was never only a conceptual decision. It comes from a much deeper place. The first art form I ever learned as a child was *shanshui* (山水 landscape painting), and it shaped the way I see composition, rhythm, emptiness and depth long before I knew the language of fashion design. I also found many ink paintings I made between the ages of six and ten when I returned home (see Appendix A1).

This project began when I picked up the brush again after almost five years. I painted a landscape based on a photograph I took in Alaska, and the process reawakened something I had forgotten. As I watched the ink spread across the paper, I realised how much of my understanding of space, balance and visual rhythm came from this tradition. The act of painting reminded me that *shanshui* is not about depicting mountains but about building a world through absence and flow. That realisation became the true starting point of my methodology. Further details of my early methodological exploration can be found in Appendix D2.

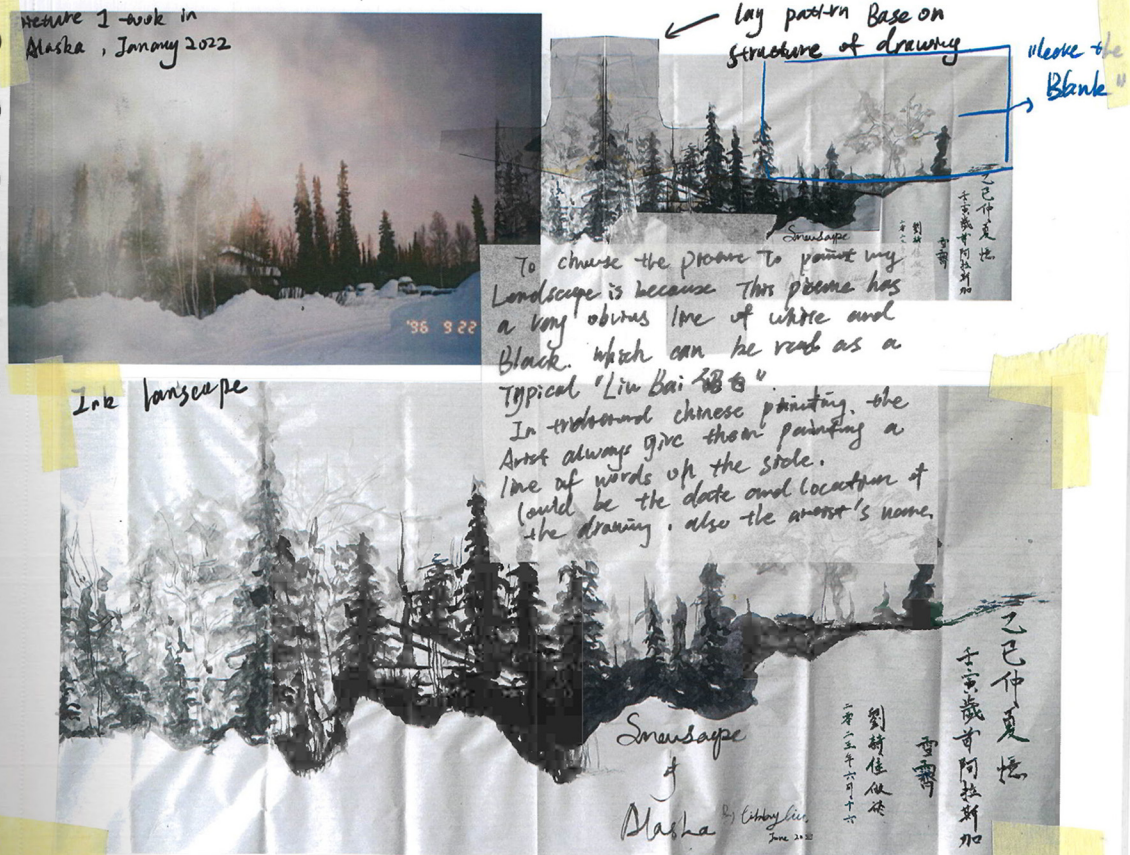
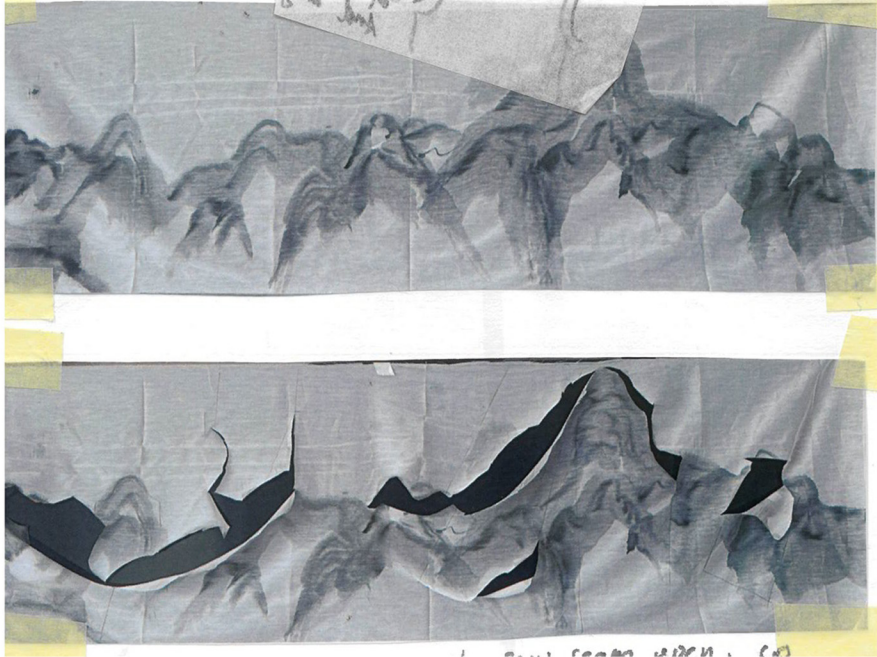


Fig. 10 film picture of Alaska (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

Fig. 11 ink landscape drawing (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

Fig. 12 ink landscape drawing on fabric (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)
Fig. 13 cut the pattern blocks on fabric (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)



I prepared a long strip of semi-transparent white fabric and traced the outlines of mountain ranges with diluted ink. Hanging this traced fabric on the wall, I studied the rising and falling contours. Many curves corresponded naturally to arcs in modern pattern blocks.

By overlaying basic garment blocks onto the traced mountain trajectories, I divided the composition into zones that could be reinterpreted as pattern pieces. Selective cuts and joins transformed the traced fabric into the basis of a garment structure that directly translated the scroll's curves into clothing. The details and process of this stage can be found in Appendix A3.13-3.17.

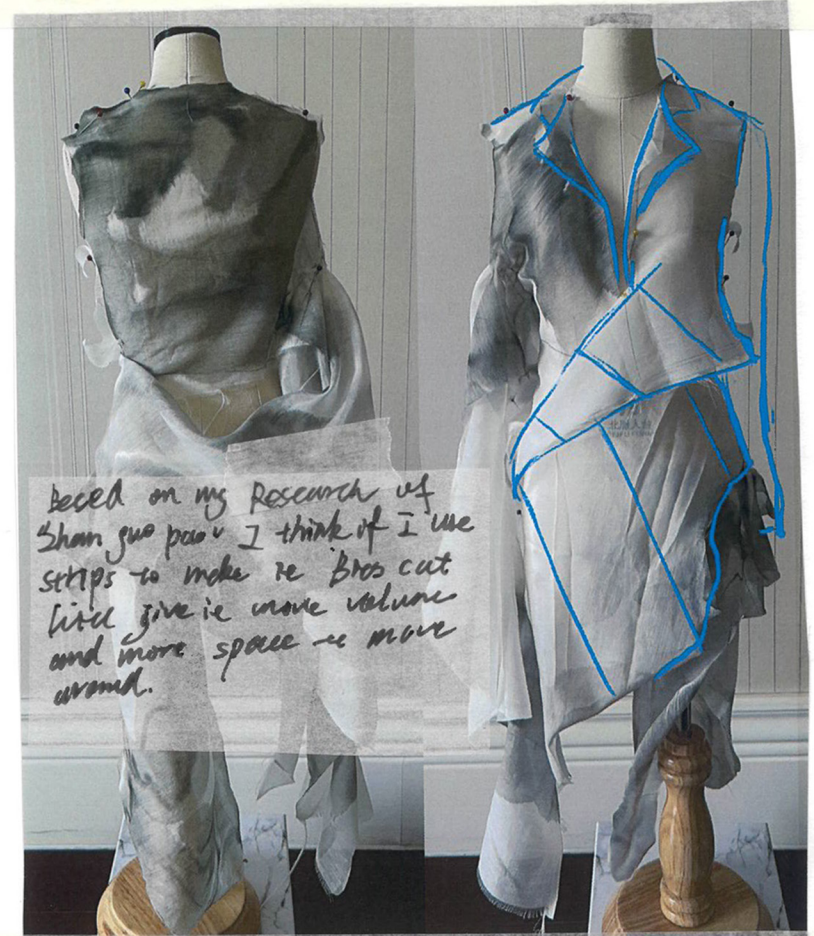


Fig. 14 ink landscape draped garment (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

Based on my research of Shan guo pavilion I think if I use strips to make the brocade like give it more volume and more space to move around.



Once I had developed the cutting and drawing plan, I transferred the long panel of fabric, already marked with the traced contours and the impressions of basic block shapes, onto the mannequin. Instead of approaching it as separate pieces to be assembled in a predetermined way, I attempted to work with the fabric as one continuous surface, rotating it around the body and testing how the traced curves could be made to correspond with the body's own lines.

In this process, I tried to “fit” the fabric into the mannequin through a spiral motion, searching intuitively for points of connection and balance. It was an ambiguous and experimental stage—somewhat chaotic, guided as much by accident as by intention. It was precisely this open-endedness that revealed unexpected possibilities. More detailed records of my draping, sewing and design experiments are documented in Appendix A3.11–A3.30.

Cut on Landscape

TWAO

Fig. 15 draped garment lay flat (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)



If I put this garment flat, you can very clearly see the pattern. It's also a really perfect "zero waste" pattern.

This "prototype garment" became both a document of process and a generative tool. It embodied the experimental translation of the scroll into clothing, and at the same time provided a library of structural solutions. Nearly all of my subsequent toiles drew from this first attempt, isolating a seam, amplifying a curve, reinterpreting a fold. Each new piece an expansion of the logic first discovered here. In this sense, the chaotic experiment of wrapping and joining a single long panel evolved into the foundation of my collection, showing how a garment could remain one piece yet suggest the layered complexity of many.

THREE

The Lineup & Pattern Flat Drawing

For the line-up stage, I began by using collage as a way to explore silhouettes. Collage, for me, functions as a deliberately loose and ambiguous method: it allows me to identify overall forms and proportions without being constrained by garment details. This is important because the logic of each look in my collection is not predetermined on paper but discovered through structural experiments on the mannequin. The process is less about illustrating an imagined design and more about constructing a logical structure that can exist as one continuous piece of clothing. More versions of my Line up can be found in Appendix A10.



Fig. 16 progress lineup (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

In this sense, the later versions of the line-up were always created in motion. I was exploring, fitting, adjusting and making decisions at the same time. The process required me to analyse the structural behaviour of

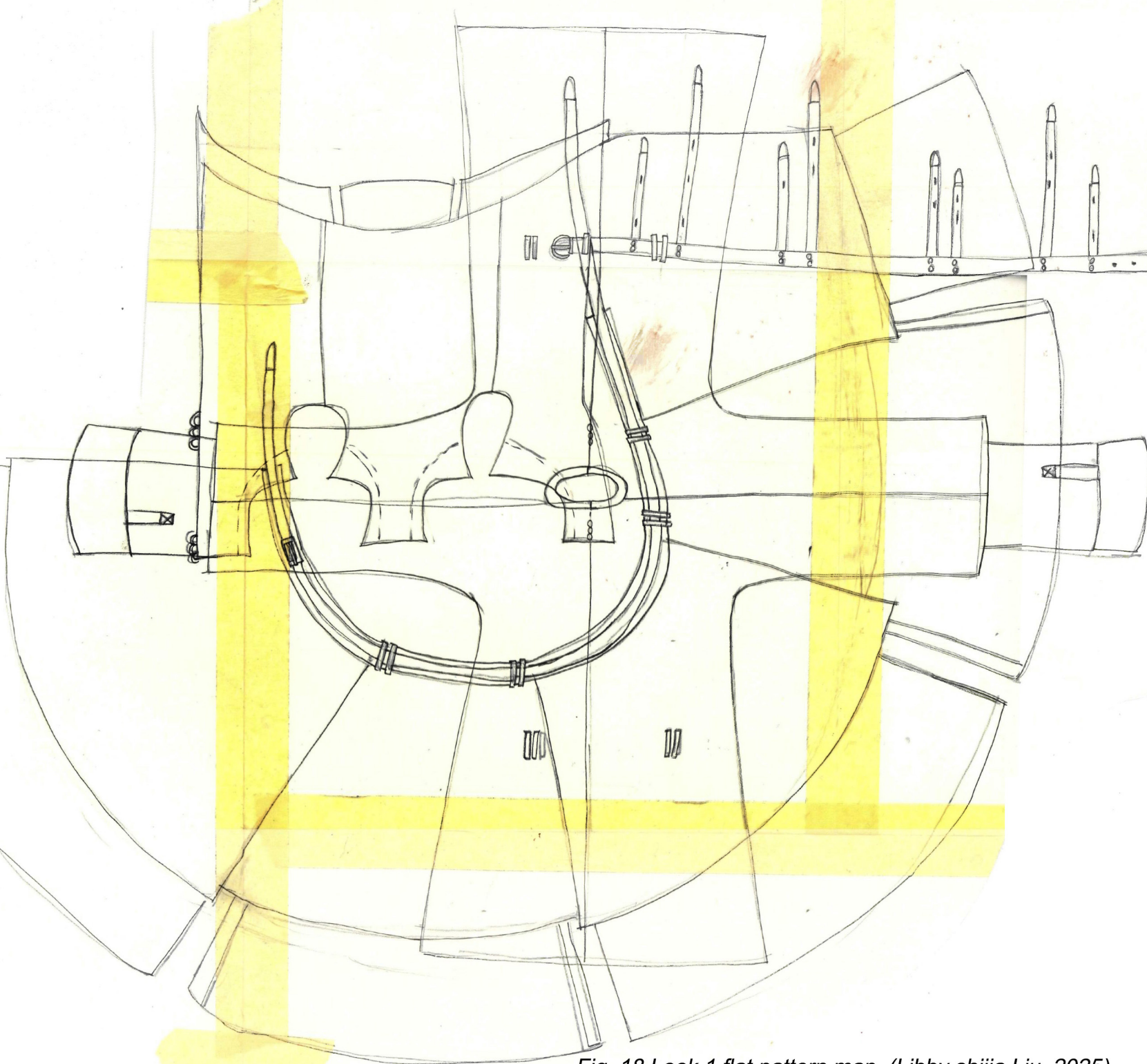
This way of working has become central to my design identity. It taught me that for garments based on continuity, the only way to understand them is to build them first and think through the hands.



each piece while simultaneously imagining how it could evolve into a complete look. It was impossible to design the collection in advance. The logic of the one-piece system demanded that the line-up be discovered progressively through the act of making. more lineup progress can see appendix A10.

When it came time to create my range plan, I realised a problem: my garments cannot be separated into tops, jackets or trousers, so a conventional technical drawing could never explain how they work. Since each look is structurally continuous, there was no logical way to “price” or categorise them as individual items.

Fig. 17 final lineup drew with ink (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)



To reflect the true nature of the project, I redrew the range plan as flat pattern maps instead of garment diagrams. These maps show how each section connects, rotates and merges into the next. For this collection, the clearest technical drawing is the pattern itself. The only format that can reveal the continuity and engineering of a one-piece system. More of my technical drawings and range plan can be found in Appendix B.

For my final line-up, I wanted the illustrations to echo the collection's origins in Chinese ink painting, so my goal was to render the looks using true ink techniques. Before committing to hand-painting, I tested the visual language through AI to preview whether the aesthetic would translate well. By feeding my toile photos into the model and adjusting the prompts, I generated a series of trial images that helped me refine the atmosphere, brush quality and overall mood.

The full process — including how I communicated with the AI system and how the stylistic parameters were developed — is documented in Appendix E

Fig. 18 Look 1 flat pattern map (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

In making these collages, I drew not only on shapes from my current experiments but also from earlier work, particularly the *Round-collared robe* (圆领袍), as viewed on historical statues from the Tang dynasty ((Shaanxi History Museum, 2023)) which I have chosen to retain as a recurring detail. The round-collared robe represents an important starting point for me: it connects my project to the traditions of Eastern flat-cutting while allowing a collision of elements with contemporary tailoring. By including these references in collage form, I could keep the Yuanlingpao detail active as I tested new structures on the stand.



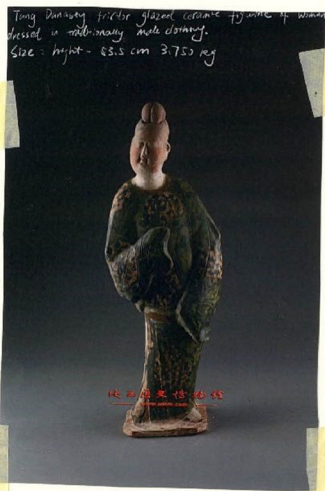


Fig. 19 Tang Dynasty Three-Color Glazed Ceramic Figure of a Woman Dressed in Traditional Male Clothing, Shaanxi History Museum, Xi'an (Shaanxi History Museum, 2023).

Yuanling pao (Round collar robe) also known as *dege pao*.
Originally a masculine, foreign-inspired robe, in Tang Dynasty was adopted by women.
This wasn't just about fashion; it was about control — woman's control over her.
How she dressed, how she was perceived and how she moved through society.
I think, the Yuanling pao served a similar role to Le Smoking suits in the 20th century.
— an act of reclaiming a traditionally male garment and making it one's own.

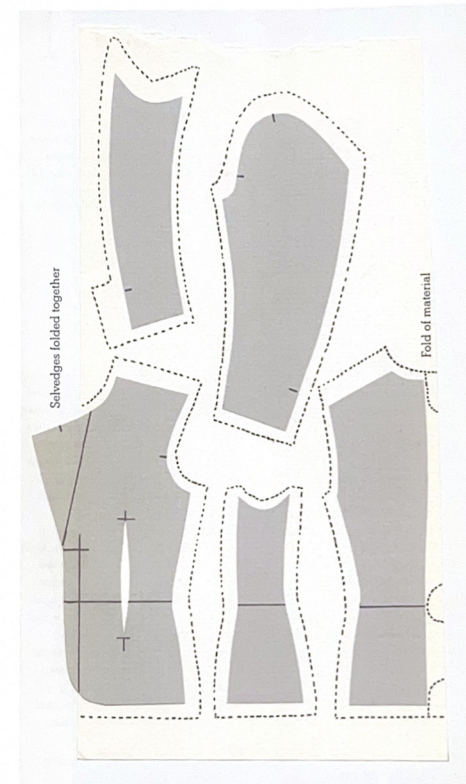
It absorbed stylistic influences from the Western regions via the Silk Road in a period of cultural openness. Eventually it became a mainstream dress for both men and women, even though in China's feudal society gendered dress was traditionally rigid (Chen, 2019; Yang, 2024; Met, 2004).

I was fascinated that while many Western garments today use a set-in sleeve attached to an armhole, this Chinese structure essentially abolishes the traditional "armhole" and instead uses a T-shaped body with large, flowing sleeves.

I love the Round-collared robe's (圆领袍) voluminous silhouette, also because its historical significance resonates deeply with me. In the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) the Round-collared robe became a highly popular garment.



Fig. 20 Ōdairin'ōhō (Green Robe with Round Collar) (n.d.)



Cutting out lining.

- seams in the garment
- Short seam of two-piece sleeve: $\frac{3}{8}$ in/1cm.
- Shoulder seams (both back and front): 2in/5cm.
- Sleeve head: 2in/5cm all around to include the underarm section.
- Hems: 1in/2.5cm.

The centre back of the jacket (top part) is placed 1in/2.5cm away from the lining fold. If your centre back seam is quite shaped you might have considerably more seam allowance at the waist and hem. Do not be tempted to place your pattern on the lining off grain to make this the same all the way through. The excess is sewn away by means of a seam at the top, the waist and at the hem. The resulting pleat is then pressed to one side. The centre front of the jacket is placed on the selvedge of the lining, so as to allow plenty of material to play with when fitting the lining into the garment.

Making and applying a piping

The piping is made from a bias strip of lining or odd piece of silk that you may want to use. If you need to join pieces together, always join bias strip so that the seams are running on the straight grain. Cut the strip about 1½ in/4cm wide and as long as needed. Press it in half and then trim it to ½ in/1.5cm.

Fold one end under and start sewing it to your facing about 1in/2.5cm from the finished hem with a running stitch. Be careful to sew it just to the facing fabric. Along your facing below the break point, let it run parallel to the front edge of the jacket. Then in a gentle curve, bring it towards the collar. Let it run around the neckline, just covering the stitching that joins the top collar to the neckline seam. Hold your piping strip slightly taut around here, which will prevent it from puckering later. Go down

Chapter 11 / Lining the jacket
Fig. 21 *Vintage Couture Tailoring*, (Thomas von Nordheim, 2012)

Fig. 24 pattern of round collar robe (Libby shijia Liu, 2024)

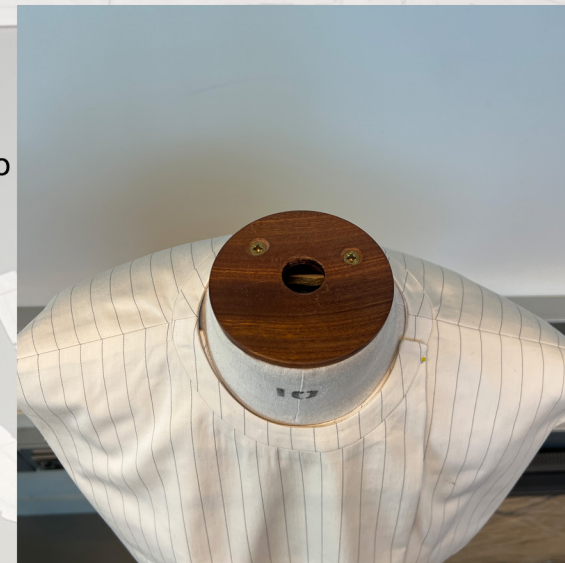
In a modern context this type of construction has been largely discarded, perhaps because it doesn't hug the body in the way Western tailoring demands. In my earlier project (EPT) I retained the trapezoidal cut of the *Round-collared robe* (圆领袍), but I refined the fit:



for example I used a three-dimensional tailoring method for the collar area, adapting the neck contact and ergonomic

shape, so that the garment becomes extremely wearable and refined. Therefore in my collection this structural system appears extensively, especially in shirts, because I find it highly comfortable.

This is my version of the *Round-collared robe* (圆领袍). As can be seen from my base pattern, my version of the Round-collared robe has been modified through ergonomic considerations.



For instance, the sleeves are slightly slanted downward rather than extending horizontally,

allowing the garment to follow the natural slope of the human shoulder. This adjustment reduces excess volume and improves fit.

Fig. 22&23 round collar robe simple (Libby shijia Liu, 2024)

FIVE

The Fabric

The selection of fabrics in this collection is deeply connected to both the historical and cultural roots of Chinese material heritage.

First and foremost, I chose silk; the most iconic textile of China, the very origin of the Silk Road. Naturally, silk became my primary material choice because historically silk was the most used fabric ubiquitous China. I used various types, from light white mulberry silk to heavier, textured weaves. Among them, one of the most meaningful fabrics I worked with is *Xiangyun Sha* (香云纱), also known as “mud-dyed silk”.

Xiangyun Sha is a traditional textile from southern China, made through a repeated process of dyeing silk with natural plant extracts and river mud. This creates a distinctive two-sided effect in brown and black, with a gentle metallic sheen. (Xia, 2018). Its double-sided nature aligns closely with my design concept, where inner layers are revealed and both sides of the fabric carry equal visual and structural importance.

I also incorporated natural linen and-linen blends, which have been used in Chinese daily wear for centuries. These fibers bring lightness and texture while referencing the humble tactility of traditional garments.

To connect this with Western tailoring craftsmanship, I also used 100% wool suiting fabrics and classic cotton shirtings, merging Eastern pattern logic with Western structural discipline. Following traditional tailoring techniques, I applied materials such as horsehair canvas, linen interfacing, and wool-linen blend foundations which are support forms usually hidden inside the lining of the suit. I intentionally exposed these materials on the outer surface, to challenge the convention of hiding the garment’s inner architecture. For me, these internal structures are beautiful; they deserve to be seen.



One of the most distinctive fabrics in my collection is a black Jacquard textile woven with intricate floral motifs. Its presence was inspired by the way traditional Chinese ink landscape hand-scrolls are mounted, where both the front and back hold equal importance. In a scroll, the front carries the painting, while the reverse is often adorned with *brocade silk* (织锦), creating a tactile balance between art and structure. I wanted to bring that same sensibility into my garments, allowing the textile itself to become part of the narrative framing.

The woven pattern I chose originates from a Tang-dynasty *Pipa* (琵琶) preserved in the Shōsōin Repository in Nara, decorated with *luodian* (螺钿) inlay. A traditional technique using finely cut pearl shell pieces embedded into the wood to form radiant floral designs. These motifs, meticulously arranged in geometric grids of blossoms and lozenges, carry both aesthetic and cultural significance: they embody the sophistication and global openness of Tang design.



Fig. 25 Textile with floral medallion (Metropolitan Museum of Art, late 8th–early 9th century)



Fig. 26 Shōsōin “Shitan mokuga sō biwa” (No. 2), (Shōsōin, n.d.)

Fig. 27 black silk organza sample (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)



One of the greatest challenges during this stage was integrating trousers into the one-piece, rotational, onion-like logic of dressing and undressing. Unlike tops or layered skirts, trousers carry a strong association with separation, making it difficult to reconcile them with a continuous garment system.

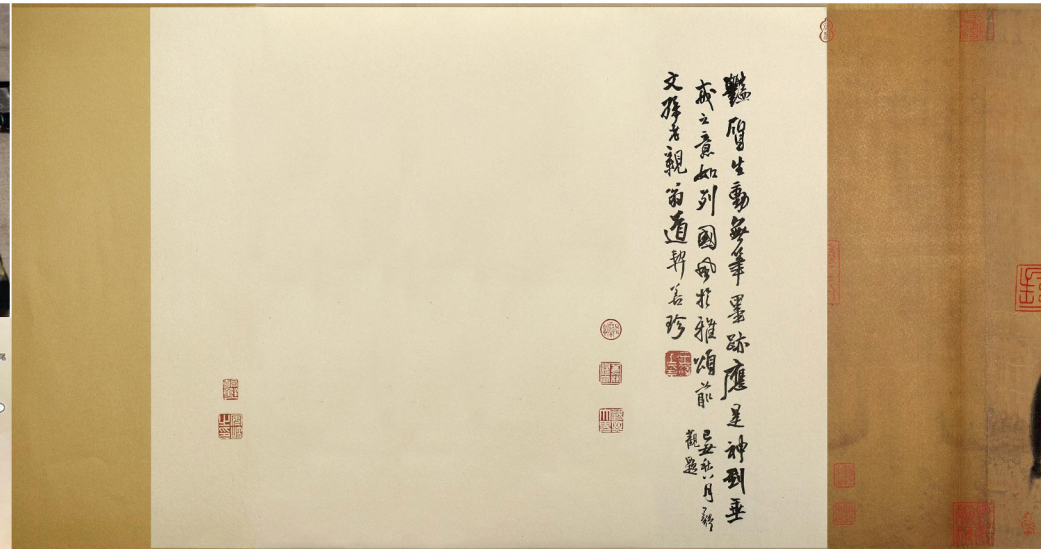
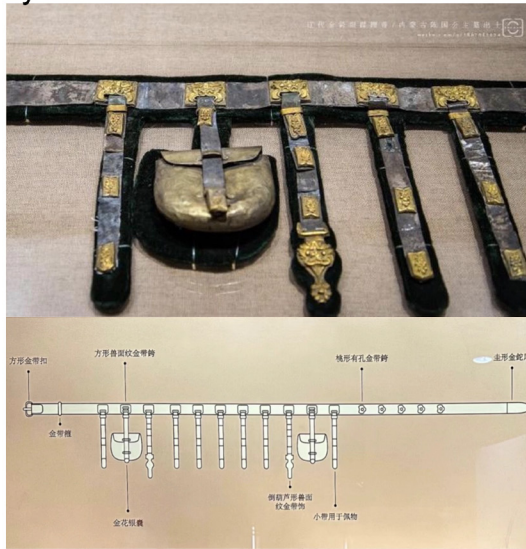
In my summer experiments, one toile successfully attempted this integration, proving that even trousers could become part of a scroll-like structure that rotates and unwraps around the body. “The space in between” was the key to solve how to make it into one piece. I began to focus on exploring how each garment connects to the next through both structure and function after summer break.

I questioned: How does the shirt connect to the jacket? How does the jacket connect to the trousers? These connections are not only aesthetic but also structural, forming a continuous system across the body.

SIX
connection in between

Structurally, the *diexie dai* (蹀躞帶) featured multiple pendant straps hanging from the main belt. These components were not purely decorative, originally derived from equestrian equipment, they allowed riders to hang tools, pouches and personal items during travel.

The leather belt system in my collection draws direct inspiration from the *diexie dai* (蹀躞帶), or jade-and-gold belt, which became widely popular during the Sui and Tang dynasties.



The belt therefore functioned as both a status emblem and a portable storage system, bridging aesthetics and utility. Beyond this functional origin, the *diexie dai* also reflects the flourishing equestrian culture of the Tang dynasty, when horseback riding symbolised elegance, freedom and social grace. There are more pictures of the *diexie dai* in garments in appendix 7.20.

Historically, this belt was more than an accessory — it was both a functional harness and a symbol of social hierarchy. During the Tang dynasty, such belts were designated as part of official attire, restricted to government officials and members of the court. (Benn,2002)The belt’s plaques were often made of jade, gold, or silver, with intricate ornamentation that reflected one’s rank and identity.

Fig. 28 and 29, Princess of the State of Chen and her husband, Tomb No. 3, (Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, 1986.)

In this painting, noblewomen riding through spring landscapes embody the confidence and vitality of Tang society. A moment when women's public presence signified cultural openness.



In my research, I examined traditional horse tack and leather harness systems, observing how straps wrap around the horse's body to create support, balance and rhythmic continuity. This structural logic informed my design approach.

However, in my garments, leather does not act as a literal connector. It functions as a mechanical aid that supports the garment's intrinsic continuity. The true connection lies in pattern cutting itself: each part of the garment is linked through form, rather than assembled as separate modules.

Fig. 30, Zhang Xuan, *Court Ladies of the Guo State on a Spring Outing* (《虢国夫人游春图》), Tang dynasty, 8th century, (Palace Museum, Beijing. n.d.)



The making process of this collection was as demanding as its concept. Because each look is a fully independent structural invention, and because every garment in a look must ultimately join into one continuous piece, the pattern cutting became extremely complex.

SEVEN

This complexity required craft of an equally high standard. I chose to root the entire project in Western tailoring techniques, so every jacket, coat and structured piece is fully hand-canvased.



Fig. 31 hand stitch canvas front and back (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)



Across five looks, I completed five hand-stitched canvases, working with horsehair, linen interfacings, pad stitching and layered foundations. This was the first time I attempted such intensive tailoring at this scale, especially since Look Four involved an unconventional double-collar coat with extended panels and trouser components. Figuring out how to apply a traditional canvas to a structure that did not behave like a typical suit was one of my biggest challenges. I made all shoulder pads by hand to support sculptural silhouettes. Some garments required substantial internal padding. Working with unconve

ntional materials like suiting canvas made the process intricate, especially around exposed edges. I tested many finishing methods to balance refinement with the raw-edge language of the project. Hand sewing became central to my finishing philosophy. I used hand pick stitches, couture hemming techniques and subtle bead-like hand tackings throughout the collection. These decisions ensured that even with the complexity of the overall structure, the garments do not slip into costume. They retain the quality, density and discipline expected of luxury craftsmanship. More construction details see appendix 6.9/8.5-8.7.

Fig. 32 hand stitch canvas collar (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)



critical evaluation

For a long time, I avoided making work that appeared recognisably Chinese. The risk of becoming too literal or too decorative felt high, and I worried that my perspective would not be strong enough to carry the cultural weight. I also feared that a Western audience might read such work only through existing stereotypes.

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This long process helped me understand the direction I want to take after graduation. My intention is simple. I want more people to wear my clothes. I want my work to exist in daily life, not only in conceptual spaces. In the next three to five years, I plan to create my own brand. It will not follow the logic of exclusivity or extreme luxury. Instead, it will focus on accessible craftsmanship. I want to bring together the comfort and openness of Eastern flat-cutting with the precision and stability of Western tailoring. My work often includes shirts, jackets and trousers, and these elements suit women who move between professional spaces and daily routines. Clothes can be soft and structured at the same time. They can hold a quiet elegance without asking the wearer to compromise their comfort or identity.

Fig. 33 horse bit scan (Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

critical evaluation

STEP 02

步驟貳 · 水墨初成



Fig. 34 AI generate shanshui landscape website
(Libby shijia Liu, 2025)

READY FOR INK PATTERNING

AI is no longer a possibility. It is already here. As a designer working in this moment, I know that I cannot step outside of this reality. The only meaningful choice I have is to accept it fully and to learn how to work with it in a way that serves my values.

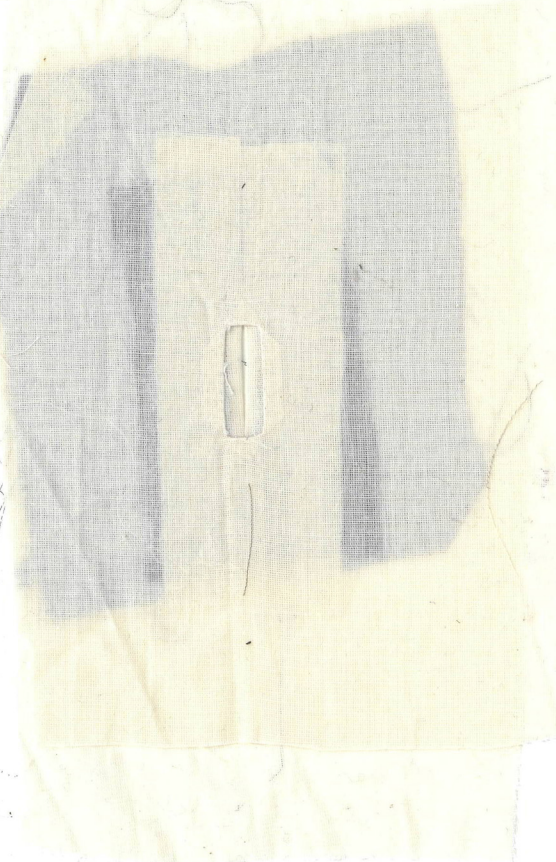
My relationship with AI did not begin in this project. I started experimenting with AI in my BA years, long before the technology reached its current speed of development. I wrote in my BA proposal that I hoped one day to create a system that could support personalised variations and allow users to participate in the design process. At that time it felt like a distant idea, something that lived more in imagination than in practice. In the final stage of my MA I was finally able to build the first working version of what I once envisioned.

In this project I created an experimental website that captures the workflow behind my design method. The tool allows a user to upload any landscape image from their daily life. The system then uses AI to turn that image into a Chinese ink painting. The ink rendering carries the randomness, diffusion and expressive rhythm that shaped the structural development of my garments. After generating the landscape, the tool positions basic pattern blocks inside the image and forms a visual interpretation of the method I used throughout this project. It recreates the logic of reading mountains, responding to contours and placing structure within flow. The website does not only display a result. It performs the same thinking process that led to my patterns. More details about this ai app I build with ai can see appendix E2.

Even though, this prototype is not perfect, I still see great potential from it. If I build my own brand, the tool could help reduce development time and labour while keeping my pattern cutting language consistent. My design assistants could use it to understand my structural approach and generate possibilities that align with my direction. I also see potential beyond my own studio. If I choose to make it open source, design students could learn from the methods embedded in the tool. They could study my understanding of zero waste logic, my approach to landscape based structures and my way of translating visual rhythm into pattern cutting. The system could grow into a dedicated software for designers, one that carries my workflow and makes it accessible across different contexts.

The Master's project strengthened the technical foundation required for this vision. The complexity of my structures pushed me to refine my understanding of pattern logic, internal balance and fit. My tailoring practice expanded more in this period than at any other time in my studies. I spent hours shaping padding, refining canvas, understanding how internal engineering influences external presence. Along the way, I also learned how crucial it is to think about usability. A garment can be conceptually rich, yet if it is uncomfortable or too difficult to navigate, it loses part of its meaning. This awareness will guide my transition from experimental one-piece construction into ready to wear. I can keep the sincerity of craft while adjusting complexity so that more people can wear the clothes with ease. more technique details see appendix A4-A9.

This project also revealed several challenges that I need to address. My structures tend to be extremely complex and often rely on my own hands. I find it difficult to delegate tasks even when collaboration would be more efficient. Under pressure, I sometimes lose clarity and become overwhelmed. My dependence on draping means that each look develops as a separate world, making it harder to extend a single logic across an entire collection. These tendencies do not discourage me. They serve as reminders of where I need to grow. In ready to wear, I will learn to simplify, to build systems, and to let the garment breathe between concept and practicality.



When I think about the designer I want to become, the answer remains gentle and uncomplicated. I hope many people will enjoy wearing my clothes. I hope they can feel the quiet strength and contained elegance that I try to express. I hope my work offers women clothing that can move between occasions without forcing them into discomfort or restriction. My design language carries an Eastern sense of restraint and an inner tension that unfolds slowly. If my clothes can offer even a small sense of choice and confidence to the women who wear them, I will feel deeply fulfilled.

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