

**Negar Kazemian**

The bridge

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Fashion design

MA 2-spring 2020

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## **Intro**

**When immigrants face new cultures, the first thing they can notice is that everyone looks and dresses different than they do.**

**They suddenly feel out of place which might force them to change the way they look.**

**Since there is no easy way to change one's physical appearance such as skin pigmentation or face features, they decide to change their wardrobe.**

**This is in a way a suppression of personality, which can in a bad case lead to minor mental health issues, for instance depression. They still love the way they used to dress, the colors and all the patterns.**

**All of these feelings leave them divided between two worlds, two places, two cultures.**

**They don't want to feel like outcasts and at the same time, they don't want to abandon their true nature and taste in things like fashion.**

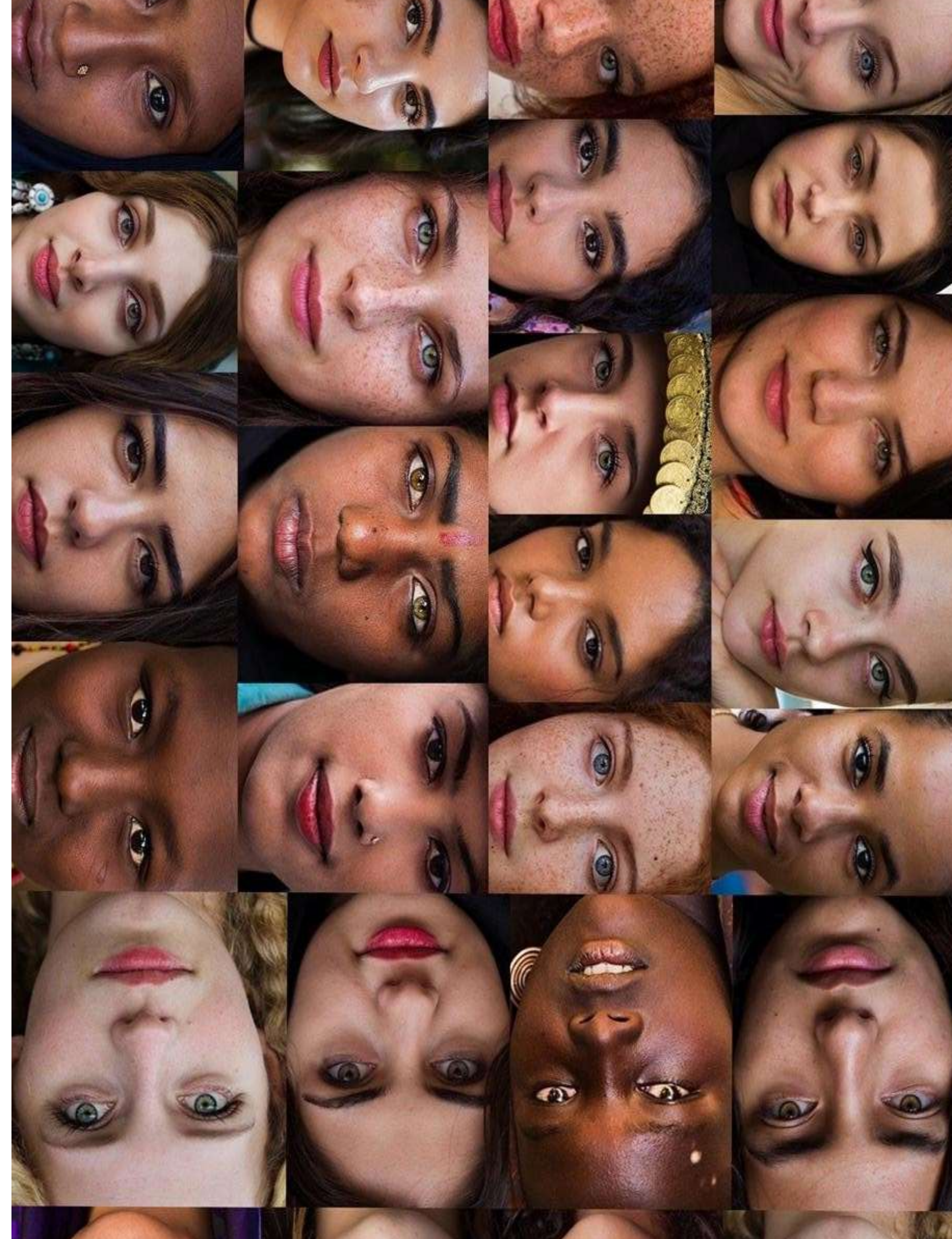
**How can we connect the two platforms that are drifting apart when a person is standing right on them, one foot on each?**

**I want to give them something that will do just that – I want to give them a fashion bridge.**

**I have found a subtle way of infusing rich cultural heritage into a small item such as a piece of fashion accessory.**

**This way, the aforementioned immigrants can wear their past on them at any time,**

**uniting their past selves with their present selves into just themselves.**





## **Wanting to stay yourself while still being part of the new world**

**It was in order to be considered a trustworthy person,  
I should change myself to a totally different Negar.**

**From one point of view it made it so easy for me to be comfortable,  
from another a question was born: “What will make u distinct from  
the person who sits next to you?**

**”We are not robots. We are not some prewritten programs.**

**I have been growing up with Iranian culture for 24 years.**

**My hobbies, my taste in music, my taste in fashion, the way I dance,  
the way I party, the way I handle different situations are all different from  
the ways of a person who was born and raised in Europe.**

**As a fashion student I love my Iranian**

**heritage of clothes and art, but as an immigrant I want to blend in.**

**As an accessories designer, how can I combine these two facts?**

**As an immigrant, I have experienced the clash of two cultures in my personality. I had to change some habits and behavioral patterns to feel more included, but I was never able, nor did I want to forget my cultural identity. As time passed, I became more comfortable with adapting my fashion choices to Scandinavian style. But I always feel like I need to have some part of my cultural identity on me. If it didn't come with the feeling of being excluded, I would always go for colorful Iranian choices. When I realized my personal experience is not enough to come to conclusions, I decided I need to do wardrobe studies and interviews. I have selected a field of people who came to Norway and a field of people who are living in Iran, both fields having various characteristics amongst the respondents (to prevent getting biased results).**

## **Scenario + wardrobe study**

**These two elements were the starting point of this thesis.**

**At first, during scenario sessions (that were a part of the university curriculum)**

**when we were supposed to come up with scenarios for items,**

**I found out that most pieces have a special story behind them.**

**The story tells a lot about the person and his/her mindset.**

**Doesn't matter if you are the designer or the costumer,**

**both are connected and share the same mood and feelings for**

**that piece that reminds them of something important or interesting.**

**After starting the wardrobe study sessions, I found out you are able to**

**tell the reason behind a person liking a specific item or style! You can guess how old an item is,**

**what brand is it, what the material is, where does it come from,**

**what was the impulse to get the item and, above all, you can tell how important some**

**pieces are to their owners and form a story that explains the relationship.**

**I started conducting wardrobe studies with my fellow classmates, but then**

**it all got interesting to me and it is the reason I decided this tool might be ideal**

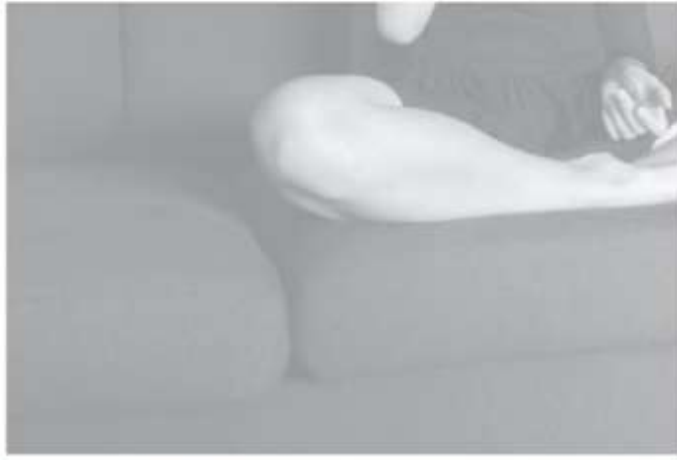
**to help me solve the problem I mention in the intro of this thesis.**

**I even started doing wardrobe studies with my Iranian friends**

**whenever we were gathering for tea and chat!**









**I conducted wardrobe studies and interviews with 20 people from two different homogenous groups, which was so far the most enriching and interesting part of my project, to gather knowledge on the problem mentioned above.**

**I interviewed and studied fashion tastes of 10 of the people in Iran and 10 of the people here!**

**I first interviewed 10 Iranian girls.**

**They all live in Oslo (24-34 years old).**

**I went to their houses and we talked about their style in Iran and in here.**

**If and how they changed the way they dress, if they changed their style.**

**What was the impact of that on their social and professional life?**

**I asked them to show me their closet and I analyzed my findings with the following conclusion:**

**They all still have Iranian elements in their houses, they decorate their house**

**80 percent Iranian, maybe just the furniture they use is from IKEA,**

**as well as some pots and kitchen wears. And that's about their interior.**

**They still listen to Iranian music. They mostly eat Iranian food.**

**But in their closet the situation is a bit different. They still keep their colorful**

**clothes and they told me they keep them for travel purposes, for when they go to warm places.**

**They never use them in here unless it is parties with other Iranians or partying in their house.**











**As part of the interviews, I gave them papers with simple and short questions and I let all of them have a day to think about them before asking for answers:**

- 1. What is the most precious piece of accessory in your closet?**
- 2. Why is this piece important to you?**
- 3. What is the value of it to you (personal or money wise)?**
- 4. What is the story of how you got that piece? (for real)**
- 5. Can you write a scenario and describe that piece of accessory?  
(it can be real or dreamy, short or long)**

**Then during my travel to Iran in January I had the chance to do the same research about Iranian closets with 5 girls belonging to young generation and 5 middle aged women, because I wanted to check out the diversity of taste amongst different age groups in Iran.**

**The interviews went great and out of 20 people in total, 10 of them agreed on giving me the scenarios.**



## The Brooch

Hi, I am no one.  
I used to be super strong.  
I was kind to anyone I wanted. I ignored anyone I wanted.  
Full of trust in myself.  
Every morning I felt my heartbeat and I was happy to breath.  
But now.  
It is no longer a dream.  
I can still feel the air pressure on me.  
I stand in the middle of nowhere.  
Everything just turns around me.  
The song just keeps playing over and over.  
I don't remember if I heard a voice this sad before.  
I think and think and forget it right away, again and again.  
Every feeling I had is gone.  
I have no past and no future.  
Everything I used to want is around me and I have no feelings of belonging, no emotions.  
Nothing and nothing.  
Only thing I have is this 7 years old pair of boots that was with me everywhere I was.  
And this brown oversized coat which has a pretty big hole right under my "right heart", close to the middle.  
Maybe it wasn't a coincidence I wore this coat on that special day.  
Everything just changed in a blink.  
In a sentence that had 2 simple words. It was an answer to my question.  
2 words and 2 years changed everything.  
Suddenly I don't remember any details.  
All the dates and days are just erased from my memory.  
I had a sharp memory before it happened. What made it so weak?  
It's still turning around me, everyone is just a shadow, just comes and goes.  
No pleasure, no empathy.  
Everyone just hurts each other, and I can hear it.  
They don't know it, but it is the glory of trust that keeps breaking over and over, every second.  
I know it better than themselves.  
It still turns around me.  
Memories fade away and suddenly I see myself right here, right now.  
In the future.  
Everything is just gone, only a bleeding heart is beating right in my hand.  
Mmm, that's why the coat has a hole burnt in it.  
The heart keeps getting more solid and cold, but it's still bleeding in my hand.  
It's still red but it's not made of flesh.  
It's metal, copper, it hurts my skin a lot and has some sparkling details that call me to read the story behind it.  
I should put it back.  
But outside.  
Everyone should see what an feelingless piece of art it can be.  
And all of us should have our own special kind of this.

## The Earrings

For me it is all about dance, moving and how my art as a dancer remains in my audience eyes.  
It was always my dream to be a dancer. When I was young, I was I a gymnast. I was talented, but back then it was simpler to just focus on school . I started working full time as soon as I turned 18, and soon I got pregnant, I never got to dance, untill now.  
I found a group of enthusiastic people who love dancing as much as I do.  
we are learning choreographies and performing at town balls.  
The earrings are part of one of our dancing outfits, along with a shiny silver fabric full of glitters.  
the earrings are made of many lomg cotton straps. Thanks to that, when I move during dancing, they move too and create a spectacular sight.

## The Necklace

It is always about treasures.  
I born in a big big family. when it comes to jewellery and accessories you never can skip from hearing this sentence: Yes I got it from ...(some one older in the family.  
But this one is really old and traditional piece of jewellery that my great grandmother gave it to my grandmother, she gave it to my mom and my mom passed it to me and insist that when its the right time I should give it to my daughter.  
It mades out of soil and it smells really nice when water touches it and it hase some prescious pieces of stone randomly between the soil bullets.  
When I face with some problems in my life I keep it in my hand and I pray untill I fall sleep.  
I always think that it has a memory inside of it. Or it has a part of each one of uss' soul.  
These days I am thinking about making a frame for it and hang it on the top of my bed and let it rest there untill it is the time To pass it to my daughter!

### The Brooch

She was standing alone in a cold December breeze. It was quite unusual to find yourself in a place that wasn't swarming with people chasing their everyday tasks. Not since millions of people moved north to escape the unbearable heat. The neon-green street lamp was flickering, but the moon dominated the sky that night.  
He was coming home from his boring everyday job. He was happy he made it in time to catch the last train.  
He was wearing his usual outfit that fit the dress code at his workplace. He didn't even think about what he was getting in in the morning. It was a slim, dark blue suit with soft suede hems. Brown shoes that were not very clean with old black laces, and a brown handback with golden metal details that he got as a gift 10 years ago.  
There were some holes in it, but he didn't even notice.  
They were the only people at the station. She was wearing a long black dress with lacey details and no sleeves, but her coffee-brown arms weren't cold. They were covered by long black gloves and only her shoulders were bare.  
A brooch stood out on her pitch-black dress like a beacon in a dark, starless night. He usually didn't pay attention to others, but the silver brooch got him interested. He decided to get a closer look. The red train with no rails arrived, floating on the magnetic surface silently like a lover's whisper. He got in the same wagon as she did and sat on a seat facing her.  
They were the only two people in the wagon, but she didn't mind.  
She knew his intentions and she was used to people staring at her brooch.  
That's why she wore it in the first place.  
It was a silver, sun-shaped brooch with many detailed beams, each going in different direction.  
It was much bigger and fancier than brooches he knew from his grandmother's pictures.  
No one wore fancy jewels anymore. In the centre, there were differently sized and shaped bright blue stones.  
He didn't know it was Persian turquoise.  
Even though it was big, it seemed light as it didn't disrupt the form of the dress.  
He also didn't know she was the one who crafted the thing that mesmerized him for the last fifteen minutes.  
Neither did he know that all the materials were gathered from the remains of what used to be her home in a place what used to be her town in a country that used to be giving and full of life.  
It all started to change years ago when the heat waves stroke.  
Her people were a proud nation and they loved her idea of reviving old memories in the form of brooches, using materials that felt like home. Materials that felt like Iran.  
Later that month she made a similar sun-shaped brooch with Persian turquoise for one of her friends.  
Later that year she was making brooches for tens of lost souls seeking for the feeling of home.

## The Brooch

My nails are bleeding.  
Details give me pleasure, I can feel it in my hand, now I feel the glorious renaissance in my room.  
The light has gone where he lives. I cannot see anything! We made a brooch together.  
There was a river outside our house between P and O. We wanted to hang the brooch on a bridge across the river to show our love to everyone and forever. But the bridge broke after he passed it.  
The brooch now belongs to another lover.  
It was very beautiful with a diamond in the center.  
The diamond made me blind when it left with him.  
Now everyone knows I'm blind because of him and the damn brooch.  
Let me tell you some details about the brooch, but promise me that if you find it, you will give it back to me, because the brooch is the only thing that can remind me he's real!  
First, we wanted to make it from wood, I love to work with wood! But he likes metal and diamonds. He thinks diamonds are like moon, and on that night when he left me he again reminded me that my eyes looked like the moon and that they shined in a way he never saw before.  
Both of us like stones, he had a collection of pictures of renaissance worthy stones he wanted to collect, but he suggested me to use stones besides our river. I said "I agree", but I knew I'm not even worth to him the same as his collection.  
I had some shells from the Persian Gulf, we used them to cover the rest of the brooch.  
Did I tell you his eyes are the same as the Persian Gulf?

## YOLO!

For me it is about eating, drinking travelling smoking and .... AF!  
Why should you spend money on accessories when you will die and you can not take any of those with you.  
But look at it like me!  
When you eat you drink or smoke it will make an effect on yur moment. by eating you will gain weight! by drinking you will gain happiness and by smoking you will get cancer! but still it will always be there with! you do not have to change it all the time or being worried about if it fits you today or not!  
why should we spend money on products that we should throw out after few times or years!  
don't waste money just enjoy the moment!

## The Everything

Honestly every shit that they design out there!  
I grew up in a family that I never had the chance to buy or even choose my own outfit.  
So until I come here I did not have any chance to own something that I chose for myself.  
Now I feel like I need to fill my closet with everything trendy and new in the vitrins.  
Maybe in next 25 years I finally can find out what is my style and what looks good on me and finding my own sign or whatever but until then I will fulfill my desires that did not met when I was child or teenager!  
Unfortunately!

## Expensive Items!

Accessories for me are about how much money it costs!  
You can give me a House a Limo a Diamond or a Perfume as long as it is expensive  
it means it has good quality and it means I can add it to my life to make it more beautiful or joyful!  
so it sounds like an accessory to me!

## Frida Kahlo Earing

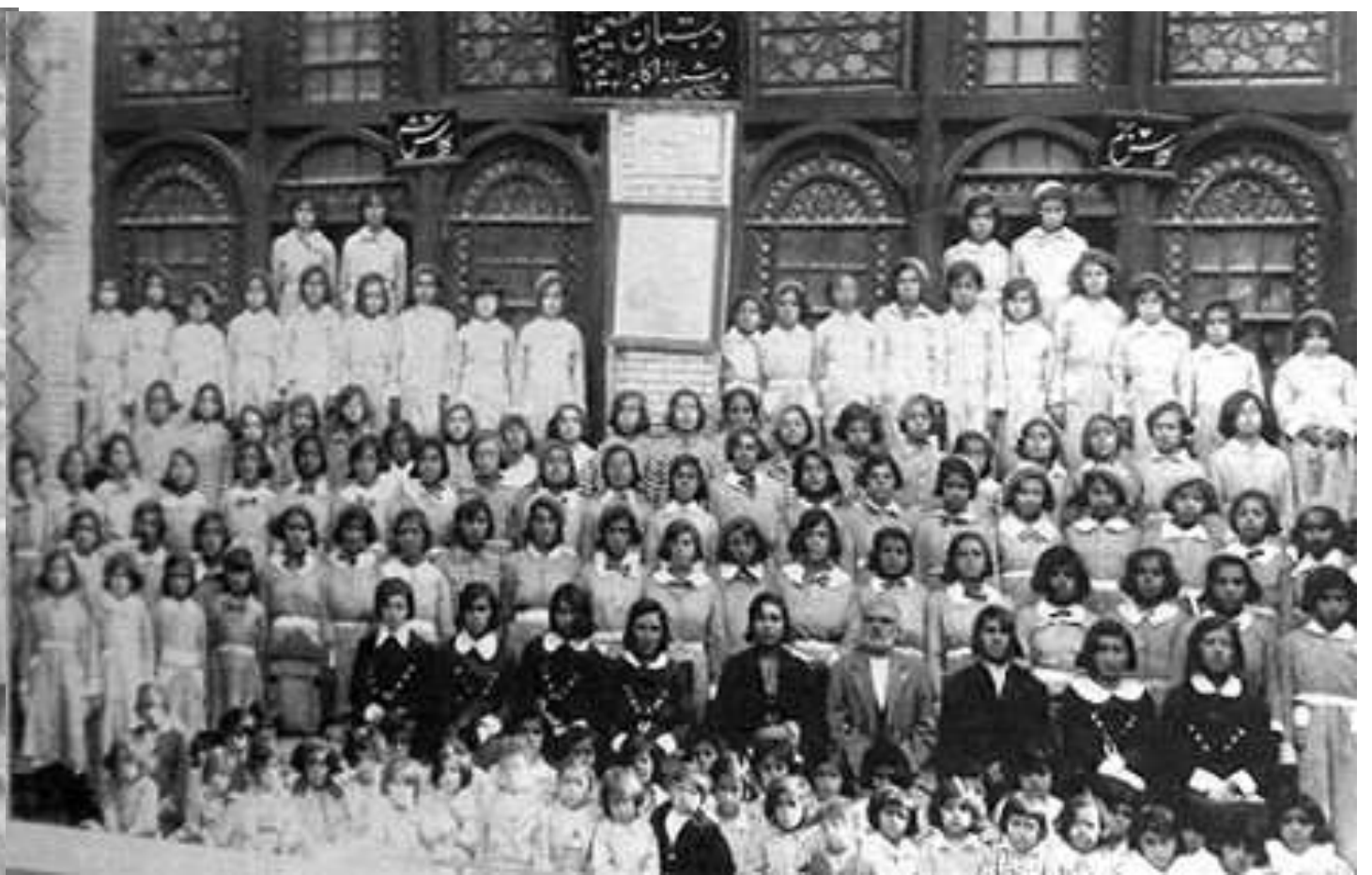
It is all about colors!  
I always buy colorful garments then I will add more colors to it by buying accessories!  
Every trip that I had, ended up with a big laugage full of accessories and clothes of that city or country. to be honest I have two accessories per garment.  
But my most favorite one is the one that I found in a street on a bench in thiland. It was a Frida Kahlo earring (just one).  
It was made out of glass and silver. It was so big and gorgeous. I took it back home and after disinfected it I started using it. I was so in love with it that I cut mt hair so short and I get rid of my piercing in my nose and ears just to let it shine by itself alone!  
and it changed me to another person who did'nt want to buy accessories anymore but buy clothes that looks good with my earring!  
it broke after 5 years and the silver part got oxodize but I kept it in my jewelry box.  
sometimes I feel like I should order it to someone to make an exact same one.  
But the fact that the new one will never have the same story behind it make me not to do it!





**I gathered all the results and analyzed all the answers. I decided the best piece of accessory to accommodate my criteria is a collar.**

**Amongst the options I got and for the purpose of this project, collars are something you can see at first sight. After that, I spent time on researching collars, their origin and uses in Europe, Iran and rest of the world. I tried to understand the original concept of the item and fuse that with my concepts and ideas.**





## Collar

*I will never forget those days. Days when I woke up to the smell of fresh bread being pulled out of the oven.*

*After breakfast, we had to get ready for school.*

*It was six of us kids, I had two older sisters. I always kind of envied them since they had their own wardrobes stuffed with fairly nice outfits. As schoolkids, we had to wear plain white shirts, navy skirts, white stockings and black Vernier leather shoes.*

*It was a common outfit for all school kids back then.*

*Then it was time for my favourite part of that time of a day.*

*We had to wear a collar to show that we were clean and tidy.*

*We were pretty similar thanks to those uniforms and it was pretty nice as a student.*

*but the cute part was that Our mother customized the collars with different combinations of stones and embroidery for my older sisters as their jewellery piece. My classmates were just admired that part of my outfit.*

*I still remember that feeling and up to this day. How those times were different, warmer, and how my mom made me and my sisters feel special with her exceptional collars.*

## Collar research in general

Collar is a part of clothing, usually sewed on a shirt, dress or coat. It fastens around the neck. Collar, unlike other necklines such as lapels or revers, is being made from a separate piece of fabric that is not a part of the main body of the garment. Collar might also be completely detachable from the main body of the garment. (Bridgland, 2013)

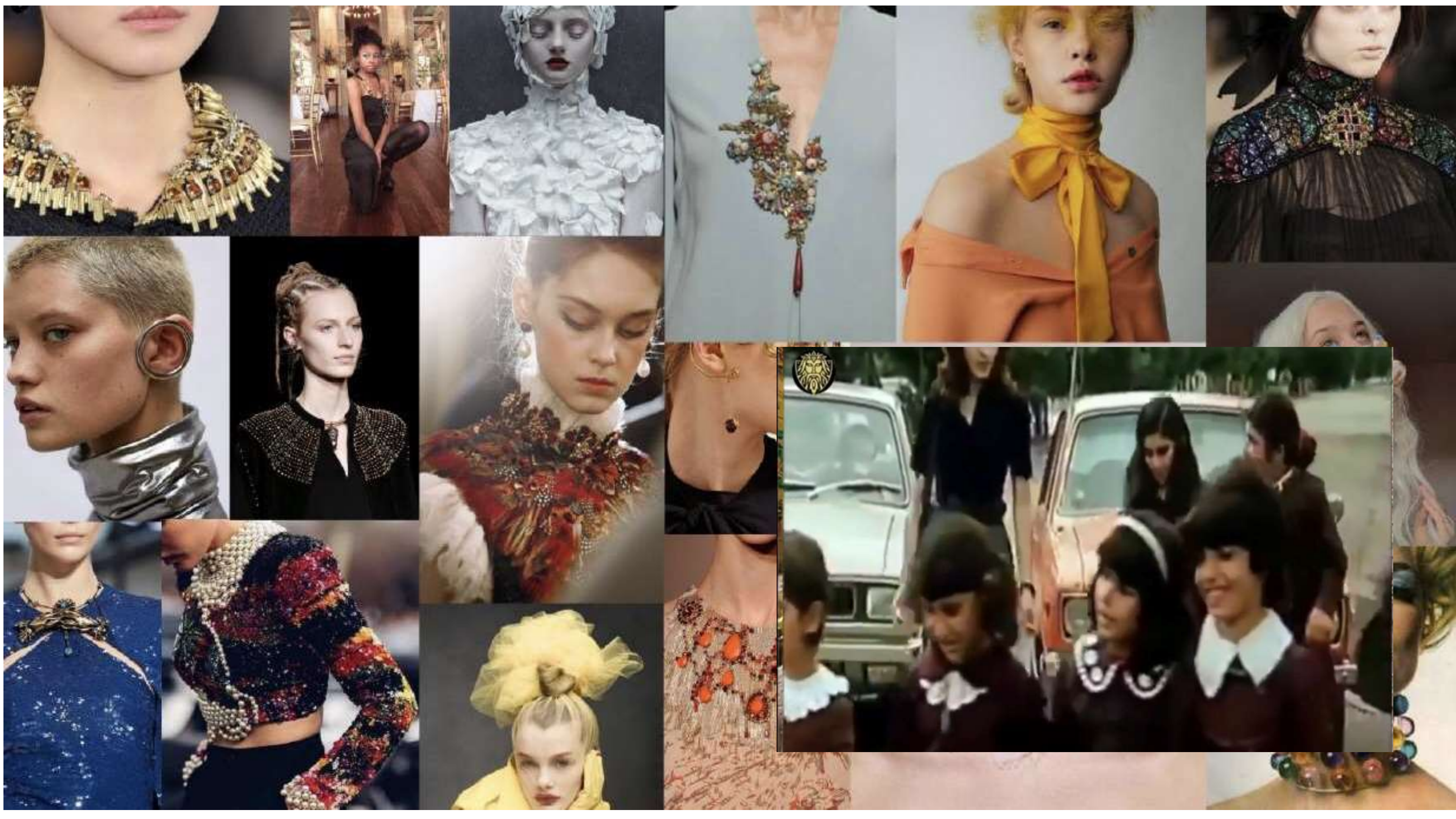
If we want to track the origin of collars, we have to return all the way to the 1300s, when collars, or gorgets, were a part of armour that protected the neck of the wearer. The English word *collar* probably comes directly from the French version *coler*.

In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, collars made their way into fashion as they were being used for similar visual purposes as nowadays. (Etymonline.com, 2019)

During the Elizabethan and the Edwardian period, collars became perhaps most noticeable in their existence. People worn them as a form of jewellery.

Back then, it used to be the part of a garment that caught your eye the very second you saw it. Ornamental collars of various shapes and patterns were used mainly by the higher classes. (Elgin, 2010) As centuries passed, collars were slowly being pushed aside and getting less noticeable on garments. People realized the practical usability of collars on clothes is little and perhaps, as clothes were becoming more and more affordable, collars became just excessive fabric that could save the costs if not used. Nowadays, we mostly only see collars on shirts, coats. there are many kinds of different looking collars, each giving a unique touch to the top they decorate.







**In my cultural background, there were always colors and patterns.**

**In Iran, it didn't matter what age you were, you would always wear layers of patterns and colors!**

**We didn't have something like fashion design in Iran, it was mostly about the special ways people used to dress in different states of the country for decades. But in bigger cities, some small communities or individuals started to use those colors and patterns in modern and more minimalistic ways.**

**But still, Iranians are mostly big fans maximalism and if you are familiar with our architecture, you know what I mean by that.**





Then











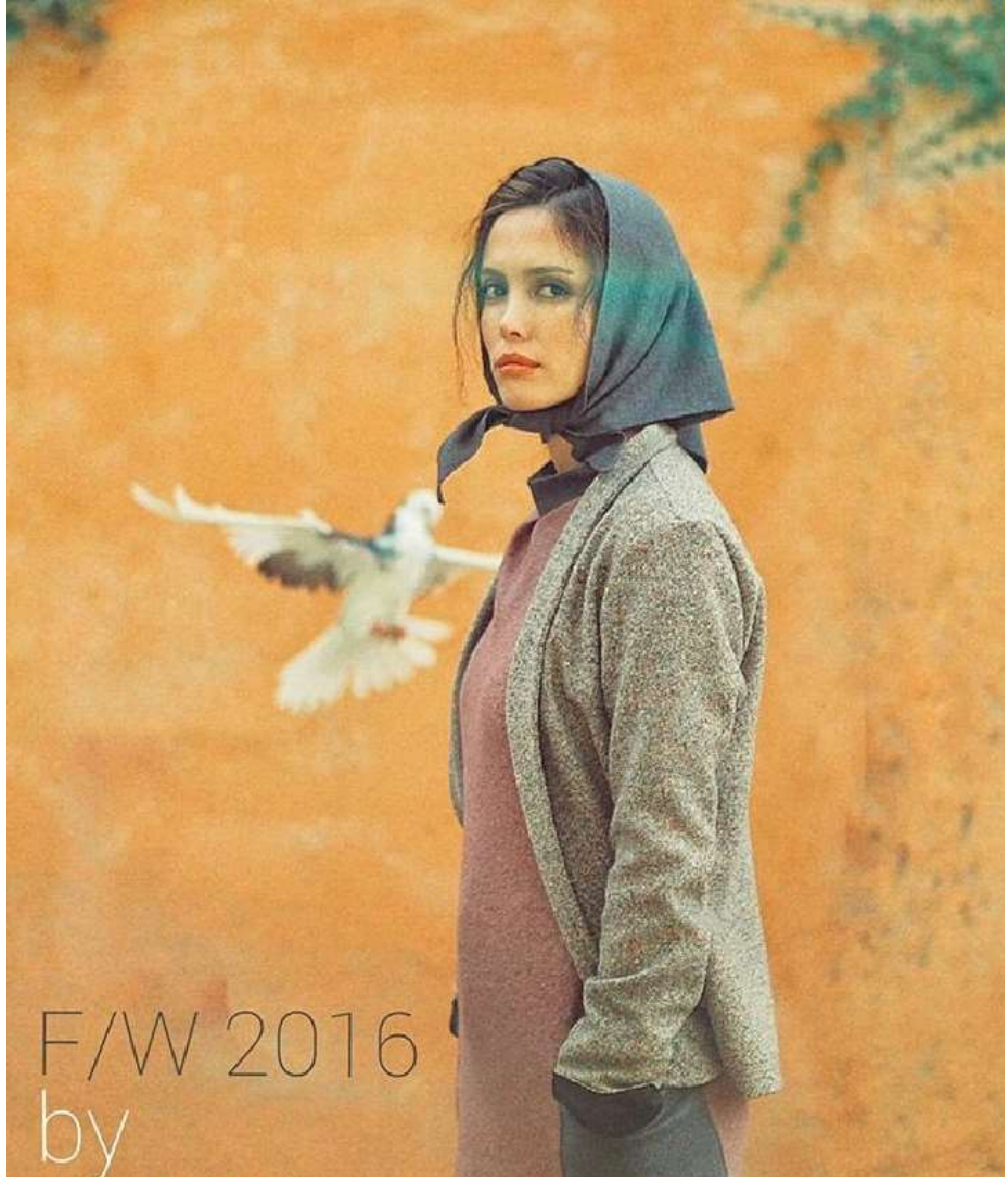
**Now**







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## **Wanting to stay yourself while stil being part of the new world**

**I felt like in order to be considered a trustworthy person, I should change myself to a different version of Negar.**

**From one point of view it made it so easy for me to be comfortable, from another a question was born:**

**“What will make u distinct from the person who sits next to you?”**

**We are not robots. We are not some prewritten grams.**



**Scandinavian  
style!**













**I have been growing up with Iranian culture for 24 years.**

**My hobbies, my taste in music, my taste in fashion, the way I dance, the way I party, the way I handle different situations are all different from the ways of a person who was born and raised in Europe.**

**As a fashion student I love my Iranian heritage of clothes and art, but as an immigrant I want to blend in. As an accessories designer, how can I combine these two facts?**



## **Metal workshop**

**I joined metal workshop to try out different ways of coloring metal and working with it.**

**I talked to Camilla Luihn, my teacher in the metal department**

**She taught me how to color metal in different colors in a 100% eco-friendly way.**



Heating the metal from different distances until it has jewel-like tones.





**Making the metal slightly red and putting it in boiling water right away, that gives it a crimson red**





**Dipping a piece of cotton into a combination of salmiak and salt, then putting the metal inside of the cotton and leaving it in a warm place for 12 hours. Then you will get turquoise blue.**







**Making a pattern on the metal and putting it in acid for a few minutes creates black color.  
You should then use a piece of sandpaper to erase the upper surface and see the pattern and color under.**



**All of these colors remain the same just with a simple fixative spray.  
The only slight problem (unless you make it into an advantage)  
with the above mentioned techniques is the fact that the designer  
doesn't have direct control over the result –  
the color often get a different shape and random abstract patterns are formed on the material.**



**In early January I travelled to Iran to attend a couple of workshops on how to make Persian rugs. I even applied and got accepted to join those workshops. It was the main reason I travelled back home, but unfortunately right after I left Norway, there were huge political tensions between Iran and USA, a commercial airplane crashed due to human error, resulting into many protests all over Iran.**

**Everything was cancelled and closed so I didn't get the chance to try out those methods. Since I had planned on using the techniques while making my items, it was really tough. But despite all of that I travelled to the where they make original felts and I had the chance to observe different colors and thicknesses of felt, as well as different methods of making it!**













My next step was meeting a guy who was a fabric seller before the revolution (the exact timepoint of the selected scenario). After the revolution he couldn't continue his job, so he had a huge selection of 40 years old fabrics that never got sold. It would have been quite a good option for my collars, but the problem was that the fabrics were so old that were getting ripped even by any kind of pressure. It wasn't suitable for sewing anymore. But it definitely was a precious collection from those times.

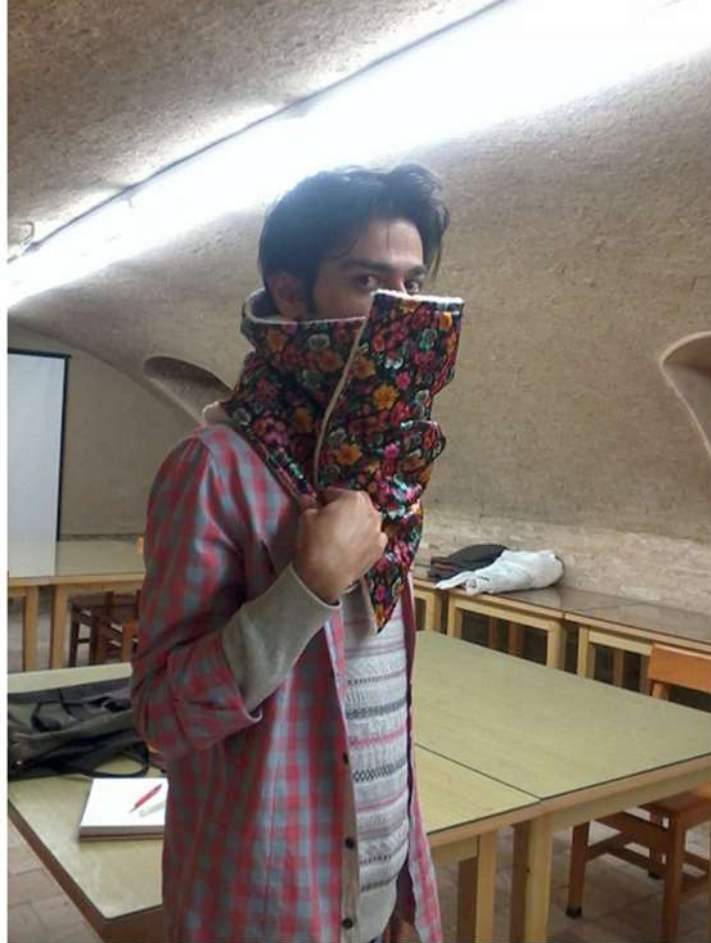




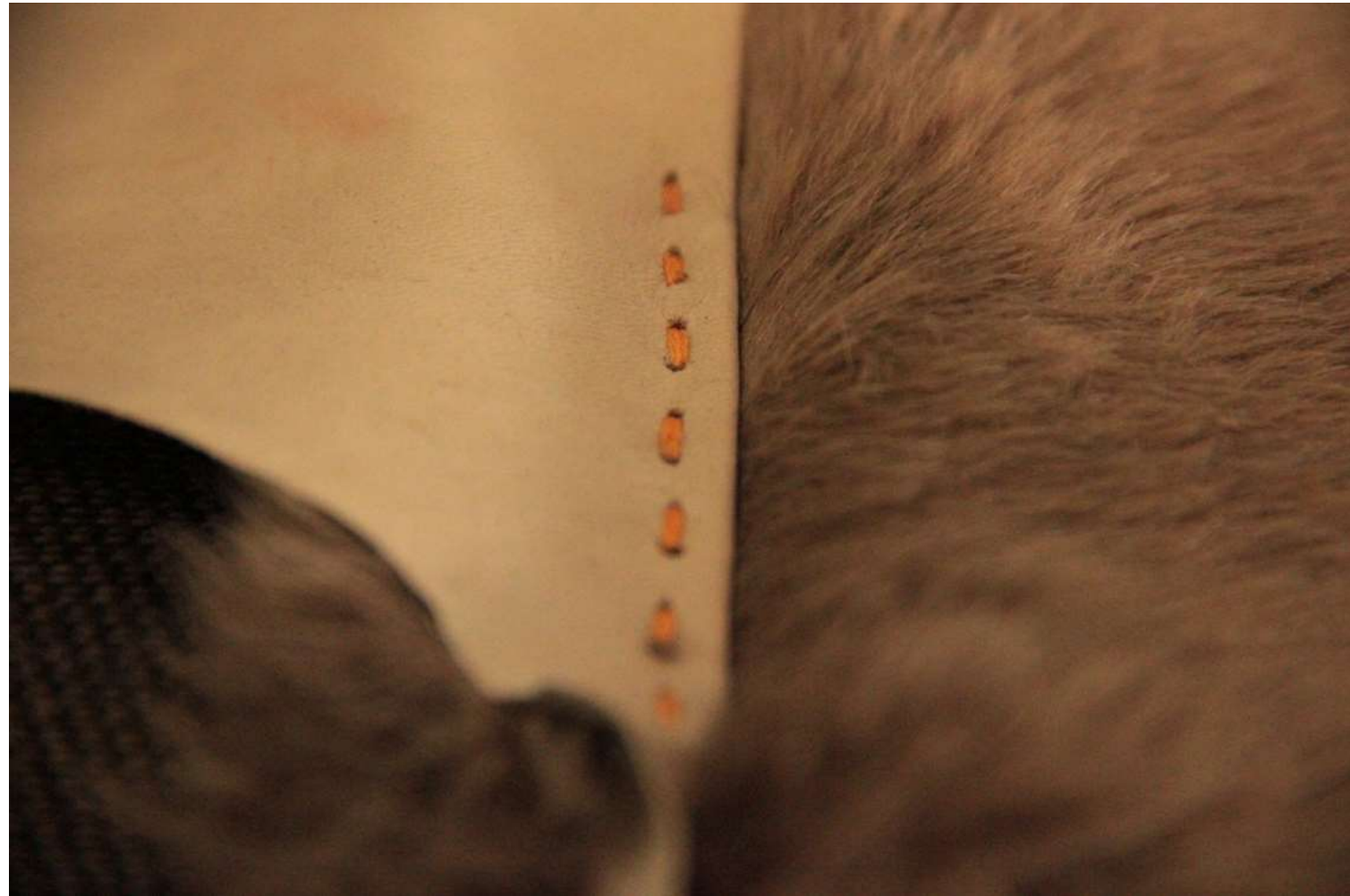
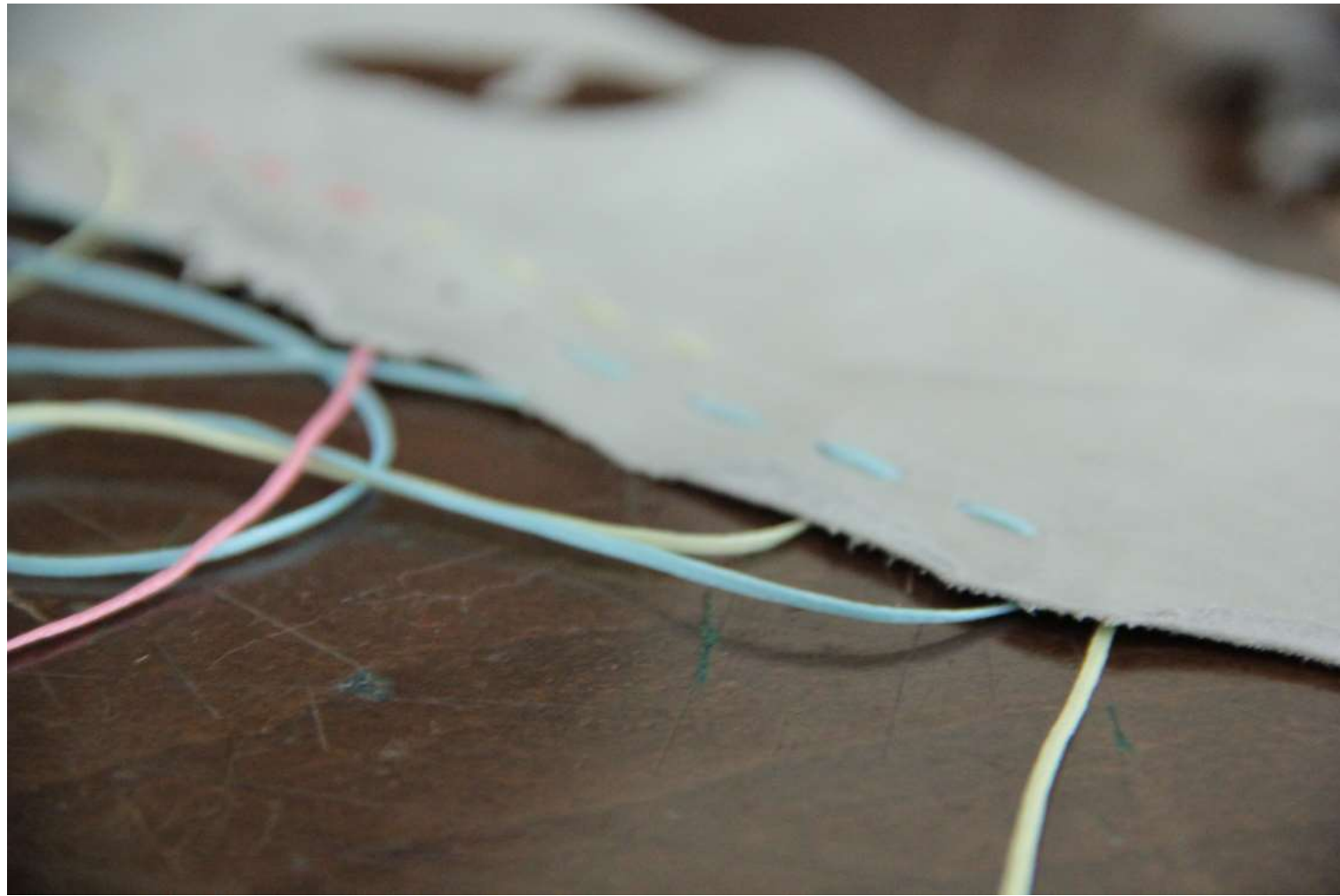
The next thing I did in Iran was helping 2 of my friends making some collars just to get familiar with the process of making something around the neck.  
(I can not reveal more pictures of their project but it was an amazing experience for me)









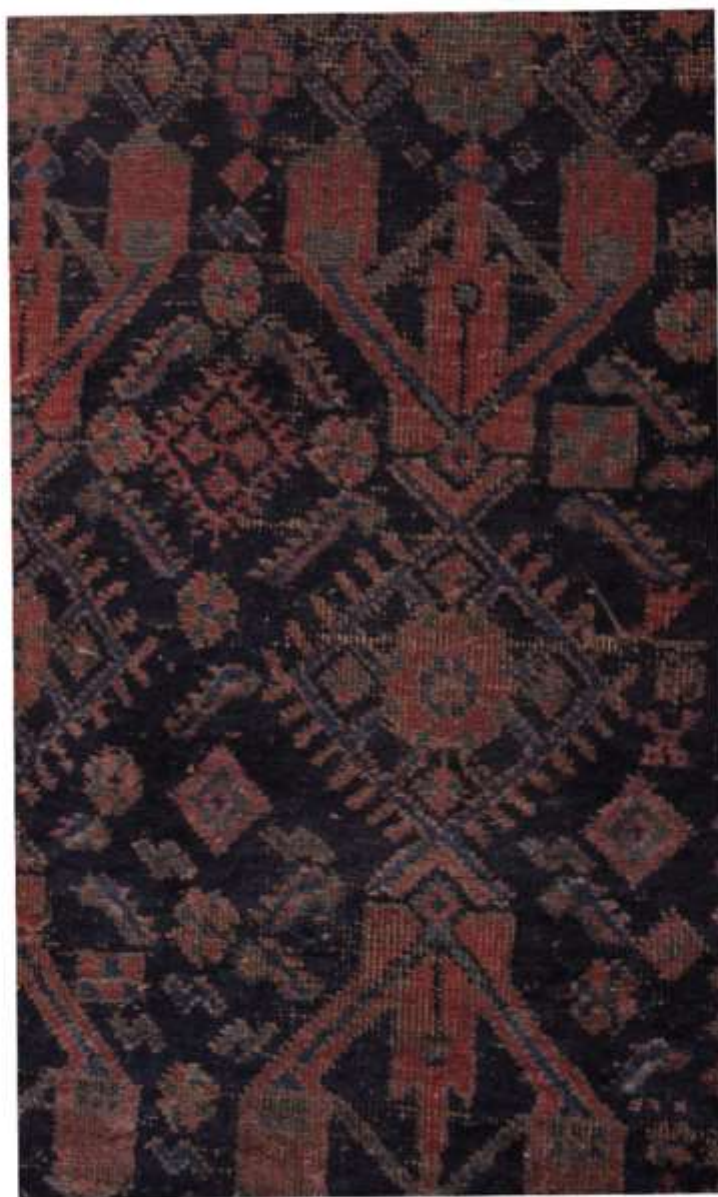




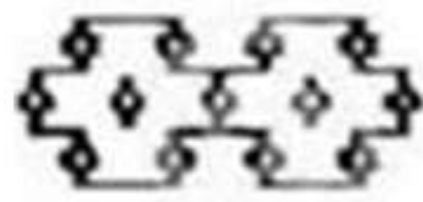
The last thing I did in Iran was visiting a rug collector who had hundreds of years old Persian rug in his collection. They are priceless so I couldn't buy any, but the patterns and colors are of the most persian kind ever!









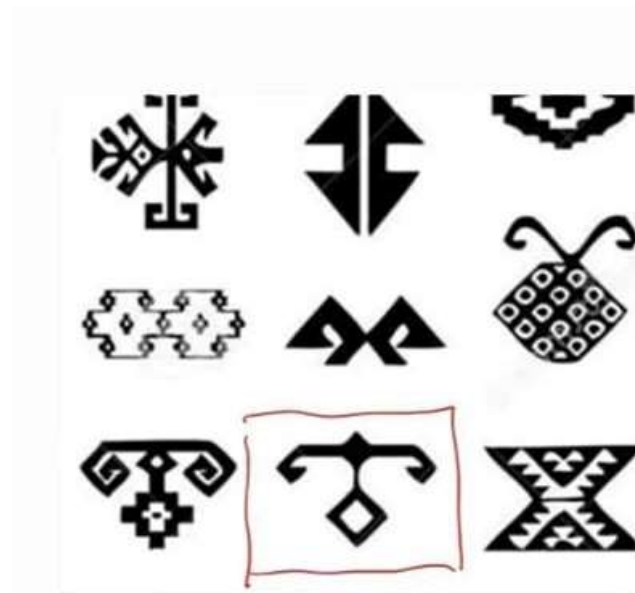
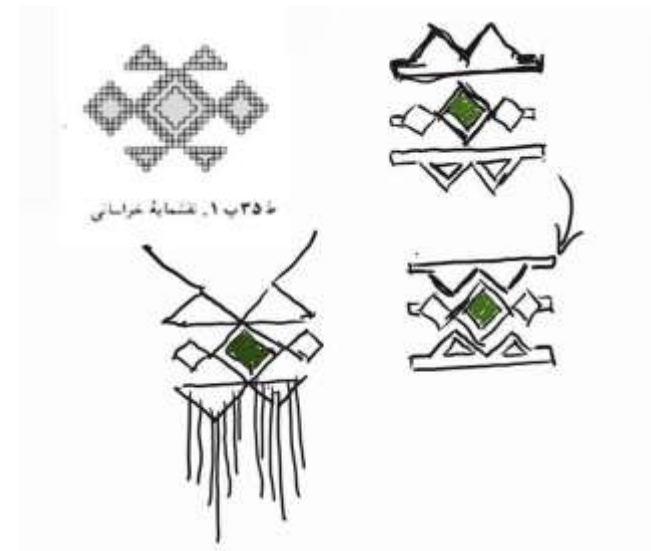




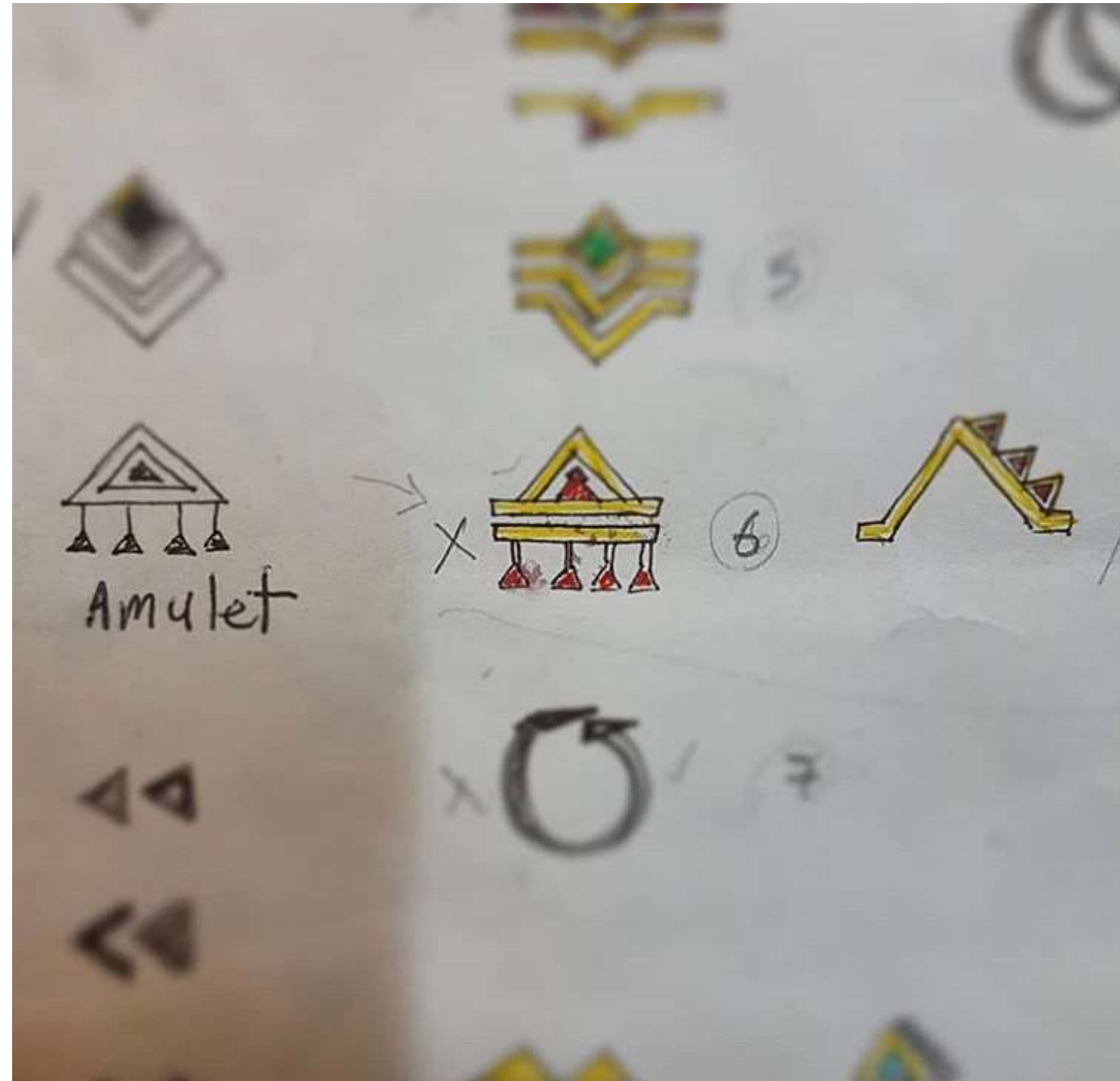
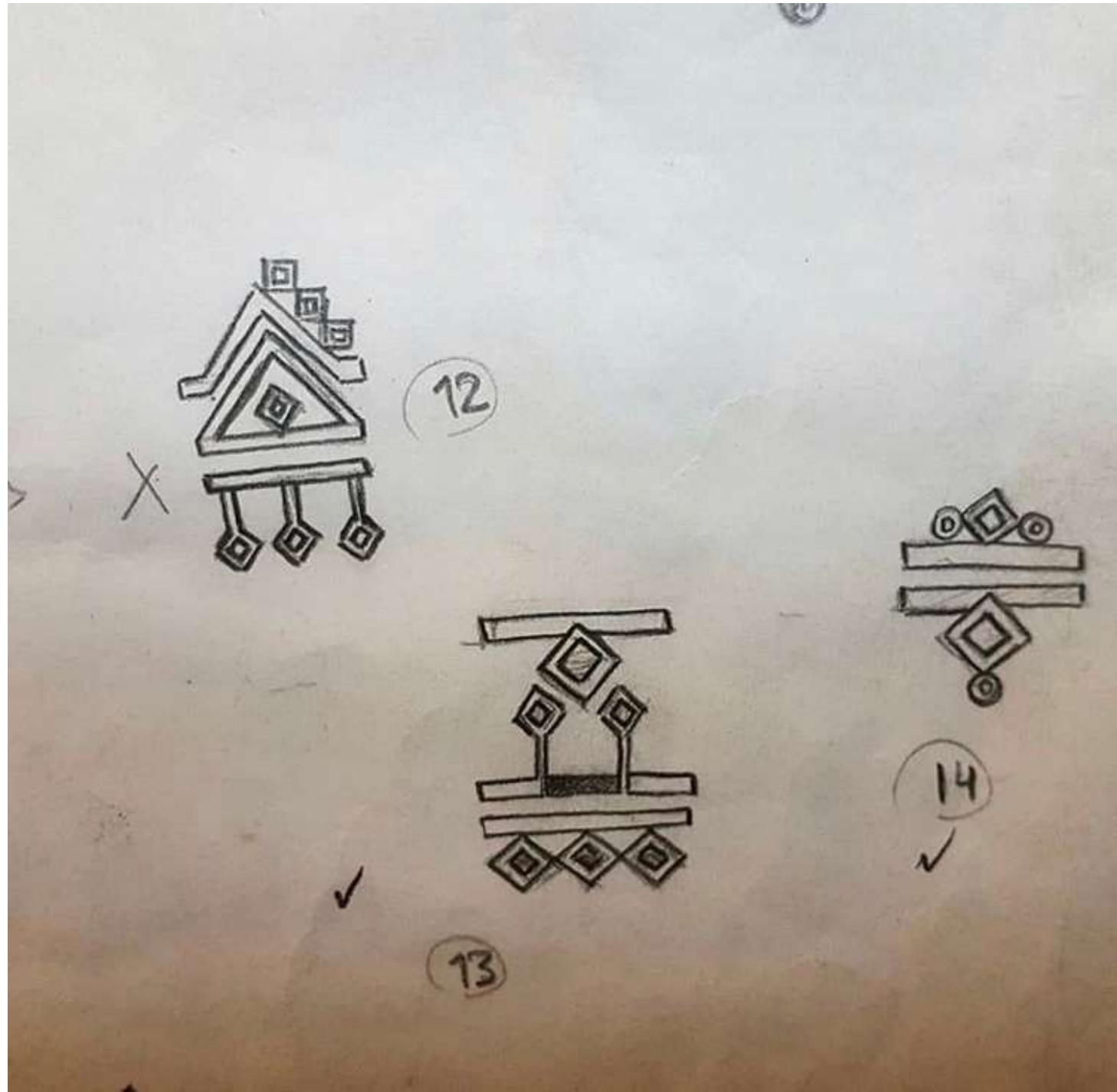




With all the knowledge I have gathered on various materials, techniques and patterns, I started sketching designs derived from the collar scenario.









after sketching for motives I sketched for the collars and the whole shape and Idea that I had in my mind





**Choosing a material after all the tests and making prototypes with different kinds of fabric, plastic, paper.**

**Felt plays an important role in Iranian attires, has a rich history and is one of the most common textile materials in Iran. It has a right thickness so it doesn't need to be sewed with a sewing machine and the edges can be sharp. For these reasons I chose felt to make my final prototypes with and beads to make the motifs from persian rugs patterns.**





I tried to color fabrics like cloth and felt to my sketches color with saffron and turmeric.





The following pictures are of materials I have found in Oslo that can be used for the purpose of my project





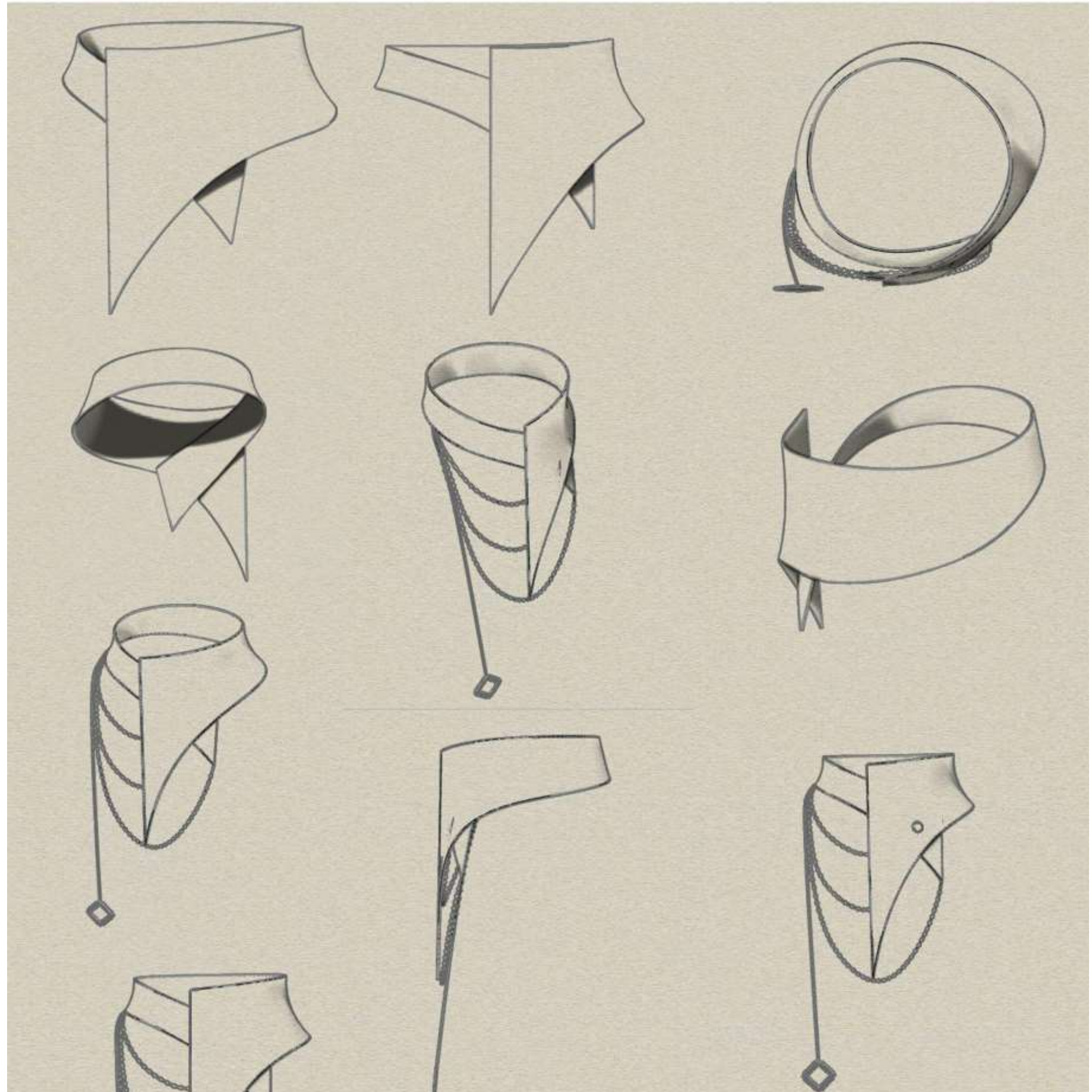
I tried to combine the colors that I chose from persian rugs and monuments in Iran with colors that the PANTONE company calls “persian”, because I thought it might be closer to the universal taste. Furthermore, it has been associated with the term “persian” by a well renowned company, so some people know these colors as persian colors.

#FE28A2 persian-rose-color Red 254 Green 40 Blue 162	#00A693 persian-green-color Red 0 Green 166 Blue 147	#1C39BB persian-blue-color Red 28 Green 57 Blue 187	#CC3333 persian-red-color Red 204 Green 51 Blue 51	#D99058 persian-orange-color Red 217 Green 144 Blue 88	#F77FBE persian-pink-color Red 247 Green 127 Blue 190
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I started to use the collars on my Rhino models to see it in 3D and to become more aware of the form and how it would look on the body.

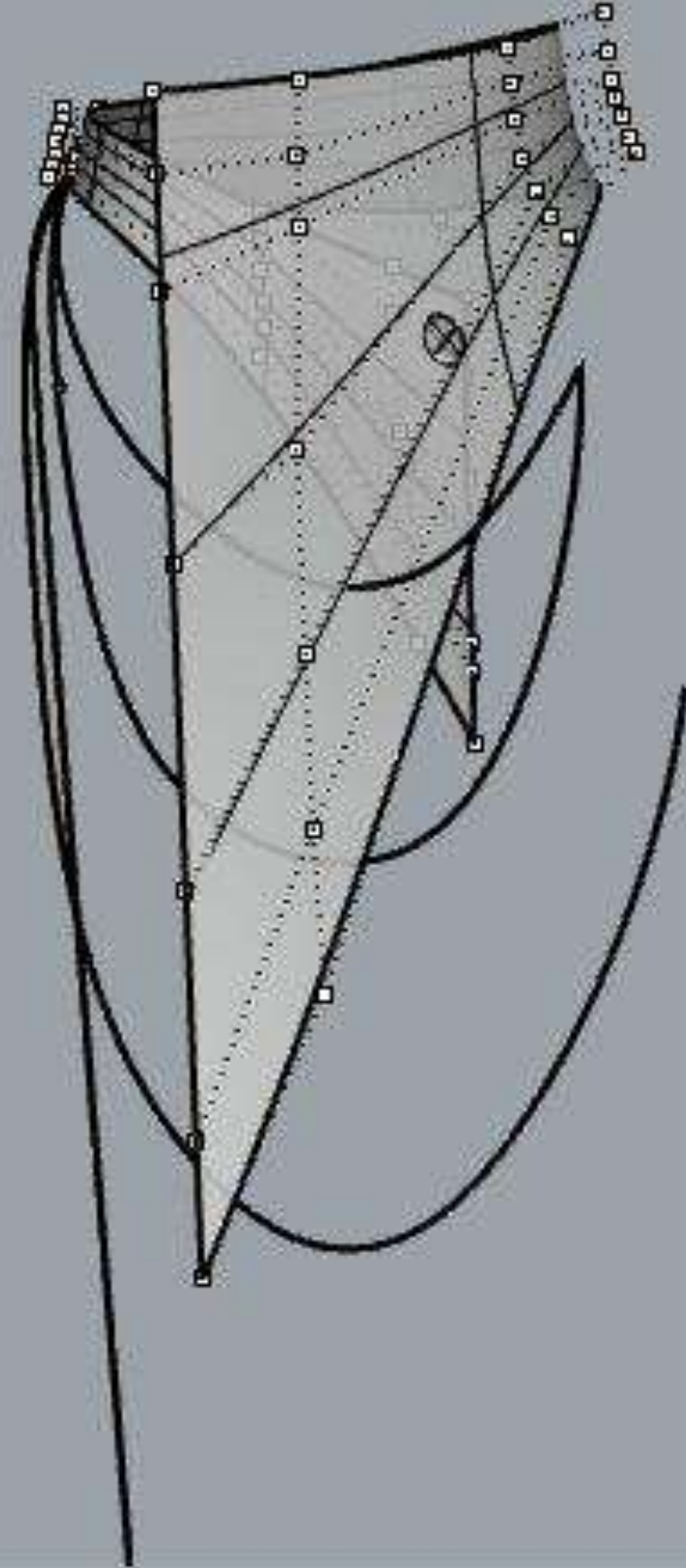
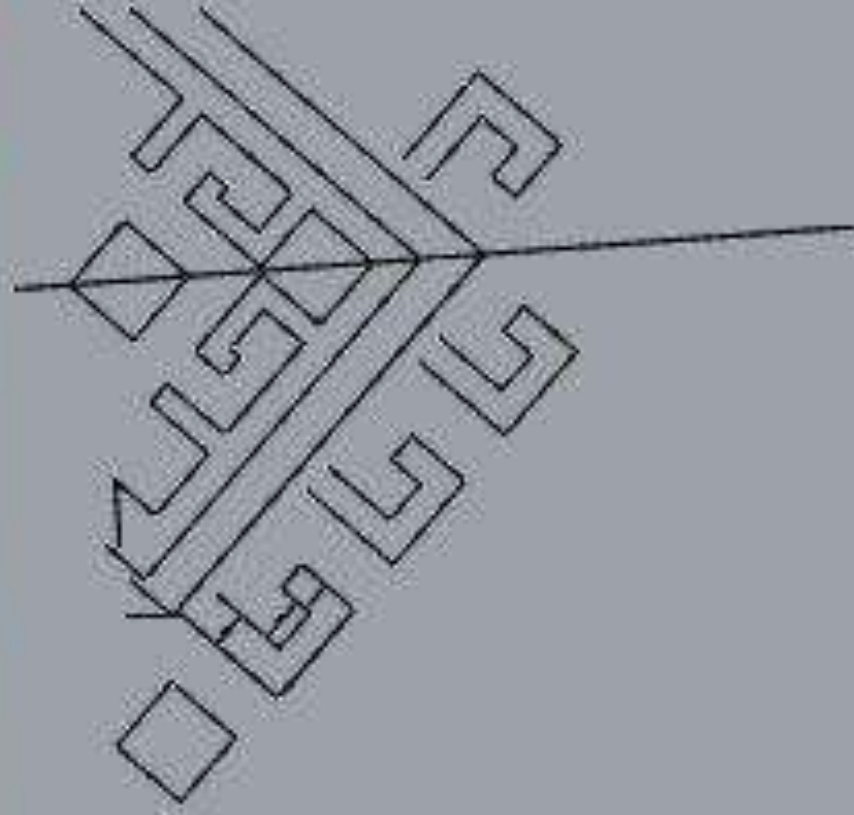
First collar\_ process of making









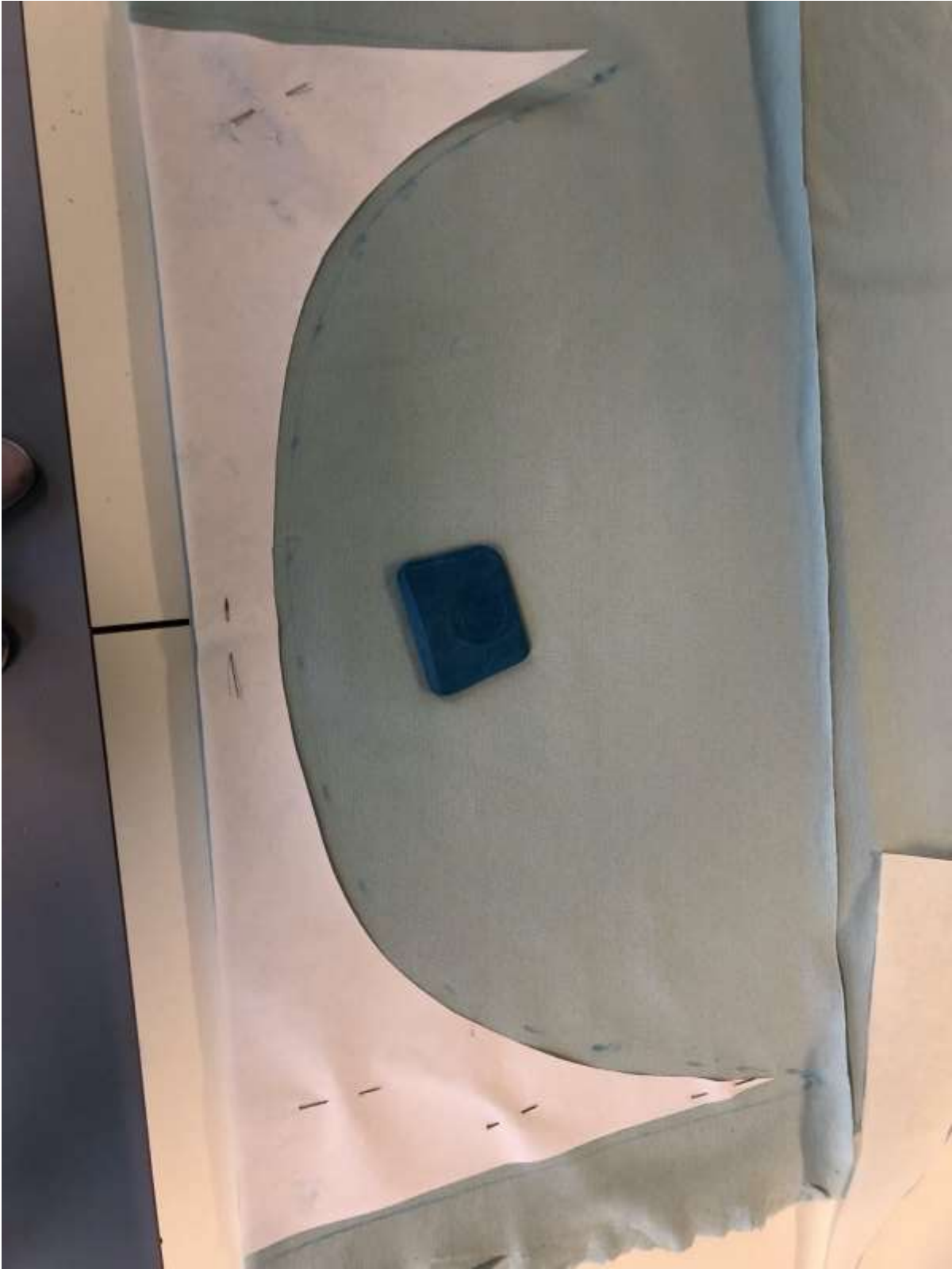








Then I started making the designed collars in workshop (but still as prototypes).





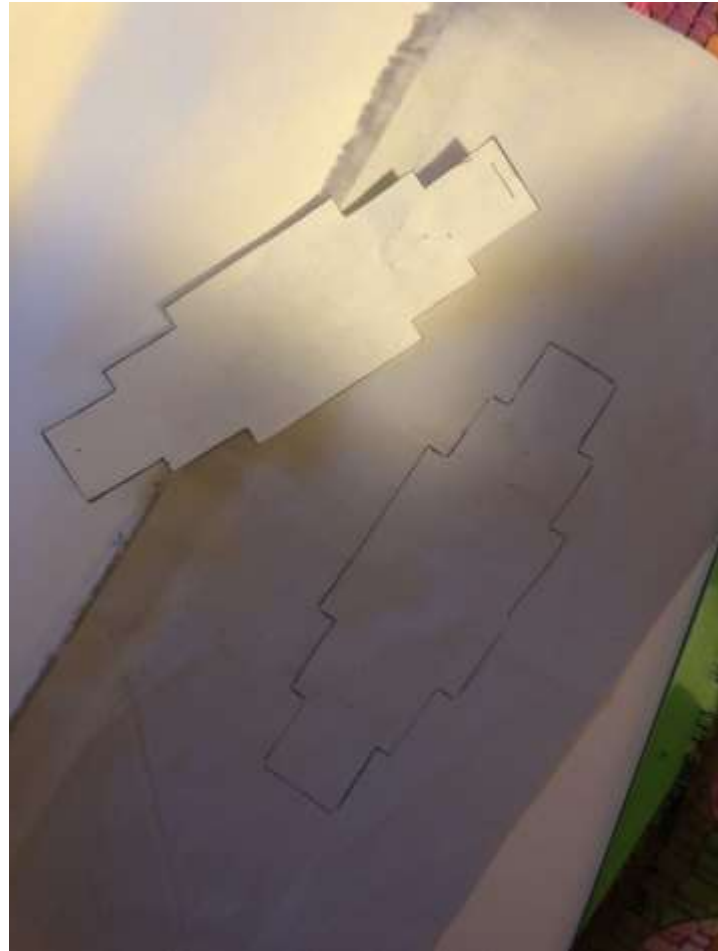
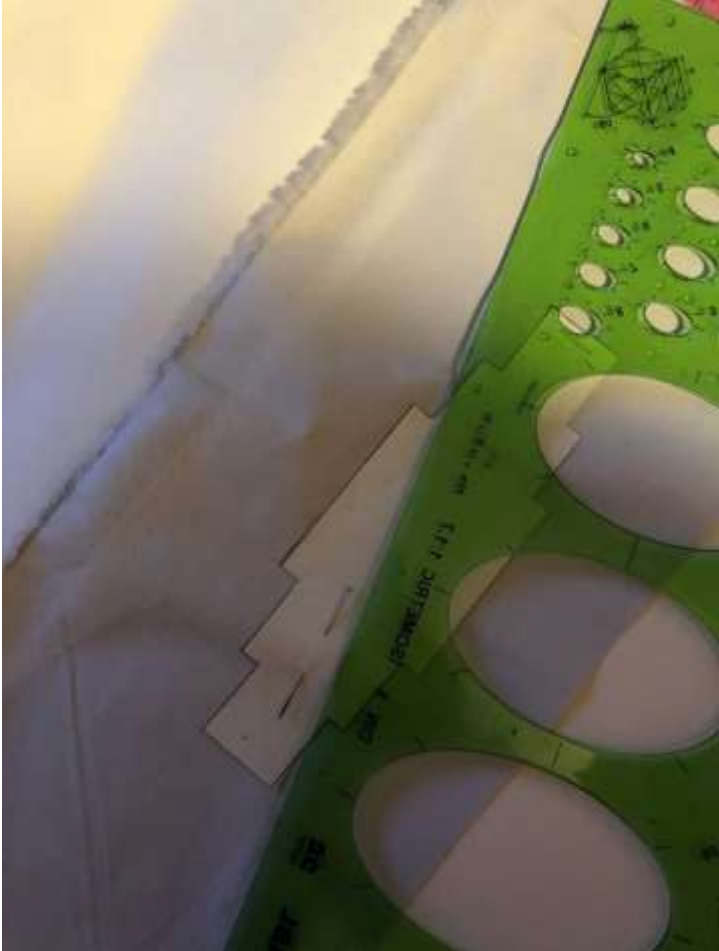
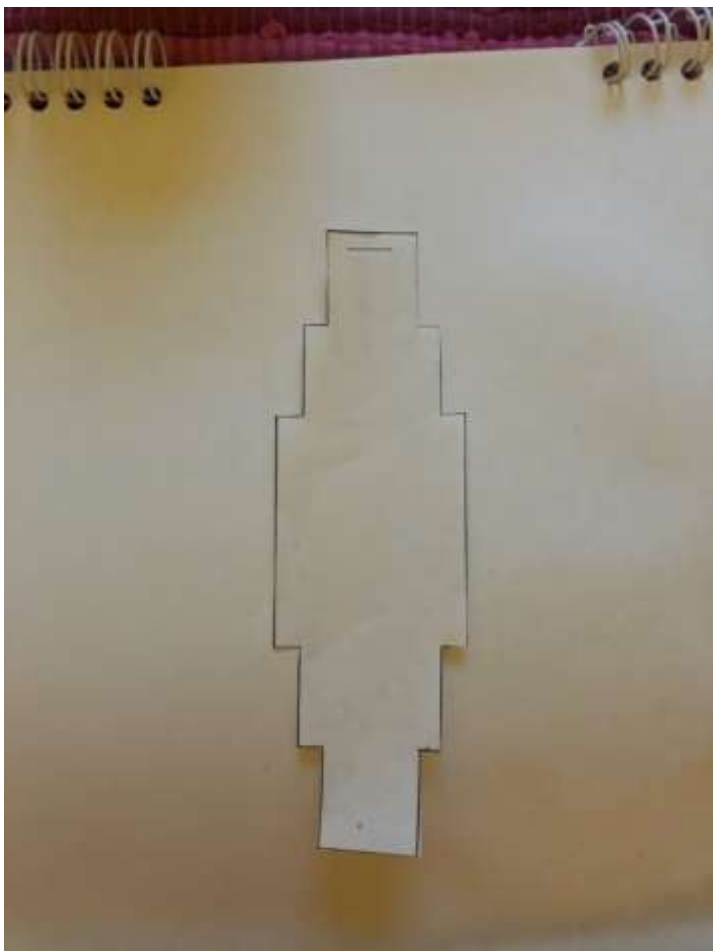








The process of making motifs

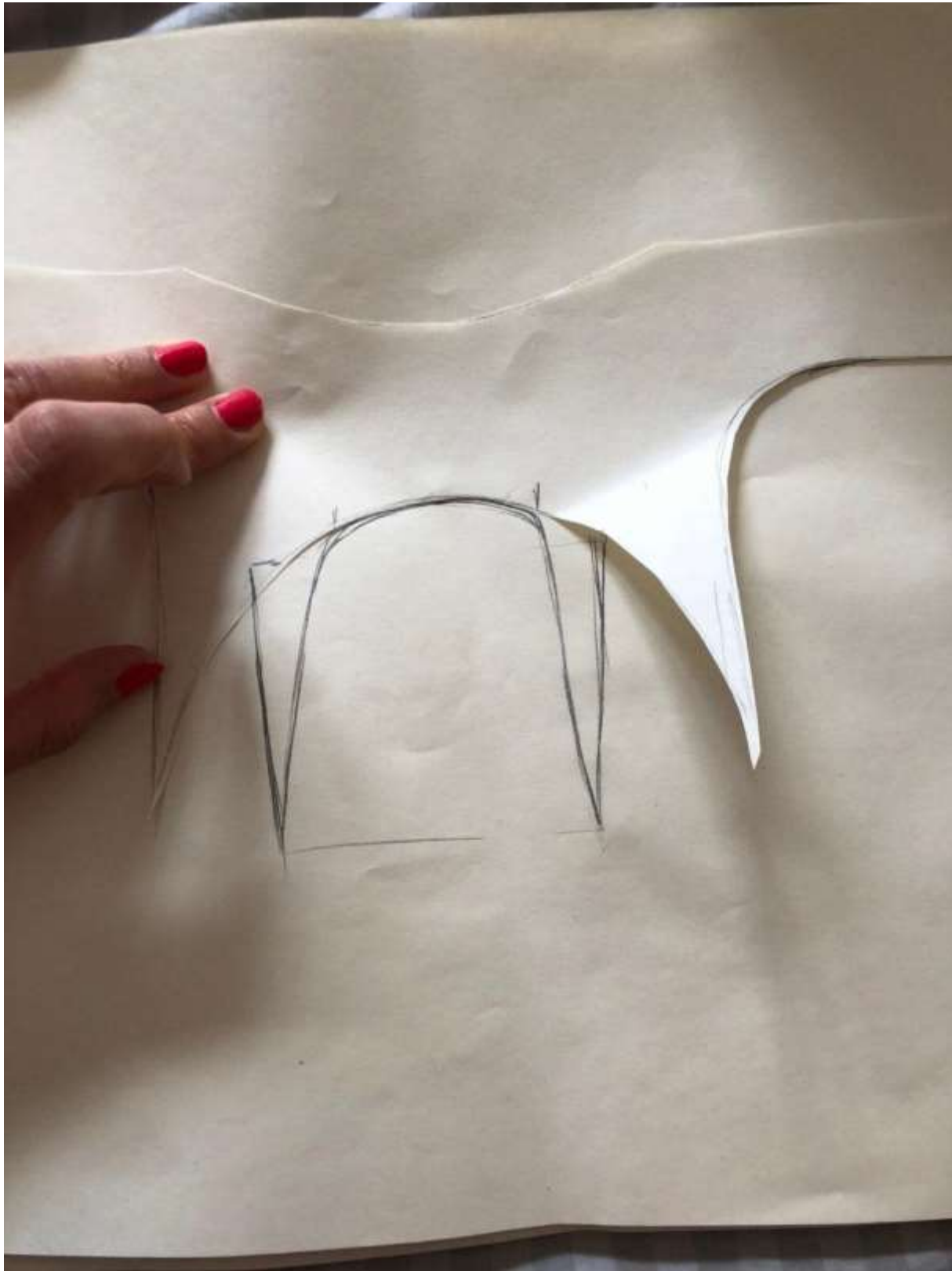








Second collar\_ process of making













Third collar\_ process of making





Fourth collar\_ process of making









**First of all, I am sure the creating process would be completely different if the situation was normal during the past months.**

**I have lost the opportunity to attend workshops where I would focus on improving my crafting techniques and gathering important notes and know-hows from people who are experienced in those areas.**

**I would be more capable of making high-level looking prototypes and I wouldn't be forced to improvise with materials or techniques. I am confident I would be able to complete a series of collars that would be closer to my designs and would be a better representation and expression of my ideas, if I had the chance to improve my crafting skills with the help of teachers and use the university studios for the whole duration of the semester.**

**My plans were first disrupted during my visit to Iran in January because of the Iran-USA tensions and following protests with many casualties. Then all of our plans were altered by the pandemic situation during March, April and May.**

**On the other hand, this kind of conditions gave me the opportunity to improve my problem solving and time management abilities. It forced me to adapt and overcome unexpected obstacles and even though the results were greatly altered by those obstacles, the experience gained throughout this process is very rare and valuable. I am grateful for them, as well as for the opportunity to present my project even despite the unfortunate flow of events.**