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“All design is political.
[...] A design cannot be disconnected from
the values and assumptions in which it
was created, from the ideologies behind
it. [...] ideology is in everything around
us, but we perceive it as natural.”

Ruben Pater,
Amsterdam, 2016

Design is always political because it reflects the values, beliefs, and world views of its creator. Every choice what to include, highlight, or change shapes how we think and interact with the world. Design can challenge systems, promote inclusivity, or re-inforce inequality. It's never neutral, it's a tool for dialogue, activism, and change.

Fashion design has long been used to make political statements through powerful symbols and collective identity. For example, the corset has shifted from a restrictive garment symbolizing societal control to a symbol of liberation when reclaimed in modern fashion. Similarly, social movements often adopt *uniforms* to create solidarity and visibility like the Black Panthers' black berets and leather jackets, which projected strength and resistance, or the pink pussy hats of the Women's March, symbolizing unity and resistance. These choices aren't just aesthetic, they communicate values, challenge norms, and unite people around shared causes, making fashion a potent tool for political expression.



Black Panther march, 1969



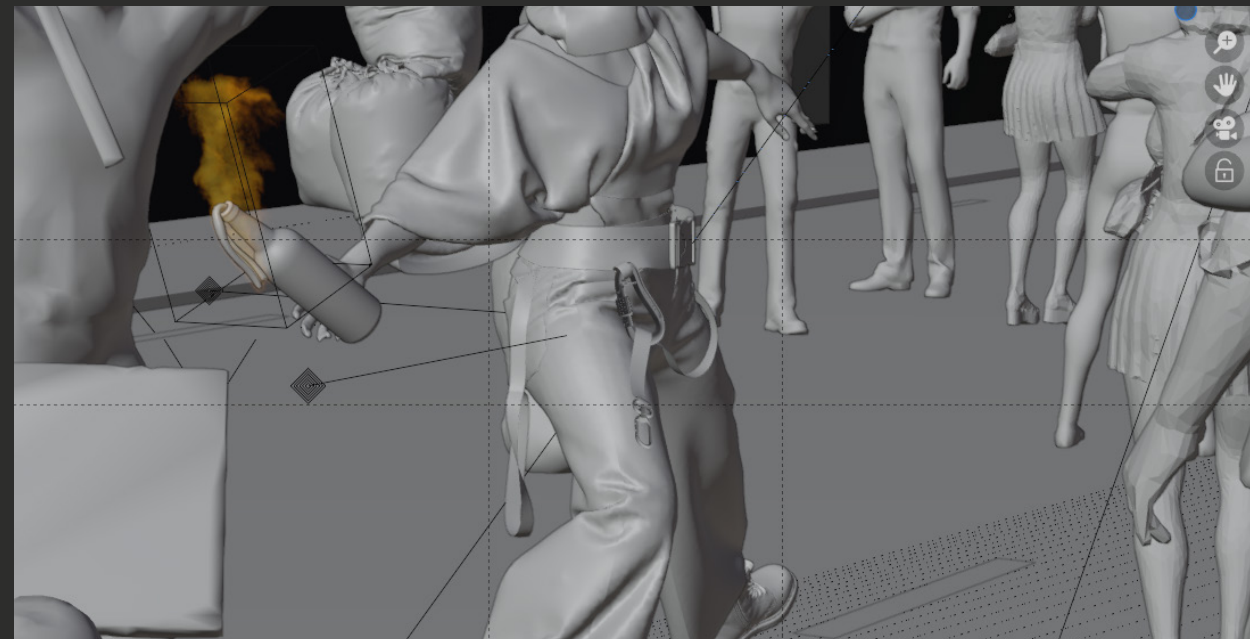
Women's March on Washington D.C., 2017



My name is Florencia, and I am originally from Uruguay. I have been always deeply interested in both the arts and fields like technical drawing and mathematics. As a high school student, my journey alternated between these two worlds, with design being the perfect intersection for me where creativity and technical precision meet.

My journey into the working world began at a young age, an experience that allowed me to encounter people from different realities and circumstances. These interactions opened my eyes to the challenges faced by many and encouraged my interest for social causes. Fashion is my tool to express myself and give visibility to causes I believe in.

As a designer, this has profoundly shaped my creative identity.



An estimated of 150 billion garments are produced annually, from which between 15 and 45 billion of those garments are never even sold, this clearly highlights the immense waste created by the system (Chan, 2023).

From the annually production, about 92 million tonnes of discarded garments find their way into landfills.

Digital fashion is more sustainable than traditional fashion in several ways. Unlike physical garments, digital fashion doesn't require raw materials, manufacturing, or transportation, which are some of the largest contributors to environmental harm in the fashion industry. As Ecocult points out, "DressX claims that the production of digital fashion uses 97% less carbon than the production of a physical garment."

However, digital fashion still has an environmental footprint, primarily due to the energy consumption associated with blockchain¹ technology and data storage. When digital garments are created, bought, or sold as NFTs.², it involves transactions that use energy. The computers validating these transactions, known as "miners," consume a lot of electricity, contributing to carbon emissions.

The Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) report of a single physical t-shirt compared to a digital t-shirt shows a significant reduction in CO2 emissions. A physical t-shirt generates approximately 7.8 kg of CO2, whereas a digital t-shirt reduces emissions to just 0.26 kg. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, n.d.).

While digital fashion is a step toward more sustainable fashion, it's important to recognize that the technology supporting it isn't entirely free of environmental impact.

¹ Block chain: technology that stores information in a digital database, making it secure and no one person, company, or government controls the network—it's maintained by many different computers (or "nodes") working together, making it more secure and resistant to manipulation, so no single entity controls it and the data is hard to alter.)

² NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) are unique digital assets stored on a blockchain, representing ownership of a specific item, such as digital art, music, or virtual fashion. NFTs are one-of-a-kind and cannot be replaced or exchanged on a one-to-one basis, making them valuable for digital collectibles and assets.



Chan, E. (2023, September 8). Why are billions of clothes never even sold? British Vogue. Retrieved from <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/why-are-billions-of-clothes-never-even-sold>

Ecocult. (2021, April 22). Digital and virtual fashion: A sustainable future or more waste? Ecocult. Retrieved from <https://ecocult.com/digital-virtual-fashion-sustainability/>

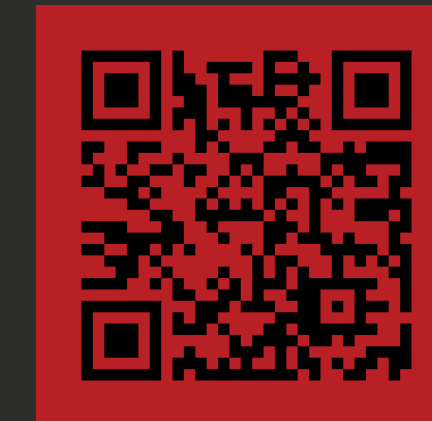
Ellen MacArthur Foundation. (n.d.). The Fabricant: Life cycle assessment of digital fashion. Retrieved from <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-examples/the-fabricant>



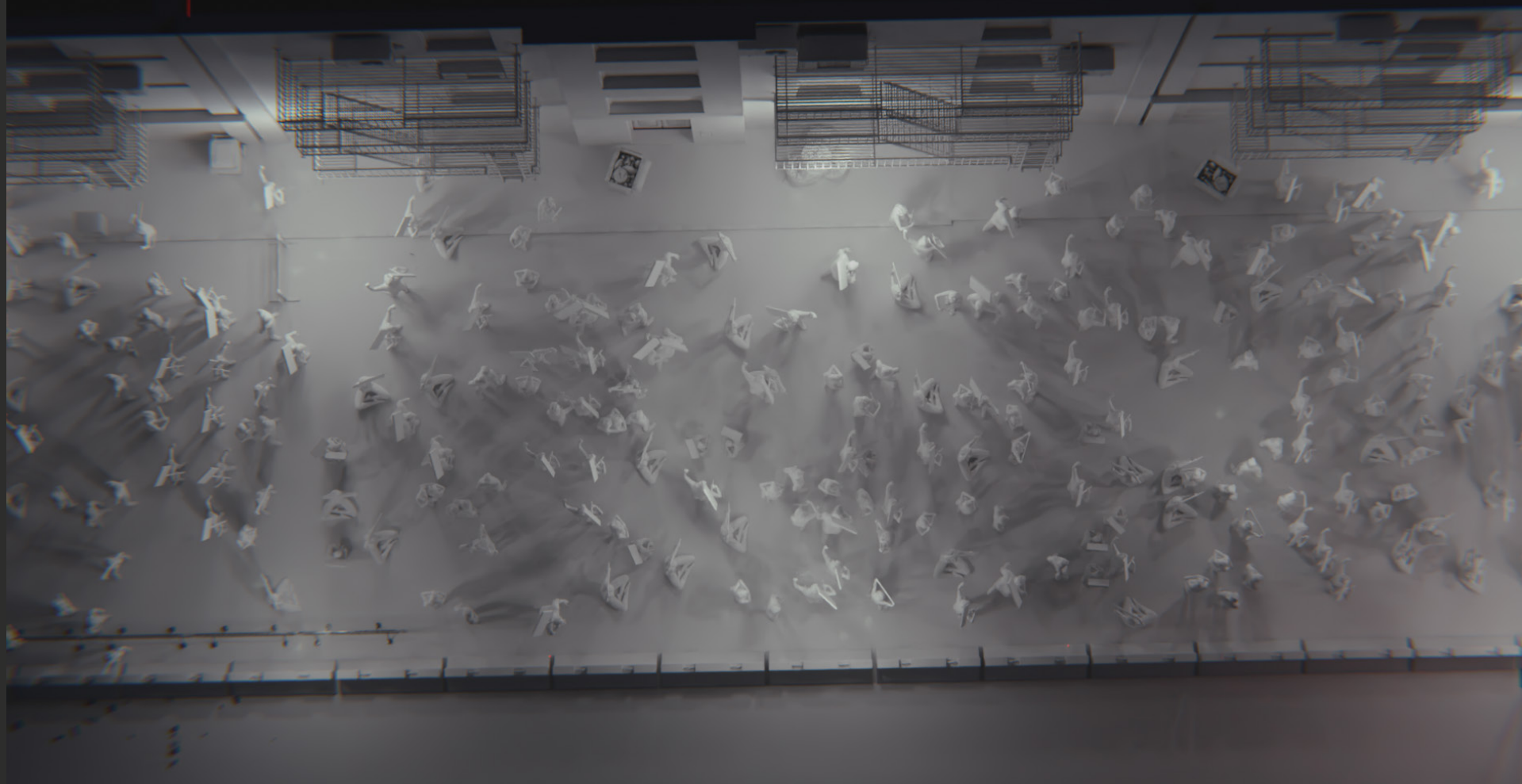
For this project, I have chosen to explore the topic of workers’ rights and their protests, focusing on domestic workers, a group often overlooked. To ground this project in reality, I want to share the story of Corazon Espanto, a domestic worker from the Philippines whose story was captured by the organization FairWork NL. Corazon was offered a job as a domestic worker in an ambassador’s household, with a promised salary of \$350 per month. For Corazon, a mother of seven, this opportunity seemed like a chance to provide for her family. However, her reality turned out to be harrowing. Corazon was allowed only three hours of rest per day, her meals consisted of leftovers, and her employer confiscated her passport, leaving her powerless to leave the situation.

What makes her story even more heartbreaking is that it occurred in the Netherlands, a country ranked as the 4th in Europe, with the least prevalence of modern slavery. Despite this, the 2023 Global Slavery Index revealed that approximately 10,000 individuals in the Netherlands live in modern slavery, with 38,000 doing forced labour¹. This reality shows the need for political change, even in nations that are perceived as progressive.

One critical step in this fight is the ratification of the ILO Convention 189, an agreement that recognizes and protects the rights of domestic workers. Sadly only a few European countries have done this: Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Switzerland. While their ratification marks a crucial step toward dignity and justice for domestic workers, it’s disheartening to see that the majority of European nations, including the Netherlands, have not taken this step. This leaves countless domestic workers without the basic protections they deserve, mostly migrant women and girls, highlighting the neglect of some of the most vulnerable and essential workers in society.



¹ The international legal definition of forced labour according to the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), forced or compulsory labour is: “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily.”



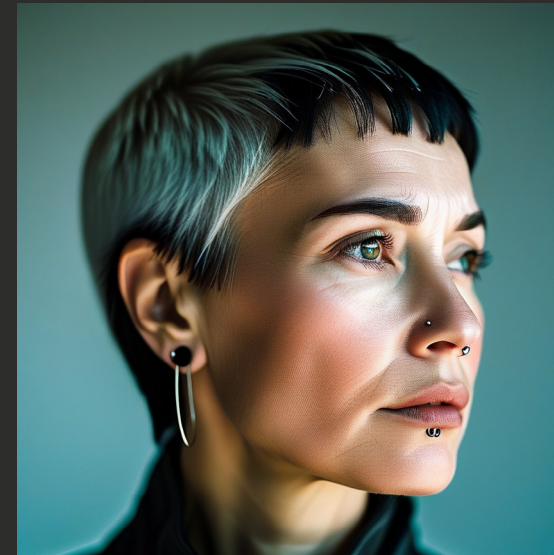
My graduation project, Resistance Wear, envisions a digital platform in the metaverse where individuals unable to attend physical protests can participate in activism virtually. This platform amplifies the voices of the silent, encouraging engagement through discussions on political topics and interaction with the digital environment. Users can also purchase digital skins to express solidarity with causes they support, starting with this inaugural collection advocating for domestic workers' rights.

The collection, a 3D digital fashion line, highlights the need for the ratification of ILO Convention No. 189, which only nine EU countries have embraced. This leaves countless domestic workers, predominantly migrant women, without adequate legal protection. The fight for domestic workers' rights is both a labor and feminist issue demanding urgent attention.

My designs incorporate durable and textured materials like denim, leather, and jersey knit, shaped into bold cargo pants, baggy trousers, harnesses, belts, and draped pieces. A vibrant palette of black, red, and yellow symbolizes strength and urgency.

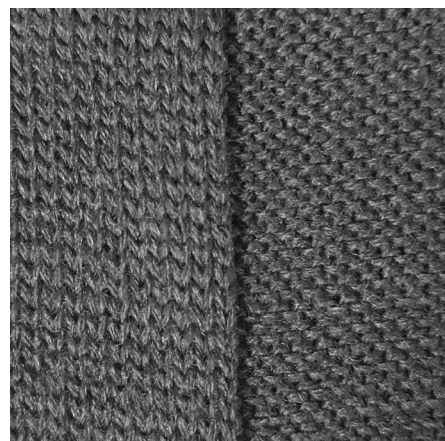
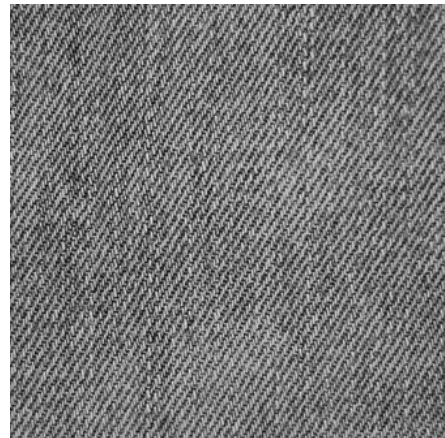
Proceeds from all purchases will be donated to organizations advocating for domestic workers' rights, such as FairWork, which directly supports victims of labor exploitation in the Netherlands. By merging fashion, technology, and activism, this project seeks to inspire digital activism while offering tangible support to a disadvantaged community.

TARGET PERSONA



To humanize this concept, I developed a target persona named June. June has been a participant in political activism since her youth. More recently, she became a single mother by choice, which naturally reduced the amount of time she could dedicate to on-the-ground activism.

Today, she advocates for social and political change primarily through social media platforms, where she reaches a wide audience with her powerful messages. June embodies the modern activist—balancing personal responsibilities with a commitment to making a difference.



While designing this collection, I chose a color palette that reflects both the protest world and the domestic workers' movement. Red and black symbolize resistance and protest, while yellow represents the domestic workers' struggle for recognition and rights. For materials, I incorporated leather, jersey knit, and denim—each chosen for their historical and symbolic ties to the working class.

Denim: The story of the denim begins in southern France, Nîmes. There, in the 19th century French textile manufacturers made a mistake in the weaving technique while trying to recreate an Italian blue cotton fabric called “jeane”, and ended up producing a stronger, more durable fabric: denim. This fabric fastly became popular among the farming class because of its sturdiness and resistance.

Starting in the 1960s with the “hippie” movement, denim jeans became a symbol of protest and youth culture. University students wore jeans to show solidarity with the working-class, while women's rights protestors wore them to fight against perceived gender expectations.

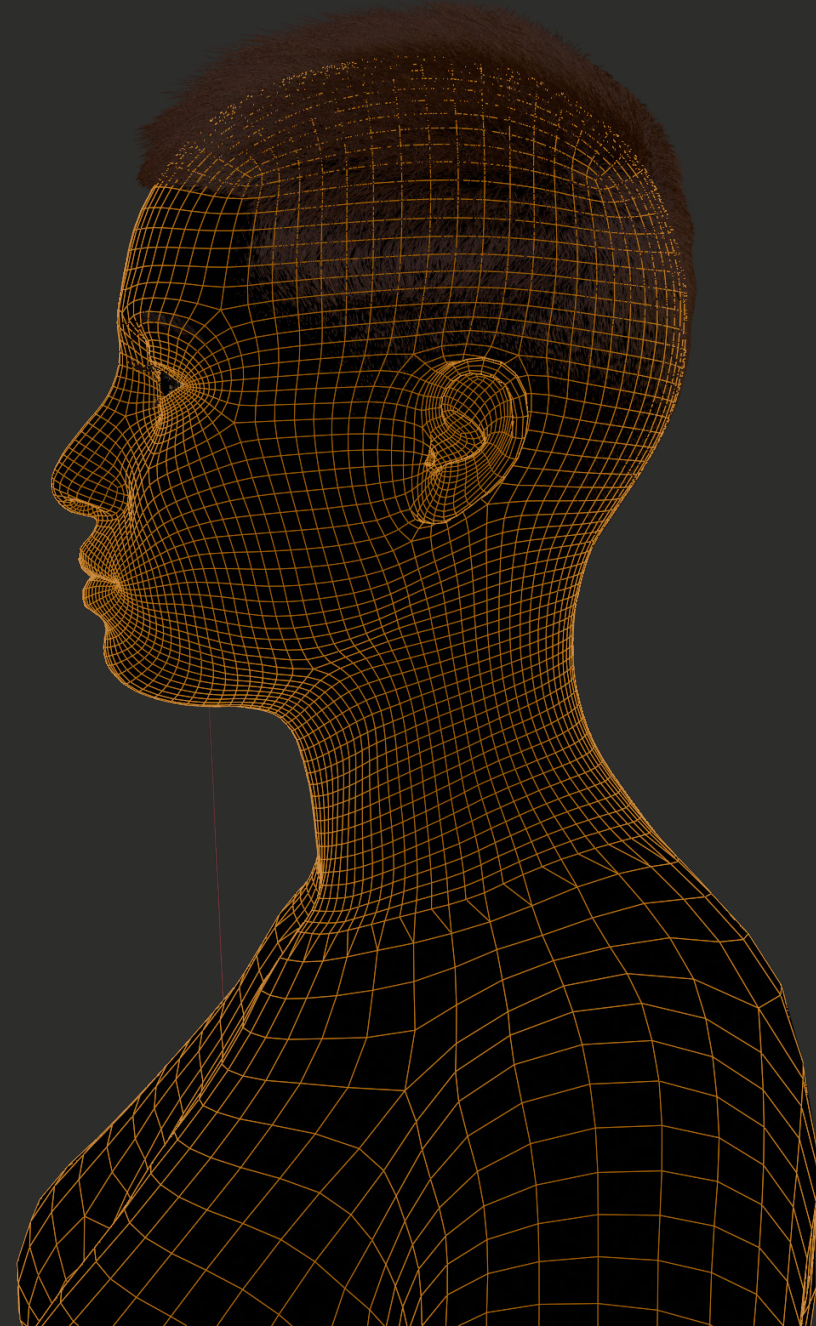
During the 60s and 70s, jeans remained a symbol of rebellion, from those protesting against government policies to rock musicians, college students, and others in mainstream culture, jeans represented counterculture. They were seen as so controversial that many schools even banned them.

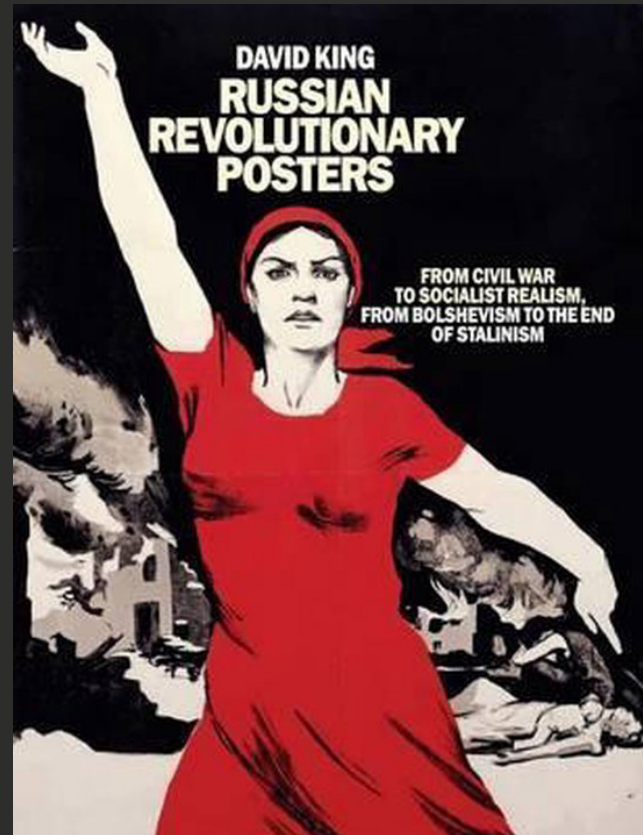
Leather: Is a material with a history as old as humanity itself that went into a significant transformation in the early 1980s. Transitioning from a primarily functional fabric to a symbol of rebellion and nonconformity. Leather became even more appealing to people who wanted to stand out from the crowd and go against the system. This material has also experienced a fascinating democratization, evolving from a luxury of the elite to a material available to the masses. Leather has played a significant role in various cultures around the world. Indigenous cultures have long used leather for clothing, footwear, and ceremonial items. In Asia, traditional leather goods include Japanese tabi shoes and Korean hanbok shoes. European leather craftsmanship, particularly in Italy and France, has set global standards for quality and design. Each culture's unique approach to leatherworking has contributed to the variety of leather goods available today.

Jersey Knit: I chose to incorporate jersey knit, not only for its versatility but also for its contemporary significance in political movements. In recent years, jersey knit gained powerful symbolic resonance through the 2017 Women's March, where the iconic pink Pussyhat became a global emblem of female solidarity and collective action. Worn by more than half a million participants in the protest in Washington, D.C., the Pussyhat transformed the march into a vivid, unified statement of resistance against the Trump administration in the U.S. and a bold demand for women's rights. This meaningful example of how a simple knitted garment can carry such profound meaning inspired me to embrace jersey knit as a material that merges practicality with a rich legacy of protest and unity.

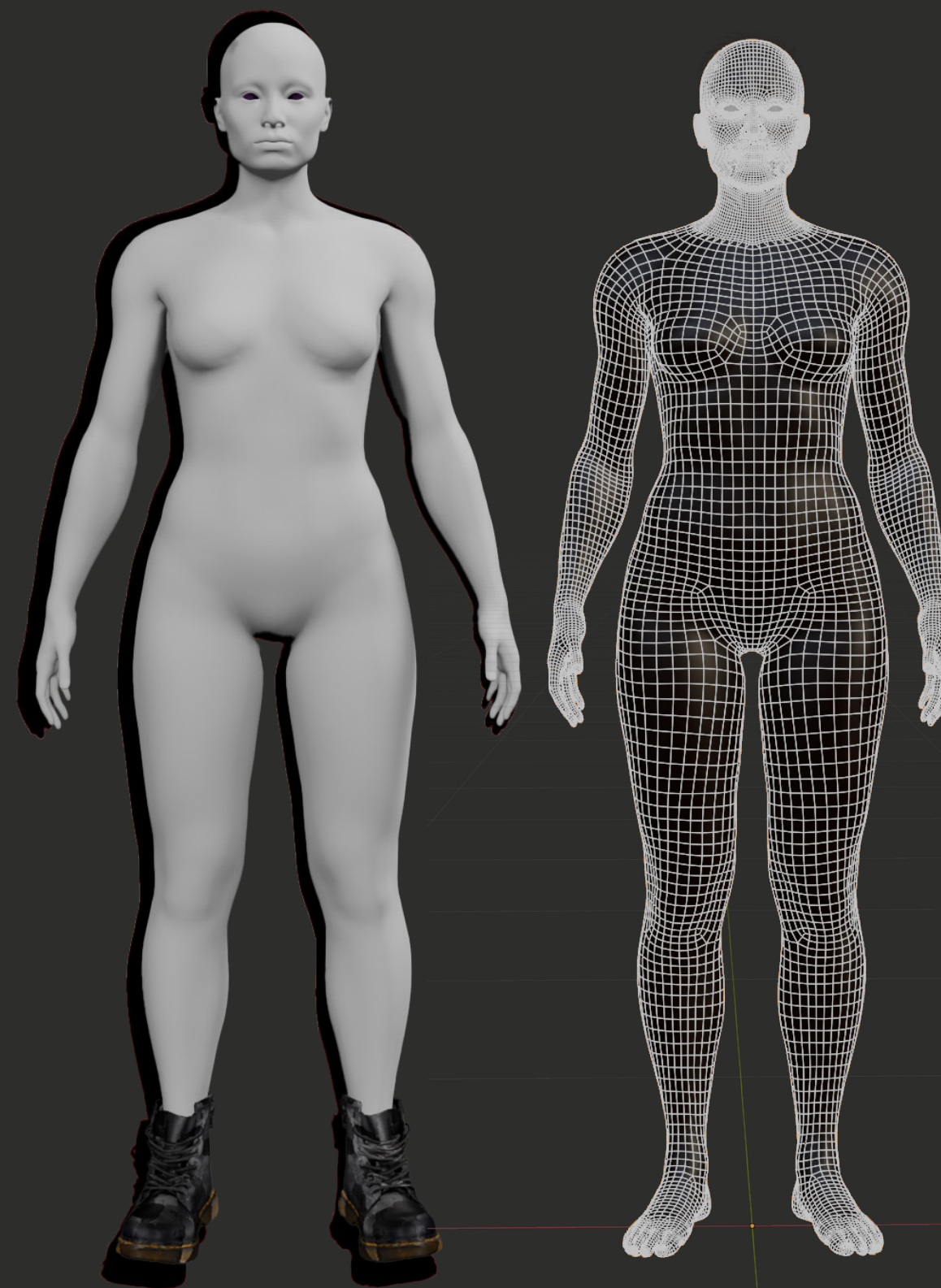


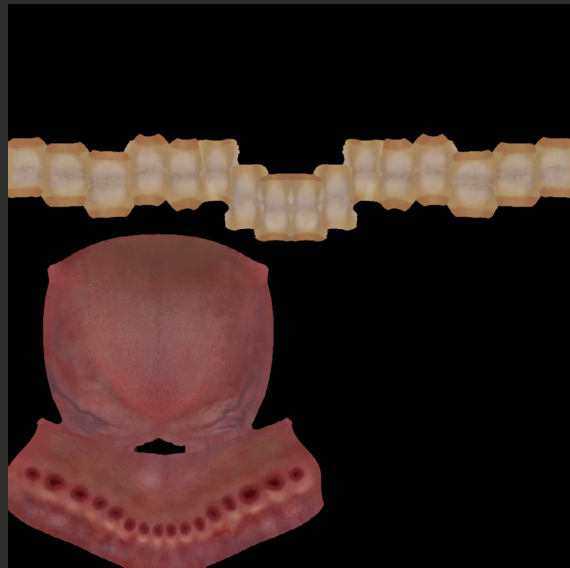
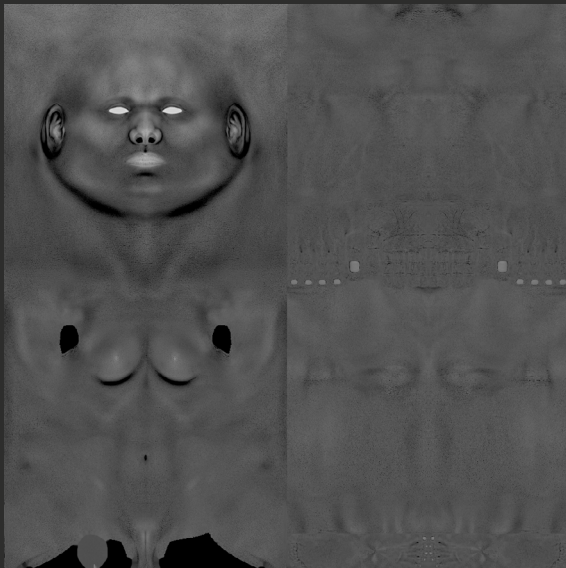
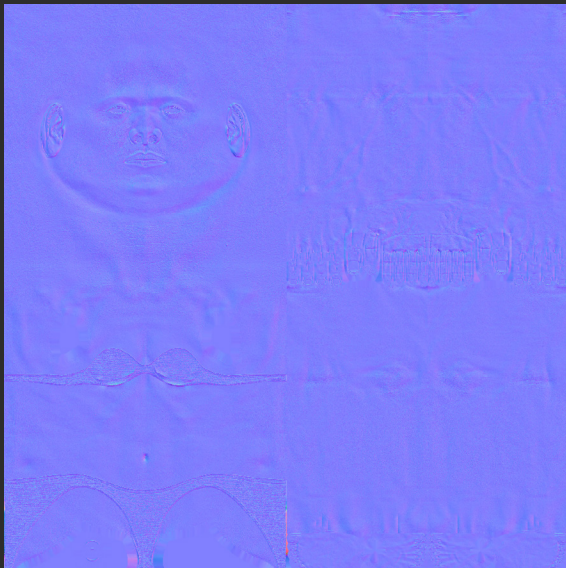
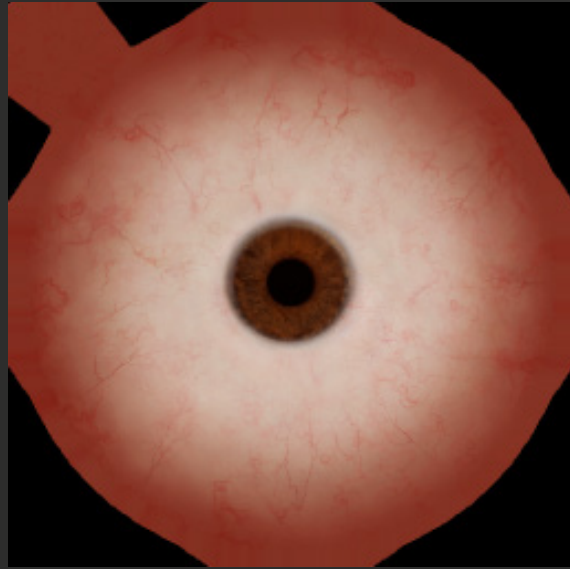
ANITA

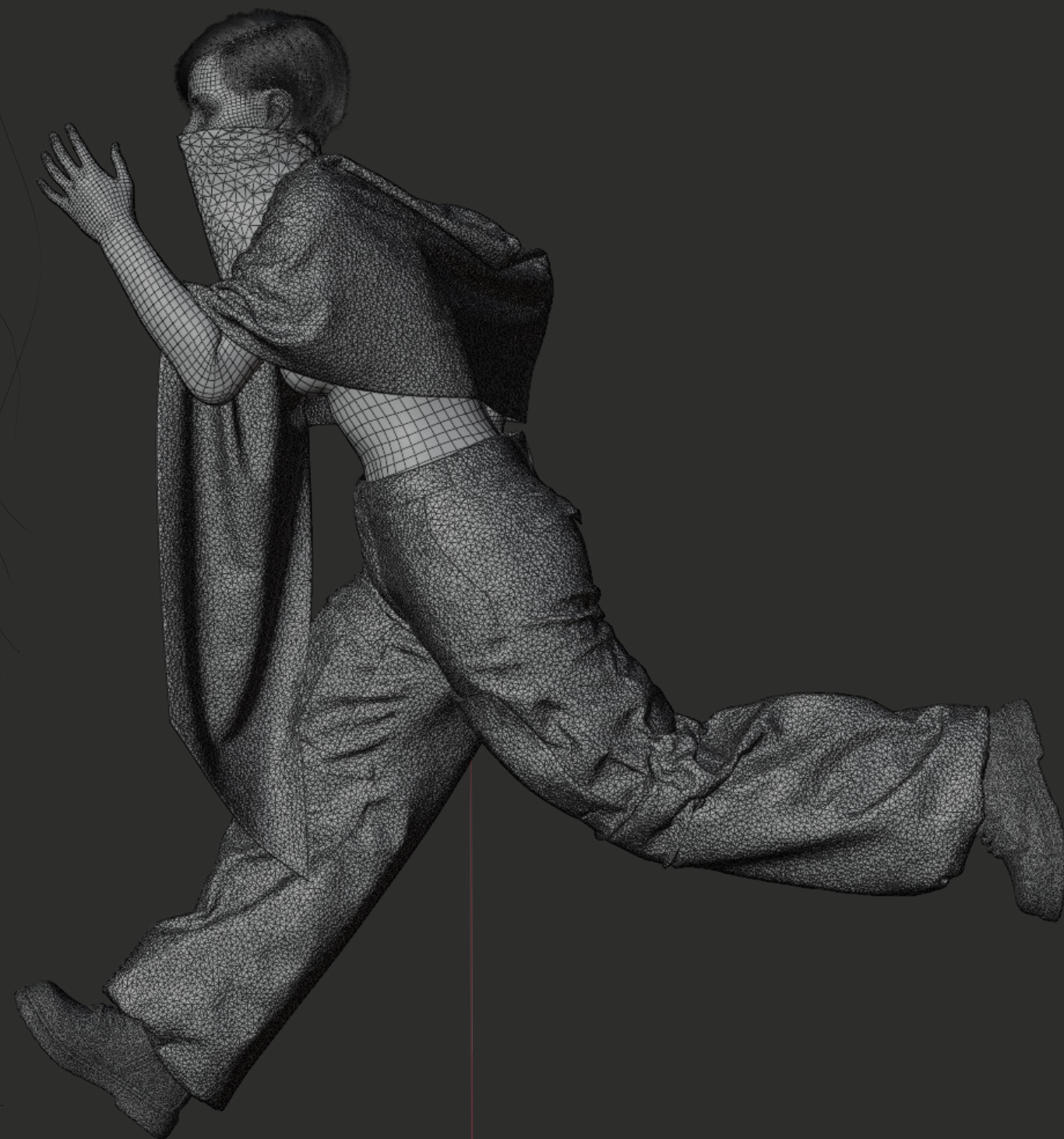
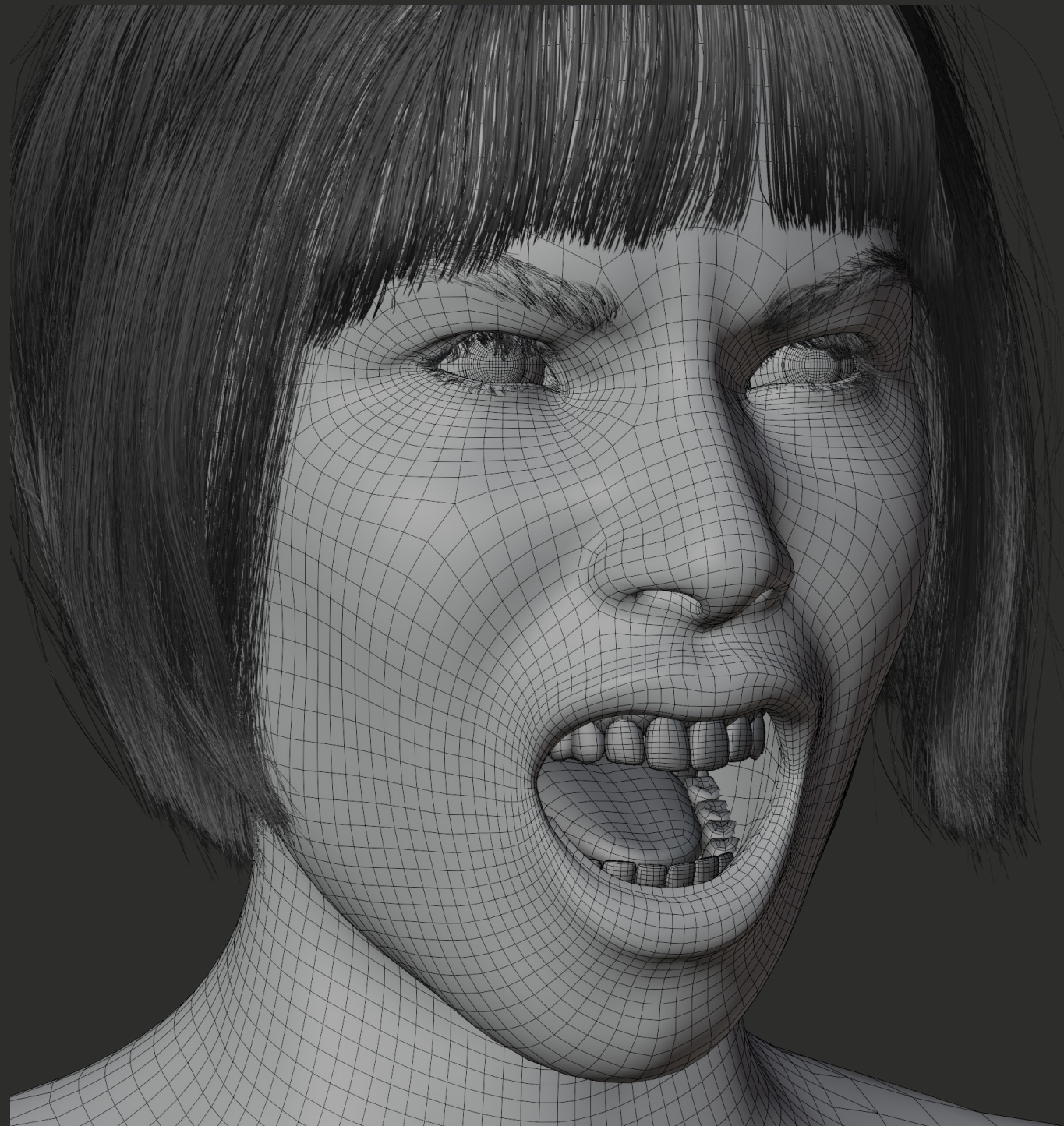




The design of my avatar draws inspiration from the representation of female bodies in revolutionary posters, which celebrated strength and resilience. These figures were portrayed as robust, capable, and confident—embodying the ideals of collective power and equality rather than adhering to traditional notions of femininity. By rejecting overly slender or sexualized depictions, these posters show an empowering image of women as active participants in shaping society. My avatar adopts this aesthetic to challenge contemporary beauty standards, emphasizing a powerful and inclusive vision of womanhood that aligns with the ideals of solidarity and activism in my collection.









WISDOM. INSTRUMENT.





CALL OF DUTY

WZ

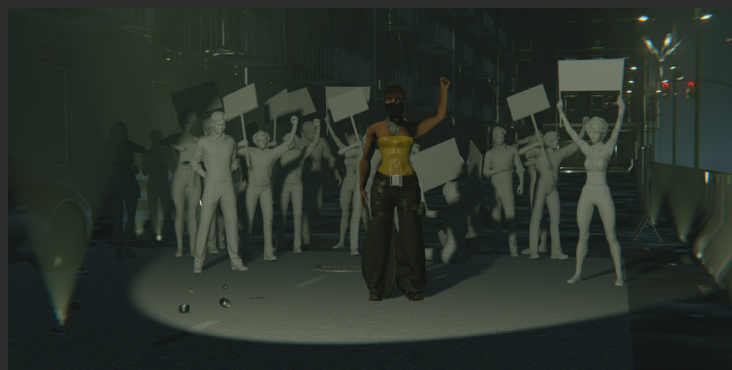


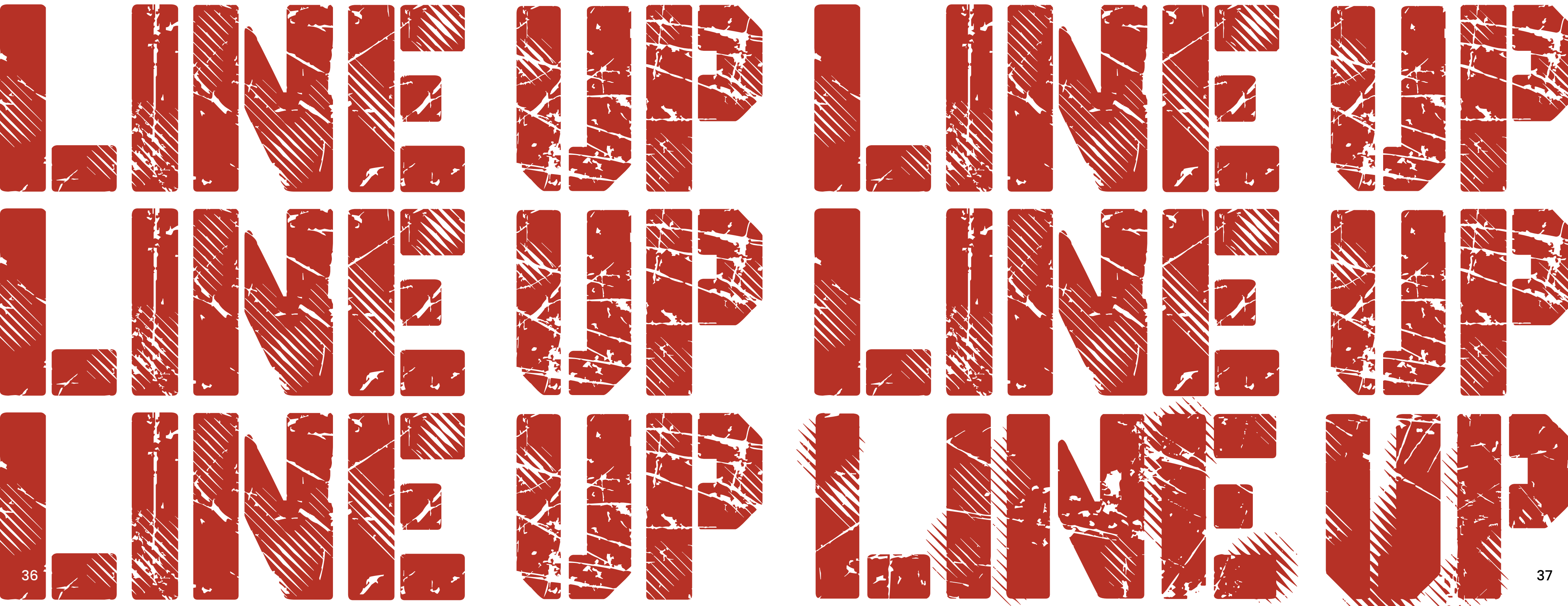
PROTEST

TEST



SCENE







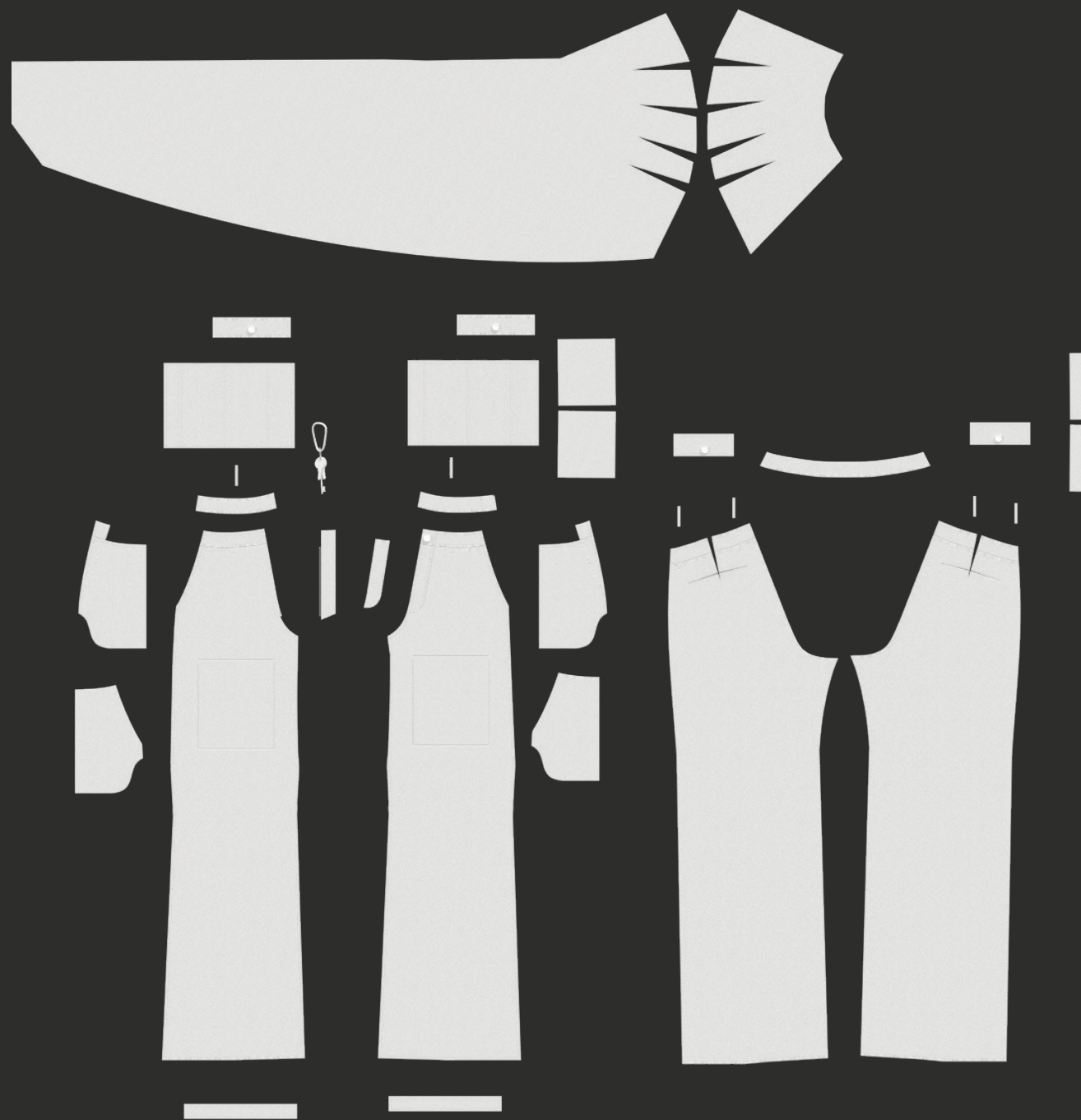






To start my design process I took pictures of drapings I have done on a maniqui and combined it with elements or garments from workwear.





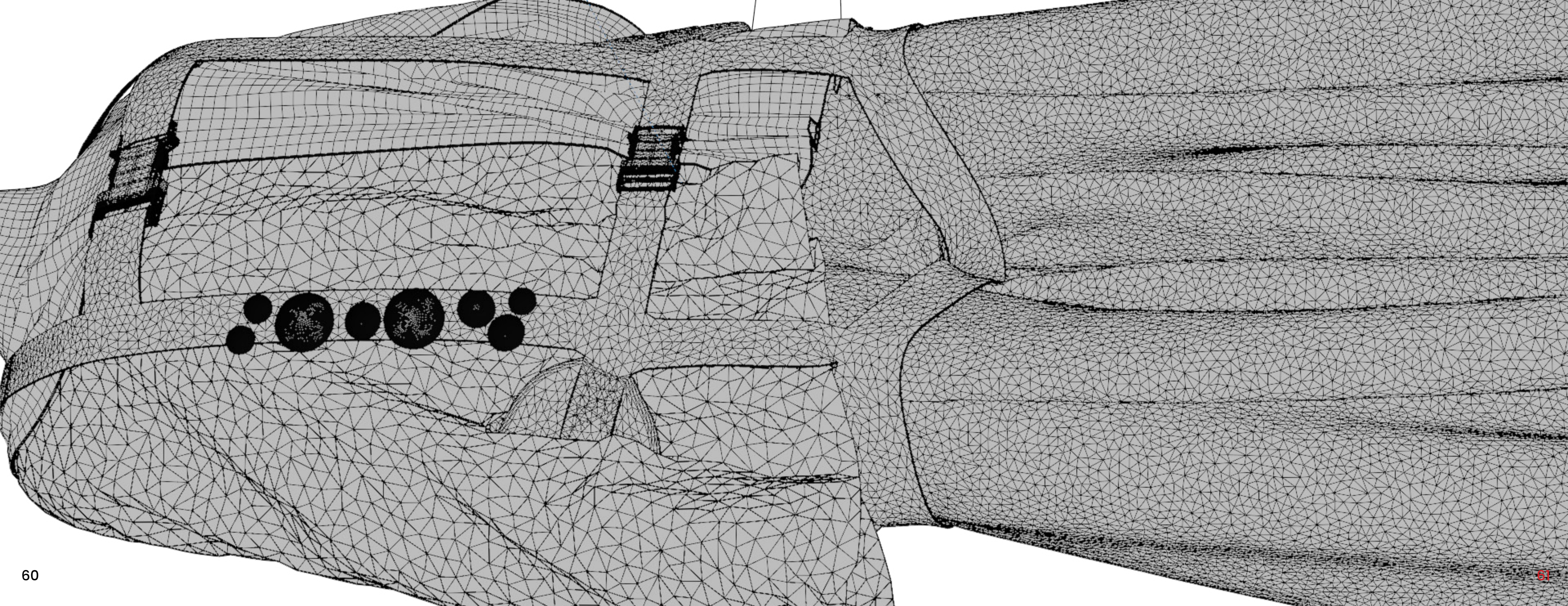


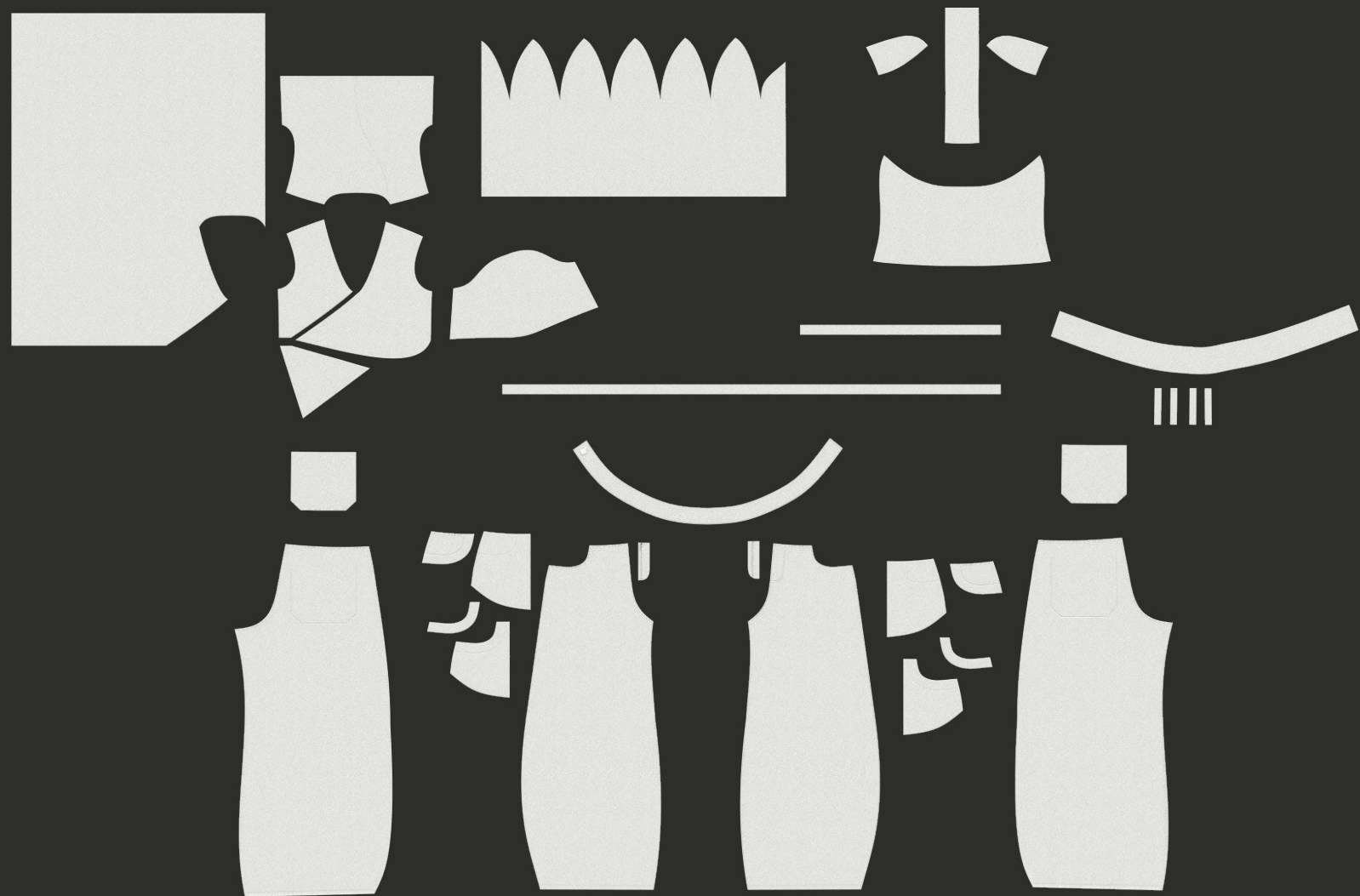


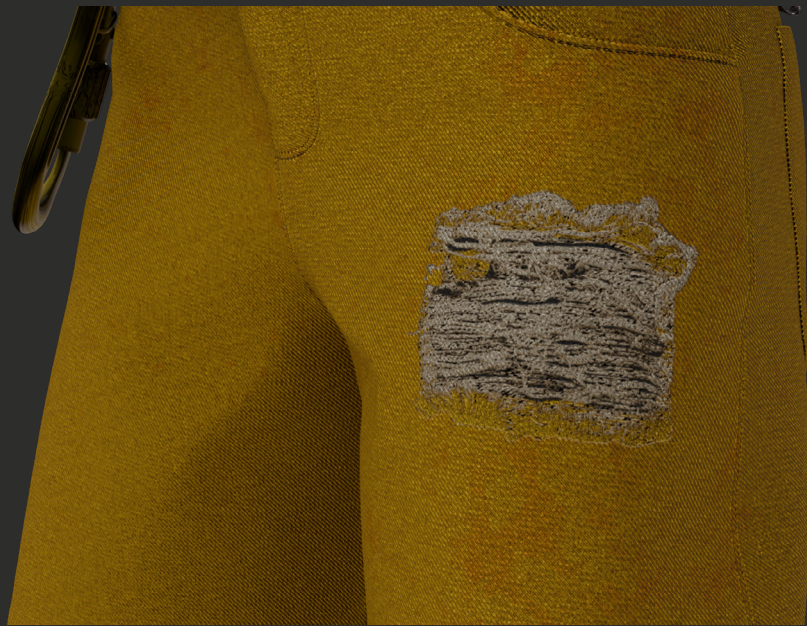


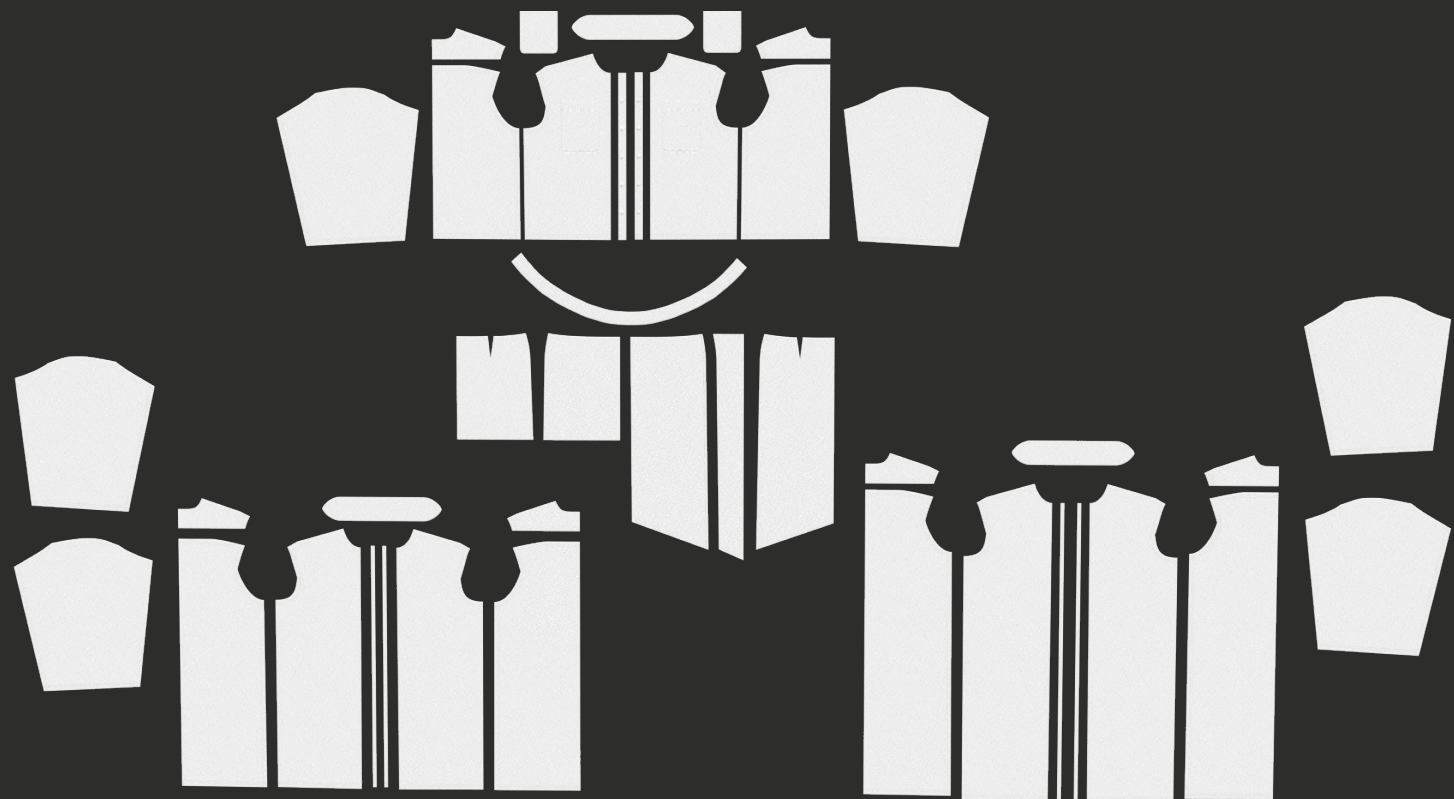




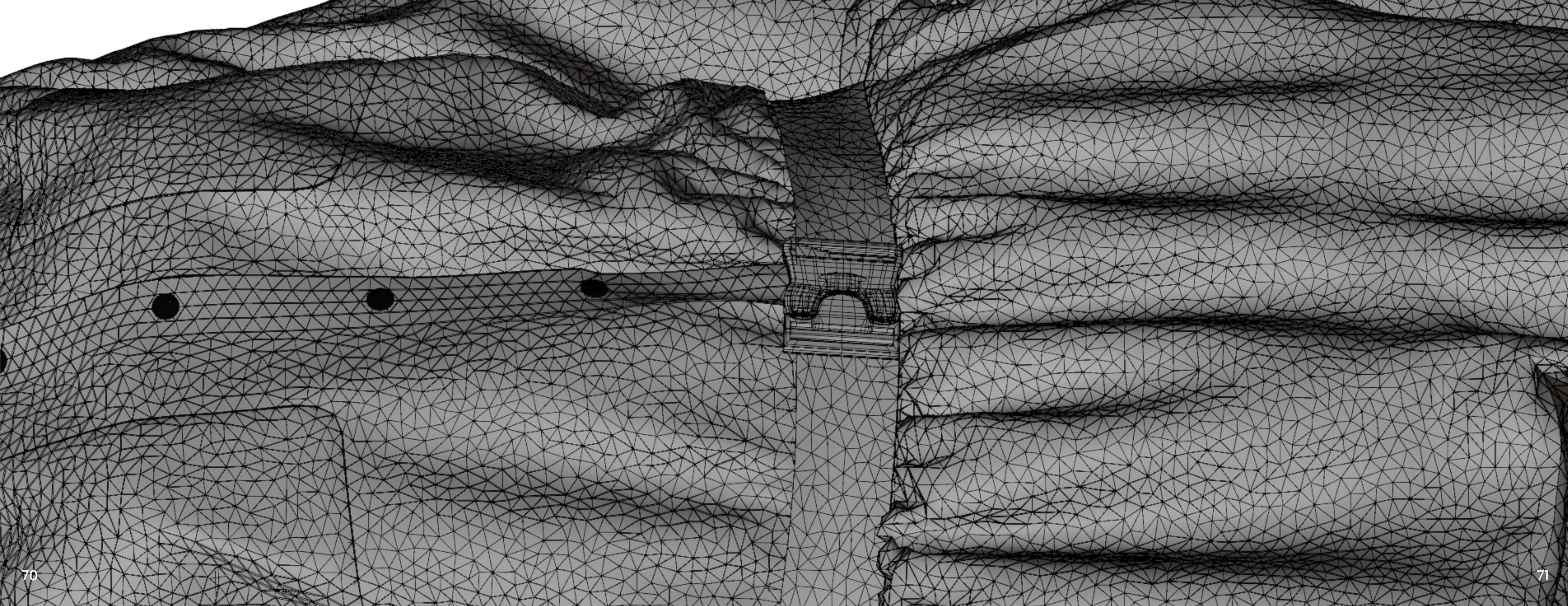


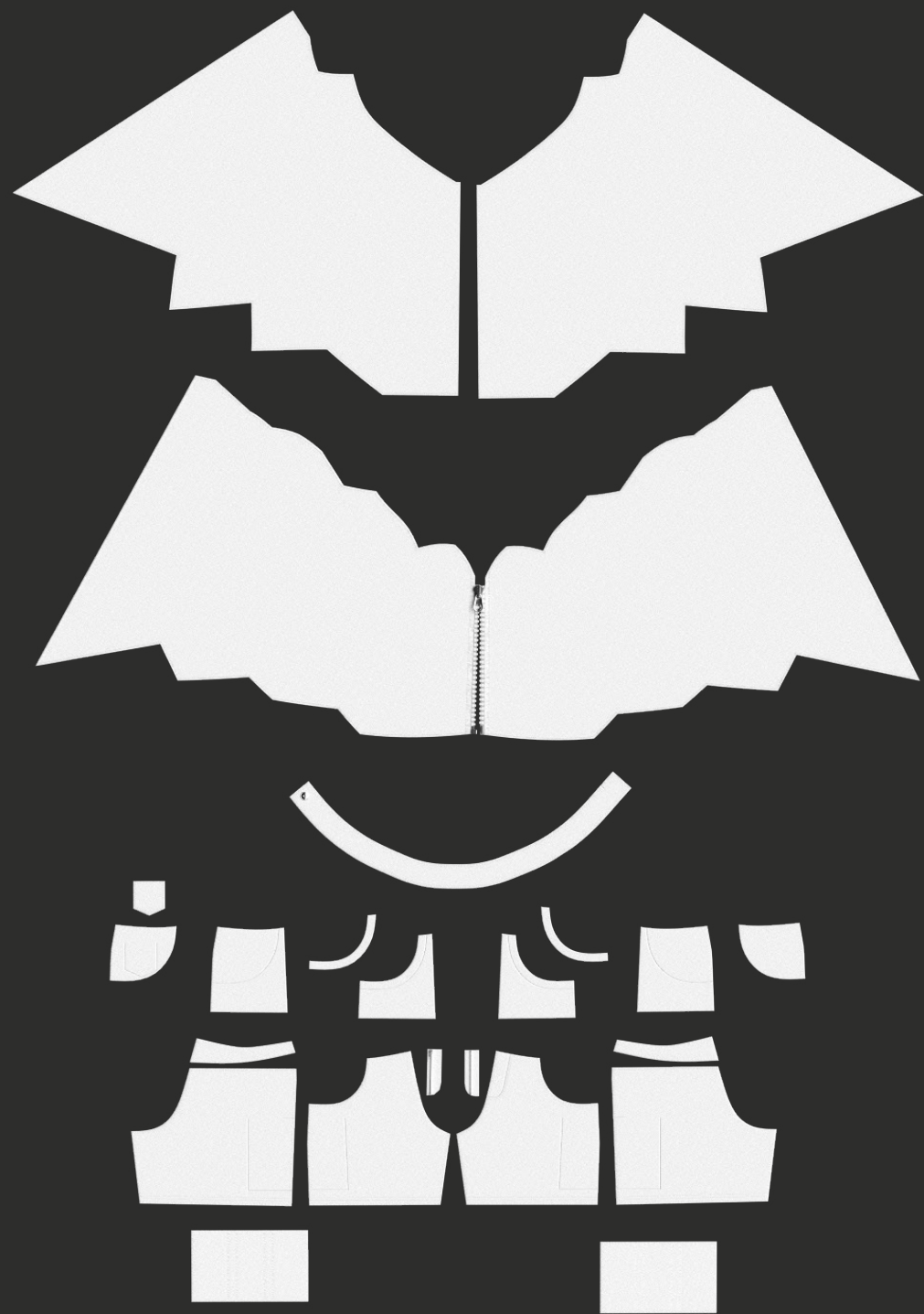


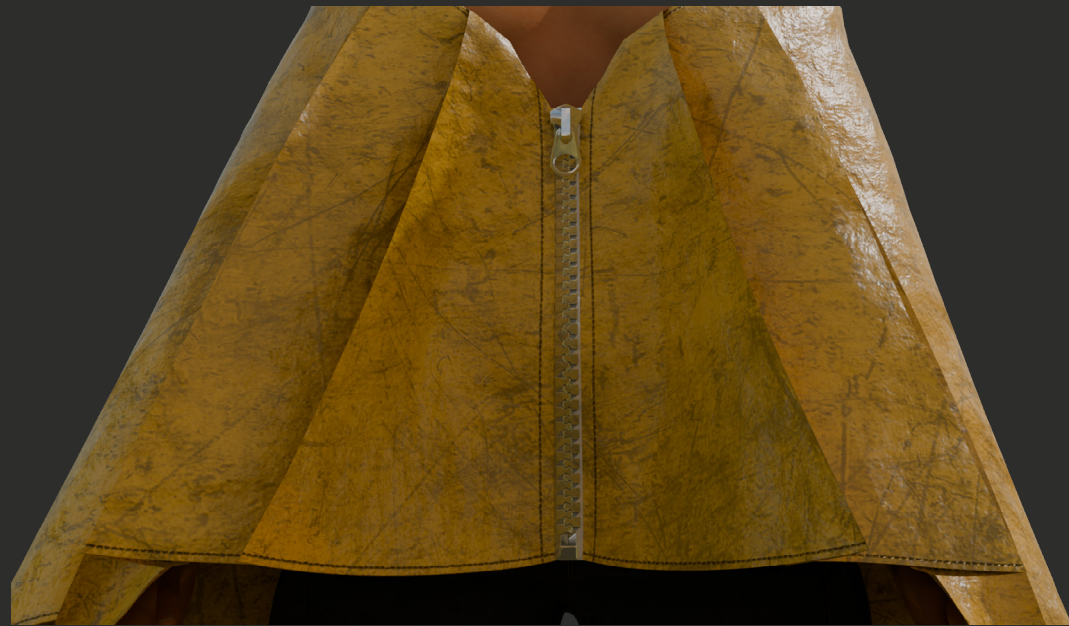
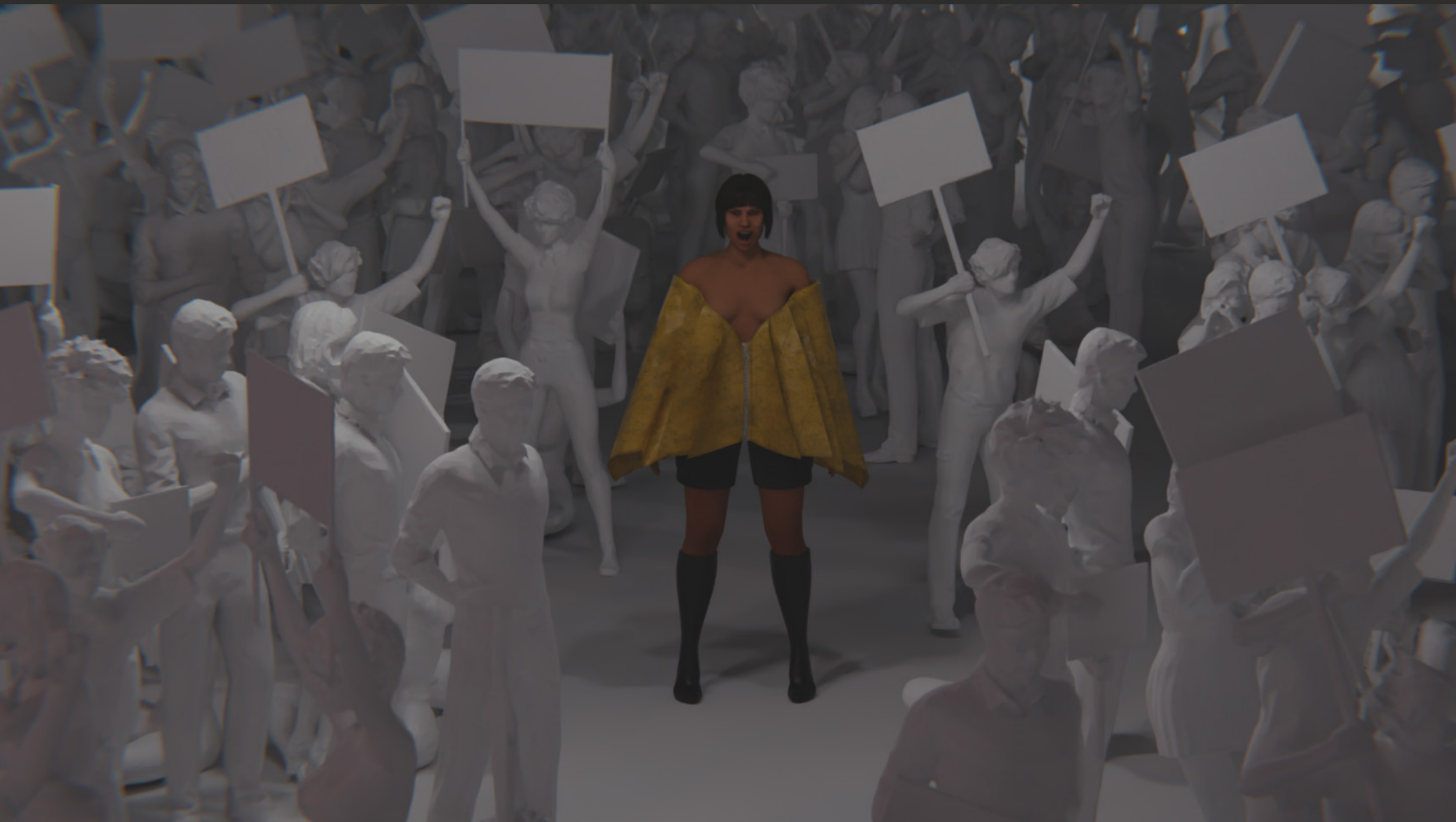


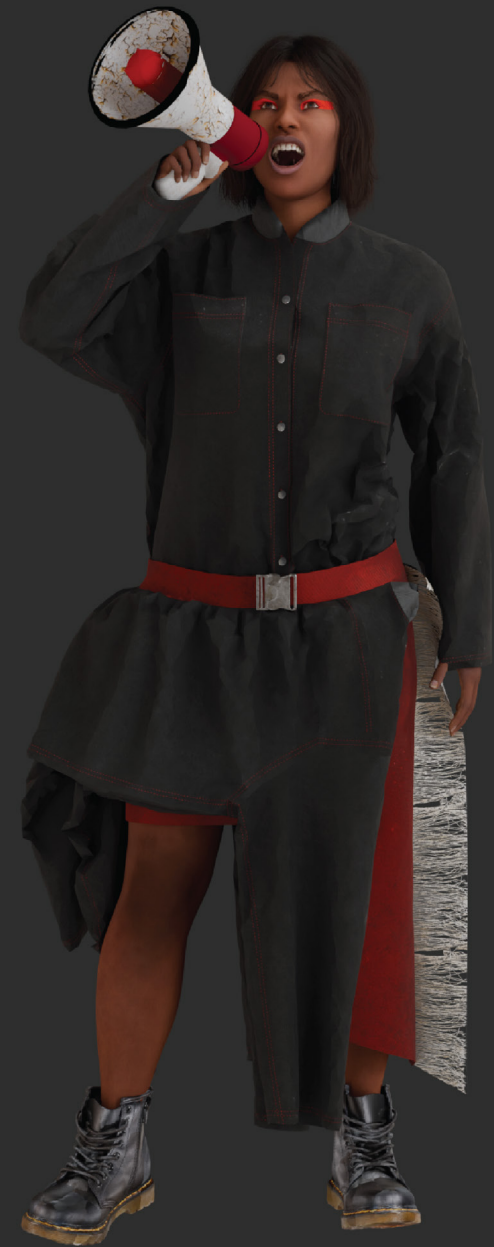






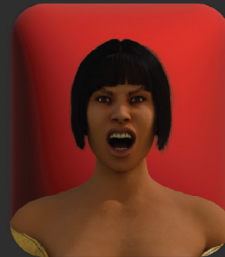






CHARACTER

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Edit



Options



Back

The rise of digital fashion is undeniable, with major brands like Balenciaga, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton already exploring its potential.

I decided to make my collection digital, this decision aligns with the needs of individuals, like my target persona June, who may be unable to attend protests in person but still wishes to participate in meaningful ways.

I envision this collection existing on a chatroom-based platform designed to foster community and activism. The platform would offer open spaces for individuals to connect over shared causes and private rooms for more focused discussions or meetings.

Users could purchase digital skins (the collection) to showcase their support for specific causes.

Proceeds from these sales would be directed to organizations like Fair Work Netherlands, which helps victims of modern slavery.

Looking ahead, this platform could expand to host collections tied to various causes, each supporting a different social or political issue. The goal is to create a space where fashion becomes a tool for change, combining creativity, technology, and activism.

