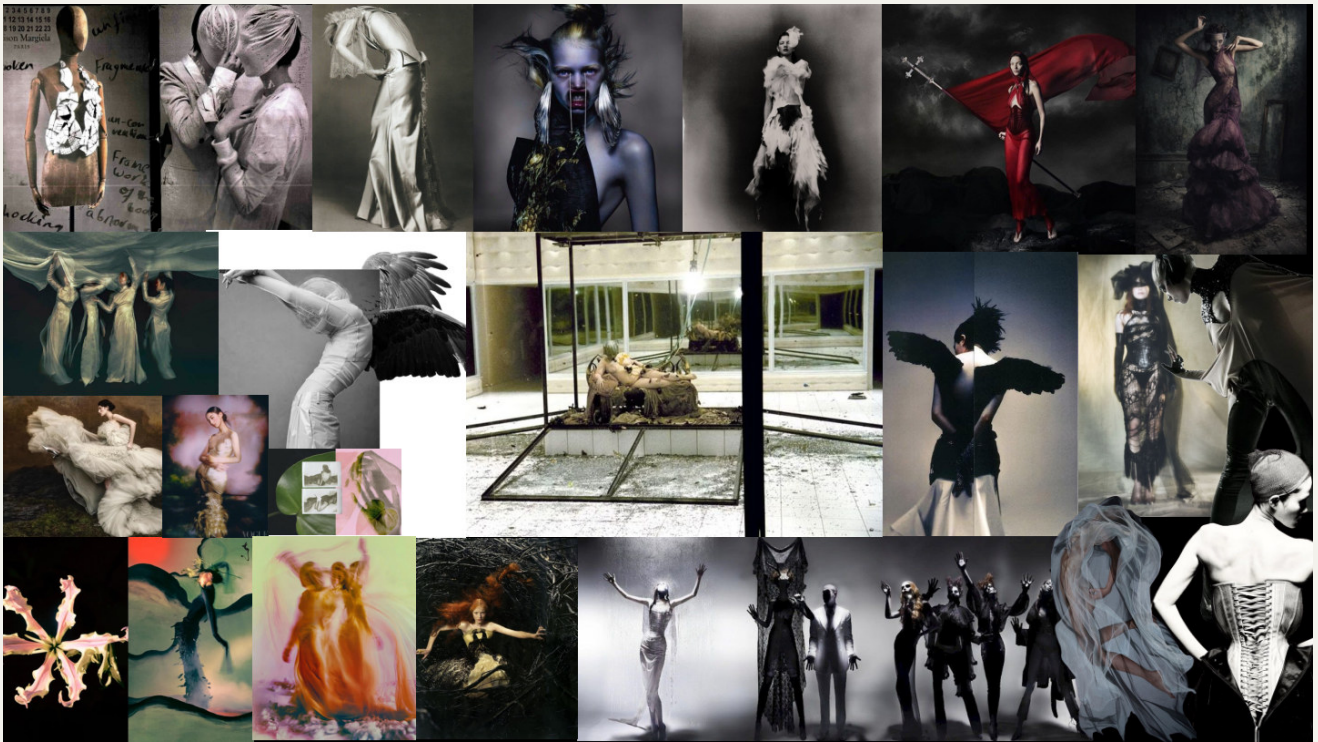


Menagerie

An inquiry into manufactured ideals

Annotated creative brief | Fashion film and project context



When does admiration become control?

Menagerie examines a system that shapes women toward ideals of femininity. Observation leads to correction; correction produces a polished appearance; that appearance is then displayed and judged. The Swan, Songbird and Serpent embody different demands within this system.

A fourth woman appears natural and undefined. As she encounters traces of the others, her position becomes uncertain. The film ends with a final adjustment to her appearance, leaving open whether she has escaped the system or become its next creation.

From the brief: pp. 6-10, 44-45. Image: original moodboard, p. 13.

Reference imagery from other works. A creative proposition, not an empirical finding.

Evidence & interpretation

The project treats perfection as a moving target: a standard that always leaves something more to refine. This is the brief's creative proposition, not a result established by a scientific study.

From the brief: Supplied creative intent, cited by original page number.

Interpretation: An editorial reading of how the work may function.

Research context: External scholarship added to this edition.

Open decision: A question the supplied material does not resolve.

Objectification as a theoretical lens

Theory | Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997

Objectification theory offers a framework for considering the experiential consequences of a culture that sexually objectifies women's bodies. It provides context for the project's attention to observation and appearance.

A theoretical framework does not validate the film's archetypes or establish that every woman's experience follows the same pattern.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00108.x>

Idealized images and short-form video

Experiment | Gurtala & Fardouly, 2023

In an experiment involving 211 young women, appearance-ideal image or video exposure was associated with lower appearance satisfaction and higher negative mood and self-objectification than appearance-neutral content.

The reported results concern that sample and those exposure conditions. They do not measure the effect of Menagerie or demonstrate that critical fashion films change viewers' beliefs.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.06.005>

Research summaries are limited to the accessed abstracts. Neither source studies Menagerie. No audience testing or measured outcomes were supplied.

Swan / Purity

Purity as discipline

From the brief: pp. 15, 16, 17, 18

Grace, composure and innocence become expectations that require restraint. The Swan is admired for appearing elegant and untouched.

Elements: Sheer fabric, feathers and pearls.

Materials: Tulle, silk organza, silk chiffon and satin.

Construction: High necklines, elongated silhouettes, layered tulle volumes and sculptural collars.

Beauty: Soft, doll-like, pale and porcelain.

Named references: Valentino Haute Couture; Alexander McQueen under Lee McQueen and Sarah Burton; Maison Margiela Artisanal 2024; Pat McGrath.

Interpretation

The softness of the materials can conceal the effort needed to maintain the pose. Restraint is a possible dramatic expression of the ideal, not an approved movement score.

Producer question

Confirm garment availability, fitting needs, makeup preparation and how the performance communicates discipline.



Original archetype reference page. Images are inspiration, not production stills.

Songbird / Beauty

Beauty as captivity

From the brief: pp. 19, 20, 21, 22

Youth, beauty and visibility attract admiration. The same demand to be seen can confine the woman to an ornamental role.

Elements: Branches, boas, feathers, fur and tulle ruffles.

Materials: Soft tulle, gathered tulle and silk taffeta; ribbons, beading and embellishment.

Construction: Exaggerated ruffles, layered volumes, oversized bows and ornamental details.

Beauty: Colourful, exaggerated and drag-like.

Named references: Molly Goddard; Dior by John Galliano; Viktor & Rolf; Galliano-era Dior in the 2000s; Pat McGrath.

Interpretation

Abundance and ornament can make admiration feel like confinement. The film still needs a concrete action or framing decision to communicate that tension.

Producer question

The styling page suggests borrowing garments. Confirm lenders, fitting dates, handling conditions and return responsibilities.



Original archetype reference page. Images are inspiration, not production stills.

Serpent / Desire

Desire as condemnation

From the brief: pp. 23, 24, 25, 26

Female sexuality is desired when it pleases others, yet condemned when claimed autonomously. The Serpent embodies this double standard in the project's argument.

Elements: Lace and lacing.

Materials: Mesh, lace, latex and leather details.

Construction: Body-skimming silhouettes, cut-outs, draping and sheeriness.

Beauty: Dark, glossy and sharp, with snake-skin effects.

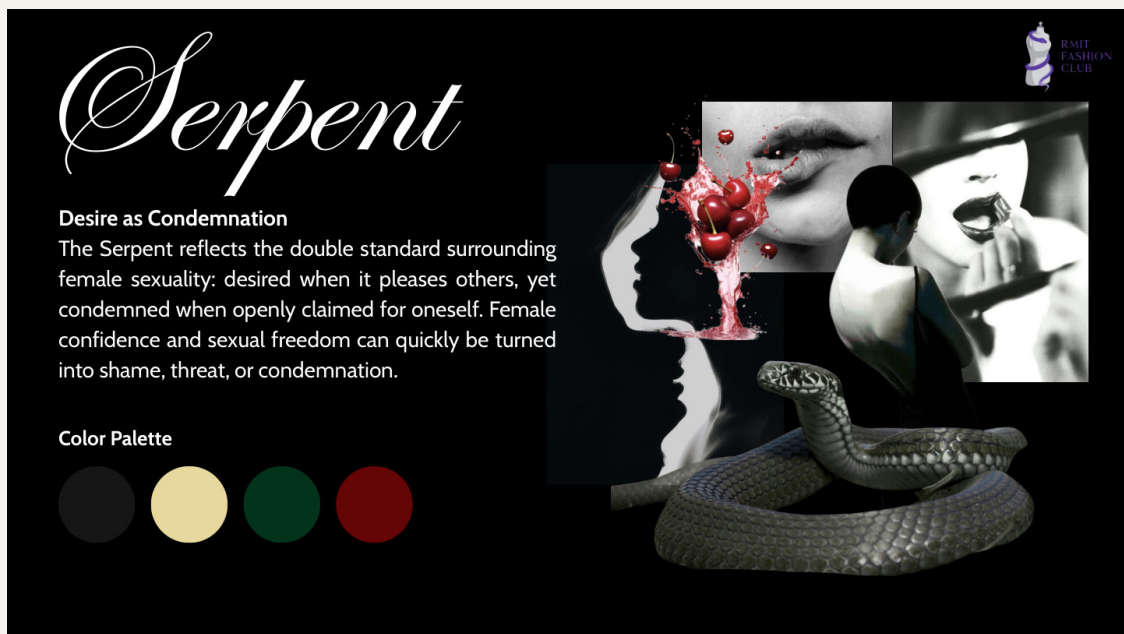
Named references: Alaÿa by Pieter Mulier; Thierry Mugler; Ludovic de Saint Sernin; Fanci Club; Gucci Fall 2026 makeup, as named in the brief.

Interpretation

The treatment needs to make the judging system legible. Sexualized imagery alone may leave the intended critique unclear.

Producer question

Agree wardrobe coverage, framing and physical actions with the performer before filming; plan privacy and changing arrangements.



Original archetype reference page. Images are inspiration, not production stills.

Specimen 04 / Undefined

Effortlessness under examination

From the brief: pp. 27, 28

She appears untouched and without a prescribed ideal. The story leaves uncertain whether she exists outside the system or at the beginning of another cycle.

Elements: Bare feet; traces of white feathers and pearls, colourful feathers and branches, lace and lacing.

Materials: The brief names draping, semi-transparent fabric and unfinished construction without a complete material specification.

Construction: Draped, unfinished and body-hugging styling.

Beauty: Bare, fresh, effortless and undone.

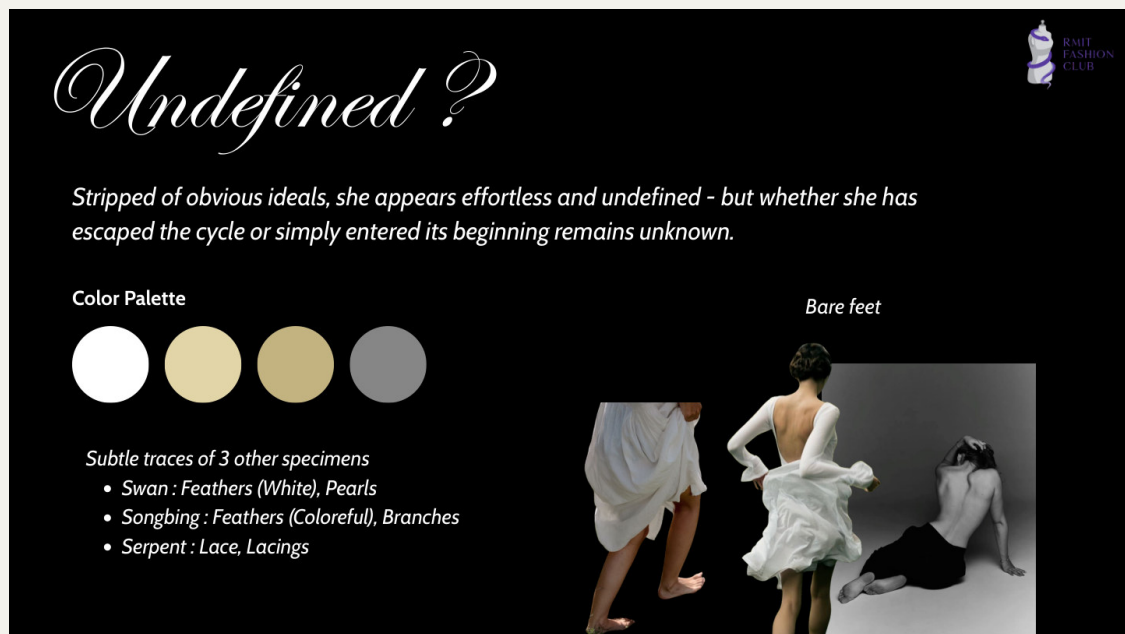
Named references: The supplied pages contain visual references but do not name their individual creators.

Interpretation

Naturalness may itself become a carefully produced appearance. This reading explains why the final adjustment matters without resolving the ending.

Producer question

Confirm the collected fragments, continuity between encounters, safe barefoot movement and the exact final adjustment.



Original archetype reference page. Images are inspiration, not production stills.

Inside the Menagerie

Three women are refined into ideals of purity, beauty and desire. A seemingly untouched fourth enters the Menagerie, leaving uncertain whether she exists beyond its system or is its next creation.

From the brief: pp. 44-45. Proposed length: 2-3 minutes

Mood and tone: Dark, surreal, unsettling, obsessive and ritualistic.

Genre references: Dark comedy, documentary, psychological and satire are listed as references, rather than a resolved formal treatment.

Filmmaker references: Nick Knight; Ruth Hogben, printed as 'Rurh Hogben' in the source; Nadia Lee Cohen; Yorgos Lanthimos.

01 Awakening

Specimen 04 awakens inside the Menagerie, seemingly natural and undefined.

Interpretation: Establish her position before she encounters the other specimens.

02 Encountering traces

She moves through the space and encounters traces of the Swan, Songbird and Serpent.

Interpretation: Give the encounters a readable order and identifiable objects.

03 Fragmented refinement

The traces trigger glimpses of how the other women were purified, beautified and sexualized.

Interpretation: Connect each ideal to a distinct act of refinement.

04 Collecting fragments

She collects fragments left behind as she continues through the space.

Interpretation: Track which objects she acquires and carries between shots.

05 Entering the display

She reaches an empty pedestal and steps onto it herself.

Interpretation: Preserve the apparent agency of this action.

06 One final adjustment

A final adjustment is made to her seemingly effortless appearance.

Interpretation: Leave the viewer uncertain about escape, conformity and the meaning of naturalness.

The final adjustment

Specimen 04 steps onto the pedestal herself. The adjustment that follows unsettles the distinction between autonomy and conformity. This is an interpretation of the synopsis, not a replacement for the director's treatment.

The brief does not identify the precise adjustment, who makes it, or the framing. Those choices remain open.



Undefined ?

Stripped of obvious ideals, she appears effortless and undefined - but whether she has escaped the cycle or simply entered its beginning remains unknown.

Color Palette



Bare feet



Subtle traces of 3 other specimens

- Swan : Feathers (White), Pearls
- Songbing : Feathers (Coloreful), Branches
- Serpent : Lace, Lacings



Styling

Draping, semi-transparent, unfinished construction, body-hugging



Beauty

Bare, Fresh, Effortless, Undone



Specimen 04 reference pages, pp. 27-28. The undefined appearance remains part of the question.

The wider project

Photography

From the brief: pp. 30-42

The photography direction uses a pitch-black backdrop, pedestals and isolated spotlights to present the women as curated objects. Natural-history museums, specimen archives and exhibition spaces provide the reference language.

The first group of posing references favours vertical and Fibonacci compositions. Pearls, branches and lace connect to the three archetypes.

The second group favours vertical, centred compositions and display. White podiums, sheer fabric and lacing appear in the named elements.

Lighting references include chiaroscuro, key/fill/back light, layered brightness, strong light-shadow contrast and soft colour washes.

These are supplied photography directions. Their use in the film requires agreement with the director and cinematographer.

Exhibition

From the brief: pp. 47-48

The exhibition places the four women within one system of display. Visitors observe the defined ideals, compare them, interpret Specimen 04 and question the act of classification itself.

The stated audience journey is observe, compare, interpret, question.

Spatial images propose a gallery-like setting, but the brief does not supply dimensions, installation specifications or a confirmed venue.

Exhibition production sits outside the film producer's scope. Shared footage, garments or props need an agreed handover.

Communication

From the brief: pp. 49

The communication plan spans the photoshoot, film and exhibition. Its proposed outputs are preserved here as wider project context.

Photoshoot and film: teaser, poster photoshoot, inspiration introduction, character introduction post, a post about constraint, a liberation post, the fashion film, and behind-the-scenes photography and film.

Exhibition: event poster, promotional post and recap post.

The liberation post needs reconciliation with the film's unresolved ending. Teasers, cutdowns and behind-the-scenes videos are additional producer deliverables only if separately agreed.

Decisions still to make

Proposed discussion owners are roles, not confirmed crew assignments.

Ending and promotion

How should the proposed liberation post relate to the film's ambiguous final adjustment?

Discuss with: Creative lead and communication lead | Brief: 45, 49

Movement

What observable actions distinguish purification, beautification and sexualization?

Discuss with: Director and performers | Brief: 4, 44-45

Sound

Will the film use voice, music, mechanical sounds, breath or silence? What is each sound doing?

Discuss with: Director and sound lead | Brief: 4, 44-45

Genre treatment

How will dark comedy, documentary and satire appear on screen?

Discuss with: Director | Brief: 44

Final gesture

Who makes the last adjustment, what changes, and how much does the camera reveal?

Discuss with: Director | Brief: 45

Production resources

What are the budget, shoot date, confirmed crew, location and shared-resource arrangements?

Discuss with: Producer and project lead | Brief: Not supplied

Delivery

Which files, aspect ratios, review rounds and approvals define a finished film?

Discuss with: Producer and final approver | Brief: Not supplied

Sources & editorial method

Primary creative source: [RFASH C26] MP - CREATIVE BRIEF.pdf, 50 pages, supplied by the producer. All source page numbers refer to that document.

This edition reorganizes the substantive creative material. Team-introduction imagery, section dividers and the closing slide are not reproduced. Team credits were not inferred from photographs.

The specimen language belongs to the artwork. It does not describe biological categories of women. The archetypes and unresolved ending are creative constructions.

Research context and producer questions are editorial additions, not decisions already approved by the project team.

Reference imagery is rendered from the supplied PDF. It depicts inspiration from other works, not completed Menagerie footage. Named references are retained where supplied; complete image-level credits were not available.

Research references

Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T.-A. (1997). Objectification Theory: Toward Understanding Women's Lived Experiences and Mental Health Risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21, 173-206.

doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00108.x

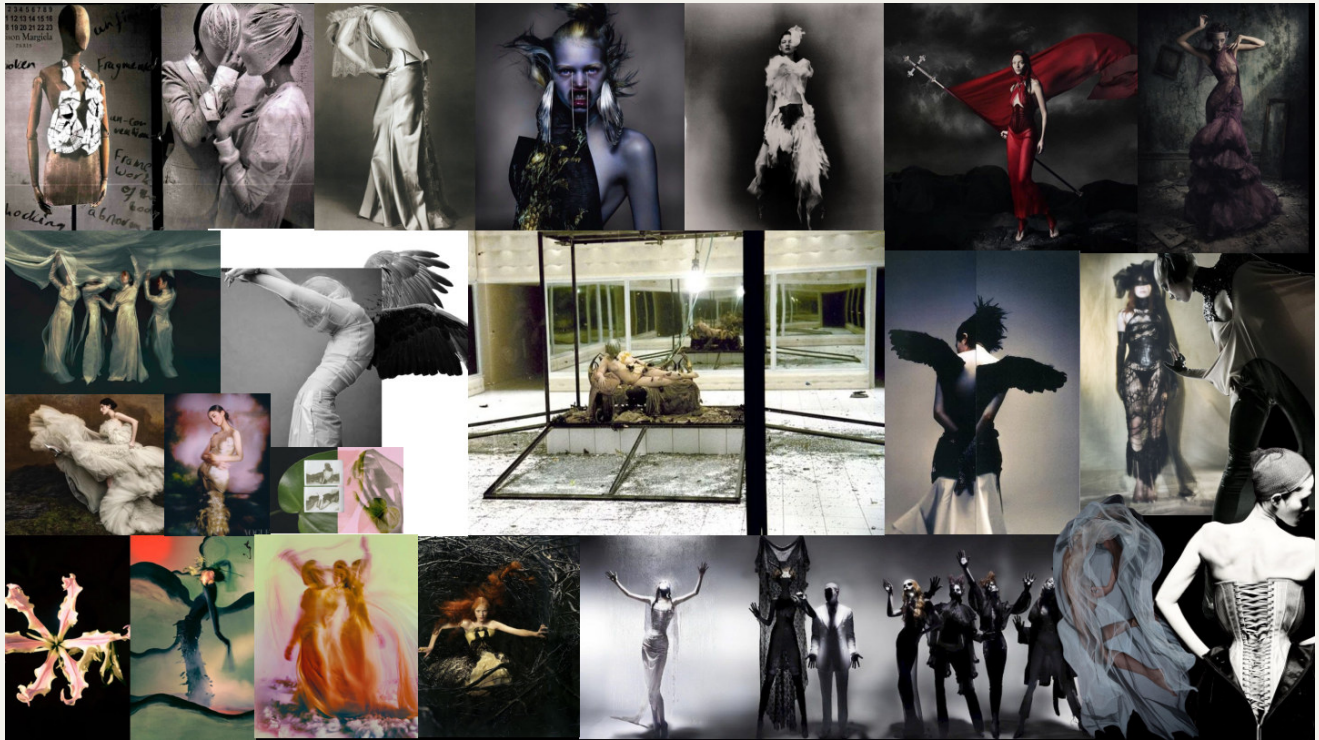
Gurtala, J. C., & Fardouly, J. (2023). Does medium matter? Investigating the impact of viewing ideal image or short-form video content on young women's body image, mood, and self-objectification. *Body Image*, 46, 190-201.

doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.06.005

Research records checked 24 September 2026.

Reference atlas

Original p. 13 | Overall moodboard



Original p. 15 | Swan: archetype

Swan

Purity as Discipline

The Swan represents an ideal of femininity built around grace, composure, and innocence. Admired for appearing elegant and untouched, she reflects the pressure to remain beautiful, restrained, and perfect.

Color Palette



Reference atlas

Original p. 16 | Swan: elements



Original p. 17 | Swan: styling



Reference atlas

Original p. 18 | Swan: beauty



Original p. 19 | Songbird: archetype



Reference atlas

Original p. 20 | Songbird: elements



Original p. 21 | Songbird: styling

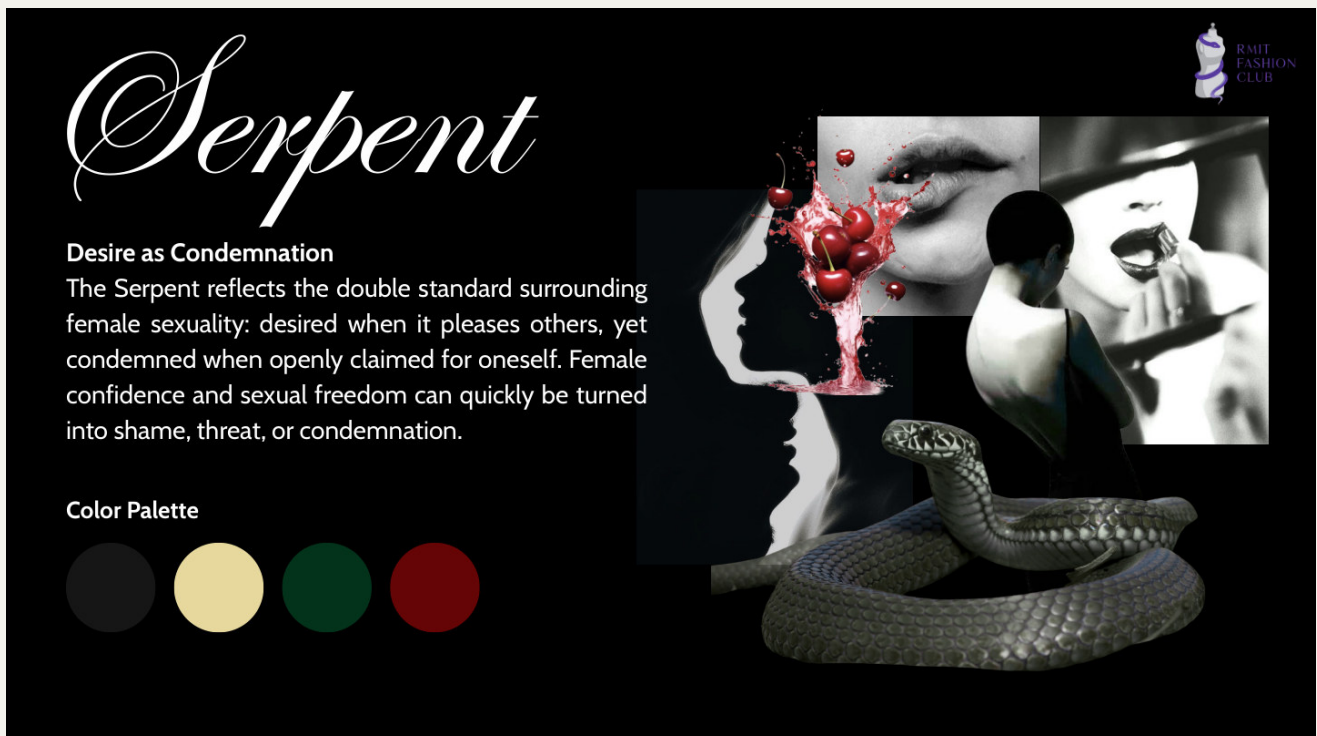


Reference atlas

Original p. 22 | Songbird: beauty

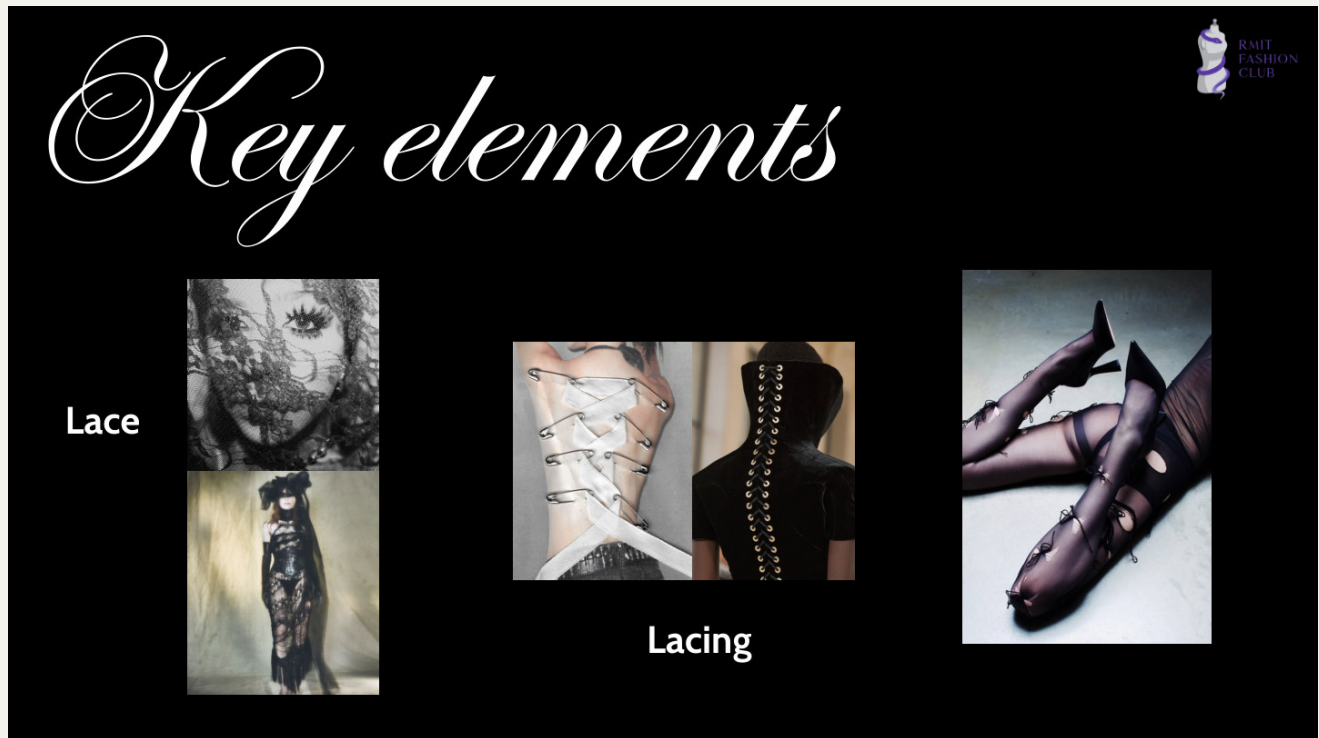


Original p. 23 | Serpent: archetype

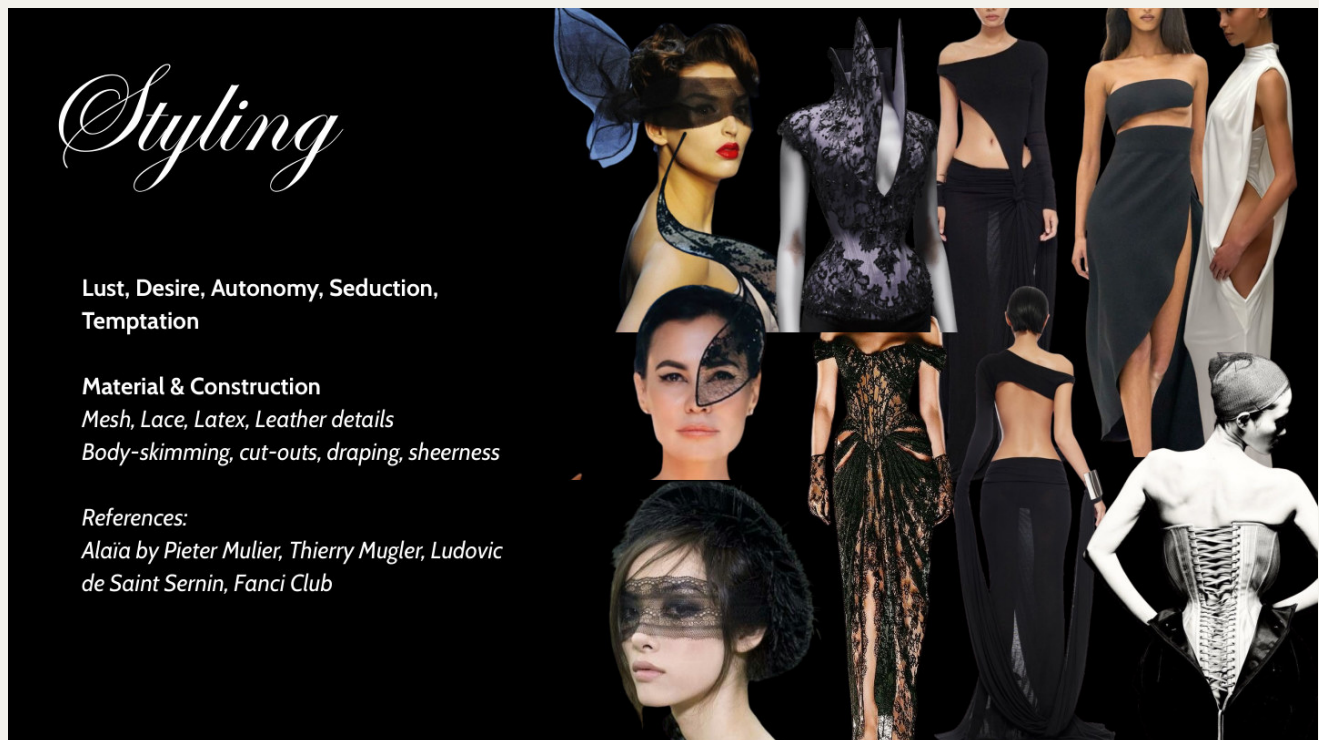


Reference atlas

Original p. 24 | Serpent: elements

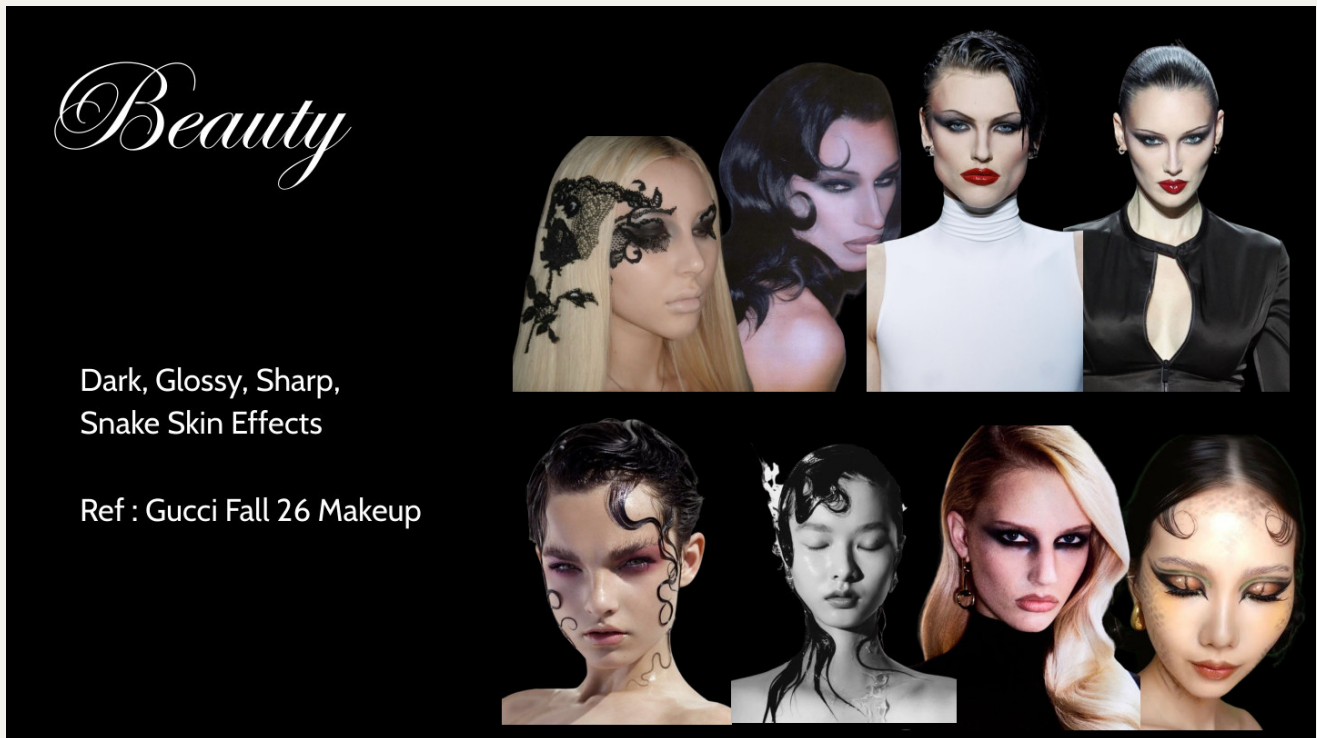


Original p. 25 | Serpent: styling

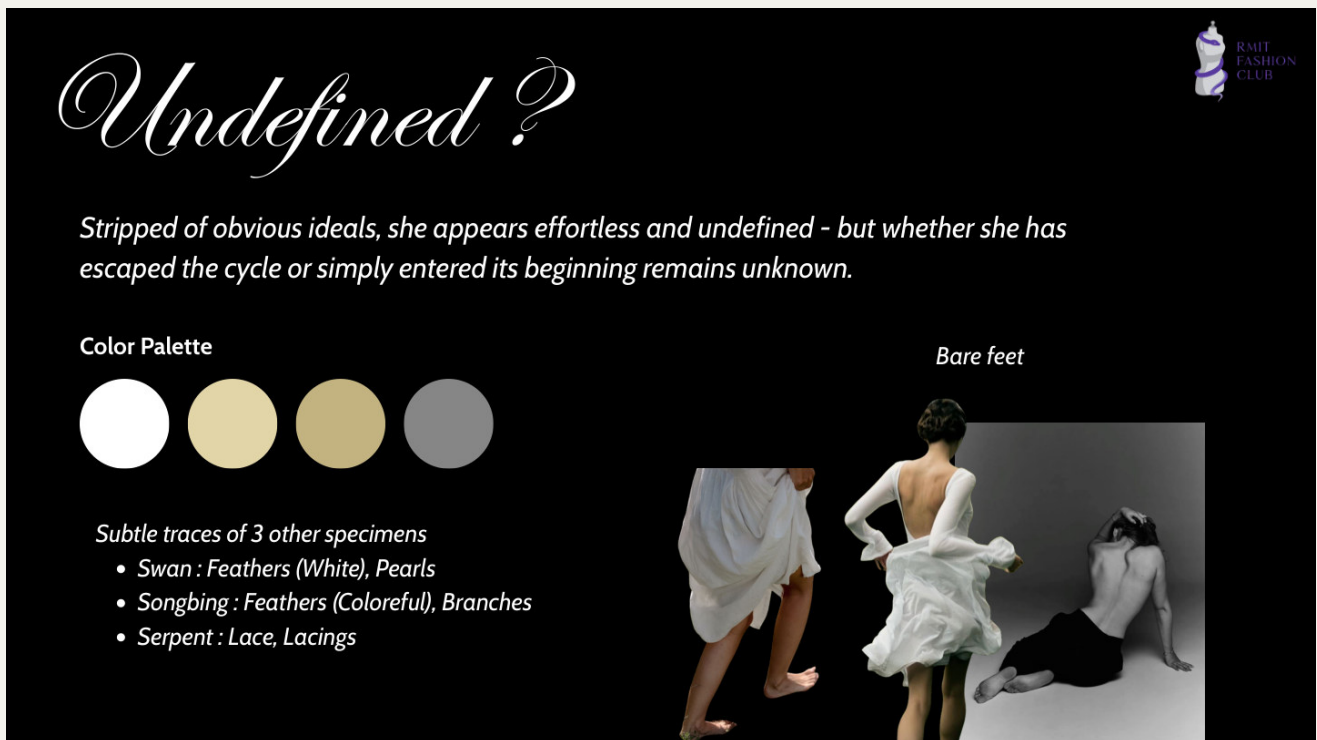


Reference atlas

Original p. 26 | Serpent: beauty



Original p. 27 | Specimen 04: archetype



Reference atlas

Original p. 28 | Specimen 04: styling and beauty



Styling

Draping, semi-transparent, unfinished construction, body-hugging



Beauty

Bare, Fresh, Effortless, Undone



Original p. 31 | Photography: first colour references

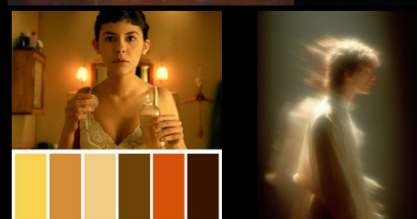


Phase 1

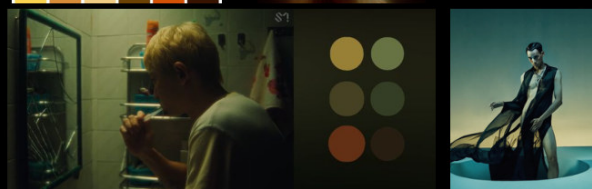
Songbird



Swarn



Serpent

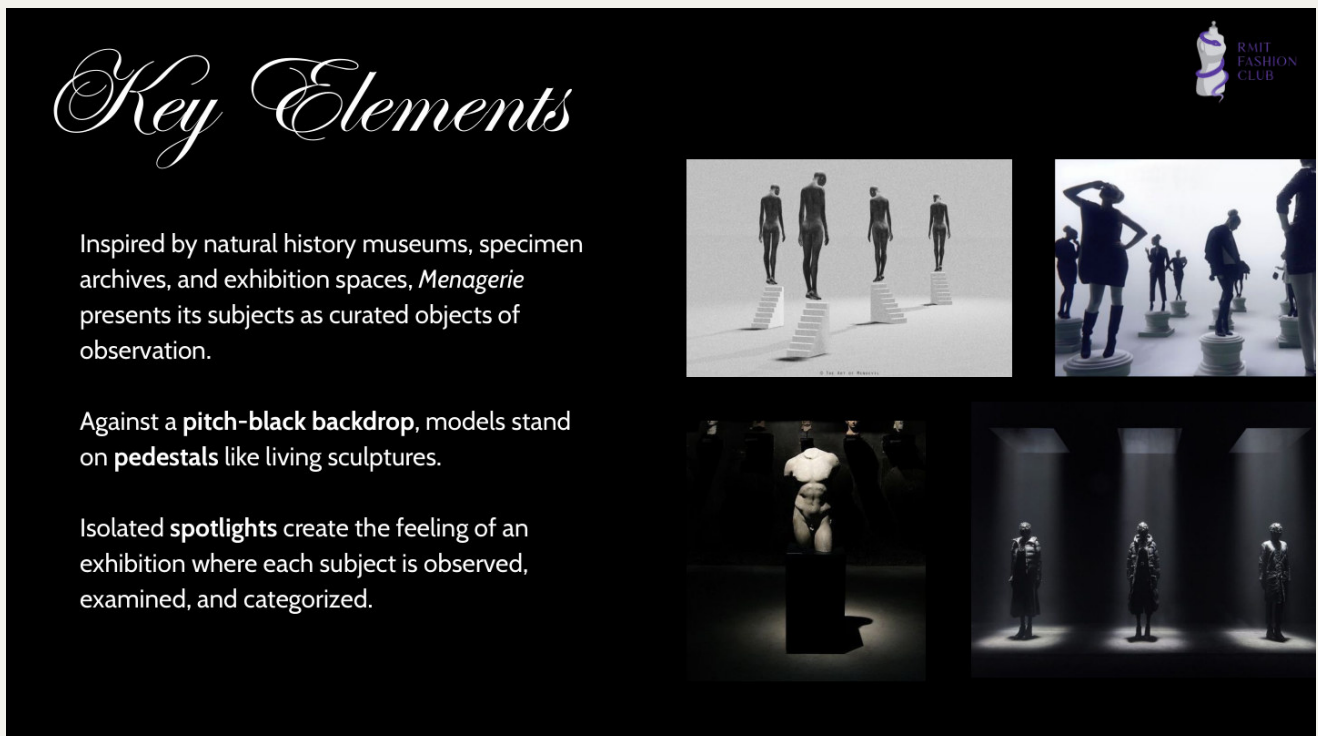


Reference atlas

Original p. 32 | Photography: second colour references



Original p. 33 | Photography: display language

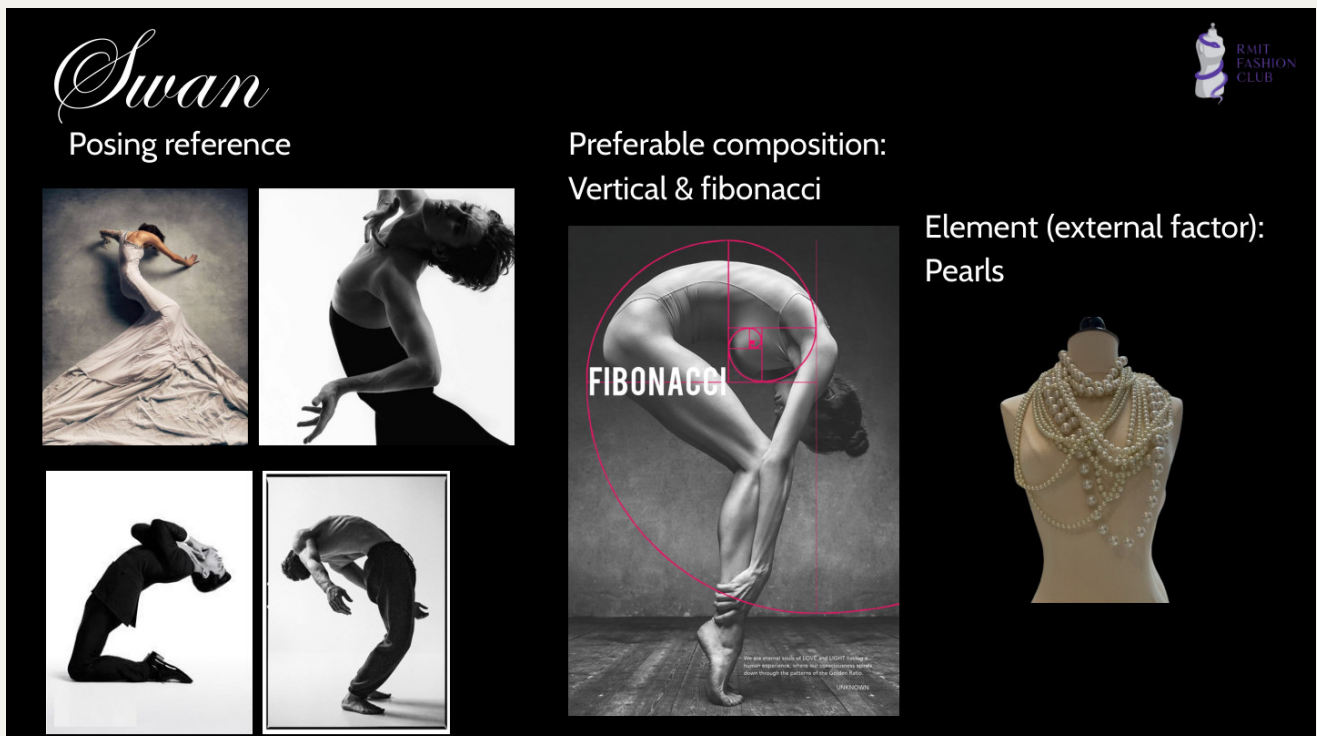


Reference atlas

Original p. 34 | Photography: lighting

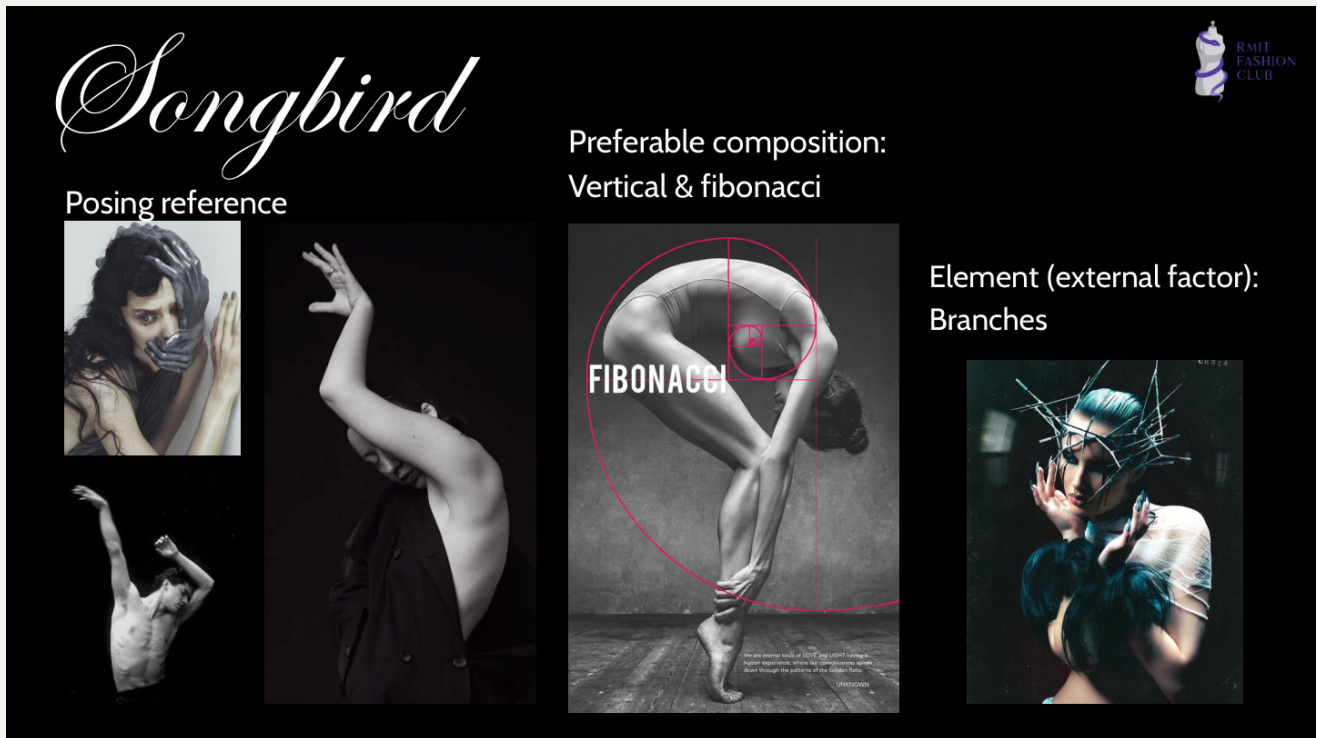


Original p. 36 | Swan: first posing references

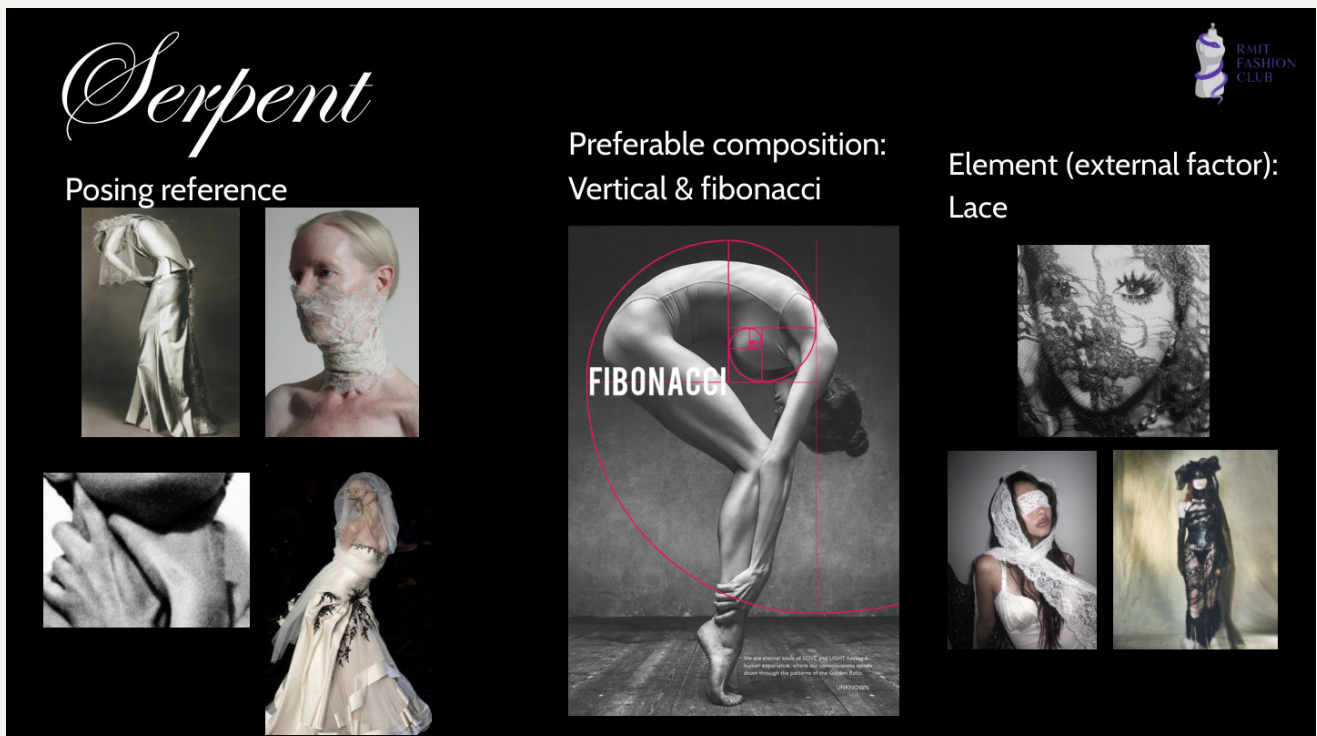


Reference atlas

Original p. 37 | Songbird: first posing references



Original p. 38 | Serpent: first posing references



Reference atlas

Original p. 40 | Swan: display references

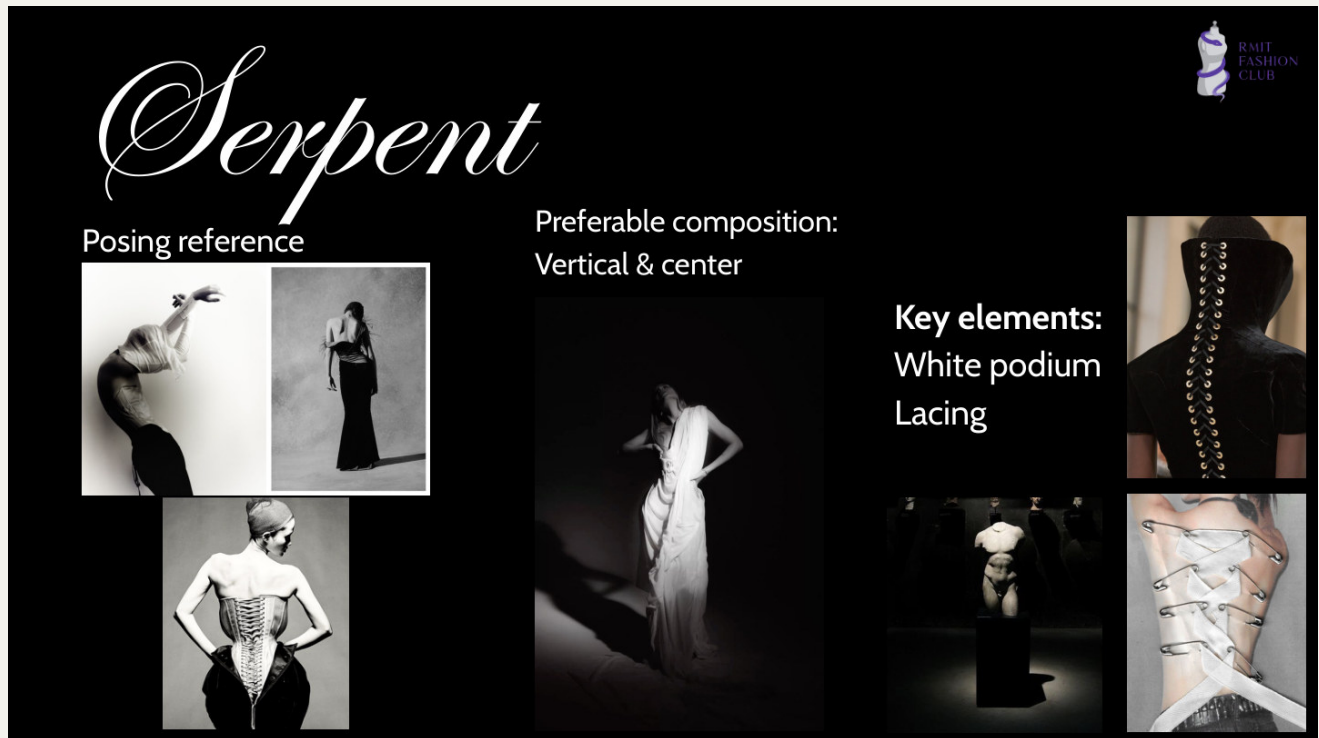


Original p. 41 | Songbird: display references

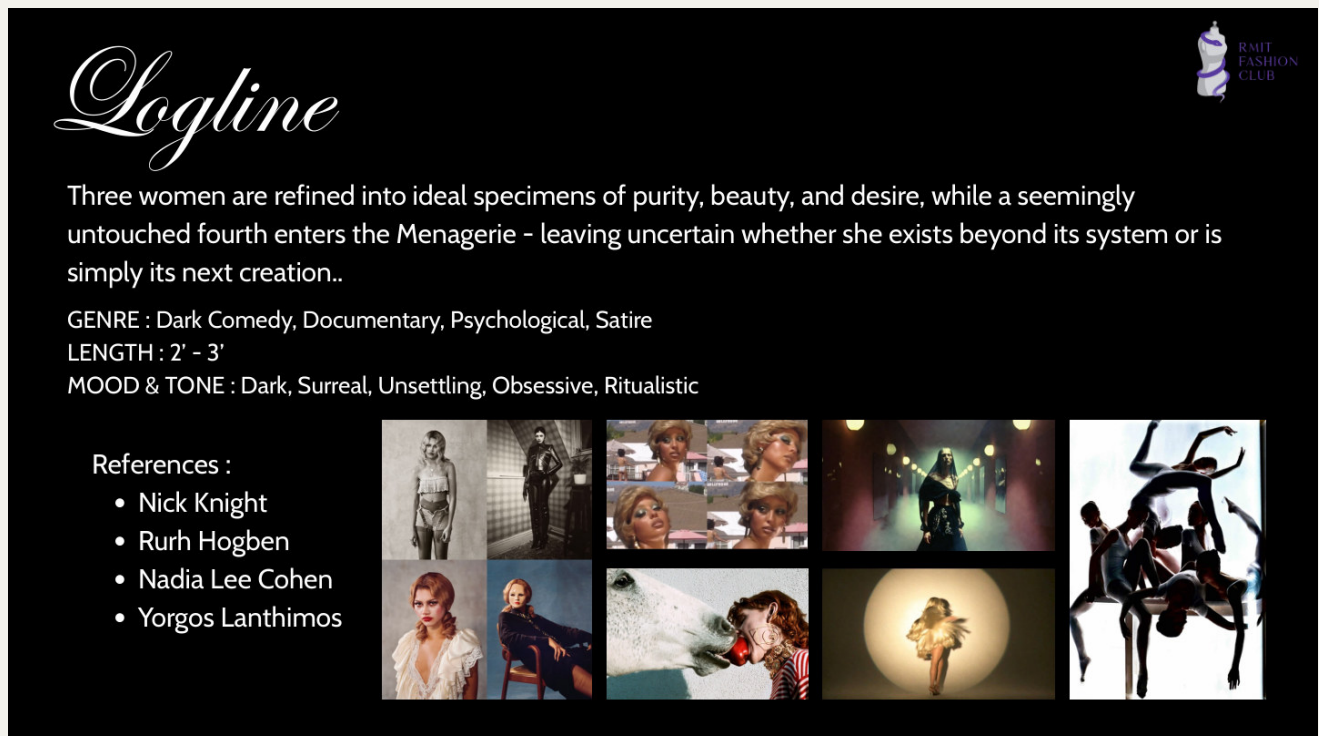


Reference atlas

Original p. 42 | Serpent: display references



Original p. 44 | Fashion film references



Reference atlas

Original p. 48 | Exhibition: spatial references



Spatial Direction

