

FACADE

Pity the nation that raises not its voice



FACADE /fə'säd/ noun

1. *The face of a building, especially the principal front that looks onto a street or open space.*
2. *An outward appearance that is maintained to conceal a less pleasant or creditable reality.*

WOMENSWEAR SPRING/SUMMER 2026
SOPHIA LAMMI

“We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.” – Winston Churchill

Architecture is a language of power. Throughout history, leaders have used monumental structures to communicate dominance, shaping public spaces into reflections of their authority. In the United States, the deliberate adoption of classical architecture serves as a visual shorthand for legitimacy, **reinforcing ties to an idealized past while obscuring the diverse realities of the present.**

This collection interrogates that imposed aesthetic, questioning **why our democracy - “the rule of the people” - continues to frame itself through the aesthetic language of a fallen empire.** Through form, texture, and structure, “Facade” challenges the rigidity of classical ideals. Draped silhouettes and fractured tailoring reflect the instability of inherited myths; patchwork textiles force a confrontation between imposed tradition and lived experience.

“Facade” is a refusal to accept a singular, institutional narrative of national identity. It asks: **What would an aesthetic of true democracy look like?** One that reflects the richness of our histories, the complexity of our present, and the possibility of a future not bound by the ideals of an empire that crumbled two thousand years ago?

This is not a rejection of history, but a reclamation of the right to define who we are - on our own terms.



THE MOTHER ART IS
ARCHITECTURE.

WITHOUT ARCHITECTURE
OF OUR OWN,

WE HAVE NO SOUL OF OUR
OWN CIVILIZATION.

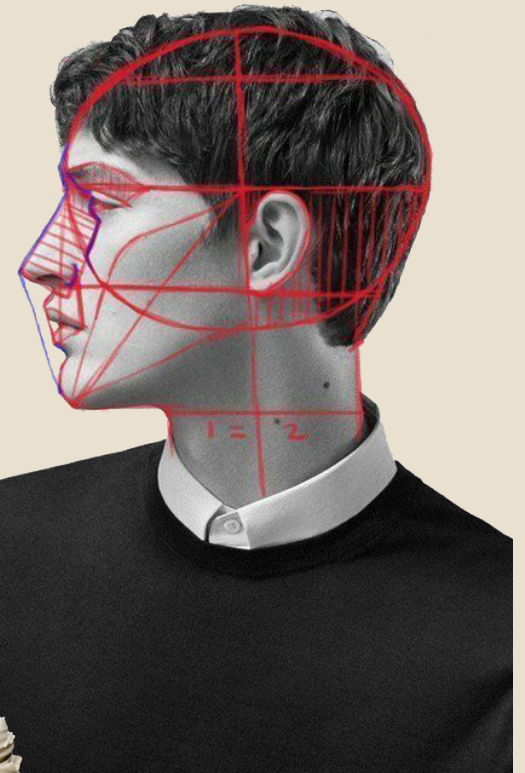
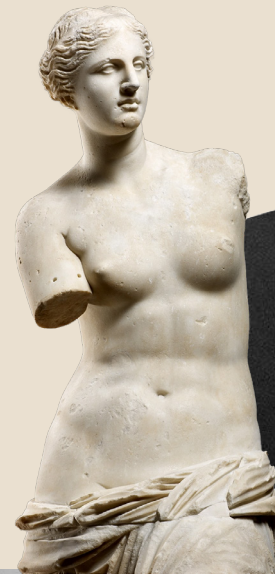
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



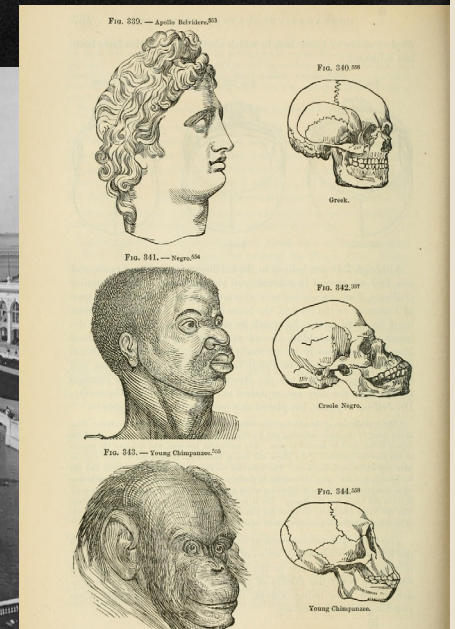
The association of neoclassical architecture with whiteness and racial superiority has deep historical roots. In the 18th century, scholars like Johann Joachim Winckelmann **idealized ancient Greek art, epitomized by statues such as the Apollo of Belvedere, as representations of perfect human form.** This idealization contributed to the perception of classical antiquity as a pinnacle of aesthetic and cultural achievement. However, this perspective often overlooked the polychromatic reality of ancient sculptures, which were originally painted in vibrant colors. The Renaissance's emphasis on unpainted white marble further perpetuated the misconception of a monochromatic classical past, **aligning whiteness with purity and beauty.**

In the United States, this translated into the adoption of neoclassical architecture for government buildings and monuments, **symbolizing democratic ideals while simultaneously marginalizing non-European influences.** The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, known as the "White City," showcased gleaming white neoclassical structures, reinforcing the association between whiteness and cultural superiority. This event not only influenced urban planning and architectural trends but also **propagated narratives that equated whiteness with civilization and progress.**

"perfect features"
→



recolored greek
statues from
the met
→



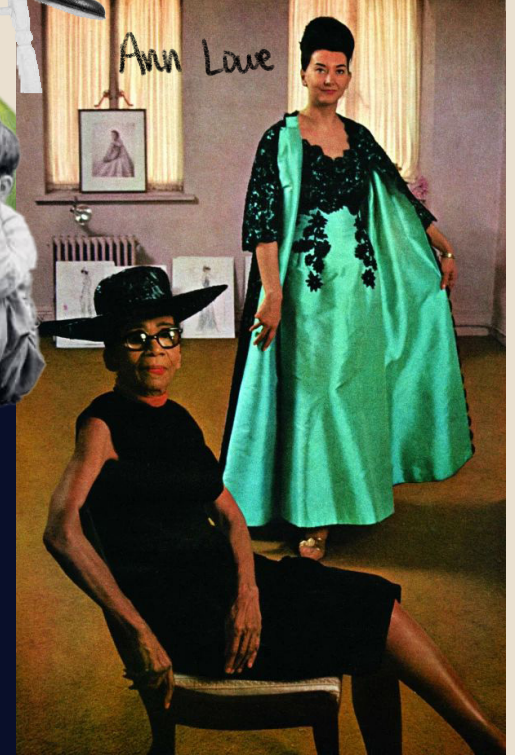
Passed on January 20th, 2025 by President Donald Trump, the “Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture” Executive Order mandates that **all public federal buildings must “respect classical architectural heritage”** and be constructed in the neoclassical style. On the surface this seems to be a harmless edict focused on developing the nation’s architectural identity. However, as stated by Phineas Harper of Open City, *“Trump’s edict should be seen as part of a far more worrying agenda than a mere taste tussle. The order is not just about the look of buildings – it is part of a jingoistic culture war waged against black and ethnic minority Americans. Trump’s order venerating classical aesthetics is intended to wrap the buildings of American authority not just in stone cladding but in the architectural shorthand of his core political project: white supremacy.”*

Trump’s executive order exemplifies the American perpetuation of Eurocentric narratives and marginalization of diverse cultural expressions. The order aligns with historical practices **where neoclassical architecture symbolized power and dominance at the expense of inclusivity.** During the antebellum period, neoclassical designs were prevalent in Southern plantation estates because they served as emblems of white supremacy and economic control. **In Nazi Germany, classical architecture was employed to project an image of racial superiority and ideological conformity.**

In the American context, the promotion of classical architecture for civic buildings disregards the rich tapestry of indigenous, African American, and immigrant contributions to the nation’s architectural heritage, erasing these narratives from the public and civic sphere. **This approach not only imposes a singular historical perspective but also undermines the pluralistic values that constitute the essence of American democracy.**

Louis Armstrong
Jazz Pioneer

Frieda Kahlo
Painter



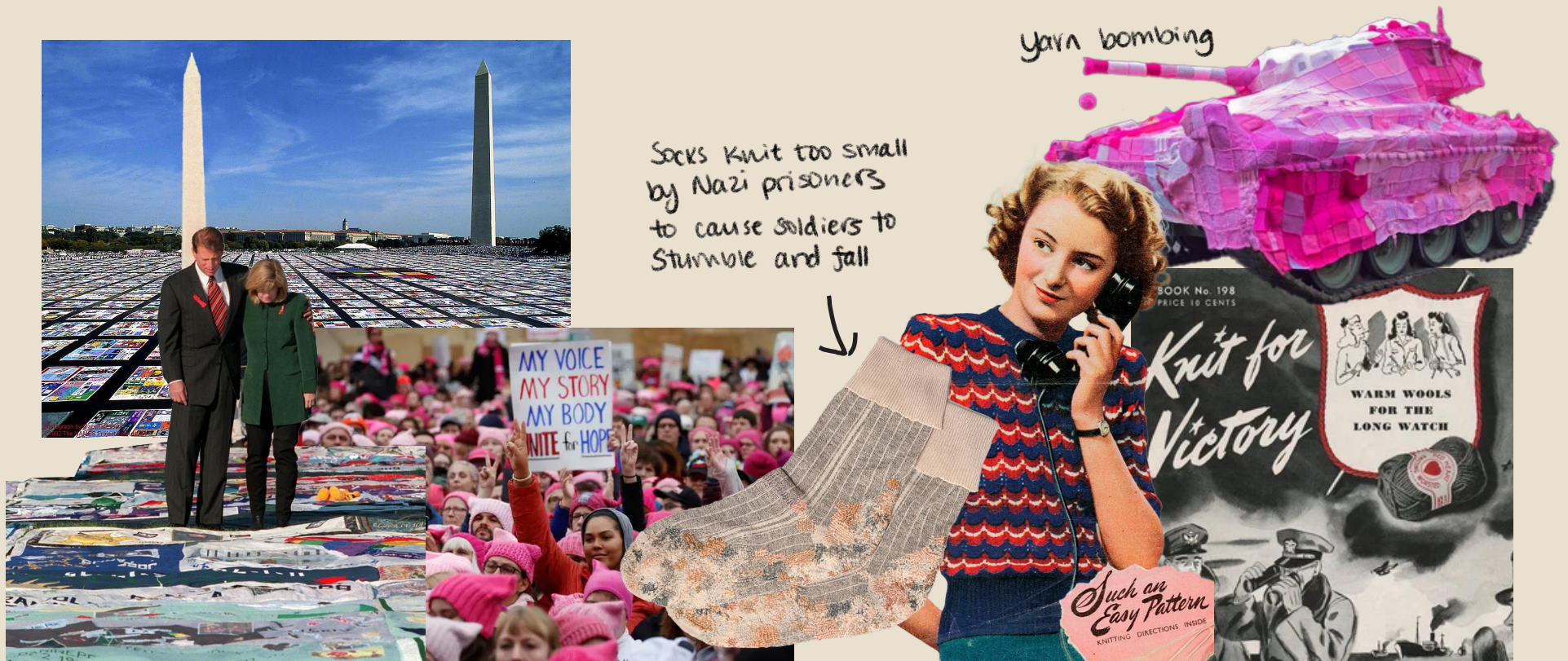

PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS
**PROMOTING
BEAUTIFUL FEDERAL
CIVIC ARCHITECTURE**

January 20, 2025

Textile crafts like quilting and knitting have long served as mediums of democratic expression and resistance, embodying the **participatory and inclusive values foundational to American democracy**. During the American Revolution, women organized “spinning bees,” producing homespun textiles to boycott British goods and assert political agency in **public spheres traditionally dominated by men**. During the Civil War, quilts stitched with coded symbols were hung as signals along the Underground Railroad, **guiding enslaved people to freedom under the guise of domestic routine**. The AIDS Memorial Quilt transformed grief into activism, sprawling across the National Mall in **defiance of governmental silence**.

These crafts, often collaborative and community-driven, **contrast sharply with the top-down imposition of neoclassical architecture**, offering a more authentic representation of a diverse and evolving national identity. By engaging in these tactile traditions, marginalized groups have historically reclaimed agency, stitching their narratives into the fabric of public consciousness and challenging monolithic cultural impositions.

Quilting, with its layered composition, creates dimensionality and rigidity, allowing a garment to hold shape without rigid boning or interfacing. It functions like a soft form of tailoring: **shaping volume through padding, gridwork, and constraint.** Similarly, knitting offers unparalleled flexibility — it can mold to the body with precision, stretch, and sculptural flow. Unlike woven textiles, knit garments are built stitch by stitch, forming garments from the inside out. **This process allows designers to embed symbolism and intentionality directly into the fabric.**

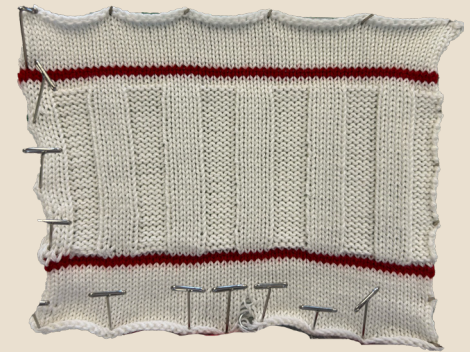




Knitting
words
into
garments?

In colonial times, knitting was a vital household skill, with women and even young children contributing to the production of clothing and textiles. During the American Revolution, homespun textiles became symbols of resistance against British imports. The 19th century saw innovations such as the introduction of the first knitting mill in Mansfield, Connecticut, in 1838, marking the transition from handcraft to industrial production. In the mid-19th century, Indigenous communities, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, **integrated knitting techniques with traditional patterns to create unique garments like the Cowichan sweaters.** The 20th century experienced fluctuations in knitting's popularity, influenced by economic factors and wartime efforts, with notable figures like Elizabeth Zimmermann and Mary Walker Phillips **elevating knitting to an art form and fostering a revival of interest in handcrafting.**

Sample Swatches ↓



Experimental Swatches:
4-ply 100% merino sport wool

Left: single-bed punchcard, tucking every other pass

Right: double-bed alternating columns of knit stitch and stockingette stitch, 5 needles wide

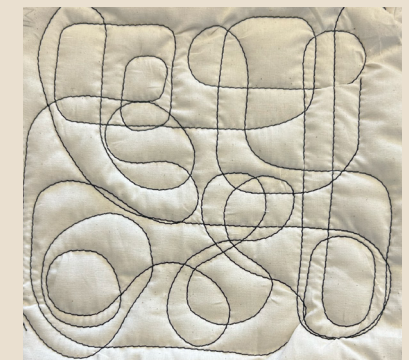
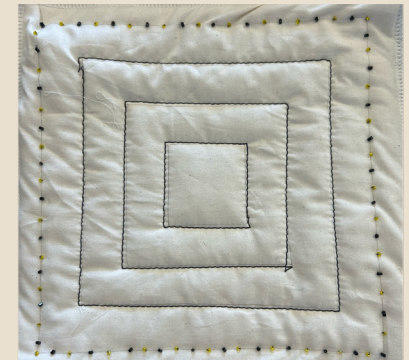
American quilting has evolved from a utilitarian craft into a rich form of artistic and cultural expression. In colonial times, quilts were primarily whole-cloth pieces, valued for their durability and warmth. **The 19th century introduced patchwork and appliqué techniques, with quilting bees fostering community bonds.** During the Civil War, quilts symbolized unity and were used in fundraising efforts. African American communities, notably in Gee's Bend, Alabama, **developed distinctive quilting styles that narrate personal and collective histories.** The 20th century saw a resurgence of interest in quilting, with artists like Yvonne Wells using the medium to depict significant moments in Black history.



Experimental Swatches:
100% cotton muslin; quilting
batting

Top: basic quilting square pattern
with walking foot machine; outer
square hand beaded

Bottom: freehand machine
quilting with walking foot
machine



color blocking?

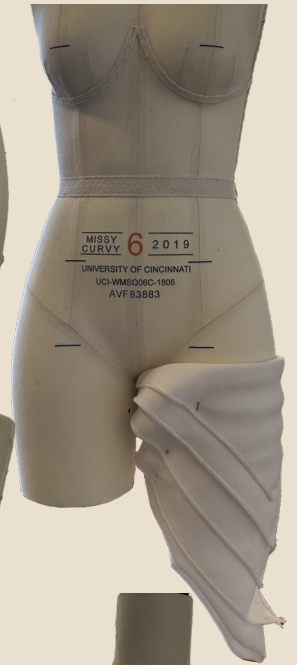


Sketching Ideation

Silhouette Inspo



3D Exploration



Plaster

Abolition

Gesso

Erasure

Pallor

Blueprint

Hearth

Slate

Silt

Oxide

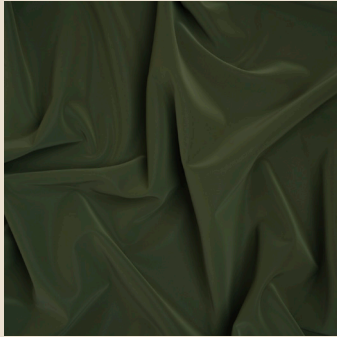
Terracotta

Aureate

Censure

Ember





Faux Leather with Felt Backing



Stretch Cotton Sateen



Lightweight Rigid Cotton Denim Twill



Textured Faux Leather Stretch Polyester Knit



Brushed Cotton Canvas



Sherpa Fleece Lining



Brittany 3-ply Merino Wool Yarn



IN 2025, Trump signed a mandate requiring all new federal buildings to be designed in the neoclassical style — columns, domes, white stone. At first, it seemed strange but harmless, like a preference for a certain “look.” But when I read responses from architects and critics, I realized it was much deeper. **They weren’t just talking about taste** — they were talking about whiteness, power, and erasure.

So I started tracing the roots. Neoclassical architecture was everywhere during the antebellum South — plantation houses built to look like temples. It was used by Nazi Germany to project racial purity and ideological control. And it all traces back to ancient Rome and Greece — cultures that, over time, came to **symbolize a kind of mythic whiteness**, even though the reality was far more diverse and colorful. The statues were painted. The people were mixed. **But the version we inherited got bleached starkly white.**

That led me to a bigger question: why does the U.S. still reflect that version of history in its most powerful buildings? We’re a country made of many cultures, yet the architecture of our government reflects only a narrow slice of that reality.

Facade is my way of unpacking that contradiction. The collection uses shapes pulled from architectural forms — columns, grids, symmetry — but pushes them off balance. I worked with materials like canvas and sateen — both utilitarian and symbolic — and built texture into the surfaces through quilting, stitchwork, and layered structure. Color choices like white and gold nod to classical ideals, but browns, reds, and greens break that illusion open. **They’re signs of erosion, resistance, and new growth.**

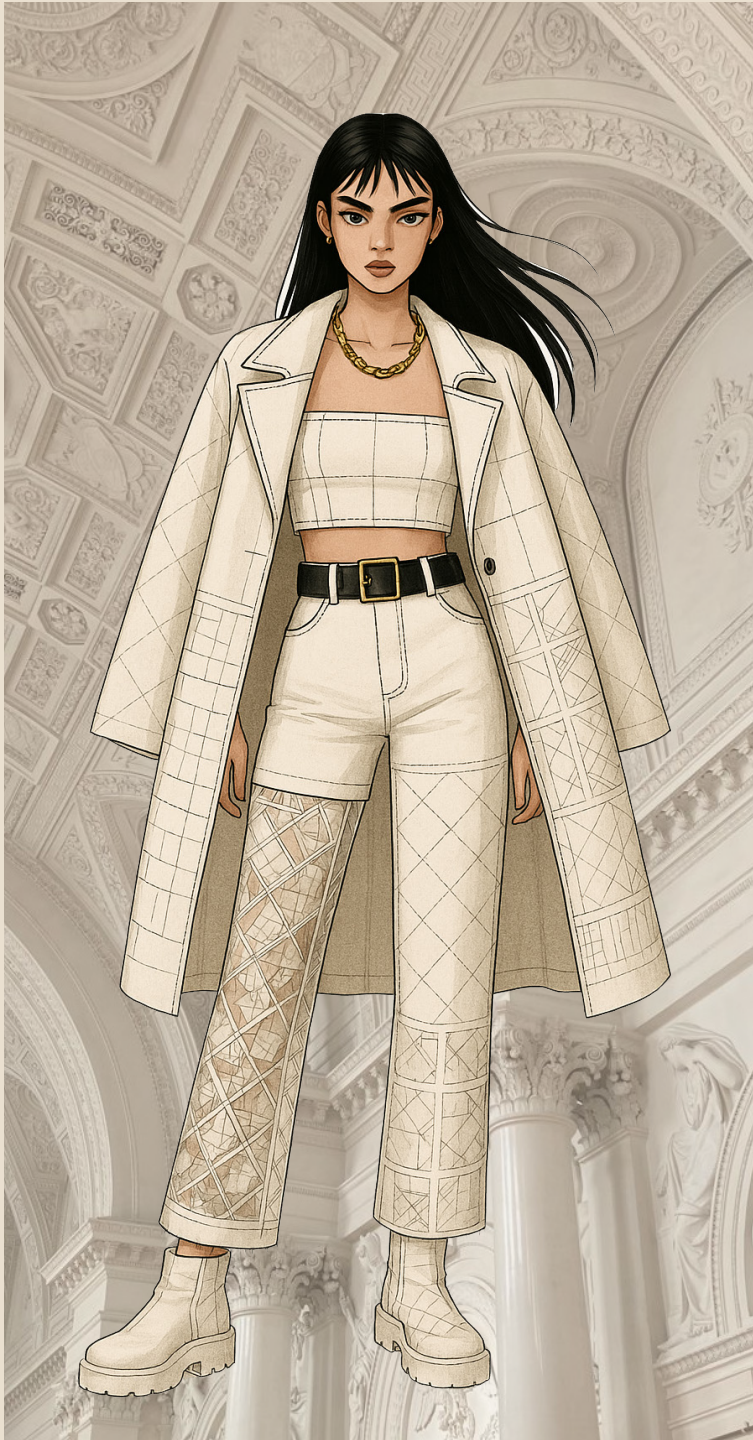
Facade is for the moment when you see a building and realize: it’s not just about the way it looks. **It’s about what it was built to say. And who it was built to silence.**





THERE IS NO GATE, NO LOCK, NO BOLT THAT YOU CAN SET
UPON THE FREEDOM OF MY MIND.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

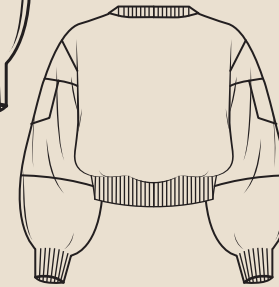
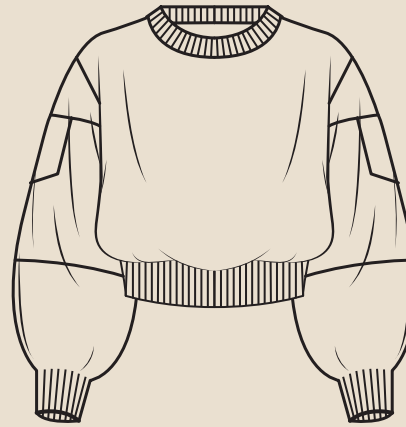


Quilting pattern represents the Kentucky county map - Kentucky is one of the most gerrymandered US states, leading to skewed and disproportionate election results.

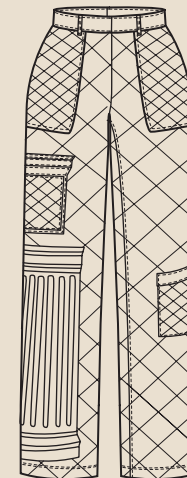
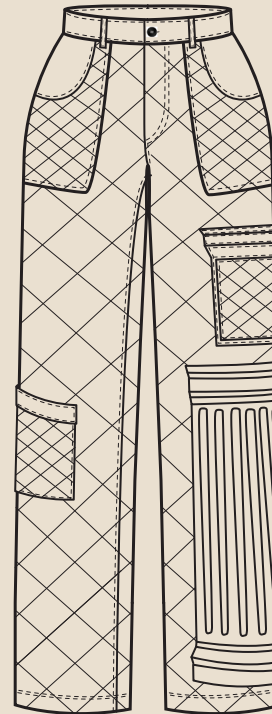


Swirling pattern on sleeves is created with freehand machine quilting. Sweater has interfacing on interior to provide stability for quilting.

Hints of blue represent freedom breaking through the ivory perfection of neoclassicism.



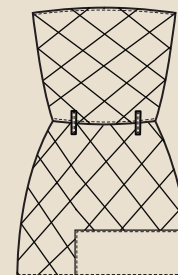
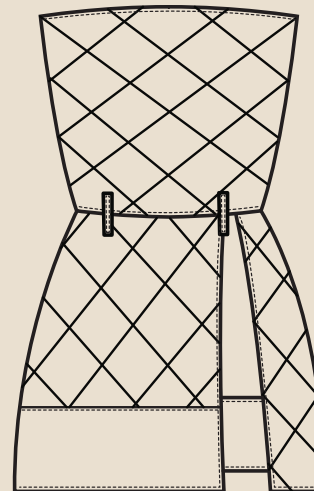
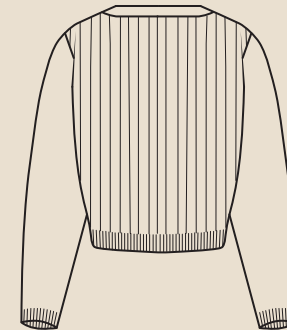
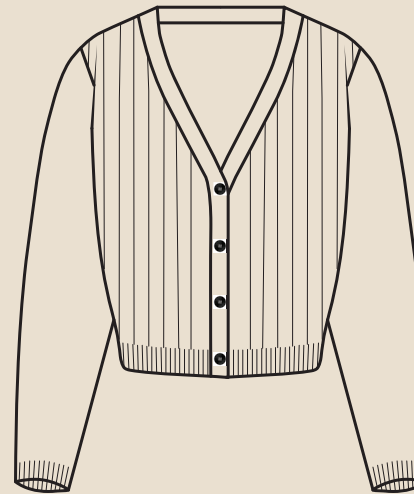
Fluid lines create contrast with the sharp geometric shapes of neoclassicism, and bring to mind fiery passion.



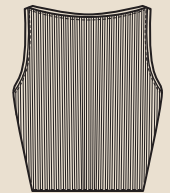
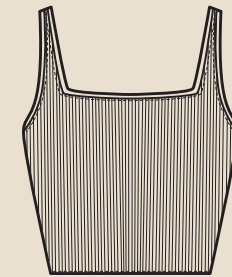
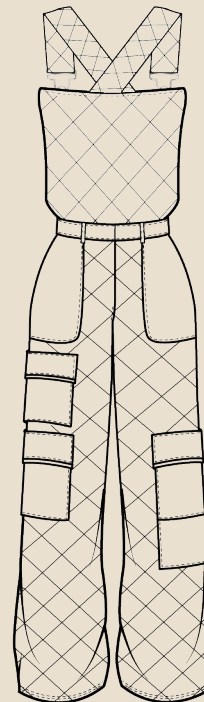
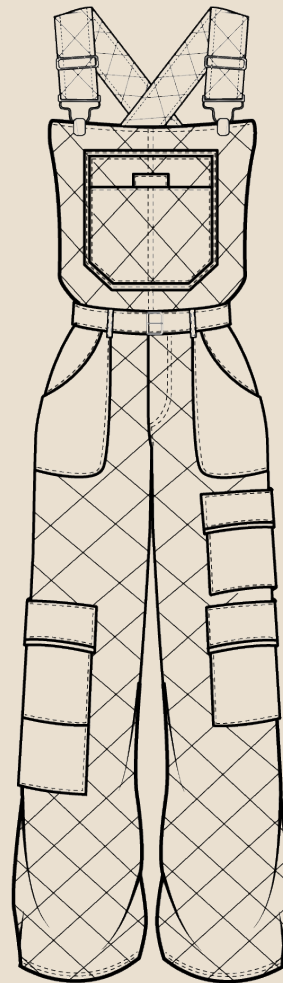
Column shape is created with cording and quilting and applied onto pants as a design detail. Pockets are all functional.



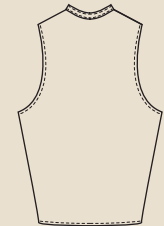
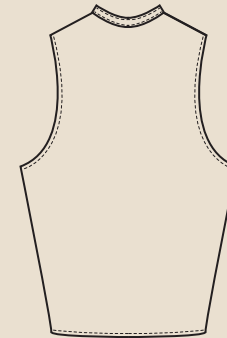
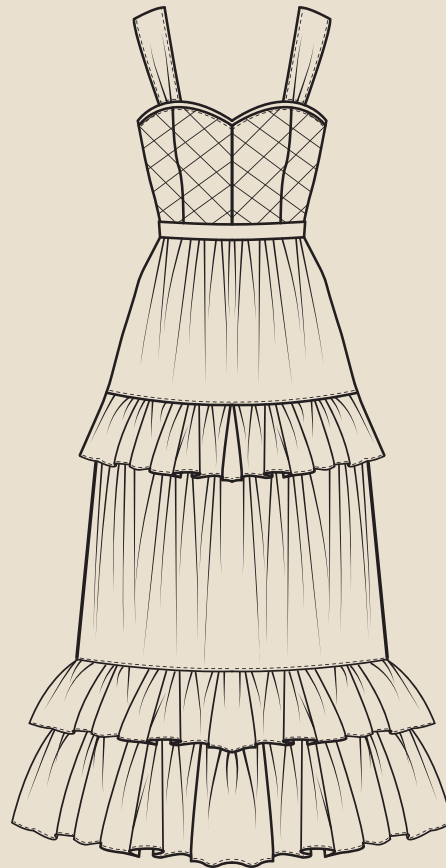
Alternating stockingette stitches create the iconic column-esque look. Sweater is naturally dyed with tea to call back to the Boston Tea Party and celebrate the use of tea all over the world.



Text from the US Declaration of Independence can be revealed by unzipping the zipper on the princess seam.



Ivory and blue complement each other in equal quantities, paying homage to both the structure of ivory classicism and the freedom that's represented by blue.

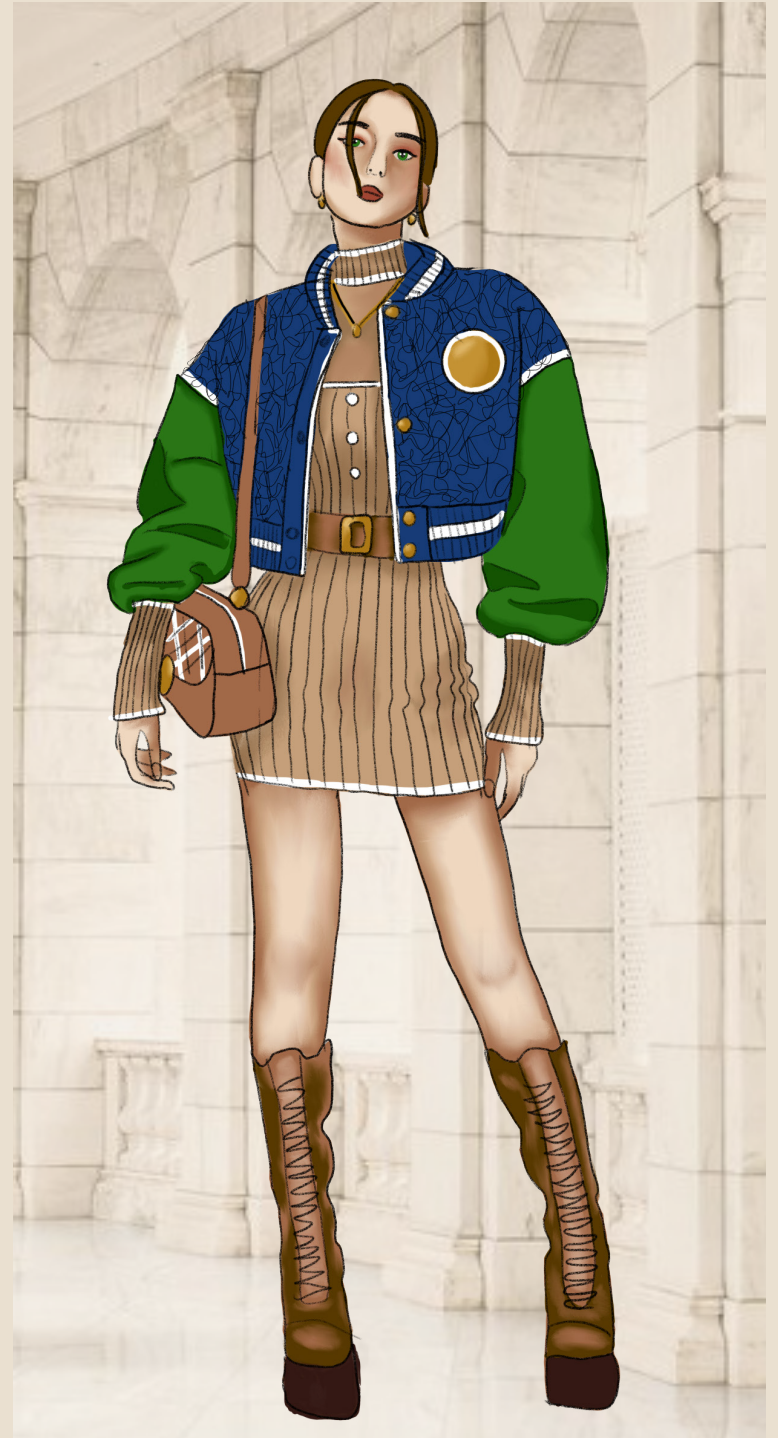


The gathered tiers and ruffles of the skirt are reminiscent of the shape of a Greek column. The use of blue, however, symbolizes that while we can recognize and appreciate the positive history of our neoclassical heritage, we also acknowledge the modern-day diversity of our nation.



Freehand machine embroidery on the body of the varsity jacket gives structure and a unique visual appeal to a classic American staple.

Embroidered on the green pant panels are the poems *Democracy* by Langston Hughes and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou.





Left top: gauge swatch to calculate pattern measurements

Right top: blocking a back panel after washing



Left bottom: joining two body pieces using the linking machine



Right bottom: finishing the open neckline with i-cord



Woven from 4-ply 100% merino wool sport yarn on a 200-needle Brother knitting machine.

Final knit structure: sleeves in single jersey and finished at cuffs with 1x1 rib; front panels and back in alternating columns of knit and purl stitches, finished with 1x1 rib.

Joined on the linking machine.

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