
ARACHNE PORTFOLIO
Eva Buryakovsky

Project Statement; Concept Themes

The myth of Arachne tells of a gifted young weaver who defies Minerva and is transformed into a spider

In this interpretation, the myth is set in a pre-revolutionary Caucasus carpet-weaving community in Azerbaijan

Rebellion Against Community



Hakobyan, Who Are The Azerbaijani People

Oppression



Azerxalca Carpet Weaving Factory Workers

- *Craft used as resistance against authority*
- *Patriarchal systems that restrict women's creativity*
- *Carpet-weaving culture as the social setting*
- *Conflict of generational and interspecies hierarchies*

Transformation



Adams,The Vines, 2022

Female Agency



Kuba Region Carpet Weaving, 1985

- *Becoming a spider as both punishment and freedom*
- *Transforming to reclaim creative power*
- *Weaving as a political and symbolic act*
- *The artist: a keeper of memory and challenger of power*

Tradition



1850 Garabagh Group Carpet, 2025

Hierarchies



Shahriar, Daughters of the Sun, 2000

Political Craft



Ahmed, Symbol, 2018

Artist's Role



Franses, Western Khanates, 2017

Arachne Character Board

Carpet Weaver Girl

- *Young Azerbaijani carpet weaver (early 20s)*
- *Prideful, devoted, and intensely craft-driven*
- *Lives immersed in wool, yarn, dyes, and looms*
- *Seeks a level of mastery beyond human limits*
- *Costume constructed from felt and woven scraps*





Karimov, Shirvan Region Carpet, 1985

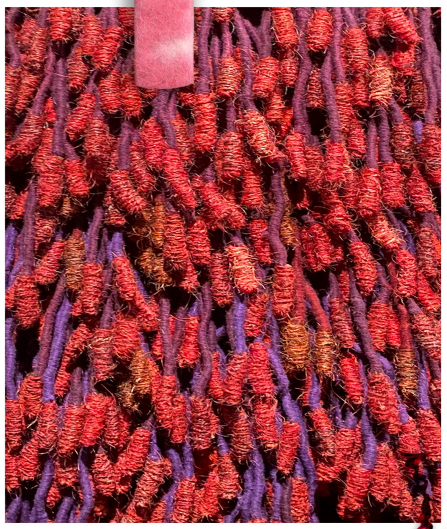


Karimov, Kuba Region Carpet Weaving, 1985



Arachne's Costume Before Transformation





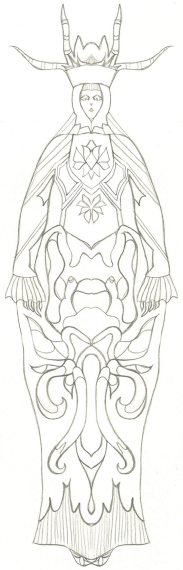
de Amaral, Naturaleza Mora, 1981

Process Page

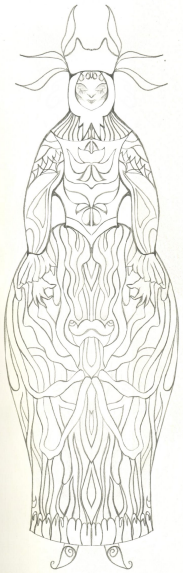
Final Silhouette, Ornament And Colour Palette Development



Initial Hand Sketch



Process Hand Sketches





Arachne's Final Spider Costume Silhouette
(Final Hand Sketch Overlaid On Toile)



Final Colour Palette



Spider Ornament In Colour



Albers, Under Way, 1963



Arachne's Costume After Transformation

Zoroastrian Symbol Of Eternal Fire



Buryakovsky, Fire Mountain, 2025

Arachne Character Board

Transformed Into A Spider

- *Transformed Arachne becomes more aggressive*
- *Weaving remains the centre of her existence*
- *She no longer needs a loom; the web is produced directly from her body*
- *She is now made of wool, yarn, and cobwebs*
- *She becomes a textile-adjacent spider being*



Hillyard, Ladybird Spider, 2011



Hendry, Radial Web, 2018

Introduction to Arachne







Transformed Arachne

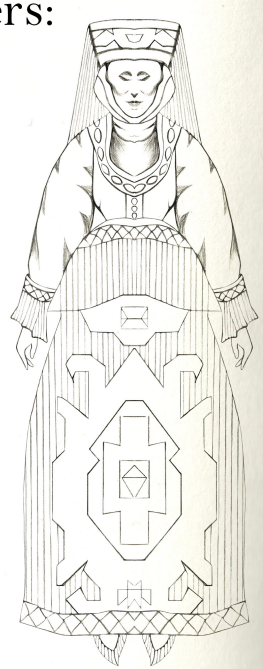


Arachne's Mother

Supporting Characters: Carpet Weaver



1900 Piled Carpet By Shirvan Group



Initial Hand Sketch Of Arachne's Mother

- *Woman in her 50s, carpet weaver*
- *Dedicated to her craft and textile heritage*
- *Strictly follows ancient symbols and precise geometric patterns*
- *Her materiality reflects control and order*
- *Costume based on early 20th-century Azerbaijani women's dress*



Kazakh Traditional Women's Costume

Character Board



Arachne's Mother's Costume

Karimov, Shirvan Region Carpet, 1985



Dean, Dyeing Techniques, 2018



Ahmed, Handmade Carpet

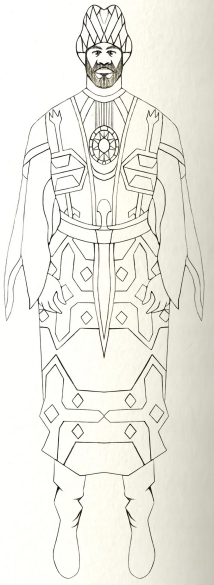
Ganja, Traditional Men's Costume



Buryakovsky, Sheep In Gobustan Field, 2025



Initial Hand Sketch Of Arachne's Father's Costume





Studt, Purple-Dyed Fabrics & Corresponding Sea Snails, 2018

Arachne's Father Character Board



18th Century Shah Oud Instrument



Supporting Characters: Textile Dyer

- *Middle-aged Azerbaijani man (50s)*
- *Herds sheep, collects and dyes wool using local herbs*
- *Supplies materials to his wife and daughter*
- *Life centred on work, family, and the Azeri community*
- *Strongly invested in preserving traditional ways of living and making*
- *Views feminist and queer identities as a threat to patriarchal authority*
- *Costume inspired by the Azeri hunting dress from the Ganja region*



Arachne's Father's Costume



Colorit Creativity Workshop, Wool And Dyeing, 2015

Supporting Characters: Old Carpet Weaver

- *Minerva disguised as an elderly Azerbaijani weaver (80s)*
- *Appears short and whimsical*
- *Arachne initially does not take her seriously*
- *Assumed to live like the other women: spinning wool, weaving*
- *Uses this form to deliver a "gentle" warning to Arachne*
- *Constructed from embroideries, textile braids, and wool*



Minerva's Costume Transformed Into An Old Woman

Ganja Region Traditional Women's Costume





Initial Hand Sketch Of Minerva's Costume Transformed Into An Old Woman



Colorit Creativity Workshop, Wool And Dyeing, 2015



1900 Piled Carpet By Baku Group



Pile Carpet Weaving Workshop With Rena, 2025



Carpet Weaving in Azerxalca Factory

Minerva Character Board

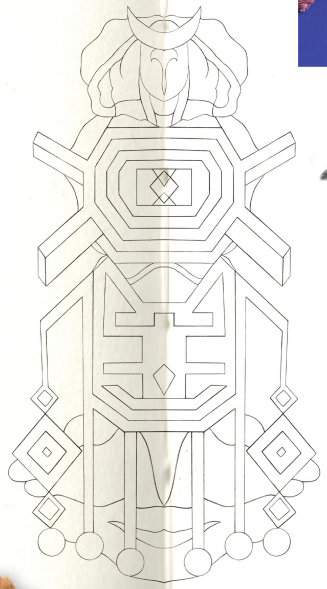
Minerva Character Board



Mukherjee, Basanti, 1984



1910 Wool Piled Carpet By Nakhchivan Group





Azerxalca Installation, 2025

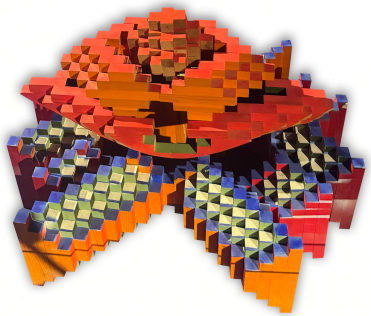


19th Century Boghazalty Necklace

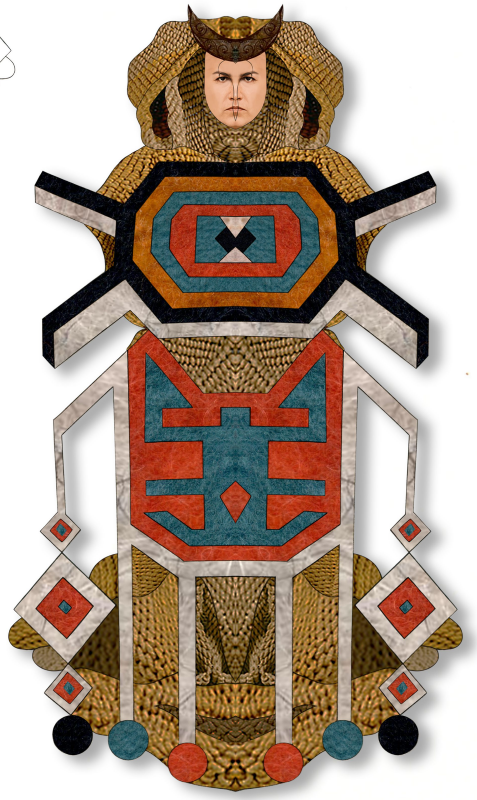
Initial Hand Sketch
Of Minerva's Costume
As A Textile Goddess

Supporting Characters: Textile Goddess

- Unusually tall, immortal woman with a commanding presence
- Seeks to punish and subdue Arachne's "wicked" behaviour
- She is prideful and egocentric
- Accepts the weaving challenge, convinced of her victory
- Loses the contest but destroys Arachne's human existence
- Remains victorious through domination rather than skill



Hagverdiyev, 3D Carpet Installation, 2022



Minerva's Costume As A Textile Goddess




SIRIN & ALKONOST
PORTFOLIO
Eva Buryakovsky

Project Statement

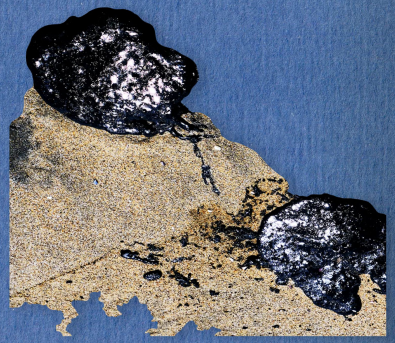
The project draws on the Slavic myth of Sirin and Alkonost, two interconnected birds whose opposing forces shape human fate

Human And Non-Human Systems



Bednarz, Machinery Maintenance, 2015

Symbiosis



Simon, Plastitar, 2022

- *Human and animal forms merge, highlighting shared vulnerability*
- *Pollution is integrated rather than rejected*
- *The body recovers mobility through a gradual transformation*
- *Immobilised movement reflects the suffering of wildlife*

Resilience



Forshaw, River Kingfisher, 1991

Ecological Trauma



Beltra, Still Life in Oil, 2013

Concept Themes

The birds merge into a single hybrid figure that moves from ecological contamination and paralysis toward renewal and reconciliation

Natural Cycles



Attenborough, Fantail Pigeons, 1998

Anthropocene



Sassoon, Oil Spill in Dalian, 2010

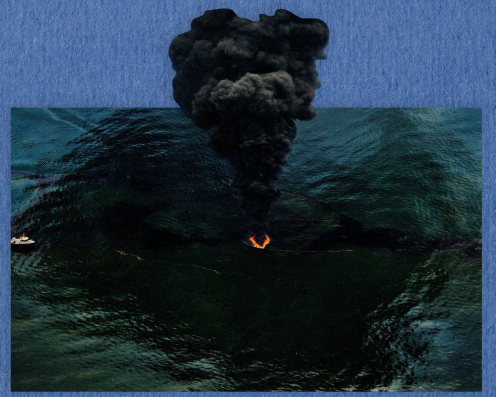
- *The narrative follows decay, rebirth, and regeneration*
- *Alkonost's body is affected by human-made ecological crisis*
- *An ancient Slavic myth is reimagined through a modern ecological lens*
- *Pollution is embodied through the oil-spill shell that restricts the body*

Contemporary Myth



van Herpen, Roots of Rebirth, 2021

Contamination



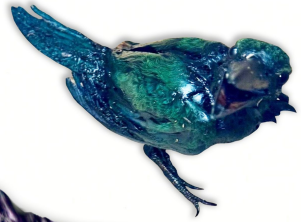
Beltra, Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, 2013

Sirin Character Board

Oil Spill Cocoon

- *The Sirin character is reimagined as a state of being, evolving from the Alkonost under the impact of human pollution*
- *The Sirin Cocoon is a liminal form that breaks apart into oil-spill matter and reforms by merging with other living bodies*
- *This cycle connects endurance and contamination, showing nature's survival*
- *The Oil Spill Cocoon represents ecological collapse*
- *Its surface is made from sediment, and industrial waste, creating a toxic sheen*



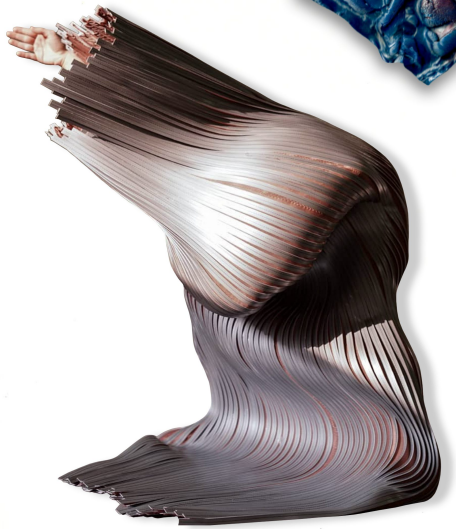


Trapped Inside
The 'Sirin' Oil Spill
Cocoon Costume





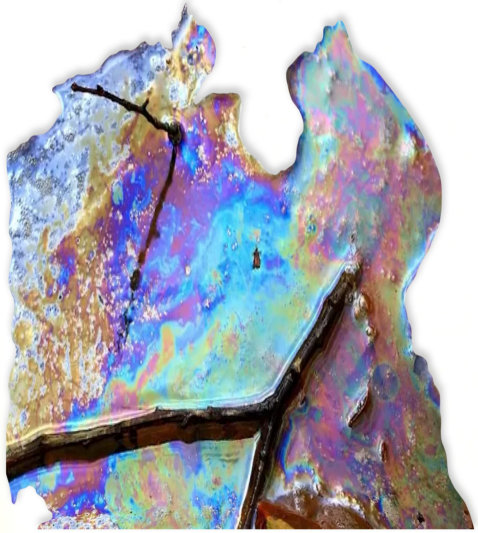
Painted Oil Spill
Fabric Sample For Costume



Woutera, Deform, 2015



van Herpen, Wilderness Embodied, 2013



Augustyn, Oil Spill, 2025;

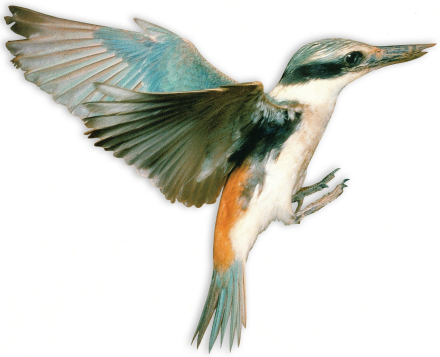


Vrubel, Girl with a Wreath, 1910



Perrins, Kingfishers, 2003





Perrins, Red-Backed Kingfisher, 2003



van Herpen, Sensory Seas, 2020



Barrett, Blue-Winged Kookaburra, 2005



Dupont, Woodland Kingfisher, 2014

Alkonost Character Board

Kingfisher Bird

- *The Alkonost is the youngest and most innocent of the mythological bird-women*
- *Her name derives from the Greek Alkyone, "kingfisher", symbolising transformation & love*
- *Her form mirrors the kingfisher, with iridescent feathers that shimmer through movement*
- *Her divine role is to bring harmony and joy to humanity through her celestial song*
- *When trapped within the Sirin Cocoon, she becomes a symbol of nature's fragility*

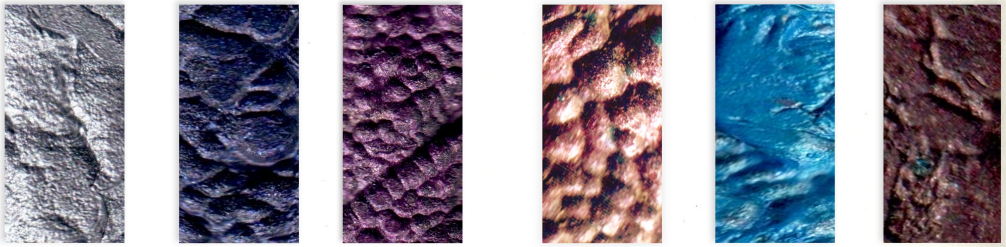


Alkonost's Costume
After Escaping
The Oil Spill Cocoon

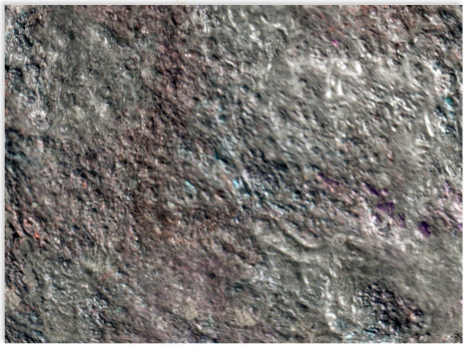
Process Page

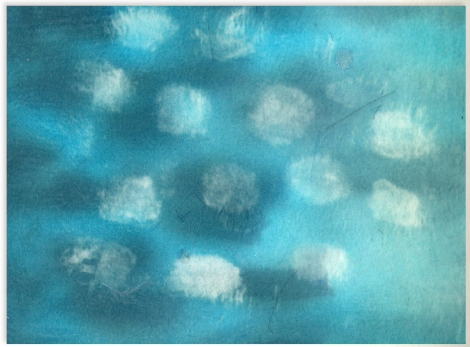
Initial Colour Palette, Sample Development, And Silhouette Designs

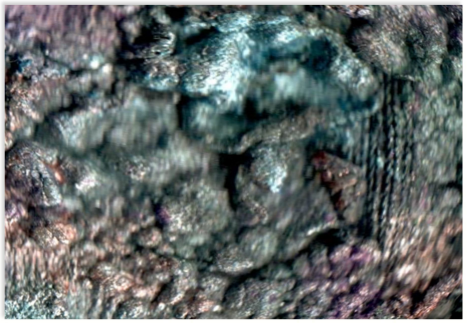
Painted Puff Binder Textured Fabric Swatches In Sirin's Costume Colour Palette



Painted Puff Binder Oil Spill Fabric Samples & Flocked Feather Fabric Samples









Alkonost Kingfisher Costume Collage



Sirin Oil Spill Cocoon Costume Collage



Sketches Of Initial Sirin And Alkonost Costumes



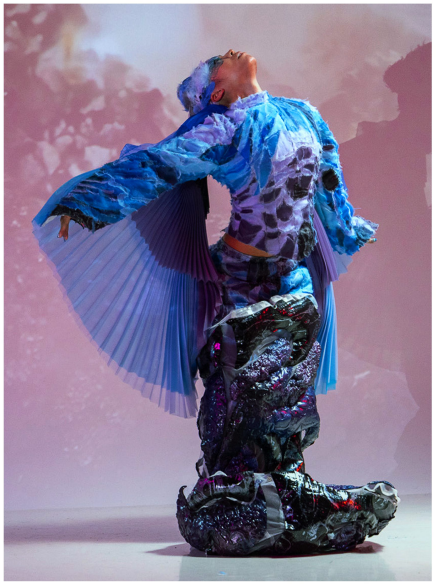
Sketches Of Final Sirin And Alkonost Costumes



Escape from the Oil-Spill Cocoon





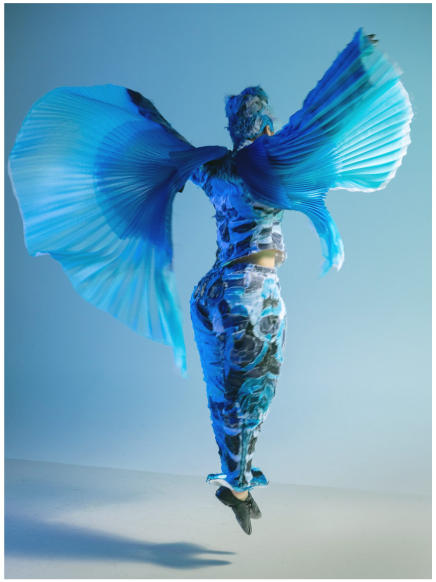




Newfound Freedom





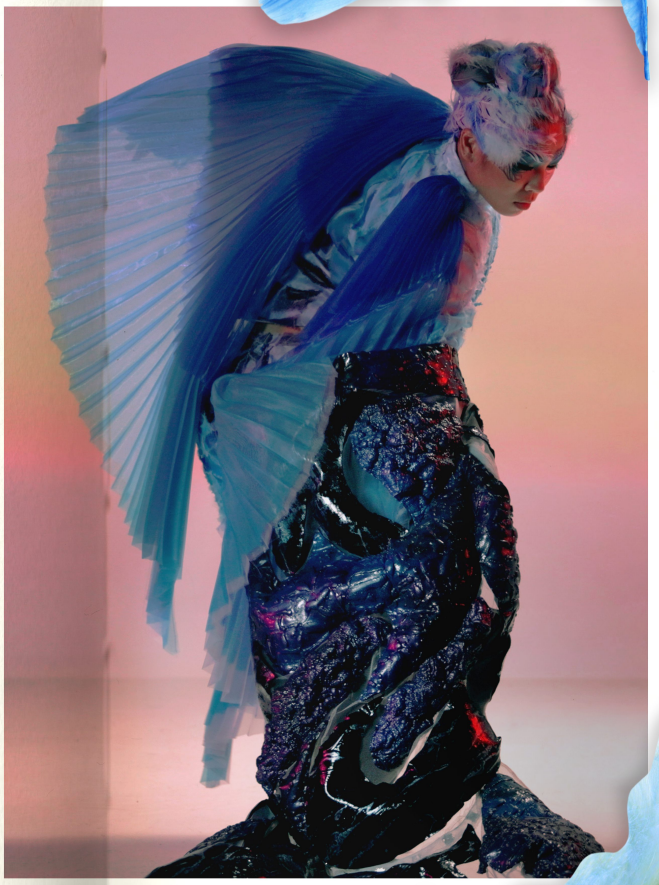




Symbiosis with Oil-Spill Fragments









Gamayun Character Board

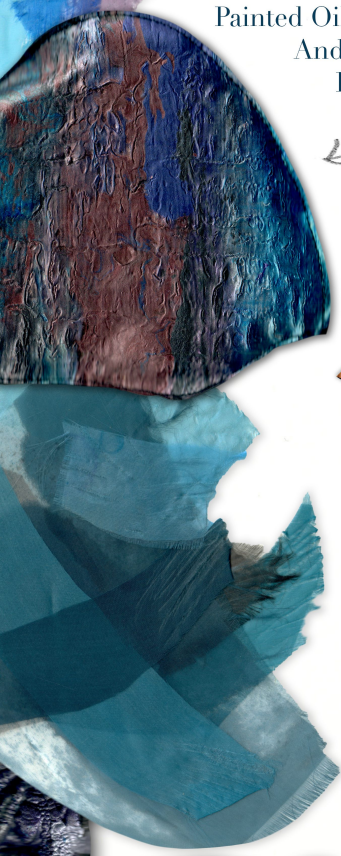
Supporting Characters: Short-Eared Owl

- *Gamayun is an ageless, owl-like being embodying timeless wisdom*
- *She dwells among rusted oil platforms and polluted sea structures*
- *She speaks of humanity's environmental destruction*
- *Her body is made of rust, corroded metal, and oil-coated feathers*

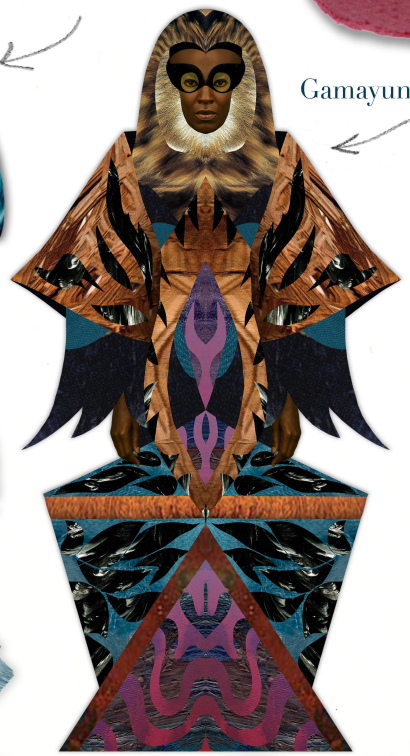


Dahiya, Ambarnaya River, 2020

Painted Oil Spill Fabric Samples And Dyed Feathers For Costume



Gamayun's Costume





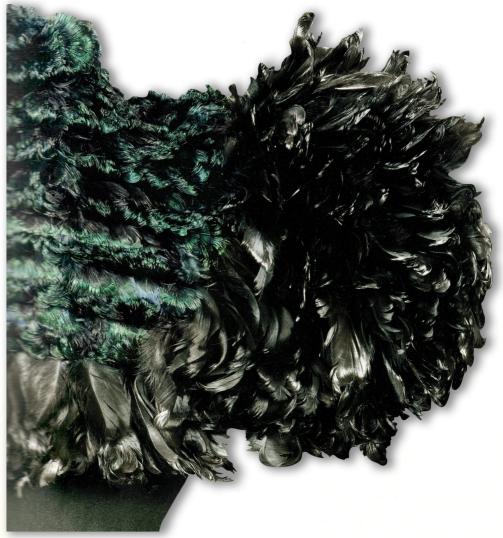
Initial Hand Sketch Of Gamayun



Perrins, Short-Eared Owl, 2003



ABS Group, Jack-Up Drilling Rig, 2025



Champot, Cape, 1895



van Herpen, Micro Dress, 2012



Vasnetsov, Gamayun the Prophetic Bird, 1898



Perrins, Buff-Breasted Sandpiper, 2003



Madlevskaya, 18th Century
Kokoshnik Kostroma Region, 2022



Vrubel, Princess Volkhova, 1900



V&A, Bodice, 1639



van Herpen, Roots of Rebirth, 2021

- *Bereginya is the eldest bird-woman, foremother of all avian beings*
- *She rules both air and water, uniting celestial and earthly forces*
- *Just like a Sandpiper bird, she exists between land and sea as both nurturer and destroyer*
- *As the archetypal mother, she governs cycles of life, decay, and renewal*
- *Her form is fluid and ever-changing, composed of feathers & water droplets*

Bereginya's Costume



Initial Hand Sketch
Of Bereginya



Supporting Characters:
Sandpiper Bird

Bereginya Character Board


RUSALKA PORTFOLIO
Eva Buryakovsky

Project Statement

The project reinterprets Antonin Dvorak's 1900 opera 'Rusalka' through the themes of Chernobyl disaster, Slavic myth, displacement & ecological crisis

Danger Zone Inhabitants



Kiyevskaya, Grandma in Chernobyl, 2021

Craft



Madlevskaya, Late 18th Century Necklace, 2024

- *Rusalka reflects the Samosely, living within the risks of the Exclusion Zone*
- *The costume uses removable elements to express cycles of renewal*
- *Rusalka's transformations reference Slavic rituals and folk magic*
- *The narrative draws on land-based traditions and village rituals*

Witchcraft



Mogilyansky, 'Young Lady' Doll, 1899

Rural Life



Ptushkin, Chernobyl Today, 2019

Concept Themes

Through a transforming costume, Rusalka's character moves between states, of shedding and reclaiming elements to reflect cycles of loss and renewal

Industrial Life



Ptushkin, Chernobyl Today, 2019

Post-Apocalyptic Society



Varlamov, 90's Street Photography, Moscow, 2018

- *Chernobyl represents the destructive impact of the human industry*
- *The 'Exclusion Zone' becomes a space where myth and survival coexist*
- *Nature reclaims the land despite human destruction*
- *The project is rooted in Slavic mythology and ritual practices*

Nature Prevails



Jones, Chernobyl: The Lost Tapes, 2022

Ancient Slavic Society



Russian Textile Workers, 19th Century, 2019

Rusalka Character Board



Madlevskaya, 19th Century Necklace
Vologda Province, 2024



Madlevskaya, 19th Century
Kokoshnik Kostroma Region, 2022



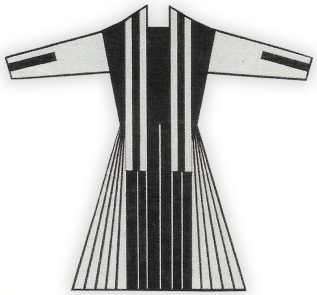
Gorshenina, Uprooted, 2022



Ershov, Bast Shoes, 1962



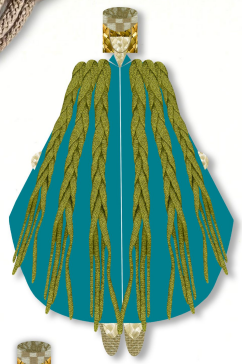
Kulturologia, Ritual figurines, 2022

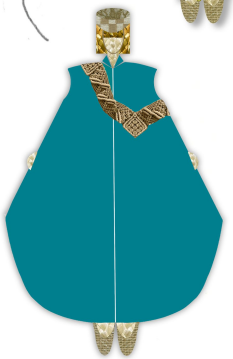


Stepanova, 'Tarelkin's Death' Play
Costume Sketch, 1922

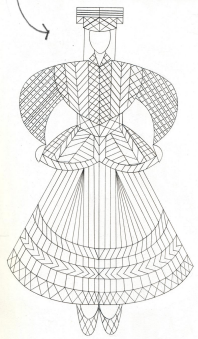


Batanov, Balaklava Underground
Museum, 2017





Initial Ink Drawing
Of Rusalka

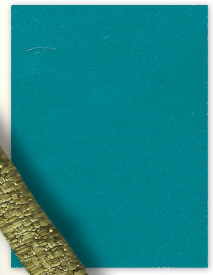




Rusalka's Process
Of Transformation

Rusalka Character

- *A witchcraft doll desperate to be human*
- *She is deeply rooted in Earth & woven from the remains of Soviet attire and straw*
- *During the transformation she is stripped of all her organic elements*
- *Her doll-like dress turns into a hazmat suit*
- *In Act 3, she returns to nature, however, her textile 'root' braids are now decaying*











Initial Pencil Sketch Of Rusalka # 1



Initial Pencil Sketch Of Rusalka # 2



Initial Costume Toile Fitting (Front)

Process Page



Initial Pencil Sketch Of Rusalka # 3

Pencil Drawings, Silhouette Developments & Toile Fittings



Collage Development #1

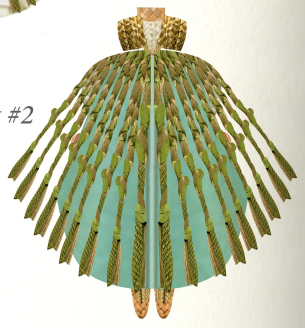


Collage Development #2





Collage Development #3



Collage Development #4



Initial Costume Toile Fitting (Back)



Initial Costume Toile Fitting (Side)

Introduction to Rusalka






Transformation

Rusalka's Demise





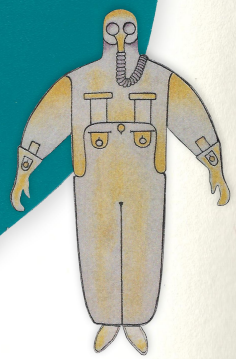
Prince Character Board



Batanov, Balaklava Underground Museum, 2017



Varlamov, 90's Street Photography, Moscow, 2018



Rodchenko, Costume Design for Bedbug, 1913



Jones, Chernobyl: The Lost Tapes, 2022



Chelushkin, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, 2018

Initial Ink Drawing Of The Prince



Prince Character

- Young man, early 20s
- His world is full of material possessions
- Looks like an industrial metal structure
- Plastic materials surround his body
- In the human world, rotting plants start growing out of him
- In Act 3, all material & technological elements surrounding him begin malfunctioning





Prince's Process Of Transformation



Maiorov, Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, 2021



Russian Ethnographic Museum, 20th Century Udmurt Doll, 2019



Virtanen, Women's Magazine 1929, 2021



Oliveira, Human Nature, 2023



State Historical Museum, 20th Century Ukrainian Headdress Kapilushnya, 2019



Vintage Everyday, Kichka Headdress from Ryazan Province, 2018

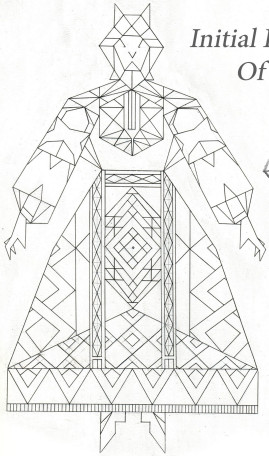


State Historical Museum, Women's Clothing Ukraine 1939, 2019



Osipova, Wearable Sculpture, 2022

Initial Ink Drawing Of Jezibaba



Jezibaba's Costume



Jezibaba Character

- *Immortal elderly woman*
- *Lives in between the human and spirit worlds*
- *Has part-human, part-animal attributes (horns on her head, claws)*
- *Is made up of felt, wool, decaying Soviet cloth, straw, metal and plastic*
- *She is able to exist in both worlds*

Jezibaba Character Board

Vodnik Character Board



Rodchenko, Sketch of a Man's Suit, 1920



Historical Museum, Kartyuz Headwear, Novgorod District 1880



Jones, Chernobyl: The Lost Tapes, 2022



Oliveira, Human Nature, 2023



Russian Ethnographic Museum, 19th Century Ukrainian Men's Costume



Kulturologia, Straw Doll-Amulets, 2022



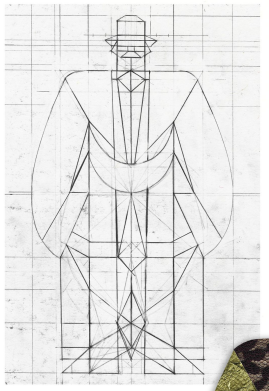
Pavlovych, Peasant, 1908



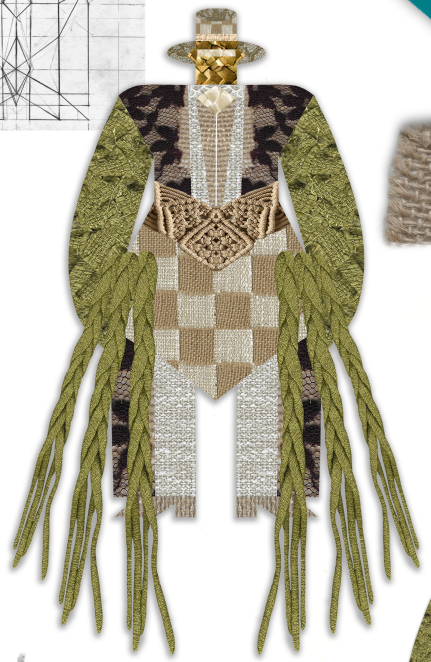
Batanov, Balaklava Underground Museum, 2017

Vodnik Character

- *Immortal elderly man (is actually a straw sculpture)*
- *In beginning of Act 1, is distinctively joyful about his world*
- *He is made out of straw, unrefined linen, felt & tree bark*
- *In the human world, Vodnik morphs with the inorganic materials such as plastic and metal*



Initial Pencil Drawing Of Vodnik







Vodnik's Process Of Transformation



Stepanova, Designs For Sports Clothing, 1923



Russian Ethnographic Museum, 19th Century Haircut doll 3, 2019



Virtanen, Sketches By Vyacheslav Zaitsev 1963, 2021



Bakhtiozina, Analogue From Summer, 2022



Alexey, Holiday in the Village, 1867



Russian Ethnographic Museum, 19th Century Haircut doll 1, 2019



Mukhin, Pussy Riot, 2012



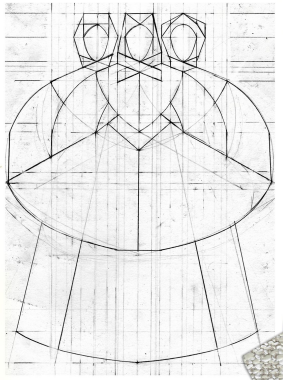
Russian Ethnographic Museum, 19th Century Haircut doll 1, 2019

The Naiads Character Board

The Naiads

- *Immortal creatures that look like young maidens*
- *Their world is full of games and joy, however, it feels shallow*
- *They are made out of straw, plant roots and remains of Soviet fabrics*
- *All three are woven together*
- *Their braids connect them to the natural environment they exist in like roots*

Initial Pencil Drawing Of The Naiads



The Naiads' Costume