



BETWEEN US  
MARIAM SHWEIKI  
FINAL GRADUATION PROJECT

## Artist Bio

**Mariam Shweiki** is a Palestinian artist, fashion designer, and jewelry designer born and raised in Jerusalem.

As a Palestinian artist, she is constantly searching for new ways to speak about her identity. Rather than relying on familiar representations, she seeks to develop a visual language through which personal experience becomes a way of speaking about Palestinian identity, belonging, memory, and freedom.

Growing up in Jerusalem under occupation, alongside a lifelong relationship with horses, has profoundly shaped her artistic practice. Together, these experiences have led her to question ideas of power, control, resistance, balance, freedom, and the body—not as abstract concepts, but as lived realities. These questions remain at the core of her work and continue to shape every collection she creates.

She approaches fashion as a medium for research rather than decoration. Through garments, wearable structures, and material experimentation, she explores the relationship between the body, identity, femininity, and the systems that shape the way we move, inhabit our bodies, and experience the world around us.

Working across leather, metal, textiles, and experimental fabrication techniques, Mariam creates contemporary feminine silhouettes that merge fashion and jewelry into a single visual language. Her work explores the tension between strength and vulnerability, structure and fluidity, protection and openness, transforming fashion into a space where personal experience intersects with questions of power, identity, and freedom.



# ABOUT THE PROJECT



## Between Us

I see in the horse a reflection of a woman searching for her own voice.

Jumping over obstacles during training is a direct extension of my everyday life in Jerusalem. The obstacle is not merely a metaphor; it is a military, physical, and psychological reality. From this space emerge questions that extend far beyond horsemanship itself: What is the meaning of power? What does it mean to lead? Can freedom exist within a reality shaped by boundaries?

Am I trying to control the horse, or to lead myself within a controlled reality?

Am I reclaiming a strength that was once lost, or questioning the limits of violence in order to dismantle them?

Where does power truly begin: in refusing to be led, or in refusing to lead through violence?

This exploration became a reflection on power, femininity, leadership, freedom, and the ways we understand our presence in the world.

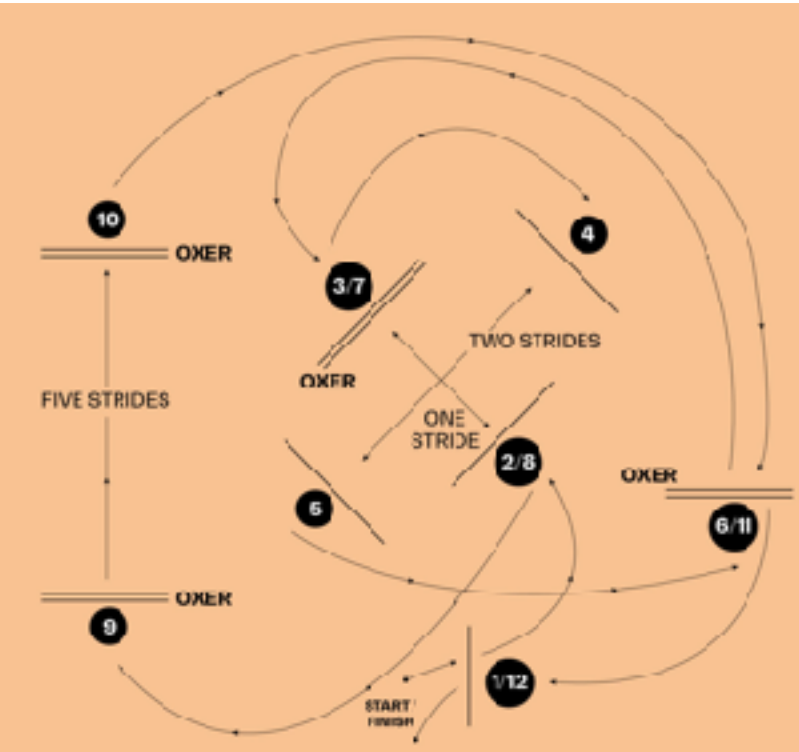
The collection draws its visual language from the world of horsemanship, translating its elements into feminine silhouettes that seek a balance between strength and vulnerability, structure and fluidity, protection and openness. For me, these garments are not about the horse as much as they are about the woman—about a woman rediscovering her voice and redefining her relationship with her body, her strength, and the world around her.

This collection does not seek to answer these questions. Instead, it gives them a physical form. For me, these garments are not simply clothes; they are visual expressions of questions that continue to shape me.





KEY WORDS  
DIRECTIONS OF THE PROJECT



HORSE • RIDER • HORSE CONNECTION • BODY & MOVEMENT • IDENTITY IN MOTION

JUMP • OBSTACLE • BARRIER / POLITICAL BARRIER • CROSSING

SUSPENSION • FLIGHT MOMENT • HEIGHT • ELEVATION

IMPACT • FALL • PAIN • FEAR

RESTRICTION • FORBIDDEN MOVEMENT • CONTROL • RESISTANCE

FREEDOM • CONTROLLED FREEDOM • RELEASE

LEATHER • STRAPS • METAL • RINGS • EQUIPMENT

GROUND • HOOVES • RHYTHM • LANDING

TRUST • STRENGTH • SOFTNESS • BODY MEMORY

POWER • IMBALANCE • CLAIMING SPACE • HORIZON





# RIDER & HORSE ERGONOMICS

The synergy between rider and horse is built on correct alignment, balance, and mutual understanding. Good ergonomics enhances performance, prevents injury, and creates a harmonious partnership.



## CORRECT vs. INCORRECT RIDING POSITION

✓ CORRECT POSITION

EYES UP

Looking forward

SHOULDERS BACK

Relaxed and down

STRAIGHT BACK

Natural alignment

SOFT ELBOWS

Following the horse's mouth

HIPS OVER HEELS

Balanced seat

HEELS DOWN

Stability and support

✗ INCORRECT POSITION

EYES DOWN

Looking at the ground

ROUNDED SHOULDERS

Tension in upper body

HOLLOW BACK

Loss of core support

LOCKED ELBOWS

Restricts the horse's movement

SEAT TOO FAR BACK

Unbalanced

HEELS UP

Loss of stability

## CENTERING & ALIGNMENT

HEAD CENTERED

SHOULDERS EVEN

RIBS OVER HIPS

HIPS CENTERED

LEGS LONG AND PARALLEL

HEELS UNDER HIPS

A centered rider has equal weight in both seat bones, even shoulders, and aligned aids.

## EQUINE ANATOMY AT A GLANCE

NECK

Flexibility and balance start from the poll.

WITHERS

The highest point of the back; critical for saddle fit and weight distribution.

BACK

The core of the horse's movement and balance.

LOINS

Provide power and engagement from behind.

HINDQUARTERS

The engine: power, propulsion and collection.

LEGS & JOINTS

Shock absorption and support.

## TWO-POINT POSITION (FOR JUMPING)

1 APPROACH

Balanced seat, rhythm and straight line.

2 TAKE-OFF

Close hip, knee and ankle. Eyes up.

3 OVER THE FENCE

Fold at the hip, maintain soft hands.

4 LANDING

Absorb with knees, return to balance.

## HORSE MOVEMENT & BALANCE

ENGAGEMENT

Hindquarters under the body

SUPPLENESS

Through back and neck

RHYTHM

Consistent and regular

STRAIGHTNESS

Equal on both reins

## SADDLE FIT & WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

A well-fitted saddle allows freedom of movement and even pressure distribution.

✓ **CORRECT FIT**  
Clear spine channel  
Even pressure  
Balanced contact

✗ **INCORRECT FIT**  
Pressure on spine  
Uneven contact  
Restricts movement

## THE RIDER'S EFFECT ON THE HORSE

**BALANCE**  
A balanced rider allows the horse to move freely and symmetrically.

**CONTACT**  
Soft, elastic contact creates trust and connection.

**AIDS**  
Clear, subtle aids support communication and responsiveness.

**PARTNERSHIP**  
Harmony comes from respect, feel and understanding.

A balanced horse moves with ease, carrying the rider in a way that is comfortable and sustainable.

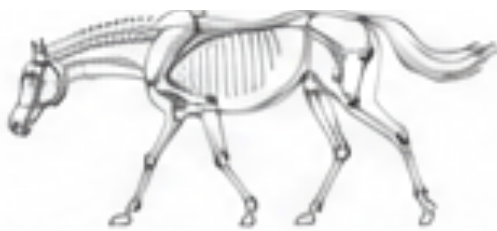
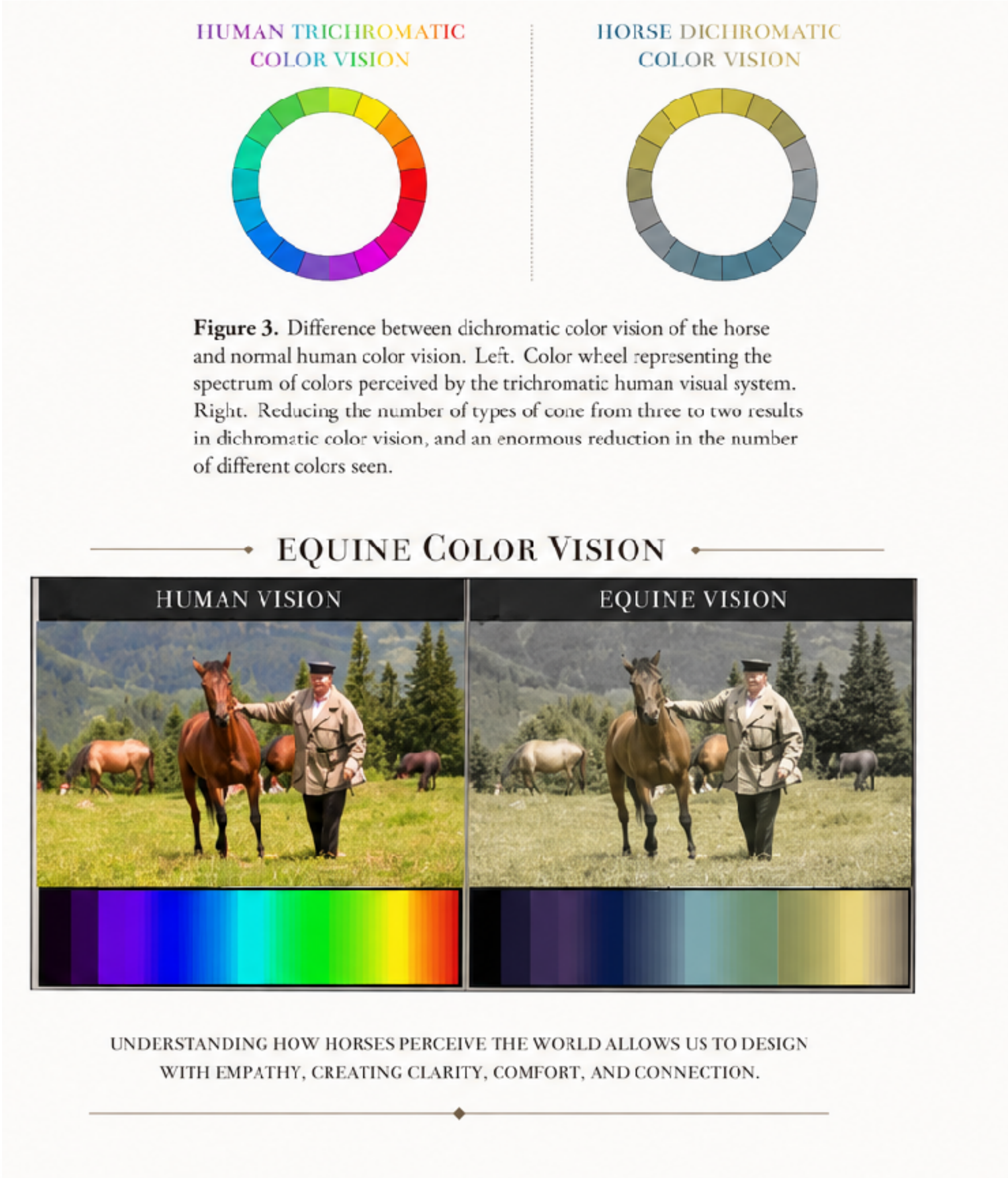
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DESIGNING  
THROUGH THE HORSE’S PERSPECTIVE

Humans have trichromatic vision, allowing them to perceive a wide spectrum of colors. Horses, however, perceive color differently. Their vision is primarily adapted to distinguish blue and yellow, while relying more heavily on contrast and movement than on color itself. Colors such as red and green, especially when highly saturated, may appear unclear or confusing to a horse, potentially causing stress or avoidance.

In contrast, horses respond more calmly to natural, muted tones such as earthy colors, which resemble their environment and do not distract them during movement or jumping. For this reason, the collection focuses on a palette of black and white to create strong visual contrast, combined with soft earth tones that preserve clarity of form while reinforcing qualities of strength, stability, and presence—characteristics associated with the Arabian horse.





# FIRST SKETCHES





# EVOLVING SKETCHES





# EVOLVING SKETCHES





# ONE GARMENT - TWO BODIES

## One Piece – One Identity – Two Bodies

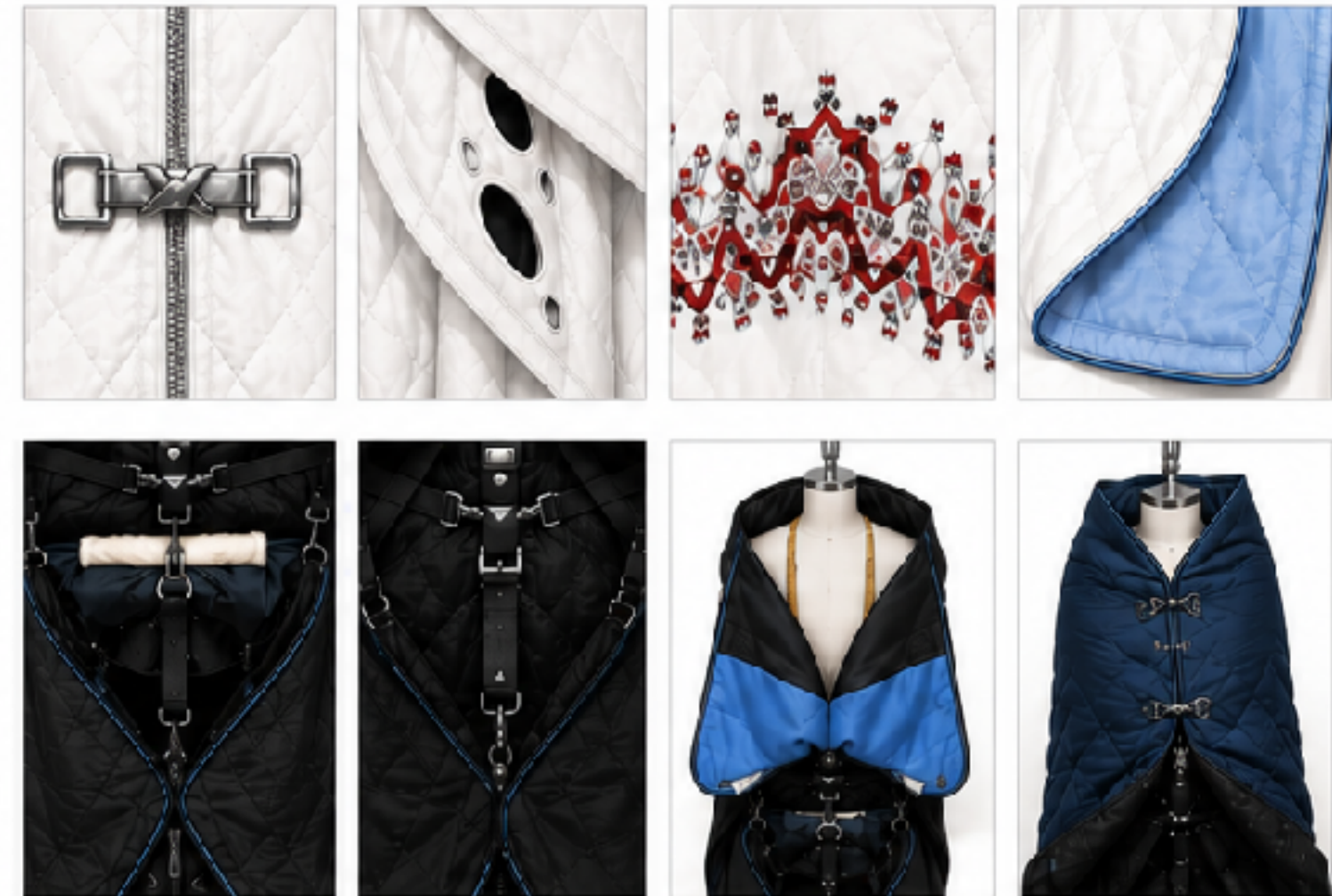
The design originates from the horse's blanket and is reinterpreted into two independent pieces: one worn by the horse and the other by the woman. Although they serve different functions, they share the same visual language, expressing the connection between the two bodies.

For the horse, the piece represents protection, comfort, and security. For the woman, it becomes a form of armor that carries memory, strength, and presence.

Together, the two pieces express a relationship built on trust, balance, and shared movement rather than control.









# Look I



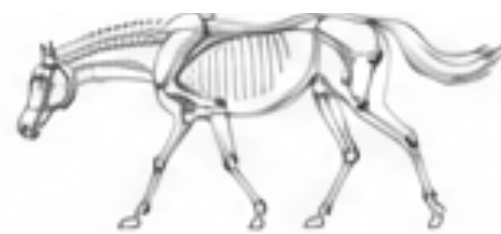
FRONT VIEW



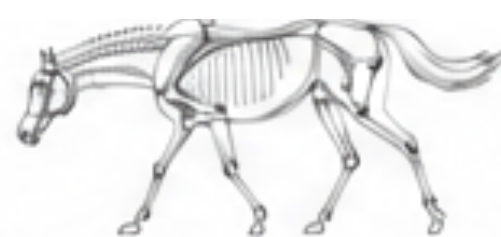
SIDE VIEW



BACK VIEW









# Look 2



FRONT VIEW



SIDE VIEW



BACK VIEW





# Look 3





# FINAL LOOKS

