

In Mourning, We Bloom

by

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Project Introduction

Growing up in America as a Black young girl, my skin is constantly a symbol of difference amongst my light-skinned peers. During my junior year of college, I struggled to define a meaningful project that would leave a lasting mark. In *Darkly: Black History and America's Gothic Soul*, Leila Taylor mentions a thread that she happens to come across, the first few words she begins to read says, "I really hate when I see black goths" (Taylor, 2019, p. 13.) The wording of the statement struck me because I never thought this was how Black goths were viewed in goth communities. My ideology began to flourish to create a branded collection of doll figures but quickly escalated to something much deeper, a need to understand why white and other people of color are so threatened by black identity. Why does it seem that people of color are seen as incompatible to have interest and hobbies in certain subcultures that are more inviting, compared to reality where they are very exclusive.

Black people's culture is integrated into goth backgrounds more than most people realize. Goth is often associated with themes such as pain, historical reflection, agony, and usually a space for inclusion (*Downtown*). People enjoy goth for aesthetics but don't understand what the meanings of being a goth stands for. Black communities and Goth converge on their shared experiences of being policed and belittled when they exist outside of what society finds socially acceptable (*Nally*). When goth individuals or people of color present themselves outside of socially accepted norms, their appearance can provoke discomfort or judgment from those who view difference as threatening or unfamiliar (*Nally*). When trying to join these communities' Black individuals are met frequently with shock, resistance and exclusion (*White*).

My project examines the overlooked connections of Black cultural expression and goth aesthetics. *Darkly: Black History and America's Gothic Soul* by Leila Taylor, examines the intersections of race, identity, and resistance through dark self-expression as performed by black

goths, analyzing the connections in race and racism in the 21st century and how it connects with the American history of Black people.

I never thought that I would return to fashion, but joining Gem67 Magazine Club, @gem67magazine on Instagram, during my time in college reignited my interest in visual expression and stylization. Throughout this experience, I have built sustainable and meaningful connections that have constructed both my growth as a person and my creative direction. With my love for collecting dolls, along with seeing doll customization on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, it enlightened me to merge these ideas and passions into one project, bringing them into fruition. Through this process, I immersed myself into research, particularly through *Darkly: Black History and America's Gothic Soul*, while also teaching myself the skills and techniques of sewing. Taylor's discussion on Black identity, otherness, survival, and mourning constructed how I perceived my own making process. When viewed in a different light, sewing was not just a technical skill I had to just learn, but it became much more personal, through forms of labor and memory of self-expression. Although this process has brought many challenges, I indulged myself into a craft with no prior experience. The trial and error reflected the same tensions I was reviewing throughout my research on goth culture and Black identity.

Research Overview

My research is centered around how goth culture intersects with Black identity, along with how the Black community can sometimes be excluded from a subculture whose themes and histories closely reflect aspects of their own cultural past. In *Darkly: Black History and America's Gothic Soul*, Leila Taylor emphasizes how Black history itself is gothic, being constructed by horror, mourning, survival, and intergenerational trauma throughout generations of Black people (Taylor, 2019, p. 23.)

This challenges the dominant understanding of goth as a primarily white subculture and reconstructs the idea that Black people have always embodied elements of goth, often without recognition. The phrase of “once a goth, always a goth” reinforces how significant identity within goth culture is, which contrasts with the ways Black individuals searching for identity have been constrained within a racialized society.

A central concept that drives my project is transgression, which I define as the act of rejecting the constraints around what is considered acceptable or “normal,” especially when it involves matters like race and subcultures. In goth culture, transgression often appears through aesthetics, music, presentation, and attitude. However, for Black individuals, it exists in occupying spaces where they are not always welcomed. This is the reasoning behind the creation of “otherness,” when marginalization occurs both within mainstream society and within goth communities themselves. Taylor speaks on this topic of being “othered within otherness” (*Taylor, 2019, p. 10*), a concept that shapes my understanding of identity and informs my study.

However, in terms of Black identity, who defines what it is meant to be “Black enough”? Society constructs expectations of Blackness through racist frameworks and displays of media that stereotypes Black people and limits how they are perceived. These are performed more than people understand, reproduced within Black communities. When it comes to cultural norms and getting into the goth culture, there are some things that are rejected, that the goth subcultures express in different ways, such as not being white (*White*). This creates trauma and reveals how identity and community can become distorted. By learning and engaging myself into this culture as a Black person, I am challenging the limitations and am redefining how self-expression can exist within Black identity.

Along with Taylor’s work, articles such as Lidia Zuin’s, *Black & Goth: black people and goth subculture*, discuss Black participation in goth subcultures (*Zuin*). Tamika Thompson’s, *To “Feel Seen”: The Black Gothic in America*, also describes the Black Gothic in America, emphasizing the

importance of visibility and representation (*Thompson*). Both emphasize how Black individuals have always contributed to gothic aesthetics and narratives, even when those contributions are erased. These issues are connected to a bigger and broader theme played out through civilization, one being colonialism. Connected to the realization of how goth culture was developed through the culture of England also raises concerns about how colonial histories influenced goth formation and how the black identities are involved within it.

Popular culture often plays a large role in constructing my understanding of goth culture. Bands that Lelia Taylor often mentions throughout her book, including *Siouxsie and the Banshees*, *The Cure*, and *Joy Division* contributed to the visual and emotional semiotics of goth, reflecting its predominantly white origins. *Joy Division* transgressed many historical references showing how goth culture could be engaged with themes like suffering and oppression. That often leads people to misunderstand the realities that were experienced by the marginalized groups involved. But other forms of media brought a raw depiction of Black life in America, through shows like *Atlanta* (*Atlanta, Glover, 2016*). This aligns with the gothic aesthetic of unavailability, unease, and disorientation.

These examples expand my understanding beyond goth aesthetics themselves and instead focuses on the cultural ways of colonialism and historical power structures that shape both goth culture and Black identity. Goth originated in England, which was a country that participated in the Transatlantic slave trade and colonial expansion. Through that event, it is often questioned on how much culture is rooted in the aesthetics of mourning a loved one, decaying or decomposition, and ultimately the price of death, which relates to how real histories such as the Transatlantic slave trade and colonial expansion consisting of violence and neglect are experienced by Black individuals. Looking into this conflict led me to think about how goth aesthetics can sometimes stylize suffering, while Black people were forced to endure those same issues in their reality. This is a clear example of

how the disconnect has been reinforced through the idea of certain forms of “darkness” that are recognized, while others are ignored.

Looking into this contradiction led me to consider the concept of “phantasm,” which appears throughout my research as a way of understanding the invisibility, absence, and distortion in cultural perception. In relation to my project, Phantasm is how Black suffering is involved through both hyper-visibility and invisibility. This issue is often brought up in conversation about others but never acknowledged or understood as to how heavy of a strain Black suffering is. This idea goes back to how Black goths are perceived in a subculture as present but not fully digested by others involved. It makes me think about how I want my dolls to not be seen as objects, but as figures that resist objectification or disappearance. By making them dramatic and visible to the public eye, stylizing them with the intention to catch eyes, I want to push against the historical tension that rendered black bodies to be erased or diminished.

Another important area of my research is focused on the history of paper dolls, through race and representation. Paper dolls go way back to the 18th and 19th centuries. They were widely used to play with fashion exploration and socialization for younger girls to learn a sense of style in their identity (*Johnson, 2005*). However, in this development, they publicized Eurocentric beauty standards, showing how the market was uplifted by predominantly white figures of power. When Black people finally had received some type of representation, it was for humiliation, stereotyping, and limiting access (*hooks, 1992*). These were used to reinforce the racial hierarchies on where Black people stood against White people and their Eurocentric beauty standards. This displays how heavily ingrained the ideas about how race and value were distorted only because our melanin was seen as an issue, a threat.

At the same time, the evolution of the Black paper doll emphasizes moments of resistance and reclamation. As time passed, more creatives and artistic individuals began to produce more paper dolls that represented Black identity in a way that was more affirming towards the community after being dehumanized for such a long time. These were often used to explore fashion, beauty, and cultural pride without the involvement of Eurocentric beauty standards ruining imagery and messaging. This history directly informs my project by not only using the paper dolls as a medium but by learning how to reinvent something that speaks about how cultural history is being erased, by introducing Black figures within a subculture that is supposed to be more acceptable of the abnormal. Therefore, I am reinventing the paper doll as more than just an object, by using things such as storytelling and visibility to transform its approach.

Moreover, my research dug into the idea of tautology and power, particularly how some narratives are only accepted as truth simply due to the reinforcement of who has a higher position of authority. This shows how Blackness is displayed through a narrow-minded, stereotypical framework that people consistently repost and reproduce in media and through culture. Public representations have a strong influence on how Black communities are viewed, constructing that societal understanding through repeated visual communication of narratives. This causes contradictions when Black people engage in alternative expression, such as goth culture, because they are not often accepted by society today as normal. This is shown through the systems of authority and control, where Black communities are many times policed, surveilled, and viewed as intimidating, also in spaces within subcultures that are usually meant to embrace nonconformity. Understanding where black people stand in this dynamic made it more clear to me of how my project is not only just a creative development of my skills, but a form of resistance against these imposed narratives as someone who's been a part of an alternative community and is of Black descendants.

Making / Presentation Overview

The making and process of this project was just as important as the outcome. Initially, my intent was to handmade four dolls through polymer clay that I could safely use in the oven. But I felt as if I was reaching too far into the stars for something I wasn't very savvy in, sculpting. However, this approach had given more purpose to the dolls than just representation and form of resistance; it included a sense of permanence and individuality. I eventually ended up landing on the thought to recycle older Monster High G1 dolls as a base by repainting, reconstructing, and remaking new clothing so the features could reflect Black goth aesthetics. This choice was intentional; they were the original blueprint that built the foundation of my interest on representation for Black goths. These dolls are an extension of the gothic framework I wanted to go into but with a twist of my own creativity and meaningful representation of dark-skinned identities. When beginning my craft, sewing played a significant role in much of my time and effort. It was a central point in my project development that showed the dolls' styles and visual identity. I was often going through media references such as social media websites like Pinterest & Instagram and online articles discussing Black goth style and gothic fashion imagery to look at patterns, cuts, fabrics, and material (*Taylor; Zuin*). At first, I would mark down how a stitch should be sewn. Then I would ask myself, should I incorporate an invisible stitch, a saddle stitch, or a back stitch? My questions provided insight on how I developed my sketches of the clothing the dolls were to wear. The second set of ideas refers to how the visual and symbolic elements I observed in my media references directly influenced the design choices in my sketches. These elements included symbolic markings such as the Ankh symbol, or the white makeup used to show resilience, or the dark and dreadful textiles on the clothing material they wore. I went back to revisit them for refinements, which involved correcting visual inconsistencies and making color alterations to align clearer with my intended design direction.

As I continued, the process was natural and fluid, and I think it was due to the longing for connection that I have attached to sewing and my late grandmother. I wanted to partake in a task that

also allowed me to connect with her in some way. She is an immigrant; she is not from the States. She learned so many skills like cooking, baking, cleaning, knitting, sewing, crocheting, and how she would beat crossword puzzles quickly, or how she would braid my hair and sing old spiritual music to me in the morning before school. The process of sewing was more than just a project; my entire project is tied to the inevitability of my life as a Black woman, a Black person in America. This was my form of connecting with my artwork on a different level and experiencing something I didn't imagine I could become so in tune with.

But as time began to slip through my fingers, the process became more difficult and slowed down significantly. This shift forced me to confront both my technical challenges that were involved in my making process through sewing with different types of fabric I'd never sewed before, but also the emotional weight that was overwhelming. I felt pressure in how much time I had left to complete the project but also the significance of my grandmother's influence that shaped my understanding of craft and textiles. Through this process, I not only began this as learning a skillset but also as a form of memorialization and recognizing my lineage. Due to the time constraints and complexity of constructing physical dolls, my advisor and I were able to come up with a secondary approach. We decided that I would go about further developing my rough sketches into paper dolls. While I felt like this compromised how I wanted to go about representation and how I wanted these to originally be displayed, it was a door that opened new possibilities for flexibility & further exploration. Trial and error played a big part in finding new ways to express the work that included revising editorial issues, and how I wanted my project to be displayed in the exhibition.

But paper dolls have their own historical weight, also relating towards representation and race, inevitability proving my point again on how Black figures are limited, shunned, or excluded entirely by society. By working with this knowledge, I have been able to directly work and engage with material through that history and recycle it with Black goth representation. When working on these paper dolls, there was a significant drop in time that I had left for my production. I had a hard time

brainstorming on how I wanted to go about a form of doll that I have seen from time to time as a kid but never really seen in a while. The making of these dolls required extensive research and visual planning, including mood boards, typeface exploration, and design iterations. I began to ponder how elements such as poses, textures, and contrast would visually communicate the themes that goth has to offer like, otherness, discomfort, and beauty in darkness.

The figures and their skin complexions were a way to explore the variations of Blackness, especially my first male doll, Malik Redd. He was developed with the intention to show awareness of how vitiligo is a thing that a lot of Black individuals are born with and should have some representation as well. This is related to the idea about how having diverse representations in public spaces can shape how people look at identity and can challenge dominant perceptions by expanding the horizon of what Blackness can present itself as and how to understand it.

I also just think that something should always be accepted not because it stands out but because we are all just human at the end of the day. Our melanin should not affect how we are perceived in what subcultures we choose to indulge in. I focused a lot on darker skin tones that are often most heavily subjected to the humiliation of dehumanization and erasure. My hope is that others will see these Black figures as not simple objects but representations of identity, resistance, and presence.

I needed to do heavy digging into the history of paper doll making and the importance of it; while researching a new topic for this project, I was also developing new sketches using an application called Procreate. Procreate is a raster-based program that you can also use to illustrate, using many mediums across the board digitally, along with effects and different artboard sizes, and it only costs \$9.99. This application was hard enough to manipulate through brushes and blending, but I had forgotten how the application was a raster-based program which means when I scaled my images larger, they became unclear and pixelated. Discussing this with my advisor, we came to agreement that I would develop my designs through Adobe Illustrator, but I wanted to somehow find a way that

would allow me to do my design work with my stylus and digital sketch tablet, along with my physical sketchbook. I found the app, Adobe Fresco, allowing their customers to use vector-based brushes to make their artwork without losing resolution. Once I was developing my first round of sketches from the previous first drafts, the vectored drawings were very pixelated even when exporting as a PDF file, causing an immense feeling of frustration. My advisor and I figured out it is due to the clipping mask feature used in the application. When clipping the drawing to a certain subject on the file, it causes the files to be exported as a rasterized drawing rather than a clear, vectorized drawing. I went back into the application to undo all the clipping masks so when I uploaded them into Adobe Illustrator, it would not ruin the quality.

Through this process, one of the most exhausting tasks was reapplying all of the clipping masks. I originally took pictures of each grouped section to remember how everything was organized. I then used my phone as a reference while working on the computer. I did not fully know how to complete the task, so YouTube became my main support. After watching several videos, I learned I needed to use compound paths, but the groups were difficult to decipher due to how layered and broken the artwork had become. Every time I needed to repeat the process of creating a compound path and reapplying a clipping mask, it would take me at least an hour to locate the correct tools and complete the steps. At one point, I spent from 11 a.m. to 6 a.m. trying to figure out how to fully remove Amara's face and skin so only her legs or torso remained for clothing construction.

Another issue that slowed my process was my laptop constantly overheating due to the number of files and layers open at once. I cannot count how many times I had to step away just to let my system cool down while working on unfinished prototypes. Adobe also frequently crashed because of the complexity of my files. I gathered much of my symbolism, textile knowledge, clothing, hair, makeup, piercing, and shoe inspiration through Pinterest, while most pre-rendered vector objects such as graphic ornamentation and typefaces came from Adobe libraries. I often created mood boards in Pinterest as part of my development process for the four Black paper dolls. The final moments leading

up to production were stressful due to time constraints. I wanted to create something both visually presentable and conceptually understandable in terms of who these figures represent.

Coming up with the title for this project was quite difficult because I am very indecisive. I uploaded some of my key pieces of information into ChatGPT to develop possible titles for my project involving otherness and mourning, which led me to two names that caught my eye, *The Weight Wears Lace* & *In Mourning, We Bloom*. I first went to my friends, questioning them on which sounded more like the meaning of my project and what I am representing. A lot of them stated they enjoyed the sound of *The Weight Wears Lace*, so did I, so I was going to originally pick that title, but I decided I needed anonymous opinions. I went into my personal social media account, giving a small summary on what my project represents, then uploaded the titles to a poll, asking those who view my story to please vote. At first, *The Weight Wears Lace* was still in the lead; a lot of people seemed to like the way it rolled off the tongue and the double meaning behind the choice of words. As the day went on, I was working on my project and forgot about the poll, but when I went to check on it again, *In Mourning, We Bloom* was now winning with at least 30 votes, so ultimately, I ended up choosing the title, *In Mourning, We Bloom*.

Fundamentally, the making process reflects the same themes that are explored in more than one place of my research: transgression, visibility, and the rejection of erasure. In forms of illustrated design or through physical embodiments, the dolls challenge the idea that Black individuals, Black Identities, are something that people use and throw away out of ignorance when they're done with us. My design process emphasized complexity and permeance, within our culture and structural systems, that have historically excluded and denied these qualities to Black individuals and Black identity.

Conclusion / Next Steps

The conclusion of this project does not feel like an ending, but rather the beginning of a longer process of exploration and development. Through this work, I have gained a clearer understanding of how I want to engage with both fashion and identity moving forward. Even though my idea was to initially create physical representations on recyclable dolls, the paper doll idea that my professor and I came up with allowed my creative skills to flourish in a different form of medium that still followed my visual foundations. This project has helped me realize how far I can go with how I create my visual concepts and where I can translate them into a physical form for the world.

Moving forward, I want to continue further developing my skills in visual conception through graphic design, work on sewing skills, and textiles. A far-reaching goal is that I eventually want to produce a line of dolls just like brands Monster High and Bratz, which were very innovative and on store shelves for everyone to connect with.

This project was a testimony on how I express my ideas, refine my aesthetics and practices, to understand technical processes that are required to bring these physical forms to life. This is to say that while the outcome of the production may seem small, it is still a step in the right direction. The nights in the VA where I had to stay until the next morning, no sleep, no rest, show determination to show who I am and who I can become through my creativity.

Moving forward from that, I plan on building a more strengthened portfolio over the next six months to a year, which will consist of things such as old projects, my old work refined, new work, commission work, and my painting. By doing so, I want to put myself into a position where I have better standing in the competitive areas, like securing a job while also showing what I can bring to a company, and to continue to grow as a professional. I also want to start doing commission-based work, because I want to practice applying my skills in the real-world while still developing who I want to become as an artist and a designer.

This project has brought me to what I hope to expand upon more as my future moves forward, challenging the dominant narratives of the world and expanding representation in society. My project has pushed me to be more aware of the things that came before us and what we experience in the present day, and what is to come for our future, as well as helping me understand who I want to create for and how I want my art to communicate to others.

I don't want to seek approval or validation; I am more eager to produce work that is honest and unapologetic for the audience looking at it. This mindset that has been built through this process has aligned with the transgression that has guided my research, rejecting limitations, towards creating spaces for Black voices to not be overlooked. As I move forward in my career, I would like to not see this project as a project, but as a piece that evolves from a stem of who I am, who I will be, and who I am becoming. I hope to continue to grow my knowledge about understanding ‘otherness’, goth culture, and my own place within the middle of both.

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Documentary Images



Baggy jeans featuring ripped mesh inserts sewn along the side seams of the legs.



A lowcut shirt with a folded-over neckline, featuring long sleeves that flare and flow at the cuffs, and a floral pattern stitched into the center for detail and contrast.



A fitted green skirt layered with a black, ripped mesh overlay that hangs at a high-low positioning, creating a distressed, textural contrast.



{Previous to Image 1} A lowcut shirt with a folded over neckline, featuring no sleeves, and a floral patterning that is stitched into the center for detail.



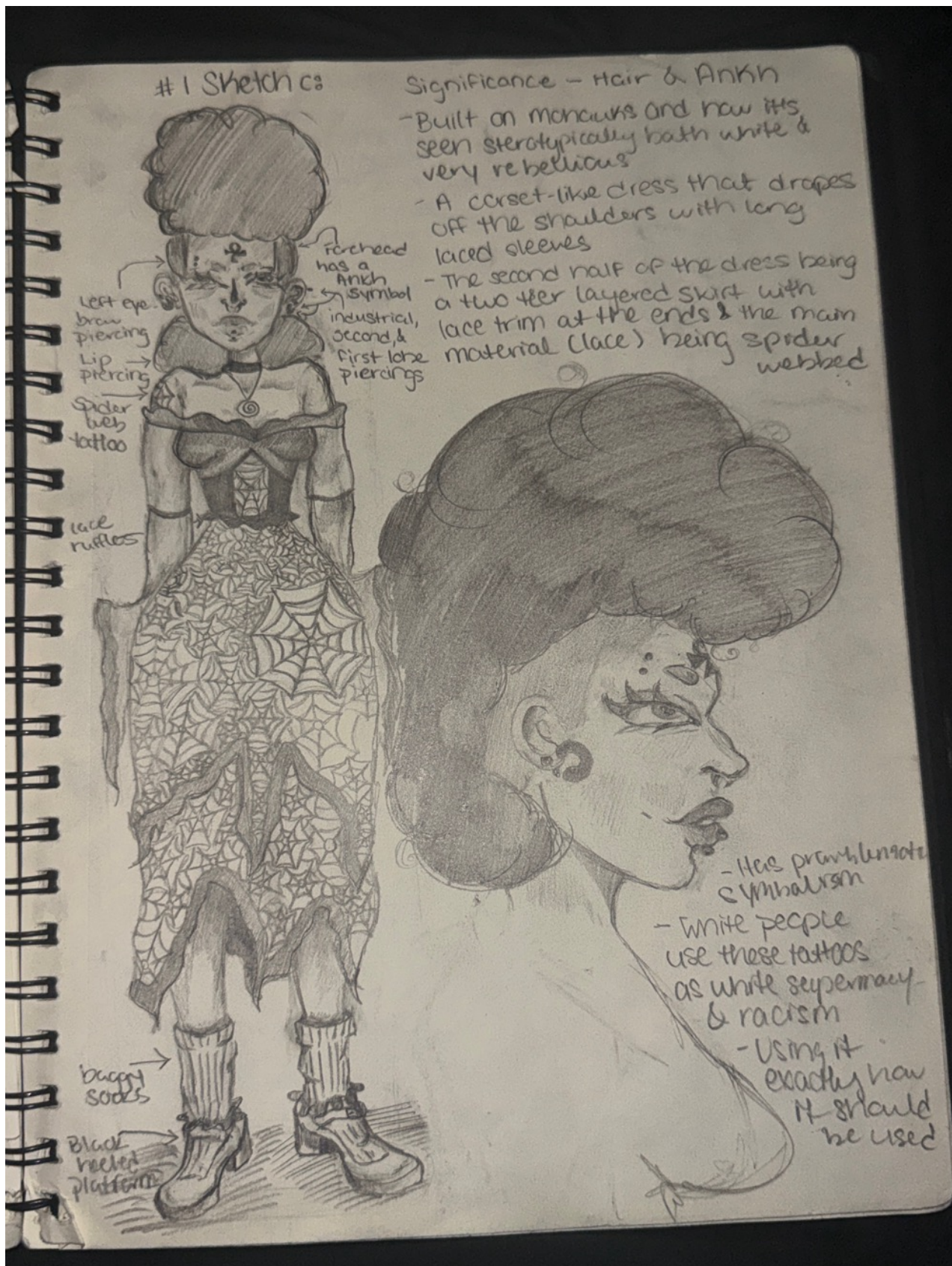
A skirt constructed from tan cotton fabric, layered with black skull-patterned mesh sewn on top, creating a sheer, textured overlay with a dark, gothic contrast.



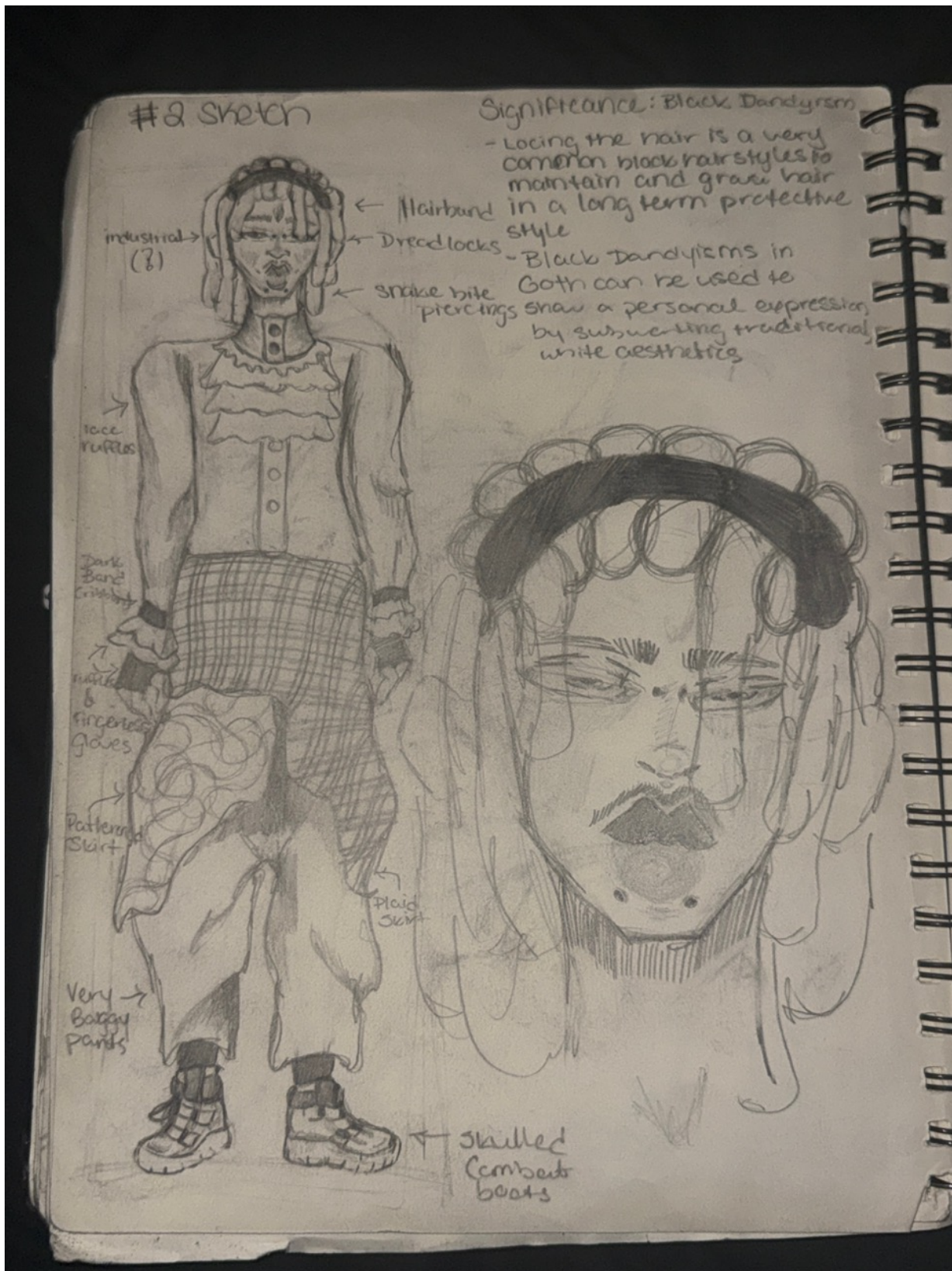
A distressed top with a tan cotton fabric, mesh sewn in the middle area of the long-sleeved top with a tan v-line draping down the neck.



A tube top paired with a fitted green skirt, featuring front-sewn detailing that creates a scrunched, gathered texture down the center for a structured yet distorted silhouette.

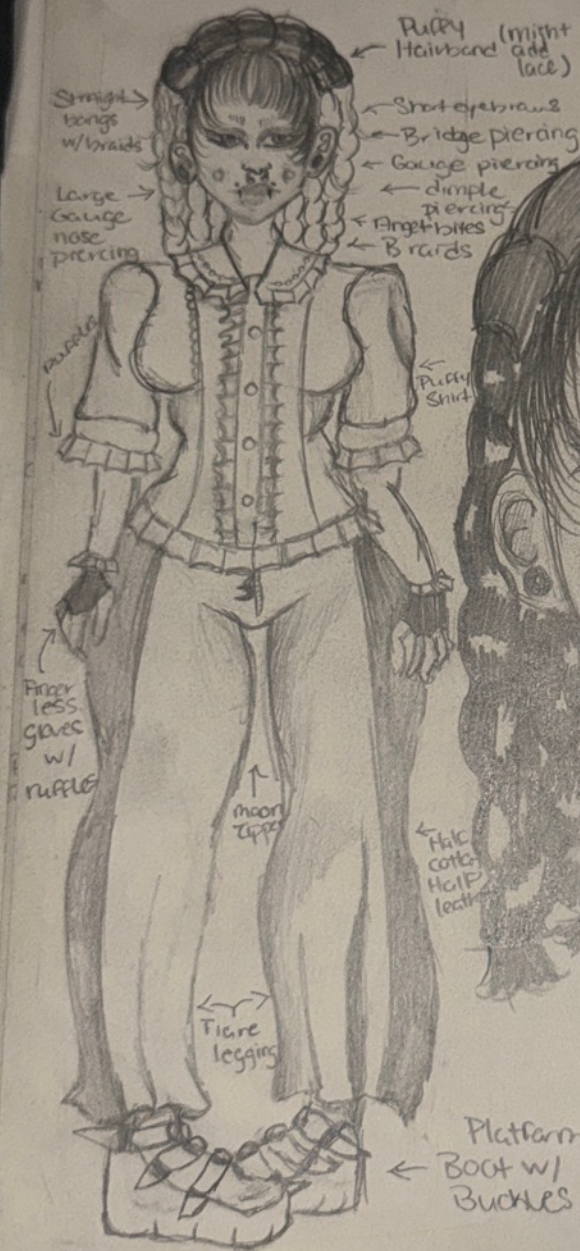


Finalized rough sketch of Nia Caldwell, developed from earlier character studies, showing her initial character design in basic form, first ideas for accessories and foundational gothic styling before later refinement.



Second sketch initially developed for Malik Redd, showing him with his dreadlocks worn down rather than styled into a mohawk as seen in the finalized design, marking an early stage in his character development and silhouette.

Sketch 3



Significance - Ruffles & Braids

- Inserting a certain amount of Ruffles show a sort of dramatic impact or elegance
- Braids used to show an extent of ancestry as well as individuality and boldness

- Shirt is cotton with a wrinkled and puffy look to it
- she has 5 piercings in total but the 5th one is on her tongue

Early sketch of Amara showing a before concept of four braids, later evolving into a fuller cluster of braids with added baby braid bangs and updated piercing details, refining her overall character identity and style direction.





Yelani Crowe

elegant, introspective, brilliant presence

Tattered lace that she wears is distressed and worn down to reveal the dark fabric underneath.

Black ribbons that are layered and tied in a way that she likes to hold during dances.

When not going with a crowd, she wears a dark blue dress with a black belt that she likes to hold during dances.

Her totem is a black ribbon that she wears to hold during dances.

Cherry black boots that she wears to hold during dances.

Yelani Crowe

elegant, introspective, brilliant presence

Age: 28

- X Ethnicity: Afro-Caribbean American
- X Aesthetic: Victorian goth / dark romance
- X Personality: Observant, reserved, emotionally contained
- X Interests: Poetry, philosophy, and vintage fashion
- X Political View: Capitalist, liberal, and is anti-establishment
- X Special Fact: She collects old books and reads them like emotional archives of strangers.



Amara Noss

spiritual, grounded, protective energy

Age: 23

- X Background: African American (Southern roots)
- X Aesthetic: Witchy goth / southern gothic
- X Personality: Intuitive, expressive, socially aware
- X Interests: Folklore, tarot, dark soul music, community art
- X Political View: Justice oriented, community centered, anti oppression
- X Special Fact: Amara designs outfits that she never wears twice in the same emotional state, treating clothing as a performance language

Amara Noss

spiritual, grounded, protective energy

White lace collars that she wears to hold during dances.

Black ribbons that she wears to hold during dances.

Off the shoulder collar that she wears to hold during dances.

Legged split bodice that she wears to hold during dances.

When not going with a crowd, she wears a black dress with a black belt that she likes to hold during dances.

Cherry black boots that she wears to hold during dances.





Dia Caldwell

romantic, sensitive, expressive

Age: 22

X Ethnicity: Afro-Latina (Caribbean + Black American)

X Aesthetic: Romantic goth / soft noir (historical)

X Personality: Emotional, creative, empathetic

X Interests: Jamming to music, hanging out with her cat (Midnight), painting

X Political View: Pro-immigrant, pro-arts, anti-censorship

X Special Fact: Dia grew up in a household where storytelling was treated as spiritual inheritance, the "sacred" things about people before they speak them into fruition

Dia Caldwell

romantic, sensitive, expressive

Vertical and horizontal lines that are black, expressive, and have a romantic volume

Flared skirt that brings in a sense of grace and volume

Black skirt with sheer paneling and corsetry details that emphasize the shape of the body, romantic silhouette

A edge of romantic goth that is both, romantic and punk, a mix of the two

Tutu-like skirt that has a soft, romantic feel

Asymmetrical asymmetry that has a rich, romantic feel that has a rich, romantic feel

Black skirt with sheer paneling and corsetry details that emphasize the shape of the body, romantic silhouette

Malik Redd

minimal, intellectual, detached

Black hair that gives him a sense of mystery and a sense of mystery

The black and white color scheme is a sense of mystery and a sense of mystery

Black and white hair that gives him a sense of mystery and a sense of mystery

Black and white hair that gives him a sense of mystery and a sense of mystery



Malik Redd

minimal, intellectual, detached

Age: 25

X Background: African American

X Aesthetic: Minimalist goth / monochrome avant-garde

X Personality: Quiet, intellectual, observant

X Interests: Literature, theory, archival work, experimental art

X Politics: Progressive, academic critique of systems

X Special Fact: Malik learned electric guitar not to perform, but to translate theory and emotion into sound structures he could control and dissect







spiritual, grounded, protective energy

Amara
Joss

- ✕ Age: 23
- ✕ Background: African American (Southern roots)
- ✕ Aesthetic: Witchy goth / southern gothic
- ✕ Personality: Intuitive, expressive, socially aware
- ✕ Interests: Folklore, tarot, dark soul music, community art
- ✕ Political View: Justice-oriented, community centered, anti oppression
- ✕ Special Fact: Amara designs outfits that he never wears twice in the same emotional state, treating clothing as a performance language

spiritual, grounded, protective energy

Amara
Joss

White face makeup with symbolic marking called the Ashk, paired with a bone clip that gives a protective presence in the spiritual energy

Off the shoulder ruffles that are attached to sheer mesh, creating a delicate flow by exposing the shoulders to show balance

Layered spiderwebbed skirt that flows with torn, uneven edges, creating movement and a worn, ethereal gothic texture

Honey-blond braids that flow naturally down the face, adding a soft contrast, keeping a slightly untamed look

A structured corset with webs that detail the curves of the waist, becoming a visual metaphor for a symbol of confinement

White ruffled socks paired with black Mary Janes, introducing a delicate, vintage contrast to gothic look

elegant, introspective, defiant presence

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elegant, introspective, defiant presence

Textured locs that are distressed and worn are distressing to the face, loose to frame the face, carrying volume and weight to it

Silver chains that are layered and metal accessories and chains use their shine to add sharp contrast

Worn-out pants with a relaxed look, streetwear feel that balances the look with the torn scarf draped under the belt

A blue dress shirt with a loose flow to it, giving the outfit a dark but elegant silhouette

Use to reinforce the gothic atmosphere, the umbrella is a significant accessory in adding a moody gothic touch

Chunky black boots that heavily emphasize their significance in the grounding gothic style

Malik

Rebby

minimal, intellectual, detached

Age: 25
Background: African American
Aesthetic: Minimalist goth / monochrome avant-garde
Personality: Quiet, intellectual, observant
Interests: Literature, theory, archival work, experimental art
Politics: Progressive, academic critique of systems
Special Fact: Malik learned electric guitar not to perform, but to translate theory and emotion into sound structures he could control and dissect



Malik

minimal, intellectual, detached

Soft but piercing glare from the sharp features created by a calm, but emotionally distant expression, with small features of black makeup

The higher neck top on the red fabric feels restrained and formal, reinforcing a controlled & composed identity

A straddled spine, silver belt that adds a metallic accent, breaking up the dark tones with a rebellious edge

Sculptural, petal-like hair that expands in a outward perspective, giving it an avant-garde presence

The fitted corset introduces structure and tension, subtle wrist accessories that add a hint of personality without detracting from the minimalist aesthetic

Relaxed black pants that are softening the rigidity above, showing movement effortlessly

Dark and sturdy boots that add a sense of weight and grounding to the look

