

# Capsule collection for women's plus-size clothing brand

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Toimeksiantaja/Yhteistyökumppani(t)

annascholz Ltd.

Tiivistelmä

Työn tavoitteena oli suunnitella kapselimallisto (eng. capsule collection) annascholz-nimiselle pluskoon naistenvaatemerkille. Opinnäytetyö perustui yrityksessä kesällä 2016 suoritettuun työharjoitteluun ja sitä kautta hankittuun pohjatietoon.

Työ koostui kahdesta osasta: tutkimusosasta ja käytännön suunnitteluosasta. Tutkimusosassa laajennettiin tietämystä kohderyhmästä lukemalla tutkimuksia ja artikkeleita, jotka liittyivät pluskokoihin ja niiden asemaan vaatetusteollisuudessa. Tutustuttiin myös muihin opinnäytetöihin, jotka liittyivät pluskokoihin ja konseptisuunnitteluun. Tulevia trendejä etsittiin kansainvälisen WGSN-trendiennustuspalvelimen avulla.

Suunnitteluosassa suunnitteliin kapselimallisto annascholzille mukaillen pääsuunnittelijan työnkuvaa. Tämä tarkoitti sitä, että keskityttiin vain suunnitteluun jättäen kustannuslaskelmat mahdollista myöhempää harkintaa varten. Mikäli yrityksessä pidettäisiin suunnitelmista, he voisivat tulevaisuudessa ottaa joitakin malleja tuotantoon.

Mallisto koostui 12:sta vaatekappaleesta ja kuudesta kuosista, joista tuotettiin tekninen katalogi.

Sesonkina mallistolle toimi kevät/kesä 2018 ja kuukautena kesäkuu. annascholz lanseeraa 10 pientä mallistoa vuodessa lähes kuukausittain, joten tämä mallisto suunniteltiin kesäkuuta varten. Mallisto esiteltiin yritykselle marraskuun 2016 lopussa, jolloin kevät/kesä 2018 ei oltu vielä suunniteltu.

Mallistosta saatu palaute oli positiivista ja työ luvattiin ottaa huomioon kevät/kesä 2018 sesongin mallistoja suunniteltaessa.

Avainsanat

brändi, pluskoko, mallisto, kapselimallisto, trendi, trendiennuste

Field of Study
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Client Organisation /Partners
annascholz Ltd.

#### Abstract

The objective of the thesis was to design a capsule collection for women's plus-size clothing brand called annascholz Ltd. The thesis was based on a design studio internship period that was carried out by the author at the company during summer 2016 and knowledge gained during that time.

The thesis consisted of two parts: the first part was the research part and the second the practice-based design part. In the research part more information was gained of the target group by reading studies and articles about plus-size and its position in the clothing industry. In addition, other thesis works made about the subject of plus-size and designing for an existing brand were studied. A small trend research was also made using the international trend forecast site WGSN.com.

In the second part, a capsule collection was designed by loosely imitating the job description of the company's head designer. This means the main focus was on the designs, leaving the cost calculations aside for further discussion. If the company were to like the designs, they would be able to take them to production.

The collection consisted of twelve items and six prints. A technical catalogue was produced according to them.

The season for the collection was spring/summer 2018, more specifically the month of June. annascholz launches 10 mini collections per year almost monthly, so this collection was planned for the June launch in mind. The collection was presented for the company in late November, when the June 2018 collection had not been designed yet. The feedback that was received was positive and the collection was promised to be taken into consideration when the spring/summer 2018 collections would be designed.

## Keywords

brand, plus-size, collection, capsule collection, trend, trend forecast

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#### 1 INTRODUCTION

When I started thinking about the subject of my thesis, it was clear to me from the beginning that I wanted to do some work for a client or a partner. Some fashion design graduates design a collection of their own, but for me it was not relevant at the time, because I will not be starting my own company after graduating. I want to gain more experience in working in the fashion industry before developing my own brand.

Naturally, I was delighted when I asked about thesis opportunities at annascholz, the company where I was interning, and they came up with a suggestion to design a capsule collection. They said some of their interns have done some similar projects, but not recently, so this would be a nice opportunity for me. I would also get a chance to learn more about designing for plus-size customers, so that would work as the research part of my thesis.

I do not have personal experience of wearing plus-size, since I have always been quite slim, like everyone in my family. Designing for a slim or petite body is very easy, and I have done that a lot during my studies and free time. This task gives me a new challenge, which I am embracing with enthusiasm. Of course, this project is also a valuable asset to my portfolio, which will help me find work in the future.

The target group is women from sizes 16 to 28 UK (42-54 EU). There can be many body types in this category, just like there are many body types in general. Everyone gains weight differently: some women get rounder from the belly area, some get more hourglass shaped, with bigger breasts and hips and relatively small waist. This should be noted when designing the collection, so that there would be something for everybody.

Knowing the brand is also very important. annascholz is a luxury designer brand that is known for its unique prints. Their philosophy is not to hide the body. They want to offer the plus-size women the opportunity to wear clever, well-fitting, good-quality clothes, just like everyone else. Their designs have sexy silhouettes, plunging necklines and curve-hugging looks. That is why my main focus will be making them feel amazing, instead of just making their bodies look slimmer.

The purpose will not be to devotedly imitate annascholz's previous styles, of course. I was advised to use my imagination and bring something new to their look. It would benefit the company as well to get some new perspective, since Ms. Anna Scholz, their designer has been designing for the self-labelled brand for almost 20 years. It will be a creative process,

where I am trying to free myself from any unnecessary restraints and be inspired by body positivity.

First and foremost, I chose this task to learn and become a better designer. However, it would be great if the results of my work would please the company, furthermore they could benefit from them.

Glossary

**body positivity:** "One's positive and accepting attitude towards one's body." (Suokas 2016, 3)

**brand:** "A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark, and package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors " (Aaker 1991, 7)

capsule collection: "A capsule collection is essentially a condensed version of a designer's vision, often limited edition, which transcends seasons and trends by being functional — read commercial. They often focus on construction and delivering key looks, without the styling and theatrics of a show." (Morton 2016)

*collection:* "A selection of clothes especially as presented by a particular designer for a specific season." (Volpintesta 2014, 208)

*draping:* "The tradition and technique of folding, pinning, and controlling fabric panels over the human body form or dress form." (Volpintesta 2014, 216)

*gather:* "An excess length of fabric that is squeezed into a fitted edge, seam, drawstring, or elastic." (Volpintesta 2014, 216)

*jersey:* "A fine gauge machine knitted fabric that is flexible and drapey, generally designed to be cut and sewn into finish garments although seamless garments are also made of a jersey construction." (Volpintesta 2014, 216)

*print:* "A mark or impression made in or on a surface by pressure." In fashion design: "A print is applied to fabric." (Volpintesta 2014, 146, 147)

*scale:* "A consistent relative proportion of a design no matter what size its representation takes." (Volpintesta 2014, 216)

*production:* "The process, facility and methods used to construct, embellish, and complete fashion garments." (Volpintesta 2014, 216)

silhouette: "The outline or general shape of something." (Volpintesta 2014, 28)

## What I already know

My knowledge of annascholz is based on my experience as their design studio intern during the 1<sup>st</sup> of June and 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2016. My tasks included attending fitting sessions, garment cutting, Photoshop editing tasks and assisting at photo shoots to mention only a few. During this time, I had a chance to observe how the company worked from design to production. I made lots of notes and interviewed every person working at the office. I will refer especially to these interviews throughout this thesis. I can safely say that I have formed quite a strong conception of the brand's image, customers and working ethics, but I can still contact the personnel there if and when any questions come up.

#### 2 EXECUTION

This thesis is a development project, where the objective is to design a collection that pleases the client. It consists of two parts: the first part being the research part and the second the practise-based design part.

In the research part I will learn more about the target group more by reading books, studies and articles about plus-size and its position in the clothing industry. I will also explore other thesis works made of the subject of plus-size and designing for an existing brand. This part is made to complete the knowledge I have already gained and give me new perspectives on the matter. A small trend research will also be made by me using the international trend forecasting site WGSN.com. In the trend research I will try to look for colours, materials and silhouettes that could work with the annascholz style and image.

In the second part I will design a capsule collection based on the trend research, as if I were the company's head designer. This means I will only be focusing on the designs, leaving the cost calculations aside and other regulations for further discussion with the team. Should the company like my designs, they could make toiles (=prototypes of appropriate fabric) and see how they work on a fitting model. I will not be making these toiles as a part of this thesis, because I have limited the subject only to designing. I would need more time to make the toiles myself. If my designs would work as toiles, the company could take them or parts of them to produce in their factories.

## Schedule and resources

This is a rough schedule that will guide me through the project. The color blue marks the tasks that were done during the internship.

Month	Tasks
July	-Studying annascholz Ltd.
	-Studying their customers
	-Studying plus-size fashion
	-Meeting with Ms. Scholz (discussion about the design process, etc.)
August	-Observing trends in London
September	-Making proper trend research in Finland with a trend forecast site
	-Finding studies relevant to the subject
	-Sending via e-mail: Moodboard/idea board, colour and print
	suggestions
	-FEEDBACK: Via Skype at the end of the month
	-Making necessary changes to moodboards
October	-Sketching
	-Sending via e-mail: First draft of the collection, suggestions about
	materials
	-FEEDBACK: Via Skype at the end of the month
	-Making necessary changes to sketches, updating the moodboards
November	-Finishing the designs
	-Making guiding specification sheets
	-Final presentation in London on Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> of November
December	-Final presentation in Kuopio on December 2 <sup>nd</sup>

This project itself will not take much financial resources. I can use libraries for publications, I have enough drawing equipment and Adobe software programs such as Photoshop installed on my computer. The trend forecast service is provided by my university. I might have to buy some samples of fabric when I am designing the collection, but they will only cost a few euros. When I fly to London, I will have to pay for the flights and the accommodation, but that is my own choice. Apart from that, the project itself will require very little expenses.

# SWOT-analysis

In this SWOT-analysis I have listed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats regarding this thesis project.

Strengths	Weaknesses
-Experience as intern in the	-Not belonging in the target
company	group, no first-hand knowledge
-Education in designing,	as a plus-size person
drawing and sewing	-No experience in designing for
-Good language and	plus-sized people
communicational skills	-Living far from London
-Fresh, new ideas	
Opportunities	Threats
-Improving of communication	-Running out of time
and language skills	-Problems in communicating,
-Learning more about the	long distance
target group	-Sending too many messages
-Getting professional feedback	and annoying the personnel
-Chance to production	-Not understanding the brand
-Asset to portfolio	

# Reliability issues

Business and/or trade secrets are under strict disclosure within this thesis, and shall not be described to any extent except for general content that will not endanger or jeopardize any parts of the commissioner's business.

## 3 ANNASCHOLZ - THE BRAND

annascholz is a women's plus-size clothing brand, based in London, United Kingdom. It was founded by a German designer Anna Scholz. Ms. Scholz came to London in the year 1990 to study fashion design at Central Saint Martins, graduating in 1994. The annacholz brand was founded in 1996, and in the same year the plus-size store group Lane Bryant bought her first collection to sell in their 10 best shops. Since then, her collections have been sold by different stockists, including Harrods, Selfridges and Saks 5th Avenue. In 2009, the webshop annascholz.com was launched and by 2016 they had given up external stockists and started selling their products exclusively online. (annascholz.com 2015)



Picture 1. Autumn/Winter 2016 © Anna Scholz

#### 3.1 Setting

The annascholz office is located in Chandelier Building, NW10, in Northwest London. It takes about 30 minutes to get there from the centre of London by underground. The office is big and a great place for the whole team to work in. Besides the workers' personal desk spaces, the office includes a warehouse where their stock is managed, a design studio where the patternmaker and interns work and a small studio where some of the photo shoots are held.

#### 3.2 The business idea

annascholz is exclusively a plus-size womenswear brand. Their products come in sizes 16 to 28 (EU 42-54). They are labelled as a luxury brand, and not without a reason: they use quality materials such as silk and wool and they put a lot of work in achieving a great fit. The team includes a print designer who designs their unique prints in collaboration with Ms. Scholz. In a video interview (ANNA SCHOLZ TEAM), published by annascholzTV, their own Youtube channel, Mr. Cliff Kaye, the managing director of annascholz, says:

"All women deserve to feel sexy, deserve to feel wonderful, deserve to feel great and should not be segmented by their shape or their size."

This sums up the annascholz philosophy quite well.

## 3.3 The industry and the market

The plus-size clothing industry is growing rapidly. The industry is worth roughly 17,5 billion dollars, according to Business Insider Nordic (2016-05-11). And no wonder, since the statistics speak for themselves:

"According to data from the 2014 Health Survey for England, 24% of adults in England are obese and a further 36% are overweight, making a total of 60% who are either overweight or obese." (Baker and Bate 2016, 5)

According to the same source, the corresponding numbers in the rest of the United Kingdom are: Wales 58%, Scotland 65% and Northern Ireland 60% (Baker and Bate 2016, 14, 15, 16).

This means that in the whole United Kingdom, the majority of population is overweight or obese, making the normal or underweight population the minority. I am stating this because most of the annascholz products are sold to the UK. The rest of Europe is not very different:

"... in 46 (European) countries (accounting for 87% of the Region), more than 50% of adults are overweight or obese, and in several of those countries the rate is close to 70% of the adult population." (World Health Organization 2015, 9)

In conclusion, the majority of the European population is overweight or obese. According to a research by Washington State University (Daugherty 2016), the average american woman also wears between a size 16 and a size 18 (the United States is annascholz's second biggest market). This means that the amount of people who need plus-size clothing is enormous.

(Note: If you find your best fit from the plus-size department, it does not automatically mean you are overweight or unhealthy. Everything comes down to proportion and how the weight is distributed on the body. However, my point is that if you *are* overweight (or obese), you will most likely need plus-size clothing.)

People have started accepting bigger bodies due to the recent body-positivity movement. The idea of the movement is to improve self-esteem and how people perceive themselves (Suokas 2016, 4). Ms. Scholz also posts regularly about fitness, food and healthy lifestyle to her blog and social media. Her message is that you can be healthy and feel good without being size zero.

Most of annascholz's products are sold in the UK. During my internship I learned that British women like their clothes to be colorful and interesting, whatever their size. annascholz also had a flagship store in Berlin in 2010, but it was unfortunately closed. In Germany, people dress more conservatively in general, and it appeared that German plus-sized women were not so interested in bold cuts and colorful prints. But it does not change the fact that there is still a great need for plus-size clothing in the whole world and only few brands are investing in great fit and quality.



Picture 2. Spring/Summer 2016 © Anna Scholz

#### 3.4 Products

annascholz launches 10 mini collections in a year. They include garments from casual to working clothes. Some collections also have more glamorous pieces to wear at parties or festive occasions. They have outerwear, such as jackets and coats. In the spring of 2016, a fitness collection was launched, too. annascholz does not make trousers or jeans very often, because the customers can find these items cheaper elsewhere. The same goes for accessories.

More importantly, annascholz is known for their dresses, tops and skirts. Ms. Scholz and the team put a lot of work in making the clothes fit and adjusting the patterns to achieve the best possible results.

## 3.5 Competition

According to Ms. Michaela Gingell (2016-07-27), their ecommerce marketing executive, annascholz's biggest competitor is a plus-size brand called Marina Rinaldi, owned by the MaxMara Group. They are basically the only brand that offers similar quality with similar prices. She does not see the cheaper brands, like Evans, as serious competitors, simply because their materials and fit are not as good and the prices are completely different.

#### 4 THE PLUS-SIZE BODY

## 4.1 Defining plus-size

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, "plus-size" means "extra-large" in terms of clothing, and it was used in 1942 for the first time (Merriam-Webster 2016). Plus-size clothing often starts from size 16, but this varies between brands.

A quick internet search shows that there is much controversy related to the term plus-size. When you search the words "plus-size clothing" from Wikipedia, you come up with this sentence: "Plus size clothing is a term given to clothing proportioned specifically for people whose bodies are larger than the average person's." (Wikipedia 2016) But when you search for "average clothing size UK", most articles say that the average size in the UK is size 16 (Dogryol 2016). This would suggest that size 16 is not plus-size, yet most high street shops do not even manufacture this size, leaving it to dedicated plus-size brands to provide. It seems that the definition of plus-size according to the clothing industry is outdated.

# 4.2 Body types matter

Knowing your body type helps you to choose clothes that suit you best. It's also important for a designer to know about different body types if he/she is designing clothes that people are actually going to wear.

There are as many body types as there are people, naturally. I went through many guidebooks on how to dress and found out that the first step in determining your body type is finding out if you are you straight or curvy. (Henderson, Henshaw 2010, 15) After this step, the other dominant features of the body can be analysed. For example, if you have a full bust, what shape your shoulder line is or if you have a defined waist. Lorna Knight lists (Knight 2012, 20-28) five different body types in her book: hourglass, bottom-heavy triangle, top-heavy triangle, round and oval.

Of course, not everyone can be categorized as bluntly as this. Many people are a combination of different features. These categories will only point you to the right direction in finding out your shape. It is up to oneself which features one wants to emphasize and which to hide.

When it comes to designing, designers usually determine the group of people to whom they are designing for. Naturally, the ideal situation is that everyone would buy their clothes, regardless of age, sex and lifestyle choices, but defining a more specific group is more beneficial. This is also helpful when it comes to marketing and finding the customers.

Ms. Scholz told me (2016-07-27) that she usually designs pieces that flatter the curvy body, but also something that goes well with a straighter frame, accentuating the legs. Both styles can be found in each of her collections, so that there is something for everybody.

## 4.3 Common problems

I did plenty of my research by browsing through plus-size forums and blogs and their comment sections. I learned that people seem to have all kinds of problems when it comes to finding plus-size clothing: some people were complaining about frumpy floral prints or not wanting to wear stripes, others were frustrated about the length of the garments. Tall people find the clothes too short whereas shorter people cannot seem to find anything that does not look like a big tent on them.

Producing every shape and size is not a possibility for a commercial clothing brand. Producing sizes that are rare, or in other words, far from the average size that is sold, is very expensive for the company and the risk that they will not be sold is great. The unfortunate fact is, if one has a body that is very tall, very short, very slim or very large, or maybe even, asymmetrical, one will always end up having to alter. This is why it's good to know some basics of sewing, or know someone who does. Visiting a seamstress is of course the best way to get the best results.

#### 4.4 Solutions

Luckily, there are some common problems that designers are able to influence. Prints and colors for example, can be designed to flatter the plus-size body. I agree that teeny tiny florals can look unbecoming on a larger body, simply because the scale of the print does not match the scale of the body. Also, Ms. Scholz told me (2016-07-27) that her collections rarely include pastel colors. In her experience, pastel colors make a big body look bigger than it is, drawing the attention to every lump and bump that the person would rather not

show. In addition, pastel colors have a certain childish impression to them, and a large portion of annascholz's clientele is middle-aged or close to it.

Ms. Scholz is a tall lady, and has always been plus-sized, so she has plenty of personal experience in what suits a bigger body. Clever draping and pleating is often seen in her collections. These details draw the eye to the curves wanted to be shown and away from the ones that are not. Also the unique prints that she's famous for are carefully designed to fit a full-figured body: they usually come in bright colors and shapes that trick the eye from the surface of the body. The materials that she uses are usually soft and stretch at least a little bit, so that they settle nicely on the body and do not pull. She also likes to leave some skin visible, for example in the cleavage or adding some slits to the sleeves. This adds sexiness to the look. If the whole body is completely covered from head to toe, the person can look like a mountain of clothes. Besides, most people have parts that they like about their body and like to show.



Picture 3. Spring/Summer 2016 © Anna Scholz

#### 5 THE DESIGN PROCESS

Summary of things I should keep in mind when designing for annascholz based on what I have learned:

- No baggy styles
- No tiny, frumpy florals
- No solid pastels
- No oversized or "boxy" shoulders
- Use fresh colors
- Include interesting details: ie. pleats, ruching, cuts
- Design interesting prints

#### 5.1 The trend research

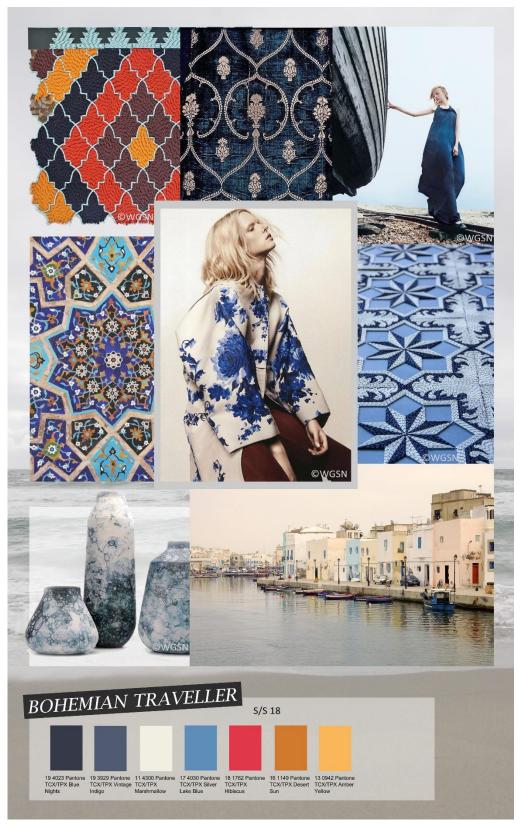
I started making my trend research already in London during my internship. I think every designer makes a little trend research whenever they step out of their house. Watching people has always been a hobby of mine, but in London I tried to focus more on the trendy side of it. I went to shopping malls and shopping districts, like Oxford Street, and checked out the shops, while observing people. I also went to Camden to see alternative styles to get another perspective. Camden is famous for its vibrant music scene, markets and affordable restaurants, and especially young people enjoy spending time there.

One of the biggest trends that I noticed this summer was 90's details. Crop tops, choker necklaces, platform sandals and t-shirts under strappy dresses. These were mainly worn by teens and young adults. But some 90's trends, like floral summer dresses and metallic accents in accessories, were also worn by people in their 30's and older. Some other notable trends were tops that reveal shoulders, big, white shirts, hoop earrings and midi skirts. Velvet was also popular.

When I got back to Finland, I was able to log into WGSN.com, a trend forecast site that my school provides for us students. I looked at the future trends that were forecasted for S/S18 and got interested in a macro trend called "Kinship". This is how the trend is described at the website:

"Kinship explores a new global outlook for pattern and texture where East meets West. It takes inspiration from the explorative spirit of ancient spice and textiles trade along the Silk Road." (Palmer, 2016, 2)

It had a very clear and dynamic color palette, which I thought would suit annascholz well. Combined with flowy silhouettes and graphic prints, it would make a real stand-out collection. I made a moodboard where I collected inspiring pictures with color suggestions.



Picture 4. Moodboard

I came up with the name "Bohemian Traveller" inspired by the exotic color palette. The collection could have some very summery pieces, suitable for holiday and free time but also some casual working styles. As a target person I was thinking of a smart working woman who travels the cities of the world, wearing bold prints and bright colors. The collection would be quite versatile, with styles that suit a younger woman and styles that someone closer to her 50's or even 60's might wear.

I looked through a great deal of pictures of recent fashion shows and street styles. I gathered the most inspiring outfits into a collage and made some notes about the details that caught my eye.



Picture 5. The most inspirational pieces

I sent both boards to Ms. Scholz, her assistant Ms. Ellery and patternmaker Mrs. Agternkamp..

## 5.2 First Skype meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> September

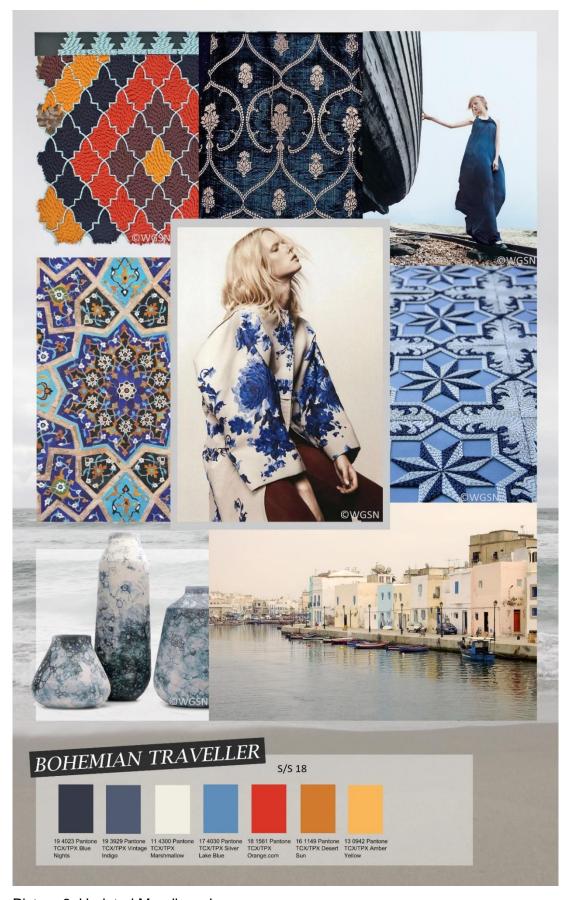
I discussed the feedback concerning my moodboard and ideas with Mrs. Agternkamp on Skype on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Ms. Scholz had said (2016-09-16) she had loved the moodboard and the inspirational pieces. She thought the detailing would work very well for them and she had herself pinned some of the same images on Pinterest. The things that she liked the most were the sheer detailing, both kimono and maxi jackets and the maxi skirt.

The only thing she did not like was the comfy jumpsuit. She had said it looks too cheap for them and people could buy that style elsewhere much cheaper. Mrs. Agternkamp agreed with Ms. Scholz. The picture was not maybe the best one that I could have chosen, but I explained that I was talking about the silhouette and the feeling most of all. Ms. Scholz had said she liked jumpsuits though, so I maybe I could design a more luxurious one.

Ms. Ellery (2016-09-19), Ms. Scholz's assistant and print designer had pointed out that the moodboard had a bright pink tone in the Pantone color squares, but there is not a similar kind of color in the mood pictures. Instead there is a very bright orange, so she had suggested I find an orange hue to replace the pink one. I think the pink might have looked more orange on my screen, that is why I made the mistake.

I was very delighted with the feedback. I felt like I was off to a good start. I was very inspired when I did the boards, so I was glad I could continue with this feeling.

Here are the updated boards.



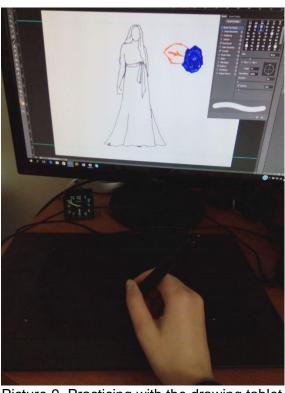
Picture 6. Updated Moodboard



Picture 7. The most inspirational pieces, updated



Picture 8. Practice sketches



Picture 9. Practicing with the drawing tablet

# 5.3 Sketching

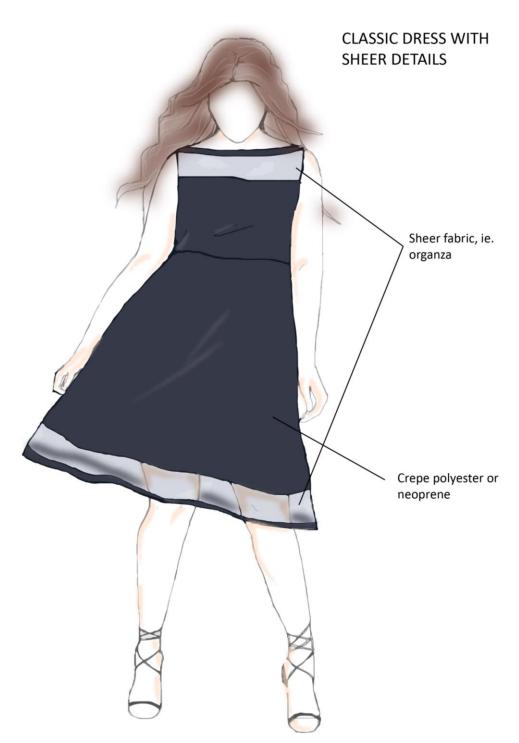
Before I started sketching the actual collection, I practiced my drawing a little. I looked at photos of real plus-size people and sketched them with crayons (Pictue 8.). I had decided that I will be making my sketches as realistic as possible, at least what comes to proportions of the body. After that I moved on to practicing drawing with a Wacom drawing tablet (Picture 9.). I am used to drawing fashion illustrations with stick-like figures in a very quick manner. Now I used photographs from real plus-size people as references, because I wanted the sketches to be realistic. I thought it was important that one can see straight away how the clothes might look on a plus-size person, not only for the client, but for me as well.

After the first Skype meeting, I started making the first sketches of the collection. I made the sketches with Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator using a drawing tablet.

Here is a picture of all of the first sketches together:

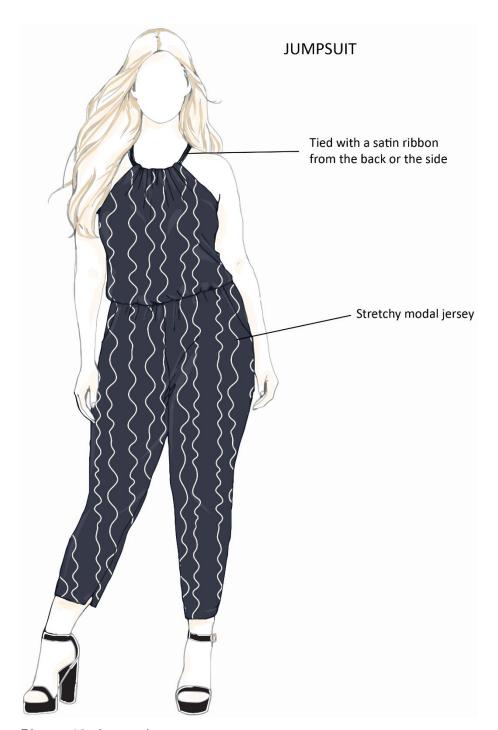


Picture 10. All styles



Picture 11. Classic dress

This is a very simple but chic style. Ms. Scholz had said she liked the sheer details in the board with the most inspirational pieces, so I designed the sheer panels to give a modern touch to this vintage-inspired dress. The soft neoprene fabric is very comfortable and maintains the shape of the dress nicely, accentuating the waist.



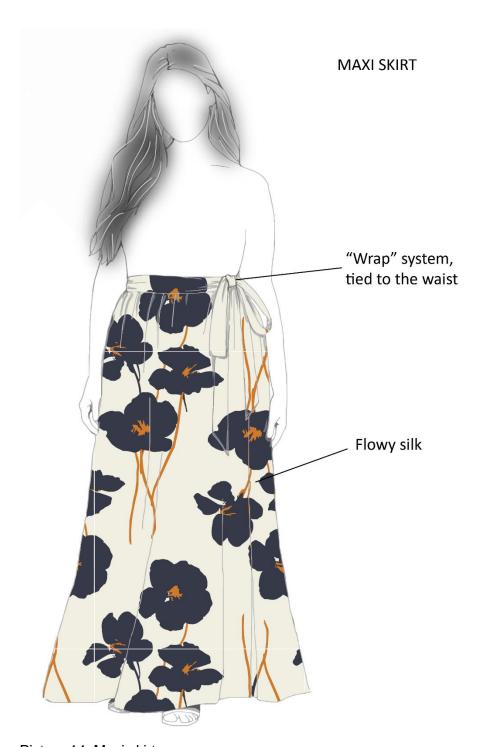
Picture 12. Jumpsuit

This jumpsuit is relaxed but still very stylish. The dynamic print elongates the body and makes the viewers eyes travel vertically. The material is soft and stretchy, so it is very comfortable to wear. This style would look good with almost every body type because of the gatherings at the waist and neckline. The final touch comes from the satin ribbon tied to the back of the neck, which also brings a bit of luxury to the look.



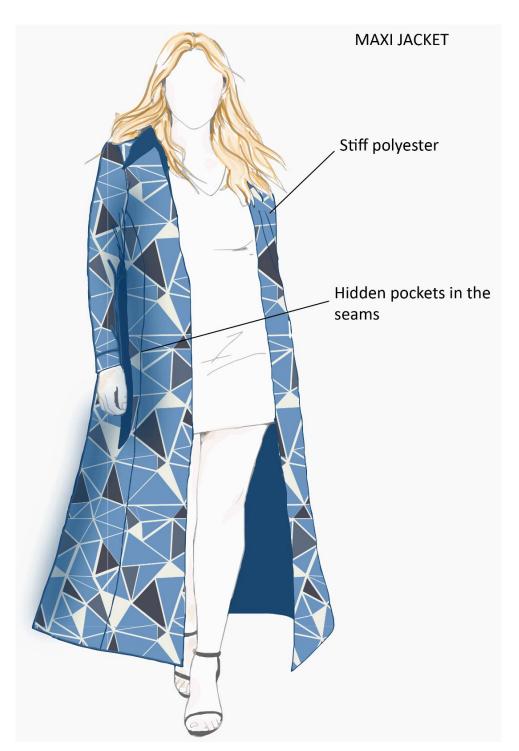
Pictue 13. Kimono

This light kimono jacket is also good for any body type. Tied to the waist, it brings out the legs. The print is very fresh and unique and it is easy to combine with a short skirt or jeans.



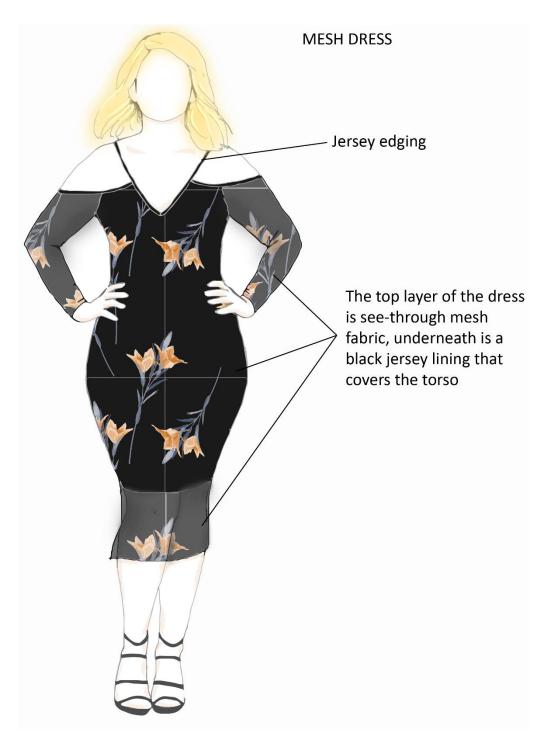
Picture 14. Maxi skirt

This maxi skirt is great for anyone who is more comfortable having a little more coverage. Despite the simple design, it's a very luxurious piece: the fabric is pure silk that moves elegantly with the person who wears it. The big flower print is feminine but not juvenile. The best thing is that this can worn this for years, because the wrap system allows the waist to be tied where comfortable.



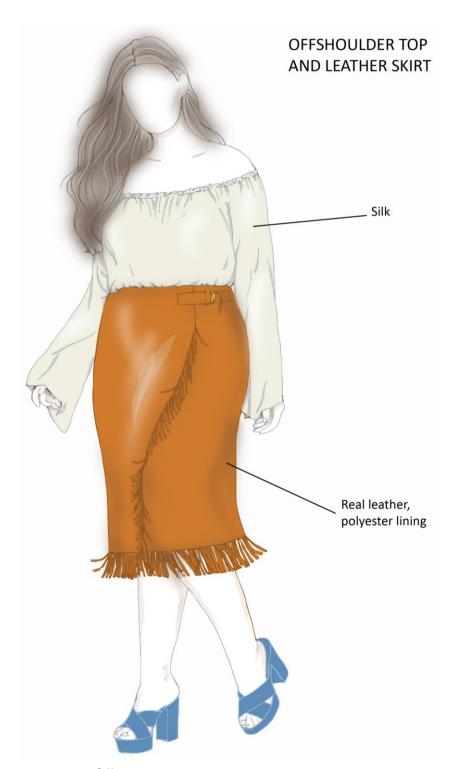
Picture 15. Maxi jacket

This is a fabulous statement jacket. The graphic print was inspired by beautiful Mediterranean mosaic tiles. The princess cut allows a great fit and is perfect especially for a busty figure. When worn closed, the belt brings out the waist. The jacket also has pockets for practicality.



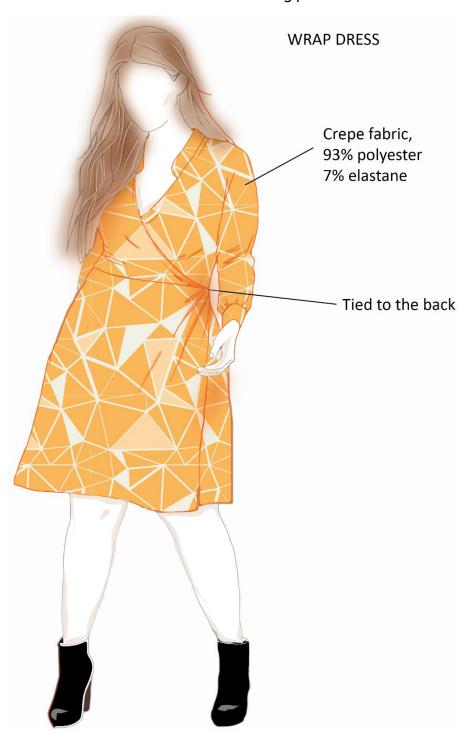
Picture 16. Sheer dress

This daring dress is best for an hourglass-shaped figure. The arms and the legs can be seen through the mesh fabric. The jersey lining is very stretchy so it does not pull. The V-neckline is very feminine and flattering for a plus-sized body. The colors and the print are inspired by a tropical garden at summer night.



Picture 17. Offshoulder top and leather skirt

The offshoulder top is a great way to show some skin while covering the arms. The whole look has a 1970's feeling, with the flared sleeves and the fringed skirt. The pencil skirt is a great garment for accentuating the waist for all body types. The D-ring system allows some adjusting of the fit. Note the quality materials: pure silk and real leather.



Picture 18. Wrap dress

The classic wrap dress is a hit with almost all ages and bodies. This one has a modern touch with the graphic mosaic print. The little collar is a fun detail. The crepe fabric comes down nicely while the fit is adjusted with the ties in the back. The dress is suitable for both work and free time.

## 5.4 Second Skype meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> October

I discussed these sketches on Skype with Mrs. Agternkamp on 25<sup>th</sup> October. To my relief, Mrs. Agternkamp said (2016-10-25) she liked them very much and said she would wear some pieces herself. There were only a few minor changes she suggested to make the collection look more coherent. Some of the pieces, like the jacket, the jumpsuit and the kimono, were very blue, therefore she suggested adding a drop of orange to them. Also the sheer/mesh dress would be better with the shoulders covered, because it requires a bra underneath and the visible bra straps would look just weird.

She did point out, though, that I should discuss with Ms. Scholz and Ms. Ellery, because they are in charge of the design part of collections.

Unfortunately, Ms. Scholz and Ms. Ellery were very busy and they were only able to give me very brief feedback. Ms. Scholz's wish (Scholz 2016-10-28) was to see more details, as she thought many of the styles were quite simple. She suggested adding some new styles that were not so simple shapes.

# 5.5 The final sketches

After I received the feedback from Ms. Scholz and Mrs. Agternkamp, I worked on the sketches some more. I added some orange to the blue pieces. The sheer dress had its shoulders covered and the hem extended. I also altered the print and changed the general color to blue because the black did not fit the collection.

I sketched two new styles that I tried to make more contemporary. I was slightly unsure about these pieces, but I tried to trust my instinct on this.

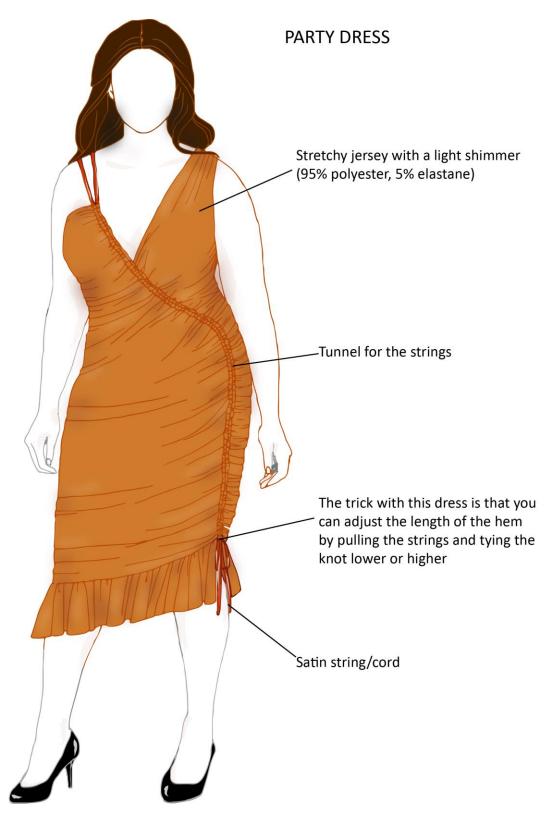
I also added some embroidery to the white offshoulder top and other details according to Ms. Scholz's wishes.

#### Here are the results:



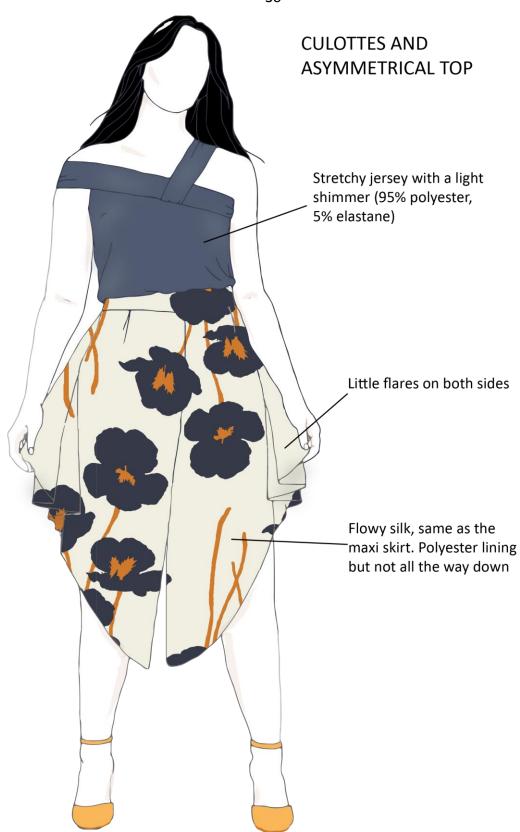
Picture 19. All styles, updated

The two new styles that I designed:



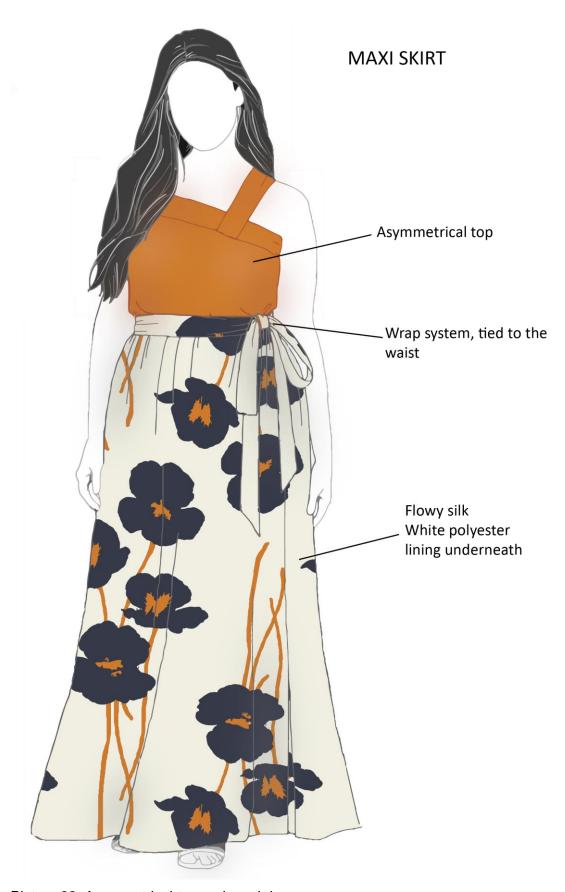
Picture 20. Party dress

This piece became the highlight of the collection. The drawstring detail is modern and trendy addition the classic cocktail dress. The stretchy fabric and gathering accentuate curves. The Desert Sun orange brings to mind a beautiful Moroccan sunset.



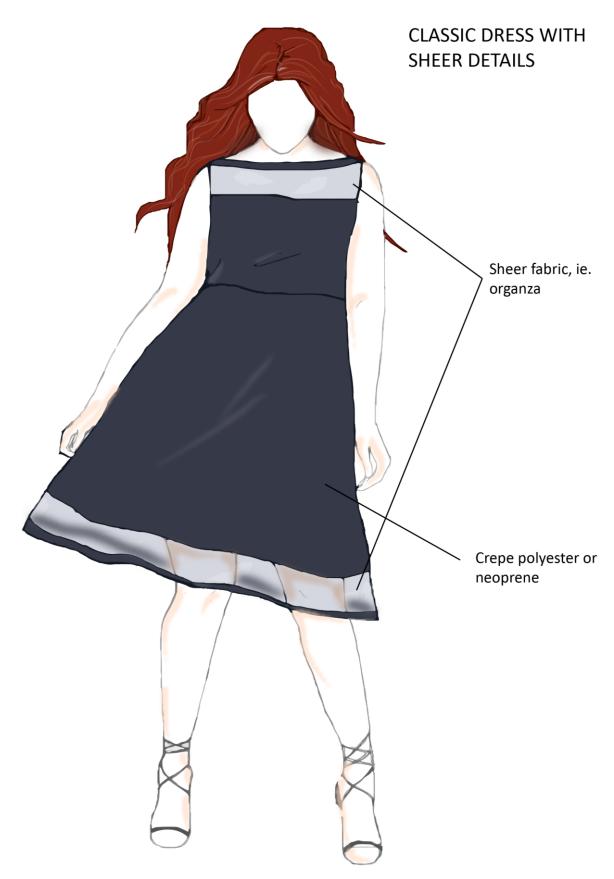
Picture 21. Asymmetrical top and culottes

This is the most playful outfit of the collection. The asymmetrical top breaks the traditional shoulder lines, drawing the eye to the décolleté area. The interesting culottes are a combination of a skirt and trousers. The luxurious silk feels wonderful in the summer.

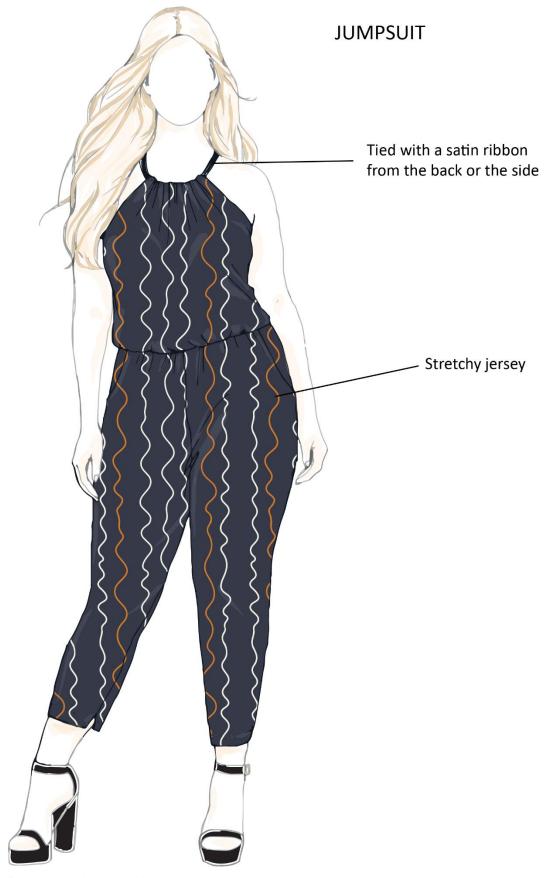


Picture 22. Asymmetrical top and maxi dress

The maxi skirt was accompanied by the asymmetrical top in the bold Desert Sun orange.



Picture 23. Classic dress



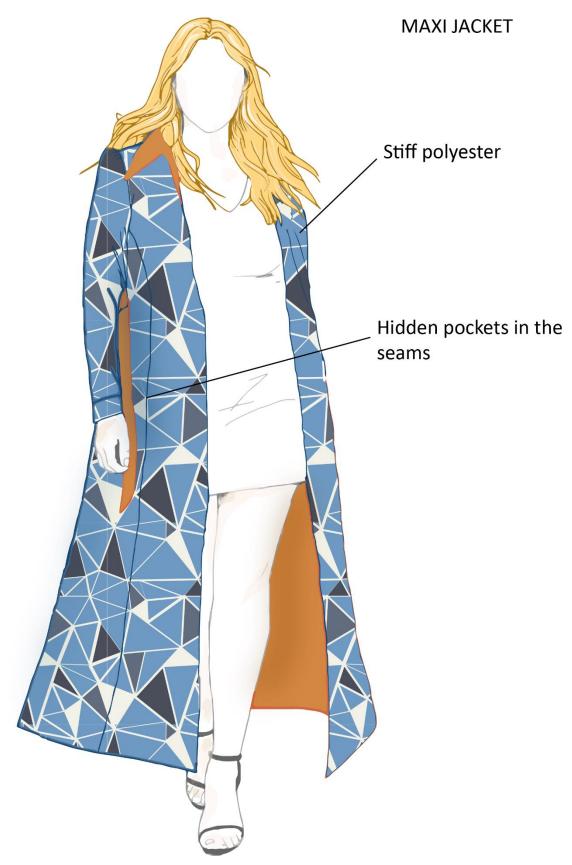
Picture 24. Updated jumpsuit

Some orange was added to the jumpsuit to make it look more interesting.



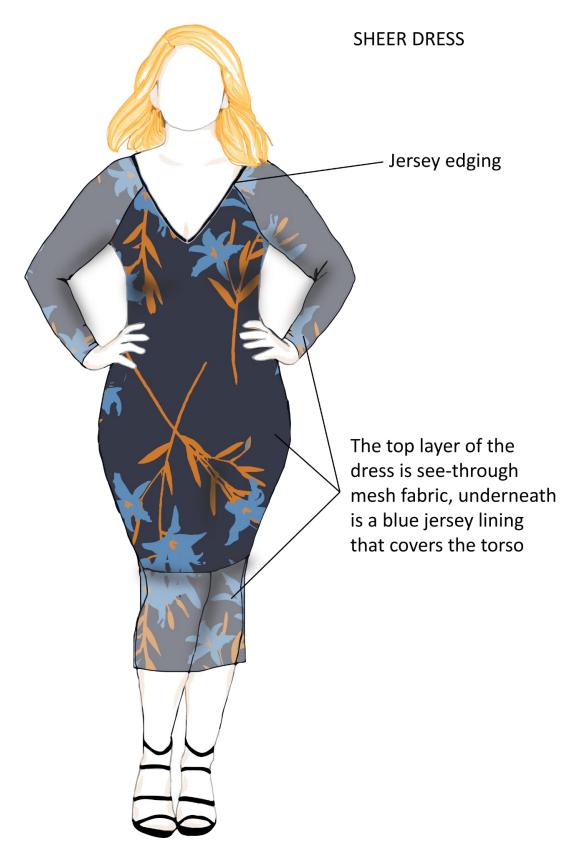
Picture 25. Updated kimono

The orange that was added to the print made the kimono look more vibrant.



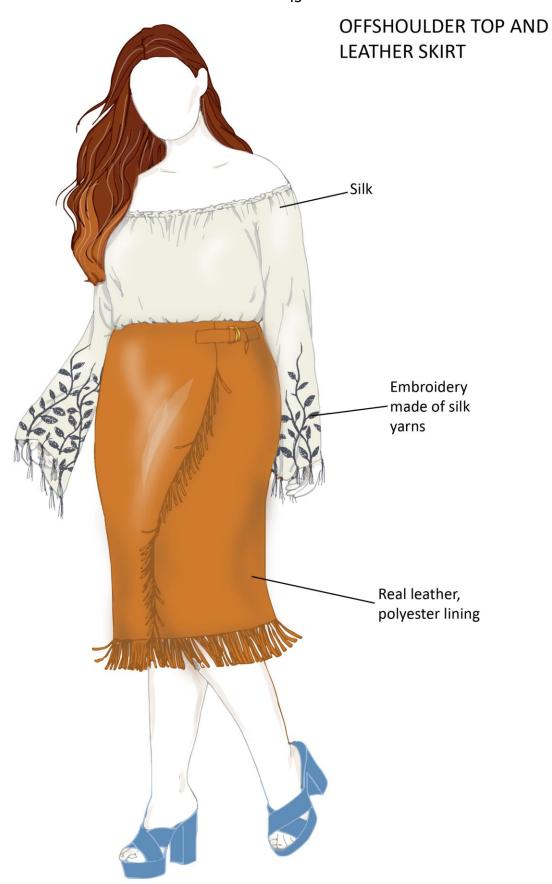
Picture 26. Updated maxi jacket

The maxi jacket got a drop of Desert Sun orange as well, making it look more like a summer garment.



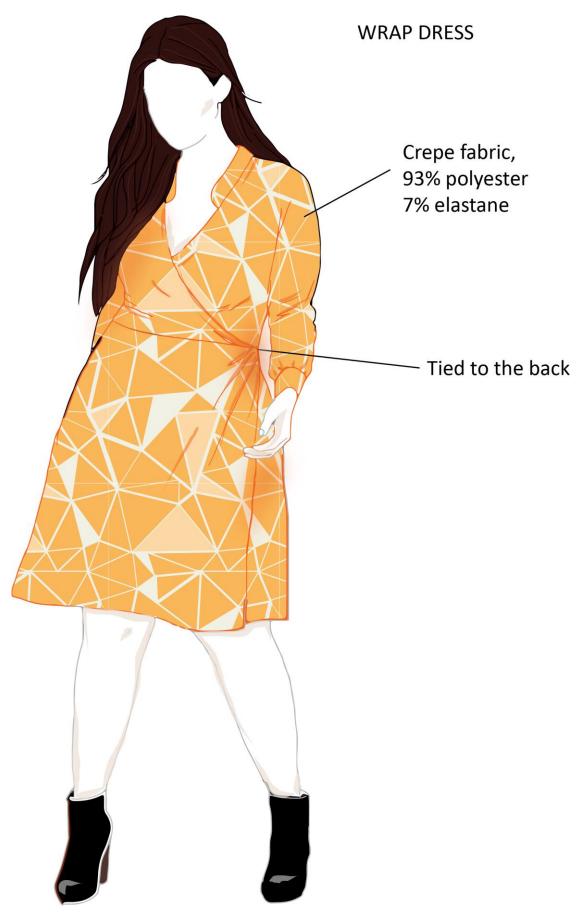
Picture 27. Updated sheer dress

The sheer dress had a complete makeover. The Blue Nights base color made it fit the collection better. The Lily-print is now bigger and bolder, but it still has the summer night garden feeling to it.



Picture 28. Updated offshoulder top and leather skirt

The offshoulder top is now more interesting and even more luxurious with the silk yarn embroidery detail in the sleeves.



Picture 29. Wrap dress

#### 5.5.1 The materials

When my internship period in London ended, I took small pieces of fabrics from the studio leftovers with me. I wanted to be able to look at them and feel them when I would design the collection. Most of the fabrics annascholz uses are bought straight from the factory where the garments are produced. Using the fabrics that are familiar to the company would give them a better idea how the garment would be like.

According to Henderson and Henshaw (2010, 30), spandex is the best friend of a full-figured woman. Plenty of elastic jersey can be found in annascholz's collections as well. Especially when the garment has gathers, elastic jersey looks very flattering. It is also very comfortable to wear. When it is made of mostly polyester, the fabric is very durable and pilling rarely happens. Due to these reasons it was a natural choice to use elastic jersey in many of the designs. I made specification sheets (see Appendices, Technical catalogue) where I demonstrated which materials are used in each garment and where.

Silk was a natural choice as well. It's cooling in the summer and very durable. annascholz has used it countless times and it looks and feels amazing.

I am using neoprene in the classic dress. It is the neoprene annascholz uses and it is different from the one that is used in scuba diving gear or gymnastic mattresses. This neoprene is lighter, more flexible and it is made for everyday clothing.

The only material that I designed in the collection that annascholz does not use much is cotton (plain weave, not jersey). I wanted the kimono to be cotton to give it a proper Japanese feeling. The Japanese wear 'yukata', a garment made of cotton, during hot summer days or festivals. It resembles a kimono very much. Also, if the kimono was made of polyester satin or something that is shiny and flowy, it might look like a dressing gown. This kimono jacket is meant to be worn outside, so I figured thickness would be good.

Cotton is not often seen in plus-size collections because of its stiffness. Plus-size clothing is usually designed for a body that has bigger and rounder shapes than its smaller counterpart. A stiff garment takes a great deal of work to make fit perfectly. But in this case, the kimono is designed to have a good amount of looseness in it and the belt that is tied to the waist sets the fit. Also the fabric softens when it is used a couple of times.



Picture 30. All of the prints from left to right: Lily, Yellow Mosaic, Blue Mosaic, Aronia, Nasturtium, Garland

#### 5.5.2 Prints

I designed all of the prints in the collection myself. I used both Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator to get the result that I wanted.

annascholz is known for unique prints. Before I started designing the prints, I carefully looked through their current and previous collections in order to understand what kind of shapes and color combinations they used. Then I thought about my theme and my color palette. Because I was inspired by travelling, I wanted the prints to be related to it as well. I was thinking of exotic gardens when I designed the floral prints (Picture 30.). I used real photographs and rendered them in Illustrator to create the print, for example Aronia-print (Picture 31.).

I took the picture near my house.

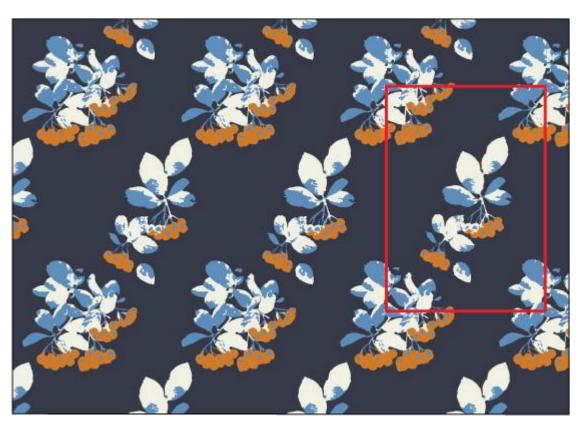
I wanted them to look modern and graphic, therefore I used as few colors as possible. I kept in mind that the flower prints should not be too small in size or prudish-looking.



Picture 31. Aronia berries near my house.

I created the Mosaic and the Garland-print to contrast the delicacy of the floral prints. They are more modern and masculine, whereas flowers represent femininity. In my opinion, it is good to have contrasts in a collection, that way the collection speaks to a larger audience.

annascholz have their prints made digitally in Europe. I created specification sheets (see Appendices, Technical catalogue) of the prints as well. In the specification sheets I have demonstrated the size of one repeat in the print. In print design, a repeat means the rectangular area of a motif that keeps repeating throughout the canvas, creating a pattern. The size of the repeat determines the size of the pattern.



Picture 32. Demonstration of a repeat. The repeated area is inside the red square.

### 5.5.3 Other

I did not use the bright red/orange colour from the moodboard. I also changed the name of the collection to "Elegant Traveller", as I thought the word bohemian would be too limiting and non-commercial. When I thought about a bohemian traveller, I was thinking of a backpacker. The word elegant would be better, because it brings to mind a grown woman who travels mostly in cities. Here's the third version of the moodboard:



Picture 33. Third and final moodboard

## 5.6 The presentation on November 29<sup>th</sup> and feedback

I travelled to London on 28<sup>th</sup> of November and had a meeting with Ms. Scholz, Mrs. Agternkamp and Ms. Ellery on the next day. I had made a technical catalogue with all of the pictures and the specification sheets (see Appendices, Technical catalogue) that I presented to them. First we discussed each garment separately and in the end looked at all of them together.

There were some details that the ladies wanted to change (2016-11-29). The party dress needed to be shorter in order to make walking easier. The buttons in the leather dress would need to match the color of the leather. But all in all, the feedback was very positive and they said they liked many of the outfits. The styles were very cohesive, said Ms. Ellery. She also complimented me on succeeding to make functional repeats on the prints. Ms. Scholz thought my specification sheets were very informational and easy to understand. She said she would definitely take a look at the catalogue when designing the S/S 18 collections, which was very soon.

To be honest, I was very nervous at the start of the presentation. I was afraid that the designs would not fit their brand or they would not like them for one reason or another, even though I had done my research. After the meeting, I thought it actually went really well. Ms. Scholz saying she would take my designs into consideration was everything I had hoped for. I cannot wait for the S/S 2018 collections to be designed.

#### 6 EPILOGUE

When I started this project I did not even have a clue how much I was going to learn. Even though I was frustrated from time to time and wanted to take a long break, I am glad I chose to do this.

This project taught me a great deal about the plus-size community, body types, concept design and materials. I have developed my skills further in digital drawing, designing prints, communicating and working independently from home. As a result, I have improved as a designer and I am more confident when I start looking for work in the field of design.

The trend research, especially the part where I was observing trends in London, was new to me. I come from Northern Finland, and have never lived in the capital Helsinki, where all the major fashion influencers in Finland live. It was also the first time for me to be living abroad, and finding future trends straight from the streets was a new experience for me. I wish I had had more time to do it more profoundly, taking plenty of pictures and making notes. We had mainly worked with WGSN.com in my school when it comes to exploring new trends.

Sketching with a drawing tablet was also new to me. I had briefly tried out a drawing screen at my school, but besides that, I had no experience in it. It was a risk to use a method that I had such little experience of, but I think it was worth taking. I am very slow at drawing with pen and paper, and drawing straight to a digital format speeded up the sketching process a great deal. Especially because I had to design prints, it was quick to apply them straight to the sketches without having to scan any papers. I think my images turned out great and I received plenty of positive feedback from them.

The thesis was completed in time, which I am very proud of. However, it doesn't mean I had too much time on my hands. I had to work very hard to make it happen. I only wish the thesis was larger a project, so I would have had time to take my designs even further. I could have made experiments with the materials or study more about grading for plussize.

I was anxious to receive feedback from professionals, but I think it prepared me for the future. Designers have to be able to take criticism as something non-personal and be able to learn from it. However, I could not be happier with the feedback I received from annascholz. It was honest and constructive. If Ms. Scholz decided to take even a small detail of my design into her collection, I would be very proud of being part of making

fashion more diverse. Being able to say I have worked with this company will definitely be an asset for me.

I also hope that other fashion graduates would find this thesis helpful. When I tried to find previous thesis projects made of plus-size clothing, I found only two. That was one of the reasons that convinced me to do this in the first place. Now that there are more, maybe students could push their projects even further in order to create something new.

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#### **Pictures**

Picture 1. AW16: La Dolce Vita, annascholz 2016. [digital photo] annascholz [website]. [Retrieved: 2016-11-17] Found: <a href="http://www.annascholz.com/aw16-la-dolce-vita">http://www.annascholz.com/aw16-la-dolce-vita</a>

Picture 2. AW16: Street Style, annascholz 2016. [digital photo] annascholz [website]. [Retrieved: 2016-11-17] Found: <a href="http://www.annascholz.com/ss16-street-style">http://www.annascholz.com/ss16-street-style</a>

Picture 3. AW16: Night Flower, annascholz 2016. [digital photo] annascholz [website]. [Retrieved: 2016-11-17] Found: <a href="http://www.annascholz.com/ss16-night-flower">http://www.annascholz.com/ss16-night-flower</a>

Pictures 4-33. VÄHÄKANGAS, Oona 2016. Private archives.

## **APPENDICES**

# Appendix 1. Technical catalogue



Picture 34. Collection sheet



Picture 35. Asymmetrical top specification sheet, page 1/3

Item: Asymmetrical top Page 2 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018 Sample size: 18 Cutting: 1. Stretchy jersey (95% polyester, 5% elastane)

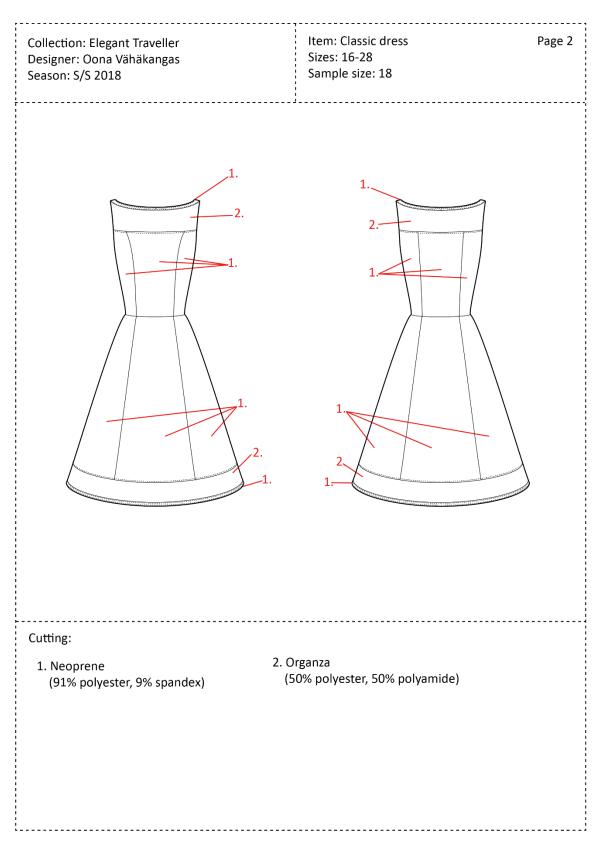
Picture 36. Asymmetrical top specification sheet, page 2/3

Item: Asymmetrical top Page 3 Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sizes: 16-28 Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Detailing If possible, the seam goes inside the strap, if not, then stiched from the top Width of the straps: 7cm Jersey finish stitch

Picture 37. Asymmetrical top specification sheet, page 3/3



Picture 38. Classic dress specification sheet, page 1/3



Picture 39. Classic dress specification sheet, page 2/3

Item: Classic dress Page 3 Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sizes: 16-28 Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Detailing Width of the binding in the neck and hem: 2cm, if possible Invisible zipper on the left side Hem length: knees are supposed to show from the see-through panel

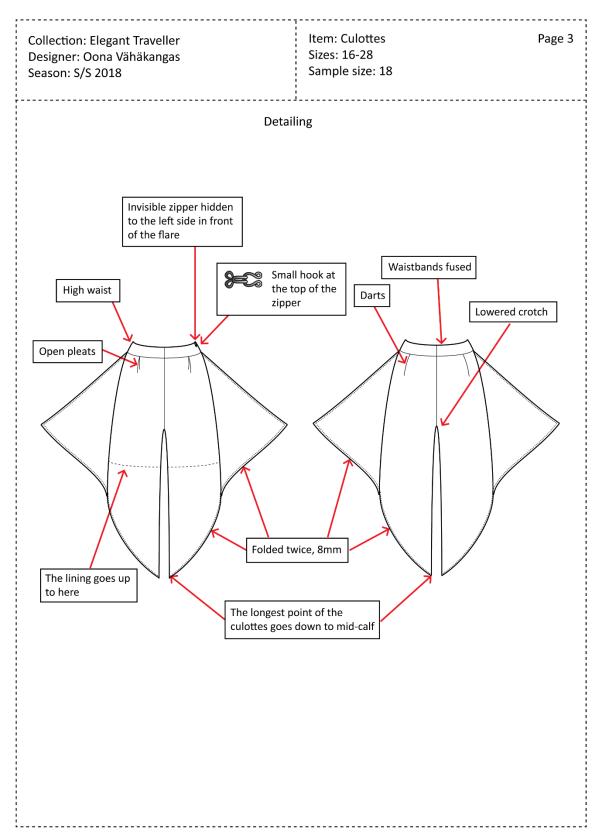
Picture 40. Classic dress specification sheet, page 3/3



Picture 41. Culottes specification sheet, page 1/3

Item: Culottes Page 2 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018 Sample size: 18 Cutting: 1. Flowy silk (2.) Lining (100% silk) (100% polyester) Color: white

Picture 42. Culottes specification sheet, page 2/3



Picture 43. Culottes specification sheet, page 3/3



Picture 44. Jumpsuit specification sheet, page 1/3

Item: Jumpsuit Page 2 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Cutting: 1. Aerobic-jersey 2. Satin ribbon (88% polyester, 12% elastane) (100% polyester)

Picture 45. Jumpsuit specification sheet, page 2/3

Item: Jumpsuit Page 3 Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sizes: 16-28 Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Detailing Satin bow, black Invisible zipper Tunnel with two 10mm elastic bands Pockets in the front Small slits in the sides of the legs, depth: 4cm

Picture 46. Jumpsuit specification sheet, page 3/3

Item: Kimono jacket Page 1 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018 Sample size: 18 Back Front Colorways / Material: Thick cotton (100% cotton) Yarns in the collar panel, wristbands and belt are "Desert Sun". Other yarns to match.

Picture 47. Kimono jacket specification sheet, page 1/3

Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018 Item: Kimono jacket Page 2 Sizes: 16-28 Sample size: 18 Cutting: 1. Thick cotton (100% cotton)

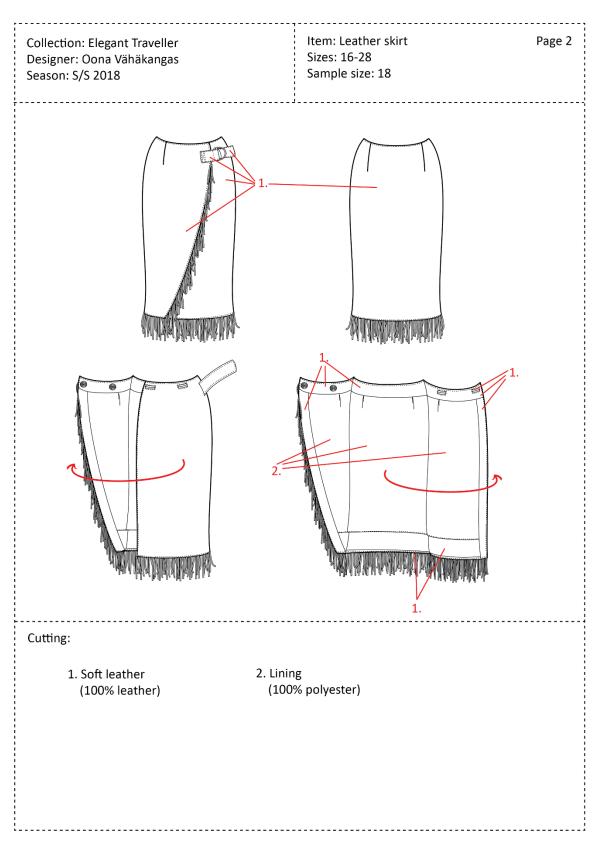
Picture 48. Kimono jacket specification sheet, page 2/3

Item: Kimono jacket Page 3 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Detailing Stitching in the collar panel, wrist-Width of the collar bands and the belt panel, wristbands done evenly 5 and belt: 5cm times. Color of the yarn: Desert Sun Small straps holding the belt in place Length of the hem: 2/3 thigh Folded twice, 8mm Small strings attached to the right side seam and the left lapel. This knot helps the jacket to stay closed neatly.

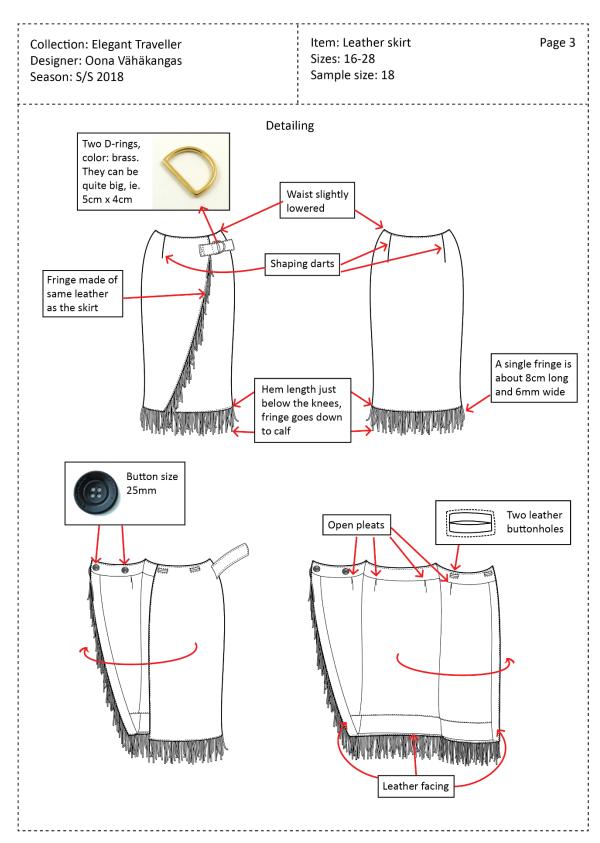
Picture 49. Kimono jacket specification sheet, page 3/3



Picture 50. Leather skirt specification sheet, page 1/3



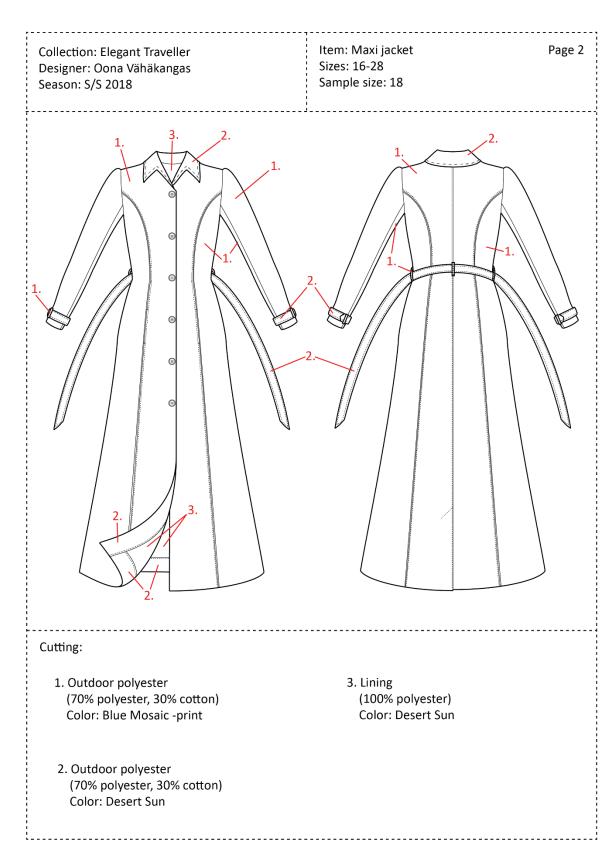
Picture 51. Leather skirt specification sheet, page 2/3



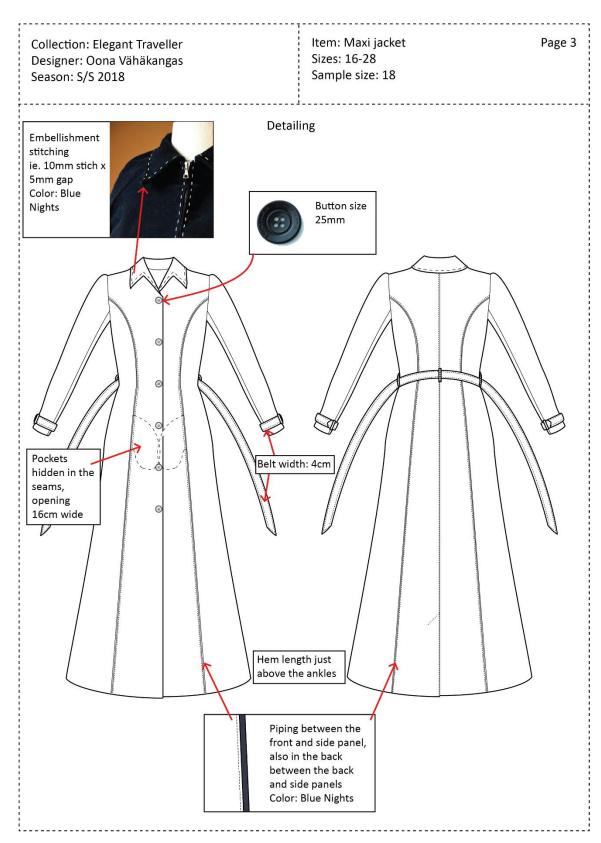
Picture 52. Leather skirt specification sheet, page 3/3



Picture 53. Maxi jacket specification sheet, page 1/3



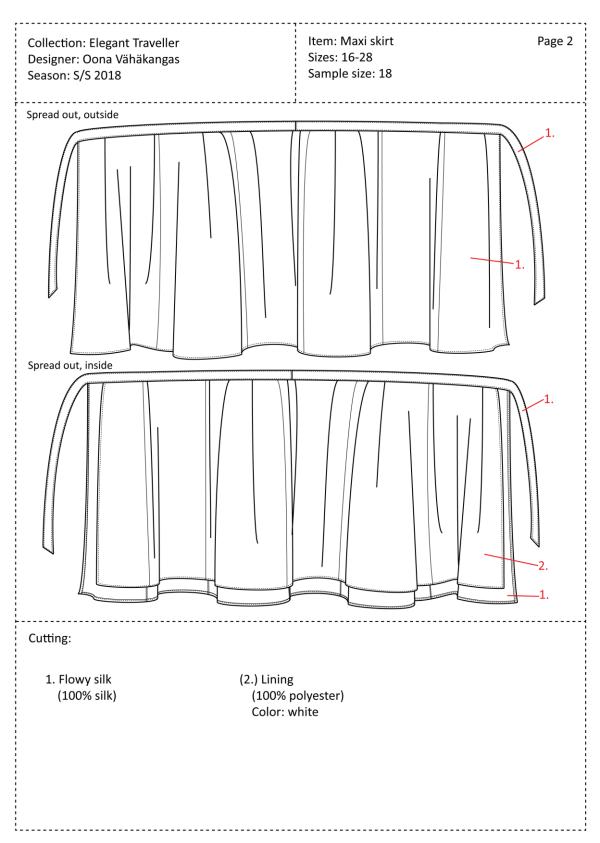
Picture 54. Maxi jacket specification sheet, page 2/3



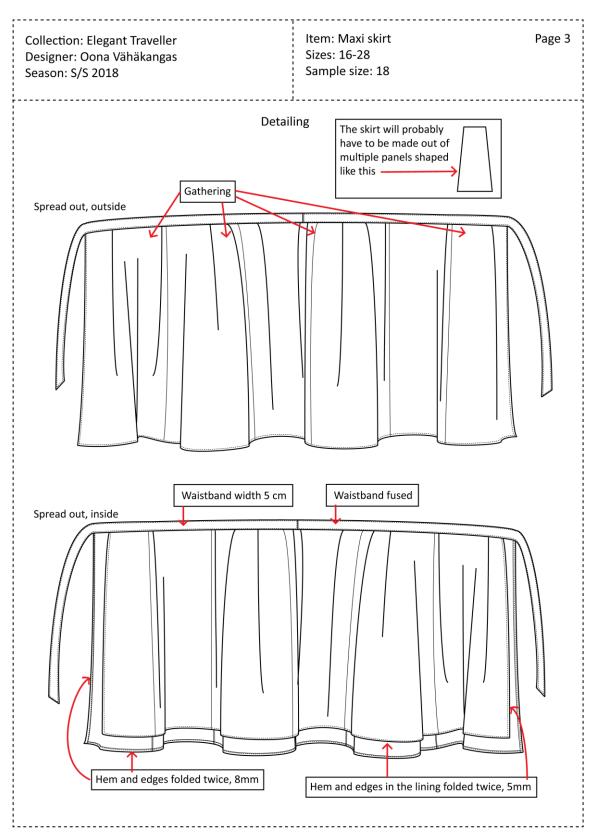
Picture 55. Maxi jacket specification sheet, page 3/3



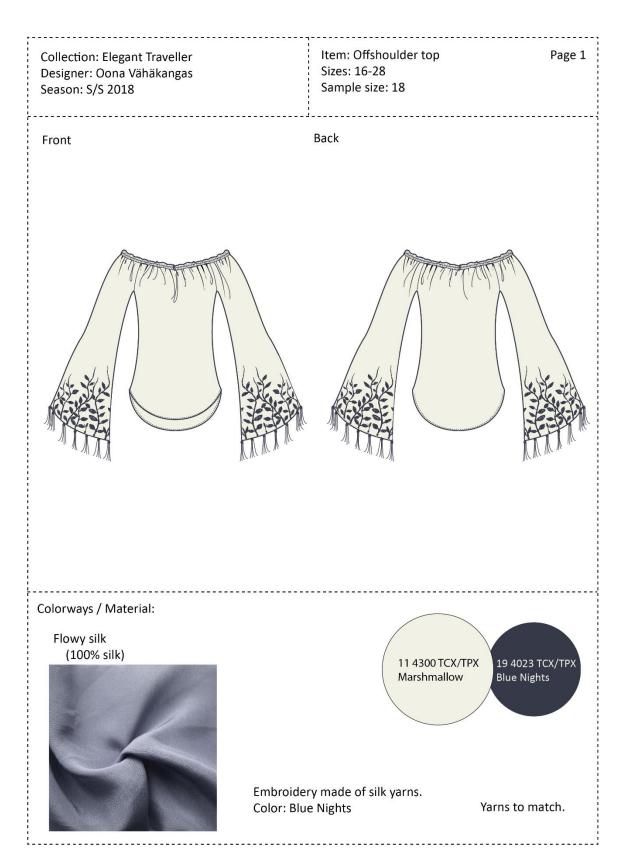
Picture 56. Maxi skirt specification sheet, page 1/3



Picture 57. Maxi skirt specification sheet, page 2/3



Picture 58. Maxi skirt specification sheet, page 3/3



Picture 59. Offshoulder top specification sheet, page 1/3

Item: Offshoulder top Page 2 Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sizes: 16-28 Season: S/S 2018 Sample size: 18 Cutting: 1. Flowy silk (100% silk)

Picture 60. Offshoulder top specification sheet, page 2/3

Item: Offshoulder top Page 3 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Detailing Because of the elastic, the Drawstring tunnel, top can be worn lower so it elastic band inside. reveals the shoulders or it Width: 8mm can be lifted higher for a more covering look. Hem comes down to Width of the sleeve at hips, longer in the back most: about 30cm Design of the embroidery

Picture 61. Offshoulder top specification sheet, page 3/3



Picture 62. Party dress specification sheet, page 1/3

Item: Party dress Page 2 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Cutting: 2. Matching bias satin cord 1. Stretchy jersey (100% polyester) (95% polyester, 5% elastane)

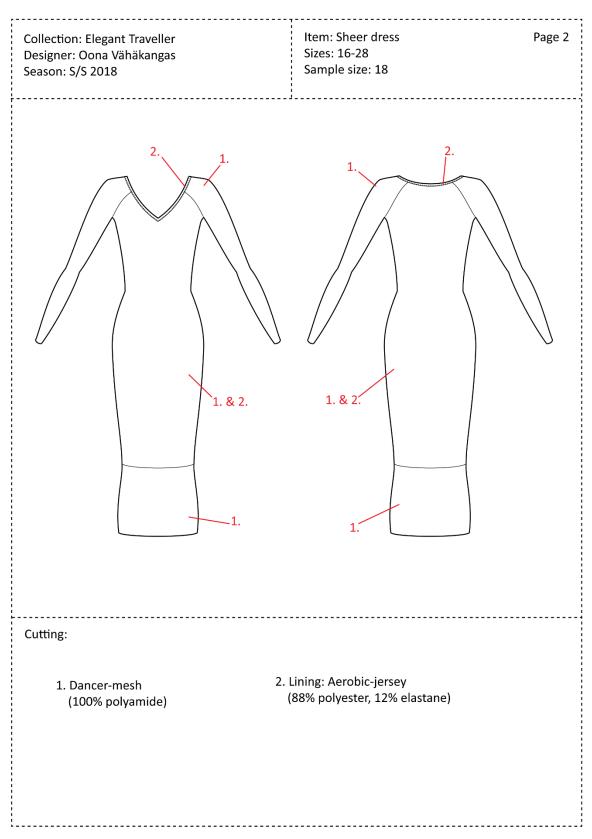
Picture 63. Party dress specification sheet, page 2/3

Item: Party dress Page 3 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Detailing Drawstring /tunnel -system Pleats on the shoulder Some gathering in the side seams Drawstring tied to a knot The length of the hem is determined by where the knot is tied. The example length could be below the The ruffled hem is uneven knees.

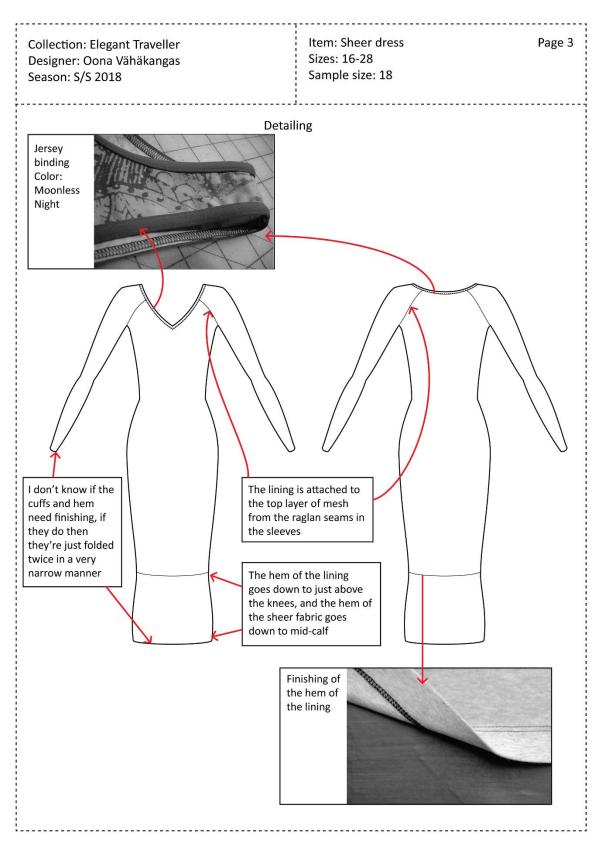
Picture 64. Party dress specification sheet, page 3/3



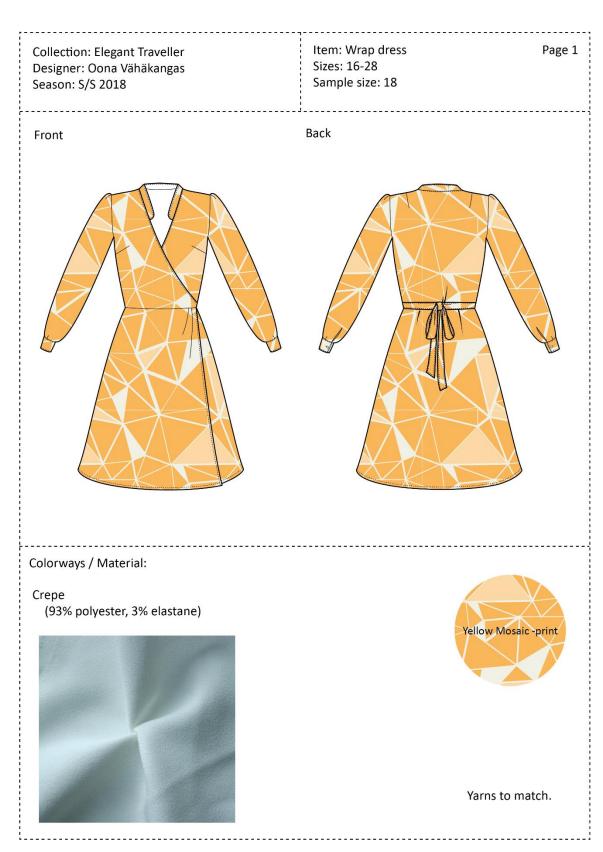
Picture 65. Sheer dress specification sheet, page 1/3



Picture 66. Sheer dress specification sheet, page 2/3



Picture 67. Sheer dress specification sheet, page 3/3



Picture 68. Wrap dress specification sheet, page 1/3

Page 2 Item: Wrap dress Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018 Sample size: 18 Cutting: 1. Crepe (93% polyester, 3% elastane)

Picture 69. Wrap dress specification sheet, page 2/3

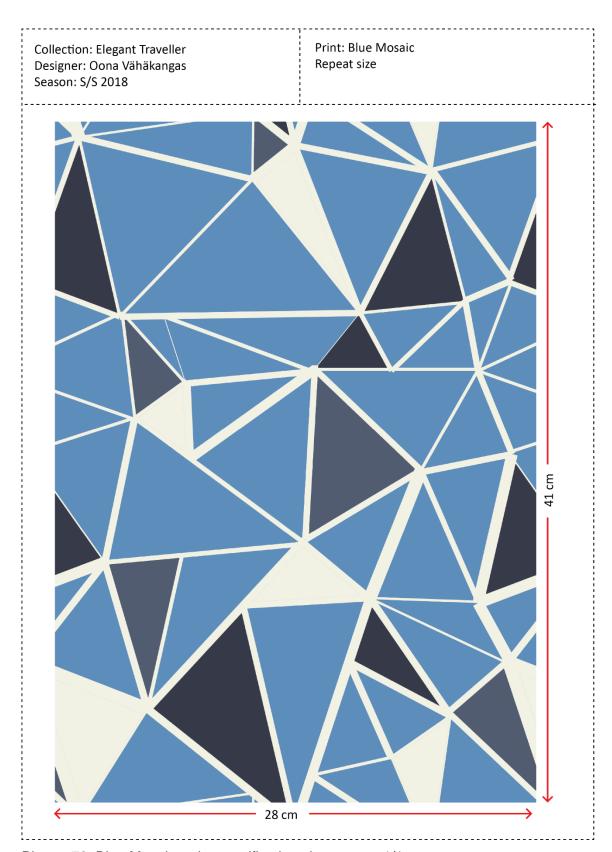
Item: Wrap dress Page 3 Collection: Elegant Traveller Sizes: 16-28 Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Sample size: 18 Season: S/S 2018 Detailing Collar width 3 cm Small puff Some open pleats Traditional shirt cuff Ribbon width 3cm Hem length just above Small hole the knees on the right side where the ribbon comes out

Picture 70. Wrap dress specification sheet, page 3/3

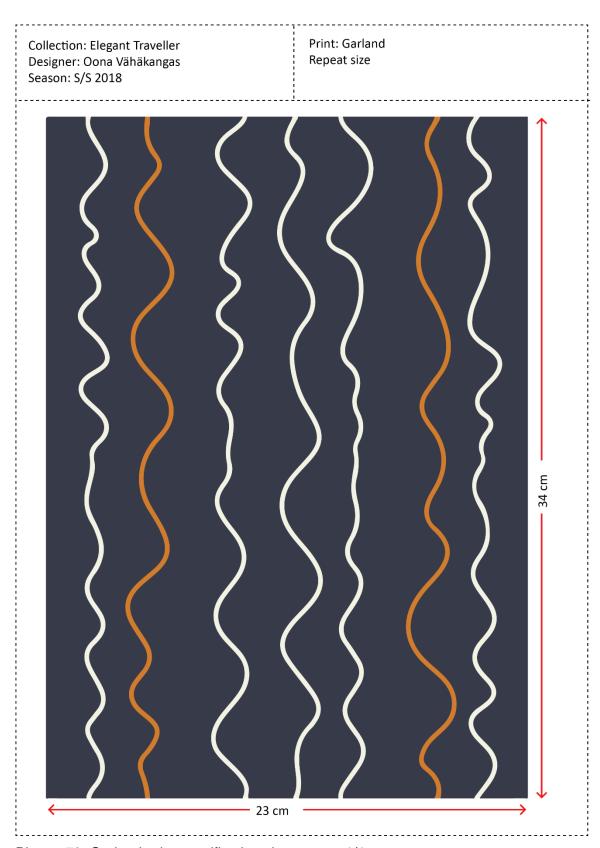
Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018 Print: Aronia Repeat size 51 cm

Picture 71. Aronia-print specification sheet, page 1/1

35 cm



Picture 72. Blue Mosaic -print specification sheet, page 1/1



Picture 73. Garland-print specification sheet, page 1/1

Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018

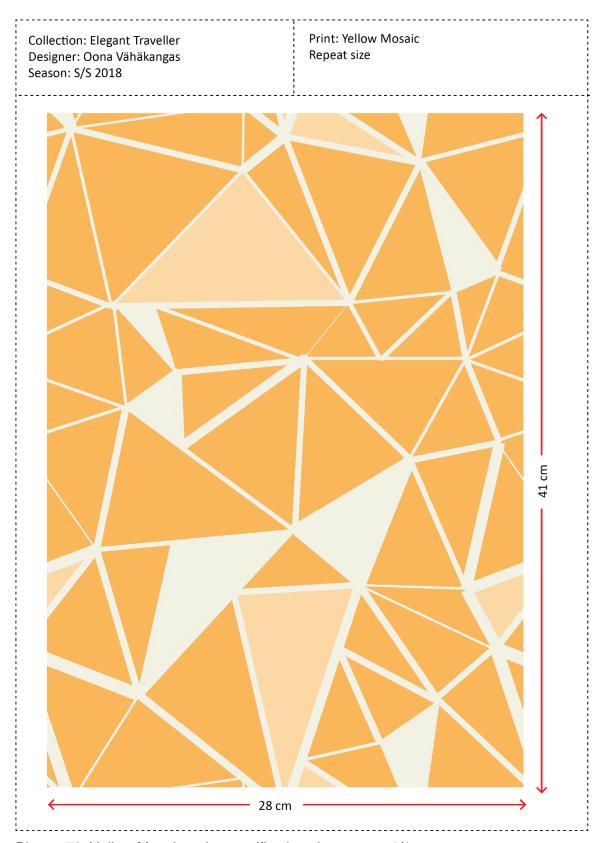
Print: Lily Repeat size



Picture 74. Lily-print specification sheet, page 1/1

Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018 Print: Nasturtium Repeat size 78,5 cm

Picture 75. Nasturtium-print specification sheet, page 1/1



Picture 76. Yellow Mosaic -print specification sheet, page 1/1

Collection: Elegant Traveller Designer: Oona Vähäkangas Season: S/S 2018

Embroidery



Picture 77. Embroidery specification sheet, page 1/1

## References for appendices

Appendix 1. Technical Catalogue

Pictures 29.-72. VÄHÄKANGAS, Oona 2016. Private archives.

