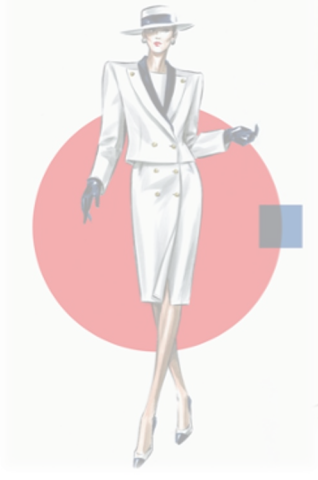
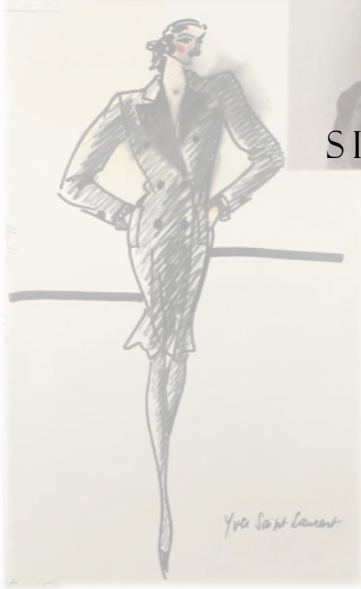



# KEBAYA RE-IMAGINED

SINGAPORE STORIES 2023

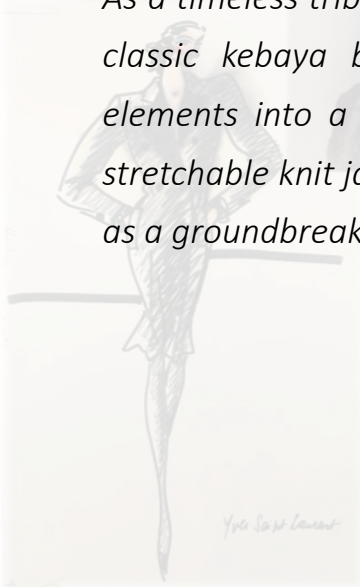




*“When we think of kebaya, synonymously we think of batik.*

*For Singapore Stories 2023, I'm inspired by Dutch-Eurasian batik maker Eliza van Zuylen's beautiful range of buketan motifs as my design inspirations have always paid homage to various group of women from mythology and ancient civilisation to modern history.*

*As a timeless tribute to tradition and innovation, my creation reinvents the classic kebaya by seamlessly merging batik kain sarong and blouse elements into a long digital print dress that emulates buketan motif in stretchable knit jacquard, a fabric never been used in kebaya trends before, as a groundbreaking choice.” ~ Adelyn Putri*





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## THE KEBAYA STORY:

A kebaya is an Indonesian traditional blouse-dress combination that originated from the court of the Indonesian Kingdom of Majapahit, and is traditionally worn by women in Indonesia and become a national dress. Kebaya also widely used around the archipelago in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Southern Thailand, Cambodia and the Southern part of the Philippines. There are many variants and varieties of kebaya spread across the archipelago namely Kebaya Kartini, Kebaya Jawa, Kebaya Kotabaru, Kebaya Bali, Kebaya Sunda, Kebaya Peranakan and Kebaya Indo also know as Kebaya Noni.

In Singapore, the kebaya is a traditional women's wear to the Malay and Peranakan community as a formal and everyday wear. The local community wore the variant of kebaya from Java and Kotabaru alot. Kebaya from Java has a simple shape with a V-neck collar flap that gives an impression of simple elegance. The rise of modern-day tailoring and innovation made the kebaya a heavily influenced item in the world of modern fashion. Lace dresses and airlines uniforms are one of the best examples of kebaya influence.

The iconic Singapore Airlines uniform takes inspiration from the kebaya and was first worn by Malayan Airways' flight attendants in 1968 with a modified sarong kebaya rendered in batik cloth. The airline subsequently commissioned French couturier Pierre Balmain in 1974 to adapt the uniform. The designer himself recognised the impact of the kebaya and did not want to change it too much. As he explained, *"I approve of your sarong kebaya, I think it's very graceful, and if any alterations are to be made, they should only be to make the dress easier to wear."*

Kebaya blouse can be tailored tight-fitting or loose, made from various materials, from cotton or velvet, to silk with exquisite lace and brocade, decorated with glittering sequins or patterned with floral stitching or embroidery.

The kebaya blouse is commonly semi-transparent and traditionally worn over two pieces of cloth. First is a female torso wrap on the upper body called **kemben**, usually in plain, batik print, velvet or any type of fabric depending on the occasion and wear. Followed by **kain sarong**, for the lower body, a long decorated batik cloth wrapped around the hips, secured with rope and wore as a kind of sarong or skirt. This is usually an unstitched fabric wrap around three metres long. In the Malay peninsula, a third piece of cloth is used to cover the head (head, shoulders, and arms) from the sun and it is called **kain kelubung** or **selendang**.

## KEBAYA RE-IMAGINED:

Revisiting my design from Singapore Stories 2020, I'd like to extend and diversify more on *The Kebaya Dress* I've previously showcased. My design inspirations have always paid homage to various group of women from mythology and ancient civilization to modern history.

When we think of kebaya, synonymously we think of batik. And for Singapore Stories 2023 I thought of Dutch-Eurasian batik maker, Eliza van Zuylen, with her beautiful range of Batik Belanda **buketan** motifs. Eliza's designs are both inspirational on cultural significance and aesthetic success, a design aspiration for me and my brand Nude Femme.

Eliza van Zuylen was born in 1863 in Batavia (Jakarta) as the daughter of a Dutch soldier and an Indo-European woman. After her husband, Alphons van Zuylen, was appointed as government inspector in Pekalongan, she moved to this north coast city, which, since the 1850s, was an important batik production center. After helping in her sister Christina's batik workshop, van Zuylen opened her own business in 1890. Starting off with just three Javanese batik makers, her workshop was very prosperous and expanded quickly, by 1918 becoming the largest Indo-European batik business in the whole of Java. Her workshop ended up being the only Indo-European batik business to survive the economic depression of the 1930s. One of the motifs that became the essence of Batik Belanda is the **buketan** motif or floral motifs in the form of flower arrangements that also have a variety of decorative figures such as birds, butterflies, peacocks and swans. The use of decorative styles of flowers is a stylization of naturalist forms associated with the Art Nouveau movement that developed in Europe from 1890-1930.

*"A study of the history of buketan batik uncovers the ambiguity and dynamism of the development of new forms: first, buketan was about a European motif and yet utilized a Javanese technique. Second, buketan was formed when a type of Javanese culture met another culture (European, colonial, Art Nouveau) formed by Western-European expression. Third, batik buketan was inherently dynamic and ambivalent as it was based on an 'inequality of taste' subject neither to the establishment of 'Javanese batik' or coastal batik or pesisir batik. Lastly, through this interaction, buketan became a symbol of modernity in the Indies and Indonesia. Together these factors could be called a socio-cultural deconstruction of batik buketan culture." ~ The JAADPROJECT*

With these ideals, I envision the ways and styles of batik and kebaya being use to elevate it with relevance into Singapore's modern multicultural society yet maintaining it's cultural significance to revitalize the history and background.



# FABRICATION



Taschen reprints a colorful book of 19th-century floral engravings by Pierre-Joseph Redouté.



Pierre-Joseph Redouté, 1759-1840, was a painter and botanist from Belgium, known for his watercolours of roses, lilies and other flowers at the Château de Malmaison, many of which were published as large, coloured stipple engravings.

Art Nouveau movement draws inspiration from the natural world of plants, insects and wildlife which deeply influenced by many artists including Pierre-Joseph Redoute works and architectural designs, characterized by sinuous, sculptural, organic shapes, arches, curving lines, and sensual ornamentation.



Batik Sarong by Eliza van Zuylen. Collection of the Peranakan Museum, Singapore.

These batik designs, inspired by Art Nouveau elements, Dutch horticultural books, European flowers and fairytales were created by Eliza van Zuylen herself and then drawn on the cloth with hot wax by her batik makers. She was said to have introduced the floral bouquet design (buketan) in batik sarongs, which influenced batik makers from all communities and became the most recognisable design in the twentieth century. Such batiks became extremely sought after throughout Dutch and British colonial settlements. Inspired by her work, I've explored into textile fabrication to emulate the buketan motifs.



Watercolour drawings of birds, insects and flowers in Pierre-Joseph Redouté style with license.

Using licensed bought watercolour paintings of a few of my favourite flora and fauna, the humming bird and geranium among other elements, I've composed a bouquet motif to emulate Eliza's buketan batik. The final design is then digitally printed onto knit jacquard as this method allows the design to be more colourful with no waste dyestuff and uses less water. Currently the first prototype is made with regular 100% viscose, but as an eco-conscious choice for a capsule collection, ECO viscose like **Lenzing viscose** or **livaeco viscose** will be use a more sustainable option.



Final textile fabrication in 3 variation of colours aiming to achieve the distinct sections of *pagi-sore* in *buketan* batik specially designed for Singapore Stories 2023.



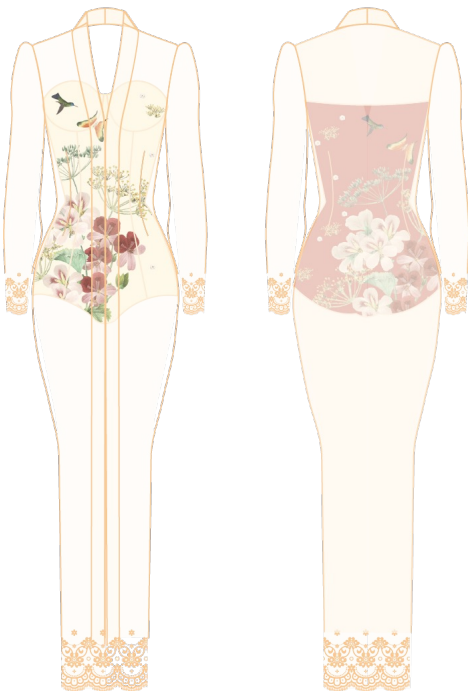
**A. BATIK KNIT-BODYSUIT**

- Strapless Print Knit Jacquard
- Prints emulating Dutch-batik “buketan” motif by Eliza van Zuylen\*
- Hand embroidery on flower motifs for 3D embossed effects



**B. KEBAYA OVERSIZE BLAZER**

- Seen here as sheer (semi-transparent) to showcase layering over **BATIK KNIT-BODYSUIT**
- With variation to do in opaque fabrics
- Power dressing shoulder pads and side pockets
- Worn with Lotus Earring as “kerongsang” from NudeFemme CC24 collection



**C. KEBAYA DRESS - SHEER**

- Sheer (semi-transparent voile) layering over **BATIK KNIT-BODYSUIT**
- Lace embroidery at sleeves and hem
- 2-way invisible zipper front opening
- Worn with Lotus Earring as “kerongsang” from NudeFemme CC24 collection



**D. KEBAYA DRESS - BATIK**

- Print Knit Jacquard with batik print emulating Dutch-batik by Eliza van Zuylen\*
- Hand embroidery on flower motifs for 3D embossed effects
- Sheer sleeves with lace embroidery
- 2-way invisible zipper front opening
- Worn with Lotus Earring as “kerongsang” from NudeFemmeCC24 collection
- Worn with long-tassels “selendang” specially designed to pair with dress

\*Prints of Dutch-batik motif by Eliza van Zuylen pending reproduction image rights and license. Alternatively, a separate new design bouquet motifs will emulate Eliza’s “buketan” motifs.





## Innovation & Details:

Starting with the *kemben*, I've replaced it into **A. BATIK BODYSUIT (pg2)** to represent as one of the essential inner body-wear of our times since the modern invention of corsets, which, famously was worn together underneath the kebaya by Singapore and Malaysia film-noir artists since 1960s. Bringing the significance back on my key inspiration for Singapore Stories 2023 to Eliza van Zuylen, the bodysuit crafted in knit jacquard with *buketan* batik showcasing the beauty of the prints and elements of a *kemben* and *kain sarong*.

Pairing inner-wear with an oversized blazer seems to be de rigueur of casual power dressing among of the young and fashionable Gen Z, it would seem suitable to enhance the traditional kebaya into **B. KEBAYA OVERSIZE BLAZER (pg2)** with broad shoulder pads reminiscent of 80s power-dressing widely acceptable by the strong empowering women today. Variations in opaque or sheer semi-transparent fabric aligned with "naked-dressing" trend among the A-list celebrities on the red carpets.

A development from the blazer will be **C. KEBAYA DRESS-SHEER (pg2)** or **D. KEBAYA DRESS – BATIK (as seen picture on the right)**, a long dress with collars that echo's the V-neck with the kebaya flap all the way down in a two-way opening zipper. This enables a flexibility and the ease of wearing as highlighted by monsieur Pierre Balmain.

By merging the usual batik kain sarong with the blouse together and cut the dress closed to the body, I kept the main enchantment and charms of a kebaya, however re-constructed in stretchable knit jacquard, a fabric never been used in kebaya trends before. Sleeves are contrast with sheer semi-transparent voile and lace embroidery retaining detailed elegance and femininity.

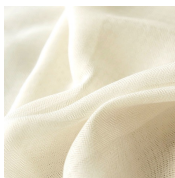
In a way, this is my interpretation of re-imagining a widely loved outfit across the archipelago into functional garment for the multifaceted woman at work and play, one who dresses up from daywear to evening wear yet embracing the historical value of a sarong kebaya.



**Textile & materials:** Maintaining the same aspiration for fabrics and materials for all NudeFemme's collection, I'll continue to work with production and textile studios on recycled series yarns, organic cotton blend, dyeing process and sustainable solutions that have been audited and credited with GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard), Oeke-Tex 100, SFA (Sustainable Fibre Alliance), GRS (Global Recycled Standard) and RWS (Responsible Wool Standard) certifications.



Jacquard Knit - Recycled Cotton Polyester Elastene



Voile - Cotton



Beige Lace Venice Lace Cotton



Tassels Trimmings



Gold Yarns for embroidery



Gold Embroidery



Embroidery on knits

# FINAL LOOK

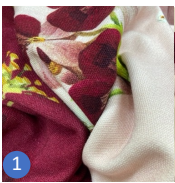
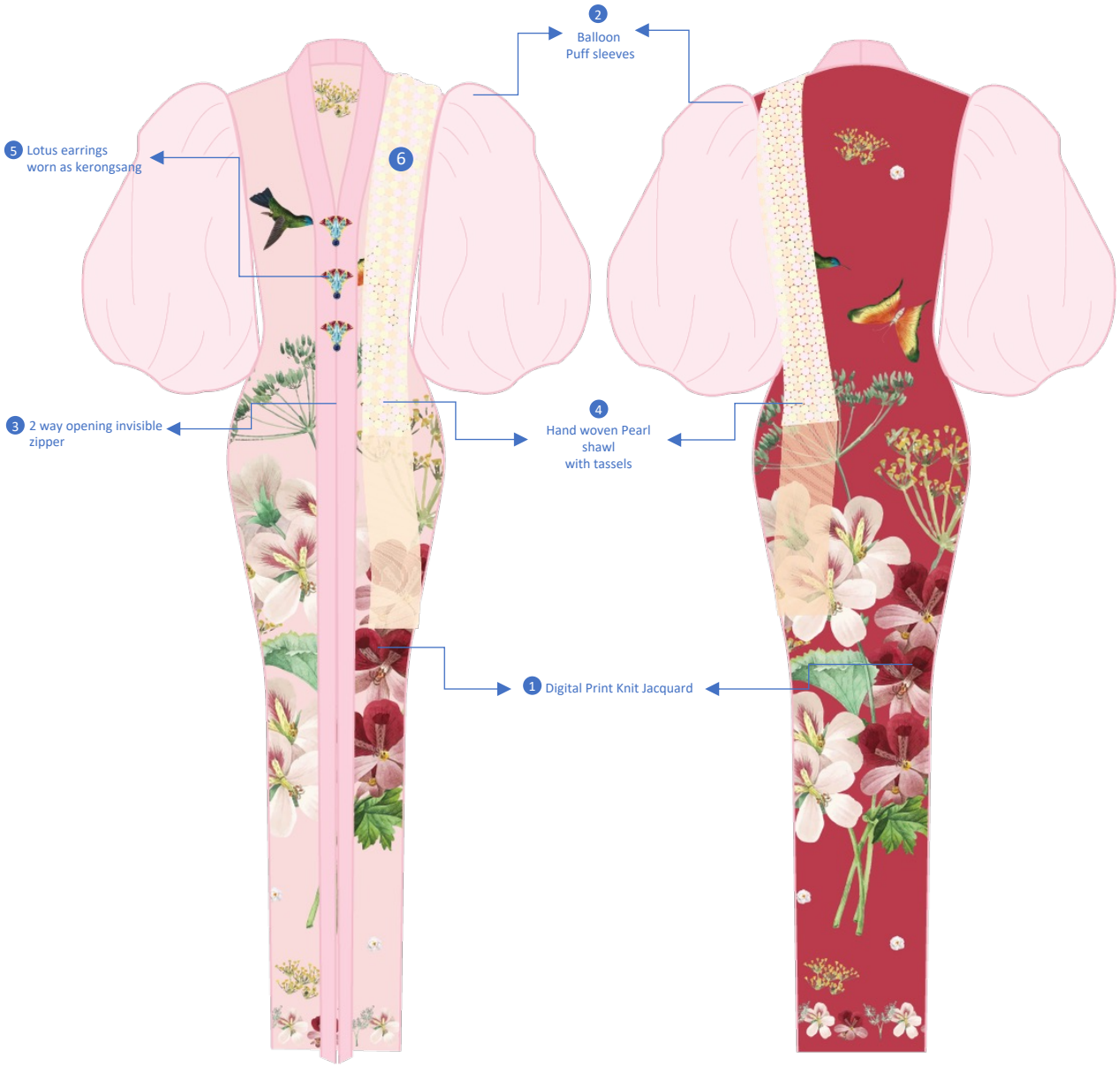
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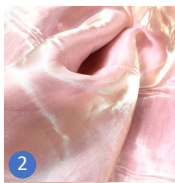




# FINAL LOOK



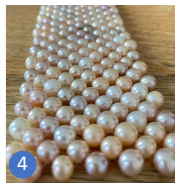
1 Body – Printed Knit Jacquard Viscose 100%



2 Sleeves – Organza Nylon 55% Polyester 45%



3 Details – 2-way invisible zipper front opening



4 Accessories – Shawl, handwoven multicolour freshwater Pearls w/tassels trimmings



5 Accessories – Lotus Earrings Multi Gemstones, 925 Silver, 18K Gold Plated

6

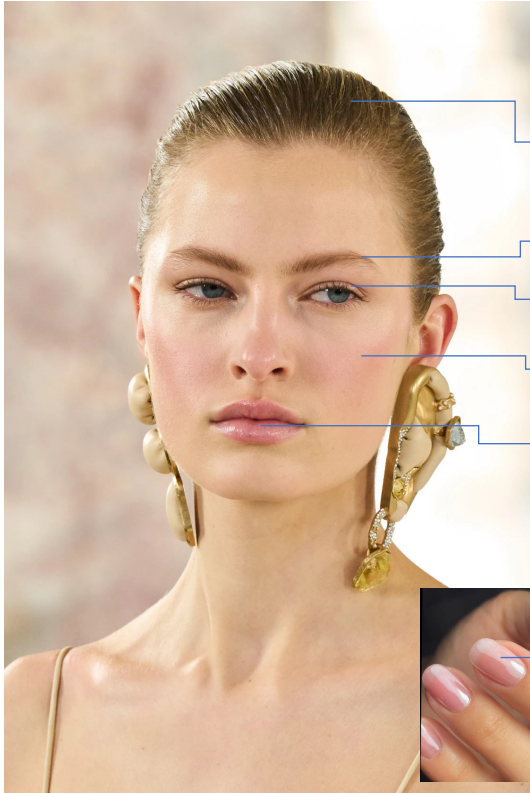
Accessories – Pending Brooch to secure pearl shawl



7

Shoes – Heels pending fitting day

## BEAUTY



HAIR: Sleek back comb, pull back. Not too flat. A little volume at top.

BROWS: Soft brows, combed.

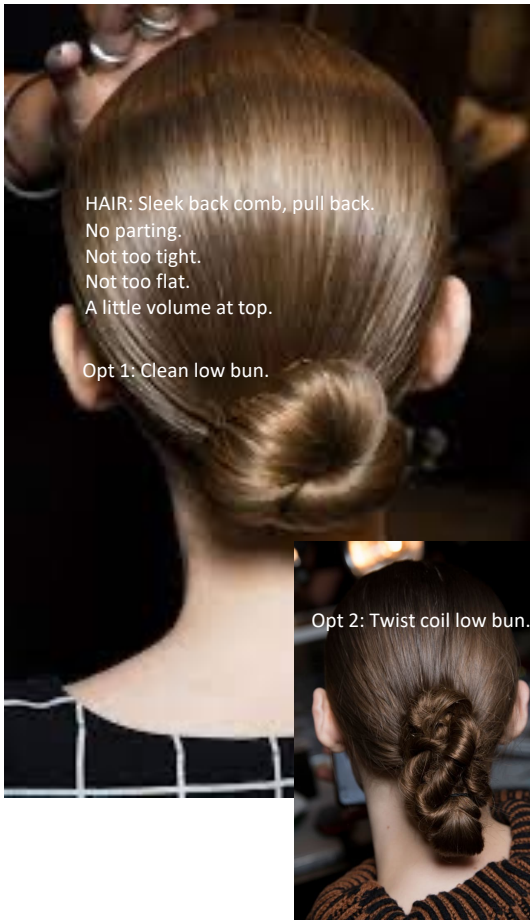
EYES: Shimmer and dewy on lids and inner eye. Add false eyelashes but NO harsh eyeliner.

FACE: Soft and dewy, coverage. Minimal contour. Dewy highlights on cheekbones, nose, lips. Pink blush in W-shape.

LIPS: Soft pink in glossy and dewy, with highlights.

NAILS: Clean short natural with glossy top coat.

## HAIR



HAIR: Sleek back comb, pull back.  
No parting.  
Not too tight.  
Not too flat.  
A little volume at top.

Opt 1: Clean low bun.

Opt 2: Twist coil low bun.

## MODEL – Spencer @ Basic

