5.1 Visual Research

According to Rose (2016), research is a method to find information with systematic investigation to solve problems and creating new ideas or theories. The method of visual researches are using some kind of visual imagery that will help the researcher during the process of studies. Visuals are very important for explaining the data and make it easier for readers to understand. Therefore, the author did visual research to achieve certain data with imagery mediums. This research consists of mind maps, mood board, sketches progress, and trend analysis.

5.1.1 Mind Map

As a starting point to branch out all the ideas, author create mind map to organize all the data from the most general to the most details. The main focus on the first mind map was taking Bugis culture as the highlight. Author tried to list down some parts of the culture that could be the DNA of the collection. Bugis is a very rich culture that has a lot of components that inspire the author; the people, the beliefs, the location, and of course the traditional fabric. These information and details are very helpful during the brainstorming process. It helped the author to imagine which part of Bugis Culture that can be amplified to the collection. Not just the look of the fashion items, but also the foundation of the collection.
After listing down all the information needed, author decided to took the culture of Bugis’ 5 genders as the highlight and background of the fashion collection. The beliefs of ancient Buginese inspired the author during the early stage of creative process. Especially the role of Bissu as the highest gender in ancient Buginese class of society. It is interesting because nowadays, genders beside man and woman are classified as inferior; but back days in kingdom era at Sulawesi, the one who’s respected as leaders were actually queers. Beside that they were also seen holly and became the communicator of god to the society. This culture of Bugis really inspired the author because the tolerance toward gender and sexuality of people in this country long time ago is much better compared to what’s going with today’s people.
Taking the character Bissu as the main ‘muse’ of the collection, author branching out all the details about them. Author conduct research and interviews in order to find in-depth information about Bissu. Not just their role in the society as agender priests, but also their classification and levels, the way they dress, and the problems they are facing today.

Bissu was divided into 10 levels (from the highest to the lowest); Puang Matoa, Puang Lolo, Jennang, Bissu, Bissu Pance, Ana Bissu, Bissu Malolo, Bissu Patudang, Maujangka, and Cole-cole. Each levels has their own job-description and wear different color of clothes. The way they dress-up was unclassified by gender. It is a concrete fact that androgynous fashion already existed in Indonesia long time ago.

After creating this two mind maps, author came into a conclusion to create a unisex ready to wear collection inspired by the agender priest of Bugis, Bissu. The silhouette of the pieces will be genderless where it blends the masculinity and femineity, emerging it into one look.
5.1.2 Visual Inspiration

Beside the story of Bissu, there are a lot of type of aspects that could potentially becoming the source of inspiration of this Sakral collection. Such as things related to art and fashion that adds imagination to the author during the creative process.

5.1.2.1 Moodboard

Moodboard is a concept board that will be the qibla of the collection. It must interpret the whole collection comprehensively.

According to the moodboard the author created, this whole collection will be go in a way with the 4 keywords; youth, genderless, ethnic, and bold. The author want it to be youthful and fun; where people can wear it and radiate the feelings of freshness and energetic. It must be very bold because of the vibrant colors each clothes has. Just like how Bissu dress-up on daily, oversized and straight-cutting will create a genderless silhouette. The author wants all people can wear it without the feeling of too feminine nor too masculine. It’s a neutral wear. Lastly the fabric of Lippa Sabbe will add the ethnic vibes from the touch of Bugis culture. The key item that will be the top silhouette of Sakral Collection is bowling shirt with mixed fabric as the materials. The author tried to show the raw and innocent side of the collection through the touch of crayon. This interpret the pure soul of Bissu. A green pattern of Lippa Sabbe is also shown in the left side of the moodboard since it will be the materials used. Lastly, Lontara (Bugis traditional fonts) and the flower embroidery will be an accent to enliven the collection as the details.
5.1.2.2 Trend Forecasting

Spring-Summer 2022 will be the benchmark of author’s collection. It is predicted trend that will be launch for next year’s tropical wear. According to WGSN, one of the key item that will be the most wanted item for men’s wear during the SS22 will be lace shirt. Within all the
movement that has been spreading this days, where a lot of big public figure voicing out about toxic masculinity where demanding men to dress up in certain way. In upcoming SS22, soft masculinity will be the top trend for men’s wear. Feminine material and flamboyant silhouette will hit the era again, it is like repeating the peacock transformation back in 80s. Since Sakral will be much more talking about blending masculinity and feminine soul into a wearable pieces, this soft masculinity trend will fits perfectly with the collection that author prepared.

Beside the lace shirt, Victorian Statement-Collar will also be a very big thing predicted in the upcoming SS22. This kind of peterpan collar used to be a uniform and daily wear of how people dressing-up back days in Victorian era. Combining lace and ruffles with the extravagant mood, author wants to merge the statement collar and a bowling shirt to create a soft-masculinity inspired wear. Since lace and ruffles were identify mostly as a woman-wear, author imagining to blend a masculine silhouette with a feminine material to create a genderless wear.

5.1.2.3 Soft Masculinity

The collection itself will be a unisex wear where it will not identify as ‘masculine’ nor ‘feminine’. The author want the collection express a genderless mood, but not with a boring template of basic unisex that are mostly just oversized and plain. Figures below, are some inspiration that author feels perfectly fit to be visual inspiration of the collection mood. The fabric and silhouette used will be bold yet still calm, it will be very ‘in between’ look where it combine feminine materials and boyish cutting into 1 wearable arts. It tries to break the stigma where men can only wear limited style due to its fragile masculinity. Author tries to offer fresh styles and out of the box gender-neutral clothing for the industry. For example combining lace collar with structured bowling shirt and even creating genderless tailored skort.
5.1.3 Fabric and Material Chart

For this Sakral collection, not just introducing the Bissu and gender of Bugis’ culture; author also want to promote the fabric Lipa Sabe of Bugis. Lipa Sabe is a silk produced in South Sulawesi and was originally worn as a sarong by the local people. Working together with Monalisa Textile (fabric retail store in Makassar), all pieces of this collection will be using lipa sabe as the main material. With the vibrant colors and unique pattern that lipa sabe has, author
believe that it could add a contemporary twist to the collection. The most famous pattern of Bugis silk is the plaid one. This pattern was used as a sign of status, whether the wearer has married or not. The Balo Lobang with large checkered pattern is worn by single men, while the Bola Reni with small checkered pattern is worn by single women. But over time, these meanings has shifted and became more flexible. Now anyone can wear it.

Beside of it’s amazing design, research shows that most of Indonesian still doesn’t aware with the existence of this heritage fabric that they have. Most of the people in fashion industry are too focusing on Javanese Batik, therefore author wants to introduce another heritage of Indonesia as well; which is Lipa Sabe.

5.2 Design Process

Design process is one of the most influential and important parts for the project. This part is explaining about the progress and flows on how this project was done starting from the beginning until the end in order to achieve the results. It covers the journey of the author from the very first step when everything are still in ideas form until it become the wearable product.

5.2.1 Process Flow
The process starts when the author finds a problem that can be solved through fashion. Born and raised in Makassar, the author always has a strong interest in Bugis’ traditional fabric. Its vibrant color and patterns are beautiful and breath-taking. Unfortunately, most of people (even Indonesian) still don’t aware about the existence of it. People just recognize Batik Jawa as the one and only traditional fabric Indonesia has. Therefore, at first, the author wants to introduce the fabric as the starting point. After digging some information about Bugis tribe, it open the author’s eyes even more about so many new things that the author even haven’t heard about her homeland before; The Bugis’ 5 genders concept. It is very interesting because as part of the LGBTQ (Author is a transwoman), she doesn’t even know that the beliefs and diverse gender-concept is actually developing in South Sulawesi back-days in kingdom era. It is part of the culture and the society can live with it with such a high tolerance towards one another.

After done with the background story, the author started to sketch some raw idea of how the collection will be. The author decided to create a ready to wear collection that is inspired by the fluidity of Bugis’ Bissu. The collection itself will be neutral and unisex. The author tried to implement the silhouette of how bissu dress up and also spread some questionnaire to the market about the concept that the author has already plan. Is it too quirky, is the market ready for a concept that the author has prepared, and so on.

The responds went pretty good and the concept has it’s market, then the author started to create a mock-up and prototype of the clothes. The chosen Bugis silk is still not finalized yet,
the main goal on this process is just the silhouette and the shape of the clothes. After discussing it with some experts, author then fly to her hometown Makassar to find the right fabric for this collection. The process took quietly long time because there are so many choices and all are beautiful. The author then decide to just take all of them and later on patch it into a whole look. Then here’s the most exciting part, after having the fabric and design, now the author entering to production sampling to see how the design and fabric works together. After finalizing the whole idea, consulting it with the supervisors, correcting some parts of the sample and final concept, the author then did the final production. The collection contains of 5 looks that has top and bottom.

After all the clothes were done and ready, then the author prepared all the marketing tools essential. Such as look-book, videography, and Instagram page before the brand’s launching day. The author also prepared the packaging before the launching day.

5.2.2 Product Sketches

5.2.2.1 Product Sketches Development

For the first stage before production, the author did some raw sketches of the key items that this collection will have. Author created a pull over skirt that is inspired by sarong that was usually worn by locals as bottom with Bugis silk as the material and also interpret this design into a shorts. Sarong is a must-item to have in this collection according to the author’s imagination, could turn woman and worn man; that man still use it to go to mosque. It describes
unisex and fluidity very well. Beside that, for the top; author wanted to create an oversized bowling shirt that is inspired by Bajo Bodo of Makassar. The idea on this stage has not been finalized yet but the author was planning to elevate the baju bodo’s design to be something more modern and now-days by creating a shirt with the same material as baju bodo’s which is organza and adding the peterpan collar to gives a royal mood that visualized bissu.

Figure 5.8 Raw Sketches
Source: author’s data

Figure 5.9 Raw Sketches
Source: author’s data
After finalizing the concept and some key items, author then tried to sketch as many items that perhaps will corelate with the collection. On this stage, author already decide to direct this whole collection into resort-wear. With Spring/Summer 2022 as the qibla and resort-wear as the whole mood; author sketched 10 tops and 8 bottoms with the purpose so that later on, there will be a lot of options to have. Most of the silhouette will be oversized with sheer and light material. The color will be very vibrant too with the aim of having a perfect beach wear. Author feels pretty satisfied with the design that has been created. Later on, author must pick 5 of her favorite look that will be the looks of Sakral collection. But for this stage, the more options the better.
5.2.2.2 Final Product Sketches

It took quietly long time for author to finally decide which design that will be taken into production state. The consideration is to find a perfect combination of fluidity that will fit in all kind of genders. This part is very tricky because a wrong combination of silhouette and fabric can be look cheap since the collection will consist with a lot of colors and combination of different fabrics. It is to create clothes that can still look good on a beach day of Bikini days but also for a men whose enjoying his summer breeze over the nature. The author wants this Sakral Collection to be a perfect fit someone can wear on their resort days.

After a revisions, discussion and consultation, author than come up with 5 final looks and 4 bottoms.
Figure 5.11 Collection Line Up
Source: author’s data

Figure 5.12 Collection Line Up
Source: author’s data
Considering from the business perspective, it can be mix and match and worn by everyone easily. It translates the genderless and fluidity that the author wants to communicate. Beside that, most of the items can be turn into a lot of style and looks. For example, the culotte with detachable apron be styled into 6 looks by just 1 pants and 2 detachable aprons. Also the dress that can be reverse into another style and can be an outer too. So not just offering story and culture, through this collection; author also offering versatility.

5.2.2.3 Technical Drawing

On this stage, sketches were developed and turn into digital illustration in a form of technical drawing to make it clear. It also helps the production party to understand the pattern and part of the clothes in detail. It is an important way to communicate design ideas visually about it’s construction, specifically to show the silhouettes and details to make it more easily to visualize by others.
Figure 5.13 Technical Drawing
Source: author’s data

Figure 5.14 Technical Drawing
Source: author’s data

Figure 5.15 Technical Drawing
Source: author’s data

Figure 5.16 Technical Drawing
Figure 5.17 Technical Drawing
Source: author’s data

Figure 5.18 Technical Drawing
Source: author’s data
5.2.2.4 Fabric Experiments

As mentioned in the previous sections, the fabric that will be used for this collection is the traditional fabric of Bugis; lipa sabe. Due to its richness of pattern and color, author wants to combine several styles into one big fabric by patching it into one. There were 2 types of lipa sabe used for this collection. The one that was manually woven and the one that was printed on a cotton. There were 8 key patterns in total.

When the fabrics arrived from Makassar, author decided to scanned and printed it into another materials with different texture. This is so that later the patchworks will be filled by a lot of textures. It will be the combination of sheer and solid materials.. With the mixture of variety colors, the collection will be very rich of colors and motifs.
After several revisions and consultation for the key patterns, author then did some experiments. This experiment aim to elevate and develop the lipa sabe to be something more relevant and modern so that it could be even easier to be introduce to the market. Inspired by bissu’s gender fluidity and the wave of Makassar’s beach, author added ripple effect to the original key patterns. The process went via digital and it gave a very interesting and contemporary result. It has a modern twist on it.
Later on, this digitalized pattern will be printed on a sheer fabric to add an alive and movement effect. From the 8 key patterns, author add more 4 digitalized new pattern. So there are 12 patterns used for this collection in total.

Figure 5.21 Fabric Experiment by author
Source: author’s data
After printed in the sheer material, image below is the result of the new fabric. Under the sun, it gave a movement effect and strengthen the ripples. The material use is chiffon and organza which still correlate with the baju bodo. This fabrics also translate the perfect mood of summer and nature.
Since it is going to be a patchwork, author also tried to collage the fabric experiment with the solid colors and the original pattern to see how does it will works in one unity. This process and stage help the author to visualized how does the fabric will look when it’s paired with one another later on.
5.2.2.5 Embroidery

Not just emphasize the story of bissu and showing lipa sabe on the pieces of Sakral, author also add the Lontara of Bugis as an accent on the collection. Lontara Bugis is the script that is used on Lagaligo book; the heritage of ancient Bugis. The script itself is shaped triangle and combining lines with dot which make it looks very modern and asymmetrical. Having the Lontara embroidered on the clothes will add an ethnic impression but also contemporary accent due it’s modern shape.
The sentence from Lagaligo book that is going to be embroidered on the clothes is *Mauni na orowané mua na makkunrai sipa'na, makkunrai mui; mauni makkunrai na orowané sipa'na, orowané mui* which means “even if he’s a man, but if he has a feminine soul then he’s a she; and woman who has masculine soul is a man”.

Beside the sentence of Lagaligo, author also quote the translation of sacred in lontara to be the logo of the collection. Sacred in Lontara is ‘*masagala*’.

After deciding the Lontara script that will be use, then the author hand the script and the pattern to the production stage to see how does it looks on fabric. The script itself will be embroidered in many colors to correlate with the concept of diversity.
5.2.2.5 Mock Up

Mock-up is one of the most important part in design development in order to see how the vision of the product will be actually implemented before the final production. Mock-up...
experiments are made with sample materials that might have the same characteristic with the actual fabric. It is to see how does the silhouette and structure will be later on.

Author did 2 times of mock up process. The first one is on a cotton muslin to see how the silhouette, size, and details will be look in a piece. After some revision and correction, everything then go in a way just like what author’s imagination; then the author continue to the second mock-up progress which by using the similar characteristic material with the final fabric. On this progress, author were using organza and Javanese printed woven in order to see the combination of this 2 different fabrics. Also, author tried to see the combination of organza bowling shirt with the peterpan collar.

Figure 5.27 First Mock-up on cotton muslin
Source : author’s data
Figure 5.28 Second Mock-up
Source: author’s data
Figure 5.29 Second Mock-up
Source: author's data
Table 5.1 Working Timeline
Source: author’s data

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5.3 Working Timeline

Begun on February 2020 after the first submission, Author started to do the design process and finalized what the market wants via market research by spreading the questionnaire. The production took 4 months process before entering the promotion and marketing activities. It’s pretty tricky and hustling because author need to did all the production finish at least before the end of May because it will be Indonesian big public holiday (Eid Mubarak). Entering May, author started to focus on the costing and all the branding essential such as marketing tools. Author needs to make sure that by the end of May, all the clothes are ready for the photoshoot and campaign preparation.

5.4 Experts’ Insight through The Collection
After the final production done, author ask several fashion key opinion leaders’ insight and opinion regarding the collection. Alessandro Georgie (@alegeor) said that the collection are very eye-catchy that he will definitely visit the social media page if he sees the advertisement in internet. He loves how the combination of patchwork reflects the traditional side but still showing the modern vibes. In Alessandro’s opinion, the articles can also be worn to formal events depend on the styling. Lastly, the issue of genderless fashion is currently discussed well in the fashion industry of Indonesia. The market is ready for an eccentric collection like Ian Hugen’s *Sakral*.

The second fashion content creator that the author interview is Cissylia Stefani (@cissylia). Cissylia adore how the collection contain traditional elements but execute in a trendy and modern way. She explain that *Sakral* is such a new fresh air that stand out and make her want to know more about the brand. It is very unique and bold in a good way.