Wear, design and enjoy clothing

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Wear, Display And Enjoy Clothing

by

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I dedicate this thesis to these abiding patrons.
INTRODUCTION

Many artists choose to combine metal and textile to execute their works. Metal elements are sewn, woven, and crocheted into garments, sculpture, ornament, or decoration because it fastens directly to fabric to make a richly creative and decorative effect. Also, the qualities of metal provide structural stiffness, weight, and light (reflection) to the fabric.

I explored different ways of integrating metal and fiber into the fabric of woven yarn structures. "Using textile techniques in metal does not constitute a movement or a style."¹ However, treating metal like fiber is an intriguing concept with flexible possibilities for the two different materials.

I brought together a range of fibers and other materials. I also designed and wove a series of three dimensional garments, which included pants which were a combination of various materials; cotton, raffia, copper, stainless steel, kynar, magnet wire, and metallic tape. I demonstrated that successful pieces could be achieved by combining fiber and metal.

My thesis projects were an artist's approach based on my experiences as a fiber artist. These works were an exciting experiment. I enjoyed this production, and tried to improve the fabric expression, especially through combining an unrelated material with fiber.

Using these materials led me to create a fascinating fabric through my experiments, which culminated in my thesis work. Finally, the textural and structural effects created harmony between fiber and metal. I achieved an elegant integration of two materials.
HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS

Artists are always influenced by the creations of their predecessors and afterwards with their contemporaries as well. I am influenced subtly by Korean culture combined with Korean traditional art.

Examples of garments or ornaments combining metal and textiles can be found in various cultures. My Korean ancestors used metal in textiles, especially gold and silver. They also used fiber and metal because this combination provided a strong, beautiful impression enhanced with polished light reflections. These textiles have been fabricated into harmonious statements that incorporate a complement of both metals and fibers.

I have researched traditional Korean garments and ornaments designed exclusively for members of the upper class and royal families at the National Museum in Seoul, Korea and in Korean history books. As I became acquainted with many traditional works, I became sensitized to the rich, spiritual heritage as seen by the artists of my world.
"All of these artists, even those who continue to create traditional fiber art, work in the present. The work they create can not help but reflect some aspects of modern life. Traditions are not stagnant; they are alive and play an active role in everyday life. Textile traditions are no exception. As art evolves from one generation to the next, it becomes the journal of a culture."  

There has been a vast rediscovery of means of expression in the use of textile materials. Many of these materials are thousands of years old and stem from different civilizations, some of which still uphold their original traditions."  

Most people only remember the masterpieces created in the past. They do not realize that artists today continue to express their heritage as their ancestors did. Certainly, contemporary art is influenced by cultural traditions.

Korean artists have always adapted different materials for their own creative directions, especially with varied and unique designs in textiles. I rediscovered the traditions of the past and I expressed my creative ideas by using both traditional and unique materials in my work.

The materials used in my three different garments hold specific cultural importance to me. This apparel speaks of my people's history and

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culture. My Projects blend many remarkable combinations of traditional and contemporary work.

Artists are finding their own voice for their culture. They live, feel, and create within their culture and tradition. Their works grow to their final form naturally. With my inherent Korean culture and tradition, my very emotional works combine special and different materials linked to a strong, beautiful expression of unique fashion. There is an intense influence from previous generations which acknowledges my traditional interests. My art is a revival of Korean culture through the new concepts of a young artist.
PRODUCING THE GARMENTS USING A VARIETY OF MATERIALS

Many artists work with a variety of materials. In the textile art field, using metal or wire is common. Wire is a very available material and it has the potential to form exquisite and delicate objects.

I explored diverse materials in my weavings: raffia, copper wire, stainless wire, cotton, coated wire, and metallic tape. I also experienced a deep empathy with these materials in the creation of my work.

"The materials and techniques the craftsman uses greatly influence the forms he makes. The obvious difference between work made of clay, weaving materials, and mosaic tesserae indicate that each material to a large degree determines the nature of the finished product. Each material has limitations and possibilities for the designer. The requirements of good design and good workmanship require the artist to become familiar with his material and to explore its limitations and possibilities." 4 With the

possibilities and limitations of these many materials in mind, I planned, explored, and created my work.

"Many chose to concentrate on the formal aspects of art: color, texture, form, and the relationship of all." \(^5\) In my pieces, I share this concern. With my varied materials, I tried to create three dimensional works by intertwining design, texture, and color harmoniously.

All of my garments are of a simple shape which enhances the flow of the fabric. The simple cloth pants are designed zipperless, buttonless, and without a waistband. My garments are not just for wearing. They can also be displayed and enjoyed as art. The designs concentrated on the body as a vehicle for art. This created a new art experience where I sought to express individuality, not a fashion trend. Thus, the cloth is alluring and these simple pants are in fact a ploy to draw attention to the obvious, the intriguing form of clothing.

My thesis pieces were woven on a four and eight harness loom. The weaving pattern and surfaces, including plain and twill weave, were created with many materials right on the loom. \(^6\) "There are vast textural changes which can result from simple changes in warp and weft composition and in variations of weave constructions. The most commonly used weaves are plain weave and twill weave."

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or tabby weave is used more than any other weave. In plain weave, the warp and weft threads interlace alternately. On a four-shaft loom, apart from plain weave, three proportions of interlacing between warp and weft can be made: 1/3, 2/2, and 3/1. The interlacing of warp and weft make diagonal lines across the fabric.

My piece entitled, Wear, Display, and Enjoy Clothing I, was woven on a four harness loom with a warp of 28-gauge copper wire and a dyed raffia weft (fig.1). This piece has the basic structure of a simple twill weave, showing the color contrasts of a warm, brilliant copper color and a calm, natural dyed raffia color.

“Copper wire of very fine gauge is used in electronic circuitry. Wire made for circuitry is usually coated with a varnish which retards tarnishing and gives a distinctive color. Varnished wire comes in such brilliant hues, such as bright red, and in a number of subtle colors ranging from dark brown to light gold.” 7 In most of my works, varnished wire was used because it is ideal for use in weaving. It is soft and flexible and it is obtainable in many beautiful colors and gauges.

Raffia, a natural material, when woven with fine copper wire, is attractive with its calm and deep shades of color, which include blue tones blended with green, gold, and brown. These two materials, copper wire

1. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing I;

(rolled woven fabric and detail)

twill weave; copper wire and dyed raffia

45" x 120"
and dyed raffia, provide a balance of color, material, and texture. The twill weave used for this fabric provides a very illusive feeling. This fabric's texture resembles tree bark. This brings a sense of formality to the work by using subtle variations of materials, and also has a natural feeling through the use of the copper's warm bright color and the raffia's calm deep color.

Most colors chosen in my thesis work are heightened by brilliant hues and high contrasts through the nature of each material. I created solid areas of intense color, and achieved remarkably subtle gradations by combining fine strands of different color threads together in the loom.

My exploration of metallic threads, in combination with many other materials, created reflective surfaces and a heightened focus on a particular aspect of my images. The materials are dense and complex in the weaving structure as well.

"String or yarn is the most flexible of materials, and, when using metal, the craftsman must always consider its malleability and strength determining the suitability of material to process."  

Thin wire is flexible, so sometimes it breaks and bends suddenly. Weak material such as fine wire must be handled with care in the weaving of the product.

The second garment that I created is a woven, dense, textural fabric with unique designs emphasizing the woven surface (fig. 2). The

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2. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing II;

(rolled woven fabric and detail)

twill weave; cotton and kynar wire

45”x 110”
surface provides a special look made from its twill weaving structure in harmony with cotton and metal.

In the cloth, coated light wire and red cotton thread are used as warp, and these were also used for the weft. I alternatively threaded one material, the wire or the thread per inch through the harnesses. Each material was of two colors, light blue and an intense red, for the weft and the warp. Textile constructions usually require tension. While I was working on this project, there was a serious problem with the tension because each of the two materials had a different nature: cotton thread is more flexible than wire. After working out this problem, the end product, a gorgeous fabric, was finished into a fashionable garment.

I developed my colors to stimulate the viewer and to establish emphasis and contrast in each garment. I have always been fascinated by the contrast and the intensity of these two particular colors, and I have often used the colors in my work.

**Wear, Display, and Enjoy Clothing III**, was created by using two beautiful metallic wire warps which create the fine, brilliant red and white colors (fig. 3). Each of these colors is repeated every three inches with thin stainless steel wire used for the weft. Stainless steel wire is more suitable in this weaving process because it connects very well with other metal wires. This woven fabric produced the left side of the pants, a striped red and white pattern.
3. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing III-a;

(rolled woven fabric and detail)

plain weave; magnet, kynar, and stainless wire

38' x 54"
These metallic materials give a strong yet subtle impression because of the light reflection of the metallic texture. This unique fabric is achieved through plain weave, which is normally associated with regular lines that form a pattern.

The other-side of the pants was woven to look like a black screen. I used black wire for the warp and black wire and black cotton thread for the weft (fig. 4).

In addition, the crocheted star shapes of metallic tape were attached on the black screen to create a unique surface that interplays with the silver color. These stars then create a very strong impression on a highly textured field of black. I also crocheted metallic shapes on the black screen which uses the crochet technique in combination with weaving, making this fabric quite delicate.

"Especially, in wire form, they are malleable enough to be worked almost without the aid of tool."  

To create all of my pieces with wire, I used only a loom and a crochet hook.

These experimental textiles were all finished by uniquely combining different materials. The four finished weavings were cut into various pant shapes, using a variety of patterns. Each cut piece was put together to

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4. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing III-b;

(rolled woven fabric and detail)

plain weave; cotton and kynar wire

36" x 44"
make the front side and the back side of the pants. The cut metal fabric edge was very sharp, so the seam was covered with cotton tape. This was done so that a person wearing them would not be scratched by the end of the wire. Next, all of the fabrics were sewn by hand with cotton and raffia threads because it was impossible to use a sewing machine with fabric made of metal wire.

Although wire is a little harder to work with because of its thin-gauge, it was an incredible experience in my exploration of textile art. My works provide people with a substantial connection to the art world, where expression comes immediately with the use of these materials. I was pleased with the results.

With the garments completed, the four different fabrics, and the three pairs of pants; it was like having all the scenes and characters of a play appear before my eyes concurrently.

I took the intense color, the sensuous texture of weaving, and a simple design, and like many artists, I embraced the use of new materials because I wanted to allow people to enjoy these unique materials used in textile art.

"Fabric is the backbone of fashion and quality is the backbone of fabric and fashion. Quality is determined largely through materials, design, and workmanship." ¹⁰ My works include material, color, and

design. By using these elements, I hope people workmanship and quality, which I see inherent in my works.
"Fiber sculpture has had a different history. The reasons for this are too complex to explore here. Suffice it to say that textiles, other kinds of fiber production, still have associations with the decorative or the purely utilitarian. They suggest fragility and impermanence and also, inevitably, raise the vexing issues of gender roles and feminist theory. Such factors contribute to the perception that fiber sculpture evolved outside what many understand to be modern sculpture proper. Happily, however, this perception is increasingly regarded as irrelevant to an accurate assessment of the quality and aesthetic importance of fiber sculpture. This is due not only to changing ideas about the nature of important art in general, but also to the emergence of significant sculptors working in the medium." 11

In my works, sculptures and garments, I have described the dialogue between the artist and his medium as well as expressing joy in the creation of art. I draw my inspiration from material and process. With unique materials and sensuous textures, I have linked weaving to a sound and have caught a rhythm and created harmony through movement.

My metallic works play humorously, beautifully, and sensationally through their performance. People can immerse themselves in my pants, a natural sculpture, and watch intently as the stunning and alluring garments achieve the desired form.

The first sculptured garment, the large, wide trousers, entitled Wear, Display and Enjoy Clothing I, show a simple, natural shape almost like a tree trunk. The tree-shaped pants, when installed free-standing, convey a sense of being enamored with the natural feeling of this unique material (fig. 5).

The body of my three works was scaled to human size. They are wearable art. I translated art into fashion. It also demonstrated three dimensional design.

One piece of clothing, using red and blue wire pinned from the ceiling, makes a diamond shape with its two bending knees (fig. 6). It looks colorful and powerful through the use of the blue wire's light reflection. My last project gives the illusion of the American flag. It sets us
5. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing I;
pants sculpture; copper wire and dyed raffia
14" wide by 45" high by 12" deep
6. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing II;

pants sculpture; cotton and kynar wire

14" wide by 45" high by 12" deep
up to view my beautiful artwork in terms of a modernist dialogue. The pants stand by hanging them from the ceiling to the bottom with fine wire. The bottom of the pants shows beautiful wire in line with light reflections and also a delicate surface (fig. 7).

I acknowledge that my pleasure in the garment comes at the moment of the completion of the naturally compressed cloth. The clothing is not skillfully tailored, as my design would not allow it, but the wearer looks exotic. The young woman in these photographs plays with her emotions. She wears these uniquely sculptured pants that look heavy and uncomfortable with beauty and grace. The model shows three garments in a stunning performance (figs. 8, 9, 10). The garments were given a human language, setting a mood with an alluring performance maintained throughout. The spectacular garments also include cones made from wood branches, silver lace that looks like a net, and long black gloves for breast decorations. These decorations make the pants look fashionable as well as comical. I have now discovered myself as a fiber artist.

My works deal with the exploration of materials in a visual articulation of volume. The pants also shape these compounds into image, creating three dimensional pieces. This exploration of perception is typical of my work. I was interested in three dimensionality in both physical and psychological space.
7. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing III;
   pants sculpture; cotton
   magnet, kynar, and stainless wire
   14" wide by 45" high by 12" deep
8. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing I;

performance;

included corn made by wood branch and plastic leaves
9. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing II; performance; included crocheted silver lace
10. Wear, Display, and Enjoy clothing III;

performance;

included velvet long gloves
Because I have combined humor in the creation of an unique textile, I have clearly demonstrated my primary position in the textile field through the components of this thesis project.
THE CONCEPT WITH MATERIALS

Contemporary fiber artists select materials because they offer clues about form that have yet to be created. Material is very important when searching for an idea. The material selection leads artists to create unique and creative works. It means an artist’s ability to explore quality in material with great expressiveness. Through the creative journey with various materials, artists discover their own reality and they create beauty.

In my thesis works, I created my own stories, focusing on simple and unique clothing using different materials. Through the beautiful garments, I wanted people to feel the relationship between the material, and to create harmony.

My garment series gives new meaning to wearable art: it is a most distinctive achievement in contemporary art. Fiber art is connected and influenced by fine art, so I wanted a good quality of material to emphasize this beauty.

My pants are very simple, but are not comfortable. However, everybody in society wants to relax and enjoy their free time. I want to give this feeling to people. When seeing my work, people want to come
up, touch, and enjoy these distinctive clothes. The result is a new delight in the art world.

I did not follow the rule, functional pieces for wearing because I wanted to create artwork for art's sake. Also, I have always wished my work to have the joyousness of our lifetime. Because of these beliefs, I have tried to create this art. I developed the idea by using creative materials and I explored the idea.

Through my art, using different and unique materials, I hope people will appreciate my work as real art. I hope they feel pleasure, which was and will always be my main concern and concept.
CONCLUSION

I have always used subject matter that was familiar to me in the creation of my artwork. In my thesis work, I used a variety of materials for my garments. I experienced the integral relationship between material and form. By using different materials, I discovered an artistic voice or value in the fiber art world. Material, in particular, provided the inspiration of these works because of my passion for these materials. As a result, the materials gave my work beauty and inspiration for creating this artwork.

Fiber artists all over the country are looking to expand the definition of their medium. I tried new explorations with these materials in my art. The Wear, Display and Enjoy Clothing series, achieved a new innovation of fiber art through the use of unique materials and techniques.

I recognized that my work uses the expressive language of people in the art world. As a fiber artist, I expressed my own artistic language to the new art world. Through the language of expression, I have demonstrated my work to the viewer as a real human voice.


