Feminine beauty: The Woman of the world

Hsueh-Lan Yang
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FEMININE BEAUTY:
THE WOMAN OF THE WORLD

BY
Hsueh- Lan Yang

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Approvals:

Advisor: Mr. Donald Bujnowski  
Date: 6/27/91

Associate Advisor: Mr. Max Lenderman  
Date: 6/27/91

Associate Advisor: Ms. Nancy Ciolek  
Date: 7/11/91

Special Assistant to the Dean for Graduate Affairs:  
Mr. Phil Bornarth  
Date: 7/15/91

Dean, College of Fine and Applied Arts:  
Dr. Peter Giopulos  
Date: 7/16/91

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To My Family
1.

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I took a journey of self-awareness to find the inner source of my conscious and unconscious emotions, and to achieve an integration of the emotional and the rational in Art and Fashion. The motivation of this thesis stemmed from my love for the various facets of textiles, including the history of textiles, textile art and fashion design.

When enjoying the art of sculpture, a strong power of life is stimulated in my heart. Sculpture reminds me of the human beings reflecting on the world of nature and on themselves and become the womb of art. Love of sculpture planted the desire in my heart to create sculptural forms in my textile work. When I worked as a designer that focused on commercial products, my artistic creativity seemed to be diminishing. Desiring to inspire and reawaken this creativity, I have chosen in my M.F.A. research to subject the design concept and to search for the integrity of art and fashion. The desires as well as my obsession of sculpture and the study of textile art and fashion design, led to the exploration of surface texture and sculptural forms in my thesis work.

The construction of all the thesis projects was created on the ideas of sculpture. Crucial concepts of sculptural construction which are applied in the thesis projects include the use of the rotation, continuous motion mobiles, and the importance of surrounding open space. Hence, the two projects, "She" and "The Woman of Nature," were formed, and the three garment projects can be seen to be natural sculptural forms which are worn.

The concepts underlying the thesis consist of the Yin-Yang theory, dual-personality and color symbolism. These stemmed from the impact of Chinese philosophy on me, and my considerations of the changing female role in society, and personal aesthetics. These concepts are summoned in each project to render the identified and specific traits.
These works show a thorough integration of inspiration, material and techniques that has been patiently realized through experimentation and discovery. The concept of the thesis is an understanding of femininity and aesthetic sensuality. The thesis theme manifests my abiding interest in the strength and continuity of feminine beauty, as well as an assertive individuality of design.
PART ONE

THE CONCEPTS
2.

THE YIN - YANG THEORY

The universe is constructed on a format of polarity: beginning and end, male and female, expansion and contraction, life and death. "Process" occurs as the movement between these poles of the universe. The poles are distinctly antagonistic but complementary. They are mirror-image reversals of each other, and like positive and negative charges, mutually dependent.

The ancient Orient utilized the Yin and the Yang to portray this concept of Nature's law and the construction of the universe. The Yin and the Yang reveal the underlying sameness in obviously opposite entities. The Yin-Yang symbol, depicted in figure 1, is translated into two magatamas or two spirals. The original figure is asymmetric. In its integral elements, both spirals of the symbol when viewed from the front move clockwise; if viewed from the back, counterclockwise. In both cases, the two magatamas are opposite but complementary.

For all phenomena, beings and things, the Yin is dominated by centrifugal force, which produces an expansive airiness, while the Yang is dominated by centripetal force, producing density. The relationship of the Yin to the Yang is that of magnetism. The Yang attracts the Yin, the Yin attracts the Yang; the Yin repels the Yin, the Yang repels the Yang. The force of mutual attraction is proportional to the difference of relative charges.

The interaction of the Yin and the Yang occurs as that oneness splits and becomes two. By their combination and interplay, the Yin and the Yang give rise to all forms that are present in the world of the relative universe. Thus, all the positive and complementary dualism of the phenomenal world derives from but two forces, or the front and the back of one ultimate reality.
The Yin-Yang theory underlies the concepts portrayed in this thesis. Interplay between the Yin, symbolized by silver, and the Yang, symbolized by gold, can be seen in every project.
DUAL-PERSONALITY:
FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY

The philosophy of the Yin and the Yang indicates that all phenomena of nature and human society are complementary. The "Yin" denotes the "feminine" side of life, which is passive and receptive, while the "Yang" denotes what is "masculine," or aggressive and dynamic. These counterpart ideas have been used to describe the sex roles appropriate to females and males in human society. They can also, however, help to describe polarity existing within each individual personality.

Human sex role differentiations have been prescribed fairly universally according to these definition of "feminine" and "masculine." Personality and physical differences between women and men have been used to justify these prescribed roles, with women seen to be more emotionally and interpersonally sensitive than men, and men seen to be more competent, achievement oriented and assertive than women.

However, these differentiations can also be shown to be related to political, economic, and sociological forces. Since the industrial revolution and social practices have broadened sex-role possibilities for women, changes in the nature of work and education have diminished the cleavage between the sexes in the socialization of personality.

Furthermore, recent research of social scientists indicates that femininity and masculinity do not relate negatively to each other. Rather, a dualistic interplay of feminine and masculine attributes and seems to exist within the individual personality rather than a pure bi-polarization into completely separate feminine and masculine personalities. This

concept will be called "dual personality," and describe the way in which both sexes embrace both the feminine and the masculine, making humanity more unidimensional than bi-polar in character. To portray this dual personality, magenta and peacock colors are used to represent femininity and masculinity respectively in the thesis works.
PART TWO

THE PRELIMINARY STUDY
4.

FEMININE BEAUTY

"From the point of view of Art there are no concrete or abstract forms, but only forms which are more or less convincing lies. That those lies are necessary to our mental selves is beyond any doubt, as it is through that we form our aesthetic point of view of life."

-De Zayas, 1923

As the theme of the thesis projects was developed from the interplay of the Yin and the Yang, the human body in its feminine and masculine forms could be seen in itself as the basis of all fashion. Focusing on the femininity of the Yin, on November 30 a series of female figures were spontaneously drawn through personal expression.

Although these drawings followed the free association movement of the thought, they express a synthesis of the love of nature and art, memories, experience, and feelings about femininity. The figures are a statement of discovery, expressing joy and sensuality with a vitality of emotion.

Although all four figures depict the female form, they show a development from the pre-sensual innocence of the primitive feminine soul to the naive beauty of the emerging woman, to the practiced sensuality of the mature, passionate woman, to finally the idealized identification with nature and universal ideas of which a woman may dream.

They are thus titled, "Primitive" (figure 2), "Naive" (figure 3), "Passion" (figure 4) and "Dream" (figure 5).

5.

KNITTING

Historically, the principles of knitting date back to prehistoric times. The making of fish nets was a fundamental form of knitting used by almost all primitive peoples. The oldest existent piece of knitted fabric was found by Yale university archaeologists' excavations at Dura-Europos in Syria. It is a woolen fabric with the crossed Eastern stitch pattern, and has been dated at 256 AD.

Hand knitting was introduced into Europe by the Arabs. In the Viking tombs in Scandinavia knitted fragments were found which testify to the early technique practiced in Europe over two thousand years ago.

The knitting operation was invented in Scotland in the fifth Century. The first stocking firms were devised in Nottinghamshire, England, in 1589. In 1758 the ribbing apparatus was invented by Jedediah Strutt. By 1864 William Cotton of Loughborough had perfected a power-driven knitting machine which would shape the fabric as it was knitted, a machine which became the basis of our modern full-fashioned machine. But it was not until the middle of the Nineteenth Century that a circular machine was created which produced tubular fabrics. Now the improved circular knitting machines are very common, along with jacquard knitting machine, and computer-knits.

Knitting structure is produced by the interlooping of yarns. Knitting is the process of making cloth with a single yarn or a set of yarns moving in one direction, instead of two sets of yarns crossing each other, as in weaving. There are two main classifications of knitted fabrics: weft knits and warp knits. Each uses a different kind of machinery for producing fabrics. Examples of weft knits are those used in sweaters and hosiery. Examples of warp knits are those used in tricot which is used in lingerie.

Three knit structures, rib knit stitch, rib jacquard, and intarsia, were chosen to
compose the projects of this thesis, each of which will be explained below. There are practical distinctions between these stitches that helped convey the particular aesthetic mood and philosophy behind each project. These practical distinctions will be described below, while their applications to the color and style of each garment sculpture will be explained in the chapters describing each artistic work. Each structure was uniquely fitted to the artistic sculpture in which it was used.

The rib knit stitch was used to create "The Breeze of Spring" (figure 11). In rib knits, the fabric is constructed with alternate wales of plain and purl stitches on both sides of the knit, which the knitting machines produce using two sets of needles. There are three practical distinctives of rib knits. First, rib knits lie flat and do not curl at the edges as jersey knits do. Second, rib knits have a very distinct lengthwise rib effect on both sides of the fabrics. Any combination of rib arrangement is possible, such as 1:1, 2:2, 3:3, and so on, with the combination of different rib stitches creating the movement of surface design. Third, rib knits have greater elasticity in their width than their length. For this reason, rib knits are often utilized for sweater bottoms, knit cuffs, knit hats and similar applications. In this project, rib construction was used to fit the shape to the body.

The second project, "The Rhythm of Autumn," (figure 12) was made with the rib jacquard knit. Jacquard knits are built from selected color face loops on a basis knit of single jersey or 1:1 rib. In two colors jacquard, one complete row of face pattern loops are produced with two color selections. A rib jacquard has a very stable structure which gives a loose-fitting, self-supporting shape suitable to a coat. It also has a pleasing scrambled color appearance on the back side, because of the birdseye or twill backing, which makes it suitable for background for colorful motifs on both sides. Thus, the rib jacquard was utilized to create a picturesque surface with stable shape.

The third project, "The Passion of Winter," (figure 15) was made using an intarsia knit structure. "Intarsia" is a term derived from the Italian, "intarsiare," which means "inlay." It is a motif or decoration on a solid color knit made by using different color yarns which appear to be inlaid into the knit. There are three distinct properties of intarsia. One
is that it has clean, clearly defined color areas. Another is that it does not overlap the various colored yarns where the colored areas abut to each other so that it produces a clear line. The third is that there is no reduction in the elasticity of the material because of overlapping. The fabric created can be made more or less fitted or loose, depending on styles, and distinct, clear images can be conveyed.
6.

FELTING

Historically, felt is probably the oldest known textile fabric. It has been suggested that primitive man discovered that the fur of his foot coverings entangled and formed a solid mass when the moisture, body heat and agitation of his foot movement acted on the furs.

Wool is the most ideal for felting. When the fibers have been selected, they are carded into a flat batting, and if necessary, blended with other fibers. The scales of wool fiber swell when placed in the warm water, after which pounding and twisting will cause them to entangle or interlock with one another. When the fabric is dried, and the fibers stay together; it is "felted." To create heavy felt, the wool is placed in a weak acid instead of in warm soap water. Slight felting of a woolen will give it compactness and softness.

Traditionally, felt was made for a thick and sturdy but soft fabric. In this project, in order to create wearable art which is related to fashion trend, felting was selected to make a sheer and soft fabric with a textured surface. In order to create a stable construction, net fabric served as the basic underlying structure for the sheer felted fabric.

The process of making sheer felted fabric is first making a thin flat sheet of wool fibers, then covering it with the net fabric and finally putting another thin layer of wool on the top of the net fabric. Through the open construction of net fabric, the fibers of the two layers interlock very well. After pressing and agitating, the net fabric will be stably inserted and sandwiched between the two layers of wool fibers. Varying the thickness of wool fiber or adding fragments of fabric creates the different densities of felt. Also, it is very playful and interesting in combining different materials as woven fragments, thread, sisal and various yarns, to create a textured surface. Further variety in surface texture can be obtained by printing and embroidering designs on the felted fabric.
Experimentation revealed that sewing embroidered images on the felted fabric will create a nice relief on the surface. Of the drawn female figures the "Naive" was explored and sewn onto the felted fabric. The "Naive" figure, embroidered on the felted fabric, portrays an intimate relationship between felted fabric and the female figure (figure 6). The delicate, firm and transparent felted fabric with textured surface recalls the sensitive, sturdily embroidered and essential, tangible female figure. It is an interaction of thoughts.
PART THREE

THESIS THEME: THE WOMAN OF THE WORLD

" 'til the woman of the world shows me
The secret seed she planted in my heart
Her breath is cool to sway me
Roots shoot down
Her eyes begin to shine
My love runs leaf and vine
Through the woman of the world."^1

--Michael Hedges

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PROJECT ONE: "SHE: HER INNER SOUL
AND OUTER APPEARANCE."

"The job for the artist is to dismantle existing communication codes and to recombine some of their elements into structures which can be used to generate new pictures of the world."

-- Victor Burgin

Once the thesis proposal was approved, the question was raised of how the sculptural form could be approached with textile work. The initial thought was to convey the thesis idea by utilizing different techniques. A series of ideas were developed by many experiments, such as by weaving multiple layers on the AVL computer loom, knitting the sculptural maquette with a knitting machine, and sewing felted fabric to create a sculptural form. Then these ideas were condensed, allowing for selection and focus on a few ideas and using complementary techniques to emphasize the theme of the thesis.

Inspired by the series of drawings, an exploration of aspects of female beauty became the theme of the thesis. In order to accent the natural form and simple shape of the female figure, the design concept was a simple construction. Further the research was then to develop the transformation of the two-dimensional drawn image into a three-dimensional form.

The idea behind the three-dimensional structure is to present helixes and spirals as they appear in nature, in branches growing helically out of trunks and stems or in seashells which clearly manifest the spiral helix in their designs. In constructing the three-dimensional form, the hypothesis was to create a few succeeding panels with the same image but in decreasing sizes. Then the full perspective view of the identified image would result from seeing through those panels.

With the intention of seeing through the whole project, chiffon, soft and sheer,
was chosen as the material. Shimmering acrylic paint was then used as a media to represent the female figure relief on the chiffon. Due to the weaving construction of chiffon, it does not absorb the paint very well. It was better to rinse the painting area of chiffon before painting it with acrylic. Water and tissue were used as erasers, but only as soon as the area was painted. When the female figure was painted, there was an interaction of the outer female figure and the inner self. At several times personal projections went into the same image drawing, when going away and coming back to add strokes. The figures' layered, rich surfaces and density of form were built up through layered brushstrokes. The image created came from the heart, resulting in the image called “she.”

After painting, the main problem was how to secure and sandwich the painted chiffon fabric between two pieces of plastic. The static electricity of fabric and plastic and the desire for a clean and clear frame made it hard to frame without using glue or screw knots. After many experiments, the final solution for framing began with using double stick mylar tape. First, the chiffon was adhered to the plastic edges with mylar tape. Then end caps were adhered on the edges of the chiffon and plastic sandwich. In this way the chiffon would not shrink after being sandwiched between the plastics, and the end caps secured the sandwich, too. To establish the five panels, the bases were designed in the identified forms but separated. Thus the whole project included five panels which could be aligned in a straight order, curved form or shell shape. In order to recall the shape of the female figure, the shell shaped alignment was chosen to create unity and balance between the formed structure and the image of each individual panel.

Both design concepts and color symbolism are applied into this project. The receptivity of femininity is revealed in this project by the circulation between the space of successive panels and the surrounding open space. The attractive image and elegant form of the female are expressed by the female figure, while the blue color tone of chiffons and the enclosed rectangular plastic frames, under which the soft quality of chiffon is intangible, symbolize the dominant and aggressive quality of masculinity.
"She" (figure 7, figure 8) consists of the sensual effects of the interplay of female figure, fabric, texture and space. In the multi-dimensional layers, the overlapping image of female figures with their subtle changes and continuous motion, express the feeling of quiet flowing delicacy, serene mood and infinite beauty.
8.

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECTS TWO-FOUR:
"THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMAN, HER SENSUALITY."

"Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than merely to keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us... Thus, there is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking."³

-- Virginia Woolf, Orlando

Fashion, as Art, can be one man's or woman's secret obsession, or it can transcend the personality and speak for a broad and diverse humanity. The theme, "Thoughts about Woman, her sensuality" (figure 9) includes three pieces of thesis work: "The Breeze of Spring," "The Rhythm of Autumn" and "The Passion of Winter." Through the language of knitted design and careful choice of materials, the projects communicate something of the feeling of each season and of selected feminine characteristics.

Creating these designs involved a variety of artistry, discipline, and skill. From the inception of each idea to the completion of each garment, a full range of gifts, training, delight, and diligence was needed. Adjustments were often made along the way to improve the design. The results combine high quality, simple elegance, and romantic sophisticated humor. Symbolically and literally, the female beauty was liberated by knitted clothing that reveal the natural sculptural lines of the body.

9.

PROJECT TWO: "THE BREEZE OF SPRING."

Spring is fresh, easy, gentle, sensual, and sexy. As it follows winter, it is subtle yet budding with new life. To render this sentiment of spring, the project, "The Breeze of Spring" (figure 10, figure 11) is designed to be fitted yet comfortable, simple yet chic. The result conveys the elegant glamour of femininity. The fitted design of this rib dress is lean for spring. The construction of this dress, using the Brother KH-940 6G knitting machine, is in plating yarn rib knitting.

In the plating yarn rib knitting construction, plain stitches and purl stitches form a pattern of alternating colors. Glittering glamour is created by using lurex yarn, metallic thread, and space-dyed silk in magenta, peacock and olive green colors. The main yarns, showing the plain stitches, are raw-white silk and gold lurex yarn. These create the glittering surface. The plating yarns, which appear on the purl stitches and form the enamel surface, are space-dyed silk yarn and metallic thread.

By their elasticity, rib knits are designed to be fitted to the dressed form. The rib combination of this dress is 2:2, 3:2, 5:2, 8:2, then reversed. The rhythm of glittering, alternating with enamel color effects created by plating knitting portrays the complement of the positive and the negative, the Yin and the Yang. The harmony of the alternated arrangement of rib stitch and the rhythm of the color effect of plating knitting, create a rotated movement around the female torso. That perfect flow, that graceful liquidity is what was striven for in the dress.

To get the nice shape and right proportion, the dress was knitted by using full-fashioned knitting and following a charted pattern. It was a very time-consuming job, because the special fit style required a number of stitches varied in almost every row. Thus, the decreasing or increasing stitch operation was regularly used in the process of
Because rib construction is so elastic, there are not enough bed stitches to make a whole body piece or sleeve piece at once. Therefore, this dress consists of eight knitted pieces, including four body pieces and four sleeve pieces which were assembled by hand-sewing. It required an enormous amount of craftsmanship.

Since quality was important from the beginning, making amendments during the construction process was done when required. The original design details included a little standing collar, a tail, and an open back. In this design, the body piece would be of rib knit with one metallic, one lurex and two silk yarns. While the tail, for draping, would be of single knit with one single space-dyed silk yarn. Due to use of the space dyed yarn, the subdued enamel tone of the tail piece did not match the blurring and shimmering mood of the body piece. Thus the tail was removed. After the placket was sewn, the open back seemed less attractive than it was in original concept, so it was amended to use an invisible zipper. After these details were changed, the short collar was also removed to give the simple, chic, finished effect.

The subdued, serene tones of magenta, peacock, and olive green in space-dyed silk, are reminiscent of the ancient Chinese enamel vases and their philosophical associations. The shimmering metallic accents render an exciting, regal mood. The attractive rhombus shape which appears on the top part of the dress was formed by the exact matching of upper armhole lines.

The shape flows smoothly from the round collar, to the shoulder with its rectangular puffed sleeves, and down the breast, waist, and hip areas to the back center-slit bottom, in a way reminiscent of the natural shape of prairie, hills and plateau, and highlighting the infinite beauty of the female torso. Meanwhile, the rectangular puffed sleeves with the rhombus pattern on the upper back interject the assertive quality of masculinity into the overall feminine effect. The result is feminine, modern and exciting with both elegance and simple, chic, shapely lines. It is for the energetic woman who is a passionate explorer full of fantasies.
10.

PROJECT THREE: "THE RHYTHM OF AUTUMN."

The most central quality of "The Rhythm of Autumn" (figure 12, figure 13) is its sensuality. Fall throbs with strong, living color in bright, primary shades. Conveying the swirling effect of autumn of this delicately colorful, loose but shaped coat represents the capricious quality of femininity. This quality incorporates discovery, pain, joy and sensuality with a vitality of emotion, and the coat becomes a physical embodiment of this interior world with its intangible elements. There is an unyielding, voluptuous physicality epitomized by the rib jacquard work with its luxuriant texture.

In this work, the construction is rib jacquard. The jacquard pattern was designed in the pattern programing device, PPD-110, then transferred into the knitting machine. The pattern yarns are space-dyed silk and metallic thread, which form the enamel surface, and the background yarns are raw-while silk and silver lurex yarn, creating the opposite shimmering effect. The complete jacquard coat with its blended shimmering and enamel colors symbolizes the merging of femininity and masculinity, the Yin and the Yang, distinguishable but mixed like the interplay of autumn colors.

Because of the multi-ply yarns knitted together, all of the bed knit stitches were needed for the sharp, with decreased and increased stitches used for the dolman sleeves, it was very hard to control the even tension of yarns and to get an even weight, with the knitted cast-on pieces. This problem often resulted in the knit stitches being formed into tuck stitches. Hence the tension of yarns was continuously adjusted and the tuck stitches changed to knit stitches. The first attempt was made without all those conditions being considered very carefully, resulting in the first two cast-off pieces finishing in two different lengths. The only solution was to unravel one of the pieces and re-knit it. One reason for this was that there was not enough space-dyed silk yarn to knit another piece,
because the amount of silk dyed originally had a surplus margin of 10%, to protect against loss. Another reason for re-knitting was the tight schedule of the thesis show. It was a very painful and frustrating job. Finally just as in "The Breeze of Spring," this coat included eight jacquard knitted pieces which were assembled by hand-sewing them together.

The desire was to alter the jacquard motif to convey a mood of unrestraint. Thus a shimmering acrylic was painted on the surface of the jacquard knitted piece, treating it as a canvas. As this painting of the surface progressed, the excitement and joy of viewing impressive mountain scenery in Autumn came to life. Standing back for a look the perspective revealed a movement of painted colors from strong brushstrokes to blurring light brushstrokes, to the simple, clear jacquard patterns on the surface. There is a rotation of movement up from the front bottom to the upper front, across to the back upper and down to the bottom, then around to the front of the coat. With the loose design of the coat, the air between body and coat circulates within the surrounding space. This design represents the airiness and receptivity of femininity.

After the whole surface of the coat was finished, the original colors painted on the bottom were too strong. A decision was made to partially remove the colors. Experimentation proved that the only way to eliminate the acrylic was to use lacquer thinner. It is hard to describe the shift of emotion that occurred when moving from the excitement of the unrestrained painting to the regret of erasing it. However, the final effect is serene, peaceful, sophisticated, subtle, and picturesque. The coat does not convey a luxurious splendor, but gives a glamorous and attractive impression.
"The Passion of Winter" (figure 15) concludes and re-eminases the color symbolism of the thesis work. Use of intarsia made it possible to incorporate clear imagery into the design with sharply defined colors. Colors are strong, with sharp enamel tones of magenta and peacock, gilded with silver and gold, representing femininity and masculinity. The separation of colors portrays the separation of masculinity from femininity, while the incorporation of both is reminiscent of the existence of both in the same body of the wearer. Thus they show the mutual interaction of the Yin and the Yang and convey the idea of dual-personality. Even the materials capture this sense of contrast, in the bulky warmth of alpaca wool mingled with smooth, cool touch of cotton with lurex yarn, and they embody the negative and the positive of the Yin and the Yang, and thus the essentials of female and male.

The yarn is used as an alphabet of form to communicate in a tactile language. By the intarsia construction, the yarns are the pigments painted and knitted into the canvas to portray the drawing, "Passion" (figure 4). The seductive female figure appears in the knit, adding to the warmth and femininity of the winter garment. The pattern merges into the background and the background becomes a part of the pattern. A story unfolds in color, convex and concave lines and shapes. Viewed in sequence from the left front piece to the right front piece to the back piece, the abstract pattern is actually in the shape of the figure (figure 14). When the coat is worn, the image appears to be totally abstract, until the wearer stretches her arms out horizontally. Then the female shape emerges clearly.

The style of this coat is simple, with round collar, open front and dropped shoulder sleeves. The silhouette is of masculinity, while femininity is expressed through the attractive female image, the stark and distinct colors and the hooded, mystical mood.
The picture (figure 15) gives the garment a sense of absorbed warmth from the photographic lighting, contrasting with the pale face which reflects the light, and renders a cool, chic feeling. The whole atmosphere of this coat is of sensual mystery, elegant glamor and seductive Feminine Beauty. With the sentiment of the passionate, sexy, irresistible female figure image, the winter will be warm and ardent.
12.

PROJECT FIVE: "THE WOMAN OF NATURE."

The approach of this project is to create a unity of surface texture and sculptural form to embrace the synthesis of the Yin and the Yang, femininity and masculinity. However, the underlying theme focuses on femininity and feminine beauty.

As Rozsika Parker, the author of "The Subversive Stitch," mentioned:

"In the history of embroidery - through the very threads of samplers, firescreens, table runners and dress - can be traced another history: the history of woman... In twentieth-century, embroidery became part of a move to transform the relationship of art to society and the place of woman within society."*

This statement addresses the deep and continuous historical link between embroidery and femininity. Hence, embroidery with its association with femininity is employed as an art medium. Embroidery is increasingly recommended as a means of expressing not only femininity, but also individuality. Rebecca Crompton mentioned in "Modern Design and Embroidery," (1936) that embroidery "even in its simplest form may become the expression of personal thought and feeling," as it is "work which mirrors (a woman's) own thought and personality"5. Thus, embroidery was selected to be one of the mediums of the last project "The Woman of Nature," to embrace the femininity, complementary with masculinity, deep inside the artist’s heart.

The form of female beauty of the thesis work centers on the female body, and is inspired further by such beautiful expressions in Nature as the shape of a flower, a seashell, a fish or a bird, or even the movement of a wave. "The Woman of Nature" (figure 16 figure 19) expresses natural beauty in its combination of female figure and flower image.

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With the primitive passion of being a female, there was a personal identification with the exciting, graceful and sophisticated female figure image. Instinctively a series of female figure drawings evolved. Since that time, the seeds of female beauty planted in the artist’s heart, and these intrinsic drawings became the source of the forms of the thesis work. The process of artistic transformation, involved a balance of the figure form and abstraction of female figures, in which such changes took place as amending the right breast of "Naive" in the "She" project. After researching female beauty and female figure drawing in the work which included a class in figure drawing, through further deep meditation, the metamorphosis of "The Woman of Nature" was created.

In order to render the image as a relief on a textured surface, felted fabric was selected as the base for embroidery. The felted fabric is the same as that of the embroidered "Naive" work, blending wool, silk thread, sisal and net fabric fragments to create the exciting, diverse surface texture. In order to make a work with a reversed view, the felted fabric was folded to get an overlapped and more stable base for sewing.

Utilizing two color sets of sewing thread and bobbin thread obtains the same image reversed on both sides with different color tones. In the process of sewing, the stitch width was continuously being changed to create the various widths of the line, and the stitch length was being changed to create the diverse densities of line. By sewing the line with loose-density zigzag stitches along side the tighter-density stitches which outline the drawing, a three-dimensional image was created. The felted fabric became a canvas, the threads were the paint; thus, as the embroiderer, there was self expression as a painter and textile artist. The fibers, threads and stitches form the substance of the image with the overall result expressing the affinity of what is "Nature" with what is "Human."

In the drawing, the center figure looks like the pistil of a flower, and the two lying figures with turning bodies, they appear as petals springing from the calyx. The radiating and centrifugal alignment and the open, discontinuous lines of the two figures represent the expansive airiness of the Yin and the receptive quality of femininity. The lying women with turned backs also indicate the subordinate trait of femininity. Conversely, the center
figure springing from the calyx, which is emphasized with the blue color tone and with the frontal view, symbolizes the centripetal power and domination of the Yang and the masculinity.

To convey the opposite and review the complementary relationship of the Yin and the Yang, as well as of masculinity and femininity, two different atmospheres were created in a reversed image. On one side, the similar shimmering hues render the abstraction that the lying women, petals, and leaves are merged together, with the center figure distinct. The other side, with its clearly separated solid colors to define the flower motif and figures, shows the figure more clearly.

Setting the reversed design within the clear plastic frame and supporting it with a stand includes the surrounding open space in the sculpture and provides a free view. The three-dimensional relief of the sewn image derives from the sturdy, delicate embroidery on the soft, bulky, textured surface of the felted fabric. The project's unity comes from the combination of use of surface texture, sculptural space, and the balance among its multiple facets.
13.

CONCLUSION

Completing the thesis marks the beginning of a second stage of artistic maturity of my art life. The first milestone was the artistic maturity following my B.S. study of Textile and Clothing. I then established a goal of incorporating aesthetic appreciation and artistic creativity into an integrated design; I love the challenge of design. As I work through the M.F.A. research, the aesthetic vocabulary has been combined with the introspection and self-expression. My imagination collected all that was impenetrable and uncertain, hoarding secrets that expand from my inner being. From the point of anticipation to the acts of making the projects, my creativity unconsciously accumulated, and was explored consciously in the works. The works did explore the meaning of living with both the instincts and the intellect, which are inherent within me.

Scrutiny of Michelangelo's drawings reveals that they are distinguished not only by their extraordinary grace, but also by his ideas on how to wrap the human form elegantly in cloth. Thus historically art has incorporated some awareness of fashion. With fashion and art, both are becoming more pervasive elements of contemporary life, it is inevitable that they will continue to cross over each other's boundaries.

Thus, the dialogue that I want to express, is more of an interior one dealing with the sensual effects of free play of imagination, intelligence and curiosity, as well as the interplay of fiber, texture and space. Through it, I want to convey the integrity of Art and Fashion.
Figure 1: The Yin-Yang Symbol of China: Two Magatama
Figure 2: Drawing "Primitive"
Figure 3: Drawing "Naive"
Figure 4: Drawing "Passion"
Figure 5: Drawing "Dream"
Figure 6: "Naive" Figure Embroidered on Felted Fabric
Figure 8: "She: Her Inner Soul and Outer Appearance" (2)
Figure 10: "The Breeze of Spring" (1)
Figure 11: "The Breeze of Spring" (2)
Figure 13: "The Rhythm of Autumn" - After removing Acrylic Colors
Figure 12: "The Rhythm of Autumn" - Before removing Acrylic Colors
Figure 15: "The Passion of Winter"
Figure 16: "The Woman of Nature" (1)- The Whole View
Figure 17: "The Woman of Nature" (2) - The Shimmering Tone
BIBLIOGRAPHY


