

ELEVEN DRESSES:

A STUDY

By

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LIST OF NOMENCLATURE

- Art Quilt: a quilt that is not used as a bed covering, rather for artistic purposes (Wikipedia.org)
- Batting: layers or sheets of raw cotton used for lining quilts (merriam-webster.com)
- Couture: a French term for the business of designing, making, and selling fashionable custom-made women's clothing (merriam-webster.com)
- Craft: an occupation or trade requiring manual dexterity or artistic skill, such as pottery, carpentry, and sewing (merriam-webster.com)
- Crochet: needlework consisting of the interlocking of looped stitches formed with a single thread and a hooked needle (merriam-webster.com)
- Discharge: to bleach out or remove (color or dye) in dyeing and printing textiles (merriam-webster.com)
- Embellish: to heighten the attractiveness of by adding decorative or fanciful details (merriam-webster.com)
- Fabric Manipulation: to control or maneuver fabric to create texture or visual interest
- Fiber Art: a style of fine art which uses textiles such as fabric, yarn, and natural and synthetic fibers. It focuses on the materials and on the manual labor involved as part of its significance (Wikipedia.org)
- Fiber Reactive Dye: a cold water concentrated dye which is the most vivid of all dyes for cellulose fibers (Jacquardproducts.com)
- Fine Art: art concerned primarily with the creation of beautiful objects (merriam-webster.com)
- Free-Motion Stitching: the use of a sewing machine to create random decorative stitching
- Handwork: work done with the hands and not by machines (merriam-webster.com)
- Muslin: a plain-woven sheer to coarse cotton fabric (merriam-webster.com)
- Shibori: a Japanese term for several methods of dyeing cloth with a pattern by binding, stitching, folding, twisting, or compressing it (merriam-webster.com)
- Surface Design: any method of adding visual interest or design to fabric or textiles
- Wearable Art: describes the making of individually designed pieces of usually hand-made clothing as artistic expressions (Wikipedia.org)

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This collection of work is a culmination of techniques studied throughout the course of the designer's graduate career. It is a study of texture and fabric manipulation applied to pieces of wearable art. Eleven dresses were made, each embodying a different fiber art technique. Dyeing, quilting, handwork, stitch work, layering and embellishing textiles are the concentration of the study. The artist applied these techniques to multiple pieces of fiber art wall hangings and wearable art garments which have been shown in local, national, and international competitions. It was important for this design thesis to showcase the various methods of fabric manipulation that the designer has learned. In order for the focus of the collection to be on the techniques used, eleven dresses were made from one pattern, which is a simple A-line mod-style dress with a jewel neckline, long set-in sleeves, and approximately mid-thigh in length. The dress not only serves as a canvas for the surface designs created, but each fabric transformed the shape and effect of the dress. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is the study of manipulating fabrics to create texture and visual interest in wearable art, and the effect each fabric has on one dress pattern.

In order to link the pieces in this study and make the work translate as a cohesive and thoughtful collection, a significant connection was needed, more than simply the

dresses being the same pattern. As a plan to build a relationship between the pieces, the designer took inspiration from visual images of the state of Oklahoma. The landscape and sights of Oklahoma are unique and encompass many different terrains, environments and scenes. Traveling across the state, a person can see everything from modest mountains, forests, and wheat fields. The inspiration is not only taken from these various landscapes, but what can be seen and experienced in Oklahoma. Sunsets, tornados, litter and fields, among other aspects, were all translated into the language of fabric for this study. The dichotomies innate to Oklahoma are very interesting and inspiring. The state carries personal meaning to the artist, as it is part of her heritage and history, inspiring and nourishing her work and life. This research was a personal journey, as well as a study of the effect of fabric manipulations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction to Survey of Related Work

This design thesis is a study of fabric manipulation and the effect each fabric has on one dress pattern. It is a result of countless experiments and techniques studied throughout the course of the designer's graduate career. The focus of the collection was intended to be on the manipulation of fabrics and their effect on the shape and appearance of a garment, therefore the eleven dresses were all made from one dress pattern. In order to unite the collection, the inspiration behind each piece and technique was Oklahoma. Various aspects of the landscape and scenery were used and translated into the language of fabric and dress. In preparation for this collection, several resources and inspirations were reviewed. The concept of fashion as art was a significant concern. Fashion and art have been connected as long as either have existed, however fashion has yet to reach such high respect as the fine arts (Mackrell, 2005). This collection of work seeks to combine the two disciplines of art and fashion design in hopes of gaining a better understanding for the art of fashion. The debatable issue of craft and fiber work as 'women's work' is another topic discussed in this paper. Craft has too often been considered unsophisticated and has garnered little respect. This idea is revolving, however, as craft has seen a resurgence and gained more attention and value. Finally,

designers and artists whose work had an influence on this collection will be reviewed and images will be shown.

Fashion as Art

What constitutes an art form? It is a question often asked in the realm of art and design. The term “art” has been redefined and changed over time, but the current sense of the word is a short version of “creative art” or “fine art”, which in effect is still quite vague (Kinney, 1999). Throughout the last hundred years, anthropologists, sociologists, and costume institutes have emphasized and studied the classifications of dress and the theatrics of clothing. In fact, fashion “has so permeated social life that it has recently been called this century’s ‘most evident and widespread popular aesthetic form,’” (Kinney, 1999). These statements may be evidence that fashion has in fact evolved into a form of art. However, it is still widely debated. The Aesthetic Movement of the 17th Century believed that art should provide sensuous pleasure and that art need only be beautiful. Fashion certainly provides sensuality and can easily be deemed beautiful, so one would assume that fashion does qualify as art. However, each art form has its own system for judging beauty and aesthetics, so in this case, beauty, or judgment, is in the eye of the beholder (Hunter, Jacobus, Wheeler, 2000). The garments for this thesis were inspired by the belief that fashion is in fact an art form. The eleven dresses are essentially fiber art wall hangings which have been shaped and altered to be redefined as ‘wearable art.’

Fashion often takes cues and inspiration from the fine arts. A prime example of this is the 1965 Winter collection by Yves Saint Laurent. The collection consisted of a group of wool jersey tunic dresses based on the artwork of Piet Mondrian. (See Figure

1). The collection was called the “Mondrian Look” and was designated by *Harper’s Bazaar* as “the dress of tomorrow,” (Mackrell, 2005).

Figure 1



Many designers use artwork as inspiration for collections, translating painting and sculpture into wearable pieces.

The genre of Surrealism is most often paired with fashion. In fact, Surrealist art and fashion are often seen as synonymous entities. Surrealist artwork is defined as “the product of the chance juxtaposition of two different realities,” (Hunter, et al., 2000). Images of sewing machines often appeared in Surrealist work by Andre Breton, Louis Aragon, Salvador Dali, Man Ray, and Oscar Dominguez, (Martin, 1987). It seems only natural then, that the Surrealist artists would begin working with fashion designers like Elsa Schiaparelli and Coco Chanel in the 1920’s and 1930’s. “Schiaparelli famously collaborated with Salvador Dali to bring into textiles and clothing his imaginative visual ideas, such as the Desk Suit, echoing his painting *Venus de Milo with Drawers*,” (Black, 2006). (See Figure 2). Even today, fashion designers such as Jean-Paul Gaultier, John Galliano and Christian Lacroix take cues from the art and theories of Surrealism to create

their fantastical and dreamlike couture collections and runway shows.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Garments can also be treated as a canvas for surface decoration. “The textile surface offers a vast range of possibilities for treatments, whether embellishments such as printing, beading, embroidery or appliqué, special surface finishes...or manipulation by pleating, dyeing and heat setting,” (Black, 2006). The opportunities for artistic and creative expression within the medium of fashion are quite endless. Japanese fashion designer, Issey Miyake describes his clothes as inventions that are “visual creations” and “functional accessories,” (Sato, Meier, Chandes, 1999). His work is a venture into fabric and texture manipulation that has transcended the realm of fashion into wearable art.

Hussein Chalayan, ThreeAsFour, Comme des Garçons, and Lainey Keogh are other textile and fashion designers who have surpassed the realm of fashion and turned garments into artistic creations, (Black, 2006).

The concept of fashion as art had a breakthrough in the 1980s, when distinguished museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim, and the Louvre began showing fashion collections in their galleries. Designers such as Yves Saint Laurent, Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace, and Vivienne Westwood all have had groundbreaking and remarkable exhibits in places once reserved only for painting and sculpture. Issey Miyake is a designer whose work is a cross between fashion and art. He has shown his unique *Pleats Please* and *A-POC* clothing as “fashion installations” in museums worldwide, (Mackrell, 2005). (See Figure 4).

Figure 3



Women’s Work

This study is not explicitly devoted to fashion design, but is also a study of textile surface design and fabric manipulation. Many of the techniques used for the fabrics are considered traditional craft methods. The use of these techniques raises a challenge in

design, as they are often considered low-brow and “women’s art”. Despite the complicated methods and precision required to do this work, it is not always regarded with much respect in the art world. The group of fiber artists, Quilt Art, claim, “It is not because we cannot paint or draw, but because there is something about the quality of fabric and stitch which best suits what we want to say and how we want to work,” as a response to quilting being considered a low form or art, (Shaw, 1997).

Even in the discipline of interior design, women struggle with earning respect. According to some critics, interior design has been considered mere “decorating” and to be the subservient field, while the dominating, “male” discipline is architecture (Havenhand, 2006). Also, “‘taste’ is viewed as a reflection of capricious feminine values, while ‘good design’ came to indicate rational masculine values” much like “art” was often viewed as a masculine effort, (Turpin, 2007). The famous home of Ray and Charles Eames is a widely debated and discussed topic in this matter. Because it was so heavily decorated on the interior, people assumed this was Ray’s addition, while the architecture and design were attributed to Charles (Havenhand, 2006).

Fiber and textile art gained notoriety and recognition in the 1970s due to the Feminist movement. Many feminist artists addressed the issue of being disregarded in their work, making powerful statements against repression. Ghada Amer creates heavily embroidered paintings and sculptures that contain explicit images of sexuality in the backgrounds. In doing this, she is taking ownership of a traditional craft and making a statement that feminist art can show female pleasure. (See Figure 5). Louise Bourgeois, a renowned feminist artist who has been prominent in the art world since the 1950s, continues to make feminist statements in her work. She currently sews pieces made from

her old clothing in order to experience a “psychological and emotional process,” (Sonnenberg, 2006).



Figure 4

The modern crafts movement, which brought the original Arts and Crafts Movement of the early 1900s up to date, has brought a new recognition to the realm of craft. Fiber artists in particular have begun to purposely separate their craft from function, which helps obscure the discrepancy between “art” and “craft,” (Shaw, 1997).

Inspirations and Influences

Many different aspects of fashion and art were used as inspiration for this collection of wearable art. An interest and passion for the visual and tactile sense of texture and fabric in particular, is the driving force behind the work. The most significant influence was the work of Issey Miyake. The textile manipulations and fabrications he created throughout his career inspired the exploration of texture in this study. Miyake says “there is no limit to what clothing can be made from, that anything can become a garment,” (Kawamura, 2004). Miyake’s most inspirational collection was *Pleats Please Issey Miyake*. The collection was so innovative due to the remarkable technique Miyake created. Traditionally, pleats are permanently pressed before a garment is cut, but he did it the opposite way: he cut and assembled a garment two and a half to three times its

proper size, and the material was *then* folded, ironed and oversewn so that the pleats remained in place. Then the garment was placed in an industrial press between two sheets of paper, and it emerged with permanent pleats. Miyake's inspiration behind this project was that "in addition to the clothes reserved for an elite, there should be another clothing style aimed at a wider female audience, a style that would not be restricted to a particular age or profession, and which would be inspired by current aesthetics. At the same time it would be functional and go beyond the fads and trends of the moment," (Sato, et al., 1999). (See Figure 6).

Figure 5



Having creative control of the entire process, from fabric to garment, was another inspiration and goal for the collection. "When a designer constructs the fabric directly...the development of fashion becomes a hybrid...where form can be simultaneously created by the fabrication itself," (Black, 2006). Transforming a flat, two-dimensional piece of fabric into a textured, stitched and three-dimensional garment

was an exciting challenge. The work of Robert Rauschenberg was also an inspiration in this respect. His series of Combine paintings which are “compilations of things- objects, images, colors, non-colors, textures, fleeting thoughts from a vast, splendid, unassimilable cosmos” were stimulating, (Hunter, 2006).

The work of art quilters and fiber artists also had an important influence on the collection. Creating depth and dimension in a flat piece of fabric using dyes, stitching, and patterns is an intense design challenge. “Art quiltmakers have greatly expanded the technical vocabulary of quilting through their use of studio art techniques, including various types of painting, printing and dyeing. These methods, combined with the traditional approaches to quilt construction and design...result in new artistic syntheses and visual outcomes,” (Shaw, 1997). Artists who recreate textures and elements found in nature were an inspiration.

The creation and conceptualization of this thesis work was an incredible and extensive design process. Inspirations from art and fashion design were used, as well as the influence of the scenery and landscapes of nature, and Oklahoma in particular.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The thesis, Eleven Dresses, was inspired by nature and the landscapes and elements of Oklahoma. Each piece has an important meaning and a distinct creative process. A journal was kept throughout the design process, detailing each stage of production. This section will explain and detail the creative process for each dress.

tornado alley

tornado alley was made from a shimmer organza fabric. The artist took six yards of the synthetic fabric, and randomly wrapped glass marbles in sections, using 100% polyester upholstery thread to secure the marbles. This process is similar to the Japanese *shibori* technique of binding and compressing fabric for dyeing purposes. After wrapping the marbles, the fabric was placed in a large pan and sprayed with water. A conventional oven was pre-heated to 400 degrees. The fabric was placed in the oven, and baked for one hour. The fabric, with marbles still secured, was then placed in a freezer overnight. The next morning the fabric was taken out, the marbles were released and the thread was discarded. The baking and freezing of the fabric permanently molded the shape of the marbles. In order to cut out the pattern, the fabric was stretched out to full size and pinned down on a board. The dress was sewn on an overedge machine, using a rolled hem stitch for seams.

hay girl hay

hay girl hay was crocheted using 100% organic cotton yarn, Alpaca yarn, and raffia. The raffia was used in order to represent the hay and wheat which are so prevalent in the Oklahoma landscape. The three strands were held together and crocheted using a size 13 crochet hook.

the sunset

In order to create the fabric for the sunset, the artist laid out approximately three yards of white muslin fabric then placed a layer of double-sided fusible interfacing onto the muslin. On top of this, 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ yards of white china silk were laid and pressed down using an iron. After the fabrics were fused together, the artist set up the fabric on the long-arm quilting machine. Using cotton thread, the piece was stitched with a circular, free-motion stitch. The stitching took approximately 35 hours to complete. Upon completion, the fabric was laid out on a table, and the dress pattern was cut out. The pieces of the dress were then washed and dried in conventional machines. Due to the backing fabric being 100% cotton, the pieces shrunk. Next, the dress was constructed. Finally, the dress was placed on a dress form, and layers of dye were sprayed onto the dress in a painterly fashion. In order to get deep gradually layered colors, five different fiber reactive dyes were used in order of lightest to darkest. The dyes used were coral pink, rose red, charcoal gray, amethyst, and deep purple.

red dirt

This dress was the most time-consuming piece in the collection. The fabric was created in a similar fashion to the sunset. Three yards of cotton canvas was laid flat with a layer of double-sided fusible interfacing on top, then approximately six yards of silk

velvet were placed on this. After the three layers were fused, they were set up on the long-arm quilting machine and stitched using linear free-motion stitching with cotton thread. This process took approximately 40 hours to complete. After stitching, the fabric was then placed in a mixture of red dirt, water, and white vinegar. The piece was left in a large pot for one week. After rinsing, the color was light orange, so it was re-dyed in a mixture of red dirt, soda ash and water. The fabric sat in this mixture for 24 hours, and turned a deeper shade of orange. The pattern was then cut out of the fabric, and the dress sewn.

what i see

This dress was made from foam batting material, and sewn on a five thread overlock machine. The garment serves as a screen on which photographic images of Oklahoma, taken by the designer, were projected.

don't lay that trash on Oklahoma

This dress was made of melted garbage bags. The bags were placed between two sheets of aluminum foil and pressed. The heat from the iron caused the garbage bags to melt and shrink. The melted strips of bags were then stitched together, and the dress pattern was cut out. In order to represent the image of garbage and deconstruction, the designer used spray paint to mimic graffiti that is seen in some of the urban areas of Oklahoma, specifically downtown Oklahoma City.

don't stray

This dress was made from maps of Oklahoma. The maps were torn into rough and random pieces and placed onto a muslin backing using double-sided fusible interfacing. A layer of netting was then placed on top and the pieces were stitched

together in a random and linear pattern. The dress was then sewn using a five thread overlock machine.

stormy spring

This garment was made from two layers of polyester lining fabric which were melted using an industrial heat gun. Each layer was melted individually then basted together, and the pattern was cut out. A third layer of nude colored polyester fabric was sewn behind the melted fabric. The colors used represent the often stormy skies of spring, and the green grass which emerges after the rains.

soiled

soiled was constructed of dark brown satin. The satin was fused to cotton batting, and each pattern piece was quilted in circular free-motion stitching. Approximately five spools of brown thread were used in the quilting process. After the dress was constructed, it was discharge dyed using bleach, which was left to saturate the material overnight. The dress was then rinsed, and a copper color resulted.

field of greens

Three yards of white cotton muslin were dyed using fiber reactive dyes in the order of Kelly green, avocado, and blue green, in order to obtain a multi-colored tie-dyed effect. After drying, the fabric was ripped into strips, and sewn onto a muslin backing. The dress was then cut and constructed from these pieces. The dress represents the lush green fields and plains of Oklahoma.

found

This dress is made of a cotton muslin backing which was dyed using fiber reactive dye in robin's egg blue, then layered with sky blue. The dress pattern was traced onto the

yardage of muslin then the yardage was attached to the long-arm quilting machine. The designer then strategically placed flowers, greenery, feather and raffia onto the muslin and covered it with a layer of netting and pinned the layers together. This was then stitched using whimsical, free-motion stitching to secure the items in place. Upon completion of the stitching, the pattern pieces were cut out, and the dress was constructed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results section of this study will include detailed images and explanations for processes conducted for the thesis research. Each fabric manipulation process will be shown as well as the resulting garments, as displayed in the thesis exhibition.

tornado alley 1



tornado alley 1: Photo of the process of creating the piece, *tornado alley*. The artist is using polyester upholstery thread to wrap the organza fabric around glass marbles. The fabric was baked at 400 degrees for one hour, so the rounded, “bubbly” shape of the marbles would remain permanent.

tornado alley 2



tornado alley 2: Detail of the rounded, three-dimensional shapes baked into *tornado alley*.

tornado alley 3



tornado alley 3: This is a photo of the completed garment, as displayed in the gallery exhibition. The twisted and abstracted shape of the dress inspired the title, *tornado alley*.

hay girl hay 1



hay girl hay 1: Detail of the crocheted piece entitled, *hay girl hay*. The garment was crocheted using 100% organic cotton, 100% Alpaca, and raffia.

hay girl hay 2



hay girl hay 2: Photo of completed garment *hay girl hay* as displayed in the gallery exhibition.

the sunset 1



the sunset 1: This photo was taken during the dye process of *the sunset*. The dress was originally white, and was sprayed with layers of fiber reactive dye to achieve the rich colors of an Oklahoma sunset.

the sunset 2



the sunset 2: Detail of the stitching and gathering of *the sunset*. This detail and texture was achieved on a long-arm quilting machine, using circular free-motion stitching.

the sunset 3



the sunset 3: Photo of *the sunset* as displayed in the gallery exhibition.

red dirt 1



red dirt 1: Photo of the velvet dress *red dirt* in a pot filled with actual Oklahoma red dirt, water and soda ash. The dress soaked in the mixture for one week.

red dirt 2



red dirt 2: Detail of the texture and stitching in *red dirt*. This intricate detail was achieved on a long-arm quilting machine, using free-motion linear stitching. This stitching process took approximately forty hours.

red dirt 3



red dirt 3: Photo of *red dirt* as displayed in the gallery exhibition.

what i see 1



what i see1: The dress, *what i see* as displayed at the gallery exhibition. The dress was made of foam batting and served as a screen on which to display images of Oklahoma taken by the artist.

what i see 2



what i see 2: Image of *what i see* as displayed with photos projected onto the dress.

what i see 3



what i see3: Image of *what i see* as displayed in the gallery exhibition with photos of Oklahoma displayed onto the dress.

don't lay that trash on Oklahoma 1



don't lay that trash on Oklahoma 1: This dress was made of melted garbage bags which were stitched together to make a fabric which the pattern was cut out of. The artist spray painted the dress to mimic graffiti that is often found in urban areas of Oklahoma.

don't lay that trash on Oklahoma 2



don't lay that trash on Oklahoma 2: don't lay that trash on Oklahoma as displayed in the gallery exhibition.

don't stray 1



don't stray 1: This photo is of the beginning stages of creating *don't stray*. The dress was made of torn maps which were laid onto a muslin backing and fused down. Netting was then laid on top of the paper, and the layers were stitched together.

don't stray 2



don't stray 2: Detail of the process of stitching the maps in *don't stray*.

don't stray 3



don't stray 3: Detail of the completed product of *don't stray*.

don't stray 4



don't stray 4: don't stray as displayed in the gallery exhibition.

stormy spring 1



stormy spring 1: This photo is of the process of creating *stormy spring*. The polyester lining fabric was laid out on the table, and then melted using an industrial heat gun.

stormy spring 2



stormy spring 2: Detail of the polyester lining fabric during the melting process for *stormy spring*.

stormy spring 3



stormy spring 3: Detail of the blue and green lining fabrics layered together upon completion of the melting process for *stormy spring*.

stormy spring 4



stormy spring 4: stormy spring as displayed in the gallery exhibition.

soiled 1



soiled 1: Detail of the quilting that was done for *soiled*. This dress was made of satin, which was fused to batting and quilted. The dress was then discharge dyed by pouring bleach onto the completed garment.

soiled 2



soiled 2: This photo is of the quilting detail and color variation achieved in *soiled*.

soiled 3



soiled 3: soiled as displayed in the gallery exhibition.

field of greens 1



field of greens 1: This photo was taken during the dyeing process of *field of greens*. This garment is made of 100% cotton muslin which was dyed in three layers of fiber reactive dyes. In this image, the muslin is soaking in an avocado dye bath, after being dyed in Kelly green.

field of greens 2



field of greens 2: Detail of the ripped strips of dyed muslin used to create the tiered effect in *field of greens*.

field of greens 3



field of greens 3: Detail of the raw edge tiers at the neck and shoulder of *field of greens*.

field of greens 4



field of greens 4: field of greens as displayed at the gallery exhibition.

found 1



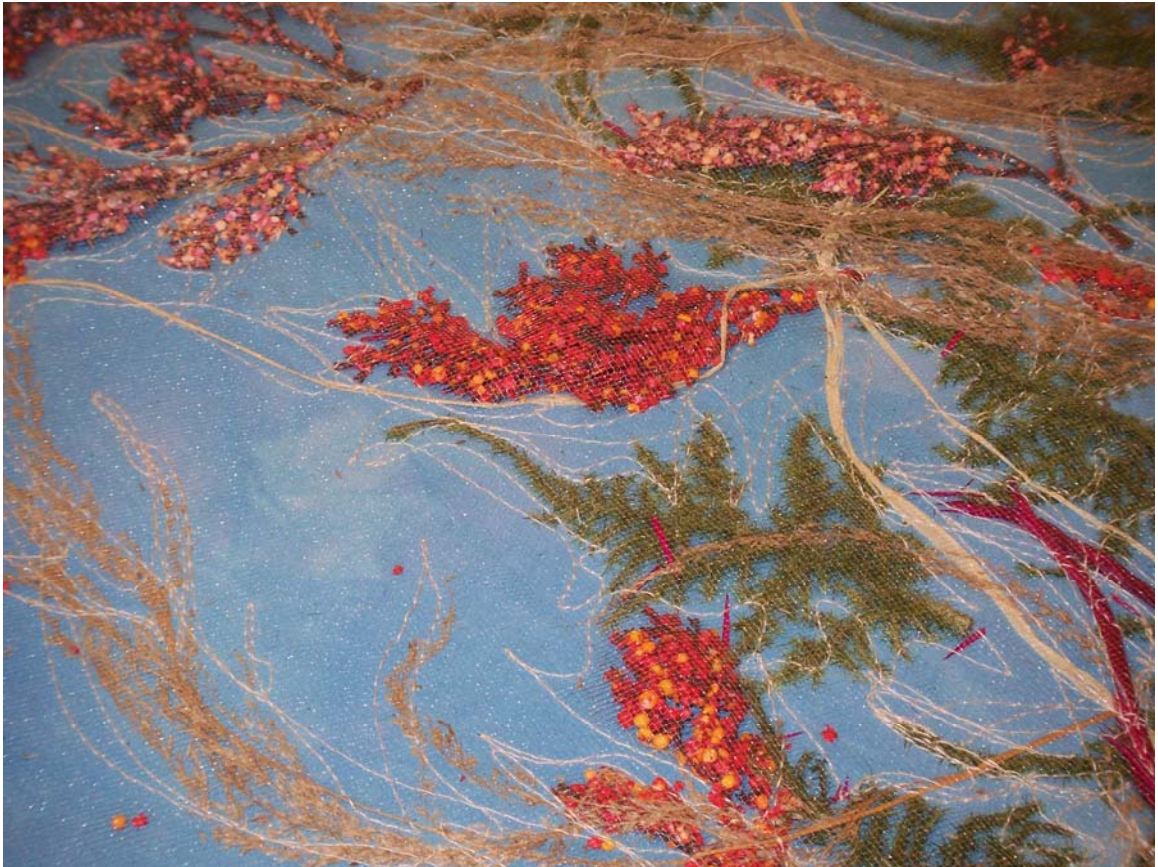
found 1: This is an image of the preparation to create *found*. The fabric was dyed to resemble a clear summer sky. The pattern was traced onto the fabric then leaves, flowers and feathers were strategically placed.

found 2



found 2: This image was taken while the fabric for *found* was being stitched on the long-arm quilting machine.

found 3



found 3: Detail of the stitching and objects used for *found*. The stitching was intended to echo the shapes of the flowers and leaves, yet have a free and whimsical effect. The concept of the dress was the objects a person can find after a clear and windy summer day in Oklahoma.

found 4



found 4: found as displayed at the gallery exhibition.

found 5



found 5: Detailed side view of *found*, as displayed at the gallery exhibition.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The design thesis entitled *Eleven Dresses: A Study* was an exciting and significant process. The purpose of this thesis was the study of manipulating fabrics to create texture and visual interest in wearable art and the effect each fabric has on one dress pattern. The research resulted in eleven garments, which had varying appearances and forms. The collection was inspired by the continued study of fabric and surface design, and the desire to learn how different techniques affect the appearance of a garment. The entire collection was created using one dress pattern, which was a simple, mod-style dress with long sleeves, jewel neckline, and mid-thigh in length. Each garment went through multiple stages of production, and the designer documented the process. The end result for the collection was a gallery exhibition held at the Department of Design, Housing & Merchandising Gallery in the Human Environmental Sciences building at Oklahoma State University. The exhibition was shown from March 13 through March 31, 2008. Overall, the collection was very unique and successful. The exhibition opening received positive reviews and comments and garnered encouraging attention.

The process of creating these eleven wearable art garments was a strenuous and tedious process, yet exciting and enjoyable at the same time. The designer faced many challenges while constructing the pieces. One example of an anticipated challenge was the set-in sleeve. Each garment, despite thickness, hand, and delicacy was required to have a set-in sleeve, with the exception of the crocheted piece, *hay girl hay*. The process

of gathering and sewing in the sleeves was even more difficult than expected. The fabric for *red dirt* was especially challenging as the fabric was up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick in areas. Also, the construction of *tornado alley* was difficult because the fabric was bubbled and shrunken. The fabric had to be stretched and pulled as it was sewn. The designer had some certainty of the outcomes of each piece, as many levels of experimentation and sample-making had previously been done prior to the design thesis process.

The collection could be further investigated by creating different fabric manipulation processes. Also, a way to do this study could be to draft different patterns to better suit the hand and texture of the fabrics created. A micro-study could also be done in order to focus more closely on one aspect of the inspiration which was Oklahoma. For instance, a study doing all natural dyeing with items from Oklahoma could be quite interesting. Or a person could broaden the scope of the study and do a collection based on all fifty states of the United States.

The eleven garments that resulted from this design thesis collection were interesting and unique. The process was a personal journey for the artist and a learning experience. Further development of fabric manipulations will continue to be experimented with for future studies.

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Experience: Teaching Assistant, Oklahoma State University, Department of Design, Housing & Merchandising. Research Assistant, Oklahoma State University, Department of Design, Housing & Merchandising. Worked for Associate Professor Vincent Quevedo; Institute for Protective Apparel & Technology, Dr. Donna Branson and Dr. Semra Peksoz.

Professional Memberships: International Textile and Apparel Association; American Quilters Society; Oklahoma Visual Artists Coalition; Individual Artists of Oklahoma.

Name: Shea Nicole Alexander

Date of Degree: May, 2008

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: ELEVEN DRESSES: A STUDY

Pages in Study: 55

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Design, Housing & Merchandising

Scope and Method of Study: This collection of work is a study of texture and fabric manipulation applied to pieces of wearable art. Eleven dresses were made, each embodying a different fiber art technique, and made from the same pattern. The purpose of this design thesis collection is the study of manipulating fabrics to create texture and visual interest in wearable art, and the effect each fabric has on one dress pattern. In order to link the pieces in this study and make the work translate as a cohesive and thoughtful collection, the designer took inspiration from Oklahoma.

Findings and Conclusions: The end result of this thesis was a gallery exhibition held at the Department of Design, Housing & Merchandising Gallery in the Human Environmental Sciences building at Oklahoma State University. Further development of fabric manipulations will continue to be experimented with for future studies.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Professor Vincent Quevedo
