

## Contents

page

- |           |  |                       |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | Letter from the Speaker                | Patricia Christy      |
| <b>2</b>  | Stroud International Textiles Festival | Lizzi Walton          |
| <b>4</b>  | Australian Design Award                | Pat Jones, Australia  |
| <b>5</b>  | Ildikó Dobrányi Foundation             | Ibolya Hegyi, Hungary |
| <b>6</b>  | Fibrescapes, Solo MA Exhibition        | Wu Pei Shan, Taiwan   |
| <b>9</b>  | Unusual Prints of the Fifties          | Renata Pompas         |
| <b>11</b> | A Virtuoso Performance                 | Erika Cohn, Germany   |
| <b>12</b> | Kaunas Textiles Binnial                | Patricia Christy      |

## Letter from the Speaker

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our Newsletter in which you will find some interesting articles from members in Taiwan and Australia as well as Europe.

I am pleased to welcome our new member from Budapest, Ibolya Hegyi, a tapestry artist who has written about the Ildikó Dobrányi Foundation project.

As we are a Textiles Education Working Group it is good to hear news about the work of our members' students. Erika Cohn attended the Diploma Show of Katrin Volmer's costume students in Hamburg, who always produce such wonderful costumes. Pat Jones from Melbourne, Australia, has written about a competition for chair design which her students took part in very successfully. The winner's work will be exhibited in Belgium at the International Trade Fair for Fabrics and Furnishings, so maybe some of you will be able to see this if you visit the Fair.

In the last Newsletter you will have read about Wu Pei Shan's success at the Premio Valcellina earlier this year. She has been studying for her MA during the last year but suffered a set back when her Grandmother died.

However she finished the work, which was inspired by her Grandmother's belongings, this summer and here you will find some excerpts from her MA statement describing the research for this work.

Those of you who attended the ETN conference in Haslach may remember the very interesting talk about the Stroud International Textiles Festival. One of the organisers, Lizzi Walton, has written an article about this year's event in which our member Norma Starszakowna took part and some of her work, as well other exhibitors, can be seen in the article.

Finally, Renata Pompas visited an exhibition about the 1950's textiles designs of a well known Italian silk manufacturer Andrée Brossin de Mére, which featured fruit and vegetables as the main inspiration.

**The deadline for the Spring Newsletter is 6<sup>th</sup> January** and I hope that we will have more interesting articles about the work of members' students as well as other interesting textiles events which you might experience in the coming months.



**Jo Barker. Cobalt Haze (Detail)**



## **Stroud International Textile Festival – CROSSING BORDERS**

**By Lizzie Walton,  
Stroud, England**

Textiles communicate. They express joy that language renders as cliché; withstand abstraction that words try to qualify and contain; record pain without evoking sympathy or condolences.

Thankfully the voice of contemporary textile practice conforms to no particular rulebook. Textiles are the first material to touch our skin at birth and what many of us will lay upon at the moment of death. Textiles are the material that covers our bodies every day of our lives; the material we rest between each night. It is the textile that is used to staunch the flow of blood from wounds and protect us against cold and wind and excessive light. They are quite literally an inescapable presence, trailing close behind air, water and food in our list of needs and wants.

It is with an appreciation, love and understanding of textiles being a global language that the Stroud International Textiles was born.

The Stroud International Textile Festival is based in the stunning Stroud Five Valleys in Gloucestershire UK. It encourages debate and discussion around contemporary textiles and the related arts and encourages new ways of looking at and exploring textile design and textile art through events, exhibitions, talks, workshops. It takes place every year in May (1-21 May) and is held in venues in and around the charming market town of Stroud that nestles in the Cotswolds. Once home to the famous Scarlett cloth it still has a working Mill that pro-



*Norma Starzakowna screen printing*

duces the green cloth used for billiard tables and the cloth for tennis balls. The term 'Strouds' became a general term for woollen broadcloths and the Stroudwater Scarlets became incorporated in many different textiles of ceremonial, decorative and religious significance throughout the world.

Tradition is all very well but here in the Stroud Five Valleys yesterday's industry is replaced by inspiration and quality from leading textile artists and makers, graduates and future designers, emerging new talent who bring innovation and inspiration to the festival.

The festival, now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year, has placed the Stroud Valleys once more back on the map for textiles and has ignited the flame the area once had for innovation in textiles. It is truly recognised as a nationally important event in the UK's cultural calendar.

We are honoured to have Mary La Trobe Bateman OBE as our Festival Patron. Mary is an active champion for the applied arts and contemporary crafts.

The annual festival continues to build a reputation for delivering high quality, world class work and delivering a stimulating and varied programme, this in turn raises the Stroud district's profile. It is the only festival that profiles textiles in the UK to such a high standard.

It remains an important platform for the applied arts nationally and introduces related art forms such as music, dance, and performance to broaden and enrich the visitor experience. The textile story is a diverse one that embraces fashion, costume, historical, fine art textiles, ethnic and so on and the festival can touch on any of these aspects within the 21 days.

Every year we have a World Textile Fair where travellers and collectors come to present their collections for sale and there are accompanying talks. It is a fun two days and to be able to meet and talk with the travellers as well as purchase gorgeous cloth, clothing, interior textiles, attracts visitors from all over the UK.

Over the years prestigious artists such as Sue Lawty, Matthew Harris, Michael Brennand Wood, Ptolemy Mann, Mary Restieaux, Mary Schoeser to name a few have exhibited and participated in the festival. 2010 had the pleasure of Norma Starszakowna with Jo Barker, Kate Blee and Sara Brennan who were joined by a host of interesting speakers and artists.

With debate and exploration at our heart, the festival regularly holds seminars and in 2010 we held a 2 day conference to debate the topic 'Slow Textiles' and study new textile technology. Academics and pioneers of the Textile Environment department at

Chelsea College of Art, London, were among the speakers and the Day one was chaired by Helen Carnac.

The audiences are varied and concessions to students are offered.

The plans for the 2011 festival are in advance, with exciting news that it will be curated by David Littler of the 'Sampler - culture-clash' project. 'Sampler-culture-clash' is an international collective of dj's, embroiderers, sound artists, textile designers, dancers, spoken word artists, curators and graffiti artists. Together they are exploring the connections between textiles and sound and the cultures of embroidery and Dj-ing using the common word "sampler" as the starting point for investigation. Their philosophy is to create spaces where a diverse range of people can come together to meet, to share, to learn, to generate new ideas, to make collectively and to have fun. As the Director of SIT I am thrilled and excited that David has agreed to do this and believe it to be a new and exciting direction for the festival. Alongside there will be the satellite events, talks, small exhibitions, the Textile Open Studio Trail, and more, much more.

But all this excellence and innovation is under threat. With the severe cuts to the arts in the UK, Stroud International Textiles, or SIT, and the festival has to raise £25,000 in order to apply to funding bodies for the financial support needed to deliver the programme. SIT is taking the initiative and appealing to all lovers of textiles and contemporary crafts. You can make a donation of any amount to save the festival by going to the website and donating on line or by sending a cheque (which can of course be put against tax) to the office.

If everybody who loves textiles and the arts and have attended the festivals could donate £10 we would be well on the way to securing the festival and Stroud International's future.

To learn more about the festival and Stroud International Textiles go to <http://www.stroudinternationaltextiles.org.uk>

We look forward to welcoming you to this inspiring and absorbing festival and to any of the year round events that take place.



*Norma Starzakowna*



**Stroud International Textiles  
Five Valleys Foyer  
Gloucester Street  
Stroud GL5 1QG  
Tel. 0044 (0)1453 751056**



## Australian Design Award Promotes Emerging Textile Design Talent

By Pat Jones,  
Melbourne, Australia

RMIT University's department of Textile Design (TAFE) recently celebrated three of its graduating students becoming finalists in the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Dreamweaver Design Award. The award, as sponsored by Warwick Fabrics (Australia) aims to encourage students and emerging textile designers to produce a range of fabrics for commercial upholstery and woven interiors. The award is aimed at students in their final year of study and to recent graduates within one year's completion of a tertiary textile design

course at an Australian University or TAFE.

Students are asked to submit a range of fabrics and co-ordinating designs, suitable for commercial upholstery. Students also submit a concept board and a story board to support their collection. Now its seventh year, the award is the only national prize for woven textiles and is one of a few opportunities for Australian students to receive exposure to industry as well as work with manufacturers. As such students undertake their work, understanding the level of competition is high, as a result each year the standard of work becomes higher.

The award has three main phases, the initial selection by a panel of judges where the three finalists are chosen. This year, the finalists were Carla Grbac, John Brooks and Mariam Qazag all from RMIT University Textile Design (TAFE – Technical and Further Education) department. The next phase the three finalists travelled to Beaulieu Pacific Mill in Queensland to work with the Textile design team in an intensive one day design exercise



**Mariam Qazag.**  
**Dreamweaver winner**

to translate their designs into commercial fabrics to be woven at the Mill. The final fabrics are then used to upholster commercial furniture.

Each finalist then attends the final judging phase, an interview with the selection panel, all of whom are selected by Max Warwick and represent industry. It was during the interview process that Mariam Qazag was selected as winner. Max Warwick commented "*Mariam's work stood out as it demonstrated excellence in design, ability and creativity, and this was recognised by the panel of judges.*"

Mariam received her award at a gala celebration at the Warwick Fabrics' showroom in August and as winner, Mariam will travel with the Warwick Fabrics design team to Belgium in September 2011, where she will attend the world's largest international trade fair for fabrics and furnishings, MoOD (formerly Decosit). Mariam will also visit Mills by sponsor company Beaulieu Fabrics.

Owner and Managing Director of Warwick Fabrics, Max Warwick, said: "We have some incredible design talent in Australia and it is my passion to highlight these young designers and to potentially promote them on to the world stage."

RMIT University is one of a handful of university's worldwide that offers students the experience to design and produce hand woven jacquard cloths on an ARM Jacquard Loom. Access to the loom provides students with the opportunity to sample designs for jacquard weaving for commercial fabrics and artistic practices.

RMIT University offers an Advanced Diploma in Textile Design and Development (TAFE) and students interested in a career in textile design can undertake electives in the first year of the program (weave, knit, tapestry, and print) and in the second and third years of the program students undertake specialist units in their elective of choice. RMIT also offers specialist CAD units in Industry relevant software programs and digital design.

[www.rmit.edu.au/textiledesign](http://www.rmit.edu.au/textiledesign)

[www.warwick.com.au/about-warwick\\_design-award.aspx](http://www.warwick.com.au/about-warwick_design-award.aspx)

# Ildikó Dobrányi Foundation

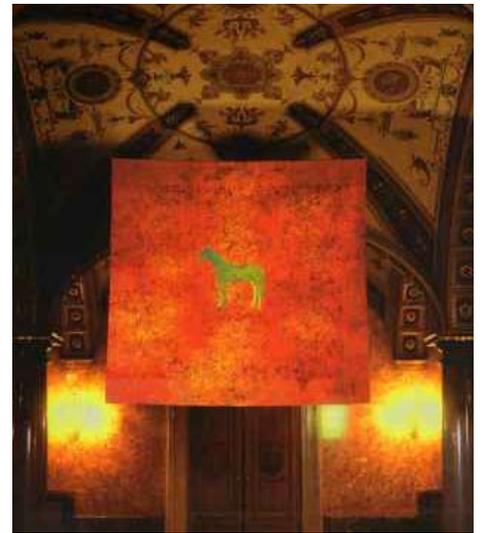
By Ibolya Hegyi,  
Budapest

In Hungary, the personal, autonomous woven tapestry genre developed in the twentieth century in response to the pioneering efforts and teaching activity of Noémi Ferenczy.

Ildikó Dobrányi (1948–2007) was one of the most significant figures in tapestry art in Hungary. A talented organiser in the field, she graduated from the Department of Tapestry (which had been founded by Noémi Ferenczy) at the Hungarian Academy of Applied Arts (today the Moholy-Nagy University of Arts). Her talent and her great knowledge of weaving contributed to the rebirth of the tapestry genre. Like Noémi Ferenczy before her, she argued passionately that design and execution could not be separated from one another in tapestry art, since it is the weaving that breathes life into a composition.

Voicing the above conviction, Ildikó Dobrányi served, from 1996 onwards, after the changeover in Hungary, as elected president of the Association of Hungarian Tapestry Artists. The Association set as its goal the advancement of the tapestry genre. The Association's two *Kárpit* exhibitions at the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts came about in accordance with this endeavour, as did its publication of the volume *Tapestry Art in Hungary*, in Hungarian and English.

The Ildikó Dobrányi Foundation was set up in the spring of 2009 by the architect Dániel Kulinyi (Ildikó's son) and the art historian László Szabó. Its curators are the art historians Edit András, Miklós Mojzer, and Emese Pásztor, the literary historian Katalin Schulcz, and the tapestry artists Marika Száraz and Ibolya Hegyi.



The Foundation was established to represent, support, and defend the autonomous woven tapestry genre in the spirit of the efforts made by Ildikó Dobrányi herself.

Among the goals set out in the Foundation's charter are the maintenance and broadening of ties with leading figures, organisations, and institutions in the field. In line with these goals, and to mark Hungary's forthcoming presidency of the European Union in 2011, the Foundation has formulated its first project. Announced jointly with the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Brussels, this will be entitled *Web of Europe*. In it, tapestry will appear as a contemporary medium that bears in mind its European and Brussels traditions.

A list of the artists invited to participate, and a detailed description of the project itself, can be seen on the Foundation's website: [www.dobranryfallfoundation.hu](http://www.dobranryfallfoundation.hu)

An installation, *Web of Europe* will be on display at the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels from 5 May to 31 July 2011 and then at the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, in autumn 2011. The installation will be accompanied by a catalogue in Hungarian and English.

In the near future, we plan to organise an international tapestry conference. This, the curators hope, will contribute to a reappraisal of the tapestry genre. They believe that the time has now come for this renewed visual, artefactual, and space-shaping genre, long associated with built spaces but now absent as a separate department in Hungarian higher education, to be reintegrated into built spaces and the Hungarian university curriculum alike.

# The Unusual Print Fabric's Elegance During the Fifties.

By Renata Pompas,  
Milano, Italy

Since Margherita Rosina took on the management of the MuST (Museo Studio del Tessuto della Fondazione Antonio Ratti), the museum's regard towards historical research focused on the modes of production of silk in the Como (Italy) area. As a matter of fact, after the interesting and well-documented retrospectives dedicated to Carla Badiali ("*Carla Badiali - Designing Textiles*", *Texere News & Info*, October 2007) and Guido Ravasi, this year in Villa Grumello (Como) has been unveiled the beautiful exhibition dedicated to "Filande e Tessitura Costa." A very important Italian silk manufacturer of the fifties in which the exhibition displays the textile designs created by Andrée Brossin de Méré.

Margherita Rosina and Francina Chiara, together with the "Archivio di Stato di Como" (Como's Information Centre) and the Insubria University, managed to classify, thanks to a deep and lengthy research, all the researched material. They succeeded to put in order: the accounting and the correspondence; over a thousand of the compositions recorded and grouped together according to consistent themes; the samples; the drawings and the news item. Whilst the transparencies and the text sheets are still due to be classified yet.

The great success of Filande e Tessitura Costa for their spinning and weaving factories arose in the fifties, at the time of the Italian high fashion birth. This achievement has been due to their collaboration with the Swiss creator Andrée Brossin de Méré, a peculiar professional who managed to be, at the same time, a fashion designer and a skillful manager. The ten-year working relationship between the creator and the firm helped to promote the Filande e Tessitura Costa production and to introduce it to the Haute Couture's foreign markets.

Andrée Brossin de Méré employed a peculiar working method by working together with some illustrators, who put her ideas into practice and juxtaposed her sketches, achieving



unusual and impressive results. Méré showed her originality with the choice of the subjects: not only the classic flowers, but also architectural elements, fruit and vegetables, chinoiserie, reproductions of porcelain items, chandeliers, glasses, photographic wooden paneling, etcetera... She was very peculiar also in her choice of arranging those subjects with thick and continuous patterns, which left no space for the background, and in the choice of a colouring that was at the same time elegant and dauntless. This distinctive and peculiar style helped Méré to establish herself as a worldwide acknowledged creative artist and achieved international success, possibly to the detriment of that of the firm's.

Open-minded towards the avant-garde, Méré hit it off very well with photographers. She used to commission black and white pictures of subjects of her choice by the most prominent professionals of the time, then, she would cut those images in order to rewrite them in collages according to her inspiration. These collages were juxtaposed and translated into drawings by Méré's co-workers, and then she would choose the colouring. The most eminent among these collaborators was beyond any doubt the abstractionist painter Manlio Rho from Como. In the exhibition it is possible to admire two of his textiles: one composed of various Persian cats' heads brought closer to each other in order to constitute a single hard-

coated fur coat; the other one is composed of mink skins set in a herringbone composition, an idea of the Swiss creator. It may be of a certain interest to remember that, in the very same years, the abstractionist painter Luigi Veronesi was at work. Since the thirties Veronesi worked also as a textile designer and as an experimenter for the off camera techniques. He forged abstract compositions by means of the contact technique, which is done by means of arranging various objects on the photosensitive papers before printing them.



Another set of prints, which has been thereafter imitated by many stylists, is that dedicated to the Bijoux (1955). Here are mixed together different elements such as jewellery, gem stones, strings of pearls, perfect flowers, big chains, hatpins and golden jersey skeleton of corals. Sets of fruit baskets, framed in an oval garland and with the colours of the gem stones inlaid, set against a black background, reminds one of certain previous prints of Versace, whilst the brushstroke big roses and

She was drawn to the attention of the international press thanks to Dior, who presented seven Costa textiles printed in seven exclusive colour ways chosen by Méré in the S/S collection in 1951. Later on the Swiss creative stunned the world by conceiving a set of prints representing vegetable garden products, exclusively designed for Hubert de Givenchy, the rising star of Haute Couture. Méré proposed various patterns of melons, peaches, lemons, berries, peppers and peas, all with an explosion of sunny colors. It may be worthwhile to recall the funny lemons

with the spiral cut peel arranged in diagonal lines and the remarkable thick waterfall of open green pea pods. And how could we forget the red peppers carpet spaced out by their price tags?

Scrolls, jade sculptures, Japanese prints and architectonical ruins a la French Arcadia open up the space for one of the most unusual subjects in the textile design: the huge Murano or Baccarat crystal chandeliers portrayed almost at their natural size (S/S 1954). The research also managed to recover and classify the photographic preparatory collages, the textiles and an article from the fashion magazine "Novità" which illustrates two Givenchy dresses: a pink and a light blue one.

their long stalks reminds one of the subsequent works of Ken Scott. Between a flower and a bouquet, Méré managed to go beyond any expectations drawing her inspiration from the page of cookbooks dedicated to the art of introducing the food. In the S/S 1959 she submitted: themes of fruits and jellies; triumphs of lobsters and sea elements; a semi abstract design of several layers of chips all over it!

After this magical decade, the "Filande e Tessitura Costa" chose not to renew the collaboration with the Swiss creator and their productions gradually lost their originality and changed to plain and self-colored textiles. It was the end for a unique and unusually creative period.



**Museo Studio del Tessuto/MuST**  
[www.fondazioneratti.org](http://www.fondazioneratti.org)

**Catalogue:**  
**L'età dell'eleganza. Le Filande e Tessitura Costa nella Como degli anni Cinquanta.**  
 A cura di Margherita Rosina e Francina Chiara  
**Nodo libri, Como, 2010-07-05**  
[www.nodolibri.it](http://www.nodolibri.it)

# Fiberscapes-solo exhibition 2010

Artist's statement by  
**WU, Pei-Shan, Taiwan**

## Preface

The remainders of the emotion will, with sadness and disillusion, produce a variety of narrations, which tell and hear many stories. In the last two years, I began to explore the images of memory. My grandma was sick and taken care of in my uncle's place in Kaohsiung, on September 8, 2002.

At the end of the winter of the last year, I glimpsed at my grandma's dressing table in Yunlin County, which had been kept as it was for eight years. Thus, with layers and layers of dust compiled on the table, I planned to clean this table, which was still adorable to me. While cleaning, I found many products were out of use: the evaporated perfume, the decayed ointment, the half-melted plastic bottle, and the yellowed paper box. Those products, old and decayed, were put into one paper box, and were planned to be thrown away.

However, unconsciously, I picked up the old products from the box and then scrubbed them one by one. I finally decided to take all of them away.

*Each object has its own history, which is commonly shared by me and my grandma. The object can be a bottle or a picture, and then, that's all.*

While I wanted to search for an answer, the doubt appears contingent and marginal. The "unattainable" essence of things is surrounded with the time and the things. If this sort of anxiety is a necessary condition, it foretells that the artist's failure toward the incompleteness from the totality to the infinitesimal—the failure of being able to sort and have a whole view. Then I invented a technology of my own to create the potentiality.

## My Idea Waiting for the reshaping

My mind suddenly stops, and then begins to tell the story, sometimes fragmentary yet sometimes continuous. It is like the "bullet time effect," as Eivind Rossaak in his "Figures of Sensation: Between Still and Moving Images" notes. The hacker Trinity



***Wu's final piece for her MA made from Collar, portrait, Kyong Bok Kung fur leather and transfer printing***

hides behind the computer man, who exclaims, "Freeze." Then she jumps up in the freeze air. The six video cameras simultaneously begin to shoot, and they demonstrate one figure from six different angles at the same moment. This totally changes and even goes beyond the classic use of slow motion and the use of stop motion. We also pay attention to the leotard in Trinity which will sparkle with the divided lens! The object, at this very moment, demonstrates itself.

I was so intent on giving an explanation to fibre arts and the life; I can't restrain my impulse to tell, while the emotions uncontrollably surge and emerge. The fibre art is imminent in the duration and the repetitive manual doing. This allows me to deal with the files, which are sometimes so intimate yet sometimes so unfamiliar. The materials will reveal themselves, with the time-consuming and repetitive making; they offer a view from a certain angle, a figure, a concept to the world. This is what I call, "Fiberscapes."

## The sensible figure of an image

The process of the art creation is complicated and long. It requires many channels, experiments and reshaping to produce an "artwork" with the logic of sensation. We can't help but think that we can observe the skin

of the image (or the ghost's skin) in order to escape the narration of the work and then, more importantly, liberate the image object from this narration. It is indeed a challenge for an artist to write on the one hand and to create on the other. The creation can hardly be separate from writing, but the gap may sometimes push the artist to the edge of mental chaos. While writing, I mentally underwent the woe and sorrow of my grandma's demise on June 12 this year. The object of hers, all of a sudden, becomes the witness—the witness of the object of the deceased. However, how should I deal with the objects and documents from the spirit? What, then, is enshrouded upon the image ghost's skin, the inward-outward boundary between the visible and the invisible?

## Theory An inquiry of essence

What is the essence of the fiber art? I think there is another phenomenon behind the question: the form of fiber art is plural with a variety of technologies, such as the digital tools. Hence, another question I want to propose is: *what* is its essence after the fiber art is connected with diverse and heterogeneous art forms today? This sort of inquiry may, to some extent, focus on the expression of the

materials. First, "essence" suggests a permanent meaning, which includes the inward and the outward parts of an artwork. However, the inquiry of whether the fiber art has "essence" suggests a principle that will make the production and appreciation of beauty become absolutely epistemological. It can't help but become fixed. Although this sort of reply may seem incomplete, it compels me to think: we can find a new concept from a fragment, which may go beyond the limit of the structure.

### **The meaning of the fiber art history**

The fiber arts have originated from the dyeing-weaving craft in American around the 1970s. They have their unique form of expression. With the evolution of different materials, the fibers available for use begin to boom. The expression medium of the fiber arts are: printing, painting, weaving, embroidering, knitting, collage, etc. If we were allowed to use "spectrum" to describe the relation between fiber arts and the dyeing-weaving, then the fiber art can have the most beautiful gradient of colours.

The expression of the traditional weaving is multiple and complicated. Weaving can be one of the most primitive skills in the daily life of the civilization before the industrialization. The development of weaving skills and the civilization are closely related, suggesting that the evolution of one civilization depends mainly on the skills of clothing production. For example, some oracle bone scripts in Shang Dynasty (of Ancient China) have shown the Chinese characters, such as *mulberry*, *silkworm*, *silk*, etc. This reflects that the mass production of the clothes render the traditional weaving craft as the memory, which is so distant and unattainable.

The boundary between art and craft is blurring and many artists are beginning to use the traditional dyeing-weaving vocabulary: the technique of dyeing-weaving is not only a skill, but also a symbolic sign. It is concerned with the issues such as weaving, needlework, the femininity, the post-colonialism, feminism, etc. The technique of dyeing-weaving is time-honoured: each skill and materi-

al is tinged with the historical and cultural development. The manual labour is provocatively obvious: labour embodies one's mode of being, which is relatively different from other modes of being. This seems to suggest that when one piece of artwork reaches its ultimate, it will be transformed into another sphere. Then it will be collected with a rich variety of creative expressions.

### **The Ghost without returns....**

In the days of mourning, most people feel curious and confused about the rumour of "the Seventh Day," which suggests that the spirit of the deceased will return after seven days of death. This is also concerned with one's relation to home—one's permanent dwelling of spirit. But, the question is, how can we visualize and even embody the soul, which is absolutely abstract.

Some spirits can't return, as the rumours go, because of their resentment, regrets or helplessness. They wander in the mortal's world, and still attempt to search for their route of home. This explanation has already presumed the existence of "home," which is already a concrete concept. A spirit who can't return home and it wanders in the place which doesn't belong to it; the apparition of the spirit arrives, invites, and gives promises.

### **Surrealism**

In the 1930s, the surrealist Meret Oppenheim began her work about the containers and their symbolic implication. With the emergence of the found object ("*objet trouvé*") in 1914, the boundary between art and the daily object becomes blurred. After the 1950s, the traditional manual craftwork is transformed from the common object to an artistic expressive material. In terms of the material, it offers a new possibility for the art creation, including its quality, tactile, and its variation of forms. The material, with its symbolic significance, expands its existing mode of being. Oppenheim combines the two familiar objects, leather and cups, together in order to evoke the eerie and paradoxical effect. This, moreover, symbolizes a

sexual symbol of secret life and erotic imagination.

### **The skills -The manual traces**

What is the essence of the fiber art? Or, does the fiber art have the essence? I think there is another phenomenon behind the question: the form of fiber art is multiple with a variety of technologies, such as the digital tools. Hence, another question I want to propose is: what is its essence after the fiber art is connected with diverse and heterogeneous art forms today? This sort of inquiry may, to some extent, focus on the expression of the materials. First, "essence" suggests a permanent meaning, which includes the inward and the outward parts of an artwork. However, the inquiry of whether the fiber art has any "essence" suggests a principle that will make the production and appreciation of the beauty become an absolutely epistemological task. It can't help but become fixed. Although this sort of reply may seem incomplete, it compels me to think: we can find a new concept from a fragment, which may go beyond the limit of the structure. It sometimes comes to a paradox when we employ the image to express an object.

### **Non-image**

This has been related, as John Berger argues in *About Looking* (1992), to the decline of religion and the rise of the photographer. This compels us to think about the early photography applied to the photography of the portrait, suggesting that one's face is closely related to one's spirit. If we can photograph someone's facial expression at that moment, we can, to some extent, preserve his/her thoughts and emotions. Hence, it is no surprise that the camera replaces the eye of God. There is a breakthrough for the fibre work, which was sometimes considered material. In the past, the production of the image required silk screen and thermal transfer technique. However, now, the breakthrough remains in the fact that the materials on the surface can produce the structure of the pictorial patterns. This is, no doubt, a historical breakthrough. The "imagary" of the

non-image permits the artists to focus on the structural arrangement without any limitation, and more importantly, escapes the narration of the image-story. This may, I would argue, allow the artists to find the free possibility within the limit of techniques.

## **The trace of the light and dark**

One of the photography's features is to *witness*. If photography is a periodical product, then the image copied on the cloth equally suggests its re-composition, a new product with a new context.

Joseph Beuys' artistic features come from the anthroposophy, which is not from the traditionally used "thermal materials," such as the felt, fat, honey, and dead rabbits. The application of the "plastic substance" ("plastische substanz") has broken through the earlier emphasis on the superficial form and colour of one product. The content of the leather products has, moreover, multiple significations, such as the step-by-step procedure of production from skin to leather and the multiple imagery of the physical and chemical changes.

## **Concluding remark**

I've been doing fiber creation for more than ten years now. However, if the discussion of the "fiber art" fails to have any theoretical foundation, its development and continuation may come to a deadlock. Well, how should I begin, in case the fiber art may fall into the pitfall of the fixed and ossified form and definition?

A simple conclusion: fiber art, with its time-consuming production and the internal coordination, is sometimes a structural, decorative, accessory, except for its forms. It has, however, many internal dialogues, despite the fact that its content is distilled and then becomes silent, with the long time of production. I am trying to think of any possibility to transform the identity.

In summer, 2004, I attended the Philosophy Workshop, which was held by the Institute of Philosophy at National Sun Yat-sen University, and then encountered Prof. Fabian Heubel. His idea of "Technology and Chi" totally

eluded me. Actually I at that moment hadn't had any opportunity of reading any of Prof. Heubel's papers or books. I even read Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* as a novel. The two experiences which suddenly enlighten my philosophical thought are: Prof. Chen Kai Huang's elucidation without any period in his class and Prof. Gong Jow-Jiun's metaphor of Lord of the Rings as to the idea of "resonance." Philosophy is for understanding, not for reading. So why do I have to *read* philosophy? And what's the relation between my work and my life.

After four years, I came to Prof. Herbel's seminar again. Suddenly, the confused mind of four years ago becomes enlightened. Then I am pondering how I can, all of a sudden, become enlightened after I returned to his seminar four years later. Philosophy, if deeply internalized in one's heart, will reveal itself after it finds a proper channel of expression. I am trying to ask: Can philosophy and aesthetics be a methodology, or even a "science of creation"? I have a sensible capability as an artist and "witness" the process of creation, but I fail to find a language to communicate with "the humans."

## **To bridge the gap between theory and practice**

One challenging question proposed in my M.A. presentation constantly haunts me: Is it your method of trying to avoid by employing other artistic forms, such as literature and movie? I was totally stunned to silence at that time. As I recalled, I found that there were only murmurs in my M.A. thesis. Ambitious as I was, I could hardly find a channel for the piece of artwork to communicate with others. In my thesis, some were personal, some were fragmentary, and some were my true thought striving to find a way of communication. Like the dog of the Babel Tower, my right to voice and articulate was, however, silenced. Then I discovered, after I began to read some theories, that only when I leave the thought in a communicable field can the artwork evoke its questions and even answers.

Most artists are unable to articulate—this inability to articulate doesn't

directly concern with the artist's talent but with his/her failure to deal with the problems and condition of the artwork. Each artist has his/her own technology of self, which is the *praxis* of subjectivity; however, the drive to keep the artist's constant self-transformation requires experiments and researches.

## **The trap of knowledge: to begin with "the illiterate"**

But, we are deeply constricted by the environment—the environment of capitalism. When you want to give a critique on it, it just slips away.

This can be a series of Q&A.

After watching Chaplin's *Modern Times*, we may sometimes "accuse" the Industry of the "unreasonable" problems from a single perspective. After we analyze the problems from the Industry, we keep asking: What, then, should we do? The reply may sometimes remain on one's emotions, such as resentment and discontent. Yes, and then—should we throw away the tools and return to the good old agricultural society? Or should we then create a humanistic work environment? But it still sounds absurd, since by doing this, we still fall into the trap of capitalism, which is so slippery and untouchable. Now, my reading of the issue of "capitalism is totally illiterate" is no longer the resistance, but its potential pitfall, i.e., capitalism will render an individual an ossified being or a living illiterate.

Now I have double positions: one as an artistic practitioner and the other as a theoretical researcher. I am currently a Ph D student in the Doctorial Program in Art Creation and Criticism at Tainan Nation College of the Arts. On the one hand, I have to systematically integrate the theoretical discourse and discussion, and on the other hand, I have to empirically do the fieldwork, such as the knowledge of "fiber art event" so, anything concerning the aesthetic and art history will be dealt with in order for a wider and better perspective. Moreover, the daily praxis is intertwined between the critique and creation.



## A Virtuoso Performance

By Erika Cohn, Germany

Our Member Katrin Volmers teaches costume design and making at the Anna -Siemens School of Costume Design and this summer I was privileged to see the biannual presentation of her students' examination work. This took place in the hall of a former machine factory, which is now a place for theatre, dance and other groups from all over the world who perform their events in these special surroundings.

Each year the students follow a different theme and this year the costumes were inspired by quotations from literature and historical events and statements of famous men.

Here are some of the examples taken from the catalogue:- "URBANE FUTURE" The student had designed a gentleman's overcoat, at the back of which there were pockets with button and buttonholes, in which the gentleman could carry all the utensils like a laptop, a mobile telephone, and other modern office equipment with him.

"EXACTLY to the POINT" A mother presented a costume, designed by her daughter. She looked very elegant in a suit with a jacket covering the hips over a long clinging skirt. The big black

collar and the black cape contrasted with the main fabric of fine wool with irregular black spots. The mother, who acted as the fashion model, showed that not only young slim girls could present these special garments.

"FAIRY of BIRCH GROVE" A poem of the Irish writer W.B. Yeats gave the source of inspiration for the creation of the "Fairy of the Birch Grove".

"Come fairies take me out of this dull world, For I would ride with you upon the wind. And dance upon the mountains like a flame."

Against a backcloth painted as a birch grove, the fairy glided along wearing a layered, full skirted dress of white silk with the layers edged in black silk which swung when the model was moving across the stage. The close fitting strapless bodice, with a black embroidered stomacher, had butterfly wings attached at the back. The construction of the wings was amazing with the white silk, held taut in a wire frame, with the butterfly markings in black silk. Detached floating white sleeves were also enhanced with black embroidery and black borders. The technical construction was fascinating.

In front of a backcloth showing a fleet of ships with full sails there stood "THE MASTER and COMMANDER", showing a scene from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The motto is the following:

"When we are at the end of the world this is still our home, this ship is ENGLAND"

Determined the master stands in a full suit of dark fabric with golden buttons and epaulettes and the light fabric of the waistcoat and the tight breeches, giving the impression of a ship's commander.

"THE FIGUREHEAD"

On old ships the bow is sometimes decorated with a figure - head. The sculpture is usually of the upper part of a female body carved in wood and colourfully painted which is looking out to warn of danger on the rough seas.

"The eyes, tired from watching out Into the far distance Riding on the waves, Splashing foam and sometimes Uncertain..."

The model presented a blue dress with a strapless bodice embroidered with shining pearls, the clinging long skirt ended in a hem, painted to show the foam of the sea.

The female figure head is usually a hint to the female name of

the ships. It said "die Queen Mary II (in German), she is sailing to New York.

SWING KINGS

One of the highlights brought the presentation of the swing era to life. Swing was the most popular dancing style of the jazz age during the 1920's and 30's A couple were dressed in the style of the 1920's, the girl in a short white frock with a black top, a flower in the waved hair, the partner in dark trousers, a short coat, white shirt and a tie, dancing in "full swing" fascinated the audience. They tap danced always in new formations as the soles of the shoes had small plates of metal, intensifying the rhythm of the music. The models not only presented their costumes, they also played their role which made the show even more fascinating.

After the presentation one could have a closer look at the costumes and the designers gave some explanations.

I was - among other things - very impressed by the ingenious cutting, the perfect drapery and the fit, for example of this garment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which I liked most.

Now we look forward to the next presentation in two years time.



# The Kaunas Textiles Biennial

You will all have read by now about the next ETN meeting which will take place during the Kaunas Textiles Biennial next September. I have been in contact with Virginija Vitkiene who is organising this exciting event. She has informed me that a room has been reserved for a TEXERE General Meeting during the conference, so I hope that many of you will be there to attend this meeting.

She has also agreed that TEXERE members and their students may exhibit some art works on the subject of REWIND. If we have enough people taking part we can have an exhibiting space during the conference or for a longer period. If there are just a few people taking part we can have satellite exhibitions maybe in shop windows in the town, near the conference venue. In any case who ever wishes to take part they can have some exhibition space, depending on the size of the art works. I would need to send images of examples of the art works in advance so that a suitable exhibiting space can be allocated.

It is not possible to be a part of the International Students' Exhibition as the Textile Departments taking part are from academies which already have close contacts with the Kaunas Textile Department, so your students' work would be a separate exhibition.

You will have read about the three themes of Rewind, Past, Present and Future, so you could work to any of these three themes. You may submit your own individual work or that of your students, but in this case, as I am suggesting larger sizes than last time, **please choose the best 10 works from your students** because of the cost of transport and space available.

**Rewind Past** This could be inspired by topics such as, the history of your region e.g. costumes or traditional textiles, a period of art such as art nouveau, art deco, Roman or Greek art etc. or family history.

**Rewind Present** This should be a way of expressing yourselves and your interests in textiles.

**Rewind Future** This could be textiles of an experimental character and futuristic in concept.

You may work in which ever textiles medium you normally work with and it may be 3 dimensional if you wish, but it must be fairly small and light because of transport costs. Design works and 2 dimensional work, such as embroideries and weaving, should be no more than A3 in size for the same reason particularly if you are posting it to Kaunas. Also it should not be presented with glass or heavy frames because of weight and safety. Sorry to put limitations on the size and weight of work but this is for practical reasons. If you are attending the conference you may take the work to Kaunas yourself and display it the day before the conference starts. Virginija is appointing someone to take care of the Texere exhibits and to organise and help with their display. It will be necessary to send photographs of your work and details of size to me when it is completed so that I can send these to the person who will be appointed and she can then find the most suitable area for their display before the work arrives. If you are not attending the conference but wish to exhibit some work please tell me and I will let you know where you should send it to.

Now that you have more details about the conference and the themes I do hope that many of you will choose to take part in the TEXERE exhibition. As Kaunas is celebrating 70 years of Textiles education it would be very appropriate if TEXERE, as a Textiles Education Working Group, celebrating 21 years, could make a good contribution to this festival. Please let me know as soon as possible if you as an individual or your group of students wish to take part.

We already have a few groups and individuals who wish to take part and I hope that more of you will decide to join them. I will send you further details about deadlines as soon as I can verify them with the organisers. If you have any further questions don't hesitate to ask me.

**Patricia Christy**

# REWIND