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HANDMADE TALES: SUSTAINABLE FASHION
THROUGH CRAFT CONNECTIONS



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2016

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ABSTRACT

India is a country with an ancient history. The crafts of this country are diverse and are a reflection of the country's cultural heritage. According to Dasra (2013), the craft industry provides millions of artisans with employment and is one of the largest small scale or cottage industries. For centuries, these craft communities have specialized in traditions that are specific to the regions and respective skills, which have been handed down from generations of artisans. Yet in recent years, as Wood (2011) notes, this sector faces a major threat as a result of growing preference for mass produced designs that are cheap and easy to afford. This has contributed to the steady decline of craft based products. This, alongside a lack of knowledge of new innovative ways to design, and decreasing demand for their products have left the craftspeople very vulnerable and has posed a big threat to their sustainable livelihoods.

Integrating fashion design with artisan textiles can help regenerate the community and village culture while enhancing the value of products. This practice led research project offers a framework to meet the emerging challenges associated with ethical and environmental principles linked with fashion by incorporating sustainable processes used in traditional craft production. Importantly, it can also offer one strategy to support economic sustainability issues linked to the livelihood of craftspeople at the village level.

The project develops an example of a sustainable fashion design process by drawing from the rich heritage of Indian crafts and focuses on developing a fashion collection that integrates artisan craft textiles into the design process. This reaches out to a market that is sensitive towards sustainability issues linked to artisan livelihood and fashion and values the handmade and organic as an alternative approach. This exploration of issues related to sustainability both for fashion design and craft is an attempt to uncover why developing a relationship between the two is significantly more relevant today than it ever has been.

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INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT AND PROJECT OUTLINE

Over the last two decades, I have been involved with the design industry, wherein I have been committed to the development of new ideas related to design and craft and have developed a deep understanding of the importance and potential of design to bring change. Using traditional materials and processes and working in collaboration with craftspeople, my work has always been rooted in cultural and traditional aspects related to contemporary designs. I have consistently endeavored to highlight their traditional knowledge and uniqueness to create an appreciation for artisan creativity and skills.

Along my own journey, I have been inspired by the work of various designers, artisans and organizations and they have helped me take a step ahead to pave the way towards a sustainable and socially responsible design practice. This interaction led to a growing interest in design thinking, theories and methodologies, and social impact of design. Through these interactions, I have come to understand that as designers we need to address the concerns being raised about sustainable ways of designing and bear the responsibility in re-designing and re-thinking the design process and systems to address these concerns. We must also understand the responsibility on our shoulders to preserve our traditional craft skills and cultures for future generations to cherish.

This practice-led research responds to the above experiences and examines the importance of design and of responsibility. It builds on my desire to contribute to the advancement of a sustainable and socially responsible design practice. I believe we have a choice to become truly sustainable in our design process in two possible ways:

One is by adopting sustainable methods of production and consumption, which minimize harm to the environment by incorporating minimal waste and using environment friendly methods of production. This can be achieved by incorporating the use of ancient artisanal production methods and techniques into the design process. The other angle looks at the economic sustainability of artisan crafts and village lifestyles, which can be strengthened by a deepening of a relationship between the fashion design process and artisan textile production. This strives to open more opportunities for the artisans' livelihoods at the village level.

This project addresses these concerns and issues around sustainability and is broken up into five sections, where every section is specific towards the understanding of the overall concepts, issues and practices that arise from the study. Each chapter tries to address the core issues and concerns put forth and do so by forming a conversation.

The first section explores and investigates the central proposition of the research and outlines the aims, objectives and research question that arise out of the concerns being addressed. The second section studies the relevant literature and provides a solid contextual framework relevant to the study. This helps reinstate and understand the aims and objectives and how to achieve them. It also studies examples of practices of individuals, designers and organizations in India and across the world who are actively engaged in this field of work. The third section discusses the research methodology adopted leading to the fourth and substantive section, which discusses the process followed to achieve the goals set forth. The last section establishes an outcome which is achieved through the final design work and thus helps reach a conclusion specific to the aim.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The study aims to design a fashion collection that uses artisanal craft textiles. These textiles incorporate the traditional hand techniques of weaving, dyeing and embroidery into the design process. This supports wider strategies of sustainable design and production methods and the economic sustainability of village lifestyle.

The fashion design process draws on traditional dress, and contemporary approaches by using geometric forms. These forms take their inspiration from the traditional kimono and Indian sari, both cultural dress forms that incorporate geometric forms and are worn by draping around the body. By using explorative methods of design, the objective is to enable innovation and adaptability within the product and engage the creativity of the designer and wearer to help build a relationship with the designed product. This process thus aims to prolong the product's life cycle while keeping the focus on sustainable methods of production. Through this, it reaches out to a market that cares for and is aware of the concerns discussed above.

The project places priority on well-made designs that transcend age and seasons and are ethically and environmentally produced. These designs create value by merging ancient knowledge with sustainable design processes and strive to be at the forefront of contemporary design yet deeply embedded in the Indian cultural heritage.

The primary question for this research project is:

How can a connection between fashion design and artisan textiles develop new design directions that support the production of village craft?

CONTEXTUAL THEORY

SUSTAINABILITY IN DESIGN THROUGH ARTISANAL CRAFT

To understand the research context, I started my study by exploring definitions of sustainability and its relevance to my research. Since I am looking at sustainability from different value systems, I divided it up into two broad and well-defined directions for study. Two key areas emerged. The first was sustainable fashion, the current fashion and consumption systems and the impact on the environment. The second area that emerged was that of economic sustainability within artisanal craft production at the village level.

Sustainability, as defined by Gordon and Hill (2015), is an ecological system that maintains a good balance of what is taken from the environment and what is renewed. According to Gordon and Hill, sustainable fashion is fashion that is environmentally and/or ethically conscious through its design and production methods.

As Khan, Vandevyvere and Allacker (2013) point out, this concern for sustainability is not new, but it has now regained its importance to address the environmental issues arising out of our excessive exploitation of natural resources, much of it being caused by the wasteful approach caused by the industrial revolution.

According to Fletcher (2014), this concern for sustainability applies more so to the fashion and textile industry as these two industries cause the maximum amount of pollution and waste, thus causing a significant environmental impact. Fletcher (2014) further emphasizes that this is largely due to the fact that consumers now drive the fashion industry to produce a large volume of low priced fashion products leading to greater consumption. Since fast fashion products are cheap, they tend not to cater to any emotional or symbolic value for the consumer and thus are not able to satisfy this need leading to mass buying patterns and increased waste. To address this concern, in 2007, she propagated a movement for fashion that was slow and was the exact opposite of what fast fashion is. This inspired the thinking of designers across the globe to work with alternative materials to create awareness and responsibility towards fashion and consumption. This focus on sustainability is also emphasized by Hethorn and Ulasewicz (2015) who reinforce the fact that fashion plays a very important role in sustainability as it is an intrinsic part of our lives. It can have a huge impact on the environment and its proper use can have a positive influence on the people consuming it and the environment as a whole.

The second dimension of sustainability is an attempt to understand the economic sustainability of Indian artisanal crafts at the village level. To understand this better, it was essential to first define what is *craft* and who is an *artisan* or *craftsperson*.

There are various definitions of craft from all over the world. In the Indian context, however, Dhamija's (2003) definition outlines craft as a means of self expression for the artisan creating the products and objects for personal use and also as a means of economic activity. Craft is a reflection of the artisan's way of life, and the heritage and skill which has been passed on to them through generations. It originally developed out of a necessity to fulfill everyday needs, however it has now evolved to appeal to a larger audience and has thus become a major economic activity for the craftspeople at the grassroots level.

Dhamija (2003), further defines a craftsperson as someone skilled in the technique of producing a craft object. These craftspeople use their creativity and knowledge for expressing their individuality and culture through this medium. These crafts produced by the craftspeople speak different languages and are a reflection of India's rich history and diversity and are a legacy that is passed on through generations. These provide a bridge between the modern and the traditional and are a powerful tool for cultural co- existence. For these craftspeople, crafts are a means of economic sustenance and everyday life (Figures 1-2).



Figure 1: Narayen, S. (1870). *Worker preparing thread for sari weaving*.

Retrieved from http://oldphotosbombay.blogspot.co.nz/2010/07/worker-preparing-thread-for-sari_14.htm

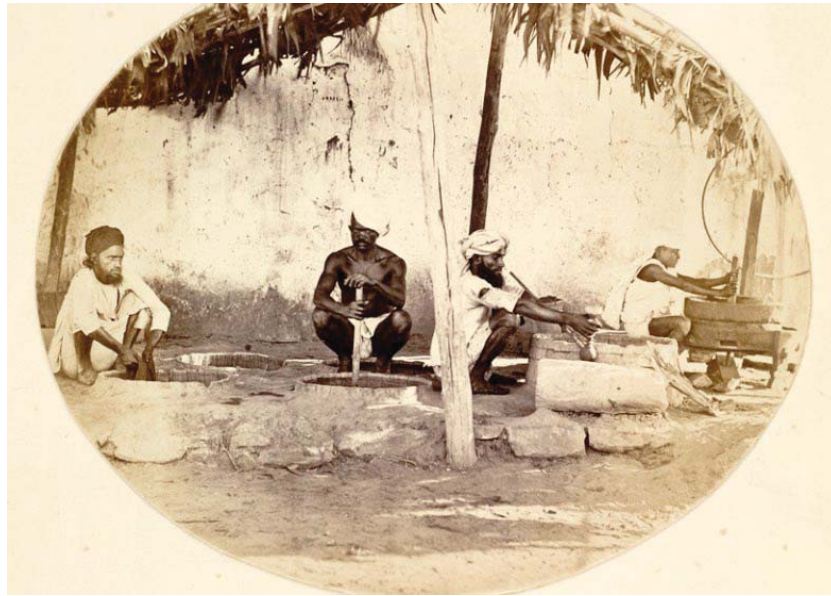


Figure 2: Narayan, S. (1870). *Dyers at work- Western India*.
Retrieved from http://oldphotosbombay.blogspot.co.nz/2010/07/dyers-at-work-western-india_14.html

According to Libel and Roy (2004), crafts provide employment and livelihood to a large number of people living in rural villages and help alleviate the poverty levels. It ensures that the craftspeople skilled in their traditions do not leave these in search of alternate income opportunities. However, with changing markets and preferences, they are sometimes forced to do so, thus endangering their traditions, which can ultimately get lost.

This is further emphasized by Wood (2011), who states that the rise of the industrial production has been one of the major factors responsible for replacing handmade production around the world. This has posed a significant threat to craft sustainability and our planets living systems and resources.

Looking at the current trends and market preferences for cheap mass-produced products due to the industrial revolution, Libel and Roy (2004), emphasize that protecting and preserving these craft traditions and skills, such that they continue to provide viable livelihoods for the craftspeople is now becoming a big challenge and needs to be addressed with great urgency. This is further intensified by the limitations faced by the artisans who have limited understanding and access to new markets and adapting to their needs.

According to Dasra (2013), since craft activities are very informal, there is an urgent need to organize this sector and build consumers interest in craft by sensitizing them to their history and value as a cultural tradition that needs to be preserved.

Ranjan and Ranjan (2009) suggest that evolving crafts to cater to open economies as a result of globalization, is the need of the hour such that it can provide a fresh perspective to this traditional knowledge. This can be used to support the welfare and economic sustainability of the artisans practicing these traditions in their villages.

From these discussions and thoughts, it is clear that crafts need a new perspective to cater to the changing needs therefore, the question that arises out of the above discussion is whether one can build a lasting relationship between fashion design and artisanal crafts to help address these sustainability concerns.

According to Fletcher (2014), since the present modes of consumption create an unsustainable approach to fashion, she feels that fashion needs to play another role that identifies with sustainability concerns and cultivates new aspirations in consumers. Besides a functional aim, fashion needs to address the individual emotional connection that a consumer can have to the designed product. This connection, according to her can be built by producing fashion that is based on values and skills and that are conscientious and sustainable. These designs can thus sustain communities and livelihoods along with protecting the environment.

Black (2008), suggests innovation in thinking of designers can lead to new trends and perceptions for fashion and thus create a new direction for this industry. Therefore, for achieving sustainability, a new approach to thinking needs to be set in place for bringing about change.

In keeping with this thought, Brown and Katz (2009) suggest a fresh approach to design that aligns our needs to the natural world. This new approach to design works by applying design thinking and principles across the whole process, to create not just better designed products but overall experiences which connect the consumer to the product. This new thinking applied to design is further emphasized by Peterson (2013), who explains that even though design is an old concept, it has always been fluent and changing. As compared to earlier times the design field has seen a significant shift towards a more reflective and creative practice and is more focused towards systems, services, and experiences rather than just material products.

According to Peterson, craft is one such medium through which we can create new and thoughtful approaches to design. We can build on this knowledge to design with a deeper understanding and sustainable practices and thus encourage emotional relationships of the consumers with the designed products.

However, Greenhalgh (2003) points out, that traditionally craft, because of its economic status, has always been perceived as inferior in status to design. Since it has been limited to the craftspeople and their use and needs at the village level, it needs a new expression and identity for its economic prosperity.

Kermik (2012), states that collaborative partnerships between craft and design helps bring fresh ideas to the forefront and uplift the status of craft. The design world, which predominantly focuses on industrial production, is now increasingly adopting the principles and values that are linked with craft practices.

This has opened new avenues for product innovation leading to a regeneration of urban and rural environments and thus paving a way for sustainable development. Powell (2014) further reinforces this, by emphasizing that historically designers have had a passionate connection to their community and have used design to promote positive social change.

This reinforces the fact that integration and building a healthy relationship between craft and design is the new approach to design such that it can benefit the overall good. So, the thoughts that arise out of the above discussions is can re-thinking how and what we design be used for the sustainable development of craft traditions. Also can it give it a fresh perspective and pave a new way ahead for both design and craft.

According to Gwilt and Rissanen (2011), our current approach to design does not look at the lifecycle of the product designed. They propose an approach to designing that works towards a relationship between the maker and consumer. Also, as emphasized by Greenhalgh (2003), since crafts help build this relationship and connect by keeping the historical, cultural and social contexts intact, this integration of design with craft can be looked at as a way ahead for both.

As artisanal crafts are our country's creative history they need a new design language to face the challenges which have arisen from industrial production and mass consumption.

Wood (2011) emphasizes that by developing this connection between design and craft there is a great opportunity for employment in the craft sector that can be opened up. As in India, craft is generating livelihoods for millions of people, and therefore this connection between the designers and artisans can take advantage of an expanding market globally and address the issues of employment and livelihood for this sector and in turn address the environmental sustainability issues linked with design.

Fletcher (2014), too, strongly feels that the fashion markets need to be driven towards building relationships and attention towards moral, environmental and social issues. To incorporate this shift into the thinking, we need to help the customer understand the function of what they buy and how it can contribute to human wellbeing and cater to our emotional and social responses. Understanding this helps develop a different sensitivity towards what people buy and consume.

As opposed to a market driven by fast fashion and wasteful consumption, McIntyre (2010) has observed that as the markets have evolved in response to changing economies, there is a new pattern and shift of consumption which places more relevance to contemporary design in craft. He also reinforces that place of origin and the use of local knowledge are of increasing importance for consumers, forging a new significance for craft products. According to him, personalized, exclusive and originally designed products with local connection are increasingly being valued.

He also emphasizes that narratives behind these craft objects create more appeal and now consumers are very interested in stories and personal connections behind objects, their origin, who and how it was made and what materials have been used. Also, when buying designs with craft one can do so without compromising on sustainability issues discussed earlier. This creates a significant opportunity for economic development, and it can open up craft and design to new markets and provide a stimulus to local trade.

This new approach and way ahead for craft as emphasized by McIntyre (2010), draws our attention to the emergence of a global market for hand crafted products. This is evident in the emergence of companies such as Good Earth, Fab India, Anokhi in India with a global reach, catering to the needs of this new emerging market who value the intrinsic quality of the handmade.



Figure 3: Good Earth, (2016). *Good Earth store in Khan Market, New Delhi.*

Retrieved from <https://www.goodearth.in/Store-Locations>

Anita Lal, the founder of Good Earth, started her first store in 1996 to cater to this growing market for authentic craft based products. These stores help link the artisans to a market who values craft and the traditions behind them. Through their work they are helping revive and sustain forgotten craft traditions and thus provide livelihood to the people behind these. Today, Good Earth is recognized globally as a leading design house with a craft focused approach to design and now has stores across all major cities in India and a growing online presence for the international market. This trend is very promising as it addresses the specific concerns addressed earlier related to sustainability both for design and craft (Figure 3).

INSPIRING WORK WHICH HAS INFORMED THE PROJECT



Figure 4: Gaatha, (2015). *Chappa Chappa Charka Chale*.
Retrieved from <http://gaatha.com/charkha-making-process/>

The greatest influence for the thinking for the project has been informed by Mahatma Gandhi's ideologies and philosophy around *Khadi*, the fabric that represents India and is a national symbol of our country's independence. It is a hand-spun and hand-woven fabric and as noted by Jain (2014), it is not just a fabric, it has a wider embodying meaning attached to it and connects the wearer to their cultural identity.

For centuries, India had been one of the major textile producers of the world. Jain (2014) observes that there was a decline in the textile production during the rule of the British, which resulted in a loss of a means of livelihood for millions of rural families. Mahatma Gandhi (Figure 4) promoted *Khadi* as a symbol of freedom, self-reliance and self-governance during the freedom struggle.

As Jain (2014) further emphasizes, *Khadi* for Gandhi had a larger context, which enabled regeneration and diversification of the rural economy. He saw this as a means to raise the social and economic status of a large segment of the Indian population living in villages and ensured them a dignity of labor.

Dransfield and Dransfield (2003) note that Gandhi believed in building the economy from the local level upwards. He always worked around approaches which could build economic relationships at the grassroots level and he identified alternative approaches to economic sustainability by small scale local initiatives that look at the spiritual rather than material dimension, which is a far cry from our existing approach of exploitation of resources and ecological irresponsibility. His teachings help us to develop a holistic approach towards our way of life and to value our local knowledge.

As Dransfield and Dransfield further note, according to Gandhi, sustainability can become a reality only when we recognize the importance of this and apply it for the greater good. Today, after many efforts by government organizations and designers working consistently with this fabric, Khadi has reached a status of not just a poor man's fabric but as a style statement. It represents contemporary elements of our country through a new language of design.

According to Punjabi (2012), in today's context where there is a growing concern for eco friendly fashion, Khadi creates a perfect balance between aesthetics and functionality and takes care of sustainability concerns discussed above. It has now established a wider acceptance where it is being used by designers across the globe. However, in spite of this shift in status, this industry still needs more people appreciating the intrinsic value of this hand-spun, hand-woven fabric for its overall benefits which are in line with all the aspects of sustainability discussed earlier. I wanted this thought to form the basis of my inspiration for shaping my ideologies and principles to work within this research project.

To enable me to develop these principles and thoughts further for the project, I studied the works of other contemporary designers who have made a positive difference to fashion and are working towards the cause of sustainable fashion and sustainable livelihoods both within India and across the world.

The work of Uma Prajapati, who is based in Auroville, Pondicherry in India has been a great source of inspiration for the project. In 1997, Prajapati (2016), founded *Upasana*, a social enterprise that was born out of a passion for creating sustainable clothing by linking fashion with the Indian handicraft traditions. Upasana's mission is to create conscious sustainable fashion and address social issues to bring about a change.

According to Prajapati (2016), through the launch of *Paruthi*, a fashion line in organic cotton (Figure 5), they committed themselves to create a sustainable business collaborative, which tries to bridge the gap between, organic and sustainable. Through this initiative, they help provide support to organic farmer communities of Tamil Nadu who were in utter despair as a result of increased competition from man made production and unfair business practices. This line of clothing addresses sustainability issues concerning both the environment and livelihood generation of artisan communities living in rural India.



Figure 5: Upasana, (2016). *Paruthi – India’s local organic brand.*

Retrieved from <http://www.upasana.in/product-category/collections/indigo-skies/>

Another person who has been inspirational for the project and inspired a holistic approach towards a sustainable fashion design process is the founder of *People Tree*, Safia Minnery. Minnery (2016), started her company twenty years ago in an effort to develop a sustainable fashion business through which she could address the current issues related to the fashion industry, which is driven by fast fashion. This trend, according to her, is leading to various environmental concerns being caused by excessive waste and unsustainable ways of producing, which cause massive amounts of waste and pollution.

Minnery (2016) wanted to develop a business model that adopts a holistic approach that works through collaborative and long term partnerships with artisan producers. Their collections use sustainable materials and practices and they are today recognized as pioneers in the business of sustainable fashion and fair trade. Through their dedicated work, they are providing skills and livelihoods to the rural artisans and also addressing the sustainability issues linked with fashion.

In an effort to have a collaborative approach to their work Minnery (2016) partnered with various organizations and artisan groups in India and Bangladesh to make garments from high quality, hand woven fabric. The skill of weaving a fabric is a tradition that is passed down through generations. According to her, there are more than 10 million artisans in India and Bangladesh alone making a living out of this tradition. The hand-woven process does not consume electricity as it is powered by the person operating the loom and is one of the most sustainable ways of producing a fabric leaving no carbon footprints. Through this business model they share the benefits with the artisans and producer companies they have partnered with (Figure 6).



Figure 6: People Tree, (2016). *Our Story*.

Retrieved from <http://www.peopletree.co.uk/about-us/who-makes-our-products/caos>

A further inspiration has been the work of Chanda Shroff. According to Marketos (2006), Shroff, founded *Shrujan Trust*, a non profit organization (NGO), in 1969 in an effort to revive the traditional hand embroidery of Kutch, in the western part of Gujarat in India. The region of Kutch has a rich cultural heritage and the women of various communities have practiced the tradition of hand embroidery across generations, see (Figure 7).

As Marketos (2006) notes, each community has a unique style that speaks their language and Shroff has been instrumental in breathing new life into these ancient craft traditions. According to Marketos, embroidery for the people of Kutch is a means of their personal, social and spiritual expression and Shrujan has ensured that these ancient traditions are not lost in the race against the man made.



Figure 7: Marketos, A.S. (2006). *Awards for Enterprise: Pride and Enterprise*, Chanda Shroff, 2006 Laurete- Cultural Heritage. Retrieved from http://www.rolexawards.com/explore/themes/empowering_women/pride_and_enterprise

Alison Gwilt's work (2013), has highlighted new ways to approach design for sustainability to make a positive contribution to society. Her work primarily focuses on the use of sustainable methods of designing for fashion and textiles, that challenge the current methods of designing and producing and have given me an in depth knowledge on new ways to explore the positive contribution that the contemporary fashion designer can make within society. Concepts like lifecycle thinking and adopting sustainable design strategies into the fashion design process have helped me outline a number of guiding principles to keep in mind while developing my processes.

ISSEY MIYAKE

For the practical and most challenging part of my research work, I wanted to apply the use of an alternative approach to fashion. To inspire my thoughts and approach to design, I studied the works of Issey Miyake for his philosophies and approach to design.

According to English (2011), Issey Miyake has been respected worldwide for his unique expression of creativity, which has always challenged the norms of contemporary fashion. He has led the way ahead for fashion by aligning it with art and has always looked at the Japanese history and traditional culture to produce inspirational work for others to follow. He has carved a niche for himself in the international market by setting his own trends and design language through his bold and unstructured designs.

As English (2011) further elaborates, Miyake's work is known for its freedom of ideas, without any constraints or any rules and constantly focusing on the evolution of design. He has always been admired for his ideas around making clothes with the concepts of minimal waste. She further adds that he has always worked towards collaborating with the traditional Japanese craft techniques and instilled new life in them to meet contemporary needs.



Figure 8: The Rosenrot, (2014). *A look into modern Issey Miyake.*

Retrieved from <http://the-rosenrot.com/page/13>

Since the beginning of his work as a designer, Miyake has always promoted the concept of “one piece of cloth”, (Miyake, 2014, para. 7) where he highlights the connection and creative play that arises out of the interaction of the body with the cloth. In 1993, Miyake launched his brand “Pleats Please Issey Miyake” (Miyake 2014, para. 11), where he offered clothing that was multi functional and easy to wear and was perfect as it catered to the different needs of woman (Figure 8-9). This project has been greatly influenced by this work of Miyake for it’s multi functionality, adaptability, versatility and geometric free flowing bold forms.

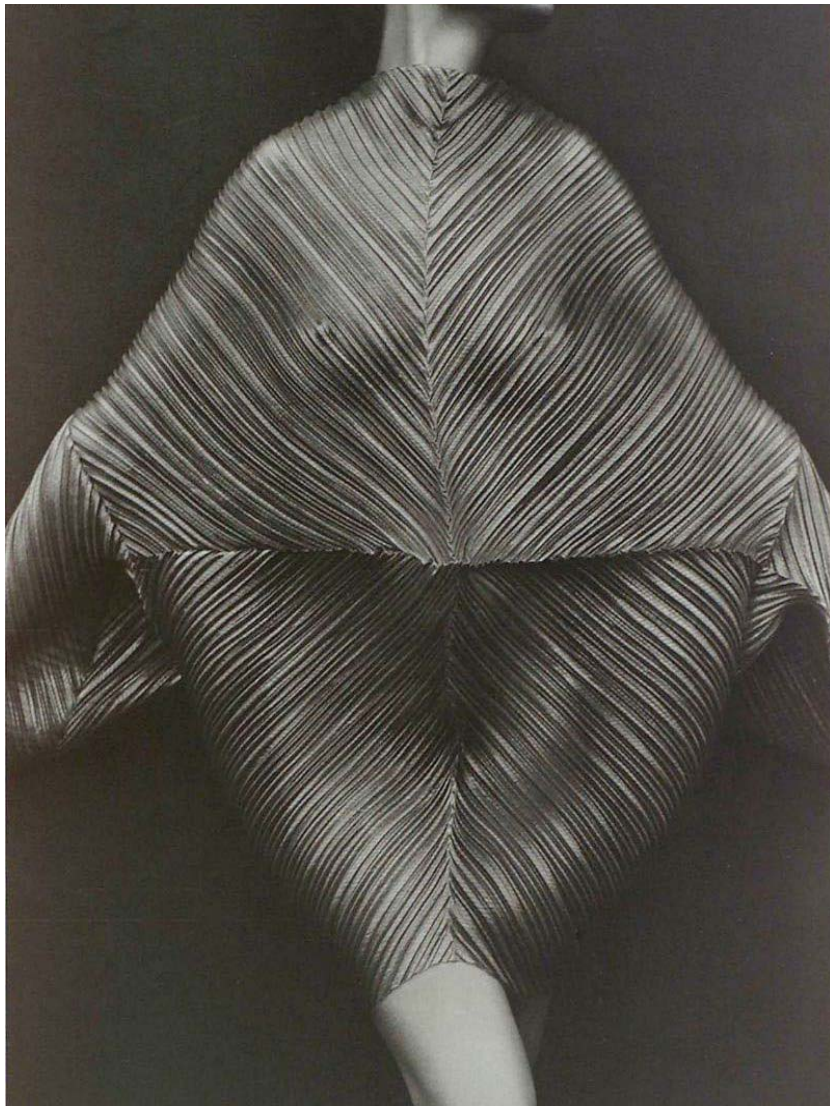


Figure 9: Szucs, A. (2011). *Some things I like- Issey Miyake Dress*.
Photo by herb ritts. Retrieved from <http://iiiiinspired.blogspot.co.nz/2011/02/some-things-i-like.html>

His work has greatly inspired my thinking stimulating further exploration around collaborating with Indian craft techniques and concepts of minimal waste and geometry to develop a new contemporary language of Indian design. A study into Miyake's approach to design, helped me understand how he has been inspired by the kimono as a geometric form. This led me to research the history of the traditional rectangular sari and to understand the concept of geometry through the language of Miyake's work. This understanding of form, shape and the relationship to the body helped me define my thoughts and enabled me to develop a design language which fuses the traditional with the contemporary whilst expressing my identity as a designer.

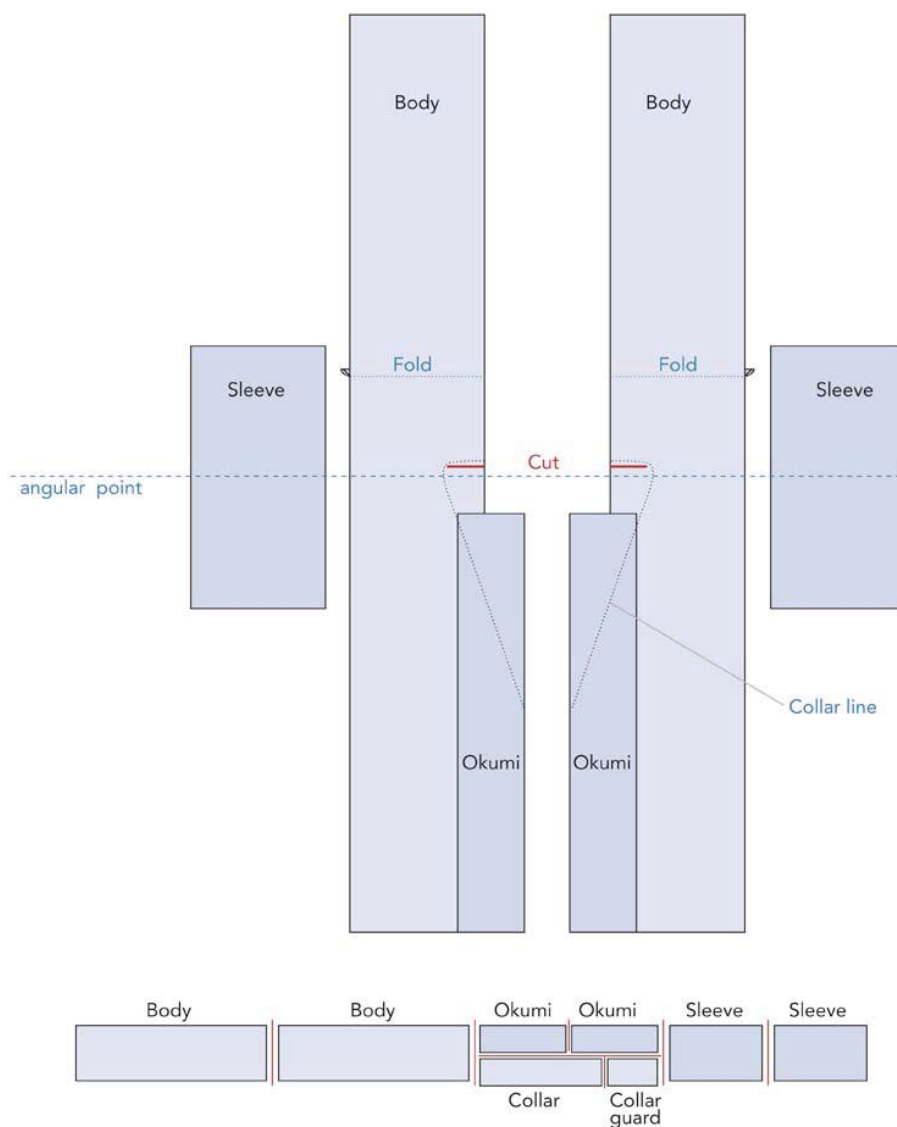


Figure 10: Zerowastepatterndesign, (2012). *Making a Kimono*. Retrieved from <https://zerowastepatterndesign.wordpress.com/tag/construction/>

According to English (2011), for Miyake, the kimono has played a key role in expressing his design language. It's simple construction which uses eight rectangles connected together with straight seams makes it a very functional and widely accepted traditional attire (Figure 10). Even though it's boxy when it's flat, when draped on the body it can create beautiful drapes allowing freedom of movement. It's anti-structural form and simplicity of cut embodies the Japanese culture fully (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Hermanson, T. (2012). *Book Review: Japanese Fashion Designers- "ma" of the kimono*. Retrieved from <http://www.wornthrough.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/kimono-from-back.jpg>

THE SARI

Miyake's work around geometry greatly influenced the thoughts and direction for the project which furthered my research into the history of the Sari. According to Snell (1985), the Sari is a rectangular unstitched piece of cloth and varies in length from 6 to 9 yards. It is a traditional dress of Indian women and it is a belief that these draped garments have been worn by the Indian women since the times of the Indus valley Civilization. As Snell (1985) further notes, the most common way of wearing a Sari is draping it around the waist and the bust, however it has been worn in various styles depending on the tradition, region and culture of the place it is worn in.

Since, traditionally it has been a woven piece of cloth, it has generated employment for millions of weaving families. However, in recent years, this sector, like all the other craft sectors has been facing a lot of competition from machine made and power loom sectors pushing the ancient tradition of weaving and the weavers to a state of despair. Though the traditional way of wearing it still keeps the traditions and cultures alive, there now have been new trends developing which have opened up various possibilities for wearing and draping these in unconventional ways. There are a growing number of Indian designers who have been working with the weaving communities and collaborating with their traditional skills to give a contemporary language to this ancient wisdom.



Figure 12: Anavila Sindhu Mishra: LFW Winter/Festive 2014.

Retrieved from <http://boutiquesarees.com/anavila-saree-lfw-winterfestive-2014/>

These new trends have increased global acceptance of the sari and while earlier it only catered to a certain category of traditional consumer, it now has a close following by a more contemporary market, who have been given a trendier approach to wearing it by the possibilities created by the designers.

Designers such as Anavila Mishra (Figure 12) are amongst a few of the mainstream designers who celebrate this traditional drape in a contemporary language and through their design work they help generate livelihoods for the hands behind these. Because of its flexibility of drape, the sari is one of the most inspiring and adaptable forms of clothing, taking on the wearers imagination. It is one of the best ways to explore and understand the relationship between the body and the cloth.

Exploring the works of Miyake, and studying the traditional forms of kimono and sari has helped inform my thoughts around geometry and drapes and the inter relationship of the two. Since I did not want to limit the work to just the rectangular shape, I dissected the rectangle into other geometric shapes which could fit into it while working around the concept of minimum waste. I explored the square, rectangle, triangle, circle and semicircle, which could all fit into the long rectangular woven fabric and generate minimal waste (Figure 13). This opened up more ideas and scope for explorations of drapes by combining these shapes together, which follow through in my experimentations ahead. Fabric waste generated through the circular shapes has been used to make the fastenings for the garments designed.



Figure 13: Geometric shapes derived from within a long rectangular shape.

METHODOLOGY

This project follows a practice-led design research methodology by focusing on creating a fashion collection through building a relationship with the traditional crafts of India. This relationship with the artisans has offered the project an opportunity to lay emphasis on the design process that has enabled me to produce a body of creative work and thus helped establish a holistic engagement with sustainable design principles.

Nimkulrat (2012) points out that craft practice when integrated into practice-led design research can spark a new way of thinking for theoretical inquiry. It can help in reflecting and articulating the knowledge gained through this integration into the research context which can then be expressed both through a written and visual form through the body of design work produced.

According to Rust (2007), designers can justify their research work by providing a rationale for their research problem by establishing a relevant understanding of the context in which the research sits through using the correct methods of research, thus highlighting the research contribution.

Review of the literature has been undertaken to understand the concepts of sustainable fashion and economic sustainability in craft, understanding fashion design and artisanal craft in their present contexts, and the relationship between the two.

The starting point of my ideation was intensive research on my specific research concern as indicated earlier. Using this analytical method, I have been able to address my inquiry which in turn has identified fabric qualities, dyeing techniques, surface explorations and other technical and design details suitable for this design project.

During this research, I identified craftspeople I would like to partner with. Since the methodology for this project is a practice-led iterative design, driven by a form and material exploration process, I approached local crafts and artisans of Gujarat in India to creatively explore my design strategy with sustainable material and surface design choices.

THE PROJECT: THE STORY UNFOLDS

Creating sustainable designs, using natural fiber and organic hand woven textiles dyed with natural indigo, was enabled through connections with artisan communities in India by integrating the traditional techniques used by them into the design process and using the textiles designed by me and created during these associations for the collection *Flights of fantasy*.

I have used a minimal waste approach to design through the selection of the geometric shapes identified as a strategy for waste minimization. By experimenting with these eco conscious textiles through the techniques of draping, I have built transformability and versatility into the designs, with an aim to create an example of a sustainable design process that integrates artisanal textiles and fashion. The aim is to take a holistic approach to the production and lifecycle of the products. This design process provides a model to take ahead, to propose possible solutions for sustaining livelihoods for craftspeople at the village level.

My process demonstrates the use of explorative making methods through draping techniques and geometric pattern shapes. Records of the process have been kept by photographing and documenting the outcomes from the experimentations and development phases, including a visit to India to work alongside artisan communities involved in hand weaving, natural dyeing and hand embroidery for my final design work.

In line with my methodology, key stages have included critical analysis to evaluate developments of fabrics and forms. While working, systems have been developed to enable me to integrate relevant research with design ideas from the two perspectives discussed earlier.

My first step towards achieving this has been to first define my design philosophy which would outline the basic guidelines for my research. This as, explained earlier has been inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's ideology of self-reliance and self-governance. To enable the poor masses living in villages across India to be self-reliant and to elevate them above the poverty levels, he encouraged them to spin and weave fabrics made from cotton grown in their villages. This ensured livelihood generation for the masses at the village level. Shapes that could be made from geometry, and combining these shapes without much cutting and sewing, and applying the principles of reuse and minimal waste became more clear through this study.

I limited the geometric shapes identified for the experimentations to five shapes: circle, semi circle, square, rectangle and the triangle as shown in Figure 13. In addition to a study of the geometric form of the traditional sari, the work of Issey Miyake (Figures 8-9) has been studied where he has explored geometric forms resulting in bold and unstructured designs, taking Japanese traditions to a global fashion market.

Commencing with design explorations from single geometric shapes, design work progressed to using innovative combinations of multiple geometric forms. During the design development process, continual reflection led to the introduction of transformability within each garment, thus imbuing longevity and versatility into the garments. Aligning with my sustainable ideals and philosophies, this also addresses the conventional way we perceive fashion to be produced and consumed, and encourages wearer participation in the process of interpreting the garment potential.

Simultaneously, dyeing experimentations on various fabric types enabled the development of textiles relevant to the design work of this fashion range. Alternative methods to address the design of edge finishes and fastenings provide multiple design possibilities which enable the wearer to have versatile wearing opportunities. Minimal fabric wastage has been used to create the fastenings, thus putting everything to good use.

Fabric choices, dyeing and surface texture methods, along with the association with the craftspeople intend to provoke re-thinking about how and what we design and its implications towards environmental and economic sustainability.

The practice-led iterative process methodology has helped in vast range of experimentation which has enabled a focused approach to the research project. The most significant areas of investigation have been the initial and advanced draping experiments from the geometric shapes identified and the different dyeing techniques investigated on various types of fabric qualities. The experimentations have been conducted in stages in a systematic manner leading to the final outcome.

Stage 1- VISIONS

Stage 2- EXPLORATIONS

Stage 3- CONNECTIONS

Stage 4- INNOVATION

VISIONS

To aid in this investigation, Vision boards (Figures 14 - 16) have provided a clear understanding of the design direction for this project. This analytical method has helped to develop certain key ideas, which have further helped to identify colors, fabric qualities, and dyeing and surface textures.



Figure 14: Inspiration board 1

Retrieved from <https://nz.pinterest.com/haritakapur/inspiration-board-1/>

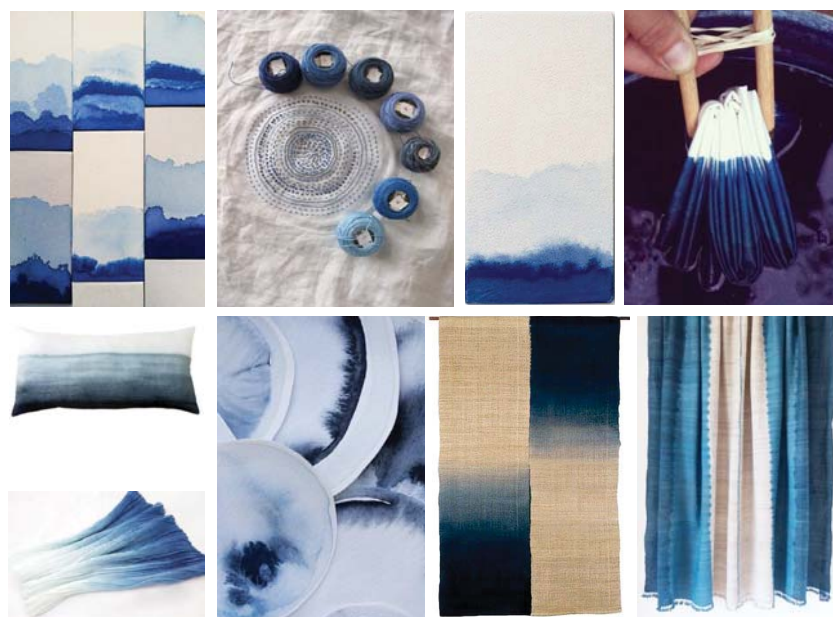


Figure 15: Inspiration board 2 for dyeing techniques

Retrieved from <https://nz.pinterest.com/haritakapur/inspiration-board-2/>



Figure 16: Inspiration board 3 for surface textures

Retrieved from <https://nz.pinterest.com/haritakapur/inspiration-board-3/>

After having envisioned the design direction, the geometric shapes to be used were identified, and methods of draping were used as my primary method of experimentation. As draping is a free form exploration process, minimal initial sketches occurred to enable the creative process to develop the final outcomes. However, to document my progress, each and every single exploration has been photographed and a workbook maintained to help me visually conceptualize the progress for further investigations. Using a miniature body form, I experimented with the five geometric shapes in muslin as a starting position. During the dye experimentation phase of the project, the main factors considered were simplicity of the process, dye availability, and consideration of fabrics to work with. I studied the traditional methods and the current trends in indigo dyeing to help me establish a look. The simple dip dye process helped me achieve the desired ombre effect as the absorption properties of the fabrics influenced the dyeing methods.

Exploration with single geometric shapes enabled me to critically analyze how each shape responded to the body. These experimentations helped build the confidence and the direction that the project could take which led on to further experimentations on the actual scale as shown in Figure 17. The initial experimentations with single geometric shapes helped to understand how each shape responded to the body. This upon, critical reflection, led on to experimentations with combinations of shapes which follow.



Figure 17: Kapur, H. (2016). Early ombre dyeing experiments

EXPLORATIONS

In response to the literature and precedents referenced (Figures 18- 19), the full potential of my design process, using multiple design possibilities with the geometric shapes was inspired by Issey Miyake, who questioned form to the body through his use of forms with geometry.



Figure 18: Leblond, R. (2016). *Fashion-Issey Mikaye (1938)-Issey Miyake, Cocoon Coat*, photographed by Noriaki Yokosuka, 1976. Retrieved from <http://theredlist.com/wiki-2-23-1249-1258-view-1970s-profile-issey-miyake-3.html>



Figure 19: Leblond, R. (2016). *Fashion-Issey Mikaye (1938)-Issey Miyake, Constructible Clothes*, 1970. Retrieved from <http://theredlist.com/wiki-2-23-1185-1188-view-epure-profile-issey-miyake.html>

Based on the results from the earlier experimentations, certain concepts emerged which furthered the process to develop forms by combining the shapes together and to explore the possibilities that arise from these. A simple structure of how to use the forms together was made. I applied the simple principles of addition and subtraction to my permutations and combinations to achieve the results with the shapes. For example, $A+B=X$, $A+B+C=Y$, $A+A+C+B=Z$ and so on and so forth. The development process that emerged by combining the different shapes together opened up the possibilities of what can be achieved through the process being examined (Figures 20-27).



Figure 20: Kapur, H. (2016). Experimentation in circle and semi circle



Figure 21: Kapur, H. (2016). Experimentation in circle and semi circle



Figure 22: Kapur, H. (2016). Experimentation in rectangle and triangle



Figure 23: Kapur, H. (2016). Experimentation in two rectangles and triangle



Figure 24: Kapur, H. (2016). Experimentation in rectangle and semi circle



Figure 25: Kapur, H. (2016). Experimentation in circle and semi circle



Figure 26: Kapur, H. (2016). Experimentation in circle and semi circle



Figure 27: Kapur, H. (2016). Experimentation in circle and semi circle

Having developed an aesthetic through the geometric form explorations, the direction of my work became clear and moved into the natural indigo dyeing phase with full scale garment (Figures 28-32).



Figure 28: Kapur, H. (2016). Indigo dyeing in different techniques

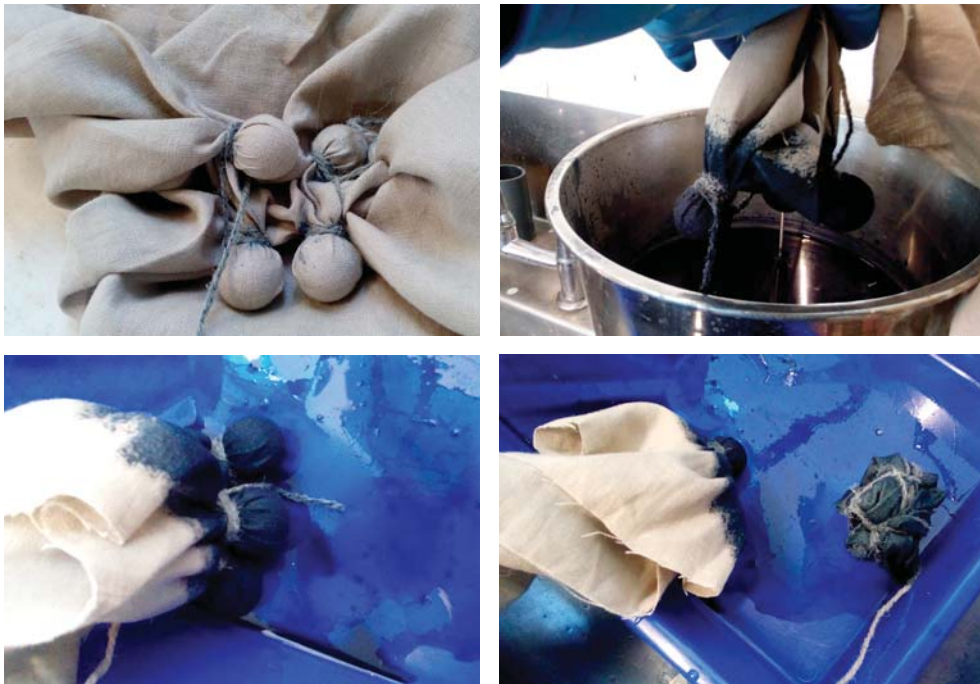


Figure 29: Kapur, H. (2016). Indigo dyeing in different techniques



Figure 30: Kapur, H. (2016). Indigo dyeing in different techniques



Figure 31: Kapur, H. (2016). Drying of dyed fabrics



Figure 32: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping explorations from the dyed fabrics

CONNECTIONS

As part of the design process for this project I travelled to the rural villages of Gujarat in India. Four weeks were spent there to further my understanding of specific processes involved in aspects of the weaving, dyeing and hand embroidery. This has been a very crucial part of my project since it relied on working together with the artisans and their craft techniques to produce the textiles designed by me, which have been used for my final design work.

To aid in the development of my relationships with the artisan communities, I travelled to Kutch, India, situated on the western edge of the state of Gujarat. Its rich and diverse creative traditions live at the intersection of cultures and communities with a history that dates back thousands of years. It is recognized for its rich cultural heritage, diverse communities and fine handicrafts. All of these communities maintain their traditional crafts, which have been passed on to them through generations. Each community has its own style, colors and language that represent their culture and history.

I visited Limbi in Surendranagar district of Gujarat for sourcing the Khadi fabric, and Bhujodi, in Kutch for the woven fabrics made from Ahimsa (Peace) silk. For the indigo dyeing process, I have integrated my design ideas with traditional natural dyeing methods used by the artisans in Kutch. Surface texture and simple hand embroidery techniques have been designed and developed by connecting with Shrujan Trust, a Non Government Organization (NGO), which has been reviving the craft of traditional hand embroidery in order to revitalize the local economy and empower the women embroidery artisans of Kutch, Gujarat.

WOVEN DREAMS

Khadi weaving is an artisanal industry. According to Gaatha (2015), Khadi meaning hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, was part of the freedom fight in the 1920's, by Mahatma Gandhi as mentioned earlier on page 11. Ever since then, Khadi has been woven on looms by skilled artisans living in rural villages and has evolved today as a cool, comfortable and environmentally friendly fabric providing sustainable livelihood to millions of weaving families. The ideology and thought behind Khadi was very crucial to my study and I wanted to convey the same through my work.

Shripal Shal, the founder of Asal, a social enterprise, started his organization as a movement to regain a sustainable lifestyle and his organization engages with many families in weaving, farming and handicrafts. Shah has been working with the weaving communities of Limbdi, to weave and produce some of the finest Khadi fabrics. I visited these weaving communities to understand the process in detail and to source the Khadi fabric required for the project.

Weaving a Khadi fabric involves various stages which start by first handpicking cotton balls from the fields. After cleaning and carding, these are then spun into yarns on a spinning wheel called the *Charka* (Figure 33). The hand-spun yarns are wound into reels which are then hand woven into fabrics by skilled artisans on hand looms.



Figure 33: Kapur, H. (2016). Traditional *Charka* for khadi yarn spinning

Gaatha (2011) brings to our attention that, Bhujodi, is a 500-year-old village where the craft of weaving shawls evolved as a need to cover against weather for the Rabaris, the original nomads and cattle rearers of the region. As part of the barter system, in exchange of wool, milk and grains, the *Vankars*, meaning weavers took up weaving for these nomadic communities. The barter system is no longer in use, however the Vankars have evolved the weaving process to suit the current requirements (Figure 34).

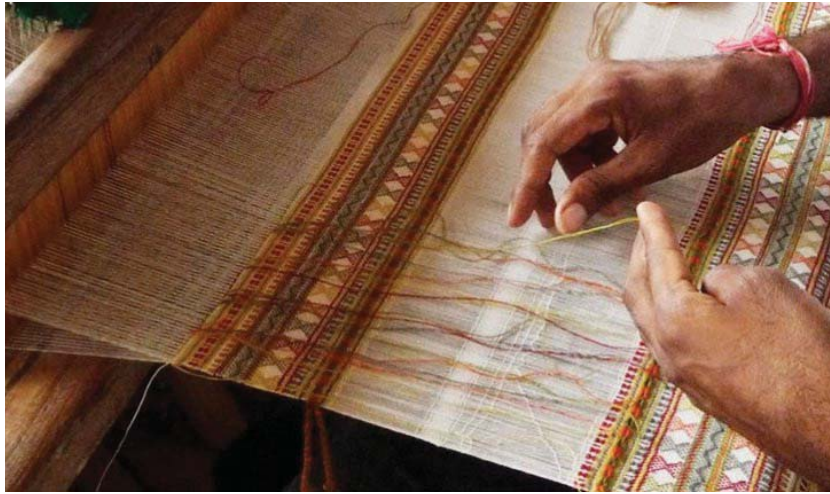


Figure 34: Gaatha, (2011). *Tana Bana*.

Retrieved from <http://gaatha.com/bhujodi-weaving-kutch/>

Though traditionally sheep wool was used for weaving, now a number of yarns are being used to cater to the current demands, one such yarn being Asimsa (peace) silk (Figure 35). As Eva (2014) brings to our attention, Ahimsa or (peace) silk was developed by Kusuma Rajaiah in 2001 after years of research into developing a process of producing the silk yarn which does not involve killing of the silk worms in the process. This non violent method of producing a silk yarn is laborious and expensive but creates an ethical fabric which is beautifully textured and soft. Shawls made from this yarn have been used in the design work.



Figure 35: Kapur, H. (2016). Ashimsa (peace) tussar silk coccon and yarn

Vankar Shamji Vishram Valji is an enterprising and award winning weaver of this village. He learnt the nuances of the craft from his father, Vankar Vishram Valji, an award winning master weaver and due to their ongoing efforts to keep this tradition alive, they have taken on the responsibility for providing a livelihood to a number of families employed in weaving with them. Bhujodi is full of activity, with women working on the Charka spinning yarns and the men weaving beautiful masterpieces on the looms. (Figure 36).



Figure 36: Kapur, H. (2016). Vankar Shamji Vishram Valji's weaving facility in Bhujodi village

After understanding the weaving process, I procured the required fabrics and started working around the pre-dyeing process. This involved cutting and finishing the fabrics in the geometric shapes identified earlier. Minimal cutting and sewing was involved to incorporate the concepts of minimal waste. The fabric requirement was calculated according to the fabric width and the layout for cutting was planned according to the layout worked out earlier.

THE INDIGO STORY

Indigo is a natural dye extracted from an indigo bearing plant species *Indigofera*, and is one of the most loved natural dyes. Balfour (2013), notes that its history goes back to 2600 BC, when around the time of the Indus valley civilization, Indian dyers discovered its secret and changed the global history of this dye.

Balfour (2013) brings to our attention that, with the advent of the industrial production, this dye was chemically synthesized and used for the denim industry on a large scale. This greatly affected the natural production of this dye especially in India, which was its biggest cultivator and its use became restricted to remote small scale craft communities. However, according to Balfour, as the fashion industry becomes more conscious of the need for sustainable production practices, there is a renewed appreciation of this natural dye and the craftspeople who have preserved this ancient tradition. It is now being used by fashion designers globally.

The purity of the process involved in dyeing and the magic of this color creates a sense of calm and serenity, and it was this intrinsic characteristic of this natural dye which pulled me and inspired me to create my own design language through the medium of this dye.

Kutch, is one such place in India where the traditional methods of indigo dyeing are still being practiced, though by very few artisan families. The ancient method of using a submerged indigo vat is now rare but is being practiced by only one facility in Bhujodi (Figure 37).



Figure 37: Kapur, H. (2016). Traditional indigo vat

I visited Khamir, in Kutch to carry out the indigo dyeing for this research. Khamir was founded in 2001 after the Kutch earthquake which displaced many artisans. It is a platform for the crafts and heritage of Kutch and houses various facilities under one roof. One such facility is for natural dyeing (Figure 38) where master dyer Khengar Bhai and his son Narendra have been working on the traditional processes of natural dyeing since a number of years. They helped me understand the traditional process of indigo dyeing in detail and I was able to implement my design ideas under the instruction of their knowledge and skill.



Figure 38: Kapur, H. (2016). Dyeing facility at Khamir

The dyers use an ancient and indigenous technique for preparation of the fabric before dyeing. They soak the fabric overnight in a mix of cow dung and cow urine which is diluted with water to decrease its concentration (Figure 39). The fabric was soaked overnight in this mixture and dried before the final dyeing (Figure 40).



Figure 39: Kapur, H. (2016). Mixture of cow dung and cow urine



Figure 40: Kapur, H. (2016). Pre Preparation of fabric for indigo dyeing

The vat was prepared by using natural indigo powder in their traditional recipe. The dye preparation process was one that has been used for generations and is a part of the legacy passed on through generations of artisans. To shade the fabric in layers, two additional dye baths were used and were diluted as per the dye concentration required for each fabric (Figure 41).



Figure 41: Kapur, H. (2016). Preparation of Indigo vat and additional dye baths

Working with local artisans highlighted a valuable sharing of knowledge that achieved something new in the process. The magic of the dyeing process started unfolding as the dyed fabric was exposed to air for the oxygenation process to take place, changing the dyed fabric from a light green to blue. To achieve the layered ombre effect, the fabric was dyed twice in the other dye baths until the desired shaded effect was achieved. (Figure 42-44).



Figure 42: Kapur, H. (2016). Dyeing and oxygenation process



Figure 43: Kapur, H. (2016). Dyeing and oxygenation process



Figure 44: Kapur, H. (2016). Hands on dyeing

After the indigo dyeing process was complete, the fabrics were dried and left overnight for dye fixing, which involved soaking the fabrics in the diluted mixture of cow dung and cow urine once again. This enabled the dye to fix preventing any color bleeding and also gave a surface sheen to the fabric (Figure 45).



Figure 45: Kapur, H. (2016). Drying of dyed fabrics

THREADS THAT TIE

On completion of the dyeing stage, connections were made with the Shrujan Trust in Bhujodi. Chanda Shroff, the founder of Shrujan Trust, has dedicated a lifetime working with rural women embroidery artisans of Kutch. She has been empowering these women artisans by training and providing them with embroidery work, as a means to earning a livelihood since 1969.

A simple running stitch style of embroidery was identified; a hand embroidery technique called Khudi Theba. Duraja (2013), notes that Khudi-Theba is a traditional technique created by the Harijan women artisan community living on the Banni grassland track on the edge of the great Rann. They have been traditionally using this embroidery technique for various forms of quilting (Figure 46).



Figure 46: Rolex Awards for Enterprise, (2016). *Chanda Shroff, 2006 Laureate, Cultural Heritage India*. Retrieved from http://www.rolexawards.com/profiles/laureates/chanda_shroff/photos__videos

The layouts for the embroidery were designed by me while keeping the simplicity of the embroidery technique in mind. Since geometry has been my primary source of inspiration for shapes, I wanted the embroidery to speak the same design language and the designs for each shape were worked out and positioned on the fabrics before giving out to the women embroidery artisans (Figures 47-51).

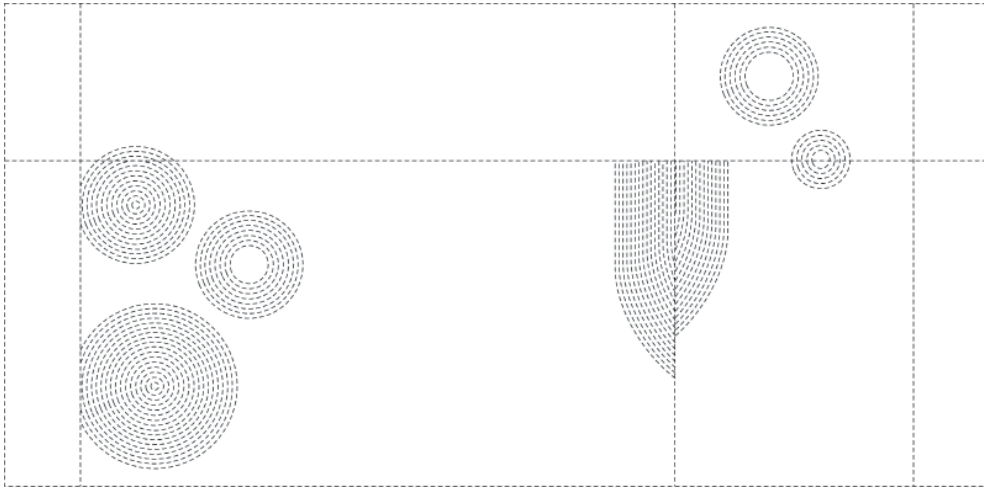


Figure 47: Embroidery layout for rectangle

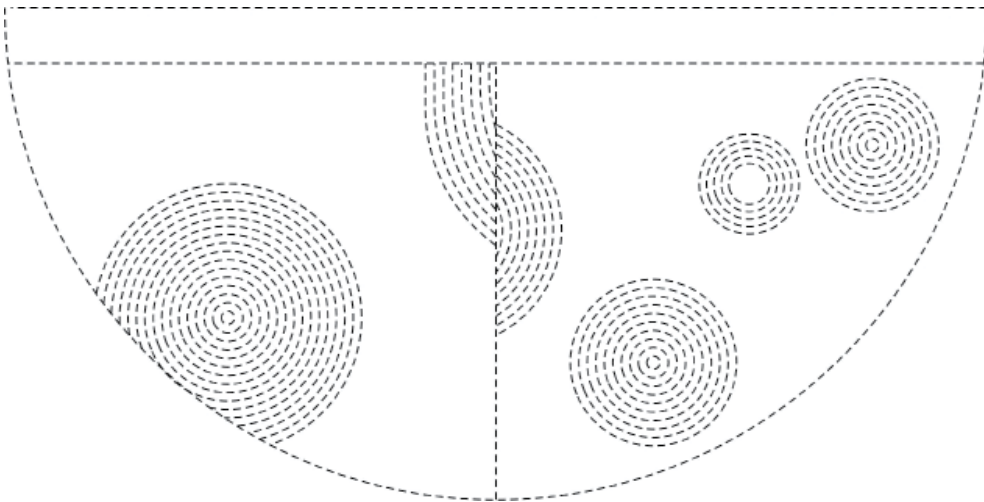


Figure 48: Embroidery layout for semi circle

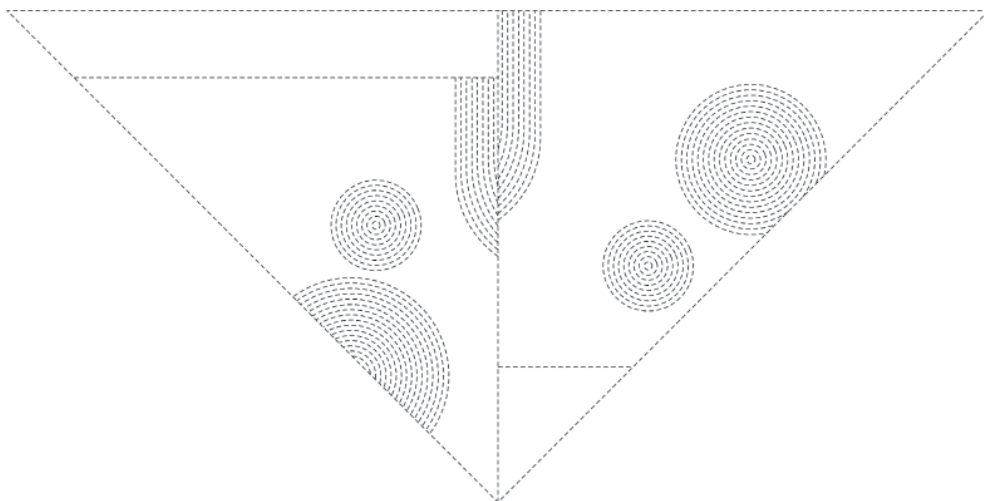


Figure 49: Embroidery layout for triangle

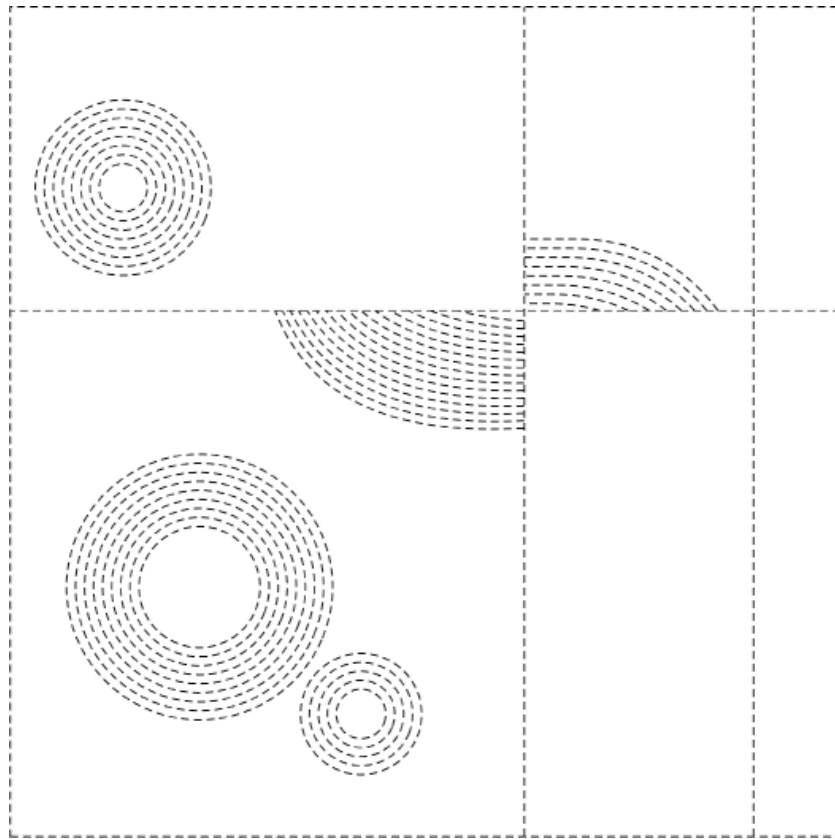


Figure 50: Embroidery layout for square

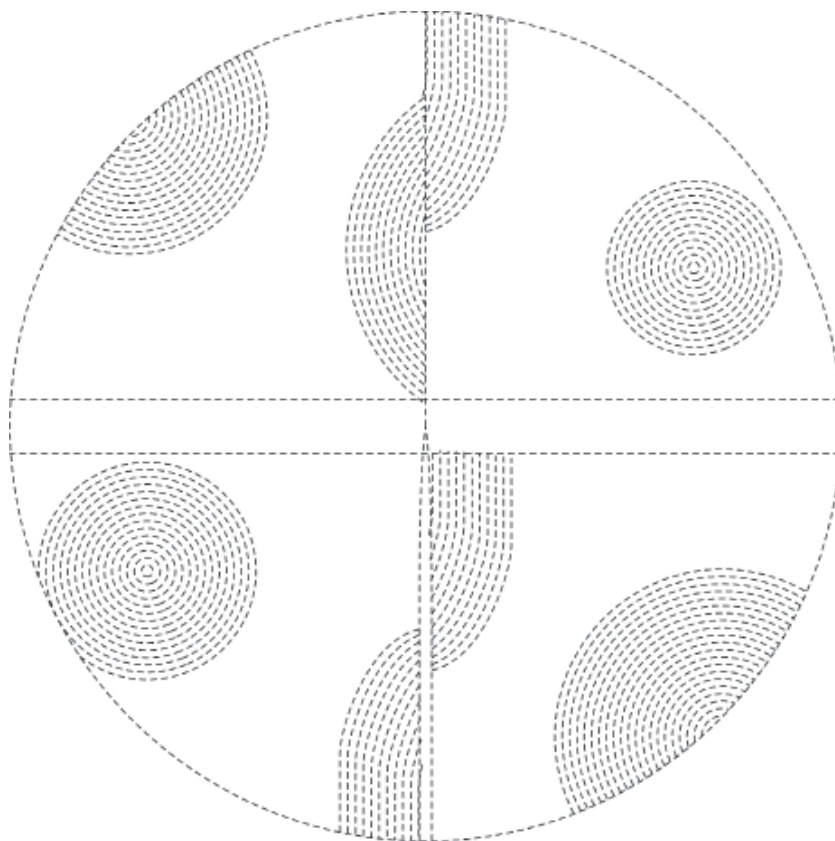


Figure 51: Embroidery layout for circle

Thread colours for the embroidery were selected keeping the central theme and colour story in mind for both the fabrics being used for the project. The kind of stitches of embroidery required and explanation of the layout was discussed with the artisans in detail. Once understood, initial samples were produced (Figure 52-54).



Figure 52: Kapur, H. (2016). Embroidery thread colors being explained to the women artisan



Figure 53: Kapur, H. (2016). Embroidery technique being discussed



Figure 54: Kapur, H. (2016). Embroidery sample in progress

The entire textile development process has been achieved by ideation, discussions, experimentation and exploration of the possibilities from within the frameworks laid down. By adopting a hands on approach with the experimentation of the ideas, designs were developed with the artisans by communication and discussion of concepts. This opened the scope for future work through these associations and has helped to achieve the aims laid down earlier. This process has enabled me to understand the design and production methods to achieve the desired outcome. While I obtained a better understanding of the traditional skills and craft techniques, the artisans understood a contemporary use of their traditional knowledge and how to use this approach of design with their existing craft skills. These experiences enriched us in our learning and has helped to achieve the design outcome as per the aims laid out.

The fabric waste from the cutting of the fabrics was creatively used to make fastenings and accessories which has been be used for my final drapes and looks (Figure 55).



Figure 55: Kapur, H. (2016). Fastenings made from textile waste

FORMS THROUGH FOLDS

Following the project phase in India, the design development was further developed. Combining the geometric forms defined my design language. The market identified earlier caters to a demographic who appreciate not only the handmade and organic, but is also sensitive to sustainability concerns.

I went back to study my earlier work around forms which had been greatly influenced by the work of Issey Miyake. Starting with the single square shape I tried a variety of draping methods to achieve looks that could cater to different moods, occasions and purpose while keeping the target market in mind (Figure 56-62).



Figure 56: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square



Figure 57: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square



Figure 58: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square



Figure 59: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square



Figure 60: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square



Figure 61: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square



Figure 62: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square

From the use of single shapes, I went ahead with the earlier idea of using two or more of the geometric shapes together (Figure 63-78). These explorations helped to further strengthen the design process set in place. Results of the explorations were recorded and documented through each stage of my progress. As mentioned earlier, I tried different looks to suit different needs keeping the market identified in mind.



Figure 63: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle



Figure 64: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed square and triangle



Figure 65: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed triangle

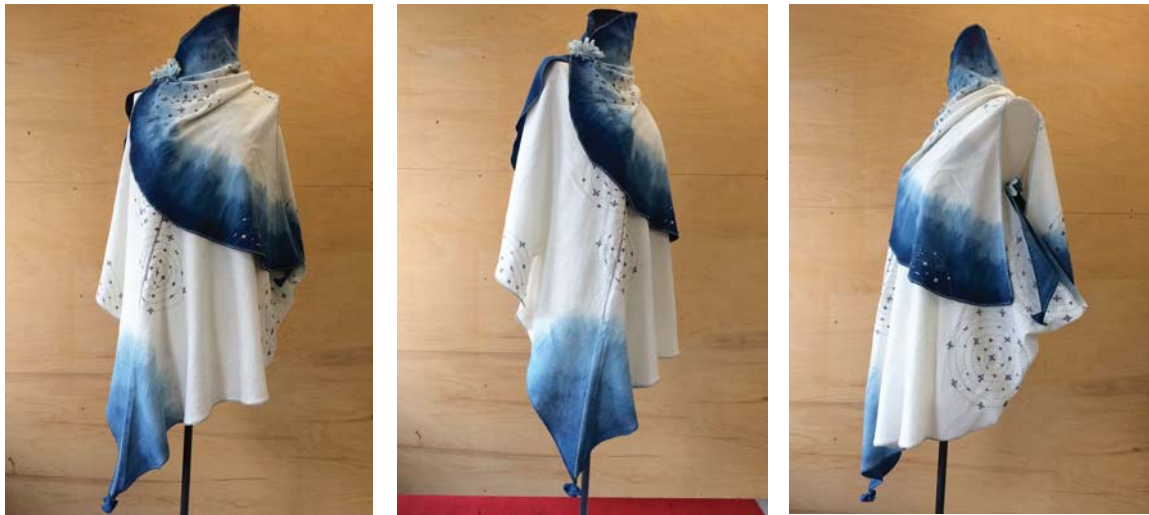


Figure 66: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed triangle and circle



Figure 67: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed triangle, circle and semi circle



Figure 68: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed two circles and semi circle



Figure 69: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed circle and rectangle



Figure 70: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed circle and semi circle



Figure 71: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed circle and semi circle



Figure 72: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed triangle and rectangle



Figure 73: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed triangle and rectangle



Figure 74: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed circle



Figure 75: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed triangle, circle and semi circle



Figure 76: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed triangle and semi circle



Figure 77: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed triangle, circle and semi circle



Figure 78: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping exploration in khadi indigo dyed circle, rectangle and triangle

Furthermore, combining the tussar fabric with the dyed and embroidered khadi geometric shapes opened up possibilities for either designer or wearer to create a variety of wearing options. It also strengthened the scope of future work where this process can be applied further to any craft tradition (Figure 79-86).



Figure 79: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping in tussar silk circle



Figure 80: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping in tussar silk circle



Figure 81: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping in tussar silk triangle and square



Figure 82: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping in tussar silk triangle and square



Figure 83: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping in tussar silk triangle



Figure 84: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping in tussar silk triangle and khadi indigo dyed triangle



Figure 85: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping in tussar silk rectangle and khadi indigo dyed triangle



Figure 86: Kapur, H. (2016). Draping in tussar silk circle and khadi indigo dyed circle

INNOVATION

FLIGHTS OF FANTASY

The vast experimentations which have taken place, have helped in the emergence of the main concepts for the design project. These have been formalized into certain final looks keeping the design principles identified in mind (Figures 87-101). There were two main objectives in creating this fashion collection as indicated earlier. The first was to create transformability and versatility for the designer and wearer through the looks that follow. There is a very distinct language of design that emerges from these. The idea of using these forms to evoke a sense of purity and serenity on one side and a modern bold statement on the other hand is expressed through the visual representation of the drapes on the body with which they interact. The different looks and moods that can be created by the designer and the wearer also highlight the significance of the idea of these designs being adaptable and versatile and catering to the different needs of the market identified. The second concept was to create a design process that helps in building a relationship between the designer and the artisan to help address the economic sustainability concerns at the village level. The uniqueness of this project, has enabled to establish this link between the designer, the artisan and the wearer through the design process set in place.



Figure 87: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*.
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square

ANGELIC



Figure 88: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle



Figure 89: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle



Figure 90: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle



Figure 91: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle



Figure 92: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 2-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square



Figure 93: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 2-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square

THE BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL



Figure 94: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle



Figure 95: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle



Figure 96: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle



Figure 97: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle



Figure 98: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle



Figure 99: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 2-
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle, semi circle and triangle



Figure 100: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 2-
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle, semi circle and triangle



Figure 101: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 2-
Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle, semi circle and triangle

CONCLUSION

This master's project has adopted a practice led design methodology to facilitate a process of design and production through partnerships with artisanal craft communities, whilst addressing sustainability concerns in the fashion industry.

Designing a fashion collection using sustainable materials and processes, enabled an integration with traditional craft techniques in an effort to address sustainability issues linked to the livelihood of craftspeople. This learning and exchange of knowledge and skills has helped reinforce the objectives laid down and has opened a direction of work that builds on this understanding. It has been able to highlight the importance and relevance of design and craft connections as a way ahead. It is hoped that this design process will contribute to formulating an inspirational roadmap for more sustainable design ideas, which look at not just one craft tradition, from a particular area or community, but rather offer a template of connecting local craft with global opportunity through the medium of fashion.

The development of design ideas, study of precedent work and the explorations of forms from geometry leading to the textile developments have all been part of a very stimulating process. These have helped spark new ideas and thoughts that defy conventions and with this value of knowledge gained, a path for further study and building upon these relationships has opened up. The design work that has evolved out of this process has helped build an engagement of the designer, artisan and the wearer and has built in the aspects of transformability and versatility. These designs build an experience and relationship of the textiles to the body for both the maker and wearer. This project has helped develop an unspoken language of design through this relationship.

Through the process developed, I hope to reach out beyond a market who is aware of and cares for sustainable ways of consuming and living and possibly educate those who are currently not aware of the same. Additionally, this project aims to serve as an educative tool for change in such that small movements across the world can contribute towards the greater good. The ideologies and principles that I have studied and developed during this research have advanced my belief further, that as designers we need to shoulder the responsibility that we have towards our eco systems and our care and concern for our craft traditions and the craft communities involved in keeping these alive today. Investing in this relationship opens up a tremendous opportunity for the people involved and can benefit the overall good.

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Figure 88: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle

Figure 89: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle

Figure 90: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle

Figure 91: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square and rectangle

Figure 92: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 2-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square

Figure 93: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. Angelic 2-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed square

Figure 94: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle

Figure 95: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle

Figure 96: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle

Figure 97: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 1-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle and triangle

Figure 98: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 2-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle, semi circle and triangle

Figure 99: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 2-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle, semi circle and triangle

Figure 100: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 2-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle, semi circle and triangle

Figure 101: Nizer, K. (2016). *Flights of Fantasy*. The bold and the beautiful 2-Final draping in khadi indigo dyed circle, semi circle and triangle

ORIGINALITY DECLARATION

Written assignment originality declaration

Declaration

Student ID: 15221097

Surname: Kapur

First Name: Harita

Assignment Title: Handmade Tales-Sustainable

Fashion through craft connections

Paper Title: Master of Design

Paper Number: 197.803

I declare that the assignment Handmade Tales-Sustainable fashion through craft connections is entirely my own work.

Ideas used from works of authors have have been duly acknowledged and referenced to their correct source.

All images used through the research study have been duly acknowledged to their correct source.

The assignment will be used only for this paper and will not be submitted elsewhere.

Student signature

Date