



Faculty Development Grant Report

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**Project Description:**

In Fall 2016, I received a Faculty Development Grant to fund a textile art workshop titled “Places, Spaces and Traces” in Les Carroz, France.

This workshop focused on creating artistic textile surfaces, while experimenting with found materials, different media, novel techniques, mark-making (i.e., use of stitch as a “line”), and paint methods on fabric (e.g., sun prints with silk dyes). These different approaches to creating textiles are often described as “painting with cloth.”

This workshop was instructed by a renowned textile artist from the U.K., Cas Holmes, author of several books and articles including “The Found Object in Textile Art” and “Stitch Stories”. She utilizes a unique “hands-on” approach that showcases her experimental use of found materials and inventive application of textile and mixed media procedures.

**Significant Activities:**

According to Cas Holmes, the most important aspect of “creating art” is the process of developing one’s own approach to subject matter in a meaningful way. Specifically, Holmes showed how she makes connections to natural environments in developing her narratives and her personal vision as a textile artist.

## #1. Stitch- Sketching:

Drawing and recording daily observation, and the realization of those ideas in textile is a process.



Sketchbook by Cas Holms



Sketchbook by Sumi Lee

The colors, textures, and changing light over the meadows, fields and landscape can provide a stimulus for the narrative, formal, or abstract quality in textile works.

## #2. Collecting found objects for the mark-making process:

Strong emphasis on using found materials as a part of the exploration of developing a “creative language”. Found materials include aged pages from old books, magazines, postcards, stamps, envelopes, faded printed textiles, a piece of lace from an old dress, and even a cuff of old shirt.

Textured fabric and acrylic paint can be used as a mark-making process.



Example of how Cas Holmes, utilized cut pieces of shirt sleeves to create a narrative collage.

### #3. Momigami Kneading Method:

Creating flexible textile with recycled paper which can be stitched together with other collage pieces. Rub a little oil onto the palm of your hand and crumple then stretch the paper. Continue the process by adding more oil to your hand as needed. When the paper feels flexible, you can then sew it as a textile. Brown paper, magazine paper, and long-fibred eastern paper work particularly well.

This oil-treated crumpled paper should be ironed for heat set after dry. This is a fascinating process of recycling old papers. Old faded papers with music notes, old songs, old poems and personal hand writings and images may invoke a sense of nostalgia.

I made Momigami with an old, faded blank music note, my mom's old music book page, a magazine, used tea bags, a museum ticket, and a postcard (all of which will be further processed when they are collaged together with fabrics). The natural crumpled texture provides an interesting tactile surface.



#### #4. Sun Printing with Silk Dyes:

(Silk painting iron-fix dyes)

Using Seta color or color craft silk paints (which react strong sunlight), you can create an almost negative image – like a film – on fabric. Stretch out your fabric on cardboard covered with polystyrene and secure it with pins.

Using the wet-on-wet process, paint the fabric with dyes, mixing colors as you go and adding water for a soft effect. Pin plant materials, stencils or lace pieces.



Expose to sun on a bright, hot day until completely dry.



Upon drying, remove objects, iron fabric to heat-set.

### #5. Mono printing, Stamping and Pasting:



Adding multiple layers by using different techniques to blend colors, textures, and images may result in unique surface designs. In layering paper and fabric, wallpaper paste is used for safer handling. I used the following: a random page torn from old music notes, a coffee filter, magazine pieces, scrap fabric, and an old lace piece to create interesting layers. Thereafter, I applied acrylic paint to imprint wild flowers and leaves. When all elements were layered, I applied mixed wallpaper paste to create a saturated and blended surface.

### **#6. Free Motion Stitching with Sewing Machine:**

This technique was novel yet extremely fascinating. The sewing machine functions as a drawing tool to create beautiful line drawings. Imprints of objects and painted backgrounds set the tone softly and add depth to final composition. You have to use the special “free embroidery foot” and remove the presser foot from the sewing machine.



Free sewing machine drawing technique is used for dresses and outlines for imprints of flowers and leaves.



Collage of stencils, recycled magazines, scrap fabrics, wrap paper, and free motion stitching of shirt.



Working in the studio, Les Carroz, France.

## #7. Free Motion Quilting:

Creating 3-dimensional volume with padding material underneath. Partial quilting technique will create a natural crinkled texture and soft volume, which casts subtle shadows around main objects.



**Before**



**After**

\*Sun print, paper collage, free motion machine stitching with quilting and hand stitching are applied above.

You don't need the most expensive machine to get great results. A machine with a basic stitching function can create a natural free form shape with variegated lines.

## #8. Deconstruct and Reconstruct:



Break down the surfaces and reassemble, to reveal hidden text, images, and patterns. Cut up and work dry pieces back into the wet layering process. Rework the top of the layers with print, paint, and dye.



\*Demo by Cas Holmes

Each additional step of deconstruction and reconstruction will create unique textures and color compositions. There aren't any restrictions or limitations in this process.



In this landscape collage, parts of the pieces are sliced and additional fabric is inserted with stitches.



After adding outlined machine stitches around the stenciled area, parts of the piece are removed to reveal bright colors of the pattern underneath.

## #9. Hand Stitching:

Various linear stitches, such as running stitch, backstitch, cross stitch, French knots, chain stitch, and bird feet stitch with chunkier embroidery thread will produce subtle textures with natural volume.



## #10. Landscape Collage:



When composing a collage, inspiration can be found from just about anywhere and is not limited to natural objects. For example, the imperfect line qualities of buildings are well-suited for nostalgic themes.

I used indigo fabric, which I dyed in Japan, as a base to create a mixture of two different experiences from two opposite corners of the world. “Momigami” papers are mixed with scraps of fabric.

## #11. Presentation Idea: Making a Hanging Scroll

Showing the process of pasting with wallpaper paste, and applying free motion stitches to tie them together to blend tone and texture, and add natural branches on top for hanging. I attached dried wild flowers on both ends in an attempt to make the piece more emotional and narrative.





### **Epilogue:**

Eight women from all over the world – hailing from Spain, Germany, U.K., the Netherlands, and the United States – came to a secluded little village on top of a mountain in Les Carroz, France. We had high expectations, for the workshop was to be led by a revered textile artist from the U.K. Although we each held diverse occupations, ranging from lawyers to artists, and represented a broad demographic with ages ranging from 45 to 71, we showed tremendous solidarity from 8:30 AM to 7:00 PM every day as students of textile art.

We were completely engaged in slow stitch and hand painted work. We learned how to respect 100% machine-free handwork, how to appreciate our natural surroundings by practicing conservation (e.g., preventing contamination by carelessly draining toxic water under the sink).

In contrast to the seemingly mechanical nature of tools like the sewing machine in the production of cloth, the use of the needle and thread produced more spontaneous results. Unlike computer

generated work or any kind of machine products, the immediacy of hand stitching relies more heavily on intuition rather than logic. The textile artist must tell his or her stories with each stitch.

### **Value to Otis:**

I plan to put together all this valuable visual research as a teaching resource.

All the pictures taken during the workshop will be used when we look for hand generated surface textile works that are also eco-friendly and sustainable. After my report is posted on O-space, it will be widely shared among the Otis community. I will continue to make myself available to students, faculty, and staff as a consultant with regards to hand stitches and dyeing.

Fortunately, for this new semester of 2017, I was assigned to lead one of our senior mentor projects, “Chris Chang”, which requires a lot of hand painting, dyeing, and multiple treatment layers to create unique couture collection that pertains aesthetic of maximalism. All sample pieces that I created over the workshop will be very useful to our team. I already provided a brief presentation to my current students.

Since this amazing experience is completely unique to that mountain village in Les Carroz, France, I want to share this wonderful experience with my Otis fashion family and friends. I proposed to the program organizer and textile instructor that we put together a “Slow Stitch” textile workshop program, specifically geared to Otis fashion constituents and friends – the kind of program I feel more of the fashion community should be exposed to.

We agreed on running this workshop in July 2019, specially restructured for the group that I will bring with me - fashion alumni, faculty, and friends in fashion field.

I am so excited about this special workshop that I am organizing an event to share with the fashion alumni. It will be an unforgettable, once in a lifetime experience, which will open a new door to stimulate their imagination and elevate design aesthetic.

## **Conclusion:**

I thank Otis College of Art for awarding me the faculty development grant that made it possible to participate this valuable textile workshop in France.

It gave me a valuable opportunity to look back on myself as a fashion educator and appreciate importance of slow process of making unique artwork, as opposed to the fast-paced fashion industry.

This grant has greatly advanced my career as a fashion designer and broadened my scope of knowledge as a fashion educator. I very much appreciated the opportunity.

