

#44

Zeszyty Artystyczne

TKANINA ARTYSTYCZNA
Wobec współczesności

TEXTILE ART
In the face of contemporary times



Uniwersytet Artystyczny
im. Magdaleny Abakanowicz
w Poznaniu

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Marie Pourchot

MA degree in anthropology in Montpellier, France. Conducts a reflection on the social and cultural functioning and psycho-sociological patterns of societies. She has followed several courses in embroidery and stylism, and, in a form of intuitive automatism, she merges her achievements in human sciences with the textile techniques acquired by directing her artistic work on a committed approach. awarded for the "Kimonoshima" performance, *Atoutfil* competition in 2013. rewarded for his work *Traver in fantasmagoria*, at 3rd Biennial of Textile Art in Poznan. Her works have been exhibited internationally (Latvia, Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Romania, Slovakia).



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On the border of the eye

Fabric accompanies the body throughout life, until death. It carries meaning, and each culture has its textiles – from its clothing to its banners. Fabric is memory, history, and identity; it is a medium for culture, for a way of thinking and seeing the world. Thus, like writing on a page, thoughts are written on textiles.

My life as an artist who works with textiles, mainly in the Lunéville crochet embroidery style, is a struggle against a process, where my artistic direction does not always seem to align with general expectations. My work explores time and materiality through the use of a secular medium which is mainly attributed to women and often to housewives: embroidery. Each embroidered work requires a significant number of hours to complete, which is considered a luxury in these ultra-fast times; it is a celebration of slowness as a personal and artistic action that counters the requirement for speed. Starting from this metaphor of professional struggle, I gradually reflect on the themes involved. My art then becomes a peaceful action which aims to express my concerns, raise public awareness about the themes addressed, and finally, to integrate textiles as an artistic medium that conveys a socio-political commitment.

The purpose is also to de-compartmentalise this art-form and produce textiles within the genre of contemporary art. Inspired by the problems encountered in the world, I reappropriate images and symbols to register the sufferings that challenge me and need to be confronted. If art can make you dream, it can also make you feel a diversity of emotions and address dark aspects of the human condition. This process is a form of activism in a time and a society where the dark is often rejected or denied. My goal is to explore this darkness and play with the ambivalence of opposites by giving it a precious aspect that reminds us of the fragility of life. Thus, my work revolves around the themes of exile, freedom, identity, interculturality and otherness.

I materialise these reflections by creating works that combine textiles (hand embroidery), engraving and painting. The act of embroidering allows me to become fully involved in my subject and, through the length of its elaboration, it restores the temporality of exile, of absence, of displacement and the long process of syncretism. Lunéville crochet embroi-

dery, needle point, drawing, ordinary or fine fabrics, old fabrics, printed or plain, engraved or painted, these textiles are the support and the medium through which I express myself.

Having trained initially in ethnology, my artistic work is nourished by questions about the notion of identity, and the circulation of people and ideas. The theme of exile came to me spontaneously whilst on a trip to Morocco, when I learnt that children climb onto the axles of trucks in order to clandestinely cross into Europe. My Moroccan spouse went into exile for love, my Alsatian grandfather, to be considered German during the Second World War, lived an exile without displacement, and what about all those who suffer the violence of governments, the climate, the economy?

I follow the path of the immigrant, I trace the path of exile with threads of silk, cotton, and linen. Everything begins with internal exile, this imprisonment of the self. Then comes the act of jumping out of oneself, one's habitat, one's archetypes, one's relationship with the world, to finally join another world. Clandestine exile, legalized exile, forced exile, exile at home; exile is an action embracing abandonment and will. What do we leave behind? What do we keep?

There are three dimensions to the reflections I express through the body.

I. The body in exile; displacement

Our bodies tell stories of power relations, struggles to exist, they do not escape the norm. They talk about class, race, conventions, laws, summons, domination, and myths. Bodies communicate. By their absence they embody human action and become a symbolic construction, the result of social and moral shaping. The bodies, their dress, and the allegories I present are embroidered. They are expressed in many forms in the cacophonous world. They represent a geographical diversity of bodily scenarios around exile and syncretism. With embroidered silhouettes and prints, the objective is to reveal the invisibility of the body and its place in social space through its imprint, its shadows, its traces, its fleeting and ghostly passage, and through memory. By their invisibility they embody human action and become a symbolic construction. I tell the story of these spectres of verticality, the bridging of two worlds on the edge of visibility and confronted with the tangibility of borders.

II. Theme of the body „inhabiting“, through habitation but also through clothing, the original house

The house is therefore much more than a material shelter. It is the way in which a group thinks of itself and fits into the space. The house crystallises memories and individual history; it is a refuge, a landmark, a reference. Living takes on an existential dimension in which those without a home seem not to exist/.

The house is the image of everyone's universe. It reflects the prescriptions and proscriptions of every culture and the distribution of individuals and their activities in each space of the house. It also exacerbates our imagination, our fantasies, and our wishes. The garment is considered a habitat. Wrapped around the body, the garment and the house are representations of identity, of the individual's relationship with the world, but also of points of departure and arrival. Living and dressing take on an existential dimension and those who have no house or clothes seem far from existing because, in Heidegger's philosophy, to live is to be present to the world and to others; exile and displacement gradually become absence and erasure.

III. The image of the body through anthropomorphism or chimerical body grafts

It is a rewriting of the self, of otherness, of individuation, of the perception and interpretation of the body communicating in social space. Also a result of creolization, these characters represent the meeting of cultures.

I transpose these reflections through research and by taking an inventory of motifs of different origins, which, dissociated from their initial context, will then be staged in order to echo the mixing of cultural identities. The fabric, by its traditional or contemporary nature, with or without motifs or texture, is a vector of identity, used as a support with additional identities applied to it. This artistic approach allows me to materialise these inter-individual exchanges.

Through the use of linen, pieces of kimono fabric dating from the interwar period, cotton, silk, fabrics from past, recycled objects, old pearls, old threads, as well as synthetic materials, my goal is to express my perception of the social body, the body I know/experience?, the body that moves me, the body that seems to me both relevant and adequate. ●

Abstract

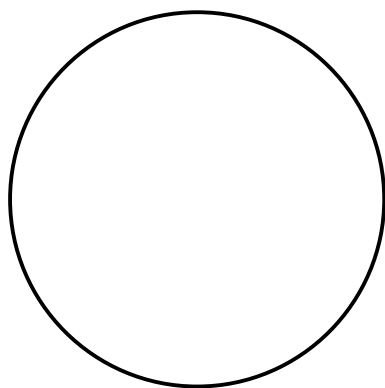
It begins with the inward exile, this kind of self-imprisonment... Then man takes a leap out of oneself, out of one's settlement, out of one's archetype, out of one's connection with the world and finally joins another world. Exile may be illegal or legalized, exile may be under duress, but home can also be an exile - exile is both giving up and wanting more: what is to be left? What is to be kept? Marie Pourchot expresses her views through her work on the body itself. By hand-embroidering, she portrays the bodies, their outward appearances, their allegories (their ghostly forms, their sheltering residences and existences, their mythical graftings and self-rewritings). They express themselves in polymorphic ways in the cacophony of the world. They picture a geographical variety of bodily scenarios about exile and syncretism. Her goal is both to display the invisibility of the body; its position in society through its prints; its shadow; its mark; its fleeting, spectral passing – its memory. The bodies, being absent, play the story of human acts and become a symbolical structure. Marie Pourchot tells the story of the ghostly figures of a vertical journey, hyphens between two worlds, on the border of the eye, faced with the materiality of borders. Her creations, aiming for peace, are meant to not only express her concerns, but also to display and highlight those to the spectator: textile too can convey socio-political commitment as an artistic medium. Therefore the artist gives a material form to her thoughts through works combining fabrics, hand-embroidery, imprinting and painting. Her practice of hand-embroidering allows her both to commit fully to her topic; to figure, by its duration, the lasting of exile, of absence, of transfer and lengthy syncretism process; but it also figures, through its technical preciousness, the life and fragility of the deepest desire.

Keywords:

exile, syncretism, cultural, interculturality, alterity, original dwelling, body

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