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## ADORNMENT AND MODESTY A Symbiotic Relationship between Surface Design and Social Behavior

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*Virginia Commonwealth University*

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**ADORNMENT**

**AND** MODESTY

A Symbiotic Relationship between Surface Design and Social Behavior



**ADORNMENT**

**AND** MODESTY

A Symbiotic Relationship between Surface Design and Social Behavior

Approval certificate for Hawa Stwodah for the thesis project entitled Adornment and Modesty: A Symbiotic Relationship between Surface Design and Social Behavior. Submitted to the faculty of the Master of Fine Arts in Design of Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar in partial fulfillment for the degree, Master of Fine Arts in Design.

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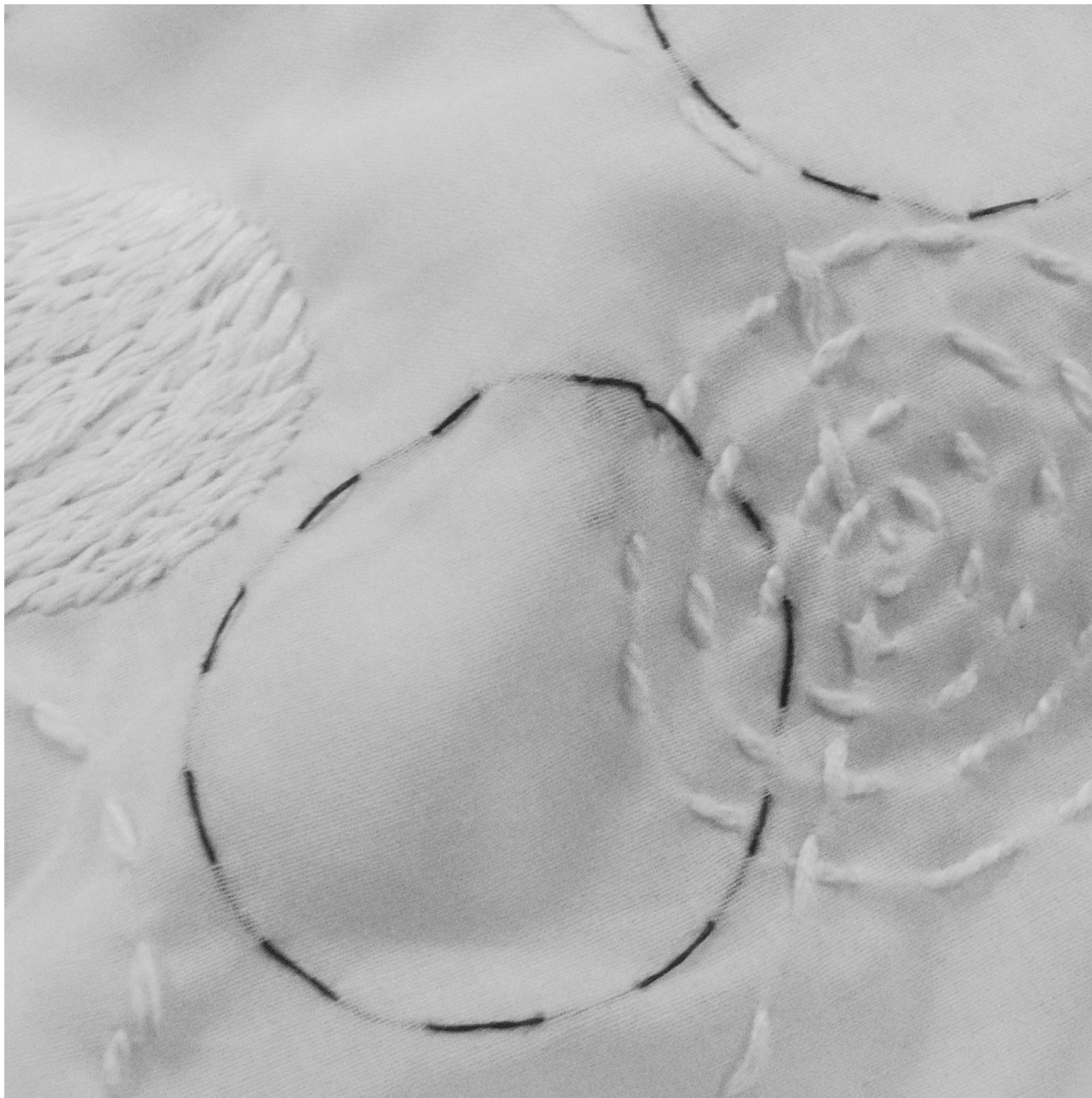
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## **Abstract**

The impulse to beautifying clothing through acts of adornments or embellishments is an innate characteristic of humans. The added decorative details are used for identification and visual communication by the wearer and comprehension and visual appreciation by the viewer. This thesis investigates the recent attention to female modesty, labeled as the Modesty Movement--the community that has developed around the apparel segment of the Movement and the framework of the behavior encompassing the participants within Movement. Additionally, the thesis focuses on adornment through the lens of textile/surface design (embellishment) specific to the Greater Middle East and the northern provinces of India and its application to modest apparel. Surface design is defined as manipulation of a textile beyond the woven construction, in this context it is applied to women's apparel that covers the head and chest. Through a series of experiments using light, sound and motion the thesis examines how the use of of adornment simultaneously conveys identity and conceals the wearer.





## Introduction

The words adornment and modesty, when used to describe women's clothing, may seem contradictory, but I intend to show that modesty and adornment are symbiotic in terms of apparel. In recent years a movement has rapidly developed, called the Modesty Movement.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, a niche market has emerged within the women's apparel industry in tandem with a lifestyle and web presence that surrounds the movement. This thesis will investigate the recent attention to female modesty; the community that has developed around the apparel segment of the Movement and the framework of the behavior encompassing the participants within the Movement. Although the principles of this phenomenon span regions and religions, non-Western countries tend to have a higher concentration of practicing participants. Additionally, this thesis will focus on adornment through the lens of textile/surface design (embellishment) specific to the Greater Middle

East (as defined by the 2004 G8 summit<sup>2</sup>) and the northern provinces of India and its application to modest apparel. The overarching goal of the thesis is to study the correlating relationship between modesty and the ornamentation of apparel and to utilize the knowledge in a novel design solution.

The subject of this thesis is comprised of layers: understanding and defining modesty and modest apparel within the Modesty Movement encompass one strand while adornment through surface design is another ply. Each of these components is investigated and researched independently, then addressed as a group - weaving together the connections, interactions and effects they have on one another. The paradoxical notion of adornment and embellishment on apparel for individuals involved in the Modesty Movement will be explored. This document introduces and defines the key elements, maps a plan of implementation, chronicle experimentation and summarizes the outcome of the thesis.

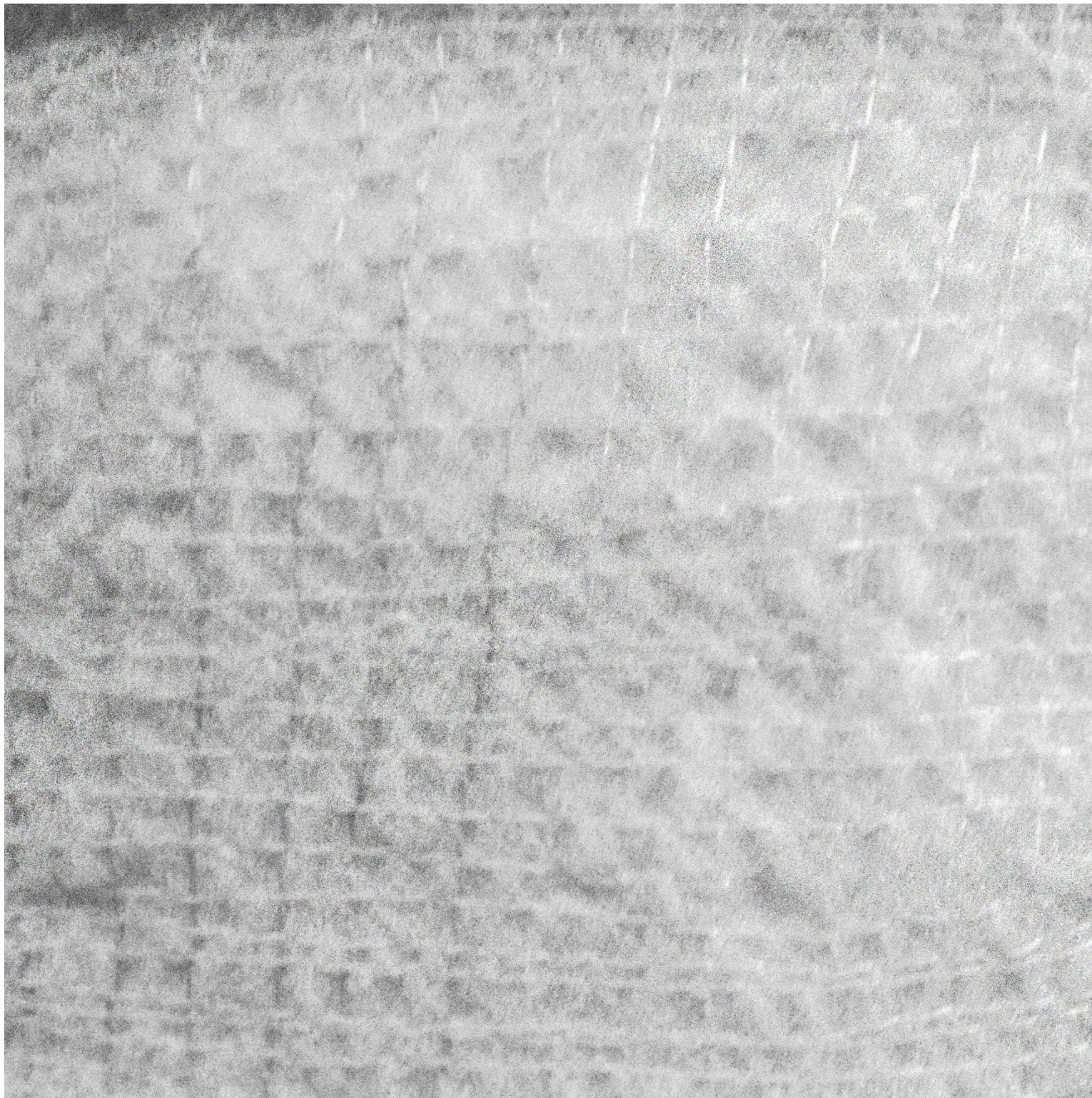
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<sup>1</sup> Yabroff, "Girls Gone Mild? A New Modesty Movement," *Newsweek*, April 15, 2015, <http://europe.newsweek.com/girls-gone-mild-new-modesty-movement-104415?rm=eu>.

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<sup>2</sup> 2004 G8 Summit Countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen... countries sometimes associated: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan,





## Modesty

The Modesty Movement is a complicated subject matter and applies to many aspects of the participants' lives. For this thesis the apparel sector within the Movement is identified for analysis. The definition of modesty is very fluid and personal to most people and groups, however generally it means covering more skin rather than less. In an article from the late 1930s, titled "The Psychology of Clothes", Ernst Harms discusses the form of clothing, which he states is determined by the person's own characteristics and mental state. When clothing is considered from a purely psychological point of view one will try to "determine its characteristics by starting out from such typical emotions as modesty, desire for protection, and desire for adornment."<sup>3</sup> The fact that a movement has sprung up around such a delicate subject is remarkable. In the book *Girls Gone Mild*, author Wendy Shalit discusses the growing Modesty Movement of the North American girl: she notes a shift in what is considered "old fashioned", the reaction to promiscuity, and

<sup>3</sup> Harms, "The Psychology of Clothes, *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 2 (1938): 239-50. doi:10.1086/217972, 246."

abstaining from drugs and alcohol.<sup>4</sup> The Movement has a considerable audience, comprised of predominantly females and plays a substantial role in trying to satisfy the consumer looking for apparel that will meet her requirements for modest garments. A synopsis of Reina Lewis's book *Modest Fashion: Styling Bodies, Mediating Faith (Dress Cultures)* captures the essence of the behavior:

Modest dressing, both secular and religious, is a growing trend across the world, yet so far it has been given little serious attention and is rarely seen as fashion...(Lewis) examines the growing number of women who, for reasons of religion, faith or personal preference, decide to cover their bodies and dress in a way that satisfies their spiritual and stylistic requirements. These are women who are making fashionable the art of dressing modestly. Scholars and journalists, fashion designers and bloggers explore the emergence of a niche market for modest fashion and examine how this operates across and between faiths, and in relation to 'secular'.<sup>5</sup>

The apparel segment of the Movement has risen and evolved via blogs, YouTube and other social

<sup>4</sup> Shalit, "Girls Gone Mild: Young Women Reclaim Self-Respect and Find It's Not Bad to Be Good, December 7, 2015, <https://books.google.com.qa/books?id=Whcss-N54t4C&pg=PR7&dq=Shalit,+Wendy.+Girls+Gone+Mild.+New+York:+Random+House,+2007&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjxqMbBusrJAh-WCICwKHV6sANwQ6AEIJDA#v=onepage&q=Shalit%2C%20Wendy.%20Girls%20Gone%20Mild.%20New%20York%3A%20Random%20House%2C%202007&f=false>."

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, *Modest Fashion: Styling Bodies, Mediating Faith, Dress Culture*. (I.B.Tauris, n.d, 2013)."



media platforms. Lewis states that, "it is the market and the internet which have allowed modest fashion to break out of narrow religious community based circles and go global, crossing the boundaries of a single community or tradition, and catering to all who have access to the universal cultures and currencies of shopping, money and internet access."<sup>6</sup> The community that has sprung up has a consumer connection as shown in a Bloomberg study which provided statistics for the Islamic fashion market: "\$96 billion, globally, estimating that 50 percent of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims each spend at least \$120 a year on modest clothing."<sup>7</sup> This study doesn't factor in the Jewish or Christian community or others outside of the Abrahamic religions who purchase modest apparel. In the same article, countries like Indonesia are identified as manufacturing hubs for Muslim apparel; these countries are looking to export their goods to the European and American markets in the near future.<sup>8</sup> What these statistics are projecting is a definite growth in markets that have to do with modest apparel. When emerging markets grow rapidly, trends and offshoots inevitably occur. What this thesis addresses is the significant role surface design or embellishment will command in the arena of the modest apparel market. In the article titled "Materializing piety: Gendered anxieties about faithful consumption in contemporary urban Indonesia," Carla Jones succinctly states the intrinsic connection between adornment and modesty. She states "In essence, because Islamic dress requires a

relatively large amount of fabric, its adoption can be read as a technique by which women strategically identify a style that provides them with a larger canvas for self-decoration than is offered by secular fashions."<sup>9</sup> The "large canvas" isn't limited solely to Islamic dress. One can see parallels in other religious and secular communities regarding the desire to decorate, adorn and embellish apparel.

For this thesis, the parameters where I focus my attention are on the female and the "large canvas", which encompasses the area from the top of the head to the middle of the chest. This is, historically, where the majority or concentration of self-beautification and decoration occurs.<sup>10</sup> How do women balance modesty with the desire to adorn themselves? What are the motifs they use? How does a woman use adornment to create her modest identity? Islam and Islamic apparel are used as the case study, to be used as the model to understand modesty and the application of embellishment at the global level.

Due to the designated area of focus, the hijab or veil form the nucleus of the research. The veil has been a significant topic in the media and throughout the globe, sparking heated debates and controversy regarding Islam and women. In her book *Veil- Modesty, Privacy and Resistance* Fadwa el Guindi states the words "harem, veil and polygyny are words that have come to evoke Islam and are synonymous with female weakness and

oppression in the Islamic community."<sup>11</sup> My intention is not to produce a polemical thesis on cultural inferiority and oppression. The aspiration is to look at how women use adornment on the area that they veil or cover to communicate their identity and individuality. Additionally, beauty is examined in reference to modesty and adornment, however the thesis is not intended to approach the philosophical argument of what defines beauty. My intention is not to discuss moral judgments regarding modesty -- simply to probe the motivation and behaviors. Certain countries within the region are identified where specific surface design techniques are investigated. The geographic parameters (approximately from Turkey to India) have been set to insure that the area of focus, adornment, is thoroughly examined.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> "Presenting Contemporary Style with Cultural Modesty, *fibre2fashion*, March 23, 2015, <http://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/50/4909/presenting-contemporary-style-with-cultural-modesty1.asp>"

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>9</sup> Jones, "Materializing Piety : Gendered Anxieties about Faithful Consumption in Contemporary Urban Indonesia." *American Ethnologist* 37, no. 4 (November 2010): 617-37. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1425.2010.01275.x.<sup>624</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Paine, *Embroidered Textiles A World Guide to Traditional Patterns*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, n.d.,2010)<sup>190</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> El Guindi, Fadwa. *Veil- Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*. Dress, Body, Culture. Berg, 1999





## Modesty and Adornment: Dress, Culture, and Society

The merging of the concepts of dress, culture and society can be explored in the context of the relationship of adornment and modesty in apparel. In the book *The Visible Self*, Joanne Eicher defines dress "as both a product and as a process that distinguishes human beings from other animals."<sup>12</sup> She says "human beings, in every society on the globe, dress themselves for many and varied reasons, including protection of the body, extensions of the body's abilities, beautification and nonverbal communication about the wearer."<sup>13</sup> While Eicher gives a wide range of the reasons for dress, Harms gives a narrower scope when referring to dress in that "what is important, and remains so in every cultural-psychological study of human dress, is that in so far as its purpose is concerned all dress appears to be motivated primarily by the environment."<sup>14</sup> El Guindi summarizes the different

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<sup>12</sup> Eicher and Evenson, *The Visible Self Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society*, 4th ed. New York, London: Fairchild Books, n.d, 2015, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid,2.

<sup>14</sup> Harms, "The Psychology of Clothes,241."

dimensions of dress in her book, as "dress is a code of communication and a marker of a number of social domains -- individual and group identity, social status, economic position, political power, gender, and religious role."<sup>15</sup> All three perspectives, Eicher, Harms and El Guindi, give a comprehensive understanding of dress. Ultimately there are a variety of reasons why clothes cover the body, modesty being one constant component within the whole frame.

The reasons why and how people choose to clothe themselves are the larger questions. Harms's view on how people dress and adorn themselves depends upon emotions and their mental state, which then makes the "why and how" of dress selection contingent on the individual's state of mind. In the book *Islam and the Veil* Theodore Gabriel looks at Islamic veiling; she states that "most non-Muslims in the West presume that the hijab, or khimar, niqab, or jilbab (Arabic words for specific forms of modest apparel) has been forced on Muslim women by their men. They do not attempt to examine the motivations of the women themselves for wearing it."<sup>16</sup> Gabriel goes on to break down the many rationale for donning the veil: symbol of Muslim woman's identity, piety, decoration/adornment, security, protection of privacy and dignity, and political protest.<sup>17</sup> She uses the veil to illustrate how diverse the reasons behind covering are, not simply an oppressive patriarchal society and environmental pressure propelling the need to veil. These motivational factors stretch across the spectrum of participants within the apparel segment of the Movement. As we

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<sup>15</sup> El Guindi, *Veil- Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*, 66.

<sup>16</sup> Gabriel and Hannan, *Islam and the Veil*, ( Vol. 21. UK: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011),14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

establish that modesty is a part of the whole notion of dress, the individual, at a very personal level, defines modesty for herself and her surroundings. Eicher and Harms touch on what Eicher refers to as “surface design”<sup>18</sup> and writes that it is “often applied to the body in the process of dressing [and] can be temporary or permanent.”<sup>19</sup> She breaks dress down to its core level and then systematically categorizes all forms of dress with surface design being one of the categories. Throughout the book she “uses the classification system to understand the power of dress within any society and culture to communicate information about individuals and groups.”<sup>20</sup> In the charts/categories that Eicher has developed to help in the classification and cataloguing of dress for her book, there is a subcategory in Surface Design label named “Attachments to Body Enclosure.”<sup>21</sup> It is in this subcategory where she explains surface design as additional pieces that decorate or inform the dress and are attached on top of the “body enclosure” (i.e. blouse, pant). Harm explains the idea of surface design in a less sterile, more psychological manner. “Clothing, which patterns and decorates the surface of the human body, stands as an artistic form of psychological experience midway between the plastic and the surface types. To the wearer itself it appears as his external surface, while for the spectator it has a more plastic character.”<sup>22</sup> He elaborates on the idea of adornment, stating “‘To adorn’ means to make something beautiful, especially one’s self. Adorning is therefore an active

aesthetic experience.”<sup>23</sup> Beauty’s importance and how it is influenced by the individual’s intelligence and emotions, makes it, for the wearer, in Harms’s words: “... a predominantly emotional creation, while for the spectator it is special.”<sup>24</sup> Eicher and Harms methodically show that beautifying clothing with adornments or embellishments is an innate characteristic of humans. Beautifying clothing is used for identification and visual communication by the wearer and comprehension and visual appreciation by the viewer (the spectator). Eicher gives a very thorough definition of culture and introduces us to the term “material culture.” She states that culture is defined “as the human-made material items and patterns of thought, feeling and behavior shared by members of a group who regularly interact with one another... and relates to the way human beings are taught to behave, feel and think from the time they are born. Culture includes a broad range of phenomena, both material and nonmaterial in nature.”<sup>25</sup> Material culture circumscribes tangible objects such as items of dress and evolved into “concepts of culture to examine how ideas and beliefs are embedded into material things.”<sup>26</sup> In the book *Clothing as Material Culture*, Susanne Kuchler and Daniel Miller expand on the concept of this definition and discuss using materiality “to complement the common critique of the concept of culture with a more specific critique of terms such as society, social relations and the subject.”<sup>27</sup> Looking at surface design through the cultural (material culture and materiality) lens is imperative. For instance, the kind of filament

used in a MakerBot extruder and the type of silk floss used for Souzani motif cannot be arbitrary, each type of material is significant. The notion of modesty must be analyzed from a non-material angle (beliefs, values, standards). It is here where the meaning of the symbols and motifs used for decoration and embellishment must be considered. Several articles provide insightful examples of non-material culture for modesty through in-depth ethnographic surveys within several religious communities. In “Grace Is Deceitful and Beauty Is Vain: How Hassidic Women Cope with the Requirement of Shaving One’s Head and Wearing a Black Kerchief” Sima Zalberg interviews several women within an ultra-orthodox community<sup>28</sup> and passes on their stories about experiences with shaving their heads after marriage.

“Shaving my head [for the first time] was a great joy for me, a really great joy! You wait so much for marriage, and this—the shaving—comes with it, it’s a sign that you’re finally married.”<sup>29</sup>

Zalberg writes that:

From the women’s perspective esthetics may include much more than mere physical beauty, and may not be separable from their religious, cultural and social views... the criteria for beauty, as well as perceptions and manifestations

of femininity, are not absolute but rather depend on the social codes of different groups... which do not match the accepted criteria in most modern Western societies.<sup>30</sup>

The standard of beauty is measured by the religious dedication these women show when shaving their heads. They sacrifice their hair to maintain a certain level of modesty that their small community regards as acceptable. For the Journal of Consumer Research’s article “Veiling in Style: How Does a Stigmatized Practice Become Fashionable?” Ozlem Sandikci and Guliz Ger spent four years studying Turkish women in two cities on “how women interpreted and practiced covering seemed to vary by demographics, years of covering, life stage, political views, and cultural and financial resource.”<sup>31</sup> They looked at how, that prior to the early 1980s, “veiling was mostly associated with and practiced by the peasants, the poor, and the elderly”<sup>32</sup>; and how veiling was later adopted by the younger generation as an instrument for political commentaries. Consequently, they look at how veiling turned into a fashion movement with Turkey, leading the market in modest apparel. Sandikci and Ger interviewed many women to understand the sense of community that had developed around their shared beliefs.

Again, the source for a definition of society in the context of apparel is Eicher’s *The Visible Self*. She explains society as “a group of individuals who interact with one another based on the sharing of beliefs and ways of behavior.”<sup>33</sup> She explains how different cultures and societies, due to similarities

<sup>18</sup> Eicher and Evenson, *The Visible Self Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid,4.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid,5.

<sup>22</sup> Harms, “The Psychology of Clothes,” 246.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Eicher and Evenson, *The Visible Self Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society*, 31.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Kuchler and Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture*, (Berg, 2005),2.

<sup>28</sup> *ToldotAharon*, an ultra-Orthodox Hassidic group- The women, for reasons of modesty, are required to wear simple dresses that do not display their femininity, and black stockings. When they are married, they are required to shave their head completely and cover it with a black kerchief. Young unmarried girls must wear their hair long in one or two braids.

<sup>29</sup> Zalberg, “‘Grace Is Deceitful and Beauty Is Vain’: How Hassidic Women Cope with the Requirement of Shaving One’s Head and Wearing a Black Kerchief.” *Gender Issues* 24, no. 3 (September 2007): 13-34. doi:10.1007/s12147-007-9043-3, 23.”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Sandikci and Ger, “Veiling in Style: How Does a Stigmatized Practice Become Fashionable?” *Journal of Consumer Research* 37, no. 1 (June 2010): 15-36. doi:10.1086/649910, 19.”

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>33</sup> Eicher and Evenson, *The Visible Self Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society*, 33.

in interests, cross or overlap leading to interactions and dialogue. A prime example of this overlap is in social media and the modesty market. In an article for TechInsider titled "Modestly Dressed Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Women are Starting a Fashion Revolution Online", Megan Willet says "Thanks to social media, these women are able to connect through their mutual respect for religion and love for fashion, inspiring other women to do the same."<sup>34</sup> When modesty is looked at as a societal movement on a global level, the core beliefs and values are not limited by location or religion.

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<sup>34</sup> Willett, Sep. 11, and 25, "Modestly Dressed Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Women Are Starting a Fashion Revolution Online", *Tech Insider*. Accessed September 26, 2015. <http://www.techinsider.io/modestly-dressed-religious-fashion-bloggers-2015-9>"





## Modest Community

The platform of social media can be seen as the arena where a convergence of both cultural and societal influences on dress occurs. Young designers and merchandisers promoting their products as well as their convictions can best illustrate social media's influence on the market surrounding the modesty movement. The global accessibility of modest apparel, as well as having a forum for sharing similar values, make the various social platforms an ideal place to nurture like-minded endeavors. Tanya Basu, in the article titled "How the Internet Made Modest Fashion Cool", writes about Mimu Maxi, a modest clothing company run by Mimi Hecht and Mushky Notik. Basu states, "... the inclusiveness of the modest-fashion movement also means its appeal stretches beyond the faithful. Atheists are among the most vocally supportive on social media of modest blogs and Instagrams—a point everyone I spoke to made to me without prompting. 'If you notice from our Instagram page, it's not a small hobby,' Hecht said of Mimu Maxi's social-media presence."<sup>35</sup> Hecht and Notik are a pair of Jewish sisters-in-law, who have been producing hip,

<sup>35</sup> Basu, "How the Internet Made Modest Fashion Cool, *The Atlantic*, February 27, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/02/making-modest-fashion-cool/385789>."

oversized garments targeting the modesty market. In an online article for *Bustle* Jodie Layne writes "the pair have gained a following, and not just of religious women—including their many Muslim fans—but of babes of all backgrounds who are into the dresses based entirely on their design."<sup>36</sup>



1. Mimu Maxi. Photograph *The Atlantic*, February 2015

Social media is an inclusive platform, offering a forum where common ideologies can be explored. Because of the open access to social media, there are wide ranges of perspectives available within the commonality. People can find who and what speaks to them the best: like-minded individuals who share similar views on adornment, modesty and beauty. This has eliminated distances and boundaries among women. The participants within the Movement are coming together, regardless of faith or how each group defines modesty, for the communal desire to grow a business and to provide multiple clothing options for women who practice similar lifestyles.

<sup>36</sup> Layne, "Meet Mimu Maxi, The Retailer Founded By Two Orthodox Jewish Sisters Who Craved Modest Yet Fashionable Apparel", *Bustle*, December 7, 2015. <http://www.bustle.com/articles/61971-meet-mimu-maxi-the-retailer-founded-by-two-orthodox-jewish-sisters-who-craved-modest-yet-fashionable..>"





2. Summer Albarcha Instagram. Photograph Refinery29.com, April 2014

In the article “This Instagram Will Inspire Muslims & Clingy-Clothes Haters Alike” for the website Refinery29.com, Leeann Duggan wrote about Muslim blogger Summer Albarcha:

Her cleverly layered OOTDs (Outfit of the Day) are sure to inspire you, whether you’re Muslim, Orthodox, or otherwise dress modestly for religious reasons. Heck, even if you simply hate clothes that stick, or love a good maxi-skirt, there’s a bounty of fashion inspiration here. And, that’s something we can all get down with.<sup>37</sup>

It is this universal appeal that is catapulting the Modesty Movement. Blogs and videos are filled with merchandise for sale and with tutorials to support the styling of the apparel. The community that has developed around the desire for modest apparel transcends categories. For *The Atlantic*, Basu quotes the up and coming entrepreneurs (Hecht and Notik) as saying: “People who shop with us who aren’t Jewish, don’t really care about religion,” Hecht said. “They just like the fabric and the cut. There’s Muslims who like us, atheist hipsters who like us. We’re not hiding who we are, and it’s cool.”<sup>38</sup> This inclusive attitude toward modest apparel and the desire to be seen is the common denominator within the Movement. This stance speaks to Harms’s notion of adornment for personal beautification and the desire to be beautiful is a societal aspiration.

<sup>37</sup> Duggan, “This Instagram Will Inspire Muslims & Clingy-Clothes Haters Alike”, *Refinery29*, November 17, 2015. <http://social.refinery29.com/hipster-hijabis-instagram>.”

<sup>38</sup> Basu, “How the Internet Made Modest Fashion Cool *The Atlantic*”, February 27, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/02/making-modest-fashion-cool/385789/>.”



## Modest Beauty and Visibility

The desire to be beautiful does not get compromised because one chooses to dress modestly. Sandikci and Ger state in "Veiling in Style" that the women they interviewed believed that "covering should be beautiful because 'God is beautiful and likes beautiful things' swiftly legitimizes this interest in beauty. They cite the [Qur'an and the Hadiths] on the importance of beauty and the prophet's interest in dressing beautifully."<sup>39</sup> The standards of beauty are not universal, but the similarity of trying to gain beauty is a constant in all humans. Banu Gökariksel and Anna Secor conduct interviews with women in Konya and Istanbul for their article "The Veil, Desire, and the Gaze: Turning the Inside Out". Below is an excerpt of a conversation with a young upper-middle class woman from Istanbul speaking about beauty.

Saliha: Yes, absolutely. They dress in a way that makes even me look. Imagine a beautiful woman, for instance, a really beautiful woman and she has exhibited

<sup>39</sup> Sandikci and Ger, "Veiling in Style, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27."

all of her beauty. I find myself staring after her.

Moderator: So are there veiled women at whom you find yourself staring as well?

Jale: Of course, the headscarf, the overcoat, the matching colors, the shoes, the purse.<sup>40</sup>

In the conversation captured by Gökariksel and Secor, they touch on the subject of trying to attain beauty and the acknowledgement of beauty. The women interviewed by Gökariksel and Secor give a nod of acknowledgement to the two participants, the wearer and the spectator, Harms mentioned when he discussed adornment and the emotions involved in the adornment process.<sup>41</sup> Gökariksel and Secor state in their article:

In the context of the rise of fashionable veiling in Turkey, we argue that veiling does not simply mean blocking the gaze but is instead a matter of mobilizing a particular visual regime, one that enacts its own aesthetics and ethics. Veiled women are not invisible; they are visible in a particular manner, and they are active participants in producing that visibility.<sup>42</sup>

In the article they refer to Lacan's theory on the field of the gaze and declare "Within this field of the gaze, the subject plays with her own image, mapping herself (clothed and idealized) within the picture according to the coordinates of her own desire."<sup>43</sup> In the book *Islam and*

<sup>40</sup> Gökariksel and Secor, "The Veil, Desire, and the Gaze: Turning the Inside Out." *Signs* 40, no. 1 (2014): 177-200, 183."

<sup>41</sup> Harms, "The Psychology of Clothes", *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 2 (1938): 239-50. doi:10.1086/217972"

<sup>42</sup> Gökariksel and Secor, "The Veil, Desire, and the Gaze, 178."

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 179.



*the Veil*, Gabriel refers to Moroccan writer and sociologist Fatima Mernissi's views on the three dimensions of hijab -- visual, spatial and ethical.<sup>44</sup> Gabriel states that:

...most people, when they see a veiled woman, are aware of only the visual. They remark on the looks of the woman, or rather the inability to see her looks, but the ideas related to space and the ethics behind wearing the veil is mostly overlooked. If they would consider these other two dimensions they would understand better the rationale for wearing the veil—that the space behind the hijab has a special dignity or even sanctity, and that there are ethical aspects to a woman's decisions to wear it.<sup>45</sup>

What the spectator can see, what the spectator is allowed to see, and what is hidden are what the subjects or participants in the Modesty Movement deal with when adorning themselves.



3. Modern Afghan Chadari-detail Photograph Jasmine Thompson, December 2013

When looking at the idea of visibility and invisibility within the realm of apparel, the Afghan Chadari comes to mind as an example of this theory. The Afghan Chadari is an outer garment that is worn by women over their clothes when out in public. It covers the wearer from the top of the head to the ankles. The garment is made up of several segments: the cap, the face veil with lattice work in the eye area, and the main pleated section of about 10 yards of fabric. The garment has been around for several centuries in the region. Debates over its origins prevail, but most believe it originated in either Persia or India around the mid 1500's. There are images of a garment found in paintings from the Mughal era that closely match what women wear in present-day Pakistan and India. In Berg Fashion Library's Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion, author Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood writes in "The Chadari/Burqa of Afghanistan and Pakistan"

<sup>44</sup> Gabriel and Hannan, *Islam and the Veil*, 17.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 18.

that, "From the medieval period on, it appears that these garments were primarily worn by upper-class urban women, as nomadic or village women did not have the resources of time and money required for the amount of cloth and for the creation and embellishment of the garments."<sup>46</sup>



4. Chadari or burqa, from Afghanistan, 19th century. Victoria @ Albert Museum, London, UK

<sup>46</sup> Vogelsang-Eastwood, "The Chadari/Burqa of Afghanistan and Pakistan," *The Berg Fashion Library*, November 9, 2015), <http://www.bergfashionlibrary.com/view/bewdf/BEWDF-v5/EDch5056.xml>.

Although people of the region call the garment a chadari, it has been referred to interchangeably as the burqa (an Arabic word). However, with the recent media spotlight on Afghanistan, the word burqa has come to specifically identify the medium-blue-colored, head-to-toe covering worn by Afghan women.



5. 20th Century Cotton and Silk Afghan Chadari. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Costume Institute- Gift of Diana Vreeland, 1972

The garment was originally made from cotton or silk and hand pleated with the predominant embroidery technique Khomak dozi or Kandahari dozi<sup>47</sup> applied to the cap and face/chest area. This technique of embroidery uses the long, traditional embroidery needle to construct the short satin stitch; the threads of the base fabric are counted to create symmetrical geometric patterns.

After the mid 1950s, a synthetic version of the textile became popular that maintained the crisp micro pleats and was easier to wash. The cost of the garment dropped drastically with the introduction of synthetic textiles, and women were able to replenish their chadaris more often. Although the base textile was a synthetic, woven by a machine, the hand embroidery was, at the time still used for embellishment on the cap and face/chest area. Since the garment retained the handcrafted embroidery and customized decoration in the head and chest area, as well as being made to measure, the cost of production was still significant and the chadari remained a luxury item. Embellishment was added to distinguish and signify the wearer's identity and individual style, before the entire garment was dyed.



6. Khomak/Kandahari dozi. Photograph by author, November 2015

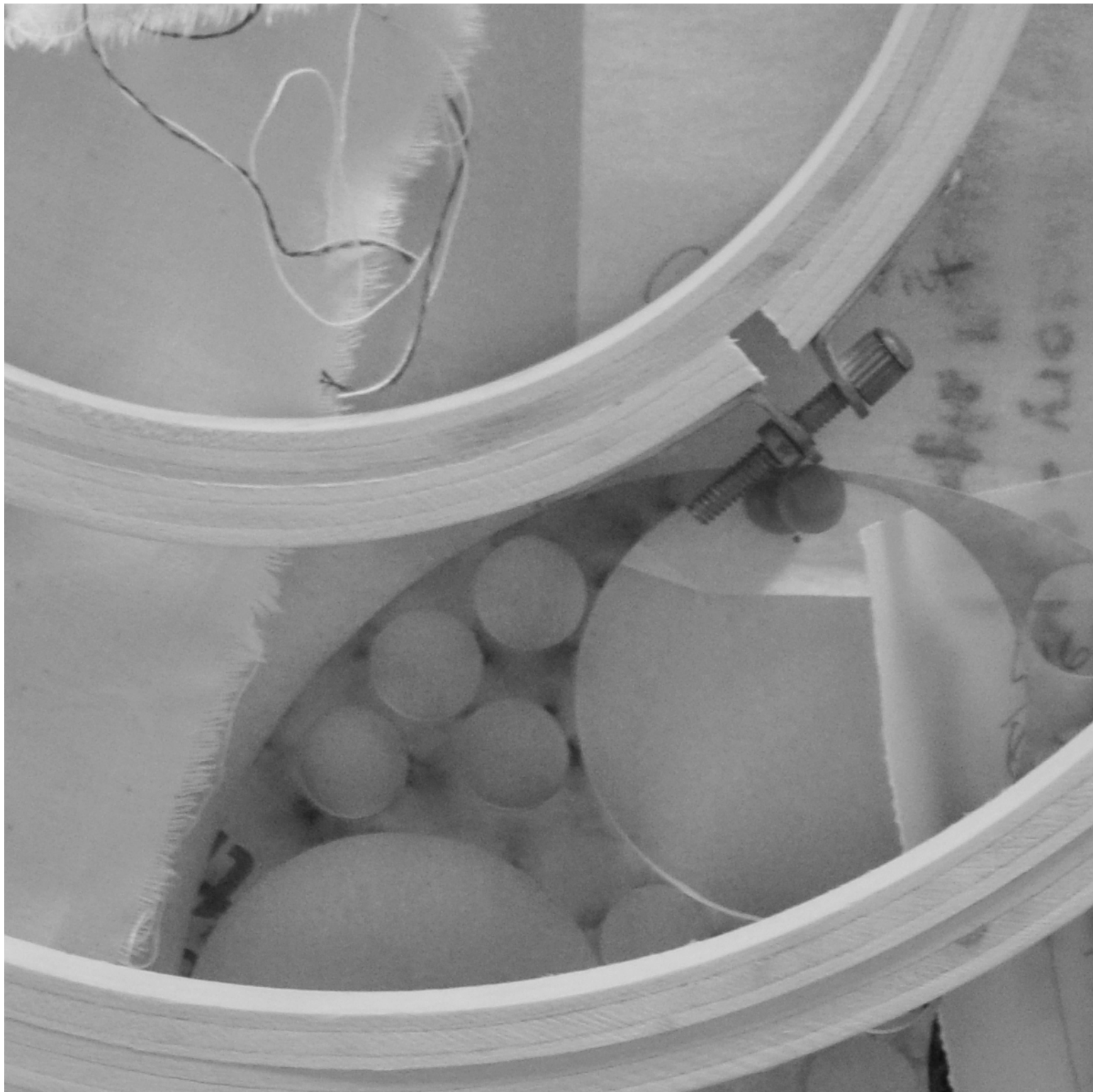
<sup>47</sup> Khomak means raw or unfinished, dozi: sewing/embroidery and Kandahar is a city in Afghanistan, the 'i' at the end of the word makes it possessive- needlework of Kandahar)



7. Modern Afghan Chadari. Photograph Jasmine Thompson, December 2013

In the 1980s and 1990s, machine made (synthetic textile and machine embroidery) chadaris were imported from abroad and sold in Afghanistan, allowing much more consumer access. The form and function of the garment are still the same: an outer garment that envelops the wearer to provide coverage from the public. At first glance, especially through the lens of contemporary depiction, the garment, a large engulfing textile, appears to conceal individuality. However, the nuances of the embellishment on the cap and face/chest convey the wearers distinction and, to a certain degree, identity. Through the adornment of the garment, the wearer subtly controls and communicates social and cultural messages to the spectator.





## Designer and Artisan

Within contemporary fashion there is another component in the equation of wearer and spectator -- the designer. The designer offers distinctive seasonal apparel collections: a series of garments that allows the wearer, options to select from when trying to define her individuality and carve out her identity.

The Turkish designer Dr. Gonul Paksoy, combines communication into the pieces she designs and heavily incorporates cultural heritage into the garments. Dr. Paksoy is not only a fashion designer, she also is an artist, a chemist, and a cookbook author: a woman who is invested in preserving her national heritage through conservation of antique textiles, and maintaining her artistic license by incorporating those textiles in her apparel design. In an interview at her boutique in the Teşvikiye area of Istanbul in June of 2015, she spoke of her collection of more than 4,500 pieces of Anatolian textiles that she has gathered over the past 30 years. She works with these pieces, incorporating them into her current collections, repairing and restoring the textiles, re-dying and manipulating them into contemporary garments. She has an atelier in Adana, Turkey, which her sister manages, where local artisans work on the garments and accessories. Each item is cut and sewn by hand



8. Dr. Gonul Paksoy in her boutique in Istanbul. Photograph by author, June 2015



(not on a machine) in the atelier, producing an inspiring delicacy of seams and finishings. Her Ph.D. in chemistry aids in the dyeing and conservation process, which she oversees personally. She draws inspiration from her upbringing in Adana: the ascetic life and practices of the Sufi's, their *tekke* (a gathering or meeting place for members of the Sufi Order) and the dervishes. The silhouettes and simple lines of her designs allow for the textile to come to the foreground. She says her work is "art not fashion", and each item is to be worn and treasured, "because fashion always changes, fashion's life is very short, my designs are very long...timeless."<sup>48</sup>

Her nature is quiet and soft-spoken, she doesn't participate in fashion shows or the seasonal timelines, and she doesn't market or promote herself globally. Dr. Paksoy embodies the idea of an artisan designer. Her entire philosophy is to make beautiful, timeless, high quality garments that the wearer could easily display as artwork. Her boutique is sparse with clean lines, and her designs are displayed alongside her dolls, accessories, books and jewelry. She is mostly stationed in her boutique, but also visits her small atelier in Istanbul as well as the one in Adana. She is very much involved with artisans and wants to stay true to the brand she has subtly cultivated. She has a global following without doing any marketing or advertising.



9. Jewel neck jacket with large button Antique textile. Photograph by author, June 2015

<sup>48</sup> Gonul Paksoy (designer), Interview with author, June 3, 2015.



10. Oya- Turkish needlework. Photograph Hand/Eye Journal, February 2016

Dr. Paksoy doesn't sell through third parties and only shows her collections in select exhibitions. The clientele she has attracted to her boutique in Istanbul are those who are interested in one-of-a-kind hand crafted garments with hidden treasures tucked away within the folds and seams, which are only known to the wearer and designer. Her signature shape is the triangle; incorporated into her garments in the form of a gusset or small triangular panel. She also cleverly includes the triangle when a vintage textile needs surface repair - essentially using it as both a patch as well as an adornment.

Dr. Paksoy's focus on conservation and heritage adds a layer of value to the exquisite handcrafted garments she produces. During the interview, I asked if she used modern textiles in her collection, she nodded and said yes, but only natural fibers that would complement the Ottoman antiques she uses. She works with the artisans, especially young girls, to maintain regional crafts such as *oya*, classic Turkish needlework. The *oya* style Dr. Paksoy favors is produced using a fine needle and silk thread. These techniques, which usually depict flora and fauna, are traditionally

used to embellish edges of scarves, and brides customarily wear *oya* around the head. Each motif applied to the textile has a significant meaning and symbolism. The women who develop the *oya* use it as a form of secret communication.<sup>49</sup> Dr. Paksoy goes to the villages where these items are produced; often she re-dyes and slightly redesigns the patterns. She admitted that communicating with the artisans is sometimes difficult when attempting to change the traditional patterns, but said she thinks, due to the historical importance of the style and international interest in the embellishment, she will continue working with the craftspeople, not only to maintain the skill but also to develop slight variations of the patterns.



11. Organza overlay top with large necklace incorporating Oya- Antique textile. Photograph by author, June 2015

<sup>49</sup> "Oya - Turkish Needle Lace, *HandEye*, February 11, 2016, [http://handeyemagazine.com/content/oya-turkish-needle-lace.](http://handeyemagazine.com/content/oya-turkish-needle-lace)"



The importance of the craftsmen and the distinctive techniques of embellishment they use to produce surface design is a crucial aspect in developing designs that are able to be constructed, as well as have meaning and value. *Souzani* and *Zardozi* are two surface design techniques used in the Greater Middle East region. Each has a very recognizable style that is specific to areas within the region. *Souzani*, meaning “needlework” in Farsi, is predominantly found in Central Asia, and is a craft done by women in their homes. The stitch is produced with colorful silk threads and a traditional embroidery needle on a cotton or natural base textile. A long satin stitch is carefully placed to create either a smooth floral/circular motif or used to produce a slight 3D textured effect.<sup>50</sup> Uzbekistan is renowned for its *souzani* goods and produces textiles for apparel and home furnishings. The example of the *souzani* technique in the photograph (figure 12) is a vintage piece from Afghanistan. Afghanistan has a large Uzbek population, and the two countries share a border. Uzbeki influence is evident in the *souzani* style of the photographed piece, but the slight color variations are a subtle indication of an Afghan approach. The large medallions merged with floral motifs are traditional combinations, symbolizing the sun and fertility from ancient cultures.<sup>51</sup> The piece is a wall covering. It uses the traditional *souzani* style of the long stitches to create the large circles and understated ridge textures. The *souzani* technique is different from the *Khomak/Kandahari dozi* mentioned in the *chadari* segment, mainly in the



12. Vintage Suzani Tapestry from Afghanistan. Photograph by author, November 2015

use of colors. *Souzani* uses a wide range of vibrant colors, while *Khomak/Kandahari* is more tone on tone, and monochromatic in its execution.

<sup>50</sup> Mallett, “Contemporary Uzbek Suzanis, *Marla Mallett: Textiles and Tribal Oriental Rugs*, <http://www.marlamallett.com/suzanis.htm>.”

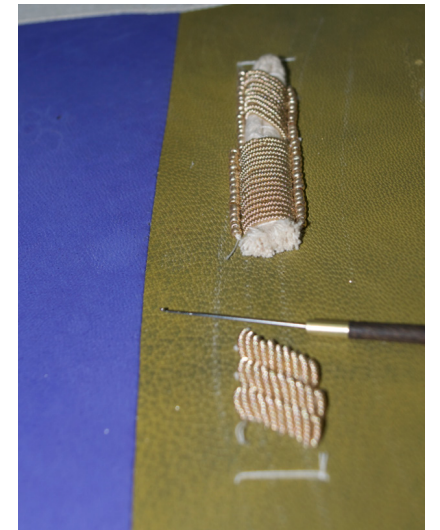
<sup>51</sup> Paine, *Embroidered Textiles A World Guide to Traditional Patterns*.



13. Aadda frame India. Photograph by author, October 2015



14. Zardozi needle Ari, India. Photograph by author, October 2015



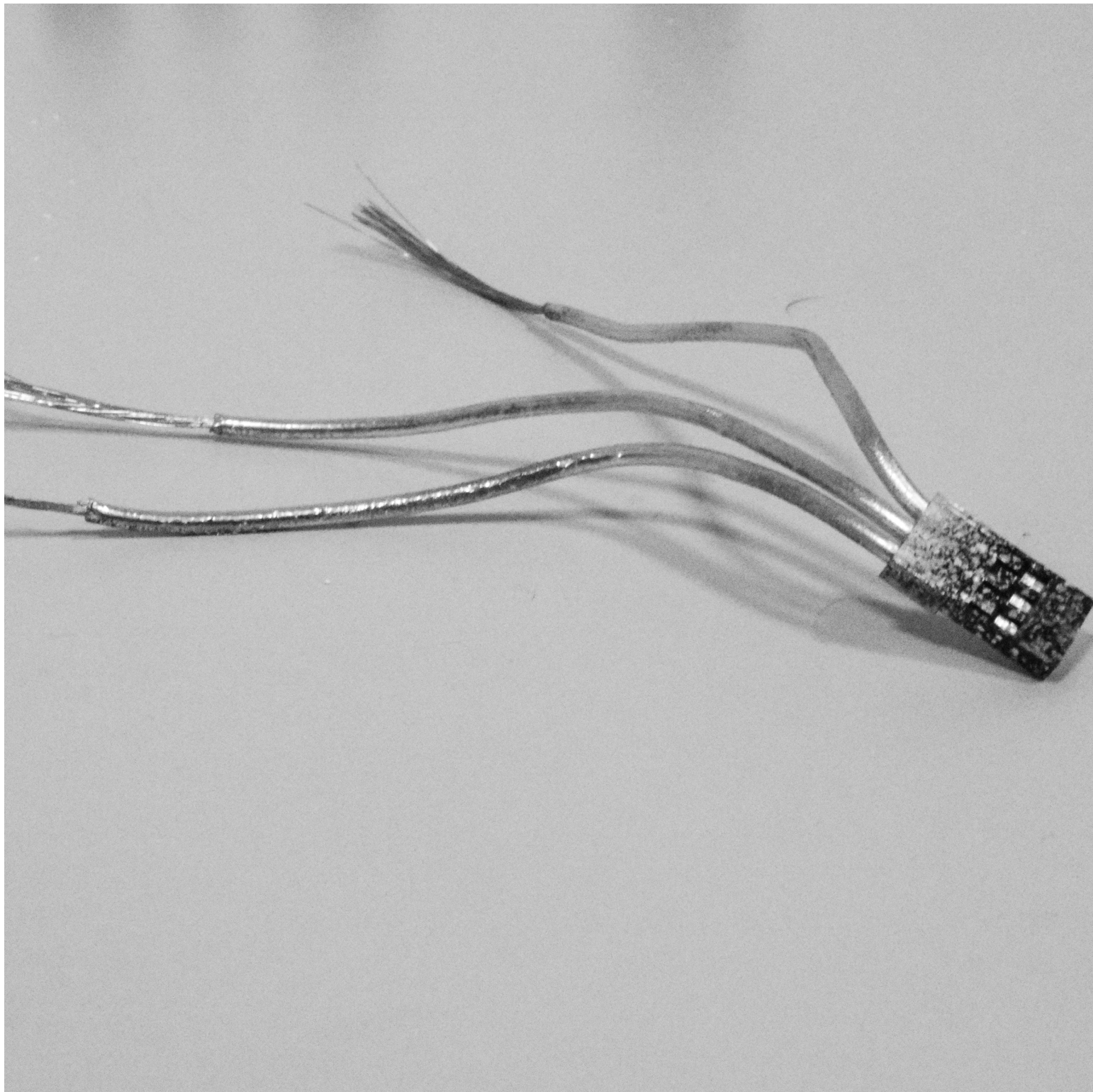
15. Artisan at work India. Photograph by author, October 2015

*Zardozi*, (a Farsi term, *zar* meaning gold) is mainly created in Central Asia and India. The technique was thought to originate in Persia and was imported to India during the Mughal reign where depictions of the time show it thoroughly imbedded into the regional dress and textiles. The materials and tools used in this surface design technique are a bit different than the traditional embroidery use of silk floss or thread. *Zardozi* employs metallic thread, wire, and coils are used to create a 3D effect. The metal threads can be applied on silk (chiffons as well as velvet), cotton, wool and leather. The textile is stretched on a wooden frame called an *Aadda*, and a special needle, an *Ari*, is used to create the embroidery. Beading, sequins and thread/floss embroidery can also be produced using this needle, and also fall under the title of *Zardozi*. Men in India mainly produce this craft. This is in order to insure that the secret techniques don't leave the artisan's group when a girl marries into another family.

The items produced are rich and luxurious textiles that are manufactured into apparel, home goods, jewelry and accessories and used internationally. Both *Souzani* and *Zardozi* design techniques are easily identifiable styles that have not been marginalized with the advent of industrialization. Granted, machine versions are readily available in the market, but designers and manufactures of quality goods still utilize artisans' handcrafted works when incorporating embellishment into their collections.

The craftsmen are an integral part in the alliance of adornment and modesty. The craftsman or artisan works closely with the designer to communicate the message or vision they wish to convey in their collections.





## Visible Technology

The visibility of adornment is a fundamental aspect of this thesis. Surface design and the garment it embellishes work hand in hand. The following examples of visible surface design play on the concept of the functionality of the material. Kobakant<sup>52</sup>, a collective that works primarily with textile crafts and electronics, was invited to do a residency at the Museums Quartier in Vienna to create a work for the Technosensual Exhibition, which they called the Crying Dress. It is a futuristic design set in the narrative of a fictional commission by a wealthy man for a funeral gown that would be worn by his wife during her time of mourning. The dress is the first of a series Kobakant is developing in their Exquisite Electronics set. The garment uses wearable technologies to produce sound and trigger water to leak from the headpiece. The circuitry and sensors are exposed and visible as decoration and ornamentation on the garment.

<sup>52</sup> "Kobakant, February 10, 2016, <http://www.kobakant.at/?p=222>."



16. Crying Dress. Photograph Kobakant, February 2016



17. Crying Dress detail of circuitry. Photograph Kobakant, February 2016





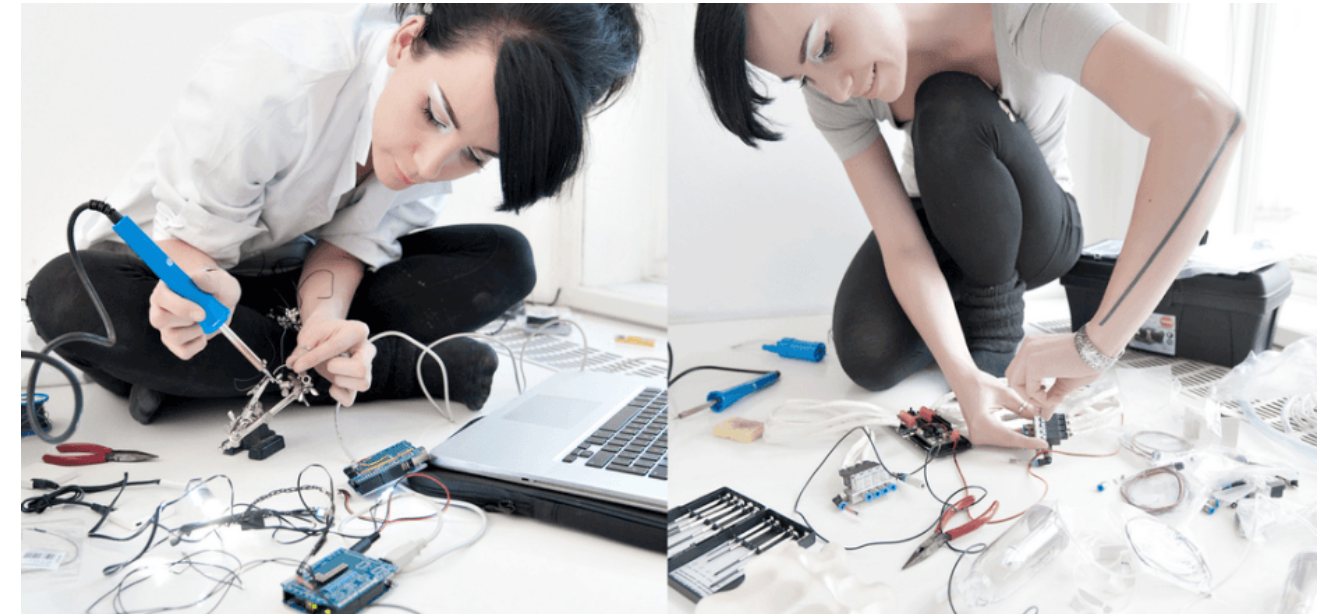
18. Particle Dress. Anouk Wipprecht. Instructables, February 2016

Anouk Wipprecht is a designer who incorporates fashion with technology. Her garments combine apparel design with engineering, science and interaction/ user experiences. She has made a series of garments that push the boundaries of wearable art; they move, breathe, and react, to the environment around them. In her designs the technology creates the aesthetics as opposed to simply enhancing a function, which is hidden. She states in a 2014 interview for Makezine that her designs "...seem radical but I see future fashion become more sensorial and reactive – customized interfaces that utilize technology as an extension of our capabilities. My designs are very extravagant, and for a reason: to raise

questions, to entice, to activate, to make a difference."<sup>53</sup> Wipprecht has developed an interesting notion of community informed apparel design, which she has titled Open Source Element Dress. She has placed an open call for "...anyone who has a bit of inspiration to contribute 62 mm-wide design-elements called 'particles' that will be united on the dress through a connecting mechanism."<sup>54</sup> Anyone can be involved in the design; they use a template and submit their designs to Wipprecht who will select 150 of the 3D printed particles to adorn the

<sup>53</sup> Mohammadi, "The Electrifying Designs of Anouk Wipprecht, *Make: DIY Projects, How-Tos, Electronics, Crafts and Ideas for Makers*, May 15, 2014, <http://makezine.com/2014/05/15/the-electrifying-designs-of-anouk-wipprecht/>."

<sup>54</sup> "A Fashion Designer Is Creating The World's First Open-Source, 3D-Printed Dress, *The Creators Project*. Accessed February 11, 2016. <http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/a-fashion-designer-is-creating-the-worlds-first-open-sourced-3d-printed-dress>."



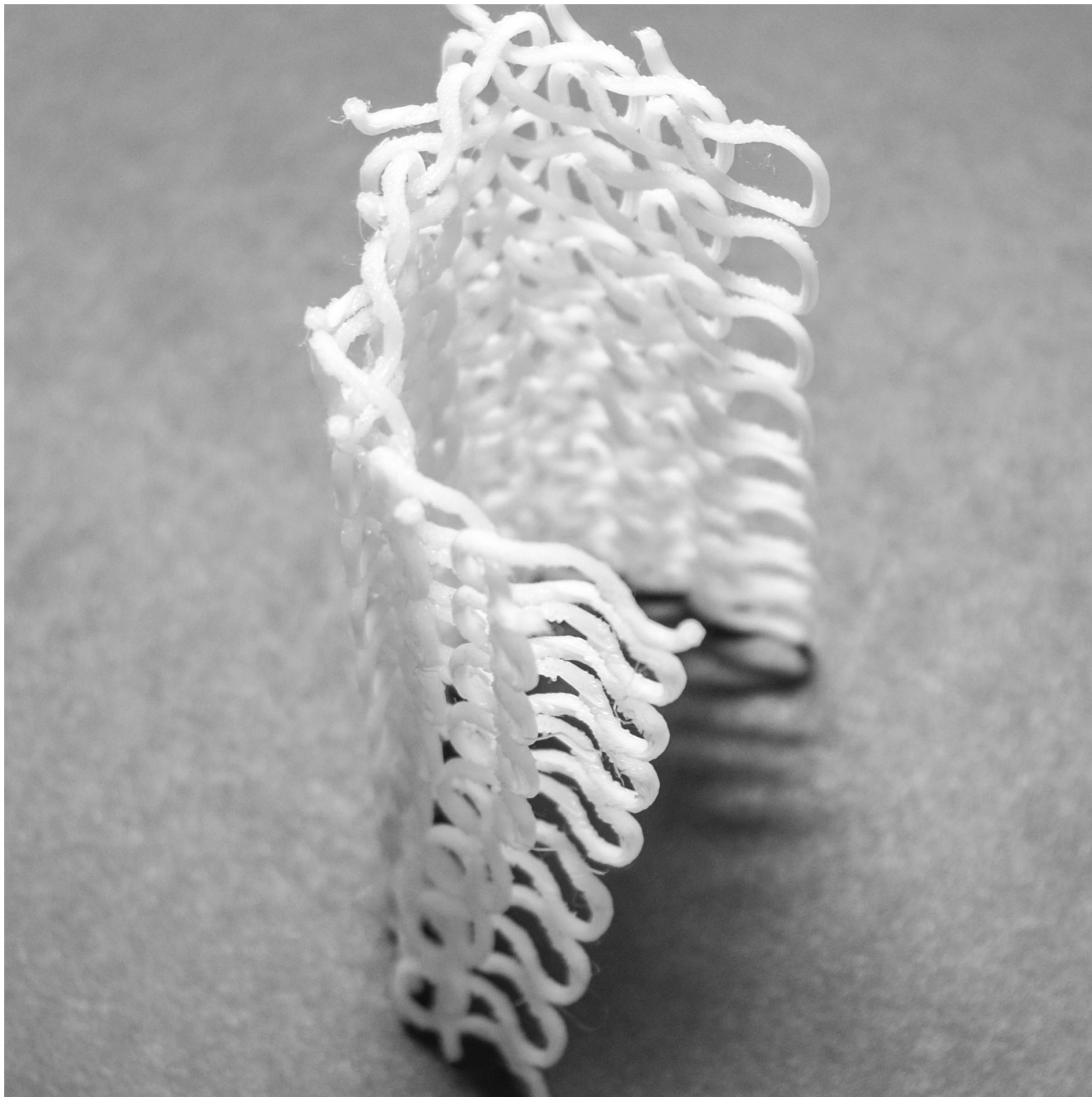
19. Anouk Wipprecht working. Instructables, February 2016

dress. In an article for The Creators Project, Wipprecht explains her objective is to not lose the human element and requests a story be submitted with each 3D printed "particle."<sup>55</sup> She is pushing the idea of the individual and beautification with an interlinking narrative into a new realm. The adornment of the garment is at a global level as anyone and everyone is welcomed to be involved in the development of the surface design. Her approach to materials and their exposure is intrinsic in the design, in the same Makezine article she states, "I love robots, but I hate the fact that all the cool stuff (the mechanics and electronics) is always hidden and boxed in. In my robotic fashions, I like to project my systems externally, so you can see how and where everything goes and flows."<sup>56</sup> The visibility of hardware and interactive nature of Wipprecht's

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Mohammadi, "The Electrifying Designs of Anouk Wipprecht."

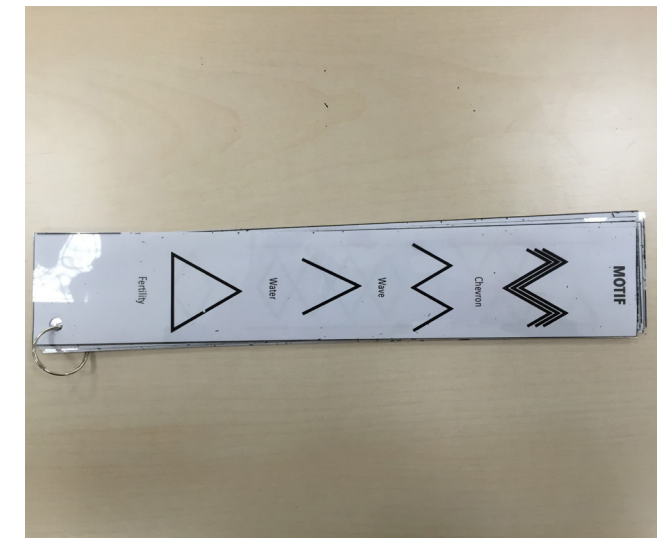
designs adds another layer of meaning to her work. Her work allows the viewer to see what is a typically hidden and provokes questions about conventions; this is the crucial aspect of her futuristic designs.



## Research

As mentioned by Harms previously in this document, modesty is defined by the individual and is dependent on her experiences and perceptions of the world and the self. How can apparel designers offer an outlet for the wearer to articulate her singular version of modesty? How can the wearer control the level of visibility? What will the wearer allow to be seen or what can the spectator see? What will be the information the wearer wants to convey or communicate? Where can adornment be implemented in the design? How will the surface design inform the spectator?

These questions were considered through a series of mini-experiments investigating modesty and adornment. Five experiments were conducted, each addressed one or more of the questions as well as additional queries that developed during the process.



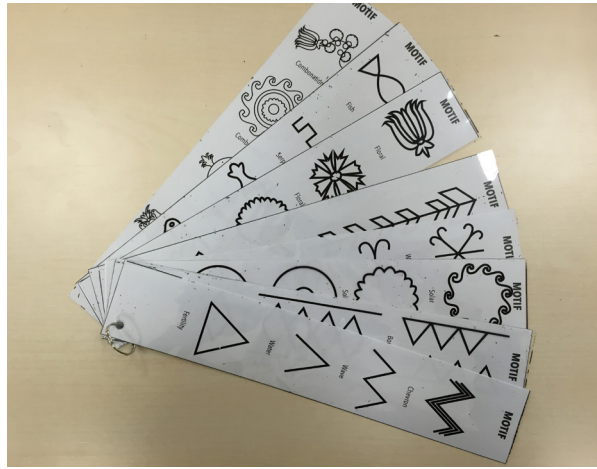
20.Simplified Motifs and Symbols. Photograph by author, September 2015

### Motif Fan

This inceptive experiment was aimed at familiarizing myself with the traditional, fundamental motifs used in embroidery, as well as with the origins and symbolism of the shapes of the motifs. I used Shelia Payne's *Embroidered Textiles*<sup>57</sup> as a reference for symbolism and meanings. In the book she broke down traditional motifs to their core shapes and contextualized each pattern. Many of the shapes referred to fertility and prosperity; various flora, and geometric shapes, which represented similar themes. I created a series of line art that itemized and categorized the various motifs and their meanings. These motifs were subsequently printed on acetate and standard printer paper to show both the line drawing as well as a label. The prints were then cut and assembled similarly to traditional Pantone Color Swatch fans used in design studios.

<sup>57</sup> Paine, *Embroidered Textiles A World Guide to Traditional Patterns*.





21. Motifs and Symbols Fan. Photograph by author, September 2015



22. Motifs and Symbols Fan with Standard Pantone. Photograph by author, September 2015

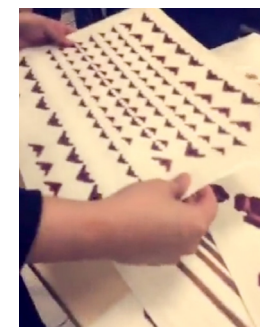


23. Motifs and Symbols Fan with Standard Pantone in use. Photograph by author, September 2015

The outcome of the exercise was an understanding of the essence of the motifs and the reasoning behind them from an anthropological perspective. Acquiring the knowledge of the motifs' origins, where the shapes stemmed from would allow for more informed decisions regarding usage of the motifs in future experiments and implementation in the fabrication segment of the thesis.



24



26



25

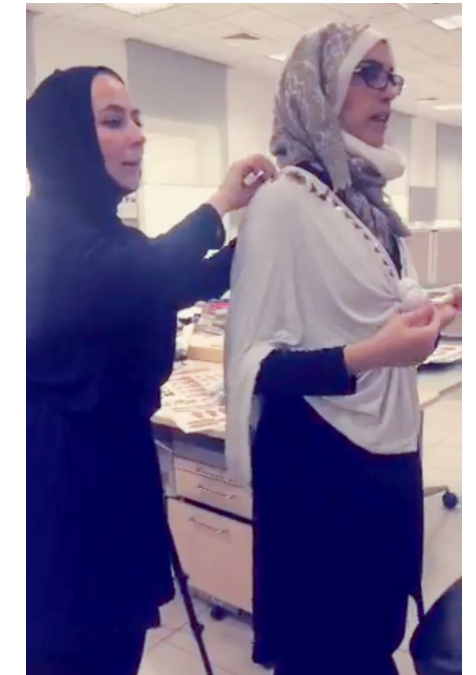


27

24. Motif Stickers and knit fabric. Photograph by author, September 2015  
 25. Motif Stickers. Photograph by author, September 2015  
 26. Motif Stickers selections. Photograph by author, September 2015  
 27. Motif Stickers placement. Photograph by author, September 2015

### The Adorned Scarf

This purpose of this experiment was to observe participants adorn and embellish infinity scarves (2 white knit jersey scarves-: 1 long: 26inX74in and 1 short: 24inX60in) with a variety of 'embroidery' stickers. Each participant was asked if they were willing to take part in the experiment and then was given the brief overview of the steps. I documented each participant's scarf selection, placement on the body, choice of stickers (both type and number), and mode of sticker application. I referred to Shelia Payne's *Embroidered Textiles*<sup>58</sup> as



28. Motif Stickers placement and adjustment. Photograph by author, September 2015

well as Ami Ronnberg's *The Book of Symbols*<sup>59</sup> when isolating the traditional embroidery icons to be used for the experiment. *The Book of Symbols* offered an understanding of symbols from a non-textile perspective. A number of historical textiles from within the Greater Middle East region were identified; the image of the motif was extracted from the Payne's photographs and printed in color on clear vinyl. The motifs resembled an embroidered patch and acted like stickers to be adhered to the jersey infinity scarves by the participant. The participants were all female and either students, faculty or staff affiliated with Virginia Commonwealth

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ronnberg and Martin, *The Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images* (London : Taschen, 2010).



29.Motif Stickers documentation. Photograph by author, September 2015

University Qatar. They varied in age, nationality, ethnic background, and religion. The participant's involvement and the actual execution of the experiment was conducted within a 24 hour time frame.

The set of instructions were as follows:

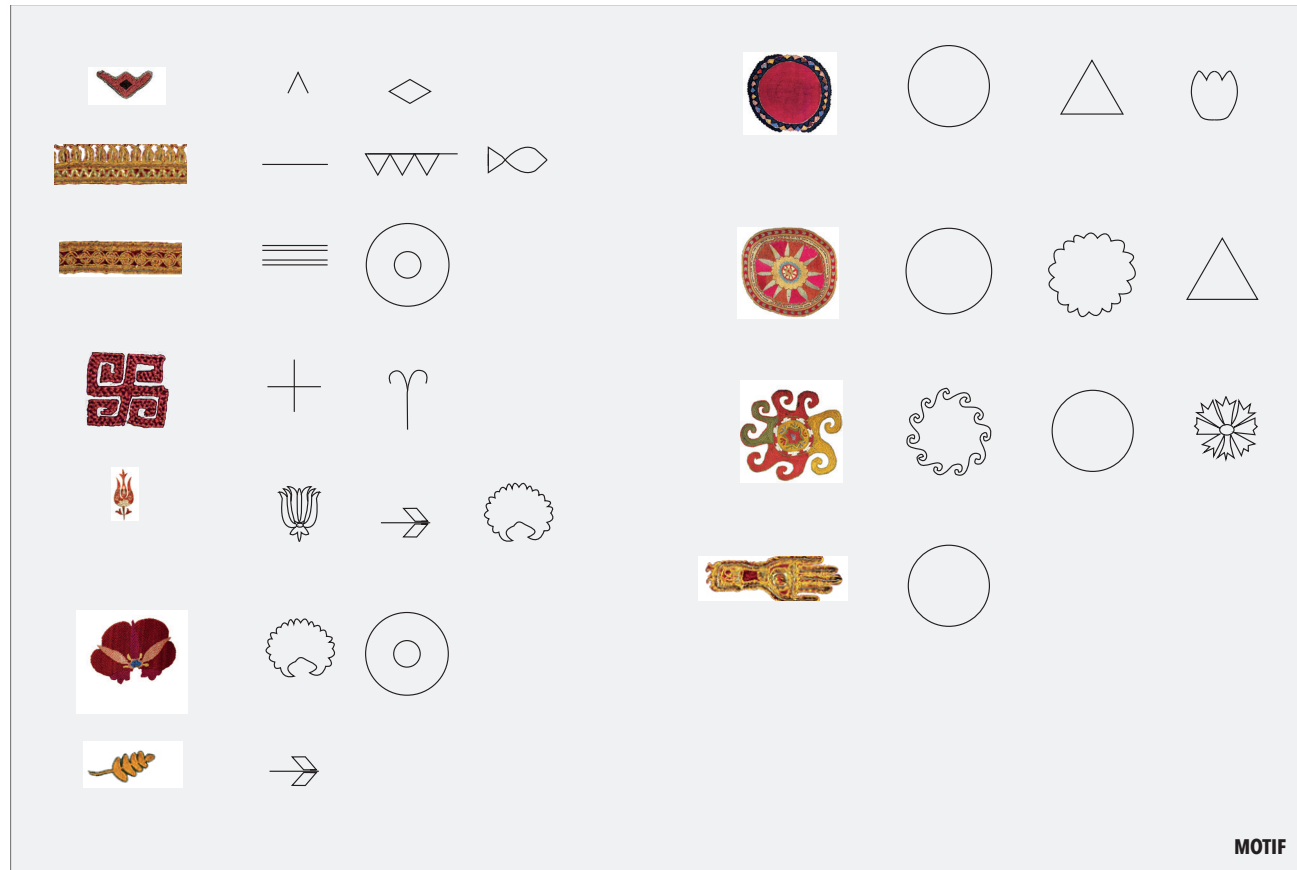
- Select scarf or scarves (one or both scarves could be used).
- Style the scarves according to their comfort level/personal taste.
- The area of the body where the scarves could be placed was from the top of the head to the bust line.
- The sheets of printed vinyl with the icons printed on them were given to the participant, and were instructed to select as many or as few icons to place on the scarf.
- Once placement was completed 3 photographs (front, and both profiles) of the were taken.

After the experiment was concluded, the following steps were taken to compile the results:

- The stickers were then removed from the scarf(ves) and recorded.
- The number, size and placement of the icons was noted.
- The photographs were then arranged according to the order they were taken and an item similar to a fashion show lineup was developed...this helped in the visualization of the experiment in its entirety.
- The icons used by each participant were placed below the photograph.
- A legend or key was developed using motifs from the previous exercise (black and white line drawing).
- A chart was developed to show data.



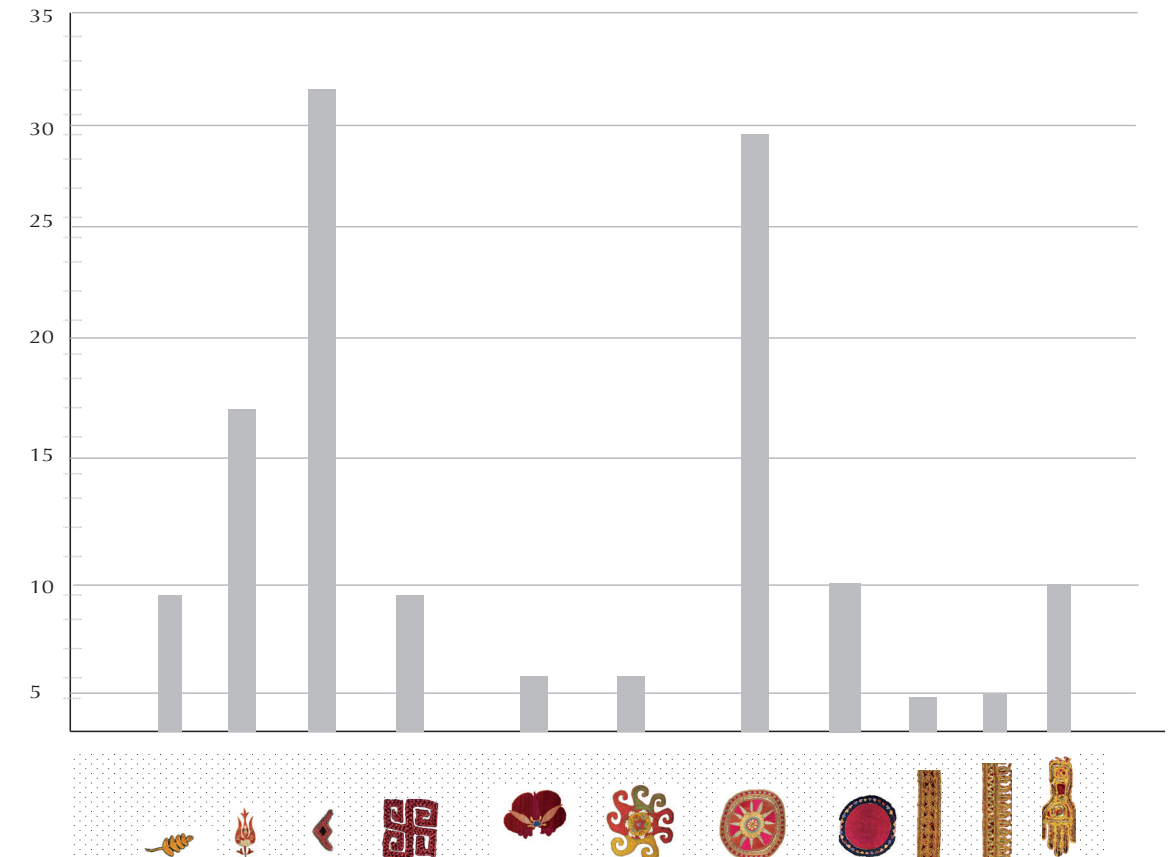




30.Data collected documentation. September 2015

The outcomes illustrated the individuality of each participant regarding icon selection. The majority of the participants placed the icons in approximately the same area. A significant factor regarding icon selection and placement was whether the participants observed others

performing the experiment. They either followed the predecessor's lead or verbalized that they didn't want to follow suit, and conscientiously made different selections and placement. Overall, it was the items selected and the concentration of placement that was most informative.



31.Data chart. September 2015

*Volume & Silhouette*

Inspiration Images



32.Images found on various sites. Photographs, October 2015

*The Visible Self* by J. Eicher and S. Evenson, was pivotal in the process of this experiment, particularly their consideration of body modification.<sup>60</sup> By relating the text to some of the inspirational images collected, I realized the connection between bustles and shoulder pads used to alter the body to that of adding turbans and knotting the hair for control and modification of the silhouette. As both a veiled and unveiled woman having lived and traveled in the Greater Middle East as well as North America, a constant question of: 'Is that all hair?' has arisen. This question has been posed to me and I have asked others or wondered to myself, what was forming that protrusion under the fabric. Was it all the person's hair or did she clip on a hair accessory to create a larger mass? The addition of a hair accessory, like gathered fabric or a net, is often used by women who wear a veil to create more proportional form and give an overall balance to the shape of the veil. This inclination to explore silhouettes, or rather augmented silhouettes, led me to conduct research on matted dreadlocks, the Sheitel, and the Sikh practice of wrapping large masses of hair. Dreadlocks "are a universal phenomenon in the

<sup>60</sup> Eicher and Evenson, *The Visible Self Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society*.

East as well as in the West. Spiritualists of all faiths and backgrounds incorporate into their paths a disregard for physical appearances and vanity."<sup>61</sup> The Sheitel<sup>62</sup>, is a wig worn by married Orthodox Ashkenazi Jewish women as a part of pious requirements of the faith. Hair is one of the five articles of faith<sup>63</sup> in the Sikh belief system. A Sikh protects unshorn long hair under a turban, they allow their hair to grow and when it gets to a certain length they roll it and wrap it in a turban. All of these various practices of hair and head treatments, triggered questions on how certain features are modified and transformed. I decided that for this experiment I would concentrate on volume after looking at different cultures' and societies' versions of head/upper shoulder manipulation. The intent was to observe how the participant replicated volume and silhouettes of head coverings and hairstyles from images and videos given to her in advance of the filming/documentation.

An embellished knit jersey, a plain knit jersey, filament, and knitted cotton yardage were used to explore the idea of adding volume to the head/neck/torso area. The participant was given the inspirational images and asked to exaggerate the silhouette. The images were of both genders, a variety of age ranges, and represented a diversity of religions and ethnic backgrounds. While the model wrapped and tied the textiles, we discussed manipulating the natural shape of the area by adding layers and objects to magnify and 'enhance' the section of the body.

<sup>61</sup> Emx, "History and Origin of Dreadlocks | Knotty Boy, March 29, 2016, <http://www.knottyboy.com/learn/dreadlock-history/>."

<sup>62</sup> "Taxonomy of the Sheitel, *The Forward*, March 29, 2016, <http://forward.com/articles/203226/taxonomy-of-the-sheitel/>."

<sup>63</sup> "Sikhism: Why Do Sikhs Keep Hair?," *RealSikhism*, March 29, 2016, <http://www.realsikhism.com/index.php?subaction=show-full&id=1248364871&ucat=7>.



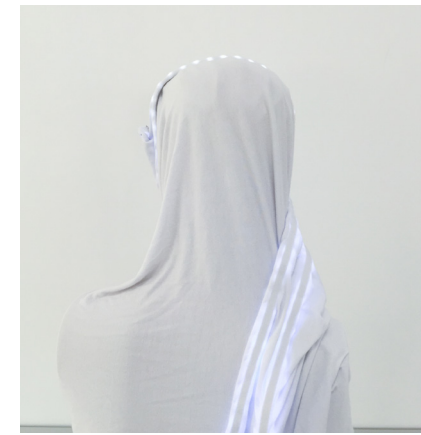
33.Images from Movie. Photograph and Movie by author, October 2015



The results of this experiment produced several significant effects. Through exaggerated tying and wrapping of the knit textile dramatic shapes were created. By adding the supplemental elements (filament tufts and additional knit pieces) the silhouette was distorted and areas were magnified, drawing attention to different regions. One of the surprise consequences was the medium through which the experiment was documented. The short video was shot in a rough and choppy manner, some frames were extremely dark or blurred while others were over-exposed creating a glow which subsequently highlighted areas of focus. The nuances of the light were remarkable in their control of where the eye was directed.



34.12 images of light Photograph by author, April, 2016



Noor & Naqsh

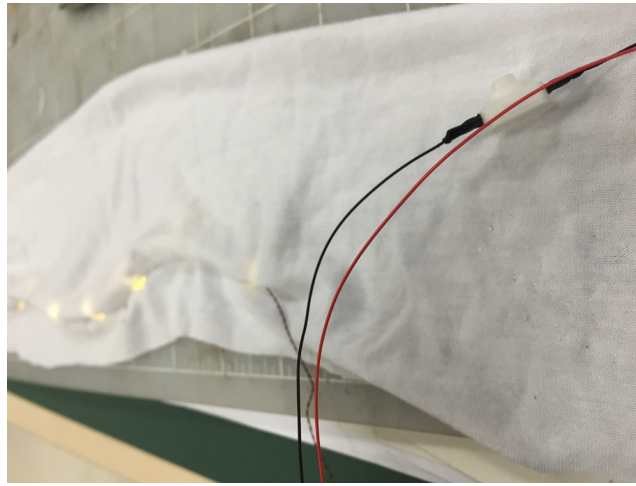
This experiment developed after finding a quote by Banu Gokarıksel and Anna Secor stating, "Veiled women are not invisible; they are visible in a particular manner, and they are active participants in producing that visibility."<sup>64</sup> I wanted to explore visibility, control and the spectator. How surface design could be incorporated in defining the visibility of the wearer. I decided to use light and pattern/ texture to help illustrate the concepts in the experiment. I divided the two subjects into separate segments each addressing visibility and control from a different angle. I labeled one *Noor*, meaning light in Arabic and the other *Naqsh*, meaning patternwork or texture in Persian.

Noor

This portion of the experiment, analyzed the reaction between light and textiles. It considered the way the layers of fabric were wrapped and positioned in order to illuminate the area of the body. I wanted to examine the intensity of the light and how visible the wearer became depending on her method of layering and wrapping. The intent was to see the relationship between the light, the

<sup>64</sup> Gökariksel and Secor, "The Veil, Desire, and the Gaze, 178. "



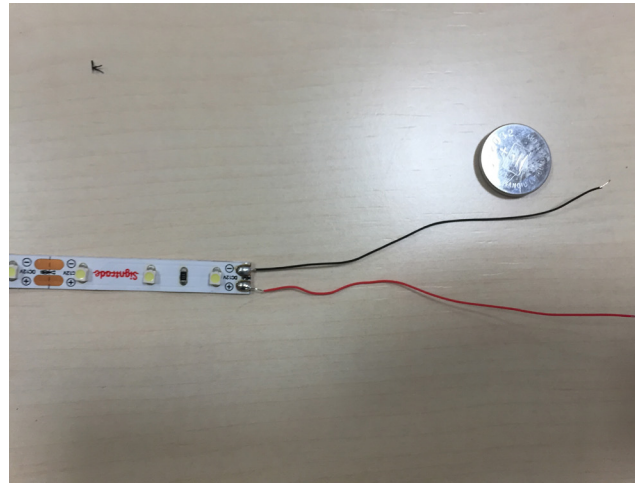


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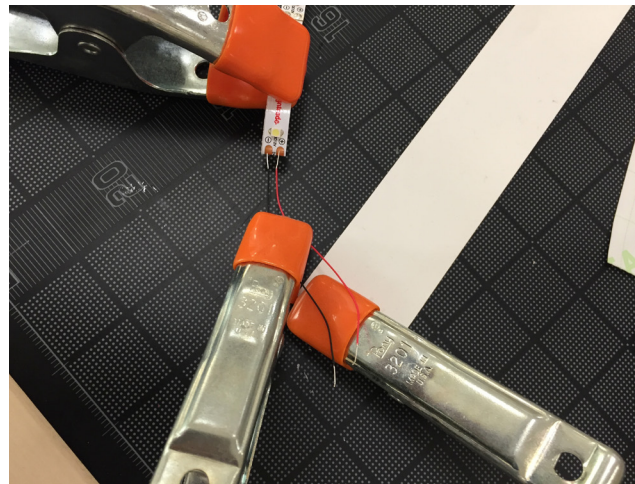
textile and the wearer. It was comprised of two studies, a micro version and a macro. The first study used a doll and tiny lights both individual and on a string. The lights ran off of a 3V disk battery that was placed in a holster on the back of the doll. The doll was used to explore the various wrapping techniques. The lights used were a warmer color temperature, which gave more of the desired "glow".

The second study used a long strip of light to see the results of wrapping on a human scale. A longer strip of lights on adhesive tape was used. The lights were soldered to wires to connect to a 9V battery. I decided 2 rows of lights would best satisfy the experiment. The intensity of the lights, which had a cooler temperature, was overpowering to the viewer. The outcome, for experimental purposes, was dramatic and illustrated the concept well.

The outcome of the intensity of the light illustrated the idea of controlled visibility thoroughly. The photographs in both the dark room as well as the lighter space configured shadows and a stark contrast on the exposed face and concealed the head and chest area; it distorted the features and drew attention to various areas.



36



37

35.Images of process. Photograph by author, October 2015

36.Images of process. Photograph by author, October 2015

37.Images of process. Photograph by author, October 2015

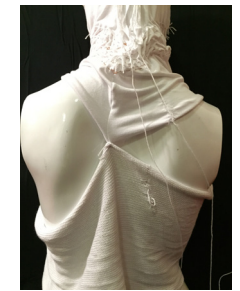
### Naqsh

The Afghan *chadari* was the catalyst for this experiment: the all-encompassing outer garment worn by the women of Kabul when leaving the confines of their homes. The *chadari* creates a shapeless figure who was hard to identify and difficult to communicate with. As a child, I remember feeling anxious when going out with any of the women of my family who wore a *chadari*, as I was worried I would not be able to recognize them quickly and lose them in a crowd. Although the garment's head cap, eye area and chest has embroidery and the entire garment is pleated, being able to discern what the wearer's expression was, what they were saying or what they looked like was very difficult. The aim of the experiment was to explore an "athletic/sport" version of a *chadari*; a closer fitting garment similar in shape to a balaclava- a future *chadari* where the wearer could convey facial expressions to the viewer and indicate that they were speaking without compromising their modesty.

The materials used were traditional sportswear knit textiles (jersey and stocking) as well as novelty trims: cotton yarn and copper wire. A balaclava is usually a fully-fashioned knit article; instead in this instance the knit jersey and the stocking knit were cut and pieced together. These textiles were manipulated, layered and distressed to see what shapes and textures they would produce. The face and head were sectioned off and each area was treated with a different 'technique'. The entire surface of the face and head was covered except for a slight slit in the eye area, where a yarn grid covering it. I created the yarn grid around the eyes with the cotton yarn. The surplus strands of yarn from the grid I knotted and attached additional strips of jersey to create as a type of fringe. The looser knit (stocking knit) was placed in the top of the head, lower part of the face, throat and chest. The knit jersey was allocated to the on the side panels of the face and around the back of the head, to allow for a closer fit to these curved areas. Two bands of knit jersey were attached horizontally in the eye area to create an eye slit. The two knit bands barely touched and permitted the wearer to control the vision parameters. The cotton yarn and the copper wire were threaded through both



39.Images of Texture. Photograph by author, October 2015





knitted sections to draw up and gather the different textiles, creating ridges and raised areas. I concentrated the majority of the manipulation on the top of the head, the forehead, the eyes and the lower part of the face.

The intent of these applications on the textiles was to experiment with the type of control and maneuvering the wearer could have on a totally covered face/head/chest. The modified balaclava gave similar coverage as the *chadari* but with a closer fit; it provided more identifiers for recognition. The forehead had drawstrings that could raise the knit band up to allow for more visibility. The drawstrings at the forehead also could be drawn up to show surprise or lowered to convey suspicion or anger. In the lower half of the face the cotton yarn is knotted and cut to create 3D protrusions that vibrated to show that someone is talking or shaking their head. The top of the head had strips of knit jersey woven over the stocking knit sections to create a lattice motif. The back area had copper wiring and cotton thread that could be drawn up and shaped to help identify the wearer. The copper wire referenced a jewelry aesthetic; it is the only color in the piece and its placement was not typical to where traditional surface design is applied on apparel. The throat and chest area was gathered and draped to mimic how the *chadari* wearer holds her *chadari* when walking and moving. Movement was an essential factor in this experiment. Drawing attention to certain areas by either having textile movement through a pulley system or by the quivering of the materials.



Stocking Knit

### Zeena Hood

Inspiration Images



40.Mood Board-Images found on various sites. Photograph, December 2015

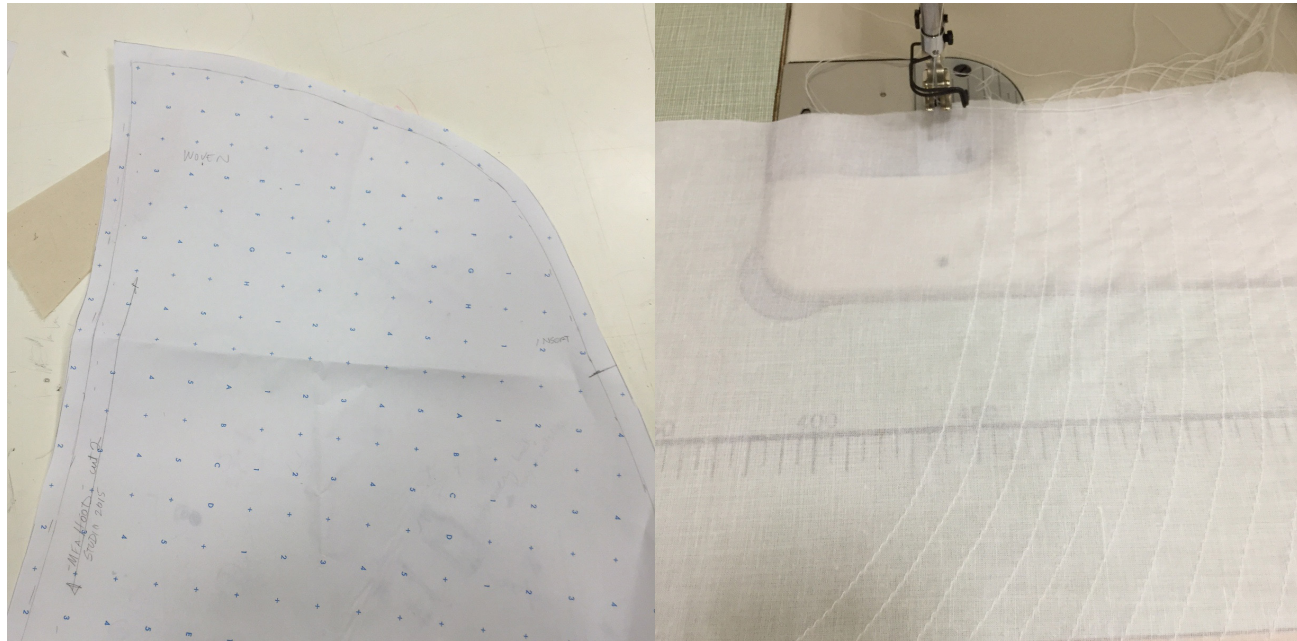
This experiment addressed a pocket. The pocket had to be analyzed and reinterpreted according to the thesis's objectives: the relationship between modesty and adornment. I decided to look at the pocket in its basic level, at its common definition: *a usually small cloth bag that is sewn into a piece of clothing, a larger bag, etc., and that is open at the top or side so that you can put things into it.*<sup>65</sup> I created a series of pockets that would encircle the head and shoulders of a woman. Since my approach was a bit abstract, I decided to look at philosophy to help inform the development of the concept. Abû Hâmid Muhammad ibn Muhammad Al-Ghazâlî (c.1056–1111) was one of the most prominent and influential philosophers, theologians, jurists, and mystics of Sunni Islam. Imam Al-Ghazâlî was dedicated primarily to reconciling the dimensions Zahir and Batin. He argued that individuals would never be able to act properly and achieve satisfaction unless the two 'sides' could find harmony. Zahir refers to the outer dimension, or the outer face, of the Islamic faith. Batin on the other hand refers to the inner, spiritual dimension. At its most simple level the former term refers to acts while the latter refers to the

<sup>65</sup> "Pocket | Definition of Pocket by Merriam-Webster, April 16, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pocket>."

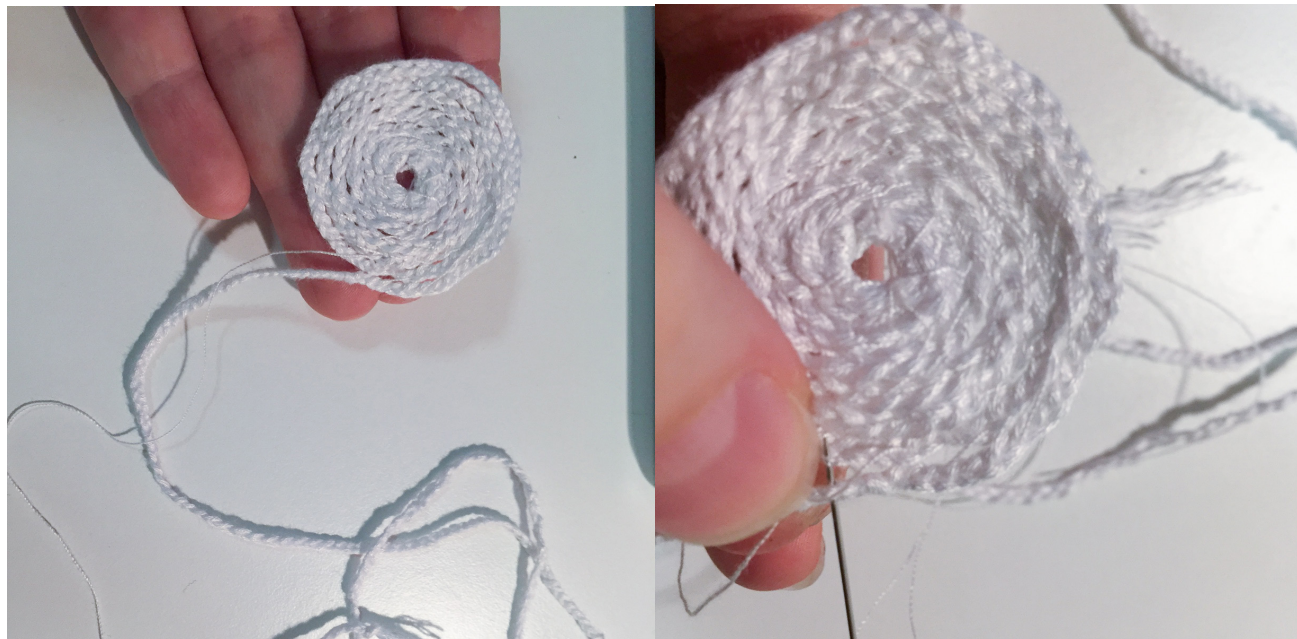


41.Model: Aisha Al Muftah wearing Zeena Hood Photograph Hadeer Omar December 2015





42.Images of process. Photograph by author, December 2015



intention behind those acts.<sup>66</sup> I was principally interested in considering what is hidden and what is visible. How could the use of adornment convey identity and conceal the wearer simultaneously? The modular system of pockets integrated into the interior hood allowed the individual to add and subtract the fabric discs according to the information they are willing to communicate.

There were several iterations of the hood both knit and woven and, finally, I was satisfied with the interior and exterior shapes and the inside pockets. I created the knit embroidery discs, referencing the *souzani* style of embroidery and topstitched the outer woven section. Once the hood was completed a photograph of a model wearing the item was taken to define parameters the creator and wearer of the hood allowed the spectator to see. The photograph created a frame where the spectator's view span was confined. The images were printed larger than life size, to emphasize the visibility of the image.

The resulting images showed the detail work of the embellishment without compromising the visibility of the figure. The dark and light contrast was something unexpected but overall the entire outcome was extremely helpful in the development of the thesis concept; the control the artist had over the viewer, to see what was visibly hidden.

A brief summary of the key influential factors from the outcomes of the five experiments is: gaining an understanding of the meanings of the motifs, the significance of their placement on the body by the wearer, and how the wearer conveys individuality by adorning themselves with the motifs. Additionally volume, silhouette, light, texture and movement all are significant contributors to the visibility of the wearer and the control the wearer has on the gaze of the spectator. These insightful determinations generated the framework

for the fabrication portion of the thesis. Looking at the two concepts of adornment and modesty through very specific fields has created several conditional statements. Essentially the connection between the two subjects is: if humans clothe themselves for the stated reasons, modesty being one of them, then adornment is applied to dress because humans want to attain beauty. Beautification of the self does not stop when one has decided to participate in the sociocultural system of modesty.<sup>67</sup> Gokariksel and Secor ask a provocative question in their article: "If clothes are the image of the self, then what kind of self is mapped upon the veiled surface?"<sup>68</sup> This idea combined with Carla Jones's analogy of the "large canvas" allows participants in the modesty movement an expansive area where they can use adornment and embellishment to communicate their modest self.



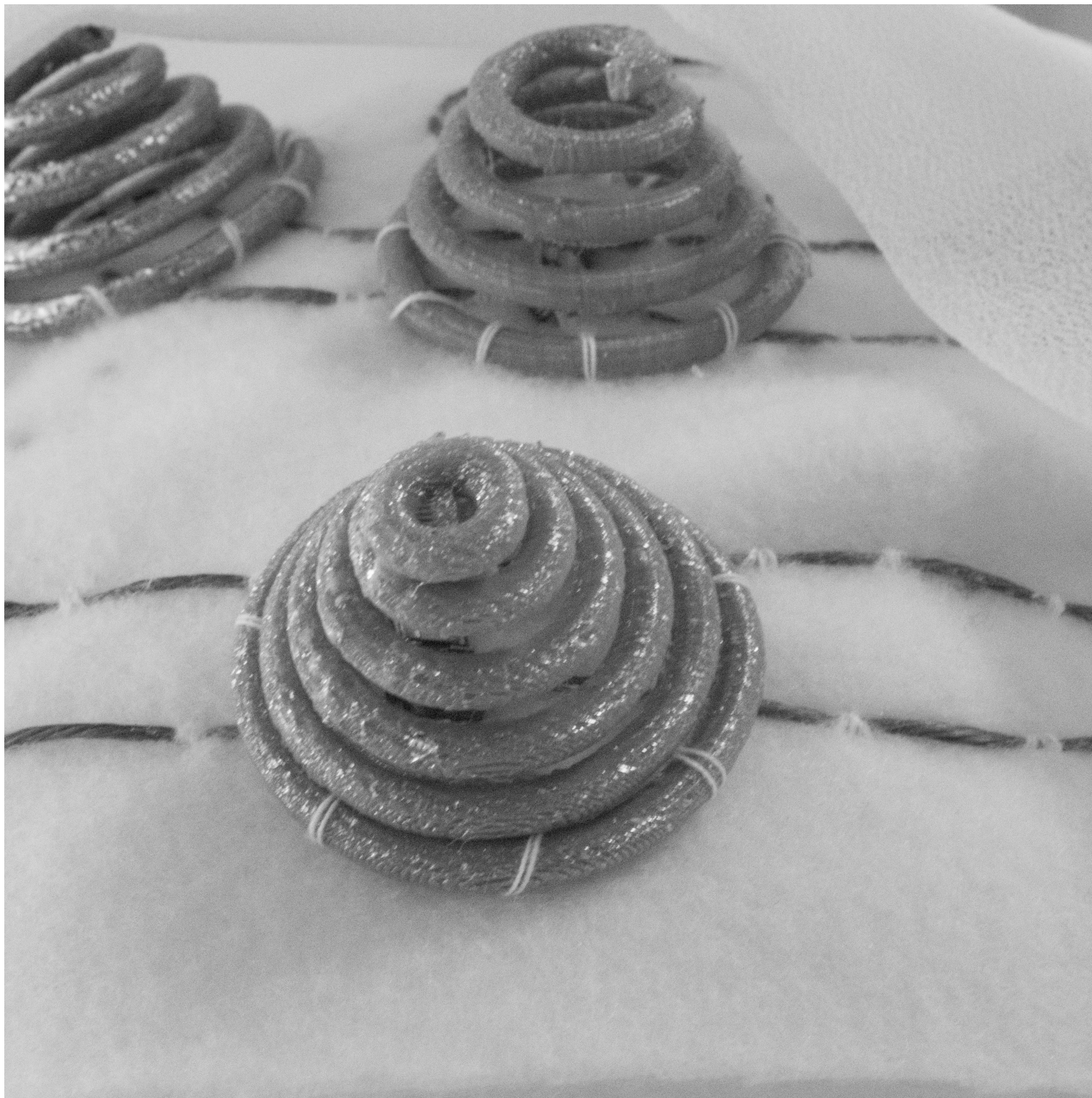
42.Images of process. Photograph by author, December 2015

<sup>66</sup> Nakamura, "Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online*. Islamic Philosophy, n.d., <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H028.htm>."

<sup>67</sup> Eicher and Evenson, *The Visible Self Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society*.

<sup>68</sup> Gökariksel and Secor, "The Veil, Desire, and the Gaze, 178."



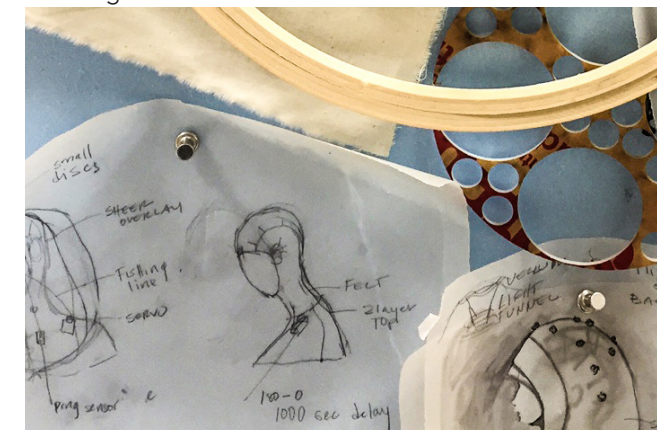


## Fabrication

The fabrication portion of the thesis is a culmination of the research and experiments. The purpose of this segment is to clearly convey the concepts and theories explored surrounding modesty and adornment through tangible artifacts. The artifacts I created to illustrate the topics are: three female figures covered in embellished textiles from the top of their heads until mid-bust as well as a video depicting the interior details and workings of the garments. Each figure satisfies one or more of the realizations and proposed interpretations regarding the relationship between adornment and modesty.

The impetus for these three figures and their coverings evolved from the final experiment, the Zeena Hood. An examination of the relationship between interior and exterior, the semiotics of surface design, what is revealed and concealed, and the role of the wearer and spectator is what emerged from the Zeena experiment. The concepts materialized, as did the development of the coverings that were neither veil nor hood, but an item, which hovered someplace in between. They are futuristic approaches to modest coverings: garments that transgress age, religion, nationality or a specific ethnic background. Textiles and wearable technology merge to produce articles not currently

associated with modest apparel. The critical elements in the coverings are the apparent surface design and the interactive ingredient. The surface design on the coverings, with varying materials from sewable electronic pieces to plastic tubing, is concentrated to heighten visibility. Form and silhouette are fundamental but the sensor driven adornment and embellishment and their exposure is the pivotal factor in the fabrication portion of the thesis. Layering of textile, technology, surface design and meaning are the consistent concerns throughout the thesis. The figures themselves are a core component in the perception of modesty. They serve as platforms to exhibit three main areas of focus: light, sound and movement. The posture, their size and the material they are constructed from directly connect to the textiles and the surface design of the coverings. The figures subtly augment the outer coverings. They are featureless and white to provide structure and support to the outer coverings in a harmonious manner. The forms were



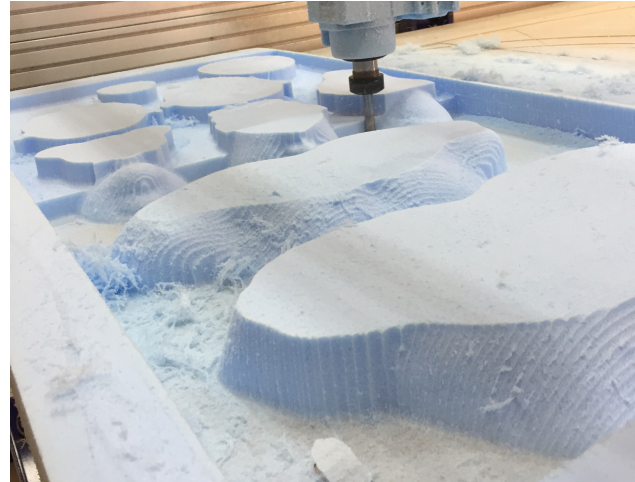
43. ImageW of process of figures. Photograph by author, February 2016

constructed using a CNC milling machine to cut blue foam and ModRock, a Plaster of Paris bandage, to model the form.



The coverings have two divisions: an interior fitted cap and bodice where the majority of the hardware and wiring is comprised and an exterior enveloping piece that incorporates the surface design technology.

The three figures and the coverings have



certain constants: the same white form, the same textiles used for the coverings, an interior hood and bodice, exterior enveloping piece, wearable technology, LilyPad Arduino with code developed and modified for their specific functions, and proximity sensors imbedded in the coverings



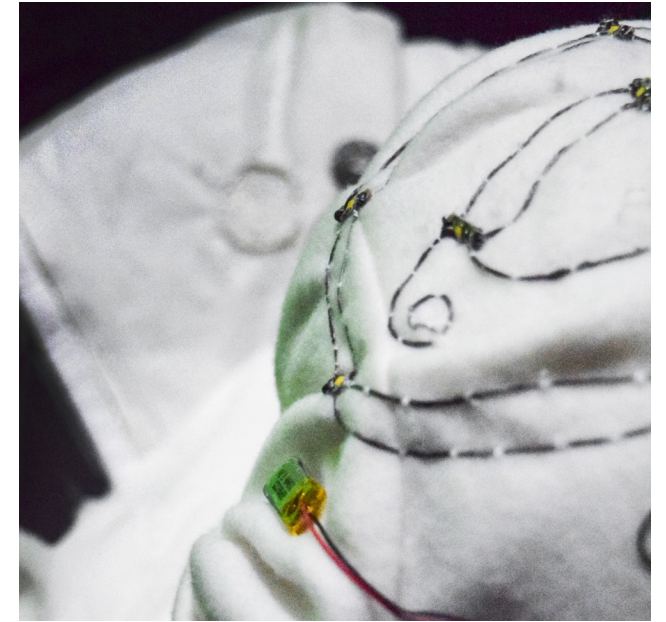
44.Images of process of figures. Photograph by author, February 2016

and the form. However, each have been named according to their singular attributes. Noor, is predominately associated with light, Haya, is linked to sound and Zeena is connected to motion.

#### Noor

The Noor figure is dedicated to examining light and shadow, the movement of the light and how shadows appear through distortion of light. Noor is an Arabic word and a name given to both genders; at a very elementary level it means light. The word has Qur'anic connections so the meaning has much more subtle nuances, quite often referring to the Divine Light, illuminating inner beauty, and guidance. The overall look of the Noor Figure is very delicate and airy. The sheer textile that is the exterior envelope offers total transparency, allowing all of the elements to be observed. The components that make up the Noor figure are: the neutral colored fleece interior cap and a neutral cotton blend poplin and chiffon bodice, stainless steel conductive thread, LilyPad-Arduino [small programmable computer], sew-able LED Micro-white lights, 3D printed spirals, a neutral silk chiffon exterior envelope, Ping))) ultrasonic sensor, and a polymer lithium ion battery.

The light that emanates from the figure's covering corresponds to movement and proximity of the spectator as it is registered by the Ping))) located at the center of the figure's chest. As the spectator moves closer to the figure the lights gradually increases in intensity, radiating more stable light. The 3D printed PLA spirals are attached on top of the LED lights of the interior cap. The inner framework and the height of the spiral cast shadows across the silk chiffon exterior envelope piece and across the figure's face. The *Zardozi* artisans of New Delhi and Jaipur inspired the development of the 3D printed spirals. The manipulation of the metal coils used by the *Zardozi* artisans influenced the shape and application of the plastic spirals. The conductive thread and LilyPad wiring are visible through the chiffon exterior while the LED lights project the patterns from the spirals on to the



44.Image of Noor figure. Photograph by author, March 2016

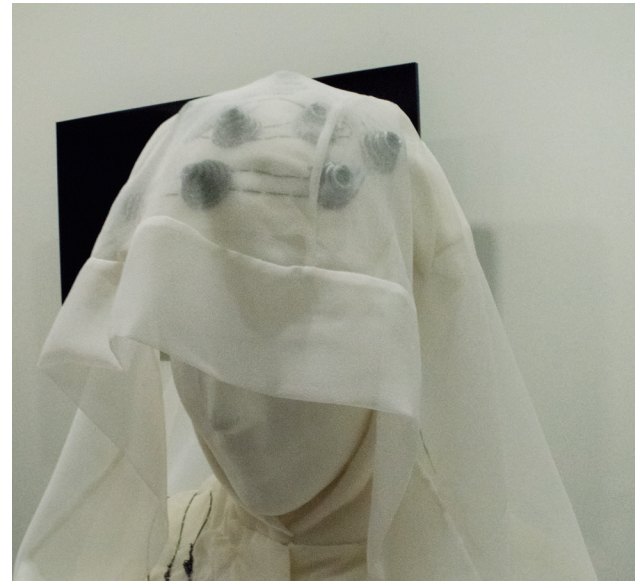


45.Image of Noor figure. Photograph by author, March 2016





46. Image of Noor figure. Photograph by author, April 2016.



48. Image of Noor figure. Photograph by author, April 2016.



47. Image of Noor figure. Photograph by author, April 2016.

chiffon, signifying surface design. The symbolism of the spiral can be traced back to the idea of creation, nature and guidance. The geometric shape continues to whorl out and appears to pulse as the light dims and brightens.

#### *Haya*

The figure of Haya is designated to the idea of sound. Haya is an Arabic word that is also used as a female name. It also has intricate meanings: modesty, demureness, humility, and/or honor. The Haya figure is totally covered by a dense exterior envelope piece yet has soft sounds coming from an MP3 LilyPad-Arduino and speaker located the top of the head covering. The components of Haya are: the neutral colored fleece interior cap and neutral cotton blend poplin and chiffon bodice, a small speaker, a MP3 LilyPad-Arduino [small programmable computer], stainless steel conductive thread, a neutral novelty cotton textile exterior envelope, an inner chiffon panel, a head cap stand,

a chiffon head cap panel, photo luminescent thread, a Ping))) ultrasonic sensor, a small LED light case, and a polymer lithium ion battery.

Soft sounds resonate from the Haya Figure, which draws attention to the concealed form. The hushed jingling of metal and the rustling of beads causes the spectator to pause and try to identify from where the sound is emitted. Similar to the Noor figure the Ping))) sensor will trigger the sounds, as the spectator gets closer to the figure. The proximity of the spectator signals the sound which then directs the gaze of the spectator to the sound. The sound comes from beneath layers of textiles; the revealed surface design and hardware propel the spectator to consider what is hidden and what is producing the noise. The conductive thread topstitched on the exterior envelope piece is purely for aesthetic purposes, however the spiral pattern of conductive threads surrounding the speaker does serve a function, connecting the speaker to the LilyPad MP3 board. The attachment of the conductive thread around the speaker to the silk chiffon is done by a couching stitch, referencing back to *Zardozi* hand embroidery. The photo luminescent threads topstitched in a grid pattern on the inner chiffon panel also provides a dim glow in a dark environment. The stylistic reference to the *chadari* is deliberate with a pronounced head cap that summons to mind an exaggerated stereo sub-woofer. The Haya figure's exterior envelope does not show any indication of the form beneath, as the slant of the shoulder and the curve of the head is totally obscured. The areas where the opaque textile is disrupted are the rectangular eye area and the circular top of the head cap. Behind the cutout section at the eye area of the exterior envelope is a sheer inner panel with the photo luminescent topstitching, two pockets are housed in the grid to hold the small self-powered LED case. These lights activate the luminosity of the thread and a layer of shadow to the heavy exterior envelope. The sheer circular panel at the head cap allows the spectator



49. Image of Haya figure. Photograph by author, March 2016

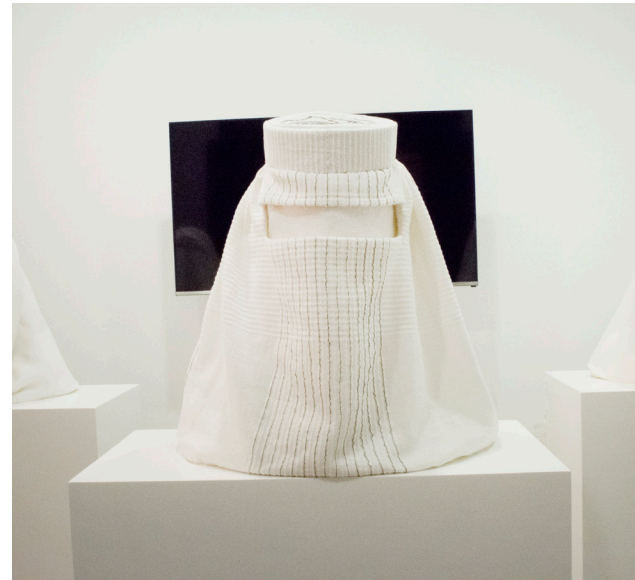


50. Image of Haya figure. Photograph by author, March 2016





51. Image of Haya figure. Photograph by author, April 2016



52. Image of Haya figure. Photograph by author, April 2016

to see the inner mechanics of the speaker, LilyPad and conductive thread. The speaker acts as a trigger to inform the viewer that there is an additional interior layer to the Haya Figure.

#### Zeena

The Zeena figure is focused on movement and is directly derived from the previously mentioned Zeena Hood prototype. In Arabic Zeena means ornament, or something beautiful, and is often used as female name. The Zeena figure consists of translucent and opaque textiles and has varying sizes of plaited decorative circles covering the head and face. The faint movement of the circle in front of the figure's face is masked by the draped chiffon piece. However, the understated sway of the disc does cause enough motion to steer the spectator towards it.

The components of Zeena are: the neutral colored fleece interior cap and neutral cotton blend poplin and chiffon bodice, a LilyPad-Arduino [small



53. Image of Haya figure. Photograph by author, April 2016

programmable computer], plaited and swirled cotton yarn, plastic tubing, front chiffon panel, a triple-layered rear exterior envelope, two rotary actuators (servomotors), a Ping))) ultrasonic sensor, a small LED light case, illusion monofilament, and a polymer lithium ion battery.

In the gradient of modesty the Zeena figure appears to represent the middle path of moderation in regards to coverage and apparent adornment. The figure seems divided literally in half: in the front area is a single sheer sheet, and in the back section consists thicker folded layers. This figure exhibits the surface design through a partition. The plaited circles can be seen, but only through a veil of draped chiffon. The plaited circles refer back to the *Souzani* style of hand embroidery as well as the circular motifs often used by the Central Asian regional artisans. The slight movement that occurs behind the sheer curtain is prompted by the spectator's proximity, similar to the other two figures. The Ping))) sensor measures the distance of the spectator and causes the servomotors to turn and pull the monofilament, which then, slightly pulls the specific circle located over the figure's eye area. The partial rotation is enough to move the circle and create a ripple effect on the sheer panel, the plaited strands and other circles. The movement should compel the spectator to look at the Zeena figure more closely, seeing the varying sizes of circles, which start at the crown of the head. The plastic tubing pieces, which are attached to the fleece interior cap, raise the sheer panel above the cap suspending the circles between the lower and upper sections. The metaphor of the middle way and having the circles suspended between the upper and lower layers refer to many of the principles Dr. Gonul Paksoy incorporated in her design philosophy. The moving circles are a nod to her Sufi dervish inspired aesthetic. Finding a balance, looking inward and reflecting on the Self are all a part of this method of thought.



54. Image of Zeena figure. Photograph by author, March 2016



55. Image of Zeena figure. Photograph by author, March 2016





56. Image of Zeena figure. Photograph by author, April 2016



57. Image of Zeena figure. Photograph by author, April 2016



58. Image of Zeena figure. Photograph by author, April 2016

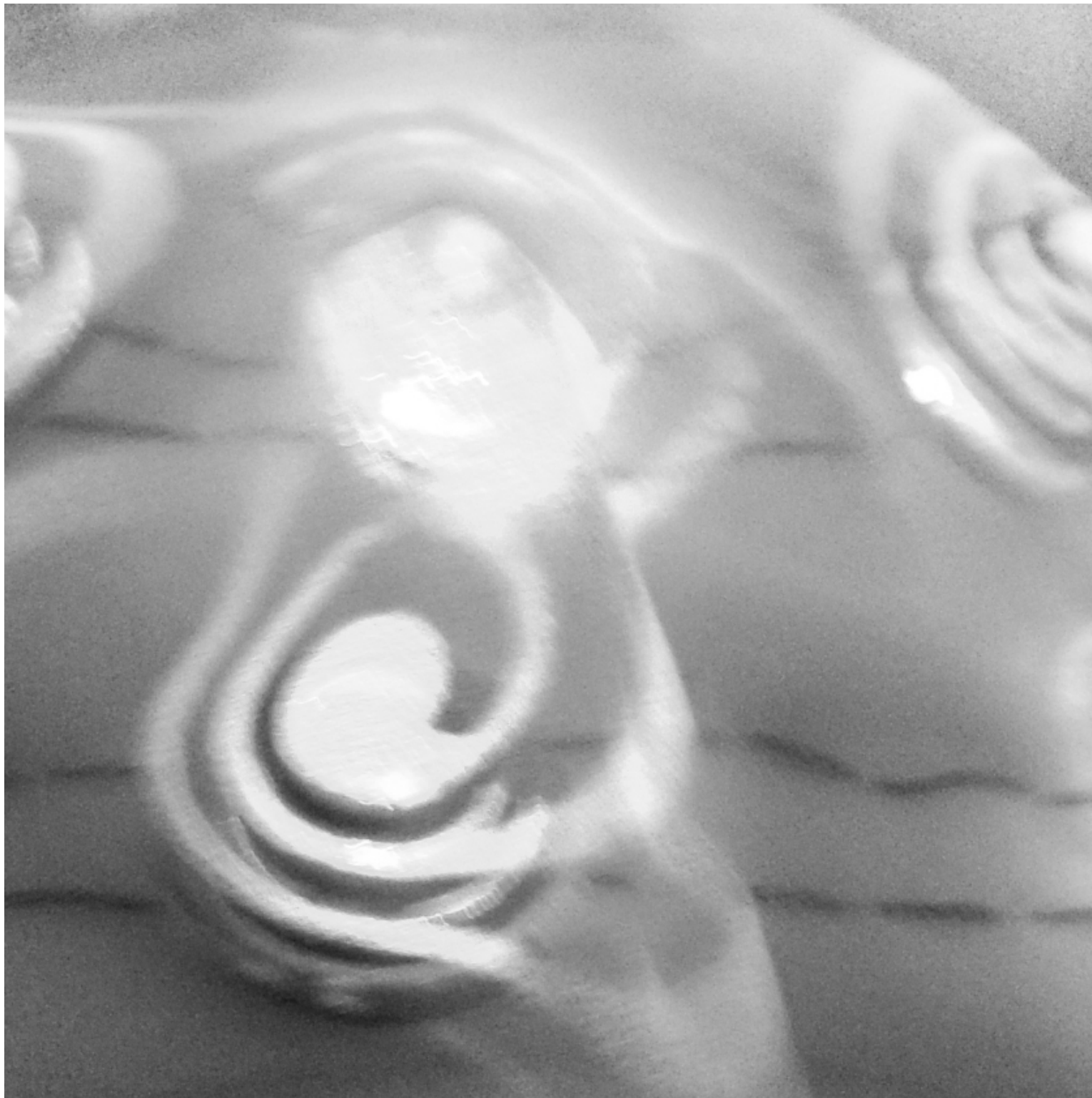
This exploration through light, sound and movement has been able to encompass almost all of the major modesty and adornment points this thesis has explored. However one additional segment that needs to be addressed is the control of the frame of the gaze. What is contained within an actual frame and how is it presented? An amalgamation of the photograph of Aisha Al Muftah (the model from the Zeena Hood experiment) and the video in the Volume and Silhouette experiment satisfies this portion of the thesis. The black and white, slow moving, sometimes blurry film style highlights the surface design while taking the spectator into the inner works and functional aspects of the coverings.

The spectator is shown the interior and hidden components of the surface design as well as the outward and exposed in the film. The figures as well as all the minute details are presented. Movement, light and sound are shown in the context of modesty and adornment, this time in the confines of a screen.



59. Image exhibition entrance. Photograph by author, April 2016





## Conclusion

This thesis investigates the correlation between adornment and modesty. The research and exploration of surface design and a social behavior culminates in a conceptual designs approach to modest apparel. In the fabrication phase what is revealed and concealed, by the wearer, from materials to identity is examined. The selection of motifs that embellish and distinguish the wearer, the materials themselves, the interaction between wearer and the spectator all surround the notion of what modest apparel can become. This systematic study has yielded outcomes that have satisfied the initial questions concerning the ties between adornment and modesty, but it has also prompted me to become conscious of residual results regarding modesty and the roles of the wearer and the spectator.

The perception of modesty by both the wearer and the spectator is now more apparent to me. The roles began to merge and shift due to visibility and awareness. The spectator sees and processes a modest display of adornments according to their own personal values and beliefs. Therefore, both individuals' (wearer or spectator) interpretation of modesty is part of the equation. I am interested in how modesty is portrayed and recognized. Modesty is not simply what and how the wearer reveals but also what and how the spectator observes.

I intended this thesis to examine these questions of modesty, and I hope it will enhance conversations the modest community has cultivated regarding apparel and the universal concept of defining personal beautification and individuality. Lastly, in the sage words of an icon "Adornment, what a science! Beauty, what a weapon! Modesty, what elegance!" Coco Chanel



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## Glossary

Aadda- wooden frame used to stretch textile

Ari- hooked metal needle

Chadari- Afghan outer garment

Hadith- an account of the words, actions and habits of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh)

Haya- Arabic, modesty, demureness, humility, and/or honor- female name

Hijab- Arabic, modesty, veiling or head scarf

Kandahari dozi- Afghan, geometric satin embroidery stitch used in Kandahar region

Khomak dozi- Afghan, geometric satin embroidery stitch meaning raw or unfinished embroidery

Naqsh- Farsi, pattern work or texture

Noor- Arabic, Divine Light, illuminating inner beauty, and guidance- male or female name

Oya- Turkish, classical needlework

Sheitel- Yiddish, wig worn by Jewish Orthodox married women

Sikh- monotheistic religion originating in the Punjab region of South Asia

Souzani- Farsi, embroidery style which uses couching and long satin stitches

Sufi- mystical, spiritual dimension of Islam

Tekke- Sufi spiritual lodge

Zardozi- Farsi, metal or floss embroidery style

Zeena- Arabic, ornament, something beautiful- female name

