

Bliss

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How significant is the involvement of contemporary designers to the survival and sustainability of traditional craft forms? In a society over-run by modern design, traditional art forms are relegated to mere souvenirs and utilitarian objects. This project was initiated in an attempt to explore the effectiveness of collaborative efforts between designers and artisans. Pedagogically relevant, this exploration will encourage research; learning material culture and heritage as well as encourage the use of alternative materials and traditional techniques for contemporary design.

Research was paramount to this study. First, what traditional technique(s) was appropriate for a functional garment? Laundry, comfort and wear-ability were put into consideration. I narrowed my choices down to basketry. Secondly, what types of material(s) would produce a successful outcome? This led me to research the feasibility of different materials, such as silk, synthetic and cotton cords, threads, silk charmeuse spaghetti loops and ribbons. Each had a unique quality and therefore produced different results. And lastly; what type of garment was I to construct? I produced a series of sketches ranging from day wear to bridal. The bridal gown served as a nice template to experiment; it is a traditionally western garment and my challenge was to keep it contemporary and use locally made Nigerian product such as the basketry coils.



embellishment. Each coil was hand sewn to the garment to maintain the shape and quality of the coils.

After summing up all my findings, contact was made with Elizabeth Ayuba a local artisan from Zaria, Northern Nigeria through Dr. Martha Ahuwan a lecturer in textiles and clothing at the Ahmadu Bello University. Various materials were sent and prototypes were made. Once the desired aesthetic and quality was met, production commenced. The Silk prototype was the most befitting choice due to its surface quality and metallic threads were used for

The bridal ensemble comprises of a one-shoulder coil encrusted top, a ruffled asymmetrical bolero jacket with a built-up neckline and a full skirt. The lined top is constructed of Silk Duchess Satin, a boned inner foundation and interlined for support with cotton batiste.

The Bolero jacket is constructed with Silk Dupioni and layered with multiple Silk gauze frills and embellished with a woven coil. The half jacket comes as an alternative to a full bolero jacket which gives the bride a one-shouldered look without feeling bare. The skirt has a double layer overlay of silk Gauze over Silk Dupioni and lined with a polyester blend.

I strongly believe that collaboration between traditional artisans and designers (students or professionals) is an invaluable stepping stone to sustainability of various craft forms and possibly an additional source of income for the local artisans.

