

Indigo Lantern

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Indigo Lantern is one of my self-exploration of surface design techniques using natural dyes. The purpose of this project is to synchronize the cultural design components through construction techniques and highlight the sustainable practice of using natural dye to create a modern look. The inspiration came from traditional Korean patchwork Jogakbo and Buddhist lantern festival.

More designers have started to take a more sustainable, slow fashion approach in designing and making clothes (Clark, 2008). Slow fashion is a socially responsible fashion design practices that seek to improve environmental and human welfare. These practices overlap with my interest in reducing resource consumption and waste. This project explores the use of the family heirloom traditional textiles. Hemp was domestically harvested, processed, and woven by my family. The textiles used were the last rolls of fabric made by my great-aunts about 80 years ago as the most female member of the rural family who practiced domestic weaving. They were 16-inch wide hemp with imperfections in the thickness of each yarn and regularity in weaving. The fabric also was deteriorated with aging and insect damage over the years. As I retrieved useable pieces, jogakbo, Korean traditional patchwork technique was the rational choice to give life to these priceless fabrics. During the Chosun Dynasty period, jogakbo was popular among commoner who had limited resources to make cloths to wrap things or to cover the table. However, as jogakbo was recognized as a unique Korean design with its aesthetic value, it became a stable souvenir item and has been widely applied to modern costumes, furniture, crafts, and architecture by reworking the color and the surface configuration of the patchwork (Kim & Hong, 2009).

In a quest to stay with the sustainability focus without using harsh chemicals, indigo was used to dye the hemp. Indigo has been popular since ancient times because of its excellent fastness and excellent antibacterial property (Oh & Ahn, 2013). For its antibacterial and insect repellent effects, use of indigo provided the additional benefit of preserving the old fabric. Furthermore, the antiquity value of indigo, one of the most valued and most globally widespread dyes (Ferreira et al., 2004), compliments the purpose of giving new life to my family's traditional fabric.

Hemp pieces were dyed in different shades of blue. The top was draped on modified prince panels to create twelve panels to achieve the ombré effect through jogakbo pieces. A hoop foundation was created to add volume to simulate the shape of a paper lantern. The skirt was flat patterned using the dimensions of the hoop foundation.

The ensemble is a unique interpretation of jogakbo and the sustainable practice of using natural dyes. The dress creates rhythmic characteristics with the structural patchwork fashioning a 3-D lantern shape. This design contributes to the expression of a sense of emphasis, harmony, and unity in the final design.

Techniques. Dyeing, flat-felled seams, binding, flat pattern, draping

Materials. 100% hemp, indigo dye

Date Completed: December 2018

Measurement: Female medium (size 8) Bust 36", Waist 27", Hip 36"



References

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