

September 2018

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Curatorial Overview: *Contemporary Muslim Fashions*

By Jill D'Alessandro, Curator in Charge, Costume and Textile Arts, and Laura L. Camerlengo, Associate Curator, Costume and Textile Arts

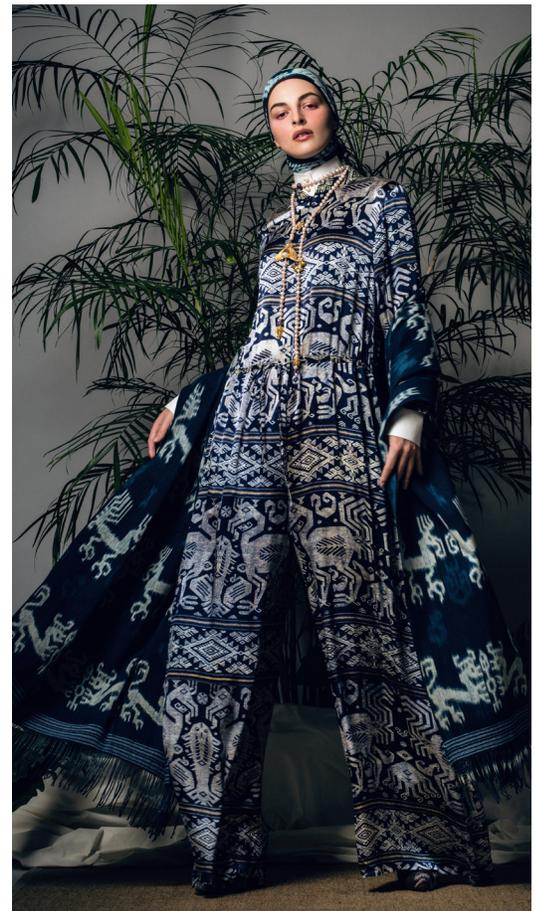
Opening at the de Young Museum on September 22, 2018, *Contemporary Muslim Fashions* is the first major museum exhibition to explore the complex and diverse nature of Muslim dress codes worldwide. It focuses especially, but not exclusively, on clothing that responds to individual and collective interpretations of modesty. As Islam is a multicultural faith with 1.8 billion practitioners worldwide (half of whom are women), the dress of its practitioners is shaped not only by religious traditions but also by local customs and global fashion trends. The exhibition captures a snapshot of Muslim women and fashion today by focusing on various corners of the globe where designers are creating, and consumers are wearing, highly fashionable garments that adhere to concerns for modesty and related aspects of Muslim religious cultures. By connecting global fashion styles to local tastes and modes, *Contemporary Muslim Fashions* showcases both select regional particularities and the commonalities found in dress codes across the Muslim faith.

The first gallery of the exhibition challenges the conventional notion that modest fashion worn by Muslim women is uniform, by the presentation of high-fashion modest garments from leading international designers. The combination of highly stylish dress with varying degrees of body cover has become one of the most pervasive national and international fashion stories in the past decade, with immeasurable media coverage illustrating the diversity of modest fashion styles around the world. Gallery content situates the development of this sector within larger social and cultural changes, such as the increased spending power of Muslim women, the rise of the empowered Muslim millennial woman and of Muslim women fashion bloggers, the surge in interest from major Western retailers, and the growth of modest fashion weeks.

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ITANG YUNASZ (b. 1958, Indonesia) for ITANG YUNASZ (est. 1986, Indonesia)

*Ensemble (jumpsuit, top, and scarf), Tribalux Collection, 2018
Vintage cotton warp-faced plain weave, warp-resist dyeing (Sumba ikat), silk satin, silk chiffon, and spandex
Jewelry by MannaQueen for Itang Yunasz, 2018
Courtesy of Itang Yunasz*

Contemporary Muslim Fashions

(continued from page 1)

As the headscarf is often perceived as most identifiable element of Muslim women's dress by Muslims and non-Muslims, the second gallery explores the high degree of diversity in head coverings (and lack thereof) among regions, generations and individuals around the world through the display of art and fashion photography. Important to our understanding of modest Muslim dress codes is the understanding that not all Muslim women wear a hijab (headscarf) and few wear a niqab (face veil). As these images reveal, the headscarf is worn for various reasons: it may express personal piety, the conventions of a community, or any of a variety of political positions. Like all clothing, the headscarf can have multiple meanings to different observers at the same time. While in few regions, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Indonesian Aceh province, head covering is regulated by law, in most others it is not. The heightened visibility that headscarves give to Muslim women in particular means that many may feel a responsibility to be ambassadors for their religion or community, especially in Muslim-minority countries.

The subsequent galleries present surveys of contemporary fashions made for Muslim concerns of modesty from designers in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, both regions with burgeoning industries. In the Middle East—a Muslim-majority region—many different forms of head and body covering are worn. For women, one of the most common is the abaya. Traditionally, this simple, loose over-garment is shaped as a voluminous floor-length robe, black in color, and designed to cover the body from the neck to the feet. It is often accompanied by a covering for the head or the head and face. The abaya serves myriad functions throughout the region, including as religious dress for countries that follow more conservative interpretations of Islamic law, and as cultural heritage and practice. As the garments in this section show, young fashion designers throughout the Middle East are offering new interpretations of the abaya. By infusing elements from regional textile traditions, the materials and techniques of French couture, international fashion trends, and diverse folk costumes, among other sources of inspiration, they are creating new garments that suit the needs of both local and global audiences.

In Southeast Asia, Indonesia is one of the leaders in the contemporary Muslim fashion sector today, and the largest majority-Muslim country in the world. Within the Indonesian fashion industry, stylish modest dressing for Muslim women is now the fastest growing segment and a driver for the development of its traditional textile industries, such as batik and weaving, which appear in many Indonesian garments on view in the exhibition. In neighboring Malaysia, the rise of millennial-generation Muslims has combined with an explosion of social media platforms and e-commerce to produce a rapidly growing market for halal fashion, beauty, technology, and food. As seen in the exhibition, Malaysian designers reflect the rich cultural and religious diversity of a secular country in which approximately sixty percent of the population is Muslim alongside significant numbers of practicing Buddhists, Christians, and Hindus. Fashion-forward designs cater to Muslims' concerns for modesty while drawing upon the country's different cultures and traditional and modern design influences.



*Mashaël Al Rajhi (b. 1987, Saudi Arabia) for Mashaël Alrajhi (est. 2013, Saudi Arabia)
Ensemble (jacket and pants)
Autumn/Winter 2017
Merino wool and velvet
Courtesy of Mashaël Alrajhi; photographer: Brian Doherty; model: Monet Huie.*

Among arbiters of Muslim modest style, developments in social media have enabled their ability to foster dialogue with their followers. This synergy will be featured in the exhibition through the display of Instagram content, as Instagram is currently a preferred platform for the distribution of fashion photos and videos with short text captions and searchable hashtags. As the exhibition's Instagram content reveals, among Muslim modest fashionistas today, personal style can serve as a medium for discussion about contemporary fashion as well as a tool for positive social change. Clothing allows them to draw attention to issues of sustainability and ethical production in fashion; to gender, racial, and religious inequalities; and to other societal concerns.

Smaller, interstitial spaces within the exhibition will showcase sportswear made for Muslim concerns of modesty, including the Nike Pro Hijab and the burkini. Although many Muslims regard physical exercise as part of a religious obligation to stay healthy, for women in some cultures, staying fit can be a challenge. Criticisms from within Muslim communities often focus on the apparent inappropriateness of displaying women's bodies and on the movements and clothing choices related to sport. In addition, in regions such as the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent, women may traditionally spend time in the private rather than public space, further hampering physical activity. In recent years, however, observant young Muslim women are challenging these norms, asserting what they see as their right to sport. While Muslim women for generations have self-fashioned their own sportswear, since the turn of the twenty-first century female entrepreneurs have been creating new garments for a rising generation of Muslim female athletes who dress modestly. Recognizing the size and importance of the Muslim consumer base, major retailers have also begun creating collections geared toward the Muslim athlete.

The exhibition concludes with the presentation of haute couture and high-end fashions by leading Western designers who are customizing their designs for the needs of Muslim women. Elite Muslim clients have been important patrons of the Parisian couture houses for decades, where designs have often been adapted for regional and religious sensibilities. Today this tradition continues among leading couturiers as well as top European and American fashion design houses who create garments to suit the faith-based needs of young, professional Muslim women. As seen in the gallery's garments, some designers offer limited-edition collections for the Muslim high holidays of Ramadan and Eid, while others adapt current styles to accommodate Muslim concerns for modesty by altering the hem or neckline, closing slits, adding sleeves, or substituting a sheer fabric with an opaque alternative.

The increased availability of modest fashions over the past decade coincides with a larger trend in the fashion industry toward more covered styles that appeal to women across many faiths and cultures. As Contemporary Muslim Fashions reveals, the growing desire for modest and stylish fashions by Muslim women has fostered a market that serves diverse needs beyond Muslim communities.



*Leah Vernon (b. 1987, Detroit, Michigan, USA)
Leah Vernon by Velvet d'Amour for VOLUP2
Magazine
Photo by Velvet d'Amour, 2017, for VOLUP2
Magazine.*

NEWS FROM THE CONSERVATION LAB: Same structure, a century apart, divergent images

By Sarah Gates

Head Conservator, Textile Conservation

Recently, the Textile Conservation Lab had two beautiful examples of the weaving technique called “double weave” in the lab at the same time.

One was a length of fabric designed by William Morris in 1878-1881 and woven on a Jacquard loom. The other was a contemporary artwork by Logan Fry, hand woven in 1991.

“Double weave” is defined as a two-layered cloth made by weaving two or more sets of warps and one or more sets of wefts at the same time. The two fabrics are interconnected and essentially trade places whenever the design changes, with one layer going to the top and the other moving to the bottom. One way to determine if a cloth is a true double weave is to use your fingers to physically separate the two layers of cloth in a specific area of the woven fabric. If the fabric pulls apart and you have one layer of cloth in each hand – it’s double weave! It is also sometimes called pocket weave or pocket cloth which helps to describe the technique as well.

Double weave is an ancient technique, with the earliest known examples dating back to 700 CE and the Paracas culture in Peru. The two examples in the Textile Lab are only about 100 years apart, but the difference in imagery is much greater.

The length of fabric designed by William Morris is a famous pattern by the Arts and Crafts master, entitled Bird. It has been reproduced countless times on everything from wrapping paper to plastic carrier bags and water bottles. It takes its inspiration from a great variety of sources - from 19th century Indian woodblock prints to 15-16th century European millefleur tapestries and 16th century English embroidery.

The double weave by Logan Fry entitled Microchip Series 2: Poly, depicts as the title implies, a microchip. Fry was inspired by, amongst other things: the 20th century painters Mondrian and Albers, bar codes on products and packaging, circuit boards, and most interestingly - the book by Neuromancer. Written by author William Gibson in 1984, the book contains numerous references to textiles looking like microchips (paraphrased from artist email 2/2018).

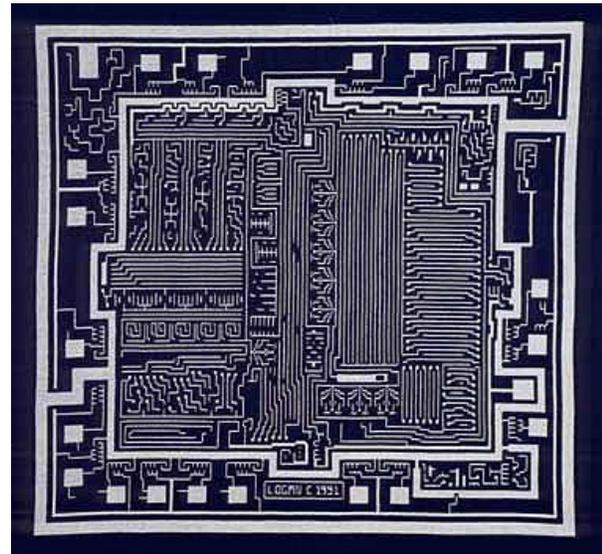
These are two textiles, woven using the same technique, but with very different sources of inspiration. The sources can be said to come primarily from two different directions: the past and the future. The two examples of double weave will both be on display at the same time, but in different buildings: the Morris double weave is on display in the special exhibition Truth and Beauty: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Old Masters at the Legion of Honor museum, and the Fry double weave can be seen in the newly re-installed contemporary art galleries (gallery 13) at the de Young museum.



1. Double weave structure diagram



2. William Morris (designer), English, 1834–1896
Morris and Company (manufacturer), English, 1861–1940
Bird Curtain, 1878–1881
England, English
Wool; doublecloth (jacquard woven)
209.6 x 129.5 cm (82 1/2 x 51 in.)
Museum purchase, Art Trust Fund. 1996.47



3. W. Logan Fry, American, b. 1944
Microchip Series 2: Poly, 1991
United States, Ohio
Wool; double weave, paired warp and weft threads (Finnweave)
95 x 92 cm (37 3/8 x 36 1/4 in.)
Gift of the artist. 2002.166

From Leslee Budge, TEXTILE ARTS COUNCIL Board Chair

September 2018

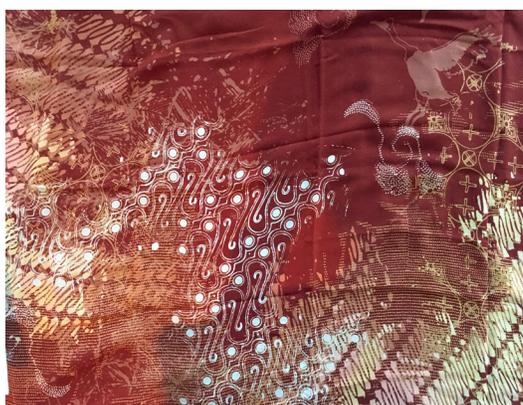
As I write this column, I am traveling with the Textile Arts Council in Indonesia where we are learning about Indonesia culture through their art of batik. We have seen many different styles of batik from the contemporary adaptation of traditional batik at the workshop of Nia and Agus Ismoyo to the workshops where the traditional methods are employed. We have seen the private collection at the Puro Mangkunegaran palace and visited the gallery and workshop of Afif Syakur who has a collection of over 3,000 ancient batiks. For him, batik is one of the Indonesian wheels of life—it needs to be taken care of with continuous innovation to keep it vibrant. This is my fourth adventure with TAC, organized by our board member Mary Connors. Through these trips I have learned a great deal about the textile arts and traditions of the Filipino, Indian, and Moroccan people. I love to travel and learn about textiles and TAC has provided the opportunity for me to do so.

I will complete my fourth year as the TAC Board Chair in September. After serving for two terms as chair, I have decided it is time to pass the gavel. We elect our Board officers for two-year terms after the September annual TAC meeting. While the TAC membership elects Board Members, the Board elects the officers. Shirley Juster has volunteered to stand for election as Board Chair. The following have agreed to continue in their positions: Treasurer Joy Stocksdale, Secretary Alex Friedman, and Co-chair for Board Member Care Shelley Wells. The Board created a new position of Co-chair for Office Operations. I have agreed to stand for election for that position to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities. It has been an honor to serve as Chair and I look forward to continuing to serve on the Board.

The Textile Arts Council is in solid financial standing. Due to good financial management and a stable TAC membership we were able to support the *Contemporary Muslim Fashions* Exhibition with a donation of \$50,000 making TAC a Significant Supporter of the exhibition.



Batikker waxing the cloth in preparation for the first dye bath.



Contemporary adaptation of traditional batik by Nia and Agus Ismoyo

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Consider Giving to *Fund-a-Need*

**The Textile Arts Council
of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
would like your help in protecting
the museums' costume collection.**

The Textile Department takes in about 50 – 60 fabulous new garments each year. There have been several large gifts recently which greatly enriched the couture and ready-to-wear holdings. However, the department has run out of storage cabinets. We hope to help the Museums purchase several costume cabinets to house and protect its collection.

Each cabinet costs \$2,557 and holds approximately 30 garments. Four are needed to house the current backlog and two are needed for the anticipated accessions this year. These are special cabinets designed for our space by the best in the archival storage business, Delta Designs Ltd. They protect the garments from light, dust, and pests, and allow the garments to be protected, yet easily accessible.

Please consider giving a donation of any amount to the **Textile Arts Council** for the 2017/2018 Fund-a-Need:

- Make checks payable to Textile Arts Council with Fund-a-Need in the comments line.
- Mail your donation to the TAC office at 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, San Francisco, CA 94118
- Contact the office at TAC@famsf.org or 415-750-3627 to donate using a credit card



Artwork: Barbara Beckmann

NEXT NEWSLETTER\

January 2019

Deadline for Submission

NOVEMBER 15, 2018

The Textile Arts Council newsletter welcomes announcements and columns from our members about textiles and related events in the textile community. Please send your copy to the TAC office:

tac@famsf.org

TEXTILE ARTS COUNCIL TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

Curator-led tour of *Veiled Meanings: Fashioning Jewish Dress from the collection of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem*

at the Contemporary Jewish Museum

- Thursday, September 27, 6:00 PM
- Cost: \$25 TAC members. Pre-registration required.

Curator-led Tour of *Contemporary Muslim Fashions*

- Wednesday, October 10, 10:00 am–1:00 pm. deYoung Museum.
- Cost: \$100 /person. Pre-registration required.
Includes catered lunch at the De Young Café

Tour registration is open to current TAC members plus one guest. To register or for more information contact the TAC office.



Woman's robe, 18th–19th century. Turkey, Ottoman Silk, cotton (lining), metallic threads, sequins; plain weave, embroidery (satin stitch, couching)

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Caroline and H. McCoy Jones Collection, Gift of Caroline McCoy-Jones 2004.100.3

SAVE the DATE!



TEXTILE BAZAAR NOVEMBER 11, 2018

ANTIQUE ✦ ETHNIC ✦ VINTAGE ✦ CONTEMPORARY

10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- **Moriarty Hall, St. Anne of the Sunset Church,
1300 Funston Ave. (at Judah), San Francisco, 94122**

The Textile Bazaar is a unique event because of the vendors who, through their travels, cultural knowledge and collecting history, offer extraordinary textiles for sale. Many of this year's vendors are old friends, some going back to our very first bazaar in 2009.

Shop the treasures of Bali, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, India, Japan, China, Guatemala, Mexico and more.

Participating Partners Include:

Daniel Gundlach of the Language of Cloth with batiks from Bali

Maya Escudero with Philippine textiles

Deivi with handcrafts from India

Kathy McHenry Guatemalan treasures

And appreciate our own local artists, many of whom are joining us for the first time:

Kirsten Malone and her embroidered stationery

Jenny Fong's shibori dresses and accessories

Handwoven textiles from Sally Forelli

Buttons of all shapes, sizes and functions from Pamela Wiston

Chang Tsai's hand knitted jewelry and ornaments

Nora Daniel's hand painted silks

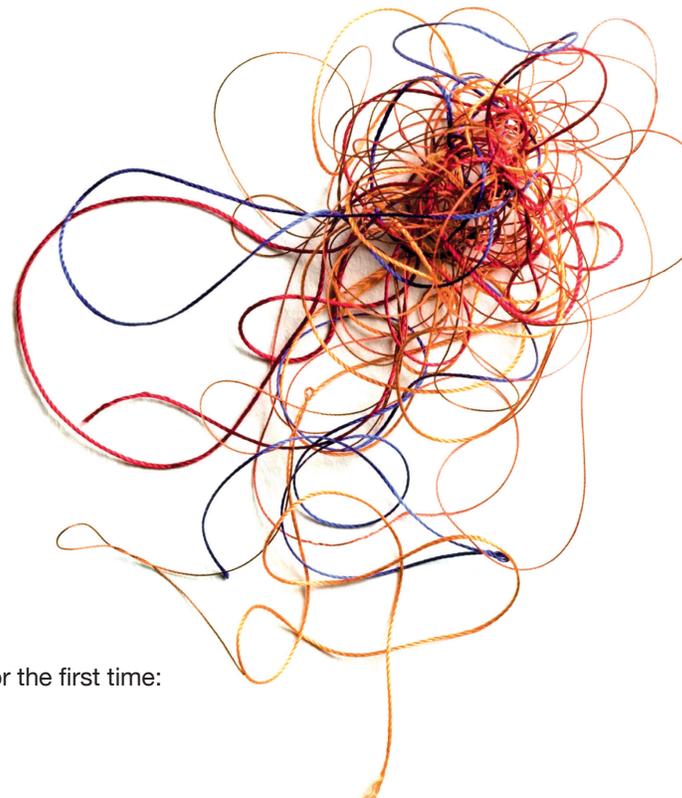
Handcrafted jewelry from Joanne Espinosa

Kim Nelson's felted hats and accessories

Don't miss returning vendors Janet Ebert, Carla Needleman, Tamara Hill, Nancy Hernandez, Ruth Anderson, Mary Connors, Connie Levy, Charmaine Wong, Pat Moore, Susan Hall, Sonnie Willis.

Welcome new vendors Joszi Meskan, Roger Clayden, Harry Tsvi Strauch, Emily Rosenberg, Patricia Tostenson, Darlene Jurow, Christine Ohtani-Chang, Jan Marie Etre.

Visit our website to see more previews of what's to come.



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www.textileartscouncil.org

IN MEMORIAM



It is with great sadness that we share the news that our longtime board member, colleague and dear friend, **Barbara Beckmann**, passed away on August 1.

In addition to being an active member of the TAC board with a valued knowledge of textiles, Barbara was the owner of Barbara Beckmann Designs, a textile resource for the interior design industry since 1983 known in particular for her silks. For more than thirty years, BBD developed and refined hand-painting/printing techniques for fabric from her factory first located in San Francisco, then Napa, and then finally moved to Sonoma. Her fabric collections had been represented in interior design showrooms through the US and internationally. Barbara graduated from the University of Illinois with a BFA degree, and also studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Pratt Institute and the University of California at Berkeley. Her designs and paintings have been exhibited in New York and San Francisco. She taught textile design at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising and the University of California, Berkeley Extension, and illustrated several children's books. She had been an active member of HIA, NEWH, ASID, DFA and the Foundation for Design Integrity. We will miss her engaging and cheerful spirit. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family.

September
2018

Textile Arts Council

Don't miss these exciting TAC events!

“New Materials: Synthetic Biology in Textiles”

- Myrrhia Resneck, Technical Designer/Knitwear Engineer, Bolt Threads
- Saturday, September 15, 2018, 10 am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

“Contemporary Australian Indigenous Screenprinted Textiles”

- Joanna Barrkman, Senior Curator, Fowler Museum at UCLA
- Saturday, October 20, 2018, 10 am • Koret Auditorium \ de Youngm

“African Indigo Textiles”

- Pam McClusky, Curator of African and Oceanic Art, Seattle Art Museum
- Saturday, November 10, 2018, 10 am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

TAC Annual Textile Bazaar

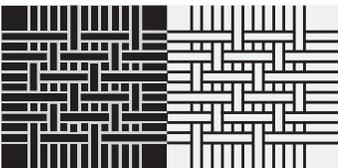
- November 11, 2018, 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Moriarty Hall, St. Anne of the Sunset Church, 1300 Funston Ave. (at Judah), San Francisco, 94122

“Hanbok in a Greater Cultural Context”

- Minjee Kim, PhD., Independent Dress Historian
- Saturday, January 19, 2019 10am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

deYoung\
\Legion of Honor

fine arts museums
of san francisco



Textile Arts Council

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