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## Cultural Exchanges

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## Cultural Exchanges

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Keywords: New Technologies, Textile Innovation, Sustainability

Dimensions: bust 34.5"/center front length 60"/waist 71"/center back length 61"

*Cultural Exchanges* is an artistic outcome grounded in language, collaboration, technology, and sustainability. Two colleagues came together to create this gown of digitally printed Chinese dupioni with 3D printed embellishment. The finished piece is the result of a design process that was enriched with cultural and personal exchange between two individuals that came from distinctly different backgrounds; American Jewish and Korean. Mutual curiosity, one for the other, fueled a desire to create, but also to celebrate diversity.

Language, "which represents the accumulated experience of a particular nation's people and encompasses the fullness and variety of their lives," is seen by many scholars as contributory to the formation of distinct cultures (Jakupov et al., 2012, p. 2251). The Yiddish language poem of Bessie Hirschfeld Pomerantz, entitled Zun O Zun (Sun O Sun) was first published in 1957 and served as a beginning point of conceptualization for this work (Hirschfeld Pomerantz, 1957). The poem, which explores a longing to be in nature, and an inability to do so, resonated with both individuals working on this project.

Yiddish is thought to have originated in the twelfth century AD and is derived from a Judaized amalgamation of central European languages (Pomeranz-Freidenreich, 2010). The language was commonly spoken in Jewish homes and schools and was also the preferred language for the study of the Talmud. The Holocaust greatly diminished Yiddish speakers as it is estimated that more than 85% of the more than six million Jews killed were Yiddish language speakers (Weinreich, 2008). Multiple institutions, such as the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts are attempting to preserve remaining Yiddish texts. The weight of importance therefore related to the preservation of Hirschfeld Pomerantz's poem is clear; however, the opportunity to discuss the reasons why it is important to do so led to a translation of the Yiddish text into Korean. Colleagues therefore found mutual ground in the exchange and preservation of language as an outward symbol of real and internalized ideals of cultural identity.

The design process for this work began with the development of a rich textile surface. A high-resolution scan of a painting completed by one of the designers served as the foundation for the textile. Further manipulations were completed via Adobe Creative Suite to add color contrast, texture, and the text of the Hirschfeld Pomerantz poem in both Yiddish and Korean. The incorporation of text in textile surfaces is a process with a rich history of placing words "onto clothes, turning to thread and fabric in place of ink and paper" (Jana, 2016, para. 2). Historically, and artistically, words have been used to both communicate meaning and to produce interesting surface design on textiles. The textile used in this work further explores the practice of artists such as Jane Dunnewold who are interested in the creation of complex surfaces often referred to as art cloth (Dunnewold, 2010). The cloth was printed on a wide format digital textile printer onto 42" wide 100% silk Chinese dupioni. Digital textile printing can produce short runs of fabric and conserves both energy and resources while producing little to no chemical waste.

To further facilitate the exchange of cultural heritage information, traditional Korean hanbok served as a reference point for the development of the silhouette of *Cultural Exchanges*. Korean traditional costume, known as hanbok, features beauty of the form, defined by silhouette, and with limited exposure of bodylines. A traditional women's hanbok ensemble would consist of jeogori, a jacket, and chima, a type of wrap-around skirt or dress. Chima have a high waist into which yardage is pleated or gathered into a skirt band above the upper bust line. Traditionally, the waistband extended past the skirt fabric itself and formed ties so that the skirt could be fastened around the upper

bust line (Kum, 1998). The chima silhouette lent itself to modification for the creation of a minimal waste garment that utilized the majority length and full width of four yards of digitally printed Chinese dupioni fabric with less than one percent waste trimmed from the hem. This small strip of waste was retained and will be used in a future project. Two pieces of two yards of rectangular digitally printed fabric were cut, and each piece was draped and pinned to develop the front and back of the completed chima inspired dress silhouette on a size six dress form. The yardage was gathered into the white band encircling the upper torso creating extra fullness and a fluent look. A salvaged piece of white 100% linen was utilized for the band at the top of the gown and for the focal point that emanates from the upper torso band. Unlike traditional Korean chima, the white upper torso band does not tie but rather culminates in a closure and opening on the wearer's left side fastened with snaps and reinforced with the same salvaged white linen. All seam allowances were finished with lace seam tape, and the hem was carefully completed by hand.

The focal pendant was created with the use of Rhinoceros 3D modeling software and printed on a Makerbot Fifth Generation 3D Printer in polylactic acid (PLA), a biodegradable polymer. Three different shapes, each featuring a different combination of words, were drawn in Adobe Illustrator, imported to Rhinoceros, and then extruded to transform the two dimensional drawings into three-dimensional forms. Small holes to facilitate connectivity were included in the design of each piece. 3D printing is an additive manufacturing process that does not produce the same amount of waste often associated with traditional methods of jewelry or accessory production. The printing process was paused to allow for the change of color from translucent to lemon yellow. Each piece of the triptych pendant features a word in both Yiddish and Korean; sun, light, and warmth. These key words were lifted from Hirschfeld Pomerantz's poem, and hope to express the emotional desire for interaction with natural light. The individual pieces were attached with cotton beading thread and further embellished with turquoise and glass beads.

*Cultural Exchanges* is a captivating aesthetic presentation, born of a technologically aided design process with a minimal ecological footprint, which celebrates and presents cultural diversity using language as a foundation. *Cultural Exchanges* is more than another attempt to demonstrate proficiency with technology. Rather, this work is grounded in research, cultural understanding, and a design process that fully explored and utilized available resources to achieve an ecologically friendly custom outcome.

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