

Moda Forms

by

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Moda Forms

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This thesis is dedicated to
My sweet family and friends and to Jesus, who has been my driving force.

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Moda Forms deal with my interest in combining fashion and sculpture. I create tiny forms that inherently, because of their size, evoke a sense of intimacy between the viewer and the object. The exterior of each form is suited in something I call the "outfit of the form" or the "object's garment". This embellishment does not determine the internal experience but is merely a manifestation of the experience embodied within the form. These objects do not hold some sort of magical power that can in themselves change the human condition, but I use these objects as a metaphor for the intimate experience that happens in the secret place inside the human spirit.

I work in a size that exploits the relationship between the size of the human body and the object. This relationship between the tiny object and the body equates to inevitable closeness to the object. You must move in close to the object in order to observe its minute details. These small objects have to be approached thoughtfully and delicately. They provoke a feeling of value as though the objects are ephemeral and can easily be crushed if approached without caution. Extremely small objects reveal great detail but also hide many secrets. Charles LeDray has been a great influence of mine in the subject of size in sculpture. LeDray says, "I want to take drama and condense it down into a size that you would not expect"; he adds "All my work is the actual size it needs to be." ¹

The process in which LeDray works has also been very influential to me. LeDray hand stitches very tiny articles of clothing that are similar to the size in which I have been

¹ Jerry Satlz, *"It Don't Come Easy: Charles LeDray's "workworkworkworkwork," Sperone Westwater*, <http://www.speronewestwater.com/cgi-bin/iowa/articles/record.html?record=445>, accessed 5 Mar. 2008.

working. This process is very important to the concept behind my sculpture. I use double magnification jeweler's glasses so that the objects can be stitched in such a small size, keeping secret fine details from the natural eye, much in the same way that the delicate nature of the human emotion and spirit hide in the body.

I also investigate the forms of sea life found in the secrets of the oceans depths. Many of the objects in *Moda Forms* resemble jellyfish or sea anemones. For example in *Family* (plate 1) the transparent blue and pink fins extending from the base of the objects closely resemble sea life bordering the coast in tropical regions. And in *Jennifer* (plate 2) resemble the leafy glowing forms of a sea anemone reflecting fluorescent light onto the surrounding surfaces. Just as these creatures are hidden from us in the depths of the ocean; *Moda Forms* are metaphors for the experience of deep healing in the human spirit.

The cradle as a metaphor, is also a reoccurring theme in *Moda Forms*. The design of the cradle evokes a deep sense of comfort and intimacy. A cradle is a symbol of a safe space in which one is nurtured and protected. For me the interior of the cradle provides for an experience of warmth and rest. It is this experience that interests me. This allows the strengthening of both body and emotions to develop without hindrance or delay. These forms each contain a void. For example in *Little Girl* (plate 3) an opening to the interior space of the object can be seen beneath the pink polka-dot flap that lines the interior. I use this void as signifier for the experience that happens within the cradle. *Moda Forms* are containers for this intimate experience.

As the human spirit mends and strengthens, this experience is manifested in the

“outfit of the object”, the object being the enamel or flocked porcelain form and the outfit being the transparent plastic or pleather external stitched soft element. These soft constituents are tailored and stretched over the solid form as seen in *Princess* (plate 4). Each outfit worn by the object has a direct relationship to the experience that the form itself contains. Clothing is often identified with position, social status, and occupation, the outfits worn by each sculpture in this case; identify a specific scenario that is taking place within each object. The outfits are identifiers not catalysts for the internal experience. This is very important to understand, for I do not believe that the external assets such as fashion have the ability to change the human spirit or emotions. I am however making a statement that when internal changes, such as healing of the human spirit and emotion take place, external manifestations cannot help but emanate to the external form of our body. This mood is manifested outwardly through the expressions of the body when deep healing takes place.

My choice of materials refers directly to Japanese fashion design particular the street fashion of Tokyo. The streets of Tokyo are blocked off every weekend where teenagers come and displayed their latest clothing designs (plate 5)². There is freedom, inventiveness, and use of unconventional materials in the creatively executed ensembles. Common materials seen in the midst of these weekend informal fashion shows range from eighties spandex to clear or brightly colored transparent plastics that take the form of anything from jewelry to hand-made shoes. These outfits are made to be temporal, and serve the purpose of expressing a theme or mood to onlookers.

² Flickr Loves You Tm., “Japanese Street Fashion,” *Flicker Loves You*, <http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=Japanese+street+fashion>, accessed 5 Mar. 2008.

Moda Forms are visually indebted to fashion designer Issey Miyake. He uses pleats and folds in some areas which contrast beautifully with areas in which are tightly stretches and reveal the shape of the body. Much in the same way I use synthetic materials stretched tightly over solid forms to reveal the shape under the stretched pleather and allow that area to protrude out from the body of the sculpture. This enhances the form in exactly the same way in which a collar or the puff sleeve of a garment changes the contour of form of the human body.

In the tradition of Haute Couture, which is French for “high sewing” or “high dress making”, I have set up a rubric for myself of the quality that must be obtained in every piece. This standard of quality must be obsessively followed in every step of the development of these highly detailed forms. This rubric is carefully followed from the use of dental tools to sculpt the initial form, to the standard I develop to control the quality of each stitch. For example every stitch has to follow the strictest guidelines of perfection; these guidelines pertain to the specific size of each stitch, the distance between each stitch, and the distance from the edge of the material. If not perfect, it must be immediately taken out and re-stitched. This high standard is held to in every process in the development of these objects. The investment that I have made in every step, in every detail, is very important in the final outcome of each piece. Although many of the details are too small to be seen by the natural eye the viewer can intuitively experience them. The process calls for high levels of concentration, which becomes meditative resulting in a methodical process of stitching.

Finally the scale of my objects in relationship to the size of the gallery is very important to the concept in which I am working. A single *Moda Form* becomes a tiny

speck of color on a large white wall. From a distance these flashes of color provoke the viewer's curiosity and leads to an intimate experience with the object. They have to be viewed up close and still much of the details are hidden. Just as, the delicate transformation of the spirit is hidden deep in the interior space of the human body.

Plate 1



Family
8" x10"
2008

Plate 2



Jennifer
11" x 4"
2008

Plate 3



Little Girl
11.5" x 6"
2008

Plate 4



Princess
14" x 8"
2008

Plate 5



Japanese Street Fashion
8" x 4"
2008

Vita

- Education:** M.F.A. 2008 (anticipated) Sculpture Texas Christian University
B.F.A. 2003 Painting/Drawing Texas Women's University
- Professional Experience:**
- 2007 Department Assistant
Professor Cameron Schoepp- Sculpture I
Department of Art and Art History, TCU, Fort Worth, Texas
- 2006 Gallery Assistant, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth Texas
- 2002 Docent at the Chinatti Foundation, Marfa, Texas
- 2000-2001 Piloted children's art program, Red Apple Lutheran Private School
- Travel And Related Education:** Educational Tour of Europe and Great Britain, 1969
Attended "The International Arts Festival", Edinburgh, Scotland, 1996
- 1996-2005 Visited major art museums in 11 countries in Europe and Asia
- 2001 Studies Abroad Program, Tuscany, Italy, through the Dodge Lamar School of the Arts (including Art History Studies in Paris, Rome, and Florence)
- Exhibition Records:**
- 2008 Solo exhibition, Moudy Exhibition Hall, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth Texas
- 2007 *Sprung (Fort Worth Gallery Night)*, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth Texas
- 2006 Gallery Assistant, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth Texas

2004 *Aquifer*, Juniper House, Denton Texas. 2004

2004 Director/Architect/Choreographer of *Desert Situation I, II, III* performed on the campus of Texas Women's University

2002 *Garments and Places*, (Texas Women's University, Denton, Texas

2001 Mural, Nashville, Tennessee

2001 *Student Exhibition*, Cortona, Italy

2000 *Deep Ellum, Tunnel Vision Mural Project*, Dallas, Texas

1999 Mural, Insomnia Café, Dallas, Texas

1999 *Vorterman Show*, Texas Women's University, Denton

Visiting Artist Lectures:

2008 (anticipated), Tarrant Count College, Hurst, Texas

Conferences:

College Art Association Conference, 2007 New York, New York

la Beinnale Venezia, 2005, Venice, Italy

la Beinnale Venezia, 2003, Venice, Italy

The International Arts Festival, 1996, Edinburgh, Scotland

Related Professional Experiences:

Floor Design, *Madame B. collection*, M.A.C. cosmetics, Dillard's, Fort Worth Texas, 2005

Floor Design, *Moulin Rouge event*, M.A.C. cosmetics, Dillard's, Fort Worth Texas, 2005

Floor Design, *Diana Ross collection*, M.A.C. cosmetics, Dillard's, Fort Worth Texas, 2005

Personal makeup artist for **Paul McCartney**, including concert makeup and makeup for television appearance, 2006

Guest Lecturer (anticipated), Tarrant Count College, Hurst, Texas, 2008

Abstract

Moda Forms deal with my interest in combining fashion and sculpture. I create tiny forms that inherently, because of their size, evoke a sense of intimacy between the viewer and the object. The exterior of each form is suited in something I call the “outfit of the form or the “object’s garment”. This embellishment does not determine the internal experience but is merely a manifestation of the experience embodied within the form. These objects do not hold some sort of magical power that can in themselves change the human condition, but I use these objects as a metaphor for the intimate experience that happens in the secret place inside the human spirit.