

Draft of Mascha Mioni for the
Panel discussion at mini Symposium Bangkok Nov. 10, 2013

“Painting on Canvas versus Wearable Art”

To be an artist is a privilege, which is in you from the day you are born. It is not possible to become an artist by education alone at an art school or university. These institutions give you great tools, more skills for expression and more time for practice, but the artist needs to be in you.

(Curriculum)

To explain my point, I shall first dive into my own past, my own experiences.

My mother was a dressmaker/couturier, she worked at home. Besides being a housewife and looking after me and my sister she always had thread and needle ready. My father worked as an electrician at the Swiss railway company.

That was a long ago time before TV, computers, tablets and mobiles.

One could say, my youth was formed at a one square meter table at which my father was constructing models of airplanes which never flew, my mother designing and sewing dresses, my younger sister playing nurse with her dolls and I was drawing on whatever I could find to draw on.

One day I'll never forget, I was about 9 years old, as usual all of us were gathered around the table, my father looked wonderingly at my drawing and said astonished to my mother: "look what she did, mother, she is an artist!"

So I knew - I believed what my father said - that I am an artist.

But also in my youth, there wasn't only the drawing, there was the textile with which my mother made dresses for other people ... normally one gown a week ... she always knew that I was longing for some leftover patches to make outfits for the dolls.

Now, looking back, I know: "There the foundation was set for my whole life".

I never could decide what is more important, painting or designing dresses, until one day when a friend gave me all the tools I needed to paint on silk, and at last I could combine both my desires.

(Painting and Wearable Art)

What is the difference between painting on a canvas to hang on a wall and painting on silk and additionally forming a dress out of it?

The most perceptible difference is, that when you present your work on canvas, people say, oh how interesting, they talk seriously with you, they want to know the idea behind it and they accept it as a work of art and then it is not so difficult to find a gallery to present in.

The moment you do the same on silk, paint a unique work, ... you even want to form it like a sculpture, you imagine a moving sculpture ..., so you invest a lot more time and the result is that they say: why do you make dresses, when you could make ART?

All my life I tried so hard to explain that there is no difference, almost like a preacher who wants to convert everybody to his belief.

I arranged exhibitions showing both together, pictures and Art to Wear ...

I printed a book showing both together, just to prove: look: both is artwork!

I organized performances, just to give people the chance to adore the beauty of Painted and formed ARTwork as part of a moving body of work.

No chance ... they will not change their mind ...

You can also forget the art circus of buying and selling at auctions and to museums ...

All has a good and a sad side. The good is, that the painters on textile form a group of international artists who experience this struggle and don't give up! So I continue to meet many great people all over the world who fight for the same idea:

"On what ever he works: If an artist is doing a good job, it doesn't matter what the surface is."

The show goes on ... many young textile artists are on their way ... I believe that they have more self confidence to move in the direction many did before them. As I near the close of my career, if I had to give advice to young textile artists I'd say:

"Textile artist, don't become a tool used by others, who profit from you by producing lots of cheap copies, be aware of your worth. To be misused by industry is a danger for painters on textile, a danger the canvas user doesn't experience ... "

Henri Matisse, Louise Bourgeois, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Sonja Delaunay, Mariano Fortuny in Venice – to name only the most important - ... didn't mind to "stoop down" to textile painting ... Not to forget the great kimono painting! It will also last forever ...

(conclusion)

What is the difference between textile painting and canvas painting ?

The canvas painting you may hang on a wall, painted textile you can wrap around you, you can cuddle in it, it can give you warm, make you look beautiful ... it can be your second skin, you walk in your creation ... what a great experience!

We live in a world where people travel a lot. To move around with paintings on textile is much easier ... it's light, you can fold it ... wash it and iron it! Don't dare to do that with paintings on canvas ...

By painting for the wall one speaks of different styles, concrete, contemporary, expressionistic, dadaistic, pop art ... and so on ... With textile, art to wear especially, one talks about FASHION ... Forget to look at Art to Wear as a fashionable piece! It is a way to express art as any other way.

If we want to escape from this misapprehension, the people who deal with art must change their point of view ... when the time is ready, it will happen, so let's just keep going ...

What contributed most for the individual, for artistic presentation, and for the use of art on every day clothing? It was called Flower Power! It was a worldwide attitude against war, terrible war, hate and nastiness, that found it's expression through Art to Wear ...

Picasso had painted the signs on the wall and a whole generation used their own bodies to continue this protest, along with musical artists ...

Whether I paint on paper,
create an oil-painting on canvas,
or work on art to wear,
makes no difference.
But, through expanding the process
and forming a cover for the human body,
the work enters a new dimension.

My wish for the future is, that many good artists will say and do the same ...

I dedicate this plea to Yoshiko Iwamoto Wada.