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Shibori: Tradition and Innovation

Ana Lisa Hedstrom

Shibori has recently become part of American textile vernacular. Folk traditions have often been sources of inspiration and appropriation by Western craftsmen and designers. The phenomenon of shibori is not only how it has been embraced by Americans, but how our viewpoints and adaptation of techniques have also changed and inspired craftsmen in Arimatsu, Japan, the center for production of indigo dyed cotton shibori. Today, in Japan, plastic plumbing pipe is used for Arashi, polyester is replacing cotton to create permanently textured shibori fabrics, and Western industrial techniques of cloque and devoré enhance traditional patterns.

I propose to follow how American shibori has thrived in conjunction with the growth of atelier created art clothing. The competitive fashion world has instigated much of the development of "shibori language" as designers seek a signature fabric. I will speak from my own experience in the studio, the museum, and the marketplace, and share the work of other designers who have created an individual look: Marien Clayden, Carter Smith, Joan McGee and Genvieve Dion.

For centuries both economic stress and opportunity have challenged the shibori craftsman in Japan. Today young designers such as Reiko Sudo and Yoshiki Hishinuma are again innovators with their high tech shibori-heat shrinking, laminating, and dissolving threads.

In a world where many textile traditions have been undermined or diminished by change, shibori is a success story with a sense of history, an international production and marketplace, and an exciting integration with technology. This could be a model for the 21st century.

California artist craftsman Ana Lisa Hedstrom has been an innovator in the field of surface design and art clothing. Her work has been exhibited internationally and published in periodicals and books including *Art to Wear* by Julie Schaffler Dale, *Shibori* by Yoshiko Wada, and *California Designers* by Doug Bullis. Examples of her fabrics and clothing are in the collections of The American Craft Museum, the Cooper Hewitt Museum, and the DeYoung Museum. She was the recipient of NEA craftsman grants in 1982 and 1989, and was awarded the Ideacomo Award at the Third International Fashion Foundation Textile Competition in Tokyo in 1998.

A frequent teacher and lecturer, she has been a speaker/presenter at the International Shibori Symposiums in Japan in 1993, in India in 1996, and in Chile in 1999.