

9-2014

The Obiko Archive

Jean Cacicedo
jeancacicedo@mac.com

Ana Lisa Hedstrom
analisa@analisahedstrom.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf>

 Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#), and the [Art Practice Commons](#)

Cacicedo, Jean and Hedstrom, Ana Lisa, "The Obiko Archive" (2014). *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*. 929.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/929>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Textile Society of America at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

NEW

DIRECTIONS: Examining the Past,
Creating the Future.

The Obiko Archive

Jean Cacicedo and Ana Lisa Hedstrom.

We, the presenters, would like to thank the Textile Society of America for this wonderful opportunity today to present the Obiko Artwear Archive Project. Many thanks to all our board members of the Textile Arts Council, and our curator of textiles, Jill D'Alessandro for all their support and encouragement throughout this project.

The Textile Arts Council is a support organization for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Created over 20 years ago, the Textile Arts Council was established to advance appreciation of the Museum's textile and costume collection. The council pursues this mission through scheduled lecture programs, newsletters, hands on workshops and artist studio tours, and international travel opportunities.

The Obiko Artwear Archive documents and celebrates Bay Area clothing and jewelry designers whose work was showcased from 1970's through 1990's at Sandra Sakata's Sutter Street San Francisco boutique, Obiko. The archive includes Obiko memories collected from all our selected designers, designer biographies, and a history resource index.

The archive and takes advantage of digital technology in many ways. The archive includes a collection of over 300 digitized photographs from our 28 featured designers, an oral history section with over an hour of recorded audio interviews, and 4 one hour long runway style fashion shows. The 6 CD archive set, presently resides in the Textile Arts Library at the De Young Museum, San Francisco. A PDF of the archive is accessible for viewing by going to the textileartscouncil.org then pressing the download button. The audio section and one of the four Obiko's fashion shows will also be available for viewing on the website, in the near future. The archive PDF reads like a book: by scrolling the pages or you can also click on a designers name to move forward, back, or view in any desired sequence. The History chapter contains essays and biographies, with a Resource list of notable historic exhibitions, publications, and gallery representation. As producers, Ana Lisa and I see the potential of expanding the archive with the future additions of chapters, and possibly even a set of e-books on Artwear.

The term Artwear defined objects artistically driven and hand crafted during a period in history where anti-establishment and anti-fashion attitudes prevailed.

Artisans creating art wear were nation wide, from coast to coast, and belonged to this very American studio craft culture of handmade objects.

By 1976, Julie Schaffler Dale's renowned "Julie:Artisans Gallery" on Madison Avenue, NYC, was well established and recognized as the premier Artwear east coast gallery. Central to the west coast phenomena was Obiko. First established in 1972, Obiko designers played a significant role in the cultural identity of San Francisco and influenced many others working in the textile arts.

Sandra Sakata was a creative force in the art wear movement and became an icon in her own right as a brilliant stylist and muse. She had a unique talent for creating ensembles of various designers and her clientele embraced her ethic approach to fashion by walking out

of the store, transformed and content in their new look. Together Obiko and her designers created a synergy extraordinaire. A seat at her fashion shows was the hottest ticket in town! Sandra died in 1997 at age 57.

Several books and publications have brought attention to the Artwear movement. Most notably, "Art-To-Wear" by Julie Schaffler Dale, published in 1986 and Melissa Levetons' 2005 comprehensive catalogue that accompanied the exhibition Artwear Fashion Anti-Fashion, at the Asian Museum.

The concept for the archive began three years ago when we and a few of our colleagues discussed the desire to document Bay Area Artwear history. Using digital technology, information could be stored on CDs eliminating storage space problems that existed on museum's shelves. Eventually, this archive could live on in "the cloud" for all to access.

Research began two years ago when the Textile Arts Council board of directors created a history committee, lead by board members Jean Cacicedo and Ana Lisa Hedstrom.

Paramount to building this archive was to research and contact all the local designers involved with Obiko's artist community. Letters were sent out to designers but not all respondedand there were some hurdles to jump. Obtaining photographs of objects created 30 years ago became either problematic or impossible for some and locating works to be re-photographed specifically for this archive was not an option nor our strategy. The final selection of photographs were scanned in a 72 dpi format as a means to avoid possible pirating of desirable high resolution photos and to also skirt copyright issues. All of our designers who participated agreed to this condition.

Modern copyright law has evolved greatly with the advent of technology and is not only constantly changing, but it's also vague and open to interpretation.

Funding for the Obiko Archive was made possible, through many volunteer hours by the Textile Arts Council board members. Creating this archive took over two years to produce. The primary costs for the project involved editing and converting Obiko's fashion shows from VHS to digital, professional recording of interviews, and the cost for designing the look of the archive. About \$3000 total. In the fall of 2013, we had a very successful, sold out, fall party with informal modeling of vintage art wear and the proceeds collected enabled us to create the Obiko Archive Fund. These proceeds have helped with the costs of incorporating the archive onto our website @ textileartscouncil.org.

A very special thanks to all the participating designers featured in this archive. We thank you all for footing the bill to provide us with your own digitized images, biographies, memories and historical photographs. All of the images included in the archive are vintage photographs, taken during their time of execution and exhibit a stunning example of the work created during the Obiko era. The Textile Arts Council hopes that the archive will be a great discovery and resource for future generations.

Thank You. Jean Cacicedo, Berkeley, California.

Ana Lisa Hedstrom, Emeryville, California:

Peter Sellars left us with the statement “adornment is Joy”. If there is a movement that exemplifies that maxim it is the art wear movement documented in the Obiko Artwear Archive. I will share images of 13 of the 26 designers who are featured in this archive.

Kaisik Wong was an early collaborator with Sandra Sakata to establish the boutique Obiko: His aesthetic was essential to the Obiko look. Kaisik’s work was part chinoiserie, but also evoked Erte, Poiret, and surrealism. In fact Kaisik collaborated with Dali in 1974 in establishing his museum, and was commissioned to create a costume for Dali.

In 2002 Cathy Horyn published a full page article in the NY times on the reproduction of this Kaisik Wong pieced vest by Ghesquiere at the house of Balenciaga. Apparently his assistant showed him a picture of the vest in the book Native Funk and Flash. Many professionals were interviewed and the general consensus was “so what”. To quote a copyright lawyer, Dr. Lessig, “we borrow and change... that’s the creative process” . Whether you believe this is an example of appropriation, inspiration or a rip-off...it is an on going question.

Various textile techniques were utilized by Obiko designers . Here are some noted in my presentation : Alex & Lee : jewelry using braiding, beads. Candace Kling : antique ribbon folding. Ina Kozel, who studied in Japan for several years : Roketsuzome. Later when her teacher and mentor saw her work, he said “this is a wonderful misunderstanding”. John Marshall : Katazome. Carter Smith : shibori/ tie and dye.

Ana Lisa Hedstrom : shibori. Marian Clayden : shibori. Tim Harding : slashed applique.

Jean Cacicedo : wool felted coats with reverse appliqué. Holly Badgley : painted coats.

KLee Manuel : painted feathers and leather. Janet Lipkin : machine knitting.

Richard Martin and Harold Koda wrote in their catalog for the Metropolitan show, Orientalism: “in giving primacy to the textile, eastern dress emphasizes the flat terrain of cloth, the looping and wrapping of the garment and the integrity of the untailored textile” . For many Obiko designers Max Tilke’s book, Costume Patterns and Design which depicted folk costume as flat pattern pieces rather than photos or drawings of garments as worn. Many of the designers, myself included , were not trained in sewing or tailoring. But the composition of rectangles, squares, and strips made clothing production seem possible. Many also embraced the surface design and craft of other cultures, both mastering and changing these traditions.

Is this movement neo-orientalism? I suggest that is a post modern movement as defined by the dictionary. “Post modernism uses complex forms, fantasy, and allusions to historic styles in contrast to austere forms & emphasis on utility...revival of historical elements and techniques”. There is much to inspire, explore, and document in the Art Wear Movement and we look forward to seeing new and expanded research in the future.