

The art of contemporary Jok textiles: The integration between craft and creative design”

ศิลปะการออกแบบผ้าจกร่วมสมัย“การผสมผสานระหว่างหัตถศิลป์และการออกแบบสร้างสรรค์” *

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยที่ผ่านกระบวนการสังเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้านการออกแบบและทดลองสร้างชิ้นงานจริงออกมาเชิงประจักษ์ซึ่งมีวัตถุประสงค์หลัก คือ การดำเนินการสานต่อและสร้างสรรค์ศิลปะการออกแบบผ้าจกร่วมสมัยที่แสดงความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างหัตถศิลป์และการออกแบบสร้างสรรค์ที่สื่อภาษาร่วมสมัย การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติใช้วิธีการเก็บข้อมูล คือ การจดบันทึก, การบันทึกเสียง, การสัมภาษณ์, การสังเกตการณ์, การถ่ายภาพ, การถ่ายวิดีโอ และจัดทำแบบสอบถาม เพื่อหาความหมายและการตีความขอบเขตของคำว่า “ศิลปะผ้าจกร่วมสมัย”

ความเจริญทางเทคโนโลยี ค่านิยมทางสังคม และสภาพเศรษฐกิจในปัจจุบันส่งผลให้ศิลปะผ้าจกร่วมสมัยเป็นมรดกทางหัตถศิลป์อันล้ำค่าของชาวไทยวนค่อย ๆ ลดบทบาทหน้าที่ลง จากวัตถุประสงค์ดั้งเดิมที่ทอผ้าเพื่อใช้ในครัวเรือนและพิธีกรรมทางศาสนาเป็นการทอผ้าเพื่อสร้างรายได้เสริมในครัวเรือน ดังเช่น โครงการหนึ่งตำบลหนึ่งผลิตภัณฑ์ (OTOP) ซึ่งเป็นนโยบายทางวัฒนธรรมของภาครัฐที่สนับสนุนให้เกิดการสร้างรายได้ในชุมชน โดยการพัฒนางานผ้าทอมือในระดับครัวเรือนขยายสู่การผลิตเชิงพาณิชย์แต่จากข้อจำกัดด้านการขาดแคลนช่างทอผ้าฝีมือดี และด้านวัสดุอุปกรณ์ในการทอผ้าตลอดจนความไม่เข้าใจในคุณค่าและอัตลักษณ์ของตนเองส่งผลให้ผ้าทอพื้นเมืองในปัจจุบันนั้นขาดเอกลักษณ์ และขณะเดียวกันยังละเลยในรายละเอียด ขาดความประณีต จึงทำให้คุณค่าทางสุนทรีย์ในงานหัตถศิลป์ลดน้อยลง สมมุติฐานของการวิจัยนี้ คือ การนำเสนอแนวคิดใหม่ในการออกแบบผ้าจกร่วมสมัยและการสร้างสรรค์รูปลักษณ์ใหม่ของศิลปะการออกแบบสิ่งทอให้เกิดการยอมรับในสังคมปัจจุบัน ตลอดจนการส่งออกซึ่งภาพลักษณ์ใหม่ของศิลปะผ้าจกร่วมสมัยที่แสดงความเป็นสากลและสอดคล้องกับกระแสโลกาภิวัตน์ โดยบูรณาการแนวคิดผ่านรูปทรงทางศิลปะภายใต้แรงบันดาลใจจาก “The beauty of Imperfection and the Flow” ซึ่งผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่านอกจากการปฏิบัติแนวคิดในการออกแบบผ้าจกร่วมสมัยแล้ว “ก๊” ทอผ้าแนวตั้งที่ประดิษฐ์ขึ้นมาใหม่เป็นตัวแปรสำคัญที่ทำให้เกิดการสร้างสรรค์โครงสร้างผ้าทอแบบใหม่ ๆ ขึ้น ซึ่งสิ่งเหล่านี้ผู้วิจัยคิดว่าน่าจะเป็นประโยชน์ในกลุ่มคนสร้างสรรค์ที่ตระหนักถึงคุณค่าทางศิลปะ เช่น นักออกแบบ ศิลปิน นักสะสมงานศิลปะ และยังเป็นการจุดประกายหรือเป็นแรงบันดาลใจในการต่อยอดทางความคิดในการออกแบบงานในลักษณะอื่น ๆ ต่อไป

คำสำคัญ 1. ผ้าจกร่วมสมัย 2. ไทย-ยวน 3. การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติ 4. อัตลักษณ์ 5. ก๊ทอผ้าแนวตั้ง

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Abstract

This study was undertaken by means of data synthesis and empirical experiment. The main objective of this study is to sustain and create Jok textile art through new perspectives that represent a relationship between traditional crafts and contemporary design. This study is a Practice based Research combined with Applied Research. In this study, note taking, tape recording, interviewing, observing, photographing, video recording and questionnaire surveying were applied to primarily identify the concept of “Contemporary Jok Textile”.

Nowadays, Technological advancements, social value and economic change impacts on Jok textile regarded as invaluable heritage of Tai Yuan. That is, the role of Jok textile is continually decreasing. In the past, people wove Jok textile for household and religious uses. Recently, in contrast, the purpose of weaving Jok textile has shifted from weaving for domestic use to weaving for sale. For instance, the government established a One Tambon One Product (OTOP) Project to commercially develop Jok textile weaving, enabling people to gain more income. However, the development cannot reach to the fullest because it is encountering several shortcomings such as a lack of professional weavers, a lack of various materials and weaving equipment and a lack of comprehensive understanding on its own identity. These result in not be able to make local textiles unique and decreasing their aesthetic values.

The hypotheses of this study were to present new perspectives of contemporary Jok textile design, to create new Jok motifs and promulgate them to the public and to present new image of contemporary Jok textile which is more international and suitable for current trends. This study is a combination of unconventional concepts and Art form inspired by “The beauty of Imperfection and the Flow”. The findings of the study revealed that the alternative weaving tool or the “Vertical Floor Loom” invented by the researcher was the significant factor which enabled weavers to create new and attractive woven textile structures. The researcher believes that this research study will be useful for creative people who place great importance on the value of art work such as artists, interior designers and contemporary art collectors and be great inspiration for the development of Jok textile in the future.

Keywords 1. contemporary Jok textile 2. Tai Yuan 3. Practice based research 4. Identity
5. Vertical floor loom

Introduction

Belief, tradition and culture have been drastically influenced the role of hand-woven textiles in Thai society. However, the recent change of technology and attitudes has decreased that role. Somporn,Udom (1987) mentioned that “With the onslaught of modernization, the art of Jok or Chok textile was almost lost in the Tai Yuan life style”, meaning that the role and the uses of hand-woven textiles were completely changed. That is, in the past the purposes of weaving textiles were to worship holy spirits, to give to their lovers or to spare good deeds for their next lives. In the present, however, traditional textiles are woven for sale or to earn extra income. The researcher found that a lack of specialists and a lack of materials and weaving tools are main limitations among people in weaving traditional Jok textile. Weaver’s still use traditional Jok technique which is passed on from generation to generation for weaving Jok textile along with applied Jok technique. They design new Jok motif by making it simpler or less complex which sometimes decreases its beauty. Moreover, synthetic materials are mainly used instead of natural ones. The beauty of Jok motif is a unique of Jok textile which must not be overlooked.

The objectives of this research are to present the values of Jok textile art, to promote hand-woven textiles to be on a same level with the Fine Art exhibited in the museum and to maintain Jok textile weaving through the use of the contemporary and international concept. The beauty of Imperfection and the Flow was the inspiration of Jok textile design in this study. Discontinuous supplementary weft technique combined with double weave Jok technique was used. Besides, this study aims to increase understanding among new generation about local wisdom of Jok textile inherited from their ancestors as well as to promulgate new image of Jok textile to the public in both national and international level.

Modern weaving machines in textile industry can create textile motifs closely similar to the ones woven by hands. Only specialists can justify which textile is produced by machines or by hands. Furthermore, the costs of Jok textile woven by machines are not expensive. Sittichai Samarnachart. (2001) pointed out that “At the present, industrial sectors have played an important role in economic status. The development of traditional Jok textile into industrial system has been encouraged. New techniques and innovative production are introduced and this led to concern of quantity control.”

Hand-woven textiles are continually produced in the areas that people put their effort to maintain traditional crafts. These areas include Tambon Kubua in Ratchaburi, Long District in Prae and Mae Jam Sub-District in Chiang Mai. The researcher noticed that traditional Jok technique sometimes lacks relation and aesthetic value. For the case study of the Tai-

Yuan in Ratchaburi and Saraburi provinces, the researcher found that the patterns and colors used in some traditional design of Phaa Tin Chok are disappearing. (Sittichai Samarnachart, 2001).

The researcher have realized the importance of Tai crafts and intended to promote the significance of Jok textile to be on a same level with Fine Art. Therefore, the researcher selected Practice based Research which is widely undertook in a field of art and design as a research methodology. The Jok textile prototypes were produced based on the synthesized data including problems and shortcomings encountering while conducting the experiments. The results of this study will provide guidelines which can be further developed in the field of contemporary Jok textile production and demonstrate a thinking model which can be applied for commercial purposes and can be useful for interior designers, art collectors or contemporary crafts lovers. More specifically, this research study aims to sustainably develop body of knowledge by means of integrating both left and right brain, combining imagination, purposes and causes and results, using abstract and concrete, applying preserving and improving concept and employing research with creativity. Preecha Taothong, (2011) To revive the role of Jok textile art in the field of Applied Art evoked the researcher to form hypothesis that Jok textile art will become widely known in intentional and can finally be the pride of Tai-Yuan. The identity and culture of each ethnic group are a selling point and a core theme in creating art. It can easily create favorable in terms of the exotic. On the other hand exotic becomes the basis condition to be use and d exhibited as a contemporary art from non western artist. As they have become part of the fixed formula in presentations as seen wide spread at the present moment. Wantanee Siripattananuntakul. (2012). “Artist, art and culture : reproduction and go inter.” **Veridian E-Journal**, Vol.5, No3(September-December) : 71.

Aim of the research

- 1) To maintain and create the art of Jok textile which represents contemporary Fine Art appearance.
- 2) To present new perspectives illustrating a relationship between the traditional crafts and the contemporary and international design under the concept of “The beauty of Imperfection and the Flow”.
- 3) To identify the aesthetic values and new image of contemporary hand-woven textiles as well as tactile values of colors, textures, structures and patterns along with materials and present them in the field of Textiles in the domestic environment.

Hypothesis of the research

- 1) To be able to sustainably maintain traditional Jok textile art in Thai society.
- 2) To develop contemporary Jok textile and make them widely known among young generation as well as to broaden outlooks for Thai textiles.
- 3) The new image of Jok textile and Vertical Floor Loom invented in this study can be further developed so that they can be more efficient and useful in the field of arts and crafts in the future.

Scope of the research

1) The researcher investigated history and the identity of traditional Jok textile from several historical sources and information obtained from Field Research in the areas where Jok technique is still woven such as Ratchaburi, Sukhothai, Prae and Chiang Mai province. The researcher interviewed specialists and collected data from the museums and historical sites. Tape recording and photographing were also done to collect primary data.

2) Questionnaires were distributed to visitors who visited the exhibition to primarily identify the concept of “Contemporary Jok Textile”. Four pieces of Jok woven textile were presented. Variables were the differences of motifs and materials used.

3) Three pieces of contemporary Jok textile art were woven and presented to the public through the exhibition. Besides, the researcher invited specialists to share their ideas and suggestions about the designed Jok textile.

Research Methodology

This study is a Practice based Research which gains new knowledge by means of practice. “The Practice based Research provides original outcomes or increases existing knowledge in a particular field.” (Preecha Taothong, (2011), Seminar handout, How to write a Creative Journal, Silpakorn University, Bangkok). This research placed great emphasis on interpreting aesthetic values and identity of contemporary Jok textile art. To analyze and interpret the concept of “Contemporary Jok textile”, the researcher set up the questionnaires to gather information from visitors who visited the exhibition. After that, the responses from the questionnaires were analyzed based on the theory of visual design and primary data gathered from theoretical research conducted by artists and designers. Additionally, the researcher included a study of the development of traditional Jok textile through contemporary uses.

The researcher impressed by the Jok motifs on the border of Tai Yuan tube’s skirts. The motifs seem to occur as a result of the errors while weaving. This discontinuousness

occurs because weavers use different color shades of threads, leave inconsistent spaces or sew small pieces of fabric on the border's waist of tube skirts. Trial and error is an essential method for creating contemporary Jok textile art. Therefore, this research combined Art Form which means seeing beauty through discontinuousness of traditional Jok textile with asymmetry of design and motif to create alternative Jok textile art. The researcher particularly admired beauty occurring from errors as beauty of abstract shape. As a result, this became a great inspiration and a thinking model that used to create contemporary Jok textile representing relationship among discontinuousness, beauty and perfection.

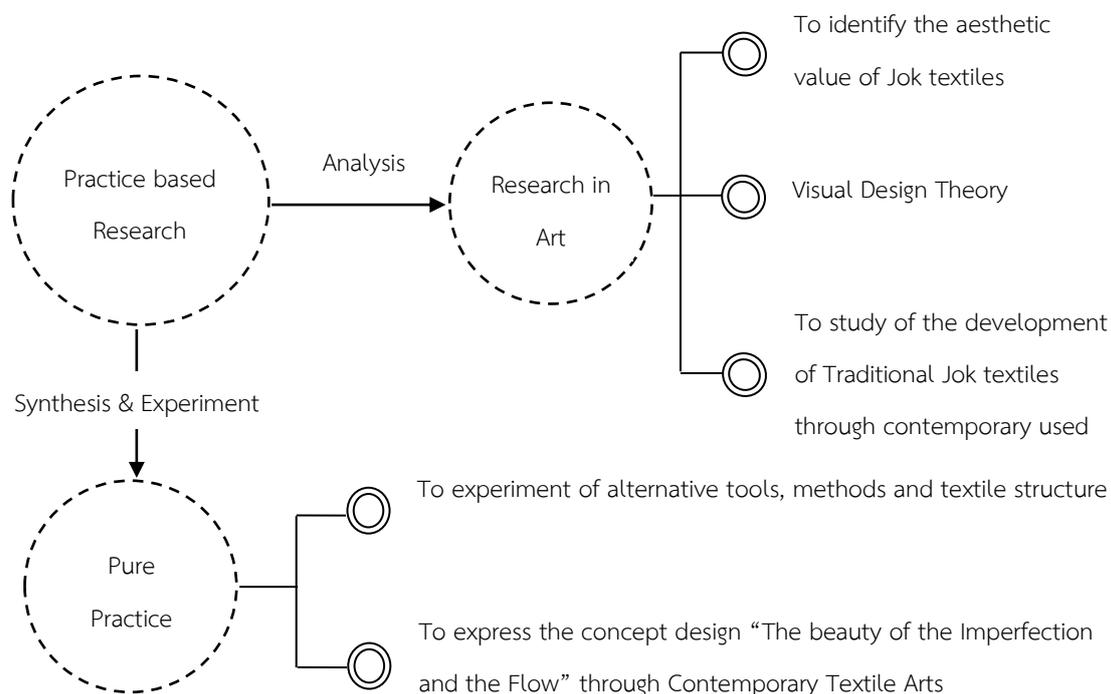


Figure 1: A diagram of the mythology of the research

Moreover, using different materials and inventing Vertical Floor Loom to fit double weave discontinuous supplementary weft were significant factors for this study. The Vertical Floor Loom was specifically designed to serve the purposes of this research study.

Methods

Since this study is a Practice based Research, sample Jok textile were produced and developed to prove the hypotheses on contemporary Jok textile art. The researcher divided the experiment into three sections including the experiment on pattern design, on material selection and on Jok textile structures. The researcher combined both new and traditional Jok designs to create some prototype textiles. Both natural and synthetic materials were used. The

Jok technique using two shafts weave and four shaft weave were applied. It was found while carrying out the experiments that if double weave Jok technique was used with width fabrics, the patterns could not be seen while weaving. As a result, the researcher invented a special loom (double faces vertical floor loom) to solve this problem so that the study could be carried on continuously.

The information about traditional Jok motif was synthesized based on design process. For instance, the rearrangement of traditional motif and using mirror image placement and asymmetrical balance are used. Moreover, computer program as Photoshop is useful tool to create contemporary Jok textile design. The integration between art and design knowledge and cultural value cause a guideline to create design tool. (Tanitr Thitikulpirom. (2010). “The creation of Mud mee Pattern the use of by Graphic-Based Device.” **Veridian E-Journal SU**, Vol.4, No1(May-August): 132. The exhibition was organized to display Jok textile models on the wall so that the concept of contemporary Jok textile art was identified by visitors put a mark into the box underneath. The models or sample textile pieces were displayed effectively to persuade visitor participate.

The outcomes from this part were synthesized based on research methodology of arts resulting in having new image of contemporary Jok textile art. Furthermore, the researcher intended to find factors which played significant role on the differences of sizes and proportions of traditional Jok patterns. The last section was to create three prototype pieces of hand-woven textiles representing contemporary design by using double weave Jok technique. (Figure 20,22,24)

Analysis results

The researcher was inspired by the traditional Jok motifs on the border of Tai Yuan’s tube skirt. The researcher noticed that they are imperfect motifs and unconventional designs. The researcher was interested in carrying out the research study to investigate factors that enable weavers to create these patterns. The factors are discussed as follows.

1) Experiment

Basically, a rough sketch of work is the first stage of designing. In contrast, in a field of hand-woven textiles, patterns were generally passed on through practicing and memorizing and were not drawn or written. Jok weaving technique is independent. That is, weavers are not limited and can freely create their own patterns. In this study, weavers created patterns by using several color shades of threads, used color schemes with different volumes and create irregular rhythm when weaving based on their imagination.(Figure 7,8,9,10,11,13)

2) Error / Damage

Traditionally, weavers often used natural materials to dye threads. Sometimes, they could not maintain the same colors. This depends on many factors such as quality of materials as well as internal factors such as dyeing process, temperature control or environmental effect. Besides, insufficient threads while weaving require weavers to replace threads with different colors. (Fig.13) A trace of being destroyed from the environment and storage of the old woven textiles are both hidden attractive image and beauty that can bring creative contemporary ideas. (Fig.12)

3) Intention

The researcher found during field research that weavers in Bann Had-Seaw, Sukhothai province create several Jok motifs on the same border of tube skirt because they would like to record, maintain and conserve their own motifs. These motifs are discontinuous and intentionally separated (Fig.14). Analysis results from the experiment samples of Jok textiles are classified into motifs, texture and textile structure as follow.

The 1st experiment: The researcher designed new Jok motif and used natural materials such as raw cotton no. 10/2, woven on plain weave structure and using 4 shaft table loom.

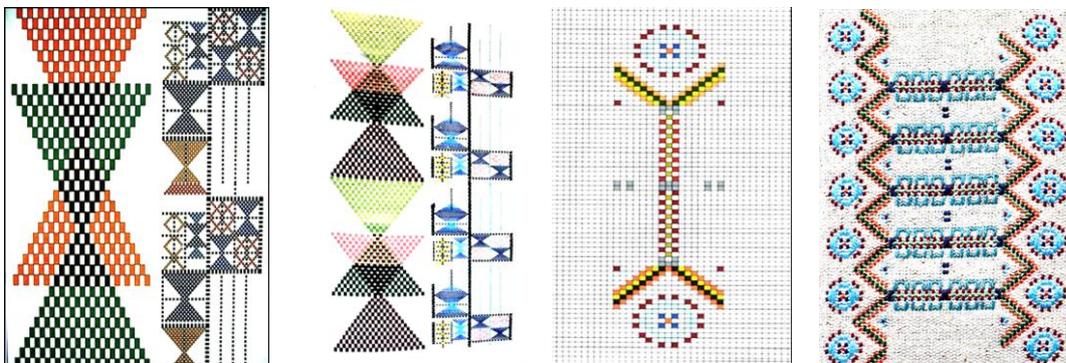


Figure 2: Using Word document program to design new Jok motif. The new Jok motif is then woven on plain weave structure.

Motifs	The motif drafting is drawn on graph paper, using word document program. The proportion and size of Jok motif after woven are similar to the one primarily designed. Jok motif is outstanding when woven on plain weave.
Texture	The textile's texture is thick and stiff but having soft touch.
Textile structures	Textile samples are woven by using plain weave with two shaft, using reed no.50

Figure 6: The Analysis of the results from the 1st experiment.

The 2nd experiment: The researcher designed new motif and used natural material such as finishing cotton or Mercerized cotton no. 20/2, woven on Waffle Variation weave structure and using reed no. 50 and woven on table loom.

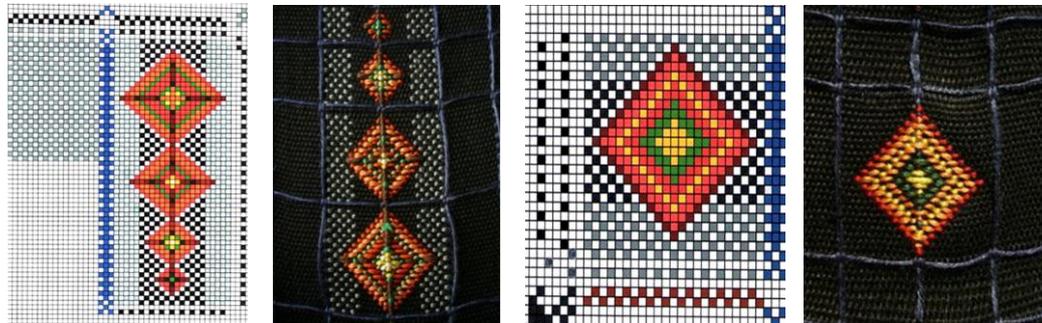


Figure 3: New Jok motif (Dok Khem) with four shafts weave (Waffle weave)

Motifs	The new designs are simplified and drawn on graph paper by using word document. The size of Jok motif is gradually descended that presents of dimensional in motion. Jok motifs are calculated before being applied on to Waffle weave structure.
Texture	The textile texture is durable, soft and sleek with good weight.
Textile structures	The combinations of Waffle weave structure and Jok technique create impressive contemporary Jok textile aspect.

Figure 8: The analysis of the results of the 2nd experiment

The 3rd experiment: The researcher designed new Jok motif and used natural material such as cotton with treatment or so called mercerized cotton combined with synthetic materials (Antara) woven on plain weave. Several colors of warps and different paces are applied, using table loom.

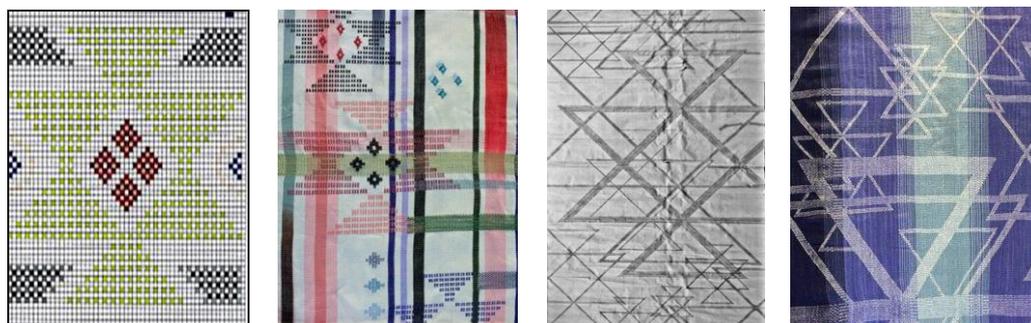


Figure 9: New Jok motif (Dok Chan) woven on plain weave, using several colors of warps.

Motifs	The motif drafting is drawn on graph paper by using word document. The proportion of the motif is depending on the size of supplementary yarns. Mercerized cotton yarn has a soft and loose quality; therefore, the motifs are stretched up or squeezed down when applied with Antara yarn that has unique quality as plate, thin and stretchy.
Texture	The textile structure is soft and durable with good weight. Using dyed mercerized cotton no. 20/4.
Textile structures	Two shafts weave with plain weave structure, using reed no.50

Figure 4: The analysis of the results from the 3rd experiment

The 4th experiment: The traditional Jok motif as Nhak and new Jok motif are woven on 2 shaft table loom (plain weave) with reed no. 50 and no.70. Both natural as cotton mercerize and synthetic materials as Antara and metallic yarn are applied.



11

12

13

14

Figure 11 : Nhak motif, cotton and cotton Mercerized, chemical dyed, Reed no. 50.

Figure 12 : Nhak motif, metallic and Antara, Reed no. 70.

Figure 13 : New Dok Chan motif, cotton cotton Mercerized, chemical dyed, Reed no. 50

Figure 14 : Applied Dok Chan motif, Metallic and Antara thread, reed no. 70.

Motifs	The different size of yarns and materials of use as well as textiles structure are the key factor that effect to design aspect. The Jok motif appears clearly due to the sophisticate method of weaving.
Texture	The textile texture that is woven from mercerized cotton gains softer touch and more durable compared to rough metallic yarn. To insert supplementary weft yarns by tie around every ends can achieve relief or tactile surface.
Textile structures	Textile structure from mercerize cotton yarn is looser than textile structure from metallic yarn, using reed no.70 (Fig.12,14) is stronger and more density structure than woven textile using reed no. 50 (Fig.11,13)

Figure 5: The analysis of results of the 4th experiment

The 5th experiment: The last experiment was aiming to create new Jok patterns from previous errors. The Jok patterns were created under the concept of “The beauty of the imperfection and the Flow”. Materials of use are Antara and Natural dyed silk 150/200D, Twisted 340, Reed no. 50. and using table loom. Double weave Jok structure is experimented but it was not practical because weavers could not see Jok patterns on the other layer while weaving. As consequently, the researcher invented a special loom to solve this problem.



Figure 6: Double Weave Vertical Floor Loom, Red wood, size: 82 x75x152 cm.

The sources of inspiration in the 5th.experiment come from the traditional Jok motifs on the border of Tai Yuan’s tube skirts. The disorder or unconventional design inspired to the concept of the beauty that disguise in the error Jok patterns. The outlines or silhouette contour lines appear on the different colour values are met to creates abstract shapes.



Figure 9,12: Jok motif of Tai Yuan's tube skirt, Ratchaburi, 1997

Figure 7,8,10,11,13: Jok motif of Tai Yuan's tube skirt, Ratchaburi (Manee Sookkasem)

Figure 14: Jok motif of Tai Phuan's tube skirt, Sukhothai, 2010 (Sathorn Soratprasopsanti)

Title: "The beauty of the imperfection and the flow no. 1"



Figure 15: Sketch design of layer A and B, printed on Vinyl sheet, technique: Ink Jet

Figure 16: The 4 shaft double weave Jok technique, layer A(L) and B(R) Materials: Silk 130/150 D 370 twisted and Antara, Reed no. 50, Woven on double weave vertical floor loom

Title: “The beauty of the imperfection and the flow no. II”

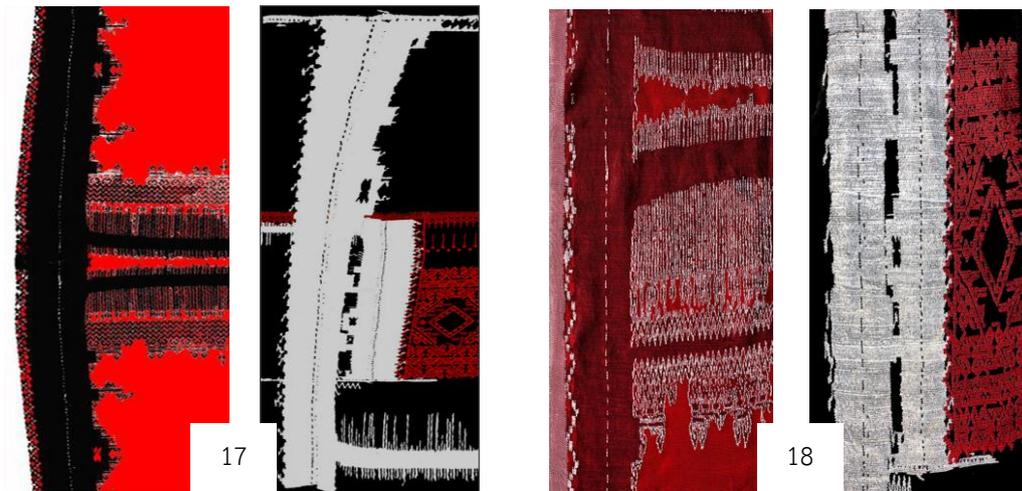


Figure 17: Sketch design of layer A and B, printed on Vinyl sheet, technique: Ink Jet

Figure 18: The 4 shafts double weave Jok technique, layer A(L) and layer B (R), Material: Metallic thread, Antara and Natural dyed silk 150/200D, 340 twisted, Reed no. 50, Woven on double weave vertical floor loom.

Title: “The beauty of the imperfection and the flow no. III”



Figure 19: Sketch design of layer A and B, printed on Vinyl sheet, technique: Ink Jet

Figure 20: The Woven textile with 4 shafts double weave Jok technique (Left: layer A and Right: layer B) Material: Antara and Natural dyed silk 150/200D, Twisted 340, Reed no. 50, Woven on double weave vertical floor loom.

Motifs	The design theory as asymmetrical balance can be applied for Jok textiles. As a result from the 1 st . to 3 rd .experiment, new Jok motifs have been improved to find alternative designs. To achieve the unity of design double weave Jok textile requires the balance of motifs in both layers.
Texture / Surface	The high quality of twisted threads creates soft touch textile with sparking and slippery quality. It is outstanding texture is a combination of natural and synthetic thread as Antara thread. The conflict between matt and shiny surface creates puzzle dimension.
Textile structures	The use of four shaft double weave structure with Jok technique achieves by appropriate tool, therefore the invention of vertical floor loom is a benefit for this experiment. Both seams of woven textiles are connected by double weave method.

Figure 25: The summary from the 5th . Experiments

Research Tools

1. Questionnaires are used with visitors and textile experts who visited the exhibition to identify the concept of “Contemporary Jok Textile”.
2. Vertical Floor Loom is invented by the researcher to fit double weave Jok technique.

Research outcome

1. To have comprehensive understanding and put more emphasis on Jok textile art rather than producing Jok textile for commercial purpose.
2. To promote the art of contemporary Jok textile to become widely known in the field of contemporary textile design in national level and to represent its identity creatively.
3. To be great inspiration for textile designers, interior designers or creative people to further develop their own work based on the outcomes of this study.

Conclusion

It was found from this study that the change of designs and weaving methods of Jok textile as well as new materials that fits current attitudes and trends can successfully integrate local wisdom into creativity. This is regarded as the identification of Contemporary Jok textiles.

The art of contemporary Jok textile should be promulgated to the public so that it can reflect new perspectives of the integration of craft and creativity. Pertaining traditional

weaving methods and patterns should go hand in hand with using new materials and alternative weaving tools so that weavers can unlimitedly create unique and international Jok patterns that well serve young generation's needs.

The aim of inventing Vertical Floor Loom was to support Jok or Discontinuous supplementary weft technique which cannot use with ordinary local loom. The results of this study showed that this Vertical Floor Loom can perfectly weave double weave Jok technique and can be used with other type of weaving technique such as Tapestry weaves.

Suggestion

1. Size and proportion of Vertical Floor Loom should be adjusted to fit several weaving methods.
2. The contemporary Jok textile created in this study can be applied for commercial purposes but there should be reduction of some parts, details of pattern designs and processes of weaving.
3. Comprehensive understanding of contemporary textile design and awareness rising on the value of Jok textile should be preceded when dealing with interior design. Additionally, proper installation and cleanliness are essential.

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