

## The Aesthetics Qualities Of Fibre Art In Interior Design

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on the artistic and aesthetic qualities of fibre art and its design. The aim is to explore and understand the definition of fibre art, its history, materials and techniques used, vocabularies, and the designers who offer a strong background to understand how the manner of weaving, material selection, and the formation of two- and three-dimensional artefacts can work together to solve the problems of interior spatial design. It begins with analysing the functional and aesthetic elements of fibre. This portrays and explain the various techniques of fibre art as well as applied practical and technical studies of the aesthetic properties of materials we're using. It then continues to consider the problem of artists and designers by focusing on all the principles and elements that are required in creating art forms of fibre art & design. This research study began, as all research should, with a lot of self-interest, curiosity and a desire to better understand all of the practical possibilities for the use of fibre art in our daily lives. It started when, as a practising interior designer, I became overly fascinated with the surface character of my medium that is fibre. All the interior designers are well familiar with the aesthetic properties of their textile materials and of the forms that they create using this medium i.e. fibre art. Amazing as it is, however, the practice of hand tuft crafts of fibre art itself – is also very confusing. At least it was to me, as I began to study it more firmly and objectively about fibres, their sources for extraction, the creation of fibre crafts, and, lastly, the utilitarian approach to use fibre art in our daily lives.

Keyword: Aesthetic, artists, crafts, fibre art, interior design, techniques.

## INTRODUCTION

Fibre art is often considered as a mere form of art, showcasing a purely aesthetic function, improving the quality of experience in our daily lives. Fibre art is both a new and an old art form that artisans are using for more than a decade. The purpose of using fibrous materials like wool, natural silk, cotton etc. as a medium for craftworks is not new; weaving, knitting, dyeing, printing, and otherwise treated materials become evident in the history of mankind. (Henning, 1977) <sup>1</sup>. As an interior designer, I focused more on the techniques of hand-tufting, exploring this method in various types of materials in order to create artefacts such as wall hangings, curtains and carpets as well as three-dimensional sculptural forms that can be viewed from all sides together. Because of my experience as an Interior designer, I began to see this in the context of an opportunity to combine applied utilitarian functions with aesthetic poetic functions.

To understand the artistic phenomenon surrounding fibre art is possible only if we observe its evolution during a certain period of time, from modernism to postmodernism, keeping in mind that art, through its forms of expression, becomes more evolutionary between art and applied science, which encompasses knowledge of different fields, which neither designer nor the public is capable of handling. Due to their diverse and riveting qualities, fabric artefacts got recognition in several parts of the world, and the technique used in hand tuft is finding wider application. Renowned International designers, furniture workshops, and well-known home furnishing stores: all have shown an increasing interest in fibre artefacts.

Modern art faces more challenges than its own independent space, constrained by typical artistic creation, where technical and cultural dimensions are challenged, followed either by an ornamental or utilitarian function. The artists who use fibre as their medium of art often prefer the aesthetic function of art form over a utilitarian need. Rutherford's statement (1989) about fibre art and designs: principles of unity, balance, rhythm, and the elements of colour, line, texture, shape and form, provide a concrete foundation for artistic creations; these are the basic elements and principles of art which an artist use to create a form<sup>3</sup>.

Through basic elements and principles of design, we get to know about the diversity with which this artistic genre has created its own way in order to demarcate its own individuality within the traditional and artistic aspect. At present, we can easily make a difference between the following major categories: Fiber Art – wall-hanging or spatial art like a tapestry, wall-hanging panel, 3-D art installation, unique textile artefacts; wearable art or accessories pieces, textile design and textile miniatures. These are some directions where we can easily look upon the artistic features of Fiber Art, art forms such as 2- and 3-D art installations, wall coverings etc. Fibre art becomes an art of contemporary design when the intention of creating is more than just a pure aesthetic mean. In this context, the work of fibre art no longer exists as a segregated object but becomes an inclusive part of our environment, bracing and encouraging practical approaches in the lives of human beings.

Fibre artefacts have three main functions in a particular space. They provide good insulation – that is, they help to regulate such things as temperature, climate, the movement of air, and the quality of light and sound. They offer a degree of privacy and also work as an acoustic material that can be used in home theatre, auditoriums etc. And they provide a sense of aesthetic stimulation, joy, excitement, and even delight, affecting our sense of sight, hearing, and even touch, as the textures and surfaces of fabrics offer a wide perspective of aesthetic sensations. However, the use of fabrics in a space is very context-dependent.

### **Historical Background**

The term fibre art was introduced by Constantine and Larsen “to fill a void since there was no nomenclature to define the work being done in fibre since the 1920s” (Constantine, personal communication, 1990)<sup>6</sup>. Traditionally, fibre art appeared as just a mere aesthetic object. The term fibre art, often known as art fabric, was introduced to showcase new art design products in textiles and interiors after World War II. This article only deals with the fibre art developments since World War 2 and the challenges faced in describing that art.

When we look deeper into the history of fibre art and its origin, firstly it appeared in central America and some part

of Europe and then it outspread in the same territories as contemporary art. This is the particular period when fibre art got recognition as a global trend in a short span of time. The concept was contrived after World War I, in the America, and specified as a new trend of art in textile industry. The first initiative towards this art reformation took place in Central America in mid-1950's through art and craft workshops. During 50's, Lenore Tawney, together with Sheila Hicks, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Louise Bourgeois and other artists hustled to fill the void between art and craft<sup>2</sup>.

During the era of 1950, as artists and designers strike to understand the use of the fibre more objectively, various artisans in western countries like America, France, etc. experimented with the creation of form with fibre which can be used to hung on the wall or were created as a free-standing two or three-dimensional art installation. Fibre authors worked rigorously on the quality of the fabric they're using like linen, sisal, and cotton and then treated them accordingly in order to create a figurative piece of art<sup>4</sup>.

Artist Lenore Tawney, a former design student at the New Bauhaus college in Germany, was, in fact, the first person to create a 3-D art form with the use of fibre which was then included in the realm of sculpture and art installation. The 1961 exhibition held at the Staten Island Museum, where she participated was named as the event which introduced fibre art in the Latin countries and which helped this form of art to completely rule out the idea of just being a mere craft.<sup>7</sup>

The tradition of using textiles is a part of this world, and Fibre Art, the modern art, cannot be segregated, as it stands between the values of the past and the newest trends of the present. This relation illustrates a valuable encounter that has formed a concrete foundation for modern artists as well as designers, embracing their medium of creativity, knowing every positive and negative aspect of textile art, and which has come to be known as Fibre Art, in a few decades.

The postmodernist theory has been influencing various fibre works since the 1980s. The theory inspired art that addressed social issues such as gender, political activism, racism

and the idea of the role of the artist in society. Currently, various fibre artists are still working to redefine the use of art and craft in this modern era. Based on the tradition which saw tapestries moving from the floor into the space of the gallery as a free-standing 3-D abstract art installation and often geometric art pieces, many creative artists explore how fibre and its smallest element could be the base of abstract sculpture.

### **Materials & Techniques used in Fiber Art**

Nowadays, artists mix non-fibrous materials like metal, aluminium with thread, clay, paper; even wood has found its way into the artist's palette. The category of materials used in fabric creations is achieved primarily based on the difference between traditional, unconventional and experimental materials. Conventional materials are those whose properties are of natural or synthetic origin, which has been modified into textile fibre using different manufacturing processes.

These types of materials can be produced manually or industrially which afterwards can be transformed in the thread and adapted in artworks. It includes metallic fibres like copper, aluminium, steel etc, optical fibres and any other materials with certain techniques that can be used as a thread and can work as a substitution for textile fibres when used in applying classic textile techniques, thanks to the ingenuity of the creators.

Wool is the oldest, most common, and easiest material to use in hand tufting. In the past few years, linen has been increasingly utilized, but not as much as wool. Linen is more difficult to work than wool. Occasionally, both materials are used together to create a form of art that can be used as an abstract. There are many other fibres, besides wool and linen, for example, raw silk, chenille silk, which are suitable technically but are not utilized as much as wool. Trying to determine exactly when and with which event the hand-tuft technique originated is impossible and speculative. However, the history of the hand-tuft technique began with the fabrication of the modern hand-tuft Machine in the 1980s<sup>5</sup>.

The properties of thread materials rely completely on the properties of the fibre composing the thread: length, thickness and structure of thread, as well as their density,

have a great significance of the material's character and for creating a calming and dramatic experience— where length, thickness and strength of the fibre are important. In order to create fibre art, a variety of techniques are used. Some of these methods date back to the Stone Age. Although weaving is one of the oldest techniques, several no loom processes including twining, knotting, wrapping, stitching, and felting were also used in ancient times.

Hand tufting has been compared to pile weaving like rugs, carpets, etc. in terms of its appearance, and the visual impression is homogenous. Hand-tufted materials share a trait with pile weaves a front side with long thick standing threads that are either trimmed or uncut (loops). What sets them apart is the type of technical fabrication they use, which is aided by various tools. Pile weaves are made on horizontal looms, whereas hand-tufted fabrics are made on a vertical frame with a backing. Pile weaves are manufactured row by row, with the backing and fringe added at the same time. However, because hand-tufted work is created on a pre-existing backing, the entire surface can be worked on at once.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Fibre art has a rich tradition of form and expression in western culture, as well as many other cultures all over the world. Transforming fibre art into contemporary art of design that requires an artist to move into new territory, accompanied by appropriate study and a new method of inquiry that allows the integration of many factors in design solutions without sacrificing the expressive emotional force that makes fibre art beneficial in modern civilisation. It is important to have a sophisticated vision of research but it also requires a vision of harmony and emotional expression. The creative goal in fibre art, like in all art, is to explore new ideas, push boundaries, research a variety of raw materials and methods until a new world of fresh possibilities appears—an original art form for which there is no precedence. It is evident that fabric artworks have gained popularity all around the world. "While this art form may be in need of nomenclature, it demands and deserves autonomy," Constantine and Larsen (1986).

The central question was whether fibre art and design could be used as a practical utilitarian goal of improving aesthetic quality in interior spaces. The answer is yes, but only under

certain parameters. It takes more than creative vision and intuition to figure out what those qualities are. Fibre materials create a difference, according to the artist's perception and the engineer's common sense. Design, on the other hand, cannot neglect emotional expression without losing its human significance and relegating itself to just commercial and utilitarian concerns. In conclusion, the diversity of trends and styles in Fiber Art - an art form that is still evolving - comes from its ability to respond to any form. That's why more and more artists from different fields discover fibre and are more and more enticed to use it as an art form.

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