WHO ARE YOU?

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‘Who are you’ is a question to the reader, the writer itself and the spectators being a part of final installation. It’s not the matter of finding one’s own self only; this is to experience and question the existence of individuality in this era...
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Dear Reader,

It’s not the matter of finding one’s own self only; this is to experience and question the existence of individuality. The wording compiled in the form of reflective diary is neither an ordinary text nor a statement. Instead, it gives a clear idea of investigating the gender distinctiveness in this era of post modernism.

The twelve chapters reflect the invariable efforts of figuring out individual artistic skills, taking constant decisions and exploring three dimensional structures in knitting by producing art on industrial machines. The decisions have been based on research, exploration of materials, production, adding and developing of the initial concept.

The sculptural forms produced on a knitting machine reveal the existence of human body. The installation induces sensation, questions the sense of absence, though differentiating between the Male and Female identity. The work evokes the evolution of human life exposing the secret of unborn, the journey of gender origin. No doubt we are born with gender specific features, but still one is constrained to investigate the individuality.

The work also questions the human nature of looking at things ‘ways of seeing’. This intrigues the mind, how the work changes its meaning when it moves from one culture to another.

Hope you enjoy the journey!

Regards,
Who am I?

The story begins with the impediments around us. Why do we get affected with the comments of others in our lives? Well it seems to be harsh but it does make us stronger or weaker.

The choice is ours! Isn’t it?

Really!!!

But is it a dream or in real... I can’t believe the existence of myself and the challenges I am taking on my way.

‘It’s not an image I am seeking. It’s not an idea. It’s an emotion you want to recreate, an emotion of wanting, of giving, and of destroying.’ (Meyer-Thoss, 1992, p. 194)

What is going on?

It’s people around who make us realize the sense of absence. What is this sense of absence which exposes to unimaginable consequences with peculiar ramifications? How does it feel if one can’t reproduce? Is this the only reason the two genders are coupled together? Is it the same in different ethnic groups? I am compelled to explore the feeling women have if they can’t reproduce.

‘What do we expect our lives to be and what are the chances of those who don’t meet the standards?

What happens when we lose control?’ (Puranen, S., [Accessed 10 Oct 2009])

The journey starts with the optically convincing proof that there exists a life beyond. The world is full of freedom. We do have life beyond.

‘I never dream. I think though I am not sure, that my connection with the unconscious comes not through the dream but through real life.’ (Meyer-Thoss, 1992. p.122)
PAIN

BEAUTY

FEELING

GENDER

MATRIMONY

WOMB
This textile Installation brings together the abstraction of women organ of reproduction Womb. The white represent the color of wedding in Western world along with the knitted copper and brass showing festivity. The piece refers to the connotation of beginning of two genders coupled together for a certain reason using Womb as design element.

Does it make us think something? The pain the agony appears. The scars or the stitches seem to make the internal feeling more evident. Still the element of beauty is there. How can one compare the pain with beauty?

‘When you experience pain, you can withdraw and protect yourself. But the security of the lair can also be a trap.’ (Meyer-Thoss, 1992, p.122)
Why? Male and Female Identity!

The issue of Propagation, infertility questions women identity in relation to man. Feel the sensitivity of absence.

‘Oh yes, our body is being influenced by our life. And yet our body is more than the sum of its parts. We are after all more than the sum of our experiences. We are as malleable as wax. Descartes wrote about wax. We are sensitive to the souvenirs of what has happened before and apprehensive to what is going to happen after.’ (Storr, Herkenhoff, Schwartzman, 2003, p.20)

Is it about the external Persona? But there still remains a thought whether or not we are born with characteristic of being boy or girl or we do create our personality by the environment we live in. Although we are born with the gender specific features but one is constrained to investigate these distinctiveness.

‘Persona’ and the relation of unconscious mind to the body makes one think of Social Mask. The external persona is more about the social appearance and the environmental influences on individuals. Although according to Carl Jung’s school of psychology in every male you find an expression as a feminine inner personality called anima and as same in the unconscious of female it is expressed as a masculine inner personality called animus.

‘What we call the conscious need not be defined; it is the self same thing as the consciousness of philosophers and popular opinion /knowledge (consciousness=Bewusstsein*=knowledge of being). Everything else is for us the conscious. We are soon led to make an important division in this unconscious. Some process becomes conscious easily; they may then cease to be conscious, but can become conscious once more without any trouble: as people say, they can be reproduced or recalled. This reminds us that consciousness is in general an extremely fugitive condition. What is conscious is conscious only for a fleeting moment.’ (A. Rusu, 2008, p.22)

So the conscious does have a relation with unconscious in a direct or indirect way. Is this a dream or in real? The characteristic and influences on body do question the existence of human gender.

*awareness
Transformation of body with relation to textiles in space questions one’s own existence. There still remains a feeling of presence/absence. Every individual wear one’s identity and create communication between one another by using various means.

So we do have a strong expression and presence of human body in an abstract way in relation to the surroundings. The realistic body reference induces sensation, questions the sense of ambiguity as an artistic expression.

The body container sculptures by Movana Chen shows her exploration and focus on wearable art. She finds method to wear one’s identity and create communication between one another by using magazine papers as material for knitting. The structures, the technique and expression add strength to my thought process and procedure.

Adelle Lutz work is sensational creating a strong expression through body with pubes on costumes.

Claes Oldenburg installation reflects to the transformation of hard into soft. It does draw my attention because of the ambiguity in its shape referring to crucified figure, elephant truck or male genital...

Similarly Bourgeois work inspires and question the relation of female body with infant reflecting to the origin of human life.
MATERIAL

EXPERIMENT

FIBER

SKETCHING
My world is full of experiments.

‘Events have to be knitted together like a sweater. Everything is interconnected and develops as creative images emerge’. (Bernadac, 1996, p.41)

To make things happen physically, there begins a new venture.

What is the right material?

Pemotex and Stainless steel...

Why?

The selection of the material is based on the property of the fiber. Pemotex shrinks when expose to heat. Stainless steel gives strength and maintains the shape.

‘It shrinks when heat is applied and it is not reversible. When knitted together with heat emitting thread, you can control the shape (shrink) of the textile dynamically. Only downside is that it is not reversible.’ (Pemotex [Accessed 18th Oct 2010])

The material and the sketching on the knitting machine open up many directions.

Sketching is a form of diary for me. Using various material and ways of sketching generates apprehensions leading to a solution which best represent one’s thought.

What is considered mainly the external persona?

The method of documenting my own self appeared interesting. Posturing in different ways did reflect on my own thought of finding external persona, giving a clear perception of form and life size scale. Combining literal drawings with body outline visually evoked sense of abstraction and reality, presence and absence.

The process continues...
Sketching directly in material brings interesting shapes. The life size scale reference begin the journey of bodily like forms. The shapes are based on the concept of gender differentiation. Latex is applied to keep them in the shape and give it more of a skin feeling.

Along side the embroidery trials enhance the visual appearance. The hairy like texture does create sensation reflecting the human body.

Why adding embroideries?

The purpose was to create my own material library to have a reference of hairy like texture. The explorations were made on trying out various stitches with different yarns. The aim was to reflect and bring the essence of concept using embroidery as a method of expression.

What am I visualizing at the end?

Bodly like knitted forms and a hanging sack with nine soft sculptures inside. The sack is inspired by the female organ of reproduction womb. The nine soft sculptures are the development stages from fetus to infant. The soft sculptures are stiched together using fabrics with patterns. The patterns are composed using spermatozoon and egg cell as design elements. They are heat transfer on shear fabric to give more of flesh like feeling.
IDENTITY

EXISTENCE

HUMAN BODY

SENSATION

PRESENCE

ABSENCE
Why body like sculpture forms?

‘What you’ve written becomes visible, but I want more than that, I want the visible to become tangible.’ (Bernadac, 1996, p.15)

The knitted structures appeared more of a container or shell for me. While shaping I had the feeling of agitation which later appeared more of a sense of confusion visually. The process of taking off the structure after shaping was more of a method of taking off one’s own identity.

The sculpture with the body inside does question the existence.

Presence/ Absence
Form, Shape & Space...

What is the right context?

The regular way of putting the art works in white cube is interesting. But!

What is being communicated?

Is it for selected audience or it can be for public at large?

The context does matter. Even if its for public place or for the the selected audience in terms of Art lovers, the space does matter. It does change the meaning of the works as well.

The process of wearing the sculpture in a crowded Public space grabbed the attention. It makes one think about the existence of body and one’s own self. It does question...

WHO ARE YOU?

Why is it so? Is it because of the body with in the sculpture which makes one think about the life and reality?

I guess yes indeed. The interaction with the people in the Public space wearing the sculpture questions identity. It does reflect on the existence and origin of human life.
RETHINK

PERSONALITY

MALE

FEMALE

ABSENCE

KNITTING

AESTHETICS

PERSONAL ENCOUNTER
Stop! Rethink...

What am I doing?

It has been adventurous so far but, what am I looking for?

I am not seeking various facets of my personality. It’s more of looking into sense of absence, through differentiating between Male and Female Identity.

What is this sense of absence?

It’s the feeling originated from the conception of infertility in women from male perspective. The feeling the thought moves further into Male and Female identity, as women being the symbol of fertility in every culture. It does reflect on the journey of human life. It also questions whether or not we are born with the characteristic of being male of female or we do create these by the environment we live in.

‘The relation of one person to his surroundings is a continuing preoccupation. It can be casual or close, simple or involved, subtle or blunt. It can be painful or pleasant. Most of all it can be real or imaginary. This is the soil from which all my work grows. The problems of realization-technical, and even formal and aesthetics-are secondary; they come afterwards and can be resolved.’ (Meyer-Thoss, 1992, p.179)

The development of my work is mainly based on the body reference and knitting technique as an expression. Using human body brings aesthetic explorations along with the personal encounter. It does reflect on the conception of presence and absence.
KNITTED TEXTILES

PERSONAL

INTERPRETATION

PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE

IDENTITY
Wearing the knitted textiles is a physical experience. It originates thoughts of taking off one’s own identity. The presence of human body is more of a visual experience in the picture. But in real it’s more of the physical interaction with the knitted structure.

The one taken off the body represent the personal interpretation about the existence of human body.
What do the hanging bodies represent?

Him & Her!

The sculptures reveal the existence of human body. They do differentiate in terms of their structure and physical appearance.

What are they communicating?

With their appearance they represent the Gender differentiation. The form does reflect on the cultural, physical appearance of him being strong, stiffer and her similarly more of fragile revealing the element of sensitivity.
‘My body knows and is teaching me the dance of birth. Everyone was once swimming in their mother’s womb.’ (A. Rusu, 2008, p.54)

The piece evokes the evolution of human life starting from fetus to infant, the journey of Gender origin. The bodies juxtaposed together represent the various developmental stages of fetus. It does question the origin of gender and life in the womb.
My work grows from the duel between the isolated individual and shared awareness of the group. At first I made single figures without any freedom at all. Now I see my work as groups of objects relating to each other. But there is still the feeling with which I began- the drama of one among many. (Deborah, 1892, p.22)

So what is there at the end?

The four pieces together emphasize on the initial thought. Male Female Identity!

The origin of gender differentiation!!!

My?

Interpretation towards the whole concept through the body lying on the floor...

The work strongly relates to each other in terms of physical appearance and technique. They do create a dialogue in terms of their placement. The four pieces along reveals the existence of human body, questions the origin of gender and the secret of the unborn.

The journey of expressing the whole thought in physical work makes one think and reflects on the existence and origin of one’s own life.

The process continues...

I still can’t believe the existence of myself and the challenges I took on my way.

The challenges have varied in terms of material exploration, technique, space, installing works in physical, understanding and interacting with people of various cultures.

It does keep on changing?

But so far the final outcome is a result of invariable efforts of figuring out individual artistic skills, taking constant decisions and exploring three dimensional structures on knitting machine. The decisions have been based on the research, exploration of materials, production, adding and developing the initial concept.
The journey has been quite adventurous so far. The final installation along with the four pieces image 28.titled Him & Her, image 30.titled Secret of the unborn, image 27. Me, myself & Identity, reflects to the initial thought. As an artist I see the continuity of my work through the piece titled ‘Me, Myself & Identity’ right now.

I have always started with words or a strong source of inspiration something which actually makes me passionate to articulate or explore. The material and sources are all around us; we actually use and transform them. I think for me it’s the process, substances, techniques which later help to interpret ideas into inventive solutions. It’s more of an interdisciplinary approach so to me it’s more of a process oriented progression. I think the goals and aims are always there but they develop with exploration of situations.
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*Photo credits: M kamran and Zizi Zhu.*
Appendix 1.

ARCHETYPE

[Knitted structure coated with latex hand embroidered]

The external latex coating gives a skin like feel. The hair like texture embroidery communicates the essence of concept.

The shadows created by the play of light are a strong manifestation for the concept.
Appendix 2.

Technical explorations
Knitting explorations to find strength in structures

Saleem, F., 2010. [Exploring structures on knitting machine]

Saleem, F., 2010. [3D knitted structures]

Saleem, F., 2010. [Knitted structure with latex coating before and after]
The method of selection of sample was based on the strength of the structure. The coating of latex on the textile knitted surface added to the impotency.

The next step was to find the right measurements and shape for the real size archetype. The selection of shape was based on the delimitation* of the knitting machine making it simpler using my own body outline.

* With the use of stainless steel with Pemotex it’s hard to achieve realistic body shape. As for widening the needle easily breaks.

**Appendix 3.**

**Embroidery Explorations**

Embroidery has always been my strongest tool to enhance works as textile artist. Its combines traditional craft with modern technology fabrics. The explorations were made on trying out various stitches with different yarns. The aim was to reflect and bring the essence of my concept using embroidery as a method of expression.
Appendix 4

Exploring space in relation to art work
It’s not the matter of finding one’s own self only; this is to experience and question the existence of individuality in this era...