

THESIS

INTERSECTIONS

Submitted by

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Art Department

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Colorado State University

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY


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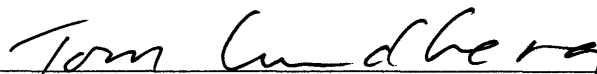
WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY JENNIFER L. McNAMARA ENTITLED INTERSECTIONS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS.

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### INTERSECTIONS

My work is an exploration of intersecting systems and dualities. These dualities conflict during the creation of each piece, a questioning resolved only at the conclusion of the work. These questions encompass common themes: the interaction between manmade systems and nature, light and darkness, strength and weakness, and the passage of time.

By weaving with materials that are more durable than their delicate appearance suggests, I can confront the passage of time and the inherent tensions within disintegration. I work with nylon monofilament, polypropylene, and wire because they embody these qualities and interact favorably with light. When woven, these materials often create a translucent curtain. The degree of translucency is determined by the compression of horizontal woven weft elements. This compression and opening of the weft reflect a sequence of time. The dense areas suggest moments of tension, compression, and stress while the open areas convey release. The surface of the weaving suggests a time line.

In the installation *Inner Sanctum* (Figure 1) the passing of time is apparent in the weft. The installation is composed of twenty columnar weavings in two rows, ten in front, ten behind. The capitals of the weavings are encased in flat aluminum, giving way to a gentle curve that ends in a circular release of warp

elements. Initially the color is very apparent in the palette created with polypropylene monofilament. As the viewer walks the length of the installation, rhythm and movement are created through a gradual opening of color giving way to transparent nylon monofilament. The color portion of the weavings appear transient, gradually fading. Movement is created by this disintegration of color as well as the kinetic quality of the materials.

Through my work I am attempting to create a feeling of the unseen, particularly the mysterious elements of nature alluded to in the visual experience of translucency. A Japanese artist working in nylon monofilament, Machiko Agano, relates her work to these elements, “I am constantly trying to understand how I relate to eternal elements such as wind, light, air, water, and earth.”<sup>1</sup> Nylon monofilament embodies the feeling of these elements. The material appears fragile, weighs little, and is kinetic. I create large-scale installations using this material because of these qualities. Moving through the spaces of an installation viewers create air currents that interact with the work and cause the individual elements to gently sway.

The scale of the installations I create are generally larger than the viewer, suspended, and three-dimensional. These works often refer to multiple column-like shapes, creating an environment reminiscent of ancient architecture. It is an environment that envelops, promoting a range of individual reactions. Enclosures promote safety, calm, and quietude, yet scale relationships and diffused light can

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Koumis, ed, Art Textiles of the World: Japan, (Winchester: Telos Art Publishing, 1997) 77.

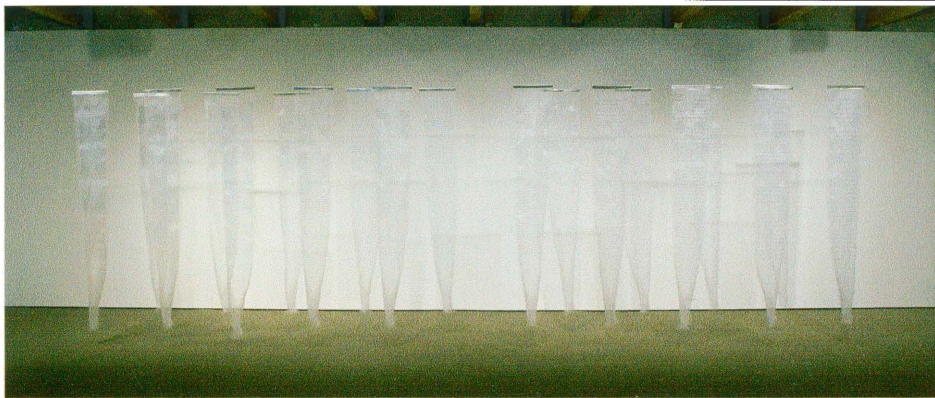
also evoke feelings of insignificance, iciness, and loneliness. This need to create an atmosphere of light and shadow inspired by the mysteries of nature, yet created with the repetition of architectural forms, is a recurring theme.

Column-like forms create volume in the installations. Using translucent materials, the forms activate the interior and exterior, appearing at once open and closed. Woven surfaces create active texture, apparent in shadow as altered grids. In the installation *And It All Fades* (Figure 2) the columns are formed by the loom-controlled technique of double weave. Using this technique I am able to create a three-dimensional, seamless column. In this piece the column appears in a vertical format. In *A Moment of Indecision* (Figure 3) the column has been flipped to its side, creating a side-opening through which the viewer can peer. The surface texture is smooth nylon monofilament and rough hemp, creating contrasts in texture and light. The hemp is variably spaced within the horizontal weft of each piece, again alluding to a rhythm, a passage of time. Within the center tube, dyed cheesecloth is inserted, adding a veil of translucency within the layers.

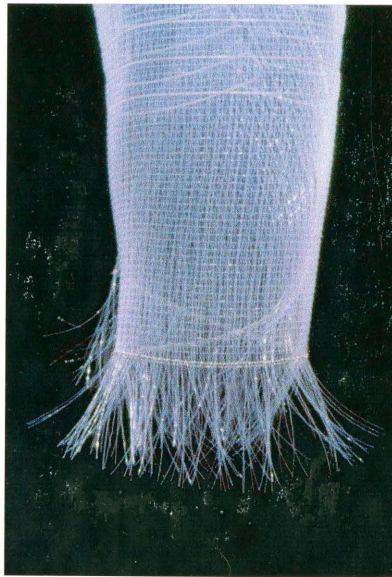
The environment in which a piece is shown is significant, interacting equally with the work through lighting, shadow, scale, and movement created from air flow. Each installation site lends a different feeling through lighting and environment. Natural light enhances the color in each piece, unnatural illumination creates greater contrast of light and shadow within the texture of the woven surface. The scale of the space can make the installation appear monumental or insignificant, creating an experience unique to each environment.

Despite the range of dualities within these works, all of them share certain traits. They all create rhythm, texture, interaction with light, and forms that reference natural gestures. Some of them are more indicative of architecture, using columnar forms, while others are completely organic. Questions of time, space, and environment are always present. The process of creating them is my reprieve, my peace. When working on a weaving I am lost in a rhythm. I am separate from all but what I am doing. The process of creation, for me, is an escape from the mundane responsibilities in my life. It is halting of time; all that is significant is the shooting of the shuttle, the noise of the beater packing the weft. There is a sense of resolution at the completion of each piece, a separation that occurs when I finish the physical work of creation. It is then that the piece begins its own journey, its passage of time.

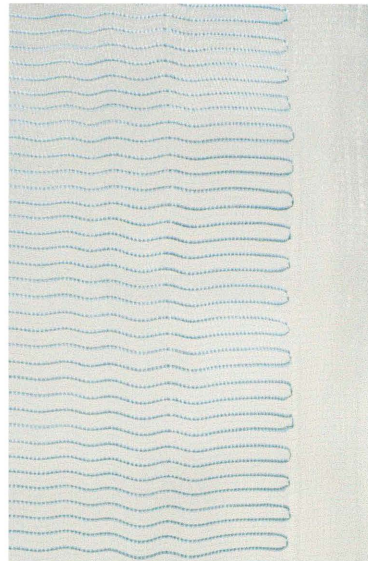
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**Figure 1**      *Inner Sanctum*  
Woven, nylon monofilament, polypropylene, coated copper wire,  
aluminum, 20 weavings, each 6'6''h x 15'w, 2004

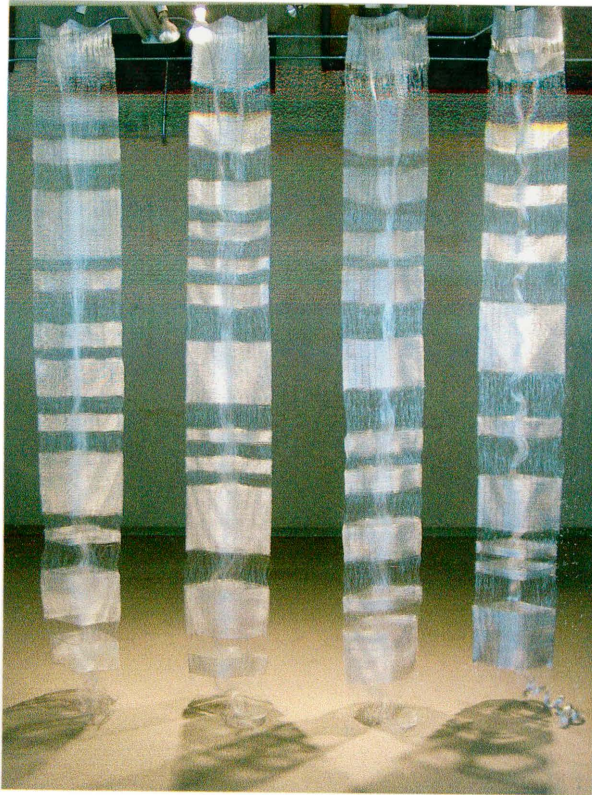


*Inner Sanctum*, detail



*Inner Sanctum*, detail

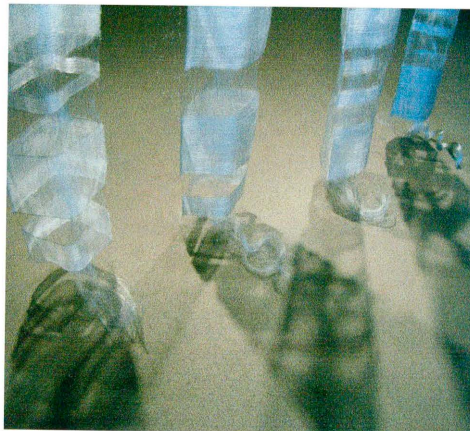




**Figure 2** *And It All Fades*  
Woven, nylon monofilament, polypropylene, coated copper wire,  
4 of 16 weavings, each 8'h x 14"w, 2005

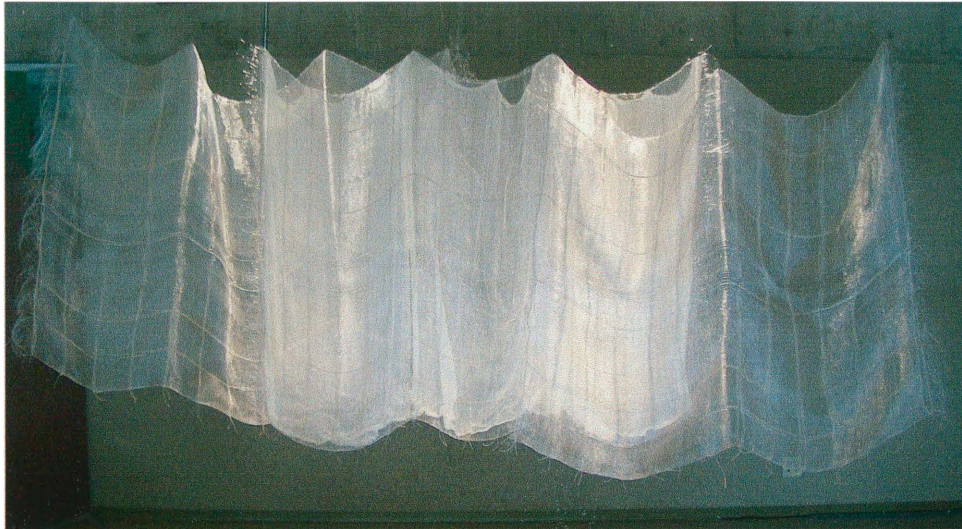


*And It All Fades*, detail

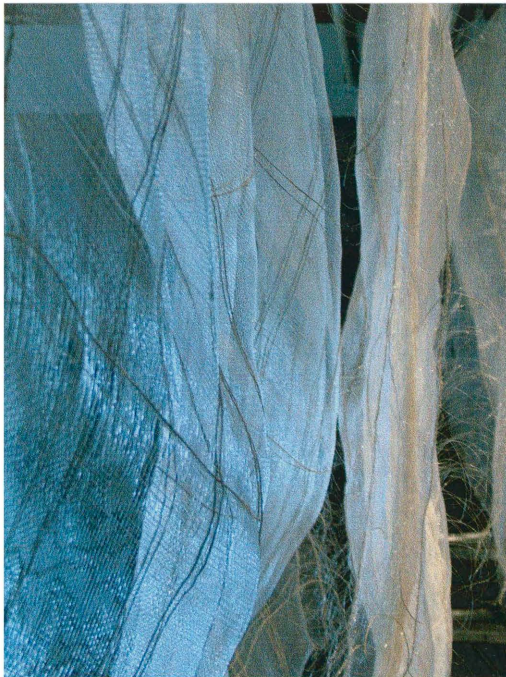


*And It All Fades*, detail





**Figure 3**      *A Moment of Indecision*  
Woven, nylon monofilament, hemp, cheesecloth  
3 weavings, 45”h x 10’w installed, 2005



*A Moment of Indecision, detail*



*A Moment of Indecision, detail*