

THESIS

FOUND, AND WANDERING LOST

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

Fort Collins, Colorado

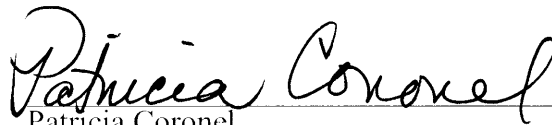
Fall 2008

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY KEVIN KISSELL ENTITLED FOUND, AND WANDERING LOST BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS.


Committee on Graduate Work




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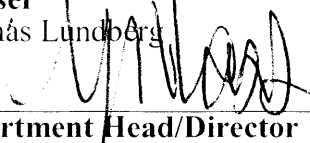
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS
FOUND AND WANDERING LOST

The making of art involves a progression from an unconscious idea to a culmination in the form of a tangible object. The unconscious idea begins in the artist's imagination. The final destination appears when the idea is given a physical presence in the form of an object. Each individual part of the object is ultimately connected to a larger part of a complex path. The crossing from the idea to the tangible object is perilous, because the artist is responsible for giving form to the dreams, images and thoughts in a convincing manner. I have searched to find an art form that allows me to process my dreams and transform my ideas into physical reality. With this work, the quest for that perfect match between artist and medium presented certain questions: "How can I utilize cloth to find my visual language? Could cloth carry my amorphic ideas to fulfillment?" I am interested in the process of giving life to imaginative ideas, watching as each piece of art comes to fruition through a series of disentangled challenges. Finally, my vision transpires through art.

The art of creating cloth allows me to accomplish those goals. Lightweight woven cloth is the ideal foundation on which to layer atmospheric bands of color. My large suspended weavings imply a sense of space. They are door-like in relation to the human form: the black framed edges create the impression of windows to an ether world of ideas and contemplation.

The internal dialogue of creativity is ever changing. Throughout the dyeing and weaving process, design decisions constantly occur. Decisions start as dreams or

glimpses of a new project, with details such as color relationships, spatial planes, and proportional elements. Ideas are sketched, collages formed, and research conducted, but along the way there are always barriers to traverse. However, when I find success in an idea, it seems like I am given something special, like a guide along the journey.

During the 1950s, a group of New York artists' were searching for a new visual language, a new way to think about art. In particular, Mark Rothko wanted his art to move beyond representation of objects on a canvas. He wanted to create a direct path of communication between his painting and viewers. His objective was to paint large canvasses with swathes of color that were as energetic as they were meditative. His goal was to reach a feeling of absolute zero, defined as an art that did not represent the familiar, and which had the power to stir viewers' souls. A transcendental dialogue between art and audience took place. I share these goals, and believe that our human connection to cloth deepens the sublime interaction between object and admirer, as cloth becomes the spectacle.

I have formed a bond with weaving that allows me to process my ideas into a physical object that conveys my visual language. Weaving is as ethereal and obscure, and as particular, as the process of moving an idea to the form of an art object. As an art form, weaving is numinous and tedious, as it transforms single yarns into a medium suitable for human interaction. It is as if two languages are being spoken simultaneously. Cloth is fluid yet solid, fleeting yet permanent, and vulnerable yet stoic. The process of cloth taking shape on the loom is a paradox. It is a rigid grid of intersecting vertical warp yarns and horizontal weft yarns, yet it is delicate to the

hand and is able to drape into three-dimensional forms. As color is layered onto the yarns, the rigidity of the grid is disguised and becomes subliminal.

In the course of dyeing yarns and weaving cloth, I can define my own visual language within a long-established textile tradition. The fluidity of warp painting forms a direct path of communication, expressing that point at which inspiration flows from the mind and becomes a physical entity. There is a feeling of anticipation when dye encounters yarn, traveling as if it knows exactly where to go. At that moment, artist and medium begin their relationship, moving toward the artistic vision. When the strict rigidity of the loom meets the fluidity of the dyed yarns, an interaction occurs as warp and weft combine, infusing color and giving form to cloth. My weavings begin with black yarn. My organization of color involves bleaching areas of black and adding dye in its place, allowing hues to intermingle in an aqueous association. In that moment, color becomes the protagonist.

My woven panels are shaped by an expedition of seeing, guessing, discovering and ultimately creating. To me, art is an inevitable expression of an internal depiction, modified by the intuition and personality of the maker. The panels are large in format, which places them in direct relation to the human form. The viewer is able to contemplate the presence of a doorway or window. Each panel embodies unconscious qualities in their meanings. They are not representational interpretations of an event or an obvious artistic struggle with emotion. They are whispers, hints of communication. There are no answers contained in the weavings. In fact, the weavings are embodiments of acceptance in the face of eternal questions. They are able to give reference to a place yet they are nomadic. Each individual part

of a weaving is ultimately connected to a large part of a complex path. As the viewer contemplates the woven panel, a dialogue begins to form by the subtle cadence of color and repetition of fluid pattern. Fingerprints of the present moment lead to the next.

I have found my place in the world of textiles. Ideas and dreams develop into forms, dyes flow and establish zones of color, and ordered threads become cloth. For artist and viewer, spatial and emotional connections form, then change; lost in contemplation, viewers are free to wander among cloth panels—and free to imagine wandering through these woven doorways.

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1. Aloneness. 30X87". Handwoven cloth, warp and weft ikat, embroidery. Cotton, fiber-reactive dye.
2. Dreams Burn Down. 24X87". Handwoven cloth, warp painting, ikat. Cotton, fiber-reactive dye.
3. Nobody Lost, Nobody Found. 24X87". Handwoven cloth, warp painting, ikat. Cotton, fiber-reactive dye.
4. Cherry Stars Collide. 28X70". Handwoven cloth, warp painting, ikat. Cotton, fiber-reactive dye.
5. Stars and Topsoil. 24X70". Handwoven cloth, warp painting, ikat. Cotton, fiber-reactive dye.
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10. Aloneness, detail.
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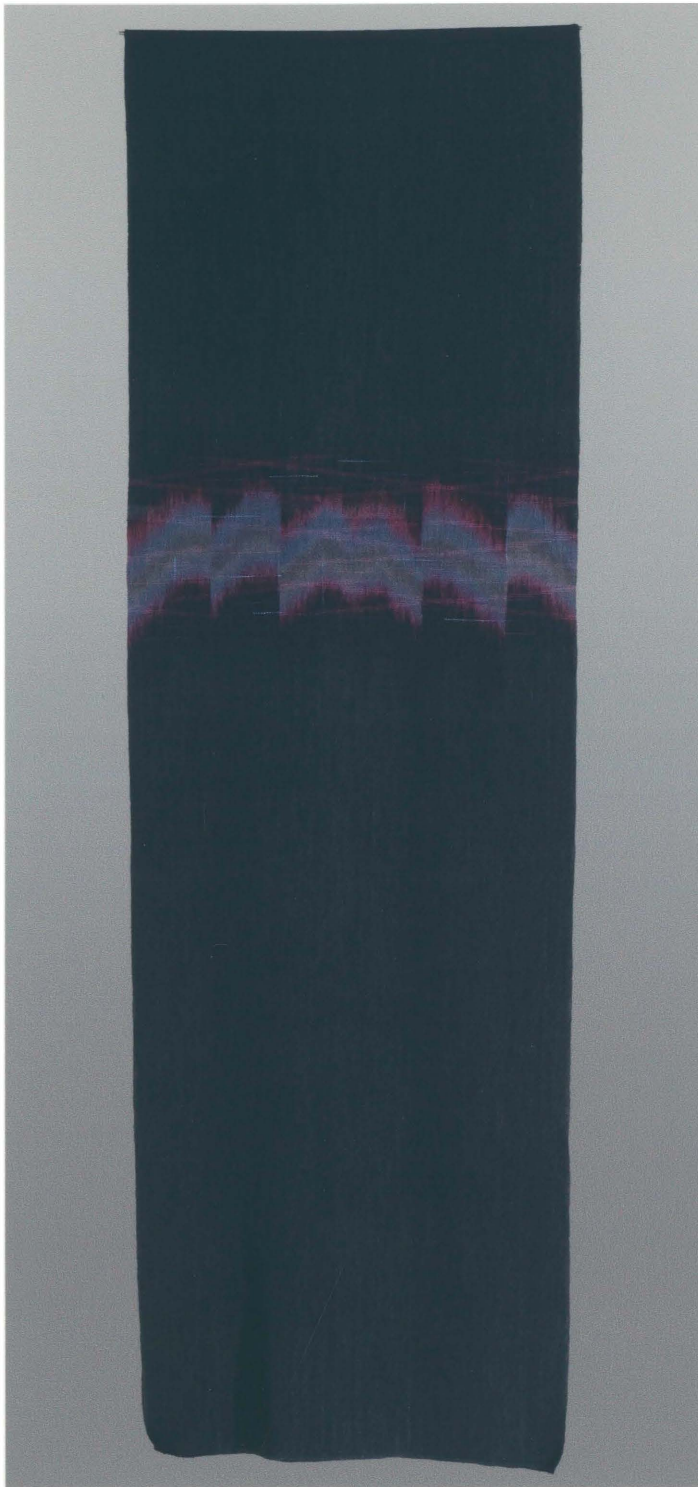


Figure1. Aloneness.



Figure 2. Dreams Burn Down.



Figure 3. Nobody Lost, Nobody Found.



Figure 4. Cherry Stars Collide.



Figure 5. Stars & Topsoil.



Figure 6. Tiny Smiles.



Figure 7. Untogether.

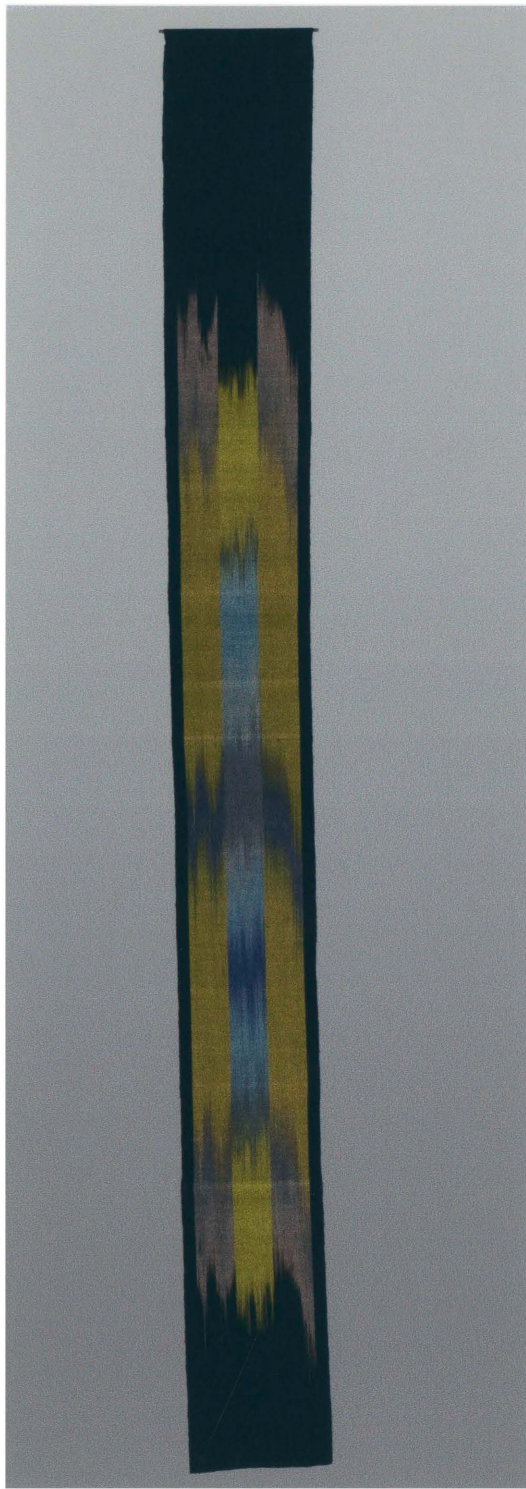


Figure 8. Essence.



Figure 9. Echoes In A Shallow Bay.

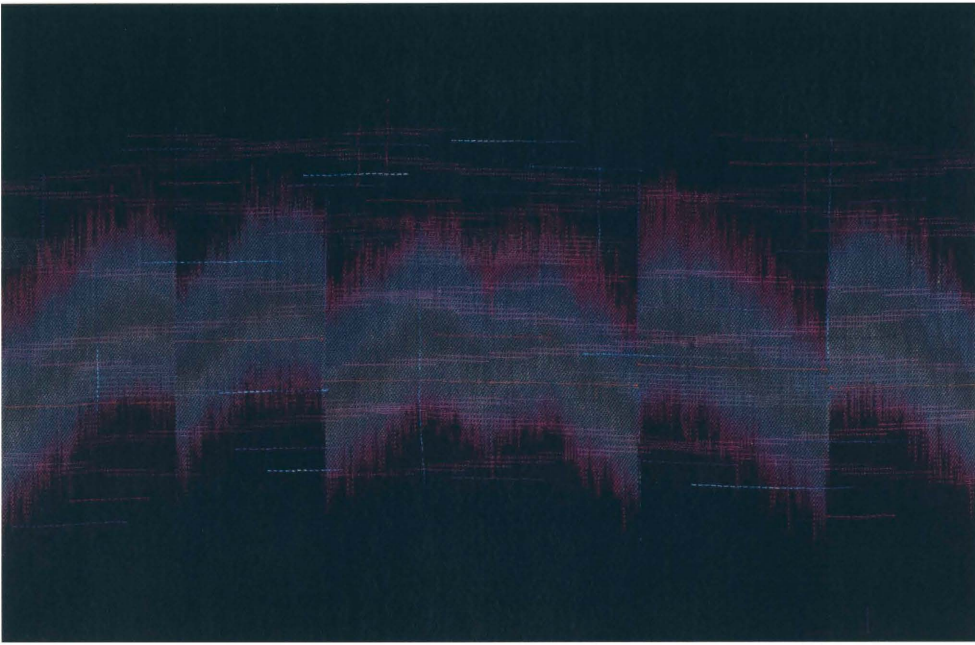


Figure 10. Aloneness detail.

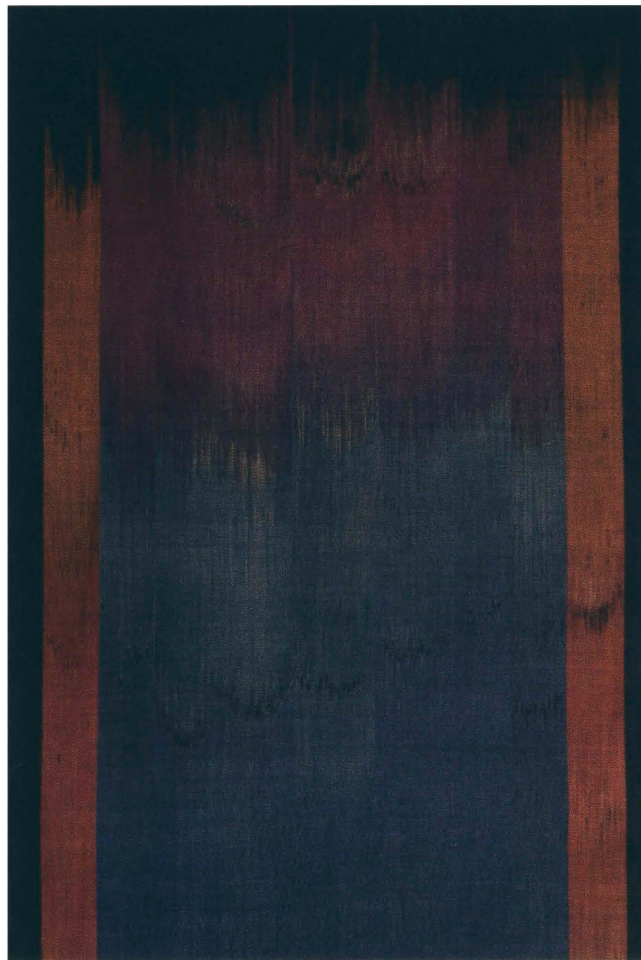


Figure 11. Dreams Burn Down detail.



Figure 12. Stars and Topsoil detail.

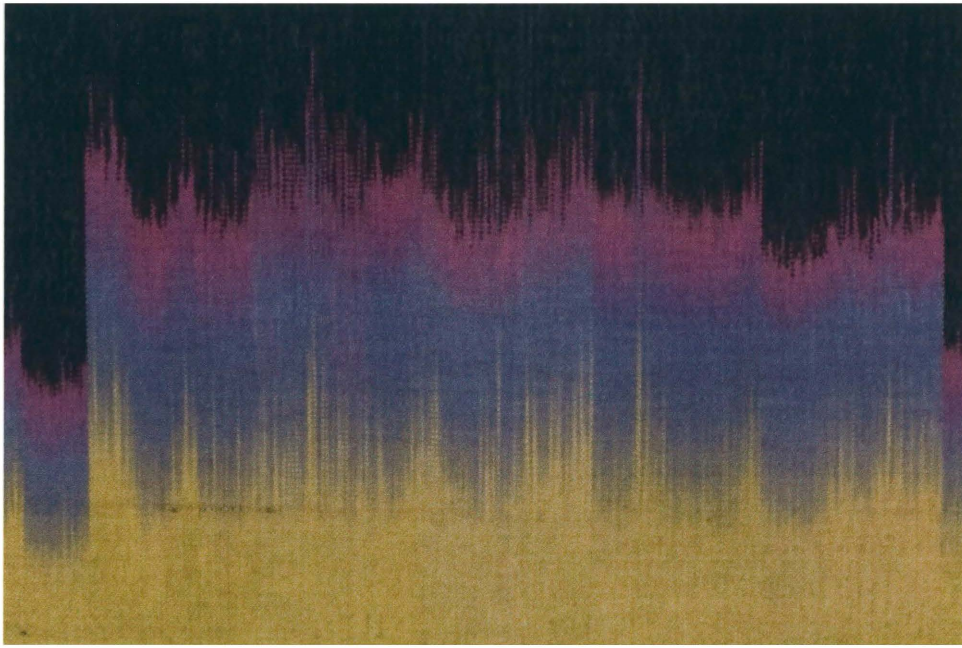


Figure 13. Tiny Smiles detail.

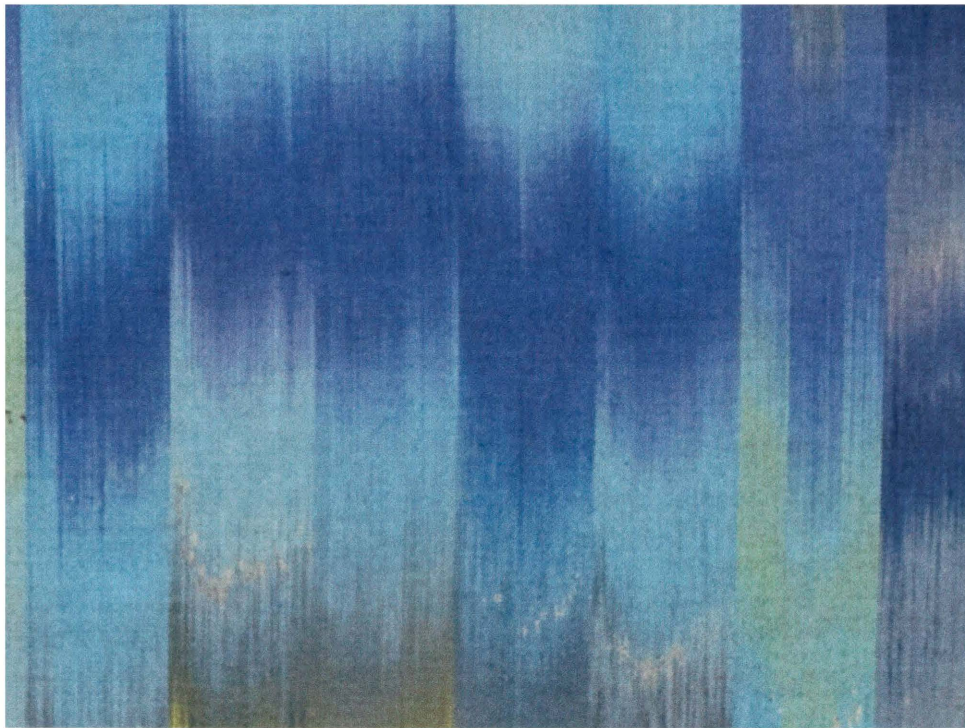


Figure 14. Untogether detail.

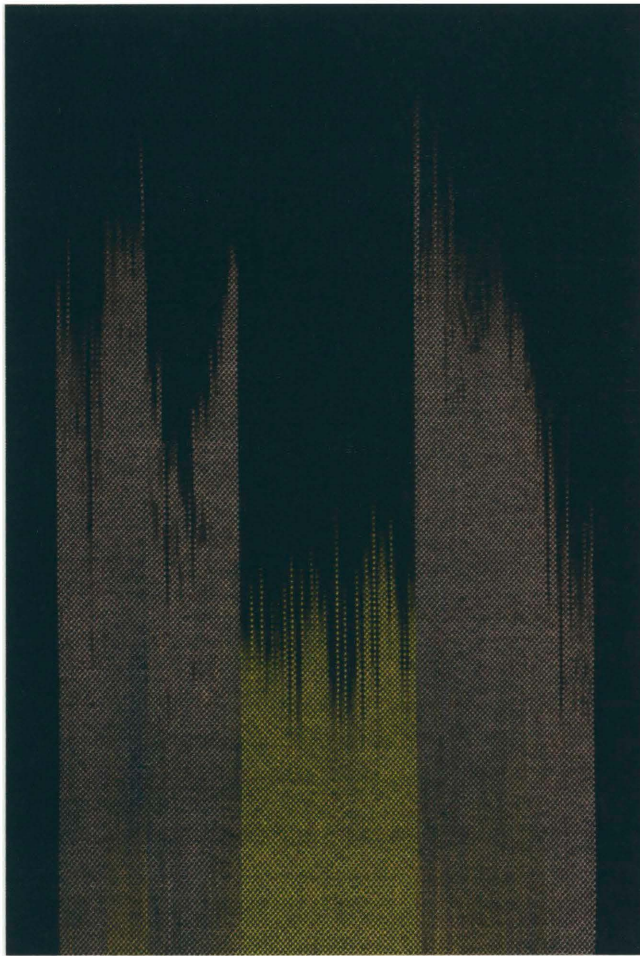


Figure 15. Essence detail.



Figure 16. Echoes In A Shallow Bay detail.