

Abstract

**Subjugatus**

by

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Director of Thesis: Ken Bova

Major Department: Metal Design

This document is written in support of the creative body of work entitled *Subjugatus*. My research in graduate school has focused on finding a way to merge textile design with my chosen field of study: metal design. Influenced by my personal experience of living in a very patriarchal home and community, I create work that demonstrates the complex identity of woman as both oppressed and empowered.



# **Subjugatus**

A Thesis

Presented To the Faculty of the Department of Art  
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

by

Tina Lazzarine

April, 2013



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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my four daughters: Hope, Briana, Kara, and Amber. My desire is that they continue to embrace life as strong, independent, and vigilant young women while being receptive to love and open to trust.

## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank my parents who have always given me their love and support and my daughters who encouraged me to take on the challenge of grad school. They have all made tremendous sacrifices on my behalf and I will forever be grateful.

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## Introduction with Six Anecdotes

### I

The popular 2002 movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* is a light-hearted romantic comedy about a young Greek woman, Toula, who struggles to find her own identity and follow her dreams while dealing with her patriarchal family. When her father rejects her plea to return to college she cries to her mother, “Ma, Dad is so stubborn. What he says goes. ‘Ah, the man is the head of the house!’” Toula’s mother lovingly explains, “The man is the head, but the woman is the neck. And she can turn the head any way she wants.” To me this quote seems to be an altered version of I Corinthians 11: 3 (King James Version) which reads, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” While amused at first, I found the movie quote ironic on dual levels. Not only does it suggest that the woman who is under control actually is in control, it uses what seems to be a manipulated scripture to teach how to manipulate.

### II

I was raised in a deeply religious patriarchal household. One evening when I was 7, my father was going out and specifically told me to stay away from King, our German Shepherd, who was leashed to the door leading to the bathroom and who had a history of hostility toward children. But I “had to go” and after attempting to walk past King, I remember only being on the floor with his wet jaws girdling my neck for what felt like hours. I wondered when he would stop, if he would stop, or if my parents would find me dead, still wearing the red, white, and blue jumper I wore to school that day, lying in the

urine I just couldn't hold. He did stop, and went to the end of his lead, barking at what I imagined was an angel sent to save me. I ran with my hand clasping my neck, fearful that my smooth-soled patent leather shoes would cause me to slip on the now wet floor, or that King would notice my attempt at escape and bite the hem of my jumper in an effort to attack me again. I was taken to the emergency room where I received 17 stitches and got two balloons, pink and blue, because I was such a good patient. The doctor said that if King had gone any deeper I would have died, and that was one of the only times I had ever witnessed my father cry. King was reprimanded that night but remained a part of our family. For years I was reminded of my disobedience as the cause of my injury and that is the moral of the story that was shared with friends who would ask my parents about my scar. Princess Alexandra of Denmark wore a wide collar choker because of insecurity, as a way to conceal a scar on her neck which may have resulted from a childhood operation. The scar on my neck I wear proudly, but for my family the scar is a story of disobedience and punishment.

### III

At the age of nineteen, I got married for all the wrong reasons. Pregnant and enamored with the idea of marriage, my husband-to-be and I didn't even know ourselves, let alone each other. The King James Version of the Bible states in Ephesians 5:22-24, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own

husbands in every thing.” In my personal experience, the patriarchal structure of my religion was central to my belief system. When I got married I wore a veil and my father gave me away. I had the option of including or excluding the line “love, honor, and obey” from the vows the minister would ask me to repeat. Based on the preceding scripture, I chose to include the word “obey.”

#### IV

My husband and I shared some of the same views on family- the man is the breadwinner, and the subordinate wife stays home- cooking, sewing, taking care of children. For me, this was indoctrinated by my religious upbringing. For him, I later realized that it was easier to control someone who never left the house. We had four daughters together, and as we grew into our identities, we also grew apart. Until the girls were old enough for school I didn't drive, and rarely left the house without him. He wasn't fond of my friends, so I never saw them. If he had to work a holiday, we were not permitted to enjoy family gatherings. When things really started going downhill he wanted to move us to Colorado- away from everyone to “start fresh.” He called me worthless so much at the end I began to believe it. The verbal abuse led to physical violence and I knew it was time to leave despite my pious opposition of divorce.

#### V

Life for me was changing dramatically. The idea of evolution was considered to be a concept born of sin according to my religion. It wasn't until after my divorce, when I began to have an understanding of nature as divine vernacular. In other words, I started to hear the voice of God metaphorically speaking the history of the world through tree

rings, fossils, and sedimentary rock layers. My epiphanic moment came while gardening after I purchased my own home. I had a problem with rainwater drainage in a recessed portion of my yard and after a week or two of standing water, I noticed that the grasses I remembered there didn't die; they continued to grow, but they looked different. I suddenly began to understand what evolution was-- a continual process of adaptation. This made sense to me-- not only in geological and biological terms, but also in terms of emotional and intellectual development. I started to see my life as in a continual state of "becoming." This idea became a theme in my earlier work wherein I used natural forms to articulate the cyclic process of change that occurs in both personal and social development. This belief, I later learned, was shared by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who has been quoted as saying, "nothing endures but change."

## VI

My mother and both grandmothers were active participants in the domestic arts and had a tremendous influence on me. I learned knitting and crochet from my maternal grandmother, and my mother taught me a variety of embroidery stitches and encouraged my use of the sewing machine at an early age. My paternal grandmother painstakingly crocheted doilies and embroidered pillowcases until her arthritis prevented her from continuing. For years sewing was a part of my creative outlet-- from making children's clothing to cross-stitching pillows I engaged with these skills as a domestic activity, or hobby, rather than an art form.

Now as a metalsmith and an informed artist, I enjoy the challenge of combining textiles with metals in a way that is balanced and gives traditional women's craft a voice in contemporary mixed media sculpture. Further, by using textiles in my work, I remain loyal to my heritage while reinventing the dutiful sewing skills I was taught as a child as a particularly fitting partner to metalsmithing techniques.

In response to patriarchal society, I create work that either exploits the irony of oppressive societal norms or empowers the female wearer. Integral to the work are the dichotomies of hard and soft, seduction and repulsion, protection and intimidation. This complexity parallels the multi-faceted aspect of the female experience. The neck as site for the work is ideal because it is among the most vulnerable parts of the human body. The modern Latin word *Subjugatus* is the past participle of *subjugare*, literally defined as "to bring under a yoke" (the prefix *sub* meaning "under" and *jugum* meaning "yoke"). The diminutive of *iugum* (the Latin origin of Modern Latin *Jugum*) is *iugulum* which means "collarbone, throat, neck" and is also the origin of *jugular*.<sup>1</sup> If you control a person's neck, you control the person.

The collar then can be a symbol of power and alternately a symbol of subjugation. Often, the lines may become blurred between these roles and a collar that empowers might also be a burden. By binding soft fabric with wire into either protruding or constricting forms, sometimes both, my work becomes a metaphor for control and

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<sup>1</sup> "Yoke" "Subjugate" Harper

oppression. The viewer is presented with the question of whether the wearer is in control-- or under it.

Through the collar, this body of work will demonstrate the complex identity of woman as both oppressed and empowered. In my exploitation of what is considered to be “traditional” or “normal” I hope to draw attention to the absurdity of past and present customs such as wedding veils, neck rings, and corsets. While feminist activism and social awareness have been instrumental in the advancement of an egalitarian society, the persistence of a patriarchal mindset that clouds views on women still exists today.

### **A Discovery in Form and Process**

My introduction to the form employed by this body of work began with experiments in textile dye resist techniques. Shibori is the Japanese art of binding, tying, twisting, stitching, or wrapping fabric in preparation for the dyeing process. *Kumo* means "spider" in Japanese and *kumo shibori* is a specific binding technique which results in a spiderweb pattern when the dyed fabric is unbound. Other Japanese terms provide a more descriptive definition of the process, such as *tegumo* which means “hand spiderweb” and *kikaigumo* which means “tool-aided spiderweb.”<sup>2</sup> I was so enamored by the conical form of the bound fabric prior to removal of the threads because of its stiff

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<sup>2</sup> Wada, p. 208-209

contrast to the draping quality associated with fabric. I decided to design work that highlighted the form and started binding with wire instead of thread for stability and permanence. The kumo shibori forms are a literal visual reference to bondage and remain central to the concept within this body of work.

Inevitably, I made many discoveries while working in this medium. Binding large squares of cotton fabric result in very wide bases. In contrast, when using silk, the fabric is able to compress more resulting in a narrower base (figure 1). Using wire to wrap with instead of traditional thread was exciting to me because, not only was the form more stable, it was able to hold a curve when slightly bent. The real magic happened when I began inserting wire at the core before binding around it. Initially, a thin gauge wire was used allowing the kumo shibori forms to bend easier and hold better. By switching to a thicker gauge wire I could really push the twists and manipulate the forms to hold just about any shape (figure 2). Wasting fabric became an issue and a concern for me, as did the quest for slender forms with narrower bases. By binding rectangular strips less fabric was wasted but this would result in a torpedo-like shape and often the frayed edges of the fabric would reveal themselves throughout the form. Ultimately, this was solved by sewing long and narrow triangular shapes which allowed me to insert the wire and bind around it. The resulting form would be extremely slender with a narrow base. Binding rectangular tubes of fabric gave me a symmetrical form rather than a taper which I incorporated in choker type pieces. Several of these symmetrical bindings could even be braided. In allowing the form to evolve, I was getting control of the material.



Figure 1: Kumo shibori cotton vs. silk

Figure 2: Shaping shibori



Metal becomes the display mechanism for the kumo shibori elements and gives the work a convincing impression as articles of body adornment. A number of metalworking processes were used in the construction of this body of work including hinge-making, wire weaving, and chain making (figure 3) which authenticate the work and, in a more practical sense, allow it to conform to the body.



Figure 3: Linked and woven chain detail from *In Training*

Texturing metal was achieved by either etching or roller printing. In etching, the metal is first prepared by cleaning and applying some type of resist. In the case of *Medusa* (figure 4) the resist was toner ink from a copy machine. Imagery is first applied to a transfer paper known as Press-N-Peel™ (PNP Blue), then applied to the metal with heat and pressure. The metal is suspended in a container of ferric chloride, an acid, which then eats away any exposed metal. *Power Play* has a diamond grid-like texture imprinted into the metal achieved by using a rolling mill to press the texture of copper mesh into the surface of the copper. In order to protect the texture during forming, a plastic hammer was used. The front and back pieces of this corset-like neck piece each have a shape similar to a saddle (figure 5), which in metalsmithing is known as an *anticlastic* form. When the dominant axes curve in the same direction, the result is a *synclastic* form. If the dominant axes curve in opposite directions, it is an *anticlastic* form.



Figure 4: *Medusa* etching detail



Figure 5: Texture and anticlastic form detail from *Power Play*

The lace-like material used in *Medusa* and *Something Borrowed* is handmade by machine stitching thread to organza. This process is aided by the use of a water soluble film, Solvy™, which allows the presser foot of the machine to glide on the surface without pulling the loose threads into the needle plate and also allows one to draw shapes directly on the film as a guide for stitching. The sandwich of thread, organza, and Solvy™ is stitched and then soaked in water, dissolving the Solvy™ and resulting in a delicate, lace-like material (figure 6).



Figure 6: Lace-like material from *Medusa* and *Something Borrowed*

Several methods of dyeing and surface treatment of fabric were used in the completion of this work. Silk, which includes organza, is a protein fabric and in order to achieve a rich red or black color an acid dye is used. For fabrics such as cotton, a fiber reactive dye which forms a covalent bond with the cellulose fiber molecules is used. Black tea was used to stain the white cotton in *Power Play* before machine stitching with red thread (figure 7). While inexpensive purchased pre-dyed black cotton was used in *Femme Fatale*, the red tips were achieved simply by bleaching the black fabric for a short period of time.



Figure 7: Stitching detail of  
*Power Play*

The pendant in *Femme Fatale* is a painted enamel piece. Enameling is a procedure where ground glass particles are fused to metal when they are exposed to high heat, usually around 1500° F. A product called Armour Etch contains acid and is used to create a matte surface that permits pencil drawing on the surface before re-firing. To achieve depth and contrast, an oil-based black overglaze is carefully painted over the graphite and the piece is re-fired. This is repeated before painting with china paints and firing one last time (figure 8).



Figure 8: Painted enamel

The tubing used in several pieces was made by cutting rectangles of copper, brass, or nickel silver sheet and forming them into channels which were drawn through a steel drawplate to close any gaps and ensure a circular tube. When using nickel this is no

easy feat as it is notorious for its tendency to warp and takes more strength to draw down than copper which is a much more malleable metal.

## The Collars

### *Metamorphosis*



Figure 9 : *Metamorphosis*  
Kumo shibori cotton, copper, cameo  
1 1/4 x 13 1/2 x 13"  
2011

The transformation the caterpillar undergoes in order to become a moth parallels the changes that occurred in my own life. The reference for this piece is the Black Cup Slug

Moth whose caterpillar is black with white spiny growths covering its body.

*Metamorphosis* is a commentary on separation and solitude in situations of domestic violence based on my experience of a woman living in an abusive relationship. This piece began as my first exploration with the technique of kumo shibori. The pendant (figure 10) is the silhouette of the adult Black Cup Slug Moth and the cameo harkens back to the Victorian trend of wearing cameos in necklaces. The kumo shibori spines create distance and represent the sense of loneliness felt by victims of abuse.



Figure 10:  
*Metamorphosis* pendant detail

*Mourning Glory*



Figure 11: *Mourning Glory*  
Kumo shibori cotton, nickel, steel, glass beads  
20 x 22 x 2"  
2012

Mourning customs vary as do most rituals across cultures, but the most notable difference between male and female bereavement practices is that of *Sati* which took place in India until it was abolished in 1829 by the British. Based on the idea that a good

wife should do as her husband, Sati involved a widow immolating herself on her husband's funeral pyre. Widowers, however, were not expected to do the same for their wives.<sup>3</sup> The society of 19<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain observed complex etiquette guidelines pertaining to mourning. The length of time a person mourned was determined by their relationship to the deceased and they wore black clothing to separate themselves from society and indicate their grieving status. Queen Victoria was so devastated when Prince Albert died that she remained in mourning for 40 years, until her death in 1901. Both the British and Americans followed her example and mourning attire became a lucrative industry, women of course being held to more strict guidelines pertaining to their attire and length of mourning.

*Mourning Glory* conveys the withdrawal and evolution of grief that occurs when a loved one dies. Black kumo shibori cotton extensions protrude from nickel bezels which orbit the neck as if to push others away in an effort to isolate the wearer. The nickel bezel bases are etched with the pattern of ornate oval frames and are strung together between black glass beads (figure 12). The beads reference *jet*, a fossilized wood, which was so often used in mourning jewelry.



Figure 12: *Mourning Glory* detail

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<sup>3</sup> Ashenberg, p.164

*Femme Fatale*



Figure 13: *Femme Fatale*  
Kumo shibori cotton, copper, enamel  
16 x 14 x 14"  
2013

The Black Widow Spider is a dangerous arachnid known for the extremely potent venom it possesses. The name *black widow* comes from the practice of the female spider to eat the male after mating. *Black Widow* is a term also applied to some women,

implying they are predatory in behavior. The 2012 movie, *The Avengers*, features a powerful female character by the name of Black Widow who is denigrated by the villain Loki who calls her a “mewling quim.” This misogynistic insult translates from Victorian era English slang as “whining cunt.”<sup>4</sup>

Author Jane Caputi, who discusses pop culture’s representation of women in her book *Goddesses and Monsters*, writes, “Patriarchal ‘good girls’ are associated with niceness and all-around impotence, toothlessness. The ‘bad girl’ or femme fatale is the always dangerous abyss, the black hole, and the *vagina dentata*—the one that still has some bite.”<sup>5</sup>

An image of the Black Widow Spider is drawn and painted on the white enameled pendant of *Femme Fatale* which means “deadly woman” in French. The eight kumobori extensions that encircle the wearer’s head mimic the legs of an arachnid.

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<sup>4</sup> As defined by [Urbandictionary.com](http://Urbandictionary.com)

<sup>5</sup> Caputi, p. 328

*In Training*



Figure 14: *In Training*  
Copper, kumo shibori cotton  
49 x 6 x 6"  
2013

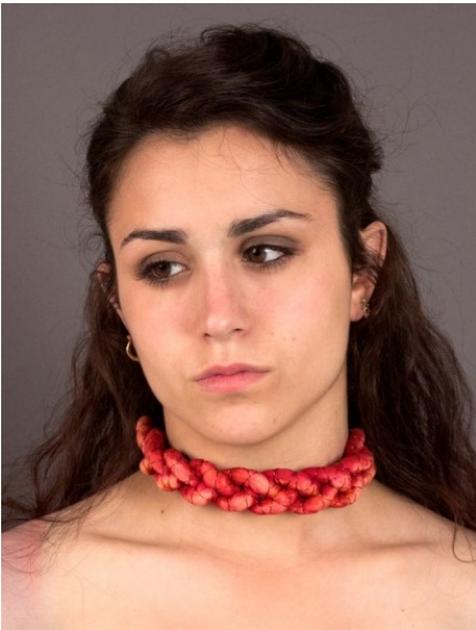


Figure 15 : *In Training* front view

The lingering attitude among some groups that women are to be compliant spurred the creation of this piece which exaggerates the idea of the master and his servant, reducing his treatment of her to that of an animal. Dogs that are in obedience training may wear one of many types of choke collars. *In Training* is fabricated with braided

shibori dyed muslin and copper teeth attached to the interior. Pulling on the woven copper “leash” squeezes and pierces the neck similar to a dog training prong collar.



Figure 16 : *In Training* back view

## Heirloom



Figure 17: *Heirloom*  
Kumo shibori cotton, brass, copper,  
enamel, thread, lock  
4 x 5 x 5"  
2013

In various cultures throughout history examples can be found of unsafe body modification practices stemming from gender inequality. What is most disconcerting about this is that women have been the ones perpetuating their own subjugation. Chinese footbinding was a practice performed during the 10<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries because tiny feet and a wobbly gait were seen as beautiful to men. The process was often executed by mothers who would wrap their daughters' feet so tightly their arches would

break and their toenails would penetrate their soles. Corsets , FGM (female genital mutilation), breast ironing, lip-plates and brass neck rings are all examples of modifications made to girls at a young age in an effort to either beautify or protect.

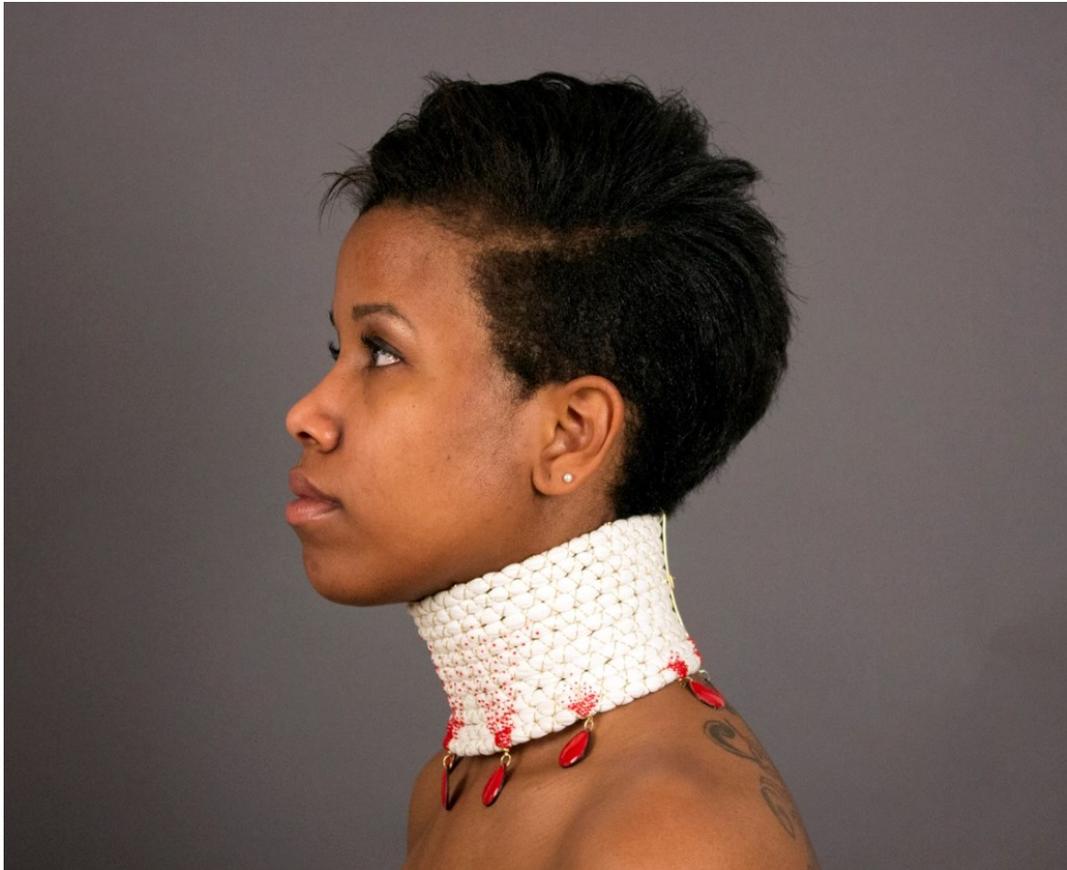


Figure 18 :  
*Heirloom* profile view

Social psychologists Dr. Peter Glick and Dr. Susan Fiske developed the Ambivalent Sexism theory in 1996 that breaks sexism into two categories: *hostile sexism* and

*benevolent sexism*.<sup>6</sup> Hostile sexism is the negative viewpoint of women as inferior beings to men and produces behavior such as harassment or domestic violence. Benevolent sexism, however, has a misleadingly positive appearance and is often a viewpoint shared by women themselves. The notion that women require the protection of men or to be provided for falls under the category of benevolent sexism and often goes unnoticed, which complicates the progress of gender equality.

The brass bound tubular forms of *Heirloom* reference the brass rings worn by the Kayan women of the Padaung tribe in Myanmar. Red enameled teardrop pendants hang from the bottom of the piece and red French knots (figure 19) are embroidered to draw the eye into the piece from the pendants upward.



Figure 19: Heirloom detail of French knots

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<sup>6</sup> Glick and Fiske, p. 491-492

*Power Play*



Figure 20: *Power Play*  
Copper, kumo shibori cotton, brass,  
thread, leather  
3 ½ x 8 x 11 ½"  
2013

Neck corsets and collars are often used in BDSM (Bondage, Domination/Discipline, Submission/Sadism, Masochism) culture. These sexual practices are often considered to be deviant or at the very least unconventional. Interestingly, the popular term for the

art form of rope bondage is *shibari* which comes from the same Japanese root as shibori.



Figure 21: *Power Play* side view

*Power Play* is a very literal reference to control and submissive behavior. Leather ties lace through brass eyelets on either side of the piece. Brass spikes protrude through the cotton kumo shibori elements, defending against anyone who may threaten the wearer.

*Something Borrowed*



Figure 22: *Something Borrowed*  
Organza, thread, glass pearls, kumo  
shibori silk, nickel, velvet, brass, padlock  
18 x 12 x 12"  
2013

The bridal veil is a long standing tradition of the wedding ceremony in Western culture.

The ritual of a father lifting the veil of his daughter and “giving her away” to the groom is part of our patriarchal inheritance.

In 1972, Sherry B. Ortner wrote a feminist article titled, “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” exploring the relationship of gender to nature and culture and inciting major

dialogue on the topic. Feminist geographers Mona Domosh and Joni Seager discuss this matter at length in their 2001 book *Putting Women in Place*. With regard to control of nature they write, “The control of nature by men-whether men literally, or ‘man’ universally- is made ideologically easier if nature is feminized. The metaphor of ‘rational man’ subduing a female ‘nature,’ which the scientific revolution articulated, cannot be seen as a quirk of the seventeenth century. It certainly remains deeply embedded in the language and the metaphors of modern science, and it is also a broader cultural feature of modern life. The literature of European (male) exploration of new lands, from the fifteenth-century reports to contemporary accounts, is rife with metaphors of raping the wilderness, penetrating virgin lands, conquering a capricious nature, mastering the wild, and subduing untamed lands.”<sup>7</sup>

Also a contributing influence to this work is David Lynch’s 1986 film, *Blue Velvet*, notorious for its bizarre depiction of sexual dysfunction and violence. The female protagonist in the film exhibits a need to control, and also to be controlled.

In *Something Borrowed*, a silk organza veil is hand stitched onto kumo shibori “branches” which are fed through nickel silver cylinders dividing sections of glass pearls. Delicate leaves are stitched over much of the organza and impair vision on the part of the wearer who, as the idiom goes, “can’t see the forest for the trees.” Pearls are often

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<sup>7</sup> Domosh, p. 179-180

worn by brides as their white, opalescent quality is readily associated with purity and innocence. Blue velvet lines the interior of the pearl collar, referencing *Blue Velvet* and becoming the “something blue” borrowed from the over-quoted portion of the well-known rhyme, “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue, and a sixpence in your shoe.” The neckpiece is secured onto the wearer with a heart-shaped padlock.

### *Medusa*



Figure 23: *Medusa*  
Kumo shibori silk, brass, steel,  
copper, microfiber, organza, thread  
27 x 12 x 18"  
2013

During a research trip to Germany in 2012, I visited the Ernst Haeckel Haus, nicknamed *Villa Medusa*, in the small city of Jena where the biologist, artist, and philosopher, Ernst Haeckel, spent most of his life teaching at the University of Jena. Upstairs in the *Villa Medusa* was Haeckel's study which has been kept intact from the time he last worked before his death in 1919. The jellyfish images (specifically *peromedusae* and *discomedusae*<sup>8</sup>) from Haeckel's book of lithographs, *Kunstformen der Natur* published in 1904, serve as exquisite ceiling decoration in some of the rooms. These illustrations also made their way into the design of linens and small furnishings within his study.



Figure 24:  
Ceiling image of Haeckel's study  
*Villa Medusa*, Jena, Germany  
2012

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<sup>8</sup> Haeckel, *Kunstformen* p. 131, 97

This was an emotionally moving visit as his work had been inspirational to me for some time. The conflict between religion and evolution was at its height during the time of Haeckel, who converted from his Evangelical beliefs and expanded the divide between evolutionary theory and traditional religion. In his book, *The Riddle of the Universe*, Haeckel writes, “The goddess of truth dwells in the temple of nature, in the green woods, on the blue sea, and on the snowy summits of the hills- not in the gloom of the cloister, nor in the narrow prisons of our jail-like schools, nor in the clouds of incense of the Christian churches.”<sup>9</sup>

With Haeckel's *peromedusae* as a visual point of reference I sought to construct a neckpiece that embodies a sense of power. The tentacles of the jellyfish share a similarity to the hair of serpents belonging to the mythological figure of Medusa. According to some of the Greek myths, Medusa was once a virgin whose beauty rivaled that of the goddess Athena. While she was praying in the Temple of Athena, Poseidon was captured by her beauty and raped her. The defiling of the temple angered Athena who punished Medusa by turning her into a hideous monster whose gaze would turn her onlookers to stone. While this tale is centuries old, the scenario of a rape victim being blamed for the crime is poignant and relevant in today's culture.

Medusa is the epitome of beauty and danger, simultaneously a feminist's champion and a misogynist's nightmare. Marjorie Garber and Nancy J. Vickers write in *The Medusa*

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<sup>9</sup> Haeckel, Riddle p. 359

*Reader*, “For what is most compelling in the long history of the myth and its retellings is Medusa’s intrinsic doubleness: at once monster and beauty, disease and cure, threat and protection, poison and remedy, the woman with snaky locks who could turn the unwary onlooker to stone has come to stand for all that is obdurate and irresistible.”<sup>10</sup>

Hinging oxidized brass plates surround the neck with etched images of the *peromedusae* that alternate with the cross-like detail from Haeckel’s close up of the jellyfish mouth tube (*periphylla hyacinthina*). A soft microsuede interior comforts the neck of the wearer. The “lace” is layered thread sewn onto hand dyed organza in graduated color from red to black which is then assembled to resemble ruffs worn during the 16th and 17th centuries. Though all classes of society wore ruffs, they are often associated with the iconic attire of Queen Elizabeth I, hence the term “Elizabethan collar.” The sinuous kumo shibori extensions of *Medusa* aspire to intimidate the viewer while possessing their gaze.

*Medusa*’s wide clasp (figure 25) on the back of the neck of the wearer admits access without threat to an aggressor, revealing her susceptibility. This reflects the potency of the Gorgon’s mythic gaze-capable of turning one to stone yet from the backside she remains vulnerable.



Figure 25: *Medusa* clasp detail

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<sup>10</sup> Garber and Vickers, p. 1

## Conclusion

In *The Equality Illusion* Kat Banyard writes, “The only way we will ever be able to uproot violence against women...is by changing the cultural landscape that nurtures it and dispelling the illusions which act as shelter.”<sup>11</sup> The oppression, discrimination, and marginalization of women have been pervasive throughout history and culture. As one individual I do not expect to single-handedly change the world or touch on each and every injustice done to womankind, nor was this body of work intended to do so. I do, however, believe that every person contributes to the whole of society and my hope is that through my artwork I can bring even the slightest bit of light to expose the shadows on our landscape. Traditional textile arts, which bear associations with women, can serve as a medium to draw attention to our past, incite conversation about our present, and help to design a future where equality is the standard.

One of the goals of my graduate research has been to fabricate a dynamic relationship between metal and fiber. With confidence I feel this body of work has met that goal and given me a source of inspiration for future work. I will continue to push the technique of binding fabric with wire and to explore the idea of what it means to be bound, whether by tradition, belief, or society.

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<sup>11</sup> Banyard, p.107

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