**The Gorgeous Drape**

**“Because an illusion is an illusion. Reality always exists despite the facade.”**

Oct 2017, at the beginning of my advance course, it was almost unclear on how to bring the topic of my project “action reaction” to life. Having progressed on my research, I could demystify my thoughts that lead me to a contemporary way of depicting a “single straight length of cloth” which is the most culturally rich garment, is gorgeous, full of vigor and variety that should give most of us a pause and make us think twice about the versatility of a cloth, and about remaining classic or being modern!

“In the history of Indian clothing the sari is traced back to the [Indus Valley Civilisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_Valley_Civilisation), which flourished during 2800–1800 BC around the northwestern part of the [Indian subcontinent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_subcontinent)”

[Cotton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cotton) was first cultivated and woven in Indian subcontinent around 5th millennium BC. Dyes used during this period are still in use, particularly [indigo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigo), [lac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lac), [red madder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubia_cordifolia) and [turmeric](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turmeric). [Silk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silk) was woven around 2450 BC and 2000 BC. The earliest known depiction of the sari in the Indian subcontinent is the statue of an Indus Valley priest wearing a drape”…(Wikipedia)

I started working on waves in printmaking classes and body as a covering for soul in paintings. Somehow, I found connection between the materials and the topic the gorgeous drape. Any object or body has three interpretations – as an object, as a person and its ethnic impression. As soon as I tried to find out these qualities in Saree, to my surprise I was taken aback by the scientific, traditional and ethnic values, this thousand years old attire is having.

“The sari represents a culture in which the woman is considered not only more appropriate in terms of aesthetics and climate, but was also an act of greater purity and simplicity. The important point to highlight is that saree can be made of unstitched clothes. There are more than one hundred drape and wearing styles therefore sari is the most unique and versatile of garments.“There are more than 80 recorded ways to wear a sari*”….( https://thestoriesfromindia.wordpress.com/)*

Layers of Saree and the numerous ways a woman can wear this dress, makes it versatile for all seasons. Indeed, this is the most graceful dress for women in India. Indian girls feel pride when they wear this, the dressing style is so perfect that it can enhance the beauty of any lady, irrespective of height, color or weight.

### The real significance of the saree lies in the management of such a huge piece of cloth in an aristocrat way. Sarees are usually linked with the managing abilities of a woman, just like how she manages so many important or trivial chores in a perfect fashion while being at it. Women look most refined, polished, charming, and lovely while performing their chores while at the same time, creating a harmony wherever they are…. *(*[*An Introduction to the Saree – Indian Ethnic Fashion – Medium*](https://medium.com/indian-ethnic-fashion/an-introduction-to-the-saree-6775fd474318)*)*

The Saree can be single colored or multi colored and if tied perfectly for an occasion, it not only enhances the eternal beauty of the lady, but gives pleasant impression to the viewers.

Indian marriage is a lifetime event for the girl and Saree is the most important dress to grace the occasion. Whole event of marriage looks gorgeous with ladies wearing Sarees in different colour and this makes the whole arena look vibrant. It is pertinent to mention that the Colour of Saree too play an important role. Bride mostly would wear Red colour Saree, which is a symbol of new life and rising…. However, saree looks gorgeous in all colours.

I am highly influenced and impressed by few points mentioned by Olgo Barrios in the article “Unveiling and subverting hidden meanings: The Sari as a creative tool in designing a woman’s identity in Shakuntala Boolell’s La femme enveloppe” (1996) one of them which is my most favourite is - The attire that was meant to hide Supaya’s body turned into a cloth that, modelled by Supaya as a second skin by means of her introspection, ended up unveiling her true self.

Each woman then, will wear the Sari in a way that reveals her own personality. Once the piece of fabric has been removed from the woman’s body, the particular style is lost and fabric reverts back to a flat rectangular form. Then she has mentioned about the belief of the cloth is a metaphor for the creation and the thread is the foundation and the weaver of the Sari is architect of the universe.

Keeping in mind all above qualities, I could think about an experiment with mirror and thread in which any viewer, can see herself and himself wearing the drape which is showing the texture of the thread. I never thought that working with thread will be so meditative, full of movements and interesting while working with thread. I was thinking about Saint Kabir Dasji who was the biggest philosopher poet of this time. He was a weaver too.

The gaps which I find and the ways to fill them by taking a different angle…. different angle ……angle…..solution. There is tune, music, rhythm. Protection with cloth made of thread and thread is so fragile

Fragile + Fragile+ Fragile = Strong = Protection.

Weak + Weak + Weak = Strong = Protection.

But still I wasn’t sure how to give a perfect shape to my work because till now I was into painting or 2D presentation of different materials of mural art. With the help and encouragement of teachers of HSOA. I tried to work with cloth with porcelain and cloth with plaster of Paris.

I also want to mention artist Karla black who is creating sculptures working with different kinds of materials like packaging, old clothes, carpets, food stuffs, make-up and toiletries. But what inspires me most when she says – “sculpture is what supports me…because what is actually is…because its real…because it’s really here so its physicality that matters, a painting is not exactly supposed to be here it’s supposed to take elsewhere so it’s an escape and traditionally sculpture is opposite of that…

I also feel the ownership of those sculpture of mine because they are real, original, unique and only one of its type in this world. I am able to feel their weight, movement fragility, curves and the character of these objects made with cloth, pop and porcelain not only with faculty of eyes but with touch also.

At the same time I also appreciate Nicola Tyson and her work ‘curtain figure’ in which she has depicted whole story of the character with few strokes and colors somehow I progressed in my own style but taking inspiration from literature and other artists like Paula Rego, Ansem Kiefer, Trisha Dinnely, Shirin Neshat etc. Elgin Marbles(marble sculptures of Greek artist Phidias) were also a kind of inspiration for me.

Saris have a beautiful history behind them and reflect art, culture, design and fashion. Anything which is connected to history and any country’s culture is a kind of heritage, which takes it’s shape from the environment, need of people and thousands of years and that should be respected as we respect each other.