

NICK CAVE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

"MY DESIGNS FOR CLOTHING HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SIMPLE. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT MY CLOTHING HAS A POINT OF VIEW...THAT WHEN YOU VIEW THEM YOU START TO INVESTIGATE THE SMALL DETAILS IN THE CONSTRUCTION AS WELL AS RICHNESS AND THE MANIPULATION OF FABRICS. THE TECHNIQUES USED IN DEVELOPING MY FABRICS COME FROM MY SOLID BACKGROUND AS A PRINTER. I HAVE ALWAYS TREATED MY CLOTH AS A CANVAS. AND I LET IT EVOLVE AS I OPEN MYSELF UP TO THE PROCESS."





Opposite page, left:

Nick Cave, *Sound Suit*, 2001; crocheted and pieced afghan, sisal hemp, sequins.

Model: Nick Cave

Opposite page, right:

Nick Cave, *Untitled*; silks and microfiber fabrics; layered separates.

Photo: Nick Cave

Left:

Nick Cave, *Untitled*, 1998; silk, organza, cotton, linen, indigo; handpainted jacket.

Photo: Nick Cave



Nick Cave has been called

many things—an artist, an academician, a designer, a dancer, a performance artist, a sculptor. His multi-media/multi-dimensional approach to his art reflects the direct way in which he responds to his own personal history, and his need to stretch conventional boundaries. Cave says that he strives to create meaning in his work that “makes a difference in the lives of individuals.”

Cave grew up in Missouri where he was encouraged by his family to explore his many interests that ranged from quilting to modern dance. He went on to earn his

B.F.A. at the Kansas City Art Institute in Missouri and his M.A. at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. During 1989, he moved to Chicago to teach in the Fiber and Material Studies Department, where he taught until 1993. Today he is back at the school full time, teaching in the Fashion Department.

During the early 1990s, he used the artistic language of dance combined with elaborate costume to create a series that he named *Sound Suits*—works created to be used in both performance and for contemplation as art objects. The suits often incorporate discarded debris scavenged from his urban environment or thrift stores—bottle caps, sticks, feathers, crocheted fabrics—all recontextualized and reassembled into body coverings that somehow balance rarefied elegance and visceral awareness. When Cave dons one of the suits and moves to music, it creates its own idiosyncratic noise that adds to the mystery and dimensionality of the experience.

In the early 1990s when Cave was teaching at the Art Institute, designer Jeffrey Roberts attended a lecture that he presented about his performance work. After initial conversations, they were both drawn to the possibilities of collaborating with one another. These talks led to their conceptualization of a partnership to form Robave, Inc., a company that engages both of their talents and energies to create one-of-a-kind or limited edition handpainted clothing. Roberts and Cave spent close to three years in the planning stages for the company, debating both practical and ethical considerations of making clothing with extremely high standards that doesn't conform to a trendy market.

During 2001, Cave and Roberts purchased a four-story building in Chicago to serve as a studio and loft. They are in the concept-stage for new developments within the original concept of Robave, while Cave is concentrating on the creation of a new series of *Sound Suits* that he hopes to show in museums and use in performance around the world.



Opposite page, left:
**Nick Cave, Untitled,
1997; silk; handpainted;
organza jacket.**

Photo: Nick Cave

Opposite page, right:
**Nick Cave, Untitled,
1998; silk, constructed
jacket; silk, dress.**

Photo: Nick Cave

Left:
**Nick Cave, Untitled,
1996; silk, velvet; hand-
painted, patched wrap.**

Photo: Nick Cave