



MARY JAEGER

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

"I AM MOTIVATED BY THE DESIRE TO LEARN AND CHANGE...MY REAL PASSION LIES IN THE STUDY OF 'TRADITIONAL' DYEING AND SURFACE EMBELLISHMENT TECHNIQUES LIKE JAPANESE TEGAKI YUZEN, SHIBORI, TSUTSUGAMI (JAPANESE FINGERNAIL WEAVING), INDONESIAN TULIS BATIK, AND INTRICATE EMBROIDERY AND BEADING WORK LIKE THAT DONE IN CHINA, JAPAN, OR MOROCCO. I APPRECIATE THE CRAFTSMANSHIP, TECHNIQUE, DESIGNS AND UTILITARIAN FOCUS OF ANTIQUE TEXTILE PIECES, ACCESSORIES, AND GARMENTS. MANY OF THESE TECHNIQUES ARE DISAPPEARING AS CULTURES CHANGE AND TECHNOLOGY IS INTRODUCED. THE CHALLENGE OF DESIGNING MY COLLECTIONS IS TO MAINTAIN THE ARTISTIC INTEGRITY OF THE TEXTILE USING HANDS-ON TECHNIQUES, YET MODERNIZE THE DESIGN AND FUNCTION."

Right:

Mary Jaeger, *Kimono Mosaic Wrap: Momoji and Coral Shibori*, 2001; vintage kimono pieces contrasted with contemporary silks; reversible with comparable pattern on each side.

Photo: Stuart Liben. Model: Saori Tanaka.

Opposite page:

Mary Jaeger, *Himalayan Long Shawl*, 2001; wool, silk, nylon blend; limited edition: 1/2.

Photo: Stuart Liben. Model: Saori Tanaka.



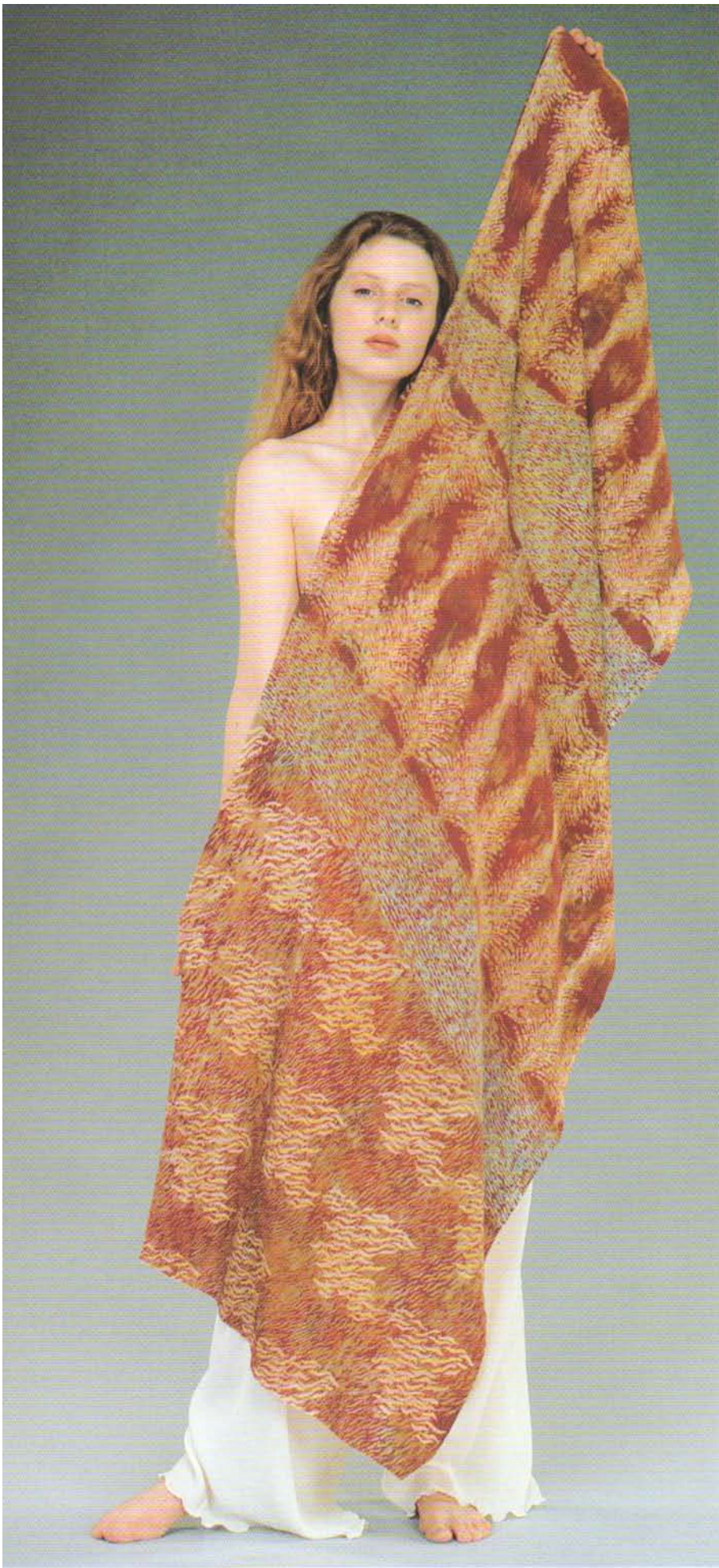
Influenced by centuries-old techniques, Mary Jaeger's work supplies an innovative bridge between the distant past and the yet-to-be future. Fusing the energies innate to Western innovation and Eastern mastery of process, she creates bodies of work that echo her creative desires and changing interests. She has cultivated her own aesthetic through processes that are used as tools for the expression of her ideas.

After studies in apparel, textiles, and related arts at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, The University of Notre Dame in Indiana, and The Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, she pursued the study of traditional textile techniques in Japan. There she learned to think of her work in textiles as an art form. Her academic studies in Kyoto during the 1980s centered on hand painting on silk (direct and resist dye applications) as well as surface embellishments such as beading and embroidery. The discipline acquired through learning textile techniques such as *tegaki yuzen*, that involves around 15 different steps to create finely-shaded painterly scenes on silk, aided her road to success as an artist and businessperson.

After two years of formal schooling in Japan, she was invited to work with a kimono company called Koei Kogei to design a collection of western-styled clothing using a traditional Japanese textile design method. Her work gained her acclaim which lent her opportunities to design important collections in Japan and Europe over the next few years.

After her years abroad, she longed to return to the United States. She sold her designs in gallery and trunk shows across the country and marketed her work with the help of an agent. Eventually, she established a design studio in New York City, where she still works today. In 1998, she and her husband collaborated in the process of opening a store to house her creations in NoLiTa (North of Little Italy), an area just east of Soho in New York. Jaeger notes that she enjoys the "challenge





and flexibility” of having her own retail business. She uses the internet as a resource for reaching a global audience, while her store serves as a place to exhibit her collection and educate patrons about textile processes.

Through the years, Jaeger’s collections have engaged a “cross-culture blending of techniques, fabrics, and colors,” which she acknowledges as the most satisfying aspect of her work. Her most recent work with wool incorporates a texturing technique that she considers to be her signature look. From this raw material, she sculpts three-dimensional pieces by stitching a series of geometrically-placed tucks into the flat fabric. “The resulting textiles resemble topographic landscapes and encourage the wearer to wrap the shawls and capes in a multitude of ways, pushing the mountainous dimples in and out, creating their own look,” she explains. Jaeger feels that “the possibilities for this surface texturing are limitless.”

As she hits her creative stride in the diverse world of the 21st century, Jaeger seems to have learned how to successfully meet the market on her own terms—driven by the fuel of years of preparation, research, discipline, and innovation.

Left:

Mary Jaeger, *Scandinavian Forest at Midnight*, 1995; crinkle silk; batik resist, hand painted.

Photo: Tom McInvale. Model: Sabrina Fassbinder

Opposite page, left:

Mary Jaeger, *Mondrian Network*, 2001; wool; hand tucked, detailed with cube hematite beading; silk charmeuse bias skirt.

Photo: Stuart Liben. Model: Saori Tanaka

Opposite page, right:

Mary Jaeger, *Kimono Mosaic Wrap: Spring Under the Sumptuary Laws*, 2001; vintage kimono pieces contrasted with contemporary silks, reversible with comparable pattern on each side.

Photo: Stuart Liben. Model: Saori Tanaka

