



**TIM**  
**HARDING**  
STILLWATER, MINNESOTA

"IN PAINTING THE PICTURE PLANE IS THE WINDOW THROUGH WHICH THE AUDIENCE MUST LOOK TO EXPERIENCE THE ARTIST'S VISION. THAT PLANE IS ALSO PERHAPS THE ULTIMATE BARRIER BETWEEN ART AND LIFE. CAN THE ARTIST EVER BREAK THAT BARRIER AND INVOLVE THE VIEWER IN THE CREATIVE ACT: CAN THE VIEWER EVER BE 'IN' THE WORK?"





Opposite page:

**Tim Harding, *Aspen*, 1987;**  
cotton; dyed, layered,  
quilted, slashed, frayed.

Photo: Petronella Ytsma

Above:

**Tim Harding, *Koi Kimono*, 1996;**  
silk; layered, stitched, cut, pressed.

Photo: Petronella Ytsma



Right:  
**Tim Harding, *Shroud Triptych*, 1990; silk; pieced, cut, draped.**

Photo: Nancy Neuman Press

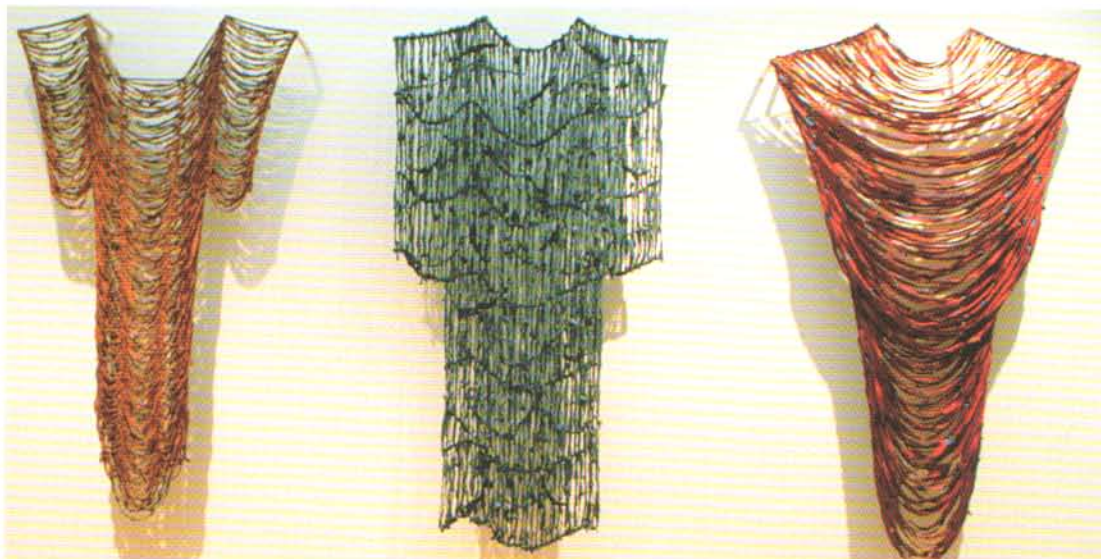
Opposite page:  
**Tim Harding, *Reversible Silk Vest and "Cut-outs" Shawl*, 1989; silk; layered, quilted, slashed, frayed.**

Photo: Lawrence Manning

Model: Fiona Gebreselassie

Below:  
**Tim Harding, *Magma*, 2001; silk; layered, stitched, cut, manipulated.**

Photo: Petronella Yisma



**With the eye of a surgeon who** knows the anatomy of the world beneath his scalpel, Tim Harding cuts through layers of fabric in a revealing way. The armature of clothing, on which he hangs his formal considerations, is secondary to his obsession with texture, color, line, and mark.

Harding began his artistic life as a painter, often applying layers of paint to his canvas before scratching the surface to disclose some of the painting's underbelly. He found the canvas of his paintings more interesting than the paint. Intrigued by the textural possibilities of the medium of fabric, he returned to school to study art at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in Minnesota.

In 1979, he developed a technique for building up a "complex structure" of fabric by dyeing, layering, and quilting before "revealing color, image, and pattern



through the mutilation of its surface" by slashing and fraying. This technique—although it has been used to serve a progression of concepts—has remained a constant in his work for more than 20 years.

In 1986, he began layering and slashing heavy cottons sewn into the forms of greatcoats and kimonos. During the later part of the 1980s, he did a series of landscapes on coats with references to nature. Using the fabric as a painter would use paint, he slashed and pressed the fabric to create patterns that suggested trees, clouds, or water. By the 1990s, he found that he favored the intense colors and vulnerable surface of silk over cotton, and his work became more and more an abstraction of nature than a nod at representing it.

In his present work, he creates not only clothing but wall pieces that allow him to explore the visual properties of color and texture without the added consideration of the garment's shape. Whether his work takes the form of wall pieces or garments, it constantly challenges assumptions about art and craft by not bending to categorization.

In a more recent series of work, he has turned to the study of the properties of light on water, dealing with reflection and refraction. Although he still uses nature as a point of departure, it almost seems unnecessary. Harding is by nature a colorist who explores the endless formal and emotive possibilities of his subject matter.



