Chador | Veil–Tent

Reconceptualizing the veil with a speculative and performative approach

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Abstract

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This thesis is a research-creation project that aims to explore the veil beyond the controversial definitions and interpretations which have been ascribed to it, thereby to investigate the borders between inside and outside, men and women, human and non-human. This research, thus, speculates on the possibility of a composed veil, as a customizable boundary that can be personalized and co-created actively by its wearer through a performative approach. While the veil (chador in Farsi) negotiates privacy and interiority as a visible, personal space and boundary constructed directly on the body, at a larger yet still intimate scale, traditional Iranian architecture is also characterized by interiority and introverted spatiality as foundational principles. By positioning the body, the veil and Iranian residential architecture in mutual dynamic interaction, this research seeks to reconceptualize the veil as a 'microcosmic dwelling place' which defines an extension of privacy in public and emplaces the body within a context. Consequently, each phase of the research-creation project reveals particular material and spatial aspects of the veil, to constitute a multisensory environment that mutably reconstructs the boundaries between body and space. The composed veil, in this framing, no longer limited to any specific religion, or gender, or cultural context, could be redefined by that wearer as a means of individualized emplacement and engagement in a given social context.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Preface

The wearing of a religious veil, and practices of veiling, are controversial topics across the world that generate numerous social and political discourses. In recent decades, the veil has become a symbol of Muslim women, perceived in many cases as so-called proof of their oppression, a position mostly rooted in two opposite political standpoints. On the one hand, this position derives from what might be understood as an orientalized veil and from judging Muslim women according to western standards, which are culturally and historically different from Eastern ideologies (Almila, 2018a; Khan, 2004). On the other hand, it is the result of imposed veiling as an instrument for internal and foreign policies in many Islamic countries, namely Iran, which seeks to control women's sexuality as part of those states' development procedures (Sedghi, 2007).

Through these political lenses, Muslim women, despite both their diversity and their individuality, are usually overgeneralized behind the surface of the anonymizing politicized veil. While this overgeneralization has homogenized all Muslim women, it has also dichotomized them from other women and men around the world. As a consequence of this generalization and, moreover, what might be called this anonymization, the veil has proved to be an insurmountable barrier not only between Muslim and non-Muslim but also between diverse cultures and ethnic identities. This dichotomization of Muslim women has affected many of those individual women's lives. These impacts have a variety of personal and communal consequences, ranging from limiting one's social participation and integration to the displacement of women from particular geographical contexts.

Project objectives and focus

This project is an attempt to understand the act of veiling from a perspective that intentionally takes the discussion out of the range of stereotypes and misunderstandings about what veiling does. This research, most of all, brings the focus back to the individual who wears the garment, to explore what it means for her as an agential individual. This is important because the wearer of the veil as the main subject has been largely ignored in many of these discourses, which overemphasize cliché social norms and reductive perceptions of the veil. This thesis, thus, speculates on the possibility of a *composed veil*— which is in contrast with the notion of the *imposed veil*—, as a customizable boundary that can be personalized, that is, can be actively co-created by its wearer. The composed veil, in this framing, no longer limited to any specific religion, or gender, or cultural context, could be redefined by that wearer as a means of individualized emplacement and engagement in a given social context.

While the veil (chador in Farsi) negotiates privacy and interiority as a visible, personal space and boundary constructed directly on the body, at a larger yet still intimate scale, traditional Iranian architecture is also characterized by interiority and introverted spatiality as foundational principles. By positioning the body, the veil and Iranian residential architecture in mutual dynamic interaction, this research seeks to reconceptualize the veil as a 'microcosmic dwelling place' which defines an extension of privacy in public and emplaces the body within a context.

This research seeks to investigate how consideration of the chador, not as part of a dress code but as a 'microcosmic dwelling place,' can embody alternative narratives for social engagement in Iranian culture, through a performative approach. Socio-cultural research and analysis of veiling studies, overlaid with an exploration of the contrapuntal relationship between the chador and traditional Iranian architecture, will drive a process of research-creation toward this end. The following keywords serve to bridge various segments of the project: personal and cultural boundaries, bodily practices, materiality, spatiality, emplacement, displacement, and multisensory engagement.

Personal motivations and inspirations

Having the experience of living both in a Muslim country, Iran, and in a multicultural context, Quebec-Canada—the latter having a wide range of religions and beliefs—I have had the chance to observe veiling issues in two different contexts. Clearly, the issues around veiling practices are persistent challenges for many women, as an everyday practice in my country of origin, Iran, and, as we see today, even here in Quebec-Canada. Stimulated by this realization, this project seeks to reconsider the concept of the veil through a speculative perspective.

The research-creation approach to design has provided a chance for me to direct my experience of architecture, and as an architect, toward the sensitive topic of the veil. My architectural education and background, on the one hand, influenced the way that I have perceived and conceptualized the notion of the veil as a spatial practice. On the other hand, my recent activities and research extended my sensitivity in engaging with the materiality of the veil. This very personal understanding inspired me to extend the concept of the veil from its literal meaning to the more tangible context of a dwelling place in Iranian culture, through a speculative and performative approach.

Overview of chapters

In chapters Two, Three and Four, first, I will explain why the veil has become a significant controversial issue, and how veiling as a misunderstood concept has impacted many women's lives for a number of years. Next, I will explore different existing connotations for the words veil and veiling, translated from hijab in Arabic and chador in Farsi, as specific to different cultures and contexts, in order to explain why I have chosen the word chador as the appropriate term for the purposes of this project. In addition, I will present my methodology and the theoretical and conceptual background that supports my research-creation project. Moreover, as a precedent for this Master of Design project strategy of research-creation, I will discuss the veil from the lens of two Iranian artists and try to underscore the critical importance of their approaches.

In chapter Five, I will focus on the underpinnings of the creative process of my artworks, which include speculation of concepts, explorations through material practices and

implementation of diverse media, prototyping, and finally production of an installation named *Chador| Veil–Tent III*, and a stage performance (specifically the fifth scene), *Of the world, dust remains*. In these projects, a bio-textile acts as a material metaphor of the veil, and constitutes a multisensory environment that mutably reconstructs the boundaries between spaces and bodies, and, indeed, in *Of the world, dust remains*, the barriers between performer and spectator. In this way, the bio-textile reveals compelling aspects of its own material agency, by imaginatively positioning the body, the veil, and representations of Iranian residential architecture in mutual dynamic interaction. This flexible porous boundary is composed by its wearer or inhabitant in relation to or negation with many personal, cultural and even natural elements, to symbolically provide a platform for emplacement in given circumstances or contexts.

Chapter 2: Reviewing the Background

Introducing the main context - Veiling as a significant and controversial issue

Especially since late colonial and post-colonial times, the veil, which had "been legally and socially regulated for thousands of years in different contexts" (Almila, 2018a, p. 4), has been framed as an Islamic symbol. The veil, thus, has been extremely fetishized and politicized and become one of the most politically heated topics around the world. However, the subject has a long history, even before Islam, and has been ascribed a vast range of meanings depending on different religious, cultural and geographical contexts (El Guindi, 1999; Zahedi, 2007). For instance, El Guindi writes that the veil in Christianity signalled seclusion from worldly life and sex, as in the case of nuns—a practice that precedes Islam—yet this definition is not commonly recognized. Moreover, he makes mention of veil utilization by both men and women in the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic Arab East, which is supported by ethnographic evidence (El Guindi, 1999, pp. 3–12). In the *Iranica Encyclopaedia*, according to literary sources, there is evidence that in pre-Islamic Iran, the veil had been worn not only by women from different classes, including Persian queens, but also by Persian kings (Yarshater & Columbia University, 1997). According to Almila:

> […] many Jews, Christians, and Hindus also practise forms of veiling. Veiling is also a fundamentally global phenomenon today: it is practised in North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia Minor, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, Far East Asia, Australia, Latin America, North America, and Europe in many forms and shapes. Beyond the obvious forms of veiling, other phenomena, such as

male facial hair and masks can also be studied within the framework of veiling. (2018a, p. 1)

Furthermore, during its long history, the veil has adapted a wide range of shapes, colours and materials. Sometimes their styles and influences have been mixed in a way that makes it challenging to interpret the exact cultural and religious belongings (El Guindi, 1999). To conclude, it can be argued that "veiling as a global phenomenon, not limited to any specific religion, to one gender only, or to particular garments, styles, or appearances" (Almila, 2018a, p. 1) has been practiced in different forms and has been given different meanings.

Veiling discourses lead to cliché social norms

In our era, whereas "for many women, the veil remains an everyday item, something that indicates religious belonging and facilitates religious practice, ensures appropriate gender relations and moral purity" (Almila, 2018a, p. 10), it symbolically has emerged as a political metaphor encompassing all the differences and distinctions between Western and Eastern, Islamic and non-Islamic norms and values. Consequently, the veil has become a battleground for many contradictory interpretations and frameworks. Allievi delineates two of them:

> At the risk of excessive simplification, two dominant positions can be distinguished in the public discourse. For the west, the Muslim women are by definition downtrodden, and the symbol of her oppression is the hijab, the veil she is forced to wear. For some Muslim women—and for Muslim men— it is Western women who are slaves to their obligation to be beautiful and available, on pain of being rejected, and so it is they who are not free. (2006, p. 120)

Many critics believe that these oppositional discourses, which have been formed out of clichéd social norms, are rooted in mutual misunderstandings about the political and contextual differences between East and West. This misunderstanding has solidified notions of other and otherness, which have either dichotomized women and men, and Muslim and non-Muslim, or have classified Muslims as insiders or outsiders in different social contexts.[1] Therefore, both the

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[1] The demarcation between the "good" and "bad" Muslim which are sometimes defined as the insiders and the outsiders, depends on the acceptance or refusal of each state's veiling policies, yet many scholars, namely Volpp,

symbolic perception and the excessive generalization of the veil have resulted in a particular public understanding of otherness. According to Allievi, "quite often it is surrounding society that creates the problem of the veil, and in a way insists on it as part of the cliché of the Islamic woman" (2006, p. 121). To sum up, although these two contradictory viewpoints have deep roots in the cultural constructs of their social context, they are highly politicized, and thereby reinforce the complicated situation of many women's lives on a global scale.

According to these political interpretations about veiling practices, many women are in a persistent challenge in addressing problematic issues regarding what they wear. They are under question from both sides, either when they don the veil in non-Muslim contexts or when they do not follow the dictated dress codes in some of the Muslim countries. For this reason, an exploration of the chador as a veil and garment is completely relevant to both geographical groundings of this research, Iran and Quebec-Canada. It can be argued that in both contexts, it is the politicized veil and the politics of veiling that fundamentally shape the everyday experiences of Muslim women and the very meaning of other and otherness.

The process of veiling, unveiling and re-veiling in Iran

Iran is one of the Muslim countries with compulsory dress codes for women that has included veiling during much of its history. Indeed, the veiling of women was common even before Islam, as well as afterward, for example with compulsory veiling and unveiling processes in existence during the early Islamic period (Yarshater & Columbia University, 1997). During the last hundred years Iranian women veiled at the turn of nineteen century or Qajar dynasty,[2] unveiled from 1936 to 1979[3] during the Pahlavi dynasty, and re-veiled after Islamic Revolution of 1979 and

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argue that it is more broadly embedded in hegemonic ideas about culture. For instance, Volpp's (2007) argument about multiculturalism and the culture of citizenship, explains how, in the eyes of many both people and states, the good Muslim has a "culture-free citizenship" and is willing to be modernized. In contrast, the bad one is a "culturally-laden other," who refuses to become liberated from her/his ancient cultural attachments.

[2] During the Qajar dynasty, the veil signified women's secluded world and privacy in a sex-segregated patriarchal context and defined a barrier between women and the real world outside. Females were hidden behind the walls, curtains, or the veil. Their mobility was so restricted, and they hardly appeared in the public spaces, unless being veiled in a black chador under specific circumstances (Sedghi, 2007).

[3] As a part of his large-scale modernization political strategies, Reza Shah defined a new dress code for women and banned the chador and headscarf in 1936. Many women who considered the veil as an obstacle to their progress in

they remain veiled (Almila, 2018a; Sedghi, 2007; Shirazi, 2018). Post-1979, the newly-imposed dress code marginalized many women, who insisted on their emancipation and freedom. Four decades after the Islamic revolution, although many women do not believe in compulsory veiling, they have adapted it to survive and to stay socially active. As Sedghi makes clear in her book, *Women and politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling* (2007), the veil has a more complicated meaning than merely a cover to conceal the body or appearance of Muslim women, and it is part of the more significant systems of Iranian states, politics and power (2007, p. 2). It is clear, then, that Iranian women's lives have been profoundly affected by the need to navigate through the complexities of these political connotations and implications of veiling practices.

Beyond the aforementioned complexities, for many years, women have tried to challenge the rigid boundaries of the imposed veil and some have employed various methods of wearing the garment according to their personal, aesthetic, social and environmental needs. These manipulations have been able to surpass the forces imposed by the regime and provide these women with the power for choosing their own so-called personal boundary. In other words, the young generation "use an array of multiple fashion systems to create not only their own fashion but also to negotiate ethnicity, identity and religion"[4]— despite the negative attitude of Iran's government toward these manipulations— (Shirazi, 2018, p. 108). Inspired by these constructive reconsiderations of veiling practices, in this research, I explore the notion of the veil as a customizable boundary which can negotiate its wearer's identity.

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public life, work and education, embraced the change and became unveiled. On the other hand, for many men, women and, above all, the clergy, this compulsory unveiling was not the symbol of women's emancipation and modernization but an act of shame and oppression. Consequently, enforced unveiling marginalized many women, for whom the veil was an inseparable element of identity and a symbol of respect, virtue and pride (Begolo, 2008; Shirazi, 2018; Zahedi, 2007).

[4] For further details about hijab fashion shows, secretive underground fashion hijab, and street hijab styles, as part of Iranian women's struggle to invent their new styles and course of actions see Shirazi, 2018, pp. 108-112.

Multiculturalism and veiling debates in Quebec - Canada

Misunderstanding about veiling practices is pervasive in Quebec-Canada, as well. Quebec is a multicultural environment and Muslims are part of its ethnic mosaic. However, the veil, not as a cultural value but as a political issue, has been targeted in Canadian political and media discourses. For instance, this political approach had become even more apparent after Quebec's government passed Bill 21, on June 16, 2019. According to the Bill, religious symbols were required to disappear as a manifestation of Quebec secularism, from most public spaces (Uprichard, 2019). The Canadian government has been opposed to Bill 21, and the debate has been part of everyday news in Quebec for a while. In *Veiling narratives: Discourses of Canadian multiculturalism*, Kassam and Mustafa broaden the discussion to Canada as a whole, and argue:

> Proposals to limit the rights of women in religious or cultural expression are very much about power and privilege rather than about gender equality. We contend that there is no difference between the power dynamic of compulsory *uncovering* and compulsory *covering* of Muslim women. (2018, p. 80)

One of the objectives of this thesis, and of the research-creation project at its heart, is to provide the viewers and readers, and Quebec society as a whole, with another point of view when confronting the veil, either in observation or discussion. Individuals are thereby being asked consider veil-wearing more as a personal and cultural practice than as a political imperative. Only in that case can one then ask two crucial underlying questions: what does the veil means to its wearer in a society in which both culturally and socially differs from hers; and, do cultural and social confrontation and integration impact the notion of the veil as a customizable boundary, and, for that matter, does it need any adaptation accordingly? My hope has been to provide a space for such discussions regarding the cultural differences and its nuances through different layers of this research work.

Definitions - Choice of terminology

Different connotations exist for the words veil and veiling, differentiations that are more than simply literal translations across particular languages (Farsi versus Arabic, for example). And whereas some of these terms have precise meanings socially and contextually, they are overcharged with preconception in other languages or other cultural contexts. Consequently, a precise choice of terminology relevant to this sensitive topic is crucial both to reach an in-depth understanding of their socio-cultural relations and to avoid misinterpretation. Bringing the focus to three familiar words—veil, hijab and chador—is essential to clarify why the term chador has been chosen as optimal for this research-creation exploration. As will be demonstrated below, the term underscores the viewpoint from which the subject has been targeted, and clarifies the author's approach.

Veil

In *Veil: modesty, privacy and resistance*, El Guindi–describes the multi-dimensional meaning of the veil:

> [T]he meanings assigned in general reference works to the Western term *veil*
> comprise four dimensions: the material, the spatial, the communicative, and the
> religious. The material dimension consists of clothing and ornament, i.e. veil in the
> sense of clothing article covering head, shoulders, and face or in the sense of
> ornamentation over a hat drawn over the eyes. […] The spatial sense specifies veil
> as a screen dividing physical space, while the communication sense emphasizes the
> notion of concealing and invisibility. (1999, p. 6)

According to these definitions, then, the term has the potential to describe different aspects of spatial, material, and communicative practices. As has already been noted, however, during recent years, the term has been associated primarily with Muslim women and Muslim worlds and defines their inferiority and oppression. To cite from Almila, "admittedly, to use the word veil is to introduce a potentially Eurocentric, Western viewpoint," (2018a, p. 2), thereby subverting the Eastern perception of the term, and hence cannot be considered impartial. Given that realization,

the veil as a term is inappropriate as a means to reflect the complexity and diversity of all the practices associated with it in different cultures and languages.

Hijab

The Arabic word hijab has been defined variously in dictionaries and the Quran. It means a barrier, a partition, and obstacle, or it refers to something that prevents, covers, or protects. Indeed, many Muslim women themselves give the term varying connotations, related not only to dress but to purity and modest behaviour (Almila, 2018a; Ruby, 2006). According to these definitions, the term hijab, like the term veil, refers to multidimensional contexts and meanings. Yet despite all the semantic nuances of the Arabic term hijab, due to its association with Islamic values, it is heavily charged with preconception in Western countries, and, in the eyes of many, is a symbol of resistance and oppression.

Chador

The word chador has several meanings in Farsi dictionaries, for example, a sheet, tent, shade and a piece of garment. As a garment, the chador is the name given to one of the forms of headdresses in Iran, a long veil with the open front that covers the body from head to toe. In Persian classical texts, there is evidence that women from different periods and classes wore either the chador or another form of headdress in Iran. At the turn of the nineteenth century, under the reign of the Qajar dynasty, the chador was one of the three-piece garments women had to wear (Sedghi, 2007, p. 26). It was the standard outer garment for women until its prohibition by Reza Shah, in 1936. After the Islamic revolution, 1979, in Iran following by compulsory veiling rules, some women still wear the chador, the black one in public spaces and the light-coloured floral one for indoor use (Yarshater & Columbia University, 1997). Also, many traditional women still don a light-coloured chador at home or during special ceremonies.

In this project, the double meaning of the term chador, both as a veil and a tent, opens a broader perspective to investigate the veil, not only as the long garment with the open front that covers the body from head to toe as mentioned above, but also as an ephemeral dwelling place, like a tent. By focusing on the materiality and spatiality of chador as, essentially, a covering applied

either directly to the body, or more broadly encompassing a particular space, the term deflects attention away from the overcharged topic of veiling practices in terms of gender issues, politics and many other controversial aspects ascribed to it. Furthermore, that chador is a Persian word makes it a better choice for this project, given its attendant Iranian cultural proximities and, hence, relevance to my own work. Much more than a mere game of words, then, this analysis of terminology, and the research-creation project that accompanies it, productively engage a consistent and intentional fluctuation between veil and tent away from cultural biases and stereotypes, by extrapolating from a wearable to a dwelling space in all its stages of research and creation.

This exploration of terminology is also useful because the co-definition of tent further emphasizes the materiality and spatiality of the garment, versus its symbolic significance as established by non-wearers, and thereby constitutes a valuable opportunity to compare it with Iranian domestic architecture as a way to envelop and encompass, in this case, the space around the body.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research-creation, Research through design

This thesis follows the methodological approach of research-creation. SSHRC defines this methodology as

> an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms). (Social sciences and humanities research council, 2019)

The definition also makes clear that formal or academic research-creation cannot be limited to this process; it must contribute new knowledge through both artworks and written papers or thesis which can be disseminated and scrutinized (Candy & Edmonds, 2018). In short, the project can be reviewed and evaluated not only through an artist's lens but also by academics and other stakeholders –such as audiences– who come in contact with it.

The project at the heart of this thesis can be categorized under the *Research through design* approach. This research approach "is constituted by the design process itself, including materials research, development work, and the critical act of recording and communicating the steps, experiments, and iterations of design" (Martin & Hanington, 2012, p. 146). It also offers a more comprehensive understanding of the subject through direct engagement with the material practices such as installations and performances.

I pursued the methodology of research-creation because of its "strong potential as a form of intervention precisely due to its often experimental, processual nature" (Chapman & Sawchuk, 2012, p. 11). In this project, research-creation provided a context to generate and disseminate new knowledge through a personal and performative approach, thereby helping to create a context for socio-cultural analysis and debates. Here, adapting the research-creation methodology provided a unique insight that otherwise could not be uncovered through other forms of research.

Toward that end, over the course of the project, instead of generating one outcome I developed four speculative research-creation exercises. These took the form of installations and performances, and all will be examined thoroughly in the following chapter. Although each project could be considered as a separate or solo work, all of them were intertwined to offer a unique conceptual approach to explore the meaning of the veil from different perspectives. The process of creating each project was therefore an opportunity for exploration as well as for reflection and evaluation.

My goal has been to explore the means through which veiling as a customizable and personalize-able phenomenon can be framed through an interdisciplinary approach. This research-creation investigated a new strategy to address the subject matter, namely through materialization and spatialization of discourse. Consequently, that research has been situated at the intersection of different disciplines, from architecture to performance. This interdisciplinary approach enabled me to consider the outcomes of the project not only within design theories but within other methods in which the alternative approaches to the veil as a spatial and material practice, either directly or indirectly, were being inspected. Through design theory, I focused on two threads of exploration that guided this research-creation towards the end, namely speculation and performativity.

Speculative approach to design as a method

In *Speculative everything* (2013), Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby define speculative design as the design or use of objects or artifacts to engage with social and political issues by applying imaginative thinking. This approach to design offers new design alternatives and possibilities for a preferable future. It proposes neither a solution nor necessarily "a better way, just another way" of being (p. 189). As Dunne and Raby claim:

This form of design thrives on imagination and aims to open up new perspectives on what are sometimes called wicked problems, to create spaces for discussion and debate about alternative ways of being, and to inspire and encourage people's imaginations to flow freely. Design speculations can act as a catalyst for collectively redefining our relationship to reality. (2013, p. 2)

Speculative design is a critical way of thinking about how the world is, and its aim is to open up a space for discussion and debate on how the world could be. Usually by taking the form of a narrative or scenario in a provocative and fictional context, through speculative design viewers are encouraged "to suspend their disbelief and allow their imaginations to wander, to momentarily forget how things are now, and wonder about how things could be"(Dunne & Raby, 2013, p. 3). Also, Dunne and Raby argue that we need to change ourselves, reprogram and rethink our beliefs, values and priorities to fit within the limitations of our planet. Speculative design is a proposal for progress and "change for the better, of course, *better* means different things to different people"(2013, p. 3).

In *Critical of what?*, Ramia Mazé referred to this type of design, which is more concerned with "exposing issues and articulating questions" (Mazé, 2009, p. 381), as critical practice. This critical practice needs to be explored in an interdisciplinary way, with many crossovers from, for instance, architecture, performance, music, literature or other disciplines (Mazé, 2009, pp. 379–397).

The research-creation investigation explored in this thesis was, essentially, more about asking questions than finding answers. Throughout all the stages of creation, it started by asking "what if" questions instead of using problem-solving strategies. Hence, all the projects that comprised this research-creation evolved around a quest, not to re-experience the notion of the veil as it is, but to speculate how the meaning of the veil could be reconceptualized in a given context. For those reasons, I have tried to adopt an interdisciplinary approach of design to derive new platforms for rethinking and reimagining the sensitive issue of the veil. Thus, the veil as a material and spatial place became the main clustering mechanism around which all imagination and speculation might open up new possibilities for material practices and narratives. This speculative context, then, could provide a platform for discussion and debate around other aspects of the subject.

To conclude, through this approach, the project offers new possibilities for reformulating the veil as a 'microcosmic dwelling place' to experiment with new perspectives and values, which are rooted in Iranian culture and architecture. Although I could have chosen to undertake my research by addressing and recreating existing Iranian architectural paradigms, I preferred to excavate the essence rather than form and craft new ideas through videos, performances and installations.

Performative approach to design – Performativity as a method

Philosopher and feminist theorist Judith Butler applies the term performativity to the analysis of gender development. She argues that not only gender but our identities can be performed through everyday social performances and iterative corporeal acts which she defines as performativity. For instance, she distinguishes between sex as "biological facticity," and gender as "cultural interpretation" to reason that gender is formed through performativity. She writes:

> To be female is, according to that distinction, a facticity which has no meaning, but to be a woman is to have become a woman, to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of 'woman,' to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project. (1988, p. 522)

Butler reasons that the formation of gender and identity is never fully "self-styled," but rooted in history, and "that history conditions and limits possibilities" (1988, p. 521). But what if gender and identity are revised, renewed and reconceptualized through iterative collective acts to constitute a reality 'that is in some sense new'?

From another perspective, in the article *Artistic research: A performative paradigm,* Bolt asserts that performativity is a conceptual and critical effort, an attempt to create a "new" or a "difference" to get beyond the norms and "to effect 'movement' in thought, word and deed in the individual and social sensorium" (2016, p. 129). Bolt asserts that a performative act is not a singular performance, but an iterative act that engages the body (both the artist and the spectators), tools and materials in everyday practice. Through such iterative practice, a new form of understanding can be realized. To sum up, it can be said that, in artistic research endeavours,

performativity is an interdisciplinary approach that invites "new ways of analysis, modes that focus on process, participation, events, expressive actions and experience" (2016, p. 134) to theorize, make and act in the world.

In this project, speculating the veil as a 'microcosmic dwelling place' is an opening to a series of pertinent questions. Who occupies the veil? Is it others who impose the veil on its inhabitants or is it the veil itself that dictates certain limitations to its wearer due to its materiality and form? Using a speculative platform for this research, instead of seeking more pragmatic answers to all these questions, I tried to rephrase the questions differently to suggest a new approach. What if the veil and the wearer mutually define and redefine each other according to different given contexts and in relation to others (human and non-human)?

Performativity embodies enactment, and therefore, in this project, a performative approach was taken in order to encompass deep engagement through bodily and material practices. These iterative bodily practices operated the embodied modes of thinking. The bodily engagement was explored in different phases, in which new imaginations and conceptualizations were developed through sketches and prototyping. This strategy was inspired by Pallasmaa, who argues that:

> Sketching and drawing are spatial and haptic exercises that fuse the external reality of space and matter, and the internal reality of perception, thought and mental imagery into singular and dialectic entities. As I sketch a contour of an object, human figure or landscape, I actually touch and feel the surface of the subject of my attention, and unconsciously I sense and internalize its character. (2009, p. 89)

On the one hand, the choreography of sketching embodied highly personal performativity. On the other hand, all the prototypes provide a setting for bodily engagement and interaction of spectators as performers.

Design for social equity through speculation and performativity

In the first chapter of *Discrimination by design: a feminist critique of the man-made environment*, Weisman discusses how classifying people according to their race, gender, wealth and other criteria, can end up in social inequality reinforcing the spatial caste system. The author

argues that dichotomies of people delineate the manner in which we collectively conceptualize social, physical and metaphysical space in society. Accordingly, "these three spatial realms constitute the symbolic universe that structures human experience and defines human reality. Far from being absolute, the symbolic universe varies greatly among different cultures since it is subjectively created" (1992, p. 10).

As Weisman came to recognize, "physical space and social space reflect and rebound upon each other," and she mentioned that " both the world out there and the world inside ourselves depend upon and conform to our socially learned perceptions and values" (1992, p. 9). For instance, in many societies, we can find links between particular symbolic physical directions and spaces, and that society's social and biological classification mechanisms. From a feminist perspective, the author criticizes societies in which social and gender inequality has become embedded in the organization of space and inscribed in the design of the "man-made" built environment. In such a "man-made" built environment, dichotomies between male and female also impact territorial behaviour. Weisman claims that controlling personal territory is essential and explains:

> Territories manage personal identity by establishing the spatial and psychological
> boundary between self and other whether self in an individual or group. When we
> are unable to control our own territory, our identity, sense of well-being, self-
> esteem, and ability to function may become seriously impaired. (1992, p. 23)

In *The environment and social behavior* (1975), Altman identified this personal territory as privacy and stated that "privacy is an interpersonal boundary-control process which paces and regulates interaction with others" (1975, p. 10). However, as both Almila and Altman write, this boundary is more flexible in reality, and it is in fluctuation between the particular level of closeness and openness according to the different cultural contexts and interactions (2018b; 1975). Privacy, also, could be studied in association with the notion of self-identity. People need to be accepted by others through their resemblance, yet they need to be respected for their individuality and their distinctions. (Altman, 1975, pp. 48–51) Following this definition, privacy functions as an integral element of cultural and individual identity, what Marc Augé called frontier:

> The notion of frontiers itself marks the minimal and necessary distance that ought
> to exist between individuals to make them free to communicate with each other as

they intend. […] So our ideal ought not to be a world without frontiers, but one where all frontiers are recognized, respected and permeable; a world, in fact, where respect for differences would start with the equality of all individuals, independent of their origin or gender. (2008, pp. xiv-xv)

Later in *Non-places* (2008), Augé claims that abolishing frontiers does not only eliminate different territories but diverse identities, "because individual and collective identity is always constructed in relation to and in negotiation with otherness" (Augé, 2008, p. xi). Therefore, from the author's viewpoint, an egalitarian universe is the homogenous, yet diverse space with permeable boundaries.

In addition, through a speculative lens, Weisman illustrates different platforms from which social equity, mostly gender equity, can be fostered. To open up new perspectives, she asks important and crucial questions such as, what if the notions of sex segregation and "the inequalities associated with them were abolished," or what if the territorial boundaries that currently separate personal, social and physical space could be redefined (1992, p. 32)? In exploring the answers, Weisman indicates that we should think about "to design a society in which all people matter" (1992, p. 179).

Throughout all the stages of this thesis, I have tried to explore these two questions: how the speculative materialized veil (tent) might provide a social platform for recognition, discussion and debate about this sensitive socio-cultural issue; and how this iterative and performative process might foster the equality of all individuals, regardless of their ethnic origin or gender. To unpack these questions and develop a speculative design I focused on the notion of emplacement, which can be understood in contradistinction with displacement, as the feeling of being socially marginalized and sensually homeless (Howes, 2005, pp. 1–17). David Howes asserts,

[T]he emergent paradigm of emplacement, suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment. […] Bringing the issue of emplacement to the fore allows us to reposition ourselves in relationship to the sensuous materiality of the world. […] We usually think of emplacement in terms of our visible and tangible surroundings but we relate to and create environments through all of our senses. (2005, pp. 7–8)

I undertook my conceptual creation process having been stimulated by the ideas represented in this literature review. These works led me to conceptualize the veil as a personal and cultural boundary that can be recognized and discussed in terms of a critical and speculative platform. In the following chapters that address the creation phase of the project, I try to investigate various methods of negotiating the cultural and personal boundaries enabled or afforded through the sensuous materiality of the veil in the context of Iranian cultural paradigms. As a way of cultural communication, sensing cultures and multisensory approach became the conceptual core of this project.

Chapter 4: Conceptual framework

Introduction

This chapter commences by asking what-if questions about the veil. For instance, what if the veil could be considered as a personal space? Alternatively, what if it could be perceived as a 'microcosmic dwelling place' or an extension of privacy in the public realm? These are critical questions, given the fact that respecting personal boundaries and preserving multiple layers of interiority is also one of the crucial aspects of traditional Iranian architecture. This chapter is based on an analogy between the notion of the veil and the concept of the border in the Iranian courtyard houses. I argue that in both, border functions not only as a phenomenological paradigm but also as a material reality, which separates and at the same time creates meaningful spaces on both sides.

In Iran, after Islam, domestic architectural traditions followed the principles of privacy — moving beyond the scale of the veil to that of the house— to enable a sense of freedom and intimacy not only to women but to all the household members. As the main concept of this research-creation, I will explain some of these architectural typologies related to my speculative approach. In the given examples, the notion of border negotiates the hierarchical layers of privacy and the multisensory aspects of the space on different levels of interiority or exteriority. Hence, the first part of this chapter seeks to explore the proximities of the spatial organization in both the veil and the courtyard houses typologies.

The second part of this chapter tries to illustrate the various interpretations of the veil from the lens of visual arts. Toward that end, two case studies were selected, focusing specifically on Iranian artists, in order to underscore their individual approaches and critical importance. These

artworks highlight the subject matter through the lens of two female artists currently living out of Iran and, thus, observing the problematics of that society from outside through visual and installation arts.

Iranian traditional courtyard houses, introverted spatial formation and privacy

The Iranian traditional courtyard house is one of the various types of dwellings that has introverted or inward-looking configurations. Sharp boundaries separate the inhabitants from the world outside. Tall exterior walls with few windows, carefully located above the eye-level of passers-by, guarantee the maximum separation of the two worlds. The only opening that is normally visible from the outside is an entrance with indirect access to the house (Memarian & Brown, 2003). From the inside, it follows a consistent spatial arrangement, although it varies in size and local characteristics from place to place.[5] Aside from all the physical and climatic comforts that these houses provide, due to their introverted formation, they are also best suited the traditional and cultural beliefs of their inhabitants, inasmuch as they emphasize family privacy away from the public sphere (Hosseini Raviz et al., 2015; Memarian & Brown, 2003).

Privacy in such households has operated at different layers, namely public, semi-public, semi-private, and private. The private part of the house includes bedrooms accessible only to their inhabitants. The semi-private sector has constituted space for family gatherings, while only female visitors have been invited to enter them. Male guests have been welcomed to enter only the public spaces of the house, including rooms specifically designated for guests (see Figure 1). As Memarian and Brown delineate it: "the entry pattern of the traditional house has to serve a dual function in preserving the privacy of the inner household, while at the same time offering warmth and hospitality to the visitor" (2003, p. 190).

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[5] Memarian, in his book: *Introduction to House typology in Iran*, *Courtyard houses* (1994), which is written in Farsi under the original title of: آشنایی با معماری مسکونی ایرانی، گونه شناسی درونگرا analyzes Iranian courtyard houses through a comprehensive approach by depicting them in the larger context of the city. He then explains their construction methods (materials and structural system), spatial characteristics (entrance, room and gardens and other spaces), typology of each space (architectural ornamentation and details), all of which vary house by house and from place to place around the country.

Private Layer
Semi-Private layer
Semi-Public Layer
Public Layer

Male
Visitors
Female
Visitors
Family
Gatherings
Personal
space
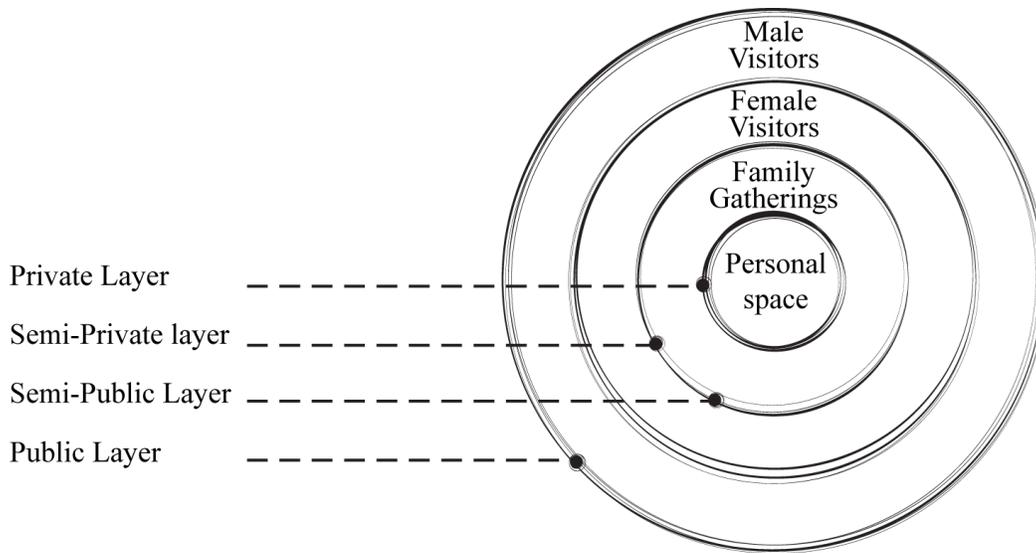
Figure 1: Different layers of privacy in Traditional Iranian courtyard houses. Diagram by author.

In this architectural typology, the hierarchical spatial organization has enabled people to have separate spaces for their personal or interpersonal relationships, from absolute solitude to ultimate social interaction. Although the boundaries between the interior and exterior spaces seem to be solid, the borders between interior levels of space in some parts of the house are interchangeable and flexible enough to modify the level of privacy and have the potential for changing the scale if needed. This organization shows that a certain amount of flexibility of the border was culturally acceptable up to the point where it reached the very limits of the public sphere. As an example, an *orsy* or sash window room reflects such flexibility of the space between interior space and the courtyard. Opening the sash window could expand the space by connecting it to adjacent spaces and the courtyard (see Figure 2).[6] This flexibility has allowed the inhabitants to ultimately adapt their residential spaces with their level of privacy and intimacy.

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[6] An *orsy, ارسی*, or sash window room has many other functions in Iranian courtyard houses. One of the common forms of *orsy* was a double window configuration, with both movable upper and lower parts. Two parts could either slide one behind the other or move upwards on an embedded rail within the wall thickness (Memarian & Brown, 2003, pp. 167–175). Hence, there were various options for opening or closing each part to serve different performance requirements, such as controlling the view from outside to inside, or expanding the semi-private spaces to the semi-public zone.
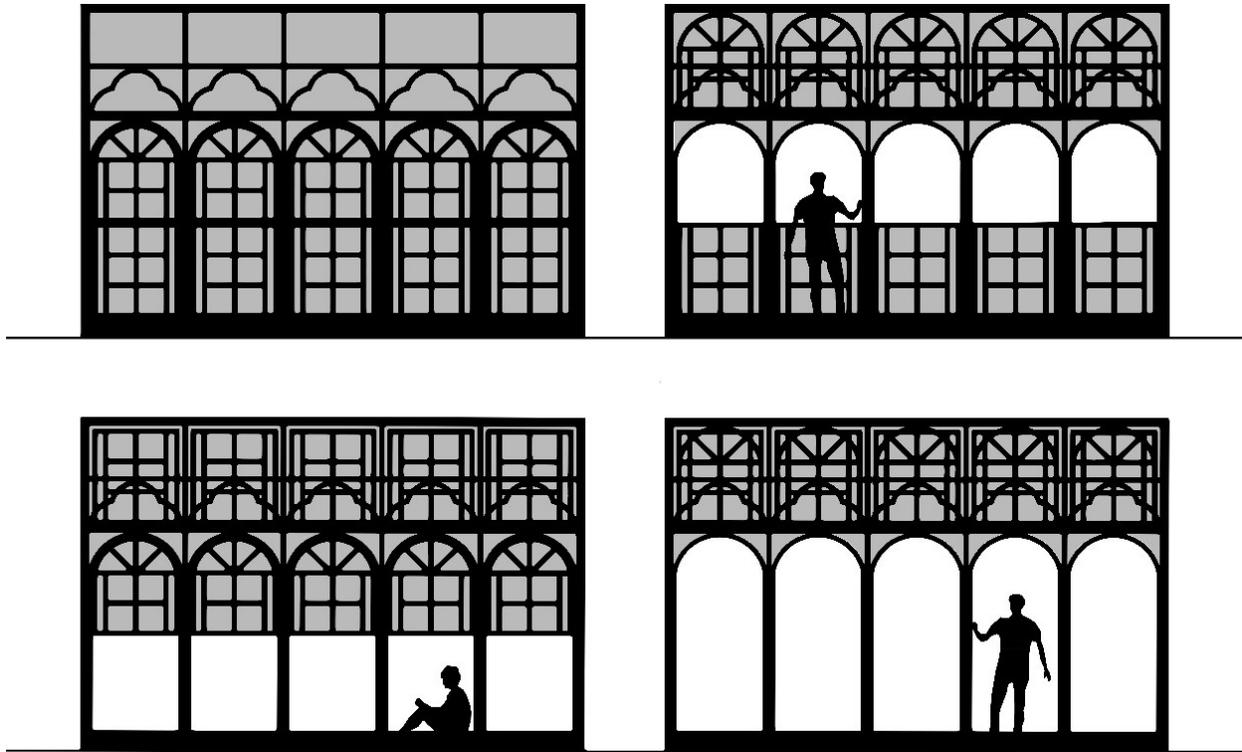
Figure 2: an example of an orsy or sash window, and its ability to expand and transform a room to increase the space or the level of privacy. Sketch by author.

When the principal characteristics of the courtyard house are overlapped with those of the chador, we see a consistency of interior spatiality such that, in each case, the inverted configuration constitutes multiple layers of privacy according to Iranian cultural paradigms. Second, they both define personal and social borders in a visible way by drawing physical boundaries directly around the body or around the bigger space of the courtyard. Hence, whereas it might not look evident at first glance, in both the chador and the courtyard house, the notion of boundary plays a critical role in defining the private and semi-private spheres in different scales. Inspired by the fluidity of certain architectural elements of the courtyard space, this project explores the alternative ways in which the rigid separation of space might be replaced by a more mutable or permeable definition of boundary. My argument is that through this fluidity, each dweller would have the opportunity— and the agency—to compose his /her personal boundary at various scales, ranging from a small-scale chador to a large-scale courtyard.

The idea of the fluidity of boundaries around domestic space, this time as a kind of metaphor—and, as such, as inspirational to my research-creation—can also be profitably traced

back to a particular critical text, to further clarify my position. In his book, *The poetics of space*, Gaston Bachelard brings forward the concept of the mutable boundary of a home by quoting Spyridaki, in which the latter describes his imaginary house.[7] As Spyridaki documents the experience, "[…] its walls contract and expand as I desire. At times, I draw them close about me like protective armor [...] But at others, I let the walls of my house blossom out in their own space, which is infinitely extensible." Bachelard came to recognize that "Spyridaki's house breathes. First it is a coat of armor, then it extends *ad infinitum*, which amounts to saying that we live in it in alternate security and adventure. It is both cell and world. Here, geometry is transcended" (1994, p. 51). According to this interpretation, the sharp geometry of walls is imaginatively replaced by a mutable boundary that does not necessarily signify separation but offers a way of negotiation between two sides, thereby creating a dialectic relationship between private and public.

Courtyard houses as a miniature sensory environment

Courtyard houses may also be explored as the entanglement of human space and nature together, inasmuch as they embrace nature and hold it within their walls to modify the house's microclimate and serve as an inner private garden (Hosseini Raviz et al., 2015; Nayyeri Fallah et al., 2015). Accordingly, courtyard houses are isolated worlds with different auditory, visual, and even olfactory sensations as opposed to outside their boundaries. These sensory paradigms and values, embodied in the courtyards, provides the feeling of 'home' and bodily intimacy. Privacy in the courtyards and publicity of the outside is also linked with other sensory ambiances that make the two sides distinct. From the outside, high flat walls with small openings are markers of distance and separation. Inside, architectural details and ornaments, and even various natural elements of the courtyards stimulate the sense of touch. In the same way that Juhani Pallasmaa describes the qualities of architectural ornamentations in the works of Alvar Aalto, higher levels of detail in the interior of Iranian courtyards "crafted for the hand, invite the sense of touch and create an atmosphere of intimacy and warmth" (2012, p. 71). As the corridors get narrower and rooms become smaller while passing through each layer from the public to private, space is brought into

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[7] Georges Spyridaki (1953), *Mort lucide*, Séghers, Paris, p. 85; cited in the book, *The poetics of space*, page 51.

direct contact with the body. Hence, the haptic sensory of the courtyard is an invitation to experience the intimacy and privacy of the inside.

Moreover, sound and smell can be sensed with different modalities from inside or outside. Each can be detected with the nose and ears inside the courtyard, as we can clearly distinguish their sources. From outside, that intimate atmosphere is less accessible sensorially since smell and sound are filtered by the thick surrounding walls, and thus, less sensory information can be transmitted. In the multisensory ambiance of the interior, the body can be emplaced within an intimate context of the courtyard. The aim here is not to explore the various ways in which a courtyard negotiates the bodily experience of the visitors in its multisensory context, rather it is a brief opportunity to consider how a similar differentiation of interiority and exteriority can be refocussed toward the spatial organization provided by chador. In the following chapters, I will discuss how the notion of boundary is reflected in my project, inspired both by the notion of sensory engagement as described in the courtyard spatial experience, and by the intimacy and privacy of the space within the boundaries of the chador.

To conclude, essential to my argument is that the concept of boundaries establishing public and private spaces in an Iranian courtyard house— and in a smaller scale, the chador— is to be understood not as the creation of barriers, but as the interchangeable separation of two phenomenological experiences, namely of interior and exterior space. Inspired by similar principles, the preliminary step in this research-creation focuses on the subjective experience of a veil as an enveloped space, in which our sensory perception is engaged and affected. Here, the notion of boundary is presented not as a stopping point, but as a pause in a movement to facilitate a conscious understanding of self and place; one which is a "sensory and embodied mode of thinking" (Pallasmaa, 2009, p. 17).

The chador in contemporary critical artworks

In contemporary art practices, there are numerous works that address the complexities of the chador. Artists from diverse Islamic cultures react to the topic in various ways. Their artworks are heterogeneous and diverse in nature (Daftari et al., 2006). My research-creation ideas were first inspired by Shirin Neshat, an Iranian-American artist, who criticizes, on the one hand, the

notion of the imposed veil in Iran after the Islamic revolution, and on the other hand, Western representations of Muslim women. Although my research took a different direction from hers, my multidisciplinary approach and critical thinking have been impacted by her mixed-media installations and short videos.

Farniyaz Zaker, an Iranian artist and researcher, is another of my sources of inspiration in this project because of her distinctive interpretation of women's clothing as a dwelling place. She conveys this meaning through material practices embodied in her artworks. Zaker creatively depicts the idea of the dress as a dwelling place through installations in which she investigates text and textile. Whereas Zaker is not directly working with the concept of the veil, she is looking at clothing not as a dress but as a place.

Pardeh is one of her site-specific installations, exhibited in 2011. The Persian term *pardeh* refers to the curtain or the veil, and the word *divar* means wall in English. In this installation, the term *divar* is printed as a pattern on the silk curtain hung on a window in a gallery (see Figure 3). By doing this, Zaker depicts the proximities of separation either by a wall or textile curtain, in Iranian culture, to provide privacy and intimacy within domestic space. Furthermore, writing the word *divar* on the soft body of silk highlights the evolution of traditional Iranian architecture surrounded by high walls, to the more transparent modern architecture of this era (Fraser & Zaker, 2015; Zaker, 2019a). Such transformation serves to demonstrate how, in Iranian culture, the notion of family privacy continues to be respected, reflected through the continuity of spatial separation from public spaces, in the more recent architectural iterations, either by erecting walls or hanging curtains.

In another installation, *Pause in movement*, a giant dress, 2.30 x 2.30 x 3.02 m, sculpts out a space in the middle of a gallery room (see Figure 4). The dress in this installation is a symbol of a dwelling space that emplaces its inhabitants. The whole setting aims to convey the notion of the dress as an extended home and enclosed space of infinitive privacy (Zaker, 2019b). Thus, the dress in this installation depicts as the embodiment of space. In addition, the installation compels the viewer to contemplate how this boundary between inside and outside is fluid yet sensitive, one which should not be stressed or pressured from outside or by the outsider.

Inspired by these artworks, my project focused on spatial and material aspects of the chador, which can be speculated and experienced through installations, videos and performances.

Figure 3 (Left): *Pardeh*, installation by Farniyaz Zaker, Old Masters Room, The Ruskin, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2011. Photo retrieved from the artist's website: http://farniyazzaker.com/

Figure 4 (Right): *Pause in Movement*, installation by Farniyaz Zaker, The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2012. Photo retrieved from the artist's website: http://farniyazzaker.com/

Chapter 5: Design-Creation

Introduction

This chapter introduces the different phases of experimentation and prototyping that, together, enabled *Chador* to reach fruition, and eventually led to two final performances and installations. Each prototype tries to take a speculative approach to consider the problematics of the subject matter in their own ways. My concepts were composed, orchestrated, and woven through research, experimentation of new techniques, and exploration of various materials. The research was developed side by side with the creation process. This parallel methodology enabled me to integrate the knowledge obtained through critical reading and data gathered through material analysis in newly created artworks. In the following sections, the developed projects are presented consecutively in chronological order.

Project 1: Journey beyond the boundaries, Speculating the idea of cultural differences, Dec 2016

> "[A] space is something that has been spaced or made room for, something that is cleared and free, *namely within a boundary*, Greek *peras*. A boundary is not that at which something stops but, […], the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing." (Heidegger, 1971, p. 154)

Journey beyond the boundaries was the name of the first prototype presented in the form of a site-specific installation at Concordia University, in Montreal. In this project, instead of focusing on the concept of the veil directly, I investigated the notion of cultural territories and boundaries, inspired by the crystalized mosaics of identity in a globalized city such as Montreal and their spatial materiality. I started with the following research question: how does walking as an everyday social choreography engage our body to explore micro-spatial territories which differ culturally?

For this prototype, I began with the concept of cultural boundaries and its association with the notion of inside and outside, insiders and outsiders. According to Augé, inside and outside can be connected through recognition of a boundary. For instance, he says if one considers language as a boundary, "learning the other's tongue, or the other's dialect, means establishing an elementary symbolic relation with [the other] him, respecting [her] him and joining [her] him" (Augé, 2008, p. xiv)—which is a journey beyond the boundaries.

One might argue that in a global city like Montreal exchange with a cultural element of diverse ethnic identities might be an everyday practice. However, this does not guarantee that everyone has a deep understanding of the very essence of those elements. This project has tried to embody the concept of the individuality of diverse cultural territories and boundaries. It has aimed to provide a platform for outsiders to experience the inside through their presencing. As Heidegger noted: "A boundary is not that at which something stops but, [...], the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 154). Such a reflection brought me back to the analogy between cultural boundaries and Iranian courtyard houses, as a more tangible boundary between inside and outside.

As mentioned in Chapter Four above, this project has focused on the notion of boundaries as the separation of two phenomenological experiences of interior and exterior spaces and an embodied way of thinking. This multisensory engagement within the courtyard houses, in Project 1, made material through a series of boxes configured in particular ways and containing particular elements, is not like a story that could be told and be perceived remotely. The courtyard is exactly where one needs to employ speculative and other qualitative methods to absorb the very essence of its intersensory cross-relationships through bodily engagement.

Process of prototyping - Miniature courtyards

My intention in this exercise was to try to find a specific location in Montreal, which has been exposed to flow and flux of immigrants and has already been dynamically engaged with controversies of the idea of inclusion and exclusion as consequences of cultural difference. Consequently, St. Laurent Boulevard, from the waterfront to Jean-Talon, was selected as the site of my exploration. This urban corridor consists of several ethnocultural communities and neighbourhoods. This phase of research was inspired by a number of local restaurants and their colourful smellscapes, where the smell of their exotic and various foods transcends the space boundaries and permeates the street. The installation consisted of several suspended boxed in a studio (see Figure 5), while a video recording of St. Laurent street was projected on the entire scene (see Figure 6). Each element had a conceptual role that contributed to the general perception of the work.

Feeling of exclusion   Feeling of inclusion
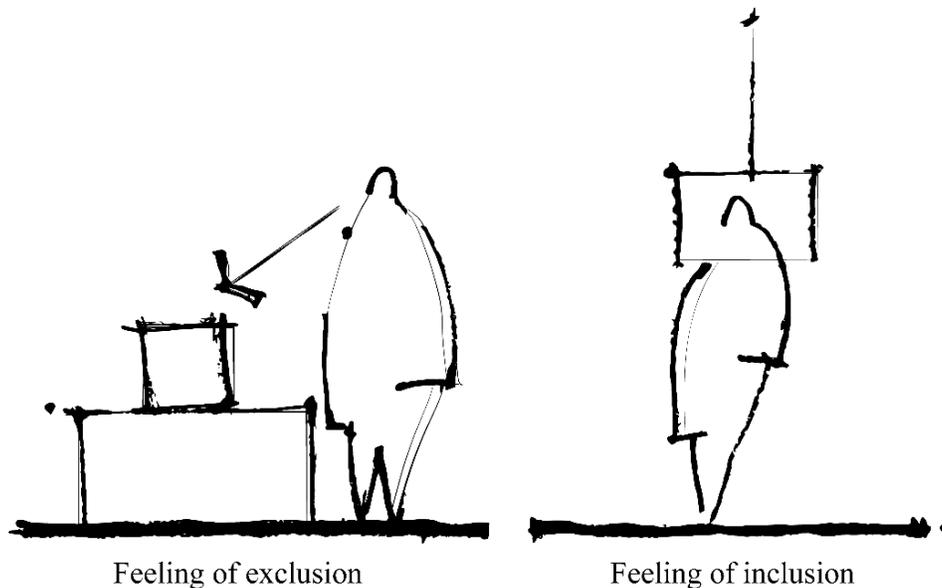
Figure 5: Preliminary concept of the suspended boxes. Sketch by author.

The boxes - My sketches in the prototyping phase were motivated by a distant memory of mine. When I was a child, my grandmother had several vintage boxes, brought from her journeys to various cities and countries. In each box, she collected diverse materials, fabrics, decorative stones, spices and condiments, candies and souvenirs. As a child, I perceived these boxes as

multisensory micro-territories; I lived in those imaginary places without having visited them. The multisensory quality of the boxes not only shaped my dreams but also formed my understanding of distant unknown places. They also helped me embody the idea of being an insider while being physically outside.

Different sketches and thoughts on the physical position of the boxes and their materiality eventually led towards the idea of suspended territories. Each box was intended to represent the spatial experience of a distinct sensory ambiance, as varied as my grandma's boxes. To provide a multisensory context, the final prototype brought together visual, acoustic, tactile and olfactory experiences.

Reflector - Inside each box, there was a reflector. It acted as a projector which reflected light on the bigger screen, outside. The idea was to reflect the visitor's presence in an isolated space to confront the body and the self at the center of perception and experience. At the same time, each box and its inhabitant were a part of a larger scale narrative manifested through shadows and reflections on the screen.

Spices and dried herbs - I introduced different spices, condiments and dried herbs, which have deep and long-lasting odors, to the interior space of the boxes, to provoke haptic and olfactory sensation, thereby creating an intimate interior for participants. I also strove to emphasize the idea of individual identity of each space, because, as Pallasmaa reminds us "every dwelling has its individual smell of home" (2012, p. 54). The applied herbs carried with them olfactory and tactile memories from distinct cultures.
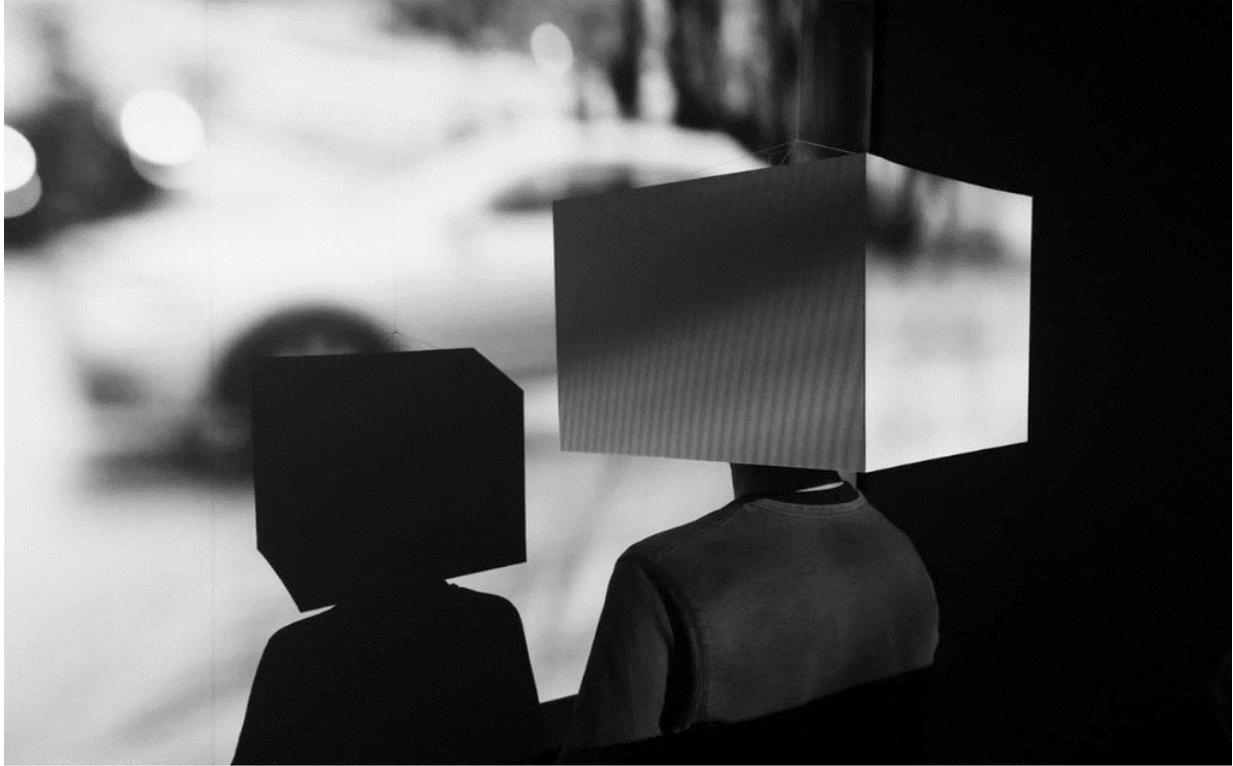
Figure 6: Journey beyond the boundaries- projection of the video on the entire installation, Concordia University 2016. Photo by author.

Installation phase

The boxes were suspended in the middle of a room. Each was made from the same white cardboard; they therefore seemed uniform and homogeneous from the outside. A video accompanied by a piece of purposely-created music was projected across the entire installation. The members of the audience were invited to explore it. As soon as they got inside, they perceived the sensory spatiality of the interior space of each box (see Figure 7).

Although homogenous from outside, the boxes were designed individually, and differed in content inside due to the inclusion of various herbs and spices applied to their interior. Multiple smells and textures stimulated the senses of tactility and olfactory, while at the same time, the geometrical form of the suspended boxes impacted the acoustics of the interior. These boundaries, in essence, emulated and embodied micro-territories in the multicultural context of Montreal.

Journey beyond the boundaries were small-scale renderings of a distance space, the traditional courtyard houses of Iran. In both cases, there was no opening granting the observer the

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opportunity to see inside without inhabiting the space; the boxes had no openings, just as the houses are surrounded by tall brick walls. In both cases, the real multisensory interior universe, and their unique individuality could not be deciphered without feeling the ambiance as an insider, through a journey beyond its boundaries. This project symbolically provided a platform for an outsider to be engaged and integrated with these patchworks of cultures through a performative approach and social choreography. These small territories, which conceptualized cultural boundaries, in contrast to their sharp and rigid walls, constructed places of inclusion for multisensory experimentation and engagement.
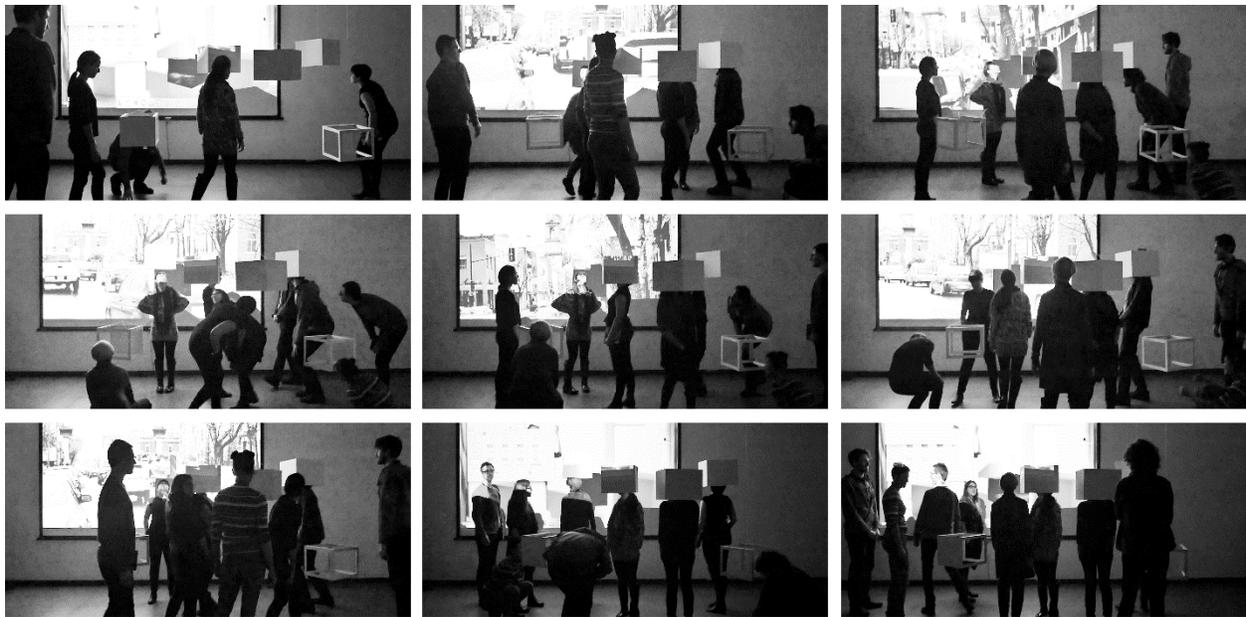

Figure 7: Journey beyond the boundaries, installation at Concordia university, Dec 2016. Photo by author.

Project 2: Chador | Veil–Tent, Analogical exploration and the interplay of words, Dec 2017 and Mar 2017

Phase 1

> "In opposition to theatrical or phenomenological models which take the gendered self to be prior to its acts, I will understand constituting acts not only as constituting the identity of the actor, but as constituting that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of belief." (Butler, 1988, p. 520)

The second prototype, entitled *Chador| Veil–Tent I*, was also presented at Concordia University. During this phase of the creation process, I developed and expanded the concepts by playing with the definitions of the word chador. As mentioned above, this project was based on the idea of the interconnectedness of two familiar meanings of the term, namely the veil and the tent. It helped me to explore how the idea of an exoticized and politicized veil constructs a space of exclusion, and how the composed Veil–Tent could create a space of inclusion. Furthermore*,* the project demonstrated aesthetic aspects of speculative and performative design as a medium to tackle gender dichotomies, ascribed to the veil and veiling practices.

The veil emphasizes the intimate sphere and visualizes the personal territory; it has a direct connection with the body and conceals it from exposed encounters with others and outsiders, thereby making it an exclusive boundary. On the other hand, a tent has the potential to be an inclusive space—indeed, potentially for more than one individual—and the space inside it is not always-already private: it is portable and versatile; it has connotations of impermanence; and it can be performed (built, inhabited) collectively. However, both the veil and the tent can provide privacy and intimacy for their wearer or inhabitant. Accordingly, *Veil–Tent* is a small-scale rendering of a courtyard house, with the same characteristics of privacy, yet movable.

According to these concepts, the rigid boundaries of the previous prototype, inspired by tall brick walls of the courtyard house, were replaced with the flexible boundaries of the tent. The typology of the Iranian courtyard house offered a precedent for this flexibility as well. For instance, the function of *orsy* windows inspired me to enable this flexibility and interchangeability in different parts of the house, as mentioned in Chapter Four. The different levels of privacy from personal to public, established through various architectural hierarchies in such residences, was conceptualized through the fluidity of place in this project: the result was a flexible space that could be folded or expanded to provide a personal or social platform. This manipulation and deformation of a chador as a personal boundary was thus constructed as a performative space in interaction with both wearers and non-wearers.

Prototyping and Installing as the scenes for personal and social performativity

This prototype was fabricated with paper to form a flexible boundary. The white paper was folded by hand, pleat by pleat. The folding pattern represented a type of Iranian muqarnas, a form of ornamented vaulting to be found in Islamic architecture. The folding process was an experimentation with various ways of pleating to find a strategy for converting a two-dimensional material to a three-dimensional pattern following the geometry of these ornamentations (see Figure 8 and Figure *9*).
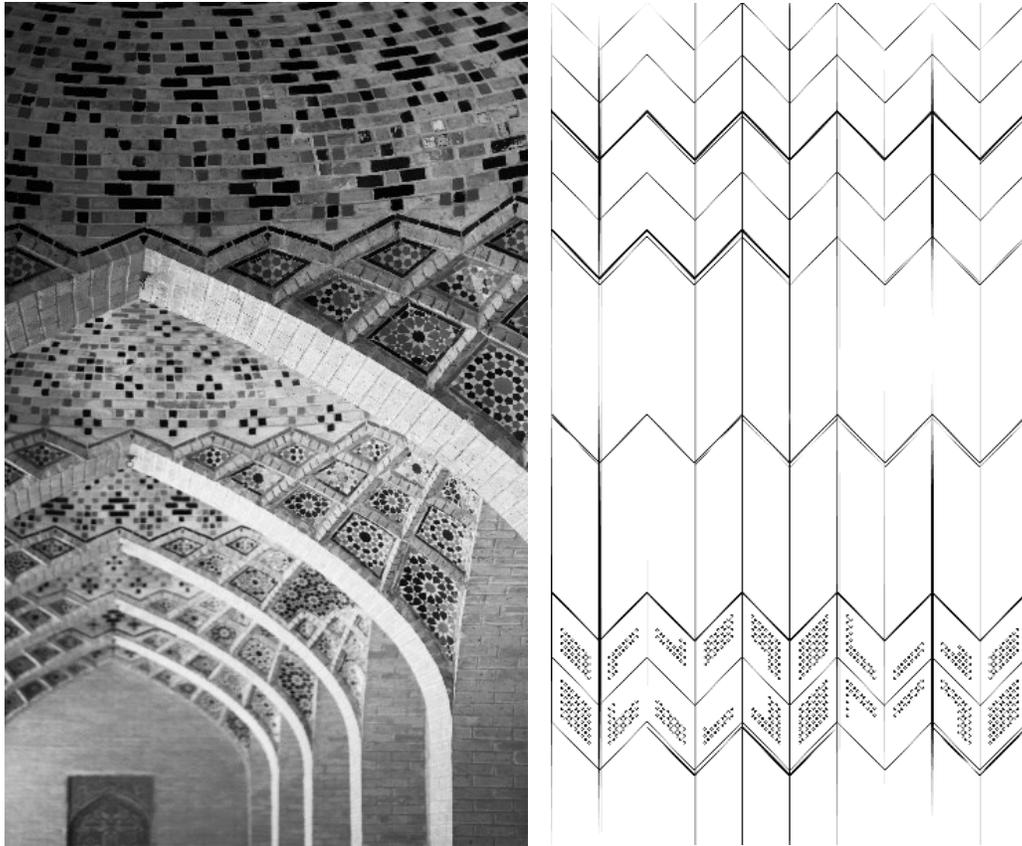
Figure 8 (left): Iranian muqarnas, Nasir-Al-Molk Mosque, as the main concept for the folding method. Photo by author.

Figure 9 (right): Left-2D sketches for folding the paper. Sketch by author.

The installation consisted of a six-meter paper veil–tent set in the middle of the studio space. Initially, the chador in that setting was viewed as completely folded and no details could be seen. When it was unfolded and fully spread out, all the folding details became visible. It thereby provided a platform for participants to experience the haptic sensation of its spatiality and materiality. Participants had the possibility to fold the paper and cover their bodies within it like a veil. They were also able to expand the folds to provide more room like a tent for other participants. They were invited to touch its surface, interact with its plasticity and reconcile their bodily relation with and within it. The foldable architecture was thus in constant fluctuation between veil and tent to visualize the bodily engagement in confrontation with an immediate transition between interiority and exteriority (see Figure 10**Error! Reference source not found.**

Flexible, foldable and interactively mobile, the tent facilitated constant changes in transparency and form by folding, expanding or reshaping. In this project, the foldable chador thus became a playful and an experimental arena for reconceptualizing our performativity through the formation of personal and social boundaries. Through such performativity, not only could the identity of the actor be constituted, but "that identity as a compelling illusion, an object of belief" (Butler, 1988, p. 520) can be negotiated iteratively. Accordingly, the foldable chador persistently articulated the fluctuation between the veil and the tent as an object, beyond all gender and political discourses. Being defined at the very threshold of the two definitions, it constituted a compelling interface between inside and outside, intimate and public.
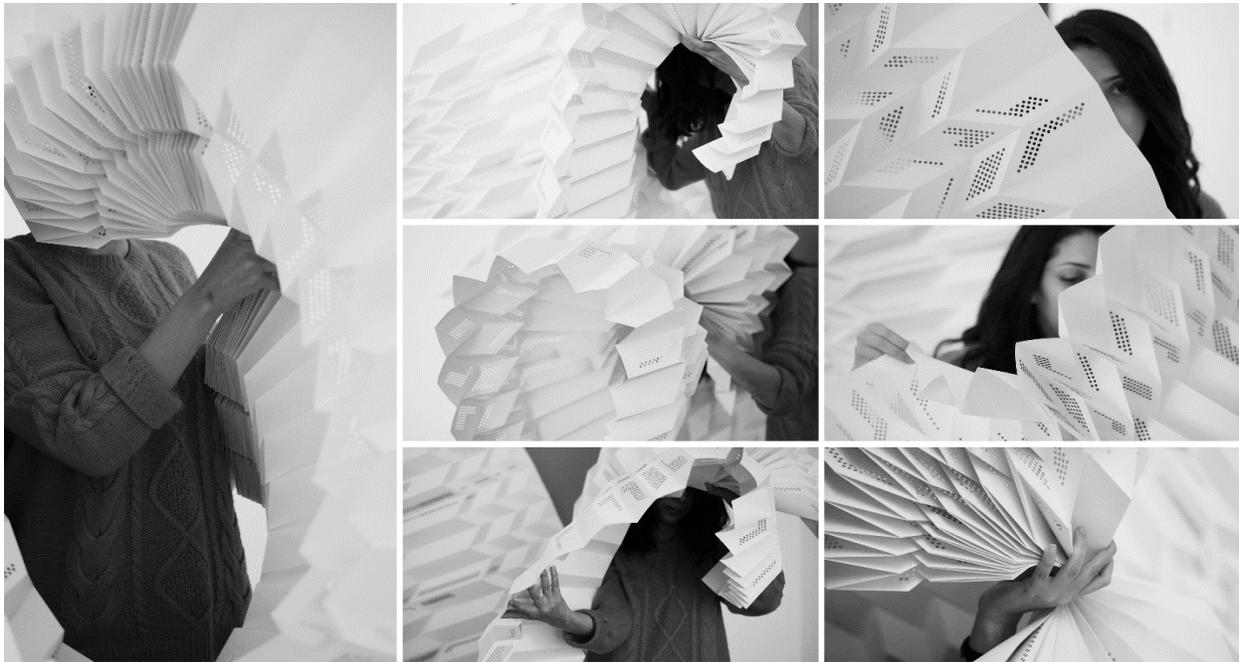

Figure 10: Chador| Veil–Tent I installation, Concordia University, Dec 2017. Photos by author and Roozbeh Tabandeh.

Phase 2

> "[A] system of sensory values is never entirely articulated through language, but it is practiced and experienced (and sometimes challenged), […], in fact, is not just something one sees, or hears about; it is something one lives." (Howes, 2005, p. 3)

The second phase of prototyping was inspired by one of my visits to Iran during my Master's research. I had the experience of visiting a traditional courtyard house in the historic district of the city, which had been renovated to become a small family restaurant. The place hosted people from the city as well as many tourists and travelers. In this place, people were situated in a social context through food as a medium. This place well embodied the notion of commensality that established social togetherness.

In this phase of the project, the notion of food and recipes became the main concept as a way to understand and recognize other boundaries. In *food and multiculturalism* (2018), Alex Rhys-Taylor explores how food (taste and smell) are integral to cultural exchange and formation of multicultural cities and writes:

> The focus on taste and smell open directly into consideration of the role of biography and cultural inheritance in shaping individual identities, as well as the ways individuals organize themselves in relation to others. In a global city […], this involves a consideration of the ways in which the senses work to shore up distinct cultural identities, but also means considering the ways in which the senses might work to shore up senses of commonality across apparent differences. (2017, p. 21)

Installation phase

The second iteration also generated a folding project, this time a white suspended cotton fabric, aimed to invite people to experience its spatiality through the materiality of food. Hence,

an additional layer of Iranian domestic culture, namely recipes, was added to this iteration, to enable the same commensality inspired by that courtyard house (see Figure 11). In my project, the recipes were arranged in the form of calligraphy, written in Farsi, English and French, and engraved into the fabric.
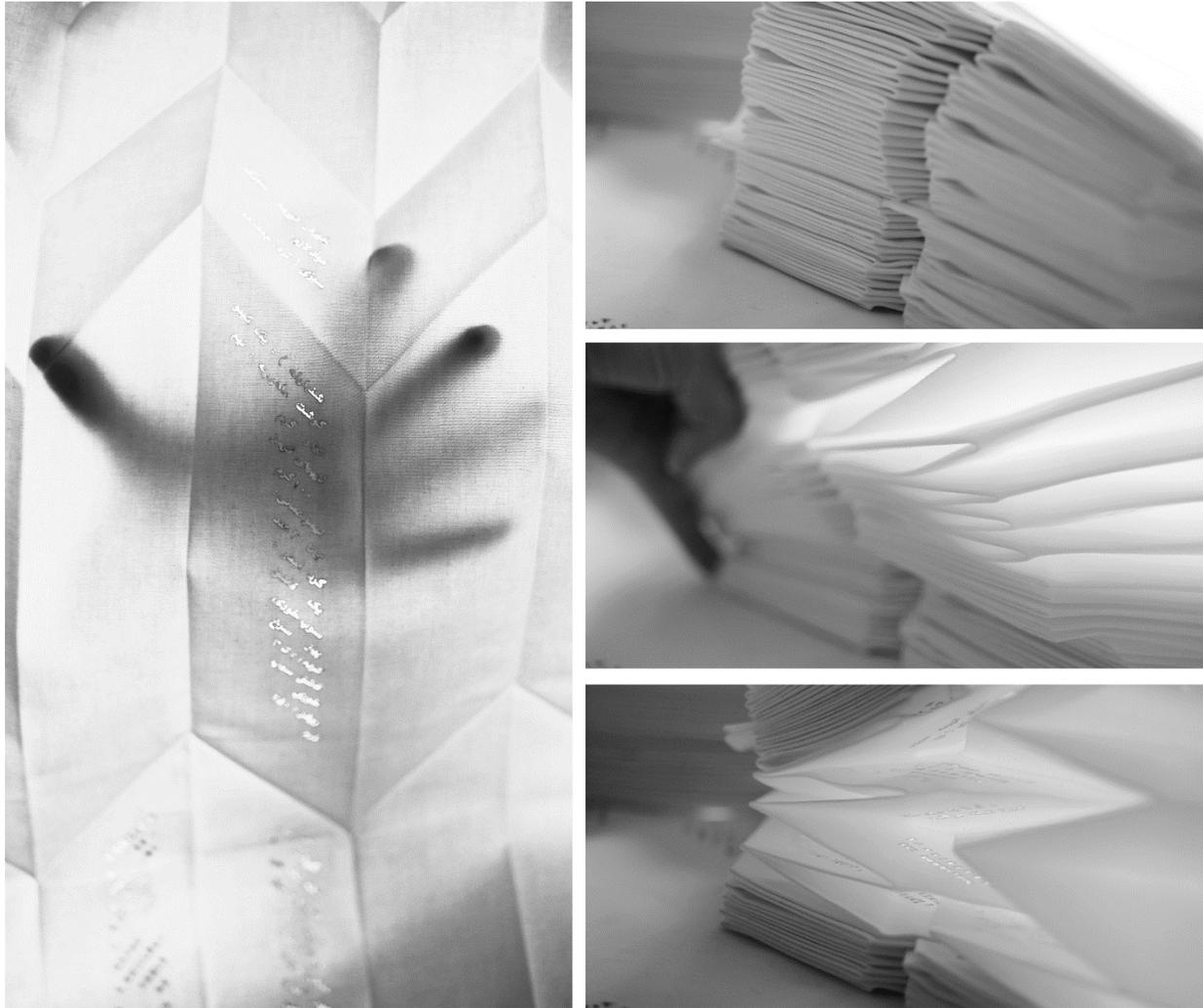
Figure 11: Chador| Veil–Tent II, Engraved recipes. Photos by author.

The sensuous materiality of a conceptual chador, in this prototype, was experienced through multisensory experimentation of the above-mentioned small courtyard house-restaurant. This installation provided a platform for the participants to be engaged with the physicality and tactility sensation of the Iranian recipes. Pallasmaa argues:

Touch is the sensory mode that integrates our experiences of the world and of ourselves. Even visual perceptions are fused and integrated into the haptic continuum of the self; my body remembers who I am and how I am situated in the world. (2009, p. 101)

The fabric formed a tent large enough to accommodate a body or bodies, and it was intentionally flexible enough to be reshaped by means of several ropes that connected it to the floor. The textile architecture embraced the body with the intention of creating a familiar association with place via memories of food and their recipes. In my project, engraved recipes on the surface provided a textural pattern and gave the fabric a tactile and multisensorial dimension while offering degrees of transparency and opacity. Pattern recognition encouraged participants to manipulate the structure, expand or refold it to gain a better understanding of the space. Dried herbs, indicated in the recipes, were scattered on the floor, their smell permeating the space when participants walked on them. Again, this tensile structure and membrane installation, like the paper veil, constituted a material interstitial space, between veil and tent. Opening each fold enabled more spatial configurations of scale through participants' interplay (see Figure 12).

This installation provided "a microcosmic dwelling place" for the participants to live in, to experience the interiority of the inside through sensation of tactility of the recipes and materiality of its own. Furthermore, the chador this time, revealed a unique identification of its origin and its wearers.

Figure 12: Chador| Veil–Tent II installation, Concordia University, Mar 2017. Photos by author.

Project 3: Of the world, dust remains - Bio textile as a fermented chador, Jan 2019

"I will turn the figures of "life" and "matter" around and around, worrying them until they start to seem strange, in something like the way a common word when repeated can become a foreign, nonsense sound. In the space created by this estrangement, a *vital materiality* can start to take shape." (Bennett, 2010, p. vii)

Of the world, dust remains, was a stage piece performed in Shiraz, Iran, directed by Roozbeh Tabandeh. My contribution to this project consisted of stage, light and material design. This collaboration provided an opportunity to experience part of my research-creation phase in a performative context. Composed of six consecutive scenes, this interdisciplinary stage-work brought together various artistic disciplines including music, poetry, design and painting. The

whole scenario was a co-creation of personal narratives by each attendant artist, in interaction with other participants.

One of my most prominent contributions was in the fifth scene, in which the entire narrative was based on an idea of visualizing the concept of boundary very similar to what I developed in three previous prototypes at Concordia. In this project, I tried to defamiliarize the chador relative to the context in which the audience had already developed an understanding of its salient features.

As explained in the earlier creation phases of my thesis, the chador had been turned around and around from the beginning of the creation phase, to reveal different meanings through its materiality and spatiality—from assembling materials and layers to pleating and folding paper and fabric. For this scene, I grew a bio-textile, a fabric made of kombucha, as a material metaphor for the chador. In this case, the recipe became the central concept and, by virtue of its distinct agency, determined the very materiality of the piece, rather than simply penetrating the surface. This time, in other words, a personal recipe, which reflects the notion of individuality and identity, shaped the very process of making and growing the chador. Moreover, the kombucha fabric was produced through fermentation, a process of microbial transformation. The fabric appeared on stage as the fermented chador, imbued with an agency of its own; in this way it represented the quest, as Bennett argues, to "…turn the figures of "life" and "matter" around and around, worrying them until they start to seem strange [such that] in the space created by this estrangement, a vital materiality can start to take shape" (Bennett, 2010, p. vii).

Stage work

Three months before the performance of *Of the world, dust remains*, in my hometown Shiraz, in Iran, and in the basement of my parents' house, four large polyethylene containers sat. They contained SCOBY that floated on the surface of fermented sweetened tea, otherwise known as kombucha. At three weeks old, they were ready to be washed and dried. They were alive: each had its own natural appearance, surface roughness and morphology like any other living creature. The process of growing SCOBY had started those three months earlier, and was repeated several times to grow more layers. Now, after three months, the eight-meter kombucha leather was ready for its performance.

In this performance, on stage, and in each act, the notion of chador was defined and redefined through dynamic improvised interactions between the performers and the fabric (see Figure 13)**Error! Reference source not found.**. On the one hand, the rustic sound of cowbells and the shimmering light of oil lanterns depicted a familiar landscape, in which the fabric comprised an imaginary tent. That tent situated the performers' presence, regardless of gender, under its own material agency. On the other hand, in the dim light of the oil lanterns, the actors moved and touched a surface previously unknown to them, namely kombucha leather. Its surface became increasingly warm as a result of being touched, and the heat of the lanterns released a particular smell that permeated the space and transcended the stage boundaries. Meanwhile, wandering between the performers, a poet recited a poem in Persian:

"It is beautiful not to know,

I know nothing of you" (Nozari, 2008, p. 193).

<div dir="rtl">

" زیباست ندانستن،

من از تو هیچ نمی دانم "

</div>

The actors, too, whispered the poem, while caressing the leather, coming together to frame the overarching kombucha tent in the scene. This improvised choreography, creating new definitions derived from an exotic live leather of which neither performers nor audience had any previous knowledge, centred the tent as a living boundary—one which both shaped and could be shaped, and was both caring and in need of care—in the overall dramaturgy of the play. The poet continued:

"Look!

There is nobody on the other side of the veil

On this side neither"(Nozari, 2019).

<div dir="rtl">

" نگاه کن،

آن سوی پرده هیچ کس نیست

این سوی پرده هم "

</div>

Figure 13: Of the world, dust remains, Shiraz, Jan 2019. Photos by Hamid Yazdanpanah.

During this phase of the project, the bio-textile material functioned as a metaphor of the chador and constituted a multisensory environment that mutably reconstructed the boundaries between body and space. Here, the bio-textile revealed its own material agency by situating the dynamic interactions between the performers' bodies and the veil. This time, the chador performed neither the role of the veil nor of the tent, but played its own unique role according to its own material agency.

Project 4: Unveiled Chador- From a voiceless personal shell to a dialogic social platform, May 2019

> "What is a home?
> a place that makes us feel inside. We have a deep desire to be inside, being accepted into and being enveloped by ever more folds, […].
> All these folds, […] all these insidious layers of insider-ity are metaphorical blankets that we wrap around us to keep the warmth in and the cold out. […]We all compose our special mixture of blankets, some of them bought off the shelf, some inherited from Grandma, some borrowed from others, some made with our own hands, patchwork, needlework, carefully hand-knitted." (Bhagwati, 2007, pp. 5–6)

This final installation was an invitation to experience the unveiled chador within an enclosed space. The introverted organization of the installation was inspired by the same architectural model derived from Iranian traditional courtyard houses. This time the chador, which was usually used as an extension of privacy in the exterior space, was unveiled and exposed in an interior context so that those who were typically considered as outsiders were now invited to interact and explore it as insiders.

In *Unveiled Chador*, working with the bio-textile illuminated the main narrative of the installation. I started making kombucha leather, for the first time, for this project before the one I did in Iran. Growing kombucha fabric proved different from previous prototyping processes. That difference— working with a living material— sprang from the very first moments of its formation at an atomic level. The process of engagement with the fabrication of a fermented chador enabled me to reimagine all the more the relations between humans and non-humans. Such entwined relations have been explored by Serpil Oppermann, in terms of what she calls material ecocriticism. "Broadly speaking," she writes, the world can be understood as having

permeable boundaries where material agencies; human and nonhuman bodies; ecological, social, and political forces; [and] economic practices; […] become fundamentally intertwined. This is also a crucial point of emphasis in material ecocriticism's articulation of the relational interplay between the human and the non-human realms, between the ecological and the social. (Oppermann, 2016, p. 93)

From this viewpoint, the fermented chador can be reimagined as neither a distinct political, social nor cultural barrier, but as a permeable interactive boundary between human and non-human. The process of making, working and performing with such a material enabled me to consider the process of creation differently: such a process bestows upon a sensing porous body the ability to be situated in diverse socio-cultural contexts, such as are typical of our era.

Prototyping- A microcosmic dwelling place

The final prototype consisted of different layers of "blankets"—the black fabric in the background of the installation as a metaphor of the imposed chador; the translucent tracing paper which covered a partition and provided an enclosed space; and the kombucha fabric as a material metaphor of the composed chador—all of which formed what might be considered a speculative home or a microcosmic dwelling place, within which the spectator could explore a complex array of experiences. The aim of this enclosed space of the installation was to emulate the typology of a courtyard house, with a chador unveiled to comprise its interior space.

Video and sound effect - In this installation, a short video was projected on the black fabric, on white tracing paper, and the kombucha leather, from two different directions. It aimed to entwine all these separate elements. In addition, by passing through the tracing paper, it connected the outside and inside of the installation space. The video captured an improvised choreography of my own personal interplay with the veil, in a non-dialogic setting. Presented in three acts, the video visualized different aspects of my bodily engagement with the veil (see Figure 14). In the first act, my body, encumbered by the chador, was in a constant challenge with the chador while trying to stretch the surface to make more room. In this act, my hands are depicted

as in search of small voids in the surface that would enable me to see through it, to what lay outside. The second act was about manipulation and reformation of chador to be reconciled with the body. In this part, the interactions between the textile and the human body were organized in a more harmonious manner. In the third act, by contrast, the chador was not a separate entity but constituted a kind of inseparable (living) skin intermingled with my body. The soundtrack consisted of actual acoustics recorded during the interactions, amplified and manipulated electronically in the post-production process.

Figure 14: Video captures, interaction between the body and kombucha fabric. Photos by Roozbeh Tabandeh.

Final installation

The exhibition space in Montreal, Canada, in which the installation took place, consisted of an enclosed space with a narrow opening, surrounded by white translucent partitions (see Figure 15). Inside the space, participants immediately encountered the suspended kombucha fabric, with its particular smell and texture. The fabric itself had made the long voyage from Iran to Montreal. This was the final iteration of the chador which I had grown, mended and patched with my own hands. It was the culminating—at least for now—layer that I composed by myself alongside all

the other veils inherited from my grandmother and/or acquired from others in the past. Most notably, it is the type of the chador that everyone can compose to personalize and customize their identity and emplace themselves within a social context.

Figure 15: Final installation,4th Space at Concordia University, May 2019. Photo by author.

At the center of the veil–tent, small bottles of kombucha liquid and baby SCOBIES reminded the participant that the formation of all these boundaries has started from a simple biological reaction (see

Figure 16). The installation, one might therefore conclude, was one that eschewed rigid barriers between insiders and outsiders, men and women, but, rather, underscored and privileged the permeable boundaries between human and non-human.

This project encompassed all the previous ones, to negotiate how the notion of the chador was interrogated through the process of material practices and performative approaches, that is, from an *imposed veil* to the *composed chador*. The *composed chador* is thus constituted as a home, "a place that makes us feel inside," a place where one is at ease with whomever shares the space. In this place, everyone is accepted with all their differences and individual identities. Such acceptance is enabled notwithstanding, Augé's claim that in our era "people are always, and never,

at home": they have to construct many aspects of their everyday life and identity in relation to many cultural contacts and interactions (2008, p. 87).

This final installation made material a personalize-able and customizable chador, as a metaphor of self-composed home representing a complex identity, derived from the lens of my personal and expressive interpretation. All these efforts have a shared target, which is to enable both myself and the participants to situate our presence within contexts which I could call my impermanent home.

Figure 16: Unveiled Chador, view from inside, small bottles of kombucha liquid and baby SCOBIES. Photo by author.

Conclusion

At the preliminary stages of the process, this research-creation project aimed to create a platform for engagement and interaction of crystalized mosaics of identity in a globalized city such as Montreal. In such a context, it is essential to this project that the cultural differences and values of the participants, which are signified through their socio-cultural boundaries, could be respected in a platform of interplay and interaction. The exploration began by investigating some often-overlooked and misunderstood values in such a context, those which have generated marginalization and displacement of individuals. This stage of the research process coincided with contemporary debates about veiling practices as a symbol of Islam both in my country of origin, Iran and here in Quebec. According to these debates, not only in the present day but for many years, many Muslim women, no matter whether they practise religion or not, have been marginalized in many contexts. Accordingly, the notion of the veil thereby came to the forefront of interest in this thesis.

My project has tried to address the following question: how could consideration of the chador as a 'microcosmic dwelling place' embody alternative narratives for social engagement in Iranian culture? Through all the stages of the project, the metaphor of the chador as a 'microcosmic dwelling place' has been presented as possessing many shared qualities with elements of the Iranian traditional courtyard house. Inspired by this type of architecture, which has been formed and developed through time in response to various personal, cultural and geographical paradigms, this thesis tried to explore how *Veil–Tent* could itself be framed as a type of boundary, and thereby be customized and appropriated in accordance with its particular environment to emplace its wearer or inhabitant within that given context in a more fluid and flexible fashion.

Through various prototypes, the concept of emplacement has been explored through sensory engagement with certain aspects of materiality and spatiality of the border, from the sharp multisensory boundaries of the first project to the permeable margins of the chador. In *Veil |Tent*, the foldable chador provided a mutable boundary that could be reformed and expanded collectively by the performers while deciphering the Iranian recipes to a tactile sensation of letters and folds,

from within or outside of the space. In *Of the world, dust remains*, the fermented chador constituted a multisensory environment that reconstructed the boundaries between body and space, both through the actors' improvised choreography and in each spectator's imagination.

This project defined as its aim to speculate the chador as a personal boundary that could be produced and reproduced by its wearer or inhabitant (and the material itself) rather than by someone else imposing their will or opinion. The chador in this thesis was an agent of its ongoing materialization to create a scene for spatial performativity. In such flexible and impermanent context, the wearer could have a chance to manipulate and appropriate the veil as a personal territory in a way that not only non-wearers but also non-humans have the equal impact on its formation and transformation.

As Bhagwati mentions, "[…] today, in a city like Montreal, and indeed in many cities around the globe, persons with evidently self-composed homelands and with blatantly complex identities are increasingly becoming an everyday phenomenon" (2007, pp. 3–4). How can experiencing the veil from non-familiar perspectives, as proposed in this research, contribute to a better understanding of the contemporary situation of the ever-changing identity of people in globalized cities? How can such an understanding result in an insightful recognition of frontiers —in this case, the veil— where the equality of individuals and groups, genders and races, humans and non-humans is a value?

To conclude, this research-creation was commenced with a single question, yet finished with more. Posing questions as a method has deep roots in speculation about the very essence of the subject matter. Through these speculative questions, one can perform and compose own boundaries iteratively, in attunement with self, others, human and non-human.

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Appendices and supplemental materials

Appendix A- Cutting and engraving paper and fabric

For *Chador| Veil–Tent* project, I tested different types of paper and fabric to find appropriate material for this installation, based on its physical quality and weight. In my experimentations, I had to draw outlines of the pleats by hand. In addition, semi geometrical patterns and fonts were carved on paper and fabric. To model the final prototype, both the pleat lines and the geometric patterns were designed in Adobe Illustrator software, then engraved with the technical aid of the laser cutter machine. These patterns were carved with the laser cutter. To provide the installation with various levels of transparency, the laser cutter had been set with different settings of heat and speed (see Figure 17).

Settings for the laser cutting and engraving		Power	Velocity	PPI/ HZ
Paper	Perforation lines	5.00	100.00	5000
	Cutting lines	20	20.00	2000
Fabric	Perforation lines	15.00	60.00	3000
	Engraving letters	55.00	15.00	500

Figure 17: Chador| Veil–Tent, process of prototyping. Photos by author.

Appendix B- Kombucha fabric

Kombucha SCOBY, Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast, is a living organism of cellulose layers. Kombucha is an edible liquid produced from a fermentation process using sweet tea and SCOBY which is also known as the "mother." in addition to the "mother," which is basically used as a starter, other layers of SCOBY grow and float just above the kombucha liquid during the fermentation process. These are called baby scobies. They are nanoscale meshes that look like gelatinous mats. These bacterial cellulose layers are nourished by nitrogen sources of tea and carbon sources of sugar, which exist in the liquid. As the dried form of thickened layers, kombucha fabric is an eco-friendly and sustainable material (Yim et al., 2017).

The time and process of fabric growth depend on many parameters such as environment, temperature, mother/SCOBY, and the recipe (type, quantity and quality of tea and sugar). These items affect not only the speed of growth but thickness, roughness, colour and transparency of the fabric. During the process of creation, I produced many small prototypes to achieve a durable semi-transparent fabric by changing and manipulating temperature, type and proportion of tea and sugar. However, after six months of experimentation and exploration, each piece autonomously created its individual surface, roughness, transparency and morphology. The most significant result of working with this living membrane was discovering the unpredictable character of this material.

The process of growing SCOBY and making kombucha leather

During the process of material making and testing, I tried three recipes, and each ended up having a different result. Each recipe had its own proportion of tea, sugar and kombucha starter. A summary of these formulas and combinations is presented here:

I grew the first fabric at home in the room temperature, in a small transparent container, 20x30x10 cm, covered the top by a piece of thin fabric. The most crucial difference between the first experimentation with the two following ones was the fact that it started from scratch. This means that instead of using mother SCOBY, I added organic kombucha liquid as a starter. The result was papery and fragile after 45 days of growth and 14 days of drying (see Figure 18).

Ingredients	Water (litre)	Teabag	Sugar (kg)	organic kombucha liquid (litre)
Quantity	2.00	8	0.40	0.40

The thickness of the wet fabric before drying: 2 mm

Growing duration: 45 days
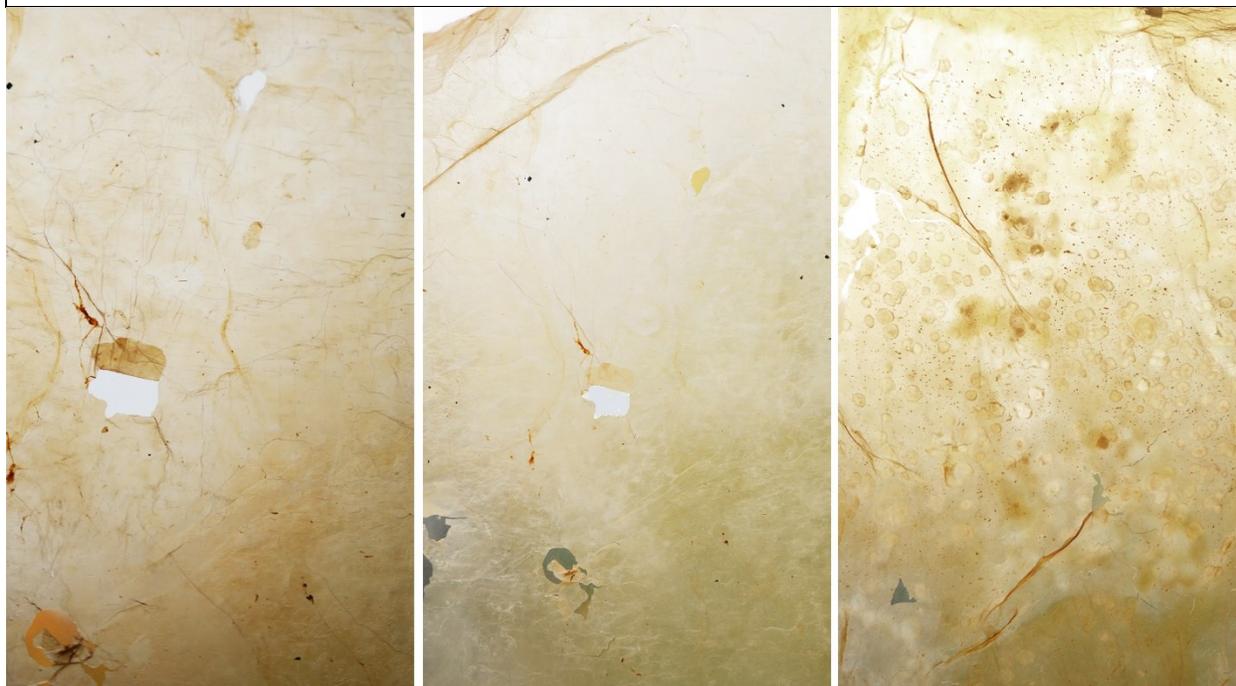
Figure 18:The first papery and delicate kombucha fabric. Photos by author.

The second fabric was grown at the lab environment, Speculative Life Bio-Lab at Concordia University. I used the same size container, 20x30x10 cm, but this time I added mother SCOBY, which optimized the growing process. In comparison to the previous prototype, the product was thicker and less fragile after 21 days of growth and fourteen days of drying (see Figure 19).

Ingredients	Water (litre)	Teabag	Sugar (kg)	Mother SCOBY
Quantity	2	6	0.25	one small piece, 6x6x1cm

The thickness of the wet fabric before drying: 5 mm

Growing duration: 21 days
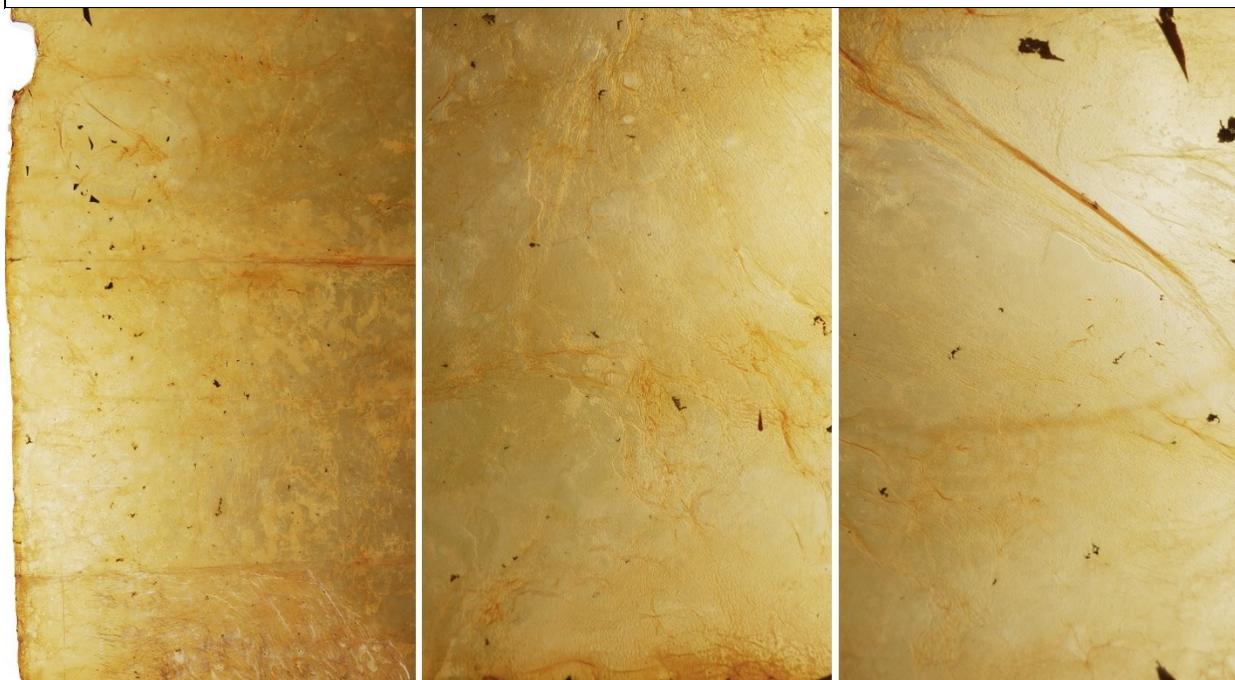
Figure 19: The second yellowish kombucha fabric. Photos by author.

The third kombucha fabric was grown at the same environment, but this time the container was three times bigger to explore size and time ratio. Also, the container was black and covered by a thick cotton fabric, which made the growing environment shady and dark. The result was supple, leathery and semi-transparent after 21 days of growth and eighteen days of drying (see Figure 20).

| Ingredients	Water (litre)	Teabag	Sugar (kg)	Mother SCOBY	fermented liquid from previous test (litre)
Quantity	6	12	0.75	two small pieces, 6x6x1cm	1
The thickness of the wet fabric before drying: 1 cm Growing duration: 21 days					
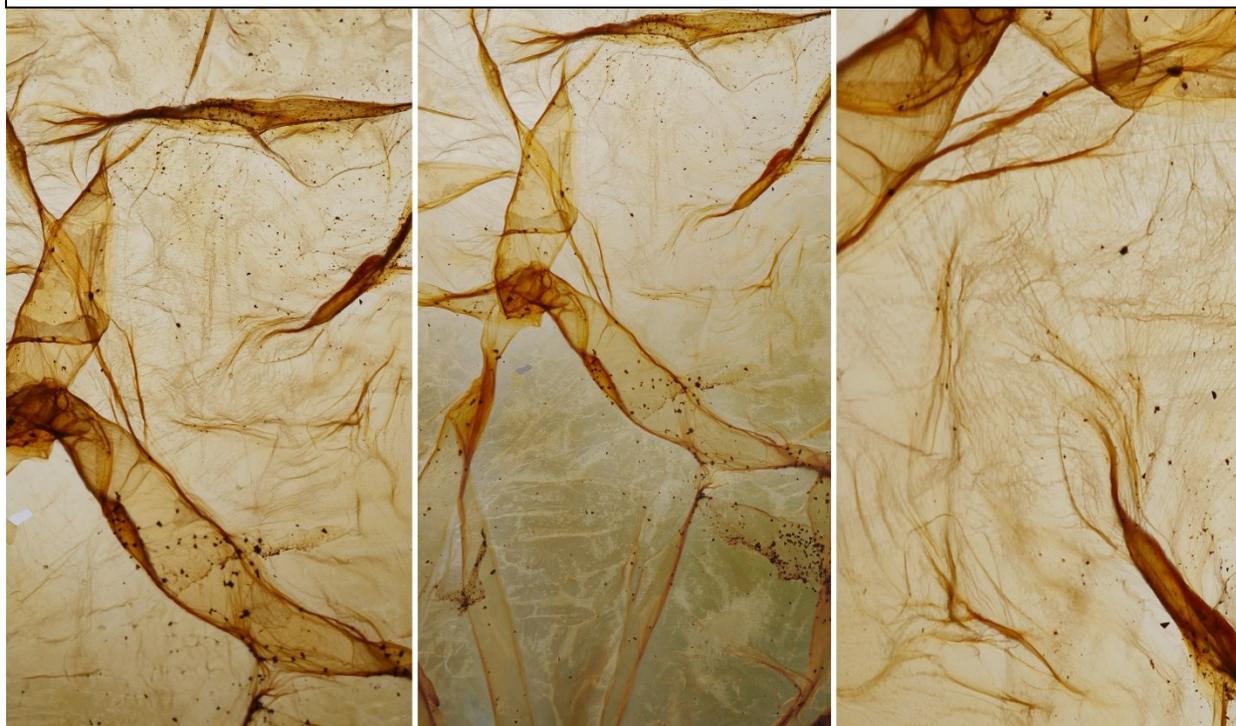
Figure 20:The third skin-look kombucha fabric. Photos by author.

In all three processes, one litre of fresh liquid containing water, sugar and tea, was added to the fermented liquid on a weekly basis to nourish the new SCOBY layers. To summarize these experiments, I discovered that the kombucha fabric grows much faster in a dark or shady room, and with a higher temperature. Also, I observed that by reusing the fermented liquid and the mother SCOBY from earlier phases, the newly produced layers got thicker in a shorter amount of time.

Therefore, to obtain the best result for the final project, I grew 20 mother scobies in 20 litres of kombucha liquid one month in advance and used them as the nutritious starter.

I used the third recipe for the mass production of the fabric in Shiraz, Iran, which took about one month for each layer. However, the fabrics had distinct morphologies, as the environment, and raw materials were different (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: Process of making kombucha fabric- Iran. Photos by author.