From Cocoon to Community: The Role of Silk in Intercultural Learning, Research-Creation and Art Education

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Abstract

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Jacky Lo

Can silk inform us of the past, the present and a reimagined future? This thesis mends together familial histories, intercultural learning, and community-based art education through research-creation. The research addresses silk's history, production as a collaborative and cultural material in two components, a body of work exhibited at the Centre Culturel Georges-Vainer in Montréal, and a community workshop. The exhibition examines my first research question, above, and the silk moth through weaving, embroidery, and paper works alongside the forgotten experiences of my great-grandmother and family in diaspora. The art-making workshop, guided by the same research question, brought together communities in Montréal through needlework, conversations on materials considerations, and a collective art piece displayed in the exhibition. The research uses the theoretical lens of intercultural arts education to investigate my second research question: how can silk threads, storytelling, and community projects like my workshop connect cultures together, specifically in a diverse and multicultural city like Montréal? By examining the stories woven into silk, I address my third research question, how can projects such as *Silk Cocoon* contribute to inclusive intercultural art education in community settings? I offer a glimpse into a reimagined future where the threads of the past and present converge, guided by a deeper understanding of our relationship with materials, community, heritage, and the self.

Land Acknowledgement

In indigenous cultures moths are often linked to intuition and faith, suggesting that unbeknownst to me, the silk moths have been guiding me through my research-creation. They are perceived as symbols that encourage trust within the process of transformation and the invisible force steering one's path. Here I would like to acknowledge that I live and work on the unceded ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples in Vancouver and the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation in Tiohtià:ke/Montréal, which I call home and the place where my family sought to find refuge, a place where my father saw endless possibilities in raising a family. I want to thank the indigenous peoples who have allowed me to be a settler in a place that has formed so much of my identity and art through the beautiful mountains, rivers, oceans, and vast lands that have connected me from coast to coast.

Acknowledgements

As I piece together this thesis, I find myself reflecting on the journey that has brought me here—a weaving of guidance, support, and love of many who have walked before and beside me.

To my mom and dad, who have been so supportive and caring during this whole process even through the three-hour differences and being four provinces away. Thank you for trusting me with your sweet and hard stories about the past and being so patient and understanding when I only had questions and no answers. To my two sisters who have been my role models growing up and for always taking care of me regardless of what my requests may be.

To my supervisor Dr. Kathleen Vaughan, your invaluable guidance, unwavering support, kindness, and fruitful conversations about sustainability, textiles, art-making, and Iceland have been the fertile soil in which this thesis has taken root. To my thesis committee Dr. Lorrie Blair, who have contributed so much warmth and wisdom to my work and experience at Concordia University.

My heart goes out to my cohort (now all my great friends) and my “parents” from the Iceland field school experience for making my transition to Montreal so welcoming and easy, in which I now call home. To my all besties, thank you for the late-night discussions, shared challenges, and supportive words throughout this process.

I owe a debt of gratitude to all participants for their stories and time which made this research possible.

Finally, to Kelly who has encouraged, pushed, and believed me from day one. Thank you for seeing the potential within me as I have with the moth.

To my grandpa and grandma, and for all the third culture kids and migrant families who felt neither here nor there.

Figure 1. Close up weaving of *The Third Space*. [Digital photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo.

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1. Introduction

Positioning

The groundwork and results of this studio- and community-based research-creation thesis centre around my body of work, displayed in a solo exhibition entitled *Silk Cocoon*, staged at Montréal's Centre Culturel Georges-Vanier (CCGV) from March to April 2023 and a workshop with the community. In this specific body of work, the materiality and production of silk alongside fractured histories and stories pertaining to my great-grandmother are explored, as it will be evident within the discussion of the work. My research and discussion will unfold in two distinct phases. The first phase is centred on the body of my studio-based artworks. The second phase consists of a participatory, collaborative art-making workshop alongside and engaging with the exhibition, followed by an optional questionnaire circulated to all participants. The intercultural art education methodology used in this thesis helped me materialize silk to inform my identity as a Chinese-Canadian educator, artist, and great-grandson, where I experienced self-discovery through making and community exchange.

To preface, I moved to Montreal from Vancouver amidst the pandemic in 2021 for school. Since moving, I've been thinking a lot about familial legacies, recalling my childhood memories and sense of belonging. During my first semester at Concordia University, I had to present stories of significance through the lens of an art classroom for one of my assignments. I recalled an elementary school project on weaving. When I was in grade 5, I was working on this weaving and tapestry project for school. I struggled to create the design for my tapestry and got so frustrated as I tried to complete it (Figure 2). Luckily, my grandma came in as a helping hand and taught me the weaving skills she learned from her mother. As I sat and watched her demonstrate, she could not help but express her excitement and memories of her mother and grandmother. She was surprised that my elementary class would conduct such a project and have both the boys and girls participate. She began telling me about her experience learning to weave and our family.

Figure 2. Lo. J., (2024). Photograph of my grade five tapestry[1]

Note. By J. Lo, 2005, tapestry with felt backing, wooden dowel, located in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

[1] Lo, J., (2005). *Grade five Tapestry*. [Weaving with yarn, twine, felt, wooden dowel]. Photo: Jacky Lo.

She revealed that my great-grandmother was considered a master embroiderer. She made most of her living by embroidering fine silk and occasionally clothes for the noble and bourgeoisie classes in China. Her specialty was silk butterflies. However, during the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao wanted to create a new visual culture to communicate his ideologies (Vainker, 2004a). Much of the traditional art and culture were either destroyed or suppressed (Zhang, 2013). This included certain regional embroideries and traditional silk patterns (Zhang, 2013). To survive, my great-grandmother and her family focused on weaving instead. As a result, many of our family members only passed down the knowledge of weaving after she had passed awayKnowing this part of my lineage, my curiosity and fondness for craft and textiles grew exponentially. Unfortunately, I was never allowed to inherit the familial expertise because I was a male; my two sisters and my female cousins were given the opportunity. Even so, I was always around my sisters and would help them with their projects or weaving exercises. Aside from traditional gender norms where my family saw needlework and weaving as women's work, I was discouraged from the practice due to my having a condition called Hyperhydrosis*,* the excessive sweating on hands and palms. Due to these reasons, I slowly lost touch with the skills and never really reconsidered the practice. I can't definitively say these experiences are the reason, but I never subsequently considered incorporating fibres into my artistic practice.

When I began my journey doing my Master's degree, I was curious about my role as an art educator and my identity as a first-generation Chinese Canadian[2]. I began to wonder and imagine what my family's life would be like if my great-grandmother were to have passed down her embroidery knowledge. This curiosity led me to re-trace my family's history and involvement in the textile craft in Guangzhou, China. I made multiple attempts to reconstruct this history, from reaching out to family members and family friends in China to reviewing public records, which only led me to more fragmented pieces and questions. Many of the oral stories I received were mainly from my grandmother, my father, and my aunts, but unfortunately, examples of my great-

[2] Throughout the text, I use both 'Chinese Canadian' and 'Chinese-Canadian'. However, I use 'Chinese Canadian' to emphasize the separateness of each identity rather than in conjunction.

grandmother's work and photo records were nowhere to be found; this was partially due to my father immigrating to Canada and having to sell and let many things go. The only photos he brought with him were a couple of pictures of the family and the wedding photos with my mother. With the available resources and fragments of stories I had, I tried to connect and make sense of it all, hoping to spark another clue or direction to my familial silk roots of the past. Eventually, this led me to this thesis and my work at CCGV.

In the next section of my thesis, I take us into the world of silk, its history in China, and its contemporary use and innovations in multiple industries.

Introduction to Silk

Silk is an endlessly rich subject for research, whether historical or material. Resonances of its cultural histories imbue my artmaking and that of my participants, even if the detail presented in this text is more than I offered during the course of my workshop. I did communicate that silk is a natural fibre that can be spun and woven into textiles, threads and yarn or used for felt making. The silk fibres are harvested through the filaments of the silkworm cocoons, specifically the mulberry silkworm (Bombyx mori). The best-known silk comes from the cocoons of the larvae of mulberry silkworms due to the triangular structure of the fibre (Johnston & Hallett, 2022). This structure allows the silk to refract light at different angles so that when spun, silk has a shimmering appearance (Johnston & Hallett, 2022). Due to the silk's shimmering appeal and natural abilities as the perfect insulator for both hot and cold seasons while being breathable and lightweight, silk was seen as gold and highly desirable over the millennia.

The origins of silk as a fibre can be traced back to China between 5,000 and 7,000 years ago (Zhao, 2022). The demand for this luxurious fabric was one of the primary building blocks of the Silk Road, hence the name. These trade routes were a system on both land and sea covering multiple regions in Asia (South, Southeast, and Central), Russia's steppe, the Iranian and Anatolian plateaus, the Arabian Peninsula, Africa (North and Northeast), Tanzania, Morocco, Europe (Eastern and Southern), and

the Iberian Peninsula (Frankopan, 2022). The Silk Road brought textiles, crafts, and artists together, resulting in the emergence and movements for new techniques and traditions to textiles and their production. These trading routes were hubs of innovation and collaboration through exchanging raw materials, knowledge, artistic design styles, and patterns. The silk trade was primarily responsible for spreading silk production methods, specifically Sericulture, worldwide and what we know today. (Zhao, 2022)

There are many kinds of silkworms, and they can be found all around the world; however, the domestication of wild mulberry silkworms was first documented in China in 3500 BCE (Zhao, 2022). The origins of sericulture started with wild caterpillars and Chinese cultivators who, over time, bred them into mulberry silkworms, from whose cocoons we extract filaments to make silk (Zhao, 2022). Over multiple and cross generations, the mulberry silkworm became dependent on human protection due to domestication (Zhao, 2022). The adult moth is flightless and lacks the camouflaging abilities to allow the insect to thrive in the wild. Therefore, the sole purpose of many of these domesticated silkworms is to produce silk, with some having the opportunity to emerge and reproduce in the next domesticated generation (Zhao, 2022). Sericulture is the process of farming mulberry trees, harvesting mulberry leaves, rearing the silkworms, harvesting the cocoons, and reeling the filaments of the cocoon into threads (Zanier, 2022).

Chinese scholars believe that the domestication of silkworms started when Chinese ancestors began to link and parallel their life cycle with the silkworms in nature - from eggs into silkworms (larvae), pupae (cocoon), and then moths (Zhao, 2022). This comparison was likely seen as the unfolding of human life, silkworm to cocoon was the evolution to death and the transformation of cocoon to moth was the representation of the afterlife (Zhao, 2022). This theory can be supported by the discovery of silk proteins in ancient Chinese tombs shaped like a silkworm pupa, suggesting that silk fabrics were used and presented during the burial (Postrel, 2021). Therefore, the origins of silk production began as a cultural and tradition purpose.

To support this further, fairy tales and stories of silk can be found documented in ancient texts. One of many fairy tales mentions the 'silk spirit,' which linked silk with royalty and ceremony (Vainker, 2004b). The most notable and mentioned scroll about Sericulture is the academician Lou Shou's scroll of the weaving process, which the original is lost. However, many recreations have been made (Hammers, 2011). The scroll comprises a series of paintings called 'Illustrations of Tilling and Weaving' and poems alongside art. In the documentation of Lou Shou's scrolls, many paintings featured women producing silk. They demonstrated the significance of women's contribution to the history of weaving silk. Many scholars believe the industry became female-dominated due to the folklore of the first sericulturalist, a goddess. This resulted in ceremonies honouring her through the state, which empresses and not emperors led. Although historically, farming and cultivating silk were female occupations, as China began to modernize, both men and women took on roles of weaving and embroidery.

The result of sericulture is raw silk that is usually coiled into bundles (Zanier, 2022). Silk production is the next step after sericulture: the refinement and spinning of threads, dyeing, and weaving to form fabrics (Zanier, 2022). Silk weaving can be done anywhere and in any climate; however, sericulture is different and dependent on areas that cultivate mulberry trees (Moriculture) (Zanier, 2022). As a result, regions outside of China may understand the production process; however, harvesting mulberry trees proved difficult or not viable (Vainker, 2004b). The climate-sensitive nature of mulberry trees greatly influenced the trading routes that formed the Silk Road, the trade routes described above (Zanier, 2022). Hence, the limitation and difficulty in expanding sericulture to Western countries made silk more alluring. Another reason sericulture could not be widely spread globally was the regenerative capacity of silkworms (Zanier, 2022), meaning that there was a common belief that imported silkworms would 'degenerate' within a few generations, requiring new worms and eggs to maintain good quality silk (Zanier, 2022). Degeneration theory and the rejuvenation of silkworms became the standard belief and practice until the early eighteenth century. Modern scientists frown upon such belief (Zanier, 2022). It was also a time when innovations in

techniques and production began to develop to increase output while saving time (Postrel, 2021).

One of the innovations in production was in moriculture. Silk farmers discovered how to crossbreed two different mulberry trees (Lu and Jing) in China for more luscious leaves and a sturdier trunk. Pruning improvements also enhanced leaf growth, allowing year-round food for the silkworms. Farmers could raise several generations of silkworms a year with abundant food supplies. Mulberry plants can be grown as a bush or a tree. Harvesters often prefer bushes as they are easier to collect and reach. To produce silk, the artisans will supply the worms with fresh mulberry leaves, raising the worms on trays protected from the elements, ideally in a dry and ventilated environment (Postrel, 2021). The cultivators will then give the maturing silkworms branches to build cocoons on (Postrel, 2021). Once the pupa is formed cultivators will carefully observe the hibernation process (Postrel, 2021). Before starting on the process, farmers need to sort the cocoon from those who are too small or falling apart. After sorting, the outer floss is removed as the fibre is unsuitable for weaving. Just right before the moth emerges, the nurturing ends and the artisans harvest the cocoons by immolating the chrysalis through steaming, baking, or soaking it in salt water (Postrel, 2021). The process of immolation is integral to producing high-quality silk because once the moth breaks out, it damages the silk. (Postrel, 2021). Every stage requires attention to detail and precision. Factors such as the density of silkworms to mulberry leaves, the temperature, and timing can significantly make a difference in the quantity and quality of silk (Postrel, 2021). In the next couple of days, the reeling begins, and the cultivators will need to remove the sericin around the fibre with hot water to allow the silk fibres to separate. Cultivators learned that by sprinkling salt on the harvested cocoon, they could preserve and extend another week for reeling, which resulted in more silk per harvest with the same amount of people. Another added benefit of salt is that it improves the quality of the silk (Postrel, 2021). Farmers will reel the silk to produce a skein; to weave the fibres, the spinners must twist two or more together to make threads. Depending on the project's needs, farmers may dye their silk threads or the fabric once the weaving is complete (Vainker, 2004a).

In textiles, the tapestry technique is one of the oldest methods for weaving and continues to be practiced today (Talbot, 2022). Tapestry emerged independently in the Eastern and Western hemispheres and is carried out globally in many cultures (Talbot, 2022). The technique was developed in China along the Silk Road, resulting in the silk tapestry, one of China's most prized textiles (Talbot, 2022). At the same time, the silk exchange along the roads transformed the weaving traditions in other cultures. (Talbot, 2022) The introduction of silk threads and sericulture expanded the potential of woven textiles in terms of aesthetics, social prestige, decorative patterns, and new motifs (Talbot, 2022).

Historically, the Chinese presented silk as a sign of friendship, especially when visiting out west and beyond. At one moment, Chinese silk acted as currency, and it was worth the value of gold in Europe (Abdel-Salam, 2022). Bundles of silk cloth were collected as taxes from the Chinese government so that they could use the textile as bartering and giving power in times of need (Zanier, 2022). This made silk a multifaceted agricultural staple (Vainker, 2004b). The apparent use of silk was for clothing. However, it was also known as a material for decorating and finely protecting things (Vainker, 2004b). Silk was often spun by the lower classes and woven by noble women (Vainker, 2004b). Men and women of all social classes wore silk. Those who could not afford to wear the fabric still knew the textile through banners, decorations, and costumes during public festivals, religious ceremonies, funerals, and birthdays, especially for elders, weddings, and family rituals about the Chinese Year and the zodiac (Wilson, 2005b). Culturally, China is known for the silk bestowed on the dead and their mourning garments for the living. They also used silk in celebratory tapestries that commemorate life. These silks would be divided into two traditional rituals of ‘Bai Shi’ and ‘Hong Shi', ‘White occasions’ and ‘Red occasions,’ white being mourning and red being celebrating (Wilson, 2005b). The colours can be reflected by the occasions, often white and navy associated with death and red and gold for auspicious events.

Silk pieces were used to transform domestic and sacred spaces on particular occasions or promote customs and political ideologies, especially during the Maoist years (1949-1976) (Wilson, 2005b). During the communist regimes of Mao Zedong, luxuries were frowned upon; however, due to its lucrativeness, the silk industry was not an immediate target for reformation (Vainker, 2004a). The silk industry became more widely distributed because of technological advancements and mass production techniques (Wilson, 2005b). Silk was 75 percent of China's exports in the early 1950s (Vainker, 2004a). As Mao took control, he ensured that the political regime was inseparable from the daily lives of Chinese citizens, which included art (Wilson, 2005b). Mao Zedong would reinforce his power in silk through the establishment of an embroidery institute in Suzhou to preserve skills and techniques of fine craft, despite the institute producing pictorial propaganda of Mao and the communist party (Vainker, 2004a). The act of giving, receiving, weaving, or embroidering motivational images of Mao or the communist party aimed to reinforce this inseparable link of the state, the party, and power (Wilson, 2005b). During this era, the silk pile rug played a significant role in promoting social and political ideologies which were essential to keeping the revolutionary spirit alive. Many traditional crafts during this time were either preserved but highly controlled, only limited to government circles or foreign consumers, or wholly abandoned to be forgotten (Vainker, 2004a) – a policy that directly impacted my own family, as I noted above.

From 1966 to 1976, the social upheavals during the revolution aimed to create a new form of society by eliminating the "Four Olds" (thinking, habits, culture, and customs), specifically for the arts; one of the objectives was to 'socially purify' operas, folklores, and embroidery (Zhang, 2013). For instance, as the revolution began in 1966, the regime denounced the four main schools of embroidery (Xiang, Shu, Yue, and Suzhou) because they were seen as part of the "Four Olds." Embroiderers were either sent to do farm work or create artworks for the Revolution museums (Zhang, 2013). This led to declining standards of craftsmanship and embroidery. Eventually, cotton and silk rationing and poor distribution networks limited the public's access to such goods (Wilson, 2005a), even while propaganda images showed another (false) narrative of

flourishing exchange of silk and cotton amongst the people (Wilson, 2005a). As a result, around 1970, collectors started to notice an increase of printed designs on silk instead of embroidery works from China (Wilson, 2005a). Eventually making Chinese silk came to be less in demand, especially with the decrease of foreign interest (Vainker, 2004a).

As mentioned, textiles have been used, seen, and valued as payments and exchanges. From the economic perspective, textiles and banknotes meet the four functions of money - a medium of exchange, a set and standard value, a store of wealth, and a standard of deferred payment (Wang, 2022). The differences between textiles and banknotes are in their social and cultural implications. For example, during the Tang dynasty in China, textiles such as silk were reserved for specific purposes such as dowries and were equivalent to currency (Wang, 2022). Today, the intersection of banknotes and textiles still exists. Although many contemporary banknotes are mostly made of a paper-polymer blend, textiles are added as a security feature (Wang, 2022). For example, Americans embedded silk thread in their notes to prevent counterfeiting (Wang, 2022). Textiles and weaving patterns are common in designing banknotes for security and representing national identity and traditions (Wang, 2022).

Other contemporary uses of silk include the medical industry, the cosmetic industry, the electronic industry, and the food industry. Within the medical field, the silk protein fibroin is commonly used and developed for films, hydrogels, fibers, and flat and 3D structures for medical applications (Reddy 2020b). Medically, silk fibroin is known for cartilage tissue engineering, microneedles for transdermal delivery of vaccines, and cancer detention for bio-imaging (Reddy, 2020b). In the cosmetic industry, numerous case studies evaluated the benefits of silk-based materials for cosmetic use (Reddy, 2020b). For instance, hydrogels developed by silk fibroin are used in hair growth-promoting agents, and water-soluble fibroin and silk sericin were found to improve the moisturizing efficiency of the skin (Reddy, 2020b). As for electronic use, electrochemical transistors, supercapacitors, conductors, and sensors are developed from silk-based materials and fibres (Reddy, 2020b). In the food industry, the by-products and waste from sericulture, such as the pupae, are highly valued for

agricultural and nutritional purposes (Babu, 2019). For example, silk wastewater can be extracted to make Sericin powder, which is valuable in food products. The pupae are valued as a rich human food source, poultry feed, and fertilizer (Babu, 2019).

Within textile industry

Within the textile industry, many new types of silk and technology have also been developed and incorporated with environmental impacts in mind. Tussah silk, considered as the organic, wild or peace silk, is cruelty-free and non-violent silk that is produced without harming or killing silkworms (Schoeser, 2007). Tussah silk specifically extracts cocoons of silkworms in the wild only after the silkworm has completed the metamorphosis process (Schoeser, 2007). The results of the silk are fibres which are less uniformed and shiny with a more yellowish-brown colour in contrast to sericulture silk (Schoeser, 2007). Similar to Tussah silk, Ahimsa silk is also referred to as cruelty-free silk or peace silk, allowing the larvae to fully develop into moths. The only difference between the two silks is how it is harvested; Ahimsa silk is not harvested in the wild (Schoeser, 2007). The demand for peace silk is steadily increasing for consumers, for its cruelty-free and sustainable initiatives. The integration of technology has also transformed the silk industry by making the production more sustainable and efficient: for instance, incorporating artificial intelligence to refine the harvesting process, through precise control of temperature and humidity for higher quantity and quality of silk (Pal et al., 2023). The use of genetic engineering has also led to breakthroughs in silk production. Biologists have successfully engineered silkworms to produce silk with desired traits such as strength, colour, and lustre (Reddy, 2020a). They have made biological attempts for silkworms to produce spider silk, which has higher tensile properties than silk produced by the bombyx mori (Reddy, 2020c). Aside from technological advancements, the textile industry has been exploring other forms of animal and plant-based silks such as lotus silk, soy silk, and marine silk such as mussel silk for more sustainable and innovative practices. As an artist that use silk, these new breakthroughs have the potential to open up new and creative possibilities for textile art, promote sustainability, and enable interdisciplinary collaboration between artists and engineers, thereby fostering intercultural and ethical research within the arts.

Artists

While researching and finding artists related to my practice, I stumbled across artists who made works focusing either on personal material considerations, intercultural spaces and objects, or fabric as a medium. I want to highlight a specific work by Montreal-based artist Karen Tam, *Kiosk for the Silent Traveller 哑行者的亭子* (2018) (Figure 3). This piece laid very similar parallels to my exploration of imagined

Figure 3. Tam, K., (2018). Kiosk for the Silent Traveller 哑行者的亭子.[3]

Note. By K. Tam, 2018, installation with founded, bought, and fabricated objects and artwork, exhibited at Xiangning Art Museum in Shenzhen, China.

[3] Tam, K., (2018) *Kiosk for the Silent Traveller 哑行者的亭子*. [Installation with found, bought, and fabricated objects and artwork]. 3.05 x 3.05 x 2.9 m. Photo: Gordon Tam

futures, third spaces, and community engagement. For context, this piece was featured in a group exhibition at the Xiangning Art Museum in Shenzhen, featuring a group of Chinese artists living overseas from all over the world (Tam & Lum, 2019). It was the first time Tam had shown her work in China (Tam & Lum, 2019). The piece explored Chinese spaces and material culture, specifically the Chinese Kiosks at the World Exposition in the 19th and 20th centuries, indirectly addressing the European interpretation of Chinese architecture (Tam & Lum, 2019). The installation's architectural structure is nothing new in the eyes of North Americans, but through the lens of the Chinese locals, it was a space of created fantasy. The reception received positive reviews, and the work led to discussions on how Chinese culture is viewed and represented overseas (Tam & Lum, 2019). Reading through interviews about Tam's work, she often questions the authenticity of Chinese culture and the idea of China within North American spaces like Chinatowns, Chinese restaurants, and curio shops. Despite the authenticity, for Tam, performing "Chineseness," or a form of self-exoticism in these spaces for economic survival, adds to Canadian history and is a part of the Chinese-Canadian identity and experience (Tam & Lum, 2019). For the purpose of my research, the material silk, my exhibition, and *Kiosk for the Silent Traveller 啞行者的亭子* present themselves as intercultural spaces within the Chinese-Canadian discourse.

An ongoing artwork series I want to spotlight is the *Invisible Identities series* (2019) (Figure 4) by Don Kwan. Kwan is an Ottawa-based artist who creates work about identity, representations, and intergenerational memory-making in the diaspora through his experiences as a gay Chinese-Canadian (Kwan, 2022). In this piece, Kwan recreates iconic waiters' uniforms (dress shirts, vests, and cheongsam) by weaving together old menus and photos of his own family restaurant to document early Chinese Canadian eateries (Heath-Eves, 2019). Kwan's parents and grandparents opened *Shanghai Restaurant* in 1971, where he grew up watching his family waiting tables and managing the restaurant. Eventually, Kwan and his siblings took over the family business. The series began when he collected Chinese take-out menus within a 150-kilometre radius of Ottawa as he was concerned about the lost histories of the mom-and-pop restaurants closing around him (Kwan, 2022). He wanted to capture these

stories and give tribute to the waiters, once a common job to many Chinese immigrants through artmaking (Kwan, 2022). The uniforms depicted in the piece are based on the uniforms that his father and grandfather wore as waiters (Kwan, 2022). Many of the menus collected by Kwan reflected the early dishes in Chinese eateries; similarly to Tam's work, the dishes on the menu challenge the ideas of authenticity. Alongside this challenge, Kwan uses the menus and personal photos as material considerations to reclaim the invented genre of food as a notable part of Canada's culinary history and communities. I draw parallels to my own body of work and the essence of the *Invisible Identities series*, through the usage, personal narratives, and considerations of the material– in my case, silk and for Kwan the paper take-out menus.

Figure 4. Kwan, D., (2019) Invisible Identities series.[4]

Note. By D. Kwan, 2019, installation/sculpture with take-out menus, hangers, prints of family photos, exhibited at Craft Ontario in Toronto, ON, Canada.

[4] Kwan, D., (2019) *Invisible Identities series.* [Take-out menus, hangers, family photos prints]. Photo: Jocelyn Reynolds

Artist Do Ho Suh, is known for his installations, depicting spaces and homes he has lived in using fabric and exploring how those places are activated by memories, fabric, architecture, and objects (Loos, 2022). Originally Suh experimented with silk for his pieces, however it got too expensive, so he opted for polyester organza used to make Hanboks (a traditional Korean garment) in the summer, linking it to his culture (Loos, 2022). It was important for Suh to use fabrics that have transparency as it gives a ghostly vision of the past while creating an ambiguous distinction between what is outside or inside the space (Loos, 2022). Part of Suh's conception of his work was initiated through his discomfort of moving from different places and being displaced, having language barriers, and using different metric systems (Loos, 2022). I'm particularly interested in his piece, *Home Within Home Within Home Within Home Within Home* (2013) (Figure 5), an installation of two life-sized models of homes where the artist once lived. The work features the outer home, his Rhode Island town home when he studied at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and the inner home, suspended inside the outer home is a traditional Korean building where Suh grew up (Carrier & Joachim Pissarro, 2013). The work as Suh describes

"The experience was about transporting space from one place to the other—a way of dealing with cultural displacement. And I don't really get homesick, but I've noticed that I have this longing for this particular space, and I want to recreate that space or bring that space wherever I go. So, the choice of the material, which was fabric, was for many reasons. I had to make something that's light and transportable, something that you can fold and put in a suitcase and bring with you all the time." (Suh, 2003).

I find his exploration of home and culture admirable and the way he describes and uses fabric as a medium resonates to my practice and connection with silk.

In developing my research, the three artists, Karen Tam, Don Kwan, and Do Ho Suh offer glimpses of their perspectives on the complex connections of cultural identity, materiality, and diaspora. These artists challenge the binary of one over another and instead ask the audience to dwell in the intersections that bridge the past and present,

the personal and the communal. I find inspiration in their capacity to evoke memory, heritage, and belonging through their mediums as I draw comparisons to my own approach. Their practice resonates deeply with my investigation into silk as a medium, underscoring the significance of material considerations in the expression and connections to cultural histories.

Figure 5. Suh, D.H., (2013) Home Within Home Within Home Within Home Within Home [5]

Note. By D. H. Suh, 2013, installation with polyester fabric, stainless steel, exhibited at National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA), Seoul, Korea.

[5] Suh, D.H., (2013) *Home Within Home Within Home Within Home Within Home*. [Installation with polyester fabric, stainless steel]. 15.3 × 12.8 × 12.97 m. Photo: MMCA, Korea.

2. **Theoretical Lens**

My inquiry has been guided through the theoretical lens of intercultural art education, ideas I have been pursuing in depth for the writing of this text and after my intervention at the CCGV. So, what do we really mean by intercultural? Based on the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), '*Intercultural'* is the occurring between or involving two or more cultures. Using this definition as a starting point, I will be diving deeper into how interculturality relates to silk, education, and my practice through the scholarly works within *The Routledge International Handbook of Intercultural Arts Research,* compiled by the editors Pamela Burnard, Elizabeth Mackinlay and Kimberely Powell (2016). I have also incorporated postcolonial theories on culture by Homi K. Bhabha on the 'third space' hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) since his work is foundational to so much thinking in this field.

I began with questions about how to express my positionality through the work with the approach of respect and deep understanding while addressing my Chinese and Canadian identities. I came across UNESCO's Education Sector for Peace and Human Rights, on the guidelines of intercultural education (2006). Before diving into the guidelines, UNESCO first defines culture as: "Culture is at the core of individual and social identity and is a major component in reconciliation of group identities within a framework of social cohesion" (2006 p.12).

UNESCO's document continues deeper into aspects of culture in education, language, religion, diversity and cultural heritage, minority and majority, multiculturalism and interculturalism (2006). For the aspects of my research, I will be focusing on education, multiculturalism, and interculturalism in culture. The roles of culture and education are intertwined, almost like a yin and yang. Culture informs knowledge and acts as a frame of reference for members of society in shaping the ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and believing. Together, these act as a feedback loop, as culture cannot exist without continuous teaching and practicing amongst groups. Multicultural refers to the diverse cultures in human systems. Multiculturalism also encompasses aspects such as linguistic, religious, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity that form national

culture. Within the definition of multiculturalism, it is understood that multicultural education focuses on learning about other cultures for diversity, understanding, and acceptance. Intercultural, on the other hand, aims to develop creative and sustainable ways of living in multicultural communities through respect, understanding, and dialogue. While 'Intercultural' is defined by Merriam-Webster as 'the occurring between or involving two or more cultures', UNESCO further expands on the definition by adding, "The existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expression through dialogue and mutual respect" (2006, p. 17).

The objectives and role, as suggested by UNESCO on intercultural education are divided into four pillars: *learning to know*, *learning to do*, *learning to live together*, and *learning to be* (2006). *Learning to know* is taking broad general knowledge and in-depth explorations of specific projects, such as making contact with other languages, spaces, and cultures together with the goal of communication. *Learning to do* is developing competencies that empower individuals to find a place in society and are useful in collaborative situations—for example, understanding how to work in a team. *Learning to live together* aims to foster an understanding and appreciation of interdependence, cultural diversity, values, and skills that contribute to a sense of solidarity and collaboration among diverse community members. *Learning to be* is focused on personal development, autonomy, judgement, and responsibility. Valuing and respecting a person's cultural background strengthens one's senses of identity and personal meaning. Lastly, UNESCO emphasizes that intercultural education is not a supplement or a simple add-on to a curriculum. Rather, it should be integrated into the whole educational ecosystem, including decision making, teaching methods, student interactions, and learning materials. As of September 2015, intercultural education is one of the targets (4.7) that is part of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 by the United Nations (2015). Specifically, Goal 4 - 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (United Nations, 2015). Considering this target and goal as an artist and educator, I began to examine intercultural approaches in art education.

Since the rise of globalization, intercultural contact and interaction has become an integral part of today's complex world. This was exceptionally evident during and right after the COVID-19 pandemic with all the Asian hate and anti-Asian sentiments happening all over North America. When I moved from Vancouver to Montreal, I would receive WeChat calls from my mother to be careful of my surroundings and strangers after she had seen a stream of continuous attacks on the Asian communities across North America online. As we are all still recovering from the pandemic's effects as well as working to address structural racism more broadly, I believe it is vital to integrate intercultural efforts in all aspects of life, especially in the arts. A large part of constructing my workshop was to demystify the (micro)aggressions that came along with this crisis and embody how we can show solidarity or come together as a community from different backgrounds through one material - silk. I wanted to utilize silk as an intercultural material of hybridity that could foster understanding and connection towards my experiences and the participants'.

I next refer to *The Routledge International Handbook of Intercultural Arts Research* (2016) compiled by arts education professors and experts Pamela Burnard, Elizabeth Mackinlay, and Kimberly Powell, as a critical resource into the insights of researchers, academics, and artists in the field of art education balancing between local and global cultures. In this discussion, I'll concentrate on 3 chapters and their key concepts, establishing connections to scholars who have influenced my understanding of interculturality in the arts, research, and education.

In Chapter 31, "Glocalization and Interculturality in Chinese Research," scholar Samuel Leong (2016) proposes a "planetary-commonality" perspective of global-local interactions as a point in fostering cultural understanding. Leong sees interculturality as interactions between different cultures on multiple levels, such as sub-cultures, gender cultures, learning cultures, linguistic cultures, and artistic cultures. Instead of thinking of interculturality as a fusion approach, Leong constitutes it as a synthesis of multiple identities – togetherness as the starting point. For him, globalization causes more opportunities for interaction, especially with migrant populations. Migrants, for example, offer a unique perspective on interculturality as they continue to connect with people

from their ancestral homelands while attempting to integrate with their host countries. This experience of connecting and integrating has greatly affected cultures through Leong's "process of 'glocalization'" (p. 344) where cultures redefine cultural products to suit their needs, beliefs, and customs. Leong references China as a case study. Ever since China opened its doors to the world in 1986 and hosted the 2008 Olympics, China has been a key player in the global economy. Widespread consumerism and globalization caused China, a country known as a Confucian nation with long-lasting legacies and histories, to experience changes in cultural values and norms. As China becomes more interconnected with the world, Leong points out that assumptions of what constitutes Chinese culture may no longer be easily defined. Despite this challenge, Leong addresses intercultural arts and research as tools in providing possibilities for modern scholars to view identity as multifaceted and not monolithic. Leong examines three phenomena of interculturality within Chinese arts: the Cantonese opera, Chinese diasporic musicians, and cantojazz.

While I won't elaborate on the specifics of his discussion since these art forms are not directly connected to mine, these three phenomena, as Leong (2016) describes, demonstrate how intercultural arts are always intersectional with multiple layers and cross connections of identities, truths, and manifestations. Each phenomenon shows how single entities can contribute to a 'butterfly effect' of expanding influence on an emerging or larger whole. In addition, it illustrates how interculturalism can result in new complex systems that can transform customs, values, and beliefs of multiple communities. I took his ideas in deciphering and connecting to my own work – specifically *Sī Rue (Silk Road)*, *The Third Space*, and *1 Step Forward and 2 Steps Back* (discussed below, pp. 32) – as well as thinking about intercultural interactions and art making within my workshop. Aligned with Leong's concept of planetary-commonality perspective, the three pieces utilize aspects of layering and interweaving of materials to describe the feelings and contemplation within the cross connections of identities and truths in ways I elaborate later in the thesis.

In chapter 9 '*The Role of Love in Intercultural Arts Theory and Practice*,' scholar Brydie-Leigh Barleet (2016) introduces concepts of love, specifically compassionate

love, as a method and ethic in intercultural arts theory and practice. Barleet believes that love can serve as a guiding principle to move forward. She defines compassionate love as elements of intimacy, interaction, trust, honesty, openness, caring, courage, fairness, faithfulness, respect, gratitude, dialogue, and ethical responsibility. Barleet draws inspiration from bell hooks' book *Beyond Race: Living Theory and Practice* (2013), specifically the chapter "Moving Past Blame". In the chapter, hooks argues against the 'us-and-them paradigm' and that overcoming this paradigm is essential for society to move further, especially within marginalized communities. Barleet takes on hooks' notion of moving forward and references author and expert in spirituality in medicine, Lynn G, Underwood (2009) on compassionate love, which focuses on the good of the other person, and both addresses human suffering and encourages human flourishing at the same time. In the case of Intercultural arts research, Barleet uses love to challenge the way we engage dialogue with others; instead of focusing on otherness, we seek to understand. Ultimately, Barleet proposes that love should be a core action and ethic behind why artists make work or how we engage with people, spaces, practices, and research. Compassionate love is at the core of my artistic practice and an important factor for intercultural engagement. Keeping with UNESCO's definition of 'Intercultural' and Bareet's attributes of compassionate love in mind, they both reference elements of interaction, respect, openness, and dialogue. Reflecting back and taking on this knowledge my workshop, exhibition, and the communal piece, *Mori (Bombyx mori),* which I will elaborate further in the discussion, features compassionate love through intercultural means.

In chapter 11, '*Insider, Outsider or Cultures In-between'*, Ylva Hofvander Trulsson and Pamela Burnard (2016) explore the ethical and methodological considerations in intercultural arts research. As researchers, Trulsson and Burnard highlight the importance of being aware of or acknowledging the positionality, power dynamics, privilege, or potential biases when investigating interpersonal dialogue in research. This chapter challenges the problematic notion of the insider/outsider dynamic in intercultural inquiry and the value of practicing responsible reflexivity. The dichotomy of insider/outsider limits researchers' identities in relation to research rather than to the communities. The outsider researcher tends to be valued by academia for their

objectivity; however, the insider researcher perspective suggests that an outsider researcher cannot truly understand a culture without experiencing it. To move forward Trulsson and Burnard bring forth the need to practice responsible reflexivity which engages the researcher's understanding of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, voice, representation, and text in relation to the studied context. In qualitative research settings, it is widely accepted that the researcher has power over participants which often results in power biases. This imbalance can often misrepresent, or construct information based on knowledge selected or excluded. Trulsson and Burnard propose intercultural interviews as a space for knowledge and exchange as well as a therapeutic tool for storytelling that is often not shared, understood, or appreciated in qualitative research. As intercultural researchers, they emphasize the need to learn how to represent, see, and understand new cultures or relationships before analyzing the data. Most researchers fall in the space between insider and outsider. The 'space between' in research is often referred to as "a multidimensional space, where researchers' identities, cultural backgrounds and relationships to research participants influence how they are positioned within that space" (2016, p. 121).

Trulsson and Burnard reference education researchers Katrin Goldstein-Kyaga and Maria Borgström's concept of 'third identity' which describes identities of globalization (2009). These identities are diverse and multifaceted and can change depending on context and or situations. Goldstein-Kyaga and Borgström argue that identities such as ethnicity are hard to describe when people find themselves situated in a globalized society. Their concept is inspired by Homi K. Bhabha's theories of the 'in-between place' or 'third place' (1994), which I discuss below. To conclude, Trulsson and Burnard believes that intercultural research is

> "…not simply the need for a methodological tool for equalizing and making visible power relations and practices of gathering data as 'truths', but rather a reflexive tool which can work to counter comfortable research practices: researching within discomfort zones is key." (2016, p. 123).

In essence, intercultural research advocates for reflexive tools to challenge comfortable research practices and inspire curiousity within discomfort zones of research. I have taken up this practice by utilizing intercultural interviews as part of my inquiry in the workshops. Considering the limitations of the insider/outsider dichotomy within research, I felt it was important for me to be part of the community and be transparent with my own biases and personal connection to the material throughout the workshop and the interviews. One of my questions from the interview – "While working on the activity did you think about any materials other than silk that are important to you? Can you elaborate a little?"[6] – opens a dialogue about their own subjectivity and representation to a material from their own life.

To further expand on culture, identity, and the 'space between' I will touch on renowned cultural critic Homi K. Bhabha's influential theories of the 'third/in-between space' as described in the seminal *The Location of Culture* (1994). Although published 30 years ago, his book remains relevant and underpins many considerations of intercultural art and education. The book begins by explaining the fundamental division of the 'West' and the 'East' or within the western perspective, the west and the 'other'. Essentially the West sees itself as cultured and civilized, while the East as lazy, self-indulgent, and uncivilized. Bhabha argues that binary divisions of West-East are unstable and unsustainable, and he developed two fundamental concepts to showcase this, one of them being hybridity. Hybridity is the notion that identities are compiled from all the different cultures with which they have experienced. Due to hybridity, when cultures meet, ideas are exchanged, causing both cultures to change or adapt, resulting in the fallacy of 'pure' Western or Eastern culture. The act of enforcing this binary creates the 'Other' resulting in a process that often denies one identity over the other. However, Bhabha invites us to consider our identities as hybrid moving parts rather than as constituent of a stable sense of self. Hybridity also aims to reconsider stable markers such as nationality, gender, and class as sites of collaboration and contestation, where re-imagining of identities of self can occur. Within these sites of collaboration and contestation, frequent inconsistencies and contradictions would lead to spaces of

[6] See below, Appendix B for the full list of interview questions.

ambiguity, to which Bhabha would refer as liminal, in-between, or the Third Space. In Bhabha's mind, the Third Space is the imaginary intersection where two cultures or identities meet; often it is also a space where real and imaginary spaces intersect. With respect to Bhabha in particular, I personally relate to the Third Space in navigating my identities as a Chinese Canadian and my role as an artist and educator. The dissection and exploration of Bhabha's ideas can be seen as a theme in my show and the artworks I make. The theme is especially apparent in the way I think about silk and the recurring number of three's (my identities: Chinese, Canadian, and the hybrid of both) in my work. This can be seen in my pieces: *The Third Space*, *1 Step Forward and 2 Steps Back,* and *Like a Moth to a Flame (飞蛾扑火),* further discussion below.

To conclude, I've taken a critical approach in understanding intercultural art education and how it influences and acts as the guiding principle in how I analyze my research. These scholars and their ideas will be addressed further in tandem with my body of work and as I dive deeper with each work within the discussion section of my thesis.

3. Methodology

My research and the question, “Can silk inform us of the past, the present, and a reimagined future?” were addressed through the process of personal research-creation and alongside community-based research-creation for my workshop. My first introduction to research-creation was in a methodology class for graduate students taught by Dr. Lorrie Blair at Concordia University. During the course, I stumbled across the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada’s definition on research-creation (2021): “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,” which is where my interest in art and research began. In the article “Research-creation: Interventions, Analysis and ‘Family Resemblances’”, communication theorists Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk (2012) examine research-creation in depth through analyzing and dividing the method to four subcategories: *research-for-creation*, *research-from-creation*, *creative presentations of research*, and *creation-as-research*. They also express that the categories are not mutually exclusive but rather useful terms for elaborating different approaches to research-creation. For the objectives of my thesis, I will be using *creation-as-research*, the approach in which Chapman and Sawchuk define as “...the elaboration of projects where creation is required in order for research to emerge” (2012, p. 19). In essence, it is about the balanced duality between the process of creation and the emergence of knowledge and research. Creation-as-research is very intriguing to me as an artist and educator, and it felt natural for me to incorporate this method as part of my inquiry. In Natalie Loveless’s (2019) manifesto on research-creation, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*, she explores the potential of research-creation as an institutional remaking practice as well as mobilizing this method for and in the Anthropocene. Loveless engages with research-creation as “...insertion of voices and practices into the academic everyday that work to trouble disciplinary relays of knowledge/power, allowing more creative, sensually attuned modes of inhabiting the university…” (2019, p. 3), a method in which new ways of thinking and voices challenge the academic tradition structures of knowledge. I have taken this theory of method into account when considering the voices and practices that

emerged during the planning of my workshop and the process of making. Another aspect that Loveless brings forth is inter- or trans-disciplinary perspective of research-creation and the way it encourages artists to consider the future. Research-creation blends artistic production and academic research together; meanwhile it trains researchers to think about how their practices and voices affect the how, where, and why of the future they're crafting. Upon reflecting on my own thesis, research-creation as a method resonates very much with my objectives. The concept of interconnection, the blend of different perspectives, and future considerations are all aspects that lie at the heart of my work.

Aside from doing research-creation as part of my work, I have incorporated community-based research-creation (CBRC) to the second phase of my research consisting of the participatory and collaborative art-making workshop. In the article, "Meaning and Making: Laying the Groundwork for Community-based Research-Creation," artist-researcher David LeRue (2023) proposes CBRC as a collaborative framework which "...provides the conditions for research participants to create their own works of research-creation within a larger research study" (p. 199). Part of the intrigue of CBRC is the engagement and the democratic aspect of creation within the researcher and participant dynamic which, as LeRue puts it, "opens the artistic aspects of these inquiries to diverse perspectives, fruitful complications, and more interesting directions that is possible through gathering community input for individual creation alone" (2023, p. 199). Connecting it back to Trulsson and Burnard (2016) on intercultural research and practicing responsible reflexivity, I recognise that CBRC provides a space to work on responsible reflexivity that offers co-creation and collective meaning. In addition, CBRC can add another layer of engagement beyond the standard oral testimony in interviews, in my case both CBRC and interviews were incorporated in my study.

Procedures

The artworks I created for the exhibition are focused on addressing my first research question, "Can silk inform us of the past, the present, and a reimagined future?" through the lens of silk. Silk became my catalyst for collaborative connection,

investigation, and exchange as well as my means for recovering my cultural and familial history. Using skills such as weaving and embroidery, the artwork highlights the complexity and importance of silk as a natural fibre while also representing diaspora and lost memories. The initial concept of creation was informed by the known fragments of my family history, specifically my great-grandmother's work as a master embroiderer in China. Never having met my great-grandmother and just knowing specific passages of my family's legacy, I wondered if art making and its process could help mediate the missing narratives and legacies of the past. I address the question through weaving, sewing, and embroidering silks and mulberry paper, as well as with the concept and context of the artwork. The style of silk embroidery I explored in my works is from one of the four famous embroidery schools in China called *Yue Embroidery*, believed to be the oldest embroidery school, whose origins are associated with the Guangdong province, where my family is from (Zheng, 2019). Yue embroidery is also known as Guangdong/Guang embroidery or Cantonese embroidery (Zheng, 2019). This embroidery style is generally rich and complex, with bright colours, gold and silver threads, and a wide range of themes, specifically auspicious motifs of dragons, phoenixes, birds, and fruits (Li & Zhang, 2017). It is described as visually similar to Western painting, compared to the other three embroidery schools (Zheng, 2019).
The body of work came into fruition soon after a call for proposals for the 2023 Bourse Concordia-CCGV award, an opportunity for the winner to create a solo exhibition and related workshop at the Centre culturel Georges-Vanier from March 9th to April 16th, 2023. I was notified as the winner on January 30th, 2023, which meant I had a little over a month to make and install the pieces for the show. In total, I made 14 pieces for the exhibition. I will be discussing 12 of the pieces as the other two pieces utilizes materials and techniques not addressed in the research.

To begin, I first gathered and recalled all my knowledge about my great grandmother through oral stories from my family members, trying to connect to her as a great-grandson. I have also drawn from my own experiences, memories, and reflections as a Chinese-Canadian educator and artist to answer these questions: What are the missing parts of my great-grandmother's narrative? How does connecting with her

inform my identities and a new form of knowledge? Can weaving and embroidering silk make me closer to her? Can I celebrate her fully while acknowledging the lost memories through art?

Next, I experimented and worked with a variety of silks (silk blends, bourette, raw, recycled and tussah silk) from all over the world (China, Denmark, France, India, Italy, Japan, and Switzerland) through different methods of weaving and embroidery, and an assortment of mediums and materials. For weaving, I used frame looms, objects, and handmade warps to create my pieces. For embroidery, I worked with a variety of fabrics, from silk to wool as well as papers, mainly mulberry paper. Some of the questions that came to my mind: What specific motifs used in Yue embroidery am I drawn to as an artist who is Chinese-Canadian? Where are contemporary silks imported from? What variety and quality of silk is available? What does it mean for a Chinese-Canadian artist to work with a material with a rich history and specifically to me, with such familial connotations? I address these questions in my discussion of my research-creation artworks, below.

After completing the body of work, I moved on to designing the accompanying workshop entitled *Silk Connections*. The objective of the workshop was to explore concepts of re-imagining futures, sustainability, circular economies, and connections to the material of silk. It addresses the same question: “Can silk inform us of the past, the present, and a reimagined future?” highlighting the history and production of silk as a natural fibre.

I designed the workshop to be 90-minutes long with 10 adults, held on Sunday, April 2, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. The workshop was offered bilingually, in both English and French, with a fellow graduate student volunteer serving to offer French language translation at the event. The workshop was oriented to adults within the community of Sud-Ouest neighbourhoods local to the Centre culturel Georges-Vanier (Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy, Griffintown, Point-Saint-Charles). Registration was managed by the Centre’s website, with the first 10 people to respond being admitted to the workshop and a

subsequent waitlist kept. There was also a nominal ($10 per person) cost associated with the workshop to help defray materials costs and to ensure the seriousness of those who register, given the limited number of seats available. This is standard practice for all the workshops at CCGV.

Potential participants were invited through the promotion material related to the exhibition and workshop of posters, emails, and social media (Instagram and Facebook, the Centre's pages as well as my own). I also reach out through the Department of Art Education's networks at Concordia, the CCGV, and my own. In the promotional material, it was made clear that participants in this research would require motor skills involving needle work, understanding of English or French both orally and written, and that the workshop is part of my thesis research. However, people had the option to participate in the research if they wished, which meant that they agreed to having their process of working photographed (artworks and hands only), participating in a short survey either orally (recorded) or online (available until April 23, 2023), or both. Those who wish to participate needed to indicate this by signing a consent form. People also had the option to simply come to the workshop without participating in the research, if they preferred. The procedural steps I followed in the workshop were:

1. Participants were given a tour of the exhibit and a brief question and answer session based on works that interested them.

2. Next, participants moved upstairs to the studio, where I introduced the ideas of my exhibition through the making of silk moths using recycled silk fabrics.

3. I then gave a hands-on demonstration and two paper handouts on how to make the decorative silk moths (about 4" to 5" long) one written and one visual guide (see Appendix D & E). To create the silk moth, they choose four pieces of pre-cut wings and fabric for the body (the fabric for the wings and body was recycled silk and cotton). They then assembled the pieces and parts through sewing and

needle work, with stuffing (cotton) provided for the body of the moth.

4. After my hands-on demonstration, the participants had the opportunity to create their own decorative silk moths using the recycled silk fabrics provided. I provided hands-on assistance if required. I let them know that participants would have time to create a small number (1-2) moths during the length of the workshop.

5. During the process of making, I photographed the creating of the silk moths by those workshop attendees who agreed to be part of the research.

6. Near the end of the workshop, participants were invited to install their artwork on the Gallery walls for the remainder of the *Silk Cocoon* show, coming to collect it from me the day of the de-installation. Alternatively, they could choose to take their silk moth home with them at the end of the workshop if they preferred.

7. At the close of the workshop, participants were reminded that they had the option to be interviewed or submit their responses online from a Google Survey Form, available until April 23, 2023. Both the interview and online survey had the same questions. The in-person interview was done at the CCGV workshop space, and the responses were audio recorded and then transcribed. The questions asked in the survey included:
    - Please introduce yourself and explain why you wanted to be part of this workshop.
    - What thoughts came into your mind while making the moths with the silk and did it change your thoughts about silk?
    - While working on the activity did you think about any materials other than silk that are important to you? Can you elaborate a little?
    - What part of the workshop was the most meaningful for you and why? Did anything surprise you?

- Is there anything else you would like to say about the workshop and your participation in it, or the *Silk Cocoon* exhibition itself?

8. The exhibition was de-installed on April 17, 2023, when participants whose works were installed in the gallery picked up their artworks.

In addressing my second research question – how can silk threads, storytelling, and community projects like my workshop connect cultures together, specifically in a diverse and multicultural city like Montréal? – I analyze these responses and their impact on and consideration of the material and newfound understanding of silk, opening a dialogue about intercultural art education within the community. Lastly, I will articulate the specifics and interconnections of the two phases of my research project (the body of my own work and the participants' artworks and survey responses), describe how this studio-based and community-facing research has contributed to my development as a Chinese Canadian artist-teacher, and address my third research question, "how can projects such as Silk Cocoon contribute to inclusive intercultural art education in community settings?"

4. Discussion

Before I discuss the pieces in *Silk Cocoon*, I want to address the three pieces I made prior to the call out for the Bourse-Exhibition at the CCGV which were displayed in the show. For some context, I had been thinking about paying homage to my great-grandmother and my family history in embroidery back in the spring of 2022. In the summer of that year, I had the life-changing opportunity to go to Iceland through the field school program developed by Dr. Kathleen Vaughan at Concordia University in association with the Icelandic Textile Centre (Textílmiðstöð Íslands). Although it was just a month, this experience actualized my investigation towards my great-grandmother and her lost practice through art making. Soon after returning to Montreal, I began weaving. The first weavings I made were three small pieces, *Sī*, *Soie*, and *Silk* (which I call the Silk Series) (Figure 6) using various quality and blends of silks, with the bulk of silk acquired from my hometown, Vancouver, and some in Montreal imported from different parts of the world. I started the weavings with embroidery hoops as the frame of the warp as a call back to my great-grandmother's origin story of embroidery, then eventually replaced by weaving. I thought that the juxtaposition of the weavings instead of embroideries in the hoops represented my familial story well. During the process of creating the pieces, I drew inspiration from the past and what I knew at that time, the pieces each take on distinct colourways. The first piece *Sī* utilizes auspicious and celebratory colours (reds, pinks, and yellows) in the Chinese culture, those I grew up seeing during celebrations and festivals. *Sī* is woven with bourette silk (Denmark), wool, alpaca, silk blend (Japan) and mohair, silk blend (Italy). *Soie* is compose of merino-silk blend (Italy), silk (China & Switzerland), raw silk fibre (China) and mohair-silk blend (Italy) with a blend of gradient like whites, beiges, warm greys, and orange-yellow hues. The colourway of *Soie* acts as a transitional piece in between *Sī* and *Silk*. *Silk* on the other hand is devoid of colour with just white silk from China and Switzerland, representative of silk in its natural and lustre state. *Silk* also demonstrates different processes of silk, in the middle of the work unspun silk can be seen in the tapestry alongside more refined silk. Aside from the colour scheme, the mentions of where the silks were imported from added another depth to the cultural and geographical connections that formed a modern-day silk road. It was important to me to utilize

Figure 6. Lo, J., (2023) Silk series.[7]

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), weaving on embroidery hoops, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[7] Lo, J., (2023). *Silk Series.* [Weaving with bourette silk, wool-alpaca-silk blend, mohair-silk blend, twine, merino-silk blend, silk, raw silk fibre]. 15.24 cm x 15.24 cm (ea). Photo: Jacky Lo

different languages to name my works to represent my heritage and the journey of this project, the pieces are entitled ‘silk’ in Chinese, English and French. Looking through the intercultural perspective, language is referenced in one of UNESCO’s pillars on intercultural education, *learning to know,* as well as one of the multiple identities Leong mentions within interculturality. This series also takes on the symbolism of circle – as auspicious motif within Chinese culture and in many cultures the concept of the life cycle, unity, and divinity. (Zhang, 2021) The works align with the Chinese scholars’ understanding of domestication of silkworms and the link to the life cycle with the silkworms and Chinese ancestors mentioned prior in the Introduction chapter on silk (Zhao, 2022). The Silk series laid the foundation for the artworks I developed for this thesis.

For the works made for the exhibition, I will focus and discuss the body of work into three groups - paper, weaving, and embroidery for organizational purposes as the pieces emerged simultaneously and are all connected in some capacity, as I discuss below.

(paper)

Slow Burn, Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I) and *Mùrè II (Mulberry II, 木热 II)* are handmade papers made from the fibre of mulberry leaves that silkworms consume. The paper was purchased at Au Papier Japonais in Montréal, where they have a huge section of colours and types of papers. The paper used in *Slow Burn* (Figure 7) is Kizuki Somegami, a thin, high quality Kozo paper, made with 100% Chinese Kozo, the white inner bark or 'bast' of the paper mulberry tree. The paper used in *Mùrè I* (*Mulberry I, 木热 I)* (Figure 8) and *Mùrè II (Mulberry II, 木热 II)* (Figure 9) are Usukuchi, an extra heavy mulberry blended paper. All three artwork feature charred marks made on the papers using a wood burner to replicate the bite marks of silkworms on mulberry leaves and the immolation of silkworms during silk harvest. During China's Cultural Revolution, burning was a tactic employed to destroy works of art, literature, and other items from the ‘old’ visual culture that Mao disapproved of. Burning paper is another prevalent practice in Chinese culture, known as joss money (Chung & Li, 2017), which is offered to the gods

and ancestral worship on festivals or special occasions. In addition to representing lost knowledge of burned book pages, my use of burning is also intended to symbolize the lost legacy of my great-grandmother and to be in remembrance of her. These paper-based works *Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I)* and *Mùrè II (Mulberry II, 木热 II)* attempt to mirror each other as a way connect together (Figure 10), as I felt constantly while making my pieces for the show. Like the Silk Series, *Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I)* and *Mùrè II (Mulberry II, 木热 II)* use a combination or a blend of English, Chinese, and French in the titles. For instance, in French the word 'mulberry' is mûre and if you separate the words and add an accent grave (or in Chinese, the 4th tone) to the 'u' and the 'e', it makes the Chinese pinyin of 木热 (mù rè), translating to English to 'wood burn'. When naming the pieces, I was fascinated to see how translation and language can act as a space of relation and similarities. In my case the translations directly highlight my process, the 'wood' being the paper and the 'burn' my manipulation. Using the theoretical lens of intercultural art education, the medium of mulberry paper can be regarded as an intercultural material created by combining various plant fibres and processes from Japan and China. For instance, the bark in *Slow Burn* originates from China, while the technique to make the paper is from Japan. The process combines and layers many fibres together to create the paper, which I see as a metaphor for interculturality. The mulberry paper is light and translucent, much like my ongoing research into my great-grandmother's history and Bhabha's notion on hybridity, the paper is neither clear nor opaque, but rather a blend of both. The missing marks or sections are what give these artworks their identity; without the negative space the works are just mulberry papers, however the burnt parts present the intention, the lost, and narration. In a sense, the paper contains the story, and the holes represent the voice of the story, inviting the viewer to comprehend or search for the missing. This interplay between the voice and narrative can be related back to researchers Trulsson and Burnard (2016) on responsible reflexivity, in which the holes and paper are both seen as important facets that make up the work, rather than understood as a dichotomy of insider/outsider.

Figure 7. Lo, J., (2023). Slow Burn.[8]

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), charred Kizuki Somegami paper, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

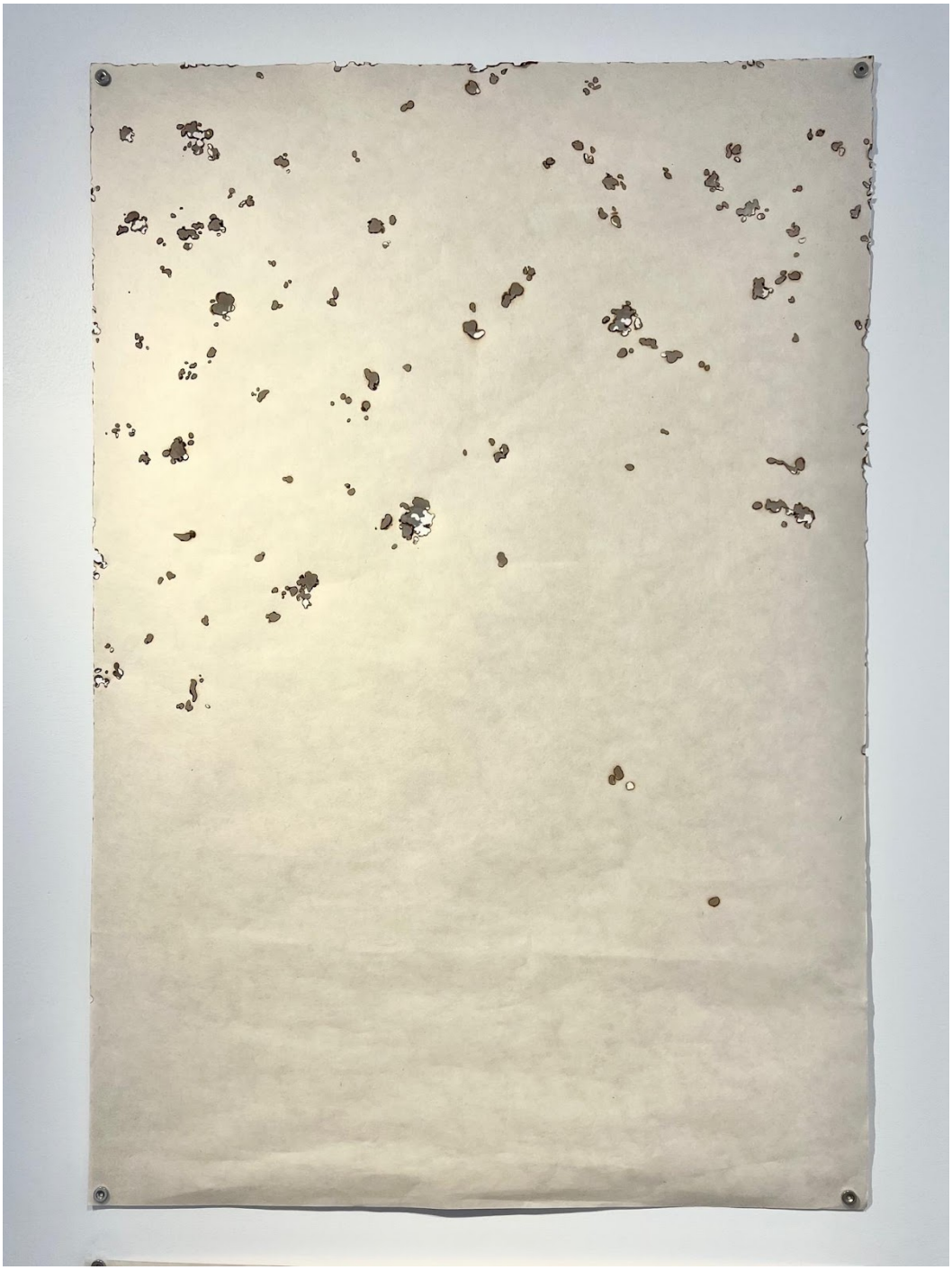
[8] Lo, J., (2023). *Slow Burn*. [Mulberry paper]. 27.9 cm x 21.6 cm.

Figure 8. Lo, J., (2023). Mùrè II (Mulberry II, 木热 II).[9]

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), charred Usukuchi paper (bottom), exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[9] Lo, J., (2023). *Mùrè II (Mulberry II, 木热 II).* [Extra heavy mulberry paper]. 99.7 cm x 66 cm.

Figure 9. Lo, J., (2023). Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I).[10]



Note. By J. Lo., (2023), charred Usukuchi paper (top), exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[10] Lo, J., (2023). *Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I).* [Extra heavy mulberry paper]. 99.7 cm x 66 cm.

Figure 10. Lo. J., (2023). Installation photograph of Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I) and Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I) together.[11]

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), paper works, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[11] Lo. J., (2023) Installation of *Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I)* and *Mùrè I (Mulberry I, 木热 I)*. [Digital photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo.

(weaving)

In the exhibition, *The Third Space* and *Pùpà (Pupe, 铺帕)* are weavings that explore networks, connections, and identities. Entitled *The Third Space* (Figure 12), the work initially references Bhabha's postcolonial theories on culture and the 'third space' (1994), however notions of *planetary-commonality* from scholar Leong (2016) can be found within this piece. As Bhabha offers the concept of hybridity in which re-imagining of identities of self can occur, similarly Leong engages us through the perspective of global-local interactions between different cultures as layers and negotiations in which new forms are art can occur. Examining *The Third Space* through these theories, weaving can be seen as a pedagogy for intercultural relations as threads (an allegory for cultures) are interlaced together to form textiles, which can be viewed as a network or community. For example, it was imperative for me to find out where the source of the threads came from to illustrate the global impact silk still has in a modern context. The tapestry is made up of three different weavings woven together with extra or left over weft thread of each piece. Each weaving within the tapestry represents my three identities - Chinese, Canadian, and the hybrid of the two. I first started with the middle weaving as the in-between space of the piece, it is a blend of various hues, fibres, and silk qualities. The middle piece contains a blend of Merino silk blend (Italy), silk (China, France), bourette silk (Denmark), wool alpaca and silk blend (Japan), mohair silk blend (Italy), wool (China) and twine (China). Similar to the *Sī*, the central section has an auspicious colour scheme that pays homage to the Canadian flag's colours as well as the rich reds, purples, pinks, yellows, and whites associated with Chinese culture. The flow of the weaving came naturally, however shifts in tension caused the piece to form a natural wavy pattern, which I leaned into. The bottom weaving, which is made of natural and hand-painted silk from China, France, and Switzerland, is symbolic of my Chinese identity. It has a superior quality silk that is thinner and finer, requiring the longer weaving time of the two. The higher quality silk also showcases the beauty and artisanal heritage of silk. The last weaving is the top piece which is representative of my Canadian identity, composed of mainly recycled silk from India and hints of silk from China and France and raw silk fibre from China. Its top section is structured with uniform lines as the design due to using a denser silk thread made from recycled fibres.

The recycled silk in the weaving references the first yard of woven silk produced in Canada in 1922 by the Montreal-based Bruck Silk Mills at their Cowansville location (Digital Museums Canada, n.d.); I imagine the silks made by mill are now being recycled or upcycled. Together the three weavings demonstrate the pedagogy of intercultural arts research through the selection of threads from various global sources, as well as a personal perspective through the meticulous blending of materials and colours, with each area of the tapestry depicting a facet of my identity. In reference to the scholars Bhabha and Leong, this piece celebrates the convergence of cultural and personal histories to produce a dynamic, multifaceted portrayal of identity.

Pùpà (Pupe, 铺帕) (Figure 13) on the other hand, focuses more on lineage and networks. The work began with my surname and its meaning. When my father immigrated to Canada, he was given the last name Lo based on the phonetics of how he said it, however in Chinese pinyin it is Luó and when written it is 罗 (simplified) or 羅 (traditional). When I translated my surname in Google Translate from Chinese to English a series of verbs and nouns came up, such as ‘collect’, ‘display’, ‘net’, ‘shift’, and to my surprise ‘silk’. Taking these words as a starting point, it became evident that the word ‘net’ resonated with me in the context of weaving and fishing as well as the concepts surrounding catching and (net)works. When I was drafting the proposal for the exhibition, I knew I wanted to weave an object and through the process of translating my last name, I began to search for nets or webbing as an object with which to weave. Eventually, I stumbled across a bamboo lampshade reminiscent of traditional fishing baskets and cocoons. I began weaving the lampshade using a variety of silks (fibres, recycled, and tussah) and wool from China, France, Switzerland, India, Iceland, and Italy. The weaving took many layers of overlapping and underlapping to create the piece, which contributed to a butterfly effect as an emerging whole. When all the silks and wool are threaded together, they create a metaphor of intricate networks strung together, where the viewer cannot tell where each begins or ends (Figure 11). This layered weaving process symbolizes the complex networks that connect many cultural elements together, creating a metaphor for interconnectedness in which the origins and endings of cultural influences are indistinguishable. Like many of my pieces, *Pùpà*

(Pupe, 铺帕) also uses a combination or a blend of English, Chinese, and French in the title. However, with *Pùpà (Pupe, 铺帕)* the Chinese pinyin is based on with the English word ‘Pupa’ the stage in which the silkworm is inside the cocoon. If you dissect the word into two and add an accent grave (or in Chinese, the 4th tone) to the ‘u’ and the ‘a’, it becomes 铺帕 (pù pà) – meaning to store or a shop of a wrap or handkerchiefs. These series of words reminded me of the Silk Road and the life cycle of silkworms and their metamorphosis to a moth. Collectively, these artworks highlight the strength of intercultural arts research, illustrating how cultural and personal narratives can be interwoven to form complex and interconnected weavings.

Figure 11. Lo, J., (2023). Close up photograph of Pùpà (Pupe, 铺帕).[12]

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), woven lampshade, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[12] Lo, J., (2023). Close up photograph of *Pùpà (Pupe, 铺帕)*. [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo

Figure 12. Lo, J., (2023). The Third Space.[13]

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), weavings with variety of silks, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[13] Lo, J., (2023). *The Third Space.* [Weaving with merino-silk blend, silk, raw silk fibre, bourette silk, hand painted silk, wool-alpaca-silk blend, mohair-silk blend, recycled silk, wool, twine]. 25.4 cm x 99.06 cm.

Figure 13. Lo, J., (2023). Pùpà (Pupe, 铺帕).[14]

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), sculpture woven with fibres, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[14] Lo, J., (2023). *Pùpà (Pupe, 铺帕)*. [Sculpture, weaving with bamboo, silk, silk fibres, recycled silk, tussah silk, wool]. 114.3 cm x 68.6 cm.

(embroidery)

There are three embroidery pieces in the exhibition that share similar sentiments with the paper and weaving works discussed above. The work *Sī Rue (Silk Road)* (Figure 14) outlines the historic land route of the Silk Road overlayed by the route my parents took to settle in Vancouver and my route coming to Montreal. The textile used in

Figure 14. Lo, J., (2023). Sī Rue (Silk Road).[15]

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), embroidered fabric with silk, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

piece is a blend of alpaca and silk that is made in China and again features colours found favorable in the Chinese culture. The piece emphasizes the Silk Road's extensive

[15] Lo. J., (2023). *Sī Rue (Silk Road).* [Alpaca and silk woven fabric, silk embroidery]. 165.1 cm x 69.6 cm.

history of interactions with other nations and cultures, as well as its impact on society, culture, geography, and globalization. Similar to the other pieces, *Sī Rue (Silk Road)* explores the ideas of blending materials (alpaca and silk) and layering different maps to represent the influences that create the whole piece demonstrating interculturality. The piece also takes on considerations of glocalization by documenting the global map of the Silk Road to the localized personal project where the piece was made (Montreal). *Sī Rue (Silk Road)* also uses a blend of English, Chinese, and French in the title. As mentioned before 'sī' is silk in Chinese and the French word for road is 'rue', together they make silk road.

1 Step Forward, 2 Steps Back (Figure 15) is probably my most personal piece and it features hand embroidered work on printed Japanese mulberry paper that convey the ideas of struggle and discovery. In this piece there are three embroidered moths, like the other pieces above, the three moths represent the three identities. For me the motif of the silk moth is the manifestation of possibilities and potentiality, not only does it make silk (an intercultural material), but it also manages to survive immolation and lead an ethically sound existence. The moth and butterfly in Chinese folklore (The Butterfly Lovers) is believed to be spirits of recently deceased relatives (Sax, 2001), which symbolizes the re-connection with and potential of my great grandmother. The triangular formation of the moths and the title suggests an internal struggle, a negotiation, a constant push and pull, the complexity of needing to choose, and questioning whether my identities are holding me back or propelling me forward, reflecting on Leong's (2016) sentiments on glocalization and interculturality. The print on the mulberry paper took resemblance to the core principles of Yue embroidery, which feature a rich and complex floral design with bright and gold colours (Li & Zhang, 2017). The thin black silk threads used to create the moths are delicate and depending on the light may be only visible up close. The visibility of the moths is a reflection on the constant struggle in my mind: it may not be apparent, but it is there. I spent the most time making this piece, due to the fragility of the mulberry paper and meticulous planning for constant puncturing back and forth of the needle. This process was a struggle and required a level of perfection which mirrored the personal struggles I experienced on what it means to be Canadian and the

social roles growing up with my two older sisters. The three moths also serve as an allegory for my two sisters and me, symbolizing the experiences of my childhood alongside them. This allegory highlights the persistent comparisons between genders and the societal expectations placed upon us in relation to our familial history with craft.

Figure 15 (a) & (b).[16]

(a) Lo. J., (2023). Detail photograph of 1 Step Forward, 2 Steps Back.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), two embroidered silk moths on printed mulberry paper, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[16] . (a) Lo. J., (2023). Close up photograph of *1 Step Forward, 2 Steps Back* [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo. (b) Lo. J., (2023). *1 Step Forward, 2 Steps Back.* [Japanese printed mulberry extra heavy paper, silk embroidery]. 99.7 cm x 66 cm.

(b) Lo. J., (2023). 1 Step Forward, 2 Steps Back.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), embroidery on printed mulberry paper, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

Like a Moth to a Flame (飞蛾扑火) has a very similar composition to *1 Step Forward, 2 Steps Back,* and both share many sentiments and ideas surrounding the potentiality of the moth. The biggest piece in the exhibition, *Like a Moth to a Flame (飞蛾扑火)* (Figure 16) features three machine embroidered moths on mulberry silk charmeuse. The moths on the silk portray a sense of hope and demonstrates what they would have looked like if they had lived to tell the story. The moths are embroidered by the Tajima embroidery machine in the Textile + Materiality Milieux Research Cluster at Concordia University. The piece explores the dichotomy of machine- versus hand stitched embroidery and showcases the potential of new technologies within the industry, aligning with my view of moths as a sense of hope and future. The title is a metaphor for my irresistible attraction towards silk and my familial past even though it may lead me to nothing; like a moth to a flame, it also illustrates the process of silk making with the silk being the flame we are attracted to. Interestingly this common saying could be found in Chinese and in English, represented in the title. The three embroidery pieces —*Sī Rue (Silk Road)*, *1 Step Forward, 2 Steps Back*, and *Like a Moth to a Flame (飞蛾扑火)*— both honour the complex historical and cultural importance of silk and contemplate the individual and shared experiences that influence one's identity, while showcasing a combination of traditional artistry with modern creativity.

Figure 16 (a) & (b).[17]

(a) Lo. J., (2023). Like a Moth to a Flame (飞蛾扑火).

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), embroidery on mulberry silk charmeuse, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[17] (a) Lo. J., (2023). *Like a Moth to a Flame (飞蛾扑火).* [Silk, polyester embroidery, wooden dowel]. 208.3 cm x 76.2 cm. (b) Lo. J., (2023). Photograph of embroidery on Tajima machine. [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo.

(b) Lo. J., (2023). Photograph of embroidery on Tajima machine.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), process photo of *Like a Moth to a Flame (飞蛾扑火)*, located at Concordia University, Montréal, QC, Canada.

(group work)

The final work I will discuss in the show, entitled *Mori (Bombyx mori)* is made up of 24 decorative silk moths, 12 from the participants in the collaborative art-making workshop and 12 made by me (Figure 17). All the moths are composed of cotton stuffing and recycled silk fabrics, mainly from ties found in second hand stores and from donations, as well as beads for embellishments. Akin to *1 Step Forward, 2 Steps Back*, and *Like a Moth to a Flame (飞蛾扑火)* the symbolism of the moth used in this piece is a metaphor for potentiality, the re-imagined second life, and the sense of hope. At the same time, the title uses the Latin word ‘Mori’ – meaning death to suggest the reality of most silk moths that produce silk, and is a word also be found in the scientific name – Bombyx mori. I chose to use the silk fabric of ties to play with the ideas of masculinity, femininity, and expected social roles, referencing the masculine history of ties (one of men’s wardrobe staples) to needlework, generally referred to as women’s work. The collaborative effort in the piece serves as the manifestation of interculturality and

potential connections as participants are exchanging dialogue while making the pieces. The goal of the workshop was to think and have a conversation about materials, specifically silk, and how they can lead to re-imagined futures, sustainability awareness, circular economies, and intercultural and personal connections. These objectives of the workshop provide the basis for community-based research-creation, which LeRue (2023), mentioned above, refers to as a collaborative framework for participants to create their own research-creation works. In the case of *Mori (Bombyx mori)* the community-based research-creation adds a level of public outreach by becoming the final work in the exhibition. Furthermore, by working with hands-on materials, participants undoubtedly shared stories and formed bonds that go beyond the workshop, giving them an opportunity to witness firsthand how the arts can foster a sense of community and encourage the inclusion of people with varied backgrounds. Prior to the workshop, I had made 12 silk moths and installed them sparingly around a wall in the gallery where they served as examples to participants.

In the workshop I had a total of 10 participants, from young adults who were students to retired folks living in various parts of Montréal. All the attendees agreed to participate in the research, signing consent to be photographed and take part in a survey either orally in person or online. Each participant during the workshop made at least one silk moth with some even making a second one. There were also a few attendees who took some material home to continue making more moths after the workshop. At the end of the session, when participants had the option to contribute to the exhibition by installing their moth(s) or to take them home, all of them decided to install their piece(s) (Figure 18). As mentioned above, collectively they made 12 silk moths which were installed alongside the 12 moths I had made prior. At the end of the workshop, I reminded the participants about the survey, and that they had a choice to be interviewed or to submit their responses online. By April 23, 2023, I received a total of six responses, all online. To further elaborate my inquiry, I will be looking at the work(s) and comments of four participants, as they directly relate to my research questions. The other two participants provided insights, however many of their

responses were one sentence or word answers, which were difficult to be analysed for the study.

Figure 17 (a) & (b).[18]

(a) Lo. J., (2023). Mori (Bombyx Mori) on left wall.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), The collection of decorative moths made with recycled silks displayed on left side of gallery, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[18] (a) Lo. J., (2023). *Mori (Bombyx Mori)* on left wall. [Installation with recycled silks, cotton, beads]. (b) Lo. J., (2023). *Mori (Bombyx Mori)* on right wall. [Installation with recycled silks, cotton, beads].

(b) Lo. J., (2023). Mori (Bombyx Mori) on right wall.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), The collection of decorative moths made with recycled silks displayed on right side of gallery, exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

Figure 18.[19]

Lo. J., (2023). Close up photograph of Mori (Bombyx Mori).

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), Three decorative moths made by Jacky Lo (left), Kristen McCartney (middle), and Mary Bailes (right), exhibited at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

Results

Following the intervention at CCGV, all the survey comments as well as the collaborative piece *Mori (Bombyx mori)* were retained and analyzed as source material in addressing my research questions. *Mori (Bombyx mori)* and the workshop are integral to the exhibition and the research as they connect the public, the artist (me), and the Centre to silk. The work and responses are intended to represent collective learning, exchanges of knowledge, and participant experiences that took place both during and after the workshop and when the silk moth(s) were made. These sources are

[19] Lo. J., (2023). Close up photograph of *Mori (Bombyx Mori)*. [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo

not analyzed and coded through scientific methods. Instead, I reviewed the survey responses to identify themes, objectives, and information relevant to my scholarship. The inclusion of the participant comments helped situate interculturality in my art making practice as well as my roles as an educator and researcher, furthering considerations of material practices, re-imagined futures, and collective making, which I will discuss below.

Participant Responses

I will examine the online feedback received in the structure of the five survey questions and how they relate or address the research question “Can silk inform us of the past, the present, and a reimagined future?” connecting to the ideas surrounding material considerations, communal bonding, and sustainability.

In response to the first question, the participants introduced themselves and gave some insights and reasoning for taking part in the workshop. The participants all came from different backgrounds with some to no knowledge on silk. For instance, Kristen is an undergraduate student from Concordia University and enjoys fibre arts, Amy on the other hand works at a bank and loves trying new things. Elora is a graduate student from Concordia University and Nancy is an art educator with over 30 years of experience teaching high school, museum, and higher education.

For the second question I asked the attendees about their thoughts on silk while making the moths and if it changed their pre-existing knowledge on the material. Both Amy and Kristen found it interesting to learn about different forms of silks and enjoyed broadening their understanding of the material and how it is used. Kristen stated, “I thought about how interesting the different sides of the silk materials were and enjoyed the various textures and colour motifs,” as well as “It broadened my understanding of the material and how to use it”. Amy wrote,

> “J’avoue que je ne m’étais pas réellement arrêtée à réfléchir d’où vient la soie, de comment elle est créée et j’ai trouvé cet apprentissage intéressant.” Amy

> continues, “J’ai aimé le moment que j’ai pu prendre pour moi. L’aspect écologique de recycler de la soie à partir de vêtements existants,” [I loved the moment I was able to take for myself. The ecological aspect of recycling silk from existing clothing. I admit that I hadn't really stopped to think about where silk comes from, how it is created, and I found this learning interesting.]

addressing the proposition of the workshop which allowed new ideas to emerge as well as bringing forth aspects on sustainability through recycling. Kristen also spoke about the community aspects of sharing and conversations, in which she writes “I also thought about the conversations I was overhearing about different processes to create silk which I found very fascinating.” Nancy and Elora brought up aspects from their own personal stories with silk. Nancy spoke about her experience working with the material in their own practice and the quality of silk – “I thought about the precariousness of the material, how fine it is, particularly when you cut it. It requires a lot of patience to work with.” And “It did not change my thoughts on silk since the activity made me think about an animated film I made about the silk industry in Lyon, France.” Elora recounted her own personal experience with silk ties and the relationship of the ties to her family, while addressing the history and the role of ties in men’s fashion, contrasting the original purpose to what they will become after the workshop. As she stated,

> “When working with the recycled silk ties, I thought about how beautiful the fabrics were, and how genderless they appeared cut into squares as they were. I don't often think about ties, I don't wear them, but it strikes me how the tie is one of the few pieces in a traditionally male wardrobe that strives only to be beautiful. There is little utility in a tie, unlike other items in a male wardrobe, but it is expressive and fanciful. When I was a child, my sister and I would pick out a tie each Christmas as a present for our dad. They would be silly patterns with ornaments or other seasonal iconography but he would always wear them proudly. When I was making the moths during the workshop, I started to think about who once wore the ties we were reusing. I wondered if they were gifted, too, and how long they hung in the closet before becoming moths.”

Elora demonstrated the act of reimagining by considering the life before and after with the recycled silk ties into moths.

Figure 19.[20]

Lo. J., (2023). Pre-cut recycled ties.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), Recycled ties for the workshop, hosted at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[20] Lo. J., (2023). Pre-cut recycled ties [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo

In the third question, I asked if participants had thought about another material of significance other than silk during the workshop and if they could elaborate. Kristen thought about her own preferred materials and idea of experimenting with them, putting thought into her own material considerations, as she expressed, “I thought a lot about different types of yarn and the processes that are associated with the various types. I thought about how interesting mixing different fibers in yarn can create such beautiful textures, shines, warmth and colours.” Nancy and Elora both touched on the aspects of the experience when working with materials. Elora spoke about the tactility of fibres, writing, “In our conversation we talked about the pitfalls of ordering fibre online without first touching it. It's so important to touch, someone said. I like working with textiles particularly for the way it brings us back to the sensuous, tactile realm.” She added, “Working with textile on projects big and small, sewing a moth by hand or hemming curtains on my sewing machine, I feel empowered by the ability of my hands to form the things I surround myself with. It also demystifies the process of the woven products I use every day.” Nancy talked about focusing, “I enjoy sewing and I am drawn to threading a needle by hand and trying to make stitches as even as possible. I enjoy the extreme focus and shutting everything out, but I can still have a conversation with the people around you.” Aside from the experiences of focusing and tactility, Elora and Nancy also mention notions of community and connections. Elora connected the material world through notions of trade (global and local), connection, and how they evolved over time, stating:

> “Jacky brought an abundance of yarn and fibre to the workshop that he had sourced from other places. A couple skeins he had sent from his hometown in BC, where yarn was more affordable. Hearing this story I thought about trade, and how trade has changed since the merchant era. We have all become our own merchants, in a sense, sourcing obscure materials from international sellers on sites like Etsy, eBay, and other big and small businesses worldwide.”

Figure 20.[21]

Lo. J., (2023). Materials spread for the workshop.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), Participants playing with material, workshop hosted at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

The fourth question prompts for any surprising moments and the most meaningful part of the workshop and why. All the responses conveyed the element of communal learning, making, and a sense of bonding. For Kristen “It was the bonding with other participants. I found it so lovely to spend time with a group of people who shared this interest and wanted to learn and share personal experiences as well. The warmth of the environment was surprising, I did not expect it to feel so safe and welcoming.” As for Amy she mentioned the need to connect to others especially during the pandemic, writing:

[21] Lo. J., (2023). Materials spread for the workshop [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo

> “Ce qui a été le plus intéressant pour moi, c’est l’apprentissage en petit groupe. On peut sûrement l’apprendre via un video en ligne, mais je trouve beaucoup plus intéressant de le faire en petit groupe, l’énergie n’est pas la même et ça nous force à le faire vraiment. Durant la pandémie, j’ai réalisé que j’avais besoin de reconnecter avec l’art et malgré que j’ai tout le matériel dont j’ai besoin chez moi, je ne le faisais pas. Alors, je m’inscrit à tout plein d’ateliers dernièrement et ça me fait beaucoup de bien.” [What was most interesting for me was learning in a small group. We can certainly learn it via an online video, but I find it much more interesting to do it in a small group, the energy is not the same and it forces us to really do it. During the pandemic, I realized that I needed to reconnect with art and despite having all the materials I need at home, I wasn't doing it. So, I've been signing up for lots of workshops lately and it's doing me a lot of good.]

Elora shared similar sentiments to Amy on working with others and the desire to incorporate this outside their regular routines. Elora articulated that:

> “What was most meaningful in the workshop for me was the calm conversation that wove our group of strangers, friends and acquaintances together. As we sewed we looked to our peers for inspiration, instruction, and gained a familiarity that comes from sharing experience. It reminded me how meaningful it is to make alongside others. So much of my own studio practice is solo, so it's nice to spend time in a community of practice. It's something I would like to better incorporate into my regular routine.”

Nancy, like the rest of the participants, found value in working with others and doing something outside of their regular routine, whether that meant taking up their practice or working with friends. She remarked that “[I] enjoyed just making art with peers and my good friend who I usually don't do these activities with.”

Figure 21 (a) & (b).[22]

(a) Lo. J., (2023). Participants for in the workshop.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), Participants at the workshop, hosted at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

(b) Lo. J., (2023). Mary (left) and Nancy (right) making their silk moths.

Note. By J. Lo., (2023), Participants making their silk moth, at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[22] (a) Lo. J., (2023). Participants in the workshop [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo. (b) Lo. J., (2023). Mary (left) and Nancy (right) making their silk moths [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo.

For the fifth and last question, I invited them to disclose anything they wanted to say about their participation and the exhibition. Like question four, all the participants shared a sense of appreciation towards the exhibition and the workshop. Kristen and Nancy wrote about the collaborative work *Mori (Bombyx mori)* which spoke to them about community. Kristen responded with "I had a great time and loved the exhibit! I think being able to incorporate our works into the exhibit is such a great new dimension and speaks to the community and social aspect to fiber arts very well." Nancy said, "It was an enjoyable workshop overall; there was a good variety of materials to choose from and I appreciated that our work was placed on the gallery walls, and that we had a say as to specifically where it was placed." Similar to Nancy and Kristen, Amy spoke to the fact that the workshop and exhibition opened her mind to new perspectives of others, stating "Merci d'avoir pris le temps d'organiser cet atelier et de l'avoir animé. Merci d'ouvrir notre esprit sur la réalité des autres à travers l'histoire racontée par cette exposition." [Thank you for taking the time to organize and facilitate this workshop. Thank you for opening our minds to the reality of others through the story told by this exhibition.] Elora dove into the nuances of interventions made by hand and the many stories and folds that came together to form the exhibition, the pieces, and the workshop. In her response she shared

> "The exhibition drew from the many different folds (so to speak) of silk, and it came together wonderfully. I particularly appreciated [Jacky's] re-use of the readymade, and the interventions done by hand. My favourite piece in the show is the repurposed lampshade woven with silk fibre. It is striking for its material tension between human, machine-made, and natural process. So many histories had to come together to make that piece, it's so simple and elegant and strange."

The feedback from the workshop participants offered valuable insights into the community art education project, *Silk Connections* and how silk can inform us of the past, present, and a re-imagined future, which fell into the themes of material considerations, social bonding, and sustainability awareness. Participants discovered a fresh appreciation for silk's different forms and uses, demonstrating an understanding

for the past and a new future. They emphasized the educational and ecological aspects of recycling silk, as well as the community-building experiences fostered by the workshop. The conversations about silk prompted reflections on the history, production, and the experience working with other materials that are important to the four participants. The attendees shared personal anecdotes and connected with each other through their experiences of silk, revealing the importance and future desire for communal learning and making. The workshop's most meaningful moments revolved around these shared experiences and the sense of connection they created. The workshop and exhibition were appreciated for the collaborative and inclusive nature, allowing participants to contribute to and shape the final display of *Mori (Bombyx mori)*. This collective effort and the ability to see their work integrated into the exhibition reinforced the social aspects of the workshop, highlighting the power of shared artistic and material understanding in fostering interculturality and new insights.

Figure 22 (a) & (b)[23]

(a) Long. N., (2023). Nancy's silk moth.

(b) LeGoff. A., (2023). Amy's silk moth.

Note. By Long. N., & LeGoff. A., (2023), Nancy (left) and Amy (right) silk moths, displayed at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[23] (a) Long. N., (2023). Nancy's silk moth [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo. (b) LeGoff. A., (2023). Amy's silk moth [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo.

Figure 23 (a) & (b)[24]

(a) Crawford. E., (2023). Elora's silk moth.

(b) McCartney. K., (2023). Kristen's silk moth.

Note. By Crawford. E., & McCartney. K., (2023), Elora (left) and Kristen (right) silk moths, displayed at Culturel Centre Georges-Vanier (CCGV), Montréal, QC, Canada.

[24] (a) Crawford. E., (2023). Elora's silk moth [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo. (b) McCartney. K., (2023). Kristen's silk moth [Digital Photograph]. Photo: Jacky Lo.

5. Conclusion

Moths are seen as spiritual messengers from the past guiding humans through change and transitions. Throughout this whole process, I have found that the silk moth has been my guide and collaborator especially in my research-creation journey. In my discussion, the motif of the moth has been revered as a sense of hope, possibilities, potentiality, and my great-grandmother, and now it is a profound symbol of transformation. The process of the moth's metamorphosis from egg to adulthood is a captivating story of development, self-reflection, and renewal. As I learned about silk and the moth's journey, I began to see the parallels of my own path towards transformation and the potential of this thesis project. It was important for me as educator, artist, and great-grandson to know and reconnect to the past as I believe it informs the future. In my case, it was the personal struggles I had with my Chinese Canadian identities and the lost legacy of my family. The approach of interculturality in (re)discovering and embracing heritage and cultures permeates all aspects of my life, especially with materials, and I believe interculturality should be implemented at the heart of art education. Here I would like to revisit my research question: *Can silk inform us of the past, the present, and a re-imagined future?* As the silkworm undergoes significant changes to reach its final form, each stage can be read as the past, present and future.

The first phase where the worm hatches out of the egg exists as a state of potential capacity for learning and limitless growth. Its large appetite and desire to eat parallels my pursuit of knowledge for the past and the lost histories of my great-grandmother, ready to be uncovered with an outlook of possibilities.

The second stage is the pupa (cocoon), representing the present moment of introspection and change, reflecting my research-creation process, specifically, creation-as-research, as Chapman and Sawchuk put it "…where creation is required in order for research to emerge" (2012, p. 19). The act of creating enabled the emergence of knowledge and connections. Through this process, I was able to respectfully reconstruct my great-grandmother's narrative while simultaneously uncovering the

sense of liminality I experienced as a first-generation Canadian. It felt freeing to let the making come first and for the art to exist without any expectations or pressure to look or mean a certain way. I was able to freely explore the material of silk in an effort to better understand my great-grandmother's profession. Despite the fact that there isn't a single, definitive reality to my great-grandmother's narrative, I discovered that by making, I can actually find many stories here. Silk allowed me to conjure possibilities and futures of what could be. I believe that the act of re-imagining holds significant influence, particularly during a period with heightened global tensions and the looming threat of climate change to our ecosystems and wildlife. Re-imagining allows a space to reflect and create better futures, in my case a future full of intercultural interactions. Like the cocooning phase, the silk became the space for contemplation and self-reflection as well as an intercultural thread that ties me to the public of Montréal.

The third stage exists in two realities, one is the adult moth and the other, in most cases, the legacy of their silk. These trajectories signify the future of emergence and renewal, the actualization of potential of the moth and silk. This stage reflects the moments within *Silk Cocoon* and *Silk Connections* where participants and I embrace collaborative exchange, new perspectives, and a new transformed self to the world. Based on the testimonies from the workshop, the desire for community learning and sharing were found as the most impactful aspect of the experience. During the stitching, the workshop fostered a safe and intercultural environment that wove conversations of personal and familial stories together. The experience and feedback lead me to my third research question: how can projects such as *Silk Cocoon* contribute to inclusive intercultural art education in community settings?

Thinking about the future, initiatives like *Silk Cocoon* have contributed to intercultural art education and research-creation by exploring the intersections of material histories, family histories, and cultural histories, thereby supporting more inclusive futures of art teaching, learning, and making. *Silk Cocoon* is an example of collective understanding established through vulnerability, love, and empathy. At the core of this project is an ode and love to my great-grandmother, the master embroiderer

I had never met, demonstrated through the care and affection expressed in the exhibition. According to Barleet (2016), compassionate love is a guiding principle to the future, projects like *Silk Cocoon* embody compassionate love and interculturality by building empathy, positionality, and connection through the sharing of stories and finding similarities within each other. I see this project growing into an intergenerational discourse on legacies with family members, establishing links towards meaningful materials or objects. Eventually, the initiative would lead to multiple families from different cultures and backgrounds sharing their narratives and forming a sense of collective understanding about the materials, cultures, and migrant experiences that exist within the Canadian identity. This prospective project will establish an inclusive place for diverse and intergenerational art-making, while investigating what it means to be and live with inter- or multi-cultural identities.

To conclude my MA thesis, to me silk has been the perfect medium and metaphor for interculturality: structurally, it is one seamless single strand desired and appreciated by all, in which tangled or woven, silk serves as a continuous connection; whether you perceive it or not, the link will always remain. I hope that this thesis serves another form of connection to future scholars on research-creation, material considerations, lost legacies, and community art education. Before I end, I encourage you to find a material of significance, learn about it, connect with it, and see what it tells you.

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Appendix A: Ethics Certificate

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant:	Jacky Lo
Department:	Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency:	N/A
Title of Project:	Silk Connections
Certification Number:	30017942

Valid From: March 16, 2023 To: March 15, 2024

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Dr. David Waddington, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Survey Questions

1. Please introduce yourself and explain why you wanted to be part of this workshop.
2. What thoughts came into your mind while making the moths with the silk and did it change your thoughts about silk?
3. While working on the activity did you think about any materials other than silk that are important to you? Can you elaborate a little?
4. What part of the workshop was the most meaningful for you and why? Did anything surprise you?
5. Is there anything else you would like to say about the workshop and your participation in it, or the Silk Cocoon exhibition itself?

Questions d'entretien

1. Veuillez vous présenter et expliquer pourquoi vous avez voulu prendre part à cet atelier.
2. Quelles pensées vous sont venues à l'esprit pendant que vous confectionniez les papillons avec la soie, et cet exercice a-t-il modifié l'idée que vous vous faisiez de la soie?
3. Pendant que vous participiez à l'atelier, avez-vous pensé à des tissus autres que la soie qui sont importants pour vous? Pouvez-vous donner des précisions à ce sujet?
4. Quelle partie de l'atelier a eu pour vous la plus grande importance et pourquoi? Avez-vous eu des surprises?
5. Y a-t-il quoi que ce soit d'autre que vous aimeriez ajouter au sujet de l'atelier et de votre participation, ou au sujet de l'exposition *Silk Cocoon*?

Appendix C: Consent Form

UNIVERSITÉ Concordia UNIVERSITY

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Silk Connections
Researcher: Jacky Lo, MA Candidate – Art Education, BFA
Researcher's Contact Information: lojacky65@gmail.com
Faculty Supervisor: Kathleen Vaughan, MFA, PhD
Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: Kathleen.Vaughan@concordia.ca

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to explore through an exhibition-related art workshop the question, "Can silk inform us of the past, the present and a reimagined future?" This project considers the impact of artist collaborations with communities for the creation of socially engaged, participatory art by facilitating workshops; in this case with specific references to silk and art making relations, the intersection of culture and history, production, and storytelling.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you and other workshop participants will be asked to visit the exhibition *Silk Cocoon.* Participants will be given a tour of the show and participate in a question-and-answer session about its works. Participants will then head upstairs of the CCGV to the art-making workshop. In the workshop participants will create 1 or 2 silk moths ranging from 4" to 5" long using recycled silk and other provided materials, in ways that will be clearly shown to you. The researcher and his assistant will provide hands-on assistance as required.

Participants will be invited to install their artwork on the Gallery walls for the remainder of the show (coming to collect it from the artist on April 17, 2023, the day of the de-installation) or take it home with them. After this hands-on experience, participants will participate in a short informal audiotaped interview (5 minutes or less) or online survey on Google Form (available until April 23, 2023). The questions are the same in both formats and consider the meanings and potential of silk and other materials. In total, participating in this study will take approximately one hour and 30 minutes.

Google Form link:

https://tinyurl.com/538wk57b

You may participate by allowing photographs of your artmaking and your hands at work; being recorded or submitting written answers to the survey questions; or both. It is your choice.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

Potential benefits include:

- Participants may benefit from a deeper understanding of silk and materials in artmaking as well as the ways in which collaborative discussions and the creation of participatory artwork can be a method in to create dynamic learning experiences.
- Participants may benefit from viewing textiles and silk in an alternative manner.
- Participants may benefit from connecting and viewing materials as an association to familial histories, and trading stories with other participants.
- Participants may become more familiar with academic research projects and enjoy supporting the work of an emerging artist-researcher.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research:

- Participants' contributions to the collaborative/participatory artwork
- Audio recorded participant feedback during interviews
- Participant responses to the online survey
- Documentations of the collaborative artwork and the workshop

By participating, you agree to allow the researcher to have access to information regarding your experiences and responses to the workshop. We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form. We intend to publish this result of this research; participants may choose which level of disclosure they wish for their real identity in the final report.

Please indicate your preferences on the next page by checking one box in all three parts:

1) PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

[ ] I consent to photographs of my artwork and potentially images of my hands making it appearing in publications and presentations of the research, such as Jacky Lo's thesis.

OR

[ ] I do not consent to the taking and sharing of pictures of my artwork or my hands.

2) SURVEY QUESTIONS

[ ] I agree to sharing my answers via a short audio-recorded interview or the online Google form, and understand that the same questions are asked via both formats.

OR

[ ] I do not consent to providing survey answers.

3) DISCLOSURE

[ ] I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the results of the research, for example, in Jacky Lo's thesis.

OR

[ ] Please do not publish my name as part of the results of the research. I understand I will be identified by a pseudonym instead.

We will destroy all survey results five years after the end of the study. Documentation of the collaborative artwork will be stored in perpetuity and not destroyed.

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You may still take part in the workshop even if you change your mind about participating in the research. You can also ask that the photographs taken and the information you provided in the online survey or questionaries answers from individual interviews not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before September 7th, 2023. If contacted before the date, the primary researcher will destroy any contribution provided by the participant in the form of written or audio recorded verbal responses as well as any photographs of the participants artwork or hands-on making process. Following September 7th, 2023, participants will no longer be able to withdraw from the research, allowing any and all contributions to appear in the final report.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print) _____

EMAIL _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

Appendix D: Written Instructions for the Silk Moth

Silk Moths - Written Instructions

If you have no cotton fill you can fill up the body of the moth with tiny scraps of fabric, yarn, or thread.

1. Find the fabric for the wings (4 pieces) and for the body (2 pieces)

2. Draw the pattern on the body on one of the fabrics

3. Pin the fabric and start stitching - make sure you leave room for an opening

4. Cut out extra fabric but leave room for seam allowance

5. Turn the body inside out - with a pencil or a straw

6. Fill up the body with cotton fill (you can use a pencil to help)

7. Close the opening of the body

8. Overlap the wings to your desired look and stitch the tip of the wing together

9. Sew the wings to the body

10. Repeat for the other side

11. Optional* sew on decorative fabric on the body

12. Optional* you can cut out twine/string pieces for antennae - they should be long enough to tie a knot

13. Optional* you can use beads for the eyes or do embroider them on

14. Customize your moth in any way

Appendix E: Visual Guide for the Silk Moth