

OTA Naomi (Aus)

In the stillness –visual presentation

I've been exploring fibre sculptural work (mostly spatial installation) referencing historical issues of textile. With my understanding of culture as a native Japanese and international experience as an artist, the work suggests a unique perspective to invoke history or cultural exchange within contemporary practices.

The work interprets some particular issues which I've been developing through research into the historical exchange in textiles between South East Asia and Ryukyu (ancient name of the kingdom in present day Okinawa, and still the name of the group of islands at the southernmost end of the Japanese archipelago). I have been investigating the cultural missing links between South East Asia and Japan. The specific subject I focus on for the research is ikat weaving. Ikat gradually changed in design while traveling from place to place in the area. I look at this vast area of the map as a 'space', including notions of tidal routes, time and cultural exchange.



Another notion of 'space' I examine in my work is what I experienced in Taketomi Island in Okinawa, the main site of my ikat research. They have places called Utaki, sacred groves that are non-decorative, rather empty and neutral, but sublime and powerful. The Utakis as essential elements, the 'space' of the island consists of paths covered by white coral-sands, old wells, stone walls, and etc. This is another interesting conception of mapping along with the ikat connection.

The recent series of work, 'Corallo-scape' interpreted this long process of ikat transformation by referencing coral shapes that represent 'stillness and growth' at the same time. By expressing these opposing elements, I also intended to create a primary or neutral image. For me, it is like going deeply down into one's original scenery regardless of superficial cultural background. It is extraordinarily ambiguous and certain at the same time. It may not belong to any particular culture by its appearance, but is definitely a core element of one's culture.
