



Woman in Culture and Arts

Looking for Feminine Language: Study of the Works of Iranian Women Artists Inspired by Sewing and Knitting Experiences

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article type:	Introduction
Research Article	<p>In many cultures, men are predominantly responsible for the profession and industry of weaving and knitting, while women are primarily responsible for domestic sewing and weaving, provided that they are conducted within the confines of the home. This was particularly true in the modern era, when the separation between the household and the workplace resulted in the distinction between professional sewing for men and knitting and needlework for women. The love for the household and the embodiment of homemaking virtue were symbolized by the needlework and knitting of women. However, cultural critics contend that these knitting and needlework projects did not merely demonstrate a preference for domesticity or a sentimental attachment to the home; rather, they represented the rigid, submissive, and passive roles that were expected of housewives. Therefore, the task of knitting and needlework was akin to a cultural challenge for contemporary women. This article explores the historical roots of the association between knitting and sewing and women's identity. It then poses the question of whether contemporary female artists, who employ knitting and sewing strategies, regard them as artistic creations and pursue them. Have they altered their perspective to reconsider female identity? How were they inspired by sewing and knitting to create contemporary works of art, in search of the language of female identity? In this article, it will be explained what "women's language" is and how it is a woman's identity and narrates women's experience.</p>
Article history:	<p>On the one hand, knitting and sewing at home are regarded as a feminine skill and the creative work of women. On the other hand, they are a symbol of obligatory labor within the confines and isolation of the home, as well as a form of unpaid work that is never considered. In the family system, art is acknowledged but not regarded seriously as a productive and subsistence occupation. This dual exposure to women's sewing and knitting is also evident in feminist perspectives, which have transformed it into a symbol of women's taste preferences and, conversely, a symbol of women's isolation in domestic labor. This double exposure has served as the foundation for the development of critical works of art by female artists.</p>
Received: 10 June 2023	Theoretical Framework
Received in revised form: 17 June 2023	<p>The purpose of this article is to examine the works of contemporary Iranian women artists who are in pursuit of a feminine language, drawing inspiration from the art of needlework and weaving. Feminine language is intended to convey the experiences of women and to facilitate the comprehension and reception of women, as identified by Luce Irigaray. The language and experience of women are fragmented, fragmented, and plural from Irigaray's perspective. This does not imply that it is incoherent or inadequate; rather, it indicates that women's language is in stark contrast to the common speech apparatus of men. He defines this attribute of women's writings and regards women's or women's text and language as significant and expressive. This article addresses the issue of how female visual artists have transformed knitting and sewing into a means of exploring the language of female identity.</p>
Accepted: 2 June 2024	Methods
Published online: 5 August 2024	<p>The following five art exhibitions were examined and analyzed in order to address this question by integrating the methodologies of "Event Study" and "Trend Analysis": "Tajali Ehsas (Manifestation of feeling)" (1992 to 2009), "sew+zan" (2016), "Women Create" (2019), "Nakhsh (Design)" (2019), and "Persbook" (2019 to 2021). The selection of the</p>
Keywords:	
<p><i>Contemporary Iranian art,</i> <i>Feminine language,</i> <i>Iranian women artists,</i> <i>Knitted collages,</i> <i>Sewing and knitting,</i> <i>Women's art.</i></p>	

number of samples was also based on purposeful sampling in order to capture the widest range of artistic experiences and to investigate the diverse types of women's identity search in the works of artists.

Findings

In fact, it is important to note that during the 1960s, when the dominant field of art was in the hands of males, women were inextricably linked to this dominant flow in order to avoid marginalization from the center, much like female artists were absent from the Saqqa-khaneh art flow. In the 1980s, Firoozeh Saberi, in the 1990s, Parvaneh Etemadi, and a diverse group of artists in the 2000s and 2010s reimagined the motifs of traditional fabrics and weaves in a modern context. Artists produced works that were centered on women by incorporating collages of braids and stitching. Two approaches or two encounters in the experience of Iranian women artists in the experience of woven collages can be observed when investigating them: a) the approach of desirable femininity and b) the rethinking approach in the special language of women.

The findings demonstrate the evolution of the experiences of contemporary Iranian women artists in the use of stitching and weaving from the 1990s to the 2020s. The use of sewing and knitting as a symbol of desirable femininity has been observed in the works of certain Iranian female painters, particularly in the artistic event for women titled "Tajali Ehsas (Manifestation of feeling)" during the 1990s. Artists portrayed traditional and rural aspects of women's skills and maternal femininity in the context of domestic work. However, the socio-cultural changes of the 2000s led to the use of sewing and knitting as a critical and linguistic action for rethinking the identity of women by female artists in the decade. We are currently located in 2001 and 2010.

Conclusion

In this article and in response to the research question, it was demonstrated that female visual artists utilized knitting and stitching as a method of investigation into the language of female identity. The examination of the works of Iranian female artists revealed that the artists employed needlework and knitting as a means of reevaluating the gender identity of women. They also transformed these works into a new cultural text for critical perspectives, drawing inspiration from the role of braids and hand-weaving.

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