Traditions and Transformation
Abstract

Traditions that shape our identity and beliefs are constantly undergoing transformation through our interactions with new cultures. At the same time, these interactions enhance our awareness of where we come from, and where we truly belong. In this thesis I investigate the history of jewellery in India through a contemporary perspective and interpretation. My project narrates my transformative journey from the rich tapestry of Indian traditions towards the contemporary western culture. The subject of Indian jewellery is vast and complex, the enquiry is just the beginning of the journey. Therefore, my goal is to discover linkages between the age-old traditions and the fast-changing world of today. I create a dialogue between traditional, ritualistic Indian jewellery and an irreverent choice of materials and methods that have been conceived from my experiences in the West. Through this dialog, I explore the push and pull between traditional ethos and modern sensibilities, and the transformation it engenders.

Keywords: tradition, transformation, structure, chaos, organic, wearability, narrative, language, culture, roots.
Introduction

Traditions and values do not stay frozen in time and place – they undergo perpetual transformation through our encounters with other people in different places. We carry our respective cultures within us. Often when we move away to a distant place with a contrasting culture, our awareness of our own culture becomes much more acute. It is then that we come to appreciate ourselves as who we really are and where we truly belong. My project is a reflection of my journey from the rich tapestry of Indian culture to the contemporary European art.

Culture is more than the flavors, textures and visual elements of a place. Our culture seeps into our system through years of non-cognitive practice and shapes us from within. We are steeped in the culture that we grow up in and embody its norms and expectations consciously as well as subconsciously. Growing up in India, its history, culture, traditions, and folklore, have always fascinated me. One of the oldest civilizations in human history, India has a wide sense of style and aesthetics in the diverse craft culture. Art and craft have thrived in India under the patronage of widely diverse rulers ranging from the indigenous Hindus, the subsequent Islamic conquerors, and the colonizing westerners. Each ruler or dynasty has brought with itself a new sense of aesthetics, which still has a deep imprint on the values and core of people’s lives even today.

My project revolves around the cultural heritage of jewellery in India that goes back to over 5000 years. It is a narrative of my Indian roots steeped in tradition as they interact with contemporary Western aesthetics – a reflection of my experiences in Scandinavia. This new immersion has given me an opportunity to not only reflect on my cultural norms but also to be open to how these cultural norms and perspectives may shift and be augmented within a new setting. I believe that by respectfully showcasing an alternate perspective as to who we are, we allow for the natural flow of our transformation.

With my practice having one foot firmly planted in the traditional Indian culture and the other foot extending towards the modern times I am looking for balance. I am investigating the past through a contemporary point of view and interpretation. I am inspired by the push and pull between back to the past or break with the past, which has been a lingering thought in my head.

Through this thesis project, I ask the question: How can Indian jewellery ethos complement the contemporary art world while still being grounded in heritage? My exploration during this project is to create jewellery that is narrative of this underlying
linkage between past and contemporary. I explore the relevance of tradition through colours, symbols and wearability while defining my own method of making through different materials, their transformation, and dialogue with each other.
**Background**

Jewellery has always been an integral part of the Indian traditions and culture. Its significance extends far beyond being a mere accessory, and instead serves as an emblem of social patterns that is also infused with deep religious undertones. Traditionally, an Indian woman irrespective of her caste or status is never without a basic set of daily wear ornaments – rings, earrings, bangles, toe-rings, necklace, anklets.

I remember that as a child, I would often run to the dresser to get my mother or aunt her bindi (a dot-shaped adornment worn in the middle of the forehead) every time I would see them without one. Wrists adorned with bangles, a neck-chain around the neck, a nose ring, were more an extension of their body than just ornaments. I didn’t understand tradition much back then, but it felt incomplete to see them with any of these missing. Another cherished memory from that time is shopping excitedly in crowded bazaars for colorful glass bangles to match with different dresses worn during weddings and festivals. Festivals like karva-chauth and teej celebrate the marital bliss where women dress up in new clothes and ornaments. One of the major Hindu festivals, Diwali, celebrated for prosperity, good luck and peace – is yet another time to buy ornaments. Markets are decorated and stores are swarmed with men and women shopping for new clothes and jewellery.

In India, we celebrate the commonality of divergent belief systems. Our traditions vary from culture to culture, region to region and yet represent the same roots shaped by different contexts. In this diversity the non-denominationalism of jewellery makes it a pan-Indian art form. Yet paradoxically, there is no such thing as pan-Indian jewellery, since every region, community, caste has a specific form, design and technique as instantly
identifiable as other regional crafts. In that sense, Indian jewellery conforms to every notion of luxury. It has its inception in that it is specific to time and place, it is customized.

During my journey from my Indian roots to the new experience of living and studying in Sweden, I became more keenly aware of the traditions that had shaped my life almost invisibly. This awareness has inspired my research, where I drew upon my background as a jewellery artist to narrate my journey of transformation. I investigated Indian traditional jewellery which forms an integral part of traditions, festivities, and society itself, reflecting the Indian culture in fine detail. I further incorporated the western styles and beliefs by experimenting with different methods and processes. The outcome of my research is a narrative of transformation, where traditions interact with the contemporary to define their own identity in new ways.
Jewellery as Tradition

“In no other culture do we find a parallel to the meticulous classification of gems and jewellery according to shape, size, style and design as enumerated in ancient India. Accompanied by an extensive lexicon of specific terms this unique feature indicates the importance of jewellery in Indian tradition-an importance going far beyond bodily adornment”, writes jewellery historian Dr Usha Balakrishnan.

In the Indian tradition, jewellery has long been considered a source of security, good omen, and luck. Excavations and cave paintings from the pre-historic settlements in the Indus valley reveal that men and women have been wearing jewellery since several millennia ago.

In India the relationship with jewellery begins at the time that a child is born. The first gift given to a new born, popularly, is a pair of bangles or bracelet strung in gold or silver and black beads. These bangles or nazariye are believed to ward off the evil eye and keep the child healthy. A couple of years or so later, depending on the region and community of the child, follows a ceremony when the child’s ear(s) are pierced and adorned with the very first pair of earrings. These ceremonies and adornment continue through the entire lifetime and also form an integral part of rite of passage rituals.

The significance of jewellery as a tradition reaches its peak during weddings. In the Indian tradition, marriage is the holiest of all non-filial relationships and is considered to transcend the circle of rebirths itself. Naturally, jewellery plays a central role in the Indian wedding rituals and continues to pervade the life of a married woman.

In this project, I focus exclusively on the Indian jewellery traditions and their significance in the contemporary context. In addition to religious and cultural significance, jewellery in India carries a social aspect as well. Jewels constitute savings and are the social barometers of affluence, power and status. Distinctive ornaments indicate caste and ethnic identity. Jewellery in India is worn as symbol of status and rank, worn as amulets for good health, jewels maintained human body in perfect equilibrium. Families hold jewellery as private wealth, which is inherited and passed over as heirloom generation after generation. It is so precious that it is not only kept secured from outsiders but also worn only on extremely special occasions.
The range of jewellery available in India in terms of materials used, designs and techniques of craftsmanship is unparalleled," writes Usha Balakrishnan. She gives examples: The Nagas make jewellery using beetle wings, feathers and bones; Bengalis use conch shells for their bangles; Keralites include tiger claws and elephant hair in their jewellery; Maharashtrians use black beads; many states, including Tamil Nadu, use terracotta.

Each piece of jewellery has an ethos and a meaning, from the navaratna stones that are used to propitiate planets to the jewel-like key ring that is ceremonially handed over by a mother-in-law to her daughter-in-law. Along with the tradition of wearing jewellery, there lies a deep-rooted practice of hand-made jewellery. Families have specific motifs for the ornaments worn during specific occasions. Women still sit down with jewellers and craftsmen to custom-design their ornaments.

Since the language of Indian ornamentation is vast, this diversity shapes the social structure and process of making jewellery in India. In sharp contrast with studio jewellery culture in contemporary European art scene, where the artist completes his piece of work from start to finish single-handedly and independently, jewellery in India is made by the master craftsmen. Most of these craftsmen learn to make jewellery through observing the seniors in the family during their growing up years. The knowledge of making is usually passed down
from generation to generation making them the masters in their craft without undergoing any formal training.

The stages and techniques of jewellery making, however, are divided amongst the craftsmen, therefore they work in groups of four or more, depending in the intricacy of the work. Some work on the initial frame building stage, the others excel in stone-setting or polishing or enameling and so on. Then there are specific techniques as filigree, jadu (traditional stone setting), inlay, engraving, repousse- there are dedicated craftsmen or karigars for each. The techniques are so intricate and diverse and require so much experience to master that it is difficult for one to learn them all and work independently.

An aspect of the Indian jewellery tradition, which is slowly eroding with time, is the practice of hand-made jewellery. With understanding of the long process of jewellery making in India, I am creating a process of my own to make jewellery that looks Indian and is a narrative of the relevance it holds in the Indian tradition. In my work I make extensive use of the elements that are used widely in Indian jewellery. I also use a lot of colours that identify with the traditional Indian jewellery forms. By making pieces that are inspired by my movements through life as well the culture that I am rooted in, I wish to highlight the narrative of perpetual transformation that makes up who we are and where we come from.
Jewellery as Transformation

Traditional Indian weddings, Shaadi, are known for their scale and opulence. The wedding dates are fixed after consulting a priest for an auspicious time calculated by the positioning of stars and planets, of the bride and groom, to reflect the celestial union of the couple. A marriage is seen as the union of two families. Therefore, the involvement of family and relatives from both sides remains the most dominant aspect of any Shaadi.

Spanning several days, the splendor of Indian weddings highlights rich culture and treasured rituals. The plethora of rituals in any Shaadi, provides a colorful tour of the Indian traditions. The experiences India is known for- from rituals, customs, faith to food, music, attires- everything can be savored in a Shaadi. The weddings vary vastly from region to region and even from one household to another. They also differ in terms of religious ideologies and the different sects within the broader faith.

Over many centuries the typically ornate designs of the bridal jewellery have come to represent the region and the community they are derived from. The bride is decked in traditional ornaments of precious and semi-precious jewellery, gifted to her by her and the groom’s family. An Indian bride is covered with these ornaments, from the crown of the head to the tip of the toes, in jewellery whose visual inspiration lies in prototypes from nature, representing marital bliss, good health, fortune and more. The wedding day is also believed to celebrate the divinity and beauty
of the bride as she transitions to womanhood, so the bride is given a divine emergence by sixteen adornments, the Solah Shringar.

Indian literature is replete with imagery of women arraying themselves with jewellery. Given that all Indian art forms are interwoven with Shringar, it’s imperative to understand its ritualistic relevance throughout vast and diverse India.

The Shri in Shri-ngar refers to the Goddess Lakshmi - the goddess of good fortune, beauty and prosperity in the Hindu culture, also a symbol of femininity and fertility. Some beliefs suggest that the Solah Shringar ritual nullifies the negative effect of the sixteen phases of the moon which is believed to have a negative effect on the woman’s menstrual cycle. At the same time, vedic texts give a detailed significance corresponding to where and why each of these sixteen adornments are worn to aid health and well-being of the wearer. For example:

Bindi, the ornamental dot placed on the forehead between the two eyebrows, is placed on the ‘agya-chakra’ often termed the third eye. The symbolic third eye represents fire and is believed to enhance the intuitive power of a woman, improve focus and exude energy. The left of the nose is popularly pierced as it is supposed to ease childbirth and reduce menstrual discomfort. Outer ears carry acupressure and acupuncture points, wearing earrings presses these points and helps in keeping kidneys and bladder healthy.

The senior ladies in the family consider certain pieces of jewellery as fundamental for married women. In addition to a nose ring, toe-rings and mangal sutra are viewed as sacrosanct symbols of marriage - not wearing any of these is often frowned upon by the seniors in the family.

**Transformation through materials.**

Transformation being an intrinsic part of my project, I want to tell a story of transformation through my work. Through my making, I explore this transformation in materials. I use lack of control as a method to allow nature of the materials to take over, eventually letting their transformation to dictate the final outcome of the work. It’s fascinating for me to observe how the materials with different physical and chemical properties react and interact with each other. I brought together various materials in several combinations time and again to yield different results almost every time. My main investigation included
pouring of: molten glass on shredded glass, molten glass on molten bronze, molten glass on bronze, molten tin on glass, molten silver on glass, molten glass on wax.

Infact, the results varied as the materials changed state, a tiny piece of wax blew up by more than ten times its size on coming in contact with the hot glass, and the glass trapped the fumed carbon giving it a shape of its own (image 15 and 16). The prototype in image 14 was derived by pouring molten glass and molten bronze at the same time on a bed of sand. The glass when cooled formed a channel like path in the metal, as if it was inlaid. It also rejected some of the excess metal when it cooled completely.

It was interesting for me to note how these materials react like humans when brought in contact with a foreign body or environment, holding on to some, leaving behind the rest. I strive to create through a process of dialogue, I focus on how to maneuver the materials and alter them to speak for themselves. This dialogue makes my work.

Accidents and experiments in the process also play a big role in my making. In my final work, as in image 17 I tried to recreate the results of my investigation and also used some original prototypes from the investigation to lend the work its narrative of transformation. In order to be true to showing the transformation through materials it is important for me to preserve the dents and marks of the process on the final face of work. The shift that occurs between the elements provides a meaning when they come together.
Jewellery as Narrative:

Jewellery in India is rife with narratives. Ornaments function as a canvas for the narration of myths and legends. Of materials, gold is considered an immortal, incorruptible metal full of fire and warmth signifying the Sun, silver is the moon metal and is worn with pearls to cool down hot temperament. It is popularly believed that since gold and gemstones are found in nature, they have natural powers to cure diseases and change the effects of planetary influence. Ayurveda makes extensive use of gem and gold therapy for their healing powers that are activated in various ways.

Shapes, colours and motifs are also significant to the jewellery narrative and are relevant to when the jewellery is worn. Geometric forms invoking magical powers and protection against evil spirits are used as symbols of omnipresent powers of nature and imagination. Brides and married women wear jewellery with fish motifs that symbolize fertility. Leaves and flowers symbolize good fortune, auspicious occasions and abundance. Serpent symbolizes the eternity of cyclic time because of its capacity to discard its skin and its apparent immortality. Lions stand for strength, courage and sovereignty, while the Elephants stand for strength, visibility, calmness and gentleness.

Transcending purely decorative values that they are usually associated with, colours also hold contextual relevance. Red indicates both sensuality and purity. A red coloured dress is put on deities who are charitable, brave, protective, and who have the capacity to destroy evil. Green is a festive colour, it represents life and happiness. Yellow is the colour of spring symbolizing growth, knowledge and learning.

Narratives in Indian jewellery thus has a long-established tradition from ancient times to present day. It differs in meaning and context from the narrative jewellery of the Western contemporary jewellery, which is largely a construct of the twentieth century. Indian jewellery narratives are explicit and absolute whereas in the west it shows the link between story-telling and making. In his practice-based Ph.D., Maker Wearer Viewer, Jack Cunningham writes, “A wearable object that contains a commentary or message which the maker, by means of visual representation, has the overt intention to communicate to an audience through the intervention of the wearer.” He also writes “with all narrative jewellery interpretation is personal, open to debate and influenced by the social and cultural position of the audience. Strong motivational factors in the production of
narrative jewellery would generally indicate that makers seek a response to their work through a need: to comment on the human condition; to communicate, and connect with others; to have the narrative interpreted or understood at some level by the viewer.”

In my work, I have used traditional Indian colours, elements from Solah Shringar; and new materials devised during this project. I have combined traditional jewellery materials from pre-existing pieces that I owned with the elements created through transformation of materials referencing a narrative of traditions and transformation. In this work (image 19) I have attempted to do away with the idea of preciousness by bringing together materials (silver, brass, bronze, glass shreds, pearls, semi-precious stones) that have traditionally not been amenable to being incorporated in a single product.

Using different materials to make jewellery allows me to give form to a transformative story from my Indian heritage. Each element in itself is merely a piece of the narrative. They work together with the rest to create a bigger narrative, so that the entire story comes together as a whole.

There’s also the narrative of finding structure through chaos that I wish to elucidate through my work. Each of the elements in my work is not necessarily a part of traditional jewellery. The remnants of sprues, organic shapes that look incomplete, unfiled edges represent the chaos that is part of every transformation. Bringing these elements together forms a structure, what I think of as a jewellery sculpture, one that could still be worn.

I call this piece (image 19) “Manthan”, a Sanskrit word that loosely translates to the English word, “churning”. But Manthan is more of a spiritual word that denotes churning of thoughts, internal reflection, self-awareness. This is what my project is all about. It is about churning of thoughts that make one more self-aware, where we can see ourselves more clearly. Manthan also means mixing things homogenously which leads to transformation. This necklace is a Manthan of my own transformation.
during my journey. This necklace tells the story of my journey as a jeweller, as an Indian woman, and as an artist in Sweden. In this necklace I have combined my aesthetics of jewellery making in India with my new methods that I created while working on this project.

At the same time, this piece does not strictly adhere to Indian traditional motifs and prototypes instead it finds its definition through the wearer and the observer. In this way this piece is a Manthan of the Indian narrative through the use of colours and the western jewellery traditions that emphasize its relationship with the maker as well as the observer. Therefore, I do not plan to isolate this piece within a vitrine as is the norm with jewellery. Instead, while exhibiting this piece I plan to keep it open and accessible to allow the audience to interact with it and lend their definition to it.
Pouring

Alongside the research that has laid the theoretical foundation of my work, I have been interested in specific ways of working with materials. In my work, I investigate the transformation of different materials using the method of pouring. Pouring of water as an offering to the sun, or Argya in Hindi, is the most ubiquitous sight in India. The rays of the Sun refracting through the film of flowing water at the time of sunrise are considered excellent for the eyes and energizing for the entire body and soul. Yajna or offering is made to the fire by pouring milk/ghee/grains etc is central to a lot of Indian rituals symbolizing sacrifice, devotion, worship. Pouring of milk or water is also carried out on the Shiva-lingam, a representation of Lord Shiva, for the flow of positive energy. These rituals are practiced in distinct ceremonies across India and loosely symbolize transformation. Pouring as a method is also used in Ayurveda for medicinal purposes, again implying transformation, in this case, of health.

Process and materials are of utmost importance in my work, since they exhibit the real transformation, the evolution of the material. Through understanding how jewellery was and still made in India, I have made this work with an almost irreverent, uncontrollable process – pouring. This process has given me a new perspective on the understanding of the materials. It’s fascinating to watch the materials transform and take another shape and form when poured on one another. There’s no fixed outcome. Material is always questioning the craftsman of its own identity through constant investigation and transformation. It always responds at its own will, taking charge of the maker and challenging further. There is never a culmination to its story, it always requires picking up again and working through at length. There are so many more revelations contained within each material than its finite creator can possibly imagine.
To bring the transformation hidden within the unyielding surface of the final piece it is important for me to retain the imprints of the process that a piece goes through during this journey of transformation. It is indispensable for me to acknowledge the stories these imperfections speak of; the evolution of the work. I believe that makes the piece exclusive, I imagine the process of transformation as different stages of evolving and growing.

22. Sameeksha Mehra, Ring- Traditions and Transformation, bronze on shredded glass.
Discussion

The starting point of this project was my personal experience of moving to Sweden from India. Due to the contrasting cultures and lifestyle of these two places I missed a sense of belonging. Inspired by my new surroundings I started by working with materials that were new to me. I investigated the reactions of these materials when brought in contact with one another. I looked at connecting my personal experience of integrating into a new society and transforming, with the transformation of these materials. Allowing materials to undergo their own journey of transformation and not dictating the final outcome helped me become more aware of my own journey of transformation thereby connecting more with these materials. The process helped me overcome the fear of unknown and deal with the pressure of creating measurable results. To think of the objects not as finished pieces, but as part of an on-going process of transformation made the process more rewarding and playful. I continued with the process to create jewellery that would speak of my Indian heritage and this journey of transformation.

For the exhibition I wanted to present the jewellery in a way that it interacts with the audience and communicate the narrative of transformation and traditions. Each element in my jewellery pieces tells a story of its own journey, I wanted the audience to read that narrative. At the same time, I also wanted to bring forth the relevance of jewellery in Indian culture and the divinity attached with it. During the exhibition in the White sea, I hung the pieces against the backdrop of a red saree (a traditional Indian costume). The necklace Manthan took the center with rings hanging on different levels, four on each side. The display looked spiritual as it metaphorically represented goddess Durga or Shakti-Indian goddess of power and protector of all that is good and harmonious in the world. In Hindu religion Durga is depicted in a red saree with eight hands carrying weapons of different kinds. The necklace with the saree backdrop represented the goddess sitting on a pedestal with four rings on either side representing her eight arms. It was satisfying to observe other people’s ways of
looking at the installation, the feedbacks I received suggested that the installation was read the way I had intended to put across.

As an artist my practice is the reflection of my Indian background - my personal history composed of childhood memories, festivals and day to day traditions fuel my imagination. I wish to bring to fore the traditions of India in jewellery and craft through my process of creating jewellery rendered with heritage mastery of Indian craftsmen. I aim to bring together the ancient and the contemporary in jewellery. I encourage myself to explore Indian heritage jewellery and to work with their elements to make my contemporary work.

As an Indian artist I look forward to starting a dialogue about contemporary jewellery in India. I want to collaborate with the jewellery craftsmen of India and create pieces that comment on the eroding heritage of jewellery craft while still being relevant in today’s time. I see my work exhibited in museums and galleries with talks and discussions about craft revival.

As an Indian artist based in the West, I want my work to talk about the traditions and crafts of India and how traditions go through transformation to hold relevance in the world of today. I want my pieces to look attached to history and heritage, while creating my own making process and materials. I want to capture the viewers through the process and narrative of the jewellery to introduce them to the journey the piece undergoes, the ways of production that underlie the final representation and not just the final face of the work. I hope my work contributes to the dialogue between traditions and transformation.

In the context is a new fast changing world where liberty is often at odds with deeply held beliefs, through my work I wish to highlight the importance of traditions and cultural relevance. These words seem charged and bear a lot of weight but in order to have a conversation about the future, an understanding of the past is equally important, as knowing where we come from informs where we are headed. Traditions make us understand our lineage, that we do not live in a vacuum – there is a thread that connects us with the history and will roll forward to link us with the times to come. Traditions help us in the process of self-definition, contributing to our well-being and cultivating a sense of belonging in the whole wide world.

Transformation through encounters with other traditions during travels has long been the metaphorical constant throughout human history. In ancient times, people would travel for survival, for land, knowledge, and power. Travels also led to trade in exchange of ideas, knowledge and culture. Today the impact of global connectedness on culture and economy is indisputable.
It’s a small world, after all. This saying has never been truer, and in all likelihood, as the trends continue to develop the way they do, the world will continue to shrink even further.

Through this research on traditions and transformation I had been looking for answers to Where does it all lead? What becomes of us? What do we achieve in the chaos of being placed in a new setting?

The rich jewellery tradition of India and the knowledge of handicraft is being replaced by global trends at a fast pace. At this rate, we risk losing this invaluable heritage, with people preferring to trade their heirloom pieces for modern designs and materials. I wish to make jewellery by creating my own material and combining it with the elements from previously owned Indian jewellery pieces, irrespective of their material. Given that a lot of heritage jewellery now exists in non-precious materials as they don’t yield monetary value, I wish to bridge this gap and keep the heritage alive while adding a contemporary conceptual flavor to my work.

I am deeply impressed and inspired by the works of Indian artists Swapna Mehta and Himani Grover (working under her label Chicory Chai). Both these artists work a lot with transforming vintage jewellery pieces by lending them a contemporary flavor.

Swapna works with redefining older jewellery for the taste of today by weaving eclectic, contrasting elements together in new untamed narratives. For me she is like a painter who compiles a new canvas with all elements traditional yet successfully bridging the gap between contemporary and traditional. As she says “The ethos of my label is to be grounded in heritage, but not stuck in it. Having a completely modern style but respecting and being influenced by the way things were done in the olden days. It is for the fearless woman of today who makes her own rules.”
Himani “seeks to explore the rustic stories and emotions that end up losing face in the race for elitism and luxury.” A firm believer in conscious consumerism, Himani upcycles old pieces. She also works with re-imagining and re-creating older pieces for her clients through the story they narrate. She lays emphasis on keeping the emotional value of the piece intact, while giving it a makeover. Like in the neck-piece (image 26) she narrates the journey of the protagonist across India, thus the necklace integrates an antique Deccan nath (nose-ring) and a pendant from Ladakh along with carrying traces of Taj Mahal to Ajrak to Bhil art to Step wells to Urdu poetry.
Conclusion

This project started with me exploring my traditions in a foreign land, not letting the chaos of contrasting cultures deter the transformation I was going through. With an interest in how traditions can be preserved while still being abreast with the contemporary culture, I hoped to develop my own practice within craft and gain insight into where I am coming from.

Throughout this project my making process has guided me towards a better understanding of concepts. Also, it has inspired me to better read the development of my work, which in turn has made my practice more informed. While working with materials and their transformation, I related closely with the growth in my personal journey. Through my research, I feel I’ve connected better with my roots and added more layers to my knowledge of my own culture. I have come to a deeper understanding of how I reflect this knowledge as a method in my artistic practice.
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