

Unfolding Growth

The technique used to create these banners is called Itajime (most commonly known in North America as “tie-dye”). In Japan, this technique is revered for its effortless sophistication. In order to create a pattern on the cloth, the cloth is first folded and then clamped with simple wooden shapes on either side of the folded bundle. The clamped bundle is then immersed in a vat of dye. Wherever the wood is clamped, the dye is resisted creating a pattern that is only visible once the bundle is removed from the dye and opened.

The Itajime designs I have created reflect and suggest both the surrounding architectural structures and the sculpture already integrated into the space. As the wind blows through the banners the fabric “billows” out one way or another, repeatedly returning to their original state and pattern, changing as the people walk along the street. From simple folding and geometric shapes, these Itajime patterns can be developed to suggest everything from a simple flower to a snowflake or a complex crystal structure.

UNFOLDING GROWTH, reflects how repeating simple building blocks can create complexity and maturity both in a community and in a design.

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“As a maker, I have been trained primarily as a surface designer. I am interested in creating nature inspired patterns on fabric by manipulating textile print, dye and embellishment techniques. I am constantly looking to challenge what is possible. In me, the designer and maker are interconnected. The design comes from what the hands make, and the hands bring into existence what the design that was envisioned.”

Growing up on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Tara Griffiths has always displayed an affinity for pattern and textiles. Upon returning from travels to Prague, she finished her degree the textile department at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University in 2002.

Primarily a fashion artist she has clients throughout Western Canada and has shown in Halifax, Calgary and the United States. She currently lives in Calgary where she works at the Alberta College of Art + Design and is a founding member of Calgary’s vibrant fibre arts group Contextural: a fibre arts co-operative.