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From Physical Structure to Pragmatic Experience: A Synthesis Review of White-Collar Miao Batik Costume Wearing

Yang Yang[1,2], Siti Mastura Md Ishak[1*]

[1]Department of Industrial Design, Faculty of Design & Architecture, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, [2]School of Fashion Art, Hubei Institute of Fine Arts, 430205 Jiangxia District, Wuhan, China

Corresponding Author Email: ct_mastura@upm.edu.my

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Abstract

Among the Miao communities of Danzhai County in Guizhou, China, the white-collar Miao (Bailing Miao) are distinguished by festive costume in which batik, rather than embroidery or silverwork, carries the central decorative and symbolic load. Decades of scholarship have documented the motifs, structure, and cultural semantics of this batik. What remains unsynthesized is the experiential knowledge of the women who both make and wear it. This article reports a synthesis review that integrates three research streams: craft practice as experiential knowledge, dress and wearing as embodied experience, and pragmatist aesthetics with aesthetic interaction. Eighty-one sources were analysed using a literature review synthesis method in which points of departure (PODs) from each stream were identified and crossed. The crossing supports a layered theoretical argument: in the case examined, maker and wearer may coincide in one body; making-cognition and wearing-cognition are proposed as a continuous embodied system; and the wearing moment may reactivate sedimented craft knowledge as pragmatic experience. The review closes with a theoretical proposition that organizes pragmatic experience through three proposed foundations and four phenomenological elements—somatic, kinaesthetic, cultural-affective, and temporal. The Design-User System Assessment (DUSA) framework offers a complementary evaluative lens for examining selected aspects of this experience through its formal, functional, meaningful, and emotional dimensions. Read through Ingold's concept of correspondence, wearing a batik costume can be interpreted not as the consumption of a finished object but as the continuation of a relationship that making began. The proposition offers design researchers a way to treat ethnic costume wearers as knowing bodies rather than as carriers of pattern inventory.

Keywords: White-Collar Miao Batik, Pragmatic Experience, Maker-Wearer Continuity, Design-User System Assessment, Correspondence, Somaesthetics

Introduction

In the villages around Yangwu Town, Danzhai County, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, southwestern China, the white-collar Miao (Bailing Miao, a branch of the Black Miao) prepare festive costume in which indigo resist-dyed cloth, applied with a copper-tipped wax knife, covers the greater part of the garment surface (Wu, 2000; Yang, Yang, & Wang, 2015). Unlike other Miao branches whose festive splendour is built from embroidery and silver, the White-Collar Miao built theirs on batik, and the 2006 inscription of Miao batik on China's national list of intangible cultural heritage drew its core evidence from this community (Si, 2025). The costume is not an accessory to identity but one of its principal material anchors, and the women who make it are, in the main, the women who wear it (Si, 2025).

The structure of this batik has been described with increasing precision. Early documentation established the motif repertoire (spiral, bird, fish, butterfly, dragon) and its geometric abstraction (Wu, 2000; Yang et al., 2015; Yang, Y., & Ishak, S. M. M., 2026). Recent work has pushed further: an aesthetic study of traditional Miao batik design (Lyu & Yahaya, 2021), frieze-group analysis of border ornament identifying the generating operations (translation, reflection, rotation, glide reflection) beneath what the eye reads as rhythmic pattern (Lyu, Yahaya, & Guo, 2025; Si, 2025), and a bibliometric map of Chinese batik research that shows how concentrated the field remains on visual communication (Lyu, Guo, & Wu, 2025). Cultural scholarship has likewise mapped the field: ritual festivals as the occasions on which costume and community confirm one another (Chen, Li, & Luo, 2021; Fu, 2021; Chen, 2021), and museum and digital mediation of batik art judged by aesthetic experience (Guo & Ahn, 2023).

Knowing what a motif is, however, is not the same as knowing what wearing it does. Around the first kind of knowledge, two large research camps have grown up without meeting. The first studies craft practice. Across textiles, ceramics, and woodwork, researchers have established that making is a mode of cognition: knowledge lives in the hands, decisions are taken below the verbal threshold, and the practitioner's body is the instrument of inquiry (Polanyi, 1966; Strati, 2003; Nimkulrat, 2012; Groth, 2017). This stream has its own journals, conferences, and a declared "making turn" in fashion scholarship (McNeil & Bellanta, 2019). The second camp studies dress and the dressed body. Here the body is theorized as the site where clothing acquires social and aesthetic meaning, and dressing is treated as a practice through which identity is continuously performed (Entwistle, 2000, 2015; Johnson, Lennon, & Rudd, 2014; Davidson, 2019). This stream is equally rich, and equally self-contained.

The two camps part at precisely the point that matters most for the White-Collar Miao case. Craft research, in the main, ends where the object leaves the workshop; its experiential vocabulary is tuned to production. Dress research, in the main, begins when the object reaches the body; its experiential vocabulary is tuned to presentation, gaze, and social situation (Ruggerone, 2017; Marino, 2020). A woman who drew the spiral with her own wrist and later feels that same spiral against her upper back under festival drumming falls between the two vocabularies. Within the literature assembled for this review, neither camp routinely asks what the maker's knowledge may do during wearing, or what wearing may add to making.

A third, smaller stream supplies the missing vocabulary. Pragmatist aesthetics, from Dewey (1934) through Shusterman's somaesthetics (2000, 2008, 2012), treats aesthetic experience as grounded in the lived, sensing, moving body rather than in disinterested contemplation. Adjacent work in interaction design has converted this into analytic instruments: aesthetic interaction (Petersen, Hallnäs, & Jacob, 2008; Locher, Overbeeke, & Wensveen, 2010; Ross & Wensveen, 2010), embodied and somaesthetic interaction design (Höök, 2018; Höök, Jonsson, Ståhl, & Mercurio, 2016), approaches that systematize design-user relationships through aesthetic-experience assessment (Siti Mastura, 2017), and design frameworks that bind user experience to tacit knowledge (Küpers, 2016). What this stream has rarely done is turn its instruments on ethnic costume wearers, who are more often treated as custodians of pattern inventory than as subjects of aesthetic experience.

The motivation for undertaking this review is academic, theoretical, and practical. Academically, it responds to the separation of craft studies and dress studies outlined above, which fragments the ethnic-costume maker-wearer into a producer of artifacts and a wearer who presents them, leaving the continuity of her knowledge unexamined. Theoretically, from the perspective of the Chinese nation as a community, it seeks to lay the conceptual groundwork for a community-grounded paradigm of wearable art in China. The White-Collar Miao case suggests that wearable art cannot be adequately understood through individual artistic authorship alone, or through approaches that treat the body primarily as a display support and wearing as an exhibition event detached from social life. Its meaning and value may instead be understood as sedimented, negotiated, and renewed across generations through shared environments, livelihood practices, ritual traditions, and communal relations (Chen, Li, & Luo, 2021; Fu, 2021; Jia, 2010; Wu, 2000). Practically, this perspective matters because heritage safeguarding and design approaches that isolate motifs or finished garments from these relations may preserve visual form while displacing the bodily knowledge and collective memory through which that form remains meaningful (Fu, 2021; Sun, 2020). These considerations motivate a shift in the unit of inquiry from the costume as a finished object to the maker-wearer as a knowing body whose making and wearing remain embedded in communal life.

The gap, stated plainly: for White-Collar Miao women, maker and wearer are one body, and no review has yet synthesized what happens when making-cognition meets wearing-cognition in that single body. This article addresses the gap with four questions. RQ1: How is batik craft practice experiential knowledge? RQ2: How might that knowledge carry into the act and event of wearing? RQ3: What kind of aesthetic experience emerges at the wearing moment? RQ4: What theoretical proposition for design research can be built on the answers? The purpose is not to add new field data but to reorganize existing evidence so that the maker-wearer, currently invisible to both craft studies and dress studies, becomes a legitimate object of inquiry.

Method

The review adopts a literature review synthesis method (Ibrahim & Mustafa Kamal, 2018). Synthesis, in this sense, goes beyond summarizing each source in sequence: it identifies the point of departure (POD) of each literature stream, that is, the position from which the stream starts arguing and to which it keeps returning, and then crosses the PODs to locate positions that no single stream reaches alone. The method suits the present purpose because the

maker-wearer problem does not exist inside any one stream; it exists in the space between them.

Four databases were searched: Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). Search strings combined three term clusters: craft and making (craft practice, tacit knowledge, embodied cognition, aesthetic practice); costume and wearing practices (dressing, dressed body, wearing experience, costume wearing, garment-body interaction); and the aesthetic frame (pragmatist aesthetics, somaesthetics, aesthetic interaction, embodied interaction). A contextual cluster (Miao, batik, White-collar Miao, Danzhai, Miao costume) captured the ethnic-specific literature in English and Chinese. The search window covered publication from 2000 to 2026, with earlier foundational works (Dewey, 1934; Polanyi, 1966; Casey, 1987) added by citation tracing.

Records were screened in three stages. Duplicates and items in languages other than English or Chinese were removed; titles and abstracts were screened against the review questions; full texts were then assessed against three inclusion criteria: the source reports empirical or theoretical work on (a) craft or making experience, (b) dress, wearing, or garment-body relations, or (c) pragmatist aesthetics and aesthetic interaction; and, for contextual sources, (d) documented evidence on White-Collar Miao batik. Sources that could not be verified through publisher records or established repositories were excluded, as were sources whose bibliographic details could not be reconciled with any verifiable publication. The final corpus comprises eighty-one sources, organized into three analytical streams (craft and making as experiential knowledge; dress and wearing; pragmatist aesthetics and aesthetic interaction) and a contextual group on White-Collar Miao batik.

The analysis proceeded in two passes. The first pass organized the corpus into three analytical levels mirroring the review questions: craft practice as experiential knowledge (RQ1), the making-wearing relation (RQ2), and aesthetic experience at the wearing moment (RQ3). The second pass extracted the POD of each level and crossed them in pairs, following the synthesis procedure: POD1 with POD2, POD2 with POD3, and POD3 with POD1. Here, crossing does not denote deductive inference. It is an interpretive operation through which claims from different literature streams are brought into relation to generate provisional propositions that exceed, but remain accountable to, the reviewed sources. The resulting positions were integrated into a theoretical proposition (POD8), followed by a final interpretive synthesis through Ingold's concept of correspondence (Final POD; RQ4). Aesthetic interaction theory was used as a diagnostic lens for POD7, DUSA as an assessment heuristic for POD8, and Ingold's correspondence as a meta-theoretical lens for the final interpretive synthesis. None of these lenses was treated as empirical evidence for maker-wearer continuity. Where the crossing exposed discontinuities in the existing literature, these are reported as gaps rather than smoothed over.

Result

Craft practice as experiential knowledge

Craft practice as embodied cognition

Craft research agrees on one point: making is a way of knowing, not merely the execution of prior knowledge. Strati (2003), working from organizational aesthetics, showed that aesthetic understanding in skilled practice is tacit: the practitioner knows more than she can say, and

the knowing is carried in the doing. Polanyi (1966) supplied the foundational distinction: focal awareness attends to the pattern emerging on the cloth, while subsidiary awareness dwells in the hand, the wrist, the pressure of the wax knife. Craft cognition is precisely this economy of attention. Nimkulrat (2012) described it as hands-on intellect, arguing that textile practice integrates intellectual work that conventional research methods fail to capture, and documented how her own weaving became a research instrument. Groth (2017), analysing design and craft practice as embodied cognition, reached the same conclusion at dissertation scale: thinking in craft happens through the hands, and the hands' knowledge is structured, transferable, and irreducible to verbal report. Glazzard (2014), in knitted textile design, traced how material experimentation with auxetic structures reorganized the designer's understanding of garment volume, the material teaching the designer rather than the reverse. Smith and Dean (2009) framed the epistemic status of this work as practice-led research, in which practice is not an illustration of findings but their source.

Tacit Knowledge and the Material Dialogue

The second cluster specifies how experiential knowledge is stored and exchanged. Hawkins and Wilson (2017) argued that practice-led research produces multidimensional knowledge that resists capture in propositional form, and called for research methods that stay close to the material. Lamont and Ranaweera (2019) showed experiential knowledge doing social work: amateur knitting participation, compared with music participation, raised happiness and well-being, the making itself rather than the finished object carrying the benefit. Kouhia (2015), in an autoethnographic film on the meanings of craft practice for a young hobbyist, showed that what making means to the maker exceeds what the finished object displays. Väänänen, Kääriäinen, and Tervonen (2017) measured the emotional correlate: craft practitioners' attachment to their work grows with the depth of their involvement, and the sense of achievement is embodied before it is narrated. Ings (2024) described enskilment, the slow growth of skill through practice, as itself a pedagogical achievement. Gowlland (2009), in a Chinese craft community, showed that what counts as valuable knowledge is negotiated through trained perception rather than given in advance. Across these studies the hand emerges as an organ of knowledge with its own memory and its own logic of improvisation.

Craft Practice as Aesthetic Practice

The third cluster claims more than cognition: making is already aesthetic experience. Johnson, Lennon, and Rudd (2014) established in the social psychology of dress that aesthetic response to clothing is situated, embodied, and bound up with identity work. Matteucci and Marino (2017) pressed the point philosophically: everyday aesthetic engagement, including the aesthetic dimensions of making, deserves the analytical seriousness reserved for art. In fashion studies, the "material turn" and the "making turn" have made this position editorially visible (Davidson, 2019; McNeil & Bellanta, 2019), and Marino (2020) consolidated it as a somaesthetics of fashion, in which the dressed body is both perceiver and perceived. The signal for the present review is a structural silence. In the craft-aesthetics literature, the analysis characteristically stops at the edge of the workshop. The finished cloth leaves the frame, and with it leaves the question of what the maker's aesthetic engagement becomes when the maker puts the cloth on. That silence defines the territory the next section crosses.

From Making-Cognition to Wearing-Cognition

The Temporal Dimension: Dressing as Process and Event

Wearing research agrees that dressing is a process, not a state. Schiehll, Simões, and Moreira da Silva (2015) published a kinesiological analysis of the dressing process itself, showing that putting on a garment is a phase-structured motor task whose demands can be measured joint by joint. Höök, Jonsson, Ståhl, and Mercurio (2016) placed movement at the centre of somaesthetic design, arguing that movement is a way of being in the world, not a displacement of the body through it. In fashion studies, Kim (2019) analysed the wearing process as a rite of passage: the dressed body is transformed through the temporal act of putting on, and this temporal act is where much of dress's meaning is generated. Chon (2021) connected temporality to fashion's deeper sustainability argument, showing that the experience of dress extends across the whole life of a garment. Vogel, Jording, Kupke, and Vogeley (2020) analysed the temporality of situated cognition, showing that experience distributes across temporal scales and is never exhausted by the present moment. Liedgren, Desmet, and Gaggioli (2023) supplied the transitional concept with their framework of liminal design: phases in which the user stands between defined states are precisely where deeper experience is generated. Casey (1987) provided the retention mechanism that binds these phases together: habitual body memory, the body's capacity to hold and re-enact its history without deliberate recall.

The Spatial Dimension: Weight, Distribution, and Contact

The wearing body meets the garment as a physical system. Dunne and Smyth (2007) catalogued the psychophysical elements of wearability: weight, pressure, heat, and restriction are not secondary to design but constitutive of whether a garment can be worn at all. Dean (2011) gave this a somatic register, investigating costume through the moving body's own modes of attention. At the neural level, Ryan and colleagues (2021) showed that motion and texture interact in the sense of touch, so that a moving body feels cloth differently from a still one. Thermal and tactile channels carry their own evidence: local thermal sensation mapped by individual body parts (Zhang, Arens, Huizenga, & Han, 2010), the regional distribution of thermal sensitivity across the body at rest and in motion (Ouzzahra, Havenith, & Redortier, 2012), and the demonstration that tactile stimulation carries affective meaning beyond its sensory registration (Van Rompay & Ludden, 2015). At the scale of the whole moving body, the interactive dance installation Sárka demonstrated that movement qualities can be composed and transmitted by designed artifacts (Bergström & Jonsson, 2016).

The White-Collar Miao literature supplies the costume-specific counterparts. Documentation of the women's festive top describes a left lapel female top whose cut and ornament concentrate symbolic meaning at precisely those body regions (collar, shoulder, back panel) that carry the garment's weight and govern its drape (Wang & Long, 2024). The tube skirt and its construction technique distribute flexibility and swing around the hips and legs, converting the walker's stride into a moving display of repeated pattern (He, 2025; Zhao & Zhang, 2022). Jia (2010) set these garments within the structural principles of Miao dress generally, and Chen (2012) analysed the organizational forms and compositional rules that govern how ornament is assigned to garment regions. The pattern is placed where the body will carry it.

The Continuity Hypothesis

These two dimensions converge on a hypothesis that the separate literatures cannot state because each holds only half of it: for the woman who made the cloth, making-cognition and wearing-cognition are one continuous system. Streeck, Goodwin, and LeBaron (2011) furnished the general frame, treating the body as the primordial site where meaning is made through material engagement. Bergström and Jonsson (2016) showed that movement qualities are legible and learnable, which is to say that the body's movement knowledge can be composed and transmitted by designed artifacts. Kim (2019) documented the transformation of the person through the wearing process. On this basis, the review proposes that what the crafting hand knows, the wearing body may reactivate. The wrist that learned the spiral may retain that knowledge as habitual bodily dispositions; when the spiral rests against the upper back, the proposed continuity concerns a change of register within the same subject, from productive to perceptive, rather than a transfer of knowledge between different subjects. No reviewed source states this continuity for ethnic costume, and the two research camps between which the maker-wearer falls have no routine way to ask it.

Aesthetic Experience and Somaesthetics

The Somatic Dimension

The somatic vocabulary for the wearing moment is ready to hand. Shusterman's somaesthetics (2000, 2008, 2012) defines the body as the locus of aesthetic experience: not the container through which perception passes, but the site where meaning is generated. Dewey (1934) grounded this in lived experience, in which aesthetic quality saturates everyday doing. Bugg (2014) analysed dancing dress, showing how dress is experienced and perceived in movement, and Hannah (2014) treated fashion itself as an aesthetic event. Fleetwood-Smith, Hefferon, and Mair (2019) explored the lived experience of clothing attachment during wear, showing that what the wearer feels in the garment binds the garment to the self. Smelik (2018), from new materialism, added that the materiality of clothing participates in experience rather than merely triggering it. Parker and Spennemann (2005) had earlier warned that privileging vision compromises the total sensory field, a warning the batik case takes literally: indigo-dyed cloth is judged by hand as much as by eye. Mehta, Holásková, and Walker (2024) closed the loop somatically: individual differences in tactile sensitivity alter how the same textile is perceived at the skin, so the same cloth is not the same touch for every body.

The Kinaesthetic Dimension

Aesthetic experience at the wearing moment is also motor experience. Dean (2011) located the aesthetic substance of costume in somatic movement. Burnett and Gallagher (2020), writing from 4E cognition, showed that aesthetic experience spans the spectrum from absorbed skilled action to reflective contemplation; wearing festive costume sits toward the skilled-action end. Boncompagni (2020) described aesthetic gestures as habitual and expressive at once, which is precisely the register of a woman who has worn festive costume since childhood. Chudoba (2017) and Crippen (2017) extended somaesthetics and embodied cognition from the individual body toward the built and social world. The kinaesthetic literature converges on one point: the festive body does not perform in costume; it composes with it.

The Cultural-Affective Dimension

Neither the somatic nor the kinaesthetic dimension exhausts the experience, because the spiral on the cloth is also an ancestor. Ruggerone (2017) theorized the feeling of being dressed, the affective tonality that clothes bring to the clothed body. Sykes and Brace-Govan (2015) showed a rite of passage, the purchase and first wearing of a bridal gown, reorganizing the wearer's identity through ritual time. For the Miao case, the contextual literature is explicit: festive costume is the visible confirmation of collective belonging (Chen, Li, & Luo, 2021; Fu, 2021; Chen, 2021); the motifs encode lineage memory and cosmology (Wu, 2000; Jia, 2010; Yang et al., 2015); the structural grammar of ornament organizes that encoding (Lyu, Yahaya, & Guo, 2025; Si, 2025); and when batik art is exhibited or digitized, aesthetic experience remains the criterion of success (Guo & Ahn, 2023). Affect unanchored in cultural form loses direction; cultural form stripped of lived affect remains inert. The wearing moment is where the two may meet, and the cultural-body gap identified in this review is that, within the reviewed corpus, their meeting remains largely unsynthesized.

Interim Synthesis: Foundations and Phenomenological Elements

The three levels of evidence converge on a proposition structure. The synthesis proposes three foundations: craft practice generates sedimented body knowledge that is tacit and pre-reflective (Section 3.1); dressing is hypothesized to reactivate that knowledge through habitual body memory (Section 3.2); and the dressed body enters aesthetic interaction with a material and social world that answers back (Section 3.3). Across the corpus, four phenomenological elements organize the wearing moment: the somatic (what the dressed body senses), the kinaesthetic (how it moves), the cultural-affective (what it means), and the temporal (how it continues). The three foundations identify the conditions that make pragmatic experience possible, whereas the four phenomenological elements describe how that experience is organized. The following section develops these foundations and elements into a theoretical proposition through the POD crossings.

Discussion

Points of Departure

Three PODs anchor the corpus. POD1: the maker-wearer continuity hypothesis, generated by this review, that dressing may reactivate what making sedimented. POD2: craft as embodied cognition, the position of the craft literature, stated crisply by Strati (2003) and Groth (2017), that the hand knows. POD3: craft as aesthetic practice, the position of the aesthetics literature, that making and wearing are already aesthetic experience (Johnson et al., 2014; Marino, 2020). POD2 and POD3 are well-developed positions within their respective literatures, whereas POD1 is a hypothesis generated by bringing those literatures into relation with research on wearing and body memory. The interest lies in their crossings.

POD1 × POD2: Temporal Extension

Crossing the continuity hypothesis with embodied cognition supports a provisional temporal claim that the sources approach but never state. Casey (1987) showed that habitual body memory is retained without being recalled: the body keeps what the person forgets. Vogel et al. (2020) showed that experience distributes across temporal scales beyond the moment of contact. Schiehll et al. (2015) and Höök et al. (2016) showed movement as phase-structured being. Read together, these sources support the interpretive possibility that, for the maker-wearer, the dressing sequence may be a re-entry into a history the body already

holds. On this account, she may not simply put on the costume but resume a relation that the wax knife began. The anticipation of wearing (Liedgren et al., 2023) may therefore involve not only expectation of the new but also readiness for the known. In this review, reactivation does not denote a single mechanism. It may involve motoric sedimentation, trained perceptual attention, and autobiographical or cultural-affective recollection; the reviewed sources do not establish that these processes necessarily occur together. *This is POD4, the temporal extension of making-cognition into wearing-cognition: if maker-wearer continuity holds, craft knowledge may persist as habitual body memory and may be reactivated during wearing without requiring deliberate verbal recall.*

POD2 × POD3: Spatial Coupling

Read alongside garment-construction and contact studies, crossing embodied cognition with aesthetic practice supports a provisional spatial claim. The crafting hand works in zones: a border here, a panel there, the wrist mastering the spiral in a particular angular range. Garment construction assigns ornament to body regions (Wang & Long, 2024; He, 2025; Zhao & Zhang, 2022; Chen, 2012). Contact research shows that the wearing body registers those regions differentially: local thermal sensation by body part (Zhang et al., 2010), regional sensitivity at rest and in motion (Ouzzahra et al., 2012), motion-texture interaction in touch (Ryan et al., 2021), and affective meaning in tactile stimulation (Van Rompay & Ludden, 2015). The frieze-group regularities of White-Collar Miao border ornament (Lyu, Yahaya, & Guo, 2025) are therefore not only visual rhythms; under the maker-wearer continuity hypothesis, they may also be compared with the motor rhythms of making and the subsequent sensations of wearing. This is POD5, spatial coupling: the bodily organization of making may be compared with the regional distribution of wearing sensation. Spatial coupling is used here as an analogical hypothesis rather than as a claim of established one-to-one mapping. Empirically, it could be examined through maker-wearers' patterns of tactile attention, movement, and recognition in relation to the garment regions on which they worked. Under the maker-wearer continuity hypothesis, these patterns may become intelligible as two registers of one embodied history; whether they coincide at the same body sites remains an empirical question.

POD3 × POD1: Feeling, Moving, Belonging

Crossing aesthetic practice with the continuity hypothesis supports a provisional affective claim. Festive wearing is collective ritual (Chen, Li, & Luo, 2021; Fu, 2021), and ritual reorganizes identity through time (Kim, 2019; Sykes & Brace-Govan, 2015). The dressed body generates a feeling of being dressed (Ruggerone, 2017), composes aesthetic gesture from habit (Boncompagni, 2020), and acquires attachment through wear itself (Fleetwood-Smith et al., 2019). These findings describe the wearer in general terms. They show that dress carries affect; they do not explain why the woman who made the dress should feel it differently from any other woman who puts it on.

The proposed difference begins in the making. Craft practice is a prolonged period of somatic investment: the wax knife trains the wrist, the indigo marks the hand, and months of repetitive work pattern the maker's attention and anticipation long before the festival arrives. This investment may build a somatic anchor into the garment itself. When the maker-wearer dresses for the festival, she may therefore be interpreted not simply as encountering a finished object but as resuming contact with material that has absorbed her own movement.

Her feeling of being dressed may acquire an additional register beyond its communal one: the cloth may not simply dress her but return a sense of her own competence to her. The affective experience may thus combine communal affirmation with the re-enactment of her own making. As an illustration of the hypothesis, the drum rhythm she dances to may resonate with the rhythm her wrist knows from the wax knife; the ancestor-spiral at her upper back may also recall the line her own hand drew. *This is POD6: feeling, moving, and belonging may be brought into relation at the wearing moment because the body that feels the belonging is also the body that moved the making. The model does not entail that such reactivation is always conscious, successful, or affectively positive; bodily change, interruptions in practice, and ritual circumstances may complicate or interrupt it.*

POD4 × POD5× POD6 Read with Aesthetic Interaction Theory: The Cultural-Body Gap

Read through aesthetic interaction theory, POD4–POD6 specify the temporal, spatial, and cultural-affective relations that an integrated account of maker-wearer experience would need to explain. Set against the reviewed corpus, this integrated account formalizes the cultural-body gap. Aesthetic interaction research holds that meaning emerges in the dynamic between user, artifact, and context (Petersen et al., 2008; Locher et al., 2010; Ross & Wensveen, 2010). Yet, within the reviewed corpus, the ethnic-dress literature principally documents formal and meaningful properties—motifs, construction, and lineage symbolism (Wu, 2000; Yang et al., 2015; Lyu, Yahaya, & Guo, 2025; Si, 2025)—while the embodiment literature offers general accounts of bodily and affective experience without necessarily attending to the wearer's own history of making (Entwistle, 2000; Davidson, 2019; Marino, 2020). Between them sits the cultural-body gap: research describes either her motifs or her body, but rarely how her bodily history of making participates in the generation of motif meaning during wearing. Shusterman (2000, 2008) explains why the meeting matters: meaning is generated in the lived body; affective resonance is embodied in inter-practice (Küpers, 2016); and where cultural knowledge is material and resists verbalization, the hands and their objects carry it (Schrijver, 2021). On this reading, wearing can be interpreted as an aesthetic-interaction event. *This is POD7, a diagnostic synthesis: the cultural-body gap lies not in an absence of research on either motifs or bodies, but in the relative underdevelopment of an integrated account of how the maker-wearer's bodily history participates in meaning generation during wearing.*

POD4 × POD5 × POD6: The Theoretical Proposition

Integrating temporal extension (POD4), spatial coupling (POD5), and affective conjunction (POD6) supports the construction of the proposition this review set out to build (Table 1). POD8 does not independently confirm POD1; it specifies the experiential structure implied by the continuity hypothesis when that hypothesis is read alongside the craft, wearing, and aesthetics literatures. Three foundations, four phenomenological elements, one claim: pragmatic experience is proposed as the situated somatic, kinaesthetic, cultural-affective, and temporal organization of wearing, through which sedimented craft knowledge may be reactivated and transformed in aesthetic interaction. The term pragmatic emphasizes not merely the persistence of bodily knowledge, but its renewed organization through doing, undergoing, and situational response. POD4 primarily informs the temporal element; POD5 links regional bodily contact and movement to the somatic and kinaesthetic elements; and POD6 connects feeling, movement, and communal belonging primarily to the cultural-affective element. These alignments are heuristic rather than one-to-one derivations. The

proposition, though theoretical, generates empirically examinable and comparative research questions. Somaesthetic tasks (Shusterman, 2012), movement-quality analysis (Bergström & Jonsson, 2016), and cross-situational interviewing can examine whether the wrist that draws the spiral composes differently with the skirt that carries it. For example, research could compare wearing one's own costume with wearing a costume made by another person to examine possible differences in movement qualities, tactile attention, and accounts of attachment. Such comparisons would also need to consider garment familiarity, fit, prior wear, and ritual context as alternative explanations for any observed differences. DUSA specifies four complementary assessment routes for these questions: formal assessment of visual and tactile qualities; functional assessment of dressing, movement, and garment-body performance; meaningful assessment of lineage and ritual significance; and emotional assessment of attachment, belonging, and the wearer's felt relation to the garment (Siti Mastura, 2017). These routes operationalize selected aspects of the proposition; they do not replace its temporal account of making-wearing continuity. DUSA organizes what may be examined, but it does not by itself demonstrate reactivation or making-wearing continuity; such demonstration additionally requires temporally paired observations and explicit attention to the wearer's making history. *This is POD8, the constructive elaboration of the continuity hypothesis.*

The three foundations identify the conditions that make pragmatic experience possible; the four phenomenological elements describe how that experience is organized; DUSA specifies dimensions for its assessment; and, as developed below, correspondence interprets the relation that sustains it.

Table 1
DUSA assessment dimensions and their relationship to the phenomenological elements of pragmatic experience

DUSA dimension	Assessment focus	Application to White-Collar Miao batik costume wearing	Primary relevance to the proposed phenomenological elements
Formal	What does the wearer see and touch?	Visual and tactile qualities of the indigo cloth, motif placement, texture, pressure, and contact with the body	Primarily relevant to the somatic element
Functional	What can the wearer do, and how?	Dressing, posture, gait, dance, skirt swing, and garment-body coupling in use	Primarily relevant to the kinaesthetic element
Meaningful	What does the wearer understand the costume to represent?	Lineage memory, ancestral symbolism, ritual occasion, and communal belonging	Primarily relevant to the cultural-affective element
Emotional	What does the wearer feel?	Attachment, pride, belonging, affective resonance, ambivalence, and any reported connection between present wearing experience and prior making experience	Also relevant to the cultural-affective element and may be shaped by her making history

Note. The temporal element is not a separate DUSA dimension. It concerns the proposed processes through which formal, functional, meaningful, and emotional responses may be sedimented, reactivated, and transformed across the continuity of making and wearing. The applications presented here are proposed analytical uses of DUSA and require empirical validation in future research. The alignments are heuristic and non-exclusive rather than one-to-one mappings.

Interpretive Synthesis (Final POD): Pragmatic Experience as Correspondence

Read through Ingold's concept of correspondence, the diagnostic synthesis (POD7) and the theoretical proposition (POD8) support a further interpretive reframing rather than a deductive conclusion. On this reading, meaning can be interpreted as arising where lines of life and lines of material continue one another, as in an exchange of letters (p. 200), in a world where there can be no lines without surfaces (p. 190) (Ingold, 2021). Whereas POD8 names the possible reactivation of craft knowledge, correspondence reframes that reactivation not merely as the recovery of an internal bodily trace, but as an ongoing, situated relation among body, cloth, movement, and communal setting. Here, correspondence does not depend on formal resemblance between the drawn line and the later movement; it refers to the continuing answerability of body, material, and environment within the wearing event. The White-Collar Miao maker-wearer's relation to the costume can therefore be interpreted as correspondence in this sense. The wax knife's line does not stop when the cloth is cut; it continues in the wearer's stride, in the swing of the tube skirt, in the hand that reaches to touch the ancestor-spiral at her upper back. Wearing is not the consumption of a finished object. It is the object's continuing. The review therefore proposes the following interpretive synthesis: for the White-Collar Miao case examined here, and potentially for other dress practices in which makers wear their own work, pragmatic experience may be interpreted as correspondence sustained across making and wearing. DUSA remains a subsequent assessment heuristic for selected aspects of the proposition, rather than a premise of this interpretation. Design research that extracts the pattern and loses the correspondence (Guo & Ahn, 2023) risks preserving visual form while leaving tacit, bodily, and relational dimensions underdocumented.

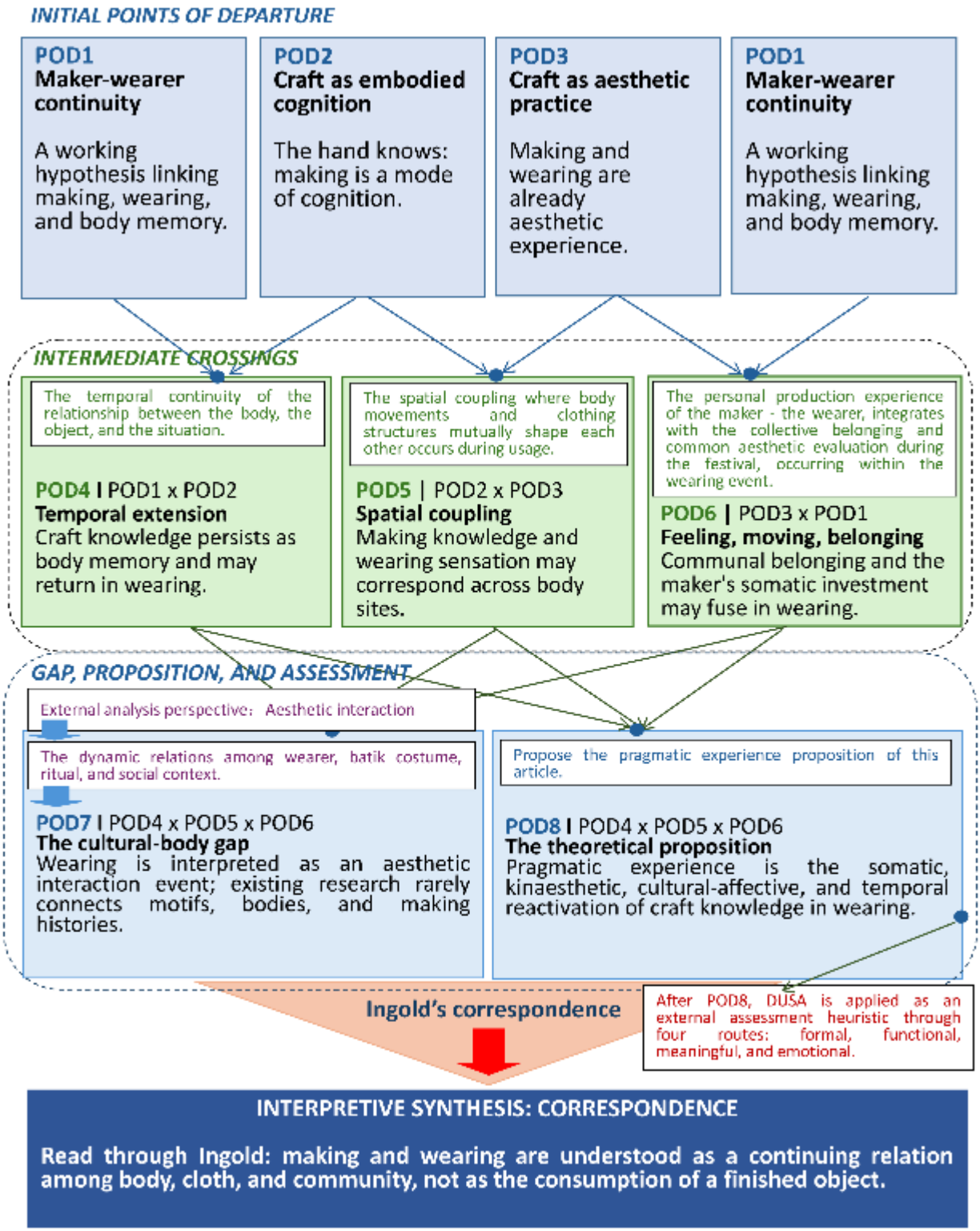


Figure 1. Integrated POD synthesis: from initial points of departure to the theoretical proposition, DUSA assessment, and interpretive synthesis.

The implication for design research is disciplinary. Treating the maker-wearer as a knowing body changes what counts as data: movement beside motif, habit beside meaning, reactivation beside recollection. It also changes what heritage preservation protects. Read

through the present synthesis, current safeguarding approaches can be interpreted as prioritizing documentary and transmission-oriented measures: motif inventories are surveyed, listed, and archived under China's Intangible Cultural Heritage Law (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2011). Representative-inheritor measures fund venues, stipends, and transmission activities (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2019), while the occupational cost of the work itself is documented in the ergonomics literature (Musa et al., 2000; Daruis et al., 2024). The analysis suggests that safeguarding could be expanded beyond motif inventories and individual practitioners to include correspondence itself—the ongoing letter-exchange between a body and its cloth.

Conclusion

This synthesis review set out to make one body visible to two disciplines that have looked past it. Consider a hypothetical White-Collar Miao maker-wearer who draws a spiral with a wax knife and later wears the garment. The proposed continuity asks what may happen when she encounters that motif again during wearing under festival Lusheng Dance. Craft research has studied her as a maker. Dress research has studied her as a wearer. Within the literature assembled for this review, neither stream routinely addresses her as the single body in whom making and wearing may constitute one continuous system of knowledge. The evidence assembled here supports the hypothesis that making and wearing may constitute such a continuous system. Craft practice deposits structured, tacit knowledge in the hands. What happens when the maker puts on what she made? On this account, habitual body memory may reactivate that knowledge and distribute it across the dressed body, in patterns that correspond to the spatial organization of making. The wearing moment is not, on the proposed account, the terminus of production. It can instead be interpreted as an aesthetic event in the full pragmatist sense, at once somatic, kinaesthetic, cultural-affective, and temporal.

The proposition may inform future comparative research beyond the White-Collar Miao case. For design research, it foregrounds the maker-wearer as an analytical category. Within the literature assembled for this review, the bodily competence of the maker-wearer has remained largely outside the integrated analytic frame. In analytical emphasis, craft studies often stop at the workshop door, while costume studies often begin at the mirror. DUSA offers a heuristic for investigating selected aspects of this competence without reducing it to motif documentation: through the formal qualities the wearer sees and touches, the functional performance of dressing and movement, the meaningful associations of lineage and ritual, and the emotional responses that arise in wear. The temporal continuity between making and wearing links these assessment dimensions rather than constituting an additional DUSA category. For heritage policy, the analysis suggests that the unit of preservation could be expanded beyond motif inventories and individual practitioners to include correspondence itself—the ongoing exchange between a body and its cloth. Extraction-based approaches risk severing that exchange. A museum that digitizes the spiral without the wrist that draws it may preserve the archive while leaving important forms of tacit and relational knowledge underdocumented. More broadly, the review may inform future comparative work toward a community-grounded paradigm of wearable art in China, in which artistic value is sustained not only by finished objects and visual display, but also by intergenerational relations among bodies, materials, ritual, and social memory.

These claims are qualified by the evidence available. The synthesis rests on published sources, gathered for purposes other than the maker-wearer question. So no reviewed study observed the same woman at the wax knife and at the festival. The synthesis also brings together heterogeneous empirical and theoretical sources; its POD crossings are interpretive constructions rather than independently observed regularities, and the identified gap is bounded by the search terms and literature streams assembled for this review. The Chinese-language contextual sources were retained for their irreplaceable documentation of costume construction, motifs, and cultural background. They are therefore used to establish material and cultural context, not to provide direct evidence of making-wearing reactivation. The proposition is programmatic rather than demonstrated. It specifies what paired observation should look for, without yet claiming to have found it.

The fieldwork this review implies is concrete. Paired observation of making and wearing in a single body. Cross-situational interviewing between workshop and festival ground. Somaesthetic tasks designed with White-Collar Miao women, not merely for them. These would test whether the wrist that draws the spiral composes differently with the skirt that carries it. The stakes exceed a methodological refinement. Paired fieldwork could examine whether, when a maker-wearer in Danzhai touches the ancestor-spiral upon her upper back, her present tactile experience is informed by knowledge acquired through her own earlier making at the wax knife. That continuity is what this review has tried to name. Between making and wearing. Between a body and its cloth. Between a community and its memory. Design research that learns to see it may find, in the maker-wearer, not a subject who carries patterns but a body that knows.

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