

# Maria-Teresa Yunis, «Textile from birth to death»

with her friend and associate, Carmen Maria

Santiago de Chile, 28 aout 09

## Your activity:

**MTY:** I am designer textile from the Catholic University, since 35 years. I dedicate my whole life to textile art: practicing and teaching different technics. I am 56 years-old, and I hope that textile will be with me till I die.

My work lasts from morning until evening. I don't have time fore anything else. I sleep with it too. I work in my house, where I organized a show-room, my workshop. I dedicate 90% of my life to teaching and practicing many different technics of working with textile, such as batik, shibori, *fielt*, *texturizados*, *mixt technics*... That is a passion for me, to share all my knowledge and skills that I learnt year after year.

**C:** Chilean, I am married, live in Santiago. I am working with Maria Teresa, not more. I help her in differents aspects of her activity: almost on the commercial part, because it is very important to show to the public her work, her relation with textile...

Her products are commercialized in Santiago, North Chile, Vina, Valparaiso, Concepcion, Punta Arena, Pasque Isle, Tenuco, much at a national level. But at an international level too, like in United States or in Germany.

**MTY:** One very important point is my big attention to the shop where I sell my work. In Chile, crafty making is not usually valorized. So I choose shops who will focus on the value of my exclusive products, because each piece is handmade. Each shop will communicate about the quality in direction to the customer.

## How you came to that:

**MTY:** I know textile art since I was born, because my dad used to have a firm, and I used to play there with the fabrics, wools, bobines, pelottes...

So it inside of me, un « spirit » textile!

I studied style in Buenos Aires, in France and then in Chile at the Catholic University,. Each seminar, each symposium taught me something important. In Lyon, in France, I discovered textile culture, how it is made, how it is worked...

**C:** I studied textile design at the Catholic University, too. I worked for a workshop « half-handicraft) *estampado*. But I was too busy, and had no time for my family, my house. So I left textile to educate my children, and I came back to it four years ago.

## Your success, Satisfactions

I think that when it's a passion, work is better done, because for me, it's not work, but a permanent gift.

It's a personnal realization: I am now reknown at a local and national level. I don't look for contacts, but people call me: for example the Catholic University, through Sylvia (Gajewski, other interview).

The best guaranty of success, too, is that I can live from this activity, between production and teaching. It's important to make people know that. Because textile activity is often seen like not generating money. But I have also an economic valorization. I am self-sufficient, and I have never needed any help. I can take care of my children, allow them to study, feel that I assume my mother role.

### **Your obstacles, difficulties:**

It can also be a value, but I am never tired. I am never fed up with working, with having new ideas... « *Tengo cassello* ». I am perseverant. ***I HAVE TO TAKE OUT ALL WHAT I THINK.*** I always have many contacts, I can imagine lots of evolutions for my work, but what is a lack for me is to be able to do an economical and strategic plan. I also have difficulties to valorize my work , that's why I asked Camelia to join me.

### **Is it ok with your family, personal life?**

**MYT:** We all are born and all will die in textile

**C:** My family is more important than my work. I am stimulated by my work, textile is tactile and warm.

### **How do you see yourself and your projects in 5 years?**

**MYT:** I pretend to do some more design, creations, but in a bigger space, in a workshop with better working conditions. I don't see big change. I see myself still teaching.

I have a social project with a workshop of women in handicrafts, in the South Chile (rapel) and I am working a lot with them.

**C:** I want to consolidate my work with Maria Theresa, to expand the business.

### **If you had a message or a question to other active and creative women around the world...**

**MTY:** Even if they wonder about their love for textile, they should not have doubt: textile will be their big love, they have to go on and textile will become their passion. I can say that because I asked myself many questions when I began studying textile.

**C:** Textile is « warm ». It gives the sensation to « acoher » what you do: the same for all textile and handmade work.

**I leave her,** She's going on with a command of « fielt » from a particular customer, to put on the wall in his living-room, accorded to the colour of the sofa and carpet.