

**Project Background:**

My work over the past several years has examined domestic design traditions as a lens through which to present contemporary political and social events. The relationship between the history of fine art painting and the printed decorative surface is one of the primary ways in which my work functions. I find rich and varied pictorial sources in traditional textiles and ceramics; not exclusively for examples of the principles of design, but also for the inclusion of current events. Decorative surfaces are an ideal space for me to investigate the ways in which we surround ourselves with objects of both comfort and terror, subdued in patterns as visual 'background noise.'

I have conducted extensive online archival research into the French toile tradition over the past five years and it has been reflected in my artworks from 2004 to the present. This type of decorative patterning has a particularly rich history, as well as a unique set of design criteria that allows it to function in multiple environments and flourish as a contemporary visual surface. I am interested in gaining new (and idiosyncratic) perspectives on this specific tradition. I intend to incorporate current events into the work, while in France and after my return from the Cité residency. Specifically, American political situations like the ongoing war in Afghanistan and the broader "war on terror," in conjunction with other instances of American capitalistic enterprises. The aim of this work is to highlight the continual and ubiquitous methods by which the United States operates as an imperialist democracy throughout the legacy of globalization. The contemporary French political perspective will be useful while researching and producing this body of work.

**The History of Toile:**

The word "toile" refers to any of the printed fabrics pioneered in the town of Jouy in France in the 18th century. The story of French toile is the story of the development of the printed fabric industry in France and in the West in general, embodying a move from court-sponsored domestic surface treatments to patterns designed to reflect the interests of the working and middle classes. The textile manufacturing enterprise at Juoy exemplifies how politics, cultural movements, and technical discoveries converge to influence the history of image making, from King Louis XIV's embargo on the importation of Indian fabrics (hence the rise of French-made toile), to the invention of copperplate technology.

Toile has survived as an enduring design technique, outlasting both the physical factory site and the pastoral, idyllic French countryside it once depicted. This aspect of the tradition is particularly interesting in my research, as the malleability of the design was exported to Revolutionary-era, Civil War-era America, and well into the 20th century, depicting scenes from the film "Gone with the Wind" and important moments in Eisenhower's Presidential term, to name a few popular examples. In the 21st century there has been a resurgence of interest in toile imagery and Provence-style fabric, and basic toile designs have had an enormous impact in the marketplace, particularly in the United States. My artworks exploit this trend, utilizing the familiar and ubiquitous (and uniquely Western, unlike many designs appropriated from India, China, and Africa).

**Purpose of on-site research in France:**

Though online archives of historical textiles and patterns are available, it is necessary to travel to specific sites in France to view actual objects and research traditional materials, tools, and techniques. The online research I have conducted has proven inadequate in that the samples available online are

often incomplete patterns, poorly reproduced, or lacking in contextual information. At various museums in France, there are extensive physical collections in the form of fabric samples, pattern books, printed tapestries and papers, and documentation archive libraries.

There are many museums and collections available in France that will be of interest to me. While working there, I am particularly interested in the collections at Musée Galliera (Paris), Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Paris), The Museum of Printed Textiles of Mulhouse (Alsace), Textile and Decorative Arts Museum of Lyon, and most important, the City Museum of Toile de Jouy (Jouy-en-Josas, near Versailles).

I am curious to seek out historical context when visiting these sites, to add depth to my current bank of information as well as to more accurately trace the stylistic development and subsequent variations of toile. Potential cross-pollination in the traditions of ceramics and needlework designs could more clearly be traced during this on-site research.

While at the Cité studio in Paris I will make a series of works on paper and canvas, in various oil-based and water-based media, that appropriate the visual strategies of the decorative surfaces discovered through the research. It is my expectation that this context will provide a multitude of variations, ready for exploration, in future pattern-based bodies of my work.

### **Residency Period**

I would like to request a Cité residency during the months of May – June, 2010. As a second choice, I would accept July – August, 2010.

### *Museum Links:*

Musée des Tissus et des Arts Décoratifs, Lyon : [www.musee-des-tissus.com](http://www.musee-des-tissus.com)

Galliera, Musée De La Mode De La Ville De Paris : [www.galliera.paris.fr](http://www.galliera.paris.fr)

Musées des Arts Décoratifs, Paris : [www.lesartsdecoratifs.fr](http://www.lesartsdecoratifs.fr)

Musée Municipal de la Toile de Jouy (Jouy-en-Josas): [www.musee-impression.com](http://www.musee-impression.com)

Musee de L'Impression sur Etoffes (Mulhouse) : [www.musee-impression.com](http://www.musee-impression.com)



*Above: Musee de L'Impression sur Etoffes, Mulhouse, 3<sup>rd</sup> room exhibiting 18<sup>th</sup> century history and techniques*