



New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences



Issue 5 (2017) 68-73

ISSN 2421-8030

www.prosoc.eu

Selected paper of 5th World Conference on Design and Arts (WCDA-2016), 26-28 May 2016, South East European University
Skopje-Macedonia

"COUCHING" PRODUCTS AT KAHRAMANMARAS MUSEUM

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Suggested Citation:

Baykasoglu, N. & Akpinarli, H.F. (2017). "Couching" Products at Kahramanmaraş Museum. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 5, pp 68-73. Available from: www.prosoc.eu

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Ayse Cakir Ilhan Ankara University, Turkey

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Abstract

One of the most significant branches of our culture and traditional handicraft arts is embroidery. It is of an aesthetic characteristic and artistic value produced with the help of a needle or a crochet applied on such surfaces as a woven fabric, leather, felt etc. using silk, wool, raffia, silver purl threads. Even though handicraft arts which are the products of creative intelligence, fine taste and skill seem to be disappearing in some ages, they have managed to reach to the current time as one of the important documents of our culture. One of the techniques having a prominent place in our tradition embroidery is couching technique. Couching is an easy to apply technique made by attaching a yarn produced by stranding into a cord or a thick yarn with a fine yarn on the design line over a cloth surface. It has been in the program of vocational and technical teaching schools and non-formal education institutions. There are some samples of cepken, shalwar (baggy trousers), wristband, vest and jacked embroider with couching technique in Kahramanmaraş Museum. In the current study, these samples were investigated in terms of technique, design, materials, composition and so on , and introduced with visual examples.

Keywords: Ethnography Museums, aesthetic characteristic and artistic value

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1. Introduction

One of the most significant branches of our culture and traditional handicraft arts is embroidery. They are the applications with an aesthetic characteristic and artistic value produced with the help of a needle or a crochet applied on such surfaces as a woven fabric, leather, felt etc. using silk, wool, raffia, silver purl threads. Even though handicraft arts which are the products of creative intelligence, fine taste and skill seem to be disappearing in some ages, they have managed to reach to the current time as one of the important documents of our culture.

Handicraft arts are the mirror of the cultural level of a country and also the most meaningful and lively documents of the cultural personality of that country. In our country, which has been the cradle of a great many civilizations and also a passageway, handicraft arts have a rich history and they have a fine style and sense of color in their production with a neat craftsmanship.

The embroidery technique having emerged with decoration and the sense of decoration adds harmony and beauty to the work of art without breaking the unity of the field that is applied. Even though there are the traditions, legends and beliefs behind a motive that looks so simple, this simple motive has melted in the pot of Turkish culture and attained a new richness of expression (Onuk, 1998).

Those dealing with traditional arts have two tasks today. One is to assist what was inherited through knowledge and skills to survive and the other ones are to teach this branch of art to the coming generations. These tasks are neatly related to each other and also have an art and science relation needed to preserve and survive traditional products of art.

It is a must to prevent the death of traditional works of art inherited and to survive them for the maintenance of that branch of art.

Art of embroidery of which raw material is fiber appears with the works of unique beauty from the past to the current time in Anatolia. Having an important place in our traditional cultural values, handicraft embroidery is one of the sources of proud that we have taken over from the past and also an art that we have to deliver to the coming generations.

The products produced with the couching technique, which is one these values, have a quality putting an importance on the hand-made embroidery even in the current time. Despite multi-headed machinery needing no external intervention after started and making a production in a very short time and very easily, the importance given to the handicraft embroidery has increased day by day. Handicraft arts are a place of running away from the mechanization of daily life and from getting monotonous. When we take a trip in this world, we find ourselves outside the problems we have today.

The products that are the subject of the current study and considered among the most valuable works of art in Ethnography Museums, worked with couching technique have attracted the a great many domestic and foreign visitors and won their approval.

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the works embroidered with the couching technique in the Museum of Kahramanmaraş and introduce them. The study was carried out with survey method. Related literature was reviewed and 24 parts which are on exhibit and in the warehouse that were worked with couching technique were investigated in terms of technique, color, decoration, composition and instruments and the data obtained were analyzed.

2. Technical Features of Couching and The Products in The Museum Of Kahramanmaraş

Located in Mediterranean Region with a history dating back 14 thousand years, the city of Kahramanmaraş has a very prominent place in the formation of cultural richness and hosting for a great many civilizations.

The tracks of museums were first encountered in Seljuk Period in Turkey in Kahramanmaraş and Young Hittite Stelas having a unique importance in the world were exhibited in the Castle of Kahramanmaraş during the Sultanate of Dulkadiroğulları. The first museum was established in Kahramanmaraş in 1947 in Taş Medrese (Stone Madrasah) and it was moved to the Castle of Kahramanmaraş in 1961 and then to the current museum in 1975. It started to serve in modern sense of museology by exhibiting different works .(<http://www.muze.gov.tr/tr/muzeler/kahramanmaras-muzesi>). It was found in the investigation carried out in the museum of Kahramanmaraş that there are a great many ethnographic works. It was also found that similar works could be found in private houses.



Images . 1 and 2 Kahramanmaraş Museum

The early samples of couching needle technique date back to Central Asian period (Barista, 1997).

Couching needle technique is a technique regarded in basic embroidery techniques and it is also a technique used alone however it can also be used with different embroidery techniques (applique, Chinese needle etc.). In couching technique, the yarn or silver yarn is spun by hand or by a spinning wheel as one ply or a few plies and turned into a cord. There are ready made cords in the market as well. Cepkens, nihales encountered so often in the museums are the finest samples of this technique (Baykasoglu, 1992; Akpınarlı & Baykasoglu et al., 2014).

Couching is applied as both open and close styles. In closed style couching needle, as the yarn used by pricking in the spun parts of the cord in the same color, the attachment cannot be seen. As for the open style, the same or different color yarn is first embroidered in a way that it appears in the first line (Baykasoglu, 1992). However, in the second line the cord is attached in a way that it can be aligned in the centre of the first line.



Figure 2. Closed Style Couching

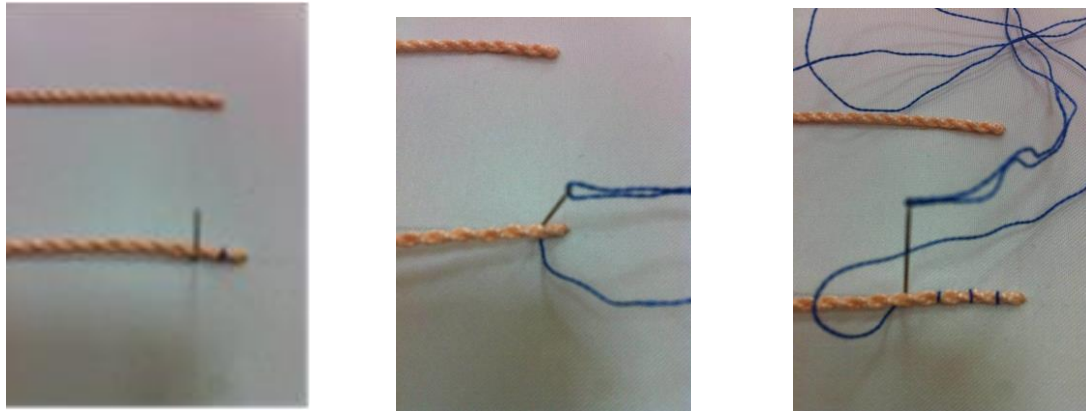


Figure 3. Open Style Couching

If it is to be filled completely depending on the shape of the background design, the same process is repeated at every line. Upon the investigation of 24 products worked with couching technique in the museum of Kahramanmaraş, 1 shalwar (baggy trousers), 1 waistband, 1 sleeve part, 4 vests, 12 cepkens and 5 jackets were identified. As a background fabric, wool was used in 6 works, velvet was used in 14 works, satin was used in 3 works and felt was used in 1 work. In all of the works, spun cords in different features, readymade materials and fine sewing yarn were used and as a supplementary material, scales, buttons and tassels were used. As for the techniques used, open style couching was used in one work (sample no ...) and closed style was used in the rest. In terms of the decoration styles of the products, plant decoration was used in 7 products, geometric shapes were used in 3 products and both plant and geometric shapes were used in 14 products. As for the colors of fabrics used as a background material, blue was used in 1 work, white was used in 1 work, green was used in 1 work, purple was used in 3 works and red was used in 3 works. When it comes to the colors of cords used on the surface, yellow silver cord was used in 8 products, yellow and white silver cords were used in 4 products, white silver cord was used in 8 products, grey yarn cord was used in 2 products and black yarn cord was used in 2 products. As an ornamentation component, scales were used in 4 products, readymade material was used in 24 products and button worked with silk seller technique in 4 products.

Couching technique has been taught in embroidery programs in both formal and non-formal education as a unit. Couching technique has been taught in these educations and new designs have been worked.



Figure 3. A Vest Worked by Nursel Baykasoglu with Couching Technique

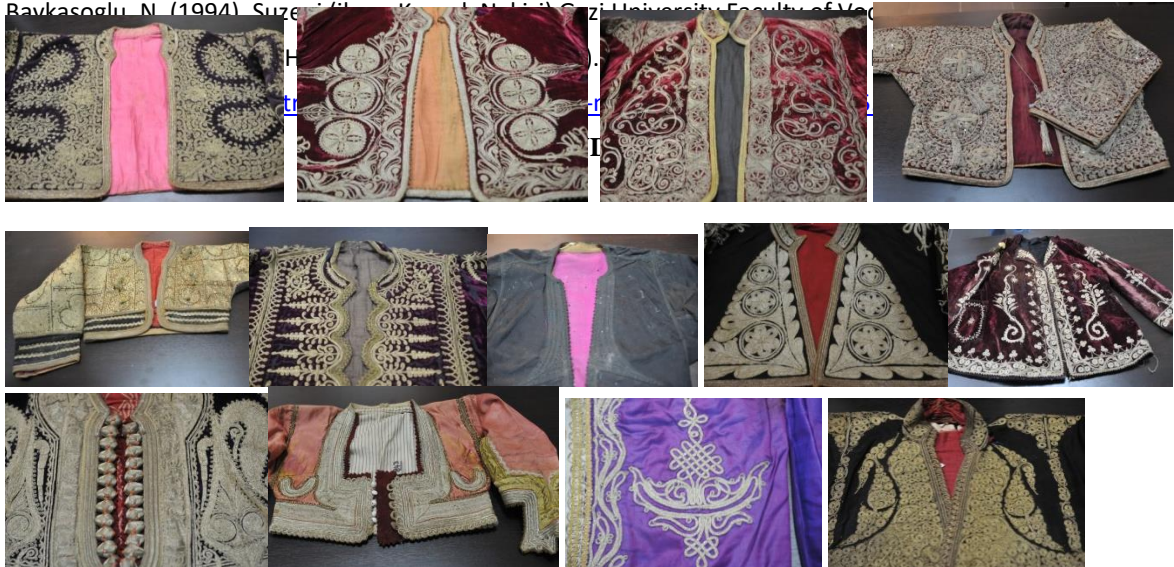
As a conclusion, similar studies must be carried out in other museums with the works produced with couching technique which have a prominent place in the museum of Kahramanmaraş and they must be turned into profitable products for the economy as touristy souvenirs. It is necessary that the designs of the products be preserved and survived in new designs for home textile and clothing in the sense of modern fashion. In order that new generation could adopt these values, the fields of use should be changed and interdisciplinary studies should be carried out and that it should be provided to allow using them as local elements with artistic applications.

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VESTS



SHALWARS AND SLEEVES

