

Nora Fok

Social and Cultural Influences



Biography

- Born in Hong Kong in 1952
- Jewellery designer who works with **knitted and woven nylon**.
- Fok's designs are for **display purposes** and are not meant to be worn as everyday design.
- She left school at the age of 12 to work in a toy factory.

Warning the images on this page are NOT by the designer. They are examples of what inspired and influenced them.

Exposure to different Cultures

When Fok was a child she visited **Chinese operas**. She loved the **traditional costumes** – they were colourful, glittering and fantastic.

Fok was influenced by the **elaborate forms** of the costumes and used shapes like the headpieces with **dangling tassels** as a reference.



Education

Fok first trained as a **graphic designer** in Hong Kong, doing several courses at the polytechnic in design and in advertising during the 1970s but she always knew this area of design was never for her.

In 1978 she moved to England to complete a **wood, metal, ceramics and plastics course at Brighton Polytechnic**. This course encouraged her to **explore materials in a new way**. This course was the beginning of Fok's journey into jewellery

Influence of other designers

Fok's teachers at the Brighton Polytechnic (Caroline Broadhead and Susannah Heron) played an important role in helping her develop her own style of jewellery.

One tutor, was a keen angler, who brought in some **nylon fishing line**. Fok spent a lot of time playing around with the fishing lines and **experimented with knitting and knotting it**.



New and Emerging Technology

Fok felt that there was something new and special for her to discover with the **use of nylon**, as it was only invented in 1935 so it was new and exciting. The challenge was to learn new processes and develop creative ways to use the material.

Fok knew the nylon had lots of potential as it was **easy to manipulate**. She loved its **tactile qualities** and the way that it is **warm when you wear it** against the skin. It also **responds well to dyeing**.

It was also very **practical** as she didn't need large equipment or much space to do her work.

Visual Inspiration

Fok completes collections of designs all inspired by the same theme. These vary greatly, here are some examples-

- **Plants** – both flowers and fruit
- **The night sky** – galaxies and nebula
- **Buildings** – the Armadillo in Glasgow for example.
- Microscopic images of **plant cells**
- **Artists** – Kandinsky's Circle paintings



Kandinsky
'Several Circles' 1926



Nebula



Microscopic photo of a plant cell

PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES: (what processes has she used to make her designs?)

Fok is a very traditional craftsman using basic weaving, knitting, pleating, knotting and tying methods with the nylon to achieve her forms. She uses no mechanical equipment, all her work is carried out by hand processes, with only basic tools.

She hand dyes and hand crafts all her work. Working with nylon monofilament she creates forms that have a delicate and flimsy appearance but are in fact extremely strong and durable

Fok initially completes lots of studies of her inspiration eg a flower, vegetable etc.

Fok quite often makes several test pieces first, working out the colours and sizes as well as the structures.. The majority of Fok's pieces are one-offs so the whole making process is very experimental and time consuming.

Artist Gallery

Armadillo 2007
hood/ neck piece
woven clear nylon
diameter: 30cm

Inspired by the Clyde Auditorium, so called the Armadillo in Glasgow



Aqualegia 2004
Wrist piece
Woven and dyed nylon
Diameter 19cm



**White
Foxtail Lily**
2005
ring
knitted
woven dyed
nylon
height:
21.5cm

**Kandinsky
Circles 2007**
neck piece
knitted
knotted dyed
nylon
length:75cm



Inspired by

Kandinsky's circle paintings.



Ring Nebula 1997
neck piece
knitted pigmented nylon
diameter:34cm



Metamorphosis 2009
neck piece
woven knotted clear and dyed nylon
diameter: 60cm
A series of sculptural pieces inspired by the life cycle of a butterfly.