

Yao ethnic minority women from the province of Hunan (China) developed this particular Nushu secret language (nowadays a dead language) since the 3rd century, a 2,000 character writing code which could not be decoded by men. For centuries, women expressed themselves using elements of their daily lives in their handcrafted work, scarves, embroidered dresses, vases, fans, puzzles, poems and letters, which went unnoticed and mainly criticized the feudal and fierce patriarchy, pretending to be undecipherable ornaments to the eyes of their masters. The hands that embroidered them were not free, but signs were.

We are all aware how women have been oppressed by their husbands, the cruel ancient Chinese custom of foot binding... They could not have access to education or thinking; locked up in their own homes, Nushu was the only way they could express themselves. Like many other hidden systems, this code was born from oppression and isolation, from the search for gaps in what was already established and to find a place to breathe and to exist. Something as subtle and intangible as the Nushu writing. Utterly silent screams, a desperate need to communicate, emerging from the delicateness of women's hands and away from male eyes and judgments.

Men leave the house to face the outside world; women are as brave by creating a language that men cannot understand.

The Nushu key elements which I'm actually interested in can be seen in blogs written by women revealing their poetry and intimacy. In fact, Nushu has never disappeared because the essence of that writing materializes every time a woman sends a message to another woman using their own codes.

The need of the human being to express, whether it is a woman or a man, is obvious. We are gregarious beings who need to communicate; also, our inner world, full of feelings, ideas and abstractions, absorbs a large part of our lives. Women share and use that vital need for expression, and the fact of having been subjected to men's social policies has not inhibited their expressiveness, yet it has extremely limited their means.

By browsing female blogs, I perceive them as embroideries: the use of photographs, drawings, designs, rhymes and even the search for characters and colors, all trying to search for a different way to get their messages across.

Sense of humor, companionship, revealing female aggressiveness or tenderness... thousands of examples disseminated every minute in different blogs, with privacy, in a network that links feelings only separated by distance.

Likewise with the lost Nushu, a language stitched in pieces of silk or fabric, complemented by precious embroideries, and used to create and pass on songs that now, as if nothing had changed, digitally accompanies those unequivocal expressions of the everlasting desire of women to communicate their inner world with their own eyes and hands.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The essential part of this project is its open, enriching and collaborative nature.

I started this project by sending an e-mail to some of my female friends and acquaintances with their own blog, asking them to collaborate in an art project about women and resend this e-mail to as many female friends as they wanted.

They were required to send me a short message via e-mail included in their personal blogs, i.e., messages that they wanted to convey. They were asked to include the link to their blog, the message and the name of the author. Responses were immediate.

I have personally checked each blog and it's really amazing to see how different and vast the interests are: some are really poetic, others quite practical, some talk about motherhood, others about sex, current events, art, photography, literature, cooking recipes, feelings, personal diaries, humor, music. Ages, places of residence and personal profiles do not follow a standard pattern; on the contrary, they seem to be quite diverse. This fact alone seems to be a good indicator of what's happening. Women of all types, age, location and condition send their messages to the world. Everything they want to share and freely express.