



Sighting the full moon
by Mary Martha Dudley

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF APPLIED
ART

Montana State University

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Abstract:

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SIGHTING THE FULL MOON

by

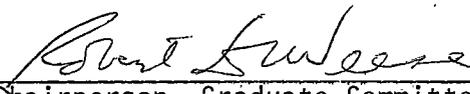
Mary Martha Dudley

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

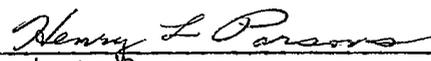
of

MASTER OF APPLIED ART

Approved:


Chairperson, Graduate Committee


Head, Major Department


Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

May, 1976

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

It is necessary to realize that there are three separate but interrelated activities involved in my thesis show: "Sighting the Full Moon." The primary activity was the conception and construction of the pieces. Peripheral activities include talking about the artwork and my processes of working, and writing about the works and those processes. These three activities are separate but integral.

Making is the most immediate action for me. Talking and writing about my work becomes part of the informational process and is perhaps important in the "cycling" of images. The verbal and the written are evidence of dealing with the "outer world", as those activities involve the accepted language of our culture. The visual expression of my artworking communicates more directly the form of my inner world and the continually developing personal symbols therein. I cannot "explain" the show by linking these processes, for that would involve making a verbal construct of a visual expression. There is no need to "explain" the work in that sense because it would do nothing to reinforce an object that is already concrete visually. It is appropriate, however, to discuss methods of working and materials.

The three towers (slides 1-4), the floor piece (slides 8), and wall piece (slides 9-10) all involve the use of unfired clay. The towers are not painted with slip, but the other two pieces are in order to add color. All the clay involved in these five pieces has been reclaimed from previous pieces. I use clay that cannot be used for firing purposes because it is contaminated. It is clay that found its form in my first coil piece, a ten foot tower, constructed one year ago. Since then, the same clay has been in many different states: slaked down for recycling, partially dried in plaster bats, then used in constructions. Speaking metaphorically, it knows its form, as some of the same clay has been used from the beginning of my term here at MSU, and has been added to from the scrap piles and slip buckets of potters who need to maintain a relative state of purity of materials.

My essential medium for the past two years has been impure clay. I often use muslin (slides 9-10) for backdrops or "grounds" for my pieces, as well as other materials such as wire (slides 8), canvas, wood and thread (slides 5-7). All these materials originate from the outdoors. They are essentially natural materials, although even the clay underwent certain processes before it was used by the potter. I feel a connection with these types of media because they

do not dictate a previously established process or image, and do not require the use of power tools. The images I achieve are directly influenced by the selection of materials and the processes needed to construct that image.

The pieces in this exhibition are true to the materials involved, as wood, canvas, wire, thread and clay are still directly identifiable as such. There is no camouflage caused by process. Each material remains visually clear; each material is involved in a visual whole that reflects an adherence to its innate qualities.

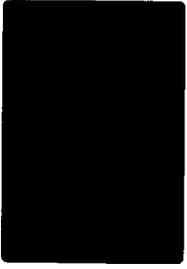
In addition to media, size directly influences perception. I enjoy the physical exertion required to make large pieces, and the statements in clay are realized because of their size. Coil structures such as the three in slide number one are conceived by many people as impossible when verbally described. When visually stated, the image is concrete, and therefore a fact of its construction and medium. What is perceived as a "surprise" to the viewer is a fact that I stated visually through an intuitive method of working.

Through my previous use of clay, I gained a certain knowledge of its properties. This knowledge leads me to more discoveries as I work toward an image (a goal). Through making, I learn about more possibilities of working and the use of clay, as well as reinforcing what I know to be true. All this information is augmented by what I sense intuitively. It is that initial choice of image and media, then the activity, and lastly, the concrete three dimensional fact that ordains an image. I perceive the pieces as embodied energy, the strength of which is told by making.

LIST OF SLIDES

- 1- UNTITLED (3 towers): unfired clay, all three are approximately 12' tall, approx. 2' diameter at base.
- 2-4- Close-up views of the three pieces in slide number one, in order of appearance from front to rear.
- 5- UNTITLED (The Two Houses): dead-fallen trees, canvas and thread. Canvas pieces are 6'9" at base of triangle, 6'8" tall.
- 6-7- Details of piece in slide number five, illustrating images sewn on the canvas in thread lines.
- 8- UNTITLED: clay painted with colored slip, wire, sawdust. Diameter of circle, approx. 5', clay pieces are approx. 29" to top of wire.
- 9- UNTITLED; muslin, unfired clay painted with colored slip, dental floss. The muslin ground is 9'x12'.
- 10- Detail of slide number 10.

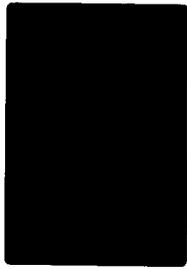
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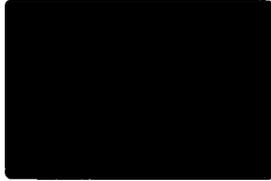
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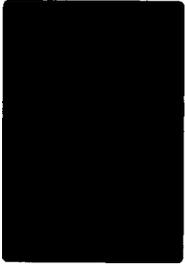
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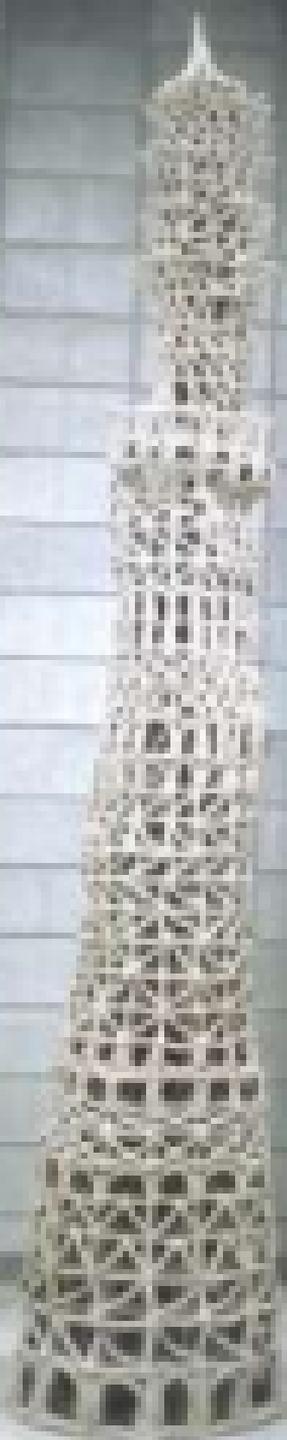
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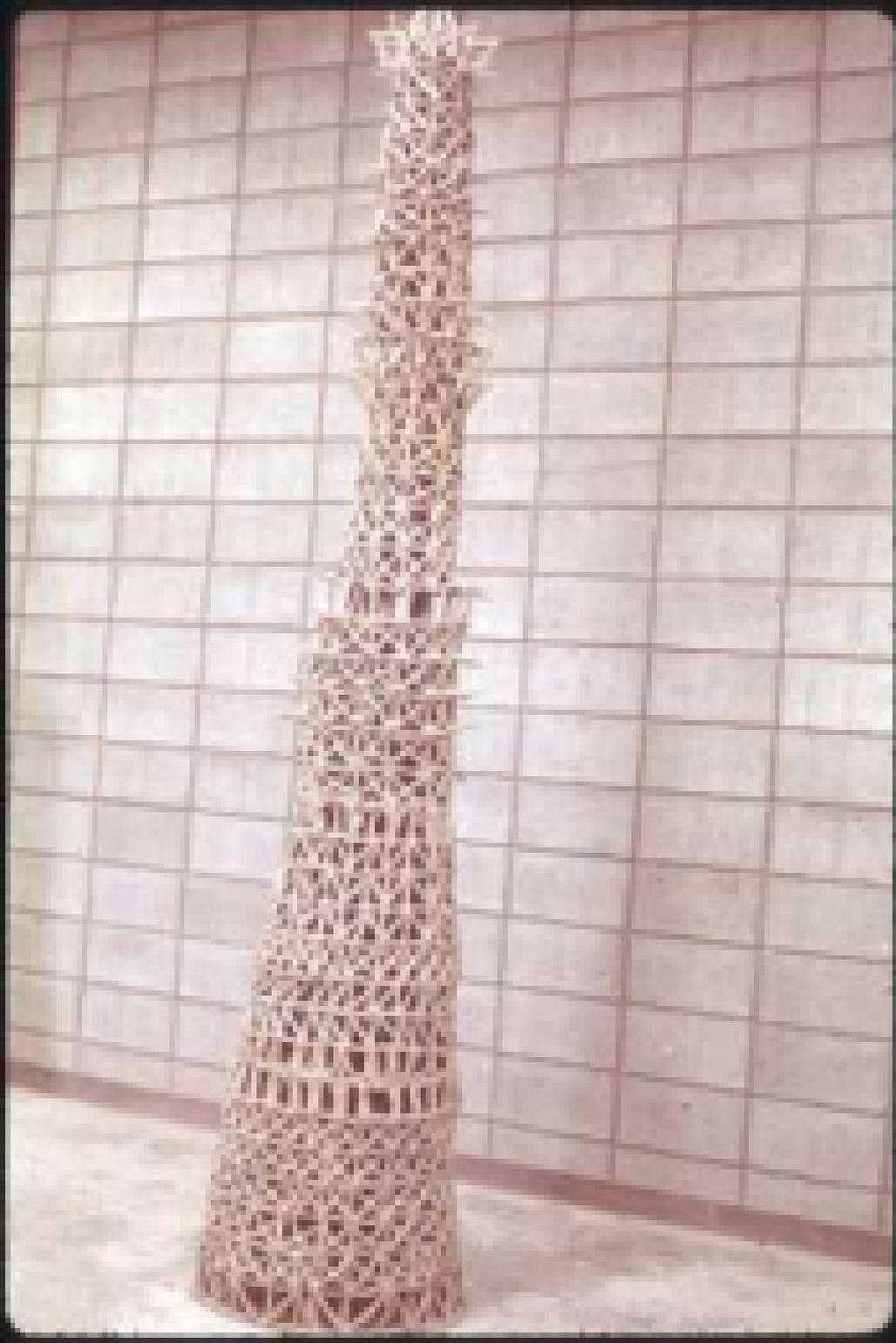
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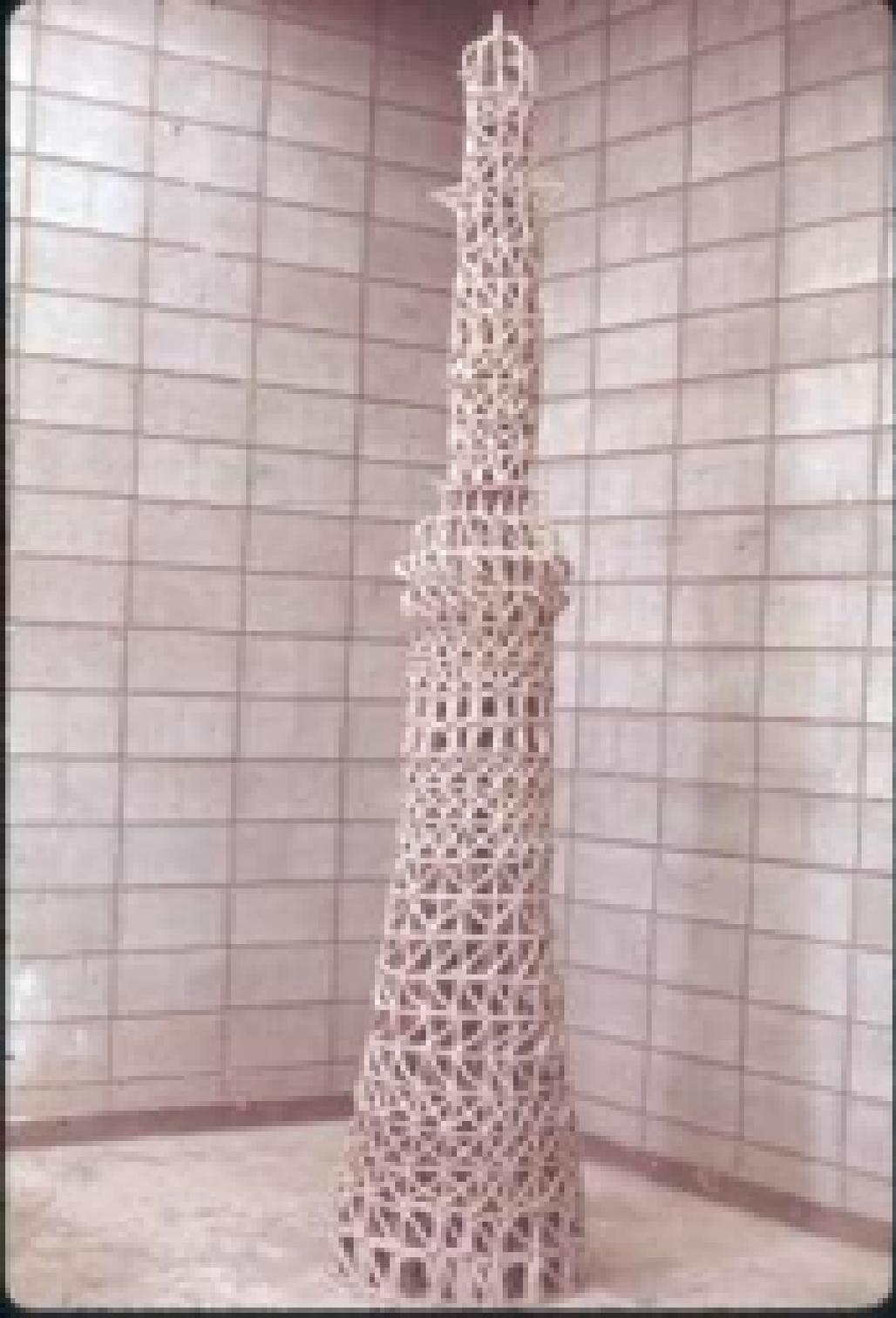


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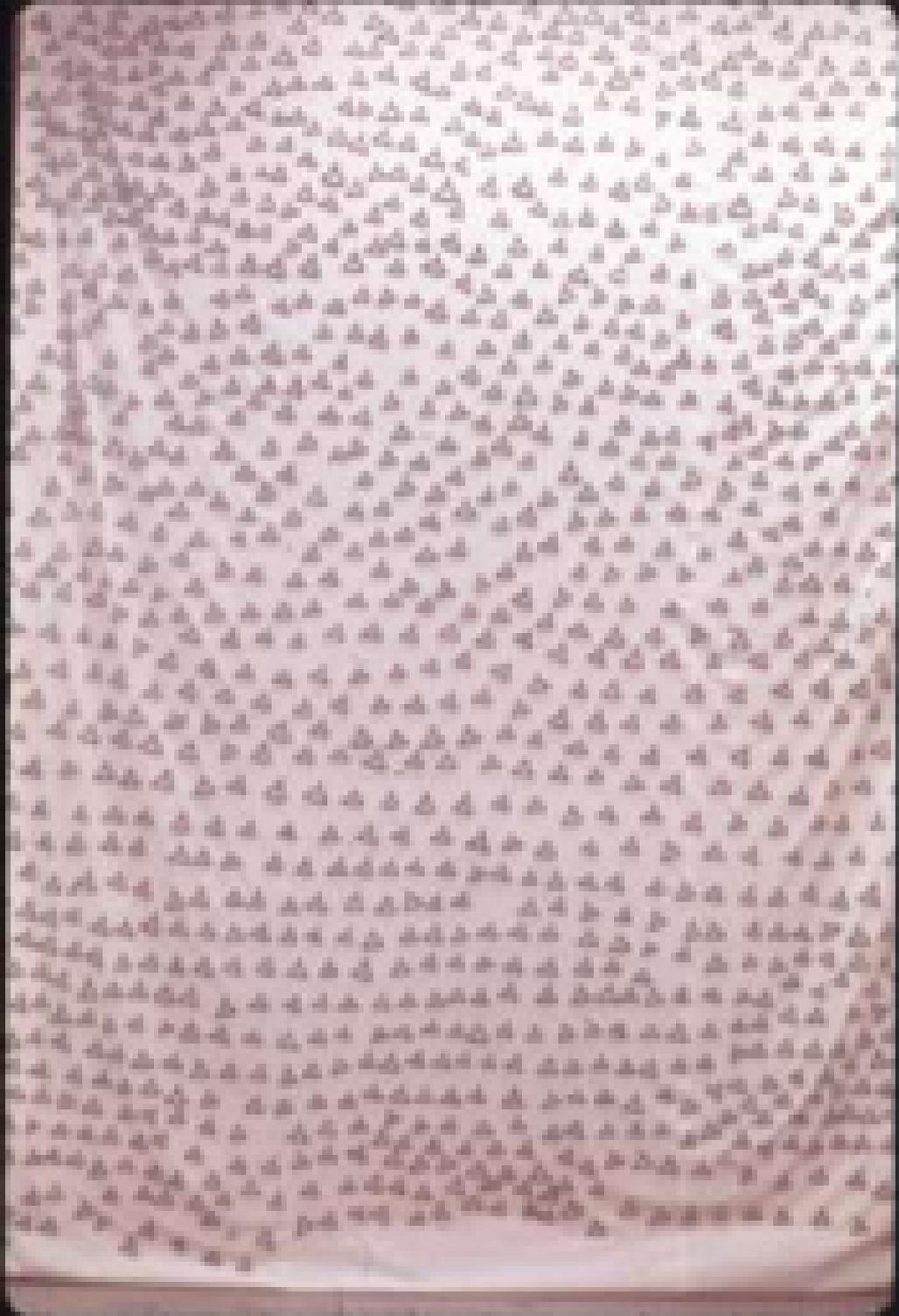


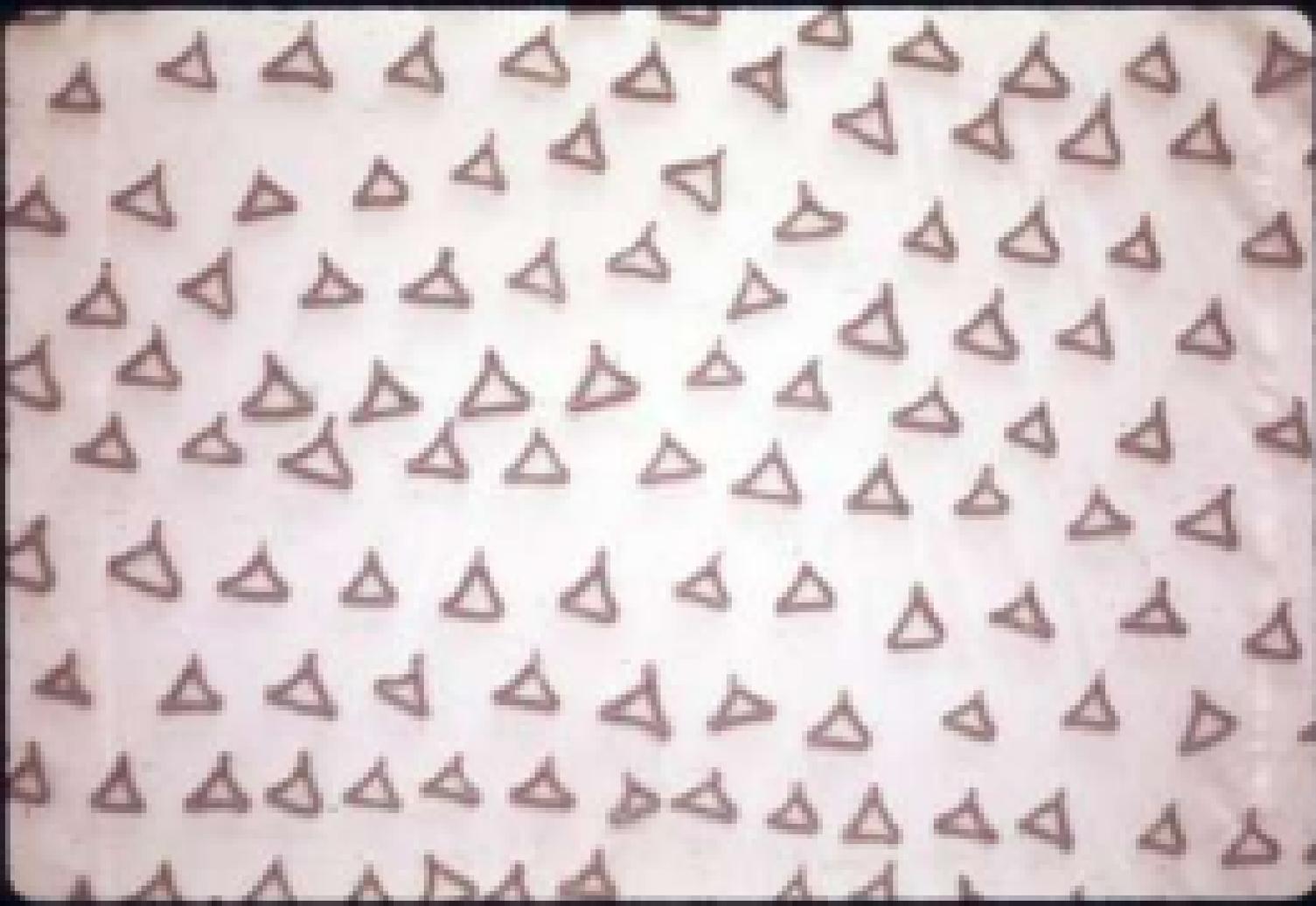












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