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### Fly With Me: Developing the Skill of Flying Tying

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Fly With Me: Developing the Skill of Fly Tying

by

Suzanne M. Ciesla

An Abstract of a Project  
in  
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Science

December 2009

Buffalo State College  
State University of New York  
Department of Creative Studies

## ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

Fly With Me: Developing the Skill of Fly Tying

This project explores the art and skill of creating an original freestyle salmon fly by utilizing both divergent and convergent tools. Using materials from different birds, I learned how to take these materials and put them on a hook to make a pattern that is pleasing to both others and myself. Then on a beautiful fall day, I went fishing, to uncover whether or not my fly would entice a fish.

Spending time in the world of fly tying has taught me how accepting people are and how supportive a climate can be. Leadership skills were developed by examining the role of women in the male dominated world of fly tying. My experience will one day be shared with other women in teaching the skill of fly tying.

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Suzanne M. Ciesla

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Date

Buffalo State College  
State University of New York  
Department of Creative Studies

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A Project in  
Creative Studies

by

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Dates of Approval:

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Cyndi Burnett, M.S.  
Lecturer, Advisor

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Suzanne M. Ciesla  
Student

### **Dedication**

My project is dedicated to my husband for introducing me to the beautiful world of fishing and fly tying. The glow in his eyes and excitement he exhibits has truly been an inspiration. His unwavering support throughout my studies has been the backbone of why I have been able to finish my degree.

Thank you Keith!

I love you!

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family. After going through the Creative Studies program, I have realized how much of the creative spirit they possess. The openness, listening, and laughter they have given me are qualities I cherish. To my Mom, who after working on a frustrating part, would say, “take a deep breath and go relax for a minute”. To my Dad, who would always check in with me on how I was doing and for the interest he always shows in my endeavors. To my brothers, who are protective and inspiring to their little sister and always had an ear to lend. Thank you.

To my former boss and friend, Darlene J. Lake. She is the person who taught me not to be afraid of being a strong woman in areas where women aren't always present. Thinking of her while posting my fly and presenting it at the symposium made me less nervous and proud of what I had accomplished. Her character building, wisdom, teachings and unwavering support are qualities I will always carry with me in life.

A thank you goes to Paul Rossman for inviting me into his home. The hours he spent discussing and teaching me about the art of fly tying was invaluable. His artistic background and different perspective on flies gave great insight for the development of my own style.

To my advisor Cyndi Burnett, who has brought a quality into my life that I cherish. Through her work with intuition and meditation, my stress level has been at a manageable rate during the project. Her thoughtfulness and care for her students has made me realize how important a teacher is in the lives of students. This is something I have carried forth in my own teachings and will continue to do in my career.

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## Section One

### Purpose and Description of Project:

The purpose of the project was to learn how to tie an original freestyle salmon fly. Salmon fly tying is the skill and art of making an artificial lure that has the ability to catch salmon. After developing the concept for the fly and creating the design, I began making it. The fly was used at Eighteen Mile creek to catch a salmon.

Watching the skill of fly tying for the last several years, I have related the use of the creative process in the formation and development of flies. I determined which materials to use based on the creative processes of divergent and convergent thinking. The endless possibilities of colors, textures and design bring the personality of the person tying into the beauty of the fly. While observing tiers and their flies at shows and on the on-line forum ([www.classicflytying.com](http://www.classicflytying.com)), the distinction between styles is a noticeable trait. Styles can be determined by a unique characteristic used by the tier such as the shape of the fly. If five tiers were to make the same fly, they would all have a different appearance, showcasing their style. I have observed tiers being absorbed by their creation using a particular style. Csíkszentmihályi discussed the concept of flow. (Parnes 1992), [and I felt](#) I reached a state of flow while working on my fly. I became completely absorbed when sitting at my desk and in the zone of tying. While in the zone, my desire was to discover my own style, [so that I could](#) become recognizable within the community of artistic salmon fly tying.

Another aspect [of this](#) project [was](#) brought to my attention through a discussion on the [online](#) forum. When posting my project, a tier wanted to ensure that I consider the “why” of tie flying. What is the passion and reasoning of creating a fly? I posted the

topic “why do you like to tie” and have received numerous, beautiful and inspirational responses that have touched a chord with tiers on the forum. I know for myself, I want to learn the skill because of watching the art for a couple of years, and now finally trying to make one. I have always been attracted to the balance and colors of the fly. When someone has created a salmon fly that has both elements attractively set, I am drawn to the person that created it and the fly itself.

The quality of materials is also an important component of the fly. A blank canvas, or the hook, begins the construction of a salmon fly. Selecting the size, bend, length, grade of finish and type of barb for the hook will help define the balance of how the design of the pattern will look. Along with the hook, different types of bird feathers, natural materials, animal fur and grades of floss was thoroughly examined to determine the best variety available. The bird feathers came from a cotinga, kori bustard, turkey, pheasant, duck, imitation Indian crow and parrot. The artistic flies created by most are not used for fishing. The cost of materials and time spent deters tiers from putting their fly in a fish’s mouth. However, one of my primary goals was to use my fly to catch a salmon.

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### **Rationale for Selection:**

One weekend, 9 years ago, I had my first experience with the world of flies and fishing. On a cold Saturday in October, I drove to Olcott, New York to a place called Burt Dam. The day started pitch dark and walking to the fishing spot was a treacherous experience. We waited in the water until sunrise and I didn’t know what I would expect when light finally came. I was a little tired, but I would find out why it was worth the wait.

When sunlight came, I was surrounded by hundreds of men. Fishermen were standing along a creek, fishing poles in hand, looking like little kids getting ready to play. I looked up and saw a beautiful scene. Trees were everywhere with the color of fall. I could smell leaves, water and fish. I could hear jokes and laughter from friends being together. I felt in awe of the scene that surrounded me. Even though I was around many people, I had such peace and thankfulness for the sheer joy of nature. I looked at Keith, the man I would marry at a later date, and could see the sheer joy of standing in the water and partaking in a sport he had done since he was five.

Then Keith opened his fly box to put this bright, feathery, odd shaped thing on the end of his line. What was that cool looking object that was supposed to catch a fish? I was in awe with the way it blew in the wind and shimmered. The way the hook bent and glistened in the sunlight and how some of the colors matched the leaves on the trees. I was memorized by what I came to know as a fly; the thing that went on the end of a fishing pole to catch a fish. On the same day, I used one of Keith's flies, a bright red, green and brown fly that was light, and looked pretty on my pole. To my surprise, one of the fish liked the fly also and, as a result, I caught my very first brown trout! Covered in slime, water and creek gook, Keith took my picture of the proud moment when the world of fly-fishing entered my life and the beginning of my love of flies took hold. My "aha" was at this point. As Parnes (1992) discussed the product, or the fly, it became "new and relevant" (p. 136) to me and I loved the thought of making one myself.

Torrance (1983) described the importance of falling in love with your dream. He stated, "if you have a dream of the future and have fallen in love with it-if you are committed to this dream and willing to persist with it, you are double lucky!" (p. 73). I

pursued my dream and fulfilled the vision I had those many years ago when I first encountered a fly. I finished my journey to learn how to make one of those cool looking things that goes on a fishing pole - a beautiful salmon fly.

## Section Two

### **Pertinent Literature**

In my two years as a creative studies major, I have found myself to be a visual learner. I have established the use of visual images as one of the key concepts in the development of my own creative process, product, press (or environment) and person. The references I selected to assist me with this project were rich in pictures, paintings and plates of various materials, instructions and flies. I started with searching a variety of instructional books such as *How to dress a salmon flies by Pryce Tannatt (1977)*. However, when researching different birds, materials and patterns, I found myself leaning toward the books with more visual representations and not relying on just instructional methods. By just looking at the pictures, I could see the wing design I wanted to use. My reference list was narrowed down to what helped me throughout my creation of a salmon fly. I started be reviewing eleven books and articles about how to tie a fly and development of patterns. Now I have five that had an influence on my key learning's.

\_\_\_\_\_ The first book was called, *Tying the classic salmon fly: A modern approach to traditional techniques* (Radencich, 1997). This book provided a basis for learning how to tie a fly along with descriptions of the different parts of a fly. Once I had a framework and reference point for the wing, topping, and throat, I was able to orientate myself to what materials were needed. My first fly was made from instructions from this book and first hand lessons. Also, a CD was provided that gave tutorials on tying each part of the

fly. Being able to watch Radencich work with the tools and the thread helped me with placement of my hands while working with delicate material such as silk thread. I admired his patience in the video and his detailed descriptions in the book. [As a](#) beginner, [I felt](#) the basic terminology and glossary of terms [described](#) proved [to be](#) valuable when [posting on the](#) discussion forum and when looking at other fly patterns for ideas.

[The](#) next book [that had an impact on my learning contained](#) vivid [and](#) detailed photographs of fly patterns. *Rare and unusual fly tying materials: A natural history* by Shmookler and Sils (1999) was an eye opening experience for the patterns created by fly tying individuals. When looking at the many images, I kept going back to a certain style, [which led](#) me [to](#) an “aha” moment. I loved the look of a mirrored image—the wing, tail and topping was on either side of the hook and had a symmetry that caught the essence of a fly. I found what I thought was natural in a fly—a balanced look—that when in water, would attract the attention of a fish. I modified [the](#) style to make it my own. [I didn't use the mirrored style, but will in a future fly.](#) Also published in the book are flies tied by Mr. Paul Rossman. He is the gentleman I took lessons from, and analyzed his material collection [when I took a trip to Connecticut](#). Mr. Rossman also used a mirrored effect in some of his flies, and was part of the inspiration for the style I have created.

*Creative leadership: Skills that drive change* by Puccio, Murdock and Mance (2007), established what I feel about the role of women in the fly tying world. One of my objectives in the project was to learn a new skill and then use the knowledge to teach other women. Puccio et al. (2007) stated, “they (leaders) must find ways to build work environments that encourage creative thought” (p. 25). The need to understand what a leader must do in an environment that is not creative is an important factor in my future

development to teach someone how to tie a fly. Knowing how to foster and establish creative thought are methods I will carry in my teachings.

With fostering creative thought, idea generation was another aspect I used throughout each step in making the fly. The steps in making a fly involved numerous times when ideas were needed. Within each step, color, materials, and design had to be developed. Through the use of idea generation tools, such as brainstorming and forced connections, [\(Firestien et al, 2001\)](#). I was able to have a group of images to choose from.

[The article by Torrance, \*The importance of falling in love with 'something'\* \(1983\)](#) resonated with the passion I started to build after my first fly-fishing experience. I realized the time and place were finally in alignment to [learn how to](#) make a fly. I don't believe I knew how much I wanted to create a fly until the [Master's](#) project came along and I started researching the materials and styles. Torrance stated (1983), "do what you can do well and what you love, giving freely of the infinity of your greatest strengths and most intense loves" (p. 78). Throughout the process of creating fly, I have found my greatest strength in the ability to completely absorb myself in the use of pattern. Realizing my relationship with the visual stimulation I see in flies, I have developed a sense of looking around my world, from my classroom to my home, and seeing where I can put my newfound passion into place. Giving freely involves taking risks; I have taken a risk in developing a fly that no one else has and [showed](#) the fly to professional tiers who have years of experience. Because of the passion I found in working on a fly, I gave freely and didn't worry about other's opinions or how the fly would look. I knew the fly would turn out beautiful, and if it didn't, that I could fine-tune it until I found it

pleasing.

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For my project, I chose the work of Csíkszentmihályi because his work with “flow” influenced my creation and carried me through to the final product. Flow is the mental state a in which a person is completely immersed in the activity at hand. I entered a state of flow when creating a fly. The following are some of the components of flow that I experienced (Csíkszentmihályi 1997):

1. Concentrating: delving deeply into the creation process of making a fly. I focused on the new skill and ensured the final product was the best possible.
2. Distorted sense of time: I sat at my desk on a Sunday afternoon, surrounded by all my materials working on the body of the fly. When I got up, thinking it was about an hour since I had started, I had actually worked for 2.5 hours and not even realized it.
3. Personal control: I loved that I was in control of the design from the size of the hook to the pattern on the wing. I felt ownership and freedom on the creation and haven't felt this way about many projects in my life.
4. Intrinsic motivation: A key component for my project. I don't believe I would have worked so hard on the fly if I didn't feel a personal connection. I have been intrinsically motivated since the inception of my idea. Now that the product is finished, I have such pleasure over the experience and will continue in future endeavors to create more flies.

The following is a list of the above selections and other books and articles that played a part in the process of creating fly:

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<http://www.classicflytying.com/index.php?showforum=5>

<http://www.ronnlucassr.com>

<http://feathersmc.com>

## Section Three

### Goals and Timeline

My goal for the project was to develop an original artistic salmon fly. I applied Guilford’s factors in Creative Thinking: problem sensitivity, fluency, flexibility and originality in the design and production of the fly (Parnes, 1992). Originality was a main focus as my own personal style developed throughout the project. I showcased the fly to professional fly tiers, used the fly to catch a salmon, and developed a new skill to create salmon flies to frame, sell or just enjoy in my home.

In order to achieve the goals, I joined an online forum, ([www.classicflytying.com](http://www.classicflytying.com)), to gain insight, knowledge, ideas and feedback on fly tying.

I made an area in a spare bedroom to have a place that would inspire me in the creative process. The room consisted of a comfortable chair, natural lighting, organized containers of materials, laptop and original flies my husband has made for inspiration.

I then started working on the actual fly. By researching books, articles and flies on the forum, I started diverging and converging ([Parnes 1992](#)) on different materials to

use. Many materials were looked at. I ordered the materials from John McClain in Michigan ([www.feathersmc.com](http://www.feathersmc.com)). His supply of feathers, tinsel, hooks and fur is extensive and provided the needed items. Using colored pencils and paints, I drew and colored the pattern, which I used for the fly. I then took a trip to see Paul Rossman in Connecticut. Mr. Rossman is a published and professional classic and artistic fly tier. I held discussions with him about the tying process and explored his techniques. I also took a lesson on tying with him. This gave me better insight in seeing an actual professional fly tier and understanding what his process was for creating an original fly.

Another goal in making the fly was to have it appealing to both humans and fish; then I would know my product was successful. I had 3 different colors, feathers and patterns chosen. At this point, intuition entered my project. I chose the pattern and colors that I was drawn to and ultimately used for the final product.

\_\_\_\_\_ The fly was made next. Much practice was involved and resulted in many flies being made until the best one was chosen. I took the fly to a symposium in Somerset, New Jersey on November 21, 2009. Experience tiers critiqued the fly and offered feedback. The fly was then posted to the online forum for further analysis and critiquing (refer to appendix D).

#### Project Timeline:

| Month          | Activities   | Time Requirements |
|----------------|--|-------------------|
| September 2009 | Joined the Classic and Artistic Fly Tying forum.               | 1 hour            |
|                | Set up an area in bedroom to establish a creative environment. | 3 hours           |
|                | Set up trip to Connecticut to see Paul Rossman.                | 1/2 hour          |

|               |   |          |
|---------------|---|----------|
|               | Worked on draft for sections 1,2 and 3.   | 5 hours  |
|               | Started diverging/converging on patterns to incorporate into the fly.               | 2 hours  |
|               | Diverged and converged on different materials to use for the body and wing.         | 2 hours  |
|               | Practiced tying the body.   | 8 hours  |
|               | Discussion on forum in regards to style.  | 4 hours  |
| October 2009  | Drew and colored the pattern.   | 2 hours  |
|               | Tied the body of the fly.   | 3 hours  |
|               | Researched fly design with different materials and patterns.                        | 10 hours |
|               | Picked the floss and tinsel to coordinate with the wing pattern.                    | 2 hours  |
|               | Worked on paper.  | 5 hours  |
|               | Took trip to Connecticut to interview and take a lesson from Paul Rossman.          | 12 hours |
|               | Discussion on forum with photograph of my design.                                   | 3 hours  |
| November 2009 | Put the fly design together off the hook.   | 4 hours  |
|               | Made the fly.   | 30 hours |
|               | Named the fly.  | 1 hour   |
|               | Worked on master project write up.  | 12 hours |
|               | Took trip to Somerset, NJ for the International Fly Tying Symposium for evaluation. | 16 hours |
|               | Photographed the fly.   | 1 hour   |
|               | Posted the fly on the forum for discussion.   | 1 hour   |
|               | Received evaluation and critique from the forum.                                    | 4 hours  |

|               |   |          |
|---------------|---|----------|
| December 2009 | Final product presentation of fly to Masters Project class. | 1/2 hour |
|               | Total number of hours                                       | 131      |

## Section Four

### Outcomes

The creation of an original freestyle salmon fly was the primary goal achieved in this project. Not only did I gain a new hobby, I achieved making a useful product that was pleasing to myself, others and fish. The satisfaction I feel for what I achieved is one that I will carry to the next level of fly tying.

The fly I chose was created with a number of diverse materials. The body was created with different colored threads and tinsels. I wanted the colors to coordinate together and I spent a great deal of time looking at different combinations to match the wing. The wing comes from a green parrot. The design of the wing was full feathered as opposed to a married wing. The black hurl head was part of an ostrich feather. The gut loop is actual silk gut from a silk worm. The cheek originated d from a macaw parrot. All materials are from John McLain at [www.feathersmc.com](http://www.feathersmc.com). I based all color combinations by starting with the wing first. Once I had brainstormed and converged on the bird and wing, I then chose the threads, tinsels and cheek that matched the color of the parrot wing. The following is a picture of the fly:



One of my outcomes was to use the fly to catch a salmon. When I considered the time I would spend in making the fly, I knew that I could not chance a fish chewing it and having it ruined. I chose to make a second one and made the flies simultaneously so they would be exact. Luckily, I had the hindsight to do this because my fly was not only unrecognizable, but also lost in the water when extracting the fly from the fish's mouth.

A second outcome is the knowledge gained from discussions on the online forum ([www.classicflytying.com](http://www.classicflytying.com)). The tips on materials and techniques to use were invaluable in the process of tying. I started posting on the forum explaining my Master's project and what I wanted to accomplish. I then posted my first practice fly and received good feedback on parts that needed improvement. I especially needed work on tying on the thread and making sure the wing was set correctly on the hook. I used the information from these discussions when I made the fly for my project. The feedback on my final fly complimented my work with the thread because I had worked to improve the tying technique. My wing, however, still needed some work. I didn't have it set exactly correct on the hook and the wing didn't align perfectly. Now I know that I need to work

on a full-feathered wing on my next fly to ensure they match and are set straight on the hook. \_\_\_\_\_

I knew the fly was visually pleasing to both myself and other fly tiers, but would a fish think it was also visually stimulating and decide to have it for a meal? I wouldn't know if I created something pleasing to both human and fish until a trout took hold of it in its mouth. I had apprehensions about putting a fly that I had spent hours working on into water and having it possibly chewed up by a salmon. Even though I had made a second fly, I still felt bad putting this beautiful creation of mine in the water. Not until I found a beautiful fall day did I decide to head to the creek with my fishing pole. Once again, I remembered my first time fly-fishing. The fall colors were still apparent and the smell of a wood burning stove and wet leaves took hold. So I put on my fishing gear and cast my line in the water at Eighteen Mile creek.

An hour went by. I thought after an hour, if a fish hadn't nudged it, then either the fly was not what the fish were eating now, or it was something that was so odd looking it scared them. But, I hung on and waited. After 94 minutes, my line twitched and a small salmon decided my fly looked appetizing and grabbed on. I was so surprised that I yelled out. I was not alone in the water; other men were present including my husband. He helped me land the fish because I was too excited to reel it in. My fly mesmerized a fish and wanted to eat. Since this happened, I know I created a product that has fulfilled my creative side and enticed a salmon with my newly learned skill.

Now that my project is complete and I have showcased the skill to others through the Artistic and Salmon Fly Tying forum and the symposium in New Jersey, women will see a tangible product created by another female. I will do my best to bring about a

change in the fly tying world and bring more women in to participate.

## Section Five

### Key Learning's

In the past few months, I have had both personal and professional key learning's.

My key learning's in creating an original salmon fly were the following:

- Creating a fly takes a great deal of patience.
- How to make my way in a male dominated world.
- How my FourSight preferences influence my creative process.
- How the importance of constructive criticism influenced my project.

#### Creating a fly takes a great deal of patience

While working on the fly that would be my final product, I experienced a great deal of frustration in getting it to look just right. I would say to myself, "is this enjoyable to people?" I had a vision for what the fly should look like, practiced creating the fly, and knew what I had to do to execute my plan, but getting there was not easy. Patience was the most needed quality when working on this creation. I had to stop several times throughout the making of the fly. During the stage when I had to hold thread and floss at the same time, I would let go of the thread and the floss would unravel. After three tries, I knew I had to step away because I was completely out of the zone of tying. At another point, I dropped the feather I would use for my wing, and not realizing it was on the floor, rolled over it with my chair. I knew time was limited, but I stopped creating the fly and got my materials and desk cleaned, then put back in order. When I had my area ready, I felt more relaxed and had the new feathers I would use in a much safer place.

I also felt a time constraint in finishing the fly and having it look “perfect” even knowing it didn’t have to be. With frustration, came the thought of how many years people who have tied flies have spent practicing and honing their skills. I know that with practice, my skill will improve.

### How to make my way in a male dominated world

Recently, I had the thought that not many people know the art of making a fly. I decided to be a fly fisher woman for Halloween and wore the costume to school. Dressed in full gear including waders, fishing hat, and net, I was amazed at how many people didn’t know what my costume was. I wore a fly I had bought at a show and the practice fly I had made. Even fewer people could identify the fly pinned to my hat. At this moment, I realized that students had never fished or seen a fly, and I knew how important teaching the skill of fly tying would be for students to expand their knowledge. The colors and patterns are what was commented on the most and I loved how people reacted by saying “I had no idea this was a fly.”

Fly-fishing is a sport held mainly by men. As few women do fly-fish, even fewer take part in the actual making of a fly. Within the online forum and the shows I have participated in, I have seen only some women who are active participants in the field. However, the women I have met have had an important impact on why I chose fly tying as my Master’s project. One woman is Joan Wulff, recognized as one of the best fly fishers in Western fly-fishing. She is the founder of the Catskill Fly Fishing center in Livingston, New York. I met her two years ago in the Catskills and had an embarrassing encounter in our first conversation. Not realizing who she was, I asked if she had ever fished or tied flies. Casually, she remarked that she enjoyed both very much and asked



the same question of myself. Later, I would find out her important contributions and have a wonderful conversation with her about her experience in fly-fishing and about how many women had no interest in the sport of either tying or fishing.

      I also met another wonderful woman, Mary Dette Clark. In the quaint town of Roscoe, New York, Mrs. Clark carries on the tradition of her family heritage, tying the famous “Dette flies”. She runs the fly shop her parents started in the 1930’s and is well known in the area. I met her two years ago and was charmed by her warmth, acceptance and knowledge of fly tying materials and the art of fly-fishing. She had an area set up in the shop where she tied flies and I was enthralled with all of her materials and the passion she holds for the beauty of creation. The dedication of both Joan Wolf and Mary Dette Clark is my inspiration for women in fly fishing and tying.

      In the past, I have worked in a job dominated by men, where I had to be a strong female leader. In my, experience, I did not always have acceptance with my male peers and I found it to be an uphill battle to gain respect and support. My experience as a woman tying a fly was an intimidating event at first. I was nervous putting myself on an on-line forum of almost all men and discussing my project. But then I posted my first fly and waited for the feedback. What I discovered was a very nurturing and surprisingly warm experience with the quality of comments received. I felt elated with acceptance from a close-knit group of people. \_\_\_\_\_

      At the symposium this year, I met a wife of one of the tiers. When she realized I was there to showcase a fly and was tying as a hobby, she became quite interested in how I started the process. I had a long discussion with her about my project, using different tools to help create my fly and what inspired me to tie. She has now decided to start

tying a fly and will be keeping in touch with me for guidance and shared ideas. I was extremely excited that I was able to share my experience and possibly influence another woman to start learning the skill of tying. I will be hearing from her in January when she will start learning to tie.

Change leadership finally came to fruition for me when I felt the acceptance and had an influence on another woman at the show. I was apprehensive about taking on the task of teaching other women about fly tying. I wasn't sure if I could relay to them how a woman would be acknowledged on the forum or at a show. Now I am confident that no matter what a woman will try, the members of the forum will be understanding and supportive to the endeavor of fly tying.

#### How my FourSight preferences influence my creative process

Examining FourSight (Puccio et al. 2007) preferences within my creative process was my next key learning. The preferences have taught me my comfort level in the creative process and the areas I need to focus on for improvement. I excelled at ideating. I spent hours sketching, coloring and picking out materials. At times, some of the brainstorming sessions yielded some very extravagant flies that I thought no fish would come near. Implementation came next. I would get so excited and in a state of flow over a colorful feather, I wanted to make the fly immediately. However, a problem arose when I didn't clarify the idea. When I started my final fly, I did a lot of work on the body with different kinds of threads and tinsel. When time came to put on the wing, I realized the hook was too big. My whole design was created and drawn on paper, but I didn't clarify and wasn't "cautious about leaping to conclusions or solutions" (Puccio et al. 2007, p 19), I had to start a brand new fly on a different size hook. The time and

materials wasted had an effect on the way I continued in making the fly. When I started over, I made sure to measure and plan out each step by examining and asking myself if everything looked proportional on the hook and if all materials were fitting together in a balanced way. Clarification is an area I will still need to work on, but in the end, it's worth spending the extra time to ensure the product's success.

### **How the importance of constructive criticism influenced my project**

I have posted my first fly on the forum for feedback on the classic fly tying forum ([www.classicflytying.com](http://www.classicflytying.com)). What surprised me most was the warmth and acceptance I have experienced with the many comments I have received. I have learned how to have more self - confidence in pursuing the ambition of tying a fly. The encouragement to pursue my Master's degree in creativity and the pride from some who think making a fly for a project is amazing has had an effect on my view of the people who tie flies. My respect level has increased ten fold because of the dedication they give to the art. The visit to Mr. Rossman gave me an in depth look at the time spent in creating a pattern and making a fly. I would now love to see how other tiers create a fly in future endeavors.

I then presented my final fly at the International Fly Tying Symposium in Somerset, NJ. At an informal setting, I asked six different people to critique the fly and provide any feedback they were willing to offer. One of the tiers was very honest and explained what he didn't like and what I needed to improve on. I appreciated his honesty and constructive criticism that gave me great insight into what I missed and where I needed to improve. A personal key learning was how much I liked the feedback and how I wasn't offended by what was said. I want so much to get better at the skill and know that I have to be very open minded and accepting of all aspects of critique. The rest of

the tiers were very flattering and gave congratulations on a great job, which I also appreciated, but I wondered if they didn't want to hurt my feelings. Since I wanted the honest feedback, I almost wished they gave more constructive criticism on what I could fix for the next time. I wasn't sure if they didn't want to discourage me and knew I was very new to the skill and thought for a first fly, it wasn't bad. I am sure that as I advance and am not a beginner, the feedback will become more critical and in depth.

## Section Six

### Conclusion

I have reflected on the first time I became interested in fly-fishing and decided to replace my men's waders I had bought from Dicks. I went to a fly shop where they had to special order waders because at the time, they didn't carry women's sizes. The thought led me to think about how many women don't participate in fly-fishing. The art of making a fly is even less known for women, and hopefully this will change. When teaching women, I will need to be aware of the different styles of creativity. Bringing out a person's potential, regardless of any style, is priority when teaching someone a new skill, especially tie flying.

I want to expand the design to a more intricate pattern with use of more feathers. The fly I chose to make didn't have a lot of floss in the body or many different feathers in the wing. When I looked back at the book, *Rare and unusual fly tying materials: A natural history* (1999), I gained some more ideas for a new fly. I would like to use more exotic birds because the colors are so vibrant. I also want to make a larger fly to

incorporate the use of more feathers.

As a result of this project, one of my leadership goals is to have a table at the fly tying symposium at Somerset, New Jersey. Showcasing my flies to other women and explaining the art of fly tying is a skill I will be ready to teach. In two years, my goal is to become proficient enough to demonstrate tying to others at the symposium.

I will one day teach others to tie a salmon fly. Once I have enough skill, I will teach to at risk students in my school as either a club or after school activity. The creative process will be shown for making a fly, but can also be introduced in other aspects of schoolwork or hobbies students may have. I will be able to start showing students how to use divergent and convergent skills at school to create a fly in the spring. By the time I start teaching, I will be skilled enough to show the beginning stages of tying a fly. Teaching students is one of my leadership goals and establishes myself as a useful fly tier.

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#### **Websites:**

<http://www.classicflytying.com/index.php?showforum=5>

<http://www.feathersmc.com>

#### **Appendix A**

#### **Concept Paper**

### **Title of Project: Fly by Me (Beneath my Wing)**

Suzanne M. Ciesla

Submitted: September 15, 2009

**Project Type: Develop the skill of Fly Tying Freestyle Salmon Flies**

#### **Section One**

#### **Purpose and Description of Project:**

The purpose of this project is to learn how to tie an original freestyle salmon fly.

Salmon fly tying is the skill and art of making an artificial lure that has the ability to catch salmon. After developing the concept for the fly and creating the design, I will begin making it. The fly will be used at Eighteen Mile creek to catch a salmon.

Watching the skill of fly tying for the last several years, I have related the use of the creative process in the formation and development of flies. I will determine which

materials to use based on the creative processes of divergent and convergent thinking.

The endless possibilities of colors, textures and design bring the personality of the person tying into the beauty of the fly. While observing tiers and their flies at shows and on the on-line forum ([www.classicflytying.com](http://www.classicflytying.com)) the distinction between styles is a noticeable trait. Styles can be determined by a unique characteristic used by the tier such as the shape of the fly. If five tiers were to make the same fly, they would all have a different appearance, showcasing their style. I have observed tiers being absorbed by their creation using a particular style. Csíkszentmihályi discussed the concept of flow and I would like to reach a state of flow when working on a fly. I want to become completely absorbed when sitting at my desk and be in the zone of tying. While in the zone, my desire is to discover my own style to become recognizable within the community of artistic salmon fly tying.

Another aspect to the project is one brought to my attention through a discussion on the forum. When posting my project, a tier wanted to ensure that I consider the “why” of tie flying. What is the passion and reasoning of creating a fly? I posted the topic “why do you like to tie” and have received numerous, beautiful and inspirational responses that have touched a cord with tiers on the forum. I know for myself, I want to learn the skill because of watching the art for a couple of years and now finally trying to make one. I have always been attracted to the flow and colors of the fly. When someone has created a salmon fly that has both elements attractively set, I am drawn to the person that created it and the fly itself.

The quality of materials is also an important component of the fly. A blank canvas, or the hook, begins the construction of a salmon fly. Selecting the size, bend,

length, grade of finish and type of barb for the hook will help define the flow of how the design of the pattern will look. Along with the hook, different types of bird feathers, natural materials, animal fur and grades of floss will be thoroughly examined to determine the best variety available. The bird feathers will come from a cotinga, kori bustard, turkey, pheasant, duck, imitation Indian crow and parrot.

The artistic flies created by most are not used for fishing. The cost of materials and time spent deters tiers from putting their fly in a fish's mouth. However, I am going to use my fly to catch a fish to see if the pattern created will actually attract a salmon.

### **Rationale for Selection:**

My first experience with the world of flies and fishing was on a weekend 9 years ago. On a cold Saturday in October, I drove to Olcott, New York to a place called Burt Dam. The day started pitch dark and walking to the fishing spot was a treacherous experience. We waited in the water until sunrise and I didn't know what I would expect when light finally came. I was a little tired, but I would find out why it was worth the wait.

When sunlight came, I was surrounded by hundreds of men. Fishermen were standing along a creek, fishing poles in hand, looking like little kids getting ready to play. I looked up and saw a beautiful scene. Trees were everywhere with the color of fall. I could smell leaves, water and fish. I could hear jokes and laughter from friends being together. I felt in awe of the scene that surrounded me. Even though I was around many people, I had such peace and thankfulness for the sheer joy of nature. Then I looked at Keith, the man I would marry at a later date, and could see the sheer joy of standing in the water and partaking in a sport he had done since he was five.



Then Keith opened his fly box to put this bright, feathery, odd shaped thing on the end of his line. What was that cool looking object that was supposed to catch a fish? I was in awe with the way it blew in the wind and shimmered. The hook bent and glistened in the sunlight, and some of the colors matched the leaves on the trees. I was memorized by what I came to know as a fly; the thing that went on the end of a fishing pole to catch a fish. That same day, I used one of Keith's flies, a bright red, green and brown one that was light and looked pretty on my pole. To my surprise, one of the fish liked the fly and, as a result, I caught my very first brown trout! Covered in slime, water and creek gook, Keith took my picture of the proud moment when the world of fly-fishing entered my life and the beginning of my love of flies took hold. My "aha" was at this point. As Parnes (1992) discusses the product, or the fly, it became "new and relevant" (p. 136) to me and I loved the thought of making one myself.

Torrance (1983) described the importance of falling in love with your dream. He stated, "if you have a dream of the future and have fallen in love with it-if you are committed to this dream and willing to persist with it, you are double lucky!" (p. 73). I am now pursuing my dream and will fulfill the vision I had those many years ago when I first encountered a fly. I now begin my journey to learn how to make one of those cool looking things that goes on a fishing pole, a beautiful salmon fly.

## **Section Two**

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### **Websites:**

[http://www.flyfishingconnection.com/patterns/fly\\_tying.php](http://www.flyfishingconnection.com/patterns/fly_tying.php)

<http://www.classicflytying.com/index.php?showforum=5>

<http://www.ronnlucassr.com>

### Section Three

#### How do you plan to achieve your goals and outcomes?

My goals for the project are to develop an original artistic salmon fly. I will be applying Guilford's factors in Creative Thinking: problem sensitivity, fluency, flexibility and originality in the design and production of the fly (Parnes, 1992). Originality will be a main focus as my own personal style will be developed throughout the project. I will showcase the fly to professional fly tiers, use the fly to catch a salmon, and develop a new skill to create salmon flies to frame, sell or just enjoy in my home.

In order to achieve the goals, I will join an online forum, (www.classicflytying.com) to gain insight, knowledge, ideas and feedback on fly tying. I will make an area in a spare bedroom to have a place that will inspire me in the creative process. The room will consist of a comfortable chair, natural lighting, organized containers of materials, laptop and original flies my husband has made for inspiration.

I will then start work on the actual fly. By researching books, articles and flies on the forum, I will start diverging and converging on different materials to use. Many different materials will be looked at. I will be ordering the materials from John McClain in Michigan. His supply of feathers, tinsel, hooks and fur is extensive and will provide the needed items. Using colored pencils and paints, I will draw and color the pattern, which I will use for the fly. I will then take a trip to see Paul Rossman in Connecticut. I will be interviewing and exploring his techniques and taking a lesson on tying with him. This will give me better insight to an actual professional fly tier and see what his process is for creating an original fly.

The fly will be made next. This will take much practice and will result in many

flies being made until the best one is chosen. I will take the fly to a symposium in Somerset, New Jersey. Experience tiers will critique the fly and offer feedback. The fly will be posted to the online forum for further analysis and critiquing.

### Project Timeline:

| <u>Month</u>          | <u>Activities</u>  | <u>Time Requirements</u> |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <u>September 2009</u> | <u>Join the Classic and Artistic Fly Tying forum.</u>                                    | <u>1 hour</u>            |
| -                     | <u>Set up area in bedroom for to establish a creative environment.</u>                   | <u>3 hours</u>           |
| -                     | <u>Set up trip to Connecticut to see Paul Rossman.</u>                                   | <u>1/2 hour</u>          |
| -                     | <u>Start diverging/converging on patterns to incorporate into the fly.</u>               | <u>2 hours</u>           |
| -                     | <u>Diverge/converge on different materials to use for the body and wing.</u>             | <u>2 hours</u>           |
| -                     | <u>Practice tying the body.</u>  | <u>10 hours</u>          |
| -                     | <u>Discussion on forum in regards to style.</u>  | <u>4 hours</u>           |
| <u>October 2009</u>   | <u>Draw and color the pattern.</u>   | <u>3 hours</u>           |
| -                     | <u>Tie the body of the fly.</u>  | <u>4 hours</u>           |
| -                     | <u>Research on fly design with different materials and patterns.</u>                     | <u>10 hours</u>          |
| -                     | <u>Pick the floss and tinsel to coordinate with the wing pattern.</u>                    | <u>2 hours</u>           |
| -                     | <u>Trip to Connecticut to interview, photograph and take a lesson from Paul Rossman.</u> | <u>16 hours</u>          |
| -                     | <u>Discussion on forum with photograph of my design.</u>                                 | <u>4 hours</u>           |
| <u>November 2009</u>  | <u>Put the fly design together off the hook.</u>   | <u>6 hours</u>           |
| -                     | <u>Make the fly, putting the design I have created on the hook.</u>                      | <u>25 hours</u>          |

|                             |   |                 |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------|
| -                           | <u>Name the fly.</u>  | <u>1 hour</u>   |
| -                           | <u>Trip to Somerset, NJ for the International Fly Tying Symposium for evaluation.</u> | <u>16 hours</u> |
| -                           | <u>Photograph the fly.</u>  | <u>1 hour</u>   |
| -                           | <u>Post the fly on the forum.</u>   | <u>1/2 hour</u> |
| -                           | <u>Evaluation and critique on the forum.</u>  | <u>6 hours</u>  |
| <b><u>December 2009</u></b> | <u>Final product presentation of fly to Masters Project class.</u>                    | <u>1/2 hour</u> |

**Total number of hours = 112**

### **Section Four**

#### **What will be the tangible product or outcomes?**

An original salmon freestyle fly will be produced. I will gain a new hobby and extend my knowledge through practice and discussions with tiers on the forum. I will one day teach others to tie a salmon fly. Once I have enough skill, I would like to introduce the skill to at risk students in my school as either a club or after school activity. The creative process will be shown for making a fly, but can also be introduced in other aspects of schoolwork or hobbies students may have.

### **Section Five**

#### **Personal Learning Goals:**

Fly-fishing is a sport held mainly by men. As few women do fly-fish, even fewer take part in the actual making of a fly. Within the on line forum and the shows I have participated in, I have seen a few women who are active participants in the field. However, the women I have met encompass an important impact on why I chose fly tying as my master's project. One woman is Joan Wulff, recognized as one of the best fly fishers in Western fly-fishing. She is the founder of the Catskill Fly Fishing center in

Livingston, New York. I met her two years ago in the Catskills and had an embarrassing encounter in our first conversation. Not realizing who she was, I asked if she had ever fished or tied flies. Casually, she remarked that she enjoyed both very much and asked the same question of myself. Later, I would find out her important contributions and have a wonderful conversation with her about her experience in fly-fishing and about how many women had no interest in the sport of either tying or fishing.

I also met another wonderful woman, Mary Dette Clark. In the quant town of Roscoe, New York, Mrs. Clark carries on the tradition of her family heritage, tying the famous "Dette flies". She runs the fly shop her parents started in the 1930's and is well known in the area. I met her two years ago and was charmed by her warmth, acceptance and knowledge of fly tying materials and the art of fly-fishing. She had an area set up in the shop where she tied flies and I was enthralled with all of her materials and the passion she holds for the beauty of creation. The dedication of both Joan Wolf and Mary Dette Clark is an inspiration for women in fly fishing and tying.

My goal is to introduce the artistic and creative side that goes into the making of a fly. Because many women don't partake in fly-fishing, the art of making a fly isn't a well-known skill for women; hopefully this will change. When teaching women, I will need to be aware of the different styles of creativity. Kirton describes two styles, adaptors and innovators (Puccio, Murdock & Mance, 2007). Kirton also believed that either style has creative potential. Bringing out a person's potential regardless of any style is priority when teaching someone a new skill, especially tie flying.

Another goal in making the fly is to have the appeal where both humans and fish are attracted to my creation; then I will know my product is successful.

With showcasing the skill to others through the Artistic and Salmon Fly Tying forum and the symposium in New Jersey, women will see a tangible product created by another female. I will do my best to bring about a change in the fly tying world and bring more women in to participate.

**What criteria will you use to measure the effectiveness of your achievement?**

When the fly is aesthetically pleasing to myself, others on the forum, and at the symposium, I will know I have achieved the skill of putting together different materials on a hook and producing an original fly. If a fish decides to try to eat the fly, then I know I have achieved an effective outcome because not only did humans appreciate it, but the fly appealed to a fish also.

**Evaluation:**

I will present the fly on the Classic and Atlantic Fly Tying forum for analysis. The fly will then be presented to professional fly tiers for critique and analysis of style and creativity at the November Fly Tying Symposium in Somerset, New Jersey.

The last evaluation will be on a Saturday in late November at Eighteen Mile Creek in Hamburg, New York. With my husband, my fly will be placed on my fishing pole and placed in the water. Will my fly mesmerize a fish and want to hook it? If this happens, I know I created a product that has fulfilled my creativity and enticed a salmon with my newly learned skill.

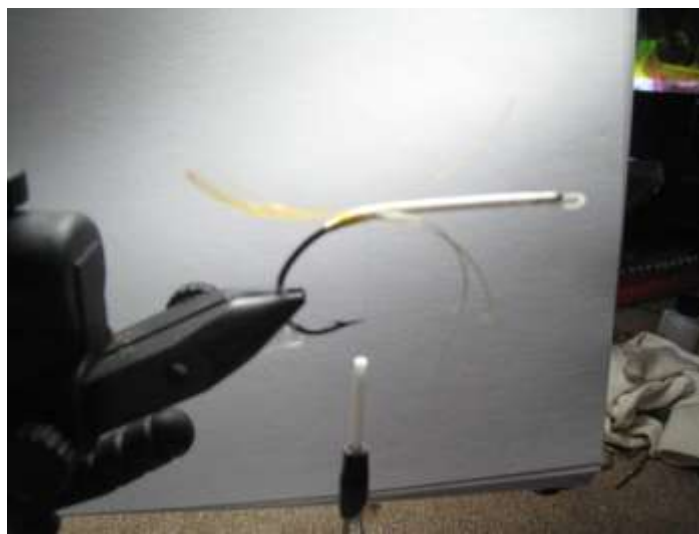
**Appendix B**

**Making the Fly**

**The palette (my hook)**



**Tying the underbody and tail**





**The floss and tinsel on the body**



**The finished original Freestyle Salmon Fly**



**Appendix C**

**People involved in the project**

**My husband Keith**



**Mr. Paul Rossman**



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Mr. John McLain **and** myself



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### Appendix D

#### Feedback and support from the forum ([www.classicflytying.com](http://www.classicflytying.com))

- “First try! I quit. tossing all my tying junk and finding a new hobby. FIRST one! Geeze!”
- “Paul gave some great advice on tinsel spacing. To me, that's the only flaw so far -- and it could be adjusted with some judicious pressure from a dubbing needle.”
- “Off to a great start! Just keep at it. Good luck with the project.”
- “Suzanne, I haven't been posting much lately but this one has brought me out of my isolation. Gorgeous work for your first or fifteenth for that matter. Straighten up the ribs and get this thing done already! Beautiful work!”

\* The quotations are in the original format and have not been edited