

UNSW Galleries

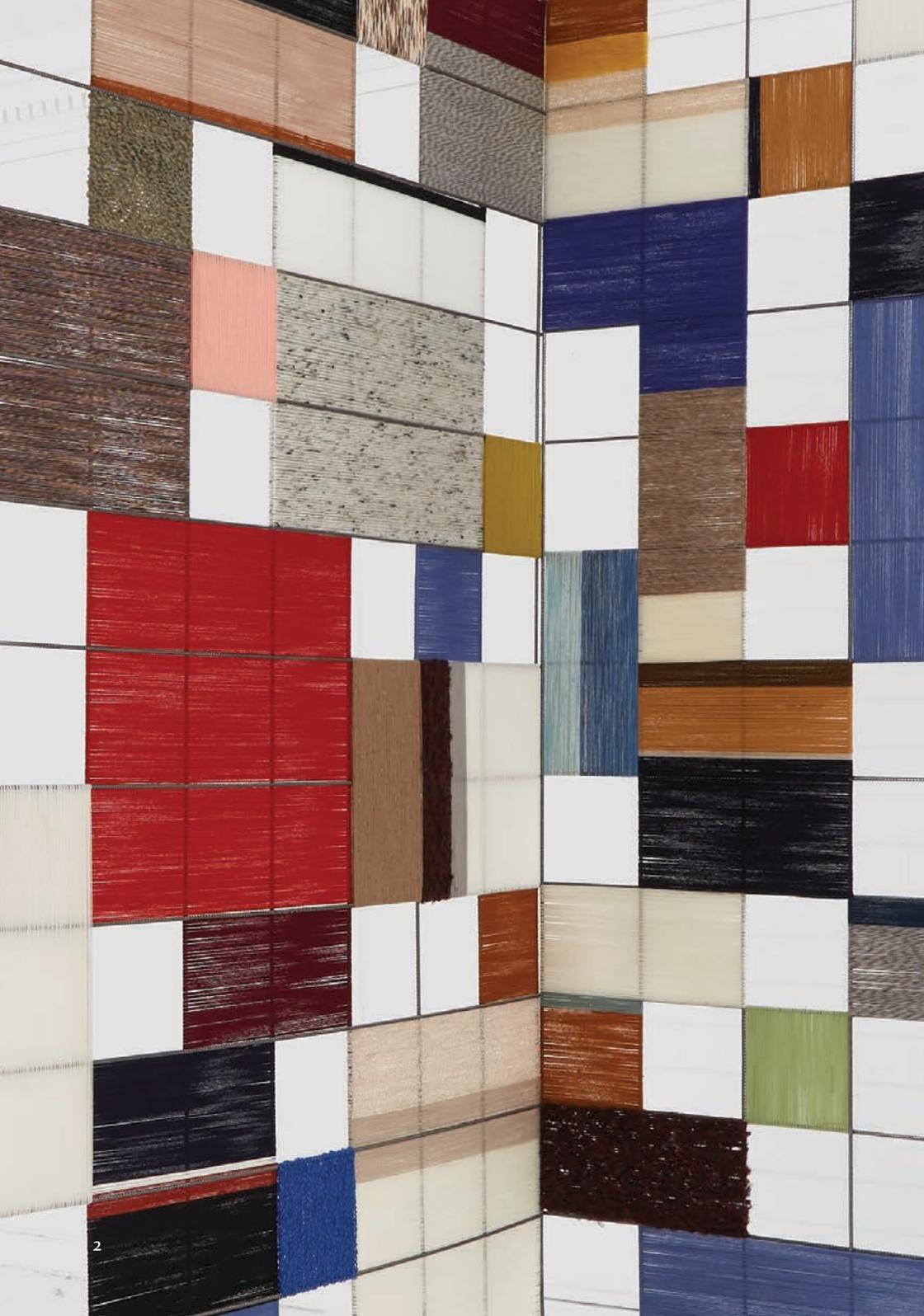
Pliable Planes
expanded
textiles & fibre
practices

Secondary
Education Kit



**Museums
& Galleries
of NSW**





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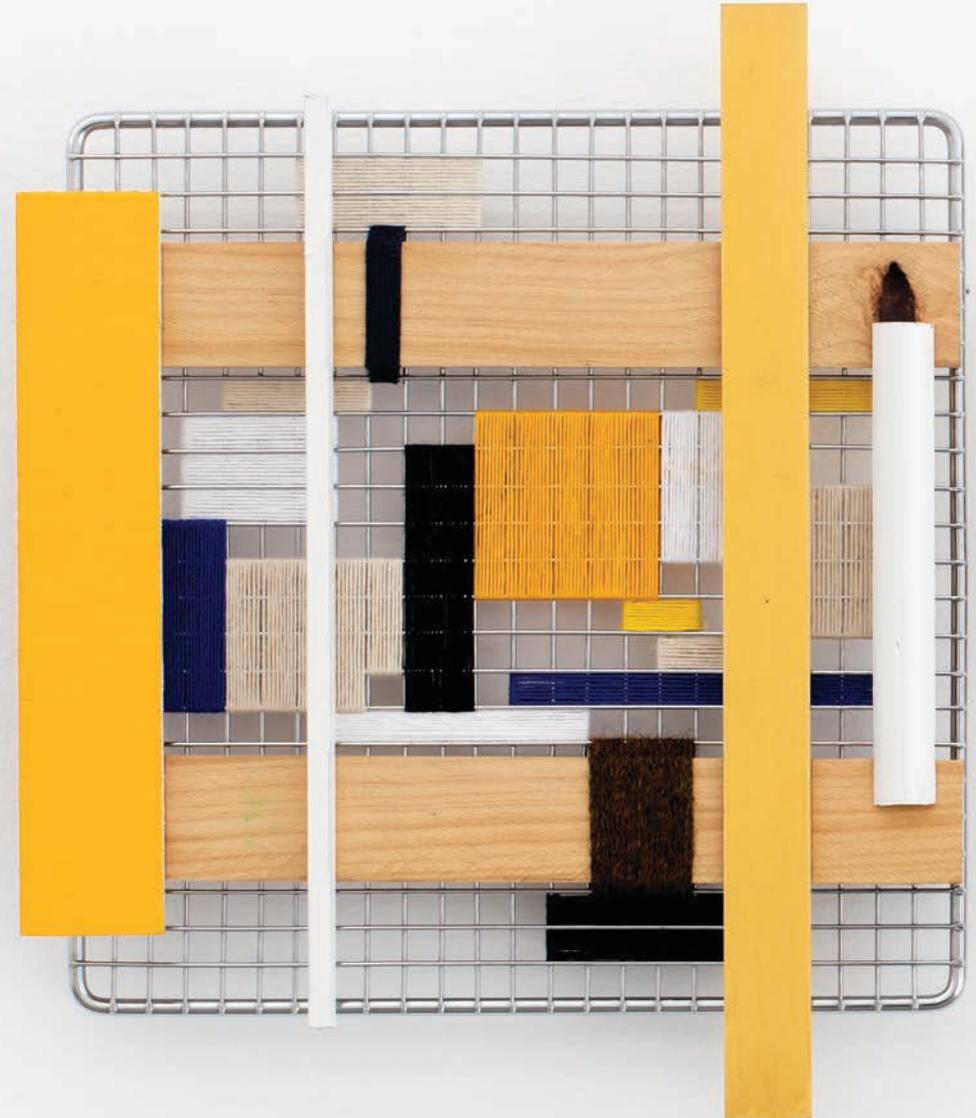
About this resource

This education resource provides support for teachers and secondary school students in Years 7-10 to engage with the exhibition 'Pliable Planes: Expanded Textiles & Fibre Practices'. This project was developed at UNSW Galleries in 2022, and tours across Australia throughout 2023-24.

This resource presents an overview of the key themes underpinning the exhibition, and explores the ideas, materials, and processes behind the works of each of the twelve exhibiting artists.

The education kit features three artist case studies which include a series of thinking and making activities. These prompts are designed to develop students' knowledge through creative and critical thinking, and extend investigations through writing, drawing, designing, and experimenting with materials. These activities can be used to support visits to the exhibition, or to assist further learning in the classroom.

This resource has been mapped to the Australian Curriculum for Years 7-10 in Visual Arts, but is useful for a variety of curriculum areas. A primary resource has also been developed that is tailored for students in Years 3-6, though the material in both resources can be adapted to suit students of all ages.



Years 7–8 Curriculum Links

ACAVAM118	Combining and adapting materials, techniques, technologies and art making processes, reflecting upon techniques used by artists including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists
	Investigating how different combinations of techniques can represent a theme, concept or idea, for example, applying paint with different tools to create different textures
ACAVAM119	Discussing and documenting their choices of representation to strengthen meaning and viewpoints in their artwork
	Researching artworks that provide different ideas and concepts based on ideological views and institutional theories of design and art practice, for example, the Bauhaus
ACAVAM122	Researching ideas for display or presentation, reflecting on different times, places and cultures, and considering how these can be options for display of their own artworks
	Exploring social relationships as subject matter within artworks and how the display of these artworks reflects, challenges or extends the relationships between the artist and the audience
ACAVAR123	Visiting and critiquing a physical or virtual exhibition of art, craft or design, and reviewing how artists have used visual conventions in their artworks
	Critically analysing an artist's intention for an artwork and their use of visual conventions
ACAVAR124	Analysing how visual arts practices and processes and use of available technologies shape the practices of art, craft and design

Years 9–10 Curriculum Links

ACAVAM125	Developing representations by combining and adapting materials, techniques, technologies and art making processes
	Considering viewpoints – societies and cultures: For example – Can you understand and explain why the artist has developed their representation in this way?
	Conceptualising how visual conventions can represent ideas in their artwork
ACAVAM126	Experimenting with a variety of techniques and processes when exploring their intentions as artist
	Selecting, testing and experimenting with materials, techniques, technologies and processes to synthesise an idea that is developed into multiple representations
ACAVAM127	Considering viewpoints – histories: For example – How has the artist appropriated an artwork from another time?
ACAVAR128	Analysing and documenting the practices of selected visual artists and designers, including their use of materials, technologies, techniques and processes, when developing their art and design intentions for representation
	Applying their understanding of traditional art, craft and design practices to plan the use of materials, technologies and processes in a contemporary context
ACAVAR130	Investigating the practices, techniques and viewpoints of artists from different cultural groups and their use of persuasive, communicative or expressive representation.





About the exhibition

'Pliable Planes: Expanded Textiles & Fibre Practices' is an exhibition drawing together twelve Australian artists. Together they demonstrate the vast potentials of working with textiles and fibre as a material, process, and subject in contemporary art.

The project takes its title from a 1957 essay by celebrated Bauhaus artist and weaver Anni Albers (1899-1994) who highlighted similarities between weaving and architecture, and defined textiles as fundamentally structural and endlessly mutable. Albers' ideas around material experimentation, inventive processes, and transdisciplinarity offer a framework for thinking through themes of the project.



Works in the exhibition consider the ways social, cultural, and personal histories are embedded in materials from a range of different perspectives. Artists respond to historical modes of production and representation; challenge ideas around gendered labour and domesticity; rethink material relationships to the body and the environment; and renew connections to First Nations fibre practices.

Exhibited works reinterpret established textile methods including weaving, embroidery, knitting, and sewing by experimenting with material limitations, and pursuing unexpected approaches. Artists explore ideas and processes based in textile practices across a range of material outputs including expanded painting, sculpture, assemblage, performative gesture, sound, video, and installation. These expansive approaches alter our perception of what textiles and fibre might be, what forms they might take, and how they function within creative practices.

Key Themes

Materiality

'Pliable Planes' sees artists investigating the qualities and capabilities of a range of materials. Several works trace materials through different states of transition, and consider historical, cultural, and social conventions associated with certain materials.

Experimental Processes

Each artist has a process-driven practice that involves experimenting and playing with materials and ideas in a number of different ways before reaching a final outcome. New works test material limitations by applying textile methods to different media, and exploring new possibilities for making.

Expanded & Transdisciplinary Approaches

The exhibition features expanded approaches that merge the field of textiles with several other disciplines across art, design, and craft. Artists are thinking about textiles through the lens of architecture, weaving with flexible porcelain, deconstructing painted canvas, casting in aluminium, and creating sonic representations of needlepoint. The exhibition seeks to reshape an understanding of how textiles and fibre are defined and used in contemporary practice by reaching outside of disciplinary boundaries.

Abstraction

An enduring interest in geometric abstraction is a focal point for several artists who depart from figurative representations to experiment with form, colour, and surface. A number of artworks utilise the grid as a structural device to deconstruct the geometry of weaving itself—a gridded structure already exists in the weaving process through the interlocking of warp (vertical) and weft (horizontal) threads.

Craft/Fine Art Hierarchies

Craft and fine art have historically been compared to each other, typically placing craft lower on the hierarchy of disciplines. This debate has centred on a reductive notion that art is an intellectual endeavour, whereas craft only requires manual labour. Rather than thinking about these two fields as opposing halves, artists in 'Pliable Planes' find value in all forms of material practices, and aim to collapse the division between art and craft by fusing elements of both.

Gendered Histories & Perceptions

The exhibition is underscored by a complex history of gendered labour that historically considered textiles and fibre practices such as weaving, sewing, and embroidery as 'women's work'. This perception becomes a factor in the craft versus fine art debate, where 'soft' practices and women's labour were devalued. 'Pliable Planes' challenges these simplistic notions that have dictated who should be working with materials in certain ways based on gender roles, and whether this classifies the practice as fine art or craft. Exhibiting artists depart from gendered readings of materiality and history, pursuing rigorous and experimental approaches that reimagine potentials for working with textiles and fibre.

The Body & Embodied Experiences

We already have an intimate bodily relationship with textiles from wearing clothing, and direct references to the body are seen in several artworks. The exhibition also considers the embodied experience of making—the physically demanding and intricately handmade nature of textiles practices that leave traces of the maker's hand. Works also create embodied spatial experiences that ask the audience to physically navigate artworks throughout the exhibition space.

Glossary

Abstraction	An artistic style that explores the use of shape, colour, form, and line to create imagery. This visual language is unconcerned with imitating literal or figurative depictions of the visible world.
Assemblage	A work of art made by grouping together a collection of found or unrelated elements, often everyday objects.
Bauhaus	A German art and design school founded by architect Walter Gropius in Weimar, operating between 1919–33. The school became renowned for attempting to unify the principles of mass production with individual artistic vision, and sought to combine aesthetics with everyday function. The Bauhaus movement had a profound influence upon subsequent developments in art, architecture, graphic design, interior design, industrial design, typography, and education.
Embodied Experience	An experience or perception that is influenced or formed in relation to an individual's own body.
Fibre Practices	A practice of making that involves using natural or synthetic fibres, fabric, or yarn in art, design, and crafts. Methods include, but are not limited to, weaving, knotting, twining, coiling, pleating, and braiding where the nature of materials and process of making are as important as aesthetic and/or conceptual outcomes.
Gendered Labour	Forms of work regarded as suitable for particular gender roles, as determined by prevailing social norms; e.g. the expectation that domestic tasks such as cooking, housework, needlework, or childcare are traditionally women's responsibilities.
Hierarchy	An arrangement or classification of things according to relative importance or authority.

Installation	A work comprising multiple components, often involving a large-scale, site-specific presentation of mixed media. These works are concerned with a broader sensory experience, and are designed to transform the perception of a space.
Materiality	The quality or state of being material. In social sciences, materiality is the notion that a cultural artefact's physical properties have consequences for how the object is used; e.g. materials guide the artmaking process.
Mode of production	A Marxist concept that refers to a specific combination of 'productive forces' (labour, tools, and raw materials) and the 'relations of production' (the social structures that regulate relations between people and the production of their work).
Plane	A surface area within space that extends infinitely in all directions, altered by interventions of line, perspective, shape, colour, and volume.
Pliable	Supple and flexible enough to bend freely or repeatedly without breaking or yielding.
Textiles	An umbrella term referring to various fibre-based materials and processes, including woven fabrics made by interlocking threads from natural or synthetic sources. Created by hand or machine through numerous methods, textiles perform a range of functional and aesthetic roles across areas of art, craft, fashion, industrial design, science, and engineering.
Trans-disciplinarity	Approaches that integrate, connect and/or move beyond different disciplines or areas of study to generate new concepts, theories or methods in a holistic way. It can also refer to concepts or methods that were originally developed by one discipline, but are now used by several others.



Paul Knight — Case Study

Paul Knight is a visual artist interested in how intimacy is constructed and communicated through a practice which includes both photography and textiles. While his photographs often document bodies in intimate spaces, his textiles are distinguished by the absence of these bodies.

Using a labour-intensive process of hand-weaving cloth, Knight recreates household fabrics intended for daily use such as bedsheets, towels, tablecloths, and tea towels. These objects allude to intimate rituals of everyday life including washing, cooking, and sleeping—activities we do together with family and friends, or alone by ourselves. These works are often presented in a simple way—hung from a hook, suspended from the ceiling, or draped across the floor.

For ‘Pliable Planes’, Knight has woven four bedsheets that comprise two works, *Double Suns* 2022 and *As Moons* 2022. They co-exist in a shared space within the gallery, suspended both parallel and perpendicular to each other.

Knight works with cotton on a Louët countermarch floor loom using a plain-weave technique to create lightweight fields of colour. Intended to be walked through, the material gently ripples in response to the air pressure generated by moving bodies.

Once removed from the bedroom, the bedsheets no longer serve a practical function. Knight is interested in how they instead become a formal abstraction of the intimacies we associate with the bedroom.



“I like to think of domestic cloths as abstractions of the complexity of what domestic spaces are. Some of the fabrics we live amongst end up holding so much information they become loaded to the point of an overflow.

When you take the object of a bedsheet out of the domestic space—as a form, or structure, or sculpture—it plays on a minimalist language.”

Paul Knight — Keywords

Absence:

A period in which you are not somewhere, or the state of being away from a place or person. It can also refer to a non-existence or lack of something.

Domestic:

Relating to the home, the household, household affairs, or family relations.

Intimacy:

A state marked by emotional closeness, connection, familiarity, or friendship in personal relationships. It can also refer to a cosy, private or relaxed atmosphere.

Labour-intensive:

Processes that require a heightened level of manual work and/or mental exertion.

Loom:

An apparatus worked by hand (hand loom) or mechanically (power loom), for weaving yarn into a textile. The countermarch loom has a frame that sits on top of the apparatus, consisting of two crossbeams and an extra set of lamms. This allows for the vertical warp threads to be held at a tighter tension, and assists with lighter treadling (operating a lever with the foot), for more versatile weaving.

Plain-weave technique:

A plain-weave is the process of pulling the weft thread (horizontal thread) over the first warp thread (vertical thread), then under the second, over the third, and so on, until you get to the end of the warp threads.

Paul Knight — Activities

Making

Look at your list of words. How would you represent this space in colours, patterns, and symbols?

Spend some time thinking about this code. Write or draw as many ideas as you can think of into each corresponding column.

Colours

Patterns

Symbols

Paul Knight — Activities

Making

Spend some time looking at your list, and think about the best way to visually communicate your intimate story. Which colour(s) pattern(s) or symbols(s) most succinctly convey the feeling, mood or memory of this intimate space?

Select at least one from each column, and no more than three. How can they be combined together?

Spend some time drawing this to create an abstract representation of your intimate space.



Extension

If you were to translate this abstract drawing into a textile object, what intimate textiles would you use, modify and transform to make it, and how?



Kate Scardifield — Case Study

Kate Scardifield's experimental studio practice combines material investigations with archival research. Her work is underpinned by an examination of materials through various states of transformation.

You Don't Need Me To Tell You 2022 expands on Scardifield's ongoing project 'Canis Major' which imagines future systems for navigation and communication. Scardifield refers to her textiles as 'wind instruments', using them as transmission markers in the landscape.

These large-scale textiles are made from repurposed sailcloth and are designed to materialise the surrounding atmospheric conditions. Activated by the artist's body and the wind, the amorphous soft sculptures create a sequence of shapely poetic gestures that study the body, materiality, and environment in conversation with each other.

The series reveals Scardifield's enduring interest in semaphore communication systems where the bright, saturated colours of the material move in contrast to the landscape as a form of communication. She activates the wind instruments across two sites in a dual channel video to form a call-and-response.

Juxtaposing wider frames of footage with close-ups of texture and colour, Scardifield creates moments where the undulating flow of the air-filled textile connects with the curves of the landscape. The work reveals quickly shifting weather patterns and speaks to our slow awakening to the current climate crisis.



“Intended to exist as a live and multi-sited work, ‘Canis Major’ collates past histories with speculative thinking to collectively imagine future systems of navigation and communication.”



Kate Scardifield — Keywords

Amorphous:

Lacking a clearly defined or fixed shape or form, having a shapeless quality.

Archival research:

A type of research which involves seeking out and extracting material from archival records. These records may be held in collecting institutions such as libraries, museums or galleries.

Atmospheric conditions:

Conditions that comprise the state of the earth's atmosphere in terms of temperature, humidity, wind, clouds, and precipitation.

Canis Major:

A constellation in the southern celestial hemisphere. In the second century, it was included in Ptolemy's 48 constellations, and is counted among the 88 modern constellations. It contains Sirius (the brightest star in the night sky) and The Milky Way (the galaxy that includes our solar system) passes through it.

Semaphore:

A visual communication system designed to convey information across distance, predominantly used in the maritime sector. It involves moving two brightly coloured flags into different positions to represent different letters, numbers, or symbols.

Transmission marker:

An object used to indicate a position, place, or route in the act or process of sending something.

Kate Scardifield — Activities

Thinking

Spend some time looking deeply at Scardifield's work—both the object and the video. What are you reminded of? How does the body engage with these works?

List some single words that come to mind as a response to this work.

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What other systems do you know of that are used to communicate or navigate? What objects or apparatus do you know of that are used as a visual signal across long distances? How do these differ from the objects that Scardifield has made?

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Kate Scardifield — Activities

Making

Scardifield's works respond to the body and to the weather as a way of speaking about the current climate crisis.

Spend some time thinking about your own thoughts and feelings on the climate crisis. Collect and document these thoughts in a mind map or drawing.

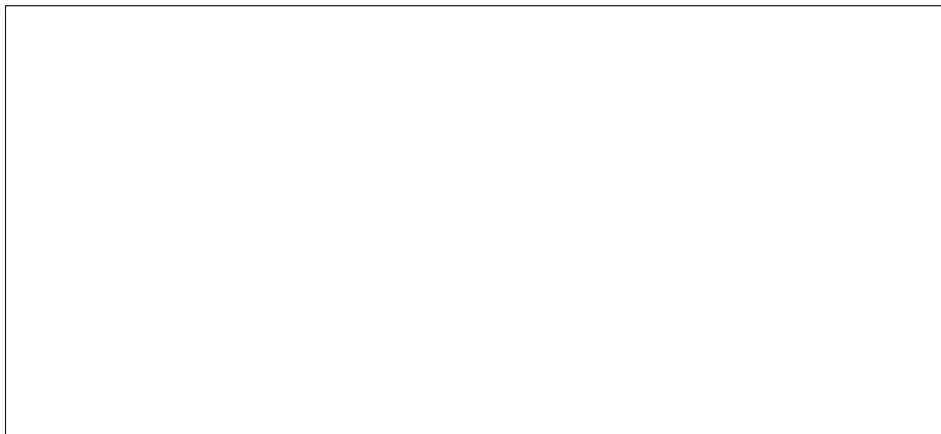


Kate Scardifield — Activities

Making

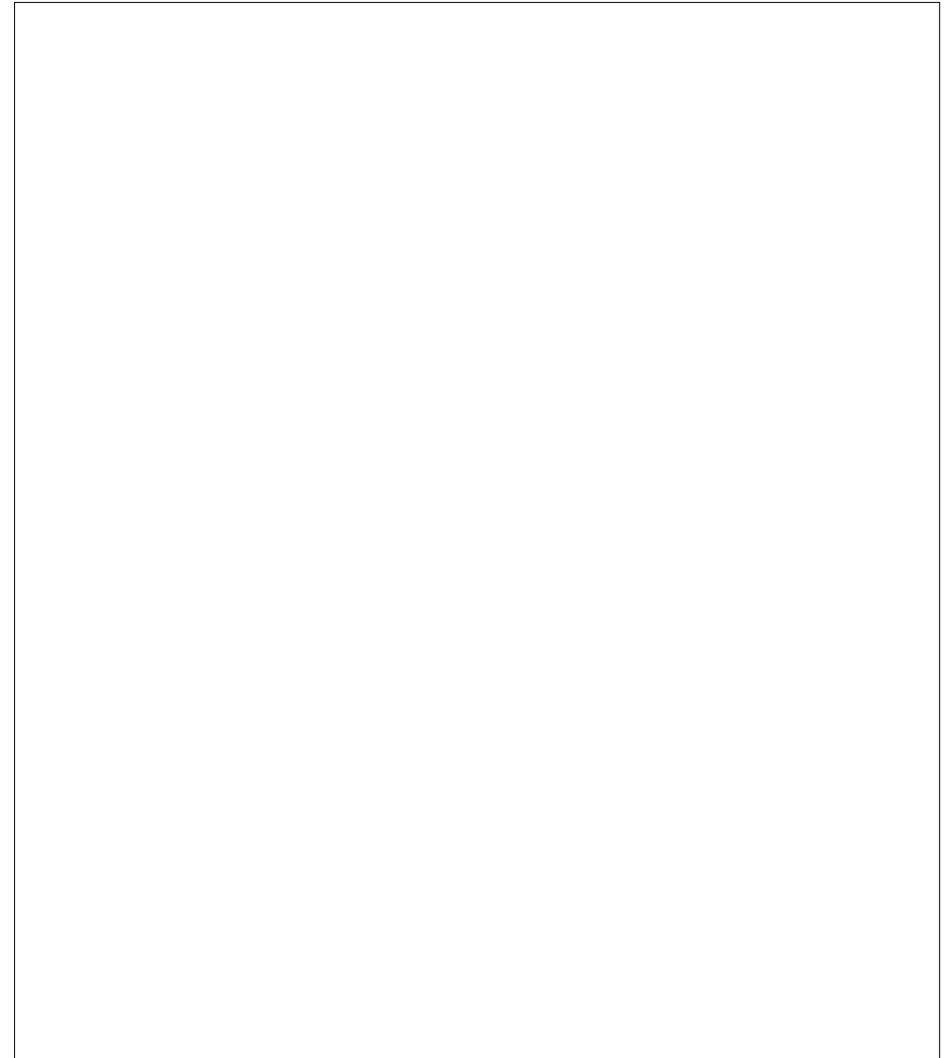
Start planning a design to make an apparatus that communicates your response to the climate crisis.

How does it connect to and/or utilise the body and the environment?



Think of its materiality, colour, process and desired outcome.

Write and draw detailed notes and plans including a sketch of this apparatus, using as much detail as possible.





Katie West — Case Study

Katie West is an artist and Yindjibarndi woman of the Pilbara tablelands with a strong sense of home in Noongar boodja, Western Australia. Her practice is underpinned by custodial ethics and First Nations health and well-being perspectives. It incorporates textiles, installations, and happenings to consider how First Nations peoples weave stories, places, histories, and futures.

Sunrise after sunrise, sunset after sunset 2022 is part of an ongoing series that reflects on basket-making practices that were developed by West's grandmothers over generations. Rather than recreating the baskets with woven plant fibres which would have traditionally been used, she stitches together recycled and naturally dyed fabrics.

West creates a patchworked installation of suspended banners that are distinctive for their representations of dilly bags. Sourcing readily available materials from op shops such as organza, sequins, lycra, velvet, and cotton, she naturally dyes some fabrics, imbuing them with the colours and scents of the earth.

The natural dye process—the rhythm of walking, gathering, bundling, boiling, and infusing materials with plant matter—has been significant throughout West's practice as a way of connecting to Country. For West, textiles and fibre practices can navigate disruptions to cultural ties, and provide opportunities to renew relationships with her Yindjibarndi Ancestors. West approaches artmaking as a form of cultural renewal, where materials and processes hold embodied knowledge.



“I’m motivated to make these pieces because it is a way to make these baskets present in my life and for my family, including the next generations of our family line. I want the children in my family to always know their ancestors made these baskets.”



Katie West — Keywords

Ancestors:

A person from whom one is descended, or was in someone's family in past times. First Nations people have an ongoing relationship with Ancestor spirits, which is not confined to one's family lineage. It encompasses First Nations spirituality, and the interconnectedness of plants, animals, landforms, and celestial bodies.

Country:

For First Nations people, Country or Land is more than a physical environment. It is fundamental to First Nations identities, embodying all aspects of existence: culture, language, spirituality, and law. The words 'Country' or 'Nation' are often used to refer to an individual's ancestral lands and seas. In Australia there are hundreds of distinct Nations and peoples, and a connection to Country is paramount for each.

Custodial ethics:

A moral philosophy centred on reciprocal relationships to people and the environment rather than hierarchical power structures. For First Nations people, a responsibility to care for Country and Kin is central to ethical principles and law as well as social and political systems.

Dilly bag:

A bag generally woven from plant fibres including reeds, vines, and grasses, and sometimes lined with animal fur or feathers. The bags are mainly designed and used by First Nations women to gather food, and are most commonly found in the northern parts of Australia. These functional items are also now produced for artistic purposes.

Katie West — Activities

Making

Start sketching a design for a banner or series of banners that communicate to a new generation the steps, processes, or actions of the knowledge that your elder has shared. Think about what a banner is, where they are used, and why.

Use your list of ideas to create symbols, textures, and patterns to create your banner(s). You might like to include text, but keep it simple with single words or short phrases—remember a banner has to communicate information quickly and simply.

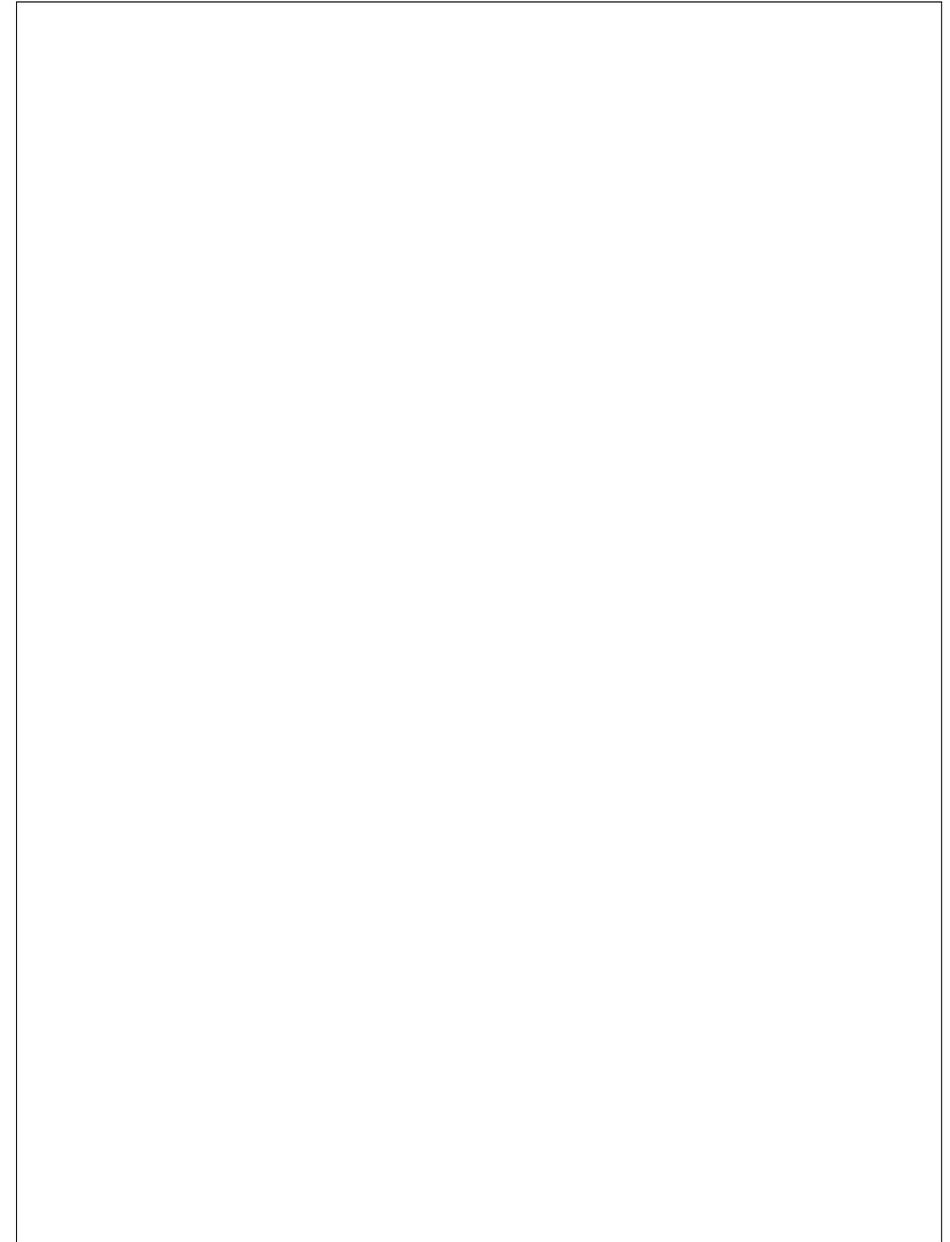
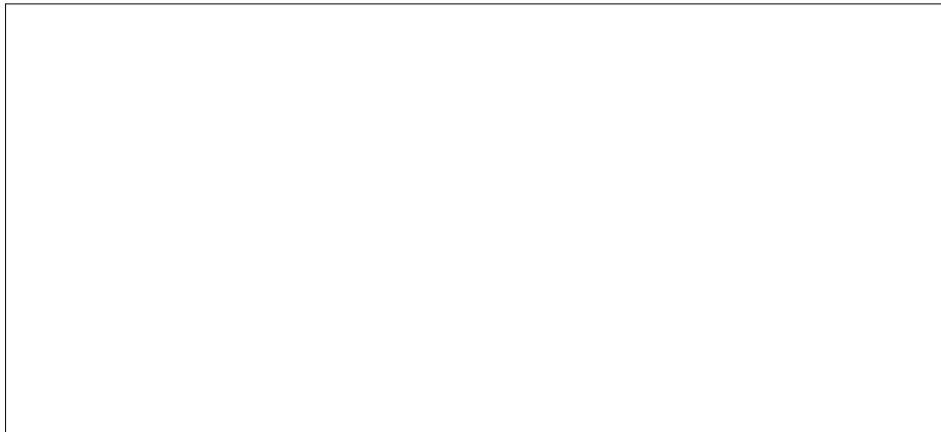


Katie West — Activities

Making

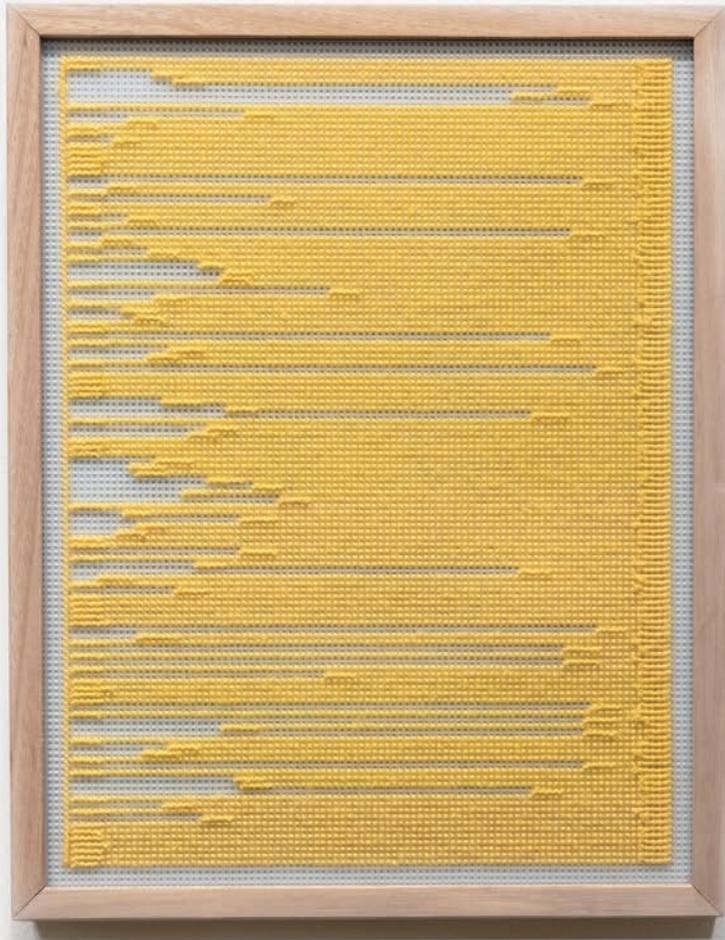
If you were to turn these sketches into textile banners, what recycled textiles would you use? What texture and finishes would they have? How big would the banners be?

Write about or draw designs for your textiles banner.



Extension

You now have your own instructions and details to create these textile banners at school or home.



Akira Akira

Akira Akira is an artist interested in notions of abstraction, embodied practices, and intuitive experimentation with processes and materials.

In 2016, Akira Akira made a series of minimalist needlepoint tapestries, marking a conscious decision to begin working after a prolonged creative hiatus. The series started with the gift of small remnants of tapestry canvas and wool from a fellow artist. Akira simplified the act of making by accepting the limitations of these found materials, which determined format, scale, and colour. Each work had a structure of 87 by 164 stitches and one colour (Appletons code 875). This slow and restrained approach to form and process allowed Akira to explore subtle variations in tone and texture throughout the making process.

This new body of work was completed during periods of isolation and follows a similar scale and format to earlier works while allowing for a deliberate return to decision making. Akira instead uses perforated acrylic sheets which alter the structure to 94 by 124 stitches, and works with a new colour of wool (Appletons code 551). The act of making remains a disciplined studio ritual where part of each day is devoted to filling in rows with single strands of wool.

Occasionally the strands become frayed or tangled and need to be cut, leaving accidental gaps in the panels. Akira records these gaps on a spreadsheet, and then transforms the data into an abstract, melodic soundscape. This prompts audiences to not only engage with the work by looking, but by listening too.

Sarah Contos

Sarah Contos' multidisciplinary practice maps relationships between imagery, form, and materiality. She is interested in layering and manipulating found objects with references to popular culture and art history. Playing with duality, her work creates an interplay between individual and collective memory.

Two Minutes and Six Seconds of Bubblegum 2022 sees Contos experiment with casting woven forms in aluminium. The work attempts to visualise the rhythm of 'bubblegum pop' music in its composition. The modular, metallic forms, hanging chains, and safety pins are juxtaposed against plush woollen pompoms and tassels reminiscent of childhood crafts, while also referring to punctuations or drumbeats. Contos challenges the idea that weaving and knitting are 'soft' practices by casting in aluminium, while incorporating her signature DIY aesthetic. Fascinated with contradiction and tension, Contos explores the pairing of hard, soft and the space in between, as materials move through different states of transition, speed, and tempo.

Voltron II (Studs) 2019 is made from leather jackets collected by the artist from thrift shops in Paris. Scents of perfume, tobacco and alcohol linger within the work, prompting us to think about the people and bodies that once inhabited these jackets. Many different thoughts can come to mind when thinking about the black leather jacket—maybe it reminds us of rock or punk music, or a spirit of rebellion. By sewing together the individual jackets in a spider-like composition, the jackets are no longer wearable, and take on a new sense of power and seduction in their sculptural form. This composition also nods to the felt works of American conceptual artist Robert Morris.





Lucia Dohrmann

Lucia Dohrmann explores and extends the possibilities for painting and textiles, closely studying materiality and the process of production. Her repetitive, handmade process involves unravelling painted canvases, removing the weft (horizontal threads) to leave behind the warp (vertical threads).

Dohrmann's practice disrupts the usual correlation of canvas as a surface upon which to paint, and repositions it as a deconstructed series of woven threads. This creates a tactile surface that marks the passing of laboured time, where unmaking becomes making.

In *Quatrefoil 1 - Weft 2022* and *Quatrefoil 2 - Weft 2022*, Dohrmann references her Italian heritage by using a palette that contains the colours of Roman buildings and stone roads. The paintings incorporate a quatrefoil design, which is a symmetrical decorative pattern formed by four overlapping circles. This design is often seen in Medieval architecture and heraldry.

Once unravelled, the grid of six vibrantly painted colour planes is transformed into a series of muted thread curtains, leaving behind a ghostly memory of the painted image held within the warp of the canvas.

Mikala Dwyer

Mikala Dwyer explores connections between sculpture and performance, installation and theatre, and public and private space. She is interested in the permeable and changeable nature of objects, and our relationship with them. Dwyer often re-introduces elements of previous work in different contexts, animating materials and objects to create new meaning.

The Nurses 2020 is a strangely prophetic work and has appeared before. It was first exhibited at the Art Gallery of South Australia as part of the 2020 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art. Presented within an installation titled *The Bay of Sick*, the project developed out of Dwyer's research into disease and the wellness industry. Two weeks after the exhibition opened, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of Australian borders, and the work now takes on a whole new meaning after experiencing periods of quarantine, lockdown, and isolation over the past two years.

The Nurses' flaccid black and white costumes and bulbous, acrylic, bird-shaped heads hang on an acidic yellow wall. This colour references the Quarantine flag which historically was flown on ships to warn of onboard disease. The bird-like heads transport us back to the fourteenth century, where Italian doctors shielded themselves from the plague with beaked masks, and remind us of protective yet fearsome magpies, who swoop down each year to defend their young.

Accompanying *The Nurses* is another bird-like figure, sequinned and bright. *Warning* 2020 appears more playful, but as its title tells us, something is still not right in this nest.





Janet Fieldhouse

Janet Fieldhouse's practice is an expression of her Torres Strait Islander heritage, exploring maternal connections to Badu (Mulgrave), Muau (Moa), Kirri (Hammond) and Erub (Darnley) Island communities. Fieldhouse combines materials such as porcelain clays, stoneware, and earthenware with natural fibres to reinterpret everyday baskets and ceremonial body adornment, including arm and wrist bands, pendants, scarification, and tattooing.

Fieldhouse merges her weaving and ceramic practices by working with Keraflex porcelain, a flexible, thin tape that can be shaped and folded, transforming into porcelain when fired in a kiln. The material is notoriously difficult to control during firing, resulting in collapsing or folded forms. Embracing the medium's unpredictability, Fieldhouse describes the firing process as 'the dance in the kiln' that leads the work to where it wants to go. The rigidity of these fragile forms when they emerge from the kiln contrast with the enduring supple flex of natural fibres, including pandanus, sedge grass, and palm leaf traditionally used to weave body adornments.

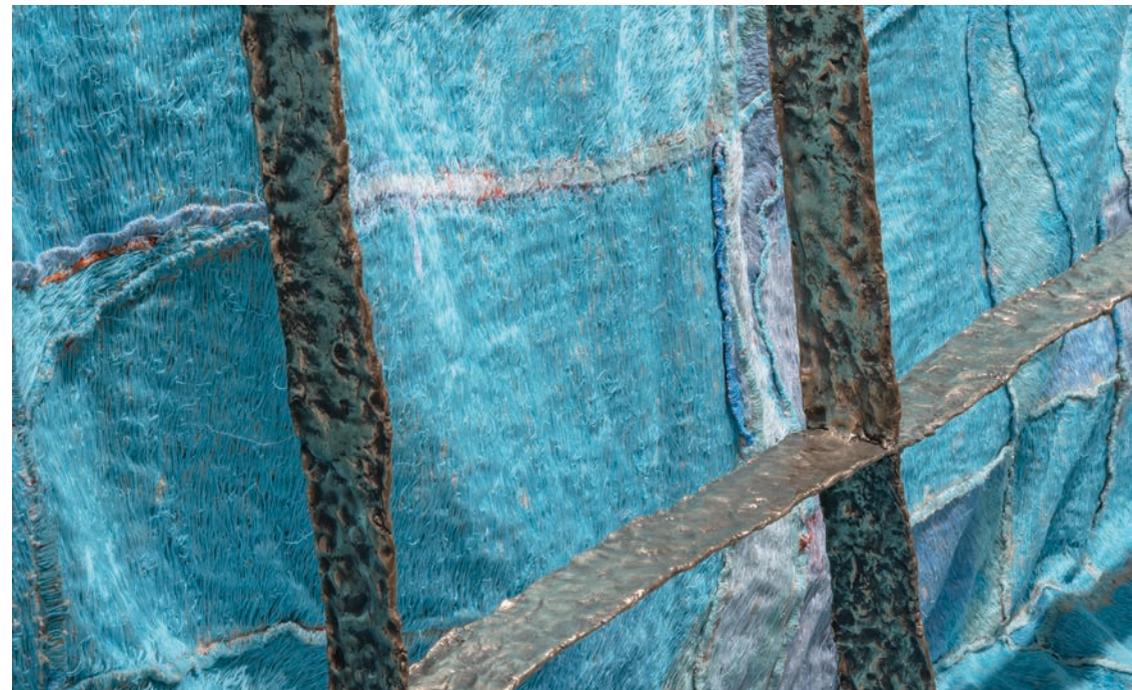
Janet Fieldhouse's recent work has been influenced by her research into the making techniques of First Nations people from Japan, the Americas, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, and cultures throughout the Pacific region. *Hybrid Basket* 2019 and *Colour of Land III* 2019 are hand-built forms combining clay with fibre. One is encircled with woven raffia, the second is topped with a found woven fibre form, and both allude to ceremonial adornment and traditional basket-ware. Celebrating collective, cultural spaces, Fieldhouse creates a dialogue that references her ancestral past, and speaks to a confluence of cultures.

Teelah George

Teelah George utilises gesture and mark-making to document intangible aspects of life including time, location, and memory. Her labour-intensive process involves repetitively hand-stitching layers of thread to build rich fields of colour. George also works in cast bronze, often utilising the medium to create supporting structures for her textile works. She is interested in challenging the way these two materials have historically been used, and unpacking the gendered assumptions that have underpinned these conventions.

Sky Piece, falling (Melbourne, Perth) 2020-21 traces George's attempts to record the ever-present yet immeasurable sky in both cities. It features a patchwork of shimmering blue threads and has been partially bleached by the summer sun, emphasising the fragility of the material. The embroidered linen is anchored to the ground by a gridded bronze structure, reminiscent of a window to the sky. With each palm-sized segment taking an hour to complete, it took several months to make and is George's most significant work to date.

“I am interested in the sky being both familiar and strange to us all - it is omnipresent yet eternally immaterial and vast. My constant and persistent attempt to represent it within my material language and process constraints are somewhat Sisyphean. However, it reflects a fundamental human desire to represent, communicate, and a will to keep.”





Anne-Marie May

Anne-Marie May's practice explores the relationships between drawing and sculpture, and exterior and interior spaces. Her practice revolves around investigations of materials and processes explored through strategies of 'making and undoing'. May's studio is a dynamic space where artistic action, materiality, and methods connect to work across structural, compositional, and spatial alignments.

In *Unforeseen Constellations* 2022, May deconstructs and transforms an industrially made carpet. Ready-made materials come with defined formal characteristics including colour, texture, and surface, and are embedded with purpose and memory from a previous life. May embraces the constraints of her carpet offcuts, and transforms them through a series of physical actions including cutting and stitching.



May uses a CADD (computer-aided design and drafting) program to map a set of coordinates, plotting a matrix of stitched embroidered lines that intersect with cut voids. Conjuring a cosmic mapping of space, May uses the drawing process to trace connections between spatial and non-spatial surfaces.

The carpet is suspended vertically within the exhibition space, offering views of both the tufted and hessian sides, and shifting our understanding of the carpet as a horizontal floor plane. Light passes through the voids casting shadows onto the floor and walls, signalling May's enduring preoccupation with activating the spaces in and around her work.

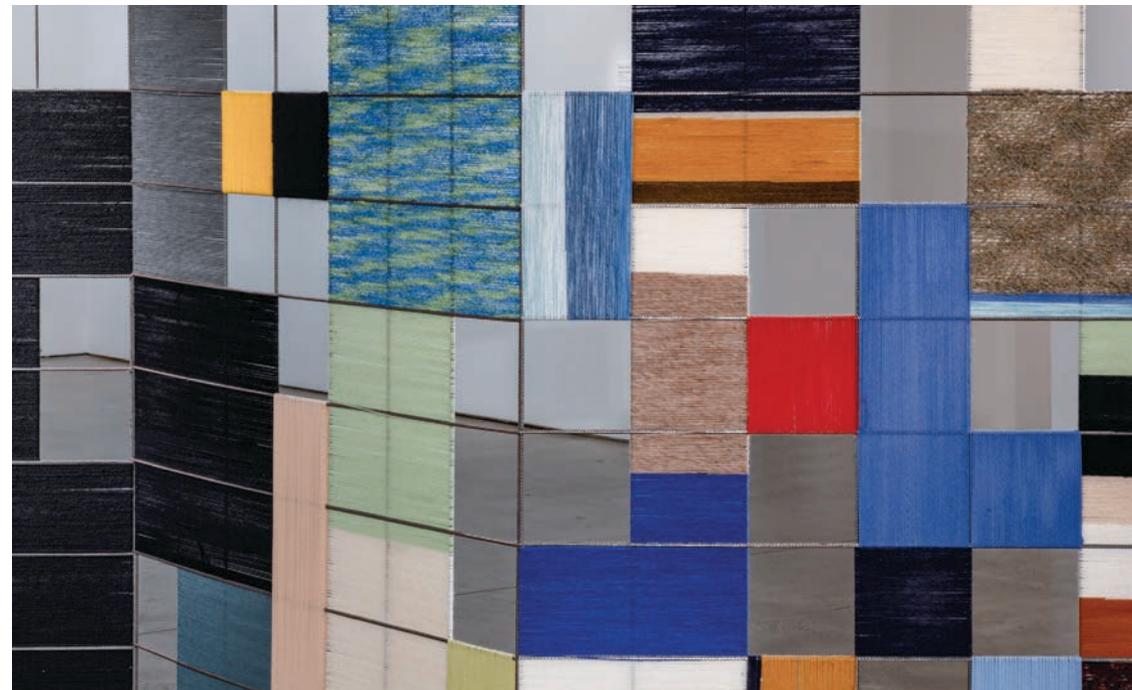
Jacqueline Stojanović

Jacqueline Stojanović is an artist and weaver engaged with an expanded textile practice that spans weaving, drawing, assemblage, and installation. Informed by travels across the Balkans, Caucasia, and the Middle East, she is interested in building upon the social and cultural histories of weaving within contemporary practice.

Adopting the language of abstraction, Stojanović approaches weaving through an open use of raw materials, often utilising the grid as both a structural device and framework for the inherent geometry that exists in weaving.

Concrete Fabric 2019 is a large-scale architectural weaving that winds wool across steel mesh panels typically used for reinforcing concrete. The work responds to architectural principles of the Bauhaus from a weaver's perspective, referencing the work of textile artists Anni Albers, Otti Berger, and Gunta Stölzl, and operates as a dividing structure within the gallery.

The work merges industrial and domestic materials, with woven blocks of colour that reference the architecture of socialist apartment blocks in the former Yugoslavia. Confined to the geometry of the grid, the wool remains taut, exposed, and linear. In this work, Stojanović deconstructs the apparatus of the loom and the interlacing of warp and weft, reflecting on the essential function of the grid within the process of weaving.



John Nixon & Jacqueline Stojanović

John Nixon is a pivotal figure within the history of abstract and non-objective art. He pursued an experimental practice focused on painting while also encompassing disciplines ranging from collage, drawing, and printmaking to film, music, and dance. Nixon was also known as a generous collaborator and mentor to generations of artists, curators, and writers.

In early 2019, Nixon and Jacqueline Stojanović began a series that united aspects of their respective practices—constructed painting and weaving. The collaboration began while Stojanović was working with Nixon as a studio assistant. During this time, the pair took turns in contributing to a body of work that examined the formal and structural qualities of painting and weaving. The collaboration demonstrates a mutual interest in the use of everyday and found materials with works incorporating metal, wool, wood, bottle caps, hessian, and handwoven jute.

Initiated by Nixon in early 2020 and recently completed by Stojanović, the most recent series is distinctive for its use of wooden rulers as a visual and structural element. Rulers were essential to both artists in practical and conceptual ways. Nixon considered the ruler synonymous with the straight-edged character of geometric abstraction, sometimes attaching one to his constructed paintings as a readymade motif. For Stojanović, a ruler can be handy as an improvised shed rod, a device used to assist the weaving process. Their collaborative series combines painted surfaces and wooden rulers to create tessellated designs that reference parquetry and weaving patterns. Experimental in nature, the artists' shared body of work expresses an enduring interest in abstraction across generations.



Acknowledgements

UNSW Galleries stands on an important place of learning and exchange, first occupied by the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation. We recognise the Bidjigal and Gadigal people as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and extend this respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all Nations of Australia. First Nations sovereignty never ceded.



Education Partner

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Exhibition Partner

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Touring Partner

The exhibition's national tour is supported by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program.

Image Credits

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p2: Jacqueline Stojanović, *Concrete Fabric* (detail) 2019. Courtesy of the artist, Melbourne. Installation view: Boot Gallery, Melbourne. Photograph: Christo Crocker

p5: John Nixon and Jacqueline Stojanović, *Untitled* 2019. Courtesy of the artists; Estate of John Nixon; Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne; and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

pp8-9: Installation views, 'Pliable Planes: Expanded Textiles & Fibre Practices', UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p10: Installation views, 'Pliable Planes: Expanded Textiles & Fibre Practices', UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

pp16-17: Paul Knight, *As Moons* 2022, *Double Suns* 2022. Courtesy of the artist, Berlin, and Neon Parc, Melbourne. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p19: Paul Knight. Photograph: Paul Knight

p20: Paul Knight, *Double Suns* (detail) 2022. Courtesy of the artist, Berlin, and Neon Parc, Melbourne. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p23: Paul Knight, *As Moons* 2022, *Double Suns* 2022. Courtesy of the artist, Berlin, and Neon Parc, Melbourne. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

pp28-29: Kate Scardifield, *You Don't Need Me To Tell You* (production still) 2022. Courtesy of the artist, Sydney. Photograph: Robin Hearfield

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pp40-41: Katie West, *Sunrise after sunrise, sunset after sunset* 2022-ongoing. Courtesy of the artist, Perth. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p43: Katie West. Photograph: Zan Wimberley

p44 & 47: Katie West, *Sunrise after sunrise, sunset after sunset* (detail) 2022-ongoing. Courtesy of the artist, Perth. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p52: Akira Akira, *551.005* 2022 from the series *NEW PERSERVERANCE* 2016-ongoing. Courtesy of the artist, Perth. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p55: Sarah Contos, *Two Minutes and Six Seconds of Bubblegum* 2022. Photograph: Luis Power. *Voltron II (Studs)* 2019. Photograph: Jacquie Manning. Courtesy of the artist; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; and Station Gallery, Melbourne.

p56: Lucia Dohrmann, *Quatrefoil 1 - Weft* 2022, *Quatrefoil 2 - Weft* 2022. Courtesy of the artist, Adelaide. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p59: Mikala Dwyer, *The Nurses* 2020, *Warning* 2020. Courtesy of the artist, and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p60: Janet Fieldhouse, *Memory Series 1 (Mark II)* 2014, *Colour of Land III* 2019, *Hybrid Basket* 2019. Courtesy of the artist, and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p63: Teelah George, *Sky Piece, falling* (Melbourne, Perth) 2020-21. Courtesy of the artist; Neon Parc, Melbourne; and Gallery 9, Sydney. Installation view and detail: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p64: Anne-Marie May, *Unforeseen Constellations* 2022. Courtesy of the artist, Melbourne. Installation view and detail: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p67: Jacqueline Stojanović, *Concrete Fabric* 2019. Courtesy of the artist, Melbourne. Installation view and detail: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

p68: John Nixon and Jacqueline Stojanović, *Untitled (pair)* 2019-21, *Untitled* all 2020-21. Courtesy of the artists; Estate of John Nixon; Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne; and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. Installation view: UNSW Galleries, 2022. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

Akira Akira
Sarah Contos
Lucia Dohrmann
Mikala Dwyer
Janet Fieldhouse
Teelah George
Paul Knight
Anne-Marie May
John Nixon
Kate Scardifield
Jacqueline Stojanović
Katie West

Curators

Karen Hall & Catherine Woolley

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Getting To Us

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Opening Hours

Wednesday - Friday 10am - 5pm
Saturday - Sunday 12pm - 5pm
(Closed public holidays)