

LIVE COMPOSITION & MARK MAKING: AN EXPLORATION OF MAXIMALIST RUG TUFTED FASHION USING SECONDHAND, DECONSTRUCTED YARNS

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DESCRIPTION

This creative research collection allowed me to connect with my inner child through fantasy, freedom, exploration, and play. Creativity and expression through fashion has been an on-going passion of mine, exploring my own personal narrative and identity and informing my aesthetic decisions through creative costuming and maximalist fashion. The collection combines tufted and digitally knitted garments, textural garments that seek to push the boundaries of what is possible in both disciplines while highlighting circularity and thoughtfulness in the design process.

During the knitting design process, prototypes may not have the desired outcome and once documented, present a large challenge as a high volume of knitted textile waste. This collection's purpose was to achieve higher circularity within my design practice. I explored deconstruction as a solution, by repurposing the yarns used in knitted samples into tufted fabrics. Rewound yarns present a greater likelihood of failure in digital-knitted production resulting in flaws and damage in the garment. However, with tufted fabrics, structural integrity is less reliant on the yarn's strength, allowing for upcycled materials.

Live Composition & Mark Making is grounded in the cradle-to-cradle design philosophy whereby raw materials are reused indefinitely or serve as food for soil or new products (Mcdonough, 2002). This method reduces the consumption of raw materials, relieving the burden on natural resources and mitigating the amount of waste generated being sent to landfills (Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2023; Mcdonough, 2002). Considering circularity through this project has been a guiding ethos in my approach to material use as a designer. The yarns used in developing my tufted pieces came from deconstructed knitted samples from previous research to exercise greater control of my environmental footprint and waste generation in the design process. I saved my scrap yarn pieces from my tufting exploration and used them as fringe in the collection.

The digital knit was programmed in M1+ software and produced on an industrial Stoll knitting machine. In the white dress, I applied goring and ottoman techniques to draw attention to the body as a canvas. This garment exaggerates the 3-dimensional nature of the human form through texture and haptic visual stimuli. I leveraged zero waste and domestic production techniques by producing my digital knitted pieces to exact body specifications and knitting pattern shapes in the facilities at Kent State University.

The tufted fabrics explore mark-marking and live composition as they interact with the body through fashion. The collection presented a unique opportunity to consider each stroke with intentionality, carefully assessing the garment with meticulous attention and color selection while incorporating spontaneity and play. Pattern development was

seamless for visual cohesion across the garment once completed. All mark-making was done in a live composition style where aesthetic choices were made improvisationally. My aim was to create minimalist line drawings that exist as living, moving paintings on the body, engaging the viewer in thoughts regarding the choices and privilege involved in maximalist dress and freedom of expression in fashion.