Futurescan 3: Intersecting Identities

Open to change: slowing down to explore and innovate

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A specific type of knowing comes from the handling of materials in the handcrafting of an artefact. This research looks at the relationship between the handcraft of weaving, and the decision-making process and knowledge of the textile designer. It investigates the potential for new design opportunities to be opened up for the commercial designer by moving out of the industry studio and back into the practical workshop environment. As an educator, manager and formerly a designer trained in textile design, this research explores an established industrial production method of weaving but revisited using a craft-like approach.

Slowing down the creative process to engage with the materials themselves, this paper starts to explore the potential of hand woven leno structures to be used within the landscape and to explore the process of change in response to environmental factors. Architect Philip Beesleys’ work seeks to achieve a balance with nature, submitting itself to the natural cycles and inevitable decay, in which he deliberately designs mesh structures with weak and fragile links, whose materials soak up environmental forces. This paper starts to further explore the value of haptic intelligence and empathy for materials, also adopted by Beesley in his Haystack Veil (1997) and later Holozoic series. The process of creating leno structures on a handloom, has resulted in outcomes difficult to predict using digital software, confirming weaving as an emergent system (Philpott, 2011), where disparate threads are combined into dynamic structures.

There is a delicate relationship between textiles and the landscape, in response to which the designer of performance fabrics is required to create, indestructible solutions, with a lifetime guarantee. By embracing the science of uncertainty, fresh ideas and new solutions have the potential to be created.

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