

Wefting the Warp

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This research-creation is about difference-becoming-movement, the *potentia* of difference, and the generative and productive quality of becoming. Drawing from material feminism, relational movement and research-creation, difference-becoming-movement is explored through a simple weaving technique on a modified frame loom that created relational movements.

Referencing the work of cultural theorists and material feminist Rosi Braidotti and philosophers of affect, Erin Manning, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Wefting the Warp* aims to materialize the rejection of binary oppositions in favour of movements that create new and unpredictable shapes and forms. The multi-directional loom I use moves past the rectilinear frame as one way to relate to the loom and the woven work. The woven textiles express multiple relations that I come to sense as movements that are akin to an improvised dance with the loom. This “dance” is materialized between me and the loom, as well as the warp and weft yarns. Inspired by material feminist perspectives of sexual difference, irreducible difference in this thesis is not something to be neutralized, but rather, acknowledged and activated. Difference is acknowledged through movements that produce woven textiles “off the grid,” thus, seeking new corporeal forms with no starting point, no end point, and certainly no definitive centre.

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Introduction

Wefting the Warp began with a personal interest in the physical and emotional impact of Western conceptualizations of fashion and beauty. My training and experience as a fashion designer cultivates a concern for the oppressive effects of fashion and beauty standards, stemming from an awareness that the values put forth by mainstream fashion are symptoms of patriarchy. Fashion and beauty industries are actively engaged in dictating what defines beauty and what delineates *perfect* corporeal forms. Indirectly, these industries use shame and unrealistic expectations to discipline bodies, while at the same time, promote individuality and difference. If the idea of physical beauty, at its core, were broad enough to encompass difference as beautiful, then what could bodies become?

My earlier research explored the conceptual transformation of a female body between varying degrees of body size and shape. These earlier conceptualizations of the body, titled *Marks of Obsession: Appearance, Transformation, Pain, and the Abject Female Body* (Pollice 1), manually distorted images of a body. On one extreme, images of a body were vertically stretched creating exceptionally long, thin, and emaciated images. The other extreme saw images of a body horizontally stretched, creating noticeably short, wide, and corpulent shapes. The many iterations of the image resulted in unrecognizable forms (Figs. 1, 2 & 3). Subsequently, the work led to exploring the complete dissolution of a body. *Marks of Obsession* examined the potential of what the images could become through repeated modifications. These early explorations laid the material groundwork to continue research about bodies and their relationship to space, movement,

and scale. *Wefting the Warp* seeks to encourage new ways of thinking about what bodies can do when space, both physical and cultural, are not limited in form, gender, and relationality.



Figure 1. *Marks of Obsession, Vertical Stretch Series, 2020*



Figure 2. *Marks of Obsession, Horizontal Stretch Series, 2020*



Figure 3. *Marks of Obsession, One Extreme to the Other*, 2020

What limits corporeal possibilities are presumed ideas about the body's capacity to transform. Bodies are always already socially predefined. They are material but also cultural (Entwistle 12, 27). In Western societies ideal bodies are conceptualized in relation to cultural standards of beauty – tall, thin, white, young. A body's value and worth are determined based on these culturally constructed standards. Hierarchizing bodies in this way perpetuates the divide between mind and body, strengthening ideas that difference is negative and out of place. Too often, these normative ideas determine the cultural space within which bodies can move and transform. An example is the "fat body" in relation to the thin fashion standard conceptualized in the West.¹ The dichotomy of

¹ Fat studies is an academic, interdisciplinary field of study that identifies, critiques, and challenges the ways fat people are portrayed and treated in a fat phobic world. It examines the embodied experiences of fat bodies and aims to challenge the discriminatory portrayal of fat people as less than human.

The term "fat" is taken up by researchers and activists in place of medicalized and stigmatized terms like obese or overweight so as to reflect a positive and empowered way of being. <https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-fat-studies-63108>

body shape and size posits one type of body as ideal and desired, as ‘the one’ – opposed to an abjected ‘other.’ This spectrum of difference exploits more than fat bodies. The notion of difference as “pejorative” (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 3) designates difference as less than or not good enough and resonates in discourses of gender, sexuality, race, class, and ability, always situating dichotomies between ‘the one’ and the ‘other’ – male and female, white and black, straight and queer, and so on (Massumi 2).

The paradox of both fashion and beauty is the aspiration for uniqueness and individuality while following current aesthetic trends and consequently looking the same. Different, but fundamentally the same. In other words, ‘difference’ is celebrated in industries that continue to encourage the importance of looking the same. What would the social terms of beauty be if not about being different for an outcome of sameness? What if the focus was on multiple ways of becoming both and neither? *Wefting the Warp* is about the positivity of difference, multiplicity, and unpredictable movement. It reflects on the notion of ‘the one’ and ‘the other’ and attempts to disorganize that binary structure through movement. I am attentive to my body’s movement and interaction with a frame loom that I altered so that its structure enables multiple forms to take shape, forms that come together to create new embodied understandings and becomings.

My ongoing experimentation with corporeal forms has led me to ask: What happens when bodies are not socially predefined, and form relies instead on movement and not gendered or oppositional binaries? The form emerging on my multi-directional loom indexes improvisational and relational movement, the multiplicity of form, and the dissolution of rigid oppositional binaries that hierarchize difference. Can difference be perceived without hierarchy? Can multi-directional weaving be used to materialize corporeal becomings? Can multiplicity support a process of

transformation? How can ‘the one’ and ‘the other’ be separate and at the same time interwoven in a way that does not prioritize one or the other? I consider how I relate to the loom and how the warp relates to the weft. Can these relations and movements enable the warp and weft to be interlaced in a way that does not prioritize either function? I ask if difference can be individualized while also creating multiplicities. In making and working with a multi-directional loom, I negotiate the positioning of warp yarns based on influences and interferences that emerge as I reach towards the loom. This negotiation is an opening, a potential movement out of which a shape will emerge in relationship (Manning, *Relationescapes* 6).

Like the reconfigured and undefined warp and weft structures engaged in this work, I question what a body can do if it were not predefined, if it were conceptualized beyond an idealized, normative/non-normative dichotomy. In this imaginative process a body is potentialized in multiple ways. I materialize this by manipulating a tapestry frame loom and reconstructing discarded t-shirts and fabric swatches into continuous strips of material to then create a multi-directional loom and woven textile forms based on the loom’s new configuration and re-formed garments. This work is not specifically about fat bodies, nor is it specifically about fashion, beauty, or the multitude of technologies used to discipline bodies. This research is not inspired by the need to answer a question that is revealed in a final object, instead, it is motivated by the iterative process of making and doing and then pausing to think through making and failing (Fig. 4).² The connections I identify

² Failure occurs at every step in the process of creation. The iterative process of making involves taking risks with unknown methods and materials and reflecting on the outcome. The outcome of one failed attempt propels further experimentation. In this exploration, ‘multi-directional’ weaving looked very different at the onset (Fig. 4). It was not until several failed prototypes that the moveable crossbars determined what the multi-directional loom looked like.

between feminist and critical theory and my practice continuously support further study. In this way, research-creation forms the methodological framework of my research.



Figure 4. Early prototype for multi-directional weaving, 2021

Erin Manning argues that research-creation is a “mode of inquiry” (Truman 229) that invites us to ask how thinking happens and how making (perceived as other than thinking) makes a difference.³ Others maintain that research-creation considers research (knowledge making) as a (speculative) *event* emerging from practice (Truman 226), and some approach research-creation as method, equating the outputs of research as creations (Truman 227). Regardless, many scholars and artists agree that research-creation is not an artistic practice described in theoretical terms, but rather “creation-as-research” (Truman 229-230) where research strategy is positioned around the creative process.

Methodology in *Wefting the Warp* attends to a process of becoming. Research-creation is a methodological framework that situates creative processes at the center of research. Through art practice, experimentation, and research, creative output is where knowledge resides. Research-creation is about the process of making art, together with the process of research to create knowledge. The creative process at the core of this research involves experimenting with multi-directional weaving, and my body’s movement in relation with the new opportunities presented by a multi-directional loom. Through this type of weaving, I attempt to de-stratify and rearticulate binaries by reconceptualizing my body in relation to space, movement, and scale.

Wefting the Warp aims to materialize the rejection of binary oppositions in favour of relational movements that create new and unpredictable forms. I use a simple weaving technique to explore multiplicity, and to explore the process of forming and unforming connections. On a modified

³ Research-Creation is an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programmes-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22>.

frame loom the weft and warp yarns move differently; this difference invites a multi-directional textile to form. The multi-directional frame loom is a medium used to make connections that create unique textile forms, exceeding the predetermined or expected boundaries on a traditional frame loom. Rearticulating the frame, thereby shifting boundaries, expectations, and movement, incites other modes of thinking and making.

As both maker and researcher, I draw a parallel between the research process and the process of making. Both are explorative, yet through creative practice there is an opportunity to experience what is not yet known, and to experience serendipitous moments. Serendipity plays a significant role in both the process of making and the creative output. It is “insight coupled with chance” (Fine & Deegan 436 qtd. in Makri and Blandford 3). Serendipity brings together inspiration and intellect that often leads to ‘aha moments’ for the artist or maker (Pollice 2020). Both the research process and making process throughout this work have been documented in research notes, journal entries and reflections, photos, and videos. Personal reflections on the experience of making are recorded in process journals and highlight serendipitous occurrences throughout the process of making that connect to periods of inspiration, furthering both the research and the making. Estelle Barrett asserts that art as research generates new knowledge from everyday experiences arguing that knowledge is experiential, and that learning begins with lived experiences and reflections on those experiences (Barrett 115-119). It is through self-reflection that experience becomes intellectual (Barrett 117). The synergy of making and reflecting is important to me and to the becoming of *Wefting the Warp*. This research-creation is about difference-becoming-movement, it is about the

potentia of difference, the generative and productive quality of becoming, and alternative ways of relating through movement.⁴

In Chapter 1 I think with Rosi Braidotti and her concept of sexual difference in response to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's idealization of sexual neutrality (*Metamorphoses 4*, Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* 156, 173). Sexual difference cannot be viewed as in-different, what is important is challenging the perception of difference as negative (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses 4*). In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari aim to "displace the opposition" (476), while still detecting two very distinct functions. In many ways, my creative practice aims to do the same. My weaving on a multi-directional loom looks to rearticulate sexual difference in a way that does not reinforce ideas of hierarchy and binary thinking but supports an understanding of what is theorized as pure difference (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses 4*). With this, I go back to the loom and reconsider the warp/weft binary and the function of each within the structure and construction of the woven textile. Their divergent function is required to create a woven textile.

Deleuze and Guattari's idea of body without organs (BwO) further explicates the concept of pure difference in that it supports the dissolution of hierarchical organization and stratification, producing something other than what is socially accepted as "organized." Bringing together ideas of difference and BwO influenced how I made my loom and how the subsequent connections advanced through weaving on a loom that does not prioritize a traditional structure. Much like a BwO, my loom is a medium upon which many networks and connections can be made and unmade. It is a practice for continual change, weaving possibility and multiplicity in the process of becoming, which I take up in Chapter 2.

⁴ Potentia – positive or empowering (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses 33*)

Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize difference through becoming. Becoming is not a process of developing certain characteristics. For example, in becoming-woman one does not develop feminine characteristics – whatever those may be essentialized to be. Becoming is a process of deterritorialization, it is not a starting or end point, instead, it is located in the “middle” – of a thought, a feel, an encounter.⁵ It describes the relationship between elements and forces as they generate a new way of being rather than imitating, representing, or resembling. Becoming is productive, it assembles new and unexpected ways of relating that are not about subjectivity. Braidotti is somewhat aligned with Deleuze’s notion of becoming, and how sexual difference is prioritized, however she stresses that through becoming-woman, Deleuze erodes the very material difference between the two sexes into “multiple and undifferentiated becomings” (*Metamorphoses* 77). Braidotti maintains that becoming, and more specifically becoming-woman, neutralizes female subjectivity, arguing that specific subject positions are not considered in the process of becoming. In this way, embodied experiences and particular struggles based on subjectivity are erased. She suggests that a positive perspective on female subjectivity means redefining human subjectivity to undermine a binary logic (*Metamorphoses* 76).⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, reject binary subjectivity and think with forces that produce a network of connections that rely on a multiplicity of sexed subject-positions (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 76-77).

⁵ Deterritorialization, along with reterritorialization, are processes of un-doing and re-doing established systems and structures. Together they are used to characterize a constant process, or movement of transformation. Deleuze and Guattari think with the idea of deterritorialization to explain how capitalism works, it is understood as a “system that frees (deterritorializes) materiality and human interaction from hierarchical over coding” (Bevir 377).

⁶ This project questions binary oppositions and is not about gender inclusion/exclusion. In this research I am not essentializing gender and therefore an expression of non-binary gender or trans-gender is minoritarian (further explored in Chapter 2).

The woven artifacts I created are maps with “multiple entryways” (Deleuze and Guattari 12-13) that break with the conformity of operating within a grid-like system.⁷ The process of fabricating these woven textiles propose radical difference by not gendering the loom in its traditional warp/weft configuration, thus there are no definitive binaries and no hierarchy. The materials I use to weave become malleable and full of potential. The loom enables the woven textile body to transform, in movement – with me.

In Chapter 3 I take up movement as a result of relations between bodies in space (Manning, *Relationescapes* 15), aware of my body in-movement with the loom. Constant interaction with other bodies makes movement improvisational (unknown, virtual, incipient). Manning asserts that a body reaching-toward is already beyond itself and becoming, and in this way, a BwO (*Politics* 136). According to Manning, we are in the process of making our own BwO every time we reach toward to touch another body (*Politics* 137). Her evocation of reaching-towards is an important component of my own movements. Movement is a result of relations between bodies (both organic and inorganic), constantly generating new, unknown connections and becomings. Relational movement is always improvisational and there exists a certain degree of risk in not knowing how movement will be interpreted and received (Manning, *Relationescapes* 31). This idea of movement informs my interactions with the loom and the woven textile forms I create. It is not possible to know where movement will take my body’s reach as I weave. The becoming of the interaction is unknown, yet, full of potential.

⁷ In *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Brian Massumi conceptualizes the grid as “an oppositional framework of culturally constructed significations: male versus female, white versus black, gay versus straight, and so on (2).” He explains that a body relates to a “site” on the grid. The site is where gender, race, and sexuality intersect on the grid and is how the body is coded (Massumi 2).

Shifts and negotiations in making, and interactions with the loom, inspired thinking the body otherwise. For Braidotti and other material feminists, the work is to change the narrative of “woman as other of the same” (*Metamorphoses* 23), which denotes other as less than, to “woman as other of the other” (*Metamorphoses* 23), meaning always other, but not less than. It is important that the materiality of the sexes be acknowledged and not neutralized. In this way, both sexes are needed for generative corporeal transformations of pure difference. Different but not less than. My woven textile forms express this potential of pure difference by wefting the warp.

Chapter 1: DIFFERENCE

Difference is understood as opposites, or things that are not like one another, indicating points of comparison in a hierarchical system. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines difference as, “the quality or state of being dissimilar or different; an instance of being unlike or distinct in nature, form, or quality; a characteristic that distinguishes one from another or from the average; the element or factor that separates or distinguishes contrasting situations” (Difference). This dictionary definition assumes a universal understanding of difference. Conventionally, this understanding is expressed, for example, in the distinction of woman as different to man, based on a sexed identity. For Deleuze and Guattari, difference is beyond identity, and they position difference as the basis of being. It is what they call pure difference and what Braidotti theorizes as the positivity of difference (*Metamorphoses* 4). *Wefting the Warp* begins with difference, not as negation but affirmation, and the importance of acknowledging material and bodily difference as a site of conceptual transformation.

Braidotti argues for the *potentia* of difference. Her work in *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, focuses on Deleuze’s philosophy of difference, alongside other thinkers. One of her main arguments is for the “power of dissymmetrical relations between the sexes” (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 75, 267). In other words, for the *potentia* of (sexual) difference. Sexual difference is not simply a set of oppositions directed at sexed bodies – woman as the “sexual complimentary” of man – rather, it is the difference between two entities that do not yet exist, and are in the process of becoming (Grosz, *Becoming* 146), a concept explored in chapter 2. Sexual difference, originally theorized by French feminist philosopher, Luce Irigaray, does not strictly refer

to anatomical difference between the sexes. In an extensive explanation of Irigaray's theory, Elizabeth Grosz summarizes that although sexual difference is the most basic or "irreducible" difference between the sexes, it encompasses the lived differences of the subject as mediated by culture (*Becoming* 146). She explains sexual difference is morphological difference, it is how significance and meaning of the body differ, and it involves the lived experience of the subject (*Becoming* 145). In this way, different bodies do not experience the world solely through their anatomy but through meaning, value, and use of the body (Grosz, *Becoming* 146). This forms the basis for understanding sexual difference as embodied.

The notion of universal human embodiment does not align with Braidotti's conceptualization of sexual difference, who maintains there is no neutral human body, or a gender-free and neutral understanding of feminine subjectivity ("Becoming Woman" 44). Subjectivity can be located where a material body and social constructions of that body intersect. Here, multiple meanings are made, and thus multiple identity positions assumed. Subjectivity, however, must be considered together with lived experiences. Within the category of 'woman,' Braidotti identifies other differences – between men and women, amongst women, and within each woman, envisioning a subject that is "non-unitary ... not one, but multi-layered" ("Becoming Woman" 43). The body, she says, is a cultural construction based on differences and what those differences have come to mean (race, sex, class, age). The notion of difference as "pejorative" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 3) enforces a social hierarchy determined by binary oppositions, qualifying difference as inferior. The potential of difference, however, challenges this negative perception, it acknowledges difference without prioritizing one while diminishing the other. Here, I consider the loom and how difference is intrinsically built into it and into the process of weaving. The distinct

and divergent functions of both the warp and the weft must be acknowledged as both simple opposition and complex difference, but also understood that they exist “in mixture” (Deleuze and Guattari 474) because, crucial in the formation of a woven textile is the coupling of difference. My work reconsiders the meaning, value, and use of the warp and weft within the borders of the loom, thus shifting the prioritizing of one over the other, while recognizing that difference does not have to incite inferiority. The multi-directional loom I utilize and the process of weaving I employ enable opposition and difference to materialize in a way that highlights the distinction between the warp and the weft without organizing one as more valuable than the other.

Historically and geographically, looms have been adapted to account for the developments of weaving, including variations such as the warp-weight loom, the back-strap loom, the heddle loom, the tapestry loom, and so on. This research-creation starts with a wooden tapestry frame loom becoming a multi-directional frame loom. I constructed a frame loom using wood, metal screws, butterfly bolts, and finishing nails. I chose to work on a frame loom that measured 6' in length and 4' in width using 1" x 3" wood beams to create the frame (Fig. 5). Setting two 6' upright bars down, I overlaid two 4' crossbars on the front of the upright bars at the top and bottom to create a rectangular frame. Two screws were used at each corner to fix the frame. Additionally, two 4' crossbars were secured at the back of the frame using butterfly bolts, offering the flexibility of removing them when needed. I then added finishing nails along the top and bottom crossbars positioned at ½" intervals. This completed the tapestry frame loom (Fig. 6) Through prototyping various loom configurations, I determined that I could shift the direction of the weave by adding additional moveable crossbars. To this end, I used two more 1" x 3" wooden beams that measured 8' in length, and another four butterfly bolts. I drilled several holes along the upright bars of the

frame and drilled matching holes along the 8' beams. The beams were then positioned on top of the frame at differing angles and secured with butterfly bolts. As with the fixed crossbars, finishing nails were hammered into the angled beams at $\frac{1}{2}$ " intervals. To offer the possibility of further directional-shifting, finishing nails were also added to the upright bars at 1" intervals.

By this interaction, the tapestry frame loom became a multi-directional frame loom (Fig. 7).

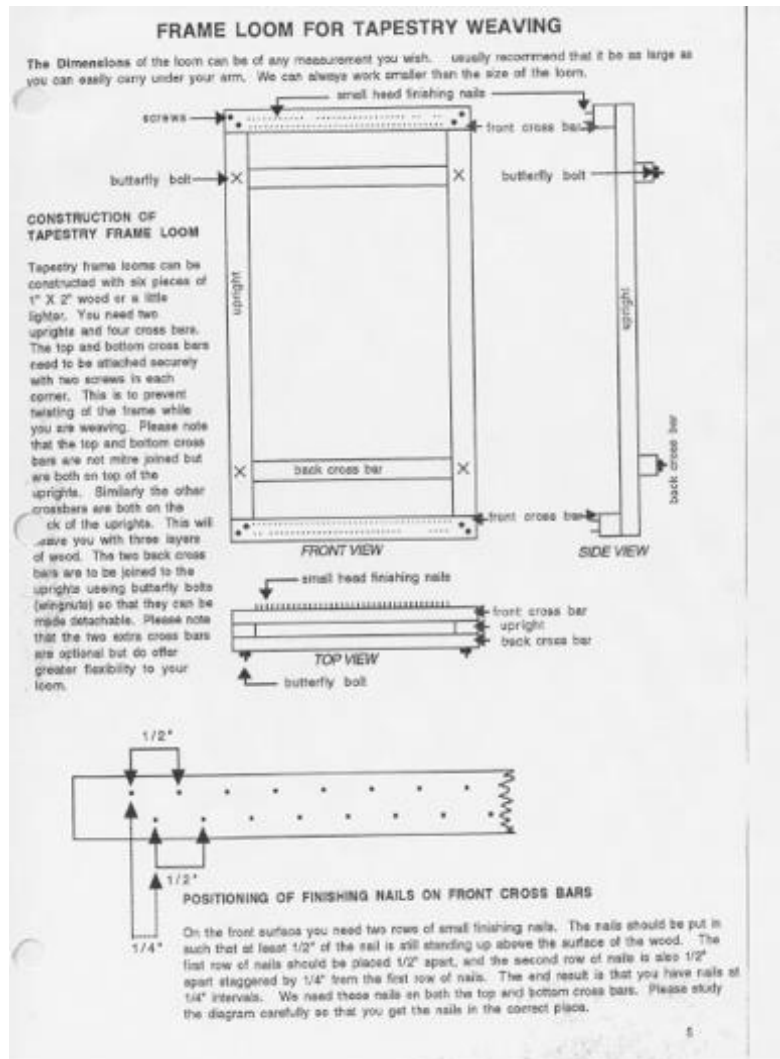


Figure 5. Tapestry Frame Loom – Instructions. William C.G. Hodge, Armure Studios, 1998.



Figure 6. Process of making a frame loom



Figure 7. Multi-directional loom with moveable crossbars

The formation of a plain weave involves a series of parallel threads or yarns (warp) rigidly set within a frame, and a mobile thread or yarn (weft) that interlaces the parallel threads at right angles (Albers 4). Difference, in terms of the function of the warp and the weft, is fundamental to building the woven textile form. Weaving on a multi-directional loom is my attempt to materialize difference as the multiple ways of becoming both and neither. In a chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, titled “1440: The Smooth and The Striated”, Deleuze and Guattari argue that differences exist only together. They explain this by naming smooth and striated as two spaces that are distinct yet in relation (474). They perceive a woven fabric as ‘striated space’ or sedentary space. In their

explanation, fabric is composed of two parallel elements: warp and weft yarns, each with unique functions; the warp is fixed while the weft mobile. They argue fabric, like striated or sedentary space, is “delimited,” first that the frame and the number of warp yarns determine its width and second that the weft moves back and forth effectively closing the space along the sides. Also, fabric has a definitive top and bottom that are effectually different (Deleuze and Guattari 474-5). A traditional tapestry frame loom involves a series of warp yarns that are fixed to the loom and moving in one direction, and a weft yarn that moves perpendicular to the warp yarns. The warp and weft have dissimilar roles in the construction of fabric. While the warp is in place to create a basic structure for the fabric and to provide tension, the weft moves in and out of the warp, its movement circular and its configuration limited by the warp yarns. Additionally, the top and bottom of the fabric are treated differently, looped at the top and knotted at the bottom. The loom and the woven fabric derived from it produce many necessary oppositions; warp/weft, top/bottom, open/closed, vertical/horizontal, fixed/mobile. To this end, Deleuze and Guattari oppose striated space with smooth space (474).

Smooth space, or nomad space (Deleuze and Guattari 474), when used to describe a cloth, involves no interlacing of threads, only entanglement. Felt is a cloth made by entangling and compacting fibres. For Deleuze and Guattari, felt is opposed to fabric. Where fabric is closed, limited and finite, felt is “open, unlimited and infinite” (Deleuze and Guattari 475). Also, felt has no top or bottom, no centre, no warp, or weft, and moves in all directions. They argue that, although a simple opposition, smooth and striated spaces exist together, and they use patchwork, or quilting, to explicate this. A quilt is at once a smooth space as it has no centre and can be infinite, but it is from striated space, as it is constructed using squares of fabric, in and of itself striated. Smooth

does not mean homogenous, on the contrary, quilts encompass various bits of fabric (striated) that come together in patchwork. In this way, smooth space came from striated space, one passed through the other, and, although the two spaces and two cloths happen to be mixed, their differences persist. Fabric, felt, and quilts each materialize the potentia of difference, the irreducible difference present in the process of becoming. The woven form that emerges on a multi-directional loom is neither smooth nor striated, it is a mixture of the two, a series of movements and flows capable of coming together in multiple ways, in ways that oppose organization, hierarchy, and signification. The multi-directional loom itself is a medium that enables connections to be made and unmade where differences – warp and weft yarns, smooth and striated space – come together without hierarchy or organization.

The multi-directional loom embraces difference and generates new forms, without hierarchy or order. The addition of moveable cross bars facilitates this generative quality, enabling the woven form to multiply through its capacity to transform and connect. On a conventional frame loom, cross bars are the horizontal bars positioned at the top and bottom of the frame, where the nails or pegs are lined to support the warp structure. Perpendicular to the upright bars, the horizontal cross bars allow for the warp yarns to move strictly in a north-south direction. Adding two moveable cross bars at varying angles, also lined with nails or pegs, makes space on the loom for the warp yarns to shift and pivot in indeterminate ways. This forgoes an established order to weave, for example here weaving can proceed with only partial warp yarns in place on the loom. On the multi-directional loom there is potential for the warp and weft to connect in ways not dictated by the configuration of the frame loom, rather, enabled by it. This multi-directional loom invites becoming and multiplicity. It is rearticulated to bring together multiple warp/weft relations

without negating either and without one limiting the potential of the other. The parallel components needed in the construction of fabric or striated space pose as binary oppositions but weaving on a multi-directional loom allows for each to maintain their divergent functions, as warp and weft, while not limiting the movement of smooth space.

To think of this in another way, within a system or structure, difference is not the problem. The problem is the organization of difference and its hierarchical structure – “the enemy is the organism” (Deleuze and Guattari 158). By *organism*, Deleuze and Guattari mean the organization of organs of a body that makes meaning. To counter this, or to free the body from limits imposed by structure, they theorize a Body Without Organs (BwO). A BwO is vibrant and alive and full of potential because its organization has been dismantled and “populated by multiplicities” (Deleuze and Guattari 30), potentializing what a body can do, instead of what a body is. Chapter 6 of Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* presumes we all want to make ourselves a body without organs, but what does that mean, how do we do that, and why would we want to? A BwO refers to a structure or system without organization. It is understood that a BwO does not oppose organs per se, only the organization of them. A body assumes a form and with that the social implications associated with that form, or subject. Thinking that organs are “organized” determines how a body moves in the world. On the other hand, a BwO is free from the coding and meaning of determined organization and becomes instead a site of infinite possibility – it is without organization, signification, and subjectification, yet, imbued with potential. The BwO is far more interested in a body’s potential than its embodiment.

Like sexual difference, the BwO is *potentia*. The BwO is the body before any of the intensities, that freely move upon it, organize themselves to make meaning that constitutes a

subject (Grosz, Volatile 170). It is the virtual potential of the actual body, “the *field of immanence* of desire, *the plane of consistency* specific to desire” (Deleuze and Guattari 154) and here, Deleuze and Guattari define desire as productive, irrespective of lack or pleasure, whereas the BwO is unproductive. Making ourselves a body without organs, as the chapter suggests, is not a concept but a set of practices (Deleuze and Guattari 150) involving cautious experimentation that sufficiently dismantles the self to find our BwO (Deleuze and Guattari 151). In this way we can release from coded and structured subjectivities and from social signifiers. This release makes space for differences to coexist. A BwO, and perhaps a multi-directional loom, is a medium without organization upon which to form new connections where relations are made and unmade. Thinking with Braidotti and with Deleuze and Guattari, I considered how their theories of sexual difference, smooth and striated space, and BwO interface on an experimental loom, a loom that does not prioritize an organized or structured configuration.

*Interval*⁸

A woven textile is comprised of interlacing warp and weft yarns. The warp yarns form the basic structure of a textile, while the weft intersect at right angles to fill in the warp. A tapestry frame loom is a rectangular wooden frame with pegs or nails along the top and bottom horizontal crossbars. In my studio, a modified multi-directional frame loom leans against a stark white wall. It

⁸ “Interval is duration expressed in movement. It is not something I create alone or something I can re-create by myself. It exists in the between of movement. It accompanies movement but is never passive. It activates the next incipient movement ... Proposition: the interval creates the potential for movement that is expressed by at least two bodies” (Manning, *Relationescapes* 17). In my writing I am using the interval to reflect on the movements that I perceive as moments of pause that are not still. They are moments that enable me to sense a relation between my body and the loom.

slants slightly to the left as the bottom right corner is taken off balance with the addition of an extended crossbar moving past the frame. The asymmetry is a bit jarring. Uncharacteristic of a frame loom are the many nails lining not only the fixed crossbars bracing the top and bottom edges of the loom, but also the two additional extended crossbars positioned at random angles, and the upright bars. The entire frame is at once threatening and inviting.

I move in, warp yarn in hand. I choose a nail. Any nail. I secure the yarn; from there I connect the yarn to another nail and continue moving from nail to nail in a direction I choose as I move to and from the loom. There is some hesitation in my movement as I loop the yarn around the nails. At the beginning of this interaction all nails are available to me, available to be warped, and I move freely. But, as I move to fill the space with warp yarns, fewer nails remain un-looped, and my reaching toward the loom forces me to retreat at times and think about the interferences I am faced with, namely the already occupied nails, and think also about the direction towards where to move next because of those interferences. At times, I am inspired to make dramatic gestures and move the warp yarn across the entire frame, intersecting with multiple warp yarns already in place. But I stop at this, realizing that certain intersections and overlaps might limit further movement. And so, I pause, move back, un-do some of the warps, again, I reassess how to move next. With this negotiation-in-movement, I begin to create the warp structure.⁹ This structure is not solely based on warp yarns moving in one direction, nor does it require the warps be fully in place before starting to weave. A traditional frame loom bases its structure on warp yarns moving strictly north south, and only once those warps are securely in place can the weaving begin. Instead, using a multi-

⁹ Negotiation-in-movement is a term that emerged in conversation with Maria Belén Ordóñez to unpack how I, through my movements, navigated the interferences I encountered on the loom. Movement can also entail pausing, reflecting, contemplation, and this is where a non-verbal negotiation exits.

directional frame loom, I form a warp structure in any size, shape, and direction I choose. I weave the section. An opening presents itself, inviting me to warp another section in an altogether new direction. I weave. Stop. And with a new yarn in hand, I begin the warping process again, connecting nails to other nails or to the finished edge of an already woven section. As I continue to warp then weave, warp then weave, I feel the textile emerging on the loom move in ways that negate the rectilinear frame. I move and connect to nails along the crossbars aligned at varying angles and extending beyond the frame. I reach towards the loom, I hesitate, retreat, and reach towards again. I choose the direction and placement of the warp yarn and consider how my choice will further develop the woven form. I ask myself, will there be opportunities for connections to develop and occupy new shapes? The woven form fills the space within the frame and outside of its borders. The shape of the woven form is beyond rectilinear. It has no definitive top or bottom, no beginning or end. It has no center. For now, the end is where I stop. It can continue to build upon itself, transform, and become. I move in relation to the loom and to the warp structure as it continues to change. My movement is improvisational and there exists a certain degree of risk in not knowing how my movement will impact and where it will take my body's reach (Fig. 8).

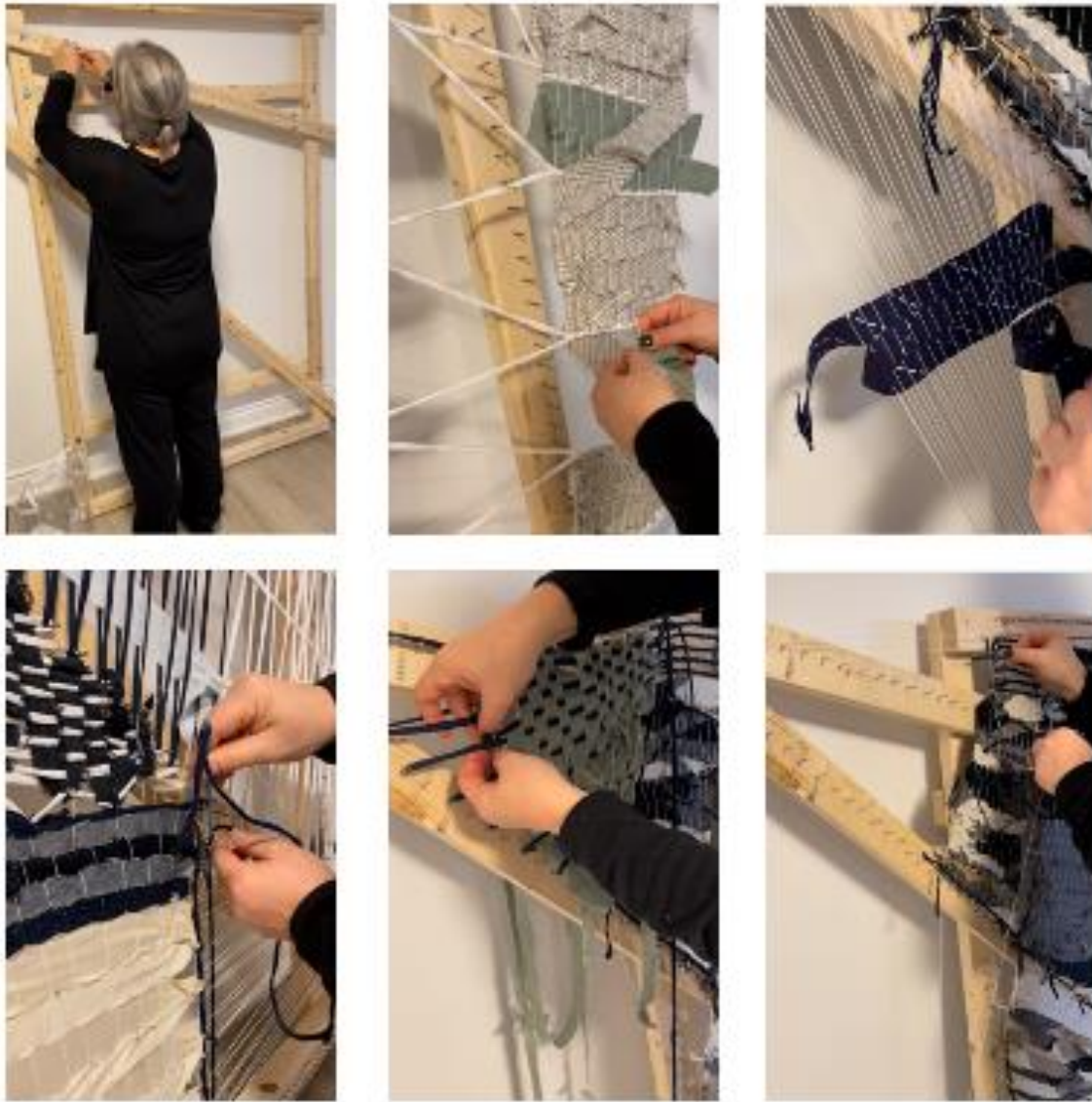


Figure 8. Moving with the Loom

My reaching toward the loom repeatedly changes my position; I renegotiate placement of the yarn and the warp structure is at once redirected and thus reconfigured. Through improvisation, I alter the loom's form while the loom continues to alter my movement. As it forms, the warp structure, and the woven form, become an extension of my movement. Following the basic principles of weaving while engaging in multi-directional shifts, new configurations of the interlacing of warp and weft emerge. The weft yarns fill the warp and invite further connections to

be made, both as warps and wefts. As the weaving progresses, I see that at times it is important to begin with a warp structure, but there were significant moments of making and moving that required the weft to be in place before the warp could start anew. The warp structure was not given precedence on this loom, nor did it limit the movement of the weft yarns, as might occur on a traditional tapestry frame loom. Unconventional connections are made by rearticulating the weft yarns from one woven section to become warp yarns in another. Interacting with the multi-directional loom in this way I am able to make improvisational decisions that redirects the outcome and consequently the understanding of the woven form. Additionally, the multi-directional loom becomes a medium onto which a network of connections is woven together in a way that does not prioritize one yarn over the other, one direction over the other (Fig. 9).



Figure 9. A Network of Connections

The multi-directional loom weaves possibility and multiplicity without stratification while in the process of becoming. Becoming is non-linear. It is about movement, potential, and multiplicity. The multi-directional loom I worked with undoes a certain binary mode of thinking. It creates openings for new warp yarns to be added and these additional segments move past the rectilinear frame that would otherwise limit its formation. The intricacy of difference continues in the new directions towards which the woven form is called to move, with no starting point, no end point and certainly no definitive centre. In the following chapter I take up multiplicity and becoming.

Chapter 2: BECOMING

As with all other 'plateaus' discussed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming is complex and abstract. Elizabeth Grosz explains that becomings are flows of intensity, they are multiplicity, moving from one thing to another where neither resembles the other (*Volatile* 173). Diverse 'things' come together to compose new functions, and in this becoming, the relation is more important than the identity of each thing. Repositioning the relation between diverse things changes the composition and in turn the new composition changes the relation between them, and so on. There is constant movement and a reaching-toward a potentiality that is never attained. Relation through reaching-toward is about becoming. Becoming is not imitating or identifying with something, it is not productive, it is "movement ... between heterogeneous populations ... a verb ... it does not reduce to, or lead back to "appearing," "being," "equaling," or "producing."" (Deleuze and Guattari 239). The aim of becoming is to undermine a normative ideal.

Deleuze and Guattari write that all becomings are possible only through becoming-woman, "it is the law to all other becomings" (277). In their theorizing, the terms molar/molecular and major/minor are dichotomies associated with man/woman. In a Deleuzian framework, molar refers to a recognizable and normative subject position, conversely molecular is not devoted to identity or any subject position and thus is fluid. Major, or majoritarian refers not to numbers (majority) but access to power and what serves as a standard or normative ideal, universally understood as man, or molar, and woman is minoritarian in relation to man (Deleuze and Guattari 291). Women are minoritarian because of their assumed inferiority within a patriarchal system, and so becoming-woman is a way to challenge a system that prioritizes molar at the expense of molecular (Grosz,

Volatile 177). Deleuze and Guattari maintain all becomings are molecular and must pass through becoming-woman (275). Becoming-woman does not entail becoming a woman as understood by her form and function, or molar entity. Becoming-woman challenges the molar entity to become minoritarian. Both man and woman must pass through becoming-woman, becoming molecular or minoritarian, as there is no becoming-molar – molar just is. Braidotti critically reads becoming-woman as erasing sexual difference (*Metamorphoses* 77). She argues that the process of becoming-woman does not consider different subject positions and thus women's struggles within patriarchy are made invisible. Braidotti thinks with Deleuze but emphasizes the tension between his theories and those of feminists, especially in relation to sexual difference, becoming, and multiplicity.

Sexual difference is material, it is embodied and corporeal. From a feminist perspective, sexual difference emphasizes the constitution of the subject, both female and male (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 22). Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, seem to be more in favor of deconstructing the subject, as their idea of becoming might suggest. Becoming is multiplicity, and Deleuze and Guattari argue for multiple sexes, "as many sexes as there are terms in symbiosis" (242). Their argument maintains that difference in reproduction is limited to the "simple duality between the sexes within the same species" (242), whereas difference in multiplicity, through becoming, multiplies difference, not the individual, and this, for them, is generative. Braidotti finds this troubling for sexual difference as it eliminates subject positions and supports "multiple and undifferentiated becomings" (*Metamorphoses* 77, 267) that dilute difference. She is in favor of a non-unitary vision of the subject but stresses the need to reconfigure the subject rather than bestow it with multiple sexualities (*Metamorphoses* 268). She argues for both, a subject and multiplicity – a subject with multiple subject positions that account for the "multiple, complex and

multi-layered selves” we are in the process of becoming (*Metamorphoses* 258, 268). Manning differentiates identity from individuation. She explains that individuation is the engendering of potentiality while abandoning individual identity, and by engendering she means to potentialize all matter. Individuation marks identity as a moment in the process of becoming where becoming is so much more than a fixed category or an identity (*Politics* 90). In other words, individuation allows for becoming, not of matter or form but a becoming multiplicity (*Politics* 90). Individuation, she argues, allows an exploration of relation as becoming that is modified by a potential that is not yet known, and that happens through individuations rather than through an identity politics. The concept of identity is substituted with individuation and supports Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of multiplicity.

Multiplicity is not the doubling, increasing, or multiplying of a single subject, it is not “pluralized identity” (Grosz, *Volatile* 225), or the many parts of a whole. Multiplicity is not understood as the many and the one, rather, multiplicity is the many, even one is a multiplicity. A multiplicity is an assemblage, it is defined by its capacity – by what a body can do. Multiplicity does not follow a binary logic, meaning one does not become two and two four. Deleuze and Guattari explain that multiplicity is not related to the One as object or subject, multiplicity has no object or subject and only increases through relation or a change in nature (8-9).

Moving with a multi-directional loom deconstructs the binary logic inherent in its form and function, while at the same time respects the reality that two very distinct elements are needed to create a woven form. The multi-directional loom dissolves the grid framework composed of gendered opposites by adding additional crossbars thereby eliminating its binarized, hierarchical structure. What emerges in the form of the loom is uncoded and likened to a “*map and not a tracing*” (Deleuze and Guattari 12). Deleuze and Guattari insist on making a map – a map is

unknown, it is an experiment, it constructs the unconscious and makes connections (12). A map, with its multiple entryways (Deleuze and Guattari 12) is never the same, never redundant, and in this sense, full of potential.

A map is different than a tracing. Deleuze and Guattari describe a tracing as representation and reproduction, generating and supporting a binary logic (12). A map is unlike a tracing in that it does not reproduce the unconscious, it constructs it (Deleuze and Guattari 12). A map can make new connections, to reorient, disorganize and modify itself. However, we are reminded that it is important to not contrast a map with a tracing. A tracing does not reproduce a map in its entirety, it is a reproduction of an isolated selection of the map, and in so doing transforms the map into an image that is not multiplicity. A map on the other hand, lets the viewer perceive what is beyond its borders, through movement. In her book, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy*, Manning describes the work of three Aboriginal artists that map the movement of the land on canvas. The paintings she references ask the viewer to move, where the experience of movement is not felt as art representing a story of the land, but the act of telling it (Manning, *Relationescapes* 161). Mapping here is a dreamscape, it is not conceptualized through a Western understanding of a map as a grid, instead, a map is non-representational, mapping the future not the past. A dreaming is not an entity, Manning argues, it is a movement (*Relationescapes* 163), maintaining that dreams must be performed, or they disappear (*Relationescapes* 164). Kathleen Petyarre's work *Arnkerrthe* (2001) is described by Manning as becoming-movement, depicting the movements of a mountain devil lizard (*Relationescapes* 156). Petyarre's work creates asymmetrical movement within the limits of a symmetrical square canvas that forces the eye to move not only outside of its limits but especially within, reaching-toward a focal point that shifts the contouring movement of the square to

triangles. The lines that form the triangles move off the canvas, mapping a becoming-movement that is felt, not represented. In my own work, movement, and the supposed continuation off the grid, is materially suggested through the lines that form within the woven textile.

The woven forms I make propose radical difference in a non-gendered, non-representational configuration. The materials I use to warp, and weave are found materials. The colours and textures that characterize the different fabrics at the onset were random at best, and expressed notable dichotomies in both colour and texture – warm/cool, light/dark, soft/hard, natural/synthetic, patterned/solid, smooth/rough, supple/rigid, translucent/opaque, loose/tight, and so on. From the selection of fabrics, I chose to discern three analogous colour palettes with which to weave. For example, one form blends various shades of blues, from cool blue, blue-green, cool white and grey, interlacing one dichotomy from each pair. Each woven form is made using different fabrics in similar hues. I chose the fabrics for each woven form based on colour, while the textures and fabric content varied within each palette. This was a conscious aesthetic choice dictated by the materials and colours available to me. Utilizing an analogous colour palette offered a sense of visual continuity for me. It also simplified the choices I had to make while moving with the loom. In turn, my movements focused primarily on interacting with the loom itself and were not interrupted by having to choose the colour of the next yarn or bias strip. The materials are themselves unconventional for weaving. They are processed to become the multiple warps and wefts passing on and through this loom. Hand weaving, as an art practice allows for an understanding of how medium and process come together in form. It is important to note that hand weaving depends greatly on materials used to weave the cloth, and the process and development of those materials (Albers 3).

Commonly used materials for hand weaving on a tapestry loom include a high twist cotton or linen, something with no elasticity, for the warp, and wool for the weft. Although tension is important in the warp, limiting the warp yarns to very sturdy and non-elastic yarns on a multi-directional loom was not critical because the warp's function was not limited to creating a structured foundation for the fabric. The warp emerged on the loom alongside the weft and did not presuppose the weft. Also, the direction of the warp moved and shifted as the weaving progressed, organically changing the tension. The connections made between each section varied in terms of direction of flow, just as the materials used for each the warp and the weft varied. This expanded the possibility of materials used for both warping and weaving in that the multi-directional nature of the weave allowed for the warp yarn to shift both its direction and consequently its function, alternately becoming weft. In this way, the t-shirt yarn used to form the warp in one section was reintroduced as the weft of another section.

The materials used in this weave were not threads, but textiles that I transformed into yarn-like materials, and used to both warp the loom and to weave. Two diverse types of fabrics were used: knit and woven. Discarded cotton t-shirts, classified as knit, were transformed into t-shirt yarn (Fig. 10), and used, at times, to form the warp structure but also used as the weft, weaving in and out of the warp. The process of creating t-shirt yarn involves cutting t-shirts (ideally t-shirts without side seams) in such a way that allows for a continuous flow of fabric without any connections such as stitching or knotting/tying (Figs. 11). The main body of the t-shirt allowed for the longest, uninterrupted length of yarn to form. To utilize the t-shirt to its fullest, the sleeves, upper chest and back sections formed shorter lengths of yarn, frequently connected by knotting.



Figure 10. Making T-Shirt Yarn



Figure 11 Continuous t-shirt yarn

The second fabric type is a woven fabric. Repurposing large sample swatches of various woven fabrics, I created bias tape.¹⁰ Bias tape or bias binding is primarily used for finishing seams and raw edges. It is made of a strip of cloth cut on the bias, folded in on both edges then folded in half. The square fabric swatches varied in size but approximated a 24" square. These I transformed into bias tape approximately 1" and 2" in width.



Figure 12. Making Bias Strips

¹⁰ On the Bias – diagonally to the grain of a fabric, at an angle: diagonally to the fibers of something

The edges were left unfinished and not folded as in commercial bias tape. The process included cutting the square fabric diagonally to form two triangles and overlapping them at a right angle, then stitching the two pieces together to form a long parallelogram. This is then folded in half, off-set by 2", and stitched again (Fig. 12). A continuous strip is cut in a circular fashion (Fig. 13). The bias strip is interrupted by seams at regular intervals, creating further interruptions in the weaving process (Fig. 14). The bias strip was used most often as the weft yarn primarily because of its width and ease of filling the space relative to the scale of the loom. In some cases, the bias strip formed the warp and interlaced with either other bias strips or t-shirt yarn.



Figure 13. Circular Cutting



Figure 14. Interruptions in Bias Strip

*Interval*¹¹

The loom, tilting slightly to the left, leans against a bare white wall. A spool of white cotton crochet thread ready to warp my new loom. Warp in hand, I approach a nail at the left edge of the top crossbar. Square knot. I was taught that a square knot, also known as a surgeon's knot, is the most secure. Left over right, tie, right over left, tie. Secure. I pull the thread down to a nail along the

¹¹ " The interval is the production of movement before we know it as such. It is the residual we tap into a quick change of direction that causes her leg to fly in the air, magically circling her already recomposing body. The interval is salient throughout, but I cannot name it or locate it exactly. I feel it only momentarily in the instant where I catch a glimpse of her eyes wide with wonder asking herself, " How did I *do that?*" (Manning, *Relationescapes* 18). In my making, I move with my loom, and though it does not move with me, the relation between us unfolds in a way that is unknown, improvisational. I move with my loom *before* I move with my loom. My movement becomes visible through the weft and warp connections I make on the loom.

angled crossbar, loop it around, and pull it up to the next nail along the top crossbar. I continue looping the thread. Although I am moving up and down, and feel that the warp thread is moving in a north-south direction, the warp pattern that forms between the horizontal crossbar bracing the top of the frame and the angled crossbar that points to the bottom right of the frame is skewed. It moves towards the right but also angles towards the bottom. At first evenly spaced, the warp yarns soon fan out and create wider and wider spaces between themselves. I tie off the warp thread. Square knot. Then cut it away from the spool, leaving a long tail for good measure.



Figure 15. Bias Strips

Off to the side rests a basket filled with bias fabric strips. I grouped the fabric strips based on colour. Each group a compilation of textures and patterns, natural fibers and synthetic, shiny, and matte, but the colour palette tells a story (Fig. 15). The first one is blue. But even the colour blue and all its possibility is infinite. I leave it as blue. I choose a navy and grey plaid cashmere strip. Blue. Blue? In and out. Over and under. The fabric moved through the cotton thread filling the space between the two crossbars. I can fit several rows of weaving if I pack the weft, or I can let the weft strips lie flat, filling the space more readily. It's a matter of scale. In some cases, I pack the weft, in others I don't. Where the weft is firmly packed the weave feels taut and firm, here I can connect new warp yarns through the selvage edge, further pulling the woven section taut and shifting the direction for the next woven section. On this loom the colours are cool. Bias strips are navy, other shades of blue, teal, seafoam green, grey, taupe and cream. There are areas of concentrated dark blues contrasted by areas of light creams and soft plaids. The textures vary from woven cashmere to coarse linen and matte satin, and sections of the woven form come together with t-shirt cotton yarn. Some areas are dense, while others sparse (Fig. 16).



Figure 16. Woven Connections

The form moves beyond the rectilinear frame of the loom. The moveable crossbars invite the warp yarns to loop around the nails in multiple directions and so the shape of the woven form is not limited by the shape and size of the frame. The weft yarns, and the woven textiles they become are not determined by the rigid, uniform, grid-like warps. Because the warps are not rigid or uniform, and the loom does not impose a grid-like structure, I stop weaving when I run out of bias tape. This is not to say the woven form is complete. The woven sections on the loom invite further connections

in new directions, and there is potential for the woven form to continue to become in relation to the multiple directions inherent within and to the movement they incite outside of the frame.

The materials come together at times in contrast while in other areas blended. The movement of the woven sections and the warps and wefts that connect them trail across the loom, some stopping mid-way, others gliding across the frame, wanting to leap off and continue the movement (Fig. 17).



Figure 17. Woven Form on Multi-Directional Loom

On a multi-directional loom, the distinct functions of the warp and weft become something other through movement, not only in a material way where warp moves into a weft position and weft moves into warp, supplanting the other's function, but in what surfaces through their relational movement. Through movement, the woven form is in-formation – becoming. In the following chapter I take up Manning's concept of movement as it relates to bodies and engenderings.

Chapter 3: MOVEMENT

Hand weaving is the method I use to explore movement. It is one of the oldest methods of creating cloth, or what Anni Albers calls “a pliable plane”.¹² Some of the earliest weaving was created using a “warp-weight loom” (Albers 4), where warp yarns were suspended from a bar and held in place using weights at the bottom. Throughout history, looms continued to develop and become more mechanized to advance the speed of production and to control warp tension. These developments furthered the plain weave to include intricate patterns, however the basic principle of weaving, interlacing warps and weft, remained unchanged.

Warping a tapestry frame loom typically requires a high twist yarn in cotton or linen to ensure a degree of tensile strength. Tied to the farthest left nail on the bottom crossbar, the warp yarn is tautly wound up to the farthest left nail on the top crossbar, looped around then securely pulled down to the next nail on the bottom crossbar, looped, then up again. This pattern of warping continues from left to right, ending at the last nail on the right end of the bottom crossbar. Tension used in weaving varies depending on the type of cloth. A tightly woven cloth is built around a high degree of tension whereas a loosely woven cloth has less tension. Regardless of the type of cloth, tension needs to be maintained throughout for consistency and regularity. This is achieved by warping the loom as a first step followed by checking the tension. Tension can be adjusted by adding a wedge or a weight to the warp to eliminate some slack. The multi-directional frame loom presents an opportunity to weave differently. Warping the entire structure in advance of weaving

¹² Anni Albers is a textile artist and author of many books and essays about weaving. An important text on the art, history, and implications of weaving, *On Weaving* takes up the fundamentals and methods of weaving, not as a guide for weavers but as an invitation for interdisciplinary work that embraces textile problems (ix).

limits the potential inherent in the loom's new configuration. Warping small sections of the loom at one time reveals new relations between the nails on the loom. Not all nails are engaged with at the start of weaving, and this invites other sections of the work to move in various directions and make unexpected connections. The traditional weaving process is less effective in this case because a multi-directional loom is based on movement and connection, and here neither can be predetermined (Fig. 18).

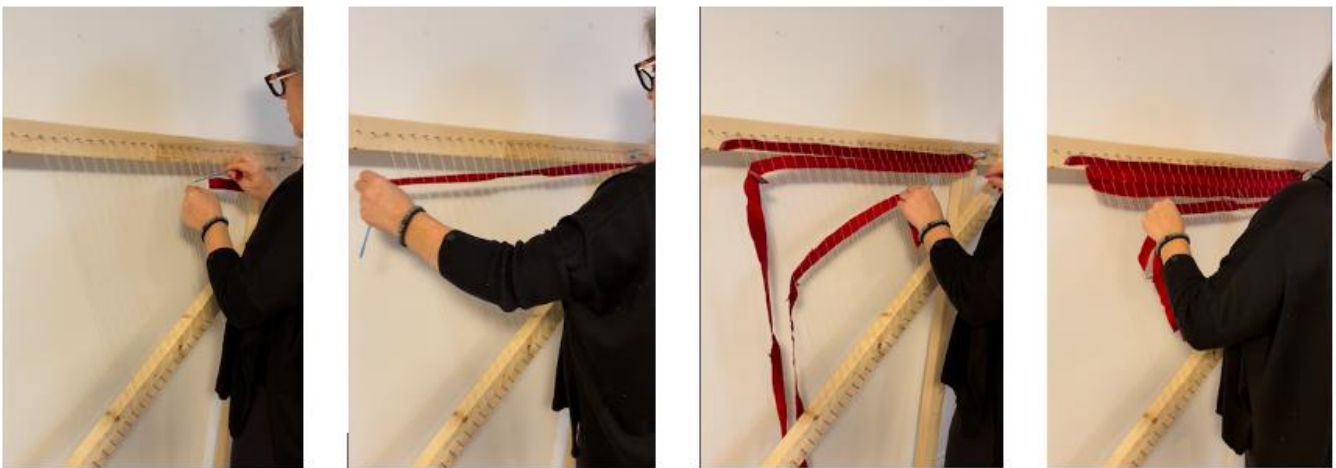


Figure 18. Weaving one warped section

Connection propels movement. Movement cannot stop; it is what Manning calls preacceleration (*Relationescapes* 13). Preacceleration is an intensity that unfolds between at least two bodies reaching-towards an *embrace*. This reaching-toward signals an acceleration of a movement that is “already always begun” (Manning, *Relationescapes* 13). The movement is ‘within,’ and in reaching-toward, it becomes a movement ‘without,’ a preacceleration. Preacceleration is already always part of matter, the movement towards an embrace, for example, speeds up the movement that is already always there. The movement of reaching-toward takes form, and contact

changes both bodies. Connection makes the movement relational. Movements towards the loom are relational because what propels them is my reaching toward.

Relational movement is theorized by Manning and involves what she describes as “face-to-face walking” (*Relationescapes* 230). Walking is the predictable movement, the structure that foregrounds the connection made by the face-to face encounter. This relation gives movement its force or momentum (Manning, *Relationescapes* 230). On the other hand, unstructured movement is not relational because it lacks a felt connection. Felt connection could mean touch, eye contact, or perhaps a rhythm that feels and looks like a choreographed movement. For Manning, face-to-face walking is expressed through dance, and more specifically, the Argentinian Tango.¹³ She explains that in this improvisational dance, bodies each take a step, one forward one back, but before the step is taken there is an opening, a subtle mode of communicating to motivate the movement. What happens is both bodies move together in relation. The relation here gives movement its strength (Manning, *Relationescapes* 14, 230). For Manning, the relational movement she practices uses walking as an “enabling constraint” to ensure that movement stay connected through face-to-face contact. She invites others to form other types of relational movement based on different enabling constraints. I use weaving as the constraint that enables movement and connection with a multi-directional loom where the relation was materialized in a woven form.

On my loom, connections are made and broken, but the movement is always relational. Connections are what Manning calls ‘invisible-but-palpable links’ between bodies (*Relationescapes* 14). They are imperceptible modes of communicating but very much felt through contact. Manning

¹³ Argentinian Tango – A fully improvised dance that, while the movements that emerge are unknown, the dance relies on the structure of the walk, always keeping one foot on the ground (Manning, *Relationescapes* 230).

asserts that contact is what motivates movement (*Relationscapes 14*), and the connections I make on and with my loom have led my movements and the woven textile to go in all directions – some predicted, others not. The woven textiles are a series of connections that intersect and interlace or come together, but also break the space it begins to occupy, and the space it leaves vacant. At the start of weaving, the woven sections moved in multiple directions, and I followed, pulled, and stretched along with the flow of material between my fingers. Each movement that follows is based on the movement that preceded it, already reaching towards the next. The succession of movements is what Manning calls incipient movement (*Relationscapes 14*). Movement is incipient. We cannot see it *yet*.

I step towards the loom. The loom does not move, of course, but because it has been reconfigured my next step is not prefigured. I am invited to move differently, to choose differently. My step forward does not call on the loom to move but my movement is called upon by the repositioning and shifting direction of the warp yarns on the loom. It is an invitation to move – an opening. Manning explains this as a repositioning of an almost-shifting body that has not yet actually moved (*Relationscapes 14*). Watching the process videos of my making with the loom I see a flow of movement that appears choreographed; however, it is the unseen, potential movement or incipient movement that directs this dance. This weave is not planned. It begins with a feeling that invites movement. I connect with the loom, and my body is repeatedly inventing the motion in response to that connection. The intensity of moving together with the loom translates into another movement and then another, interpreted by the changed configuration of the loom. The movements are each preaccelerations, each relational.

Relational movement undoes dichotomies. Movement does not eliminate dichotomies but offers an opportunity to relate otherwise. In my woven forms, the warp is laid out in a section of the loom and the weft intersects it creating openings for a new section of warp yarns to connect and redirect the flow. In these movements, the warp and the weft not only interlace with one another, they reach-toward, re-articulating themselves as either the warp or the weft. Where typically the weft weaves in and out of the warp, in many instances, on this multi-directional loom, the weft becomes the anchor, or the structure upon which new warps can be connected. The rigid binary of warp and weft has shifted, and the positioning and functioning of each flow back and forth, alternating between leader and follower, structure, and connection.

In theory, as in (traditional) practice, the warp creates the structure of a woven form. The width is predetermined based on the number of warps, while the length can be infinite depending on the length of the warps. The direction of movement, however, is consistent throughout – warp yarns are vertical, while weft yarns are horizontal. On a multi-directional loom warp and weft move in all directions and alternate their function throughout. Based on a shift in direction, some openings call for the weft yarns of one woven section to become the warp yarns of another, not only changing direction, but altering their function within the structure. In this development, the difference inherent in the warp and weft are certainly required and their contrasting functions acknowledged, but not hierarchized. I enable the weft yarns to move beyond the limits imposed by the warp by reconfiguring their function in relation to movement. Can this difference in warp and weft be understood outside dominant construction of ‘the one’ and ‘the other,’ or hierarchical binaries?

Interval

The loom. The weaving. The woven form.

I stand looking at the loom, all the spaces within the frame, and those just outside the frame, are filled with woven sections moving across and beyond, connecting sections in all directions. I can feel the tension. Is that what is holding this all together? I imagine the woven form without the tension rigidly holding the warps in place. Without it, when removed from the loom, the form will relax, and the tension will ease. I hesitate. Again. This time it is the uncertainty of what will become of the woven form without the support of the loom that makes me pause. What will become of the weft if the warp were lax? Will it fall apart? Unravel? Unweave? Disconnect? Will the interlacing of difference come apart?

The weft is already malleable by default. Would the form come undone when the force pulling it taut were no longer part of its configuration? I know I must remove it from the loom. Before I do, I secure any loose ends by tying some and stitching others. I test the tension. I slowly unhook and unloop the warps from the nails, making sure all connections between sections and across nails are secure, one by one. I continue to unloop and unhook. Some are tighter than others, some under more pressure than others. I chose to separate the woven form starting from a middle point first, working my way to the outer edge, ensuring the interlacing remains intact. Three warps remain on nails along the top crossbar as anchors for the entire woven form. Some knotted connections are not secure at all, so before continuing I make sure to connect them. I check the tension, again, and anticipate the collapse of the entire form. I am afraid of ruining everything. Even though the tension eases up, slowly at first and then substantially, and the form is no longer under any stress, the weft does not crumble between the warps. The weft maintains its relation with the

warp and the connections continue to support the woven form, the warp and the weft supporting each other. I was afraid that without any tension in the warp that the weft strips would shift and move out of place, leaving holes within the form. That doesn't happen. Gravity does not have the same pull here as it might have had if everything was moving in the same direction. Different textures and fabric construction interlace and together create a stronger connection working harmoniously within the form, keeping the warp and the weft together. I unloop the remaining three warps from the loom and watch it pool to the ground. I lay it flat on the floor. I wrap the weave around myself. I drape it on a dress form. I pin it to create a shawl, like an embrace (Fig. 19).



Figure 19. Woven textile draped on a dress form

Now, with the loom emptied of all materials and connections, it is ready to engage in new connections and movements. The multi-directional loom has moveable crossbars in place to shift their position, rearticulating the space available to weave, inviting unknown shapes to form. I move the loom; rotate it 90 degrees to the left. I pause again, questioning if repositioning the loom instead of reangling the moveable crossbars would impact my movement and my relation to the loom. I wonder if my movement or my propensity to repeat my movement as per the first weave will change if the loom's position changes while keeping the cross bars as they are (Fig. 20).

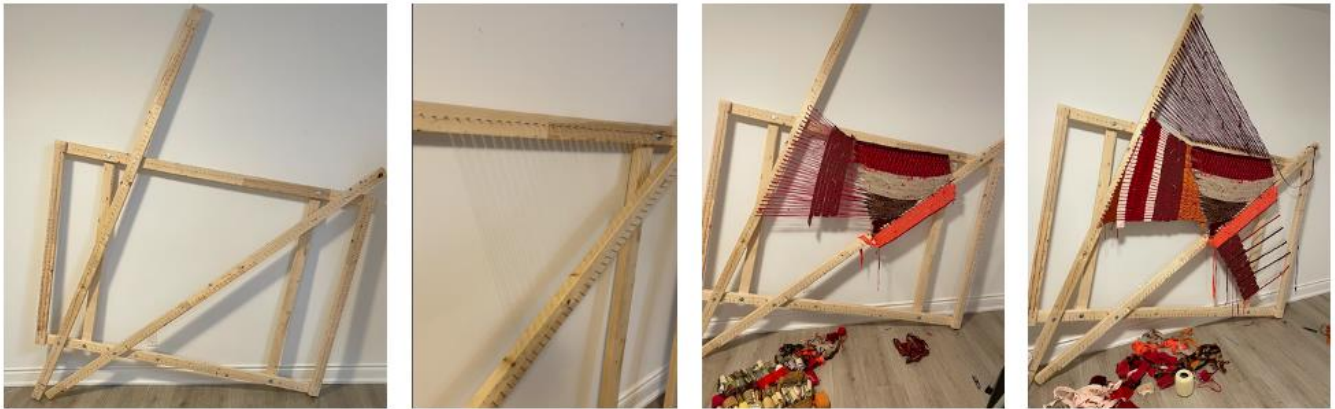


Figure 20. Multi-directional Loom in Horizontal position

This mapping of difference and movement has led to the creation of a collection of woven forms as materializations of difference, through relational movements with a non-conventional loom. The woven forms created on a multi-directional loom divert from the grid and tracing, towards a map in difference – becoming-movement.

Conclusion

“The only constant in today’s world is change, but that is neither a simple nor unilinear process”

Rosi Braidotti (Metamorphoses 264).

At the start of this research-creation, I could not envision what I was going to make, much less the outcome. I questioned my abilities in weaving, as weaving had never been part of my creative practice. My first love is fashion and making garments. That love evolved into, or was simply inherent, in a pull that has kept me fascinated and moving. My creative practice progressed from designing and making clothes for one type of body, to designing and transforming images of bodies that deter from that one type of body, to now, weaving difference without hierarchy. True to the interdisciplinarity of my creative practice, *Wefting the Warp* is an interlacing of all my loves – fashion design, the body, and (sexual) difference.

This project started with the concept of the irreducibility of sexual difference. The complexities of gender categories have not been addressed here. In the context of this work, non-binary, transgender, and the multitudes of gender variations are minoritarian and understood as ‘other’. Within oppositional pairs, like male/male, warp/weft, the ‘one’ and the ‘other’, there is hierarchy, delineating one as the standard or universally accepted norm and the other as less than. This relationship situates difference as less than, or negative, “pejorative.” My aim was to shift this perception allowing for difference(s) to interact without the usual negative connotation of identifying a lesser value, but also without erasing difference itself. I asked, how can ‘the one’ and ‘the other’ be separate and at the same time interwoven in a way that does not prioritize one or the other? This inspired a different type of weaving on a reconfigured loom.

The multi-directional loom made space for difference in multiple woven *reachings*. Becoming, in this sense, is about the relation between things and not individual identity – the relation between warp and weft rather than their individual functions. On the loom, becoming is repetition, against the

grid, against linearity and binary thinking, it is not however, undifferentiated. The relational movement between myself and the multi-directional loom and between warp and weft emerges as a woven form where the warp and the weft function as either warp or weft within the altered space of the loom, neither prioritized. In this way, I ask, can difference be maintained as individual while acknowledging multiplicity in a way that does not create in-difference?

Each chapter in this thesis, and each woven form in this exhibit builds upon difference. There is, however, a literal interpretation of difference on the loom. There is a difference between the warp and the weft. To create a fabric, both warp and weft are needed. Both are important due to their divergent functions, and it is here that I emphasize difference. In the making of a textile form on a multi-directional loom, the warp and weft switch function based on relational movement. Each take turns at being the structure (warp) or the malleable flexible form (weft). Difference persists, and that is where irreducible difference is relevant. There are two different functioning yarns that come together to make one textile. While creating this woven form, the two take on each other's function and work together. One is no more important than the other, one is not better and the other inferior, but the distinction is always there. There exists warp and weft movements, but, on a multi directional loom, each move from one function or position to the other, much like a leader leading the follower who then leads the leader – in an improvised dance. At some point the leader becomes the follower. On this loom, the warp engages the weft, but the subsequent warp sections follow the weft. The next warp cannot develop until the previous warp has been wefted. This is the movement that is always already present.

The woven forms I make propose radical difference in a non-gendered, non-representational configuration. I moved forward without expectations. The resulting object is full of mis-takes. By mis-takes I refer to improvisational movements guided more by questions than assurances or answers. These movements materialize as imperfections, mis-matched connections, unique flows, and patterns, and something that cannot be duplicated or imitated. As I make, I reconcile those mis-takes, deciding how I would change my movements in the next iteration. When I move on to making a second piece my hands already know how to transform those mis-takes. The details I find so characteristic and

interesting in the first object, the one created entirely without expectation or foresight, almost disappear in the following piece because I unintentionally redirect the mis-takes. In many instances, the second piece does not have the same improvisational qualities as the first. I follow this thread of thinking and question how I can continue to interject and shift materials, movements, and frames, so that I return to a state of unknowing, always having new directions to explore.

I interrupt the flow through the positioning of the frame. The first woven piece was constructed with the frame in an upright position and with the additional horizontal cross bars pointed at varying angles. The positioning of the second piece came about when rotating the frame 90 degrees to the left and arranging it lengthwise. I questioned how I would relate to the frame if it were in a different position. Would I approach it differently? Would the weaving take on a different form, a different texture, even though the configuration of the frame had not changed? In this case, I was not reaching-toward an upright frame, I was instead moving towards a frame that was horizontal. It was inevitable that I approach it differently because I could not mimic my previous movements. Rotating the frame simply changed the perspective and allowed me to move differently. The third piece is formed on a different loom configuration. The moveable cross bars are repositioned, and the new angles create different spaces on which to weave. Here, I not only reach toward a different frame, but my connection to the frame is altogether different, inviting new connections, new relational movements, and a new woven form.

Each piece adopts and adapts based on the learning from earlier making. The different iterations of the woven forms show process in the making. On a loom or in a hierarchical system, the warp is the standard, the weft on the other hand, is the other. It is non-normative and inferior to the warp and relies on the warp for its structure and movement. *Wefting the Warp* at first sounds like it is subverting the function of each, maybe even positioning the weft as the structure. However, that is not the case. *Wefting the Warp* reinforces the value and strength of each and stresses the importance for both weft and warp to move together, simultaneously building structure and moving within that structure to create a woven form that reinforces the importance of difference beyond an idealized

normative/non-normative dichotomy. *Wefting the Warp* is a BwO whose changing form materializes through the force of movement always already present.

APPENDIX



Figure 21. Blue woven form on exhibit



Figure 22. Red woven form on exhibit



Figure 23. Green woven form on exhibit

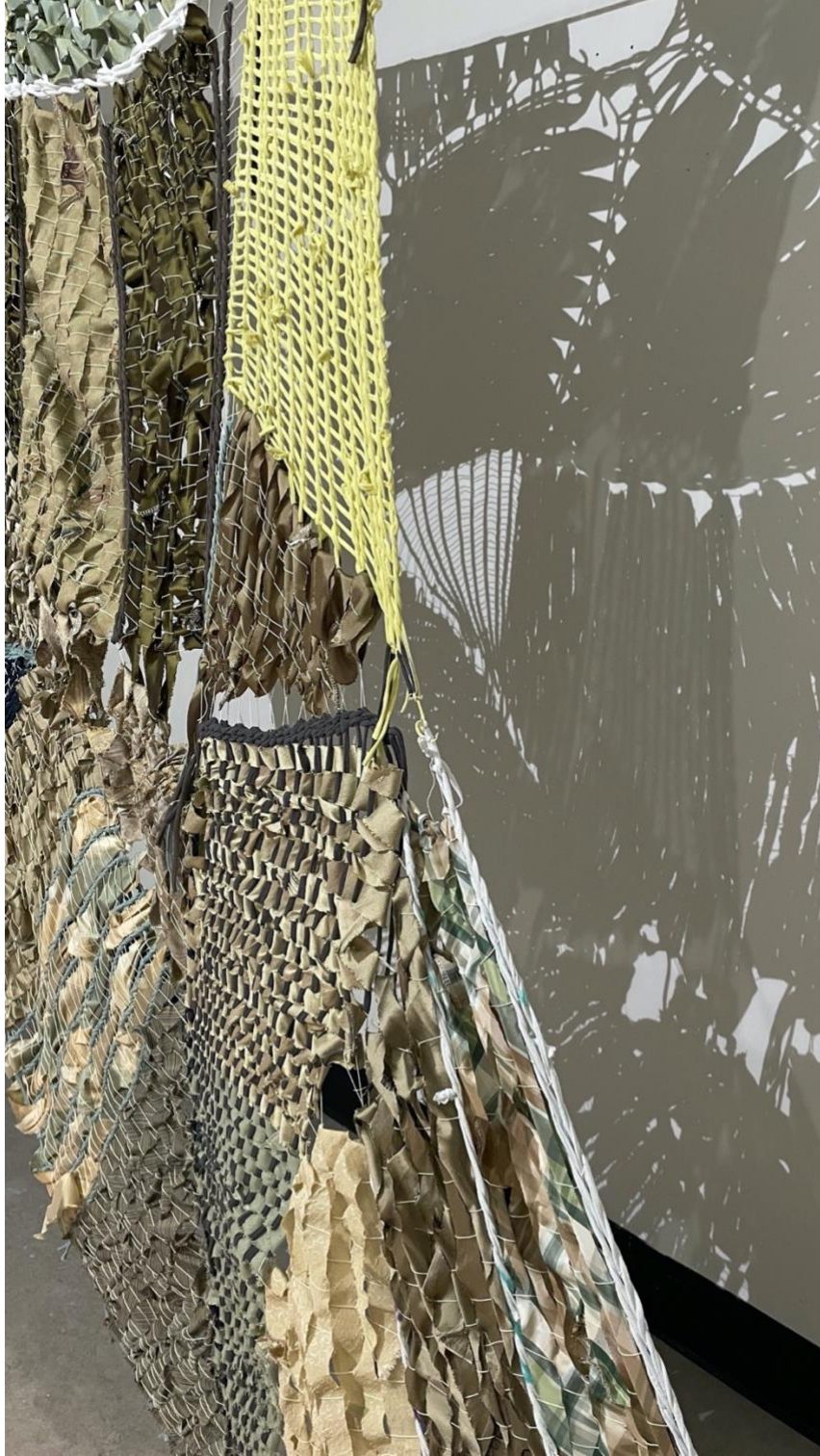


Figure 24. Close-up of green woven form on exhibit



Figure 25. Wefting the Warp Exhibition, March 31 – April 3, 2022.

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