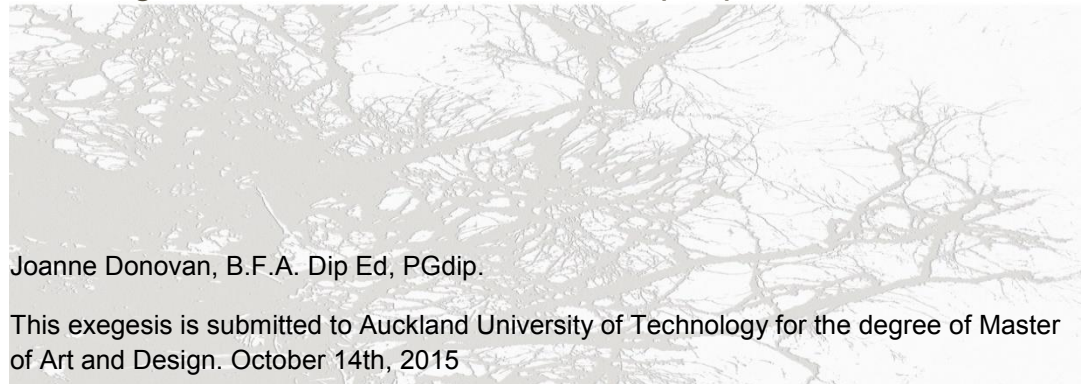


fabricating intimacy

reducing subliminal distances between people and textiles



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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this exegesis contains no material previously published, created or written by another person (except where explicitly stated through references and acknowledgements), nor material which, to a substantial extent, has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other higher learning institution, except where due acknowledgment is made.

Joanne Donovan, October 14th, 2015

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abstract:

In our age, the fast, technological production of cloth and resulting overconsumption can appear as a nihilistic force. At an ever accelerating rate, industrial production distances us from our formerly intimate connection with textile making and the raw materials from which they are created.

As we witness the progressive onslaught of overconsumption and the consequences brought about by its collateral side effects, many designers contemplate ways and means for change. As a counter ploy to mass production I explore ways to invoke a human connection and authenticity into technological textile production in order to participate in a cultural realignment of attitude towards textile consumption. Driving towards small shifts in end user perception by incorporating handwork, gesture and emotion; textile design intentionally becomes a political act. Through interrogating, intimacy, indexicality, tactility and by creating work that is idiosyncratic rather than deliberately created for bulk manufacturing, I seek a deeper response to the created textiles. The intention is to be part of a dynamic evolution towards change in the way we produce and use cloth.

2. introduction:

2.1 Research question

We can see things without noticing them. We often use things without understanding what they are made of and sometimes even without understanding why we use them. Trend culture and 'use value' makes objects less real for us. Disembodied from our humanity, things are discarded without feeling; the more things we own, the less we care about them (Attfield, 2000). This is part of the problem that causes overconsumption. How may we design towards change?

Anusas and Ingold (2013) posit the idea that industrial production has the effect of drawing an opaque veil around objects, manufacturing a distance between people and the material nature of the things they use. People in consumer driven societies are, they say, increasingly isolated from the materials and processes that create form and substance. It is certainly true that consumer goods appear in shopping malls and retail outlets, as if by miracle. The world of retail is almost an illusory make-believe, where disconnect between the object and its manufacture, materials, labour and waste bi-products, is inviolate (Leonard, 2010). People are thus trapped within a false perception of a cornucopia-like world and within a vortex of increasing estrangement from their environment.

An antithetic to the concept of technological 'progress', Flusser's (1999) theory contends that the material things we create, paradoxically obstruct us whilst at the same time advancing us. Culture is not produced by hand, tradition and communities, but instead through the fingertips pressing keys and buttons so machines can make things.

Products flow out of machines as we apply our minds to create more iterations and 'better' objects. Consequently there is less and less space to manoeuvre as our societies become defined and directed by the things we make.

Responsible design is therefore designing with environmental transparency and with people in mind rather than centred on the qualities of the object. Flusser describes this as the antithesis of what is considered forward progress. Designs then become 'mediations' drawing people closer in a dialogic intercourse.

2.2 Project scope

Reimagining textile design from this theoretical view is the problem I investigated through this project. Was it possible to devise transparency, to reveal a textile to its end user in new ways? Could I better contextualise a textile within its wider environment and community of creators? How could I achieve this? Flusser expresses this design problem when he imagines ways to realise what he describes as 'responsible design'. He asks the question; "Can I give form to my projected designs in such a way that the communicative, the inter-subjective, the dialogic are more strongly emphasised than the objective?" (Flusser, 1999. p.59). To facilitate this, I began to think about the textile in a different way; to cease to see it as a separate 'thing' but to understand its true nature; that of matter and ideas flowing between people in a material form. Therefore, I saw that my objective was to investigate ways of narrowing the psychological distance between the maker and the end user. I developed strategies to remind the end user of the maker's existence and of textiles' material nature within the organic world. Thus the textile is reframed as a communication; thereby revealing its subjective nature rather than its object nature.

Indexical trace formed the basis of my investigation and experiments during the post graduate diploma year. Through investigation, I developed a toolbox of techniques to take further. I learned that traces of a human presence are revealed through the gesture of drawing, stitch, photography and wear and tear (Best, 1999, Flusser and Roth, 2014). The communicative, the dialogic nature of the textile is thus engaged and emphasised.

2.3 Contribution

The overarching intention was to utilise this knowledge to design textiles in such a way that the perception of their value is changed. The goal was to create things that foster appreciation, invite noticing and facilitate mindfulness for nature. To make textiles without participating in a seasonal trend culture but to create cloth that is intended to be cherished and kept, perhaps passed down. The purpose of this project was to probe a way of practice that forms part of the antidote to the tidal wave of overwhelming materialism (Chapman, 2005). My aim was to consciously contribute to the development of counter stratagems that could help restore a sense of proportion in the way textiles are produced and used.

3. context:

3.1 Positioning the researcher

When I was twenty five, I left my art teaching job in Porirua to go to India for a year. I spent the year travelling around, staying in villages outside the main tourist centres, immersing in local culture whenever I could. The experience put me in touch with a kind

of artisan textile production that industrial processes have all but eradicated in our society. Craft was not something that was done to while away the spare hours, but was the technology that provided the necessities of life. In a mudbrick cottage, I saw a 'khadi' (hand loom) silk sari being block printed. On another occasion, in the Indian Himalaya, I watched women weaving an elaborate geometric pattern, richly coloured, using a fine homespun, hand dyed wool.

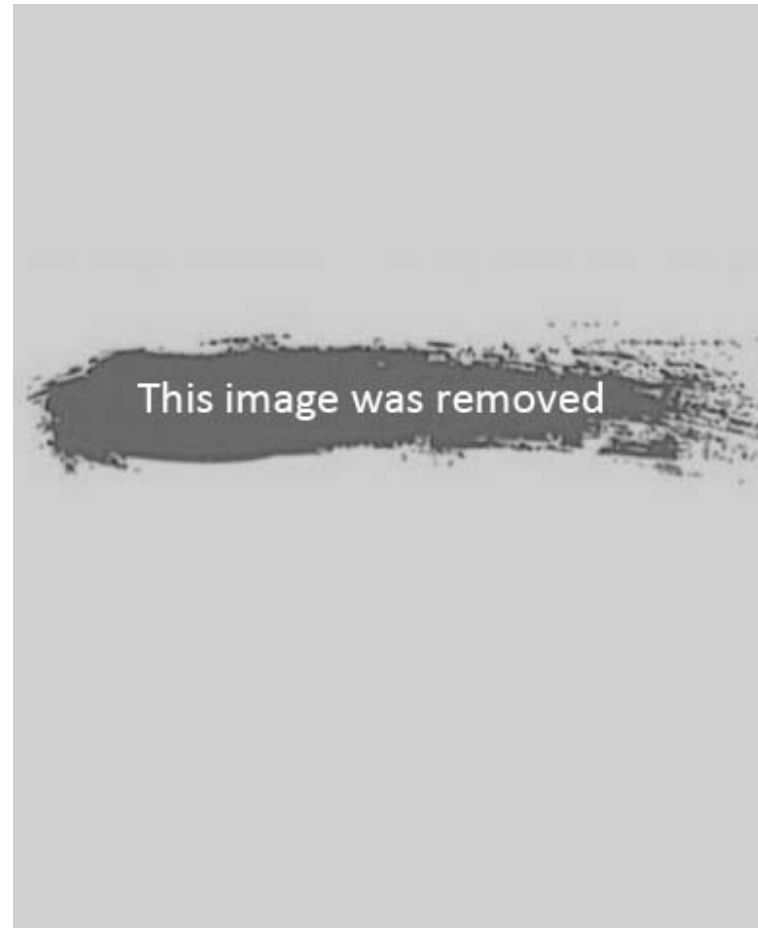


Figure 1. Pandit, T. (1991).
Joanne washing dishes.
Photograph. Goa, India.

Figure 2. Donovan, J. (1991).
Village girl carrying water.
Photograph. Goa, India.

Figure 3. Donovan, J. (1991).
The wedding party. Photograph.
Goa, India.

It was astounding to see long stretches of beautiful cloth created entirely with human hands in low tech environments. Observing the production of cloth in village micro industries made me more aware of the raw processes through which all textiles were once made everywhere.

Later, when I worked as an interior designer, this experience made me more conscious of the embodied energy in the textiles I used because I had seen what went into cloth made completely by hand. I had developed more consciousness toward textiles and I couldn't think about cloth in the same way. The invisible had become visible.

For society in general, industrial production has changed the rhythm and pace with which we make and use textiles and consequently the value we place on them. Trend culture pushes ever forward the desire to consume, which in turn drives the speed of production systems (Fletcher, 2014, Gwilt, & Rissanen, 2011). Cloth is made in vast quantities, in endless variety and in chameleon-like changes of form. This creates the illusion that cloth is a limitless resource, or rather, limited only by the consuming paradigm of any particular season.

Increasingly I found the cycles of what Chapman (2005) describes as regular 'identity renewal' in the interior design industry, disheartening. Redesigning peoples' homes to eradicate whole periods of their history seemed more than just wasteful. I began to wonder why the marks and signs of the passage of time had to give way to the shiny and the new. I asked myself what I as a designer could do to draw attention to this and to empower people to make different choices in an environment flooded with commercial hooks and messages. I chose to do this Masters as a way of investigating how my design process and creative skills could be put to better use: to support change and awareness rather than to serve a pattern of consumer use that is harmful.

3.2 Design activism

Within the change movement, researchers and design practitioners have moved from purely technical concerns towards fundamental social connectivity and drivers within our emotional consciousness, to determine new design approaches (Thorpe, 2010). Designers across disciplines redefine design protocols, challenge precedence and look for constructive alternatives in order to drive a counter evolution against what is perceived as 'out-of-control' consumerism (Bruinsma, 2000, Walker, 2006).

'Slow Design' is a movement intent on advancing design methodologies and production outcomes towards this. The premise is a theory of design that does not serve repetition on a mass scale and offers a vision wherein we as designers extend our creative force beyond materialism (Strauss & Fuad-Luke, 2012). The movement recognises that the fast pace of modern existence frequently annihilates our sense of ownership over the things we use and circumvents a natural state of reflection and 'grounded-ness' towards people, things and materials. Alistair Fuad-Luke extols designers to create paradigm shifts away from this, towards *experiences*, rather than objects (Fuad-Luke, 2009). A collective engagement with end users is the result and this is seen as a pathway to a new concept of progress.

Similarly, Kate Fletcher (2014) discusses 'a new model for action that deposes passivity and indifference'. She identifies disconnect between 'closed fashion' and the user. Fletcher develops solutions to enable individuals to bridge the divide between maker and consumer.

An innovative approach from activist and researcher Otto von Busch (2009) called 'The Reform Project', is a work in co-design and end user engagement. His research energises us to resist passive compliance with the mechanics of trend culture. In von

Busch's thesis for change, designers and consumers have agency in that objective and are empowered to break through the benumbing effects of consumerism. For von Busch design can be a subversive act, where each small move collectively culminates in the 'groundswell for change'.

3.3 Empathy as a tool

Jonathon Chapman also considers re-examining design protocols. His approach is to consider what really matters to us. He examines the empathetic state in which we often acquire and retain things and promotes the idea that designers should design towards this. When objects are loved and cherished for longer, we consume less. 'Design empathy' involves a conscious engagement with the end user on an emotional level (Chapman, 2005, 2009). Creating a deeper sense of satisfaction for something is seen as an important factor in why things are kept and cherished, therefore emotion is an important factor when designing for sustainable outcomes (Chapman 2009, Niinimäki, & Koskinen, 2011, Walker, 2010).

These contemporary 'humanist' approaches that contextualise my project are somewhat anti-rational. For Fuad-Luke (2009) and Chapman (2005), emotional responses and intuition are placed higher in the hierarchy of human understanding and are fundamentally important if we are to connect with the things we make and the people who use them. This is considered a necessary shift towards change.

3.4 Handcraft

Walter Benjamin discussed the disconnect he observed between humanity and what we produce using industrial processes, as a discord between soul, eye and hand. He determined that it is through the body, in particular the hand, through which authentic experience is transmitted and understood. Thus, a fundamentally human way of knowing, is subverted in our age of technological mass production (Leslie, 1998).

Anthropologist Tim Ingold, (2000, 2013) extrapolates further, that in fact human social relations and knowledge of the world itself is intimately connected to the things we make by hand. Making is the binding that forms culture, making is knowing the world. Consequently, a restorative agent for change lies in a paradigm shift towards seeing ourselves as connected to the things we make and use, rather than completely separate.

Consciously or unconsciously, we often measure the value of objects in relation to our biological form and its rhythms. This is an accord through which we can read and understand the world. (Ingold, 2010) Traditionally, textiles were valued in accordance with the time it took people to grow or farm the primary products and make them up into textiles. Increments of a human lifespan, days, months, even years, were clearly embedded into cloth. In addition, textiles and the objects we made from them, were often things that bound us together as family and community, even across generations (Wachowich, 2014). Industrial processes remove our awareness of embodied human time and by implication, the true costs of the textiles around us. A greater perceived distance exists therefore, between the fabric we use and ourselves.

By placing a frame of reference into my textile designs, in the form of hand done stitch, or a brush mark, or a photograph image, the textile is on some level within a human scale once more. It is once again connected to us on a level. A human being with

thoughts and feelings, subject to the laws of time, has made that thing. A subtle, subliminal paradigm shift takes place. The textile is now finite whereas before it was limitless, without a visible beginning or end. By designing textiles within a human framework, we create a finite thing; the users perception towards its incremental value, is altered.

3.5 Wabi sabi

In 'The unknown craftsman', Soetsu Yanagi (1989) suggests a way of crafts as a powerful meditation through which we can reconnect with nature and ourselves. Yanagi demonstrates, using the unpretentious craftwork in handmade Korean tea utensils, the Zen concept of impermanence. Signs of handling, changes in texture and colour in these wares, indicate the imprint of humanity and of changing time. The aesthetic of wabi sabi is discussed within the context of the function and beauty innate within simple objects. A consciousness is developed, embedded in the made object, that all things are part of the organic world and are either evolving or devolving. The notion is explored that when nature is imbued, material things can inspire reflection and respect for the moral standards of gratitude, simplicity and humility (Yanagi, 1989, Arnheim,1994).

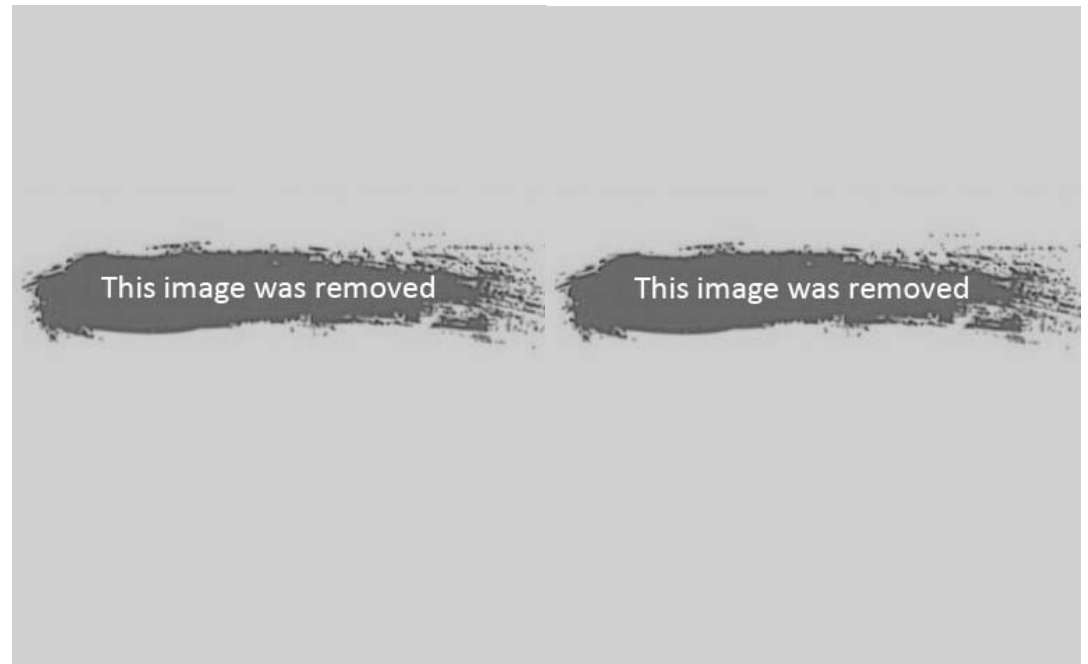


3.7 Key textile print designers

Kate Ashe's textiles carry the slogan 'to collect and cherish' (Quinn, B. 2013, p.152). Kate's fashion practice evolved out of her textile print practice, where she created stunning prints that raised awareness about nature and sustainability. Her work is not intended to follow trend culture but to promote a move away from throwaway 'fast fashion'. She make 'one offs', intended to be kept, treasured and handed down. Although Ashe uses hand work to produce her designs, I investigated a similar approach using digital technology. Following Ashe's lead but using a digital medium, I attempt to raise thoughts of nature, inspire a sense of something that should be cherished and to create an object that will be kept, maintained and handed down.

Figure 4. Quinn, B. (2013).
Kate Ashe's day waratah
print. Image. p.156

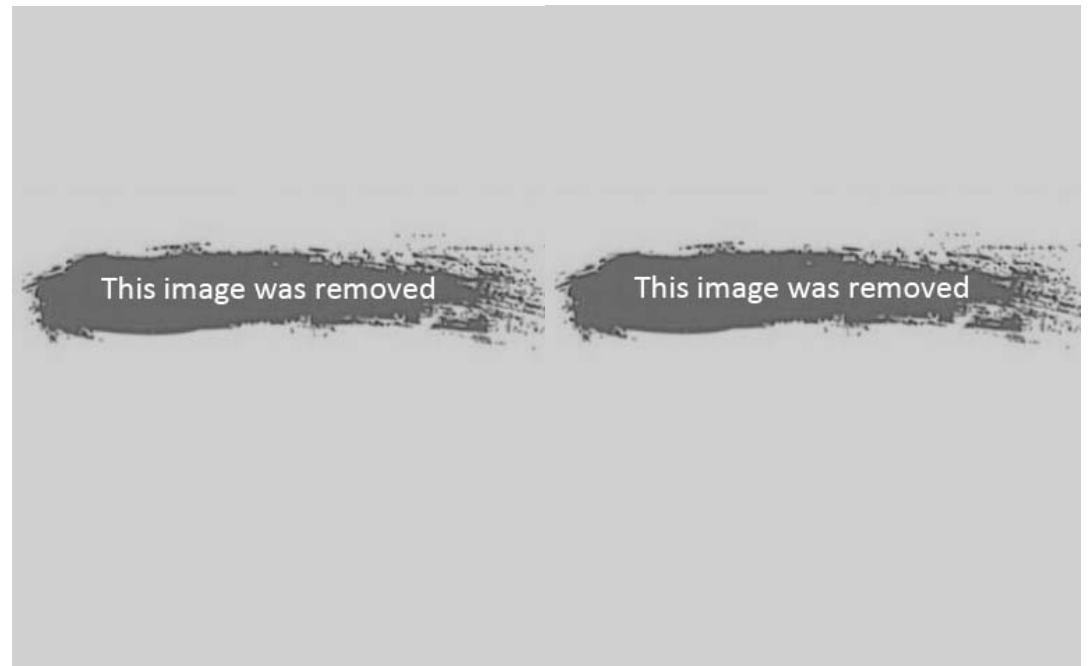
Figure 5. Quinn, B. (2013).
A printed garment by Kate
Ashe. . Image. p.157



Paul Simmons and Alistair McAuley formed the textile studio 'Timourous Beasties' in 1990. Their designs are produced as textiles and wallpaper, often using digital print, for the interior design industry. A strong relationship to the drawn image lends their work an air of traditional craft although it is technologically produced. Traditional looking toiles, for example, surprise us with modern tales of prostitutes, pimps, degrading tower blocks and typical urban scenes. This juxtaposition of tradition and modern, the hand done with the digital, give the prints a unique preciousness and lodges them in the territory of limited run or bespoke, rather than mass production. Nature is a divine force in many of the prints, Simmons and McAuley populate their world with exquisite lizards, bees, flowers and leaves. They remind us that there is no higher opulence than nature itself and we experience appreciation of nature when we see their work.

Figure 6. Bamboo Lace,
retrieved from:
www.timourousbeasties.com/shop/fabric/40/bamboo-lace/ 9/10/2015

Figure 7. Timourous
Beasties devise an interior
for Edinburgh's five-star
G&V Royal Mile Hotel.
Retrieved from
<http://www.timorousbeasties.com/journal-post/g-v-hotel-edinburgh> 9/10/2015



4. methodology:

4.1 Action research

The manifestation of textiles, created by me the agent, intended to accomplish the objectives hitherto outlined. Design practice with intent and experimentation produces the roadmap, or strategic approach to achieve the objective. My research question defines the parameters of that objective and the theoretical readings underpin, support and develop the practice.

The concept of the design cycle as described by Donald Shon (1991) in 'The reflective practioner', acknowledges the cyclic nature of design thinking. Creative searching is interspersed with periods of analytical reflection and decision making, then the process begins again; research>creative outputs>reflection and decision making

I generate designs for textiles in a cycle that begins with reaching around; framing in my mind, or through sketching, a possible a range of outcomes.

Wabi sabi is an important part of the process. Discovering things worn by nature, observing, letting things be, the acceptance and celebration of change and decay. These approaches underpinned much of the making over the course of the project.

Initial gatherings or concepts are followed through with trials and experiments, after which I evaluate and reframe the outputs. Cell phone experiences, are often followed by some work with mixed media in the studio. Reflection, handling, juxtaposing and notes take place before the designs are remediated in Photoshop. I sometimes know what I will create in Photoshop based on a prior experiment and sometimes things happen in Photoshop that stimulate new design ideas.

In Photoshop a process of 'play' i.e juxtaposition, and visual 'handling' takes place. Raw images and scans are opened all at once and viewed together or in groups on the screen. The method of working in Photoshop is similar to the way a collage is usually made in the physical world.

Finished designs are stored as medium resolution tiff files then sent to AUT's, Textile and Design Laboratory (TDL) for printing as test proofs. The prints are returned to me after about five working days after which, there is a new period of reflection that is markedly different from the first design cycle.

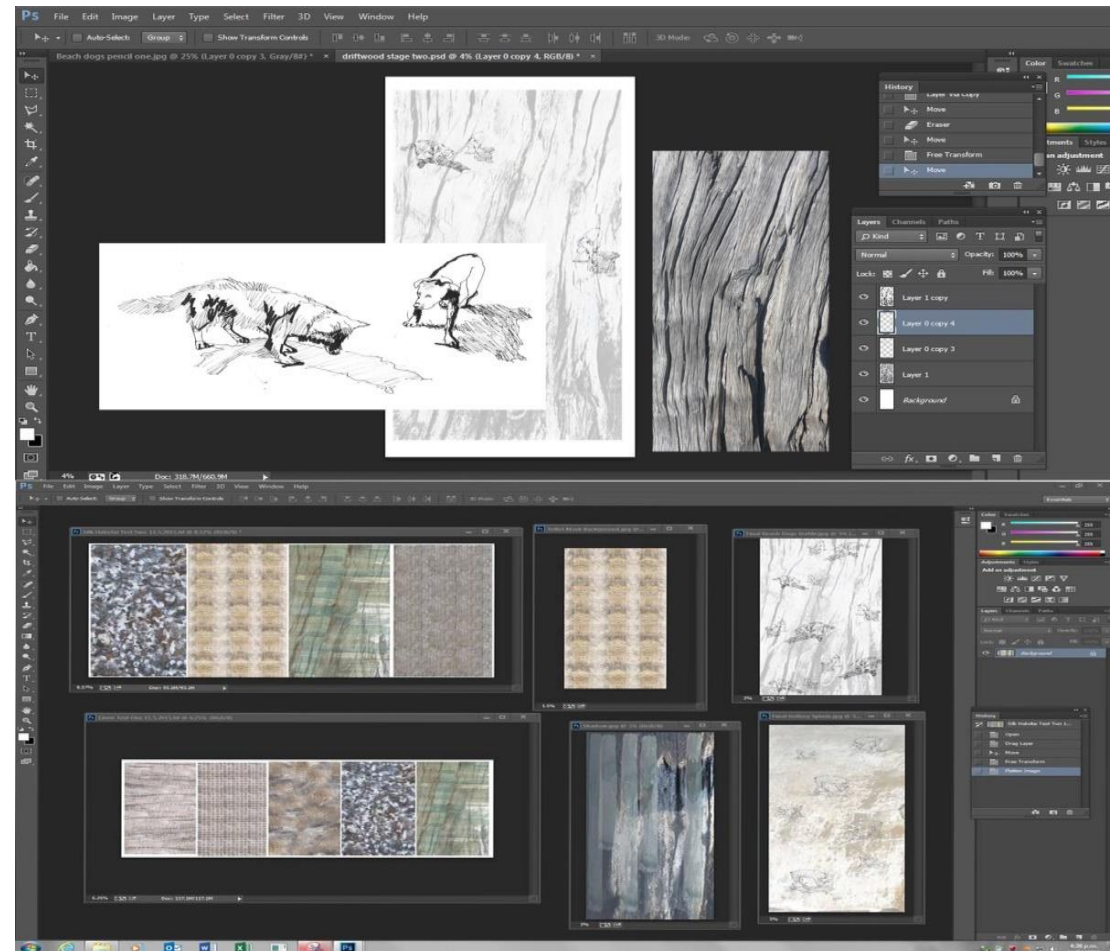


Figure 8. Donovan, J. (2015). Adobe collage process. Digital image.

I re-engage with the proofs, handling them juxtaposing them with colour and textures, to begin a new layer of experimentation and exploration. Sometimes new forms materialise and the designs are remediated. I use stitch, cutting slashing, sanding and painting with fabric dyes, to remediate the prints.



Figure 9. Donovan, J. (2015). Silk habotai print. Digital image.

Figure 10. Donovan, J. (2015). Textile print being remediated. Digital image.

5. methods and processes:

5.1 Overview of methods

Photographing experience using a cell phone

Mixed media drawings, monoprinting

Adobe digital collaging

Digital Print at AUT's Textile and Design Lab

Handling, reflection, analysis

Drawing and painting, marbling or stitching into the printed textile

Deconstructing, tearing mending and sanding

Letting things be, serendipity, wabi sabi



5.2 Advantages in CAD driven print design

Digital printing and CAD have dramatically altered the way printed textiles are created and used. Traditionally pattern repeat was a vital component of many textile designs. How pattern was repeated was influenced by the sizes of screens, print beds and rollers and this lent a rigid character to many textile designs. Conversely, CAD-derived printed textiles, can utilise large scale images or randomised patterns that are limited only by the carrying capacity of the computer (Briggs-Goode, 2013). Designs can be reworked to be large or small in scale so they conform to a product's form, or specific garment shapes. A limited run can be produced and that can be run off again as needed. This 'engineered' approach is less wasteful, and it changes the landscape of the design process as the designer can play a more integrated role in the final outcome.

Figure 11. Donovan, J. (2015). Diagram indicating uses for engineered digital textile prints. Digital image.



The process has other advantages; I can affect change much more quickly digitally than when I use a traditional method. Varying iterations, changes that could take hours or even days when working with traditional print or dyeing methods, can be brought about in CAD as easily as creating a new layer I can work through experiments quickly, which is exciting and gratifying; this alone creates surges of creativity and the freedom to explore many more potential outcomes (Treadaway, 2007).

5.3 The Challenges inherent in digital design

Despite the potential of this tool and the freedom it allows, artists and designers also report its limitations. Since digital design has found its place among traditional hand-done practices, practitioners comment that the results often seem 'flat and dead' by comparison to analogue processes. According to researcher Cathy Treadaway (2004), artists who use CAD as part of their practice report feeling a lack of ownership over the result and a sense of dissatisfaction in it. Possibly this is due to the fact that designs generated in CAD, are uniformly codified rather than made with the idiosyncrasies of the hand, body and mind working together. The subtle signs of gesture, the trace of a body, human weight and movement are missing. As Flusser contends in 'Gesture', we subconsciously recognise our own experience of the world when we observe human gesture (Flusser, & Roth, 2014). It follows therefore, that when we cannot recognise ourselves in digital imagery, we experience the result as somewhat devoid of life.

When a design is made up of pixel and code, the image exists in a non-human dimension, which is not influenced by time, decay, or devolution. Only after the blueprint

is released into the fabric or onto the material object, is it subject to the living world of decay and human engagement wherein we may begin to observe references to our own experience.

However delicate the hand, there are no raw edges in CAD; fingertips tap out iterations on a keyboard and the results are viewed, absent from the tactile sense, on the screen. Conversely, analogue craft is always a physical engagement that expresses the limits of tools, hand dexterity and materials (Sennett, 2008, Treadaway, 2004, 2009). In CAD the mind alone makes a decision to push the keys or swerve the mouse only the fingertips are engaged; the result is abstracted, removed from the body, articulated in a codification of making, but not the reality itself.

Whatever twists and turns I create, random mouse moves, serendipitous use of layers, scans of analogue drawings, to try to reinvest the body, the distance created by the character of the process is clear. The bridge is too wide, the distance cannot be crossed because it is a distance that exists between dimensions, the virtual and the real (Flusser, 1999).

Ingold (2000) argues that physically acting in the world is in itself, a way of knowing. Accordingly, it is through attentive touching, handling, looking, scent and listening, entailed in practical work, that much knowledge is gained.

When the digital prints come back from the TDL and are remediated with analogue processes, a transition takes place in the making. Firstly there is touching, reflection and assessment through which the textile is brought into the realm of the human body once more. If the textile is drawn into, stitched or cut, these actions are done in the time it takes for the action to happen and are performed using the human body and tools. The work is within what Ingold (2000) calls the human 'task scape', once more.

Time is an immediate component in the relationship. Actions within Photoshop are relatively equal in terms of time. I can apply a field of colour for example, in relatively the same time as it takes to create a texture, or draw something with the mouse. On the other hand, analogue processes equate to significantly different portions of time (Treadaway, 2007). I can tear the cloth in a few seconds, but stitching can take hours or days. Risk is reintroduced into the process, in addition to serendipity and guesswork. These qualities, which are present in all craft but largely absent in the digital, embody the presence of humanity I strive for in the textiles.

5.4 Colour palette

The palette developed is derived from colours seen in a walk in the forest. Following the principles of wabi sabi, the palette is made up of subdued colours, inspired by mud, sand, water reflections, tree bark, leaf litter and lichen. I confine myself not just to subdued natural colours, but also to the way colour forms in nature. Nothing in nature is one large plane of colour, instead everything is made up of a myriad of nuances of similar colours (Juniper, 2011). Therefore, I too tend to drive towards uneven patinas made up of a spectrum. It is through the paring down of the palette toward subtle, diffuse and murky colour that I hope the print will acquire an obscure beauty. The lack of uniformity in the colours, a lack of ostentation, unrefined simplicity, a reverence for nature and the feelings it instils in us, summarises the inspiration for the colour palette.



Figure 12. Donovan, J. (2015). Colour palette and mood board for textile inspiration. Digital image.

5.5 Catching experience – photographs as gesture

Using a smart phone camera is a way of paying attention to the moment and of focussing on the here and now. Experiences are drawn together, using the phone's immediacy and collected for later use. The stand point of the viewer becomes the nexus upon which an experience is recorded and the smart phone is in a sense a conduit, a window.



Figure 13. Donovan, J. (2015). Montage of smart phone images taken during a beach walk with the dogs. Digital image.

Photographs are taken with an ease and simplicity that permits the capture of fleeting experience. The amount of images that can be collected during one period of exploration is hard to exceed, using dropbox and/or an SD card, and this permits a kind of freedom. The phone is often carried on the body, so unexpected encounters can be recorded at will. The 'throwaway' environment of cell phone images, which can be clicked at random, edited and discarded at will, means that images can be taken in a kind of impressionist sweep of a scene. They can be part of a fluid experience.

Although I used photographs as a source almost from the outset in this project during the post graduate diploma, my initial investigations centred around drawing and stitch as expressions of human experience. It took a progression of work and the discovery of Vilem Flusser to lead me to the discovery that the photographs themselves were also a gesture and could convey the humanity expression I sought.

Flusser describes photography as a gesture of seeing and it therefore follows that the trace of that gesture is present in the final image (Flusser, and Roth, 2014). Once I began to think of the images I was using in this way, the photographs, became re-contextualised as a direct communication between the maker and user/viewer.

“We recognise ourselves in this gesture because it is our own way of being in the world. We know that we are dealing with a human being because we recognise ourselves in him. Our identification of a human body is a secondary element of this direct and concrete recognition.”

(Flusser, and Roth, 2014, p.76).



Figure 14. Donovan, J. (2015). Montage of smart phone images capturing reflections and disturbances in a puddle. Digital image.

The movement of the cell phone, the movement of the photographer, the object being photographed and the reader of the image are united in an orchestration that is an imprint of someone looking with discipline and intent. Thus a human being, a human experience, a kind of touch is conveyed through the photographs and into the textile designs.

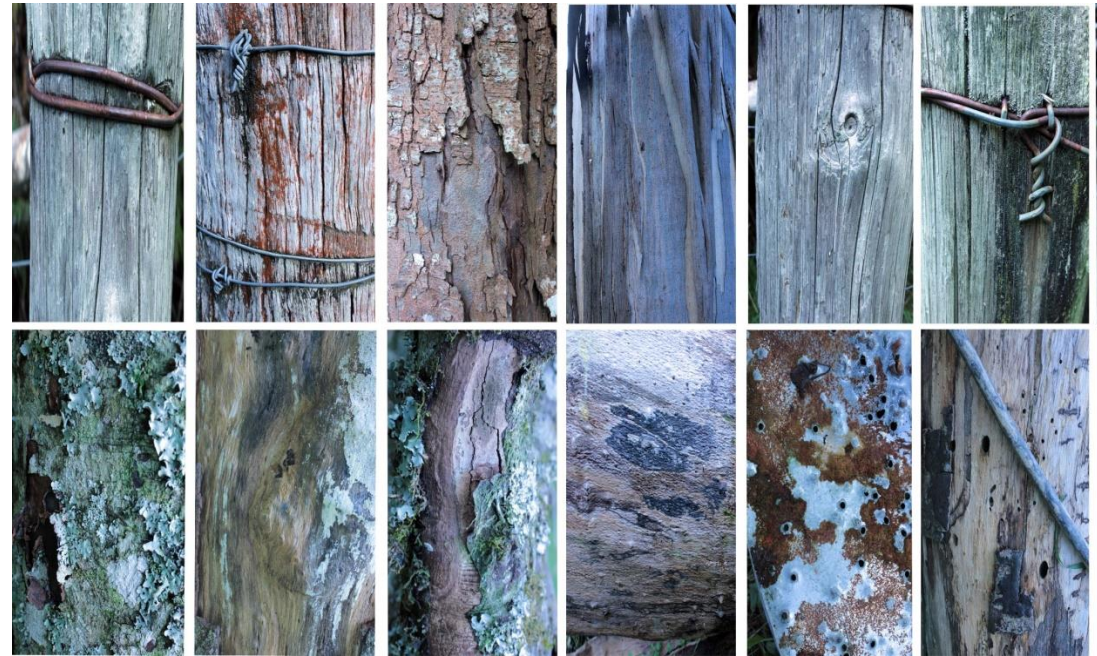


Figure 15. Donovan, J. (2015). Montage of smart phone images capturing textures and experiences in a forest of trees. Digital image.

This series of work, taken from a short walk in a stand of bush reflects the images that caught my eye as I experienced the sight, sounds and smells of the trees. This human experience of the bush is caught, like a newt in a jar, almost unfettered by art or control. The images have, in the true sense of wabi sabi, an uncontrolled simplicity like nature itself. Later I edit; examining and extracting the colours and the textures that signify the

most to me in order to claim those images that convey the gesture of the walk, the seeing and the experience.

5.6 Intimacy, empathy and the anti-rational

I attempt to bridge the divide between the digital and human world through imbuing the work with uniquely human qualities of the maker. Through drawing and cell phone images, I resonate my own consciousness through the work. It is a light touch that becomes a subliminal connectivity. Art, says Ingold, gives expression to human feeling. He describes how this can work using Leos Janacek's work, who conducted some experiments codifying sea sounds. Janacek determined that sound/speech is not just a symbolic communication, but IS the thing expressed (Ingold, 2000). Thus, although the digital codifies nature and the human nuance is flattened, the prints I create are a resonance of an earlier experience and bring that alive in the textile.



The series of work entitled, 'Beach dogs', 'Shadow', 'Jedboy splash', and 'Fur tex' are four designs taken from the photographs and drawings from the beach walk described earlier. The dogs, their play, the water, organic textures such as driftwood and fur, are expressed through layered imagery in Photoshop and hand drawing.

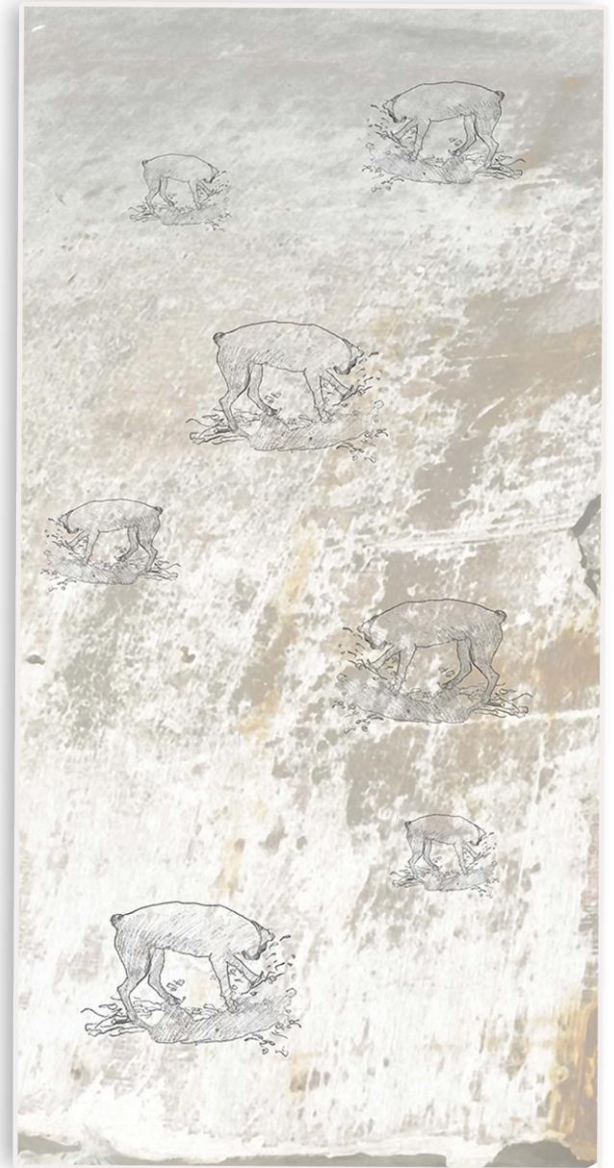
Figure 16. Donovan, J. (2015). Beach dogs. Digital print, silk georgette.

Figure 17. Donovan, J. (2015). Fur tex. Digital print, linen.



'Jedboy splash' and 'Beach dogs', use pencil lines of varying weights and direction changes, to indicate the trace of a moving body, responding to an observation. There is the movement of the person drawing the dogs and the movement of the dogs themselves, caught in the sketches. The textures, fur, driftwood, and a sandy beach, further link the images to an experience and the experience recorded is based on feeling.

Figure 16. Donovan, J.
(2015). Jedboy splash.
Digital print, silk habotai.



In 'Shadow', a series of hand done brush marks overlay an image of a shadow on driftwood. The brush mark is a recorded moment of human movement, the image is a recorded moment of human experience.

Figure 19. Donovan, J.
(2015). Shadow. Digital print,
silk habotai.



I consciously used emotional responses, empathy and intuition to drive these textile designs. This in part, is another way to reveal the human maker to the viewer through the prints and a ploy towards humanity's foothold in the mass production counter culture. Empathy, intuition, the inner life of humans, are often expelled from the business of design as industrial production has increased. 'Enlightenment thought, says Tim Ingold, has proclaimed the triumph of human reason over recalcitrant nature' – (Ingold, T. 2000 p.27)

We are trained from birth to compartmentalise and hold to logical systems for seeking knowledge and understanding experiences. However, in reality our way of gaining experience or information is dualistic. On one hand, we rely on the socially programmed methods our logical self understands and on the other, we rely on our inner feeling or intuition. Creative practice often orientates our psyche towards our intuitive understanding of things, triggering memories, experiences and identifying knowledge (Treadaway, 2009). My methodology works within a dualistic approach wherein I also consider intuitive understanding and emotional responses as legitimate forms of understanding through which knowledge may be derived.

5.7 Stitch, the hand and indexical trace

Our body is the loom upon which all our actions are made. Hands express our inner nature which is in turn, expressed in the things we make (Sennett, 2008). As already discussed, machine made things contribute a character that is formed with uniform precision and are therefore absent of the serendipity of the hand with all its traces of humanity (Treadaway, 2004). The nature of the digital process also contributes a virtual

character, visible in the printed outcome. The idea is present that the design is without edges, can be created instantaneously, unlimitedly and in infinite forms.

Coupling stitch with digital textiles brings the print from the infinity of the digital realm back into the physical human task-scape. We read the language of human dexterity in the stitches and thereby an experience of time is invoked. Stitch has associations with arduous work, preciousness and value. Researcher Claire Pajackowska (2009) describes stitch as an important index of value in our cultures of industrial production, wherein we can experience a gesture of making in its temporal human context.

In this work 'Nevada Stitch' hand done stitch becomes a political act. The stitches remove the textile from the possibility of large scale mass production. Where do they go if they have no place within this system? Are they in the realm alongside home knitted pullovers and items mended and passed down? Perhaps they are reinstated within a community of practitioners who generate unique outcomes on a small scale. Possibly the end user and the designer collaborate to create a bespoke series of work. The stitched remediation ties the designer to the outcome and thereby defines somewhat the nature of its future re-production.

Figure 20. Donovan, J. (2015).
Nevada stitch. Digital print, on woven
merino.

Figure 21. Donovan, J. (2015).
Nevada stitch detail. Digital print, on
woven merino.



This series of work 'Plaid', 'Oak patina', 'Tex wax', 'Lace wax' and 'Beach dots one' draw on proximity to the body as inspiration. 'Plaid' uses images of a crumpled and worn shirt to create an imperfect and unregimented plaid. 'Oak patina' is a rhythmic non-pattern taken from images of worn and aged wooden furniture. I am interested in the relationship to the body represented in the textures and translated through to the prints. The finished textiles, printed on linen, also look 'handled' and 'used'. This conveys a relationship to a third person or persons, it imbues a history and a vague sense of time.



Figure 22. Donovan, J. (2015).
Plaid. Digital print, linen.



Figure 23. Donovan, J. (2015).
Oak Patina. Digital print, on
linen.

Figure 24. Donovan, J. (2015). Tex wax. Digital print, silk habotai.

Figure 25. Donovan, J. (2015). Lace wax. Digital print, silk habotai.

Figure 26. (next page)
Donovan, J. (2015). Beach dots one. Digital print, silk habotai.



Textures ignite our memory of touch, we respond to textures on a bodily level as well as visual. (Sennett, 2008). For the prints 'Tex wax', 'Lace wax' and 'Beach dots one' I photographed drawings I made using dribbled wax. I dribbled wax on various cloth backgrounds to create a texture that invites a sensory response. The leather used for 'Tex wax' repels the wax, soot enters the droplets before it dries. The lace texture used for 'Lace wax' absorbs the wax, soaking it in. The lace peeks through a solid yet rough film.

On the third, the approach was to set up a resist. The wax sets within the silk, forming a barrier that resists an applied dye. The spatter of wax dots in 'Beach dots one' is revealed by the dye. The wax textures seem to rise above the textile although they are embodied with it. This creates a kind of sensory reaction to the texture that is similar to the way stitch is discovered by touch. The texture is released from the surface yet part of it.

The works in this series imprint a trace of the body into the prints. Wax is dribbled, a shirt is worn and rumpled and a piece of timber yields to the human hand. Proximity to body and hands are apparent and a human nuance is restored to the prints.



5.8 Idiosyncrasy

As mentioned earlier, scale and repeat are important parameters in textile designs intended for mass production. Pattern repeat should be smaller if the textile is intended for the garment industry and larger if it is an interiors textile (Briggs-Goode, A. 2013). Other limits may include standard fabric widths, and railroading.

This series of works, 'Creases', 'Jedboy brush', 'Mould lace', 'Timberland' and 'Water drop id', run counter to the standards that define a culture of production. Instead of conforming to scale, they are designed to be organic in form. The designs are asymmetrical, run free form and are non-repeating. In doing this I attempt to alter the view, to change the paradigm that a textile may be run off as a seemingly limitless item. To use the piece of printed cloth for something would be as if to use a piece of driftwood from the beach to fashion into a chair. The design must follow the material and merge with it. The idiosyncrasy of the material must be celebrated and allowed to be in order for an object to be realised. By creating designs that are complete in themselves and idiosyncratic, I attempt to return the cloth into the finite. The textile is contextualised within the made world of craft, in an attempt to restore a sense of proportion that intrinsically acknowledges labour and limited resources.

I took inspiration for this approach from Yanagi's (1989) study of the aesthetics and philosophy behind certain forms of Korean pottery. The Japanese tea masters elevated these ordinary utensils through the way of seeing them. Each one is unique; its idiosyncrasies serving to demonstrate the notion that the world is full of hidden beauty which is often discovered rather than deliberately made. Wabi sabi, he says, is the

admiration of
things made
without rigid
form, as
perhaps nature
would have
made them.
(Yanagi, 1989,
Arnheim,
1994).



Figure 27. Donovan, J. (2015).
Jedboy brush. Digital print
remediated with textile inks, silk
habotai.



Figure 28. Donovan, J. (2015).
Timberland. Digital print, silk
habotai.

'Creases' uses images of fabric overlaid with an image of worn timber. 'Mould lace' is taken from images of decayed wooden panel. These are printed on silk habotai, which preserves the graphic details and soft nuances of colour.

Figure 29. Donovan, J. (2015). Creases. Digital print silk habotai.

Figure 30. Donovan, J. (2015). Mould lace. Digital print, silk habotai.



'Water drop id' makes use of a view seen through water drops on glass. The view is distorted, the colours muted, the droplets of water fracture the scene into a myriad of colours and forms. This textile reminds us of the changing flux that is the organic world, its fleeting impermanence and beauty. The print is on silk habotai which holds the detail and watery quality of the final result very successfully.

Figure 31. Donovan, J.
(2015). Water drop Id.
Digital print silk habotai.



Reading around the tea masters and the concept of wabi sabi led me to imbue textiles with the qualities of change as seen in nature. I developed textures that remind us the world is in a constant state of change, such as lichen, decay and rust. Traces of imperfection, reminders of time and decomposing nature are the antithesis of the new 'perfection' machines produce. I therefore align the textiles I make with the natural world; they take their place among things that we brush against every day, which have become somewhat invisible to us.

In these textiles, the designer is 'the unknown craftsman' (Yanagi, 1989) whose presence speaks through small signs. The visibility of these signs leads to the contemplation of the designer, the material, the choices and the mind behind the creation. In this way the object becomes a plane where a dialogue takes place.

5.9 Disruptive processes

The overarching intent of my project is to revive more meaningful relationships with textiles over a longer period so that they become less disposable. By imbuing symbolic value I hope to make something that is cherished, tended, and kept. To achieve this, I have attempted to alter the view of the textile in various ways, including through intentionally disrupting conventional production processes.

Traditional methods for producing textile designs include block printing, screen print, dyeing and various forms of needle craft. Digital print may use scanned drawings or designs created directly in CAD. My approach in this series, 'Lichen miyabe', 'Wormwood pristine', 'Marble play', 'Silverwood ink', and 'Wormwood ink', was to disrupt conventional methods in order to create new forms

Here, layers of the print are stitched back into the design to create a three dimensional manipulation of the surface. 'Lichen miyabe' invites probing touch, exploration and discovery, as the print and hand done stitch lifts off the surface of the cloth. Touch offers a different sensory response to sight alone and invokes new reactions. (Sennett, 2008). The textile is thus experienced in a new way.



Figure 32. Donovan, J. (2015). Lichen miyabe. Digital print on merino wool with stitch and applique remediation.



'A callous is to the mind, what the zoom lens is to the camera.' (Sennett, 2008, p153).

'Wormwood pristine' is printed on linen which has a natural 'handled' looking texture after the print process. The imperfect look and feel of the fabric suits this design. During the print process, the ink absorbs into the warp and weft unevenly, the effect is if the fabric was worn down by time. I further enhanced this effect by sanding the fabric. Sanding exposes the warp and weft and rubs out the design so that it integrates with the threads. The design merges and emerges; it becomes part of the textile instead of imposed on it.

Figure 33. Donovan, J. (2015).
Wormwood pristine. Digital print on
linen, sanded.



'Marble play' picks up on the movement in the original drawing and the seawater with a remediation using a traditional marbling technique. The application of the inks using this process is hard to control and this lends the design a life of its own. The print is on silk georgette, which is fine, diaphanous silk. The effect of moving, splashing water depicted as a fleeting moment, is further enhanced by the delicate fabric. This experiment has further potential. Ink and colour applied this way change the handle of the cloth, but re-scanning into Photoshop and printing again, restores the original quality of the fabric. This also increases the variety of scales at which the design can be created. Through layering hand and digital methods, the print acquires a unique character.

Figure 34. Donovan, J. (2015). Marble play. Digital print on silk georgette, marble remediation



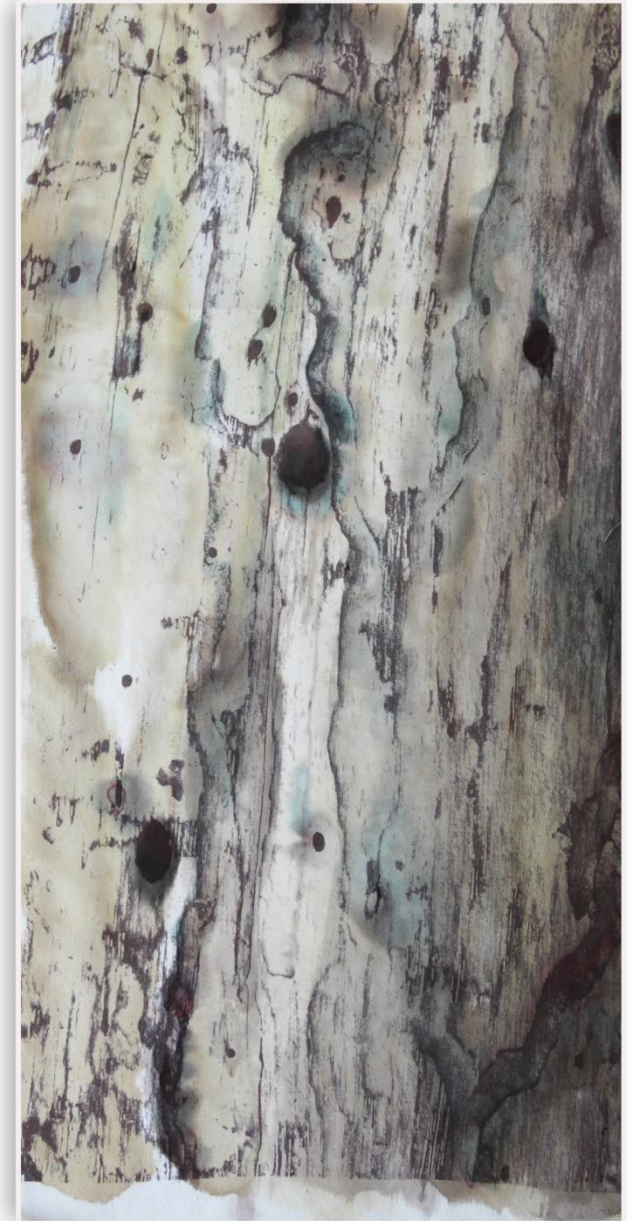
‘Silverwood ink’ and ‘Wormwood ink’ are made using silk painting inks that can be heat set. They can be watered down to create layers of wash. Merged with the underlying print, a hand done quality is achieved through the painterly brush marks. The digital ground in these designs, retires behind the active layer of dye work. The foreground detail is laden with gesture and indexical trace. The layering of digital and analogue indicates human touch, an element of which, may be perceived as authentic craft in a technological process (Treadaway, 2007).

Figure 35. Donovan, J. (2015).
Silverwood ink. Digital print on silk
habotai, textile ink remediation



Remediation contributes skill, commitment and an element of risk (Treadaway, 2004, 2007). The hybrid method of working, shifting between mediums, disturbing the creative flow between mediations, creates unique tensions and outcomes. In these designs, the digital print becomes the ground. The effects applied afterward are driven by the piece itself which suggests its own transformation and what it will become.

Figure 36. Donovan, J. (2015).
Wormwood ink. Digital print on silk
habotai, textile ink remediation



5.9 Decay, time and devolution

'Beautiful decay', 'Wired', 'Target practice', 'Silver wood', 'Ripple' and 'Tree cloud' explore the concept that age and change are natural and desirable forms of beauty. The first four in the series celebrates as adornment, the long slow touch of time: decay, weathering and patina. The last two in the series celebrate fleeting time: a moment caught, that will never return. This series imbues the wabi sabi concept of impermanence. The trace evident in these designs is not a human touch but signs of nature; the sun, wind and rain.



'Beautiful decay' explores the idea that mould and dirt are not damage but are rich embellishment beautiful enough to apply to precious silk. The wabi sabi philosophy that beauty is beheld in something normally discarded or eschewed, gives rise to reflection and appreciation of the organic world and its devolving processes. (Juniper, 2011, Koren, 2008).

Figure 37. Donovan, J. (2015).
Beautiful decay. Digital print on merino
wool

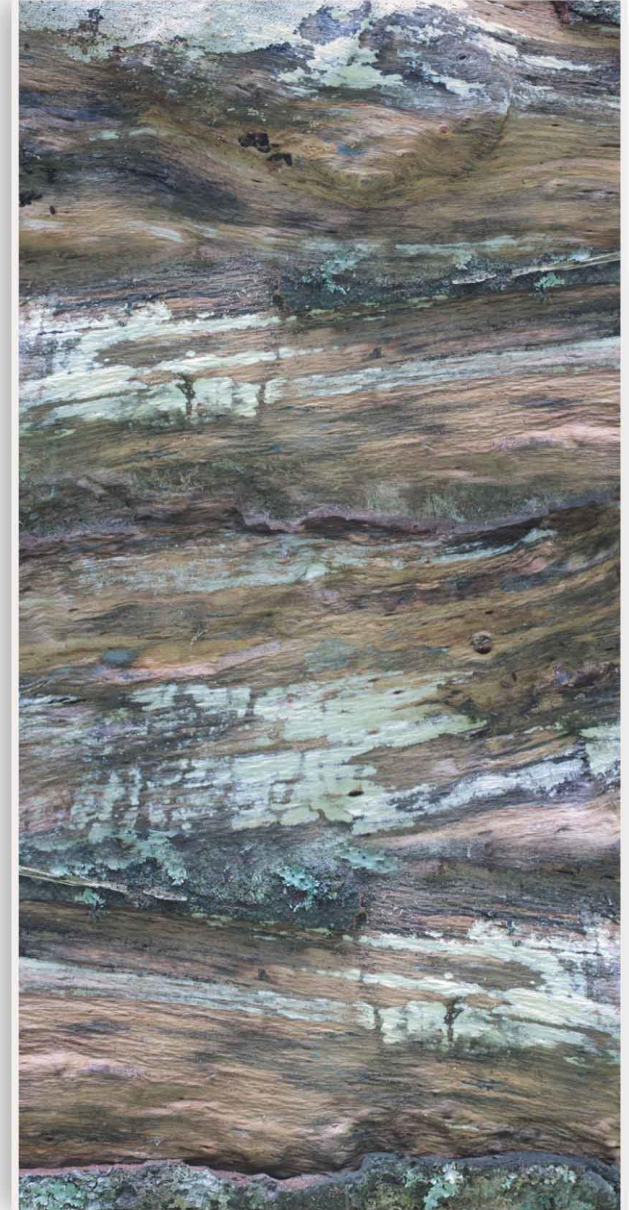




Figure 38. Donovan, J. (2015). Wired. Digital print on silk habotai

Figure 39. Donovan, J. (2015). Target practice. Digital print on silk habotai



Lichen, rust and weathering are intimate signs and marks borne on the surface. Printed on silk habotai, every mark and nuance of patina is richly detailed. Surface is activated and the print is thus reminiscent of a skin: lichen and patina are the unpretentious tattoo acquired through time. The imagery used in these textiles validates and embeds itself in the textile in ways other designs do not because of the relationship to surface. A tactile response is invoked and the materiality of the cloth is awakened.

For 'Silverwood' a minimal palette aligns this work with the wabi sabi concepts of simplicity, humility and purity. (Arnheim, 1994, Koren, 2008, Juniper, 2011)

This design and the others in the series are intended to inspire a reverence for nature. A concept of how we come to value nature in this way is discussed by Kay Milton (2002) in 'Loving Nature, an ecology of emotion'. Milton ascertains that consumer-driven capitalist societies tend to view nature as a resource to be used up, whereas other cultures often consider it to be 'sacred'. She argues that a lack of emotional connection to nature is not innate in us but is behavioural. Therefore, our desire to protect and value the planet and its resources depends on our sense of reverence for nature.

Figure 40. Donovan, J. (2015). Silverwood. Digital print on silk habotai





Figure 41. Donovan, J. (2015). Ripple. Digital print on silk habotai



Figure 42. Donovan, J. (2015). Tree cloud. Digital print on silk habotai

They 'Tree cloud', and 'Ripple' invite noticing of a point in time. A water splash, reflections caught fleetingly in moving water, sky and passing clouds are images of tiny moments that normally pass us by unobserved. These works reference the philosophy of mindfulness the tea masters fostered through the contemplation of simple aesthetic forms. (Okakura, 2012).

6. project outcomes and conclusion

For this project I have attempted to create;

Textiles that are designed with mindfulness and unclouded intuition rather than rational thought

Textiles that are not prototypical or designed for manufacturing systems, but are idiosyncratic

Textiles that invite a sense of reflection on nature instead of technological process,

Textiles that use technology to inspire thoughts of, and admiration for, nature

Textiles that remind us that the world around us is organic and that all things degrade in time

Textiles that remind us of the presence of the human designer; gesture, thoughts and emotions

Contextualising textiles more clearly as the products of human thought, labour and skill and as part of nature, rather than a purely technological construct, establishes them in a communal relationship instead of something above or beyond community. Textiles created as such can become part of a discourse between maker and user, a discourse about material worth and the environment. When an object's inter-dialogic nature is realised, hopefully the way in which it will be used and appreciated, is also changed.

As industrial manufacture has largely destroyed the social nature of textile production, the human being is drawn from the centre of production to the periphery. Often, the embedded human labour in a fine textile, is made to seem invisible, rather than

expressed as an index of value. Divorced from a maker, the human and environmental context in which things are formed and realised, are impalpable.

Just as all tools extend our capacity, (Sennett, 2008) Photoshop and digital print grant significant advantages in production but the end result is also affected by the technological character of the process. Once again, human agency can be less apparent and this sometimes contributes further to a sense of distance between the finished article and its maker.

As the social and environmental cost of textile production is curtailed off behind a screen of technological production, the simple step of designing towards an alternative approach can become a political act. Through combining technological technique and restoring a sense of human experience into the design I attempt to reduce the psychological space between the textile and the end user. I discovered that by imbuing human experience into digital textile design it is possible to change the character and more importantly, the textile's place in mass production culture. The question is can this change affect our sense of value towards textiles and how we respond to them?

I was also aware throughout the project that although the digital process offers some advantages towards a sustainable objective, digital print utilises toxic inks, works are printed in a hi-tech environment (at the expense of enormous resources) and outputs rely on an unlimited supply of fine textile stock produced elsewhere and transported over a considerable distance. Yet just as the lightest leaf can cause a ripple that extends across a wide lake, I believe the small actions we take as designers matter. Our intentions and integrity can embed new direction into the things we create. Without this, we are instead agents of the very problems that threaten us.

Through disrupting conventional processes and designing textiles for uses outside mass production methods I take part in the positive cultural transformation that begins within consumerism. It is beyond the scope of this project to answer whether or not textiles produced using craft, or in the other ways I have developed, would lead to less consumption and greater appreciation of printed cloth. Instead I offer alternatives for consideration and submit this undertaking as part of what Otto von Busch (2009) describes as the small change that becomes part of the greater collective direction.

If a textile is an object made to exist between people, is it also a space where fingers might link? Do the things we make also bind us to each other as people, the land, and as community?

Word count: 8009 main article, 10084 including headings, front pieces and references.



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8. appendix A. Exhibition images



Figure 43. Donovan, J. (2015). (a). Fabricating intimacy exhibition, photograph: Su Hendeles.

Figure 44. Donovan, J. (2015).
(b). Fabricating intimacy exhibition,
photograph: Su Hendeles.



Figure 45. Donovan, J. (2015).
(c). Fabricating intimacy exhibition,
photograph: Su Hendeles.

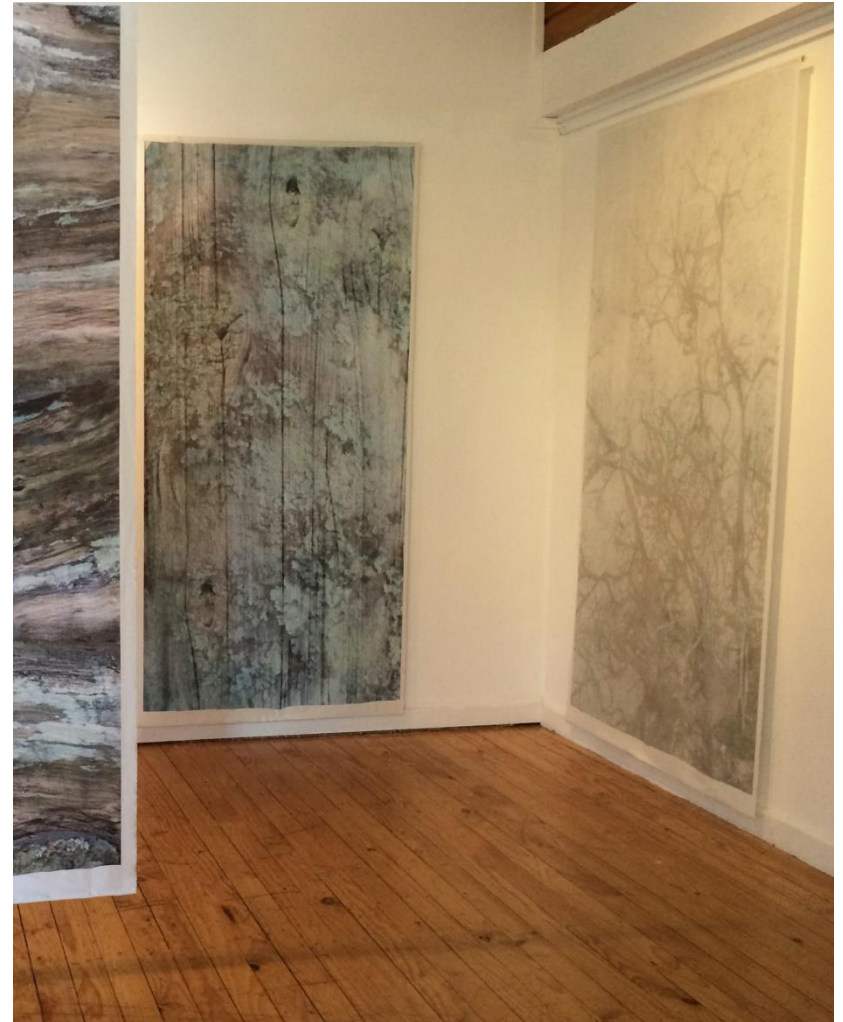
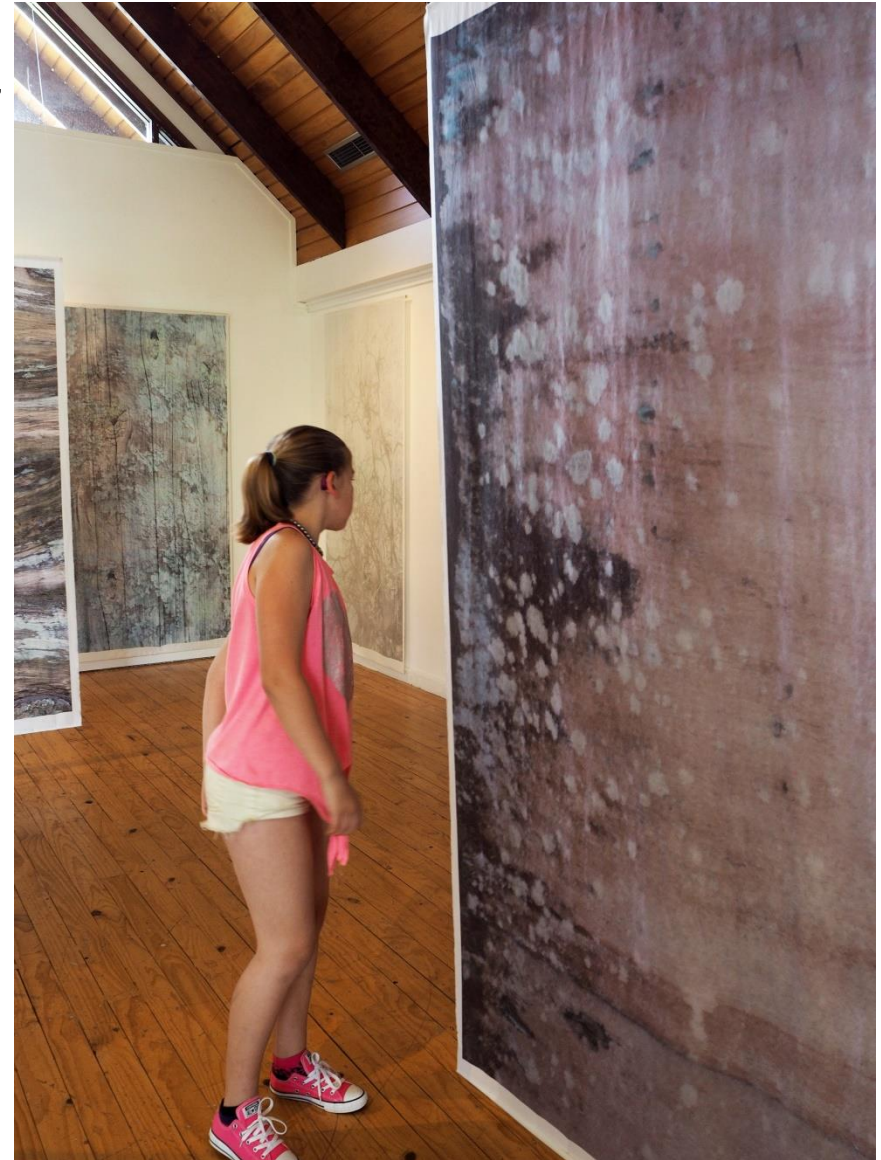




Figure 46. Donovan, J. (2015). (d). Fabricating intimacy exhibition, photograph: Su Hendeles.

Figure 47. Donovan, J. (2015).
(e). Fabricating intimacy exhibition,
photograph: Su Hendeles.



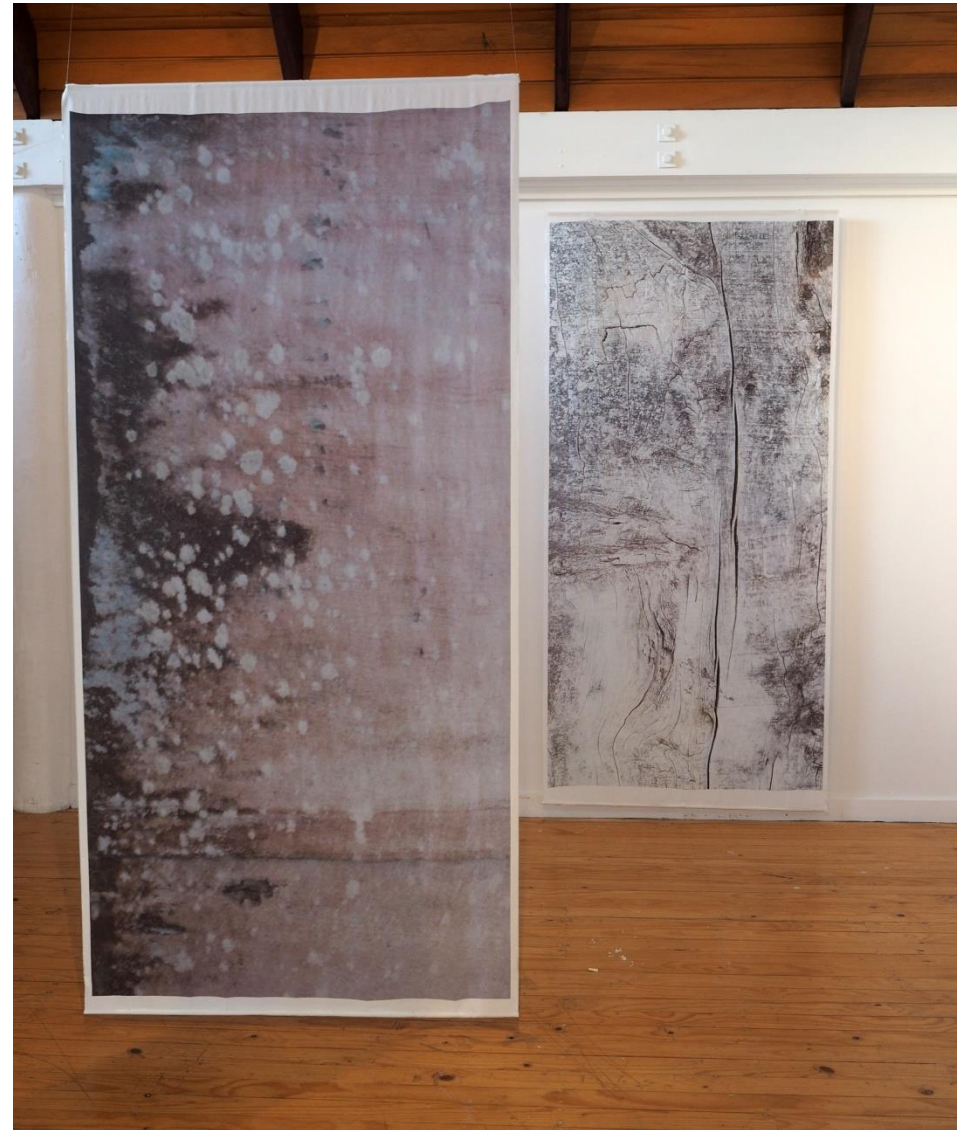


Figure 48. Donovan, J. (2015). (f). Fabricating intimacy exhibition, photograph: Su Hendeles.

Figure 49. Donovan, J. (2015).
(g). Fabricating intimacy exhibition,
photograph: Su Hendeles.

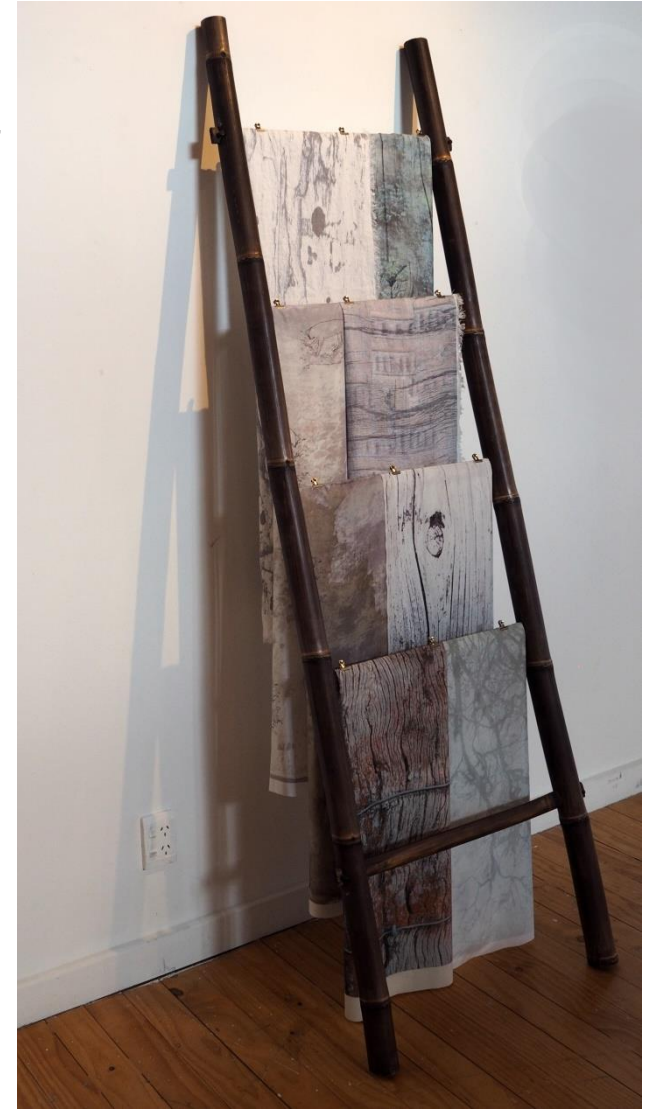




Figure 50. Donovan, J. (2015). Donovan, J. (2015). (h).
Fabricating intimacy exhibition, photograph: Su Hendeles.