

TEXTILE + DESIGN LAB

Case Study Number: 08/2017

Project Title: Woven Knit Bag

Researcher: Nikki Walker

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Project Period: July 2017 – ongoing

Project Description:

The Woven Knit Bag draws conceptually from the designer's relationship to cultural and physical environments. Informed through nostalgia and historic experience, the rural country and coastline of the Taranaki region, and the culture of 1970's New Zealand, all influence the context of the project. Textures, colours, materials and shapes used aim to portray the elemental, monumental and beautifully rugged aspects of place and people. The creation of objects or products becomes an act of 'making well' with what is available (a cultural norm of the time in this historical period). This frames the ethos behind the Woven Knit Bag as sustainable, beautiful and local. Translating these experiences and concepts into contemporary technologies has become the focal consideration of the designer, who has a long-held interest in knit-based products and textiles. The Textile and Design Lab is facilitating the development of the Woven Knit Bag, where access to Shima Seiki knitting technology has allowed the designer to experiment with technique and utilise seamless knitting technology to fully realise her conceptual underpinnings.

Background:

Nikki has a background in film and advertising production and has recently completed her Bachelor of Design degree in Textile Design. Currently, she is developing her Woven Knit Bag as part of her Master of Design degree. The bag was initiated in response to a competition, 'Raising the Baa', co-funded by the Wool Research Organisation of NZ and the Textile and Design Lab, which encouraged students to find applications for strong

(coarse) wool. Nikki was a finalist in this competition. She is currently working for MKM Knitwear and completed an internship with NZ footwear brand, Allbirds, in San Francisco in 2017. The designer has always had a love for textile design, with particular interest in knit technologies, both digital and traditional.

Process:

Hands on prototyping and experimentation informs the process of the designer, who focuses on the use of 'woven' knitting techniques to create texture and relief through translating the aesthetic of the weave into knitted structures. Three dimensional floats and contrasting materials such as merino and coarse wool create tension in the surface, reminiscent of topography and other abstract conceptual connections. The development of a knitwear package is an ongoing part of her work, where techniques can be translated from one machine to another, increasing the possibilities for shape and functionality in conjunction with the placement of texture and colour. The advantage of creating the package is that the bag can be created on the WholeGarment® knit machine for which there is no need for assembly of knitted panels as seams and joins are incorporated into the programme. This means the design can focus on sustainability, as materials are only used as required and production processes are minimised. The designer is also looking to incorporate recycled PET fibre into the bag to provide added structure and durability to the design through environmentally friendly means. Senior Technician, Gordon Fraser, is commended by the designer, who found his knowledge and enthusiasm for using the knit technology crucial to the development of her own ideas and skill.

Project Outcomes:

The project is still on-going and one of the designer's key aims is to create a product that is commercially acceptable. The designer also envisages the possibility of an installation or exhibition of her work on a larger scale, to provoke other applications for her techniques. Continued exploration of technique, structure, material and the addition of colour to her work will form the basis for ongoing developments.

Publications:

[Link to designer's online blog featuring previous projects:](#)

particularparticular.tumblr.com

Images:



