FIBRE *STORIES*

FIBRE *STORIES*

Edited by Ash Logan and Chiara Schmitt
Managing Editors: Emily Smith, Hélène Day Fraser
Assistant Editors: Elham Atighi, Melanie Camman, Christa Clay
Advisors: Keith Doyle, Cemre Demiralp, Kate Armstrong
Creative Direction: Ash Logan and Chiara Schmitt
Design: Arina Sin
Photography: Benny Zenga, exceptions noted
In collaboration with The Stationary Project

Printed and bound in Canada
Typeset: Joly Text and Joly Headline from Blaze Type
Anais from New Letters
ABC Favorit Mono from ABC Dinamo

This book can be downloaded as a .pdf
http://fibrestories.ecuad.ca
http://fibrestories.ca

Emily Carr University of Art + Design
520 East 1st Avenue
Vancouver, BC
Canada, V5T 0H2

Produced on the traditional, unceded and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Fibre Stories: Fibreshed as the seed, the Field School as the fertile soil / [edited by Ash Logan and Chiara Schmitt].

Publication produced to accompany the Fibreshed Field School program presented by the Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship in collaboration with the Aboriginal Gathering Place and Material Matters at Emily Carr University of Art + Design from September to December, 2020.

ISBN [Print edition] 978-0-9878354-8-2
ISBN [Electronic edition] 978-0-9878354-9-9

1. Design --Textiles --Canada—Research—Field School. 2. Art, Canadian--21st Century—Research --Field School. 3. Textiles --Regenerative systems --British Columbia.
I. Armstrong, Kate, 1971- II. Emily Carr University of Art + Design (B.C.)

Fibreshed as the seed, the *Field School* as the fertile soil

Contents

Contributors

This project would not have been possible without the hard work of all the people involved:

Fibreshed Field School Project Team:

Emily Smith *Research Faculty Lead, Fibreshed Field School, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Co-founder of Vancouver Fibreshed*

Hélène Day Fraser *Associate Professor, Design + Dynamic Media and Co-Director, Material Matters, Emily Carr University of Art + Design*

Ash Logan *Project Coordinator*

Cemre Demiralp *Coordinator, Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship and Living Labs, Emily Carr University of Art + Design*

Kate Armstrong *Director, Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship and Living Labs, Emily Carr University of Art + Design*

With thanks to Lisa Papania, Beedie School of Business and Sarah Lubick, Director of Entrepreneurship, Simon Fraser University

Mentors:

Rebecca Burgess *Founder + Executive Director, Fibershed*

Stephanie Ostler *Owner, Devil May Wear, Instructor, Beedie School of Business, Simon Fraser University*

Nicola Hodges *Textiles Instructor + Maker*

Sharon Kallis *Executive Director, EartHand Gleaners Society*

Brenda Crabtree *Director, Aboriginal Gathering Place and Special Advisor to the President on Indigenous Initiatives, Emily Carr University of Art + Design*

Tasha Nathanson *Founder + CEO, 7 Leagues Leather*

Dr. Love-Ese Chile *Founder, Grey to Green Solutions, Regenerative Waste Labs*

Star Hoerauf *Owner, Morning Star Woollen Farm*

Guest Facilitators:

Connie Watts *Associate Director, Aboriginal Gathering Place, Emily Carr University of Art + Design*

Valérie d. Walker *Indigo Griot + Artist, Sessional Faculty, Emily Carr University of Art + Design*

Pam Magee *Owner, Macgee Cloth Company*

Janey Chang *Artist + Experiential Educator*

Senaqwila Wyss *Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Ethnobotanist + Educator*

Meagan Innes *Indigenous Educator*

Phil Gregory *Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia*

Anna Hunter *Longway Homestead, Pembina Fibreshed*

Students: Emily Carr University of Art + Design

Lydia Lovison *Visual Art*

Danika Oystrek *Industrial Design*

Connor Budd *Industrial Design*

Camila Szefler *Illustration*

Naomi Boyd *Industrial Design*

Emily Janek *Visual Art*

Annika Dixon-Reusz *Industrial Design*

Tess Snaden *Visual Art*

Paula Torres Urzua *Industrial Design*

Ruby Lewis *Visual Art*

Tuyen Hoang *Industrial Design*

Laura Herridge *Visual Art*

Morgan Martino *Industrial Design*

Ajra Pursley-Doobenen *Industrial Design*

Damien Stonick *Masters of Design, Alumni*

Shira Animan *Illustration*

Taja Arya Jinnah *Visual Art*

Caleigh Smith *Communications and Media Studies,* Simon Fraser University

Fibre Stories: Research Assistants

Chiara Schmitt *Masters of Design*

Christa Clay *Masters of Design*

Melanie Camman *Masters of Design*

Elham Atighi Lorestani *Masters of Design*

Ash Logan *Bachelor of Design, Alumni*

The Shumka Centre operates with the generous support of the Vancouver Foundation.

This program is generously supported by the Accountability Council for Co-op Education and Work-Integrated Learning (ACE-WIL) and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.

Emily Carr University of Art & Design
Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship
Living Labs
Material Matters

Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship

BRITISH COLUMBIA Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

vancouver foundation

ACE WIL

Fibreshed Field School took place on the traditional, unceded, and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səl̓ilw̓ətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

As a place-based project, we are especially aware of our responsibility to the fibreshed, bioregion, and Indigenous hosts of this land.

01 LOCAL *FIBRES*

An Introduction by

EMILY *SMITH*

A Fibershed (or 'Fibreshed' in the Canadian spelling), is a term coined by Rebecca Burgess that denotes a "geographical landscape that gives boundaries to a natural textile resource base, engendering appreciation, connectivity, and sensitivity for the life-giving resources within our homelands"[1].

The Fibershed movement involves design for local and regenerative textile systems that support independent working producers and expand opportunities to rebuild regional manufacturing through connecting end users to farms, ranches, and our local land base. Building a deeper relationship within our region involves connecting directly to the land, while developing a personal connection to the history, processes, and people of the unceded territories of the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Sḵwx̱wú7mesh* (Squamish), and *sə́lilw̓ətaɬ?* (Tsleil-Waututh) nations

I FIRST LEARNED ABOUT REBECCA BURGESS' WORK IN 2014, WHEN I was in the Bay Area at a Maker Faire, a DIY festival founded by the folks that created *Make: Magazine*. At the time, Maker Faires were the centre of my universe: I was busy organizing the Vancouver Mini Maker Faire here in Vancouver, and was an avid knitter and textile artist. It was always so exciting to bring together

1. Gabrielle Saulsbery. "You Know Slow Food? Check Out Slow Fashion." modern farmer. Accessed through *https://modernfarmer.com/2015/10/rebecca-burgess-grow-your-jeans/*

such a diverse group of individuals from the many subcultures of makers in the city: installation artists, textile artists, circus performers, science and technology enthusiasts, basket weavers ... It was like a big potluck of giant kinetic sculptures, robots, and wild ideas. I loved Maker Faires because they were so democratic and inviting. I always felt empowered to learn something and make something new, which presented an exciting alternative to the

consumer landscape I was living in.

I was working as a graphic designer at the time, and really had no idea that what I was doing for "fun" would end up being my main source of earning a living in the city. I found it much more rewarding to work with others in real-time, to bring people together, and make real things with my hands. I had originally explored graphic design in 2008 and I wanted to do this job, thinking I could use my skills to do something for the environment.

I had just finished reading *Cradle to Cradle* (by William McDonough & Michael Braungart) and realized I wanted to be *that kind* of designer, creating within a circular economy. When I finished design school, I looked around me and realized that there wasn't much of an industry dedicated to this. So, I explored these ideas offline instead. While it's tempting to want to find some sort of instant solution to what can be done, I realized I had to go on a personal journey to uncover blind spots and develop a deeper relationship to the world around me.

I found that I was always drawn to fibre and textile artists. Vancouver has so many amazing guilds and groups of knitters, stitchers, weavers, spinners. The more I knit, the more I became curious about the fibres I was working with, and started to learn about those materials. I started to understand how our clothes are really made, why they're so inexpensive, and how the ability to purchase more and cheaper clothing drove many people to throw their clothing away. I saw how many of the major brands that I was buying from were blatantly stealing designs from independent and Indigenous artists, utilizing unethical farming practices, and flat out exploiting their workers. I learned about the 2013 Rana Plaza disaster, which drew global attention to uncovering the problems within multi-tier supply chains that for a long time were kept from consumers. At the same time, I could see that we were robbing ourselves of the experience of *making the thing*, which can be very bonding. It all just felt out of balance.

Back in 2014, when I was reading about Rebecca's work with Fibershed, it seemed to be a worthy cause and I immediately signed up as an affiliate member. The question I kept asking myself was, "How can we do *better? More slowly?* Is it possible to make a living wage while working mindfully and sustainably?" Growing up in Windsor, Ontario, I watched the auto industry collapse in neighbouring Detroit, Michigan. When this happened, I was initially excited to consider the positive impact of this collapse on the environment (I've since learned was definitely not the case; manufacturing just went global), I also saw the economic impact of so many auto workers unable to find work. The ethos of Fibershed involves re-invigorating local manufacturing, as well as the incorporation of multiple ways of knowing, making and creating. I figured that perhaps this model could be an opportunity to cut down our carbon footprint by localizing production and being more mindful on both a producer and consumer level.

I hosted a series of meetups with as many people as I could find who were asking themselves the same questions. I invited artists, educators, and fashion experts to attend small events and tackle these questions through discussion, guest presentations, and inquiry. It was at one of these events that I met Emily Carr faculty member Hélène Day Fraser, who helped me connect some dots with regards to design and education. It wasn't until 3 or so years later that I was lucky enough to work with Hélène on *Clothing(s) as Conversation* and attend Emily Carr to complete a Master's degree. It became clear to me that I was most interested in bringing people together to create experiential and inquiry-based programming in order to see a cultural shift. What could designers do with this sort of knowledge, and how might a more informed materials-based approach inform their professional practice?

Fibreshed Field School was created in collaboration with staff, faculty and students at Emily Carr and SFU. The wheels were set in motion when I was invited to teach an SFU program, *Business of Design*, in which I was called on to encourage business and design students to make and think with their hands. In my second year of teaching this course, Lisa Papania kickstarted a partnership between Emily Carr and SFU revolving around sustainability and the textile industry. Lisa connected SFU's School of Interactive Technology (SIAT), the Beedle School of Business, and Emily Carr's Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship. She even arranged for the course to be co-taught with Stephanie Ostler, a local designer and owner

of *Devil May Wear,* who would become an important collaborator. Together, we incorporated principles from business and design in order to encourage students to think critically about the global fashion and textile industry, and consider possibilities for the future. Fibreshed just seemed to be something I couldn't get away from.

The biggest challenge teaching this program was that we wanted it to be experiential. We wanted students to think critically through making, and to do *something* in the real world, with real people. We didn't want to hear students parrot back what we had said; we wanted them to construct their own ideas, and create something meaningful. Sure, we introduced them to everything we could regarding our own explorations, but created an open dialogue and encouraged students to also take concrete actions in their own lives.

We were lucky enough to have Rebecca Burgess host a talk with students where she explained what Fibershed is all about, and how she was working with farmers, artisans, and brands to create carbon negative clothing. She spoke about how she had witnessed individuals with wildly different political viewpoints come together and agree on things like healthy soil. She was critical of the global conversation on sustainability, and how limiting life cycle analyses can be from both a consumer and producer point-of view. In many ways, we're missing out on possibilities locally when we just focus solely on the global scale. We also shared the work of Kate Fletcher, and the *Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion*, a global meet-up network that started out of the UK. We brought in guest speakers like Tasha Nathanson from a fish leather shoe startup, *7 Leagues Leather*, as well as Caitlin ffrench, an independent textile artist and designer, to name a few. We were seeking out creative individuals challenging the status quo and making a living through hands-on making.

At the end of the semester, students were tasked with creating a group project which involved the entire class, with the criteria that they work together and build an inquiry-based discussion to learn from one another. Ultimately, it was up to them to curate and create a discussion-based event where they engaged the public. The students created *Local Fibres: Local Futures*, the precursor to Fibreshed Field School.

In the end, launching Fibreshed Field School was something that I was thrust into. This program would never have been created had there not been an expressed interest from students, facilitators, makers and business owners. It is impossible to illuminate our local fibreshed without a range of voices, perspectives, and multiple ways of knowing. All of the pieces were there - we just needed to bring them together.

Fibreshed Field School is built around the work of local experts, artisans, farmers, academics, and small business operators I'd come into contact with as a result of hosting Vancouver events. I did my best to work with mentors with perspectives and real-world applications that include many different ways of knowing: economic, scientific, Indigenous, embodied knowledge (head, heart and hand) to name a few.

This program posed the following questions to both mentors and participants:

- *What can a local, sustainable and equitable textile ecosystem look like?**
- *How can we build deeper connections to what we wear?* and*
- *Is it possible for designers and makers to make a living doing so?*

This publication documents the wide array of activities that came about as a result.

UCRF MANIFESTO

Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion (UCRF) proposes to:

1. Create an 'activist knowledge ecology', that is, to develop a system of knowledge about fashion sustainability purposefully geared towards fostering sustainability change;
2. Advocate for whole systems and paradigm change, beyond current norms and business-as-usual. This includes rejecting overly-cautious economic, legislative and policy frameworks;
3. Diversify the voices within fashion and sustainability discourse, to reflect multiple perspectives beyond the dominant business approaches presented, including but not limited to the global south and indigenous communities;
4. Express our determined opposition to ill-advised and destructive fashion projects;
5. Formulate visions—and corresponding research practices—that allow for the possibility of enacting new relationships between humans and Earth in the context of fashion;
6. Take a leadership role in debating existing and new ideas and creating action around fashion-sustainability themes, especially in areas where the generation of new knowledge is of actual or potential significance;
7. Devise means for turning research applications towards the underlying root causes of pressing environmental and social problems, including but not limited to climate change, wealth inequality, biodiversity loss, and plastic pollution;
8. Organise, when determined desirable and feasible, fashion researchers to translate radical step change into effective political, and other, action;
9. Review and revise, when deemed necessary, this manifesto.

Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion

"The Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion (UCRF) was formed in 2018 by Kate Fletcher, Lynda Grose, Timo Rissanen and Mathilda Tham (in alphabetical order).

The formation of the Union was brought about by the realization that over the last thirty years sustainability in fashion has been an industry-led movement and as such, has been constantly framed within business, without asking questions about the nature of business itself."

Union of Concerned Researchers. "UCRF Manifesto." Version 2 accessed through *https://concernedresearchers.org/manifesto/#*

LOCAL FIBRES: LOCAL FUTURES

Photo
by Dino Dang

Local Fibres: Local Futures was a student-led assembly created in November, 2019. Aligned with the *Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion*, the goal was to create a space where a diverse group of individuals could connect and discover their part in building resilient communities and better business futures. It centred around a series of activities to provoke and capture collaborative discussions around the pressing issues related to sustainable fashion and clothing production. The assembly included a mix of students, faculty, researchers and industry to connect with and discover possibilities for a more sustainable local textile industry in BC. The results of this discussion informed the first Fibreshed Field School at Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2020.

This event was the final project for the first-ever joint program between Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT), the Beedie School of Business, and the Shumka Centre at Emily Carr University. The program was called *Business of Design*, later renamed *Make Change Studio*, focusing on textile and clothing sustainability. This program was co-led by Emily Smith, Stephanie Ostler, and Hélène Day Fraser. The work, which also engaged collaborators from the Textile Adaptations Research Program (TARP), spanned three terms, and integrated principles of business and design. This was also the moment when discussions about how to turn the idea for the Fibreshed Field School into a reality started to happen with Kate Armstrong, Director of the Shumka Centre, and Cemre Demiralp. Together they acted as producers for the Field School, arranging funding and developing the institutional and administrative framework needed to successfully operate this ambitious new model.

The first term was all about research, investigating wicked problems related to fashion and sustainability, and seeking out opportunities for change. The students would read and research, and explore through the act of making. For some students, it was the first time they had picked up a needle and thread.

About halfway through the first term, Emily Smith connected students to the *Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion*, a union that was formed in 2018 by Kate Fletcher, Lynda Grose, Timo Rissanen and Mathilda Tham. It was an opportunity for students to connect with global leaders in fashion sustainability and to be part of a global conversation that addressed local issues. The Union was formed to challenge the narrow scope of industry-led sustainability discussions, and to include broader perspectives to steer a smarter debate about fashion and sustainability (UCRF) Emily posed the opportunity for the class to organize a local assembly an event with Fletcher's *Earth Logic Action Fashion Research Plan*, that would bring together individuals in Vancouver to discuss, challenge and question what can be done on a local and global scale.

In order to address diverse topics in the framework of this assembly, several discussion topics were predefined by students, which represented seven groups in the event structure. The participants chose which topics most aligned with their interests, and students organized ways of capturing the conversation being had, and building actionable "next steps".

Photo
by Dino Dang

Photo by
Christic Leung

QUILT BY AMY SALVADOR
AND ASH LOGAN

The first activity was called ‘Quilted Discourse:’ Each group had two assigned topics with a series of questions to help guide the conversations. The topics included: *Localism; Materials; Post growth; Commerce; Earth Logic; Globalized Consumer Culture; Academic + Public Collaboration + Social Change; Greenwashing; Policy; Intersectionality / Accessibility; Transdisciplinary; Information - of supply chains and products; Education*.

After each topic of discussion, the participants were asked to draw or make notes of whatever stood out to them on 5x5 inch squares of paper. Those would then be scanned, and laser-etched onto denim that was donated by a local business. The squares were then sewn into a quilted tapestry that symbolizes the discourse generated around sustainability, community and textiles.

A larger discourse would bridge the conversations and find any ‘aha’ moments, followed by the next activity. Titled ‘Local Action Plan,’ this activity was inspired by the UCRF Manifesto and opened up the conversation on actionable steps the participants could take in their local communities.

For the last activity, the participants were given two postcards designed and printed by the class. The first postcard was addressed to the participant’s local Member of Parliament. The participants were asked to write a message to their local representative about changes they want to see around climate action and sustainability in their community. The second postcard was for the participant’s future self. They were asked to write down any goals or actions they wanted to take within the coming months related to textiles and sustainability. In the following spring, the postcards would be mailed back to the participants to reflect on their goals.

This event became the springboard from which Fibreshed Field School was created.

This program is a partnership between The Beedie School of Business and SIAT at Simon Fraser University, as well as the Shumka Centre for Creative Entrepreneurship and Textile Adaptations Research Program (TARP) at Emily Carr University.

Union of Concerned Researchers. “Welcome” accessed through *https://concernedresearchers.org/welcome/#more-2365*

Students involved in hosting event:

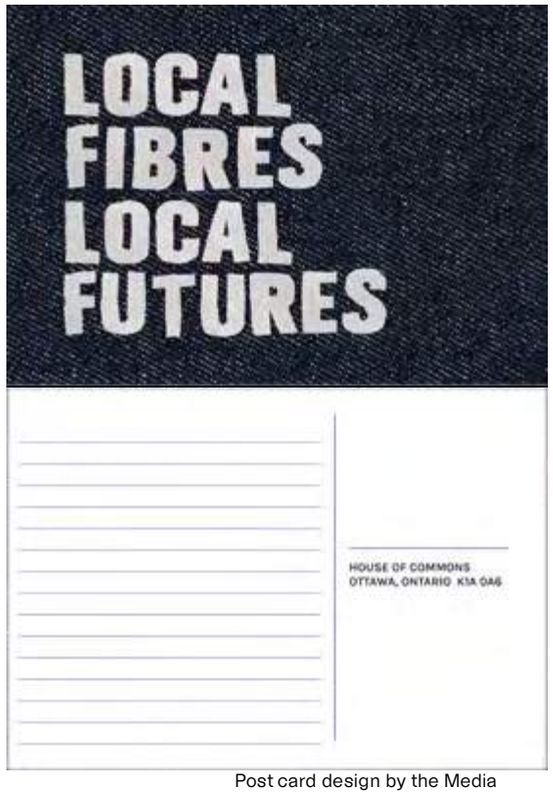
CURATION TEAM
ASH LOGAN
AMY SALVADOR
MICHAEL PETER
AMAR SHAH
PHOEBE LIM

MEDIA & OUTREACH
ZOE FORTUNE
SHENGHUI (KAREN) LIM
TOAN (DINO) DANG
KIN SEE (CHRISTY) LEUNG

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
MATTHEW KURTIS
SAI-MUN FONG
JOHANNA JUCUTAN
CORA WAI-KEI FU

LOGISTICS:
NIKHIL CHODIMELLA
SANYA ARON
SOHYUN PARK

HAPPINESS
CHIH JOU (KELLY) SUN
GABRIELLA TOFFOLETTO
YUQING (CYNTHIA) PAN
YOU (LIV) LYU
ZHANMING ZHANG



Post card design by the Media Outreach team

Notes from the sidelines

HÉLÈNE DAY FRASER

I have been questioning and reconsidering the garment industry and our relation to clothing for a long while now.

In 1991 I graduated from studying Fashion at Ryerson in Toronto. I had a line of clothing called *Blank Canvas*. I was interested in statements, clean starts, clean slates. It was (I recognize now…) unidirectional and arguably highly influenced by a modernist perspective. As I worked in the industry, I began to think of clothing and designed objects in relation to our cumulative experiences with them. I also realized that while I loved clothing as a statement, I longed for a back-and-forth dialogue - perhaps like winding and unwinding a ball of thread - a dialogue between the designer/maker and the user, with the object as the go-between.

That thinking started me on a new route - a project titled *cloTHING(s) as Conversation*, which I developed with my colleague Keith Doyle. *cloTHING(s) as Conversation* became the nexus connecting a thread of exploration into dialogic spaces, artifacts and action, material and the social. The project, which engaged over eighty-eight people (researchers, research assistants, collaborators, participants) from three different continents, focused on the discovery of new knowledge through the application of practical skills, product-service systems, and residual artifacts that enable novel pathways in sustainable design, production and the critical use of clothing. It sought:

- Alternate means of thinking about the role of clothing (from statement to conversation)
- Alternate means of communication (the implications of digital technology, one to one—moving to many to many)
- Alternate means of production and use (additive manufacturing, distributed networks, resilient systems)

Dialogue fostered by the events and provocations of *cloTHING(s) as Conversation* extended for myself and the others involved to the places where we make, the materials we work with, the strategies we use, and the implications of the relations we have with humans and the more than human.

And somewhere along the way … I came across Rebecca's Fibershed. It resonated! Fibershed provided myself and others with a significant marker and example of a possible, pragmatic way to facilitate and promote needed change. I also met Emily Smith. Emily's enthusiasm, drive and capacity to draw people together around making was inspiring and formidable! Her initiative and drive as she taught her version of the ECU/SFU program, *Business of Design,* was notable and led to a new project—her idea for a field school revolving around the Vancouver Fibreshed. In my position as Associate Dean of Emily Carr's Master of Design program (2017–2021), I was no longer directly connected to research but was always thinking and interested in new modes of porous mentorship that questioned the status quo. It was my pleasure and privilege to contribute in the ways I could to Fibreshed Field School:

- Taking part in discussions about ways to acknowledge and learn from the Indigenous wisdom connected to making in this place;
- Facilitating connections to the Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion;
- Collaborating with Emily Smith, Cemre Demiralp and Kate Armstrong as they designed the structure of the Field School
- Providing space and facilities of Material Matter's TARP lab;

And finally, most recently, guiding (along with my colleague and co-conspirator Keith Doyle) a group of five remarkable Designers/Research Assistants as they combed through the content and insights of students and mentors of the Fall 2020 Fibreshed Field School. Their work over the past four months has led: to this publication documenting the Fibre Stories collected in Emily's Field School; a series of how-to zines inspired and informed by the students activities and learning; and a vibrant podcast. They have also contributed to identifying and detailing new curricular and research initiatives that Emily Carr can take on with community stakeholders in the coming years.

I am of the mind this is just the beginning of a marvelous and important adventure - very much looking forward to seeing where it leads us all!

HÉLÈNE DAY FRASER is a first-generation Canadian, of Welsh and English descent, born in North-Eastern Quebec. She has been formed by life in a small town on the Canadian Prairies, an island in the Philippines, downtown Toronto, Strasbourg, the outskirts of Paris, France, and most recently Vancouver and the North Shore. Hélène is an Associate Professor in the Ian Gillespie Faculty of Design and Dynamic Media at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. She holds a Master of Applied Arts in Design and a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Fashion. Her work in academia is informed by a past professional career in fashion, design, and manufacturing.

A conversation with

REBECCA *BURGESS*

Photo by Paige Green

FIBRE STORIES IS A PODCAST ABOUT OUR LOCAL FIBRESHED, regional textiles, industry, education, soil and the tensions that arise when we examine fibre and cloth through the lens of sustainability and decolonization. The full podcast can be found on www.fibrestories.ca
For our first episode, recorded on May 26, 2021, we welcomed Emily Smith (creator of the Fibreshed Field School and co-founder of Vancouver Fibreshed) and Rebecca Burgess (Executive Director of Fibershed, Board Chair of Carbon Cycle Institute, and the author of the book Harvesting Color) as our guests.

We would like to acknowledge that our host Melanie, our guest Emily, as well as Emily Carr University of Art + Design, where Fibreshed Field School and Fibre Stories podcast have been primarily conducted, are located on the traditional, unceded, and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səl̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) nations. Rebecca joined the podcast from the unceded territory of the Coast Miwok, North of San Francisco. As a place-based project, we are especially aware of our responsibility to the fibreshed bioregion and Indigenous hosts of this land. The Fibre Stories podcast will continue to explore the implications of doing fibre work as uninvited guests, and the impacts industry and institutions have on humans and non-humans in this place.

Rebecca [RB] was essential to the success of the Field School, contributing her mentorship and vision for resilient local textile economies. In the following pages we are excited to share an abridged transcript of the pilot episode of Fibre Stories, featuring a conversation between Rebecca Burgess and Emily Smith.

How does being in this place relate to your concept of a Fibreshed?

Emily Smith (ES): It's been such a wonderful journey to connect with people who I believe in and who embody the Fibreshed ethos: neighbours, educators, small business operators, and artists. To go hyperlocal and focus on what's directly in our backyards. To learn about the fibres that make up our clothing and to continually go deeper, asking questions like, what are the fibres that make up the yarn that make up the sweater I'm wearing?

How has the concept of Fibershed shifted for you throughout time? How do you consider it now?

Rebecca Burgess (RB): The year 2020 really deepened some layers of my understanding of what it is to live, work, and experience material culture from the soil to your skin. Then how you care for that material, how it returns to the soil at the end of its life, and how you bring consciousness to each of those steps.
Last year brought forward another layer of understanding [of the history and impacts of] colonization in California. The community that I originally started doing my work with was segregated. It was kind of like working with tribes. I was learning, not doing anything, other than acting as a sponge and absorbing their ethos, their approach, and their land stewardship models. Separately, I was touring euro-based farming systems that were sheep dominated, or cotton and flax. This cotton wasn't managed like it would be in West Africa, it had origins in South America or China. Although the cotton growing in California has very much been operationalized by the European settlers that arrived here, bringing the cotton to California mainly in the 1930s. Hat for a long time and now I'm ready to come together with a bunch of human beings and solve our crises together. This is where I'm at right now. Fibresheds are supporting me in that and challenging me. The dichotomy between the indigenous stewardship and the European settler is like a dike. It is two different approaches. It still is. The reality which reflected back at me is that these are two different things. I feel like the heartbeat is we've got to pull this together. We've got to become intersectional, because we're not going to survive if we don't. Western science and traditional ecological knowledge have got to pull it together.

Emily, you've put a lot of thought into planning all of this. What are your afterthoughts and your reflections?

ES: My intention with Fibreshed Field School was to cultivate a conversation that includes multiple ways of knowing. To see and validate multiple world-views, ideas of the world and really look at questions around how we can create more equitable and sustainable cloth. Then - what are some ways of making it work? How can we make a living wage doing this, making this stuff? None of these questions are comfortable. Once you actually start getting down to it, the history of textile production, where your clothing comes from, cotton, and their ecosystems - there's nothing comfortable about it. It was really uncomfortable for me thinking about how we could represent all of these different scenarios and different ways of being and to envision new possibilities. Fibreshed Field School was made up of people that I've met on my journey with Fibershed. Often people that have radically different views as well -- in philosophies and perspectives. I believe it's in being able to hold space for multiple perspectives, and create spaces for conversation, where real learning happens. I don't think it's as powerful to present various worldviews in a lecture and go through all the points, than it is to experience what's lived, and shared between people.

"It's probably one of the most thoughtful manifestations of holding multiple perspectives in one space that I've seen and very well done in that period of time where, at least in the US, it feels very polarizing sometimes."

—Rebecca Burgess

RB: It's as if Fibreshed Field School is operationalizing and giving the space for people to have an opportunity to understand all the fractals of all our different perceptions. That's really what makes up a community. That's what makes up a fibreshed. A beautiful platform was created here for that conversation to occur, with the different perspectives all meshed into an umbrella. It's really powerful. It's unlike anything I've ever seen. It's probably one of the most thoughtful manifestations of holding multiple perspectives in one space that I've seen. This project was very well done in that period of time where, at least in the US, it feels very polarizing to do this work sometimes. Having multiple perspectives coming together, in one space, safely, acknowledging differences is absolutely critical.

What role do academic initiatives, such as Fibreshed Field School, have to play in building alternative, decolonial textile economies that are considerate of the land on which the work takes place?

ES: You know, for me it does keep coming back to looking at where we are now, where we are going, and where we can go. Opening up these stories is such a huge part of making more informed and educated choices about our humanity, careers and our future.

RB: I've had some students from Mainland China do some really interesting drawings and sketches of how they homesteaded with silk, silkworm production and hog production. These systems would all feed each other, including the effluent from boiling the chrysalis. They would eat the protein that the caterpillar provided and use that water to create a den for the pigs to roll around in mud. Nutrients from the hogs were put at the base of mulberry trees to create a nutrient cycle that would in turn create healthy trees that fed the silkworms. I found it very interesting that these were the same students who felt pressured when I asked them to think about what the most ecological fibre is. They all said nylon. Then I asked them to paint a picture of their own relationship with their ancestries, and what that fibre system looks like. Then we thought about it through the lens of the carbon cycle. Then really what is the most ecological fibre, if we look at it through that lens of thermodynamics and carbon cycling, which are the most fundamental laws that our planet works that we know our planets work within? Their responses were, 'Oh, my traditional way of doing things was actually fairly climate-friendly.' It's just when we try to scale up hog production, or silk, then we create life cycle assessments

“You know, we’re letting centralized knowledge and power dictate over our own intuitive, just understanding of how the world works. And that’s where universities have the opportunity to create change and say ‘let’s foster this from the grassroots up.’”

—Rebecca Burgess

(LCAs) based on those industrial processes. Then we plaster those LCAs, through sustainability indexes, such as the Sustainable Apparel Coalition and the Hague Index and allow those indexes to come in and become the instruction manual. For these young mainland Chinese students who thought, 'Oh, we can't do silk, it's horrible. That's how I was taught.' We're letting centralized knowledge and power dictate over our own intuitive and just understanding of how the world works. And that's where universities have the opportunity to create change and say, 'let's foster this from the grassroots up'. Let's foster this knowledge from this place up and share that instead of this thing that comes from on high and crushes everything you actually know to be true/ the hierarchical learning environment that dismisses traditional knowledge.

FIBRE STORIES IS A PODCAST ABOUT OUR LOCAL FIBRESHED, regional textiles, industry, education, soil and the tensions that arise when we examine fibre and cloth through the lens of sustainability and decolonization. The full podcast can be found on www.fibrestories.ca

02 FIBRE SHED FIELD SCHOOL

THE FIELD SCHOOL

Through her passion for textile sustainability and education, Emily Smith developed Fibreshed Field School in collaboration with Cemre Demiralp and Kate Armstrong from the Shumka Centre to bring a unique experiential learning environment to students and mentors alike. The Field School was divided into three cohorts, each offering a different perspective on what's possible for local, ethical textile production. Though faced with the challenge of a global pandemic, the Field School persevered through resilience and creativity. Fibreshed Field School was an experiential mentorship program that investigated ecologically sensitive and economically viable methods of local textile production.

This program was inspired by and worked collaboratively with Fibershed, an international network founded by Rebecca Burgess. “Fibershed is a non-profit organization that develops equity-focused regional and land regenerating natural fiber and dye systems. Their work expands opportunities to implement climate beneficial agriculture, rebuild regional manufacturing, and connect end-users to the source of their fiber through direct educational offerings. They are transforming the economic and ecologic systems that clothe us to generate equitable and climate change ameliorating textile cultures.”[1]

The program offered industry exposure and knowledge transfer between fibre producers, designers, and entrepreneurs. It provided immersion in the hands-on, real-world context where fibres are grown, harvested, and processed. It allowed gaining practice and support as well as a greater understanding of how to instantiate ideas and make projects happen outside of the classroom.

1. Fibershed. “Fibershed’s Mission & Vision.” Accessed through *https://fibershed.org/mission-vision/*

Reciprocity &Stewardship

Photo by Sharon Kallis

RECIPROCITY &STEWARDSHIP

In partnership with *EartHand Gleaners Society* and the Aboriginal Gathering Place, the Reciprocity & Stewardship cohort focused on responsible land stewardship and practices informed by Indigenous ways of knowing.

Cohort activities included the processing of nettle, daylily, fireweed, flax, dogbane, milkweed as material research at Trillium Park and the Means of Production gardens with Sharon Kallis, along with workshops at the Aboriginal Gathering Place including traditional ways of making salmon leather with Janey Chang, cedar basket weaving with Brenda Crabtree, and spinning animal fibres with Senaqwila Wyss and Meagan Innes at the Aboriginal Gathering Place.

Building a more profound relationship within our region involved connecting directly to the land while developing a personal understanding of the history, processes, and people that occupy the unceded, traditional territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səl̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MENTORS AND GUEST FACILITATORS:
BRENDA CRABTREE
SHARON KALLIS
JANEY CHANG
SENAQWILA WYSS
MEAGAN INNES

STUDENTS
LYDIA LOVISON
DANIKA OYSTREK
CONNOR BUDD
CAMILA SZEFLER
NAOMI BOYD
EMILY JANEK

Photos by Benny Zenga

ABORIGINAL GATHERING PLACE

Situated in the heart of the university, the Aboriginal Gathering Place (AGP) offers students, faculty and the community the possibility to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing and making. Through learning with traditional materials and methods, the AGP shares resources and experiences on culture and material practice while opening up dialogue through events, workshops and talks.

The students from the Reciprocity and Stewardship cohort were invited to take part in workshops that would foster their understanding of traditional ways of making through hands-on explorations with cedar and fish skin. The Aboriginal Gathering Place became a place of learning during the Field School to the students. Here they learned cedar basket weaving with Brenda Crabtree and fish leather making with Janey Chang. Senaqwila Wyss and Meagan Innes shared their knowledge of the traditional processing of animal fibres with the students, advancing the students' understanding of history, practices, and the people connected to this region.

ABORIGINAL GATHERING PLACE

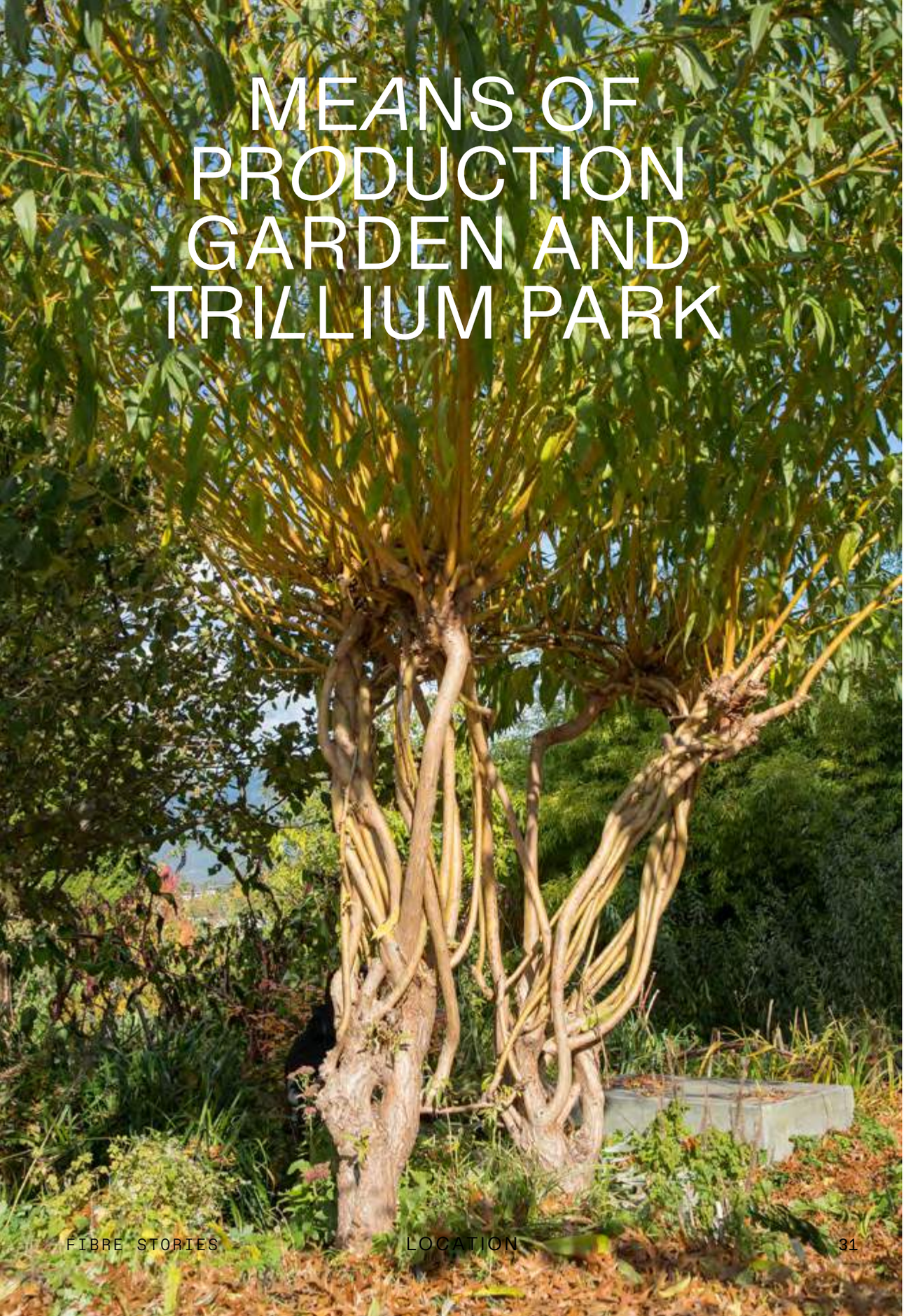
Emily Carr's Aboriginal Gathering Place (AGP) hosts students, contemporary artists, and informs curriculum and community.

It is a centre that reflects the cultural characteristics of our Aboriginal students, community and traditions. The AGP allows our Aboriginal students to develop and strengthen their identities in a supportive, safe environment. We foster learning experiences and are committed to providing the necessary support to Aboriginal students to ensure their academic success. Our interdisciplinary Aboriginal curriculum encompasses both the traditional and contemporary artistic expressions of Aboriginal Peoples, and is a valuable resource for students in accessing and exploring traditional materials and methods. Courses include studio practice, art history, critical theory and industrial application.

from "Aboriginal Office" accessed through *https://aboriginal.ecuad.ca/aboriginal-office/*

Brenda Crabtree's cedar weaving workshop. Photo by Connie Watts.

MEANS OF PRODUCTION GARDEN AND TRILLIUM PARK



Situated not far from Emily Carr University of Art + Design in the Mount Pleasant Area of Vancouver, the Means of Production Garden (MOP) provides a place within our community where environmental art engagement can take place, and the discourse on art and ecology can be nourished. Stewarded by the *EartHand Gleaners Society*, the garden provides resources to investigate fibre processing through craftsmanship.

Along with the MOP garden, *EartHand Gleaners* also manages Trillium Park North located at the edge of the Strathcona neighbourhood in East Vancouver where they grow fibre plants. Trillium garden gives EarthHands artists, makers and educators the opportunity to teach sustainable harvesting, crop management and crafting skills using the locally grown plants.

Focused on responsible land stewardship and practices informed by Indigenous ways of knowing, the Reciprocity and Stewardship cohort was invited to learn about fibre processing from Sharon Kallis. Along with learning about the gardens' different plants, the students learned fibre processing, coiling and braiding throughout the Field School.

EARTHAND GLEANERS SOCIETY

We are artists, makers and educators who believe that bringing people together to share creative projects that connect us with the land helps our communities become strong, resilient and just.

Founded as an arts-based non-profit in 2013, *EartHand Gleaners Society*'s specialty is connecting makers with materials that come directly from the land around them; we model 'How to be a Producer without first being a Consumer'. By working with the plants around us using ancestral skills common to all cultures, we inspire participants to discover cultural connections, learn new skills, and discover novel sources of raw materials for creative practices, including garden waste, invasive plants, and textile waste.

Respect is the core of EartHand's practice. Our environmental art projects spring from collaborative research, skill development and skill sharing among community members and professionals in the fields of education, sciences and the arts. We aim to strengthen intercultural connections and relationships to place, and find meaningful ways to acknowledge our Host Nations. Our regular partners include Vancouver Park Board, local schools, environmental stewardship non-profits, and our community arts organization peers.

from "EartHand's About" page. accessed through *https://earthand.com/about/*

SHARON *KALLIS*

WITH A "ONE-MILE DIET" APPROACH TO SOURCING ART materials, Sharon Kallis works to discover the inherent material potential in a local landscape. After graduating from Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design in 1996, she began working with materials from the land in 1999 and has exhibited and engaged communities with her practice in Ireland, Spain, Mexico, and throughout the United States. Sharon is the founding Executive Director of *EartHand Gleaners Society*, an arts-based organization that brings together artists, scientists, and educators to consider how we can be makers without first being consumers through the appropriate use of locally grown plants. With the EartHand community, Sharon manages two urban parks as creative commons; growing weaving, dye, and renewable woodland plantings.

Sharon has received Canada Council and British Columbia Arts Council grants and was the recipient of the Brandford/ Elliott International Award for Excellence in Fibre Arts in 2010. Sharon received the Mayor's Arts Award for Studio Design in 2016.

Sharon is the author of *Common Threads: weaving community through collaborative eco art* (New Society Publishers 2014), a book about her art practice written as a field guide for others wishing to explore unwanted plants for creative community actions.

BRENDA *CRABTREE*

Photo provided by Brenda Crabtree

BRENDA CRABTREE (XYOLHOLEMO:T) HAS BOTH NLAKA'PAMUX and Stó:lō ancestry and belongs to the Spuzzum Band. Brenda is the Director of Aboriginal Programs and Special Advisor to the President on Indigenous Initiatives at Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

She is also an artist, curator, mentor, educator, community facilitator and cultural advisor. Brenda is recognized as an enduring champion for Indigenous artists and has been a key figure in developing ground-breaking programs. In her art practice Brenda fuses Northwest Coast First Nations materials and traditions with political texts to create a vehicle for political activism, bridging art, politics and history.

Brenda received her BA and MA (Cultural Anthropology) from Western Washington University. Her teaching and art practice focuses on both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal materials and techniques. Her research includes collaborating with Indigenous artists + educators in New Zealand, Australia, Borneo + Tuvalu.

In 2016, Brenda was honoured by the BC Achievement Foundation as an enduring champion for Indigenous artists, and has been a key figure in developing groundbreaking programs such as Decolonizing the Healthcare System through Cultural Connections, the Urban Access to Aboriginal Art Project, and the Aboriginal Canadian Entrepreneurs artist residency.

Meanwhile, she sits on a number of boards and committees including the YVR Art Foundation's board of directors; the Bill Reid Gallery's content committee; the First Nations Council for Coast Mountain College; and Ornamentum magazine's editorial advisory committee.

Her work as an artist is likewise as much an act of considering context as it is one of pure creation. This broad focus was front and centre during a pair of recent exhibitions—*Li iyá:qtset: We Transform It* at Abbotsford's The Reach gallery, and *We Carry Our Ancestors: Cedar Baskets and Our Relationship to the Land* at the Legacy Art Gallery in Victoria, BC.

JANEY CHANG

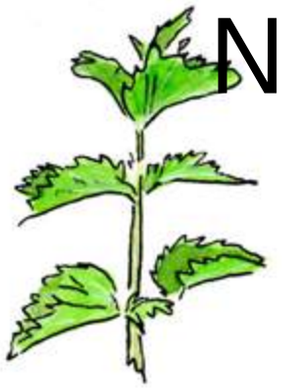
JANEY CHANG IS AN ARTIST + EDUCATOR, FISH SKIN TANNER, AND revivalist on a path to remembering how to be human and alive through the (re)learning of ancestral skills. She is a first generation Chinese Canadian woman living in North Vancouver on beautiful Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and Tsleil-Waututh Territory at the foot of the mountains and close to the ocean. Her main art form is salmon skin leather, where she gives new life to salmon skins that are destined for waste from the restaurant industry. Learning this traditional ancestral skill has helped to connect her to her Chinese heritage as well as to K'emk'emelay/Vancouver, the land she calls home. This passion has evolved into her livelihood, and she has had the honour of teaching fish leather classes to many humans, including Indigenous communities who have distant memories of this old ancestral skill.

MEAGAN *INNES*

Photo provided by Meagan Innes

MEAGAN INNES IS FROM XWMÉLTS'TSTN ÚXWUMIXW (VILLAGE). She is a Sḵwx̱wú7mesh slhánay̓ (Squamish Woman), an educator and a multidisciplinary artist. Meagan received her Master's Degree in Education from Simon Fraser University where she examined the importance of ancestral skills, knowledge and language. Her re- search and work revolve around examining connection to place, kinship and spéńem (plant) s7ekw'í7tel (siblings) péńem (plant things). She is an emerging artist who is waking up her ancestral skills and practicing the ways of her Ancestors. She is exploring reshaping pedagogy to embody traditional ways of knowing and being, more specifically Sḵwx̱wú7mesh traditional ways of learning, knowing and being. She had recently completed the First Nations Language Program at Simon Fraser University to learn Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Sníchim, the language of her Ancestors. Meagan loves to work with her hands, utilizing traditional materials and objects to create cultural works that are used for their intended purposes. Her practice includes, but is not limited to, weaving with a variety of natural fibres, animal hides, and plant materials as dyes and pigments.

PROCESSING NETTLE



① Cut a long stalk.

② Remove / strip the leaves.

③ Dampen (1h) and crack the stem open flat.

④ Seperate the bark layer (in pieces) from the fiber.

⑤ Hang the fibers to dry. It will shrink and be ready to use.

CAMILA *SZEFLER*

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH NETTLE?

Nettle "urtica dioica" naturally grows in the northern hemisphere and has been used for centuries as food, clothing and medicine. Here's some examples:

TEA

pick in spring the green tips (which the plant tips will bifocate). The tea is high in iron and good for seasonal allergies.

DYE

you can get a pale green dye in the spring.

CORDAGE

ideally use fibers from the stalks in mid to early fall.

Camila Szefler

COIL BASKETRY: ONE ROW AT A TIME

NAOMI *BOYD*

Materials

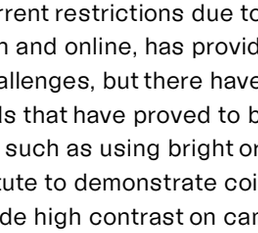
Basic coil basketry contains possibilities to achieve form with any number of materials, including natural and man-made fibres in infinite combinations. Forms of basketry using natural materials were developed by cultures on opposite sides of the planet using drastically different materials, and yet so many of the most basic techniques overlap or are in conversation with each other surrounding the same basic principles. Artifacts are produced using a certain set of skills or techniques, whether those appear in the harvesting and processing phases or within the finishing, and so the object itself becomes a vessel for holding skills and perpetuating that knowledge. Working with natural materials means that the life of a given artifact is intentionally and inherently limited, meaning that the practice of making must be kept alive in the form of skills and knowledge.

Coiling & Lashing

Once you have your first loop in place, the concept is very simple; you use your lashing to sew (lash) your outer row to the one before it. The infinite nature of this type of making is something that has deeply appealed to me, and allows for the continued practicing and honing of skills over time. This mat has become the manifestation of my own rope making and coiling practices, incorporating some materials for both the coil and lashing; daylily, fireweed, flax, hemp, nettle, and many more to come. The basic repetition of technique allows for all of these aspects to work together in harmony, even when things become a bit chaotic in the overlap. The plan is to continue building outwards with 'local' materials, even as I relocate with the mat to different places. It has become somewhat of practice of place-making and my go-to spot to meditate—the texture enables one to feel present and supported while sitting on it.

Developing Form

The actual creation of form would have been



incredibly important for practices of cultivation, relationship building, and artistry: the vessels that we take for granted today would have enabled the gathering of material and sustenance, transportation of water and goods across distances, and therefore trade, exploration, and other forms of development. The combination of all of these aspects would have meant deep respect for both the materials and the skills required to create such objects, allowing those who participated in such a practice to feel pride and commitment to their work. This is something that I am only beginning to develop in my work.

Teaching

An important factor for me was to try and perpetuate my learnings and teach others some of the same skills. Conducting workshops to comply with the current restrictions due to the pandemic, in-person and online, has provided its fair share of challenges, but there have been some workarounds that have proved to be relatively successful, such as using bright orange string as a substitute to demonstrate coiling which would provide high contrast on camera.

Final Thoughts

All of this work has led me to develop a deep appreciation for the concept of coiling and developing form through simple repetition. The techniques are quite simple, possibly the most basic way of developing breadth and form using a linear, flexible material, and yet the possibilities for making and creating are limitless.

CONNECTIONS OF CONSEQUENCE

Technically speaking I am an industrial designer, currently in my fourth year of studies. I have long struggled with my relationship to the discipline, feeling little kinship with the field or its dominant processes and approaches. I am not alone in my concerns, as many of my fellow students follow rituals of careful self-regulation and monitoring during their design processes. My aversion to the industrial stems from my upbringing in a small island community in B.C. It was (and is) intensely rural and local, where there exists a constant appreciation for local material, traditional techniques, and hand labour. Small, craft thinking dominates. Connection to the land, both wild and cultivated is emphasized at home and in school. These are all ideals shared with the Fibreshed concept, and more specifically, the Reciprocity + Stewardship cohort of the Field School.

For a long time I observed two distinct approaches to design; one in the context of my island home, and one which took place in the urban setting. For me, one being satisfying, and the other being incredibly dissatisfying, even frustrating. Despite concerted efforts, I had failed to completely transpose my rural design methodology to the urban. I had yet to witness precedents that operated under similar values in an urban setting. The design process in the city seemed entirely disconnected from any consequential factors; divorced of reciprocity, care, temperance, narrative, and place. It was overbearing, overblown, overabundant, and fed by an overly global system. It was a constant feeling of guilt, wastefulness, flippancy, and frivolousness.

Before participating in the Reciprocity + Stewardship cohort of the Fibreshed Field School, I had been making progress in shaping a more satisfactory design methodology for myself, allowing back in parts of my upbringing, ancestry, and interests that I had previously excluded. This methodology was formed by an obsession with the ancient and manual, a growing interest in natural materials, and a shift towards rough and non-pedigreed forms. However at the time I had yet to fully commit myself and did not recognize the intricacies of the philosophy I was trying to practice, attempting to replicate it without a complete understanding. It was by engaging with the Reciprocity + Stewardship cohort that I fully realized how to structure a more satisfying design methodology using these principles but based in the urban.

Connection was a constant theme throughout the cohort. Connection to land, to material, to process, to culture, to teaching, and to other people.

At the outset of this cohort, we first established a bond with the land, by acknowledging it and speaking to it, working and caring for it, with hands and knees in the dirt. Then came the attachment to the materials, which began with their extraction. That attachment only grew as we spent time with the materials: feeling, processing, refining, learning, and knowing them. By inheriting skills and techniques, this connection to materials deepened. We established bonds with other people as well, through the teaching of those skills, and subsequently through collective learning and labour. From this communal labour—through the skills, materials, and the stories and anecdotes recounted—a link to culture emerged.

The approaches of the Reciprocity + Stewardship cohort revealed a vast web of links to consequential nodes, functioning as liaisons to place, process, material, and people. These links themselves are reciprocal, simultaneously informing and governing each other, allowing the creative process to be as much enabled as it is constrained. Fibresheds are heavily embedded in the local. From what may seem a limitation, vernaculars spring forth, directly informed and supplied by the unique local context of place, culture, methods and material. The use of natural materials and manual techniques allows for honesty and transparency in all stages of making, evidencing origins in imperfection, and revealing labour, care and communion. This is a process of making which truly venerates material and the place from which it comes, neither lo-fi nor lo-tech, but lo-facade.

By observing these tenets, I have felt a new sense of comfort and liberation in creation. It feels right, and I no longer feel guilty, wasteful, flippant or frivolous in my making. Acknowledging webs of connection that are both tempering and empowering alleviates those emotions. These ideas require sacrifice, a conscious choice to disengage from dominant canons of creation and to commit to something older and more earthly with unwavering, nigh spiritual, devotion. There is also, I believe, an obligation that is instilled by practising these ideas. I am humbled and grateful for the knowledge I have received; from Sharon Kallis, Brenda Crabtree, Janey Chang, Senaqwila Wyss, Meagan Innes and my fellow students. In receiving their teachings, I have inherited a responsibility to preserve and teach them.

I'd like to provide something of an analogy, for what I am not exactly sure. A continuous part of our work in the Reciprocity + Stewardship cohort has been the action of twisting to bring things together. First, it was through cordage of raw plant materials, and finally, in the spinning of wool. A ritual of bringing together disparate and disconnected, but equally venerable strands. The twisting of a length of material is limited and informed by that which is supplied, drawing in elements of place, process, people, and culture; each fortifying the cord. Cord, which can link, connect, tie and bind together.

CONNOR *BUDD*

MAK*I*NG TRADITI*O*NALLY:

creating space
to slow do*w*n

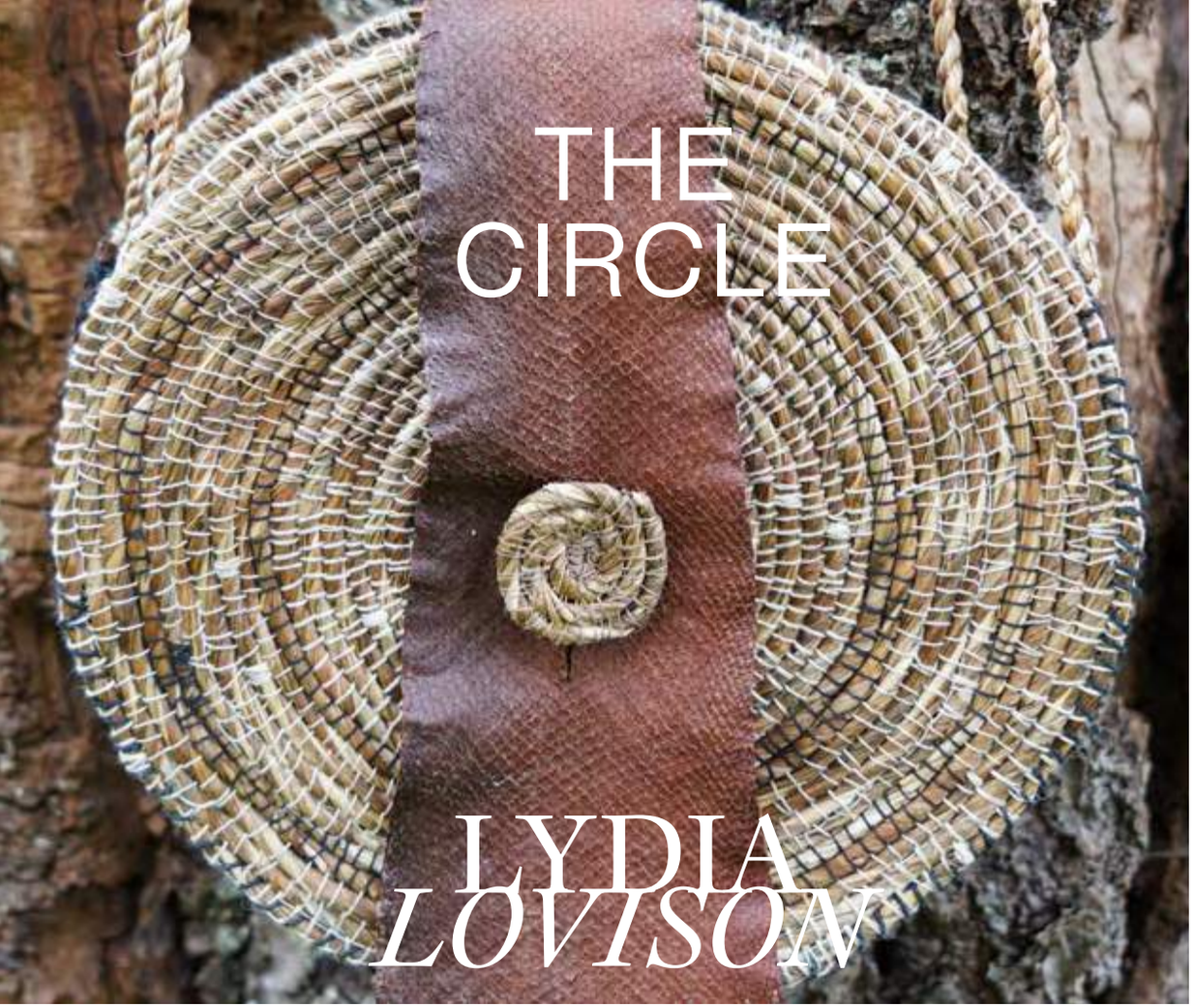
DANIKA
OYSTREK

Ancient processes of creation are shared histories between us, uniting and safe, yet the need for profit causes industrialized processes to be increasingly prioritized and normalized.

Through learning to work in my local fibreshed, I have begun to reawaken these instinctual methods of creation which have been forgotten through the generations. During this process I have begun to long for a deeper connection with my ancestors and a sense of purpose and self that extends beyond my time. My great-grandparents were born in Ukraine and began homesteads on the prairies of Alberta in the early 20th century. They lived a traditional Ukrainian lifestyle in Canada, one in which they raised my grandparents. The majority of these traditions have been lost to time, yet one remains: the food. My family gathers on occasion and has the most magnificent feast. Traditional Ukrainian cuisine is what I have been brought up on. These cultural experiences have been formative in my sense of self and they carry strong memories of my loud Ukrainian family. This is a part of myself that I long to share with others. This awakening led me to create the project *Yisty (Eat)*, which had me share traditional meals that my grandmother has taught me to prepare. By rekindling my connection with ancestral foods and sharing them with others, I hope to develop a stronger connection to my practice and the people who surround me.

To ground this meal in ancestral methods of making, I fabricated two tools from raw materials. The first is a pot-holder made from hand-spun fibres including wool, dog hair, and fireweed seeds. It is knit quite thickly to be as resistant to heat as possible. In addition, I created a trivet made from coiled daylily rope. The material at the centre was harvested in the garden of my childhood home in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta and the external portion has been harvested here, in Vancouver. These two choices are symbolic of the journey which has brought me to this point: from where I've grown up to where I am now. I have discovered that to create in these spaces, the creative process must be significantly decelerated. Working with the seasons and waiting for available materials goes against what designers are accustomed to. It is time to normalize making slowly.

Above: The table is set with a coiled daylily trivet and a knit pot-holder made from hand-spun yarn. Holibtsi, Borscht, and Perishke prepared according to my grandmother's recipes. Materials were sourced in Vancouver, BC, and Fort Saskatchewan, AB.



THE CIRCLE

LYDIA LOVISON

Something was missing. Something was missing though I didn't know it the day I sat down to weave with cattails. For weeks I had been thinking over what design object I would make using the skills I had learned at Fibreshed Field School. What, what would I make? Then, the idea arrived. A bag. I was going to make a bag. But it wasn't going to be just any bag. It was going to be a knowledge holder. It would hold knowledge in the form of a book —my Reciprocity and Stewardship book, which was filled with what I had learned, what I had made, what I had to say about it all. I considered materials and its shape. The mesmerizing process of the circle, of coiling with daylilies or iris stems was certainly a contender. But, I was also drawn to weaving with cattails into a square bag. Decisions finally made, I sketched out ideas, considered measurements, set up my materials, consulted my resources. Then, I got to work. Some humans tend to shift into hurry mode as their default gear, that go-to gear for the mind and body. I'm definitely part of this group. Plant fibres, however, are decidedly not in that gear. They exist in a gentle, unhurried way. They listen, then respond. To the seasons. To nutrients. To care. As I worked on the bag, the cattails resisted as I kept urging them on. I can do this, I kept thinking. It will be amazing. I wove and wove, dismantled and wove. Repeat. And then I stopped to stare at the bag. It was awful. My weaving was terrible. Exasperated, I stomped out to the compost bin, lifted the lid and threw in the bag.

The following day, I returned to the bin and peered inside. The municipal recycling and compost trucks would be arriving soon. There they were, the cattails, the gifts from the earth that I had not done well by. I ran my hands over them, filled with feelings of remorse and regret.

It is no small thing to single out a specific event or experience from Fibreshed Field School. We have been bursting with learning, gaining knowledge generously shared by big-hearted people who care deeply. But if I must choose one experience to highlight, it is a lesson I learned. These past months of harvesting, processing, coiling, weaving, spinning, tanning, making fishskin leather, making yarn, making objects—all gathered and taught in the Indigenous way—have helped me confront that missing thing.

Disconnection. Disconnection severs listening. It has been a humbling and an emotional thing to grasp. It had been years since I had plucked a living thing from the earth. Here I was, harvesting plants, learning to process, learning to make, returning to the garden what I could not use. It felt new and familiar, challenging and comforting. I received many gifts—tools, materials, knowledge—all meant to culminate into something good. Instead, I felt as if I had failed.

The day after the compost truck picked up the cattail bag, our cohort gathered at the Aboriginal Gathering Place to spend the day with Sharon Kallis, Senaqwila Wyss, Meagan Innes and Brenda Crabtree. It was November 13, 2020. In her generous way, Sharon brought many supplies. Corn hair, horse hair, dog hair, rabbit fur, fire-weed fluff, sheep wool, milk-weed, hempseed fluff, carders, drop spindles and more. We were going to learn to spin.

Senaqwila and Meagan are Indigenous knowledge holders working to recover what has been lost—their oral language but also the cultural language of the hands, making with plant fibres, hides, fishskin, cedar and so much more. They do this for their ancestors and community, but most especially for the children and that tender generation's right to hold their culture dear, with un-fettered knowledge and pride. They spoke of the depth of cultural loss in their community, with a fierce determination to make right what colonialism tried so hard to erase. There were many days at Fibreshed Field School that felt human, with our cohort spending time in nature, in community, learning from bighearted people. But this day stands out for me as particularly human. We gathered in a circle. Senaqwila had her drum and she and Meagan sang a traditional song. Their singing was like a ceremony of memory and emotion. The drumming a call of heartbeats to long away ancestors. When the time came to acknowledge and welcome our ancestors, all I could do was weep.

Later, Meagan shared a story about a material gift she received from someone in her community. She described her independence, her determination to process that gift on her own. Instincts strong in her told her they would spark and lead the way. She created and created, dismantled and recreated. Repeat. In her words, the resulting object "wasn't good enough". But then support came. She asked her community for help and they were waiting for her. Meagan held up the object for us. All I could see was a startling beauty, a beauty made deeper with everything it carried, the memories, the learning, the community, that circle of support.

On that day, I learned to look inward and listen. To really listen. To confront barriers of disconnection and that immediacy that demands fast, perfect results like some kind of checklist.

I picked up the drop spindle knowing I would not build much skill in a day. Indeed, I might not make much progress at all. Yet somehow, with the power of Meagan's story and Sharon's guiding steps —what to look for, what to feel for—the fibres connected. One set of hands held drop spindles, the other held fibres. Our circle, our little community, was spinning connective knowledge.

Indeed, sustainable making; using gifts from the garden, do away with environmental guilt: objects made in this way become gifts of reciprocity when they are returned to the soil as food. Somewhere in Vancouver, the soil is feasting on my unfinished cattail bag. But that time of disconnection, of not listening, still weighs on me. The cattails were moist but they needed more. In my go-to gear of hurrying towards perfection, I didn't even think to notice - let alone ask for help. When the listening came, my knowledge bag arrived in its slow, unhurried way. It is made of iris stems, not cattails. Coiled, not woven. All along, it was meant to be a circle. Not a square. It took time for me to hear that. The bag is made of knowledge. And it carries knowledge. It also carries gratitude. So much of it.

*W*arping&*W*eaving

WARPING &WEAVING

In partnership with the *Macgee Cloth Company*, a local weaving mill based in Roberts Creek, this cohort focused on transparent practices around textile production.

In this exploration of design for small-scale textile manufacturing, the students learned skills for prepping textile production (warping, weaving, and ethical yarn sourcing) and gained first-hand experience using the weaving software Fiberworks. The project culminated with the opportunity for the students to have their designs for two blankets woven in ring-spun cotton and lambswool, as well as their very own personalized labels, produced professionally by the weaving mill.

MENTORS AND GUEST FACILITATORS
NICOLA HODGES
STEPHANIE OSTLER
PAM MAGEE, MACGEE CLOTH COMPANY
ANNA HUNTER

STUDENTS
TUYEN HOANG
TESS SNADEN
RUBY LEWIS
PAULA TORRES URZUA
ANNIKA DIXON-REUSZ

ROBERTS CREEK

Situated between Gibsons and Sechelt, Roberts Creek is a beautiful, rural community on the Sunshine Coast, located on the unceded, ancestral and traditional xʷməθkʷəy'əm (Musqueam), səl̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and shíshálh (Sechelt) territories. While Roberts Creek is known for its forests, and beaches and local art and craft scene, it is also home to our two mentors Pam Magee and Nicola Hodges.

Aiming to learn how small-scale textile manufacturing takes place locally, the Warping and Weaving cohort was invited to visit the *Macgee Cloth Company* and learn about fibre processing from Nicola Hodges in Roberts Creek.

The students started their day trip in Vancouver. After a short ferry ride on a cloudy day, they were all warmly welcomed by their mentors in Roberts Creek. Beginning with a tour of Pam's workshop, the students were offered insights into textile processing technologies. Impressed by the huge metal loom that originated from the Industrial Revolution, the students learned about Pam's practice in the small-scale weaving mill.

To illustrate what types of fibres are being processed in Roberts Creek, Nicola laid out different natural fibre samples and explained their properties. The students learned how to spin and ply the fibres using a drop spindle. To advance their understanding, Nicola demonstrated how to use a spinning wheel.

Equipped with a broadened understanding of small-scale textile production within their local fibreshed community and hands-on practice in fibre processing, the students returned to Vancouver.

MACGEE CLOTH COMPANY

Located in Roberts Creek, British Columbia, Canada, the Macgee Cloth Company is a bespoke textile company specializing in blankets and throws made on antique English shuttle looms. Our blankets have a true selvedge edge which can only be made by a shuttle loom weaving a continuous weft thread. We have sourced and imported Dobcross looms from Wales and Yorkshire in the UK manufactured from 1936 to 1953 as well as a Charlesworth warper from 1899 to craft blankets in the great tradition of heirloom weaving.

from Macgee Cloth Co. "About the Macgee Cloth Company." accessed through *https://macgeecloth.com/pages/about-us*

*ON*LINE SESSI*ON*S

The original vision for the Field School was to take place in-person and outdoors, where each cohort would meet weekly, participate in workshops and engage with guest speakers. The initial concept included cross-cohort collaboration and community events for the students and mentors to share the work they were creating.

During the planning phase, the world came to a halt when COVID-19 swept the globe. Although many challenges were present, the project staff acted with resilience and determination to create an unique and memorable experience for everyone involved.

To adhere to the Provincial Health Orders much of the Field School transitioned to the virtual space. The platform used was BlueJeans video conferencing, the name couldn't be more fitting, a symbol that describes not only the history of our Western textile industry, but also that of artisanal labour and unbreakable fibre.

The students from the Warping & Weaving cohort gathered virtually from the comfort of their homes on Friday mornings, facilitated by mentors Nicola Hodges and Stephanie Ostler. These meetings were an opportunity for the students to ask questions and get feedback on their process, along with lessons in using the Fibreworks software to design their blankets.

Due to the flexibility of gathering virtually, the students were able to have guest speaker Anna Hunter visit them to speak about owning and operating her fibre farm and wool mill called *Longway Homestead* in Manitoba.

Stephanie Ostler facilitated an online financial workshop for both the Warping & Weaving and Regeneration cohorts. As the founder of a successful clothing company *Devil May Wear*, Stephanie helped the students understand finances in relation to running a small business and provided templates for the students to explore their product ideas.

NICOLA *HODGES*

NICOLA HODGES IS A TEXTILE CRAFTSPERSON AND TEACHER WITH an interest in design, local textile manufacturing and sustainable fibre farming. She has worked with *EartHand Gleaners Society* since 2017 teaching workshops on fibre processing and spinning as well as led projects exploring hyper-local natural dyes. She recently had the opportunity to train at Long Way Homestead's spinning mill as well as travel to study various practices including traditional knitting design, natural dyes, leather tanning and shepherding. She is currently living on shíshálh (Sechelt) and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) territories in Roberts Creek where she is working on a research project for *Maiwa Handprints* studying the viability of growing dye crops in this bioregion.

STEPHANIE *OSTLER*

Photo provided by Stephanie Ostler

AS A LIFELONG RESIDENT OF THE RAINY CITY STEPHANIE OSTLER launched her clothing company, *Devil May Wear*, straight out of high school, and immediately began attracting international attention and sales. By the time she was 30 she had 3 successful retail locations including Granville Island, Main Street, and Fan Tan Alley in Victoria. *Devil May Wear* has been voted Vancouver's Best Local Designer Clothing Store for 3 years and was voted runner up prior for 5. Working with mostly sustainable fabrics she produces her designs in Vancouver which she has sold in stores as far as Hong Kong and The Netherlands. Through *Devil May Wear*, Stephanie supports high school students with valuable job experience and mentorship and has worked with teen mothers to provide the skills they need to go out into the workforce. She uses her entrepreneurial expertise to help launch startups, speaks about being a designer and entrepreneur at various events in order to inspire young people and the community at large, and runs small seminars about starting your own business.

In 2013, she did a TEDx talk titled "The Luxury to Buy Better" where she spoke about buying sustainably. Stephanie is a member of the environmental committee of the University Women's Club of Vancouver, is currently the treasurer and was previously the president of the Granville Island Business Association, has sat on the boards such as the Canadian Club of Vancouver, and was a mentor with YELL in West Vancouver Secondary School. She recently stepped down as Vice President of ArdorCare, a biomedical provider of creative innovations supporting Canada's aging population, which launched publicly in 2019. She is passionate about giving everyone a chance to contribute meaningfully and to inspire the next generation by educating young people about entrepreneurship.

PAM MAGEE

Photo by Alana Paterson

PAM MAGEE IS A WEAVER USING INDUSTRIAL SHUTTLE LOOMS from the early 20th century to create blankets in the tradition of European textile production during the Victorian age. She is the founder of *Macgee Cloth Company*.

Located in Roberts Creek in British Columbia, Canada, the *Macgee Cloth Company* is a bespoke textile company specializing in blanket throws made on antique English shuttle looms. Their blankets have a true selvedge edge which can only be made by a shuttle loom weaving a continuous weft thread. In order to craft blankets in the great tradition of heirloom weaving, the company has imported Dobcross looms from Wales and Yorkshire, which were manufactured from 1936 to 1953, and a Charlesworth warper from 1899.

The company was started with the desire to create a blanket in the tradition of heirloom textiles craft but with transparent sourcing and environmentally sound provenance. Their blanket throws are made from 50% English Lambswool and 50% ring-spun, organically grown, North American cotton. The Lambswool is from Gledhill Spinners in Yorkshire, UK, a family-owned wool spinning company in business for nearly 80 years. The wool is 100% new superfine 21.5-micron lambswool.

The company uses ring-spun cotton from Hill Spinning, a family-owned mill and one of two spinners in North America who ring-spin cotton. Ring-spun cotton uses an older, slower spinning method which produces a stronger and softer yarn than the open-end spinning used in high production textile industries. The cotton that is used is grown organically by the *Texas Organic Cotton Marketing Cooperative* and certified by the Texas Department of Agriculture.

ANNA HUNTER

Photo taken from www.longwayhomestead.com

ANNA HUNTER IS A FIRST GENERATION SHEEP FARMER AND WOOL mill owner in Eastern Manitoba, Treaty One Territory. Anna, her husband Luke, and their two sons moved to Manitoba from Vancouver, BC in 2015. She started a small sheep farm, raising Shetland sheep for their beautiful wool. In 2018 they established a small-scale wool processing mill - the only one of its kind in Manitoba. They process wool and fibre for themselves and other farmers. Anna is passionate about building community and connecting rural fibre farmers with urban consumers, fibre artists and crafters. Anna believes that regenerative agriculture and climate beneficial food and clothing is integral to moving forward as farmers, fibre artists and Manitobans. To learn more about Anna and her farm/wool mill, check out *Longway Homestead.*

CUBILA

PAULA TORRES URZUA

Who could have known weaving and warping are so unique and so full of little details. Before the program, I did not have a clear understanding of the background work and all the knowledge necessary to get a latticework and each design's delicacies.

Even though we are not used to appreciating the presence of weaving in our products, it has always been part of our culture. Recognizing the effort and time of each piece is essential, and we have to become more aware.

I admire those who can create with fibres, textiles and nature altogether, always complementing each other. For example, when interweaving yarn or threads into a fabric by performing a warp and weft series. To be fair, what captures my attention the most is the versatility with which multiple blueprints can be created when changing a single thread's colour without changing the overall idea at the time of weaving. The difference is in the details; keeping things simple by exploring shapes and patterns that we can appreciate in each outline represented by the different cultures. There are vibrant, striking and colourful tones in my culture, with different shapes that form a story within the same cloth, which by itself expresses a vast part of what Mexico is.

Canada and Mexico are two completely different cultures. The art of weaving is present in both countries; but have different techniques, colours, patterns and expressions. In Mexico, Mexicans use natural fibres, such as cactus, agave, palm, and cotton, as well as natural dyes extracted from plants, insects, and minerals. They are always incorporating weaving and embroidery in their cultures as tribute and pride. On the other hand, natural dyes and a neutral colour palette are characteristic of Canadian weaving from what I could experience; later, these various materials combine during the weaving. However, in both countries, the art of weaving has started to decline, partly due to the lack of availability of natural resources. One single piece can take months to complete; cost and time are also important variables to consider when deciding materials and continuity.

Being in the Warping & Weaving cohort taught me two things. First, it showed me how much we could express with such simple materials which we used in the program, exploring and hands-on learning, but more importantly through thoughtfulness and sharing. Second, I realized we tend to see weaving in our cultures as if it were something from the past, oblivious to the existing development and somehow outdated. The act of recognizing the work put into the objects that are part of our daily lives should become a part of our routines by paying attention to small details. The work on details is splendid and worthy of appreciation. Weaving can be turned into many things and varies in size, colour, technique, figure, pattern, material, and shape.

TEATIME OVER LINEN

I remembered seeing a call to participate in Fibreshed Field School on a sunny day back in the summer of 2020. It was a chance I never wanted to miss. Fast forward to September, I joined the program under the Warping and Weaving cohort, which concentrated on cloth production. In the beginning, I got a chance to make my own blankets with *Macgee Cloth* located in Sunshine Coast, British Columbia.

If anything could be taken away from the Field School experience, it has been the people; their generosity in sharing knowledge became a genuine touchpoint that compensated for how most of our learning happened in a virtual environment. Our later assignment, "Dream Cloth", asked how we would design a cloth from our imaginations. I sought out linen as a potential material for it. So, I reached out to Damien Stonick from the Regeneration cohort. Concentrating on one material and learning through conversations made the process very fulfilling for me. Here, I would like to invite her perspective and offer our encounter to hopefully shine some light on this fibre.

Tuyen: Extracting fibre from flax is lengthy and time-consuming. I have only seen this process from afar, just like peeking through a kitchen window. Have you gone through it by hand? How does it make you feel about this material?

Damien: I haven't had the opportunity to take flax from seed to linen yet. I am reminded almost daily about how much patience is needed to make things that are meaningful, and lasting. I have, however, started my own learning in a few different ways. The first step I took, on what is a rather slow journey, was watching videos. I have watched Scottish and European productions. The Scottish was presented by an older gentleman who works at what is essentially historical preservation, and the other was a large-scale, largely mechanized European farm and factory. I started reading a book, titled *Homegrown Linen: Transforming Flaxseed into Fibre*, written by Raven Ranson. She is from Vancouver Island. She mentioned flax growing over the winter in our region quite happily. So, I bought seeds from *Whole Foods* (granted, not fibre producing, but for seed) and cleared a patch in the front yard, and stomped them in. That was two months ago and the little friends are probably two inches tall now. Typically flax has a 100-day maturation cycle. So, the colder weather causes a growth delay. After I had planted the seeds, I was able to connect with Sharon Kallis, who is the founder of *EartHand Gleaners*. I joined Sharon, Kathy Dunster, an agriculture professor at KPU, and an MDes student from Emily Carr. Kathy and Sharon have been trying different fibre flax seed varieties for the last two years and we assisted them in processing a few of the batches. I feel anxious about the disconnects I have in my knowledge. I have planted them. I am watching them grow. But I have not harvested or retted, which is one of the most critical steps in linen production. I have broken, scutched, hackled, and carded, but have not spun or woven. It has been my experience, having come from a Bachelor's Degree in Materials Science and Engineering. So in the transition to design, it is very easy to disconnect from the full history of a material. We get excited about the potential and the usefulness, but we have no part in the labour of it. Flax is such a bodily intensive material. How much more do we cherish a garment or good when our own sweat goes into the birth of it?

Tuyen: From the research, I have gathered moisture is crucial in working with linen. Compared to cotton, linen yarn is not as elastic and is tricky to use for warping because the tension may easily become uneven. One trick is praying water to fix that. Keeping the yarns moist on the loom also makes it easier to beat them in. I have seen experienced weavers advising to avoid pure linen for warping. This has shifted my perspective on the process involved in working with linen. Water is equally important to transform flax to fibre. It is needed during retting to dissolve the pectins that bind layers of the stalk. Fine quality linen yarns are made of the longest fibre remaining after shorter ones are removed, and spun when damp. I am curious if any of this aspect influences your perspective on the process to cultivate and processing linen?

Damien: I genuinely have not gotten as far as you in this regard. Thank you so much for teaching me! If there is anything I have come to appreciate, it is the generosity of the individuals who grow and make. Their hearts and spirits are so deeply and literally woven into the fabrics they make and share. This is not on the topic of the prompt, but I have met so many genuine and giving women who are so open with sharing their knowledge. It has been so humbling and gratifying.

Tuyen: If linen fibre is produced on a large scale, alkali or oxalic acid may be used during the retting process to make it faster. Both could be toxic to the environment. Retting with water or dew takes a longer time, and is an environmentally healthy practice. This also means organic linen is more expensive and less accessible.

Damien: I've settled fairly deeply into examining and opposing the costs of forcing plants and resources to do what we want them to, and not work with them in how they are inclined to behave and perform. The use of chemicals to expedite the retting processes is a pretty big example and chemical dyes are another. In the world of mass production, the more you make and the faster you do it, the more money you can make. This impetus for speed, however, is what gets us into trouble with deeper and deeper earth debt. I am of the mind that there is space and support for goods that are made mindfully, and the history of linen is not one that came from chemically speeding up the process, but hundreds, if not thousands, of years of doing things the slow way.

Tuyen: Yes! I find it unsettling how linen used to be the oldest and prominent fibre, but is now replaced by others that are faster to produce like cotton.

Damien: Cotton can be better, but it's faster and easier to use horrifying amounts of pesticides and absurd amounts of water.

Tuyen: Perhaps this is why smallscale production has a better chance at forging a healthy relationship with the land, and with the community, it provides for. But it is very difficult without a supportive policy and grant incentives. Can you share some of these struggles?

Damien: The thresholds for building a business to scale feel quite intimidating, but the approach I'm taking is building an argument for the support of rural communities through flax processing and linen production. Permitting and support for small farms are quite scarce, and it can be difficult for farming to happen in urban areas. The more we talk about and facilitate growing and small-scale manufacturing, the more we can push on municipal and provincial entities to support. It also takes a lot of creative thinking- where is the funding, and how can I position my goals within the goals of a city, province, or country? How can I leverage the language they use in my approach, conversations, and applications? I'm not quite in a position to get funding. So, I'm learning what I can, and connecting with similarly invested individuals.

Tuyen: You mentioned that flax was abundant in Canada before being wiped out by canola cultivation. Reviving a flax production from the ground up does seem like swimming against the current. It requires lots and lots of support. I am certainly one in spirit. Thank you so very much for providing such wonderful insight.

In retrospect, I went through what felt like negotiating back and forth with expectations about a material. The more I found, that reality flipped me one-eighty. Listening to Rebecca Burgess, I realized there are many layers to understand the resources that we use. I am grateful for Nicola Hodges, one of our mentors for constantly providing her presence. Her teaching about how fibres become cloth was the earliest touch point that fueled a thirst to learn as much as I could. A simple takeaway came from reflecting on all these processes: Physically touching, feeling, learning with hands is a fundamental gateway to understand my material, how much it produces and how to use it meaningfully. A truthful way of making means not forcing something to be made or performed at a capacity it doesn't have. It is easier said than done. On why it is important to be part of a community: I would like to have a symbiotic connection with growers, producers, and fellow practitioners. However, ideas come faster in my head than my skills can catch up. They have yet to take form and whom I produce for have yet to actualize. As I am finding my own practice, there are more questions than answers. And to find answers, I will keep making.

TUYEN *HOANG* In collaboration with DAMIEN *STONICK*

WORDS AND IMAGES BY TUYEN HOANG

REPEATED ACTS OF TENDING

TESS SNADEN

I was eighteen when my parents helped me move across the country. Before they drove away, my dad hugged me and asked, “Can you make it through the next ten minutes?”. Through tears and some confusion, I said, “Yes.” He hugged me one more time and said, “Then you’ll be fine, just keep making it through the next ten minutes.”

Since then, I have thought about this moment constantly. The idea that if I can focus on a smaller action, like the ten minutes ahead of me, eventually time will pass and I will not be where I was. When I spent the first holiday away from my family I taught myself how to knit. That long weekend I sat and did not stop knitting until my scarf was about two feet wide and nine feet long. Reflecting on my practice, everything I have made comes from this methodology of repetition; something small, done again and again, and finally amounting to something larger.

This has only been amplified by the Field School. In it, I have been pushed to question where I am needed the most and how I can better our local fibreshed. Many times along the way I have related to the single threads at Pam’s mill. On their own so minuscule and tiny and the idea of making a large blanket with them seemingly impossible. However, with dedication and repeated acts of tending they amount to such beautiful pieces of cloth. I am a single thread, dreaming of a larger blanket that I in no way can make on my own, but with this Field School and the community that has started, I know I don't have to do it all by myself.

I was recently asked why people outside of the textile community should care about Fibreshed. The question in my head is not why but how couldn’t you care about Fibreshed? It was hard to give a direct answer because why would people outside of this community care enough to buy a 500 dollar sweater when they can go to H&M and get a similar one for 20 dollars? Why would they go out of their way to know their clothes when they are used to wearing them twice and throwing them out? Why, why, why became so loud I couldn’t hear my own thoughts, but in a way the answer is simple. With a deeper understanding of our clothes, we are less likely to toss them away. When we connect a maker or a place to the pieces in our wardrobe, we wash them with more care and we consider them more important than the cheap t-shirts from H&M. It is not about the price but more so considering the lifespan of the things we buy. It’s pushing people to question their consumption choices and recognize the harm in throw-away fashion. These questions are like the unmade cloth, large and untouchable in my mind. Although, with every conversation, we have around the importance of knowing we pass one thread through the others slowly weaving a Fibreshed tapestry. This process cannot, nor should not, be rushed so I turn to my trust in repetition. It has been a powerful privilege to be part of this journey and I do believe this is only the beginning of my blanket.

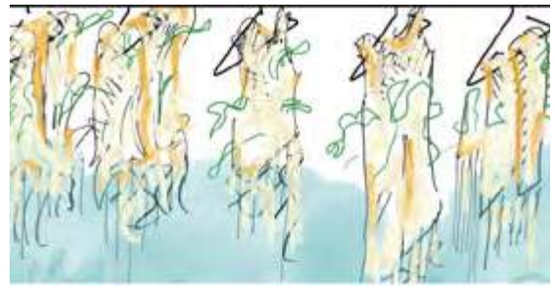
WORDS AND IMAGES
BY TESS SNADEN

WHAT IF OUR CLOTHES GREW?

ANNIKA *DIXON*

“It is November and the weather is cold, the few leaves remaining on the trees blow in the wind. The alarm clock beeps and beeps again for the third time this morning. From the cozy comfort of my duvet, I can sense the cold air from outside through my bedroom window. The concept of standing seems daunting. My toes curl towards my heels as I slowly push the covers aside and comb my fingers through my hair and over my face to shake the feeling of sleep. Perched on the edge of my bed I balance looking into my closet to decide what I wear. The water in the trough is low because it was neglected from being filled the night before, so my lovely garments are looking a bit wilted. I accept the reality that I will be rocking the “tired” look today. Standing straight, I move my hand over my clothes, a couple of pairs of pants dangled in the water, a couple of tops, and a fluffy jacket, all in various shades of cream. I know where each of them comes from, the way that they were made, and by whom. Harvested from the local farm just a couple of kilometres away and spun, woven, and finished at our local clothing supplier. They come with tags mapping their lifespans, but of course, it depends on how well you take care of them. I grimace at the thought of how I neglected to feed them the night before. Opting to not yet get dressed, I picked up my emergency spray bottle and gave each of the clothes a squirt of nutrients to perk them up. I then shuffled to the kitchen to start the coffee and put bread in the toaster. While I wait for my toast and coffee, I take a shower, filling a large bucket with water at the same time. I then add the bucket of water to my closet trough. Sitting at the window with a hot cup of coffee and peanut butter toast I lose my thoughts in the fog...though lately it is been hard to decipher fog from pollution... the strives we took to move to a more sustainable future allowed us to adapt to a new way of living very quickly, but there are still remnants of life before that we have never been able to tackle. It is challenging. Full from breakfast, I am now running late for work, a consequence of wanting to enjoy breakfast. Returning to my closet, my clothes seem to have perked up from the nutritious spray, which is a relief. It is always a bit of an embarrassment wearing wilted clothes in public. It physically shows neglect. I opt for a long sleeve gathered sweater, a-line woven pants, and the fluffy jacket with a cute hat and mittens to keep me warm out in the cool November weather. By detaching the garment wicks and removing the hangers, they shake dry and curl around my body. Feeling comforted by my connection to my clothes, I step out my door with confidence and zoom to work, knowing I will rewind this cycle when I get home at the end of the day but opt for curry for dinner instead of toast. I made an internal promise to remember to water and spray my closet tonight before bed. Prepared for a long day of meetings and phone calls for the rest of the day, I move into the day as the clock ticks ten o’clock.”

My dream cloth for my final assignment for Fibershed Field School focused on the critical concept of “what if our clothes grew?” and looked into the future. Researching hydroponics with wool as a growing medium to reflect how we live with our garments, and encouraging a deepening of our connection with our textiles. An idea that can allow us to think about our objects in a different way. Hydroponics are plants that can grow without soil; herbs, clovers, and some vegetables. To grow seeds in textiles you need a medium, wick, and water trough. If you are growing seeds in the winter it is helpful to have a grow lamp and place your system next to the window where it can get lots of light. You will also ideally have some pumps to circulate the water, but it is not necessary for a basic system. For the wick, you can pretty much use any type of fibre as long as it soaks up water. Old clothes,



cotton, wool, and even some synthetic fibres will work, though not as well as a natural fibre.

From this program, I have gained a strong knowledge of weaving and am excited to delve deeper into my role as a designer to support the local textile industry. We have had the incredible opportunity to have two large blankets created at Macgee Cloth and turn our design visions into technical instructions. We all now have the potential to start our own sustainable practices within our personal spaces; planting natural dye gardens, and starting sample weavings. But beyond this, with our gained knowledge of yarn counts, of Fiberworks (creating digital weaving instructions), and connection to the local fibre processing (mills, sheep farms), we can create woven cloths for a variety of different purposes (lamps, clothing, furniture, accessories, and décor), pushing beyond our intimate personal practices, into greater impacts, helping us approach unique and creative solutions for weaving our own cloth. This has emphasized how important systems of support for mills and farms that are local. I look forward to starting a natural dye garden in the new year, and continuing to learn as much as possible about making textiles locally, and collaborating with other designers interested in this area.

Regeneration

REGENERATION

In partnership with Rebecca Burgess, *Morning Star Woollen Farm* and *7 Leagues Leather*, this cohort focused on exploring multiple practices surrounding regeneration and the circular economy.

The students learned about new methods of regenerative agriculture in BC through a visit to Star Hoerauf's *Morning Star Woolen Farm* on Bowen Island. Star, a regenerative farmer and designer, in partnership Phil Gregory, UBC Professor Emeritus of Physics and Astronomy, presented their "Food and Fibre Sustainability Insights."

To build on regenerative practices, the group attended a natural indigo dyeing series with Valérie d. Walker, a local textile artist and educator. They learned traditional shibori dyeing techniques and how this natural dye can help create healthy soils.

In the final series of activities, the group worked with Dr. Love-Ese Chile and Tasha Nathanson from *7 Leagues Leather* to conduct an experiment to evaluate the potential use of a cider industry by-product, provided by Twin Island Cider, as a tannin for leather production. Students tested the material for tannin content in a laboratory experiment, comparing it to results obtained using more conventional leather tannin sources.

After each of their activities, the students reflected on their experiences in a group video call with their mentor Rebecca Burgess.

MENTORS AND GUEST FACILITATORS
REBECCA BURGESS
STAR HOERAUF
TASHA NATHANSON
DR. LOVE-ESE CHILE
PHIL GREGORY
VALERIE D. WALKER

STUDENTS
LAURA HERRIDGE
MORGAN MARTINO
AJRA PURSLEY-DOOBENEN
DAMIEN STONICK,
SHIRA ANIMAN
TAJA ARYA JINNAH
CALEIGH SMITH

BOWEN ISLAND

The name for Bowen Island is Nexwlélexm in the native language of the Squamish people and describes a beautiful place in the middle of Howe Sound, not far from Horseshoe Bay, West Vancouver. It is home to mentor Star Hoerauf and guest speaker Phil Gregory.

The students of the Regeneration Cohort were invited to visit *Morning Star Woollen Farm* on Bowen Island with the intention of learning about regenerative farming. During their visit, astrophysicist and soil enthusiast Phil Gregory presented his ideas on "Food and Fibre Sustainability" through a group discussion.

The students started their day trip from Vancouver on a rainy fall morning. After a welcome by Star to her farm, their first activity included examining a raw sheep fleece. Star explained how the raw wool is processed to become a finished product. She spoke about her past career in technical apparel design and her goals as an entrepreneur. Star explained the importance of building personal networks, referring to the experience she has had developing relationships by having her fleece processed into yarn. Accompanied by the sheep, the students then got a tour of the farm where they learned about Star's regenerative farming practices raising sheep specifically for their fleece. She explained how the property had been developed for water conservation and described the systems in place for carbon sequestration, including strategic grazing techniques.

Later, in a discussion with Phil Gregory, the students learned about soil degradation, the impacts of global warming and chronic disease epidemics in relation to industrial agriculture on a global scale. They discussed how regenerative practices can help to rebuild healthy soils, starting on a local scale.

MORNING STAR
WOOLLEN FARM

At *Morning Star Woollen*, our purpose is to study the natural world and invest ourselves in ways that enhance the healing of the soil that sustains everything we produce and share.

Ours is a well-worn path, quietly pioneered by generations of ranchers who intimately understood the synergy of grazing animals and the earth. We're honoured to follow their wisdom and the lessons that unfold before us moment by moment on the farm. And we're proud to be contributing in a small way to nourishing the future world by nurturing our little stretch of land.

from Morning Star Woollen farm, "Our Story" accessed through *https://morningstarwoollen.com/*

*O*NLINE SESSI*O*NS

The adaptability of virtual meetings allowed for the students of the Regeneration cohort to have group discussions with their mentors as well as hands-on workshops with their guest facilitators.

Rebecca Burgess met with the students from her home in California while the students tuned in from Vancouver. Rebecca facilitated discussions around the content the students were learning in the Field School from the context of Fibershed and regenerative farming practices.

The virtual meeting space also made possible an indigo presentation from Valérie d. Walker, where the students learned more about her work as a textile artist and indigo maven.

The most impressive use of the Bluejeans video conferencing application was the series of workshops hosted by Tasha Nathanson and Dr. Love-Ese Chile, where the students learned the process of making fish leather and conducted tannin extraction experiments from kits that were prepared for them, all from their own homes in front of a computer screen.

In the face of a challenge like COVID-19, the students, mentors, guest facilitators, and project staff showed great resilience and made the Field School come to life through perseverance, flexibility, and determination.

STAR *HOERAUF*

SHEPHERDESS, GROWER & DESIGNER AT *MORNING STAR WOOLLEN FARM*, Star Hoerauf is a life-long lover of clothes who has worked for leading edge makers of technical outerwear including Arc'teryx, the North Face and Patagonia. She has spent the past decade raising children, sheep, and reconciling her love of clothing with the fashion industry.

Hoerauf is recognized as a pioneer in the realm of high-performance technical apparel, and has received more than a dozen awards for technical outerwear design. Though much of her career has been spent innovating synthetic fabrics and cutting edge construction techniques, she is now passionately focused on the use of high-performance natural fibers and small-scale domestic manufacturing on Bowen Island, BC.

VALÉRIE D. *WALKER*

Photo by Maya Lubell

VALÉRIE D. WALKER IS A RENAISSANCE ARTIST, ALCHEMYST, TRANSMEDIA maker, educator, curator, Indigo Griot, Radio-Wave creatrix & BIPOC Femme Afro-Futuristic transmitter. She holds 5th level *Ikebana* (Japanese flower arranging) & *Chado* (tea-ceremony) degrees with Urasenke-Kyoto & lifetimes of Indigo knowledge, she landed on Gaia in Honolulu & has traveled the planet in space and time. Valérie holds a degree in EECS from UC-Berkeley and her MFA from NSCAD University.

Valérie's artwork explores enviro-positive natural dyeing and printing, fibre-based responsive installations, tactile virtual spaces, solar-powered circuits, story-telling, epigenetic memories, environmentally healing studio processes, craft-based techniques, digitalia and imagining, programming, sensoriality, and Afro-Futurism. Her curatorial work examines Diasporiac revelations, Indigi-Queer Black Other Femme representations & Techno-Enviro Moravecian NightMares.

Valérie has over 20+ years of Grrl Powered radio online from her production & hosting of the XX Files Radio show, @Matricules, Canada's only open-source, feminist digital media art portal. Her installations & dimensional sculptures are exhibited across Canada and the world. Part of the Surrey Art Gallery's 2017 Ground Signals group exhibition, her recent Richmond No. 3 Road mentoring project, and commissioned work received outstanding reviews.

Valérie returned to the West Coast 6 years ago, after 20 years in Montréal where she taught Techno-Culture, Arts & Gaming (TAG) and Computation Arts in the Fine Arts Faculty of Concordia University. Involved with Studio XX (now Ada-X) for 17 years; Valérie produced & hosted the XX Files Radio show, now in year XXV on CKUT FM & Soundcloud. She has started several alternative, BIPOC, Feminist LGBTQ+ hackerspaces & Alternative & Grrl & Queer Games festivals in Montréal. She teaches Interdisciplinary Foundation Studio, Interactive Wearables, Electronics for Artists, Fibreshed Regeneration (TARP) Indigo naturally, Programming for Grrlz with community empowerment centers, and serves on various art juries and the boards of Pride in Art and BLAC. She is an artist in residence at the Malaspina Downtown Printing Studios and has her own bio-fermented natural indigo dye studio in East Vancouver, BC.

TASHA *NATHANSON*

Photo provided by Tasha Nathanson

TASHA IS A CURIOUS ENTREPRENEUR, ATTUNED TO SOCIAL enterprise and keen on business models successful not just on a commercial level but also designed to enhance the well being of individuals, communities, and the environment. When she encountered a group of Vancouver artists teaching themselves small-batch fish leather tanning, she set out to research and test the market for scaling that idea up from artisinal handwork to commercial production for job creation and wider impact. Building a new type of manufacturing business that will blaze a way forward (re)using local, sustainable resources is what gets her up in the morning. Seven Leagues Leather is the result.

DR. LOVE ESE *CHILE*

Photo provided by Dr. Love Ese Chile

DR. LOVE-ESE CHILE IS THE FOUNDER AND TECHNICAL DIRECTOR of circular waste research and testing company *Regenerative Waste Labs*. Dr. Chiles' research focuses on understanding the biodegradation of bio-based products to develop new waste management and circular recovery technologies. Her interests lie at the intersection of the circular economy, bioeconomy, green chemistry and sustainable science. She has taken her scientific training into the industry and is passionate about communicating and translating her knowledge into new ventures and initiatives that will add value to our communities. As a person who comes from diverse backgrounds both personally and professionally, Dr. Chile is driven to connect people who may not usually come together to co-create products and services that will lead our communities into a greener and more equitable future.

LAND, SHEEP, WOOL, FELT, REPEAT

AJRA DOOBENEN

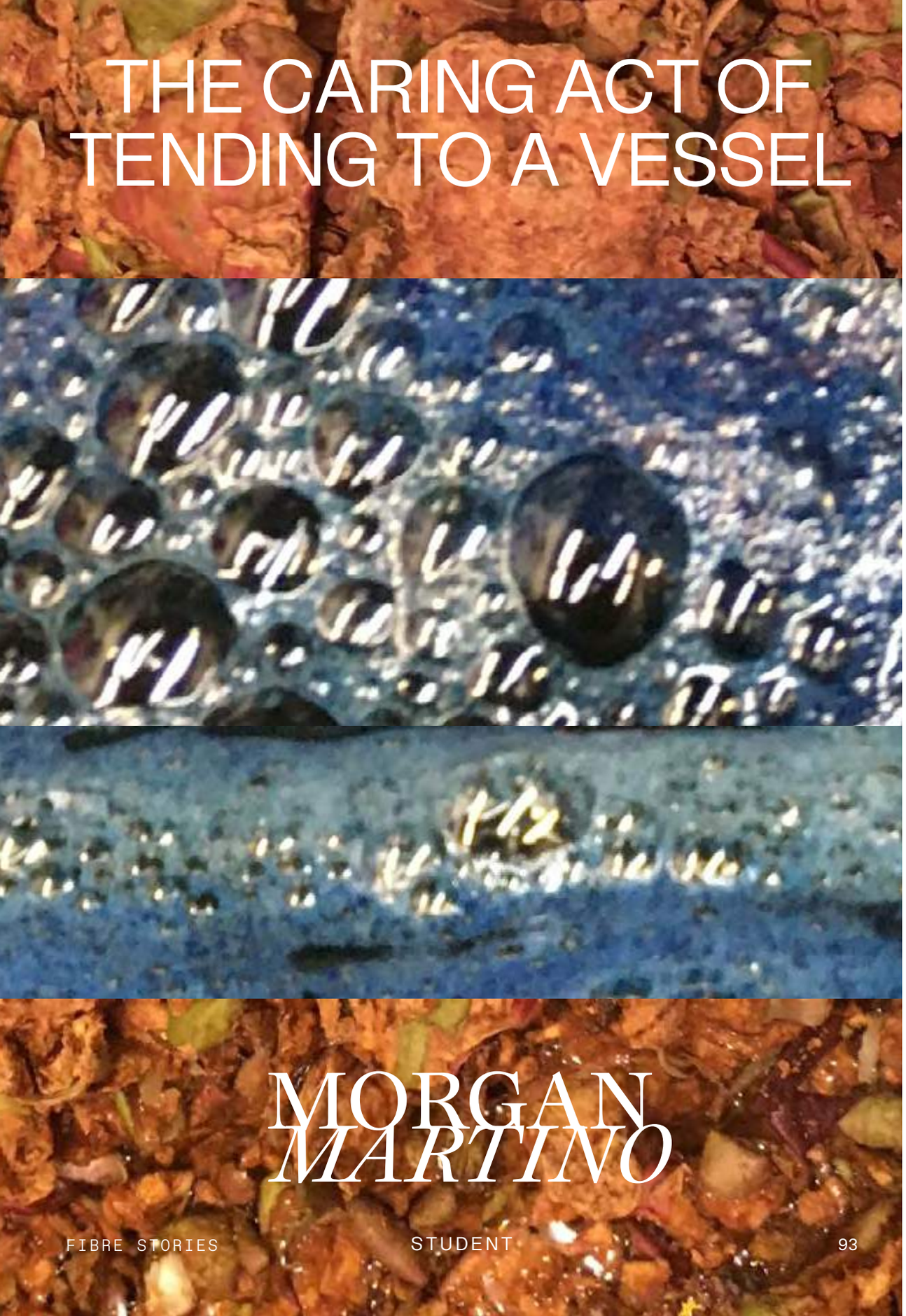
Regeneration—a word that evokes ideas of growth, cultivation and continuous caring for something that might have been forgotten or disregarded. A word that involves cyclical ways of working.

Regenerative farming practices in our Fibreshed are being embraced by various farmers working at different scales. We were invited to visit one of these farmers, Star Hoerauf, at her home and farm on Bowen Island, BC. This experience was the first time meeting many of my cohort members in person. Upon arrival, we gathered around a work table with a raw sheep fleece on it. This was from one of Star's Blue-faced Leicesters. This table, perched on her back deck, overlooked her farm that scaled a large and steep hill. We could hear her sheep through the fog and rain as they roamed around their field. Star told us stories about her relationships with them as she talked us through how she planned to process this specific fleece. The task was slow, layered and required a community of people to get from raw wool to spun yarn. I was enamoured by it all. It seems silly to be so taken by a greasy lanolin rich fleece, however, I couldn't hide my excitement as I listened attentively. I stood there trying to take in as much information as possible in the short time we had.

From here I knew this was something I needed to explore, however through Star's description of the process I also knew it would require care, dedication and most of all, time. There is a responsibility and respect that has to be taken on when working with these materials. What does it mean, as a maker to work

with fleece from a sheep that contributed to a regenerative farm?

For me, it means you are working within the soil-to-soil cyclical system. As the sheep contributes to regenerative farming and carbon sequestering, the wool it grows is an extension of these practices and methodologies. Not only can it be used for the making of yarns and felts, but eventually its nutrients can be returned to the very soil in which it originated. I believe that forming relationships with the soil, animals and everything in-between is at the heart of regenerative farming. So naturally, I started my exploration. Using fleece from my home island, I was able to connect with the people and sheep that produced it. After these conversations, I processed the fleece. This process included skirting, scouring and carding the fleece and following this I felted the wool. I am now at the stage of having a material (felt) to work with—we'll see what comes next!



THE CARING ACT OF TENDING TO A VESSEL

MORGAN *MARTINO*

There is something so wondrous about tending to a vessel. Watching over its contents, bubbling and swirling about in an ever-changing-never-quitethe-same series of patterns and abstractions. Like watching a camp fire or the pull of the ocean, the contents of a pot, cauldron or container can be incredibly captivating to the human mind, inviting interaction and attention. During my time in Fibreshed Field School, I was able to unpack how the actions of tending to a vessel in service of dyeing or tanning could connect to sustainable making practices.

Many of the ways in which we usually engage with creating, transforming or caring for textile goods (at the individual level at least) do not have a limited window of time to be completed. One can set down a pair of knitting needles or crochet hook or embroidery hoop and come back to it months or years later and pick back up where they left off. Sewing projects can be passed down from generation to generation, mended and modified through use, reuse and disuse. With leather tanning and textile dyeing however, a more active role of care must be employed to make sure they can to work in their intended fashion.

When in the presence of Valérie d. Walker and her Indigo Vat, I was struck with how much of a relationship the two of them had. I couldn't help but begin to personify it, finding metaphors for a child or beloved pet. She would swaddle the vessel in blankets for warmth, feed it lime, sugar and sake, and check its health. Our impact on the vat had to be carefully planned and considered before our use of it, and was as much a factor in our use of it a s how it would affect our fabric.

When I was able to tend to my own pot during Dr. Love-Ese Chile's Apple Pomace Tannins workshop, I was able to experience first hand what tending to a vessel of dye was like. The hours I spent in front of it, checking its temperature, stirring its contents and smelling its aromas helped reinforce the lessons in presentness, reciprocity and resilience that other areas of the program had brought up. I began to imagine how a prolonged relationship with these sorts of dyeing processes would impact my design practice, enabling me to better consider my design decisions with regards to how their materials are processed.

As I continue my work in creative fields, I hope to carry with me the long term caring commitment I was able to experience when looking after these vessels of dye. Their lessons in process driven, site specific, symbiotic making are lessons in the true costs and rewards of making in a sustainable way.

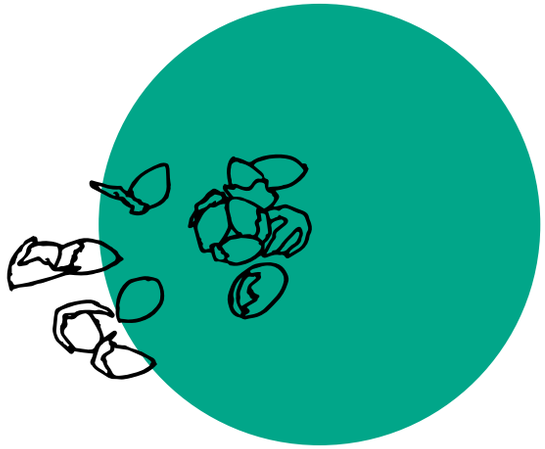
INDIGO DYEING

SHIRA *ANISMAN*

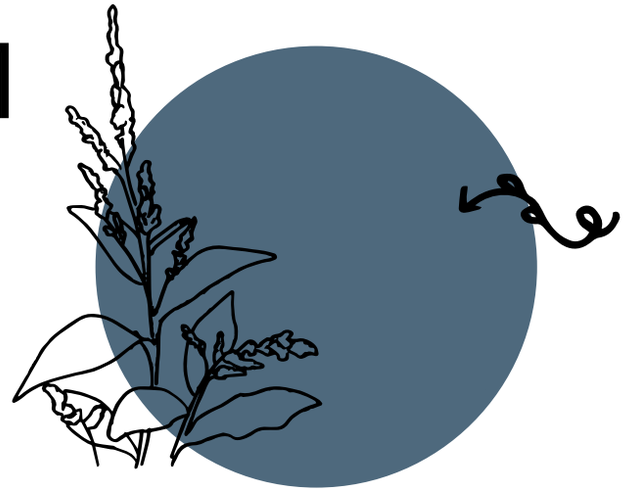
WORDS AND IMAGES
BY SHIRA ANISMAN

GROWING A TE*X*TILE SYSTEM

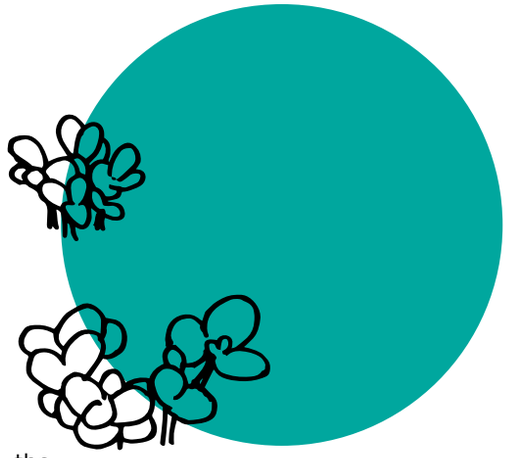
An analogy of growing Indigo



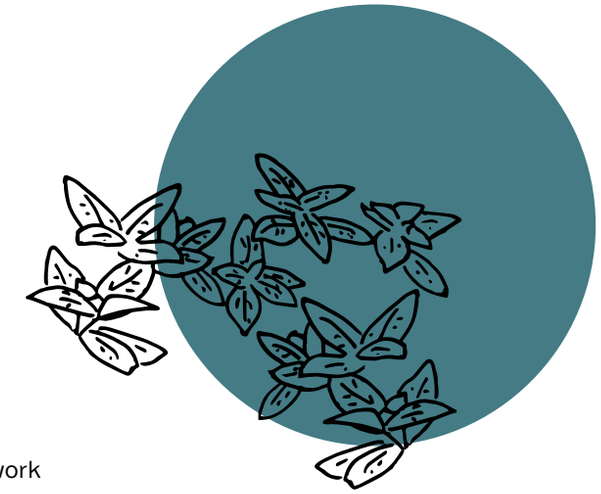
Much like a seed, an idea starts small. A healthy textile system needs to start with healthy ideas. Ideas focused on life, on place, on accountability, on hands, on craft, on care.



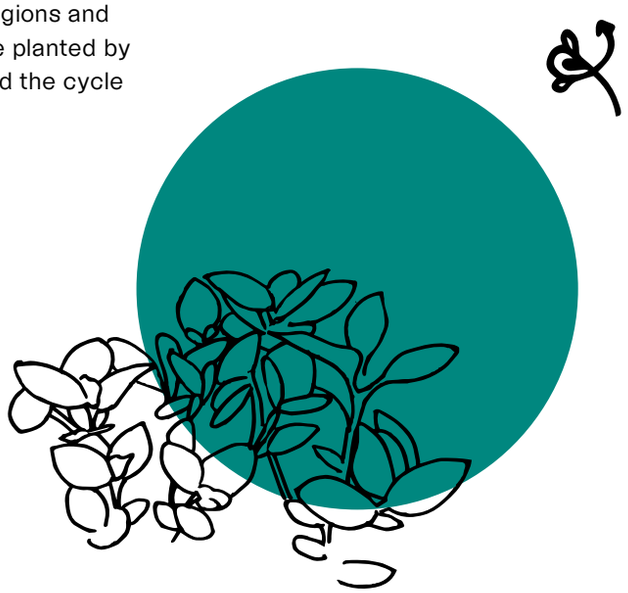
To grow the idea of a new textile system, the idea must be planted. A seed planted in the wilderness, far from where we live and breath, might grow, it might die. Planting an idea where we are, however, we can care for the idea good soil, we can check in on it, we can weed out destructive ideas and practices. We become accountable, and excited!



As the system grows, more producers, growers, makers, designers, and support systems start to grow. A stronger network starts to produce more sprouts, more leaves, and more potential.



As the system matures, the budding network starts to bear fruit. The system can begin producing goods, connections with the system can begin to branch out to other regions and produce seeds of ideas that can be planted by other people, for other systems, and the cycle begins again!



As a seed grows and begins to sprout and spread, we can begin recognizing where ideas are progressing, projects are growing, and where there are gaps. We can begin to ask what amendments need to be added, how can we fertilize the soil- grow support in the community, hold conversations, and develop practice.

DAMIEN *STONICK*

WORDS AND IMAGES
BY DAMIEN STONICK

HAND-*ARTS* AS SYMBOLIC RESISTANCE

Hand-based rituals can deepen our relationships to both material and place.

Hand-based rituals can deepen our relationships to both material and place. These practices can be a part of building systems of support; having positive reverberations in the lives of vulnerable people and disability justice. I focused on processes that lead to learning our bodies in different ways to increase our autonomy and connection to the land. In this way, ritual can tangibly link to health in our lives.

Rural communities often lack necessary services and supports. This reduced accessibility has an increased impact on people living with disabilities. Nexwlélexwm (Bowen Island) is the rural island community where I grew up. It is where I have the strongest connection to place. The earth and water systems there raised me, and the natural environments are often where I felt the most freedom as a visible minority in a small population. When we are building resilience in our communities and practices why shouldn't we look at ecosystems or individual organisms' bodies to reflect the ecology in our frameworks? Even in details like how wool can be felt like a form of protection or how the imprints of sheep's hooves can shelter seeds and water. There are even lessons to be learned in the scale structure of a salmon if we spend the time to be able to see them.

A natural system that I learned the most from was soil. Philip Gregory, a local Bowen astrophysicist turned soil-enthusiast, brought up a concept when describing the importance of making information around health in soil and how that can affect our bodies visible. This was the need to "give people the tools to survive their lives." He gave people the knowledge to avoid nutritionally deficient food, but this struck me as something with a wider application. Part of giving people the tools to survive their life is environmental health and forming meaningful relationships between people, and between practices. Visibility of knowledge and production can help combat the violence at all levels in fibre and agriculture production; having an awareness of the life cycles in labour and material.

Life cycles were central to my exploration of indigo. I studied the Kumo Shibori dye-resist technique. A meditative process of collecting and tying in creek stones. I gathered stones from the natural water system where all my drinking water came from growing up. The ritual informed my body. There are multiplicities in how we can enrich our relationships to our environments, and this project built a circularity with my personal history with the creek and in the technical process. Our mentor, indigo maven Valérie d. Walker, told us we have the colour blue because we can breathe which is another strong connection between indigo and the body. I also felt connections to the body in the language of family lineages—the powers of the mother indigo vat—and in how each vat has its cycles of life and death. Valérie's stories also brought up the notion of gift economies, gifts in exchange for knowledge, and the passing down of meaningful work objects. Even the untying of our work felt like opening a gift from the indigo vat itself. Collecting the stones, tying them in, dyeing the work, and returning the stones all activated my body in different ways. The dyeing process has its own kind of choreography that can enrich interaction. Across cultures, the procession of dyeing informs physicality. Becoming embedded in cultural language, cueing the creation of songs and dances linked to making.

The effects of the dyeing process on the body reminded me of *mehndi*. One of my first memories is of when a woman articulated henna designs on my hands at a family wedding. I remember running around but having to keep my hands still as the henna dried. How it was a memorable deepening of family and cultural relationships translated from one hand to another person's hand. I thought about my cultural background when creating my shibori because India was historically the largest producer of indigo. Although the way indigo is grown now has been shaped by British colonialism and industrialization. There is a need for increased transparency in environmental and labour health impacts to change these colonized systems for the better. This can help a production go back to the direction of local farming practices. Localized engagement in the arts and meaningful labour is a way of producing relationships that can facilitate greater change. While experiencing the isolation and uncertainty of the pandemic, through hand-based rituals of making, a community formed between us. We were in a way producing tangible expressions of these connections. Even if we couldn't exist altogether in the ways that used to be normal, we still shared a kind of physical presence through our shared work. I felt this also while working with the salmon leather. The fish leather process has made me reassess the value of what we consider waste materials and what materials we restrict from value. This had a poetic relationship to how the conditions of industrialized labour have been a method of restricting people with disabilities from the economy, and extensively from society. These systems are devaluing when you are disabled and can damage self-worth, autonomy, and health which is why labour that is accessible and meaningful is so important. Hand-based rituals have visible value in our lives, in part, because environmental health is inextricable from community health. Fibre arts are uniquely suited to addressing questions in community building because this medium is ingrained in our daily rituals of comfort and connecting with others. The fact that engagement in the arts and meaningful labour has positive resonance especially in the lives of people who are marginalized or vulnerable, is something that will stay with me and inform my practice moving forward. As I am sitting sewing gifts for loved ones from the salmon leather I made myself, I think about the possibilities in the community, and I feel hope.

TAJA *ARYA* JINNAH

03 FIBRE FUTURES

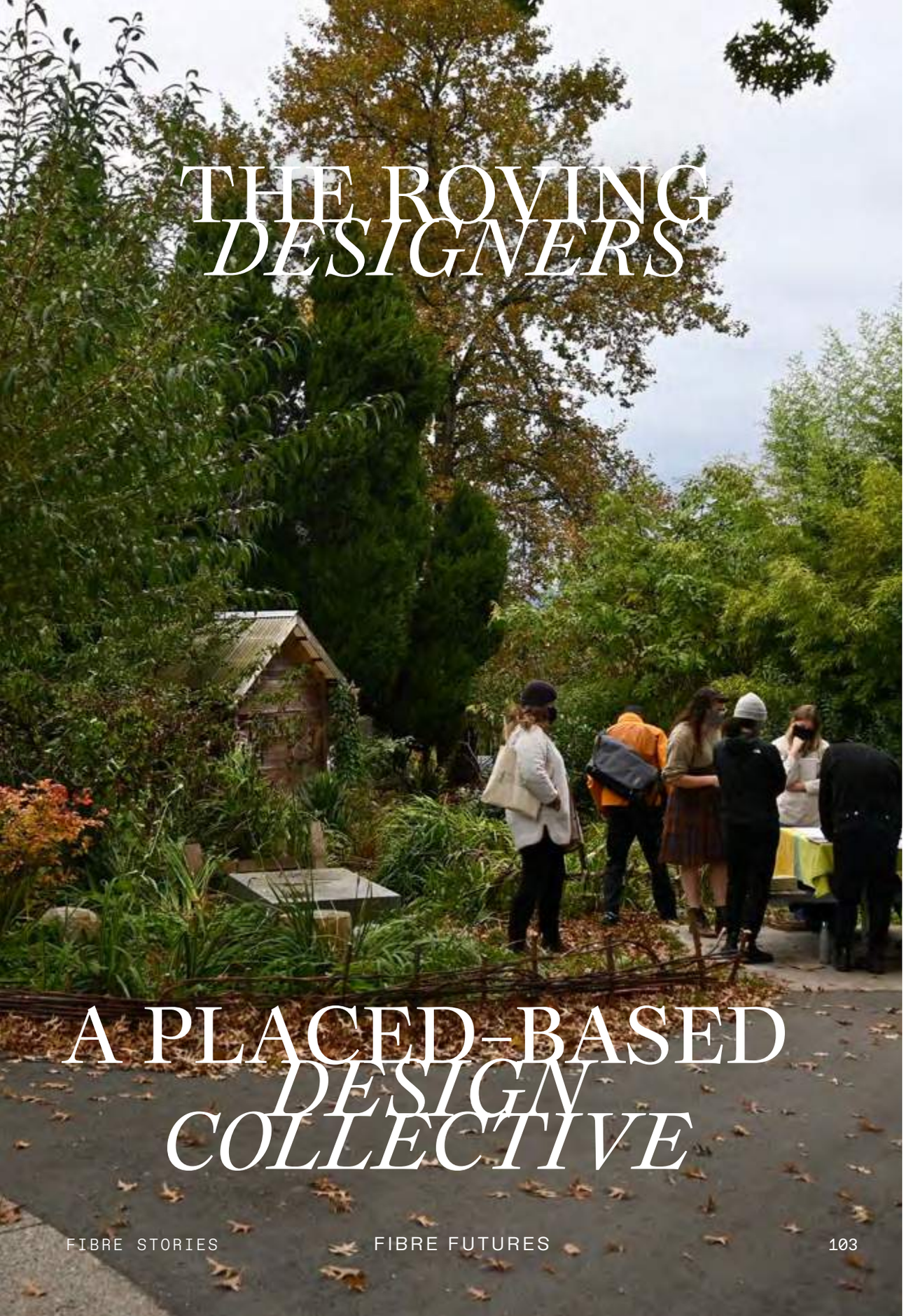
WHAT'S NEXT?

Fibreshed Field School brought together students, mentors, faculty, and community in a way that revealed the importance of establishing a local textile industry and the responsibility of artists and designers to work reciprocally with the land, culture, and community.

Students gained insight into fibre production and processing, manufacturing and design, and entrepreneurship. While learning where fibres are grown, harvested, and processed, their perception of time was challenged through slow making. They learned what it means to research and work responsibly and reciprocally with local fibre systems. These insights sparked a change in their work, which for many students outlasted the Fibreshed Field School and begins to inform their future design and art practice.

With this next chapter, we aim to give these students the space to share their continued work and give others inspired by the concept of fibreshed the opportunity to show how their practices are trailblazing fibre futures outside of the Field School.

THE ROVING *DESIGNERS*



A PLACED-BASED *DESIGN COLLECTIVE*

THE ROVING DESIGNERS ARE A COLLECTIVE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY designers. The collective was created to foster co-design and co-creation in a sustainable, inclusive and decolonial manner. Its aim is to bring design work out of the confines of traditional studio spaces and into parks, plazas, sidewalks, and anywhere else in nature and public space.

Formed in fall 2020 in response to shifting access to studio spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Roving Designers are focused on creating spaces for members to gather and share in each other's practices. The collective is a space that encourages decolonial design practices that care with and respond to local environments, communities, and contexts through small and slow acts of design making that can lead to discussions and insights into larger systemic issues.

Projects that have come out of the Roving Designers include guided design walks as well as a Design Workbook. This summer the collective continues to be active through a Practice-Based Book Club and Micro-Grant initiative. As members of the collective begin to travel to different parts of Canada, these projects act as tools for members to continue to stay connected to one another and to share how the spaces and communities they live within shape their personal design practices.

More information about the Roving Designers can be found here

www.rovingdesigners.carrd.co
instagram: @rovingdesigners

WORDS AND IMAGES BY ROVING DESIGNERS

GREEN*SING*ING

CONNOR *BUDD*

The realizations I came to last semester—about my practice and design beliefs, and how those ought to be shifted—heavily influenced the development of my Bachelor of Industrial Design grad project.

GREENSINGING is an attempt to articulate a methodology and philosophy of design; a manner in which design, through preparation, process, and product, ought to behave.

It places special emphasis on connections, and a recognition of them, which I found to be an integral part of my experience in the Reciprocity + Stewardship cohort of the Fibreshed Field School. The methodology of *GREENSINGING* stresses the need to observe and acknowledge these webs of connection that underpin, support, or may suffer under the creative process; connections to land, to non-human entities, to material, to each other. In observing these, a designer is both tempered and empowered, committing to a canon of creation that is far older and innate.

A concern I had while participating in the Field School was how to introduce these concepts to people who are unfamiliar with them. *GREENSINGING* is, among other things, an attempt to create a framework, heavily inspired by Fibreshed, which can be understood by those parties to whom these concepts are completely foreign. My time in the Field School revealed many of the grand questions that I have about design and ways of living and creating, and *GREENSINGING* begins the process of interrogating and exploring those questions. It is my way of articulating some of the concepts which lay beneath the surface of Fibreshed. Perhaps it has less to do with the fibre (though it is certainly not excluded), and more to do with the shed.

PDF versions of my complete *GREENSINGING* writings can be read at **cutt.ly/7vRRTdk**

GREENSINGING is a propositional framework of practice for establishing reciprocal and continuous relationships with the natural world. It seeks to effect a biophilic and bio-collaborative sensibility, not only as a design methodology, but as principles and practices which may be adopted by anybody wishing to grow more empathetic relationships with natural systems. It is a response to ecological grief and a resulting disillusionment with design practice. It draws in new values for a world in crisis; a deep love of land, a focus on the local, and a return to ancient and innate ways of existing and thinking. This framework engages participants in guided field activities, provoking reflections upon relationships to the non-human natural, and directing them towards a biophilic and bio-collaborative mindset. Through participants' engagement with these activities, **GREENSINGING** has been tested, generating artifacts and manifestations of the process.

CONTACT: **cbudd@ecuad.ca**

WORDS AND IMAGES
BY CONNOR BUDD

Inspired by *w*hat she lear*n*ed in the Field School, Camila Szefler has continued to work with fibre in her practice. Working with the tow flax leftover from her project, the 50 mile Sketchbook, she made paper that can easily be drawn and written on. Using a proper blender, the hollander beater on the Emily Carr campus, she was able to explore different drying methods to create beautiful flax paper.

*FLAX*PAPER

CAMILA *SZEFLER*

WORDS AND IMAGES
BY CAMILA SZEFLER

PRACTICE, *PRACTICE*, PRACTICE

NAOMI *BOYD*

*P*RACTICE, PR*A*CTICE, PRACTIC*E* encompasses a series of forms & interventions exploring the relationships between maker, material, & the spaces in which the work is situated.

MATERIALS

My work as a maker and designer seeks to explore relationships involving objects, materials, places, and the systems that support these interactions. This project has developed to be distinctly practice based, embracing the ongoing nature of learning processes related to material research methods. While this work may not be recognized as traditional 'industrial design,' I believe it speaks to the discipline's core elements, those which seek to address the world around us through material.

The repetition of basic actions is a key element in establishing connections between maker, material, and site, whether that be the tying of knots or weaving of branches. This practice seeks to embrace the concept of emergence, which is the way complex systems and patterns arise out of relatively simple interactions.[1]

Once a number of these primary elements (materials, techniques, tools) have been identified and validated they can be recombined to incorporate new structures, shapes, and uses. The forms which arise serve to augment the existing body of work, a foundation for further research through design.

VOLUMES

The volumes were created to capture this period within an ongoing practice, focusing on the three themes that have been central to my work recently: generation, intervention, and stewardship. The act of documentation has also become a part of the practice itself, the goal being to continue producing volumes of similar style as the work develops over time and place.[2] This work was humbly practiced on the occupied, ancestral territory of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and səl̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations thank you to the land that has hosted me as an uninvited guest, and continues to teach me each and every day, thank you to all of the teachers who got me here, thank you to all the folks, beings, and sites that have significantly informed this practice, thank you to the willow, for keeping me humble.

1. adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy, 2017
2. watch documented interventions on www.vimeo.com/534160897

CONTACT: naomidboyd@gmail.com
www.naomidboyd.ca

DUDE CHILLING PARK
cotton rope
3 hours of making // up for 12 days

SCULPTURE GRAVEYARD
south flatz advertising tarp
2 hours of making // up for 40 hours

PATCH OF GRASS
cotton twine & pine cones
6.5 hours of making // up for 34 days

VEINS

TUYEN *HOANG*

Veins is a project that explores *t*issues made fr*o*m garments - unused, lost their purpose, donated, thrown. This project explored creating structures that could function as seats, and later took a speculative route. What happens when the seat form is informed by *V*ietnamese indigenous beliefs?

left: *Tall stool*
20” x 17”
Plywood, steel, recycled denim and leather

above: *Comfort stool*
18” x 17.25”
Plywood, steel, recycled denim and leather

*(re)*valued

ASH *LOGAN*

While attending her final year of Emily Carr University in the fall of 2019 Ash took *Business of Design* led by Emily Smith and Stephanie Ostler, where she was introduced to the work of Rebecca Burgess and the Fibershed Network.

While working on her thesis project, she knew she wanted to work within the area of textile sustainability, and was looking for direction and inspiration. Attending the first public lecture given by Rebecca Burgess at Emily Carr, which centered around regional textile systems and carbon-negative clothing, her project direction became clear.

(re)valued approaches the wicked problem associated with the clothing and textile industry by exploring a generative material practice using regional fibres and multiple textile production techniques. Each artifact is a representation of its process, carrying an embedded vernacular. The series of artifacts are designed to provoke conversation around our values, the material economy, connection and to encourage a new urban mythology.

The Coat

The coat's design is a representation of the process, every aspect carefully crafted from sketch to fibre processing, picking, cleaning, carding and felting, to pattern drafting and sewing. The transparency of its story is seen, smelled and felt through the materials that have been produced and designed. Lined with silk and sewn using silk thread, the coat is designed to be composted for end of life. The form allows for an openness in accessibility. The coat is aesthetically inspired by Japanese fashion with an androgynous approach.

The Tote-Back

The tote-back is a versatile bag designed for daily use. Using regional fibres, the bag communicates a deep connection to the land while maintaining a polished look with ease in its functionality. The bag can be worn off the shoulder and as a backpack. The bag is designed for end of life using linen fabric for the lining and handles, fastening the ends of the handles with leather and sewn together using silk thread. It's clean, simple aesthetic allows it to be used in any scenario.

The Pouf

The pouf is home seating furniture, quality made for comfort. The woven and felted fabric offers a unique yet subtle aesthetic. The regional wool creates a soft and comforting experience. Sewn together using yarn made from the same fibre and stuffed with straw, the pouf is designed for end of life.

Ash acted as the project coordinator during the Fibreshed Field School activities and has continued work with the project in the second phase as a research assistant.

She continues to work in regional material systems, utilizing not only new local fibres but also deadstock fabric that has been diverted from waste streams.

CONTACT: www.ashs.design
ashal.22@gmail.com
@ash.s.design

IMAGES: above left: *The Tote-Back*
above right: *The Pouf*
right page: *The Coat*
model: Ketrice Anderson

REBIRTH

ELHAM
ATIGHI
LORESTANI

The *s*kirt is desig*n*ed to *b*e like an illustrative book with three layers of fabrics telling the stories of death and rebirth over and over again.

The Master of Design program has taught Elham what it means to truly connect to land in deep ways that explore her own heritage She is now working on the concept of revaluing textiles and fashion garments by means of telling stories. She wants to provoke conversation about different cultures and values.

Inspired by her Iranian heritage, Elham's current work formed around the idea of Nowruz and the rebirth of nature. The work is the result of Elham's personal thoughts around the concept of death and life after death. It is built on a 2430 BC myth about the celebration of spring (Nowruz). Dumuzi, king of the gods of Sumer, married the beautiful Goddess called Inanna who is the goddess of fertility. The marriage is the face of sacred marriage. Dumuzi dies and Inanna mourns his death. Ultimately, he will be allowed to return to heaven to be with her for one half of the year. His return is the beginning of the new year and it is the symbol of rebirth. In methodology, sacred marriage is used to describe creation.

WORDS AND IMAGES
BY ELHAM ATIGHI LORESTANI

PL.*L*AB

A PLACE-BASED MATERIAL LAB

The lab was created with a mission to understand material ethics and responsibilities from the places and land on which we work, live, and play.

The *pl.lab* is a research and design lab with a mission to understand material ethics and responsibilities from the the places and land on which we work, live, and play founded by Christa Clay and Chiara Schmitt, both graduate students at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. The collaborative approach of this project allows us to work with students, faculty, and external co-creators with the collective goal to create a meshwork of data through resources, experiences, contacts, and protocols. Through this work, we hope to build a foundation from which to share and offer knowledge and open up conversation on place-based and responsible material practices.

Aiming to engage with people through this research, to provoke imagination, and to diversify perspectives on material practices in ways that support local communities, we see this work as a means of embedding reciprocity between designers and place within the Emily Carr community and beyond.

The first project of the lab focused on an in-depth material analysis of *Cytisus scoparius*, commonly known as Scotch Broom, an invasive plant species that is pervasive in southern British Columbia. The investigations included processing the broom as a raw material to explore its potential as a regional resource for fibre content.

This experience has encouraged the next steps of creating a place-based material database. Our team is now in the early stages of building the first edition of this work, which will feature artists and designers, their local material affinities, ethics and protocols of harvest and collection of the featured material, and more.

www.pllab.ca

WORDS AND IMAGES
BY CHRISTA CLAY
AND CHIARA SCHMITT

CHIARA *SCHMITT* & CHRISTA *CLAY*

WORMS AND WEAVING:

a design practice through soil and cloth

MELANIE CAMMAN

Sometimes the worms are a metaphor for designing with care, reciprocity, and working with circular systems.

Over the past year, I have been exploring the making of cloth and fabric at all stages. My participation as a research assistant in the second phase of Fibreshed Field School has given me permission to incorporate my love of gardening into a design practice. The regenerative farming practices introduced to the students aligned with the practices I have already adopted working with worms and composting to build rich soil for growing vegetables. The work includes seeding flowering plants to support bees and hummingbirds, planting flax, nettle and fibre plants for making cloth, and now madder and natural dye plants for learning how to colour cloth. Working with EartHand Gleaners had bridged my experience from working in my own yard to working in the community and in relationship with others. As a personal exploration and within an EartHand Guild, I have also delved into weaving as a way to explore my own heritage and the history of settler colonialism in Canada. The history of cloth is intertwined with racism and movements of people around the globe.

I have also embarked on an exploration of worm composting as a part of my practice. Worm composting is a simple and elegant way of building soil, and working with what already exists. I have been running worm-composting workshops with young people, post-secondary students and adults who are neurodiverse. Sometimes the worms are a metaphor for designing with care, reciprocity, and working with circular systems. In other workshops, I am simply sharing what I have learned about composting with red wigglers and building soil. My favourite moment was exploring alternative forms of listening with five-year-olds by creating vibrations, stomping and patting the ground to be loud or quiet, to teach them about how worms, who do not have ears, hear through movement.

Weaving and worms are teaching me how to make complicated issues and topics accessible through embodied experiences.

WORDS AND IMAGES BY
MELANIE CAMMAN

Our perceptions of time had been tested through slow making.

—Lydia Lovison

As we move through different physical environments over the semester (virtual, rural, urban) this regenerative practices take on different identities, however at its roots are these and values of care, attentiveness and cyclical methods of practice.

—Ajra Pursley-Doobenen

I am starting to contemplate materiality of the things I build and make from...but beyond that—where do materials come from? Where do they fit in relation to the world?

—Laura Herridge

I'm looking forward to the coming months and years of practicing these teachings and continuing to develop my own understandings and connection to the land and the materials and techniques that have developed through what the ecology has provided to us.

—Naomi Boyd

Trying these new skills, I am so aware that there are people who hold all this expertise in their bodies. Thinking about that knowledge held in touch is so inspiring. It makes me very hopeful to remember we all have the capacity for this sort of skill and mastery.

—Ruby Lewis

Hand weaving holds, in my mind, more of the makers memories and stories. The process of small scale hand works, like weaving, knitting, crocheting, and sewing carries the stories and feelings of the maker regardless if it's clear to an outside eye.

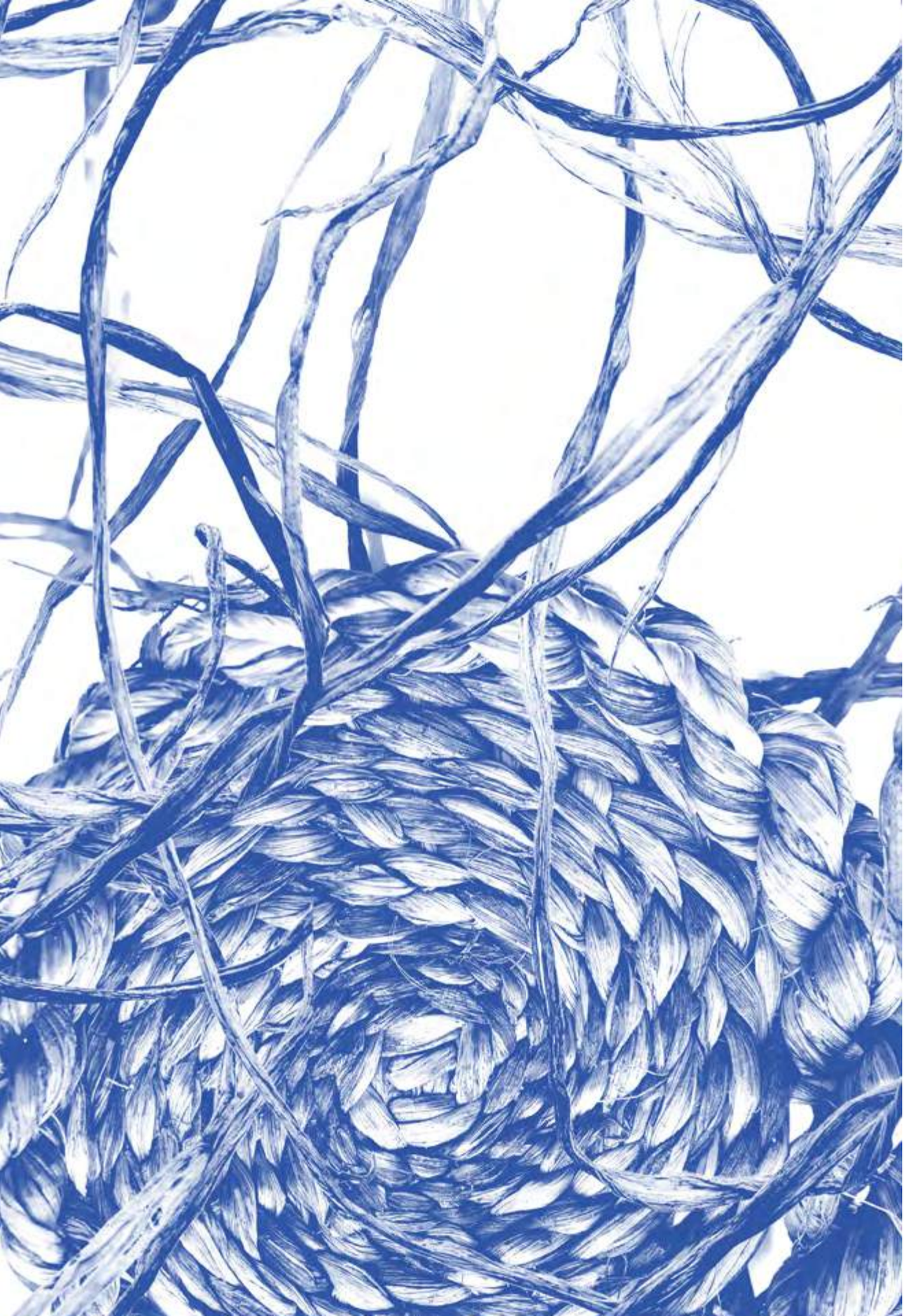
—Tess Snaden

In one way or another, our collective warp fluidly feeds our imagination and holds together our blankets. Like a watershed where we get water from, or a foodshed where to get food from. I would like to remember this collective warp as my fibreshed, a precious one.

—Tuyen Hoang

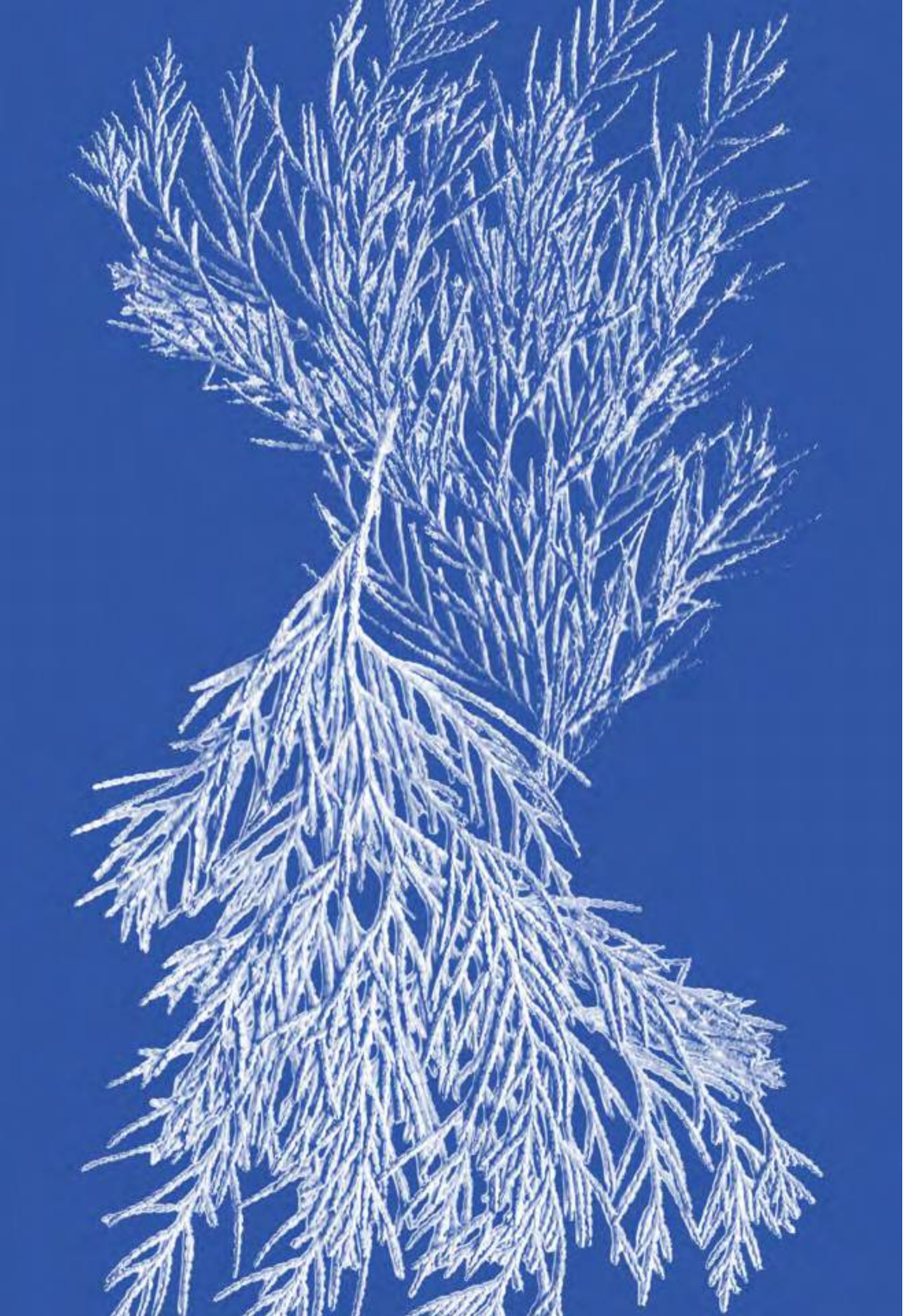
The more I made rope
the more my hands
began to let my mind
wander. I no longer
had to focus on the
movements of my hands.

—Emily Janek



During this process I have begun to long for a deeper connection with my ancestors and a sense of purpose and self which extends beyond my time.

—Danika Oystrek

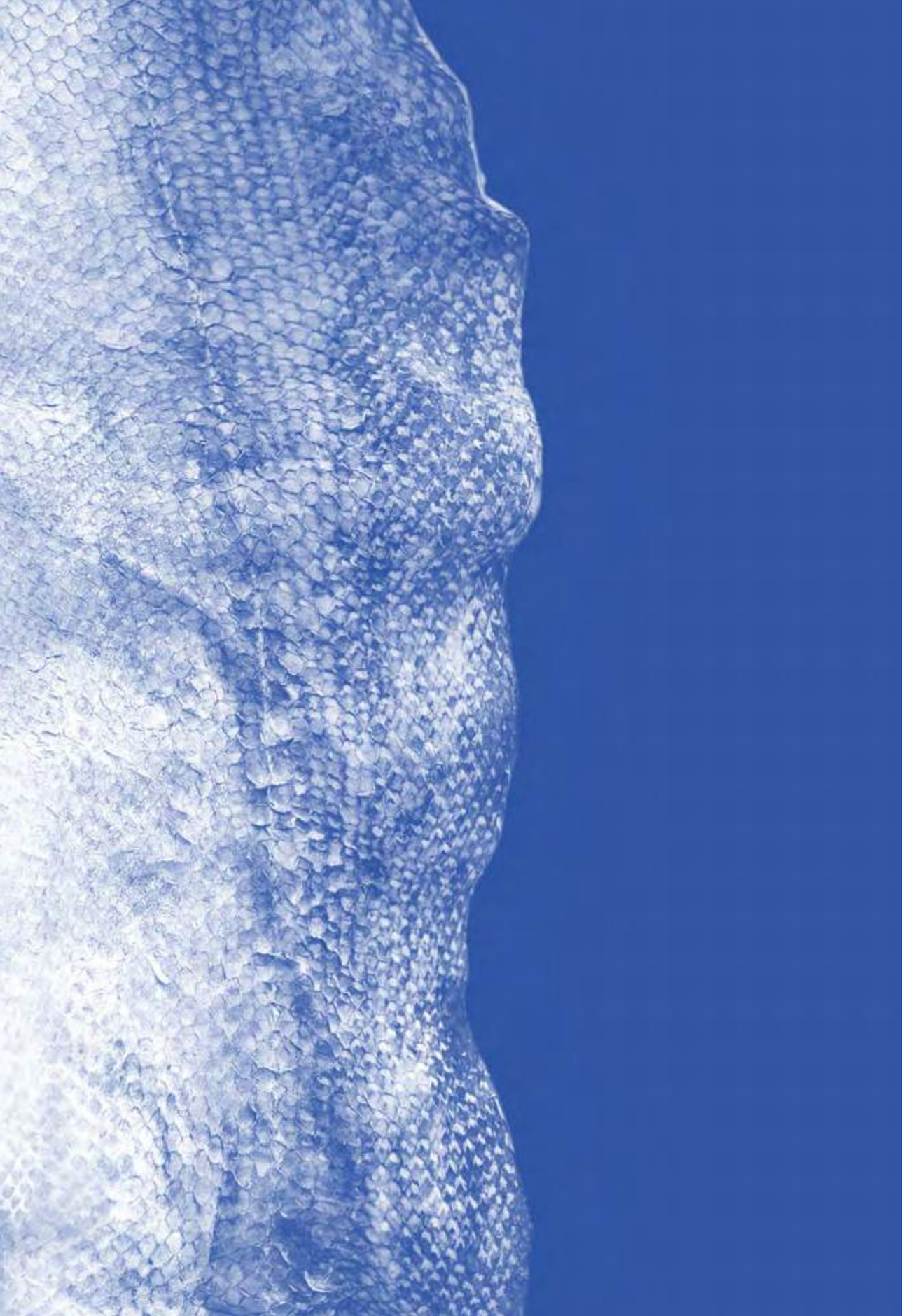


Being present for the entire process through work and labour, knees in the dirt, fingers green. All the wonderful scents of those raw materials, so lovely and fresh. The soft rustling as a group of us all quietly twist up cordage.

—Connor Budd

While experiencing the isolation and uncertainty of the pandemic, again through hand-based rituals of making a community started to form between us. We were in a way producing a tangible expression of these connections.

—Taja Arya Jinnah



Working with and aiding in the creation of materials such as tannins and dyes without a predefined use for them (rather than the reverse process that I am used to) was a paradigm shift that allowed me to critically examine my own practices, both in regards to its connection to material consumption and community engagement.

—Morgan Martino

04 FIBRE FOR THOUGHT

IN RETROSPECT

Sometime in early 2020

Emily said "let's go outside!"

Then,
COVID-19 happened.
Creatives caught
Stuck.
Boxed in.
Separated
From one another.
Wondering

How to collaborate ...
What would it take to
make a difference?

SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2020

THE FIELD SCHOOL

Reciprocity And Stewardship, Warping And Weaving, Regeneration Cohorts

An initial proposition to go places, meet people, be together, shifted to a virtual endeavour. Reconstructed out of necessity. A place of uncertainty and strangeness coupled with many ways of knowing, doing, being—of care. The students and their mentors found a way to connect. And as they did so they spoke-worked-found new relations with fibre, tools, place, weather, heritage, time, and stories.

JANUARY–JUNE 2021

FIBRE STORIES

Ash, Emily, Hélène, Christa, Elham, Chiara, and Mel

Following this as the *observers-onlookers-gatherers* of all of this collective intensity and tasked with documenting/sharing the many creative threads/experiences of the Fall Fibershed Field School over a more extended time frame, we slowly realized that new relations had formed.

In early July 2021, after months of online discussions and planning, we finally met up, in person, for the first time. Sitting together, in a light filled room, with two white boards in front of us we were finally able to share through gestures, sighs, laughs—movements in a shared space. And as we did so we collectively wrote out—sorted through—what we had been invited to look at, listen to and consider.

The students of the Field School had been welcomed to move beyond extractionist understandings/usage/positioning. They took this on with gusto. We realized for them (and us also) the fibre, tools, place, weather, heritage, time, stories of this experience were active, autonomous agents who contributed in their many ways and had come to be understood by the students (and ourselves) as collaborators.

REFLECTION

Collaboration is the action of working alongside one another. As collaborators, we team up, get together, work jointly, participate, unite, combine, merge, link, associate, amalgamate, integrate, and form alliances. As we do so, we share goals, wishes, and desires for the future. For Fibreshed Field School's mentors, students, facilitators and community, this future embraces diverse perspectives and accepts our non-human contributors to counter the prevailing modernist and capitalistic agendas through collaboration. Collaboration is an abstract term defined through human contexts. But what happens if we treat not the human but rather the earth as our collaborator? Its history, forces, processes, and sustenance as partners. What if we question the role the human plays in the concept of collaboration?

Following our own affinities for particular collaborators, this final section offers up some final thoughts to leave you with.

fibre AS COLLABORATOR *helping*

In our heavily manufactured, globalized world, it's nearly impossible to see or interact with the process and footprint of our everyday textiles. The fibre and cloth that make up our lives have been essential to our survival, and yet today it's nearly impossible to understand how things are made—let alone engage with the technological, political, economic, and cultural forces at play. By engaging with tools, technologies, and embodied knowledge, we begin to unravel the depth and range of activities that have shaped where we are, so that we can explore a wider range of what's possible, or even practical, when it comes to the cloth that we (designers and humans) surround ourselves with.

The transformation of fibre into cloth requires human-made tools or methods: sowing seeds, shepherding, digitizing patterns, spinning a drop spindle, or harvesting plants for dye or fibre production (to name a few). From a whorl to a shuttle, each mechanical process calls upon a different relationship between the maker and the cloth, and the cloth to the wearer of that material. The labour of these technologies undergoes significant changes when we move from small-scale, hand methods, towards mechanized production, that can produce enough cloth to clothe a community. Perhaps, by engaging with the process—people, plants, tools, and methods—we can create a richer experience of the world around us.

By acknowledging the presence of textiles in our lives, we uncover a multitude of world views and expressions from past and present times, in hope that it can contribute to the creation of a rich, regional connection to the land, people and processes in our fibreshed.

EMILY *SMITH*

tools
AS COLLABORATOR
in partnership

As designers we are trained to use tools, to construct, to develop, make
There are conventions—old ones along with new … ingenuities.
They conglomerate (stratify…)
more and more AND!
Ways of doing always in relation to the tools we find, make, construct, envisage.
Partners that help us build and see other worlds.

Most often
In the desire to specialize—assert expertise, contribute to efficient systems of the modern machine
The designer
Trained
To make things with prepared units of resource (dimensional lumber, spools of thread, bolts of cloth…)
Loses sight
Gains little to no access to what came before (or the tools that are used).

Past—present—future are separated out

important narratives lost.
The thread that ties
past/present/future
cut.

The loom, a rock weighted
The loom, within a constructed frame
The loom, connected to a system (developed—of 0's and 1's
Punch card tickets
To devise
Make patterns
Tell stories
Collect, recollect, hold, mark out, offer up.
Possibility!

Prior to
emergence / proposition! /
the crafty maneuver of offering up cloth

We tend, watch, observe, cut, care (hoe, weed, prune …)
We harvest: cut, lay out, ret,
Wait
We align fibre: card, smooth, pull …….
Wait

Draw them out and spin ….. … ….
Twist, bundle
Dye
Dream
Plan.

All the way through tools are with us.
Sometimes we need just our hands—they are our tools for seeing and engaging with the world.
Often (and for millennia)
we devise tools to assist.
Blades for cutting, rows of needles for aligning/sorting, rocks for weighing down, spindles for entwining, buckets, tables, combes, racks …

The designers/creatives/makers of Fibreshed Field School were ones in training. Taken out of the usual scenario of engagement, offered new relations with tools, by mentors who tended, shared yarns. The students were invited (and accepted!) to make/think/make in new ways. As we watched, listened, read their words, we realized that tools (those they worked with) were no longer objective implements - to be exploited. The relationship had shifted. Tools were friends, helpers, guiders, their collaborators—tools and people / people and tools—designing/ making/ form giving—thinking together—*preparing new possibilities.

*Old English tōl, comes from a Germanic base meaning 'prepare'

HÉLÈNE
DAY FRASER

place AS COLLABORATOR *friendship*

We walked the land. Felt the soil beneath our feet. Saw it becoming a little denser with each step. Paving the way for us. We noticed how it would accompany us softly. Supporting our path. In life. Wherever we would go. How long it would take. We would smell the oils of the earth rising to our nose. The soil had been nourished. From the clear rainfall and the cold streams that would cross our trails. From the nutrients given by its ancestors and neighbours. Cared for by the little non-human companions that call it their home. It would offer us humans a place. A place to envision our future. A place we would make our home, too. A place that would make us happy. Happy, that we were on a patch of earth in this endless universe.

But with this place came responsibility. Responsibility to care for the place we would live in. To not only take but also give. How can we collaborate with Place?

> "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."—Aldo Leopold

We humans must take up our elemental task again. We have to re-embrace our role as caretakers of our earth. Because with every cleared forest, every dried-up water source, and every additional degree of heat, life becomes more difficult. Our ancestors cultivated the land. They took only as much as they needed. Because unlike us, they understood that land and place means not only origin but future. And to be able to envision it, the integrity and balance of the place had to be maintained.

The students learned what it means to become a caretaker of place. They learned about soil degradation, regenerative farming practices and local materials. But they also reflected on what place means to them. While visiting outdoor studios, many of the student's experiences were at home. In virtual space, place becomes lost easily. Place is not just home, or a point on the globe. Place is also a state of mind. It is positioning.

Collaborating with place will guide us towards a safe, reciprocal and responsible future. A future in which, as Aldo Leopold said, we no longer see the place we live on as a commodity but as a community of which we are a true part. A community that we care about preserving. A community that we are responsible for, that we work for, and that we protect. Because who would not cre for their home and family?

CHIARA *SCHMITT*

weather AS COLLABORATOR *in conversation*

Heatwaves, floods, forest fires, droughts, never-ending rains. Lambing season, the time to shear, returning salmon, spawning. Seeding, flowering, pollination, fear of frosts, the harvest. The ret and the rot, boiling, curing, tanning, extraction, transmutation and transformation. Cyclical, interrupting, disrupted, informing. A pandemic. Adaptation.

The Fibreshed Field School ran for one semester in Fall 2020. The program intended to reconnect students to the places where cloth was grown, soil was built, and to examine interventions to the economy that adjusted for local fibres and place-based knowledge. But the rhythms of a semestered learning system and academic funding cycles do not align with earth-based systems. Institutional learning is out of sync with the growth cycle of plants and the shifting seasons of weather. A single semester is a sliver of the whole process.

It left me wondering, what would it look like for students to grapple with sustainability by attuning their educational calendar to the rhythms of the materials they are working with? What if weather was not a secondary consideration but a collaborator? Starting the school year, when the weather shifts, indicating the time for planting the seeds. Then watching them grow, noting the days of rain, frost, drought, forest fire smoke, and quietly intervening when the rains don't come. Counting the days to harvest and paying attention to the indicators of harvest time, the days getting longer and warmer, then shorter and cooler. When you spend time outdoors, the weather teaches you to respond and adapt.

Most weather we are accustomed to and prepared for, but it is severe weather that catches us off guard. Fires, droughts, floods, heat waves, ice storms, and other phenomenal acts interrupting the timelines of human activity and our attempts to control and separate humans from the world. The pandemic was an interruption, on a global scale, forcing us to adapt. During the fall semester, students and mentors experienced the flexibility of a Fibreshed Field School format. Being already attuned to the cycles of nature and patterns of weather, it was able to adapt to the conditions of the pandemic, and encouraged students to connect with humans and non-humans through a time of social and physical isolation.

Weather teaches us to notice and respond to events larger than ourselves, over which we have no control, but which we must learn to live and work with.

MELANIE *CAMMAN*

heritage AS COLLABORATOR *caring*

In January, when most of us came on as research assistants, we convened on Zoom where we all quickly realized that we each had parents or grandparents who farmed. They had land, resilience and material intelligence that lives on now in our childhood memories. Bonding over this shared connection through our respective heritages, I realized that this was not so much a coincidence, but rather a consequence of our "developing" modern world. What once was a common way of life, farming or ranching to make a living, has become increasingly commercialized and privatized in the course of two generations. In this particular circumstance, we all began to feel kinship with our family histories in agriculture—as we now thirst for the opportunity to grow our own food and materials. We struggle with the urban condition, its high cost of living and subsequent skyrocketing land and home costs, that stifle that thirst to grow. Instead, we have adapted. We grow in small patches on street corners and subdivided lots, we volunteer in community gardens, and we share with each other what we are grateful to have. We make do, and in the process inspire hope for our dreams of having our own land someday, just like those that came before us—to have the agency and opportunity to build more resilient, closer knit, and self-sufficient communities for us and future generations. We are resilient in our own ways, fighting for flexibility and opportunity to build the futures we want for the world. Futures that ring reminiscent of the past, have us using our hands more, and being mindful of our impact on human and non-human beings around us. My grandmother likes to tell me that my grandfather, whom we called G-Daddy, is smiling down on me, shining proud that I farm and grow just like he did his whole life—those words still bring tears to my eyes.

It seems more and more that those who do not consider the past as a teacher or collaborator would do well to repeat some older ways of working, to revitalize what may be considered old fashioned in an increasingly industrialized and digital world. We are very much responsible for carrying on lessons that our ancestors worked hard to learn, in the spirit of progress, and in the spirit of maintaining that there are countless right ways to be... it is in this spirit that the students of Fibreshed Field School learned. They learned from mentors who had mentors who had mentors—they worked with that passed on knowledge and material intelligence. Without this context, where would we be now? Our histories and heritage are with us in our practice—an ever present and indispensable collaborator.

CHRISTA *CLAY*

time AS COLLABORATOR *an ally*

The time of it all. It is possible that each person involved in Fibreshed Field School experienced time in different and unique ways. Time can move quickly and slowly and it is something we can never get back. Time builds memories and stories and skills. Time seems to move at different paces depending on how it's spent. Time is valued in different ways. When I think of time in my own experience, the longer I'm here the faster it seems to go. The ways in which our culture values time is often disconnected from the human experience and the natural cycles and seasons.

Time as an abstract concept. When we think of time in relation to our fibreshed, there are natural cycles that are in direct conflict with the academic institution. The intersection of these two different ways of existing, the construct of linear time introduced through industrialization and the cyclical nature of the natural world, in a lot of ways shaped how the field school was planned and experienced. For one short semester, each cohort was able to dip into their mentors' processes, be fully present in their experience and take away those lessons to bring into their own practice. They learned that the process of designing and making, growing and harvesting is never really finished. There is no beginning and end, there is only the journey, and to be present in that journey is to slow down.

Time as protest. Slowing down our practices and our lives is an act of defiance. Slowing down brings care, focus, consideration, compassion and empathy. We're better able to take notice of the details, the human and non human collaborators, sentient and non sentient. The field school provided an opportunity for the students to engage with fibre systems at a pace that is not common practice in the globalized textile industry. Many of the students reflected on slowing down their practice and finding a more mindful approach to making. This initially caused some discomfort from their familiar pace but the process of learning patience is not always easy. In my own youth I thought there was virtue in finishing first. As time went on with more experience, failure and success, I started to see the value in slowing down my pace and have brought those values into my own practice. However - our culture, industries and economies carry a different set of values. Like many others, I'm tired of trying to keep up in a world that is imploding. The way that our culture values time doesn't consider all of the stakeholders, only the shareholders. Presently there is no balance in making a living and caring for the environment. Though, programs such as Fibreshed Field School bring hope for a just future. There's so much strength in bringing communities together to rethink and recalibrate our understanding of time. By working together to deconstruct the concept of linear time, we can begin to see time as a collaborator.

Time as protest. Slowing down our practices and our lives is an act of defiance. Slowing down brings care, focus, consideration, compassion and empathy. We're better able to take notice of the details, the human and non human collaborators, sentient and non sentient. The field school provided an opportunity for the students to engage with fibre systems at a pace that is not common practice in the globalized textile industry. Many of the students reflected on slowing down their practice and finding a more mindful approach to making. This initially caused some discomfort from their familiar pace but the process of learning patience is not always easy. In my own youth I thought there was virtue in finishing first. As time went on with more experience, failure and success, I started to see the value in slowing down my pace and have brought those values into my own practice. However - our culture, industries and economies carry a different set of values. Like many others, I'm tired of trying to keep up in a world that is imploding. The way that our culture values time doesn't consider all of the stakeholders, only the shareholders. Presently there is no balance in making a living and caring for the environment. Though, programs such as Fibreshed Field School bring hope for a just future. There's so much strength in bringing communities together to rethink and recalibrate our understanding of time. By working together to deconstruct the concept of linear time, we can begin to see time as a collaborator.

ASH *LOGAN*

stories AS COLLABORATOR *drawing us together*

Everything started with a story. Story as we have it in mind has a framework, a beginning, a middle and an end. Rebecca Burgess started a new story. She understood that people play a big role in it and that those relationships are missing in the future of the fibre stories. The beauty of stories is that they tend to generate other stories. Such was the case of Rebecca's story which was the beginning of many other stories. One of them being Fibreshed Field School - which gave threads to many other voices. Creating voices for not only the future but also linking back to the voices which sang a song like knotting threads on a Persian carpet.

Reading the students' contributions opened up a whole new world for me. The beauty of their writing was that it was so real. It was not building off of any one person's story but around connection - not only to humans, but to more than humans. To the stories that seem to be taken from us - the stories of our grandparents and our land. It is so unique how the process of creating materials by hand can create conversations that could never have happened otherwise.

Fibershed reads like an endless book, with every chapter generating more chapters like threads woven into each other to create patterns for future works. Fibreshed Field School and the subsequent research phase have fought against the single story narrative that masks the key issue with stereotypes. As said by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "the problem with stereotypes is not that they are not true, but they are incomplete. They make 'one story' become the only story" (Adichie as cited in Bertolotti et al., 2016). Fibreshed stories were generated not only by multiple voices, but by many different means of communication. It is a radically different approach in comparison to the commercialized and Western fashion system that only gives certain people a voice by making some communities visible and neglecting others. What Fibreshed Field School embraced is similar to a storytelling practice that is discussed in the DESIS network's "The pearl diver: the designer as storyteller" that sees diversity as an asset for the sustainability among cultures, acting as more of a tool for exploration than a mode of expression. When I come back to this project, I see the importance of shifting the designer's role from that of a storyteller to an enabler of multiple stories. This publication and podcast are not made by one single author/voice/perspective, but rather a multitude of authors. The stories themselves act as mediators that allow different stories to emerge and enter in dialogic discussion with each other.

ELHAM *ATIGHI LORESTANI*

Fibreshed as the seed, the Field School as the fertile soil

Over the past year, many people have entered and engaged in this project. We have each thought about and found strategies for making in new and meaningful ways as we have done so. By collaborating with fibre, tools, place, weather, our diverse heritages, time and the stories we share, we have grown and begun to recognize many new ways that we can contribute and make a difference towards the care of our planet and each other.

This site of collective action has propagated so many new sets of possibilities! We await in eager anticipation to see what will unfurl!

With gratitude,

Ash, Emily, Hélène, Christa, Elham, Chiara, and Mel

1 Leopold, A., & Meine, C. (2013). *Aldo Leopold: A Sand County Almanac & Other Writings on Conservation and Ecology* (LOA #238) (Library of America) (Reprint ed.). Library of America.
2 Adichie as cited in Bertolotti, E., Daam, H., Piredda, F., & Tassinari, V. (2016).
3.*The pearl diver: the designer as storyteller* DESIS Network Association-Dipartimento di Design, Politecnico di Milano

Fibreshed as the seed, the Field School as the fertile soil.

Inspired by and in collaboration with *Fibershed*, an international network founded by Rebecca Burgess, the Field School was a proposition to go places, meet people, and learn about regional and regenerative fibre systems. In the Fibre Stories publication and podcast we share stories about Fibreshed Field School, our local fibreshed, regional textiles, industry, education, soil and the tensions that arise when we examine fibre and cloth through the lens of sustainability and decolonization.